

PASTOR'S PEN

As worship planning team thought about and discussed a theme for Advent this year, a few lines from the carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem" came to mind: "Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in... Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today... O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel."

Each Advent is an invitation to remember how God draws near to us, even when we are stubborn in our independence, stuck in patterns of sin, or too busy with work or family to be still in prayer. Still He comes. He is not put off by our human frailty or the darkness of our world. He longs to gather us to Himself.

Over the next few weeks, let's take time to reflect on how we can make space to receive Christ in a new and deeper way this holiday season. The large nest on the table in the sanctuary represents our lives. At the beginning of Advent, it will be cluttered with stuff, much like our lives can get cluttered so easily with many different things- "to do" lists, errands, family gatherings, shopping, work, phone calls, emails, parties, worry or stress, and on and on. As Advent progresses and Christmas Eve approaches, we will slowly empty that big nest. As we visually make space in the nest, we will be invited to consider how we can make space in our day to day life.

What can we empty from our minds, our hearts, our calendars, perhaps even our homes; to make space for more of Jesus? What distracts you? What prevents you from slowing down? What pulls at your affection and crowds out a desire for God? Or here is a different kind of question- What can you lay down this holiday season in order to make space to welcome someone who is lonely or in need? By welcoming and serving them, you serve Christ (see Matthew 25:34-40).

I am reminded of another song that we often sing here at DMC, "Control." It repeats this line a number of times: "God, you don't need me, but somehow you want me." The joy of this Christmas season is that God pursues us. We are wanted, each one of us! God longs for us to receive Him and the abundant life that He offers; full of peace, strength, freedom, wisdom and love. May this season find us living deeper into that truth and being renewed by it. How can you make space for Jesus this Advent?

-Pastor KrisAnne

December BIRTHDAYS

Lucy DeJesus	12/4
Robin Miller	12/10
Kathy Heckler	12/13
Blanche Althouse	12/22
Robert Schwabe	12/25
Phillip Zeo, Sr.	12/25
Doris Garges	12/28

December ANNIVERSARIES

Lester & Sara Heacock 12/23

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Please come to help with Christmas caroling on **Wednesday evening, December 18**. Meet at 6:00pm at Don and Kathy Heckler's home, 200 Murray Drive, Doylestown.

Bring enthusiasm, children, flashlight, snacks for later, and **warm clothing**. Those who answer the door bell will be invited to our Christmas Eve service. We need enthusiastic singers! If you are uncertain about the weather or have any questions, call Hecklers (215-345-4493) or Freida Myers (215-794-8327).

SECOND SUNDAY SENSATION

for both children and adults!

The primary department is sponsoring a special event for children in Grades K - 7 each month on the second Sunday. For children, the November 10 "Second Sunday Sensation" featured a presentation by Mr. Mike, an experienced teacher and story teller (known to us as Michael Haney). The children enjoyed great stories and a special snack. At the same time, the adults enjoyed a special presentation by the Rockingham Male Chorus, a group of volunteer musicians from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. They presented a program of beautiful arrangements of music, including many familiar hymns and songs, excellently performed. They also had available cassette tapes and compact discs for future enjoyment.



FROM SANDY RIDGE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Being in "the right place at the right time" speaks to the Community Garden growing in plants and in community character. Who are the volunteers? Our story speaks to the beauty of providing fruits of our labor for those in need. Each year since the garden's first, in 2011, the relationships between church members, community volunteers and those in need grow. These connections have manifested themselves by a greater production of fruits and vegetables, variety of plants, a more permanent structure, a native wildflower boarder, and most far reaching, a burgeoning social character welcoming a wider diverse group of volunteers. "In everything give thanks", Paul the Apostle, Thessalonians 5:18.

-Jeffrey Buckwalter,
Community Garden
Volunteer

FROM THE PRAYER CORNER

December can be a really busy time for many people. We try to meet expectations of ourselves, our family and the culture. Our theme here at DMC this Advent is making space for God, in the midst of this busy season. Making space for God is an intentional decision; making space for corporate worship, prayer, connecting with people, reading the Bible and letting go of unrealistic expectations are just some of the intentional choices we can make during this Advent season.

I invite you to make space for God by spending some time in either one of the prayer rooms here at DMC. Both have prayer resources that will aid whatever time you have. The upstairs prayer room has a special prayer activity that will help you focus on the theme, Making Space for God. Feel free to use these spaces and reach out to the church office if you need access to the building when the church is locked. There is also a calendar next to the door to reserve your time in the upstairs prayer room.

I would also encourage each of us to step into the Main floor prayer room and invite the prayer ushers to pray with you for the wisdom to know how and when to make space for God. The prayer ushers continue to be available every Sunday during our worship service.

May we each experience the peace that God offers to us as we make space for his presence.

-Sandy Landes, Prayer Minister



SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE PRAYER ROOM

During the month of Advent, you are invited to set aside a time to visit the Upstairs Prayer room to use the prayer activity created especially around our theme: **Creating Space for Jesus**. Sign up for a time slot on the calendar outside the prayer room. Check with the office if you need access to the building when it is closed.

FROM THE LIBRARY

Book Review of Rich in Love by Irene Garcia

This love story is messy as it describes the life of a teen couple, Domingo & Irene, who got pregnant and married at age 16. In their early years of marriage, there was alcoholism and physical abuse. They came to know the Lord and felt a call to take in foster and adoptive children. The story gets even messier as the children who came into their home were broken and had many challenging behaviors. I liked this story of the young teen couple whom God used in spite of their own sin & brokenness. The stories of the children they adopted did not have story-book endings. Some of them ran away and returned to their birth families, choosing destructive paths.

The remarkable thing was that Domingo & Irene continued to be faithful & obedient to God's call in taking more children, moving, changing careers and even enduring the death of one of their children. The author does not sugar-coat the pain & hardship of being on God's journey but provides an honest and direct depiction, that I appreciated. They testified to God's presence & direction in many unexpected ways. Their obedience was not altered by the outcome of each child's life or the responses of others. Some people told them to stop taking more children because it was very stressful and difficult to deal with the foster care system, as well as the various behaviors of the children and their birth parents. Irene & Domingo heard God's voice and trusted His call—even after they were 60 years old!

I suggest you read this book and ask yourself, as I did, "What is God calling me to?" It may not be the logical thing or the path that others will understand but the rewards of an obedient life cannot be measured by human standards. Let me know if you choose to read this book – I would love to discuss it with you.

-Nancy Heacock

FROM THE CARE TEAM

The Care Team met on Monday November 4, 2019 and had a very purposeful meeting.

We opened our meeting with prayer and a reading from Luke 15 20:24 which are versus from the story of the prodigal son. We discussed the posture and talked about the viewpoint of the father and that of the son. The father was ecstatic and waiting for his son's return, he was full of compassion. The son was humble, open and was ready to repent. Both were able to trust and show grace. When we are open and honest we can be trusted and the grace of God will be present in those situations.

We have a standing agenda item at each meeting to discuss compassion fund needs. Additionally we prayed for our congregation and for church members in need.

Our next meeting is planned for Monday December 16, 2019, at 7:30PM.

-Robin Miller, for the Care Team

FROM SISTER CARE

You may remember that last year (2018) our Thanksgiving Offering went to support the work of Mennonite Women Sister Care in Vietnam. A brief summary of Sister Care:

Sister Care seminars provide women with tools for ongoing personal healing, recognizing and celebrating God's grace in their lives, and responding more confidently and effectively to the needs of others in their families, congregations, & communities.

I recently received a note from Rhoda Keener, whom you may remember also spoke at DMC for Mission Sunday last spring. Rhoda with Carolyn Heggen held two Sister Care leadership training seminars in eastern Ukraine in May, followed by a seminar in South Korea in early November. They are now preparing for Sister Care in Thailand where they will also be joined by some women from Laos in January 2020. Rhoda wrote of enjoying "meeting and learning to know many gifted women". They will return to Vietnam in November 2020.

The following are a few of the responses from the women...

- ◆ God has deeply touched me through the seminar, and I was reminded that I am God's beloved daughter.
- ◆ I realized that I too carry stories of poison that need to be transformed into stories of healing and light.
- ◆ I experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit, and was especially grateful for the opportunity to read the Bible through the perspective of women.
- ◆ I found that God loves me and wants me to be a healer for others throughout my life.
- ◆ When I heard compassion fatigue described, God anointed me newly like a waterfall. I will use the manual as the path of blessing in my church meeting.

South Korea was the 19th country where Sister Care leadership training has been taught; **the** Sister Care manual is available in 15 languages with translations provided for these seminars. The seminars are funded in various ways and by gifts from individual donors.

For more information visit <https://mennonitewomenusa.org/ministries/sistercare/>

-MaryLee Chittick

PASTOR APPRECIATION

During the service on November 24, Susan Bartels led us in a time of appreciation for our pastors. Mary Lee Chittick spoke to KrisAnne, Heidi Swartley to Sandy, and John Moyer to Pastor Randy at several points during the service. Ahead of time, colored leaves made of card stock were passed out to the congregation to have words of recognition and blessing written on them. They were collected to make a display for each one, conveying appreciation of their leadership. One of the displays took the form of a tree with colored leaves. (see photo on following page)

Relationships! What was I thinking?

Recently the Care Team invited John Drescher- Lehman, a licensed clinical social worker, to lead us in a learning opportunity about relationships. The four areas John covered were attention, acceptance, forgiveness and love. It was well-attended and appreciated. Here are a few thoughts from Dave and Joyce Zuzack about their experience.

Dave writes: *One thing that struck me at John's workshop is the wonderful people who attended. It was humbling to be with that group of people who all wanted to improve their relationships, many of whom were willing to share vulnerable parts of themselves for the good of the group.*

Joyce gives a summary of learnings: *A relationship requires tending. It is not static; it never remains the same. It requires attention and thought to keep it flourishing. You have to strive to love yourself, and work at recognizing your own strengths and weaknesses, to help a relationship with another person thrive. A loving relationship exposes our vulnerabilities.*

When you think the other person in the relationship is "at fault," and is driving you crazy, look again. Sometimes the fear and displeasure we harbor about our own self can affect how we relate to the other person. And when fearful, we try to control the situation, try to control the other person. We must try to let go of expectations.

Anger and resentment is a heavy weight to carry around. It makes you feel tortured. "Letting go" is a liberating feeling. To forgive takes effort and time and comes in small increments. "Piece by piece by piece."

Ask the other person, "What do you wish I would do more of?" "What do you wish I would do less of?"

May we all continue to keep learning as we live in relationships!

-Sandy Landes

DEADLINE for submitting items to the

January 2020 News & Views: **December 31, 2019**

PARTING THOUGHT -

For Anabaptists:

Jesus Christ is the center of our faith

Reconciliation is the center of our work

Community is the center of our life.



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