

First UCC Focus July 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>

JULY SCRIPTURE

July 5

Romans 7:15-25a
 Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12

Isaiah 55:10-13
 Romans 8:1-11
 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 19

Isaiah 44:6-8
 Psalm 86:11-17
 Romans 8:12-25
 Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 26

1 Kings 3:5-12
 Romans 8:26-39
 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52



Worship services will continue to be live on facebook at 11 a.m. each Sunday morning. The link to facebooklive is:

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

You do not have to join facebook to see the video. While church itself is closed we know that it is important to gather and stay connected during this time so we hope you will be able to join us live on our facebook page: First United Church of Christ-Salisbury. If you are unable to join us live, you can watch any of our live events during the week by visiting the Church's page. This includes any story times or mini-concerts as well as worship services.



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|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 5 | 11:00 | Online Worship & Communion |
| 6 | | Church Office Closed |
| 7 | 10:00 | Online Storytime with Pastor Carol |
| 8 | 6:30 | Zoom Bible Study |
| 9 | 7:00 | Task Force Meeting |
| 12 | 11:00 | Online Worship |
| | 4:00 | Property Committee Meeting |
| | 7:00 | Zoom Check-In |
| 14 | 10:00 | Online Storytime with Pastor Carol |
| 15 | 5:30 | EC Board Meeting |
| | 6:30 | Zoom Bible Study |
| 16 | 6:00 | Finance Committee Mtg. |
| 19 | 11:00 | Online Worship |
| | 12:30 | Church Council Meeting |
| | 7:00 | Zoom Check-In |
| 21 | 10:00 | Online Storytime with Pastor Carol |
| 26 | FIVE ALIVE SUNDAY | |
| | 11:00 | Online Worship |
| | 7:00 | Zoom Check-In |
| 28 | 10:00 | Online Storytime with Pastor Carol |

Tentative dates for Zoom Check-Ins are listed. They will be scheduled and posted on Thursday Thoughts.



For those who have not joined us yet, Zoom Check-In is a chance for us to meet online and touch base with each other. There will be meetings scheduled and posted on Thursday Thoughts and reminder emails sent prior to meetings. Give a Check-In meeting a try. You'll be surprised at the people you see online! Just click on the link in the invitation received from Pastor Carol. It is new technology and if you are feeling unsure of the process or if you have problems logging on, give Pastor Carol a call. Someone can walk you through the online process. It is not as intimidating as it sounds!!



WWW.1STUCC.ORG



Like and share the various posts on facebook.

This enables friends to see them if you share them.



There will be no Zoom Check-In on Sunday, July 5. Have a safe and happy holiday weekend.

CAROL'S CORNER

Dear Friends,

We begin this month with the 4th of July celebrating Independence from England. An independence won through hard fought battles and the loss of many lives. We boast in our freedoms, in our ability to do what we want, believe what we want, live how we want. And yet right now, we live in a time that is calling for us to sacrifice some of those freedoms. We're having a difficult time with that.

We're having a difficult time with that because the underlying ethos of our culture, of America is this rugged individualism. Pick yourself up by your own bootstrap. Self-reliance. We say America was built on this foundation of rugged individualism. Unfortunately, it appears to me that this rugged individualism has devolved into narcissism.

The reality is that it wasn't rugged individualism that won our freedom. It was people working together, fighting together that brought about that victory. It wasn't rugged individualism that built our railroads and our cities and our communities. It may be that rugged individualism is what is tearing us apart these days.

The reality, I believe is that God created us not for ourselves, but to be part of a community. It is when we come together as a people that we are at our best. During World War II think of how the people rallied around the troops and worked together and sacrificed together. Think about how we came together after 9/11. When we rally together, we are at our best.

Hear these words from Paul's 1 letter to the Church at Corinth:

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

I know that we are all tired of this Pandemic. And we are tired of staying home and curtailing our activities. We are tired of not being able to be together in one space for church, let alone being with families and friends at outdoor barbeques and beaches.

We are being called to sacrifice our freedoms in order that others might be safe. We may feel that we are too young to get this virus, we may feel that we should be able to take that risk for ourselves, but I wonder, how would you feel if you were the one who was carrying that virus and you brought it to a friend, or a loved one or someone who is at high risk? What if they became seriously ill or even died?

So, I encourage you all, wear a mask, stay socially distant and be careful out there, not just for your sake, but for our community and our world.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Carol



A LETTER FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

Dear 1st UCC Family,

As we approach a 3-month removal from face-to-face worship and gatherings I wanted to take time to share a few of the victories and struggles of recent weeks.

Although we have not been physically in the same room or in our sanctuary as a family of Christ in some time, there is astounding evidence our church has been open! I want to thank Pastor Carol and so many of you for continuing to ensure we stay connected. From the wonderful concerts, continued Bible study, children's story time, donations to our healthcare workers, visits to our children during Easter, to our live stream worship services on Sunday mornings, we continue our mission of realizing Christian fellowship. Nothing can stop the spread of God's love and our fellowship.

Church Council, as well as a Task Force consisting of myself, Pastor Carol, Mark Schiemann, Carolyn Cline, David Waller, and Leslie Dent, continue to monitor the current situation, educate ourselves regarding COVID-19, closely follow guidance from the UCC, and evaluate our options. While we are all having to make personal decisions regarding our own health and potential risks we may face; making decisions regarding the health and safety of our larger church family is a great responsibility.

I wanted to raise a few of the issues the Church Council and Task Force are challenged with while contemplating when we might again be able to worship together in the sanctuary. We are all aware of the need to practice social distancing and the benefits of face coverings, but when we think about our traditional worship service, simple things like handing out bulletins, the use of hymnals, congregational responses and singing become areas of concern. For example, singing extends the distance of aerosolized droplets being carried in the air further than normal conversations. We also realize some of the normal amenities offered during worship may be altered or not available – the nursery and limitations of restroom availability.

Returning to physically gathering for worship would look very different than our traditional service, and far from “normal”. Hymnals and pew pads would be removed, and the sanctuary would be sanitized on Saturday evening in preparation for Sunday morning. You would practice social distancing outside, at one entrance, while awaiting temperature checks before being allowed to enter the church. There would be no bulletins. Families living under the same roof could sit together, but seating would be staggered across pews while skipping pews to allow for appropriate social distancing. Singing would not be allowed. Congregational responses would not be allowed. The nursery would be closed. Only one or two bathrooms would be open and available to only one person at a time. Gathering in the vestibule would be discouraged and it is likely we enter and leave the sanctuary in an organized and orchestrated way.

I know I continue to struggle with balancing a desire for us to gather and physically worship together with ensuring the continued safety of all our church family. I also struggle with whether the worship service described above is greater than continuing our successful virtual fellowship. The continuing guidance from the UCC is for congregations to not rush back to face-to-face worship. I believe not rushing is prudent advice. I ask you to not only pray for our church, our church family, and our leaders who are faced with these challenging decisions, but that you also reach out to me, Pastor Carol, Council and Task Force members to share your thoughts and opinions.

I am grateful for the love and connections we continue to share, even though we are not able to greet each other with handshakes, embraces, and hugs. The doors to our church building may not yet be open again, but the fellowship we share, and the love and grace of God have never been closed.

Jeff Smith

Church Finances During an Unexpected Pandemic

Summer has historically been a time in our church finances when giving tended to fall off as members took vacations and were away from church; in many years, people would catch up their tithing once they returned to attend more regularly and our finances would recover. With the social distancing that has come with this pandemic, attending streaming church services from the comfort of your home, it may come as no surprise that contributions to our church have fallen off. Your Finance Committee and your Council are determined not to impact our paid staff negatively if at all possible, and meanwhile the fixed operating expenses (and a couple of surprises) continue. The Finance Committee is forecasting a \$36,000 shortfall in Current Fund income through the remainder of the year. Various committees and persons have suggested and implemented cost reduction efforts where it has been deemed feasible. Our members continue to experience a variety of changes in their livelihoods, which can make contributing to church challenging.

We have been very fortunate to receive some welcome news regarding two different funding sources! Our church was awarded a COVID-19 micro grant from our UCC denomination. In our application, we indicated that we could use funds for mission work where we planned to continue to prepare meals for Rowan Helping Ministries quarterly, as well as gifts of food donations via the Little Red Wagon; we also indicated the need for expanded internet bandwidth for streaming services, which reaches more folk than just our own membership, and additional cleaning supplies that will be needed when we are able to conduct in person gatherings again. We also applied for and were granted a PPP loan which we can use to pay our staff payroll for about 10 weeks (provided that we don't layoff or terminate anyone). The loan is at low interest of 1%, and if we keep our employees, there is a strong probability it may be forgiven!

If your resources are stable, please continue to give as you are able. The bright spots of the micro grant and the PPP loan are significant, but are very specific about what items they can be applied to, and are of relatively short duration. These will help to offset some of the shortfall we are experiencing, but we continue to depend on faithful givers to carry us through. There are many ways to make a contribution. You can drop your offering in the mail, send it through your online banking system, or donate through PayPal ([HERE](#)). We thank you for your continued support of our Church.

Mark Schiemann
Chair, Finance Committee



BIBLE STUDY

We will continue to meet on Wednesday nights at 6:30PM for Bible study. We invite anyone who would like to join us to do so even if you have not been a part of bible study before. A link will be provided via email before each Wednesday night. We will be continuing our way through Mark's gospel.



Although we do not officially have a Five Alive Sunday at this time, 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.

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

A client came to Rowan Helping Ministries seeking assistance with her first month's rent. The client is sixty years old and living on a fixed income. Her current rental home is being condemned. Her new landlord is willing to work with her client to help her move in and she reduced her first month's rent. The client has minimal expenses and will be sustainable going forward. Rowan Helping Ministries granted her a voucher for her first month's rent. She was excited to have a new safe place to call home.

100% of your contributions go to help citizens of the Salisbury/Rowan area and our church family with unexpected short term emergencies.



Special Thanks to Dr. Phillip Burgess, Susan Trivette, Jeff Smith and Mark Schiemann for their dedication to Sunday Morning Online Worship Services. There are many behind-the-scenes people who make production possible.



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), Janette Yost. *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.*

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST FOUNDATION
207 WEST HORAH STREET
SALISBURY, NC 28144
704-633-2723

June 25, 2020

Dear Friends of First United Church of Christ:

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 attached. 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 (***please note this is a new email for the church**) or by regular mail, but must be postmarked on or before this date to be considered for the 2019 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.

We look forward to receiving your application form soon.

Have a blessed day.

Sincerely,



Greg Alcorn, FUCC Foundation Chairman

***Please note the application is not attached to this Newsletter. Please contact the Church Office for a copy of the application to be emailed or sent to you.



NYE Online Gatherings

Many of the original National Youth Event presenters have been able to put together meaningful content that will be shared via the web and will include chat features during and after live premiers.

Loving Your Neighbor in Quarantine and **Creativity & Justice in Quarantine** are still available for viewing.

Unite Through the Extraordinary! A culminating interactive experience will be presented July 24-25. Details will be available soon.

These can be found at: <http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/>

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND ...

The Month of July ...

- July 1: Resolution Renewal Day
Postal Worker Day
Gingersnap Day
- July 2: I Forgot Day
- July 3: Stay Out of the Sun Day
- July 4: Independence Day
- July 5: Workaholics Day
- July 6: Thank a Pastor Day
- July 7: Strawberry Sundae Day
- July 8: Freezer Pop Day
- July 9: Sugar Cookie Day
- July 10: Teddy Bear Picnic Day
- July 11: Cheer Up the Lonely Day
- July 12: Collector Car Appreciation Day
- July 13: Beans 'N' Franks Day
- July 14: Mac & Cheese Day
- July 15: Give Something Away Day
- July 16: Get to Know Your Customers Day
- July 17: Wrong Way Corrigan Day
- July 18: Toss Away the "Could Haves" and "Should Haves" Day
- July 19: Ice Cream Day
- July 20: Global Hug Your Kid Day
- July 21: Junk Food Day
- July 22: Hammock Day
- July 23: Gorgeous Grandma Day
Refreshment Day
Vanilla Ice Cream Day
- July 24: Tell An Old Joke Day
Amelia Earhart Day
- July 25: Wine and Cheese Day
- July 26: Aunt and Uncle's Day
- July 27: Love is Kind Day
- July 28: Milk Chocolate Day
- July 29: Lasagna Day
- July 30: Cheesecake Day
Paperback Book Day
- July 31: Raspberry Cake Day (does cheesecake count??)
Or for the healthier: Avocado Day

Any Day is "HAVE A GOOD DAY!"