



First Family News

March, 2019

LETTER FROM THE DONIGIANS

Have you walked down the Sunday school hallway lately? If you have, you must have noticed the prayer web on the wall. This has been a project of our children, but the entire church community has been invited to join. It's easy; just stop, say a silent prayer, then take a piece of ribbon that is provided and tie it somewhere on the web.

We have done this several times, and it is a very satisfying thing to do. But it is more than just satisfying for the person tying on the ribbon. It is almost overwhelming to take a step back and see the entire web as a whole. So many ribbons. So many prayers. Sometimes just a visual display can speak volumes. If you have ever visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, you know what we mean. It's just a big slab of granite but the name of every soldier who died during the war is inscribed on that granite. Simple. Almost stark. But the meaning, deeply felt, cannot be denied.

The prayer web works in much the same way. To think of all the people taking the time to make a special effort to pray for someone and then to mark that prayer with a ribbon is a poignant thought. When we walk down that hallway we often stop, look at all of the ribbons/prayers there, but we also take special attention for the ones we have placed there ourselves and remember the prayers that we have added. And then we add another ribbon or two.

If you haven't seen this prayer web recently, please take a few minutes and walk down the hallway. Take note of how many prayers have been prayed in just the spot where you are standing. Add a ribbon or two yourself. And consider all of the prayers that have been offered over the years within these walls. Consider all of the prayers that have been offered just this year here in Quakertown. Consider all of the prayers that all believers everywhere offer every day. Wow! And God hears them all, values them all, answers them all in God's own way. Scripture tells us that this is so. Psalm 116:1 says: I love the Lord because He hears my prayers and answers them.

We will soon be entering the Lenten season, a time of personal reflection and prayer. Hold tight to this scripture; visit the prayer web; pray for all the people who are important to you. God will hear and God will answer, not necessarily in ways we have decided would be best, but in ways that are God's ways. A visit to the prayer web would be an ideal way to begin to prepare our hearts for Lent.

Blessings and peace,
Pastors Doug and Joyce

LETTER FROM PASTOR DON

The Season of Lent begins on March 6: Ash Wednesday. Those of us who call ourselves Christians recall various traditions and practices over the years that have been part of our personal Lenten experience. Perhaps most familiar is the receiving of ashes, a long-time practice for our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, but also, a growing tradition within the many Protestant communities of faith such as our own.

Why ashes? One understanding is that the ashes of Ash Wednesday represent the dust that you and I essentially are, and which we will be even more when we die. And yet, the "ashes" point us to a life-giving message: namely, that it

is this same dust that we are and will be that God takes and gives new life.

Many years ago a certain man wrote to the Department of Agriculture regarding the “dandelions” in his lawn. The man wrote: “Dear Sirs: My lawn is infested with dandelions. I have pulled them and sprayed them. I have used every device known to humanity. But still the dandelions keep multiplying. I am at my wits’ end. Can you help me?”

The Department wrote back: “Dear Sir: Since you cannot get rid of your dandelions, we suggest that you learn to love them.”

There are dandelions in everyone’s life that must be accepted. Maybe it is... a physical disability, a struggling, stress-filled marriage, not as much intelligence as one would like, a missing skill, or a job or career wherein one feels trapped or unfulfilled. Although we may not appreciate any and all of these “dandelions” in our lives, there are things about us that we need to learn to accept.

It is when we have accepted ourselves because God accepts us, that we can be honest about ourselves. It is when we are accepted by God and honest about ourselves, that we have freedom. It is when we sense that God is leading us to use that freedom to give ourselves to Him by caring about each other, that we have been moved from ashes to new life.

May this Lenten Season be one of acceptance, freedom, caring, and new life for you and yours! May we all strive to embrace (and even love?) all those dandelions that decorate the lawn of our lives!

Blessings on you and yours!

Grace! Peace! Hope! Love!

With you in Christ’s Service!

The Reverend Dr. Donald E. Moyer

Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME begins on March 10. Don’t forget to “spring forward” or you might be late for church!

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”).

JUNE 26 – IRON PIGS BASEBALL – Join Steve Filko and his church, Trinity Episcopal in Bethlehem at the June 26 game against the Rochester Redwings (Minnesota Twins)! Tickets are \$11 each. Sign-ups will take place starting **in April** at the S.I.G.N. board or call the Church Office.

MAKING AN IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY - Did you know that within our community, a ministry of service has been developed between one of our local churches and an elementary school? For about an hour a week, church volunteers are going into the classroom as teacher’s helpers. These volunteers usually help students with reading or math issues, but sometimes they help the teacher with other classroom tasks. First Church is excited to be joining other local churches in this successful ministry. Would you be interested in volunteering within our school district in this way? Multiple clearances must be obtained, but we can help you in this process. Please contact Lisa in the Church Office or speak with Nadine about this exciting ministry.

WOMEN’S RETREAT OPPORTUNITY – The ladies of First Church are invited to join me for the East Swamp Women’s Retreat, “Believe, Behold, Become,” on April 5-7 at Spruce Lake Retreat Center in Canadensis, PA. \$160 covers 2 nights’ lodging and 5 meals. Come away for a weekend of worship and study and be encouraged to grow your faith as you live out your life story, wherever you may find yourself today. For more information, talk with Lisa in the Church Office. To register <https://escregistrations.churchcenter.com/registrations/events>

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).

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

Mark your calendar – VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL will take place on July 8 through 12. We will be “traveling” to Athens and joining Paul on his Dangerous Journey!

ADULTS IN THE CHAPEL – Join us Sundays: 10:30-11:30 a.m. We are continuing with Unshakable Hope: Building Our Lives on the Promises of God by Max Lucado. Join us!

COMMUNION

Holy Communion will be celebrated on the following *Sundays at 9:15 am (unless otherwise noted)*

- Lent Sunday, March 10, 9:15
- Maundy Thursday, April 18 7:30 pm
- Good Friday, April 19 7:30 pm
- Easter Sunday, April 21 7:00, 9:15 & Noon
- Pentecost Sunday, June 9, 9:15 am
- Summer Communion, July 28, 9:15 am
- World Wide Communion Sunday, October 6, 9:15 am
- Advent Sunday, December 1 9:15 am

Holy Communion will also be celebrated on the first *Sunday evening of every month at 5:15*, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1

CONDOLENCES

We give our condolences to Bill and Jennifer H. and Kate and Travis and their families and friends at the passing of Bill's father, Kate's grandfather, and Elijah, Aria, and Ivy's great grandfather, who passed away on Wednesday February 6, in Florida.

COUNCIL NEWS

At the first regular meeting of the new church council, led by Alyse F., on February 4, the following matters of business were attended to:

- New President, Alyse F., welcomed new council members. Council members reviewed duties and responsibilities of deacons and elders.
- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting were approved, and the bills were approved to be paid. The next meeting of council was scheduled for March 11.
- The Finance Committee is investigating way to realize more income on our investments.
- One Dream Mission Team Golf Outing is scheduled for June 7.
- 69th Strawberry Festival is scheduled for June 8.

- The Property Committee is looking into installing telephone in the kitchen, continuing to work on Narthex Carpeting and Sanctuary Lighting issues.
- Staff Committee reported that they will be advertising Linda Friday's position.
- Council agreed to meet for Saturday session on March 2.
- Discussions began to plan 2019 Food Truck Event.

FIRST FRIDAYS AT FIRST CHURCH

Our 2nd First Friday at First Church will be Friday, March 1 at 7:30 p.m. Bingo and Game Night! Bingo starts at 7:30, Board Games (bring your own) starts at 8:30. Doors open at 7:00 – Family Friendly Event - Join Us! All are welcome.

KITCHEN MINISTRIES

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY DINNER – It was a special night. The guests were entertained before and after dinner by the Wellspring Clubhouse Chorus. They added a lot of energy to our dinner. Eighty-four guests enjoyed turkey pot pie or hot turkey sandwiches, buttered beets, salad and the usual drinks, breads and desserts. Our next dinner will be on Thursday, March 21. *If schools are closed due to inclement weather, the dinner will be cancelled.*

MARCH FOOD PANTRY Items of the Month are: Pancake mix and syrup, peanut butter, and jelly. *(Food Pantry Items of the Month are coordinated with predictable sales cycle for each calendar month.)*

LENT 2019

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE – Join us on Ash Wednesday, March 6, for worship in the Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.

EASTER LILIES - If you would like to have Easter lilies and you are not currently on our list, please call the Church Office. Please specify if this is will be a one-time listing or if this is something you would like to do on a continual basis. Lilies are \$7.75 each and the deadline for order is March 27.

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS – Our popular Lenten Soup Suppers will begin on March 13. Wednesdays (continuing on March 20, 27, April 3, and April 10) at 5:30 p.m. Please plan to attend this special time together. We are looking for soup makers and dessert bakers, as well as donations of bread, crackers, butter, cheese, salads. Please sign up in at the S.I.G.N. board outside the Church Office. We will be watching the movie, “The Hiding Place,” the story about a Dutch family who hid Jews in their home. They were arrested and sent to concentration camps. The most famous of the family was daughter, Corrie Ten Boom. Most of her family died in the camps. She survived and wrote and lectured about it.

PHOEBE RICHLAND DAYTIME ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES – You are invited to attend worship services at Phoebe Richland on Ash Wednesday, March 6 at **10:00 a.m.** If you prefer not to drive at night, you now have the option to join folks at Phoebe during the daytime. There are two services, both beginning at 10:00 a.m., one is in the Benner Heller Memorial Chapel (located in Meadow Glen) and the other is held in the Health Care Center's multi-purpose room. All are welcome, please simply RSVP to Chaplain Jamie Moyer at 267-3711-4580 or jmoyer@phoebe.org so they have enough chairs set up.

MISSIONS

March 10 – MISSION SOUP SALE – Help support this year's mission team by purchasing quarts of homemade soup for \$8 each

MARK YOUR CALENDARS – Our 6th Annual Golf Outing is scheduled for Friday, June 7.

NEW PICTURE DIRECTORY

Please send us your latest photos because we are printing a new Picture Directory. Everyone is invited to provide the church office with a new photo. To ensure an updated photo is used in the new directory, simply do one of the following:

1. Bring in a photo to be scanned
2. Send your electronic photos to info@firstucc.net
3. Make arrangements with the church office to have a new photo taken during office hours
4. Make arrangements with a friend to have a new photo taken and submit to the church office

If a new photo is not provided, photos used in the 2016 directory will be used. If no photo was used in the 2016 directory and none is provided, only names and addresses will be listed in the back of the directory. *The deadline to submit a more recent photo of you or your family is April 5. The new directory will be available this spring.*

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

SANCTUARY LIGHTING - We are sure that most of you have noticed how dark it is getting in the front of the sanctuary. We are concerned and upset as well regarding the short time the incandescent bulbs have lasted in that area. New bulbs were installed everywhere in the sanctuary and most of the narthex in May of last year. The bulbs are rated at an average of 2,000 hours, there is no way that we have even come close to that amount of use. We have contacted the supplier regarding warranty replacements for the failed bulbs. During our 1/31/19 meeting we discussed several options to correct this situation. Since we must rent a man-lift to replace the bulbs we felt it was a good time to try some LED bulbs in the front of the sanctuary and the section leading up to the altar. This would be a good trial to see how the pastors, organist and choirs like the LED lighting before proceeding to replace all the incandescent bulbs throughout the sanctuary and narthex. At the same time, we will use any used but still working bulbs to replace remaining burned out bulbs. Please email Joe at info@firstucc.net with any questions or concerns!

STAFF COMMITTEE

IMPORTANT FIRST FAMILY NEWS - Linda Friday reports that her husband has retired! What great news for their family! However, this happy news will impact our First Church family. Because Linda will no longer have health insurance through her husband, she is seeking employment with health benefits. Therefore, Linda will be resigning as the Director of Christian Education (DCE). This is very disappointing to the Sunday School because her expert leadership has created a wonderful learning environment for the children. Linda will be continuing in her role until she finds a suitable position. Applications will be available in the office for anyone who may be interested in being considered for this position. We will be seeking a DCE, not a replacement for Linda, because Linda cannot be replaced. Thanks, Linda, for all your many contributions and for loving the church and the children.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (posted 2-14-19) Part time Director of Christian Education: children's ages, cradle through 12th grade. Responsible for Sunday School curriculum development and implementation, teacher recruitment and training, Vacation Bible School, and special children's services. Evidences of a calling to work with children, likelihood of success via education and/or experience, and creativity are important. Compatibility with the theology and mission of First UCC is essential; browse our web site for a sense of this. Strong people and teamwork skills are necessary to work in a high energy, multi-staff environment. If interested, please send cover letter, contact info, and resume to: Staff Committee, First UCC, 151 S 4th St, Quakertown 18951 or info@firstucc.net.

STAGE TASK FORCE

The next stage task force meeting is Monday, March 18 at 7:15 p.m. Stage Workdays are March 9 and 16 at 8:00 a.m. All are welcome!

2019 STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

MARK YOUR CALENDARS – Our 69th Strawberry Festival is scheduled for Saturday, June 8. Please watch for more information about the planning meetings.

THANK YOU

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who ready the newsletters for mailing each month! I appreciate your faithfulness and eagerness in assisting me in to doing this! What a giant task this would be if I was doing it on my own! *Lisa J.*

To the Women's Guild, Thank you so much for the delicious cookies. I enjoyed them very much! I also enjoyed Jackie's visit. I always look forward to her visit. Thank you for being so thoughtful. *Betty H.*

Dear Barbara and the Women's Guild, I want to thank you all for the nice surprised I received. My husband passed away on December 7 and a few days later, I was given a Christmas cookie assortment baked by ladies from your Women's Guild. Knowing you cared enough to share your delicious treats at this difficult time made me realize how blessed I am to have such a caring church family. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. *Alda M.*

To Fellow Guild Members, Thank you for the delicious gift of sweet treats – what a great variety. Jackie, Lynn, and I had a great visit too. *Best Wishes, Janice P.*

Dear Women's Guild, Thank you for the tin of cookies and candy and the angel ornament you sent me for Christmas. I felt like I was back in the Army. *Sincerely, Roger M.*

Dear Women's Guild Members, When a youth is placed at Bethany, they are scared, angry, and without hope. Most will come with the clothes on their back and if they are lucky, they may have a small bag of personal belongings. They are seeking for someone to listen, provide a guiding hand, and care about them. Though it may be difficult for them at first, our youth begin to see that there are so many new opportunities available to them at Bethany. Every resident not only receives the most basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing, but also opportunities to learn new life skills. They can attend school, participate in art, music and recreation programs, work/volunteer in the community, and build new friendships. Through these programs, they can regain control of their life and set a new path for their futures. Thank you for your generous gift of \$500 to Bethany's Brighter Future Fund. Your special gift to the Brighter Future Fund will provide our youth with a new foundation to become empowered young adults with positive goals. Thank you for thinking of our youth during this time of year. Your ongoing support will help them to continue to heal and take back their lives. *Sincerely, Carolyn Schultz Spano, Director of Development, Bethany Children's Home*

WOMEN'S GUILD

The Women's Guild wants to thank everyone that donated items or cash to our "Love Package" project. We were able to fill and mail/deliver boxes of goodies to 14 college students and one person in the military. The guild thanks everyone for their generosity!

Please accept our deepest gratitude for helping our Phoebe Richland Residents enjoy their best Christmas ever! The First UCC members really went above and beyond with the lovely gifts and how wonderfully organized everything was. Our residents are blessed to have you. Again, love and thanks and wishes for a happy new year from all of us at Phoebe Richland! *Annmarie Petitto-Thomas, Phoebe Richland Volunteer Coordinator*

The April Women's Guild meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. The program will be on Container Gardening by master gardener, Joan Pavlica. Everyone is welcome!

REDNER'S TAPES - The guild sincerely appreciates the congregation's assistance in saving register tapes from Redner's. Aside from offering and donations, this is our only source of income and it helps us to do projects such as our Love Packages and gifts for our shut in members at Christmas and Easter. In order for us to get the percentage, you must sign up for a Rewards card at Redner's. Ask at the service desk. You also will receive money back either for gas or as a credit on your order. We need the entire receipt – receipts that are not intact must be discarded. Receipts can be turned in at our guild meetings or to the office. *Thank you for your help!*

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.

First United Church of Christ
151 S Fourth St
Quakertown, PA 18951

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TIME VALUE – DO NOT DELAY

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER

