

Announcements and Encouraging Word for March 29, 2023

Would you like to remember or honor a loved one this Easter? You may do so by purchasing a flower to decorate the church or you may donate to the Trustees Fund or to the General Fund. Please complete the form attached (and found in your bulletin on Sunday and copies in the Narthex) and place it in the offering plate or in the lockbox on the Church office door. Checks should be made payable to Mt. Carmel UMC. **Deadline is Friday, March 31st.**

Holy Week and Easter Services

***** There will be no Sunday School on Easter. Any children who come that Sunday are encouraged to go to church with their families and enjoy the music. *****

Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) – April 6, 2023 – Communion – 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday - April 7, 2023 – Worship Service – 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday – April 9, 2023 - Easter Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m.

8231 Bayside Drive, Pasadena

(Home of Dave Shelton's Sister, Joanne)

Easter Sunday – April 9, 2023 – Easter Celebration Service – 9:30 a.m.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! PASTA NIGHT WILL BE THIS SUNDAY APRIL 2, 4-7PM. Buy your tickets NOW. \$12 for adults and \$8 for children. You can contact me by phone or email in the church office. We will have a **LIMITED** number of tickets available at the door. **Please help spread the word.**

Are you following the church on social media? If not, you should! Our Facebook account is <https://www.facebook.com/mtcarmelumconnection/> And our Instagram account is <https://www.instagram.com/mcumc21122/>

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.

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 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

Nobody wants to look under the hood, and absolutely no one wants someone else to look under the hood for them. We all own automobiles that require inspection and service from time to time. It used to be something you could do yourself with the assistance of a few basic tools, a halfway decent service manual, and a sense of adventure. These days however most of us have to leave it to the professionals. I own two late model cars and one of those is a hybrid. When I open the hood these days I find myself faced with a confusing array of doodads that are completely beyond my scope of understanding. I know how to check the oil, top off the coolant reservoir, and fill the washer bottle. That's about it. So not only do I not want to look under the hood, I have no idea what to do or what to look for if I tried. As for having someone else look under the hood for me? Well, that's an area where most wisemen fear to tread. Letting the professionals look under the hood is like opening a very expensive Pandora's box. They are sure to find something wrong and it's bound to be pricey. Nevertheless, we need to submit our chariots to periodic inspection and service. That is unless we WANT to get stuck along the road somewhere, probably someplace sketchy, and when it's most inconvenient. Yes, it can be a financially painful process and if you are doing it yourself a harrowing one (especially if you have parts left over after you put it back together.) Yet inspection and maintenance must be done. After all, cars are not perfect simply because their designers aren't perfect.

Lent, and especially Holy Week, is a time for looking under the hood in the spiritual sense. It's not always something we enjoy doing, at least if we are being honest with ourselves. I'm well aware of my imperfections, but I really don't always want to face them or be reminded of them. My tendency is to let them slide – like the incessant check engine light on my car's dashboard that I learn to ignore. (I had a friend who placed a piece of black tape over his check engine light, so he didn't have to see it and his engine finally blew up.) We ignore check engine lights at our own risk. The same goes for our spiritual check engine lights – we ignore them at our own risk. If we don't pay attention, if we don't perform our spiritual inspection and maintenance, something probably will blow up and we'll find ourselves in a much worse place.

So Lent and especially Holy Week are times to pause and take stock of where we are spiritually in light of Jesus' journey to the cross for our sakes. It's a time for us to ask ourselves how we are doing in our relationship with God. How well is Christ's love reflected through us? Are we living in ways that hinder or obstruct our relationship with Jesus?

As we walk alongside Jesus on the path to the cross, we witness those who are complicit in the injustice of the cross. We witness those who condemn Jesus along the way, and we witness those who comfort Jesus as he walks that painful road. As we do so we are called to self-examination (checking under the hood). In what ways am I complicit in the injustice of the world and how does that affect

my relationship with God? In what ways am I like Peter, who when challenged denied his relationship with Jesus, or in what ways am I giving testimony to the Gospel of Jesus through my words and example? As we witness his journey under the weight of the cross, the times he falls to the pavement, we are called to ask in what ways are we standing alongside others Jesus loves who are carrying crosses of their own. Are we coming to their aid or standing aloof? What is that saying about our relationship with God?

These are just a few examples of the territory we are invited to pause and explore as we do the scary work entering into spiritual self-reflection and maintenance. Are there any spiritual check-engine lights flickering? Are there places we could be doing better in our walk alongside Jesus? Now's the time to attend to them before we're led to even deeper spiritual wastelands. Once we have done this we can turn to maintenance and repair as we enter into prayer and engage in spiritual disciplines that draw us closer to Jesus and repair our ailing souls.

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