



The Midweek

Wednesday, June 7, 2017

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

What happened to the first half of 2017? Is it just me or does this year seem to be flying by? I had such big plans for 2017 and all I would get done and I am already way behind. At this rate I will never get my storage units cleared out before the end of summer. Instead I am trying to decide what should stay and what needs to go off my 2017 to-do list.

More importantly, I am trying to figure out what God wants me to do. James 4: 13-15 says, "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

But how do we recognize what the Lord wills in our lives? Sometimes we know because there is such a strong prompting by the Spirit that it's almost impossible to ignore. But there are other times when God seems fairly quiet on a matter and the attempt to discern what the Creator wants from and for us is much more difficult.

When this happens, we may feel our stress levels going up as we try and figure it out. Questions start flying through our minds. What if I get this wrong? What if I go in the opposite direction of what God wants? If I do

something different than what He wants is God going to punish me?

What God wants most is for each of us to become more like Jesus. If we follow the teachings of Jesus and work to be His hands and feet in the world we are not going to get it wrong. So, the next time you try and figure out what the Lord wants in your life, ask yourself if it helps you follow the example of Christ. Sometimes simply changing the question can help us determine what the outcome should and will be.

And to God be the glory and honor forever.



Upcoming Meetings

- ♦ **Vacation Bible School**—June 18th—June 22nd.
- ♦ **Yard Sale Meeting** —June 20th at 1:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.





From the desk of our Conference Director

Table Sharing

As a student at Duke Divinity School, I developed a close friendship with a woman in my class, who also lived in our neighborhood. We began running together in the mornings and sharing long conversations over meals. We laughed at ourselves, wrestled with our slightly different theological perspectives, and occasionally studied together. I enjoyed our friendship.

One morning, after a year or so of friendship, she did not show up for our morning run. I saw her at school and asked if everything was okay, and she nodded curtly and dismissed me. I thought maybe she was having a bad day or needed some quiet space. However, after attempting to talk with her over the following month, she made it clear that she no longer wanted to remain friends. I asked if I had done something to hurt her or offend her, but she refused to answer and went on ignoring me.

I felt very hurt by her actions. I also felt betrayed. We had shared some vulnerable stories with each other and I no longer felt that she would honor the sacredness of those stories. And, I felt confused. What had I done? Why couldn't she give me an opportunity to fix whatever it was?

I wrestled with God in prayer over this relationship. Every morning at 5:00 a.m. before my morning run, I would pour out my heart to God. At first, my hurt feelings progressed to anger. I began to view her as a threat, an enemy. But one morning I prayed through Psalm 23. When I got to the verse which says: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies," an image came to my mind. I expected to see the Lord preparing a table for me alone, while making my enemies watch. Instead, I saw God preparing the table in the presence of my enemies because God intended for me to eat with my enemy! There waiting at the table for nourishment stood my former friend/enemy/daughter of God. Although my friend and I never captured the depth of our original relationship, I no longer viewed her as an enemy. I recognized her as a child of God, just like myself, who needed to feast at the table of the Lord.

Something powerful happens when we eat together. Jesus knew that fact, and many of his teachings and miracles take place around a table. Can you think of some examples? In John, Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding feast. In the wilderness, Jesus fed over 5000

people as they sat down in groups, at “table” together. He shared his last meal with his disciples, instituting the Lord’s Supper, and giving them his final instructions. At the table in Emmaus, Jesus blessed and broke the bread and the disciples’ eyes were opened. On the beach, eating some fish, Jesus forgave Peter and commissioned him to feed the flock. I’m sure you can think of many more examples. Gathering around the table, thanking God, blessing and sharing food: these actions create a place for relationships to deepen into the Beloved Community.



As we planned Annual Conference this year, we hoped that gathering around tables for worship and serving each other communion, gathering around tables for holy conferencing, and gathering around tables for meals would remind us that we all share in the table of the Lord. We may disagree with each other theologically or ethically or doctrinally. But, we are not enemies. Because of the community Jesus creates, we can disagree with one another and not disdain or disrespect or dismiss the other. Gathering around tables in this new venue allowed us to eat with new people, even “strangers,” hearing and sharing stories which endear us to one another, revealing our common humanity and the very image of God in each other. Several people commented that the spirit of the conversations and debates felt different, because we did share table space.

Sharing meals around tables with those we serve (such as in a soup kitchen) blurs the lines between the ones helping and the ones being helped. Suddenly, we cannot hold ourselves above “these needy people,” but instead become one with them. One of my favorite stories in response to the Black Lives Matter movement took place in Wichita, Kansas. When the Police Chief heard of an upcoming BLM protest, he requested a meeting with the organizers. After their conversations, the two groups organized a “First Steps Community Cookout,” where police officers cooked and served the local community in order to establish relationships. (You can read more about the event here: <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/07/19/486581466/police-and-black-lives-matter-hold-a-cookout-and-praise-rolls-in.>) Around tables, the two groups planted seeds of hope. No longer viewing one another as

enemies, they began to see one another and learn each other's' names. And, they began sharing ideas about how to foster a community based on mutual respect. Doesn't that sound like how the church should behave?

I've heard a saying: "Do not invite someone to church before you invite them to your table for a meal." People long for real, authentic relationships. They long to share the stories of their lives and be heard, and honored, and valued. How might God be calling you to invite someone to share a meal at your table? What steps might God be prompting your congregation to take to create places around tables, where we can learn the stories of those "outside" of our church? Sharing meals around tables with friends, strangers, and even "enemies," will get us a step closer to our vision of "Connected Christians offering the hope of Jesus Christ to today's world." Will you take that first step?

Vicki

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

From Finance Chair, Bob Berglund:

After some years of declining revenue here at Avenue Church, the last 3 years have been flat. Expenses have been cut to provide balanced budgets and year end results. In preparation for the 2017 budget, a very similar formula was followed. For the first 20 Sundays of this year budgeted income is \$251,112.91 out of a yearly budget of \$602,850.00. This does not include specially designated funds such as the Parish Purse or special Sunday collections such as for Camp Pecometh or one time donations which are made and spent for a specific purpose such as furniture or memorials. Our undesignated income is currently over 40% of our yearly expected income and expenses are in line with last year. Compared with previous years, we are well ahead of where we normally are and expect that trend to continue throughout the year. If anyone is interested in seeing more detailed information about the budget, income, or expenses, please let Pastor Tom know. The financial records of the church are always available for you to see. Transparency is important to all of us here at Avenue. Thank you to each and every person and family that helps to make mission and ministry of this church possible. It is because of God's gracious abundance and your generosity that we are doing so well. God bless you all.

233rd Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference – Down to The Rive to Pray

This year, as we went “Down to the River to Pray,” both thematically and literally at the Christina Riverfront, we experienced worship at Annual Conference in new ways. We combined one of our worship service components (the Celebration of Ministry) into the other services, so we had one worship service each day of Conference. Sitting around tables allowed us to invite more participation in worship, as members served one another communion and participated in the Service of Remembrance by dropping pebbles into bowls of water, reminding us of the impact the deceased members still have on our lives. The visual displays highlighted our theme of “Down to the River to Pray.”

In opening worship, the young people’s dance ministry from Centennial UMC in Smyrna, called “Greater Is Coming,” led the processional with ribbons. Following the dancers, a deacon—Rev. Nancy Greenwell, carried the Bible, Rev. Alexinia Seldon—a Licensed Local Pastor, carried the cross, and Isaiah Embert, a young adult lay person, carried the light. After a call to worship and prayer, we celebrated the different areas of ministry and the ordination anniversaries, with Rev. Sally Stewart and Karen Stigars-Jones reading the names. We then celebrated the retirees, with a video listing their years of service, their favorite Bible verse, favorite hymn, and last appointment. We prayed for them to find continued work for the Lord in their retirement years.

Our music for Opening Worship came under the direction of Rev. Kevin Benjamin. Following a couple of music selections, Bishop Peggy A. Johnson preached on the passage from Acts 16:13-15, where Lydia, the seller of purple cloth, went down to the river to pray. The Bishop used “PURPLE” as an acronym for her message. As a response to her message, we shared an offering for our Congo Partnership and enjoyed a dance offering by the young people from Greater Is Coming. Then, we celebrated communion, using a Great Thanksgiving written by Rev. Michael Johnson, and serving one another around our tables. This opening celebration set the tone for the work of Annual Conference.

On Tuesday evening, we worshiped at the Ordination Service. We remembered our own baptisms and celebrated the ministry of all the baptized, from which clergy arise. The Conference Registrar, Rev. Karen Dize, presented the candidates to be ordained—Rev. Eric Warner, commissioned—Rev. Ronald Bell, Jr., Rev. Blair Hall, Rev. David Ingalls, and Rev. Gary Priddy, and recognized as an Associate Member—Rev. Yvonne Paxton. The Men’s Choir from Simpson UMC ushered in the Holy Spirit through their music, especially their song, “Down to the River to Pray,” featuring Paul Ford as soloist.

Bishop Gregory Palmer, from the Ohio West Episcopal Area, brought the message, reminding us to listen to the voice of God, calling us in the night. He preached from 1 Samuel 3, the calling of Samuel while he served the priest, Eli. Bishop Palmer and Bishop Fisher assisted Bishop Johnson in the ordination. After ordaining our Elder, commissioning our Provisional Elders, and recognizing our Associate Member, we offered our gifts to the Board of Ordained Ministry Scholarship Fund. Then, we remembered Elisha receiving a double portion of Elijah’s spirit, as Rev. Dr. Bo Gordy-Stith read the passage from 2 Kings 2:6-14, and Rev. Ron Bell, Sr. passed the mantle to newly ordained Rev. Eric Warner. Bishop Johnson closed the worship with an Invitation to Candidacy for Ordained Ministry and we had two women respond to God’s call.

Finally, on Wednesday morning, we closed Annual Conference with our Service of Remembrance. After a call to worship, opening hymn, and opening prayer, we received the gift of Rev. Tina Blake, who offered her gift in dance to “How Great Thou Art.” Rev. Timothy Duffield read the names of the deceased as the bell tolled in honor of each person. We also invited people around the tables to drop a pebble in the bowl of water on their table if they had been touched by the ministry of the deceased. As the water rippled, we remembered that the person’s life continues to impact our own, even after they are gone. Rev. Ashley Jones offered her gift of music in song, after we had watched a video with pictures of the deceased. Rev. Dr. Sung Ho Bae brought the message on Paul’s thorn in the flesh, as he shared his personal story of his mother’s suffering. As the choir sang, “Thank You,” Bishop John-

son shared gifts with the families of the deceased. After a closing hymn, benediction, and sending forth, our worship and our Annual Conference, came to an end.

We hope and pray that you experienced the presence of God—our Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—in our worship at Annual Conference. We came down to the Christina River at the Chase Center Riverfront, to pray, to worship, to experience community, and to dialogue. We hope that you returned filled to overflowing with God's amazing grace and love.

In legislative action the Conference:

Resolutions that were adopted as presented:

- ♦ R4 - RESOLUTION ON DELAWARE CONFERENCE ACADEMY (UMES)
- ♦ R5 - RESOLUTION ON THE JOHNSON AMENDMENT
- ♦ R6 - RESOLUTION TO RETAIN CURRENT GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES
- ♦ R8 - RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR NATIVE AMERICANS
- ♦ R9 - RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF THE 500th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION
- ♦ R12 - RENTAL/HOUSING ALLOWANCES FOR RETIRED OR DISABLED MINISTERS OF THE PENINSULA-DELAWARE CONFERENCE
- ♦ R13 - OFFSET RATE INCREASE FOR HEALTH/DENTAL INSURANCE
- ♦ R14 - SETTING THE PRE-1982 PAST SERVICE RATE
- ♦ R15 - 2018 COVENANT FUNDING PLAN RESOLUTION

Resolutions that were voted down:

- ♦ R3 - REJECTING "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM" AS A MEANS OF DISCRIMINATION

Resolutions that were adopted with amendments:

- ♦ R7 - RESOLUTION FOR REDUCING HARM FOR LGBTQ CHILDREN AND YOUTH :

Amendment - Replace line 45- 49 with the following: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, where possible, United Methodist Churches within the Peninsula-Delaware Conference are encouraged to: a) work with local schools to support educational opportunities, best practices for creating safe spaces, and policies for reducing bullying,; and to b) support all youth, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, or who question their sexual orientation or gender identity; to the end that they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to fully embrace and live out their true identity in Jesus Christ.

- R10 - RESOLUTION RELATING TO COMPUTER NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCESS POLICY:

Replace "sign" on line 16 with acknowledge

- R11- RESOLUTION TO SET MINIMUM SALARIES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2018:

Replace "same increase on line 12 with "similar increase" and change "2.0% increase" to "2.6% increase on line 9.

Cub Scout Pack 186 Fundraiser



This is the 1st fundraiser of this type the pack has ever done. Please come out and support us with an evening of fun and enjoyment :-)

WHEN: July 17, 2017
WHERE: Avenue United Methodist Church—Fellowship Hall
20 N. Church St
Milford
TIME: Painting will start at 6:30
PRICE: \$40/pp

Please send names of attendees via an email to:
pack186@comcast.net

***Pre-pay by cash, check (written to Pack 186) or credit card.

Mail check to: Avenue United Methodist Church
attn: Carrie Huot
20 N. Church St
Milford, DE 19963

Credit Cards via: cubscoutpack186.ecwid.com



A V E N U E C H U R C H P I C N I C

JOIN US AS WE SEND-OFF OUR GRADUATING SENIORS
THE EVENT INCLUDES: GAMES, PRIZES,
LIVE MUSIC
INFLATABLES
FOOD, FELLOWSHIP AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

JUNE 11TH 5:00PM
ON THE LAWN

W W W . A V E N U E U M C . C O M

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 Milford Plant, Flower and Garden Shop at (302) 422-4961. Flowers are placed in the altar vases up by the cross.

PRAYER CONCERNS PAST WEEK: The family and friends of Jennifer Wiley, victims and families of the Manchester bombing, all our military men and women, Louie, Shirley Longaker, For the family and friends of the two men killed on the train in Portland, Oregon, Pop pop, Milford High School Softball team who is playing for the championship on Tuesday, Frances, Elfi Pann, Chip and Nancy Lee, Piraila, Our country and our president, Joyce Bonnoni, Judy, Betty, Bonnie, Theresa, John Siegrist, Dave and Sharon Dawson, For the family and friends of Olivia, Jill Gustin, April McIntyre, Dottie and Jerry Jackson, Colleen Dunham, The family and friends of Carolyn Wright, Mitchell, Edie's son and family, Howard Haverkamp, The homeless, Peggy Hughes, Christopher, Jo Wood, David, Eric Porter, Bonnie Carmine, Andrea and Julian, traveling mercies, Janice, Janet Dill, Karlyn, Diana, Kirsten Pierce, Jeanette, Sarah, Bethany, Donny, and Sammy, traveling mercies, Al, Jake, Katie and Brandon and Tim Jacoby.

Rejoice with: Helen Snell, a new graduate of Rochester College and the daughter of Rev. Adam and Susie Snell and granddaughter of Fran Jaquette and Bill Gustin.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: Jason Smith, Rebecca Dutz, Melanie Robinson, family and friends of Ronnie Messick, Haily, the victims of the London attacks, the victims of the Iranian bombings, Judy, Betty, Bonnie, Keith and family, Arlene Seitz, Ashley Wyatt, Theresa, John Siegrist and family, Dave and Sharon Dawson, April McIntyre, Colleen Dunham, Howard Haverkamp, Jo Wood, Peggy Hughes, Kirsten Pierce, Bill Salvin and team, Christopher, Brandon and Katie, family and friends of Wesley Scott, Paul, Christy Stevenson's parents, Emily and Kyle, Madiosn, Jake, Joe, everyone on the Alaska Mission trip and their families, Christopher's family, elected leaders at all levels of government, Mitchell, the residents and officials of Delaware, David, Johnny, Don Butler, Edward, Elfi Pann, Francis, Ramie, Dottie and Jerry Jackson.

Rejoice with: The six children of Compassion International who have sponsors, Yvonne Young, Ginny, the Milford High School softball team

WE EXTEND SYMPATHY TO:

The family and friends of Alan Lauckner who passed away on June 6, 2017. Al joined Avenue on March 12, 2006.

BIRTHDAY GREETING TO:

Dee Konesey will celebrate her **103rd** birthday on **June 13th**.

ANNIVERSARIES

Gene and Alva Hemshrot who will celebrate their **61st** anniversary on **June 9th**.

Howard and Louise Sipple who will celebrate their **57th** anniversary on **June 12th**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Ronald Payne was recently recognized by the Boy Scouts of America for being involved with Boy Scouts for **65 years**. Ronald is currently a leader with Boy Scout Troop 186.

WEEKLY MUSIC REHEARSALS:

♪Handbells

Resume on Monday, September 11th at 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

♪MomentUM Praise Team

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

♪Mispillion Children's Chorus

Resume on Tuesday, September 5th at 6:15 p.m., Music Room

♪Praise Team

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

♪Sanctuary Choir

Resume on Wednesday, September 6th at 3:00 p.m., Music Room

♪AveNotes

Resume on Wednesday, September 6th 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

ALASKA MISSION TRIP 2017 is scheduled for **June 10th-17th**.

WE NEED YOUR HELP FOR VBS: Please bring in paper towel and toilet paper tubes for craft project for VBS. Also, we need clear empty 2 liter bottles, tissue boxes and old ties.

FATHER'S DAY is just around the corner and we are accepting donations for carnations in loving memory or honor our fathers. Envelopes are in the pews. Carnations are \$5.00 per stem and proceeds will benefit the Parish Purse. All orders need to be placed no later than June 14th so they can be added to the bulletin for Father's Day. If you have any questions call Elaine Willey at (302) 422-8952.

UMW MISSION U: If you love to learn and study, consider attending UMW Mission u. Mission u is being held on Friday and Saturday, **July 14th and 15th**. The studies are: Spiritual Growth: *Living as a Covenant Community* and Geographical Study is *Missionary Conferences of the UMC in the US*. The Covenant Community book is great - explaining covenants in the Bible and some connections to Climate Justice. I know that Missionary study will be good. Mission u is being held in Dover at the Holiday Inn. There are brochures and registration forms on Fellowship Foyer table. Please consider going. It is kind of pricey with meals but I heard the food was excellent. You do not have to buy meals. Please let Beth Parker know if you are interested or just register yourself. **Deadline is June 23rd**.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: We will continue to meet through August with a variety of topics. Please join us at any time. Contact 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.

NEW ADULT SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY at 9:30 A.M. in the Grier Room. During the month of June we will be studying the Judges. The Book of Judges continues the history of Israel after Joshua's death. God raised up a series of national leaders called judges. Empowered by God, judges delivered the people from their enemies. The judges we will be studying in June are: Deborah and Barak; Gideon; Jephthah; and Samson. Please come any Sunday that you can.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP: The Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group will meet the **2nd Monday of each month**. The next meeting will be **June 12th** at 4:00 p.m. in the Grier Room.

WIDOW/WIDOWERS/LOST AND FOUND GROUP will resume on **September 6th** at 2:00 p.m. in the **Heritage Room**. Come join us. Contact Janice Abbott at (302) 422-1863.

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: office@avenuepreschool.org. Be sure to visit our Facebook page and website at: www.avenuepreschool.org.

The Milford Community Pantry had a slow start to the year with fewer families than last year. That trend seems to be changing and we are back to a more active stream of families so the backlog of food is now almost gone. We need cereal, we prefer the low to no sugar varieties since we are trying to train families in good food choices.

We also need someone with a pick up and daytime availability. We go to the Food Bank **ONE DAY A WEEK at the most**. We have some drivers with SUVs but there are times when we need a larger cargo area. Is the Lord nudging you to use your time and your pick up???? Call Tita Lewis 664-1321 or Diane Dolan 242-5125.

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 6/11

8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 5:00 p.m. Summer Kickoff, Sanctuary, Grier
 Room and Fellowship Hall

MONDAY 6/12

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 4:00 p.m. Alzheimer's Support Group,
 Grier Room
 7:00 p.m. 1st State Harmonizers,
 Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. AA, Room 206

TUESDAY 6/13

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, Wesley Room
 7:00 p.m. Central Delaware Chess Club,
 Room 206
 7:00 p.m. Nominations Meeting,
 Grier Room
 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal,
 Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY 6/14

9:00 a.m. District Task Force Meeting,
 Grier Room
 10:30 a.m. Diabetes Prevention Program,
 Heritage Room
 1:30 p.m. Knitting Group, Grier Room
 5:00 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion,
 Room 202

THURSDAY 6/15

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 2:30 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion,
 Room 202

FRIDAY 6/16

8:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SATURDAY 6/17

7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SUNDAY 6/18

8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 5:00 p.m. Vacation Bible School,
 Fellowship Hall

LAST WEEK AT AVENUE

Attendance:	2016	2017
8:00	70	72
9:30	167	181
Sunday School	41	47
11:00	65	69
<u>FUSION</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	343	369

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