



The Octagon

Severna Park United Methodist Church News

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A Thrill of Hope

When I was growing up, my favorite moment was “Joy to the World.”

Each year on Christmas Eve, the service would culminate in a sacred moment of candle lighting. You know that moment: where everything gets hushed and you can feel the presence of God

sweeping across the congregation, as the light passes from neighbor to neighbor. I loved that moment... but in our church, as soon as all the candles were lit, we burst into a festive chorus: “Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King.”

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A Thrill of Hope

Winter Relief Thanks

We would like to thank the 300-plus volunteers that participated and put in over 1300 hours to make Winter Relief a success. We not only provided our 45 guests a place to sleep, meals & snacks, laundry, sewing, transportation, and showers, but were able to give each guest a goody bag with gift cards and provide both dental services by Dr. Dave Deitrick and barber services. Our guests were entertained by our own Chris Dillard and choirs, attended an employment networking session led by Sean Wise, and enjoyed a bonfire at Deb Harden's home.

But Winter Relief goes way beyond this. It was summed up perfectly by one of

our guests, "It's one thing to open your church to us, it's another thing to open your hearts to us." Truly God was present with us during this week. Our volunteers and leadership team served with their hands, feet, hearts, and time, but most importantly they loved our guests as Jesus loves them. Not only were the guests blessed in many ways, but our entire church was blessed.

If you did not get a chance to participate in the Winter Relief Mission this November, please consider volunteering **February 4-11**. We would ask you to keep all of the homeless population in your prayers.

Thank you,

Carolyn Heim & Pam Sherman



THE STAR

THE STORY OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 2

Cookies & Crafts
4:30–6:30pm
Movie begins at 5pm

- Showing in the Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall
- Bring a snack or dessert to share
- Popcorn provided

Advent Giving Tree

Our annual tree of giving is up in our Fellowship Hall! Each of the 459 ornaments on the Advent Giving Tree represents a need from one of our church mission projects. This year, our church has adopted 16 families through the Salvation Army, giving us the chance to brighten Christmas for 50 children. You can also choose to give through our Backpack Buddies ministry, help our Heaven's Kitchen team provide warm food for the Brooklyn Park Community, provide gifts for our Wycliffe Missionaries, and so much more. While some items must be returned quickly for early delivery, others can be brought to church any time before Christmas Eve. This is a great opportunity for your family to bring a "thrill of hope" this Advent season!

11am Advent Sunday School

They're the soundtrack of the Christmas season. Christmas carols ring out at shopping malls, through radios, and on network TV specials. Choirs sing them, dancers bring them to life, and movies know when to cue them at just the right moment.

But the songs of Christmas provide more than holiday cheer. For hundreds of years, traditional carols have told the true story of Jesus' birth—and they have stories of their own to tell! Throughout Advent, 11am Sunday School for our PreK-5th Grade will share the songs, the stories, and God's plan to send a Rescuer to the world that very first Christmas.

Christmas Eve Cherub Choir

All children ages 3-6 are invited to join us in for a special Christmas Eve cherub choir. Practices will be on **Sundays in December** at **9am**. Choir members are also invited to be in our preschool pageant at the 3pm Christmas Eve service.

ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org

YAG December

YAG Cookie Chat — SPUMC's Young Adult Group is getting together for a Christmas Cookie Extravaganza on **Thursday, December 13, 6:30-8pm**. Join us for a night of fellowship, frosting, and your favorite Christmas movies! Childcare will be provided. Email Carissa if you want to help bring the sweets.

YAG Goes Lunching — Join the Young Adult Group at Hella's Restaurant (Veterans Highway) at **12noon** on **December 30**. Join us and connect with some other young adults (20's & 30's) at SPUMC. Email Carissa for more info.

carissa@severnaparkumc.org

Outdoor Nativity

Thanks to the crew of Dave Robinson, Tommy Parker, Logan Dill, & Dan Lee who put up our outdoor nativity on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.



A Thrill of Hope

A Thrill of Hope

(continued from page 1)

I loved everything about this moment: the danger and novelty of holding my own candle, the cozy feeling of everyone gathered in the sanctuary, the triumphant brass that joined our voices in praise, and the dramatic juxtaposition of quiet candles and loud song. This moment, to me, is Christmas. All year long, whenever I would flip through the hymnal, I would run my fingers over the wax drips on page 246 of the hymnal, remembering the “wonders, wonders of his love.”

These days, I’ve grown to love other moments throughout the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany: the moment our staff begins to pray and dream about what God has in store. The moment when we set up the Advent Giving Tree in Fellowship Hall, and it gets emptied by your generosity on the very first Sunday. The moment the children gather in chaotic joy to decorate cookies with mounds of frosting and create crafts that will decorate their homes. And, of course, I still love that sacred moment on Christmas Eve when the lights go down and the candles are lit. The season is filled with moments, and in each one of them, there is a soundtrack of joyful and faith-filled music.

What is your Christmas moment?

For so many of us, the songs of the season are woven into our favorite Christmas moments, whether it’s in the sanctuary, decorating the tree, or simply gathered with family. This year, our congregation is going to journey through the holy season of Advent guided

by key phrases from some of the most familiar Christmas carols. As we preach and worship through these songs, it is our hope that your love of them will grow deeper – and that whenever you hear them again, they will be a reminder of the hope, peace, joy, and love that we find in this season.

I hope that as we embrace the songs of the season, you will feel “a thrill of hope” at what God has in store for you.

grace & peace,

Rev. Carissa

UMYF News

Sunday, December 9, 7pm — Program, “What Are We Really Celebrating?” with songs, games, & contests. ICU signups.

Sunday, December 16, 7pm — Christmas Party! Wear Christmas colors and/or and ugly Christmas sweater.

Sunday, December 23 — No meeting

Sunday, December 30 — No meeting

Sunday, January 6, 7pm — Full programming resumes!

Super Sixth

All 6th graders and friends are welcome as we get started this fall!

December 9, 5pm — Christmas Party. Wear Christmas colors. If you can, bring a dozen of some kind of Christmas cookie or treat. Videos, games, contests.

January 13, 5pm — Winter Beach Party. Come ready for summer, and for games, crafts, and dinner!

January 27, 5pm — Regular evening.



Congrats Eagle Scouts

Congratulations to three of our youth who have achieved Scouting's highest rank, that of Eagle Scout. Eagles must meet several requirements, receive recommendations, and complete an approved project. We celebrate with our youth and commend them for a job well done.

Kevin Lee: Kevin joined Troop 339 at Woods Church in 2013. He held many leadership positions and participated in several high adventure and special activities over the years. His project was to plan, organize and lead a meal packing event for Rise Against Hunger, an organization whose mission is to end world hunger by 2030. The project packaged 10, 130 meals that went to a school in Malawi, Africa. Kevin is a junior at Severna Park High School where he is on the wrestling team. He is also an active member of MYF. Kevin is the son of David Lee and Lynn Sullivan, and brother to Dan and Justin...all of whom are involved in scouting.

Erick Howard: Erick has been a scout since elementary school, starting at Benfield Elementary and moving up to our troop 993 at this church. He has been in numerous leadership positions and earned several honors. His project was to replace/rebuild the seating in the Chapel in the Woods, next to the Memorial Garden at SPUMC. Erick is a senior at Severna Park High School and plans to attend a 4 year college next fall in a Navy program, studying engineering. He is currently an officer in our MYF. He is the son of Rick and Beth Howard, brother to Allie and Ben...all of whom are actively involved in scouting.

Mitch Decker: Mitch also began his scouting career at Benfield and "graduated" to Troop 993. Mitch has held various leadership positions and has been awarded several honors. He participated in many camping and high adventure trips. His project was building four new picnic tables for the Nursery School playground area. Mitch is a senior at Severna Park High and plans to attend college in the fall. He is the son of Robin and Tom Decker, and brother to Alec, also an Eagle Scout.

Connections Class

If you want to learn more about SPUMC, or if you're interested in joining, come to our next Connections Class on January 13 at 11am in the Parlor.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Please come and give the gift of life at our next blood drive. The Red Cross Blood Mobile will be on our front parking lot on Monday, December 17th from 2pm-730pm. It only takes about an hour and your gift could save up to three lives.

dmckinney@severnaparkumc.org



Advent at SPUMC

It's hard to imagine Christmas without the carols, a rich part of our tradition and a deep point of connection for so many people. This year during the Sundays of Advent, some of the most familiar carols of Christmas will guide us through this holy season and bring us to Christmas Eve, where we will light candles, sing "Silent Night" (which "turns" 200 this year) and try to soak in the mystery of the manger. We hope you will be a part of all that we have to offer at SPUMC during this season—serving, sharing and most of all, singing together!

Sunday Morning Worship

December 2 — *Anticipate*: A Thrill of Hope

December 9 — *Center*: Peace on Earth & Mercy Mild

December 16 — *Rejoice*: Echoing Their Joyous Strains

December 23 — *Adore*: Now in Flesh Appearing

December 24 — *Celebrate*: All Is Calm, All Is Bright

December 30 — *Go*: Over the Hills & Everywhere

January 6 — *Shine*: Guide Us to Thy Perfect Light

Events

The Star, Cookies, & Crafts

Families will get together on **Sunday, December 2** from **4:30-6:30pm**. Join us as we watch The Star beginning at 5pm. Enjoy decorating sugar cookies. Make ornaments and crafts. Bring hors d'oeuvres or cookies to share. For serious movie-watchers the movie will be playing in the Sanctuary, with a more casual atmosphere in Fellowship Hall.

Blue Christmas Worship

The Christmas Season can be a hard time for those dealing with grief or loss. You are invited to a service of healing and hope, **Sunday, December 16** at **5pm** in the Sanctuary, where we will reflectively celebrate Emmanuel, God with us.

UMYF Christmas Party

Youth Fellowship will have their annual Christmas party with games, contests, cookie decorating, and good food on **December 16** at **7pm**.

YAG Christmas Fellowship

Our Young Adult Group is getting together for a Christmas Cookie Extravaganza on **Thursday, December 13, 6:30-8pm**. Join us for a night of fellowship, frosting, and your favorite Christmas movies! Childcare provided. carissa@severnaparkumc.org

Moms Connect Christmas Party

All moms are invited to join in the Moms Connect Christmas Party on **Thursday, December 20, 6:30pm**. We will pack gifts for Heaven's Kitchen kids and enjoy a White Elephant Gift Exchange (\$10 limit). ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org

Serve

Heaven's Kitchen

On **Saturday, December 22**, volunteers and guests will gather for a special meal at Heaven's Kitchen, our meal ministry in Brooklyn, MD. We need help to make this meal hospitable, grace-filled, and tasty. If you would like to volunteer contact Chip. boxslsman@aol.com

Intentional Acts of Kindness

Thanks to the generosity of several people, on December 2, 200+ families or individuals will get to turn a \$100 bill into an act of kindness. The only "rules" are 1) you commit to being intentional about passing on this blessing, and 2) that you share the story with us of what you did. Use your compassion and imagination to bring 'a thrill of hope' to someone's life this Christmas! Be sure to check our website throughout the season to read stories of the acts of kindness.

rfoster@severnaparkumc.org

Reverse Advent Calendar

Grab a SPAN tote bag and put 1 food item in it each day of Advent. Return the bag to Fellowship Hall on Christmas Eve or the next Sunday. The bags will supply our local food pantry for months to come. fseaman@severnaparkumc.org

A Thrill of Hope

Advent Studies

“Hidden Christmas” — To help you find the real spirit of Christmas, this study by Timothy Keller will take readers to the heart of the nativity, looking at messages of hope, redemption, and salvation.

Sunday 9:30am — Dick Legare & Nancy Landers

Sunday 11am — Reid Reininger

“The Living Nativity” — A hands-on class based on the book by Larry Peacock, where we’ll explore how Advent and Christmas traditions like wreaths, trees, and more help us draw closer to our faith.

Tuesday 7pm — Rev. Carissa Surber

“Living Nativity” Women’s Class — Susan Brunk is leading a study class for women during Advent that meets in the Parlor. See description above. Childcare is provided.

Tuesday 9:30am — Susan Brunk

“The Advent Mission” — A daily devotional that will double as discussion material, focusing on Jesus’ arrival in the manger as well as his second coming in victory.

Friday 10am — Rev. Lee Ferrell & Chip Linehan

11am Sunday School for Kids — The songs of Christmas provide more than holiday cheer—they have stories of their own to tell! Throughout Advent, Sunday School during our 11am worship will share songs, stories, and God’s plan to send a Rescuer to the world that first Christmas.

Sunday 11am



Christmas Eve

3pm: Family Service | **Toddlers & Preschool Children**

- Carols, stories, and informal pageant
- Carols & glow stick candlelighting
- Relaxed for our youngest worshippers

5pm: Family Service | **Elementary School Children**

- Christmas pageant featuring our 2nd graders
- Carols & glow stick candlelighting
- Brief Christmas message by Erica Benjamin

Birthday Cake for Jesus and Sunday School Art Show in Fellowship Hall immediately following both Family services.

7pm: Contemporary Christmas Service

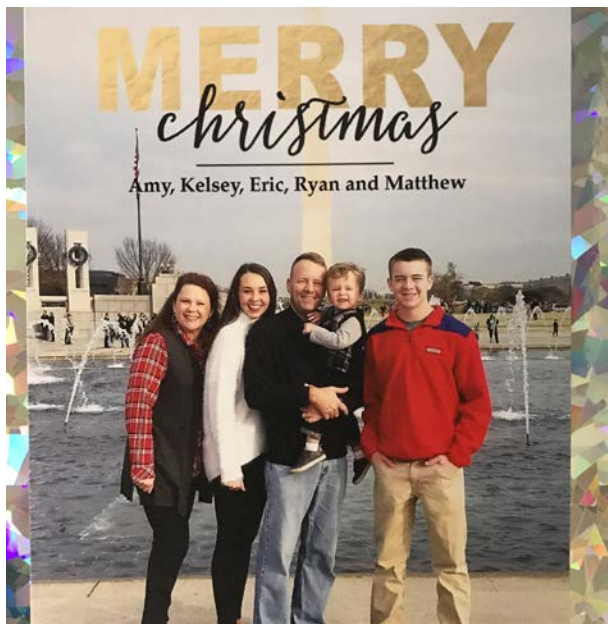
- Christmas Carols led by our Worship Bands
- Candlelighting
- Christmas Message by Rev. Ron

9pm: Traditional Christmas Service

- Music by Brass Quintet, Bells, & Christmas Choir
- Carols & Candlelighting
- Christmas Message by Rev. Ron

11pm: Traditional Christmas Service

- Music by Brass Quintet, Bells, & Christmas Choir
- Holy Communion & Candlelighting
- Christmas Message by Rev. Carissa



Send Us A Card!

We're once again creating a display of Christmas cards from our church members and friends. Please send us a card—we'd especially love to get your family photo card if you do one—and we'll add it to the montage of Christmas images. Thanks!

Nursery School Registration

SPUMC Nursery School will be opening registration for the upcoming school year in early January. If your child will be 3 or 4 years old by September 1, 2019, we'd love to have them join us!

To schedule a tour of our wonderful school, please email Robin Decker at rdecker@spumcns.org. Visit our website, for information on when and how to register, and be sure to "like" us on Facebook!

severnaparkumc.org/nursery-school



2019 Pledge Cards

Thanks to everyone who has already turned in a Attitude Adjustment pledge card to help support our ministries in 2019. As of November 25, we have received 152 pledges totaling \$739,000. Our goal is to have 200+ pledges and closer to \$850,000. Additional cards are available online or at the Welcome Desk and you can turn yours in by placing it in the offering plate, returning it to the Welcome Desk, or by mailing it in to the church office. Many thanks.

severnaparkumc.org/pledge

Year-End Giving

Help us to end the year on a strong financial footing. If you are in a position to meet or exceed your pledge or to make an additional gift at this time of year, it would be greatly appreciated. Contact the Church Office if you are interested in making a stock donation as a one-time gift or as part of your pledge. Many thanks!

A Thrill of Hope



We hope you enjoyed hearing from our Volunteers in Mission teams as well! Big thanks to all who contributed music, scripture, and witnesses to a joy-filled morning.

If VIM Sunday inspired you to learn more about upcoming mission trips, just reach out to Chip Linehan: VIM@severnaparkumc.org. He would be happy to help you find the right opportunity for your skills and the amount of time you'd like to give. Stay tuned for more details about 2019 trips—we're planning to work with Costa Rica Missions, UMCOR West in Salt Lake City, and more, plus expanding our local opportunities to serve by doing renovations at West River Camp and SPAN, two of our local partner ministries.

A Note From VIM Sunday

Dear Severna Park UMC Friends,

Today's Volunteers-in-Mission-themed worship was a terrific, inspiring, uplifting, encouraging, and challenging occasion—and a vital witness to Christ on this Christ the King Sunday—in these days when American culture and society is, in so many ways, in polar opposite to Him.

Through the well-presented testimony of the four speakers, Jesus' call to justice, dignity, compassion, and reconciliation came through clearly. The enclosed gift to the VIM program for its vital witness is, in a small way, our grateful response and thanks to SPUMC and all those involved in Volunteers in Mission.

Blessings,

Charles & Elizabeth Hambrick-Stowe

P.S. We attend when visiting our son Chuck, his wife Tamara, and our grandchildren Emma and Tommy.



“We the People” Veterans Day Concert



Christmas Tea & Adults Loving Life Lunch

