



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

February 2023

Vol. 197

A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

Chuck's Church Chat

"If January is the month of change, February is the month of lasting change. January is for dreamers... February is for doers." — author, Marc Parent

Saints,

Grace to you and peace!



Well, you did it again! Through your giving in November and December we put a big dent on our budget deficit (*Only some unexpected end-of-the-year expenses kept us from balancing it...*) That's two years in a row that you seriously stepped up to the plate!

You'll probably agree that budget deficits sound foreboding (*And give our Finance Chair, JoAnn Lettieri, a few sleepless nights!*), but on the other hand, aren't such deficits also a measure of the faith we have to go forward in ministry? Okay, maybe I'm just suffering from chronic optimism, but hear me out!

Fact- a church that takes no chances has far less risk of a budget deficit, right? But a church that risks greatly (hello New Dover!), well, that's a leap of faith! And I believe I heard somewhere that faith-leaping is what we followers of Jesus Christ are supposed to be about, are we not?

You've probably heard that many mainline churches, including numerous United Methodist churches, are in trouble, suffering from shrinking congregations, decreased offerings, and ineffective ministries. Many have a difficult time maintaining their buildings and grounds, paying their shared ministries to the Conference, as well as their utility bills. Some have even had trouble meeting their weekly payroll. While the Covid pandemic certainly didn't help the situation, these circumstances have been building for some time, decades even. The temptation when Covid hit was to pull back on the reins and hunker down until the storm passed. But that, it turns out, proved to be precisely the worst thing any church could do!

Thanks to the faith of you, our congregation, led by our amazing Church Council, we did just the opposite, actually seeing the pandemic as an opportunity to, not decrease, but increase both our outreach and nurture related ministries. And so riding on the storm clouds of Covid there arose Bread Breakers, ICU India, Disconnect to Connect, and our various online ministries, all the while the while strengthening and expanding our Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, YAYA, the Jehovah Jira Garden, the Dominican Republic mission, and on and on!

As the writer Marc Parent so states in the poem above, "*January is for dreamers... February is for doers,*" I'm grateful every day to pastor a church that does both and does them incredibly well! Dreams and actions mean so little unless they are paired together. So Saints, let us keep dreaming great dreams and instigating great actions as we go boldly forth into 2023, building God's Kingdom until journey's end!

Your fellow dreamer and actor,

Chuck

GUESS WHO'S TURNING 175 THIS YEAR?????



1848



2023

NEW DOVER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH!!!!

**IT'S A YEAR-LONG CELEBRATION!!!
DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED NEXT MONTH!!!**

**WE ARE ASKING FOR OLD PHOTOS- YOU CAN
EMAIL THEM TO THE OFFICE OR BRING THEM IN.
WE'LL SCAN THEM AND GIVE THEM RIGHT BACK!**



KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Manny & Nora De La Paz
Debbie Ladym
Brian Richards
Kyle Becker
Victor Vilela
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 2023 permanent prayer list, please contact Karen Rowland at krowland648@yahoo.com

FROM YOUR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

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

In This Issue:

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**WHEN WE WORK,
WE WORK
WHEN WE PRAY,
GOD WORKS.**

Heason Taylor

SERMON OF THE MONTH

Sermon of the Month
Preached at Wesley UMC, South Plainfield on the First Sunday after Epiphany

Title: Overwhelmed with Joy

Matthew 2:9-12

⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, ¹⁰ until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, ¹¹ they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Spirit of God, speak truth to us today and set us free for Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. May we listen honestly, receive abundantly and love Christly through your Word.

How many of you remember your Middle School years? 6-8th grade...

The most awkward and essentially formative years in a person's life-developmentally speaking.

I know a few current and retired Middle School teachers and many of them love their "children" "babies" and can often pull a really sweet tale of their days with the middle schoolers they teach. A lot of times these transforming tweens test their patience as a teacher and as a human being-without knowing what they're doing.

If you were to ask a pastor like me with years of ministry with youth, children, young adults, adults, which ministry is the hardest?

Middle School.

Which ministry is the most rewarding?

Middle School.

If you've had children or raised children and grandchildren,
The shortest school life you can remember of them would be?

Middle School

But the most important formative years in a person's life is also,

Middle School 12-15 years old.

Do we have any parents of 12-15 year olds in this room?

God bless you, special prayers for you...

Turning to middle schoolers, you make decisions every day like your life depended on them-what to wear, and for some, just give up making decisions at all and it's Whatever time. Making decisions and not making any are both very overwhelming during these years.

Middle School years can be both agonizing times of growing pains and trial-and-error for some, Or could be a golden opportunity to spring forth, find your true self and purpose and grow brightly. In other words, with these tweens-there's no middle.

So is our journey of Faith, more specifically today, on this first Sunday after Epiphany on which day we celebrate

The baptism of the Lord and remember our baptism-this Sunday. Today.

In today's Matthew's gospel, we have the magi, ancient astrologers known as the wise men who come from the east and meet the King of Judea and goes through this test for wisdom.

They had decisions to make to set out and follow the star. But they could've also just said, OH, I will see what I can do about that star. Not so sure if that's The Star anyway.

Just like everyone of us here today would agree with my daily goals, "to get out of bed, and drink my coffee," if you have done those you've lived. But we both know, having lived through some significant Middle School years or life-changing experiences that there IS more to living,

and we NEED more than just coffee to really live. I mean, as in the gospel of Matthew 2: ¹⁰ "When they saw that the star had stopped,^[9] they were overwhelmed with joy."

Overwhelmed.

Overwhelmed with joy.

A statistic showed that an average child laughs 150 times a day and an average adult laughs 6 times.

And did you catch the verse where it says, "When they saw that the star had stopped," they were overwhelmed with joy?

They were overwhelmed with joy even before they came face to face with the baby Jesus? But why?

What does the stopping of their star have to do with their joy?

- That the star was a very smart star and it moved on LTE or 5G the least?
- Because, it meant that they were moving and the star was moving along all this time,
- A long journey, questionable, uncomfortable, inconvenient, scary,
- Many unknowns, especially the destination...
- The stop of their star sealed and confirmed and awakened their JOY, their joy did come in the morning as a Psalmist prayed and sang-
- And because their unknown, insecure and uncertainties have stopped, at the stop of the star.
- Their journey came to a destination, to the
- Presence of God, begotten a baby wrapped in a mother's safe arms.

So,
When did the Epiphany we celebrate every year really begin? At the stop of the star. The star of the magi is in Methodist terms who we refer to the Prevenient Grace. God's grace that precedes our insights and decisions, God's grace who goes before us and guides us gently. Non-coercively, non-violently, but certainly, clearly and surely,
Have guided you,
Will shine upon your children too, and
Raise a generation of Imago-Dei, reflecting images of our God,
Of love and justice, of truth and liberty,
With equality and stewardship,
In kindness and understanding,
through acceptance and listening ears

Through your faithful walks, rides, and journeys.

As an epiphany of a tween ends at the stop of their heart's wrestling when
They meet a really great teacher,
A bestie, a nice and funny old neighbor, a not so rude clerk,
And they will see that God is Good when others treat them the way they want to be treated,

Let us be a church like the star, that stops a restless heart, one at a time,
So when they stop to come and see,
It is the Messiah, their Savior and Friend,
The one who fulfilled prophecy, the Son of God, and Emmanuel,
That like the star, the Prevenient Grace,
God was always there with them.

If you have any middle schoolers entering confirmation this year,
Today, some of us are like those formative Middle Schoolers, like the astrologers searching, .

May those who journey and search, nobody said it's going to be easy—
But we can ease the challenges a little by keeping the journey going,
Keeping company, keeping the hopes up, aiding one another,
Subbing when one is occupied
To be met by God's love and grace at a destination, and experience the
Overwhelming Joy.

[Continue to Read and Think>>](#)

American Psychological Association writes on Middle School malaise,

As the goals of the game change, some students adjust and thrive while others do not. Why? Many psychologists who study childhood education believe that an important key is how children think about their own intelligence and abilities. If a child thinks of his or her intelligence as fixed—I'm either this dumb or this smart—he or she will avoid tasks that challenge their ability or risk failure. Instead, they choose to work on problems that they already know how to solve.

Children who think of intelligence as malleable—they believe they can get smarter if they work at it—look for challenging tasks and look at failure as a way to learn and improve. These children tend to blame their failures on a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability.

Which students do the best?

According to the research, children who believe that intelligence can change over time made the best adjustment to secondary school; this is true even if these children had low self-confidence. It was actually the high-confidence kids who believed that their intelligence was fixed who had the most trouble making the transition. These kids apparently believed that they should be able to do well because they were smart and that extra effort in order to learn a new skill was not necessary. When “effortless” learning did not take place, these students lost confidence, motivation and interest.

What can parents do?

Encourage your child to try new things, learn new skills.

Tell them that it is OK to fail and act that way when they do fail.

Teach them that learning takes effort, time, and practice.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/schools-classrooms/middle-school>

We donate sandwiches and clothing throughout the year to St. Joseph Social Service Center. I wanted to share some of the Christmas and New Year greetings we have received from them. Our mission work is impacting lives everyday even though we don't always see it.



ST. JOSEPH Social Service Center

Thank you for your overwhelming generosity and for bringing joy to so many!

We cannot begin to thank you all enough for so generously sharing your blessings, for donating your time to serve our community, and for your prayerful and financial support. We are continually in awe of how much we are able to do together so that our sisters and brothers have what they need. From collections of toys, hats, gloves, socks, food, etc. to the massive effort involved in the Thanksgiving and Giving Tree programs, we thank you for your contributions!



As our weary team of staff and volunteers reflects on the past year, we are filled with gratitude that you make the work of St. Joseph's possible.

We have many statistics to share regarding our year - 1,000,000 pounds of food distributed to 800 households, 150+ guests at soup kitchen each Saturday, 70 individuals receiving prescription assistance, 25 receiving mental health counseling, countless others receiving sandwiches, clothing, shoes, holiday gifts, etc.- but this message from Michael F. on 12/27 is what we are all about:

Hello, St. Joseph's Social Service Center on Division St. This is Michael F.

I just wanted to call to thank you for all that you guys do for all of the seasons and what you do for people. I was there back in 2004/2005 and I left there on this day to go detox. I am in recovery and today is 17 years since I left there so I just wanted to say thank you to everyone who helped me."

Michael went from detox, to a 21 day rehabilitation program, to a halfway house, and on to a steady job and stable housing. He reconnected with his family. We are so thankful to Michael for sharing his story!

Thank you for supporting St. Joseph's so that we may be a place of HOPE and hospitality for our sisters and brothers. We pray for peace, health, and hope for our global family. On behalf of all of us at St. Joseph's, we wish you all a Happy New Year!

With gratitude,
Bernadette Murphy
Executive Director

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

February is Random Acts of Kindness month, and February 17 is Random Acts of Kindness Day. Here are a few ideas to get you started; boundless enthusiasm should keep you going! Check out the website for more ideas.

1. Be a friend to a lonely neighbor.
2. Visit the nearest little library and donate a book.
3. Be kind to your server.
4. Have a judgment free day.
5. Compliment with reckless abandon.
6. Sign up to be an organ donor.
7. Leave quarters at the laundromat or vending machine.
8. Leave snacks and refreshments for delivery drivers.
9. Donate blood.
10. Let someone get ahead of you in line.
11. Adopt a grandparent.
12. Take someone out for lunch.
13. Send a senior a care package.
14. Cook a meal for someone in difficult circumstances.
15. Leave a generous tip.
16. Be nice on the road.
17. Write positive messages on sticky notes and leave for others to find.
18. Shop local.
19. Give someone a ride who needs one.
20. Pick up trash in your neighborhood or in a park.

"A SINGLE ACT OF KINDNESS THROWS OUT
ROOTS IN ALL DIRECTIONS, AND THE ROOTS
SPRING UP AND MAKE NEW TREES."

- AMELIA EARHART



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
FOUNDATION

www.randomactsofkindness.org

MEMBERSHIP NOTE: THE NEW
DIRECTORIES HAVE BEEN EMAILED OUT.
IF YOU NEED TO MAKE CHANGES,
CONTACT ME. IF YOU NEED A HARD COPY
OF THE DIRECTORY, PLEASE CALL/TEXT
ME OR SEE ME AT CHURCH ON SUNDAYS.
ANITA DAVIS

February Birthdays

- 1 John Kimball
3 Alex Budala
4 Muriel Christie
8 Rosie Pang
11 Chris Becker
Granville Christian
13 Mary Ellen Anglin
14 Jeremy Aludino
Samantha Nocciolo
18 Brian Rock
19 Dianne Petersen
Karissa Tuason
20 Nirmitt David
Bettina Kingsly
21 Tony Bonito
23 Poorna Jeevanandam
25 Wendy Bouchoux
Bhaarat Joshi



February Anniversaries

- 2 Robin & Desdimona Christian
4 Madhu & Swati Christian
Jerry & Eydie DiRenzo
9 Regan & Sheron Christie
14 Kennyson & Bindu Christian



OUTREACH- WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE

The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the winter clothing drive. We collected 17 hats, 10 scarves, 17 pairs of gloves, 10 pairs of socks, two muffs and 3 neck warmers! And Judy Tymitz 's friend, Janet, donated over 70 hand-crocheted hats! They were dropped off in December to the Group Home #1 on New Dover Road in Edison. I was invited in to see the facility, which was very clean and organized, and also met with the home director, Tamika. She was so appreciative of all the items, which she would also share with the other 7 or 8 county group homes. They house 6 adults at the #1 home, and she said many of them have no family members, and if they have family, some are unable to provide for them. Thanks again for your generosity!

In His Service, JoAnn Lettieri

SHROVE TUESDAY **PANCAKE & SAUSAGE DINNER!** **@ NEW DOVER UMC**

**Come Celebrate the Eve of Lent,
*New Orleans Style!***
**Featuring the Cool Jazz Saxophone of
Brian Chesney!**
Tuesday, February 21, 6:00-8:00
**Tickets are \$5 each. Children under
10 are free!**
**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT OUR COP
CREW!**
***Sign up to help on the board in
Fellowship Hall***

The Finance Committee is continuing to provide financial information. The following provides the income and expenses as of December 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 | |
| | December | Year to Date |
| Income | \$ 42,791.06 | \$ 359,161.50 |
| Expenses | \$ (45,399.20) | \$ (384,866.08) |
| Difference | \$ (2,608.14) | \$ (24,866.08) |

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