



**Cedar Grove UMC**

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## **The Beacon September 2017**



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

### **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 . . .*

Annual Conference, Stay-Cation, Church Anniversary

I have led services for other church anniversaries, some for fewer years and some for more years, but it is always an honor to a part of such a service. I hope and pray that every one of you will make an effort to join us on October 22 for a time of remembrance, a time of celebration, and a time to look forward. For as much as I want us to celebrate our past, be thankful for all those remembered and forgotten who gave us this church that we enjoy today and we owe it to them to remember them, God also wants us to look forward to where He is leading us.

Inside this newsletter you can learn about what we do as a church currently, what happened at annual conference this year, and other articles. As I write this, I am getting ready for my annual 'stay-cation', thinking about filling positions on our committees for the new year, getting ready for our church conference in October, writing my sermon for my first Sunday back, doing what I can to assist those who are preaching during my stay-cation, and so on. Even as we look back we keep doing God's will and looking forward to where He is leading us.

I will be on 'stay-cation' from August 12<sup>th</sup> to September 2<sup>nd</sup> ; although I am working on August 22<sup>nd</sup> when we have our Church Council meeting and I will be at worship each Sunday along with teaching Sunday school. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time such as a death or hospitalization do not hesitate to call me.

I hope and pray that all of you had some time this Summer to rest and refresh yourself and will be ready as we head into September to help us be the church I know God wants us to be.

Your fellow servant of Jesus Christ,

*Glen*



## **CHURCH NEWS**

**The 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Cedar Grove UMC** will be held on Sunday, **October 22, 2017 at the 10am** worship service with a meal to follow. We have many special things planned for this service and it is not one you will want to miss. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find more information on this event, but please save the date and plan to be a part of this special day in the life of our church.

**Church Conference** will be held on **October 21<sup>st</sup>** (the day before our anniversary celebration) at Davidsonville UMC at 1pm. Since this will be a “church” and not a “charge” conference every member of the church will have both voice and vote. This change has been made in our district for every church by the District Superintendent .

**Once a Month Study Starting on September 18 at 10am and September 19 at 7pm.** We will begin a four-session class on the Parables of the Jesus. In this class we will look at every parable Jesus taught, how to interpret the parables, other parables in the Bible and consider why this was Jesus’ favorite type of teaching. In fact one third of Jesus’ teachings were parables. Every Christian needs to know how to interpret this type of teaching. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex and please indicate which session of the class you will come to, either the morning or the evening one. I want to thank the 20 plus people who have already signed up, but there is room for more! If you have any questions please contact Pastor Glen.

The **Wednesday Night Community Dinner, Youth Group, Kidz Group, and Women’s Bible Study** resume on **September 13**. The dinner is at 6:00 pm in our Fellowship Hall and the groups begin at 7:00 pm. Youth Group meets in the Education Center, CGKidz meets in the Fellowship Hall, and Women’s Bible Study meets in the Parlor.

**Women’s Bible Study Pot Luck Dinner.** There will be a potluck dinner on Wednesday, **September 6 at 6:30 pm** at Diana Seen’s home for those interested in attending the Women’s Bible Study which begins on Sept. 13. We will be studying the book “A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23” by W. Philip Keller. We can give you the book and the first week’s lesson at the dinner. Please RSVP to Diana either by email at [dianaseen4@comcast.net](mailto:dianaseen4@comcast.net) or phone at 443-618-9759.

**Family Movie Night** is Friday, **September 8 at 7:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. We will be showing “Boss Baby!” Movie night is FREE and all ages are welcome! As always, our movie night snack bar will be open selling pizza, popcorn, candy, and sodas. Everything is \$1.00 or less. Hope you can join us for a fun evening! Movie night is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of every month.

**Blood Drive.** On Wednesday, **Sept. 13 at 2:30 pm-6:30 pm** the AAMC Bloodmobile will be in our parking lot. To sign up online go to [www.signupgenius.com/go/20f084caba92ea5fb6-cedar5](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f084caba92ea5fb6-cedar5) or you can contact the church office by phone at 410.867.7417 or email at [office@cgumc.org](mailto:office@cgumc.org). Give the gift of life!

**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.

125 Years



Join us to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cedar Grove United Methodist Church on Sunday, October 22, 2017. A special service will be held at 10:00 am followed by a church-wide potluck luncheon. The Martha Lydia Circle is spearheading this event. Many special things are being planned for this service, and we would like your help to make this a memorable day. If you have any special Cedar Grove mementos you would like to share or display, please let us know. Special displays will be set up in the parlor for all to see. We are also looking for any pictures you may have depicting Cedar Grove activities such as weddings, baptisms, Sunday School activities, Youth Group

shenanigans, camping trips, service projects, retreats, special services or any other Cedar Grove photos. You can either place them in the box in the Church narthex so we can scan them and return them to you or scan them yourself and send them to Jeannie Haas at [jhaas72@comcast.net](mailto:jhaas72@comcast.net). We would like these photos and memorabilia by September 15<sup>th</sup>. We would also like to invite former members who have left the area to this special day. If you know of anyone who you think would like an invitation, please provide names and addresses to the Church office at [office@cgumc.org](mailto:office@cgumc.org).

Finally, we hope to make a Memory Book of this special day where Cedar Grove members and attendees can share their special memories and thoughts of Cedar Grove United Methodist Church. Watch for more details on how to provide these special thoughts to be included in the Memory Book. As we prepare for this celebration, please join us in continuing to pray for Cedar Grove United Methodist Church. May we continue to be a beacon of light to South County and may God be glorified in all we do!



## MISSIONS CORNER

(This month we are highlighting : **The Good News Jail & Prison Ministry**)

The Good News Jail & Prison Ministry places Christian chaplains in jails and prisons to minister to the spiritual needs of inmates and staff. They “believe the most effective tool for ministering to the needs of inmates and staff is the daily presence of a chaplain. The chaplain serves as evangelist, pastor, counselor, mentor and friend to those who are incarcerated and the staff who guard and protect them.” Chaplain Chase Wood, a member of Cedar Grove, and Chaplain Brit Fletcher are the chaplains assigned to the Anne Arundel County facilities and we support them in their mission. Their pastoral presence “helps men and women, inmates and staff, come to a relationship with God enabling them to begin to live a life that leads them away from incarceration rather than a life that leads them deeper into the cycle of crime.”

**SPY 2017 was a success!** We had another great year at SPY! We achieved what seemed impossible and felt God with us at our job sites and back at Fieldstone UMC. Below are some photos from our great week! The kids worked hard and were a blessing to their homeowners and their leaders.





**Cedar Grove UMC Women's Ministry Presents:**

**FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT  
WOMEN'S RETREAT WEEKEND**

*Featuring Anita Gutschick from Women of the Bible  
and Bible teacher, Joanne Guarnieri Hagemeyer*

**Friday, March 2, 2018 thru Sunday, March 4, 2018  
At the Clarion Resort Fontainebleu Hotel  
10100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD 21842**

If you'd like to go on this fun retreat weekend, please complete a registration form by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> (forms can be found in the narthex or you can contact the Church office). Cost is \$35 per person for the weekend (non-refundable). This fee is for the retreat program only and does not apply to your hotel stay. (Each attendee is asked to make their own hotel reservations at the hotel, see info below.) Please make checks payable to "Cedar Grove UMC Women's Ministry" and put "For Retreat" in the memo area. You may place the check with your completed registration form in the collection basket during Sunday Worship or you can mail it to the Cedar Grove office or to Diana Seen at 4923 Thomas Drive, Shady Side, MD 20764.

*Please contact us if you have any questions:*

Diana Seen: 443-618-9759, [dianaseen4@comcast.net](mailto:dianaseen4@comcast.net)

Sharon Staley: 410-562-6646, [sharonstaley@aol.com](mailto:sharonstaley@aol.com)

**Clarion Resort Fontainebleu Hotel Package Rates:**

- Standard Double/Double: \$269
- Double Occupancy: \$155
- Triple or Quad Occupancy: \$125

The Package Rate is based on single, double, triple or quad occupancy. The package rate includes: 2 nights' accommodations in a standard double/double room, Saturday breakfast buffet, Sunday deluxe breakfast buffet, all taxes and service charge included.

**Individual Reservations:** All guests will be responsible for securing their own reservations. Please use the Clarion's toll free number, 800-638-2100 when making your reservations and request the special Cedar Grove UMC group rate.

**Hotel reservations must be made by Feb. 2, 2018.**

**Hotel Policies:** Check-In: 4:00 PM. Check-Out: 11:00 AM. Personal checks not accepted in hotel. 72-hour notice required on cancellations/changes. No refunds for early check-out.



## **BOOK CORNER**



### Reading the Parables

Richard Lischer WJK Press 2014 195pgs

As annual conference neared I needed to pick a book to read. I always want to pick a book that is short enough for me to finish over three days and usually something that either is in an area of interest or ideally something I am preparing to teach or preach at my church. So I chose this book by Richard Lischer on parables which is a part of a series of books, 'Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church'. I have used other volumes in this series and really enjoyed them (the volumes on the 10 Commandments and Apocryphal Gospels are great).

The book is divided into 6 chapters which will give you a good introduction to what parables are, how to interpret them, reading the parables from the perspective of the Gospel writers, the poor, and with the saints. Overall this book does a decent job on all of these topics. At times, in trying to be fair to all approaches to interpreting the parables and I think to highlight the more radical, the book could confuse you rather than clarify for you what the parables mean. But with that said it will show you why parables taught long ago can continue to speak today in so many different and powerful ways.

The book is written clearly and while at times I thought having an academic understanding of parables is helpful, anyone could read and benefit from this book. Is it the book I would recommend to someone as their first book on parables? My answer would have to be no. My first choice would be David Wenham's "The Parables of Jesus," James Moore's six little volumes on Jesus' Parables, J. Kalas' "Parables of Jesus, Parables from the Backside, & More Parables from the Backside," and if you want the best (but long and academic the way I like them!) Craig Blomberg's "Interpreting the Parables 2nd Edition" or K. Snodgrass' "Stories With Intent." (By the way I have read and/or consulted over 100 books on the parables and own every one of them!)

*Pastor Glen Arnold*

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### ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017

One of the things I have always done at all of my churches is provide a report for them to read about Annual Conference. Now I am often criticized for this by other pastors and sometimes by my own church people because often people are upset by what I report. I understand that concern but what the Annual Conference does has, will, and does impact our church. Now often that impact is not immediate or direct but sometimes it is. I remember the year we went to what is called "direct assessment" for paying clergy health and pension benefits and while it did not bring the end to the denomination as some predicted, it did immediately change things. Then there are other things the Annual Conference does that takes years to have an impact on the local church. Regardless of whether the impact is immediate or delayed, big or small, good or bad, and so on, every church person and every church should know about it.

Let me address the good things of this year's annual conference first and begin with the biggest change, we have a new bishop, LaTrelle Easterling. There were a number of things I liked about the way she led the conference. First, she has made a priority of elevating the role of lay people in the life of our conference. (I suspect that is why we are all having 'church conferences' this year instead of 'charge conferences' where the main difference is that at church conferences every member can vote and at

charge conferences only the officers of the church can vote. Our church conference is scheduled for Sunday, October 21 at 1pm at Davidsonville UMC. (Yes that is the day before the 125th Anniversary service!) I think that one of the ways our denomination has gotten lost in so many ways is because the rank and file, the laity, has not been more involved in directing our denomination or only learned what was happening when it was too late to do anything about it. Second, Bishop Easterling exhibited a very different leadership style. Let me be clear, I don't think this is because she is our first woman bishop in this conference (because I have observed other female bishops leading and they were just like their male colleagues) but rather how she intentionally leads. I will give two examples, (1) she was much more collaborative in tone and (2) when she was asked to make a ruling of law, she did not do what every other bishop we have had has done which is ask for the allowable 45 days to make a decision, she instead conferred with the parliamentarian and made her decision.

It would be difficult for me to come up with anything else good to report as we do so little real business there is just hardly anything to comment on. We did pass a budget and the benevolence fact did not go up so that is good. The two-session Bible study was good, but again it was more a sermon than a Bible study. We greeted many people, gave gifts, heard a few words from them, and then we moved on to the next one. The time of worship was okay but again at times too loud for me. And of course we recognized the retiring, remembered the dead, and commissioned and ordained the new.

On the negative side, the issue of homosexuality and in particular one person, T. C. Morrow a woman who is married to another woman and was not allowed to go any further in our process (she was turned down last year) to ordination because of recent judicial council rulings, dominated the whole conference. There are a number of aspects of this that annoy me. First, our annual conference cannot change the rules about 'self-avowed practicing homosexuals' becoming clergy. The Book of Discipline is clear they cannot. Second, the fact that T. C. Morrow and her supporters know that according to our rules she is ineligible for ordination but to stir things up they keep on going. Remember, all clergy agree to uphold the rules of our church. It seems to me their behavior is in violation of not just our rules, but means they were not telling the truth when they were ordained! Third, at the last general conference (the body that can change our rules) it was agreed to hold a special meeting prior to the next general conference (held every four years) to try and resolve this issue.

But that didn't stop those in our conference from turning our annual conference into the T. C. Morrow show. Just to give you one example of what happened, the Rev. Dr. Phil Wogaman surrendered his credentials as a minister in protest to the unfair treatment of GLBTQ people and in particular T. C. Morrow. Oddly as he stood on his principles by ceasing to be an ordained minister in our denomination since he could not agree with our policy (Amen! I can respect that kind of integrity.) he went on to tell those who agree with him not to follow him. So let me get this right, he had to do the right thing for his side of the debate but he doesn't want anyone else to do the right thing? (With that type of attitude he should have never been ordained.) And of course the reason for this is that at his age, he is long retired and in his nineties, and by the way was my Ethics professor at seminary and thus this cost him nothing, gets him the notoriety he has often craved and hopes will help those who are trying to change our rules to succeed. But how can anyone claim they have to do the right thing, but don't you do it? Hopefully you are getting a sense of why I don't enjoy the 'show' that is our annual conference. I could add the endless inquiries on T. C. Morrow's situation, for example a newly ordained elder saying that she was going to do all she can to change our policy on this matter. Which begs the question, if The United Methodist Church is so wrong on this issue, why are you being ordained in a denomination where you just promised to uphold this evil, wrong rule? I would have never become a United Methodist Elder if I thought some

aspect of our official rules and beliefs were evil, wrong! And since I will not uphold any rules that are wrong and have promised to uphold the rules of The United Methodist Church I will retire or surrender my credentials rather than ever do what I believe to be wrong as an ordained elder not just of The United Methodist Church, but much more important to me as a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Of course the painful truth as to why this person is seeking and being ordained in a church she thinks is wrong, it is about the money, the power, and prestige that come with ordination and of course to change our denomination without any consideration for those who are already there and don't want this change.

Finally, since for me the issue is the proper interpretation of Scripture and the people on both sides have their arguments and each of us must decide for ourselves which interpretation is right, is not the solution to this problem two denominations? People on my side are not moving and neither is the other side so rather than reduce every conference to moronic fighting over this issue let us go our separate ways. Each year people and congregations (but not the buildings) leave our denomination on both sides of this issue because they are fed up. Often when people move to a new community, even if they like the local United Methodist Church decide not to go there because of the uncertainty of where our denomination will move on this issue. I don't know what the special commission will come up with but the only solution I see working is a Christian parting of the ways between the two sides of this debate and then both groups moving forward on what really matters, focusing our conferences on bringing people to faith in Jesus, organizing to help the poor, having places for people to grow spiritually, and so on. Maybe the commission will 'solve' this never-ending debate and, in case you forgot, we have been in this rut since 1972, though it has only gotten really bad since the turn of the century. Thankfully our rules will not change on this matter until January 1, 2021 which gives me plenty of time to get ready for whatever I will do in response.

Finally, we voted on a few minor issues like should we be invested in Hewlett Packard because they invest in Israel and Israel is bad (I don't agree with this view of Israel by the way); asking the board of pensions to look at our investing in general to make sure we are not supporting Israel in any way; about supporting a pro-choice organization; our conference moving policy in regards to retirees; and a number of constitutional amendments which for the most part have little or no impact on how we operate as a local church or denomination.

As for the accommodations they were not as nice as last year but good all the same. Next year we go back to the Waterfront Marriott in Baltimore for the next annual conference. I did read a whole book at conference which I do every year to make sure I get something out of the three days; you can read a review of that book in the 'Book Corner' article in this newsletter.

I want to thank my dad for driving me to the conference and really, really, thank him for coming and getting me so that I could leave the conference! I was glad to leave the conference so that I could then prepare for Stacey Witte's Memorial service which was the next day. It was a moving service as those who stood (including a guitar playing and singing Greg Witte and a beautiful remembrance by Melissa) and remembered Stacey and said such beautiful things about her, witnessed to the power and glory of Jesus not only in her, but in how she impacted others in His Name. A very sad occasion but a praise worthy time!

If you have any questions about this conference, please don't hesitate to ask me about them.

Pastor Glen Arnold