

First United Church of Christ

501 Northampton Street • Hellertown, PA 18055-1838

Phone: 610-838-8811 • Fax: 610-838-8929

E-mail: office@firstucchellertown.com

Website: www.firstucchellertown.com

The Rev. Joel D. Risser, Pastor (Starting 4/23/18)

Ms. Marjorie P. Hughes, D.C.E.

FIRST FRUITS
April 2018



Worship Services

April 1	8:00 AM	Easter Sunday Worship/Communion
	10:30 AM	Easter Sunday Worship/Communion
April 8	10:30 AM	Worship
April 15	10:30 AM	Worship
April 22	10:30 AM	Worship
April 29	10:30 AM	Worship/Pastor Joel's First Sunday

Church Office Hours:

Office Hours are 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Please make your calls to 610-838-8811 and conduct your business during those hours. Other calls will be recorded on voice mail. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and cooperation.



Pastor Susan's Reflections

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ([Jeremiah 29:11](#))

As I write this letter, I am filled with gratitude for all the love, respect, and support that you gave to me as your supply pastor. I feel that in this interim period, I have grown as a person and a pastor. It has been both a privilege and a blessing to serve you these past few months. I will always be grateful for the time we shared at First Church. I love you and I love this church. I will miss you all and the bond that we shared through the love of Christ. This is a new and exciting time for First Church. In a few weeks you will be welcoming your newly called Pastor, Rev. Joel Risser and his family. God has great plans for your future as you and Pastor Joel join together to worship and glorify God and do the work of ministry.

May God bless you and Pastor Joel as you move forward with faith and hope.

Love and Blessings,

Pastor Susan



Dear First UCC Family,

Thank you for the warm send-off during the service and reception on February 25th. We were touched by your kind words and generous gifts. It was a meaningful day for us as we concluded our service to the music ministry at First Church. We are grateful for our time here - for the joyous music we've made and for the friendships we've built. We wish the best for this exciting new chapter in the life of the church!

Peace & Love,
Ben & Megan



Senior Bus Trip to Lancaster

Hop on board for our bus trip to **Sight and Sound** in Lancaster County to see the performance, "Jesus". The date is **Saturday, August 11th**. The bus will leave the church at 8:30 AM. The play begins at 11:00 AM. It is 2.5 hours long. A sit-down lunch will be held at Hershey Farms at 1:30 PM. The bus should return home at 6:00 PM. We will post a sign-up sheet with cost as soon as it is available.



Easter Flowers

Easter flower may be picked up after the second Easter service on April 1st.



First UCC Annual Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, May 5th from 9 AM to 1 PM. Drop-off for items (please no electronics or clothing) will be from 6-7 PM on May 1, 2, & 3 or during church office hours from 4/30-5/4.



First Fruits February 2018

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First

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501 Northampton Street
Hellertown, PA 18055

Volume 65, Number 4

With the support of:

- Marji Hughes
- Phyllis Scherer
- Ann Brown
- Carlann Broglie



Consistory News:

- The following officers were elected: President-Andy Spear, Vice-President – Bob Scherer, Secretary- Andrea Milliren, Tresurer – Bob Turner, Head Elder- Ann Brown, Head Deacon – Elsie Stout, Head Trustee-TBA
- The Church Technician Position was established as a volunteer position, Matt Milliren accepted the post. Matt has been instrumental in arranging all the video and audio equipment for the chancel and the classrooms. He has updated all of our computer programs and made sure that we had all the permits to record services, show movies, and use the One Call System. Our thanks to Matt.
- Marji Hughes was approved unanimously to be our permanent Director of Christian Education.
- The Trustees and Security Committee are busy

getting estimates for a key card system for entry into the church and surveillance cameras and other security measures.

- The arch over the altar has cracks in the caulking which does not appear to be from leakage, but drying. Also, some staining from previous leakage that had been fixed has leached through the paint on the walls. Work is underway to get these areas fixed.
- Our lawn service company has decided it can't continue and a new one will be needed soon.
- The Elders will take on a care package project for college students and military personnel. They will also begin work to revive the Caring Spirits program that includes parishioners visiting the home-bound and infirmed.
- The Tuesday Men's Group has asked Consistory to look into getting lighter tables for New Fellowship Hall.

Consistory News: (Cont).

- Pastor Joel suggested we change the name of Old Fellowship Hall to be more welcoming. Consistory decided to have a contest to see if a better name could be recommended. Details to follow.
- Consistory approved sending \$1000 from the Wimmer (Other) Fund to help Pastor Alan Miller's family with medical bills.
- Confirmation Class has sold many mini-grills. There are still some left for \$15 – a bargain. Money will go towards their retreat expenses.



Message from Your Consistory President

It has been unsettling to note that we are missing some of our favorite parishioners as the church has gone through the pastoral search transition. I hope and pray that our lost sheep will come home. This is such an exciting time at First Church as we begin a new adventure with Pastor Joel. Consistory is working hard to restart many of the programs that

we all enjoyed so much over the years, such as congregational dinners and the Caring Spirits Program. There are more things in the works and once Pastor Joel is on-board, even more great things will happen. Please come back and share the love of Jesus Christ with us. We miss you.

Easter Sunday, April 1, will be Pastor Susan's last day as our supply minister. Her support for our church has been a blessing and we are most grateful. The Reverend Marian Shearer (Marji's sister) will preside over our services on April 8 and 22. Andrew Spear will preach on April 15. Pastor Joel will finally be here on April 29. The Lord's Name be Praise!

The Confirmation Class and its mentors have again dived into the old archive pictures and documents that have been brought down from the attic to the Kindergarten Room. They have a new poster full of pictures and have decided to run a contest to see who can name everyone in the pictures. The new poster is mounted in the Narthex. There are plans for a second contest in a few weeks.



Sunday School begins each week at 9:15am in the Sanctuary with Opening Worship. Children are asked to sit with their classmates. Parents and caregivers welcome!

April Dates to Remember:

4/1 - Easter

8:30am and 10:30am worship

Child Care at 10:30am only.

No Sunday School

4/6-4/8 Confirmation Retreat

4/29 Pastor Joel's first Sunday

4/30 VBS Leaders' Meeting

Looking ahead:

May 6 – Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast

May 20 – YOUTH SUNDAY – Pentecost Celebration

May 27 – Sundaes on Sunday

Please speak with Marji Hughes if you have any questions or would like more information.

ROLLING RIVER RAMPAGE

Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting

Monday, April 30
6:30pm

light supper provided

Whether you are a talented story-teller, would like to hand out snacks, or are not even sure how you might fit in, you are invited to attend.

Don't hesitate to speak with Marji Hughes
mphughes22@gmail.com
610-984-5053 or 610-838-8811
with questions, to rsvp, or to volunteer!



Vacation Bible School

Join us on a whitewater rafting adventure to experience the ride of a lifetime with God! Along the river, you will discover that life with God is an adventure full of wonder and surprise, and you can trust God to be with you through anything.

For children 4 years old through grade 6 in the fall.
7th grade and up are invited to be assistants!

July 9-13

9am-Noon

Registration forms will be available in the narthex and in the next newsletter.

Thoughts from Pastor Joel

Serendipity or Providence

Coincidences make me wonder if I am encountering serendipity or providence. I believe God gives us hints through coincidences in our lives that nudge us toward God's will. Sometimes we assign too much meaning to strange coincidences. I am thankful that most of the time these coincidences serve as contributing evidence of God's will, not absolute and irrefutable proof of the path we should follow. Coincidences have helped me when I was trying to discern God's will in my life. When I was exploring whether I was called to pastor First UCC I had one of those moments.

I was surprised when I learned that one of the former pastors of First United Church of Christ was Rev. Dr. Edward Butkofsky. Ed Butkofsky was a legendary figure in specific circles, and I was vaguely aware of him before I was even a pastor. He pastored First UCC from 1949 to 1954, before being called to a long tenure at Salem UCC in Harrisburg. My surprise came from the idea that I would be pastoring another church that had been pastored by a member of the Butkofsky family. Rev. Dr. Martha Boyer, his daughter, was my immediate predecessor at St. John's UCC in Jonestown. I've also met his widow, Mary Alice, many times over the years. I noticed this coincidence after I had decided I was called to serve First UCC, but I still found it comforting to have a surprising connection to the church.

The leading of the Holy Spirit is not subtle in the Bible. Most of the time, scripture makes it sound like God is telling people what to do explicitly. There are often even some holy special effects. In Exodus 3, a burning bush gets Moses' attention before God tells him exactly what to do. On the road to Damascus, Saul is blinded by the light before Jesus tells him to change his life, and his name (Acts 9). As I try to come up with scriptural examples of God communicating subtly, I find myself rejecting every possibility that comes to mind. If God's will is communicated with subtlety in scripture, the Bible is just as subtle in telling us about it.

God's will is very explicit in scripture for a reason. People who were receiving a message from God that they believed was important enough to write down would not have subtle stories. The writers of scripture would have had to defend their words and convince others they had a message from God. Their writings would also have needed to pass the test of time. Ordinary leadings from the Holy Spirit aren't spectacular enough to become scriptural signs of God's providence. The experience of the church is that God gives us clues in every way we can imagine, including coincidences.

Those Serving in April

	4/1	4/8	4/15	4/22	4/29
Ushers	EASTER Consistory (8 & 10:30)	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5
Greeters			Karyl Laub		Emily & Bob Stetser
Nursery 0 – 6yrs.	Tanya Scherer & Kristen Milliren	Michelle & Samantha Major	Melissa Spear & Sophia Riehl	Barb Thatcher & Morgan Mixa	Carol Petruno & Ashlynn Mixa
Lay Reader	Andy Spear (8 & 10:30)	Becky Rosenberger	Lay Sunday	Warren Kurz	Bill Hoff

Those Sponsoring in April

	4/1	4/8	4/15	4/22	4/29
Bulletins	Dave & Georgie Stuempfle	Kim Kyra	Kim Kyra	Bob & Phyllis Scherer	Carlann Broglie
Altar Flowers	Dawne Pender	Mrs. Al Hoffert	Marji Hughes	Richard Carl	
Organ Piece	Bob & Louise Krill				
Piano Piece	Walter Grigoruk & family				

This edition of First Fruits has been sponsored by:

C. Allen Yost

Like us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/1st-UCC-Hellertown



Stewardship of God's People at First Church

Date	Contributions + Capital Campaign		Attendance
February 4	\$ 2,986.00	\$ 0.00	123
February 11	\$ 1,707.00	\$ 0.00	75
February 18	\$ 4,122.00	\$ 0.00	119 (Call Sunday)
February 25	\$ 7,494.00	\$ 0.00	84

2018 Greeters Needed – A sign-up sheet is posted on the narthex bulletin board. Please consider serving in this way on a Sunday morning.

2018 Bulletin Sponsors – A sign-up sheet is also posted on the narthex bulletin board for those who would like to be a bulletin sponsor. The cost is \$10.00 per Sunday. Checks should be made out to First UCC and marked for bulletins.

Newsletter Sponsors – if you would like to sponsor a church newsletter, please sign up on the narthex bulletin board. The cost is \$60.00 per month. Please make checks out to First UCC and mark for newsletter sponsor and the month you are sponsoring.

Altar Flower Sponsors – If you wish to sponsor altar flowers or would like to have a organ/piano piece placed for Sunday worship or a rosebud for a birth/baptism, please see or contact Minga Ferencin at 610-213-9036 to make the arrangements. The cost for altar flowers is \$30.00 and checks should be made out to First UCC and marked for altar flowers and the date you are sponsoring.

Suggestion Box – There is a suggestion box in the Narthex with sheets of paper to use for anyone who has a comment, question, or suggestion. Please fill out the sheet with your thoughts and drop it in the box. Our goal is to improve communication within the church, and, one way is to make every voice heard. Please leave your name, phone number or email if you wish so that we can reply to you. All of them will be responded to in some fashion.

Newsletter Deadline – Next newsletter deadline is April 10th. Please email articles to the office at office@firstucchellertown.com or place them in the church office. Please include your name & phone number.



April Birthdays
Happy Birthday to:

- 4/03 Madison Jezick
- 4/03 Liam Riehl
- 4/04 Juliana DiTroia
- 4/05 Renate Geisinger
- 4/06 Becky DiTroia
- 4/06 Maria Laub
- 4/06 Erin Paparelli
- 4/07 Noah Yonney
- 4/08 Bradley Letko
- 4/09 Nick Oblas
- 4/09 Tricia Shelly
- 4/09 Mary Stoneback
- 4/09 Alice Yuille
- 4/10 Melissa Henry
- 4/10 Jorryn Kyra
- 4/10 Matthew Milliren
- 4/10 Jeff Petruno
- 4/12 John Musgnung
- 4/12 Janis Weaver
- 4/13 Zoe Jezick
- 4/15 Steve Kyra
- 4/15 Katelynn McCullough
- 4/15 Jameson Packer
- 4/16 Jacob Weaver
- 4/16 Elaine Wusaty
- 4/19 Margaret Teitsworth
- 4/21 Bill Sabo
- 4/22 Amy Mixa
- 4/23 Larry Muldowney
- 4/25 Zachary Thatcher
- 4/27 Sandy Belletti
- 4/27 Landon Packer
- 4/30 Meghan McCullough



April Anniversaries

- 4/05 Cindy & Kenneth Searfoss
- 4/27 Debbie & Bernie Wolst
- 4/30 Dean and Brenda Shaffer

**The Trustees of the
 Remembrance Fund *Have
 received and gratefully
 acknowledged gifts given in loving
 memory of Dan Deysher:***

- Karyl Laub
- Kathleen Kerksmar & Art Seitz
- Ruth Hill & Linda Riley
- M/M John Musgnung
- M/M Filiciano Rodriguez
- Howard Fulmer
- Charles G. Huch
- Stephens Funeral Home
- M/M Michael Santo
- Crystal Trinneer
- M/M Dennis Parsons
- Sandra P. Boyd
- Catherine Underkoffler
- Al Horvath
- Doris Diehl
- Estate of Dan Deysher
- Irene Heller
- Aileen Werner



To the family and friends of:
C. Allen Yost
February 25, 2018

Our beloved “poet Laureate” and church member, Allen Yost passed away on February 25, 2018. For those who didn’t know Allen, he usually sat in the back of the church. You might remember him by the fact that he had a tracheal tube. Allen had not spoken a word for 11 years, due to cancer, but he made his voice heard through his poetry. Frequently Allen would write of his joys, the past and his faith, which would appear in First Fruits. A collection of his poems is in a binder called Poems of Inspiration which is located in the Narthex. Before Allen passed away, he wrote one more poem for us. We publish it here as a remembrance and gift to everyone.

FINAL POEM BY C. ALLEN YOST

At last, the journey’s over.
The long, long trek is done.
Although there’s been a little woe,
Mostly it’s been fun.

Sometimes I watched the passing scene,
Sometimes I would take part.
But, know that when I was involved,
It was with happy heart.

I’m headed down that final road,
two doorways just ahead.
One leads to the glory land,
The other, the undead.

I wonder which will open wide
To call me to come in.
I haven’t lead a blameless life,
I’ve done my share of sin.

I know He is a loving God,
Forgiving to the end.
That’s why I’ve tried so very hard,
my wayward life to mend.

I hope that it’s the Pearly Gates
That open, far and wide,
So I can spend eternity,
Sitting by His side.

You may be sad because I’ve gone.
But there’s no other way.
Just know I hope to see you all.
Please join me there some day!!

ALLEN

Staff

Rev. Joel D. Risser, Pastor (starting 4/23/18)	484-852-1889
Ms. Marjorie P. Hughes, D.C.E.	610-984-5053
Mr. Mark Helms, Interim Organist/Choir Director	
Mrs. Phyllis Scherer, Administrative Asst.	610-554-6223
Mr. Robert Turner, Church Treasurer	703-626-0641
Mr. Sherwood Stauffer, Sexton	610-838-7391

Consistory Members

Elders

Ann Brown, Head Elder	610-462-7056
Phyllis Heil-Henry	484-764-9107
Andy Spear, President	610-317-0104
Georgie Stuempfle	610-838-7493

Deacons

Carlann Broglie	610-838-6093
Warren Kurz	610-442-0968
Andrea Milliren, Recording Secretary	610-838-9948
Elsie Stout, Head Deacon	610-838-6470

Trustees

Bill Hoff	610-807-9663
Matthew Milliren	610-838-9948
Robert Scherer, Vice-President	610-554-6084
Dean Shaffer	610-838-7206

If you need to contact Pastor Joel (beginning April 23) please text him, If you do not have text capability, please use the phone number listed above, but **please do not call between the hours of 10pm and 7am** unless you have an emergency,

Pastor Joel will be available for hospital and recovery when informed. Hospitals, rehabilitation facilities and nursing homes do not communicate well with churches. Always inform the church office if you are hospitalized or would like a pastoral visit. Please do not trust that word will get to the pastor through the grapevine. **Our hospital code is 428.** You can mention that if you are admitted.

Community Lecture Event

“Grief is a Journey: Finding Your Path Through Grief”

For those interested in attending, please see the bulletin board for more information on the Bereavement Lecture by Dr. Kenneth J. Doka. The lecture will be held on **Wednesday, April 25th at 7:30 pm** at Central Moravian Church, West Church and Main Streets, Bethlehem PA. For additional information or tickets see: www.sluhn.org/littnerlectureseries.

Care Package Ministry

The Elders are organizing a Care Package Ministry for college students and service persons within our congregation. If you think your children or grandchildren would enjoy receiving a package, please contact the church office (610-838-8811) with the name and address of the person so we may send some Christian cheer from our church congregation and let them know we haven't forgotten them.



April 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 EASTER SUNDAY 8:00 Worship/Communion 10:30 Worship/Communion	2 7:00 BCE Meeting 7:00 Dart Baseball Away/East Hills	3 7:45 Men's Breakfast 9-11 Work Crew 6:00 Bear Den 6:00 Webelos II	4 9-1 New Bethany Ministries Lunch Group 7:30 Adult Choir	5	6 Confirmation Retreat	7 Confirmation Retreat
8 Confirmation Retreat 9:15 Sunday School 9:15 Coffee&Conversation 10:30 Worship 6:30 Troop 319	9 10:00 Women's Bible Study Group 6:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Dart Baseball	10 8:00 Women's Breakfast 9-11 Work Crew	11 6:00 Tiger Den 7:00 Webelos I 7:30 Adult Choir	12 6:00 Lion Den 7:00 Wolf Den	13	14
15 9:15 Sunday School 9:15 Coffee&Conversation 10:30 Worship 6:30 Troop 319	16 7:00 Dart Baseball Home/ St. Matthew's	17 9-11 Work Crew 6:00 Bear Den 6:00 Webelos II	18 7:30 Adult Choir	19 6:00 Set-up for Scout Ceremony on 3/20	20 6:00 Pack 319 Meeting	21 12:00 Birthday Party
22 9:15 Sunday School 9:15 Coffee&Conversation 10:30 Worship 6:30 Troop 319	23 10:00 Women's Bible Study Group 6:30 Girl Scouts	24 9-11 Work Crew	25 6:00 Tiger Den 7:00 Webelos I 7:30 Adult Choir	26 7:00 Wolf Den	27	28
29 9:15 Sunday School 9:15 Coffee&Conversation 10:30 Worship w/ Pastor Joel 11:30 Prayer Partners Luncheon	30 6:30 Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting Dart Baseball-City					