



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

November 2021

Vol. 183

A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

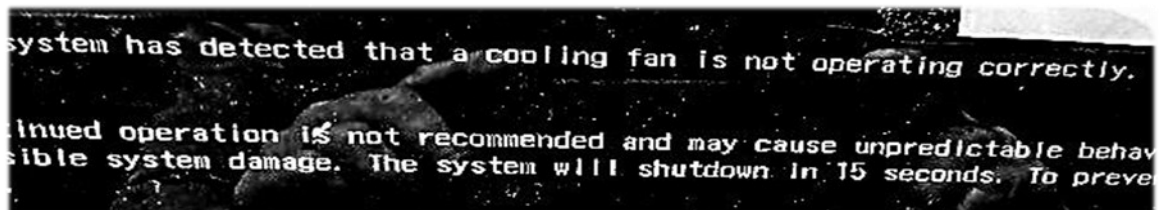
CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints,

Grace to you and peace.

Last Sunday morning started off so typically. I woke up in the dark around 5:45, crawled out from underneath the blankets, stumbled into the bathroom, brushed my teeth, showered and shaved, put on my “Sunday best,” walked out the front door, took a deep breath, and crossed New Dover just as the dawn was breaking. Once across the parking lot I took out my keys and unlocked both sets of the double doors in the breezeway and went straight to the kitchen where I microwaved what remained of the coffee left over from Friday, then headed to my office to get everything ready for what would be a busy Sunday morning. There was a PowerPoint to prepare for the new 9:00 am Adult Sunday School class, some loose ends to tie up before printing the sermon, and the worship slides with hymns and announcements to fine tune.

Everything was smooth and routine up to that point, but then I hit the button to turn on my laptop and that's when things got all *catawampus* on me. Because instead of my inspiring “buffalo-on-the-prairie” screen background popping up I got this...



Uh oh.... For everyone who's had a computer that refuses to power up (and I know that's most, if not all of you) this is not a happy moment to say the least. There's never a good time for a computer to hit the bricks, but come on man, a minister's laptop on a Sunday morning? Other than a main frame computer in a malfunctioning nuclear plant, it doesn't get much worse, does it?! Without my laptop I could not access my PowerPoint presentation, edit the worship slides, or (*horrors!*) print out my sermon. All because a cooling fan wouldn't turn on. A cooling fan? Really?! In 30 plus years using computers, I've never had a defunct computer cooling fan, but I sure as heck had one now. And if I couldn't get the laptop to somehow power up, it was going to be a most challenging Sunday morning with no slides for either Sunday school or worship and a sermon that would have to be preached from my shaky memory. Not good! So kids, that brings us to this month's lesson...

Unlike my Dad who repaired IBM main frames for 35 years, I don't know that much about what's inside the shell of a typical computer. I've heard there's something called a central processing unit (CPU), chips, hard drives, memory boards, ports, memory slots, and evidentially a cooling fan. Thing is, all these need to be functioning properly in order for the computer to do its work. ***One goes down, the whole thing suffers.*** And in this case, not only the computer, but all my plans for

Sunday morning.

Saints, in one key aspect a church is not that much different than a computer. Like my cooling fan, if just one key person or position is missing or malfunctioning, the whole church suffers, and if the church suffers, so too does our ministry and mission! Our church may not be composed of CPUs, chips, hard drives, memory boards, ports, memory slots, and cooling fans, but we do have essential parts like Sunday school teachers and administrators, worship leaders, musicians and singers, ushers, counters, committee and members and chairs, mission volunteers, trustees, financial experts, conference delegates, coffee hour volunteers, kitchen workers, admins, and on and on! If just one of those persons or positions are missing or malfunctioning the whole ministry suffers.

Saints, New Dover is blessed to have such a large percentage of our congregation actively involved in ministry; more so than most other churches. We are blessed every week with dozens of volunteers who realize that faith is about more than attending worship. Without **you** the work of Jesus Christ in Edison and any place our mission reaches would be severely diminished!

That said, for those of you who aren't all that active, there is no time like the present to fire up your engines and charge into the work of God's Kingdom! Rest assured, Christ has called on **you** to rise up and follow in his footsteps. That call upon your life isn't just about you; its about the entire church because whenever any of us fail to answer that call, then like the malfunctioning cooling fan in my laptop, some aspect of our ministry will lie undone and neglected. Realize that you yourself can make such a huge difference when it comes to transforming the world through the work of the Gospel! Not only that, but you will receive the priceless gift of a deeper joy that comes through a life service and self-sacrifice. Just ask anyone who volunteers at the church- the joy is genuine as well s contagious!

Okay, back to last Sunday- *all's well that ends well!* After about ten futile tries I somehow got my laptop up and running long enough to finish the PowerPoint slides and print out the sermon. As of now my computer is lying dormant in a repair shop somewhere in south Edison waiting for a cooling fan transplant. It's a critical case but I'm hopeful for its survival, because just like each one of us, it still has a lot of work to do!

Have a blessed, thankful November all,
Chuck



KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Manny & Nora De La Paz
Pat & Brian
Marianne & Eugene
June Ebbets
Lulu Kamenas & family
Erin, Kenley, Quentin
Robert Engel, Sr.
Nicholas Simone
Eleanor Campbell

Hurricane Ida Flood Victims
Service men & women
Veterans
Homeless, unemployed
& uninsured
All affected by Covid-19 and
their families
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 2021 permanent prayer list, please contact Karen Rowland at krowland648@yahoo.com

FROM YOUR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

In This Issue:

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JOIN US EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING AT
10 AM FOR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

*Prayers
have no boundaries.
They can leap miles &
continents & be translated
instantly in any language.*

Billy Graham

SERMON OF THE MONTH

“The Devil Loves Disorder”

(Preached Sunday, October 10, 2021)

Jeremiah 31:35-36/ Romans 16:17-20

I'd like to start off by asking you a question. Between the relentless pandemic, raging climate change, unprecedented gun violence, and the epidemic of lies and disinformation spread by cable news and social media, has the world ever seemed as chaotic as it is right here, right now? The Kenyan American singer-songwriter, JS Ondara puts it this way on his recent album, “Tales of America”:

*“There is a bear at the airport waiting on a plane.
There is a cow at the funeral bidding farewell.
There is a goat at the terminal boarding the C train.
There is a horse at the hospital dancing with the hare.
Somebody call the doctor, from the university,
Somebody call upon the witch and the wizardry,
Somebody call the rabbi, the pastor and the sheikh,
'Cause we are coming on the days of insanity. The days of insanity...”*

One definition of “insanity” is “*extreme folly or unreasonableness, something utterly foolish.*” Sounds like an apt description of our times, does it not? But is this present insanity really anything new? Hasn't disorder and chaos always been a part of our lives? JS Ondara might sing in 2021 of “Days of Insanity,” but didn't Barry McGuire sing in 1965...

*“Don't you understand what I'm trying to say?
Can't you feel the fear that I'm feeling today?
If the button is pushed, there's no running away
There'll be no one to save with the world in a grave
Take a look around you boy, it's bound to scare you, boy
But you tell me over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction?”*

Didn't the Temptations sing in 1970...

*“Well, the only person talking about love thy brother is the preacher
And it seems nobody's interested in learning but the teacher
Segregation, determination, demonstration, integration
Aggravation, humiliation, obligation to our nation
Ball of confusion. Oh yeah, that's what the world is today, hey, hey”*

And didn't Genesis sing in 1986...

*“I must have dreamed a thousand dreams been haunted by a million screams
But I can hear the marching feet they're moving into the street
Now, did you read the news today? They say the danger has gone away.
But I can see the fire's still alight they're burning into the night
There's too many men, too many people making too many problems
And there's not much love to go around; can't you see this is the land of confusion?”*

Whether we call it the eve of destruction, a ball of or land of confusion, or days of insanity, seems disorder and chaos is something we've all had to deal with throughout our lives. But its not like chaos crept up on us unawares! Not like this is anything new! Because it first reared its ugly head all the way back to the beginning, did it not? All the way back to the very first couple of verses in the very first chapter, in the very first book in the Bible:

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.”

Saints, the very first confrontation in the Bible was not between God and the Devil; it was between God and chaos. Chaos is God’s most ancient foe. The Hebrew term employed for the world when God first appears on the scene is *tohuwabohu*, meaning “**without form,**” the chaotic waters “over which darkness was imposed.” In Genesis 1 God does not create the world from nothing, but rather imposes order on the preexisting chaos. God begins by separating the light from the darkness, then the waters above from the waters below. This is followed by the sea from the land, then the creation of the heavenly bodies, and the creatures of the earth, culminating in the creation of human beings

The point the Genesis writer is making is that by the time God finished, chaos has been overcome and the world exists in perfect balance. And that’s the way it stayed all the way until the 3rd chapter (*Hurray! We humans made the rest of chapter one and all of chapter two without screwing things up!*), but in that 3rd chapter the balance of creation is thrown off and chaos is reintroduced. How? Not by any act of God but by the unfaithful actions of human beings. What started with Eve, Adam, and the serpent quickly escalates in the subsequent chapters. Cain murders his brother Abel. Cain’s great, great, grandson, Lamech, murders another man. And then in chapter six we read how human women started having babies with divine beings called the Nephilim! At this point, God has had it up to here. We’re told in Genesis 6...

The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually...and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ‘I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them

So, after instructing a righteous man, Noah, to build the ark (we all know that story, right) the horrible, cataclysmic day arrives. We’re told, “***...on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.***” You see what happened here? The barrier separating the waters above from the waters below is torn asunder, and the boundary separating the sea from the land is obliterated. God’s creative order is decimated and chaos once again ravages in all its fury. The earth reverts back to its primeval *tohuwabohu* state, back to a formless void awash in a sea of disorder and turmoil.

Now we might ask, why would God do this? How could God unleash such destruction upon the earth God himself called “good?” But if we actually read the passage we discover that while God allowed it to happen, God was not the ultimate cause of the flood. Listen carefully.... ***And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. ‘I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them***

The message of Genesis is clear. While preexisting chaos was there in the beginning until it was overcome by God, all subsequent chaos originates in the disobedience, corruption, and evil actions of human beings. ***It finds its source in us!*** Now some of you might be thinking, “*Come on, Rev! What can a book written thousands of years ago by a people living in a disparate culture tell us about the pickle we’re in here and now?*” Can this ancient account of creation still be relevant in 2021? Well, let’s test it! The verdict in Genesis was that **WE** were responsible for the reemergence of chaos upon the earth. So let’s ask ourselves, **WHO** is responsible for the chaos that engulfs us here and now? Who is responsible: For the pandemic that we have failed to defeat? For the rampaging storms and rising sea level of climate change? For the weekly, if not daily, mass shootings? For the spreading of lies and disinformation leading to mob rule and distrust in our governmental institutions? Is God to blame for the chaos running rampant about us? Or can we be honest with ourselves and admit that the responsibility lies in the very same place as it was in the time Genesis was written? Saints, ***“We have met the enemy, and he is us!”*** Like the humans of Genesis’ time we have no one but ourselves to blame for the mess we’re in, and if that’s so, isn’t it our responsibility to figure a way to fix it, to figure out a way to restore God’s order to the universe?

I bet there are some among us who wonder if that’s even doable. Who have come to believe we’re so far gone that all hope is lost. But here’s the thing- ***its not like we have a choice.*** Saints, ***we will either overcome this chaos or be overcome by it, because everything,*** and I mean everything, as riding on it! Chapter 31 of Jeremiah tells us exactly what’s at stake- nothing less than the survival of our very nation. He prophesied,

“If this fixed order were ever to cease from my presence, says the Lord, then also the offspring of Israel would cease to be a nation before me for ever.”

What was true for Israel 2,500 years ago is just as true for the United States of America in 2012. Chaos is not some ancient, amorphous, ethically neutral entity; it is here and now, and it absolutely has the power to bring down our nation as it has taken down countless nations in the past. And chaos is in no way ethically neutral; Genesis, as well as Jeremiah, make that clear. Again, chaos was God's most ancient foe. And the "Kingdom of God" so central to Jesus' life and ministry was all about what? Yeah, restoring God's creative order. Let me tell you something- ***the Devil loves disorder!*** Are we therefore not obligated as Jesus' disciples to oppose any and all forces that threaten God's orderly Kingdom of love, justice, and compassion? **Right now**, chaos is the destructive force we must reckon with. Once we realize this, the next question is "What can we do about it?"

Saints, the good news is this- [we already possess within us what's needed to restore God's order!](#) Hear that?! ***We already possess within us what's needed to restore God's order!*** We have the faith, do we not? We have the wisdom, do we not? We have the hope! Do we not?! We just need to fire it up, fire it up and get off our rear ends, and get to work, because the longer we wait, the more protracted the battle! Apathy and defeatism is not the solution because this chaos ain't going away on its own! Rather than putting this confrontation off any further, let's heed what the writer of Hebrews wrote to the early church:

"Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed."

So, assuming we are now motivated to go into battle, if we're looking for an effective plan to defeat God's oldest foe, let's see how the early church did it! You see, the early church had its own chaos to deal with, mainly having to deal with a plethora of snake-oil salesmen running around the 1st century Christian communities of the Mediterranean world spouting what each of them believed it meant to be a true follower of Jesus. At this point it was very possible that everything could go wrong and Jesus entire life and teaching would be forever lost to history. But that's not what happened! The church survived those early chaotic days how? By sticking closely to Jesus' actual teaching, while at the same time having faith in the power of his sacrificial death and the hope of his resurrection. As such this early band of believers provided us with blueprint for winning our own battle against the agents of 21st century chaos.

A good place to start is chapter 16 of Romans. The Apostle Paul was dealing with his own agents of chaos, who preached a contrary gospel, and muddied the waters once he left town, leaving spiritual confusion in their wake. They told everyone that their teaching was truer to Jesus, but Paul saw right through their rhetoric and called them out for what they truly were:

"I urge you, brothers and sisters, to keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and offences, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned; avoid them. For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded."

Saints, take a close look at that quote, will you? Was there ever a passage in the Bible that could be moved 2,000 years into the future without changing a word, and sound just as fresh and on-target as this one? This passionate admonition from the very last chapter of Paul's very last letter was his final rebuttal to all who would claim faith in Jesus Christ, yet teach the opposite of what Jesus himself taught, and preach a way of life that was the opposite of how Jesus himself lived! Paul exposed these so-called purveyors of truth to be nothing more than agents of chaos. They existed then, and Saints, they exist now, only in greater numbers! And the damage they are doing to the Gospel today is even greater than that of Paul's time.

Think about it- compare their message to that of Jesus! Everything Jesus lived and taught was about restoring God's creative order to the earth; everything they do is designed to bring disorder and chaos. Jesus built bridges; they build walls. Jesus preached compassion; they preach judgment. Jesus preached justice; they preach oppression. Jesus lived a life of courage; they live in fear. Jesus preached wisdom; they preach ignorance. Jesus preached the equality of all God's children; they preach racial superiority.

Why do they do what they do? Paul doesn't pull any punches: ***"...such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites..."*** You see they say its all about Christ, but really it's all about them! And they're easy to identify if we know our scripture, but what's really disappointing is how successful they are at getting so many to believe them. It's one thing to have some loser preach a message that's so blatantly anti-Christ! But how do these agents of chaos get such a large following?!

Paul, himself, disappointed with the gullibility of the new believers, knew it was “...*by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded.*” Man Paul! That’s pretty rough, ain’t it? Calling all those who fall for such smooth talk “the simple-minded?!” But you know, sometimes straight talk is what we need when we’re in desperate straits!

Just who are these simple-minded people Paul is referring to? They are those who fail to value wisdom. Who only adhere to scientific facts when they suit them. Who abandon critical thinking skills in order to ally themselves with certain leaders, simply because they tell them what we want to hear. Above all, they are those who fail to see the true motivation behind the “smooth talkers and flatterers,” that they are *not* in it for the Gospel, but are, as Paul puts it, in it to satisfy “*their own appetites.*” Such deceivers are not builders of God’s Kingdom, but agents of chaos, who feast upon fear and ignorance. Well Saints, *its time to starve them out!* And the only way to do that is through obedience to the true Gospel and gaining in God’s wisdom. As Paul realized 2,000 years ago, in chaotic times such as these *being wise is not an option; it is a responsibility!* We should never want to count ourselves among the simple-minded, rather among the wise; Remember how in Matthew 10:16 Jesus instructed his followers... “*See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.*”

Saints, the Devil may love disorder but as Paul preached, Satan and all those who follow after him will ultimately be defeated- “*The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet.*” *We want to on the winning side, do we not?* But in order to do so, we need to snap out of our pessimism and apathy, fire up our engines, and follow the one who goes before us. Do that and we will turn this chaos into God’s divine order





The Metuchen Edison Area Interfaith Clergy Association Annual Thanksgiving Service is Tuesday, November 23 at 7:30pm.

The service will be broadcast online only. Details will be sent out via email before the service.

There are currently 12 families on the Food Basket list. If you would like to sponsor a family in need this Thanksgiving, please complete the form found on the office door and they will be added to the list.

Food needed: turkeys, boxed mash potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, canned vegetables, stuffing, soups, pie fillings, cake mixes.

Baskets to be distributed on Nov. 21.





The Poinsettia sale is back! Flowers can be ordered from November 28 through December 5. Look for Lisa Gilmore or someone from the Altar Guild after services to order.

UMW News

Please continue to support our ongoing mission projects. As a reminder they are;

- Personal care products for the Women of the Veteran's Homes of Menlo Park. Items included are body wash, shampoo, deodorant, bath powder, combs, toothpaste & tooth brushes, Chapstick, body lotions, lipstick, scarves (new) and jewelry. All items should be new (please no samples).
- "Pop tabs" from cans for Ronald McDonald House in Long Branch, NJ.

Our meetings for the remainder of the year are:

- November 10 - Our guest speaker is Rev. James Lee. Rev. Lee is the pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church in South Plainfield. He will be speaking about his trip to Nyagidha Village in Kenya. Light refreshments will be served.
- December 8 - Our Christmas Celebration with covered dish.

We Need Help

Please consider offering your time to serve as an usher or liturgist or greeters at our Sunday morning service. These are important and valued roles in our worship experience!

Please contact me at krowland648@yahoo.com or text me at 732-742-7150 for more information.

Blessings,
Karen Rowland



November Birthdays

- 2 *Lisa Chesney*
4 *Kyle Becker*
Rex Parmar
5 *Karoline Tuason*
9 *Timmy Lindner*
12 *Dan Mizak*
16 *Muriel Besecker*
18 *Diana Bennett*
19 *Matt Murante*
19 *Herbert R Wittke*
20 *Sandra De Alwis*
22 *Sarah Castro*
Agnes Kingsly
23 *Al Vicisko*
24 *Robin Christian*
27 *Emma Patrimonio*
Nancy Preston
28 *Landon Oswiany*

November Anniversaries

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



MEMBERSHIP CORNER

THE WOLVES

The wolves are all around us, chasing us, nipping at our heels;
They surround us, barking and snarling,
Their teeth bared and tongues panting
In anticipation of the kill.

The pack has dogged our path since the beginning,
Sometimes in plain sight, often in the shadows;
Masters at the art of pursuit, never tiring or conceding,
As they steadily close in on their prey.

Who are these creatures, so determined in their flight?
Forces of evil, disguised for easy consumption:
Greed, fear, anger, lust, sloth, pride, envy.
Each tries to run us down, sink its teeth in our throats,
Until we give up the fight and give in to darkness.

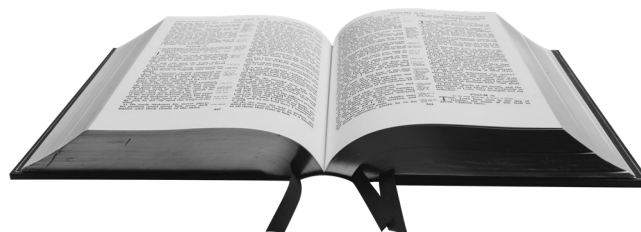
Why do they mark our every move, anticipate always the direction of our feet?
The pack knows every weakness, every shortfall;
Relentless, it waits for the moment of surrender, then tears apart the life of the
Spirit,
Leaving the body wounded and broken.

How to escape the sharp claws of final destruction?
We must cease the chase, turn and face the snapping jaws
Accept our weakness as His strength, use the Spirit to fight the dark:
Generosity, faithfulness, love, self-control, patience, kindness.
The wolves retreat, kept at bay with His Word and Truth.

Where ends the hunt and begins tranquility?
We emerge from the wilderness and stand in the field of His light;
The angry pack pursues no more, melting into blackness
The dark has lost, the body is renewed, the Spirit strong.

Victory in Christ-the race has been won.

Anita Davis
September 27, 2021



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