

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

February 12, 2025

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Weekly Schedules

Liturgist - Our February schedule is...

02/16 – Warren Magruder, 02/23 – Sari McLeod

Narthex Greeters - Our February schedule is...

02/16 – Ernie Donaldson, 02/23 – Gail Miller

The Unified Board will be meeting this Monday, February 17th at 6:30 at the Church Hall.

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

It seems that so many people these days may be suffering from S.A.D. No, I'm not talking about Seasonal Affective Disorder though a few of us are enduring that depressing malady in these dark winter days. The S.A.D. I'm talking about is Spiritual Attention Disorder. Yes, I just made that name up, but I believe the condition it describes is very real. It's especially during difficult and uncertain times that we need to be taking care of our spiritual health and discerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yet it is also during these difficult and uncertain times that our spiritual attention gets sidetracked by seemingly more immediate concerns and worries. That's when we lose touch with our sense of God's guidance and easily fall into despair.

So, when I feel myself slipping down the slippery slope of Spiritual Attention Disorder, I regain my footing by remembering two things. First that I am never out of the Lord's sight. God always has my back and is always watching over me. Psalm 139 beautifully declares this truth.

"Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there;

if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

¹ even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me fast."

- Psalm 139: 7 – 10 NRSV

Then, in remembering this assurance I also remember that I should never allow the Lord to leave my sight. Ages ago I played tennis. One of the most important things I learned about tennis is that you have to keep your eye on your opponent. If you get distracted and miss them addressing the ball, you will miss the ball when it comes back to you. Well, I know the Lord is not my opponent, but I also know if I take my spiritual eyes off the Lord, I'll lose sight of, and miss, the assurances that the Lord sends me.

So, when I feel myself becoming more and more distracted by the distressing events taking place around me, and feel myself slipping into despair, I refocus on God. For instance, I find that when I

begin and end my day with a word to God, acknowledging God, praising God, and perhaps even petitioning God that the days become much more bearable. It might be as simple as pausing on my way from the parsonage to the church to soak in the morning, to praise God for the mornings beauty, and then ask God for a good day. Then, when the day is done, thanking God for the gifts of the day. When I've done this, I've bracketed the day in praise for God and, in a way, made that day sacred.

When I feel myself losing touch with God's Spirit, I'll seek the Spirit's guidance in scripture or a devotional, or maybe in simply reading or singing a hymn to myself. The whole idea is to focus my attention on God and away from the distressing distractions around me. One hymn I turn to repeatedly is "His Eye Is on the Sparrow". It wasn't included in the United Methodist Hymnal, but you can find it in "The Faith We Sing" which is the little black paperback hymnal – also in our pews. It's number 2146. The third verse really speaks to me when I'm suffering from Spiritual Attention Disorder. Maybe it will speak to you as well.

"Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,
when song gives place to sighing, when hope within me dies,
I draw the closer to Him, from care he sets me free:
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.
I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
For his eye is on the sparrow and I know he watches me."

That's all for today. Take care of yourselves, take time to acknowledge God, and I'll see you on Sunday. 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