

The Happenings!

Pleasant Grove UMC

February 2014

Notes from the Pastor

For 10 months I have had a simple bird feeder hanging from a branch of a chestnut oak. It is in plain sight from our warm and sunny prayer space. Except there is one problem – there are not any birds coming. I was certain that I had done everything right – seed selection and proper location – but no action from the birds. Several weeks ago, in frustration, I threw the seed out and took down the bird feeder. In place I hung a small container of suet. Then came the snow and the extreme cold AND the birds. Now I have nuthatches, flickers and others. The suet container is almost empty and needs to be refilled.

I have been reminded again of how God's love comes to us when we prepare the way. Remember the story about the sower and the seeds? The seeds really only grow where the soil is prepared and ready for planting. So it is with us – we can only sense God's presence with us if we are listening and observant --- like the birds at the suet – we can also feast on God's extravagant love. *Dick*

Reflections

"Each one should use whatever gift they have received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the Word of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 4:10-11

Worship

During the month of February we will be working with the messages that come to us from the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew. These teachings from Jesus help to guide us into an understanding as to what the Christian life is about. The central themes surround justice and love and becoming a disciple.

Feb. 2 – "Hard Words to Live By"
Feb. 9 "It is all about Salt"
Feb. 16 "Relationships Matter"
Feb. 23- Art Smith speaking
Mar. 2 Lucas Ball speaking

Education

Young Children class led by Sara and Christina Taylor will be working with the books of the Bible. This will be an age appropriate DVD based class. Class will begin after "The Children's Message" during worship.

Starting Feb 2nd Sara and Christina's class will be using **Buzz** from Group Publishing Co. **Buzz** keeps kids' attention with Bible stories they haven't heard before—those less often told but just as memorable. Children learn in their own style, and they choose which way the lesson goes.

Older Children class led by Helen Kemp will be working with the Gospel of John followed by the book of James. This class also begins after the children's message.

Note: this class needs the support of another adult so that the class could run each week.

Adult Class led by Pastor Dick will begin a 12 week short course on: *Christianity and World Religions* by Adam Hamilton. This course will look at Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism—all from a Christian point-of-view.

We gather at 9AM with coffee on Sunday mornings in the Tracey Building. We are looking into the possibility of visiting the Hindu Temple in Finksburg, MD.

Spirit and Spice

The focus of Spirit and Spice is missions and prayer. This group of strong prayer warriors has been meeting for more than 35 years. In 2013, they donated \$925 to missions.

Currently the group is using "Unshakable Faith" by Kathy Howard. It is a study on the life of Peter. There are 8 lessons which examine "faith traits" which God instilled in Peter, an ordinary person who was, although a believer, a bit unstable, headstrong and impetuous. However, he was a passionate and natural leader. These traits give us an "unshakable faith" and help us to weather the storms of life we may face. Our goal is to allow God to do in our lives what He did in Peter's life and have an obedient, dependent, and trusting relationship with our Savior.

Missions

PGUMC is quite active in local missions both in the community and region. Here are some of the opportunities that we all have to serve:

Handicapped ramp construction in Hampstead:

As soon as the cold weather breaks and the ground thaws, we are ready to go. This project supports one of the PGUMC families and is closely supported by members of the Baltimore County Christian Work Camp. We need people who can work in the cold and help build a sturdy 32' ramp.

Spring 2014: Work with PGUMC members doing interior repair including electrical and plumbing and painting. Again, we are supporting a PGUMC family.

Sarah's Hope: In 2014, we are continuing with the reading to the Pre-K children at Sarah's Hope in Reisterstown. Usually Tuesday –Thursday at 10AM for ½ hour. Make a commitment for one day a week. To sign up, please contact Helen.

Casseroles: In the Social Hall Kitchen, the UMW will be preparing casseroles on Friday Feb 28th to help feed the homeless through *Our Daily Bread*. Want to help? Contact Vola.

UMW

The UMW will not hold a meeting in February. The next meeting will be March 4th at noon at Marsha Schuster's home. All are invited to attend this meeting. During February, the UMW will sewing dresses for Haitian girls (Feb 20th). The PGUMC UMW helps the Westminster based ministry – *The Lease of These Ministries*.

PGUMC Committees

Trustees:

We are beginning to explore the replacement of the sound system in the Sanctuary. It is about 25 years old and needs a significant upgrade to meet

the needs of the PGUMC congregation. There was no Trustees' meeting in January.

Church Council:

At the January 2014 Church Council meeting, the Finance Committee announced that PGUMC had paid 100% of the apportionments to the BW Conference (\$10734). The 2014 apportionments are \$9964 which is a result of the 2013 reduction of the apportionment percentage.

Helen made a request that the council establish an Altar Guild to help with the Christmas and Easter altars.

Pastor Dick discussed the impact that the recent weather has had upon worship. Also was discussed the possibilities of a different approach to the Wednesday night Lenten worship services.

Visioning Committee:

As you are aware, many churches are seeking to understand just how God wants us to address the changing demographics and attitudes concerning worship. For us at Pleasant Grove UMC, it is quite clear that we have to address this issue head-on. As a result of a UM Conference meeting, we have decided to establish a Visioning Committee that will look at all the dimensions of worship at PGUMC. Since, from worship comes all other programmatic aspects of *church* we will be examining in detail our programs and our facilities. If you would like to participate in this important effort, please contact Pastor Dick.

February Dates:

Feb 2nd – SPRC
Feb 8th –Men's Winter Retreat
Feb 9th – Visioning
Feb 12th –Trustees (7PM)
Feb 18th – Church Council

Prayer List

Please continue to pray for: April Schriefer, Doris Kirkland, Charlotte Yohn, Ruth Warren, Pat Sheppard, David Osborn, Georgiana Harvey, Becky Harvey, Helen Kemp and for the future of PGUMC.

Future Happenings

Men's Retreat: Feb 8th 8:30 until 2:30PM in the Social Hall. Once again we share in this joint retreat with the men of Carr-More and Reisterstown UMC. Please mark your calendars.

Lent

March 5th Ash Wednesday Service, 7PM in the Sanctuary
Wednesday Service

The CarrMore churches are exploring a change to our usual Wednesday night services. We will be in touch with you soon.

April 27th Rebuilding Baltimore Together – one day mission trip to Baltimore. We are in the process of selecting a home to work on. We expect it to be in the Mid-Govans area – the same area as last year. See John Lambert for more information.

Sight and Sound trip: Please send in your reservation for the **June 18th** trip to Sight and Sound in Lancaster, PA. The feature will be a 2 ½ hour dazzling rendition of Moses. Cost \$95 per person includes, admission ticket, lunch at Bird-in-Hand and transportation, Contact: Vola Osborn 410-429-3922

July 20th–July 23rd Baltimore County Christian Work Camp. John Lambert will have more information soon.

Contacts: If you are interested in more information on any of the items, please contact: Pastor Dick – 410-913-6182 or revwrh@gmail.com Helen Kemp- -410-429-5080 or pgchurch@verizon.net Please check out our website: [www:PleasantGroveUMCMD.org](http://www.PleasantGroveUMCMD.org)