



The Octagon

Severna Park United Methodist Church News

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Saunter!

As we made our way from the parking lot, weaving through a small group of street vendors that regularly greeted our bus (some with friendly banter, others with more aggressive sales tactics), we headed up the hill to Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity. It was a steep, but short walk and we wanted to make sure that everyone in the group would stay together. When one of our pilgrims expressed some concern about keeping up, another immediately chimed

in, "Don't worry; we're not in a rush. We'll just saunter."

I smiled both inwardly and outwardly when I heard this, in part because of the care that people were demonstrating for one another but even more so because this word had been part of the pre-pilgrimage orientation that I had offered our traveling band – and apparently it had stuck. I encouraged our group to think of our trip to Israel and Oberammergau less as religious tourism and more as a holy pilgrimage,

(continued on page 2)

suggesting the dispositions of the heart and frames of mind that might create the right conditions for this: openness, prayer, attentiveness and a leisurely pace (even with a packed itinerary) that would allow not just for taking things in, but letting them soak into our souls.

One of the guides I had pointed to was John Muir, the great American environmentalist whose life and work is forever bound to the Giant Redwood forests of California. Muir ironically and memorably said,

“Hiking – I don’t like either the word or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains – not hike! Do you know the origin of that word ‘saunter?’ It’s a beautiful word. Away back in the Middle Ages people used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages through which they passed asked where they were going, they would reply, ‘A la sainte terre,’ ‘To the Holy Land.’ And so, they became known as sainte-terres or saunterers. Now these mountains are our Holy Land, and we ought to saunter through them reverently, not ‘hike through them.”

And so we sauntered to the place of Jesus’s birth on that particular afternoon, just as we sauntered our way throughout the region surrounding the Sea of Galilee while we re-traced the steps of Jesus’s public ministry, sauntered to Nazareth where we took in the stunning Church of the Annunciation and global artistic homage to Mary, sauntered down to the banks of the Jordan River where we renewed our baptisms, sauntered from the Mount of Olives singing and figuratively waving palms toward Gethsemane and sauntered solemnly on the Via Dolorosa

(“The Way of Suffering”) as we followed the bustling, sacred, route of Jesus being led to the crucifixion.

In short, we walked and wept, read and knelt, listened and marveled, learned and imagined as we were transformed on our journey into a bunch of sainte-terres. And for many of us, the experience of being present on such holy ground was life-changing and faith-forming.

During the month of August in worship we will explore what it means to find ourselves standing, brushing up against and experiencing life on holy ground. And here’s the good news: you don’t have to travel to Israel or the Passion Play for that to happen to you. As 20th century Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel puts it, “Faith is not the clinging to a shrine but an endless pilgrimage of the heart.” In other words, the Holy Land with all its sacred sites is by no means the only place that is holy; rather holy ground abounds in the woods, at the beach, on the bay, in our neighborhoods, at work, anywhere we stop and pay attention to the movement and presence of God’s Spirit.

On ASP Sunday (August 14) we’ll hear from Appalachia Service Project participants about the fertile soil of serving others that becomes holy ground year after year. You can read testimonies of some of our Israel/Oberammergau Pilgrims about their particular holy ground experiences elsewhere in this newsletter and hear from other travelers in worship later this month.

Come saunter with us this month and pay attention to all the sacred turf that we tread on.

Be God’s,

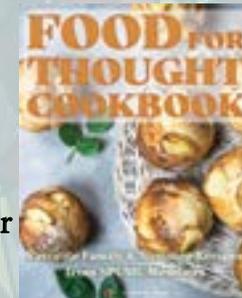
Rev. Ron

On Holy Ground

In August we will begin a new series called On Holy Ground. We will be reading biblical passages that describe sacred encounters with God – like Moses at the burning bush – and hear testimony from our Appalachia Service Project team members and Holy Land Pilgrims. Hope you will join us in person at our 8, 9, or 10:30am services when you’re in town or on Facebook or YouTube for our 10:30am livestream when you’re away.
[facebook.com/severnaparkumc](https://www.facebook.com/severnaparkumc)

Food For Thought Cookbook

Last month to go along with our July sermon series “Food For Thought,” we asked all of you to submit your favorite summer recipes for our church-wide virtual cookbook. With everyone’s submissions, we were able to curate a lovely collection of recipes perfect for every summer celebration! Special thanks to Jessica Smith for designing our cookbook cover! Make sure you take a look at our final product by visiting www.severnaparkumc.org/top5



Annual UWF Backpack Drive

The UWF and the SPUMC Sunday School are sponsoring the Annual Backpack Drive. We need your help! You can go to Sign-up Genius and sign up for a specific grade level and school.

Find the appropriate supply lists on our website and Facebook page. Then go shop for a back pack and the supplies to fill it.

You can sign up to pack a backpack by going to www.severnaparkumc.org/women or by scanning the QR code here.



We will have bins set up near the front and back entrances at SPUMC to collect the backpacks and also some extra teacher/classroom supplies. The teachers always need the following items: Paper towels, zip bags (any size), tissues, crayons and colored pencils, cleaning wipes, liquid soap, hand sanitizer.

For questions or more information, contact Lorine Smith (lorines@smithfamily.net)

Adults Loving Life Events

Join us on Wednesday, August 24th, at 12:00 for our annual indoor picnic luncheon. Everyone’s favorite, Mission BBQ, will do the catering. Singer/guitarist Jerry Colley will entertain us with his “Musical Variety Show.” There will be a patriotic theme; wear your red, white, and blue! Make reservations by calling Lou and Kathie Kamm at 410-647-5914 (deadline is August 21st).

Save The Date for these upcoming events:
Aug. 24 - Indoor picnic luncheon; with catering by Mission BBQ and entertainment by “Jerry Colley’s Musical Variety Show.”

Sept. 21 - Luncheon with Pastor Byron speaking about the formation of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments.

Oct. 26 - Luncheon with our own Shawn Reese joining us to play our favorite hymn requests.

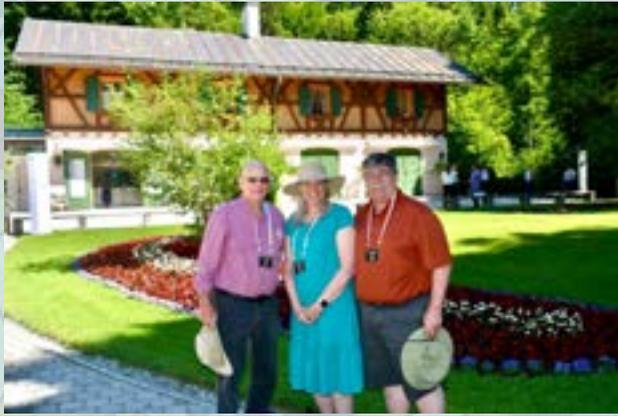
Dec. 7 - Bus trip to American Music Theatre for “Home for the Holidays.”

On Holy Ground

Holy Land Testimonies

I am compelled to share my gratitude and appreciation for being included with such a wonderful group of Christians. I especially want to thank Rev. Ron for renewing my baptism in the Jordan River as that experience has special meaning to me at my age. After experiencing the Holy Land, I believe many of us appreciated seeing the Passion Play first. As for the Israel experience, Hanna has a special gift of biblical and historical knowledge of the area that is just amazing. She added something special to our pilgrimage that I am certain other groups did not experience. Her knowledge humbled me as I listened to her and saw with my own eyes what I have learned and believe in as a Christian. The addition of our being able to have an evening meal with a Bethlehem family added some understanding to the area tension and appreciation for the long-standing complex relationship between Israel and Palestine. Again, thank you Rev. Ron and Holly for a marvelous pilgrimage and experience of a lifetime.

Yours in Christ,
Clete Meyer



Since returning from our trip to Austria, Germany, and the Holy Land, many family & friends have asked me to tell them about the whole experience. I usually start out with something like “It was unbelievable, amazing, and indescribable.” It truly was! Thinking back to when we first learned about the trip in 2018 through Rev. Ron & Holly, and all that we have endured since that time, I am so happy my mom, Barb, and I were finally able to go and experience it together. I believe our SPUMC group was blessed and meant to travel together on this incredible pilgrimage.

When asked what the highlights of the trip were, I am not sure where to begin. Some of the thoughts I wrote down in my journal to capture how I was feeling on the plane ride home include “amazed, exhausted, content, sad to leave, happy, thankful, inspired, closer to God.” From experiencing the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany, helping with communion on the Mediterranean in Caesarea, placing prayers in the Western Wall, walking on the Teaching Steps, experiencing the site of the fish & loaves miracle at the Sea of Galilee, hiking around Tel Megiddo with our awesome tour guide, Hanna, “sitting” down in the Dead Sea for the first time,



listening to my mom read Psalm 88 while in The Sacred Pit, or having dinner with the headmaster of a school & his family in Bethlehem, each day was filled with so many amazing sites that I have only read about throughout my life.

I think one of the places that helped to deepen my faith the most was my baptism renewal in the Jordan River. My mom and I both participated in this. It was amazing to see different groups of people from all over the world here. I felt God’s presence of warmth and love in the sun and cool water. I think it is a very emotional place for many others, too. My mom and I were so happy we were able to experience this together. The other place I felt that helped to deepen my faith with a sense of wonder and God’s presence was in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Just ducking through a small, stone doorway into this huge church decorated ornately with golden crosses, paintings, and blue & red oil lamps everywhere was absolutely breathtaking. Then, crawling into the cave to touch the area believed to be the site where Jesus Christ was born and the manger, was surreal and gave me chills.

This trip truly was a trip of a lifetime that I am still digesting. I am so thankful and blessed to have shared it with my mom and everyone who was able to go. I feel a deeper sense of faith and would love to return to learn and see more. I have a greater appreciation for how people live in Israel and Palestine, and that we really aren’t so different. This trip was an extraordinary adventure and pilgrimage for all, and I look forward to the next one!

Ashley Jewell

ASP Celebrates 40 Years!

Aside from wandering in the desert, Noah's epic sail, and every season of Lent... how many other things related to the church reach the 40th milestone? Over this time, we have sent hundreds of volunteers to work on hundreds of homes for our brothers and sisters in Central Appalachia. We have dug ditches, built ramps, put on whole new leak-proof roofs, installed siding and underpinning, built huge retaining walls, installed drywall, sanded, painted, built porches and safe stairs, did room additions...and met some of the most gracious, kind and wonderful people you would ever hope to meet. Rev. Lee was on 38 of the 40 years and in looking over her journals, has chosen to share with you –



LEE'S TOP TEN FUNNIEST/ HAPPIEST MEMORIES

10. When staff told our runners NOT to run in the field across from where we were staying because it was a local marijuana field and they might get shot!

9. Glenn Tudor placing pink flamingoes outside of our center every morning, thus completely confusing every ladies from another church

8. Unique fireworks shows on the 4th of July – Dungannon, VA where they exploded in the crowd, Logan WV where we all watched from inside a big Ryder truck, Marty Gransky's \$200 show in a backyard, and (my personal favorite) watching from the porch at Jonesville curled up in a big comfy rocker!

7. A tooth-brushing contest one night when bored ("It looks like a McCarl Family Reunion!")

6. Learning a fabulous group game, "Four On a Couch"

5. Getting busted for our kids dancing in an empty trophy case

4. Getting pranked by a silly string attack while eating lunch, and our homeowner's response, "Don't get that on my sammich!"

3. Wonderful, fun traditions – Ryder Truck Parties, Christmas Eve (1997), Hump Day (2001) Lee's Goodnight (2001), On Wednesdays We Wear Pink (2013) and the morning Booty Call dance

2. When the late, great Sam Porter snuck a dog home in the back of the Ryder truck and everybody knew about it except me!

1. When the Ryder truck got solidly stuck under a bridge in West Virginia !!!

Most of these are "you had to be there" type moments. Which is precisely why, if you've always thought about going on this project, DO IT! The Appalachian people, the beautiful scenery, the games of Catch Phrase and spoons, the great devotions, the laughter, the tears, and the memories will remain with you forever. And you will be able to say with a great degree of humility, "I made a difference!"



ASP Sunday August 14

Our 40th year with the Appalachia Service Project will be celebrated on Sunday, August 14 at all three services. Come hear from our youth and adult volunteers about the ministry they experienced there. Hear about the work accomplished, the beautiful Appalachian people we met, and yes...the fun we had while serving through home repair. Complete with pictures of the week and an original song!

Following worship we invite you to continue the joy with a true ASP lunch... peanut butter and jelly or ham and cheese sandwiches, chips, watermelon and our 2022 discovery - Cheesecake on a Stick! No cost...kid friendly...more pictures. Anyone who has ever gone on ASP is welcome to an anniversary t-shirt as long as the sizes last.



Flood Recovery Project

The short-term project in conjunction with VIM and UMCOR to Waverly, TN is now full. Thank you for your wonderful response and concern for the people of Waverly. IF more spots open up we will let you know; you might want to let Rev. Lee know you are interested. We feel quite sure there will be more of these kinds of short-term recovery trips coming up!



Food Truck Party Success!

During Food Truck Party VBS we welcomed 155 kids to SPUMC to learn that God provides for our needs and that we are called to provide for one another through service. Kids collected two huge overflowing tubs of food for backpack buddies and SPAN. We are grateful for the 70 volunteers that made it all possible! Feel free to take a CD from the welcome desk to join in the energy of VBS 2022.



On Holy Ground

Fall Garage Sale Update

The Fall Garage Sale will be **Saturday, October 1**, with work days on **September 28-30**. Each Garage Sale utilizes about 250 volunteers to receive, sort, price, organize and sell all of the donated items. We are starting the sign-up process early this time, Sundays in August and September, in Fellowship Hall. If you are all ready to sign up to help, please stop by to volunteer so that SPUMC can continue this tradition that raises money for mission projects locally and internationally, and provides affordable items for our neighbors.



In order for the Garage Sale to succeed, we'd love your input. This event has occurred for decades in May and October up thru 2019, and has raised significant funds for mission projects locally and internationally, while also providing for the everyday needs of our community. Please take a moment to scan the QR code, and fill out a survey gauging interest on volunteering to support our mission. We would greatly appreciate your filling out this survey by **Sunday, August 14**.



SPAN Cabaret Performance

A Cabaret Performance to Benefit SPAN created and performed by Severna Park Native, Laurette Hankins-O'Connell and Pianist/Duet Singer: Anita O'Connor. With an exuberant and occasionally irreverent salute to a wide array of Broadway musicals of the 20th century, this upbeat "backstage tour" includes showtunes from more than six decades of Broadway's best. Join us on **Saturday, September 10, 2022, 7:00pm** (doors open at 6:30) at the Severna Park Community Center Boone Station Hall, for a one hour show with an intermission. Tickets: \$25, with 100% of the net proceeds goes to support SPAN. Concessions and wine will be available for cash-only purchase. Silent auction items will be available by check or PayPal. Space is limited. Tickets must be purchased in advance using check or PayPal. You may mail a check to SPAN, 400 Benfield Rd., Severna Park, MD 21146 or you may pay via PayPal at spanhelps@yahoo.com. In the message section, state that your payment is for the show, and indicate how many seats you want. If you want to find out more, please email spanhelps@yahoo.com.

SPAN - Serving People Across Neighborhoods is also currently in need of **gravy, syrup, oil, and basic condiments, coffee, tea, tuna/hamburger helper, and sides of potatoes, rice, or pasta.** Please place items in Fellowship Hall.

Heaven's Kitchen Flowers

For the entire month of August, Heaven's Kitchen will receive \$1 from every specially marked \$12.99 Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet sold at Giant Food in Severna Park!

SPUMC Nursery School

It's almost back-to-school time! SPUMC's excellent Nursery School still has a few openings for the upcoming school year which starts in **September**. If you would like to register, please visit our website: www.severnaparkumc.org/nursery-school If you have any questions, please email us at office@spumcns.org

Youth News

MYF will continue meeting in the summer for informal gatherings and groupbuilding. Weather permitting, we are planning -

- August 7** - Regular summer MYF with Mr. Rob's Snowballs
- August 14** - Few special outdoor games and watermelon
- August 21** - WATER NIGHT! Come dressed appropriately!
- August 28** - Special games to be announced
- Sept. 4** - Regular summer MYF

Full Programming for youth entering grades 7-12 will resume on **Sunday, September 11** with our Super Sundae Sunday. Be sure to join us to kick off the school year!

SUPER 6th, our preparatory program for 6th graders will begin in late September. Keep watching announcements for more details!

First Fruits Farm

Sunday, August 7 is the last day to sign up for the mission trip to First Fruits Farm. Families and individuals will serve together in missions as we harvest produce at First Fruits Farm. First Fruits Farm is an hour and a half from the church. All ages are welcome to participate. Produce is shared with local food banks, homeless shelters, soup kitchens

and other food providers. Please sign up to join us on **Saturday August 20 9:00-11:30.** ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org

Back to School

On **Sunday, August 28**, in all services, we will bless all students and teachers as they prepare to return to school. Whether it is a daycare diaper bag, a preschool tote bag, a backpack with a Chrome book, or a teacher tote, bring your bag to worship and we will bless it and you! At **9:00** children will go to Sunday School after the blessing and continue to be blessed for their school year. AACPS school begins **Monday, August 29**.

Summer Sunday School

This summer kid detectives will dig into a few of Jesus' parables to solve the mysteries of how to grow their faith, how to care for, serve, and love others. Growing spiritually doesn't have to be an unsolved mystery! They'll discover that the answers have been there all along: spend time with God, spend time with others, use your gifts, and share your story.

Sunday School at 9:00 will vary each week so check out the schedule below. Nursery care is available weekly at 9:00 (babies and toddlers) & 10:30 (kids 5 and younger).

- August 7** - Preschool and Elementary- Parable of the Good Samaritan Part 1
- August 14** - Preschool and Elementary- Parable of the Good Samaritan Part 2
- August 21** - Preschool and Elementary- Parable of the Lost Sheep, Coin, Son
- August 28** - Preschool and Elementary- Blessing of Backpacks, All kids begin in worship and then will go to Sunday School
- September 4** - Preschool and Elementary school Games

Spark in the Park!

This summer, our Family Ministries will be heading outside with a series of Spark in the Park meet-ups. Connect, cool off with an ice pop, and enjoy the summer sun with your church family.



- **August 7 2:00pm** Water Play and Fun In the Parking Lot
- **August 20 9:00am** At First Fruit Farms- Advanced Sign-ups Required
ebenjamin@severnaparkumc.org

Severna Park United Methodist Church

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