



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

November 2023

Vol. 205

*A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church
Celebrating 175 Years 1848-2023*

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

“My Thanks”

*John Greenleaf Whittier
1807-1872*

*(John Greenleaf Whittier was an American Quaker poet and
a strong advocate for the abolition of slavery in the United States.)*

“O friend beloved, whose curious skill
Keeps bright the last year's leaves and flowers,
With warm, glad, summer thoughts to fill
The cold, dark, winter hours...

Pressed on thy heart, the leaves I bring
May well defy the wintry cold,
Until, in Heaven's eternal spring,
Life's fairer ones unfold.”

Saints,

Grace to you and peace “*O friends beloved,*” as we enter this month of festive thanks! And we as a church have so much for which to be thankful, do we not?

How about a tremendous shout-out to our Anniversary Task Force and all the hours and efforts they've put in to make this 175th year such a memorable one! In addition to the T-shirts, magnets, and weekly history quizzes, those who were able to attend the celebratory luncheon on October 8 were treated to a program that, to paraphrase our anniversary slogan, “*Honored the Past, Blessed the Present, and Transformed the Future.*”

Following a bountiful buffet lunch, it was thrilling to unveil our beautiful new 175th Banner, revealing the efforts of Pastor Rosie and the D2C fellowship and all who contributed to it! It was also inspiring to hear from Bernadette Murphy of Saint Joseph's Social Center and Linda Closs from Bianca F.L.O.W.E.R. who shared with us how vital our Bread Breakers sandwich ministry has been for their work among the hungry in Elizabeth and Plainfield.

After that we heard from former pastor Rev. Bob Costello and his wife Margie, who drove two hours up the Parkway following their own church service to be with us. And *WOW!* What an incredible keynote speech by New Dover's own, Rev. Dr. Juel Nelson, currently serving the Greater New Jersey Conference as Director of Leadership Development. Juel gave such a moving testimonial to the Saints of New Dover who inspired her on her journey to ordained ministry, but she didn't confine her remarks to the past; she challenged us here and now to continue mentoring our young people as they, like she before them, seek out their own heavenly calling! How could we not be determined to take her up on that?!

The luncheon closed with what can only be described as a stunning hour-long video put together by Rhea Manglapus (with lots of help from her incredible family), that put in narrative form the entire history of our church, from 1848 to 2023, highlighted by personal testimonies from you, our current church members. By the time it ended there was barely a dry eye in the house...

And so Saints, the long journey of New Dover United Methodist Church rolls on, and though we honor all the Saints who have blazed the trail before us, the task is far from over! I cannot put it any better than did the Apostle Paul in his Letter to the Philippians when he wrote:

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

Amen, Paul. May we continue to be faithful to the God who inspired you 2,000 years before, as we ourselves press on!

Have a blessed Thanksgiving,
"O friends beloved!"

Chuck

Honoring the Past, Blessing the Present, Transforming the Future



KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Manny & Nora De La Paz
Debbie Ladym
Shirley & Lamont Shaffer
Beverly Vollmar
Evelyn MacKenzie
Fran Livecchia
Gail Engel
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

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Come...unload and renew
Prayer Fellowship
Wednesdays at 10 AM

THE WONDERFUL THING
ABOUT PRAYER
IS YOU CAN UNLOAD
YOUR HEART AND GOD
WILL HEAR,
UNDERSTAND, AND
RENEW.

-Pastor Chuck Swindoll

SERMON OF THE MONTH

“Putting Ourselves to the Test”

(Preached Sunday, September 24, 2023)

II Corinthians 13:5-9

Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to pass the test! I hope you will find out that we have not failed. But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong—not that we may appear to have passed the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. This is what we pray for, that you may become perfect.

Question- How do you define what it means to be a Christian? If I were to ask each one of you to define “Christian,” I imagine we would come up with as many shades of definition as there are people in attendance.

If we go to the dictionaries: Webster defines Christian as “*one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ*” According to Oxford being a Christian is “*based on or believing the teachings of Jesus Christ*” And the new kid in town, Wikipedia, states “*Christians are people who follow or adhere to Christianity, a monotheistic Abrahamic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.*” Notice how each dictionary employed different verbs in their definition: *profess, Believing, following, adhering to.*

How about how the church itself defines “Christian.” Here of course belief takes on a central role, but the definitions vary from one degree to another depending on which denomination we ask. Catholics define “Christian” as any person who is baptized and who believes in Jesus Christ. Baptists characterize Christians as those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who came to earth to save humanity from sin. Presbyterians define Christians as those who believe that Salvation is by Grace through Faith in Jesus Christ, and Lutherans describe a Christian as one who believes that Jesus Christ, true Son of God, and true man, is the world's Savior from sin, death, and the power of the evil one. And so on.

So you see, various denominations render a definition of Christian that centers on one’s belief. In short, whether or not one is a Christian comes down to what we choose to believe.

This may all sound good to us those of us who have been raised to think of faith as one’s agreement to a certain set of religious principles centered on Jesus Christ, but when we get to the biblical definition of what it means to be a Christian, we discover it’s about more than mere stated belief.

In Galatians chapter two, Paul gives us his definition of what it means to be a Christian: “***I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.***” So you see, for Paul, being a Christian means more than agreeing to a doctrine of faith in Jesus Christ; it means actually having Jesus Christ living inside of us! Now, here’s some good news for those of us who call ourselves Methodists: our founder John Wesley preached an identical definition of what it means to be Christian! In his sermon, “Almost Christian,” Wesley preached that for a person to be Christian, they must be filled with holy love and have faith in Christ, and by “holy love,” Wesley meant not a bigger version of human love, but Christ’s perfect love living, as Paul wrote, inside us. Christ’s perfect heart in place of our own flawed hearts. More on that later!

This naturally brings us to the really important question: How can you or I know for sure if we have Christ in us? After all, we can convince others, heck, we can even convince ourselves that we are Christian, but according to Paul, we can only make that claim if we truly have Christ living in us. How can we determine, beyond doubt, that our faith is more than just agreeing to a religious creed, but is actually the real deal? This was the very question that Paul raised in this morning’s New Testament passage.

Like each of Paul’s letters, II Corinthians was written to address an issue in the church at Corinth.

Paul, along with Silvanus and Timothy, had founded the Corinthian Church around the year 50 or perhaps a few years earlier. In the time since Paul wrote his letter we call I Corinthians, there was dissension in the church and many had fallen away from his teaching of the Gospel. This turmoil is what Paul is addressing in chapters 10-13 of II Corinthians. By revolting against the proclaimed Gospel upon which Paul built their church, they were in essence putting his teaching to the test. But in this letter, Paul effectively turned the tables and by doing so, taught those of us living 2,000 years later a valuable guide for coming to terms with our own faith! He writes...

“Examine yourselves...Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to pass the test!”

Here Paul is boldly challenging the members of the Corinthian Church to examine, to test their own faith in order to determine whether they have Christ living inside of them, or not. Pass the test and all is well. But fail the test, then no matter how many times one cries “*Lord, Lord,*” no matter how well one is familiar with Jesus’ teaching, no matter the times one *claims* to believe in Jesus Christ and him crucified, in Paul’s eyes they still don’t have it!

“Examine yourselves...Test yourselves,” Paul writes, but he doesn’t actually clue us in on what such a test would look like! So how can we examine ourselves to determine whether we actually are “Christian” according to Paul’s understanding of the faith- having Christ in us?

What if such a test reveals that we really are just paying our faith nothing more than lip service, and we’ve been nothing more than hollow-hearted church-goers, the same religious types Jesus addressed in Matthew 23 when he cried, ***“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.”*** How do we know for sure whether or not we are truly Christian?

For many it’s simply a matter of our heart. *“I just know I’m a Christian because that’s what my heart tells me, and I always listen to my heart!”* Sounds so wise, right? *“Just follow your heart; it knows the way!”* Sounds so beautiful, doesn’t it? But here’s the thing- is our heart the most accurate barometer as to whether or not we’re a Christian? Well, if you pay attention to the following two things it is not!

First of all there’s that passage from Jeremiah where the prophet stated so bluntly, ***“The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse— who can understand it?”*** The King James version of the passage sounds even less encouraging: ***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”*** The word in the Hebrew translated devious/deceitful is *aqob* meaning *“fraudulent, crooked, polluted.”* YIKES! And the word translated perverse/desperately wicked is *anash* which can also mean *“incurable, sick, woeful.”* So yeah, according to scripture the heart is most untrustworthy to say the least!

The other place where we realize the heart’s often deceptive nature is when we take an honest look back at our own lives! You know we like to romanticize and believe that every time we’ve followed our heart we ended up in a good place! But really?! Our memories can be pretty selective at times, right? I don’t know about you, but if I’m honest with myself, there were just as many times following my heart got me into trouble as there were times things ended up on a positive note! Heck, if my heart was a reliable guide I would have been married when I was 16 and had a job as a railroad engineer because that’s what my heart told me to do!

And think about the situation our country is in right now. It’s so divided, and why?

Because we have two tribes and each of them are following what their hearts are telling them!

They can’t both be right, and maybe neither of them are. Is there a way to test whether the choices we make as individuals, as a church, or as a country reflect having Christ in us, as Paul so challenged the Corinthians 2,000 years ago?

The answer is yes, there is, and it’s found in the words of the very one whose presence is being tested! If we were to write up a test based on Jesus teaching as found in the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, it will at the very least give us a good indication whether we can claim the name “Christian.”

For instance, how would we honestly answer the following 8 **TRUE OR FALSE** questions?

1. I believe I should go through life in a humble manner.
2. I have anger issues.
3. I prefer to keep my faith to myself.
4. I prefer to keep the amount of donations I give to the needy to myself.
5. I think it's possible to worship God and still strive to make a lot of money.
6. If my neighbor borrows something from me I don't pressure them to get it back
7. I am pessimistic about the future.
8. The Kingdom of God is my highest priority.

Are you finished? Okay let's turn in our tests and see how we've done!

1. I believe I should go through life in a humble manner. **TRUE**
["Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth". Matthew 5:5]
2. I have anger issues. **FALSE**
["I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment." Matthew 5:22]
3. I prefer to keep my faith to myself. **FALSE**
["You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden". Matthew 5:14]
4. I prefer to keep the amount of donations I give to the needy to myself. **TRUE**
["Whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward." Matthew 6:2]
5. I think it's possible to worship God and still strive to make a lot of money. **FALSE**
["No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." Matthew 6:24]
6. If my neighbor asks to borrow something from me I gladly lend it. **TRUE**
["Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you." Matthew 5:42]
7. I am pessimistic about the future. **FALSE**
["Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." Matthew 6:34]
8. The Kingdom of God is my highest priority. **TRUE!**
["Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33]

So, how did you do? In the words of Paul: ***"Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to pass the test!"*** If you honestly answered each question and aced the test, that's a pretty good indicator you fit Paul's definition of what it means to be a Christian. You have Christ inside you. Well done! If you flunked, eh, not so much...

But here's the good news: God is always willing to give us a make-up test! But before we take it, we'll need to do some extra homework assignments. So let's study the teachings of Jesus, really study them. Then let's put those lessons to work, because if Christ is really inside us we cannot help to put our faith into action! In short, let us strive to perfect ourselves in love! Let's ace that test! Do that, then there's no doubt we'll hear Paul's words of encouragement: ***"This is what we pray for, that you may become perfect."*** Amen Paul, amen!

Revealing the Special 175th Anniversary Church Banner

New Dover UMC, Sunday Banquet at the Pines Manor, Sunday, October 8, 2023 by D2C

Banner Creation

This "Special Banner Project" began early Summer of 2023, as the regular members of Disconnect 2 Connect-Helen Jenkins Castro, Justine Colon, Anita and Claudine DeSimone, Peter Nyema, Rosie and I (Stephanie Rademacher) came gladly and willingly to contribute to the church's special celebration today (October 8, 2023). We wanted to tell everyone what this church is about even after we may not be around to tell the stories. Just like the previous banner that was hung in the Wesley Hall quietly for years was telling the story to us.

Every segment of this special group project was made possible by many of you who serve and serve rather discreetly like secret agents and guardian angels. Can you see yourself in it? There's always space for more.

"Our Journey Continues... Growing in Love," letters were cut out by our Sunday School children and youth and each part of the banner was created by different members.



When we saw that the year ended with the new millennium (on the original banner),

We all knew it was time to create Part 2.



Why This Banner

"Church banners are visual reminders and statements of the victory Jesus Christ has already secured for us. Just as the church sanctuary is a revered place to worship, church banners reinforce the dramatic message of God's salvation and deliverance." (banners4churches.com/church-banner-history)

So now you see how this banner will continue to tell of God's story through you and me, and the victory we've experienced through not only triumphant moments like raising \$38,000 for ICU India, in the midst of world's greatest pandemic in history to secure an ICU unit in Christian Medical College in Vellore, India or feed hundreds of thousands of people through our Bread Breakers Ministry, but also as we overcome our physical challenges and come to worship and prayers, from those who are able to those who are in need.

We let the world see that through all the ministries of the church working together, some behind the scenes, some on the frontlines, God is empowering us, transforming us, and right in the center of our connectional body. As you can see, the flow of Living water is at the very center of it all.

Revelation 22:1 writes Then the angel showed *me the river of the water of life*, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.

Joh 4:14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

Psalms 1:3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

New Dover, we've been busy the past 20+, in fact 175 years. Let's not slow down. We can't wait to see what new and wonderful things God will do through you!



Youth And Young Adults

YOUTH and YOUNG ADULTS FELLOWSHIP
Meeting Locations of YaYA Saturday Meetings may vary.

October 21

November 18

December 16

We will be collaborating YaYA meetings with neighborhood church youth groups this year. YaYA members are invited to your Weekly Saturday Service Opportunities from 4-6PM available on the 1st and 2nd Saturdays.

*All dates are subject to change without notice.

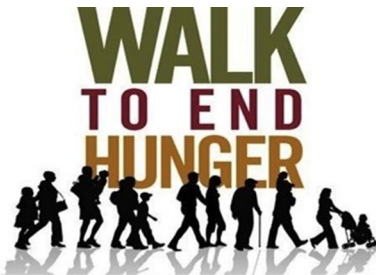
United Women in Faith



United
Women
in Faith

The United Women in Faith will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, November 8th at 6:30pm. Come hear Pastor Rosie tell us about important women of the Bible. It promises to be an interesting and informative evening for us all to enjoy. Then join us for our always delicious cake and coffee and the wonderful friendships we have made with one another. All women are invited!!

Dianne Petersen-President (732-381-8688)



THE METUCHEN-EDISON AREA INTERFAITH CLERGY ASSOCIATION

**HELP US HELP OUR NEIGHBORS IN
NEED!**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2:00pm
First Presbyterian Church
270 Woodbridge Ave, Metuchen
FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE REV
PLEDGE SHEET IS IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

November Birthdays

- 2 *Lisa Chesney*
4 *Kyle Becker*
Rex Parmar
5 *Karoline Tuason*
6 *Melanie Lamoreaux*
9 *Sammy Gadekar*
Timmy Lindner
12 *Dan Mizak*
18 *Diana Bennett*
19 *Matt Murante*
20 *Sandra De Alwis*
22 *Sarah Castro*
Agnes Kingsly
24 *Robin Christian*
27 *Emma Patrimonio*
Nancy Preston
28 *Landon Owsiany*

November Anniversaries

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



We will begin taking orders for Poinsettias on November 5. The last day for orders will be November 26. The price will be \$8.00 for a 6" pot. As always, you also have the option of donating money to the Memorial Fund to honor a loved one. Please see Kyle Becker if you have any questions.



If you know of a family in need, please call the office with their information.

Sunday School Food Drive will continue until November 12 and baskets will be distributed on November 19.

Food needed:
Canned goods, i.e. soups, vegetable, cranberry sauce, gravy,
mashed potatoes,
items to make pies, cake mix, cereal,
turkeys

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

WORDS OF WISDOM

These are the days that I remember, the wise words of a king now passed. Therein lies the truth of our lives, from whence the die is cast.

To try and apply our wisdom as mortal woman and man, reveals us as the fools we are and have been since our time began.

The folly of our own direction pursuing what we see; leads us nowhere under the sun, exposing futility.

The joy and wisdom of this life, the work we hold so dear; all an empty chasing of wind without Him who put us here.

We are reminded that for every thing there is a time and place, even for things which we are loathe to agree (which often is the case!)

Furthermore, we must take heed that God is neither deaf nor blind; He knows the sin that hardens each heart and darkens every mind.

A day of judgment will come for all, as He provides ruling and sentence; better to work for Him now and make today the day of our repentance!

We also learn the value of being a friend-the strengths and comforts it provides; within the cords of friendship the love of God abides.

Beware the life that you live-your actions, attitudes, the words you speak; show in everything you do that it's truly God you seek.

If you are living for yourself but say you're doing well, recall that worldly desires and thoughts pave the wide easy road to hell.

Finally, stick to the path that God has designed for you; His ways may be unknown but His love for us is true.

Carry on no matter what, keep leaping into the fray; He will always take care of us, come what may.

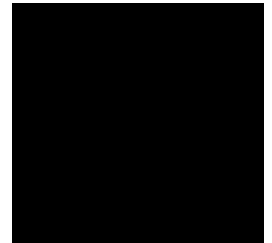
Keep Him close in thought, deed and prayer, for soon the years will pass away and in His heavenly kingdom you will see Him there.

Your body will pass but your soul will rise, and you will behold your Creator with new eyes.

*(inspired by Ecclesiastes)
Anita Davis, September 2023*



**NEW DOVER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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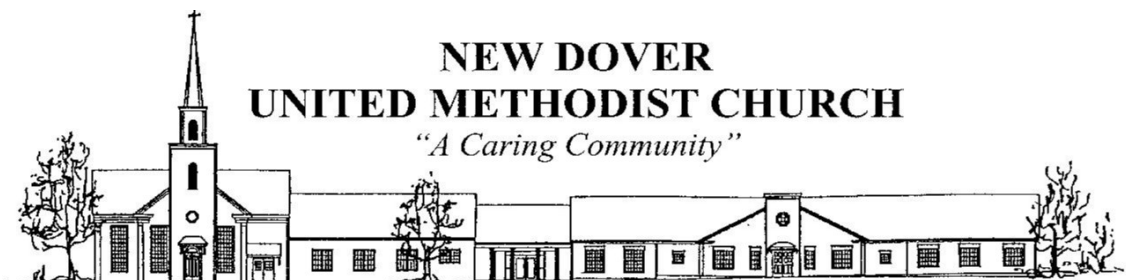
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**NEW DOVER
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

"A Caring Community"

