



Cedar Grove UMC

5965 Deale-Churchton Road
Deale, MD 20751
410-867-7417
office@cgumc.org
www.cgumc.org

The Beacon December 2015



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

From the Pastor's Desk . . .

Christmas 2015

As each year passes and I have far fewer Christmas sermons to prepare ahead of me than behind me it never ceases to amaze me how something God did so long ago and has had so many words said about it still speaks to us, challenges us, inspires us, and captures our attention. And it is very important that we let God's Christmas capture our attention amidst all of the other voices that speak so loudly every December. I sometimes cringe when I hear someone say things such as 'It just isn't Christmas unless you have children in the house' or 'If it isn't cold with snow coming down it just isn't quite what Christmas should be'. Well, my brothers and sisters Christmas is not about having children underfoot, it is about the Christ Child and even if snow isn't falling, the grace of God comes down to us anew each Christmas as we remember what Jesus did for us.

Take a moment and ponder how much our Father in heaven loves us. He sent His only Son, Jesus, to live here on earth and face all the problems and hardships that come with life and all the more that at the right time He would die on the cross for us. He would rise with the good news that by believing in Him we can have salvation and eternal life. That is the true meaning of Christmas!

We are giving you a number of opportunities to put the true meaning of Christmas on center stage. First, throughout Advent we are studying and I am preaching on James Moore's **Christmas Gifts that Won't Break**. This book and its message will help you to focus on the true meaning of Christmas and the impact it should have on your life. Second, on December 12th at 6pm we will be having a **Greening service**. I have led similar services (Robyn Case is leading this one) through out my years as a pastor and it can be a very moving experience, particularly if you don't know the meaning behind a lot of the decorations we use during Christmas. I hope you will come out and enjoy this service. Third, on **Christmas Eve and Christmas Day** we will have worship services to put the full focus on the only reason for this great and graceful season, the birth of Jesus.

Let me close this final newsletter of the year by **thanking all of you** for all you do for Cedar Grove UMC. And finally, on Christmas Day when you are gathered with family, friends, and maybe even a stranger or two, let them all know that for you, knowing Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is the best, greatest, and only eternal gift!

Your fellow servant of the Christ Child,

Glen





CHURCH NEWS

Join us for our **Hanging of the Greens Service** on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 6:00 pm. The program will include readings of scripture and reasons for the season, singing of Christmas carols, and decorating the Church for the Christmas holiday. If there are any seniors that may need a ride, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. Also, the youth group will be making luminaries to be used for the Hanging of the Greens service and Christmas Eve. So, if you can please also save one gallon plastic milk jugs and then bring them to the Church narthex to donate it would be most appreciated. Please contact Robyn Case if you have any questions.

Each year during the Christmas season the altar is adorned with **poinsettias** that are sponsored by members of our congregation. If you would like to sponsor a red poinsettia plant, please complete an order form at church and leave it with your payment in the offering plate. The **deadline to order is Sunday, Dec. 20th**. Please contact the office should you have questions.

Thanks to all whom are participating in our Stewardship campaign, and also thanks to those who donated to help with the **Holiday Sharing** and **our Community Thanksgiving dinner**.

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services. Our Christmas Day service will be held at 10:00 am. We are in the process of determining the Christmas Eve service start time and will get that information out as soon as possible. We hope you will come and celebrate in worship, the way God intended, the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ!

Angel Tree Gifts for Children at Deale Elementary School: CGUMC is again working with Deale Elementary to provide Christmas gifts for children in need. If you can sponsor a child, please take a star from the bulletin board in the church hallway, purchase the noted gifts for the child, and then deliver the gifts wrapped in a gift bag **with the star attached** to the Church **by Sunday, Dec. 13th**. Please contact the office should you have any questions.

Donations for Care Packages for Service Personnel in the Middle East. Once again, the kids' Sunday school classes will be combining (K-12th grade) on Sunday, Dec. 6th, to assemble care packages and make cards for our service members in the Middle East. We are in need of donations of the following favorite treats: M&Ms (all flavors); any snack bags of chocolates, Twizzlers, Oreos and Chips Ahoy chocolate chip cookies; Non-dairy coffee creamer, and Starbucks ground coffee (not K-pods). We will also gratefully accept Christmas cards (for the kids to write) and money for postage. **Donations can be dropped off at the church office Mon.-Wed., the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday evenings, or on any Sunday until December 6.** If you have school-age kids, please bring them to Sunday school at 9:00 am on Sunday, December 6th, so that they may participate. The kids had a great time with this service project last year and the service personnel who received the packages were extremely moved and touched by the kids kind messages, prayers and treats! (With the exception of the coordinator, no other service personnel are aware the packages are arriving, so it's a lovely surprise!). If you would like any more information please see Sharon Staley or Ingrid Quimby-High. Thank you!

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 them hard to pronounce names) you can always let Pastor Glen know you have changed your mind. So please sign-up.

Family Movie Night this month is **PJ night!** So wear your favorite pajamas. It's also a double-feature showing "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and Jim Carrey's "The Grinch". Don't forget, we are collecting **BLANKETS** for the **HOMELESS**. So, if you bring a blanket to donate you will get a sweet treat! The snack shack will be open selling snacks such as pizza, popcorn, and drinks. All items are \$1.00 or less. Family Movie Night is fun for everyone! Hope to see you there!

This is the last call for anyone interested in being a part of **Confirmation Class 2016**. I would like to know by December 1 if there is any 6th grade or older youth who would like to be confirmed. The classes would begin in January, and if I have any confirmands we would meet in December to pick a time and day that would work for everyone.

We continue to have our **Wednesday dinners** at 6pm and we would love to have more people come out to them. Invite your neighbors! Following the dinner we have Kids group, youth group, and women's Bible study at 7pm. *Please note:* The dinners will break for a couple of weeks beginning Dec. 23rd and will resume on January 6th.

The **Tuesday Morning Bible Study** continues to meet and study the Gospel of John. All are welcome!



BOOK CORNER

The Infancy Narratives, Jesus of Nazareth

Pope Benedict XVI

Image 2012 132pgs



It is my custom to try and review a book about Christmas for the December newsletter and this year I had the very enjoyable experience of being able to read the retired Pope's book on how the Gospels describe the birth and early life of Jesus Christ. He has actually written a trilogy, along with this book he adds volumes on from infancy to Palm Sunday and from Palm Sunday through the resurrection. I look forward to reading these volumes as well and will most likely review them in this newsletter.

This book is short and to the point. Four main chapters that address the four key parts of the birth of the Jesus, the genealogies, the annunciations, Luke's birth story, and finally Matthews Magi. There is a brief final chapter on Jesus' going to the Temple when He was 12.

While written in a serious and at times academic style, the patient reader will have no problem understanding what Pope Benedict XVI is saying and given his ample citations of Scripture be able to look at the exact verse he is addressing. Those who know the theological background of this retired Pope will not be surprised to find his thoughts to be solidly biblical, conservative, and insightful. For me the biggest surprise, and a happy one at that, was I expected a heavy dose of Mariology, teaching about Mary, but I did not find it in this volume.

Most of what Benedict XVI writes about was familiar ground for me, though at points he got me to look at the story from a different angle, for the most part, whether you are Protestant or Roman Catholic you will simply find clear, solid interpretation of the Bible without distraction. So often I find authors trying to insert their story into their telling of the incarnation, it is refreshing to find someone who doesn't even want to be seen, only to bring the Biblical text alive to its readers.

I heartily recommend this book to anyone who wants to hear what the Bible says about the birth of Jesus. Note, at points this book does enter into academic referencing and debate with other scholars (which I really like but is not for everyone) but even if you struggle to follow the nature of the debate, you will learn more about what our Bible is saying about the birth of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Glen Arnold



MISSIONS CORNER

(The Mission we are highlighting this month is the **Lighthouse Shelter**)

The Lighthouse Shelter is a homeless prevention support center. Their mission is “to help rebuild lives with compassion by providing shelter and services to prevent homelessness and empower people as they transition toward employment, housing and self-sufficiency.”

The Light House is located in Annapolis, Maryland, and they provide “emergency shelter and transitional housing for individuals and families who are homeless as well as permanent supportive housing for women. They also “offer life-changing programs through a case management centered model that includes, counseling and referral services, basic life skills, and wellness and job training programs that help clients reclaim hope and independence in their lives.” They believe that with the love and compassion of staff and volunteers they can make a huge difference in the lives of many in need.

“More than 90% of the Light House budget is funded from private donations from individuals, foundations and corporations.” So donations are important and appreciated. They also need volunteers to help with many things, such as making lunches, working the front desk, weeding the gardens, stocking the pantry. Cedar Grove supports this mission each 4th Monday of the month in cooking a meal and serving it at the shelter.

If you, your family, or church group would like to help prepare or serve a meal, or lead a dinner one month, or if you would like more information, please contact Brian Manifold at 410-286-3085 or by email at unclebebee@msn.com.

Should you wish to make a monetary donation to this ministry, please place the donation in the offering plate during Worship and note that it is for the "Lighthouse Shelter Ministry."

