

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

February 28, 2024

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The Faith Hope Circle will meet on Thursday March 7 at 12:30 in the church hall. All women of the church and community are cordially invited. Bring your lunch; dessert will be provided. Hope to see you there!

We are in need of Liturgists for Sunday Mornings. This is a wonderful and easy way to get involved. You do not have to read every Sunday. We put together a schedule that works with your availability. We would love to hear from you! Just contact the office if you are interested.

Easter News

Easter is almost here!! A beautiful Easter Lily is such a touching way to remember or honor a loved one and contribute to our church. Please see the attached form to order yours. You can also donate to the Trustee's Fund or the General Fund to honor your loved one. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

Speaking of Easter...this year we will be having a Potluck Breakfast on Easter Sunday. It will take place after the Sunrise Service in the Church Hall. All are welcome! Come after the Sunrise Service OR before the 9:30 Service. We will be having breakfast casseroles, fruit and pastries. In order to get a feel for how much food we will need, please let the office know if you would like to attend.

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) – March 28, 2024 – Communion – 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday – March 29 – Worship Service – 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunrise Service – March 31 - Easter Sunrise Service 6:45 a.m.

8231 Bayside Drive, Pasadena

(Home of Dave Shelton's Sister, Joanne)

Directions to the Easter Sunrise Service

- The address where the Sunrise Service will take place is 8231 Bayside Drive.
- From the Church continue east on Mountain Road.
- Continue straight onto Pinehurst Road. (Mountain Road will turn off to the right.)
- Continue on Pinehurst past the entrance to Downs Park – Pinehurst will make a sharp turn to the left.
- Continue on Pinehurst.
- Turn Right onto Oakdale Road (the second street to the right)
- Follow Oakdale Road one block to its end.
- Turn Right onto Bayside Drive
- 8231 Bayside Drive will be immediately to your left. (Address on Mailbox – Gravel drive.)

- Park as orderly as you can on the lawn – otherwise park along the street being careful not to block other driveways.

Easter Celebration Service – March 31, 2024 – Easter Celebration Service – 9:30 a.m.

Mt. Carmel Child Development Center is having a Spring Fest and Breakfast with the Easter Bunny Saturday, March 23rd, 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.

In Other News

SAVE THE DATE!! Our Pasta Dinner will be on April 21st this year. More information and lots of opportunities to volunteer to come.

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!

If you are still in need of your End of Year Giving Statements, please contact Jen in the office.

Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike

Several years ago, my son was accosted in a parking lot by someone ranting about him being “a snowflake”. This person followed him out of the store where he was shopping all the way to his car and was still berating as my son drove away. Obviously, this was quite frightening for my son. We don't know for sure what initiated the outburst, but I suspect it might have been something on the t-shirt my son was wearing.

At the time I was hoping this was just a fluke, but it seems this kind of blatant, over-the-top disrespect of others has become commonplace in our society. I'm hearing more and more from people of opposing viewpoints, not respectful disagreement, but a “your wrong so you're my enemy and I want to destroy you” kind of sentiment. This is especially true in the public sphere. Unfortunately, this kind of sentiment is being demonstrated by people who should know better; some who even call themselves Christian. Perhaps you have seen or heard examples of this kind of behavior yourself. Let me assure you this is not of God.

Nowhere in the Gospels does Jesus advocate the disrespect of others. Yes, to disagree is fine, and argue one's point is fine, but to disrespect another cannot be found anywhere in Jesus' teaching. Disrespect to the point of dehumanizing another is completely opposite of any of Jesus' teachings. In

fact, I would call it anti-Christian behavior. Not only is it damaging to society, it is damaging to the soul of the one engaged in disrespecting another.

Jesus taught us, "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." *Luke 6:27 -28*. In Matthew 5:22 Jesus teaches, "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement. Again, anyone who says to his brother 'Raca' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool' will be in danger of the fire of hell." (Raca is an Aramaic term of contempt.) When Jesus was asked "who is my neighbor?" he replied with the parable of the Good Samaritan which identified "neighbor" as someone who in that culture was ordinarily disrespected (Samaritans) thus revealing his respect for that maligned group, and teaching that his hearers should respect them as well. Then we have "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" which in other words encourages us to respect others with the same respect as we have for ourselves.

Jesus even responded to those who disrespected him with respect. As Jesus was dying on the cross, he did not curse his tormentors. Rather he prayed for them "Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing." He prayed that prayer aloud so that others could hear and learn by his example. Prayer rises out of respect and concern for another, not the hatred and disrespect of another. We are to pray for those who curse us or who we are tempted to treat as enemies.

If we turn to the Old Testament and look at Exodus 20: 1 – 17 (which happens to be one of the Lectionary readings for this Sunday) we find the Ten Commandments. Respect is at the heart of those commandments. It begins with respect for God and moves to the respect of others. Don't kill. Don't commit adultery. Don't steal anyone's property. Don't testify falsely against your neighbor, and don't desire to wrongly possess anything that belongs to your neighbor. All of these commandments demand respect, the respect of God, the respect of others, the respect of others property. I find it ironic that some of those who call for the Ten Commandments to be displayed in public places would turn around and disregard them in their sometimes hostile disrespect of others.

So how should we respond when we encounter such disrespect either toward ourselves or others? Obviously with respect. Yes, that may seem odd but returning disrespect for disrespect just deepens the cycle of disrespect. It is not necessary for us to agree with someone's opinion or point of view in order to respect that person. Going to battle (what I call the nuclear option) is not the best or only option when encountering people who don't hold our views. Instead show them respect. Acknowledge that you are of another opinion but that you respect theirs and invite them to share why they feel the way they do. Express to them your hope that they would respect your opinions as well.

We need to remember that as Jesus died on the cross, as people spat on him, and as they hurled insults, his response was one of respect. He prayed for them. Nothing less is expected of us.

That's all for today. Be well, be forgiving and gracious. Be safe, stay connected, and I'll see you in church or on Zoom this Sunday.

Blessings – Pastor Mike

Weekly Reminders

If you have prayer requests, even if you plan to share them at Sunday worship, please 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. (Join us in your pj's with a morning cup of coffee) I open the Zoom meeting at 9 a.m. to give people time to sign on. 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.**

Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church

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