

The Lantern

MOUNT LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WILMINGTON, DEL. | EST^d 1812

**SPECIAL
EDITION**



August 23, 2013 — As most of you know, our pastor will be away on Study Leave from Sept. 2 through Dec. 31 of this year. This is both an exciting and somewhat nerve-wracking opportunity for our congregation and for Pastor Jennifer.

It is exciting in that it gives the congregation an opportunity to step-up and live more fully into caring for each other and the many ministries of the church. It is nerve-wracking in that we don't know exactly how this will all work out. What we do know is that God's faithful love will carry us through.

We have long depended on our pastor for a multitude of tasks and for ongoing support and encouragement; now the congregation, with the help of our Interim Pastor, Rev. Dr. C. Karen Covey Moore, will be able to develop a greater reliance on each other and on God for becoming the body of Christ.

Be assured that much work and planning has gone into preparing for this time and that our lay leadership team of Iva Boardman, Harry West and Chris Portante is well equipped, with God's good grace, to work through whatever comes.

What is a Study Leave?

First, let's cover **what a study leave is not**:

- A study leave is not the precursor to a pastor's leaving a church.
- A study leave is not an extended vacation for the pastor.
- A study leave is not an invitation for church members to "vacate" church!
- A study leave is not the time to rework the entire church to fit your interests or desires.

Now, here's **what a study leave is**:

- A time of rest, renewal and reflection for the pastor to pursue topics more deeply than otherwise possible while juggling the many cares and demands of ministry.
- A time permitted by the UM Book of Discipline after a pastor has served full-time at least six years in a local church setting to take up to six months of formational and spiritual growth leave.
- A time approved by the local church's Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the Administrative Council and the District Superintendent prior to the leave being granted.
- A wonderful opportunity for a congregation to grow together in God's steadfast presence and sustaining love as they work to continue the mission and ministry of the church.

How does this Study Leave work?

The primary functions of the church have been divided up into three areas of Worship, Pastoral Care and Administrative Ministries, and each area will be coordinated by one person.

Worship, coordinated by Iva Boardman, will continue each Sunday morning at 10:30am:

- Pastor Karen will be with us each first Sunday for communion and on third Sundays leading worship, as well as Christmas Eve Service at 7pm.
- On the remaining Sundays (and the Family Christmas Eve Service at 5pm), our trained Lay Speakers and Guest Speakers will fill the pulpit and lead us in worship.

- Administrative Assistant Phoebe Chan will continue to prepare the bulletins each Thursday by noon – if you have anything to include in the bulletin on any given week, please contact her by phone or email.

Emergency Pastoral Care concerns will be coordinated through Lay Leader Harry West:

- During September, Rev. Tracy Mooney will provide emergency pastoral care coverage. She may be reached directly at Peniel UMC, 994-9519, or the parsonage, 998-8165.
- From October-December, Pastor Karen will provide emergency pastoral care coverage. All calls requiring her attention should be made either to the church office during office hours, 652-8411, or to Harry West at 998-9124 or cell phone 584-8396.
- Harry will be coordinating all funeral arrangements with Pastor Karen and the family during this time.

Administrative Ministries will be coordinated through Chris Portante, Admin. Council Chair:

- Please refer any matters related to property, finance or personnel to Chris who will work with the chairpersons of those ministry areas, consulting with our Lay Leaders as needed. You can reach Chris by phone 750-8353 or email, cportante@gmail.com.
- Charge Conference scheduled for Wed, Oct. 9 at 7pm, will be coordinated by Chris. Remember he will need your cooperation in getting reports submitted in a timely fashion!

Please consult with Iva Boardman, Harry West or Chris Portante about any concerns or questions you have regarding any church matters throughout this four-month time period. They are ready, willing and able to help; just remember though that they have many other responsibilities in addition to whatever your concern or issue may be. Be patient and supportive for Jesus' sake.

Whom do I call if someone gets sick or dies?

If you or someone you know and love becomes hospitalized, requires surgery or dies, please call the church office at 652-8411 — or Harry West at 998-9124 or 584-8396 (cell phone) — immediately so that Pastoral Care can be put in place.

How do I get help if I need Emergency Assistance Funds?

If you or your family is in need of emergency financial assistance, our church family is dedicated to providing help. Please contact Harry West at 998-9124 or cell phone 584-8396 and either ask to speak to the pastor on call or speak with Harry directly about the situation and he will coordinate obtaining the help necessary through our church Emergency Assistance Funds.

Why does our Pastor need a study leave?

- Ministry is an incredibly public and demanding way of life; the cumulative responsibilities and exposure require a deeper time of renewal than can typically be obtained with one day a week rest which is often interrupted by other ministry demands.
- Ministry that is effective and continually growing needs adequate time for reflection and retooling. Pastor Jennifer has long desired to widen and deepen her practice of leading worship and preaching skills. This is the content focus of her study leave. She will be reading extensively, visiting other churches, listening to other preachers, interviewing them and learning from them and attending classes over this time period.
- Our pastor spent the first five years of ministry here at Mt. Lebanon facing formidable challenges of helping our congregation heal and nurture new growth and new leadership. While much has improved and we are well on our way to becoming a healthy and active church, your pastor has born the brunt of this work while at the same time carrying on all the other duties and cares of ministry. A time of rest is a good and worthy pursuit.

Are We Ready?

A note from Mt. Lebanon's Co-Lay Leaders

As we draw close to September 1, when Pastor Jennifer begins her study leave, the question of our congregation's readiness is a natural one. I am reminded of so many big events that occur in life, like graduations, weddings, having children, first and subsequent jobs, retirements, etc. While the list may differ for each of us, it is safe to say that each of us has had one and probably would score grades from A to F on how ready we have been for the various events.

I can assure you that Pastor Jennifer has worked with the leadership of our church to think through and plan for each of the elements that she does and continues to do seamlessly for us. From September 2nd through December 31, 2013, we as the congregation of Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church have an opportunity to give back, to execute lessons learned, to pull together, to grow and be ready to lovingly receive our pastor when she returns.

Will we get it all right or do it as Pastor Jennifer does it? Absolutely not! However, I so believe that we can do it because we are children of God. With our eyes on Jesus and with faith and trust in our Heavenly Father, we can do it. We will need to love and be committed to God and each other so that we can work through issues.

Psalm 46 assures us that God is our strength and refuge, a very present help in trouble. How blessed we are to be God's children and have each other as brothers and sisters. Please join me with prayers for Pastor Jennifer as she gets ready to begin her study leave and for our congregation to not miss a beat in our worship and service to God during the coming months. With God, I believe that we are indeed ready!

— Iva Boardman and Harry West

A few requests:

- Love one another even more than you already do, especially when things don't seem to go smoothly or as you had expected.

- Make sure to attend church as often as you possibly can to support each of our lay speakers who have spent much time and energy preparing each Sunday worship for you!
- Remember that Pastor Jennifer is sequestering herself during this time period; please do not text, email, call, leave messages or send notes. Please understand that she will not be in contact with you during this time, not because she doesn't love all of us but because she is trying to renew her focus on her relationship with Christ first and foremost in her life. Trust that the love we share in Jesus Christ will remain strong through our prayers and the bonds we have forged in God's love. Be assured, Pastor Jennifer fully expects and plans to return in January 2004.

Contact Information

Worship

Iva Boardman, Lay Leader
475-8744

Emergency Pastoral Care

Harry West, Lay Leader
998-9124 (H) or 584-8396 (C)

Administrative Ministries

(Staff, Finance, Trustees, The Lantern)

Chris Portante, Admin. Council
750-8353

Information for Bulletin

Phoebe Chan, Admin. Assistant
652-8411

office.mtlebanonumc@verizon.net

Reflections from the Pastor...

It is really difficult to believe that there are only two more weeks until September. I am so very grateful to each of you for your willingness to release and support me through this upcoming time apart. While I am excited about the work ahead and the chance to reflect on ministry in all its various forms, I must confess I am also struggling. Put very simply, I will miss each of you and being part of your lives through this time. We don't call it church family for nothing do we?

I have recognized over these last several months of planning and preparing that this challenge of trusting you to God is both a blessing and a lesson. It's a blessing in that I am daily leaning more strongly on God's steadfast promises to care for those I love as well as myself through this time. It's a lesson because I am realizing more and more deeply that what each of us need first and foremost is Jesus. Each day, I trust that me stepping away for this time will help you grow closer to God. I also hope and pray that you will grow closer to each other; supporting each other, watching over one another in Christ's love, stretching and reaching out to one another even if you might be irritated or annoyed at another's behavior or words, remembering to check in on each other when you don't see somebody for awhile and always to point one another to Christ.

Our new purpose statement is a great focus tool to help hold us together in the days ahead: Through God's grace, Mt. Lebanon is a welcoming, caring, accepting and praying church family passionate about Christian discipleship and generous service. I thank God for the generous love, support and service that you have extended to me for this study leave. I can't wait to see and share what God is up to in the life of our church family, as well as in my walk of discipleship, when we see each other again in New Year!

~ Pastor Jennifer Kerby

MOUNT LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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E-mail: office.mtlebanonumc@verizon.net

Worship Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School at 9 a.m.