

# Happy Valentine's Day!!

## Announcements and Encouraging Word for February 14, 2024

**The Outreach Committee is asking for your help to stock the shelves at the Pasadena Food Pantry (Soup Kitchen).** The need to help local families **is greater than ever.** In January that Food Pantry alone served 113 families. That is a large number considering they were closed on New Year's Day. ***We are suggesting for this Lenten season instead of giving something up we take on this local mission by donating pasta products to stretch meals or chicken noodle soup for those cold winter nights. As of Monday, the pantry was totally out of donated food.*** A box will be placed in the narthex for donations. Often you can purchase store brand items for a lower cost. We appreciate any and all help you can give at this time!

**We will be beginning a Lenten Study this coming Tuesday, February 20th, at 7 p.m.**

This is a six session study of the book "Final Words from the Cross" by Adam Hamilton.. The book is available from Amazon for \$14.99 and is generally available for delivery the next day. It is also available on Kindle for \$9.99. There is a video available with this study but is on backorder, so the first session will be discussion only. Please let the church office know or let me know on Sunday that you will be participating with the study. You can also email me your desire to participate at [soujourner56@gmail.com](mailto:soujourner56@gmail.com). Thanks - Pastor Mike

**We will be holding a 2024 Fundraising Planning Meeting this Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup> after the church service.** All are welcome! We are looking for fun, new ways to raise some funds for our church. We are also looking to set some dates for our traditional fundraisers. Hope to see you there.

**The church office will be closed on Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup> in observance of President's Day. HOWEVER, there will STILL be a Unified Board Meeting that night at 6:30 in the church hall.**

**Mt. Carmel Child Development Center is having a Spring Fest and Breakfast with the Easter Bunny Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 8am-12pm.** Breakfast includes bottomless pancakes, 2 sausage links and a drink. Advanced ticket purchase is required. Please see the attached forms. You can also pick up the forms in the church hall.

## **End of Year Giving Statements**

Once again, to save paper and postage, the church will not be doing widespread printing up and distributing annual giving statements. Everyone can now easily generate their own statements from their Realm account whenever they like. If you do require a hard copy done the traditional way, please just let the office know and we can provide one. If you haven't accessed Realm and need a new invite sent, just let the office know. You can also see all your current giving and history all the way back to 2008. Below are easy step by step instructions to print your giving statements.

Accessing Giving Record & End of Year Giving Statements

To generate and print out giving statements from your Realm account-

- Log into Realm
- Click on “Giving” on the left side of the page. It will automatically show your gifts for *this* year, to date, to verify your gifts.
- For Yearly Statements, click the Filter button (that droopy triangle symbol) and change the Gift Date Range to “Last Year”. then click the blue “Filter” button.
- To print, simply click the Printer Icon. A report will generate, and you can click the Printer Icon in that window to print your statement.
- Done!

**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](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**

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. - [Ephesians 2:10](#)

I know that for some of us it seems the world is moving too fast and that we are being left further and further behind. Some of us may feel that we no longer have anything of value to contribute in this accelerating world. I wonder about that myself sometimes. For instance, I used to work on my cars. If my chariot needed an oil change, I did it. If a fan belt broke, I fixed it. I could change spark plugs and wires. I could replace the distributor. I could service the brakes. I can’t do any of that anymore; I wouldn’t dare! I drive a hybrid and I have no idea how to fix the thing when things go wrong. My other car is “normal” but even with that the technology is so advanced I’m afraid that if I

tried any of the major kinds of repairs I used to do I'd break something and end up having it towed to the dealership. Automotive technology has gotten so far beyond me that I can no longer contribute to my family's bottom line by doing the repairs myself.

I am doing some major renovations on our house in Frederick County. I can still do that – at least for now. But even with that there are things I can no longer do. My wife, my kids, and my doctor no longer allow me to get on the roof, clean the chimney, or clean the gutters. They even worry when I get on a step ladder! A couple of days of hard work never used to phase me. Now when I wake up the next morning it feels like I've been that tackling dummy for the Baltimore Ravens. Is the day coming when that kind of work gets beyond me?

Even ministry has changed tremendously in the forty years since I was ordained. The demands and needs of congregations have changed, as have the ways to address them. Information technology continues to change and accelerate as does its application in ministry. I wonder sometimes if the time will come when I'll no longer have anything useful to contribute as an ordained elder in the church. But then I run across a gem like the scripture I quoted above which reminds me that God has created me for a purpose and that purpose will never change – even as the world around me does. God has work for me to do and will always have work for me to do whatever my estate or condition in life. Yes, the nature of the work may change, but there will always be important work for me to do. No matter where you are in life there will be important work for you to do as well.

Sometimes I think we get hung up on what we think we can't do and stop looking for the things we can do (or wait for an invitation). That's a dangerous practice because it leads to days on end spent watching game shows, talk shows, news propaganda, and incessant Colonial Penn commercials. That's not what God intended when God gave us life. So, I know that as long as I draw breath I'll have something important to contribute to the Kingdom of God. I simply need to be attentive to the needs of the day and where God would have me serve in it. I encourage you to do the same. It may be as simple as giving daily encouragement to others, making a pot of soup for someone in difficult straits at home, or being the liturgist on Sunday mornings. There's always something to do, find out what it is and dig in!

That's all for today. I'll see you on Sunday on Zoom. Until then be well, stay safe, and in please stay connected to each other and to God.

Blessings & Peace, Mike