

# TIDINGS

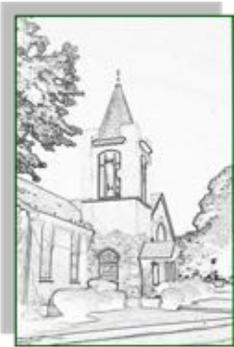
The Monthly Newsletter of Forks United Church of Christ  
*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey...  
you are welcome here!*

Palm Sunday



Sunrise Outdoor Easter Service





A friend of mine shared with me that the town council in her borough was considering whether or not to officially declare their municipality a “Second Amendment Sanctuary.” I’ve heard of other towns considering such proposals. Quite frankly, it seems ridiculous to me. There is not a chance on heaven or on earth that the Bill of Rights is going to be changed in this way, probably ever. But whenever certain people hear any discussion about gun control, the knee-jerk reaction is that their rights are being violated.

I know that most people in churches probably don’t want to talk about such matters. I get it. It’s a controversial topic, with lots of opinions. But the day I’m writing this, there was another mass shooting in our country, a little too close to home, at a Wawa in Upper Macungie Township. I feel the need to say something.

First of all, I will acknowledge that there are a multitude of factors contributing to gun violence, including the complex subject of mental health. Also, I absolutely support the rights of hunters to have rifles to hunt with, and the rights of ordinary citizens to have hand guns to protect themselves or just target shooting. And I know that if I support what I believe to be reasonable, common-sense gun control, regarding rapid-fire assault weapons, people will vehemently disagree with me. Everyone certainly has the right to their own opinions.

But, when I hear in church meetings, as I did recently, that there should be more guns in the country, I feel that I must state the obvious- faith in God and the love of guns cannot exist in equal measure. Many Christians, however, think that their Christian faith and their fetish for lethal weapons can co-exist quite nicely. Quite simply, that’s idolatry.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, what we commonly refer to as the Old Testament, God commanded God’s people that they could not worship idols, that no other gods could come before the one true God. Nonviolent resisters like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr, were influenced by the nonviolent message of Jesus. Jesus, conversing with Pilate, said that, if his realm were this world, his followers would use violence to protect him, but his realm is different. Assault rifles and the Gospels don’t mix. Read them if you don’t believe me.

In a recent Christian Century magazine article, editor, Peter Marty quoted Abraham Lincoln, from his message to Congress, delivered one month after the Emancipation Proclamation. He said:

“We can succeed only by concert. It is not, ‘Can any of us imagine better?’...The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country...We know how to save the Union...We, even here, hold the power and bear the responsibility.”

Lincoln, of course, was referring to the great evil of slavery. As Marty goes on to say in the article, “In Lincoln’s estimation, the nation needed to break free of its enchantment with ideas about the institution of slavery that were no longer relevant and never deserved to be true.” The same is true of our nation’s unreasonable and delusional love affair with guns. As Christians, we are called to worship God, not guns.

Pastor Bob

## 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:

5/2 - Strengthen the Church

5/9 - heat special offering

5/16 - 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.

We're pleased to share our **2021 First Quarter Mission Offerings:**

\$270 - *Our Church's Wider Mission*

\$205 - *One Great Hour of Sharing*

\$5 - *Neighbors In Need*

\$10 - *Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross)*

Our next Mission Offering is **Strengthen the Church** which will be received on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021. If you cannot attend church (outside on the lawn at 10 am), please know your contribution will be accepted anytime as is true with all mission offerings. Make checks payable to 'Forks United Church of Christ' with notation 'Strengthen the Church'. Please read the note below from Rev. Traci D. Blackman, Associate General Minister, Justice & Local Church Ministries, of The United Church of Christ.

"As Spring awakens us to renewed life, with the emergence of budding flowers and new blooms, I am reminded life begins long before evidence of such newness is visible. Just beneath the surface seeds are sprouting roots making ready for what shall soon appear. In many ways your generosity through Strengthen the Church Offerings does just this. Your generosity seeds the work and witness of the national setting. It is your faithful support in giving that gives root to the many signs of ever-emerging life that springs forth in the form of new ministries, platforms, and advocacy needed to impact the needs of our churches and communities of this present day. What a joy it is to co-labor with each of you as we work together towards a just world for all. My deepest gratitude and love."

## 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, Sharon Solt Harfman, 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. May's food of the month is personal hygiene items and healthy cereal.**

**\*\*\*Our blessing box will remain on the front step of the church. Please use it to drop off donations or to fill a need you have.**

## 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. Or you can watch on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEOmIblk8CHl3wb55Ir-djg>) Never miss a week!

## Newsletter Submissions

If anyone wishes to submit any articles for the NEWSLETTER, please have all items emailed by the **20th of each month** to: [wmbornbake@yahoo.com](mailto:wmbornbake@yahoo.com)

## 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 May

## Those Serving

## 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, swiffing 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.

**A HUGE THANK YOU to the Margaret and Bob Zabe, Carol Young, Cathy Tirrell, and Lois Steward for cleaning our church in March and April!**

## Visitation List

Please see the Church Directory or contact the Church office or a member of the visitation team for addresses. Chuck Givler, Anna Laudenslager, Florence Saylor, Janet Rush, Betty Stocker, Irene Tenges, Bonnie Warren

## Celebrate with our Church Family

### Happy May Birthdays

02 Shirley Thatcher	20 Anna Laudenslager
08 Alyson Beers	20 Walt Francis
08 Nicholas Williams Jr.	20 Wayne Hochwarter
10 Keith Kresge	21 Derick Whitmore
10 Ian Wagner	25 Randy Dewalt
13 Barry Durie	25 Nancy Fry
13 Erika Negrin	25 Chris Happel
14 Dorothea Setzler	27 Jerry Kinsey
15 Amy Knitter	27 Grace Weaver
17 Gregg Cressman	28 Alison Fleming
19 Margaret Zabe	29 Charise Jones
19 Nina Sales	29 Josh Hahn
	30 Eleanore Hornbake

### May Anniversaries

Kris & Jack Sales	5/03/1997
Nancy & Randy Fry	5/05/1979
Vilma & Jim Milham	5/11/1996
Kalyn & Charles Kolb	5/12/2012
Tracey & Gregg Cressman	5/14/1994
Salome & Matthew Audenried	5/19/2007
Cindy & Steve Aicher	5/23/1987

### Confirmands

Andrew Biddle, Jacob Hackman, Chloe Miller, Grace Quinn

### Notice

Forks Cemetery Board is holding its Annual Plot Holders meeting Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm in the cemetery office (located at the rear of the white house by the cemetery).

## May 2021

						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> <i>Communion</i> 5th Sunday of Easter Outdoor Worship resumes <i>John 15:1-8</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 6th Sunday of Easter Happy Mother's Day! <i>John 15:9-17</i>	<b>10</b> 7PM Stewardship & Finance	<b>11</b> 6PM Spiritual Council 7PM Consistory	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Ascension Day <i>Luke 24:44-53</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 7th Sunday of Easter <i>John 17:6-19</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> Pentecost Sunday Confirmation Strengthen the Church Offering <i>John 15:26-27,                      16:4b-15</i>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> Trinity Sunday <i>John 3:1-17</i>	<b>31</b> Memorial Day					

Sundays

10AM - Worship

*God is still speaking,*

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



May 2021

