

September 2014 Newsletter

To the Salem UM Church Community,

By the grace of God and with the help of many from our community, Salem both offered and provided hospitality to the thousands who walked through Brookeville to commemorate the Bicentennial. In 1814 the Quaker people of this town offered hospitality to strangers displaced by war, and in so doing entertained the President of the United States, James Madison. An estimated 6500 people visited Brookeville this past Labor Day weekend to experience this historic event.

Even though Salem did not exist in 1814, we did not let this stop us from being a vital part of the town today. We offered food to the hungry, beverages to the thirsty, our front lawn to the tired, and our air-conditioned sanctuary to those who were too warm. We served over 1000 sandwiches and nearly that many sodas or ice teas. The docents in the church answered questions about Salem and shared our history to the unknown numbers who walked through our doors for the first time.

We are grateful to the nearly seventy people who helped with this event over four days. On Thursday and Friday we prepped, cooked, and packaged food. On Saturday and Sunday we set up and served the food. Those who worked alongside us were friends, family members, and neighbors. The Sandy Spring Lions Club provided two of the four tents on our front lawn and many Lions helped in various ways throughout the four days, as well. Those who helped reported having fun learning new things, making new friends, and going home with a “good tired.” One person who worked in our kitchen for the first time stated, “I’ve never worked with a group where everything went so smoothly and we had so much fun, too!” Serving together binds us together!

We also need to give thanks to the Brookeville Commissioners, Katherine Farquhar, Sue Daley, and Buck Bartley along with Sandra Heiler, the visionary and organizer of this event, for their support. They had faith in us and helped us in so many ways. We give thanks for Mary Ellen Eaton whose expert catering knowledge, perseverance, and talent in training kitchen novices made this weekend a success. And we give another special thanks to Connie Sommerville and Bill Lavelly, our two Licensed Food Handlers, whose presence and supervision allowed us to meet the Health Department requirements.

Salem UMC is a place where strangers are welcome and we treat them as one of our own (Leviticus 19:33-34). We are a place where the needs of “the least of these” are met (Matthew 25: 31-46). And we are a place in which strangers can be entertained with love and respect (Hebrews 13:1-3). A while back, someone coined the phrase, “Salem: The Little Church that Can.” I would like to rephrase that to Salem: The Little Church That With God’s Help Does Great Things!”

Offering Hospitality to Everyone,
Rev. Sue

