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Like us on Facebook  
First United Church of Christ  
Hampton



**TOGETHER**

**Worshipping God  
Growing Spiritually  
Serving Others**

While we may not be able to gather together physically, we are still coming together online! Please visit our Facebook page for virtual Sunday worship services, prayers, reflections, and music!

Together we are First UCC!

# FIRST UCC HAPPENINGS



FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, HAMPTON, VA



*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ~Ephesians 4:29*

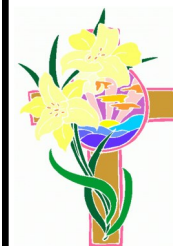
Hello, beloved. I, your staff, the EVA, and others are actively creating, searching, and navigating this time as best as possible collectively. Here are a couple ideas and nuggets of information I'd like to share.

1. I have set a handful of devotional books in the back of our church mailbox in the event that anyone would like to drop by and grab one to use while at home.
2. If stamps are low, then your tithe can be dropped in the church door slot. Doyle plans on making deposits on Fridays. Your faithfulness has been AMAZING!
3. We are looking into a gift bag to be dropped to our shut-ins.
4. Virtual worship services are being posted each Sunday on our Facebook page, along with daily prayers and reflection and music.
5. Wellness checks, or as one pastor friend of mine calls them, "triage" phone calls will be made daily to the membership occasionally during this time.
6. Appropriate licenses have been purchased and donated so our online worship experiences are completely legal and all music is covered under this license.
7. Diane and some praise team members have recorded music to use in worship posts prior to the complete distance mandate.
8. I will hope to continue daily post, messages and devotions online and send concessional mail-outs and emails to continue to inform the congregation what is going on as best as possible.

There is much more happening, from insurance discussions, training, webinars, worship experiences, various platforms that may be easiest for our congregation recognizing that not even half of us are online. Your patience and prayers as we continue to move forward and navigate this uncharted time as a STAFF TEAM are appreciated.

One last important thing. Living out our faith in as positive a light as possible is paramount during these times. Let's be mindful of Ephesians 4:29 and its encouragement to encourage one another and for our words to be useful for building one another up as is needed. It has never been more important to practice that Scripture than now. Blessings on each of you today!

~Rev. Ed Lilley



**APRIL 2020**  
**TOGETHER**

**Worshipping God  
Growing Spiritually  
Serving Others**



**From the Director of Music**



Dear First UCC Friends,

I just wanted to keep everyone up to date with what I've been doing these past few weeks and our plans for coming weeks. First of all, because we are all working remotely, I have been trying to touch base with emails that include audio files of some beloved hymns and piano and organ music to lift your spirits. I have called everyone who doesn't have email, and spoken to all but one person. I think I have created a master email list for all staff to be able to send out information so that we are all on the same page. We need to share information with those who don't have email by using the telephone and US mail. We will again share worship and beautiful music together, but now we are still exploring ways to do this. So far this is what has been done:

Facebook – through my Facebook video posts, shared on the church Facebook page, I have been able to bring those of you on Facebook some of my music making. Some come from the church organ, and some from my home piano. Pastor Ed has video recorded some organ music to include in our Facebook worship videos as well.

Congregational Emails – I have sent out emails with recordings of my piano and organ music to everyone I know of that has email. If I missed you, please email me at [toccatagirl@aol.com](mailto:toccatagirl@aol.com) to tell me.

Choir Emails – The singers in Good Time Singers, Worship Ensemble, and Men's Chorus all have their music folders and hymnals at their homes now. I have sent emails of audio files of some of those favorite anthems so that individuals can sing with them at home. I hope to continue to send recordings to singers so that we can continue to lift our voices in song, using the music we love, and with texts that are so dear to us, especially during Lent and Holy Week. In this new world of online education we call this asynchronous learning.

So, please know that every one of you is in my prayers every day. Our UCC motto is "That they may all be one." It is my fervent prayer that, in spite of our being apart right now, that we may find ways to be in community with each other.

Peace and Love,

Diane Drury

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

- 5 Morgan Rountree
- 10 Chris Henderson
- 11 Kara Bocklet
- 12 Ralph Smith
- 16 Celia Smith
- 17 Elaine Brooks
- 19 Allen Bryant
- 22 Pat Kline
- 25 David Kline
- 25 Derrick Lawson
- 27 Patsy Queensbury



If you have a birthday and it's not on the list, please let us know so we can correct our records.

*April Anniversaries*

**Rich & Pastor Lisa Griffin  
April 22nd**



If you have an anniversary in April, May, or June please let us know, so we can correct our records.

**Sunday School is now online!**

I've created a forum/message board for our class to discuss the weekly lessons. The web address is:

<https://1stuccsundayschool.proboards.com/>

Please register if you haven't already! If you need help signing up, email me at [firstuccyo@verizon.net](mailto:firstuccyo@verizon.net) or text me at (757) 232-2434.

~Courtney Phillips

**Psalm 23:4** - *Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. (NLV)*

May the peace of God be with you.



## HOW TO SUPPORT CONGREGATION MEMBERS

Pray for one another. Send emails and texts to each other. Send cards to your elderly members who are not connected digitally. If someone is infected, help them contact loved ones. Encourage congregation members to ASK FOR HELP. Drop helpful products or a COVID-19 bag outside the doors of those in need in your congregation. Make phone calls to members. Ask members to call other members. Use pick-up groceries where available. Help members learn to grocery shop on-line. Pick-up medications and supplies.

## HOW TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Pray for your members, community, those who are vulnerable. Pray for wisdom and creativity. Pray for insight and wisdom for doctors. Don't disappear or go silent. Be a source of hope. Stay levelheaded. Be informed and thoughtful. Get creative on how to love people in your community. Continue to donate to your local food bank. Drop off groceries on doorsteps of vulnerable people. Encourage people not to hoard food. SHARE. There is enough. There will be more. Stand against fear of marginalized folk, especially Asian. Surprise skilled nursing facility workers by ordering and having delivered to them fruit trays, sandwiches, cheese and crackers, etc. as a way to thank them.

## SUPPORT GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Anxiety, depression, fear, panic, worries and all mental health challenges are real. Encourage people to ASK FOR HELP. Talk about facts. Check in on family and neighbors who are isolated and lonely. Practice peace. On-line yoga. Meditation. Check self-talk. Don't catastrophize. Make sleep a priority. Look for an on-line counselor, Choose times to watch reliable news to keep updated. Walk, but keep a physical distance from people. Focus on what you can control. Connect with others. Create a schedule for yourself even when self-quarantined. Use music and art to soothe yourself. Stay in the present. Ask yourself, "What is the healthiest thing I can do in this moment?"



## A message from Rev. Lary Diehl, Pastor Emeritus

In these times of the Corona Virus, fear & anxiety, I find great comfort in these words:

From Ps 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns."

And, Ps 121: "I lift up my eyes to the hills from where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. The Lord will not let your foot be moved; The Lord who keeps you will not slumber."

I share this with you because I care for you. I know it may not lessen all the fear & anxiety, but I hope it helps. My thoughts & prayers are with the people of First Church.

God Bless You.  
Pastor Diehl

'God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.'  
(Psalm 46.1 NRSV)



## A prayer for these uncertain times



Holy God, ever present with us, we are mindful of these times in which we live. Uncertainty, anxiety, and fear are present among us as we listen to and care for one another in these days. We ask that your peace and healing presence be with us, as we pray for and hold each other in love. We ask your guidance and direction as we live out your command to love one another as we are called to love you. In the name of the one who has called us and prepared us for these challenging days, we pray. Amen.



## WAY OUT: THE WAY OF GRATITUDE

*Jesus is not teaching us to stand at the margins and beat our breasts as a way of gaining religious certitude. ....He is declaring a new economy, one that neither character recognized. For the tax collector had also internalized the social identity epitomized by the Temple. It is not the tax collector's speech, but Jesus' "I tell you" that marks the irruption of the truth here.*

Walter Wink,  
"The End of Breast-Beating," *Sojourners*

A parable is a story that the teller intends to be compared with another. Jesus intends for the hearer to hold in parallel with their life these two caricatures of a standup guy and a shirker, the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14).

We know which of these characters our congregation relies on. We know which one pays the bills, teaches in the church school, pounds nails at Habitat, and visits the sick. The standup guy moves from practicing the way of righteousness to being self-righteous with his us-them language and thanking God that, "I am not like other people."

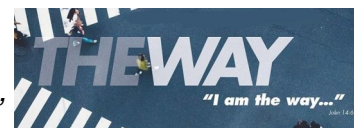
From the parable, we don't know if the shirker even notices the contemptuous comparison of the self-righteous one as he cries out, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Unlike the self-righteous one praying from the abundance of his achievements, the shirker is praying from his need.

Knowing our proclivity to live by comparison, whether it is the Joneses or the person 25 years our junior, Jesus tells this story. What is the way out from living by comparison? Gratitude.

People who are genuinely grateful are never greedy or jealous, never bitter or small, not self-centered or hateful. If they can see every day as a gift from God, see what they have done or achieved as made possible by the gifts of God and see what they own as what God has given them for a while, they are who we call gracious people.

The way of gratitude is the way out from the bitterness of comparing and measuring. Being grateful leaves you free and transformed. From there, stepping into generosity is a small step.

*'I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.'*



### First UCC Weekly Offering

Mar 1	\$1,940.00	Mar 8	\$2,627.50
Mar 20	\$1097.50	Mar 27	\$2,360.00



Even though our church doors are temporarily closed, we are still incurring operating costs. Please continue to make your offerings as you can, either by mail or by dropping them into the mail slot on the church office outer door. Thank you so much for your continued support during this time.

### Treasurer's Report

General Operating Checking Account Balance	\$26,256.17
Breakdown:	
Bills to be Paid through 04/03/2020	\$1,174.80
General Fund	\$22,307.87
Reserve Fund Balance	\$1,007.33
UCC Local Mission Grant Balance	\$342.15
Mission & Evangelism Balance	\$2,431.35



## BE THE CHURCH TO CARE FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST FROM SOUTHERN CONFERENCE UCC

- ◆ TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
- ◆ TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE VIRUS
- ◆ TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT OTHERS FROM THE VIRUS
- ◆ USE COMMON SENSE
- ◆ WASH YOUR HANDS
- ◆ FOLLOW LOCAL, STATE, AND CDC GUIDELINES

Coronavirus (CoVid-19) is a respiratory illness that causes flu-like symptoms including fever, coughing and difficulty breathing.

- ◇ If you have any of these symptoms, seek medical advice.
- ◇ Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about any recent travel and your symptoms.
- ◇ Stay home. Do not travel while sick. Avoid contact with others.
- ◇ Ask to join meetings via video or telephone conference call while you are recovering. Join worship via livestream.
- ◇ Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- ◇ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- ◇ Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue away.
- ◇ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects, especially your cell phone.