



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

November 2020

Vol. 172

A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints,

Grace to you and peace.

The first three and a half weeks of November for many is a transitional period of sadness and melancholy, surrounded as it is by two of the most popular months of the year. October invigorates our senses with brisk mornings and colors shimmering from the trees. December brings us a thin sheet of ice on the pond and one day may surprise us with the first magical snowfall of the season. But in terms of weather and the landscape, November most often means grey skies, bare trees, and cold mud.

In "My November Guest", the American poet Robert Frost challenges us to gaze beyond surface appearances and discover the inner beauty that exists in all the seasons of the year, including November.



*My Sorrow, when she's here with me, thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be; she loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walked the sodden pasture lane.
Her pleasure will not let me stay. She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away, she's glad her simple worsted gray
Is silver now with clinging mist.
The desolate, deserted trees, the faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees, she thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why...
Not yesterday I learned to know the love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow, but it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.*

Our faith teaches us that there is something divine at work even within that which many may consider somber and melancholic. Looking back over the nine months of this relentless and often heartbreaking pandemic, our first reaction may very well be to focus only on the sadness and despair. But when we take the time to gaze beyond the surface we can clearly see the hand of our Creator, especially in the work of those who are doing all they can to get us through this pandemic.

After injuring her back this past April my Mom had to spend a few weeks in a rehab facility in South Jersey. Rehab is seldom fun, the worst part about her ordeal was that, because of COVID19, none of us were allowed to visit, and for anyone who knows our family, that was tortuous; we are social extroverts to the extreme! But although on the surface things appeared nothing but gloom and doom, underneath God's hand was clearly evident in the dedicated, courageous work of the nurses,

aides, and physical therapists who made sure she received the best care that could be given.

This Thanksgiving a family prayer will go forth to thank God for the “beauty” that shines forth even when the days are cloudy and rainy. It is my prayer that each one of you have been given a glimpse of God at work in your life, even in the midst of our current darkness.

Have a blessed, beautiful November,

Chuck



**O GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD,
FOR HE IS GOOD;
FOR HIS STEADFAST LOVE
ENDURES FOREVER.**

1 CHRONICLES 16:34

give thanks

KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Boyce Family

Judy Tymitz

Family of Tom Crouse

Pat & Brian & Family

Parkhill Family

Manny & Nora De La Paz

Debbie Ladym

Robert Engel

Cancer patients

Robin & Carolyn DeCicco

Tonya Burleigh

Service men & women

Veterans

Homeless, unemployed

& uninsured

All affected by Covid-19

and their families

Children with Autism

All Elderly of NDUMC

Paul Nolan

Mildred Roberts

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.

A New Day

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on the yesterdays.

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SERMON OF THE MONTH

"Thunder from the Mountain, a Whisper from the Tomb"

Preached on September 27, 2020

Exodus 19:1-9a, 16-20; Luke 24:1-11

The Hebrew scripture lesson from Exodus tells us that on ***the morning of the third day***, Moses brought the people of Israel to the foot of a mountain called Sinai. Turning to face the mountain he instructed them to wait for him there. Then, one foot after the other, he began making his way up the steep, stony slope, over ground shaken by tremors, as the din of an otherworldly trumpet blast echoed louder and louder with each mounting step. Peering ahead through the dense smoke and thick clouds enveloping the peak, Moses clambered higher and higher toward a close encounter with the God who would answer Moses' trembling human voice in deafening thunder. Meanwhile ***on the morning of the third day*** at the base of Sinai the nation huddled, anxiously, nervously, hunkered down before the maelstrom of sight and sound, like green troops before the heights of Iwo Jima. There they would await word of a new vision God had promised to deliver to them through his messenger Moses. How that message would be received would determine the young nation's future.

Now, let's flash ahead a thousand years. For Israel it was centuries of conquest and covenant, promises made, some fulfilled, many broken, a repeating cycle of humble subservience, followed by prideful nationhood and heartbreaking exile, miraculous deliverance from Babylon but then humiliating submission to Rome. Then came that hour when the sun rose unexpectedly on the dawn of a new age. It was ***on the morning of the third day***, that Mary Magdalene and the other women brought spices to a tomb cut into the side of a hill, so they might anoint the body of Jesus. Upon arriving at the grave, to their surprise they saw that the stone sealing the tomb had been rolled back. And so, cautiously, nervously, they stepped through the narrow entrance to the burial chamber into what they thought would be a melancholy rendezvous with death. But once inside, after their eyes became adjusted to the dark, they saw, not the prone, battered body of Jesus, but standing before them two complete strangers robed in dazzling white. The women quaked with fear and bowed their faces to the ground, but out of the shadowy silence the strangers whispered, *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."* There's a pause. Stunned silence. And then the women turned, leaving the tomb forever behind, and in the amber glow of a Middle Eastern morning made their way back to Jesus' remaining disciples, who at the time were huddled in an upper room and told them their story. How that message would be received would determine the young church's future.

From the thundering heights of Sinai to the intimacy of a garden tomb: two places on earth where, ***on the morning of a third day***, the awesome power of God, met the uncertainty and anxiety of our human race. Both sound rather dramatic, even alien, to our 21st century ears don't they? Who hears God's voice in thunder on a mountain or whispered in a tomb anymore? But Saints, what happened upon that quaking mountain summit and within that still, quiet tomb, is what's supposed to occur every week, whenever and wherever a pastor sits down to write a sermon! That's because the Kingdom of God is not yet fulfilled, and until it is God continues to call messengers forth to both receive the Word, and then deliver it, usually on a Sunday morning, to an uncertain, anxious crowd huddled at the base of the mountain or hiding in an upper room, sitting in pews or in this case lounge chairs!

Marcus Borg, in his book Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time wrote that throughout human history, there have been what he calls *"spirit persons"*, human beings who have *"vivid and frequent subjective experiences of another dimension or reality."* These experiences can come in various forms. One is *"a vivid sense of momentarily seeing into another layer of reality,"* what Borg calls *"visionary experiences."* Other times Borg says *"there is a strong sense of another reality coming upon (us), as in the ancient expression, 'The Spirit fell upon me.'"* Whenever these experiences occur, whether it's upon a thundering mountain or within a whispering tomb or in a pastor's office or study, *"suddenly the world is perceived in such a way that previous perceptions seem nothing more than blindness."* Borg goes on to say that these *"Spirit persons (all) share a second feature as well: they become mediators of the sacred."* How do they mediate? How do they communicate this revelation to the world? Well, they do their best to *"speak the word and will of God."*

It is obvious from the Old Testament reading we heard this morning that Moses was just such a mediator. He was called forth, he experienced the presence of the Holy on the mountain and upon his return he spoke God's word to the people gathered at the foothills of Sinai. So too the women in our Gospel reading. They unexpectedly experienced a new dimension of reality in the tomb, and we know that they, like Moses, spoke of this new reality to the other disciples still in hiding, fearing for their lives. Two examples of how the Holy is first experienced and then proclaimed, and there are numerous other examples in the pages of scripture, from Jacob's dream at Bethel to Ezekiel's chariot of fire, from Saul on the road to Damascus to John's apocalyptic vision on the Isle of Patmos. Reading the Bible, it becomes evident that a common theme throughout history is that God calls individuals out from all walks of life to first of all, experience the sacred, and then to proclaim that experience to God's people.

Now there is nothing new or ground-breaking in what I'm sharing with you this morning- it is one of the basic tenets of the Christian faith, whether you're a Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal, or what have you. We believe that God calls on persons to be spiritual mediators. In the mainline denominations we call them ministers of word and sacrament. And once a person lays claim to that call, it is the church's responsibility to determine whether that call is genuine. In the United Methodist Church that determination is made by a group of clergy and laity called the Board of Ordained Ministry. If the Board determines one's call to be true, the church then trains and sends these individuals forth to become messengers in churches around the nation and the world. Now four plus years ago, through prayer and discussion with the cabinet, our Bishop John Schol determined that I was the one called to be New Dover's spiritual mediator. Yeah, somehow, through reasons we may only comprehend in the afterlife, he determined that I was the one God called into your midst. (*I know!*) I was the one called on to take those weekly journeys to the mountain or the tomb, and then stand before you on Sunday morning and report back on what was revealed to me there. Pretty scary isn't it?! That's a lot of trust to be placed on one lone individual, especially an Eagle and a Phillies fan who wandered north from the swamps of South Jersey! But as nerve-racking as it's been for you who weekly gather in your pews and lounge chairs at the base of Mount Sinai, I can tell you unequivocally it's even scarier for those of us called to journey up the slopes of the mountain or tiptoe into the tomb to encounter something sacred and then report back to you on Sunday.

Saints, in my experience there's no more isolating experience on earth than writing a sermon. It's nerve-racking enough to bring a word of grace, comfort, hope, or tough love every Sunday morning to an expectant congregation living in a troubling, challenging world, but as intimidating as it is to stand here, this is nothing compared to coming face to face with the holiness of God each week behind the closed doors of my office. You know why I have no nerves up here? Because all my nerves were expended in the week before the sermon's delivered! Saints, encountering God's sacred presence revealed through the pages of scripture alone in your study is often very much like hearing God's booming voice on an isolated mountain top in the midst of a thunderstorm. Other times it's like stepping out of warm morning light into the shadows and hearing him whisper from the eerie silence of a tomb. And what's even scarier is that when you begin the journey toward sermon-hood at the beginning of the week, you really have no idea whether the Spirit will take you to the mountaintop or the tomb or the shores of the Sea of Galilee or the crumbling walls of Jericho! Wherever I find myself, I know I'm about to encounter a mystery that needs to be plumbed.

Couple of quick stories. For much of 1985-86 I was living in Boulder, Colorado. It was a year of transition, just after I had received my MS degree and just before entering seminary. I was certain that God had called me to ordained ministry, and so I felt I need to get away from Jersey for a year or so to sort things out. It was in May, after a five hour hike through Indian Peaks Wilderness, when I clambered up a rocky cliff and found myself all alone astride the continental divide. Looking out over the snow-covered peaks of the western Rockies was one of the most breathtaking vistas I had ever seen. Unfortunately, a few minutes after I got there, out of nowhere a violent thunderstorm bulldozed its way up the western slope, catching me isolated and vulnerable before its awesome power. It was there I got just a taste of what Moses experienced as he met God on Mount Sinai. But rather than facing the storm with calmness and confidence I found myself scurrying like a frightened mouse along the ridge of the divide with lightning hitting all around me, and not a shelter to be found. And of course with lightning there was thunder! We who are basically flat-landers find average thunderstorms scary enough; I know we've had some serious boomers this past summer in Jersey, but let me tell you something, our flat-land storms are nothing compared to the terror a thunderstorm inflicts when you're enveloped by one in the mountains! Every crack of thunder smashed into the sides of the surrounding mountains and reverberated back upon my ear drums, echoing loudly again and again, deafening me until I just threw my hands over my ears and prayed that God would beam me up and set me down in any place on earth but where I was. And why did I choose

to share this cowardly encounter with the *mysterium tremendum* this morning? Because believe it or not there are times when that's exactly what it's like to write a sermon! The times when there's a storm brewing out there in the world or within the otherwise friendly confines of our congregation, and I am called upon to face it. Times when, believe me, the last place I want to be is on a mountaintop dodging the thunderbolts of God so that I might live to descend from the peak with a word of judgment because sometimes that's what God wants us to hear.

But then there are those times when the journey has taken me not upward toward the swirling clouds, but downward into the misty shadows to a funeral I performed early in my ministry. I remember making my way to the cemetery where the committal of the body would take place in a mausoleum, not a large well-lit mausoleum with hundreds of vaults like you see at Saint Gertrude, but one of those modest, crumbling marble structures with a rusty iron gate and only room enough for a few family members. Leading the pallbearers through the iron gate, we left the world of the living behind. The bright light gave way to dark shadows; the musty air inside the mausoleum stifled the outside sounds till we could hear only the grating sound of sand and grit crunching and scraping underfoot, echoing off the marble walls. The Hebrew Scriptures have a name for such a place- Sheol, the place of the shades. So why did I choose to share this scene of shadow and death in this morning's worship service? Because there are times when *that's* exactly what it's like to write a sermon! Because it was in this the repository of the dead that I was asked to preach words of life, committing a man's body to the earth while at the same time commending his spirit to God, proclaiming the miracle of resurrection into the very face of death. The very same thing I and countless other preachers are called upon to do each and every Sunday. A sermon is nothing less than our proclamation of the mysterious encounter we had with the Holy that week. No, not in the form of an angel suddenly appearing in the office or the voice of God booming through the church's air conditioning system. But an encounter with the living Word of God, face to face in the pages of scripture.

That's what we who have been called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament are counted on to do each and every Sunday, but what about you? What is your role in all this? Well Saints, in many ways you are like the Israelites huddled at the base of Sinai, wondering about the future, awaiting word from Moses returning from the heights of Sinai. And you are also the disciples huddled in an upper room, encircled by an often frightening world, awaiting word from the women returning from the garden tomb. How do you react when the word is given? Well, if you have your doubts you're not alone! Describing the disciples, Luke tells us that *"...these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."* After hearing one of my sermons some of you may very well walk to your cars shaking your heads and thinking similar thoughts! But look at the bright side- it's better than building a golden calf like the Israelites did, right?!!

The point is neither Moses, nor Mary Magdalene, nor any preacher of the Gospel has any control as to how any one of you will react to the message that's delivered. When someone says to me when leaving the service, *"That sermon was meant for me!"* I usually respond, *"Hey I just preach 'em; God aims 'em!"* And I truly believe that. If a minister believes that every word from his or her mouth will transform the life of every person listening in that morning I would remind them of Jesus' parable where the sower casts seeds to the left and the right, but only a quarter of them grow to bear fruit. All we messengers can do is cast the seeds the rest? Well that's up to God and you!



**SMALL CHURCH GROUPS
CAN NOW MEET!**

**PLEASE ABIDE BY THE
FOLLOWING CONFERENCE
GUIDELINES:**

**WEAR MASKS AT ALL TIMES
PRACTICE SAFE DISTANCING
(AT LEAST 6 FEET)
NO COFFEE OR REFRESH-
MENTS (FOR NOW)
CLEAN UP/SANITIZE ALL
AREAS YOU USE**

**?QUESTIONS? CONTACT THE
CHURCH OFFICE
732-381-9478**



Our food ministry has grown so much since March. We continue to pick up food at Wawa every week and provide hundreds of bag lunches every week to St. Joe's for those in need. We have recently acquired two more Wawa locations in Edison and Avenel. So we need your help with pickups. If you would like to get involved in this worthy cause, contact Brian Richards at 732-433-3000 or email deliveries12@aol.com.

FINANCIAL NEWS

The Finance Committee is continuing to provide financial information. The following provides the income and expenses as of August 2020. 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		
	2020	
	August	Year to Date
Income	\$ 19,790.27	\$ 157,105.29
Expenses	\$ 25,014.31	\$ 201,029.05
Difference	\$ (5,224.07)	\$ (43,923.76)

Membership Blog

November 2020

Our blog begins with Saturday, September 19, 2020. A small but enthusiastic congregation gathered in front of the sanctuary for the first regular Saturday evening service since the beginning of March. It was a gorgeous, albeit cool, evening. Anita D. led the music and Rev. provided the sermon. Rev's wife Jean joined us with a canine companion, much to the delight of the attendees. The Scripture for the day was Matthew 7:21-23. Rev. spoke of faith without works. Do we feel that because we "say the magic word" and are saved that we need do nothing further? Jesus rejected people with such an attitude; if you only read and talk about the Word without following it up with action, you are still lost. During the sermon, Rev. also referred to passages in James and Galatians with the same theme. Welcome back Saturday night! The next weekend was Music Sunday, which heralded the return of our bell choir, about 10 ringers strong. Jim Dalton sang "It is Well with My Soul" for the offertory. The Scriptures for the day were Exodus 19:1-9a, 16-20 and Luke 24:1-11. Rev discussed that in both of these passages God's word called to an uncertain crowd through His chosen messenger. He then went on to detail the experiences and reactions of those who are called to proclaim God's word. If we are called, how do we react, and if we are those waiting for the proclamation of the Word, what is our attitude? Those called can only cast the seed of the Word-God and those listening complete the cycle of transformation. Thank you Alice, bell choir and Jim for making Music Sunday a special one! The next weekend was another sunny and fairly comfortable occasion, perfect for outside Communion services. The Saturday praise service included Anita D. at the keyboard and Rev giving the sermon on a gorgeous fall evening. The Scripture for the day was Hebrews 2:14-15. Rev. noted that this passage gives us a more personal viewpoint toward our faith and attitude toward the shadow of death. God empathizes with our lives because Jesus lived a human existence. Are we focused on the kingdom; do we have total trust in Him, His protection, His total control and our salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus? Don't let fear be the death of our spirits; let faith win over fear and be free to do the ministry of Christ. We can be the example as his servants, and we can provide hope to others. In faith we are safe! On Sunday morning, despite the coolness, a good crowd came together to hear Pastor Rosie give the sermon and lead her first Holy Communion. Congratulations, Rosie! On Columbus Day weekend a loyal crowd sat in the parking lot on Saturday evening to hear Rev give a tour de force performance; singing and speaking his way through the service, he treated those present to not only the sermon but a little of Cat Stevens and Willie Nelson as well. On Sunday morning the congregation was blessed to hear Mary Jane M. sing and play the guitar in folk-singer style-beautifully done MJ! In preparation for the offering, Rev noted how easy it was to give online, with Edgar S. responding, "Even a cave-man could do it!"; thanks Edgar for delighting the crowd. The sermon on fear, faith and freedom was a repeat from the previous Saturday, with Scripture added from Isaiah 51:12-16.

A big thank you to all those who are making it possible to have service on a regular basis, and also to those organizing and working with the Sunday School; it's not glamorous but oh, so important! Finally, let us remember long time member Tom Crouse, who met his Savior in mid-September after a long battle with cancer. Tom served his church and its congregation faithfully through the years, and we will miss his presence in the church family. Our deepest condolences to Linda and the family.

November Birthdays

- 2 *Lisa Chesney*
4 *Kyle Becker*
Rex Parmar
5 *Karoline Tuason*
6 *Melanie Lamoreaux*
9 *Tim Lindner*
12 *Daniel Mizak*
15 *Emma Burleigh*
16 *Muriel Besecker*
17 *Shannon Coyne*
18 *Diana Bennett*
19 *Matthew Murante*
20 *Sandra De Alwis*
22 *Sarah Castro*
Agnes Kingsly
23 *Al Vicisko*
24 *Robin Christian*
Jeshurun Paul
27 *Emma Patrimonio*
28 *Helen Burleigh*
Sam Harland
Landon Owsiany
30 *Sara Rademacher*

November Anniversaries

- 5 *Micheal & Melissa Owsiany*
12 *Lawrence & Wendy*
Castlegrant
19 *Ashwin & Lina Katthula*
22 *Brian & Stephanie*
Rademacher
24 *Victor & Meghan Vilela*
26 *Chester & Vicki Aludino*
30 *Zachary & Samantha*
Nocciolo



WORSHIP COMMITTEE - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Dear Friends,

At our September Ad Council meeting, we further explored plans to a future reopening of the sanctuary for indoor worship. Before we can proceed, we need volunteers as ushers and liturgists. Each Saturday service would need two ushers and Sunday services would need six. At this time, we have no volunteers for ushering at the Saturday service and can only cover two or three for Sunday service. In addition we need more liturgists for Sunday worship.

These positions need to be in place before we can move forward. Without your help, New Dover will not be able to safely reopen to indoor worship.

Please prayerfully consider helping with your time and talents. You can sign-up at church on Sunday mornings or contact me at Krowland648@yahoo.com or call 732-225-7264.

Blessings,

Karen Rowland
Worship Chairperson

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women will hold their first meeting on Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 6:30pm. After a very brief business meeting, we will hold a relaxing, social gathering and celebrate being together once again. (All safety measures will apply.) Please come out and join us if you are able.

If you have any questions, please call me (732-381-8688 or Peggy Silva (732-388-2920).

Sincerely,

Dianne Petersen
UMW President



I would like to thank everyone that came to Tom's funeral with support and love. I miss him dearly and was so overwhelmed with the love and support for our family from New Dover.

Thank You Again,

Linda Crouse and Family

Youth & Young Adults

Pray for our Youth and Young Adults as many of them returned to hybrid learning. Also remember to pray for teachers and school staff as hybrid education may increase the exposure to contagions. Be kind, patient and understanding of your school administrators, teachers, and of course your children.

Starting October 11, Youth Group will continue to meet in-person every other week and discontinue our weekly Sunday 4pm Zoom until further notice.

Sunday Meets In-Person 4pm



October 18 - Fun Sunday
October 25 - No Meet
November 1 - Project Groups
November 8 - No Meet
November 15 - Project Groups
November 22 - Celebration!
November 29 - OFF FOR THANKSGIVING

Sunday School

We're going strong and growing in our virtual Sunday School. Thanks to all 32 registered students and our dedicated teachers.

K-5 10AM Google Meets
MS & HS 11AM Zoom

You're not alone raising your children! We're here to support you. You can still register your children/ grandchildren to our Sunday School. It's a great way to outlet and let loose your children's thoughts and inward pressure from the world and be kind to their hearts and souls with the help of our caring teachers. Go to newdoverumc.org then Sunday School and click on the Googleform to register. Or, scan this code to stay connected and for announcements.

Do you want to give? We're looking for 2
Middle School level teachers,
2 K-5 (back-up) teachers.
Please contact Pastor Rosie, 917-453-1233.



New Dover Sunday School
WhatsApp group



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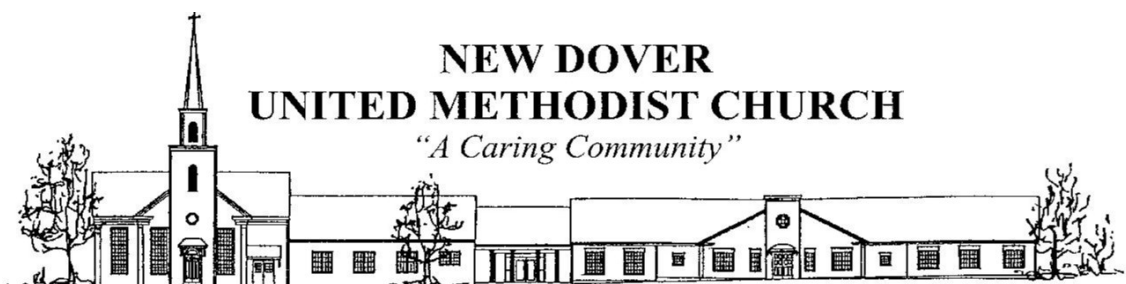
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SCENES AROUND NEW DOVER

