



Middletown  
United Methodist Church

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**As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.  
(Psalm 71.14)**

Dear Friends,

I hope that this note finds you and yours filled with hope, peace and assurance that you are in the palm of God's hand. We are living in a time when many would say there is no hope. People are dying. Businesses are closing. Investments are disappearing. Children are home under the instruction of virtual teaching. However, I believe that even now we can and do have hope! As the hymn so boldly states, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness" (My Hope Is Built). Our hope is not built on the things of this earth, the things that so easily pass away. Instead our hope is built in our faith, trust, and belief in Jesus Christ. So, the words of the 71<sup>st</sup> Psalm can then be our own, "I will always have hope." Again, not because of anything we have done, but because of what God has done!

God is doing many wonderful things throughout Middletown United Methodist Church, even during this pandemic! For example, some of our pre - COVID19 ministries have moved online and we have even birthed new ministries. Currently we have 7 different small groups that are meeting on a regular basis: FB Live, Daily Devotional, Coffee Chat, Youth Group, Message Bag, Women's Prayer Group, Bell Choir, and Game Night. (Please email or call the church office for exact login information for each of these small groups). We now have 4 Facebook groups that are associated with our church: MUMC Prays, Grove Hall Gals, Message Bag, and 2020 Vision. We continue to support the Keyport Food Pantry with our ongoing food drive. We have 21 *Connectors*, wonderful people who, on a weekly basis, are reaching out to 7-8 families in the church, simply to see how they are doing. As of May 20<sup>th</sup>, over 6,100 masks have been made and delivered to those serving on the front lines of this pandemic. Each week we are now delivering hot meals to both Bayshore and Riverview hospitals. Our doorstep visitors continue to provide hope

and assurance with their visits and deliveries. Our online worship presence continues to bring glory and honor to God as we gather each Sunday at 10 am to celebrate the Resurrected Christ.

In March of this year, when the anticipated financial impact of the pandemic was becoming real, the leadership of our church made the faithful decision to continue to compensate all 24 employees of the church (this includes Learning Path Preschool). This decision was made anticipating no tuition income from the preschool and while tithes and offerings were not being collected. Since that point in March, you, the members and friends of Middletown United Methodist Church, have been very generous with your tithes and offerings. To date, the total financial contributions of the congregation are comparable to this same time in 2019. Thank you! Thank you for continuing to partner with God. Our God is using Middletown United Methodist Church in great ways to share peace, love, justice, hope, and Good News.

In April the leadership of the church applied for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) through the Small Business Administration (SBA). In May we received notification that our applications for both programs had been accepted and that we had been approved for both loans. The total amount of the funds received from the SBA is \$84,465. Currently these funds are a loan. Right now there is an expectation that we might need to repay some of these funds. Our church leadership will be applying to the SBA for forgiveness of these loans and we are tracking the spending of these loans so that the funds may be forgiven. These funds are dramatically helping our preschool, Learning Path Preschool, and church employees, by allowing MUMC to continue to compensate all 24 workers. As more information is available pertaining to the forgiveness of these loans it will be shared with the congregation.

In addition, the Leadership team of your church has been in the process of developing a plan of how various ministries will start to meet face to face again, including worship, once our Governor has lifted the restrictions. Our plan will comply with CDC, state, county, and township guidelines and will be shared broadly with the Middletown UMC families as soon as it is completed.

God is blessing us here at Middletown United Methodist Church during these times of COVID-19. We continue to faithfully pass on that blessing to others through our various ministries. In addition to the numerous missions and ministries previously mentioned, our Missions Team decided to allocate approximately 50% of our church's annual mission-giving to a variety of missions' partners. We had heard from them about the financial difficulties they were having, and it seemed only

right to share the blessings with them now instead of waiting until the end of the year. Thank you for your continued support of all that God is doing in and through Middletown United Methodist Church. Thank you for how you continue to give back to God of your time, talent, and treasure. For your convenience, at the top of our website ([middletownumcnj.org](http://middletownumcnj.org)) there is a link that you can use to 'give online.' If you have any questions after reading this letter please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any member of the Leadership Team. All of us are humbly serving our God and neighbors together during these unprecedented times.

May the words of Psalm 71 be our own words, especially during this difficult period: "I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more." "Our hope is in the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121.2). Hope on, Middletown United Methodist Church!

Peace and God's blessings.

Humbly serving Christ with you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Derrick L. Doherty". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name of the pastor.

Rev. Derrick L. Doherty

Pastor, Middletown United Methodist Church

**Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.  
(Colossians 3.1-2)**



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United Methodist Church  
*connecting • growing • sharing*