



SALEM BROOKEVILLE

A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

NEWSLETTER November 2023

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A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR



“Where is God?”

Have you ever asked that question? Perhaps you've heard someone else ask it.

As we watch the news, scroll on our social media, even talk with our friends, we hear about people dying in Israel and Palestine. We hear about oppression that's near and far. We even have pain in our own lives.

Where *is* God?

Would you believe me if I said God is all around? That God is within your every breath?

- 1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
- 3 You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
- 5 You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

-Psalm 139

This knowledge IS too much for us. We are too limited to understand God's presence

with us (ah, human limitations!). So, we have worship.

Seriously!

Worship serves to do more than just give us an emotional boost for the week. Worship is purposeful and (often!) ordered. Dr. Lester Ruth, from Duke Divinity, says worship should follow an arc where it begins by *Revealing* and/or *Remembering* God's actions, and then moves into the people *Responding* to God. The whole service should follow this arc, but there should also be mini-arcs within each act of worship.

What does this mean? Well, it could mean the large arc where we pray, sing of God's goodness, and listen to scripture to *remember* and *reveal*. We listen to joys and concerns to see how God has shown up or where God is needed. Then in the second half of worship, we *respond* through the sermon, communion, offering, and singing.

When we practice this arc week in and week out it teaches us to see God's actions and how to respond. It teaches us to reach out to God because we remember and reveal the way God has been showing up all along.

If you're like me, you feel a little (a lot!) helpless in the midst of all the world's brokenness. It helps me to practice seeing where God has shown up in my life and in the world. It helps me to remember that we're never as alone as we can feel. The God of Psalm 139 isn't going to abandon me after all this time. The God of Psalm 139 is working in all the catastrophes and pain to bring goodness into the world. Sometimes I just need to remember that.

The next time you're in worship, look for when we remember/reveal and then respond. Now that you know that, does it have more meaning for you?

Blessings,

Rev. Emily Hart

LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

On October 19th and 20th this Leadership Team held its first Fall Strategy Retreat. Hosted at St Paul UMC in Laytonsville and with inspired assistance by the Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, of the Unitarian Universalist church, the Team reviewed the Salem UMC congregation's 2023 accomplishments and planned goals and the ways for achieving them for 2024.

Many ideas were brought up and discussed at length. Categories we examined were Congregation Strengths, Growing Edges, and Salem's Deep Gladness.

Congregation Strengths are new energy from new membership, caring, compassion, giving and in being a welcoming community in Christ.

Growing Edges (areas for improvement) are tension around politicized issues, sanctuary accessibility and aesthetics, physical plant management and burnout.

Salem's Deep Gladness are spiritual care, music coordination harmony with sermon and mission work.

The Leadership Team's charge and focus was also to develop three goals for 2024 and list ways to see them through.

Goals for the 2023-2024 year:

1 By July of 2024, we will have generated a comprehensive needs assessment of the projects needed to improve the sanctuary aesthetically, structurally, and in terms of accessibility. The list will include order of priority and estimated costs. Fred, Buck, Janice, and Pastor Emily will contribute initial ideas to the list.

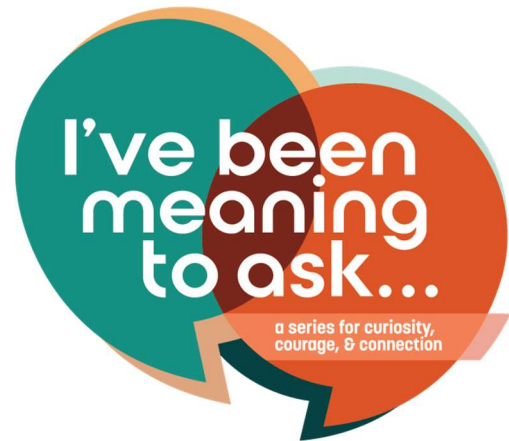
2 We will host a series of community events, and meetings with the Brookeville Commissioners that create opportunities for us to learn the needs of the community. The events will include a spring community dinner, visit with Santa, Blessing of the Animals, quarterly meetings with the Commissioners, and the Yard Sale.

3 In the 6 months leading up to the Election in 2024, we will host an engagement series (possibly with Braver Angels) that will include food and provide opportunities to talk about divisive issues in order to fulfill our vision.

The Salem Leadership Team discussed these goals in different ways and we are confident they represent what the Salem UMC congregation believes is the direction we are being led by our Lord and at the same time accomplish what our Goal and Vision statements attest.

For this attendee, the retreat was an eye opener in learning about planning for ministries, the challenges of leadership development and seeing what a vibrant and forthcoming Leadership team Salem UMC has. Thank you for being so willing to bring your ideas to the table.

NOVEMBER SERMON SERIES



Brief Series Overview of Part 2

I've been meaning to ask... what happens after death? This question and others like it start popping up as soon as we're aware of mortality. So, if you're like me, you've been asking this since you were a small child and you first knew someone who died. Scripture promises resurrection, but sometimes it seems like all Christians offer a different message of hope or judgement to the point it seems like we have different Bibles. So what's the truth? It's hard to know. Scripture offers many different views of life after death from many different time periods. For the next three weeks we'll ask some of your most pressing questions, focusing on how the New Testament specifically addresses them. One thing remains consistent across everything I've read and believe: God loves us and all people and in the end, we'll be with God. And that's good news.

Nov. 5 I've Been Meaning to Ask... Will I see people I love in heaven?
Revelation 7: 9-17 / 1Thessalonians 4: 13-18

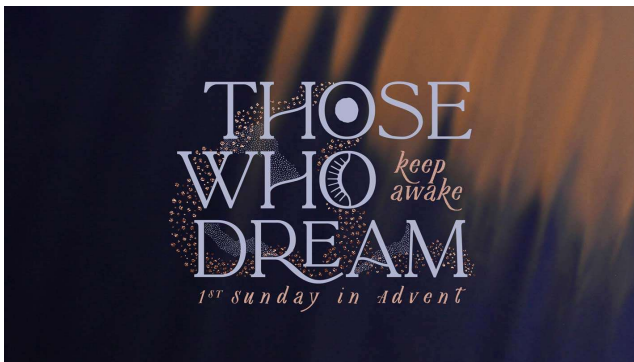
Nov. 12 I've Been Meaning to Ask... What is heaven like?

Revelation 21: 1-7; 22-27; Matthew 20: 1-16

Nov. 19 I've Been Meaning to Ask... Does God Have Favorites?

Luke 15: 3-7, 8-10, 11-32

Next up:



This year, the opening lines from Psalm 126 jumped off the page:

“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.”

What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God’s dreams and pray they shape our reality. This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time.

Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world.

First Sunday in Advent

Nov. 26 Those Who Dream: Keep Awake
Mark 13: 24-37; Isaiah 64: 1-9; Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

In Advent, we remember that God’s ultimate dream is to be intimately connected to us—to come down and dwell among us. As we keep awake, we join Isaiah and the psalmist in pleading for restoration and for God to draw near.

BIBLE STUDIES

The current study is of the book “What is the Bible?” by Rev. Anne Robertson. The Amazon link to buy the book is

<https://www.amazon.com/What-Bible-Exploring-Dickinson/dp/0990721205>

and the Christianbook.com link to buy the book is

<https://tinyurl.com/2sj5uzmp>

6:30-7:00 P.M. gather
7:00-8:00 study

The zoom link for all the Wednesday night studies is

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/94812192432?pwd=T256VnlzQ1VwVk83eGljeGRLL3pNQOT09#success>

MISSIONS

The Lord's Table

The Lord's Table resumed in October. It will continue to be held the first Friday of each month. The location is Epworth United Methodist Church, 9008 Rosemont Drive, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact Churchill Groves for information.

Olney Help Food Needs

You may leave non-perishable food donations in the box in the Meeting Room behind the Sanctuary or in the marked box in the Community Hall. Food items needed most at this time: canned fruit (in juice please), boxed spaghetti, pancake mix and syrup, canned chili, canned chicken, sloppy joe sauce and canned pasta, adult cereal, canned peas (low salt), spaghetti sauce – plain kind, canned meats, such as tuna, chicken, turkey, corned beef, spam, salmon, Vienna sausage, etc., 1 lb. bags of rice and rice sides (Knorr/Roni), pasta sides (Knorr/Roni), baked beans, canned green beans, corn, peas (low/no salt), Jelly - all sizes, all flavors, condiments - BBQ sauce, ketchup, mustard, salad dressing; instant mashed potatoes - pouches and boxes, juice boxes - 100% juice, shelf stable bottled juice. For those who find it easier to order online we have a new Amazon wishlist with many useful items on it.

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/B9R4BSW2TAS5?ref=wl_share

If you are interested in volunteering or know someone in need, please call their Helpline at 301-774-4334. If you wish to make a financial donation, you may do so at:

www.olneyhelp.org.

Prayer Shawls

Prayer shawls are available free for anyone who is ill or needs comfort. Feel free to pick one up near the coat rack.

HISTORY OF PRAYER SHAWLS

Do you know how the prayer shawl ministry began? Years ago, a small group of women were getting together to crochet. Then Rev. Sue Shorb suggested they crochet with a mission – making prayer shawls for the church. Women have come and gone, but a core group of three have carried on with this mission, making perhaps 50-80 shawls a year. They are hung over the altar railing and prayed over, and can be freely taken by anyone and for anyone who is sick or in need of comfort.

What a wonderful ministry.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

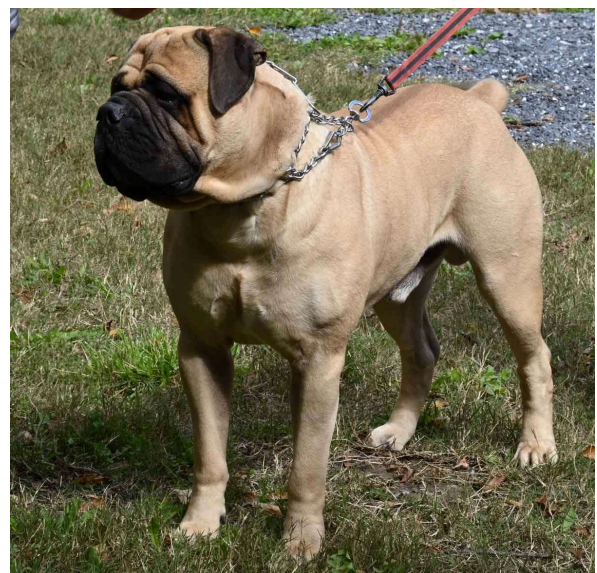


Our Annual Blessing of the Animals community event took place on October 15, a beautiful Sunday, outside near the pumpkin garden. We knew it was going to be a special event when a horse trailer backed up in the parking lot and Terry Anderson brought June Bug the pony out to take part in the blessing. More animals participated this year: there were dogs, some small, some big, some furry, some hairless, a very brave Cosmo the kitty, and well-mannered June Bug.



Each animal was blessed by Reverend Emily and received a medal honoring the Patron Saint of Animals, St. Francis of Assisi, who believed that humans and creatures are blessed by God. The medal reminds humans to take care of their animals and to be grateful for them as gifts from God.

A variety of dog biscuit treats including salmon, cheese, and peanut butter, were enjoyed by our four-legged guests before they departed.





LUNCH FOR SIX

Would you like to chat with others outside of church while enjoying lunch out? This is the perfect opportunity to meet people who sit outside your pew. Groups have gone to GrillMarx, Mama Lucia, Olney Grille, and Jimmie Cone. Fun! There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board down the hall from the sanctuary for the next group.

Good reasons to go out to lunch with others:
1) Doctors say socialization is great for us seniors. 2) Doctors say socialization is exercise for the brain. It is work. One has to follow the conversation and think what to say next. Also, one follows how others are responding: what they say and their body language.

SOCIAL HOUR

Please remember to sign up to bring snacks to the Community Hall so Social Hour can continue. This is another great way to encourage fellowship following the Worship service. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board down the hall from the sanctuary. Instead of weekly, we'll try once a month. Nothing fancy. Just a dozen donuts cut in half is perfect.

YARD SALE POSTPONED

Our yard sale has been postponed until spring. We're sorry for any inconvenience this has caused.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO SEND EMAILS

A volunteer is needed to send email announcements. This would include sending the weekly "What's Happening at Salem" email and some others from time to time. This is approximately a two hour a week commitment – about one hour composing the emails and attending the Communications Team meeting via Zoom each Wednesday from 11:00 A.M – 12:00 P.M.

If interested, please contact Rev. Emily.

GIVING

Offerings can be sent to:
Salem United Methodist Church
12 High Street, Brookeville, MD 20833

If you would like to give by app, you can download the "Vanco Mobile" app and search for Salem United Methodist Church or by its invite code R8A63K.

If you haven't been able to access Vanco and would like to give electronically, we now have a PayPal option. You can use this link:
<https://paypal.me/SalemBrookeville>

BIRTHDAYS



If your name should be on the list, please contact the church. We don't want to leave you out. Thank you!

November Birthdays

Kulley Bancroft	11/04
Betty Bittner	11/17
Joyce Howes	11/24

CONTACT INFORMATION

Reverend Emily Hart takes Sabbath days on Saturdays and Mondays for rest and renewal. She also honors time with her husband and dogs in the evening. Please contact her on these days (or after 8:30 P.M. on other days) only in an emergency or a scheduled meeting.

Church Address:
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www.salemunitedmethodist.org

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The newsletter is prepared by the Salem United Methodist Church Communications Team. Contact any team member with questions or comments. Thanks!

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