

The Midweek

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

It's time to get back to HGTV parables.

One of the major themes of HGTV programming is home renovations. As the star of one show puts it, they "take the worst house in the best neighborhood and turn it into their client's dream home." The houses that are featured are rough and raw. Many times there are plumbing issues, electric problems, structural concerns, landscaping nightmares and the house is always outdated. The designers and contractors try to present a vision and image of what the home can look like once the changes are complete. As another show says, "the bigger the disaster, the bigger the makeover."

The various shows usually start with the purchase of a residence. Sometimes it's the client that buys the home and turns it over to the contractors and designers for renovation. In other programs it's the contractor who buys the house with the intent to flip it.

The majority of each episode concentrates on the hard work of demolishing and rebuilding the entire property. Some things go well but there are always setbacks or surprises along the way. Termites, water damage, updates to building codes that were not anticipated...and the list goes on and on. Very often it requires that the house go down to the basic frame and be renovated from the ground up.

However, the outcome is always the same. When the house is completed it is stunning.

Personal rebirth is a big theme of Easter and in many ways we are like those houses. The bigger the mess that our lives are, the bigger the makeover can be, thanks to Jesus. Very often we have to go back to the basics of who we are as children of God. We need to change our attitudes, actions, thoughts, words, and everything else that keeps us from reaching our full potential as part of the Lord's creation. Some things go smoothly and at other times we find we need to try again.

In various parts of our lives, we need a full "gut job." In other areas, it might just require a few touchups. When we put ourselves in the hands of the divine Carpenter from Nazareth and surrender to Him for our personal remodel we can become a beautiful creation that witnesses to the love and grace of our Creator. What a glorious transformation we can become.

And we already live in the best neighborhood in the entire universe. We live in God's kingdom on earth. The start of our personal restoration is already underway.

The renovated homes in these shows are unique and full of love, individual character and beauty...just like we are after experiencing the rebirth that comes from giving ourselves to Christ. In this Easter season of life and renewal, I pray we all appreciate the joy of our spiritual makeovers.

To God be the glory.

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Click the link below to register for your spring photo session:

https://booknow-lifetouch.appointment-plus.com/9r52t450/



Photo Dates: May 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th, 17th, 25th, 26th and 27th



From the desk of our Conference Director. .

Learning to Confess

Many years ago, as a midshipman at Annapolis, I had an interesting encounter with one of my classmates. Both of us were seniors, getting ready to graduate in May. My classmate (I'll call him, "George") and I both sat at the same table for meals. At dinner one night, George commanded a plebe (first year student) to tell a joke, while we waited for the food to be served. I added a caveat to "make it a clean joke," but George shook his head. "It does not have to be clean," he replied. Of course, the plebe, emboldened by George, told a vulgar and sexist joke.

Later that evening, I went to our company wardroom and asked to speak with him privately. I told him that I felt hurt by his refusal to support what I considered a reasonable request, and asked for his help in keeping the jokes clean. He shook his head and brushed off my concerns; and the vulgar jokes continued.

Thankfully, God gave me a spirit of forgiveness for this and many similar incidents at the Naval Academy. I prayed about it and let it go. After I graduated, I did not even recall the situation again... until 23 years later. I received a Facebook friend request from George, which surprised me. But, I accepted his request and he sent me the following message:

Vicki, Thanks much for accepting my friend request. I just joined Facebook about a week ago, and I'm adding all the old 23rd company classmates from the class of '86...I wonder if you'd be willing to accept an apology after 23 years? I remember once in the wardroom, close to our graduation, you took me aside and asked me if I would stop the plebes at the table from telling vulgar jokes. I was dismissive of your very reasonable request. You stayed quiet about it, but a few tears welled up in your eyes. Well, I've grown up since then. I have a daughter now, and I hope nobody ever treats her the way I treated you that day. I think about that incident from time to time, and have always hoped that I'd get a chance to tell you that I regret having acted like an immature, insensitive idiot. It

would mean a lot to me if you would accept my apology.

Of course, I replied to him and told him that I accepted his apology. I explained that I had forgiven him long ago, so that I would not carry around any poisonous grudges. But, I did write that I appreciated his courage in apologizing. So many, even now, would not have taken the time to apologize or even care. We had a few nice exchanges and we remain Facebook friends.

I ran across his message again, recently, and thought again of his courage to admit he was wrong and to apologize. No one, particularly no one in the public arena, apologizes for anything anymore. Have you noticed that? I have often thought how much a sincere apology would cool down heated partisan debates, and allow for relationships to be healed. An apology conveys empathy, a sense that the one apologizing understands the emotional wound to the other that their behavior caused. It also implies that the person apologizing will learn from their mistake and choose a different path the next time.

Apologies reestablish the connection of the relationship, which the behavior broke.

But, to get to an apology, people must be willing to see and acknowledge their role in the hurtful situation. As followers of Jesus, we call that admission "confession," and we learn how to confess in worship. Yet, even among Christians, we have a hard time confessing. We tend, instead, to phrase things in the passive voice. When our kids were little, we explained that if they could add "by Zombies" to the end of a sentence and it still made sense, then most likely the sentence is using the passive voice. Politicians, in particular, often us the phrase, "Mistakes were clearly made." Adding our test phrase for passive voice makes this sentence read: "Mistakes were clearly made...by Zombies." Yes, it is a silly test, but it makes a great point. Using the passive voice avoids assigning responsibility for the action.

Unfortunately, this passive phrase does nothing to contribute to healing a relationship. How can you understand the pain of the person you hurt if you do not try to empathize with their feelings? And how can you empathize with them when you repeatedly refuse to accept responsibility for your actions?

Jesus offers us another way. During this season of Lent, especially, the church emphasizes the need to confess (admit you sinned) and repent (change your behavior) and be reconciled (restore the relationship), as we prepare for Easter. We might be tempted to view this invitation to repentance in a negative light, but it is such good news! We CAN have the courage to confess and repent and be reconciled because of what Jesus has done for us. Assured of God's forgiveness through Jesus, we no longer need to hide. Instead, we have become FREE to accept responsibility for our own actions and apologize.

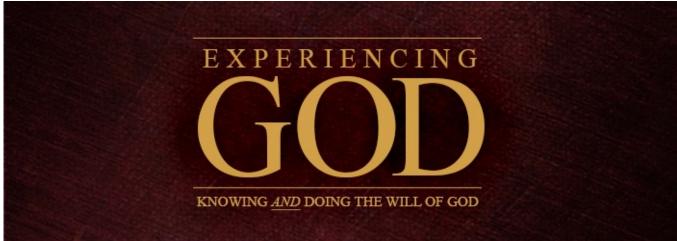
Notice how George felt strongly that he needed to apologize after 23 years! And, he longed to receive my forgiveness. As followers of Jesus, we do not need to wait for 23 years to recognize and confess and repent of our sin. Instead, Jesus invites us into that practice daily in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

What do you need to confess? In what ways is Jesus calling you to change your ways (repent) and be reconciled to another? What about our churches? Where do we need to confess as local congregations? As a conference? As a denomination? Our prayer of confession in the hymnal might be a good place to start: "Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." May we learn the freedom of confession as we seek to follow Jesus more closely.

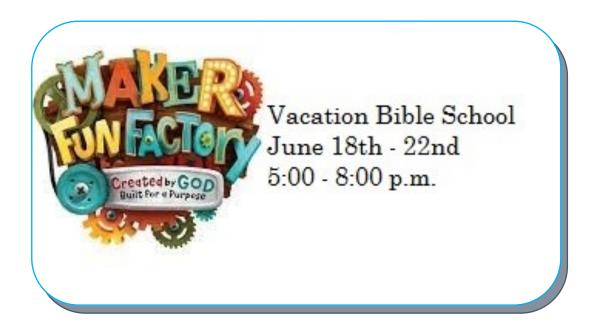
Blessings on the journey,

Vicki

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith Director of Connectional Ministries



Apríl 5, 2017 Dinner at 6:00pm and Study at 7:00pm at the home of Poncho and Lisa Johnson Led by Donny Hopkins



SAVE THE DATES

EASTER CANDY & BAKE SALE

PALM SUNDAY WEEKEND

April 7th & 9th

<u>Friday</u> 10:00 am—2:00 pm

<u>Sunday</u> after all three services

Presented by the Ladies of Avenue. All proceeds to be used for missions supported by the Avenue Methodist Women. Our Church is blessed by all the wonderful cooks that share their talent and time to bless others.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

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.

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: Owen, Joan and Bill Dudley, Debbie and Bob, April McIntyre, Al, Colleen Dunham, Marion Jarrell, Emma Burton, Bobby Bergez and family, Carmella and Richard, Leslee, Karen Moore, Dave and Sharon Dawson, Lillie Brittingham, Kirsten Pearce, Kathy Sullivan, Charles Harding, Daisy Daniels, The family and friends of Donna Jackson, The family and friends of Kenneth McKnatt, Our nation and its leaders, Code Purple leaders, guests and volunteers, Howard Haverkamp, Art Blanchet, Betty Ziesel, Ray, Tim Roe, Jacob Robertson, Lauren Downes and baby Faryn Downes, Ariana, A friend who is having mental health issues and is dealing with suicidal thoughts, For someone undergoing cancer tests, may God bless them with complete healing, Patricia Marney and Dawn Kifer and their families, Traveling mercies for Adi Nelson, Sharon Bailey, Bonnie Shea for healing, Nick for healing, For those affected by the nightclub shooting in Cincinnati, For Bill Gaskill's family, For a difficult pregnancy and guidance from God, Pastor Wendy, Joe Terrone, Abel Heller and Jacob Slater.

Recently hospitalized: Gary Seal, Anita Van Horn and Les Armour.

Rejoice with: The family of Owen Preston Pusey.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: Joan and Bill Dudley, the family and friends of Jim Bailey, Charles Shockley, Debbie and Bob, April McIntyre, Al, Colleen Dunham, Marion Jarrell, Bill and Colleen, Leslee, Karen Moore, Leslie Wuentsel, Dave and Sharon Dawson, Lillie Brittingham, Debbie, all those killed and injured in the suspected gas attack in Syria, Kirsten Pearce, Howard Haverkamp, Betty Ziesel, the friends and family of Kay Martell, all who are seeking jobs, Bill Gaskin and family, John Siegrist and family, Code Purple guests who are still sleeping outdoors, The Feed the Need Ministry, the Milford community, Vinnie, everyone affected by the tornado in Chesapeake and Virginia Beach, all impacted by the floods in Colombia, the Marney family, Zee Martinez, Donald Saint, Charlie, Jack Slater and Bill Salvin.

Recently hospitalized: Pam Wilkerson.

Rejoice with: Ken, Luisa Combs and Jen Antonik

WEEKLY MUSIC REHEARSALS:

♫Handbells Mondays at 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

MomentUM Praise Team

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

Sanctuary 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.

UPCOMING

COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICES are held each Wednesday at noon followed by a soup luncheon at various churches.

The schedule is: April 5th, Avenue UM Church

LENTEN ORGAN RECITALS ~ 12:05-12:35 P.M.

All recitals are held at Avenue Church each Thursday during Lent. A soup luncheon held in the Fellowship Hall immediately following all recitals. All are welcome.

The Schedule is: April 6th, *Kevin B. Chamberlain*

UMW CANDY SALE: UMW will be hosting a candy and bake sale on **April 7th & 9th**. They will be open in Fellowship Hall **Friday, April 7th 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 9th after each service**. If you have questions or would like to contribute to sale contact Bonnie Carmine at (302) 422-7193.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES AT AVENUE:

April 9th, Palm Sunday Services

8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

April 13th, Holy Thursday Service with communion 7:00 p.m.

April 14th Good Friday Service at 7:00 p.m.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES:

6:30 a.m. - Sunrise Service

8:00 a.m. - Festival Worship

with choir, brass and organ

9:30 a.m. - Worship with praise team

11:00 a.m. - Festival Worship

with choir, brass and organ

SCHOLARSHIPS: Avenue offers a number of scholarships each spring. Graduating Seniors can get applications from the church office by emailing Kelly Hudson

at <u>churchoffice@avenueumc.com</u> or they can be downloaded from the webpage. Then complete the applications on your computer and return them to Mrs. Hudson. Handwritten applications will not be accepted. **Please keep these two dates in mind:**

• May 1st, 3:00 p.m. deadline to return all Avenue Scholarship applications to the office.

• May 21st, 9:30 a.m. is when scholarships will be awarded, along with gifts and recognition for all the Class of 2017. **Please plan to join us.**

ALASKA MISSION TRIP 2017 is scheduled for June 10th-17th. Next meeting of the team is April 5th at 6pm in the Grier Room.

JELLY BEAN JARS: The Jelly Bean Jars are back for children and adults. The yellow sign-up sheet is for children up to 12 years old and the green sheet is for those 13 and up. The one who guesses the closest wins the jar of Jelly Beans. The winner will be announced on Easter Sunday. Good luck to everyone.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: We will continue our study on **April 11th**, Women of Easter by Liz Curtis Higgs. 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 on April 5th at 2:00 p.m. in the Heritage Room. Come join us. Contact Janice Abbott at (302) 422-1863.

H.O.P.E.: H.O.P.E. is a safe place to talk and express your feelings. Whether you are discouraged, dealing with sadness, have no one to talk to, or feel like life is hopeless, this group is for you. H.O.P.E. is an inspiration and hope-seeking support group. Hold On because Pain does End. H.O.P.E. will continue every Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. in Holzmueller Room. If you are interested, please contact Brittany Gunderson at blg2011motherof2@yahoo.com with questions and comments.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP: The Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group will meet the 2nd Monday of each month. The next meeting will be April 10th 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 Holzmueller Room. Our next study is **April 23, 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

AVENUE PRESCHOOL: Registration for the 2017-18 school year. Registration is now taking place for current and former Avenue Preschool families for the 2017-18 school year. Please contact the school as noted below if you are a former family interested in enrolling your child. Registrations must be done in person. Space is very limited. To be eligible, a child must be at least 36-months old on or before August 31st. You can contact the preschool office at (302) 422-8775 for information or send an email to: <u>office@avenuepreschool.org</u>. Be sure to visit our Facebook page and website at: <u>www.avenuepreschool.org</u>.

COMMUNITY

AWARD WINNING CHILI AND KRISPY KREME DONUTS COME TO AVENUE!!!!

The Alaska Mission Trip Team will be in the foyer the next three weeks to take orders for pints (\$5) and quarts (\$10) of the Award Winning Chili Cook-off Chili by Seth Wilcox himself!! Additionally, order forms will be available to order fresh, piping hot Krispy Kreme Donuts for \$10 a dozen. Both chili and donuts will be delivered fresh and available for pick up after church services on Palm Sunday, **April 9**th. Thank you for your support!!

ALASKA MISSION TRIP TEAM will be hosting a Fundraiser at "The Palace" in Milford on April 18th from 4pm to close. A portion of the evenings proceeds will be donated to the Mission Trip for Alaska. Coupon to follow!!!

LAST WEEK AT AVENUE

Attendance:	2016	2017
8:00	61	60
9:30	201	185
Sunday School	78	68
11:00	78	77
Thursday Service	0	5
FUSION	0	42
Total	418	437

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 4/9 ~ Palm Sunday

	Candy Sale
8:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship
9:30 a.m.	Contemporary Worship
9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
10:45 a.m.	Confirmation Class, Grier Room
11:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship
6:00 p.m.	FUSION, Wesley Room &
_	Fellowship Hall

<u>MONDAY</u> 4/10

10:30 a.m.	Hospital Aux. Board Meeting,
	Grier Room
11:00 a.m.	AA, Wesley Room
4:00 p.m.	Alzheimer's Support Group,
	Grier Room
5:00 p.m.	Girl Scout Troop 140, Heritage Room
6:00 p.m.	Cub Scouts—Tigers, Fellowship Hall
6:30 p.m.	Handbell Choir, Sanctuary
7:00 p.m.	First State Harmonizers,
	Fellowship Hall
7:00 p.m.	Boy Scouts, Wesley Room
7:00 p.m.	AA, Room 206
7:00 p.m.	Sunday School Meeting,
	Heritage Room

TUESDAY 4/11

10:00 a.m.	Sisters Bible Study, Grier Room
2:00 p.m.	4H, Wesley Room
6:00 p.m.	Brownie Troop, Nursery
6:00 p.m.	MomentUM Praise Team
	Rehearsal, Wesley Room
6:00 p.m.	Covenant Discipleship Group,
	Wendy's Office
6:15 p.m.	Mispillion Children's Choir,
	Music Room
6:30 p.m.	Cub Scouts—Bears, Fellowship Hall
7:00 p.m.	Central Delaware Chess Club,
	Room 206
7:00 p.m.	Praise Team Rehearsal,
	Sanctuary
7:00 p.m.	Finance Meeting,
	Carpenter Room

WEDNESDAY 4/12

1:30 p.m.	Knitting Group, Grier Room
3:00 p.m.	Sanctuary Choir, Sanctuary
	and Music Room
5:00 p.m.	Instrumental Rehearsal,
	Sanctuary
5:00 p.m.	Women's Emmaus Reunion,
	Room 202
6:00 p.m.	AveNotes, Music Room
6:30 p.m.	Cub Scouts—Webelos 1,
	Wesley Room
6:45 p.m.	Pride of Delmarva, Fellowship Hall

<u>THURSDAY</u> $4/13 \sim$ Holy Thursday

11:00 a.m.	AA, Wesley Room
2:30 p.m.	Women's Emmaus Reunion,
	Room 202
6:00 p.m.	Girl Scout Leaders Meeting,
	Grier Room
7:00 p.m.	Holy Thursday Service, Sanctuary

FRIDAY 4/14~ Good Friday

Church Office Closed

7:00 p.m.	Good Friday Service, Sanctuary
8:00 p.m.	AA, Wesley Room

SATURDAY 4/15

7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

<u>SUNDAY</u> $4/16 \sim Easter$

6:30 a.m.	Sunrise Service
8:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship
9:30 a.m.	Contemporary Worship
9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
11:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship

"A Dynamic Faith Community Growing in

Hope, Love and Service"