



Cedar Grove UMC

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REACHING OUT, GROWING CLOSE, CHANGING LIVES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

From the Pastor's Desk . . .



CHRISTMAS 2018

I am fond of reminding people where the word Christmas comes from as it is the joining of the words 'Christ' – our Lord and Savior and 'Mass' – what was once the term all churches used to describe Holy Communion. So according to the word, Christmas is about celebrating Holy Communion as we remember the birth of Jesus, on what we claim is His birthday.

Modern Christmas has gotten a lot bigger in terms of things we care about and think are important about Christmas that have nothing or little to do with Christ's birth and its meaning that involves so much more I wonder if the real purpose and meaning of Christmas is forgotten. More importantly as Christians is the quality of our Christmas or its experience and meaning for us each year dependent on these other things or upon our taking the time to remember the birth of Jesus, to ponder and treasure as Mary did about its meaning, taking time to thank God and be joyful for what He has done for us and so on.

In the book we are using for Advent to supplement my preaching, To Live Again by Sheila Jacobs on page 84 she writes, 'Do you understand that Christian joy is not dependent on circumstances – how real is that for you? (Be Honest!) Since this is an Advent devotional book about a Christmas movie I wonder if I can ask the same question about Christmas and your circumstances. We have all heard at least here in North America that snow makes for a better Christmas or puts us in the mood for Christmas. Nothing wrong with that but you know that snow has nothing to do with the birth of Christ, what it should mean to us and impact us. When you listen to Christians talk about Christmas, outside of church, you hear conversations of hope and sometime worry about gifts bought (not to mention paying for them!), family making it home, the struggle to get our Christmas decorations up, getting all the cooking done, travel hassles and so on.

My point is simply this, while all of our other Christmas traditions and activities can go well or poorly, we must not let those highs and lows impact the unchanging truth and joy of this great day, of this great birth, of what John 3:16 puts so well, 'That God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but have eternal life'. AMEN

The Beacon December 2018



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

So if all of your other Christmas plans go poorly, I hope when you bemoan this to family and friends you will add, but that doesn't change that fact that Christ was born and that by believing in Him I have salvation and eternal life. Or if you are reveling in that perfect Christmas where everything went great, when you are sharing your joy for that, you will add but it is nothing compared to the joy I have in remembering each Christmas that God loves me, sent His Son Jesus and that by believing in Him I have salvation and eternal life. That is indeed the reason; not only for this season but for the joy we should have each Christmas, regardless of our other circumstances.

God sent Jesus to us to tell us about His love and to save our souls. Let us all be joyful about this great truth this Christmas and share it with everyone. As always it is my heartfelt prayer that all of you have the Christmas you hope to have and that Jesus and His birth be at the center and heart of your Christmas joy and that you share this Good News, above everything else, with everyone.

Your fellow servant of the Christ Child,

Glen



CHURCH NEWS

Advent Book. We are again using a book for Advent and this one is based on the classic Christmas movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*. The book we will read is "To Live Again; It's A Wonderful Life" by Sheila Jacobs. The book is divided into four chapters, one for each Sunday of Advent and we will begin on the first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 2, at which we will look at the first chapter. Copies of the book can be found in the church narthex. The book costs \$7.00 and we are asking for that as a donation if you take one. Please take a book even if you can't afford to leave a donation. We want everyone who wants to read it to do so.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship services! Join us for our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service at 7:00 pm on Dec. 24 and for our informal Christmas Day service at 10:00 am on Dec. 25.

Poinsettias. Each year during the Christmas season our 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 (included with the Sunday bulletin at worship) and place it along with your payment in the offering plate by Dec. 16 or contact the church office. Each plant costs \$12.00. *Thank you!*

Operation Christmas Child. There was a tremendous response for packing shoeboxes last month. Church members packed 96 boxes. Many thanks to everyone who participated whether you donated money, gifts, packing shoeboxes, or with spiritual support! There are still openings to work at the distribution center 2:00-6:00 pm on Thursday, Dec. 6. Please call Sandy Burns at 410-867-7898 if you'd like to help that day.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study. We are studying Genesis. If you would like to join us, please do! We meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 am every Tuesday.

Wednesday Night Dinners continue until the Christmas Break (last dinner until January will be on December 12). Join us for delicious food and Christian fellowship. Things continue to go well in terms of attendance but we need the numbers to stay where they are for this event to continue. Invite your neighbors, the food is delicious!

The Women's Bible Study meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:45-8:00 pm in the Parlor. On Nov. 28 we start an Advent series studying "The Redemption of Scrooge," by Matt Rawle. This Advent series invites us to enter into the pathos of Charles Dicken's *A Christmas Carol* to discover anew the healing power of God's grace. Even the most selfish, sinful person is not beyond the reach of God's love in Jesus Christ. As we spiritually consider our past, present, and future, may we, like Scrooge, recommit ourselves to kindness, living with a generous spirit in today's world of haves and have-nots. If you have any questions please contact Diana Seen at dianaseen4@comcast.net.

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.

Children's Sunday School is every Sunday during worship service after the children's message. Our lessons sometimes involve food, so please be sure to let Cindy Rothhaas know if your child has any allergies or dietary restrictions. We can always use middle/high school helpers. Please let Cindy know if you are able to be a helper or if you have any questions at 410-867-2973 or at rrothhaas@comcast.net.

Sanctuary/Sunday Committee—Sandy Burns. Again I would like to thank all of the volunteers that have helped with greeting, nursery and ushers. We had a great response to volunteers to greet on Sunday mornings. Did you enjoy greeting church members? Please sign up again to volunteer for another Sunday. We really need more volunteers to work in the nursery. Are you reluctant to volunteer because you don't think that you have enough knowledge of the bible or scriptures? It is nice to have the knowledge but is not mandatory for this support. We should have two volunteers each Sunday however due to the low response we have not always been able to do that. Please volunteer so that we can rotate the Sundays so that there is no need to miss Church services every week. Please talk to Courtney Roby or Debbie Huffman if you have any questions. We can also use more volunteers for ushers on Sundays. Please talk to Randy Smith or Spike Deale if you have any questions about being an usher. Again thank you for the support each Sunday. Please contact Sandy Burns at 410-867-7898 if you have any questions or want to provide suggestions on how we can better support Cedar Grove UMC. God bless everyone.

The **Church Office** is open Monday-Wednesday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. **If you need assistance when the office is closed**, please contact Pastor Glen at pastor@cgumc.org or by cell at 443-699-3645. The office emails will not be read until the office admin is back in the office. So if you have an immediate need, please reach out to the Pastor.



Come and take a break from all the holiday hustle and bustle and join us for our December **Family Movie & PJs Night!**

On **Saturday, December 15 at 6:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall we will hold our Christmas Season Double-Feature showing first the movie "Incredibles 2" and then after that we will show "Jingle All the Way." Wear your favorite Christmas PJs and you will get a treat.



Movie night is FREE and all ages are welcome! Our movie night snack bar will be open selling pizza, popcorn, candy, sodas, and this month only HOT CHOCOLATE! Nothing cost over a dollar.

Also, this is the last month to donate to our Blanket Drive for the Homeless. New or used blankets are welcome. If you are donating a used blanket we ask that you please make sure it's washed and ready for giving. So bring a blanket to movie night to keep the homeless warm this winter. If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Crine at sweetbooboo16@aol.com.
Thank you for your kindness and generosity!



MISSIONS CORNER

(This month we are highlighting : **The Lighthouse Shelter**)

The Lighthouse Shelter is a homeless prevention support center in Annapolis, MD. 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." 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. For more information, see their website at annapolislighthouse.org.

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 uncleabee@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."



BOOK CORNER



The Coming of Christ

C. H. Dodd Cambridge University Press 1951 39pgs

My tradition for the December newsletter is to review a book on Advent/Christmas and this year I have a slightly unusual choice in that the book is on Advent -- not Christmas. It is very short and is fairly old having been written over 50 years ago. It is written by C.H. Dodd, a very prominent New Testament scholar. I have read other books by Dodd such as the Parables of the Kingdom; The Epistle of Paul to the Romans; and The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. I was delighted to see that he had written a devotional style on the coming of Christ. When I got the book I was surprised by its brevity but delighted with its content.

Advent is the season that begins the Christian year and by looking back at the coming of Jesus long ago encourages us to look forward to His return. Dodd captures this dual focus perfectly in this book. In four very short chapters, one for each week of Advent, and were originally given over the radio in England through the BBC. But he also does the other key thing that we as Christians should always do living between the two comings of Jesus, realize how His first coming should impact how we live today and do the same with His future coming. What we say and do should reflect the impact of the babe born of a virgin long ago and live in anticipation of His return and the certain victory that will come at the time of God's choosing. I will simply add that Dodd does a great job of addressing, in both Christ's past coming and in Christ's future coming, God's answer to the reality of sin and death in our lives and that those who believe can rest assured of His gracious answer.

This book is easy to read and so short I would encourage everyone to read it if they can find a copy for less than the around \$25-\$27 new price. I got mine for around \$10 and Amazon listed the book as 48 pages and I thought that was a good price until I got the book because it was only 39 pages in terms of pages with writing on them! (So, if you pay the \$25-\$27 price this amounts to about 64 cents a page!) Nonetheless, I am still happy I got it and read it and it has certainly put me in the right spiritual attitude to begin Advent and remember anew the coming of Jesus long ago and look forward to His return as I seek to let these truths help me to be the Christian today that God wants me to be.

Pastor Glen Arnold