A photograph of a church at night, illuminated from within. The church has a prominent steeple. In the foreground, a large evergreen tree is heavily covered in snow and decorated with colorful Christmas lights (red, green, blue, yellow). The sky is a deep twilight blue. Bare trees are visible in the background.

Our Spire
Volume 41
February 2021
Number 1

**Reaching Up to God,
Reaching Out to People**

Pastor's Page:

disinformation

[,disənfər'māSH(ə)n]

NOUN,

false information which is intended to mislead, especially propaganda issued by a government organization to a rival power or the media.

synonyms:

lie · falsehood · fib · fabrication · deception · made-up story · trumped-up story · fake news · invention · fiction · piece of fiction · falsification · falsity

According to Wikipedia, disinformation is false or misleading information that is spread deliberately to deceive. This is a subset of misinformation. The English word disinformation is a loan translation of the Russian dezinformatsiya, derived from the title of a KGB black propaganda department. Joseph Stalin coined the term, giving it a French-sounding name to claim it had a Western origin. Russian use began with a "special disinformation office" in 1923. Disinformation was defined in Great Soviet Encyclopedia as "false information with the intention to deceive public opinion". Operation INFEKTION was a Soviet disinformation campaign to influence opinion that the U.S. invented AIDS. The U.S. did not actively counter disinformation until 1980, when a fake document reported that the U.S. supported apartheid.

In thirteen years, the time I have been your pastor, this is the *toughest* pastor's page I have written—*by far*. I haven't been stalling; I am overwhelmed with how to enter the conversations our nation is having at this harrowing, dangerous time. Overwhelmed. That's the accurate word. Minutes before I began writing here, I learned a word I have yet to hear. It is the word that tops this page. Disinformation. I've been hearing about this word for at least a year, but didn't know it actually was a word, an action, a deliberate plan to spread fabrications with the intent to divide.

I am not a political spokesperson; I am a pastor. This may not sound like much given that many in my profession are active Republicans or Democrats. By this, I mean their political slant narrowly or directly comes to the pulpit. They feel they must speak the truth which, honestly, is not a truth as much as it is a location, opinion, or bias. I am NOT about division, or political persuasion. There is one truth to follow. There is one leader to follow. Yes, in Luke 12:49-53, this upstart preacher from nowhere Nazareth is recorded to have said:

49 "I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already burning! 50 I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished. 51 Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to divide people against each other! 52 From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two against—or two in favor and three against.

53 'Father will be divided against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'"

This is prophetic text given this time in America's history today. Families (in specific and in the broadest sense of the word) are torn, three in favor and two against, or two in favor and three against. And yes, the world is on fire. But this division Jesus speaks of is to heaven-bound and hell-bound people, not left- or right-thinking Christians. In this passage, Jesus is speaking to the fork in the road of choosing salvation or sin that, when not confessed and repented, will keep us from eternal life with God.

Pastor's Page Continued:

Q: Ask yourself, is Jesus really about division the way we often experience it these days?

A: No, he is not. If you follow Jesus, and if you read the volumes of work from the Apostle Paul, you know Jesus, the only Son of God, holds His Father's most obvious attribute in his divine DNA, and this is love. Love. Love is not about being pulled apart; love is about being drawn together. Jesus has an essential mega theme in his ministry: the sin we humans carry has been washed away by the lamb's blood on the cross. We are forgiven not divided! And Paul, the most prolific author in the New Testament, speaks of harmony, not discord. He writes of unity of mind and spirit in Christ Jesus, not division.

The word division brings me back to the word disinformation. Dear Congregation, I will tell you, I'm weary. I am weary from the battlelines drawn in the world around us. When the weight of this world gets heavy, and it does, I am reminded we are not of this world (John 15:19). In this life, we will have trials and tribulations (John 16:33), but our Savior lived, died, and rose again so that we never have to be a part of this world—we are apart from it.

The word disinformation is troublesome for me. The words Jesus says, in stark contrast, are not hardening, they are heartening. There is a great deal of disinformation out there. The information in scripture, however, is all we need. Turn to the Word. Own it. Live it. Breathe it. Memorize it. Be liberated by it. Be guided by it. Be lifted by it. Be loved by it so that you, in turn, can love others as Jesus first loved you.

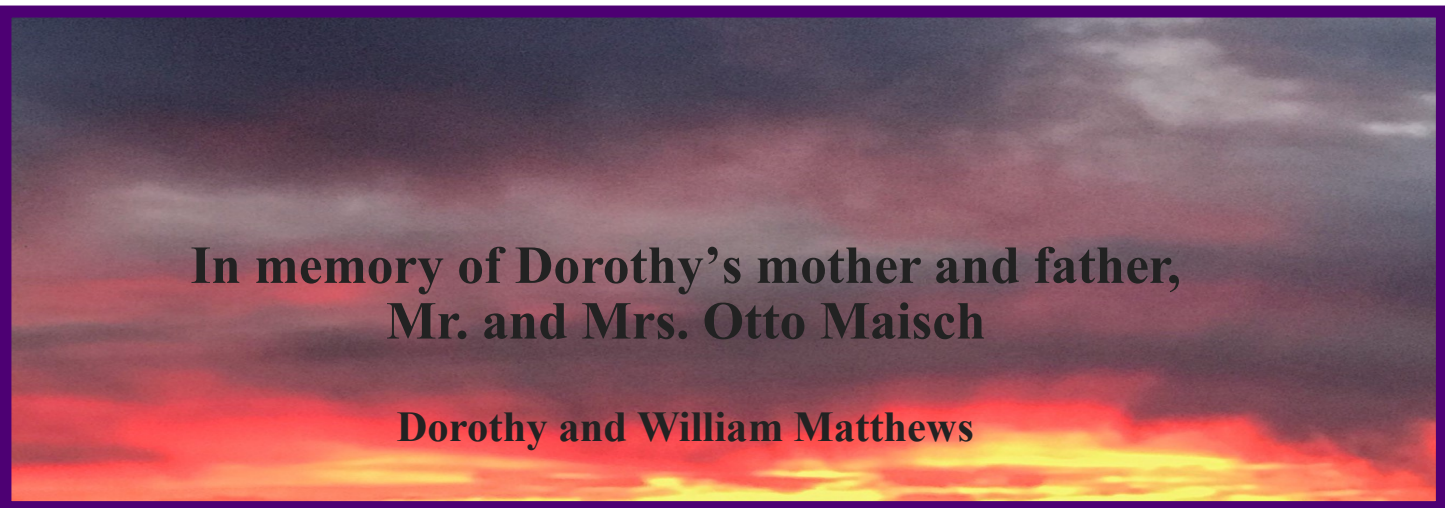
In closing, I find these words from John Newton to be inspiring. I hope you will, too. He once said, "A soul disengaged from the world is a heavenly one; and then are we ready for heaven when our heart is there before us."

Dear Lord,

Heaven is before us. I pray that we disengage from disinformation. I pray that we all become less political and more in the personhood of Christ, the spotless, sinless Lamb of God. As division comes—three against two and two against three—I pray we understand our role which aligns completely with Your second commandment, which is to love our neighbor as ourselves. Help us let love win, Lord. To this end (which is no end at all but a beginning), help us let love be known, and shown. Now and always, keep us turned into the information of scripture.

We pray in the rejuvenating presence of the Holy Spirit,

Amen.



**In memory of Dorothy's mother and father,
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Maisch**

Dorothy and William Matthews

We will glorify the Lord.



This was shared on January 10th during the slideshow presented during worship: The hymn **We Will Glorify the Lord** states exactly what we are doing: We are glorifying the Lord. We are His messengers. We are His agents of hope. We are His ambassadors of peace in a world that, at times, is so very, very conflicted. We are not of this world, so the raucous and the clamors, and the anger and the fear we hear does not consume us; rather, these spoken cries of dismay enable us to minister with love to those in need of solace, sanctuary, and, above all, eternal salvation.

Solace is a word that holds a double meaning for all of us. Since mid-March of this last year, we have been displaced. Like the great diaspora in 586 BC, where the Babylonian armies seized the city of Jerusalem and carried off scores and scores of people into the hard plight of slavery in a foreign land. All of us have been displaced in some way. What we knew is no longer. What we want isn't coming back, or isn't coming back quickly enough.

Sanctuary is a word that now means something else entirely. In the days before the virus, our sanctuary meant this sanctuary, this church, this space. The calming blue walls, the detailed white trim work and the deep red carpet brought us to holy ground, a centered calm, and a connection to God. Now we are out there—scattered, or so it seems—and yet, in glorying our God, we find the meaning of 'sanctuary' in our living rooms, our kitchen tables, our sun-filled spots, or wherever. We don't just watch, but we participate in worship through technology.

Eternal salvation has never been more of a need these days. As it has been in the past, our world is a hot mess. Our nation is stressed, stretched, and strained. Yet our God—our forever creating God of new heavens and a new earth—is out there with us. He is with us! He doesn't present to us a challenge we cannot meet, because we have His help, His guidance and above all, His love. We can reach more people now and share the Good News of Salvation today and tomorrow because worship, no longer contained to a set hour on a single day, can be shared by copying a link and sending it to someone we know who needs to know our God is being glorified here. Death has no sting. An eternal life with the great I AM is ours.

Think of your family, your friends, your neighbors, your community. This warm feeling, tugging at you, warming you, is not just a feeling. This is the Spirit of God at work within You. God IS making something new. God is DOING something new. That something is you. God, the King of inspiration and creation, is creating something new in you through these unparalleled times so that, yes, such goodness can come from grief.

We will love more. We will respond more. We will receive more. We will witness more. We will listen more. We will shoulder more. We will care more. We will lift more. We will sing His praises more. We will glorify the Lord all the more. We will Glorify the King of Kings, we will glorify the Lamb. We will glorify the Lord of Lords, who is the great I AM!

And here comes Lent.

Here's one for you. A God moment that just happened here at my desk at home.

To begin, I have to back up and share that Judy, being Judy, sets reading materials around the office computer for me to see that arrive in the mail. I receive them as little nudges to help my prayer life as your pastor. Thanks, Judy!

A month ago, a packet of little Lenten devotionals, all neat and tidy in clear shrink wrap, waited for me by the office computer. I glanced through them. I brought them home to look further into what we, as a congregation, might do together this coming Lenten season.

As I started to look around my computer area here at home for the devotionals with familiar, traditional sounding Lenten-themed ideas, I found this book on my nearby bookshelf with this title, "Let Your Life Speak". It is written by Parker J. Palmer, copyright Jossey-Bass Inc., 2000. This book came from my seminary days at Boston University's School of Theology. Or did it? The date is right, in that it was published during the third year of my MDiv era, but this little book has nothing to do with theology or Lent. On the footfalls of our Stewardship Fall 2020 campaign about our God stories, this title instantly sparked the Spirit in me. "Yes," I said quietly. "Here it is. Our 2021 Lenten journey—let your life speak."

This isn't a pre-fab series which, like pre-fab Stewardship campaigns themselves, never truly speak to me. No, Let Your Life Speak? This is us! Specifically, this is us hearing the stories of those Jesus touched, healed, spurred on, intercepted, healed and/or sparked. Six stories. Six weeks.

One story came from Matthew 9, Jesus heals a bleeding woman. This will be one of the six stories that will let our lives speak.

When I added the flowers from a nearby pot for the photo, I spilled a speck of dirt on the page. Long story short, the speck didn't blow away. It made one big smudge. A smudge? I couldn't use the page for the photo. Anyway, God helped me find another page in my Bible beside my computer. I share all this because between the cover cut outs from the book jacket and what I penned as Lent 2021 was this verse. The verse reads, "Then one of the teachers of religious law said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go (Matthew 8:19)."

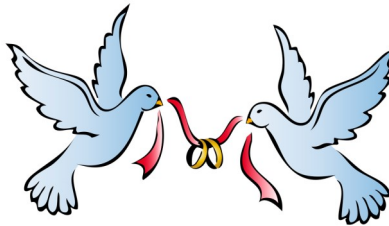
Using six Gospel stories as our stories this Lent, we will follow our teacher wherever He goes.

Our Lenten journey begins February 21. Join us. God is speaking His story into us.





**Congratulations
Alyssa and Cody
Nolan**



**Congratulations
Dakota and Kailey
Hiller**



**Spire Sponsor
Happy Valentine's Day**

Elsie Hackbart

Here is another “God Story.” This one is from Rich Masters.

Several years ago, after returning from another hospital stay prior to my transplant, a very amazing Moment occurred. I was sitting in my favorite chair in dim light. I was listening to some beautiful music. I’m sure there were tears in my eyes as I sat there feeling sorry for myself even knowing my situation was my own fault. I get so emotional as I write this.



At my lowest point, the Lord came to me put his arm around me and we walked down a beautiful garden path. Not a word was said, but I knew that everything would be alright. I also have to mention the power of prayer and how many prayers were offered for me over the years. It all proves that the almighty is always there with you.

God Story from Jean Bonham.

Thinking back over my life, there are many times that a Greater Hand was in charge. Growing up in the Presbyterian Church, where both of my parents were involved, I attended Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and later become a part of CE. I sang in the choir and enjoyed other functions. In addition to having a minister’s daughter as a best friend, you learn and believe that Someone really did die to help us when we need help.

The Helping Hand came to me several years later when my husband, baby and I were traveling. Going through Phoenix, Arizona, a speeding car ran a red light and broadsided us, pushing us across four lanes of traffic. This was before the days of seatbelts and child safety seats. The baby was in the seat between my husband and me, so our little one was somewhat protected.

When our parents heard of the accident that day, my Mother knew of a family in my hometown who had relatives in Scottsdale, Arizona. The next day, a lady showed up at the hospital. She told me who she was, and, after we talked, she took our baby home with her and cared for it until I was able to do so. My husband was given a job in a nearby town and stayed at night with our baby at this lady’s home. He stopped in daily to spend time with me.

I truly believe the Good Lord was with us that day and sent many helping hands to ease our discomfort and anxiety—ambulance crew, police, doctors, nurses of all kinds, a kind family to care for a baby and an organization to give my husband a different, temporary job.

A few days after the accident, the man who caused the accident came by to apologize and, after hearing his story, I realized how fortunate I was because the man had been drinking while behind the wheel of his car.

God Moment from Betty Lou Bennett

I had wonderful Sunday School teachers here in Harford as I was growing up. We had wonderful conversations and that is where I developed the basis for my faith.

When I was 5 months pregnant with my first child I had an emergency appendectomy and was given medication that paralyzed me. That was the first time I really prayed. I prayed more when our 17 year old nephew died and when our niece was still born. These situations helped me learn how to surrender control through prayer. I needed that skill as my husband and brother faced serious medical situations later in life.

Faith is confidence in what you hope for, an assurance about what you can not see.

Focusing on the Positive: Blessing and Joys in 2020



**Youth and Outreach Sponsored
Pancake Supper
February 2020**



**Holy Sacrament Box
donated
By Teresa Lamberson
in Memory of
Patrick Lamberson
March 2020**



The well in Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan Sewing Program currently making COVID masks are both supported by the Missionary Group and our congregation,



**Missionary and North Harford
Willing Workers Outreach
Summer Lunch Box Program
186 Families fed
492 Children fed
Summer 2020**

**North Harford Willing Worker and Missionary Outreach
Showers of Blessings for
CareNet and the
Women's Resource Center
April 2020**





**Youth and Outreach
Ice Skating
February 2020**

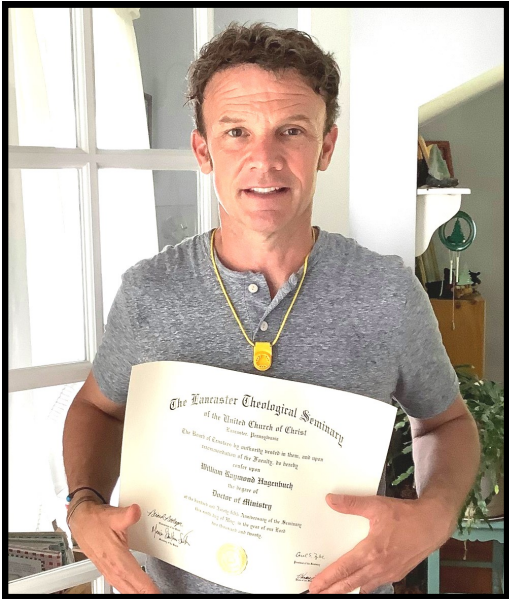
**Missionary and Boy Scout
Sponsored
Mountain View Elementary
Snack Collection
February—May 2020**



**Weinberg Food Bank
Started February 2020**



**Coaches VS Cancer
Youth and Outreach
January 2020**



**Reverend Doctor William Hagenbuch
September 2020**



**Youth and Outreach
New Year's Eve Celebration
December 31– January 2020**

**Missionary Group Sponsored
Operation Christmas Child
50 Children in
Malawi, Africa
received Shoe boxes
filled by our
Congregation.
November 2020**





**Suggestion Box
Donated by Sue Furney and
Wayne Frederici
March 2020**



**Our Congregation
filled the
Christmas wishes
of 26 children
December 2020**



**Online and Web Worship
Harford First Congregational Church
continued to offer live-streamed
worship along with web access to
worship services.. Worship text and
scripture were added visually for
worshippers at home.**

Pet Blessing
11/14/2020
9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m
First Congregational UCC
Harford

**Take some time to give your
beloved pet(s) the gift of a
blessing. †**



**Willing Worker Roast
Beef Dinner
Sold 366 Meals and
sold out!
November 2020**

**Our Congregation
collected 141 boxes of
Hot Chocolate mix for
Interfaith
November 2020**



The Stout Family Benefit results:

Yard Sale: \$4762

Donations: \$2200

Craft Sale : \$ 392

Bake Sale: \$ 798

Basket Raffle: \$8455

Meal: \$5570

Total: \$22,177

September 2020



Stewardship launched the Pledge Campaign by Introducing “God Moment Stories”

October 2020



Girl Scout, Briana Boswell made and donated a “My Little Library” located at the front left of our church.

November 2020



October 2020

Outdoor Worship with True Heart



Community Outreach and Deacons Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

November 2020

New Members Class

The pastoral relations team met in January and want to announce that a new membership class will be taking place as soon as it is safe enough for many people to gather.

Stay tuned for details!



Kingsley Willing Workers Soup Sale February 28 after worship service



The sale of the soup is pre-order only.

Order by February 21.

Cost will be \$7.50 a quart.

The following soups will be offered at our February 28, 2021 soup sale.

Chicken broccoli cheese
Chicken corn chowder
Hamburger vegetable
Hamburger vegetable barley
Hot sausage tortellini
Mexican Corn and Bean Chowder
Mushroom Leek
Taco soup



Please email Judy or call Judy at 570-434-2716 or 570-396-8184

jmm@nep.net with your order.

If you live semi close to Harford we would offer to deliver.

Thank you.

Emergency Food Distribution

Hop Bottom Fire Hall

Paula Smith, the Summer Lunchbox CEO, noticed that some of the extra Summer Lunchbox food would expire before summer 2021. She got with her church's food pantry (Hop Bottom United Methodist Church) and offered a food distribution in December 2020, once a week, on Wednesday. The first few weeks 25-30 families were served. The last week in December over 100 families came for relief food.

The employment situation and food situation continue to grow worse here in the MountainView School District. The Missionary Group is asking the congregation to join them in collecting food items for this food distribution. Many of the people served by the Summer Lunch Program are coming asking for help.

The food items are different than the Weinberg Food Bank. The items are selected specifically to meet the needs of school age children. The list of needed items are below. The Peanut Butter collection barrel will be set on the porch by the double glass doors for food drop off every day that weather permits.

If you wish to make a monetary donation, please make the check out to Harford First Congregational Church and put "Hop Bottom Food" in the memo spot.

Food Items Needed

Boxed Cereal (Child Friendly Types)	Pasta (all)
Ramen Noodles	Pasta Sauce (all)
Canned Soup (all)	Canned Tuna (water packed)
Peanut Butter	Jelly
Macaroni & Cheese	Mayonnaise
Pancake Mix	Syrup
Popcorn (microwave type)	
Canned Fruit (Peaches, Pears, Fruit Cocktail, Applesauce)	
Canned Vegetables (Green Beans, Peas, Corn, Mixed Vegetables)	

Soup Ministry

Know someone that is shut-in or feeling down or sick? Take them a quart of home-made soup. It's in the large freezer by the church mailboxes. Just sign the paper on the door to let us know who received the soup.



Troop 98 Times

Published by Alex Empet and Gavin Bewley.

Camping Trips-

Our last camping trip was to the Tuscarora Scout Reservation. We helped with Lumberjack Day, and then we had our Thanksgiving Feast.

The only camping trip that involved a real competition was the fishing tournament. Who ever had the longest fish, won the tournament. The winning fish was 17 inches long. Gavin's personal best was 13.25 inches placing 3rd, Reilly's personal best was 13.125 placing 4th, Alex's personal best was 12.5, and Billy's personal best was very close to beating the winner with a whopping 3.5 inches. Alex caught the most fish of our group with 7 fish and finished his final requirement of the fishing merit badge.

The biggest camping trip this year was a trip to the Poconos to go whitewater rafting on the Lehigh River.

Service Projects-

Our scout troop recently helped Craig Stout and his family by helping with the rummage sale, and cutting, splitting, and stacking firewood. At the rummage sale, a group of us helped set up tables and carry out all the items onto the tables. Helping with the firewood is very self explanatory because the majority of Scouts burn wood in their homes. The Stout family has done many great things for troop 98 and for the community. When the suggestion of helping do their firewood was brought up, everyone was on board. We knew that if enough people came this would make this go much faster. We pulled together as many people as we could, and we worked for two Saturdays. Craig had already bought some wood that needed to be processed, but Jamie Galvin also brought a load of firewood. We worked diligently, and got all the fire wood done.

As a scout troop we love to work on fire wood projects. On our last camping trip, we helped carry and stack all the firewood. It was a very good system of carrying wood because there were two lines for 3 splitters. Although there were two splitters feeding one line, the line with one splitter worked much faster.

Hiking Trips-

On our first hike of the year, we went to Tuscarora to complete our first hike for the hiking merit badge We finished strong, and worked on other requirements afterwards.

We had to think of other hiking ideas, and someone had the great idea of the rails to trails. It was a great idea because it was a flat 10 mile hike. It was very scenic and luckily uneventful.

For our third hike, we decided that the rail to trails was a fun hiking idea. We decided that it would be a great incentive to hike to Cables deli in Uniondale. The hike was a very flat and uneventful 10 mile hike.

Our fourth hike was a bit of a creative hike. We decided to walk from the Empet's in Harford to the Bewley's in Gibson. We had planned it out before and it met the requirements of our ten miles of hiking. But with a few changes to the route and one missed turn it ended up at roughly 12 miles through more hills then we had expected. Overall it was a fun and exciting hike through our local area.

In the end 2020 has been a very unique and exciting year. We can't wait to see what next year has in store for us.

Troop 98

Cradle Roll: 2 children received the 2-year-old letter and book

1 children received the birth letter and blanket.

Missionary Minutes

Treasurer: Operation Christmas Child Boxes - \$116.61

Operation Christmas Child Shipping - \$369

Community Health Evangelism - \$500 (plus \$1000 from Nicaragua Fund)

Interfaith Christmas Tag - \$30

Remaining Funds: \$663.05

Emergency Food Program: Paula Smith, Hop Bottom United Methodist Food Pantry, began distributing food in December due to the increased need. She needs assistance in collecting food and funds to support this food distribution. It was decided that Missionary would sponsor the collection of food and funds for the Hop Bottom Food Distribution. Maureen Warren suggested that much of the food collected by the Food Cupboard could be given to this program. The program will be explained in the February Spire and during announcements during worship. See Flyer.

Operation Christmas Child: It appears that many of our Operation Christmas Child boxes again were delivered to Malawi, Africa. We read a story about a child that received a Christmas box and subsequently attended the Greatest Gift Classes. He received Jesus as his savior and then invited his entire family to attend services with him.

Spaghetti Dinner: It was suggested that we consider a Spaghetti Dinner when restrictions are lifted.

Trustee Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2021

Attending: Harry Gardner, Gary Housel, Bill Chichester, and Rick Masters

Old Business:

-Measure Square footage for Driveway Repair and Additional Parking Area.

-Spectrum checked on the electric heater in the vestibule. A simple breaker replacement fixed the issue.

-Gary requested a quote for lamp posts from Spectrum Electric, but has not received a price yet. Additional work needs to be done to find a suitable option to replace the lamp posts. Options include making our own. Regardless of where we get the lamp posts, we agree that they should be powder coated.

-Security Cameras

New Business:

-The light in the alley near the Kitchen entrance needs to be replaced, but Gary hasn't been able to find the correct bulb yet.



Weinberg Food Bank

Harford First Congregational Church
The 4th Friday of each month



Please contact Tammy if you have registered but do not plan to pick up.

Next distribution February 26, 2021 from 4:30-5:30

Any income can apply, complete the form online firstchurchharford.com or call Tammy @ 570-396-7081.

Day of Distribution please bring with you a photo ID and a current household bill with your current Susquehanna County address.

Attention! The worship service will be livestreamed live at 10:00 am each Sunday.

We have been eager to worship together again. We are now meeting in groups with masks, distance, and additional sanitizing.

We would like to invite those who feel ready to worship in groups to come to the livestreaming of our worship at 10:00 am. Masks are mandatory. We must keep our distance. We will not use the hymnals and Bibles or have bulletins. All needed text will be projected for you.

For those who feel it is best to stay at home and continue online worship, please know our council supports and appreciates your participation. Safety first is a key to our wellbeing.



We look forward to worshipping with you online or in person each Sunday at 10 am.



Youth and Community Outreach

The Youth and Outreach Community distributed Christmas cards with Weis Gift Certificates for \$10 to the MountainView teachers, administrators and staff prior to Christmas this year.

Mikaela Stout and Emma Long acted as little elves and made the distributions.

Mikaela Stout and Emma Long along with Elementary Principal Dr. Lake and 3rd grade teacher Mrs. Wasko.

Letters from the recipients are on the following page.

Correspondence

In Response to the Christmas card with Weis gift card distribution by our youth to Mountainview Teachers and staff.

-Thank you so much for your thoughtful gift card to Weis. It is such a joy knowing the community we live/work in is so appreciative. Jen Davis (Computer Science Teacher)

-Thank you so much for the thoughtfulness and generosity this holiday. You go above and beyond in your care of this community. Mrs. Riley

-Thank you so much for thinking of us at this very difficult time. I was very surprised and humbled by your kindness. God bless you and have a peaceful holiday season.
Carolyn Hine-Rainey (School Counselor)

-Wow! This is a thoughtful and generous gift! We are truly blessed to have community like you supporting us! Andrea Sanders

-Thank you so much for thinking of the faculty and staff at MountainView. Your kind act of generosity was much appreciated this holiday season.

Mrs. Harrington, Mrs. Hammond and Mrs. Heller

-Thank you so much for thinking of all of us this holiday season. Your kind gesture/gift really put me in the Christmas spirit. Thank you again and God bless you! Jamie Mirabelli

-What an absolute pleasure it was to see Mikaela and Emma today, They have grown into smart, strong and beautiful young ladies. Thank you for thinking of the educational staff this Christmastime. I am often in awe of the service and love your congregation provides our community. Have a blessed Christmas! Diana Slick

-Thank you for the generous gift at Christmas time! Lori Cobb

-Thank you so much! This was a wonderful surprise! The Christmas spirit is alive!
Mrs. Miller (nurse Tammy), Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Bognaty

-Wow! What a thoughtful gift and note. Thank you so much for thinking of me at Christmas. God Bless You! Mrs. Bazil

-Thank you so much for your kindness and thoughtfulness. The gift card was so very appreciated and was a lovely surprise. Thank you to Mikaela and Emma for being Santa's helpers and delivering the gifts. They are two special young ladies! I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy 2021! Melissa Wasko

-What a lovely surprise! Thank you so much for your thoughtful gift. Merry Christmas and a Healthy Happy 2021. Robin Phillips

-Thank you so much for thinking of all of us here at MountainView! I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year! Jamie Esgow (2nd grade teacher)

-Mikaela and Emma—Thank you for delivering those beautiful card and thoughtful gift cards! Thank you and may you both have a wonderful Christmas! Mrs. Ril

-You were so sweet to think of me! Merry Christmas! Mrs. Bayle

-Your Christmas gift touched my heart! So very generous! Merry Christmas!
Andrea James (Title I)

MountainView Correspondence Continued

-Thank you so much for the Weis gift card that you gave to the Mountain View teachers at Christmas. It was so thoughtful and the sentiment made me tear up!
Thank you for thinking of us. Love in Christ, Rebekah Ihlefelt (Math teacher)

-Thank you for the very thoughtful card and gift card for the holiday. Thank you for your support of the teachers and staff at Mountain View School District.
Douglas Womelsdorf, Director of Curriculum

-Dear Harford First Congregational Church, Thank you so much for the gift card to Weis Markets. It was very thoughtful of you to give it to me. It is appreciated! Even more appreciated are the kind words of encouragement that you wrote in your message. Your Christian thoughtfulness lifts us all. Thank you for sharing the love of Jesus to our school community!

Sincerely, Laurie Barlow

Correspondence

Dear Harford Church Family, May you always remember the wonder and joyfulness of this Holiday Season. Thank you for all of your kind prayers and support. I am very thankful for you all. Thank you for your cards and prayers. I know this has been a tough year for so many of us. I am so very thankful for our precious Lord Jesus and friends like you.

Blessings and Love, Sincerely, Susan Major-Conklin

Greetings of the season and warm wishes for the year ahead.

Diane Button

Dear Church Family, Wishing you all the wonder and magic of Christmas.

Blessings and love always to all of you.

Barbara Day

Happy Holidays, Heard about the big snow storm, hope everything is ok. Mother and I are doing ok staying home except for my work. Mom has been able to stay home with me this last year. Our hospital has started giving out the vaccine. I received the first dose of the two that are needed. I'm very happy about that.

Take care and keep well, Jeannette Pease

Harford First Congregational Church,

The Officers and Members of the Harford Volunteer Fire Company thank you very much for your donation to our department. Your generous response to our annual fire fund drive is sincerely appreciated and gratefully acknowledged.

Best wishes to all! George Lotter, HVFC Secretary

Correspondence continued:

All are welcome to support Craig Stout by sending him a card, a prayer, an encouragement, or a “thinking of you” note. Craig has expressed that cards do matter, and the doorways on the first floor of the house are adorned with cards he has received. Let’s start the second story of cards for him as he experiences the second leg to his battle with cancer.

Craig Stout
813 Stearns Road
New Milford, PA 18823

Dorothy Greene wishes everyone a Happy New Year from her place in Lansdale! (Our artist is still under COVID lockdown.)

On Sunday the 3rd. I spoke with Dorothy on the phone and she sounded cheerful and we covered many subjects about the church mostly. She has not been painting to much lately as it took quite a bit of space in her apt. She has been knitting and misses seeing her friends, both there and here. She said she enjoys the notes that people send her. Jean Bonham

Any wishes you’d like to extend to her via email will be forwarded.

My oldest foster child turned 8 in early January. He was in church the Sunday we sang Happy Birthday to those who celebrate January birthdays. A week after the singing, he still finds this significant. In fact, he said again tonight (January 17) just how special this was.

“I want to thank you for singing to me on my birthday month,” he says. “Church is one really special place.”

The school has been in session remotely for the first half of this month. He was unable to be in school during his big day. So, yes, the church is one really special place.

I thank you all, too. Pastor Will

Today I had the fourth cancer surgery on my scalp in Rochester. It went well, and I am feeling fine. Will receive the pathology report sometime next week, hopefully. That will determine future course of action. I continue with the daily radiation sessions for my prostate cancer. I've completed seven of the required twenty eight. Please keep the prayers coming - they are much appreciated.

Ray Frederick

Merry Christmas

The Winemiller family 2020 has been a year to remember. For our family, it is the year we all reunited South Carolina. Jay began Law school at the Charleston School of law, and Jolie moved to Bluffton and works for Montage International. From our family to yours, Merry Christmas and best wishes for the new year ahead.

The Winemiller Family (Jen, Jan, Jaye and Jolie)

Greetings for Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year. Merry Christmas to my church family.

Love, Mallory

At this joyous season may you be blessed with the peace, happiness and love that Christmas brings. May the child whose birth we celebrate bring glad tidings to all of you and may the New Year see us all reunited in our beloved church. Miss you all and one of these months will be back.

In love and peace, Jean Bonham

Christmas Joy and Blessings to All. Have a great holiday season with family and friends. Merry Christmas Harford Church and Family.

Love in Christ, Your Farmer Friend, Earl Russell Gow

Thank you all very much for thinking of me. I'm doing better now but I still can't live alone, so I'll be here. It is very nice here and I have a lot of good people keeping everything going.

Think a lot of my friends. Keep up a praying time. God is with me. Thanks again.

Love, Martha Jenkins

Dear Church family, Rejoice in the blessings of His love this Christmas and throughout the New Year. Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

JoAnn Grimes

May the Christmas Spirit shine brightly on you and yours this Holy Season. Thank you for all you do!

Merry Christmas. Cathy Tracy and Family

Dear Friends in Christ, We would like to thank you for the many prayers offered for Rich during his illness. Happily Rich was able to overcome his set-back with pneumonia and is strengthening everyday. Again, we thank you for the prayers. Rich & Shirley Masters

Correspondence continued:

Let me begin by describing a few of my core beliefs. I feel God talks to us. No, I don't mean voices in my head, but I mean he talks to us through our fellow men and through our surroundings. I believe that God gives us the tools to do what needs to be done, even though which tool and how to use it isn't always apparent. I believe that I am compelled to do the right thing. I know the axiom is that doing the right thing is always difficult. But this is not true. Helping a friend or giving a gift can be very rewarding. Even when the task at hand is difficult, I find that doing the right thing is ultimately easier because God will be by my side.

The events of the past five years have been difficult for our nation. The political discourse has been harsh, and the level of animosity has been increasing steadily. Looking back, I see that this has been going on since Reagan was first nominated and the news media universally proclaimed that the chimpanzee, Bonzo, was smarter than the future president. I know there has always been acrimony in the public discourse, but this was the first time virtually all the media outlets made the same claim using the same words. I watched with dismay as this acrimony spilled into the nation's response as the Chinese virus spread. This resulted in thousands of unnecessary deaths. I feel many in power used the virus as an excuse, and steps were taken to stifle free speech, religious freedoms and weaken election integrity. I was seriously concerned and looking to my bag of tricks, I expressed my concerns to our elected officials. The response I received back was it would be "very difficult" to correct this. I was promised that they would fix it for the next time. As you can see, two of my core beliefs were instrumental up to this point.

I saw something wrong and I acted, but my prayers for a resolution to this conflict seemed to go unanswered. This has not deterred me. When I try to discuss my concerns with others, many simply reply that what I say is fake, made up and lies. Often the response to any discussion is anger. I can only speak but I cannot force someone to listen. In a few cases, there has been honest discourse, where both parties listened and learned. This is all I ask.

I am taken aback by the similarities between what happened on January 6th and the French Revolution. The people gathered to protest. Shots were fired into the crowd and the crowd surged forward instead of running. While the words, "let them eat cake" are cautionary, we do have video of a wealthy political leader encouraging people to "eat ice cream". The similarities are disturbing. Since the events of January 6, I have seen those in power embark on the same path that was followed as other nations fell into tyranny.

These are scary times. I am deeply afraid. I am 67 and retired, so what the future holds will have little impact on me; still, I refuse to hide behind a rock. I aim to take the righteous path and work to correct these injustices. I know God will be beside me as long as I do not allow my righteous indignation to descend into anger. I pray for the strength to walk this path that God is calling me to follow. Please pray for me as I move forward. Please pray for our nation. It is on a precipice and the future is uncertain. Please join me in asking our government officials to cast aside the acrimony and hatred they have embraced and do the right thing for our nation.

If you would like more background or discussion please contact me at gferrara@nep.net.

Gus Ferrara

Kingsley, PA 18826

Home Bound

The Carey Family

Barbara Pease

Martha Jenkins

Dorothy Greene

Joan Benson



Prayer Concerns

- We pray for our nation to be blessed and that our nation seeks its blessings
- We pray our national and local leaders
- All school districts—this includes school board members, administration, faculty, staff, parents and students
- Craig Stout and Family
- We pray for Connie and David Schulte's son (Phil)
- for those with medical issues large and small
- for those affected in anyway by the COVID virus
- David and Brandy
- Those with Alzheimer's and their families
- Ivie Simons on her journey with cancer
- Gary and Wendy Phillips
- the Carey family
- Ray Frederick
- those experiencing financial pressures
- those fighting addition
- Joan Benson & Lois Gibson and all those in nursing homes along with their families
- Will's five foster kids
- Evan Clarkson and all those faithfully serving in the military
- MaryJane Genneken
- Marlene & Larry Dean
- Rich Masters
- Sandy Zupanovich
- UCC churches in Japan
- Greg Symuleski
- Family of Kathy Swaha
- Indonesia
- Jim Shaw
- Lance Tabaca
- Walter Poxon & sister Lois Terrance and Angie
- Kandy's friend Mary Keihl (ALS)
- Dottie Hagenbuch's (family member with Leukemia)
- Sandy Tingley family with COVID
- Family of John Beaver
- Brian Estabrook
- Family of Linda Canfield (Gail Batzel's aunt)
- Jessica Miller's grandfather (Bill Brooks)
- Tanner with COVID (Kathi Ferger's grandson)
- Family of Willie Reuss
- Healing for Jacob Lucas
- Marilynn & Richard (Marylou Swank)
- Family of Ossie Mae Slusser (Kathi Ferger's sister)
- Dale Steiner (Jan Winemiller's father)
- Megan in the military (Kathi Ferger's granddaughter)
- Small businesses struggling
- Patrick Simons
- Doris Holtsmaster Schenck
- George Zack
- Joe Megivern
- Family of Laura (cousin of Teresa Lamberson)



Directory Update

Joe Metzler
224 Lake View Road
Kingsley
PA 18826

Laura Jane Moser**
6017 Black Oak Drive
Toledo
OH 43615-1854



Conrad Owens**
429 Franklin Street
Great Bend
PA 18821

Rudy Sumpter/Jim Decoe
108 North Harmony Road
Kingsley
PA 18826

Memorial Plaque Information

Are you interested in having a plaque attached to the memorial stone in the memorial garden? One may have a plaque ordered by doing the following:

Cost---\$25.00

Send check (made out to First Congregational-UCC) along with name of person and the year of birth and the year they passed away to the office.

The office will then proceed to order the plaque and have it placed on the stone.
Thank you.



Notice: Please send all material for March to be included in the Spire to:

Firstchurchspire@gmail.com

by the 15th of February 2021!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Spire Sponsors

We **need Sponsors** to help us cover the cost of printing and mailing the Spire. Please let us know if you can help. The sponsorship can be in Memory or in Honor of someone or just a donation.

Mailing costs approximately \$75/month. Please send to: Harford First Congregational Church—UCC

PO Box 217

Harford, PA 18823

Ugly Quilts

We are now meeting for Ugly Quilts in the lecture hall on Tuesdays at 9:30.

We will sit far apart. Bring your mask and lunch if you can stay until 12:00 so that we may dine together. Ellen has some tops completed and I have been working on making stuffing during the summer. Bring a friend.

Come at 9:30 and stay until after lunch or come at 10:30 and leave whenever.

Looking forward to seeing you. Thank you, Judy



February Birthdays

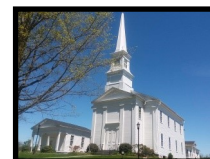
February 4 Dana Empet
February 14 Missy and Charlie Heller
February 15 Kim Bridgeman
February 18 Charlie Grimes
 Doug Higgins, Jr.
 Justin Moser
February 23 Lynette Muller
February 25 Jim and Gail Batzel
February 27 Charline Hudson
February 28 Kay Gow



The Website is up and running.

We have worked hard, but we realize that important things may not have been included. We are still adding and changing things so if you have suggestions, please email Holli Chichester at hollischichester@gmail.com or call 301-643-1775. Please check it out at

www.firstchurchharford.com



New Year's Resolutions

We all may not be so inclined to make New Year Resolutions, however, I wanted to share this idea from Jean Bonham.

She is writing letters by **hand**, first to her great grandchildren, second to her grandchildren and then to her children. She said they would receive them when she has passed. This idea of letter writing seemed to me to be a wonderful idea to do and send to each grandchild, etc. on their yearly birthdays. Something for everyone to think about beginning to do especially this year.



THE WILLING WORKERS

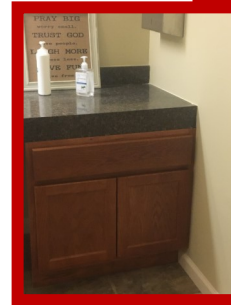
We are not flashy folks, nor dashy folks,
Nor flighty folks, nor jerkers.
We are quiet, slow and steady folks,
But we are Willing Workers.
We are not haughty folks, nor naughty folks,
Nor sneering folks, nor smirkers,
We are just plain, common, humble folks,
We are just Willing Workers.
We are not pouty folks, nor grouty folks,
Nor lazy folks, nor shirkers,
We are cheerful, happy, pleasant folks,
For we are Willing Workers.
We are not healthy folks, nor wealthy folks,
Nor mighty folks, nor quirkers,
We are lame, and old, and ordinary,
But we are still Willing Workers.

Poem by Hattie Patrick Burdick

Willing Worker NEWS

The Willing Workers would like to announce the addition of custom cabinets in the Ladies' room and in Gathering Room.

The Gathering Room cabinets will be used to store Willing Worker equipment traditionally stored in the basement. The Ladies' room cabinet will store toiletries.



It's Time to Winter-Spring Clean!!!!

The Missionary Group is sponsoring a yard sale, date TBA. The proceeds will go to help Missionaries living in Nicaragua. We will be collecting anything to be sold in a yard sale:

Clothing, shoes, bedding, electrical appliances, lighting, TVs, furniture, household items, kitchen items, tools, yard stuff, toys, baby items, bikes, decorations etc.

Please bring any items to the lecture hall and label them "Yard Sale".

If you would like a pick up, please call or text Holli at 301-643-1775 or 570-851-5109 or email at hollischichester@gmail.com.

Thank you, Missionary Group



February 2021

February 2021

March 2021

Su	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mo	8	9	10	11	12	13
Tu	14	15	16	17	18	19
We	21	22	23	24	25	26
Th	28					27
Fr						
Sa						

Su	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Mo	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
Tu														
We														
Th														
Fr														
Sa														

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Jan 31	Feb 1	2 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	3	4 10:30am Pastor in office	5	6
7 10:00am Service (sanctuary)	8	9 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	10	11 10:30am Pastor in office	12	13
14 10:00am Service (sanctuary)	15	16 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	17	18 10:30am Pastor in office	19	20
21 10:00am Service (sanctuary)	22	23 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) <i>100 Missionary (LH)</i>	24	25 10:30am Pastor in office	26 4:30pm Weinberg	27
28 10:00am Service (sanctuary)	Mar 1	2	3	4	5	6



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Spire email: firstchurchspire@gmail.com
Web URL: www.firstchurchharford.com

.....the people in darkness have seen a great light

Isaiah 9:2

Join Us Each Sunday!!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MAIL

PLEASE DO NOT DELAY



Harford First Congregational Church—UCC

Rev. Dr. William Hagenbuch –Pastor
Home Phone: 570-434-7729
Email: wrh@nep.net
Office Hours: Thurs. 10-12:00

Judy Mitchell –Sec
Hours: Tuesday 1:00-5:00
Friday 1:00-5:00