



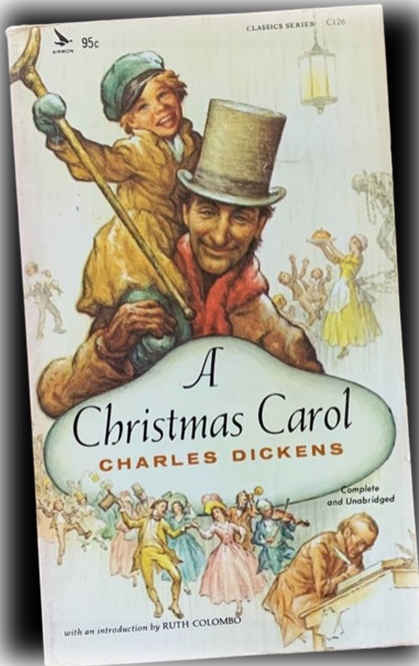
# THE NEW DOVER HERALD

December 2022

Vol. 195

*A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church*

## Chuck's Church Chat



*“There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, returned the nephew. 'Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!’” -Nephew Fred to his uncle, Ebenezer Scrooge, in A Christmas*

Saints,

Grace to you and peace as, for the seventh year, we set out together on our journey to Bethlehem.

There's a battered old book sitting on an antique bedside table upstairs in my house in the little town of Canton, New Jersey. It's a paperback of Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol that my Mom bought for me during one of the Scholastic Book Fairs held every year at Quinton Elementary School. A Christmas Carol, for all its popularity, is a thin novel, only 128 pages, which makes it a story one can easily read in one sitting.

One of my Advent traditions is, on an evening in December, to climb the rickety stairway to my bedroom, close the door behind me to keep in the heat, pull back the covers, prop up the pillows, climb in, turn on the dim lamp, reach over, grab the paperback, and begin reading the first chapter—*“Marley was dead to begin with.”* The anticipation is not unlike the thrill I feel when embarking on one of my journeys west!

Although written 179 years ago, Dickens descriptions of the bitter London winter weather (*“Foggier yet, and colder! Piercing, searching, biting cold.”*) the shoppes decorated with holly and candles for the holiday, the struggles of the Cratchit family to make the most of their limited resources, the horrifying entrance of Marley's ghost, and the miraculous transformation of Scrooge from *“...a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner,”* to one who

“...knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge,” is nearly as timeless as the holiday itself!

Maybe you have a holiday tradition that’s as meaningful and personal to you as this one has been to me. Perhaps it’s a custom, ritual, or a cherished memento passed down from your parents or grandparents, and then from you to your children or grandchildren? Hmmmm....I wonder what it is?!

Our family has had many over the years, from setting up Grandmom’s ancient Nativity set, to Mom reading us “The Night Before Christmas” at bedtime, to baked lasagna on Christmas Eve, to attending Candlelight Service that same night, to my brothers and I having our picture taken hanging our stockings (a bit embarrassing once I reached my 20s!). As both Mom and Dad have now passed, the responsibility to pass these sacred sacraments to the next generations lies with my brothers and I. Hopefully we will be half as great at it as our parents proved to be.

It is my hope and prayer for each one of you that the season ahead will be one that creates joyful memories for you and those who follow. As Advent begins, just set aside a little time to reflect on what’s truly important about the journey ahead, and then choose that which is eternal over that which is fleeting. Do that and you will reflect the words of the gloriously transformed Ebenezer Scrooge:

*“I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach!”*

And may God bless us, everyone!

*Chuck*



### **Poinsettia Plants & Memorials**

Please fill out the form below and return it along with your payment to the table set up in Fellowship Hall. The plants will be used to decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas. Donations to the Memorial Fund and/or the Endowment Fund may also be given in lieu of a plant order. **Plants may be picked up after the Christmas Day service.**

#### **Order deadline: December 4th**

Please make checks payable to New Dover UMC with Special Flowers in Memo

Plant Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ **Cost is \$7.00 per plant** Total Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial Fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Endowment Fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please print all information below

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

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

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

# KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Manny & Nora De La Paz  
Debbie Ladym  
Earlette Butterfield  
Brian Richards  
Kyle Becker  
Service men & women  
Veterans  
Homeless, unemployed  
& uninsured

All affected by Covid-19 and  
their families

The People of Ukraine  
Victims & their Families of  
the recent 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 2022 permanent prayer list, please contact Karen Rowland at [krowland648@yahoo.com](mailto:krowland648@yahoo.com)

## FROM YOUR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

PLEASE JOIN US FOR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP EVERY  
WEDNESDAY MORNING AT 10 AM

### *In This Issue:*

- Chuck's Church Chat
- Poinsettia Sale
- Keep Us in Your Prayers
- Sermon of the Month
- Holiday Events
- UMW News
- Membership Corner
- December Birthdays & Anniversaries
- Clothing Drive
- Christmas Baskets
- Finance News

## PRAYER

is that portal that brings  
the power of heaven  
down to earth. It's  
kryptonite to the enemy  
and to all his ploys  
against you.

Priscilla Shirer

# SERMON OF THE MONTH

## “Sparse Company on the Bethlehem Road”

*(Preached on Sunday, December 5, 2021)*

### Isaiah 33:7-16

Picture yourself in your car heading to a sold-out concert. You're all excited because this is *the* big show of the year and everybody you know said they're going. Before you take off, you're a bit concerned because you noticed there's only one road that leads to the venue and you know there's going to be heavy traffic. But once you pull out of the driveway and get on your way, things are not as you anticipated. Rather than bumper to bumper vehicles loaded with concert goers, there are very few cars on the road. Naturally, the first thing you think is that somehow you must have made a wrong turn! How else to explain the lack of traffic? I mean, what makes more sense- that thousands of people took the wrong road to the concert, or that you did?

So what do you do? You pull into a gas station, take out your map, and ask the attendant if you're on the right highway to the concert. And guess what? She tells you that you absolutely are! She even shows you on the map that the highway you're on goes directly to the venue. You thank her and head out. But you leave the gas station with one still burning question- if almost everyone you know said they were going to the concert, why aren't there more cars on this one road that leads there? Everybody said they were going! But if that's the case, where are they? Where are they indeed?!

Saints, there's a big event coming up this month that **no one wants to miss**, isn't there?

Of course we're talking about **CHRISTMAS!** *THE* biggest event of the year, especially for the young and the young at heart. No one here wants to miss Christmas, right? Of course not!

Everyone you know is telling you they're going to be present at the holy birth come December 24<sup>th</sup>. And so you take off on the one highway that leads to Bethlehem, expecting it to be bumper to bumper with fellow believers. But once you get underway, you're a bit shocked to see only a few fellow travelers on the road with you. In fact, there's sparse company on the Bethlehem road.

Wait a minute, you might ask, isn't just about everybody in town heading to Bethlehem this time of year? So where are they? And you wonder, am I on the right road? After all, what makes more sense- that just about everybody else got lost on the road to Bethlehem, or that you did? How are you supposed to find out? Well, guess what you need to do? You need to pull over and take out, not a map, but a Bible! And as you open it up and read the prophecies and the stories you'll discover that you've been on the right road all along!

That's certainly a relief. But hold on a minute....if that's the case, where the heck are the rest of the crowd? Somewhere out there are an awful lot of people who believe they're on the correct road to Bethlehem to witness the birth of Jesus, but it turns out, somewhere along the way they made a wrong turn! It's one thing to say you're going to Bethlehem, it's another to actually get there! Ask yourself- how many professed Christians believe the road they're on will take them to Bethlehem, when instead they end up at.....Bed, Bath, and Beyond? Saints, this Christmas Eve there's a chance we're going to arrive at the stable and wonder where everybody else is!

In the scripture passage from Isaiah 33 we hear the prophet proclaim, **“The highways are deserted, travelers have left the road.”** Why are the highways of Isaiah's time deserted? Well, probably it's because the vast majority of the people took the wrong road! The road the Jews had always been encouraged to take was that which was given its direction by the laws and

commandments of God. Stay on that road and you will be blessed by God all along the way.

Stay on that road and collectively you will become a great nation in the eyes of God. But, here's the deal- the majority thought the road too difficult to navigate. Some believed it too hazardous, because whenever you try to do the right thing seems you almost always encounter opposition, even violent opposition.

Isaiah specifically describes those who have deserted the highway of God, when he declares, ***The treaty is broken, its oaths are despised, its obligation is disregarded.*** Treaty breakers and oath despisers are those who broke the covenant God made with the Hebrew people, the terms of which were forged in the thunder of Mount Sinai- the Ten Commandments.

Basically it came down to these words from Yahweh: ***"I shall be your God and you shall be my people."*** But the vast majority of the people pulled an Adam and Eve and decided they would rather be their own boss, a nation with their own rules, and went their own way! And though they would brag that they were God's people because, after all, they were children of Abraham, and convinced themselves, they were heading in God's direction, in actuality they were massed together on the wrong road, while the highway of God was barren of travelers!

Saints, when we read this passage from Isaiah it's so easy to cast judgment on the Jews of Isaiah's time, isn't it? How, we ask, could they have broken their vows to a God who had been so faithful to them, to a God who had done so much for them? But what about the vows we ourselves made to that very same God when we joined the church? We who remember what we vowed, don't we? If not, here's a little refresher course!

- ⇒ **On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?**
- ⇒ **Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?**
- ⇒ **Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?**
- ⇒ **According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy Church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world?**

Saints, if we still abide by these vows, that we made to God and to our fellow disciples, then congratulations- we are on the *ONE* highway that will take us directly to Bethlehem to witness the holy birth! But, as Isaiah prophesied, if we neglect to honor these vows, we may convince ourselves and others that we're heading to Bethlehem this Advent, but in reality the road we are on will never take us there.

If we have kept our vows and are on the one highway that leads us to Bethlehem, who then *WILL* we see on the road walking beside us. God through Isaiah makes it crystal clear.

- ⇒ ***Those who walk righteously and speak uprightly,***
- ⇒ ***who despise the gain of oppression,***
- ⇒ ***who wave away a bribe instead of accepting it,***
- ⇒ ***who stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed***
- ⇒ ***and shut their eyes from looking on evil.***



And correspondingly, who *WON'T* we see on that Bethlehem road? Those who walk in a direction opposite of God's instructions. Those who...

- ⇒ **Oppress others,**
- ⇒ **accept bribes,**
- ⇒ **regard bloodshed and violence as an option,**
- ⇒ **who think its okay to use evil means to achieve their ends.**

The Bible is consistent- God does not take kindly to travelers who have intentionally wandered from the one highway that leads to Bethlehem, telling them that rather than bearing good fruit,

- ⇒ ***You conceive chaff, you bring forth stubble; your breath is a fire that will consume you.***
- ⇒ ***And the peoples will be as if burned to lime, like thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.'***
- ⇒ ***The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless:***

To which the ones who suddenly realize they've been on the wrong road gasp in reply, **'Who among us can live with the devouring fire? Who among us can live with everlasting flames?'** Again, Those ***"who walk righteously and speak uprightly."*** They will be our companions on the highway to the City of David.

Further, Isaiah let's them know that their faithfulness to God and their righteousness will be rewarded, declaring...***They will live on the heights; their refuge will be the fortresses of rocks; their food will be supplied, their water assured.*** In other words, God will supply all their needs.

And so this "hellfire and brimstone" prophecy ends on a most joyous note for those who have kept their vows to the one true God, the God who calls us to a life of faithfulness, compassion, and justice! Those of us who live such a life will surely find ourselves on the highway to Bethlehem this December. And remember, just because there may be sparse company on the road, that doesn't mean we're going in the wrong direction. Keep the faith, honor your vows, and we'll see you on the road!





Mark your calendars for December 11th!!

We will have a special worship service including the bell choir and our annual Children's program "The Real Story".

Following service, you are invited by  
Rev Chuck and Jean  
to their annual  
Open House  
at the Parsonage  
for fellowship, food (including Rev's  
famous chili) and drinks.  
Please stop by and celebrate the holiday  
season together.



*United Methodist Women*

Come join us for Christmas celebration  
on December 14th at 6:30pm.  
Bring your favorite covered dish to share.  
We will provide desserts.

Our “craft lady” Peggy has a special  
Christmas craft for us to make, a game and Christmas music are  
planned for a relaxing evening Of fun and fellowship.  
All women of our church are invited.

There are no meetings during the month of January and February. Our  
next meeting will be in March celebrating St. Patrick’s Day and coming  
of Spring.

Special blessings to all for the Christmas season.

Sincerely,

Dianne Petersen - UMW President

\*\*Special request from “Craft Lady”. She is always thinking ahead.  
Please save your wine corks to be used for Christmas 2023. Preferably not red  
stained but they are welcome too. You can put them in a bag and leave for  
Peggy in UMW mailbox in breezeway. This is ongoing thru 2023. \*\*





## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Dear Friends...a reminder...the greeting card ministry boxes will be set up in Fellowship Hall beginning Nov. 26. If you wish to send cards to anyone at New Dover without the cost of stamps, drop your cards in the box and they will be ready for pick-up the following week until January 1, 2023. Any cards not taken by then will be mailed by the church. **If you want to send cards to members unable to be at church, those cards will be mailed as they are dropped in the box. Before Thanksgiving, a name list will be provided to you by email, or printed copy by request.**

Also, the directory will be updated in January 2023; if you need to make changes to your contact information, please let me know by then.

Anita Davis [marblesandmayhem@outlook.com](mailto:marblesandmayhem@outlook.com)

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### ENCOURAGING OTHERS (PART 2)

9. Encourage other believers with a reminder of Christ's coming. It redirects our thinking towards an eternal perspective and our ultimate deliverance from the sin and death. *We who are still alive and are left will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words (1 Thess 5:17b-18)*
10. Realize the power of presence. Just being there can be encouraging! When you're with others, you're telling them that they're important. The Apostle Paul closed his letter to the church at Colossae promising to send his friend Tychius *that he may encourage your hearts (Colossians 4:8b)*.
11. If you're part of a church, Bible study, or fellowship, show up. Your presence encourages others that they are part of a community of faith and that they are not alone. That's why the writer of Hebrews says, *Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as we see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:25)*.
12. Use encouragement as a form of outreach. If anyone should be known for being an encourager, it should be Christians. Write a letter of appreciation to people at work, your apartment manager, your child's teacher, or your doctor. Often when we interact with these people, we are asking for their services. Take time just to say thank you!
13. If you really want to encourage someone who gives you excellent service, write a letter of commendation to the person's boss.
14. We could learn something from the way team athletes freely pat, touch, and high-five each other in competition. Touch is a powerful encouragement. Be sure to be sensitive in this area, though. Ask someone if you can hug them before doing so. And be careful to remain above reproach in all your relationships.
15. When you see someone making positive changes in their lives, affirm them. "You seem to have a really great attitude about...", "It may be that I'm just starting to take notice, but I see that you are...", "Do you think that you are becoming more...?"
16. Tell people how they've encouraged you!



## *December Birthdays*

- 3 Sherry Katkar  
Herbert H. Wittke
- 4 Gem Aludino
- 6 Joycelyn Meade
- 8 Regan Christie
- 10 Brian Richards
- 11 Craig Gilmore  
Alice Lamoreaux
- 12 Paulette Harland  
Edward Ladym  
Stephanie Rademacher
- 13 Sarisha Christian  
Peter Nyema
- 17 Brian Rademacher
- 19 Jim Dalton
- 21 Mukesh Christian
- 24 Mackenze Chesney
- 25 Roz Pizont
- 26 Ruzwalt Khristi
- 27 Kennyson Christian  
Violet David
- 30 Ashley Rademacher
- 31 Brian Chesney

## *December Anniversaries*

- 18 Gerry & Lin Allarey
- 19 Hemant & Rosemary Raju
- 20 Herold & Jyotika David
- 30 Ashok & Violet David



## CLOTHING DRIVE

The Outreach Committee is having a fall/winter clothing drive. We are collecting NEW women and men's adult-sized hats, scarves and/or gloves. They will be donated to the Group Home #1, located right here on New Dover Road, which is sponsored by the NJ Institute for Disabilities. Check out their website - **NJID.ORG**. Any extra accessories will be distributed to other group homes throughout our area. We will be collecting items through December 11. Please look for the donation box in Fellowship Hall. Can you please consider buying, knitting or crocheting an item for someone in need? Any questions, contact JoAnn Lettieri at 908-296-9177.



Christmas food baskets will be distributed on December 18. If you know someone who could use a helping hand this year, fill out a request form that can be found on the church office door.

Items needed are turkeys and hams boxed/canned potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, canned vegetable, pie fillings, cake mixes, etc.

The Finance Committee is continuing to provide financial information. The following provides the income and expenses as of September 2022. 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		
	2022	
	September	Year to Date
Income	\$ 29,862.50	\$ 253,300.13
Expenses	\$ (35,982.99)	\$ (287,697.79)
Difference	\$ (6,120.19)	\$ (34,397.66)

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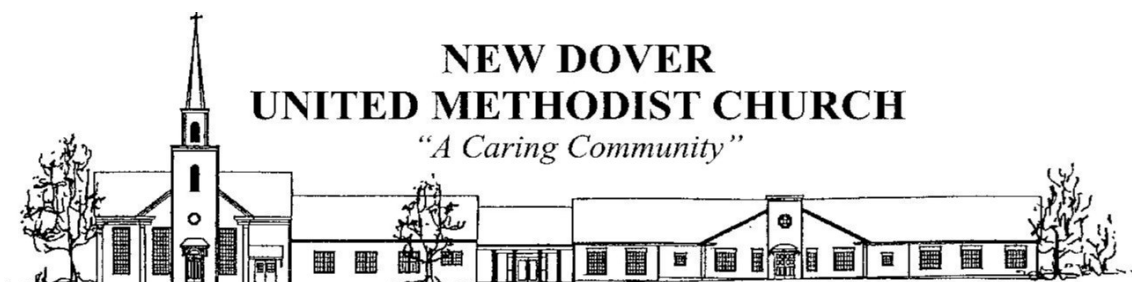
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# NEW DOVER UNITED METHODIST HERALD

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**NEW DOVER  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
*"A Caring Community"*















