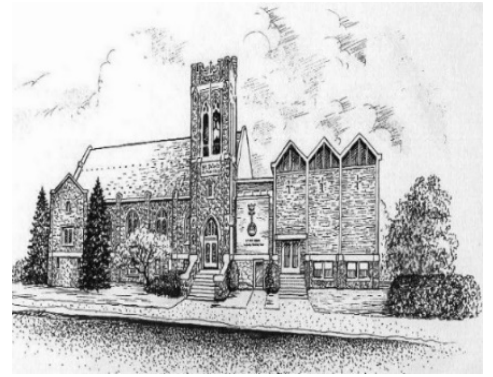

August 2020 Mini-Newsletter

St. John's UCC, Fullerton

575 Grape Street, Whitehall, PA 18052

www.stjohnsuccfullerton.org T: 610-264-8421



"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." - Jeremiah 29:11

I can relate to the many of you who are disappointed that we will not be able to resume worshipping in St. John's sanctuary in the immediate future. In our heads we understand the risks to ourselves and our neighbors, but in our hearts, we just want to be able to gather back in that Holy Space, where God's presence is so real - in the woodwork, in the words spoken, in the music played and sung, in the people around us - that with almost no effort on our part, we find our souls nourished, our spirits revived and our commitment to faithful discipleship renewed and strengthened.

It's easy to be nostalgic and yearn impatiently for things to go back to the way they were before the novel coronavirus disrupted everything we knew as "normal." And yet, one of the most long-standing descriptions of the People of God is that of people on a journey. In Acts, the early followers of Jesus were even known as people "of the way." (See Acts 24:14, among other references.)

So, here's a challenge. As we move forward through this extraordinary period, rather than asking "When will things be like they were in January?" try trusting God's promise and offering this prayer: "God of the Way, help us to be as excited about moving forward with you as we have been about things getting back to the way they were."

I wonder what might happen at St. John's if we all pray that prayer?

Be God's,
Pastor Bonnie





Church News

And in the meantime...

Join us for Vespers on Wednesday, August 5 at 7:00 pm

Vespers, also known as Evening Prayer, takes place as dusk begins to fall. It is a service that dates back to before the 4th century. At St. John's Vespers, we will gather to give thanks to God for the day just past, reflect on scripture, and join together in prayer. The service will take place, weather permitting, outside in the Field of Dreams at the far end of the 6th Street parking lot. Space will be reserved in the parking lot for those who would prefer not to walk out onto the grass.



The following precautions have been planned to help keep everyone safe:

- Social distancing (a minimum of six feet between your family group and others) must be maintained at all times. There may be no physical contact between people.
- Face coverings must be worn before, during and after the service.
- There will be no seating available - please bring your own lawn chairs or blankets or plan to stand throughout the service.
- The church building will not be open; bathrooms will not be available.
- A private log of attendees will be kept by the Healthcare Committee for two weeks. If an outbreak occurs, this information may be critical to help save lives. The log will not be shared with anyone else, and will be destroyed after two weeks.

In case of rain, the service will be postponed to August 12th. The decision will be posted on St. John's FaceBook page and added to Pastor Bonnie's church voicemail message (610-264-8421, ext. 2) We hope you'll join us!

Summer Zoom Worship Services

Worship services every Sunday at 9:30AM

Use the below link to join the worship services.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81685098134?pwd=bmFSL2xFeGU2SEhpU050akNXcHZFQT09>

Meeting ID: 816 8509 8134 Password: 1902

Dial by your location +1 646 876 9923 US (New York) Meeting ID: 816 8509 8134 Password: 1902



Transition Team News

The St. John's Fullerton Transition Team, a small group of individuals appointed by Consistory, will be in place soon! They will meet regularly with Pastor Bonnie and work with the congregation to make the best use of the interim time and to help SJF be in the best possible shape to call a new settled pastor. More to come!

Transition Team Q and A's:

1. **Is the Transition Team the same as the Search Committee?**

No! The Search Committee, which will consist of people nominated by the congregation and appointed by Consistory, will not be formed for several months. The Search Committee will have the task of preparing the Church Profile with input from the entire congregation. Once the Profile is approved by the PennNortheast Conference, the Search Committee will begin the search, interview and discernment process that culminates in the recommendation to the congregation of a candidate to serve as St. John's next settled pastor.

2. **How is the Transition Team different from the Search Committee?**

The Transition Team will be focused on the interim time; the Search Committee will be focused on the search for St. John's next settled pastor. Some of the work done by the Transition Team may provide helpful information for the Search Committee's preparation of the church profile, which requires answers to the questions *Who are we? Who is our neighbor?* and *Who is God calling us to be?* but it is the Search Committee, and not the Transition Team, that will write the profile.

3. **Can an individual serve on both the Transition Team and the Search Committee?**

It's possible, although the time commitment required for Search Committee members (usually weekly meetings for at least a year) makes that impractical for most people.

4. **How long will the Transition Team be in place?**

The Transition Team serves until the interim work is completed. A typical interim period lasts about 18 months.

Continuing by Popular Demand "Tuesday Talkbacks"

They will take place every Tuesday in August at 2:00PM. Join us via Zoom for informal conversation – you set the agenda! Contact the church office for the Zoom link.



“Strengthen the Church” Together We Grow Stronger

“Strengthen the Church” is a special mission offering of our denomination which supports the expansion of ministry and growth of local UCC congregations. Your support will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to create a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

- Your generosity supports youth ministry and events.
- Your generosity supports extravagant welcome throughout the United Church of Christ.
- Your generosity supports local church community outreach.
- Your gift builds up the Body of Christ.

Enclosed with this newsletter is an insert and special offering envelope for “Strengthen the Church.” Contributions will be received from now until August 31. Thank you for your generosity.



New Member's Class

Are you, or is someone you know, curious about St. John's UCC Fullerton? Our New Member Class is a great way to find out everything you ever wanted to know about St. John's- even if you have been attending worship here for years! Participating in a New Member Class will not obligate you to become a member, but it is a pathway to do so if you desire.



Please let the church office know if you, or someone you know is interested - a class will be scheduled once we have a small group of interested folks!

Hello, Lady PEEPS!

I have tentatively scheduled the First Lady PEEPS Women's group meeting for Tuesday, [September 22nd](#) and reserved Fox Hall for all of our meetings for the year. It is my hope and prayer that we will be meeting in the church in some manner by that time. If that changes, I will think about plan B. I am still in the planning stages for the September meeting but the theme will be Compassion, Inspiration and Blessings in 2020.

Hope to see you all soon!
Colleen Kulhamer

Mission Committee - Mask Ministry

The Mission Committee continues to offer to our St. John's family the opportunity to receive a hand-sewn face mask during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please contact Marion DeMilio to place your order at 610-797-9652 or momoyer@ptd.net.

There is no charge, but we do ask that you consider making a donation to St. John's. (please mark your donation "Mask Ministry")



August Anniversaries

- August 1** Brenda & Dennis Pascoe – 50 years
Clarissa & Donnie Brensinger – 5 years
- August 3** Donna & Russell Chorney – 15 years
- August 5** Jessica & Todd Shirk – 15 years
Annamarie & Robert Barrall -31 years
- August 6** Michelle & Ryan Brobst – 15 years
- August 7** Beth & Gary D. Neitz – 16 years
- August 8** Christine & Stephen Reck – 5 years
- August 9** Stacy & Timothy Sommer -17 years
- August 11** Robin & Donald Brensinger – 30 years
Lissa & Ken Wuchter – 3 years
- August 12** Gina & Terry Brokenshire – 31 years
- August 14** Stephanie & Brian Deutsch – 21 years
- August 15** Shirley & Thomas Teets – 61 years
Sharon & Donald Foellner – 50 years
Virginia & Ted Hess – 50 years
- August 16** Sandra & Ronald Glass – 62 years
Carolann & David Adams – 3 years
- August 17** Noemi & David Quinn – 7 years
- August 18** Diane & William Orłowski – 36 years
Amanda & Andrew Czekner – 2 years
- August 19** Margaret & Richard Baatz, Sr. – 42 years
Stephanie & Craig Hanzl – 31 years
Alyssa & Bradley Beckwith – 14 years
Andrea & Joseph Guan – 2 years
- August 20** Melissa & Kyle Szoke – 10 years
Roberta & Bruce Pope – 43 years
Kathy & James Haggerty – 37 years
- August 21** Linda & Charles Apple – 55 years
Tammy & Mark Yura – 21 years
- August 22** Beverly & Lamar Peters – 56 years
Connie & John Viglione – 56 years
- August 23** Janet & Ralph Miller, Jr. – 62 years
Amanda & Jeffrey Phillips – 17 years
- August 24** Rachel & Edward Pollitt – 18 years
- August 30** Grace & David Mohr – 62 years

Thank You

Janet and Ralph!

Head gardeners Janet and Ralph Miller have decided to take a long overdue retirement from maintaining the outside gardens of the Church. They have put their heart, soul and finances into making the Church grounds something we can be very proud of. A grateful congregation thanks you, Janet and Ralph for your years of dedicated service and hard work.

I have worked with Janet and Ralph for the past several years as time permitted. I will now, humbly, step into the role of head gardener. This is a role I cannot perform alone. I would like to establish a team of gardeners to perform the tasks that Janet and Ralph performed mostly on their own. Once I have a group of volunteers, we will meet to establish how to approach the daunting task of keeping the outside weeded, pruned and planted.

If you are interested in helping with the gardening, please contact Nancy Dougherty at nancydough@msn.com or at 610-760-8361. There is still a lot of summer remaining so please respond as quickly as possible. Weeds wait for no one.

~ Nancy Dougherty



A New Way to Give!

You know that your gifts to St. John's UCC, Fullerton make a difference in people's lives, but did you know you can support the mission and ministry of SJF via your smartphone? Just download the GivePlus+ app, find St. John's UCC Fullerton in the dropdown list of participating churches, and decide how much you want to give! You can make a one-time donation, or set up recurring contributions, which you can easily increase or decrease at any time.

Your gift(s) will be recorded by our Financial Secretary in the same way that any other contribution is, and will be included in your end-of-the-year giving statement. It's fun - and remember - "God loves a cheerful giver!" (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Healthcare Ministry News

Submitted by Evelyn Stupp

During this “physical distancing” time I’ve been thinking a lot about grief and loss. We usually think of grief as occurring when someone dies; this is probably the most obvious kind of loss we think of when we think of grief. And yet, I’m reminded of other forms of loss that have affected us. We’ve felt cut off from seeing/hugging our families, friends and church family. We’ve missed out on celebrating milestones or offering a comforting touch to the lonely or bereaved. Travel plans, jobs and academics have been upended. Going shopping – even listening to the news – can be stressful. Until recently, we couldn’t go to the gym or restaurants, and even now, we do so cautiously, fearing a potential resurgence. Our daily routines and lifestyles have had to change, and it’s natural to grieve what we’ve missed, don’t have or can’t do right now.

So what can we do as we move into what’s called a “new normal”? A few suggestions:

Recognize that this type of grief is real. Grief is a normal reaction to loss; we all grieve and handle life’s changes differently. The word “bereaved” comes from the ancient “to be robbed of”, and the loss and grieving we’ve known these past months (and even now) isn’t limited to a loved one’s death.

Maintain a healthy focus/perspective. Healthy practices of exercise, diet, humor, relationships (even virtual), faith/prayer are important. Grieving losses doesn’t mean we don’t have faith; in fact, our faith can strengthen us in this time. Look for/give thanks for unexpected blessings. We’ve seen (and perhaps shared in) the goodness of people helping others with food/other donations, grocery shopping, making/delivering masks. We’ve learned how to connect with others/worship through technology. Maybe we’ve had more time to advocate for the needs of others or to spend on a hobby or with family. Maybe we’ve realized in a fresh way what (and who) is really important in life.

Reach out – even if for now it’s not in person. If you’d like to be part of a new small group (likely Zoom; time determined by group availability) that offers each other encouragement, support, hope in the midst of life’s various changes (not limited to death of loved one), please contact me at estupp15@gmail.com or 610-428-9095.

Healthcare Ministry

We hope everyone is safe, strong and healthy during these trying times.

We are meeting via zoom to keep our services open to all of you.

The Miller-Keystone Blood Bank is still in need of blood and you can contact them at 610-820-0962 to make an appointment. If you are in need of any medical equipment, you can contact the church office.

The Bereavement program, under the direction of Evelyn Stupp, is available for anyone in need (see separate article). We are in the process of forming a walking competition in the near future. More info to follow soon.

Blessings from the Healthcare Committee



Crafts for Sale

Just a reminder that our dishcloths, T-towels, table runners and all our kitchen and household furnishings along with baby items, cookbooks, and our 12-bean soup mix are on sale all year long. ***Something new is our fabric casserole totes and travel jewelry cases.*** There are many knitted, crocheted, and counted cross stitch items. (Photos available on our church website.)

If you need anything at any time, you can contact Carol Raszler at 610-393-7572 or email her at crazler@aol.com. We can make arrangements to deliver items until the church reopens.

August 2020 Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Debra Altorfer Nancy Bowman Diane Buss Laney Headman Robert Jennings
2 Jay Gilbert Thomas Saeger Jacquelyn Snyder Loretta Wilmot	3 Brianna Kuhns Joshua Mill Thomas Miller Wayne Nottle John Viglione Matthew Young	4 Eric Lord Cody Moyer Nicole McWilliams Marilyn Piskula Adam Rarich Lynette Schutts Margaret Young Gabe Wright	5 Regina Mohr David Quinn	6 Stephanie Batdorf	7 Veronica Miller Austyn Venanzi	8 Kori Toole
9 Thomas Brokenshire Kayla Bryant Jeanne Fischl	10 Jackson Hentz	11 Alexander Bryant Deadra Clewell Sandra Diefenderfer MaryBeth McNicholas	12 Austin Musselman	13 Tracy Briody Michael Gravely	14 Jagger Bolton David Mohr Gregory Sommer	15 Angela Buskirk Noreen Muth Margaret Snyder
16 Stacy Dunbar Gail Green Andrea Guan	17 Matthew Buskirk Johanna Carlisle Trevor Heffelfinger Joanne Heppe	18 Amanda Philips	19	20 Bryan Brensinger William Cszasz Sharon Czekner Michelle Funk Barbara Holden Marian Kline Lee Ann Lopez Charles Mohr James Molinaro	21 Amanda Bolton Thomas Heppe Stanley Luckenbill Gary W. Neitz	22
23 Jim Carr Emma Rarich	24 Diane Orłowsky Kavan Toole Jacob Verba	25 Jenna Bruder Elizabeth Stirba Jonathan Stoss Georgia Weaver Pamela Williams	26 Michael Buss Lori Silfies	27 Deborah Carl Donald Devers, Jr.	28 Alexandra Baer Robin Dorney Marina Newton	29 Nancy Delp Scott Eberhart Kathryn Kaintz Jamie Santee Tyler Shankweiler
30 Carole Flores Shirley George Reece Moyer	31 Ellen Sagazio					