



May 2019

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The Octagon

Severna Park United Methodist Church News

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We're Doing It Right

A recent presentation held at Severna Park High School entitled, "What If We Put Mental Health First? Now What?" addressed the need for attention to mental illness. It focused on teens and parental responsibility to lessen the pressure on their kids, learn to listen without immediate

judgement, increase the level of communication at home, encourage their children to relax and be themselves, and so much more.

Dr. Anna Mueller, Sociology Professor at the University of Chicago, has done extensive research on teen suicide.

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In scripture, people encounter God “under shady oak trees, on riverbanks, at the tops of mountains, and in long stretches of barren wilderness... [and] when people want to know more about God, the son of God tells them to pay attention to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, to women kneading bread and workers lining up for their pay. Whoever wrote this stuff believed that people could learn as much about the ways of God from paying attention to the world as they could from paying attention to scripture.”

From “An Altar in the World”

-Barbara Brown Taylor

That first Easter came as a big surprise.

These days, we prepare for Easter for weeks and months at a time. We fast for Lent, and we buy our dresses and suits. We decorate the church, we invite our neighbors, and we plan a big family Easter dinner. By the time Easter gets here, the choir has fine-tuned their “hallelujahs” and the lilies are just ready for their photo opportunity.

But that first Easter was a total surprise, because certain things - specifically Jesus things - were not where we expected them to be. Instead of buried in the tomb, Jesus was alive and walking through the garden, walking to Emmaus, walking on the beach - alive and walking, sharing love and communion with all.

That first Easter, Jesus' resurrection from the dead was just the start of the surprises. Far from the end of the story, Easter kicks off a movement of new life, where you never know where you might see God at work in the world.

These next few weeks, our worship will be focused on these miraculous movements of God. It's tempting to divide the world into sacred and secular, and to seek God only in those places traditionally deemed "holy." Yet, as those first disciples saw, God is full of surprises and cannot be contained. We're excited to see where the new life of Jesus shows up in our world, be it in popular music, literature, paintings, movies, or science. In addition to exploring these themes in worship, we'll live it out through an **Art Exhibit, May 12-19**, and a **Coffee House on May 18**, featuring original works from our congregation and our community.

As people of faith, we are blessed to have rich scriptures, where we can always find God's voice speaking truth to us. But in these next few weeks, I invite you to bring the scripture into conversation with other aspects of your life. As Barbara Brown Taylor reminds us, it was Jesus himself who taught us to learn about God's kingdom by paying attention to "the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, to women kneading bread and workers lining up for their pay." Our prayer is that as we bring the songs, stories, and science of 2019 into conversation with these ancient scriptures, we will hear God's voice speaking in new and different ways.

And maybe - just maybe - we will be surprised by new life.

Altar in the World Schedule

May 5: Christ Plays in 10,000 Places

May 12: See the Art in Me

May 19: Hollywood Jesus

May 26: How Great Thou Art

<p>HEY, SPUMC!!!</p> <p>WE LOVE YOU A LATTE!</p>	
	<p>COME JOIN US!!!</p> <p>SATURDAY MAY 18 7PM</p> <p>COFFEE HOUSE AND ART SHOW</p> <p>S.PARK UMC 731 BENFIELD RD</p>

Coffee House Art Show

We love you a latte! That's why we want to hang out with you at our Spring Coffee House Art Show event on **Saturday, May 18, 7-9pm** in Fellowship Hall. We'll be treated to artistic performances and lots of art will be on display the whole week leading up to the Coffee House. If you're interested in performing or showing your art, contact Chris.

cdillard@severnaparkumc.org

Doing It Right

We're Doing It Right

(continued from page 1)

Of all the suggestions she offered in her presentation was the idea that teens need a “support group” before tragedy occurs. When something awful happens, it seems that teens and parents have very few credible resources on which to draw for direction, understanding and renewal of hope. She said that if our teens had a solid, positive system of support on an ongoing basis, they would be more able to cope with disappointment and upset, as well as grow as capable young adults.

And that is when it occurred to me – we are doing it right! All of our programs for children and youth are based on complete acceptance of our kids as worthy children of God. That can only set them on solid ground as they learn to accept themselves and develop a sense of morals and values.

But I want to highlight MYF, Methodist Youth Fellowship. This is a consistent, creative program where youth are taught that they are valued and gifted. There is intentional discussion of topics relevant to teens with emphasis on achieving positive outcomes. The youth themselves would tell you that this is a safe place where they can express opinions and beliefs without put-downs. They learn to interact with and listen to each other. Care and concern for every kid is stressed and offered liberally. There is also silliness and laughter; we are fraught with traditions so special to the youth. And above all, there is free expression of faith and prayer.

The beauty of MYF is due to 3 factors:

1) The grace of God and guidance from the Holy Spirit. We could not do this alone. We are inspired and encouraged by the creative Spirit of Jesus Christ.

2) An amazing group of volunteer “counselors” – adults who, over the years, have given so much time, talent, and heart to see that our youth are growing, affirmed, and well-cared-for. I thank every one of them who have served and are serving.

3) Awesome teens with which to work! Our kids are smart, funny, caring, and committed. They make me laugh a lot and cry sometimes. They challenge me on critical topics. They are confident and capable and understand the need to value other people, including and especially those different from them.

We have what teens need (as do youth groups in most other churches around)!

God has been so good to us. If your youth are part of our program, keep them coming. If your youth are not attending, consider introducing them to MYF. As scores of alumni will tell you, “It made all the difference in who I grew up to be.”

Thank you!

Rev. Lee

SPAN Needs

SPAN's pantry is very short on the following items: feminine hygiene products, toilet paper, paper towels, shampoo, and laundry detergent. Any donations will be very appreciated.

Cabaret Show for SPAN

Laurette Hankins-O'Connell is presenting a Cabaret Performance to benefit SPAN at 7:30pm on June 1 at the Holy Grounds Youth Center at 623 B&A Blvd. in Severna Park. The performer and pianist are donating their time, so 100% of the proceeds will go to SPAN. Space is limited. Please call SPAN for ticket information at 410-647-0889. spanhelps@yahoo.com

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry is a one-to-one lay caring ministry, offering high-quality and confidential care to people who are hurting. Several Stephen Ministers from SPUMC, Nancy Braks and Allen and Linda Egloff, are cooperating with the Stephen Ministry program at Woods Presbyterian Church. Working together our churches can offer helpful and supportive ministry to our church members and to the community.

If you would like to receive care from a Stephen Minister, or if you might like to consider becoming a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Byron.

bbrought@severnaparkumc.org

VBS Prep Day

Come help on **Saturday, May 11, 9am-2pm**. Everyone will be able to help whether crafty or not!

Your donations help keep VBS costs low so we can ensure all families are able to come. Please stop by the donation board in Fellowship Hall.

ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org

Elementary Mission Trip

Seven of our elementary kids and their grownups are heading to DC for a family mission trip, **May 17-19**. Families will serve God together in a new and unique way, forming memories that last a lifetime. Children will see the Gospel being brought to life through their own service and by witnessing their grown up's service! We will be hosted by The Pilgrimage, a ministry of a Presbyterian church, and serving at various organizations throughout DC. Please pray for our team as we travel into DC, serve the homeless and impoverished, and love our awesome God together. Sign up to pray for our team in Fellowship Hall May 5 & 12. We will share about our trip on June 2 in worship.

Our team: Erica Benjamin, Sharon & Peter Acosta, Rick & Nevaeh Callahan, Tracey & Jordan Dill, Carrie & Klayton Haynes, Kevin, Kristyn, Owen, & Nolan Lyons, Jennifer & Anna Pilholski, and Lori & Adam Sexton.

Endowment Breakfast

Join us on **May 19** in Room 301 after any of the morning services for a ½ hour Creative Giving Seminar to explore different avenues for generosity. Learn how to support the church or other charitable organizations in more tax efficient ways, and also about the SPUMC Permanent Endowment Fund. Refreshments provided. Contact Dick Morgan for info.

rmorgan@higdoninc.com

Unbridled Easter Joy

What a weekend of unbridled Easter joy! On Saturday several hundred kids and their families gathered for our annual EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA. After crafts and refreshments, children hunted thousands of eggs all over our property for a grand total of about 10 minutes. On EASTER SUNDAY, we started the day in the garden with our Sunrise Service, moved into the Sanctuary for 8am worship and it got crazy (in a great way) at 9:30am when we concurrently launched our NEW Family Service with 300 people in Fellowship Hall and squeezed 429 people into the Sanctuary for our Contemporary Service. We pulled out all the stops at our Festival Service – brass, choir, organ – and ended the day with a rousing Hallelujah Chorus at Noon. All in all, 1399 people worshiped with us (we may round up to 1400). Alleluia. He is Risen!





Doing It Right

Traditional Plan Ruled Constitutional

The Judicial Council of the UMC (sort of our Supreme Court) met the last week of April and upheld the overall constitutionality of the Traditional Plan that was passed at the specially called General Conference in February which strengthened our prohibitions on clergy officiating at same gender weddings and the ordination of LGBTQ+ individuals. Several of the individual petitions were ruled unconstitutional (such as the “loyalty to the Book of Discipline” requirements for Board of Ordained Ministry members and requirements that Boards of Ordained Ministry “conduct a thorough examination” specifically to determine if someone was LGBTQ). Other individual petitions were upheld, such as the “Disaffiliation Plan” which would allow congregations the “limited right” to leave the denomination with their property (a major departure from current church practice) if there is significant disagreement of conscience with the UMC’s stand on human sexuality. This would require a 2/3 vote of a Church Conference at the local level, a majority vote at the Annual Conference level and payment of current and following year’s apportionments, among other things.

Across the denomination, particularly in the US and Europe, there continues to be great division and pushback against the Traditional Plan, including pledges of non-compliance by some annual conferences, at least one entire jurisdiction (the Western Jurisdiction) and some countries (Germany, Norway). There is renewed talk of giving the U.S. UMC

the same autonomy that is now afforded the Central Conferences (Africa, Asia, etc.) when it comes to adapting the Book of Discipline to their local contexts. Our Bishop LaTrelle Easterling and the BWC Discipleship Council have each issued strong statements challenging the rulings and pledge to continue to work for a more inclusive and just church.

In the face of what is being received as ongoing harm and outright discrimination in the LGBTQ+ community, local churches everywhere are redoubling their efforts to make it abundantly clear that *everyone* is a child of God – no exceptions – and welcome in their faith communities. Our new *Sacred Worth* group is one part of this effort (see article below). It is unclear where all of this is leading us. This is a fluid situation that continues to unfold week by week. Please continue to hold the United Methodist Church in your prayers as we discern a loving, just and faithful way forward. Stay informed by visiting the Still Seeking a Way Forward page of our church website which includes more in-depth information and links to what is happening on the regional, national and global levels of the church.

severnaparkumc.org/a-way-forward

Sacred Worth Group

We are in the early stages of developing a group for LGBTQ+ persons, family members, and allies as a place for support and conversation about how our church can be more welcoming. Our first meeting will be on **Wednesday, May 22** in the Parlor. Contact Rev. Ron for info.

ron@severnaparkumc.org

Annual Conference

From **Wednesday, May 29** through **Saturday, June 1**, clergy and lay members from United Methodist Churches throughout the region will gather for the 235th Session of the **Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference**. This year's conference continues to dwell in Ephesians 4:1-16, with the theme "We are One: United to Love." The conference schedule is extended to four days to provide time for increased youth and laity participation on Saturday. This year, in addition to the normal business of the Conference, members will continue to respond to the decisions of General Conference 2019, particularly as they pertain to ordination of LGBTQ+ individuals. We will also be electing clergy and lay delegates to represent our region at the 2020 General Conference.

You're Invited!

On **Friday, May 31** at 7 pm, Rev. Carissa will be recognized as a full elder during the Ordination Service. Anyone who would like to attend this service is welcome to do so! There is general seating available at the service for all who would like to attend. Please plan to arrive at the hotel no earlier than 6 pm, and carpool from Severna Park to avoid difficult downtown parking. The service will be held in the hotel ballroom at the Baltimore Waterfront Marriott Hotel (700 Aliceanna St, Baltimore, MD 21202). You can also view the service online.

bwcumc.org/events/annual-conference

Annual Conference Pics

Last year, multiple members of our music ministry were part of the worship team at Annual Conference. This year our Music Director, Chris Dillard will once again be helping to lead worship throughout all of Annual Conference, including the Ordination Service on Friday and special Youth Service on Saturday.



UMYF Retreat

Forty senior high youth had one last great bonding experience with one another before the graduation of this year's seniors. They headed to Hashawha Environmental Center for their annual spring retreat and there was lots of laughter and deep conversation, too.



UMYF News

Sunday, May 5, 7pm: Annual No Talent Night, plus “Meet the Freshmen” and “Senior Share”

8:35pm: Final ICU meetings!

Sunday, May 12: No meeting. Happy Mothers Day!

Sunday, May 19, 5-8:30pm: End-of-the-Year Banquet. \$12 per person. Tie for guys, nice dress for girls. Awards, recognitions, review of the year, plus a delicious banquet served by alumni.

Sunday, May 26, 7pm: Begins “Summer MYF” - games, sports, food, and just hanging out. Special nights will be announced.

Super Sixth

The last meeting of the Super Sixth is **May 5 at 5pm**, with our own Olympic Games. Some events are standard and some are silly. Medals will be awarded!

It’s been a good year with great 6th graders. Thanks to Beth Smith, Maddy Koul, and Blake Bierdeman for their leadership.

lferrell@severnaparkumc.org

“Our Minds Matter”

A new student-led group called “Our Minds Matter” is seeking to make a difference in our county. Their goal is to “advocate and raise awareness of the dire need of more mental health resources in public schools.” There appears to be a huge stigma over mental health illnesses, especially in our community. Our youth want to tell parents, peers, and legislators that the system needs to change.

A rally is planned for **May 18, 11am–12noon** at Susan Campbell Park in Annapolis. All are welcome! For more information, check Our Minds Matter on Instagram @ourmindsmattermvmt or search “Our Minds Matter Movement” on Facebook.



Connections Class

If you’re new, curious, or ready to join, you’re invited to attend a **Connections Class on Sunday, May 5 at 11am** in the Parlor. Learn about what is at the heart of SPUMC and discover ways that you can get involved. Childcare is provided. RSVP to Beth.

bfrank@severnaparkumc.org

Mother’s Day Brunch

Join us in Memorial Garden on **May 12** after the **8 and 9:30** services to enjoy refreshments and the beauty of the garden.

Doing It Right

Blessing of the Animals

Our 3rd Annual Blessing of the animals included LOTS of dogs, 3 ferrets, 2 cats, a bunny, a rat and 2 virtual horses. What a great time we had in the garden on a beautiful afternoon celebrating the furry friends who bring such joy, fun and loyal companionship to our lives. Thanks to everyone who came out!



Severna Park United Methodist Church
731 Benfield Rd. Severna Park, MD 21146
410.987.4700 | severnaparkumc.org