

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

November 20, 2024

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IMPORTANT DATES

Services for Rich Reed will be held this weekend. Family and friends are invited to Stallings Funeral Home in Pasadena on Friday, November 22nd, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Richard's life will be celebrated at a funeral service, which will be held here at Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church on Saturday, November 23rd, 2024, from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm, with a luncheon to follow. A Zoom Link for this service was emailed yesterday. Inurnment will follow with a graveside service at Mt. Carmel Methodist Church Cemetery on Saturday, November 30th, 2024, at 10:00 am. His obituary can be found here <https://www.stallingsfh.com/obituary/Richard-Reed>

Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, November 27th at 7pm there will be a service at Community Methodist Church on Fort Smallwood Road in Pasadena. Our very own Pastor Mike will be liturgist. All are welcome to attend.

All ladies of the church are invited to the Faith Hope Circle Christmas luncheon to be held Thursday, December 5th at 12:30 at Pasta & Vino restaurant in the Food Lion shopping center on Mountain Road. If you plan on attending, please RSVP to Denise Calabrese 410-255-3929.

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!

ALERT

If you signed up for the Holiday Sharing Program, please contact Jennifer in the office and let her know what family you have. Please call or email with this information.

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...
11/24 – Warren Magruder

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

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

Other events around town...

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

You would think the world is ending given all the dire predictions that seem to be floating around in the Non-MAGA world right now. Panic is in the streets and the media loves panic; it makes more money. In panic there is profit. Now I'm not MAGA by any means but I'm trying to resist the Chicken Little syndrome of believing the sky is falling. It probably isn't.

Of course you have all heard the story of Chicken Little, in some cultures it's called Henny Penny. Why? I have absolutely no idea. I'll make a long story short. Chicken Little is walking through the woods and an acorn falls on her head. Convinced that this is evidence that the sky is falling she proceeds to run through the woods warning her friends of the world's imminent end. They believed her and set off to find the King to warn him. However, along the way they are seduced by Foxy Loxy who promises to lead them to the King but leads them to his den instead. Chicken Little and her friends are never seen again. For them the sky really did end, not because the sky was falling, but because they were gullible enough to believe it was.

Of course, claiming that the sky is falling is the way candidates win elections. After all, the people need a savior to save them from the falling sky. This last election there were a lot of Chicken Littles running around claiming the sky is falling. Let's pray that the Chicken Little that won doesn't lead us into the fox's den.

Now here's the moral of the Chicken Little story. It's one we all need to remember. We can summarize the moral messages of the story as follows: 1) don't form incorrect conclusions from insufficient data; 2) don't stoke fear in others without good cause to do so; and 3) don't take other people's word for things, especially when those other people are making extraordinary claims (which should require extraordinary evidence). In other words, chill out.

Yes, these past few days have presented me with fodder for plenty of nightmares. I could easily worry about all the "what if's". But panic never helps anyone except the news outlets. I know people who are surfing the net, looking at all the dire predictions they find there and sifting through them for a word of hope. I've learned from experience not to do that – it only leads us further into fear. Instead, I turn to scripture. One Scripture which I hold close to my heart, especially in times like these, is Psalm 46 and I encourage you to read it. It's not very long.

There are some phrases that really stick out and comfort me. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth may give way, and the mountains fall into the sea", (Even though it may seem the sky is falling.), "though it's waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging." This portion of the psalm reminds me there is no other refuge but God, no one else we should trust. This helps me avoid the Chicken Little syndrome.

Here's another helpful phrase from the Psalm, one I'm sure you are familiar with. "Be still, and know that I am God." This phrase is a balm for my overactive imagination which has the tendency to imagine and fear all sorts of scenarios of falling skies. God asks me to still my troubled mind and spirit and to recognize that even in the midst of chaos and confusion, imagined or not, God will have everything in hand. There are lots of Chicken Littles out there, there are all sorts of dire predictions, and we can conjure up all sorts of horrible possibilities, some of which may come to pass. None of this changes the fact that we follow God and that Jesus is the only savior we need to follow, the only Word we need to trust.

As Jesus' followers we will have a lot of work to do given what may be in store. We won't be able to do that very well following the Chicken Littles of this world and worrying about their predictions. We

will meet each need as it arises and not worry about what could happen, trusting all the time that God is our refuge and strength and will lead us through.

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

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Office Hours – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9-2