



The Midweek

Wednesday, July 10, 2019

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

Once again, my friend Pastor Heidi said it better than I ever could. As we are dealing with all the changes in Avenue Church, wondering what is to come next, we really only need to remember that God is in control and we can find peace. To God be the glory for all time, forever and ever.

It was a blessing to live in Flint Hills country for almost 20 years: good people; beautiful prairie scenery; sunrises and sunsets of wonder; a roaring quiet to be appreciated. It has been almost a year since we moved back to Kansas. Last year we tore up the lawn and gardens to install drains, replace sprinklers, establish garden beds and build a terraced garden.

This year, drawing from prairie memories, I planted a prairie/settler's garden in the upper terrace. After the last frost lifted from the prepared soil, I planted three peonies to represent settlers (in 1996, there were beautiful peonies next to the old corral at our prairie home), and then threw a small mixture of wildflower seeds hither and thither on the bare soil and waited, and waited, and waited. Slowly, slowly, a green fuzz appeared. Some sprouts were recognizable; most seemed like mystery plants. Were they weeds? After some time, I realized that my little six-foot garden was a mere microcosm of acres of native grassland after the spring burn. Slowly, slowly, the fuzz became plants six inches tall, then a foot, then three feet, buds forming, and reaching for the sun.

Like the prairie grasses, a single plant does not do well, but together, they can bend and sway with the breeze, and work together to break up the driving rains. Each morning, the sun wakens the day's blooms. In June, white flowers were the first to bloom, then orange poppies, then blue larkspur, then red poppies, today the orange-petalled black-eyed susans have joined the dance. Come Winter, the ground will be bare again and the flowers but a memory. The seeds and the peony tubers, however, will survive and warm again to Spring's sunlight and rain.

This growing season made me think of all the cycles of beginnings and endings we have in our

lives. Have you thought about how many times an ending is really a beginning? As a student, sometimes, we long for the end of the school year, so that we can begin our break. We begin a new job; we change jobs; we retire – endings and beginnings. Some parts of our lives are like the bare earth or the prairie after a burn, but we can take hope in knowing that from the seeds or roots something surely will grow. When we read the beautiful poetry of the first five verses of John, we are uplifted. We come face to face with indescribable greatness. This passage touches our souls, and we know the truth of it. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:1-5).

Before the beginning, there was God. God is always. God is with us always: shining in all the darknesses of our lives; bringing life and hope to all our burnt pastures; healing our wounds; overcoming our griefs; comforting us in despair; pouring lovingkindness into our hearts when we pray.

The book of Lamentations is full of anguish and misery, but the writer also expresses an unsurpassed hopefulness. “This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:21-23). Like this writer, we remember times of answered prayer when the light shined through a seemingly impossible circumstance.

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

I would like to thank Pastor Wendy for her visit when I was in the hospital. And I would like to express my appreciation to all those in my church family for lifting my name up in prayer during my recent illness and recovery.

Appreciatively,

Kay McFadden



From the desk of the Director of Connectional Ministries . . .

Unleashed

By Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

We recently watched the live action version of *Aladdin*. I loved the part where Aladdin set the Genie free with his final wish. I felt the release in my body as I watched the handcuffs fall off. All of us can relate to an experience of being set free—of seeing the strings which keep us subservient severed and sensing the immense change taking place. The Genie then chose attachments to others, in particular his wife and later children. What a difference exists between chosen and forced ties that bind!

Of course, in the movie, other transformations take place as well. Aladdin changes from a young man insecure in his identity, basing it solely on how society defined him as a “street rat,” to a man who appreciates his inward worth. Princess Jasmine changes, too. In the beginning of the movie, we get glimpses into her strength of character, as she reads and learns and gets to know the people of her realm. But, people in power try to shut out her voice, particularly Jafar. She sings a portion of a song declaring that she will not be silent. However, the song cuts off early. By the end of the movie, however, she finds her strength and her voice. She calls on those who know right from wrong to do right and not just follow the law blindly. She then sings the whole song (you can find the song [here](#)), celebrating the boldness of her voice and actions:

“I won't be silenced
You can't keep me quiet
Won't tremble when you try it
All I know is I won't go speechless
Speechless
Let the storm in
I cannot be broken
No, I won't live unspoken
'Cause I know that I won't go speechless.”

I found great comfort in this song celebrating female strength. I share the frustrations of my sisters as men often cut us off when we speak or dismiss our comments and concerns or even try to take credit for our ideas. Additionally, we have been socialized to listen with empathy, which sometimes means we remain silent even when we have valuable input to offer. The socialization of empathy can cause us to avoid making waves with our words, because we want to keep the peace. Yet, remaining silent prevents us from using our power for good in the world. So, we have to overcome the cultural barriers to unleash our words or risk remaining speechless.

But, I have found, like Jasmine did, that tragedy has helped me overcome my silence. I feel like I have been unleashed in my boldness, no longer afraid of speaking out or making waves. Many of you know that tragedy came in the form of my son, Elijah, being killed by a gunshot wound to the head. I confess that I still do not have a definitive answer when people ask me what happened. His girlfriend said she dropped him off to buy weed. The detectives said he entered the house to rob it, although they acknowledge that people in that household sell drugs. Neighbors say they have video surveillance of Elijah being let into the home. Yet, the “homeowner” claimed he was breaking in and shot Elijah in the head at point blank range while Elijah, who was unarmed, hid in the bathtub. If he was hiding in the bathtub, why did the man not tell him he had a gun, shut the door and call the police? If he was unarmed, why did the man see him as a threat? The detectives closed the case. The DA’s office gave us what answers they could. But so many questions remain unanswered. And, we recognize that we will not get answers.

We knew the night we saw him in the hospital that we would neither get answers nor justice. As my two other children, Joy and Eli, and my husband, Bo, and I gathered around his bed, we promised each other that we would get help dealing with our grief as we needed it and that we would find some way to work toward justice, not in a desire for revenge, but in a solidarity of grief with other families who live through this trauma. It does not matter the circumstances of death, a gunshot death brings a very different type of grief, a grief combined with trauma. I still cannot get the image of my son out of my mind, lying in the hospital bed with his head swollen beyond recognition and wrapped in bloody bandages. When I first arrived and hugged him, his eyes released bloody tears. I know that those tears reflect a biological reaction, but I cannot help but also believe he somehow experienced our presence. I often awake at night with a vivid image of those bloody tears, and wondering if he was alone when he died. I dream of running and hiding my other children from people with guns. I have trouble watching violent movies now and my body shudders involuntarily when I hear a loud bang. And I cry at unexpected times.

Yet, one thing I know. Through this tragedy, I have been unleashed to work to help address gun violence. Although much of the work I do would not have prevented Elijah’s death, I feel driven to do what I can to make sure that no other mother goes through the heartbreak we endured. Addressing gun violence requires a multi-faceted approach, including mental health, inequities in education, lack of job opportunities, poverty, systemic racial bias, etc. It also includes advocating for common sense gun legislation, such as safe storage, assault weapons ban, magazine capacity limits, permit to purchase, etc.

Through an organization called [Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America](#), I have begun advocating for safer communities through common sense gun legislation in Delaware. The group of mother and others, a part of [Everytown for Gun Safety](#) which was begun by a mother after Sandy Hook, works with legislators to address loopholes in the law and offers “Be SMART” training to adults on how to prevent children from accessing weapons. SMART stands for Secure all guns in home and vehicles, Model responsible behavior around guns, Ask about the presence of unsecure guns in the homes of others, Recognize the role of guns in suicide, and Tell your peers to be SMART. The organization does not stand against the 2nd Amendment, nor does it want to take away all weapons. But, we also recognize that some weapons were designed for the battlefield and not for hunting or private defense. Permitting unlimited access to these weap-

ons makes a battlefield out of our communities, where we should feel safe.

While I know that legislation remains but one prong of addressing gun violence, it is the one I feel called to help.

I also find strength in Jesus, who spoke out against political systems of his day which harmed and oppressed people. When he began his ministry, he also refused to remain speechless and refused to silence his followers. Remember the passage in Luke 19:39, where Jesus and his disciples ride into Jerusalem and people tell Jesus to silence his followers. He replied that if his followers were silent the stones would shout. God does not want us to remain speechless. In today's Connection, you will read about Rev. Carlos Reyes Rodriguez, who has become a missionary to our own conference for Hispanic Latino Ministries. Read the article below to find out more about he refuses to be silent. And, I invite you to find your own voice. Yes, God will use the stones to cry out, but what if God wants to use you first? Do not be afraid of what you will say. The Spirit will give you the words. (Matthew 10:19.)

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 Sandy Williford, The family and friends of Dan Smith, Anne Spicer, Brayden Rosebrook, Kim McClure, Alex Olivera's son, Sally and Howard Todd, Gilbert Emory, Lydia Ann Carmine, Arnold Williams, Ginny VanTine, Diane Gehlert's niece, Charlie, Gary Coulbourne, Londyn Hudson, Kay, Jennifer, Beverly Harrison, Leroy Hitchens, Dave, Bill, Alan Jester, Connie Eisenbrey, An 8:00 Sunday school class, Justin, Jesse, Charlie Fleetwood, Craig, Vicki, Brandon, The Schultes family, Merry, Gerald Zeveney, Andrea, Dean, Doris Rickert, Lida Wells, Linda Breedlove, Ferd Nelson, Jean Hutchman, Johnny Meehan, Kay McFadden, Brenda Beissel, The Fisher family, Elle Sheaffer, Carlton Goodhand, Dot Sophos, Alma Brittingham, Janice Brittingham Conaway, Cynthia, George Reph, The Pasmore family, The LaMotte family, Karen Hoch, Katie, Sue Whitmoyer, All in Milford Hospital, Joe, Susan, Jerry, Rich, Marc, Sally, Joan Eisenbrey, Pat Rust, Michele Barto Winn, Dee Ann Mason, Elwood Leary, Pat Dunne, Beth Judy, Lisa Shaw, Glen Stevenson, Kirsten Pearce, John Spillane and Colin Hayward.

Praise God for: A great week of VBS and The Bergez family.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: The family and friends of Sandy Williford, the family and friends of Dan Smith, the family and friends of Evelyn Barto, Colby Johnson and the mission team from Bridge 88, Samantha Leister, Anne Spicer, Braydon Rosebrook, Kim McClure, Alex's son, Sally and Howard Todd, Gilbert Emory, Lydia Ann Carmine, Arnold Williams, Diane Gehlert's niece, Charlie, Dot, Sandy, Kay Meade, Rob Craig, Londyn Hudson, Kay, Beverly Harrison, Leroy Hitchens, Dave, Bill, alan Jester, Bill Gaskill, Connie Eisenbrey, for an 8:00 Sunday School class, new job opportunities, Justin, Jesse, Charlie Fleetwood, Craig, Ray Gibson, all pastoral families who have moved, Dawn Neilson, Vicki, Brandon, the Schultes family, the victims of flooding, the victims of the earthquake, Merry, Gerald Zeveny, Andrea, Dean, Doris Rickert, Lida Wells, Linda Breedlove, Ferd Nelson, Jean Hutchman, Johnny Meehan, Brenda Beissel, the Fisher family, Elle Sheaffer, Carlton Goodhand, Dot Sophos, Alma Brittingham, Janice Brittingham Conaway, Cynthia, George Reph, Karen Hock, all in the Milford Hospital, Joe, Susan, Jerry, Rich, Marc, Sally, Joan Eisenbrey, Pat Rust, Michele Barto Winn, Dee Ann Mason, Elwood Leary, Pat Dunne, Beth Judy, Lisa Shaw, Glen Stevenson, Kirsten Pearce, and John Spillane.

Praise God for: Karen Williams, the LaMotte family, the best country in the world, and Joan Eisenbrey.

WEEKLY MUSIC REHEARSALS:

♪Handbells

Resume on Monday, Sept. 9th at 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

♪MomentUM Praise Team

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

♪Mispillion Children's Chorus

Resume on Tuesday, September 3rd at 6:15 p.m., Music Room

♪Praise Team

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

♪Sanctuary Choir

Resume on Wednesday, September 4th at 3:00 p.m., Music Room

♪AveNotes

Resume on Wednesday, September 4th, 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.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO:

Dee Konesey will celebrate her **105th** birthday on **June 13th**.

ANNIVERSARY GREETING TO:

Robert and Marie Bradley will celebrate their **60th** anniversary on **July 11th**.

UPCOMING

AVENUE UNITED METHODIST MEN - On Saturday, July 13th starting at 9:00 a.m., the AUMM will be assisting the Trustees with a church clean up. The basement needs to be cleaned up, especially old furniture and a variety of items in the store room. We will also need a crew to help clean up the river bank behind the Preschool playground, picnic tables and fire pit. A good turn out will make for easy work. *Rob Craig, AUMM President.*

2019 YARD SALE - Get ready to ——— CLEAN OUT!! The Yard Sale is August 1st, 2nd and 3rd and we need your donations of clean, gently used items. We take clothing, shoes, housewares, linens, toys, holiday items, small kitchen appliances, and misc. items. NO TV's, COMPUTERS, COMPUTER CORDS or MONITORS!!! Also, NO large appliances.

Drop off times: 9:00 a.m. till 4:00p.m. (July 22nd – July 29th) at the church. We also need good clean gift bags w/ handles - large sizes (like those from Dollar Tree) and small ones, preferably plain w/o writing, i.e. Happy B-day, etc. Please place them in the tote inside the office door. Thank you.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: We will be meeting on **July 16th and August 13th** in the **Grier Room** at **10:00 a.m.** Any questions 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.

KNIT/CROCHET GROUP: Christ Episcopal Church in Milford has asked us to join with them in making Seaman's Scarves for "Christmas at Sea" <https://seamenschurch.org/christmas-at-sea>. Please join with us, in this endeavor. Stop in the Grier Room any Wednesday afternoon from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., to knit or crochet with us and/or pick up yarn for both this project and our Prayer Shawls. Call Carolyn Humes 422 8620 or e-mail carhum@verizon.net.

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS: Summer Sunday for adults led by Rev. John Van Tine, retired plus others meets at 9:30AM on Sunday mornings in the Grier Room. The study for July is "A Heartfelt Covenant." The lesson for July 7 is "Jesus Teaches About Fulfilling the Law" based on Matthew 5:13-20; July 14's lesson is "Jesus Teaches Us to Love One Another" based on Matthew 5:21-32; July 21's lesson is "Jesus Teaches About Transforming Love" based on Matthew 5:39-48; and July 28's lesson is "Jesus Teaches About Spiritual Discernment" based on Matthew 7:1-6, 15-23. All of these lessons are from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Plan to come as often as you can.

VBS THANK YOU: We would like to **thank all the volunteers** that helped make 2019 VBS a great success. Special thanks to the crew leaders, youth helpers, registration, greeters, kitchen helpers, audio visual, music crafts, games, etc. for all their dedication and hard work.

COMMUNITY

MATTHEW PROJECT: We are in need of a baby stroller. Thank you.

MILFORD COMMUNITY PANTRY: The Diaper Pantry is opened WEEKLY on Wednesday morning from **10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.** We need 8 people to commit to one day a month and we will have it covered. Would you like to see young mothers smile?? See how happy they are that people care?? Contact Tita or Diane so we can establish a calendar. We need 2 people each week.

We are in need of toilet paper, canned tomatoes and cereal.

2019 Yard Sale

Avenue United Methodist Church

Thursday, August 1st 2:00 pm -- 6:00 pm

"Early Bird Special" (\$1.00 Admission this day only.)

Friday, August 2nd 8:30 am -- 4:30 pm

Saturday, August 3rd 8:30 am -- 12:00 pm

All proceeds go to missions of the church.

DONATIONS: accepted at the church weekdays

July 22nd – 29th (9:00 am to 4:00 pm)

(NO TVs, computer equipment, large appliances, or books)

For furniture pick-ups contact

Sonny (302) 690-4953 or Larry (302) 745-4331

Avenue United Methodist Church
20 N. Church Street
Milford, DE. 19963
(302) 422 - 8111



MISSION u 2019

July 18-20, 2019

Pecometh, The Riverview Retreat Center

401 Jack Elliot Way, Centreville, MD. 21617

The Mission Studies for 2019

Spiritual Growth Study: *Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship*

Study leader: Rev. Dr. Bo Gordy-Stith

Special Study and publication: *United Methodist Women In Mission: 150 Years and Beyond*

Study Leader: Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

Registration Forms available on Foyer table

Deadline is June 30, 2019

Price ranges from one day commuter \$75.00 to
Single room for three days at \$425.00.

See Registration form.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

FAITH – HOPE- LOVE IN ACTION

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 7/14

- 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School Class,
Grier Room
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

MONDAY 7/15

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

TUESDAY 7/16

- 10:00 a.m. Sisters Bible Study, Grier Room
- 6:00 p.m. MomentUM, Wesley Room
- 6:30 p.m. SPRC, Holzmueller Room
- 7:00 p.m. Central DE Chess Club,
Room 206
- 7:00 p.m. Praise Team, Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. Trustee's Meeting, Grier Room

WEDNESDAY 7/17

- 1:30 p.m. Knitting/Crocheting Group,
Grier Room
- 6:45p.m. Pride of Delmarva,
Fellowship Hall

THURSDAY 7/18

- 8:30 a.m. Men's Emmaus Reunion Group
- 11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
- 2:15 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion
- 6:00 p.m. Improv Group, Heritage Room
- 6:30 p.m. Discipleship Pathway,
Carepenter Room

FRIDAY 7/19

- 7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SATURDAY 7/20

- 7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SUNDAY 7/21

- 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School Class,
Grier Room
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship