

January 2024

THE COURIER

A Monthly Publication of The Inter-Faith Chapel

A House of Prayer for All People

From the desk of Rev. Dr. Woodie Rea

We have just stepped over the threshold into a new year! Twelve new and unused months lay out before us, ready to be filled with our decisions and actions.

We hope it will be a better year than last. We always do, but perhaps even so more this time around.

There are ways in which we hope that our world will be a better place. There are ways in which we hope we will personally grow and improve. This, of course, is where the concept of New Year's Resolutions and having a "Happy New Year" originate.

Once these twelve months have passed, we are going to look back over 202 and are going to feel one of two ways. We are going to feel a sense of pride and pleasure over the fact that we achieved some of the goals we set forth, or we are going to feel the realization that we did not.

If you want to come out on the positive side, you are more likely to succeed if you evaluate what ultimately brings you happiness and what a "happy" new year would look like to you.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Happiness is when, what you think, what you say, and what you do, are all in harmony." True happiness comes from living a congruent, authentic, and integrated life with each part working together in unity.

With this in mind, the best New Year's Resolution may be for each of us to strive for happiness by resolving to be authentic and congruent with God, with ourselves, and with others. As Polonius said to his son, Laertes in *Hamlet* (1.3) *This above all else: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.*

To help in living an integrated life of harmony and happiness, I share with you this list of "Spiritually Literate New Year's Resolutions" from Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat of *Spirituality and Practice*:

I will live in the present moment, not in the past or worrying about the future.

I will cultivate the art of making connections with people.

I will be thankful for all the blessings in my life.

I will practice hospitality and graciousness.

I will seek fairness and justice for all.

I will practice little acts of kindness.

I will offer brief words of encouragement and expressions of courtesy.

I will cultivate the skill of deep listening.

I will practice reverence for life by seeing the sacred in all things.

I will give up trying to hide, deny, or escape from my imperfections.

Continued on page 2

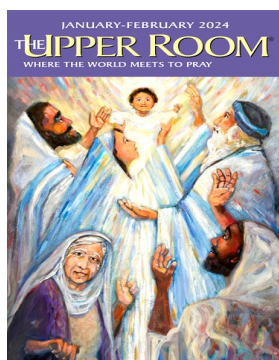
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In 2024, there will be exciting moments and amazing events. There will also be difficult days and trying times. Let us live in harmony with God, ourselves, and others as we go through all the days of this year, and beyond.

Happy New Year,

-Woodie

Upper Room — Devotional Books



January/February Upper Room issues are now available. Copies are placed in a basket in the Narthex.

You may pick up copies Monday through Friday from 9:00 am—3:00 pm.

Please also consider picking up a copy for a friend or neighbor who is not able to get out.



Each January, we must make time to take down the Christmas decorations.

Please come and help us on **Tuesday, January 9** starting at 2:00 pm.

All are welcome and your help is appreciated!

IN MEMORIAM



Ralph Sheaffer
December 11, 1929— December 4, 2023

Betty Printz-Sims
December 4, 2023

January Prayer of the Month

A Prayer for a Happy New Year

May the Lord make my New Year a happy one...

Not by shielding me from sorrow and pain, but by strengthening me to bear it if it comes.

Not by making my path easy, but by making me sturdy enough to tread any path.

Not by taking hardship from me, but by taking all cowardice and fear from my heart as I meet hardships.

Not by granting me unbroken sunshine, but by keeping my face bright even in the shadows.

Not by making my life always pleasant, but by showing me where men and His cause need me most and by making me zealous to be there and to help...

God, make my year a happy one.

—*Guideposts Magazine (January 1973)*

Sunday Bus Service Available



Bus service is available on Sunday mornings for those who live in Leisure World and do not have their own transportation. Riders must

be able to get on and off the bus without assistance. This service is designed for those who attend most Sundays, rather than those who need an occasional ride.

There is room for a few more riders. If you are interested, please call Bonnie Bonner at 301-598-5312.



Prayer

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for
but everything that I had hoped for.

Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers
were answered,
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.

~Unknown

Do you have a 2024 gate pass?

Leisure World continues to improve the systems used for community access to increase security. The Chapel was asked to provide names of those who attend our services from outside of Leisure World on a regular basis and 2024 gate passes were mailed to them to help expedite their entrance.

Please know that all visitors are always welcome for any of our services and events, but that obtaining a printed pass will assist in your entry going more quickly and smoothly.

If you live outside of Leisure World and did not receive a 2024 gate pass to be scanned at the gates, please contact Bonnie Bonner. You may call her at 301-598-5312 or email her at b.bonner@inter-faithchapel.org.



This is the first month of the rest of your life

John Denver wrote a song in the '70's, *Today Is The First Day Of The Rest Of My Life*, singing about waking up in the morning, envisioning his life, and looking "forward to my growing old". Would you like to feel stronger, healthier, and more peaceful a year from now? Then this is the time to start! Don't make a list of

New Year's resolutions that are not sustainable. Instead, take one small concrete step towards a more satisfying life and commit one hour a week to your own health and happiness.

Did you make resolutions about getting healthier or losing weight or being less stressed last year? How did it go? If you'd like to start again or enhance your progress, Body & Brain Yoga is your chance for you to take concrete action and stick with it. Since IFC members can do this in the comfort of their home and at no cost, well, it seems like a no-brainer. On January 4th, the first Thursday of the month, power up your computer, grab a chair and Zoom into the IFC Chair Yoga class.

This ongoing class is free to members of the IFC. Classes start promptly at 3pm. The room opens at 2:45 pm so you can arrange your camera and chair and be ready to start at 3 pm. No previous experience is necessary to join our warm and friendly group as we improve our physical, mental, and spiritual health through mindful movement. You can start no matter what your health is like right now and bit by bit feel, breathe, and move more easily.

Let's make 2024 a year where we learn to live a happier, healthier and blessed life every day. To join, email Christine Tetrault at ctetra11@aol.com. She will send you the information you need and answer any questions.



THE INTER-FAITH CHAPEL LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

*Entering the Passion of Jesus:
A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*
By Amy-Jill Levine

**Tuesdays, February 13, 20, 27, and March 5, 12 and 19
1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
Facilitator: Dr. Ramonia L. Lee**

Jesus' final days were full of risk. Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward. Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade. He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes or anointed him with costly perfume. We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges.

In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. Levine looks into characters such as Judas, Pilate, Caiaphas, the disciples, and the women around Jesus to understand their relationships and roles in the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions and how we all face risk in our Christian experience.

The sessions will explore the following:

- February 13 Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem: Risking Reputation
- February 20 The Temple Incident: Risking Righteous Anger
- February 27 The Anointing of Jesus and the Role of Women: Risking Challenge
- March 5 Jesus' Teachings in the Temple The First Dinner: Risking Rejection
- March 12 The Last Supper Traditions: Risking the Loss of Friends
- March 19 Gethsemane: Risking Temptation

Join Dr. Lee on Tuesdays during Lent: **February 13, 20 and 27; March 5, 12 and 19** at 1:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. The text for the class is *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*. The cost of the book is \$13.00. It is also available on most e-readers at a reduced price. Call 301-598-5312 to register no later than Wednesday, February 6. Please let us know if you want a book when you register.

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Baltimore Musicales
Lift Every Voice and Sing
Sunday, February 25, 2024
at 3:30 PM
The Inter-Faith Chapel



Join the artists of Baltimore Musicales for *Lift Every Voice and Sing* on Sunday, February 25, 2024 at 3:30 PM at The Inter-Faith Chapel. This afternoon of music, poetry, and community will celebrate the tremendous contributions of Black artists, both past and present, who have shared their talents and their stories and changed the course of music history. Hear ensembles by Leisure World resident Glenda Clay, who serves as the Gospel Choir director at The Inter-Faith Chapel, as well as art songs and spirituals by Hall Johnson, Jasmine Barnes, Margaret Bonds, Moses Hogan, H. Leslie Adams, William Grant Still, Thomas Kerr, and Betty Jackson King. Featured performers include Angeli Ferrette, Shana Oshiro, Jarrod Lee, Justin Harrison, Hakeem Henderson, cellist Jodi Beder, and pianist Elizabeth G. Hill. The concert will be followed by a reception--the perfect opportunity to chat with the artists and meet fellow music lovers. Tickets are \$20, available at the door or online at <https://www.baltimoremusicales.org/performances/lift-every-voice-and-sing>.



Thanks to All for a Successful Ministry this Christmas!

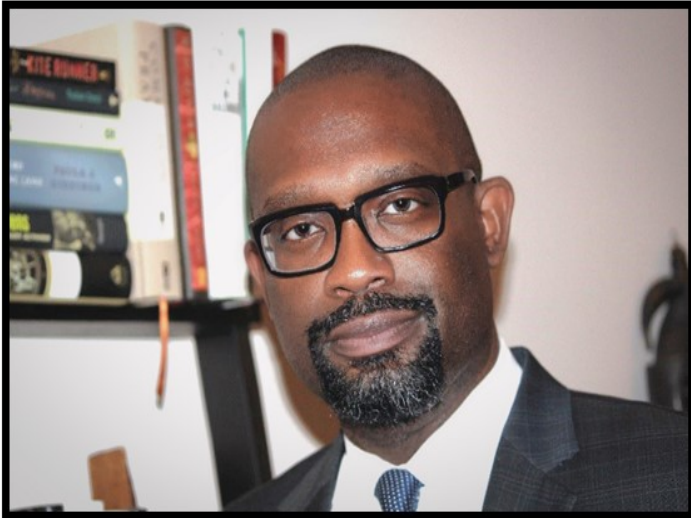
Thanks to the bag stuffers and bag deliverers who spent so many loving hours creating the holiday gift bags, and for the other seasonal craft items that have been provided to many who do not get out very often. In the two weeks before Christmas, about 75 members and affiliates received holiday packages. Also, a special thanks goes to Tyra Thompson, Chair of the Outreach and Fellowship Committee for her arduous work and great organizational skill in coordinating this effort. She assembled a group of dedicated workers who helped make this season of the year a blessing for so many!

A wonderful time was had by all in attendance at The Inter-Faith Women's Christmas Program. The story of the Crismons, the crèche, and the people who were there when Jesus was born was heard by all. The Bell Ringers, special music and a play about the story of Jesus's birth told by Chapel members were part of the program. Thanks to Ginger Samara and others for organizing this special event!



Lessons & Carols Sunday featured the Chancel Choir, singers from the Baltimore Musicales and Dr. Holly Oberle, Director of Music. Paul and Betty Arneson lit the Advent Candle and artwork depicting our Savior's birth painted by Myriam Amaro-Lawrence was presented.





The Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Worship Celebration Monday, January 15 at 10:00 a.m.

The annual community worship celebration observing the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, January 15. This service is co-sponsored by The Inter-Faith Chapel and The Leisure World Association for African American Culture. Music will be provided by the Inter-Faith Gospel Choir under the direction of Rev. Glenda Clay and master organist

Everett P. Williams. Drumming will be provided by the Ogoni Harambee Drumming Circle and Percussion Ensemble. The theme for this celebration is: *A New Dream for A New Day*.

The speaker for this celebratory service will be Rev. William H. Lamar, IV. Pastor of the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. For 20 years, Lamar has been actively involved with Direct Action Research Training (DART), Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), and the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) to organize for justice in local communities. Most recently, he has collaborated with Repairers of the Breach, Poor People's Campaign – A National Call for Moral Revival, Center for Community Change (CCC), and People Improving Communities through Organization (PICO) to enact social and economic justice and to exhibit a real embrace of the beloved community.

Rev. Lamar earned the Bachelor of Science degree in public management with a minor in philosophy and religion and a certificate in human resource management *magna cum laude* from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1996. In 1999, he earned the Master of Divinity degree from Duke University Divinity School. Lamar is currently a doctoral student in the inaugural cohort of Christian Theological Seminary's Ph.D. program in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric. An avid reader and writer, Lamar has published articles in outlets such as *Christian Century*, *The Christian Recorder*, *Divinity Magazine*, *FaithandLeadership.com*, *The Anvil*, *TheUndefeated.com*, and the *Huffington Post*.

All are invited to join us as we recommit ourselves to the cause of justice and freedom and remember those in the Civil Rights Movement whose sacrifices make even such a gathering possible.

Centering Prayer

Lenten Centering Prayer: Seven Wednesdays in Lent, 6:00 – 7:00 pm. An Invitation to be still before God through centering prayer Wednesdays in Lent: “Be Still and Know that I am God” Psalm 46:10

Wednesday, February 14
(Ash Wednesday)
Wednesday, February 21

Wednesday, February 28
Wednesday, March 6
Wednesday, March 13

Wednesday, March 20
Wednesday March 27

Do you have a desire to deepen your relationship with God during Lent? If your answer is yes, please join others who seek to be still and know God more deeply through centering prayer. Participants will meet in a sacred circle of prayer each Wednesday evening in Lent from 6:00 – 7:00 pm in the Chapel’s fellowship hall. In addition to devoting 20 minutes of silence to the practice of centering prayer, facilitator Bertie Knisely will lead participants in deepening prayer practices such as breath prayer, sacred movement, and chant. *Please register by February 11 by calling the Chapel office at 301-598-5312 or by emailing facilitator Bertie Knisely at bertiek@moravian.edu.* All are welcome.

What is Centering prayer? Centering prayer is a method of contemplative prayer with the sole intention of offering ourselves to God and consenting to God’s presence and work within us. It is a spiritual practice of intentional silence, in which we let go not only of the noise and sounds of the outside world, but also seek to let go of the inner noise of our mind’s wandering thoughts. It invites us to contemplation: communion with God beyond thoughts, words, emotions, sense experiences, or acts. St. John of the Cross tells us, “Contemplation is nothing other than a secret, peaceful, loving inflow of God. If given room, it will fire the soul in the spirit of love”.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR THE MONTH

One practice invites us to bless strangers quietly, secretly. Offer it to people you notice on the street, in the market, on the bus. “May you be happy. May you be at peace.” Feel the blessing move through your body as you offer it. Notice how you both receive some benefit from the blessing. Gently, almost without effort, each and every blessing becomes a Sabbath.

~Wayne Muller in Sabbath
by Maggie Oman Shannon

To Practice This Thought:

When you are out and about, silently and secretly bless as many strangers as possible.

Inter-Faith Women donate to DC Central Kitchen

The offering at the Inter-Faith Women’s Christmas program on December 7 was designated for DC Central Kitchen (DCCK).

Thanks to everyone who attended and made a donation, The Chapel was able to donate \$500 to help this non-profit organization. During a limited time in December, an anonymous donor offered to match all donations to DCCK, so The Chapel’s \$500 was doubled!

Since 1989, DCCK has worked to combat hunger and poverty through job training and job creation. The organization provides hands-on culinary training to individuals facing high barriers to employment. DCCK picks up wasted food and turns it into balanced meals for shelters and non-profits, while training jobless adults. Thank you to all who donated!





Finding a Silver Lining at the start of a New Year January, 2024 Health Article

At the start of a New Year, think about the ways you can keep from being overwhelmed by world events and obstacles in your own life. While you may not be able to find a silver lining in every situation or always manage stress as well as you would like, there are strategies and perspectives that can help you navigate the challenges ahead. One of the most important and helpful ways of handling stress and focusing on the positive is by practicing gratitude. This perspective can help in minor, temporary situations or a long-term crisis.

If you're facing a health challenge, take time to appreciate the person giving you a ride from the doctor or the nurse who is particularly caring. You may find yourself feeling a little guilty appreciating your good fortune knowing that others aren't in the same situation. You're not being insensitive by being thankful you're safe or that you survived trials and have things that others do not have. What you can do is take that sense of gratitude and put it to work by learning more about yourself and perhaps helping those around you, even it's just reaching out to offer love and support. Indeed, truly practicing gratitude is more than automatically saying "thank you" when you receive something. Regularly expressing gratitude to people simply for being in your life can uplift and can strengthen relationships.

Connect with those you love. Stay in community, especially when things are hard. If you stay disconnected, you risk becoming socially isolated, which can adversely affect your cognitive, mental, and physical health and well-being. It's also helpful to limit your interactions with people who bring negativity and conflict into your life. You will be better off if you can surround yourself with positive energy and supportive people. Choose to disconnect from those who really do not share similar values in major ways that will only upset you and do not try to change people minds if they are not open to it.

It's important not to get caught up in news and events that are beyond your control. Taking a break or simply dialing down your news consumption may be healthier. Limit news exposure so that you can stay educated, but not unnecessarily take in too much so you can't function, because that does nobody any good. Prioritizing your mental and physical health are important anytime, but especially so when going through a difficult period or coping with more stress than usual. Make sure you have adequate vitamin D in the winter. A warm chamomile herbal tea will reduce your stress and anxiety and calm your nerves and uplift your mood.

Thank you God for all your many blessing and for keeping us safe from harm.

~Andra Matthews, RN, BSN, Health Advocate

2023 Contribution Statements

Contribution statements will be mailed, no later than January 31, to everyone who contributed a total of \$250 or more to The Chapel in 2023.

If you do not receive a statement or have any questions about your statement, please call Bonnie at 301-598-5312 or email her at: b.bonner@inter-faithchapel.org.

Financial Report			
Giving Actual Month of November 2023	Giving Budget Month of November 2023	Giving Actual Year to Date November 2023	Giving Budget Year to Date November 2023
\$72,013	\$38,854	\$419,084	\$391,496

You may call Bonnie Bonner, Chapel Administrator, at 301-598-5312 if you desire a more detailed financial report.

**Slate of Council Officers and Chairs
To Serve on The Inter-Faith Chapel Council From
January 2024 through December 2024**

- Council Chair..... Maureen Harris
- Council Vice-Chair..... Elizabeth Brooks-Evans
- Council Secretary..... Peggy Miles
- Treasurer..... Roman Czujko
- Building & Grounds..... Rick Kaiser
- Christian Education & Spirituality..... Karen Robertson / Bertie Knisely
- Finance..... Don Hill
- Inter-Faith Women..... Ginger Samara
- Membership..... Maggi Lindley
- Missions..... Betty Hughes
- Music..... Katherine Latterner
- Outreach and Fellowship..... Tyra Thompson
- Pastor Affiliate Relations..... Arlene Kaiser
- Worship..... Heidi Bender

2024 Offering Envelopes



Offering envelopes for 2024 are available for pick up in the Meditation Chapel and will be in the Narthex, after the Christmas season. You may pick your box up on Sunday morning or Monday-Friday from 9 am-3 pm.

If you give by mailing your offering, dropping it off at The Chapel, or placing your gift in the offering plate, using envelopes makes the counting and tracking process more efficient and accurate.

Please call Bonnie at 301-598-5312 to request a box of envelopes if you have not used these in the past. The Sunday morning counters will thank you!

January

CALENDAR 2024

Thursday, January 4 @ 11:00 AM — Gospel Choir
 Thursday, January 4 @ 1:00 PM — Chancel Choir
 Monday, January 8 @ 1:00 PM — Movie: *UP*
 Thursday, January 11 @ 11:00 AM — Gospel Choir
 Thursday, January 11 @ 1:00 PM — Chancel Choir
 Monday, January 15 @ 10:00 AM — MLK Community Worship Celebration
 Wednesday, January 17 @ 6:00 PM — Centering Prayer
 Thursday, January 18 @ 11:00 AM — Gospel Choir
 Thursday, January 18 @ 1:00 PM — Chancel Choir
 Monday, January 22 @ 1:00 PM — Movie: *SOUL*
 Thursday, January 25 @ 11:00 AM — Gospel Choir
 Thursday, January 25 @ 1:00 PM — Chancel Choir
 Monday, January 29 @ 1:00 PM — Movie: *FINDING DORY*

New Year's Resolutions

T	E	V	A	L	U	A	T	E	U	A	M	E	W
D	M	E	V	A	R	B	O	A	V	B	E	E	I
E	I	G	O	A	L	I	A	S	N	D	R	E	N
T	A	T	B	A	E	T	T	E	G	R	A	T	C
E	L	H	J	E	A	C	H	I	E	V	E	P	O
R	C	T	E	V	Y	R	E	V	O	C	S	I	D
M	O	G	C	O	E	S	O	P	R	U	P	H	T
I	R	N	T	R	R	E	A	C	H	E	O	O	H
N	P	E	I	P	A	I	L	B	E	H	E	P	U
A	F	R	V	M	P	O	S	I	T	I	V	E	R
T	O	T	E	I	M	E	A	N	I	N	G	T	E
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PLAN
 OBJECTIVE
 TARGET
 POSITIVE
 WIN
 FOCUS
 DISCOVERY
 HOPE
 ATTITUDE
 IMPROVE
 STRENGTH
 EVALUATE
 MEANING
 BRAVE
 GOAL
 RESULTS
 ATTAINABLE
 DETERMINATION
 PURPOSE
 ACHIEVE
 PROCLAIM
 REACH



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phone 301-598-5312
www.inter-faithchapel.org

Rev. Dr. Woodie Rea, Senior Minister

Rev. Dr. Ramonia L. Lee,
Minister of Congregational Life

Rev. Dr. Robert W. Perry
Minister Emeritus

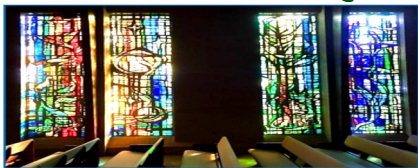
Dr. Holly Oberle, Director of Music

Bonnie B. Bonner, Administrator

Joy M. Dufour, Administrative Assistant

Steve Buck, Gary Carpenter
Video Technicians and Chapel Sextons

Come
Worship
with us



Please join us in-person for
worship at

The Inter-Faith Chapel
on Sundays at 10:00 A.M.

You may also live-stream on
Sundays at 10:00 A.M.

In addition, you may view the
Worship Service on YouTube
or visit our website at:
www.inter-faithchapel.org.

Wishing you a
Happy New Year
and blessed year
ahead. May
God's light
guide your way
in 2024.