



AUMC WITNESS

Our Mission: Love God, Love Neighbor, Serve the World

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Vol. 10 No. 7



We are a Stephen Ministry Church

March 26, 2013

DISCERNMENT 2013: REFRESH

By Rick Hampton

As you have been reading in recent Witness articles, AUMC has embarked on a discernment, "**REFRESH**", to evaluate how our faith community is fulfilling God's will. The Discernment of God's will and His plans for us is an ongoing process. We have recently taken a survey of who we are, and we are scheduling home meetings to evaluate how AUMC has been fulfilling God's will and how we should move forward in the future with AUMC programs and missions. In the most recent Witness, Dr. Brown asked a series of questions, worth repeating, that we as a faith community must continually answer as we move forward in fulfilling God's will:

How faithful have we been to our vision? What have been the results of our efforts? Have new disciples been made? Have lives been transformed? Is our larger community aware of us? Are we aware of the needs of the larger community? Is the direction we discerned still the way God calls us? Are there things we could do better? Are there things we should stop doing? Are there things we should change?

We encourage each of you to sign up and attend an upcoming AUMC Discernment REFRESH home meeting in April. As discussed above, the meeting purpose is to prayerfully evaluate how we have been fulfilling the will of God at AUMC as perceived by AUMC congregants; and answer the questions of **what God wants from us** and what God hopes our work together will be in the future. Sign-ups will occur after each church service. If you cannot sign-up in person, please contact the church office for scheduling details.

Discerning God's will is not just the work of an individual person. Each of us has perspectives as God individually speaks to us about His will. God's word is set out in the Bible. It provides general guidance to us relating to His will. And He has given each of us free will to decide what path we take as we move forward in our spiritual journey. Collectively as a faith community we also have free will to define the path forward. God acts within the faith community, so collectively discerning what to do and be as a faith community is important. How do we identify the specific path forward for AUMC? Through the Bible, we can discover wisdom and direction. John Wesley, one of Methodism's founding fathers, developed what is now called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to help us interpret the scriptures. It gives us a proven way of exploring, growing in, and living our faith in Jesus Christ. Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in **SCRIPTURE**, illumined by **TRADITION**, amplified in personal **EXPERIENCE**, and confirmed by **REASON**. God reveals Himself to us through each of these four dimensions. And each dimension contributes to our understanding and experience of who God is and how God has acted in the past, is acting now and will act in the future. Collectively discerning the path forward, based on where we have been and our view of how God is asking AUMC to move forward through our programs and missions is the objective of the REFRESH.

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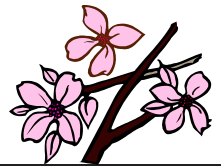
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The Ahhh-ness of Things

*The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.*
- Isaiah 40:8



“We encounter life as cherry blossoms spread along the ground with only a hope of a spring-like return.”



I remember my first time experiencing the Washington, DC phenomenon known as cherry blossom season. I was awestruck by the beauty of the blossoms along the tidal basin against the backdrop of monuments and bridges and a bright blue sky. Time seemed to pause as people shed their political ambitions and their skipped their business meetings to instead gather under the cherry trees to inhale the fragrance of spring. Then, shortly after their arrival, soon after peak bloom, a rain fell and a strong wind blew. The cherry blossoms blanketed the earth like freshly fallen snow. People packed up their picnics and returned their attention to matters more mundane until the cherry blossoms returned the following spring.

Mono no aware is a Japanese expression that refers to the fleeting nature of things. The phrase is literally translated as the pathos, the poignancy, or the “ahh-ness” of things. It reflects the idea that there is a simultaneous beauty and sadness that comes with the awareness of the impermanence and transience of things. This awareness of impermanence heightens the appreciation of beauty even while it causes a gentle sadness. Among the Japanese, cherry blossoms are the ultimate symbol of *mono no aware*.

This year, the cherry blossoms are at peak during Holy Week. As we commemorate the climatic conclusion of Jesus ministry, we do so with a heightened awareness of its beauty and significance but also with a sadness knowing the fate that awaits Jesus on Calvary. Easter, similarly, evokes a feeling of *mono no aware* with its reminders of human mortality overcome only by the hope of eternal life.

The prophet similarly reminds that all people are like grass. Indeed, “their constancy is like the flower of the field.” The grass withers and the flower fades “when the breath of the Lord blows upon it.” We experience this impermanence regularly in life, with its series of births and deaths, baptisms and funerals, spring times and winters. We encounter life as cherry blossoms spread along the ground with only



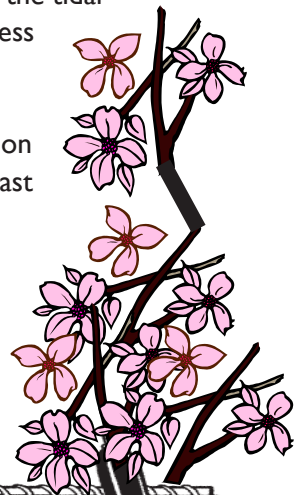
a hope of a spring-like return. What, then, is resurrection?

Resurrection is the antidote to the impermanence of life. Indeed, resurrection does not make life permanent; rather, it provides a promise that death is also impermanent. The grass still withers, the flower still fades, the cherry blossoms still fall, but the story does not end there. The word of our God stands forever. The resurrection promise of our God stands forever.

This Easter season, take a walk along the tidal basin. Pause and experience the “Ahhh-ness of things.” Join us for Holy Week and Easter services. And be reminded of the words of Fredrick Buechner, “Resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing.” Amen!

Easter Blessings,

Rev. Cynthia Johnson-Oliver



DATEBOOK

- March 27, 6:30 p.m.:** Lenten Communion service
- March 28:** Maundy Thursday, 7:30 p.m. service
- March 29:** Good Friday, 7:30 p.m. Tenebrae service
- March 31, 6:30 a.m.:** Easter: sunrise service
8:30 a.m., 11 a.m.: regular services
9:50 a.m. Adult Sunday School

NEWS IN BRIEF

Name that sermon! Have a pressing religious question? Curious what our pastors think about your favorite topic? Now's YOUR chance to determine the subject of our next sermons! Email your thoughts to office@annandale-umc.org with "Name That Sermon series" in the subject line, and our pastors will use YOUR ideas as the subjects of the sermon series later this spring!

Your LMP offering can help families right here in Annandale – AUMC's weekly food assistance ministry touches hundreds of lives in the neighborhoods where we live. Our meals program at Poe Middle School serves students a hot meal each Wednesday afternoon. (**85% of Poe's students qualify** for the free lunch program.) Immanuel's Thursday food distribution program helps those in need feed their families. Please consider a generous donation to Lenten Mission Projects to keep these vital programs going. Contributions can be made by check or online at www.annandale-umc.org.



A Men's Spiritual Retreat is scheduled for Friday, **April 19**, 6 p.m. til Saturday, **April 20**, noon, at the Northern Virginia 4-H Educational and Conference Center near Front Royal. Thought-provoking general and small group sessions are planned and Dr. Clarence Brown will be the special guest speaker. Optional golf outings and Civil War tours are available Friday and Saturday afternoons. A \$100 fee covers Friday night lodging and dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch. Reservations are **due by April 1**. Contact gary@garyfitzgibbon.com or call 703-963-8707.

Camp Highroad "Giving Back" Campout is scheduled for **May 17-19**. This is an opportunity to help clean up and repair the facilities and grounds at Camp Highroad. Supplies will be purchased with donations for the Lenten Mission projects. Lodging reservations are due by **April 10**. Contact Mark Bradley, Bradleyfam@aol.com.

Save the Date – Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, Saturday, May 4. A great way to meet people from the church that you have not had an opportunity to meet or to catch up with friends you haven't seen for awhile. Sign up to be a HOST or a GUEST. Please contact Lin Hobson at 703 642-8623/email at kraavings@cox.net. Details to follow.

Christmas in April (Rebuilding Together) is scheduled for **April 27**, and volunteers are needed for a half or full day. AUMC will be participating for the 14th straight year and will team with ACCA/St. Barnabas Episcopal on a local "house repair project" to a deserving family or Fairfax County group home. Participation by all ages is welcome. This is a great opportunity for anyone who needs Community Service hours and is sponsored by the Missions Committee and ACCA. If you are interested in working or "fixing a treat for the workers", contact John Clarke, 703-642-3836 or 703-606-6464 (cell) or email clarkejhl@gmail.com.

Wanda Warren (soprano) and Young Choi (piano), Immanuel Campus, Annandale UMC, will be making a joint presentation to the inhabitants of the Hermitage of Northern Virginia, 5000 Fairbanks Ave, Alexandria at 2 pm, Saturday, **April 27**, 2013. This presentation is intended for the inhabitants of the Hermitage but it will also be open to others. Please pass the word.



Easter Adult Sunday School: "Immanuel, Incarnation, and the Meaning of Easter." March 31 at 9:50 am; Sanctuary. All adult classes will combine. Burnett Thompson will discuss the significance of Jesus as "God with us" and "God in the flesh." All adults are invited to join us on Easter Sunday!

Easter Sunday Parking: As a show of hospitality to our visitors on Easter Sunday, we request that any AUMC members who are able would please park at the Blooms parking lot on the corner of Gallows Road and Columbia Pike.

MINISTRY MEETINGS

Tues., April 2	Trustees	7:30 p.m.	Room 303
Wed., April 3	Stephen Ministry	7:30 p.m.	Room 303
Tues., April 9	Finance	7 p.m.	Room 210
	Missions	7 p.m.	Room 302

LECTIONARY TEXTS

March 31, Easter Day: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 (UMH 839); I Corinthians 15:19-26; John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12

April 7, Second Sunday of Easter: Acts 5:27-32, Psalm 150 (UMH 862), Revelations 1:4-8, John 20:19-31

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(USPS 046-900)

Send address changes to:

Annandale United Methodist Church

6935 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003-3458

Published biweekly.

Periodicals Postage Paid at
Annandale, VA 22003

WEEKLY VOLUNTEERS

Sunday, March 31

Outreach greeters 8:30 a.m. R. Hampton, 9:30 B. Brown,
10:30 a.m. W. Ward

Greeters: Deborah/Miriam Circles

Fellowship hosts: Exploring Faith in Life

Ushers: 8:30 a.m. S. Chase, G. Sherfey, P. Sherfey, R. Gordon,
S. Nkesi (c)

11 a.m. B. Gordon, G. Rothman, R. Witkowski,
R. Gordon, P. Adams (c)

Sunday, April 7

Outreach greeters: 8:30 a.m. E. Wilson/C. Cox, 9:30 M.
Pearson, 10:30 a.m. L. McConville/E. Moss

Greeters: Altar Guild

Fellowship hosts: Bible Fellowship Class

Ushers: 8:30 a.m. S. Fleming, D. Pemberton, R. Roberts, K. Sabo (c)
11 a.m. R. Gallagher, C. Perdue, P. Straub, P. Shockley (c)

NEXT DEADLINE

Friday, March 29 is the deadline for the April
9 Witness which covers April 14 and 21

CIRCLE NEWS

**As always, new members and guests are
welcome at all circle meetings!**

DEBORAH: Mon., Apr. 8, 7:30 p.m., AUMC Rm. 210. Prog.: Carol Irons will continue the book study on *More Bad Girls of the Bible*. Hostesses: Pat and Christi Shattuck. Dev.: Sandy Barker.

FRIENDSHIP: Tues., Apr. 16, 12:30 p.m., IUMC Fellowship Hall. Prog.: The history and study of hymns and singing of the hymns.

LYDIA: Thurs., Apr. 11, 10:00 a.m., AUMC Rm. 209. Prog.: Covering last minute details concerning the AUMW Spring Tea and visiting. Hostesses: TBA. Dev.: Rosemary Perdue.

M&M's : Sat., Apr. 20, 8:00 a.m., at the home of Pat Sherfey. Hostess: Erin McKenney. Dev.: Becki Stewart.

MARTHA: Mon., Apr. 22, 7:00 p.m., IUMC Fellowship Hall. Prog.: Betsy Clevenger will continue with the study of Women of the Bible. Dev.: Betsy Clevenger. Refreshments served.

MIRIAM: Thurs., Apr. 11, 10:30 a.m., AUMC Rm. 210. Prog.: Pot Luck luncheon bringing a favorite dish with the recipe & discussing last minute preparations for the AUMW Spring Tea.

PHOEBE: Tues., Apr. 23, 7:30 p.m. at Guapo's – Shirlington.

Brown Bag Lunch makers needed

Thursdays through March, noon at Immanuel campus. The lunches are for the Bailey's Homeless Shelter. Help is also needed with food distribution every Thursday, 5 – 7 p.m. For more information, call Betsy Clevenger, 703-425-6424.

