

THE PROSPECT TOWER

Prospect United Methodist Church
A Growing Christian Community of Faith in Action

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Pastor's Page

The Roller Coaster of Life

I always wondered why January should be so cold. What if January is like Summer? Someone who has been to Florida in January can tell how it is. One day a thought came up on my mind. In the heat, we tend to be too relaxed. Sometimes heat makes us feel numb. We are too busy fighting with heat and sweat. It is too hard to keep us focused. But in the cold, it make us alert and cautious. Of course, extreme coldness drive us crazy, but still proper coldness awakens our senses. I think the reason January is cold is that God wants us to be alert and awake when we start a new year especially right after the hype of holiday seasons.



This may be a time when we are all over the map, recovering from the build-up and hype of the Christmas and New Year season. In the days after Christmas – when much of the hype and excitement related to the season has passed – we can exhale a “We made it” sigh. What we’ve been waiting and preparing for – both the spiritual and the practical – has arrived: Christmas and New Year. We enjoyed the respite from some of the hustle and bustle of the past weeks. We also have cluttered our lives with schedules so busy we barely have time to breathe. We plan, prepare, cook, clean, party, and yet wind up exhausted.

However, after the holiday season, after all vacation ended, when we have to go back to our normal life, which we expected to be different this time but in a few day after New Year’s Day we found out it is similar to last year. We might be disappointed and depressed. You might have not been excited at all about the New Year because you might think it will be the same, not different from last year. You might be right. The New Year might be the same as last year. It might be worse with down hills and dark moments. But I believe you can keep celebrating God even through down hills and darkness, because God will be with us and sustain our life anyway.



I do not know whether you like roller coasters or not. Actually I do not like roller coasters. On my second date with my wife, we went to an amusement park. She wanted to ride the most extreme ride in the park. I could not say no, because it must have made me look like a coward. So I took a risk. After the ride, I puked for hours. So

(Cont. to Page 2)

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we had to leave the park just after one ride. She was mad about it. She still talks about that day, when we argue with each other.

Anyway, going down, falling down, is not a pleasant experience. It is awful. But people enjoy it when they ride a roller coaster. Why? Because we know we have a safety bar which can keep us from falling. So we know we are safe even if we are falling down. You might feel going down after the hype of holiday season or when you face the reality. But do not be weary and do not be afraid. Because God holds us together. God is our safety bar, safety belt and safety net. So we can enjoy going down and falling down. Enjoy it. We can praise God who protects and sustains us. We might scream when we go down, but we can laugh when the falling ends and when we start going up even if we know there is another falling down. We can sing Psalm 148 every day as the Israelites sung when they returned from the exile. In every up and down, good and bad, God is with us sustaining us and holding us together. I bless you to enjoy the ups and downs this year. This year will be a Happy New Year. This year will be an exciting ride with God. Happy and Good Riding!!

Best in Christ,
Pastor Kim

■ Potluck Postponed

The January 29th potluck luncheon is cancelled due to the District Service Day to be held at Prospect that afternoon. There will be a make your own pizza in February sponsored by Education Committee?.

■ Prospect Hosting District Resource Day

Prospect Church will be one of two sites hosting a Connecticut District Resource Day within a few weeks. The District Day at Prospect is scheduled for Sunday, January 29th, from 2 to 4:45 p.m. The other Resource Day will take place at Golden Hill U.M. Church in Bridgeport on February 4th from 9 to 11:45 a.m.

Connecticut District Superintendent, Rev. Ken Kieffer, will appear at both Resource Days. The Connecticut District Newsletter invites all to “join us for a time of information, inspiration, and opportunities to interact with United Methodists from around our district.”

Among the topics scheduled are “A Prayer Workshop”; “Conversations With Our Muslim Neighbors”; “Church Finance”; “Prison Ministry In the Community”; “Imagine Abundant Health”; “UMC Today and Forward”; “Stewardship”; “Small Group Leaders”; “Introduction to Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care”; “When Disaster Strikes”; “UMC Today and Forward”; and “Stewardship.”

Pre-registration is encouraged for people to be able to attend the workshop of their choice. Registration details will be available soon.

The Resource Days are coordinated by Maggie Carr, Chair, District Council on Ministries, who can be reached at jcarr01@snet.net; or by calling (203) 284-8278.

■ Charge Conference Held

Prospect’s Charge Conference was held on December 8th. District Superintendent, Rev. Ken Kieffer, presided. Pastor Yountae Kim reports, “Ken Kieffer shared Holy Communion with us and presented a Faithful in Ministry award to our church. A Charge Conference is a very important opportunity to know how our church is working, to participate in our decision- making process and voice opinions.”

The Faithful in Ministry award goes to a church that fully supports all shared ministry apportionments. Rev. Kieffer also shared some ideas for ministries and resources we can do and use for our church.

In addition, he adds, “We heard some witnesses on the ministry going on at Prospect. We elected new trustees and approved new bodies of leaders. The Finance Committee explained our financial situation and looked into our 2017 budget. I hope you all can join in our charge conference next time.”

Thanks To All

From Music Director Heidi Flower regarding the recent death of her mother, long-time Prospect Church member Marge Herold: “I am absolutely overwhelmed by the caring gestures, kind words, beautiful cards and warm hugs that I have received from my Prospect Church family. My mother was so proud of this church and its history. My family has been blessed to have had her for 90-plus years, and she will remain in our hearts forever.

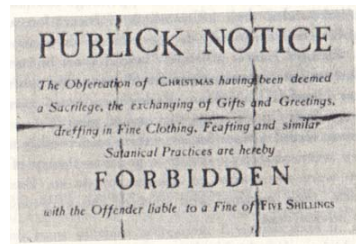
“Thank you again for your love and thoughtfulness!”

*Sincerely,
Heidi Flower*

History Corner

PROSPECT IN EARLIER DAYS

Christmas In Colonial Days - Kathy Dube



With Christmas festivities fresh on our minds, it may be surprising to take note that Christmas wasn't always celebrated in "the Colonies" that became the United States of America. According to a historical review in the Colonial Williamsburg website (http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/christmas/hist_anotherlook.cfm), the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in most of New England. Calvinist Puritans and Protestants abhorred the entire celebration and likened it to pagan rituals and Popish observances.

In 1659, the General Court of Massachusetts forbade, under the fine of five shillings per offense, the observance "of any such day as Christmas or the like, either by forebearing of labour, feasting, or any such way." The Assembly of Connecticut, in the same period, prohibited the reading of the Book of Common Prayer, the keeping of Christmas and saints days, the making of mince pies, the playing of cards, or performing on any musical instruments. These statutes remained in force until they were repealed early in the nineteenth century. In 1749, Peter Kalm noted that the Quakers completely dismissed the celebration of Christmas in Philadelphia. Kalm made another interesting observation about the Presbyterians as well. He wrote in his diary:

Christmas Day. . . .The Quakers did not regard this day any more remarkable than other days. Stores were open, and anyone might sell or purchase what he wanted. . . .There was no more baking of bread for the Christmas festival than for other days; and no Christmas porridge on Christmas Eve! One did not seem to know what it meant to wish anyone a merry Christmas. . . .first the Presbyterians did not care much for celebrating Christmas, but when they saw most of their members going to the English church on that day, they also started to have services.

Christmas Day in 1775 must have been a great disappointment for the Presbyterian missionary, Philip Fithian. A year earlier he had experienced the finest of Virginia Christmases at the residence of Robert Carter, Nomini Hall. But in 1775, Fithian toiled as a missionary in the western counties of Virginia among the Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The following is part of his diary entry for December 25th: *Christmas Morning--Not A Gun is heard--Not a Shout--No company or Cabal assembled--To Day is like other Days every Way calm & temperate-- People go about their daily Business with the same Readiness, & apply themselves to it with the same Industry.*

Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Moravians celebrated the traditional Christmas season with both religious and secular observances. These celebrations in eighteenth-century America were observed by the aforementioned communities in cities such as New York and Philadelphia, in the Middle Atlantic colonies of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, and in the South.

[This article is reprinted from The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter, vol. 16, no. 4, winter 1995-96.]

Mission Corner

■ Methodist Missionaries Primer

By Jill Wilson, Chair, Conference Council of Missions

Cambodia, the Philippines, Japan, Mongolia, Ecuador, and Mozambique to name a few ... These are some of the locations our Methodist church has missionaries. In October 2016 a group of 15, a mix of clergy and laity from the Conference Council on Missions, was hosted by three of them: Revs. Grace and Jay Choi in the Philippines, and Rev. Hikari Chang in Japan.

They introduced us to their ministries, their cultures, their traditions and themselves. It was an educational cross-cultural experience at every turn. They also showed us how our apportionment dollars were at work in their locations. At one point the group met some of the deaconess students who are beneficiaries of our apportionments!

Our NYAC (New York Annual Conference) has a direct relationship with these and other Global Ministry missionaries. Some have Covenant Relationships with our congregations. These relationships are kept alive through email correspondence, Skype sessions, newsletters, and personal visits when they return to the USA and visit supporting congregations.

Our Covenant Relationship with Helen Camarce in Cambodia, begun in 2014, is on-going also! She sends us her periodic newsletters and we can follow her on her Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/105704749592110/>. If you would like to read her latest newsletter (November), go to <http://anewprospect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Newsletter-Nov-2016-PDF2.pdf>

She is looking forward to visiting with us during her next "itineration" visit, which is planned for this year!

The accompanying photographs include highlights of our tour.



Rev. Grace Choi with the Choraliers, the Deaconess in training singing group (Philippines)



Rev. Jay Choi, Union Theological Seminary professor (Philippines) with Jill Wilson

Youth Corner

■ Breakfast With Santa A Snow-Filled Fun Day

Even though the snow came down, the Breakfast with Santa event took place as scheduled on Saturday, December 17th. Santa's reindeer got Santa and Mrs. Claus to PUMC to greet the 70-plus guests who showed up for breakfast and all the fun activities.



After a delicious buffet breakfast of pancakes decorated as a reindeer, sausage, hash browns and eggs, groups were taken around to the activities. They enjoyed Arts and Crafts, a thrilling Magic Show, Story and Music Time and of course, a one-on-one with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Photographs of children talking with Santa were taken for them to enjoy and take home.

Families also shopped in the Elf Mart, where sales were brisk! We are hoping that their families enjoyed the gifts.

Anna and Elsa were unfortunately "frozen" in Airendale but they would like to come and visit with the children on another date. For those who purchased a ticket to the breakfast, we are working on a date for a meet-and-greet with Anna and Elsa. As soon as we have a date we will let you know.

Luisa Gladu, chair of the sponsoring Middle Ages Group, says, "Thank you to all the volunteer elves who made the breakfast a success. We could not have done it without you"!

■ Pageant Success

Music Director Heidi Flower and Church School Superintendent Christa Zaldivar share their thoughts on another successful Christmas Pageant.



From Heidi: "What fun it was to have our children sing each week during Advent as we lit the candles. Thanks to all parents for getting the kids to church and having them practice with the compact disc that I recorded the music on so kids could practice at home or in the car. Our pageant, 'The First Christmas,' was delightful and moving. The children sounded great! I was so proud of all of them. My appreciation is also extended to the members of the Senior Choir and Prospect Tower Handbells for their lovely sounds of the season. I admire their dedication and good cheer."

From Christa: "Our Christmas Pageant, 'The First Christmas,' was a wonderful production performed by 18 Sunday School children, including animals, angels, shepherds, wise men, Joseph, Mary, and even baby Jesus! Our fabulous narrators were Harrison Riker and Zachary Cudjoe. Thanks to all children, families, Sunday School teachers, and Heidi Flower for giving their time and talent to this year's performance!"







Light OF THE World

In a world full of sin and darkness, how can we find our way?
Discover Jesus' answer in John 8:12, NIV.

*Directions: Use the key to fill in the missing vowels.
Then read the completed Bible verse.*

KEY:  **A**  **E**  **I**  **O**

  **M**  **T H**  **L**  **G H T**  **F**

 **T H**  **W**  **H**  **V**  **R**

 **F**  **L L**  **M**  **W**  **N**  **V**  **R**

 **W**  **L K**  **N**  **D**  **R K N**  **S S.**

 **J**  **H N** 8:12, NIV

Answer: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness." John 8:12, NIV

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