



The Messenger

First United Methodist Church Newsletter
446 Camden Avenue, Moorestown, NJ 08057
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Rev. Richard Nichols, Pastor
Kathy Clawges, Director of Youth
Donna Banes, Interim Music Team Coordinator
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

APRIL 2018



EASTER WORSHIP Sunday, April 1st

6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service - Start the Day of Resurrection by gathering in the courtyard in a traditional sunrise service, anticipating the joy of the resurrection. We will adjourn afterward to Fellowship Hall for a continental breakfast. All are welcome.

8:15 a.m. Early Praise and Worship - Come to the Sanctuary, 15 minutes earlier than usual, to celebrate Easter. Begin with praise songs and end with the Hallelujah Chorus led by our Adult Choir.

9:30 a.m. Easter Praise and Worship - The walls will resound in this service of contemporary praise in celebration of Easter. We meet as usual in the Sanctuary.

11:00 a.m. Easter Worship - enriched with the music of a brass choir, the music of our Adult Choir, and the joyful singing of the timeless hymns of Easter. Also meets in the Sanctuary.

GROUNDS FOR GOOD Friday, April 6th



Ring in the spring at April's Grounds for Good Coffee House on Friday, April 6. Coffee House newcomers Narrow Road will perform, and the evening will feature free coffee and tea as well as a variety of snacks and baked goods for purchase. Admission is always free, but proceeds and donations will benefit The Interfaith Hospitality Network. The doors to Fellowship Hall will open at 7:30, with music kicking off at 8.

SEMI-ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE April 25th & 26th

Shopping Hours:
Wednesday 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Thursday 9:30 am to 2:00 pm and
6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
(\$3.00 Bag Night)

**Soup & Sandwich lunch for sale from
11:30 am to 2:00 pm on Thursday

Donations Accepted:

Sunday, Apr. 22nd, 3:00 - 7:00 pm
Monday Apr. 23rd & Tuesday Apr. 24th
9:00 am to 7:00 pm

(Sorry, we may need to close doors early for donations if we are full.)

Please, NO magazines, encyclopedias, large furniture, large exercise equipment, tube TVs, PC Monitors or anything requiring two people to carry.

Sponsored by Adult Fellowship and
the Education & Youth Departments

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Apr. 1st Easter Sunrise Service - 6:00am
Apr. 1st Easter worship - 8:15, 9:30, 11:00am
Apr. 2nd Church office closed
Apr. 3rd New Group Study begins - 7:00-8:00pm
Apr. 6th Grounds for Good - 8:00pm
Apr. 8th Light Harbor at Avista - 2:30pm
Apr. 10th The Serving Plate - 5:00pm
Apr. 13th My Abba's Hands - 7:00-9:00pm
Apr. 14th My Abba's Hands - 9:00am-3:00pm
Apr. 15th Men's Breakfast - 7:45am
Apr. 21st Eyes of Our Hearts in Camden - 7:00am
Apr. 21st Adult Fellowship - Noon
Apr. 24th Crafts for Good - 7:00-8:30pm
Apr. 25th Rummage Sale - 6:00-9:00pm
Apr. 26th Rummage Sale-9:30am-2:00pm;6-8:30pm



FROM
PASTOR RICHARD

During the month of March, our sermon series focused on Great Sermons from the Bible, looking at the words of Moses, Joshua, Peter and Paul. As I reflected on these messages, I detected a common theme. Each message expressed some kind of invitation for persons to commit themselves to the Lord. For Moses it was a call to love God wholeheartedly with all your heart, soul, and strength. Joshua calls the people to put away their idols proclaiming his own faith by saying: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Peter preaches a message of repentance and an invitation to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And Paul addresses an audience with many religions and philosophies and invites them to find real life by turning to the risen Christ. All of these important words were invitations to either find faith or to deepen one's faith. They are words of hope and challenge that called persons to take personal steps to make important decisions in their lives.

God still speaks to our hearts and the invitation is still given to take those steps that will lead us to find faith and a deeper walk with the Lord. We are challenged to move from a place of complacency or just maintaining the status quo in our spiritual life to a place of surrender and full trust and devotion. Taking those steps and making a decision to follow Jesus wholeheartedly may require us to let go of some things, but the reward is finding the real peace and joy the Lord gives.

On February 21, dearly loved evangelist, Rev. Billy Graham, ended his earthly journey and entered into the glory of heaven. Rev. Graham was known for his simple, but authentic message for people to receive Christ and find new life. Like the biblical characters from the Great Sermons, his messages would invite persons to make a decision about their relationship with God. His crusades often ended with the hymn of invitation: "Just as I Am." May the words of one of the verses be our response to the Lord's call and invitation for us. That whatever the need is in our life, we will find that place of surrender and experience the peace and joy that God wants to give us: *"Just as I am, thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down; now, to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come."*



MUSIC NOTES

I recently read a quote on Twitter from tinybudda.com. Yes, I am on Twitter, but don't ask me how it works! Anyway, it read **"Sometimes music is the only medicine the heart and soul need."** It really struck a chord, pun intended, with me. I started to reflect on all the moments in our lives that music is a part, from a favorite song, the song that was playing when you first met your significant other, weddings, funerals, I could go on and on!

For me music has always been a huge part of my life! I was influenced early on by my mom and grandmothers who would sing to me. My earliest recollection is my grandmother singing "you are my sunshine, my only sunshine..." My mom always sang and played the piano and is the biggest reason for my love of music, but how does it heal the heart and soul? What do we turn to when we're happy, upset, worried? Music! I'm sure you can think of a song or hymn that is special to you and that you associate with a time in your life. When you do, you immediately recall a special time, or a memory. Maybe that song or hymn got you through a rough time. It allows you to find comfort when nothing else may bring you comfort. Music may give you the strength you need to travel through your day, maybe only a minute at a time. It might be that music is what speaks to us, stays with us, relays a message we need or it might just soothe the soul!

Music in church often reflects the seasons of the year. We recently traveled through Lent. The hymns or songs were more reflective, in some ways darker, portraying Jesus' journey from Palm Sunday to Good Friday. On Easter there is a noticeable shift. The hymns and songs of praise are joyous, the music reflects that wonderful news the Jesus is Risen, He is Risen Indeed! What awesome medicine for both your heart and soul!

Music sometimes touches us in ways that nothing else can. It can have a profound impact on our lives, sometimes before we even realize it. What is that song or piece of music that truly touches your heart? Where does it take you? Hopefully the songs of praise and hymns take you on the journey to the foot of the cross. Comforts you, lets you know that the love of Jesus Christ surrounds you always. That is the only medicine your heart and soul needs!

Donna Banes
Interim Music Ministries Coordinator



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

"I believe in the Holy Spirit" Apostles' Creed

During this past Lenten season over 75 adults and children from our congregation participated in the book study "**Creed: What Christians Believe and Why**" by Adam Hamilton.

To many of us reciting the Apostles' Creed is as simple as reciting the Lord's Prayer. To others this may have been their first introduction to any type of creed. Either way there are great benefits to embracing a creed to live by.

According to the Online Dictionary a creed is "a set of beliefs or aims that guide someone's actions." Merriam-Webster defines a Creed as "1: a brief authoritative formula of religious belief: the Nicene Creed 2: a set of fundamental beliefs; also : a guiding principle."

As Christians we are blessed to have a "guiding principle" that directs our steps. A code that reminds us that we are in a direct relationship with God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit. We may not understand all the aspects of our faith but we can always cling to the hope that comes from trusting that the Apostles' Creed and similar creeds are there to direct our steps, to keep us grounded and to offer us hope in the darkest times.

"It (the Apostles' Creed) helps us remember God's answers to the deepest wounds, longings, and questions of our hearts. It reminds us of what is true. It captures many of the foundational convictions upon which our lives are built. And it gives us hope." (Creed pg.164)

I am very thankful that I was introduced to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Lord's Prayer early in my life. I am thankful that my parents gave me the opportunity to learn and live by these creeds and professions of faith. I am also thankful that I can pass the words of these creeds to others through our Sunday School program and other settings. But more than anything, I am thankful for the belief I have in God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit.

What "Creed" are you living by? I truly pray that you are allowing this Creed to be a guiding principle in your life as you "believe in the Holy Spirit".

To God Be the Glory!
~Karen M. Murray, DCE

Special Events:

VBS Registration has begun. Forms can be found on the Welcome Center or downloaded from the website, www.meetwithGod.com. (VBS Week is Aug. 20th - 24th, 9am - 12noon).

Volunteers are NEEDED to staff our 2017-2018 Sunday School Year as well as our VBS week. If you are interested please contact Karen Murray @ 856-222-1120.

Confirmation Sunday - May 20th at the 11:00 Worship Service. Please pray for this class of beautiful students as they are preparing to join this Church.

**NEW GROUP STUDY
BEGINNING APRIL 3rd**

When Christians Get it Wrong Group Study
Tuesdays, April 3-May 8
7:00-8:00 PM in the Resource Room (F102)
Ken Hoffner, Cheryl Holiday, Devika Gill - Facilitators
Coordinated by the Reconciliation Team
Nursery Care Available

Everyone is welcome to join a stimulating new group study of Adam Hamilton's *When Christians Get it Wrong* book and video series, which examines some of the obstacles Christians create that hinder others from experiencing God's love and grace. As noted in the book, following Jesus should be "more about open doors than locked fences, more about serving people than judging them, more about joyful living than angry fighting."

The chapters and video delve into issues you may have wondered about, including how Christian ideals align with science, politics, other religions, homosexuality, and when bad things happen. Adam Hamilton tackles these issues and addresses the how's and why's of Christians getting it right when it comes to following Christ in the world.

Each book chapter corresponds to a different section of the video. Participants can read the chapters ahead of time, or simply come watch the video if you don't have time for the book. Group discussion will follow the video presentations. Those wishing to read the book may pick up a copy in the church office (a \$10 donation would be appreciated) or borrow one from the library.

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.

ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTION

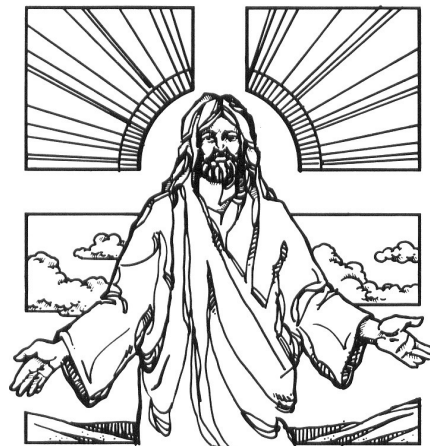
If you would like to use your mobile device to make an electronic donation to FUMC Moorestown, just scan this QR code and you'll be connected to our mobile giving page!



**A NOTE FROM THE LIVE CIVILLY/
MOORESTOWN MINISTERIUM
FOOD PANTRY**

April is always a good month. The joy of Easter, the beauty of spring. At the pantry, the warmer weather brings more people. We don't ask for documentation of need. We open the doors and give to all who arrive. Your donations of non-perishable food are welcome and fill the bags that we distribute. People often ask for paper goods, laundry soap and dish soap. Though not part of the bags, these items have sometimes been donated and greatly appreciated. All of these items are welcome as well. Without your generosity, the pantry could not flourish. Thank you for your continued support.

In peace,
Connie O'Brien
Pantry Coordinator



*"Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here but has risen."*

Luke 24:5

**NOT ON OUR EMAILED
"MESSENGER" LIST YET?**

Did you know that the church newsletter is available electronically? If you still receive a mailed paper copy of your monthly "Messenger" and would like to help us "go green" and save some money too, let us know that you would like to be added to our email list! You will receive an email from the church each month with a link to the page on the church website where you can get the current issue, as well as back issues and the calendar pages. Just email church@meetwithGod.com, or call the church office at 856-235-0450.

LAY LEADER LINES

I think we are all ready for the spring season! This winter has been challenging in so many ways, with the weather, disturbing news stories, and much more.

The Easter season ends in such a time of celebration! Traveling the journey with Jesus, being overwhelmed by His gifts to us, and praying for new beginnings for our families, our friends, our country, and ourselves, gives us gratefulness in many ways.

I believe that God is constantly encouraging us to move forward, and not to be stagnant.

Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages us: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.”*

1 John 5:14, shares some wise words: *“And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”*

2 Corinthians 5:17, has a powerful message: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*

I did not know that April is “Lawn and Garden Month”, and the second week in April is “Garden Week.” Thinking about the encouragement of springtime, and the beautiful gifts that God gives us every day should bring hope to all of us.

As our church family gets ready for more changes this summer, I think that God will smile if we work together. I read a story, called “The Daffodil Principle” (Abundance-and-Happiness.com) that I hope you will take the time to read. The garden was planted by one woman, who started in 1958, one bulb at a time. There were more than 50,000 bulbs when she was finished, about forty years later. She had created something of indescribable magnificence, beauty, and inspiration. One of the most important lessons to be learned from this garden is learning to move toward our goals and desires one step at a time. This woman encouraged so many other people to start a project, working with others, and creating joy!

Six-year old Carl has learned a lesson in working together, as he describes what he has learned about God:

Jesus' dad appreciated everything that He had done, and all His hard work on earth so He told Jesus that He didn't have to go out on the road anymore and could stay in heaven. Now He helps His dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones He can take care of Himself. Like a secretary, only more important. You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.”

Carl, apparently, realizes the importance of teamwork too.

Oscar Wilde has something to share about kindness and working together: *“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.”*

Franklin D. Roosevelt gave us many things to think about, including this thought: *“Happiness lies in the joy of achievement, and the thrill of creative effort.”*

As we work on our own springtime projects at home and at church, we know that God is with us, encouraging us and leading us. Romans 8:28 should be an inspiration too: *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.*

In the words of an old Chinese proverb: *“Pearls don't lie on the seashore. If you want one, you must dive for it.”*

Let's work hard, together, and keep our dreams, as four-year old Greta shares;: *“Mom, I better go to bed now. I have a dream locked up in my heart that I need to let out.”*

Let's keep our dreams, and our prayers, alive, as we work together to serve God, through our communities, church, and home.

God bless you all,
Kathy Appleton
Lay Leader

A LETTER FROM BISHOP SCHOL

Reprinted below is a letter emailed to the churches by Bishop John Schol, dated March 1st



The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

New Disciples • Vital Congregations • Transformed World

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD. -Psalm 27:14 NIV

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I have just returned from a four day meeting of the Council of Bishops. At the meeting, we reviewed proposals from the Commission on the Way Forward about legislation and the future vision for The United Methodist Church *a unified church, making new generations of disciples and transforming the world in and through different contexts, cultures and understandings.*

The United Methodist Church, at every level - congregations, conferences and General Conference - have wrestled with including gays and lesbians in the life of United Methodism. The conversation is further complicated because different theologies, cultures and nations - which offer different understandings and experiences - make up The United Methodist Church. This can easily be seen in the Council of Bishops who reflect this great diversity in the church and are not of one mind. While we are not of one mind, we are able to have respect, deep appreciation and forthright conversation with one another that is Christ-like. We also give room and space for differences in understandings and ways to lead. I call all of our congregations, our organizations and our conference to model this same Christ-like love.

At our meeting, we reviewed two proposals that the Commission on the Way Forward developed. Both proposals are a vision of how we can be one United Methodist Church, recognizing and even respecting one another in the midst of our differences so that we continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ, grow vital congregations and transform the world. The proposals continue us as a worldwide church.

The first is to allow churches to shape their practices about weddings, to allow pastors to shape their practices about who they will marry and to allow boards of ordained ministries and clergy executive sessions to shape their practices about ordination. This proposal would allow congregations, clergy and boards of ordained ministries/clergy executive sessions to determine how to be in ministry with gays and lesbians. The proposal has safeguards so that churches would not be forced to conform to a certain practice or to receive gays and lesbians as their pastors. Clergy would not be required to perform weddings they do not feel is within their convictions and understanding.

The second proposal is to be one church with three organizational branches, one conservative, one centrist, and one progressive in which each branch has authority for aspects of the Book of Discipline that will allow them to make changes more favorable to their theology.

The Council of Bishops recognizes this is an important and a directional time in the life of The United Methodist Church. After three days of worship, prayer and conversation, we gave feedback to the Commission on the Way Forward about the two proposals. The Commission will make its final recommendation which will be reviewed by the Council of Bishops. The final legislation for the February 2019 Special General Conference Session will be shared with the whole church in July of 2018.

Continued on next page

Bishop's letter, continued

All proposals have benefits and challenges and the same is true with these two proposals. There will not be a perfect proposal and there will not be total agreement. For 40 years the General Conference has maintained our current policies about homosexuality. It may very well do the same in 2019.

Each of us is called to a clear mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Right now, we are being called to lean into what that means for our future. As the bishops discussed, we are faced with a challenge of how far to lean in the midst of this conversation choosing context or unity. Unity requires shared belief and practice but can become rigid, exclusive and policy focused. Context maintains shared identity and purpose and although it is more inclusive, it can lack clarity and boundaries. Both are right. The more we push into unity, we sacrifice contextual expression and the more we push into context we sacrifice unity. The bishops are seeking ways to be faithful to God as we hold both context and unity in one hand. It is not easy.

For instance, at a very different level, the church has accomplished both unity and context in worship. There are many forms and expressions of worship. United Methodists worship in different ways, at different times and in different types of places. For the sake of unity, we have abandoned the idea that there is only one way to worship. Up until the late 1900's worship was much more proscriptive. In the last 50 years, it became more and more diverse throughout United Methodism. This is an example of unity and contextualization. In a similar way for the good of the mission, the bishops, who are a very diverse group representing different theologies, cultures and nations, seek unity and contextualization. Jesus also faced into this and many of his parables talked about the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, to honor the Sabbath and to do the things of God on the Sabbath even if it was perceived as work.

Regretfully, there are some in the church who because of their theology, ethnicity or culture are already talking about forming their own denomination or their own "branch". This is not helpful to the discernment of the Holy Spirit. It creates reaction as opposed to discernment, splintering as opposed to being shaped by the Holy Spirit. I call every pastor and lay person to wait upon the Lord, for God has led the people through every circumstance, every challenge and every decision.

Let us trust in the Lord together. Here are some things you can do.

1. Pray for the continued movement of the Holy Spirit in our church, in our congregations and in your life.
2. Seek to understand before you try to be understood.
3. Make plans not for what you will do if this or that happens, but for the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
4. Be not anxious but trust in God.

I will continue to lead in the midst of this conversation and I will continue to provide space and room for the Holy Spirit to work in different contexts and maintain the unity of the church. I will respect different theologies, cultures and experiences and never force people to be someone different. Human force is counterproductive. Instead, we need to allow the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ to work in each one of us.

Thank you for being United Methodist. You are a part of a world-wide denomination that is growing, particularly outside the United States and is transforming lives and the world. Please pray for me and my leadership. I value your prayers and your ministry.

Keep the faith!

John

Bishop John Schol
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey