



The United Methodist Church of Port Washington

July 2017 – Newsletter

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From the Pastors

‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

John 15:12-17

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

I have a confession to make: The last several weeks have been intense! In The United Methodist Church, the end of June is also considered the end of the so called appointment year. In some cases the Bishop and his Cabinet decide to reappoint pastors back to their current local congregations, in other cases the Bishop and his Cabinet appoint pastors to a new community as their gifts are needed in a different setting. This year, the latter is the case for The United Methodist Church of Port Washington.

My former district superintendent, now retired, used to say that in a way the appointment system was like an arranged marriage. Did I used to cringe, but really, what a fitting example! Now I’m not going to try to hook you with a whole bunch of nonsense in order to convince you to like this arrangement. Chances are, some of you may not like change very much and that’s okay. Change and transitions are almost never easy. You may be asking yourself and one another: “What to expect?” Or “Are the two pastors going to be a good thing or not so much?” Or “Is this going to work?” Pastor David and I have been talking and praying about this ever since our faith journeys have been connected during our meet-and-greet with the SPR Committee that late Friday evening at the end of March 2017. Crazy as it sounds though – I am thankful for the challenging nature of a transition because somehow as we face and encounter a challenge, the pretensions behind which we may tend to hide are stripped away and we can get to know one another in a more profound and deeper way.

Yet even in the midst of a challenge or change or a transition, God is with us and God meets our needs – both personal and congregational. We are in good hands, friends! The Lord God who has loved us back to life goes this road with us and indeed, the Lord creates a new future for us and we newly experience the fact that, when walking with God, the end of one season is the beginning of another. How reassuring, especially as we learn how to live this journey together!

And though we may not know each other yet, the few encounters we have had with one another help me see a wonderful bunch of people with different passions, gifts and talents, and ever-growing faith in our Lord. Pastor David and I look forward to seeing you do some truly inspiring things for Christ and his kingdom, and we wholeheartedly believe that there is a reason why life has brought us together. In fact, all the while acknowledging and understanding why this arrangement may feel as such – just an arrangement, we wholeheartedly believe that it has been God altogether who has brought us together.

And remember, constantly reminding yourself and one another and your pastors that all of us, we are fearfully and wonderfully made by our Creator, and if we continue treating each other as such, as friends in Christ, we may be surprised at just how much our Lord Jesus will do in our midst. I have previously witnessed just how much God can do in a church that has a big heart. I see a church like that before me, a church with a big heart – such potential! But first and foremost, let’s get to know each other, truly know each other. Let’s learn each other’s names as we worship together, as we attend the church events or as we participate in one of the many inspiring missional opportunities planned and brought forth in the name of Jesus Christ. Let’s listen to one another’s story, our history. Read and study the word of God together. Share our strengths, confess our weaknesses. Genuinely care and pray for one another and with one another. Show that we truly matter to one another. Support and strengthen each other’s faith. Then and only then can we stand united in one clear vision and mission, hands and hearts joined together in one ministry and service to our Lord and neighbors. Call me a dreamer, but I very much look forward to seeing what God will birth through our church because I know, I just know it’s going to be something breathtaking!

And remember, even though we now find ourselves in the midst of a transition, there will be a time when everything will fall in its place, a time when the labor pains will be long gone and we will understand the depth of God's calling for The United Methodist Church of Port Washington in new, clearer ways. Let's bear with one another as we get there – let's reconcile our differences, be patient with one another, purposefully pray for one another, and treat each other like friends in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has given us a commandment to love one another in the same way he has loved us. Because no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. And maybe now, as we listen to his words, it all makes just a little bit more sense. After all, we did not choose him. He has chosen us, in this very configuration, The United Methodist Church of Port Washington and The David B. Collins Family, and he appoints us to go together and bear fruit, fruit that will last, beyond our time and beyond our own selves.

In Christ, Pastor Romi Abelova

Grace and peace to you Beloveds,

It is safe to say a new day has begun, and in the middle of summer no less. Growing up, summer used to be my favorite time of year in Myrtle Beach for the obvious reasons. Multiple times a week I remember loading up the 1983 Oldsmobile Delta 88 with several gallons of water (not for drinking) and heading to 6th Ave S. in Surfside Beach – it had one of the few public bathrooms and a handicapped ramp over the sand dunes. After a few hours we would load the car back up and Mom would rinse our feet off with the gallon jugs of water. If you've ever been to the beach, you know what I'm talking about here with the sand in the car. There was absolutely nothing more aggravating than having to vacuum out beach sand from the carpet and floor mats.

But in this, there is something to be said about the washing of one's feet. For the most part, leaving the beach we were relatively clean, only have feet and flip flops caked in sand, and just as Mom washed our feet and ensured that we were "clean" for the car ride home, so do Pastor Romi and I wash our children's feet. When Jesus arrived at the house of the Pharisee named Simon, he was not welcomed in the traditional manner, which would have included a customary foot washing until the sinner arrived in the form of an unnamed ritually unclean person. It was when she anointed Jesus' feet with her tears and oil that the grace and salvation we know today was proclaimed there in the home of the Pharisee. The example for us to live by has been presented through this unlikely vessel, something I like to call unexpected graces in unexpected places.

How we welcome the others, you know – the people who don't necessarily talk like us, look like us, or fit into the mold our church so often tries to squeeze them into – speaks volumes about who and whose we are. Sometimes we are only concerned with "keeping the sand out of the church...I mean car" that we forget the anointing our Lord received that day from an unexpected saint, yet sinner, and that it takes all of us to continue that anointing.

The welcome that we have received as your new pastors and pastoral family has indeed been a warm one, and in these first four weeks of cleaning, unpacking, setting up your parsonage and our home, learning about the mission and ministry of our church, and getting to know each of you, we have certainly learned quite a bit. The most important detail of which, at least to me, is that you are a community that needs to feel loved, and I hope and pray we can fulfill that, so that all of us may in turn take the love of Christ that we have right now and show it to the world. When people see a genuine, honest, and joyful community of followers of Jesus, we become a place that fosters and nurtures healthy relationships through the mutual love of God we all have.

That said, there are going to be challenges, and it might not be as easy as we wish, but I have another little saying: if everything were easy, it wouldn't be near as fun! We can rise together as brothers and sisters in Christ and meet the difficulties that we all know will present themselves, because there is no challenge that is too great and no task too small for us when we stand together. I truly believe we have been united together by God in this "arranged marriage," and that the possibilities we have before us are many. As we grow together, may we welcome others with the same attitude that the unnamed woman welcomed Jesus with, and though we may not literally wash someone's feet as they walk in the door, we will be a place where hearts will be washed with the living water of our Lord and become anew. And who knows, maybe even our own hearts will be washed as well.

Peace, Pastor David Collins

July Birthdays

- 2-Jim Hirschberg
- 5-Lee Hines
- 8-Michael Salerno
- 10-Linda Tomppert
- 15-Dave Peraza
- 16-Damaris Burton
- 17-Carol Comerford
- 19-Nancy Weiss
- 22-Jo-Ellen Hazan
- 23-Janice Weir
- 26-Phil Van Praag
- 27-Andrea Bain
- 27-Amy Kovner
- 27-Veronika Collins

August Birthdays

- 3-Hazel Nolan
- 6-Kendra Rosenbaum
- 24-Karin Logrieco

A Note from Children's Ministry

We need to HIRE NURSERY STAFF as we are losing the Burtons to college commitments. Please refer appropriate applicants to Nancy.

News from Sunday school is that we remain hopeful. We have been offering nursery care and Sunday school but attendance remains inconsistent and we are striving for better attendance. We are planning a salad and pizza party for the parents and children from Sunday school on Friday night August 4 at 6:30 and our invitation is to come and share a meal with the pastors and their children. Our goal is to deepen the connection between the children and the parents here at UMC PW. Also, our Jamaican mission project will have a representative in New York in August. We hope to invite her to church so that we can personally thank her for her work and recommit ourselves to providing breakfast for the elementary school and Sunday school in Jamaica.

Notes from the Lay Leader & Stewardship Chair

What is stewardship? We are charged with the financial and physical support of our church, certainly. But stewardship also covers care of our world and our community; our congregation and ourselves. How do we do that? By loving neighbors, praying for peace, working for justice and showing compassion to all.

As Lay Leader:

Lay leadership provides support to the pastors in whatever way possible as well as expanding the communication between congregation and pastors as needed.

Report on the Pastors Welcoming Tea:

Who hates grits? Who was born during a tornado watch? Who has gone scuba diving all over the world? Just a few of the tidbits we learned about each other at our first Pastors Welcoming Tea. Ten of us shared something about ourselves that others might not know and enjoyed getting to know each other a bit better in the process. Upcoming teas are July 30 at the Newbys; August 13 at the Perazas; August 27 at the Weisburds and September 17 at the Blooms. For the convenience of the hosts, please sign up in advance.

Thank you to everyone who has hosted the afternoon teas. This is a wonderful way for us to get to know each other! Pastor David

Blessings, Lee Fertitta

Music & Choir

The choir and I are looking forward to another year of prayer through beautiful music. I know the congregation greatly appreciates the work that the choir does in efforts to inspire and assist in the prayers of the people on Sunday morning. Unfortunately, we lost two members of the choir in the last few months, as they moved on to the next chapters in their personal lives. Our already small choir got smaller. I'll question whether we can use the word "choir" to describe who we are, if the choir gets any smaller.

Can you sing in any style? Do you play an instrument? Any instrument at all? We cover all musical ground here. You might be surprised at how well we can integrate your particular talent into the musical prayer we make. By the way, I also believe that the desire for "talent" (whatever that is) is a gift from God, and we know how to use that. You can't make the commitment of rehearsal every Wednesday evening and a service every Sunday morning? We'd rather you sing the Christmas carols, or play your oboe only once or twice a year, than never. Please come to a choir rehearsal. You'll understand why we are the friendliest, happiest, tightest group in the church.

Our first rehearsal for the season will be Wednesday, September 6, at 7:30 in the sanctuary. Our first sung Sunday service will be September 10.

Ed Needham, Director of Music