

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 25-March 3:

Kevin Seibert; Joseph & Zachariah Sewalk; Gary Seyler; Kassandra & Brantley Seyler; Blair, Emma, Kathryn & Jackson Shangraw; David Shangraw; Sam & Anne Shea; Mike, Terri , Michael & Brian Sheldon; Tom & Judy Shellenberger; Yvonne Shenuski; Marilyn Sheriff; David & Susan Solomon; Bill, Nancy & Emma Somers; Katie & Nathan Somers; Dave & Carol Spearly; Jamie, Michelle & Jensen Spencer; Hal & Ellen Spooner; Darlene Stannert; Inez Stanton; Earl, Evelyn & Aaron Stauffer; George & Judy Stauffer; Sam, Vicki, Samuel & Kathryn Stea; Katie Stepnowski; Matt, Melissa, Lance & Jade Steslow; Cathy Stonerook; Carol Strand; Luke & Amy Stroup; John & Marian Stuempfle; Rocky Stugart; Kathleen Suffling; Jim & Charlene Surfield; Ken & Edee Swartwood; Patricia Sydock; Steve, Kristin, Thomas & Alex Takach.

PRAY

Welcome to



First Church

United Methodist

Week of February 25, 2018

MEET THE PASTORS

New to First Church? Take a few minutes today to meet one or more of the pastors and let us help you get connected with First Church.
After 8:00 and 9:30 service, First Evangelical Center - Room 206
After 11:00 service, Christian Life Center - in the back of Stryker Hall
After 11:00 service, North Campus - in the lobby

STAY CONNECTED AND GET INVOLVED!

First Church is a busy place. We want to make sure you aren't missing out on anything. Besides reading the Weekly Newsletter, you can go to www.firstchurch.cc to learn all about First Church. The First Glance email newsletter, sent every Saturday, briefly highlights some important upcoming events every week. You can also like the First Church Williamsport Facebook page. Stay connected and get involved!

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.*

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

INVITE

MONTHLY CHRISTIAN BOOK

GROUP

Join us on Tuesday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Donna Johnson (1701 Clarion Dr.) for the March book – The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization by Vishal Mangalwadi (Part 1 of the book only). No reservation needed. Come once, come every time!!!! Great discussion, good fellowship. “COME AND SEE.”

TECH MINISTRY SEEKING

VOLUNTEERS

We are seeking volunteers to serve in a variety of ways at First Church. Specifically, volunteers are needed to run media slides at the 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. services held at the First Evangelical Center. There are several other areas that tech help is needed such as capturing images of special happenings, creating slides for Sunday morning worship, and creating videos for ministries! *No prior technology experience is needed.* If you are interested, have questions, or desire further information, please contact Katie Stepnowski at kstepnowski@firstchurch.cc or sign up on the back of the communication card.

GROUP LEADER TRAINING

Save the Date

Saturday, March 24th
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Fuse Box
We look forward to continuing to grow together as leaders and dive into what it means to be a more effective group leader.

WELCOME GRAND FRIENDS (60+)

Grand Friends will meet on Tuesday, February 27th 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.

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. We also ask that you prayerfully consider becoming a co-coordinator to assist during host weeks. Thank you.

PRAYER TO END SLAVERY

#HiddenNoMore

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

Luke 4:18, ESV

Please pray for the launch of IJM's spring advocacy campaign,

[Hidden No More: The Digital](#)

[March to End Slavery](#). Ask God to move in the hearts of people across the United States, mobilizing them to advocate for their elected officials to protect resources that combat slavery around the world.

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](http://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.

TEACH

SEND

Continued from Pastor's Page

While the current North Campus worship experience will be ending, we are still in a discernment mode as to how best to use the North Campus facility. In the weeks ahead we will be holding another gathering to hear from folks who have ideas and a passion to see new ministry possibilities emerge from the North Campus. Please be on the look out for information about that meeting and please come if you are able to share what might be on your heart.

I ask for your prayers in this time of transition. I ask for your appreciation to our North Campus folks who have demonstrated the exact type of spirit and faithfulness we need to continue to grow in new ways. I ask for all of us to have spirits of humility and surrender as we seek not our will, but the Lord's.

We know that endings are painful and can feel like "dark times," but as followers of Jesus, we know that "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." I rejoice in the ways that the light of Christ has shined through our North Campus and truly believe that there is a bright future ahead for First Church as we take our next steps.

May we seek God whole-heartedly to discover all that God has in store for us in the days ahead.

In Christ,
Pastor Matt

Prayer of Confession

Holy and living God....You are good and perfect and wonderful. Your thoughts and ways are higher than ours - how can bearing a cross be good for us? We struggle to understand when hard times and challenges come our way. We ask where You are in the midst of suffering and trials. We don't understand. Our faith is so weak and our vision is limited and small. Your word tells us to rejoice greatly - even as we are suffering and experiencing grief. We are puzzled and confused - we don't know what to do. We want to trust - but are afraid. Then we read that these trials strengthen our faith. The fire of these trials refine us. As we realize that we can't handle these things that we are facing on our own - it dawns on us - that we need You. We don't have to face challenges in our own strength or by ourselves. We have You. Jesus led by example as He bore His cross for us and for our salvation - He was the ultimate example of faithfulness to the Father. He came - and suffered - to set us free from our sins - to refine us... to cleanse us... to purify us - with the power and fire of the Holy Spirit. In this fire we can experience hope and be filled with inexpressible and glorious joy. Who but the Lord could bring joy out of pain? You alone are worthy of praise, glory and honor. We are humbled and amazed at this incredible love. It takes our breath away. Thank you Jesus - help us to be more like You.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Children Potty Trained 3 yrs-4th grade
JUNE 18-22
9 am - Noon
Register*: www.firstchurch.cc
*Registration will start this spring

SEAN WALKER'S BASKETBALL CAMPS

June 11 to 15

9:00 to 10:30	Those going into Kindergarten through 2 nd Grade	\$20.00
10:45 to 12:15	Those going into Third Grade through 5 th Grade	\$20.00

July 9 to 13

9:00 to 10:30	Those going into Kindergarten through 2 nd Grade	\$20.00
10:45 to 12:15	Those going into Third Grade through 5 th Grade	\$20.00

A glimpse of our camp looks like:

- Free Shooting
- Bible Teaching
- Warm Ups
- Skills
- Scrimmages

Any Questions, please feel free to call Kathy Choate at 570-322-3993 or email kchoate@firstchurch.cc.

CHILDREN/YOUTH

Sermon Outline

Fire: Our Cross To Bear (2)

1 Peter 1:6-9

- I. Spiritual disciplines that push us out of our comfort zones are designed to make us more _____ in Christ
- II. We grow the most in our _____ comfort... not _____ comfort
- III. It is in the trials and _____ of persecution that we most rely on the _____ of the Holy Spirit
- IV. The church is the ONLY organization that exists primarily for the benefit of its _____
- V. Three elements of suffering Peter shares
 - 1) The _____ of suffering
 - 2) The _____ potential that can come out of suffering
 - 3) The _____ we need to practice to get good out of suffering
- VI. Practices ofPractices of _____

Life Application:

What steps of MORE and LESS am I willing to take to get out of my own comfort zone in order to better engage the holiness of God? Am I willing to commit to even one “More” item and one “Less” item? How can I practice more? More focus on God? More Bible time? More prayer? More time with God? More nudging of others towards Christ in an intentional way? How can I practice less? Less noise/distraction (ie. Less social media/tech), less busy, less food (ie fasting). Circle at least one of “More” and one of “Less” and stick to it for Lent.

Scripture Reflection: 1 Peter 1:6-7

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Pastor's Page

NEXT STEPS

First Church,

You may remember that back in January of this year we shared in a consultation weekend with the company MultiSite Solutions in regards to next steps with our North Campus. Since that time we also have held two, open town hall meetings to hear from folks in regards to the recommendations given by MultiSite solutions on the North Campus.

Throughout this process our Lead Council has been listening intently to what was shared at the consultation weekend as well as the town hall meetings. After prayerful consideration, the First Church Lead Council recently decided to end our current North Campus worship service on Sunday mornings. The date of when this will occur will be determined by our North Campus leadership team but will be no longer than the end of the current school year.

As you know, the North Campus has been a special place for us. We have rejoiced in the progress we have made in developing “incarnational ministries” in the community around the North Campus through missional service days, connections with Cochran Elementary School, prayer for the teachers, and movie nights to name a few. We have also celebrated the close-knit community that has developed with those who regularly attend the North Campus.

At the same time one of the significant revelations from our consultation weekend was that we have been “in competition” with ourselves because of the close geographic location of our North Campus to the main campus and because the North Campus has not been able to operate in a completely self-sufficient manner. As a result we have been spreading our resources thin in a manner that is not helpful to either the North Campus or our main campus.

From the beginning of this endeavor we have approached our North Campus ministry as we do with any ministry opportunity... which is, “Lord... use us as you will. We are here if you wish to use us in this way and if you desire us to pursue another course of action we will do that as well. This is about you... not us Lord...”

The folks at the North Campus have exemplified this spirit of humility and faithfulness in an incredibly powerful way.

We have learned a lot regarding our next steps as a result of what has happened at the North Campus over the last five years. In fact, it is abundantly clear to me that God has used the last five years to prepare us for the next five years.

continued

FIRST CHURCH READING PLAN FOR LENT

In Lent we will be reading and studying 1 Peter. We are committing to read through 1 chapter for each Sunday in Lent leading up to Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

Week One: Ash Wednesday February 14th- Saturday, February 24th — Read 1 Peter, Chapter 1.

Week Two: Sunday February 25th— Saturday, March 3rd — Read 1 Peter, Chapter 2.

Week Three: Sunday, March 4th—Saturday, March 10th— Read 1 Peter, Chapter 3.

Week Four: Sunday, March 11th— Saturday, March 17th— Read 1 Peter, Chapter 4.

Week Five: Sunday March 18th—Saturday, March 24th— Read 1 Peter, Chapter 5.

We will focus on reading through each chapter using a method, much like the *Lectio Divina*, which is a method of reading scripture which helps us to internalize the living Word of God, and then to put it into practice in our lives. To do that, we will read through each chapter 4 times, as follows:

First Reading: Enter

As you read this passage of scripture for the first time you are simply "entering in" or familiarizing yourself with what God is saying here. Notice the circumstances, people, places, etc.

Second Reading: Impress

As you read the same passage of scripture for the second time, notice what word, phrase, sentence or verse makes an "impression" upon you.

Third Reading: Pray

As you read this passage of scripture for the third time through, begin by spending a few moments in prayer thanking and praising God for His Holy Word. As you read, be prayerfully interacting with God about the text.

Fourth Reading: Live

In this final reading of the passage ask God to show you how He wants you to live based on this scripture. Is there something He would have you start doing, stop doing or continue doing?

Optional Readings for Week Six-Holy Week:

Sunday, March 25th, Palm Sunday— Read through the gospel accounts of the last week of Jesus's life beginning with His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem—Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12.

Holy Thursday/Good Friday/ Sunday, April 1st, EASTER/Resurrection Sunday— Read through the gospel accounts of the rest of Jesus's last week, death, and resurrection— Matthew 26-28 (for further reading Matthew 22-25); Mark 15-16 (for further reading Mark 12-14); Luke 22-24 (for further reading Luke 20-21); John 13-20.

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