



The Midweek

Wednesday, December 21, 2016

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

This is the last midweek before Christmas and I was hoping for some incredibly inspiring words to take you into Christmas Eve but I have to admit that I have nothing. It's not that I didn't pray for something spectacular because I did. The Holy Spirit however didn't send me anything even close to amazing.

But the Spirit sure responded. Sometimes the answer is yes and sometimes it's no and then there are times when the answer is "I have something better." In this case it was a strong and obvious prompting that there was nothing I could say or write that would be more incredible, wonderful or awesome than the story that was written over 2,000 years ago. What could I say that was not already decreed by angels and heralded the arrival of the Savior of the World?

So I'll keep this short and suggest that instead of reading my words that you read the words that the Bible gives us. The Gospels of Luke and Matthew do a great job of proclaiming to us the birth narrative. Check out Luke 2: 1-20 and Matthew 1: 18 – 2:23.

Instead I'll close this edition of midweek with a sincere and heartfelt Merry Christmas, God bless, and happy new year. I love you all and I pray you have a joyous, warm and happy holiday season.

Peace and blessings,

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



From the desk of our Bishop. . .

Social Justice Sunday in the Philadelphia Area

Advent is a time of waiting and preparing and looking forward. So in these weeks prior to the celebration of Christ's birth I want to call all of you to look ahead to 2017 and particularly to the issue of social justice. The prophets who proclaimed the birth of Christ: Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Malachi, to name a few, looked forward to this coming Messiah who would bring salvation but just as importantly he would bring justice and equity. Isaiah 11:4 declares that "...with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth." Isaiah 61:1 proclaims him as one who will bring "good news to the oppressed, to bind the broken-hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners." The coming of Christ is forever connected to social justice between people and it is part of the gospel that we need to share from our pulpits. John Wesley, our founder said "there is no holiness but social holiness." (Works of John Wesley, Vol. XIV, p321)

I ask that everyone preach a social justice sermon on Sunday, January 15, 2017. This is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and his legacy of the civil rights movement can be a powerful backdrop for this sermon. There are many directions that this kind of sermon could go but I urge the preacher of the day to use this time to speak a prophetic word about the social injustices that are in the communities where you serve, in your state, in our country. Call everyone who is listening to do something about social justice as a response to the Word. Ask people to become informed, participate in the political system, speak out when people are being left out or oppressed, and do something to make the world a more just place to live. In this way we are fulfilling the ministry of Christ that we so happily herald at the Advent season but sadly we often pack it all away with the Christmas decorations as soon as the new year comes.

Recently I viewed a documentary on Netflix entitled "13" ("13" is the title because it speaks about the 13th amendment in the US Constitution that abolished slavery). It explains the history of slavery, Jim Crow, Civil Rights and mass incarceration epidemic in this country in a compelling way. Perhaps a social justice sermon could focus on the prison system. According to this documentary our country imprisons more people than any other nation on earth. We have gone from 357K prisoner in 1970 to 2,306,200 in 2014. One in three African Americans can expect to be in the criminal justice system some time in their

life and they make up 40.2% of the prison population. How have our laws and money-making enterprises created this “prison-machine”? What is a better way to live together on this planet with justice and respect? This can perhaps be an interesting topic.

Know for sure that when you preach this sermon there will be those who will not be happy with you. “Good news to the poor” means not-good-news to those in power. Truth and justice is never a cut and dry process to achieve in this world but those with money have the upper hand in controlling the process and would prefer to keep things the way they are. Preach social justice anyway. Salvation comes from Jesus Christ and with our salvation comes a new way of living in which we are all equally sisters and brothers together and our goal is to be the loving presence of Christ in this world.

[Resources for Preaching on Racial Justice](#)



Peggy A. Johnson



Eternal Gifts

The *Eternal Gifts* giving campaign wrapped up just over a month ago and we've finally received the last few covenant cards in the mail. I am pleased to report that you all have committed to sharing \$328,654 of the gifts that you have received from God with Avenue Church. To put this number in context, it is a slight increase of over last year when we accumulated pledges of almost \$315,000. Considering our pledges have historically totaled about 60% of our total gifts, it looks like we will be in good shape to meet next year's budget. Friends, this is an awesome witness to the generosity and the commitment of our members. You have promised to help continue the long tradition of the ministry of Jesus Christ here in this place.

I also wanted to include the breakdown of directed giving from our pledge cards, as an indication of where the passions in our congregation lie. There are a multitude of categories that were under \$500 which I have chosen not to include for the sake of space, but if you are curious we would be happy to share this information with you.

General Fund	\$301,334
Building Improvement	\$12,900
Music	\$7,720
Parish Purse	\$2,200
Food Pantry	\$1,200
Journey of Faith	\$1,200
Matthew Project	\$720
Volunteers In Mission (VIM)	\$600

As we enter into 2017, may God bless all that Avenue UMC is involved in and sharing with the community.

Pastor Tom

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



Come worship with us and welcome in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on this glorious, wondrous night. All services will include Silent Night with candlelight and Holy Communion.

CHRISTMAS EVE

3 p.m. Family friendly service with a child-focused sermon, organ, carols and special music by the “AveNotes”

5 p.m. Family friendly service with a child-focused sermon, organ, carols and special music

7 p.m. Contemporary service with the Praise and Worship Team

9 p.m. Contemporary service with the Praise and Worship Team

11 p.m. Traditional service with organ, choir and carols

Childcare is available at the 3:00, 5:00 and 7:00 services.

CHRISTMAS DAY

11 a.m. Blended Service with piano, acoustic guitar, and lots of music

**THE POINETTIAS ARE GIVEN TO THE
GLORY OF GOD
AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

Jim Abbott by Greg, Heather, Quinn and Morgan
Jim Abbott by Ernest & Lorraine Donovan
Lydia V. Abbott by Arlene & David Wilkerson
Herman and Edna Argo by Doug and Kathy Kutz
Grover and Orpha Ashton by The Webb Family
Elsie Bailey by Tita & Diane
Dianne Barnard by Annette & Steven Billings
Dianne Barnard by Joyce & Bob Voshell
Parents, Harry and Priscilla Betts and Sister, Ann Betts by John Betts
Marcyea & Art Bielefeldt by Jean Bielefeldt
Janet Boltz by Ronnie and Anita Joseph
Greg's Parents' John & Elizabeth Brennan by Carole & Greg Brennan
Our daughter Kimberly Ann Brennan by Carole & Greg Brennan
Carolyn A. Brown by Arlene & David Wilkerson
Lyle Bunville by Kathryn Welch
Lynn Byer by William Byer
Grandmother, Ruth Chamberlain, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
Grandfather, Paul H. Chamberlain, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
Uncle, Paul "Paulie" Chamberlain, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
Cal Clendaniel by Ginny Clendaniel and family
Cal Clendaniel by Joyce & Bob Voshell
Dale Clifton by Rick & Carol Sherwood
John Clifton by Rick & Carol Sherwood
Parents Chester and Florence Coffin by Their Family
Grace Conway by Dave & Sherrie Morris
Jennifer Crabb by Pat and Dick Crabb
My parents, Ida & Richard Crabb by Dick Crabb
Walter and Roberta Davis by Ernie and Lorraine Donovan
Jack Dickerson by John Betts
William and Annie Donovan by Ernie and Lorraine Donovan
Marcy Douglas by Marty Brereton
Tom and Irene Eastburn by Carole and Greg Brennan
Ed, Frances and Ted Fisher by The Don Fisher Family
Duane T. Fox Sr. by Connie Fox and Family
Lucius and Hazel Fox by Connie Fox
Isabelle Gill by Arlene & David Wilkerson
Lorraine Glenn by Thomas and Bonnie Glenn
Matthew T. Glenn by Thomas and Bonnie Glenn
Charles Hatfield by His Family, Sue, Children and Grandchildren
Dike and Lib Hitchens by The Hitchens Family
Richard J. Holleger Sr. by Hilda Holleger and Children

Doris & Jr. Hobbs by Arlene & David Wilkerson
 My parents, Elizabeth & John Hopkins by Pat Crabb
 Great Uncle, Dawson A. Howard, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 Bill Jackson—My Best Friend, My Husband by Ginger Jackson
 “Dad” Bill Jackson by Tom and Tanja Payton
 Dad Bill Jackson by Paige and Crystal Lynch
 Grandfather/Great Grandfather Bill Jackson by Jeremy, Jessica and Jayce Lynch
 “Pop Pop” Bill Jackson by Richard and Brynn Byerly
 “Dad” Bill Jackson by Ed and Wanda Richardson
 Pop Pop and Pop (Bill Jackson) by Adam, Chrissy, Gabe and Michael Richardson
 “Pop-Pop” Bill Jackson by Tavor and Ashlee and Leila and Kinsley
 Ralph Jump by Bernice Smith & Family
 Don H. Lewis by Tita Lewis
 My Parents by Tita Lewis
 Bud, Sally and Peter Macky by The Don Fisher Family
 Great Uncle, Rev. J. Robert Martin, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 Great Uncle, Joseph Martin, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 Great Grandparents, William Thomas and Eunice Comstock Martin, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 David M. Marvel by Linda M. Marvel
 Raymond & Edith Masten by Harry and Carolyn Humes
 Barbara Mercer by Doug and Kathy Kutz
 Lucille Mercer by Ann and Kaye
 Cindy McBroom by Joyce & Bob Voshell
 Phyl Minner by Bernice Smith & Family
 Myron Morgan by Vaughn & Dale Morgan & Family
 Earlene Morris by Dave & Sherrie Morris
 Great Grandparents, Charles Edward and Myrtle Grace Musgrove, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 Grandfather, Rev. L. Wayne Musgrove, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 John and Elizabeth Nailor by John Betts
 Edith May Nelson by F.C. Nelson
 Edith Nelson by Barbara French
 Edith Nelson by Marty Brereton
 Edith M. Nelson by Linda & Tom Spiegel
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles S. Postles, Sr. by Lloyd and Nancy Webb
 Paul Rimmer by Bonnie Glenn
 Nancy Lauckner Sereno by Mom & Dad
 Debbie Serpa by All The Peters Family
 Betty and Herman Sharp by Annette and Steve Billings
 Marion Sherwood by Rick and Carol Sherwood
 Rev. Paul Sherwood by Rick & Carol Sherwood
 Martin Smith & Kenneth Smith by Bernice Smith
 Jodie Smyth by Jo Wood
 Marjorie Steiner by Ed Steiner
 Marjorie W. Steiner by Daughters: Karen Steiner and Sandra Steiner Ball
 Marjorie W. Steiner by Graddaughters: Sarah Ball, Becky Ball and Anne Steiner
 Mark Steiner by Sisters: Karen Steiner, Sandra Steiner Ball
 Marge Steiner by Joyce & Bob Voshell
 John and Mary Steward by John Betts
 Anne Thomas by Bernice Smith & Family

Dolores Smith and Neil Moore by Borden Smith, Christopher and Ryan Moore
 Harold and Charlotte Tucker by The Hitchens Family
 Charles and Edna Mae Warren by Conways, Morgans and Smiths
 Our Daughter, Sarah Kathleen Webby by Lloyd & Nancy Webb
 Aunt Kay Webb by The Webb Family
 L. Robbins Webb by Kathryn Webb
 Mr. & Mrs. Lucius C. Webb by their family, Kathryn Webb
 Katie & C. VanNuis Wilkerson by Arlene & David Wilkerson
 Elizabeth & Charles Wilkerson by Arlene & David Wilkerson
 Burton and Hazel Willis by Connie Fox and Family
 Burton and Hazel Willis by Susan Harrell & Family
 Guy and Evelyn Winebrenner by Gene, Debbie, Matthew and Kellie Topolski
 Our Parents by John and Ginny Van Tine
 Doris Veasey by Dave & Sherrie Morris

**GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD
 AND IN HONOR OF**

Ed Bailey by Tita & Diane
 Alan Boltz by Anita and Ronnie Joseph
 Linda Breedlove by Pat Fisher
 Barbara French & Marty Brereton by F.C. Nelson
 Marian Dickerson by John Betts
 Our daughters grandchildren & great-grandkids by Ernest and Lorraine Donovan
 Kathleen Friedline by Tom & Bonnie Glenn
 My children, grandchildren and great grandchildren by Ginger Jackson
 Joe and Mary Jo Lear by John Betts
 Justin Nation Family by Jean L. Bielefeldt
 Grandmother, Betty R. Musgrove, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 Mother, Rebecca S. Musgrove, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 Ferd Nelson by Barbara French
 Katie, Bethany, Donny & Sammy by Tom & Sarsh Pasmore
 All the Peters Family by All the Peters Family
 Aunt, Elizabeth A. Schwegel, by Kevin B. Chamberlain
 Edward J. Steiner by Sandra & Barry Steiner Ball, Karen Steiner & Arand Bahl,
 Sarah & Becky Ball

**GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD
 IN LOVING MEMORY AND HONOR OF**

All Sarah Circle Members past and present by Sarah Circle

FUSION YOUTH RALLY

On **January 6th**, FUSION Student Ministries will be taking over 50 students to the 30th annual Pen-Del Youth Rally for a weekend of worship, learning, and fun in Ocean City, MD.

There are still some students that will require scholarships to help offset the cost of their trip.

Anyone wishing to give the gift of a memorable weekend for a student in need can do so by simply labeling their check or offering with the words "Youth Rally" and a scholarship will be set up.

Thank You for your continued support for the students of Milford!!



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 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 Gettysburg, 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.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: The Bailey family, the Sherwood family, the Helmick family, Roger Perry, April McIntyre, Colleen Dunham, Jim Greenly, Christopher, Bill Salvin and family, Dave Abt, Kathryn Barnes, Donald, Dave Dawson, Barbara Vederose, Ken, Emily and Kyle, Darryl Jopp, Brenda's grandmother, everyone traveling over the holidays, Layla Messick, for all relocating to warmer climates for the winter, Bev Vincent, Keith, Judy Hudson, Cindy Canevaie, Andrew, Charles Harding, the Casterline family, Kathy Sullivan, Vie Starling, Ruth and Roy German, Kathleen Stockley, family and friends of Sallie Messick, Lucille Schoop, and John Hatfield.

Recently hospitalized: Cynthia Jones and Carolyn Williams

Rejoice with: All celebrating advent with family, everyone attending small groups, Bob, everyone spending time with that "special someone" or family, Bobby Walls, Jean Hutchman, and Jerry Jackson.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

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

Jacob Hudson for receiving an appointment to the United States Naval Academy. Jacob is the grandson of Kay and Sonny Hudson, and MaryLou and Jack Sheaffer. His parents are Elle Sheaffer-Michael and Tim Hudson.

THANK YOU to all for you're thoughts and prayers at this time of the loss of my wife and friend. May she rest in peace with the Lord. Ed Bailey

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 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 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

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	99	86
9:30	284	210
Sunday School	96	96
11:00	88	108
Thursday Service	0	14
FUSION	0	55
Total	567	559

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 12/25 ~ Merry Christmas

11:00 a.m. Worship

SATURDAY 12/31 ~ New Years Eve

7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

MONDAY 12/26 ~ Church Office Closed

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room

7:00 p.m. First State Harmonizers,
Music Room

8:00 p.m. AA, Room 206

SUNDAY 1/1 ~ New Years Day

8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

TUESDAY 12/27

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

6:30p.m. Girl Scout Recruitment,
Fellowship Hall

7:00 p.m. Central Delaware Chess Club,
Room 206

7:00 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal,
Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY 12/28

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

6:00 p.m. AveNotes, Music Room

THURSDAY 12/29

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room

6:30 p.m. New Worship Service, Sanctuary

FRIDAY 12/30

8:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

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