



The Lantern

NEWSLETTER OF MT. LEBANON UMC
EST. 1812

Dates to Remember

NOVEMBER

- 12: INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING HOSTED AT MT. LEBANON @ 3PM
- 15: MISSIONS TEAM MEETING @ 7PM
OFFICE OPEN - 11:30AM - 2PM
- 19: GUEST SPEAKER FROM RISEMALAWI
- 21: OFFICE OPEN - PASTOR KELLY ONLY
CHELSEA WFH
- 24: OFFICE CLOSED
- 28: OFFICE OPEN FROM 9AM - 12PM

DECEMBER

- 2: FUNERAL & MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR
UJIWALA TITUS @ 11AM
- 6: ADMIN COUNCIL MEETING @ 7PM
- 9: ANGEL TREE PARTY @ 10AM
- 13: TRUSTEES MEETING @ 7PM
- 22: OFFICE CLOSED
- 24: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE AT CHESTER
BETHEL @ 7PM
- 26: OFFICE CLOSED
- 31: JOINT WORSHIP AT CHESTER BETHEL
@ 11AM



Trustees Updates

Trustees is happy to report the start of the HVAC upgrade! This week our propane gas tank was installed behind the Church and a line run to our building (we are beyond the DPL natural gas line so had to use propane). In parallel, we are trying to restore the old, broken, or crooked gravestones in our cemetery. The State of DE has a Distressed Cemetery Fund we want to apply to, but the Fund has created so much demand for the few people who work in this business that it's hard to get their time. Finally, we do need to remove the power mower and snowblower from the basement by the furnace (which violates insurance codes). Does anybody want either? Call the office if you do!

Bill Innes, Chair of Trustees



MT. LEBANON & CHESTER BETHEL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES
PRESENT

Fall Bible Study


A modern look at the Ten Commandments
in historical context, how Jesus interpreted
them and how every "thou-shalt-not"
points to a life giving "thou shalt."

*Based on Adam Hamilton's book, "Words of Life"
(available online or through the church office)*

In a culture of workaholism, materialism, and social
media-driven envy, God's path leads to gratitude,
confidence and peace.

TUESDAYS ON ZOOM @ 10AM:
OCTOBER 31
NOVEMBER 7, 14, 28
DECEMBER 5

**THURSDAYS IN PERSON AT
CHESTER BETHEL @ 7PM:**
NOVEMBER 2, 9, 16, 30
DECEMBER 7



A Moment for Missions

Thank you to all of you who returned your Special Sundays Offerings contributions. This is a once a year opportunity to fund thirteen ministries of the United Methodist Church locally, nationally and internationally.

Our team of six cooked with love to serve dinner to families at the Ronald McDonald House on October 14. If you couldn't be there, hopefully you can join us for a date in 2024.

The October 22 "cookie packing" event for our NA guests resulted in 40 bags of delicious cookies with notes of encouragement. Thank you to cookie contributors and the amazing team who packed. Our next event will be January 28.

When you are reading this, our annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Project will have occurred on November 12. While a summary of the event is not available, the Missions Team thanks you for your attendance and contributions of 50+ bags of all of the items for a Thanksgiving meal and a \$15 voucher for meal or a desired item.

Please try to be with us on Sunday, November 19 when Dr. Zamumtima Chijere will share highlights of the RiseMalawi Ministries in Africa. We have been a supporter of the high school there for the past six years.

Also on November 19, the names of the children in our Angel Tree program will be available. We are blessed to have 25 children who have been nominated by a parent or other family member who is incarcerated. We then contact the family to find out one item of clothing and one toy/craft that the child would like. On December 9, we gather for the Angel Tree party from 10am - 12:30pm where Bill Currier from We Kids Rock will lead the children in singing, dancing and games. Next will come crafts, cookie decorating and the Christmas story followed by lunch. This is an event for all!

On December 16, we will serve our final 2023 dinner to Family Promise families at Jesus House on Milltown Road in Wilmington. Please look for the menu on the sign-up table in Fellowship Hall or call Iva Boardman at (302) 388-0409.

The Missions Team thanks each of you for your gifts of participation, contributions and prayers. It is only as a village that we are able to do what we do for our brothers and sisters.



UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Wed. November 15 @ 7pm

Wed. January 17 @ 7pm

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!

From the Desk of Pastor Kelly

We are now approaching the holiday season, and you know what that means – lots of delicious food! Thanksgiving is on the way! What is your family’s traditional meal blessing? In my family, my dad is the traditional blessing-giver before Thanksgiving dinner. He always shares this introductory prayer before adding more specific thanksgivings to God: “Our Father, we thank thee for the food thou hast provided for us. Bless it and sanctify it to the good of our bodies. This we ask in Jesus’ name.”

On one occasion in college, during a meal I shared with other leaders of our campus ministry, I was called upon to give a blessing. I chose that one! But in my haste and anxiety over recollecting the words to my family’s traditional blessing, I accidentally transposed “bless it and sanctify it” into “Blessify and sanct it to the good of our bodies” – and I will never forget how mortified I was!

We must perpetually remember to give thanks to God for the blessings we’ve been given. While I’m sure we’ve all heard a plethora of sermons on the topic of Thanksgiving, I don’t think that we can be reminded too often to give thanks to God for our blessings – and even to offer our thanksgiving for the lessons that our trials have taught us. It has been proven in recent psychological studies at many major universities that when we cultivate a greater emphasis on gratitude in our lives, the positive effects on our bodies are numerous: we then tend to feel more optimistic, to visit the doctor less often, to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and blood pressure, to sleep better, and to exercise more – among many other benefits. But as people of faith, we find even greater value in practicing gratitude! When we form a habit of remembering the goodness of God, we will be able to recall in times of stress or trial that our God is a God of goodness and mercy. This will help us to trust in God more faithfully as we live our daily lives.

How can you incorporate more gratitude, or thanksgiving to God, into your life? I have a few suggestions:

- Take time before going to sleep each night to tell God about 5 blessings that you experienced in your day. They can be as small as “I made it out the door on time even though my toddler had a rough morning” and as big as “I found out today that I’m cancer-free.” Remember to attribute these blessings to God, saying, “You helped me to make it out the door” or “You have brought me healing.”
- Make time to meditate on the blessings of God in your life. While I’m not personally in the practice of meditating because I have trouble focusing due to anxious thoughts (which some people have told me ought to be my greatest reason to meditate...), I can imagine the benefit of meditation. Pick a quiet spot at home, at work, or in the car on your commute. Bring to mind your understanding of thanksgiving, of how you’ve grown from the blessings of God in specific instances during your life. Think about how those blessings made you feel, or how you were able to be a blessing to others and how your actions made them feel.
- Volunteer! We are always happier when we are able to be a blessing to others. Whether you volunteer in church ministries and events, or in local charities around town, you are doing God’s work. If you aren’t physically up to going out to volunteer, you can pick up the phone instead and call a friend, a fellow church member, or other person who could use the kind encouragement of a friend. There is always an opportunity to make someone’s day better, no matter who and where you are!

Practicing gratitude toward God every day, or every week, is a beautiful spiritual discipline. But remember to be kind to yourself if you are taking this on as a new habit! We might not always remember to give thanks if we've had a busy or stressful day. We might not always find the right mindset for meditation. Good thing our God is a merciful and loving God; we don't have to be perfect all the time! Still, the approaching holidays invite us to work on offering our thanks. Our holy Scripture guides us to dwell on God's saving goodness, as the prophets invited the Israelites to do in the Old Testament, and as Paul instructs in the epistles:

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
-Colossians 2:6-7

University/Scholarly Articles Consulted:

Harvard: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>

Penn State: <https://prowellness.childrens.pennstatehealth.org/10-amazing-statistics-to-celebrate-national-gratitude-month/>

UC Davis: https://health.ucdavis.edu/medicalcenter/features/2015-2016/11/20151125_gratitude.html

General compilation of research: <https://clinmedjournals.org/articles/ijda/international-journal-of-depression-and-anxiety-ijda-4-024.php?jid=ijda>

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

