

# Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

October 2, 2024

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## Thank you...

To our Liturgists who read each Sunday. Our October schedule is...

10/6 – Sari McLeod, 10/13 – Warren Magruder, 10/20 – Jeri Hayden, 10/27 – Warren Magruder

To our Narthex Greeters that greet you each Sunday along with Fran of course. Our October schedule

is... 10/6 – Deb McMurtrey, 10/13 – Ernie Donaldson, 10/20 – Becky Bishop, 10/27 – Jen Harris

To our Coffee Hour Teams, The Fauconnet Family, The Johnson Family and Faith Hope Circle

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Faith Hope Circle will be meeting THIS Thursday, October 3 at 12:30 in the Church Hall. All are welcome to join. Please bring a bag lunch.**

**ORDER YOUR HOMEMADE SOUP NOW!! DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 4<sup>th</sup>!!! Attached are order forms for our wonderful homemade chicken noodle soup, chili, cornbread and apple dumplings. All made with love by the folks at Mt. Carmel.**

**Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Harvest Festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>!! Flyers are available!! Please take one and post it somewhere in the community. We NEED HELP GETTING THE WORD OUT!**

**One person's junk is another person's treasure!! Our first Flea Market fundraiser will be held on Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 9-3.** This is the same day as the very well attended Chesapeake High School Craft Event so we are expecting a lot of drive by traffic!!

*We are selling spaces NOW!!*

**Our church members will be able to set up on the Friday before our event!!**

### **Rentals:**

**Space only \$15.00**

**Space with a 6 ft round or rectangular table \$20.00**

**Space with an 8 ft rectangular table \$25.00**

**Spaces with tables available until sold out**

**Indoor and outdoor spaces available on first come first serve basis**

Please see our flyer in the Church Hall. Take some to hand out! ***We have purposely scheduled this on the same day as the CHS Craft Fair to maximize traffic.*** If you would like to rent a space/table or need more information, you can contact Jen in the office.

**We will be selling Apple Pies again this year!!** We will begin taking orders on at our Harvest Festival. The pies will be on a first come, first serve basis! You won't want to miss getting yours because they are *DELICIOUS!*

**This year we will be ushering in the holiday season with our first Christmas Tea, Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.** If you are interested in helping with this event, please contact Jen in the office.

## *Other events around town...*

Community Methodist UMC will be having a Blood Drive on Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am to 2:00pm. Please see the attached flyer for more details.

Galilee Lutheran Church will be having a TRUNK OR TREAT event on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup> from noon to 11:30. Please see the attached flyer for more details.

## Church Financials

Here is the financial statement for August, our Expenses vs. Income. Please note that August is typically our leanest month income wise. We are hoping the September Statement will be better. So far shortfalls in giving are being covered by reserves and dividends from investments.

Expenses for August 2024	\$17,947.37
Income for August 2024	\$ 7,661.22
Net Income	(\$10,286.00)

*Please see the Pastor's Encouraging Word below regarding this information.*

## **Outreach News**

**We continue to support our local food pantry.** Thank you all for helping with this ongoing project. I saw a nice food fairy donated lots of canned goods this week. Thank you to that nice person. We will continue to gather boxed macaroni and cheese for the next few months. We give out 2 boxes of mac and cheese in each food bag. Last week we gave out 56 bags of food. That's 112 boxes of mac and cheese that went out the door. So, keep them coming, folks.

## An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike

This is supposed to be an "encouraging word" so I'll try to be as encouraging as possible – but that comes at the end of this missal.

You probably have already seen, included above, the church operating budget financial statement for August. Yes, it is alarming but there are several things we need to understand in looking at this.

First, August is typically our worst month income wise – people are away, and church attendance is typically down. This is reflected in giving. Year to date, January through August, it doesn't look as alarming, nor is it encouraging with a shortfall of \$29,000.00 (the shortfall last year for the same period was \$16,000.00). Secondly – because of the way we receive income from investments (which we are using to mitigate shortfalls) there was no payout in August. Nor were there contributions from reserves (which we have also been using but are not infinite). This makes the figures seem even more startling. Obviously, some major adjustments need to be made as we structure the budget for next year.

Earlier this year we sent an appeal to members to increase giving – and the response to that appeal was positive. People who are giving have increased their giving. Though much needed and appreciated it seems it's not enough. Certainly, increased giving wouldn't hurt in this situation and would be greatly needed and appreciated, but that is not the entire answer.

Some of the decrease in overall giving can be attributed to the slow recovery in attendance following the Coronavirus. Several substantial givers are no longer attending. The greatest decrease is due to the passing of several members and change of life situations for other members which have decreased or curtailed their giving. We are also experiencing a decrease in attendance which is not unique to this congregation but being experienced in many congregations across the nation as interest in church and organized religion wanes. The closing of the Mount Carmel Child Development Center was unfortunate but had no negative effect on our income. If anything, the CDC's continuation would have been a drain on our finances.

So where do we go from here? What does this mean for our congregation? Be assured that our ministry as a congregation will continue. Certainly, there will be some necessary changes dictated by a smaller and tighter budget, but the doors will remain open, and our ministry will continue to be vital. I truly believe that with faith and trust in God all things are possible. The key is remaining faithful, continuing to trust in God that God will lead us through our current difficulties. There is an old expression that says, "When God closes a door, God opens a window". I truly believe this. Right now, we need to look for the open windows. Over the next several months the Unified Board of the church will be engaged in doing just that – investigating the open windows – and our Annual Conference provides several. Please be in prayer for the work of our Unified Board as they explore future possibilities and paths forward through these lean times.

The source of the expression, "When God closes a door God opens a window", is found in scripture. Matthew 7:7 declares, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you." Verse 8 continues, "For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." Some may see what is happening financially in our congregation as the closing of a door. If so then we seek another door, or a window, trusting in God to provide an open one that will lead us to different, and perhaps even greater ministries.

In fact, new ministry and community outreach opportunities have presented themselves and are being launched within the next month. One, called Evolve KidsCare, will be using the rooms in the Sunday School building and will be providing childcare in four-hour segments to parents and families who are in recovery, need to attend 12 Step meetings or similar interventions, and need a safe place for their children while they attend. We will also be providing a place for a Homeschool gathering affiliated with Let's Play America as well as an associated 4H group. These are important outreach

opportunities which will have a neutral effect on our budget. However, they will increase our visibility and enhance our impact on the needs of the surrounding community.

New avenues and possibilities are already presenting themselves. As we move forward diligently and faithfully seeking, asking, and believing I am confident that other doors will be opened to us. Matthew 7:7 encourages us to trust God and know that God will provide a way. In this lean season I encourage you to do the same.

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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**Office Hours – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9-2**