



The Midweek

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Out of the Darkness and Into the Light

In the 1990's I listened to the Christian rap/rock group, DC Talk. One of their songs, In The Light, had these lyrics:

*I want to be in the light as He is in the light
I want to shine like the stars in the heaven
Oh Lord be my light and be my salvation
Cause all I want is to be in the light.*

I think of these lyrics during this time of year as we experience so much darkness at such an early time. The darkness outside is a reminder of the darkness that the world experiences apart from God. Many walk in confusion, choosing their own way rather than God's way. Many choose to trust in human wisdom rather than Godly wisdom.

Episcopal priest, Flemming Rutledge writes, "Advent begins in the dark."

As we journey deeper into the season of Advent the darkness has increased, but so has our reasons for hope. The prophet Isaiah reminds us, "that the people walking in darkness have seen a great light."

This Sunday at 6:00 p.m., we will gather outside on the lawn for some socially-distanced carols, special music, to hear the Scriptures and to receive

Communion together. At the end of the service, we will light up a tree that has been placed on our property. We will gather to declare that the light has come. We no longer have to walk in darkness. We want to be in the light, as Jesus is in the light.

I look forward to a special time of worship this Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m. Bring a chair, your mask, and a heart ready to seek the light of Christ.

Pastor Steve

2020 Annual Conference Report

The 236th Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference met under a revised format, due to Coronavirus restrictions and concern for the safety of all clergy and laity involved. Through the miracle of Zoom, separate clergy and laity sessions were held on October 24, followed by a joint session on November 13. The Zoom format worked very well, with the added benefit of a \$100,000 cost savings over the usual 3-day live conference.

Attending the conference on behalf of Avenue were Pastor Steve LaMotte, delegates Beth Parker and Barbara Rutt, and alternate delegate Ed Steiner. Avenue ably provided the musical offering for the Laity Session, thanks to Kevin Chamberlain, Harriet Davies, Elaine Devita, Ginny Van Tine, and Susan Newark.

In addition to usual business matters, two major items were presented at Conference, a request to redistrict, and requests from four local churches to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church.

Conference approved the petition to reduce the number of districts from the current 4, Wilmington, Easton, Dover and Salisbury, to 3, Northern, Central and Southern. The shift will result in annual savings of approximately \$300,000. Specific geographic boundaries will be established by Bishop Johnson. Churches should see minimal impact, and every effort will be made to preserve ongoing partnerships between local churches. Most likely Avenue will become part of the Central District.

Conference also approved resolutions allowing 4 churches to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. The requests came from Antioch, Calvary, Groome, and Nelson. Some background information may be useful to understand the handling of these requests.

In 2019, at a Special Session of General Conference, a plan was authorized by which a local church might, for reasons of conscience regarding issues of human sexuality, ask to sever all ties with the United Methodist Church. Such disaffiliation would be subject to the financial satisfaction of apportionment, outstanding debts, pension and health insurance liabilities. The General Conference authorized this disaffiliation design by the very narrow margin of only 2 votes. The UMC Judicial Council is in the process of determining the constitutionality of the plan. Additionally, when General Conference next meets, tentatively August/September of 2021, the matter may again be considered.

The Pen-Del Annual Conference 2021 spending plan was approved, \$5.1 million, an amount 7% lower than 2020 and reflecting savings to be realized through consolidating 4 districts into 3. Apportionment calculations were set for the upcoming year. It is anticipated that Avenue will experience a reduction of \$4,887 in our 2021 Apportionment.

The Conference Annual Appeal was designated to benefit the following programs: BOOM (Board of Ordained Ministry) scholarships, Congo Partnership, providing clean water, agricultural, educational and medical support, and Salisbury Urban Ministries.

Finally, Conference recognized retiring pastors, including Earle Baker, who faithfully served for many years here at Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Rutt
Lay Delegate

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY: Worship is held each Sunday in-person or online at 9:00 a.m. (Traditional), 10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (Contemporary). We are streaming the morning worship services on our Facebook (facebook.com/avenueumc) and Youtube (youtube.com/c/avenueunitedmethodistchurch) pages.

GIVING AT AVENUE is possible through multiple ways.

- You can give your offering in-person
- You can snail mail your gift to: 20 N. Church St. Milford, DE 19963
- You can give online through the red “give” button on our homepage
- You can text “avenueumc” to 77977 and follow the prompts
- You can download and use our “Avenue Church DE” App on your smart phone

GIVING STATEMENTS for January 1-September 30, 2020 have been emailed to all members/friends who have emails registered with Avenue Church. If you do not have email and would like a print out of your giving statement, please call Kelly at the church office to request one.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: The Church Office will be open **Monday through Friday** from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. We do ask that you consider using a phone call or email if you are able to accomplish your business before coming into the office.

PASTORAL CARE: If you or someone you know is in need of pastoral care, please call the church office at 422-8111 or contact a staff person directly. You can also email prayer@avenueumc.com to have your name added to the prayer chain. We are doing limited face-to-face visits during this time, but would be happy to make contact any way that we can.

HELP WANTED! AVENUE GREETER TEAM: The Avenue Greeter team needs your help. We're inviting you to join and help serve in this ministry. No experience needed, just a friendly smile and some of your time (a few Sunday mornings throughout the year). If you're interested, please call John Horsman at (302) 222-6642.

CHRISMON TREE 2020: Avenue will again be making Christmas special for area families who are in need. Because of COVID we will be providing gift cards for families to purchase gifts for their children. While there is joy on our end of purchasing gifts, our families will be able to experience the joy of buying gifts for their children. Families will be given gift cards with appropriate funds available based on their wish list and our guidelines for what we provide. If you would like to help share the joy of Christmas, please write "Chrismon Tree" on your check or envelope.

PLEASE MAKE YOUR WORSHIP RESERVATION: As we continue to adapt our worship services to meet the State guidelines and best practices in the midst of a pandemic, **we are asking each person/family planning on attending worship to make a reservation.** By following the link below, you can make a reservation for service you plan on attending (9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. or 6:00 p.m.) and you will be able to choose to sit in the sanctuary or in overflow seating in Fellowship Hall. If you do not make a reservation, it is possible you will be seated in Fellowship Hall if the sanctuary has reached capacity.

You can access our reservation system by going to <https://avenueumc.thersvpapp.com/> and begin reserving your seat(s). You will need to do this every Sunday you plan on attending worship. Please call the church office at 422-8111 if you cannot make the reservation online.

HELP NEEDED FOR UPCOMING CHRISTMAS SERVICES: If you plan on attending Blue Christmas, Lessons and Carols or Christmas Eve services we could use your help. (Greeters, health check ins, liturgist, ushers, communion assistant and a/v.) If interested please click the following links.

Blue Christmas—<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45A9A92FA7FBC16-blue>
Lessons and Carols—<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45A9A92FA7FBC16-lessons>
Christmas Eve Services (12/23) - <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45A9A92FA7FBC16-christmas1>
Christmas Eve Services (12/24) - <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45A9A92FA7FBC16-christmas>

DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS: The Sunshine Bible Class for adults led by Rev. John Van Tine, retired is meeting in the Wesley Room at 10:15AM. Our study for December is “God with Us.” The lesson for December 6th is “God and Human Beings” based on Psalm 8:1-9; December 13th lesson is “Imitate Christ” based on Philippians 2:1-11; December 20th lesson is “Becoming God’s Children” based on John 1:10-18; and December 27th lesson is “The Father Dwells in Jesus” based on John 14:8-14. Feel free to join us in the Wesley Room for these exciting lessons.

ADVENT MISSION STUDY: Pastor Steve will be leading an Advent Study beginning **Wednesday, December 16th at 10:30 a.m.** in Fellowship Hall. We will look at how Advent prepares us for Jesus’ Second Coming and how our understanding of that prepares us to truly live into Christmas. Please sign up by calling or emailing the church office.

Thank You From the Avenue Staff

As a staff, we wanted to say a big "Thank You" to the many kind words and signs of appreciation during Staff Appreciation Month in October. We are thankful to be part of a caring community and it is a pleasure to serve at Avenue. We are looking forward to the upcoming year and shining the light of Christ in the Milford Community.

Thank You!

Erica, Taylor, Laura, Curtis, Kelly, Will, Kevin, and Steve

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO:

- **Jean Hutchman** who will celebrate her **95th** birthday on **December 10th**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- **Jack and Mary Lou Sheaffer** on celebrating their **56th** anniversary on **December 5th**.

SYMPATHIES TO:

- The family of Marty Uffner who passed away on Tuesday, November 24, 2020.
- The family of Bundy Simms who passed away on Friday, November 26, 2020.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- Those affected by the COVID-19, Medical Staff, and those working on a vaccine
- Our local, national, and world leaders
- Our District Superintendent (Rev. Dr. Kyung-Hee Sa), Bishop Peggy Johnson, and The United Methodist Church
- The Pastors, Staff, and Leadership of Avenue United Methodist Church

PRAYER REQUEST:

Bob Cage
Lydia Castro
Brittany and Baby Naomi
Jennifer Clarke
Pat Clearly
Jack & Denny Collins
Luisa & Billy Combs
Donna and Keith Coverdale
Julie Dally
Josiah Davis
Joanna Denney-Turner
Carolyn Evans
Veronica Evans
Fay Farissier
Gary Farmer
Ken Fechter
Charlie & Barbara Fleetwood
Craig Hanna
Dave Harris
John Horsman
Pat Hudson
Doris Isele
Karl Isele
Dottie & Jerry Jackson

Alvin Jarrell
Dean Johnson
Linda Kemp
Doris Koon
Rhoda & Greg Kurz
Ellie Lauckner
Jean Layton
Lauren Lee
Nancy Lee
Brittany Poore Little
Lyn
Jack & Zelda McDuff
Ricki McGuire
Frank Mentusky
Jennifer Hughes Miller
Orville Mills
Stan Moody
Jason Neall
Alex Oliveras, Sr.
Alex Oliveras, Jr.
Adriel Oliveras and family
Mary Ellin Parsons
Laurel Pastor
Jan Perkins

Millie Remick
Roy Rigby
Lorna Rosella Rulona
Phil Saint
Char Sandifer
Richard Sapp
Alice Sellers
Leo Shew
Roland Simms
Racheal Simesak
Gary Simpson
Linda Singleton
John Smallwood and family
Ann Sutcliff
Teresa
Joan Wadman
Betty Ziesel

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

The Sanctuary is never prettier than it is when the poinsettias arrive for December. Placing poinsettias in the church in memory or honor of loved ones is a beautiful and cherished tradition.

This year we will again only be ordering 6.5" pots of poinsettias at **\$7.00** each. The Altar Guild has requested that we only order 75 pots of flowers and in **RED** only. All additional funds will go to the Parish Purse.

Sponsor's Name _____

Memory of _____

Honor of _____

The cost for each Poinsettia is: 6.5" pot \$7.00 _____

The Altar Guild has requested that we order only **RED** Poinsettias this year.

Please Print Clearly

Please use a separate order form for each name
in memory of or honored

Names of sponsors and those remembered and honored will be in the Worship Folder on December 20th.

Please make checks payable to Avenue United Methodist Church

Orders MUST be in no later than Wednesday, December 16th



Fusion Winter Schedule

November 1st- No Fusion

November 8th- Fusion 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

November 15th- Fusion 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

November 22nd- Friendsgiving 3 PM- 7:30 PM

-We will be boxing Thanksgiving food boxes as part of Friendsgiving

November 29th- No Fusion

December 4th- Friday Night GROG 6 PM- 8 PM

December 6th- No Fusion

December 13th- Fusion 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

December 20th- Fusion 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM-Christmas Party

-\$20 and Below Gift Exchange



@FusionatAvenue



@fusionatavenue



@FusionatAvenue



**Remind App: Text @fusavenue to
81010**

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: Donna Hill

My name is Donna Hill and I have been asked to tell about myself from Mrs. Janice Abbott. I have been with Avenue UMC for about 10 years ago when I joined. I have helped with Sunday School and for 7 years I have been making the coffee too. I help when it is needed.

I don't like talking about myself but I will for Mrs. Abbott. I would like to tell everyone that I miss them all, to be safe and Happy Holiday to all. I will be back soon when it's a little bit safer to come back.

Bye for now.

Donna Hill



A Thrill of Hope

Join us this December as we experience the HOPE
of Jesus!

- Dec. 6 Light Up Avenue | 6 p.m.
Join us outside for carols, lights, and more
- Dec. 17 Blue Christmas Service | 6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 20 Ugly Christmas Sweater Sunday
- Dec. 23 Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve (Eve)
3 and 6 p.m. | Piano Led Worship
9 p.m. | Guitar Led Worship
Register at | christmasatavenue.thersvpapp.com
- Dec. 24 Lessons and Carols | 10:30 a.m.
- Dec 24 Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve
3 and 6 p.m. | Band Led Worship
9 p.m. | Organ Led Worship
Register at | christmasatavenue.thersvpapp.com

Avenue United Methodist Church
20. N. Church St. Milford, DE

facebook.com/avenueumc
avenueumc.com



Health Ministry



COVID-19 and Grief

"Many people are experiencing grief during the COVID-19 pandemic. Grief is a normal response to loss during or after a disaster or other traumatic event. Grief can happen in response to loss of life, as well as to drastic changes to daily routines and ways of life that usually bring us comfort and a feeling of stability." Common grief reactions include:

- Shock, disbelief, or denial
- Anxiety
- Distress
- Anger
- Periods of sadness and crying
- Loss of sleep and loss of appetite

"Some people may experience multiple losses during a disaster or large-scale emergency event. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, you might be unable to be with a loved one when they die, or unable to mourn someone's death in-person with friends and family. These losses can happen at the same time, which can complicate or prolong grief and delay a person's ability to adapt, heal, and recover." <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/stress-coping/grief-loss.html>

Together we must understand that the inability to say goodbye to a loved one before they die is difficult. Family and friends miss the last holding of the hands, giving a hug or kiss or just being by their loved one's side to say goodbye. This adds to the grieving process.

COVID-19 has added another dimension to grieving. The grieving of our health care workers. They try to care for their patients in hopes of recovery. When they lose the battle to death, they feel pain and defeat. Watching their patients die alone, even though they try to be with them, is difficult. They grieve for their patients and the patient's family.

We need to work together, love each other, be patient with ourselves as well as each other. We must remember foremost; God is stronger than all of us and He will help us through this challenging time!



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"For I am persuaded beyond a doubt that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers, Nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8: 38-39