

Mt. Carmel UMC News and Encouraging Word

April 30, 2025

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Weekly Schedules

Liturgist - Our May schedule is 5/4 – Jeri Hayden, 5/11 – Warren Magruder, 5/18 – Sari McLeod, 5/25 – Warren Magruder

Narthex Greeters - Our May schedule is 5/4 – Deb McMurtrey, 5/11 – Ernie Donaldson, 5/18 – Donna DeLawder, 5/25 – Gail Miller

Faith Hope Circle is meeting this Thursday, May 1st at 12:30. Ladies can bring their lunch, & dessert will be provided.

We will be having a Clean-Up Day on May 17th at 8:30am. Please mark your calendars!! More to come about what to expect from the day. *Stay tuned!*

Local Community Church Events

May 3, 2025, 4-8pm – Scout Troop 441 is having a Spaghetti/Taco Dinner Fundraiser at VFW Post 2462. Adults \$15, child (4-12) \$8, under 3 FREE! Contact Alena at 334-379-0750 for tickets. Also, I have attached the FUN FLYER to this email.

May 5, 2025 - Magothy UMC is having a fund-raising day at Carrabba's (Pasadena) all day. If you mention Magothy UMC when you order, they will get 15% of the proceeds all day, lunch and dinner.

Thank You!

Mt. Carmel would like to acknowledge all the work that Dave Shelton has dedicated to our church. He has been our Financial Secretary for the past several years. He is one of those quietly and efficiently working behind the scenes to keep our mighty little church straight. He is now off to sunny Florida to bask in the glow of retirement. Dave, we wish you and your family all the best!

CALL TO ACTION

From Stephanie Donaldson – “My dear sweet Co-Worker Alexis Smith and her family, lost practically everything in a house fire including their sweet doggy Leggo. They will be displaced for at least 6 months to a year. Some of their immediate needs are clothes. Mostly for Alexis and their 2-year-old son Levington.

Alexis wears: Top - Size Medium, Bottoms - Size 4 or 6, Shoes - Size 8 and Levington is a 4T."

MCUMC would like to start a collection for the young family. If you have anything you could donate, clothes or gift cards for example, please bring them to the church. We will be collecting items in the church office and Narthex. Spread the word to the community. Remember, small donations makes a BIG difference. If you have any questions, please contact Jen in the office.

Outreach

The Food Pantry we support has received spaghetti from the county's food bank. Thanks to everyone who has helped with the pasta project. It made a big difference to area families in need. We are back to asking for boxes of macaroni and cheese. This is among the items the food pantry has to purchase on a weekly basis to round out the grocery bags. I've seen area stores selling their brand for as little as \$.59 per box. Let's help as much as we can during the remainder of April and May. *The mac and cheese drive is on!* Thanks, from Outreach.

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike

The following composition is a distillation of something I wrote early in my ministry. I found it as I was going through and cleaning out some of the papers in my office. I thought it might be worthy of an "Encouraging Word".

"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. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel." - Jeremiah 18: 1 - 6

Years ago, I went on a tour of the Steuben Crystal Works in Corning, New York. There, I had the opportunity to watch an artisan make a crystal carafe. He carefully gathered a gob of molten glass in a kiln and then blew air through a tube into the gob while slowly spinning it to the correct shape. He spent a great deal of time on the piece and when it was finished it was sent along to another stage of the process where the carafe would be inspected. If it failed the inspection, it would be destroyed. I also learned that the standards are so high that only one in ten pieces would be accepted. The rest would be destroyed and the fragments thrown away since it was easier and cheaper to start from scratch than to try to recycle the remains.

I'm so glad that our God is not like the glass maker who destroys imperfect creations. Instead, God is like the potter of Jeremiah who takes the time and effort and has the patience to remold the less than perfect creations into works of perfection. There is no waste where God is concerned.

Have you ever felt like a lump? By this I mean feeling not particularly beautiful or perfect. Have you ever felt unhappy about some aspects of yourself or dissatisfied with your accomplishments? I'll have to admit that from time to time I have. There have been periods in my life when I've felt like a lump. There were times when I've felt distinctly imperfect. There were times when I've felt UN; unworthy, unhappy, unlovable, uncaring, unimportant, and unsatisfied. Perhaps you've felt UN as well.

I also call this “feeling like a lump”. Maybe you know the feeling. There will be times when we are all too aware of our imperfections, blemishes, and what doesn’t feel right about our lives; feeling like a blemished pot. Isn’t it wonderful that our God can reform us and renew us to creations reflecting God’s beauty and grace.

The first thing we need to understand is that no one, despite how we may feel, is a lump. Genesis 2: 4 – 7 describes God lovingly taking the dust of the earth, the raw material of creation, and forming human beings then breathing into us the breath of life. No one with God breathed life in them is “just a lump”. We are special, precious, and holy. But we are not a finished product. God is continually forming and reforming us through the work of the Holy Spirit. 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 potting wheel and spun different forces come into play. Centrifugal force draws the clay out from the center. The potter works the clay forcing it into shape. But the clay itself is active and can get away from the potter resulting in a spoiled creation. When talking about the clay of our humanity the forces working upon us are God’s shaping work, but also the force of our own sinful nature drawing us away from God’s shaping hand. Causing us to “get away” from God.

But God is patient, and instead of tossing out the whole lump as unfit, God continues to work upon our clay until we are shaped just right – at least as long as we are willing to be shaped. As long as we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit, inviting the Spirit into our lives, God will shape us. God will be at work throwing the clay of our lives again and again, working and reworking us until we reflect God’s image and perfection. Through the Holy Spirit God works on us unworthy as we may feel to bring out God’s intended perfection.

The apostle Paul was by his own admission an imperfect and broken vessel, an imperfect lump of clay. Yet instead of throwing him away God remolded him so that the risen Jesus could say to Ananias of him, “He is a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before gentile kings and the children of Israel. (Acts 9: 13 – 15)

Maybe the reason we sometimes feel like a lump is because we have resisted God’s shaping us through the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we’ve been too filled with pride, even arrogance, to be open to the promptings of the Spirit. Yet if there is breath in us God will not throw us on the garbage heap but will work on us until we are just right. You may feel like a lump from time to time. The weight of our imperfection may at times become almost unbearable. But our God is a God of grace and patience, willing to rework our lives from marred lumps of clay into glorious earthen vessels worthy of carrying God’s word.

That’s all for today. I’ll see you on Sunday. Until then be well and be safe. Blessings & Peace, Pastor Mike

Take a glass blowing class!! – McFadden Art Glass, 6802 Eastern Ave, Baltimore, offers “one time glassblowing workshops in which participants will work with the resident glass artist to blow their own glass piece.” More info at <https://mcfaddenartglass.com/services/make-your-own-activities/>

Try your hand at pottery – Providence Pottery and Arts Studio, 40 Church Road, Arnold, offers many different classes from painting to creating pottery. More info at <https://providencepotteryandartsstudio.square.site/>

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