

First Church

604 Market St.
Williamsport, PA 17701

570-322-3572

office@firstchurch.cc

Check us out at

www.firstchurch.cc

Donate



SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00 am—Traditional

604 Market St.

9:30 am—Blended

604 Market St.

11:00 am—Contemporary

601 Market St.

11:00 am—Contemporary

1157 Market St.

(live streamed message)

4:30 pm—Celebrate Recovery

604 Market St.

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

5:00 pm—601 Market St.

First Night meal, fellowship, music,
brief message, children's ministries,

fuse* (youth ministries), First

Friends (special needs group) &

adult small groups.

CYCLE OF PRAYER:

February 4-10:

Sean, Marcy, Tyler, Andrew, & Allyson McCann; Austin, Liesel, Calvary, Talon, & Selah McCardle; Judy McCormick; Todd & Eleanor McCoy; Carol McMurray; Jerry & Cindie Merrick; Dulcey Messersmith; Stefan & Canda Metropoulis; John & Suzette Meyer; Mat, Nicole, Kaleb, & Kohen Meyer; Matt, Holley, Kate, & Emma Meyer; Jordan Miller; Kathy Miller; Kevin Miller; Rocky, Suzanna, Brynn, Paiton, & Anya Miller; Donald & Ellen Montis; Jeff, Susanne, & James Moore; Mike, Lindsey, Julie, Aidan, Annabella, & Lily Morgan; Elmer Morrow; Eva Moser; Kevin, Erin & Evelyn Mowrey; Gary & Cherie Moyer; Tom & Tracey Mulcahy; Chris & Mariah Mumford; Mary Ann Munro; Mark Murawski; Richard & Sandy Murray; Craig & Lorrie Netzley; Douglas, Ashley, Trey, Parker, Ryleigh, & Presleigh Nicholas; and Kevin, Mari, Erin, & Katelyn Niedzwiecki.

PRAY

Welcome to



First Church

United Methodist

Week of February 4, 2018

Transformation in Christ | Changing lives inside and out (Romans 12:1-2)

A DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY—STEP 1

We invite you to connect with God and others here at First Church through *A Disciple's Journey—Step 1*. If you are not yet connected as a member in full discipleship at First Church, this 4 week group will guide you as you begin your next step in your journey of discipleship. *A Disciple's Journey—Step 1* is for you if you wonder what connecting in faith in Jesus Christ is about or if you wish to connect in full discipleship at First Church as a new disciple/member. Pastor D.G. Giordano leads Step 1. Your next opportunity to take this step will be on Wednesdays beginning *February 21* from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in room 206 of the First Evangelical Center. Children's Ministry takes place at the same time as part of First Night so your children can also grow in their discipleship (Christian Life Center, First Floor). Please contact the church office to register or for more information, or sign up on the communication card.

COMMUNICATION OFFERED— 2nd TUESDAY

Communion will be offered in the First Evangelical Center Sanctuary on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 12:00 p.m. until 12:30 p.m. Be sure to join us on Tuesday, February 13th!

VISION DAY— Saturday, Feb. 24

8:30-1:30 at CLC

It's time to sign up! Sign up now on the Communication Card or at www.firstchurch.cc. Please join us for Vision Day. At Vision Day this year, we are going to focus on the ONE THING that Jesus told every one of us that we *must* do to be a faithful follower. Come find out what it is! We are excited to welcome J.R. Briggs, a coach, consultant, teacher, and writer who has invested in kingdom leaders in over 23 states. J.R.'s passion is two-fold: to grow fruit on other people's trees and to collaborate with others to create good kingdom mischief. There is no cost for this event. Register now!

INVITE

MONTHLY CHRISTIAN BOOK GROUP

Join us on Tuesday, February 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Donna Johnson (1701 Clarion Dr.) for the February Book – Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis. No reservation needed. Come once, come every time!!!! Great discussion, good fellowship. “COME AND SEE”.

NEXT SUNDAY IN WORSHIP:

Cultivating a Healthy Marriage

Valentine’s Week is a perfect time to examine the nature of committed love, specifically the love found and practiced in marriage. On Feb. 11, we will spend the morning talking about how we can cultivate the strongest marriages possible through biblical truth and the power of God’s Holy Spirit. Marriage is a highly requested sermon topic. It affects everyone—married and non-married alike. This is a great Sunday to invite someone who wants their marriage to be healthy and vibrant to join you in worship.

WELCOME GRAND FRIENDS (60+)!

Grand Friends will meet on Tuesday, February 27 at Hoss’s Steak & Sea House. We will start at 12:00 p.m. This will be a social event. If you know someone who would be interested in our group, please invite or bring them along. RSVP to Carol Cassidy at 570-323-5596, no later than February 26th.

First Church is hosting an IF Local Site -IF: Lycoming County on February 9-10.

Join us for a Two Day Gathering to Retreat, Refresh and Renew with women worldwide. It promises to be an uplifting, powerful, and influential event that will empower you for years to come. IF is worth it! Register at <https://register.ifgathering.com/event/iflycoming-county>
Contact Melissa Lundy @ lundy515@comcast.net for more information. See you at the gathering.
#IFgathering2018 #IFLycomingCounty #Imgoingareyou

Continued from Pastor’s Page

We will offer more possibilities moving forward, but I would ask that we begin now to commit to a period of holy intentionality through repentance and humility.

I realize it can sound weird... but if we are willing to make the journey we will be surprised at the Resurrection we experience. Let us be a holy people.

In Christ,
Pastor Matt

Abiding Memorial Fund

In memory of Brandon Bussler by Scott and Melinda Sechrist.

In memory of Ray Eck by Susan & John Hennip, Shirley Hill, and Gearlad Holloway.

Birth

First Church would like to congratulate Melissa Anderson and Robert Hill on the birth of their son, Blaize Robert Anderson-Hill on January 23, 2018.

Death

First Church would like to express their sympathy to the family and friends of Ray Eck who passed away on Jan. 24, 2018.

TEACH



FUSE* will not meet tonight, February 4th, because of the “Big Game”. We encourage students to gather with friends and family and use the opportunity to invite other 6-12th graders to the GAME NIGHT OUTREACH next week!

HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

United Methodist Church high school seniors and those enrolled in college who are also active in their church and/or in the conference may apply for a fall 2018 scholarship offered through the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Students apply online between **January 3 - March 7, 2018**. Student loans are also available at interest rates as low as 3.75 percent (with a credit-worthy co-signer.)

Funds for these scholarships come from offerings taken on United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday, and Native American Sunday.

SHOP AT AMAZON – SUPPORT FIRST CHURCH

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers. If you would like to support First Church through AmazonSmile, here is our unique link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/24-0829840>.

SECOND MILE GIVING

The Second Mile giving for January & February is Shepherd of the Streets. The Shepherd of the Streets Ministry is often the first responder for persons in financial need. The Shepherd provides financial assistance for prescription and other medical needs. In addition to financial assistance, the Shepherd provides pastoral care and other support services. www.uclc.org/content/shepherd-streets

MISSION ITEMS NEEDED

Local Food Pantry — saltine crackers, chunky soups, chicken noodle soup, and fruit snacks. **Shepherd of the Streets** — shampoo and deodorant. Donations for these missions may be left in the baskets at the following locations: Christian Life Center - the Market Street entrance; First Evangelical Center - the Ross Street entrance; North Campus - Lounge. **PLEASE DO NOT PLACE OPENED OR EXPIRED ITEMS IN THE BASKETS.**

FAMILY PROMISE

Family Promise host week at North Campus is February 25 - March 4. Please contact Patty Fox at 570-971-2872 if you can help with meals, overnight stays, or can spend a few hours in the evening with the families. I also ask that you prayerfully consider becoming a co-coordinator to assist during host weeks. Thank you.

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR 2018

Would you like to honor or remember a loved one or someone special? Then why not place flowers on the altar at the Evangelical Center. The cost is \$35 and checks can be made payable to First Church (please write “Altar Flowers” in the memo line”). To sign-up for flowers at the Evangelical Center, see the bulletin board located in the Coffee Area. Please be sure to indicate if it is in memory of or in honor of. *Sponsorship of altar flowers will be acknowledged on the rolling slides prior to worship in the First Evangelical Center Sanctuary*

CHILDREN/YOUTH

SEND

Sermon Outline

The Darkness Has Not Overcome (5)—Overcoming Trouble

Habakkuk 3: 1-19

- I. In the end it is not in anger and bitterness that Habakkuk approaches the darkness, but and he comes to face it with _____ and _____.
- II. We can know the goodness, love, and light of God in spite of our _____.
- III. What does it mean to rejoice _____ suffering?
- IV. Habakkuk tells us we can _____ uncontrollably AND be at _____.
- V. Grief drives us _____ into joy and then joy enables us to feel our grief without it _____ us.
- VI. Rejoicing in the light of the Lord is not just a feeling that comes if we hold on long enough in the dark. It is a discipline we do by: _____, _____, _____.
- VII. The _____ shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

Life Reflection:

Do I really believe that the Light overcomes the darkness? Can I truly get to a place where I am able to rejoice even in suffering? What steps can I take to help me realize the truth that the Light does overcome the darkness? Will I commit to repeating scripture in my life on a regular basis? Will I seek to regularly remember all that God has done for us? Will I practice rejoicing even in the darkness? Make this a daily prayer this week: *“Lord, help me to repeat, remember, and rejoice in You and Your light...especially when life is most dark.”*

Scripture Reflection: Habakkuk 3:18-19

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.

Pastor's Page

A Weird Season

First Church,

We are getting ready to enter what many in our culture might see as a “weird season.” In the Church we call it Lent. Lent is the 40 day time period each year that we spend intentionally getting our hearts ready for the celebration that comes with the Resurrection at Easter. But according to the Bible, the best way to get ready for new life is to first of all go through a time of denying ourselves through repentance. When we repent we do the honest, deep, raw work of confessing to God where we have blown it... apologizing for it... and embracing God's forgiveness towards a better life.

This year Lent will come at an even stranger time. It begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14—which is also Valentine's Day—and then Easter comes on April Fool's day (April 1) this year. How ironic on a day celebrated for overly expensive chocolates and roses we will put on ashes. How striking on a day where the culture celebrates “tricking” people with falsities we as the people of God celebrate the greatest Truth of all! Weird right?

I raise all of this today because the best way for us to experience the Resurrection is to first walk purposefully and intentionally through the 40 days of Lent.

What can we do differently this year to make these 40 days truly significant?

Let me offer you a few elements to think about over the next week before the start of Lent occurs.

- 1) Plan now to come to Ash Wednesday to start Lent and Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Resurrection services at the end of Lent.
- 2) Engage the sermon series “Fire” with a firm commitment to living a holy life. One of the practices that we invite you into is to read a chapter of 1 Peter every Wednesday. Details will be provided in the weekly newsletter and on the Church Facebook page. We encourage you also to follow up on the practices offered in the sermon series.
- 3) Join us every morning, or even one morning of the week Monday-Friday of Lent (starting Thursday, February 15) at the North Campus at 6:00 a.m. for 30 minutes of prayer. On Tuesday mornings we will also celebrate communion.
- 4) Consider practicing fasting. Either with food or, in an age of technological overload, with social media. Even if it is not a complete “halt” in usage, consider stopping at a certain time of day, reducing to no more than 15 minutes a day, or some other intentional restriction that will allow you to turn your attention to God.

Continued..