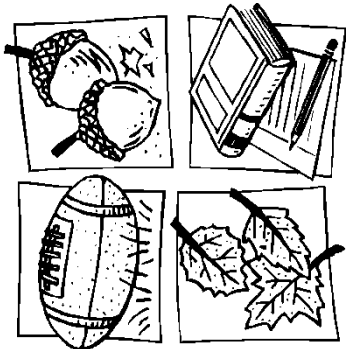


FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
110 ROUTE 61 SOUTH
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, PA 17972
Rev. Ms. Shawn D. VanDyke, Pastor
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Serving God through Christ; Serving Others with Love

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Information Deadline for the FALL (OCTOBER/NOVEMBER) 2020 NEWSLETTER is Sunday, September 13!



FIRST CHURCH HERALD

Vol. 39, Issue 3

Newsletter of First UCC

Sch. Haven, PA

SEPTEMBER 2020

SERVE

Love the Lord

Tell the Truth

HOPE

Pray Continually

Love One Another

FORGIVE

Be Humble

Work Together

Trust God

BELIEVE

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

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

***As the building is not open to the public due to COVID-19,
the church office is unable to accept visitors.
Please call us so that we may respond to your needs.
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.
Please know Pastor Shawn is available for you at any time.***

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
(also Special Funds Treasurer)
Church Sexton – Penny Shade

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

2020 CONSISTORY MEMBERS

Harris Bradley, Vice President (385-1494); Brian Edling, Recording Secretary (385-7343); Keith Edling (385-1199); George Hosler (366-1400); Carrie Ann Klinger, Treasurer (728-0173); Kenny Klinger, President (205-5465); George Rondeau; Rusty Searle (385-2533); Penny Shade (573-1449); Cheryl Strunk (610-750-1210); Lora Yoder (294-7716); & Peggy Zechman (366-1400).

SALUTATIONS FROM SHAWN

Ending to Begin

When the year 2020 began we anticipated a year of clarity, of symbolic 20/20 vision. Instead the year has given us COVID19 (in all fairness the virus did start in 2019), economic crisis, the hottest summer on record, wildfires ripping through California, a derecho decimating Iowa, and (yikes) the presidential election. The word "unprecedented" has been used an unprecedented number of times, along with "asymptomatic", "contact tracing", "essential", "PPE", "quarantine", "shortage", and "unknown", all of which is a bit frightening.

We're waiting to get back to normal and, no, we don't mean the "new normal." Except it isn't going to happen. The pandemic has changed the world, how we interact with one another, how we travel, how we work. The church has taken a significant hit. COVID19 will dramatically increase closures for churches which were hanging on by a financial thread.

Online church is here to stay. More and more people prefer worship options which fit their schedules. Buildings are losing their importance. Churches are selling buildings which simply exhaust too many resources that could be used to help people. It seems to be time to reimagine church, to explore new ways of "serving God through Christ and serving others with love."

With all of these crises hitting at the same time, our anxiety levels are pretty high. Interacting with the Bible's stories of faithful people who lived thousands of years ago, we find they too faced never-before-experienced events yet not only survived but thrived because God was with them.

The people of Israel were freed from slavery by God. Their gratitude quickly faded into fear as they journeyed into the unknown. They panicked, complained, and rejected both God and Moses. Through God's exasperated commitment and Moses' frustrated guidance, the people learned to trust in God, even if the future was obscured. In the year 2020, we find ourselves in a similar situation, dealing with constant change, uncertain of what will happen next. As we step into the wilderness, following the example of the people of Israel, we walk in footsteps of faith. We don't know what the future holds, but we know God holds the future. Every ending leads to a new beginning.

Yours in Faith and Anticipation of God's Guidance,
Pastor Shawn

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP

Wondering in the Wilderness: Ending to Begin

The people of Israel stepped out of the Red Sea into a future completely unknown. After centuries of slavery, they yearned for freedom yet found themselves frightened by everything beyond their control: where would they find food, shelter, and especially water? Had Moses led them into the wilderness only to die? What hope was there for a new beginning?

September 6

14th Sunday after Pentecost; Communion; ONLINE WORSHIP ONLY
Romans 13: 8-14
Exodus 1: 8-16; 2: 1-10
Matthew 9: 35-10:14

Lost

Love Fulfills God's Requirements
The Birth of Moses
Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

September 13

15th Sunday after Pentecost; Faith Formation;
Confirmation Orientation; Fall Newsletter Information Deadline
Exodus 3: 1-15
Romans 14: 1-12
Matthew 10: 24-39

Cover Up

The Burning Bush
Weak and Strong
Jesus Prepares the Disciples

September 20

16th Sunday after Pentecost; Confirmation Classes Begin
Exodus 6: 1-13
Romans 14: 13-23
Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

Broken Spirit

The People Refuse to Listen
Do Not Judge One Another
The Parable of Four Soils

September 27

17th Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 7-11
Romans 15: 1-6
Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

Hard Hearted

Ten Plagues
Live to Please Others
The Parables of the Weeds

In Person Worship. While we are all eager to return to worship, we need to note we cannot guarantee anyone's safety. We are still in a state of pandemic. Please weigh carefully your personal risk factors before you attend worship. Face coverings are required in the church. Please read and follow the instructions on the signs on the doors and throughout the building as we strive to keep everyone as safe as possible.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Communion & Food Pantry Donations

September 6

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.

Christian Education

September 13

The future of Christianity depends on how well we know the scriptures and how well we apply them to our lives. Our support of the Christian Education program for all ages at First Church is crucial to our service to God.

The Compassion Fund

September 20

This Special Offering is placed in an emergency fund where 90% helps church members in need and 10% may be used for emergency community needs.

If you are unable to join us for worship, please mail your offering envelopes to First UCC, 110 Route 61 South, Schuylkill Haven PA 17972; or if you do online banking arrange to send a check to the church.

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP

The following totals are up to and including the end of July 2020
plus a comparison to July 2019 & 2018.

	<u>July 2020</u>	<u>July 2019</u>	<u>July 2018</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES –	\$137,668.01	\$133,798.61	\$139,949.33
REVENUE –	\$ 37,598.08	\$ 44,942.82	\$ 42,026.86
Resources from Kline Fund –	\$ 96,275.00	\$ 94,900.00	\$ 91,600.00
TOTAL REVENUE –	\$133,873.08	\$139,872.82	\$133,626.86
Gain/Loss –	\$ -3,814.93	\$ 6,044.21	\$ -6,322.47

CARE CARDS

Volunteers are needed to send cards to members, i.e. thinking of you cards to shut-ins, get well cards, sympathy cards etc. Cards, stamps, and return labels are provided by the church. Please call the church office if you are able to help with this ministry of the First Church.

WORSHIP @ FIRST CHURCH

Worship Options

We now have options for worship participation to fit our varied schedules. Worship is held each Sunday morning at 9:30 AM in the Sanctuary. During worship, the service is livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. It's also recorded so that people can access worship at their own convenience. Since we have had some trouble with internet disruption, we are working to set up a more secure connection. This may take a couple of months. Meanwhile, if you have suggestions for improving worship, please talk to Pastor Shawn or Chris Evans. We are learning on the job and appreciate your help.

Using Your TV Remote to find YouTube

If you have a voice activated TV remote, ask for "YouTube, First United Church of Christ, Schuylkill Haven" and the remote will open the church's YouTube channel so that you can watch worship. You may also be able to use the "Search" feature on a traditional remote to connect with YouTube.

Worship Without the Internet

If you are unable to attend worship in the sanctuary and do not have access to the internet, please give the church office a call to let us know if you would like to receive a weekly synopsis of worship through the mail.

ADULT SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study Starting in October

The topic for Bible study will be determined by participants. Would you prefer to meet in-person at church or online? Would the morning, afternoon or evening suit you best? Please let Pastor Shawn know what works for you so that options will be offered to meet people's schedules.

The Love Diet Resuming in October

Are you interested in taking better care of the body God has given to you? Would you like to feel better about yourself? If you would like to support others in a joint venture of healthy living, please join us. Please let Pastor Shawn know what times work best for you: morning, afternoon or evening.

If you have an idea for a small group, in person or on line, call Pastor Shawn.

SPONSORS NEEDED

This is a great way to note an important event or honor a loved one.

Sponsor the bulletin (\$12), newsletter (\$12),

or flowers (\$30, PLEASE NOTE THE INCREASE IN PRICE).

Call Jen to reserve your date (570-385-2049). Order forms are in the Narthex.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Psalm 23 and Jesus' Early Ministry

Meet Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, and learn how the two men worked together to serve God.

- 9/6 NO Children's Church as we worship online this day.
9/13 Psalm 23: God is with us!
9/20 Psalm 23: God's Goodness and Mercy
9/27 John Prepares the Way for Jesus Luke 3:1-22

Thank you to our Children's Church Teacher!

Delia Edling, our lead teacher, continues to offer Children's Church during worship. Children are asked to wear masks, as Delia will do, while ensuring everyone is safely distancing. Delia will also record portions of the Children's Church for children to enjoy on Facebook at their convenience.

"Reimagining Our Future with Children, Justice and Joy" Prayer Vigil for Children September 13 through October 25

During the annual Prayer Vigil for Children you are invited to pray for:

- Children who are afraid; bullied; disabled; homeless; ill; and poor.
- Children in our church and community; this nation; and God's world.

During this time of pandemic, our prayers and actions are needed for children in our community and around the world. If you have a specific concern for children you would like to address, please talk to Pastor Shawn.

COVID19

COVID19 Masks

Researchers at Duke University have tested the effectiveness of 14 kinds of masks. They concluded that multi-layer cotton masks are almost as good as professional N-95 masks. Bandanas, neck fleeces, and knit masks are inadequate and should be avoided.

EVANGELISM

Inviting People to Church during a Pandemic

While not everyone is comfortable worshipping in the sanctuary right now, we can still invite people to join us for worship on Facebook and YouTube. Please let your friends and family know they are welcome to join us at their convenience online.

CHRISTIAN PASSAGES / SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS

Births – **Briar Rose Uniman**, newborn daughter of **Max & Liz Uniman**, who was born on Thursday, May 28. Briar is the granddaughter of **Craig & Terri Luckenbill**.

Deaths – **Annie Eckert** passed away on March 6, 2020. Annie is survived by her daughter **Robin Bayliff** and family.

Meghan McShaw passed away on March 6, 2020. Meghan is survived by her sons and extended family.

James Stripe passed away on May 21, 2020. Jim is survived by his son Mark Stirpe and family.

Alice Ebert passed away on July 18, 2020. Alice is survived by her daughter and family.

Jane Madenfort passed away on August 12, 2020. Jane is survived by her sons Matthew, Michael, Mark and Mitch and their families.

Briar Keitsock, who was born on July 13, 2020, passed away on August 13, 2020. Briar is survived by his parents Kayla Stewart & Bayne Keitsock and grandparents **Tom & Mary Stewart**.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation for Fall 2020

First Church invites young people in sixth grade and older to affirm their baptism with the Rite of Confirmation. Through baptism, they were welcomed into the worldwide community of the Christian Church. Through confirmation, or catechism, young people are invited to explore their relationship with God through the teachings of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The confirmation process at First Church is a two year program. Confirmands attend weekly worship and confirmation class, and participate in a variety of church activities. If you have questions about confirmation, please talk to Pastor Shawn.

How Would You Like to Participate in Confirmation?

Would you prefer to meet at church for in-person class or would you prefer an online gathering using a format like Zoom? Please call the church office to share your preference, or send an email to firstuccpastor@verizon.net or a Facebook message to Pastor Shawn.

Pastor Shawn's Annual CROP Walk Challenge to the Confirmands

Pastor Shawn challenges the confirmands to see who can raise more money for the CROP Walk against hunger on Sunday, October 4. Confirmands can participate in the actual walk or set up a virtual walk in a smaller group. Online registration is encouraged during this time of pandemic.

FUND RAISERS

As the pandemic prevents the church from holding Meat BINGO presently, we are looking for new ideas for safe fund raisers. Talk to a Consistory member or Pastor Shawn if you have suggestions for new fund raisers.

MISSION

Hillside SPCA Donations to Bless the Animals

During the month of September we will gather items needed at Hillside SPCA to care for the animals including: cat litter, cleaning supplies, dog/cat food, dog and cat toys, etc. Monetary donations may also be made to "Joe & Caroline's Fund" to assist with veterinary expenses. Place your donations in the box in the Narthex or leave them at the church office door.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE Project

Once again we will gather small gifts to give to the Meals on Wheels clients in the Schuylkill Haven area. Since they are confined to their homes, we hoped our gifts would let them know they are an important part of our community. Place your donations of small, inexpensive items representing October (fall or Halloween items), November (fall or Thanksgiving items), and/or December (Christmas items of course) in the box in the Narthex or bring them to the office door.

CROP Walk to Fight Hunger One Step at a Time

Support the ministry of the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches to feed hungry people in our community, nation, and world. See the "Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches" section for additional information.

PSEC

Thank You, PSEC

As the financial impact of COVID19 hit in the spring, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ provided emergency gifts of \$1000 to each of the 165 churches in the conference. Their gift made clear that we truly are a United Church supporting one another through unexpected challenges.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Monthly Food Pantry

Friday, September 18, 1 PM

Due to the pandemic's severe impact on our economy, more people than ever are turning to the Council of Churches Food Pantry. Your donations feed our neighbors in need. Food is distributed on the third Friday of each month at the Food Pantry, located at 110 West Market Street behind Evans Delivery (the old Walk In Shoe Factory). Drop off your food donations at the church office door or send a check to "Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches", PO Box 303, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972.

Bloodmobile

Thursday, September 24, 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 donate blood.

CROP Walk

Sunday, October 4, 1 PM

Meet at the Council Food Pantry OR Create a Virtual Walk

Enjoy a beautiful walk through the Schuylkill Haven Borough with friends AND raise money to feed hungry people at the same time. Receive a participant's envelope from Pastor Shawn. Registration begins at 12:30 PM, with the walk kick-off at 1 PM. Participants are encouraged to register on-line during this time of pandemic. Invite your friends to support your walk on social media. Register at www.crophungerwalk.org/schuylkillhavenpa, enter "First UCC Schuylkill Haven" in the search box and "Register" as a walker.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is Not the Church Budget

Stewardship is not about meeting the church budget. Stewardship is a response to God's generosity. When we give to one another, we remind ourselves and show others that we are made in the image of God. Jesus said that we must lose ourselves in order to find life. Losing ourselves in generosity gives each day meaning through God's transformational hope. Our gifts of time and money empower the church to serve its purpose as the Body of Jesus Christ in the world revealing God's presence.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

- | | |
|---|--|
| 9/2- Heather Corby (1980)
Chris Evans (1986)
Dwayne Reichert Jr. (2005)
Tom Stewart Jr. (1974) | 9/13- Bill Harp (1963)
9/14- Sean Spotts (1993)
9/15- Becky (Sikora) Klimas (1983)
Jara Strunk (2006) |
| 9/3- Eric Heck (1988)
Suzanne Schrader (1943)
Quinlan Spotts (2003) | 9/17- Alesse Coover (1984)
9/18- Braylon Ludwig (2012)
9/19- Rusty Searle (1955)
Pastor Shawn (1958) |
| 9/6- John Pritiskutch (1961)
9/7- Beth Fryer (1951)
9/8- George Rondeau (1961) | 9/20- Jeff McCormick
Billy Schaeffer (1990) |
| 9/9- Bill Corby (1970)
Mary Stewart (1978) | 9/21- Jim Haeseler (1972) |
| 9/10- Beth Eckert (1958)
Helen Kimmel (1963) | 9/26- Lily Fenstermacher (2007)
Grayson Fessler (2008)
Marcia Harp (1964) |
| 9/13- Brian Harp (1963) | 9/29- Corey Mentzer (1981) |

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 9/11- Gary & Gloria Ebling (1976) | 9/20- Harris & Joan Bradley (1969) |
| 9/12- Brandon & Becky Devlin (2015) | 9/26- Brian & Marcia Harp (1998) |
| 9/12- Bob & Carole Lee (1997) | |

If we missed a birthday or anniversary, listed an incorrect date or do not have the year, please call the church office so that we are able to correct and/or update our records.

THANK YOU

Thank you to **everyone** for your continued support of First Church's ministry during the closure of the church for several months as well as in our limited return to worship in the sanctuary at the end of July. Special thanks to **Todd Roberts** for mowing the lawn and **Darrell Spotts** for his efforts to maintain the plant beds.