



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

February 2024

Vol. 208

A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

February Days

Ellwood Roberts

The icy northern blast sweeps by, from wild wastes of the Arctic snow;
Above us droops a wintry sky, a bleak white landscape lies below.
But, 'neath the chilly Polar blast, a low, sweet undertone I hear:
"The wintry storms will soon be past, and pleasant Spring-time days are near."

Saints,

Grace to you and peace!

As I write this "chat" it's mid-January and as the temperature is not supposed to rise above the freezing mark today, there's no sign that "*pleasant Spring-time days are near!*" It's been a couple of years since we've had a "cold spell" like this one, and hopefully by the time you're reading this our outdoor thermometers will be displaying a longer line of mercury!

2024 is a leap year, and doing some calculations this morning I realized that had I been born on February 29th, this month I would be celebrating my 17th birthday! The good news is that I would be a teenager with infinitely more wisdom than I possessed when I actually turned 17. The bad news is, I would only now be getting my NJ driver's license! That might have been inconvenient, but it sounds like a good trade-off to me- I'll take it!

The thought of February also takes me back to my 3rd grade classroom in Quinton Elementary School, with the smell of waxed wooden floors, closets where we hung up our "wraps," and the cardboard headshots of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln staring down at us from above the chalkboard that ran the length of the wall. (*If there's anyone under the age of 40 reading this, please ask your parents to explain the difference between a chalkboard and a Smartboard!*). Though it's the shortest month, February seemed to run on forever because during recess we were often confined to the classroom instead of going outside to the playground. That was no doubt done to keep us from having the skin of our bare palms stick to the steel monkey-bars in the sub-zero cold. Once back from lunch on such a day, we grabbed the games from the closet and learned how to play checkers, chess, Hi Ho Cherry O, and Old Maids (*no gambling permitted!*). Looking back, I regard 3rd grade as an extremely formative time in my youth when, as a precocious eight-year-old, I began to develop my love for science and history, art and writing. I wonder how many of you share similar recollections of that period in your life, and if not third, what grade in school was most influential in your upbringing?

Speaking of influential, one of the things I boast to my fellow clergy friends about is our amazing New Dover Sunday School program! Since the pandemic, we have seen a steady increase in the number of students, the commitment of our teachers, administrators, and parents, and a

bigger youth presence in our time of worship. Of course, Sunday School is vitally important when it comes to understanding the Bible and developing a spiritual sensibility, but Sunday School at NDUMC does so much more than that. Here our Christian faith is taught, not as something to merely read about and memorize, but to actually live out! Our kids learn the importance of putting their faith-into-action as throughout the year they participate in hands-on ministry such as collecting canned goods, raising donations for Bread Breakers, and participating in worship. We want our youth to remember this part in their faith journey as one that was challenging, exciting, and actually fun! Hey, if we can accomplish that, they will have a much better chance to carry what they've learned and experienced here throughout the rest of their lives, continually cultivating their faith wherever their journey takes them. Who knows, maybe one day they'll show up in our awesome adult Sunday School class and share their story with those of us who are passionate about our own faith journey!

So Saints, stay inside for recess when it's freezing, wear gloves when you go outside, and remember, despite appearances, "pleasant Spring-time days are near!"

Your servant in Christ,

Rev Chuck

Rev. Chuck Coblentz

PS: This edition of "Chuck's Church Chat" is written in loving memory of Nancy Preston, who, for some reason, enjoyed reading my scribblings, and every month would quiz her daughter, Jayne, as to their contents! We all miss you, Nancy!



In Loving Memory
November 27, 2934 - December 30, 2023

KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Manny & Nora De La Paz
Debbie Ladym
Shirley & Lamont Shaffer
Beverly Vollmar
Evelyn MacKenzie
Fran Livecchia
Gail Engel
Family of Marilyn Kimball
Service men & women

Veterans
Homeless, unemployed
& uninsured
The People of Ukraine
For Peace in the ongoing
conflict in Israel & Gaza
Victims & their Families of
mass shootings
All Elderly of NDUMC

Pray for all those affected by Natural Disasters, those suffering with addictions, those suffering from depression, Victims of terrorism & violence, all national leaders, and all those serving at New Dover UMC.

All doctors, nurses, EMT, teachers, grocery store workers, janitors, and all other frontline workers. Thank you and God Bless.

If you wish to add anyone to the 2023 permanent prayer list, please contact Karen Rowland at krowland648@yahoo.com

FROM YOUR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

In This Issue:

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- Keep Us in Your Prayers
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- Sanctuary Decorating
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- December Birthdays and Anniversaries
- Annual Parsonage Open House
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PLEASE JOIN US FOR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP EVERY
WEDNESDAY MORNING AT 10 AM

IF THERE IS ONE PLACE
WE HAVE THE RIGHT
TO BE BOLD
BEFORE OUR GOD,
IT IS IN PRAYER.

PASTOR CHUCK SWINDOLL

SERMON OF THE MONTH

“Doesn’t Matter to Them”

Preached on Sunday, February 2, 2020

Matthew 11:16-19 Isaiah 35:3-6a

‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

***“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”***

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’

My grandfather on Mom’s side, “Pop Pop” Niblock, besides being a legendary pork butcher, was an ornery, fun-loving grandpop who doted on his three grandsons. On top of that, he was a genuine character! One of Pop Pop’s peculiarities was his habit of giving nicknames to...well, just about everybody he knew, including the three of us. My youngest brother Harry, who used to watch wrestling and flex his 5-year-old muscles was labeled “*Hulk*.” Brother Paul, who was always looking for ways to earn a little extra money on the side, so Pop Pop named him “*The Weasel*.” And me? Well, when I came home from college one weekend to find that Paul had infringed on my space in the bedroom we had shared for 20 years, I announced that “*the king has returned*,” and he was to retreat back to his own territory! Pop Pop got such a kick out of my declaration that he immediately renamed me “*The King*,” a name that my brothers still call me, if only sarcastically!

The point is, whenever Pop Pop gave someone a new name, rest assured it was always meant as a term of endearment or to raise a smile; never an insult or put-down. But not everyone who attaches a label to another person is so well-meaning. Sometimes it can be downright mean! Which brings us to... ***it’s an election year!!!!*** So fasten your seat belts, because here come those in-your-face negative campaign ads and Internet postings whose chief purpose is to stick a derogatory label on a politician’s opponent.

As you know, this means that if one is running against a Democrat the ad will almost always say something like “*...tax and spend liberal*,” right? And if one is running against a Republican the ad will inevitably spout something like “*...in the pocket of big business*,” right? Okay, that is now, this was then...

2,000 years ago, how did their religious opponents label John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth? We read in the gospels how first John and then Jesus came onto the 1st century scene teaching and preaching about something they called “*the Kingdom of God*.” It was their vision of a world very different from the one that existed at the time where the vast majority of the population was living in abject poverty, while only the top one or two percent lived comfortably.

In the Kingdom of God those who were the outcasts, the disabled, and the oppressed, were not kept down, rather they would be lifted up, while those on top would not hoard their wealth but would share what they had with the poor. In other words, the lower classes would be empowered and the upper classes humbled. In the words of Mary’s “Magnificat,” as recorded in Luke’s gospel:

***He has brought down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.***

So, how did this glorious vision proclaimed by John and Jesus go over with the religious and political leaders of their time? Uh...not so great. So they did what every unethical person wishing to hold onto power does to those they oppose- they labeled them! John? Well they called him a demoniac! And Jesus? Well he was nothing more than a glutton and drunkard! And just like a modern-day political attack-ad, if you can get enough of the public to accept the label you’ve put on your opponent, well, you’re well on your way to defeating them. Hard to win people over if they believe you’re either possessed by demons or a falling-down drunk, right?!

But as the parable teaches, Jesus was having none of it! He struck back and did so using both wisdom and humor. Jesus compared what those in power were doing to children playing a game in the street called “Weddings and Funerals.” There’s an old English nursery rhyme based on this verse in Matthew that goes like this:

***A wedding song we played for you, the dance you did but scorn.
A woeful dirge we chanted, too, but then you would not mourn.***

The game was played like this- when one kid sings or plays a wedding song, the rest of the group is supposed to break into a happy dance, but when someone sings or plays a funeral dirge, the group is supposed to mourn, cry, and wail. Jesus was in effect comparing John the Baptist's teaching on the Kingdom of God to a funeral- gloomy and stern, after all, John called the leaders a "brood of vipers" and demanded they repent of their wrongdoing. John prophesied that even now *"the axe was at the root of the tree!"* Not the cheeriest message, right? But desperately needed nevertheless! John sang a stark, serious funeral dirge of judgment and repentance, but those in power refused to mourn or wail.

In contrast, Jesus' compared his own message to a wedding, a celebration of love. Every last person, no matter their social standing, was invited in, to dance, and eat, and drink good wine! Not that there wasn't an element of judgment in Jesus' message- there was. But for Jesus' judgment always gave way to forgiveness and acceptance once the person realized their sinfulness. Jesus sang for them a joyful wedding song, but the powerful refused to dance!

Here's the thing, Jesus saw that no matter how the Kingdom of God was presented- with judgment or with compassion-it didn't matter to those in charge- they did not want change, *any change!* Why? Because change threatened their power, their wealth, their status on the community, as well as their comfortable lives. And so they devised a campaign of false rumors about John and Jesus in order to bring them down; they're own negative campaign ads if you will. *"Don't vote for John; he's a demoniac! Don't vote for Jesus; he's a glutton and drunkard!"* They labeled John and Jesus the way they wanted their constituents to perceive them. But again, that almost always happens whenever someone dares to be a herald for change, threatening the status quo. It doesn't matter how destructive the status quo might be to the masses, there will always be those who benefit from it, and will do anything they can to maintain their death grip on power, including demonizing their opponents! So the question is - what do we do about it?

Jesus addressed his critics by asking the question- *"But to what will I compare this generation?"* He went on to describe a generation that rather than taking the time to actually listen to what he and John had to say, would rather simply label them and move on. But what about our own generation? How do we label Jesus? Are we as vicious as the opponents of his generation? Our first inclination is *"Of course not! We love Jesus! If we label him, it's all good labels! We label him our Messiah, our Savior, our friend!"*

But Saints, what if we hear Jesus' message as raw and unadorned as his own generation did? How do we label him then? Well, how do we label any person who comes to us in our time preaching an identical vision of the Kingdom of God?

- ⇒ How do we label someone who teaches we must love even our enemies?
- ⇒ How do we label someone who teaches we must love the immigrant as one of our own?
- ⇒ How do we label someone who teaches we must share what we have with the poor?
- ⇒ How do we label someone who teaches we must *"bring down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; and fill the hungry with good things, and send the rich away empty?"*

Saints, how we label them would be precisely how we would label Jesus. It's a challenge that cuts to the very core of who we are, those of us who dare label ourselves *"Christian."*

The one who invites us into the Kingdom is the same one they labeled a glutton and a drunkard. Will we turn away from his invitation to the wedding, or will we dance?



ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE FEBRUARY 23 & 24, 9-2.

**TO BENEFIT OUR
RISE AGAINST HUNGER
EVENT IN MAY**



**DONATIONS ACCEPTED STARTING FEB. 1ST!
NO LARGE FURNITURE OR APPLIANCES**

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SORT &
PRICE ITEMS AS THEY COME IN,
& TO WORK THE DAYS OF THE SALE!
(ALL VOLUNTEERS GET 1ST DIBS!)**

**SIGN UP ON SHEET IN FELLOWSHIP HALL,
OR EMAIL REV CHUCK AT ccoblen@msn.com**



Dates to Remember Lent/Easter

February 13 Shrove Tuesday Dinner 6:00pm
February 14 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00pm
March 24 Palm Sunday Service 10:15am
March 28 Holy Thursday Service 7:00pm
March 29 Good Friday Service 7:00pm
March 31 Easter Sunrise Service 6:30am
Easter Service 10:15am

Permanent Prayer List 2023

A Mother's Hope
All Cancer Patients
All Care Givers
All Children & Teachers
All First Responders & essential workers
All God's Creatures, Great & Small
All Homeless People
All Loved Ones who have passed
All Missionaries
All Our Past Ministers & Families
All Prayer Warriors & their Families
All Religious Leaders
All Service Men & Women
All Suffering with Chronic Illnesses
All Suffering with Addictions
All those suffering from Covid
All Who Don't know the Lord
Amelia Paporozzi & Family
Andy Young
Benjamin Lafferty & Family
Bernie and Margaret Mantashian
Beverly Vollmar
Bonito Family
Bonnie Gentesse
Brady Family
Brian, Pat & Families
Bud Butterfield
Caren Brock
Carney & Vilela Families
Children caught in human trafficking
Christians in the World
Christine Rowland
Convalescent Homes
Dan Mirdala
Dawn & Peter Burnett & Family
Debbie & Ed Ladym
Evelyn MacKenzie
Families along southern border
Fran Livecchia
Gail Engel
Greve Family
Jayne & John Bonner & Family
Family of Jenny Azzarello
Jim & Donna Sauss
JoAnna Mikels
Jody Colombrita
Joe & Shirley Kowalewski
Joe Mandella
John Resch & Family
Joycelyn Meade & Family
Judy Tymitz & Family
Joe Woznak
Family of June Ebbets
Karen Miller
Kathy Saporito
Katie Carpenter
Kevin Speckin
Kim Falcone & Family
LaMont & Shirley Shaffer
Lorraine & Bob Michelson
Manny & Nora De La Paz & Family
Margaret Campbell
Marian Jones
Marilyn & John Kimball
Maxine
Michelle Albanese

Misty Kramer
Molly Ruezinsky
Nancy Preston & Family
New Dover UMC Families
New Dover Youth Group
New Dover Church School
Nicholas Tucker
Non-Christian families in the World
Nora & Family
Olivia Rodrigues & Family
Our Nation & All Leaders
Pat Sammond
Peggy Pruitt & Family
Peggy Silva
Petersen Robyn DeCicco
Rose & Jim DeLand
Sabrina Benicaso
Sandy Katz
Steve Orzol
Stevie & Chip Kamenas
Special Needs People & their families
Support Ministries
Family
Protection of the Unborn
Rademacher Family
Family of Raju Christian
The People of Maui
The Unemployed
Those with mental illness
Tonya & Scott Burleigh
UMC & Conference Membership
Unspoken Prayers
Vicki Komarek
Victims of Natural Disasters
Victims of Prejudice
Victims of Terrorism & Violence
Vijay Kumar
Wayne Baston
World Peace
Wounded Veterans
Michael Yager

This is the 2023 Permanent Prayer list. Please advise Karen Rowland or the church office if you wish to continue the name on the 2024 list or if they can be deleted. Send updates by February 23.

Finance News

The Finance Committee is continuing to provide financial information. The following provides the income and expenses as of November 2023. The church income includes what is provided to the church in pledge envelopes to current expense and other income sources such as building rentals, flea market and various fundraising activities. Church expenses are shown which include salaries, utilities, conference obligations and other costs to keep the church operating.

New Dover United Methodist Church Operating Fund		
	2023	
	November	Year to Date
Income	\$ 30,282.09	\$ 324,896.46
Expenses	\$ (31,780.50)	\$ (353,241.98)
Difference	\$ (1,498.41)	\$ (28,345.52)

SAVE THE DATE CHRISTIAN OUTREACH PROJECT 2024 JUNE 23-29!

See Pastor Rosie for application and details

February Birthdays

- 1 *John Kimball*
- 3 *Alex Budala*
- 4 *Muriel Christie*
- 8 *Evelyn MacKenzie*
Rosie Pang
- 11 *Christopher Becker*
Granville Christian
- 13 *Mary Ellen Anglin*
- 14 *Jeremy Aludino*
Samantha Nocciolo
- 18 *Brian Rock*
- 19 *Dianne Petersen*
Karissa Tuason
- 20 *Bettina Kingsley*
- 21 *Tony Bonito*
- 23 *Poorna Jeevanandam*
- 25 *Bhaarat Joshi*
- 27 *Vera Henry*

February Anniversaries

- 2 *Robin & Desdimona Christian*
- 4 *Madhu & Swati Christian*
Jerry & Edyie DiRenzo
- 9 *Regan & Sheron Christie*
- 14 *Kennyson & Bindu Christian*



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner is on Tuesday, February 13, 2024.



This year (once again), the Nurture Committee of New Dover has kindly agreed to donate the funds raised from ticket sales from Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner toward COP scholarships.

Generally, each COP camper needs to raise \$500 for the week to cover the cost of lodging and meals, COP registration and basic tools.

Tickets are \$5.00 per person
Children under 10 free

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Lent Begins

One of the things I love about New Dover is our passion for ministry in the community. New Dover never fails to come through in support of mission work. That's the exciting part of being in this church family. However, just as we all have expenses in our homes, the church also has expenses in God's house. This is the not-so-fun business end of things. Without our facility, most of our mission work would not be able to go on.

Just as we have at home, the church has two types of expenses: Operating and Capital. Operating expenses are things like the utility bills, office supplies, lawn maintenance, plowing, etc. Capital expenses are for things that last, like a new roof, new HVAC, or a new electric piano. No one wants to sit in a cold, dark sanctuary without a bulletin. Both funds need to be supported to continue our missions and ministry work.

This year Ash Wednesday falls on February 14, Valentine's Day. This is fitting, since it begins the season of Lent, which leads to the heart of the Christian calendar. Lent is often looked upon as a time of reflection and sacrifice. We talk about "giving something up for lent." Perhaps this year you might consider giving up your latte, or eating out as often, or some other unnecessary expense, and giving what you would have spent to the church.

The Finance Committee tries its best to make sure we are clear about how your donations are being spent. Every week the bulletin has the current state of our finances. Check the bulletin and give some consideration as to how you can help. Every little bit helps! Thank you for your faithful giving!

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." –

Hebrews 13:16

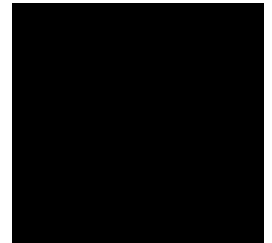


Wanted: Altar Guild Volunteers

The Altar Guild is looking for volunteers to help with preparing the altar for services. Duties include setting up communion, checking and replacing altar candles, replacing paraments when necessary, and setting up for any special occasions during the assigned month. New volunteers will be given guidance and assistance. Once trained, you can choose to work alone, or with a partner. Consider finding a friend to work with! The more volunteers we have, the fewer months each of us is responsible for. New volunteers will be given the "easier" months. Please see Kyle Becker or Karen Rowland if interested.



NEW DOVER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
687 NEW DOVER ROAD
EDISON, NEW JERSEY 08820



DATED MAIL—DO NOT DELAY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

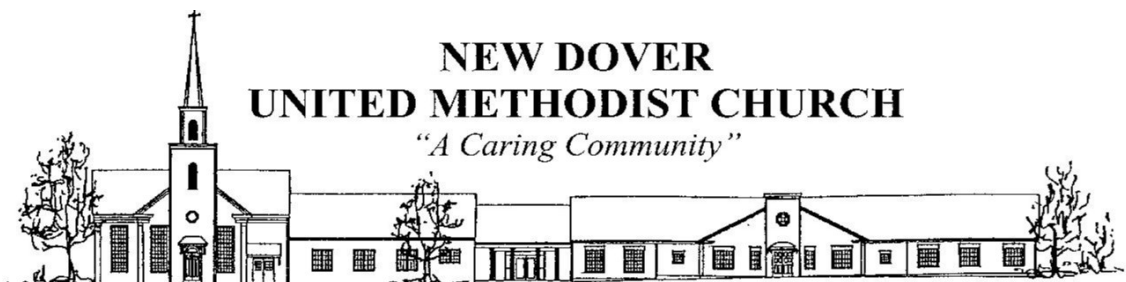
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**NEW DOVER
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
"A Caring Community"

