



First Family News

February, 2019

LETTER FROM THE DONIGIANS

We are just getting used to writing 2019, a new year with new possibilities. It is also a time to reflect on what happened in 2018. This was the focus of our recent congregational meeting. We celebrated what has been accomplished in the past year and challenged ourselves with new possibilities for the coming year. We were able to officially welcome Pastor Don back after his recent heart surgery and recuperation. It is so good to see him felling so well.

We were surprised and delighted to receive thanks from the congregation for our ten years of ministry here among you. The picture of the sanctuary is breathtaking and the plaque for the kitchen ministry is so encouraging. Thank you all for your support, your prayers, and your willingness to dream with us.

2019, a new year can mean different things to different people. If one has been chronically ill due to age or disease, a new year could look like more of the same. How can this been seen in a different light? One way is to trust in God's promise that present suffering is temporary. Heaven awaits. Another way is for all of us to pray mightily for improvement. For those who are able and willing, this is a huge opportunity. Visitation and encouragement from church members as well as pastors can really help those who are limited or shut in. In December a group visited some, who can no longer regularly attend worship, to sing Christmas carols. All were uplifted by the visit. The Women's Guild delivered Christmas cookies and Christmas angels to those who can no longer regularly attend worship. Each was delighted to be visited. Other ideas?

If we are without major physical challenges, a new year can include thoughts of improvement. Generally it is not easy to improve; if it were, we would already have done so. It is especially difficult to improve when something is trapping us. But that is when improvement is especially important because whatever entraps us hurts our quality of life and lessens our ability to minister to others. To help with this situation, we are presenting a sermon series about Celebrate Recovery, a Christian application of the 12 step program developed for alcoholism, but which has been extended to help in a whole variety of struggles with things that entrap us. This program helps us escape fears, anxieties, obsessions, addictions, and also lesser struggles in life. Please give it a try.

If any of us has a new idea that excites us and would be good to do, we can commit ourselves this year to give it a shot. If the idea is challenging, do not despair. One of the missions we have as a church is to encourage and help one another grow in faith and practice. If the idea is a one-person thing, we can all pray and encourage. If the idea needs a group to be accomplished, we can add brain storming and hands-on effort to prayer and encouragement. Just ask.

We pray that, as a church we can truly support one another through 2019.

Pastors Doug and Joyce

LETTER FROM PASTOR DON

It's so-o-o good to be back! Tuesday, January 8, was my first day back in the church office following my recent "medical vacation." It is hard to believe that it has been nearly three months since my October 19, 2018, cardiac aortic valve replacement surgery.

It is good to be alive! Physically, I feel much stronger with increased stamina and energy. Mentally, life seems much brighter with each day filled with ongoing gratitude and, spiritually, my gratitude to Almighty God and His healing spirit is at an all-time high!

This recent experience has given me a tremendous opportunity to be sincerely thankful for so much and so many! I am amazed at the gifts, the skill, the compassion, and the dedication of my cardiologist, my cardiac surgeon, the operating team, the nurses and support staff, and the visiting hospital volunteers. I am forever grateful to my wife, Sue, and my family, for their support, care, and love throughout my surgery and recuperation time! I am humbled and so thankful to my First Church Family for its caring support and prayerful presence as I was lifted up in a healing and loving spirit of well-being!

Yes, the past three months have been a significant time of change, a magnificent time of personal self-understanding, and a wonderfully miraculous time of healing and renewal.

And, yes, it is a joyous blessing to be back in your midst with renewed vigor and a rejuvenated spirit! Blessings on you and yours! See you around church! Grace! Peace! Love!

With you in Christ's Service!

The Reverend Dr. Donald E. Moyer

Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOMELESS MEAL - The Annual Homeless Meal served at Old First Church in Philadelphia is coming up in February. Once again, we are asking for donations of food and monetary donations for this meal. There will be sign-up sheets in the hallway for donations of food. Also **BROWNIES** and **COOKIES** in Ziplock bags are needed for the men to take out on the street the next day. Monetary donations can be taken to the Church Office with the designation "Homeless Meal," or can be given to Dean Wilson. Once again, thank you for your generosity.

IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER - You can watch Channel 69 WFMZ for the scrolling closing listings, visit their website: www.wfmz.com (click on "school closings," click on "church/worship/libraries"), or view our Facebook Page ("First United Church of Christ – Quakertown").

UPPER BUCKS CODE BLUE SHELTER – During periods of extreme, life-threatening weather (temperature or wind chill of 26 degrees F or below) between November 15 and April 15, room is available at the Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter located at the Quakertown Masonic Lodge, 501 W Broad St, Quakertown, PA from 9:00 pm to 7:00 am the following morning. A hot meal and hot breakfast will be provided. The Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter is a ministry of Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks (AHUB).

THE LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY PROGRAM (LIHEAP) may be able to help keep families safe and healthy. You can call the National Energy Assistance Referral (NEAR) project for more information. This is a free service providing information on where you can apply for LIHEAP. Call 1-866-674-6327.

STAYING CONNECTED with First Church has never been easier. Weekly emails are sent with all the latest news, announcements, electronic versions of this newsletter *days ahead of the mail*. Simply email the church office at info@firstucc.net and we will add you to the emailing! Also, if you are on Facebook, we

offer event announcements and reminders, Bible lessons, videos, and pictures at our Facebook pages. Simply “like” “First United Church of Christ – Quakertown” and/or “Youth Worx” and you’ll always have the latest news! Don't forget to invite your Facebook friends to also like the Church's Facebook pages.

EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT – SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP - Come out at 5:15 p.m. for our Sunday Evening service in the Chapel for a time of music, teaching, and discussion. Holy Communion is served on the first Sunday of every month.

GIANT GIFT CARDS are on sale on the first Sunday of every month in the Narthex after the service. YouthWorx has a limited supply of gift cards in stock, ready for you. Thank you.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES so please join us. First Family (baby - 2 years), Faith Factory (ages 3 – 14) and High School students will meet in classroom #6. All other classes will begin in their class location. You are welcome to invite friends and family to join you, everyone is always welcome at First Church! If you have any questions, please contact Linda Friday in the Church Office.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY - Join the girls on Wednesday mornings from 10:00-12:00 in the Chapel for Biblical study, prayer, and fellowship. We are working through the wonderful Max Lucado DVD series, *Traveling Light*, which focuses on the promises of Psalm 23. Come every week or just when you can make it! Everyone is welcome!

ADULTS IN THE CHAPEL – Join us Sundays: 10:30-11:30 a.m. Unshakable Hope: Building Our Lives on the Promises of God by Max Lucado. "This world has a tremble to it. There are things that seem unsteady in this life. But when we belong to God, it allows us to filter our problems through the promises of God. When we choose to be people of the promise, we choose to build our lives on the promises of God, not the circumstances of life. The stories of the men and women in Scripture were different, but the theme was the same: they were People of the Promise. Because of God’s promises, Noah built an ark on dry land, Joshua claimed the Promised Land, David became king, Peter preached the first sermon, and John caught a glimpse of the future. Like them, we can also build our lives on God’s promises, and trust him to keep them".

12 of the Most Significant Promises in the Bible include:

- You Are Stamped with God’s Image
- God Will Win the Victory
- You Are an Heir of God
- Your Prayers Have Power
- God Gives Grace to the Humble
- God Gets You
- Jesus Is Praying for You
- Death Has Been Defeated
- Joy Is Coming Soon
- You Will Have Power
- There Is No Condemnation in Christ
- Justice Will Prevail

..."And since His Word is unbreakable, Our Hope is unshakable".

Blessings, Lisa M.

CHURCH FAMILY

Congratulations to Katrina S., who was named the Junior Student of the Month at her high school.

On January 17, we welcomed baby David Benjamin into our church family. David is the son to Carolina and Daniel S. and joins brother, Anthony, and sister, Abigail, at home.

COMMUNION

Lenten Holy Communion will be celebrated on and Sunday, March 6 at the morning service at 9:15 a.m. and on Sunday, February 3 and on March 3 at the evening service at 5:15 p.m.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

At the Annual Congregational Meeting, 3 elders and 2 deacons were approved by the congregation to serve on council. Diana D. and Ryan M. were approved as new deacons for the 2019 council. We thank them for their willingness to lead First Church in these roles. A special thank you to past president, Karen W., and our 2 elders whose terms expired. Your service to First Church is very much appreciated!

COPIES OF THE 2018 ANNUAL REPORT are available in the Narthex. Contact the Church Office to have a copy mailed.

COUNCIL NEWS

At the regular meeting of the church council, led by Karen Wallace, on December 10, the following matters of business were attended to:

- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and bills were approved to be paid. Council approved the next meeting of council to be rescheduled to the first Monday of the month, February 3.
- Council approved the proposed 2019 budget.
- Annual Congregational Meeting agenda and details were planned for meeting scheduled to take place immediately after worship on Sunday, January 20.
- President, Karen W., thanked council members.
- Care Committee reported that get well, thinking of you, happy birthday, and sympathy cards are sent to Church Family.
- Christian Ed reported that the lessons on the Lord's Prayer have begun.
- Property brought up matters of sanctuary bulb outages and carpeting in Narthex.
- Kitchen ministries reported on December meal of ham served over 100 guests, Blessing bags were given out to attendees and to Head Start families. Overabundance Wawa and Giant items are being shared with local recovery house. New policy was made regarding Convection Oven – no meats to be roasted in oven due to splattering and cleaning issue. January meal will be ziti.
- Missions reported that 44 quarts of soup were sold, on January 13.
- Sacraments reported that 118 persons communed on January 6, Epiphany Communion.
- Safe Church reported that 3 panic buttons have new batteries and have been tested, set of walkie talkies have been purchased, looking to set up new Security Committee.

FIRST FRIDAYS AT FIRST CHURCH

Our 1st First Friday at First Church will be Friday, February 1 at 7:30 p.m. We will be showing a film written by Pastor Doug called "Gray Matters: It Will Change Your Mind." Popcorn and refreshments will be provided. Please join us as we kick off this new monthly gathering! All are welcome.

KITCHEN MINISTRIES

JANUARY COMMUNITY DINNER - The dinner in January served 77 guests. The menu was: Baked Ziti, sausage or meat sauce, green beans, salad, bread and butter, desserts and drinks. There was also many frozen items from Giant and Wawa for them to take home. Our next dinner will be Thursday, February 21. Please join us! *If schools are closed, the dinner will be cancelled.*

FEBRUARY FOOD PANTRY Items of the Month are: Pancake mix and syrup, pork and beans, canned fish and meat, canned fruits and vegetables, hot cereal. *(Food Pantry Items of the Month are coordinated with predictable sales cycle for each calendar month.)*

LOVE PACKAGES 2019

The Women's Guild will again be sending Love Packages to our college students and service personnel in February. It is difficult to keep track of all of our students and those serving our country. If you know of students or someone in the service, please get the mailing information to the guild as soon as possible. This includes college students that are living at home. Even if you provided the information last year and it has not changed, please let us know so that we are sure we have the correct address!

If you wish to join us in this project, we would accept cash donations, checks (payable to Women's Guild) or any of the following items: quick and easy microwaveable meals such as mac and cheese and packages of soup or noodle meals (PLEASE no cans or liquids), oatmeal, flavor packets for water, hot chocolate packs, individual snack crackers, cookies, protein bars, microwave popcorn, hard candy, gum, or other sweet treats. Items must be commercially packaged. Homemade food is not recommended and we cannot accept outdated items.

We can also send non-food items such as puzzle books, pens, pencils, post-it notes, highlighters, fragrance free dryer sheets or dry laundry detergent tablets. We have to be careful not to have fragrances that will transfer to the food!

Due to postal regulations, we cannot send anything liquid.

Please don't bring the items to the church until after January 20. Place items in the box marked "Donations for Love Packages" in the Parlor. **Deadline is February 3.** Questions? Contact Barbara or Judy or email womensguild@firstucc.net.

STAGE TASK FORCE

The next meeting is Monday, February 11 at 7:15 p.m. (Please note the change of date!) We will be reviewing phase 1 punch list items (remaining to do list) and begin to discuss next steps. Hope you can join us.

SYMPATHY

On January 12, Joe passed away; Joe was the husband of Connie, and father of Kellie (and Daryl), grandfather of Alicia, Cassie, Weston, and Jaryn.

THANK YOU

To my friends at First Church, thank you for the flowers I received recently. They bring such a loving message with their beauty. God bless each of you as we enter 2019. *Janice P.*

WOMEN'S GUILD

The February Women's Guild meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 5 (snow date is March 5) at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. Hopefully we will be warm and cozy inside while Joan and Joe J. share "There's No Place Like Rome." If the weather is questionable, please call the church office or Barbara to confirm that the meeting is being held. Everyone is welcome!

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

EVERY SUNDAY MORNING – Worship with us at 9:15 each Sunday morning for a time of hymns, scripture readings, choir anthems, and sermon following a traditional order of worship.

EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT – SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP - Come out at 5:15 pm for our Sunday Evening service in the Chapel for a time of music, teaching, and discussion.

FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

An intimate message from God to you.

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2 I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28 For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4 I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7 I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15

My question is... Will you be my child? John 1:12-13

I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

*Love, Your Dad...
Almighty God*



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FEBRUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

