

NEW DOVER HERALD

January 2019

Holiness unto the Lord

Vol. 152

Highlights

In This Issue:

- Chuck's Church Chat
- Keep Us in Your Prayers
- Save the Dates
- Thank you
- Sermon of the Month
- UMW News
- Rise Against Hunger
- Church-wide Rummage Sale
- Membership Blog
- Calendar
- January Birthdays & Anniversaries



CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints,

Grace to you, peace, and Happy New Year!

Okay, first of all, please don't blame the US Postal Service for the late arrival of this edition of the newsletter. As you might imagine, it's been pretty hectic around the office this past month. At the close of the year, given the rush of Advent and Christmas, we're admittedly pretty burned out, and so we're conserving what remains of our energy and limping across the finish line with the first Herald of 2019!

Normally I'm writing the January "Chat" about halfway through December, but one benefit of running late is I can comment on our Christmas services, and so why not take advantage of my procrastination, eh? So here goes...

- ◆ Before I start, the crew who **decorated the sanctuary** really outdid themselves this year- such a beautiful setting for our Advent and Christmas services! Well done!
- ◆ Thanks to all who attended the annual **Parsonage Open House** on December 9th. Jean and I were so happy to greet and feed each one of you, and I was especially excited to see you guys wipe out two crock-pots of my chili in record time!
- ◆ The annual **Christmas Pageant** put on December 16th by our youth and directed by Mary Jane and other assorted Manglapuses was the best I've ever seen in any church I've served! Praise was loud and unanimous for everything from the stage, costumes, and especially the performance of the kids. It was followed by a full house Potluck Lunch featuring a wide variety of food reflecting our incredibly diverse congregation!
- ◆ On Saturday the 22nd "Acts of Praise" led a rollicking pre-Christmas praise service featuring their typical high energy and a new carol to boot! If you've never made it out for a Saturday night service you don't know what you're missing!
- ◆ On the following day over 200 attended the much anticipated **Christmas Cantata** featuring selections from Handel's Messiah during worship on the 23rd and we were rewarded with an incredibly emotional performance by our enhanced choir as directed by our amazing musical director Dr. Grace Kim- WOW!
- ◆ As traditional on **Christmas Eve** we held two services of **Lesson & Carols** culminating in the beauty of candlelight. Altogether over 300 came out to celebrate the Holy Birth! The 7 PM service began with the talented Jaffy Jeevaraj liturgically dancing behind the acolytes followed by a lantern-lit processional! The congregation was further treated to three numbers from our renowned bell choir led by Alice Bennett, and

two numbers sung by our youth choir. The 11 o'clock service featured a brand new Christmas song, "*In Bethlehem Was My Savior Born*," written, composed, and performed by Kyle Sanders and Emma Patri- monio that inspired a standing ovation from the crowd! We all left filled the sanctuary filled to the brim with the Christmas spirit!

Okay, so that's just a taste of what happened in December. So what's coming up? Glad you asked because the answer happens to be "A LOT!"

- ◆ Our **Hot Topics** study of the **Book of Revelation** kicks back in on the week of January 7th.
- ◆ Beginning Sunday, January 13th we will begin a **preaching series on "The Sermon on the Mount."** These teachings of Jesus as found in Matthew 5-7 form the basis of our Christian ethic so you won't want to miss a sermon!
- ◆ Our Youth Group departs for their annual life-transforming **Keswick Retreat** on January 25th. So far they have raised nearly all the approximately \$2,000 needed. Thanks to everyone who has contributed!
- ◆ The annual Metuchen-Edison Clergy Association **Celebration of the Life of Martin Luther King** will take place at 3:30 on Sunday, January 20 at New Hope Baptist Church located at 45 Hampton Street in Metuchen. I'm honored to be worship leader at this auspicious service and members of our church will be performing with choirs from around our community. This is always a special service!
- ◆ Mark your calendar for two big dates related to fighting world hunger. On Saturday, March 23rd NDUMC will be hosting and providing volunteers for a "**Rise Against Hunger**" meal packaging event (please see the insert). To help raise funds required to purchase the food stuffs for 26,500 meals we will be putting on a **Rummage Sale** running from Friday to Saturday, February 22nd and 23rd. Have some things up in the attic or out in the garage just taking up space? Start boxing them up and bringing them in!

Well that should keep us all busy it for now. 2019 has just started and we're already off and running! 2018 presented us with numerous challenges including big bills from break-downs to heaters and other un- expected expenses, but your giving exceeded last year's and so we enter 2019 in good shape to accom- plish even more in terms of building the Kingdom of God in Edison and wherever our ministry reaches. "*Well done good and faithful servants...*" I don't know about you, but I can't wait to start the new year!

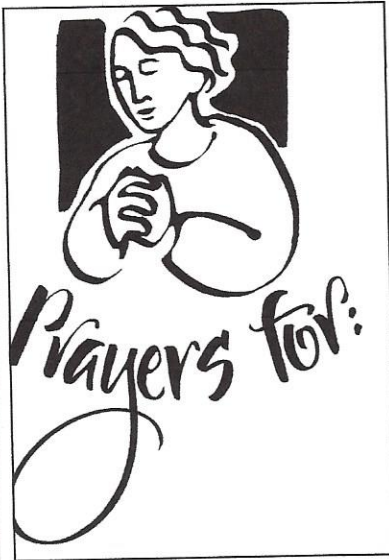
Your servant in Christ,

Chuck

Rev. Chuck Coblentz



KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Bob Meckler & Family
Manny DeLaPaz & Family
Spencer Kolb
Christine Rowland
Eric Myers
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
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.

Thank you to everyone who donated food and gifts during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

We brightened to holidays for nine families. Your generosity during this time of year is very much appreciated.

*Thank
you*

SAVE THE DATES

Feb 22-23	Rummage Sale
Mar 5	Shrove Tuesday
Mar 6	Ash Wednesday
Mar 23	Rise Against Hunger

**Save
the
Date!**

SERMON OF THE MONTH

"The Searchers"

Preached January 1st, 2017

Matthew 2:1-12

Guess what Saints? We're *all* looking for something.

We who are the children of God are many things, but perhaps more than anything else, we are searchers. At some point in our lives, for some of us it's early, for others later, we sense a hunger in our heart, a knot in the pit of our stomach, an incessant thirst, a gnawing lack of fulfillment that just won't go away, yearnings that cause us to stare off into space by day and toss about in our beds in the middle of the night. We get the feeling that there's something more to this life than the monotony of day to day living. Something more than going to school, graduating college, getting a job, raising a family, saving for retirement, and moving to Florida, before moving to a hospital or nursing home. We sense there's something above and beyond all that- some greater purpose that calls us. Sometimes it seems like it's just in front of us, so close we can sense it breathing, and yet we cannot grasp it if we stay where we are.

But many of us, rather than rising up to go in search, convince ourselves that we can satisfy our yearning by staying right where we are. So what do we do? Well, we sit on our butts and reach for anything that promises to fill our emptiness, quench our thirst, and soothe our heartache. Many of us turn to astrology, psychic healers or self-help gurus. Some listen to Tony Robbins, or Suze Orman, or Joel Osteen. Some engage in body building or crystal therapy. But alas! Eventually each will prove to be nothing more than a dead end trail, a false idol, or a fraudulent scheme to empty our wallets. So, after numerous false starts, and innumerable frustrations, we come to realize that the truth simply cannot be found without effort and sacrifice on our part.

Saints, here's the deal- if want to find an answer we will have got to get off our proverbial butts! That which we seek will not come to us if all we aspire to be in life is a spiritual couch potato. No, if we are to grasp the truth we ache for we will need to strike the tents of that which is trendy and popular and seductive, and depart on a journey. A journey that threatens to take us far from the comforts of home. A journey of faith seeking understanding. A journey that will undoubtedly test our courage and temper our perseverance. That may sound scary, but O Saints, it's *THE* journey of ultimate truth and light and life to all who will pursue it to the end. And you and I? Well, we are the ones summoned on that journey to be the searchers, for it is while we travel that path we will have what it takes to actually change the world!

In this morning's scripture lesson, 2,000 years ago three people left all the comforts of *their* homeland behind, journeying west in search of one prophesied to be the next King of the Jews. Now, despite what the hymn tells us, the wise men were not kings. The word in Greek, "*magi*," actually means astrologers, but they weren't astrologers in our 21st century sense of the word! You wouldn't see them giving advice to the "Housewives of New Jersey!" The Magi were actually more like astronomers, the scientists of their day, who even with limited technology (after all there were no telescopes in the ancient world!) took the study of the heavens very seriously. So seriously that when they witnessed the rising of a new heavenly body in the eastern twilight just before sunrise, they traveled over "*field and fountain, moor and mountain*," in search of that promised child.

Now at the dawn of a new year we here are called on to embark in a similar journey of discovery, to seek out this very same child. Like the Wise Men, we have seen the indications of his birth, for the past two months the signs have been all around us: in the holiday store displays, the lights in the windows of our neighbors, the wreaths on their door, and in the lessons and carols of

church. We too have heard rumors of this one born in Bethlehem, we too have seen his star, but how willing are we to leave *our* comfortable lives behind and seek after him? How determined are we to follow his star all the way to his birth site? How likely are we to find ourselves kneeling beside him? How devoted are we to lay our gifts before him as did the three who went before us so long ago?

For many of us the three wise men are nothing more than small plastic or porcelain action figures we take from their dusty box every December or maybe they're big wood or plastic statues that light up our front yard, or the front of our church. But the Magi are so much more than that! They are the forerunners for each one of us who desire to put every little thing that holds us back in our rear-view mirror, and start down the road that leads to spiritual fulfillment.

Everyone one of us who dares jump off the couch and head out the door, jump off the steps and take off down the road to go looking for something called ultimate truth. That is the legacy of the Wise Men.

Sounds great, right? But before you say, sure Rev let's do this! I need to remind you that it's never easy. The Magi traversed burning desert sands and forded rushing mountain rivers, scaled snow covered ridges and hacked their way through densely forested valley. Theirs was a venture that required faith, courage, wisdom, and above all perseverance. Our own spiritual journey will require no less. At the conclusion of their search, they found the promise of the heavens fulfilled in the eyes of the child. Our search, if it is equally faithful, courageous, wise, and persistent will receive no less a blessing. Saints, the answer to all the questions that have vexed us throughout our lifelong journey lies in that manger; that is God's promise to us.

We know that the Magi of the gospels were led by the light of a star blazing in the first century Mideast sky. But Saints, what star leads *us* forth 20 centuries later? Perhaps it's nothing less than that constant yearning inside each one of us to be reconciled with our Creator- that ancient covenant of unconditional love and faith and our desire to reclaim it entices us on-ward, constantly urging us further and further along on the journey. Along the way there are many who will do their darnedest to block the light of that star out just so they can go about their daily routines, because such a challenge threatens their apathetic, irresponsible existence.

But no matter, the star will never cease to beckon; it is ever before us, because God never forgets us, but neither does he force us to follow. God does not bind our wills to his; God merely places the star in the sky; and in times when our faith falters, keeps kindled the yearning in our hearts.

Saints, God grants us the freedom to follow the star, or stay where we are. The choice is always up to us! So, how willing are we to leave the comforts of our routine daily living behind and embark on such a journey of spiritual discovery? Do we possess the drive? How willing are we to face up to the challenges that await us on the road to Bethlehem? Do we possess the courage? How conditioned are we? Do we have what it takes to follow the star to manger side? Do we possess the perseverance? Like the Magi, we will encounter many dangers and obstacles along the way. They may not be burning desert sands, raging rivers, snow-covered mountain ridges or dark foreboding valleys, but the obstacles before us may prove to be just as formidable. For instance, we may sense a lack of support, even from those closest to us who don't understand our motivation and see no "common sense" in our venture. There will be those outside the faith who will whisper in our ear the vain futility of our journey; that there *is* no answer to the questions we ponder; that we might as well give it up, settle back and enjoy the good things in life. Many who claim the title of Christian will turn back when such naysayers are encountered, but those of us who are strong in the faith will press on.

In addition to overcoming obstacles, like the Wise Men, we will have to admit our need for help along the way. Even given their wisdom, the Magi sought further guidance from King Herod, whom they trusted, and he in turn consulted scripture, albeit for devious personal motives. If we are earnest in our search, we too cannot march off ignorant of the correct path because our hearts are easily deceived; and there are many false stars out there claiming to be the one true star, just as there are many messiahs out there claiming to be the one true Messiah.

In order to stay on the proper course, we too will need to commit ourselves to the study of scripture, because we will need to consult it all along the way. Those of us called by God need to put aside time to examine God's Word in scripture and gain wisdom along the route of pilgrimage; it's not an option. The wise men would have never made it to the stable had they not consulted scripture; where do some get the nerve to believe they would be any different?

To have a limited understanding of the Bible will cause us to stray from the one road that leads us to the one true Light. But with an earnest desire to journey forth and a knowledge and reliance on God's word in scripture we will some day come to the end of our search.

So then, what exactly we will find should we endure this pilgrimage that ends at a stable in Bethlehem? Matthew 2:10 tells us that when the Wise Men, after searching for so long, saw that the star had stopped over Bethlehem, "*They were overwhelmed with joy.*" Saints, we will be no less ecstatic when we experience his presence. Because that hunger in our heart will at last be satiated. The knot in the pit of our stomachs will at last be relieved. And our thirst will at last be quenched. Once we find ourselves in the very presence of the God who created us and has never stopped loving us, whether we find him in a stable, or along our disciplined, daily walk of life, we know that we have finally found the great truth for which we set out so long ago.

As we kick-off the New Year here, we of New Dover begin the journey of yet another march through the seasons that will place before us many challenges as well as many opportunities for ministry. After bowing in his presence, like the Magi we cannot remain in the stable, for we are sent forth as both individuals and as a church transformed by his life and light.

Who then are the searchers whose story is told this morning? Saints, the story is ours; *we are the searchers!* If we are to do anything about that hunger within our heart, that knot in the pit of our stomach, that incessant thirst, that gnawing lack of fulfillment that just won't go away...

Then we must rise up and follow after that star for it alone leads us onward, so that persevering to the end, may too we all be overwhelmed with joy!

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The next meeting of the UMW will be held March 13th, 2019 at 6:30. It will be the annual St. Pat's celebration. Look for more information in the March Herald. There are no meetings held during the months of January and February.

We have three mission projects for 2019 and would appreciate our congregation helping us with donations.

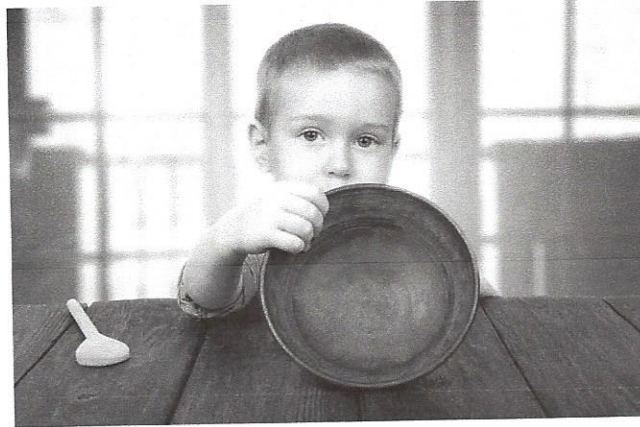
1. Our women veterans at the Veteran's Home in Edison. Personal items (toothbrushes, combs, etc. would be appreciated. Our goal is to have these gifts ready for Valentine's Day. Look for a box after Christmas in Fellowship Hall.
2. Used eyeglasses for the Lyons Club. Also look for a box in Fellowship Hall.
3. Please continue to save your "pop tabs" for the Ronald McDonald House. These are recycled and the money it earns goes toward the upkeep of their "house".

Thank you for your consideration. Looking forward a happy and blessed year at New Dover.

Sincerely,

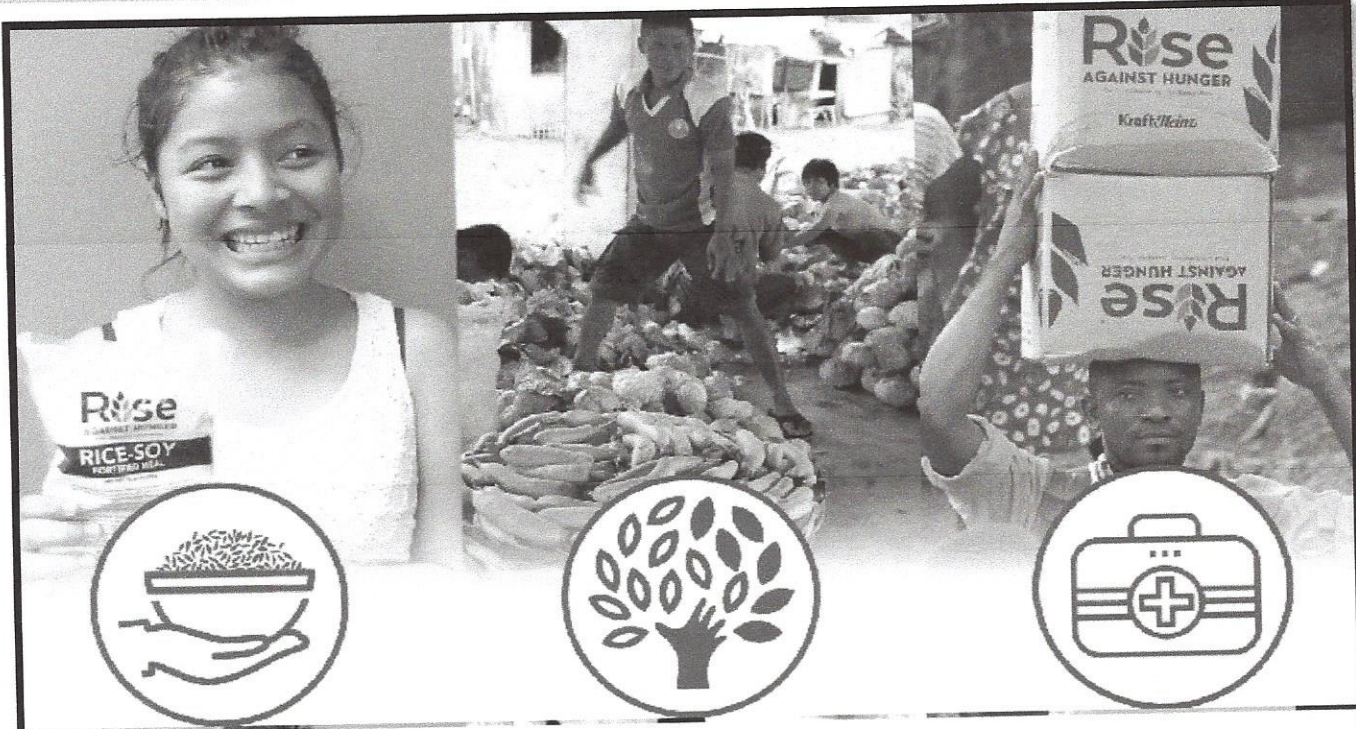
Dianne Petersen - UMW President

**EVERY DAY
26,500 CHILDREN
NEEDLESSLY DIE OF HUNGER**



**SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD
WILL BE
*“A DAY WITHOUT
HUNGER”***

**JOIN US AT
NEW DOVER
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
AS WE ASSEMBLE
26,500 MEALS
LET'S “RISE AGAINST HUNGER!”**



OUR MISSION

Rise Against Hunger is driven by the vision of a world without hunger. Our mission is to end hunger in our lifetime by providing food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable and creating a global commitment to mobilize the necessary resources.

Volunteer for Our Meal Packaging Event

Date: Saturday, March 23, 2019 Time: 10 AM - 2:00 PM

Meals Goal: 26,500 Funds Goal: \$10,000

Location: New Dover United Methodist Church
687 New Dover Road, Edison, NJ 08820

Contact: Brian Richards, Event Coordinator: 732-433-3000



▶ **This is possible.**
#2030isPossible

**TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING?
WHY NOT DONATE YOUR
VALUABLE JUNQUE
TO
FIGHT GLOBAL HUNGER?**

**churchWIDE
RUMMAGE
SALE**



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd- SATURDAY, the 23rd.

DONATIONS ACCEPTED STARTING NOW!

**Clothing for Children - Women - Men,
Jewelry, Furniture, Linens, Housewares, Luggage,
Bric-a-brac, Appliances, Tools, Toys & Games,
Artwork, Books, CDs & LPs, Fine Collectibles
Exercise & Sports Equipment & Much More!!!**

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SET-UP & WORKING
THE EVENT!**

BENEFITS "RISE AGAINST HUNGER" EVENT!

Call Rev Chuck with questions, etc. 609-937-4565

MEMBERSHIP BLOG

Our first blog of the New Year begins with the third Sunday in November. It was another notable service, kicked off with a song presentation from the Sunday School ("He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"); it's always a joy to see our young people showing their love for God! There was also the baptism of Kaylee Ferris, attended by a large crowd of family and friends. The Scriptures for the day were Psalm 100:1-5 and John 10:1-10; the sermon was given by student pastor Chris Stanley. He noted that we live in a culture of scarcity; we are always being made aware of what we don't have, sending the message that we are never good enough. God calls us to something so much better than fear based want; he calls us to gratitude in his abundant and everlasting life. We are transformed through a relationship with him and his love. Thanks to Chris for his thought provoking message. Congratulations to Michael and Amanda Ferris! The service was followed by the Miracles Celebration Luncheon; attendees were encouraged to complete their pledges and enjoy the food! The MEAICA Thanksgiving service took place on November 20th at Centenary UMC, attended by the Chancel and bell choirs of New Dover plus a contingent of our congregants. God's word and music were in abundance. The message, based on Micah 6:8, was given by Bishop Nikolaos Brown of Ignite Church. He reminded those present that we need to have an attitude of love, transparency and humility when forming relationships with others, remembering that everyone is worthy in God's eyes. He called on the people to take the road less traveled and lead change by embracing the humanity in everyone-love for God, our neighbor, justice and our country. On the last Sunday before Advent (Christ the King Sunday), the congregation was treated to the considerable talents of Emma P. on the flute; in addition to short pieces for the prelude and postlude, Emma played a difficult piece for the anthem, accompanied by an equally impressive Grace on the piano. We appreciate the ladies sharing their gifts with us. The Scriptures for the day were Psalm 146 (read responsively) and Matthew 7:7-11. The morning's topic was religious intolerance, sponsored by the SJTF. Instead of judging our differences, let's rejoice in our commonalities and our goal of furthering God's kingdom. Instead of bowing to our fear, let's be courageous and faithful despite our fear. Let's use our witness and work in love to draw others to Christ, and be respectful of others' journey of faith. Our job is to plant the seeds, then let God do His work. December's services began the weekend of Dec. 1-2, the first in Advent. The sanctuary was freshly decorated for the season, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers. On both days, services began with the lighting of the first candle. Saturday evening the sanctuary rocked to the praise band, especially "Jacob's Ladder". Rev. took his sermon from Ezekiel 3:16-21, telling us not to let our fear stop us from witnessing or accepting the lessons of the Word. Sunday morning brought Scripture from Malachi 3:6-7, and Rev. discussed homecomings. Have we become lost on our journey of faith, yearning for home and a chance to begin again? Let's not be distracted from spiritual reflection and a relationship with God. Advent is our chance to renew our bond with Him and find ourselves home once again. On the second Sunday of the month, the congregation began experiencing special presentations of the season beginning with the bell choir. Our youth group was present to light the second Advent candle. Our opening hymn was the old favorite "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night". The Scriptures for the day were Isaiah 42:14-16 and John 12:35-37. Pastor Chuck discussed light versus darkness and their meanings to us. We continue to search for the light in the darkness, and despite our fear we have faith that we are not alone and that the light will lead us home. Christ beckons us through the darkness to His light, helping us find courage and comfort in Him.



CHURCH BLOG