



Spring - Summer 2015

The Dove Express

The First United Methodist Church of Avalon

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The Pastor's Corner

Did you know that there are approximately 2.2 billion Christians in the world today? Professor Leonard Sweet, Professor of Evangelism at Drew Theological School has written that the new geographic center of worldwide Christianity has shifted slightly in recent years. The new global center-point for Christianity is not the Vatican, or the former Compaq Center in Houston, Texas, or even South Korea. It is Timbuktu.

Do you know where Timbuktu is? It is a small city in Mali, a country in West Africa. It is the ultimate definition of "the middle of nowhere." In 1986, I flew over Timbuktu on a trip from Accra, Ghana to Dakar, Senegal. At night one could barely see the lights from the city. And yet, if we think about it, what better place is there for the center of Christianity? Where is the hope and love of Jesus Christ needed more than in a place that is both symbolically and literally in the middle of nowhere.

Another place that is in need of the hope and love of Jesus Christ right now is the tiny country of Nepal. On April 25th Nepal experienced an enormous earthquake which devastated much of the country. There are now over 7,000 people who are among the dead. Much needed relief supplies are making their way to this mountainous part of the world and to the capital, Kathmandu. UMCOR is there providing help and hope in a time of great need.

Another place where Jesus is calling us to offer help and hope is in Atlantic City. Our Cape Atlantic District has formed an Atlantic City Economic Recovery Team, which is working together to provide crisis counseling and life coaching skills to those who are part of the economic tsunami that has hit Atlantic City. The District has received a \$10,000 grant from the General Board of Church and Society to begin the hard work of restoring hope to those who are still facing job losses and layoffs.

Long ago the prophet Isaiah wrote: "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken... says the Lord." As disciples of Jesus Christ let us continue to pray for the transformation of our world and have compassion for all those in need – wherever they live.

God loves you and I'll see you in Church.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Dave

The First United Methodist Church of Avalon

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School will be held this year from July 13 - 17, 2015 with a special musical presentation on Sunday, July 19th in worship at 10 am. The theme this year is *G-Force: God's Love in Action*. Participants will experience the power of God in their lives.

Vacation Bible School is open to children from age 4 through those children who have completed the 6th grade. All youth grades 7 - 12 are invited to register for the VBS volunteer program where you can serve as an assistant teacher and receive at least 15 hours of community service credit for your work.

The registration forms are available on-line at www.avalonmethodist.com. Complete the registration form and mail or email it to the Church. This year registration will be limited to the first 60 children and 15 youth volunteers. Once those numbers for participation have been reached, the children and youth will be placed on a waiting list and they will be notified if space is available. Reserve your place as soon as possible. Come join your friends in being a part of this year's fun.

Women's Circle

The Women's Circle meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. The women of the First UMC of Avalon are invited to a brunch/lunch at The Links Restaurant. If you would like to join please sign-up on the sheet on the welcome table at the back of the Church. For more information contact

Louise Baehr @ 536 – 2814.

WEST POINT CADET CHOIR

The West Point Cadet Choir, from the United State Military Academy is tentatively scheduled to come and worship with us on Sunday, September 13, 2015. Anyone who is willing to house one or two cadets during their weekend stay here in Avalon and Stone Harbor, please send an email to the Church Office at avalonmethodist@hotmail.com or speak with George Coleman who will again be coordinating housing for the Protestant Cadets. Please state your preference for hosting male or female cadets and let us know how many you can house.

Responsibilities include providing for your assigned cadets a place to sleep, a meal on Saturday night, and transportation to and from the Church for rehearsals and worship. Our Church would like to host as many cadets as possible.

Transitions

Child Fund International ~ Lydia Wanjiru, our Church's adopted African child has completed her education and is prepared to embark upon life's new opportunities.

Hunter James McNamara was baptized in our Church on May 12, 2015.

We mourn the loss of Pastor Dave's Uncle John Munkittrick of Suffran, NY who passed away on March 29, 2015. He was a World War II and Korean War veteran.

The First United Methodist Church of Avalon

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

COME AND WORSHIP!

8:30 AM – INFORMAL WORSHIP SERVICE

(JUNE 28, 2015 ~ AUGUST 16, 2015)

10:00 AM – TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE

(WITH CHANCEL CHOIR AND SPECIAL MUSIC)

BEING REMARKABLE

Have you ever been to a wonderful restaurant or experienced an event that caused you to say, "That was remarkable! Webster's defines remarkable as "notably or conspicuously unusual; extraordinary or striking."

For those of us who live here on the Seven Mile Island, it is a remarkable place. For those who come to visit from throughout the United States, the experience is even more extraordinary.

That is why we need to think about how to become a remarkable congregation. In many ways, we are already a remarkable church. But being even more remarkable is the add-on, the special sauce, and the thing that will help our church grow. Being remarkable means that others are talking about our church in a positive way.

Here are a few ways that as a church we can become more remarkable:

1. Set a high standard of excellence in all that we do in church.
2. Serve the community- without being asked. Find a need and fill it.
3. Reach out to an organization that has been critical or passive about our church and invite them to lunch.
4. Identify five key things in our church that need to be improved. It could be the sound system, the seating, the preaching, or the website – the list goes on. Then, improve them.
5. Open ourselves up for constructive feedback. Ask for input, invite in other leaders and experts. Give them permission to tell us what we need to hear, but may not want to hear.

Becoming more remarkable may require more effort but it's worth it.

This material was adapted from the April 2015 issue of Outreach Magazine.

STUDENT RECOGNITION SUNDAY **Sunday, June 21, 2015.**

If you know of anyone who will be graduating this year, please let Pastor Dave or our secretary, Brenda, know. We will be honoring this year's graduates and all those students who have served as acolytes.



Stay Connected

A new Church Family Directory will be distributed again by email June 1st. If you would like a hard copy, please contact the Church Office at avalonmethodist@hotmail.com.

If you have had a change of address or email address, please let us know. We always want to make it easier for everyone to keep in touch. Let Brenda, our Church Secretary, know how others can reach you by emailing us or calling the Church Office at (609) 967- 4204.

Church Staff



Rev. Dr. David J. Montanye, Pastor
Doris Walters, Director of Music
June Batz, Associate Director of Music
Brenda Katapodis, Church Secretary/Treasurer
Patti Boyle, Sexton

**** If you would like to include information in the next Dove Express, the deadline for the Summer issue is June 5th.**

Measuring Progress as a Vital Congregation

Each of us knows that it takes a skilled nurse to take our blood pressure, or a doctor to monitor our heart rate, in order to determine the quality of our overall health. Healthy Church often act in the same way. Our volunteers keep track of a number of important statistics which help our leadership determine the health of our congregation on an annual basis.

By keeping track of our average attendance in worship or the number of small groups that are active in the life of our congregation, we hope to accurately measure our progress in becoming a more vital and effective congregation.

Since 2011, when the Vital Congregation program began here, our Church has increased its vitality in many ways. Our average attendance in worship has moved from 79 people in 2011 to 82 people in 2014. We have advanced from having 6 small groups to having 16 small groups. Since 2011, we have received 4 new members by profession of faith and have added 3 new members by profession of faith in 2014 for a total of at least 7 new members by profession of faith since 2011. The number of people who are serving others in mission has exploded from 21 in 2011 to 80 in 2014. This means that more than half our members and friends are active in hands-on projects like Family Promise, Vacation Bible School, or supporting Caring for Kids. And finally, our mission giving has increased from \$28,500 in 2011 to over \$35,000. A portion of these mission funds came from a grant which we received from the Greater New Jersey Conference Board of Church and Society in 2014. This is all good news and represents a vitality that is inspiring.

Our goals for 2015 are:

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|----|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Average Attendance at Worship: | 85 people |
| 2. | Number of Small Groups | 17 small groups |
| 3. | New Members by Profession of Faith | 3 people |
| 4. | Number of People Involved in Mission | 85 people |
| 5. | Funds given for Mission | \$32,500 |

We have added to our list of goals 3 additional goals that are designed to increase our effectiveness as a Church in improving communication both internally, and externally, empowering laity to be better servant-leaders with improved training, and continuing to build the capacity of our 50-year building to meet the ministry challenges of the 21st century and to pass on our love for this Church to future generations who worship here. The creation of the Bell Choir and a new nursery / young children's room are a way to address the changing nature of our congregation.

***The New Avalon Assembly
A Chautauqua-like Experience at the Shore***

The New Avalon Assembly returns for its 3rd year!

This summer, the New Avalon Assembly will be returning to our Church. The New Avalon Assembly is based on the Chautauqua experience of the late 1800's and early 1900's, which provided lectures, concerts, religious speakers, and the opportunity to "recreate one's oneself" in beautiful natural surroundings.

The New Avalon Assembly was formed in 2013, and has been designed to renew this unique forum for personal growth and enrichment. Program offerings have been developed around the four original pillars of the Chautauqua experience: arts, education, spiritual growth, and entertainment. This year's programs will be based on a common theme: ***Origins and Destinations.***

Support for these events will be provided through a partnership with the Avalon Public Library and the Avalon History Center, and by contributions from the Southern New Jersey Health Council and generous individuals. The New Avalon Assembly is now a member of the Chautauqua Association, which seeks to bring together the organizations that were part of the original Chautauqua Circuit that flourished in the early 1900's and the new Chautauqua-like organizations that are being revived in resort communities throughout the United States and Canada.

Watch our Church bulletin, our summer edition of the Dove Express newsletter and Avalon's Community Bulletin Board for a complete schedule of this summer's events.



The First United Methodist Church of Avalon

Think Globally, Act Locally

Each year, our Church invites its members to think globally and act locally. That is to say that as a church we provide for the needs of others around the world especially those who have experienced a major disaster or who suffer from hunger or malaria or who live on just a few dollars a day. However, we also are encouraged to support our local economy especially those who are members and friends of this community of faith. Please remember to support our members and friends and their businesses:

Mark Kalla - *Catering*

Karen and Dutch Dechert -
Ferguson Dechert Real Estate

Robert Ferguson -
Robert Ferguson & Sons Painting Contractors, Inc.

Jack and Lolly Ferguson -
Ferguson Dechert Real Estate

Matt Pappas - *Brandywine Developers*

Don and Jack Richardson -
Richardson's Screen Shop

Patty and Mark Rutledge -
Café Loren and Avalon Freeze

Steve and Robin Schall - *The Green Cuisine*

Jack Sykes - *Sykes Lanscaping & Painting*

Bill Tozour - *Construction*

Doris Walters - *7 Mile Island Cleaners*

If you are a local business owner, please let us know so that our Church members can support your business and encourage others to do so.

FOCUS ON MISSION

Our 2015 Communion Offerings and Mission Projects meet a variety of important needs in Cape May County, in New Jersey, and around the world. Our focus this year is on helping our five strategic mission partners which help children and families in need here in Cape May County and on building greater capacity to support the One Great Hour of Sharing, the United Methodist Homes, and the Future with Hope Campaign.

MISSION PROJECTS

MAY:

Blankets and Tools Offering (CWS)

JUNE:

Volunteers in Medicine (CMC)

JULY:

**West Point Cadet Choir
Activities Fund**

AUGUST:

**Backpacks & School Supplies
Glenwood Ave. Elem. School
Wildwood NJ**



COMMUNION OFFERINGS

May 5th -

Peace with Justice

June 2nd -

Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery

July 7th -

United Methodist Homes

August 4th -

Camden Neighborhood Center



The First United Methodist Church of Avalon

**Pencil these dates
on your calendar:**

MAY



May 9th: Bake & Book Sale 8am - Noon

May 10th: Mother's Day
Baptism of Hunter James McNamara

May 17th: Healing Service

May 19th: Women's Circle Meeting 11:00 am
Admin. Council Meeting 7 pm

May 24th: Pentecost Sunday

May 25th: Memorial Day

May 28 - 30: Greater NJ Annual Conference
Wildwood, NJ

May 31st: Baptism of William T. Pollard, IV

JUNE

June 2nd: SPRC Meeting 7pm at parsonage

June 13th: Strawberry Festival 7-9 pm
(*Tentative to harvest of strawberries*)

June 21th: Father's Day
Student Recognition Sunday

June 28th: Summer Worship Schedule Begins

JULY

July 4th: Independence Day
Avalon Fireworks at 30th St./The Beach
Stone Harbor Fireworks at 80th St. Field

July 5th: Baptism of Danielle Sharon Brennan

July 9th: VBS Teachers Meeting 7 pm
Safe Sanctuaries Training

July 12th: Set-up/Decoration for VBS 2015

July 13th - 17th: Vacation Bible School

July 20th: VBS G-Force Choir

July 25th: Chicken BBQ

Looking Ahead

August 7th: Peach Festival 7-9 pm

September 13th: West Point Cadet
Choir Sunday

PENTECOST is Sunday, May 24th.
Pentecost celebrates the
birth of the Church and
the out-pouring of the
Holy Spirit. Wear Red
and worship with a
Spirit-filled heart.



District News

Greater NJ Annual Conference

May 28th - 30th
Wildwood Convention Center
Bishop John Schol, Presiding

This year the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will be held at the Wildwood Convention Center in Wildwood, NJ. Hundreds of United Methodists from churches in New Jersey (and a few from New York and Pennsylvania) will gather on May 28th through 30th to celebrate and be in mission.