

# Joyful Notes



## Pastor's Message

I bring greetings to you today, but since I do not tend to talk in ways that sound so formal, I would rather just say "hi" to everyone. I want to start off by saying how grateful I am for the honor and privilege of being asked to be your pastor. I am sending out a word of thanks to Gloria Jones, from whom you have already received, by email, a glimpse into my background. Having received this information, it also affirms the good news of a new beginning, that on July 1, 2020, I will officially be appointed to serve the Astoria First United Methodist Church and Seaside United Methodist Church.

One of my first introductions to Astoria FUMC came when I read the profile which I received from Rev. Tim Overton-Harris, when we were discussing the possibility of accepting this appointment. As I read the profile, there was a sense of great devotion to the church, and to one another. The outward expression of Astoria's ministry is evident in providing a space and place for the Warming Center, and providing

care and concern for those facing homelessness, not only in words, but more importantly in action. Astoria FUMC shines brightly in the city of Astoria, even behind the scenes bringing help and hope to the lives of anyone who reaches out.

What I saw in the profile, and experienced in meeting the pastor, and many of the leaders of the church, even by means of Zoom, is a depth of love for the Astoria Church, supported by the desire to see the church grow and thrive. I appreciate the enthusiasm and openness of the leaders who clearly care about the direction of the church. Those who attend the church, or who are members of the Astoria FUMC community, appreciate the value of outreach, yet I also hear a passion for strengthening the connection and community within the church as well.

In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, there are currently no opportunities for in-person worship, but in anticipation of my arrival, I am working with the church leaders

*(continued on page 3)*

## About Our New Pastor

Dear church family,

As we prepare to welcome our new pastor Michael Avila now is a good time to share some information.

Michael is new to our Conference he is an Ordained Elder in full connection in Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. He and his wife Vicki moved to Oregon where she had grown up to be closer to her family. They live in Redmond where Vicki works for the Redmond school district. They intend to keep their home in Redmond where Vicki will continue to work while Michael will live in the parsonage in Seaside. Michael said he and Vicki look forward making a home on the North Coast and getting to know the Astoria and Seaside communities.

*(continued on page 2)*

## Please mail in your weekly offering

Keep in mind that the church still has monthly bills to pay during this time of shelter in place.

At this time there isn't revenue coming in from our building use groups as well. Sue Hicks makes a deposit of offerings each week.

Thank you for giving by mail!

**Giving  
by mail**



## **About Our New Pastor - (continued from page 1)**

Michael has a Doctor of Ministry Degree from New York Theological Seminary. In addition he is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and he is a Psychotherapist Member of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.

When asked what are some of the areas of ministry he has the most interest in he wrote, "I am interested in contributing to the continued environment of acceptance and hope, where no one is excluded, and all are welcome, always...initially I am looking forward to getting to know folks, in learning about the things in life that bring them joy, and those things that weigh heavily on their hearts and minds."

Michael's first opportunity to start getting to know us will be Sunday, July 5th at 11:30 when we join together to worship in a ZOOM WORSHIP.

The invitation to the zoom worship will come in an e-mail from the church which will also contain the order of worship. If you have a computer, I Pad or smart phone you can easily join in the zoom worship. If you need help getting set up with zoom call me and I will try to help or we will find someone else who can.

Gloria

## ***Cascadia District Opportunities to Connect with Wendy and One Another***

As we continue to be the church and doing ministry in these challenging times, I want to continue the opportunity for virtual gatherings of laity and clergy. These gatherings will be an opportunity to get to know one another better, address challenges you are facing and celebrate what is going well. I will also share updates from PNW and OR-ID. Given this is summer, these will not be

every week. I look forward to sharing in this time together!

**Tuesdays :  
July 7 & 21, August 11**

**Clergy, LLP and Lay  
Assigned Gatherings:  
at 9:00 am -- Let's have  
Coffee/Tea Together**

**Laity Gatherings at 7:00 pm**  
- Rev. Wendy Woodworth,  
Cascadia DS



## **Goodbye and Hello**



Way back in February, Bishop Stanovsky announced her intention to appoint Rev. Tim Overton-Harris, current Cascadia District Superintendent, as Superintendent of the Columbia District effective July 1, 2020. At the same time she announced her intention to appoint Rev. Wendy Woodworth as the Cascadia District Superintendent effective July 1, 2020.

And now that time has almost come! On Sunday, June 14 we held a Cascadia District Zoom meeting in which we celebrated this past year, and we said our thank yous and goodbyes to DS Tim. We wish him all the best as he transitions into working with the churches and people of the Columbia District.

And this week we turn to welcoming the new Cascadia District Superintendent, Rev. Wendy Woodworth. She comes to the Superintendency after 26 years of pastoral ministry in the local church, all in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

- excerpt from Cascadia District News

## *Pastor's Message - (continued from page 1)*

on exploring ways to do church, especially as we move into different phases of re-entry. One of the options that came to life even this week, involves moving into worship through Zoom. In fact, together with Gloria and Mary Frances, we have all but planned our first ever Zoom worship service scheduled for the first Sunday in July. I am looking forward to continuing to work with church leaders, not only on a re-entry plan, but making room to foster the experience of worship and connection as a faith community.

I am also aware that Astoria FUMC and Seaside UMC sharing a pastor for the first time is a big deal, and a big step to take for everyone. Change is not easy, and even "good change" can be challenging just because it is something different than the structure that is more familiar. As I think about serving both churches in this shared appointment, I feel such gratitude for how each church, with roots in two distinct communities, facing their own unique challenges and opportunities, are continuing to touch the hearts and lives of those seeking a place of welcome, acceptance, and love. I also feel inspired by the spirit of harmony

and cooperation, already evidenced by the leadership of the Seaside and Astoria churches, especially in sorting out the details of what sharing a pastor will mean for both congregations.

As I prepare to move into the North Coast and begin to come alongside the good people of Astoria FUMC, I am genuinely excited and can hardly wait to get started. As I have said in other places, I am like the little boy on a road trip who keeps saying, "are we there yet?" In that same spirit, I can hardly wait to move in and begin this new journey with this deeply rooted faith community whose intention and commitment are to making room for any and all who are seeking a place where they can be accepted, valued, and loved, without condition or limitation.

One of the best parts of ministry and serving as your pastor comes with the honor and privilege of getting to know each and every person who calls Astoria FUMC home. As the time for my arrival draws closer, I look



forward to learning about the many and creative and unexpected ways God will continue to bring light to the world through us all.

Astoria First United Methodist Church has a long and enduring heritage that is not shut down by adversity, but through its people thrives, even in the face of the challenges we face in today's pandemic-infused world. The fact is that we will come through this difficult period of time, but we can face together what we could never do by ourselves. This is heart and the spirit of the Astoria FUMC about what God wants to do in our church and our community. Please, remember me in your prayers, as I remember each of you. May God give us eyes to see and ears to hear, not only what God is doing, but what God wants us to understand and learn

from one another, as we continue together to be a beacon of God's light and hope in the world.

I look forward to how God will guide us and sustain us in the days ahead. As I mentioned earlier, I am looking down the road, watching for the road markers along the way and asking over and over again, "Are we there yet?"

Blessings-  
Pastor Michael

**Share a story,  
pray requests &  
announcements  
with us!**

**Our newsletter is a great way to keep in touch, especially at this time during the pandemic. You are encouraged to submit news by the 20th of each month to share in our newsletter!**



Astoria First United  
Methodist Church

1076 Franklin Avenue  
Astoria, OR 97103

Request Service Requested

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the church office and all activities at church have been suspended until further notice.**

**As Pastor Michael will not be moving into the area until July 1st,  
he is available to respond to pastoral care needs by phone 541-499-9703 until that time.  
Pastor Michael will follow up in person after his arrival.**

**Bishop:** *Elaine Stanovsky*  
**District Superintendent:** *Wendy Woodworth*  
**Pastor:** *Rev. Michael Avila*  
**Administrative Assistant:** *Lynette Vollmer*  
**Astoria Lay Leaders:** *Chuck Albright & Sue Hicks*  
**Finance Chairperson:** *Sue Hicks*  
**Lay Member to Annual Conference:** *Mary Frances Gunn*

**Visit us on Facebook!**  
Web site: [www.unitedmethodistastoria.org](http://www.unitedmethodistastoria.org)

**Church Office: 503.325.5454**