

AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Midweek

Wednesday, August 30, 2017

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

As I am on vacation this week, I have attached the words of Heidi Hill, a friend of mine from Kansas. This is all hers but I'll be back next week. God bless you all!

About 25 years ago I finished a watercolor painting entitled, "Pause for Reflection." In the painting, on a dark blue pond, a pair of creamy white water lilies rising up from their floating pads were mirrored on the water's still surface. The painting has several layers of meanings, but the one that struck me this month has to do with making the time to review our lives: sometimes, our lives as a whole; sometimes, yearly, as we acknowledge the start of a new year, or as we observe Lent; sometimes, as we say the Lord's Prayer and reflect on "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

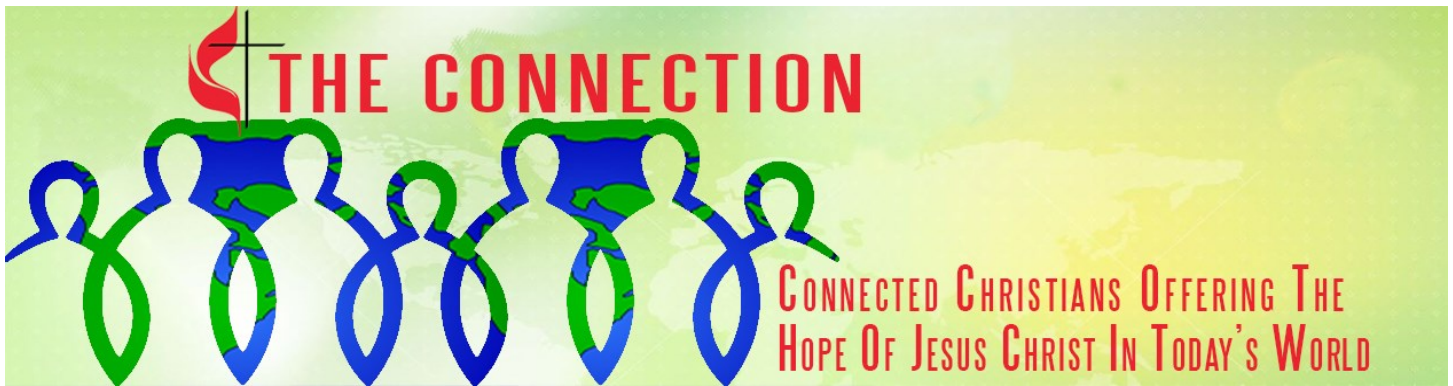
"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8 NIV). As Christians, we review our lives as an act of faith, and we rejoice to discover where God's grace has been at work. We are called to be brutally honest, as we think back on our lives, however long or short; assess the value of what we have been doing; recognize that God will forgive us for our sins; and experience God's grace in how we have lived and who we have become. Have we decided to live up to the potential that God gives each of us?

According to John's description of the reinstatement of Peter, Jesus says, ""Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go" (John 21:18 NIV). Even when we are younger, we face difficult times and challenges that are out of our control. So, what should we do?

Jesus' next words to Peter inform us, as well: "Follow me" (John 21: 19 NIV). How can we follow Jesus in these days? I think the answer lies in part in Matthew 26:36-46, when Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. We, too, can pray. We can pray constantly. We can trust God's plan for us, and accept what we cannot control or change. As a result of that trust in God, we can give over to God the control of our lives and our future, and cast out fear and anxiety. We can remember what Moses said to Joshua, "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8 (NRSV). We know that nothing exists without God. God's love is the greatest gift. Without this divinely incomprehensible gift, all our hoping and working and praying is in vain.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*" (Jude 24 KJV). *Help us, we pray, to humbly receive the loving gift of God's son, Jesus, as we uplift all on the prayer list and in our hearts for comfort, strength, courage, hope, exceeding joy and His peace.*

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



From the desk of our Conference Directory

The Hard Work of Understanding

It's official. My son, Eli, who starts his senior year at UD next week, has a girlfriend. He has been dating her for about six months now. But, he finally asked her if she would be his girlfriend, and she agreed. They had been apart all summer, so Eli didn't feel it was a given. You see, his girlfriend is from China. She attends UD also and they met, of all places, in a Spanish class last semester. As you can imagine, attending college here in the U.S., she speaks fluent English. When we met her on Eli's birthday in May, she impressed us not only with her technical grasp of the language, but also for her understanding of its nuances, such as sarcasm and humor. We've really enjoyed the couple of times that we have spent with her.

When she returned to school last week (she came back early, since she'll be serving as an RA), Eli described their time together as an adjustment period. They had "spoken" every day this summer online. But since China has a firewall to block most western websites, they had to use an app called "WeChat." She typed her message in Chinese, which Eli read in English, and vice versa. She had not spoken much English since she left last spring, and Eli had not had to pay such close attention to understand her words through her accent and cultural assumptions. He laughed about needing to use his whole self to listen to her, as he wants to understand her meaning and the emotions and motivations behind her words. Because they are in an official relationship, Eli can assign positive intent to her, even when her words do not come out correctly.

As I reflected on the effort Eli puts into this communication, I thought about how little effort we often put into understanding others. We all know our county stands divided right now on so many issues, with the latest being the removal of Confederate statues and the violence in Charlottesville. Have you attempted to listen to someone from the opposite side as you? **Just to be clear, I am not talking about neo-Nazi's, the KKK, the alt-right, or white supremacists. These groups incite violence and hatred and intimidation. We DO NOT need to listen to them spew their hatred.** But we do not need to respond in kind. Remember Dr. King's words: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." Jesus invites us to pray for them; but we do not need to listen to their hatred.

But what about people who defend the Confederate statues as "history" or defend these groups' right to free speech? Or, if you are on the other side of the conversation, what about the people who view the statues as methods of intimidation and oppression? Have we tried to listen? I have, and I confess, sometimes I feel as if they speak a foreign language. We do not see the world in the same way. We watch the same events and yet have vastly different interpretations of them. While we think we

speak the same language, we begin from completely divergent cultural assumptions, so our words do not mean the same thing. (It reminds me of that quote from “The Princess Bride:” “You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”)

To complicate matters further, many times our friendships become limited to Facebook. We do not spend time around people to whom these “issues” bring more dire consequences. And, in fact, those of us who have privilege (where the whole of society reflects our viewpoints, the color of our skin, our nationality, our values, etc.), we speak so often and so loudly that we drown out the other voices. It reminds me of someone who speaks a foreign language slowly and loudly in hopes that we understand them. Speaking a foreign language more loudly does not promote friendship and understanding.

Instead, we can learn two things from Eli’s experience. First, we need to invest time into truly listening. **Those of us with white privilege have spoken enough. Jesus invites us to listen** to the voices of those who see things differently, those who are oppressed or on the margins. These are the people Jesus hung out with when he walked the earth, and he continues to be present with the oppressed today. When we listen to people who hurt from these actions, we begin to hear not only their hearts but the heart of Jesus as well. Try putting yourself in their shoes, and attempt to see the world from their point of view. Listen not only to the words, but also to the hurt and emotions behind the words. Suspend judgement and the need to defend yourself and just listen. People long to be heard. Can we give that gift to others and begin to understand?

Secondly, once we listen to oppressed people, we form friendships and relationships with them. Suddenly, it is no longer about “us” and “them,” but about “we, the people of God.” As we deepen relationships, we learn to assign positive intents behind words and actions, instead of questioning people’s motives. **That simple step alone—assuming positive intent—can squelch many arguments** before they arise. If I assume that you intended good out of something, even if it did not come across that way, I will take the time to ask for clarification to understand. When I assume negative motives, I dismiss any misunderstandings as “attacks” or intentional spite. Can we trust God enough to give up our need to be right so that we might gain a greater understanding of our neighbor?

Maybe these steps feel overwhelming to us. Yet, our society needs us to lead to a new way of community. Our society knows how to hate, but true acts of love come rarely. When we love with the sacrificial love of Jesus, people notice. When we take the time to listen and form friendships, people notice. When we assume positive intent, people notice. Then, we can point to God who makes all things possible through the hope of Jesus Christ. And, we can be about our mission of Cultivating Christ communities through our CALL—Connecting, Acting, Leading, and Loving...until one day, the world will know.

Blessings on the journey,

Vicki

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- * Leadership Team Meeting—**Sept. 5th** at 7:00 p.m. in Carpenter Room
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- * Finance Comm. Meeting—**Sept. 12th** at 7:00 p.m. in Carpenter Room
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- * Trustees Meeting—**Sept. 18th** at 7:00 p.m. in Grier Room
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- * SPRC Meeting—**Sept. 21st** at 7:00 p.m. in HolzmueLLer Room



AVENUE CHURCH FALL KICKOFF PICNIC ON SEPTEMBER 10th Event Open to the Community

Avenue Church invites and welcomes the community to join its members and staff for the **2017 Fall Kickoff**. This annual event includes a church picnic, portable laser tag course, live music and games. **It is free to everyone.**

The event will take place rain or shine on the front lawn of the church beginning at 5:00 pm. Sponsored by the Fusion Student Ministry, the Fall Kickoff is the first activity of the new school year for the youth of the church. Members of the church and community, along with visitors to the program are invited to come out to support the students as they continue along their spiritual journey of discovery.

For more information about the Fall Kickoff and/or the Fusion Student Ministry, contact Cliff McCall, Youth Pastor at Avenue Church. (302) 422-8111.



The First State Harmonizers Presents an "A Cappella Extravaganza VI!"



The *First State Harmonizers*, again, welcomes the *PRIDE of DelMarVa*, a 30-man chorus made up of some of the best barbershop harmony singers in the Delmarva Peninsula. This a cappella presentation also includes the Ocean Bay Sweet Adaline chorus plus talented quartets who will entertain you with their own performances!

The *First State Harmonizers*, directed by Sharon Ehrisman will start the afternoon's show performing some of the chorus's most requested songs and debut a number of new songs they've added to their repertoire.

After Intermission, during which several door prizes will be awarded, the *Pride of DelMarVa*, directed by Glenn Phillips, will take the stage. We are very excited to present this exciting chorus to our followers! **DON'T MISS THIS SHOW!**

SEPTEMBER 10, 2017 - 2:00 p.m. - Milford Senior Center

111 Park Avenue, Milford, DE

(over-flow parking next door at Arena's Restaurant)

General Admission: \$ 13.00!

For Show Tickets: Call - (302) 422-8620 or (302) 382-1961

Or order online at: www.firststateharmonizers.com

This organization is supported, in part, by a grant from the [Delaware Division of the Arts](#), a state agency, in partnership with the [National Endowment for the Arts](#). The Division promotes Delaware arts events on DelawareScene.com.

Delaware Division of the **Arts**

THIS SEPTEMBER AT AVENUE
The Mispillion Children's Chorus

All students AGES 6-12 years old
are invited to begin attending
rehearsals here at Avenue Church

SEPTEMBER 5th
Tuesday evenings 6:15-7:15 p.m.

Also available at the original rehearsal location:
The Milford Boys & Girls Club
Tuesday afternoons 4:30-5:30 p.m.

NO AUDITIONS!

NO FEES!

NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!

*Just a commitment from parents and
guardians that students attend regularly
and participate in performances.*



QUESTIONS

themispillionchildrenschorus@gmail.com

Kevin B. Chamberlain (302) 422-8111

Sharon Starling (302) 422-2785

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 Colleen Allison, the family and friends of Heather Heyer, all those who do not know God, Tray, J.R. Griffin, Robert Bergez, Christine Benton, Bill and Jill Gustin, Ashley Bonnoni, all students heading back to college or starting their freshman year, our nation, our elected leaders, the citizens of this country, the victims and their families who were attacked in Spain and Finland, Howard Haverkamp, Manny, Joyce's father, Mrs. Bowe, Cheryl, Christopher, Lorraine Donovan, Dave and Sharon Dawson, Laura, Karen, Jane Dove, Ronda Ramsburg, April McIntyre, Colleen Dunham, Charlie Harding, Bill Gaskill and family, all students and teachers going back to school soon, Bill Salvin and family, Colton, Pastor Wendy, the millions of travelers on the road after the eclipse, the pastors and laity traveling to South Korea at the end of September, the family and friends of those killed on the U.S.S. McCain.

Rejoice with: That we can worship freely and on the marriage of Faye and Bill Byer.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: All those affected by Hurricane Harvey, Those unloved in the K9 Mission Rescue in Texas, Family in Victoria, Texas, Bonnie Walls, Lisa Griffin, Steve Sipple, The Gottschalk family, For Linda and Allen Hannah and family, Ella, Michelle and family, Edie Gehlert, Family of Ennis and Ditto, Family of Wayne Sullivan, Bill and Jill Gustin, For the family and friends of the sailors killed on the U.S.S. McCain, For our nation, elected leaders and all citizens to find ways to move forward as one nation under God, Selling of a house and finding a new home because of relocation, For the family of Maggie Crouch, Vaughn Crouch, Howard Haverkamp, Christopher, Lorraine Donovan, Dave and Sharon Dawson, Laura, Karen, Jane Dove, April McIntyre, Colleen Dunham, Charlie Harding, Bill Gaskill and family, Bill Salvin and family, For the 26 pastors and laity preparing to travel with the Dover District on the spiritual pilgrimage to Korea in September, For the additional service men and women being sent to Afghanistan, Elizabeth All of our students, teachers, administrators, and parents, All of our Scouts as they begin a new Scout year, Someone struggling with the need for a job, Cheryl and Mrs. Bowe.

Rejoice with: With everyone grateful for all of God's blessings, Larry Brittingham, Lillie Brittingham, Kevin Bowers who is retiring from ministry at First Presbyterian Church here in Milford.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO:

Dot Sophos who will celebrate her **94th** birthday on **September 1st**.

Ferd Nelson who will celebrate his **96th** birthday on **September 6th**.

Lida Wells who will celebrate her **94th** birthday on **September 8th**.

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

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: We will continue our study -“10 Questions Christians Ask” by David Jeremiah. 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 will meet on **September 5th** at 10:00 a.m. in the Grier Room. **Sister Bible Study will begin the study of MOSES—In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet starting September 19th.**

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY: This 9 week LIFE CHANGING CLASS will continue on **Tuesday, September 5th from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Grier Room.** Dave Ramsey will be giving us a total money makeover via DVD. He will teach and train us to manage our resources in a godly manner. Following the video, a volunteer will host a small group discussion. This is where true accountability and behavior changes occur. The group takes the “baby steps” needed to walk them to financial peace. If you have any questions, please contact Ken or Melissa Wilcox at (302) 424-4209 or kmbsw@netzero.net.

SUNSHINE ADULT BIBLE STUDY: The Sunshine Bible Class, our only Adult Sunday School class, will begin meeting **September 10th** in the Grier Room at 9:30 AM. Our studies for September are Signs of God's Covenants. These signs are September 10th, "Circumcision;" September 17th, "Sabbath Observance;" and September 24th, "Spirit-Filled Heart." Come and join the Class in these exciting studies.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP: The Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group will meet the **2nd Monday of each month**. The next meeting will be **September 11th** at 4:00 p.m. in the Grier Room

WIDOW/WIDOWERS/LOST AND FOUND GROUP will resume on **September 6th** at 11:00 a.m. in the **Grier Room**. Come join us. Contact Janice Abbott at (302) 422-1863.

OUTREACH

MILFORD COMMUNITY PANTRY: The Milford Community Pantry through its many volunteers fed over 30 families Tuesday night. The food was provided by Food Bank of Delaware and included many special treats. Diane & Tita want to give special thanks to Dave & Linda Sockrider, Janet & Myron Terebecki, Peggy & Larry Hughes, Judy & Glenn Struck, Tom Glenn and two folks from Trinity UM who were here to observe and help us do our first Mobile Pantry. The driver of the truck said he had never seen such a great group of, volunteers.....
YEAH AUMC.

On the first Tuesday of each month at 1p.m. you will see a Food Bank truck in our parking lot. This is a Food Bank initiative; our only involvement is to give them permission to use our parking lot. This is the monthly Senior Feeding Program. If you are interested or know of someone who could benefit from this program contact the Food Bank or call 211.

As far as the inventory of the Milford Community Pantry; we are low on **toilet tissue** again... all donations are appreciated.

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.

AVENUE PRESCHOOL-NEW OFFER: Children who will turn 3 before December 31, 2017 are now able to register for our beginners program. They will be in our 2 day program that is on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Children must be potty-trained before the first day of school. Children in our preschool program are actively involved in a curriculum that stresses the social, emotional, physical and academic aspects of their development. If you have any questions or would like to enroll you child please contact Paula Yeich at (302) 422-8775.

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 9/3 ~ Communion

8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship,
 Baptism
 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

MONDAY 9/4 ~ Church Office Closed

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 7:00 p.m. 1st State Harmonizers,
 Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. AA, Room 206

TUESDAY 9/5

9:30 a.m. Archives Meeting,
 Archives Room
 10:00 a.m. Sister's Bible Study,
 Grier Room
 1:00 p.m. UMW Board Meeting,
 Room 207
 1:30 p.m. Dover District Pilgrimage
 Meeting, Conference Room
 6:00 p.m. MomentUM, Wesley Room
 6:15 p.m. Mispillion Children's Chorus,
 Music Room
 7:00 p.m. Central Delaware Chess Club,
 Room 206
 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal,
 Sanctuary
 7:00 p.m. Financial Peace University,
 Grier Room
 7:00 p.m. Leadership Team Meeting,
 Carpenter Room

WEDNESDAY 9/6

10:30 a.m. Diabetes Prevention Program,
 Heritage Room
 11:00 a.m. Widow/Widowers Meeting,
 Grier Room
 1:30 p.m. Knitting Group, Grier Room
 3:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir, Music Room
 5:00 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion,
 Room 202
 6:00 p.m. AveNotes, Sanctuary
 6:30 p.m. Arrow of Light Den Meeting,
 Wesley Room
 6:30 p.m. Pride of Delmarva,
 Fellowship Hall

THURSDAY 9/7

8:30 a.m. Men's Reunion Group,
 Conference Room
 8:30 a.m. Preschool Meet the Teacher,
 Fellowship Hall
 11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 2:30 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion,
 Room 202
 6:00 p.m. Avenue Fantasy Football Draft,
 Fellowship Hall
 6:30 p.m. Bear Den Meeting,
 Wesley Room

FRIDAY 9/8

8:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SATURDAY 9/9

7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SUNDAY 9/10

8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 5:00 p.m. Fall Kickoff

LAST WEEK AT AVENUE

Attendance:	2016	2017
8:00	61	68
9:30	174	164
Sunday School	0	29
11:00	69	49
FUSION	0	0
Total	304	310