



SALEM BROOKEVILLE

A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

NEWSLETTER September 2023

CONTENTS:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| A Word from our Pastor | Page 1 |
| Leadership Team Update | Page 2 |
| September Sermon Series | |
| Truly Live | Page 3 |
| I've Been Meaning to Ask | Page 3 |
| Students Complete Gardening | |
| Project | Page 4 |
| Bible Study | Page 6 |
| Missions | Page 6 |
| Lunch for Six | Page 7 |
| Social Hour | Page 7 |
| Volunteer needed to send emails | Page 7 |
| Giving | Page 7 |
| Birthdays and Anniversaries | Page 8 |
| Contact Information | Page 8 |

A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR



As we get back to school, come back from vacation, and settle into our fall routines I find myself thinking ahead to the rest of the year. Where is God calling us?

You may know I just got back from a sermon planning retreat with some friends. We spent the week planning, reading, and praying our way into the next six months. What do our congregations need? What are we called to learn and do? Where are we called to seek God?

I thought back over the past year and remembered our mini-visioning sessions. We asked about three things: our gifts and talents, our leadership passions, and the needs of the world and then looked for the place these ideas connect. We settled on the need to see beyond differences. We recognized the way we tend to be so siloed as individuals and communities. So many of us now have only mental caricatures of people who aren't like us. We think they're *just* their policies or political views or religious ideas. And, guess what, they think the same about us. Gone are our other identities. Dog mom? Hiking enthusiasts? Olive and June nail polish student? All gone.

To them.

And how sad. I love talking to people about dogs and hiking and nails. I also love talking

about God, and (some) politics, and the way I think we should treat each other, but **all** of it comes together to make me. Just as all of your interests and passions come together to make you.

And so, as a community, we decided to try to bridge gaps.

This fall we will intentionally ask each other questions in our series, "I've been meaning to ask..." You can see more about the questions in a later section of this newsletter. I want you to know we're doing this to reflect God's care for individuals and communities. God cares who YOU are, and so I do, too. So join us as we ask questions. Come with your curiosity and your willingness. With your joy and trepidation. With the awareness that each of us are God's beloved children, more than our caricatures.

So, I've been meaning to ask, are you willing to answer?

Blessings,

Rev. Emily Hart

LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

The Leadership Team did not meet in July or August. That does not mean our concerns for our community and church were ignored.

This has been the summer of service.

At Rev. Emily's initiative, Salem participated in a student service project (SSL) with some local young people. Rev. Emily along with

Churchill Groves, Don Rider, Gene and Mollie Haines, Jake and Ginny Weinberger, and Janice Vieira all volunteered with the youth in building and planting a vegetable garden off the far edge of Salem's parking lot. If you look now it is quite lush and hopefully many good things will be harvested. Bravo and well done!

Rev. Emily and Quinn Anderson met with Salem's insurer to determine if the policies were structured to allow the AA Women's group to have child care assistance through Montgomery County. And as it happens it has allowed for another valuable service to the community to be met within the Mission and Vision of Salem UMC.

Earlier this year the heating system in the Community Hall became inoperable. Mark Aebig and Fred Ambrose met with Burtonsville Fuel to discuss repairs and cost estimates. Work was completed the week of August 20th. So it will again be warm in the Hall this winter.

The church's flower gardens were maintained this summer by numerous volunteers. Many thanks to them.

Rev. Emily also served as a summer camp counselor and as a participant in a sermon writing retreat.

And in October The Lord's Table hot meals program will be starting up again: the first Friday of each month from 1-5 pm at Epworth UMC in Gaithersburg, MD.

SEPTEMBER SERMON SERIES



Sept 3 Pray *Matthew 11: 25-30*
(This finishes the Truly Live series.)

Next up:



Series Overview

This month we'll exercise our curiosity and ask some good questions using "I've been meaning to ask" from Sanctified Art. Our leading question, "I've been meaning to ask..." conveys intentionality, warmth, curiosity, and consideration. In essence, this question also implies the following statements: "I've been thinking about you, and I've been wanting to check in... You've been on my mind... I haven't known how to have this conversation, but I'm getting started with a question." The ellipses symbolize the main objective of this series: to cultivate courageous conversations—and to keep having

them, even if we need to pause. Our weekly sub-themes provide a trajectory for going deeper. As you can see, these questions aren't surface level; they invite us to share our pain and seek ways to care for one another. We pray that through vulnerability and authenticity these conversations lead us to glimpse hope, joy, and beauty. This series alone will not resolve our divisions and differences. However, it will invite us to behold each other as images of the divine. It will help us strengthen our capacity for empathy and compassion. It will show us the simple power of asking unassuming questions. It will remind us that courage is rooted in the heart.

Sept 10 I've Been Meaning to Ask... Where are you from?
Genesis 2: 4b-15 / John 1: 35-51

In order to build connection and trust, we need to listen to each other's stories and experiences to learn who and what has shaped us. We also need to feel seen and known for who we are. In this first week, we hope to affirm the particularity of our identities while also acknowledging our common ground.

Formed from the dust and God's very breath in the Garden of Eden, we have a common home, a shared birthplace, and a collective calling: to sustain and care for all of creation. The story of Jesus calling the disciples provides a helpful charge for the whole series: to "come and see" what the journey holds. In this first week, we wish to address how the question, "Where are you from?" is sometimes coupled with assumptions, judgments, and even microaggressions—all of which can be exhausting and painful to receive. Our hope is to acknowledge, disrupt, and release the assumptions we hold about others.

Sept 17 I've Been Meaning to Ask... Where does it hurt?

Romans 7: 15-25 / Psalm 61: 1-4

In our Psalm, we see a deep cry for help and rescue from hurt. "Hear my cry, oh God!" We cry out when we are in pain. However, sometimes, while we are willing to cry out to God, we keep silent from our community. Knowing and carrying each other's hurts is part of being a faithful community.

We only ask "where does it hurt" when something is likely hurting already. Unfortunately, most of us can hear this question and point to something in our lives. A personal experience, an ongoing situation, a friend's hurt, a world issue... the list can go on. Very few of us have gotten through life without any hurts. Frustratingly, sometimes we even bring on our own pain through the things we do and don't do. These hurts live within us as open wounds or as healed scars and show up directly or indirectly in the people we encounter. Some of the most challenging people to love are actually the ones in the most pain. And yet, others live through their pain in a way that lifts others up. In Romans, Paul describes the challenge of trying to live a new life where we don't continually cause ourselves pain. So, as we hear stories of transformed pain, where do *you* hurt?

Sept 24 I've Been Meaning to Ask... What do you need?

Job 2: 11-13 / 2 Timothy 4: 9-18

This week's question recognizes that we all have needs and that we need each other. It reminds us that we each have unique needs; we can't assume to know what is best for others. It also prompts us to reflect on our own needs, priorities, and desires, which

can sometimes be difficult to discern from one situation to the next.

In the midst of Job's afflictions, three of his friends promptly leave their homes and come to him. They tear their garments, weep loudly, and sit with him for seven days, saying nothing. Their response is the ministry of presence, of true solidarity, of seeing his excruciating pain and joining him there. Beaten and imprisoned, Paul writes to Timothy with a simple request: "Come quickly." He lists those who abandoned him, but says, "I hope that God doesn't hold it against them!" In his greatest moment of need, Paul doesn't need revenge, but instead asks for companionship. In essence, this is what we all need—for someone to come quickly, to gather the items we need, and to simply show up.

STUDENTS COMPLETE GARDENING PROJECT

On July 11, local middle and high school students began a project to restore, plant and bring our three community gardens back to life. On August 17, they successfully completed the project while earning Student Service Learning hours (SSL) towards the 75 hours that are required for graduation. The purpose of SSLs is to teach students what it means to be active, engaged citizens by combining community-based service with curriculum-based learning.

The students decided they would plant: sunflowers to attract pollinators like birds and bees and also help detox the soil; cucumbers that grow fast and don't demand a lot of care; and pumpkins that grow fast

and require the same growing conditions that cucumbers need.

Then they spent the next four weeks pulling years of overgrown weeds, improving the soil, planting seeds and seedlings and weeding and watering the garden. When the cucumbers and pumpkins are harvested they will be donated to area food banks.

According to student Matthew Laughlin, "This project was fun but there were some really hot days."

Another student, Allen Harp, said he feels good about helping grow food for people who need it. "It's like giving somebody a birthday present - you don't expect anything back."

We are grateful for our student volunteers who worked hard to grow food for the food bank, our volunteer church members who supervised the students, and our volunteer neighborhood garden specialists who taught the students about preparing soil, growing seedlings and maintaining the garden.

The first photo shows the raised- bed gardens after students cleared overgrown weeds, improved the soil, planted, and built a fence.



The gardens in mid-August.





Allen Harp (L), a rising seventh grader and Matt Laughlin a rising ninth grader, worked on the project from the first until the last day.

BIBLE STUDY

The next study will be “I’ve been meaning to ask...”, a follow-up of the sermon series. This will be a 4-wk class on Wednesday evenings, running from Sept. 13 through Oct. 4.

6:30-7:00 P.M. gather
7:00-8:00 study

The zoom link for all the Wednesday night studies is

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/94812192432?pwd=T256VnlzQ1VwVk83eGljeGRLL3pNQ09#success>

See the weekly announcements for the link to a printout of this study.

Following that will be a Bible study of the book “What is the Bible” by Rev. Anne Robertson. It will be a 6-wk session starting Oct. 11. The Amazon link to buy the book is <https://www.amazon.com/What-Bible-Exploring-Dickinson/dp/0990721205>

MISSIONS

The Lord’s Table

The Lord’s Table will resume in October. It will continue to be held the first Friday of each month. The location is Epworth United Methodist Church, 9008 Rosemont Drive, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact Churchill Groves for information.

Olney HELP Food Needs

(Updated 7/7/23) You may leave non-perishable food donations in the box in the Meeting Room behind the Sanctuary or in the marked box in the Community Hall. Food items needed most at this time: **adult cereal, pancake syrup, canned peas (low salt), boxed white spaghetti**, spaghetti sauce – plain kind, canned meats, such as tuna, chicken, turkey, corned beef, spam, salmon, Vienna sausage, etc.; sloppy joe sauce, canned chili, canned pasta, boxed spaghetti and pasta, 1 lb. bags of rice and rice sides (Knorr/Roni), pasta sides (Knorr/Roni), baked beans, canned green beans, corn, Canned fruit in juice, Jelly - all sizes, all flavors, condiments - BBQ sauce, ketchup, mustard, salad dressing; instant mashed potatoes - pouches and boxes, juice

boxes - 100% juice, shelf stable bottled juice. Thank you, Nancy Cox, for hauling our donated food to Olney HELP and for working there each week.

Here is a new way to find out what nonperishable food items the pantry needs.

Control+click

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/24NT3T45084TG?ref=wl_share

If you are interested in volunteering or know someone in need, please call their Helpline at 301-774-4334. If you wish to make a financial donation, you may do so at:

www.olneyhelp.org.

Prayer Shawls

Prayer shawls are available free for anyone who is ill or needs comfort. Feel free to pick one up near the coat rack.

LUNCH FOR SIX

Would you like to chat with others outside of church while enjoying lunch out? This is the perfect opportunity to meet people who sit outside your pew. Groups have gone to GrillMarx, Mama Lucia, Olney Grille, and Jimmie Cone. Fun!

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board down the hall from the sanctuary for the next group.

Good reasons to go out to lunch:

You might smile the rest of the day.

You might make a new friend.

You may see someone sitting in a different pew, waving 'Hi' to you.

SOCIAL HOUR

Also remember to sign up to bring snacks to the Community Hall so Social Hour can continue. This is another great way to encourage fellowship following the Worship service. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board down the hall from the sanctuary.

This doesn't have to be fancy. Rev. Emily likes brownies, but a dozen donuts is good, too.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO SEND EMAILS

A volunteer is needed to send email announcements. This would include sending the weekly "What's Happening at Salem" email and some others from time to time. This is approximately a two hour a week commitment – about one hour composing the emails and attending the Communications Team meeting via Zoom each Wednesday from 11:00 A.M – 12:00 P.M.

If interested, please contact Rev. Emily.

GIVING

Offerings can be sent to:
Salem United Methodist Church
12 High Street, Brookeville, MD 20833

If you would like to give by app, you can download the "Vanco Mobile" app and

search for Salem United Methodist Church or by its invite code R8A63K.

If you haven't been able to access Vanco and would like to give electronically, we now have a PayPal option. You can use this link: <https://paypal.me/SalemBrookeville>

BIRTHDAYS



If your name should be on the list, please contact the church. We don't want to leave you out. Thank you!

September Birthdays

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Barbara Whalen | 09/06 |
| Janet Howes | 09/17 |
| Mollie Haines | 09/28 |

CONTACT INFORMATION

Reverend Emily Hart takes Sabbath days on Saturdays and Mondays for rest and renewal. She also honors time with her husband and dogs in the evening. Please contact her on these days (or after 8:30 P.M. on other days) only in an emergency or a scheduled meeting.

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The newsletter is prepared by the Salem United Methodist Church Communications Team. Contact any team member with questions or comments. Thanks!

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