

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

March 13, 2024

Follow MCUMC on social media!

<https://www.facebook.com/mtcarmelumcconnection/> AND <https://www.instagram.com/mcumc21122/>

Critical Appeal for 2024*

*Reposting for those who missed last week

Dear Members and Friends of Mount Carmel United Methodist Church,

As we come together in spirit and faith, we acknowledge the challenges that have tested us over the past few years. The impacts of economic strains, inflation, and the financial hurdles posed by the pandemic have been deeply felt by all. We recognize the steep rise in the costs of electricity, gas, fuel oil, groceries, and building materials, places additional strains on our community and our individual budgets.

Through the grace of federal assistance, our congregation received vital support that helped us navigate the immediate impacts of the pandemic. This aid provided a much-needed lifeline during uncertain times. However, we must now acknowledge that this assistance has run its course, and even with the assistance of dividends from our Building Fund we find ourselves facing a budget deficit of approximately \$18,000 for 2024.

In response to this challenge, the Unified Board has diligently reviewed the budget, identifying areas where cost-saving measures can be implemented. Despite our efforts, we are confronted with rising costs beyond our control, such as the recent BG&E rate hike and escalating insurance expenses.

While these economic pressures have touched each of us, they have also impacted our beloved church. By coming together as a community, we have the opportunity to rise above these challenges. The Unified Board estimates that if each member and friend can contribute just a little more, approximately \$10.00 per week, we can overcome the current deficit and ensure the continued flourishing of our church.

Your generosity and unwavering support are a testament to the strength of our community. Together, we can weather this storm and emerge stronger on the other side. We thank you for your attention and patience during these trying times. May God bless our little church and guide us as we work towards a brighter future.

With gratitude and hope,

The Unified Board of Mount Carmel United Methodist Church

Church Happenings This Week

A Celebration of Life in honor of Fran Wilkerson will be held here at Mt. Carmel this Saturday, March 16th at 11am followed by a luncheon. All are welcome! If you have any questions, please contact the office.

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. **Orders are due by March 22nd!**

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. 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 contact Jen in the office if you would like tickets.

In Other News

During January and February, \$84 was earned for the general fund through the sale of craft items. The majority of those items were handmade by Penny Pelligrini, so again I'd like to thank her for her talent and generosity. And thanks to everyone for your continued support. ~Pam Mertz

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.

SAVE THE DATE!! Our Pasta Dinner will be on April 21st this year. Tickets are NOW ON SALE. Please contact Jen in the office if you would like to purchase some. We are also looking for volunteers to help sell some tickets, deliver flyers to local businesses, and get the word out. The flyer is attached to this Newsletter.

The Outreach Lenten project continues. We are continuing to collect boxed pasta and canned soups for our local food pantry through the month of March. All the food collected so far has been distributed to needy families in the Pasadena area. Store brand pasta and soups can be purchased for less than one dollar each. Let's stock their shelves to help our neighbors!!

Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike

No doubt the announcement last week, then on Sunday and repeated above about our critical financial need shook you. It shook me when I was first informed of the shortfall. Yet I've been pastor here long enough to know, and to remind you, that we've been in similar financial situations before. I don't say this to minimize the present state of affairs but rather to remind that as we have been faithful to God in past situations, God has been faithful to us, and has helped us find a way through those challenges. I have no reason to believe this challenge is any different.

John, who handles our church finances as a member of the Unified Board, promised me several years ago that if he saw trouble on the horizon, he would give me a six-month warning. He has done that. In the moment I received his evaluation I think I felt the way Jesus' disciples felt when he asked them to feed a crowd of five-thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish. Certainly not hopeless but wondering how in the world the miracle of provision for the needs of the congregation could be accomplished. The point I see in this gospel account of this miracle is that God can provide ways to meet our need in ways we cannot even begin to understand. We need only remain faithful to God and be willing to be God's instruments in making miracles happen.

A miracle, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary is "a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency." So, is our situation a hopeless one in need of divine intervention? Some divine intervention certainly wouldn't hurt, but I don't think this challenge is beyond us. So, my prayer is not that God shower us

with cash from heaven but rather that the Holy Spirit inspire each of us to consider ways of helping to meet the need before us and then faithfully acting on that inspiration. I don't think this needs to be a miracle, at least in the strictest sense of the word. It does require that each of us act in faith and belief in the worth of our shared ministry such that we may provide the "extra measure" that will help meet the need. As I've mentioned above, we've met this kind of challenge before. I pray that we may do so once again.

One thing worth noting about the miracle of the loaves and the fish is that Jesus' disciples were willing participants in the miracle that took place. They didn't balk at Jesus' suggestion that they bring the food to him or that they engage in what seemed an impossible exercise of passing it out. They did what the Lord asked, believing in him completely. They got to work at what seemed an impossible challenge and helped make it happen. Jesus asks no less 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

4760 Mountain Road, Pasadena, MD 21122, 410-255-8887, mtcarmel21122@gmail.com