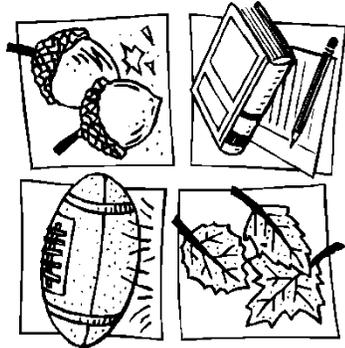


FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
110 ROUTE 61 SOUTH
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, PA 17972
Rev. Ms. Shawn D. VanDyke, Pastor
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Serving God through Christ; Serving Others with Love

Information Deadline for the
October/November 2023 NEWSLETTER
is Sunday, September 17!!



FIRST CHURCH HERALD

Vol. 42, Issue 4

Newsletter of First UCC

Sch. Haven, PA

SEPTEMBER 2023

Tell me,
WHAT IS IT
you plan to do
WILD WITH YOUR ONE
& PRECIOUS
life?

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

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS – 9 AM - 1 PM (Monday-Thursday)

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 – Sue McGovern

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

2023 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.

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

SALUTATIONS FROM SHAWN

A Wild and Precious Life

August is at its’ end. The summer is drifting into memory as the public schools open, Penn State’s parking lot is overflowing, and the first leaves turn to shimmering red. The words of Mary Oliver help us cling to these waning days of grace and light through part of her poem, “*The Summer Day*”.

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?...

I don’t know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

In the gospel readings for the fall portion of the Season of Pentecost, Jesus prepares his disciples for his death on the cross. With each Sunday’s reading, while he prepares to die, he teaches his disciples how to live.

Jesus used his one wild and precious life to teach us how to live, so that we can find what is precious in each day. That can be hard. News of the day seems filled with a sense of growing disaster, as we hear of daily acts of violence, listen to insults exchanged by people claiming to be children of God, and see the impact of untreated mental health issues, ignorance, and poverty.

Yet as we follow Jesus, we see God at work in the world, encouraging us to do what is good and right, as we place *serving God through Christ and serving others with love* as our highest priority. Jesus used his one wild and precious life to save us from sin and death, so that we can live fully as people of God. When we pay attention to the life that is all around us, we can see the endless blessings and give thanks to God for the incredible wonder of creation, including the wild and precious life of each one of us.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Shawn

Join us Sunday, September 10, at 9 AM for fellowship as we gather in God’s presence to celebrate Jesus’ wild and precious life.

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP

A Wild and Precious Life

We can counter the negativity in the world as we remember Jesus' wild and precious life, celebrating his gifts which give joy to our lives.

September 3

14th Sunday after Pentecost; Communion

Psalm 105:1-6

Colossians 1:1-14

Matthew 16:21-28

A Wild and Precious Life

Give Thanks to the Lord

What Christ Has Done

Jesus Predicts His Death

September 10

Faith-Full Sunday, 15th Sunday after Pentecost; Confirmation Orientation

Psalm 149

Colossians 1:1-2, 15-23

Matthew 18:15-20

Tell It to the Church

Sing a New Song

The Person and Work of Christ

How to Treat a Believer Who Sins

September 17

16th Sunday after Pentecost; Just Peace Sunday

Fall Newsletter Information Deadline

Psalm 148

Colossians 1:1-2, 24-2:1

Matthew 18:21-35

Settling Accounts

Praise the Lord from the Heavens

Paul's Mission and Concern

The Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor

September 24

17th Sunday after Pentecost; American Indian Ministry Sunday

Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45

Colossians 1:1-2, 2:1-5

Matthew 20:1-16

The Usual

Give Thanks

With You in Spirit

Parable of the Workers

FAITH-FULL SUNDAY

As we return to a full church schedule on Sunday, September 10, join us for **FAITH-FULL Sunday**. Breakfast fellowship will be available at 9 AM in the narthex and then we will move into the sanctuary for worship. Friends are more than welcome.

NEW MEMBERS SUNDAY

New Members Welcome. If you are interested in joining the church as a member, please talk to Pastor Shawn. New Members' Sunday is September 17.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Communion & Food Pantry Donations

September 3

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 10

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 17

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.

Meat BINGO Offering Envelope

September 24

The envelope offerings collected for the Meat BINGO will go to the general budget and help supplement the fundraisers. Fall Meat BINGO dates are September 16 & November 4.

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 2023
plus a comparison to July 2022 & 2021.

	July 2023	July 2022	July 2021
TOTAL EXPENSES –	\$146,269.96	\$145,916.17	\$143,337.32
REVENUE –	\$ 44,533.91	\$ 42,467.60	\$ 40,941.91
Resources from Kline Fund –	\$ 97,830.00	\$100,600.00	\$104,800.00
TOTAL REVENUE –	\$142,363.91	\$143,067.60	\$145,741.91
Gain/Loss –	\$ -3,906.05	\$ -2,848.57	\$ 2,404.59

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.

CHILDREN

Children's Church

Children's Church is available (nearly) every Sunday on request. Please speak to the greeters at the front door or to Delia Edling if your child is interested. Thank you to Delia who continues to serve as the Children's Church teacher every Sunday when she is able.

Prayer Vigil for Children September 10 through October 15

During the annual Prayer Vigil for Children, you are invited to pray for: Children who are alone; afraid; disabled; ill; bullied; and poor. Children coping with the impact of health issues, including mental health needs. Children in our church and community; this nation; and God's world. The church's youth will lead us in worship on Sunday, October 15, as we conclude the Prayer Vigil for Children.

Preparing Children for Communion: Sunday, September 24

During worship on September 24, we will consider the sacrament of communion. With their parents' permission, children are invited to receive their first communion on World Communion Sunday, October 1. At First UCC, parents decide when their children may receive communion as they come to believe in Jesus Christ.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Bible Study: A Full Life with Christ

Join other church members to explore the Letter to the Colossians, tentatively scheduled for Monday evenings from 7-8 PM, beginning September 18.

CHURCH OFFICE UPDATES

Church Office Closed:

Friday, September 1 & Monday, September 4 (Labor Day)

Staff Vacations:

Jen will not be in the office on Tuesday, Sept 19 & Wednesday, Sept 20

CONSISTORY

A car show was held August 5, with a profit of \$1,005. The church will have tables near Spotts Insurance on Main Street on Borough Day, September 30. Please sign up to help. Consistory meets Tuesday, September 12 at 6:30 PM. All Consistory meetings are open to church members.

CHURCH FUNDRAISERS

Borough Day Fund Raiser

Saturday, September 30

Baked Goods, Pierogis, Hamburgers, Hot Dogs and Beverages
Baked good donations are needed. Volunteers are needed for two hour shifts to sell food. Please call the church office at 570-385-2049 if you can help.

Meat BINGOs

Saturday, September 16 & November 4

Please sign up to donate food items to sell and/or donate your time to help with the event. Doors open at 11 AM; games begin at 1 PM. Admission is \$20. Specials & Raffles are extra. Food and refreshments will be available

Friends Helping Friends, Boscov's

Wednesday, October 18

Buy a 25% shopping pass for \$5 to use on most purchases at Boscov's Tuesday, October 16. The church will keep the \$5 for every ticket sold. The day includes refreshments, entertainment and prizes. Please contact Carrie Ann Klinger at 570-728-0173 to buy your shopping pass ticket or if you would like to help sell the shopping passes for the church.

Filling Sale

Order Deadline, Sunday November 5

Do you need filling for your Thanksgiving dinner or do you just need to restock your freezer? An order form will be in the October/November newsletter.

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

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. (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.

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

One Rock One Community FREE Music Festival

Saturday, October 7, 11 AM – 6 PM 1008 Rock Rd, Pine Grove
Experience the power of music and fellowship at One Rock One Community. Our festival is for everyone who loves gospel, bluegrass, and contemporary Christian music and wants to connect with others in our community. It is a day of FREE fun for the whole family!

GriefShare, 2nd & 4th Sundays, 1:30 PM, Bethesda EC Church

GriefShare is for people mourning the death of a loved one, even if that death happened years ago. For more information call 570-739-2241.

Schuylkill County Walk for Recovery

Thursday, September 7, 5 PM Registration, 7 PM Walk, Island Park
Schuylkill County Drug and Alcohol, 570-621-2890. Register online.

Hope and Resources for Individuals and Families Living with Substance Abuse Disorder and Mental Health Challenges

September 21, Penn State Schuylkill 5-6 PM Vendors; 6-8 PM Presentations
Join us to learn about resources and support for all stages from prevention and intervention through recovery. Register at schuylkill.psu.edu/hope.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation Organizational Meeting Sunday, September 10, after Worship, Kline Room

Young people, sixth grade and older, are invited to affirm their baptism into the Body of Christ through the Rite of Confirmation. Youth and their parents or guardians are invited to an organizational meeting in the Kline Room after worship on September 10. A weekly class time will be scheduled. The confirmation process is a two-year program including weekly worship, weekly class September through May, serving as acolytes, and participating in periodic church activities. If you have questions, please talk to Pastor Shawn.

Pastor Shawn & Delia Edling's Annual Challenge to the Confirmands:

PS and DE are challenging the CS to see who can raise more money for the CROP Walk against hunger on Sunday, October 1. Information will be provided at the organizational meeting on September 10. For more information on the CROP Walk, see the information under "Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches."



HEALTH

September is National Suicide Prevention Month

There are an average of 123 suicides each day in this country. It's the tenth leading cause of death, second leading for ages 25-34, and third leading for ages 15-24. For more details, visit <https://nami.org/Get-Involved>. Call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

HOSPITALITY

Welcoming the New and the White & Blue in God's Pews

During fall, guests are likely to visit us for worship. With Penn State back in session, students may join us for worship as well. God draws people into the church, so our effort to welcome "God's Guests" is part of Christian hospitality. Simply say hello, smile, introduce yourself, show others where to find a bulletin or hymnal, invite them to stay for fellowship, and welcome children to be children (and strangers to be strange, as we all can be).

THIS MONTH'S MISSION

Stock the Nurse's Pantry!

Alison Luckenbill Marmas is the school nurse at Blue Mountain High School, and mother to confirmands Matthew and Macy. Nurses often provide emergency supplies for students in need. Alison needs: socks/underwear (various sizes welcome), sweatpants (many students spill things on themselves and don't have a change of clothes in high school and middle school), individually packaged snacks (nothing with peanut butter) and bottled water. Ali notes "a lot of my office visits I can link to mild dehydration, so I usually buy bottled water to hand out." Place your donations in the marked box in the Narthex or drop them off during office hours. The students will know that the church and God care about them.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Bell Choir Rehearsal Begins Sunday, September 17

Join the Bell Choir after worship in the Music Room, as music for fall is prepared. If you have questions about the church's music program, you can contact Jacquie Engel, our music director, at 570-971-4195 or jengel800@gmail.com.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Monthly Food Pantry **3rd Friday, September 15, 1 PM**

Food or monetary donations are needed to feed people in 170-180 households in our area who receive food every month through the Council of Churches Food Pantry. Food is distributed on the third Friday of each month at the Food Pantry, located on Market Street behind Evans Delivery.

Bloodmobile **Thursday, September 21, 1-5 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. A person can donate blood every 56 days. The donor's body replenishes the fluid lost from donation in about 24 hours. You must be at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds and be healthy in order to donate blood. One pint of blood can save up to three lives.

Council of Churches Meeting **Tuesday, September 26, 7 PM**

Jerusalem Lutheran, 252 Dock St, will host this meeting, open to all church members. The Council of Churches provides emergency assistance for homelessness and utilities and organizes a monthly food pantry. First Church needs two lay representatives to serve on the Council. Talk to Pastor Shawn if you are interested in community ministry.

CROP Walk **Sunday, October 1, 1 PM** **Begin & End at the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry**

Enjoy a beautiful walk AND raise money to feed hungry people. Ask for a participant's envelope from Pastor Shawn. Registration begins at 12:30 PM, with the walk kick-off at 1 PM. Register on-line, inviting their friends on social media to support them, at www.crophungerwalk.org/schuylkillhavenpa.

THANK YOU

Thank you to **everyone** for your support over the summer! You met the church's needs with generosity, increasing the love of God between neighbors, using your gifts to share God's gift. Special thanks to **Todd Roberts, Penny Shade, and Darrell Spotts** for all their work maintaining the church property over the summer.

Notes expressing thanks to the church for a variety of generous gifts have been received from church members, the recipients of the Kline Tithe, and Seeds to Grow Mission gifts. They are posted on the bulletin board near the church office.

PSEC

The Keystone Project

The Conference Ministers of the four Pennsylvania Conferences gathered to discuss issues confronting the church. Conversation focused on confronting divisions and hostilities in the world while meeting the responsibility to answer Jesus' prayer, 'that they may all be one.' The Keystone Working Group was created to explore possibilities of providing support and nourishment to the local church. Visit psec.org and search 'Keystone Project' for more details.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The 34th UCC General Synod, held in Indianapolis mid-summer. The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson was elected General Minister and President. The frequency of General Synod meetings changed from two to three years. For details, visit generalsynod.org/news.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 9/2- Heather Corby (1980) | 9/14- Sean Spotts (1993) |
| Dwayne Reichert Jr. (2005) | 9/15- Becky (Sikora) Klimas (1983) |
| Tom Stewart Jr. (1974) | 9/18- Braylon Ludwig (2012) |
| 9/3- Suzanne Schrader (1943) | 9/19- Rusty Searle (1955) |
| 9/6- John Pritiskutch (1961) | Pastor Shawn (1958) |
| 9/8- George Rondeau (1961) | 9/21- Jim Haeseler (1972) |
| 9/9- Bill Corby (1970) | 9/26- Grayson Fessler (2008) |
| Mary Stewart (1978) | Marcia Harp (1964) |
| 9/10- Helen Kimmel (1963) | 9/29- Corey Mentzer (1981) |
| 9/13- Brian Harp (1963) | |

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

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

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.

