

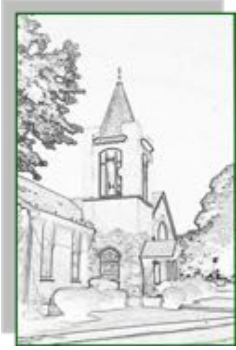
TIDINGS

The Monthly Newsletter of Forks United Church of Christ
*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey...
you are welcome here!*



Outdoor Worship





On a recent trip to the grocery store, I saw someone wearing a mask that read, “Tom Wolf Stinks!” (The language was actually stronger than that, but this is a church newsletter:) Now, I want to preface what I say by first saying that I am neither an ardent supporter nor a passionate detractor of our state’s leader. But, the encounter reminded me of a couple of realities. Firstly, our governor, back in March, made some tough decisions which, at least I’d like to think, he made with the intention of trying to keep people safe. And secondly, those decisions were wildly unpopular among many of our state’s residents.

We, in the church, are similarly faced with some tough decisions about whether to reopen the building for worship and other activities. Many congregation members that I’ve spoken with have expressed their eagerness to come back to worship in person, and have asked when that is going to happen. Our decision right now, made in conjunction with the church’s leadership, is that we are not yet ready to reopen. This is a tough decision. It is a decision that, I’m sure, many people will not agree with. Let me explain some of our reasoning for making this decision at this time.

First of all, many health professionals and scientists, (who I tend to rely on more than politicians) have warned of a possible confluence of influenza (the regular flu bug) with a possible spike in coronavirus cases as we move into the Fall and Winter. This is due to colder weather and more people moving indoors for gatherings. Secondly, we’ve already seen outbreaks occurring in colleges and universities and primary schools as schools have moved to reopen for in-person learning. Another complication is that, during our outdoor worship services and some of our small group gatherings in the building, some congregation members have not complied with our safety protocols. Finally, most of the churches in our area that are relatively the same size as we are have not moved to reopen, and the Conference’s consistent guidance on this issue is one of caution.

Perhaps more important, I think, is our mandate to keep people safe, especially the most vulnerable members of our community. This is not a political or a scientific mandate, but a Scriptural mandate. In the Hebrew Bible, commonly referred to as the Old Testament, God’s teachings are centered on community life. The Ten Commandments are a guide for framing community life in such a way that the most vulnerable members of the community are looked out for. Jesus’ most common teaching, in the New Testament, is to care for the poor and the weak, to think of others before thinking of ourselves.

The restrictions that have been imposed upon us are irritating and annoying, no doubt. Many of the people who have complained the loudest about these restrictions have cited a violation of their individual, constitutional rights. I would guess that the man wearing the Tom Wolf mask felt the same way. But caring only about our individual rights means that we care less about others’ rights. This is not Scriptural. As a community of faith, we are bound, first and foremost, to follow, not the Constitution of the United States, but our holy Scriptures.

So, for right now, we will worship outside as long as the weather permits, and then we will move back to virtual worship. Of course, this is subject to change. If coronavirus cases remain low in our area, and if the guidance from health professionals and church leadership indicates a change in philosophy, we will act accordingly.

I know that this decision will not be popular among some people. Perhaps I can provide you with a mask that says, “Pastor Bob Stinks!” if that makes you feel better (haha). But you should know that our decisions are made solely with the health and safety of our members in mind. That is our primary concern.

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:

10/4 - Neighbors in Need

10/11 - O.C.W.M. special offering

10/18 - maintenance and repair fund

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

Neighbors in Need

Neighbors in Need (NIN) Sunday is on **October 4, 2020**. NIN is a special mission offering of the U.C.C. that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Much continues to change in the world since last year's NIN. Justice issues have been laid bare, making the Neighbors-in-Need Special Mission Offering (October 4) even more critical as it pertains to at least two global pandemics, i.e., Covid-19 and racism. We have the opportunity to stand front and center with those working toward a just world for all. Please support NIN. Thank you and blessings.

Barrels, again!

Beginning in September we need to start paying for our Fuel Oil for the upcoming heating season. Again this year we are hoping you help us by buying "Barrels of Oil" for \$50 a barrel. Together we can ensure we can worship in a warm sanctuary all throughout the cold winter.

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!

Pork and Sauerkraut

Join us on October 17th for a drive thru Pork and Sauerkraut dinner! Watch our Weekly Happenings and Facebook page for details.

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.

ONA Corner

Visit this area of the newsletter for current Open and Affirming information.

ONA Committee members are: Brenda DeLong, Bob Gutekunst, Alice Hornbake, Carolyn Mitch, Rick Taylor, and Betsy Warner

Evangelism and Outreach

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.

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.

Housekeeping

In the new year, we will be looking for volunteers to help keep our church clean. Some responsibilities include emptying the trash cans, swiffering the floor under the pews, and vacuuming. If you or a group of your family or friends would be interested in doing this once for a particular month, please contact Jacob Allen (610-533-9108) or Alice Hornbake (610-703-3095) for details. Youth can also earn community service hours for their participation. Thank you for caring for our congregation and building.

Good Reads

Welcome to our section sharing what we're reading now. Please send your recommendations to wmhornbake@yahoo.com to be featured next month.

***Exciting news!!!!

Richard Taylor is pleased to announce the publication of his new book, "Congregations of the German Reformed Church in the United States." Running to over 700 pages, it includes a directory of over 4,000 German Reformed Churches formed before the 1934 Church merger, and their subsequent life. It includes 53 in Northampton County. The book begins with a summary of social and organizational history of the denomination. You can discover the stories of the church family within which our Forks congregation grew. You can check out the other churches that were in former charges with Forks. The book also notes about 1,300 Lutheran churches that were in union arrangements with Reformed churches, such as the former Salem Lutheran Church at our site. The book is designed to be a useful tool for genealogists. If you think you had German Reformed ancestors in other places, you can find the churches in those areas, which ones are alive, if they have merged, where they are affiliated, and other useful information to identify where you might find their records. Forks members will be particularly interested in the picture on page viii. Rick will be giving an online release presentation of the book at the Sigal Museum later this year. The date and time will be shared with Forks people so that you can tune in. The list price of the book is \$35.00. But a 10% discount is being offered for orders received before **December 31st**, making the price \$31.50. If anyone would like to order a copy, let Rick know (610-438-3771 or pilgrimrht@rcn.com). To save on postage he'll leave them at the Church, where you can pick them up at your convenience.

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 Flower Sponsors for October

October 4 - AVAILABLE

October 11 - Jeff and Brenda Stoudt

October 18 - AVAILABLE

October 25 - Dawn Trimble

***If you would like to sponsor the flowers on October 4th or 18th, please call the church office. Thank you. Looking to next month, November 1st is also available.

Those Serving

Ushers/Coin Collectors

October 4 - Ron Mumaw

October 11 - Sam Kemmerer

October 18 - Steve Dewalt

October 25 - Glenn Borger

Greeters/Offering Collectors

October 4 - Debbie Hartzell & Ruth Hartzell/The Cressman Family

October 11 - Lori and Scott Reilly/Sharon Merluzzi and Bobbi Ricci

October 18 - Glenn and Sandy Borger/Carol and Dave Young

October 25 - Kim Starner & Rocky Starner/Lori Rowlands and Mike Bruengsen

Celebrate with our Church Family

Happy October Birthdays

02 Sheri Burda	13 Tom Gutekunst
03 Brian Schneebeli	14 Tammy Angstadt
05 Ruth Rinaldi	14 Matthew Ackerman
05 Samuel Jones	16 Christopher Dewalt
06 Makayla Fleming	18 Madysen Hughes
06 Richard Taylor	20 Steve Dewalt
07 Ray Kromer*	22 Leigh Ann Lively
07 Linda Fleming	22 Ashleigh Gaul
09 Sarah Happel	23 Christopher Flyte
09 Cheryl Hahn	24 Isabel Ringhoff
10 Shelly Flyte	26 J.R. Mitch
11 Glenn Borger	28 Deb Ackerman
12 Bill Dreisbach	29 David Phillips
13 Laraine Kresge	31 Alexandria Wood
13 Bob Gutekunst	31 Lisa Hackman

Happy Birthday to Ray Kromer who celebrates his 95th birthday this month!

Have a happy day, Ray!

If you are not on the birthday and/or anniversary list and would like to be and have not notified the church office, please call Cheryl. Thank you.

October Anniversaries

Carol & Dallas Labar	10/06/1972
Gary Barraco & Eric Hanlein	10/16/2011
Diane & Steve Dewalt	10/22/1983
Linda & Gary Fleming	10/23/1982
Rhonda & Joe Herres	10/28/1995



Confirmands

Andrew Biddle, Jacob Hackman, Chloe Miller

Visitation List

Please see the Church Directory or contact the Church office or a member of the visitation team for addresses. Fred Bolling, Bob Egolf, Florence Saylor, Betty Stocker, Irene Tenges, Bonnie Warren

Missing Church this Week?

No fear! You can watch from your computer. If you are on Facebook, go to our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/forkschurch/>) around 10AM and tune in LIVE. If you are not on Facebook, you can STILL go to our Facebook page watch. Never miss a week!

October 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Please check Facebook and Weekly Happenings for events being canceled or reinstated.				1	2	3
4 <i>Communion</i> 18th Sunday of Pentecost	5	6	7 1PM Small Group	8	9	10
11 19th Sunday of Pentecost	12 7PM Stewardship and Finance	13 6PM Spiritual Council 7PM Consistory	14 1PM Small Group	15	16	17
18 20th Sunday of Pentecost	19	20	21 1PM Small Group	22	23	24
25 21st Sunday of Pentecost	26	27	28 1PM Small Group	29	30	31

Sundays
8AM - Meditative Worship
10AM - Worship



October 2020

