



# THE NEW DOVER HERALD

December 2020

Vol. 173

*A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church*

## CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

The road into Bethlehem is barred.  
Soldiers stand guard.  
Whether to block the way  
Or to protect us from harm is a mystery.

With a good guide we can  
Find another way  
To the holy child.

*-Author Unknown*



Saints,

Grace to you and peace as we prepare ourselves for the journey to Bethlehem.

Though the Advent road we travel on in 2020 will be unfamiliar to us, it will nevertheless lead us onward to the "City of David," and rest assured, no matter the twists and turns along the way, we will arrive in time to greet the Christ child this year having overcome numerous obstacles and with brand new traveler's tales to tell!

Before I began composing this edition of "The Chat," I thought it would be interesting to see what I wrote last year at this time. The December, 2019 Chat read like your typical, traditional list of church happenings for December: we were all set to decorate the sanctuary, begin lighting the candles of the Advent wreath, hold the Parsonage Open House, rehearse for the annual Christmas Pageant, and anticipate a program of seasonal carols from our Cantata Choir. And it would all culminate with our traditional Candlelight services on Christmas Eve.

Who would have believed back then that things would change so quickly in the space of a year??? Because the deadly COVID virus continues to rage so many of the events of this Christmas season will either be cancelled entirely or altered to make them safe for those attending. Sadly, that means there will be no open house at the parsonage and no cantata this year. But the good news is that we are going to do all we can to make the other highlights of the season happen in some way shape, or form! So here we go...

- ◆ This year the sanctuary will be decorated by the Worship Committee. Although we won't have our breath-taking display of poinsettias, it will nevertheless reflect the sacred beauty of the season.
- ◆ The candles of the Advent wreath will be lit during our livestream worship starting the weekend of November 28 and 29, culminating with the Christ Candle at our live Christmas Eve service. And why not make your own Advent wreath at home and light the candles with us each week!
- ◆ Our annual Christmas Pageant celebrating the faith and talents of our youth is still on! In the words of Rhea Manglapus (who put together our now legendary virtual VBS this past July), "It will be an online/virtual musical performance by our youth/young adults as well as a few special

guests, premiering on the church's Facebook page on Saturday, December 19." And you will be able to view it on Facebook any time after that as well, and a link will also be sent to everyone on our church's email list. Oh, and donations to support the Pageant will help revamp our Youth Group Room!

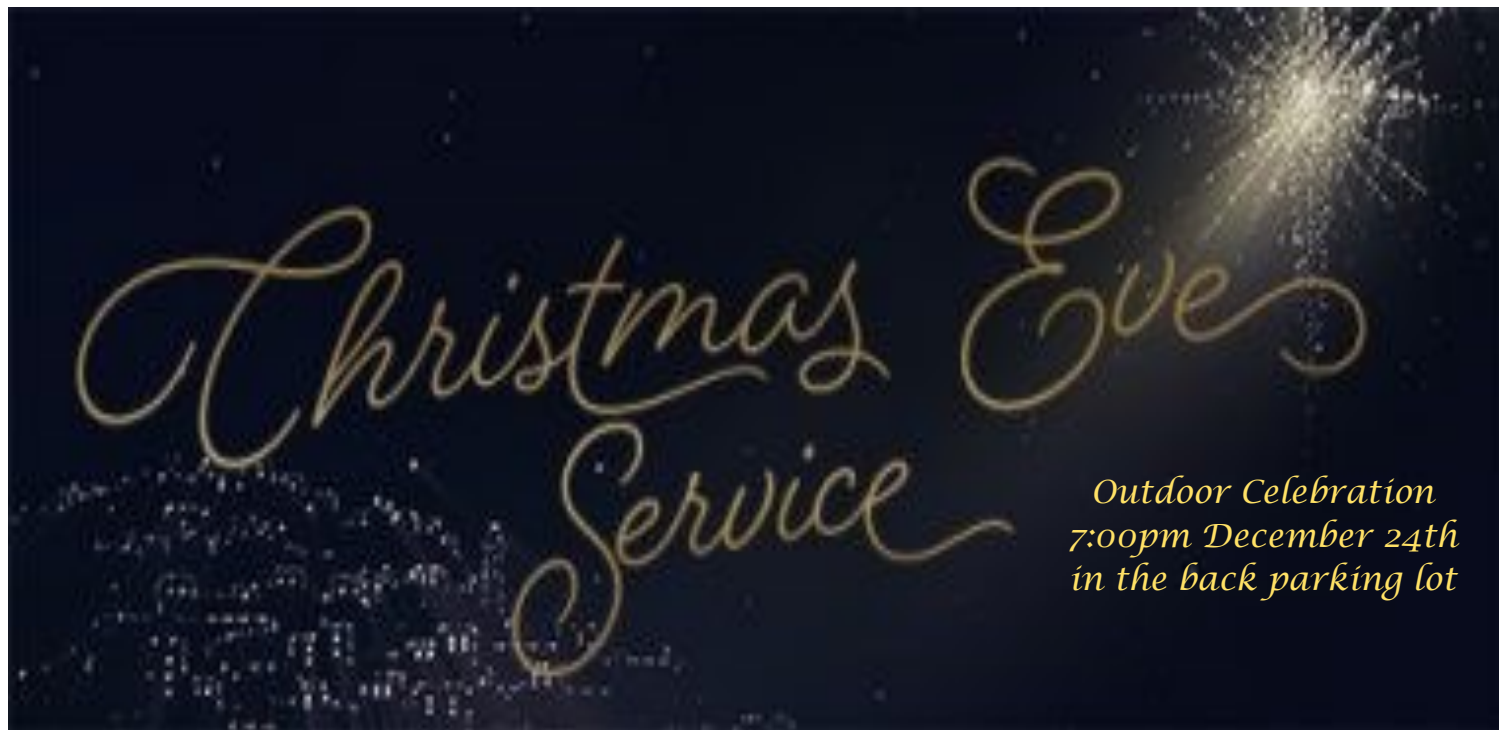
- ◆ This year's traditional Candlelight service on Christmas Eve will take place **OUTSIDE** at 7:00 PM, in the rear parking lot of the church, and it's promising to be the most memorable New Dover Christmas Eve service ever! We will have portable firepits to warm the crowd, torches to illuminate the scene, our Bell Choir ringing, and a historically accurate 1<sup>st</sup> century stable with a manger (we're also actively looking for a cooperative donkey, so if you know anyone....)! Since it's outside we'll be able to accommodate a bigger crowd and belt out our favorite carols; and we'll be lighting real candles as we pass the Light of Christ!
- ◆ If you'd like to be a part of it, either setting it up or participating in the service, contact the church office. If you own a portable fire pit, we'd like to borrow it for the night (we're up to four, but we'd like to have eight or ten). And one thing above all- pray for no rain!!! (But we'll take a little snow!)

So there you have it. Though our usual "*road to Bethlehem is barred...with a good guide we can find another way to the holy child.*" I believe we have found that "*other way.*" No virus on earth can bar our way to the stable where Mary and Joseph have found respite after their own arduous journey into town because, as Madeleine Sweeny Miller writes,

"It isn't far to Bethlehem Town!  
It's anywhere that Christ comes down  
And finds in people's friendly face  
A welcome and abiding place."

See you on the road!

*Chuck*



# KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Boyce Family	Cancer patients	and their families
Judy Tymitz	Robin & Carolyn DeCicco	Children with Autism
Family of Tom Crouse	Tonya Burleigh	All Elderly of NDUMC
Pat & Brian & Family	Service men & women	Paul Nolan
Parkhill Family	Veterans	Mildred Roberts
Manny & Nora De La Paz	Homeless, unemployed	
Debbie Ladym	&uninsured	
Robert Engel	All affected by Covid-19	

**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.**

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## God, Make Me Brave

Author Unknown

God, make me brave for life: oh, braver than this.  
Let me straighten after pain, as a tree  
straightens after the rain,  
Shining and lovely again.  
God make me brave for life; much braver  
than this.  
As the blown grass lifts, let me rise  
From sorrow with quiet eyes,  
Knowing Thy way is wise.  
God, make me brave, life brings  
Such blinding things.  
Help me to keep my sight;  
Help me to see aright  
That out of dark comes light.

# SERMON OF THE MONTH

## "Better to Light a Candle"

(Preached on December 1, 2019)

*Isaiah 9:2b-7*

*Matthew 5:14-16*

Saints, it's official- we have entered Advent, the season of darkness into light, the first Sunday in the Christian year, and so we light the first candle of the wreath this morning. It's evident the flame from that one candle adds little in the way of illuminating our sanctuary, because the day is full upon us and all the lights are on. No, in order to truly appreciate the light of one candle, we must see it in the blackness of night, because in utter darkness, the light from even one candle can be seen even for miles. During World War II, when the air raid sirens went off in a city or town of England, the order was for every last light to be extinguished and every shade to be drawn, because the light from even one window would be enough to draw the attention of the Luftwaffe bombers. Such is the power of even one little light in the midst of darkness.

The passage from Isaiah 9 places just such a contrast before us. It begins: *"The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light."* Does Isaiah mean a literal darkness, a moonless night, or a solar eclipse? No, the prophet is speaking metaphorically; Isaiah was referring to was a spiritual darkness, experienced not through the lenses of their eyes, but through the windows of their soul. So what is it like to exist in such a darkness?

Say you're staying at a friend's house for the night, a house you've never stayed in before. We've all done that, right? Anyway, you wake up about two in the morning with a dry throat and you decide you'd like a glass of water. Because your friend lives on an avenue where there are no streetlights it is pitch black. First thing you do is reach out for the wall, groping for a light switch; and despite your best effort you can't find it. Not to be deterred, you recall the general direction of the kitchen and so you set off on a journey through the bedroom door, down an unfamiliar hall, then a dining room, to reach the kitchen sink. Unfortunately, it's not a clear path. *"Whoops"* you whisper as you bump into the side-chair in the hall. *"Umpf"* you pant as your thigh slams into the corner of the dining room table. *"Ow!"* you cry out as you stub your pinky toe on the corner of the brick fireplace hearth. *"AAIIIEE!"* you bellow as reeling from the fireplace you fall backward over the sofa, landing on the set of Legos the kids neglected to put away. Lying there bruised and battered, writing in agony, Legos stuck to your back, you decide you can wait until dawn's early light to get that drink of water and crawl back to bed. This is what happens whenever we attempt to walk in total darkness!

The prophet Isaiah knew all about darkness. The Jews of Isaiah's time had been feeling their way around in it for years! Following centuries of nationhood they had been conquered by the army of Babylon and hauled off into exile, far away from their native land. They spent decades weeping in the deserts of Babylon, thirsting for just a cup of water to quench the dryness of their spirits, stumbling about blindly, with no sense of direction, no guidance to navigate the obstacles that kept them from reentering and restoring their land, from fulfilling their divine call to be a nation of priests to the world. Most had lost hope of ever seeing their homeland again.

Most had given in to the shadows and like a mole, accepted life without light.

Such were the ancient Jews, but what of us? Ask yourself- Looking at our world today, are we a people who walk assuredly in the light or do we instead stumble about in the darkness?

In other words, do we see our way clearly through the anxieties, concerns, and challenges that confront us? Are we confident that we can negotiate the stumbling blocks life throws before us in our attempt to fulfill our calling as Christian disciples, our calling to be the Body of Christ?

Or do we fumble our way through life in spiritual ignorance and biblical illiteracy? Groping about blindly, running headlong into trouble, stubbing our toes and falling over ourselves until we crumple to the ground in exhaustion and frustration, never fulfilling our potential, never quenching our thirst, never finding the light switch, desperate for just a cup of water, desperate for a word of hope, desperate for a mere glimmer of light to show us the path.

I don't believe there's one person here today who would deny that there are certain times in our life when it seems as though the darkness is all around, so overwhelming that we can't fathom any way out of it. But where does the darkness come from? God? Satan? The world?

Well, the answer may trouble us. Mainly it comes from us, from ourselves. Ultimately we are to blame for the shadows. Born into the golden light of Eden, you and I created the darkness that engulfs us. It grows in depth and breadth whenever we tell God *"Appreciate your advice but no thanks, we'd rather do it our way."* Saints, if we take our faith seriously; if we spend time with the scriptures; if we set aside the time to attend worship and Bible Study, we know how God would have us live our lives. ***Taking God's call seriously, familiarizing ourselves with God's word, is like locating the light switch that will illumine our path.*** And yet too often we prefer to say, that's okay God, I don't need the light; I know where I'm going. I don't really need Bible study, or daily devotions. And with such an attitude let the stumbling, bumbling, and fumbling begin!

Just as the people of Israel walked in darkness when they turned their backs on God and relied on their own instincts, their fear and anger, to guide them, in a similar fashion, whenever we try to negotiate the obstacles in our lives by taking the reins from the hand of God, even if our intentions are honorable, the best we can wish for is a journey in darkness, with no real hope of ever reaching our destination. Problem is we're doomed before we get started. Saints, the darkness can never be overcome solely through our own efforts! Not that we don't try... We employ all kinds of gimmicks to get us through the darkness. We try to buy our way out; we surround ourselves with material things. Too easily we fall for scams that promise a path through the darkness; scams like astrology, psychic readings, the prosperity gospel. Many think they can find our way by clinging to an extremist political ideology. And some, heck maybe most, are so apathetic they do absolutely nothing, believing the darkness will just go away if they wait long enough. And so we remain immersed in the shadows, until, like Israel before us we collapse in utter despair and cry out for help, cry out for an answer. But will the God we abandoned so long ago even care enough to respond?

Well, according to Isaiah, despite all we've done to turn God away, the answer is an emphatic "yes!" And from out of the shadows we here the word. It is the same word that was first heard at the very beginning of Genesis when all around was darkness and chaos, when God's Spirit moved over the face of the dark, chaotic waters and there proclaimed *"Let there be light!"* It's only when we open our hearts to allow that light to enter, that we can confidently walk in the Advent hope preached by Isaiah who said,

*"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness- on them light has shined."*

This light comes to us in a blessed form as the words of the prophet bring a tingle to our spine, a catch to our voice, a faint sensation as of a warm distant memory come home to roost.

As the dawn breaks, the light spreads, and as the shadows retreat we know that we are not left to perish in despair, but suddenly have a path illuminated before us, and the path has a number of names that Isaiah is only too glad to offer us: *"Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

Hearing the prophet's voice as we enter the season of Advent, we light a candle, and the anticipation of and preparation for God's visitation begins in earnest. Of course these names are for more than the season of Advent; they are for all seasons, whenever the darkness threatens to overwhelm us, whenever we find ourselves groping about blindly with no sense of direction and no visible sign of hope, and once received, we are not only to pick our selves up and walk, we are also called to deliver this hope to others along the path, others who remain lost in the darkness. The one

whose birth was prophesied by Isaiah, is the same one who, in the Sermon on the Mount, taught each one of us, "*You are the light of the world!*"

*"Hey, wait a minute Rev! I thought Jesus is the light of the world; didn't you just say that we are the source of the darkness? How can we be the light?"* I did, but the difference between spreading darkness or light comes down to one thing- the absence or presence of the Spirit of Christ. Once Christ's Spirit enters our hearts the darkness goes on full retreat, and our souls light up, and we actually become a beacon to all those who yet struggle in the shadows.

Now there are two kinds of people who call themselves Christians- bushel basket Christians, and lampstand Christians. Bushel basket Christians are the ones who keep the light to themselves.... they are light hoarders. For them, church is only seen through the lens of what it does for them. Bushel-basket Christians are by nature pessimistic, negative, and they live in fear of the world, which they see as beyond hope. They say things like, "*I wouldn't want to raise kids in this day and age.*" They say things like, "*I've got what's mine, why should I share it?*" Rather than allowing their light to shine they'd rather hide it away and curse the darkness.

But Saints, truth is there really is no such thing as a bushel basket Christian. Once given the light we are commanded to shine that light; these two actions can never be separated! Don't fool yourself- a bushel-basket Christian is actually no Christian at all.

Now lampstand Christians on the other hand are true Christians, because we receive the light of Christ and in turn allow that light to shine boldly forth, reflected in our words and deeds so that others may be led to the light. We aren't willfully ignorant of what lies before us; we see the darkness for what it is but we don't shy away from obstacles, trials, and challenges. We say things like, "*I want to make this world a better place for our children and our children's children's children.*" We say things like, "*I have been blessed with abundance; what can I share with a neighbor who's hurting?*" It doesn't matter where or in what form the darkness may be found, lampstand Christians always dare to venture forth, whether the darkness shows itself in the form of poverty, or hunger, or healthcare. Whether it be economic injustice, racial injustice, or political oppression. Whether it be greed, corruption, war, or terrorism, we are called to light a candle and bring the illumination of Christ to bear on the darkness, wherever it may be found.

It was Peter Benenson, the founder of Amnesty International, who first said, "*It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.*" That is a philosophy each and every Christian should embrace. A candle is lit whenever a hungry mouth is fed and a homeless person is given a coat.

A candle is lit whenever an arm is placed around someone who is alone and afraid. A candle is lit whenever an injustice is challenged. And a candle is lit in the darkness whenever a congregation unites to break through the walls of prejudice and misunderstanding and walk the streets doling out love in all its forms so that by their blessed example a community may grow closer to fulfilling God's Kingdom on earth.

Saints, the season of Advent is upon us. We have stumbled about in the darkness too long.

The time has come for each of us to pick up our lamps, and embark on that well-worn, month-long journey through the shadows toward Bethlehem. The little candle we carry may not seem like much against what appears to be impenetrable darkness, but "*oh my friends, it gives a lovely light!*" And if you're willing to let your light shine, I have a deal for you. Come Christmas Eve let's all meet here in this very place, and let us light the Christ Candle, and together with the light of all our candles burning, we will sing Silent Night and welcome the true light of the world. It will be well worth the journey.



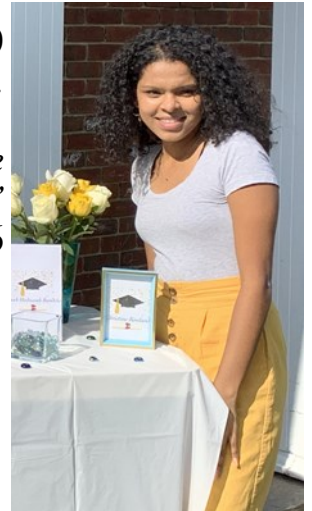


## THANK YOU TEACHERS

On behalf of families of New Dover Sunday School,  
Thank You **Miss Lina, Krisel, Sandra, Princy and Mr. Corbiey** for sharing with your students that the love of Jesus is far greater and stronger than the gravity of this pandemic.

Hadassah Bundala, Class of 2020  
Prayers & Blessings to you our dear friend on your journey to India.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*  
Numbers 6:24-26



## FINANCIAL NEWS

The Finance Committee is continuing to provide financial information. The following provides the income and expenses as of October 2020. The church income includes what is provided to the church in pledge envelopes to current expense and other income sources such as building rentals, flea market and various fundraising activities. Church expenses are shown which include salaries, utilities, conference obligations and other costs to keep the church operating.

New Dover United Methodist Church Operating Fund		
	2020	
	October	Year to Date
Income	\$ 17,614.28	\$ 199,518.88
Expenses	\$ 19,165.14	\$ 242,344.39
Difference	\$ (1,550.86)	\$ (42,825.51)

## Membership Blog

*December 2020*

This blog begins with the Saturday service of October 17, our first inside the sanctuary since March. About 20 people congregated for the evening. Praise music was provided by Anita D. and Rev. gave the sermon. The Scripture for the day was 1 John 2:18-26, centering on the meaning of the term "antichrist". This word, found only in 1&2 John, refers to a substitute Christ. Jesus also referred to false prophets and messiahs. Anyone who preaches a substitute Gospel from that of Jesus is an antichrist; they are the liars who deny Jesus is the Christ, separating the human Jesus from the heavenly One. This allows them to ignore His teachings while still claiming to be Christians. We need to be knowledgeable in the Word in order to recognize these false teachings and to spread the true Gospel. Noted were the beautiful fall altar decorations gracing the sanctuary-thank you Kyle B. for using your talents so well! The next Saturday Kyle S. returned to provide music for our last Saturday service in the parking lot. It was a beautiful evening, although a northerly breeze kept everyone huddled in coats and blankets as the service progressed. The Scripture for the day was Mark 4:1-9 (the parable of the sower). Rev. outdid himself with a sermon on the birds of the passage, explaining how "Satan birds" come in all shapes and sizes and are sometimes difficult to recognize. It is important to open hearts to the true Gospel so that when the seed is sown there is none left for these birds to steal and turn hearts from God. Our faith must result in action to show His love in the world. On Sunday morning, cold temperatures kept all but the most robust away from the service, yet cheerfulness abounded despite the chilly conditions. The service opened with the splendid hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness". The anthem was provided by Naomi Hunt and Bettina Kingsly-great job girls! The Scriptures for the day were Numbers 15:27-31 and James 4:17. Rev. discussed the sin of failing to do what is right. Intentional sin separates us from God; as disciples of Christ we are responsible for having knowledge of our sin and our need for His forgiveness, and for doing what He commands. We have no excuse when we ignore that responsibility. If we fail to do what is commanded by Jesus, we will be judged with less mercy than those who sin without that knowledge. The first Sunday in November was our last in-person service due to rising COVID numbers, but we went out in style. Not only were we able to share Holy Communion together, but it was All Saints Sunday, celebrated with a wonderful altar presentation by Kyle B. and a recognition of those in our midst who went to be with their Savior this past year. A congregation of about fifty endured breezy 40 degree temperatures to hear Grace sing a cappella for the prelude, and Catherine Poornaselvan perform for the anthem; thank you for the beautiful selections, ladies! The Scriptures for the day were 2 Chronicles 24:20-21 and Acts 12:1-2. In his sermon, Rev. noted that we are all saints; this is not because of any good behavior on our part, but because we have been set apart from the world by our relationship with and calling by God. Following the sermon, representatives of our recently passed saints placed memorial pictures upon the altar. Honored that day were Tom Crouse, Edith MacDonald, Bob Meckler, Joyce Olson, Eleanor Paul and Nayan Vyas. They will all be missed yet remembered forever in the hearts of those who knew and loved them.

In conclusion, please note that this will be the last blog; New Dover is now livestreaming all services on Facebook and Rev will continue to have select sermons in the Herald. Beginning in January, the membership page will carry a variety of poetry, commentary and informational messages. Thanks for all your kind comments over the years. Keep reading and tune in to Facebook!

"A bend in the road is not the end of the road...unless you fail to make a turn"-Helen Keller



## *December Birthdays*

- 3 *Viyanti Katkar*  
*Herbert H. Wittke*
- 4 *Gemuele Aludino*
- 6 *Mae Kiefer*  
*Joycelyn Meade*  
*Spruha Terence*
- 8 *Regan Christie*
- 10 *Brian Richards*
- 11 *Craig Gilmore*  
*Alice Lamoreaux*
- 12 *Paulette Harland*  
*Edward Ladym*  
*Stephanie Rademacher*
- 13 *Sarisha Christian*  
*Peter Nyema*
- 15 *Melanie Taylor*
- 17 *Brian Rademacher*
- 19 *Jim Dalton*  
*Bryan Paserchia*
- 21 *Mukesh Christian*
- 25 *Aryan Cimala*  
*Roz Pizont*
- 26 *Ruzwalt Khristi*
- 30 *Ashley Rademacher*
- 31 *Brian Chesney*

## *December Anniversaries*

- 14 *Adelfo Gonzalez & Donna*  
*Sucheski*
- 18 *Gerry & Rosalina Allarey*
- 19 *Hemant & Rosemary Hemant*
- 27 *Salins & Praveena Paul*



*Editor's note: My apologies to Nancy Preston, her birthday on November 27 was accidentally left off the list.*

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

So sorry we had to cancel our November meeting. We are hoping to gather for our annual Christmas meeting but because of COVID 19, we will have to wait and see.

It has been busy for us though. In October, Herb, Connie and I delivered several boxes of pop tabs to the Ronald McDonald House in Long Branch. They were very happy to receive them for recycling and cash back to help maintain their 'home'. Please continue to save them for us. It is such an important ongoing mission project for the UMW and we need your support.

On Nov. 12th, Peggy and I were finally able to deliver our personal items to the women veterans at Menlo Park. There were so many items that we needed a cart to bring them all in. They too, were gratefully receive these gifts. Thank you all for your donations, we could not do it without your help.

Hoping you all stay well and have many blessings at this very special time of year.....a very wonderful Christmas to you all.

Sincerely,  
Dianne Petersen-United Methodist Women-President



Dianne & Herb Petersen and Connie Thomas at Ronald McDonald House

One in three families struggles to provide enough diapers for their children

**Help make a change!  
Support our**

# DECEMBER DIAPER DRIVE

Drop off diapers at  
New Dover from  
Dec. 1-20

**We're collecting diapers for children and families in Trenton, New Jersey**



Dear Friends, This has been a strange time for all of us. We are concerned about each other's health and well being. It means rethinking traditions that we have for the holidays. Unfortunately, we can not have our usual poinsettia sale for the Christmas season. However it is an opportunity to rethink how we celebrate and remember our loved ones this season. We have set up a way for you to donate to one of several missions that we support here at New Dover and dedicate the donation. Please see the form.

Thank you and God Bless you this Christmas season!

Lisa Gilmore



### Poinsettia Plants & Memorials

In light of our situation with COVID 19. We are asking that instead of purchasing a poinsettia plant this holiday season that a donation be made to either the Memorial Fund, the Endowment Fund, Miracles and More or the Food Bank. You may make your gift the same amount as a poinsettia (\$8) with a dedication. Please fill in the form and drop off at the office or mail it to New Dover.

**Order deadline: December 16th**

Please make checks payable to New Dover UMC

Total Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial Fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Endowment Fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Food Bank: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Miracles and More: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please print all information below

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

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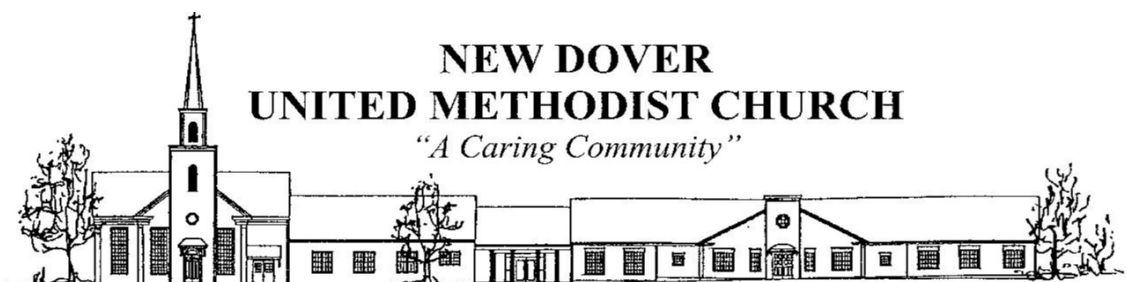
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# NEW DOVER UNITED METHODIST HERALD

**Church Office 732-381-9478  
Fax 732-381-9479  
E-mail : [admin@newdoverumc.org](mailto:admin@newdoverumc.org)**



# SCENES AROUND NEW DOVER















