



The Midweek

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Walking in the Darkness of Advent

The other day I was up until midnight, only to discover that it was only 6:00 p.m. I don't like how the darkness takes over at such an early time. I don't think that it is a coincidence that the season of Advent takes place during the darkest time of the year. While there is a lot of excitement as Christmas approaches, this time of darkness is representative of the darkness we encounter in the world. During Advent, we acknowledge that we are "people walking in darkness." Just as the darkness of December is real right now, the darkness we experience in our lives and the world is just as tangible.

The time between the Prophets in the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus is called the inter-testimonial period. This time was a 400-year period where there were no recorded prophets. The people did not hear the Word of God. God was silent. The Temple, the center of their community life and faith, was destroyed. Israel went from captivity in Babylon and occupation by the Persians and Romans. The nation lived in sin and had turned their collective back on God. Darkness filled the land.

Advent is a time when we recognize that there are times when God chooses to be silent and other times when our sin prevents us from hearing God's voice. In these moments of darkness, we can feel disoriented and alone. Advent is a reminder that Jesus walks with us in the darkness and the silence.

As the darkness gets longer while the days get shorter, let us cling to the promises of God, that God will “never leave us or forsake us.” God is with us no matter how deep the darkness we encounter.

Sow Much Love,

Pastor Steve

THIS DECEMBER AT AVENUE CHURCH

12/5 **Family Advent Night** (5:00 p.m.)

12/12 **Miracle on Bethlehem Street** (4:00 p.m.)

12/16 **Blue Christmas Service** (6:30 p.m.)

12/24 **Lessons and Carols** (10:30 a.m.)

12/26 **Combined Worship** (10:00 a.m.)

CHRISTMAS EVE AT AVENUE CHURCH

12/23 **Traditional Christmas Eve Worship** (6:30 p.m.)

12/24 **Traditional Christmas Eve Worship** (2:30 & 9:00 p.m.)

12/24 **Contemporary Christmas Eve Worship** (4:30 & 7:00 p.m.)

LET THE WEARY WORLD REJOICE
AT THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOR!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY: Worship is held each Sunday in-person or online at 9:00 a.m. (Traditional) and 10:30 a.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 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 download and use our “Avenue Church DE” App on your smart phone

PASTORAL CARE: If you or someone you know is in need of pastoral care, please call the church office at 422-8111 or by contacting Dan Holt, our *Pastor of Congregational Care*. You can email Pastor Dan directly at dholt@avenueumc.com.

TAI CHI: Tai Chi is a great way to build up core strength and balance with decreased stress on joints. Please join us **Tuesday’s and Thursday’s at 9:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall**. No fees!

MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS PLANS AT AVENUE: We are thinking about Advent and Christmas at Avenue and want you to join in during these special times of worship, study, and fellowship. Be sure to mark your calendars to get involved!

December 5th - Family Advent Night at 5:00 p.m.

- * You’ve seen the crafts in the Fellowship Foyer. Don’t miss the opportunity for fellowship as we begin Advent together.

December 12th—Miracle on Bethlehem Street at 4:00 p.m.

- * Join us at 4:00 p.m. for our production of the musical, *A Miracle on Bethlehem Street*.

December 16th - Blue Christmas Service at 6:30 p.m.

- * Not everyone is happy during the holidays. Many are grieving. A Blue Christmas Service is a time to acknowledge loss and grief amidst the holidays.

December 23rd - Traditional Christmas Eve at 6:30 p.m.

- * Can’t make worship on the 24th? Experience Christmas Eve at Avenue a day early!

December 24th— Traditional Christmas Eve at 2:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Contemporary Christmas Eve at 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 pm.

- * We have a great day of worship planned on Christmas Eve. Join us for Lessons in Carols at 10:30 a.m. when we hear the Christmas story through the Scriptures and music of our faith. In the afternoon and evening Candles, Carols, and Communion make this sacred night of worship meaningful as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

December 26th— Combined Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

- * We will have one worship service on the first Sunday of Christmas. It will be filled with Christmas Carols and a message of hope.

NEW MEMBERS CLASS will be held on Sunday, January 16th from 11:45—1:00 p.m. in the Grier Room. This class is for those interested in learning more about Avenue Church, what it means to live as a Christian through the church, and to pursue becoming a member of Avenue.

Please RSVP by emailing Kelly at churchoffice@avenueumc.com.

WELCOMING AND CONNECTING WITH THE CONNECTION TEAM: Last week, we unveiled a new ministry team at Avenue Church. The Connection Team serves to welcome guest and attenders and assist them in getting connected to the ministries of Avenue Church. Over the last several months, we have been working to develop a dedicated space for the Connection Team. That space is the newly renovated stone wall with the TV's in the foyer. This will be space where people can ask questions, fill out a connect card, and learn more about the ministries of the church.

If you would like to participate in the Connection Team, you can contact Karen Schneider at careercounselorde@gmail.com.

COFFEE NOW IN FELLOWSHIP HALL: We are excited to be able to offer coffee, tea, and hot chocolate on Sunday mornings. You can find these refreshments in Fellowship Hall. We are thankful for Donna Hill and her service to Avenue in providing this act of hospitality each week.

JOB OPENINGS - NURSERY WORKERS: We are looking to re-open our nursery and are in need of additional nursery attendants. Interested parties must be available on Sundays from 8:30 a.m. through Noon. Attendants must complete a background check. CPR certification is recommended. This is a paid position. Please email your resume and a cover letter to srlamotte@avenueumc.com

CONFIRMATION 2022 | A FIRM FOUNDATION: We are calling out to all 7th and 8th grade students as we prepare to begin a new year of Confirmation Classes. Confirmation is a journey for 7th/8th grade students to explore what it means to be a Christian and to have the opportunity to claim their faith on their own and becoming a member of Avenue United Methodist Church.

Classes will begin in January and we will meet at least once a month on Sundays at 5:00 p.m. Confirmation students are expected to attend all classes (there is some grace) and be a regular participant in worship. Students will have some work to do during the process, and we'll have a good time while we are at it. Students will be confirmed on June 5, 2022, which is Pentecost Sunday.

Please email Pastor Steve at srlamotte@avenueumc.com to register for Confirmation Class 2022.

MILFORD LIONS CLUB: Milford Lions Club is collecting used eyeglasses. There is a donation box in the coat closet.

MEAL TRAIN AT AVENUE: Health Ministries is looking for folks in the Avenue family who like to cook and would like to prepare meals for those who are sick, who have had loved ones pass, or who have had new babies as a way to care for one another. If you would like to receive emails when we need meals, you can email Sharon at sharonclendaniel@msn.com or call at (302) 390-6368.

MILFORD COMMUNITY PANTRY: The holiday season is upon us. As you shop on Amazon you can help the Milford Community Pantry. Use smile.amazon.com and select your charity. Enter Milford Community Pantry, Milford, DE and then everything you shop through Amazon Smile

we will receive a small credit. It is easy and cost you nothing. We receive a check and are very grateful. Trite is true ... ***Remember the reason for the season.*** No matter where you shop we celebrate the gift of Jesus. **The food pantry needs cereal.**

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN (UMW): United Methodist Women meet monthly in small groups and circle meetings at Avenue Church. Esther Circle meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. and Sarah Circle meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. If you think you might be interested in being part of a mission minded group of women, please plan to come to one of these meetings. You will be welcome and lifted up. For further information, please call Beth Parker at (302) 382-5581 or bparke42@comcast.net.

CHRISMON- BRING JOY TO CHILDREN THIS CHRISTMAS: As for many years, children of The Milford School District are the recipients of your generous gifts for Christmas. Due to this year's societal circumstances, we are asking for Monetary Donations. Gift cards will be purchased for children. Last year you provided for 152 children – 63 families and a few adults. In addition, at the request of Pastor Steve, hats, gloves for children, women or men will gladly be accepted, unwrapped and may be placed beneath the Sanctuary Chrismon Tree.

DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SUNSHINE BIBLE CLASS: The Sunshine Bible Class for adults led by Rev. John Van Tine, retired, is meeting in the Grier Room at 10:15 a.m.. Our study for December is "Wait for It." The lesson for December 5th is "A Long Wait" based on Luke 1:5-25, 57-58; December 12th lesson is "Mary's Pondering" based on Luke 1:26-38, 46-55; December 19th lesson is "Waiting for Prophecy to Be Fulfilled" based on Luke 2:25-38; and December 26th lesson is "Jesus is Waiting" based on Revelation 3:20-4:11. Plan to join us in the Grier Room for these exciting lessons.

SISTERS BIBLE STUDY: We will finish up our study "Incarnation" by Adam Hamilton. Join us and bring a friend. We will meet on **December 6th** at 10:00 a.m. in the Grier Room, so please be a few minutes early.

CODE PURPLE: The CODE PURPLE season is quickly approaching. CODE PURPLE provides shelter for homeless men and women during the winter months. This will be the fifth year that Avenue has been a CODE PURPLE site for homeless men in the Milford area. Avenue provides shelter in the Wesley Room from December 1st through March 15th.

We desperately need male volunteers to be overnight host at Avenue Church. Each shift is from 8:15 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. Arrangements can be made in the morning if you need to leave earlier than 7:00 a.m. If you are interested in serving, please contact Tom Chilton at chilto@aol.com

SMALL GROUPS—ADVENT STUDY: Rev. John Van Tine, Retired, will lead an Advent Study beginning Wednesday, December 1, 2021, in the Holzmüller Room at 6:30PM. The study is "The Heart That Grew Three Sizes: Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch." This study will help you rediscover and reinvigorate your Christian faith this Advent and Christmas season and look at this familiar classic through the lens of faith. All are welcomed.

Code Purple “To-Go” Items Needed

The opening night of the Code Purple season is just around the corner. Avenue operates as a cold-weather shelter for homeless men in our community from December through the beginning of March. Code Purple is looking for "to-go" items to give to the men as they leave each day. If you'd like to donate items, please bring them to the church office during business hours.

Suggested Items Placed in a Quart Sized Ziploc Bag

Juice

Canned Sausage

Breakfast Bars

Pop-Tarts

Code Purple Also Needs

Coffee

Bottled Water

Sugar

Original Coffee-Mate (Liquid)

Hot Cups



Our Lord gives us light...

Growing up on a farm littered with trees and along a waterway, summer storms that would “come up the bay”, as the local watermen would phrase it, posed a continual threat to the vulnerable power lines. Losing electricity in the summer was as commonplace as relatives visiting from out of town. While not as challenging during the day, it was the loss of power at night, being in total darkness on an isolated farm, which brought everything to a standstill. After a few experiences of this, everyone in my family more or less knew what to do in such circumstances, which was not very much, save my mom. It was she who was responsible for the kerosene lamp that was on the shelf in the dining room. The routine was this....everyone would be doing their own thing at some particular spot in the house with the aid of the relied upon electricity and then the lights would suddenly go out, often with no warning, and the house was plunged into darkness. Our jobs were quite simple....stay still, be patient and wait for the light, which to us meant give mom time to feel her way to the lamp, light it, and then set it on the kitchen table. I'm not sure this is the appropriate word, but I remember those times distinctly, waiting in the darkness, and my eyes seemed “starved” for light. And no matter where we were in the house at the time, our eyes would eventually pick up an incredibly dim glow of light, and we would all, from various points in the house, make our way to the kitchen, to where the light was emanating. The closer we got to the light, the brighter the light became.

Our Lord is the light of our lives, and while His light is forever in our midst, it is most dear to us when we have experienced the darkness that comes with loss. No matter the number of losses we have experienced, the light of the Lord cannot be blotted out. Our Lord *is* light and that light is life, both now and to come. In our time of loss, may we hunger for the light of the Lord....*as the deer pants for water*...and let us, like we did as kids in my home so many years ago, put step in front of cautious step toward the growing light of the Lord's loving presence in our midst. He is with us, always!...Amen

www.daybreakcounseling.org

“Yea, thou art my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness.”

2 Samuel 22:29



Miracle on Bethlehem Street

A Musical for All Ages

OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY

Multi-generational participation:

Families with children . . .

youth . . . single adults . . . senior adults . . .

ONLY 4 REHEARSALS

Learn your music at home with mp3 files

PRESENTATION

Sunday, December, 12th at 4:00PM

For more information, contact Kevin Chamberlain KBChamberlain@avenueumc.com



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 **\$7.50** each. The Altar Guild has requested that we only order 100 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 \$7.50 _____

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 19th and Christmas Eve.

Please make checks payable to Avenue United Methodist Church

Orders MUST be in no later than Wednesday, December 15th



ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS TO:

- **Jack and Mary Lou Sheaffer** on celebrating their **57th** anniversary on **December 5th**.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- Those affected by the COVID-19, Medical Staff, and distributing the vaccine.
- Our local, national, and world leaders.
- Our District Superintendent (Rev. Joseph Archie), Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, and The United Methodist Church.
- The Pastors, Staff, and Leadership of Avenue United Methodist Church.
- Kidnapped missionaries in Haiti.

PRAYER REQUEST:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Frank & Frances Beebe | Karl Isele | Roy Rigby |
| Brenda Beissel | Ron Ivory | Dick Roberts |
| Dale Brandon | Jerry Jackson | Lorna Rosella Rulona |
| Charlene Johnson Cannon | David Johnson | Phil Saint |
| Lydia Castro | Dean Johnson | Richard Sapp |
| Adriel Castro and family | Joie | Vicki Schultes |
| Alex Castro and family | Justin | Alice Sellers |
| Mary Charnick | Chris K. | Lexi Silicato |
| Ginny Clendaniel | Katie and family | Roland Simms |
| Jack & Denney Collins | Linda Kemp | Racheal Simesak |
| Luisa & Billy Combs | Doris Koon | Linda Singleton |
| Lauren Connell | Rhoda & Greg Kurz | Samuel Smith |
| Susan Cooper | Jean Layton | Carrie Sullivan |
| Craig | Nancy Lee | Brenda Thompson |
| Rick Crump | Brittany Poore Little | Joan Wadman |
| Joanna Denney-Turner | Jack & Zelda McDuff | TJ Webb |
| William Ernst | Reagan McGovern | Josh Willey |
| Ken Fechter | Donna Meck | Danny Wine |
| Charlie & Barbara | Sonny Meck | Dorothy Yates |
| Fleetwood | Tiffany Medlin | Betty Ziesel |
| Jayne Frank | Megan | |
| Jason, Joanna & Garrett | Susie Miller | |
| Franklin | Orville Mills | |
| Todd French | Stan Moody | |
| Gail & Jeffrey | Jean Murphy | |
| Tom Glenn | Jason Neall | |
| Connie Grieship | Larry Passwaters | |
| Alina Guido | Laurel Pastor | |
| Nikki Gustafson | Charles Paulaitis | |
| Al Hanna | Ron Payne | |
| Sam Hanna | Walt Peters | |
| Dave Harris | Patty R | |
| Beverly Harrison | Millie Remick | |