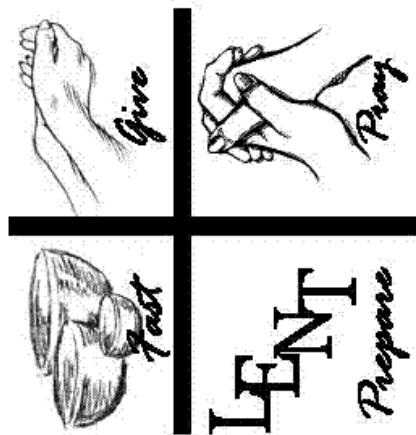


FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
110 ROUTE 61 SOUTH
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, PA 17972
Rev. Ms. Shawn D. VanDyke, Pastor
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Serving God through Christ; Serving Others with Love

Information Deadline for the
April/ May NEWSLETTER
is Sunday, March 19!!



FIRST CHURCH HERALD
Vol. 42, Issue 1 Newsletter of First UCC Sch. Haven, PA
LENT 2023 (ASH WEDNESDAY – EASTER)



Wednesday, February 22

Worship

7 PM

Sunday, April 2

Worship

9:30 AM



Thursday, April 6

Worship

7 PM



Sunday, April 9

Worship 8 AM

Easter Egg Hunt 9 AM

Worship 9:30 AM



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

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

Music Director – Jacqueline Engel

Church Secretary – Jen Semanco (also Special Funds Treasurer)

Church Sexton – Penny Shade

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

2022-23 CONSISTORY MEMBERS

Harris Bradley, Vice President; Brian Edling, Recording Secretary; Keith Edling; Carrie Ann Klinger, Treasurer; Kenny Klinger, President; Owen Owens; Rusty Searle; Penny Shade; Lora Yoder; & Peggy Zechman.

PHONE & EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS

Phone & email are the quickest and easiest ways of getting information to church members. Please notify us of your current phone number and email.

CHURCH OFFICE DROP BOX

Reminder: a black drop box was installed to the left of the office door. This is a locked/secure box and a safe location and contactless way for you to deliver items outside of (or during) office hours. The box is checked daily.

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

Return to God: The Reward of Our Everyday, Good Enough Life

All our lives we've learned that Lent is a time for contemplation, for penance, for evaluating our lives to see how we have fallen short of God wants. Through the prophet, God reaches out to us saying, "Return to Me with all your heart." (Joel 2:12) The prophet adds, "Return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who know whether God will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing?" (Joel 2:13) What God wants is that we would return to God.

As the Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, we are reminded that we are dust and to dust we will return. Yet Ash Wednesday also offers Jesus' teachings on giving, praying, and fasting since through these spiritual practices, we receive reward from God. God leaves blessings.

Maybe Lent is a time for reflecting on the reward we have already received from God and the reward we will receive in days to come. Jesus invites us to journey with him on the road to Jerusalem, traveling with the other disciples, while sharing life's trials and treasures. Although the road leads to Jesus' death on the cross, death is not the end. Jesus lives, that we might live abundantly.

This year, I propose we rethink Lent, embracing Jesus' words to seek God that we may receive reward. Instead of depriving ourselves, we can enrich ourselves, seeing God's blessings given to us. In our everyday life, Jesus invites us to realize that God has created us, making us good enough to receive God's reward. Made in God's image, we can create ways to bless the people in our lives, since it is through giving that we receive. As we care for one another, we will store treasures in heaven, finding our hearts as we return to God.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Pastor Shawn

Turkey-Syria Earthquake Relief

Visit Charity Navigator for a listing of charities. The following three charities have ratings over 95/100.

- AmeriCares, 88 Hamilton Av., Stamford, CT 06902, www.americares.org.
- Center for Disaster Philanthropy, 1 Thomas Cir. NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20005, www.disasterphilanthropy.org.
- Direct Relief, 6100 Wallace Becknell Rd, Santa Barbara, CA, 93117, www.directrelief.org

Through the UCC, mail a check payable to United Church of Christ, PO BOX 71957 Cleveland, OH 44194, noting "Turkey and Syria" on the memo line, or visit ucc.org, click DONATE, and select "Turkey and Syria Earthquake Relief."

WORSHIP DURING LENT

THE SEASON OF LENT

The Road to Reward: Daily Blessings

February 22 Ash Wednesday		Receive Your Reward
12-12:30 PM Drive-up; 7 PM in the Sanctuary		
Sacrament of Communion; Imposition of Ashes		
Joel 2:1-16a	Repentance and Return	
Psalms 51:1-17	Cleansing and Pardon	
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	The Reward of Giving, Praying and Fasting	

February 26 1st Sunday in Lent		Suddenly Angels
Psalms 32	The Joy of Forgiveness	
Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	The First Sin and Punishment	
Matthew 4:1-11	The Temptation of Jesus	

March 5 2nd Sunday in Lent		Birth
Sacrament of Communion		
Psalms 121	Assurance of God's Protection	
John 3:1-17	Nicodemus Visits Jesus	

Daylight Savings Time begins

"Spring ahead" one hour on your alarm before you jump into bed on Saturday, March 12, so we won't miss you at 9:30 AM worship on Sunday, March 13.

March 12 3rd Sunday in Lent		Water and Worship
Psalms 95	A Call to Worship & Obedience	
John 4:5-42	The Woman of Samaria	

March 19 4th Sunday in Lent		Eyes Opened
One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering		
Psalms 23	The Divine Shepherd	
John 9:1-41	A Man Born Blind	

March 26 5th Sunday in Lent		Death or Glory
Psalms 130	Waiting for Divine Redemption	
John 11:1-45	The Death of Lazarus	

April 2 Palm/Passion Sunday		Immediately Turmoil
Sacrament of Communion		
Psalms 118:19-29	The Gates of Righteousness	
Matthew 21:1-11	Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem	
Isaiah 50:4-9a	The Obedient Servant	

WORSHIP DURING LENT & EASTER

April 6 Maundy Thursday		Going to God
7 PM Worship; Sacrament of Communion and Tenebrae		
Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14	The First Passover	
John 13:1-17, 31b-35	Jesus' New Commandment	
Matthew 26-27	Jesus' Final Hours	

THE SEASON OF EASTER:

Scared to Life

April 9 Easter Sunday		Fear and Great Joy
8 AM & 9:30 AM Worship; Sacrament of Communion		
9-9:30 AM Fellowship in the Narthex		
9 AM Egg Hunt		
Matthew 28:1-10	The Resurrection of Jesus	

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP

The year-end totals for December 2022 plus a comparison to 2021 & 2020.

	<u>Dec. 2022</u>	<u>Dec. 2021</u>	<u>Dec. 2020</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES –	\$250,545.47	\$235,345.05	\$225,720.80
REVENUE –	\$ 71,238.86	\$ 72,947.66	\$ 66,428.97
Resources from Kline Fund –	\$179,000.00	\$172,895.00	\$164,900.00
TOTAL REVENUE –	\$250,238.86	\$245,842.66	\$231,328.97
Gain/Loss –	\$ -306.61	\$ 10,497.61	\$ 5,608.17

The totals for January 2023 plus a comparison to 2022 & 2021.

	<u>Jan. 2023</u>	<u>Jan. 2022</u>	<u>Jan. 2021</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES –	\$ 28,917.98	\$ 30,456.11	\$ 26,200.48
REVENUE –	\$ 4,053.66	\$ 8,160.70	\$ 5,919.09
Resources from Kline Fund –	\$ 19,100.00	\$ 18,200.00	\$ 16,100.00
TOTAL REVENUE –	\$ 23,153.66	\$ 26,360.70	\$ 22,019.09
Gain/Loss –	\$ -5,764.32	\$ -4,095.41	\$ -4,181.39

ANNUAL FINANCIAL CONGREGATIONAL MTG

Sunday, February 26, 2023 Please note the change in date!!
As stated in the last newsletter, the vote for the Kline Fund Tithe will take place during worship, when the final 2022 YTD Financial Report will be presented for approval. 2022 Financial Reports are available in the Narthex and church office.

OFFERING

Communion & Food Pantry Donations **March 5 & April 2**

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.

The Compassion Fund **February 19, March 19 & April 16**

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

Blanket Sunday **February 26**

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.

OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) **April 30**

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

OGHS (One Great Hour of Sharing) **March 19**

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery. Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Special Offering Envelopes

The envelope offerings collected for **Ash Wednesday** (February 22), **Palm Sunday** (April 2), **Maundy Thursday** (April 6), **Good Friday** (April 7), and **Easter Sunday** (April 9) will be used to support the on-going ministry of First UCC. The envelope offerings collected for **Meat Bingo** (March 12) will go to the general budget.

Lent Offering Envelopes

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

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.

CHILDREN

Children's Church, for ages 4 through fifth grade, is offered on request during worship.

Easter Candy **Donation Deadline: Palm Sunday, April 2**

Individually wrapped candy or small toys able to fit in plastic Easter Eggs are needed for the children's Egg Hunt on Easter. Call the church office if you plan to drop off your donations at the door. You may also place your donations in the marked box in the Narthex by Palm Sunday, April 2. Thank you!

Easter Egg Hunt **Sunday, April 9, 9 AM**

An Easter Egg Hunt will be held between the 8 AM and 9:30 AM worship services. In case of inclement weather, the hunt will be held indoors. Confirmants and teens are invited to setup for the Egg Hunt at 9 AM or shortly before.

CONSISTORY MEETINGS

6:30 PM, Second Tuesday

Tuesday, March 14 & Tuesday, April 11

CHURCH OFFICE UPDATES

Church Office Closed:

Friday, February 17 & Monday, February 20 (Staff Vacations)

Friday, April 7 (Good Friday)

Monday, April 10 (Easter Monday)

Office Drop Box

Reminder: a black drop box was installed to the left of the office door. This is a locked/secure box and a safe location and contactless way for you to deliver items outside of (or during) office hours. The box is checked daily.

Staff Vacations

Jen will be on vacation Thursday, February 16 – Tuesday, February 21.



CHURCH FUND RAISERS

Filling Sale

Orders due Sunday, March 19

Do you need filling for Easter dinner or do you just need to restock your freezer? Filling can be picked up Saturday, April 1, 9 AM – 12 PM. Cost is \$9 per container. Each container holds 2 pounds, so that's only \$4.50 per pound.

Meat BINGO

Saturday, March 11

Please sign up to donate food items to sell and/or donate your time to help with the event.

Meat BINGO

Saturday, April 29

Please sign up to donate food items to sell and/or donate your time to help with the event.

Annual Car Show

Saturday, August 5

Planning for the car show will begin in March. Talk to Kenny Klinger if you would like to help organize this fund raiser.

Shank's Vanilla

8 oz. bottles of vanilla are being sold for \$7 per bottle.

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.

Call the church office 570-385-2049 when:

- Someone is admitted to the hospital
(the hospitals don't call us)
 - You plan a meeting
 - You are moving
 - A new baby arrives or a death occurs
 - Your telephone number or address has changed
- If you get the answering machine, please leave a message.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation follows Bell Choir practice and/or worship. Check Sunday bulletins for details. The confirmands are looking at God's actions through key Bible characters. During Lent the confirmands will complete worship worksheets each Sunday to learn more about this essential faith practice.

During Lent, confirmands assist with special worship services. On **Ash Wednesday, February 22**, and **Maundy Thursday, April 6**, please arrive at church at **6:30 PM** to prepare for 7 PM worship. **Easter Sunday, April 9**, confirmands are asked to set up for the Easter Egg Hunt at **9 AM**.

Spring Flower Sale

Buy flowers for Mother's Day that will last all summer! The confirmands are selling bedding plants and hanging baskets. Order forms will be available in the Narthex in March. The order deadline is Sunday, April 30. Flowers will be available for pick up Mother's Day Sunday, May 7 after worship. If that time does not work for you, please call the church office. Thank you for supporting the confirmands who are raising funds for a gift for the church.

MEAT BINGOS

The profit from the November 26 Meat Bingo was \$1861.41, plus \$42 collected in offering envelopes. Profits from the bingo were placed in the church's general budget to be used towards the everyday expenses.

Our next Meat BINGOS are scheduled for Saturday, March 11 & Saturday, April 29. Doors open at 11 AM; games begin at 1 PM. The prizes will be packages of meat. Admission is \$20 which includes a game packet for the regular 20 games. Extra game packets, 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.

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.

MUSIC MINISTRY

BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL, Sundays after Worship (pending)

Bell choir practice will resume when Jacquie is able to return to work once her leg heals. New members are always welcome. If you have questions about the music program, contact Jacquie Engle, our Music Director, 570-971-4195 or email her at jengel800@gmail.com.

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Diakon Community Services Volunteer Opportunity

Meals on Wheels is the driving force behind nutritional and wellness support for older adults in Schuylkill County. The program helps participants remain independent in their homes, enables conversation between the participants and volunteers, lovingly fosters participants' well-being and safety, and provides essential nutritional support. Meals on Wheels is driven by volunteers who deliver meals to 350 county residents. Meals are delivered Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 10 AM and 1 PM. Most delivery routes take one hour or less. For more information, please call Kathi at 570-624-3013 or 800-621-MEAL.

PLANNING FOR DEATH

With Ash Wednesday we are confronted with the truth that we will die: "you are dust and to dust you shall return." During Lent, we follow Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and his death on the cross. Have you made plans for your death yet? Pre-planning your funeral and settling your estate while you are in good health allows you to make choices which suit you, in addition to helping your loved ones through a difficult time of grief. Feel free to talk to Pastor Shawn, research options on-line, and/or talk to a funeral director to start the process.

PRACTICING LENT

The Reward of Returning to God

Lent is the Season before Easter, when we think about what the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus mean to us. For forty days (since Sundays are not included in Lent) we are invited to grow closer to God and to strengthen our relationships with other people. Adding a spiritual discipline is one way to become more aware of God in your life. Some ideas to consider:

- Call or visit the person you always put off calling or visiting.
- Avoid texting when in the company of friends and family.
- Limit time on Facebook and other social media.
- Breathe deeply when feeling anger or anxiety.
- Donate food and clothing to the food pantry and Servants to All.
- Add physical activity or take a walk each day.
- Read a chapter of the Bible each day.
- Write down something you are grateful for each day.
- Listen more, to others and to God.



SCHUYLKILL HAVEN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Bloodmobile

Thursday, March 9, 1-6 PM

Jerusalem Lutheran Evangelical Church, 252 Dock St.

Every two seconds someone in the USA needs blood. A person can donate blood every 56 days. The donor's body replenishes the fluid lost from donation in about 24 hours. Anyone 17 years or older and in good health is eligible to donate. One pint of blood can save up to three lives.

Monthly Food Pantry

3rd Friday, 1 PM

March 17 & April 21

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.

Council of Churches Volunteers Recognition

Sunday, March 19, 3 PM

First United Methodist Church will host a dessert to recognition and to thank the many volunteers who organize the food pantry, blood bank, and other community ministries to assist people in need.

Council of Churches Meeting

Tuesday, March 28, 7 PM

We meet at St. Ambrose Church to coordinate monthly food pantry distribution, bi-monthly blood drives, and other community ministries.

THANK YOU

Thank you to the congregation for your generous Christmas gifts to the church staff and for your kindness toward people in need at Christmas, as you provided gifts for children through the Salvation Army and Bethany Children's Home, and Christmas gifts and dinner for two families.

Many organizations wrote to the church to thank you for your generous gifts in 2022. The letters are posted in the office hallway.

Thank You to the Congregation from a Homebound Member

Thank you so much for the Christmas "goodie bag." Sometimes the smallest gift is the most meaningful and appreciated. The candle! Most days and many nights "This Little Light of Mine" goes around in my mind. It brings light into my darkness. God bless you.



SOUL (Seniors Out to Lunch)

All adults are welcome to join SOUL for lunch on the second Tuesday of the month at local restaurants. **The time has changed to 1 PM.** Call Iris Weller at 570-366-0897 if you would like to attend.

March 14 – Hoss' Steak House, 206 Pottsville St., Cressona
April 11 – Mustard Seed Café, 110 E. Market St., Orwigsburg

STEWARDSHIP

Boiler Replacement

The congregation adopted a three-year plan in 2019 to replace \$37,000 borrowed from the Kline Fund for our new boilers. \$9,492 has been received to date. Thank you for your continued contributions to pay back this expense. Mark your gift "Boiler Donation" when you give it to the church or look for specially marked envelopes in the Narthex.

Everything We Have is A Gift from God

Life is the first and greatest gift we receive. In gratitude for God's generosity, we serve God with love. The time we have is a gift from God. Jesus is the perfect example of how we use the gifts God gives us to thank God. Through our personal relationship with Jesus, we find a rewarding way of life, enriched, and deepened every day. As we prepare for Easter, we marvel that God gives us life not only on this earth but life everlasting. When we give regularly, generously, and honestly, our giving becomes joyful.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

PENNSYLVANIA SE CONFERENCE UCC

Thank You for Your OCWM Support

Rev. Bill Worley, PSEC Conference Minister, thanked First UCC for helping the PSEC gather 2022 goal of \$738,627 for Our Churches Wider Mission. In the UCC, although we affirm the congregation is the fundamental unit of mission, mission is not just local. We are connected to one another across boundaries of neighborhood, class, race, and national borders. OCWM supports ministerial training, mission work around the world and in the USA, including 112 missionaries in 44 countries, and 55 military chaplains, as well as Justice and Witness Ministries, Local Church Ministries, and Wider Church Ministries.



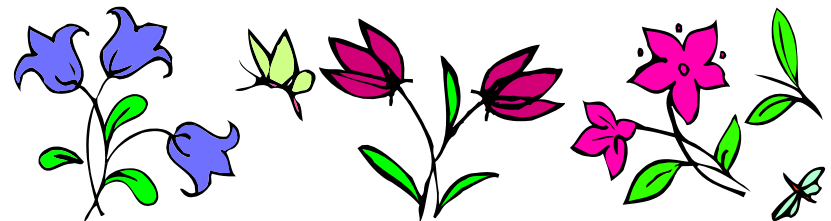
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3/1- Gail Kerschner (1957) | 3/23- Austin Boyer (1999) |
| 3/2- Justene Frushon (1987) | 3/24- Carla Keller (1967) |
| Jeniva Unger (1975) | Rachel Crumrine (1984) |
| Andrew Wagner (2015) | Billy Wingle, Jr. (1992) |
| 3/3- Danielle Guldin (1985) | 3/29- Lew Hummel (1947) |
| Peggy Zechman (1945) | 3/30- Jeff Spotts (1959) |
| 3/5- Craig Spotts (1964) | 4/1- Lynn Moyer (1955) |
| Matt Unger (1973) | 4/4- Kaede Fessler (2003) |
| 3/6- Leo Houck (1937) | Reese Frushon (2020) |
| 3/8- Theresa Luckenbill | 4/10- Iris Weller (1941) |
| Pat Painter (1938) | 4/11- Michael McCormick (2001) |
| 3/10- Kadence Sonon (2014) | Robyn Porter (1967) |
| Rhonda Thompson (1965) | 4/15- Corey Spotts (1991) |
| 3/12- Deb Mattera (1956) | 4/17- Corin Paul (1980) |
| Abigail Schrader (2009) | 4/19- Daniel Devlin (2020) |
| 3/13- Brad Moyer (1971) | Shawn Pritiskutch (2000) |
| 3/14- Dave Schrader (1971) | Macy Marmas (2012) |
| 3/17- Cheryl Stripe (1988) | 4/20- Jake Haeseler (2000) |
| Landon Stripe (2020) | 4/23- Emerson Spotts (2007) |
| 3/18- Carole Lee (1947) | 4/28- Melissa Fox (1975) |

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 3/01- Bill & Rhonda Thompson (1996) | 4/7- Don & Deb McCormick (1973) |
| 3/08- Al & Linda Deatrich (1986) | 4/15- Dwayne & Treasure Reichert (00) |
| 3/15- Michael & Sharon Wagner (2003) | 4/20- Kris & Pam Sonon (2013) |
| 3/16- Harold & Suzanne Schrader (1963) | 4/27- Brad & Angela Moyer (1997) |
| 3/18- George & Tracey Rondeau (2018) | |

If we missed an anniversary or 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.



EASTER FLOWERS – 2023

The season of Lent is here. Orders are now being taken for Easter Flowers that will adorn the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 9.

Please return this form, **along with payment**, to the church office.

Additional forms are available in the Narthex.

Deadline – Sunday, March 19

PLEASE USE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH ORDER.

Name _____

Phone # _____

TYPE OF FLOWER

LILIES ____ **DAFFODILS** ____ **TULIPS** ____

In **HONOR** of _____

In **MEMORY** of _____

BY: _____

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

COST: \$14/plant & PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER!!!

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 week. Flowers can then be picked up during the regular office hours (Weekdays, 9 AM – 1 PM).

Any flowers that have not been claimed will be given away.

SPRING POTATO FILLING SALE

Sponsored by:

First United Church of Christ

110 Route 61 South

Schuylkill Haven

385-2049

Order Deadline: **Sunday, March 19, 2023**

Pickup: **Saturday, April 1, 9 AM – 12 PM**

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE #: _____

_____ Containers @ \$9 each = \$ _____

Each Container holds 2 pounds of filling.

That’s \$4.50 per pound.

PAYMENT IS DUE WITH YOUR ORDER FORM