



MILLVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE DOVE

APRIL 2017

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR BRAD

Fair-Weather Faith

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” – Galatians 5:22-23, NIV

Welcome home! This is a month in which we get to say welcome back to many beloved things as we move firmly into Spring. I've been awaiting the return of long sunny days, but I've been anxiously excited to welcome back our brothers and sisters in Christ who have spent the winter months elsewhere. Our church family will soon be whole again and our area will come alive as beach season gets going. Think of all the new friends we have yet to meet and the opportunities to share Christ's love with new neighbors. Amid all this we are blessed to celebrate the unending joy of Easter. Reaching the end of Lent, we can begin to more fully embrace the gift and joy of everlasting life. As we continue to look at the Fruit of the Spirit, and this being the beauty of God's timing, we can frame all of this through faithfulness.

Having faith in the Lord or putting our faith in God is a familiar idea to almost everyone. Even if a person doesn't agree with it, they have some idea of what it means because many people have that same relationship to other things in their lives. Voting, whether it be for a person, idea, or thing, is an act of putting some amount of faith into what it is or stands for. For the sports fans out there, committing yourself to a certain team is an act of faith. Especially if you do it for years, even decades.

There's a word out there for the people we see wearing our team colors and jerseys when they're winning or in the playoffs--Fair-Weather Fan. And no one wants to be one of those.

I know plenty of people who have stuck with this team or that through some long, long stretches of not winning a championship or even getting close. I'll admit, I know a lot of people who are Philadelphia fans. What do they gain from it? Why wear the colors? Because there is a sense of devotion and community that goes beyond results or performance. They are a part of the Eagles, or the Flyers, even if they live far from the city and are lucky to go to a game once every couple of years. It's unshaking and unyielding. Imagine if we approached God, church, and our faith with that same passion!

There are a lot of things I could say about how our numbers, our team stats, need a lot of help. But I'm not going to approach the empty tomb with my short-term anxieties. Instead, I see this as a time to rally and reclaim the everlasting life of joy that Christ set before us. You are a part of Team Christ; you are on the starting lineup of Millville UMC playing for the glory of God and the spread of the Kingdom in our area. To you, Easter People, I say raise your voices and your spirits.

Go Team Go,
Pastor Brad

OUR FINANCIAL HEALTH ISTROUBLING?

Well, we are now three months into 2017, and I am somewhat concerned about our financial health. Not enough to go to our District Superintendent to plead hardship (at this time), but certainly enough to make you aware of the situation.

As I have stated in the past, this church has shown extraordinary generosity when faced with financial challenges, from taking on a full-time pastor, paying down the old Wesley House mortgage, and growing the building fund to minimize the amount we needed to borrow to build Wesley Hall. So I am prayerfully hopeful that you will rise to this challenge, and support whatever actions are within your means and talent to help overcome our problem.

At the end of March, our worship giving was more than \$5,000 under budget, and our disbursements were almost \$6,000 more than our worship giving receipts. We clearly cannot continue this trend.

Without going into the various reasons causing this situation, which I think are self-evident, I would urge you AGAIN to do the following:

- Pray for our church and church family, thanking the Lord for His many blessings, and asking for His guidance for the future.
- Join the ongoing effort to reach out to nearby communities, to make them aware of opportunities we offer for worship and fellowship.
- Consider your worship giving. Although we do not have a pledge campaign, consider your giving as a pledge to the Lord, keeping up with your commitment, and where possible, increasing it.

The Finance Committee will be meeting in May to consider our situation, and prepare recommendations to the Administrative Council.

Yours In Christ, Rich Spina

REACHING OUT (MORE AGGRESSIVELY) TO MAKE DISCIPLES FOR CHRIST

Several months ago, I made you aware that Pastor Brad and Erin are leading a team whose charter is to come up with ideas to reach out to our neighbors in the local community. The intent is to make our neighbors aware of our presence, and the opportunity to join with us in Christian fellowship and worship. Since that time, we have had a number of meetings to solidify actions on several initiatives. Those include a choir/sing-along type event with the community of Bishop's Landing, and a bulk mailing of church brochures to specific communities.

However, there has been little additional participation by church members beyond the original team. Given our uncertain financial situation, one solution to that problem is to grow our church family, and outreach is an approach that could have a significant impact on that goal. I would urge you to prayerfully consider what you could add to this important effort. We are not talking about knocking on doors, but participating in planning and conducting events to attract interest in our church. Listed below are events and other initiatives to be proposed for consideration:

- Movie night
- Pot luck dinners
- Local events
- 110th Anniversary celebration
- Day trips to various venues
 - Sight & Sound
 - New York city
 - Washington DC
 - Longwood Gardens
- Coastal Point articles
- More effective ways to follow up with visitors to our services

These are great ways to meet our neighbors and invite them into fellowship and worship. As with everything else worth doing, to make it happen takes leadership, time, and commitment. If you love our church and would like to help bring in more disciples to Christ, please see Pastor Brad or Erin to help out in any of the above items. Better yet, if you have other ideas, let us know.

Rich Spina

DRAW THE CIRCLE: THE 40-DAY PRAYER CHALLENGE

Starting on April 17th, Pastor Brad invites all of you to join with him on a 40-day prayer challenge through the season after Easter. We will be using the book Draw the Circle: The 40 Day Prayer Challenge by Mark Batterson. The joy of everlasting life in Christ doesn't end Easter morning; it's only the beginning! As we recommit ourselves to new life in Christ individually and as a church we need to be intentional in taking care of ourselves spiritually. Anyone is invited to join in on this challenge. There will be optional opportunities to meet periodically to pray and discuss our experience reading the book. Pastor Brad will be sharing reflections online throughout the 40 days to help everyone on the journey. The book costs \$8 on Amazon.com, and you can buy it yourself or have the church buy it for you. It's also available for Kindle and other digital platforms. If you'd like the church to buy the book please put the money in the offering plate either as cash in an envelope marked Prayer challenge or checks made out to Millville UMC with Prayer Challenge in the memo line. Look for the sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary today!

MEMORIAL BRICKS

It is time to order Memorial Bricks. I have a few orders, but I need a minimum of seven to place an order. If you would like to purchase a Memorial Brick for our walkway to permanently recognize someone, even yourself, the cost is only \$ 60.00 per brick. You may pick up an order form in the church or Wesley Hall.

Please contact Joe Skinner (302-732-9684) or Marilyn Ferry if you need help.

SPECIAL EVENTS

POT LUCK DINNER

TODAY Sunday, April 2nd at 4:30 PM in Wesley Hall. Everyone is welcome. Come, bring a friend and your favorite dish and enjoy the great food and fellowship.

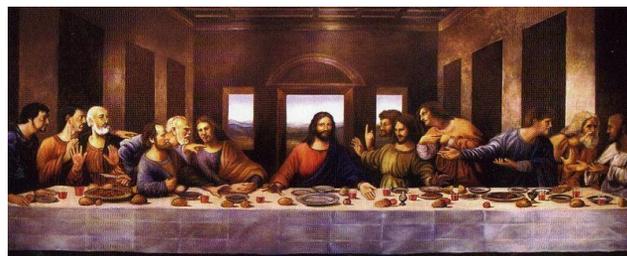
LENTEN SOUP & SALAD

We will gather for the final Soup and Salad on Wednesday, April 5th at 12 Noon at St. Ann's Catholic Church, Garfield Parkway, Bethany Beach. Worship at noon will be followed by a soup and salad luncheon. A freewill offering will be taken up during worship to assist local food banks.

AGING FAITHFULLY COOKIE BINGO

On Tuesday, April 11 at 10:00 AM we will gather for Cookie Bingo in Wesley Hall. Join us for fun & fellowship!
WELCOME BACK Brad & Nancy Bowers

LIVING LAST SUPPER



For some time now, we have worked on making sure that Jesus is at the center of Christmas and Easter as He should be. It has been forgotten by many that Easter does not revolve around bunnies, colored eggs and flowers.

Once again, we will proudly present The Living Last Supper at 7pm, Wednesday, April 12 and Thursday, April. We are blessed with men who are willing to give their time and talents to make this happen.

So!!! Having company for the week before Easter?? Well, bring them to see this performance. Tell your neighbors! Tell your friends! We truly expect a full house each night and we will be thrilled to see our church family supporting this truly wonderful performance.

Look forward to seeing you at the performance.

God Bless
Marianne Smith

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

Our local ministerium, the Christian Community of Churches, will be holding its annual Easter Sunrise Service at the Bethany Beach Bandstand at 6:00am on Sunday, April 16th. Anyone from our community is invited to attend! Pastor Brad will be participating in the service and the singing will be led by Erin Schutt on keyboard. I was amazed last year by how many people attended this service from a variety of churches in our area. There was quite a crowd there for a wonderful and worshipful way to start Easter and watch the sun rise from the boardwalk. See you there!

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE AT MILLVILLE

Sunday, April 16, 9:00 AM

UPCOMING EVENTS

CROP WALK

We walk so they don't have to!! We bring water to them so they can feed their families, as well as animals, that will also turn into a business for them. We are giving them a way to advance in so many ways. The little girls that had to get the water can now stay in school. Parents can teach their children what they are taught by volunteers from all over who come to help. Church world services brings farmers in from all over to teach and assist in each village. What a wonderful way to give a hand up and not a hand out!!

This year we will all meet at Bethany Beach Band Stand and sign in at 2:00 PM on May 7th. If you do not want to walk, then please come and sit and enjoy the entertainment. There will be a large prayer circle with prayers from the Pastors of all the churches.

I truly hope that we will have a good showing at the beach and I pray we will meet our goal.

Anyone who would like an envelope to collect, please let me know.

God Bless
Marianne Smith



AN EASTER PRAYER

Alleluia! We praise you, O God,
For the power of your saving love
Revealed in the resurrection of our Lord.
We await with gladness your new heaven
and new earth.

As you have raised Jesus from the dead
Give to us the gift of everlasting life,
That we may worship you forever;
Through Christ, our risen Savior. Amen.

