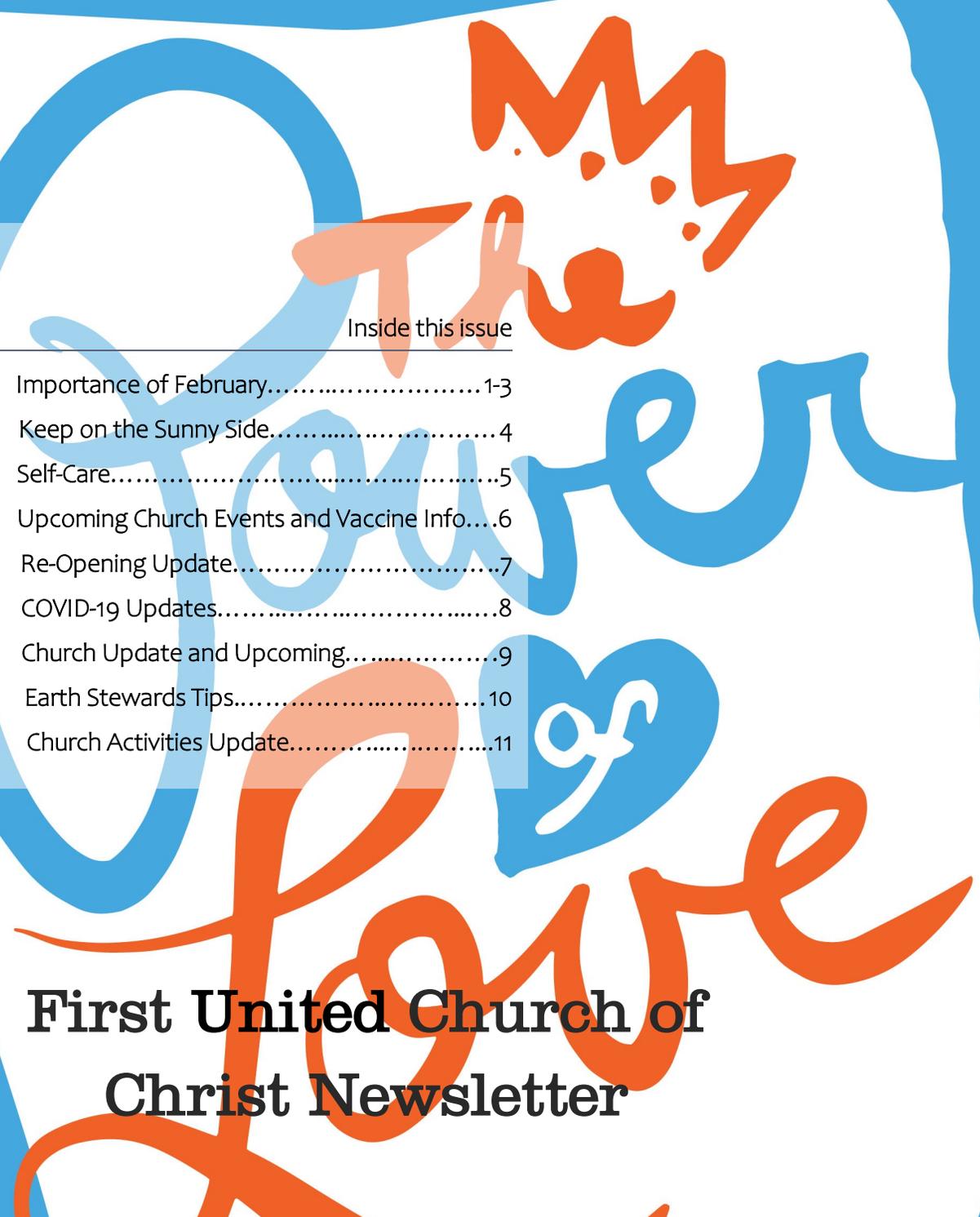


Inside this issue

Importance of February.....	1-3
Keep on the Sunny Side.....	4
Self-Care.....	5
Upcoming Church Events and Vaccine Info....	6
Re-Opening Update.....	7
COVID-19 Updates.....	8
Church Update and Upcoming.....	9
Earth Stewards Tips.....	10
Church Activities Update.....	11

**First United Church of
Christ Newsletter**





The Importance of February

You may think the cover of this newsletter was a little odd. Glue? No hearts for Valentine's Day? Yes, February 14th is the day we celebrate how much we love the special people in our lives, but I think this month means more than that. Love has the power to glue all of us together. Not just the love of our family, but also for Jesus' sacrifice for us and the community around us (and even the people who grate on our last nerve).

Did you know "February" is from the Latin word "februa," which means "to cleanse"? It goes with the theme that Shrove/Fat Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, and Lent promotes. It is a time of fasting and reflection. We reflect on what was sacrificed for us so we could have fullness in Christ. The fact that Christ had humility to become a fetus in a woman's womb, live as we do, and then to die for sinners is astounding. The Creator of this world left the right hand of God to be with us and suffer as we do, to be tempted as we are, and overcome to give us hope and new life. It is the most beautiful act in history for all of humanity.

As Christ has love for all of humanity, we should have that same love rooted in our hearts. As believers and followers of Christ, Christ literally dwells inside us. His love is for all people in our community – no matter a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, criminal history, working status, etc.

With this in mind, February is also Black History Month. This month is designated to acknowledge and celebrate all that the Black Community has overcome and accomplished. It is also a month to acknowledge the darkest and most shameful part of American history. Martin Luther King Jr., Claudette Colvin, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Jackie Robinson, Maya Angelou, and many others used their voices whether speaking or writing to stand up for equal civil rights for all human beings.

Have we, as white middle-class Americans, ever had to worry about where we sat? Have we ever had to worry about from which water fountain to drink? Have we ever had to worry about looking a white person in the eye? Have we ever had to worry about getting in trouble for using the same toilet as a white person? We can say "Well, that was back then and those are extreme cases," but, in reality, people of the Black Community face discrimination and racism every day. Have you ever had to worry about being denied for a loan because of your skin color (because of a stereotype placed on your skin color)?

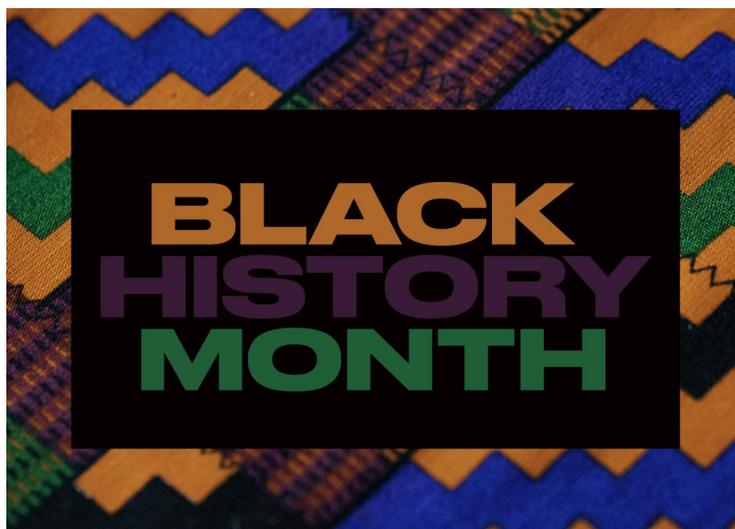
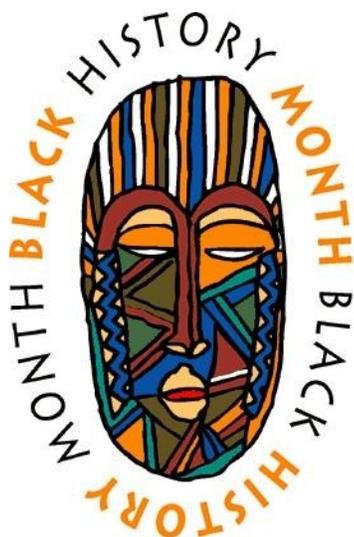


Or have you ever had to wonder why a policeman is stopping you or if you felt safe when a policeman stops you? Have you ever had to deal with walking into a public place and someone calling you an obscene name because of your skin color or to have someone refuse service to you based only on your skin color? Or make assumptions about you because your skin color is not white?

These are the circumstances people within the Black Community face every day, among countless other cruelties that we, as white middle-class Americans, do not likely see or experience because we are white. Whether someone refers to themselves as Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), People of Color (POC), African American, Black-American, or Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME), Black History Month celebrates all of them because it is a month dedicated to eradicating racism.

Eradicating racism is more than just saying there is no longer hatred in our hearts towards the Black Community. How does any change happen? Change starts with education. We need to take the initiative to research about systemic racism (check out this article: <https://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/2016/systemic-racism-is-real>), the history of Black people and slavery, White Supremacy, white privilege (“inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice”) (“Oxford Languages Dictionary”), and learning from powerful Black educators such as Ally Henny, Andre Henry, Lisa Sharon Harper, Latasha Morrison, and organizations like *Be the Bridge*. All these educators have a Facebook platform where they share their experiences.

I read a story about a man named Fortune from a link on the *Be the Bridge* page (#BlackHistoryMonth). Fortune lived during the 1700’s. He and his family were slaves to a Connecticut bone doctor, Dr. Porter. In 1798, Fortune slipped on a rock on the bank of the Naugatuck river, broke his neck, and died. Dr. Porter later found Fortune’s body, cut him into pieces, boiled the flesh off his bones, and etched labels into them using Fortune’s bones as medical training tools and to teach his son anatomy. Sounds horrifying, right? Back at that time dissecting remains was illegal, but this law did not apply to slaves. After Dr. Porter’s death, Fortune’s bones were handed down through the Porter family for 135 years, eventually forgetting to whom these bones belonged. His bones were then donated by the family to the Mattatuck Museum where they were on display with slave tools in the “Larry the Slave” exhibit. Eventually seeing how demeaning this was for the bones, the museum placed the bones in the basement in 1970. In 1999, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) rescued the bones from the museum basement, conducted anthropological examinations, and realized these bones had a name- Fortune. On September 13, 2013, Fortune was finally laid to rest next to the White society of his time. This would not have been allowed at the time of his death in 1798. We cannot truly know what the Black Community has suffered unless we ask and listen with an open heart.





We need to immerse ourselves in different cultures beyond the white American culture and gain perspective from Christians of differing races and cultures. I was probably a teenager when I realized Jesus was not white. Being raised in a white middle-class family and went to church almost every Sunday with a congregation who was primarily white, it never dawned to me that Jesus could not have been white. I was primarily surrounded by white people, so I did not know anything different. I watched (and still watch) this TV series called *Christy*, and, in one of the episodes, Christy travels with Miss Alice to an all-Black Community. The children drew pictures of the stories in the Bible and they drew Jesus as Black. I was surprised, at first, because I never saw Jesus as Black. Then, I realized, I never tried to look through anyone else's eyes prior to this. Not because I did not want to, but because I just did not know. I was so immersed in my culture that I did not realize there were other beautiful cultures out there. Granted, historically, Jesus was a brown-skinned Middle Eastern Jew, so Jesus was neither black nor white. The principle is to gain a different perspective from other cultures.

To celebrate Black History Month is to promote love for humanity on a worldwide level. This includes anyone facing oppression and hatred from others (gay men, lesbian women, bisexual (finding both men and women sexually attractive) and pansexual (being able to love romantically no matter what gender) men and women, non-binary/agender people (those who do not associate with either gender), transgender men and women, men and women on death row, men and women who were released from prison, etc.). Our only call on this earth is to represent Jesus. We are not called to change or judge anyone. Jesus changes hearts and renews minds, not us. Honestly, sometimes we all need a renewing of our minds. We need a lens change to see as Jesus sees. Jesus specifically sought out and healed the "lowest of society" in his culture. He was called to show and extend unconditional love, so that is what we should strive to do. We are here to carry each other's burdens and validate hurts and joys as human beings, to see everyone we encounter as Christ sees them. Ask the Holy Spirit "How do you see this person in front of me?" and watch how the Spirit changes what you see.



The power of love has the power to glue all of us together and change the world. February is more than just heart-shaped candy boxes and Valentine's cards. It is a representation of how we are all unified under the love of Christ. So, we need to challenge ourselves to see as Jesus sees and ask for a lens change to renew our minds in line with Christ's heart and mind for his people.



Keep on the Sunny Side

“Return to Spring”

By: Chaplain Donna Hale



It's only February; but, I feel like it is Spring because “Deer Season” is over and I can resume my morning walks in our neighbor's adjoining cornfields. The stone wall between our properties built many years ago have deteriorated and crumbled and were not “mended”—no need—“good neighbors don't need “good fences”—Robert Frost said in his poem.

For over thirty years, I have walked in my neighbor's field with my dogs. We were also often accompanied by my cats who stayed with us for a short while before going off on their own to rejoin us in the next field. Sometimes a red-tailed hawk or a turkey vulture flies overhead; and, I am reminded of Pastor Jen who years ago comforted me with her words “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). This was after I saw my brother's favorite bird, the Great Blue Heron, fly over his grave as my family was leaving the cemetery. Pastor Jen's empathy comforted me because I was both overwhelmed and awed by the bird's appearance symbolizing to me that my brother was in Heaven. I felt Pastor Jen was reminding me of God's mystery and that everything is in God's hands and in God's time.

My morning walks are meditative. I reflect on King David who, as a shepherd, cared for his sheep in the pastures. He also comforted King Saul with his music. And, I find myself praying “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” as I walk home.

During the pandemic with all its' uncertainties and tragedies, I turn to nature's solitude and beauty and feel reassured that God is always with me. Sometimes, if I remember to take my notebook and pen, I write a line or two, as Mary Oliver did to record a thought to reflect on during the day. Usually, however, I remember her question at the end of her poem, “The Summer Day,” and it resonates with me as I return home from my walk to get ready for my day. Her words echo in my mind and thoughts: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

“Glory be to God, we serve.”

Chaplain Donna



Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

-1 Corinthians 13

Often times in February, a typically cold month in Central PA, we are reminded of the warm love of Valentines Day. Love can mean so many things — we can love chocolate, or love this newsletter, or perhaps love our best friends, our children, our spouse, our country. However, this is also a time to remind us to love ourselves as God loves us.

Take time this month to offer yourself time for self-care and self-love. The scripture from I Corinthians was Paul's way of bringing the Corinthian people together and to understand that in order to follow Christ we also need to feel good and true to ourselves. This is what loving yourself means — being yourself.

Some wonderful ways you can love yourself with a Christ-like heart is through prayer, meditation on the scripture, a walk through the snow communing with God's creation, cooking a grounding meal for yourself. I am grateful that love endures in all seasons of life. As we face challenges, and stresses of this pandemic, let us be guided by scripture. Let us try not to look for love externally — but from within. When we can love ourselves and strength ourselves for the faith journey ahead this year — whatever that may look like - we know that Christ is with us and will see us through.

Many Blessings for a positive February and beyond!

Rev. Rachel Schwab



Upcoming Church Events

Shrove Tuesday

Due to the concerns at this time, there will not be any Mardi Gras party, or Mid-Winter gathering. We hope that people will still be open to opportunities to share in celebration and joy. This year, we will have a virtual Shrove Tuesday toast. There will be a toast, celebrating with a glass of something to toast with and fastnacht livestreamed at noon on February 16. It will be on Kahu Pastor Chris' Facebook page, Uber teleconference, and posted on the church website, www.lucc.org, YouTube, and the church's Facebook page. There will also be the opportunity to interact and toast together on Zoom. A zoom meeting set for 5 pm. People will be encouraged to have their own beverage and food available. We will toast each other and get a chance to talk for a little bit at that time. If you are interested in participating in the Zoom call, please contact Pastor Chris.

Ash Wednesday

To better serve people this year, we will be holding a drive thru time for the imposition of ashes. People will be able to drive into the parking lot and receive ashes between 12 pm – 2 pm February 17. Ash Wednesday service will occur virtually on February 17, starting at 7 pm. During this service, there will be a recognition of the ritual of imposition of ashes. To receive ashes, people can either participate in the drive thru time on February 17, or they can contact the church office to set up a time. The Ash Wednesday service will be livestreamed on Facebook, available on Uber Teleconference, and placed on the church website www.lucc.org, YouTube, and the Church's Facebook page.

Vaccine Information

Listed below is contact info for our Church members to contact to find out about getting scheduled for a vaccination:

1. Sadler Clinic in Carlisle: contact Jessica Barnett at 717-960-4343
2. UPMC Carlisle 361 Alexander Spring Rd.: contact Jennifer Hardsock at 833-299-4358 (this number is for Healthcare workers not employed at UPMC)
3. Quality Care Pharmacy in Carlisle at 1 Sprint Drive: contact Bryan Gobin at 717-323-8230
4. UPMC hotline: 833-724-3258
5. PA. Dept of Health: 877-724-3258
6. Also check the website: PA. Gov, which is the website of the Commonwealth of PA. There is info on getting the vaccine and other important COVID information.

Re-Opening Update



Members of 1st United Church of Christ – Carlisle:

Good day to you. The following is information on COVID statistics reported in the last week of January 2021.

Greg Lewis shared the following at the Re-opening Task Force meeting and with Consistory. The statistics for Cumberland County: The total number of cases have been down in the past week, but there continues to be double digit deaths. The percent positivity rate is 10%--which is down from 13.3% the previous week. The incidence of COVID cases per 100,000 is 198.5 and that is down from 296 the previous week. The numbers for COVID that are considered ideal to begin to open socially-- are a positivity rate below 5% and an incidence under 50 per 100,000.

The numbers have been decreasing, and people in the community are starting to get vaccinated. The data has not reached the possible benchmarks that have been suggested by the CDC. Consistory has decided unanimously to have the church building remain closed for worship for the month of February 2021. Consistory will continue to be in conversation with the Re-opening Task Force and potentially consider re-opening the church for worship in March 2021.

Please note some of the following points: When the church re-opens for worship, there will continue to be the protocol of the wearing of masks, social distancing, and temperature taking, as we had done previously. Please understand that attendees who have received a vaccination are not 100% protected from the possibility of transmitting or becoming infected with COVID and that the wearing of masks is absolutely required. When the church does re-open for the goal will be to have a minimum amount of people present. The goal is to have at least 20 people in worship each worship. If the numbers consistently drop below that number, then we may consider going back to only offering a virtual worship service again.

In the meantime, worship continues to be placed on the internet. It is livestreamed on Sundays at 10 am on Pastor Chris's Facebook page. There is also a teleconferencing option for people who do not use computers (call 717-297-0493 to listen to worship service as it happens). The Sunday worship can also be found on the church's Facebook page, the church's website (www.lucc.org), and on Youtube.com (type in First United Church of Christ – Carlisle to find videos). Please note, Pastor Chris's Facebook page is where it is livestreamed. Once the worship is concluded, it is then copied to the church website, YouTube, and the church's Facebook page. This process of sharing the worship to the other internet locations will likely occur within the hour after worship.

Grace and Peace,

Pat Frey, President	717-249-7528
Susan Stott, Treasurer	717-701-1120
Michael Coulson, Vice Pres	717-574-4595
Pastor Chris Schwab	717-422-8543
Karen Byers, Secretary	717-243-2609



COVID-19 UPDATES



Summary of 1st UCC – Carlisle reopening progress (10/5/20)

First UCC has been working diligently to prepare for reopening and to follow CDC guidelines to do this safely during this pandemic. We have formed a subcommittee of church members to address this problem and have developed a protocol that will hopefully allow all of us to return to our Sanctuary and resume our previous activities by way of the “new norm” relatively soon. We wish to summarize our progress with these newly developed guidelines below:

1. Anyone with a cough or fever, or has been around someone with Covid19 or has returned from a recent visit to a State with a high Covid19 incidence (please see Governor Wolfe’s recommended guidelines concerning this), is asked to watch the service from home by streaming or other means as is available on the Church website. Worship is available virtually (livestreamed on Pastor Chris’ Facebook page and downloaded video on church website (www.1ucc.org), Youtube.com, and the Church’s Facebook page
2. All congregation members should come prepared to wear a mask during the service. Those without a mask will be given one at the door. People who arrive to enter the church and who don't have a mask will be given one which they are expected to wear and it should cover their mouth and nose.
3. We ask that all Church attendees practice safely distancing during the service (at least 6 feet apart), except family members coming together. Every other pew will be closed, and our ushers will seat you conforming to these distancing guidelines.
4. All members will come into our Church by the parking lot door only and will be greeted there by ushers who will ask you about your recent health and travel history and take your name and contact info.
5. You will be shown into the Church and will be allowed entry by one door only. An usher in the Sanctuary will give you a bulletin and seat you. The balcony can be available for seating when there is overflow. People will be encouraged to sit in the main pew area of the sanctuary first.
6. We strongly discourage any greeting by handshake and suggest greeting by safe social distancing.
7. Pastor Chris will give the Service and read the scripture.
8. There will be no singing (possible spread of the virus) but there will be organ music by Sharon.
9. After the service there will be dismissal by row—starting at the back. Pastor Chris, out of a concern for safety for all, will not be greeting congregants afterwards.
10. Everyone will exit from a left rear door out onto the Plaza and then proceed to the parking lot. Those with some degree of disability will be dismissed afterwards and may return to the parking lot by the way they entered.
11. We discourage close social gathering afterwards in the Church or parking lot.
12. Cleaning and sanitizing related to both elevator use and bathroom use will be provided to you.
13. The Church will be cleaned and sanitized in the days before each Church service.
14. For those overflow congregants who do not have a seat in the Sanctuary or balcony—we hope to make Fellowship Hall available to listen to and/or view the Service.
15. Please note that for all building usage and visiting the church building beyond worship, social distancing and wearing masks will be required.



Church Update

Council Meetings

Consistory– 3rd Monday Every Month

Church & Ministry- 1st Monday Every Month

Advisory– Quarterly

Caring Fellowship– 2nd Monday Every Month

Christian Ed– 1st Sunday Every Month

Church & Community Connections– 2nd Tuesday Every Month

Property Management– 4th Wednesday Every Month

Stewardship– 2nd Wednesday Every Other Month

*Whether it's over Zoom or small, social-distanced meetings in person, 1st UCC is still working to move forward during COVID.

*You can find all council reports on the church website (www.1ucc.org). If you would like a copy, please email Lyndsey (Lyndsey@1stuccofcarlisle.org).

Project Share and Community CARES Collections

Project Share (Spaghetti and Sauce) and Community CARES (Ramen noodles) collections begin this month!

- ♦ On the first Wednesday of every month from **10 am – noon**, there will be a table at the parking lot door of the church where **Project Share** donations can be dropped off (or handed to a volunteer). This is the day when we will receive packets of Spaghetti and Spaghetti Sauce for the organization.

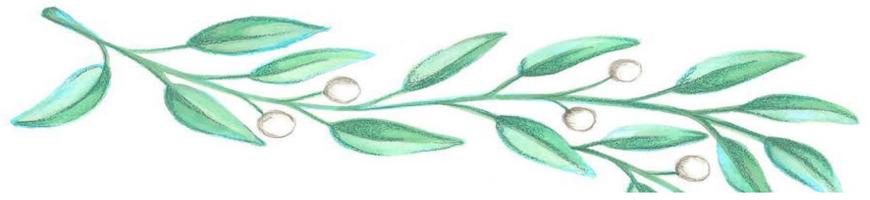


- ♦ On the second Wednesday of every month from **10 am – noon**, there will be a table at the parking lot door of the church where **Community CARES** donations can be dropped off (or handed to a volunteer). This is the day when we will receive packets of Ramen noodles for the organization.



- ♦ Every Friday from 8am to 1pm (January-March) there will be a blue barrel outside the back door for jacket, blanket, and sleeping bag donations. These donations will be given to Community CARES and Safe Harbour.

Thank you for being a giving community. Let us continue to do just that in 2021.



Earth Stewards

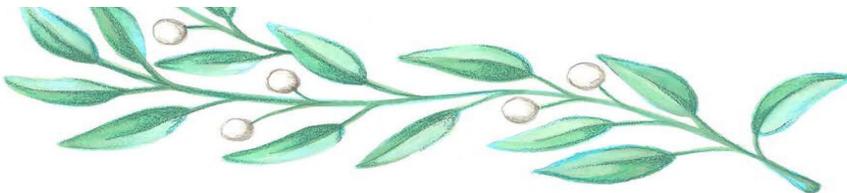
February Tip of the Month

Be the Planet's VALENTINE! - Say "Bye" to the Plastic Water Bottle

We ALL need water, but not at the expense of a healthy planet! Americans toss out 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour. Many of these will never be recycled and take YEARS to decompose in landfills, or - even worse - end up in the oceans!

Be part of the solution by investing in a reusable water bottle (BPA-free if possible). Fill it, keep it in your fridge, and REMEMBER to carry it with you! Healthier than a heart-shaped box of candy, a reusable water bottle is a great Valentine's gift for ANY age - they'll LOVE it and SO WILL THE PLANET!

Have an Earth Stewards Tip to SHARE? Email: sccoulson@comcast.net or text or call 717-580-8063. Let's ALL WORK TOGETHER to help the Planet!





Church Activities Update



If there are any other groups currently meeting and would like to update the congregation, please send Lyndsey an email (Lyndsey@1stuccofcarlisle.org) with a summary and it will be included in the next newsletter.

