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PASTOR'S MESSAGE



"So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!"

*2 Corinthians 5:17
Common English Bible
(CEB)*

Walking Humbly into 2017, But Walking, Nevertheless

When I was in high school I found comfort in the Mark Twain quote, "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow." These days, though, I find safety in the ever greater number of self-confessed delayers I discover. Research reveals that about a quarter of us self-identify as chronic procrastinators. Add this to the prevailing mood of burnout, being identified in so many professions today, and it is probably time to come to a fuller understanding of how we can get things done.

In 1920s Vienna, Russian psychologist Bluma Zeigarnik observed that waiters in a café easily recalled the details of a bill before the customer paid, but if questioned about the bill after it was settled, they strained to remember anything at all about what had been ordered. Following thorough experiments, she concluded that the completion of a job provides us closure, freeing us from the worry that picks at our nerves while the job remains unfinished. The waiters' trick was to keep "spinning the plates" of the open orders in their heads while letting those which were completed "fall." Once completed an order could be forgotten . . . so why not get it over with? This commonly felt fretfulness to carry a task through to completion is known in the psychology business as the Zeigarnik effect. The best way to get something done is to begin. This motivational wisdom works not only for getting out of bed or completing the household chores; in my case as a preacher it works in preparing a sermon – I must put pen to paper.

Not getting started can have harmful effects on communities as well as individuals. Getting started was at the heart of Martin Luther King's nonviolent strategy for changing our nation from the first small step of a bus boycott. "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." Reverend King admonished, "How soon 'not now' becomes 'never.'"

JANUARY

Ongoing activities:

Boy Scouts

Mondays, Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Cub Scouts

Wednesdays, Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25, 7 to 9 p.m.

Choir practice

Thursdays, Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26, 7:30 to 9 p.m., sanctuary

Joyful Ringers

Sundays, Jan. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 9:30 to 9:50 a.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 3

Finance committee meeting, 7 p.m., church office

Monday, Jan. 9

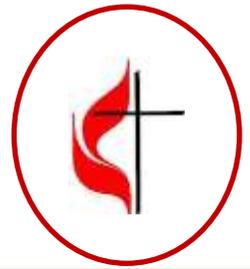
Administrative Council meeting, 7 p.m., Bohn Parlor

Monday, Jan. 16

Martin Luther King Day

Nursery school closed for holiday

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(continued) Advancing with the hope that others will follow can be a distinctly lonely business, but God knows it is often required of us. As the psychologist and philosopher William James put it, “Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task.”

The New Year is upon us and we may have many unfinished tasks at school, at home, at church, and at work. At this time of the year the words of the old General Confession are probably closer to our experience than at any other :

*We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;
And we have done those things which we ought not to have done;*

What tasks have we completed here at Drexel Hill United Methodist Church? We can stop thinking about them now. Are we keeping proper track of our ongoing projects? It is time to make a proper evaluation of what we are doing so that we may begin new tasks.

For 2017, let us all pray that procrastination not be the thief of our time. Let us seek God’s good guidance in granting that each day we act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly in faith.

A blessed New Year to you all,

Russell J. Atkinson

WORSHIP NOTES



After the Ecstasy comes the Laundry

Epiphany (also known as “Theophany,” “Three Kings’ Day,” or in Spanish, “*Los Tres Reyes Magos*”), is a Christian feast day that celebrates the revelation of God in his Son as human in Jesus Christ. In The United Methodist Church, the day commemorates principally (but not solely) the visit of the Magi to the Christ child, and thus Jesus’ physical manifestation to all the world. At least as important though, our Epiphany celebration, also initiates the new liturgical season of Epiphanytide, counted out by its Sundays after Epiphany.

JANUARY

Saturday, Jan. 21

Pinewood Derby, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., gymnasium and Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, Jan. 24

Trustees meeting, 7 p.m., church office

Saturday, Jan. 28

Project RSC Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fellowship Hall

ALERTS

Check out our web page at www.dhum.org for updated information on events and activities happening in your church community.

We welcome your feedback and ideas. Drop us an email at office@dhum.org and let us know what you think about the newsletter and about how we can make it better. Have something that you would like to include in the February edition? Send us an email with the information at office@dhum.org.

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(cont.) The traditional date for the feast is Jan. 6. However, since 1970, the celebration is held in some countries on the Sunday after Jan. 1. The United Methodist Church allows for the celebration of days like these – not fixed to a Sunday – to be celebrated on the nearest Sunday beforehand. In many Western Christian Churches, the eve of the feast is celebrated as Twelfth Night (the last night of Christmas).

The traditional Church calendar of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany has been pushed around pretty substantially by our secular priorities, but the ministry remains the same: the season of Epiphany is about getting the Word out to the world, and the Word is Love.



The Work of Christmas

by Howard Thurman

*When the star in the sky is gone,
When the Kings and Princes are
home,*

*When the shepherds are back with
their flocks,*

The work of Christmas begins.

To find the lost,

To heal the broken,

To feed the hungry

To release the prisoner,

To teach the nations,

To bring Christ to all,

To make music in the heart.

January services

1 January Epiphany Sunday

Isaiah 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7, 10-14 (UMH 795); Ephesians 3:1-12; Mt 2:1-12

Sermon: “The Mysterious Inclusion”

Communion Musical Setting C

8 January Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9; Ps 29 (UMH 761); Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

Sermon: “A Crisis of Remorse” (*note: A playful sermon that is only 83% true*)

15 January Second Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1-7; Ps 40:1-11 (UMH 774); 1 Cor 1:1-9; Jn 1:29-42

Sermon: “Control and Freedom”

22 January Third Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 9:1-4; Ps 27:1, 4-9 (UMH 758); 1 Corinthians 1:10-18;

Matthew 4:12-23

Sermon: “The Sharp Demands of Discipleship”

29 January Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8; Ps 15 (UMH 747); 1 Cor 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

Sermon “Be Happy”

The First English Prayer Book, 1549

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IN THE COMMUNITY

Donations bring Christmas joy to 31 children



The Drexel Hill United Methodist Church, working with its Outreach Committee, provided Christmas presents to 31 students from the Upper Darby School District.

Shoeboxes were filled with small, useful and fun gifts, gift cards and candy. We want to thank everyone who took a shoebox and filled it so lovingly. We want to thank Nancy Agneta and Barbara Bellini for organizing and overseeing this project.

Thanks also go to Jean and Curly Schafer and Fran Roberts for their kind donations that enabled us to provide 2 extra gift cards to every box. Hopefully, because of us, 31 children had a little happier Christmas. Many of the kids were teenagers who are often overlooked.

We look forward to doing it again next year. Thank you everyone who had a part in making this project so wonderful.

Volunteer efforts from church members, coordinated by our Outreach Committee, made it possible for 31 Upper Darby School District students to have a merry Christmas this season. Some of the volunteers are shown above with the beautifully wrapped presents. The "Be An Angel" project kicked off Dec. 4 when church members were asked to take an angel from the tree in the Narthex containing information about a particular child. Volunteers bought gifts and placed them in an unwrapped shoebox which was then returned for gift wrapping and delivery to the child in time for Christmas Day.

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A BLAST FROM THE PAST



The reprinted letter below is from Elsie Schilpp, who taught the Cradle Roll Department of the Sunday School at the church from 1940 through 1951.

It can be found on page 135 of "A History of Drexel Hill United Methodist Church."

LOOKING BACK

During the years 1940 through 1951, I was a teacher in the Cradle Roll Department of our Church. After taking my daughter to Sunday School for several weeks, I was asked by the Superintendent, Mildred Weer, if I would like to teach in the department.

I was very much impressed with what I saw on Sunday mornings and the children were orderly and well controlled. I immediately joined the other teachers and my association with them lasted eleven years. Mildred called a meeting once a month, and there we discussed our lessons for the following weeks and how to teach the children Bible stories on a level that they could understand.

We had an average of fifty to sixty children there every Sunday morning. From memory, here are the names of some of the teachers I worked with: Verna Harner, Dot Harner, Gladys Hugo, Dorothea Antis, Mary Caters on, Peg Haring, Betty Poulterer, Ann Holmes, Betty Harkins, Gertrude Phillips, Violet Artin, and Miriam Maxey (Cassel) our pianist.

This was a great experience in my life, and I have always felt so fortunate that I was given the opportunity of lending my help when it was needed. Our Sunday School over the years has been and still is well run by very capable and dedicated teachers.

May God bless them all for the good Christian work they are doing.

Elsie Schilpp

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AROUND THE REGION

Southeast District Racial Dialogue: Becoming the Beloved Community

Today, more than ever, our churches need to be places where people can come together and find space for respectful dialogue with one another. The Southeast District will be offering opportunities throughout 2017 for clergy and laity to engage in vital conversations.

On Monday, Jan. 16, Martin Luther King Day, members of the Drexel Hill United Methodist congregation are encouraged to attend the Southeast District Night of Dialogue, 7 to 9 p.m., at the Church of the Open Door, 210 S. Broad St. in Kennett Square. Refreshments will be provided.

Click on this link to register:

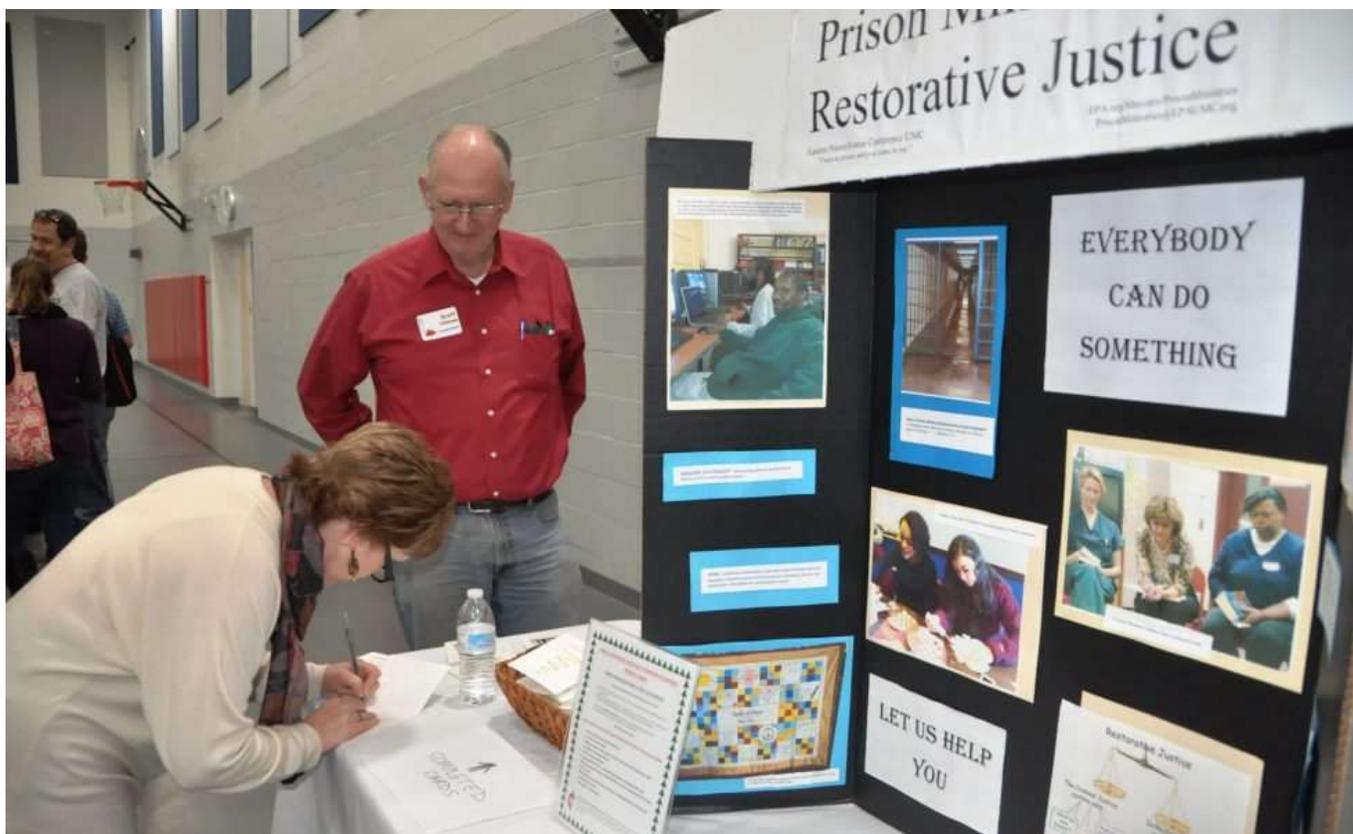
<https://southeastdistrictepa.churchcenteronline.com/registrations/events/46282>

The evening will be an opportunity to grow in relationship with clergy and laity throughout the district. We will take time to hear each other's stories and learn from one another. We will also discern ways that we can help our communities have vital conversations with one another and how to build bridges in our communities. District Superintendent DawnTaylor-Storm will lead the devotion for the evening; Rev. Lydia Munoz will be lead facilitator for the dialogue. Pastor Russell Atkinson will be attending.

These conversations are vital to our ongoing journey to become the beloved community that God intends for us. The resources we use during the evening will be able to be reproduced for use in each local church.



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



Christmas cards for inmates inspires gratitude

“Thanks to all of you who shared God’s love with inmates through a signed Christmas card this year,” writes Marilyn Schneider, leader of the conference Prison & Restorative Justice Ministries Team. “To those who are incarcerated, this is a powerful message of caring. At a time when many feel very much alone, it is a reminder that they are a beloved child of God. May this ministry continue to grow and touch hearts behind prison walls.”

Schneider, a candidate for Deacon, extends her small team’s gratitude to the many people across the conference who shared the spirit of Christmas with some folks who really need it. All those who penned

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(continued) personal greetings to prison inmates helped the team to deliver more than 8,000 cards to 10 correctional facilities in Eastern PA. That's 3,000 more cards than they delivered in 2015.

That feat is so impressive that it drew the interest of United Methodist Communications, which sent a production team here in early November to video record interviews and scenes of the prison ministries team sorting through signed cards. UMCom produced a four-minute video about the popular outreach ministry, titled "[Church Christmas Cards Show Care to Prisoners](#)." It can be viewed and downloaded on the denomination's [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

"Who would have thought God would use this simple gesture to encourage someone unknown in such a mighty way," wrote team member Linda Van Til, a Certified Lay Minister from Lancaster in a report to the Southwest District. "We say, when it comes to Prison and Restorative Justice Ministries, 'Everybody really can do something.'"

She recalls the Christmas project's start in November 2014 at Hopewell UMC's annual Planting Seeds for Ministry event. They collected over 500 signed cards that year. "In 2015 we decided to invite all churches in the conference to participate," she said. "We were able to collect over 5,000 cards to distribute to Lancaster, Berks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery county prisons and to Curran-Fromhold in Philadelphia. Some facilities received enough cards for all inmates that year. Our team was overjoyed at the expression of love shown, which encouraged us to continue in 2016."

Not all the 8,030 cards collected this year came from UM churches, as several Lutheran and Episcopal churches joined in also. Additional receiving institutions included the Lehigh County Prison, the Federal Immigrant Family Detention Center in Berks County, SCI Graterford State Prison and the Artworks Program for Juvenile Offenders.

Van Til recalls a letter written by a former inmate who described what receiving such a small gesture of love meant to her. "'At Bible study one day the chaplain handed each of us a personalized card,' she wrote. 'My card said, 'To an unknown friend, Joy to the World, the Lord is come!'' It has been years

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(continued) since I received that card, but I still get it out to read each year, to remind me (that) someone who didn't know me cared enough to send me a card of encouragement.”

In the video, the Rev. Patrick Welch, pastor of Friendship UMC, says, “Sometimes it's the only piece of mail that they get for years and years because their families disown them. That's what we're trying to do. Make sure they know they're loved.”

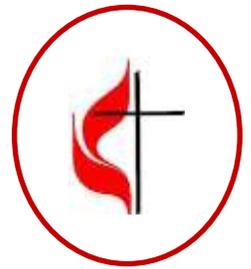
Scott Johnson, of Royersford UMC, adds, “In Matthew 25, Jesus calls us to visit those who are in prison but not everyone is ready to go inside. This is a way for people to go inside in a virtual way and touch people's hearts.”



And Linda McCrae, of West Lawn UMC, recalls talking to one member of her church who quietly shared her own gratitude: “I'm so glad you're doing this,” she said. “My son is in prison in another state, and I wish someone was doing this for him.”

“We have many families in our congregations affected by the prison system,” Van Til explained in her report. “People have told us they wish their relatives who are currently serving time could receive a word of encouragement from someone. Hopefully, that will become a reality someday as God continues to multiple this fruit.”

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(continued) Indeed, the fruit may soon be multiplied beyond our conference, as the New York Annual Conference was also inspired by news of this ministry. A conference leader contacted Schneider in October seeking permission to replicate the project, as well as the variety of online, downloadable Christmas cards.

“We saw a description of your Christmas Cards for Prisoners project in the UMNS (UM News Service) newsletter, and were so impressed!” wrote Sheila Peiffer, coordinator of Social Justice Organizing, Engagement and Advocacy for the conference. “I hope you are a believer in the expression that imitation is the best form of flattery, because we would like to use this idea in our conference. We plan to try to get something off the ground this year in a small way and then be ready for a much broader effort next year.”

Anyone interested in learning more or serving on the conference Prison and Restorative Justice Ministries Team can contact Marilyn Schneider at mschneider2222@gmail.com or Linda Van Til at raven303@ptd.net.

AROUND THE WORLD

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



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Ubuntu journey takes women into community

By Phileas Jusu

Dec. 16, 2016 | KABALA, Sierra Leone (UMNS)

Carrying large plastic bags filled with Christmas gifts, the United Methodist Women of Sierra Leone went on an Ubuntu journey Dec. 7-11 that led them through rural communities to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

“Ubuntu” is a Zulu word meaning, “I am because you are,” explained Beatrice Fofanah, outgoing coordinator of the group.

The women meet annually and this year were in Kabala, northern Sierra Leone.

“About seven years ago, when I was Women’s Coordinator, I attended an Ubuntu program in America. I was so moved by the impact of the Ubuntu journey that I decided to replicate it into the women’s program in Sierra Leone,” Fofanah said.

Ubuntu has continued to be a significant program of the women’s annual convention for the past seven years with many success stories, she said.

“The women go into the communities and, for a few hours, live and work with the community,” said Ethel Sandy, the new Women’s Coordinator. “In addition to their prayer ministry, social interaction, they also take gifts with them — clothes, shoes, toiletries, etc. And they take along a lot of love and warmth to the community they visit.”

Before beginning the Ubuntu journey, Elmira Sellu, a United Methodist Women’s missionary, talked to the women about encountering people from different cultures with different beliefs. She told them to listen and learn.

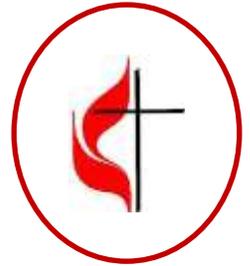
Kabala is predominantly Muslim and a new mission area for The United Methodist Church.

The first stop for the women was at the Badembaya Community at the home of two teenage mothers and a high school graduate awaiting results of her West African Senior School Certificate exam. The women prayed with the young women and encouraged them to return to school. Other members of the team visited in other homes.

After the visits, the women talked about their experiences.

They talked about the high level of religious tolerance with Muslims joining hands to pray with Christians and making prayer requests for their loved ones.

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(continued) “Yesterday, we had Muslims asking for prayers for a pregnant woman; we had Muslims asking us to revisit their homes and talk to their families; we had a child bride whose parents were encouraged to make sure that her education continues even after the marriage,” Sandy said.

The women have helped fund education for children whose parents could not afford to send them to school.

Nancy Kamara, 35, was at the Kabala meeting and talked about how the group helped her.

“Before I met the women in 2011, I was teaching, unpaid and unnoticed at United Methodist Primary School at Waima,” she said. Now she is in her third and final year to earn a teacher’s certificate because a family agreed to sponsor her for a year.

Sandy said over the years, the women have looked at governance issues that affect the quality of life of women across the country.

“We are part of the women’s rights declaration that virtually forced parliament to make a decision,” she said.

“We worked with other groups out of The United Methodist Church — the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, the Women’s Network, and the Women’s Forum. And together, we do advocacy for women and children.”

Jusu is director of communications for The United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone. News media contact: Vicki Brown at (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.