



The Midweek

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Fast Forward—January 3-24, 2021

I'm pretty much done with 2020. The last ten months have been challenging enough as COVID-19 has disrupted our economy, our family lives, our health, and our life and rhythm together as a church. This disruption has put our church (and many others) in a space where it is difficult to get any forward momentum because of uncertainty and fear. It has also been an incubation period where we have had the opportunity to see what is necessary and what is needed in our community. I continue to believe that God is and will do something new in our church.

For this reason, I am calling our church to a 20 Days of Fasting and Prayer. This will be an intentional way for us to dedicate the upcoming year to God, to repent of our sin, and to set our hearts as individuals and as a community on God. There are ways for everyone to participate in the Fast.

- Fast from food (drink water and juice) for 21 days (if healthy enough)
- Choose a day(s) during each week to fast
- Abstain from certain foods for the entire 21 days
- Do a Wesley Fast, fasting and drinking only water while only eating dinner each night
- Do a social media or technology fast.

John Wesley fasted from sundown on Thursday until sundown on Friday. He spent much of his time fasting praying and searching the scriptures. Jesus fasted in the Bible and taught his disciples to do the same. One writer has said that fasting is the most

neglected means of grace.

Over the next few weeks, we will provide you with more information about our time of fasting and some themes to pray for. At the end of the fast, we will gather for a time of worship and visioning. My prayer is that we (Avenue) would be open to the new thing that God is doing in our community in order to create space and ministries to reach new people.

As we prepare to turn the page on 2020, let us FAST FORWARD into 2021 and together seek God's face and direction for our lives and our church.

Grace and Peace,

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

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.

PAUSING THE 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP SERVICE: The Staff has made the decision to pause the 6:00p.m. evening service for the winter months. This **Sunday, December 20th**, will be the last evening service for the immediate future. The service was quite popular in the summer when the weather was warm and attendance has dwindled as we moved in-doors. Our plan is to bring the service back when the weather gets warmer.

Thank you to everyone who has served at the worship service and to those who have attended. We look forward to seeing you on Sundays at 9:00 a.m., 10:30a.m. or online!

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 ENVELOPES FOR 2021: The finance team has issued giving envelopes for those people who give primarily by envelope. They are on a table in Fellowship Foyer. Please pick them up when you come to church or at your earliest convenience when the church office is open. If you are able to deliver envelopes for a friend or neighbor who is fairly shut in, it would be most helpful. If we did not issue a set for you and you would like to have them, please call Kelly. We have extra sets. *Harriet and June*

UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY: This Sunday, we encourage everyone to wear an Ugly Christmas Sweater to worship as a fun way to gather together. If you are worshipping online, take a picture of yourself in your sweater and post it in the comments of the worship service you are watching.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS: You are invited to wish your Avenue Family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Send us a short video with your Christmas greeting and we will show them on Christmas Eve and on our Christmas Day video. All we need from you is...

- A video of you and/or your family wishing everyone a “Merry Christmas.”
- While the video should be short, it can be creative
- Send the video to srlamotte@avenueumc.com
- Be sure to include the names of the people in the video
- Deadline for submission is **Monday, December 21st at 5:00 p.m.**

OFFICE OPEN- DOORS CLOSING: With the increase in cases of COVID-19 in our area and in an effort to limit traffic in the church, we will be keeping the main entrance doors locked during the week even while the office remains open for the short-term. There is an intercom available at the main entrance should you need to get inside the church. We encourage

everyone to utilize email and phone calls, when possible, to limit the need to come to church. We thank everyone for helping to keep our staff and volunteers safe during this time. **Church Office Hours are Monday—Friday 9:00 am—3:00 pm.**

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.

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 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 finish up the Advent Study on **Wednesday, January 6th 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

Upcoming Christmas Services

- * **December 17th** Blue Christmas at 6:00 p.m.

- * **December 23rd** Christmas Eve Services—Outside
5:00 p.m. (Traditional) & 7:00 p.m. (Contemporary)
RSVP—<https://christmasatavenue.thersvpapp.com>

- * **December 24th** Christmas Eve Services
10:30 a.m. Lessons & Carols
3:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Contemporary Candlelight Communion
9:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Communion
RSVP—<https://christmasatavenue.thersvpapp.com>

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- **Russ and Harriet Davies** who will be celebrating their **60th** anniversary on **December 24th**.

SYMPATHIES TO:

- Heather Abbott and family on the passing of Heather's mom, Sandy Brown on December 1, 2020.
- The family and friends of John Smallwood who passed away on December 6, 2020.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- Those affected by the COVID-19, Medical Staff, and those working on a vaccine
- The arrival, safety, and effectiveness of the recently approved COVID 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
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
Jean Layton
Lauren Lee
Nancy Lee
Brittany Poore Little
Lyn
Jack & Zelda McDuff
Ricki McGuire
Frank Mentusky
Jennifer Hughes Miller
Orville Mills
Kathryn Avery Mitchell
Tiffany Mitchell
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
Bob Susen
Ann Sutcliff
Teresa
Joan Wadman
TJ Webb
Betty Ziesel



Coping with Grief

Grief is a part of life. It is a strong, sometimes overwhelming reaction to death, divorce, job loss, a move, or loss of health due to illness. It can also occur after disasters or other traumatic events. If you are experiencing grief, you may feel empty and numb, or unable to feel joy or sadness. You may also feel angry. You may experience physical reactions.

- Trembling or shakiness
- Muscle weakness
- Nausea and trouble eating
- Trouble sleeping or difficulty breathing
- Dry mouth
- While grieving, you may have nightmares,
- withdraw socially, and not want to participate in your usual activities.

You can take steps to help yourself cope with grief.

- Talking to others who understand and respect how you feel—family members, faith leaders, people you trust—is a helpful way to cope with your grief.
- Recognize that although you might still have these feelings over a long period, they will likely be less intense over time.
- Try to take care of yourself physically by exercising, eating healthy meals, and getting enough sleep.
- Allow yourself to feel joy and sadness, and to cry when you need to.

Going through the grieving process and healing from loss does not mean forgetting about loved ones who have died. You may still feel deeply connected to the person you have lost, but you will also be able to imagine a life without him or her. You will start to be reengaged in daily life and reconnected to others.

When moving out of grief, you may start to experience the following:

- Feeling the pain of your loss without resisting or avoiding it
- Adjusting to a new reality in which your loved one is no longer present
- Forming new relationships <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma17-5035.pdf>



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“So for the present you are also in sorrow; but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one can take from you your joy.” ~ John 16:22

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



A hand is pointing towards a glowing hexagonal grid. One hexagon in the center-left contains a stylized 'F' logo. The background is a dark teal color with a grid of glowing hexagons.

**FUSION IS GOING
VIRTUAL**

**ZOOM MEETINGS
ARE COMING**

**IF INTERESTED CONTACT
PASTOR WILL
LEISTERWILLIAM@AVENUEUMC.COM**

MINISTRIES AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS SUPPORTED BY AVENUE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Missions



Spain Pecometh Camp Scholarship

Parish Purse

Fusion Youth Ministries

Code Purple

Matthew Project

Bayhealth Foundation

The Way Home Ministry

Volunteers in Mission

Home of Hope Women's Ministry

Camp New Hope

KenCrest Group Homes

Baker Congo Partnership Project

ARC of Delaware Pizza Party

Christ Episcopal Church Seamen's Ministry

Fundraisers



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: Sue Dill

My faith journey is one of the quieter ones. I'm a lifelong Methodist, born to two Avenue choir members and christened here before moving to Camden. Most of my close relatives were Methodist as well although we cover the Protestant spectrum. Those who weren't musically inclined usually sent the children to church, but were less regular in their own attendance.

That didn't reflect a lack of faith. Nearly all of them lived out their beliefs, allowing me to see the risks and rewards for myself. I've watched them deal with life crises and move on—sometimes there was an amazing reversal of domestic abuse, sometimes a repeated backsliding into alcoholism. In one uncle's case the failing of a family business became a midlife career change into the clergy.

Thankfully most of my own "hidden blessings" take the form of happy coincidences rather than major disasters. God has usually saved the two-by-fours for the times when I've ignored the gentle nudges. By this point you'd think I'd have learned to just do the right thing the first time but in some areas I get regular refreshers. When that happens, I'm deeply thankful for the patience and forgiveness of God and for the examples shown by dozens of good, flawed, and persistent family members