



April 2021

Volume 7, No. 4

The Octagon

Severna Park United Methodist Church News

Contents

Blessing of the Animals	2
Pastoral Transitions	3
ASP Update	3
Holy Week/Easter Pics	4
Join Us Outside	8
Sunday 5! Board Game	8
SPUMC Church Softball	8
Corinthians Study	8
Task Force Update	9
Sunday School Teachers	9
Baptisms Are Back!	10
Nursery School News	10
Youth News	10
Kids Sunday School	10
Office Hours Resume	11
Scripture Readers	11
World Religions Class	11
Livestream Upgrade	12
Octagon Distribution	12



Mr. Rogers and his neighborhood full of tolerance, grace, dignity and respect just keep showing up. Though the show last aired in 2001 on PBS after a 33-year run and Fred Rogers himself died in 2003, his legacy has left its mark deep on the American psyche and upon generations of kids and adults alike. Just last night, I watched an episode of This Is Us in

which Jack was taking his two young sons, Randall and Kevin, to the taping of an episode of Mr. Rogers in their hometown of Pittsburgh. Earlier in the day, Mr. Rogers had made it into a post on a Facebook page for United Methodist clergy “nominated” as the imaginary youth and children’s pastor at the “ideal” church in heaven.

(continued on page 2)

Won't You Be My Neighbor

Won't You Be My Neighbor

(continued from page 1)

His popularity has gotten a boost in the last couple of years both from a documentary about his life and show that came out in 2018 (*"Won't You Be My Neighbor?"*) and a 2019 biopic, *"A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood"* starring none other than Tom Hanks (who, as it turns out, is a sixth cousin and whose casting made such perfect sense to just about everyone). Part of his staying power, I am convinced, is the simple fact that in a world that is increasingly hostile, crass and inhospitable, more than ever we crave his basic decency and the life lessons he taught about acceptance and neighborliness. And the pastoral team thought he might be a good guide to help us engage some of the stories we find from the early church in the Book of Acts.

As the fledgling Christian community was trying to share the good news of Jesus throughout the ancient Near East and Asia Minor, they kept bumping into neighbors that challenged their understanding of what the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection meant and who this good news was for. Each encounter led to an expansion of this ever-widening circle of grace, an ongoing openness to the movement of the Spirit.

We'll begin a new 5-week worship and preaching series on April 18th called *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* It is the complementary question to the one that the lawyer asks of Jesus in Luke 10 (Who is my neighbor?) and that Jesus answers with the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan. From there, we'll travel

through Acts to hear the stories of how the early followers of the resurrected Jesus encountered new neighbors – the Ethiopian Eunuch, the Jailer, Tabitha, and Lydia – who helped them live more deeply and faithfully. Each story will challenge us to consider contemporary parallels of how we are called to live as neighbors to people who are different from us, people who we may think of as enemies, those who nurture us spiritually and neighbors whose lives we are called to pour grace and love into, as well.

I hope you'll join us in worship each week for *"Won't You Be My Neighbor."* And even more importantly, I hope you might consider how Mr. Rogers and Jesus both nudge us to be better neighbors in simple and profound ways every day. Because every day is a beautiful day in God's neighborhood!

Be God's,

-Rev. Ron

rfoster@severnaparkumc.org



Blessing of the Animals

Our 4th Annual Blessing of the Animals will take place on **Sunday, April 25 at 5pm** in our beautiful Chapel in the Woods. Tell your dogs, cats, birds and hamsters now so that they can make plans to join us – and you should come, too!



Pastoral Transitions

Hello & Welcome: Bishop Easterling has appointed Rev. Narae Kim to serve as the new Associate Pastor at SPUMC, and she will begin her ministry with us on July 1. Narae and her husband Heerak (who has just been appointed as an Associate Pastor at Glen Mar UMC in Ellicott City) will be moving to this area after serving churches near Cumberland for several years. They are the parents of two daughters, Ana & Ruah, and we'll roll out the red carpet to make them feel welcome. You can email Rev. Narae at narae849.kim@gmail.com.

Farewell: Many of you are aware by now that Rev. Carissa has been appointed as the new pastor at Hunt's Memorial UMC in Towson starting July 1. While we're sad to see her go, we celebrate this new chapter of her ministry. Stay tuned for the details on the Farewell Celebrations for Carissa, Matthew & Deacon, which will be on Friday evening, June 11 and after church on Sunday, June 13.



ASP Update

After much prayer and discussion, it has been decided that SPUMC will NOT be participating in ASP's summer program this year. The bottom line is that there are way too many risks and unknowns that could be highly problematic. This will in no way affect our ministry in the future; we stand committed to helping the beautiful people of central Appalachia.

But our first concern is always the safety of our youth, most of whom are between age 14 and 18. Though the main ASP office is working hard to safeguard any summer volunteers, we feel confident that for us, this is the wisest and safest decision.

We WILL, however be celebrating "ASP At Home," with local work projects, another Food Frenzy, and an outdoor Auction on Sunday, June 27 at 6pm, if weather permits. More details to follow! (Rain date is July 11.) Stay tuned as to how you can support and encourage our youth!

Holy Week/Easter Photos





More Holy Week/Easter Photos





Won't You Be My Neighbor



Join Us Outside!

We are thrilled to be gathering weekly for **Outdoor In-Person Worship on Sundays at 9am**. We have capacity for over 100 people out on the back parking lot, and we're planning to add additional services as they are needed. As always, we ask the in-person worshippers maintain the following precautions, as we protect the health of everyone gathered to worship:

- Stay home if you or someone you live with is sick.
- Register before you come. This helps with contact tracing, should anyone later test positive for COVID-19 or another variant.
- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth (for everyone over 2 years old).
- Maintain physical distance of 6 feet from those not in your household.
- Greet one another from a distance - we'll save our hugs and handshakes a few more months!

Register today to attend an Outdoor In-Person Worship Service! Just go to severnaparkumc.org and scroll down to the heading that says "Register for Outdoor Worship." There will be a new link available for worship registration each week. Questions? Contact Beth Frank. bfrank@severnaparkumc.org



Sunday 5! Board Game

In a fun effort to raise money for missions, the United Methodist Women have been hard at work creating Sunday 5!, a special and unique board game about SPUMC. Games are available for a suggested donation of \$20 by contacting Vera Summers. verasummers@verizon.net

Church Softball is Back

Our church participates in a non-competitive softball league with other churches around the area. The games are on Sunday afternoons and run mid-May through mid-August. Email Lori Sexton if you are interested in participating or would like more information. SPUMCSoftball731@gmail.com

Corinthians Study

Rev. Byron is leading a five-week study of 1 & 2 Corinthians on Mondays at 7:30pm on Zoom that just began this week but you can still join in. The class will emphasize the strife and division in the Corinthian Church, and the importance of reconciliation and unity. You can register online at severnaparkumc.org/events and access the Zoom information.

Task Force Update

On April 15, the Regathering Task Force (the team monitoring COVID safety and guiding our congregation) voted to keep our church in the “orange level” of the chart below. This decision was made after prayerfully discussing all the data available to the team, including number of COVID cases per 100,000 people in our community, vaccination rates, outbreaks in comparable congregations, and more. If you have any questions or feedback regarding this decision, please reach out to Task Force Chair Gaines Johnston. gainesjohnston@gmail.com

As our church remains in the “orange level,” you are invited to return for outdoor, in-person worship (cancelled in the event of rain). While most Bible studies and Committees will continue meeting on Zoom, other groups will resume outdoor meetings, and a very limited number of small groups will be invited to meet indoors. If you have any questions about particular groups meeting in person, please reach out to Facilities Manager Dave McKinney, who coordinates our meeting calendar. dmckinney@severnaparkumc.org

REGATHERING AT SPUMC		
RED	WORSHIP ONLINE	ALL GROUPS ONLINE; STAFF WORK FROM HOME
ORANGE	WORSHIP ONLINE AND OUTDOORS	ALL GROUPS ONLINE OR OUTDOORS
YELLOW	WORSHIP ONLINE AND OUTDOORS (INDOORS IF RAIN)	MOST GROUPS ONLINE OR OUTDOORS; LIMITED INDOOR MEETINGS
GREEN	WORSHIP ONLINE AND INDOORS	GROUPS ONLINE, OUTDOORS, AND INDOORS; STAFF WORK ON SITE
BLUE	WORSHIP ONLINE AND INDOORS	NO RESTRICTIONS

MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL BE REQUIRED AT ALL LEVELS

Baptisms Are Back!

After many months of refraining from the sacrament of baptism due to COVID safety concerns, we are now thrilled to be scheduling baptisms for the spring and summer! Families are invited to join us for in-person outdoor worship (when offered) or to step into the sanctuary during the live-streaming of online worship to have their children baptized as part of the worship life of our congregation. Please reach out if you've been waiting to have your child baptized - we would love to participate in this sacrament.

Questions? Read more about baptism beliefs, scheduling, COVID safety, and more on the [Baptism page](#) of our website and email Rev. Carissa with anything else you're wondering.

csurber@severnaparkumc.org

Want to attend the next Baptism Class? Mark your calendar for **Sunday, May 16 at 12pm** and email Beth Frank to receive the Zoom information.

bfrank@severnaparkumc.org



Nursery School News

Hiring New Teachers

Help Wanted: SPUMC Nursery School has two part-time teaching positions to fill for the upcoming 2021-22 school year. Experience teaching preschool is desired

but not essential. If you have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and a passion for working with children, we'd love to have you join our amazing team.

Register Today for Nursery School

The Nursery School has resumed in-person learning (following the best health and safety practices) and registration for next year has begun! Contact Heidi Taflan, Director, for information. 410-987-8339

htaflan@spumcns.org

Youth News

- **UMYF** will continue to meet on the parking lot on Sunday nights, 6-7:15pm with ICU groups meeting until 8pm. Masks are required; your own comfortable chair recommended. If weather is inclement, we will meet on Zoom. (severnaparkumc.org/events) Click on Sunday, then on UMYF, then on the link provided)
- **SUPER 6th** to BEGIN, May 16 at 4:30pm in the Parking Lot at church, weather permitting. This is a much-delayed start, so it will be weekly and go into the summer. Those already on the church rolls will get a special invite; if you are not sure and would like your 6th grader to get a formal invite, email Rev. Lee. lferrell@severnaparkumc.org
- **CONFIRMATION** will take place on PENTECOST SUNDAY, May 23. Our wonderful Class of 2020/21 will complete their confirmation training and be confirmed on the day of Pentecost, May 23. At this point, we have to say "weather permitting," but watch for further announcements toward the end of May.



Kids Sunday School

Starting last Sunday, online Sunday School moved to 10am (still 30 minutes prior to the start of worship).

We are hoping in person Sunday School will be able to resume shortly after in person worship resumes. Best practices for Covid-19 safety and Safe Sanctuaries will be in place for check-in and throughout Sunday School. Please email Erica if you are interested in volunteering. ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org

Office Hours Resume

We are happy to let you know that the church offices are OPEN and we can't wait to see you! Office hours are:

**9am—12noon & 1—4pm on
Monday, Wednesday & Friday**

Please remember to wear your mask. As always, we are happy to meet you at alternate times, if needed.

bfrank@severnaparkumc.org

Scripture Readers

Do you enjoy reading the Bible? If you are an adult (or a responsible teen) and comfortable reading to others, we would like to invite you to be a Scripture Reader. We need readers for the virtual services as well as In-Person (9am and 10:30am) church services. Readers usually read once every two-three months. For the virtual services readers record their assigned readings and email them to Pastor Carissa. As the schedule has been filled through May, we will need a few, new Scripture Readers starting in June. Contact Paula McDermott with questions. paula@kramerenterprises.net

World Religions Class

A new short-term class on World Religions will start on May 6 and run for six weeks taught by Adam Shephard. Adam teaches a more extended version of this course at Archbishop Spalding High School. Classes will be at 7pm for no more than an hour.

May 6: Introduction to world religions

- this session will be pivotal to the understanding/structure of the rest of the course

May 13: Hinduism

May 20: Buddhism

May 27: Sikhism

June 3: Islam

June 10: Judaism

A companion book is available on the church porch, \$5. Sign up online. severnaparkumc.org/events

Resurrecting Worship



Livestream Upgrade

Once we return to full-time in-person worship, we are committed to continuing a weekly livestream of our worship service at the level of excellence you have gotten used to. This will require that we create a dedicated production center in Room 108 that is not in the middle of the Sanctuary (have to make room for people!), install multiple wall-mounted cameras that won't block the aisles, and upgrade our lighting, video projectors, and screens (a project that was already in process pre-pandemic). Our plan is to both use existing capital reserve funds and to raise new money

to support this project which will cost \$150-175,000. If you want to make a dedicated gift to support this investment in our future, please contact Rev. Ron or simply give online or by check and *designate your gift for AV Upgrade*. Many thanks! severnaparkumc.org/give

Octagon Distribution

We're rethinking how we distribute our Octagon newsletter. If you enjoy your digital copy, great! However, if you would prefer to receive a physical paper copy in the mail, please email Beth so she can add you to the list. bfrank@severnaparkumc.org

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