



AVENUE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Midweek

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

I don't know how many of you may have seen in the "regular, mainstream news" any reports about the increase of fake news stories that are popping up, especially on social media. Anyone with a website, blog, Facebook or Twitter account can post "news" and have it spread to the general population within hours depending on how many followers a site or account has and/or how many people like or retweet a post. The problem is that the so-called "news" does not have to be true or real. Unsuspecting readers may read something and not have any idea if it's real or not. Unfortunately too many readers are pulled into thinking the false news is true.

Such was the case recently when a man from North Carolina read online that there was a pizza place in Washington D.C. that was harboring a human traffic ring selling off young girls for the sex trade. This man got in his car with a load of weapons, drove from North Carolina to D.C., and showed up at the restaurant fully armed in the middle of the dinner rush when families from the area were enjoying a meal together.

Before he was able to ascertain whether the accusation was indeed true, he had gotten off one shot into the floor and panicked everyone in the place. He is now under arrest, the families and especially the children who were in the pizza place are traumatized, the reputation of the restaurant is tarnished forever...and guess what? There was absolutely no sex trafficking, or anything else illegal, going on there.

It turns out that the man who wrote the false news report may have been in a former relationship with the restaurant owner and things went badly between them. Coming up with a fake news story was his revenge. Basically his defense when asked about it was "prove me wrong." He went so far as to contend that when he wrote the piece he was sure the human trafficking was taking place and the pizza place "was able to clean it up" before anyone noticed.

There is little to no recourse for the restaurant owners who would have to prove that something which didn't exist actually didn't exist. Think for a minute about what would

happen if someone accused you of growing illegal drugs in your garage and then said you had gotten rid of them before the police arrived. How could you prove that something you didn't have was something you had not gotten rid of? Oh, and then it became a Facebook story.

I have a great deal of respect for true journalists who work hard to get their stories right, the facts straight and verified, and manage to report what is actually going on in the world. Their jobs just got harder considering they not only have to deal with the 24/7 news cycle that is constantly changing but now they get lumped into a category where nobody knows what to believe and what is misinformation.

I have a great aunt who is still convinced that if she sees something on the Internet it must be true. She based her vote for President on whom she thought would best be able to deal with the "alien invasion currently scheduled to occur in February." Since she saw it on the web and it's yet to come...well, "prove her wrong." I can't.

I'm never going to avoid the national news but if I have a choice than I am going straight for the good news found in scripture. Isaiah 52:7 says "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'"

And what better or more truthful news is there than the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. The angel who proclaimed the birth of Christ also called His arrival the "good news" as we read in Luke 2:10, "...fear not, for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people."

When the world gets too crazy and you are not sure which way to turn for the truth just pick up your Bible and read the best news of all. The news of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

To God be the glory forever and ever.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



From the desk of our Bishop. . .

Feast of St. Nicholas

When our children were young, we would celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas on December 6 in an unusual way. We told the children about the original saint, who lived in the fourth century in a province called “Myra” in present day Turkey. His parents both died in an epidemic when he was young, but left him with much wealth. St. Nicholas dedicated that wealth to serving the poor.



In one famous story, he learned of a man who had lost his fortune and had three daughters to support. Because of his desperation, he planned to sell them into prostitution, as he could not afford to feed them or provide them with a dowry. St. Nicholas heard of his troubles, and in the cover of night, threw gold through an open window of their home, into the stockings which hung by the window to dry. (In those days, people had one set of clothing and one pair of stockings, which they washed nightly and hung by the window to dry.) This gift of gold provided money to save the three daughters from slavery or prostitution.

To commemorate this anonymous gift-giving, we would purchase gold chocolate coins and attach an explana-

tion of St. Nicholas to the bag of “gold.” Then, under the cloak of darkness, we would drive to the homes of people we knew who had young children. We would pull the van past the home and turn off the headlights. Then the kids would run to the home, place the “gold” coins in the door, ring the doorbell, and then run like crazy to the van. We did not want to get caught, as the point of the exercise involved **anonymous** gifts. We had so much fun and only got “caught” once.

But, I also shared with the kids that selling daughters into slavery or prostitution still happens today. In the Navy, when we pulled into Subic Bay in the Philippines, we would see fathers send their young teen girls into the street to try to win a sailor’s heart. Although the girls would bring home money to support the family, they really hoped that a sailor would fall in love and marry their daughter. Then, the daughter could become a U.S. citizen and eventually bring the whole family over to the United States. It broke my heart to see these young girls and the desperation of their families.

Believe it or not, sex trafficking still takes place in the U.S., although the model has shifted from parents “selling” their daughters, to people “recruiting” young girls. (The National Trafficking Resource Center Hotline reported close to 30,000 calls and emails in 2015, but many of the cases go unreported.) These trafficking rings typically target adolescent girls, at a time when they might be experiencing an identity crisis and/or conflict with their parents. Many times, the recruiter pretends to be interested in the life of the girl, offering her “understanding” when her parents enforce boundaries. They may act like a boyfriend who cares about the girl, and use that manipulation to lure her into running away with him. Once away from their families, the recruiter shows his true colors and incorporates the girl into his sex ring, beating the girls and threatening to hurt their families if they report it. Because of the girls’ youth, they do not know how to escape.

At this time of year, we remember another young teen, named Mary, who became the mother of our Lord. As we honor her courage to say, “Let it be with me just as you have said,” may we also find the courage to speak up on behalf of these young women victims of sex trafficking. The Peninsula-Delaware Conference vision reminds us that we long to be: “Connected Christians offering the hope of Jesus Christ to today’s world.” When we stay connected to Jesus, connected to each other, and connected to our communities, we can join to together to protect our children through prevention and reporting of suspicious actions. The United Methodist Women offer a guide here: <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/ht/packet.pdf> and a list of signs of trafficking here: <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/what-we-do/service-and-advocacy/mission-focus-issues/human-trafficking/fact-sheet>. Most victims do not self-report, and statistics demonstrate that community reporting accounts for almost one-third of discovered cases.

Will you join with me to commemorate St. Nicholas and to honor Mary by fighting human trafficking? Let’s pray for the victims, remain alert for signs, and advocate for justice for these young girls. Let’s keep watch, like those shepherds long ago, and not be afraid to get involved. Someone’s life may depend on it.



Peggy A. Johnson

Holidays, Training, Partnership, Growth, & Waiting

Posted on December 5, 2016 by [Kirb](#)

It's now December and though things don't look like I had hoped they would at this point, I'm slowly learning that it doesn't mean it's a bad thing as long as I'm remaining in Christ's place for me and continuing to grow and listen to all He is calling me to. As much as I am anxious to get started full time and be able to begin this full time ministry the Lord has called me to, I'm being reminded repeatedly that to be 100% effective in ministry, you must not rush ahead of what Jesus is doing, but be willing to obediently wait for Him to move. This does not mean sitting around idly, but rather not trying to push things and then becoming disheartened when my time line doesn't appear to be lining up with His time line. I had hoped to be working full time long before now, yet I am still about \$900 in monthly partnership shy of being able to do that. Last week was a huge struggle for me, full of confusion as to why the Lord hadn't brought everything together for me to be able to go full time in December. After many tears, talking through some things, & allowing the Lord to show me there is more for me to learn through this time, I was able to come to a place over the weekend where I felt the Lord nudging me to use this time to give Him all my fears/anxieties/worries and receive freedom from them rather than just trying to manage/control/work through them. A simple shift in perspective, but a huge impact in how that plays out in real life. I know the journey in that direction will neither happen overnight or be an easy one, but it's encouraging to know the next step in my walk with Him. He is always calling me deeper into Him & the next piece of that is willingly giving up the need to control those things that aren't serving me! It's so much bigger than just submitting my life and work to His Will!

All that being said, I was approved to start training a couple days a week this month, so that hopefully in January I will be able and ready to start working full time! I'm excited that Thursday & Friday are my first days of training to start seeing what life will soon look like! Most of the details of moving have been worked out. I do have a few things left to get squared away over the next few weeks, but am very thankful that things have mostly gone smoothly & I'm pretty well settled in. I appreciate all the prayers & encouragement throughout this process! I look forward to being able to give an official start date for full time work, but am thankful for what the Lord is providing already and for how He has taken such good care of me always! It is also wonderful to realize you are surrounded by many good people & that He is providing me space & time to grown in Him, reflect on all He has done in my life, where He has brought me, what He is calling me to, & giving me time to build a network of support here as well! So many incredible things are happening, that I just need to retain the proper focus in order to keep pressing into what He has for me!

Moving through this Holiday season can always be tough. I've spent several of the holidays away from family, friends, & traditions over the last 5 years. This one will be another first & unique one as well, yet in different ways. However, I'm excited to know that I'm right where the Lord wants me & that He is using this time as a growing & learning tool for me and my life, not just allowing me to do for others as I usually do. No matter what the Holiday's mean for you, I hope you receive encouragement, blessing, & daily reminders that you are loved & cared for far beyond the earthly trappings of materialism, sadness, loss, unknowns, & any number of negative ideas. Allow this year to change you, grow you, & remind you of positive things! Focus on what you have that is everlasting, not on the temporary things you "lack" in your current situation. This is not to make light of missing loved ones or being in a tough situation, but rather to remind us that no situation is hopeless unless we choose to believe it is hopeless because it is always a choice what perspective we use to look at any situation.

Just as the Lord has made it clear for me this month of December is both preparation for the next 2 years of service with Him, as well as, a time of growth, change, & learning freedom as I choose to walk in His Will, I hope you will seek what this month should be for you! As I mentioned earlier, there is still about \$900 in monthly covenant partnerships needed before I am fully funded and allowed to start working full time. This does indeed stress me out as I have no idea where that will come from, but I also

know the Lord has been in every part of this journey & it's time to trust & believe He knows where it is coming from & that it will show up at exactly the right time (which has nothing to do with my personal desired timeline). Many things over the last few weeks have been surprising and things have shown up that were completely unexpected, more reminders that it's got nothing to do with me and everything to do with Him! During this process all glory belongs to Him as there is no way I could make it happen myself! Thank you to each and every one of you who are prayer partners, financial covenant partners, and are willing to provide additional contacts for me once I am officially working, I truly could not do this without you!

If anyone is reading this and would like additional information or would like to talk with me please reach out and let me know! I'd love to connect with anyone. I will include links to my facebook, my donation site, and my email and phone number below. Feel free to connect any way you like & be blessed!

My phone number is: 1-302-381-5995

My work email is: kschuler@extremenazarene.org

For anyone who would like to be a financial partner or explore more about Extreme Nazarene. My work website which also has the link for donations is: <https://www.extremenazarene.org/team/Schuler/> Just click on the Donate link and it will take you to CrowneOne who processes all of our donations.

Thank you all again!

Advent Taizé

The season of Advent is very special for us because it embraces us in the knowledge that we need to prepare ourselves. God is always inviting us to a deeper relationship. Advent gives us the opportunity to prepare our hearts for that relationship.

Prayer in the spirit of the Taizé Community is a meditative form of common prayer. Gathered in the presence of Christ we sing uncomplicated, repetitive songs, uncluttered by too many words, allowing the mystery of God to become tangible through the beauty of simplicity. A few words sung over and over again reinforce the meditative quality of prayer. They express a basic reality of faith that can quickly be grasped by the intellect and that gradually penetrates the whole being.

Join us for our Advent Taizé Prayer Service

Every Thursday in Advent

at Avenue Church

beginning December 1st

6:30p.m.

*What are
you looking
for?*

Advent 2016





For More Information: (302) 422-8111 Avenue Church
(302) 422-1086 Poncho & Lisa

We will be loading the wagons and busses to deliver our gifts to Milford Police Department's Toy Drive Christmas Tree. There will be caroling, Grotto Pizza, Hot Chocolate, Bon Fires, roasting marsh mellows, Santa Claus and many more Christmas surprises. Everyone is invited to come and help us celebrate the true meaning and spirit of Christmas.

Anyone wanting transportation to the Johnson's needs to meet at Avenue Church by 1:30 PM.



Lessons & CAROLS



JOIN Avenue United Methodist Church
for worship

Sunday, December 18, 2016
as we celebrate Christmas.

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

The 2016 Lessons and Carols service
will feature the Sanctuary Choir, Praise Team,
MomentUM (youth praise team)
and various instrumentalists and soloists.

20 N. Church Street ~ Milford, Delaware 19963
(302) 422-8111 ~ www.avenueumc.com

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: The family and friends of Elsie Bailey who passed away on December 4th, Ed Richardson, Leslie Wuenstel, Olive Wuesntel Holly Maloney, Dave Dawson, Diana, Charles Clendaniel, Jr., Carrie, Jerry Jackson, Laura Vaughan, Ohio State attack victims, Brazilian soccer team members in the plane crash in Columbia, All our animal friends who need love, Bob, Gerald, Christopher, the family and friends of Perry Bratcher who passed away on Saturday morning, Paul Sherwood, Sr., Barbara Vederose, a Grandmother who is moving here, traveling mercies, Tom Price, Kathy Sullivan, Patsy Sullivan, Mispillion Children's Chorus and families, Code Purple ministry here at Avenue, Pat, Darryl Jopp, Al & Virginian Schmick, A son, Families in Tennessee who have lost homes, family members, or friends in the wildfires, Carol Hubler, Rick, Children of husbands and wives who are dealing with divorce, Ann, Sally, Carolyn, Family health issues, Kirby Schuler, Jonathan and Donna Baker, for the glasses that we are packing for the people of the Congo, Jim Greenly, Colleen Dunham and April McIntyre.

Recently hospitalized: Darryl Jopp, Holly Maloney, Leslie Wuenstel, Paul Sherwood, Sr., and Cindy Horsman's mother.

Rejoice with: The woman recovering from her injuries sustained at Pumpkin Chunkin, Peter, Rowan Howard, and Bill Gustin.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: The Bailey family, in the death of Elsie, Chantel Helmick, Bobby Walls, April McIntyre, Colleen Dunham, Jim Greenly, The victims of the Oakland warehouse fire, and their families and friends, The victims of the Indonesia earthquake, Christopher, Bill Salvin and family, The Sherwood family, following the passing of Rick's father, V. Paul Sherwood, Roger, Kathryn Barnes, Donald, Dave, Holly, Family of Cindy McBroom, Brett Winkler, Louise Drake and family, Marie Desatti, The Marney family, Savannah Marney, Neal Burke, Kirsten Pearce, Joe Lear, Larry and Peggy Hughes's family in Gettysberg, The families and friends of the Brazilian soccer team that crashed in Colombia, Son's family, Band friends, Lou and Arlene, Tita's granddaughter Olivia, and Carolyn Urisat.

Recently hospitalized: Jerry Jackson

Rejoice with: Leslie Wuenstsel, Johnny, Amy and Rowan Howard, Daryl, Christopher and Lily Majoch as they enter the world and Tracy and Norm Lear as they celebrate 38 years of marriage.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Russ and Harriett Davies who will celebrate their **56th** anniversary on December 24th.

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

ADVENT WREATH

Lighting the Advent Wreath in worship is a cherished tradition at Avenue. We are recruiting 16 families to light the wreath this year. We use 'families' as a broad sense to include single parents, step families, multiple generations, and even traditional families. We are looking for volunteers for all three services on December 18th and five families for Christmas Eve (3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.). To volunteer to light the Advent Wreath, please contact Pastor Wendy Owen at wendyowen@avenueumc.com and indicate which service you attend (8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., or 11:00 a.m.) and which Sunday or Christmas Eve service you are available. You will receive back from Pastor Wendy, simple instructions for lighting, as well as the reading that accompanies the lighting. Thank you.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

GRIEF SHARE: Regardless of the circumstances, grief recovery is a difficult and painful process. If you are hurting from the loss of a loved one, please prayerfully consider attending GriefShare—a Christ-centered, biblically based support group for people grieving the loss of a loved one. We will have our last meeting on **Thursday, December 15th** from 6:30–8:30 p.m., in the Grier Room.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY class will resume its study of God's Word on **January 30, 2017** at 6:30 p.m. with Forgiveness, by Adam Hamilton. We welcome and encourage anyone interested to join our group. Please call Cheryl Pusey (302) 381-2474 or the church office to register. Materials will be ordered by mid-January.

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: We will start a new study on **January 3rd**. 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 Wednesday, **January 4th** 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 **January 9th** at 4:00 p.m. in the Grier Room.

EXPLORING FAITH BOOK CLUB meets on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Our next study is **January 15, 2017** at 12:15 p.m. in the Grier Room. 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 you faith" as these questions and others pertaining to God's will be discussed.

OUTREACH

THE MILFORD COMMUNITY PANTRY: The Milford Community Pantry is so thankful for the folks at Avenue who support us with gifts of food, gifts of time and gifts of money. The need has grown over the years and currently we feed over 100 families every month. We are okay right now with our volunteer help but I will put the call out if that changes.

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.

LAST WEEK AT AVENUE

Attendance:	2015	2016
8:00	77	81
9:30	186	198
Sunday School	101	108
11:00	79	89
Thursday Service	0	9
FUSION	0	93
Total	443	578

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 12/18

8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 6:00 p.m. FUSION, Fellowship Hall & Wesley Room

MONDAY 12/19

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 5:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 140, Heritage Room
 6:00 p.m. Cub Scouts-Tigers, Wesley Room
 6:00 p.m. Cub Scouts-Webelos 2, Room 206
 6:30 p.m. Handbell Choir, Sanctuary
 6:30 p.m. Parent's Night—Court of Honor, Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. First State Harmonizers, Music Room
 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts, Wesley Room & Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. Trustees Meeting, Heritage Room
 8:00 p.m. AA, Room 206

TUESDAY 12/20

1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Carpenter Room
 6:00 p.m. MomentUM Praise Team Rehearsal, Wesley Room
 6:00 p.m. Covenant Discipleship Group, Wendy's Office
 6:00 p.m. Pre Diabetes Program, Heritage Room
 6:15 p.m. Mispillion Children's Chorus, Music Room
 6:30 p.m. Cub Scouts—Bears & Pack Meeting Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. Central Delaware Chess Club, Room 206
 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal, Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY 12/21

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 & Fellowship Hall

THURSDAY 12/22

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 2:30 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion, Room 202
 6:30 p.m. New Worship Service, Sanctuary

FRIDAY 12/23

11:00 a.m. Wrap Around DE, Holzmuehler Room
 8:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SATURDAY 12/24 ~ Christmas Eve

3:00 p.m. AveNotes, Music Room
 3:00 p.m. Traditional Worship
 5:00 p.m. Traditional Worship
 7:00 p.m. Contemporary Worship
 7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room
 9:00 p.m. Contemporary Worship
 11:00 p.m. Traditional Worship

SUNDAY 12/25 ~ Christmas

11:00 a.m. Worship

**“A Dynamic Faith Community Growing in
 Hope, Love and Service”**