

Pastor's Pen

Winsome Hospitality in an Age of Polarization



Dear Congregation,

The Apostle Peter writes in his 1st letter about how to share our hope in Christ. “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:15-16).

We live in an age of increasing ignorance about Christian faith. Many of our neighbors have not been to Church since they were young, and their children have never been to church. For some, what they have heard about Christianity is a caricature which misrepresents Jesus or focuses only on the failures of the church. Others have been ‘inoculated’ against faith by the skeptical ideologies of higher ed. But many are just ignorant, having grown up never having heard the basic message of the Gospel.

These challenges make sharing the good news tricky but not impossible. Non-believers have always had opportunity to malign the Word, distort the Gospel, or judge and reject the Church. Nevertheless, many are seeking answers to eternal questions. They are hungry for God, even if the enemy tries to create smoke screens to blind them. We Christians are uniquely situated to be messengers about how to find the Lord.

Peter tells us: “Share the hope you have.” Do it with “gentleness and respect.” Keep “a clear conscience” so they have nothing with which to accuse or slander you.

If you know Jesus, you know he brings peace, forgiveness, righteousness, and new life. You have the best news in the world. Your own experience of hope is irrefutable. You can share humbly, admitting your own weakness while exalting Christ as the answer.

When we share Christ in this way, we do not need to win an argument or have a slam-dunk evangelism presentation. All we need do is point to Jesus. Tell them what he has done for you and how to find him. A gentle personal witness can be very effective.

We are planting seeds for the Kingdom. In his time and with his help, God can make those seeds sprout.

Jesus promised we would not be alone in the work. He instructed the first disciples: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) When he spoke thus, he was also thinking of us who would be his witnesses in later times “to the ends of the earth.” When we are sharing our experience of God (our witness), the Holy Spirit is with us. He is already working before we get there. He may have planted seeds of which we know nothing. We can trust God with the outcome of the harvest, even if we do not see it right away.

Though it looks as if evil is multiplying around us, God is at work. His Kingdom is advancing even while the kingdoms of the world are passing away. Meanwhile, many sons and daughters are coming to Christ out of the world. He can rescue them and make them stand, just as he rescued us.

How can they come if no one invites them? And who will invite them, if not you? You are the hands and feet and voice of Christ, calling out, “You who are thirsty, come and drink and find the living water.” Your simple witness could be the difference between life and death for a thirsty soul.

Making disciples for Christ is the basic mission of the church. As God makes opportunity, let us keep sharing our faith, the reason for the hope that is in us. Let us do so with gentleness and respect, with a clear conscience, making the most of the days God has given us. By such, the kingdom of God advances.

Yours in the love of Christ! Pastor Fisher



Worship Schedule **March – April 2026**

Sunday Worship: 9:00AM Live & Online
10:30AM Coffeehouse Worship & Sunday School
Saturday Worship: Live at 6:00 PM
9 AM Theme: *Genesis, God and Science*

March 1 ***2nd Sunday in Lent with Holy Communion***
Genesis 8-9 God's promises after the Flood

- March 8** *3rd Sunday in Lent*
Genesis 9 *The Sons of Noah*
- March 15** *4th Sunday in Lent*
Genesis 10 *Age of the Flood & Table of Nations*
- March 22** *5th Sunday in Lent*
Genesis 11 *The Tower of Babel & Abram's Family*
- March 29** *Palm Sunday*
9:00 AM *The Significance of Palm Sunday*
10:30 AM Coffeehouse Worship & Sunday School
- April 2** **Holy Thursday**
7:00 PM Celebration of the Lord's Supper with
Choir Cantata
- April 5** *Easter: Resurrection Sunday w/ Holy Communion*
6:30 AM – Sunrise Service
10:00 AM – Combined Easter Celebration Worship
Message: The Resurrection of the Lord
11:30 AM – Easter New Members Reception
(No Sunday School Today)
- April 12** *1st Sunday after Easter*
9:00 AM – *Message TBD*
10:30 AM – Coffeehouse worship & Sunday School
- April 19** *2nd Sunday after Easter*
9:00 AM – *Genesis, God, and Science I*
10:30 AM – Coffeehouse worship & Sunday School
- April 26** *3rd Sunday after Easter*
9:00 AM – *Genesis, God, and Science II*
10:30 AM – Coffeehouse worship & Sunday School



Communion Offerings

- March 1 *Pastor's Discretionary "Crisis Aid" Fund*
April 5 *Mission Cause TBD*



Lent 2026 Wednesday Night Worship Series
6 PM supper, 7:00 Worship service
"OLD TESTAMENT HEROES WHO PREFIGURE CHRIST":

- 3/4) Isaac and Jesus** - Only Son and willing sacrifice
3/11) Joseph and Jesus - Beloved Son and rejected brother who becomes the savior
3/18) Moses and Jesus - Deliverer and Prophet of God
3/25) David and Jesus - Shepherd King
4/2) Holy Thursday – 7:00 pm Program (*No supper this night*)

What's Happening in the Lawsuit

The trial involving the 50+ EPA churches seeking to exit the United Methodist denomination is set to run from **March 30 – April 6, 2026**. It will take place in Montgomery County Courthouse, Judge Jeffrey S. Saltz presiding. The case will be heard by the judge himself, not a jury. The case centers on two charges: breach of contract and promissory estoppel. The trial will be open to the public, and members of the 50 churches are encouraged to attend to show the judge we care. Please take time in the next 30 days to lift the matter earnestly to God in prayer.

LEADERSHIP & “SAFE SANCTUARY” TRAINING AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Leadership and Safe-Sanctuary training was recorded in two sessions on Jan 11 and Feb 1, 2026. This training is mandatory for all professional staff, executive leaders, Sunday school teachers, and volunteers working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. It is required whether you are new to volunteering or have had the training before (it must be renewed every three years). If you could not attend one or both sessions but are in or planning to be in one of these leadership positions, you may complete the mandatory training by viewing the recorded sessions online and filling out a “Competency and Commitment” form afterwards. The forms and links to the online training are available from the church office. Please call or email if you have any questions.

Church Prayer Ministry Updates

8 Things to Pray about in March – April 2026

- 1) Pray for those in authority everywhere, in the church and among the nations, for peace for the sake of the Gospel.

- 2) Pray for our new members, our confirmands, for the All-ages Sunday School program, for our small groups, and for your brothers and sisters in faith in the church.
- 3) Pray for the spread of the Gospel, including in our own county and neighborhoods. Pray for spiritual awakening and repentance for the lost. Pray for persecuted Christians around the world, and for the peace of Jerusalem.
- 4) Pray for the sick, those in prison, for our nursing home and shut-in members, for those who are in trouble or in need.
- 5) Pray for our outreach ministries, for our church leaders, and for the missionaries and outside ministries we support.
- 6) Pray for the Court case set to begin on March 30.
- 7) Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit, grow the fruit of the Spirit in you, and shine his light of love through you to others.

Weekly prayer team ministry continues. We continue to call our members to join the prayer rotation of praying for a week, one hour each day. We ask you to pray for the Kingdom of God to come more fully in our church and community. Consider spending serious time alone with God each day in prayer and searching the scripture. Your whole day will be blessed.

Prayer Chain. If you have a prayer request, email it to the Prayer Coordinator Darlene Beers at prayer@havenfirstumc.org. She will send it to the prayer chain. Many prayers lifted by the prayer chain have been answered!

Do you have a testimony to share? We are happy to make time in our morning worship for testimonies about what God is doing in our lives. If you have a testimony, please contact the church office at office@havenfirstumc.org and someone will be in touch.

Discipleship Article for Newsletter Feb 2026

Thankyou church, for supporting a successful Fall 2025 Alpha program!! And for the new guests coming out of this past fall event – WELCOME! We are so very glad you are joining with us in fellowship and worship. We are looking forward to offering another Alpha program this coming Fall. To that end we are planning to hold an Alpha day promotion on Sunday April 12th - the Sunday after Easter. We could really use your help. Please be thinking and praying about how you might become part of the next event. Alpha is truly a meaningful experience for both guests new to the faith or church life, as well as those who've been part of our fellowship for some time now. We look forward to hearing from you on Sunday April 12th!!

Since faith, fellowship and FUN go so well together, we've planned another church wide FUN activity for Sunday, April 26th after the 10:30 worship time. By popular demand we are planning a sequel to the Trivia Lunch held last spring, with Tom Reed and Beverly Luckenbill hosting.

Trivia Event, Sunday April 26th:

Worship 10:30 am – 10:45 am

Trivia Activity 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Lunch 12:00 pm

Sandwiches will be provided by Discipleship; we will be asking folks to bring picnic type foods, e.g. chips, macaroni / potato salads, veggies or fruits, and / or desert to share – cookies, whatever. We are also planning entertainment for the children during the Trivia game activity. Clip boards will be passed around the pews during worship services Sundays April 12th and April 19th asking those interested to sign up. You can also call the church office to let us know of your interest. We do hope you will join us for this time of fun and fellowship Sunday April 26th.

In keeping with previous goals for effective Discipleship at CFC, we want to bring back the presentation of personal testimonials to our worship services. Our goal is to have one testimonial given

every 4 to 6 weeks. Our desire is the testimonial will last a few minutes in time, and describe how the Holy Spirit is working in your life to glorify God, to help you draw closer to Jesus, and in particular, how a specific ministry at our church (e.g. small group, mission, &/or ministry) has touched your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. We will be reaching out for a few volunteers to get us going – hopefully in March. If you have a testimony you would like to share with our faith community at CFC, please contact Gary Daum, chair of Discipleship committee (leave a note with the office, or email gedaum7@gmail.com . We would LOVE to hear from you!

Finally, we wish again to encourage you to become part of one of the many small groups available at our church. Meaningful opportunities to share faith and fellowship occur best at the small group level. The bulletin board in the hallway connecting the stairs to Fellowship Hall lists the groups currently available. And if you'd prefer to start a new one – please do!! Do you have questions about small groups or resources available? Please contact Eydie Reed, our Small Group liaison. She can be reached in person Sunday mornings, or by way of email, ereed@havenfirstumc.org.



Looking for folks willing to fill the Sexton position as a substitute while Marcy is on vacation.

Four nonconsecutive weeks, 10 - 12 hours per week, paid position

If you are interested in helping or know of someone who may be interested while Marcy enjoys some much needed vacation time, please contact Linda Olsen or the church office.

Ushers and greeters, communion servers, media center help, Sunday morning prayers, liturgists, Youth helpers. If you would like to serve in any one of these ways please contact the church office. You can serve weekly or monthly depending on how you would like to serve. Friendly faces are highly encouraged! Please prayerfully consider helping.



What is Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Ministry equips lay-people to provide one-to-one Christian care to people who are experiencing difficulties in their lives.

A Stephen Minister is:

- A child of God who walks beside someone who is hurting.
- A lay person with 50 hours of training in providing high-quality, confidential Christian Care.
- A caring Christian friend who listens, cares, prays, supports and encourages.
- Someone who meets faithfully with his or her care receiver as long as is needed.

Since Stephen Ministry started at Christ Fellowship Church, nineteen people have taken the course to become Stephen Ministers. Stephen Ministers have met with 40 people, with 4 people currently receiving care. We have 8 active Stephen Ministers.

We are so grateful for all the time, effort and energy that each person who has taken the Stephen Ministry course has dedicated to people needing care. The training for becoming a Stephen Minister is applicable to your life. You learn how better to listen to people in need, and what to say, and more importantly, what not to say to someone who is going through a difficult time.

Another aspect of the ministry is the Stephen Ministry Grief book series sent to people during the first year after the loss of a loved one. We have sent out over 300 series of 4 books to people since the beginning of Stephen Ministry. Many of you have been positively impacted by the wisdom imparted in these books.

If you are interested in learning more about Stephen Ministry, please contact either Lynne O'Connell (570-449-2355) or Nancy Kraft.



Serving and Praying

Two months into the new year already. Where does the time go? As we move forward into the time of Lent starting in February, let us look forward to the joy of Christ's victory over all with Easter in April.

These past two months, our youth have started a series about what prayer is about and why we do it. Prayer should not be the last thing we do, but the first thing we do when in need of help. God is always listening and willing to help accordingly to His will. We also discuss in the series of how to pray by using the example Jesus gave us – the Lord's Prayer.

We've been also serving by running the sub fundraiser in January (though the snowstorms reduced our time of outreach) and supported the Vineyard with our annual Souper Bowl



Food Raiser at Redner's Food Market on February 8th. In total, we collected 316 food items and received \$186 in monetary donations. God was gracious in touching the hearts of those that passed by us. As I said to one youth as we were standing next to a plant seed stand, we are planting the seeds as we also receive the harvest'. We will be again serving in March (4th) when the youth provide a meal for the Lenten Supper that Wednesday night.

In March, we are planning to go to the Works (Reading) for some fun with go-karts, arcade and food (pending on early reservation in February). Then in April, we plan to run a lock-in event on April 17-18. Pray for our youth leader's endurance that night.

Speaking of youth leaders/volunteers; I encourage you that if you have a want to help the youth ministry, we are always in need of more help. We have one volunteer who helps with me and Stacey and there are times we could use more. If you have taken the Safe Sanctuary training and have your background clearance with the

church office, you may be able to help us. If not, please contact the church office for both training and provision of documentation.

Updates to the calendar will be relayed both on the Youth Ministry's webpage <https://www.havenfirstumc.org/youth-ministry> and via text or email.

David and Youth Ministry Support

Want to participate in youth events? Do we have your emergency contact information? To help us be ready for anything (mostly positive), we need to have an updated permission/emergency contact/photo release form. Use the QR Code below to open and fill the form.



Dear Christ Fellowship Church family,

Our faithful, long-serving 14-year old "SCAG Cheetah" zero turn mower soon needs replacement. To keep our church grounds safe, welcoming, and properly maintained for Sunday services and community events, we urgently need to purchase a new "Cheetah II" similar to the picture below.



Our goal is to raise \$12,000.

A new mower will save us on repair costs and allow us to continue keeping our outdoor space a peaceful sanctuary for all.

We plan to trade in the existing mower.

However, if you are interested in purchasing it then please contact the office to make arrangements for you to inspect the current mower.

We are also replacing the 45-year old water fountains with modern ultra filter "Elkay" units similar to the picture below on both levels.



The cost is approximately \$8,000

- Donations can be made via Online Giving, Cash, or Check.
- Thank you for your continued support and generosity.
- Blessings,
- Board of Trustees
- Thank you

Randy

METHODIST WOMEN MINISTRIES

UPCOMING EVENTS



March 10th –
Tuesday, 1 pm-Our own Tom Reed will be presenting a program on “Preparing your garden for planting”. We are opening this up to men also who garden.

March 14th- Community Lunch – we are preparing ham and green beans that day. If you would like to help us, come out at 10 am to the church kitchen. Blessings and fun will be had by all.

April 5th – Easter Sunday- He is Risen indeed!

April 14th- Tuesday, 1pm in Room 6. **“The Farm Store”** at Pottsville will be presenting a program on their beginnings and their vendors. Soooo, if you like fresh foods and like to eat, come and join us. Open to all who are interested.

Report on last month’s program- Servants to All “My Father’s House” program. What started as a winter shelter in 2012, is still the only shelter in Schuylkill County. But that isn’t all they do. They provide rental assistance, help people find health care and a doctor, have a street medicine program, have doctors from St. Luke’s come to the building weekly. They see approximately 40+ people per day and have provided either energy or shelter to 236 people in 2025. They’re always looking for volunteers. See the bulletin board at Fellowship Hall for more information.



MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE Bus Trip

Have you ever thought about visiting the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC, but the thought of driving there intimidates you enough to change your mind? You are definitely not alone. My road trip buddy, Sherry and I signed up for a bus trip to the Museum but it was canceled due to insufficient riders. We were so disappointed. Then Sherry suggested I drive and she would navigate. After giving the idea much thought and prayer, I researched the cost of chartering a bus. Here's what I found....

Bus trip to the Museum of the Bible:
Minimum of 30 people: cost would be \$130.00/per
person
Includes:
Admission & Washington Revelations show at the
Museum

Dinner Buffet w/ Private dining for the group at Mountain Gate Family Restaurant in Thurmont, MD on the way home.

Bus would leave CFC parking lot at 6:30 a.m.

Museum arrival: 10:30 a.m. (drop off near museum's main entrance)

Depart museum: 4:00 p.m.

Dinner @ Mountain Gate Family Restaurant

Arrival @ CFC 8:30 p.m.

Date: To Be Determined

Interested in joining us? Please see Darlene Beers or submit your name, phone number and the number in your party on a slip of paper and place it in the Museum of the Bible box in the narthex. We will choose a date when we reach a minimum of 30 people; max is 56. For more information on the Museum, visit their website at www.museumofthebible.org

Faith Community Nurse Notes

Brought to you by Ann Moyer RN, FCN

Health Issues in Spring

After a long, cold, snowy winter, the warmth of spring and longer daylight hours is eagerly anticipated. I know I am very much looking forward to walking in sunshine, hearing beautiful birdsong, and just enjoying the great outdoors!

The dramatic change in weather conditions and swings in temperature that occur during spring can put stress upon our bodies affecting our immune system. The respiratory system seems to be particularly sensitive leading to increased risk of illness.

Spring is a peak season for the rhinovirus, a leading cause of the common cold. Symptoms include nasal congestion, runny nose, sneezing, cough, minor sore throat, and occasionally headache or low-grade fever. The virus spreads easily through air droplets and contaminated surfaces. To avoid getting a cold, wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes. Keep commonly touched surfaces of your house clean by wiping with disinfectant cleansers.

Allergy issues are very common in spring. Pollen travels in the wind and ends up in people's eyes, nose, and lungs. Over the counter allergy medication can be very helpful and most effective when started 2 weeks prior to when the spring season starts (before pollen enters the system). To help reduce allergy problems, wash up after being outside for long periods of time. If you suffer from seasonal allergies, the use of an air purifier in your home is beneficial.

Asthma may also be triggered more-so in the spring season. It may be triggered by the air temperature change as well as pollen. Inside triggers may result from dust as well as cleaning chemicals used in spring cleaning. It is wise to discuss the use of inhalers and preventative medication with your physician, especially if a rescue inhaler is needed more than 2 times per week.

Most folks want to get outside after being cooped up over the winter. Physical fitness may decrease over the winter if you have been less active. Before venturing out to do yard work, hiking or other physical activity, make sure to take time to stretch and warm up those muscles. It doesn't take much to pull or strain a muscle if you are not conditioned for the activity. Preventative strategies are always the best way to ensure a happy healthy season.

May this season of rebirth be rich in warmth and light. May your body, mind, and spirit be filled with renewed hope and appreciation for our amazing God and His deep love for us. Remember, "the tomb is empty- hope is alive." Luke 24:6- "He is not here; He has risen!"

Information from:

www.calurgentcare.com>february24,2022>what-are-the-most-common-springtime-illnesses
www.familyhealth.org>common-medical-problems-that-fl are-up-in-springtime



Lenten Series - Wednesday Evenings

LENTEN SERVICES

| Date | Speaker | Topic | Meal |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 2/18, Ash Wednesday | Ted Catranis | Adam and Jesus | Ann & JoAnn's Small Groups |
| 2/25 | Dwight Dros | Abraham and Jesus | Choir |
| 3/4 | Doug Esposito | Isaac and Jesus | Youth Group |
| 3/11 | John Fatora | Joseph and Jesus | Lisa Yuengling (Lisa needs help setting up & cleaning up) |
| 3/18 | Doug O'Connell | Moses and Jesus | Marcy Hudock |
| 3/25 | Brian Reading | David and Jesus | All Church Chili Cook-Off |
| 3/29, Palm Sunday | Pastor Fisher | ----- | ----- |
| 4/2 - Maundy Thursday | Choir Cantata | It Is Finished: A Tenebrae Service | No Meal |
| 4/5, Easter Sunday | Pastor Fisher | ----- | ----- |

The meal begins at 6:00 PM. The service begins at 7:00 PM.

Maundy Thursday, 4/2 @ 7:00 PM

Presentation of

It is Finished: A Tenebrae Service

with Holy Communion

IT IS FINISHED

A Tenebrae Service
by Mary McDonald



Jubilare
MUSIC

IN CONCERT

**GRAMMY NOMINATED
JOHNATHAN BOND**

DATE: June 19, 2026
PLACE: Christ Fellowship Church, Schuylkill Haven
TIME: 9:00 AM



▶ Scan Here

www.JOHNATHANBOND.com

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Dated Mail Please do not delay

The Circuit Writer
March / April 2026

Christ Fellowship Church

"Our Mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world"

*In Person Sunday Service 9:00 A.M. & Saturday Night at 6:00 p.m.
10:30 A.M. Coffeehouse Worship Service & Christian Education
You can also join us online at: www.havenfirstumc.org Or like us
on Facebook and join us there.*