

NEW DOVER HERALD

March 2018

Holiness unto the Lord

Vol. 143

Highlights

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Act
justly
Love
mercy
walk
humbly
micah 6.8

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints,

Grace to you, peace! Anybody else up for spring?

I know we're supposed to love all of God's seasons equally, but February sure does test that thesis. Walking Marconi and Mikey through thawing mud at Oak Ridge Park under cold, clammy, slate-grey skies is not my idea of ideal weather. Ugh. One optimistic poem I turn to every year is Robert Frost's "To the Thawing Wind."

*Come with rain, O loud Southwester!
Bring the singer, bring the nester;
Give the buried flower a dream;
Make the settled snow bank steam;
Find the brown beneath the white;
But whate'er you do tonight,
Bathe my window, make it flow,
Melt it as the ice will go;
Melt the glass and leave the sticks
Like a hermit's crucifix;
Burst into my narrow stall;
Swing the picture on the wall;
Run the rattling pages o'er;
Scatter poems on the floor;
Turn the poet out the door.*

Amen Mr. Frost! February may indeed be the shortest month of the year but we have packed a lot into it so far, and I'm writing this on the 15th! Just a few highlights for your perusal:

- ⇒ Our sermon series on the Ten Commandments is receiving excellent reviews, especially from those able to attend the concurrent Bible Study at Hot Topics. The phrase I hear most often after worship and during class is, "I never thought of it that way before." Awesome! That's how it ought to be, right?
- ⇒ Fourteen (!) of us showed up at the February meeting of the Social Justice Task Force. An open and energetic discussion led to a determination to be an action-oriented force for change in our community, our nation, and our world. For more information check out the article in this month's Herald!
- ⇒ On Tuesday the 6th we had our first confirmation class of 2018. Our class is smaller this year but equally enthusiastic! If you know of a young person age 12 or older who might like to become a member of NDUMC, it's not too late to join the class!

- ⇒ What a crew we had at the student pastor recruitment event at Princeton Theological Seminary on the 8th! Thanks to our new SPRC Chair, Stephanie Rademacher, and Rhea and JayR Manglapus, who put up quite the tempting display (donuts, pretzels, video and power point!) drawing five potential candidates to our table! We've already received an enthusiastic response from one very qualified seminary student so let's continue to pray for a worthy addition to our church staff.
- ⇒ At worship on Sunday the 11th, we celebrated the Baptism of Melita Koude Nyema, daughter of long-time members Michelle and Elton, and sister of Chelsea! What a beautiful addition to our church community!
- ⇒ And what a night we had on Shrove Tuesday. We celebrated Mardis Gras in Fellowship Hall with a massive pancake and sausage dinner all the while captivated by the amazing sounds of our own Brian Chesney on saxophone! It also marked the first appearance of our brand new portable stage. Thanks to everyone who made the annual event possible.
- ⇒ One more? Okay! The following night in the sanctuary we hosted the annual Ash Wednesday Methodist community gathering. All agreed it was a powerful service featuring the musical talents of all three churches. A good start to our Lenten journey.

Like I said, February may be short, but we've certainly packed a bunch into such a small package! I wish you all a meaningful, transformative Lent, and hope to see you all in church and Bible Study as we prepare our hearts and minds for Holy Week. Peace...

Your servant in Christ,

Chuck

Rev. Chuck Coblentz

FLEA MARKET

Are you ready for our Flea Market? It opens for the year on Tuesday, March 20th.

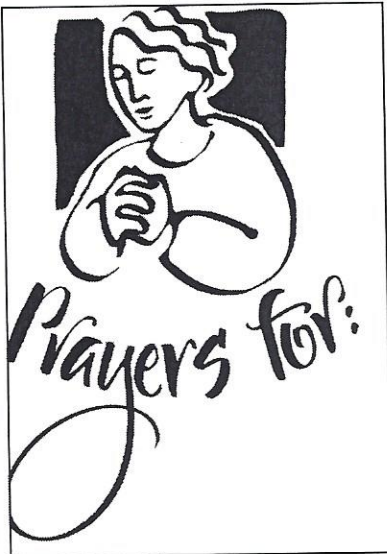
We hope you will join us for breakfast or lunch or some homemade dessert and coffee. Shop at our church table for household goods, decorations, jewelry, toys and other items.

We are always accepting donations to replenish our table and some new volunteers to assist us with our sales. This is a wonderful way to meet new people, socialize, have fun and support our church.

If you are able to help in any way, please call the church office for more information. See you in March!!

The Flea Market Staff

KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Bob Meckler & Family
Manny DeLaPaz & Family
Spencer Kolb
Christine Rowland
David Santos & Parents
Nayan Vyas & Family
Robert Rozmus
Shirley Heidersberger
Christine & Judy Tymitz

America
Christians of India
Marion Jones
LuLu Kamenas
Hedy & Tony
Calvin Christian
Doug Sargent
NDUMC Missionaries
Judy Tymitz

Wally Curtis
Joe Aiello
Preston Family
Boyce Family
Jeff & Karen Rowland
Carl & Fran Livecchia

Pray for all those seeking employment, those affected by Natural Disasters, those suffering with addictions, those suffering from depression, those affected by acts of terrorism, all national leaders and troops, 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.

To activate the prayer chain contact Nancy Preston @ 732-381-1205
or Anita Davis @ 732-815-0597

***Easter Food Baskets
Will be given out on March 25th.
Items needed for 8 baskets:***

***Turkey
Chicken
Ham***

***Cereals, soups, gravy, canned
Vegetables, etc.***

Please bring donations to the church!



SAVE THE DATES

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Mar 4-25 | Easter Lily Sale |
| Mar 20 | Flea Market Opens |
| Mar 25 | Palm Sunday
Food Baskets distributed |
| Mar 29 | Maundy Thursday
Service 7pm |
| Mar 30 | Good Friday
Tenebrae Service 7pm |
| Apr 1 | Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service 6:30am
Worship Service 8:30 & 10 |



SERMON OF THE MONTH

“Divine Identity Theft”

Preached on February 4, 2018

Exodus 20:1-2, 7; Matthew 7:15-23

I remember the first time I broke this commandment. I was five years old and like a lot of kids had picked up a few, let's say “adult words” from around the house. There is no doubt my dear old Dad was the source, as my Mom was a Sunday School teacher and had never broken any commandment. Dad on the other hand, was a golfer. Anyway, my meddlesome younger brother Paul had just burst into my bedroom for the umpteenth time, stole some of my toys and I had had enough! I distinctly remember stepping out of my room and yelling down the hall, “*Mom, will you get this God \$#&% brat out of my room!*” What happened next put a permanent scar on my psyche. I can still see my Sunday School teaching Mom sprinting out of the kitchen down the hall, straight at me, all the while screeching, “*What did you say Chuck?!*” *What did you say?!*” She grabbed my cheeks with both hands and squeezed my lips together sideways like a fish, her eyes blazing fire into mine, which were widening and welling up with tears, terror, and trepidation. Then she said it: the expression heard by countless boys and girls down through the millennia, “*How would you like me to wash your mouth out with soap??!!!*”

“*What??!!*” I gotta tell ya, I remember I was so confused, because up until this point in my brief existence I hadn't learned the difference between good and bad words, and had no idea what soap tasted like either. Mom then continued her interrogation, “*Where, Chuck, where did you hear such a word?*” At this point I would surrender to my inquisitor any information she wanted; I folded up like a cheap suitcase: “*It was Dad,*” I stammered through the tears, “*Dad says it all the time when he's mad.*” There it was; she made me rat out my own father!

And so that's how I first learned what an abominable thing it is to break the third commandment, but come on, childhood trauma aside, how serious should we take this commandment? “*Taking the Lord's name in vain?*” How can that compare to worshipping idols, lying, stealing, cheating on your spouse, or murder for crying out loud? How did such a petty little law even make it into the top ten! Heck, most of the commentators tend to short change it. My favorite commentary, The Interpreter's Bible, gives it one short paragraph! The other commandments go on for pages, but not the third, oh no- one little paragraph! It's so lightly regarded that I once heard a member of one of my former congregations say that they were going to give up taking the Lord's name in vain for Lent. ***For Lent?!!! Well isn't that special!*** So, you're not going to break one of the ten ***commandments of God*** for Lent....Well, why stop there! While you're at it think you could abstain from lying, stealing, adultery, and murder as well? After all, it's just for forty days.

Anyway, the vast majority of us believe this commandment applies solely to the use of God's or Jesus' name in a profane manner, and if we think that way, it's really not our fault because that's what our parents and our Sunday School teachers taught us, wasn't it? To avoid breaking this commandment all we had to do was choose our words carefully the next time we hammer our thumb, stub our toe, or slam the brakes when yet another moron pulls out in front of us on Wood Avenue! And I have to tell you that since I moved from South to North Jersey and driven your roads, I've observed (through my ability to read lips through car windows) that the misuse of God's name occurs far more frequently up here, than down there. Just sayin.'

That said, all a person has to do to comply with this commandment is substitute a couple of new words in place of God's name and ***Voila!*** Problem solved, move on to the next commandment Rev! “Hey Dear, looks like we're gonna get out of church early today, for once!” Uh huh...

Look, given all the problems in the world, all the bloodshed and violence, all the pain and suffering, all the corruption and oppression, why should God care about something seemingly so innocu-

ous as the misuse of his name? How serious can it be? Well... apparently pretty, pretty serious! Here's what God says about breaking this little commandment: "...*the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.*" And here's what the Torah says about it in Leviticus 24:16- "*One who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death; the whole congregation shall stone the blasphemer.*" That Saints sounds pretty doggone serious, don't it?

You see, it turns out that using God's name as a swear word is only a trivial part of what this particular commandment covers. To believe that shouting God or Jesus and attaching a colorful metaphor to it in an emotional moment is all there is to this commandment, is like believing that shouting "*Gesundheit*" after a sneeze is all there is to God's blessings!

So why does God take this law so seriously that the breaking of it causes such a grave reaction from God? None of the other commandments come with such a dire warning attached.

Well, it's because, of all the commandments, ***the breaking of the third has been responsible for more bloodshed and violence, pain and suffering, corruption and oppression, blindness and intolerance than all the others combined!*** Think about it- while invoking the name of God, nations go to war, suicide bombers kill innocent children, tyrants oppress the masses.

Twist God's name and slavery is justified, races are segregated, women are disenfranchised, and gays are vilified. Because religious fanatics distort God's name, societies flounder in ignorance, science is viewed as the enemy, and the earth and its resources are ravaged. And Saints, the reason most of our church pews are unoccupied and many of our churches have closed is absolutely because many who ***profess*** Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior misrepresent God's name through their words and actions. ***Why, you ask, is God so serious about this particular commandment? Because breaking it is serious business.***

One biblical scholar who gets it is Terence Fretheim. In his commentary on the third commandment he writes: "*A central issue at stake for God is a declaration of this name to the world and the effect the hearing of that name will have on people. Will they be drawn to it or repelled by it, or remain indifferent to it. If that name has been besmirched in some way by the manner in which it has been used by the people of God or by the practices with which it has been associated, then the divine intentions may fall short of their realization.*" He goes on to say, "*The name of God is so commonly associated with empty phrases or easy religion or the latest ideology of a social or political sort...As people hear it so used, they may come to associate the name of God fundamentally with a cause they wish to avoid or reject. Consequently, they will not be drawn to this God and the name will not receive its due honor and respect*"

Saints, what's at stake here is more than the mere misuse of God's name; it's nothing less than ***divine identity theft!*** The thieves are "*wolves in sheep's clothing,*" who go around shouting "*Lord, Lord,*" the ones Jesus himself warned us about. It's like they've taken God's birth certificate, social security number, driver's license, and credit cards, and are using them to purchase all manner of decidedly ungodlike ideologies, and philosophies that they in turn teach, preach, and shove down our throats like so much bad medicine. And they are getting rich doing it! And guess what? A lot of us are buying it. Why? Because too many of us trust anyone dressed like a minister on TV. Because we as a society have become so biblically illiterate that we lack the wisdom to challenge whatever it is they're spouting. And so we stand idly by while God's very name is dragged through the mud, the mission of Christ is compromised, our churches are perceived as gathering places for the ignorant, and the result is one catastrophe after another.

Throughout the centuries history is littered with examples of how breaking this commandment has caused death, devastation, and oppression, all "*in the name of God.*" The Bible teaches that our God is a God of peace does it not? But has a nation ever gone to war without announcing that "*God is on our side?*" Seriously, have you ever heard the leader of a country say, "*Look, I know God opposes what we're about to do, but what the heck, we're going to war anyway!*" Both nations going to war against one another take the name of God into battle with them. They can't all be right; indeed are either of them right?

Just a couple of examples, and note the similarity. Pope Urban II said this when rallying Christians to the first Crusade: *"On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to... destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. Moreover, Christ commands it. All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested."* And this one is more recent: *"We--with God's help--call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill Americans and plunder their money whenever and wherever they find it... The fighting should be in the name of God only, not in the name of national ideologies."* That of course was Osama bin Laden rallying Muslims to fight those he labeled the Crusaders. Both the 13th century Pope and the 21st century Sheik declared holy war and genocide **in the name of God**. Ask yourself, why would a God who created each and every human being in his divine image and who sacrificed his own Son in order to demonstrate his unconditional love for each one of us, tell us to butcher one another? That crash you just heard was the third commandment, shattered by the racist fear and ideological hatred of those who would employ God's name as a bludgeon against their fellow human beings.

Beside fomenting war, *the name of God* has been ill-used to justify all manner of bigotry and racist philosophies. Along with countless politicians and preachers of the 19th century, Confederate President Jefferson Davis used God to justify the enslavement of an entire race of people, he wrote, *"[Slavery] was established by decree of Almighty God...it is sanctioned in the Bible, in both Testaments, from Genesis to Revelation...Slavery existed then in the earliest ages, and among the chosen people of God... in the prophecies, psalms, and the epistles of Paul; you find it recognized, sanctioned everywhere."* In the 20th century a charismatic populist opportunist named Adolf Hitler invoked the divine name when he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, *"What we have to fight for is the necessary security for the existence and increase of our race and people, the subsistence of its children and the maintenance of our racial stock unmixed, the freedom and independence of the Fatherland; so that our people may be enabled to fulfill the mission assigned to it by the Creator...Anyone who dares to lay hands on the highest image of the Lord commits sacrilege against the benevolent creator of this miracle and contributes to the expulsion from paradise."* Both Jefferson Davis and Adolf Hitler rallied millions to their cause, and while the third commandment lay in pieces on the ground, millions died and whole races of people were either slaughtered, **all in the name of God**. Have a question- Do you think Davis, Hitler, or any like them **ever even considered** the third commandment, ever reflected upon the life of Jesus who reached out to Jews, Samaritans, even Roman soldiers for crying out loud, when they invoked God's name to support their racist ideologies?

Beyond subjugation and genocide, there are many who continue to invoke God's name to justify segregation and racial purity. In many cases those who **claim** faith in Christ will even stand in judgment against their own. Thomas Robb, pastor of a church called the Christian Revival Center, and who also happens to be the national director of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, said this about Rev. Billy Graham: *"Billy Graham's teaching of the Gospel was a cover to help destroy White Christian America. The Bible warns us about ministers of Satan coming as angels of light. In Grahams book he describes exactly how (Martin Luther) King and himself worked together to bring to ruin White Christian America...How many aspiring ministers has he warped, how many mixed marriages is he responsible for, how many violent crimes resulting from an integrated society is he behind. Billy Graham flaunts his fame and fortune before God Almighty - pretending to be a mighty preacher yet a stooge of Satan he remains."* Really Pastor? Billy Graham??? And lest you think Pastor Robb is alone in his twisting of God's name to justify a racist ideology, historian Brian R. Farmer points out that when the Ku Klux Klan was revived in the 1910s and 20s, *"two-thirds of the national Klan lecturers were Protestant ministers. "I wonder, had they ever read the third commandment? "...the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name."*

As we all know, prejudice is not confined to race, and one of the areas where God's name is invoked involves sexual orientation. Gays, lesbians, and transgender people have become easy tar-

gets of many who claim to represent the very God who created gays, lesbians, and transgender people! The most notorious is Westboro Baptist Church who show up at military funerals, and even attempted to protest at the memorial services of the children who died at Newtown in order to spew their warped theology. They teach that our nation's tolerance of gays is not only wrong, but it brings the wrath of God down upon the entire nation. On their website are these words: "*GOD HATES FAGS*" which they call "...a profound theological statement, which the world needs to hear more than it needs oxygen, water and bread. The three words, fully expounded, show... the absolute sovereignty of "GOD" in all matters whatsoever." Funny, but I was unaware that God hates any human being, quite the opposite: the Bible makes it crystal clear that we are all loved unconditionally, that Christ especially reached out to the alienated and dispossessed. Were I a member of Westboro Baptist Church I'd be a bit nervous about so casually invoking the name of the God who said, "...*the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.*" Is there anyone here who believes he would not want us to embrace and unconditionally love and open wide the doors of our church to anyone, regardless of their race, culture, political opinions, or sexual orientation? Quite simply, **Christian ministers who profess to worship a God of unconditional love yet put conditions on their own love for those who are different break the third commandment.** They would be well-served to read Deuteronomy 18:20 "*But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.*"

Finally, what about those who preach a gospel contrary to the core of Jesus' message?

I'm talking about the purveyors of the so-called "prosperity gospel," who's churches are often big in number and big in ratings, but woefully short on truth! Here are just a couple of examples, among thousands, of how they break the second commandment...

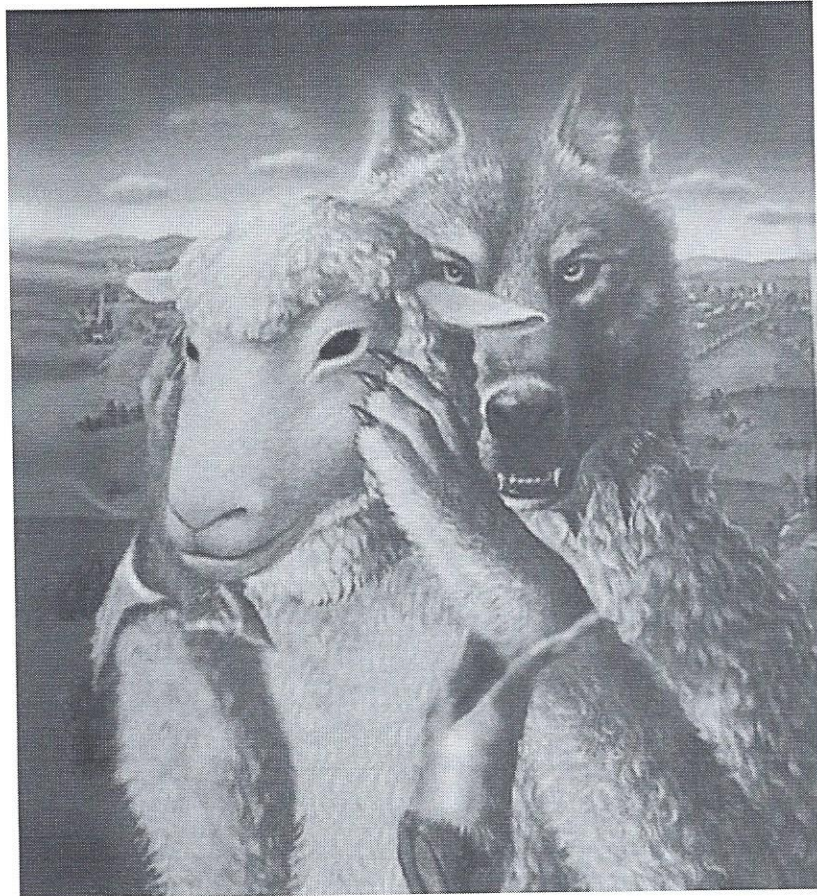
Mike Murdock asks his viewers to donate \$1,000. Murdock says that God will erase a donor's credit card debt if he or she will donate with a credit card. "*As you use your faith, God is going to wipeout your credit card debts.*" Kenneth Copeland preaches the prosperity gospel. Copeland claims there is something wrong if a Christian doesn't become rich. Copeland says that he is a billionaire. "*I am a billionaire, because the assignment that the Lord gave me, He said: 'I want you to begin to confess the billion flow.'*" Benny Hinn admits that he would like to kill his critics with a "*Holy Ghost machine gun...Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun. I'd blow your head off!*" Hmmm...

Okay, there's more to this commandment than initially meets the eye. I've given a very small fraction of examples down through the ages where people who claim to be speaking for God have supported ideologies that fly directly in the face of scripture, particularly the teachings of Jesus himself. But the question remains- what should we do about it? Well, as with all the other commandments there are two sides to the coin. If there's a penalty for invoking God's name for evil means, there must also be a corresponding blessing for employing God's name for the right purpose. And as Jesus taught us, the right purpose is always connected to building the Kingdom of God where love and compassion, not suspicion and animosity rule the day, where those who are alienated, oppressed, and beaten down by the bullies and despots this world are given sanctuary instead of apathy, where those who wander in search of a better life are offered shelter and rest, not barred doors and borders.

You know those wolves in sheep's clothing, who claim to be working in God's name but whose teaching is anything but Godly, existed in Jesus' time. They were called Pharisees, and like those who spout "*Lord, Lord*" today, they misused scripture as a bludgeon, to judge and alienate anyone who was different, anyone who disagreed with their bloated opinions. And like today, many of the common folk looked up to them, after all they must know what they're talking about, they've memorized every verse in the Bible; they must be right. But what did Jesus do? He looked them in the eye and said, "**WRONG!**" He told them, you may have every word in the Torah memorized but you can't see the forest for the trees. You go forth in the name of God trying to purify the world by judging everyone who doesn't think like you, shutting the doors of the Temple to anyone who doesn't live up to your narrow religious standard. But what you ought to be doing instead is fling wide

the doors of the Temple and hold a banquet, welcoming in the entire diverse human race.

What does this mean for us New Dover United Methodist Church? It means we're on the right track, but we still have work to do! If we're going to effectively challenge those who break God's third commandment we need to be biblically knowledgeable. Second, we need to add courage to that wisdom and not back down from those who spew prejudice and hatred and perpetuate stereotypes. We need to say, *"Sorry, you do not have the market cornered on what it means to be a Christian! We are Christian only when we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and by so doing celebrate the incredible diversity of the human race!"* Do that and we'll never have to worry about breaking the third or any other commandment.



SOCIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

The SJTF held its monthly meeting on February 5th. A record 14 people attended and as a first order of business nominated and unanimously elected Erin Markan as chair and Stephanie Rademacher as recording secretary. A number of justice issues were discussed in the 90 minutes we met including ongoing Christian persecution in India, prison reform in New Jersey, homeless families living in local motels, and the national debate on immigration. We decided our immediate efforts will go toward addressing this issue as it has already been making local headlines with long-time residents being deported or threatened with deportation.

We discussed that dozens of passages the Bible clearly state that we are to treat the refugee and immigrant with compassion and justice. Corbiey Ouellette pointed out that one of the biggest obstacles when it comes to understanding immigration is the confusion created by various terms for immigrants (both legal and illegal) as well as divergent political views on the subject. Educating ourselves is an important first step in the fight for justice. For this reason the Task Force unanimously voted to post a definition of DACA on our website and include it in this month's Herald. According to Wikipedia:

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was an American immigration policy that allowed some individuals who entered the country as minors, and had either entered or remained in the country illegally, to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and to be eligible for a work permit. As of 2017, approximately 800,000 individuals were enrolled in the program created by DACA. The policy was established by the Obama Administration in June 2012 and plans to begin phasing it out were initiated by the Trump Administration in September 2017. The policy was established by executive action rather than legislation, however, participating individuals are still commonly referred to as DREAMers after the DREAM Act; a bipartisan bill first proposed in 2001 that was the first of a number of subsequent efforts in the U.S. House and Senate to provide an opportunity for certain illegal immigrants who were brought to the US as children to attend college and eventually become permanent citizens of the United States. The key difference being that DACA provides no such path to citizenship.

The Social Justice Task Force will hold its next meeting on Monday, March 5th at 7:00 PM. All are invited to attend.



The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

New Disciples • Vital Congregations • Transformed World

There are numerous scholarships available through The UMC of Greater New Jersey. Applications and details are available online at www.gnjumc.org or in the church office. Scholarships must be postmarked by March 31, 2018.

On a local level, the Mildred Vollmar Scholarship Fund applications are also available in on the bulletin board in the breezeway. The deadline for submission is April 15, 2018.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Our "Hat & Glove Tree" was a big success this Christmas. We made a large donation along with School #26 in Iselin to Elijah's Promise in New Brunswick. Thanks to all who donated items for this project.

A new mission project that was undertaken this year was donating gifts to the Menlo Park Veteran's Home in Edison. These gifts were for the women veterans and wives of veterans who are residents living there. On February 8th, we proudly delivered 45 gift bags containing body wash, greeting cards, note pads, pens and pencils and homemade (by Anita DeSimone) small quilted bags for personal use. The ladies were delighted to receive our gifts. We would like to continue to support them in another project later this year.

Our next meeting will be held on March 14th at 6:30pm and will be our annual St. Patrick's dinner of soup, salad and our (always) homemade desserts. We are asking for a donation of \$5.00 to help defray our costs. Please look for a sign-up sheet in the foyer.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask any UMW member or call me at 732-381-8688.

Dianne Petersen
UMW President

SIGHT AND SOUND TRIP

The United Methodist Women are sponsoring a trip to Sight & Sound on Wednesday, October 24, 2018, to see the production of "Jesus", after which we will have a buffet-style lunch at the Shady Maple.

The cost of the trip is \$115.00 which includes the bus, driver's tip, a center-orchestra seat at Sight & Sound, and the luncheon at the Shady Maple together with the gratuity. The bus will leave the New Dover United Methodist Church parking lot promptly at 7:00 a.m. and we should be back at the church between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m.

A \$50.00 deposit will hold you seat and is due by April 15, 2018. The balance of \$65.00 is due by September 16, 2018 (checks should be made payable to **United Methodist Women**). I will accept installment payments of \$25.00 each per ticket after the deposit has been paid. We must sell at least 40 seats or the trip will be cancelled. No seats will be held without a deposit and are sold on a first-come/first-serve basis. There will be no refunds after final payment is made unless we have a waiting list.

Any questions, please see me in church or call me at 732-287-2231.

Connie Thomas

MEMBERSHIP BLOG

We begin with services of January 20-21, an auspicious weekend made notable by our Social Justice seminar featuring Tony Campolo. Saturday morning service began at 10 AM. Music was provided by the praise band and sermons were given by Rev. Tony and Rev. Chuck, all connected with special liturgy for the occasion. After a break for lunch which included presentations by local charity representatives, the people reconvened in the sanctuary for the afternoon service of Communion. Rev. Tony spoke again, this time on the meaning of Communion; following the Communion liturgy, the people accepted the bread and cup through intinction. The service was closed with Rev. Chuck singing a verse from "Jacob's Ladder" with his guitar, followed by Bruce Springsteen's "hyper" version from the band. What an inspiring day! Thanks to all those who made this a reality, you know who you are!! Sunday service featured the Chancel choir for the anthem and MaryJane M. singing a solo for the offertory. The Scriptures for the day were Exodus 20:1-21 and Galatians 2:15-21. Rev. began his series on the 10 commandments by discussing their purpose and the consequences of breaking those commandments. He explained Jesus' "take" on the law—that unclean thoughts are just as bad as the actions that can result from them. Paul noted that we are NOT justified by the law; we're saved because of Jesus' sacrifice.

The next weekend's service included a lovely rendition of "His Eye is on the Sparrow" by the Chancel choir as well as a couple of hymns relatively unknown by the congregation (they gave it a good try!). The Scriptures for the day were Exodus 19:16-20:3 and Revelation 4. Rev. reviewed the 10 Commandments and then introduced the first which provides a 'history' of God's relationship to his people, a covenant between the two parties. As the Israelites had trouble fulfilling their part of the covenant, we also continue to defy this commandment by putting modern idols between us and God. We should not underestimate the danger of letting ourselves be persuaded into idolizing what is unworthy of our worship, thus ignoring God's commands and turning our faith and devotion elsewhere. We must place our faith in Him and surrender our will to his.

February services began with Communion Sunday on the 4th of the month. The Youth Choir lent their wonderful harmony for the introit and offertory. The Scriptures for the day were Exodus 20:1-2,7 and Matthew 7:15-23. Our pastor began his sermon with a creative demonstration of the usual interpretation of taking God's name in vain, then explained that keeping this commandment is not as simple as it sounds. By misusing His name, associating it with thoughts and actions NOT of Him, we portray a false image of God to others. Those who use His name for their purposes are like the wolves in sheep's clothing, and God will NOT acquit anyone who misrepresents His name. God builds His kingdom through love; we need to continue increasing Biblical knowledge and our courage to demonstrate the true nature of God. The following weekend featured the bell choir as well as a trio of vocalists offering musical selections for the service. The congregation was blessed to receive a new little one for baptism; best wishes to Elton and Michele N.! The Scriptures for the day were Exodus 20:8-11 and Matthew 22:34-40. Pastor Chuck continued his series on the 10 Commandments, talking about keeping the Sabbath holy. While the Hebrews use the Sabbath as a remembrance of their exodus from Egypt, Gentiles observe it to remember Jesus' resurrection. The Sabbath (from the Hebrew "Shabbat" meaning "rest") is an honoring of God but also his gift to us—time set aside for renewal of the spirit. Rev. noted two points: we need to create the time and space to recharge ourselves, BUT we cannot over legalize the Sabbath, turning it into a list of what can and cannot be done. We need to reflect His love by first loving ourselves, then loving others!





March 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>4</p> <p>8:30 Worship 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Choir Practices 11:45 Bell Choir Practices 11:30-1:00 ADC Bible Study 4:00 Youth Group 5:00-6:30 Telugu Service 6:30 Girl Scouts</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:30 Hot Topics</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7:00 Hot Topics 7:30 Scout Troop 44 (FH)</p>	<p>7</p> <p>10:00 Prayer Fellowship 6:00 Karate</p>	<p>8</p> <p>7:30 AA</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>10:00-11:00 Karate 1:00-4:00 Kids for Christ 5:00 Praise Service 6:30-8:00 Telegu 7:30 AA & AI Anon</p>
<p>11</p> <p>8:30 Worship 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Choir Practice 11:45 Bell Choir Practices 11:30-1:00 ADC Bible Study 4:00 Youth Group 5:00-6:30 Telugu Service 6:30 Girl Scouts</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Herald Articles Due 10:30 Hot Topics 7:00 Nurture</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7:00 Hot Topics 7:30 Scout Troop 44 (FH)</p>	<p>14</p> <p>10:00 Prayer Fellowship 6:00 Karate 6:30 UNW</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:30 AA</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10:00-11:00 Karate 10:00-4:00 BS Lunch (F) 1:00-4:00 Kids for Christ 5:00 Praise Service 6:30-8:00 Telegu 7:30 AA & AI Anon</p>
<p>18</p> <p>8:30 Worship 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Choir Practice 11:45 Bell Choir Practices 11:30-1:00 ADC Bible Study 4:00 Youth Group 5:00-6:30 Telugu Service 6:30 Girl Scouts</p>	<p>19</p> <p>10:00 Herald Team 10:30 Hot Topics 7:30 Boy Scout Troop 44 (6)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7:30 - 1:30 Flea Market 7:00 Hot Topics 7:30 Scout Troop 44 (FH)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>10:00 Prayer Fellowship 6:00 Karate 7:00 Worship</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:30 AA</p>	<p>23</p> <p>7pm CS#318</p>	<p>24</p> <p>10:00-11:00 Karate 12:00-4:00 Private Party (W) 1:00-4:00 Kids for Christ 5:00 Praise Service 6:30-8:00 Telegu 7:30 AA & AI Anon</p>
<p>25 Palm Sunday</p> <p>8:30 Worship 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Choir Practice 11:45 Bell Choir Practices 11:30-1:00 ADC Bible Study 4:00 Youth Group 5:00-6:30 Telugu Service 6:30 Girl Scouts</p>	<p>26</p> <p>10:30 Hot Topics 7:00 Ad Council</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7:30 - 1:30 Flea Market 7:00 Hot Topics 7:30 Scout Troop 44 (FH)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>10:00 Prayer Fellowship 6:00 Karate</p>	<p>29 Maundy Thursday 7:00 Service 7:30 AA</p>	<p>30 Good Friday 7:00 Service</p>	<p>31</p> <p>10:00-11:00 Karate 1:00-4:00 Kids for Christ 5:00 Praise Service 6:30-8:00 Telegu 7:30 AA & AI Anon</p>