



The Messenger

First United Methodist Church Newsletter
446 Camden Avenue, Moorestown, NJ 08057
856-235-0450

Rev. Stephen Donat, Pastor
Rev. HeyYoung Horton, Associate Pastor
Glenn Rodgers, Director of Music Karen Murray, Director of Christian Education Sue Harris, Parish Nurse
Brad Kenney, Director of Youth Ministries Devika Gill, Director of First Light Learning Center

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

FEBRUARY 2013



ASH WEDNESDAY TAIZE^c SERVICE February 13, 2013 7:00 p.m.

Please join us as we begin the Lenten season on Wednesday, Feb. 13th with a special Ash Wednesday soup supper at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, followed by a Taize' style Worship service with imposition of ashes, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Soup suppers will continue each Wednesday evening throughout Lent, with small groups meeting at 7:00 to discuss *King's Cross*, a book by Timothy Keller. See Karen Murray's article on pg. 3 for more details.

MARTHA'S HANDS NEEDS YOUR HELP

Martha's Hands is a group of both women and men who enjoy showing God's love by cooking and delivering a warm meal to those in our congregation and sometimes others. They may be ill, home from the hospital or rehab, have a new baby, or other family crisis. If you enjoy cooking and helping is your gift, please contact Willene Elliott at 856-727-9643 or irvelliot@comcast.net. Thank you!

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.



POPS CONCERT Sunday, February 10th 7:00 pm

This light-hearted program of favorites, both sacred and secular, is sure to chase away the midwinter blues. Featuring children, teens, adults, handbells, choir chimes and always a few surprises!



GROUNDS FOR GOOD COFFEE HOUSE Friday, February 1st

Join us for an evening of great live music, hot coffee and warm fellowship on Friday, February 1 in Fellowship Hall. Stillwater Gospel Band will provide the entertainment, and the evening will also feature an art exhibit, homemade treats for sale, and as always, free coffee and tea. There is no charge for admission, but all proceeds and donations will benefit the Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Dix, providing support to wounded soldiers. The doors will open at 7:30, and the music will kick off around 8.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb. 1st	Grounds for Good - 8:00 pm
Feb. 6th	Sing-Along at Mt. Laurel Ctr. - 10:30 am
Feb. 10th	Pops Concert - 7:00 pm
Feb. 11th	Miriam Circle - 7:30 pm
Feb. 13th	Soup suppers begin - 6:00 pm
Feb. 13th	Ash Wednesday Taize' Service - 7:00 pm
Feb. 16th	Luncheon & speaker - Noon
Feb. 17th	Men's Breakfast - 7:45 am
Feb. 17th	Light Harbor at Mt. Laurel Ctr. - 2:30 pm
Feb. 18th	Presidents Day - church office closed
Feb. 20th	Lenten study begins - 7:00 pm
Feb. 22-24	CORE ski trip



FROM
PASTOR STEVE

I've received a number of responses as a result of our "January at the Movies" sermon series, and they've all been very encouraging and uplifting. I do appreciate that! One quick conversation that I had with someone between services was especially meaningful to me. This person said (something close to this), "I'm really glad you do this series because it is a way of saying to the world that we are interested in what *they* are saying." The thought behind that (as I understood it) is that the world kind of looks at us (the Church) as not caring about what they think, or that we are totally distanced from everything in our culture.

I think this friend was pointing out something that, sadly, is mostly true. There are exceptions (and, I pray, we are one!) but it seems to me that Christians too often run and hide from our culture, or, worse, we become 'truth guerrillas', where we stand in the sidelines and lob judgment bombs on the culture, statements that are not very specific, almost always negative, and are often more hurtful than helpful.

I heard someone say years ago that Christians tend to look at themselves as the 'litmus test' of offensiveness, i.e., we are the *first* ones to be offended. I think this is sad, especially considering that Jesus was considered to be 'a friend of sinners!'

I'm certainly not naive enough to think that everything our culture comes up with is good, or admirable. Paul was very clear in reminding believers that we are 'in' the world, but not 'of' it. But to me, not being corrupted by the world doesn't mean that we have to run and hide from it. There is a biblical perspective on so many things that the world takes for granted that is worth hearing, it is an alternate way to live that is full of joy, hope, and peace. And yet, because we appear so suspicious, (and often so judgmental), the world at large is not hearing what we have to say.

It takes time and effort, sometimes a thick skin and a lot of grace, but when Christians learn to interact with the world in love, it is often surprising how quickly we gain a hearing. We need to learn to always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us... and we also need to earn the right to share.

That right is seldom given when we haven't bothered to listen to what the 'other' person is saying.

Blessings on all our efforts to share God's love in 2013

pastor steve



**A NOTE FROM
THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Did you know that 1st UMC sends out over 500 packets of offering envelopes each month? The Finance Committee wishes to thank everyone who uses their offering envelopes to support our church financially. However, as times and technology change, so do our options for how we can give to the church. We would like to be better stewards of both our earth and your offering dollars, so we are asking that if you currently receive offering envelopes each month but prefer to give by other methods (for example, on-line bill pay or giving a check/cash at the time of the offering) please let us know so we can remove your name from the mailing list. If you want to know more about on-line bill pay please let us know. You can email church@meetwithGod.com, or call us at 856-235-0450.

**LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM
Saturday, Feb. 19th**

Join us to hear Karen Slutsky discuss a very timely and interesting topic - Medical Missions to Disaster Areas and enjoy a **noonday buffet**.

When - Saturday, February 16, 2013
12:00 PM - Socializing
12:15- Devotions
12:30 - Covered dish buffet

For reservations, call:

Bertha & Frank Bendel, 856-235-5211
or Betsy & Fred DeWitt, 856-779-8071

Remember to bring your favorite covered dish and your place setting. Hope to see you at **Noon** on Saturday, February 16, 2013.

Sponsored by Adult Fellowship.



FROM THE DIRECTOR
OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

The phrase “*Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness...*” to me is such a blessing and filled with promise. We have all seen the darkness and destruction that inhabits this fallen world. From random shootings to “Super-Storm Sandy” and so much more we know that there is hurt, sadness and anger all around. However if you are a follower of Christ you know that there is also hope, mercy, grace and healing.

My heartfelt prayer as we continue in the year 2013, is that each of us embrace the **Light of Christ** and let it show to those we meet each and every day. It is so important to remind ourselves, our family and friends of the promise that Jesus made when he said, “**Whoever** follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the **light of life.**”

*May God continue to bless you as you “Shine” for Him.
Sincerely,
Karen Murray, DCE*

LENT 2013

This year during the season of Lent (Feb. 13th - March 31st) we will be studying the book ***King's Cross*** by Timothy Keller. Pastor Steve and Pastor HeyYoung will also be using this book as their resource for the Sermons during Lent.

In this book, “*Keller shows how the story of Jesus is at once cosmic, historical, and personal, calling each of us to look anew at our relationship with God. Like Keller's other books, King's Cross is written for both skeptics and the faithful, for those struggling to understand who Jesus is and for Christians seeking to know him more intimately.*” (TimothyKeller.com).

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of ***King's Cross***, please contact Karen Murray, DCE by phone at 856-222-1120 or by e-mail at education@meetwithGod.com. **ALL orders must be received by February 3rd**. Cost of the book is \$16.00. To purchase the book in Audio Form, or as an e-book please visit Amazon.com. (You will be responsible to purchase your own copy.)

Also, if you are interested in participating in a ***Small Group*** Study of this book, Sign-up sheets will be available in the Narthex. There **WILL** be a Wednesday Soup & Study Group as well as many other groups to choose from.

Other Important Information

- The 2013 *Confirmation Class* has started for any students in 6th grade or older who would like to join the Church in May. To participate in the class, please contact Karen Murray, DCE.
- Thursday Youth Fellowship Dates for February are 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th.
- **Winter Mission Adventure** continues as we use this month to support the Christian Caring Center located in Browns Mills, NJ. Each Sunday you will be invited to make a donation.
 - Feb. 3rd - Blankets
 - Feb. 10th - Toiletries
 - Feb. 17th - Paper Products
 - Feb. 24th - Laundry Detergent.

LAY LEADER LINES

I wanted to take this opportunity to reintroduce myself as your Lay Leader. As some of you may know, the Lay Leader position requires a six year commitment; three as Associate Lay Leader and three as Lay Leader. For the past three years, I have “learned the ropes” while serving alongside Betsy Heinz. It has truly been a privilege to serve our congregation in this capacity, and I look forward to getting to know even more of you during our next three-year journey. Our new Associate Lay Leader, Kathy Appleton, and I will alternate writing monthly articles for the Messenger. We hope that you will find these articles informative and insightful.

While some of you may know me, many do not, and I thought the best way to continue our journey is with some background information. You wouldn't start a white water rafting trip without knowing the guide, so why should this be any different. My lovely better half, Nicole, and I have been married for twenty years. Although we church shopped for several weeks after our wedding, we never looked anywhere else after walking through FUMC's doors. We have 14 year old twins, Matt & Sarah. While our church home is in Moorestown, our residence is in Marlton and I work in Philadelphia. Over the past twenty years, I have served with various groups, including youth, staff parish, finance and trustees. I participate in a men's study group on Friday mornings and my main hobby is running.

I think it is important to give you this information so that you have a basic understanding of my life. These are the people and factors that influence me and color my opinions. I also believe that there is something special when people share personal experience. Am I the only father who has been humbled by his teenage children? While they would like to think this happens on a daily basis, there are times when God is clearly molding me through my children. As a child, teenager, and young adult, I never comprehended the love and sacrifice that goes along with parenthood. This lesson was quickly learned when the Doctor said “Congratulations it's twins!” At that very moment, God's love and ultimate sacrifice became more real to me than ever before. When was the last time you were overwhelmed by God's love?

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve and I look forward to our journey together. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Betsy for her dedicated service over the past six years. She has left very large shoes for Kathy and I to fill.

Peace,
Scott McGough

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE . . .

. . . to “go green” (and save your church some money at the same time!). If you would like to receive your monthly issue of the “Messenger” by emailed PDF file rather than by postal service, just let us know. You can email church@meetwithGod.com, or call the church office at 856-235-0450.

LIGHT HARBOR MINISTRY

Our Light Harbor Ministry presented a modified Lessons and Carols Christmas service for the residents of the Mount Laurel Center for Rehabilitation and Healthcare the afternoon of December 16. The service comprised nine Bible scripture readings (or lessons) from *The Message* translation that told the story of Jesus' birth, from Isaiah's prophecy through Luke and Matthew's nativity stories, to the first chapter of John's Gospel. The singing of an appropriate Christmas carol followed each lesson. In addition to our usual piano (Margie Morgan), violin (Hazel Edwards) and recorder (Anne Smith) accompaniment, the residents' voices were augmented by the four-part harmony of Barbara Engelbrecht, Peggy Deffley, Bruce Van Dyke and Bruce Smith. The scripture readings were delivered in dramatic fashion, with various people speaking the parts of the narrator, angels, shepherds, Mary, Herod, and the magi. In addition to the musicians, Linda Wanagas and Ellen Shinn took part in the readings. To close the service, the quartet sang *Silent Night* a cappella, directed by Bruce Smith. Many thanks to everyone who helped us provide this special treat to the residents.



MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT
Rev. Rogelio Porquillo
(Managok, Malaybalay City,
Philippines)

Through our Faith Promise giving, FUMC has been a partner in missions with Rogelio (Roger) Porquillo for over 20 years. In 1990 when Rev. Porquillo was a District Superintendent in the Philippines he visited United Methodist churches in NJ and was invited to our church by Robert and JoAnn Westcott. The Missions Commission thereafter decided to provide monthly support for his evangelical programs. Roger retired as DS in 1999 and as a Pastor in 2004. He has since been engaged as a volunteer missionary. One of the programs he volunteers with is the Alternative Learning System (ALS) which provides basic education to people in four area learning centers. Classes include elementary and high school education, basic literacy, computer skills, and culinary arts. Students in these classes range from age 5 to 69! Roger recently purchased a lap top and projector to be used for a training program on how to share Christ with others. Pastor Roger frequently writes to our Mission Commission and often sends pictures of ALS students and teachers. On November 30 his church celebrated their 42nd anniversary. In November, he wrote to say he prayed for our congregation and all of New Jersey after seeing pictures of the destruction caused by Super Storm Sandy. On December 10 we received this message: Super Typhoon Pablo brought miseries to the Island of Mindanao and Davao Oriental and Conval Province were hard hit. Bukidnon Province which Malaybalay is part of had no fatalities but crops and houses along the riverbanks were washouts. *When praying for our Brothers and Sisters in NY and NJ, and for those serving on mission teams during the clean up, pray also for our Brothers and Sisters in the Philippines who share the same miseries and mission opportunities as we.*

2013 Faith Promise Weekend
April 12-14!

Save these dates to join us for the next Faith Promise Weekend. Meet some of our missionary partners at a pot-luck dinner Friday night and during weekend services. Join a local mission project Saturday morning. After faithfully considering our Faith Promise giving, the weekend will conclude with a luncheon on Sunday, prepared and served by the Missions Commission.



MIRIAM
CIRCLE

Ladies, please come out and join us at our Feb. 11th meeting at 7:30 PM in the church parlor. We will be led in devotions by Fay Ferris. Our hostesses will be Ruth Gandek and Georgie Jenkins. We will have a night of music with Glenn Rodgers.

Please come out for a night of Christian Fellowship. For more information call Barbara Dapper at 235-1765.

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Newly Baptized

Baptisms:

Poppy Cecilia Hudak
on December 22, 2012; daughter of
Chuck & Kelly Hudak

Lucas Robert Chuenmark
on January 13, 2013; son of
Chai & Robyn Chuenmark

Deaths:

Richard Immler
on January 7, 2013

Rose Klenk
on January 9, 2013

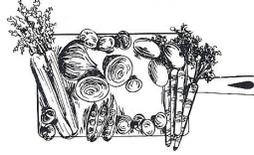


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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A
LOCAL LAY SERVANT?

If you've ever considered becoming trained as a Local Lay Servant (formerly called Lay Speaker), mark your calendar for the upcoming series of classes, to be held at First UMC of Delran. They are scheduled for March 2, 9, & 16, from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Watch upcoming Sunday bulletins for more information.

TASTE
AND SEE



*Sharing healthy recipes as we minister to
the "whole person"*

Spicy Vegetable Soup

Prep Time: 40 minutes Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil | 2 cups diced cooked potatoes |
| 1 large onion, diced | 1 1/2 cups green beans, cut into 2-inch pieces |
| 1-3 tsp. hot paprika, or to taste | 2 cups frozen spinach (5 ounces) |
| 2 14-ounce cans vegetable broth | 2 Tbsp. sherry vinegar or red-wine vinegar |
| 4 medium plum tomatoes, diced | 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil or prepared pesto |
| 1 medium yellow summer squash, diced | |

Cooking Instructions

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until beginning to brown, about 6 minutes. Add paprika and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add broth, tomatoes, squash, potatoes and beans; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are just tender, about 12 minutes. Stir in spinach and vinegar; continue cooking until heated through, 2 to 4 minutes more. Ladle soup into bowls and top with fresh basil or a dollop of pesto.

Nutritional Analysis

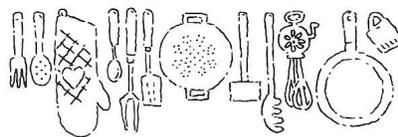
Per serving

Calories Per Serving	253
Total Fat	9 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Monounsaturated Fat	5 g
Sodium	486 mg
Carbohydrates	39 g
Fiber	10 g
Protein	9 g
Potassium	1029 mg

Recipe from The American Heart Assoc., www.heart.org

*Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed
are those who take refuge in him.*

Psalm 34:8



SPOTLIGHT ON SENIORS
Our Featured Senior - Paul Douglas Gager

Have you ever looked at your immediate or extended family members and tried to figure out who takes after whom? Sometimes it is easy. Mom has blue eyes and fair skin and so does Sis but coloring and size aren't the only things we inherit. Then there are our talents. How did we get those artistic or musical talents? As they say, it's all in the genes. Some genes, like those mentioned above are good, but then there are those that are not so good related to health issues such as diabetes and heart disease. Knowing about these not so good genes gives us the opportunity to be proactive and monitor our diet and life styles.

Paul Gager was born in the Osteopathic Hospital in Phila. He was taken home to a farm in Tabernacle, N.J. Much of South Jersey at that time was farm land. As home developers started to buy up the land, farming gradually became less profitable. His grandfather went from farming to building a lot of the log cabins in Medford Lakes. Paul's father had a small business as a building contractor. Later he served as a project manager for other contractors who were mainly building schools; his mother was a stay at home mom taking care of Paul, a sister and brother. The family attended the Medford Methodist Church and the children were educated in the Medford school system graduating from Lenape High School. Paul went on to Trenton State College to study to become an Industrial Education teacher. It was at Trenton State that he met Doris. She was taking courses to become an elementary school teacher. Their first date was to see a movie and have a snack afterward at a diner. They dated for about a year and a half before marrying in the Methodist church in Northfield, N.J. (near Margate) in 1969.

Following graduation, Paul did teach "shop" for only 3 plus years before deciding to follow in his grandfather's and father's footsteps by beginning to take jobs in construction work - (remember those genes). He worked as a construction superintendent in the Hainesport Industrial Park putting up buildings; he was a maintenance manager for a company making roof trusses, building components, and etc. He worked in North Carolina for more than 4 years before returning to N.J. He is licensed in N.J. as a general building contractor and an electrical contractor. Doris also worked in the building business doing design work for Roof Trusses in Hainesport. She is now working as an

Executive Assistant at Title Resource Group in Mt. Laurel.

Paul's father died at the age of 52. After his death, his mother decided to go to work for the township of Medford later becoming the township clerk for Medford. Paul's brother, Larry, died at the age of 43. His father and brother both died from heart attacks. (There are those not so good genes.) Paul tries to abide by healthy habits, periodic physician checkups, and good care given by Doris. His sister, Nancy, lives in Riverside and is the choir director at the Delanco Presbyterian church. Doris and Paul have one daughter, Susan, living in Phila. and working as a hair stylist in center city.

Being a fairly new retiree, Paul still enjoys building or fixing things. He considers himself a handyman willing to do small jobs. Building boats is another way he passes the time; he points to a couple finished boats in the yard. One, a small run about, is designated as his daughter's. Doris is beginning to wonder how many boats are enough. They do own a larger fiberglass boat that they keep moored in Somers Point. Relaxing on this boat on weekends gives them much pleasure - away from a busy world. They both like being outdoors. Paul goes deer hunting in season. They like to visit the Virgin Islands where they do some snorkeling. He has had to limit some of this activity in recent weeks as he is recuperating from a hip replacement. Paul and Doris have been members of FUMC for over 20 years. You have probably seen him in the kitchen on Sunday mornings being busy with the coffee hour between services; Doris uses her teaching background to teach 2nd grade in our Sunday School. Paul is a member of the Vincentown Masonic Lodge.

Should you visit the Gagers in their Mt. Laurel home you might be greeted in the driveway by a large dog. You might wonder if he is friendly. When you open the car door, you might wonder if he is going to jump in. This large dog is an Airedale named Rufus and an important member of the Gager family. And yes, he is friendly.

By the time this interview is printed in "The Messenger", the daily walks and the rehab exercises will have paid off and he will be back worshipping with us at FUMC.



FROM THE PARISH NURSE
The Gift of Years

Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking to the wonderful ladies of Miriam Circle. Instead of talking about a hot medical topic, or what was new in the parish nurse ministry here at 1st UMC, I decided to talk about a wonderful book that I have been reading called The Gift of Years. This month I would like to share with you some of my presentation, and for those members of the Circle who have already heard my talk I thank you for bearing with me, and I hope you've been enjoying your reading assignment!

The Gift of Years by Joan Chittister encourages us to cherish the blessings of aging and to overcome its challenges, and shows us that this is a special period of life - maybe the most special of them all. To live these later years well, we need to look at many of the fears and hopes that come along with aging and understand that the last phase of life is not non-life; it is a **new stage** of life. These older years are meant to be **good** years - a time to come alive in ways we never have been alive before. Chittister looks at numerous topics of the aging process, from loneliness to productivity to relationships etc. She, being over 70 herself, knows that these issues can be burdensome, but she also sees them as a blessing in ways that we might not have thought about. She puts a positive spin on aging and I find her writing to be very uplifting. Refreshingly, Chittister does **not** write about the physical changes that come with age - I think we all know about those changes anyway! She writes more about the mental and emotional aspects of aging which can significantly affect how we view growing older.

One of the chapters that I particularly liked was the one entitled "Meaning". In this chapter the author talks about our world today that judges us by our achievements and our busyness - by what we DO, more than by WHO WE ARE. (what's the 1st question that most people ask you after your name "what do you do, or what did you retire from?") Now, what happens when we do retire from our "jobs" - the thing that has defined us for many years whether we worked in the professional or academic fields or as a full-time homemaker or whatever. What's left over for us when this all goes - the role, the status, the goals - when we're done with the "doing" part of our lives. Chittister feels that the world has been upside down for so long, that it's almost impossible to believe that the meaning of life is not about **doing**. The notion that it is about **being** - being caring, being interested, being honest, being truthful, being available, being spiritual, being involved with the important things of life - is so rare, so unspoken of, as to be obtuse. The meaning of our lives is to BE the person that we are meant to be - the person that God has been developing through all these years. A blessing of these years is that we can come to understand that it is *who we are* that makes us valuable members of society, not how fast or busy we are, or by what we do.

In another chapter Chittister addresses "Newness". She talks about how life changes constantly - whether we like it or not. The **attitude we take to this change** can either destroy us or lift us to a new level of living. As she states, "If we decide that life is over once the accoutrements of middle age are over - the career, the title, the children, the climb up the social ladder - and that there is nothing else worth doing, that the very definition of who we are has been summarily foreclosed, then of course it will be. We have ended ourselves. But if we can bring ourselves to strike out now, to try on the rest of ourselves, there is a whole new world ahead of

us...and it is the willingness, the eagerness to **try** that makes all the difference." At this point in our lives, we need to choose to begin a new kind of life related to the past, of course, but free of the strictures that bind us to it. Why not take some evening classes at the high school, learn how to play an instrument, learn to knit, lead a book discussion group, call up some friends and go out for dinner...the list of new things to do is endless, but we have to decide to move on with the changes life brings and figure out what new things will bring us purpose and pleasure in our later years.

The last chapter which really struck a chord within my heart was entitled "Immediacy". If my dad had had a tombstone, he said that he would have wanted it to simply say...**He Had Fun!** My mom, when asked the secret to staying happily married for 66 years usually says, "**you have to have a sense of humor!**" We really need to "**lighten up**" about getting older. The danger of old age is that we may start **acting** old! It's having fun that keeps us laughing, and laughing keeps us happy in the here and now, and helps us feel lighter, brighter and younger. Scientific research has proven that laughing releases endorphins - hormones that improve our moods and make us feel better. I realize that it is very tempting as we age to stop meeting life head on - we stop living life fully - Who hasn't said, "I'm too tired tonight, I don't think I'll go" to the concert or movie...and your friends go without you. "She's older now and can't do these things", they say. We teach them to ignore us and then wonder how it happened! I've often heard, "That's too much effort. I don't do those things anymore" I don't do Christmas, I don't send birthday cards. We do less and less all the time until sitting in place becomes the way we go through life! We drop out of living just as surely as if we were already gone and buried. **And we do it to ourselves!** We refuse to go to the next step to begin something new. We fail to go on becoming. We become new inside when we urge ourselves to do new things. We become awake when we don't allow ourselves to simply sleep through life. We become more sure of ourselves when we **forget** our age and trust ourselves enough to refuse to fear everything in life from a pair of stairs to a mountain incline. We aren't "past" life unless we allow life to pass us by! Chittister says, "It is time now to begin again, to become new, to find ways to enjoy life, to seize every opportunity to be an exciting, interesting, significant person. We owe the world the best of ourselves because all the rest of the world is struggling with something too." Try to find something each day to laugh or at least smile about. I've always liked an anonymous quote that says "keep smiling - it makes people wonder what you've been up to!"

Statistically, we are living about 3 decades longer than in the past. Someone born in 1900 could expect to live to 47. Someone born today can expect to live to almost 79! God has given us the gift of extra years. The question is **what will we do with that opportunity?** If you would like to read The Gift of Years, please let me know and I will be happy to get a copy to you. It is sure to open your eyes to new and refreshing ways to look at growing older and embrace the extra gift of years that God has so graciously given to us all.

Here's to aging gracefully,
Sue Harris