



Cedar Grove UMC

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From the Pastor's Desk . . .

The Beacon **March 2015**



Office Hours

Monday	10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Wednesday	10:00 am to 5:00 pm

THE CROSS AND THE WORLD 2015

What do you think when you look at the cross? Hopefully you see both the incredible sacrifice Jesus went through and feel bad about how much He suffered but I also hope you see the joy of the cross. It is the cross by which we are saved. What do you think when you look out into the world? I hope your eyes are open to the incredible evil that humans do to other humans and we have a glaringly clear example of the horrible acts being committed in in the Middle East. I also hope you see the good being done as well. So what is the cross? What is the world? Clearly it depends on what you choose to look at and see. Part of the meaning of the cross for Christians is that there is more to see than what our human eyes can see. When Jesus was dying on the cross, the human eye, the world could only see a man defeated, a cause destroyed. But when we view the cross with the eye of faith, the eyes of the Spirit, we see a different picture - a picture of victory, of love, of forgiveness, and of God's will. We should also hear God's call to us to take up our crosses and do God's will in our lives.

Unfortunately when looking at the world we cannot do the same thing, for there is no misunderstanding the evil and sinfulness of our world. We can indeed look at where things are wrong and try and make them right. We can balance the evil that our eye inevitably comes across and remember that God can even turn that situation around. But we must realize that until Christ returns, evil and sin will always be there.

I hope that all of us are people of the cross, saved by Jesus, committed to carrying our crosses by giving of our selves by sharing the Good News of Jesus in words and deeds, and believing that when we obey God, whether our obedience changes things or not, God is pleased. Jesus died on the cross for us and to obey His Father's and His own will for us that we might find forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life in His name. It is my prayer for all of us that Lent 2015 has been a time of growing and serving as followers of Jesus the Christ, who died on the cross for us, and who calls us to the work of the cross every day.

Your fellow servant of the one who died on the cross for us,

Glen



Book Corner



Misunderstood Stories: A Theological Commentary on Genesis 1-11 Robert Gnuse Cascade 2014 286pgs

As I was preparing to teach my classes on Genesis 1-11, I wanted to buy a recently published book on Genesis 1-11 that I would use as my primary reading for structuring the class. So when I saw an author I like, Robert Gnuse, had written such a book and I bought it and read it. In comparison to the Longman III book which I reviewed in an earlier newsletter this book is more in depth, more thought provoking, and while a little more of an academic approach, easy to read and to understand by any reader. While providing an in-depth theological commentary on Genesis 1-11; it also provides an interesting comparison between other Ancient Near Eastern creation/fall/flood stories with those found in our Bible. This book does not go in depth on the science vs. Bible issue it does touch on it. The bulk of the theological commentary explains the text, challenges our assumptions, and offers a fresh perspective on Genesis 1-11 in the modern day. I did not always agree with Gnuse but I always enjoyed reading the book.

If you would like to read a good book that will make you look at Genesis 1-11 in a new way I would recommend this book to you. It is a serious book that requires some effort by the reader but it is well written and worth the effort.

CHURCH NEWS

Holy Week – Please come out to our Holy Thursday and Good Friday services. Each service begins at 7:00 pm.

Parsonage Update – We have had the parsonage professionally dried and damaged materials have been removed. We want to thank the Trustees, particularly Renee Power for coordinating this effort. We also want to thank Paul Seen, Kevin Roby, Jeanne and Mike Haas, Trish Wood, Sharon Staley, and Renee Power (there may have been others so sorry if your name is not mentioned) for removing all the items we wanted to save from the building prior to this work being done. We have also received a check from the insurance company for the damage and we want to thank Mary Day and Janet Brown for helping us in this process. We have more work to do and decisions to make so please pray for the Trustees and Church Council as we continue to address this issue.

Building Improvements! – The Trustees have been working hard adding a new outside door to our kitchen, reworking the air ducts in the education building to provide better temperature control, and other little improvements that help us to operate more efficiently as a church. We want to give a big thank you to the Trustees for all of their hard work.

Winter Meltdown Success – We had over 30 adults and youth attend Winter Meltdown at the River Valley Ranch in northern Maryland. Everyone had a great time and we want to thank the adults who drove and went and also the people and groups who made financial donations to help some of the people go who couldn't afford to go. Hopefully, those who went will share more about this in a future newsletter.

Genesis 1-11 Bible Study – 35 people are continuing to attend the two classes taught by Pastor Glen on Genesis 1-11. We have had some weather related setbacks but the learning continues.

Confirmation 2015 – Megan and Mason McGivern are the two young people in our confirmation class this year. Please pray for them as they learn about the Christian faith and consider whether or not they will be confirmed. Also, please support their confirmation ministry project which is a “Keep the Coins” coin drive. They would love for you to participate by saving all your loose coins into a jar that will be provided for you. Jars will be given to each family Sunday, March 1st and will be collected March 29th. The money from this ministry will be donated to the Cedar Grove Sunshine Fund.

Give Up Something Bad For Lent – Are you reading the book we offered for Lent? Have you attended any of the discussions? Have you enjoyed Pastor Glen trying to connect his sermons to the book? We would like your feedback and in particular would you like us to do something like this again. Over 50 books were offered and they were all taken so we know a lot of you took and hopefully read the book. You can direct your comments to Pastor Glen.

Martha Lydia Circle Soup & Bake Sale – The Martha Lydia ladies are holding a bake/soup sale on Saturday, March 21 from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Featuring hearty homemade soups (Vegetable Beef & Ham and Bean) and scrumptious baked goods. Cost for the soup is \$7.00 a quart. Pre-order forms will be available in the Sunday bulletin. For more information contact the church office.

Hometown Nazareth Vacation Bible School – VBS begins Sunday, June 28 through Wednesday, July 1 (4 Nights). “Hear stories about Jesus’ childhood from the best source of all...his mom, Mary! Everyone knows what it’s like to hear your mom tell stories from your childhood. Can you imagine the kinds of stories Mary could tell? Take your kids back to Hometown Nazareth, where they’ll stand up for their faith among people who doubt that the carpenter’s son is really God’s son.”

Summer Project Youth (SPY) – We head to Christiansburg, VA the week of July 18-24. We need more male Chaperones. Please see the Missions Corner of this newsletter for more information on the SPY trip.

Future Class Possibility on the World Religions – Pastor Glen would like to teach a series of classes on the main world religions. There would be one class on each major world religion where you will be introduced to the basic history, beliefs, and practices of each faith and a comparison to Christianity. The following religions would be included: Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, overview of African Traditional religions, and possibly others. Please let Pastor Glen know if you are interested.

Bill Kline sent in an article from The Capital Newspaper (Friday, Feb. 20, 2015 edition) where in it Miss Cassandra Keenan is mentioned to have made the Anne Arundel County 2015 All-State Musicians Senior Mixed Chorus! ***Congratulations Cassie!***

Missions Corner

Greetings from your 2015 Missions Council. As we said in January, we are going to try and provide more information for you on the great work being done or being supported by all of you at Cedar Grove. One way in which we will do that is to highlight our Mission of the month via this newsletter. You will hear about this same mission during the Missions Update on the 3rd Sunday of the month and we will also ask you to be in prayer for that mission and if you feel called, to support that mission with your time, talent or tangible gifts. Our Mission for the month of March is: **SPY**.

What is SPY? Project SPY aka Service Project Youth is a week-long mission adventure for middle and high school students and their adult chaperones. Physically, it's a home repair ministry, making homes safer, warmer and drier, for families in the New River Valley (Christiansburg, VA). Spiritually, we seek to be God's hands and feet in the world. Because of God's love for us, we work to love others in tangible ways.

Cedar Grove has been attending SPY at Fieldstone UMC since 2009 and the program gets better each year. **This year we will attending July 18- July 24. WE NEED MORE MALE CHAPERONES!** We can't make this work without at least one more male chaperone so, men, please prayerfully consider joining us. Cedar Grove covers the cost for chaperones.

For more details about the SPY go to <http://www.fieldstoneumc.org/#/project-spy/history-more> or contact Pam Foster at pamjimf@comcast.net.



We hope you can join us this year!