



The Messenger

First United Methodist Church Newsletter
446 Camden Avenue, Moorestown, NJ 08057
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Rev. Richard Nichols, Pastor
Glenn Rodgers, Director of Music
Kathy Clawges, Director of Youth
Devika Gill, Director of First Light Learning Center

Rev. HeyYoung Horton, Associate Pastor
Karen Murray, Director of Christian Education
Doug Hamilton, Maintenance Coordinator

Join us for Worship - Saturday 5:30 pm, Sunday 8:30 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am
Visit us on the Web at: www.meetwithGod.com -or- Email us at: church@meetwithGod.com

JANUARY 2017



FROM PASTOR RICHARD

Beginning a new year presents an excellent opportunity to do some personal evaluation and goal setting. There is reflection on the past year and assessment on how we managed our life. There is gazing into the future with hopes and dreams for happiness and success. As we do this soul searching and making plans for the future, it is good to be reminded of the Psalmist's counsel to pray: "Teach us, Lord to number our days that we might get a heart of wisdom." Living life from such a perspective will help us to make our days count and make a difference in this world.

Part of our Methodist heritage is to see the beginning of a new year as a time of covenant and to allow it to be a time of re-dedicating ourselves to following the ways of God. It is renewing our commitment to be a faithful steward in the living of our daily lives. Let Wesley's covenant prayer be our prayer of commitment as we begin 2017:

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low by thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.



GROUNDS FOR GOOD Friday, January 6th

Kick off the New Year at Grounds for Good Coffee House on Friday, January 6 in Fellowship Hall. Baz McGuire will treat us to live music, and the featured artist for the evening is FUMC's own Abby McGrath. Admission, coffee and tea are FREE, with delicious homemade goodies available for purchase. Proceeds and donations will benefit Hydromissions, which provides clean, safe drinking water for the world in Jesus' name. South Jersey native Caitlyn Terry will share about the exciting work she is doing with this important ministry. Doors will open at 7:30 pm, with music kicking off at 8. We hope to see you then!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan. 1st New Year's Day
- Jan. 2nd Church office closed
- Jan. 6th Grounds for Good - 8:00 - 11:00pm
- Jan. 9th Chick-fil-A fundraiser - 5:00 - 8:30pm
- Jan. 9th Confirmation Class begins - 5:30pm
- Jan. 10th The Serving Plate - 5:00pm
- Jan. 10th Church Council - 7:00pm
- Jan. 12th Evensong - 7:00pm
- Jan. 13th My Abba's Hands - 7:00 - 9:00pm
- Jan. 13-15 Jr. & Sr. High at Keswick
- Jan. 14th My Abba's Hands - 9:00am - 3:00pm
- Jan. 14th Crafts for Good Blanket-thon - 12-4pm
- Jan. 15th Men's Breakfast - 7:45am
- Jan. 15th Light Harbor - 2:30pm
- Jan. 16th M.L. King Day - church office closed
- Jan. 18th Internat'l Women's Friendship Grp-10am
- Jan. 21st Eyes of Our Hearts breakfast - 7:00am
- Jan. 21st Adult Fellowship - Noon
- Jan. 28th District Back to Basics Training-10am-12
- Jan. 28th Boy Scouts Pasta Fest
- Jan. 31st Crafts for Good - 7:00 - 8:30pm

LAY LEADER LINES

Happy New Year to everyone! The festivities are over. I imagine that we all hope to accomplish many things this coming year - time to start making our lists so we don't forget a single thing!

I am pretty sure that I start each year in this way, and wonder how many of you do the same type of thing. I am guilty of making lists, trying to accomplish too much, and yet somehow, putting my prayer and quiet time on the back burner (at least on the middle burner!). I do love to read, so I start by looking at some of the book titles that are on my bookshelves. The titles alone, I think, are a strong message. Here are some of them: "Slowing Down to the Speed of Life"; "Abundant Simplicity - Discovering the Unhurried Rhythms of Grace"; "Present over Perfect - Leaving Behind Frantic For a Simpler, More Soulful Way of Living"; "Loving God With All Your Mind"; "Life Management for Busy People"; "The Too-Busy Book" - the list goes on and on.

Reading these titles might be one of God's ways to encourage me and, I hope, you, to take time to listen, to pray, to rest, just to enjoy being a part of God's wonderful world. In preparation for the year ahead. I found an article that fits this topic - "Blowing Up Your Day Planner". Here are some suggestions from the article that I hope will encourage you as they are encouraging me:

- 1. Seize the day, as Jesus did, beginning with prayer. This helps to put first things first and set the tone for all that is to follow.
2. Balance is possible, and a peaceful life is what God wants us to accomplish.
3. Simple living is a good thing, and will help us cultivate an attitude of contentment.

As you already know, I learn much from observing and listening to children. Jonas, a 6-year old, says this: "I have a lot of things in my head that I want to wonder about." It would be nice to take the time to talk with him about this.

These are some things that I have learned from a few articles on children's perspectives and hope you will enjoy them as much as I do:

- Laugh every day
Notice the little things
Smile 27 more times than you do already
Slow down
Hand out high-fives
Everyone is a possible friend
You don't care what other people think
You do things "just because"

I will leave you with these words, from the book of Matthew 6:33:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Psalm 46:10 Be still and know that I am God.

As we begin this year of 2017, I pray that we will all take time, each day, to listen to God, and enjoy all of the blessings He has for us, as well as the lessons to learn. I also hope that you smile 27 more times, each day, than you do already!

God bless you all,
Kathy Appleton
Lay Leader



Deaths:

Stanley Leonberg
on November 20, 2016

ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTION

If you would like to use your mobile device to make an electronic donation to FUMC Moorestown, just scan this QR code and you'll be connected to our mobile giving page!





FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." Hebrews 13:15

Happy New Year! Yes, it is 2017 and with a new year comes new opportunity. The verse above reminds me that I am to continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God everyday and not just at Church on Sundays (or Saturdays). It also brings to mind that the words I speak should be pleasing and glorifying to God and I know that I often fall short of that. So in 2017 I am going to be even more committed to doing and saying things that will be a blessing to others, a reminder of the joy I just celebrated at Christmas and filled with thanks to my Heavenly Father. Would you consider joining me in this challenge? And, may God Bless you as we enter 2017!

Peace,
Karen Murray, DCE
856-222-1120 /education@meetwithGod.com

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT INFORMATION:

Sunday School is offered for all ages during our 9:30 & 11:00 Worship hours. All are welcome!

Thursday Afternoon Youth Group to resume on January 12th. This program is offered to all children ages 5 years old through 6th grade. Young Followers (5 years old through 1st grade) meet for dinner at 4:30 in Fellowship Hall while the CHUM (grades 2&3) and CTB (grades 4th-6th) meet for choir. At 5:15 the Young Followers go to choir and the CHUM and CTB's come to Fellowship Hall for dinner. At 5:45 all three groups go to their classrooms for Fun & Fellowship. If you are interested in participating or volunteering, please contact Karen Murray at the above number.

WINTER MISSION ADVENTURE - Our annual "Winter Mission Adventure" actually started in December. We were able to help a young mother who was in great need of Baby items. Our "Fill-A-Crib" was a huge success. Thank you to all who donated. We will continue our "Missions" by filling "Blessing Bags" for the homeless in this area in January and in February we will be seeking "Cleaning Products" to donate to The Neighborhood Center in Camden for their Spring Cleaning activities. We will also be collecting "Coins for Cancer" during the month of March to donate to Erin Talbot's organization in memory of her sister. The "Winter Mission Adventure" will conclude on Sunday March 26th, 2017. A complete list of what to bring to church each week will be distributed in January and printed each week in the Bulletin Insert.

Confirmation Class begins January 9th at 5:30 - All youth in grades 7th through 9th are invited to participate in the Class. If you are interested please contact Karen Murray at 856-222-1120 to enroll.

FP4H - Our First Place for Health program will resume on January 12th. If you would like to be part of this wonderful group of adults as we work on developing our Spiritual, Physical, Emotional and Mental health please contact Karen Murray at 856-222-1120. This class meets on Thursday mornings from 9am to 11am in the Heritage Room.

Prayer & Pilates continues to meet regularly on Mondays & Wednesdays at 5:30 in the Heritage Room. This is great way to meet new friends & stay in shape!

Bible Studies Available:

Monday Morning Women's Group - 9:30am in the Heritage Room

Tuesday Afternoon Adult Group - 2:00pm in Rm. E204

Thursday Morning Women's Group - 7:30-9:00am, Maritsa's Restaurant in Maple Shade

Saturday Morning Bible Study - 7:30-9am in the Parlor

Sunday Morning Adult Class - 9:30am in the Heritage Room (Linda Young, Contact Person)

Sunday Morning Adult Class - 11:00am in the Heritage Room (Gerald Jackson, Contact Person)

**Other Bible Studies and Small Groups are available throughout the year. Please check the Bulletin Board in the Narthex for updated groups.



MEET THE STAFF

This month - Devika Gill, Director of First Light Learning Center

My name is Devika Gill and I am the Director of First Light Early Learning Center, the preschool here at FUMC. My family and I have been attending this church for the past 16 years.

When I think back to how I came to be a part of this church and a follower of God I realize once again, the presence of God in my life, before I really understood he was there.

I was raised in a family with parents of different religions. They made a conscious decision to raise my sister and me without any formal religion. So, as I tell my girls, growing up, we celebrated Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.

We spent our early years in Maryland, and then moved to Singapore, where I spent my teenage years and graduated from High School. I went to Rider University, where I met my husband, Joel Bewley. This summer, we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. We became involved in the Interdenominational Ministry on campus. We got married right after college, the pastor from Rider married us, and we settled in the town of Pennington, oddly enough, directly across the street from the pastor from Rider, who we had a close relationship with. Over the next few years, we visited several churches but never really found the one that felt right for us.

We eventually moved to Moorestown and a few months later I became pregnant with our youngest daughter. We already had 3 daughters, Samantha who was 3 ½, Olivia who was 2, and Alex who was 6 month old. We were thrilled. As the pregnancy went on there were complications, and I remember our neighbor, Doti Stewart asking if she could put us on the prayer list at her church, FUMC. I had no idea what that really meant, but certainly wanted more prayers, so I said yes.

About 3 months before my due date I went into labor. In the hospital, the doctors warned us that if they weren't able to stop the pregnancy, chances were not good for the baby. I really can't explain it but I truly felt God's presence in that hospital room. I felt an overwhelming sense of peace and I knew that this baby was going to be

fine. I had Sophia the next morning and she spent the next 3 months in the NICU. She came home on Father's Day and we still call her our miracle baby.

That September, Doti invited our oldest daughter, Samantha, to go to choir with her son Luke. A few weeks later, we got a note that the kids were singing in church at the 11am service. I remember saying to Joel, I guess we have to go... We sat in the back and really observed. We came back the next week to the 9:30 service. There were so many things about this church that made it very easy for a non-churched person to feel comfortable. People dressed casually, were very friendly, the girls really enjoyed Sunday School, Choir and Youth Group. And most importantly, I met several people who encouraged me to get involved. Inviting me to the Monday morning Bible Study and not really giving me a chance to say no! Over the next few months, without really planning to, we became very involved in this church. We started coming to church regularly. I joined Sarah Circle, Mom's Morning Out and of course the Monday Morning Bible Study. We really felt like this was a church where we could raise our girls in and grow our faith. It felt like home to us. When Samantha joined the confirmation class, our family was baptized here together. Other than our marriage and the birth of our daughters, that day may be one of my most treasured memories. Being baptized as an adult with my husband and daughters, together in this church was truly a special moment.

As plans for the preschool progressed, Jane Butler asked if I would be interested in teaching. I said no. She then asked me to be on the board, which I said yes to. After being out of Education for several years, it felt good to be involved. And I loved what we were trying to do here at FUMC, reaching out to the community through our preschool. Eventually, I accepted the position of Director at First Light. There have been a lot of changes over the years as the preschool has grown. As Director, I've been able to implement educational ideas that complement both the First Light and the FUMC mission statement.

Continued on next page

Meet the Staff, continued

We've grown from 50 students the first year to 132 students this year. We've grown from 3 classes that first year, to 5 classes with several different options, this year. We've grown from a staff of 8 people to a staff of 15. We now have a Developmental Kindergarten class for children not quite ready for Kindergarten. We have weekly chapel time. We sing in church each year. We have a yearly Thanksgiving Feast and a Christmas Show. Our 4 and 5 year olds have weekly music and art classes. We have become a school with an excellent reputation for going above and beyond for our students.

So what does my day look like? What do I actually do? I work with a Board of Directors, made up of church members and parents. I write curriculum. I manage a group of 14 women. I monitor and implement state regulations. I work with parents, children, and teachers to ensure we have the program we want. I handle discipline, sick children, concerned parents, (overflowing toilets!), and many other day-to-day responsibilities.

First Light has been reaching out to our community for the last 10 years. Several families have started attending church as a result of being at First Light. And First Light has been able to make significant financial contributions to FUMC over the years. As Director, I take my job and the ministry very seriously. What could be more important to a parent than their child's first school experience? What could be more important to a church than a preschool that shares the love of Jesus Christ with the community? The mission statement of First Light is, as a ministry of First United Methodist Church of Moorestown, First Light Early Learning Center will offer a developmentally appropriate, stimulating and nurturing environment that fosters Christian faith and discipleship. I am truly blessed to be a part of that.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

First United Methodist Church is a community of faith committed to sharing the love of Jesus Christ with a hurting world through words and actions.

ABBA'S ANIMALS UPDATE

With January "white sales" going strong, you may find yourself with some towels, wash cloths, blankets or pillowcases that you no longer need. Please consider donating them to the animal shelters and rescue groups we support by dropping them off in the designated container near the elevator in the Sunday school lobby. We also welcome other needed items, including cat and dog food or treats (unopened), cat and dog toys, cat litter, paper towels, dryer sheets, plastic zipper-seal bags (sandwich and gallon size), peanut butter and other pet supplies. Questions: Margie Morgan, 856-764-1247 or margmorgan75@gmail.com.



A "MITTEN TREE" THANK YOU



Many thanks to all of you who contributed mittens, gloves, hats & scarves to our Mitten Tree. (And a special thank you to those of you who lovingly knit all year long so that you can donate so many items!) Thanks to your very generous donations, we were able to deliver 414 mitten tree items to Emergency Services of Burlington County. What you have given from your caring hearts has made Christmas brighter and the winter warmer for many struggling families in our communities.

ADULT FELLOWSHIP

Jane Peters Estes has been an avid student of history for more than 25 years. While informative and educational, Jane believes that history can also be fun! Jane's topic is "The Battle of Gettysburg: Where were the Women?" This program discusses the many roles filled by women during the deadliest battle of the Civil War.

Join us for a covered dish luncheon at noon, Jan. 21st in the Fellowship Hall. Bring enough food portions for ten people. For reservations please call The Smiths at 609-914-4698 or Sue Adams at 856-220-8520. Please RSVP by Jan. 9th.

- 12:00 noon Meeting & Greeting
- 12:25 Devotions - Lindsay Mitchell
- 12:45 Our Covered Dish Luncheon

Bring a friend and don't forget your place-settings and your appetite. Hope to see you there.

First United Methodist Church

856-866-0285 office



Hello parents! Happy New Year and Peace to you!

Jr. & Sr. High meet every Sunday night from 7:00-8:30pm downstairs, below Fellowship Hall, in the youth rooms. All Jr. & Sr. High students are invited to join us.

Bible Study every Wednesday night from 6:00pm-8:00pm. This includes dinner and study. Food donations and help with food preparation are always appreciated. We will resume Bible Study with our new 5 week series, "Priceless" on January 11, 2017. It is based on the movie with, For King and Country.



Mid-Winter Advance at America's Keswick

January 13 - January 15

6pm

LOCATION: America's Keswick, Whiting, NJ

Mid-Winter Advance - America's Keswick. This is our annual weekend retreat for Jr. & Sr. High School students. The total cost per student is \$130. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to grow in their faith journey. For more information, please contact Kathy Clawges at : 856-912-1148 or kclawges@gmail.com.

Five New Year's Resolutions Your Family Can Live With

Jim Liebelt

HomeWord.com

It's reported that most Americans either never or only infrequently set New Year's resolutions and of those that do only a few are always successful in keeping them.

So, what if we take a more modest approach this year, setting the "resolutions" bar at a reasonable height? It just might make a difference. With the right attitude going in, the following five "just for today" resolutions can help to get your family's New Year off to a positive start. These are resolutions that most everyone has a good shot of accomplishing -- something that your family can live with. As you succeed, you might even end up incorporating some of them into your family life and identity.

Five Resolutions for the New Year

#1: Just for today, I resolve to create some warmth in my home. Everyone at home wins when we do our part to create a warm and loving atmosphere at home. Today, try some kind words, engage, pay attention (be a good listener), show appropriate physical contact (a kiss, a hug, a touch), encourage, and lighten up.

#2: Just for today, I resolve not to compare myself to anyone else. The temptation always exists, doesn't it? Yet, playing the comparison game is never good for us. We can always find someone who appears to have more, better, or easier. Remember, we always lose when we compare what we know to be true about ourselves with what we don't know for sure about others.

#3: Just for today, I resolve to give someone a choice. Life can begin to weigh us down when we feel we have no choices. Today, lighten someone else's load by finding a way to offer them a choice. Perhaps it's offering your child a choice between several chores around the house. Maybe, it's simply asking your spouse what he or she would like to watch on television this evening.

#4: Just for today, I resolve to prepare. We all have something on the horizon that will benefit from some advance preparation. The time invested in preparation usually pays off when the time to act on that something arrives. Today, look ahead to that future event, deadline, or project and take some time to prepare.

#5: Just for today, I resolve to laugh. It has been said that laughter is the best medicine. But many of us are too busy, live too complicated lives, or are in the midst of painful life situations, which makes laughter a rare occurrence. Just for today, add laughter to your to-do list. Take a few moments to remember a good joke, watch a comedy, or look up a funny video clip online.