



The Midweek

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

I fear that over the next few weeks you will hear me say or write quite often, “this is my last time to...” (fill in the blank). It’s hard to imagine that in less than a month I will be gone from Avenue and starting to settle into Millville.

But this is the last time that I will be able to share with you the words of my good friend Pastor Heidi so in a strange way, this is also her good-bye to you.

What is so special about that area of wet sand between the dry sand and the ocean? It is the best place to make a sandcastle. It is the easiest place to walk or run. It is where you find treasures of the sea: seaweed that pops, shiny rocks and bits of pottery or glass; sea shells; little crabs that scurry about with some purpose or other.

One morning before the sun was too hot, I stationed myself with my back against the waves as my young grandson played in the wet sand. He used a small red pail to build up his castle and the wall surrounding it, dug a moat around it with his yellow shovel, with his fingers poked holes for windows, placed shells carefully here and there for decoration, and told me the story of the inhabitants.

As the tide rose, the waves broke over the walls and filled the moat with water, but he did not want to abandon his castle or the story. He built the walls taller, but the waves crept closer and closer to the castle. Suddenly, crash! A big wave slammed into my calves and in an instant the receding water obliterated all his work into a swirling blob of sand and froth. There was no time for regrets or rebuilding in that place. I gathered him up swiftly to safety with grandpa in the dry sand under the shade of a nearby tree. He still clutched the pail in one hand and the shovel in the other. That story had ended, and we soon would start another one.

How many times does Jesus talk about children in the New Testament? Numerous times! Jesus blessed the children. He took them into His arms and comforted them. Rather

than turning them away, Jesus encouraged, “Let the little children come to Me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it” (Mark 10:14-15). When the disciples were arguing about who might be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus called a child over to them and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in My name welcomes Me” (Matthew 18:3-5).

What are the characteristics of children that Jesus would call them to our attention? Innocence and trust come to mind, like the child playing in the sand trusting grandma to keep him safe. As sinners, when we receive forgiveness, we move past our weaknesses and trust in God’s strength. Other characteristics might be humility, candidness and sincerity. We let go of our own grand designs, pride and fame that separate us from our Father’s will. The child still had his pail and shovel, the tools to make another structure, and was adaptable and willing to change plans. After witnessing the utter destruction of his castle, he seemed to understand that the power of the waves was much greater than grandma and accepted what help grandma could provide.

What are we to do when the big waves slam into us and swirl around our feet? Jesus tells us to protect and to be kind to all children and to those who are children in faith. They are weak and vulnerable, so as Christians, we should lift them up and teach them so that they might not stumble and fall. Jesus teaches us that these children and those who are children in faith are all God’s children, and thereby candidates for the new kingdom of heaven. Like the children, God cares for those who are poor in spirit: the believing poor who are despised or oppressed in this world, yet still put their trust in God’s will.

In the first Beatitude, Jesus teaches us “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). For ourselves, we might remember the story of Isaiah when King Uzziah died. Surely, his world was going to be destroyed. Isaiah went to the temple and prayed. He hungered for the LORD. The Almighty came to him and around him resounded with “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts” (Isaiah 6:3). Isaiah prayed, “Woe is me! I am lost for I am a sinful man, and I live amidst a sinful people” (Isaiah 6:5). He understood that he was weak and not any better than any other person.

There are times in our lives when everything is not all right. We are knocked down and broken. Will we have the strength like Isaiah to hunger for God? And will we accept God’s love when we realize that it is always there, even as the waves crash down upon us in our despair and brokenness?

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY: Join us on **Sunday at 10:00 a.m.** on Facebook Live as we gather to worship and pray together. If you cannot watch at 10:00 a.m., the video will remain up on our Facebook page. Join us at www.facebook.com/avenueumc

You can also share the live stream on your page, inviting others to worship with us.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT: We want to thank everyone who has continued to give as an act of worship and support over the last several weeks. We know that many of our financial futures are up-in-the-air as jobs are shut-down and routines are disrupted. Your support means that Avenue Church can continue to serve the Milford community through this crisis. If you are able, you can send your gift through the mail to our church office (20 N. Church St. Milford, DE 19963) or by giving online at www.avenueumc.com/give, or by texting 'avenueumc' to 77977. Thank you, again, for your continued support.

AVENUE CHURCH APP NOW AVAILABLE: You can now download the Avenue Church App on your smartphone and stay up-to-date with the latest news, videos, and events happening at Avenue. The app is updated regularly and you will have the ability to give to Avenue directly from the app. The app is available for iPhone (IOS) and Android (Google Play) devices.

To download the app, click this link from your phone:

[iPhone \(IOS\)](#)

[Android \(Google Play Store\)](#)

You can also search "Avenue Church DE" in your App Store.

CAN YOU HELP LIVESTREAM? We are looking for those who are interested in exploring digital ministry by providing some leadership in our Livestream worship services. We are looking for members to learn the recording and editing process, to manage our Youtube uploads, and to help with Social Media. As we are learning, this kind of ministry will be essential moving forward. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Steve at srlamotte@avenueumc.com.

PASTORAL CARE: If you know someone who is in need of prayer or a phone call, please call the church office at 422-8111 or contact one of the pastors directly. We are doing limited face-to-face pastoral care visits during this time, but want to make contact any way we can.

PRAYER CONCERNS PAST WEEK: All those infected by coronavirus and the medical teams who are seeking to contain and heal it. The family and friends of Helen Sharp, the family and friends of Virginia Jarrell, Chris Schultz, Bonnie Carmine, Nancy Lee, Josiah, Tita Lewis, Racheal Simesak, Barbara Dietrich Jennifer and Chris Miller, Larry Hughes, Janie Martin, Bob Chalmers, Jack Simon, Bob Cage, Joe, Donna and Keith Coverdale, Julie Dally, Rhoda and Greg Kurz, Dottie and Jerry Jackson, Ellie Lauckner, Jean Layton, Jan Perkins, Bill and Marty Brereton, Ed Bailey, Joe and Mary Jo Lear, Bob Voshell, Craig, Sammy, Bella, Linda Breedlove, Charlie and Barbara Fleetwood, Esther LaMotte, Chris, Laurel Pastor, Betty and Ramie Ziesel, Dean Johnson, Jack and Zelda McDuff, Luisa and Billy Combs, Joan Wadman, our nation and its leaders, everyone dealing with financial issues, and all who are feeling isolated and lonely.

Rejoice with: All those whom God has blessed, Lee Tyrrell, and Yvonne Nelson.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: Those infected by Covid-19 and the medical teams who are seeking to contain and heal it. For all those in this country who have experienced racism and/or abuse by those in power of any type, the family and friends of George Floyd, all the communities impacted by looting, arson and other destruction, the healing of the nation, the family and friends of Gloria, Pat Hudson, Sherena Chilton, Chris Schultz, Bonnie Carmine, Nancy Lee, Josiah, Tita Lewis, Racheal Simesak, Bill Cage, Joe, Donna and Keith Coverdale, Julie Dally, Rhoda and Greg Kurz, Dottie and Jerry Jackson, Ellie Lauckner, Jean Layton, Jan Perkins, Bill and Marty Brereton, Ed Bailey, Joe and Mary Jo Lear, Craig, Sammy, Bella, Linda Breedlove, Charlie and Barbara Fleetwood, Esther LaMotte, Chris, Laurel Pastor, Betty and Ramie Ziesel, Dean Johnson, Jack and Zelda McDuff, Luisa and Billy Combs, Joan Wadman, our nation and its leaders, everyone dealing with financial issues, all who are feeling lonely and isolated.

Rejoice with: All those who have been blessed by God.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO:

Walt Peters who will be celebrating his **89th** birthday on **June 6th**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Larry and Elaine Price will celebrate their **50th** anniversary on **June 7th**.

Gene and Alva Hemshrot will celebrate their **64th** anniversary on **June 9th**.

RETIREMENT DRIVE-BY: The Rev. Earle Baker, who served at Avenue from 1999-2012, is retiring after 40 years in ministry in The United Methodist Church. Earle currently serves at Bethel UMC in Lewes, DE. Bethel is planning a "drive-by" celebration on Sunday, June 21st around Noon, which is Earle's last Sunday preaching. Bethel is planning an "in-person" celebration for Earle later in the year based on guidelines from the State in the midst of the pandemic. **If you would like to participate and celebrate with Earle, please contact Ron Mead at spprcbethel@gmail.com before June 8th.**

2020 YARD SALE: Due to all the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 virus, it has been decided that the **Yard Sale will NOT be held this year.** We feel this is in the best interest of the church, community, and volunteers. Please keep our mission program in your prayers as we search for ways to help others in our area, country, and world. Thank you to all!

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT-HOME: This week is the final Sunday for Sunday School At-Home. We are grateful for Sparkhouse Media for making their lessons available to churches. As Sunday School comes to a close, we invite you to look at some creative ways that you can incorporate more Bible Stories and discipleship opportunities at home.

This week, we are looking at the story of Creation. Start by [watching this video](#). Then go through the activity pages.

We look forward to the return of Sunday School in the Fall, or when the State guidelines permit it. In the meantime, please be sure to "like" us on [Facebook](#). We also need about 50 more subscribers to our [Youtube channel](#) to receive a custom URL to make it easier for people to find us.

2020 GRADUATES: If you have a family member that is graduating (high school/college), please send an email to Kelly at churchoffice@avenueumc.com with the information and a picture. We will be listing the 2020 graduates on **June 10th**.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES DURING CORONA OUTBREAK: There are several opportunities to share the light of Christ during the next several weeks of our new reality.

- Volunteer to help prepare meals at Banneker Elementary School. Contact the church office at 422-8111.
- Donate Money to the schools or two one of the restaurants who are providing meals. They providing out of their bottom line and this is an opportunity to rally around them.
- Check-in on your neighbors who may be lonely, shut-in, or at-risk. Be safe about it, but don't give up on the community.
- Do a grocery run for someone who may have trouble getting out.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT: If anyone would like to send letters of encouragement to Milford Genesis it would be appreciated. The staff and residents are struggling. Health ministry has collected masks and caps for the staff along with some food. The Chief of Police has jumped in with me to organize groups to support the staff and residents with food.

Please bring your letters to the church, we have a basket in the Fellowship Foyer.

HEALTH MINISTRY: This week we have information on masks how to make them, etc. Click link below:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Witness to Our Faith

Each week in the Avenue Midweek, members and friends of Avenue UMC will be sharing their own personal witness of faith. This column will be coordinated by Janice Abbott who will be seeking volunteers and writers who are willing to share their stories. Each article is due one week in advance and should be sent to Kelly at the Church office so there will be time to add it to the newsletter. It will appear the following week. It will be inspirational to read each week how God has blessed each person/family today and through the years. If you would like to contact Janice to volunteer, please call her at (302) 943-7278.

from Sandy Culotta

When Janice called, I wondered what I would say about my Faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. I do not have one of those defining moments where I was reborn again, but more along the lines of drifting away from the Lord during my college years and twenties and then refining my faith. I was born in Milford and baptized and grew up at Avenue. When I am in Fellowship Hall or the second floor of the main church, I remember our children's plays we did and vacation Bible school when we learned about Jesus. I have always had faith in Jesus, but it was not until my son Chip was in preschool that I realized how much I had drifted away from the Lord.

It is hard when the busyness of life gets in the way of what our focus should be. I wanted Chip to develop his faith in the Lord, but at that point, I was a single mom and not attending church. One Sunday we went to St. Matthews by the Sea. I had found what I was looking for, as St. Matthew by the Sea normally a summer church was working with the year-round residents to convert the church to full-time and not just a summer church. Pastor Dr. Don (Clendaniel) had a way of casting the net to bring you in. I was hooked before I knew it organizing the Sunday School and providing support where I was needed. The Lord puts opportunities before us, we just need to open our eyes and ears to be ready for what the Lord has plans for us. I guess that is why the song 454 *Open My Eyes, That I May See* has such meaning for me.

Of course, God does not stop with just this, he provided me the opportunity to meet Chuck Culotta who I married in 1996. My faith continued to grow when we moved back to Milford and started attending Avenue again. It seemed strange that I had been away for almost 20 years except on the Sundays I came with my parents (Tom and Verna Walls.) The Lord opened our eyes to mission work when Steve came as the youth pastor and started the annual summer mission trip to Tennessee with our youth. We were sitting listening to the testimonies from the students and the adults about their experiences on the first trip. Before we knew it, we signed up for the next year's trip. What were we thinking, me a high school principal spending more time with students in the summer and sleeping in a tent on the ground!! I am so glad we did because the opportunities to experience the Lord work by daily devotions, group praise time, memorizing Phillipians 2, helping others, see the joy in people who have nothing except their faith and seeing youth grow in their faith helped to strengthen my faith.

Jeremiah 29:11 helps me to remember that I need to listen to the Lord and he will show me the way.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Thanks be to God

Questions:

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Title:





Creation



On the sixth day, God said, "Let there be animals of every kind on earth!"

Creation



God saw that the plants and trees were good.

The Great Commission



Jesus smiled. "Peace be with you!"



Discombobulated

"Merriam-Webster" defines discombobulated as "to cause to be in a state of confusion; upset, disoriented, disorder." You may have felt discombobulated over the past several months. I know that I have.

Governor Carney has issued stages of opening up Delaware. With the COVID-19 virus still in our mists we may feel a little discombobulated with the changes we will face. Social distancing (6 ft. apart), wearing a mask (to protect others not ourselves) and good hand washing/sanitizing. Restaurants are opening, but they will not be set up like before COVID-19. Things have changed and we are not always happy with change.

Recombobulation

Now it is time for recombobulation- "Your dictionary" defines recombobulation as "to cause to think clearly again; reorient; to put back into working order." With the changes we are facing we are going to try to put our lives back in order. This can be challenging and add some stress to all of us. We need to be patient with each other while we are in a state of recombobulation.

Here are ways we can get through this time with a little more ease. We can:

- Get a good night sleep
- Go for a walk or exercise
- Eat healthy foods
- Humor is a wonderful outlet. Laugh at yourself.
- Gratitude. Be thankful of God's blessings. Name them every day!
- Dance even if someone is watching.
- Pray and communicate with God.
- Meditate on God's word and clarity of mind.
- Yoga
- Write a journal. You are living in a historical moment.
- Call someone and say hi
- Show God's love to all!!

Isaiah 40:31

"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

