

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

July 24, 2024

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ALERT

******The Zoom Information emailed this past Monday is for THIS SUNDAY, JULY 28th. Please disregard the subject line that says August in the body of the email. That was a mistake. The meeting ID and Code are correct.***

Spread Good News!

Do you have good news to share?? We want you to shout it out on Sunday Mornings at our service!! We can all use a little good news, right? And what better way to connect with our friends and family here at MCUMC than to celebrate in each other's glad tidings! Is someone having a birthday, an anniversary, a child?? Did someone get a new job, a raise, complete a project? Did a child or grandchild loose a tooth, sing a song, win a tournament? Let us join you in celebrating these triumphs! *Our prayer concerns will still be written on our prayer cards.*

IMPORTANT DATES

It's not too late to contribute to our DO NOTHING Fundraiser this summer. (ignore that silly due by date on the flyer!) So, in order to do nothing, you do have to do a little, just contribute \$\$. Whatever amount you wish to mail in or drop off, we welcome it!

Services for Bud Jenkins will be held on September 21st at 11am. More details will follow in the weeks to come.

SAVE THE DATE!! Our 3rd Annual Harvest Festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 12th!! We are looking for donations of old, used children's clothing and bubble wrap we can use for scarecrow stuffing. We also are in need of glass quart jars for our soup and chili. Please bring any donations to the church. Thanks!

Other tentative dates include: Flea Market, Saturday, November 9th and a Christmas Tea, Saturday, December 7th. We will also be selling Apple Pies again this year!! If you are interested in helping out with any of these events, please reach out to the office. ***We are so excited about our engagement with the community in the second half of 2024!!!***

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much to Sari McLeod and Tom Frantz for donating a BRAND NEW VACUUM to our church! You made this girl in the office very, very happy!!

Outreach News

The Back-To-School project is underway. We have received the names of 9 students at Jacobsville Elementary School from the county to help with their supply needs for the coming school year. Outreach supplies the backpacks with a list of needed supplies. ***We will give the backpacks and lists to volunteers on July 28th. The packs need to be filled and returned to church by August 11.*** Outreach will deliver the filled backpacks to Jacobsville before school starts. This is an easy project with great reward. Please don't miss this back-to-school fun.

Help Wanted

Our search continues for a new accompanist. Please share our job listing with anyone you may think qualifies. I have included in this email as an attachment a job listing flyer that can be distributed throughout our community. Please, please spread the word!! This same listing also appears on our website. <https://mymcumc.org/index.php/newsletter/> "Great opportunity for piano teachers/students to earn a supplemental income. Small, friendly church in Pasadena, Marland looking for an accompanist to play a baby grand piano on Sundays, one service each Sunday at 9:30 a.m., plus Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday early evening services. For additional information or to submit your interest, please call the church office at 410-255-8887 or e-mail mtcarmel21122@gmail.com."

We need 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.

An Encouraging Word

We all live a distracted life. There are distractions everywhere! It's really hard to get away from them. We are distracted by T.V. and online news. We are distracted by social media, smartphones, text messages and notifications, phone calls, talk radio, and that pesky noisy air-conditioning unit. The list of possible distractions is exhausting. I turn on my computer and connect to the internet to get my email and am greeted with the Microsoft start home page which is filled with titillating headlines all engineered to distract me. (They know my search history and what's going to lure me into the bottomless pit of useless information.) Have you ever searched Wikipedia for specific information only to find yourself drawn into the wiki-hole where you spend hours chasing interesting blue lined texts? Distraction! It's the way of modern life.

What would it be like to simply be alone with God, or with your thoughts, with nothing to distract? Personally, I think it would be really scary. I had a friend who once checked himself into a monastery for several weeks in order to finish a writing project. He could use his computer but there was no internet. There were no T.V.s or radios. Smart phones were not allowed. In fact, there was only one phone in the entire monastery and that was for emergencies only. There was a strict unvarying prayer routine: morning prayer, mid-day prayer, evening prayer, and finally vespers. Silence was the norm though discussion was allowed at the noon and evening meals. For the rest of the time, it was reading and writing which was the goal of his stay. He went there to write without distraction. He told me later he nearly went nuts! It's a scary thing being alone with your thoughts and God.

Yet it is when we are alone with our thoughts and God that we can truly come to know ourselves. It's in those times without distraction that we have the opportunity to think clearly. Jesus instructs us in Matthew 6:6, "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Away from distractions we are rewarded with an intimacy with God we can find no other way. We are told in Matthew 14:23 that after dealing with the crowds Jesus "went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone." Throughout his ministry Jesus would deliberately seek isolation away from distractions in order to be closer to God and to perhaps order his own thoughts. The less distracted we are the clearer our paths will be.

So now I'm going on a short sabbatical, a time away from the distractions and pressures of ministry. Will I be able to avoid all distractions? Probably not. But hopefully I'll be able to clear enough of the weeds away to get a better idea of the direction I need to be taking as I guide this congregation through another year. Perhaps I'll come away from this with a clearer understanding of the direction God wants me to take in my own life from this point on. Will I return to you like Moses coming down from the mountain armed with the secrets of the universe? I really don't think so. But I do hope to return with a clearer understanding of where God is calling me and of how to meet the swiftly changing needs of this congregation. There will be times when I will be alone with my own thoughts and with God, more time than I am normally able to devote to it. That's a little scary, but it's also exciting. I simply ask for your prayers now as I take time to be alone with my thoughts and with God.

This will be the last encouraging word you will be getting from me for a while. Expect the next one around September 11th. The news and announcements portion of the Encouraging Word will continue to be sent weekly.

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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Office Hours – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9-2