

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

February 5, 2025

Follow MCUMC on social media!

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

Inclement Weather Alerts

Winter weather is always dicey! It looks like we *may* have a weather event on Saturday night. (you never know with Maryland weather!) If this happens we will notify you by email on Sunday morning if we are having our 9:30 Service.

Weekly Schedules

Liturgist - Our February schedule is...

02/09 – Jeri Hayden, 02/16 – Warren Magruder, 02/23 – Sari McLeod

Narthex Greeters - Our February schedule is...

02/09 – Deb McMurtrey, 02/16 – Ernie Donaldson, 02/23 – Gail Miller

Faith Hope Circle will meet this Thursday February 6th at 12:30. All ladies of the church & community are welcome. Please bring your lunch; dessert will be provided.

Mark your Calendars

3rd Annual Pasta Night, Sunday, March 9th, 4-7. Tickets are \$12 for Adults, \$8 for Children 10 & under. To purchase please contact the office by phone or email or by just dropping in during office hours. Tickets must be purchased by March 2nd. You do not want to miss out on this always **DELICIOUS** event!

Spring Flea Market, Saturday, April 5th, 9-1. Our Fall Flea Market was such a success that we decided to do it again! If you would like to reserve a table, please contact the office. Spaces are \$25, with limited tables available with each space if needed. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Volunteer Opportunity

St. Andrews Episcopal Church hosts Winter Relief annually and this year it will be the week of February 17 to February 24. This is a brief description of the program as mentioned on their website - <https://www.arundelhoh.org/winter-relief/> "The Winter Relief Program provides emergency shelter to men and women who are homeless during the winter months. In partnership with over 40 houses of worship, the program provides shelter, food, and social and spiritual support during the coldest months of the year. The program runs approximately 26 weeks each winter. Hosted at different Anne

Arundel County Houses of Worship each week from late October through March, the shelter is a safe and comfortable refuge. Host sites provide guest services, meals, companionship, activities, and spiritual guidance during their designated week."

They need volunteers for chaperoning the guests. They have different time slots available: 4:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone who works day shifts and would be interested in a volunteer opportunity during the evening. It involves sitting with and monitoring our guests. They would love to discuss all the details and possibly other volunteer opportunities with this ministry. They are available most afternoons or evenings, so **please respond to Susan McDonald via email, suemcdonald08@hotmail.com, or cell phone - 443.224.5632.** Thank you for your consideration.

A Note from Pam Mertz

From August through December, craft sales earned \$75 for the General fund. I'd like to especially thank Penny Pelligrini for donating the 10 trivets that were sold during this time. Thank you to everyone else for your continued support as we approach the 30th year of this project. I couldn't have done it without you!

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." Ephesians 6: 10 – 11

There is a wonderful old hymn in our Hymnbook that is often overlooked but I believe is appropriate for these times. The Hymn is "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus". It was written by George Duffield in the mid nineteenth century. The tune was composed by George Webb at about the same time. It appears in our Hymnbook as number 514 and was inspired by Ephesians 6:10 – 17 in which Paul is encouraging us to put on the whole armor of God.

At first glance this Hymn is very militaristic, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross; lift high his royal banner, it must not suffer loss." It sounds like a battle hymn, and it is, just not in a physical sense. The "mighty conflict" that is mentioned is a spiritual one. The un-numbered foes are the temptations we face as we encounter trials and difficulty; temptations to live, act, and speak in ways that are not Christian. I would include here the temptation to give in to despair and hopelessness, or the worst temptation of all, to give up on Jesus or the promises of God- to abandon the faith. These are temptations that can lead to spiritual destruction.

The hymn encourages us to put on the armor of God and employ it in the spiritual battles we face. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, on which the hymn is based, is one of encouragement. There are no specific problems that the Ephesian church was facing other than the one faced by all Christian congregations meeting in areas of Roman occupation, persecution. At times the persecution could be severe. Paul knew that any Christian facing persecution could easily give in to anger, hopelessness, despair and a host of other emotions that could lead to abandoning the faith and spiritual death. Therefore, he encourages us to put on the Whole Armor of God.

That armor consisted of the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and prayer. As I read it Paul encourages us to be truthful in all our dealings and relationships and counter lies that we might be tempted to spread. We are encouraged to live in a right relationship with God by conforming our lives to the standards set by Christ Jesus in his life and ministry. This would include loving all others, forgiveness, living humbly, praying for all others including those we might consider enemies. It means always seeking peaceful and equitable solutions to our disputes. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. Knowledge of scripture is a handy weapon to have in our possession in all our spiritual battles. Prayer is our way of staying connected to God through the fog of our spiritual battles.

Now I left one weapon out and that is the shield of faith. How do we keep the faith through difficult times like the ones many are facing these days? We do so through the mutual support of a loving and caring spiritual community. In the hymn I referenced above we find this line, "Ye that are brave serve him against unnumbered foes; let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose." Strength to strength oppose is a curious phrase but in the context of the rest of the hymn and in the old-fashioned language of the 18th century it means to stand together against the spiritual temptations that difficult times bring. A modern translation might sing "and hand in hand oppose". Spiritual battles are best faced when faced together. We are called to be a part of a community of faith where we support each other in our struggles. In this community we are called to encourage the faith of others and others encourage our own faith.

As we face uncertain times, and their accompanying spiritual struggles, the church is an indispensable resource. Through corporate worship and prayer, through its preaching and teaching, and through fellowship we are equipped to counter hopelessness with God's assurance and despair with the joy knowing Christ's presence with us experienced in this community we call the church.

That's all for today. I'll see you on Sunday, or on Zoom, weather permitting. Until then be safe, stay strong, and encourage each other. Blessings & 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