



MILLVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE DOVE

JANUARY 2017

Heigh-ho, Heigh-ho...

Having two girls in the house, both a 3 year old and a 1 1/2 year old seemingly ahead of her years, you are probably not surprised to hear that there are all kinds of Disney products spread throughout every house they occupy. Although there are a few outliers here and there, the vast, vast majority of it is princess-related books, toys, movies, clothes, etc. Emma can refer to most of them by name, so now we can cycle through them per her desires. I'm sure many of you have also lived through this stage of life one way or another, so I would hope the title of this letter rings a bell. It is the beginning of the song the Seven Dwarves sing from Snow White as they head off to work. Their song has been stuck in my head for weeks as I've been praying, wondering, and listening to God about the where I and we the church need to go and what we need to do as we shift into a new year. What I keep coming back to is the call of those dwarves to go off to work.

There was a time later in last year when I was concerned and worried about the future of our church, as many of you who care for and pay attention to the matters of our church were also. Members of our church who were part of our foundation, our workers, and our spiritual core went to be with the Lord after long struggles. A few others felt led to go elsewhere in their walks with Christ. Our attendance and giving was not as good as it once was and seemed to be heading in a direction quite ominous. I'll admit, there was a time of doubt and anxiety in the wilderness there. And then God brought His hope back into the mix in a way that no one could have forced, but that could have only happened by a movement of the Spirit. A precious member of

our lay leadership, after much time in personal prayer, reminded me of where our hope, identity, power, and everything else come from. He reminded me that we could not fix it, that it had to start with God and us following Him through it all.

So that following Sunday during worship we prayed for our church as a church. We didn't pray to fill the pews. We didn't pray for the money to start pouring in. We simply prayed, with everyone at the rail who could get there and the rest raising their hands towards the altar, that we would reclaim God as our foundation, our focus, and our hearts. We prayed that we would be obedient to the Lord and do everything we could to simply honor Him and proclaim Him to the world in all the ways God would enable us to do so. We didn't pray for immediate results and material gains; we simply prayed for God's Will and our part in it. What do you know? In the next few weeks the gaps that needed to start closing started to close. In December we had an Administrative Council meeting we weren't supposed to have to come up with a plan to get us started in 2017. You could barely fit everyone in the room! Positions that needed to be filled were filled. Decisions that needed to be made were made with compassion, discernment, and all being heard. At the end of the year our giving actually exceeded our budget by a small amount.

That was all thanks to each and every one of you answering a call from God to give of yourselves and serve sacrificially in new or deeper ways. I give thanks to God with all of my heart for each and every one of you because 2016 could have ended a lot differently if one of you shied away from answering what the Lord was putting on your heart. Now I don't say all of this

so we can all feel comfortable, pat ourselves on the back, and rest on our laurels after a job well done. Through all of you, God has blessed us with a fresh start where we can serve Him without being bound to our past or any hardships. It may not seem like a huge answer to prayer, but I assure it is because we face 2017 with hope and opportunity in and through the Lord.

So now we work! Whistling is optional, but the work, the task at hand is not. I am reminded of a popular verse, and how it is often misused, Jeremiah 29:11. In this verse God says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (NIV). You see this verse a lot on graduation cards or as an inspirational message on different things. If you take a look at the context of this verse you quickly see that this verse is part of a letter from Jeremiah to the Israelites in exile in Babylon. They weren't just trying to figure things out or find a new direction in life. These people had gone through severe hardships and were trying to make lives out of a situation beyond our imagination. They were living in a place of many gods, many distractions, and ones attempting to disguise themselves as from the Lord. Jeremiah is conveying God's true promise for them because the story He had written for them was not done or anywhere near ending.

In the same way I know God's story for Millville United Methodist Church is far from ending, and is far from being a story of tragedy. We are the people of the everlasting truth and joy and there is no tragedy for those who walk in the light of God. There is hardship, there is pain, and suffering at times, but that is not our story because God is with us now and God will be with us in the after. Right now our job is to work in the Spirit, pursue God in all things and work and look outwardly, because I know that the story of MUMC has so many more characters to it. God is waiting for us to join in the work of the Kingdom, going on already around us, and bring them in. Heigh-ho, Heigh-ho.

Joyful and Hopeful in the New Year,
Pastor Brad

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MISSIONS

Advent Giving

-American Bible Society
Bibles for Soldiers

-Food for "Feed My Sheep"
at Mariners

-Toys for a Family of 4 Children
Rent money
Gift Card for Food

-"Soul Ministry"
Homeless Shelter
in Selbyville

-Paper products for Wesley Hall

*Proverbs 28:27 He who gives to
the poor will lack nothing.*

Thank You, Thank You for being
so generous.

Ellen Hitchens,
Missions Chairman

FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR 2016

As we look back at 2016, it is abundantly clear that our church continues to be blessed in so many ways, not the least of which is the generosity of our loving church family.

At times during the year, the budgetary expectations we set at the beginning of 2016 seemed to be in jeopardy. Attendance was below that of 2016, and worship giving was on a downward trend. But while our administrative leaders showed concern, our spiritual leaders said the answer is prayer, and having faith that God will make his will known to us. And they

were right. We ended the year with worship giving above our expectations.

Before I provide some financial details, you should know that the Administrative Council has decided to combine the Finance Committee and Trustees until such time as new leadership for Finance becomes established; the committees will meet jointly until that time. I would also like to thank Larry Kaplan for his leadership of Finance during a time of significant uncertainty. His steadfast effort to lower the balance on the Wesley Hall mortgage has reduced it below \$146,000.

At the end of November, our budget receipts were \$137,843, while our budgeted expenses were \$134,437. At year-end, our worship giving was \$154,563, compared to our budget expectation of \$150,800.

Our church leadership is prayerfully confident that in 2017, our church family will continue to generously support the mission of Millville UMC as we answer God's call to make disciples for Christ.

Blessings, Rich Spina Finance Chairman (acting)

TRUSTEES 2016 SUMMARY REPORT

The Trustee Committee has been a little lax in reporting our progress in 2016 but as evidenced below we have been busy at work. We plan to report to you on a quarterly basis in 2017.

Many projects were finished in 2016, as listed below:

-We acquired and installed new sanctuary lighting; much of the cost was offset by members who made donations in the name of family members. A plaque to identify memorial gifts is being planned.

-The Garage was painted and the locks were replaced.

-The church was power washed.

-The lights around the grounds were repaired and in some instances replaced.

-The church cleaning service was adjusted and renewed.

-We approved a request by the town to permit

workers involved in their construction project to park on our lot while their addition was under construction.

-The doors in Wesley Hall were not sealed by the builder when they were installed and are showing signs of deterioration. Lowe's has agreed to replace the doors. We are still in the process of who is going to install them.

-We have requested proposal to upgrade the audio/video system in the sanctuary.

-Due to icing of the handicapped during winter storms, we are considering alternatives to the current arrangement.

Phyllis Rudd

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Our United Methodist Women are taking a winter break. We had a very enjoyable Christmas luncheon on December 7th at the Cottage Café in Bethany Beach. Lois Lathbury donated one of her beautiful Christmas pictures as a special door prize. Millie Cheek was the lucky lady to take it home.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 7th at 10:00 AM in Wesley Hall. We will be making our calendar for 2017 and planning goals and events for this year.

We encourage all ladies of our church to join us. Your ideas, help and encouragement are greatly needed and appreciated.

Happy New Year! May God grant us kind hearts and willing hands.

Sharon Graham, Chair

AGING FAITHFULLY

We will not be having any events during January or February, but we look forward to getting back together in the Spring.

Stay warm!

Brad & Nancy Bowers

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. The deadline for ordering is February 1, 2017.

SPECIAL EVENTS

YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS THIS!!

This afternoon, January 8th, at 1:30 PM Prince Georges Chapel in Dagsboro will host an “OLD CHRISTMAS MUSICAL CELEBRATION” that is free and open to the public. It will be an afternoon of seasonal music, with any donations to benefit the maintenance of the chapel. Address is 32040 Chapel Lane, Dagsboro, just off of Rt. 26, on the right coming from Millville.

LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

Law Enforcement Appreciation Day is Monday, January 9th, 2017. The day is sponsored by Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS). This is a time to show our Police that the community supports them. Please show your support by:

- Flying a blue ribbon on your mailbox.
- Shine a blue light in your window.
- Post the event wherever you can.
- Create, sign and deliver a card to our local law enforcement department.
- Most importantly, if you see a police officer, THANK a police officer.

GIDEON’S PASTOR’S BREAKFAST

On January 19th, 2017, The Gideon’s International will hold a breakfast in honor of pastors in our community. Pastors, spouses, and members of their congregation, may attend. The event will be held at the Princess Royale Resort Hotel at 9100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD, from 8:30 AM to 10:45 AM. Advance registration is required by January 13th, so please see Pastor Brad if you are interested in attending.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Christian Community of Churches (Ministerium) invites all to come together in prayer during the “WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.” The event will take place on Tuesday, January 24 at 7:00 PM at Saint Ann’s Church, 691 Garfield Parkway in Bethany Beach. It will be a Prayer Service with several local choirs participating, including Millville UMC. This is a wonderful opportunity to join together in Christian fellowship and prayer with our local community.

POT LUCK DINNER

Sunday, February 5, 4:00 PM in Wesley Hall. Everyone is welcome. Come, bring a friend and enjoy the fine food and fellowship. In March, we will have a Pot Luck/Chili Cook-Off. More information will follow. Any questions, call Elizabeth Skinner (732-9684).

DOVER DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Training will be held on Saturday, February 25, 2017. Classes are open to both Clergy and Laity. Registration Deadline: February 15, 2017. The cost is \$ 7.00 per person. Further information and Registration Forms are available in the office.