

## An Encouraging Word for February 15, 2023

**On Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 1pm we will be having a Celebration of Life for Nobu Asaki here at Mt. Carmel.** There will be a luncheon in the hall immediately after.

**Volunteers NEEDED - We will be having a MCUMC Work Day on March 4<sup>th</sup> from 8am to 2pm.** We are looking to spruce up our church. We could use all the help you can give.

**There will be a very important Administrative Council Meeting on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm at the church.** All council members are strongly encouraged to attend. The District Superintendent will be our guest.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! PASTA NIGHT WILL BE SUNDAY APRIL 2, 4-7PM.** Buy your tickets today. \$12 for adults and \$8 for children. You can contact me by phone or email in the church office. We are also selling tickets on Sundays. Please spread the word.

**Please share this with everyone!!! Mt. Carmel Child Development Center has an immediate opening for a full-time, energetic and creative teacher to work with their 2's, 3's, and 4's combined class.** The hours are 7:00 am - 4:00 pm, Monday - Friday (1 hour lunch break). A 90 hour Child Care Certification and a minimum of 1 year related work experience are required. If you want to work in a supportive, fun environment, this is the job for you! Please send a resume to Dawn Rey at [mtcarmelcdc2@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmelcdc2@gmail.com).

**From the Outreach Committee** - Did you notice all the activity in the church kitchen last Sunday? The members of the Faith/Hope Circle were busy putting together a meal for our housebound members and friends for Valentine's Day. What a great idea! Thanks to everyone who made and delivered the meal.

**We will continue to collect shelf-stable food items for the Pasadena Soup Kitchen.** They recently received a good amount of canned goods from the Maryland Food Bank so they are almost caught up with the supplies they need for the near future.

However, there is always a need with the price of food increasing almost weekly. If we get the Soup Kitchen caught up, we could go back to helping NCEON with our donations. We will keep you updated. But for the time being, please continue to donate. Every little bit helps someone in need. Thank you.

**The Child Development Center is having a ZUMBA class on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup> 12-1pm.** Tickets are \$10 and the first 5 to sign up receive a special gift!! Please contact the center for more information and sign up. 410-255-2429. **They are also having an online fundraiser...** Follow these directions to shop for popcorn, candy, jewelry, kitchen gadgets, toys, and more!!

1. Go to [www.fundraisingshoppingcart.com](http://www.fundraisingshoppingcart.com)
2. In the middle of the page you will see a green "SHOP ONLINE" button. Click on it.
3. Where it says "SELLER ID NUMBER" enter 00341207

That's it!! It's that easy!! Now you can begin to shop. If you have any questions, please direct them to 410-255-2429.

**If you have prayer requests**, even if you plan to share them at Sunday worship, you may forward them ahead of time to Jen at the church office and she will compile a list to be used on Sunday morning. The church email is [mtcarmel21122@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmel21122@gmail.com) and our phone number is 410-255-8887. **Prayer Cards are also available in the Narthex on Sunday morning.** If you have a prayer or concern, we encourage you to fill out a card and it will be collected and read that morning.

**We want to remind you that we are still using Zoom for our Sunday Services.** Zoom allows you to join us from wherever you may be!! (Join us in your pj's with a morning cup of coffee) As most of you who Zoom our worship services know, I greet Zoom attendees as they sign on, take Zoom attendance, and assign names to phone numbers as phone callers sign on. I open the Zoom meeting at 9 a.m. to give people time to sign on. I encourage you to sign on early to avoid the crush of people signing on at the last minute. The earlier you sign on the easier it is for me to attend to the greeting responsibilities. It also gives us a chance to chat and share prayer requests. **If you should have any problems logging in, please alert Jennifer in the office.**

**The Announcements and Bulletin for Sunday's service are included as attachments to this encouraging word.** Please feel free to print them out and either bring them with you to the service or to use them as your guide as you Zoom the service.

### **An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike**

"Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow,  
for tomorrow will worry about itself.  
Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34

Turkey earthquake, Chinese balloon, Ukraine missiles, Korean buffoon, Facebook bullies, Trumper rage, more mass shootings, stagnant wage, UFOs and GMOs, MGT and Twitter woes; and all of that in just the last couple of weeks. Sounds like an additional verse to Billy Joel's hit "We Didn't Start the Fire", doesn't it? I probably could have added a great deal to the verse I penned here. There seems to be no shortage of things to obsess and worry over these days and I am THE champion ruminator. I have a tendency to obsess and worry over things. If there is something to worry about, don't worry, I will!

Ruminate is an interesting word. It is from the Latin ruminantem which means to turn over in the mind, muse, meditate, think again and again. Ruminate also describes the action of chewing the cud that cows (which are true ruminants) love to do. Well, I don't eat hay, but I do tend to consume way too much of the information that is available to me these days and turn it over and over again in my mind, a mental and emotional cud chewing that produces a kind of useless mental mush. Not only is excessive rumination probably unhealthy, it is also a waste of time. It can keep us from doing the things we need to be doing. It can become an insidious feedback loop sucking us down into an abyss of fear. I have found that ruminating over the world's troubles, or obsessing over personal problems and slights, past or present, all tend to prolong my negative moods. And while I'm getting lost in those thoughts, I tend not to get anything constructive done. This is not exactly the kind of thing that God expects and wants of us. Jesus acknowledges that we will continue to hear of dire events that may cause us worry but not to worry. "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of

wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.”  
Matthew 24:6.

So, what do I do when I start to obsess and ruminate? Much of what I worry about falls under the category of “things I have no control over”. I simply must acknowledge this and force myself to move on. I can’t do anything about Chinese balloons, alien UFOs, or certain wacky congresspeople. Those are the things I leave in God’s hands. I delegate that stuff to God. Some things I can act on, so I get off the dime and act on them. I always feel better when I’m acting rather than worrying. Yes, I worry about the homeless, either I can ruminate on that and how unfair the world is, or I can do something, even a little thing to help. I can obsess about the calamity of global warming and get pulled into a vortex of despair, or I can do my small part in helping to mitigate the problem. I can obsess about obsessing or I can write an essay on how to stop obsessing. Get the idea?

Experts tell us that one way to avoid obsessing over something is to avoid triggers. For instance, I know I have a tendency to worry about the current escalation of tension between superpowers and the possibility of a nuclear exchange. One thing I don’t want to be doing is watching movies like “Failsafe”, “On the Beach” or “Dawns Early Light” which all deal with our apocalyptic end in a nuclear war. That would be a trigger. I worry about the loss of civility in public discourse, so I know that hanging out on Twitter or Facebook is not going to be helpful. Given the venom of the exchanges I see in social media my exposure to those things will just make things worse. Instead, I listen to music, I watch a Rom Com, or I take a walk.

Perhaps the best thing I can do is pray. Psalm 94:19 declares “When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul.” When I find that my worries are becoming overwhelming or when I find that I’m chewing on my fears, turning them over and over again in my mind, I take it all to God in prayer. In fact, this is something I can do even in the face of things I can otherwise do nothing about. When I focus on God the fear of and obsessing over everything else falls away.

So yes, there are plenty of things in the world for us to worry and obsess over. Truth be told there always have been. Yet we’re still here, more or less in one piece, and God is now, as God has been always, in control.

That’s all for today. I’ll see you on Sunday either on Zoom or at in-person worship. Until then be well, stay safe, make good decisions in this Coronavirus environment, and in please stay connected to each other and to God.

Blessings & Peace, Mike