



THE BEACON

"Making disciples for Jesus Christ to share God's love."

Newsletter of Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church • March 2025

As we near the forty days of preparation during the Lenten Season, I wanted to share a reflection that I wrote while in seminary, which was later posted in a Beacon Newsletter article in 2019, about my journey of preparation and how it has changed my life forever:

In July of 2007, while finalizing the month-end closing at my office in Baltimore, I was struck with a very odd feeling that I had never experienced before in my life. I was sitting alone. The only one in the office over a long Fourth of July holiday weekend. Isolated from friends and family, focused only on being able to close the books. We were already a couple of years into a declining real estate market. Each month the outlook seemed bleaker. I realized that I could no longer go forward in the way that I had been living my life. I was physically, mentally, and spiritually exhausted. As Marjorie Thompson put it so well in her book *Soul Feast*, "There is a hunger abroad in our times, haunting lives and hearts. Like an empty stomach aching beneath the sleek coat of a seemingly well-fed creature, it reveals that something is missing from the diet of our rational secular and affluent culture." I had sacrificed years, building several successful careers, and I now was on the brink of ruin. I had ignored my family and friends, and most importantly, I had ignored my faith in God. For me this was an epiphany. At that moment, I resolved to make changes in my life that would lead me back to God – the source of spirituality.

It was at this time that I applied to seminary. During the application process, I was asked if this was a good time for me to start such a journey given all that was going on in my life. I was asked

again by my academic advisor when I applied to become a student pastor – she too questioned the timing. I understood all their concerns, but I had a calling that I was not going to ignore. I held fast to the scriptural precedence for Christians to follow their calling even when it did not seem to be a good time. I was reminded of Matthew 8:22 where a follower of Christ wanted to go home to his father to live and take care of his affairs until he passed. Jesus responded to him by saying that he should focus on his calling. A better sense of Jesus' statement would be, don't neglect the high spiritual calling I've given you; let the spiritually dead attend to the routine tasks of life.



Even though I ignored the concerns of so many, I did have concerns about my own fitness to serve. Deep down, I felt that I was too broken spiritually to be able to serve. Although I had come a long way in a short period, this thought haunted me. Through dialogue in my discipleship group at Wesley, I was able to begin to reconcile those destructive thoughts. I finally began to realize that the past, no matter how ugly it may have been, needs to be gathered up into a new kind of ministry. One where the past is honored, and not denigrated. In this new kind of ministry, we become wounded healers. I was finally able to allow the past to rest.

When I began this journey, I was not familiar with the term spiritual formation. I was starting from square one. All I knew was that I felt so wretched and disconnected from God. Thompson explained that this feeling of being too small and insignificant for God to bother with, or feeling that God could not love me as I really was, was a normal reaction at the beginning of the journey. At the same time, I also felt the hunger for God,

EPISTLE & CHURCH INFO

EPISTLE Continued

divinely implanted in my heart. I was determined to become closer to God and I looked forward with hope as I embarked on this journey.

One of the first steps on this journey of transformation was to begin to practice a disciplined spiritual life rooted in daily prayer and devotion. I began to pray throughout the day. Since I was in real estate, I would spend a great deal of time in the solitude of a car or my office. This gave me the opportunity to pray and reflect on my life and to listen for direction from God. I found a reaffirmation of this in the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer where he stated that, "Alone you stood before God when he called you; alone you had to answer that call; alone you had to struggle and pray, and alone you will die and give account to God." I found out that opening ourselves to the work of the Spirit requires effort and discipline. New spiritual practices were required that would open my heart to the limitless possibilities of my new calling.

In July 2013, almost six years ago to the day of my epiphany, I started a part time appointment at a small United Methodist Church. Because of my work with the homeless in urban areas, I was expecting this first appointment to have a backdrop of sirens and flashing lights. It turned out to be a rural farming community. From this experience, I have come to accept the will of God and to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit wherever it leads me. This letting-go and listening to that inner dialogue with God has allowed me to focus on my calling even when I am in environments where I am constantly bombarded with the noise and distractions of the outside world. As Thompson stated, "Listening is the first expression in communicating in prayer...Yet God desires to be known and has many ways of communicating with us if we are willing to listen."

On this incredible journey, I have often looked to the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer for inspiration. At the end of his life, Bonhoeffer was a prisoner, knowing that at any moment he could be executed. Even until the very end he maintained his faith and Christian hope. I can identify with his

EPISTLE Continued

struggle in the way I had been living – never knowing what the next day may hold. I was only able to continue by faith and hope.

This journey back to God has given me new life. I look forward to a new tomorrow and a new me. I have faith and hope, and I am content with where I am in my life and where God is directing me!

Pastor Bob

CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Office Hours:

Monday – Friday 9 a.m.—1 p.m.

Office Phone: 301-432-8741

Mt. Nebo Email: mt.nebo@myactv.net

Website: www.mtneboumc.com

Sunday Event Times:

9:00 a.m. Worship Service

Pastor:

Pastor Bob Ruggieri

443-994-9505

Email: pastorbob2017@gmail.com

Staff:

Administrative Secretary – Brandi Puzonia

Minister of Music – Rose Gamblin

Finance – Patty Watson & Shana Wolfe

Sextons/Maintenance – Sky Cleaning and Sara Halbritter

Mt. Nebo Christian Learning Center

Hours: Monday – Friday 6 a.m.—6 p.m.

301-432-6042

www.mtneboclc.org

Director – Kim Kelly

director@mtneboclc.org

Communications Team:

Toni Wetzel, Katie Smith, Pastor Bob,
Glenn deShazo, and Brandi Puzonia

MARCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHDAYS

March 5
March 6
March 8
March 14

March 16
March 19

Terry Jones
Chad Powell
Ruth Mullendore
Alyssa Berg
Joey Breeden
Vanessa Cronise
Alma Eichelberger

March 21
March 23
March 25

Howard Long
Tony Basile
Tamara White
Dan Gerand
Bob Walker

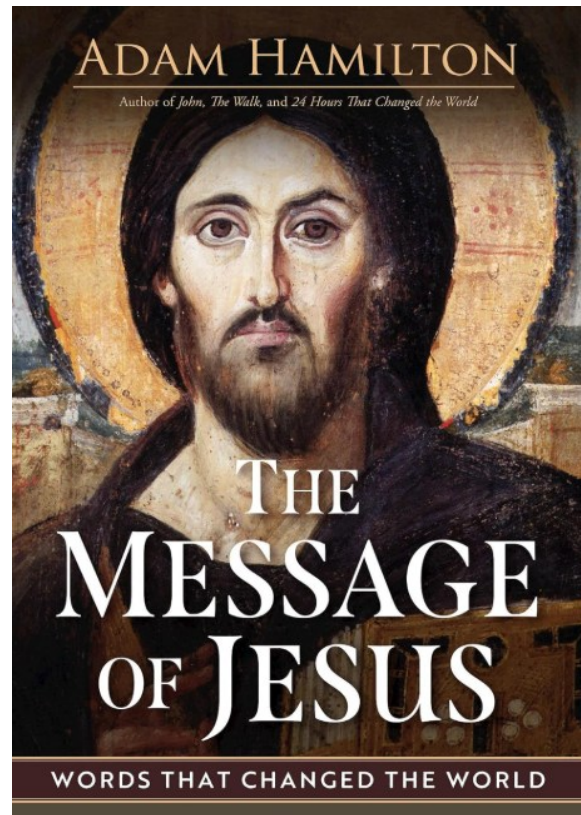


ANNIVERSARIES

None for March
HAPPY
Anniversary!

IN THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Epistle	Page 1-2
Church Info	Page 2
Birthdays/Anniv./Announcements/Thanks-living	Page 3
Church News	Page 4
Youth & Christian Learning Center News	Page 5
Missions in Outreach	Page 6
Pictures Around Mt. Nebo	Page 7-8
March Calendar	Page 9



BIBLE STUDY FOR LENT

Sundays after Worship
at 10:15am

Starts March 9—April 13

Sign up sheet in Gathering Room.



THANKS-GIVING FOR THANKS-LIVING

Special thanks to everyone who offers a prayer for those prayer requests from our Sunday morning service.

To everyone who wrote a devotion for the Lenten Devotional and to Brandi for getting them organized for the booklet.

Thank you to those who helped with assembling the devotionals.

To all who supported the UMW Soup and Sandwich Sale.

To the many who write articles or contribute pictures for the Beacon and to Brandi for the great job she does putting the Beacon together.

A big thank you to each person who signed up to donate birthday gifts to the Sterling residents.

CHURCH NEWS

MARCH LAY READERS:

March 9 — Darce Easton

March 16 — Katie Smith

March 23 — Dianna Basile

March 30 — Skip Kauffman



TRUSTEE NEWS

We hope everyone has been staying warm and safe with all this winter weather we have been receiving. Trustees have been busy over the past few months helping to maintain property for both the Church and CLC. Here are a few items we have been working on:

CLOPPER HOUSE—The Clopper House has undergone much-needed **electrical panel upgrades and a full electrical safety facelift**. With these improvements, our youth now have a safe and welcoming space for fellowship. A huge thank you to **Kline Electrical** for their excellent work. I also want to recognize **Andy Pugh** for staying on top of Happy Home Roofing and ensuring the grant work was completed, and **Katie Deatrich** for her hard work in securing the grant and submitting all the necessary documentation. Your dedication made this project a success!

PLAYGROUND FENCING—We are also excited to announce that the **new fencing around the playground is now complete!** This improvement ensures a safe and secure space for our children to enjoy. A special thank you to **Kim Kelly and Rob Wetzel** for their efforts in getting this work done—it looks fantastic!

BOILER UPDATE—As many of you know, we have faced significant challenges in getting the **boiler** operating correctly. Multiple contractors have worked tirelessly to diagnose and resolve the issues. During this process, an inspection revealed that the **chimney needed to be cleaned and lined**, which has now been completed. After many trials and tribulations—and thanks to the collaboration and persistence of everyone in-

TRUSTEE NEWS Continued

volved—I am proud to say that the **boiler is now fixed, and heat has been fully restored!** Thank you to **Rob Wetzel** who played a pivotal role in getting the boiler fixed.

These projects reflect the dedication and teamwork of our church family. Your continued support and prayers are truly a blessing!

Gary Harding, Trustee Chair

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Thank you to everyone who supported the United Methodist Women with the recent Soup and Sub Sale! The proceeds from this fundraiser will go toward ministries that support women and children.

Our regular meetings occur on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Join us for our next meeting on **Wednesday, March 19 at 10:00am!**

Alyssa Berg



FINANCIAL REPORT

Week of 2/23/2025 totals:

Regular Offering needed weekly - \$3,200.00

Last Sunday collected - \$2,088.23

YTD collected - \$20,502.65

YTD budgeted - \$25,600.00

Short of budget - \$5,097.35

Building Fund needed weekly - \$577.00

Last Sunday collected - \$30.83

YTD collected - \$2,418.42

YTD budgeted - \$4,616.00

Short of budget - \$2,197.58

YOUTH AND CLC NEWS

YOUTH GROUP

The youth group will be hosting their annual egg hunt on **Palm Sunday, April 13** after worship. We'll start in the FLC by making bags for collecting eggs and then head outside to hunt for eggs! Candy donations (small individually wrapped) are appreciated and can be placed in the basket in the Gathering Room until **April 6**.

The youth group is still looking for another adult volunteer to work with Don when Alyssa steps back later this Spring. Please consider volunteering your time with the youth group so this important ministry can continue!

Please contact Alyssa Berg or Don Dorsey for more info about the youth group - all youth in 6th-12th grade are always welcome!

Alyssa Berg

CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER

Spring came suddenly bursting upon the world as a child would burst into a room, with a laugh and a shout! We welcome Spring with open arms! This is the time of year here at Mt. Nebo when we learn to dress in layers! In the spring, we experience winter and summer all in one day!

Our themes for the month: Celebrate Reading & Dr. Seuss, Five Senses, Dinosaurs, and Insect and Bugs.

CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER Continued

*March 3rd through the 7th, we will be celebrating Dr. Seuss and Read Across America! Our students and staff will participate in daily activities. Who knows, there may be a special visitor from either *Cat in the Hat* or *Thing 1 and Thing 2*!*

Did you know that St. Patrick used the three leaves of the Shamrock to tell others about the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? St. Patrick's Day is on *Monday, March 17th* and we will be celebrating with everyone wearing green attire! May the luck of the Irish be with you!

We thank God for the opportunity to provide excellent academic preparation for the children we serve. We are most grateful to be able to share Jesus' amazing love with our children during our weekly Christian Education class with Ms. Amy.

Hugs and High Fives, Ms. Kim, Director



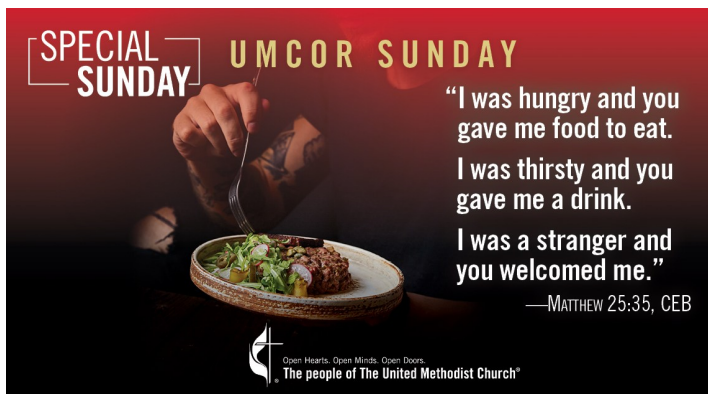
MISSIONS IN OUTREACH

UMCOR SUNDAY—MARCH 30

UMCOR Sunday is a Sunday that helps support and make aware of the work that UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) does. Your support ensures that 100% of our donations go to the ground relief and recovery efforts. Thanks to your generous donations, last year almost \$2 million dollars were given to international and US disaster responses.

The goal of UMCOR is to help all vulnerable people in crisis situations. By working together we can do so much more than by working alone. To find a project, go online to UMCOR Advance Specials. You can pick the project to support that touches your heart. Remember when you give through UMCOR, 100% of your donation goes to the work of the project.

Please give generously so that help is there for people who are suffering from a disaster to get the support they need.



MARCH WELLNESS TIPS

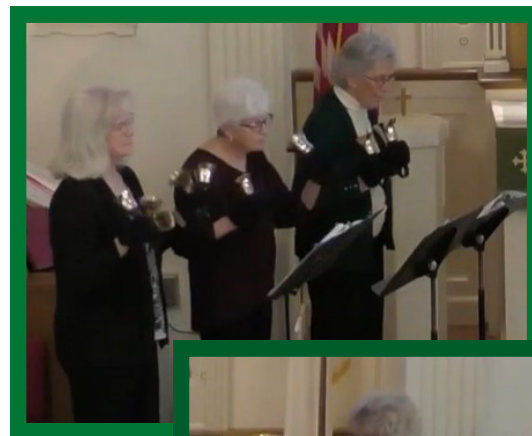
Let's celebrate the health benefits of green foods this St. Patrick's Day! You can improve your well-being and enjoy the festivities at the same time. How about trying a few of these:

Green Peppers, grapes, green beans, cucumbers, snap peas, kiwi, green apple, pear, avocado, honeydew melon, celery, roasted seaweed, broccoli, green olives, and pickles.

Have fun and make some deviled avocado eggs. You will need 3 eggs, 1 large avocado, 2 tsp lime juice, 1 tsp of cilantro and a pinch of salt and pepp-

MISSION MOUSE

Lent is a time when we think about giving something up. I was thinking that if I give something up that I truly will miss, what might I do with the money or time saved? Might I give it to the church, or a favorite charity where someone will benefit? Maybe I could give up complaining and use that energy to help someone in need, like a neighbor who has lost a loved one, a student who needs tutoring, or a committee in my church that needs an extra set of hands. Use your imagination and give a bit of yourself to a special project.

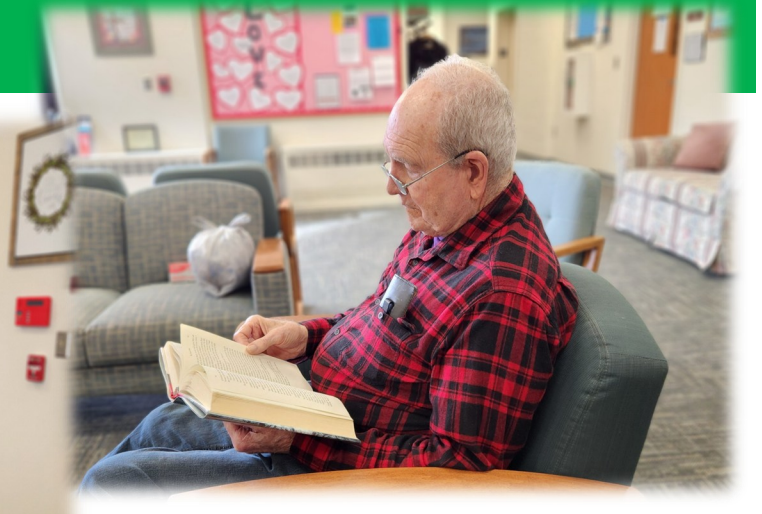


-er. Once eggs are boiled, remove cooked yoke and mash together with the avocado. Blend all ingredients and spoon mixture into the egg halves. Then sprinkle with paprika if desired. Enjoy!

Pickleball is back on Wednesday evenings at 6pm and will continue on Saturday mornings at 9am.

Patty Watson

PICS AROUND MT. NEBO



PICS AROUND MT. NEBO CONT..



MARCH 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9a Pickleball
2 9a Worship Transfiguration Sunday	3 630p Trustees Meeting	4 1p Micah's Backpack	5 7p Ash Wednesday Service @ Mt. Nebo	6 6p Girl Scouts 5p Bells 6p Choir	7	8 9a Pickleball 830a UMM Breakfast
9 9a Worship 10:15a Bible Study	10	11	12 6p Pickleball	13 5p Bells 6p Choir	14 Newsletter Articles Due	15 9a Pickleball Newsletter Articles Due 4-9p FLC Occupied
16 9a Worship 10:15a Bible Study	17	18 630p Council Meeting	19 10a UMW Meeting 6p Pickleball 630p CLC Advisory Mtg	20 6p Girl Scouts 5p Bells 6p Choir	21	22 9a Pickleball 8-9a SHARE Pickup
23 9a Worship 10:15a Bible Study	24	25	26 6p Pickleball	27 5p Bells 6p Choir	28	29 9a Pickleball
30 9a Worship UMCOR Sunday 10:15a Bible Study	31				 <p><i>Ash</i> wednesday</p>	

Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church
134 S. Main Street
Boonsboro, MD 21713

Change Service Requested

