



# The Octagon

Severna Park United Methodist Church News

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## A Picture Bible for Grownups

I never grow tired of learning new things about the Bible. It was about a dozen years ago that I was part of a conference at Princeton Seminary when I heard a mesmerizing presentation from the curator of an art exhibit that was touring the country. He described for us the story of the St.

John's Bible, this art-rich illuminated text in the Benedictine tradition that had been commissioned by St. John's Abbey & University in tiny Collegeville, Minnesota back in 1998. Donald Jackson, the Queens Calligrapher in England...

(continued on page 6)

### Are You in Your 20s or 30s?

Our church's Young Adult Group (YAG) is all about forming authentic connections and friendships through laughing, talking, eating, and serving together. This year, we are planning more fellowship events and "drop in" discussions throughout the fall, so anyone can jump in anytime. Here's the plan:

#### Come to Hang Out

Wherever we hang out, there's bound to be food and a few laughs. Come on out and meet us! More details to come on all these activities:

*September 27* – Picnic at Kinder Farm Park, 5-7pm

*November 10* – Potluck at Tracy's house

*December 13* – Christmas Cookie Extravaganza at the church

#### Come to Talk

We love Jesus and love to grow in our faith together—and plus we just love to talk! This fall we'll be using the Alpha Film Series, which uses fresh videos to start deep discussions about the biggest questions of life. Whenever we get together on Wednesday nights, we'll gather in the church Parlor from 6-8pm, and childcare will be provided by December Brown in the nursery.

*September 13* – Is there more to life than this?

*October 11* – Who is Jesus?

*October 25* – Why did Jesus die?

#### Come to Serve

YAG isn't just about meeting great people. It's also about serving the One who brought us together. This fall we're pitching in on a couple church projects to serve the people of Anne Arundel county. More details to come!

*November 8* – Winter Relief: Help make and serve dinner as we turn our church into a home for over 40 men and women who are in need of a warm, safe place to live during the winter.

*November 27* – Backpack Buddies: Help pack food so that 24+ local children who face food insecurity have something to eat over the weekend.

Want to know more? Reach out to Rev. Carissa at [csurber@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:csurber@severnaparkumc.org). You can also get connected to the YAG email/texting list by texting "YAG" to (410) 983-3507. Hope to see you there!



## Hurricane Harvey Response

Our hearts go out to all those in Texas and Louisiana who have been impacted by the devastating flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is already part of the efforts to respond with compassion and practical assistance. We will be taking a special offering for UMCOR on **Sunday, September 10**. If you'd like to know more or give online, visit: [severnaparkumc.org/top5](http://severnaparkumc.org/top5)

## Endowment Workshop

As part of this year's Stewardship Campaign the Endowment Committee is sponsoring a workshop at 7pm on **November 6** entitled "Giving Creatively." The purpose is to share with the congregation a variety of ways to give to SPUMC and to include the church in your estate planning. Details to follow. [endowment@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:endowment@severnaparkumc.org)

## Church Conference

Our annual Charge Conference will actually be a Church Conference this year which means that it is open to everyone and all church members (not just leaders) are eligible to vote. Join us on **Saturday, September 23** at **9am** as we host a cluster of Church Conferences (including our own) here at SPUMC. If you are available to help us provide hospitality for the day, please contact Beth Frank. [bfrank@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:bfrank@severnaparkumc.org)

## Financial Snapshot

Through the end of July, we find ourselves in fairly good shape financially. While our general fund giving is down slightly (\$758K in 2016 v. \$730K in 2017), our expenses are down even more (\$809K v. \$695K) due to the fact that we retired our mortgage on the church building last year. This has resulted in a current year small surplus position of around \$35K. We expect that with normal summer patterns, we will fall back a little bit in August but begin to pick back up in revenue in September. Thanks for your continued faithfulness that makes all of our ministries possible.

## Continuing the Conversation

The saddening, eye-opening events of Charlottesville have come and gone, but core issues around race, hatred, and prejudice still remain. We had a powerful time of conversation and prayer on August 20 and hope it was just a start. If you'd like to be part of the ongoing dialog about ways that we can engage these issues as a church and be a positive agent of reconciliation and grace in our community, contact Rev. Ron and stay tuned for more on the horizon.

[ron@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:ron@severnaparkumc.org)





## Fall Study Classes at SPUMC

### Sundays

**\*8:15am** ~ Search the Scriptures: A study of *The Gospel of Matthew*. Begins **September 10**. (Bob Wimbrow)

**\*9:30am** ~ Saints and Sinners: *The Strength You Need* looks at 12 important scripture passages designed to give participants the strength they need for daily living. Begins **September 10**.

(Dick Legare and Nancy Landers)

**\*11am** ~ 11th Hour Bible Study: A study of the book of *Romans*. Begins September 10. (Reid Reininger)

**4pm** ~ *Religion and Science: Pathways to Truth*. A study offering a positive alternative way to live in today's world as scientifically informed believers presented by leading scientists, theologians and philosophers. Begins **September 10**. (Chip Linehan)

### Mondays

**\*10am** ~ UMW Learn and Share Circle: A study of Adam Hamilton's *Making Sense of the Bible* with deep and lively discussion. (Cindy Rafferty) Meets every other week.

**7pm** ~ A study of Adam Hamilton's *Revival* and key events in the life of John Wesley, showing how these provide lessons for our own spiritual journey and covering the most important convictions, qualities, and essential practices of early Methodists. The goal is not just to teach history but help us find revival in our own hearts and lives. Begins **September 11**. (Rev. Lee Ferrell)

### Tuesdays

**7pm** ~ An 8-week in-depth study of *The Gospel of Luke* with emphasis on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus – his birth, teachings, parables, miracles, and unique identity as the Christ. Bring your Bibles and prepare to engage in an exciting and interesting study! Begins **September 26**. (Rev. Byron Brought)

**\*7pm** ~ Disciple 1: One of the most comprehensive overviews of the themes and books of the Bible. Old Testament begins **September 19**; New Testament January 9. (Rev. Carissa Surber)

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*\* Indicates a Long-Term Class or Ongoing Class*



## Wednesdays

**9:30am** ~ Women's Bible Study: *Battlefield of the Mind*. Begins **September 13**. (Susan Brunk & Ann Chaffee)

**7pm** ~ *Illuminating the Bible*: A 5-week small group exploring the beauty of the St. John's Bible, the first Bible commissioned in nearly 500 years. Learn how art can help illuminate both Old and New Testaments. The class complements the Sunday worship fall sermon series. Begins **September 13**. (Rev. Ron Foster)

**\*6:30pm** ~ YAG (Young Adult Group): A fellowship & study group for 20s and 30s. Begins **September 13**. (Rev. Carissa Surber) *Meets second and fourth Wednesdays; childcare provided.*

## Thursdays

**\*5:30pm** ~ Moms Connect Book Study: A study of *Anxious for Nothing* that will give readers ways to keep the stress of life from overtaking them. Begins **September 21**. (Joann Bruneau) *Meets first and third Thursdays; childcare provided.*

**\*6:30pm** ~ Moms Connect: A study of *Mom Seeks God* that looks at essential disciplines for busy moms presented in an open discussion

format. Begins **September 7**. (Erica Benjamin) *Meets first and third Thursdays; childcare provided.*

**\*6:30pm** ~ Disciple 3: A study of the connection between memory and identity that examines calls to remember, repent, renew, and commune. Begins **September 14**. (Richard Ponder)

## Fridays

**10am** ~ A study of Adam Hamilton's *Revival* (See description for Monday, 7pm). **Begins September 15**.

### Special Presentation: The Protestant Reformation

**Mondays, October 23 & 30, 7pm**

As we near the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Rev. Sherrin Marshall will give a two-part presentation that will include a background on the historical situation that brought about the rise of Martin Luther (and other reformers) and how he was thrust into the role of reformer. We will see how the Reformation affected ordinary people in the global church from then to now.

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*\* Indicates a Long-Term Class or Ongoing Class*

### A Picture Bible for Grownups (continued)

became the Art Director for this ambitious multi-year project that was completed on September 15, 2011.

The result was nothing short of stunning: a seven volume illuminated scripture hand-crafted on vellum, created by artists and biblical scholars. The Smithsonian described it as “one of the extraordinary undertakings of our time” and Newsweek dubbed it “America’s Book of Kells.” There are 160 larger panel illustrations of texts (my favorite is the creation story) and embellishments throughout, making it a delight to read.

We are going to be using this “Picture Book Bible for Grown-ups” as a frame and backdrop for a worship series this September. I’ll teach a class on the St. John’s Bible on Wednesday nights and we’ll have one or two Sunday opportunities to see videos about this remarkable work during the Coffee Break. Mostly, it will be a touchstone throughout a six-week journey that will help us get a “Big Picture” of the Bible and explore some of its foundational themes. We’ll have links on our website to learn more about this particular Bible, but the hope is that we will all be drawn more deeply into the living Word of God that continues to speak across the centuries to us in our time, too.

Hope you’ll make plans to join us on this artful biblical journey!

Be God’s, Rev. Ron

### Snapshot Surveys

Thanks to everyone who took the time to fill out 1, 2, 3, or all of our “This Is Us” surveys during the month of August. We hope you had some fun with them and we’ve also learned some interesting things about our congregation as a result of your input. For example:

- Next to United Methodist, the most common religious background among us is Roman Catholic followed by Baptist
- We prefer to go to the beach v. the mountains by a 5:1 margin
- The average age for worshipers at 8am & 11am is almost identical (67/68) and at 9:30am the average is 47
- Garry’s Grill topped the list of go-to places to eat. Adam’s Ribs was a pretty close second, and it was Chick-fil-A’s pleasure to finish third :)
- Country music topped the charts, and we like Rock and Christian, too
- We love dogs over cats by a 4:1 ratio
- Of the 140 people who responded, 53 ranked their level of connection to our church as 9 or 10 and the overall average was 7.9.
- Our favorite congregational hymn is “Amazing Grace” followed closely by “In the Garden,” “How Great Thou Art” and “Here I Am, Lord.”

You can check the website for some more results of our survey. Thanks.

[severnaparkumc.org/survey](http://severnaparkumc.org/survey)

## Choir to Carnegie Hall

SPUMC Choirs were selected to join a chorus of auditioned singers from around the US to sing in the premiere performance of composer Mark Hayes original music at Carnegie Hall! The performance will be on **Sunday, November 19** in Carnegie Hall at **8:30pm**.

This is an amazing opportunity and accomplishment for our choir. Each choir member attending has to pay for their individual travel, lodging, and food while in New York City. Any donations to the trip are greatly appreciated, as these will help offset the cost of the trip. If you would like to make a donation or want to inquire about how to get tickets for the concert, please email our Music Director, Chris Dillard.

[cdillard@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:cdillard@severnaparkumc.org)

## UMM Breakfast & SkyPark Tour

Come join the United Methodist Men on **September 16** for special tour at Essex SkyPark Airfield. Ron Shippee and Bill Cloughley have offered access to their private airplane building activities,

and we will see the annual Wings & Wheels "Fly-In" of vintage aircraft and custom cars. Our Saturday begins with breakfast at the Boulevard Diner in Dundalk at 8am and be finished at the airfield by 1pm. Carpooling available from church parking lot at **7:30am**. Contact Reid to RSVP, request carpooling, and for more info.

[reid@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:reid@severnaparkumc.org)

## ALL September Luncheon

Adults Loving Life favorite, *Mary Ann Jung*, will portray Sally Ride, America's first female astronaut at our **September 26** luncheon. Join us at **12noon** for fellowship with fried chicken and fixins' for lunch plus an engaging program in which history comes alive right before your eyes. Sign up in Fellowship Hall.

[fseaman@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:fseaman@severnaparkumc.org)



## Security Team Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers to join our Security Team. Only requires one weekend (Friday night through Sunday afternoon) every 6 weeks or so depending on number of volunteers on the team. Please contact Dave McKinney to inquire further. Thanks!

[dmckinney@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:dmckinney@severnaparkumc.org)

## AHOH Clothes Closet Ministry

Arundel House of Hope Clothes Closet Ministry requests are posted in Fellowship Hall the first two Sundays each month. Please take a card and return the items by the third Sunday. Contact Martha Hollidge for more information.

[mhollidge@verizon.net](mailto:mhollidge@verizon.net)





## THE BIG PICTURE

A LOOK AT THE  
ST. JOHN'S BIBLE

### New September Sermon Series

- September 10:** Wondering & Wandering (Genesis)
- September 17:** Rivers & Rules (Exodus)
- September 24:** Covenant & Conscience (The Prophets)
- October 1:** Upside-Downing & Upsetting (The Gospels)
- October 8:** Planting & Prodding (Paul's letters)
- October 15:** Beasts & Blessings (Revelation)

### Never Alone New Schedule

Starting **Tuesday, September 5 at 7pm**, Never Alone, our cancer support group is kicking off their new meeting schedule. They'll now meet twice per month on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. Anyone from our church or community affected by cancer is welcome to this support group.

[doris.vose@aol.com](mailto:doris.vose@aol.com)



## Adults Loving Life Picnic Photos



## UMYF Fall Program Begins Super Sixth to Start Soon

Our United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) will hold its annual kick-off event on **September 10 at 7pm**. It will feature introductions, skits, door prizes, sign-ups, and an all-you-can-eat ice cream sundae!

UMYF is for youth in grades 7-12 and their friends. It meets weekly with few interruptions and features a program designed to give youth the chance to explore topics important and relevant to them. It is a safe environment where put downs are not allowed and all are encouraged to listen to and share with each other. We value each other as worthwhile children of God and intentionally choose to live in a way that others will be accepted and inspired.

The early schedule includes:

**September 10** – Opening Night with Sundae Bar

**September 17** – Group Building Games

**September 24** – “Play Hard, Play Fair, Nobody Hurt”

**October 1** – Election of Officers

Other events include a Halloween Bonfire, Fall Retreat, Lock-In, service opportunities and the best discussions you can imagine. We do have a no-cell-phone policy so we can give each other our full attention!

Consider this amazing group on your fall schedule!

[lferrell@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:lferrell@severnaparkumc.org)

Attention 6th graders and friends! Your special group will begin at the end of this month! We hope you will take advantage of this great program and join us **September 24**.

Super 6th is a preparatory group before UMYF just for 6th graders. The purpose is to have fun getting to know the people in your grade while learning the rules and ways of our youth group. Meeting every other Sunday afternoon, we will learn lots of games, eat good food, meet good leaders and have a great time! You are welcome to bring other 6th grade friends.

All meetings start at 5pm.

**September 24** – Includes Pizza Dinner

**October 8** – Includes BINGO

**October 22** – Halloween Party

**November 5** – New Games

## Children's Sunday School

50 volunteers are needed to make Sunday School a wonderful experience for our families. We are in need of teachers for the 2017-2018 school year. Teachers are on teams and only have to teach 10 Sundays during the school year. We are in greatest need of teachers for our 3-years-olds, kindergartners, 2nd graders, and 5th graders. Please prayerfully consider dedicating 10 Sundays to our kids.

[ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org)



## VBS Has Far-Reaching Effects

We often have no idea how our two weeks of Vacation Bible School affects our children. As with most early Christian Education, we do our best, plant seeds, and lay a foundation. Then we trust God to work miracles. All we are sure of is that the kids and often their parents are still singing the great music of the week, thanks to CDs in the family car! (The rest of the parents are trying to conveniently lose the repetitive CD!)

Turns out this summer, we did hear a story worth noting. Almost-four-year-old Addison attended the first week of VBS for the first time. Her teachers were two of our youth. A full month later, Addison named her two dolls after her special teachers – Marlena and Ava.

These two youth didn't preach or cover deep theological questions. They simply loved the children, came prepared, put forth tons of energy, and made it a fun week for the 15 little ones in their care. That attention and commitment was noted and appreciated by Addison, and that she named her dolls after them is quite a compliment for these youth.

Thanks to Marlena Summers (entering her junior year at Spalding) and Ava Meadows (entering 7th grade at Severna Park Middle). They represent more than 100 volunteers who make the VBS week special. Girls, your willingness to teach has made a big difference for one little girl, and who knows how many more? Apparently, you were "Made For This!"

## 3rd Grade Bibles

Third graders will receive Bibles as part of Christian Education Sunday on **Sunday, October 8**. Children must attend a class with their guardian prior to receiving their Bible. Class is **Sunday, September 24 at 11pm** or **Wednesday, September 27 at 7pm**. Please email Erica to let her know you have a third grader interested in receiving a Bible.

## Frolic Online

Our church recently subscribed to Frolic Online, a collection of early childhood faith formation resources for families. As part of our subscription, we have the opportunity to sign up families for a monthly e-newsletter, arriving on the first of the month and featuring articles about child development and faith formation. The goal is to support parents in helping their children take first steps of faith.

For your family to receive this e-newsletter, we need your child's name, date of birth, and email addresses for up to four caregivers who would like to subscribe. That means that in addition to your child's primary caregivers, you could have it sent to a few grandparents, godparents, or others who are supporting your child's faith formation. Each e-newsletter is sent by Sparkhouse, a publisher of faith formation resources for children, youth, and families.

We know that families of young children lead busy lives. We look forward to the opportunity to stay connected with you during these early years.

[ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org)

SPONSORED BY VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

*Save the Date* AND *Save Your Stuff*

# GARAGE SALE

**SATURDAY**

*October 7*

**8:30AM-1PM**

*Drop Off Days*

**WED, OCT 4: AFTER 5PM**

**THU, OCT 5: 8AM-8PM**

**FRI, OCT 6: 8AM-2PM**

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:**

ALL FOUR DAYS, FULL OR PART TIME,  
AS MANY HOURS AS YOU CAN GIVE!  
SIGN UP IN FELLOWSHIP HALL.

## *Suggested donations*

**CLOTHING • SHOES • JEWELRY  
HOUSEWARES AND LINENS  
BOOKS AND MEDIA • HOLIDAY ITEMS  
FURNITURE (GOOD CONDITION)  
ELECTRONICS • COMPUTERS  
TREASURES AND ANTIQUES  
OUTDOOR ITEMS • SPORTING GOODS  
CHILDREN'S ITEMS • TOYS/GAMES**

**ITEMS NOT ACCEPTED:** LARGE APPLIANCES OR TVs,  
MATTRESSES, CARPET PIECES, CURTAIN RODS, BLINDS  
AND SHADES, NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, FURNITURE IN  
POOR CONDITION, OR ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS

*bring your list of donations for a tax receipt*

FOR LARGE ITEM PICKUP:

**CALL MEL MERRITT 410.703.6372**

ANY QUESTIONS?

**CALL GWYN LINTHICUM 410.647.7349 (H)**

*Free Meals, coffee, and tea will be provided for all volunteers*

SEVERNA PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
731 BENFIELD RD. | SEVERNA PARK, MD  
**SEVERNAPARKUMC.ORG/SALE**