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"Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world."

-C.S. Lewis



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A monthly newsletter for the membership of Drexel Hill United Methodist Church.

December 2017

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Everyone!

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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Mary's Son

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel (which means God with us).” Matthew 1:22-23

Listen for the cries of a newborn child and the reassuring voices of concerned parents.

The scene is a stable attached to a dilapidated hotel in Bethlehem. And while the balance of the world celebrating Christmas may go to Dickens, Clement Clarke Moore, or Nieman Marcus (perish the thought) to find the iconography of Christmas, for the faithful disciples the nativity scene is at the center of Christmas. The son of Mary is born - and against the multiple sounds of a world that doesn't know - and if it does - doesn't much care, the first cries of a baby herald God's supreme intervention into this world. For Christians a picture to celebrate. For the world a puzzle, perhaps.

This scene, the birth of Mary's son, foretold in prophesy and song, is far from what was anticipated. No one knew specifically when or how God would fulfill that ancient prophecy. Still, few could have imagined that it would take the form of a vulnerable baby, born of anonymous parents turned away because "there was no room in the inn."

Great leader of the nations, Commander-in-Chief of the

armies of God's wrath or the ultimate political Overlord, religious Prophet Almighty who would uphold traditionalism - just some of the possibilities. But a baby born in poverty?

Mary's son will live his life amidst vulnerability, injustice, weakness, and death. Because he knew these things God knows us in our weakness, in our moral dilemmas, and in our lack of faith. We, in turn, see the presence of God who understands our human condition. Mary's son has bridged the gap with those who need hope, love, and compassion most. People like you and me in a world like ours. God comes to persons financially adrift and offers an anchor. God comes to those surrounded by death in Sutherland Springs, Las Vegas, and Raqqa and promises peace.

The Son of Mary suffers with us. The Son of Mary suffers in the refugee camps, beside the bed of pain, in the heart-broken who cannot find reason in life - in the experience of those who wonder whether there is any point in going on.

Hope, love, and peace; the words Christians use at Christmas seem far removed

from the experience of many in this world. But to those who can identify the Son of Mary with weakness and the parts of life when we need help most, the message is hope, love, and peace. That is surely at the root of our Christian understanding of the how and the why.

No one long believes the Christian faith holds an easy or sublime answer to all life's problems. But surely in the weakness and uncertainty of the birth in the stable God's Son, Mary's son, became for all of us one with our human condition.

We repeat at each Lord's Supper that sublime reality: we are one with God, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world. The dilemma, nevertheless, remains. Financial struggles remain. Armies march still. Our faith is challenged. But out of the stable God's certainty leads to the Savior who becomes one with us.

God bless you this Christmas, and those you love, and those they love, and those who hurt and frustrate you, and those who bring you happiness and joy, Until all the World is blessed with hope, love, and peace.

--Russell J. Atkinson

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WORSHIP NOTES

Adventus for All of Us

For those not distracted overly by the coming of Christmas, the diversity of sources from which this year's Advent lessons are drawn brings a big change from the seeming lock-step through Matthew we've experienced for the last few months.

The season of Advent – the word comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning “coming” or “visit” - begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year for Christians: the great cycle of telling the story of Jesus life, meaning, and ministry begins once more. In 2018, we'll be spending most of our time in the company of the Gospel According to Mark. But we'll see a lot of John and a bit of Matthew as well (after all, Mark's is the shortest Gospel, with just 16 chapters).



Although the secular world accustoms us to celebrating Christmas from the day after Halloween until Christmas Day, in both Christian tradition and on the Church calendar, the Christmas season lasts sundown on December 24 (Christmas Eve) through Epiphany of the Lord (January 6). You know about the four calling birds, the three French hens, and so forth; Christians celebrate the 12 days of Christmas.

December Sunday services

3 December, 1st Sunday of Advent (Communion)

Mark 13:24-37

Sermon: “The Day Will Come” *Pastor Atkinson*

10 December, 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11

Sermon: “Be Prepared” *Pastor Atkinson*

17 December, 3rd Sunday of Advent

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sermon: “Anticipation” *Pastor Atkinson*

24 December, 4th Sunday of Advent

Luke 1:26-38

Sermon: “This Pregnant Pause” *Pastor Atkinson*

24 December Christmas Eve

7 evening service

31 December, 1st Sunday of Christmastide

Christmas Breakfast in the Narthex – 9am

Sermon: “A Little Christmas Story” *Pastor Atkinson*

Carol Sing



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Creating a Congregation of Generous Disciples

Writing a Money Autobiography

Put on your most creative shoes! Following our worship service on Dec. 10, we're all invited to a simple fellowship meal in the Rainbow Room.

Oldsters, kids, and everyone in between can engage in this guided creative writing adventure! The object is to bring to our consciousness our understanding of our own behavior and feelings about money. Even if you find writing difficult, careful reflection on your life experiences with money will yield fascinating insights.

You may end up amazed at how childhood experiences with money have stuck with you. You may impress yourself with how much Biblical views of stewardship inform your current attitudes to spending and saving.

Jesus repeatedly spoke about money and challenged the disciples, the Pharisees, and the crowds to think about wealth and their relationship to it. Money issues have troubled faithful people throughout the ages. In our materialistic world it is especially important for today's Christians to examine their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in relation to money. Writing a money autobiography is one way to begin thinking about some tough questions and to grow in Christian discipleship in this significant area of life.

Yuletide Breakfast December 31st

You are most cordially invited to join Barbara Felton and Russell Atkinson for a leisurely breakfast on the Sunday between Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Serving will begin at 9am. Gather with friends from the congregation in the Narthex.



Adult Sunday School Luther's Christmas Sermon

To mark the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, during Advent, Rev. Atkinson will be offering a Sunday School program concerning Martin Luther's famous Christmas Sermon. from 9 to 9:45am each Sunday.

Hear this thoughtful and challenging medieval homily and its challenge to smug piety. Coffee and a sweet treat will accompany the conversations this Christian classic evoke

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DHUMC hosts Longest Night Service Dec. 21

So often we focus on the light, but we don't focus on the light in the darkness.

A Longest Night Service will be held in our sanctuary on Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. For more information, call Pastor Nancy Haigh Ross 267-254-0187 or the church office (610) 259-2104.

The Blue Christmas, also referred to as the Longest Night service, traditionally held on or near the winter solstice, coincides with the day when there is the shortest amount of sunlight. This year, the solstice falls on Dec. 21.

"As a culture we really have kind of forgotten why it is that cultures across the world have festivals of light this time of year," said Rev. Nancy Haigh. "It is really dark, and it's really a hard time for a lot of people. It's the end of the year, the ending of things, and there's a lot of grief in that."

"So often we focus on the light, but we don't focus on the light in the darkness," she said. "This is the only service I know of where churches acknowledge just how dark the dark is."

Blue Christmas services include an emphasis on candles, with people in the congregation invited to come forward and light a candle in memory of someone or to mark an event in their lives. Some will say words out loud, others in silent prayer. Candles are also sometimes lit as prayers or Scripture readings are recited.

For many people, the approaching Christmas holiday does not bring with it the joy and happiness that is advertised on television or in greeting cards. They may be facing a holiday after the death of a loved one or after a divorce. Perhaps they have been unable to have a child, or have suffered through an emotional trauma. Or perhaps they feel pressured and overwhelmed by holiday preparations.



In recent years, many churches have attempted to reach out to people who feel such burdens by adding Blue Christmas services to their worship offerings. These services have a more quiet, somber feel than a traditional Christmas worship service. Scripture, music and meditations or sermons focus on the comfort God offers during dark times.

"For people who are grieving or who are in some kind of pain there is so much of this forced joyfulness at Christmas," said Rev. Ross, "There is no sort of sacred place for grieving."

Rev. Ross started holding Blue Christmas services years ago while serving the First United Methodist Church in Fairless Hills, PA. She initially got the idea from the Whole People of God curriculum, which includes a litany for a Blue Christmas service.

"I was aware of how much the pastoral care intensifies in the advent season. There seemed to be this dissonance in my pastoral care and the liturgy that needed to be evident in worship around Christmas," she said. "I liked the idea of finding a liturgical piece that felt more in line with what some people are feeling."



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Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to place a poinsettia on the altar for Christmas on Sunday, Dec. 24, fill in the form below and return it with your check made payable to "DHUMC." The plants are \$10 each and orders will be taken through Dec. 10. You may place your check and order form in the offering plate, or on Rasheedah's desk in the church office. Last day to receive orders is Dec. 10.

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please have _____ poinsettia(s) placed on the altar for Christmas.

Amount enclosed \$ _____.

In **HONOR** of _____

Presented by _____

In **MEMORY** of _____

Presented by _____

_____ I will pick up my plant(s) on Christmas Eve after the 7:00 p.m. Service

_____ Please send my plant to a shut-in.

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We'll always have Paris

Pastor Russell and wife Barbara celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary with a trip to France.

On Nov. 12, the church welcomed them back with a cake and a celebration.



Photos by ALEX MULLEN

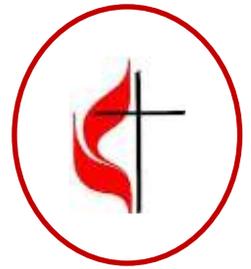
Dear congregation,

Barbara and I were most grateful for the lovely Wedding Anniversary cake you gave us on November 12! We've never had a wedding anniversary cake in the sanctuary before. Especially as we returned home after being away your kindness warmed our hearts. We are blessed to be among such thoughtful people!

Kind regards,
Russell & Barbara



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Tuesday morning of faith and Bible Study

Each Tuesday morning, from 9:30 to 11, members of our congregation get together for a Bible Study/Faith Formation Class. The dedicated participants (shown above at a recent gathering) meet in the Bohn Parlor.

9:30 - 9:45 a.m. - How goes it with your spirit?

9:45 - 10:45 a.m. - Study

10:45 - 11 a.m. - Prayer and Praise

All are welcome to join in so please be liberal with your invitations. A vital congregation needs to ponder the scriptures.

It's time for bacon, toast and the Heavenly Host

If you've got an appetite for the Word of God and a good breakfast, come on out to the Perkins Restaurant, 706 N. Lansdowne Avenue in Drexel Hill (just a short hop from the high school) the first Thursday of each month. Led by Pastor Russell, you will eat eggs and hear about Ecclesiastes, partake of tea and the Pentateuch, bagels and Bible! The devotional breakfast begins at 9 a.m. The next breakfast will take place Thursday, Dec. 7. Come out for breakfast, a short devotional, and fellowship.



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Nursery School News

This month, the children are so excited to bring their favorite teddy bears to school and get their picture taken with Mrs. Claus. They have been very busy making beautiful holiday decorations and learning new songs.

In January, the nursery school staff will start introducing the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make. The children will learn about how animals protect themselves in winter and how we protect ourselves. Stay warm!

The following thank you note was received at Drexel Hill United Methodist Church:



Dear Church Family,

It has meant so very much to me to have your prayers during my illness. I have felt the strength and warmth of each one. Pastor Russell and Rev. Nancy's visits also warmed my heart. The very beautiful Prayer shawl that came to me with love and prayers was, and continues to be, a constant blessing. The flowers from Church that came with your prayers brightened me and my room. All the beautiful cards have brought each one of you close and reminded me of your love and prayers. Each and every one of these acts of kindness have brought our Good Lord so close. I know He always holds us close and gives us the healing, strength and courage we need. I pray the Good Lord blesses each and every one of you.

Fran



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BLAST FROM THE PAST

Finding our roots at Mt. Pleasant Church, Part 2

(Information compiled from A History of the Drexel Hill United Methodist Church)

By 1900, owing to a severe depression that closed many of the local mills, Mount Pleasant Church, which had been serving many Upper Darby's Methodists, was forced to close its doors.

In September, 1922, two residents, James Shipley and Miss Ford, a school teacher from Garrettford, felt there was a need for a Sunday school in the area and decided to use the now-closed Mount Pleasant Church building. They started with 12 children. With the arrival of Norman Craig, a student at the Philadelphia School of the Bible, it was decided to reopen the church in October and 200 invitations were sent out to the neighborhood.

The first church service had 35 in attendance but grew to about 60 congregants. The church was accepted into the Conference in the South District and the members refurbished it with electric lights, wiring, paint and furniture.

By 1923, members of Broad Street Methodist Church in Philadelphia were forced to relocate and were invited to worship at Mount Pleasant. Broad Street congregants were familiar with Drexel Hill, where they had often spent their summers.

After several visits and joint conferences between the leaders of both churches, the two congregations merged, becoming Broad Memorial Church. Membership consisted of 37 members of Broad Street Church in Philadelphia and 35 members of Mount Pleasant.

On Oct. 28, 1923, Rally Day services were held at Mount Pleasant Chapel, the congregation processed to the new church located at Burmont Road and Bliss Avenue (now School Lane) where the corner stone for the new Broad Street Memorial Church was laid. The cornerstone contained an old hymnal from Mt. Pleasant, a Bible presented by Emil and Elizabeth Bohn, a history of the church, a copy of the *Upper Darby Herald*, a copy of the *Chester Times*, a program with a list of members, some coins and other personal items.

The new church, also known as McBurney Chapel, was completed in 1924, with the dedication ceremony held Oct. 28. The ceremony included the closing of doors of Mount Pleasant and the entire congregation and Sunday school marching up Burmont Road to the new church singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers."



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IN THE COMMUNITY

21 families provided Thanksgiving meals thanks to DHUMC

Drexel Hill United Methodist Church participated in its annual Thanksgiving basket outreach project, preparing food baskets for 21 needy families in the Upper Darby School District. Volunteers met the Sunday before Thanksgiving to pack the baskets, which were picked up the next day by district social workers for distribution.

“The Outreach Committee is so thrilled to thank everyone for your wonderful contributions of money, food, time and effort to this year’s Thanksgiving Food Baskets,” stated Outreach Committee Chairman Helen Campbell. “This is a longstanding project of our church which is greatly appreciated by the social workers and the families.”



Photos by DAVID BJORKGREN



In addition to the generous donations of money and food from the church community, the Nursery School and Boy Scouts also made large contributions to this year’s food baskets. A big thank you to everyone for making Thanksgiving a little brighter for 21 local families.



Each basket contained 5 pounds of potatoes, 4 pounds of sweet potatoes, 2-1/2 pounds of onions and carrots, celery, as well as 8 apples, 8 oranges, 2 or three cans of peas, corn and string beans, cranberry sauce, gravy, elbow macaroni, stuffing mix, pancake mix, syrup and cereal bars. Each family was also given a \$20 gift card. A short video of the packing can be found on the church Facebook page, www.facebook.com/drexelhillmethodists/.

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‘Grab, Gather, Grow’ coming to DHUMC

Our congregation is going to have a transformative opportunity!

Beginning in January, we will try a simple plan to get the Word outside our walls. We will attempt this by forming community groups—a fresh strategy from Jim and Jennifer Cowart, authors of *Grab, Gather, Grow*.

Here’s the question – could you *Grab* a DVD from a table at church? Could you *Gather* some neighbors or non-church friends for coffee and dessert at your house? Could you imagine how people can *Grow* by sharing in this way?

This is not difficult. This program is incredibly simple. This idea is stupendously elementary. It can work! With your participation.

Contact Rev. Atkinson pastor@dhum.org or [\(610\)259-2104](tel:6102592104) for more details.

Scout food drive a big success this year

Cub Scout Pack 92, chartered through Drexel Hill United Methodist Church, recently collected 3,000 separate food items through the annual Scouting for Food project. The food was donated to the Upper Darby Food Bank, located at Community Baptist Church, 7766 Wayne Ave (at Pennock Ave) in Upper Darby. On Nov. 11, local Scouts picked up food bags which were distributed in the local neighborhoods. The Scouts collected the donated food on Nov. 18 and took it to the Food Bank. Congratulations to Pack 92 for its outstanding efforts this year.

Members of Cub Scout Pack 92 pose for a photo outside the Upper Darby Food Bank Nov. 18 after delivering 3,000 food items to the pantry.



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Photos by HELEN CAMPBELL

A short video about the Upper Darby Food Bank and the food drive can be seen at the church's Facebook page. Just go to www.facebook.com/drexelhillmetho dists/.



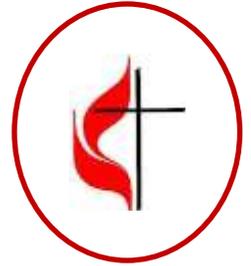
At left, one of the Scouts carries a bag of donated food. Above, Scouts bring the food to Drexel Hill United Methodist Church for sorting and packing.



Above, Scouts and adult volunteers inside Drexel Hill United Methodist Church organize and pack the food. At right, the food is loaded on to a truck for delivery to Community Baptist Church in Upper Darby.



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Once a month, on a Sunday afternoon (usually the day after our monthly RSC luncheon on Saturday, sandwiches and snacks are collected for those in Philadelphia having a tough time and delivered to them at Aviator Park across from the Franklin Institute. The Open Church On the Parkway visit includes a small worship service. Volunteers are welcome to join Pastor Russell for the next visit, scheduled for Dec. 24. If you'd like to make difference in the lives of others, please contact Pastor Atkinson.



There will be NO RSC luncheon in December but the lunches will continue during the fourth Saturday of January, on Jan. 27, 2018, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Rainbow Room (Fellowship Hall). The Project Reach Serve Care program provides a free hot catered lunch and friendly fellowship, to anyone in the community

But wait...there's more coming up from Outreach

Outreach is also collecting shoeboxes for its annual "Be an Angel" Project at Christmas. The shoeboxes can be left in the Narthex on the shelves near the food collection bins. The shoeboxes will be filled with small items for children in need. Donated gifts for the boxes will be accepted until Dec. 17, when the boxes will be wrapped for pick up the next day. Please see Helen Campbell for more information.



And remember, you can bring a non-perishable food donation for the Upper Darby Food Cupboard any and all Sundays. Items that children can pack in their lunches are especially welcome.





(The following article comes from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference website)



At East Stroudsburg UMC's weekly community dinners, coordinator Ana Price (center) teaches young volunteers how to serve the church's hungry neighbors.

Serving the Methodist Meal: Churches that feed their communities

Story and Photos by John W. Coleman

It is commonly known that Methodists believe in feeding folks. At church meetings, coffee hours, event receptions and other meet-and-greet gatherings, we become virtual “foodies,” serving snacks, sweets or entire suppers to whosoever will come.

But it's when we feed our communities—at breakfast buffets, soup kitchens, weekly or monthly dinners and holiday feasts—that serving meals becomes key to our mission.

[SEE MORE](#)



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AROUND THE WORLD

(The following article comes from the People of the United Methodist Church website)



Photo by Erik Alsgaard, the Baltimore-Washington Conference

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung speaks with Rebecca Cole, director of grassroots organizing at the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, at the three-day “Peace on the Korean Peninsula” seminar held at the United Methodist Building in Washington, Nov. 13-15. Korean-American United Methodists added their voices to the growing number of people calling on the U.S. government to tone down the rhetoric on North Korea.

Joining the call for peace on Korean Peninsula

By Erik Alsgaard

Nov. 16, 2017 | WASHINGTON (UMNS)

Korean-American United Methodists are adding their voices to the growing number of people calling on the U.S. government to tone down the rhetoric on North Korea.

At a three-day seminar in Washington, Nov. 13-15, more than 60 people came together to learn about the situation from policy experts and to engage their lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

“Peace on the Korean Peninsula,” held at the United Methodist Building, was co-sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and the Korea Peace Committee. During the seminar, participants engaged in Bible study on peacebuilding, learned how to be a faithful advocate, discussed nuclear security in Korea and discussed the current state of relations between North Korea, South Korea and the United States. [SEE MORE](#)



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December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2 CHARGE CONFERENCE CUB SCOUT CHURCH CLEANUP
3 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT	4 SPRC Meeting, 7 p.m., Church office	5 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	6 CUB SCOUTS	7	8	9 HANGING OF THE GREENS RR Society
10 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT STEWARDSHIP LUNCH	11	12	13 CUB SCOUTS	14 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	15	16 POINTSETTIA SETUP
17 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT ANGEL GIFTS DUE, BOXES WRAPPED	18 ANGEL BOXES PICKED UP	19	20 CUB SCOUTS XMAS PARTY	21 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	22	23 NO RSC LUNCH
24 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 7 PM	25 CHRISTMAS DAY!	26	27 CUB SCOUTS	28 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	29	30

www.Printable2017Calendars.com • www.FreePrintable.net

