

The Midweek

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

I didn't really begin to enjoy drinking coffee until I was in Africa. Going into meetings with officials from countries that observed Ramadan meant that there would be no lunch breaks or even a mid-morning snack during discussions. But there was always a sense of hospitality and so while fasting was an accepted practice in many nations, the art (and it was an art) of coffee service was something to be experienced and appreciated. It was sitting in those meetings that made me a coffee drinker.

Part of the reason was that it is truly amazing coffee. Ethiopian blends were the normal brew so being on the continent meant the coffee was fresher and it had not traveled the distance those beans go before we get it in the United States. It seems pretty obvious when you think about it but if I had been asked to name the great coffee countries of the world, I don't believe I would have thought about any nation in Africa as being part of the "coffee culture." But in the locations I was in on the African continent, the seriousness of coffee would mirror the cultural aspects of tea in Japan or China.

How often do we overlook the obvious because our sense of the world does not correlate with what is in front of us? Because I did not see Starbucks on every corner in the places I was in, I discounted the entire continent as "coffee countries."

We do the same so often with the people and situations that we look at in our lives. We make snap judgments based on what we believe to be the truth without ever looking or thinking about the story behind what we see. One of my favorite quotes says, "Dear Children: Don't judge my other sons and daughters. You don't know the storms I have put them through. Love, God."

I often wonder what people think when they see me. Just recently I went to Redners

and bought six boxes of raspberry poptarts and a case of Pepsi. There was not one vegetable, fruit or protein to be found in what I put on the checkout belt. The person behind me was all about healthy eating and I could just tell she didn't approve of my choices. (The poptarts were going to Afghanistan for my friend and his colleagues because they had taken a vote and that is what they wanted from home. The Pepsi was getting split up between me and Chris and would probably last both of us through June.) But it was crystal clear from the looks she gave me she was condemning my choices.

God tells us not to judge each other. Matthew 7: 1-2 says "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get."

I wonder by whom and under what circumstances the woman behind me in the grocery line will be misjudged. Perhaps she will never know that she herself is being looked at in some situation and others are making the wrong decisions about her.

It also makes me think about how many times we come to a snap judgement that makes us miss out on something wonderful because we get it wrong. If I had not been in a situation that basically forced me to try coffee I would have never understood the culture behind coffee in Africa or the amazing way it tastes.

For the record, I have never been able to duplicate the flavors of the coffee I had during my journeys but I continue to try. Maybe I will go and buy as many brands of Ethiopian coffee that I can to see which comes closest. If I head to Redners this afternoon I could probably get a dozen different types. I wonder what the person behind me will think this time.

To God be the glory forever and ever.

Pastor hey



From the desk of our Conference Director Vicki...

Transmit AND Receive

Many years ago, Bo and I both served as Communications Officers on our respect ships. As Commo, we had responsibility for the radio crew, teletype and other equipment, and cryptographic materials. We had no internet and no cell phones back then. But, we did have satellite communication.

Our ships deployed together in 1987, with my repair ship sent to maintain the battle group which included Bo's cruiser. My ship steamed independently to an island called, "Diego Garcia," so we did not sail with his battle group. Our radiomen knew we were married, and in the middle of one night, my chief came to awaken me. "Ma'am, wake up! We have your husband's ship on fleet SEVOCOM! We are under the same bird now!" (Fleet SEVOCOM was a satellite voice line which distorted voices as part of the encryption. Bird referred to the satellite.) Unbeknownst to me, Bo's radiomen had also alerted him. I went to the radio shack and called up USS BUNKER HILL. Obviously, I could not say just anything, so I asked their position so we could chart where they were. He gave me his position and asked for ours. Even with distorted voices, I knew I was talking to Bo. It was so very romantic! (Seriously! We had been married for about a year before the deployment began.) We so appreciated our crew caring enough about us to wake us both up so that we could connect.

As a newly married couple, we also were learning how to live together, and especially how to communicate. We used to joke with each other after an argument utilizing communications jargon. I would tell him that my Tango end (transmitter) was fivers (meaning fully functional) and that he needed to check his Romeo (receiver), or the other way around. We laughed about it, but it served as a reminder to us that communications involves BOTH transmitting AND receiving.

As we look around in our country and even churches right now, we see quite a bit of transmitting (speaking) and very little receiving (listening). Whether on Facebook or Twitter or the news, it seems like everyone has a lot to say and either they only say it to people who agree with them (by unfriending those who do not agree with them) or they shout it louder to people who shout back, with no one listening. Shouting at each other does not constitute communication. Yet, the old saying goes: "God gave us two ears and one mouth, so we can listen twice as much as we speak." James 1:19-21 puts it this way: "Know this, my dear brothers and sisters: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry. This is because an angry person doesn't produce God's righteousness. Therefore, with humility, set aside all moral filth and the growth

of wickedness, and welcome the word planted deep inside you—the very word that is able to save you."

I am currently taking training to get my certification to be a coach. A coach partners with a person to create a process which allows that person to reflect deeply on the gifts God has given them to help them be the best person God has created them to be. Two of the best skills in coaching involve deep listening and powerful questions. In practicing deep listening, I have noticed several trends. First, most people do not feel heard. Listening, in and of itself, can be a deeply healing and affirming process. Second, when people do not feel heard, they typically turn up the volume. So, in order to lower the volume and help create a path forward, listening deeply satisfies that need to be heard. Third, when I am practicing listening, I suspend judgment and adapt a stance of curiosity. What stories and assumptions lie behind this person's convictions? Finally, sometimes even the speaker does not know why they hold such strong beliefs. Providing a safe place for them to talk also allows them to listen to their own heart.

How do we offer that incredible gift of deep listening? For me, I have to first feel like I have been heard by God and that I have listened to God. When I pray, I experience God listening to me and when I turn to silence, I experience God speaking to me. This prayer time satisfies my need to be heard so that I can fully focus on the other person and offer them that gift of deep listening and powerful questions to help them explore and chart a path forward.

God calls every single one of us to this ministry of listening, as we saw in the passage from James. What would our churches look like if we practiced deep listening for each other? What if, the next time someone says something with which you disagree, you adapt a stance of curiosity rather than judgment? Can you imagine asking someone to tell you the stories behind their deeply held convictions (especially if they differ from your own)? What might your church gain from listening deeply to one another? How can your practice of prayer prepare you to listen to another without condemnation?

I pray that we will be able to practice these skills. I believe that when we do, we will encounter the very power of God in Jesus Christ. In today's issue of *The Connection*, we offer two opportunities to practice praying. First, we invite you to pray for The United Methodist Church and our Commission on a Way Forward. The conference has a prayer vigil with times for prayer listed below and an opportunity to gather for prayer at Conley's UMC. Then, we invite you to pray for our Native sisters and brothers as they struggle with the decision to continue to build the Dakota Access Pipeline on their territory, breaking once again the treaties we have with the various tribes. If you think the pipeline should be built, try asking someone who disagrees, especially a Native American, and truly listen. Then, with humility, pray that God's will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

As Methodists, we affirm the process of salvation, which means we are all works in progress. We need each other on this journey. I invite you to join me as we seek to reach out to people who hold different convictions, offering them listening and love.

Blessings on the journey,

Vicki

The Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith Director of Connectional Ministries Peninsula-Delaware Conference



A Message from the United Methodist Council of Bishops

Today, I stand with colleagues representing several faith traditions to strongly denounce President Trump's widespread attack on immigrants and refugees. President Trump's reckless, ill-conceived executive orders will divide families, impose a religious test for Muslims facing forced migration, penalize communities providing sanctuary and wall off the United States from our neighbors. These actions are expensive, unnecessary and profoundly antithetical to our values of compassion, dignity and justice for all individuals regardless of nationality, religious affiliation or legal status.

The biblical witness is clear and unambiguous. Walls are unbiblical. Hospitality is biblical. Denying one's neighbor is unbiblical. Welcoming the stranger is biblical. It is not surprising that Judaism, Christianity and Islam teach the reign of God as a banquet to which all peoples are invited. We are to welcome the sojourner, love our neighbor and stand with the most vulnerable among us. These very values from our sacred texts and faith traditions are currently reflected in the mandate of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and must not be usurped by any executive order. Orders, legislation or administrative actions that would have the U.S. State Department disqualify refugees from protection and resettlement based on their nationality or religion are a denial of the very principles this nation was built upon, contradict the legacy of leadership our country has offered the world, and dishonor our shared humanity.

Jesus was explicit in his teachings. In Matthew's gospel Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." (Matthew 10:40).

Refugees and immigrants arrive among us, not only with their needs, but also bearing gifts of energy, resourcefulness, love of liberty and hope. These gifts have always contributed to the renewal of our society and the church.

Above all, these strangers bring to us the Christ. When we welcome a stranger we welcome Jesus, and when we welcome Jesus we welcome our creator. Refugees, immigrants, those yearning to be free—these are the ones whom Jesus spoke about when he said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).

Repeatedly Jesus tells his disciples:

"For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25)

The original Greek language is far more poetic, powerful and prophetic. In finer translations of the Greek language, we hear Jesus saying:

"Whoever seeks to build a wall around their soul shall destroy it; whoever tears down the wall (around their soul) shall bring their soul to a living birth."

The very soul of our country is at stake. When we abandon strangers who are at risk of bigotry, xenophobia and violence we not only destroy their hope, we destroy our own souls. When we fail to assist the refugees fleeing danger, we not only place them in harm's way, we do harm to our own souls. When we build walls of concrete, or walls of divisive rhetoric, or walls of fear, or walls of immoral immigration policies, we build a wall around our own souls.

Christ calls us to tear down the walls around our souls that we might live fully and abundantly. Thus, I call on the Trump administration and the U.S. Congress to rescind the harmful executive orders and save the soul of our country. I call upon the people of The United Methodist Church to see the face of Christ in the refugee. Say "no" to the walling off of our country and our hearts and say "yes" to their hope – our hope – for new life. Let us unite and work together to bring the soul of this country to a living birth!

Bishop Bruce R. Ough, President Council of Bishops The United Methodist Church January 30, 2017



February 1 , 2017

Dinner at 6:00pm and Study at 7:00pm

at the home of Poncho and Lisa Johnson

Led by Donny Hopkins



A New Class on Christianity
Thinking our way through the Gospel of Mark
Starting: Sunday, February 19th
3 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
Led by Dan Nelson



Presents an

AFRICAN-AMERICAN

Celebration Concert,

Make Them







Sunday, February 12 3 p.m.

Unitarian
Universalist Society of
Southern Delaware
30486 Lewes-Georgetown Hwy.
Lewes, DE 19958

Tickets are \$10 (under 18 free) at the door.

Delaware Division of the

This program is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency committed to promoting and supporting the arts in Delaware. In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOSPITAL VISITS: Please help the pastors by calling the church office at (302) 422-8111 when someone from the church is hospitalized.

ELECTRONIC GIVING is being offered at Avenue Church. An *Information Sheet with Authorization Agreement* is available on the table in Fellowship Foyer. Simply fill out the authorization agreement and return it to the church office.

END OF THE YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS are available on the Foyer table.

ALTAR FLOWERS: If you want to reserve a Sunday please call the church office then call Country Flowers. Flowers are placed in the altar vases up by the cross.

PRAYER CONCERNS PAST WEEK: Dave and Sharon Dawson, Barbara Vederose, All who have lost loved ones in the severe weather in Georgia, Kirby Schuler, the missions organizer that we support, The family and friends of Jim Greenly, The family and friends of Alan Boltz, Colleen Dunham, April McIntyre, Code Purple ministry and all of our guests, The safety of the president and his family, Brandon Dodd, Danny, Brenda Powers and Alison Parker.

Recently hospitalized: Carolyn.

Rejoice with: Gannon Webb turned 14 on Sunday, Evelyn Rose McCall who will be appearing soon, Choir and music ministries of the church and Brenda Powers who is on a mission trip to Guatemala.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: The family and friends of Alan Boltz, Kim, Christopher, Olivia Davis, Kayla Horn, Barbara Vederose, April McIntyre, Colleen Dunham, Code Purple guests and volunteers, Carolyn Williams, the nation and its leaders, Dave and Sharon Dawson, Brenda Powers, Allison Parker, the family and friends of Skip Venable, Bill Salvin and family, Hannah, Jon, Jean's Mother, Lillie Brittingham, Mark Emery, Carolyn Wright, Bill Strahle, Conner, Don Meyer, Larry Eisenhauer, Tom Price, Kathy Sullivan, Jayne Frank, Patsy Sullivan, Jason Franklin, the Mispillion Chorus and Baltimore-Washington Conference youth revival.

Recently hospitalized: Deanna Elsberry and Neil Burke.

Rejoice with: Peggy and Larry Hughes, JoAnn Carter and Olga Stayton.

CONTRATULATION TO: Avenue Preschool for winning Grotto's 30th Annual Parade of Trees. GO AVENUE! ©

WEEKLY MUSIC REHEARSALS:

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Mispillion Children's Chorus

Tuesdays at 6:15 p.m., Music Room

♪Praise Team

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

ISanctuary Choir

Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m., Music Room

∏AveNotes

Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Do you like to sing? Do you play an instrument? If you are interested in using your musical gifts here at Avenue Church please contact Kevin Chamberlain, kbchamberlain@avenueumc.com or (302) 236-1276.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: We will continue our study "John" on February 6th. Please call Ginny Van Tine (302) 422-4282, Brenda Powers (302) 422-8821 or leave a message in the church office if you would like to join us. We meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Grier Room.

WIDOW/WIDOWERS/LOST AND FOUND GROUP will meet today at 2:00 p.m. in the Heritage Room. Come join us. Contact Janice Abbott at (302) 422-1863.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP: The Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group will meet the 2nd Monday of each month. The next meeting will be February 13th at 4:00 p.m. in the Grier Room.

EXPLORING FAITH BOOK CLUB meets on the third Sunday of the Month at 12:15 in the Grier Room. Our next study is February 19, 2017. The Book is "The Will of God" by Leslie Weatherhead. When bad things happen to good people, is this the will of God? If it is not, what is the will of God? If these questions have sparked an interest in you, then plan to come and "explore your faith" as these questions and others pertaining to God's Will are discussed.

OUTREACH

THE MILFORD COMMUNITY PANTRY: As the new year begins we want to express our gratitude to all of you for the support you give **The Milford Community Pantry**. We had a busy year in 2016 and expect that need to continue this year. If you want to bring food to the Pantry we suggest peanut butter or jelly. If you would like to volunteer call Tita Lewis (302) 664-1321.

AVENUE PRESCHOOL has a limited number of openings for the 2016-17 school year. To be eligible, a child must be at least 36-months old on or before August 31st. We are a Star Level 5, Delaware Stars rated program offering a high quality early education experience. For more information contact office@avenuepreschool.org or (302) 422-8111. Be sure to visit our Facebook page and website at: www.avenuepreschool.org.

SOUTHERN DELAWARE CHORALE PRESENTS: African-American celebration concert Make Them HEAR You, Sunday, February 12th, 3:00 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Society of Southern Delaware, 30486 Lewes-Georgetown Highway. Cost: \$10 at the door (under 18—Free).

LIFE LINE SCREENING: Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, is please to offer a preventive health event at Avenue United Methodist Church on March 24, 2017. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries which is a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6441 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/advantagemembers.

LAST WEEK A	T AV	ENUE
Attendance:	2016	2017
8:00	77	60
9:30	232	193
Sunday School	85	80
11:00	62	83
Thursday Service	0	6
FUSION	0	54
Total	456	476

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 2/5		WEDNESDAY 2/8		
8:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship	10:30 a.m.	Writing Group, Grier Room	
9:30 a.m.	Contemporary Worship	1:30 p.m.	Knitting Group, Grier Room	
9:30 a.m.	Sunday School	3:00 p.m.	Sanctuary Choir, Sanctuary	
11:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship		and Music Room	
5:00 p.m.	Girl Scout Troop 272, Heritage Room	5:00 p.m.	Instrumental Rehearsal,	
5:00 p.m.	FUSION, Wesley Room &		Sanctuary	
0.00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall	5:00 p.m.	Women's Emmaus Reunion,	
	Tollowollip Hall		Room 202	
MONDAY 2/6		6:00 p.m.	AveNotes, Music Room	
11:00 a.m.	AA, Wesley Room	6:30 p.m.	Cub Scouts—Webelos 1,	
6:00 p.m.	Cub Scouts—Webelos 2, Room 206		Wesley Room	
6:30 p.m.	Handbell Choir, Sanctuary	6:45 p.m.	Pride of Delmarva, Fellowship Hall	
7:00 p.m.	First State Harmonizers,			
7.00 p.m.	Music Room	THURSDAY 2/9		
7:00 p.m.	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	9:00 a.m.	DCOM, Heritage & Conference	
8:00 p.m.	AA, Room 206		Room	
о.оо р.ш.	111, 1600iii 200	11:00 a.m.	AA, Wesley Room	
TUESDAY 2/7		2:30 p.m.	Women's Emmaus Reunion,	
10:00 a.m.	Archives Comm. Meeting, Archives		Room 202	
10.00 α.π.	Room	6:00 p.m.	Girl Scouts Leaders Meeting, Grier	
10:00 a.m.	Sisters Bible Study, Grier Room		Room	
12:00 p.m.	Card Ministry, Grier Room	6:30 p.m.	New Worship Service,	
1:00 p.m.	UMW Board Meeting, Room 207		Fellowship Hall	
6:00 p.m.	MomentUM Praise Team		-	
0.00 p.m.	Rehearsal, Wesley Room	FRIDAY 2/10		
6:00 p.m.	Covenant Discipleship Group,	8:00 p.m.	AA, Wesley Room	
0.00 p.m.	Wendy's Office	-		
6:15 p.m.	Mispillion Children's Choir,	SATURDAY 2/11		
0.10 p.m.	Music Room	7:00 p.m.	AA, Wesley Room	
6:30 p.m.	Cub Scouts—Bears, Fellowship Hall	_	•	
7:00 p.m.	Central Delaware Chess Club,	SUNDAY 2/12		
7.00 p.m.	Room 206	8:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship	
7:00 p.m.	Praise Team Rehearsal,	9:30 a.m.	Contemporary Worship	
7.00 p.m.	Sanctuary	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School	
7:00 p.m.	Leadership Team Meeting,	10:45 a.m.	Confirmation Class, Grier Room	
7.00 p.m.	Carpenter Room	11:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship	
	Carpenter mooni	1:00 p.m.	Boy Scout Troop Comm. Meeting,	
		1	Heritage Room	
		5:00 p.m.	FUSION, Wesley Room &	
		•	Fellowship Hall	

"A Dynamic Faith Community Growing in Hope, Love and Service"