



The
Octagon
Severna Park United Methodist Church News

May 2018

Volume 4, No. 5

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A Kidney-Shaped Kingdom Glimpse

It was 6:15am on a Friday morning a few weeks back that I found myself in the pre-op area at the University of Maryland Hospital up in Baltimore. I had come to pray with Corey Houghton, a young man from our church in his 40's, who was awaiting kidney transplant surgery. At his bedside was his wife, Annie, who,

with Corey, has been traveling this multi-year road of failing kidney function, tests and more tests, endless doctor's visits, hope and fear. After checking in to see how Corey and Annie were feeling, I was soon introduced to John who was lying in a bed just on the other side of the room.

(continued on page 4)

VBS Volunteers and Donations

We love hosting a dynamic Vacation Bible School, and we need your donations (of time and items) to make it happen. Contact Erica for more information

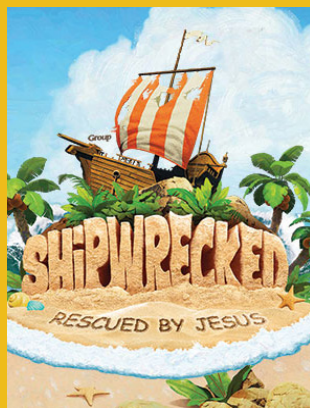
ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org

Items needed:

- empty water bottles with lids
- empty coffee cans

Volunteers needed:

- **July 9-13:**
 - 2 preschool crew leaders
 - 1 elementary craft leader
- **July 16-20:**
 - Nurse (M, W, F)



Let's Do Life Together

Are you in your 20s or 30s? You're invited to YAG!

Our church's Young Adult Group (YAG) is all about forming authentic connections and friendship through laughing, talking, eating, and serving together. Want to know more? Get on the YAG email/texting list by texting **YAG** to (410) 983-3507. You can also reach out to Rev. Carissa by email. csurber@severnaparkumc.org

Come to Talk

This year we're 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 **6:30-8pm**, and childcare will be provided by December Brown in the nursery.

May 9: What does the Holy Spirit do?

May 23: How can I make the most of the rest of my life?

Come to Hang Out

Wherever we hang out, there's bound to be food and a few laughs.

Come meet some great new friends!

Our End-of-the-Year Picnic is **Friday, June 8** starting at **5:30pm** at Tracy's house: 8221 Daniels Purchase Way, in Millersville, MD.

Bring a dish to share and come to relax together! Kids are welcome.

Blessing of the Animals

Over sixty five people showed up in our Memorial Garden on Earth Day, nearly all of them with dogs in tow (there was one rat, two virtual horses and not a single cat!) for our **2nd Annual Blessing of the Animals**. We sang, we prayed and we reveled in the gift of these furry companions who bring so much joy to our lives. What a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon! You can see all those cute canines and their proud parents on our Facebook Page.

facebook.com/severnaparkumc



Blessing of the Animals Photos



A Kingdom Glimpse

(continued from page 1)

John is Annie's sister-in-law's nephew, who had stepped forward when the call went out among family and friends to see if there might be a compatible donor. John's markers matched Corey's and he told me he was there being prepped for his own surgery ready to donate his kidney because "it just seemed like the right thing to do."

It didn't take long for the room to come to life with a steady stream of people in and out, offering instructions and expectations for the surgery, consent papers to be signed with each new visit; doctors, OR nurses, anesthesiologists, technicians. There were three teams in all. One would be working with John to remove his kidney and two would have Corey as their shared patient, the first team removing both of his cyst-covered enlarged kidneys (he shared pictures with me if you're not faint at heart) and the second team that would be implanting John's healthy kidney. The second surgeon shared that he was on his way to Philadelphia for a college visit with his son later that afternoon so that pretty much assured things would stay on schedule.

Before they led Corey and John away, I prayed with them, and Annie, John's parents and one of the nurses joined in our circle of grace. As I made my way back to my car and down I-97 to church, I kept pondering with amazement the years of training, dedication and skill that would be in those operating rooms, the level of coordination it takes to make a transplant successful, the delicate and intricate

integration of all these moving parts. I had witnessed a glimpse of God's kingdom in these multi-ethnic, multi-generational teams of medical personnel, hope-filled and anxious families and patients all working and praying toward a common goal of healing and new life.

I am happy to report that both John and Corey came through their surgeries well. Just earlier this morning, I spoke with Corey and he continues to progress, a little stronger and more himself with each passing day.

As I write this, I am on break from joining in all the frenzied preparations going on for another Missions Garage Sale at our church. In its own way (albeit less dramatically) it, too, is a sign of the Kingdom: so many dedicated and gifted people coming together to do tasks big and small all for the larger purpose of raising thousands of dollars for missions. All so that lives can be healed and God's salvation offered. Better get to work and see where my gifts are most needed. How about you?

Be God's,

Rev. Ron

Music Ministry News

Wow! What a great season it has been coming through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter with our music ministry team here at SPUMC! I am so thankful for each member of our ensembles and for each individual sacrifice of time and talent in making the music of the season so meaningful to our congregation. It is a true joy to worship with this amazing

church week after week, and it is even more exciting to see what God is doing here in the life of SPUMC.

Here is what's happening in the music ministry:

Spring Coffee House

Saturday, May 12 @ 7pm

This is a great event that not only showcases the multitude of talent that is present in our congregation, but also gives us a chance to fellowship in a relaxed setting and enjoy some great food and music. WE NEED PERFORMERS. We would love to add you to our lineup. If you would like to share your talent, please email Chris. cdillard@severnaparkumc.org

COME JOIN US!

This is a great time of year to get involved with our SPark Worship family. Whether you sing, play an instrument, play bells, or are just curious about being part of a music ensemble, we welcome you to come on out. There is a place for everyone in the SPUMC music ministry, and we are always eager to welcome new members to our team. Feel free and welcome to drop into one of our rehearsals and see what our teams are all about.

Rehearsal Schedule

Praise Bands: Wednesday, 7pm

Cherub Choir: Thursday, 6pm

Early Risers Choir: Sunday, 7:30am and occasionally Thursday, 6:30pm

Children's Choir: Sunday, 9am

Bell Choir: Thursday, 6pm

Adult Choir: Thursday, 7pm

Thank you for all your support of the SPUMC music ministry!

Fellowship Clubs Picnic

The Closing Event for the groups this year will be a BBQ Picnic on Sunday afternoon, **June 3, 3-7pm**. Feel free to invite others who might enjoy this event too.

We are asking you to contribute \$10 per person to cover incidentals. Bring your favorite outdoor chairs, and a side dish or dessert to share. Musicians are invited to share their talents too.

We look forward to being together for a fun time!"

The event is at Laurie & Hank Sims' home on the waterfront in Pasadena at 1196 Watervale Court. Parking is extremely limited; carpooling is encouraged

RSVP to Dixie Catlett.
dixiecatdc@gmail.com

Church Office Closures

The church offices will be closed on **Monday, May 28** in observation of **Memorial Day** and on **Friday, June 1** as the staff joins **Annual Conference**.

For more info on **Annual Conference**, see the article on page 6.

June Octagon

Because the offices will be closed for two days during the week prior to the scheduled publication of the June issue of **The Octagon**, we're delaying its release a week.

Look for our next **Octagon on Sunday, June 10**.

So... What Is Annual Conference?

This time of year, you'll hear church leaders talk about something called "annual conference." Here's what it all means.

In the United Methodist Church, the term "annual conference" can mean three things. An annual conference is, first, a **regional body** of the church. In the United States, the UMC is organized into 56 different annual conferences. We are part of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference, a region that covers Washington DC, most of Maryland, plus two counties in West Virginia. When the bishop appoints clergy to serve in different churches, those pastors generally stay within the boundaries of the conference.

Sometimes, you'll hear us talk about a decision that the annual conference has made. When we're doing this, we're referring to the **organizational body** of the church – that is, the central office, staff, and volunteers that conduct the work of the annual conference. Clergy and lay persons serve as volunteers on conference boards, commissions, and committees, such as when Rev. Ron and Rev. Lee serve on the Board of Ordained Ministries. This aspect of the annual conference keeps us connected and supported in our local church ministry!

Finally, this time of year, we use the term "annual conference" to refer to the **annual business meeting** held each year at the end of May/beginning of June. All the clergy in the annual conference region gather together with an equal number

of lay members, and together do the work of the church. These sessions will include reports of past and ongoing work; adoption of future goals, programs and budgets; ordination of clergy members as deacons and elders; and election of delegates to Jurisdictional and General Conferences. This year, the Baltimore-Washington *Annual Conference Session* will take place May 30-June 1 in Baltimore, with the theme, "We are One: Beneath the Cross." You can read more about this year's agenda at bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference

So why does this all matter?

The annual conference matters because we are not alone here at Severna Park UMC. We are part of a connectional church, a network of United Methodists across the state, all within a global structure that is taking the good news around the world. As our church encounters the changing culture, we are part of a larger body of Christ, one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

So this **May 30-June 1**, we invite you to pray for our annual conference session. Pray for Revs. Ron, Lee, and Carissa, and for our lay members, Erica Benjamin, Heather Kraus, and Beth Smith. Pray for Chris, as he joins a conference team in leading worship. Pray for those conference leaders who are presenting reports of their work to adapt the church to a changing world. Pray for the whole body as we make decisions about what we will value with our time and treasure in the coming year. And pray for the Holy Spirit to be among us, as we gather together in Baltimore, "one beneath the cross."



Praying for a Way Forward

The Council of Bishops has been meeting in Chicago this past week to receive and respond to the final report of the Commission on a Way Forward. The 32-member Commission which represents diverse viewpoints, global and regional contexts and clergy and lay perspectives was created by the 2016 General Conference in hopes of helping the UMC break the impasse we have found ourselves at for decades over issues of human sexuality. Please continue to hold our entire church in prayer as we seek to find loving and faithful ways to share a unified witness in spite of our theological and cultural differences over LGBTQ inclusion.

As the Bishops issue their recommendation* that will be taken up at a specially called General Conference of the UMC a year from now, in the coming months we will be offering information sessions, forums for discussion and small group studies to help us understand and explore the issues that are before our denomination. We will post a resource section on our website to provide articles, books and links to help us all stay in the loop on a local level about proposals that potentially could change the shape of our global church.

In April, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the United Methodist Church which involved the coming together of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church in 1968. What will be the shape and structure of our church moving forward is very much on the table right now and hard to predict. Will we find a way to continue to be United Methodists? I hope and pray so.

For more and developing information about the Council of Bishops and the Commission on the Way Forward, visit our Conference website: bwcumc.org.

(*expected very soon but not available at the time of this printing)

Operation Welcome Home

Members of Adults Loving Life recently delivered 3,000 personalized cards and 44 cases of granola bars to an Operation Welcome Home event at the BWI airport. The cards and snacks will be placed in bags for troops returning from overseas duty. Thank you to everyone who is helping with this wonderful mission project, and please keep those cards coming!



Wear Red for Pentecost

Everyone is invited to wear red (or orange or yellow – flames of the Spirit is what we're after) on **Sunday, May 20** in celebration of Pentecost!



Holy Land & Oberammergau Pilgrimage

Sign up ASAP for the Holy Land/Oberammergau pilgrimage that Rev. Ron & Holly are leading **June 14-27, 2020**. The cost is \$4695/person and over 75 people have expressed interest so far. A deposit of \$100 to reserve your space is due by **June 15, 2018**. Contact Holly or Rev. Ron today for more info. holronfost@aol.com

SPUMC Softball Team Schedule

Games are played on Sundays at Cypress Creek Park or Elvaton Park.

May 6: 3:30pm, Cypress 1

May 13: No Game

May 20: 2pm, Cypress 1

May 27: No Game

June 3: 2pm, Elvaton 1

June 10: 2pm, Cypress 1

June 17: 2pm, Cypress 1

June 24: 2pm, Cypress 2

July 1: No Game

July 8: 3:30pm, Cypress 1

July 15: 3:30pm, Cypress 1

July 22: 2pm, Cypress 1

July 29: 2pm, Elvaton 1

August 5: 2pm, Cypress 1

August 12: 3:30pm, Cypress 1

UMYF News

Sunday, May 6: 7pm No-Talent-Night, 8:40pm ICUs

Sunday, May 13: No meeting

Sunday, May 20: 11am Service of Confirmation

7pm Meet the Freshmen, Senior Share Night, 8:40pm Final ICUs

Sunday, May 27: 5pm, End-of-the-Year Banquet, \$12 per person. Awards, recognitions, powerpoint! Good dress required (tie for guys).

Sunday, June 3: 7pm Summer MYF begins.

Super 6th News

Today, May 6: 5:00 pm Final Super 6th of the year!

Our own brand of Olympic games...some serious, some silly. Will include an award ceremony! Sixth graders may start coming to MYF in the summer once school is out!

College News

As our college students graduate this spring, please send that information to the education office so we can publish and celebrate their accomplishments. Include the school and full degree earned.

lferrell@severnaparkumc.org

SPAN Needs

Thanks largely to the Reverse Advent Calendar food donations to SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods) from members of SPUMC, this is the first time in 2018 SPAN has a need for specific items. Currently needed are syrup, jelly, toilet paper, and paper towels. Thank you for helping!



Baptism Class

Our church is full of families and children, and baptisms take place several times each month. If you are interested in having a child baptized at SPUMC, please join us in the Parlor for a Baptism Class on **Sunday, June 24 at 11am** to learn about what is involved. RSVP to Beth. bfrank@severnaparkumc.org

Connections Class

Maybe you've been hanging around our church for a while now and you want to dip your toe a little deeper in the water. Or perhaps you're brand new here and simply want to know more. You might even be ready to take the plunge and join our church. We invite you to attend a Connections Class on **Sunday, June 3 at 11am** in the Parlor, designed to introduce you to some of the ministries of our church and to give us a chance to get to know each other better. Childcare is provided. RSVP to Beth. bfrank@severnaparkumc.org

Mother's Day Reception

Next **Sunday, May 13**, we'll celebrate Mother's Day by enjoying coffee breaks between worship in our beautiful Memorial Garden. The committee is always in need of help with the garden. If you are interested, please contact Lynnette. lynnettecloughley@gmail.com



Baseball Game Day

Our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Evan Young, invites the Southern Region & Annapolis District to the Bowie Baysox Game at **7:05pm** on Friday night, **June 15**, to enjoy a Bowie Baysox baseball game, and to fellowship with each other.

Food items include: Grilled All-Beef Hamburgers, Grilled All-Beef Hot Dogs, Pulled Chicken Barbeque, Sliced Tomato, Lettuce, Onion & Pickles, two sides, PLUS Kettle Chips, Fresh Chilled Watermelon and Ice Cream Cups. The buffet opens at 6:35pm.

The \$30 tickets must be purchased through the BWC website at severnaparkumc.org/baysox. All tickets must be purchased by June 1, 2018.

Please contact Willine with any questions. wkamara@bwcumc.org



Garage Sale Thanks

Whether you set up, cleaned up, sorted, cooked, donated, cashiered, organized, or just showed up to shop, we *thank* you for your support of the VIM Garage Sale which twice a year raises A LOT of money for missions. A special thanks to **Karen Myers** for everything she did in planning and organizing her first Garage Sale! The hat has been passed!



Garage Sale Pictures



So Now What?



UMCOR Sunday Update

We had a generous response to our special offering for the United Methodist Committee on Relief on April 29 with our guest preacher, Rev. Brian Diggs from UMCOR West encouraging us to “Get Up & Go!” To date we have received almost \$5,000 in donations but you can still help us raise that figure. You can give online at severnaparkumc.org/give or by cash or check (use an offering envelope from the Welcome Desk and/or mark UMCOR in the memo section of your check or online). Many thanks for your generosity.



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