



The Midweek

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

I can't believe the Eagles are in the Super Bowl. I grew up in the Philadelphia area, living in Doylestown, PA from the time I was six months old until I left for college. I still consider Doylestown to be my home town. But over those years, my family watched as the Philadelphia teams – Eagles, Phillies, 76ers, and Flyers would all-too-often come so close to winning the championship, just to dash our hopes at the very last minute. The last championship for the Phillies was in 2008 (one of two), for the 76ers was in 1983 (one of three), and for the Flyers was in 1975 (one of two). The Eagles made two Super Bowl appearances, in 1980 and 2004, but have never won.

Philadelphia is long overdue for a championship in any sport. As much as my desire is for Philadelphia to win, I'm not going to pray they do. I will pray that it's a good, clean, safe game and nobody gets hurt. I will pray that the fans of the winning team don't do anything stupid after the game (especially necessary, I believe, in the case of a Philadelphia win). I will pray that the level of spousal abuse goes down to zero as that is the day of the year when more assault takes place than any other. But when it comes to praying for the win, I will only pray that the teams play to their level of preparation.

Praying is not a miraculous substitution for preparation. It would not have gotten me an "A" in seminary if I had only prepared at the "C" level. It would

not have landed me on the varsity tennis team if I was only prepared to play at the junior varsity level. And it will not hand the Eagles a win if they are not prepared to take on the New England Patriots and Tom Brady.

However, if the Eagles prepared harder, better, faster and were more ready to take on their opponents than the Patriots are to take on the Eagles, than that prayer will reflect on the performance of the team.

Normally I would add scripture to my article but no matter how hard I looked there were no biblical verses about the Super Bowl. (I'm open to suggestions if anyone has an idea.)

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 style with a large, sweeping initial 'P' and a long, trailing flourish at the end.



From the desk of our Conference Director

Lost and Found

By Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

Recently over dinner with our son, Eli, and his girlfriend, we told stories about being lost. One of the stories we recalled took place at Dorney Park. We had gone to the amusement and water park with family friends, and chose to go to the water park during the heat of the day. Eli, about nine years old at the time, got separated from us. Although our kids could swim, the crowded conditions added a sense of panic when we realized his absence. We began searching the water slides we had recently ridden, and the wave pool, where Eli had wanted to go. We thought we had retraced all of our steps. Then, we went back to a first aid station, which we had passed on entering the park. There sat Eli, calm, cool, and collected. We rejoiced to have found him and asked him how he felt.

As we were recalling the story, he expanded on how he felt that day. He said, “I went back to a place which was familiar, a place I knew. And, I waited patiently. I had no fear at all. I KNEW you would find me. I just had to stay put.” As I listened to his words this time around, I heard the very simple and yet profound trust in us, as his parents, who he knew would find him.

Since that dinner, I have meditated on that simple trust as an invitation to go deeper with God and remind ourselves that we are not lost BECAUSE God will find us. If God knows where we are, how can we be lost? Psalm 139:7-12 reminds us that we cannot escape from God’s loving presence: “Where could I go to get away from your spirit? Where could I go to escape your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there. If I went down to the grave, you would be there too! If I could fly on the wings of dawn, stopping to rest only on the far side of the ocean—even there your hand would guide me; even there your strong hand would hold me tight! If I said, ‘The darkness will definitely hide me; the light will become night around me,’ even then the darkness isn’t too

dark for you! Nighttime would shine bright as day, because darkness is the same as light to you!” We can never be lost where God cannot find us!

What amazing grace to us today! We can easily give in to feelings of being lost. Our society seems to have lost its way, when we resort to name-calling on social media instead of listening to understand differences of opinion. Our schools seem to have lost their way, when we focus on punitive rather than rehabilitative means of addressing inequities and school violence. Our communities seem to have lost their way, when we choose to live in neighborhoods with people who agree with us, rather than getting to know someone different. And, our church has lost its way, when we would rather cause congregations to split apart along theological perspectives than learn to live together with our differences. Our church has lost its way, when we would rather cater to those within our doors than get to know and serve the neighbors outside of our doors. Our church has lost its way, when the things we used to do to “bring people in” just do not work anymore. We can very easily feel lost today.

Instead of running from place to place in our “lost-ness,” perhaps we should follow Eli’s example. Let’s go back to a place where we know where we are. Let’s go back to a “first aid” station and wait there for God to find us. What do we know for sure? We know that God knows us better than we know ourselves. (Psalm 139.) We know that God’s love goes deeper than we can possibly imagine. (Ephesians 3:17-19.) We know that Jesus came to reveal God’s glory to us, so that we could become one with them and so that the world would believe in Jesus. (John 1:14-18 and John 17:21.) We know that Jesus offered his life for us, so that we would not be separated from God, but would be born again. (John 3:16-17.) We know that the Holy Spirit lives in us and therefore we do not belong to ourselves. (1 Corinthians 6:19.) We know that God will always seek us out, just as God seeks out every lost sheep, and that God will find us. (Luke 15.) When we return to these “places” that we know, we find it easier to trust that God will find us. We cannot escape from God’s love in Jesus Christ.

So, if you and/or your congregation feel a little lost as we peer into the future, go back to a place where you know, and wait. God will find you there. God will never leave or abandon us. (Deuteronomy 31:6.) Once God finds us, may we have the courage to follow the Good Shepherd as he seeks for others who have lost their way.

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.

END OF THE YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS will available this Sunday on the Foyer table.

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 Louise Gill, family and friends of Jean Chidzak, Howard Sipple, Bill Medhurst, Charlie Fleetwood, Patrick Helmick, Luise Combs, Vicki Mulholland, Raechel Pfier, Stephen Parson, Christopher, Craig, Bernadette Drodz, Barry Grote, all the homeless in the world, Kirsten Pearce, Lorraine Donovan, Lisa Shaw, Travis and Sarah Hughes, Gary and Marti Seal, all traveling, Judy Brown, all Code Purple guests and volunteers, Karen Williams, world peace, Bill and Jill Gustin, everyone impacted by the government shutdown, Mason Lockhart, Karen, Bonnie Carmine, and Lynn Catts Lee.

Recently hospitalized: Dick Crabb, and Jo Wood.

Rejoice with: Tita Lewis and Diane Dolan, Leon Tschandre, Donny Hopkins, Jackson Wilkins, and Matthew Lewis .

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: Bill & Julia Creasey and family, Family and friends of Susan DelleDonne, Family and friends of Lisa Wyatt, Howard Sipple, Jo Wood, Charlie Fleetwood, Dale Cawby, Karen Haug, Kaye Green, Christopher, Stephen Parson, Craig, Kirsten Pearce, All Code Purple guests and volunteers, Karen Williams, World Peace, Bill and Jill Gustin, Colleen Dunham, Pat Murray, Family and friends of George Parsons who passed away 20 years ago this week, Pat Lilly, Curtis Griffith, Bonnie Carmine, John Steward, Bobby Bergez's dad, Richard, and upcoming Boys' and Girls' Chrysalis Weekends.

Recently hospitalized: Dick Crabb and Shirley Jester.

Rejoice with: Tita Lewis and Diane Dolan, being named Lay Laureate for their work with the Food Pantry, Praise God for each new day, Praise God for our outside greeter teams, inside greeters and ushers, and those who help every Sunday with coffee and hospitality and Praise God for those who show God's love every day.

WEEKLY MUSIC REHEARSALS:

♯Handbells

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

♪MomentUM Praise Team

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

♪Misillion 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.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Gilbert and Joan Emory who will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on **January 31st**.

UPCOMING

VIM MEETING: On Sunday, **February 11th at 12:30 p.m.** we will be meeting about our upcoming VIM Florida trip. We will be meeting in the Grier Room.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION: Everyone interested in becoming a member of Avenue Church is encouraged to attend the next New Member Orientation on **Sunday, February 11th from 12:30 -1:30 p.m.** We will meet in the Carpenter Room where you will get to know the Pastors better and receive an orientation on the heritage, values, mission, and vision of both The United Methodist Church and Avenue. If you would like to attend, please email or call the church office at churchoffice@avenueumc.com or (302) 422-8111.

THE 40-DAY PRAYER CHALLENGE

Starting on February 14th, the Avenue staff invites everyone to join in the 40-day prayer challenge through the season of Lent. We will be using the book *Draw the Circle: The 40 Day Prayer Challenge* by Mark Batterson. There will be optional opportunities to meet periodically to pray and discuss our experience reading the book. There will be various Bible Studies and worship services throughout the entire season. The book is available at church and can be picked up for a suggested donation of \$10. It's also available for Kindle and other digital platforms if you would prefer. We are also looking forward to a 40-day prayer vigil. Signup sheets will be available closer to Lent. If you have any questions or would like more information about Bibles Studies or worship times, please call the church office at 422-8111.

A WORD ABOUT GREEN PARAMENTS

Why Green?

Green symbolizes the promise of new life. It is used during Ordinary Time, a period where there is no special season. This includes the period between Epiphany and Lent, as well as the season between Pentecost and Advent. We will be using green paraments starting this Sunday

until Ash Wednesday.

What do the symbols represent?

The three-petaled arms of the fleur-de-lis crosses are symbols of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The crown motif represents Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is our heavenly leader or king.

UNITED METHODIST MEN (UMM) are proud to serve their third Pancake Breakfast of the year on **February 11, 2018**. Pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, orange juice, coffee and tea will be **served immediately after all three services. A free-will offering will be accepted.** Funds from this meal will help provide a Boy Scout college scholarship to a high school graduate from Troop #186. Other mission projects will also be funded. Join us for a most excellent breakfast and fellowship.

Avenue will be hosting the **DOVER DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING** classes on **February 24th from 8:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** If you would like to learn more about the following committees or ministries please contact the church office.

Staff /Parish Relations

Lay Leaders

Trustees

Finance

Nominations and Leadership Development

Evangelism

MissionInsite

Worship

Prison Outreach

Race Reconciliation

Connectional Giving for Mission

Children's Ministry

Prayer and Healing Ministries

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

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

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: We will continue our study *Is This The End* 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 in the Grier Room at 10:00 a.m on **February 6th** .

WEDNESDAY DISCIPLE CLASS meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Holzmueller Room. On **January 31st** we will continue exploring the Bible. To register, please call Josh Willey at (302) 422-8952.

EXPLORING FAITH BOOK will meet on **February 18, 2018** at 12:15 p.m. in the Grier Room. We shall continue our study of the "Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis by looking at

letters 21 through 31.

SUNSHINE BIBLE STUDY: During the month of February the Sunshine Bible Class will be studying "Self-Controlled, Upright, and Godly Faith." The lesson on February 4th is "Faith without Works is Dead" based on James 2:14-26; February 11th, "A Disciplined Faith" based on James 3:1-12; February 18th, "Faithful Disciples" based on Acts 9:36-43; and February 25th, "The Good Fight of Faith" based on I Timothy 6:11-21. The Sunshine Bible Class meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Grier Room. Please come and join us.

KNITTING GROUP: We are currently having a reprieve in the weather, but it will change. The Code Purple and the homeless families in our community need scarves to ward off the chill. Some of Avenue's knitters have donated yarn and started several scarves using very basic garter stitch, but knitters are needed to finish each one. Will you volunteer to complete one? The "kits" will be in the Church office for pick up and return the finished product.

UMW THANK YOU to everyone that came out to the *Hands-on Mission* work day last Saturday morning, January 28th. So many people contributed items and helped pack the 180 or so To-Go bags for Code Purple guests, UMCOR School and Health kits, Crisis Kits for the Crisis House and helped make Avenue cards of cheer. The hot dogs, chips and cupcakes were a wonderful treat and the clean-up crew was terrific. THANK YOU, the fellowship was wonderful and new faces made it more special. We will do it again later in the spring or summer with other recipients in mind. Faith with action can make a difference.

OUTREACH

AVENUE PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION FOR THE 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR. Registration is ongoing for a limited number of spots for the 2017-18 school year, which is the preschool's 50th year providing early education services in the community. To be eligible, a child must be at least 36-months old on or before August 31st, unless entering our new "Young Beginners" program--see next section for those details. Registration must be done in person. Contact the Preschool Director, Paula Yeich, and 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 after August 31st but 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. For further information please see the contact details in the Avenue Preschool section above.

CODE PURPLE

Greetings Friends! Our winter has certainly arrived and with the frigid temperatures, our Code Purple Sussex County shelter here at Avenue UMC has served 36 men so far this season. We have averaged 12-14 recently and we have been blessed with the support of community members and our church family. You may notice, we have placed a chalkboard in

the lobby to note specific needs, as we discover shortages in supplies throughout the week. We are so grateful for the rapid response to a previous request for jeans and sweat pants.

We also invite you to join us in fellowship any evening. 7:00 -8:30 is a great time to come and play games, share testimony, listen with an open heart to another man's story, and be a loving presence during this difficult time in our guests' journeys.

COMMUNITY

MILFORD COMMUNITY PANTRY: We are in need of **cereal** (not pre-sweetened please). Thank You!

LAST WEEK AT AVENUE

Attendance:	2017	2018
8:00	60	71
9:30	193	125
Sunday School	80	68
11:00	83	59
<u>FUSION</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>56</u>
Total	470	379

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 2/4 ~ Communion

- 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Music Room
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
- 3:00 p.m. Explaining Christianity with Dan Nelson, Fellowship Hall
- 3:30 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 272 Meeting, Heritage Room
- 6:00 p.m. FUSION, Fellowship Hall and Wesley Room

MONDAY 2/5

- 9:00 a.m. Hospital Auxiliary Meeting, Grier Room
- 11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
- 6:30 p.m. Handbell Choir, Music Room
- 6:30 p.m. Wolf Den Meeting, Holzmueller Room
- 7:00 p.m. 1st State Harmonizers, Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Room 206
- 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts, Wesley Room

TUESDAY 2/6

- 9:30 a.m. Archives Meeting, Archives Room
- 10:00 a.m. Sister's Bible Study, Grier Room
- 6:00 p.m. MomentUM, Wesley Room
- 6:30 p.m. Mispillion Children's Chorus, Music Room
- 6:30 p.m. Webelos Den, Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Central Delaware Chess Club, Room 206
- 7:00 p.m. Leadership Team Meeting, Carpenter Room
- 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal, Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY 2/7

- 10:00 a.m. Diabetes Prevention Program, Heritage 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, Music Room
- 6:00 p.m. Civil Air Patrol, Grier Room
- 6:30 p.m. Arrow of Light Den Meeting, Wesley Room
- 6:30 p.m. Pride of Delmarva, Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Disciple 1 Class, Holzmueller Room

THURSDAY 2/8

- 8:30 a.m. Men's Reunion Group,
- 11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
- 2:30 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion, Room 202
- 6:30 p.m. Committee Meeting, Grier Room

FRIDAY 2/9

- 8:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SATURDAY 2/10

- 1:00 p.m. Eagle Scout Ceremony (Maul), Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SUNDAY 2/11~ Pancake Breakfast

- 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Music Room
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
- 12:30 p.m. New Member Orientation, Carpenter Room
- 12:30 p.m. VIM Meeting, Grier Room
- 3:00 p.m. Explaining Christianity with Dan Nelson, Fellowship Hall
- 4:30 p.m. Confirmation Class, Grier Room
- 6:00 p.m. FUSION, Fellowship Hall and Wesley Room