



Cedar Grove UMC

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The Beacon **November 2014**



Office Hours

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

From the Pastor's Desk . . .

THANKSGIVING 2014

November is always a special time in the life of the church. We begin with All Saints Sunday remembering those of our number who have gone on to be with our Lord. We end with Thanksgiving week and the beginning of Advent, the start of a new Christian year. Of course Christmas is just around the corner, and the hopes and promise of the new calendar year.

While Thanksgiving is not specifically a Christian holy day, it is a good reminder that we should count our blessings; that we should be thankful. We should do this not just because God calls upon us to do it, but because it is also good for us to do. Often we can be made unhappy because we only look at the bad, what is not working even though these troubles are surrounded by many blessings. Of course as Christians we always have Jesus as our Lord and Savior and for that we should always be thankful. It is my hope and prayer that as you gather with your family and friends, or as I do spend the day alone, that you will tell God how thankful you are for Jesus.

I realize the year has not even ended but I am already aware that it is time for me to plan the confirmation classes for 2015. If you have a youth, sixth grade or older, who would like to attend our confirmation classes, please let me know by November 23rd so that I can schedule a meeting with the confirmands and parents in early December to determine when the class can meet and to go over the requirements for confirmation.

I hope that all of you have a blessed Thanksgiving and that you are thankful to be a part of our church as I am thankful to be your pastor.

In service and with thanks to our Lord and Savior,

Glen

WHAT ABOUT THE DINOSAURS AND OTHER QUESTIONS? A STUDY OF GENESIS 1-11



I can't tell you how many times recently I have been asked the question "What about the dinosaurs?". It is the newest version of the question "how do we reconcile the creation story with what modern science is telling us?". But there are many other things about Genesis 1-11 that are debated, considered controversial, or are wondered about. For example: Do you know that some do not believe that Eve was the first woman created according to the Bible? Do you know that the Bible tells the story of creation in Genesis 1-2, not once but twice? Ever wondered why the apple became the most common image of what fruit was on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Why was Cain's offering rejected? Do you know the true ending of Noah's story according to the Bible? What was really wrong about the building of the Tower of Babel? I would like to offer a Bible study to answer and address these and other questions.

This Bible study is open to anyone and no previous Bible knowledge is required. It will be a detailed study, along with a close reading and interpretation of Genesis 1-11, that will include:

- » How do Christians, Jews, and Muslims agree/differ on their understanding of Genesis 1-11?
- » How do we as Christians understand Genesis 1-11 in light of modern science?
- » How is Genesis 1-11 understood in different cultures, at different times, and different perspectives?
- » Why is knowing and understanding Genesis 1-11 so important and help us in understanding the rest of the Bible?
- » What else does the Bible have to say about the stories in Genesis 1-11?

If there is enough interest, I will hold this Bible study on Monday nights, starting January 12, at 7pm to 8:15pm. (Also, if there is interest, I would be willing to teach this class on Tuesday mornings at 10am.) There will be at least 10 sessions and maybe more depending on the progress that we make. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex. If you have any questions about this study please do not hesitate to let me know.

CHURCH NEWS

Let's all make sure to thank Sharon Staley and all of her helpers for putting on a great **Fall Festival** on November 1.

Confirmation Class 2015. As noted in the 'From the Pastor's Desk' article we are looking for youth, 6th grade and older who are interested in being in our Confirmation classes starting in January. Please let the pastor know by November 23rd if you are interested.

New hearing devices a big hit! Thanks to Greg Witte, the Trustees, and the United Methodist Men, we have new hearing devices to help people hear during the Sunday Worship Service. It looks like we might need to buy more than the four we got.

New Member's Class. If you are interested in joining the church, please let the pastor know.

Special Music/Singing The Praise Team would love to incorporate some special music/singing into our Advent and Christmas services. If you would like to offer some special music/singing, please contact Doug Sheidy and/or Becky Haring.

Two trees were taken down from in front of the parsonage by people hired by our Board of Trustees as they were a constantly losing branches and were causing not only an un-slightly mess but a safety concern. Also, thank you to the trustees for **painting** the front of the Education Building.

Wednesday Dinners and Activities One of the great things we do here at Cedar Grove UMC is have our Wednesday dinners and activities. There really is something for everyone, great food, fellowship, kids/youth/women groups after, and opportunities for all to help with serving the meal or with the kids/youth groups. Don't forget we will have our Thanksgiving dinner on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Help is always needed. Please contact the office or Bill Kline if you are interested.

The Martha Lydia Circle will hold a soup, bake, crafters/vendors/treasures sale on Saturday, Nov. 22 at 9:00 am-1:00 pm here at Cedar Grove. You can reserve a table for \$15. Please contact Mabel Beneze at 410-867-2978. Soup pre-ordering will also be available. Details to come soon.

Poinsettias. Each year at Christmastime the altar is adorned with poinsettias that are sponsored by members of our congregation. Order forms for those that would like to sponsor a poinsettia plant, will be included with the worship bulletin beginning Sunday, Nov. 23rd. The deadline for orders is Sunday, December 14th. The cost per plant is \$8.00. The poinsettias will adorn the altar December 17th through Christmas Day. You may take yours home after the Christmas Day or New Year's Day service.

Hanging of the Greens. We will be having a Greening (decorating the church for Advent/Christmas) on December 3rd starting with the Wednesday night dinner and involving the Youth Group and Women's Bible and anyone else who wants to help. It should be a great time of food, fellowship, and fun. If you have any questions please call Pastor Glen.



Book Corner



Strange Glory: A Life Of Dietrich Bonhoeffer Charles Marsh Knopf 2014 516pgs

Since I have finally had time to hang my credentials and some artwork in my office at the church you will see a drawing of Dietrich Bonhoeffer which I rescued from a VBS curriculum back in the mid-1980s. He is one of my favorite theologians and personal heroes. I had the great fortune to study Bonhoeffer's life and theology both in college and at seminary. I have purchased his complete works of 17 volumes and have read almost all of it. I have previously read the biography of Bonhoeffer written by his close friend Eberhard Bethge (more about him later) and a very popular one written from an Evangelical viewpoint by Eric Metaxas. I have also read many books about his life, theology, and ethics.

For those of you who do not know who Bonhoeffer was, he was a German Theologian and pastor who was involved in resisting Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party. For this he was persecuted, arrested, and a few weeks before the end of World War 2 was executed at the age of 39. Apart from his resistance to Hitler and the Nazis, he was an author, pastor, and theologian. He wrote a number of books that I think all serious Christians would benefit from reading, such as The Cost of Discipleship, Life Together, and Letters and Papers from Prison. But there was more to his life than academics, being a pastor, and being involved in the German resistance. He came from a large prominent family, was a talented musician, travelled many places prior to the war, and many other things. Marsh's book does a particularly good job of bringing in these aspects of his life as compared to other biographies and paints a different view of his personality and life than other biographies do. (And given that Bethge knew Bonhoeffer, I tend to support his view, though one must recognize that Bethge was Bonhoeffer's closest friend and thus may be guilty of not revealing as clearly some of Bonhoeffer's less attractive aspects.) If you want to learn more about his life, including two eventful trips to the United States of America, his brief correspondence with Gandhi, his childhood, school years, and large family I encourage you to read this book. (Not only was Dietrich executed by the Nazis but so was one of his brothers and two of his brothers in law.)

One might wonder why I would read such a long biography of a person that I know so well (and Bethge's biography is almost twice as long as Marsh's) and feel as if I had read the best biography already. Well, the truth be known, I buy a lot of books and pretty much read everything published about Bonhoeffer that I can get my hands on. Also, Marsh's book had a hook to get people who knew a lot about him to buy this book, and the hook was that Marsh hints at and states that Bonhoeffer was homosexual by orientation. While this would not affect my view of Bonhoeffer at all, I wondered what Marsh's evidence was for this claim. The answer is there is no direct evidence, Marsh wrote his book after Bethge had died (Bethge according to Marsh is the object of Bonhoeffer's supposed orientation and could have either confirmed or denied it), and quite frankly Marsh engages in what one only could be called stereotyping certain behaviors as indications of homosexuality which I believe are false (such as, enjoying musicals, being obsessed with clothing, etc...). Whenever Marsh directly makes the claim of Bonhoeffer's homosexuality, it is in an un-sourced sentence in a very heavily sourced book. Bonhoeffer was single, as was Bethge at the time of his death but both were engaged to young ladies, Bethge to a niece of Bonhoeffer. For me the sad thing about this is that this is a very good biography which I enjoyed reading. I almost think Marsh put this part in to get people to buy and read the book, but I think there are enough people like me who read everything about Bonhoeffer anyway, who would have spread the word about what a good book it is, and it would have done well.

I recommend this book and the Metaxas biography I mentioned to anyone who would like to learn more about Bonhoeffer. The issue of his orientation aside, you will find Marsh's to be a well written biography about a brave and interesting man who lived in interesting and dangerous times.