



St. John's United Church of Christ Newsletter



March 2020

"In the Desert"

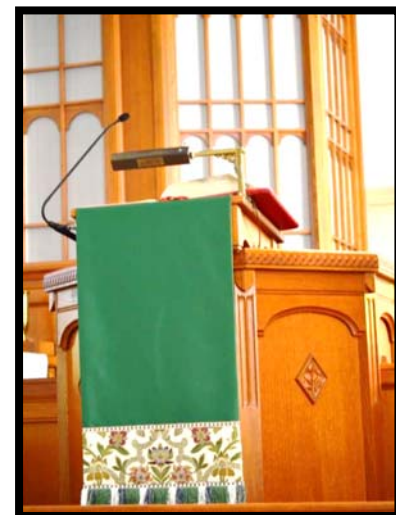
Matthew's gospel passage for March 1st, the First Sunday Lent tells us that Jesus was driven into the desert to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1-11) Without getting too deeply into what those individual temptations were, we can say that the overall theme of these temptations was centering, or dwelling on one's self, which is the very nature of what sin is about in the Christian tradition, rather than God and the needs of others. What makes Jesus different, than say you or I, according to this account and the others like it in the other Synoptic gospels, is that Jesus does not yield or fall to temptation. He is resolute in his dedication to God; which indeed makes him the best and only candidate to be a mediator between God and man, one who is both God and man, and yet without sin.

The desert is often a place of emptiness, hunger and thirst, pain and bitterness, and even loneliness. So much the struggle in the desert parts of our life is between the two points I alluded to above: God and man. It is lived out in our lives as individuals, as husbands, wives, and partners, as family members, in the workplace, and even in our life in the Church. Too often than not, we find ourselves not like Jesus, steely eyed and fixed on God in the desert, but our eyes closed in failure, asking for God's forgiveness for yet yielding to temptation again. The desert can be a tough place in which to dwell. But the structure of the forty days of Lent is a journey, like Israel journeying in the desert for forty years before entering the promised land, is meant to prepare us to be able to worthily participate in the suffering, death, and ultimately, resurrection of Jesus Christ, the God-man. As the Letter to the Hebrews tells us he experienced testing so that he could be experienced to intercede for us in heaven. We should not be afraid to ask Jesus for help in our struggles. (Matthew 4:14-16)

One of the things that I think is important to recognize is that as Christians we really do feel the trials of the desert during the forty days of Lent, which continue throughout the month of March. What is part of the Church's calendar is really lived out in our lives! This is a great mystery. And so, just as the angels came and ministered to Jesus, we need to support each other in our struggles and listen to a brother or sister's plight, knowing that like Christ we too have experienced similar temptations and want to remain strong. (Matthew 4:11)

May God go with you in the desert and may his rod and staff comfort you.

Peace,
Pastor Ray



St. John's UCC Worship Service Hours

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**Sundays**

**Coffee Hour—9:00 a.m.**

in Gruber Hall

**Service—10:00 a.m.**

in the Sanctuary

**Adult Education—9:00 a.m.**

in Leiby Chapel

### Children's Church

**Holy Communion** is observed the first and third Sundays of the month.

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Thursday Eucharist

Service

6:00 p.m. - Leiby Chapel

Prayer Calendar

NOISY MISSION UPDATE

Do you have loose change jingling in your pocket or purse? If so, please drop it in the Noisy Mission can on Sunday. Every little bit helps in mission!

During the month of March,
proceeds will support

St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

Their website is:
stmary'sfs.org

Pray for all those with diseases
Pray for the Church worldwide
Pray for the hospitalized
Pray for our nation
Pray for our choir
Pray for children
Pray for justice
Pray for Consistory
Pray for love
Pray for all children to grow in faith and trust in Jesus Christ
Pray for the congregation and our future
Pray for your neighbors
Pray for the PA Southeast Conference
Pray for peace in our Nation
Pray for our staff
Pray for your family
Pray for a community free of violence
Pray for the nations of the world
Pray for world peace
Pray for human rights
Pray for the poor
Pray for students

FEBRUARY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Amount received to meet GF budget = \$30,772.10

Amount needed to meet GF budget = \$27,744.00

Amount received over GF budget = \$3,028.10

We started the first two months in the black due to giving from two envelopes for the entire year of 2020.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2 David Firestone

4 Mary Stepp

14 Joe Komar

23 Jessie Foulds



MORNING AND EVENING WEEKLY PRAYERS

Week of Sunday, March 1 - First Sunday in Lent

Household Prayer: Morning

Holy God, as this day surrounds me like a garden with a thousand trees,
give me enough knowledge to obey your commandments,
and to choose the fruit that gives life: the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Where can I hide from you, O God? You have found me here,
stained with the fruit of desire, shivering in the evening breeze.
This is all I ask: wrap me in your mercy, and let me rest in your presence;
for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Week of Sunday, March 8

Household Prayer: Morning

Loving God, you have given me the gift of this new day,
and you send me out to live it fully and well. Help me to be attentive
to your direction and leading. If you should call me to go in some direction,
give me courage to try this new thing. If you present me with a mysterious truth or grace,
help me to understand, or to seek understanding, with a sense of wonder and faith.

Whatever this day may hold, I trust that you will keep me
in all my comings and goings. In your Son's name, I pray. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Gracious God, as the evening comes and the light fades,
I look for you even in the shadows. Your love and protection stay with me
through the night hours, and I rest in your promises. For the day as it has been,
I give you thanks. For the gift of rest, I offer a hymn of praise.
You love me and the whole world so greatly that you offer us salvation.
After a night of rest, bring me into the light of a new day.
In gratitude, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Week of Sunday, March 15

Household Prayer: Morning

God, my maker, hold me this day, with the same hand that shapes the mountains,
with the same hand that cradles the deep. Keep my heart soft and supple,
make my faith strong and firm. Renew me, re-form me, re-create me
into the image of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

We come to you now, O Lord, weary from the day's journey,
thirsty for rest, hungry for peace. Renew us in your love and restore us by your grace,
until we find our rest at last by the river of the water of life. Amen.

Week of Sunday, March 22

Household Prayer: Morning

Good morning, Lord. The day has dawned with the gift of sunlight,
and I awaken from sleep into the light and grace of Christ.
Thank you for this new day. Stay with me, I pray, shepherding me through
all that the day will hold. Lead me into pleasant places,
and give me the provisions I will need if I find myself in difficulty or danger.
Whenever the cup of gladness overflows, help me to recognize that it is filled
with your goodness and mercy. In praise and anticipation I begin this day;
in Jesus' name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

With the night, Good Lord, comes rest, and a chance for my soul to be restored.
You are with me in this and every darkness, so I will not be afraid.
For all I have seen with my own eyes today, for all others have helped me to see,
I give you thanks. For those things that I did not notice:
signs of beauty and kindness, evidences of your grace,
I pray that you will improve the eyes of my faith so that I can see you more clearly,
love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly tomorrow,
and all my tomorrows. In the name of your Son, my Savior, I pray. Amen.

Week of Sunday, March 29

Household Prayer: Morning

O God, I know that you are the Lord, for you gave me my life,
and caused me to rise this day. Put your Spirit within me,
and let my words and actions help others to know
that you are my Lord and my God. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

My soul waits for you, O Lord, more than those who watch for morning,
more than those who watch for morning. Help me to sleep this night in peace,
trusting that you will awaken me; through Jesus Christ my Savior. Amen.

**ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
315 GAY STREET
PHOENIXVILLE, PA 19460**

Address Update

If you have a permanent or temporary (college, extended vacation, etc.) change of address, please give this information to the church office:

Name: _____

New Address: _____

Phone: _____ Permanent ____ Temporary ____ from / / to / /

Applies to just the above name ____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

St. John's United Church of Christ

315 Gay Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460-3722

E-mail for Pastor: huskidog@aol.com

Pastor's Cell Phone: 484-624-2463

E-mail for Admin.: stjohnsucc.secretary@gmail.com

Church Office Phone: 610-933-5311

Website: www.stjohnsucc.tk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnsucc

Church Office Hours: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm Tuesday – Friday

Rev. Raymond Jachowski, Pastor

Matthew Valent, Director of Music

Virginia Filipovic, Church Office Administrator

Robert P. Verish, Sexton

Doris Selwitz, Organist Emerita

Ministers: Everyone