

Montgomery United Methodist Church
117 Sunset Road, Belle Mead, NJ 08502 - 908-874-3273
www.WelcomeChurch.net - *The Rev. Dr. Anthony J. Godlefski, Senior Pastor*
The Weekly Reminder – December 16th, 2018

Greetings from the Pastor

Dear Friend in Christ,

Once upon a time, people used to celebrate the season before Christmas in a very different way than we do today. The time before Christmas – Advent – was considered a "penitential" season – a time very much like Lent. No decorations, no Christmas carols, no festive foods. The hymns were slow and mournful. Then, in the midst of all this bleakness, there was the "Sunday of Joy" – the third Sunday in Advent. The other Advent wreath candles are purple – the color of repentance and a somber mood. But when Advent was halfway through, the one candle was pink – the color of joy. For this one day, people were permitted to sing and dance, to eat festive foods, and generally celebrate that Advent was half over, and that Christmas was on the horizon.

It all seems pretty hard to imagine now, doesn't it? Stores put out Christmas stuff in September. Christmas carols start up on the radio the day before Thanksgiving. And then everything starts coming down the day after New Year's. (Personal note: not for me it doesn't. I observed the English tradition of Candlemas (February 2) as the official conclusion of the Christmas season. Care to join me?)

In any case, it's Joy Sunday. Today is the day to remember that the birth of Jesus is our joy. It's a day to remember that, in the midst of all our big preparations and Christmas lists, we have a connection to God to celebrate. Remember? It's the reason for the season! Yes, joy to the world! Because – the Lord has come.

I hope you take a moment to be still and to remember that, even in the midst of everything you may be going through this Christmas, Jesus is still your best heavenly Friend. I hope that thought brings you joy this Sunday – and always

Come celebrate with us at services this Sunday, and at our CarolFest this Sunday afternoon at 4:30 PM. God bless you every day, Friend. See you in Church.

Your friend, *Pastor Tony*

2. Come to the Christmas CarolFest 2018 - Today!

Please plan to be with us on Sunday afternoon, December 16th, 2018 at 4:30 PM for our Annual Christmas Show. The show will feature all the choirs of our Church - The Chancel Choir, The Children's Choir, The Handbell Choir, plus the Starlite Chorale. It will be a rousing, festive celebration of our Lord's birth. Everyone sings! Proceeds will benefit the great Christmas Offering of our Church.

3. The Great Christmas Offering

Dear Friend in Christ,

I'd like to give you an update on the status of our Great Christmas Offering.

Our Great Christmas Offering will help our Church finish the year financially secure! It will do this by supporting our commitment to United Methodist Missions around the world. These missions help alleviate hunger and promote national and global education.

We are as committed to our Methodist missions as we are to paying all the other financial commitments of our Church. And so, your gift is a double blessing!

As of this morning, we have raised \$9,225.00 toward our Great Christmas Offering goal of \$20,000. I want to deeply thank everyone who has contributed to this important fund so far.

Will you help us in this important effort? Please make this Sunday, December 16th, our target date for contributing to a Great Christmas Offering. I thank you in advance for your encouragement and your ever-faithful generosity.

Warm regards, *Pastor Tony*

PS: You may bring or send your gift to the Church; or, you may visit the Church website: <www.welcomeChurch.net> – and click "donate". Thank you so very much for your generosity, and God bless you.

4. Unto Life Eternal

Let us pray for the Librizzi family in the passing of **Anthony Librizzi**, beloved brother of Joe Librizzi, and brother-in-law of Linda. Let us surround the Librizzi family with our love and prayers. Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at <maguirelibrizzi@gmail.com>.

Let us also pray for the family of **Mollie Dyson**, beloved Mother of our District Superintendent, the Rev. Dr. Drew Dyson. Let us surround the Dyson family with our love and prayers.

5. To Our Live Audio Broadcast (LAB) Listeners

Friends, we are working diligently to make our LAB reliable and glitch-free. We feel we are coming close. If you're having trouble with the broadcast on Sunday morning, try refreshing your browser. If that doesn't work, try using a different browser. Technology is advancing everyday. At the moment, some browsers work better than others. We look forward to the time when our broadcast plays on all browsers, telephones and devices we equally love. Please hang in there with us!

6. The Starlite Chorale 2017 Christmas Concert CD is Available

Relax and enjoy the music of Christmas sung by the Starlite Chorale. CD's are available for only \$5.00.

7. Gifts of Appreciated Stock

If you'd like to bless our Church with a year end gift of appreciated stock, we have the mechanism in place to make that happen. Our Trustee Treasurer is well versed in this procedure. See Pastor Tony for more details. Thank you ever so much for your ministry of generosity.

8. Discovery Bible Study Class Sunday - There Will Be a Class This Sunday!

The Discovery Bible Study is held in the Library from 9:45-10:15 AM on Sundays. All are welcome to come! We read the scripture, share our insights, direction and end with prayer. All material will be provided. Pastor Tony will lead the class this week.

9. Upcoming Key Events

- **Sunday, December 16th, 2018 - Joy Sunday & The 3rd Sunday in Advent:** Traditional services of worship in the morning and the Christmas Songfest Concert at 4:30 PM.
- **Sunday, December 23rd, 2018 - Sermon in Song (both services):** Come hear the choirs of our Church sing and ring the joy of Christmas in music, spoken word, and handbell ringing.
- **Monday, December 24th, 2018 - Christmas Eve:** 4PM - Stress Free Christmas Pageant and 8PM - traditional service of carols and candlelight. *Merry Christmas, everyone!*

10. Happy Birthday to You!

December - 1 - Nancy Kuziola; 3 - Heidi Runnells; 7 - Mike Thompson; 8 - Marie Poelstra †; 10 - Ajalyn Turanski
14 - David Lawrence; 14 - Doug Mallett; 15 - Shelley Cincotta; 15 - Claire Solonick; **16 - Gavin Lawrence; 17 - Rev. Marion Sanders; 18 - Natalia Lefebvre; 18 - Wade Cardinal; 21 - Sarah Ladyman-Ulibella; 21 - Bob Bjornsen; 21 - Gloria Lagerman; 22 - Vyola Willson; 25 - Baby Jesus; 27 - Ali Specht; 27 - Mike Kester; 28 - C.J. Benito; 28 - Joan Musante**
29 - Len Thompson; 31 - Leo Jurado

11. The Prayer List:

Let us surround our loved ones and friends with the blessed power of prayer: • Please pray for the Librizzi family in the passing of **Anthony Librizzi**, beloved brother of Joe Librizzi, and brother-in-law of Linda; (12/13/2018) • Let us pray for the family of **Mollie Dyson**, beloved Mother of our District Superintendent, the Rev. Dr. Drew Dyson (12/13/2018) • Please pray for **Bill and Lora Tremayne** in the loss of their beloved grandson, **Brandon**. Bill and Lora are dear friends of Pastor Tony and members of the Piscataway Christ United Methodist Church; (12/7/2018) • Please pray for the family of **Jackie Deal Godwin**. Jackie, a long time friend of Pam Schechter, has gone to be with our Lord; (11/25/2018) • For **Joy Carter**, for total and complete healing from her recent knee surgery; (11/21/2018) • For all our **Friends in California**, for strength and good health through this time of devastating wildfires; (11/21/2018) • For **Michael Fitzpatrick**, for good health; (11/21/2018) • For **Jillian**, for courage, calmness, and strength; (11/21/2018) • For **Karen Fleischer's Mother**, for strength and good health; (11/21/2018) • For **Paul Matyas**, for healing and strength of spirit; (11/16/2018) • For **Anna Burdette Cooper**, for healing in body and hope for the spirit (from Nancy Kuziola); (11/8/2018) • For Joy Carter's sister **Sharon**, who is going through a serious health challenge; (11/2/2018) • For **Chad Barr and his family**, for strength and resolution (from Candida); (11/1/2018) • For an **anonymous family** in our Church, that they may find resolution and peace of mind; (10/28/2018) • Please continue to pray for members of the **Behn Family** - for **Kay Behn**, as she undergoes hip replacement surgery on Monday October 28th; and **Bob**, "the caregiver", who is in need of fervent prayers; (10/20/2018) • For Pastor Tony's friend, **friend**, a bold young man, who is currently imprisoned; (10/19/2018) • For **Anthony Bottitta**, Hedy's husband who is undergoing bladder surgery on October 23rd; (10/19/2018) • Prayers for **Chuck Ploe**, Deb's brother, as he undergoes surgery on November 26th. Also, please keep her brother, **Patrick** in your prayers for healing and blessings as his treatments continue. Let us express gratitude and offer prayers for Deb's sister-in-law **Gail Ploe** whose eye surgery was a success - healing blessings for full recovery; (10/18/2018) • For the **sister of Steve Cooper**, for comfort and healing; (10/11/2018) • For **Bob and Sandi Bjornsen**, for increasingly good health for themselves and family members; (10/11/2018)

Guidelines: Names will remain on the Prayer List for 30 days. If you wish to keep the request for a longer period, simply call the Church office at (908) 874-3272 or contact Nancy Hranek at nancyhranek@gmail.com or (609) 954-6743. Prayer requests can be renewed as often as you wish.

"Hold me in your prayers, Friend, hold me in your prayers; half the power of praying is knowing someone cares." (Marcus Bach)