

NEW DOVER HERALD

December 2018

Holiness unto the Lord

Vol. 151

Highlights

In This Issue:

- Chuck's Church Chat
- Keep Us in Your Prayers
- Save the Dates
- Christmas Baskets
- Sermon of the Month
- Christmas Services
- Coffee Hour
- Christmas Decorating
- UMW News
- Poinsettia Sale
- Open House Invitation
- Membership Blog
- Outreach
- Calendar
- December Birthdays & Anniversaries



CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints,

Grace to you and peace in this season of joy and hope! Can it really be December? I don't know about you, but I believe 2018 was the absolute worst weather year I can ever remember! At least in that regard I'm glad to see it roll to a close. In just about every other aspect however it was a big year at NDUMC and here's hoping 2019 will be even better!

What a time we've had since the last edition of the Herald. Here are just a few of the highlights...

- ⇒ During worship on October 13th and 14th, Kyle Davis-Becker and Jeff Rowland introduced our extensive three year \$200,000 capital/mission campaign, "**Miracles & More.**" The church was given details of five exciting mission projects (in which we will partner with our Great New Jersey Conference) as well as improvements sorely needed for our church's physical infrastructure. Thanks to all who have already turned in your pledge cards; we are already over 50% of our goal!
- ⇒ I was able to sit back and enjoy the Sunday service on October 21st as our Laity took over worship. Many of our church leaders stepped up to take part in the liturgy and a special thanks to Alice Bennett who preached that morning.
- ⇒ That afternoon, despite unseasonably cold temperatures and brutal wind gusts, around twenty New Dover church members joined others from the Metuchen Edison community for the 5K Interfaith Hunger Walk. Once again this year our own "Acts of Praise" provided musical inspiration, although Anita Davis could barely play the keyboards with her frost-bitten fingers! Altogether we raised over \$3,000 to fight hunger!
- ⇒ Throughout October our Social Justice Task Force focused on domestic violence, and on Sunday, October 28th the issue was addressed during worship with scripture readings, hymns, and a sermon based on the story of Tamar and Amnon. Following worship we were invited to a table set up by the Northern Middlesex County Regional Domestic Violence Response Team. A large number of our congregation welcomed the group and received vital information to read and/or pass on.
- ⇒ All Saints Sunday, November 4th, began with a raucous shopping-cart parade (with little Melita Nyema in the driver's seat!) down the center aisle as the kids gathered bags of food donations from the congregation along the way. Following that act of mission we celebrated the lives of the saints of New Dover who passed on to glory over the past year. In addition we lifted up the life and service of one particular saint, Mildred Place (1931-1996), a beloved mother, friend, and disciple of Jesus Christ, who played such a vital role in the mission and ministry of New Dover. Touching tributes were offered by members of our church and Mildred's daughter, Sandy. Over 25 relatives and friends of Mildred came from near and far to join with us for this well-deserved tribute.

- ⇒ Peace with Justice Sunday, November 11th, began with the annual dedication of our Shoeboxes heading to children in impoverished regions around the world. Thanks as always to Anita Donnelly for her tireless work in this vital mission! During the service we took a few moments to honor our veterans and their families.
- ⇒ This month we lifted up Paulette Harland and Ashley Baidowsky for their highly successful mission trip to the Dominican Republic! In addition to distributing food, supplies, and clothing, and building another solid house, they took part in the historic ground breaking for the "El Centro Comunitario Mario Antonio Almonte," paying tribute to a saint of a man who dedicated his life to the people of Los Cocos. Well done Mario, "good and faithful servant..."
- ⇒ Finally, even more exciting news. I mean this IS EXCITING!!! As of Wednesday, November 7th, we are the official Central New Jersey Outreach Hub for all the United Methodist churches in the region. We are now a drop-off for all manner of emergency relief items including hurricane flood buckets, health kits, birthing kits, etc., which will then be picked up by Mission Central for distribution to UMCOR and other nonprofits. More details will follow but I can't begin to explain how important this ministry will be to neighbors in need in both our region and around the world, not to mention how it will further empower our own sense of mission. This is how we build God's Kingdom! Thanks to Joenette Hunt, Erin Markan, and Brian Richards, who accompanied me on the three hour plus drive to Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania in order to tour the immense Mission Central Warehouse facility, receive training, and sign the papers!

Okay, enough about last month, what's coming up in December that you won't want to miss? Excellent question! Here ya go...

- ⇒ Come out and decorate the sanctuary for the holidays starting at 9:00 AM Saturday, December 1st! There'll be holiday music playing and plenty of goodies to eat and drink!
- ⇒ The first candle of the Advent wreath will be lit during worship the weekend of December 1 & 2 as prepare our hearts for the coming Messiah.
- ⇒ Jean and I hereby invite you all to the annual Parsonage Open House, following worship on Sunday, December 9th. There'll be plenty of food and refreshments so stop on by (and maybe adopt a kitten while you're at it!).
- ⇒ On Sunday, December 16th the annual Christmas Pageant will be put on during the 10 o'clock worship service (No 8:30 service that morning). The colorful program that Mary Jane Manglapus and her "elves" put together is sure to put you in the Christmas spirit!
- ⇒ At the 10 AM service on Sunday, December 23rd our Cantata Choir, led by Dr. Grace Kim, will sing four songs from Handel's Messiah including the Hallelujah Chorus. They've been putting in a lot of hard work so don't miss it!
- ⇒ Once again this year we will have two services on Christmas Eve at 7:00 & 11:00. Come hear the good news proclaimed and sing "Silent Night" in the beauty of candlelight!
- ⇒ And again this year we will be holding a New Year's Eve Watchnight Service starting at 11:00 PM on December 31st. What better way to ring in 2019?!

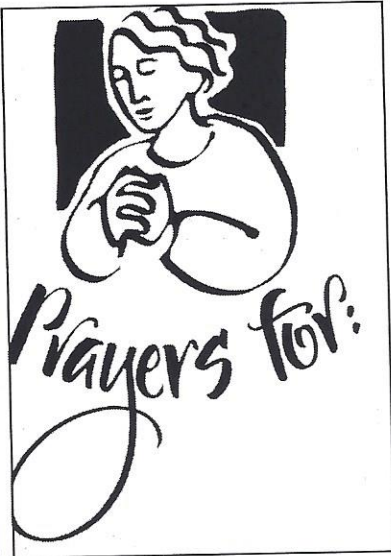
Well that pretty much takes us through the month of December, not to mention 2018! From Tony Campolo to Mission Central it's been some year, eh?! Can't imagine what 2019 is going to bring!

Have a blessed Advent!

Chuck



KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



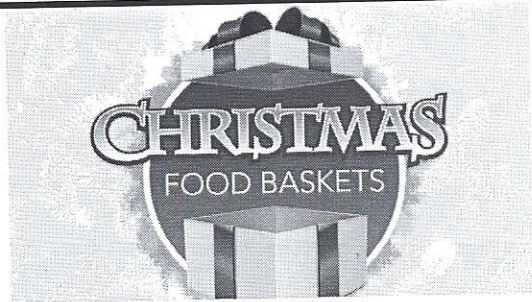
Bob Meckler & Family
Manny DeLaPaz & Family
Spencer Kolb
Christine Rowland
Eric Myers
Nayan Vyas & Family
Christine & Judy Tymitz
America
Christians of India

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

All suffering with
Addictions
Convalescent Homes
All Servicemen and
Women
Gayle Farrell
Allie Forbes

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

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



If you would like to sponsor a family, please fill out an application and leave it in the office. Applications can be found on the office door. Pickup date December 16th.

The Giving Tree is up in Fellowship Hall. Please take a tag and return the gifts by December 15th.

SAVE THE DATES

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Dec 1 | Decorating of the Sanctuary |
| Dec 9 | SS Presentation in Church
Annual Parsonage Open House |
| Dec 16 | Children's Pagaent / Pot Luck
Food Basket Distribution |
| Dec 23 | Cantata |
| Dec 24 | Christmas Eve Services
@ 7pm and 11pm |
| Dec 31 | Watch Night Service @ 11pm |

SERMON OF THE MONTH

"Still He Comes to Us"

Zephaniah 1:1-14

Sermon preached 12/24/17

This is good news?! In Luke we hear what sounds like a contradiction. Listen to John the Baptist describe the coming Messiah to his followers: *"His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."* Luke goes on to say, *"So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people."* Let me get this straight- it's good news that *"...the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire"*? Good news for whom? Certainly not the chaff, whoever the chaff may be! Here's a bit of advice- don't be the chaff! Anyway John, with good news like that please spare us the bad news!

There's a similar juxtaposition in Zephaniah's prophecy. We hear God's warning: *"I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth....my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out my indignation, all the heat of my anger; for in the fire of my passion all the earth shall be consumed."* But later in the very same book Zephaniah exhorts the nation to *"Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!"* Sing? Shout? Rejoice? Just what is there to sing, shout and rejoice about? First Zephaniah prophesies widespread destruction and punishment in the wake of God's wrath, and soon after they're supposed to *"rejoice... and sing aloud"*? How in the world can a song of joyous hope arise out of the ashes of such decisive judgment?

How dare we, sitting here in our 21st century pews, conjure good news out of such dire prophecies as these, for the words of Zephaniah and John were not directed to the Israelites alone, oh no! Saints, they are meant for us as well, for we too exist in a world of dire prophecies and chaotic devastation, do we not? Such questions need to be addressed as we journey through Advent, which itself is a season of apparent contradictions. Yes, it is a time to take stock of our lives under the lens of God's perfect judgment; but it is also a season to celebrate God's unconditional love and infinite mercy.

Advent begins in the wilderness with prophetic portents of wrath and punishment, revealing just how far we have fallen away from God. Yet it culminates with a lowly birth beneath middle-eastern stars, with a baby born into poverty, but whose life would reflect how deeply we are loved, and how capable we are of loving one another just as deeply. So again this Advent we ask how we might benefit from this juxtaposition of judgment and grace, that come Christmas we might raise a song of hope from a world in crisis.

It might help if we recall what the Israelites did to warrant such a prophetic threat at the hands of an angry God. Perhaps we might avoid a similar judgment. A major clue is found in Zephaniah 1:12, where God says,

"At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, who say in their heart, 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do harm.'"

According to the prophet the Israelites had become lackadaisical; they had lost their zeal for God; Their faith had taken a back seat to other "priorities" in their lives. And the trust they formerly had in God, well, they replaced it with reliance on themselves. All that had made Israel strong: their covenant faith, their faith in the God who liberated them, was replaced by an ideology that justified prejudice and greed. Their promise to care for the poor and dispossessed turned into utter neglect. All this spurred the once-great nation to spiral down, down, down...

Now my Grandpop used to tell me that when I found myself in a hole I should stop digging! But Israel just kept right on digging, and the deeper the hole, the more they dug, the more they deceived themselves, and the less they relied on God. This despite all God had done for Israel in her glorious past, this despite the numerous cries of God to return to him. In light of all God had done for them, it was nothing short of an epic betrayal. And so in the face of this supreme idolatry this breach of covenant, Zephaniah announces that the Lord is coming to Jerusalem. In 1:14 we hear, *"The great day of the Lord is near and hastening fast."*

Uh oh... You mean in the face of all this faithlessness and sin, the Lord is coming to judge Israel? Yeah, the time has come to tremble. To whom would *this* be good news? Is there *anyone* for whom could the Lord's coming is actually a *blessed* event? Well, the answer is the same today as it was 2,000 years ago: only to those

who heed the warnings of the prophets and take God's judgment seriously. Who realize that without the discipline, without the tough love of God we as individuals, as a church, as a nation, will surely die. And like the Israelites before us, we would no one to blame but ourselves.

And Saints, that's precisely why it's necessary for our God to judge and discipline us so.

It arises solely out of God's love for us. Again and again and again we turn from God, breaking our covenant, forsaking our faith, neglecting the poor, but again and again and again God returns to us, striving to save us from the greatest enemy we could possibly turn to: our own vain pride. God knows that when we turn from him and place our faith in ourselves we put ourselves on a path that leads only to our destruction, and God will do whatever is necessary to keep us, his beloved children from that end.

Such corrective discipline is living proof of how much God loves us. It is the very same love a parent shows a wayward child. If a child puts his or her life in danger, what type of parent demonstrates love toward that child: one who disciplines in order to teach the child? Or the parent who lets the child go on doing whatever he or she is doing? When I was a child about the only time I got punished was when I did something that could do *me* harm. If I got my fingers too close to a hot iron, my Mom would smack my hand. If I ventured too close to the road, my Dad would whack my bottom. And as my eyes teared up I figured my parents must not love me any more because if they did, why would they mistreat me so? It seemed so unfair! But of course just the opposite was true. Mom and Dad disciplining me when I did something wrong was actually evidence that they loved me more than I could imagine. They loved me unconditionally. Think about it Saints, if our parents hadn't corrected our adherent behavior you or I probably wouldn't even be alive today!

So when God came to town to punish the Israelites it was not merely wrath for wrath's sake; it was discipline born out of God's unconditional love. To walk any path without faith in God leads only to death. Throughout their long history, God disciplined Israel in order to remind them of that. But time and time again, Israel spurned God's loving correction, and time and time again, God kept coming back. Despite all their umpteenth acts of faithlessness, God never stopped disciplining them, never stopped loving them.

And it is no different for us. God loves us so much that no matter how many times we've fallen away, still he comes to us. No matter how many times we break his heart, still he comes to us. No matter how many times we scorn him, still he comes to us. No matter how many times our faith in God takes a backseat to all the temptations this world uses to lure us from the one true path, still he comes to us. Thing is, we need to see beyond God's judgment in order to perceive God's motivation. And when we do we find out that even in those times when we receive some serious discipline, we are loved by God beyond our wildest imagination. We are loved unconditionally. And once we realize this, then like Israel, we too are capable of raising a song of hope from the ashes of God's judgment.

I'm going to close this sermon by telling you a story I first heard from one of my favorite professors at Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Denis Olson. It's a story a husband and wife.

He was short and thin, with long arms and large hands. He didn't have much schooling, but was hardworking and very gentle. Some thought he was rough and coarse, but that was only because he was too shy to let anyone know his tender heart. He had such a sense of his own inferiority- he felt he wasn't worth much, that sometimes he drank heavily. People wondered how it would go when he had time on his hands when he retired. Nobody knew much about his wife. She was small and gray with a sad understanding face, drawn up around big brown eyes.

She went to church faithfully every Sunday, sitting quietly in the pew, clutching a Bible, well-worn from daily reading. The neighborhood children said that when she gave them cookies, they could see that she had a many wrinkles creasing deeply into her face.

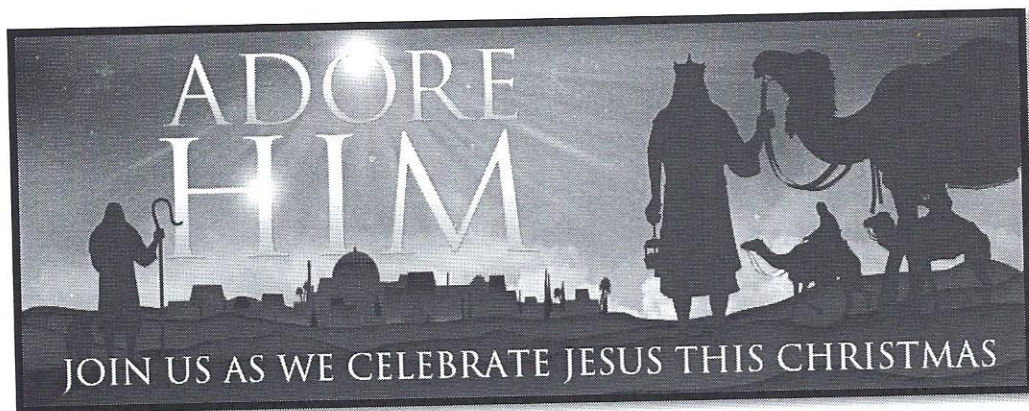
One evening he came to the village store. He had been drinking. She was with him. She looked at some cloth while he bragged and blustered. She looked at the cloth but did not really see it. He stumbled and reeled, knocking things on the floor. She came to him then, her eyes full of love. But he? He knew no sorrow, but only deep hatred; he knew no repentance, but lurched for the door.

People remember how quickly he deteriorated before their eyes. He lost interest in fishing, and even in his friends. People found him asleep in his old yellow car, his face unshaven, his head shrunken and bony. His fingernails got yellow, like those of a dead man. She came to him often, her eyes full of love. She gently unlaced his boots and urged him to eat some soup or some bread. He hated her for it and wished her away. He knew no sorrow, but only raw anger; he knew no repentance, but spoke a cruel word.

One winter night, a night bitterly cold, he was shoved out of a local tavern into the street and told to go home. He didn't have far to go, but he soon lost his way. The horizon was carried off by the snow. The street lights shimmered and merged. Soon he stumbled off the side of the road into a ditch and could not get back up. The wind ran over him, cooling his blood. He did not know sorrow, but longed

for deep sleep. He did not know pain, but longed for rest. She came to him then, her eyes full of love. She cradled his head and put on his cap. He saw her quite clearly, in spite of the dark. He spoke her name and reached out to touch her. He saw the dark lines in her face and knew he had made them. He also knew they were for him. And in that moment there came to his heart a deep, deep repentance, a sorrow which reflected on each of his days. There came to his heart a strange kind of sorrow, a sorrow exposed and covered by love. There came to his heart a strange kind of sorrow, a sorrow forgiven and flying to life.

Saints, so it was when Israel encountered God. So it is when we encounter the incarnate God, this child of Bethlehem, and that broken body of the cross. In this season of Advent we prepare to meet God as when a person prepares for the healing touch of a loved one. But when we meet this God of scripture, we realize that, as Israel discovered, the loved one's coming may not be what we expect. In fact the day of his coming into our lives transforms and exceeds all our preparations, our hearts are moved toward repentance and a sorrowful kind of love. So it is when we encounter the God who kept coming back to Israel and the God who still keeps coming back to us. Despite the many times we have turned him away, still God comes to us and cradles us with arms of compassion; God's heart open in forgiveness, God's eyes full of love.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

DEC. 23 10:00AM CANTATA

DEC. 24 7:00PM WORSHIP

DEC. 24 11:00PM WORSHIP

DEC. 31 11:00PM WATCH NIGHT

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Below you will find a list of those who cannot make it to church regularly. Please find a few moments to send these folks a note or a card this Advent-Christmas season to let them know they have not been forgotten.

Muriel Besecker
Ute Bonhardt
Wendy Bouchoux
Evelyn MacKenzie
Anthony Pagano, Sr.
Marian Rasmussen
John & Julie Gottstein
Geoff Hudson

Joycelyn Meade
Martha Loprete
Bob Meckler
Judy O'Rourke
Harold Shaban
June Ebbets
Roz Pizont
Anita Hager



COFFEE HOUR

Dear Friends,

As coordinator of scheduling the personnel to assist with coffee hours each week, I am hoping that someone will find it in their heart to volunteer beginning on the 4th Sunday of February 2019.

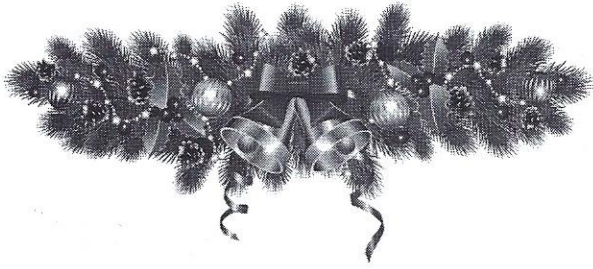
In February and every other month during 2019 (April, June, August, October and December), we will need help with this endeavor. It can be a committee or group as we have now; ie., UMW, Trustees, etc. or two or three individual as we also have (Jenn & Corbiey, Mark & Janice, Dianne & Connie, etc.) or a family (the Kingsly's). Any type of grouping will be acceptable.

The coffee hour fellowship is an integral part of our worship experience so I ask that you please consider offering your assistance.

Any questions, please see me in church on Sundays or call me at 732-287-2231.

In His Service,

Connie Thomas



You are invited!

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

The Worship Team

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

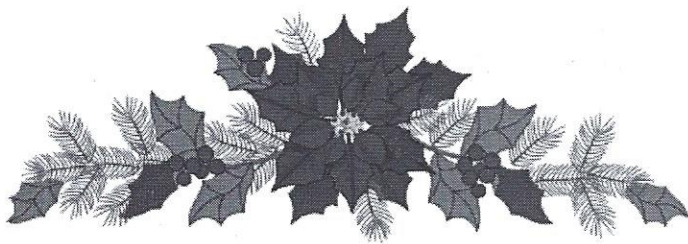
Our next meeting will be held at 6:00 pm Wednesday, December 12th. This will be our annual Christmas celebration. Come share the joy of our holiday season with us. This will be a covered dish supper so please bring your favorite dish to share. We will provide all the desserts you can eat. Afterward, we will have some fun surprises to share and always the fellowship and friendliness of our women gathered there.

If you have any questions, please see any UMW member.

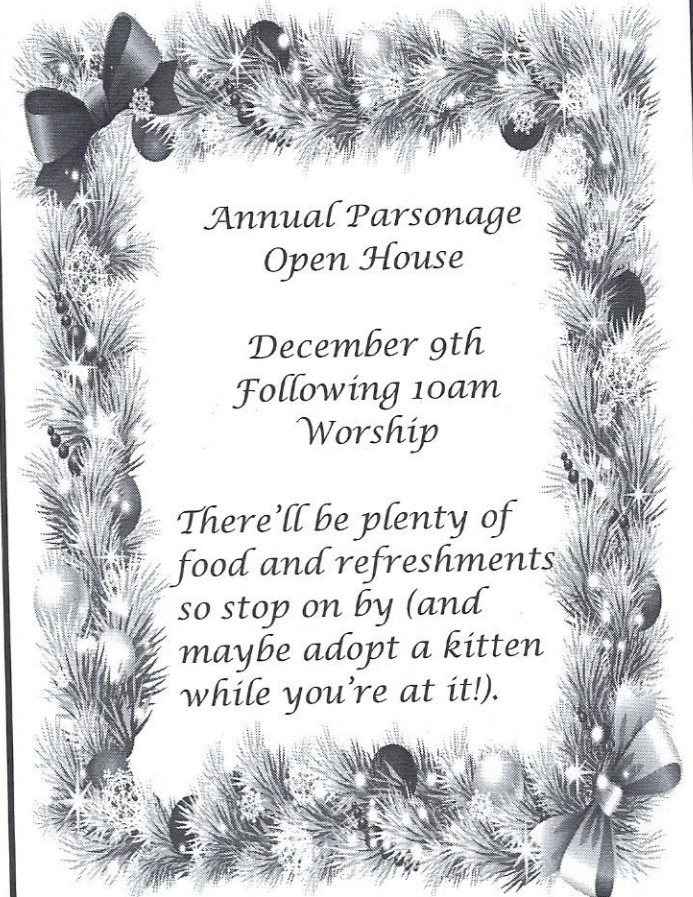
A Blessed Christmas to all.

Sincerely,

Dianne Petersen - UMW President



If you are interested in purchasing Poinsettias or contributing to the Memorial Fund or Endowment Fund, please stop at the table in the Fellowship Hall. The plant ordering deadline is Sunday, December 16th. The cost per plant is \$8.00. We will accept cash or checks (made payable to New Dover UMC). Plants may be picked up after the 11 o'clock service on Christmas Eve.



*Annual Parsonage
Open House*

*December 9th
Following 10am
Worship*

*There'll be plenty of
food and refreshments
so stop on by (and
maybe adopt a kitten
while you're at it!).*

MEMBERSHIP BLOG

Our blog begins with Laity Sunday on October 21. The Chancel and Bell Choirs provided music, and selected laity did a wonderful job of conducting the service and giving short speeches about their work at New Dover. Thank you Anita Donnelly., Angelina B & Hadassah B., Grace K., Lisa G. Pat C., Connie T., Karen R., and Madhu C. for your presentations and service. The Scriptures for the day were Hebrews 5:1-10 and Mark 10:35-45. Alice B. provided the sermon. We have our desires and ambitions, and want to have our own way, yet God calls us to serve. Jesus challenged his disciples to sacrifice and focus on others, and we who desire to be first in the kingdom must be servants. Are we being true followers of Christ? How will we respond to His call? On the last weekend in October, Saturday's service focused on our immigrant issues, specifically the caravan of refugees heading toward our border. The Word tells us to welcome refugees and share our bounty-are we being an example of His love? Let's remember what we do-or not-to others, we do to Christ. On Sunday, the Chancel Choir provided the anthem, and Grace played some Beethoven for the offertory. The Scriptures for the day were from 2 Samuel:13 and Galatians 5:16-24. As October was Domestic Violence month, the Social Justice Team sponsored the theme for the morning. Rev. discussed the rape of Tamar. Those in power take advantage of their position and regard their victims as objects to be used. We are all made equal in His image, and mistreatment of each other is an attack again God. Such behavior will result in far-reaching consequences, and we need to remain within God's boundaries as part of our walk with Him. During the coffee hour, the Edison Domestic Violence Response Team had a booth set up with information for those interested. Thank you to the social justice team and the DVRT for helping put this all together. November services began with All Saints Sunday, which proved to be exceptional. The service began with the Sunday School children collecting food-in a shopping cart, in the sanctuary-for those in need. The service itself was in remembrance of those church members who passed this year and in honor of Mildred Place, a church member who was a devoted disciple of Christ during her lifetime. Her family was present, and accolades were given by the congregation and Sandra Place in her memory. The Scripture for the day was Colossians 1:24-29. Rev. spoke briefly, noting that we are here to build the kingdom of God, both in love for Him and as a tribute to those saints who have done so before us. The sermon was followed by Holy Communion. What a great morning! On the second Sunday of the month we observed Peace with Justice Sunday, another notable service. Shoeboxes for OCC were collected and brought into the sanctuary where they were blessed to be part of our mission to others. The veterans and their families were recognized with grateful applause. Brian R. spoke of New Dover as the newest collection hub for collections of flood buckets and future mission items. The Scriptures for the day were Nahum 1:2-8a and Mark 4:35-41. Rev. discussed the storms of life and the questions posed in the NT passage. Who are we in the world; are we people of fear and passivity in taking on the challenges of world issues, or are we acting like the body of Christ, rising up to calm the sea and take the lead in social justice and mission work. Instead of asking someone to wake up Jesus, we need to wake up ourselves! The time to begin is now...our faith must outweigh our fear...the storms are no match for us when we have the strength of Christ!

In other news, the annual MEICA Hunger Walk took place in Metuchen on the third Sunday in October, with a good contingent of New Dover congregants plus our Praise Band in attendance to help kick off the event. It was a cold and windy day, but everyone was in good spirits and prepared to raise money for and awareness of the hungry. Also, our condolences to the family of Jean Macfie, a long-time church member who passed away in early November.



OUTREACH

On Saturday, November 3rd, seven volunteers from New Dover headed out to the Community Food Bank in Hillside. There we joined another group (a girl's basketball team!) to fill "Family Packs". These are distributed to needy children through their school districts to bring home to help support their family's hunger needs. Each bag contained a box of cereal, a carton of milk, a bag of kidney beans, and a box of macaroni and cheese. Our group alone packed over 1100 bags that morning!

Did you know that in the United States, 41 million people are food insecure, 900,000 are here in New Jersey, and 270,000 of them are children? When they don't have enough to eat, they can suffer direct and dramatic effects on their physical and mental well-being.

Many thanks to Rich and Michael Lettieri, Gary and Eleanor Campbell, Brian Richards and Anita Brinker. Look for announcements again this spring as we send another group from New Dover to volunteer at this worthy charity!

In His Service – JoAnn Lettieri

Below is from the Community Food Bank of New Jersey:

Hello JoAnn,

Thank you very much for volunteering for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey.

As a result of your efforts, the Community Food Bank of New Jersey is able to distribute food to our network of partner charities that serve our neighbors in need throughout the state. Please know that we could not accomplish this mission without your help

We hope that you found your volunteer experience to be both rewarding and enjoyable. We'd love to hear about your experience, so please access this survey link to provide us with your feedback.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CFBNJ>

Please accept our appreciation for all of your time, energy and support.

