

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

Non-Profit Organization
US POSTAGE PAID
Pottsville, PA 17901
PERMIT NO. 59

Information Deadline for the
LENT 2021 (FEBRUARY & MARCH 2021) NEWSLETTER
is Sunday, January 31!!



FIRST CHURCH HERALD

Vol. 39, Issue 5

Newsletter of First UCC

Sch. Haven, PA

WINTER 2020—2021 (DEC-JAN-FEB)



May the

GOD OF HOPE

fill you with all

JOY AND PEACE

as you trust in him
so that you may over
flow with hope by the

POWER OF

THE HOLY

SPIRIT.

Romans 15:13

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. If you do need to stop by the office, masks are required.

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 & 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 (516-7269); 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).

SERVICE CANCELLATIONS

The last couple of winters we used an automated call service for worship cancellations. Did you receive a phone call when we had to cancel worship? If you didn't, please call Jen in the church office so that our records can be updated with your current phone number. We will also have cancellation information on the church answering machine and our Facebook page.

SALUTATIONS FROM SHAWN

REMEMBERING HOPE

Uncertainty and waiting: welcome to Advent! Why should Advent be any different than the rest of the year?

The Church Season of Advent takes us on a journey to the past, to the anticipation of a Savior who would bring freedom. After years of oppression under many empires – Assyrian, Babylonian, Roman – the people of Israel waited for God’s promise of a Messiah. While they were uncertain when their Savior would arrive to rescue them and restore God’s kingdom, they were filled with unshakeable hope in God which sustained them through the ages.

Hope is a gift from God which strengthens us as it empowered the Jews to endure from one dynasty to the next. Hope was realized in the birth of a poor infant to an unwed mother and a troubled father. Hope wraps us in possibility in the moment we find ourselves slipping into despair, lifting us to see God’s promise of new life and new beginnings.

As Christians, our hope is in Jesus Christ, God’s Son and our Savior. Despite the problems we see and experience in the world, we place our hope in Christ who conquered evil and death. While we prepare to celebrate Advent and Christmas, we’ll do it differently than in the past, like everything else in 2020. Yet what will remain with us as strong as ever is hope. Hope that Jesus has rescued us from ourselves and from sin, hope that Jesus is working through us to restore God’s kin-dom on earth, and hope that God is always ready to surprise us with the newness of life.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life. This new life is starting right now, while we wait for the blessed hope and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” --Titus 2:11-13

Yours in Hope in Christ,
Pastor Shawn



While I am on vacation December 26 through January 2, Rev. Ken McDowell at St. Paul’s UCC Summer Hill will provide pastoral care. Please call the First UCC church office if someone is ill or enters the hospital. You may reach Rev. McDowell at St. Paul’s at 570-754-7225 or on his cell at 610-207-4783.

WORSHIP IN ADVENT, CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY

ADVENT THEME – Remembering Hope: Christ Is With Us!

November 29

Christ is Near

1st Sunday of Advent (Peace); Hanging of the Greens

Isaiah 64:1-9

Open the Heavens

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Enriched in Christ Jesus

Mark 13:24-37

Keep Awake

December 6

Begin the Good News

2nd Sunday of Advent (Hope); Communion

Isaiah 40:1-11

Prepare the Way

2 Peter 3:8-15a

The Lord Will Come

Mark 1:1-8

Good News of Jesus Christ

December 13

We Need An Answer

3rd Sunday of Advent (Joy); BCE Sunday

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Spirit of the Lord

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

The Will of God in Christ Jesus

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Testify to the Light

December 20

Overshadowed by Promise

4th Sunday of Advent (Love); Blue Christmas; Staff Gifts Sunday

Romans 16:25-27

God's Strength

Luke 1:46b-55

Mary's Magnificat

Luke 1:26-28

A Holy Child

December 24

Remembering Hope: Christ Is With Us!

Christmas Eve Worship: 4 PM drive-in OR online after 7 PM

Candlelight, Carols and Communion

Isaiah 9:2-7

A Great Light

Titus 2:11-14

The Grace of God has Appeared

Luke 2:1-20

The Birth of Jesus

December 27

ONLINE WORSHIP ONLY due to staff vacations

Check our Facebook page and YouTube channel for online options

No Worship in the Sanctuary; No Children's Church

EPIPHANY THEME – God's Eternal Purpose

January 3

In A Dream

Epiphany Sunday; Communion; New Year & Everybody Birthday Party

Isaiah 60:1-6

Promises of Glory

Ephesians 3:1-12

The Mystery of God's Grace

Matthew 2:1-12

Visitors from the East



WORSHIP IN EPIPHANY

January 10

Baptism of Christ Sunday

1st Sunday after Epiphany; Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Genesis 1:1-5

God's Purpose from the Beginning

John 1

In the Beginning was the Word

Mark 1:4-11

Baptized with the Holy Spirit

January 17

2nd Sunday after Epiphany; Installation of Consistory

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Samuel's Vision

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Members of Christ

John 1:43-51

See Heaven Opened

January 24

3rd Sunday after Epiphany; Ecumenical Sunday

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Proclaim the Message

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Time has Grown Short

Mark 1:14-20

God Has Come Near

January 31

4th Sunday after Epiphany; Praise and Healing

Septuagesima (70 days before Easter)

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

A Prophet Raised

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Knowledge and Love

Mark 1:21-28

One with Authority

February 7

5th Sunday after Epiphany; Communion; Souper Bowl of Caring

Sexagesima (60 days to Easter)

Isaiah 40:21-31

Known and Heard

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

The Gospel Free of Charge

Mark 1:29-39

Searching for Jesus

February 14

Transfiguration Sunday; Quinquagesima (50 days to Easter)

2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah's Fire

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

The Gospel of Glory

Mark 9:2-9

Jesus Transfigured



LENT BEGINS

2/17, 7 PM Worship

Ash Wednesday; Ashes & Communion

OFFERING

Communion & Food Pantry Donations *Dec. 6 & Feb. 7*

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 13*

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 *Dec. 20, Jan. 17 & Feb. 21*

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

Christmas Fund *December 20*

The Christmas Fund provides pension and health premium supplementation to lower-income retired church workers, emergency assistance to clergy and lay church employees in need.

OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) *January 24*

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

Blanket Sunday *February 28*

Through Church World Service, a gift of just **\$10** will provide a blanket for someone in need. For some people, this blanket may be their only shelter.

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 3), and **Ash Wednesday** (February 17) will be used to support the on-going ministry of First UCC. The envelope offerings collected for **Meat Bingo** (January 10) will go to the general budget. (Unfortunately due to COVID restrictions we are still unable to host Meat BINGO fundraisers.)

2021 Initial Offering

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

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.

WORSHIP @ FIRST CHURCH

Worship Options

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 you can access worship at your convenience. If you have ideas 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 do not have access to the internet, please call the church office if you would like to receive a weekly synopsis of worship through the mail.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS & PASTORAL CARE

While Pastor Shawn is away on vacation December 25 through January 2, Jen will also be on vacation. The church office will be closed Dec. 24 - Jan. 1. During that time the answering machine will be checked daily. Rev. Ken McDowell at St. Paul's UCC Summer Hill will provide pastoral care. You may call Rev. McDowell at St. Paul's at 570-754-7225 or his cell at 610-207-4783.

2021 Offering Envelopes are in the hall next to the Sanctuary. Please pick up your envelopes & those of friends and family. If you are unable to attend worship, please call the church office to arrange a day for you to pick up your envelopes. This will save the church mailing expenses. To further cut expenses, those who did not give or use their envelopes in 2018 and/or 2019 OR only used their envelopes once or twice per year, were not given 2021 envelopes. 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.



200 YEARS NEW

First Church Needs Your Prayers

"In the year 1821, the 11th of November, the local school house was regularly dedicated...before a numerous assembly, to the TRINITY OF FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST...and given the name 'United Schoolhouse for God's Service.'"

So began the ministry of the First United Church of Christ in Schuylkill Haven. The first official record of worship by the Reformed Congregation was March 11, 1822 with the first communion held Whit (Pentecost) Sunday, May 26, 1822, when 39 received communion and nine were confirmed.

As we near 200 years of existence, it's time to plan not only for a celebration but for the next 200 years of the church. The arrival of the corona virus has accentuated what was already happening: church as we've known it for the last 50 years is no longer reaching people. It's time to let God guide us to a new version of church.

From now until Easter we will seek God's purpose through prayer. Simply find time each day to pray: *"God, please reveal your purpose for First Church so that we may serve you with heart, mind, soul and strength. Amen."* Then spend a few more moments in meditation silently listening for God's response. (Of course you can pray the same prayer for yourself and then listen again. Prayer and meditation are blessings we give ourselves.)

If you're interested in planning our 200th anniversary celebration, talk to 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).

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. Call Jen at the church office (570-385-2049) if you are able to help with this ministry of the First Church.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

As per the church bylaws the Annual Congregational Meeting is held on the third Sunday of November which would be November 15, 2020. Due to extra COVID precautions and current worship attendance, Consistory decided that, based on the church bylaws, all members who've attended and/or made offerings to the church within the last two years would receive an Annual Report via mail. Based on those requirements 203 packets were mailed. Of those mailed 57 ballots were returned. By majority of votes the congregation approved the 2020 reports and budget, reviewed and approved the 2021 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 served on Consistory for 2020: Harris Bradley (vice president), Brian/Fred Edling (recording secretary), Keith Edling, George Hosler, Carrie Ann Klinger (treasurer), Kenny Klinger (president), George Rondeau, Rusty Searle, Penny Shade, Cheryl Strunk, Lora Yoder & Peggy Zechman.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL CONGREGATIONAL MTG

The vote for the Kline Fund Tithe is scheduled to take place Sunday, February 21, 2021, when the final 2020 YTD Financial Report will be presented for approval. 2020 Financial Reports will be available in the Narthex on Sunday, February 7. If attendance remains down, and/or COVID restrictions continue, then Consistory may determine to handle the Financial Congregational Meeting in the same way as the November 2020 Congregational Meeting.

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP

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

	<u>Oct 2020</u>	<u>Oct 2019</u>	<u>Oct 2018</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES –	\$187,113.69	\$194,958.70	\$198,780.34
REVENUE –	\$ 54,561.44	\$ 59,668.70	\$ 60,241.37
Resources from Kline Fund –	\$131,600.00	\$135,290.00	\$131,660.00
TOTAL REVENUE –	\$186,161.44	\$201,488.19	\$191,901.37
Gain/Loss –	\$ -952.25	\$ 6,529.49	\$ -6,878.97

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

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Stories From Jesus: Vacation Bible School

Sunday, December 27 - Thursday, January 31 – VIA ZOOM

Either 3-5 PM or 6-8 PM – *please tell us which time is better for you*

Children ages 4-12 will explore stories, also known as parables, which Jesus told about *The House on the Sand, The Sower, Light Under A Bushel, The Lost Coin* and *The Talents*. Through these stories, music, crafts, and games, children will learn that God has given each of them wonderful gifts to share with others and the world. Call the church office by Friday, December 18 at 570-395-2049 or email firstuccschuykillhaven@verizon.net to register. *Please let us know whether the afternoon or evening will fit your child's schedule.*

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

- 11/29 No Children's Church – First Sunday of Advent, Hanging of Greens
- 12/6 Zacharias & Elizabeth; The Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1)
- 12/13 An Angel Visits Mary (Luke 1)
- 12/20 The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2)
- 12/27 No Children's Church
- 1/3 No Children's Church – Epiphany Sunday/Everybody Birthday
- 1/10 John Baptizes Jesus (Luke 3, John 1)
- 1/17 Water into Wine (John 2)
- 1/24 Jesus Calls the Disciples (Luke 5)
- 1/31 Jesus Heals (Mark 2)
- 2/7 The Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17)
- 2/14 No Children's Church - Transfiguration Sunday

A huge "Thank You!" to Delia Edling, who is faithfully exploring new ways to reach the children of the church through Facebook, YouTube and Zoom, and even provides craft resources. Visit the church's Facebook page to connect.

CHRISTIAN PASSAGES / SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS

Deaths – **Mary E. Young** passed away on September 2, 2020. Mary is survived by her daughter & extended family.

Mae L. (Mengel) Deatrich passed away on October 14, 2020. Mae is survived by **Al & Linda Deatrich, Becky Devlin** and extended family.

Roger S. Spotts passed away on October 25, 2020. Roger is survived by his wife **Peggy Spotts**, sons **Jeff, Joel, Jon & Mark** & extended family.

New Members – **David & Sharon Helman** and **Mike Sheriff** were welcomed into membership on Sunday, November 15, 2020.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT & COMMUNION

Remembering Hope: Christ Is With Us

Thursday, December 24 - 4 PM Drive-In Worship

Plus Recorded Worship at Your Convenience (available after 7 PM)

God sent hope to the people of Israel as they suffered under the tyranny of Rome facing an uncertain future. Hope came in the most unexpected form: a fragile, powerless baby who was love in the flesh. God sends that same Hope to us today.

Since it wouldn't be Christmas Eve without singing, we've opted for worship from the safety of our cars. Our "candle" light and communion will also be possible if in new ways. In addition, worship will be recorded so that you can share with your family at a time and place that suits you, although you will need to provide your own candle and communion elements. No matter how we worship, *Christ Is With Us Bringing Us Hope!*

CHURCH 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.

Soup Sale

Soup choices are Chicken noodle, chili, clam chowder, ham and bean or vegetable beef. Cost is \$5/quart. Call or message the church office to order. Pick up your order Saturday, December 12 from 9 AM-Noon. Order form in back of newsletter.

Orders due December 4

Shank's Vanilla

8 oz. bottles of vanilla are being sold for \$7 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. (Don't hand in 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.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

LIHEAP

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP, helps low-income families pay their heating bills. People may apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us for LIHEAP and other services. The Schuylkill County office may also be contacted for an application at 877-306-5439.

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS SEMINAR

Sunday, December 20, 1:30-3:30PM Bethesda EC Church, Reedsville

"Surviving the Holidays" is a meeting for people facing the holidays after the loss of a loved one. Feel free to share this information with anyone who might benefit from attending this special 2-hour event. Video interviews with top Christian experts on grief and recovery topics are featured. The videos are offered from a biblical perspective along with personal accounts from people who have experienced loss.

Griefshare Sessions are also offered throughout the year, typically on the second and fourth Sundays at 1:30 PM in the Bethesda EC Church Library. For more information, call Bethesda EC at 570-739-2241.

Wreaths Across America will not be held this year due to the pandemic.

CONFIRMATION

CONFIRMATION CLASS SUNDAY, 11/29 AFTER WORSHIP

We'll meet in the Weiser Board Room until noon. In case we have to hold remote classes, we will be using resources from the internet including the BibleProject as well as DVDs with a focus on visual learning. We will explore God's word as we learn of God's love and purpose for every single person. Since we will need to wear masks, we will not have snacks or drinks.

- NO WORSHIP OR CLASS – Sunday, December 27.
- Class resumes SUNDAY, JANUARY 3 after worship.

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).

FELLOWSHIP

NO ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY THIS YEAR

Due to the pandemic, Consistory did not believe we could safely hold a party at this time. Look for future details of "Christmas in July" with Santa sporting his Hawaiian shirt.

MISSION

Giving Tuesday

December 1

A contribution to charity could be the perfect gift to honor family or friends by helping others. Visit "Charity Navigator" or "giving.org" to verify whether charities are legitimate and how they will use your donations.

Salvation Army And Family Christmas Gifts

Gift cards are available in the Narthex for 12 children from the Salvation Army. The cards note the age and gender of the children along with clothing sizes and wish lists. In addition, we will provide Christmas dinner for two local families. Please call the church office to ask about donations. Please return your Salvation Army gifts, unwrapped and with the gift card attached, by Sunday, November 29. The family donations need to be returned to the church office by Sunday, December 13.

Reverse Advent Calendar

December 13

The Reverse Advent Calendar reminds us it's better to give than to receive. Set aside a box, adding a non-perishable food item or household paper product each day to donate to the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches Food Pantry. Bring your gathered food to church on Sunday, December 13, so that it can be distributed at the Schuylkill Haven Area Food Pantry on December 18. (Food brought to the church after Christmas will still greatly benefit people in our community.) Thank you for caring for God's people in need.

Undie Sunday

December 20

The First Church tradition continues of collecting men's, women's and children's NEW underwear still in its packaging, 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. Place your donations in the marked box in the Narthex or at the office.

Winter Clothing Donations Needed

Servants to All, a non-profit for the homeless and poor in Pottsville, is seeking winter coats, gloves, hats and scarves. All sizes are needed: boys, girls, men and women, new and/or gently used (and CLEAN). Donations will be received through December. You can also mail a donation to: Servants to All, 4 South Centre Street, Pottsville, PA 17901.

Souper Bowl of Caring

February 7

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 7 to bring a dollar for a special collection for the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry as we strive to feed our neighbors in need.

PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

The 50-50-50 Challenge

Churches in the PSEC are working together to mitigate climate change. In 2019, First UCC converted to LED lighting inside the building and outside for the parking lot lights. Several years ago we converted from disposable cups to ceramic mugs and glasses for fellowship. For communion Sundays, we reclaimed glassware from years of storage. All of these small efforts add up to reduced power use while saving money and creating less pollution.

24 Hour Spiritual Care Line

Dealing with the multiple repercussions of the pandemic has been difficult for most of us. Support and a listening ear are just a call away at 888-255-6520.

The Link that Connects Our Church's Ministries

Our Conference Leaders and Staff have offered support to First UCC throughout the pandemic. In addition to providing a gift of \$1000 from the PSEC Emergency Fund during the early weeks of the quarantine, they have hosted weekly Zoom meetings; created worship videos to give pastors time for rest and vacation; presented boundary and diversity training, education opportunities and other conferences to support clergy and lay leaders via Zoom; formed three working groups around addiction, environmental justice and racism to tend to some of the things that matter most; offered stewardship resources and assistance regarding government programs related to the pandemic; and set aside emergency funds to respond to pastors and congregations dealing with personal challenges and natural disasters. Our Pennsylvania SE Conference is in covenant with us to support our ministry as *we serve God through Christ and serve others with love.*

Beloved People of God,

We want to thank you for your commitment to Our Churches Wider Mission which makes all of the ministry (through PSEC) possible. As we put 2020 behind us, we need your help, prayers and OCWM pledges to create a better and brighter 2021. Together we can support each other through this difficult time. We can answer God's call to mission and ministry. We can be spiritually united even when physically distant. We beg your prayers for the leaders of PSEC that God's love and wisdom would be upon all our work. In grateful thanksgiving for you and for your ministry,

The Rev. Antonio L. Villareal, Conference Moderator

The Rev. William P. Worley, Conference Minister



PROPERTY UPDATES

Canopy Catastrophe!

Unfortunately on October 9th someone tried to drive under the church canopy with a U-Haul truck. Thanks to two steel I-beams, the truck was stopped but still caused significant damage to the western edge of the canopy. Repair work was finished in mid-November.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Monthly Food Pantry

3rd Friday, 1 PM

December 18, January 15 & February 19

On the third Friday of the month, the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches distributes food at their Food Pantry, located on Market Street behind Evans Delivery (the old Walk-In Shoe Factory). Doors open at 1 PM.

Crop Walk Report from Sunday, October 4

Thank you for your support of the CROP Walk to fight hunger. Despite this year's unusual circumstances, with a virtual walk, First UCC still raised \$1000 to feed hungry people. Thank you all!

Diaper & Incontinence Products Needed by January 3

Adult incontinence products, disposable bed pads, feminine hygiene items and children's diapers are needed for the clients of the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches Food Pantry. We will gather these products from now through January 3 to be available for distribution on January 15, 2021.

STEWARDSHIP

We are grateful for your faithfulness! While many of you are choosing not to participate in worship in the sanctuary to keep yourselves and others safe, you are still sending in your offering. You know the ministry of the church continues even during a pandemic. Beyond the building maintenance expenses, there is the more important work of caring for people in need, especially during such a trying time. Thank you for your faithfulness to the ministry of First UCC as *"we serve God through Christ and serve others with love."*



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Giving Tuesday, December 1

Your donation to our #GivingTuesday campaign will be used to address the plight of refugees in the USA and globally. **Did you know?** The global refugee population has increased by 50 percent over the past five years. There are 26 million refugees globally. The need for our help is great.

Help Erase Medical Debt

The UCC effort to abolish medical debt stands at \$51.8 million. A collaborative effort by 122 congregations, four Associations, and individuals in the Southern New England Conference abolished \$26.2 million in medical debt. Two separate buys helped families in seven states and first responders around the country. A second purchase funneled \$107,000 of the church donations into a new fund created to respond to COVID-19, and eliminated another \$17.8 million in debt for 12,144 health care workers and first responders across the US. Non-profit RIP Medical Debt's "[Helping COVID Heroes Fund](#)" has already wiped out \$46 million in debt for 36,662 people working on the front lines of the pandemic. The campaign will continue through 2021. Checks may be mailed to: United Church of Christ, Financial Services, 700 Prospect Ave, 6th Floor, Cleveland, OH 44115, with "RIP Medical Debt" written in the memo line. To give online, visit ucc.org.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!



- 12/17- Tim & Robin Bayliff (1983)
- 12/22- Jay & Diane Newswanger (2001)
- 1/14- Scott Lopez & Melissa Fox (2012)
- 2/02- Dave & Janene Ditzler (1991)
- 2/12- Kenny & Carrie Ann Klinger (1999)
- 2/18- Mike & Bobbie Donati (2006)
- 2/24- Glenn & Deb Spotts (1979)

If we missed a birthday, 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.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

- 12/3- Herm Morgan, Jr. (1949)
- 12/8- Ronnie Alexander (1977)
Lilly Edling (2006)
- 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- Bobby Riegel (1959)
- 12/22- William Spotts (1985)
- 12/23- Mary Cramer (1963)
John Donati (1947)
- 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)
- 12/31- Emily Reichert (2002)
- 1/1- Elizabeth Reichert (2001)
Lisa Edling (1964)
- 1/2- Cindy Brozana (1968)
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)
- 1/13- Patsy Wingle (1973)
- 1/14- Scott Lopez (1970)
Renee Mohl (1970)
- 1/16- Jon Spotts
- 1/18- Elizabeth (Harner) Rudy (2002)
Dale Mordosky (1942)
- 1/19- Kath Owens (1949)
- 1/21- Richard Rohrer (1958)
- 1/22- 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)
- 2/1- Julia Kluge (2003)
Kristen Ludwig (1987)
- 2/2- Don McCormick (1951)
Bill Schaeffer, Jr. (1969)
- 2/3- Peg Spotts (1940)
- 2/5- Becky Devlin (1990)
- 2/9- Kyle Wingle (1995)
- 2/11- Megan Ditzler (1998)
- 2/13- Mary Ann Gable
Deb McCormick (1952)
- 2/17- Keith Edling (1958)
- 2/18- Tim Burian (1957)
Bev Scott (1967)
- 2/20- Tracy Lang (1974)
- 2/22- Gary Ebling (1952)
- 2/23- Ann Risser (1942)
- 2/26- Jack Fultz (2001)



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA PLANTS – 2020

The Advent Season is beginning soon and our Christmas Eve Services are not far behind. We are taking orders for the Christmas Poinsettia Plants. The plants will adorn the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve Thursday, December 24. The poinsettias will be in a 6" inch pot. Please specify the color you would like. We will do our best, but cannot guarantee the color choice.

Please take a few moments to complete the form below.

PLEASE USE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH ORDER.

SPONSOR _____

Phone # _____

SPECIFY COLOR

RED _____ **WHITE** _____ **PINK** _____

In **HONOR** of _____

In **MEMORY** of _____

Please use the exact wording you want to appear in the Flower Bulletin.

COST: \$7/plant & PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER!!!

THE DEADLINE FOR ORDERS IS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Please return your order and payment to the church office by mail or place the order and payment in the Church Secretary's mailbox located by the offices or in the offering plate.

Please check one of the following:

_____ I will take my flowers home.

_____ I do not want my flowers. The church can use them.

If you cannot pick up your flowers, the flowers will be kept in the church for 1-2 weeks. Flowers can be picked up during office hours. Any flowers that have not been claimed will be given away.

DECEMBER 2020 SOUP SALE

Sponsored by:

**First United Church of Christ
110 Route 61 South; Schuylkill Haven
(570) 385-2049**

Order Deadline: **Friday, December 4, 2020**

Pickup: **Saturday, December 12, 2020
9 AM – 12 PM**

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE #: _____

Quart of Soup = \$5

<u>Soup</u>	<u># of Quarts</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Chicken Noodle		
Chili		
Clam Chowder		
Ham & Bean		
Vegetable Beef		
Total:		

PAYMENT IS DUE AT PICK UP.