

First UCC Focus

August 2020



Church Council has cancelled all activities, gatherings and meetings at the time of publishing. Meetings scheduled at this time are for zoom, email or conference call only.

11:00 Online Worship Sundays
<https://www.facebook.com/First.UCC.Salisbury>

AUGUST SCRIPTURE

August 2

Isaiah 55:1-5
 Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
 Matthew 14:13-21

August 9

1 Kings 19:9-18
 Romans 10:5-15
 Matthew 14:22-33

August 16

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
 Psalm 67
 Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
 Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28

August 23

Exodus 1:8-2:10
 Romans 12:1-8
 Matthew 16:13-20

August 30

Exodus 3:1-15
 Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b
 Romans 12:9-21
 Matthew 16:21-28



While the church building itself is closed we know that it is important to gather and stay connected during this time. We hope you will be able to join us for online worship on Sundays at 11:00. The link to our facebook page is:

www.facebook.com/First.UCC.Salisbury/

If you are unable to join us live, you can watch any of our worship services, concerts or storytimes by visiting the Church's page.

Thursday Thoughts



If you haven't signed up for Thursday Thoughts, there is a place to subscribe on our website or just call the office. Thursday Thoughts contain special messages from Pastor Carol, First UCC news, links to meetings and notices of upcoming concerts and events.



WWW.1STUCC.ORG



- 2 11:00 Online Worship & Communion
- 5:00 Zoom Check-In
- 4 10:00 Online Storytime with Pastor Carol
- 6 7:00 Task Force Meeting
- 9 11:00 Online Worship
- 4:00 Property Committee Meeting
- 5:00 Zoom Check-In
- 11 10:00 Online Storytime with Pastor Carol
- 12 5:30 EC Board Meeting
- 13 6:00 Finance Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Mission Committee Meeting
- 16 11:00 Online Worship
- 12:30 Church Council Meeting
- ** Zoom Check-In
- 18 10:00 Online Storytime with Pastor Carol
- 19 6:30 Online Bible Study
- 23 **FIVE ALIVE SUNDAY**
- 11:00 Online Worship
- ** Zoom Check-In
- 25 10:00 Online Storytime with Pastor Carol
- 26 6:30 Online Bible Study
- 30 11:00 Online Worship
- ** Zoom Check-In

**Sunday Zoom Check-In Time to be determined.



Like and share First UCC's posts and videos on facebook.

This lets see them if you share them. And extends our Church's reach.



CAROL'S CORNER

Dear Friends,

And so, we now find ourselves “in our new normal”. In the midst of Pandemic. In the middle of summer when it is much harder to go outside, we find ourselves inside again unsure of what the future will bring. The students, teachers, custodians, bus drivers, and all the staff are waiting, doing their best to figure out the path for this fall. Parents wonder whether to send their children to school if the schools open or continue online...and they worry about how to do their job and parent, and teach, and do all the other things that they do.

We have not been able to safely gather in our church for months now. We are still not sure when it will be safe to be together. There are many faces and people we miss. We miss the meals that Bobbie has made, we miss the companionship of friends around us, we miss the choir, and we just miss the hugs and welcome, presence and support of one another.

We are blessed that we can worship online. Some churches cannot. We are blessed that we can touch each other virtually but to be honest it is not the same.

When this first started there was the thought that it would be for maybe a month, two at the most and now we are not sure about the “when”. What we do know is that even in a time of Pandemic we are not alone.

I look to scripture and the experiences of our ancestors in faith. I think of the Israelites who struggled in the wilderness as they left the slavery or Egypt and headed towards the promised land. They too did not know how long that would take. Along the way they found God and they found community, they learned new ways and grew in their faith and understanding. They also messed up. They made a golden calf, they complained about hunger and thirst and they argued about Moses' leadership.

I think of our ancestors taken from Jerusalem, prisoners in Babylon not sure if they would ever go home again. It was a generation or more before they got to go home. I think of Palestinians today, living in refugee camps, hoping that someday they might go home. There are others too who are displaced from their homes wondering if they'll ever be able to go back.

In some ways we find ourselves in a time of exile. Yet even as I say that I know that it is in those dark times that we find our faith growing the most. At least this is true for me. I know that during those times of fear, sadness, grief, despair that this is where my faith helps me cling to the hope and promise of a future that is God-determined.

Right now, I know that there is discord all around us. Voices crying out in pain, anger, fear, sadness, other voices telling them to shut up and be silent. Some saying that this is all made up, others taking it seriously. Some even saying that we are headed to the end of the world. It's as if we have lost our tether to “normal” and we're not sure where we are going or what's going to happen on the way. And so, we lash out because of our fear, because of our anxiety, because of our grief.

Right now, we are tired. We don't like this “new normal”. We don't like not knowing. We don't like it one bit. That's why I think about our ancestors in faith, I understand more about their complaints and their fears, and I receive their promises as promises that I can hold onto.

It has also occurred to me that God has been challenging me to become more patient for years now, well it may just be that this is the year that I finally learn patience, not because I want to, but because I have no other choice!

I don't know what the future holds. I do know, however, who holds the future. I continue to encourage us to hold onto our faith and follow Jesus for we may not know what the “new normal” will look like but we do know that we do not travel there alone.

Stay safe, keep your social distance and wear a mask.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Carol



From First UCC Foundation:

The First United Church of Christ Foundation has begun the selection process for awarding the annual distribution of funds. An application for your organization to use in applying for funds is available by contacting the **Church office** at **704-633-2723** or via email at **office@1stucc.org** (please note this is a new email for the Church). We respectfully request that you complete and return this form to the Foundation by **August 17, 2020**. Applications may be emailed to **office@1stucc.org** or by regular mail (**207 West Horah Street, Salisbury, NC 28144**). Applications must be postmarked on or before **August 17** to be considered for the 2020 distribution of funds.

If your organization is selected to receive a distribution, you will be notified by September 20, 2020. It is essential that you have a representative attend the eleven o'clock worship service at First United Church of Christ at a date to be decided on in October 2020 to participate in the presentation ceremony.

Greg Alcorn, Chairman
First UCC Foundation

Even though we are still unable to attend services, meetings, circle groups and other get-togethers, **GET ONLINE!** If you need help, contact Pastor Carol who can put you in touch with someone (like Mark!) who can bring you and your computer up to speed...maybe.

On Facebook:
Online Worship Service
Mini-Concerts
Story Hour

On Zoom:
Bible Study
Sunday Check-Ins
Committee Meetings

On Your Computer:
Email someone. Many members' email addresses are in our directory.

On the Phone:
Pick up the phone and call someone you haven't talked to in awhile!

Grab a Pen:
Write a note to someone who is special in your life!



Altar Flowers

Thank you Dr. Burgess for your generous donation of fresh altar flowers each week.



Your contributions with a notation for the Five Alive Fund are always needed and appreciated. Giving to the Five Alive Fund is helpful at any time and is used to help those in our church and within our community.



Thanks to all of the behind-the scenes people too numerous to mention who make our church productions possible, to those who make the gardens beautiful and to all whose patience and support have helped us move onward through this pandemic.

5-ALIVE: **HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS HELP THEMSELVES!**

A client came to Rowan Helping Ministries seeking assistance with her rent. The client is 49 years old with four sons. The client lost her job at a local restaurant due to COVID-19. When she filed for unemployment, she was told she did not qualify. She was going to apply again, but the RHM staff talked to the landlord. He is willing to keep them as tenants, but couldn't let them live there without paying for the rent any longer. An eviction has already been filed with the courts. The client has enough to pay over half of the rent. Rowan Helping Ministries is granting her a voucher for the balance of the rent due. The eviction has been dropped. She was excited they would be able to stay in their home.

Your donation to our Five Live Fund is always appreciated.



Javis Arey, Mary Austin, Mabel Barnhardt, Betty Bowles (mother of Steve Bowles), Destony Bowles, Julia Callaway, Gerri D. Crummett (Donna Odrosky's sister), Marie Cuthrell, Sarah Hall (friend of Bobbie Troutman), Gary Hauze (no visits or phone calls, please), Harry & Nancy Hipp, Anne Kennedy, Johnnie Lippard (friend of Steve Bowles), Dan Morgan (friend of Steve Bowles), Jimmy Mullis (friend of Daniel Artz), Joseph Najarian (son of Dena & David Najarian), Pat Norris, Roger & Betty Olson (Kim Proffitt's parents), Eleanor Peeler, Savannah Price (Larry Bolick's nephew's granddaughter), Glenda Shrewsbury, Sarah Shuping, Claire Skinner, Crystal Smith (niece of Bobbie Troutman), Nick Snipes, Donnie Troutman, Jeff Watson (Larry Bolick's nephew), John Wagoner, Don Whitfield (no calls please). *If you know of anyone who should be added or deleted from our prayer list, be sure and let the office know. If you have prayer concerns, please text, call or email Pastor Carol.*

A Message from Blowing Rock Conference Center ...

In honor of all of you who have supported our holy grounds over the years, we want to extend a special offer just for you. Over the long Labor Day weekend (from Friday, September 4 to Monday, September 7), we want to welcome "Family" and Friends of Blowing Rock Conference Center to stay at reduced rates.

Stay Friday and Saturday night, and receive free lodging for Sunday night. This is first come first serve as we are limiting our lodging to 50% capacity for physical distancing. We want you to come and enjoy a bit of serenity to unwind for a while, as well as feel safe. Please go to our google form; <https://forms.gle/Lhm9zA4jxTsQawdw9> for more details and to sign up.

We hope to see you at your place in the mountains.



Online Bible Study

"The Book of Isaiah may be the most often read of the prophetic books in the scriptures. During Advent Christians hear prophecies of a "wonderful counselor (Isaiah 9:6)." Good Friday brings us one who "was wounded for transgressions (Isaiah 53.5)." In it we hear of one sent to "Prepare the way of the Lord" and of one who will announce, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Isaiah 61 and Luke 4)." All of these fixtures in our church year come to us from God through the Book of Isaiah. It is indeed a constant source of food for the faithful.

There is an additional good to be found here. As profound as these treasured and familiar verses are, in this study we will learn that the Book of Isaiah is not merely a source for good quotations. The spoken prophecies of this book helped the people Israel look for the life of God with them for the better part of two very turbulent centuries, and it has continued to help Jews and Christians do the same in the twenty-five hundred years since it became a book. Before we embark on that journey, here are a few words about the book's origin," according to the authors of the Bible study we are about to embark on in August.

Modern scholars have divided the book of Isiah generally into three sections although there are some who see a 4th write for the apocalyptic materials found in Isaiah 24-27. The section we will be studying is called 2nd Isaiah and includes material from chapters 40-55.

We will be journeying with Dr. Robert Wilson and Dr. Stephen Cook, who at the time that this Bible study created were professors at Yale Divinity School. Dr. Wilson was my professor for Hebrew Scripture, and he was awesome. The study involves a short video which I should be able to share with you in zoom followed by discussion.

We will begin our study on **August 19th at 6:30PM**. All are invited to join us as we journey through 2nd Isaiah.

SRCWU Human Rights Celebration

Friday, August 7th, from 6:30-8:00

Celebration will be via Zoom

SRCWU's Human Rights Award will be announced during the Celebration. Previous Human Rights Award Recipients have been Rev. Carol Hallman and Sandy Wagoner.

Contact Flo Peck if you wish to receive the Zoom link.

Action Focus: School Supplies for Communities in Schools. Drop off point TBA.

