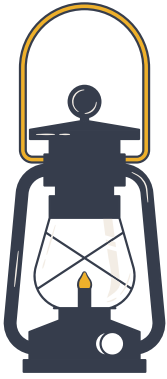


MARCH · APRIL 2024



The Lantern

NEWSLETTER OF MOUNT LEBANON
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
EST. 1812

850 Mt. Lebanon Road, Wilmington, DE 19803 · 302-652-8411 · office.mtlebanonumc@verizon.net



Easter Services

March 28

Maundy Thursday Service

6PM

March 29

Good Friday Service

6PM

March 31

Sunrise Easter Service

6:30AM

Pancake Breakfast to follow

Traditional Easter Service

11AM

What's inside?

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From the Desk of Pastor Kelly

The Mt. Lebanon UMC church choir recently rehearsed an arrangement of the great spiritual, “Standing in the Need of Prayer.” One of the lines in the second stanza included the lyrics, “Not my deacon, not my elder, but it’s me O Lord, standin’ in the need of prayer.”

As we sang, one of the members asked about the words “deacon” and “elder.” “We have those in The United Methodist Church, right? But they’re clergy, not laypeople?” I was reminded that we (clergy) often wrongly assume that all the folks in our churches know the jargon that we use. Sometimes, as is the case here, such jargon may be used differently between denominations!

For example, in my limited understanding, Presbyterians tend to use the term “elder” to describe layfolks who serve on the “Board of Elders,” which functions the same way that our Administrative Council does: they are charged with leading in the administrative duties of their local church, including finance, visioning, and other “business” aspects. They use the term “deacon” to describe layfolks who serve on the “Board of Deacons,” which governs the local church’s mission and ministry programs and initiatives.

In the Catholic and Orthodox denominations, the terms “deacon” and “elder” refer to ordained clergy. One must first be ordained a deacon before moving on to be ordained as an elder; but it is possible for ordained Deacon to choose not to pursue elder’s orders. Deacons preach, assist the elder during sacraments, and do similar pastoral care tasks; but only the ordained elder has true authority to preside over the act of consecration of sacramental elements (like the bread and wine for Holy Communion, or the water for Baptism).

The United Methodist Church has its own unique understandings of the roles of deacons and elders. Unlike our Presbyterian siblings (but like our Catholic and Orthodox siblings), we apply these terms not to laypersons, but to clergy. The UMC also, like the Catholics and Orthodox, ordained clergy first as deacons and then, if they pursued and met the requirements, as elders. However, at General Conference in 1996 (held in Denver), the rules changed to make Deacons and Elders into their own separate clergy orders. “Deacon” was no longer seen as a kind of pathway on the journey to having full sacramental and voting rights within the UMC; instead, the Order of Deacons was created to bridge the all-too-common gap between the church and the world.

While both Deacons and Elders are called to serve as ordained clergy, those drawn to each order maintain different foci within their callings:

Elder	Deacon
word	word
order	compassion
sacrament	justice
service	service

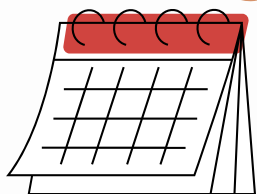
Elders are called more to preaching, church administration, ensuring that church folks receive Baptism and Holy Communion, and congregational/ community service. Deacons are called more to preaching in the church, congregational/ community service, and offering and witnessing to compassion ministries and justice needs outside of the church. In other words, ordained deacons in our tradition are more likely to be found in what we call “extension ministries”: ministries that happen outside the church, like hospice or hospital chaplaincy, counseling work, campus ministry, or other local community organizations. These pastors are still connected with a local church, but they also go out into the world to bring the church to others. Elders, such as myself, tend to be appointed to local churches like ours, and also to military chaplaincy (as military chaplains must be certified by their respective faith organizations to offer sacraments, which deacons are not called to provide).

We are certainly blessed to have laypersons (non-clergy) like you, who are called to serve on ministry teams, as administrative committee members, as special roles within the church, or simply as followers of God who come to worship the Lord! We are equally blessed that our clergy in the United Methodist connection are called to serve in many different ministry settings, poised to share the Word with people wherever they may be located. Glory be to God!

With great love and steadfastness,
Rev. Kelly Conner, MDiv, ThM
Pastor of Mt. Lebanon &
Chester Bethel UMCs, Wilmington, DE



DATES TO



REMEMBER

MARCH

- 21: Book Study at Chester Bethel - 10AM
- 22: Office closing at 12:45PM
- 23: Easter Egg Hunt - 10AM to 12PM
- 24: Palm Sunday
- 26: Virtual Book Study at 7PM
- 28: Maundy Thursday Service at 6PM
- 29: Good Friday Service at 6PM
- 31: Easter Services
 - Sunrise Service at 6:30AM
 - Pancake Breakfast to follow
 - Traditional Service at 11AM

APRIL*

- 3: Admin Council Meeting at 7PM
- 8-17: Pastor Out of Office
- 14: Guest Preacher
- 28: Cookies for NA

*Keep your eyes and ears open for any changes or updates to April events!

TRUSTEES UPDATES



**we've
gone
solar**



Last October Mt. Lebanon was awarded a \$75,000 grant from Energize Delaware, a non-profit agency based in Dover. The money was to help upgrade our HVAC system, replace our ancient fuel oil boiler, and add solar panels to our Fellowship Hall roof. All these together should reduce our utility bill by \$7,000 a year and reduce pollution and carbon dioxide that hurts our Creation. The first step was taken March 6-9, when KW Solar installed 38 panels. They need to be inspected and then added to the Delmarva P&L grid, about a 6-week process. Plans also call for J. Hentkowski Company to begin the upgrade to all of our heating and air conditioning starting either March 18 or 25. The installation will last about 7 business days and require the heat to be turned off during 4 days.
More details to follow!

Many of us are starting to plan for a final resting place, but not many know that Mt. Lebanon Cemetery has about 45 spaces for cremation burial available, right now. If you or someone you know is giving thought to this decision, please inquire through the office!



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

BISHOP, PENINSULA-DELAWARE CONFERENCE,
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

REV. ANTOINE C. LOVE *Assistant to the Bishop*

REV. ERICA ROBINSON-JOHNSON *Chief Administrative Officer*

“Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.” – Joel 2:12-13a

During the Super Bowl held on Sunday, Feb. 11, there were ads entitled “He Gets Us,” one of which portrayed scenes of foot-washing between individuals often at odds with one another. The commercial ended with the words, “Jesus didn’t teach hate. He washed feet.” The ad has aroused significant controversy for several reasons, but chief among them is whether the message is genuine or a facade. Can those who funded the ad be trusted with the message it promotes, or is there a conflicting agenda?

Individuals will need to do their own research and draw their own conclusions about the veracity of that controversial commercial. Whether or not the ad campaign is to be trusted is a matter of debate, whether or not Jesus of Nazareth can be trusted is not. As we enter into this Lenten season to pray, listen, reflect and repent, the Jesus who journeys with us can be trusted with our hearts, minds, souls and bodies -- with our very lives. We need not come cautiously or with suspicion. Jesus does not come as the world comes; Jesus does not judge as the world judges; Jesus does not love as the world loves. As we walk this 40-day journey, we can completely surrender ourselves to Jesus and allow him to continue the beautiful work of transformation in our lives.

Too often, we enter this season in drudgery, void of all joy and hope. While it is a season that reminds us of our finite humanity and anticipates the death of our Lord and Savior, it is also a path to rebirth, renewal and resurrection. Christ bids us come, he creates in us a pure heart and renews a steadfast spirit. That bidding does not originate from a place of disgust, rejection or shame, but pure love. That bidding invites us into a deeper relationship with God and God’s creation. It calls us to love ourselves more earnestly and to love one another without condition. That bidding comes that we might be fully liberated from the destructive powers of this world. The healing and transformation we need is not to be healed from ourselves as God created us, but to be healed from the ways we have learned to oppress and destroy God’s creation, the ways we have learned to hate one another, the ways we have learned to hate ourselves.

This journey is really a journey of healing -- allowing ourselves to be healed. It’s healing us from anything that separates us from God; healing us from anything that prevents us from taking on the mind of Christ; healing us from our collective brokenness; healing us from the inside out. As this transformation occurs, we begin to see the world differently. We put aside fear, mistrust, arrogance and privilege, and begin to live as people who are sincerely willing to wash one another’s feet. We embody forgiveness and reconciliation. We embrace one another in agape love. We humbly stand as one at the foot of the cross. That is our Lenten journey. May it be so.

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling
Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula Delaware Conferences
The United Methodist Church

A Moment for Missions

A big thank you to all of you who provided presence and food for Family Promise families on February 24. We served and enjoyed visiting with the three families in the program. Please mark your calendar for our next dinner on June 15. We were also blessed with hosting the families for dinner at the Ronald McDonald House on March 9. Aldersgate UMC has asked us to bake cookies and brownies for their hosting at the Emmanuel Dining Room on May 16 and you are invited to help. There will be a sign-up sheet in fellowship hall or you can call the office at (302) 652-8411.

We are so excited to be hosting our annual Easter Egg Hunt on March 23 from 10 - 12pm. Bill from "We Kids Rock" will provide music and movement followed by crafts, cookie decorating and the Easter story with Pastor Kelly before the "hunt." All are welcome to come to help, enjoy or both.

Our next baking and buying Cookies for our N.A. guests will be on April 28. Whether you bake or buy, always know that you are invited to join us in the kitchen after worship service to pack the bags and write notes of encouragement for our guests. Please note that cookie tasting also occurs since we have a rule to never pack broken cookies.

Calling all walkers! Mt. Lebanon will have a team participating in the "Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community" on June 8 at the Riverfront in Wilmington. It is a 5k event done at individuals' and teams' own speed or lack thereof. Please think about inviting friends and joining us. Pastor Kelly and Dinah are our unofficial team captains!

We are excited to be planning a "Music for Missions" concert on June 30th. The Oom-pah Band will be performing a variety of music and there will be food for sale. The Missions Team will choose three organizations and then invite you to vote for which one will be the recipient of the proceeds.

The Missions Team invites you to offer suggestions for speakers for the 2024 "Moments for Missions" during worship services. We have been blessed to have had Augie Lankford from Camp Pecometh and Donna Johnson from Child, Inc to date and speakers from Habitat for Humanity and the Salvation Army are on our 2024 list to contact. We invite you to suggest the names of organizations that you would like to learn more about.

The Missions Team thanks each of you for your support and participation in the events that have happened and continue to happen at Mt. Lebanon. It always takes a village!!



UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Wed. May 15 @ 5PM

Wed. July 17 @ 5PM

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!