



Mt. Salem Newsletter in Rockford Park

2629 W 19th St. Wilmington DE 19806

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Mt. Salem UMC

REACH UP
REACH IN
REACH OUT

Spring 2017



FROM THE PASTOR:

It is not easy to just believe in whatever is written in the Bible. We think we believe, but many times our lives stand against us, because we don't live according to what we say we believe. It is true that we tend to accept and believe what is understandable and reasonable. So, we have a problem. In Ephesians 3:19, we read that the love of Christ surpasses knowledge. It is good to know about the love of Christ; however, if it is beyond our understanding, we don't grasp its meaning fully, and we don't enjoy its power fully; then, how can we believe in this love and receive the life-giving grace in this love, when we don't fully comprehend this love? This question has been raised throughout the church history.

There was a French man, who was a very intelligent Christian. He wanted to understand everything so that he could believe what he understood. If you tend to study and think before you have faith in God, and if you believe in God when you think you understand some things of God, then you are like this French man. If you say in your heart, "I believe in God and God's creation", and say, "I believe that God is good," yet hesitate to confess Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord" because you cannot understand it, then you are like him. If you have some doubts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He died on the cross instead of you, and forgave your sins by being punished for you, because you cannot

understand this kind of love, then you are like him. We call him Abelard. This great man of the 11th century still represents your thoughts in terms of Knowledge seeking Faith: to understand in order to believe.

There was an Englishman, who was also a very intelligent Christian. In contrary to the Frenchman, this Englishman prayed and thought in prayer. He first believed everything in the Bible, because he also wanted to understand everything. If you just believe in God even though you don't understand something very clearly, then you are like this man. If you believe in Jesus' love even though you cannot explain to others clearly, then you are like this man. His name is Anselm. This great man of the 11th century also represents your thoughts in terms of Faith seeking Knowledge: to believe in order to understand.

In Ephesians 3:19, Paul prays for the church, for us, to be rooted and established in the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. How can we be rooted and established in the love that we cannot clearly understand? This love, according to verse 18, is wide and long and high and deep. I don't know how to explain the depth, length, height, and width of Christ's love with my own narrow understanding. So, I believe in this love in order to know. When I believe in God's love that passes my understanding, I experience the mystery of God whenever I partake the Holy Communion. I cannot explain it in a systematic or logical way because what I believe is beyond my knowledge: I don't deserve God's love,

the dying love of Christ; yet, I receive it in faith, and even preach about it as a pastor. Isn't this a mystery?!

Faith is not against reason, but beyond reason. The love of Christ, to me, is the holy mystery of divine love. This love is what I believe is mine, and because of this love I am free from the punishment for the sins of my life. I am grateful for God's forgiving love. Therefore, when I feel the love of Christ, my response to that love is to thank God for God's mysterious love. My response to the love of God is to love God with my whole life, and I understand my love for God is an exercise of my faith. I want to love God every moment of the day.

I hope we all have faith in this love and are all rooted and established in this love of Christ. Yet, if you are having difficulty believing why Jesus died on the cross for your sins, this love of Christ may seem distant to you. Do you find yourself wondering, "I want to know what this is all about"? Do you have to know in order to believe? Then, please try to understand, and know why Christ loves you, why Christ died for you, why Christ sends His Spirit to you for your journey of faith. How do you think you know and understand this love?

Here, I want to tell you one thing that I learned about love: I think love is a verb. When you look back on your love for your spouse, your love for your parents, your love for your children, and your love for your friends, how do they know that you love them? Don't they experience your love? Also, you know they love you when you feel and experience being loved. Yes, love can be known through experience, being loved. The knowledge of love is loving. Or we can say, love is not knowledge, but experience. So, if you want to know and study more about the love of Christ, it should be done through love.

I invite you who don't have a clear understanding of the love of Christ, and thereby stumble in having faith in God, to love Christ. I also invite you who believe in God's love in spite of your lack of understanding, to love Christ; I invite all to love Christ, to love God because that is the way of knowing the love of Christ, and because that is the way of believing the love of Christ. Do you see that both approaches, knowledge –seeking faith; faith-seeking understanding, are toward the love of Christ that surpasses our knowledge? One way is to know by

loving; and the other way is to believe by loving. Both ways are through loving.

When we read the Bible, there are so many parts that are beyond our understanding. Sometimes the Holy Spirit's illumination opens our understanding so that we can grasp the meaning of the words. However, many times the Word of God seems too difficult to understand. So, please relax. You are not the only one who struggles with the meanings of the Bible. Ephesians 3 tells us that the love of Christ surpasses our human knowledge (v.19). Christ's love is for us. There is no one who is excused from this love. The love of Christ is our life-line. Let us hold fast to this life-line: some through understanding first, some through believing first! Remember! Whether you need to know before you believe, or you just believe in order to know, the way of knowing the love of Christ is to love Him; and the way of believing the love of Christ is to love Him. Let us love Christ Jesus our Lord whose love is beyond our understanding. Let us hope that through our love for Christ, we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Pastor SunAe Lee-Koo

CELEBRATIONS:

Happy Birthday to:

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|------|--|
| May | Shawn Wilkinson (4 th)
David Campbell (17 th)
Gail Stallings Minor (23 rd)
Millie Stirparo (29 th) |
| June | Julianna Wilkinson (2 nd)
Patty Oleskey (4 th)
Leroy Rutter (7 th)
David Craig (10 th)
Vickie Hill (19 th)
Curtis Simpson (20 th)
Linda Devaco (26 th) |



BIBLE STUDY: **On ACTS**

Please join us for Bible study on Tuesday mornings at 10:30. We have been studying the New Testament Book of Acts and the lives of Jesus' disciples after his death.

STEWARDSHIP:

We are in need of stewards of time, talents, and money. Please offer yourself through tithes, your attendance and participation during service, and volunteering at Tower Treasures. We are also in need of volunteers to help with church building repairs.

Please contact Neil Lentz or Pastor Lee-Koo.

PayPal account for online offering: mtsalemumc@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Rockford Park Flower Market May 11th - 13th

Come out and enjoy the annual Flower Market featuring pop-up shops, food, amusement rides and live entertainment daily. The church will be open and offer attending guest a reprieve from the outdoors and restrooms.

Annual Memorial Day Celebration

Scheduled is the annual Sunday Memorial Day service honoring Civil War veterans, especially those interred in the Mt. Salem cemetery. We are again pleased to be partnering with the members of Appomattox Camp No. 2 in this remembrance of those who have served in our military.

Week Sewing Bootcamp for Kids

Mt. Salem will host a special sewing and knitting boot camp for youth ages 8 – 13-years-old in July. The cost to participate is free. It is an opportunity for youngsters to learn and try to master the craft. The camp will end with a fashion show for student to show off their creations. Volunteers to help coach the students are needed along with supply donations. For more information or to volunteer, contact Gail Stallings Minor at 302-367-3004

Pen-Del Annual UMC Conference

The Peninsula-Delaware Conference will be held at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington, Delaware May 22-24.

ONGOING MINISTRIES:

Tower Treasures (TT)

We've been busy! As spring approached we received many donations from customers and members of our

church who were cleaning out their basements, attics and garages. Thanks to our volunteers who donated their time in sorting, dusting off or thoroughly cleaning these items, we were able to display many of these items throughout the shop. Customers who visited were happy to find small or large "treasures" they could take home with them.

Visitors to Tower Treasures are pleased to shop here, and many times comment that the atmosphere in the shop is welcoming, colorful, soothing, clean, and they also enjoy seeing the volunteers and chatting with the. Some are old customers of the shop, some stop on occasion, and we are happy to have many newcomers. Thanks to all the volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to help create this experience for all our customers!

Several changes in the layout of the shop were made several months ago to accommodate the growing number of donations for the "boutique". Our "50% Off Sale" of men's and women's clothing have brought in many customers. This helped to clear up the many winter items on the racks. Now it's time to bring out the Spring and Summer donations. Just to name one popular item in the "accessories" section are the Vera Bradley handbags. We also carry several other designer items in our regular clothing racks and many other popular brand name items too.

THE WILMINGTON FLOWER MARKET in Rockford Park is coming soon! This yearly event is scheduled for May 11 through 13, with daily hours 10:00 am to 8:00 pm. During this time Tower Treasures will extend our hours. We will open our doors at 10:00 am and close at 7:00 pm. Mt. Salem Church will also open its doors during these hours for visitors to walk through and explore the rich history of this church. Of course, this event requires volunteers during those days and hours.

There will be sign-up sheets in Benson Hall starting in May asking for volunteers to help out. Please consider offering a few hours that best fit your schedule, either in Tower Treasures or inside the church to welcome visitors. These days and hours will be shared by many volunteers during that weekend so we're hoping you can spare a few hours.

THANK YOU TOWER TREASURES VOLUNTEERS!

A special thanks to all of the volunteers who have helped us throughout the year. Your time and effort and ideas are greatly appreciated.

Just a reminder.....We still need more volunteers in Tower Treasures each month on a regular basis. Help us to continue providing our community a unique shopping experience which in turn helps to support the needs of this church. A few hours each month would be a **BIG** help. Please contact Donna Devine at 302-299-6118 if you are interested.



COFFEE CORNER MINISTRY

This small “corner” at Tower Treasures has welcomed several customers this year. As they browsed through the thrift shop, many times they ended up in this “corner”, where we offered them a beverage. A few had the time to sit and enjoy coffee or tea, and during the colder winter weekends they sat down with a warm cup of cocoa. Our conversations, after commenting on where they were from (neighborhood, out of town or out of state), sometimes lead to their faith. One lady in particular this year, mentioned that she never studied the bible. Growing up, this was not part of what her church promoted. However, she was currently visiting another denomination’s bible study and had a lot of questions about the bible. We were able to offer her an easy to read version of the New Testament and earmarked several pages with references to God’s plan of salvation for her (and for all of us). She was very thankful for our gift and assured she would visit again and continue our “coffee corner conversation.”

There are many resources for “conversation” in this little “corner” and all are welcome to stop by during the hours of operation at Tower Treasures – Thursday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Other Updates

Leadership Retreat: What's a great thing to do on a Saturday in February? The leadership team met at the University & Whist Club in Wilmington to discuss the goals of our church, our resources and peoples, and ideas as to how best to expand our ministry. We started with a CALL to Christian leadership, where

C=connection, A=action=leadership, and L=love. We worked on getting to know each other better, and how to understand ourselves better, so that we may be more effective in growing our church and carrying the Christian message to others. The part of the meeting on learning about our strengths and weaknesses was led by the Rev. Sheryl Allston who reminded us that "The will of God will not take you to a place where the grace of God cannot keep you." During the discussions, we came up with a number of exciting possibilities for new projects and activities, and Gail Stallings has prepared a grant application that would provide financial support for several of the ideas, such as movie nights. The grant has been approved for \$2,000. The grant board explained more applicant with great ideas submitted proposals and they wanted to support them all.

During the season of Lent, we met on Wednesday evenings for a light supper followed by a service conducted by Rev. SunAe LeeKoo. Her messages were focused on the final days of Jesus before his death, and of how his death affected those around him. The messages were moving, and gave those of us in attendance a greater understanding of the immediate impact of his crucifixion.

Spaghetti Dinners:

Our spaghetti dinners have been very successful, both financially and in opening up the church to bring in non-members and our community neighbors in to fellowship with us. We are continuing the tradition of having one dinner in the fall and one in the spring. We are grateful for all the support, especially the Commodari's. Lisa Commodari, with the able assistance of Danny, has made a great contribution to preparing and serving the dinners.

