

The Lantern

NEWSLETTER OF MT. LEBANON UMC
EST. 1812

Dates to Remember

MARCH 2

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE - 7PM

MARCH 8

7PM: LENT BIBLE STUDY IN
FELLOWSHIP HALL*

MARCH 9

ADMIN COUNCIL - 7PM ON ZOOM

MARCH 10

10AM: LENT BIBLE STUDY IN
FELLOWSHIP HALL*

MARCH 16

7PM: MISSIONS TEAM MEETING, IN
PERSON AND ZOOM

**See next page for more information.*

Announcements

- *We are looking for an assistant/ fill-in for our Technology Wizard! If you have any leads, or if you yourself would like to learn how to use our software to live-stream and record worship, please email the office.*
- *The Pastor will be on vacation from Feb. 21-28, and Maxcy Hanby will preach and lead the service on Feb. 27.*

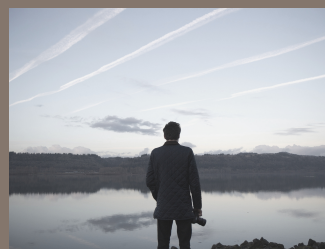
Prayers, Joys & Concerns

Joe Freebery, Doug's cousin, Jimmy; Harry West; Barbara Videtto; Ruth Johnson; Scott Godfrey; Jeanette, Denise Hudson's cousin; Pat Ritter; The Byrd family; Tracy Hopkins; Alberta Richie; Lynn; Peter and Jane Pratley; Missy Reynolds; Linn McKenry; Denise's cousin, Greg; Ryan, Maddie, and baby Aurora; Charles Watson; Sue Shoemaker; Jessica Shoemaker; our nation and world family impacted by the COVID 19 virus; Jay Dickerson; Christopher West

Updated Office Hours

*Mon, Wed, Thurs: 10am - 2pm
Tues: 10am - 1pm (Pastor Kelly only)*

More information inside:





What's Bible Study all about?

Our Lenten Bible study will take place on the first Tuesday of Lent, March 8, through the last Thursday in Lent, April 14. We will have two identical sessions per week: Tuesday evenings at 7 PM and Thursday mornings at 10 AM. Each week, we will discuss one chapter of our book, "The Difficult Words of Jesus" by Amy-Jill Levine. Please come to the first session with Chapter 1 read!



Dr. Amy-Jill Levine is a Jewish scholar of the New Testament at Vanderbilt University whose careful attention to detail, fun anecdotes, and helpful insights make all her books enjoyable for any Christian, no matter how new or seasoned in examining the Scriptures. No matter what, it's always a great learning experience! This book, *The Difficult Words of Jesus*, is described this way:

"Jesus provided his disciples teachings for how to follow Torah, God's word; he told them parables to help them discern questions of ethics and of human nature; he offered them beatitudes for comfort and encouragement. But sometimes Jesus spoke words that followers then and now have found difficult. He instructs disciples to hate members of their own families (Luke 14:26), to act as if they were slaves (Matthew 20:27), and to sell their belongings and give to the poor (Luke 18:22). He restricts his mission (Matthew 10:6); he speaks of damnation (Matthew 8:12); he calls Jews the devil's children (John 8:44).

In *The Difficult Words of Jesus*, Amy-Jill Levine shows how these difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how have they been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation."

Come on out and join Mt. Lebanon UMC in discussing a chapter of the book per week in Lent!

Missions Team Note

The Missions Team thanks each of you who participated in our Angel Tree ministry in December. Twenty-six children were gifted with clothes and a hoped for toy or craft. As always, you are encouraged to stay in contact with your families with calls, notes and invitations to church activities.

Current Opportunities: We will host our first 2022 dinner for Family Promise families on March 26th. Contributions are needed to fund a dinner for families at Ronald McDonald House. Checks should be made out to Mt. Lebanon UMC with Ronald McDonald House Dinner on the memo line.

Future Opportunities: We are investigating a possible food ministry opportunity with H.O.P.P. (Harvest Outreach People Project), a collaboration of Peninsula-McCabe, Richardson Park and Asbury United Methodist churches to bring food and services to neighborhoods through food giveaways that will also include support from non-profit organizations. We are looking for folks to visit one of these events on Friday, February 25th. If you are interested, please call the church office at (302) 652-8411.

Moments for Missions: We will be blessed to have Kim Eppehimer from Friendship House on March 13 and Alyson Windle from Neighborhood House on April 3rd to share information about their organizations.



Volunteer Opportunities

We have many members in our congregation who are occasionally unable to find transportation to worship, to doctor appointments, or to other appointments that are necessary for their health and well-being. Since we have so many amazing people here at Mt. Lebanon who are always willing to pitch in, I'm hoping that we can find some folks who are willing and able to be occasionally available to provide that transportation for our members in need. If you feel like you might be available to pick up a member from their home, drive them to their appointment, and return them to their home safely, and you'd like to be on a congregation-wide "short-list" of folks that members can call if they want to schedule a ride with you, please contact the church office via phone or email and let Chelsea know that you are willing to help out on our Transportation Team!



"Change can be a healthy human experience..."

Grace and peace to you all in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ! I remain thankful for you all and blessed to serve the people of Mt. Lebanon UMC! Recently, I've been thinking about change. Change can be a healthy human experience that brings opportunities for us to broaden our horizons, learn more about ourselves, and grow in holiness. That's the best-case scenario! But change can also be taxing, uncomfortable, and even a bit sad as we mourn the old and learn to face the new.

I have especially been thinking about change with regard to the announcement that we made at worship last Sunday. For those of you who were unable to attend or worship online with us, our Staff-Parish Relations Committee chairperson, Bill Innes, shared that as of July 1, 2022, the Bishop and Cabinet are appointing me as the pastor serving not only at Mt. Lebanon, but also at Chester-Bethel UMC (on Foulk Road on the PA/DE line). He shared that this appointment will not only provide some needed financial relief to both churches, as both will share expenses for the pastor's salary and benefits package, but it will also free some funds for our church to seek professional consulting as we continue to explore our vision and mission going forward. On which ministries ought we to focus? What do we do very well that we can continue to do on a larger scale? Conversely, what are we doing in our community that isn't as helpful as perhaps it once was, that we might scale back in favor of outreach and ministry that truly can benefit those we serve? Our further discussion about this will help us to be even more effective in serving those in our city

This announcement that Mt. Lebanon will have to share me as their pastor proved very jarring to many people, and I must admit that it was jarring to me as well when our DS, Rev. Joe Archie, presented it to me personally. I will be doing double the work, attending double the meetings, and serving double the number of persons (Chester-Bethel is about the same size congregation that we are). We will all definitely experience change. We will need to make some changes to our worship time, for example - it's possible (but not set in stone) that we may move to a 9:30 AM worship time.

My participation in some events may be more truncated. We will cross those bridges at the right time, but I am heartened by your care and concern for me in this upcoming season of change.

I assure you that the timing and process of this appointment shift is very normal, although it may be a new type of experience for us here at Mt. Lebanon. Lots of effective congregations share a pastor - and our SPRC learned that Mt. Lebanon has even shared a pastor with Mt. Salem for a few years in the past! We, and our church, are part of a system in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the United Methodist Church - for better or for worse. Just as I at ordination took a vow to go where I am sent, to serve those to whom the presiding Bishop appoints me, our churches in the Conference are part of a system in which the Bishop and District Superintendents may make any changes to pastoral appointments at any time for missional reasons. Those "missional" reasons might seem difficult for many of us to see right now, but I encourage us all to trust that God is with us, that God is moving here, and that while things might be a bit different from what we're used to, there is great opportunity for ministry to be found in this new arrangement. I promise you that no one in the Cabinet is giving up on Mt. Lebanon; this arrangement does not indicate that we have failed, that we are ineffective, or that we are in trouble. This is just our participation in the greater system as a small piece.

I know that you have questions. Many of you have shared your concerns with me, and I will always be happy to listen. In most cases, I probably have the same questions, with very few answers! But what I do know is that when July 1 comes, we can continue to work together, that you will continue to be a congregation that models love and support, and that I will be there for you to the best of my ability in your times of need.

With great love and steadfastness,

Rev. Kelly Conner