

THE NEW DOVER HERALD

February 2020

Vol. 164

A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints.

Grace to you and peace...

At the close of my first year of Little League they held the annual Father-Son game in which a team of dads went up against their boys (yes, it was a different era!). We played on the Little League field in Lower Alloway Creek, notorious for the murmurations of gnats and mosquitoes that would rise nightly from the surrounding marsh to suck our blood and challenge our concentration whenever a fly ball came our way. The aroma of "OFF!" insect repellent was a constant in those days.

For the first four innings. I watched from the bench as the other fathers and sons did battle. They wouldn't put your own Dad in the game until you went in, so both my Dad and I rode our respective benches until the fifth when I heard my name called by our coach, Mr. Zaiser. I was not a very good baseball player that first year so they put me out in right field, where the least amount of baseballs came a-callin,' which was fine by me. It wasn't until the sixth and final inning that I saw my Dad grab a bat and head to the plate. Dad was a right-handed hitter as he stood in the batter's box. I don't remember what pitch it was but I saw him swing and the next thing I know the ball soared on a line over my head, over the fence, over a hedgerow, and down into the gravel pit beyond right field. "Wow!" I thought as Dad circled the bases, my Dad had hit a home run! I was so proud.

Just like every year, the Dads won the game rather easily, and after a couple of cups of grape Kool-Aid, and red licorice string, served by my Mom who worked the refreshment stand that night, we piled into our 1966 white Buick Station wagon and headed home to Quinton. Sitting in the back seat in my "Hill's Produce" uniform I told my Dad how cool it was that he hit a home run, but instead of thanking me he apologized. "I'm sorry Chuck," he said, "I was trying to hit the ball to you and I just got too much of it."

My Dad, after giving life all he had, passed peacefully away last week at the age of 90. I will always remember him as one who did whatever he could to place my brothers and me, and later his grandchildren, as the highest priority in his life. From Little League and beyond, he and my Mom were always there for us, immersing themselves in our activities, supporting us in all of our endeavors, and rooting for us through all of our challenges. Now, while we're no angels (!), I can't imagine how we would have turned out otherwise. It is a legacy of unremitting, unconditional love that we could never repay, other than to pass it along to others we care for in our own lives.



I want to close by thanking you all for your outpouring of prayers, empathy, and support for my family, and especially my Mom, in this time our time of mourning. I'm well aware that many of you have gone through similar losses, and after this week I feel I understand your own grief better than before. That said, is it not a blessing to have such a fellowship of believers to lean on when loved ones leave us? Such is the grace of God; such is the power of our faith!

Peace.

Chuck

EVERY DAY 26,500 CHILDREN NEEDLESSLY DIE OF HUNGER



SATURDAY, MARCH 21RD
WILL BE
"A DAY WITHOUT
HUNGER"

JOIN US AT NEW DOVER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AS WE ASSEMBLE 75,000 MEALS LET'S "RISE AGAINST HUNGER!"

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KNITTING CROCHETING SEWING QUILTING CRAFTS



Do you enjoy making things? Do you feel the call to use your gifts and help those who are in need? We are looking for people (and we mean men AND women) willing to make a variety of items for the less fortunate-items such as blankets, quilts, hats, scarves, mittens, soft toys for children, etc. If your are interested in being a part of this new venture, please bring your questions and ideas to Pat Carpenter or Anita Davis so we can get started helping others!

"Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead"-James 2:26

KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Mary Ellen Anglin Boyce family **Judy Tymitz** Manny&Nora De La Paz Sandra De Alwis Tom Crouse Bonner family Fran Livecchia Richards/Carpenter fmlies Cancer patients Aaron Christie Service men&women Dianne&Herb Petersen

Veterans

Parkhill family Homeless, unem-MaryEllen Anglin ployed&uninsured Victims of terrorism&violence Evelyn Millard Robin&Carolyn DeCicco

Liam Dalton

Pray for all those affected by Natural Disasters, those suffering with addictions, those suffering from depression, all national leaders, 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.



SERMON OF THE MONTH

"The Seeds Fall Everywhere" Preached February 24, 2019 Mark 4:1-20

This passage from Mark's gospel is rich in both symbolism and wisdom. There are two key images: the first is that of a farmer, a lone thrower of seeds walking forth across the fields, never swerving from his task. It is an image that has existed unchanged for centuries. Down through the ages the sower plods steadily on, casting seeds to the right and left by the handful from a bottomless bag, knowing that only a few will ever grow to yield a harvest of fruit. The second image is that of the seeds: all the same variety, each one bearing within it one fledgling plant waiting to for the right conditions to germinate. A plant which upon maturity will bear good fruit, the fruit of the Kingdom of God. Each individual seed is precious in the Sower's hand; each is the Word of God, each one a revelation, packed with the unlimited potential of God's love and power.

So in this parable the sower and the seeds are the constants, but what is the variable? Well, it's the ground onto which these seeds are cast! Some is packed down hard as pavement, some is rocky and shallow, and some is choked with weeds. The sower does not discriminate when it comes to where the seed is thrown because that's not his or her job! This parable makes it clear that it is not up to the sower to determine where or where not to cast the seeds. It is not the sower's responsibility to determine which seeds will thrive or perish; it is only for the sower to sow, for that is what sowers are called to do.

The question it puts before those of us who claim faith in Christ is simple- "What's the dirt on us Christians?" That question is not meant to be fodder for gossip for social media, it merely asks the condition of our soil. In other words, how ready, willing, and able are we to receive and be transformed by the word of God? Is our earth tilled, watered, and rich enough to yield a harvest befitting the Kingdom of God? Or not?

Now, we would all like to believe that we are that sower of seeds, that witness to the Word of God, and indeed that is the mission to which each of us has been called. But before we grab our seed bag and take off across the open fields we need to be careful that we don't get ahead of ourselves. Before we set forth, before we fancy ourselves expert sowers, we better be sure we have first received that very Word into our hearts. Through this parable Jesus is telling us that the only way to receive God's word is to prepare the soil, for hard, or rocky, or weedy ground will not yield any fruit.

Where is this soil found? That's easy- it's found in the garden that is our heart, and so our first step is to prepare our hearts to receive this word, for if our soil is hard packed, or full of rocks, or choked with weeds, than the word will not find a fertile place to grow. First and foremost the parable of the Sower warns us against possessing a mind and heart-set that will automatically reject the hearing of God's word, not allowing the seeds to germinate, let alone reach maturity. Like a field in early April, we are to have our hearts ready to receive the seed. So how do we do that?

Well the first thing Jesus instructs us to do is "Listen!" In fact, that's how he introduces the parable - "Listen!" he tells his followers. Seems like a simple enough instruction doesn't it?

But how many of us really know how to listen? Director Quenton Tarrantino says *there are two kinds of people in the world: those who listen, and those who wait to talk!* Those who wait to talk don't really hear what a person is trying to say to them. They are typically stubborn stick-in-the-muds who think they already know it all, so what's the point? They know what's truth and put down or distance themselves from anyone who believes differently. The Pharisees, for the most part, were religious types who always waited to talk. But a person who listens, on the other hand, is open to hearing differing opinions and therefore open to change and transformation.

When Jesus tells us to "listen!" he's saying, consider what I'm about to tell you; it could possible change your way of thinking and even your way of life. So saints, when we read God's Word in the Bible, or hear it proclaimed from the pulpit, we need to ask ourselves- do we receive it on its own terms, or is our hearing deafened by our own stubborn opinions or prejudices? If only we were willing to "Listen!" Jesus tells us, we will be prepared to receive the word in all its miraculous, life altering power. "Listen!"

Jesus shouts, so let's lean a bit forward in your seats and hear the parable of the sower...

"A Sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up."

Have you ever been lying there on a beach blanket minding your own business taking in the warmth of the sun and the rhythmic sound of the surf when all of a sudden the little brat in the family alongside you decides to throw pieces of his sandwich in the air, in the direction of your blanket? Next thing you know you're surrounded by hundreds of squawking seagulls. It's like you're in a game of "Angry Birds!" Or a certain Alfred Hitchcock movie, right? Aside from the horror, did you ever notice how quickly the gulls gather up every bit of food thrown to them. Much of the time it never even reaches the ground. This is the image Jesus conveys to us in the parable. The seed represents the word of God cast from the hand of the sower, but it falls on the ground, and in the blink of an eye is snatched up by the voracious birds that flutter and flit about our lives.

What are these birds in our time? Maybe we've been caught up in the onslaught of social media and don't know what to believe anymore. Maybe we've lost ourselves in the mechanized routine of get up go to work, count the hours, come home to collapse, get up go to work again, ad nauseum... Let me ask you-how will we ever hope to prepare our hearts for peace in such a hostile environment? It's almost impossible! Think about this- how many times have we attended church, been genuinely moved by a sermon, but as the benediction echoes in our departing ears the upcoming week's deadlines, appointments, and other obligations crowd back into our psyche. Saints, these are the birds that snatch away the seed before it has a chance to germinate, let alone grow and produce. Jesus goes on:

"Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away."

The landing site of this seed is different from that of the first, but the result is just as tragic. Here the word *is* received, often with great enthusiasm, but because the layer of soil is thin, the person's faith has insufficient depth enough to withstand the onslaught of crisis and heartache. In this age of biblical illiteracy, its usually because the person has made little effort to deepen his or her faith through such disciplines as Sunday School, Bible Study, or devotions, and such people shouldn't be surprised when their shallow faith fails them in times of need. Of course when the crisis overwhelms them guess what? They inevitably blame it on God!

Saints, the key here is commitment. Roots can only extend into the heart of a person who is committed to deepening her or his faith. We cannot simply go around bragging to our friends "I'm saved! I'm saved!" and expect every problem in our lives to be vanquished. Such shallow, effervescent enthusiasm is a far different cry from the joy we possess once God's word takes deep root in us. Our faith needs to be deeper than mere words. Reciting a creed or memorizing a Bible verse is all well and good, but will it get us through the storm? I was down in South Jersey talking to a farmer friend one day who told me he had planted soy beans early in May, but because of a prolonged drought, over a third of the plants didn't come up, and the ones that did were stunted, putting forth only shallow roots. As the drought persisted the sun beat down on them and they withered in the heat. At that point the farmer had to make a decision- should he let the stunted scorched beans remain and harvest them in the fall, receiving only a fraction of the yield? Or should he cut-harrow the withered plants under and replant with new seeds, in the hope that greater things will come from the tilled soil. Wisely, he chose to begin again.

Saints, if our faith is only visible when we're in church for an hour on Sunday than our harvest too will be only a meager fraction of the potential blessings God offers us. Is our faith unable to withstand the challenges that can scorch us? Does our faith offer only a temporary relief from crisis, like some spiritual Tylenol? Perhaps like that farmer we need to cut harrow under the old shallow rooted plants our faith has become, and replant with new seeds of genuine Christian commitment, in hope of a much greater harvest. On to the next part of the parable:

"Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain."

Saints, many of us live what could be described as "strangled lives." Lives so congested by worldly diversions and temptations that our faith becomes just another demand on our lives.

The strangled life is one in which there *is* no great priority. Going to church is no different than any other activity we might show up to during the week. As Jesus tells us through this parable, in the end such a faith yields nothing. Oh, it may make us feel good for a while, it may relieve some guilt, ease our conscience, but it cannot save us from the existential fear of suffering and death. Only a faith freed from the grip of worldly desires can release us to live as children of God and disciples of Christ. One truly cannot serve God and mammon(wealth). The seed will not yield its fruit if it is made to grow among the thorns.

So....three times the sower has cast the seed, and three times the harvest is not reaped, not a good

batting average to say the least! But finally Jesus offers us a note of hope and optimism when he says:
"Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding 30 and 60 and 100-fold."

Any farmer worth his or her salt will tell you that it doesn't matter how good a sower goes forth, or how good the seed, or how much seed is cast; if the soil is poor there will be a disappointing harvest very time. You know, with modern monster tractors and mechanized planters, the image of a farmer casting seeds may seem a little archaic to our 21st century minds.

We have learned to be more economical and less wasteful in our planting methods. No farmer today, other than the Amish, would dream of walking across his or her field randomly throwing seeds on the ground. We are more surgical in our farming. But whereas such change may be beneficial to the farmer, to extend it to the ministry of Christ's church would be a great mistake.

When we're too discriminatory in sowing our seeds, when we only witness to those who we like, who are like us, we inevitably end up missing a brother or sister along the way who really needed to hear a word from God on a given day. Jesus' message is clear- God calls us forth to sow our faith on every street, own every road and alleyway, in every neighborhood the world over and not worry about where the seeds may fall. This parable ensures that the seeds that land in the rich soil will indeed grow to bear a great amount of fruit.

The big question for us personally is this- How can we be sure that **our** soil is rich and deep enough that our hearts are prepared to accept the transforming power of God's word in the pages of scriptures, presented in the sacraments, and proclaimed from the pulpit? Well, mainly by avoiding the circumstances of the parable which are capable of making void the hearing of God's word. On the surface it looks like those whose seeds fail to produce are victims of outside influences: hungry birds, rocky, shallow soil, choking thorns. But ultimately WE OURSELVES are responsible for the condition of our soil.

If we allow our lives to be flattened by the perpetual rat race. If we fail to deepen our faith and cultivate our spiritual lives. If we allow ourselves to be strangled by the demands on our lives and the lives of our children. Then Saints, we have no one to blame but ourselves.

Unless we are willing to deny our own perceptions of reality and open ourselves to a new righteousness, unless we take the time needed to cultivate the soil of our minds and hearts so that the seed will find a place and not be left for the birds to snatch away, unless we deepen the roots of our faith through prayer, devotion, and Bible Study, so we will be strong enough to withstand the challenges and sufferings of this world, unless we remove ourselves from the weeds and thorns which strangle our faith amidst the myriad of lures and temptations of this world and make the Kingdom of God our first priority, then we have no one, no one, but ourselves to blame. Only by enriching our soil we will obtain a great harvest, a harvest of salvation that will fuel the victory of the Kingdom of God.

Only when we do that, will we ourselves become the sowers who went forth to sow. Only then will we be true disciples who help Jesus build the Kingdom of God!

TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING? WHY NOT DONATE YOUR VALUABLE JUNQUE TO

FIGHT GLOBAL HUNGER?



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21nd- SATURDAY, the 22rd.

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

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

GIFTS FOR WOMEN VETERANS AT MENLO PARK VETERAN'S HOME

We will once again be make gift bags for the women at the Menlo Park Veteran's Home. The following is a list of items we include:

- Personal items: Hand/body lotions, body spray, small (NEW) scarves, combs, jewelry
- Small notepads, pens, writing paper, all occasion cards, gift bags
- Cash donations to purchase some of the above items.

Last year we were able to donate 60 gift bags to these women. Let's try to top that amount this year.

Thank you to all who have donated in the past. These gifts were all happily received. Gifts like these help provide a better quality of life for the residents.

Look for baskets in Fellowship Hall to put your gifts in.

Sincerely,

Dianne Petersen President, United Methodist Women



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner



Join us for our Annual Shrove Tuesday Pan-Cake and Sausage Dinner

> February 25, 2020 in Fellowship Hall 6 pm - 8pm

Cost: \$5 per person, under age 10 free

Save the Date

Feb 25 Shrove Tuesday Pancake

Dinner

Feb 21-22 Rummage Sale

Feb 26 Ash Wednesday



MEMBERSHIP BLOG

We start our blog this month from the third weekend of Advent. On Saturday, Rev. Davidson discussed John the Baptist and his question: are You the one we have waited for, or is there another? We are waiting for Jesus to fix our messes-why? Jesus is already working to provide restoration and retribution. We are called to help others and will in turn be healed ourselves. Let's make the commitment even amid worldly temptations. God is a chain breaker! On Sunday morning the Sunday school and some very able leaders/ helpers presented the annual Christmas pageant and wowed everyone. The service was followed by an expanded coffee hour with many goodies. Thank you to Mary Jane M. and all those who participated in creating such a great program! The final weekend before Christmas was made auspicious by the annual cantata, the Songs of Christmas. Twenty-two volunteers, led by our Grace Kim, sang beautifully and were received with a standing ovation. The cantata was preceded by a short homily from Rev. Chuck; the Scripture of the day was Matthew 1:18-25. Joseph tested the truthfulness of his dream through the Law, but then tempered it with compassion; this idea of compassion before legalism set the pattern for Jesus' life and ours as well. We should ask ourselves the question, what is God telling us? Let's dream great dreams. Thank you to all those who volunteered to sing in the cantata, and a special mention to the a cappella group who sang "The Holly and the Ivy" for the offering. Everyone was fantastic, their efforts deserving of the applause. On Christmas Eve two distinctly different services were offered. The sanctuary was aglow with altar candles and poinsettias, and the spirit of God was definitely present. At the early service the congregation experienced performances from all the musical groups offered at New Dover. separated by Scripture readings from our congregants. The sermon Scripture was from Luke 2:15-19, and Rev. Chuck gave a short homily on Mary's thoughts for the future of her son Jesus. All children are called by God for the mission of building His kingdom, and we are all called to be peacemakers. Thanks to our worship leaders, musicians, singers, and speakers for providing the congregation with a joyful experience! The following Sunday was a quiet but meaningful one for those present. During the service the congregation had a carol sing-a-long, which tested the talents of our guest organist JayR M. (who was great, by the way). The Scripture for the day was Luke 2:15-18. Rev. noted how the shepherd's care for their sheep could have been a distraction in their journey to the manger, and questioned us about what "sheep" (distractions) are leading us to lose focus on the importance of that night. Let's remember that life is about more than "tending sheep". As the shepherds told their story of the baby, so must we; it is in the telling that we and others will be changed. The service ended with the rousing "Go Tell It On The Mountain". January 2020 services began with a rousing prelude by Grace K. called "Praise Him, Praise Him!" During our Moment for Ministry, Rev. noted that New Dover will be hosting a revival later this year. The Scriptures for the day were Ezekiel 20:39-41 and Matthew 2:1-12. Rev. talked about the 3 wise men and their gifts to the Christ child. Frankincense was used for the anointing of a deity, and Rev. noted that Christ in us makes us worthy of that anointing. We as the body of Christ are anointed regularly, and should go forth into the world as He did. During the service, frankincense was burned on the altar, and as part of Holy Communion all congregants were anointed with frankincense oil as they accepted the elements. A powerful service to begin the New Year! The second weekend of the month, our Saturday congregation was treated to a sermon by Kyle S. (his first at New Dover). Taking his discussion from John 9:39, he noted that we need to take on the character and heart of Jesus, and then can't help but act, and love, like Him. Are we looking through the right lens when examining the wisdom of our world, or do we need a new prescription when we read and interpret the Gospel message? Excellent message Kyle, one to be seriously heeded. On Sunday the Scripture lessons were from Psalm 78:1-4 and Mark 4:33. Rev. talked about the nature of parables, stories used to primarily dispense wisdom and truth. Jesus often used parables to teach lessons about the kingdom of God, and we can do the same with our stories. Rev. and Pastor Davidson will be covering parables in the next two months, topics to be chosen by ballot. On Jan. 9, a service of death and resurrection was held in the sanctuary for Edith MacDonald, mother of Paulette Harland. A large crowd turned out to celebrate a life well lived, and a repast followed the service. Also, on Jan. 18 a service of death and resurrection was held at Quinton UMC for Bob Coblentz, father of our own Rev. Chuck. Amid tears and laughter, a supportive congregation shared many memories of Bob as well as Scriptures and hymns of love and hope. A repast followed the interment. We will miss you Edith and Bob, but rejoice in God's promises of everlasting life and reunion in the kingdom of heaven!



February 2020

10:00-11:00am Karate (W) 10:00-11:00am Karate (W) 10:00-11:00am Karate (W) 10:00-11:00am Karate (W) 6:30-8 Telugu Service 6:30-8 Telugu Service 6:30-8 Telugu Service 6:30-8 Telugu Service 5:00 Praise Service 7:30 AA & Al Anon 5:00 Praise Service 5:00 Praise Service 7:30 AA & Al Anon 5:00 Praise Service 7:30 AA & Al Anon 7:30 AA & Al Anon Sat 29 6:00 GS Troop 80105 7:00 GS Troop 80005 7:00 GS Troop 80005 7:00 Cub Scout Pack Fri 28 7:00 Hot Topics 10:00 Prayer Fellowship 7:00 Hot Topics 7:00 Hot Topics 7:00 Hot Topics Thu 7:30 44 7:30 AA 20 10:00 Prayer Fellowship 10:00 Prayer Fellowship 10:00 Prayer Fellowship 26 Ash Wednesday 7:00 Worship Meeting 7:00 Trustee Meeting Wed 6:00 Karate 6:00 Karate 6:00 Karate 6:00 Karate 7:30 Scout Troop 44 (WH) 7:30 Scout Troop 44 (WH) 6:00 Girl Scout 80105 7:00 Nurture Meeting 25 Shrove Tuesday 7:30 Scout Troop 44 6:00 Girl Scout 80105 7:30 Scout Troop 44 10 am Herald Team 6:00 Pancake & Sausage Dinner Tue Herald Articles Due 6:30 Social Justice 10:30 Hot Topics 10:30 Hot Topics 7:00pm Ad Council President's Day 10:30 Hot Topics Mon Office Closed 11:30 & 12pm Bell Choir Practices 11:30 & 12pm Bell Choir Practices 11:30 & 12pm Bell Choir Practices 8:30 Worship 9:00 Adult Sunday School 10:00 Children' Sunday School 10:15 Worship 8:30 Worship 9:00 Adult Sunday School 10:00 Children' Sunday School 10:15 Worship 8:30 Worship 9:00 Adult Sunday School 10:00 Children' Sunday School 8:30 Working
9:01 Adult Sandray School
10:00 Children's Sandray School
10:10 Children's Sandray School
11:30 Working Practice
11:30 & Upon Bell Chair Practices
11:30 & Upon Bell Chair Practices
11:30 & Upon Bell Chair Practices
11:00 & Upon Group
11:00 & Upon Group 11:30-1:00 ADC Bible Study 11:30-1:00 ADC Bible Study 11:30-1:00 ADC Bible Study 1:00-2:30 Telugu Service 4:00 Youth Group 1:00-2:30 Telugu Service 1:00-2:30 Telugu Service Sun 11:30 Choir Practice 11:30 Choir Practice 11:30 Choir Practice 4:00 Youth Group 4:00 Youth Group

February Birthdays

1	John Kimball
3	Alex Benson Budala
4	Muriel Christie
8	Evelyn MacKenzie
11	Chrís Becker
	Granville Christian
13	Mary Ellen Anglin
14	Jeremy Aludino
	Samantha (Chesney) Noccíolo
18	Brían Rock
19	Dianne Petersen
	Karissa Tuason
20	Bettina Kingsly
21	Anthony Boníto
23	Christopher Bandari
	Poorna Jeevanandam
25	Wendy Bouchoux
	Bhaarat Joshí
26	Adelyn Terence

Jennifer Gardner

27

February Anniversary's

Robin & Desdimona Christian
 Madhu & Swati Christian
 Jerry & Eydie DiRenzo
 Regan & Shenn Christie





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