

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
110 ROUTE 61 SOUTH
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, PA 17972
Rev. Ms. Shawn D. VanDyke, Pastor
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Serving God through Christ; Serving Others with Love

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*Information Deadline for the LENT (FEBRUARY/MARCH) 2018 NEWSLETTER
is Sunday, January 21!*



FIRST CHURCH HERALD
Vol. 36, Issue 5 Newsletter of First UCC Sch. Haven, PA
DECEMBER 2017 / JANUARY 2018

*glory
to
God
in the
Highest*



FIRST UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST
Serving God through Christ; Serving Others with Love
110 Route 61 South, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

PHONE – (570) 385-2049 **FAX #** – (570) 385-3019

OFFICE HOURS – 9 AM - 1 PM (Monday-Friday)

EMAIL – firstuccschuylkillhaven@verizon.net

WEBSITE – www.firstucc-haven.org

*If we are not in the office or have stepped away from the phone,
please leave a message on the answering machine
and we will get back to you as soon as possible.*

Rev. Ms. Shawn D. VanDyke, Pastor

25 S. Margaretta St., Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972
(570) 385-5425 firstuccpastor@verizon.net Cell 570-617-7185

OTHER STAFF

Minister of Music – Chris Evans
(Chrisevans838@gmail.com or 717-329-6904)

Church Secretary – Jen Semanco
Sexton – Dale Mordosky

WORSHIP – Sundays, 9:30 AM
CHILDREN'S CHURCH – Sundays, 9:30 AM

2018 CONSISTORY MEMBERS

Elders- Harris Bradley (385-1494), Brian Edling (385-7343), George Hosler (366-1400), Kim Quinn (622-8650), Kelly Schaeffer (385-0953) & Rusty Searle (385-2533)

Deacons- Delia Edling (385-7343), Keith Edling (385-1199), Carrie Ann Klinger (385-5979), Kenny Klinger (385-5979), Kris Sonon (294-1243) & Peggy Zechman (366-1400)

2018 CONSISTORY OFFICERS

President – Kenny Klinger **Vice President** – Kim Quinn
Recording Secretary – Delia Edling
Treasurer – Carrie Ann Klinger (firstucctreasurer@verizon.net)
Special Funds Treasurer – Jen Semanco

SALUTATIONS FROM SHAWN

Judgment or Joy?

Welcoming a child into the world is a time filled with anticipation and joy. Yet in addition to the beautiful stories leading up to the birth of Jesus, Advent scriptures offer dire warning of the second coming of Jesus, when he will return to earth to judge all people. The question left hanging in the air is: will we be found worthy of salvation or will we be rejected as half-hearted followers?

Yet even in the predictions of judgment, there is a word of promise. We do not know the hour or day when the Second Coming of Christ will occur, but we can trust that God has given us the spiritual gifts we need as we wait. With hope, we wait for God's promise that a new heaven and new earth will emerge where righteousness prevails. As we wait, like John the Baptizer, we can prepare the way of the Lord when we testify to the light of Christ casting out the darkness and fear in our lives.

The good news is that nothing is impossible with God: a vulnerable infant can save the world from evil; a single human being can redeem all of humanity through a sacrificial act of love; and a faithful girl can bear the Word of God made flesh. Indeed, through the power of God we can all bear the Word of God as we proclaim Jesus Christ the Savior of all people.

During the busy Advent season of preparation, let's take some time to share the good news with others. Everyone needs to know that "*the grace of God has appeared, bringing forgiveness and salvation to all, teaching us to renounce sinfulness and impure passions, to live lives that are disciplined, righteous, and holy, while we wait for the blessed hope of the glorious day when Jesus Christ will appear.*" (Titus 2:11-13, paraphrased)

What a joyful judgment that is for us and for the world!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Shawn

While I am on vacation December 26 through January 2, Pastor Jim Fidler will provide pastoral care. Please call the church office if someone is ill or enters the hospital. You may reach Pastor Fidler at Faith Reformed Church in Landingville: 570-366-3650.

WORSHIP IN ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

2017 ADVENT THEME – SUDDEN GLORY

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>December 3
First Sunday of Advent – Watch; Hanging of the Greens; Communion
Angel Tree Gifts Due; NO Children’s Church
Isaiah 64:1-9
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37</p> | <p>Sudden Glory: Waiting for Revelation
Tear Open the Heavens
Thanks to God
Coming in Clouds</p> |
| <p>December 10
Second Sunday of Advent – Prepare; Healing Service; Poinsettia Orders Due
Isaiah 40:1-11
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8</p> | <p>Sudden Glory: Hasten the Coming Day
Release from Captivity
Suffering for Doing God
The Beginning of the Good News</p> |
| <p>December 17
Third Sunday of Advent – Proclaim; BCE Advent Worship & Special Music
NO Children’s Church
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28</p> | <p>Sudden Glory: Testify to the Light
Good News for Those Who Suffer
The Coming of the Lord
John the Baptist’s Mission</p> |
| <p>December 24
Fourth Sunday of Advent – Rejoice; Praise & Healing; NO Children’s Church
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38</p> | <p>Sudden Glory: Proclaim the Mystery
Eternal Blessing
Revelation of the Mystery
An Angel’s Promise</p> |
| <p>December 24
Christmas Eve 4 PM and 7 PM
Candlelight, Carols and Communion
Isaiah 9:2-7
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20</p> | <p>Sudden Glory: Blessed Unexpected Joy
The Righteous Reign of the Coming Child
The Grace of God Appeared
The Birth of Jesus</p> |
| <p>December 31
First Sunday after Christmas; Carol Sing and Scriptures
NO Children’s Church; NO Confirmation Class
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Revelation 21:1-6a
Luke 2:22-40</p> | <p>The End and the Beginning
A Season and A Time
The New Earth
Dedication at the Temple</p> |



WORSHIP IN EPIPHANY

2018 EPIPHANY THEME – GLORY REVEALED

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>January 7
Epiphany Sunday; Communion; New Year Celebration; Everybody Birthday
Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12</p> | <p>Glory Revealed: Mystery Made Known
Promises of Glory
The Mystery of God’s Grace
Visitors from the East</p> |
| <p>January 14
Baptism of Christ Sunday; Renewal of Baptismal Vows
Genesis 1:1-5
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11</p> | <p>Glory Revealed: Liquid Fire
The First Days
Receive the Holy Spirit
Baptism of Repentance</p> |
| <p>January 21
Third Sunday after Epiphany; Installation of Consistory
Jonah 3:1-5, 10
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20</p> | <p>Glory Revealed: Short on Time
Preaching at Ninevah
The Appointed Time
Jesus’ Ministry in Galilee</p> |
| <p>January 28
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
Deuteronomy 18:15-20
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28</p> | <p>Glory Revealed: Never Eat Meat
Concerning Prophets
On Christian Freedom
Great Authority</p> |
| <p>February 4
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany; Communion; Souper Bowl of Caring
Isaiah 40:21-31
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39</p> | <p>Glory Revealed: Free of Charge
The Everlasting God
All Things to All People
Jesus Heals</p> |
| <p>February 11
Transfiguration Sunday
2 Kings 2:1-12
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9</p> | <p>Glory Revealed: Blinded by the Light
Elijah and Elisha
Knowledge of Glory
The Transfiguration</p> |
| <p>LENT BEGINS
February 14, 7 PM
Ash Wednesday; Ashes; Communion
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21</p> | <p>True Imposters
A Call to Repentance and Prayer
Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon
Ambassadors for Christ
Giving, Prayer, and Fasting</p> |



OFFERINGS

Communion & Food Pantry Donations **Dec. 3 & Feb. 4**

As we come to be fed at the Lord's Table, we remember those in our community who have difficulty feeding themselves. Our donations of non-perishable foods to the SH Food Pantry are much needed and appreciated.

Bethany Children's Home **December 10**

Our gifts support Bethany's ministry to neglected and at-risk teens who can no longer live at home. At Bethany they receive love and education that teaches them to be self-sufficient. Your offerings provide a home for children in need.

The Compassion Fund **December 17 & January 21**

This Special Offering is placed in an emergency fund for church members' use.

Christmas Fund **December 24**

A ministry of the Pension Boards, the offering provides direct financial assistance to retired and active UCC authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks.

OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) **January 28**

The OCWM offering is used within the PSEC for local ministries.

Advent Offering Envelopes

Advent offering envelopes will be sent out as part of a special mailer. The envelope offerings collected for the **Advent Offering** will be used to support the on-going ministry of First UCC.

Special Offering Envelopes

The envelope offerings collected for **Christmas Eve** (December 24), **Christmas Day** (December 25), **Epiphany** (January 7), and **Ash Wednesday** (February 14) will be used to support the on-going ministry of First UCC. The envelope offerings collected for **Meat Bingo** (February 11) will be used to help supplement the fundraiser.

Initial Offering

The money collected for **\$5 Initial Offering** is used to offset the cost of printing the offering envelopes.

Church Change Special Offering

Our Church Change offering will be donated to the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches Community Ministries.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

December 3 No Children's Church
First Sunday of Advent; Hanging of the Greens

December 10 Preparations for BCE Advent Worship and Suncatchers

December 17 No Children's Church - children, confirmands and teens will lead worship. Please arrive at church by 8:45 AM to prepare.

December 24 No Children's Church

December 31 No Children's Church



The Season of Epiphany: The Stories of Genesis

January 7	Creation	Genesis 1-2
January 14	The First People	Genesis 2-3
January 21	Abel, Cain and Enoch	Genesis 4-5
January 28	Noah and The Flood	Genesis 5-9
February 4	The Tower of Babel	Genesis 10-11
February 11	God Calls Abraham	Genesis 11-12

Thank you to our faithful teachers and their assistants who share God's love with our children: Delia Edling, Gavin Fry, Linda Lopez, Linda McDonald and Malaki Nye.

ADVENT GIVING

Reverse Advent Calendar, Sunday, December 10

Most of us have delighted in opening a daily Advent calendar, finding a piece of chocolate inside. Lately, a new approach to the daily preparation for Jesus' birth has emerged. People set aside a box and each day they add a non-perishable food item or household paper product to the box to donate to the local food pantry.

The Schuylkill Haven Area Food Pantry distributes food on the third Friday of the month. If you would like to participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar by gathering special holiday items, please start now, gathering food to bring to church on Sunday, December 10, so that it can be distributed at Christmas. If you bring your Reverse Advent Calendar to the church after Christmas, however, it will still greatly benefit people in our community who will need food in January. Thank you for caring for God's people in need.

ADULT GATHERINGS

Thursday Bible Study, 11 AM in the Weiser Board Room

As we prepare for Christmas, we will continue our readings in the Book of Acts, hearing the stories of early Christians witnessing to the power of Jesus Christ in their lives. We will not meet December 21 or 28 or January 4, resuming weekly gatherings on January 11. Drop in whenever it fits your schedule; weekly participation is not essential. If you are in need of a Bible, please talk to Pastor Shawn.

Women's Fellowship

Sunday, December 10 and January 14, 3:30 PM

All women in the church are invited to gather for a time of fellowship and food with no set agenda: we'll simply talk about whatever comes to mind and enjoy our time together as sisters in faith. Bring a snack to share.

If you have an idea for a small group, please talk to Pastor Shawn.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MTG REPORT

At the Annual Congregational Meeting held Sunday, November 12, the congregation approved the 2017 reports and budget, reviewed and approved the 2018 proposed budget, approved the actions of Consistory on the congregation's behalf in the previous year, and elected Consistory members.

Please thank the people who will serve on Consistory for 2018: Harris Bradley, Brian Edling, Delia Edling, Keith Edling, George Hosler, Carrie Ann Klinger (treasurer), Kenny Klinger (president), Kim Quinn (vice president), Kelly Schaeffer, Rusty Searle, Kris Sonon & Peggy Zechman.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL CONGREGATIONAL MTG

The vote for the Kline Fund Tithe will take place Sunday, February 18, when the final 2017 YTD Financial Report will be presented for approval. 2017 Financial Reports will be available in the Narthex on Sunday, February 4.



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT & COMMUNION

SUDDEN GLORY: BLESSED UNEXPECTED JOY **Sunday, December 24 - TWO WORSHIP SERVICES** ****4 PM AND 7 PM ****

To better serve families and the community, we will offer two Christmas Eve worship services, the first in the late afternoon and the second in the evening. With beloved carols and special music, with communion and candlelight, we will celebrate the birth of our Savior with joyful praise! Invite friends and family to attend these beautiful and meaningful worship services which fill us with faith, hope, joy and love.

**** Please note these NEW times for worship. ****



BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MEETINGS: 6 PM

Tuesday, December 5

Tuesday, January 9

Church members are welcome to attend BCE Meetings as we work together to provide Christian nurture to all ages in the congregation. Please join us!

CONSISTORY MEETINGS: 6:30 PM

Wednesday, December 13 – Christmas Dinner @ Hoss's

Thursday, January 11

CHRISTIAN PASSAGES / SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS

Births – **Amelia Grace Wingle**, born October 10, 2017, is the daughter of **Billy Wingle & Mindi Reed**. She was also welcomed by grandparents **Bill & Patsy Wingle**, uncle **Kyle Wingle** and great-grandmother **Betty Wingle**. Congratulations!!

New Members – **Cheryl Strunk** and **Wally Foose** were welcomed as new members on Sunday, October 29, 2017.

CHURCH PROPERTY UPDATES

Hummel Landscaping Memorial. In loving memory of Ed and Jeanette Hummel, Audrey, Hank and Lew Hummel worked with TB Landscaping to add two plant beds on either side of the driveway at University Drive. Thanks to the Hummels for giving us a visual way to remember Ed and Jeanette, faithful members of the church.

Sanctuary Entrance Improvement. Wind blowing past the sanctuary entrance removed much of the mulch and dirt in the landscaping on either side of the doors. To correct this problem, TB Landscaping removed a few plants, added soil to cover exposed roots, and then covered the entire area with river rock.

Bell Sign Repairs. Sometime in the past few months, the sign cover on the east side of the bell tower was damaged. The sign cover was updated and replaced on both sides of the stonework by Gear Signs. Lighting for the sign has been or will be updated by Matz Electric.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Surviving the Holidays Seminar

Sunday, December 10, 1:30-3:30 PM, Bethesda EC Church, Reedsville. This seminar helps those who are grieving to find hope. For more information, call Bethesda EC at 570-739-2241 or call Paul at 570-294-0778.

Wreaths Across America **Thursday, December 14, NOON**
Schuylkill Haven American Legion and Auxiliary Post 38 will welcome the Wreaths Across American Convoy on its way to Arlington Cemetery. Wreaths will be placed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to represent each branch of the military. In case of inclement weather, the service will be held at St. Ambrose Roman Catholic Church, 201 Randel St. The community is invited.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation Class meets in the Weiser Board Room Sundays after worship until noon. In addition, the confirmands will host an Alternative Christmas Gift Market in the Narthex after worship, offering gifts which will benefit people in need.

Hanging of the Greens Service Project November 26 after worship
BCE Advent Worship, Sunday, December 17, 8:45 AM Walk-Thru
NO CLASS – Sunday, December 24. Merry Christmas!
NO CLASS – Sunday, December 31. Happy New Year!
Classes resume SUNDAY, JANUARY 7 after worship.



See the "Fellowship" and "Teen FORCE" pages for other activities.

If a confirmand is ill or will be absent from either class or worship, please call Pastor Shawn at 570-385-2049 (church) or 570-617-7185 (cell phone).

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Al-Anon Meetings, Wednesdays and Fridays

Two meetings are offered weekly in Schuylkill Haven for families and friends of alcoholics: Wednesday evenings here at First Church and Friday evenings at Grace EC Church. For info call Sara 570-449-1830 or Tanya 570-497-0356.

LIHEAP

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP, helps low-income families pay their heating bills. Apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us or call 877-306-5439.

Opportunity House

Supportive services are offered for veterans who are homeless or facing homelessness. Services may include: housing/rental expenses; moving expenses; transportation; child care; VA Benefit referrals; education, health care and legal referrals. For more information call 570-604-6948.

Smoke Detectors

Do you have working smoke detectors in your home? Do you change the batteries at least once a year? If you need a smoke detector, please talk to Pastor Shawn.



EVANGELISM

Seeking Hope, Joy, Love and Peace

Evangelism is the heart of God's mission. The primary mission of the local church is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the time of year when people visit churches looking for a church home. Research shows that visitors form opinions about churches within thirty seconds of walking through the door. If you notice someone you haven't met before, please say hello. Even if they are church members who are unable to attend worship regularly, they will appreciate your friendliness.

2018 Offering Envelopes will be in the hall next to the Sanctuary, beginning December 3. Please pick up your envelopes & those of friends and family. This will save the church mailing expenses. If you do not find envelopes for yourself or someone else who wants envelopes, **PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE (385-2049)**. If you are unable to pick up your envelopes by the end of January and wish to have them mailed to you, please call the church office.

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP

The following totals are up to and including the end of October 2017 plus a comparison to October 2016 & 2015.

	<u>Oct 2017</u>	<u>Oct 2016</u>	<u>Oct 2015</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES –	\$181,784.29	\$175,409.26	\$187,760.81
REVENUE –	\$ 65,477.84	\$ 66,040.62	\$ 67,185.39
Resources from Kline Fund –	\$120,907.85	\$107,991.00	\$118,950.00
TOTAL REVENUE –	\$186,385.69	\$174,031.62	\$186,135.39
Gain/Loss –	\$ 4,601.40	\$ -1,377.64	\$ -1,625.42



SERVICE CANCELLATIONS

When it snows we may need to cancel Sunday services. If this situation should arise we will notify local radio stations. Please listen to 1360 AM or 105.5 FM for any cancellation information. We will also have cancellation information on the church answering machine and our Facebook page.

FELLOWSHIP

Annual Christmas Party

Friday, December 1, 6:30 PM

All ages are welcome. Adults and teens participate in a gift exchange while Chris leads us in caroling as we wait for the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus. Parents and grandparents, **SANTA WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A GIFT TO EVERY CHILD BUT THE CHURCH DOES NOT PROVIDE GIFTS:** please call the church office if you have any questions about this. Adults and teens, please bring a wrapped gift costing \$5 or less suitable for male or female for the gift exchange. Hess Catering will provide the food. Please sign up by Sunday, November 26. A free will offering will be received to help defray the cost of the meal.

Koziar's Christmas Village

Sunday, December 10, 4:45 PM

Meet at the church to carpool to Koziar's Christmas Village in Bernville. Cost is \$10 for ages 11-64; \$9 for 65+; \$8 for 4-10; and children 3 and younger are free. Snacks are available at additional cost. Please sign up in worship or call the church office (570-385-2049) by Thursday, December 7.

Christian Rock and Bowl

Sunday, November 26 and January 28, 2-4 PM

Meet at Strike Zone Alleys, 2501 W End Ave, Pottsville. \$10 covers unlimited games for two hours and shoe rental. Bring extra money for snacks. Please call the church office by Wednesday, January 24 to register.



HEALING SERVICE

Sunday, December 10, 9:30 AM

The holiday season isn't joyful for everyone. For people who have experienced the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, the pain of illness or a broken relationship, depression is not an uncommon experience over the holidays. During worship on December 10, the Second Sunday of Advent, we will offer a service for healing of those who struggle to find hope, as we remember that God provides light even in darkness.

MISSION

Giving Tuesday: Thanksgiving is followed by "Black Friday", "Small Business Saturday" (Nov 25: shop locally to support our community), and "Cyber Monday" for those who buy online. "Giving Tuesday" on Nov 28 is designated as a day to give to charities working to feed the hungry, to fight disease, to support veterans, and more. A charitable contribution to honor family or friends might be the perfect gift. Visit "Charity Navigator" or "giving.org" to verify legitimate charities & how they use donations.

Angel Tree Gifts: Gift cards are hanging on the Angel Tree in the Narthex for children from the Salvation Army, the Gaudenzia Treatment Center and for two local families. The cards note the age and gender of the children along with clothing size and wish list. Gift cards would also be welcomed for the parents. In addition, cards will list food items needed for a Christmas meal. Please return your Salvation Army gifts, unwrapped and with the gift card attached, by Sunday, December 3 so they can be distributed by Christmas. Other gifts may be returned by Sunday, December 10.

Visit to Rosewood, Sunday, December 17, after Worship: Meet in the Narthex to organize a carpool up the hill to take sun catchers and offer a few carols to the residents.

Undie Sunday, December 17: The First Church tradition continues of collecting men's, women's and children's NEW underwear still in its packing, in all sizes, to pass on to Servants to All, a non-profit in Pottsville working with the homeless, and Schuylkill Women in Crisis, which helps individuals leaving abusive situations. Please place your donations in the box in the Narthex.

Hygiene Kits Needed for Disaster Recovery in January: Church World Service is collecting toiletries items to help people impacted by disaster. The hygiene kits include: one hand towel measuring approximately 15-16" x 28-32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber); one washcloth; one wide-tooth comb removed from packaging; one fingernail or toenail clipper removed from packaging; one bath-size bar of soap in the wrapper; one toothbrush in packaging; and ten standard size Band-Aids. Place your donations in the box in the Narthex in January.

Souper Bowl of Caring, Sunday, February 4, 2018: Most of us will gather on Super Bowl Sunday to watch the game and stuff our faces with tasty snacks. Many people in our area are unable to feed themselves, so we are asking everyone who attends worship on February 4 to bring a dollar for a special collection for the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry as we strive to feed our neighbors in need.

MEAT BINGOS

The profit from the September 9 Meat Bingo was \$2,538.09, plus \$270 collected in offering envelopes. The profit from the November 11 Meat Bingo was approximately \$3,200. Profits from the bingos are placed in the church's general budget to be used towards the everyday expenses. **Thank you for your support!!**

Our next Meat BINGO is scheduled for Saturday, February 17. Doors open at 11 AM; games begin at 1 PM. The prizes will be packages of meat. There will be 20 games for \$15. Specials & Raffles are extra. Food and refreshments will be available. We are also looking for helpers age 13 and older. Please call the church office if you are able to volunteer.

Other 2018 BINGO dates: April 21
Fall 2018 BINGO dates will be announced over the summer.

PARKING: When parking for our fundraisers, we ask that all workers park in the upper lot so the spots in the lower lot are available for our patrons.

PASTORAL CARE

While Pastor Shawn is on vacation December 26 through January 2, Pastor Jim Fidler will provide pastoral care. Please call the church office if a family member is ill or in the hospital over the holidays. Pastor Jim can be reached at Faith Reformed UCC in Landingville at 570-366-3650.

PSEC-UCC

PSEC Fall Meeting Report, Saturday, November 18

The Pennsylvania SE Conference gathered here at First UCC for worship, prayer, and to share visions about our ministry in service to Christ. A 2018 budget was approved. The Joint Conference Vision and Development Team offered a report on their study of the potential merger of the PSEC and Penn NE Conference. The 2020 Vision Plan was updated "to effect for God and for good the lives of all people living in southeast Pennsylvania" and beyond by strengthening local churches and pastors.

Facebook

If you are a Facebook user, please "LIKE" the church's Facebook page. This will allow you to receive regular updates and messages from the church office.

SCHUYLKILL ASSOCIATION

Fall Meeting Report, Sunday, October 15

At the fall meeting of the Schuylkill Association held at St. Paul's UCC, Mahanoy City, we learned of new ministries in the Association through the Communications Committee, Committee on Youth, Disaster Relief Ministry, and Mission Committee. Reports were also received from the Committee on Ministry, Ministerium, Health Ministry, and Locust Lake Ministry. A new UCC Manual on Ministry is being reviewed. A similar Manual on Church is proposed. The Association adopted the new "UCC Ministerial Code" and "The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers." In addition to boundary training, clergy will receive diversity training every three years. Both trainings qualify for continuing education credits. The association meeting reports are in the Narthex, available for review.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

CROP Walk Report, Sunday, October 1

Thank you for your support of the CROP Walk. Gavin Fry and Riley Moyer, our confirmands raised hundreds of dollars to feed the hungry, and then raised more by volunteering to receive a whip cream facial at \$10 a pie. Please commend Gavin and Riley for their efforts to help others. First Church's total contribution was nearly \$1000, with the generous help of \$500 designated by Seeds to Grow from church mission money. Thank you all!

Monthly Food Pantry, 3rd Friday, 1 PM Dec. 15 & Jan. 19

About 170 households in our area receive food every month through the Council of Churches Food Pantry. Food donations are needed to restock the Pantry shelves. The Food Pantry is located on Market Street, behind Evans Delivery on Columbia Street (the old Walkin Shoe Factory).

Bloodmobile Thursday, January 4, 12:30-5:30 PM

Every two seconds someone in America needs blood. Council holds a Bloodmobile for the American Red Cross every other month at Jerusalem Lutheran Church. You must be at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds and be healthy in order to be able to donate blood.

Bi-Monthly Council Meeting Tuesday, January 23, 7 PM

The First United Methodist Church will host the Council of Churches as members meet to ensure that the food pantry, blood mobile, and other community ministries continue to meet local needs. If you are interested in learning more about Council, please talk to Pastor Shawn.

SOUL (Seniors Out to Lunch)

SOUL consists of senior members of the congregation who like to get together at local restaurants on the second Tuesday of the month at Noon. If you would like to join SOUL for any of their upcoming luncheons, call Iris Weller (366-0897) so that they can save a seat for you!

Tuesday, December 12, Noon – Nadya's, Orwigsburg
Tuesday, January 9, Noon – Hoss's

Hospitalization

When someone in your home is hospitalized, please call the church office to let us know. Most hospitals DO NOT call the church office when members are admitted.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship of the Good News

As Christians, we are entrusted with stewardship of the gospel. The good news of God became flesh in the infant Jesus Christ. In the "gospel," which comes from the Greek word meaning "good news," we find the meaning of our lives and the purpose of all our endeavors. Through Jesus Christ, the church is alive with the joy of the love of God. We experience God's "shalom," the wholeness of peace, revealed to us in the being of a tiny child born in great poverty to an unmarried girl and her husband-to-be. A few days after Jesus' birth they became refugees, fleeing to Egypt to protect their child. The nativity story reminds us that God works in astonishing ways, through a vulnerable, powerless human being and later through the unjust execution of that same human being to conquer sin and death. Truly this is good news we need to share with the world! Although we live in a culture that is often indifferent and even hostile to organized religion, when we share our faith and personally invite others to hear this good news, we spread the astonishing joy of God's love so that all may know God-With-Us in Immanuel. --adapted from Stewards in the Household of God by Doris Powell

Please invite friends and family to join us for Christmas Eve Worship!

The contents of this newsletter can be found on the church's website, www.firstucc-haven.org, so that you can access it easily on line.

STEWARDSHIP & CHURCH FUNDRAISERS

Shank's Vanilla. 8 oz. bottles of vanilla are being sold for \$6 per bottle. The vanilla is a great ingredient for baking.

Boyer's Tag. Boyer's SKU Tags are available in the Narthex. When you purchase groceries at Boyer's, ask to have your tag read. Periodically, Boyer's will tally the readings and send a check to the church. (No need to hand in Boyer's receipts.)

Redner's Save-A-Tape. Pick up a Save-A-Tape card at Redner's and use it whenever you buy groceries. Hand in your Redner's receipts by placing them in the box in the Narthex. Totals of the tapes will be submitted to Redner's who will then provide the church with a check.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to **EVERYONE** who participated in the church's ministry and mission throughout the year. **THANK YOU** to those who **send** Care Cards, who **make** telephone calls, **prepare** communion, and **greet** worshippers at the door to the church; to those who **mow** the lawn, **weed** the flower beds, and **maintain** the building and grounds; to those who **serve** on Consistory and the Board of Christian Education; to those who **teach**; to those who **care** for God's beloved animals, who **raise** funds for non-profits in our community, who **give** change to the Council of Churches, who support **special donations**; to those who **open** and **close** the building so that others, like Al-Anon, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and Brownies have a free and warm place to meet; to those who **organize** the sanctuary for the changing of seasons, from Epiphany to Advent; to those who **ring** bells and chimes. Thank you for being the **Body of Christ at work**, reaching out into the world, reminding us that the church is much more than a building.

THANK YOU NOTES!!

Thank you to **everyone** for your wonderful support during October for the Hurricane Relief Spaghetti Dinner and Trunk or Treat and during November for the Meat BINGO, Filling Sale, and PSEC Fall Meeting Dinner!!!! Your help was greatly appreciated!!!!

TEEN FORCE and Youth Matters!

Hanging of the Greens Service Project, Sunday, November 26

Stay after worship to help prepare the sanctuary, narthex, Kline Room and Fellowship Hall for the Seasons of Advent and Christmas. Pizza will be provided. If there's time, we'll play games in the Teen Room as well.

Annual Church Christmas Party, Friday, December 1, 6:30 PM

This party is for all ages! Invite your friends to come for good food, carols and a gift exchange. Teens and adults are asked to bring a wrapped gift suitable for either a female or male, costing less than \$5 to exchange with other teens and/or adults.

Youth & Teen Sleepover Fri., Dec. 1 – Sat., Dec. 2, 10 AM

Youth in fifth grade and older and teens are invited to bring a sleeping bag and change of clothes to the Christmas Party. In addition, teens may invite friends to attend. We'll stay overnight for games, activities, Christmas movies, and more. We'll wrap up with breakfast, ready to head out the door at 10 AM Saturday morning. Parent permission slips and medical forms must be provided for young people to participate. Talk to Pastor Shawn or Delia Edling if you have questions.

BCE Advent Worship, Sunday, December 17, 8:45 AM

Walk through the worship service before you lead worship at 9:30 AM.

Snow Tubing, Blue Mountain, Sunday, January 21, 12 to 5 PM

After worship, grab some lunch and then return to the church for an afternoon of fun on the snow. We'll carpool to Blue Mountain Ski Area in Palmerton for a three hour snow-tubing outing at the cost of \$30 per person. People need to be at least 36" tall in order to snow tube. Parents need to sign a release for Blue Mountain in addition to permission slips and medical forms for the church for young people to participate. REGISTRATION IS NEEDED BY SUNDAY, JANUARY 14. Talk to Pastor Shawn or Delia Edling if you have questions.

Snow Day at Church, Date to be Determined

If school is cancelled due to snow, we'll try to pull together a last minute snow day at church where we can sled on the slopes, throw a few snowballs, warm up in the church with hot chocolate, and head back out to get cold again. Watch the church's Facebook page for details.

See the "Fellowship" page for other activities.

FB message your suggestions for activities for February and March to the church FB page. The 30 Hour Famine is scheduled for March 29-30.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>12/3- Herm Morgan, Jr. (1949)
 12/8- Ronnie Alexander (1977)
 Lilly Edling (2006)
 Stacey Ebling (1983)
 12/10- Kali Sonon (2015)
 12/11- Treasure Reichert (1972)
 12/13- Ewen Dougherty (2007)
 12/15- Russ Coover (1961)
 12/16- Olivia Lang (2003)
 Katie Miholics (2008)
 Tim McCord (1969)
 12/18- Donna Spotts (1959)
 12/20- Doug Stewart (1984)
 12/21- Elleona Pritiskutch (2001)
 Bobby Riegel (1959)
 12/22- William Spotts (1985)
 12/23- Mary Cramer (1963)
 John Donati (1947)
 Michael Madenfort (1963)
 12/24- Joseph Mattera Jr. (1979)
 12/26- Sierra Pritiskutch (1993)
 12/27- Adriana Darcangelo (2006)
 Austin Keller (1993)
 Angela Moyer (1974)
 12/28- Bill Coffey
 Jacob Moyer (1995)
 Kelly Schaeffer (1968)
 Shirley Wildermuth (1946)
 12/29- Molly Marmas (2016)
 Carrie Ann Klinger (1952)
 Greg Semanco (1969)
 12/30- Jim Watkins (1982)
 12/31- Emily Reichert (2002)</p> | <p>1/1- Elizabeth Reichert (2001)
 Lisa Edling (1964)
 1/2- Cindy Brozana
 Bud Lopez (1950)
 1/4- Carol Donati (1949)
 1/5- Casey Moyer (1976)
 1/6- Mary Achenbach (1936)
 1/7- Cole Paul (2006)
 1/8- Gil Beury (1957)
 Russell Coover III (1987)
 1/11- Gary Keller (1964)
 1/12- Landyn Schnell (2017)
 1/13- Patsy Wingle (1973)
 1/14- Scott Lopez (1970)
 Renee Mohl (1970)
 1/16- Jon Spotts
 1/17- Matthew Madenfort
 1/18- Elizabeth Harner (2002)
 Dale Mordosky (1942)
 1/19- Kath Owens (1949)
 1/21- Richard Rohrer (1958)
 1/22- Mae Deatrich (1928)
 Joe Mattera, Sr. (1955)
 Rich Scott (1966)
 1/23- Cindy Fisher (1957)
 1/24- Michelle Dougherty (1980)
 1/26- Norah Dougherty (2009)
 1/27- Agnes Masler (1931)
 1/28- Tina Kluge (1972)
 1/29- Harold Schrader (1942)
 1/30- Tom Stewart, Sr. (1954)
 Pam Swirsky (1974)
 Robbie Wensel (1991)
 1/31- Tricia (Moyer) Mentzer (1981)</p> |
|---|---|

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!



- 12/17- Tim & Robin Bayliff (1983)
 12/22- Jay & Diane Newswanger (2001)
 1/07- Bob & Jeanne Gordon (1951)
 1/14- Scott Lopez & Melissa Fox (2011)
 1/24- Jim & Cindy Fisher (1976)

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The United Church of Christ has a vision of a just world where all are welcomed, everyone is loved and justice is inherent. The "3 Great Loves" is the denomination's project to express how Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation work together to address the needs in our current world. Adopted at General Synod 2017, the UCC is already acting on these 3 Great Loves.

- The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference is the lead volunteer agency in a public-private effort to welcome hundreds of Puerto Ricans fleeing dire post-Maria conditions and seeking refuge in Philadelphia.
- With support from UCC Disaster Ministries and the Northern California-Nevada Conference, First Congregational UCC in Sonoma, CA is helping the most vulnerable survivors of recent wildfires safely access available resources.
- Volunteer Opportunities are available in Florida, Texas, and Louisiana, to name a few places, to help with disaster recover.

For more information, visit ucc.org.

Call the church office 570-385-2049 when:

- **Someone is admitted to the hospital**
 - **You plan a meeting**
 - **You are moving**
- **A new baby arrives or a death occurs**
- **Your telephone number or address has changed**

If you reach the answering machine, please leave a message.

Church Christmas Party

For All Ages



Friday, December 1, 6:30 PM



Gather together for a great meal, some Christmas carols and everyone's special guests...Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus.
 Consistory asks that you register by calling the church office (385-2049) or signing up in the narthex by Sunday, November 26. A free will offering will be taken to help defray the cost of the meal. Bring your favorite dessert to share.

