

From the Pastor's Office

The Lord Be With You



The Lord be with you.

It's a phrase we hear often in worship. It begins the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving in the Communion Liturgy. But as often happens with these repeated phrases,

they become second nature and their meaning often passes us by.

Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk and spiritual writer who lived in the last century wrote that the phrase "The Lord be with you" is actually an announcement of great joy. Our Lord is not in some distant place, looking down upon us uninterested and disengaged. Our Lord is present and living in the world. Our Lord is with us.

The Stewardship Program at COA this year centered on the theme of "Connecting the Dots." My time with you in covering for Pastor Jessie's maternity leave has centered

on the theme of what happens after the Stewardship Campaign.

So, what does life together at COA look like now?

You have lots of gatherings beyond worship on Sunday mornings. You value Christian Education for adults and children. You meet during the week to discuss theology. You meet in peoples' homes and share meals. You go on mission trips. You almost have a third worship service every Sunday night when thirty youth walk through your doors. You connect with children in supporting the pre-school. You keep your eyes and ears open for those who need you in your community. There is a lot of life-giving ministry going on at the corner of Green Holly and College Parkway.

So, what's next? What are God's plans for COA? "Gracious!" you might understandably react. "Aren't we doing enough? Is God never satisfied?"

It's not a matter of adding more events to the calendar. That's not the point at all. Faith is dynamic and does not allow us to

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Hangings of the Greens

Saturday, December 2

5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

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Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, December 2
5:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Please join us for an evening of fellowship as we decorate the church for the holiday season.

Come and enjoy great chili and wonderful side dishes. There will be crafts for the children and for those of you that are really into decorating we will need your help as well to decorate the tree and church. We will also have a carol sing after dinner! Please take a look at the sign-up sheet posted in the narthex to sign up for a dish to share.

Here's the schedule for the evening:

- 5:00 p.m. Hanging of the Greens
- Crafts for kids
- Bulletin painting
- 6:00 p.m. All food items in place
(large meeting room)
- 6:15 p.m. Tree lighting, blessing
and dinner
- 7:00 p.m. Carol sing

You can find the sign-up sheet in the Narthex on the bulletin board,

so please sign up and let us know that you are coming.

Hope to see you there!

Yours in Christ,

The COA Deacons

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hunker down and settle in, all cozy and comfortable. We are always learning. Where does the COA community need to be stretched? What new and maybe uncomfortable territory is God asking you to explore? What hard questions are you personally asking that desperately need a faith perspective? Are you open and prepared for the surprises that God has in store for you?

As my time with you ends, I want to thank you with all my heart for your gracious welcome and patience with me. It's been a joy to be with you.

I will keep my ear to the ground knowing that God is equipping and empowering COA to “keep on keeping on” as you continue to bless the world.

The Lord be with you!

Pastor Dottie LaPenta



Pastor Jessie will be back in the pulpit beginning the first Sunday in Advent, December 3. During December, her weekday office hours will be limited and varied so that she can spend some time transitioning and attempting to strike a balance between the role of mother and pastor. Pastor Jessie is so grateful for the support that the COA community has shown her family, and continues to be thankful for COA's confidence and understanding.



Christmas Season Services at Christ Our Anchor

Christmas Cantata

December 17

10:00 a.m. Combined Service of Worship

All of our choirs join to celebrate the season with wonderful music!

Time of Meditation for Blue Christmas

December 21

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The Sanctuary will be open for private, quiet meditation.

Prayers and scripture readings will be available for use.

We Are Offering Three Christmas Eve Services Sunday, December 24

***Journey from Advent to Christmas Eve*
Service with Children's Pageant at 10:00 a.m.**

A child-friendly service that tells the story of Christmas
with music and a pageant

Candlelight Service of Worship

8:00 p.m.

Candlelight Services of lessons and carols
with The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Candlelight Services of Worship

11:00 p.m.

Candlelight Services of lessons and carols.

The Sunday After Christmas

December 31

10:00 a.m.

Combined Service of Worship

CELEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS SEASON WITH CHRIST OUR ANCHOR

COA Advent Fair Is Coming Soon!

Saturday, December 9

9 a.m. – noon

Price per child is \$15/\$10 per each additional child, which will support our Youth Group Mission. There will be plenty of activities for the children (3 years old and potty trained/no pull-ups to 5th grade), crafts, games, snacks and more Christmas fun! To reserve your child's spot or for information, please call the church office at 410-974-1713 or e-mail at coa21409@gmail.com

Adult volunteers are needed to make the Advent Fair a success. Please contact the church office at 410-974-1713 or by e-mail at coa21409@gmail.com if you can help.

COA Gift Giving/Wrapping Party

The Mission Committee will once again work with Severna Park Assistance Network (SPAN) to provide food and gifts for two families in the Broadneck area. This outreach program has been one of the more popular activities in which we participate.

Please help in one of three ways: (1) by providing food items; (2) by providing **unwrapped** gifts for the children; or (3) by contributing money to be used to purchase food and gifts. **Please be sure to label the item you are providing. The easiest way is to tape the tag you took with you to the item. All gifts and food should be brought to the church by Tuesday, December 5.**

Sign-up sheets and information are posted in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Stacie Cochran-McNeal at 410-974-1713 or by email at coa21409@gmail.com.

Please join the Mission Committee on **Sunday, December 10 at 12:30 p.m.** in the large meeting room for a Wrapping Party.



Enjoy light refreshments and fellowship, while we wrap the gifts and get them ready to be delivered to Severna Park Assistance

Network that afternoon.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacie Cochran-McNeal at 410-974-1713 or at coa21409@gmail.com.



Do you want to portray Joseph or a king, a sheep or donkey in COA's Annual Christmas Eve Pageant? Contact Nancy Jerome at songsensei@yahoo.com for more information and keep your eyes open for rehearsal information in the next few weeks.

COA Salutes Veterans And First Responders

On Sunday, November 12, COA recognized our veterans and first responders who protect our way of life. Walter Kolsch set up a memorial display in the Narthex and worked with Reverend LaPenta on the special services.

After each service, those attending were invited out front to COA's Memorial Garden for special observances. Scouts from the congregation

—Emma and Oliver Taylor for first service and Aiden and Alex Deal for second service—led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a prayer by Reverend LaPenta.

Following the first service ceremony, all enjoyed food prepared and organized by God's Gardeners.



Tea and Theology



Tea and Theology meets in the library at COA Tuesday afternoons from 2:30 – 4 p.m. We have some tea while we discuss what's up with us and life in general and then go on to a theological discussion, based on such things as books, DVDs, and world events.

On Nov 28, we began a 4-week viewing and discussion of the new Adam Hamilton DVD series, *Faithful Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph*. Hamilton, a terrific author and

speaker, tells us: “We’re not that different from Joseph. True, we may not be part of a story that will be remembered for all time, but like Joseph, we encounter circumstances that we’d never choose for ourselves.”

Come join us for this program or think about coming in the New Year when we will explore other exciting theological topics. All are welcome. There will be no meeting on Dec. 26.

2017 Stewardship Campaign

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25

Where are we now? We are not where we want to be, but we are feeling better than we did this time last year. Thank you to all of you who have submitted pledges. Even though a pledge is not a contract, it still gives Session a promising idea of what folks intend. This allows us to be realistic in planning a budget for the new year. We do plan on and receive loose offering through the year, but without knowing someone's intentions, it is harder to guess how much to allot for that. We currently have \$233,592 pledged from 52 giving units, which is more than \$17,000 less than last year and 9 fewer giving units. But we are still amazingly thankful.

Why are we thankful? It is because we have much for which to be thankful. You might remember that in last year's campaign we had to make up for having lost church membership.

This year that is not the case, so our potential is still out there. We have seven new unit pledges. We have a record 22 increased pledges, 22 pledges that stayed the same and only one pledge that was decreased. Our average annual pledge is above \$4,000, a fair increase over last year. In addition, through the Nominating Committee, we also had Time and Talents forms this year. This is all good news.

We also are very thankful for all the wonderful and energetic people who worked on this year's campaign. We want to say thanks to all of them. We had not only the actual members of the stewardship team—Jane Bartlett, Lawrie Gardner, Helen Kelley, Lisa Lawlor, Rick Link, Rob Urlock, and Pastor Jessie, as well as Rev. Dottie—who all put in loads of time and came up with innovative ideas and follow through, but we also had Church Office Manager, Stacie McNeal, and her back-up, Anne Hatcher, along with Session,

Deacons, Clerk of Session, Nominating Committee, ushers, and others too.

Then there were the dedicated and passionate Stewardship Campaign speakers who explained why certain aspects of COA and its mission mean so much to them. Several people told us they both enjoyed and were inspired by these. It truly takes a village, and this also shows we acknowledge ownership of COA's financial future. Yes, we are very thankful.

So why is there a shortfall? The bottom line is that we have more than a dozen giving units from last year, still in the church, that have not submitted

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pledges. We hope a portion of these will submit pledges before Session needs to finalize the budget. However, know that we will accept pledges any time throughout the year. Also, you can adjust your pledge up or down or

discontinue it whenever it best suits your situation by simply contacting an Administration Elder or our Office Manager.

Therefore, although we did not receive the dollar amount that we had hoped for, we still feel that in other aspects we had a successful campaign. If we do end up with a lower than 2017 working amount, Session, our treasurer and Pastor Jessie will all be working hard to fit our needs into this lesser amount. We will probably have to make prudent, cost-effective cuts to ensure we can continue to cover nondiscretionary expenses, but we want to make sure COA puts its faith into action. Thank you all for prayerfully considering how to best give of yourselves to Christ Our Anchor.

We are surrounded by God's benefits. The best use of these benefits is an unceasing expression of gratitude. — John Calvin

COA's Adult Mission Team Brings Relief to New Jersey

by Mike Henderson

Eight members of COA's Adult Mission Team worked with a group called SBP in coastal New Jersey the week of October 30 - November 3 to help families displaced from their homes by Super



Storm Sandy five years ago. The members included Tom Rorick, Frank Cain, Mike and Joan Henderson, Rick Link and our good

friends Bill Toner and Steve and Dotty Sellers from the Paxton United Methodist Church in Harrisburg, PA. Money from the Mission Committee, along with individual contributions from COA members, was sufficient to cover the \$680 paid to Morning Star Presbyterian Church in Bayville, NJ, to stay in their facilities.

During the week we worked at three different houses. We spent one day at a house in Keansburg, NJ, where we moved a lot of dirt and topsoil and painted foundation walls and stair

railings. A half day was spent at a house in Bayville removing concrete, rocks, tree roots, and other debris from the yard. The remainder of our time was spent working on a house in Brick, NJ, that is nearing completion. Here we hung doors, put up trim, caulked, and did lots of painting. The hope is that the family will be able to move into their home in the next month. Hearing about their 5-year struggle made us truly thankful for our blessings.



Dear Christ Our Anchor,
Thank you for letting us
use your parking lot during
our Bands By the Bay
marching band competition.
We would not have had enough
parking without your lots.
Sincerely,
Broadneck High School Marching
Band

A thank-you
note from
one of our
neighbors.

COA Pull Tabs Help Ronald MacDonald House

Ronald MacDonald House in Baltimore has been thrilled with the many pull-tabs Christ Our Anchor has provided them.

They receive money from aluminum collection points when they turn these in. Currently this money is then used to help fund the shuttle buses that take patients and their families from Ronald MacDonald House to various Baltimore hospitals for treatment and visitation.

Many families come to Baltimore by plane and have no local transportation nor do they know how to get around the city. Also, they frequently are upset because

of diagnoses and prognoses and it is best that they are not driving. These are some of the reasons why it is helpful to have a reliable shuttle and driver to deliver them where they need to be.





It is wonderful that our church is helping make this happen by the simple act of putting pull tabs in the container that sits on the credenza in the office hallway. All aluminum pull tabs are acceptable. For example, you can take them off beverage, soup, or pet food cans. Please take a minute to make a collection point in your home and office and then bring them in to the big jar here at Christ Our Anchor.

Fall Work Is A Big Success

Seventeen hearty souls came out on Saturday, October 28 and worked diligently to spruce up the church and the grounds around it. The kitchen was cleaned, windows were washed, some outside walls got a fresh coat of paint, lots of leaves were relocated, vines and tree branches were cut down, new doors for the shed were built, and two loads of yard waste were hauled to the dump.


Those who were able to stay until lunch were treated to brats and hot dogs, salads, chips, cookies, and soft drinks. The Property Committee would like to thank all who participated and encourage others to join us when we hold our Spring Work Day. It's a great way to get to know your fellow parishioners better.

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Forming and transforming disciples, leaders, congregations, and new worshiping communities

Grace AND GRATITUDE



For the last year I have made a practice of sending handwritten thank you notes to friends and colleagues. This might seem terribly archaic — why not express my appreciation in person, send a quick text, or post to their Facebook page? — but I'm convinced that this old-school technique is also a spiritual practice. I spend time thinking about the recipient, writing words that will have meaning upon their reading, and extending the love of Christ through a simple gesture.




Chip Hardwick

We are gifted with so many beloved people in our lives. I encourage you to voice your thanks to God and to them!

Growing in grace and gratitude alongside you,

Chip



Charles B. Hardwick
Director of Theology, Formation & Evangelism

COA Fall Women's Retreat Includes Study of Biblical Herbs

by Anna Werntz

The COA Fall Women's Retreat at Sinking Springs Herb Farm started at the pond with a morning Bible study. We were showered with sunshine and a view that warmed our hearts; birds were singing, and God's presence was breathtaking. We opened with a prayer and our host Anne joined us. We continued with a short discussion that included 1 Peter 5:6-7; Psalm 118:24; and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 from the Jesus Calling Bible.

After our study at the pond, we moved to the beautiful farmhouse where we met again with Anne who led the discussion on the 16 herbs of the Bible. We discussed ivy, bay, aloe, coriander, frankincense, myrrh, mint, rose, rue, saffron, wormwood, rosemary, fennel, caraway, dill, and costmary—a bible leaf. After this our host took us for a tour of the herb gardens and we were able to make wreaths.

Anne made us a vegetarian lunch with a garden vegetable soup and a hearty grain salad with Irish bread, most of this from her garden, delicious! After lunch, we ended our day with further discussion on the uses of herbs for today and closed our discussion with a Jesus Calling Bible Study on 2 Corinthians 5:7; Psalm 96: 6; John 8:12; and Psalm 36:9. This was a truly blessed day and I thank all of you for joining me.



Scavenger Hunt Kicks Off Youth Group's Year

COA's youth group kicked off their year with a scavenger hunt in downtown Annapolis. The youth were split into teams and tasked with finding different things around Main Street. Some of the tasks included playing on a playground, mimicking a statue and proposing to a stranger. A favorite was getting a piggyback ride from a midshipman.

Youth Group meets Sunday nights from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

