



The Messenger

January 2021

First United Methodist Church

446 Camden Avenue, Moorestown, NJ 08057

856-235-0450 www.meetwithGod.com



Worship with us Sundays at 10 am
Or join us online at meetwithGod.com



If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, The old has gone, the new is here!
2 Corinthians 5:17



ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTION

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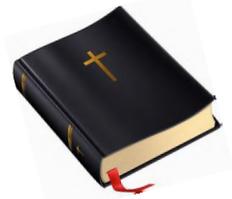


Rev. Tom Korkuch, Pastor
Kathy Clawges, Director of Youth
Norm Dorrell, Co-Music Leader
Devika Gill, Director of First Light

Rev. HeyYoung Horton, Associate Pastor
Donna Banes, Co-Music Leader
Doug Hamilton, Maintenance Coordinator
Joan Flamini, Office Administrator



From Pastor Tom



"A God of Human Ways"

Most of us are familiar with the story of Jonah and the "big fish" (the scripture doesn't mention a whale) – and how when a great storm comes up, the ship that Jonah is on begins to flounder. The crew, in a panic, discovers that Jonah is the cause of this, because he's trying to shirk his duty as a prophet – and even the pagan crew knows that's trouble. So, as a last resort, they throw Jonah overboard and all is right in the world – except, of course, for Jonah. He ends up getting swallowed by the big fish.

But God's not done with Jonah yet. God instructs the fish to "spew Jonah out on to the dry land," and he's given another chance. So, Jonah goes to Nineveh as instructed and he gives a half-hearted effort in his prophesy against the people there – hoping that they ignore him. But, lo and behold, his prophesy works and the king orders the Ninevites to repent. The king then says about their efforts to please God: "Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish."

Some of us might have our sensibilities shaken at the thought of an unchangeable, immutable God "*changing his mind*" – and yet that's exactly what God does.

The story of Jonah, of course, is not meant to be "history" as we know it, but rather a parable that tells us something about ourselves and God. In this case, God "changing his mind" may be a way of showing how God desperately wants to find a way to connect with us by acting in a very human way. God does this elsewhere as well – when God is "jealous," or "vengeful," or even "unpredictable." In Genesis, God can be heard "walking through the garden."

The point is that God comes to us in all these human ways so that God can enter into our lives and restore us to what we were meant to be. Sometimes when we pray, we ask God to take away something – "God, take away this pain, or this sadness, or this disease" – and that's good and we should keep doing that. But sometimes, I wonder if the better prayer might be, "God, please enter into this pain, or this sadness, or this disease – and help me to know that it's not so bad when you're with me."

Perhaps that's a fitting prayer as we say goodbye (and good riddance) to 2020 and welcome in 2021 with a sense of hope and promise that our battle with the pandemic will finally turn. Maybe our prayer should reflect the assurance that God has been with us and will continue to be with us as we journey through what will hopefully be the pandemic's last stand – and that this God is willing to do anything, including embracing our humanity through the incarnation, to see us through even the most difficult of circumstances.

Blessings in the New Year!



2021 Blankethon - Since we won't get to be together to make blankets for the homeless on Martin Luther King's birthday this year, we are planning a virtual Blankethon that will last several weeks of January. I will make a video tutorial to help you make your blankets at home. You can deliver completed blankets to the bin outside the Pleasant Valley entrance. Judi Angelow will go to Camden on January 16th to deliver blankets, so any items completed by then are greatly appreciated. Any blankets that arrive after the 16th will be handed out in February. Please watch the bulletin and emails for more info as we get closer, but take advantage of sales now if you can. You will need a 2-yard piece of 60" fleece for each no-sew blanket and 4 yards of flannel for sewn blankets. Thank you! Cindy Cope cindyjo5@comcast.net

Virtual Mission Trip and Faith Promise weekend 2021

In 2003, FUMC members went on a mission trip to Tlancualpican, Mexico. Headed by Lee Talbot and Harlan Baxter, a group of seven flew to Mexico City and then traveled two hours by bus to the city of Puebla where we overnighed. The following day there was some site-seeing and a wonderful lunch before leaving for the mission site. Give Ye Them to Eat (GYTTE) is a rural mission effort of the Mexican Methodist Church in conjunction with the General Board of Global Ministries of the UMC. Their compound outside Tlancualpican is called "The Farm" by most. It has grown extensively over the past 30 years and hosts many missionaries annually to participate in the work alongside the indigenous peoples. Programs are conducted in sustainable farming methods, animal husbandry, construction techniques, community health and church development. The focus of the mission is to help poor farmers better care for their families and communities, rise out of marginalization and enhance their understanding of God's love for them.

GYTTE's staff also conducts sessions for the missionaries, helping them understand the local context of this ministry, explain how national and international policies impact rural Mexico and discuss important issues (e.g. How NAFTA destroyed rural farming in Mexico and drove millions to try to emigrate to the USA.)

Our missionaries at GYTTE and their staff offer us a "Virtual mission trip" to the Farm. We will be given an itinerary for an actual 9 day visit. Current virtual trips (Zoom) are conducted with a 1 hour "orientation" where participants get to know one another and the missionaries. Then, three sessions (two hours each) are conducted virtually on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Each day includes classes and demonstrations of the things participants would be doing if they were on the Farm. Homework is assigned to help participants better understand the context of the mission efforts.

Our proposed Virtual mission trip would be led by a retired UMC pastor Marian Hartman in Camp Hill, PA, who has been to the Farm more than a dozen times. Resident missionaries Nan McCurdy and Miguel Mairena would host us at GYTTE. Because I believe it would be difficult for our working members to devote the time for three 2 hours sessions during one week, Nan and Mirian have agreed to make our trip one session on Wednesday and one on Saturday.

This would be the primary effort leading up to Faith Promise Sunday. The following agenda is proposed:

Sat Feb 6 @ 4pm – Orientation on Zoom led by Steve Feerrar and another team member

Wed 2/10 from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm – Visit Puebla and The Farm, by Mirian, Nan & staff

*Sat 2/13, 11am to 1pm – Complete tour of Farm and programs, Marian & Nan
1:30 – Virtual lunch together using GYTTE Cookbook recipes*

*Sun 2/14 @ 10am – Discussion and slide show about our virtual mission trip for Faith Promise
Sunday*

Prayer Support

A collaboration from Prayer Committee Volunteers

Submitted by Nancy Jerrell, Prayer Coordinator

**“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”
Thomas A. Dorsey (1938)**

Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand
I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home

When my way grows drear precious Lord linger near
When my light is almost gone
Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home

When the darkness appears and the night draws near
And the day is past and gone
At the river I stand
Guide my feet, hold my hand
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home

Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand
I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home