

FOCUS



ON

FAITH

Volume 51, Number 2
2021



FEBRUARY

10:15 am—WORSHIP

Join us for worship each Sunday at 10:15 am

You'll find us on [YouTube](#)

or call 855-883-5992 to listen.

LEAD PASTOR: Rev. Dr. Bruce C. Stevenson
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST: Dennis J. Duda

Faith United Church of Christ

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Center Valley, PA 18034

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www.faithchurchucc.org

We are an Open & Affirming Congregation



No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

*United with Christ,
we are committed
to sharing the
transformative love
of God's
grace and peace
through service
to our neighbors.*

2021 Consistory

Officers:

President: Becky Hite

Vice President: Mike Ford

Secretary: Mary Ellen Long

Elders:

Mike Ford

Jerry Trexler

Becky Hite

Kim Ritter

Deacons:

Tom Berghold

Mary Ellen Long

Brenda Hovis

Ken Koehnlein

Tracy Adams

Justin Koser

Matt Long

Joan Hassler

Church Treasurer: Deb Herstine

Liaisons:

Christian Ed: Mike Ford

Fellowship/Outreach: Matt Long

Enduring /Mem. Gifts: Mary Ellen Long

Property: Ken Koehnlein

Staff Relations: Joan Hassler

Worship: Kim Ritter

Budget/Finance: Jerry Trexler

Mission: Tracy Adams

Youth Group: Becky Hite

Day Care: Pastor Bruce

Fundraising: Brenda Hovis

Choir: Tom Berghold



A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

I am writing this article the day before Inauguration Day and I am anxious. I am anxious because of what happened on January 6, 2021 and because on Saturday it was posted on the U.C.C. website that there had been “credible threats” of protest made against churches between January 17 – 20th. So far all is quiet on the “Western Front.” However, if someone had told me back in 1985 when I graduated from seminary and began my ministry, I never would have imagined these days. In the meantime, I turn to the scriptures, prayer, writers, and spiritual mentors far wiser than I to calm my soul and guide me to wise thinking. As a matter of fact, I have a two hour Zoom meeting with my mentor tomorrow afternoon. By that time the Inauguration will be over, there will be calmness in our nation, and she will say to me: “I guess there wasn’t all that much to worry about after all.”

I have learned that the best thing for a leader, in any system, is not to be anxious and so in the midst of my anxiety I have been doing what I can to calm myself. An anxious pastor is not good to anyone. I have turned to something that the president of our denomination wrote the night of January 6th as “calming thoughts” and a prayer. Let me share it with you.

I have spent the last hour watching as our Capitol endures a coup attempt at the hands of armed terrorists. They were empowered by the words of our own president who invited them to take action. They have now swarmed the Capitol and breached its safety barriers. I watched as the Vice President was escorted out of the Senate chamber by his secret service guards. I watched as our elected representatives were told to take cover under their desks, put on their gas masks, and find shelter. I have seen bodies carried out on

stretchers, armed protestors bang in doors and break windows, tear gas bombs go off and terror threaten the hallowed halls of our democracy.

I never in my life thought I would ever witness such a thing.

It is a night for prayer, my friends. I call us all to pray tonight for a peace to settle throughout our land. Before this escalates further, may we all be vigilant in our prayerful support for a quick and peaceful end to this.

Let us pray for the elected representatives and their staff who are going to spend a number of harrowing hours waiting and watching.

Let us pray for the officers of the law who will risk their lives in an effort to defend our democracy.

Let us pray for America – a land of democratic ideals that doesn't always live out those ideals perfectly, but which has long been a beacon of light and hope for many who live with the hope of being free citizens in a free state.

God help us all.

Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.

Prayer is a calming practice and the responsibility of every believer. I call you to join me into a season of prayer for our nation. Anxiety will lessen, all voices will be heard, and calmer heads will prevail.

Peace,



Watch our Live Stream Service each Sunday morning at 10:15 am **on YouTube** -

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoS4wr4xIyVDTvOakhPAEow/videos>

OR listen to the Live Stream Service **on your telephone** by calling 855-883-5992.

FASNACHT DAY/FAT TUESDAY FEBRUARY 16, 2021

Stop by the church on Fat Tuesday for a “Social Distanced” Fasnacht Party in the parking lot from 11:00 am – 12:00 noon. Coffee will be served as well. Supplies will be limited so first come first serve!

LENT and ASH WEDNESDAY

As we approach Lent and Ash Wednesday, Pastor Bruce will be handing out “**Drive By Ashes**” and **communion cups**. You can drive by his office on **Sunday, February 14 through Wednesday February 17 from 1:00 – 2:00 PM** and use the elements as you watch the **Ash Wednesday service (2/17, 7:30 PM)** on YouTube.

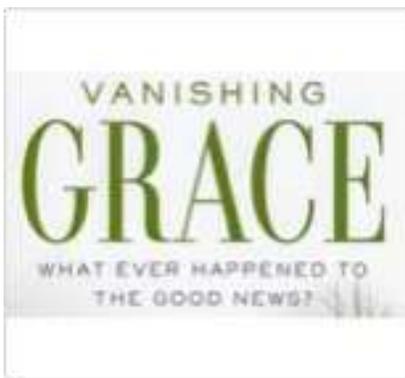


Take pictures of yourself and your items and email them to pastobruce@faithchurchucc.org so we can share our projects!

A LOOK AHEAD AT LENT AT FAITH CHURCH

Sadly, this year during Lent we will not be able to gather for our traditional Wednesday evening covered dish dinners. However, we will have our programs via Zoom. We will start at 7:00 for some fellowship with each other then the program will begin at 7:15 concluding at 7:45.

This year's program will be the video/study series entitled *Vanishing Grace* by Philip Yancey that we *tried* to do last year until COVID-19 so rudely interrupted our plans!



"Why does the church stir up such negative feelings?" Philip Yancey has been asking this all his life as a journalist. His perennial question is more relevant now than ever: research shows that favorable opinions of Christianity have plummeted drastically - and opinions of Evangelicals have taken even deeper dives. Yet while opinions about Christianity are dropping, interest in spirituality is rising. Why the disconnect? Why are so many asking, "What's so good about the Good News?" In *Vanishing Grace*, Yancey shows the desperate need our world has for grace, and how Christians can truly make the gospel good news again.

This is a five-week series. The Worship Committee invites you to make this time of fellowship and study via Zoom a part of your Lenten Journey. Each week the Zoom link will be posted in our weekly email *This Week at Faith*.

- Feb. 24: We've Got Problems!
- March 3: What Can We Do About It?
- March 10: Who Are the Grace Dispensers?
- March 17: Is it Really Good News?
- March 24: Holy Subversives!

Church World Services Blanket Sunday



February is the month to try to keep warm! It's also the month when we take our annual **Blanket Offering on the last Sunday in February**. Since we are not "in" church we will be accepting your mail in, or tithe.ly, or bill pay donations throughout the entire month of February. All you need to do is designate your donation ***BLANKETS***.

Each warm blanket costs only \$10 and our annual goal is to purchase at least 100 blankets. CWS uses these blankets around the world, including the US, during emergencies. Each blanket provides victims of natural and man-made disasters with warmth and shelter. We have met our goal for several years. Let us continue with this generosity.



See **PAGE 11** for
FEBRUARY'S MISSION PROJECT

CWS BLANKETS

Showing God's love to all: a tale of two churches

Congregations around the world host CWS Blanket offerings to live out a mission to serve God's people near and far; and that's exactly how two congregations in Washington state became connected.

First Presbyterian Church of Everett has been hosting "Dinner at the Bell" for 18 years. This weekly event is for low-income families, veterans, homeless, people with addictions – any community members in need – all are welcome. Along with a hot meal, guests receive blankets and hygiene kits.

"A lot of places push homeless people away, and it is nice for churches to open their arms to help people," said Amanda, a guest at "Dinner at the Bell."

In the same city, only five miles away, Cascade View Presbyterian Church fundraises for the blanket ministry of CWS so that organizations and churches like First Presbyterian can serve those in need.

"We have a church that believes strongly in how God calls us to love and reach out," says Pastor Luke Hyder of Cascade View Presbyterian. "We as a church want to make tangible differences for those in need."

One church gives money so the other can give blankets, and together they give hope and a tangible reminder of God's love.

Hope is powerful, especially in times like these. Will you answer the call to serve God's people and give hope today?



Donate today to provide CWS Blankets to warm the hearts and hands of people in need. Scan this QR code or visit cwsblankets.org/bulletin to make a secure donation and learn more about your gift in action.

Scan Me!



CWS

cwsblankets.org

"And don't forget to do good and share with those in need."

— HEBREWS 13:16

2020 was challenging, but congregations stepped up and provided **101,472** CWS Blankets and Kits to families impacted by the pandemic, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and other crises including homelessness and poverty.

Here's how *your* gift helped in 2020:



Blankets	21,855	Hygiene Kits	39,855
School Kits	32,820	Cleanup Buckets	6,942

To view the full 2020 Shipping Report, visit cwsblankets.org/stories-and-reports

You can show God's love and provide hope to your neighbors by making an online donation today at cwsblankets.org/donate. Each \$10 gift provides a blanket and enables someone to see and feel God's love in their lives.



"We love to reach out and help those locally but we also love to reach out to CWS who in turn reaches out to those around the world. And when you have that helpless feeling during these times, I can look at what CWS is doing and can say, 'Hey, I can support that!'"

— REV. LUKE HYDER,
CASCADE VIEW PRESBYTERIAN
EVERETT, WASHINGTON

BP 2139a



FROM THE TREASURER— DECEMBER FINANCIALS

	DECEMBER	YTD
Receipts	\$25,888.40	\$240,653.95
Disbursements	\$21,965.33	\$241,239.33
	\$3,869.20	(\$585.38)

	Weekly Offering
12/6	\$ 1,235
12/13	\$ 4,625
12/20	\$ 3,565
12/27	\$ 1,475
12/30	\$ 1,150
12/31	\$ 3,341
Letter	\$ 3,420
tithe.ly	\$ 3,380
Total	\$22,191

Special Offerings

Christmas Fund—\$206

OGHS—\$135

Joyful Noise—\$5

OCWM \$25

Strengthen the Church—\$181

Helping Hands—\$278

**2021 Offering Envelopes are
in the office lobby. You may pick yours up
Monday through Friday
between 7 am & 5 pm.**

**If you would like them mailed to you
please call the church office and leave a
message for Sandy.**



From the Secretary:

The **deadline** for **March Newsletter** articles and information is **February 10th**. Please email to faithchurchcv@gmail.com or place them in the Secretary's mailbox in the conference room or on her desk.



Winter Mission for Betty Lou's Pantry

For the past several winters Faith Church has participated in **The Souper Bowl of Caring** to collect cans of hearty soups. Faith members have been extremely generous with their donations and you have far exceeded our challenge each year. **We thank you for your generous response!**

Since the pantry is well stocked with hearty soups at this time, we are challenging Faith members to show that you care for all their needs by donating some much needed items. This winter the Mission Team would like to prepare **Hygiene Kits** for the families at BLP. When money is tight these much-needed hygiene items cannot be purchased.

It is our goal to assemble **75 Hygiene Kits** to be distributed by the end of February.

Listed below are the items we find are the most needed and when available are the first to be taken by the families:

Shampoo • Body Soap or Wash

Antiperspirant for Men & Women

Toothbrushes • Toothpaste

A collection bin can be found inside the church office door from **through the end of February!**

Let's all work together and meet this challenge to make this a SUPER, CARING gift to the families of Betty Lou's Pantry.

If you are in need or know of someone in the area who is, please call **610-282-2838** and leave a message, or email bettylouspantry18036@gmail.com

CURRENT NEEDS AT BETTY LOU'S PANTRY

The pantry is well stocked but could use

TOILET PAPER

MEAL HELPERS (Chicken/Tuna/Hamburger Helper)

Drop your detergent donations at Center Valley or Coopersburg Post Offices or the Library. Donations can also be dropped off on Wednesday mornings between 9-10 am at BLP. Thank you for your continued support.

A DAILY PRAYER

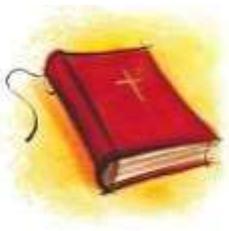
Whatever happens today, dear Lord, help us remember that you are present. If we find ourselves in the shadows of disappointment or rejection or pain, let us see your comforting light. If we're in the radiant light of success or acceptance or wholeness, may we acknowledge

WHY WE LAMENT

In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic struck America during the middle of Lent, a season associated with deprivation. Some people made light of the shutdowns, joking, "I didn't mean to give up *this* much for Lent!" Others asked why the suffering was occurring in the first place.

Professor N.T. Wright, in an essay for *Time*, explains that asking "why?" but receiving no answer is key to biblical lamenting. Adding to the mystery, he says, is that God also laments — grieving at the wickedness of humans, despairing over Israel's unfaithfulness. Jesus cries at a friend's tomb; the Holy Spirit groans in anguish.

"Part of the Christian vocation," Wright concludes, is not being able to explain why but lamenting instead. "As the Spirit laments within us," he says, "so we become, even in our self-isolation, small shrines where the presence and healing love of God can dwell. And out of that there can emerge new possibilities ... new hope."



FEBRUARY BIBLE READINGS

February 1

Isa. 51:17–23
Gal. 4:1–11
Mark 7:24–37

February 2

Isa. 52:1–12
Gal. 4:12–20
Mark 8:1–10

February 3

Isa. 52:13–53:12
Gal. 4:21–31
Mark 8:11–26

February 4

Isa. 54:1–10 (11–17)
Gal. 5:1–15
Mark 8:27–9:1

February 5

Isa. 55:1–13
Gal. 5:16–24
Mark 9:2–13

February 6

Isa. 56:1–8
Gal. 5:25–6:10
Mark 9:14–29

February 7

Isa. 57:1–13
Heb. 12:1–6
John 7:37–46

February 8

Isa. 57:14–21
Gal. 6:11–18
Mark 9:30–41

February 9

Isa. 58:1–12
2 Tim. 1:1–14
Mark 9:42–50

February 10

Isa. 59:1–21
2 Tim. 1:15–2:13
Mark 10:1–16

February 11

Isa. 60:1–22
2 Tim. 2:14–26
Mark 10:17–31

February 12

Isa. 61:1–9
2 Tim. 3:1–17
Mark 10:32–45

February 13

Isa. 61:10–62:5
2 Tim. 4:1–8
Mark 10:46–52

February 14

Dan. 7:9–10, 13–14
2 Cor. 3:1–9
John 12:27–36a

February 15

Deut. 6:1–15
Heb. 1:1–14
John 1:1–18

February 16

Deut. 6:16–25
Heb. 2:1–10
John 1:19–28

February 17

Jonah 3:1–4:11
Heb. 12:1–14
Luke 18:9–14

February 18

Deut. 7:6–11
Titus 1:1–16
John 1:29–34

February 19

Deut. 7:12–16
Titus 2:1–15
John 1:35–42

February 20

Deut. 7:17–26
Titus 3:1–15
John 1:43–51

February 21

Jer. 9:23–24
1 Cor. 1:18–31
Mark 2:18–22

February 22

Deut. 8:1–20
Heb. 2:11–18
John 2:1–12

February 23

Deut. 9:(1–3) 4–12
Heb. 3:1–11
John 2:13–22

February 24
Deut. 9:13–21
Heb. 3:12–19
John 2:23–3:15

February 25
Deut. 9:23–10:5
Heb. 4:1–10
John 3:16–21

February 26
Deut. 10:12–22
Heb. 4:11–16
John 3:22–36

February 27
Deut. 11:18–28
Heb. 5:1–10
John 4:1–26

February 28
Jer. 1:1–10
1 Cor. 3:11–23
Mark 3:31–4:9



Loving embraces

Express your love and friendship with handcrafted bracelets.



What you need:

- Adult help
- Bowl of boiling water
- Wide wooden craft sticks
- Glass cup
- Markers, paint or decorative tape

What you do:

1. Pour about 3 cups of boiling water into a bowl. Soak sticks in the water about 30 minutes.
2. Remove sticks and slowly, gently bend them into a curve.
3. To maintain the shape, place curved sticks inside a glass cup overnight to dry completely.
4. Remove and decorate the bracelets, which make fun Valentine's Day gifts.

February

04 Darin Jellison
Griffin Koch
05 Brett Dill
Karlee Allison
06 Tracy Adams
Robert Campbell
07 Ben Keeler
10 Ethan Stevenson
13 Grace Koch
Susan Hardy
14 Jade Stoffey
15 Joe Smith
Molly Grammer
17 Mark Christman
Richard Shelly, Jr
18 Steve Fosbenner
Eric Hite
19 Sandy Sosnowsky

22 Nancy Gollie
Dana Kernick
Monica Gunkle
Elisa Talboo
23 Brenda Hovis
24 Marian Barrick
28 Donald Koch, Jr



Please call the church office
with any omissions
or corrections.

Puzzle Answer: "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.
Your people will be my people and your God my God." Ruth 1:16 NIV



A famous friendship

In the Bible, Ruth and Naomi are known for their loving friendship.

Directions: Using the key, fill in the blanks to see what Ruth says to Naomi.

“

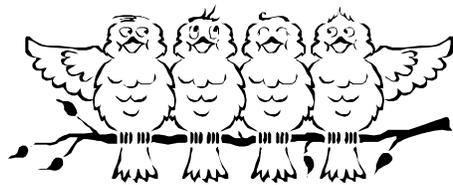
יָדַעְתִּי כִּי כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לִּי יְהוָה עָשָׂה

לְעָבְדִי וְלִי וְלִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִי וְלִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

”

וְלִי וְלִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִי וְלִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

RUTH 1:16, NIV



W	A		E	T
B	U	H	D	O
G	R	L	Y	I
	N	S	P	M