

What We've Been Up To...

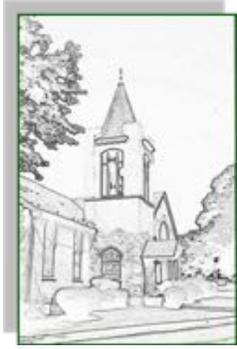
Valentine's Day Dance



Youth Group



Lovefeast



For many Christians, the season of Lent has traditionally been one of solemnity, fasting, sacrifice, and self-denial. We “give up something for Lent.” We give up chocolate, or watching television, or something else that we find enjoyable. Growing up in the Roman Catholic Church, we were not allowed to eat meat on Fridays during the season of Lent. When I got older, I used to joke that I would give up yard work, or broccoli, which of course was not much of a sacrifice. Looking back at this exercise, I realize it had a lot in common with the rest of my religious upbringing, and that was, we believed that by the force of our own will, we could achieve a certain level of holiness or righteousness. It was almost like God was a spectator, giving witness to our religious accomplishments.

This behavior is not exclusive to Roman Catholics. A friend of mine, who belonged to a fundamentalist evangelical church told me that I could always comfort and sustain myself in times of trouble if I could manage to memorize Bible verses, because there was a Bible verse for every challenge and difficulty I could think of. I was never very good at memorizing Bible verses. Neighbors of mine, who were Jehovah’s Witnesses, told me that if I followed all of the rules of their religion, which prohibited celebrating birthdays and receiving blood transfusions, but, oddly enough, seemed to be okay with drinking and smoking, then I could be one of the lucky 144,000 to make it to Heaven. It was all up to me.

I read an article, written by philosophy professor, Nicholas Wolterstorff, who described a tragic event that occurred in his life. He wrote a book about it. In the book, he tried to make sense of God’s presence in the midst of this tragedy. “It’s part of God’s plan.” “Some say that tragedy is part of God’s strategy for soul-making-for bringing about moral and religious improvement in people.” “It’s God’s way of punishing us for our wrongdoing.” “God is as pained by tragedy as you and I are, but there is nothing God can do about it.” “It is the price to be paid for some greater good that God is bringing about for humanity.” None of these strategies made sense to Wolterstorff, and he said so in his book. He was attacked by critics, who said that his book was a theological heresy, because it did not fit into their theological understandings and explanations about God. But he said that the tragedy in his life did not prompt him to try and understand God, but instead had the effect of making God more mysterious. As he writes, “I live with the mystery.” And, “The God who became more mysterious to me has also become more awesome, awesome beyond comprehension.”

I was always taught that the season of Lent was patterned after the story of Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness, during which he overcomes temptations and Satan by the force of his will, and that I should try and do the same. But stories of “wilderness” experiences in Scripture, from the Exodus to David to Elijah, mostly point to a reliance upon God. Even in Jesus’ encounter with the devil, he points to his reliance on God and is later attended to by heavenly angels. It is not all up to him.

The season of Lent, like all of our religious practices, I believe, should not be an exercise in self-sufficient salvation, but should be an opportunity to realize our need for God. Perhaps for Lent we might give up the pretense that, strictly speaking, we can do anything on our own.

During this season of Lent, we will be exploring wilderness experiences, and how we might meet God in these experiences. Whether you are experiencing a time of wilderness, or a time of oasis, I pray that you might experience the presence of God during this season, a God of mystery and awe that will truly meet us wherever we are.

Blessings,

Pastor Bob

March 2019

Evangelism and Outreach

Food Bank

Thank you for continuing to remember the urgent needs which our food banks seek to address. Canned goods and other non-perishables are always in demand. Please bring **anything** you think would be appreciated. Consider donating spices. Spices allow cooks to add flavor to food without additional salt. Think about buying cumin, cinnamon, coriander, onion powder, garlic powder, cloves, oregano, basil, parsley, cayenne pepper, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves, or any other spices you commonly cook with.

Please keep your cans coming and place them in the pantry shelf. March's food of the month is Easter items.

Emergency Prayer Chain

An outreach for prayer when you or someone you know and love has an emergency, unexpected surgery, accident, etc. The place to call is:

- Church Office - (610) 759-5676
- Lois Steward - (610) 759-3519
- Rita Blossey - (484) 373-0614

One of us will start the chain. Anyone who would like to join our Emergency Prayer Chain, please call Lois Steward or Rita Blossey at the numbers listed above.

Call the Church Office When...

- A member of your family is admitted to the hospital so the proper people are notified.
- Your home phone, email address, or mailing address has changed.
- An addition to your family has occurred.
- You want your birthday and/or anniversary added to our newsletter list.
- You feel the church can help you in any way.

Pulled Pork Dinner

Thank you to everyone who supported our Spaghetti Dinner where the profit was \$1,187. Ten percent (\$1,067) will be used for Youth programs. This was an all new profit record for the spaghetti dinner. NOW.....

Come enjoy delicious pulled pork served with seasoned baked potatoes, a medley of roasted vegetables, coleslaw and an array of desserts on March 23rd. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$11 at the door. See Jacob Allen, Margaret Zabe, Joan Mumaw, or Jean Cooper or call the church office for tickets or questions.

Forks UCC Art Series

Our fourth presentation will be a Broadway cabaret from Easton Theatre Co-op at 7:30PM on 3/23. Join us for the Pulled Pork dinner beforehand and make an evening of it! Dinner and a show tickets are \$28 and Cabaret only tickets are \$20.



Stained Glass Window

Have you taken notice that the stained glass window in the Social Hall is missing? It will be out for the next couple of months as it is being refurbished. This is just the third window being refurbished out of our 14 windows that need to be refurbished over the next few years. This is a very expensive process. How is it being paid for? Our fundraisers over the past couple of years have been designated for this expense, as well as portions of our Rummage Sale profit will be donated by the Adult Fellowship. We also have families who have donated their loved ones memorials to this project. If at anytime you wish to contribute to the window refurbishing projects please let the church office or Jacob Allen know or simply put your donation in the offering plate marked "Stained Glass". Thank you for your continued support.

Stewardship and Finance

You can always give your special offerings (envelopes) online at:

<https://forksucc.breezechms.com/give/online>

The special offerings this month are as follows:

3/3 - maintenance and repair fund

3/31 - One Great Hour of Sharing

Please note those words in the "comment" box while completing your online gift to allow your gift to be moved into the correct account.

Offering Envelopes

Do you use your offering envelopes? If not, please contact Cheryl in the church office (610-759-5676) to cancel your order. These envelopes are purchased and if you are giving electronically, we'd rather not waste the paper and money. Thank you!

One Great Hour of Sharing

The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery. Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place. **We will be taking part in this special collection on Sunday, March 31st.**

Content taken from UCC.org

Is Church Canceled Today?

To find out this winter, or anytime, if Forks UCC services are canceled due to inclement weather, the Consistory has implemented procedures to notify the congregation.

The Forks UCC Congregation can find out if church is canceled the following ways:

- The cancellation notice will be sent out to members on the mass e-mail list
- The cancellation notice will be posted on the Church Webpage
- The cancellation notice will be posted on WFMZ.com & in extreme weather conditions on WFMZ TV
- Members who sign up will receive a phone call between 7:00 AM – 7:30 AM on the Sunday in question if services are cancelled. To sign up please let the Church office know or e-mail Jacob E. Allen at jacob.e.allen@gmail.com. Sign up using the yellow forms in each vestibule.

Please take advantage of these services to find out if church services are ever canceled.

Christian Education

Vacation Bible School

Mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School this year: July 22nd-26th. Please see Amanda Knitter Williams if you'd like to volunteer!



Music & Worship

Lenten Gatherings

Again this year we will be joining with area churches to celebrate and worship together on Wednesday evenings. Look at the calendar or in Weekly Happenings for details.

Altar Flowers

If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, select your Sunday and affix your name and intention (“In honor of” or “In memory of” or “To the Glory of God”). The arrangements are \$30. Another way of showing your love is to opt out of having flowers, rather choosing to have a single candle on the altar and your flower money will be donated to a charity of your choice. This is a powerful way to honor the day but make a difference in our world. Please make checks payable to “Forks UCC” with the notation “Altar Flowers”. Simply drop your payment in the offering plate. Thank you.

Altar Guild for March -

Altar Flower Sponsors for March

March 3 - In celebration of Rev. Bob Gutekunst
March 10 - Doug & Carole Steckel
March 17 - The Grogg Family
March 24 - Anna & Victor Zeeman
March 31 - OPEN

Those Serving

Ushers/Coin Collectors

March 3 - Steve Dewalt
March 10 - Sam Kemmerer
March 17 - Mel Kresge
March 24 - Jim Milhman
March 31 - Glenn Borger

Greeters/Offering Collectors

March 3 - Jane and Sam Kemmerer/Joan Jud & Sarah Happel
March 10 - Carol and Dave Young/Sharon Merluzzi & Carolyn Mitch
March 17 - Bob and Margaret Zabe/Sandy and Glenn Borger
March 24 - Bill and Lorna Dreisbach/The Cressman Family
March 31 - Sandy Perrine & Barb Huff/Vic and Anna Zeeman

Celebrate with our Church Family

Happy March Birthdays

01 Kate McKelvey-Jones	14 Charles Prutzman Sr.
01 Deann Allen	15 Kay Kromer
01 Chris Beers	16 Tammy Uhler
03 Carol Labar	18 Kendra Ehrich
03 Jennifer Zabe	20 Dane Edelheiser
04 Bonnie Starner	21 Sarah Ringhoff
05 Debbie Hartzell	23 Corinne Gold Eberts
05 Kurtis Fleming	24 Brett Fleming
05 Jordan Allen	24 Apryl Audenried
07 Joan Guthrie	25 Tim Weis
08 Kelvin Dewalt	26 Dustin Gable
09 Janet Berger	27 Bob Egolf
10 Sarah Fleming	28 Janet Rush
10 Tina Ehrich	28 Craig Warner
11 Tagan Steward	29 Irv Angstadt*
12 Victor Zeeman	30 Ryan Hartzell
12 Alyssa Knitter	

Our wishes to Irv
Angstadt who
celebrates his 85th
birthday on the
29th. Happy



March Anniversaries

Ruth & Gary Gardner	3/06/1959
Jennifer & Brent Wood	3/11/1995
Sherry & Charles Pruntzman Sr.	3/12/1987
Carole & Doug Steckel	3/13/1954
Carol & Chuck Hartway	3/20/1983
Jennifer & Michael Zabe	3/20/1999
Corinne & Warren Eberts	3/23/2004
Judy & Jerry Kinsey	3/25/1967

Confirmands

Ashley Cressman, Tyler Grogg, Hannah Gutekunst, Samantha Shook, Riley Williams

Visitation List

Please see the Church Directory or contact the Church office or a member of the visitation team for addresses.
Earl & Dolly Abel, Fred Bolling, Corinne Eberts, Tony Jiorle, Dorothy Kortz, Florence Saylor, Irene Tenges, Bonnie Warren



March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Last Sunday after Epiphany Transfiguration Communion <i>Ordination Service</i> 3PM	4	5	6 7PM Ash Wednesday Worship	7	8	9 Daylight Saving Time
10 1st Sunday of Lent	11 7PM Stewardship and Finance	12 6PM Spiritual Council 7PM Consistory	13 Lenten Gathering	14	15	16
17 2nd Sunday of Lent	18 6:30PM Adult Fellowship	19 7PM Evangelism & Outreach	20 Lenten Gathering	21	22	23 Pulled Pork Dinner 4:30-7PM Forks UCC Art Series - Broadway Cabaret 7:30PM
24 3rd Sunday of Lent Amistad Sunday	25 7PM Christian Ed.	26 7PM Parish Life	27 Lenten Gathering	28	29	30
31 4th Sunday of Lent <i>One Great Hour of Sharing Offering</i>	Lenten gatherings with area churches Soup and Fellowship 5:30PM Worship 6PM 3/13 - St. Luke's UCC, 471 Belfast Road 3/20 - Grace Lutheran Church, 5907 Sullivan Trail 3/27 - Belfast Wesley UMC, 607 School Road					

Sundays

8AM - Meditative Worship

10AM - Worship

