

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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First Family News

Summer, 2020

LETTER FROM THE DONIGIANS

Hello Wonderful Congregation! We have not sent out a newsletter since March, instead putting our efforts into video communication. This has been a steep learning curve for us and you. But our internet videos are being opened by a more people than attend on an average Sunday morning. It has shown us a new way to spread the Word! And you have sent us wonderfully encouraging feedback on these efforts. Thank you! We plan to continue using the internet even after we are able to gather again in our church.

In the March newsletter, we described some plans, which Covid-19 has changed. We anticipated taking a sabbatical in June and July. We have not done that, so that we could shoulder some of the responsibility during this trying time. We do plan to continue in the senior pastor role but to reduce our preaching frequency to twice a month as we take on visitation in place of Pastor Don. The other weeks will be taken on by Jon Bauman, who has received very positive feedback about the effectiveness of his preaching.

Jon Bauman has completed his seminary training and been awarded a Masters of Divinity degree from Missio Seminary. After fulfilling additional requirements of the United Church of Christ, he is now eligible for ordination. This means he is eligible for call. The Staff Committee and Council are now looking at the possibility of offering Jon an Associate Minister role here at First UCC. We support this possibility as we have had the benefit of working closely with Jon and feel he has many gifts for ministry. Since the Covid-19 shutdown, Jon initiated our internet program and has not broken stride, even while quarantined at home with a case of the virus himself. Going forward, please provide your thoughts and suggestions to requests from the Staff Committee and Council as we decide on a future path.

As Jon preached on July 12th, physically gathering together at church has great value in keeping us connected with God's love. So we want to find some way to allow this. The challenge is to do so safely. Churches that open without sufficient safeguards result in the spread of the virus often via asymptomatic carriers.

Here are our plans. Of course, Covid-19 can again throw in a monkey wrench.

On July 19, we will have a "soft opening" of a parking lot service. According to Dr. Mike Chmielewski, an open-air service is safest. On the 19th we will speak and preach in real time while the congregation can listen on car radios, FM band 90.7. By "soft," we mean attend only if you wish and be patient as we learn the ropes technically. This service will be recorded and will be provided-on the internet for those who remain at home.

On July 26, rain date August 2, we will provide a more ambitious parking lot service. We will welcome a very impressive group of confirmation students who are ready to publicly proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ and join our church as members. We will also share Holy Communion, using

prepackaged elements. There will be safely recorded music by Ed and a choir quartet as well. Again, we hope many of you can come in your autos but this will be recorded and sent out via the internet for everyone else.

If the parking lot model works, we will continue it in subsequent weeks. Outside worship is dependent on weather and the season. The safe church committee is working on safe ways to worship within our building. A decision on when to begin will depend on Council, what is going on with Covid-19 in Pennsylvania, and on each of you.

We miss you. We miss seeing God's love in your eyes and words and hugs. Christians in the past have faced many enemies and prevailed, with God's help. Now we face a virus. With God's help we will prevail over this enemy as well. *Blessings, Pastors Doug and Joyce*

NOTES FROM JON BAUMAN

It's been an odd time away from "the office," and an even harder time away from the church. When we all started sheltering at home in March, we thought to ourselves that it may only be for a few weeks.

We've gone on now for over 4 months where we haven't been able to meet together in person as a group. In that 4 months, we have been having a virtual church service every week, we have had a Bible study, we have had Council and other meetings, we've had phone chains to see if anyone needs anything, and we've maybe run into each other at the grocery store and excitedly waved from afar.

Being apart is not natural. We were made to be together as communities.

Being scared to go outside is not natural. We were made to enjoy the beauty of the earth.

Wearing a mask is not natural. We were made to breathe the fresh air.

But us not doing anything we can to protect other people...is also not natural. We are called to sacrifice of ourselves for the sake of others.

I know it's been a long time since we last saw each other, and that we may not be able to see everyone at once for a while, but I am thankful that we are striving to keep one another safe.

I had Covid-19 in June. It ruined vacation plans, took my sense of smell and taste, gave me a fever, and forced me to stay home. I had my groceries delivered, some of you delivered meals to me as well, and I did not even go out for a drive.

Before I started sensing that I was recovering, I was worried about it getting worse. I'm so thankful that it didn't. But I got through that time through your support through cards, texts, phone calls, and emails. I know I said this before to you, but it truly meant a lot to me.

You all showed me then the truth that community can be had even when we are apart. You showed me embrace at a time when we couldn't see each other in person. You showed me God through your own compassion and empathy.

What a beautiful community we have at First UCC.

On July 26th, we will have the opportunity to welcome 8 new members into our church. These prospective members were confirmation students who I have had the privilege of working with, along with the Pastors and the Ryglickis for this past academic year. They are a group of students that I have seen grow in their understanding, their willingness to question, as well as their willingness to follow Jesus alongside with us.

I know that they are joining us at a difficult time. I know that hugs and handshakes of welcome cannot be given. But our community of faith can still extend our warm and sincere welcome to these new members together. We can still convey to them that we are proud of them for getting through the

confirmation program, and we can also show our excitement towards the idea of their unique perspectives and personalities becoming a part of our church.

Please consider driving in to our service on July 26, or listening from a nearby parking spot and honking your horns when we congratulate and welcome these new members. And please consider sending them your thoughts through cards, letters, or emails. Show them the kind of care that you have shown me, and that you have shown to others during this time.

I cannot wait for our time together on July 26.

May God direct our steps. *Jon Bauman, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries*

COUNCIL PRESIDENT UPDATE

As I reflect back on the last several months, there are many things Council has achieved. As a group, we continue to meet on a monthly basis making sure we discuss our financial situation and pay our bills, share in the feedback from our church family, plan ways to continue the mission of the church, and connect with each other. It has been an adjustment for us to meet using the Zoom application, however attendance has been strong and interaction very effective. I am so very thankful for the support and continued leadership of this group even during these most challenging times.

For the purposes of this update I want to focus on some of the more pressing items Council has been focused on:

- **Congregational outreach:** As we entered this new environment with the pandemic impacting all of our lives, we quickly were called to act and connect with the congregation. As a Council we connected with over 200 of our members on the phone and provided care packages for several. In addition, launched a survey to assess the desire of folks to return to church and highlight what is top of mind/critical to make that happen. Finally, cards were sent to our members as a reminder we are thinking about and praying for them.
- **Financial stability:** In order to continue the workings of our church we felt it was important to apply for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan from the government. Not knowing what financial support would continue from our members, we quickly requested the loan and, thankfully, it was granted. This allowed us to pay our bills and staff with a stronger confidence in the continuation of our work. We continue to monitor our giving and will alert the congregation to any concerns.
- **Staffing:** As many of you know, Karen Wallace operated as our Interim Sunday School Administrator. She did an amazing job continuing the program over this last year, however was met with the COVID-19 challenge and determined it was best to end early. We did have a virtual egg hunt for Easter and weekly updates with teachings to the kids. Recently, Carolina Simon led us through a virtual Vacation Bible School week where we had close to 20 kids participate along with a number of volunteers. I am thankful we were able to continue to share in the work of God's love with our children even during these challenging times. Carolina is in the process of taking on the Sunday School Administrator role and we are blessed to have her called to action for our children.
- **Physical changes:** Recently, we have updated the sanctuary to include rows that are ADA compliant and allow additional seating to our visitors that require mobility assistance.
- **Associate Pastor Role:** Recently, the congregation received a postcard in the mail congratulating Jon on his graduation and requesting feedback on Council's intention to move him into an Associate Pastor role. This was the first of many steps in the process and we will continue the dialogue as we progress forward. Communication with the congregation has taken on different channels utilizing postcards, email announcements, virtual messages, as well as hand-delivery and/or mailing to about 100 of our members without email. Thank you for keeping the lines of communication open and adjusting to these changes. There may have

been a misunderstanding that the position of associate pastor has been finalized. Please understand that Jon, the Staff Committee, and the church council are still on the journey towards that goal. Jon has graduated and continues to share in the word of God through his messages and preaching. He recently had an interview with members of the Pennsylvania Southeast conference and has a few more steps to go at the Conference and Association level. The staff committee is still finalizing the job description, evaluation, and potential financial changes. In addition, we will take the proposal to Council for approval, meet with the leader of the conference to confirm the virtual process (including trial sermon and vote), and communicate with the congregation on the plan forward.

In closing, I hope you find this update informative and motivating. As we navigate this new uncharted environment, we ask for continued flexibility and support. I always try to remember that people have the best intentions in mind, and hopefully as a church community we can all focus on moving First Church forward. *Alyse Federsel, Council President*

SURVEY RESULTS

Dear Congregation of First Church, We hope this letter finds you healthy and safe. During the challenges of the last few months it is time for us to begin to think about coming back together as a congregation to fulfil our mission of loving God, helping others, and finding joy. Thank you for the responses received from the First Church survey that was sent regarding your thoughts, feelings, and priorities for the return to church. We received 98 responses from our congregation. This is a good response rate, coinciding with the 100-130 church attendees on an average Sunday and most families consolidated their feedback in returning one survey per household. This letter will share the results from the survey, focusing on three elements of safe worship.

When do people feel comfortable returning to church?

- About 62% of respondents feel comfortable coming back to the sanctuary at 50%-75% capacity of our normal Sunday attendance. As such, we will begin our return to church in a disciplined and measured pace. This will begin with our outdoor service scheduled for Sunday, July 26th with a rain date of Sunday, August 2nd. More details will follow regarding the logistics and format of the outdoor service.
- Approximately 30% of respondents feel comfortable returning to church now with 75% to full capacity.

What safety precautions do we expect when returning to sanctuary worship?

- Twenty precautions and/or actions were listed and rated by respondents to prioritize importance. Of these twenty precautions, five rose to the top with 75% or more of people categorizing these as essential to ensure safety when reopening. These items are also in agreement with CDC guidelines.
 - Social Distancing – The seating in our sanctuary will be spread out so we are mindful and personal and physical spacing and boundaries. We plan to utilize every third pew and stagger seating with one to two families in each row with 6 feet of distance between families. Fellowship Hall will be used as an overflow room to accommodate demand. A second service will be considered if needed.
 - Limited Touch Entry Points – Doors will be propped open before the service to limit contamination of surfaces. Doors will be closed once the service begins.
 - Constant Cleaning – We plan to clean and sanitize high touch surfaces in the sanctuary and other areas of the building after each event.
 - Hand Sanitizer – Hand sanitizer will be provided in multiple areas of the sanctuary for personal use.

- Masks – Governor Wolf has mandated that masks be required in all indoor facilities. We will be following this mandate and the CDC guidelines for wearing a mask during the service. When attending a service, we encourage you to bring your own mask. However, masks will be made available for those who do not have them or who forgot them.

How can I participate if I choose not to attend an in-person church service?

- We have had a lot of positive feedback with the online services that were introduced beginning in March. From the survey, we learned that 90% of respondents view the virtual Sunday Service and 72% are participating in the Daily Devotionals.
- 75% of respondents would like to see the online services continue even after we reopen our doors. We plan to make these virtual services available to the congregation after the return to church and into the future.

Thank you to all who responded to the survey. This is summary of what was important to the congregation. We greatly appreciate the participation and comments that provided valuable feedback to help keep us safe while at church. The responses were so useful in helping to determine the best path to return to church safely and navigate the challenges that we are experiencing. Please continue to share your feedback with the pastors and members of Council as we want to ensure that your voice is heard, and that we are communicating effectively. God Bless You! *Chad Kilhefner, Safe Church Committee*

SAFE CHURCH GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING

The leadership team of First Church has created return to church guidelines, considering government regulations and public best practices. It is our intention to provide information and safety precautions to help people make an informed decision about when they feel comfortable returning to church. We will hold our first outdoor service on Sunday, July 26th, at this point, we hope to return to indoor worship services in the sanctuary with the “back to school/back to church” season in early Fall.

Please note that if you have any hesitancy on returning to the building, it is better to wait. We look forward to the day when we can worship together. Online options are available, and will continue to be available, as we all personally assess our readiness and comfort with returning to the physical building.

The congregation will need to be mindful of their own health needs and issues prior to attending. If a member feels sick, or immune compromised in any way, then he/she should not be present and can join online instead.

Church Cleaning

1. Entire church will be thoroughly cleaned. Pews will be wiped down, bathrooms cleaned, doorknobs wiped, light switches, and microphones cleaned.
2. After each service pews will be wiped down and bathrooms cleaned.
3. Extra hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies will be kept on premises

Preparations for Return to Church Service

1. An online meeting option will be available for those who are afraid or unable to attend the service in person.
2. Additional services may be added to control crowds and accommodate worshipers at the 9:15 am Sunday service.
3. Bulletins will not be handed out. Congregation members may take bulletins when provided and they will not be reused. Announcements and schedule of worship will be projected onto the DIB boards during the service. QR codes for e-bulletins can be posted online

4. Bibles, hymnals, pens, informational cards, etc. may be removed from the backs of pews.
5. Signs will be posted about not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings (smile and wave).
6. Communion will be distributed without passing a plate or tray.
7. Offering will be distributed into a drop off box. Offering plates will not be passed around during the service.
8. Be mindful of social distancing while dismissing the congregation from worship. Pastors will consider dismissing back of church first, then moving to the front of the church.
9. Choir will be reintroduced later. Solo performances or members of the same family may perform. Members will be spaced out according to social distance guidelines.

Church Amenities during Return to Church transition

1. Fellowship will not resume during this time. Stay tuned to the guidelines to know when it is best to reintroduce these services.
2. Signs will be posted in the restrooms about washing hands.
3. Display hand sanitizer throughout the church.
4. Masks will be made available for congregation members who do not have them.
5. Multiple church services, at various starting times, will be considered during our “phase yellow” reopening allowing for sufficient cleaning time in between services
6. Building users/renters can resume operations, with a plan to address cleaning needs and agreement to observe gathering and distancing protocols.

Greeters and Volunteers:

1. Greeters will be assigned to the entrance. One greeter (unless from the same family) will provide a non-contact greeting. No handshaking or hugs. Greeters will be asked to wear masks.
2. Doors will be propped open or greeter will hold them open to ensure that congregation members do not have to touch the door.

During the Service:

Families should sit together and spaced 6 feet apart, alternating rows – w/ empty rows in-between if possible. Ushers will help people find seating and encourage appropriate spacing/distancing.

1. All congregation members will be asked to wear a mask during our “phase yellow” reopening. Please bring your own mask if you have one, if not a mask will be provided.
2. Everyone should use hand sanitizer upon entering the sanctuary and again when they are leaving the building.
3. Restrooms will be available with plenty of soap and sanitizer for people to use for thorough hand washing
4. Sections of the congregation will be dismissed in an orderly manner to encourage proper distancing upon exiting the sanctuary

For those not comfortable or not able to return to church, we understand and will continue to provide virtual worship options. Examples include:

1. Live streaming the 9:15 service
2. YouTube and Facebook lessons/testimonials/worship/music
3. Virtual prayer groups and council

Submitted by Chad Kilhefner, Safe Church Committee

2019-20 CONFIRMATION CLASS

Between October 2019 and June 2020, eight teens took part in a confirmation class with blessed results. All affirmed they were ready to publically announce faith in Jesus Christ and join our church

as (young) adults. We are planning this event during a communion service at 9:15 a.m. on July 26. This service will be held outdoors in our parking lot so they and we can remain safe from the Covid virus. Our lot will hold over 40 vehicles at safe spacing, so please come. Audio will come through your FM car radio set at 90.7.

As pastors, we were amazed at the maturity and depth of understanding expressed by this class. They made it very easy to teach and feel agape love for them. Alphabetically, they are Abbie Betz, Brianna Stoltz, Cora Moll, Kyle Charlton, Maddie Mann, Rebecca Stoltz, Sean Suida, and Stephanie Charlton.

During this time they were befriended by mentors who offered them fellowship, example, and advice. These, in the order of their confirmands, were Nadine Nagurny, Cheryl Yeakel, Lenora Walker, Joe Juretus, Sue Brunner, Beth Wilson, Chad Kilhefner, and Joan Juretus. These faithful people contributed greatly to each confirmand's understanding of Christian adulthood. We thank them. These mentors have written letters of introduction in this newsletter since we will be limited by physical distancing during the parking lot service.

In addition to we Pastors, the classroom teaching team included Jon Bauman and Joe and Karen Ryglicki. Jon provided theological grounding and, with Joe and Karen, personal experiences and real life applications. They did a fantastic job, proven by the progress made by the confirmands since last October. We thank them so much.

We also want to thank the families of these confirmands. Lisa and Chris Betz, Debbie and Craig Stoltz, Christine and Tom Moll, Kelly and Marc Jaxheimer, the Manns including Mary Anne and David, and Stephanie and Scott Suida not only provided transportation and encouragement during confirmation, but also provided them with a Christian foundation that made confirmation so rewarding.

We thank all of you and God for connecting us with these confirmands for this time. *Pastors Joyce and Doug*

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS – THE 2019-20 CONFIRMATION CLASS

Abigail Betz - 2020 a year to remember! I am so glad I met Abbie in 2019. We worked together on the November Community Dinner. She filled all the salt and pepper shakers and then we ate chili for dinner. She was one of the magnificent 3 Kings in the Children's Candlelight Service. Abbie is very interested in the arts. She played percussion in the school band and also accompanied them on the piano. Sketching is a favorite art activity. One of her projects is displayed in St. Luke's Hospital Upper Bucks. She is an enthusiastic Girl Scout who was involved in community service and fundraising projects. She has a sense of adventure and is looking forward to a trip to Germany in 2021. Abbie loves cats, especially Bella. In 2020 we communicated by text, Google Duo and social distancing in her driveway. Abbie was 14 on July 17th. She finished 8th grade at Strayer Middle School. All the best to her on her faith journey. It was a pleasure to meet and mentor her this year!
Nadine Nagurny

Kyle Charlton – Unfortunately, my interactions with Kyle were limited due to Covid-19 restrictions. The short time we did work together, I got an extremely positive sense when I had a chance to chat with him for the first time. Kyle is very thoughtful when responding to questions and always responded with a complete answer rather than “I don't know.” Kyle's main interests are music, with his drums, and geology, which is not your typical response from an 8th grade student, and he demonstrates independent thinking. We are planning a trip to Ringing Rocks County Park. Whatever tasks Kyle took on, he displayed commitment and I noted that he dislikes making a mistake when playing with the band. Kyle and Stephanie helped with one of our community meals. When given a job, Kyle was focused on getting it done right. We all also got to see the good-humored side of Kyle when interacting with his sister at the community dinner. As a congregation, we are blessed to

include Kyle as a confirmed member. Kyle will be entering Quakertown HS in the fall. We can all look forward to seeing his bright future evolve and the path he follows! *Joe Juretus*

Stephanie Charlton - Stephanie Charlton graduated from 8th grade at Strayer Middle School and will attend 9th grade at Quakertown High School. She is 14. Stephanie has a wonderful sense of humor. She has a twin brother, Kyle. Along with a strong family bond, Stephanie shares a passion for art, music, and a dedication to First Church. Stephanie plays volleyball and is active in Girl Scouts. She participates in marching band and orchestra playing the flute, guitar, and piccolo. Stephanie is talented in art; her favorite color is turquoise. Stephanie loves baking with her grandmother. Her future goal is to help people and work in the field of psychology. Stephanie has been active in First Church choirs, Sunday school, volunteering, and is involved in youth group. We participated and served at the Community Dinner together. There is no doubt that Stephanie will continue to flourish in her future endeavors and go on to deepen her faith as a Christian. It has been a wonderful experience getting to learn more about Stephanie. Part of Stephanie's Statement of Faith, "I believe humankind is loved by God, are meant to love everyone, are meant to renounce evil, do mission work, and have free will. I believe the Church enables people to serve, encourages faith, supports its members, provides sanctuary, and helps the community." *Joan Juretus*

Madison Mann - Maddie Mann is a beautiful, always smiling, 13 year old attending Strayer Middle School. She will be going into 9th grade this fall. With the virus, she missed playing in her school and travel softball games this spring where she plays 1st base. She likes to spend time at her grandparents' and great-grandparents' homes. Spending time with family is important to her. She has a sister, Macie, and a pit bull mix dog named Jada. She has a job this summer working at Big Estates, helping to deadhead the flowers in their gardens. She plans to study Criminal Justice in college, work for the FBI, and help solve crimes by studying the psychological thinking of criminals. She has volunteered at Bible school and helped out by serving at one of our community dinners. Maddie is a sweet, caring, fun-loving young girl with a great future. Sending her prayers that God will always be in her life, so she will have someone to lean on as she grows, learns and becomes who she's meant to be! *Love, Sue Brunner*

Cora Moll - It has been my honor and blessing to serve as a mentor to Cora Moll. Cora lives in Trumbauersville with her parents, Tom and Christine, her brother, Jonas, and her grandmother, Marilyn Moll. She is 14 yrs. old and will soon begin her freshman year at Quakertown Community High School. Her favorite classes are math and art. She loves animals and is a vegetarian. Cora is a Girl Scout and is also involved in many activities at First UCC. She rings bells in the Agape Choir and also sings with the Alleluia Choir. She has a heart for children and can be found most Sunday mornings helping in the nursery or in the kid's Sunday School class. I appreciate Cora's quiet and gentle nature. She is very creative and we have bonded over our mutual love of hand crafts. I especially enjoyed spending time together learning the art of needle felting. Because of Cora's interest, I was introduced to this unique craft and have been inspired to felt an entire corral of woolly creatures! Cora is currently working on a diamond painting. I look forward to our continued friendship and to being a part of her spiritual journey as she matures in her faith. I am proud of Cora and know that she will be a wonderful part of our church family. *Lenora Walker*

Brianna Stoltz – My confirmand is Brianna Stolz. Brianna goes to Strayer Middle School and will be going into 8th grade this August. Brianna lives in Spinnerstown with her dad, mom, and her sisters, Rebecca and Isabella. She has a hamster named Cream Puff. During Covid 19 we have exchanged letters and are texting back and forth. Unfortunately we were not able to get together. I was going to invite Brianna to the next community meal which I volunteer at, but due to Covid 19 that didn't happen. I'm hopeful we will be able to get together in the near future. I read Brianna's statement of faith and I was really impressed what she writes about the Holy Spirit. "I believe that the Holy Spirit connects us to God by entering those who believe. He binds believers together, gives us guidance and

in times of trouble he provides comfort.” I hope we will be able to see each other this fall in church.
Cheryl Yeakel

Rebecca Stoltz - I am honored to introduce the congregation to Rebecca Stoltz. Rebecca just completed 8th grade and is excited to enter into 9th grade this Fall. Rebecca is a very conscientious student. She has been a member of the band for 3 years playing the clarinet and chorus for 5 years. She is a member of the National Junior Honor Society, which she volunteers doing various community projects. Rebecca has participated in the Reading Olympics and Strayer Makers who build and help the school. Her favorite hobby is reading. Rebecca belongs to a close, loving family and she enjoys spending time with them and playing with her two younger sisters. Rebecca has taken a special interest in participating in confirmation this year. She purchased a journaling Bible and during this quarantine has focused on her faith and building her relationship with God even stronger. Rebecca possesses confidence in herself and has passed on that confidence to me, giving me pep talks when I've expressed being nervous before performing playing bells at church. She is a very kind and caring individual. We at First UCC will be blessed to have her become a member and more involved in our church. Congratulations Rebecca! *God Bless, Beth Wilson*

Sean Suida – Sean Suida is a student in the Quakertown Community School District. He is involved in sports and has found a passion in basketball. Sean is a polite and conscientious young man. Unfortunately, the current challenges due to Covid-19 have not allowed us to connect as much on a personal level. Congratulations on your confirmation, this is a big milestone moment in your life and in your spiritual journey to know Christ. I was inspired by your Statement of Faith, recognizing the importance of the advice the Holy Spirit gives us, guiding the spirit of life in our words and actions. The feeling of safety and truth found through Christ is something that I hope inspires you throughout your lifetime. I wish you great success and happiness in your personal journey. *Chad Kilhefner*

PROPERTY

There are several things that the property committee has been involved with during our period of Covid isolation. First, we have ordered the pew cushions and we expect delivery in the later summer timeframe. Some sanding and finishing work has been completed on the end of the sanctuary pews that face the courtyard, they had begun looking pretty bad due to the UV exposure. We have also been helping Steve F. with miscellaneous projects around the church, mostly work on the grounds.

The major project we have started recently is to try and figure out what is causing the imbalance of heating and cooling air throughout the sanctuary. For those that sit on the Park Avenue side of the sanctuary, you would have noticed that it is never as warm or cool on that side. We had one of the Dorn technicians in recently to inspect the ductwork that originates in the boiler room. When they built the church, many of the ducts were cast in concrete and they were lined with a “cardboard” like material we believe to provide some insulation. The technician found that a lot of this material had pulled away from the walls of the ducts and was blocking air distribution throughout the sanctuary. He was able to remove some of the blockage but not all, we are in the process of planning a “safe” way of getting further into the ducts!! *Joe Juretus*

MUSIC MINISTRY

The Music Department has endeavored to keep music going throughout the Covid emergency. Since we were unable to sing live in the sanctuary together, Denise Parker came up with the idea of recording the voices individually and mixing them into choral anthems. We dusted off some of our favorites and shared them with the congregation through the worship services and YouTube. Denise's bravery inspired me to try to mix my own recordings, which have come out great. Thanks, Denise!

The anthems work because our choir members are willing to record themselves alone (which is extremely nerve-wracking). Ed records his accompaniment separately. Either Denise or I edit the voices, which can take several days. After the vocals and accompaniment are mixed, pictures are

added to create a video. Thank you to all the people who have submitted pictures to make the projects extra special. Keep 'em coming!

The Chancel Choir has done the following virtual anthems:

Total Praise
This Little Light of Mine
You'll Never Walk Alone
How Great Is Our God
Lay Up Your Treasures in Heaven (coming Sunday 7/19)

The following individuals have also contributed solos:

Virginia Arana (multiple times--We love you, Ginny!),
Jon Bauman (who in addition to singing several times has videotaped many of the soloists)
Nancy Chmielewski
Carol Edge
Amanda Hahn
Christine Moll
Denise Parker
Ed Swartz (all the beautiful preludes, postludes and accompaniments)

Possible anthems to come:

River in Judea
Come to Jesus
How Can I Keep from Singing
Bridge Over Troubled Water

Also coming soon--a video to celebrate our eight Confirmands.

If you are interested in doing a solo or duet for the remaining weeks in the summer, please let me know (necvocals@gmail.com). Duets and solos can be performed safely in the sanctuary with social distancing practices in place. Thank you to all the people who have made our music contributions possible during the pandemic. We will let the parents of our children and youth singers and ringers know our plans for the fall as soon as we have them settled.

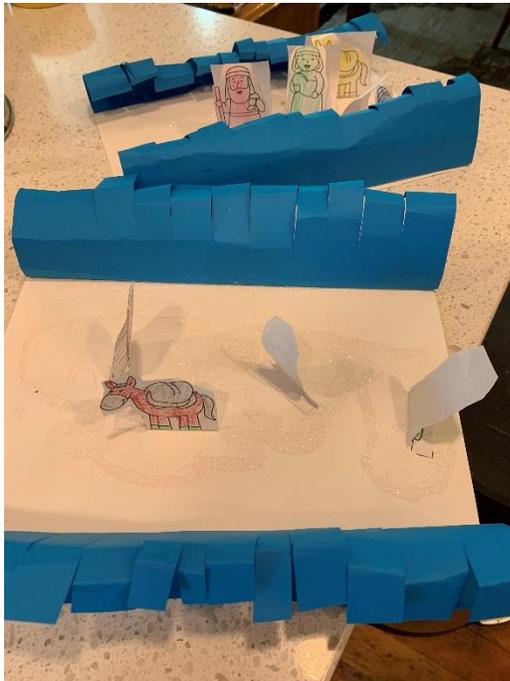
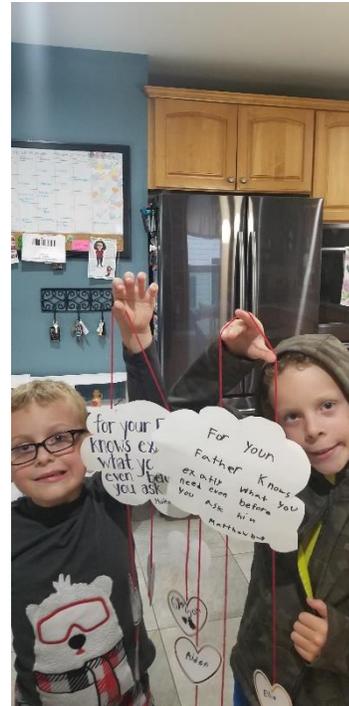
Stay safe and we hope to be singing live for you soon. Thank you to the congregation for watching our videos and sending your comments and suggestions. We could not do our projects without your support. *Peace, Nancy Chmielewski, Director of Music Ministries*

VIRTUAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

A First - There are so many things we are learning to do differently with the current pandemic situation. For our church, Virtual Vacation Bible School was a first! I was honored to be able to reach children and remind them of God's love during these times of uncertainty we are living. As Pastor Doug said, these were uncharted waters for me and our church, but it was from the heart.

We had 21 children participating in daily pre-recorded activities, incredible volunteers (I mean REALLY incredible) helping in so many ways, from prayers to videos, and so many other people who reached out asking how they could help. There is a long list of people to praise here, but we would run out of space, so my sincere thanks to ALL! The children were rock stars and did a beautiful job along with their grown-ups. My heart is full ☺. *Carolina Simon*

Enjoy some pictures!



FINANCE UPDATE

Where do we stand financially as of mid-year in this most unusual of years?

1. Giving – thank you to all for your continued support, whether electronically or by mail. Current Account Giving was at 93% of budget through June 30.
2. We were approved for a Federal PPP Loan in the amount of \$47,130 which has helped our finances through the past 3 months. We expect to meet the forgiveness criteria which require funds to be used primarily for payroll in order to maintain the number of employees and wages.

At least 60% of PPP Funds must be used for payroll costs. The balance can be used for certain allowable expenses, including Utilities.

- Existing cash balance and available investment income should help us make it through the summer months. Bills are paid current at this time. We do have outstanding loans still to be repaid to other First UCC funds and will be working on repayment plans in light of economic uncertainty through the rest of the year.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Income

Giving & Offerings	\$104,000	
Investment Income	\$ 41,000	
Rents & Other Income	\$ 13,000	
PPP Loan Funds Used	\$ 39,000	
Total Income		\$197,000

Expenses

Utilities	\$ 25,000	
Building, Office, Administrative	\$ 19,000	
Staff & Payroll	\$134,000	
Sanctuary, Worship & Activities	\$ 1,000	
Total Expenses		<u>\$179,000</u>
Net Income		<u>\$ 18,000</u>

SYMPATHY

Over the last 100 days, we have grieved losses in our church family:

Dolly Martin passed away on March 20

Margaret Treffinger passed away on March 26

Joe Ryglicki's cousin passed away from COVID-19

Don Roberts passed away on April 13

Raymond Ely passed away on May 20

Lynn Vandegrift's sister-in-law, Jeannie, passed away on June 1

Janice Peischel passed away on July 4

**First United Church of Christ
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SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER

