

Announcements and an Encouraging Word for November 15, 2023

MARK Your calendars!! Christmas Bazaar will be Saturday, December 2, 9 am – 2 pm. We will be having an assortment of vendors, games and kiddo activities, Jenos Steaks FOOD TRUCK and a visit from the one and only Santa at 12:45. **Our FAMOUS BAKE TABLE will also be there. Please consider donating a baked item for the event. That's what makes it famous!! Contact Jen in the office or Cathy Jones.**

Be prepared for the holidays when you support our group Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church through this Rada Cutlery Fundraiser! Here is our Personal Store Link to share on social media. Every purchase made using this unique shopping link helps Mt. Carmel UMC reach our fundraising goal! <https://radafundraising.com?rfsn=7718469.cc0da5&subid=JenniferHarris> Catalogs are also available in the Church Hall. To be clear, **orders can be taken via catalog and delivered to the office OR online at our Personal Store Link listed above.** If you have any questions, please contact Jen in the office 410-255-8887 or mtcarmel21122@gmail.com.

A little about RADA Cutlery: "Every one of our knives is handcrafted in the heart of the USA, with materials only from America. Our strong heritage and Midwest values assure dependability you can believe in and sharp good looks you'll love.

For more than 75 years, we've been crafting knives that stand the test of time. Our blades are created with surgical-quality, T420 high-carbon stainless steel and each is meticulously hand-sharpened to a razor-sharp edge. We build each with the highest expectations ... a lifetime of use, guaranteed."

Our Advent Bible Study Zoom Class will begin next Tuesday, November 21st at 7pm and run through 12/19. It will be based on the book The Journey by Adam Hamilton. You can order your copy through Amazon. Please let us know if you want to participate.

Christmas 2023 Poinsettia Memorials – Remember or honor a loved one this Christmas. By purchasing a poinsettia to decorate the church you are doing just that and making our little chapel beautiful for Christmas! You may prefer to donate to the general fund or to the trustees' fund. Or BOTH! Complete the form attached to this email and return it to the church. (Forms can also be picked up at the church) The deadline is December 13th.

The Annual Faith Hope Circle Christmas Luncheon will be held at the Pasadena Greene Turtle restaurant Thursday, December 7th at 12:30. All ladies of our church and community are cordially invited. Please contact Denise Calabrese, or the office if you plan to attend. Hope to see you there! Happy Holidays

From the Outreach Committee - Thanks to everyone helping supply food for the Pasadena Food Pantry. For the month of November Outreach is collecting boxed stuffing mix and instant mashed potatoes. The food pantry is experiencing a record number of families this month and feel the numbers will stay large though the holidays. Thanks again for your continuing support.

Are you following the church on social media? If not, you should! Our Facebook account is <https://www.facebook.com/mtcarmelumcconnection/> 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

"My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?" - [James 2:1-26](#)

I've got half a dozen half-filled coffee cans of nuts, bolts, washers, screws, and doodads up at our house in Frederick County. None of it is sorted. I know it's probably not the best practice but when I'm cleaning up and come across a stray nut or bolt, I just toss it in the nearest handy coffee can. The problem is that when I need a nut, bolt, washer, screw, or doodad I've got to rummage through those coffee cans to find what I need. It's a big waste of time. I know that one of these days I'm going to need to do some major sorting into some sort of compartmentalized container. That will make finding what I need a lot easier.

I'm not a sorting kind of person. Ask anyone. Ask my administrative assistant Jennifer. Just take a look at the top of my desk! Sorting and me just don't get along. I don't even like sorting my laundry, but I know I need to if I want to avoid things like pink underwear. In some facets of life sorting is important, even necessary.

Sorting may be important when it comes to inanimate objects like laundry or bolts and nuts. Sorting can be damaging and destructive when it comes to people. Unfortunately, we do this kind of sorting all the time. It's called stereotyping and it is a practice that at the very least can be misleading. Stereotyping is a kind of prejudice and at its worst it can create horrible and deadly injustices. After September 11, 2001 many in our country lumped all Moslems into the terrorist category even though

most Moslem citizens of our country were then, and are now, proud and patriotic Americans. They were, like the rest of us, traumatized by that act. In being painted with the "terrorist" brush they were further traumatized.

There are some who assume all young black men are criminals while the truth is quite the opposite. There are some who treat Asian Americans with distrust because of the so far unsubstantiated belief that the Corona Virus was deliberately created and released by the Chinese. There are those who assume that just because a person is Latino and doesn't speak English well that they are illegal aliens. This kind of prejudicial stereotyping leads to all sorts of unjust treatment.

Now terrible events far from here have led to another kind of stereotyping on these shores, the stereotyping that leads to antisemitism. On October 7th Hamas launched a despicable attack on Israeli civilians. Men, women, children, and the elderly were killed indiscriminately and in cold blood. Others were taken hostage. Israel has responded with massive attacks on Gaza killing innocent civilians and destroying critical infrastructure. Whether or not the scope of this retaliation is justified will be fodder for arguments for years to come. The Hamas attack was certainly evil, reprehensible, and immoral. Israel's response may be reaching the same level. However, as a result, it seems that antisemitism in the U.S. has risen to staggering levels.

People are understandably upset by the images of death and destruction taking place in Gaza. But I believe it is wrong to blame that violence on our Jewish neighbors and friends and paint them with the same brush as the Israeli political leaders who are directing the violent response. By the same token we should not be painting Palestinians in Gaza or on these shores with the same brush that we paint Hamas- a truly evil organization. Just because a person is Jewish doesn't mean they condone the death and destruction taking place in Gaza. Just because someone is Moslem or Palestinian doesn't mean they condone the acts of October 7th. Yet people are stereotyping our neighbors along these lines.

When we stereotype, that is group people according to the greatest common denominator, we are making judgements about individuals that may be unfair and grossly inaccurate. When we prejudge people according to outward appearance, by their nationality, or professed faith and make assumptions according to those prejudices then we open the door to injustice, in this case Antisemitism. As is observed in the quote from James above, *"have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"*

We need to remember that our Lord made no distinction between people. He didn't confine his teaching and healing to one little box of "acceptable" people. He ate with tax collectors and sinners. He engaged in conversation with prostitutes. He didn't sort people but included everyone in his ministry, one big coffee can of nuts, bolts, washers, screws, and doodads. In Mark 12:31 Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. In Luke 10: 28 – 37 Jesus, in response to the question "who is my neighbor", shares the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this parable we discover that our neighbor can be anyone, not just the people who look, speak, act, believe, or worship like we do. (The Samaritan was a foreigner with whom the Jews regarded as unclean and corrupt.) Jesus teaches us that we should not make distinctions or sort people according to stereotypes, but rather see each person as a unique individual loved by God.

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