

Middletown Messenger

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

APRIL/MAY 2017

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APRIL EVENTS

- 1 | Monthly fellowship potluck
- 1 | Young Adult Spring Hike
- 8 | Sing & Celebrate Spring Musical
- 14 | Agape Feast
- 16 | Easter Egg Hunt & Potluck
- 22 | Greeters Appreciation Lunch
- 22 | Young Adults Volunteering for Refugees

MAY EVENTS

- 6 | Church & Picnic at Beckley Park

Every Tribe, Tongue & Nation!

"Welcome to International Weekend" Middletown is blessed to have more than 24 countries represented amongst our members and attendees. This cultural diversity inspired the first International Weekend on the first weekend of March to celebrate how our differences of



background and experience make us stronger in Christ.

The theme scripture for the exciting, two-day event was Acts 2:5-11, which describes the ethnic diversity in the growing New Testament church.

During the International Concert on Friday evening, 11 soloists, groups, and choirs sang lyrics in Romanian, Kpelle, Mizo, Portuguese, Spanish, Twi, German, English, and Malayalam. A delicious light supper



preceded the concert during which dozens of attendees socialized and got into the spirit of the event.

On Sabbath morning, Women's Ministries hosted an appetizing continental breakfast of various pastries, fresh fruit, eggs, hash browns, and juice. Following was

Combined Sabbath School in the sanctuary featuring a rousing song service, an inspiring mission story ("Tormented Yet Faithful") energetically dramatized by Joey Karr, special music, and an engaging panel lesson discussion on the Holy Spirit facilitated by Martin Lalnunsanga.

The grand Parade of Nations featured the processional of 24 colorful international flags and the sounds of "Baba Yetu" ("The Lord's Prayer" in Swahili). Our own Children's Bell Choir chimed "Amazing Grace" while the deaconesses gathered the tithes



and offerings. The International Worship Team accompanied by the band led the congregation in inspiring praise and worship music. Middletown Mass Choir who sang the two event theme songs, "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" and "Love in Any Language", featuring lyrics performed in including



French, Spanish, Russian, Hebrew, English, and American Sign Language. And Pastor Marius even opened his sermon on



"Discipleship with Jesus—John" by speaking several phrases in Romanian!

Afterwards during the International Potluck, over 125 diners waiting patiently in the line

that snaked halfway around the fellowship hall, and no one's wait was in vain. The menu featured dozens of mouth-watering, homemade dishes from around the globe, including vegetable potstickers, samosas, tofu rice noodles, fried plantains, taco salad, mixed grains, enchiladas, sweet rice bread, tamales, picadillo, and channa saag. This cornucopia of flavors could only be described as extremely scrumptious!



International Weekend promises to become a beloved annual fixture at Middletown. Let's work towards Christian unity and love.

Let's build on our diversity to draw us closer together and build the kingdom of God! In the lyrics of "He Reigns", "Every tribe, every tongue, every nation, hallelujah, hallelujah!"



Foodies Fill Up on Indian Flavor!



Our own Shiny Varughese, a native of Pathanamthitta in the Indian state of Kerala, presented a mouth-watering demonstration of authentic Indian cooking on Sunday, February 12. Among the scrumptious dishes she prepared and served to the more than fifteen attendees were Mezhkuperati (mixed vegetable stir fry), fragrant Basmati Rice, Bhelpuri (a North Indian snack/appetizer), and entrees Spinach Curry and Chana Dal (Chickpea Curry).

awesome cook! I'm so glad that Shiny volunteered to do this!" And Missy Woodall

simply quipped "Super yummy!" Thank you, Shiny!



Onlookers learn to make Mezhkuperati and other Indian dishes

*"Delicious food!
Can't wait to
make my own!"*



Saige devours a mouthful of delicious Chana Dal!



Attendees received insider tips on which spices to use and how to prepare various items (e.g. soak the rice >30 min. before cooking it).

Everyone was bowled over by Shiny's flavorful cooking! "Delicious food! Can't wait to make my own!" exclaimed Barbara Hagele. Marilyn Matherly raved "What an

Spinach Curry

- 1 bunch spinach (fresh spinach, washed and chopped; can use frozen)
- 2 medium-sized onions, chopped roughly
- 1 large-sized, well-ripened tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1/2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp chili powder (1-1 1/2 tsp for less spicy)
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1/2 tsp Garam Masala powder (Rajah brand is recommended)
- 2 Tbsp yogurt or cream (vegan substitute: soy yogurt)
- Salt
- Oil



Step 1: In a pot, bring water to a boil and turn it off. Add salt and a pinch of turmeric. Put the cut spinach in the hot water for about 3-5 min. Drain the spinach (keep a little of the water, if possible) and keep aside.

Step 2: In a pan, heat oil and add cumin seeds until it turns slightly dark. Then add the onion and garlic and occasionally stir until it turns brown. Add the spices and let it fry a little. Then add tomatoes, and once it's mushy, keep it aside to cool a bit. Grind the onion mixture and pour it back into the pan.

Step 3: Grind spinach, add to the onion mixture, and mix it well. Then add cream or yogurt.

Additional notes: You can add potatoes. Cut potatoes into cubes, cook until it's tender, and add to spinach mixture. You can also add chick peas.

Caring for You in Time of Need

Merriam-Webster describes an undershepherd as "a person who protects, guides, or watches over a person or group of people." Our church family is divided into parishes, with each active member being assigned to one of our nine elders. This helps the elders to share the responsibilities of providing pastoral care to our growing congregation by serving as undershepherds (see "Ordained for Christian Service", p. 3).

The current Elders Board includes Head Elder Lee Hall, Joey Karr, Stephanie Karr, Barbara Hagele, Jeff Lewis, Brenda Reynolds, Yvonne Mickens, Melvin Kirkwood, and Martin Lalnunsanga.

If you experience death in the family; hospitalization or illness of yourself or a member of your family; or any other personal crisis; or if you otherwise need prayer, support, or spiritual guidance,

please contact your assigned elder as soon as possible. They take their ministry seriously, and they are never too busy to be there for you in your time of need. Please reach out to them.

You should have received a letter recently introducing you to your assigned elder. If you do not know who your elder is, please contact the church office or Head Elder Lee Hall.

Ordained for Christian Service



The word "deacon" derives from the Greek word "diákonos" which means "servant" or "minister". Deacons and deaconesses serve the local congregation by assisting with baptisms and Holy Communion, visiting the sick, maintaining the church building, and otherwise relieving some of the burdens of leadership fulfilled by the pastor and elders.

On Sabbath, January 28, three deacons and thirteen deaconesses who have already been actively serving at Middletown, some for many years, were ordained as servant leaders during a special ceremony. Head Deacon Eddie Brown and Head Deaconess Sandy Hall called the to-be-ordained members of their respective ministries to stand

before the congregation. Pastor Marius read a brief excerpt describing the responsibilities of deaconship, followed by laying on of hands by ordained elders and deacons from the congregation and a prayer of ordination.

Deaconesses who were ordained included Allie Dick, Annette Holliday, Valentina Benitez, Joy Dugan, Louise

Jernigan, Deborah Moore, Babie Lalremsiami, Pat Rosenthal, Connie Asamoah, Sussane Ndege, Amy Crain, Sandy Hall, and Jenise Robertson. Newly-ordained deacons included Liam Lang, Kevyn Benitez, and Evan Dick. Each ordinee received a commemorative Certificate of Ordination.

Praise God that He set apart these adults and youth to serve in His kingdom! Keep them in prayer as they serve and provide leadership to the household of faith as humble and willing servants.

Deacons and deaconesses serve the local congregation by...relieving some of the burdens of leadership fulfilled by the pastor and elders.

Bowled Over with Fun!

STRRRRRRIKE!!! Yes, a few of these were rolled by the ten energetic bowlers who gathered at Kingpin Lanes on Saturday evening, February 11 for Young Adult Bowling Night. Admittedly, most of them were gutter balls and spares. However, what the group lacked in bowling skill was made up for by making friends and laughing together.

Our Young Adult Ministry includes ages 18-35 in a variety of spiritual, social, and outreach opportunities. Please pray for and connect with them!



Front L-to-R: Nii, Julia, Dora, Brittany
Rear L-to-R: Emmanuel, Jimmy, Taku, Mellanie, Curtis, John


Sing & Celebrate
 Spring Musical
Sabbath, April 8
5:00 pm

Kids' Korner

Children, decode the Bible verse in the rebus puzzle to the right for a message about Someone who cares about you!





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"A safe environment... where people relationships become kingdom relationships"

Pen of Inspiration

by Elder Jeff Lewis

THINK PRAYER FIRST

According to Luke 22:39-46, Jesus and His disciples went up the southwestern side of the Mount of Olive to the garden of Gethsemane. He (Jesus) knew of the extreme agony and trials He would soon face, yet His first thought was to find a place where He could pray.

This is the example we are all to follow when facing challenges and seeking answers for difficult problems.

- Think prayer first because Jesus listens and hears you when you pray.
- Find a quiet place to call upon Jesus in prayer.
- Be deliberate in your communication with Jesus; let it be conscious and intentional.
- Submit in prayer for the will of God as Jesus did.
- Surrender; give Jesus all your wants and desires as you pray.

When Jesus called upon His Father for help, His Father sent an angel to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43), Likewise, we, too, will receive strength when we call upon the Lord in times of trouble. (see Isaiah 40:31).

Prayer is our primary protection against temptation and problems. In good times or bad times, let us always think prayer first above everything as we connect with our Lord.

Middletown's Got Talent!

by Brittany Fletcher



On Saturday, January 28, the first-ever Middletown's Got Talent!/Family Feud Night was hosted by the awesome Social Committee and coordinated by Jenise Roberston and Rolando Gil. The congregation joined together for a night of laughs, food, and fellowship with more than 50 adults and children in attendance.

Pizza, breadsticks, salad, and desserts were served.

This festivity provided the opportunity to see the talents of our members, both young and old. Featured talents by the Lewis siblings included a piano piece entitled "Ballade" by Kris Lewis, Erin Lewis playing violin, and Milan Lewis performing an energetic gymnastics routine.



Attendees also enjoyed watching sisters Chloe Godinez complete a rhythmic cup demonstration while singing "Jesus Loves Me", and two-year-old Saige Godinez assembled a 24-piece puzzle in about five minutes



while her sister Krysta hula-hooped in perfect time without missing a beat. There was also a passionate Paul Laurence Dunbar poetry recitation ("When Malindy Sings") by Marian Spriggs, and a sobering rendition of "Amazing Grace"

by Mary Smith. Randy Slayton also sang and played "Great King Jesus" on the guitar.

Talent acts were punctuated by the duel of Powerpuff Girls (Mellanie Hunter, Brittany Fletcher, Prima Parsons, Samantha Rabuka, and Rhonda Monroe) vs. G-Men (George

Matherly, Kris Lewis, Erin Lewis, Victor LaBoo, and Curtis Tucker) in a classic game of Family Feud, hosted by the magnificent Danny DuBosque AKA "Steve Harvey". Both teams played four entertaining and comedic rounds, but it was the Powerpuff Girls who came out victorious!



Thank you to all who coordinated, supported, and came out to this wonderful event. Everyone, begin brushing up on your talents and Family Feud skills, and we hope to see you there next year!