When God Comes Near: New Beginning

By Rev. Joey Heath

Advent is the season of preparation for the reality of God in our midst, God who came near to us, Christ born divine and yet one of us. In this season, we begin anew the journey to Bethlehem and to the manger. From that lowly manger, we again journey to Jerusalem and the disciples, to teaching on the hillside, to feeding massive crowds, to listening to the unheard, to picking up the unwanted. Then, we begin the journey toward the cross where sorrow and death intermingled, when all seemed lost until Christ rose from the grave with the promise that we have all been set free and the God who created us is waiting with arms open wide. Advent is the beginning of our telling of this story once again, of starting it over, just as we get to start over again.

As we begin again, we are invited to join with Jesus and turn the world upside down, to see the world not only as it is, but what it could and should be. Jesus began his earthly journey by doing just that. He was born in a stable and rested his head in a manger as he was watched over by his very ordinary parents and visited by shepherds. The most important person to ever live, born in the humblest way.

One of my favorite traditions is the singing of silent night during the Christmas Eve service. I love the gentle stillness of the song and then, without words, the breaking in of the light in quiet serenity as we light candles. In those moments, we are reminded that Christ is with us, reminded that there is still peace in the midst of violence, joy in the midst of sorrow, and reconciliation in the midst of division. Most importantly, we are reminded that there is still hope in the midst of darkness.

Christ continues to draw near to us and call us to our own new beginnings. With this new year we enter into through Advent and Christmas, we have another chance to do things differently. It is another chance to live each day more like Christ. It is a chance to begin the new year by sharing Christ in mittens and hats, in presents and gifts, in meals shared, in food given to fill pantries, in socks and a warm blanket on a cold night. It is the chance to come together as a community and dream big--in fact, dream bigger dreams than ever before! It is also our chance to step out in faith towards the things God is calling us to be and do, while continuing to demonstrate to those we meet and the world that there is love that transforms all things and in whom all are made new.
Keeping the “Christ in Christmas” (and the rest of the year, too!)
BY REV. RACHEL CORNWELL, LEAD PASTOR

A couple of weeks ago there was an uproar on social media about the new seasonal Starbucks coffee cups. Since 1997, the coffee company has had holiday-themed cups that come out in November, but this year there was no snowflake or Santa Claus, just a plain red cup. Joshua Feuerstein, a self-proclaimed “American evangelist, Internet and social media personality” with a large, conservative Christian following, made a video denouncing the removal of Christmas images from the cup and instructions to employees to wish “Happy Holidays,” rather than “Merry Christmas.” He suggested that fellow Christians show their disapproval by telling baristas when ordering their latte or hot chocolate that their name is “Merry Christmas,” which would force them to write that on the cup, and keep the Christ in Christmas.

I must admit, this is a pretty clever idea. However, I believe that if we want to keep the Christ in Christmas, there are a lot of other ways we Christians could be using our influence and making our voices heard. What if we gave new bedding to A Wider Circle to provide for children in our community in the spirit of the Christ child who had “no crib for a bed”? Or showing a compassionate response to those who are refugees, in keeping with the Christmas story in which Mary and Joseph find themselves fleeing a violent dictator who wanted to kill all the children in Bethlehem? What about feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, clothing those without adequate winter clothes to follow Jesus’ instruction “just as you did to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

It’s really just a matter of priorities, and figuring out what matters most as we seek to share the Good News and be part of Christ’s transformation of the world. Is it making sure that our $5 disposable coffee cup bears the words “Merry Christmas,” or trying to make the true meaning of Christmas—peace on earth and goodwill to all people—how we live?

And as followers of Jesus, this is not just something we wrestle with during the Christmas season. It’s our challenge all year long to keep Christ in Christmas, in the New Year, in our calendars and bank accounts, in our hearts and words, thoughts and actions. As we enter into the Advent season, we have many special opportunities for worship and service that will help us keep our minds and hearts on the coming of Christ in the midst of so many other joys and stresses of the season.

In the New Year, on Saturday, January 30, from 9:30am-12:30pm at the Downtown Campus, we will be offering a mini-retreat for the whole family on the theme “First: Keeping God First in Living and Giving.” We will have activities for children, youth and adults to reflect on what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus: What are the idols that compete for our devotion? How does our money and work, the giving of our time and talents, and all our priorities reflect our Christian values? What is enough and how can we live from a place of abundance and joy?

We hope that you will join us this joyous Advent, Christmas and New Year!
Advent Giving and Fellowship Opportunities

Silver Spring United Methodist Church invites you, your family, friends, and other loved ones to fellowship with us this Advent season. We have several opportunities for passionate worship listed below.

Sunday, December 6

Enjoy Fellowship at Our Potluck Advent Celebration
Sunday, December 6, at 5:00 p.m.

Everyone is invited to join us as we kick off the holiday season during our annual Advent Celebration with food, fun and fellowship in the fellowship hall from 5:00-7:00 p.m. We will sing Christmas songs, play games, make Christmas crafts, and put together care packages for our home-bound residents. So come one and all and join in the festivities. Bring your family and a dish to share.

Sunday, December 6 & 13

Poinsettia Sales Support Youth Mission Trips

Help us adorn our chancel altar for Advent by purchasing a poinsettia in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one. Poinsettias cost $15 each and will be on sale December 6 and December 13. This is a fundraiser to support the youth mission trip this summer.

Now Until December 13

Our Angel & Mitten Trees Support Hearts & Homes for Youth

This holiday season, we invite you to provide some Christmas cheer to area young people by participating in our Mitten and Angel Trees. Until December 13, you can place mittens and hats on the Chapel Hallway of the Downtown Campus, and select an Angel from the tree in the Narthex (instructions provided provided).

SSUMC has been supporting an Angel Tree outreach project for many years now, most recently through a local organization called Hearts and Homes for Youth (HHY). Since 1964, HHY has sheltered, counseled, and advocated for 32,000 troubled young people from birth to young adulthood; victims of abuse, neglect, abandonment, and emotional turmoil. Each year HHY tries to meet the holiday dreams of about 135 children and adolescents. We hope you enjoy sharing the spirit of Christmas. It is not too late to support this worthy cause. For questions, please contact Rebecca McGinnis at rmcginni@umd.edu.

Sunday, December 13

Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser
Sunday, December 13, at 4:00 p.m.

Back by popular demand! Our delicious spaghetti dinner will be hosted by our youth to raise money for their 2016 summer mission trip.

Come out for good food, fellowship and support our youth group.

Our annual spaghetti dinner will be held before the “Follow That Star!” Christmas play.

Advance Tickets:
$8.00 Adult
$5.00 Child (5-10 years old)
$25 Family (5 people or fewer)*

Tickets at the Door:
$10.00 Adult
$7.00 Child (5-10 years old)
$30 Family (5 people or fewer)*

*In larger families (6 or more), a donation of $5 is requested for each additional family member.

Get your tickets now and support our youth!

Follow That Star! Christmas Play - Sunday, December 13, at 6:00 p.m.

This year’s Christmas play begins with a time of remembering – the Narrator elicits memories of Christmases past; Mary remembers how she felt when she learned that she was to be Jesus’ mother; Joseph recalls his confusion over Mary’s pregnancy; and the Angel talks about appearing to Joseph in a dream. Join us as our children and youth tell the birth of Jesus the Christ child.
SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Pastor’s Report to Charge Conference
BY REV. RACHEL CORNWELL, LEAD PASTOR

On October 24, our church had its annual meeting with the District Superintendent to connect our local church ministry with the ministry of the larger United Methodist Church. Charge Conference is an accountability meeting—we vote on new leaders, the pastors’ compensation and other reports. We also breakout into groups with representatives from each church in our cluster to discuss a collective goal for the following year. Nearly 20 members of SSUMC participated in this year’s Charge Conference held at Glenmont UMC.

In addition to the Charge Conference meeting, each year the Lead Pastor is responsible for preparing a report for the Baltimore-Washington Conference on the state of the church and an account of pastoral ministries. This report addresses how the pastor(s) are providing support, guidance and training to the lay membership of the church; ministering within the congregation and to the world; and administering the temporal affairs of the congregation. This is our 2015 report.

We are living into our new leadership structure and finding more people freed up for ministry. The more our ministries grow, the more we need engaged laity to support and carry out the ministry of the church. We have had two successful ministry fairs last spring and this fall, and we had a large celebration for our lay volunteers on October 24. We also continue to use the Disciple’s Path study for our new member classes and all new members take a spiritual gifts inventory to help them discern where to offer their time and talent within the church.

Our mission “feeding people body, mind and spirit so no one goes hungry” continues to provide focus for our ministries in the church and out in the community. We have at least two opportunities to feed people physically every week and out of our feeding ministries we have discerned some new partnerships that are helping us develop our ministries to feed people’s minds and spirits as well. Of special note is the English-Spanish Conversation Circle, a developing partnership with Manna and also with the administration and families at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School.

Provide an update on the status of the vision/mission goals set for the prior year.

This year we adopted a strategic plan that will guide us in living out our mission for the next 3-5 years. The external goals that we had for 2015 are:

Feed people in body: Address the hunger crisis in our community. We have a new Food Ministries Coordinator (Lisa Middleton) serving on the Council on Ministries who has started meeting with food ministry leaders to evaluate the current impact of our feeding ministries and vision for the future.

Feed People in mind: address intellectual and emotional hunger in our surrounding community through strategic partnerships at our Mission Center (Four Corners). We are in conversations with Manna and with the Principals of New Hampshire Estates Elementary School and Blair, Northwood and Wheaton High Schools about how to help meet the physical, educational and spiritual needs of vulnerable students. We need to develop more leadership for the language conversation circle and we still have not explored the pros and cons of establishing a 501(c)(3).

Feed people’s spirit: Increase worship attendance by 10% each year and professions of faith by 5% each year beginning in 2015. Increase our diversity reflected in our welcoming statement. For the past two years, our worship attendance has remained about the same (average worship attendance in 2014=296; in 2015 so far=286) and our professions and reaffirmations of faith this year are 16, and in 2014, we had 19. These numbers are good indicators of congregational health, but we are not growing as quickly as we did in the past five years, nor as dramatically as we had hoped to. And while we remain diverse, we need to be more intentional about being welcoming of people of all racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds as well as people of all sexual orientations. I believe that our commitment to and work around racial justice will help us with this.

SSUMC’S MARILYN PARR PRESENTS HER TEAM’S CLUSTER GOAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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I also believe that if we can renovate the fellowship hall this year to accommodate the growing “Beginnings” service, and if we are able to hire a gospel music director, we will see an increase in worship attendance. We celebrate the fact that we have 19 confirmands this year—the largest class in many, many years!

The internal goals we had for this year were:

*Create a culture of generosity.* We formed a capital campaign team that has established February 2016 as the launch target for the campaign. The team is interviewing consultants to help us set and reach our goal. We are in the midst of our annual stewardship campaign and, while we have done more to engage and excite the congregation and tailor our message to specific giving groups within the congregation, the results are yet to be seen. Our congregation-wide stewardship retreat has been rescheduled for January 30, 2016.

We are on track to meet three of our five financial goals established by the Administrative Board in 2014:

- We have a balanced budget, and in fact, we have a $40,000 surplus in our operational expenses as of September.
- We have invested in our infrastructure, purchasing a new back-up generator and repairing the slate roof at Four Corners.
- We are paying 100% of our apportionments and are on track to continue to do so through the end of the year.
- We have 32 days of operational expenses in reserves (our goal is 45 days), and our ministries still only make up 3% of our total budget (the goal is 5%). But we are making progress and these goals are within reach.

*Achieve Facility Sustainability by 2020.* We have completed an audit of projected capital needs at both church buildings and the Administrative Board voted to spend $100,000 from our investments ($50,000 at each building) on capital repairs and renovations within the next year. We included capital improvement funds in our budget this year ($30,000) and propose increasing that to $40,000 in 2016 (more than a 1% increase, which was the goal).

*Increase Mission Engagement and Nurture Congregational Connections.* We held spring and fall ministry fairs and continued to offer new and renewing membership classes that include a spiritual gifts inventory. We celebrated the Christian Education ministry this spring and Music ministries this fall. We also hosted a celebration for all our faithful volunteers (nearly 100 people attended) to thank those who have been so dedicated and encourage them to invite others into ministry. We still need to revitalize our Congregational Care team to meet the needs of our sick, home-bound or disconnected members.

*Provide vision/mission goals for the upcoming year.*
As we continue to work toward the goals listed above, and work on the areas where we did not achieve our 2015 goals, the additional specific steps we have outlined for 2016 are:

1. Renovate the kitchen at Four Corners and get a commercial food license so that we may establish new partnerships to help us address the hunger crisis in our zip codes.
2. Commit ourselves to addressing one of the root causes of hunger through justice and advocacy.
3. Redevelop the 3rd floor office space at Four Corners so that we may form new, strategic partnerships that will help us address intellectual and emotional hungers in our community.
5. Increase the number of giving households that give between $4,000-$5,000 annually from 6 to 10, and the total number of households that make up 90% of congregational giving from 137 to 150.
6. Launch our capital campaign.
7. Conduct capital audits at both parsonages.
8. Continue to develop a culture of invitational discipleship where by those who have been transformed through serving in our ministries become the ones who invite and disciple others and grow the ministries of the church.

We are excited about our continued progress and our new goals for 2016. We look forward to sharing updates with you all throughout the coming year.
NOTES FROM OUR CHOIRS

Choir members share why SSUMC’s music ministries are so meaningful to them. We offer many opportunities to get involved and we hope you are inspired to join us. See page 7 for details and rehearsal times.

Sabina Perry, Children’s & Youth Bell Choir Member
“I love music and have been playing bells for about four years. I continue to play bells because I love how bell choir is such a group effort—you need everybody. Bells are such a wonderful addition to a church congregation, and to me, bells really ring out praise like nothing else. Whenever the bell choirs would play at my old church, I would simply sit and listen to all that beautiful ringing in harmony, singing out a song. I was in bliss. I was safe from the problems and troubles of the world and my life. To this day, I still love playing and listening to bells. It is my safe haven—my safe haven of music. At SSUMC, we are lucky to have such a great bell choir.”

Meredith Thompson, Bell Choir Member
“Music is a way I can contribute to the whole worship experience. I enjoy the camaraderie of the choir, the sense of working toward a common goal. The need to practice keeps me disciplined. It’s my joyful noise for God!”

Women’s Ensemble Members

Putting the WE in Women’s Ensemble is a group of talented and faithful individuals, finds joy in blending our voices in song. WE sing because music is an important part of our lives—a love instilled in childhood, nurtured in a High School Girls’ Chorus, and cultivated in adult choirs. WE sing because the three-part vocal harmony of women’s voices with guitar accompaniment inspires us, and the diversity of music challenges us. WE sing because joining our voices with friends and family connects us. WE sing because music, an essential part of the worship experience, is a way of praising God and sharing our gifts.

Anna Jarrell, Chancel Choir Member and Alto Soloist
“I have been a member of the Chancel Choir for about 50 years and have found it to be challenging, rewarding and fun. We rehearse every Thursday and Sunday. At Easter and Christmas, we often perform special music which may mean an extra rehearsal or two. Being a choir member is a commitment and that requires attendance. Often after a long day at work, it’s hard to go out again at night. However, once I’m at rehearsal, I lose myself in the beautiful music and the fun I have with other choir members. Mary Ann selects beautiful music for us that is challenging, yet within our talents. You don’t have to be a music virtuoso to be a member, and we would like more people to join us. You are always welcome.”

Mary Kautz, Adult Bell Choir Director
“I have loved the sound of hand bells ever since I was a child. The pure sound of a chiming bell alone is mesmerizing; however, the interweaving and coordination of individual parts to form one melodious piece of music has always intrigued me as well. I feel such joy in being part of a group that can consist of members of widely varying musical backgrounds (from not being able to read music to folks who are “seasoned” ringers) to being able to produce an amazingly beautiful sound of music together. A single bell can have a beautiful sound, but the magic occurs when we perform together. And that is key—the camaraderie and teamwork of doing it together.”

Sarah Blum, Children’s Choir Member
“I have been singing in the choir since I was 5 years old, and I’m 10 now. Mrs. Melissa Polito is the best choir teacher ever! She makes every practice fun! She has three kids: Ben, John and Emma. She has to get them all ready on Sunday mornings, yet she still finds time to make a few dozen muffins so we can have a little snack. I’ve grown to love the people I sing with - Ava, Max, William, Sarah, Taylor, Ben, Lucia and Cecelia. I will continue to sing in the choir as long as I can!”

Rhea & Edison Yson, Praise Band Members
“Three words come to our mind when we think about the importance of participating in the Praise Band.

1. WORSHIP. As a couple, we believe that singing with the band is one form of worshipping the Lord. We may not have angelic, remarkable or unique voices, but we are singing from our hearts, with the voices that He has given us, so we know that He is pleased with the joyful noise that we make.

2. GRATITUDE. The Lord has done so much in our lives. He has blessed us with health, family, friends, and a church that has become our home away from home. We can never repay Him for what He has given us or for what He has in store for us, so singing with the Band gives us the opportunity to show our gratitude and to sing with gladness.

3. SERVICE. All of us were called to serve in so many different ways, either big or small, it all matters to Him. Participating in the Praise Band is our way of serving Him.

On top of all these, we get to sing with the amazing group of people in the Band, joined by the wonderful congregation, making music to the upbeat tune of contemporary gospel songs, having so much fun, and just praising the Lord!”
WINTER MUSIC HIGHLIGHTS TO ENJOY
BY MARY ANN WILLOW, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE GREAT CELEBRATIONS OF OUR MUSIC MINISTRIES!

Thursday, December 24, 2015
Christmas Eve Music
5:00 p.m. Family Service
   Familiar carols for all ages!
   Music by Children, Youth and Adults

10:00 p.m. Candlelight Service
   A Traditional Service of Lessons and Carols
   Music by Chancel Choir, Women’s Ensemble, and soloists
   with bells, organ and harp.

Sunday, February 7, 2016
Transfiguration Sunday – Beginning of Black History Month
Special Gospel Music at 11:00 a.m.

You’re invited to join these choirs:

  Beginning Bell Choir:
    Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m.
    in the Upstairs Music Room.

  Adult Bell Choir:
    Sunday evenings at 5:00 p.m.
    in the Upstairs Music Room.

  Chancel Choir:
    Thursday evenings at 7:15 p.m. AND
    Sundays mornings at 10:00 a.m.
    in the Main Sanctuary.

  Children’s Choir:
    Sunday mornings at 10:15 a.m.
    in the Downstairs Children’s Choir Room.

  Praise Band:
    Sunday mornings at 8:45 a.m. in the Chapel.

  Women’s Ensemble:
    Every other Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m.
    in the Chapel.

MUSIC APPRECIATION SUNDAY CELEBRATED 120 MINISTRY PARTICIPANTS!

On Sunday, November 15, we enthusiastically celebrated Silver Spring UMC’s music ministries. Six of our singing and bell ringing groups participated, plus instrumentalists and the Monumental Brass Quintet.

It was marvelous to see and hear our newest group, the Children’s and Youth Bell Choir, plus the growing Children’s Choir!

During 2015, our music groups included 120 participants, some active in more than one choir.

Thank you to our musicians of all ages, to our gifted and generous volunteer directors, and to our congregation for supporting the music program year-round and with a very generous special offering on November 15th!
Volunteer Dinner Celebrates Service!

On October 24, the Lay Leadership Development Team and SSUMC staff hosted a thank you dinner to celebrate those who have been involved in ministry this past year (and some for many years before that). Nearly 100 people came out on that Saturday night for a catered meal and some fun awards were given. Guests at the dinner were invited to nominate fellow church friends for the award categories and then balloting took place during dinner.

Here are the awards and nominees for each category:

* denotes awardees

**Pinch Hitter Award** – people who always step in when needed

**Next Generation Award** – for youth volunteers
Catherine Brown, *Margaret Brown, Austin Hill, and *Risa McGinnis.

**Best Chef Award** – good cooks for coffee hour, pot luck or meals ministries
*Eleanor Organ, Marilyn Parr, Lillian Scott, Lynne Waters, and *Kyle & Helisa Whitley.

**Long Haul Award** – people have been involved for a while/since the beginning

**Many Hats Award** – for those involved in multiple ministries in the church
*Bob Browning, Ruth Gochnour, Mary Kautz, Margaret Madert, Jean McCoy, *Rebecca McGinnis, Anne Metcalf, Marilyn Parr, Ken Parr, Michele Riley, and Katie Whitley.

**Unsung Heroes Award** – for those doing grounds, set up clean up behind the scenes
Bob Browning, Lori Crowe, Rob Horn, Mary Kautz, *Anne & Ed Metcalf, Rebecca McGinnis, and *Scott McGinnis.

**Face of the Ministry Award** – for those who embody Christ in their service

**Recruiter Award** – getting new people to join ministries

**The Heavy Lifter Award** – for the folks that do the grunt work

**All About the Kids Award** – for those who are dedicated to children’s ministries
Recently our children and youth participated in a MISSION MANIA! project to create a “thank you” banner for the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). The CAFB is an important partner that supports our church’s vital food ministries. Maya Drummond, Risa McGinnis and Chloe Marshall helped deliver the banner to the food bank.

The CAFB staff was VERY happy to learn of this project with the children, and they were truly, very impressed with this gesture of thanks. The CAFB staff kept going to get more people to come and look at the beautiful banner! They were talking about where to hang it, and as we were leaving, one of them was taking pictures of many of the individual signatures. We felt very welcome, and they all were SO appreciative of what the kids and our church are doing to serve others.

A huge thank you to Wendy Hudgins who designed all of the new signage at our Downtown Campus.

If you’ve visited our Downtown Campus recently, you may have noticed our great new signage. Generously designed by Wendy Hudgins, our new signage provides better directions for members and guests to more easily move about the many levels that make up the Downtown Campus. Similar to a parking garage, each level is designated with its own color and number and easy-to-read signs indicate worship areas, classrooms, staff offices, and other meeting spaces. Take a few moments to check out our new signs!
CHILDREN’S SABBATH SERVICE

On October 11, our children did a wonderful job leading us in a service on this special Sunday with the children’s choir and the new children’s bell choir providing the music. Our guest speaker was Ms. Aria Kirkland-Harris who is the Regional Director for The Expectations Project in Washington, D.C. The Expectations Project is a national non-profit organization committed to closing the “achievement gap” for public school children by linking churches to schools in partnerships for faithful advocacy and compassionate service. Following the service, we had an informative training session on opportunities for church-school partnerships.

MISSION MANIA!

Children in 1st through 5th grades, who participate in our MISSION MANIA! outreach program, have been busy making care packages for our college students, writing letters to Veterans and sending them gift cards, and hosting a Thanksgiving food drive to make food baskets for people in the community less fortunate than they are. MISSION MANIA! kids continue to make a difference in the community and the world!

One of our college students who received a care package emailed the church with this message: “I received your package today and it brought back so many positive memories. All the youth retreats, going to Kings Dominion, the ROCK Retreat, etc. It really put a smile on my face. Thank you for thinking of me.”
Growing Deeper in Faith - Our Confirmands

“There is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”
Ephesians 4:4-5

Confirmation is an affirmation of faith. In the United Methodist Church, it is often an opportunity for young people to affirm the presence of God’s grace in their life through learning, sharing, serving and coming before the church during worship. The confirmation process invites the confirmands to give themselves wholeheartedly to God, to follow Jesus Christ and let the Holy Spirit guide them in all they do. The most important thing for the confirmands to remember is that confirmation is an opportunity for them to grow deeper in their faith and give thanks for all that God has done, is doing and will do in their lives!

This year, we have 19 confirmands and each confirmand has a mentor that meets with them once a month. Thank you to the following mentors for being a part of the confirmation team: Lori Crowe, Becky Eager, Dan Genua, Ashley Greene, Ted Hastings, Ryan Lincoln, Rebecca McGinnis, Scott McGinnis, Ed Metcalf, Lisa Middleton, Chan Park, Debbie Payton, Cindy Smith, Lenny Smith, Juli Taylor, Kyle Whitley, and Rhea Yson. The confirmands will be confirmed on Sunday, May 15, 2016.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Adult Sunday School class is studying the book of Acts and the writings of Paul. Most scholars agree that the book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke were written by the same person, and many agree that he was a traveling companion of Paul on some of his missionary journeys. When the class reaches the appropriate places in the story, they will also read some of the writings of Paul. All adults are welcome join the class at 9:45 a.m. in the Conference Room.

Questions? Contact Neil Hindman at nhindman@aol.com.
INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT

**3rd Grade “Learning to Use My Bible” Class Begins in Lent**

SSUMC’s Learning To Use My Bible class will be held during Lent. In this class, our 3rd graders will learn basic Bible skills with activities that directly coordinate with their new Deep Blue Bible. This curriculum uses a step-by-step approach to opening the Bible to kids for their lifelong faith journey. Now is the time to lay the foundation for the special importance the Bible will have in their lives. Children will learn that the Bible is not just one book. It is a special library of books that tells the “Good News” of Jesus Christ.

**Trick-Or-Treat for UNICEF**

Did you see the fairy in worship? What about the witch, the ninja or the dinosaur? All of the children looked so cute in their Halloween costumes as they trick-or-treated through the congregation for UNICEF. Collections were held during both the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. services with Ms. Marie explaining to the children where the money is sent across the world and why it is important that we share our gifts with those less fortunate.

Many, many thanks for your generous donations filling the UNICEF boxes with coins.

**Our children collected $106.00 for UNICEF!**

*Trick or Treating for UNICEF on October 25*  
*photos courtesy of Tony Richards & Marie Matthews*
The grounds and gardens of our church have become more than just the location of our building and parking lots, but a place for welcoming. We’ve had some exciting developments with our community garden, located at the Downtown Campus. In late summer, the Monarch butterfly and other species were fluttering around the church garden beds in glee. On October 21, a group of leaders including some leaders of non-profit groups met at our church with Rev. Rachel, Aaron and myself. The groups included Riverkeeper Anacostia, the National Wildlife Federation and the Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake. The meeting was to consider how we, as a church and as a community, can and will use our grounds and gardens to create some valuable benefits to our natural environment and in what way our church can be a leader in this important work.

On October 27, the church received delivery of an 865-gallon cistern to our property. The cistern is a way our church can work to improve the Sligo Creek and Anacostia watersheds. The cistern was installed in November by Trey Sherard of Riverkeeper Anacostia. It will collect vast quantities of rain (that would otherwise would quickly flood into the Sligo Creek) for later use in watering our gardens. Instead of using water from the tap, we can use the water we have collected to keep our gardens beautiful and, at the same time, we save money on the church's water bill. The cistern was a grant from Riverkeeper Anacostia and a nice prize for our community gardeners and the church.

The Community Garden is a way to build on previous year’s efforts and a way to share my Time, Talents, and Treasures with the church as a response to Rev. Rachel’s sermon of the same name on October 5, 2014. My initial idea was to use the church garden plots for a butterfly garden, and Rev. Rachel encouraged us to grow some food so the produce could be handed out at Arleeta’s pantry. From there, I began trying to figure out how to get plants for the garden, how to get amendments for the soil, and how to get people to come out and help.

Getting a person to come out and do hard work for free is not easy. Eventually enough individual members, community volunteers, the men's group and scout troops allowed us to plant 650 plants— all the supplies, plants and labor donated. The plants grew marvelously as did the weeds. We harvested vegetables for Arleeta’ Pantry for a string of Saturday mornings. In August, I put out another call for help with the weed problems and enough helpers came to help to bring the weeds under control.

The butterflies and birds showed their appreciation by loving the gardens. Neighbors walking by expressed their joy with the community gardens. After the announcement of the grant, I began to think that the church grounds could be certified as wildlife habitat. I prepared the Sacred Grounds™ application for the October 21 meeting of leaders, which included the National Wildlife Federation representative who created the program. She said our gardens met all the requirements of certification, so we have applied and our grounds and gardens are expected to be awarded the Sacred Grounds™ certification by the National Wildlife Federation for our 2015 successes.

My wife, Elizabeth, and I attended the Sacred Grounds workshops in May and June to encourage places of worship to use their grounds and gardens for the benefit of the environment. We have heard about the needs for environmental stewardship at places of worship and the response at our church was great. Now we are poised to teach others to do as we have done in a workshop planned for Spring 2016. Be sure to check the weekly bulletin announcements and the Spring MESSENGER for details.

There’s so much more to our story than can be captured here, so I encourage you to ask questions and get involved in our Community Garden for 2016. Also, take a few minutes to view our videos on YouTube to see how our Community Garden continues to glorify God.
In early November, the Administrative Board passed a $1.096 million budget for 2016, a 5.6% increase over the 2015 budget.

**Expenses**

Church programs received the largest increase in overall funds, with a budget of $83,000. Church programming now represents 8% of the total budget. This exceeds the church’s strategic goal, set in 2014, to allocate at least 5% for direct program expenses. Many ministries are receiving funding for the first time in 2016, including Lay Leadership, Feeding Ministries, Reconciling, Staff Development, and Youth. Most existing ministries also received funding increases, including an additional $2,000 for Communications, $1,500 for Congregational Care, and $2,500 for Music.

The Board approved paying the full amount of apportionments for next year, even though the apportionments are slated to increase by 22%, from $96,100 to $117,500. The Facilities budget is 5% smaller than last year due to expense reduction efforts, a savings of $20,000.

**Revenue**

The budget for congregational giving will remain unchanged at $590,000, while church use revenue is expected to increase 10% to $441,000. The Board expects to receive slightly less income from investments next year. Altogether, church revenue is expected to be $1,057 million. Since revenue is less than expenses, we expect a deficit of $39,000, which is 3.5% of the total budget.

The operations budget does not include grant income that we expect to receive in 2016 or 2017. We have received an appropriation for a Maryland State “Bond Bill” for $100,000 and a matching grant from Montgomery County for $50,000 to support renovations at our Four Corners campus, including refurbishing the kitchen, turning the Sanctuary into a multi-use space, and creating office space for nonprofit organizations on the third floor. We are also pursuing other grant opportunities to fund our capital and ministry needs.

Many thanks to the Council on Ministries and Administrative Board for their efforts in preparing and evaluating our 2016 Budget. We are excited about 2016!
Welcoming Our 2016 Church Leaders
BY REV. RACHEL CORNWELL, LEAD PASTOR

At the annual Charge Conference meeting held on October 24 at Glenmont United Methodist Church, we approved our 2016 church leadership. The following dedicated individuals have agreed to serve our congregation and its many ministries with their time and talents. For many, this is a continuation of their 2015 service and we are grateful for their past and future guidance.

Welcome to our New Leaders! We thank you for your service!

**Administrative Board:**
- Anthony Jones (Chair)
- Ryan Lincoln (Lay Leader/Vice Chair)
- Cheryl Lammy (Secretary)
- Grace Cho (Lay Member to Annual Conference)
- David Renfro (Trustee)
- Melissa Polito (Trustee)
- Dan Sherk (Trustee)
- Gladys Baxley (Finance/Treasurer)
- Mandy Joholske (Finance)
- Dave Ottalini (Finance)
- Sha-Shana Crichton (SPRC)
- Jennifer Heald-Kidwell (SPRC)
- John Taylor (SPRC)
- Margaret Brown (Youth)

**Council on Ministries:**
- Kyle Whitley (Chair)
- Rebecca McGinnis (Lay Leader)
- Marilyn Parr (Worship)
- Lori Crowe (Communications)
- Katie Basiotis (Young Adults)
- Kayla Whitley (Youth)
- Mary Ann Willow (Music)
- Marie Matthews (Christian Education)
- Lisa Middleton (Food Ministries Coordinator)
- Suzanne Browning (Lay Member to Administrative Board)
- Leader Needed (Outreach)
- Leader Needed (Congregational Care)

**Lay Leadership Development Team:**
- Rachel Cornwell (Chair)
- Chan Park (Team Member)
- Wendy Ryan (Team Member)
- Elaine Upton (Team Member)
- Ryan Lincoln (Lay Leader)
- Rebecca McGinnis (Lay Leader)

**Ex Officio Positions:**
- Lynne Waters (Financial Secretary)
- Bill Scanlan (Charter Organization Representative-Boy Scout Troop 209)
- Don Messersmith (Charter Organization Representative-Boy Scout Troop 209)
- Marcus Meeks (Charter Organization Representative-Boy Scout Troop 209)

In addition our new leadership roster listed above, we want to thank the following leaders who have completed their term of service this year:

- Michele Riley (Administrative Board Chair)
- Marilyn Parr and Randy Roberson (Lay Members to Annual Conference)
- Elaine Upton (Administrative Board, Finance)
- Eleanor Thompson (Administrative Board, Treasurer)
- Anthony Jones and Ivonne Lindley (Administrative Board, SPRC)
- Mary Kautz (Lay Leader and Lay Leadership Development Team)
- Isis Offutt (Council on Ministries, Youth Representative)
- Katie Basiotis (Administrative Board, Council on Ministries Representative)
- Lennie Smith (Council on Ministries, Outreach)
- David Renfro (Lay Leadership Development Team)
RISK TAKING MISSION & SERVICE

THANKSGIVING FOOD DONATIONS
Fill More than 30 Baskets

In November, our church family once again showed its overwhelming generosity. In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, church members, staff, friends and guests donated non-perishable food items and grocery store gift cards to help families in need. These items were collected in a festive booth located in the Narthex near Arleeta’s Pantry.

More than 30 baskets were filled with stuffing, chicken broth, green beans, potatoes, yams, corn and other vegetables, macaroni and cheese, and other food. Donations were given to a Montgomery County agency that distributed them so that local families who experience food shortages could have a happy Thanksgiving.

A heartfelt “thank you” to everyone who donated food, gift cards, and time in support of this worthy project.

In this and many other ways, the Silver Spring United Methodist Church continues to live its mission to feed all of God’s people—Body, Mind and Spirit—so that NO ONE goes hungry.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION TRIP TO HAITI
March 26-April 2, 2016

Haiti continues to experience some extreme challenges. The 2010 earthquake devastated all walks of Haitian life. Legions of volunteers and aid-workers, from Haiti and abroad, have committed themselves to the country’s recovery. These efforts have helped stabilize the area, but there is still much to do to improve the lives of Haitians.

SSUMC is recruiting volunteers for a team to go to Merger, Haiti (8 miles west of Port-au-Prince) from March 26 to April 2, 2016 (spring break for Montgomery County schools). We will be supporting the Institute of Grace in its efforts to support the citizens of Merger. The specific work required will depend, to some extent, upon the various skills volunteers bring to the team. It could include construction (electrical, flooring, painting, etc.), medical (clinic, help with the new hospital), Bible School, feeding program for up to 300 children (stories, music, videos, games, crafts), and adult education seminars (business, seminary, health).

Volunteers will work long days in sweltering heat. However, as members of SSUMC’s 2012 team to Haiti can attest, your sacrifice of time and comfort plus the satisfaction of seeing the difference your hard work makes to God’s children in Haiti will be a life-changing experience.

There will be an informational meeting in the very near future. Volunteers pay their own airfare, and a valid passport and certain vaccinations are required for travel. A $250 deposit will be required by December 20 to reserve your space. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Lennie Smith at jiggy14@comcast.net or (240) 381-8020.

We hope you will prayerfully consider joining the VIM trip to Haiti.

STAY INFORMED!
Don’t miss our updates & current events:

silverspringumc.org
facebook.com/SilverSpringUMC
twitter.com/@SS_UMC
weekly eNews subscribe to our eNews via: admin@silverspringumcp.org
SSUMC Youth Hayride & Bonfire

Youth Group 2015-16

Our UMY meets most Sunday nights from 5-6:30 p.m. in the youth room on the third floor of the education wing for games, fellowship, prayer, and a lesson.

Once a month, we also do one activity outside of our church walls like our fall hayride and bonfire pictured above. Youth group is open to all who are in 6th grade through 12th grade. For more information, contact Rev. Joey at jheath@silverspringumc.org.

“IMAGINE NO MORE MALARIA” CAMPAIGN UPDATE

This summer, our congregation came together to support the “Imagine No More Malaria” campaign, which distributes mosquito bed nets, trains community health workers, and establishes and coaches local health boards in developing health strategies, budgets, and providing oversight. Because of “Imagine No More Malaria,” hospitals and rural clinics are equipped with life-saving medication and diagnostic kits. This multi-pronged approach revitalizes and strengthens the public health infrastructure ensuring long-term sustainability.

Many heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in this summer’s campaign by filling the red boxes with coins, cash and checks. Together, we raised $3,987 over the summer! This means we only have to raise $6,000 in 2016 and 2017 to complete our church’s three-year pledge of $10,000.

The red boxes will be back next year during mosquito season to remind us that malaria continues to be a fatal disease in many parts of Africa. Contributions can be given at any time. Please note “Imagine No Malaria” on your check’s memo line or on your online contribution.

Learn more at www.imaginenomalaria.org.
Stewardship Witness

BY AUDREY PARK

Hi, my name is Audrey Park and I am in 4th grade. I would like to share with you why stewardship is important. Seventeen percent (17%) of our church’s total budget goes to Christian Education, which includes our kids’ programs like Sunday school, MISSION MANIA!, Vacation Bible School, our youth group and even Ms. Marie’s salary. Did you know that over 100 kids attend Vacation Bible School every year? Or that MISSION MANIA! is really making a difference in the lives of the people we help? Kids that participate in MISSION MANIA! learn that we are not too young and that we can—and do—make a difference.

My favorite of the kids’ ministry programs is MISSION MANIA! I like it because we get to do fun projects that help other families and people around the world. In one project, we collected shoes for Africa, which was originally Jake Joholske’s idea, one of my friends at church. Other things we’ve done are packing care packages for college students, canned food drives and making weekend lunches for kids who don’t have enough food.

This year, I’m also excited to start going to Club 45. This program is like youth group for 4th and 5th graders and it is held at the church on the second Sunday of each month at 5 o’clock! Of course, I also enjoy spending time with my friends during Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. Every year, we get a CD of the music from Vacation Bible School and my brother and I listen to it as soon as we get it.

Making a pledge every year is a very important part of making sure all these programs can continue to grow. Your giving not only touches my life, but also the lives of all the families and people we reach out to in our mission. Thank you for all that you already give and please consider making a pledge before the end of the year.

Oh, and my little brother says “thank you” too!

There’s Still Time to Make Your Pledge!

Our approved 2016 Budget is outlined on page 14. To help us meet our financial obligations, we need your support! If you haven’t made your pledge yet, please prayerfully consider what you can give and sign up for online giving (see box at right).

If you need assistance, please contact the church finance office: Aaron Sirilila, Director of Operations, at aaron@silverspringumc.org or 301-587-1215 x17, or Lynne Waters, Financial Secretary.

Sign up for Electronic Giving!

Giving online saves you time and effort. No more checks to write or envelopes to remember. When you’re away, your giving continues. It’s also good for the church, because it makes our finances more consistent and predictable.

It is easy to get started:
1) Visit SilverSpringUMC.org/give
2) Click Manage Recurring Giving
3) Follow the onscreen instructions to create or find your profile and schedule your recurring contributions.

SilverSpringUMC.org/Give
JOIN US FOR OUR STEWARDSHIP RETREAT - JANUARY 30, 2016

On Saturday, January 30, from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., we will offer a stewardship workshop for the whole family at the Downtown Campus. The workshop is entitled, “FIRST: Putting God First in Living and Giving” and we will have activities for adults, youth and kids. Visit the website to sign up at www.silverspringumc.org/first. Start your new year off right with fellowship as we learn together how to put God first in our daily lives and our giving practices.
**SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES**
**AT DOWNTOWN CAMPUS**
www.SilverSpringUMC.org

9:30 a.m. **‘BEGINNINGS’ CONTEMPORARY SERVICE**
CHAPEL
10:30 a.m. **COFFEE FELLOWSHIP**
OUTSIDE THE CHAPEL
11:00 a.m. **TRADITIONAL SERVICE**
MAIN SANCTUARY

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**OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED**

**SANDWICH-MAKING FOR MARTHA’S TABLE**
SILVER SPRING UMC: FOUR CORNERS
1st Saturday of the month from 8:45-9:30 a.m.
Contact Ken Parr at (301) 587-6913.

**ARLEETA’S PANTRY**
SILVER SPRING UMC: DOWNTOWN
Saturday mornings from 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Contact Rebecca McGinnis (rmcginni@umd.edu).

**MOBILE FOOD PANTRY**
SILVER SPRING UMC: FOUR CORNERS
2nd Tuesdays from 3:00–5:00 p.m.
Volunteers are welcome at 2:00 p.m.
Contact Anne Metcalf (anne_metcalf@msn.com).

**SHEPHERD’S TABLE**
8210A COLONIAL LANE, SILVER SPRING, MD 20910
1st Tuesday & 3rd Wednesday
Set up at 4:30 p.m.; Dinner served at 5:45 p.m.
Contact Tijuana Irons (tijuanairons@aol.com) or Bob and Suzanne Browning (suznbob@verizon.net).

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As the Silver Spring United Methodist Church, we declare our mission to be:
We are a movement of Christ’s love to the people of Silver Spring, feeding all of God’s people—body, mind and spirit—so NO ONE goes hungry.

Learn about SSUMC’s beautiful Community Garden on page 13.