

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
151 S Fourth St
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www.firstucc.net

First Family News

October 26, 2020

Letter from the Donigians

Over time, we have become more and more aware of those of our community who place their health and safety in jeopardy just by going to work. Because of them, we have access to many vital services that make our social precautions tolerable, and even provide us with some bright spots. One of ours is a Starbucks latte, from their drive-in window.

The Quakertown Ministerium, pastors in Quakertown churches, wanted to thank the many, many organizations that have continued to operate, either fully or in limited fashion, and yet be safe.

Accordingly, a “driving parade” was planned. It was called a “Parade of Gratitude” and took place on Saturday, October 16, the day of Autumn Alive in years without a pandemic. We invited representatives of several of our community helpers – fire departments, police, food banks, the high school, St. Luke’s hospital and their EMT crews, the YMCA, the library, Code Blue, The Drop, and funeral homes. In a socially distanced, outdoor ceremony on the Quakertown High School parking lot, we gave them a certificate of gratitude and a yard sign (designed by Chris Betz) that says “Thank You.” Two of these “Thank You” signs are on Park Avenue and 4th Street on our church lot. Each organization representative responded with thanks for the recognition.

Following this presentation several of the Ministerium, led by Mike and Judy Schmauder in their vintage orange Volkswagen Thing, began to weave through Quakertown passing many of the locations of those we were honoring. Many had volunteers outside waiting to wave at us and we could toot horns and wave back. It was a fun and enjoyable time.

The “can do and be safe” attitude that led to this parade, is also alive and well in First Church. It is guiding us as we search for new ways to be faithful to God while obeying God’s command to love others as ourselves. For example, we are proclaiming God’s word in our sanctuary while addressing safety by upgrading our live streaming cameras and repairing our room ventilation. We have restarted inside Sunday School for all ages while equipping teachers, custodians, and the rooms with procedures and safety devices.

Possibly our biggest challenge yet is celebrating Advent. This season historically began with a free Thanksgiving dinner and included Christmas in Quakertown, the Christmas Workshop, the Children’s Candlelight Service and Living Nativity, and special Christmas Eve services. Covid has made every of these a potential “super spreader event.” How can we celebrate God’s love and keep

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His people safe? Council and our staff and everyone willing to help are working and planning ways to do both. Please pray for our success.

Blessings and thanks, Blessings, Pastors Doug and Joyce

Announcements

Mark Your Calendars! ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION for Jon Bauman has been scheduled for Sunday, November 22 at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary at First Church. *Registration (signing up) and following safe COVID procedures will be required for attending this event.* Pastors, friends and family of Jon will register first. In a week or so, we will open up registration and you can sign-up on a Sunday morning, call or email the church office to register your attendance for this event. Stayed tuned.

CONFIRMATION 2020-2021 - In looking ahead with hope, we are beginning to ask any who are of age if they would like to have a confirmation class this year. It would likely be a combination of zoom and in-person gathering, but those details are not ironed out yet. If you know of anyone in grades 7-12 who has not been confirmed yet, and would like to be, please contact Pastor Jon Bauman at jbauman@firstucc.net.

PASTOR APPRECIATION – On Sunday, October 25, Pastors Doug and Joyce and Pastor Jon were thanked for all that they give to us at First Church. If you would also like to send them notes of appreciation, we are sure they would be happy to receive them!

OFFICE HOURS - As of September 21, we have begun to have staggered church office hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during the hours of 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Pastors Doug and Joyce will be in the office on Mondays, Jon will be in on Wednesdays, and Lisa will be in on Fridays. Feel free to phone the office staff during these times. Visits inside with staff are by appointment only.

OCTOBER 4 WAS WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY. If you took participated in virtual communion, please notify the church office of your attendance.

KNIT ONE PRAY TOO has started meeting up again on the second Wednesdays of each month, beginning on October 14. Members of the prayer shawl ministry team joining together must follow COVID safety measures. The next meeting is on November 11 at 6:30. If you have questions, please contact Lenora W.

OFFERING ENVELOPES have been ordered and should arrive in about 4 weeks.

ZOOM WORSHIP OPTIONS – Please make a note of this, tell your friends, we have begun providing a Zoom worship option for calling in and for viewing. *As always, Facebook Live will be streamed at 9:15 and the recorded version will be sent by email later on Sunday.* Put this information somewhere so that you can access it if you need to share it with someone or if you need to be home on any given week.

ZOOM WORSHIP AT FIRST UCC

To call in from your phone (audio only) call:

1 301 715 8592

If required, please enter meeting ID 965 905 9323

To join the zoom video worship, please go to:

<https://zoom.us/j/9659059323>

Meeting ID: 965 905 9323

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS on October 31. Don't forget to "fall back" your clocks or you'll be early for church on Sunday!

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY is November 1. We will be recognizing our loved ones who have passed on in the last twelve months. If you have someone that you would like to be listed in our bulletin, please let the church office know by October 29.

SOUP SALES began on Sunday, October 25 and will run through November 22 to support the Thanksgiving dinner - \$7.00 per quart, 3-4 different varieties available each week. To sign up to make soup, please contact Karen W. or sign up on the sheet.

THANKSGIVING DINNER - Soup Sales from October 25 through November 22 will benefit the Thanksgiving Dinner. We are in the process of organizing an event for the community and congregation - in-person outside and grab-and-go style. Please reach out to Alyse F. or Daniel S. if you are interested in helping to pull this together.

HOLIDAY SEASON SURVEY - As we all know December is a very important month for us as a church family: Christmas Workshop, Christmas in Quakertown, Children's Candlelight Service, Living Nativity, and Christmas Eve services. As we continue to live in this new normal, we want to offer an opportunity to think creatively and outside the norm as we enter this time of our extremely important Christmas season to work with members of your church family and determine if there are alternative ways to offer these events. Please contact Alyse Federsel if you are interested in supporting these efforts. Also, at the end of this newsletter is a Holiday Season Survey. Please fill it out and mail to or drop off at the church. An electronic version of this has been sent in our regular emails. Only one survey per household is needed (either a paper or electronic version). Thank you for your help!

HOLY COMMUNION will be celebrated on Advent Sunday, November 29

Christian Education

Faith Studio Phase II

What is going on?

Hi all! Where did the time go? We are about to enter the holiday season, the busiest one for our church (and my favorite!)

Since the start of Sunday School in the courtyard, we were able to have successful Sundays with the children outdoors, and now we took the fun inside! Attendance has been steady, so has the commitment of our AMAZING volunteers! Here is what is looking like now:

- Each class has a maximum number of 6 children and 2 adults
- ALL children 2-years-old and up and volunteers wear mask the entire time they are in the building
- Each room is cleaned after use
- Hand sanitizer is available in each room
- Improved airflow in each room with a fan strategically placed on the windows and the doors stay open. The nursery has a baby gate to keep the little ones in
- Seating is arranged 6 feet apart to comply with social distancing measures
- Art supplies, Bibles and other materials are not shared

What's next?

HARVEST HOME COLLECTION – Sunday School will collect non-perishables to donate to the Quakertown Food Pantry through Sunday, November 22.

Please contact me at sundayschool@firstucc.net or 267-374-4799 if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Many blessings, Carolina Simon, Sunday School Administrator

Family Thankoffering

I apologize that this announcement did not come out sooner. I am out of kilter and I imagine many of you are too. The guild has not been able to meet since February but we hope to remedy that very soon. The weeks seem to go slowly and yet, we wonder where the months have gone. Even though our wood is stacked in preparation for winter, mentally I am not ready!

Our traditional guild Family Thankoffering was not able to be held on October 11th (the second Sunday in October) due to COVID. However, as always, we **are** taking the Thankoffering and there is a special envelope in your packet. **COVID has disrupted our lives but not our hearts!**

Seeing the recent devastation of the hurricanes in the south and the flooding that followed, the guild is designating that the offering be sent to the UCC Disaster fund for 2020 hurricane and flood damage in Louisiana, Florida, and Alabama. I think that many of you, like me, are acutely aware of the damage flooding can do.

We understand that not everyone is in a position to give large amounts, but anything you can give to help these individuals and families that have suffered such a terrible loss would be very much appreciated.

Donations to Thankoffering can be made for the next five weeks. If you have misplaced your Thankoffering envelope or wish to make an additional offering, please write Family Thankoffering on the check or other envelope. And if you want credit please be sure your name or envelope number is enclosed with your donation.

Questions can be directed to Barbara S. email womensguild@firstucc.net or call Barbara through the church office. Thank you in advance for your gift to help these folks in need.

From Barbara S., Women's Guild President

Music News

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASON - We would like to provide the congregation with music throughout Advent and Christmas. Some things in the works are:

1. Virtual anthems by our Chancel Choir
2. Possible virtual anthems from Festival Choir
3. Piano/organ duet with Mike Kuhnert and Jack Schwartz
4. Duet with Ginny and Ed
5. Live anthems when possible

CHANCEL CHOIR - We are in the process of recording more anthems. Even if you are not a regular member of Chancel Choir, you are welcome to join in on our virtual anthems. We'd love to have you! Contact Nancy if interested.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC PROGRAMS - Great news! The Carillon and Agape Bells will resume on November 4. We have enough interest to mount two small bell choirs, which will be able to ring live in worship. If you have children between grades 7-12 who are interested in joining us, please email Nancy at dirmusic@firstucc.net. Any students between grades 3-6 who want to ring, reach out to Ginny at info@firstucc.net.

Carillon Bells (grades 3-6) - Wednesday, November 4 at 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Agape Bells (grades 7-12) - Wednesday, November 4 at 7:00-7:45 p.m.

BELL CHOIRS - Sanctuary Bells and Grace Note Ringers will not restart at this time.

UPCOMING ANTHEMS - We would love to have as many Sunday anthems as possible. To make this happen, we will need volunteers to provide either pre-recorded videos (we can help you do it)

or live performances. If you sing or play an instrument and would like to provide an anthem, please let me know.

HYMNS IN WORSHIP - We are hoping to have some hymns sung during the worship services. Although we are not encouraging congregational singing at this time, we think it could be a meditative experience to take in the words as they are sung. If you would like to sing a hymn on a Sunday, please let Nancy or Jon know.

Wishing you love, hope, and safety as we approach the winter season.

Peace, Nancy Chmielewski, Director of Music Ministry

Safe Church Update and Continued Guidelines

I hope everyone is doing well as we prepare to head into the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. We've had consistent attendance with sanctuary worship averaging 53 people per week. We also continue to see a handful of members attend service in the parking lot, following along on our Facebook live stream and/or on our radio station at 90.7 FM. *(We are averaging 103 viewers on Facebook and 50 on YouTube.)*

Special thanks to the ushers and greeters to help worshipers enter and exit sanctuary worship safely. We'll continue our strategy of social distancing, sanitizing / cleaning hands and surfaces and wearing masks while in the building and during worship services.

As you know, the pastors and church staff have resumed office hours in the church building during the week on a reduced basis and this is going well. Church council and many other groups continue to meet over Zoom video conferencing technology and other groups, including Head Start, have begun to use our indoor facilities, following the same safety guidelines we've been communicating and following.

We now have N95 masks available for use as an additional safety precaution as we begin to reintroduce responsive prayer during our worship services. While the N95 masks are optional, we do recommend wearing them if you plan to participate and we have them available to use (and to store for you) at the church to make it convenient. This is another step towards greater congregational participation during worship. Responsive prayer is the first step with singing hymns coming later as safe worship is our primary goal. Special thanks to Dr. Mike for helping us secure the N95 masks and for his continued guidance. Please reach out to the Pastors, Chad K., or any member of Council with questions or feedback.

God Bless! Submitted by Chad K., Safe Church Committee

Continued Guidelines

Everyone's health and safety is our top concern and we ask that you worship virtually and **stay home if you are:**

- experiencing any cold/flu/Covid symptoms, or
- uncomfortable returning to church at this time.

For everyone planning to attend in person, we've outlined what to expect below:

1. Wear your Mask. We ask that everyone please wear a mask while in the church building and during worship. If you forget your mask or don't have one that day, a mask will be provided.
2. Socially Distanced Seating. Ushers will show worshipers to designated seats for the day's service to ensure we can keep families together and provide space between pews.
3. Hand Sanitizer. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the church and it's a best practice to sanitize your hands upon entering and exiting the building.

4. Single-Use Bulletins. We will provide bulletins and we ask that you don't share your bulletin with others. We'll have stations to collect/recycle bulletins as you exit the sanctuary.
5. Ventilation Enhancements and Open Doors. We will adjust the ventilation in the sanctuary to maximize fresh air flow throughout. Doors will be held/propped open upon entering/exiting the building to minimize the need to touch surfaces.

Technology Update

NOTES ON OUR LIVE STREAMING CAPABILITIES - On October 18, our church was able to run our professional new Live Streaming equipment for the first time, and it went very well! We are thankful to church council, to Pastor Jon, to Joe J., to Steve F., and to many others for making this transition possible. Our virtual services have garnered three times as many viewers as there was typically people in attendance pre-COVID, and so we strongly feel as though the investment into this Live Streaming equipment will help our congregation members, will help our services reach more people, and will help our services to be more easily accessible to those who are unable to leave their residence.

Women's Guild

The Women's Guild is planning to meet at 7:00 pm in Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, November 10, following COVID guidelines – masks, social distancing etc. So that we can plan the seating, please let Barbara S. know if you plan to attend. Email: womensguild@firstucc.net or call Barbara or the church office.

Church Family News

Birthdays

Happy birthday to Alda, who turned 78 in September.

Happy birthday to Emily, who turned 91 in September.

Happy birthday to Lorraine, who turned 91 in October.

Happy birthday to Harriet, who turned 90 in October.

Happy birthday to Marlene, who celebrated in October.

Happy birthday to Pastor Joyce, who is celebrating in October.

New Members

On Sunday, October 25, three new members joined our Church Family. Please welcome: Paul & Wally, and Julia M.

Thank you's

Thank you to Ruth G. for her thoughtful and generous gift of our new beautiful pew cushions! If you have enjoyed the more comfortable seating, join us in sharing our gratitude to Ruth by sending cards of thanks to her at Independence Court.

Philip A. would like to thank the Women's Guild for all the gifts given to him in the past years, as well as for all the cards they sent to him and he thanks the members of the church who have sent so many encouraging cards to him. *Thank you!*

Thank you to everyone for the cards, phone calls, and prayers for me while I was recuperating from my cracked rib. *Cheryl B.*

Thank you for all the thoughtful cards, prayers, and condolences at my sister's passing. *Art B*

Thank you to Pastors Doug and Joyce for conducting a meaningful service remembering my sister and thank you to Beth W. for all her help. *Blessings, Art and Cheryl B.*

I want to thank my church family for the phone calls and cards for my 90th birthday. Your messages were all greatly appreciated and touched my heart. *God bless all of you, thank you, Harriet W.*

Sympathy

Sympathy is extended to Art B. and family. Art's sister, Ella, died September 25 and was laid to rest in October, surrounded by her family.

Sympathy is extended to the Riegel family. Shirley Riegel died on Wednesday, October 7. A public calling hour was in October. Funeral service was for immediate family only.

Sympathy is extended to Ruth G. and her family and friends at the passing of her brother, Jim C., a long-time member of First Church, who passed away in October, having just reached the age of 100 year old. A funeral service was held in October.

YouthWorx

The youth group was able to meet virtually over the summer, and we will be meeting again to discuss how we can move forward amidst this crisis and alongside of our newly-formed schedules.

First UCC Holiday Season Survey

Please help us know your thoughts as we move into the holiday season.

Do you anticipate attending a 2020 Christmas Eve service at First UCC?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

If you would like to attend Christmas Eve service(s), how many people in your household might join you?

Mark only one oval.

- 1-2
 3-5
 6+

If you would like to attend Christmas Eve service(s), would anyone attending with you be from out-of-town?

Mark only one oval.

- No, not this year
 Yes, but from Lehigh or Delaware Valley
 Yes, but from within tri-state area (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York)
 Yes, from beyond tri-state area

Would you be interested in attending a Thanksgiving Supper at First UCC?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes!
- Yes, and would like to help (please email the church office at info@firstucc.net)
- No, I have other plans
- No, but interested in Thanksgiving supper take-out options
- No, but would like to help (please email info@firstucc.net)

If you are interested in attending Thanksgiving Supper, please give us an idea how many might join you?

Mark only one oval.

- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6+

Do you have patio heater(s) we could borrow to allow for outdoor events (i.e. Thanksgiving)?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes (If you answer yes, please email the church office at info@firstucc.net)
- No

Are you “kitchen certified” to be able to help when making meals?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes (if yes, please email the church office at info@firstucc.net)
- No

If you have any other comments, please feel free to share them here:

If you would like to help with anything or have a heater, please give us your name or contact the church office.

Thank you!

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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

