



# The Octagon

Severna Park United Methodist Church News

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## You're Welcome (Really)

Most of us have had the experience of being warmly and intentionally welcomed. Maybe it was as we visited a boyfriend's family for the first time, moved into the dorms our freshman year at college, entered a specialty shop or went to the first day of work at a new job. All

of those experiences were no doubt different but there were probably common threads: people who greeted us with a smile and treated us like they were genuinely happy that we were there, enough helpful information that we could find our way around...

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# You're Welcome (Really)

## *This Is Home* Movie

We are very excited to announce that on **Sunday, January 27** (time TBD) we will be showing the movie ***This Is Home: A Refugee Story*** which won Best World Documentary at Sundance in 2018. This inspirational film traces the difficult and heart-warming journey of several Syrian refugee families as they adjust to their new lives in Baltimore. Displaced from their homes and separated from loved ones, they are given eight months of assistance from the International Rescue Committee to become self-sufficient. As they learn to adapt to challenges, their strength and resilience are tested. It is a universal story, highlighted by humor and heartbreak, about what it's like to start over, no matter the obstacles. Stay tuned for more details online, in the weekly announcements and E-News.



## Fresh Start in 2019!

Are you looking to make a fresh start or head in some new directions in 2019? We can help! Our church is a community where, week by week, people discover new life in Christ and are equipped to live with purpose and joy. We offer energizing worship, authentic community, stimulating classes for all ages and lots of opportunities for you to serve others in hands-on ways. Want to know more? We'd love to talk with you about taking your next steps. Contact Rev. Ron or Rev. Carissa to plan yours! [ron@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:ron@severnaparkumc.org) or [carissa@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:carissa@severnaparkumc.org)

## Learn More About SPUMC

If you're sort of new, just-curious or semi-committed (and maybe even ready to join!), you are invited to attend a **Connections Class** next **Sunday, January 13** at **11am** in the Parlor. Bring your questions and come learn more about what makes SPUMC tick and where you might fit in. Childcare is provided. RSVP to Beth. [bfrank@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:bfrank@severnaparkumc.org)

## New Grit & Grace Book Group

We're excited to hold a one-time Grit & Grace Book Group for women and girls 3rd grade and up. This is a great chance for mothers, daughters, grandmothers, and aunts to read and talk about the gritty women of the Bible. Get your book and start reading now! We'll gather on **Thursday, January 31** at **10am** (no school for AACPS) for snacks and discussion of Grit and Grace by Caryn Rivadeneira. Interested? Email Erica for more info. [ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org)

## The Longest Night

Jerry McNerney, Michelle & Maddie Koul and Pam Biddlecomb (pictured) joined Rev. Ron, Gavin Buckley (Annapolis Mayor), Stuart Pittman (AA County Executive), leaders of diverse faith communities, and individuals from all over our county at the Longest Night Service in Annapolis on **December 21**. This annual inter-faith gathering remembers the lives of homeless neighbors and friends who have died in the last year in our county and serves as a recommitment of our efforts to end homelessness and serve the most vulnerable among us.



## Nursery School Registration

The SPUMC Nursery School will be opening online registration for the upcoming school year on **January 7**. If your child will be 3 or 4 years old by September 1, we'd love to have them join us! Visit our website for more information. [severnaparkumc.org/nursery-school](http://severnaparkumc.org/nursery-school)

## Confirmation Classes

Confirmation education for youth in grades 7 and 8 will begin in early February. This is an extensive program designed to present all of the basics of our faith including church and United Methodist history. After classes are completed, youth will have the option of choosing to join the church on Pentecost Sunday, June 9.

An Orientation for youth and parents will be on **Tuesday, January 29 at 7pm** in Fellowship Hall. Classes will begin **Tuesday, February 5, 4:30-5:30pm** and run every Tuesday until June. A letter with complete details is going out shortly; contact Rev. Lee if you want to be sure you are included in the mailing. [lferrell@severnaparkumc.org](mailto:lferrell@severnaparkumc.org)

## Faith & Race Book Group

Come be part of an ongoing conversation led by Rev. Ron in the Parlor on January 22 at 7pm as we explore our next book, *America's Original Sin* by Jim Wallis. Books are available in Fellowship Hall for perusal or purchase (\$12). We meet the 4th Tuesdays of each month and you can come to one, some or all – no matter how much you have read (or not read!) of that month's book.

## You're Welcome (Really)

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the feeling that our arrival was anticipated and prepared for.

What's true for other parts and places in our lives is also true for churches. People can size up faith communities pretty quickly and decide whether or not this is a place that is welcoming for them and/or their family. In fact, some people who study and consult in all kinds of religious settings suggest that people have already formed a first impression of a church long before the first song is sung or a sermon preached. There is a "vibe" or an atmosphere that communicates more than we know. It has to do with things like parking lots, signage and aesthetics, but most of all it has to do with interactions with people.

More often than not, people tell us that they have a pretty good first and second time experience at SPUMC. Many guests say that someone made them feel welcome when they came here not knowing what to expect. But truth be told, the data sample is a bit skewed. We hear that mostly from people who come back and not the ones who quietly slipped in and out once, mostly unnoticed. Additionally, we are aware of gaps in our systems, practices and culture that make it a little too easy for that to happen, over and against our best intentions.

For the month of January, our theme will be **Radical Hospitality**, what it means and how it is lived out. We'll begin by focusing on one of the sacraments – baptism – that makes God's radical welcome tangible and life-changing. We'll have a

chance to re-new our own baptisms on **Sunday, January 13** at all of our worship services and reflect on what it means to be welcomed by grace. Over the next two Sundays we'll get into the nitty gritty of how we can make people feel welcome not only in our church, but also in our neighborhoods and as part of our lives.

We're going to be re-forming a robust **Hospitality Team** of people who will help us roll out the welcome mat in big and little ways every Sunday, before, during and after someone has spent time with us in this sacred place we call home. I'm especially looking for someone to spearhead this effort and for a team of people willing to serve as Lobby & Sunday School Hallway greeters, Welcome Center hosts and "roaming specialists" who can help people make important connections.

Beyond the formal Radical Hospitality Team, you have a significant part to play in creating, shaping and radiating a culture of radical hospitality. In fact, it will take all of us to both mirror God's welcome and provide people a sense that we've been expecting them, that this is a safe and good place for them, that maybe it might be their spiritual home, too. Won't you help us extend God's radical hospitality?

*Rev. Ron*

### UMM Men's Breakfast

Join the United Methodist Men at **7:30am** on **January 12** in Fellowship Hall for their 2nd Saturday Breakfast with a special talk by Charles Springett about his yacht trip across the Atlantic Ocean. Contact Reid for more info. [reidr@aol.com](mailto:reidr@aol.com)

# Scenes from Christmas Eve



# You're Welcome (Really)

## SPAN Reverse Advent

We sent over 310 Reverse Advent Calendar bags of food for SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods). Many, many thanks to everyone who filled them up and brought them back during Advent and Christmas. You will make a huge difference in the lives of hungry individuals and families in our community through the Food Pantry at SPAN.



## SPAN Recruiting Help

SPAN has an immediate need for someone willing to take minutes at its Board meetings which occur on the 2nd Monday of alternate months, 5 times per year. If you might be willing to fill this need, please contact Francie Seaman for more information. [fas925@gmail.com](mailto:fas925@gmail.com)

## Winter Relief

In just a few short weeks our church will again have an opportunity to host Winter Relief. Winter Relief is a mission where our church houses 45 - 50 homeless men and women for an entire week. We offer shelter, meals, showers, laundry, warm fellowship and most importantly the love of God to these men and women. There are many ways you can be involved such as serving as a host volunteer (working directly with the guests), helping with meals, helping with transportation, doing laundry, helping with some of the activities and so much more. Sign up online or in Fellowship Hall. It takes about 300 volunteers and around 1300 volunteer hours to run this mission. Please think about serving during this very important week. Visit [severnaparkumc.org/relief](http://severnaparkumc.org/relief) for more information. If you have any questions you can contact Pam Biddlecomb. [pbiddlecomb@arundelhoh.org](mailto:pbiddlecomb@arundelhoh.org)

## UMYF News

**Sunday, January 6, 7pm:** “Come As You Are” party with discussion and games. If you did not get a phone call over Christmas break, come wearing whatever you are wearing as you read this!

**Sunday, January 13, 7pm:** Program night – “What is Your Love Language (and why does it matter?)” ICUs begin , 8:35–9:15 pm.

**Sunday, January 20, 7pm:** Program night.

**Sunday, January 27, 7pm:** Ray’s Retirement Party!

**February 1-2, 8pm-8am:** LOCK-IN!

**February 3:** SOUPER BOWL OF CARING! No evening meeting.

## Super Sixth

All 6th graders and friends are welcome!

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

**January 27, 5pm:** “Everybody’s Birthday” Party

**February 10, 1-3pm:** Special Day of bowling at Severna Park Lanes. \$10 gets you shoes, lunch, and unlimited games. Arrange your own rides to and from!

## PRAY Awards

If any scouts are interested in earning their PRAY award, please contact Erica Benjamin. Once we have a group interested, we will form a class.

*ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org*

**God & Jesus:** Kindergarten & Grade 1

**God & Me:** grades 1-3

**God & Family:** grades 4-6

## YAG January

**YAG Meeting:** Join the Young Adult Group on **Thursday, January 10 at 6:30pm** in the Parlor as we pick our “word of the year” and talk about where we feel God leading us in 2019. Bring a snack to share! Kids in the nursery.

## YAG & Moms Connect

**Potluck:** The Young Adult Group and Moms Connect will get together for a meal at Tracy’s House on **Thursday, January 31**. Bring a dish to share. *8221 Daniels Purchase Way, Millersville, MD*. Email Rev. Carissa for more info.

*carissa@severnaparkumc.org*

## Women’s Retreat

You won’t want to miss our final retreat, April 5-7, 2019 at Skycroft Retreat Center, cost \$160 before February 1. Sign up in Fellowship Hall. Contact Dawn Cullis for more information.

*dcullis@comcast.net*

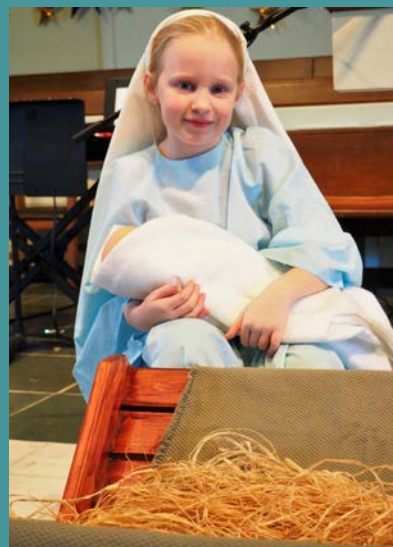
## ALL Lunch

Rev. Carissa, who loves the outdoors and especially our national parks, will share how God can meet us in the beauty of creation at 12noon on January 22. Sign up in Fellowship Hall by Sunday, January 20. Contact Pam for more info.

*geepamela@aol.com*

You're Welcome (Really)

## More Christmas Eve!



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