



Cedar Grove UMC

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REACHING OUT, GROWING CLOSE, CHANGING LIVES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

From the Pastor's Desk . . .

CHRISTMAS 2016

The book we are using for Advent makes the point that Christmas is about gifts. What child hoping for that special gift doesn't spend hours, day after day hoping for that special gift and what adult hoping to give that special gift doesn't commit a lot of time, talent, attention, and sometimes money to the getting and/or giving of that gift? The giving and receiving of gifts is an integral part of what most people think Christmas is all about. There are people who enjoy waiting until Christmas Eve to go shopping (I used to be one of those people), who enjoy being the first person in say October to brag about being done Christmas shopping (I was that guy for most of my life), or who now do not give or receive gifts for the most part as what Christmas means to them. (I am currently in that mode.) What is great about James Moore's book is that he reminds us that regardless of your family traditions of gift giving, at its heart for Christians, and God desires it to be true for everyone, it is about our receiving gifts from God and sharing them with those in our lives. Are you seeking the gift that God wants to give you this Christmas?

In one sense every Christian has already received the gift of Christmas in that they know that the child born in Bethlehem so long ago was God in the flesh, the Christ, the Savior, our Lord. He is named Jesus, which means God Saves and He is to be called Emmanuel which means God with us, and He is the Christ which means Messiah or anointed one because He came to show us the way, to open the door, to rain down upon us the grace of God.

Do you think God is done teaching you, inspiring you, leading you, and trying to impact you with the good news of the birth of Jesus? Well, I can tell you that He is not. Yes you can stop Him from impacting you by not focusing anew on the good news that is Christmas but God wants to give you new insights, new gifts of grace and I hope and pray that you will open your minds, hearts, souls, and lives to God this Christmas.

For me the bottom line is that not only does God want you to be changed by the birth of Jesus anew this year, He also wants you better able to share your faith in the Christ Child, not just the facts and summary of the truth, but your personal story of how much the Christ Child means to you.

The Beacon December 2016



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

For many people who have heard the story and not been touched by it, often it is someone they know sharing that story and what it means to them and has impacted them and changed them that can bring about the first steps of faith. This is the gift God wants us to make every effort to give to everyone. And it is the only gift that will benefit someone for eternity.

It is my heartfelt prayer that for every one of you that all that Christmas means to you comes true this year and that the gift of Jesus be the source, the heart of all of your joy and that you share His Good News with everyone. Remember whatever Christmas has become for you, it began long ago, in a little town, and it was and is and always will be a precious gift from God to us. I want to thank all of you for another great year of being Cedar Grove UMC which every one of you makes possible by the grace of God.

Your fellow servant of the Christ Child,

Glen



CHURCH NEWS

The Christmas Eve Service will be at 7:00 pm.

The Christmas Day, Sunday service will be at 10:00 am, no Sunday school at 9:00 am.

Confirmation class 2017. If you are in the sixth grade or up to including a senior in High School and would like to be confirmed, please contact Pastor Glen so that he can organize the class that would begin in January. This is the last call; please let Pastor Glen know by December 11.

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.

The Wednesday Night Community Dinners followed by Kid's Group, Youth Group, and Women's Bible Study continue so come and enjoy some food and fellowship. And then, if you are a kid, a youth, or a woman, stay for our various after dinner activities. NOTE: There are no dinners from December 14 through January 4. The last dinner of 2016 will be on December 7 and the first dinner in 2017 will be on January 11.

The Trustees will be cleaning the lights in the Sanctuary on **Saturday, Dec. 3 and are looking for volunteers** to come in either at 8:00 am to help move the chairs out of the sanctuary and/or come in around 3:00 pm to vacuum and put the chairs back in the Sanctuary. If you can help with this project, please contact Paul Seen at paulseen@comcast.net or the church office at 410.867.7417.

Donations for Care Packages for Service Personnel in Iraq. Once again, we will be doing care packages for service personnel stationed in Iraq on **Sunday, Dec. 4 at 9:30 am** and we are inviting everyone to join us to assemble the care packages and make cards for our service members. We will also have cards available in advance if you would like to take some home to write - please just ensure you bring them back on Sunday, December 4 in order to place them in the boxes. (If you or your kids would like to make cards or write letters, they are always appreciated and enjoyed by the service members). **We are in need of donations of the following items:** bags of chocolate and candy; cookies; nuts; K-Cup coffee pods or bags of ground coffee (strong coffee is always preferred - especially Starbucks!); Non-dairy coffee creamer; Office supplies (pens, pencils, notepads, etc); Magazines (we do have some female service members as well). **Donations can be dropped off at the church office, the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday evenings, or on any Sunday until Sunday December 4, provided it is there by 9:30 am.** Please plan to arrive early on Dec. 4, so that you and/or your family can participate. If you have any questions, please contact Ingrid Quimby-High at 443.404.8354 or ingrid.quimby@gmail.com or Sharon Staley at sharonstaley@aol.com.

Family Movie Night. Thank you to everyone that came out to our November Movie Night! We collected over 16 coats for the homeless! It is very exciting to see how much has been collected for the homeless over the past couple of movie nights and we are very grateful. Our next movie night is **Friday, December 9 at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.** Take a break from all the holiday hustle and bustle and join us! We will be showing a Christmas Loving Double Feature! At 7:00 pm we have **"A Charlie Brown Christmas"** and at 7:35 pm **"Elf"**. Movie night is FREE and all ages are welcome! Our snack bar will be open, selling items such as: pizza, popcorn, candy & soda, and just for December, **Hot Chocolate!** We will be **collecting WINTER HATS** for the **HOMELESS.** If you donate you will receive a free treat! If you have questions, please contact Stacy Crine at sweetbooboo16@aol.com. We host family movie night every 2nd Friday of the month. *Come check it out!*

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 the order form that will be included with the Sunday bulletin and place it along with your check in the offering plate. **The deadline to purchase is Sunday, Dec. 18.** Each plant costs \$9.00. The plants will adorn our altar on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, but please feel free to take yours home with you after the Christmas Eve Service if you'd like. *Thank you!*

The **Good News Jail Ministry Chaplains office** would like to **invite you to join us for the 18th Annual Herman Fletcher Memorial Prayer Breakfast scheduled for January 12, 2017 at 8:00 am at Trinity UMC, 1300 West Street, Annapolis MD. 21401.** Doors open at 7:30 am. (Jan. 19, 2017 is the back-up date if AACO schools are delayed or closed on Jan. 12). Please RSVP to Chase Wood by Jan. 6, 2017 at 410.222.4549 or by email at chase.wood@goodnewsjail.org.



BOOK CORNER



Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ Timothy Keller Viking 2016 148pgs

If you have been reading this Book Corner column regularly you know that in the December issue I like to review a Christmas book. So I began looking for a book and was quite happy to see that Timothy Keller had written a Christmas book. I was intrigued by what he meant by the title. Now if I didn't know a little about Timothy Keller the subtitle would have made me fear that the 'surprising truth' might turn out to be that Jesus was an alien from outer space or not really God in flesh or some other unfounded belief. So for me, even though the subtitle failed me in that nothing I read in the book was 'surprising' for me an orthodox Christian believer, it is a good book that would be great for all Christians to read and to give for indeed with all of the competing voices of Christmas--you know Santa Claus, family dinners, snow, gifts, and so on it will surprise some who have never been to church, never read the Bible, and note this next one, never had a Christian tell them what this day and season are really about and might be surprised about what the real reason is behind this great, diverse, season.

The book reads easily and quickly moves through various Scriptures to make the following points, to reveal the surprising truth that is the birth of Christ. First, who was the only person who could pierce the darkness of this world and bring God's light to us. It has to be God, because only God could do it. Second, it tells us from the perspective of from where this baby Jesus came from in terms of His mothers and fathers, meaning his ancestors. Third, what Mary, the shepherds, and wise men teach us about His birth and Him. Fourth, and finally, Keller connects the incarnation, the coming of God to us in the flesh, as a gift from God inviting us to decide for Him or against Him. This book makes a real attempt to anticipate questions and objections to the Christmas story.

Unlike our advent book Keller doesn't have as many of those great illustrative stories that we all so love, but what you will find in this is book is an easy to read, passionate presentation, of the surprising truth behind the birth of Christ and that is that God loves all of us and desires for all of us to come to Him for forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. I would recommend this book to every Christian to read, to share its message, and to give to someone who might indeed be surprised that Christmas is really about God coming to all of us.

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 or Ingrid High at ingrid.quimby@gmail.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."

