

# Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

March 20, 2024

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## *Help us out...*

*It has come to our attention that fewer and fewer people may be opening and reading these Encouraging Words. We need to evaluate whether this continues to be an effective means of communicating with members and constituents of Mount Carmel UMC. So, if you have opened and read this Encouraging Word we ask that you respond back to us indicating that you have opened and read it and whether or not you find it helpful.*

## **EASTER NEWS!!**

**The deadline to order your Easter Memorial is THIS FRIDAY.** Please see the attached form to order yours. If you have any questions, please contact the office. **Orders are due by March 22<sup>nd</sup>!**

**Please join us for our first 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.

## **HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES**

**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.

**Zoom will be available for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the 9:30 Easter Sunday Service**

**\*\*\* 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. \*\*\***

## *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 21<sup>st</sup> 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**

The other day I noticed a wonderful reminder of the coming Spring and the renewal of life. It was right up next to the eastern facing wall of our house in the Catoctin Mountains. A beautiful purple Hyacinth was blooming. In the first week of March! Everything else around it still looked dead. The grass is still brown, and the trees are still bare, and the ground where it was growing had just been liberated a few weeks previously from the encroachment of brush and weeds that had left their marks. I didn't even know Hyacinth bulbs had been planted there. Yet there it was; hope and life in the midst of desolation.

I have several favorite flowers and the Hyacinth is one of them. The purple Hyacinth flower symbolizes spiritual growth, renewal, sacrifice, and rebirth while the white flower symbolizes purity and innocence. Given this symbolic nature of the flower it has long been associated with Lent and Easter. Part of the reason for this can probably be attributed to the Greeks. A legend that early Christians were probably familiar with was the Greek legend of Apollo and Hyacinthus. According to this legend Hyacinthus was a Greek youth who, because of his great beauty, was beloved by the god Apollo. One day Apollo was teaching Hyacinthus to throw the discus. As he demonstrated he threw a discus which accidentally hit Hyacinthus on the head and killed him. Hyacinthus' blood spilled on the ground and from that blood sprang the Hyacinth, a rebirth of the beauty of Hyacinthus. Early

Christians drew obvious parallels of this legend with the spilling of Christ's innocent blood on the ground, shed for human sin, and the resurrection that followed.

As we consider the purple hyacinth we are reminded of the spiritual growth and renewal we are to be engaged in through the season of Lent and beyond; a path that leads through sacrifice to resurrection. As we consider the white hyacinth, we are reminded of Jesus' purity and innocence and wonder, in the words of the hymn, "what wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul".

As we have journeyed through the season of Lent and approach the celebration of Easter, we have been doing so in what seems the lifelessness of Winter; not just a seasonal winter but a spiritual one as well. All around us we see reminders of spiritual desolation in the growing polarization and incivility of our own nation, the human tragedy of Gaza, the unrest and violence in Haiti, and a protracted war in Ukraine just to mention a few. Yet in the middle of this we have Easter springing up, like that Hyacinth next to my house – surrounded by the desolation and ravages of Winter, reminding us of new life, renewal, hope and resurrection. May this coming celebration of Easter be for you a blooming of hope, joy, renewal, and hope of resurrection in the midst of whatever Winter you face.

My encouragement to you this week is to continue along the Lenten path of reflection, renewal and spiritual growth as we accompany Jesus along the path that leads through the cross to rebirth and resurrection. Come join us as we celebrate Palm Sunday this Sunday and remember Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Then join us next Thursday as we commemorate Jesus' last supper with his disciples and the beginning of his Passion. Return then to worship with us on Friday as we observe Jesus' passion. Then on Easter Sunday join in our celebration of resurrection and everlasting life. I hope to see all of you there.

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](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.** (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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