

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

November 13, 2024

Follow MCUMC on social media!

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

2024 Advent Study

Please Join Pastor Mike on Zoom for our 2024 Advent Study – This year we will be guided through our study using the book “An Unlikely Advent” written by Rachel Billups. This four-week Advent study focuses on the experiences of four sets of often overlooked characters in the Nativity story. During this Advent season, Rachel Billups guides readers through the themes of hope, love, joy, and peace by sharing the stories of Elizabeth and Zechariah, Herod, the Magi, and the shepherds. Each set of unexpected characters has something to teach about living faithfully on the journey to Christmas. **As with our other bible studies this one is accompanied by a video with a segment assigned to view at your leisure as you prepare each class. The video is available through the church’s Amplify.Media account. Some of you have used this before. For those of you who have not, information about accessing the videos will be sent when you register for the bible study.** The book – An Unlikely Advent – is available through Amazon and Cokesbury. It is also available on Kindle. For those who wish to dig deeper there is a workbook available that goes with the study. **These bible studies will be Zoomed so we need to know who you are so we can send you the Zoom link. The dates are November 26, and December 3rd, 10th, and 17th at 6:30pm. Please let us know ASAP if you would like to be a part of this by contacting the office.**

Thank you...

To our Liturgists who read each Sunday. Our November schedule is...
11/17 – Jeri Haden, 11/24 – Warren Magruder

To our Narthex Greeters that greet you each Sunday along with Fran of course. Our November schedule is... 11/17 – Ernie Donaldson, 11/24 – Becky Bishop

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

A HUGE thank you to all that helped make our First Flea Market a success. We made over \$650.00 through table and goods sales. We also had some very generous donations of goods and sales proceeds from our church family. Look for details about a BIGGER, BETTER Flea Market coming your way in the spring!

IMPORTANT DATES

We are looking for volunteers to help make our Apple Pies this year. We will be assembling the pies on Monday, November 25th at various times during the day. We are also looking for

donations of ingredients to make the pies. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer or contribute, please call or email Jen in the office.

IT'S TEA TIME YA'LL!!! This year we will be ushering in the holiday season with our first Christmas Tea, Saturday, December 7th, 3-5pm. Tickets are on sale now!! Only \$12 a ticket. Please contact the office if you would like to purchase one, or two, or a whole table!

Other events around town...

THIS FRIDAY, November 15th at 7pm Pastor Sheldon Brown presents Friday Night Live at Union Memorial United Church in Davidsonville, MD. Tickets are \$15 per person

Sunday, November 17th at 3pm Calvary United Methodist Church Christmas Concert Series presents Jung Park performing works by Bach, Gershwin, Liszt, Ravel and More! This event is Free.

Sunday, December 1st at 2pm Trinity Church of Annapolis welcomes Dr. Karen Jung-Yeon Yim a former pianist at Trinity and is an award-winning musician. She will perform works by Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schumann. A free will offering will be taken for the performance.

Outreach News

Holiday Sharing is in full swing. All families and seniors have been sponsored for Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. Sponsors have been assigned for the children's gifts for Christmas as well.

If you have missed out on that phase of our holiday giving, we are still collecting pasta products and boxed macaroni and cheese for the local food pantry. Their shelves are currently empty. Please consider making the holidays your "Season of Giving".

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike

Years ago, I went on a tour of the Steuben Crystal Works in Corning, New York. I watched as an artisan created a crystal carafe. He carefully heated a gob of molten glass in a kiln and then blew air through a tube into the gob slowly spinning it to the correct shape. He spent a great deal of time on the piece. When it was done to his satisfaction he sent it along to the inspection station. I was told that only ten percent of the pieces made it through the inspection stage and those that didn't make the cut were destroyed. Since it took an artisan about thirty minutes to create a piece, that would mean five hours spent in making one good piece and nine failed ones. What a waste.

We can celebrate that our God is not like the glass maker who destroys the imperfect creations. Rather, God is like the potter of Jeremiah 18 who is patient and who takes the time and effort to take less than perfect creations and remold them into works of perfection. There is no waste where God is concerned.

"This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 'Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message.' So, I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so, the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me; 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?'" Jeremiah 18: 1 – 6a

Have you ever felt like a lump; feeling not particularly beautiful, unhappy with yourself, or dissatisfied with your accomplishments? I'll have to admit that there were times when I've felt that way. There have been periods in my life when I have felt like a lump. There were times when I was not particularly happy with myself; times when I was feeling the "uns", that is un-worthy, un-loveable, un-important, un-successful, and un-appreciated. Maybe you've felt this way too from time to time; all too aware of your own perceived imperfections and blemishes.

The first thing we need to understand is that no one is a lump. Scripture reminds us that God lovingly took dust from the ground, the raw material of creation, and formed human beings, formed you and me, and lovingly breathed into us God's holy breath. No one with God breathed life within them is "just a lump". Each one of us is precious and holy, and like the potter God is continually forming and reforming us. We are living clay.

Ask any potter and they will tell you that clay has a mind of its own. When it is thrown on the wheel and spun different forces come into play. Centrifugal force draws the clay out from the center. The potter works clay forcing it into shape. But the clay itself is active and can get away from the potter resulting in a flawed creation. When considering the clay of our humanity God works to shape us through the work of the Holy Spirit. But another force, Sin, has a way of tempting us to do our own thing and get away from God the potter. Yet God is patient. Instead of tossing the whole lump on the trash heap as flawed and unfit God will continue to work upon us until we are shaped just right. That is as long as we are willing to be shaped, if we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If we are inviting the Holy Spirit into our lives God will be at work throwing the clay of our lives again and again, working and reworking until we are in God's image and reflecting God's perfection.

Peter writes in 1 Peter 5: 5 – 7, "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." The hand of God will reshape our lives and reform us into vessels reflecting God's glory.

Maybe the reason we sometimes feel like lumps is because we have resisted God's shaping work in the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we have been too filled with pride or arrogance to allow that to happen. Yet, if there is breath in us God will not throw us on the garbage heap but will work on us until we are right. We may all feel like lumps from time to time. The weight of our imperfections may at times

seem unbearable. But our God is the God of grace God is patient and willing to rework our lives from marred lumps of clay into glorious earthen vessels worthy of carrying God's Word.

That's all for this week. Pray for each other and pray for me. God is with us, we are not alone. Thanks be to God! Blessings and Peace, 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

Office Hours – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9-2