

The Heavenly Herald

“We will share the love of our Lord, building on our past, reaching in faith toward our future.”

A letter from the Pastor...

APRIL, 2024

God will fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. - Job 8:21

Dear Friends of FUPC Houston,

Historically, the Monday after Easter Sunday was known as *risus paschalis*, Latin for Easter Laugh. Early orthodox churches began a tradition of gathering on the Monday following Resurrection Sunday to tell jokes as a way of marking Easter as the ultimate joke God played on Satan by defeating death with life.

Fortuitously for us this year, the Monday after Easter Sunday is April 1st, also known as April Fools' Day. A great day to laugh, celebrate, and rejoice at the overpowering love of God that conquered the grave through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not just on Palm Sunday where we waved Palms and shouted loud Hosannas, but Scripture is full of examples of God's people being moved and even called to laughter, dancing, and great rejoicing. Going back to Sarah who said, "God has made me laugh. Everyone who hears will laugh with me" (Genesis 21:6) and then named her one and only son Isaac – "One who Laughs."

"We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, 'What amazing things the Lord has done for them.'" - Psalm 126:2

"I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!" - John 15:11

These are just a few examples of God's desire for us to be a joyful people filled with new life in Jesus Christ. May the best example be the people of First U.P. Church in Houston for always laughing, dancing, and singing songs of praise to the one true God!

On Monday, April 1, please enjoy an Easter Laugh in the name of Jesus.

Happy Easter! He is Risen!
Pastor Ben

**First United
Presbyterian Church**
102 North Main Street
Houston, PA 15342
724-746-3040
houstonpresbyterian.org

**Pastor
Ben Libert**
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Robin Spiker

Pastor Ben's Letter	1
Birthdays & Anniversaries	2
Prayer Lists	3
Schedule of Servers	4
Pastor Ben's Readings	5
Honoring Rev. Craig Kephart	6
New Members/Baptism	7
Vacation Bible School	8
Vacation Bible School Form	9
Save The Dates	10
Charitable Contributions	11
Easter Egg Stravaganza	12



April 3rd	Jordan Simpson	April 4th	Collin Westcott
April 4th	Austin Cochran	April 6th	Hunter Bigler
April 6th	Jacob Sapienza	April 8th	Sarah Wallace
April 8th	Jenna Marshall	April 9th	Daniel Sapienza
April 10th	Darlene Crumrine	April 10th	Heather White
April 11th	Joan Jones	April 11th	Bill Plunkett
April 11th	Kevin Cushey	April 12th	Patti Nagy
April 13th	Chris Tonarelli	April 13th	Neal Isiminger
April 14th	JJ Jardini	April 15th	Donna Park
April 15th	Christine Mechtel	April 15th	Tyler Keenan
April 16th	Jennifer Baxter	April 16th	James Baxter
April 18th	Betty Matthews	April 18th	Linn Blosel
April 19th	James Orbich	April 19th	Kyle Fee
April 19th	Ian Simms	April 21st	Daja Durkacs
April 22nd	Esther Kusic	April 22nd	Brooke Simms
April 23rd	Tyler Weber	April 23rd	Phoebe Mechtel
April 25th	Audra Spinnenweber	April 26th	Jared Scott
April 27th	Emily Anestis	April 28th	Michelle Amos



April 16th - Leon & Linda Young
April 25th - Ben & Randi Greely
April 26th - Steve & Tina Colletti

April 16th - Sam & Tera Washabaugh
April 26th - Harlan & Melissa Shober
April 27th - Jim & Dodie Hanna

PRAYER LIST

ONGOING PRAYER REQUESTS:

Darryl Beton, Rich (Pepsi) Witmer, Barb Burnetti, Tom Setto, John Orlando, Mindy Kelley, Brandon Craig, Darren Spiker, Cat Morgan, Rev. Don Austin, Tim Lynch, Melanie Donahoo, William Young, Patti Nagy, JoAnn Pitcock, Amanda, Matthew Scears, Brad Pitcock, Brian Baumgardner, Bill Brown, Sophia Desmond, and Bill Ensley.



APRIL PRAYER REQUEST:

Dorie Nicholls, MaryAnn Clark, Jackie Shober, Aurora, Sandy & Jack Simpson, Lance Baker & Family, Dan Browning, Robert Ward, Loraine Julius, Joyce Orlando, Charity, Cathy Lynch, Patty Goldbach, Pastor Melody, Nancy Magera, Bell Family, Evelyn, Bob Washabaugh, Marion Marcase, and Curtis Marcase.



PLEASE ALSO PRAY FOR:

**Pastor Ben and our Houston Church Leaders,
Our Nation and our Nation's Leaders, and
all unspoken requests of our church family.**

**May Newsletter Articles
due by Monday, April 22, 2024**

SERVING THE CHURCH IN APRIL, 2024

Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, April 7, 2024.

GREETERS

Deacon Greeters:

April - 7th

(MV) Nancy Youmans
(GV) Virginia Bayne
(GH) Janice Bloesel

April - 14th

(MV) Nancy Youmans
(GV) Virginia Bayne
(GH) Mark Skirpan

April - 21st

(MV) Dodie Hanna
(GV) Janice Bloesel
(GH) Virginia Rockwell

April - 28th

(MV) Virginia Rockwell
(GV) Sandy Wallace
(GH) Haley Steere

Elder Greeters:

April - 7th

(MV) Bo Lesjak
(GV) Pastor Ben
(GH) Jan Taylor

April - 14th

(MV) Pastor Ben
(GV) Gloria Schmalz
(GH) Karen Jones

April - 21st

(MV) Linda Young
(GV) Volunteer
(GH) Pastor Ben

April - 28th

(MV) Volunteer
(GV) Pastor Ben
(GH) Jonnie Swarow

Music: Karen Jones **Audiovisual:** Leon Young

Liturgist: Bob Blough

Trustees:

Bob Arnold &
Linda Young

March Acolytes:

April - 7th - Bridget Layton
April - 14th - Eden Jeffers
April - 21st - Mako Morgan
April - 28th - Baker Libert

NURSERY SCHEDULE:

April 7th - Kristie Coppola April 14th - Sandy Wallace
April 21st - Vicky Lesjak April 28th - Ashley Layton

PASTOR BEN'S APRIL READINGS

APRIL 7, 2024

2nd Sunday after Easter
COMMUNION SUNDAY

Psalm 133:1-3

1 John 1:1-2:2

“What Have You Heard?”

APRIL 14, 2024

3rd Sunday after Easter

Psalm 4:1-8

Acts 3:12-19

“Sleep On It”

Soup and Sandwich Fellowship After Worship!

APRIL 21, 2024

4th Sunday after Easter

Psalm 23:1-6

Acts 4:5-12

“No Good Deed”

APRIL 28, 2022

5th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21

“What Is Love?”



HONORING REV. CRAIG KEPHART A TIME OF REFRESHMENT March 10, 2024

For all that he has done for the people
and Churches of Washington Presbytery!



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS MARCH 17, 2024



Mary Lou Briggs
&
Nicholle Hollenbach

Welcome
New Members!



Isabella
Hollenbach

Baptized on
March 17th

Welcome
Isabella!



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

You may think it's a little early, but plans are being made for our 2024 Vacation Bible School. This year we are 'diving into friendship with God' using Group's Scuba. With help from Tad the frogfish, Finnley the dolphin, Fisher the seal, Waylon the whale shark and Octavia the octopus, we will journey under the sea to learn how God is a friend who is real, who loves, we can trust, is forever, and a friend for everyone.

We need everyone's help to get the word out and reach as many kids as possible. So save the dates, June 24 – 28 from 6:00 to 8:30 pm, and pass this on.

We can always use extra fins, I mean hands, so consider helping out. See Sandy Wallace to find your place in the sea!

See Registration Form on page 9.



The week will be filled with stories, songs, crafts, science, and snacks.
Volunteers are always welcome and needed to lead and guide children.
Station Leaders Sea Guides will lead groups of children to each station.

VBS is open to children 4 yrs of age through sixth grade. To register: Please complete the information below and submit.

You can also register online at houstonpresbyterian.org (VBS Tab)

Questions? 724-746-3040 or email: secretary@houstonpresbyterian.org

**First United Presbyterian Church, 102 North Main Street,
Houston, PA 15342
Join us for VBS June 24-June 28, 2024 - 6:00pm - 8:30pm**

REGISTRATION FORM

Student's Name: _____ Age: _____ Grade _____

Address: _____

Allergies/Medical Conditions: _____

Special Friend wishes to be with: _____

Father's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Mother's Name: _____ Phone: _____

In case of an Emergency and neither parent can be reached:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Photo Release: *First United Presbyterian Church/VBS has my permission to use my child's photograph publicly in VBS materials. I understand the images may be used in print publications, online publications, presentations, websites, and social media. I also understand that I will not receive any compensation for publication of photo use.*

Parent/Guardian/Volunteer's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I do not permit photos of my child to be shared:

Parent/Guardian/Volunteer's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I would like to volunteer as: _____ Crew Helper _____ Site Helper

I am available to volunteer on: _____ Mon _____ Tue _____ Wed _____ Thu _____ Fri

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

*Must have PA State Mandated Clearances to Volunteer. Clearances are FREE for volunteers.

Obtain at: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

or <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>



SAVE THE DATES:

Soup & Sandwich Fellowship - April 14, 2024
Following Worship, in the Social Hall.
Bring your friends and families.

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Ascension Of The Lord
May 9, 6:00pm
Potluck Dinner and Worship

* * * * *

Vacation Bible School - June 24 - 28, 2024
6:00pm - 8:30pm

* * * * *

Mission Trip to Beckley, WV
Week of June 17, 2024
Look for details in upcoming Bulletins.

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Rise Against Hunger
September 28, 2024
Meal packaging event at the Morris Community Center.
Look for details in upcoming Bulletins.

IRA - Qualified Charitable Distributions: **A Tax-Efficient Way to Donate Money To Charity**

Now that we are in the tax filing season, I wanted to pass on some brief information on Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). A QCD is a withdrawal from an IRA that's made directly to an eligible charity.

If you currently are taking Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from your IRA account, you may want to consider making your annual donation to the church or other charities through a QCD. A QCD counts toward your RMD for the year, and it is made tax free thus avoiding you paying income tax on the distribution.

The funds are transferred directly from the IRA custodian to the eligible charity (501(c)(3) organizations and houses of worship). You must remember to let your tax preparer know how much of your total annual distribution was for a QCD so that it can be reported as such on your income tax return and excluded from your taxable gross income.

We have numerous members currently utilizing this tax favorable method of donating to our church.

If you would like any additional information on the benefits, or how to make a QCD from your IRA, feel free to see me or Bob Blough.

Buddy Jeffers
Treasurer

EASTER EGG STRAVAGANZA!
MARCH 23, 2024





APRIL - 2024



Regular Events

Sunday School - 9:45am
Worship - 11:00am
Bible Study, Tuesday 10:30am

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1-Office Closed	2-Deacons Mtg. 6:00pm	3-	4-	5-	6-
7-Communion Sunday	8-Ministry Mtg. 6:30pm	9-	10-	11-	12-	13-
14-Soup & Sandwich Fellowship following Worship	15-Mission Mtg. 6:30pm	16-	17-	18-	18-	19-
20-	21-Admin. Mtg. 6:30pm	22-	23-	24-	26-	27-
28-	29-Session Mtg. 6:30pm	30-				



First United Presbyterian Church
 102 North Main Street
 Houston, PA 15342

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Houston, PA 15342

Church Office
 724-746-3040

Pastor Ext: 313
 1379pbl@gmail.com

Secretary Ext: 310
 secretary@houstonpresbyterian.org

Meals on Wheels Ext: 314
Open Door Nursery Ext: 311

Website
 houstonpresbyterian.org

Sunday School
 Sunday School Begins
 Sept. 18th at 10:00am

Sunday Worship Service
September — May at 11:00 a.m.
 June-July-August at 10:00 a.m.
 Nursery Available

Bible Study
 Tuesdays
 10:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

Gifts and Offerings

First United Presbyterian Church
 102 North Main Street
 Houston, PA 15342



Member Visitor

Name _____ No. _____

Please apply my offering as follows:

Regular Offering	\$ _____
Deacons Fund	\$ _____
Building Fund	\$ _____
Special Project	\$ _____

Memorial Fund \$ _____

In Memory of _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Thank you for your generous gift.