



THE BEACON

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

Newsletter of Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church • October 2023

While finishing my last year of seminary, I embarked on a journey as part of a community engagement requirement that would lead me on a tour of seven federal and state correctional facilities for men and women from Petersburg, Virginia to Butner, North Carolina to Morgantown, West Virginia and then returning back home. I shared this experience in great detail in a Beacon article in October of 2018.

I still have trouble explaining the extreme range and depth of emotions that I felt as I visited those institutions. Even after returning home, and for some time afterwards, I found myself reliving this profound and unique experience. As I relived this journey in my head, I continued to ask myself the question: How should we forgive those that had fallen off the path no matter how heinous the crime might be? What is the path of redemption that would lead them to restoration? Is anyone beyond redemption?

Just before my immersion trip began, it was announced that Leslie Van Houten, the former Manson family member who was convicted of killing wealthy grocer, Leno La Bianca, and his wife, Rosemary, at their home, was finally approved for parole for the terrible crime spree that the Manson family participated in back in 1969. Originally given the death sentence for these horrific killings, her sentence was commuted to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Since her conviction, she has been denied parole over 20 times. Then, at age 66, she received approval for a parole which would be subject to the approval of Jerry Brown, the governor of California at that time. Jerry Brown vetoed her release on the grounds stating that "Both her role in these extraordinary brutal crimes and her willing participation in such horrific violence cannot be overlooked..." On September 29, 2016, a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge upheld the governor's reversal of the parole board's decision to release Van Houten. Later that year, the California Supreme Court denied Van Houten's petition to hear the case.

The ageless question here remains: Are there some crimes that are so horrific that in order to protect the public we can never allow freedom to those convicted? Can people find redemption in the prison system? Are there limits to the grace that we should show in these cases – are we called by God to be merciful uncondi-

tionally? Many times, the victims and families that are involved in such cases are not interested in forgiveness and redemption. We find in Matthew 6:11-15 that we are called to forgive if we wish to be forgiven,

"Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one. If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions."

It is also found in in Matthew 18:21-22,

"Then Peter approaching asked him, 'Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.'"

Regardless of these testimonies and more found in scripture, we find it hard to practice our Christian beliefs outside the sanctuary where our brokenness is revealed in the light of day. Although,

I believe in the grace of God that is offered to all, my past experiences and prejudices have caused conflicts within my heart. I think of the victims of crime – horrific crimes that I don't even want to hear the details. Crimes against children, hate crimes – crimes that are so savage and ruthless that even the most experienced law enforcement professionals could break down in tears. Crimes that have had lasting effects on the lives of the victims and their families for years – forced to relive that terrible event over and over again.

Van Houten has long since renounced Manson and expressed remorse for her crimes. At her 2013 parole hearing, her attorney argued that her value system was completely different from what it was in 1972. She told Vincent Bugliosi, the man who sent her to prison, "I take responsibility for my part, and part of my responsibility was helping to create him." It is easy to cast judgement when reading headlines – however, it is a far different story when we are face to face with those that had once committed such terrible crimes.

The question remains, is it now time to move on for the families of the victims and for Leslie to be allowed to continue on her path to redemption? Too many



EPISTLE & CHURCH INFO

EPISTLE CONT....

years have passed harboring hatred and pain. Hatred and pain that has crowded out the love of God and quenched the flame of the Spirit in all too many souls. God and redemption can be found in prison. God can transform even the most hardened criminal.

In 2023, after spending 53 years in custody, Van Houten was released on parole. Is it now finally possible to forgive and move forward from this tragic act that impacted so many lives for so long. God and redemption can be found in prison. God can transform even the most hardened criminal. Because of this, we must continue the trend of providing all the opportunities possible to allow for this transformation – for the Spirit to enter and transform men and women through faith-based programs within the system. It is not enough to just provide occupational training and education. As one Assistant Warden said during our tour of his institution, “We don’t want to make smarter criminals – we need to give them more – a moral guidepost, an opportunity to see others and the impact that they have on those around them. He went on to say that most of the inmates will at some time leave prison. He then asked the question, “Do you want them living next to you, near your children, in your community if they have not learned to be compassionate to others?”

Pastor Bob

**CHURCH CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD
AT BETHEL UMC
ON OCTOBER 14, 2023 AT 9 A.M.**

**21006 Twin Springs Dr.
Smithsburg, MD 21783**

OCTOBER LAY READERS:

October 1 — Skip Kauffman

October 8 — Jenni Dorsey

October 15 — Cindy Kauffman

October 22 — Terri Hollingshead

October 29 — Toni Wetzel

CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Office Hours:

Monday – Friday 9 a.m.—1 p.m.

Office Phone: 301-432-8741

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

Website: www.mtneboumc.com

Sunday Event Times:

9:00 a.m. Worship Service

10:00 a.m. Sunday School (for all ages)

Pastor:

Pastor Bob Ruggieri

443-994-9505

Email: pastorbob2017@gmail.com

Staff:

Administrative Secretary – Brandi Puzonia

Minister of Music – Rose Gamblin

Finance – Patty Watson & Shana Wolfe

Sextons/Maintenance – Dennis & Sallie Dorsey
and Sara Halbritter

Mt. Nebo Christian Learning Center

Hours: 6 a.m.—6 p.m. Monday – Friday

301-432-6042

www.mtneboclc.org

Director – Kim Kelly

director@mtneboclc.org

Communications Team:

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

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BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

October 5 Rhys Jarrell
October 8 Terri Hollingshead
October 13 Angela Redden
October 14 Edward Budnick
October 15 Ed Beard
October 16 Aaliyah Linton
October 17 Debbie Lee
October 22 Tyler Deatrich
October 24 Sara Breeden
Don Dorsey
October 25 Jason Berg

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

October 4 Jody & Shelley Breeden
October 20 Bill & Patty Watson



on September 17, 2023. Bella is employed as a Retail Store Manager at the Boot Barn in Hagerstown, MD. She and Dave host a golf tournament each year for the South County Food Pantry for Micah's Backpack. Dave being a Ravens fan, and Bella a fan of the Steelers, may mean a house divided, but they come together sharing a love for the Baltimore Orioles.

Please welcome these new members when you see them.

NEW BIRTH

Allen & Tina Beard welcomed a son on August 31st. **Blake Khai Eyler Beard** weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz. and was 21 1/2 inches long. Blake joins big sister, Addison at home. Proud grandparents are Ed & Lucinda Beard.

May God bless this little one as he grows.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Amanda Mathis was baptized and joined Mt. Nebo with her mom Angela Redden on September 17, 2023. Angela is a dental assistant at a pediatric dentistry in Frederick, MD and Amanda works in the produce department at Weis in Boonsboro. They both actively serve at Faith Step Ministry when help is needed.

Dave and Bella Wade transferred to Mt. Nebo

THANKS-GIVING FOR THANKS-LIVING

Special thanks to the Wetzels, the Dorseys and the Bergs for all the work they did for the Boonesborough Days food booth.

Many, many thanks to those who baked, worked at the booth, helped with set-up and take-down of our Boonesborough Days food booth.

Thank you to the Bergs and all the volunteers who worked at the Faith Step kitchen to provide a good meal to hungry people in Hagerstown.

Thank you to the volunteers who are going on the VIM Trip to Dawson Springs, KY.

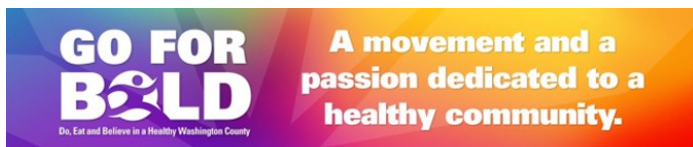
Many thanks to Dotty Neal for organizing the Church Picnic and to Rose Gamblin for organizing music, and to everyone who provided a dish to share at the picnic.

CHURCH/COMMUNITY NEWS

GO FOR BOLD

MONTHLY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT CLASSES BEGIN THIS MONTH! Many of you have signed up or are aware of the Washington County's Go for Bold program. This is Washington County's commitment for its residents to lose 1,000,000 pounds by 2030. I was a certified weight coach for Curves International for 5 years and enjoyed helping people reach their goals. I go back to school in January to get my Maryland Certification. Starting in October I'd like to host a monthly meeting which will include weight loss topics, funny stories, and a healthy dinner with dessert. These meetings will always be on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. A sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board in the Gathering Room. Please sign up by the Sunday before each class. Thank you!

Patty Watson



BOONESBOROUGH DAYS UPDATE

Thank you to everyone that participated in helping us have a successful weekend at the park on Sept. 9th & 10th. Our new menu items were a hit and we're already thinking of adding a few more new things for next year. Special thanks to the Dorsey's and Berg's who spent their whole weekend making sure things were running smoothly. All of those that worked, baked, and organized, helped Mt. Nebo to be a strong presence in the community. We were able to clear a little over \$1500 from the food sales and will be putting this into the new bus/van account to help defray the purchase cost.

Toni Wetzel and Don Dorsey

9/11 PARADE

The Town of Boonsboro and area spectators came out to pay their respects and remember the tragic events of September 11th in 2001. Vernon Brown and the First Hose Co. of Boonsboro have organized a 9-11 Remembrance Parade every year

9/11 PARADE Cont.

since that fateful day, one of the few that is held in Maryland. Thank you to those who attended and paid tribute, and to the CLC for participating with their float. We hope you join in this tribute next year, on Sept. 11th, rain or shine!

Toni Wetzel

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

At our recent meeting, Betty Lou read a poem that someone shared with her many years ago. It was titled, "My Hand in God's," and was about always walking alongside God. We were reminded to place our trust in God and He will guide our steps.

The mission of UMW is to support women and children both locally and globally. We decided to make a donation to the VIM team for their upcoming trip. The VIM team will be taking the "Hug Me" dolls with them and plan to distribute them to children there. We also decided to make a donation to the upcoming mission trip that Shelley Breeden will be taking to Africa. Shelley is going with Saving Lives Initiatives to Sierra Leone to provide medical care. With the maternal mortality high and only 1 doctor to 50,000 people, this is a critical mission. Both ministries are an example of being the hands and feet of Jesus.

We brainstormed ways to involve more ladies from the church in our meetings, as well as possible future fellowship opportunities. We also discussed the monthly birthday gifts that various people donate to the residents at Sterling Care. This is a special ministry that brings joy to the residents. If you are interested in coordinating this special ministry, please contact Betty Lou.

Our meeting closed with a reading called, "Cherry Dump Cake." It reminded us that things don't need to be complicated in order to be meaningful. Even the simplest gesture can make a difference in someone's life. After our meeting, we covered shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Everyone is encouraged to pick up a box and fill it for a child in need. Our regular monthly meetings occur on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, with our next one coming up on Tuesday, October 17, at 10:00am. We hope you will join us!

Alyssa Berg

YOUTH AND LEARNING CENTER NEWS

MT. NEBO YOUTH NEWS

The youth group is all about learning, service, and fellowship. The last few weeks were a great example of this!

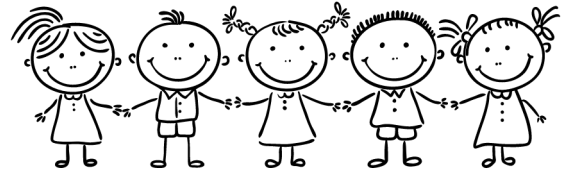
Several of the youth helped at the church's Boonesborough Days food stand. They took orders, collected money, served food, and had fun while doing it all! They even had a Sunday School lesson in the park that weekend!



Faith Step (a weekly pancake breakfast for the homeless in Hagerstown) continues to be a monthly opportunity for service. Several of the youth have been faithful to this ministry. It is always a meaningful experience to serve there. Members of the congregation are more than welcome to volunteer - see the signup sheet on the bulletin board.

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

Alyssa Berg



MT. NEBO CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER

As we head into fall, we take a pause to think about the little lives we influence every day! Remind each other to be kind and loving. It is important to play...even as adults...don't forget to play! Be Happy! Now, and always, we are so happy to have all the children and families a part of our Nebo family! This month we are looking forward to a visit from the Boonsboro Fire Department, field trips to the pumpkin patch, and our classroom harvest parties at the end of the month. Also, our children have enjoyed weekly music and chapel time with Ms. Rose! Please check out all our pictures on our Facebook page! Thank you!

Kim Kelly



MISSIONS IN OUTREACH

SHOEBOX MINISTRY

Isn't it a great feeling to know that you've made a difference in someone else's life? How about bringing joy to a child in need? Well, here is your opportunity! Every year, *Samaritan's Purse* and



Operation Christmas Child deliver shoeboxes filled with gifts to children in need. Many of these children live in poverty-stricken and war-torn areas of the world. You can be part of this amazing ministry!

There are piles of shoeboxes wrapped in Christmas paper located in the Gathering Room. I encourage you to pick up a box (or two!) and fill it with items for children throughout the world. You will find a brochure inside each box which gives information and lists suggested items, such as school supplies, hygiene items, small toys, and stuffed animals. Boxes can be filled for girls or boys in various age groups. Please do not include toothpaste, candy or anything liquid (bubbles, shampoo, etc.). \$10 (cash or check payable to *Samaritan's Purse*) can be included in your box to cover the cost of shipping. Monetary donations are also welcome and will be used to purchase items to fill shoeboxes and cover the cost of shipping.

Filled shoeboxes must be returned to the church by Sunday, November 5, 2023 and can be placed in the conference room. Please contact Alyssa Berg at 301-641-9764 or by email at jasonandalysa@hotmail.com, if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your generosity with this special ministry!

Alyssa Berg

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

Christmas Outreach is a wonderful program started by community church members almost 25 years ago. This ministry was created to provide families of S. Washington Co. in need with winter clothing and gifts for the children. The families are

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH Cont...

chosen from Boonsboro, Sharpsburg, and Pleasant Valley schools. Teachers in the school system have witnessed children without winter coats, hats, and gloves and without shoes and boots that fit. These items are expensive for one child and most families have 3-5 children.

There are usually 15-20 families and approximately 50 children that the program provides for, and these families are divided amongst the local churches and the Nora Roberts Foundation. The families remain anonymous and are listed as Family 1, Boy age 8, etc. The lists hopefully will be up on the walls in the Gathering Room by the end of October.

The reason we start early is to catch the sales on the larger ticket items such as coats and boots. We also have a Christmas Outreach account for donations. If you don't enjoy shopping in the crowded stores you may participate by putting cash or a check (made out to Mt Nebo UMC and putting Christmas Outreach in the memo area) in the Outreach envelopes in the pews. We will be happy to shop for the items not purchased by other church members for the children.

We hope you will participate in this special ministry and share the Love of the Lord this Christmas. It has brought so much joy to the families that receive these gifts. If you have any questions, you may contact Ann Wright at 301-992-7216.

Ann Wright

MICAH'S BACKPACK

The leader in charge of Micah's Backpack is Jena Capaccione. Micah's Backpack began on Sept 14th. Mt Nebo will continue to pack on the 1st Thursday of each month. Our first day to pack will be Oct. 5th. A schedule is being made. The needed items are mac & cheese cups and snacks like: Rice Crispies, Goldfish, pretzels, popcorn and fruit snack roll ups. A special "Fill the Truck" event for Micah's Backpack will be held at Weis Market in Boonsboro on Oct. 7th. Thanks for supporting this mission that reaches out to help so many children in our area.

Ruth Resh

MISSIONS IN OUTREACH

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

World Communion Sunday is an annual celebration of unity for Christian churches across denominations. The special offering collected this day supports scholarships for United Methodist Students in the US and around the world. At Mt. Nebo we have been blessed as some of our students have received a scholarship through this program. It is celebrated by partaking of Holy Communion and knowing that this sacrament invites us to focus on the holiness of communion with God and one another and to recognize our unity as followers of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Please give generously to support our United Methodist students around the world.

VIM TEAM NEWS

The mission to Dawson Springs is almost here. We will be serving from October 1st till the 14th.

This year we will be installing and finishing sheet rock, building decks and porches, painting, installing windows, siding, floors, and leak repair. Seems there still is plenty to do to get the tornado survivors back into their homes. We are a flexible team and will do whatever we need to do to serve them.

Please keep the team in your prayers as we travel to Dawson Springs and serve. Pray for travelling mercies and safety for us all.

Cliff Wright



#FallVibes



MISSION MOUSE

If you have noticed the many boxes wrapped in Christmas wrapping paper around the church and wondered about starting our Christmas celebrations so early in the year, don't worry. We are starting to work on the Shoe Box ministry. This is an opportunity for each of us to pick up a box or two or three and start looking for items that will delight a child somewhere in the world who has very little. There are directions in the boxes letting you know the items that are good to pack in the boxes. All boxes are due back at Mt. Nebo by Sunday, Nov. 5th.



Just think of the delight of a child who has nothing opening a package and finding the items you purchased and knowing that somewhere there is someone who has learned the gift of giving as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ. You can share this love by just packing a box of toys, clothing, school supplies, and health items.

PICS AROUND MT. NEBO



WORSHIP MOMENTS



COMMUNION SUNDAY



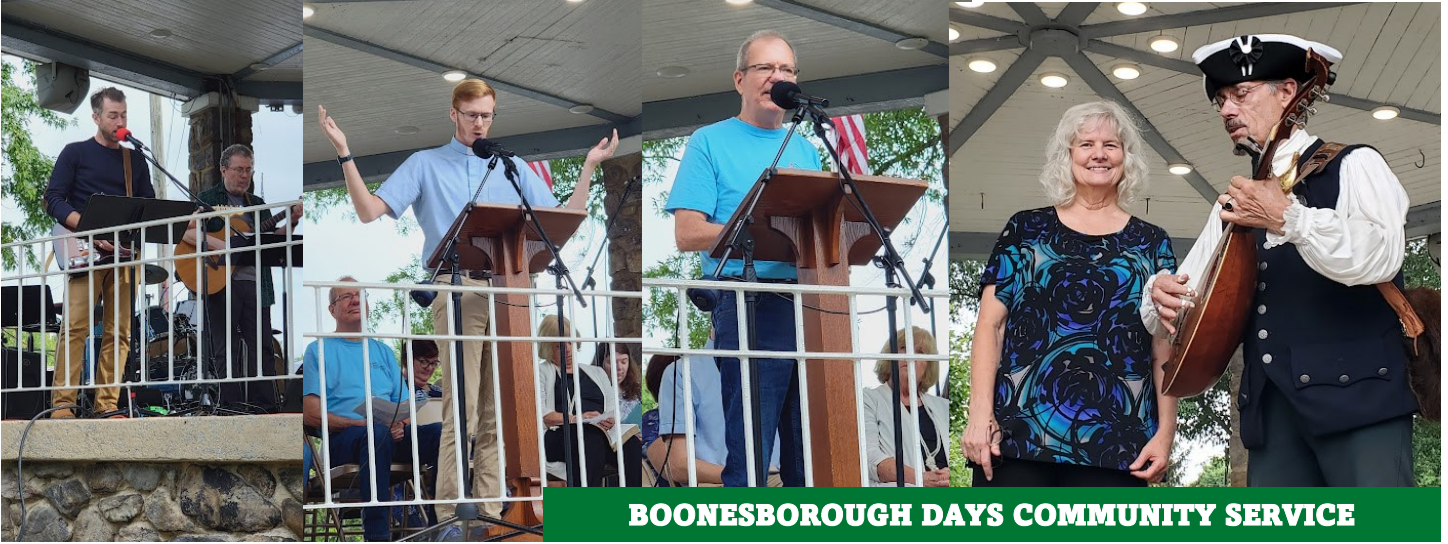
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

COMMUNITY MINISTRY PICS



BOONESBOROUGH DAYS

COMMUNITY MINISTRY CONT.



BOONESBOROUGH DAYS COMMUNITY SERVICE

9/11 PARADE



FALL ACTIVITIES



OCTOBER 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
World Communion Sunday				1pm Micah's Backpack Choir 6pm Bells 7pm		"Fill the Truck" Event @ Weis for Micah's Backpack
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Crop Walk @ Taylor Park in Keedysville 1pm		Girl Scouts 6pm		Choir 6pm Bells 7pm		9a Church Conference @ Bethel UMC
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Newsletter Articles and Photos Due		UMW Mtg 10am	CLC Advisory Mtg 6:30pm	Choir 6pm Bells 7pm	6-9p FLC Reserved	Faith Step 7:30am
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		Girl Scouts 6pm		Choir 6pm Bells 7pm		SHARE Pickup 8am
29	30	31				
		Trick or Treat Boonsboro 6-8pm				

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

Change Service Requested

