



## Cedar Grove UMC

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## The Beacon April 2017

*REACHING OUT, GROWING CLOSE, CHANGING LIVES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST*

### *From the Pastor's Desk . . .*

Easter 2017

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 that if Christ did not rise our faith is in vain. That Christians should be pitied. Of course you can respond, but what about all of Jesus' great teachings and example? Isn't it good to simply be good even if Jesus did not rise? Of course one must then face the problem of how this apparently delusional man who told His disciples He would rise from the dead would produce commandments and ethics we should want to live by and one must ask the question, why sacrifice for His teachings if in the end, we die and that is it? Obviously good teaching is good teaching no matter what the source, but we know that whatever ethic we commit to we will fail and then is not our faith more in ourselves than in Jesus? Finally, I ask you why would Jesus tell us to remember Him in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup symbolizing His death for the forgiveness of our sins and the hope of the resurrection if what really matters about our Christian lives is the good we do? Our faith is in Jesus the Christ, crucified and risen, not the good we do! Don't misunderstand me, we should do good, the Christian faith does come down to the two great commandments that as we learned during this Lenten season represent the 10 Commandments, the first four love God and the second six love your neighbor. But we love God and our neighbor in response to the grace that comes to us in a Jesus who died and rose for us.

One of the things I miss from the old communion liturgy that I used at all my churches before this one is the unison proclamation of "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again." This statement is easily memorized and captures the irreducible core of our faith. Without Christ's death we are trapped in our sins. Without His resurrection we could not know that His death was saving and not know that God can transform our sinful earthly bodies into the eternal bodies that await us at the end of time. And without the promise of His return the sin and brokenness of this world would never be brought to an end.

It is easy for us as Christians to get used to the words "Christ had died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again" but we shouldn't. These words express the wonder, the mystery, the love, and the truth of God that should always inspire us, challenge us, and give us courage to be the Christians God wants us to be at any cost, because our God is greater, our God gets the last word about us, and if we believe in Jesus, crucified and risen, we, as Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 15 will follow this first fruit of the resurrection who is Jesus.

#### Office Hours

Monday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Wednesday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm

During Holy Week you will have an opportunity at our Palm/Passion service, Holy Thursday service, Good Friday service and Easter Sunday service to remember, to learn, to grow, and to refresh your faith in a Jesus who has died, risen, and one day will come again.

Let me close with the other great words that end Holy Week, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Praise God!

In service to our crucified, resurrected, and returning Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ,

*Glen*



## CHURCH NEWS

**Scripture readers on Sunday mornings!** It has been great having some different voices read the Scripture on Sunday mornings. We would love to have even more voices. If you are interested there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex and if you do sign up we will send you the reading electronically or inform you over the phone as to what the reading is. If you find the reading to be too difficult (length or hard to pronounce names) you can always let Pastor Glen know you have changed your mind. So please sign-up.

**Our Wednesday Night Community Dinner followed by Kid's Group, Youth Group, and Women's Bible Study** continues to meet so come and have some food and fellowship. And then if you are a kid, a youth, or a woman stay for our various after dinner activities.

The **Tuesday morning Bible study** has just begun studying the Gospel of Luke and if you would like to come please do. We usually have 14-16 people present and have room for more. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Glen.

**Thanks to everyone who supported the Martha Lydia Circle soup and bake sale.** They made a lot of money which they will put to work to help our church, help people, and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Are you interested in becoming a **member of Cedar Grove UMC?** Let Pastor Glen know.

**Family Movie Night is on Friday, April 7 at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.** We will be showing the movie "Storks." Wear your CRAZY socks and you will get free popcorn! All ages are welcome. As always, our snack bar will be open selling: pizza, popcorn, candy, and sodas. Everything is \$1.00 or less. Family Movie Night is every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month. Next month, on Friday May 12, we will be showing "Rogue One, A Star Wars Story." Hope you can join us for a fun evening! If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Crine.

The **Good News Jail & Prison Ministry's Annual Spring Banquet is on Friday, April 7 at the Crofton County Club** (1691 Crofton Pkwy, Crofton, MD 21114). Doors open at 6:30 pm. Dinner and program are at 7:00 pm. There is no cost to attend. A free will offering will be taken to support our ministry. Please RSVP by contacting either Brit Fletcher at 410.222.4937 or email at [brit.fletcher@goodnewsjail.org](mailto:brit.fletcher@goodnewsjail.org) or Chase Wood at 410.222.4549 or email at [chase.wood@goodnewsjail.org](mailto:chase.wood@goodnewsjail.org).

**Holy Week.** Please join us for services on Holy Thursday (April 13) and Good Friday (April 14). Both services begin at 7:30 pm. **Easter Sunday** service is at our normal worship time of 10:00 am.

**Our Community Easter Celebration is Saturday, April 15 at 12:00-2:00 pm** here at Cedar Grove. *Rain or Shine.* Lots of fun activities are planned including an egg hunt, crafts, a cake walk, face painting, games, and lunch. There will also be a drawing for an Easter basket! Volunteers are needed to make this event a success. We have bags of empty eggs available in the Narthex and we ask if you can help to please take a bag of eggs to fill with candy and/or trinkets and return them to the church before April 15. We also need lots of help the day of the event! If you can volunteer, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. If you have questions, please contact Mitzi Roby at 410-474-4696 or by email at [Mitziidawn@verizon.net](mailto:Mitziidawn@verizon.net). *Invite your neighbors and friends!*

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## **MISSIONS CORNER**

The Mission we are highlighting this month is the **Homeless Ministry**.

*Note from Pam Morton, Chairperson, Homeless Ministry:*

I got started in this Ministry during one of the Mission Fairs, a lot like the one we had on February 26. The most recent one was larger, and it was great to see so many people show up and sign up. Thank you all for your interest. When I started in this Ministry I was doing it so I could feel good about myself, I know very selfish. But, the Lord does move in mysterious ways. I didn't really know what to expect and was not sure how long I would last as we used to get home at 1 or 1:30 AM and I was still working so it was hard to get up at 5:30 to get ready for work. Now we are more organized, so we get back somewhere between 10 and 11:30 PM depending on how many of our Brothers & Sisters need our help.

**THE SUCCESS OF THIS MINISTRY IS DUE TO THE GENEROSITY OF OUR CONGREGATION.  
WITHOUT YOU WE COULD NOT DO THE WORK GOD WANTS US TO DO.**

I can tell you that I have gotten much more out of this than I put in. Years ago if someone had told me that I would enjoy meeting, giving, talking, and especially hugging and loving my Brothers & Sisters I would have found it hard to believe. Our concept of those living in these circumstances is not what it was years ago. Some are out there due to financial situations, former military people, and yes, there are some that have addiction problems but that is not as many as you may think. You find yourself looking forward to seeing the regulars and when you don't see them you wonder where they are. You can only hope that they have found a place to stay or gotten a job and are back in society. Regardless of their situation it is a "Hard Life". I don't know that I could do it, sleeping on the street in all kinds of weather: blazing heat in summer, bitter cold in the winter, and storms that pass through producing lots and lots of rain. And yet in all this, for the most part, they are in good spirits and thank us profusely for remembering them.

Please remember them in your prayers every night, and pray that the Lord keeps them safe from harm. From both this Ministry and our Brothers & Sisters "Thank you" for all your help, financial assistance, contributions, and prayers. God's peace be with you. *2 Corinthians 8: 8 – And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.*



## BOOK CORNER



### The End of Protestantism: Pursuing Unity in a Fragmented Church

Peter Leithart Brazos Press 2016 225pgs

Most people in the mainline denominations of what are the Protestant churches have been painfully aware of the draw backs that the Protestant Movement has brought by all the many different types of Protestant churches there are from Lutheran to Episcopal to Presbyterian to Methodist to Baptist to Church of Christ and so on. While some of these denominations work well together, others do not. Often because of the doctrinal, political, and historical reasons behind their denomination it makes it impossible to work together on the two tasks all churches, denominations, and Christians have which is to bring people to salvation and help people in physical need. The one benefit that Protestant denominations used to have in the system is that when people in their denomination moved, they would almost always choose a church in their denomination. But this has ended and for some denominations, their denominational labels exclude them from even being considered by people who move into their community and are looking for a church.

So along comes Peter Leithart and this book which suggests that the Protestant denominations need to end. This should not be seen as a defeat, for many of the reasons the Protestant movement broke from Roman Catholicism, Roman Catholicism has fixed. (I only partly agree with this.) Thus Protestant Denominations should end because we have won. (Again, I only partly agree with this.) I will say I like the notion of ending Protestantism, which comes from the root word 'Protest', because what we were protesting about is gone and the way we operate today is not an effective model for ministry. (I mostly agree with this.)

Unfortunately with the exception of recommending that Protestant churches drop their denominational name from their church buildings and letterhead (notice when you listen to the radio to a certain excellent United Methodist pastor, it is announced he is the pastor of Oakdale Church) and getting back to the basics, Leithart is very short on how we can move to make this happen. Three huge problems with his argument and book are as follows, the first is at this point he doesn't want to talk about the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox churches and how they will join with us in this unifying of the church. This is a fairly important consideration in my opinion. Second, he refuses to talk about money, standards, and leadership in this new day for the church. Will churches be held accountable for how they operate? How will we pool money to the big things that Protestant denominations have done? Who will lead? Third, he cannot point to any church that is currently doing what he wants, though he does seem attracted to the independent mega churches and to the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. He also has great hopes for the fact that the once dominant, in terms of numbers, European and North American churches are soon to be passed by the African, South American, and Asian churches in terms of numbers.

In many ways Leithart rightly calls us, as John Wesley always did, to be unified in what matters, not bicker over minor doctrinal and worship practice disagreements, and work together to save souls and repair lives. AMEN. Unfortunately, this book in many ways fails in any way to show us the way forward. I am glad I read this book and for its important insights into what is wrong with what are we doing, how Protestantism can and should end in victory and in a healthier, united church. I know I will be retired from the ministry before we make any real progress or even a real start toward this and fear that I will be long dead before it becomes a reality if it ever does. I can't really recommend this book to most Christians as it fails at many levels and is written in a style that I think most people wouldn't enjoy. I would say, however, if someone wants to better understand what is wrong with our denominationalism and wants some hints at the way forward this book would have some value to that reader.

*Pastor Glen Arnold*