

NEW DOVER HERALD

November 2018

Holiness unto the Lord

Vol. 150

Highlights

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CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints,

Grace to you and peace!

Well, it's November and it looks like we've **finally** left the hot humid tropical weather behind us. In the meantime we are thankful that we have been far from the paths of the two monster storms that left so many in mourning, grief-stricken, and homeless. One of the ways we've expressed our compassion is through our hurricane relief efforts. Erin Markan, Brian Richards, and Paulette Harland, with a big assist from Jeff Rowland have transformed one corner of Wesley Hall into a mini-warehouse for filling and receiving flood buckets that will be picked up by UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief) for distribution to families in need. As of this writing, with assists from the Woodbridge Mom's Club, Girl Scout Troop 8005 from Edison, Cub Scout Pack 523 from Colonia, and the Woodbridge River Watch we have completed 67 buckets with additional supplies on the shelf—thanks everyone! Pretty soon we will be receiving flood buckets from churches throughout the Central Jersey region and no doubt many hundreds will pass through our doors on their way to Florida and the Carolinas. It's a challenging undertaking but one we are ready to accept!

Last month I wrote to you about a number of exciting events at New Dover so let's take them one at a time

- ⇒ From September 28th-30th): our United Methodist Youth Fellowship, led by our Student Pastor Chris Stanley, his wife Rachel, along with chaperones Brian and Pat, joined up with hundreds of kids from around the state to attend the IGNITE YOUTH CONFERENCE in Wildwood. Everyone who attended was ecstatic they did and it was exciting to see us reconnect with other GNJ Youth Groups! This is just one of the events helping take our UMYF to the next level. Weekly meetings feature lessons, games, fun, movies, and refreshments, and with Keswick coming up in January it looks like the momentum will continue to build!
- ⇒ Before a packed sanctuary on October 7th John Schol, Bishop of our Great New Jersey Conference, joined us for WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY. Looking out over our multi-cultural congregation he declared it's like "looking at the Kingdom of God!" During our "Moment for Youth" Bishop Schol shared with our kids what exactly it is a bishop does. Later on he delivered the sermon ("Would You Follow a Mad Man Around the World?") and celebrated Communion. Joy and inspiration were had as the scripture was read in three different languages and our Choir, Bell Choir, and Acts of Praise delivered uplifting music, including an original by our own Anita Davis appropriately entitled "Miracles Everywhere!" Thanks also to Connie Thomas and everyone who assisted with the extended coffee hour that followed!

- ⇒ With much fanfare on Sunday, October 14th we kicked off our three year “MIRACLES & MORE” capital campaign that combines upgrades to our sanctuary and infrastructure with the Conference’s “Miracles Everywhere” campaign. The week before Bishop Schol was presented with the first ceremonial bag of M&Ms (Miracles & More- get it??!!) and one week later everyone in attendance was given a bag of M&Ms in addition to a pledge card and a pamphlet illustrating some of the infrastructure challenges we’re taking on. Jeff Rowland and Kyle Becker made outstanding presentations during worship that further explained both what needs to be repaired or replaced and how it ties into “Miracles Everywhere.” As of today the leadership of the church has already pledge over \$60,000 of the \$200,000 goal so we are well on our way! Thanks to the Stewardship Committee for their hard work in getting this vital campaign off the ground, and thanks to all of you who will help us take New Dover to the next level!
- ⇒ Hot Topics is back and better than ever! Classes on the Book of Revelation on Monday mornings at 10:30 and Thursday evenings at 7:00 have been well-attended with lively, spirited discussion!
- ⇒ After focusing on the tragedy of Domestic Violence in October, our Social Justice Task Force in November will turn our attention to religious persecution in India and other parts of the world. Dozens of churches have been destroyed and thousands of parishioners and clergy have been beaten up and tortured, some murdered in the name of ethnic cleansing. We can and we will do something about this tragic happening that hits home for so many of our own families!

So, once again there’s a lot of Kingdom building going on! In the meantime our Sunday School continues to shine, the young adult Bible Study is off and running, the United Methodist Women spent a day at Sight & Sound, Operation Christmas Child has begun, and the annual Hunger Walk raised thousands to fight hunger locally and globally.

Hey, no one will ever accuse New Dover of sitting around waiting for the Rapture!

Peace,

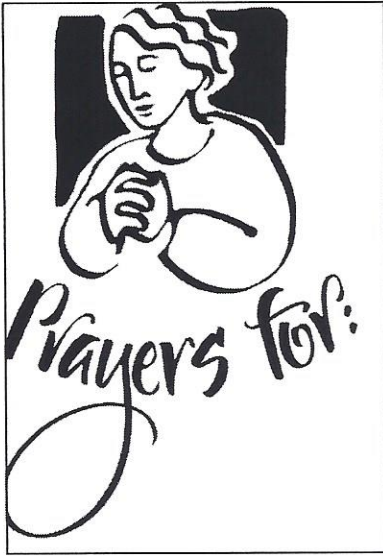
Chuck

Rev. Chuck Coblentz

Once again, in response to Hurricane Florence & Michael, New Dover is spearheading efforts to support families affected by Hurricane Florence by collecting UMCOR Cleaning Kits (Flood Buckets). The list of supplies to be included in each bucket was updated earlier this year, so everyone who wants to participate should be sure they are shopping from the May 2018 Flood Bucket list! <https://www.umcor.org/umcor/relief-supplies/relief-supply-kits/cleaning>. You can drop off your buckets or supplies at the church. We will coordinate the delivery of the items to UMCOR.



KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Bob Meckler & Family
Manny DeLaPaz & Family
Spencer Kolb
Christine Rowland
Eric Myers
Nayan Vyas & Family
Christine & Judy Tymitz
America
Christians of India

Marian Jones
LuLu Kamenas
NDUMC Missionaries
Preston Family
Boyce Family
Jeff & Karen Rowland
Our Schools
Robyn & Carolyn DeCicco

All suffering with
Addictions
Convalescent Homes
All Servicemen and
Women
Gayle Farrell
Family of MaryAnn Anglin
Allie Forbes

Pray for all those seeking employment, those affected by Natural Disasters, those suffering with addictions, those suffering from depression, those affected by acts of terrorism, all national leaders and troops, and all those serving at New Dover UMC.

Any names that may have been left off are not intentional. We trust in God to know all our needs.



If you would like to sponsor a family, please fill out an application and leave it in the office. Applications can be found on the office door. Pickup date to be advised.

SAVE THE DATES

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------|
| Nov 3-4 | Church School Food Drive |
| Nov 12-18 | Operation Christmas Child Relay Center |
| Nov 17 | Church Conference |
| Nov 20 | Thanksgiving Service @ Centenary UMC, Metuchen |
| Dec 1 | Decorating of the Sanctuary |

SERMON OF THE MONTH

Undercover Boss”

Sermon preached August 8, 2018

Matthew 25:31-46

“For I was hungry....”

This parable unites two pillars of our Christian faith: charity and divine judgment. The King alone determines who will go on to eternal happiness, and who to eternal punishment, and ***the only criterion*** he uses is whether or not the person before him reached out in love to their neighbors in need. Turns out ***this alone is the truest measure our faith***. If we possess a genuine faith in Jesus then it will be revealed in our actions, period! Those who possess such faith ***will*** reach out to neighbors in need, period! Those who do not, will do little or nothing in this regard, period!

Such truths ought to be evident to anyone who reads scripture. But what’s noteworthy about this passage is that the King hides his identity until just before he determines who will be welcomed to heaven and who will not. It’s a dramatic twist that takes both the sheep and the goats totally by surprise. And even though we may have heard this parable countless times over the years, we often go about living our daily lives without giving it a second thought! Most of the time it’s simply that we forget or ignore the fact that God is such a constant presence in our lives. But for many the reason they don’t help others is more callous and intentional.

There are many among us who would rather do anything but spend their lives helping out those whom the world deems worthless, shiftless, irredeemable. Yet time and again these are the very ones Jesus devoted his life to. And it turns out, these who we are tempted to judge so harshly, are the very same ones in whom Jesus is most present. Whoops!

How many of you are familiar with the “reality” show “Undercover Boss? If you haven’t seen it, every week they get the head of a big company, like Subway, Cinnabon, Orkin Pest Control, etc., to put on a disguise and pretend they’re a new employee of their company, just hired. Believing they are talking and interacting with a fellow worker, the employees honestly express their feelings about working for the company, and so the undercover boss gets an unfiltered look at how hard they work at their job...or not!

At the end of each episode, the employees are brought in one at a time and the boss reveals to them his true identity. The ones who demonstrated a good work ethic and modeled the ideals of the company are always rewarded in a big way by the boss in the form of a promotion and pay raise, or a college scholarship. It often brings tears of outright joy at such an unexpected reward they receive for simply being themselves. Correspondingly, the ones who loafed or fooled around on the job, or always whined and complained, or talked bad about the boss, or demonstrated a bad attitude toward their fellow workers or customers, are either severely dressed down by the revealed boss, or are fired on the spot. Their excuse is usually, “*Hey, if I had known it was you...*”

Needless to say, both the honest, hard-working employees and the whining, not-so hard-working employees are shocked when the boss’s identity is revealed! That unveiling is the most dramatic and emotional moment in the show. Of course the type of emotion displayed varies depending on whether or not the employee lived up to their boss’s expectations. As I said, for the hard-working, ethical workers it was an unexpected but pleasant surprise. But for the employees who failed to do their job or whined a lot, or behaved unethically, it is a moment of utter shame, embarrassment, and *woe-is-me* despair.

Similar drama is captured in this incredibly emotional passage from the Gospel of Matthew.

But there is far more to it than a God who goes undercover to walk among us, then reveals himself dramatically at the moment of judgment. This parable does far more than inform us of our fate in the after-life; more importantly ***it serves to guide our lives here and now***. All of the action that takes place in the passage, both in heaven’s throne room and on the dirty streets, lonely tenements, and prisons of earth, moves in and through the messiah king, the one we know as Jesus. If we accept that Jesus himself is our ultimate judge, then we can also safely assume we will be judged according to how we serve him. In other words whether or not we lived our faith or merely paid it lip service.

Think about it- why would Jesus live one way and teach one way, then judge us using different parameters?! Who will be the sheep gathered at his right hand? Right- those who walk the walk and talk the talk as he did! Those who demonstrate unconditional compassion for the oppressed and teach others to do the same. Those who, like the passing Samaritan, live out their faith by reaching out to their hurting neighbors, even when no one else will. Those who give food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, comfort to the mourners, company to the lonely, and justice to the oppressed.

Who will be the goats gathered at his left? Right- those who choose another path, who follow a different master. Those who forsake compassion for judgment; who choose prejudice over empathy. Who put strict conditions on how they dole out charity; conditions that limit their kindness to human beings **they** judge to be unworthy. Those whose Christian faith is in name only, devoid of the very essence of Jesus himself who never questioned whether someone was worthy before he fed or healed them. Those who claim to know Jesus yet don't recognize him, even when he's standing right in front of them.

It seems so simplistic- live as Jesus lived and we'll have nothing to worry about. But come on- if it's that simple why couldn't he have just told us? What purpose does that dramatic twist in the parable serve, when the King reveals himself to the people? Surprise!!! Well, perhaps Jesus is leading us into a deeper understanding of the connection between claiming faith and the actual doing of ministry? Makes sense because for Jesus, faith was always more than words to say and salvation was never something we earn to save ourselves from damnation. That would be entirely self-serving. The New Testament makes it clear- salvation is not earned; it is a gift from God, a life-force welling up from within that both guides and empowers us. It is both the inspiration and driving force of our good works, Contrary to what many church-goers think, we do not do good works in order to gain anything for ourselves. **We don't do good works to get saved; we do good works because we're saved!** But that misunderstanding continues to cloud peoples understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

One of my favorite TV characters of all time is Detective Rust Cohle of the HBO's series "True Detective," played so brilliantly by Matthew McConaughey. In one episode he was observing a revival tent meeting where the crowd of churchgoers was transfixed by the preacher's dynamic fire and brimstone sermon. Looking around he made this observation: *"If the only thing keeping a person decent, is the expectation of divine reward, then, brother, that person is a piece of crap."* Now while it's clear that Rust Cohle's intent was to cast dispersions on the believers gathered there, here's the surprise- Jesus would totally agree with him! We do not pretend to be decent, we do not reluctantly go through the motions, in order to receive a divine reward. We are decent for one reason- because we have faith in that man from Nazareth, that peasant rabbi who walked those dusty Galilean roads and dedicated his life to feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, lifting up the poverty stricken, rendering justice to the oppressed, and giving voice to the voiceless.

But what about eternal life? What about heaven? If we don't get it by earning it, how do we receive that? Well, the word Jesus uses in this parable is **"inherit."** He says, *"Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world..."* Saints, eternal life is an inheritance. And think about the nature of an inheritance. No one can rightfully seize an inheritance. It is a gift freely given by the holder of the estate to whomever he or she chooses to reward. Aside from next of kin, who receives part of the inheritance? Very simply- someone the estate holder liked and respected! And who doesn't get a part of the inheritance? Anyone who the holder of the estate doesn't like, including family members! So if you want to become an heir, it might be a good idea to figure out what the estate holder likes and respects...and what he or she frowns upon. If you take anything from this parable, take this- the King who doles out the inheritance of eternal life really likes it when we help others!

Now I mentioned that the purpose of such a parable, even one whose setting is the throne room of God in heaven, is to transform our attitudes and behavior **in this life**. In addition to offering us hope, this parable also renders us a warning, not given as a threat, but given because we are loved. You know, if there's danger around the corner a friend will warn you about it; and an enemy probably won't! Here Jesus is telling us that if, upon examining our life, we are not doing as the parable instructs, there's probably going to be trouble around the bend. If we think we can get by in life without being unconditionally compassionate to our neighbors in need there will come a day when we're going to have to answer for that.

There will come a day when Jesus, our undercover boss, will be revealed. For many of us it will be a day of ethereal happiness, but for others, well...not so much. And like the employees on undercover boss who failed to live up to the boss's expectations, they will offer all kinds of excuses, but in the end, there's no excuse for lacking kindness or compassion. Jesus was right in front of them their whole lives, but because their vision was clouded by prejudice, stereotypes, and misguided ideologies, they never saw him. There are many such people out there, and the good news is there's still time to change, still time to have the fog removed from their vision so they might see the Lord who walks among us, whose presence can be

found in every neighbor beaten down and oppressed by the harshness of our world.

All we need do is gaze into our neighbor's eyes and we will see him. Jesus' eyes peering out through the pain. Ultimately that is how he reveals his identity to us. Not through libraries filled with commentaries and theological books, but through our experience of ministry to the oppressed, the hungry, the lonely, and the hurting.

I end with the closing words of Dr. Albert Schweitzer from his classic text, The Quest for the Historical Jesus:

"He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside,

He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is."



Metuchen Edison Area Interfaith Clergy Association Presents



Please join us for

INTERFAITH

THANKSGIVING
SERVICE

NOVEMBER 20TH 7:30PM

HELD THIS YEAR AT

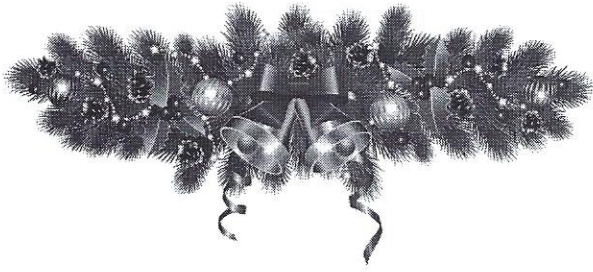
CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

200 HILLSIDE AVENUE

METUCHEN, NJ 08840

For More Information Call (732)548-7622

All Are Welcome



You are invited!

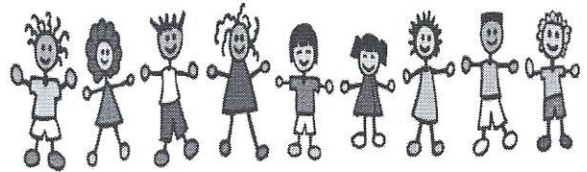
On Saturday, December 1st at 9 am, we will gather to decorate God's Sanctuary for Christmas. There will be a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall starting in November. Refreshments will be provided. Please join in for the fun and fellowship!

The Worship Team

The Children of New Dover United Methodist Church's Sunday School will be conducting a Food Drive to help give back to their community.

On November 3rd and 4th, please bring canned goods or non-perishable items to any of our services.....and keep them with you. We will be in church to collect them.

Please be an example to our children and join them as they give back to their community!



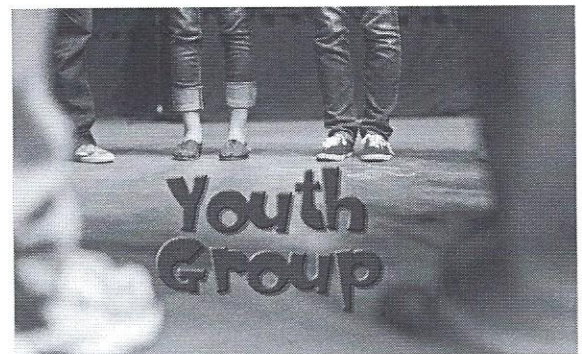
Children's Church



The dedication of the shoeboxes is November 11th. The relay center will be open from November 12 - 19th.

Volunteers are needed. Sign up is posted in hallway.

The youth group will be going to the MidWinter Advance (Keswick) retreat from January 25th-27th. This retreat is open for students from grade 6 to students in college. If are interested in going or having your teen go please contact Chris Stanley. You can email him at Chris.Stanley.9000@outlook.com.



MEMBERSHIP BLOG

We open with the weekend of September 15-16. Sunday School commenced, and many of those who had been away for the summer were present once again. The Chancel Choir returned, singing the familiar "Remember" for the anthem. As our pastor was away for the weekend, Paulette H. took the pulpit to discuss her work in the Dominican Republic. When God commands us, how often do we listen; would we rather just get on with our lives instead of answering His call? What if God ignored us when we called on Him? He is always giving and we must do the same as disciples of Christ. Paulette showed a video of her latest trip to the DR and talked about their new initiative Building Up (a new community center) as well as a future project here at New Dover to raise money for 500 Bibles to send to the DR. Thank you Paulette for your message and also your hard work these past 10 years in the mission field. Rev. returned the following weekend and gave messages related to his trip to Italy. On Saturday he spoke of spiritual jet lag, using Ecclesiastes 10:18; churches need to be "in sync" with the world and offer programs that reach people outside the church building. On Sunday, the Scriptures were Exodus 33:17-23 and 1 Timothy 6:13-16; Rev. noted that we know about God only what He wishes to reveal to us. We cannot assume we know everything about Him, and must continually look for new meaning and information from the Scriptures. It was music Sunday, and the congregation heard from the Chancel Choir, Bell Choir and Praise Band during the service. We offer a special thank you to Sunhee Y. for graciously filling in during Grace's absence. On the last weekend of September we were blessed to have JayR M. filling in for Grace, and Kyle S. and Emma P. providing special music. Kyle B., our Stewardship Chair, introduced the conference campaign "Miracles Everywhere", discussing the mission opportunities it would provide. Our pastor examined the concept of social justice and talked about the intense focus on it in the Bible. We cannot be Christian hypocrites, concerning ourselves only with our church business and neglecting others outside the church. We must be willing to change ourselves and our focus, then we can help change the world.

October services began auspiciously on the 7th with World Communion Sunday and a special visit from Bishop John Schol. The Chancel Choir, Acts of Praise and the bell choir all performed pieces during the service. The Psalter and Scriptures were read in various languages by selected readers, highlighting our multicultural congregation. The Scriptures for the day were 1 Samuel 21:12-14 and Mark 3:13-21. Bishop Schol gave the sermon, noting that Jesus was a man who was considered "crazy" by the people of his time; he concentrated on others instead of himself and that made him different. We need to reduce the focus on ourselves and turn it to others. Do we only want to see ourselves next to us in the pews, or do we want to turn outward and lead all people to see and experience God. Let's be "crazy" like Jesus! Communion by intinction followed the sermon. After the service, the Bishop had a chance to meet and greet our congregation during a special coffee hour featuring ethnic foods made by our members. Thank you to all those who planned for and participated in the service, and those who cleaned up after coffee hour. The more we work together, the more God can work through us! The following weekend turned cold, providing the opening salvo for the kickoff of "Miracles and More"-our new capital campaign addressing the renovation needs of our church. Jeff R., our Trustee President, presented a review of repairs needed and Kyle B. reviewed the specifics of the campaign. The Scriptures of the day were 1 Chronicles 29:1-19 and Matthew 6:19-21. Rev. Chuck continued the theme of stewardship by reminding the congregation that everything belongs to God and we need to be the committed stewards of his gifts. Are we giving with faith and wisdom, or holding back in fear and ignoring the Scriptures? Let's ask ourselves why we are giving and why we are giving to our church. Let's also remember where our treasure is--by advancing God's kingdom and giving in gratitude for His saving grace. Following the service, Fellowship Hall was full of outreach and social justice opportunities for congregants: Operation Christmas Child, Hurricane relief and also a sign up to register to vote! Thank you to all those who planned and initiated these efforts.

In other news, long time church member Mary Ann Anglin passed away unexpectedly on the first weekend of October. A funeral service was held at New Dover, followed by a repast in Fellowship Hall. Our sincere condolences to Mary Ellen and the rest of the family on their loss.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Our next UMW meeting will be held on November 14th at 6:30 pm.

Our guest speaker is from Hackensack Meridian Health and will present a program on Advance Directive (Living Wills). This is an informative and important subject for all to hear when life threatening decisions are to be made.

All are invited to join us for this special meeting. Of course, our own homemade refreshments will be served afterward.

Any questions, please see any UMW member.

SOCIAL JUSTICE TASKFORCE

Our next meeting is November 5th at 6:30pm. Please join us.

Our focus topic this month is the religious persecution of Christians in India and throughout the world.

Christians remain one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world. While Christian persecution takes many forms, it is defined as any hostility experienced as a result of identification with Christ. Christians throughout the world continue to risk imprisonment, loss of home and assets, torture, beheadings, rape and even death as a result of their faith.

Trends show that countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East are intensifying persecution against Christians, and perhaps the most vulnerable are Christian women, who often face double persecution for faith and gender.