

An Encouraging Word and the Announcements for September 13, 2023

Community Shred Event at MCUMC THIS Saturday, September 16, 11-1. Come and have your old, sensitive documents shredded for FREE! It's easy! Just pull into the parking lot, a helper will then retrieve your documents for your vehicle, then give you your boxes or bags back. That's it! Sensitive documents can include but are not limited to old checks, old bills, old receipts, old papers, old income tax forms. NO PLASTIC BAGS!! Not sure of what to shred? Here is a link to Pro-Shred about what you can shred <https://www.proshred.com/delaware/paper-shredding-questions/>

There will be a Planning Meeting after church this Sunday for The Harvest Festival. Please plan on staying and contributing. Volunteer Sign-up sheets are located in the church hall and the Narthex. There are so many ways to volunteer. If you can't make the event, there are several shifts that are during the week that leads up to it. Volunteer to make a sweet treat to sell at our bake table or to come in and make soup or to help set up on the day before. **We are also in need of clothing for our Scarecrow making station. We are looking for old, used children's clothing sized 5/6-9/10. Donations can be dropped off at the church.** Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church and the Child Development Center are working hand in hand to make this a fun, successful, family fundraising event! We hope you can join us! If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Harris 410-255-8887 or mtcarmel21122@gmail.com **The date of the Harvest Festival is Saturday, October 14.**

Harvest Festival Soups are now available for pre order!!! Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup, Potato Cheese Soup, Chili and Apple Dumplings are all available! **(and they are all DELICIOUS!!)** Orders need to be in by October 6th! The order form is attached to this Encouraging Word. If you have any questions please contact the office.

It is time for the Outreach Annual Autumn Food Drive to benefit the Pasadena Food Pantry (formerly the Soup Kitchen). We are starting a little early this year due to the very empty shelves at the Pantry. The Food Bank is doing a good job of supplying frozen meat and some staples but not enough to fill one bag. The Pantry must purchase or depend on donations for the rest.

There have been approximately 100 families served each month since June at this location. One of the new families explained that they started coming to the pantry because during the Covid Pandemic their family received \$250 per month in food stamps. Federal funding has been cut and they are now receiving \$25 per month to feed their family. It doesn't matter how you feel about food stamps, you can't feed a family on \$25.

We will be asking for certain items each month through November so you can help stock the shelves. For the remainder of **September we are asking for pasta products and canned soups.** You can bring your donations to church and place them in the box in the narthex. Please keep in mind that the Seventh Day Adventist do not eat nor distribute pork products when choosing soups. The Outreach Committee thanks you for your help with this local mission

CHOIR: Attention all singers! We would like to get the choir going again if we have enough singers. Rehearsals will begin on Thursday, September 28th. (We are waiting until then because our son is getting married the week before!) If you or someone you know loves to sing, please contact me. If you have any questions, please also let me know. Joe and I look forward to making music with you! Shannon Shanefelter, 410-925-3122 scshanefelter@gmail.com

The Child Development Center has an Amazon Wish List to make this year a success!! If you would like to donate, please check out the list and order directly from this link, https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/25GDKJMQRN5EV?ref=wl_share

There is still time to join our next Zoom Bible Study. Originally slated to begin on Tuesday, September 19 will now begin Tuesday, September 26th, at 7:00 p.m. The Study is authored by Adam Hamilton and is entitled Simon Peter: Flawed But Faithful Disciple. This will be a six week study examining the life, faith, and character of Simon Peter. You can purchase the book from Amazon or Cokesbury. If you are interested in joining, please contact Jen in the office 410-255-8887 or mtcarmel21122@gmail.com

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/>

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

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." - John 3: 16 - 17

We have witnessed in our Lord Jesus Christ the highest example of heroism. Jesus gave his life on the cross so that all people could have life. Not just those of a particular race, nation, creed, or any other distinguishing attribute but everyone. That's the thing about heroes: they see a need, they see people in harm's way, they don't make distinctions in whom they help, they just step up and answer the call to act out of love and concern for others. Hero's don't see race, or religion, or political affiliation. They see human beings in danger and in need. Here we see the true mark of a hero, the

willingness to give one's life for the greater good; whether that greater good be the life and welfare of just one or many. It's the willingness to risk and perhaps lose one's life to enable life.

I'm writing this encouraging word on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. I never cease to be inspired remembering the acts of heroism, especially of firemen and police on that day; heroes who climbed the stairs without hesitation and never returned. As we once again watch the memorial services, the repeated documentaries, and interviews with survivors I feel a renewed gratitude for the example set by that day's heroes and am heartened by reminders that there is the capacity in each of us to live heroically in difficult times. That when the chips are down the barriers disappear, the distinctions that tend to divide seem much less important, and that we can see in each other a friend in need rather than a potential threat. In remembering the events of that day and the weeks that followed, the simple acts of kindness and charity that could be witnessed on every hand, I'm encouraged with the human capacity to care in spite of differences. Something perhaps that we have lost.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines a hero as "a person who is admired for having done something very brave or having achieved something great". Acts of heroism can be great and small but they all have one thing in common; they involve courageously placing oneself in situations of danger for the sake of another. Ephesians 5:2 encourages us to "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God". As Christ demonstrated his love for us in a heroic act of self-giving love; so are we called to give ourselves up in acts of love toward others. As Jesus gave himself up for all people; so are we to love all people without distinction. In our divisive day and age that is a very brave thing to do. To love and care for others without distinction in our modern world is becoming a hero's work.

I don't think of myself as a hero. At least I don't feel very heroic. Yet I do remember times when I found myself standing on uncomfortable and even dangerous ground on behalf of another. I remember in grade school coming to the defense of a friend who was being bullied because he was black. I got a bloody nose, a black eye, and a trip to the principal's office for my trouble. I remember being plenty scared at the time. I also remember being arrested, handcuffed, and placed in a police wagon one day in front of the South African Embassy as I was protesting the apartheid government in South Africa. I was plenty scared then as well. It was a risky act. Was it heroic? Maybe not in the way that racing into burning buildings is heroic; but it was standing in the gap and defending the defenseless.

We are living in a time of growing intolerance toward those who may be perceived as "different" due to ethnicity, religion, sexual identification, or political leanings. We are in need of heroes to stand in the uncomfortable places "between" to advocate for those who are powerless or discriminated against. As those who claim Jesus as Lord we are called to live as Jesus lived, sometimes on difficult or uncomfortable ground, and love past differences and distinctions.

Twenty-two years ago our nation was in crisis, and heroes answered the call. In their acts we were inspired and encouraged. Now two decades later we face a different kind of crisis fueled by anger toward those who are different, distrust, and political extremism. Heroes are needed again. Not to run into burning buildings but into the growing divides between people. Heroes are needed who are blind to the differences, who will love all others as Jesus loved, demonstrating compassion and acceptance over division and courageous love in the face of hate. Can we be that kind of hero?

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, and please stay connected to each other and to God.

Blessings & Peace, Mike