



MINISTRY@DHUMC



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

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Editor

David Bjorkgren

Photographer

Everyone!

Contributing Writers

Everyone!

Circulation

Rasheedah Abdullah

Submissions

Email David Bjorkgren at dbjorkgren50@gmail.com no later than the third Sunday of each month to have items included in the newsletter.

Information

Website: www.dhum.org. Visit often for updates on church activities.

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/drexelhillmethodists

Church office:

Rasheedah Abdullah,
Administrative Assistant
610-259-2104
office@dhum.org

Pastor Russell Atkinson
pastor@dhum.org

“Whatever you do or dream you can do — begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it”. — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Resolution and Commitment

"I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low by thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thou art mine and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth let it be ratified in heaven. Amen."

Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

By Russell J. Atkinson

You can't escape some things. Your only options are to address them, endure them, or perhaps submit to them: a reckless driver, falling out of a boat, an intruder in the house.

Then there are those understated facets of our days; those that do not immediately threaten life and limb – the half-pound box of cream puffs, for example (I'll just have one more), or the cigarettes (I'm too old to change).

Anton Chekhov famously said, "Any idiot can face a crisis! It's the day to day living that really wears you down!" A moment of fright is much simpler to endure than a lifetime of subtle distractions.

In addressing the mighty challenge of the not imperative it seems we have few arrows in our constitutional quiver. One of them is commitment. Now researchers are finding that, as we have known for millennia, commitment is the secret of success. Yet, as the New Year begins, hundreds of millions around the planet will venture down a well-traveled path paved with bold and

sometimes hastily conceived New Years' resolutions.

Good luck, I say. Though over the long haul do we have what it takes – can we commit?

According to a 1997 University of Washington survey, 63 percent of the people questioned were still keeping their number one New Year's resolution two months later. The study, conducted by Elizabeth Miller, a doctoral candidate in psychology at the time, and Alan Marlatt, then director of the university's Addictive Behaviors Research Center, sought to understand the factors that best predict success in keeping New Year's resolutions. The study was useful, for apparently, little is known about the process by which people make successful behavior changes.

Still, I couldn't help but think that the classical Church community might have provided important data.

The Church has been concerned with resolution and commitment for quite some time now. The Church's ancient formula includes preparation (catechesis or confirmation), public declaration

and affirmation, and a supportive community of fellow pilgrims.

Living within a community such as this puts us in an enviable position with regard to the other challenges of life. As Ms. Miller concludes, "The keys to making a successful resolution are a person's confidence that he or she can make the behavior change and the commitment to making that change."

As we hold each other in the love and concern of Christian discipleship we are providing the setting for both confidence and commitment.

I'm looking forward to another year of shared resolution and shared commitment with the congregation of Drexel Hill United Methodist Church.

Together, we will see 2018 as another opportunity to love God and neighbor. As John Wesley so clearly offered in the prayer above – whether it be with God, spouse, child, fellow disciple, or neighbor – the "Thou art mine, and I am thine" commitment makes all the difference.

A happy and blessed 2018 to you all,

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WORSHIP NOTES

“God of gold, we seek your glory: the richness that transforms our drabness into color, and brightens our dullness with vibrant light; your wonder and joy at the heart of all life. God of incense, we offer you our prayer: our spoken and unspeakable longings, our questioning of truth, our search for your mystery deep with. God of myrrh, we cry out to you in our sufferings: the pain of all our rejections and bereavements, our baffled despair at undeserved suffering, our rage at continuing injustice; and we embrace you, God-with-us, in our wealth, in our yearning, in our anger and loss.”

Jan Berry, Shine On, Star of Bethlehem

Marking traditions in the Epiphany season

Originating in the Eastern Church, Epiphany celebrates the manifestation, “showing forth” of God’s salvation to the Gentiles.

In Matthew’s gospel, we learn that early visitors to the Christ child were magi, who probably traveled from Persia (contemporary Iran) to visit Jesus sometime after his first birthday. Later in history, the tradition of the traveling kings merged with the Western celebration of Christmas based on Luke’s narrative. Thus, the Twelve Days of Christmas emerged as the season of the Nativity, beginning with Christmas Eve and Jesus’ birth, and ending with Epiphany—the showing of God’s glory to the world. ‘

As Jesus is the “light to the Gentiles,” so Epiphany is a celebration rich in symbolism that includes light, incense, and gift giving.

As a celebration in the Church, Epiphany is actually older than Christmas! It has been celebrated on Jan. 6 for centuries, but as a concession to our very secular lives, our United Methodist calendars annually shift our observance to the nearest Sunday before that date.

Epiphany invites families to participate in rich, imaginative, and playful rituals. The entire Epiphany of

the Lord story is found in Matthew 2:1-12. With a little planning, you can incorporate a number of delightful traditions into your family celebrations (children or childlike adults are essential too).

Here is a wonderful little observance of the season that you could co-opt for your home:

I spent Epiphany in a little town in eastern Bavaria in 1992. Though the season was cool, damp, and dim the townspeople made merry parties in their homes.



In Southern Germany, and in Austria, you will find Sternsinger (Star Singers). Children in groups of three dress up as the Magi and sing Christmas Carols door to door. After singing, the children will write the initials on a doorframe in exchange for either a donation to a charity... or for cookies.

Walking from one gathering to the next, I noticed the lintel above each front door had chalk marks: 19 + C + M + B + 92. In some European homes, it is customary at Epiphany to mark the lintel above doorways with symbols of blessing.



A typical “C+M+B blessing” inscription over a house entry door in Bavaria.

PHOTO: Wikimedia Commons

You might invite your children (or convince your parents) to mark your own front door with these symbols: the date, the initials of the Magi—Casper, Melchior, and Balthasar (names and number are not found in the bible story, by the way, but come to us through tradition), and four crosses. Order these symbols in the following way, 20 + C + M + B + 18 (current year), with the four crosses representing the four seasons.

In the New Year, this marking serves as a blessing over the entire household. Be artistic and creative. The marking may be made with chalk or on a piece of cardboard that has been decorated with colored markers and designs.

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Church Membership

We're Bound in God's Far Purpose

“Not alone we conquer, not alone we fall; in each loss or triumph lose or triumph all. Bound by God’s far purpose in one living whole, move we on together to the shining goal.”

*Frederick Lucian Hosmer,
1908*

Have you considered joining Drexel Hill United Methodist Church? We would love to count you with us.

If you have been attending Drexel Hill Church for a while and would now like to consider membership, then a discussion group with you in mind will be meeting Sundays, Jan. 7, 14, and 21, 9 a.m., in the Pastor’s Study. Make your interest known to Mr. Atkinson.

And for those of you who have been attending for years without joining, please inform Mr. Atkinson – there is a way for your name to quietly slide onto the church rolls.

By God’s good blessing, we have been put here together to share this time and place.

We would rejoice to have you join.

Sharing good news through good deeds—Churches celebrate Advent

BY JOHN COLEMAN

The Christian season of Advent that culminates in Christmas is such a wondrous time in the lives of many churches. Throughout December, churches across the Eastern PA Conference have been:

- performing in Christmas pageants, parades cantatas and concerts, including Handel’s Messiah;
- staging live nativity scenes and singing carols in their communities;
- hanging greens, decorating trees and beautifying their buildings and grounds;
- hosting special community lunches and dinners and special mission outreach events;
- making, buying and sharing gifts, like Angel Tree presents for children of incarcerated parents;
- joining in Advent worship services and Bible studies;
- and even offering Quiet Christmas or Blue Christmas services for persons needing to welcome Christ’s birth and healing presence in the midst of their grief over profound regrets or loved ones they have lost.

Whether joyous or contemplative, the church events and activities preceding Christmas Eve’s candlelight services seem to fill our calendars and our region like the host of heaven’s angels filled the silent night sky over two millennia ago with songs to herald the miraculous birth of a savior. And like the angels, our churches have been busy sharing messages of hope, ministries of hospitality and a mission to help others know and experience the love and liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.



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First-ever Longest Night service brings light to darkness



At left, Rev. Nancy Haigh-Ross leads The Longest Night service Dec. 21 at Drexel Hill United Methodist Church. The service included Scripture readings, a candle lighting, hymns, prayers and a brief message. Below left, Pastor Russell Atkinson lights an Advent Wreath candle during a Liturgy of Remembering. Below right, the altar is beautifully decorated for the Christmas season.



The Longest Night service, also known as a Blue Christmas Service or A Service of Light, is held on or around the eve of the winter solstice (Dec. 21) in the Northern Hemisphere. It is a modern religious service designed to temper the struggle with darkness and grief faced by those living with loss. Loss may include the death of a loved one, divorce or separation, separation due to military service, loss of a job, living with a serious illness or any other loss. The service is a reflective alternative to the festive mood of the season, designed especially for those who may not feel like celebrating the Christmas season. This is the first year Drexel Hill United Methodist Church has offered the service and it is hoped the service will continue each winter solstice as an annual tradition. **PHOTOS BY DAVID BJORKGREN**

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New sign highlights special services

After a recent brainstorming session, the Membership Committee agreed it was time for a new sign to let people know about the special services offered here at Drexel Hill United Methodist Church. Alex Mullin, in collaboration with committee members, researched possible signs and within a week the new sign shown at left was in place. The sign can be placed outside as needed for special event and service announcements.

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 meet in the Bohn Parlor. 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, Jan. 4. Come out for breakfast, a short devotional, and fellowship.

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A birthday cake and other Christmas Eve moments



*From a birthday cake for Jesus to awards for the staff, the Sunday morning Christmas Eve service was filled with activity. The children were presented with a birthday cake honoring Jesus' birth as everyone sang Happy Birthday. Pastor Russell offered a thought-provoking sermon surrounded by Christmas decorations. Gifts were presented to (above, from left) church custodian Anthony Jenkins, Pastor Russell, Pastor of Visitation Nancy Hawes and Music Director Dan Matarazzo for their work on behalf of the church. The gifts were presented by Staff Parish Relations Committee Chairman Carol von Minden (fourth from left). Also receiving a gift was Church secretary Rasheedah Abdullah who was not present at the service. **PHOTOS BY ALEX MULLIN/DAVID BJORKGREN***

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A Candlelight service was offered at 7 p.m. Christmas Eve featuring an instrumental prelude with Jane Marchesano and Suzanne Huffnagle on violin and viola and Dan Matarazzo on piano. A quartet from Amahl and the Night Visitors by Gian Carlo Menotti was also part of the service, as was a choral setting of The First Noel. There were lessons and carols on the Christmas Story, culminating with a traditional candle lighting, ending with Silent Night and Joy to the World. At left, Dave O'Connell holds his candle. Below, a wide shot of the participants with their candles.

PHOTOS BY ALEX MULLIN/DAVID BJORKGREN



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

Office clean up

There will be a clean out of the church office scheduled for mid-January. For those of you with mailboxes in the office, please check to see if there are any items in your mailbox before the clean-out time.

Dear Congregation friends,

At our house, we give thanks to God that our lives and ministry are among you in Drexel Hill! The kindness and receptivity of the people of the church has been so lovely.

We were quite pleasantly surprised by your generous Christmas gift! Thank you so very much. Among a number of ideas we have for the cash gift you gave us, we are looking forward to adding a well-constructed workbench to the parsonage cellar.

Russell and Barbara



Thank you, DHUMC, for the warm welcome I have received and the generous bonus. You are such a wonderful and generous congregation. It has been my joy to come to work! May "2018" be filled with God's abundant blessing for you all.

Rasheedah

Thank you so much for the poinsettia. It adds more holiday to my home.

May you have a blessed Christmas and a happy, healthy, 2018.

**Sincerely,
Carolyn Nyhart**

To my dear friends and family,

Thank you so very much for the beautiful poinsettia that was brought to me from the altar today (Dec. 17).

I have it sitting by my chair in the living room where I can always see it and see and hear the Congregation and their prayers.

Thank you again for thinking of me. I miss you all and the church activities. My church was/is a very important part of my life along with God/Jesus.

Also, thank you for the Get Well and Thinking of You cards I have received.

A very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy new year to every single one of you, my dear friends.

**Love,
Betty Krom**

"May thanks and praise be gifts we give most freely this Christmas season.

Betty K.

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BLAST FROM THE PAST

Missionary activity peaked in the 1950s at our church

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

The missionary movement in Drexel Hill United Methodist Church reached its peak in the late 1950s. The 1954-55 budget was the first to allot money for the support of missionaries and the following activities were the result:

1. In 1954 Rev. and Mrs. Ross Bunce went to India as missionaries supported by Drexel Hill United Methodist Church.
2. The church assumed the full support of Rev. and Mrs. Avery Manchester as missionaries to the Congo in Africa.
3. The building of a chapel on Vieques Island near Puerto Rico was undertaken.
4. The church supported the Henderson Settlement in Kentucky, and Mrs. Wilma and Charles Ferill in India.
5. Partial support was provided for Margery Christman who served as a missionary in Japan. Margery was raised in the Drexel Hill Church.
6. Local missionary activities included sponsorship of refugee families in this country; building a scholarship fund for Alaska Methodist University (later changed to help local students), helping Mid-town, Fairmount and University City Parishes, and developing tutoring programs in our community and the inner-city.

These programs were funded by the local church adopting a formula of depositing 20 percent of all regular income into the benevolent treasury in addition to the Communion offerings, fourth Sunday of each month Sunday school collections, and all money collected for Urgent Needs (a Conference special). This resulted in a gross amount considerably above the national averages of local church giving for missions, and Drexel Hill United Methodist Church became one of the leaders in the field. Today the benevolent giving goes into the general fund of the church from which the Conference apportionments are paid. It is from the Conference level that today's missionary programs are funded.

A Donation

Nancy Hawes has given a donation in honor of the church to Save the Children. The chosen project is a medical clinic and she asks the congregation to pray for both the workers and those who will receive care there. We have thanked her for her gift.

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IN THE COMMUNITY

31 children received gifts thanks to Be An Angel



The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in The Christmas Angel Project. Barbara Bellini contacted Upper Darby School District social workers and all the children we were given were from Upper Darby High School, and their younger siblings.

Nancy Agneta and Jane Leggieri put up the tree and decorated it with the angels. Members of our congregation took an angel from the tree, along with a shoebox and shopped for that child. Thirty-one angels were taken and 31 shoeboxes came back filled with gifts. On Sunday, Dec. 17, we added some candy and a Mc Donald's gift card to each box. The gift cards were made possible by a generous donation from Fran Roberts. The boxes were wrapped and bagged, then picked up by a social worker from the high school on Monday. We also gave the social worker many pairs of sneakers in various sizes that were donated by Chris Gurganis, and Acme gift cards, donated by Diane Whitehead. I wish everyone could have experienced the gratitude shown by the social worker. Our donations to the school district are always received with tremendous appreciation. They are very grateful for all our help.



Visit the church Facebook page www.facebook.com/drexelhillmethodists/ to see a video of the gift wrapping session and other works and activities of our church.



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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 for more details.

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 Jan. 28. If you’d like to make difference in the lives of others, please contact Pastor Atkinson.



The next RSC luncheon is scheduled for 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 who wishes to attend.



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



Photo courtesy of Human Rights Watch

2018: The Year of the Migrant

In the midst of the joyous celebration of Christmas there is a backdrop of suffering around the globe in the form of migrants.

Studies indicate that there are as many as 65 million migrants, immigrants, refugees and displaced people in the world today. More than half of them are under the age of 18.

There are many reasons why people leave their homes, including war, persecution, weather disasters, genocide, and terrorism. For the most part, migrants experience extreme poverty, disease, dangerous travel, unbelievable conditions of hunger, cold, lack of medical attention and sanitation. [READ MORE](#)

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AROUND THE WORLD

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

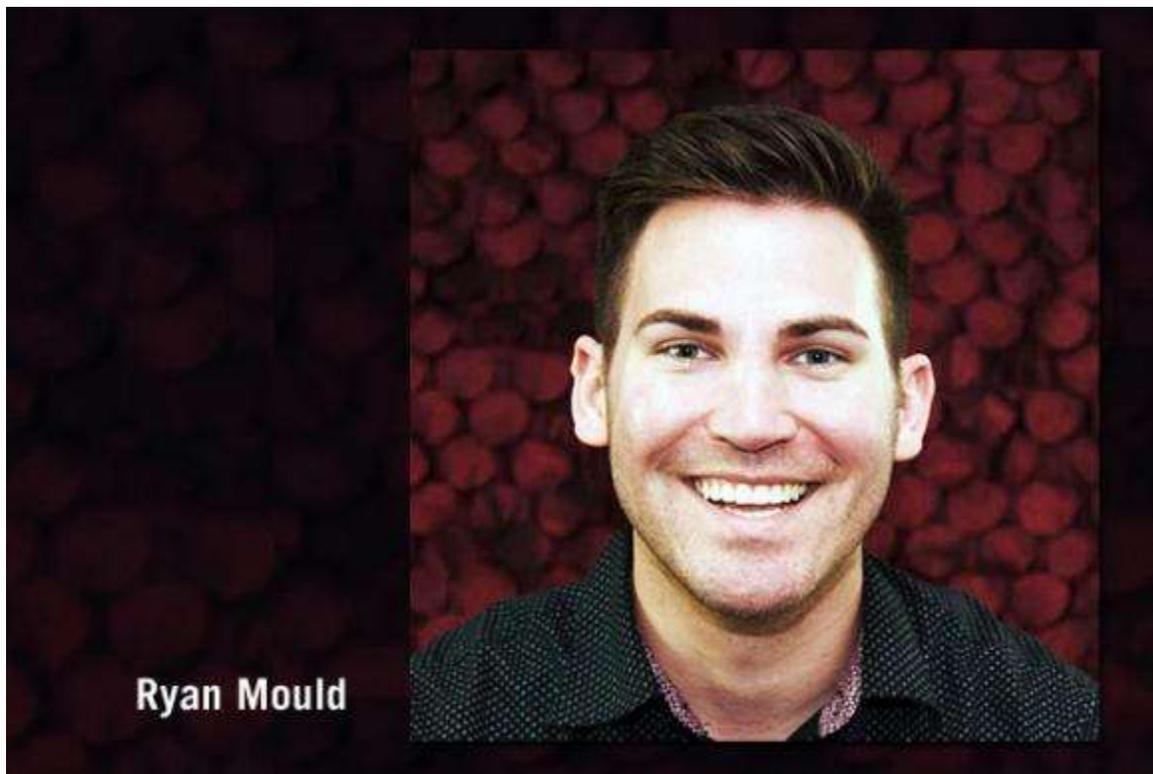


Photo courtesy of Reconciling Ministries Network

Ryan Mould was children's choir director at Trinity United Methodist Church for three years before being fired because he is gay.

Gay United Methodist choir director fired

By Kathy L. Gilbert
Dec. 14, 2017 | UMNS

After serving as children's choir director at a United Methodist church for more than three years, Ryan Mould said he was fired and told the denomination does not allow homosexuals to be "spiritual leaders."

Mould, 29, said the pastor and staff parish relations committee of Trinity United Methodist Church in Jacksonville, North Carolina, cited The United Methodist Book of Discipline to justify his firing.

[READ MORE](#)

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January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 BIBLE STUDY 9:30-11 a.m., Bohn Parlor	3	4 DEVOTIONS AND BREAKFAST, 9 a.m., CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	5	6 EPIPHANY
7	8 AD COUNCIL 7 p.m.	9 BIBLE STUDY 9:30-11 a.m., Bohn Parlor	10 CUB SCOUTS	11 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	12	13 PINWOOD DERBY INSPECTION
14	15 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	16 BIBLE STUDY 9:30-11 a.m., Bohn Parlor FINANCE COMMITTEE 7 p.m.	17 CUB SCOUTS	18 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	19 PINWOOD DERBY INSPECTION	20 PINWOOD DERBY 9 a.m.-
21	22	23 BIBLE STUDY 9:30-11 a.m., Bohn Parlor	24 CUB SCOUTS	25 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	26	27 RSC LUNCH 11:30a.m.-1 p.m.
28 OPEN CHURCH ON THE PARKWAY	29	30 TRUSTEES 7 p.m.	31 CUB SCOUTS	1 CHOIR REHEARSAL 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	2	3