

Dranesville UMC Newsletter

August 2026

Something Surprising Comes Our Way through Leviticus

This month, I am leading a Bible study through Leviticus. I admit, when I tell people that, I sometimes get a polite but wary smile in return. Leviticus has a reputation. Priestly regulations, animal sacrifices, ancient ritual instructions that can feel a world away from our lives. It's not exactly the book people beg to study.

But I've been sitting with this material for years now, working through Jacob Milgrom's commentary on it, and I keep finding myself surprised. Genuinely moved, actually. There's something underneath all those ritual instructions that I didn't expect to find, and I want to share a bit of it with you here.

Milgrom has this phrase he uses to describe how Leviticus thinks about sin. He calls it the "Priestly Picture of Dorian Gray," after Oscar Wilde's novel where a man's portrait quietly absorbs every mark of

his moral decay while his own face stays untouched. That's basically how Leviticus pictures sin working. It doesn't necessarily show up on our faces, but it leaves a mark somewhere. It affects something beyond us, whether we meant it to or not.

Even unintentional wrongs, the text insists,



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Message	1
Bible Study	3
Vacation Bible School	4
Fellowship Gatherings	9
DUMC Book Club	9
LINK Against Hunger	10
Gabriel Homes/The Closet	11
Calendar	12



**Come worship with us
on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.**

**In the Sanctuary
or virtually via Zoom**

**Coffee hour following
worship via Zoom or live**

**Adult Sunday School
at 9:00 a.m.**

*If you would like to join,
please contact us at
office@dranesvilleumc.org.*

Something Surprising Comes Our Way through Leviticus (continued)

matter. They ripple outward. They affect the people around us and, in Leviticus' imagination, they affect the very space where God dwells among his people. We don't always feel the weight of our smaller failures, the sharp word, the corner cut, the person overlooked. But something in us knows that's not quite true either. We all carry a sense that our choices echo further than we intend.

And yet here's what's more striking. The whole point of these rituals isn't punishment. It's restoration. Every single one of these ancient ceremonies ends the same way: with forgiveness. Not "the building is cleaned now," but the person walks away forgiven. God isn't looking for a reason to distance himself from his people. He's building elaborate, careful ways to stay close to them.

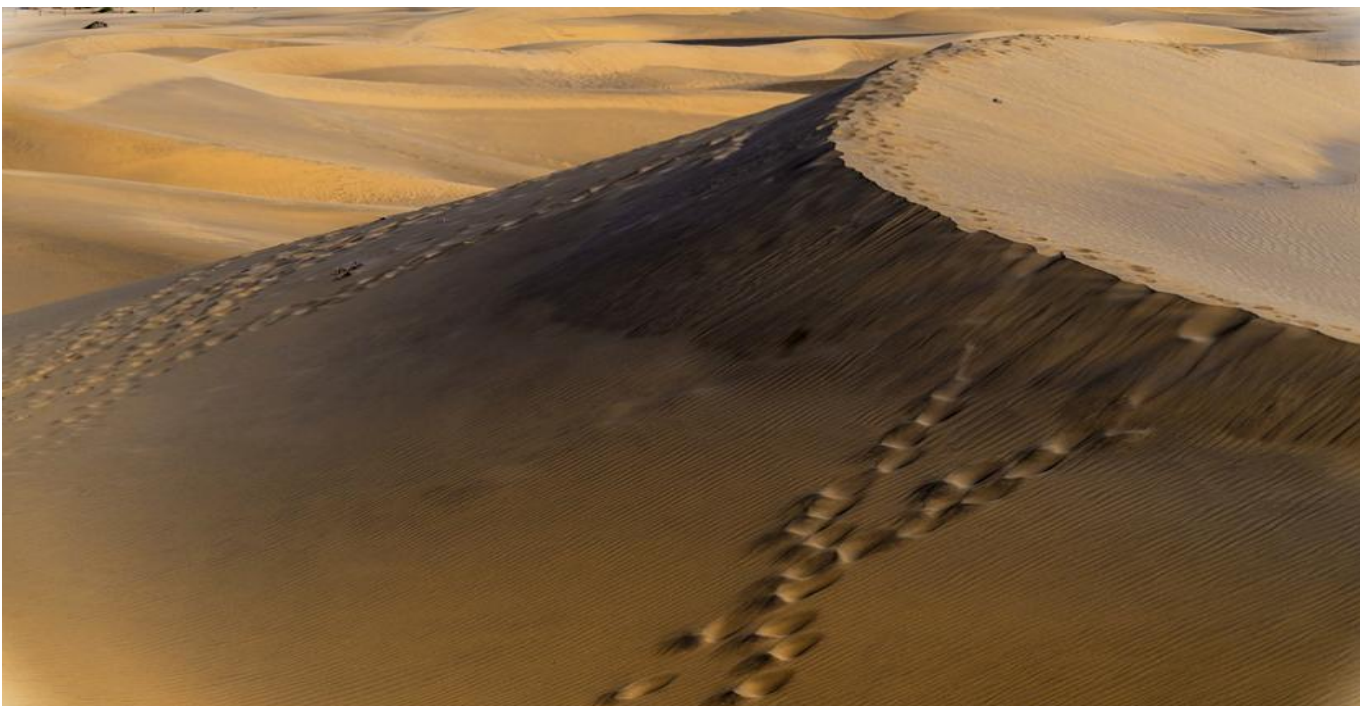
There's also something quietly moving in noticing who these rituals were written for. Not just priests. Not just leaders. Ordinary people, the same careful, dignified attention given to an anonymous member of the community as to someone higher up the ranks. Whoever you are, however small your part in the community might feel, you mattered enough for God to make a way back to him.

That's the heart of what I hope we'll explore together this month. If you've ever assumed Leviticus was the one book of the Bible you could safely skip, I'd love for you to reconsider. Come with your questions. Come with your skepticism, even. I think you might be as surprised as I've been.

The times of this study are Tuesdays at 7pm or Thursdays at 10am. The Zoom information is found at <https://dranesvilleumc.org/connect/>

I hope to see you there.

Pastor Keith



August 23rd: Blessing of the Backpacks, Students & Teachers

Join us **in Sunday Worship**. All students, teachers, and educators are encouraged to bring your backpacks to be blessed for the new school year.

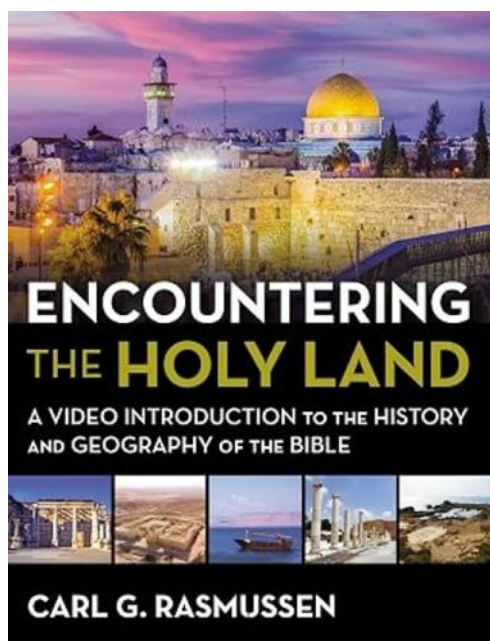


Bible Study

[Dranesvilleumc.org/connect](https://dranesvilleumc.org/connect)

Tuesday Evening: 7pm OR Thursday Morning: 10am

Leviticus rarely makes anyone's list of favorite Bible books, yet it sits at the theological heart of Israel's life with God. Starting in two weeks, we're spending eight weeks working through Leviticus with help from Jacob Milgrom, whose massive scholarly commentary reshaped how a generation of readers understands this book. We'll explore the sacrificial system not as primitive ritual, but as a carefully constructed language for approaching a holy God. We'll walk through the tabernacle as sacred architecture, tracing how space itself communicates God's presence and Israel's calling. We'll sit with the impurity laws long enough to ask what they're really protecting and why purity mattered so much to a people called to reflect their God. And we'll trace the Holiness source's vision, a vision where ethics and worship are inseparable, and where "be holy, for I am holy" shapes everything from diet, to harvest, to how you treat your neighbor. Come ready to see this strange, ancient book with fresh eyes.



Adult Sunday School

Join us in the library

or on Zoom at 9:00 am any Sunday!

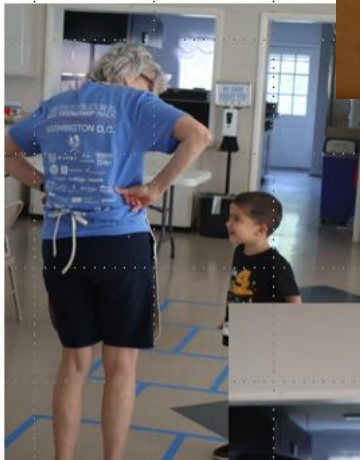
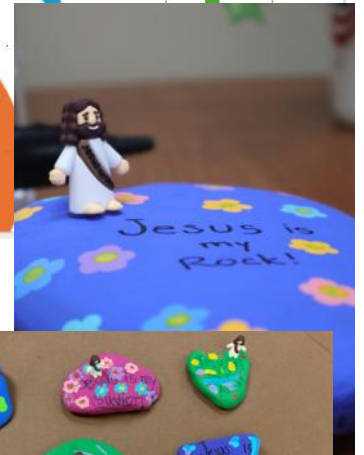
Throughout Encountering the Holy Land, scholar Carl Rasmussen leads viewers through the Holy Lands to illuminate the geographical and historical context of biblical events. Destined to become a favorite guide to biblical geography for students of the Bible, this accessible set of video lessons will invite you into the world of the Bible as never before.

•Join us in the library or on Zoom at 9:00 for this 13-week series. Easy to join at any time.

Dranesville UMC Vacation Bible School











Dranesville UMC
Thank you for
an amazing
Vacation Bible
School

Lunch with the Evergreen Group:



July's Gathering

**August 9th at 12:00 pm
in Sterling**
at The Bungalow Lakehouse
Restaurant.
The second Sunday each
month!



Please see Pete Hause for details and to RSVP
or call 703-430-7166.

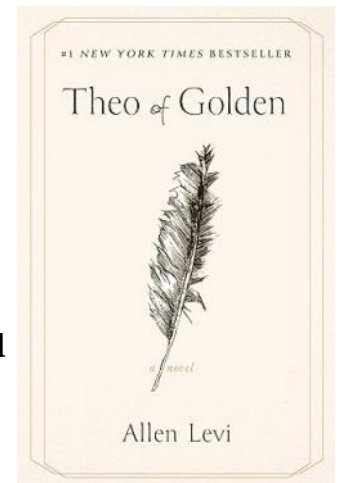
Wednesday Lunch will be on August 19th at 12:00

Outback Steakhouse 365 Elden Street Herndon, VA 20170
Please RSVP to Donna Carlo mdgirlinva@yahoo.com or 703 244-2911
Wednesday Night Community Dinners will resume on September 16th!

DUMC Book Club—September 9th

Dear Dranesville Book Group participants (and those who like to read along...) our next gathering is September 9th at 7:00pm, Contact [Beth Hitchings](#) for Zoom information.

September 9th Selection: *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi is the endearing story of a curious old man who quietly moves into a southern city and, for reasons unknown to anyone but himself, undertakes a campaign of anonymous generosity. Theo's love for people, combined with his fondness for books, art, birds, and story, unite in a colorful expression of outreach and affection. Stories are shared, friendships are born, and lives, in response to his inexplicable kindness, are affirmed and transformed. The old man, no stranger to sadness and loss, quickly becomes a welcome presence in the community, but his new friends and neighbors wonder, who is Theo? And why is he here? Beautifully written stories of kindness and neighborliness are always timely, but perhaps especially so now.



**July
Youth &
Young Adult
Bowling Party**



Volunteer for the Mobile Food Pantry: Next: August 11th

Register online for the latest updates. Join us on the **2nd Tuesday of each month** (light rain or shine) from 9:30 am – 12 pm (or until the food runs out) in the rear parking lot at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church. Join Team Dranesville and wear your Dranesville UMC T-shirts while packing food for those in need.



**Thank you! \$395 Grocery Card donations
for July**

EVEN 4 OTHERS collection

NEXT COLLECTION: AUGUST 23!!!!

Please donate for LINK Against Hunger. Leave donations in the big wooden box in front of the office before church on Sunday, August 23rd. They will be counted and transported to the LINK location after church. Donate canned goods, dry goods, paper goods, cleaning products, and personal toiletry items.





The 31st Annual Gabriel Homes Golf Tournament

Register here:

www.gabrielhomes.org/get-involved/gabriel-homes-annual-golf-tournament/

Join us, Monday, September 21, 2026, for a beautiful day golfing & supporting adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD).

Dear Dranesville United Methodist Church,

I thank each of you for supporting this year's tournament. We could not keep up the great work of Gabriel Homes without you. Please join myself, our board members, staff, and residents on Monday, September 21, 2026, for a fun day for a great cause.

Blessings,
Msgr. Bob Cilinski
Gabriel Homes Board of Directors



A BANNER YEAR: For the first six months of the year, The Closet has experienced one of its strongest performances in recent years. Revenue, customer transactions, and the number of items sold have all increased compared to the first half of 2025. Most importantly, customer activity continued to increase, demonstrating that more shoppers are visiting the store and purchasing merchandise. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and staff, the quality of donations we continue to receive, and the continued support of the community.



SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS DISTRIBUTED – As authorized by the Board, The Closet has distributed \$60,000 to six area high schools (Mountain View, Dominion, Park View, Westfield, South Lakes, and Herndon) for the 2026-2027 school year. Thank you from the awarded students have been pouring in. They are ever so grateful!

UNUSABLE DONATIONS BEING SUCCESSFULLY RECYCLED – The Closet identified the Helpsy Company to purchase by the pound unwanted soft goods and Blue Ridge Care to carry away unneeded and surplus hard goods. We still have unneeded soft and hard goods going to western Virginia through the Truck Ministry, though these trips have decreased.

CLOSET VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED - The 40th Annual Mayor's Volunteer Reception was held on Sunday, April 19, 2026, at the Herndon Community Center. This special reception, hosted by the Herndon Town Council, celebrated and extended the Town's appreciation to the many individuals who have provided dedicated service to our community. Forty-one Closet volunteers volunteered 100+ hours at The Closet in 2025 and were invited by Herndon Mayor Keven to be recognized at this event. Thank you to all The Closet's dedicated volunteers!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

<http://theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/volunteer/>

- September 5th – Annual Fashion Show
- October 16th & 17th – Everything Christmas Sale
- December 12th – WinterMarkt



Dranesville

United Methodist Church

*"Making disciples of Jesus Christ by
feeding body, mind and soul."*

Office closed Fridays in the Summer

August

- 2 Holy Communion
- 9 Guest Speaker—Adam Focht
Evergreen Lunch at 12:00 pm
- 11 Mobile Food Pantry
- 19 Wednesday Lunch Outing 12:00 Outback Steakhouse, Herndon
- 23 Blessing of the Backpacks
Even 4 Others Collection

September

- 6 Holy Communion
- 8 Mobile Food Pantry
- 13 Evergreen Lunch at 12:00 pm
- 16 Wednesday Night Community Dinner
- 27 Blessing of the Pets
Grocery Card Collection

GIVE Online!



Every Week Join Us In Study and Prayer:

[Dranesvilleumc.org/connect](https://dranesvilleumc.org/connect)

- ♦ Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School in person and via Zoom
- ♦ Tuesdays at 8:00 a.m. Prayer group is meeting virtually via Zoom
- ♦ Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. Bible Study is held via Zoom

To get connected to any of the virtual meetings, please contact the church office by e-mailing office@dranesvilleumc.org or leave a message at 703-430-3137 anytime.

Summer Office hours: Tuesday—Thursday 8:00 am—12:30 pm
Office hours: Tuesday—Friday 8:00 am—12:30 pm