

A Message from Pastor Laurel

Camp Chapel United Methodist Church

Rev. Laurel McNeal
Pastor

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Greetings, members and friends of Camp Chapel,

I know we are all eagerly awaiting July 1st, when I will officially begin serving as your pastor. Hopefully, you all know by now that my name is Pastor Laurel McNeal. You may not know much else about me, and that is okay. We will certainly have plenty of opportunities to get to know each other better as time goes on. Over the summer, there will be several small-group gatherings for us to get together and chat. I hope these opportunities allow us to get to know one another. For now, if you want to know more about me, please read the bio that is found on page 2.

I want you all to know that I am eagerly looking forward to this journey God has placed before us. I am excited to hear about what God has already done in your lives and in the life of the church. I am enthusiastic about the plans God has for us and cannot wait to see those plans unfold. In the midst of all this excitement, if I am honest, I am also nervous. I imagine you all understand that and have your own feelings about this new journey. For it is in times like these that we are reminded that change is difficult but also a constant part of life. The good news is that change also brings with it opportunities for growth and new possibilities. I fully believe that God is at work amid the changes and that all of us, individually and as a church, will continue to grow through it all.

Please know that as we go through this transition and begin this new journey, I am praying for you, the church, and the community. I also want you to know that if ever you need me, I am only a phone call, text, or email away. So please reach out.

Blessings,
Pastor Laurel

CAMP CHAPEL NEWS

WELCOME PASTOR LAUREL MCNEAL!



Pastor Laurel McNeal

Pastor Laurel received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Towson University and then attended Wesley Theological Seminary and was commissioned as a provisional elder in the United Methodist Church. For the past three years, Pastor Laurel served the Community Parish of Northern Baltimore County, which has six churches that are united as one community. There she had the opportunity to be involved in the life of the various congregations and the community.

Pastor Laurel grew up in Essex with her two brothers, Jacob and Jonathan along with her parents, George and Michele. They enjoyed camping as a family in Lewes, Delaware. There they would fly kites, swim on the beach, and sit around the evening fire. This is where Pastor Laurel's love for the beach and camping was born.

As a child and youth, Pastor Laurel attended a United Methodist Church in Baltimore County and it was there at summer camp where her faith grew. In her home church she participated in many small groups and Bible studies, and these experiences helped her to discover that God's love and compassion is all-encompassing and is still alive today.

When she was just an infant, she played the part of the Baby Jesus in a Christmas pageant put on by the youth of her church, and under her swaddling cloths she wore her brand-new, non-Scriptural, tiny patent leather shoes!

Pastor Laurel is engaged to be married and will wed her fiancé, Chris, later this year. She loves animals and enjoys spending time with her two cats, Meg and Melody.

I know Camp Chapel will warmly welcome Pastor Laurel and surround her in Christian love.

Lisa Dziuk
Chair, Staff-Parish Relations Committee

PASTOR SABBATH

Pastor Laurel observes her Sabbath day on Mondays. She will, of course, remain available in the event of an emergency, but please know that our Office Administrator is available to assist with your needs. We want our pastor to have her rest and time for spiritual renewal so she can lead us in worship and provide care and counsel to our members.

Lisa Dziuk

CAMP CHAPEL NEWS

PASTOR MCNEAL APPOINTMENT LETTER

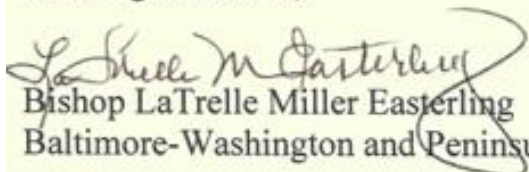
Congratulations and blessings as we begin a new conference year. The Cabinet, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, discerned that Rev. Laurel McNeal has the gifts and graces to partner with Camp Chapel United Methodist Church to continue God's work of disciple-making, congregational vitality and transformation. Some of those gifts include a commitment to try new things and exploring new possibilities. In addition, Rev. McNeal is a good preacher, a gifted teacher, a team builder and worker, and someone fully committed to pastoral care and to organizing the life of the church. The fruitfulness you desire cannot be achieved by the pastor alone. In collaboration with your new pastor, community members and ecumenical partners, you have the opportunity to deepen discipleship, strengthen relationships and nurture the beloved community.

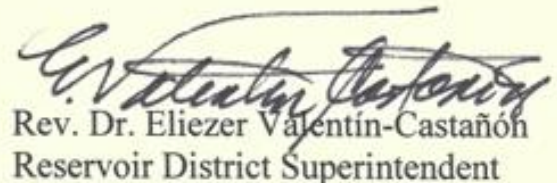
As we embrace our new structure and position ourselves for even greater outward-facing ministry, this is an exciting time in the life of our conference. And we recognize that along with those changes, this is also a time of transition from one servant leader to another. Times of transition can be both exciting and tender for everyone involved. Recognizing this reality frees you to lament and celebrate in appropriate ways, while always believing that God is still in our midst and still pouring out blessings more numerous than we can receive. As you live into this new appointment, it will be important to support your new pastor, allow them to lead in their unique way, and help them foster a meaningful relationship with you.

Please begin this appointment with a focus on helping your pastor develop a sustainable rhythm. That rhythm must include dynamic pastoral leadership, a regular day of Sabbath and adequate self-care. No one can offer water from an empty well. The pastor and SPRC are crafting a covenant that will concretize these expectations and help your new servant leader begin well.

We are praying for you and want to assist you in every way we can to ensure fruitfulness. Please be proactive in naming any assistance you need from the cabinet. May our annual conference theme, Rooted in Christ: Love Boldly, continue to inspire and encourage every aspect of our shared mission and ministry.

Blessings and love,


Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling
Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Area


Rev. Dr. Eliezer Valentín-Castañón
Reservoir District Superintendent



CAMP CHAPEL NEWS

WELCOME OUR CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR!



Barbara Earhart, Church Administrator

BARBARA EARHART

Barbara was born and raised in Texas. She moved to Maryland because of her family's military background and has now been living in the White Marsh area for nearly 14 years.

She and her husband both love animals, and they are the proud parents of a rescue Boston Terrier named Pippa. In her free time, she enjoys spending quality moments with her family, going for leisurely walks, and immersing herself in a good book. She is very excited about the opportunity to start in her new role as church administrator, and she looks forward to getting to know everyone.

CAMP CHAPEL BACKPACK PROGRAM

We will be collecting backpacks and school supplies again this year for the Eastern Regional Shelter. I will put a box by the side entrance doors to the Church for the supplies. If you prefer that I buy the items for you, that is not a problem. You can just give me the money and I'll shop for you! Any amount is a big help!



Items needed include backpacks, pink erasers, folders, glue sticks, pencils, white lined paper, crayons, colored pencils, markers, composition books, etc.

The children at the Shelter attend Rossville Elementary and Nottingham Middle School. You can visit the schools' website to get a more detailed school list.

Rossville Elementary: <https://rossvillees.bcps.org/home>

Nottingham Middle: <https://nottinghamms.bcps.org/home>

Thanks so much!
Sharon Smith

CAMP CHAPEL NEWS

PASTOR CAROL RETIREMENT PARTY

On Sunday, June 14, Camp Chapel gathered to celebrate the ministry of Pastor Carol at Camp Chapel. She was presented with parting gifts from the congregation, including a Tree of Life necklace, a shelf with a Tree of Life plaque, luggage tags, cash for her cruise in the fall, and a nativity scene and gift cards from individual members of the congregation. The gathering featured great food, special music provided by Gary and the Chancel Choir, and of course lots of tender reminiscences.



The congregation turned out to bid Pastor Carol farewell and blessings in her retirement



Pastor Carol, Dan, and their grandchildren Kenna and Charlie



Pastor Carol shows her Tree of Life necklace to Charlie



Pastor Carol reflected on her seven years at Camp Chapel

CAMP CHAPEL NEWS

REPORT FROM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 242nd session of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference convened at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Baltimore on Wednesday, May 27, 2026. The theme this year was “Rooted in Christ: Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, Lead Courageously.” Here’s my highlight reel:

Laity Session: The highlight of the Laity Session was a workshop that focused on evangelism. The facilitator was Ken Willard, Director of Faith Communities Renewal for the West Virginia Conference and author of *Beacon of Hope: Your Guide to Reaching, Witnessing, and Welcoming New People*. His message was that evangelism isn’t about knocking on doors and annoying strangers, it’s about sharing the hope and strength and comfort we feel that comes from our faith in Jesus with people we know who need it.

Worship: One of the things I love about United Methodist worship services is that they center on Scripture and the message, and nobody delivers the message like our bishop, Rev. Latrelle Easterling! If you enjoy the Word of God being preached with strength and vigor, I urge you to listen to the bishop. Her message is on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pWjYzJrQiU&t=105s>
Trigger warning: if you are a big fan of the current resident at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, you may not appreciate some of what she has to say.



Bishop Latrelle Easterling

Resolutions: The Annual Conference adopted the following resolutions:

1. To explore sensible ways to divest the conference of investments in the fossil fuel industry
2. To urge that churches be mindful of social injustices and attempts to rewrite history, and to act accordingly to resist them
3. To rewrite the pastor evaluation form to eliminate vague language and unrealistic expectations, among other known problems
4. To establish a Campus Ministry Sunday
5. To clarify rules for appointing the Director of Connectional Ministries
6. To amend time limits for the episcopal nominee endorsement process
7. To amend conference membership rules to align with the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline

Business: The Annual Conference received, discussed, and approved the budget for 2027; received, discussed, and approved clergy salary ranges and benefits; ratified the closures of Oldtown UMC in Oldtown and Asbury UMC in Hagerstown; and received and approved reports from the various institutional agencies and ministries of the conference.

The Penultimate Item on the Agenda: The final business before the service of ordination was the introduction of the 2026 pastoral appointments. At the last minute, I was told that each pastor would be accompanied onstage by a lay member from their new church, so me being the only lay member from Camp Chapel, it was my privilege to be introduced to the entire conference along with Pastor Laurel McNeal. On behalf of our congregation, I received the official letter of appointment from our district superintendent (that letter is reprinted on page 3). There was just one tiny little glitch. For some reason, the letter was not addressed to me, nor was it addressed to the chair of the SPRC, Lisa Dziuk, either of which also would have made sense, it was addressed to Pat Ryan. Pat is a member of the SPRC, but she was not registered for Annual Conference, nor was she anywhere within fifteen miles of the Hilton Hotel. But as I walked up onto the stage, the district superintendent announced, “The first appointment to be welcomed here is Laurel McNeal. She is going to be serving Camp Chapel United Methodist Church, and she indeed is coming with Patricia Ryan!” Then, turning and realizing that not a woman, but an 80-year-old man was following Pastor McNeal onto the stage, he quickly pivoted to the microphone and corrected himself: “...PAT Ryan!” There were a lot of whoops and hollers from the audience at this point, either because Pastor Laurel has a devoted and vocal following from among the churches she has served, or because I look better as a woman than I imagine I do.



Pastor Laurel onstage with Patricia Ryan. Apparently, that’s Patricia is on the right.

I think it’s probably the first thing.

Bill Smith (or Patricia Ryan?)

DEPARTED



Shirley M. Curtain, July 12, 1935 – June 18, 2026

On June 18, 2026, Shirley M. Curtain (nee Bell) passed away. She was the beloved wife of the late Stanley Curtain Sr.; devoted mother of Mark Curtain and his partner Joanna Proctor and the late Stanley Curtain Jr.; loving sister of Lois Ewing and her late husband Roland, and the late Anna Krysiak and her late husband James. She is also survived by many other loving family members and friends.

Shirley enjoyed a long career as teacher and principal. Outside of work, she served as an officer in the Daughters of the Nile. She was an avid reader, enjoying, some say, more than 100 novels a year. She was also an avid fan and loved her Ravens almost as much as she loved her Orioles.

CAMP CHAPEL NEWS

GARDEN UPDATE

Soon and very soon you will witness a transformation of four of our beloved Camp Chapel Gardens! These gardens will be **all native plantings!**

I know you are probably well aware of the benefits of planting native species. I like to think of how we prefer our native crabs over imported crabs, our Maryland corn over imported corn. This is how I consider converting to native shrubs and plants. They are less prone to disease, nourish native critters and insects and sustain future life with the harvesting of cocoons and egg sacs (we have a praying mantis egg sac right now!). I know the existing gardens have appeared somewhat neglected but soon you will be so pleased with the change!

Our gardeners are wonderful folks and they work hard. Did you know Tammy and Don Stipek have a vegetable garden in the southwestern portion of the church property? Drive by and see! Last year the zucchini was plentiful, and Tammy baked many loaves bread for the men at Streets of Hope.

Rita Talley,
Garden Coordinator

OUR CREATION CARE TEAM MADE BWC NEWS

The Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference (BWC) web site news feed ran an article dated July 11, 2025, titled “How Camp Chapel’s Creation Care Team Took Root.”

Please take a moment to read the article.

Scan the QR code ►

Or online readers can click [HERE](#)



WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!

We recently received four people into membership. Diane Gaither on May 31 and Jane Lehmkuhl, Carrie Maholtra-Ortiz, and Evelyn Serpe on June 21. Diane (not pictured) says that the 8:30 service feeds her soul. Jane is involved with hospitality and the green team and attends at 11:00. Carrie started visiting and she stuck. She is involved with the hospitality team and attends at 9:30. Evelyn visited one Sunday and has been here ever since at 11:00. Please take time to get to know our new members.



*L to r: Carrie Maholtra-Ortiz, Jane Lehmkuhl,
Evelyn Serpe, and Pastor Carol*



Coming Events

J.O.Y. (Just Older Youth)



Wednesday, July 1, 11 am in Fellowship Hall

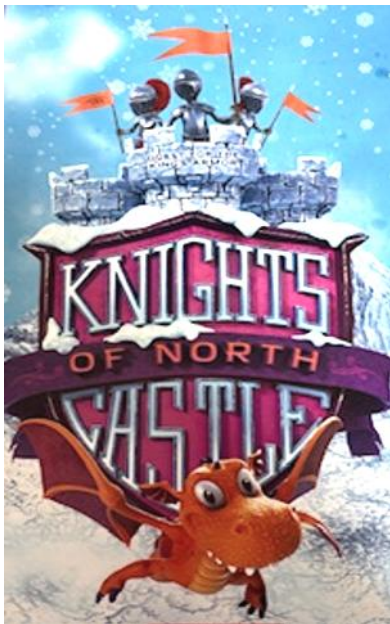
Join us and enjoy an afternoon of lunch, games, and fellowship with other Camp Chapel members. Bring a sandwich and a drink for lunch (dessert will be provided). Feel free to bring your favorite board game, cards, or dominos.



ALL ARE WELCOME!



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL KNIGHTS OF NORTH CASTLE



Join us in a quest for the King's Armor – **THE ARMOR OF GOD!** Our knights (*children*) will find clues in the King's Book (*the Bible*) and hear stories, make crafts, sing songs, and create special snacks that will help the knights understand the qualities each piece of armor represents.

Ages 3 to 10

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

July 7, 8, & 9

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

CLOSING/PARTY – SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1:30-3:00 PM

To register on our website, click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code ►



The Deadline for Submitting Articles for the August *Acorn* Is Monday, July 20





SAVE THESE DATES!



July 28

Church Council (Zoom)

August 25

Church Council (Zoom)

...AND ALSO SAVE THESE

Gary Lushbaugh's 40th Anniversary Celebration
 Children's Carnival
 Pumpkin Painting
 Fall Tea
 Holiday Bazaar
 Live Nativity

Sunday, September 6, Noon
 September 5
 October 25
 November 7
 November 21
 December 19



HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED AND NEEDED – ANY SKILL LEVEL

DATES: July 21 and 22 (EITHER OR BOTH)

TIMES: 8:00 A.M. TO ???

WHERE: EASTERN BALTIMORE COUNTY

If Pastor Carol's messages have landed and you feel inspired to help out someone in our community who needs a handicap ramp, here's your opportunity to "walk the walk". You don't need to be a skilled carpenter. All you need is a willing heart, and two working hands and legs. We can put them to work, even if it is to be a carrier !



Building materials, tools, and lunch will be provided. More details are forthcoming.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT MIKE RYAN AT 410-303-0517 OR pryan21236@comcast.net



Churches for Streets of Hope



Streets of Hope is in dire need of a place of their own. Their current home church can no longer provide free bathroom, laundry, and kitchen facilities for the homeless in Baltimore County. If you or someone you know is aware of a building that has these facilities to house this vital ministry, please contact Sue Wallace at 410-382-8318 or susan.wallace@mail.com



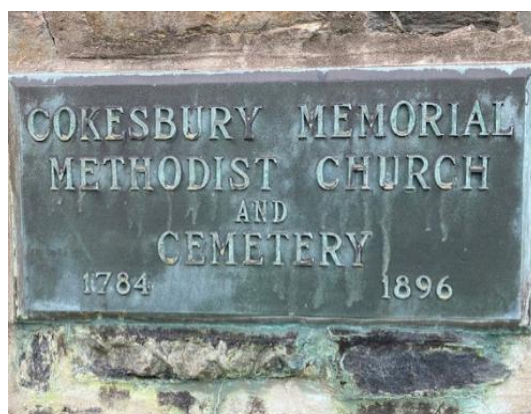
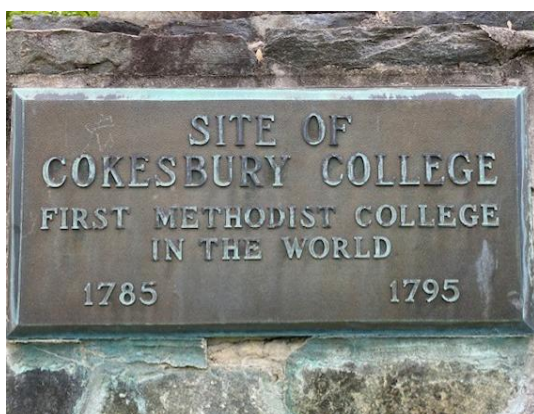
From the Church Historian

Did You Know?

Did you know...

1 ...that the site for Cokesbury Church and College in Abingdon, Harford County, Maryland was chosen by Francis Asbury, Thomas Coke and others who were on their way to visit Harry Dorsey Gough's estate in Perry Hall, the site on which Camp Chapel was built, before attending the Christmas Conference in Baltimore December 24, 1784?

Cokesbury College was the first Methodist College in the world for training Methodist Clergymen and educating their children and orphans. It was completed and incorporated in 1785 and was located one block east of Philadelphia Road. Unfortunately, the College burned down in 1795. Today, the church and the cemetery are still at this location. A memorial plaque is located at the entrance to the cemetery.



2 ...that there is another Camp Chapel United Methodist Church located in Tunnelton, West Virginia?

Tunnelton is a town located in Southwestern Preston County, West Virginia. In the 2020 Census, the population of Tunnelton was 307. The church is part of the Morgantown Metropolitan area.

3 ...that church news and events have always been a part of our church newsletters?

The Asbury Journal was the first newsletter here at Camp Chapel, published during the 1950s. It was published weekly and mailed out to church members. At the time, Rev. Henry E. Ernst was the pastor. Carville M. Akehurst was editor, Mildred Hackman, typist; Kaye Fenstermacher, Mimeograph operator; William E. Akehurst, circulation manager; and reporters: Sunday School, Virginia Jones; MYF, Sue Baber; WSCS, Anna Moore; Choir, Delores Ports; Board of Education, Lauren David Akehurst; Chapel Belles, Priscilla Ernst and Personals, Elsie B. Akehurst.

In 1957, the *Journal* was discontinued. One of the last articles published was on May 13, 1957. On May 5, the mortgage on the Fellowship Hall was burned after a fellowship supper in the hall. The burning was begun with a short worship service led by Rev. Ernst. Raymond E. Akehurst, chairman of the Official Board, made a few remarks concerning the history of the



hall and the mortgage. Rev. Charles Subock, former pastor of Camp Chapel remarked about his service at the church 17 years before. Following the burning, many of those present toured the new parsonage.

THE ASBURY JOURNAL

Vol. I No. 31 Fullerton, Maryland March 11, 1957

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK:

W.S.C.S. PLANS SUPPER

It was only a scrap of conversation at the last meeting of the commission on Membership and Evangelism, and I can neither quote it correctly nor remember who said it. This chance bit of chatter was important, however, for it revealed a profound insight into one of the peculiarities of contemporary church life and reminded us of a facet of our current religious situation that many find disturbing.

The regular meeting of the WSCS was held on Wednesday evening March 6th at the home of Rev. and Mrs. Henry Ernst. A very busy schedule has been planned by the ladies for March and April.

Several members plan to attend "World Day of Prayer" services at nearby churches on Friday March 8th. On Tuesday evening March 12, a large number of the group plan to...

After the *Journal* ceased publication, the church was without the medium for information and opinions. During Rev. Luther Starnes' ministry in the 1960s, *The Chapel Chimes* started once again to report the news and events of the church. Each organization was asked to have a reporter with the responsibility of seeing that its group news would be included in the monthly publication. Nancy Akehurst and Lois K. Akehurst were the editors while Bob and Millie Hackman were responsible for printing and mailing the newsletter.

Today, we are blessed to have *The Acorn* once again providing us with the news and events of the church. The monthly publication is printed online and is also available at the church. Thanks to Bill Smith editing the newsletters and the various articles that keep us informed of the workings of the church today.

Future articles will tell of other activities that have taken place here at Camp Chapel.

Doris Akehurst Tarleton
Church Historian

Our Church's History Tells the Story of Our
Journey of Faith, Lived in Our Community

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all the great volunteers that helped to make the music appreciation luncheon a success. We are blessed at Camp Chapel to have a wonderful group of volunteers that always step up to help. Just another example of God's people doing God's work!

Sue Wallace



To the Camp Chapel family,

On behalf of the Chancel and Bell Choirs, I want to express our sincere appreciation and thanks for your generosity. The gifts, luncheon, and special program on Music Appreciation Sunday was well planned. Special thanks go to Sue Wallace, who spearheaded the event, and to all those who prepared, set up, and served the luncheon. One additional thank you to Peter Gaskin for his hard hot work at the grill.

Gary



I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful retirement party and generous gifts. The food, fellowship, and fun was outstanding. Many thanks to Susan Wallace, Pat Ryan, Karen Warren, and their volunteers for making the day memorable. Thanks also to Gary Lushbaugh and the Chancel Choir for musical presentation - and for leading us in "O For a Thousand Tongues." You are truly an amazing congregation.

Love,
Carol



Dear Camp Chapel United Methodist Team,

On behalf of the Churches for Streets of Hope Meal Team Ministry, we are pleased to inform you that your team has been selected to receive special recognition at our upcoming Annual Meeting on June 28, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.

This recognition is presented in appreciation of your faithful and outstanding service throughout the season. Your commitment, compassion, and partnership have made a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

With sincere gratitude,
Otis Trawally
Interim Meal Coordinator

This message was edited for space considerations. The full text of the letter can be viewed on our Facebook page.

Bits and Pieces

Movie Credits Take a Long Time

Some of you may be too young to appreciate this, but there was a time when you could watch all the credits at the end of a movie in the few seconds it would take you to put on your hat. In fact, most movies would fade out to the words “The End” and the lights would come up in the theater and there would be no credits at all!

Not anymore! These days, it takes maybe fifteen or twenty minutes for the names of everybody who had even the most minor and indirect contribution to a film to scroll up the screen, along with all the legal disclaimers, the complete information about every snippet of music used, and all the thank-you’s for the folks who provided locations, moral support, and – I don’t know – maybe thoughts and prayers during the production. Don’t get me wrong, I’m just relaying facts here – in those old days countless people gave their all to a film and never got the credit they deserved!



The final seconds of Charlie Chaplin’s Modern Times

One of the reasons I’m aware of this is that I watch a lot of movies. Some are old, some are recent, some are good, some are bad, some I love, some I can’t stand (I usually opt out of those before I waste too much of my time). Then there is for me a special class of movies. These are movies I think are fantastic, but I watched them once and once was enough. *Saving Private Ryan* is one of those, as is *Blue Velvet* and, weirdly, *Citizen Kane*. But the movie standing proud and alone at the top of that list is the 2004 film, *The Passion of the Christ*.

The Passion of the Christ – If you have ever wondered, “What would it have been like to be tortured and killed by Roman soldiers in first century Palestine?” then – whoo boy! – this is the movie for you! It depicts the final twelve hours of Jesus’s life in brutal, gory, flesh-tearing, high-definition detail. I saw it in the theater, and I wouldn’t be able to bear seeing it again.

The movie was produced, directed, and co-written by Mel Gibson, who has since fallen from grace over a number of allegations regarding things he may or may not have done or said in the past that aren’t germane to this discussion. Having said that, he is an accomplished actor, and, as a director, he knows how to put together a great film, for example this one.

Mel Gibson is Catholic, and as a former Catholic myself, I kind of know where he was coming from when he first decided to take on this project. He aspired to make the definitive film about Good Friday and the events that define it, with just a few minutes devoted to the thirty years before that day, and his focus is the same as it was in my experience before I chose Methodism.

In grade school, I was taught mainly by nuns of the order of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. They are the nuns who used to wear habits that, back when I was a kid, featured heavily starched white headgear called a cornett that has often been compared to a sailboat (they don’t wear those anymore). Daughters of Charity devote themselves to prayer and charity work. They serve as nurses, social workers, and especially as teachers, among





Daughters of Charity in traditional habit

other ministries, and as teachers, these were the women, along with my mother, who shaped my early spiritual life. They were strict, but usually fair. They knew their stuff. They demanded excellence. They did not suffer fools gladly. And they taught me a ton of stuff about church, life, and Jesus (some of which I have struggled to unlearn ever since I graduated from St. Michael's School in 1960).

One thing they stressed nearly every day: Christ died for our sins. The nuns weren't about to let us forget that. I don't know whether Methodist children ever received this kind of instruction, but we Catholic kids surely did.

Sister Joan Marie would point to the crucifix on the front wall of the classroom and tell us that Christ died for the forgiveness of all the sins of humankind, "beginning with the sin of Adam and sinning and sinning and sinning down through the ages

until this very minute of this very day, when YOU, Billy Smith, yes YOU, lied to me about doing your homework last night! See that nail in Jesus's right hand? That's YOUR nail! That's YOUR sin!"

It was the type of lesson that stays with a kid all his or her life, whether that kid's name is Billy Smith or Mel Gibson, let me tell you! And Jesus's dying for our sins is one of the main themes that drives the plot of *The Passion of the Christ*. It doesn't show up until the movie is almost over, but when it does, it comes in full force!

Near the end, there is a scene that, in cinema and stage jargon, "breaks the fourth wall." Mary, the mother of Jesus, (played to perfection by a Romanian actress named Maia Morgenstern) receives the broken, lacerated corpse of her son as he is taken down from the cross, she kisses his bloody face, and then she gazes for several seconds at the camera. Only, I didn't experience it as her looking into a lens, I felt that she was looking out into time and down the centuries to see every person in the theater, and then it hit me that she wasn't looking at all of them, she was looking only at me! And her eyes gave away her feelings, and she forced me to see what she was going through: her exhaustion – she hasn't rested since he was taken in the garden, her grief – she has no tears left to cry, her physical pain – she can barely take a breath it hurts so much, her love for her son – as only a mother can feel that love, her anger that he had to die – a rage that has nowhere to go, her torment – knowing that she must still go on despite the fact that she'd rather die right here, her memories of him – every moment, every breath he took, every word, every touch.



A Catholic crucifix not unlike the ones in my classrooms at St. Michael's

(continued on page 16)

(continued from page 15)

But more than that, I felt her steely-eyed, fierce, relentless accusation. She was looking into my soul and she was judging me! She was forcing me to own up to every wrong thing that I had ever done or said or thought, and as she was cradling her son's lifeless, ruined body, her eyes were silently screaming at me, telling me, "Look what you did! YOU did this to my boy!"



And Sister Joan Marie came rushing back at me.

And there I was – and I wasn't the only person – sitting there in the dark, weighed down by my personal guilt, silently weeping. And thanking the movie makers that the end credits were going to take a long, long time to roll.

Bill Smith

Devotions for Home and Camp Chapel Gatherings: In the Garden

(based on reflections by Linda Douty, "Rhythms of Growth" and "I Come to the Garden Alone" by Charles Austin Miles)

Take a moment with a beloved hymn:

*I come to the garden alone, While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses.*

When we simply pay attention to the presence and voice of the Spirit in our lives we are blessed with an opportunity to live out of a new reality that Jesus walks with me and talks with me.

Where do you hear The Son of God's voice? Where are you when your spirit senses Jesus near?

Pick a short phrase to repeat along with breathing out and breathing in. Repeating the same prayer with your breath sweeps us into the unconscious realm where the Spirit prays for us "with sighs too deep for words." (Romans 8:26)

Take time each day to listen, perhaps in a garden, along a trail, or with eyes closed in a busy place. The witness of praying people is that repetition of listening somehow grooves a neural and muscular pathway in the brain and body, allowing the body to participate in prayer. Listening with our heart, helps us blossom in God's love. Take time to prepare, take time to listen, take time.

With Peace and Blessings,
Kathy Martin



PRAYER FOR OUR PASTOR

Heavenly God, we thank you for the blessing of our pastor. We lift her up to you today, asking for your strength and guidance in her life and ministry.

Lord, we pray that you will protect her physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Cover her with your peace, especially as she carries the weight of caring for others. When she feels weary, refresh her; when she feels burdened, lighten her load; and when she faces challenges, give her the courage and wisdom to persevere.

Give her clarity in her calling and discernment in her decisions. Guide her in teaching and preaching your word, that it may be a source of hope and transformation for all who hear it. Help her to remain rooted in your truth and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We pray for her personal life. Strengthen her relationships with her family and help her to maintain a healthy balance between ministry and rest. Let her experience your love and support through those closest to her and find encouragement in your presence.

May her ministry bear fruit for your kingdom, and may she be a shining light that reflects your glory. May your hand be upon her in all things, and may she always feel your love and grace surrounding her. We ask this in Jesus's name. Amen.



Birthdays

July Birthdays

Pat Fish
Joyce Kraft
Luz Cabotaje
Bob Delkhoon
Cheryl Stephens
Gio Amador
Allen Zink
Shirley Curtain
Nate Pendergrass
Richard Spero
Kay Glisan
Janet Rogers
Frank Long
Susan Smith
Laurie Stephan
Henry Delkhoon
Ed Mathus
Beth Olcott
Lisa Dziuk
Katie Klemm

July 3
July 3
July 4
July 6
July 6
July 9
July 9
July 12
July 13
July 13
July 14
July 15
July 19
July 20
July 20
July 22
July 22
July 23
July 26
July 27

August Birthdays

Maya Gaskin
Diane Gaither
Mary Beth Lingner
Mary Ann Plummer
Mary Lou Wernsdorfer
Diane Dye
James Ward
Butch Dye
Vanessa Finney
Sharon Smith
Maggie Taylor
Edna Halcott
Keith Burgess
Jacob Smith
Ella Burgess
Earl Smith
Carol Ann Ruth
Donald Sterlock

August 2
August 5
August 10
August 11
August 11
August 13
August 13
August 14
August 14
August 15
August 15
August 16
August 17
August 20
August 21
August 26
August 27
August 27



Having a Birthday?

The *Acorn* would love to celebrate every single birthday of every member of our congregation. Each month, we list the birthdays for this month and the next. If your birthday does not appear, please send an email to acorn@campchapel.org with your name and the month and day you were born. WE DO NOT NEED TO KNOW THE YEAR! Your age can be your secret!

Lectionary Readings

July

July 5: 6th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67
Psalm 45:10-17 or Psalm 72 (UMH 795)
Romans 7:15-25a
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12: 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 15:19-34
Psalm 119:105-112 or Psalm 25 (UMH 756)
Romans 8:1-11
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 19: 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 28:10-19a
Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 (UMH 854)
Romans 8:12-25
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 26: 9th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 29:15-28
Psalm 105:1-11, 45b (UMH 828)
Romans 8:26-39
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

August

August 2: 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 32:22-31
Psalm 17:1-7, 15 (UMH 749)
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

August 9: 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28
Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b (UMH 828)
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

August 16: 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 45:1-15
Psalm 133 (UMH 850)
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28

August 23: 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 1:8-2:10
Psalm 124 (UMH 846)
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

August 30: 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b (UMH 828)
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28



The Holy Bible Is the Word of God

What's Happening in July?

Among other observances, July is the month of awareness for juvenal arthritis, sarcoma, bereaved parents, minority mental health, and cleft and craniofacial conditions. In addition, the month of July celebrates national parks, watermelon, vacation rentals, family reunions, blueberries, cellphone courtesy, and hot dogs. Here's what else is happening:



- 1 American Zoo Day
- 1 ZIP Code Day
- 2 World UFO Day
- 4 Independence Day
- 5 National Hawai'i Day
- 6-13 Shark Week
- 7 Global Forgiveness Day
- 7 National Day of Rock 'n' Roll
- 7 International Peace and Love Day
- 10 Teddy Bear Picnic Day
- 11 7-11 Day (Free Slurpees!)
- 12 Malala Day
- 12 Etch-A-Sketch Day
- 13 Gruntled Workers Day
- 14 Bastille Day
- 14 International Nonbinary People's Day
- 15 National Gummi Worm Day
- 18-26 National Math Week
- 18 Nelson Mandela Day
- 20 Global Hug Your Kids Day
- 20 57th Anniversary of the Apollo Moon Landing
- 24 Amelia Earhart Day
- 24 National Cousins Day
- 25 National Day of the Cowboy
- 26 National Merry-Go-Round Day
- 27 National Crème Brûlée Day
- 27 National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- 28 World Hepatitis Day
- 28 World Nature Conservation Day
- 29 Full Moon (Buck Moon)
- 30 World Day Against Human Trafficking
- 31 Harry Potter's Birthday

