

The Caller

SWARTHMORE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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September 2019

*Hamba Nathi mku lu lu we ku
Walk together the journey is long*

These are the words of a wonderful South African traditional song that has been my wonderful companion these past several years in the midst of so much upheaval, uncertainty and polarization in our world, in our country and in the United Methodist Church. Work of justice and peace is long-suffering and takes a lot of resilience. Change and transition are the hardest thing to keep up with and yet if we don't, we surely die. So, we must walk together, the journey is long. This is what I hope to do with you as we wait for Pastor Kevin's full recovery and so as we journey together, I thought it would be good for you to get to know a little bit more about me.

I am a proud Puerto Rican made in Puerto Rico but born in Lancaster, Pa. So, you can say I am a Dutcher-Rican! I am an Elder in the Eastern Penn Conference and currently serve part time as the lead pastor of Church of the Open Door in Kennett Square, Pa. Open Door is a 15-year-old new church start that was developed as an intentionally inclusive and diverse congregation from its inception. I am a graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary and I am currently working on a Doctorate of Ministry at Drew Theological School focusing on Public Theology.

Among my experience developing ministries of justice among marginalized and multicultural communities, I have been involved in leading worship for 20 years in varied and diverse settings, both locally and nationally, including for the World Council of Churches Assembly in South Korea

2013 and the United Methodist General Conference in 2012 and the Festival of Sacred Arts in Falstbo, Sweden. I am a published author and contributor on the New United Methodist Hymnal Committee and have been featured in Abingdon Preacher's Manual 2019 and will be working with Abingdon again for 2020. I have served as worship leader for several annual conferences throughout the connection as well as national conferences including the United Methodist Women's Mission U and General Assembly. I have a passion for following the Spirit's lead in the creation of sacred moments and spaces for emergent communities, where together as the gathered we can experience the transformative power of God. My general rule for worship is that the Church needs to worship and live incarnationally, which means we live what we sing, and we sing what we want to live and what we are working to become—God's Reign on Earth.

I am blessed to be married to the Rev. James McIntire, Esq. who I believe is one of the best pastors I've ever met. We share a house with my son William Gabriel Caraballo Muñoz, Lindsay McIntire and our dogs Ella and Mac!

One of my favorite lines in the rest of the song is "dance together the journey is long." It reminds me of one of the greatest gifts I have received from my own Puerto Rican heritage; Fiesta is an Act of Resistance. The ability to sing and rejoice even in the midst of pain, uncertainty and change is the only way to stay strong as a community and to remain true to the course. No wonder the Apostle Paul reminded us; "Rejoice in the Lord, always again I say rejoice." Philippians 4:4

I am honored to be your pastor for this time.

Peace

Pastor Lydia

Press Release

UMCNEXT Announces “UMCNext Proposal”

NASHVILLE, Tenn. August 16, 2019 /UMCNext/ –The Convening Team of UMCNext announced today the UMCNext Proposal, a long-term comprehensive plan that offers a way for a reimagined United Methodist Church to move forward with renewed vision, missional alignment and self-definition.

The plan, developed and supported by the broad UMCNext Coalition that includes Reconciling Ministries Network, Uniting Methodists and Mainstream UMC, provides a pathway to an inclusive United Methodist Church that allows for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared fully in transformational ways for all people and for all the days to come.

“The UMCNext Proposal allows a creative way for churches to build a new expression of Methodism if desired and a path to create a renewed global United Methodist Church for those who remain, while making best use of shrinking resources,” said Rev. Junius B. Dotson, executive convener of the UMCNext Convening Team. “This proposal is not dissolution by another name,” said Dotson. “It takes seriously the difficult work that must be done to best serve the mission of the church in fresh ways.” Key components of the plan include:

1. Keeps intact The United Methodist Church as a denomination while allowing for greater regional autonomy across the entire connection.
2. Retains the current doctrinal standards of The Book of Discipline.
3. Removes language and policies from The Book of Discipline that are harmful to and exclusive of LGBTQ persons.
4. Retains the ability of pastors to determine if a couple is ready for marriage and of annual conferences to determine if a candidate meets the criteria for ordination.

5. Provides a method for groups of churches to form new expressions of Methodism.
6. Creates a Commission on the 21st Century Church to prepare a comprehensive structure and governance plan for consideration at a special General Conference in 2022.

Rev. Adam Hamilton, a member of the UMCNext Convening Team and senior pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City added, “Most United Methodist congregations have people of differing views and convictions regarding same-sex marriage. We’ve learned to live with those differences. The UMCNext Proposal seeks to reimagine a United Methodist Church for all people. It removes the language in the Book of Discipline that is harmful to LGBTQ persons. It provides a gracious exit for those who wish to leave, and it allows pastors and churches to minister according to their convictions,” Hamilton said.

Jan Lawrence, a member of the UMCNext Convening Team and Executive Director of Reconciling Ministries Network, said the plan removes incompatible language and the prohibitions, paving the way for ordination of queer clergy and for same-gender weddings.

“Ministers will have the same ability they do now per the current Book of Discipline to determine who is ready for marriage. The plan treats everyone fairly and equitably and allows us to reimagine a United Methodist Church free from the current restriction and welcoming all of God’s children,” Lawrence said.

The UMCNext Proposal acknowledges the severity of current disagreements in the church. It offers greater self-determination for churches within central and jurisdictional conferences in the global connection, as well as the capacity to begin new expressions of Wesleyan expressions of church. It also calls for a future for all parties that invites new birth and reformation in the hope that all will be led to offer Christ and serve in the world for the glory of God.

In this season of reformation, the proposal calls for a Special Session of the General Conference in 2022 to sustain momentum, receive the work of the Commission on the 21st Century Church, and take the next faithful step toward a gracious, just and Spirit-fueled new life for The United Methodist Church.

Lead Team News September 2019

The biggest news from the Lead Team since July is, of course, the changes that have resulted from Pastor Kevin's serious illness and decision that he would go out on disability from August 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. On July 1, Kevin developed a high fever with staph sepsis, that led to a seizure, a stroke, and a heart attack. He has made an amazing recovery thus far, but he still has left-sided weakness and double vision and has been recuperating at home since August 13. While he is out on disability, we will have as our interim pastor, Rev. Lydia Munoz, who is also serving half-time at the Church of the Open Door in Kennett Square. Her first Sunday with us will be September 1. Please plan to welcome her then.

We are still working on recovery from the flooding of the basement nursery space in May. The demolition was completed with the removal of asbestos floor tiles in August. We are now getting estimates for renovation of the space, which we will make into a multi-use space that will also be the destination for the Children's Sunday School. That work will hopefully start by mid-September. The Children's Sunday School has been meeting in the interim in the Centennial Room or parlor. And the nursery care is being provided in what was formerly the Children's Sunday School room and that will likely be the new home for the nursery as it is proving to be an adequate space.

And we have two new Lead Team members—Jackie Beatie and Pat Parsons—in addition to Rev. Munoz taking Rev. Babcock's place for the year. The other Lead Team members are Regina Babcock, Kelly Billig, Janice Ciampa, Andy Lewis and Mark Stewart.

Finance Update

Through the first seven months of 2019, Swarthmore United Methodist Church finds itself in a stable financial position due in a large part to the excellent performance of our investment portfolio. This gain has been offset by a reduction in our year over year giving, and an increase in our utility bills and several modest maintenance and upkeep projects. Upcoming projects include work on the front doors of the church and chapel, window replacements in the music room, repair and service work to the gutters and work not covered by insurance on the basement flood. Additionally there are a number of areas in need of a painting touch up. We respectfully ask all of our members and friends to keep their generous contributions coming. We need to follow our typically reduced giving in the summer with a very strong September as our preference is not to be forced to liquidate a portion of our investments to meet current expenditures.

We would also like to thank one anonymous friend for their recent very large gift. This gift has allowed us to remain current on our conference apportionment, which many of the smaller churches in our district cannot do.

N.O.W. Ministry News

Nurture, Outreach, Witness

Our N.O.W. Ministries are where the real action of the church takes place! As part of adapting to our being a smaller congregation, we are moving to this simplified ministry model to keep us grounded in the three essential aspects of being a faith community: Caring for each other, caring for the community, and keeping our focus on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Below is an overview of each ministry area and you are invited to contact the coordinator of any ministries you are interested in joining.

What is Nurture?

Our Nurture Ministry is responsible for tending to the faith formation and spiritual needs of our church. This is accomplished through three ministry teams: The Faith Formation Team (Education and Discipleship) currently lead by Christine Hutchinson, The Caring Team (Congregational Care/Visitation) lead by Judy Luzak & Carolyn Stephens, and The Fellowship Team (Intentional Christian Community Gatherings) which is in the process of the getting started.

We are in need of a Nurture Ministry Coordinator as Christine Hutchinson, our current coordinator, and her husband, Wes, are moving to North Carolina! We will not only miss them dearly, but we will also miss the valuable service they offered our church over the years. Please join us in celebrating them as they start this new chapter in their life together.

What is Outreach?

Our Outreach Ministry is responsible for ensuring our church continues to practice the Works of Mercy as mandated by our United Methodist tradition. Our Outreach Ministry Coordinator is Janice Ciampa. You can see all of the awesome work the Outreach Team is doing in this issue's separate Outreach News article.

What is Witness?

Our Witness Ministry is responsible for worship, evangelism, and proclamation (representing church positions publically). Lead by Pastor Kevin, this ministry ensures the church stays focused on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as well as making the community aware of who we are and what we believe and practice.

Outreach News September 2019

Please plan to join us for Rally Day on Sunday, September 8 as we come together after a summer season. Morning worship will start at 10:30 a.m. and we will be led by our interim pastor, Rev. Lydia Munoz. There will be a potluck luncheon following morning worship. We will provide a chicken entrée and beverages and invite you to bring salads, sides and dessert.

We will host our first PBJ Night on Wednesday, September 18 at 7:45 p.m. in the Centennial Room. Sandwiches will go to the Life Center of Eastern Delaware County and City Team Chester. We provide the peanut butter and jelly and ask you to bring two loaves of sliced bread. Light refreshments will be served.

Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence will be installing the final T-shirt Memorial to the Lost for this year at Trinity Episcopal Church in Swarthmore on September 28. It has continued to be a potent reminder of the lives lost to gun violence in Delaware County. There will also be a third portrait project for families of victims starting September 21 and running for 6 or 7 Saturdays during the fall at the Chester Friends Meeting House. We will again be blessed with the leadership of Carolyn Falcone and Angel Pabon. If you would like more information about either of these, please contact Ralph Ciampa, Carl Everett, or Judy Luzak.

Thanks to everyone who has faithfully continued donations to City Team throughout the summer. We will continue this ministry throughout the year. Please leave donations of food and toiletries on the collection table in the narthex.

Lunch & Learn Summer Reading Program 2019 Cokesbury UMC

Last winter our church found out about Cokesbury United Methodist Church, a small congregation in Marcus Hook, that is doing wonderful things. They offer a meal once a month attended by 60 people, provide clothing and food for the neighborhood year-round, and they also run a summer camp for local children to help them keep up with their school work. The Outreach Committee decided to collect money for 3 Sundays in July to help with their summer camp expenses. We (and Cokesbury) were overwhelmed by the support shown by our church. We collected \$660 and enabled Cokesbury to reach out to more children than they had planned. Many thanks to all who gave. You are a blessing! The message below is from Pastor Sandy Cislo.

This year Lunch & Learn was very exciting. Let me tell you a little bit about us. The children in our community are very important to us. We want to help them succeed in school and life. Every year we run a free 4-week (Monday through Thursday) reading and lunch program for the children in our surrounding communities. Our program is open to all children, incoming kindergarten all the way through high school. Students going into 5th grade and older are helpers even though they are learning and reading as well. The free lunch is also available to any child between the ages of 1 and 18 even if they do not attend the reading program. This year we were able to hire a teacher and 4 instructional aides. We also had 5 teenage helpers. Our average attendance was 40 children per day. At the end of our program each child received school supplies (scissors, folders, pencils, crayons, notebooks, glue sticks, sticky notes, highlighters, dry erase markers and a pencil bag). During the program students were able to select 6 new books (2 each week) to take home and keep. Additional school supplies (thank you, Swarthmore UMC!) are available for students in need, to begin the school year.

This year we were blessed to be able to hold several assemblies:

- Officer Steve Jackson (Our local resource officer) came twice and taught the children about bike safety and Kindness.
- A Ranger from Ridley Creek State Park came and taught about local wildlife.
- Winterthur Museum came and did a program about “Play in the Olden Days”. They taught the children games from the past and brought games the children could play as well.
- Pals for Life came and brought rescue animals for the children to read to. They were able to hold and pet the dogs and even a rabbit.
- Marshall Steam Museum came and presented a program called “Racers to Rockets.” The children learned the history of these “Machines,” how they work, and were given the materials to make rockets and race cars. Bottle caps, paper, rubber bands, straws and toilet paper rolls, make amazing rockets and race cars!

Additionally, each day, the children were able to read, write, play and eat a great lunch. Throughout the program more than 618 delicious lunches were served!

Also, this year, we were able to partner with the Mary Campbell Library and Linwood Heights United Methodist Church.

The library provided programming on the 4 Fridays and we provided the lunches. Linwood Heights, in cooperation with the principal of Linwood Elementary School, provided a Tuesday program that ran from July 2 through August 13. Again, Cokesbury was able to provide the lunches!

Truly, God has blessed us with the resources (gifted people and funding) to run these programs and to extend and expand them to reach more children and families each year! We are thankful for the support and encouragement of our sister churches! Thank you, Swarthmore United Methodist Church!

Pastor Sandy Cislo

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 9/8/19 Rally Day—Sanctuary—10:30
Pot Luck Luncheon following Worship
- 9/13/19 *The Prisoner of Second Ave*, By Neil Simon
Spotlight Theatre, Directed by Patrick O'Neill
September 13, 14, 20, 21, 22*, 27, and 28
- 9/18/19 PBJ Night—Centennial Room—7:45pm
- 9/28/19 Heeding God's Call—Trinity Episcopal Church

Deadline for the October Caller is September 17th

SUMC Book Group 2019-2020

September 11 at Carolyn Stephens's (potluck, meet at 6pm)
(NF) *The Burglary* - Betty Medsger

October 9 at Beth Carruthers's
(F) *Beneath a Scarlet Sky* - Mark Sullivan

November 13 at Carol Carr's
((F) *The Aviator's Wife*- Melanie Benjamin

December 11 at Nanette Tobin's
(F) *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee

January 8 at Sheila Bell's
(NF-memoir) *Five Stars in the Window: Growing Up during World War Two* -David Komarnicki (local author)

February 12 at Barb Weir's
(F) *Guests on Earth*-Lee Smith

March 11 at Mary Drott's
(F) *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*- Gail Honeyman

April 8 at Anne Hansen's
(F) *Sold on a Monday*- Kristina McMorris

May 13 at Anna Cashion's
(F-YA) *The Caged Graves* - Dianne Salerni
Select books for next year

June 10 at Judy Luzak's (potluck, meet at 6pm)
(NF) *The Mapmaker's Wife: A True Tale of Love, Murder, and Survival in the Amazon* -Robert Whitaker

Swarthmore United Methodist Church

Who We Are

We are a community of faith, pilgrim people on a spiritual journey to what God would have us be.

We are pledged to prayer, study, worship, and service. We are a communion of sojourners, seeking to live by faith, to do justice, and to strive for wholeness in a broken world.

The foundation of our life in faith is the Bible, which we take seriously but not literally. We find wisdom from Scripture and tradition to guide us in confronting life's deepest questions and uncertainties.

We are a sacramental community gathered around the table of the Lord, where all are welcome; communion is at the heart of what we do and who we are.

We are a community of faith where the sorrowing find comfort, the needy find help, the despairing find hope, the seeker finds a fellow traveler, the lonely find a home, the fearful find calm, and the stranger finds welcome.

We seek to find a middle course between the extremes of secularism and religious fundamentalism through faithful witness to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

We celebrate our spiritual, intellectual, political, and lifestyle diversity. We are a reconciling congregation and welcome all God's children regardless of sexual orientation.

We invite you to join us on the journey!