



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

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A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

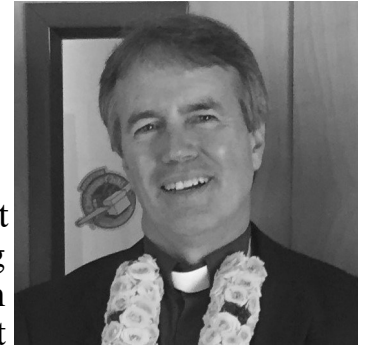
"...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing."

Ecclesiastes 3:5

Saints,

Grace to you, peace...

Like many of you, one of the things I used to take for granted but never will again is the simple act of a handshake. Oh, how I miss clasping your hands as you leave the sanctuary following service! Every shake, from "the bone-crusher" to "the wet noodle," is unique and says so much about one's personality, mood, culture, and perhaps what you may have thought of the sermon!



Now it may be quite the leap to make from a 21st century church in Edison to a 19th century whaling ship sailing through the Indian Ocean, but that's where I find my imagination taking me this morning. In Herman Melville's classic novel, Moby Dick, there's a chapter entitled "A Squeeze of the Hand" in which Ishmael, the book's narrator, describes what happens when he and his fellow crew members are standing around a barrel squeezing congealed lumps in the whale fat (blubber) to make it suitable for rendering into whale oil:

Squeeze! squeeze! squeeze! all the morning long; I squeezed till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed till a strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say,—Oh! My dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk of kindness.

What makes this scene all the more compelling is the make-up of the crew that finds itself squeezing each other's hands. Moby Dick, published in 1851, was perhaps the first book that celebrated the racial and cultural diversity of America's population. Included in the crew onboard "The Pequod" were African Americans including "Pip," the cabin boy, and "Dagoo" a former slave, "Tashtego," a Native American, "Fedallah," a Muslim mystic, and "Queequeg," a pagan harpooner from the South Pacific. Melville's point in the scene above is that it didn't matter the color or culture of the hand you found yourself squeezing because guess what- we are all on this ship, making this journey together! Now read again: *Oh! My dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk of kindness.* Given the events of 2020, have these words ever been more needed or more appropriate?

One of the most moving scenes in all of scripture also involves human touch and occurs when the twin brothers Jacob and Esau meet again after two decades apart. You recall how 20 years before Jacob had cheated his brother out of his birthright and his father's blessing, and how Jacob escaped just as Esau was plotting to murder him. Finally returning to his ancestral home, Jacob was deathly afraid of how his brother would greet him, and his fears were stoked when he was told Esau was coming up from the south with 400 men! When he saw Esau approaching Jacob bowed down to the ground seven times, surrendering himself to whatever fate his brother had in store for him. *But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.* (Genesis 34:4)

Saints, we should never underestimate the blessing of simple human touch! I hope that one day we will get through this pandemic and rise above our fears and once again gladly clasp hands in fellowship, and (*heaven forbid!*) even greet one another with a warm embrace!

As Ecclesiastes teaches us, there is "...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing." Let's hope and pray that our time for embracing isn't too far off.

A blessed summer to you all,

Rev Chuck

Financial News

Thank you for your continued financial support during the Covid-19 pandemic. Enclosed in this newsletter are 2 self-addressed envelopes for you to use to mail in your contributions or you can use our online option by going to www.newdoverumc.org and give.

Below are the financial numbers for the month of April 2020

	<u>April</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Gross Income	\$26,635.75	\$83,975.81
Expense	- 19,616.23	-91,691.68
Net Income	7,019.52	(7,715.87)

KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Boyce Family

Judy Tymitz

Tom Crouse

Pat & Brian & Family

Parkhill Family

Manny & Nora De La Paz

Debbie Ladym

Chris Stanley's Dad

Robert Engel

Gina & Jeff Jackson

and Family

Cancer patients

Robin & Carolyn DeCicco

Tonya Burleigh

Service men & women

Veterans

Homeless, unemployed

& uninsured

All affected by Covid-19

and their families

Children with Autism

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.

God, Made Me Brave

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.

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SERMON OF THE MONTH

“It is Our Time to be Hated”

Preached on June 7, 2020

I John 3:11-17

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister* in need and yet refuses help?

Like many of you during this time of pandemic and quarantine, I've been binge-watching a few TV series on demand. One of them focused on a particular player on a particular sports team in the 1990s and here's what some of his teammates thought of him. I'll do my best to clean up the language!

“He talked trash in practice; he challenged guys; went at guys.”

“People were afraid of him. We were his teammates and we were afraid of him. It was just fear. The fear factor of (him) was so, so thick.”

“Let's not get it wrong. He was a (butt)hole. He was a jerk. He crossed the line numerous times.”

“Was he a nice guy? He couldn't have been nice. With that kind of mentality he had, you can't be a nice guy. He would be difficult to be around...”

Doesn't sound like a very good role model does he? To those of you who have played a team sport, how would you like to have him on your squad? It's pretty obvious his teammates feelings toward him at the time bordered on out and out loathing, doesn't it? Must have been difficult to put together a winning season with such a “butthole” on your team!

So... who is this despised human being? Well the series I'm watching is called “The Last Dance,” and the team it covers is the Chicago Bulls of the 1990s, and the player who so terrorized his teammates? You may have heard of him- his name is Michael Jordan!

Legendary basketball coach Bobby Knight once said, *“I'm not sure I've ever been around anybody that wanted to win more or worked harder than Michael Jordan.”* Regarding his hard-edged relationship with his teammates, Jordan himself put it this way:

“Look, winning has a price and leadership has a price. So I pulled people along when they didn't want to be pulled. I challenged people when they didn't want to be challenged. Once you joined the team, you lived at a certain standard that I played the game. And I wasn't going to take any less. Now if that means I had to go in there and (kick your butt) a little bit, then I did that... When people see this they are going say, ‘Well he wasn't really a nice guy. He may have been a tyrant.’ Well, that's you. Because you never won anything. I wanted to win, but I wanted them to win to be a part of that as well...because it is who I am. That's how I played the game. That was my mentality. If you don't want to play that way, don't play that way.”

And by the way, all his Bulls team did in the 1990s was win six championships. But you know what? In his first six seasons in the NBA, from 1984-1989, despite being selected as Rookie of the Year, winning an MVP award, two slam-dunk contests, four scoring titles, all-star MVP, and defensive player of the year, Michael Jordan never got the Bulls over the hump, never won even one championship. And by the way, he was the most popular athlete in the world during that time! Some of you may remember the “Be Like Mike” advertising blitz! Championships only happened when Jordan was willing to sacrifice being

liked in order to take his team to the next level. He was even willing to be hated and despised, if that's what it took, in order to win those championships.

So Saints, here's the deal- if we want to take the Kingdom of God to the next level, if we want to defeat the powers of oppression and injustice that keep us from being the nation and the world God desires us to be, if we want to be champions of unconditional, Gospel love, than we cannot care about whether or not we're liked either! And it's not like this is something new I preaching, because besides the Chicago Bulls, guess where else that is a common theme? Yep- the Bible.

We are reminded time and again throughout the pages of scripture that if we are proclaiming and living out the will of God we shouldn't be all that surprised when we are hated and despised! Isn't that exactly what John teaches us in this morning's New Testament passage?

"Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you." And this is far from the only place in scripture where we are told this is going to happen! Do you realize that those we regard as the most beloved and respected characters in the pages of scripture, from Moses to David, from the prophets to the apostles, were also among the most despised in their time. Oh sure, we adore them now, we hang on their every word, but think about how hated Elijah was, or Jeremiah, or Amos, or every single true prophet we can name!

It's not like they weren't warned this would happen, right? Listen to a verse from Amos himself: *"They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth."* Or how about the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:22 *"...you will be hated by all because of my name."* Or again in John 15:18-19 *"If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world (in other words, the world's values), the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you."* Think about it- was there anyone more hated in his time than was Jesus himself? Recall all the times he was vilified by those in power, either religious power or political power, right? How deep was their hatred of Jesus? So deep that even early on in his ministry they plotted as to how they might have him killed.

But how does the most positive force in the universe, love, lead to the most negative force in the universe, hate? Why are those who speak the word of love hated by so many? Think about Martin Luther King; what did he preach besides love? Did he ever tell anyone to hate one another? No. And you know, now we see his picture on stamps, and we see him posted everywhere, and we say *"Oh Martin, Martin, Martin!"* Do we forget what most Americans felt about Martin Luther King when he was preaching love? If you want to be hated, love's a great way to get it done.

Why is that? Well, because there are an awful lot of people out there who actually feel threatened by the love that Jesus lived, and don't want to hear the truth as he taught it. They talk a good game; they'll say they love Jesus, they love God, etc., but when it comes to living that type of love that Jesus had they don't want to hear it because it threatens them, and they and will turn on anyone who dares lives out such love, who dares to speak the truth. But here's the thing: God is love and God loves truth, and God does not look or act kindly on those who repress the truth in order to protect themselves, their wealth, and their power. Listen to the words of the prophet Micah (*with my own intentionally sarcastic commentary in parentheses!*):

"Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob and chiefs of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong! Its rulers give judgment for a bribe (*doesn't happen here, right?*), its priests teach for a price (*our preachers would never sell out like that, right?*), its prophets give oracles for money (*our prosperity gospel prophets would never get rich off their preaching, right?*); yet they lean upon the Lord and say, 'Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us.' (*Uh...wanna bet?*) Therefore because of you Zion shall be ploughed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height." -Micah 3:9-12

That's some serious God-talk there about the judgment that will be on those who reject God's love and reject God's justice, and fail to help those who are oppressed. Wow! No wonder those in power hate those who, like Micah, dare proclaim the truth! They don't want to hear it because it's threatening to them. We Christian know that truth finds it's center in love. You see, the love that Jesus proclaimed is very different from how many of us define love. Our love tends to be sentimental, Hallmark Card, box-of-kittens love. Our love's goal is to be loved back! Our love is suppose to provide us with comfort and security.

But Jesus' love is nothing like that! Jesus' love is a tough love. Jesus' love takes chances, and often takes us out of our comfort zone. And Jesus' love expects nothing in return. Jesus' love doesn't suppress

God's truth; it proclaims God's truth!

An equally important question we ought to consider this morning is this- if telling the truth will get us hated and despised, will make us unpopular, why in the world would anyone want to tell it?! Well, maybe it's because there's something more important in this world than being liked! And maybe we ought to be more concerned with how we're judged by God than how we're judged by our friends and family members! And because we are told countless times throughout the pages of scripture that our God is a God of justice, maybe we ought to be more worried about injustice than whether or not we're popular!

Now, does this mean we are to intentionally go out there and stir up hate? Of course not! That's not what we're talking about at all. We are told countless times in scripture that we are to do the exact opposite! Remember Leviticus 19:18? "...*you shall love your neighbor as yourself,*" a teaching echoed by Jesus in Mark 12. In the sermon on the mount Jesus himself teaches us to '*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.*'" You see, here's what's ironic: it is actually when we are loving as Jesus loved that we stir up hate in those opposed to such a love. We don't go out there trying to be hated, but if we truly live out the love that Jesus so exemplified in his life, the odds are we will be. So that makes us ask the question- if we're claiming to be Christians, but no one out there despises us or opposes us in some way, are we actually living the Gospel?

Like a few of you, I'm old enough to remember the Civil Rights movement of the late 60s and early 70s, and I remember that there were basically two kinds of churches back then. The majority of churches didn't participate, and actually many of them condemned the movement itself. And history now regards them in such a negative way. But there were some, not just Black churches, but others who did take up the cause, but it was such a minority. Why was that?

Martin Luther King often said that the greatest enemy to the movement was apathy, but I think there was another enemy as well, and I vividly remember what it was for people who looked like me. The enemy was our desire to be loved, our desire to be liked. So rather than potentially lose a friendship, or tick-off a family member, we chose to say nothing, because that was the easiest thing to do.

But I look around now, and guess what? It's nowhere near as difficult as it was then. When I see the protests on TV I see people of every race out there marching, and in some marches the crowd is downright white! I mean Boise, Idaho?! I've been to Boise, Idaho and it's very difficult to find someone of color in Boise, Idaho! But I saw them marching by the thousands in Boise, Idaho, so why in 2020 would we be worried about being liked? Hey, maybe it's okay now! Maybe it doesn't take as much courage now, therefore we have *NO* excuse to not be there to lift up our sisters and brothers who are being oppressed, to fight against injustice, whether we march in support of George Floyd, or the countless, nameless others who have suffered equally under this system.

So how are we going to do that? Well it's going to take some courage, sure, but it's also going to take (*if you'll pardon the expression*) a little butt-kicking! Remember, Michael Jordan said, "*Look, winning has a price and leadership has a price. So I pulled people along when they didn't want to be pulled. I challenged people when they didn't want to be challenged.*" Saints, that could very easily be the words of Jesus! Now of course I'm not equating Michael Jordan with Jesus, but what I'm saying is that the same type of winning mentality that Jordan had for his teammates Christ has for us, because sometimes we have to be pulled kicking and screaming to do the will of God, but once we do and we see the change it brings, then we're not so much worried about what other people think of us as we are in the positive change in the lives of those who so need it. That's who we are; that's the real love of God.

Saints, if it takes being hated by some in order to have justice for all then truly it is our time to be hated! Are we willing to sacrifice being liked in order to love as Jesus loved? Well, if we're going to call ourselves Christians then we have no choice, do we?.

I'm going to close with the words of the German martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who said this to a confirmation class in 1938:

"You have only one master now...But with this 'yes' to God belongs just as clear a 'no.' Your 'yes' to God requires your 'no' to all injustice, to all evil, to all lies, to all oppression and violation of the weak and poor, to all ungodliness, and to all mockery of what is holy. Your 'yes' to God requires a 'no' to everything that tries to interfere with your serving God alone, even if that is your job, your possessions, your home, or your honor in the world. Belief means decision."



Peter Paul Rubens, "The Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau," 1624

‘Tis the Season

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven...”

‘Tis the season-

Not of Christmas or New Year’s Eve; Not of gatherings of friends and loved ones;
Not of big holiday dinners or celebrations.

‘Tis the season-

Of burdens and trials in uncertain times; Of fear and suffering, pain and loss;
Of watching and waiting and wondering.

‘Tis the season-

For hatred to strike in every direction;
For the righteous to be reviled and the downtrodden killed;
For evil to encourage violence and force within uprising.

‘Tis the season-

When the distressed plead for money, food, and cures for their ills;
When the discontent raise their voices and demand change;
When the disdainful grasp power and avoid compassion.

Yet “God has made everything beautiful in its time...”

‘Tis the season-

Not for just sitting in the pews; Not for polite conversations;
Not for empty promises of action.

‘Tis the season-

Of helping to carry burdens and easing others’ trials; Of comforting the fearful and praying for those who suffer; Of providing hope to those who wait and wonder.

‘Tis the season-

For fighting hatred with love from God’s direction; For shining God’s light to those who need to see; For promoting peace while calling for justice.

‘Tis the season-

When giving is the answer to the pleas of the needy; When supporting is the response to the shouts for change; When caring is the solution to finding leaders with hearts for God.

“God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, but there will be a time for every activity, a time for every deed.”

Anita Davis, June 10, 2020

To our United Methodist Women,

Due to the COVID 19, we are not yet scheduling our September meeting. Our usual kick-off dinner is cancelled for the time being. Please look for more information in the September Herald as to when the next meeting will happen.

Please stay healthy. I miss everyone and hope we will meet soon meet again.

Sincerely,

Dianne
UMW President.

Do you have an old bike or sewing machine that you aren't using?
New Dover UMC can help take it off your hands!!!

Our Annual Pedals for Progress Drive is right around the corner!
Saturday September 12,
2020 - 9:00am to 12noon
New Dover UMC
687 New Dover Road
Edison, NJ

For more information call:
Church Office @ (732)381-9478
Paulette Harland @ (732)259-0852

For the month of **July**, New Dover United Methodist Church Food Pantry will receive a \$1 donation from each purchase of the \$2.50 reusable Community Bag at the Stop & Shop store located at
1083 Inman Avenue, Edison NJ.



WHEN YOU BUY THIS BAG,
WE WILL RECEIVE A
\$1 DONATION!



COMMUNITY BAG PROGRAM

GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

July Birthdays

- 2 *Ross Karlo Tuason*
3 *Connie Thomas*
5 *Barbara Sucheski*
6 *Leena Parmar*
7 *Adelfo Gonzalez*
Deja Lewis
8 *Alpa Vyas*
Joyce Yoon
9 *Robert Becker*
Rickin Dialle
11 *Hadassah Bandela*
12 *Ajith De Alwis*
Jiya Katthula
14 *Pat Carpenter*
Raeann Dalton
15 *Jessica Vyas*
17 *Laura Becker*
18 *Michael Oswiany*
20 *Tonya Burleigh*
21 *Nicole De Zaio*
Nilpa Khristi
Mauricio Vilela
22 *Joshua Bonito*
23 *David Fisher*
Evelyn Millard
25 *Bryant Baidowsky*
26 *Michael Bonner*
Madhu Christian
Bryce Sarno
27 *Elton Nyema*
Jeisun Poornaselvan
28 *Mark Sojak*
29 *Elizabeth D'Arcy*
Austin Sarno
30 *Yash Joshi*
31 *Helen Castro*
Gregory Wittke

August Birthdays

- 2 *Sonel Bhagat*
4 *Nathaniel Nyema*
5 *Wesly Kingsly*
6 *Janet Greve*
Jessica Rodriguez
7 *Juel Nelson*
James Silva
8 *Persis Bandari*
10 *Erica Campbell*
Peter Ponugubaty
11 *Martha Taylor*
15 *Michele Nyema*
16 *Anthony Pagano*
17 *Scott Burleigh*
Fiona Meade
19 *Justin Bonito*
21 *Ryan Stevenson*
22 *Timothy Carney*
24 *Chester Aludino*
Catherine Poornaselvan
Benjamin Stevenson III
25 *Rishith Duggimpudi*
26 *Apurva Christie*
27 *Linda Crouse*
28 *Christopher Perrine*
Scott Perrine
29 *Anthony Paserchia*
30 *Shannon Bhagat*





July

- 2 *Janice Wilson & Mark Sojak*
- 12 *Evan & Yveline Gumbs*
- 16 *James & Susan Dalton*
- 21 *James & Rose De Land*
- 22 *Jonathan & Alice Lamoreaux*

August

- 6 *Thomas & Linda Crouse*
- 7 *John & Julie Gottstein*
- 10 *Brian & Marie Rock*
- 12 *Chuck Coblentz & Jean Wiskowski*
- 22 *Corbiey & Jennifer Ouellette*
- 24 *Wilfredo & Mary Jane Manglapus*
- 29 *Patrick & Agnes Kingsly*



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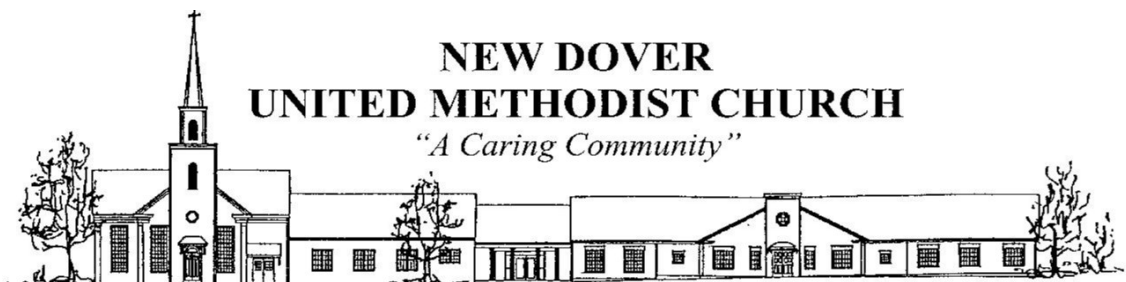
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"A Caring Community"

