

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

March 27, 2024

Follow MCUMC on social media!

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

EASTER NEWS!!

Please join us for our first Easter Breakfast 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. All links were sent out on Tuesday, March 26th.

***** 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

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!!

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.**

Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike

I've been leading a Lenten bible study via Zoom over the last few weeks. The study covers the final words of Jesus spoken from the cross. There were many valuable insights offered over the course of this study, one of which I feel is pertinent for this week. It concerns Jesus' final word from the cross which was a prayer. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." As we consider these words, we will find that Jesus was teaching us something very important right up to the very end.

This prayer is one that Jesus quoted verbatim from Psalm 31:5. It's a Psalm and a prayer that would have been taught to Jesus by his mother when he was a child. It's precisely the same sentiment communicated in a prayer that was taught to many of us as children. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, and if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." I think that was the first prayer I was ever taught – even before the Lord's prayer. I may forget a lot of things, but this is a prayer I readily remember without any effort at all. In Jesus day the prayer of Psalm 31:5 was a prayer commonly taught to children and so would have been immediately accessible to Jesus' memory even as he was dying on the cross.

So why would Jesus pray that prayer? As I mentioned above, he was teaching a fundamental attitude that would serve us well even today. When all is said and done, we need to be able to, as Jesus did in the face of adversity and death, place our souls in the loving and protecting hands of God. It's really the only safe place.

You and I have no real idea of what each day will bring, or each night for that matter. We really don't know what blessings or misfortunes even the next minute will bring. But we can be ready for whatever it brings if we've placed ourselves in God's hands. We've all had a sobering example of that this week. We had no idea when we went to bed on Monday night the terrifying drama that would unfold in the darkness and the tragedy that the morning's light would reveal. The Francis Scott Key Bridge was gone and with it six innocent lives, and the economy of Baltimore crippled as well. All in an instant. The six men on the bridge doing their work had no idea their last moments were near as they labored to fill potholes.

Life is a tenuous thing. What is not tenuous is the love of God and God's protection over us as we place our lives in God's hands. That's why this prayer is so important. That's why Jesus was teaching it to us. He was acknowledging that he was in God's hands and that in God's hands he was safe. It's something we need to acknowledge repeatedly as we live our daily lives as well. It's not a bad idea to begin our days with this prayer or something similar because we don't know what the day will bring. It might not be a bad idea to retire to our beds when our day is complete with the same or a similar prayer because we really don't know what the night will bring either.

This is an attitude encouraged by one of my favorite hymns – one I remember singing with my mom and dad in the tiny church where I was baptized. The hymn is "Are Ye Able" and it asks an important question in the third verse. "Are ye able when the shadows close around you with the sod, to believe that spirit triumphs, to commend your soul to God?" This prayer of Jesus does just that and teaches us to do the same. "Now I lay me down to sleep", may seem a childish prayer but it does the same thing and encourages an attitude of faith and trust in God – one that we each need to renew constantly in our daily walk.

Whatever the future holds we need to remember and acknowledge that our lives are in God's hands and that in God's hands we will be safe either in this world or the next. Knowing and acknowledging this daily we can live confidently, faithfully, and victoriously. Jesus wanted us to know that. "Now I lay me down to sleep" really isn't a childish prayer after all. It's a declaration of our faith and the truth we live in each day.

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

Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church

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