



**Come as you are
all are welcome!**

Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m.

Contemporary Worship Service
Followed by Fellowship Time

9:15 a.m.

Adult Sunday school

10:45 a.m.

Traditional Worship Service/
Children's SS

Staff:

PASTOR: Rev. Adam Dotts

LAY LEADER: Eric Stuver

ADMIN. ASST: Jennifer Robertson

PRAISE BAND DIR: Denise Baldwin

NURSERY DIR: Destiny Wallace

CUSTODIAN: Richard Robertson

CCW: Natalie Marionneaux

Office Hours:

Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 am – 1:30 pm

Fri. 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

501 Grove Avenue,

Johnstown, PA 15902

Phone: (814) 539-8684

Email: www.groveaveumc.com

Website: groveaveumc@verizon.net

From the Pastor

Greetings in the Name of Jesus:

The month of December marks a time of both reflection and looking forward. We reflect upon the perfect holidays' past and the stress of the future holiday season. It is easy to live in the past because we have already faced it. The tricky part is the preparation for the future. The future is filled with questions and no easy answers. December marks the beginning of the Advent season and ends with Christmas. Every year I try to stress that Christmas is to be such a small part of this time of preparation and every year I fail to get my point across. Grove Avenue will celebrate Christmas; however, I will try to place the importance on the return of Jesus which is why we celebrate. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more." Revelation 21:1

May the peace of the Lord be with you.

Pastor Adam



WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER/JANUARY 2018 ISSUE OF *THE MESSENGER*

We welcome your submissions, your input, your ideas, your opinions, essays, poems, photos, and testimonies.

Please let us know if there is a layperson you would like to salute or a particular ministry or member you would like to highlight.

You may contact the church office with suggestions or concerns about content.

The newsletter is also available online at www.groveaveumc.com.

Please notify the church of:

- address and phone number changes
- births or deaths in your family
- hospital visits
- accomplishments,
- milestones, celebrations

ARTICLES FOR THE FEBRUARY 2018 ISSUE ARE DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 18

Articles may be dropped off or emailed to the church office.

Articles received after the deadline are not guaranteed to appear in *The Messenger*.

When you need prayer...



If at any time you have a prayer request, you may do one of the following:

- Call or Email the church office
- Send it through our website at www.groveaveumc.com
- Contact the prayer chain by calling:
John & Veronica James, 266-6907
- Fill out a prayer request card and either hand it into or mail it to the church office. Prayer request cards can be found in the pew racks in the sanctuary.

Don't forget to alert the church office if you or a family member is in the hospital. Let us know if you would like it announced during church services, in the bulletin or newsletters.

Did You Know...

- If you are unable to attend church you can give your weekly contributions through our website.
- When you make a purchase on Amazon you can support Grove Avenue United Methodist Church.

For more information, contact our church office.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays

1 – Melah Toth
 5 – David Graham
 9 – Hans Esteban
 15 – JD Petak
 16 – Todd Rose
 18 – Lexie Roles
 19 – Rose Harley
 20 – Daniel Morris
 20 – Denise Baldwin
 22 – Jennifer Robertson
 26 – Hunter Kovaloski
 28 – Laura Campbell
 30 – Nadiyah Kmecak
 30 – William Zolbe

January Birthdays

4 – Fred Sabo
 4 – Jan Furdella
 5 – Sophie Reffner
 8 – Destiny Wallace
 10 – Lynea James
 12 – Bertha Sabo*,**
 16 – Richard Horner
 20 – Eleanor Pountney
 23 – Sue Allison
 23 – Bob Hagerich
 26 – John James
 26 – Amy Dotts
 29 – Carole Murphy**



December Anniversaries

17 – Bill & Gail Hiner
 17 – Ron & Kathy Gindlesperger
 18 – Joe & Sharon Scaletta

January Anniversary

18 – Bill & Heather Brice

***Homebound
 80 or over

Please send these members
 a birthday card.

Bertha Sabo
 262 Shady Oak Dr.
 Johnstown, PA 15905

Carol Murphy
 137 Worth St.
 Johnstown, PA 15905

Serving Grove Avenue

Ushers

December

Brenda Mills
 Kimberly Fox
 Bill Zolbe
 Jack McLaughlin

January

Bob Birchfield
 Sue Birchfield
 John James
 Veronica James

Scripture Readers

Contemporary Service

December

2 – Lois Graham
 9 – David Graham
 16 – Karen Hohman
 23 – Tom Charette
 30 – Eileen Stuver

January

6 – TBD (blended service)
 13 – David Graham
 20 – Karen Hohman
 27 – Tom Charette

Traditional Service

December

2 – Bill Brice
 9 – Natalie Hudec
 16 – Dave Aikey
 23 – Georgia Yeager
 30 – Pat Aikey

January

TBD

December/January Scriptures

December Scriptures

Sunday, December 2

Special Services

Sunday, December 9

Scripture Lesson 1: Malachi 3: 1-4

Scripture Lesson 2: Luke 3:1-6

Sunday, December 16

Scripture Lesson 1: Zephaniah 3: 14-20

Scripture Lesson 2: Luke 3:7-18

Sunday, December 23

Scripture Lesson 1: Micah 5:2-5a

Scripture Lesson 2: Luke :39-55

Sunday, December 30

Scripture Lesson: Luke 2:41-52

January Scriptures

Sunday, January 6

Scripture Lesson 1: Isaiah 60:1-6

Scripture Lesson 2: Matthew 2: 1-12

Sundays, January 13-27

Scriptures to be determined

News Around the Pews

Member News

Our Sympathies:

Our sympathies go to Karen Hohman and David Spotz on the passing of their father, John Spotz. John has been a member since 1937.

Our sympathies go to Doris Jones and children on the passing of her husband, Bill Jones. Bill has been a member since 1959.

Annual Conference Representative

We are looking for someone who would be willing to be a representative for the Annual Conference held in June. If you think you would be interested or want more information, contact Pastor Adam.

For Your Information

Church Office Closed

The Church office will be closed **December 24-December 26** for the Christmas holiday, **December 31st and January 1st** for the New Year's holiday.

Missing the Organ?

Even though we have had great pianist, Andrea Kovaloski and Sarah Harris, a lot of you have missed hearing the organ. Join us on **Sunday, December 9th** to hear Eloise Romano play the organ.

Robinson/Blough Scholarship Applications

Blough/Robinson Scholarship Applications are due in the church office **Monday, December 31**. First time applicants can pick up an application from the church office. A copy of your semester grades should be provided as soon as they are available. Scholarships are rewarded to members of Grove Avenue UMC who are attending higher education classes regardless of their need or income

Honoring Veterans

On Sunday, November 11th, during the worship services we honored our members who have served our country. Celebrating Veterans' Day didn't stop there. That afternoon Ignite the Valley Ministries hosted a chili cook-off at Roxbury St. Paul's UMC to raise money for local veteran's ministries. We were able to present the veterans with \$425 that they will turn over to the VA Hospital in Altoona.

Thanks to everyone who came and supported this great ministry. Congratulations to Pastor Adam Dotts from Grove Ave. UMC, who won the People's Choice award and Pastor Len Findley, from Park Ave., Ferndale, and Faith Churches, who won the Veteran's Choice award.

*Thank you
for your service*



Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.

Mark Your Calendars

United Methodist Women

All are welcome to the UMW meeting on **Wednesday, December 5 at 1:00 pm**. Come learn the purpose of our mission and enjoy the fellowship. Snacks appreciated.

A Winter Mosaic Christmas and Winter Music

Denise Baldwin will host a concert on **Sunday, December 9th** at 4:00 pm here at Grove Ave. United Methodist Church. There is a \$5 suggested donation that will benefit the church's local ministries. Come and enjoy sounds of the season while supporting those in need. For tickets call 814-659-9471 or email mosaictix@denisebaldwin.com.

Advent Prayer Service

Our annual ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 11th at 7:00 pm**. Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Jesus tells us the truth: we are the beloved sons and daughters of the God of peace. That means, like Jesus, we act according to the God of peace, practicing non-violence, resisting war, and trying to live and breathe the holy Spirit of peace. Peace is God's purpose for humanity. Since we are God's children, we must make peace, too. So join us in a prayer for peace - within ourselves, our community, our nation, and the world.

Christmas Party

We will hold our Annual Covered Dish Christmas Party on **Saturday, December 15th at 5:00 pm**. Chicken and ham will be provided. Come and enjoy the great food and fellowship. Call the church office to RSVP by December 9th.

Christmas Eve Services December 24th

As tradition we will hold two services on Christmas Eve. The Candlelight Service will begin at 7:30 pm and the Communion/Candlelight service will begin at 11:00 pm

Blended Service January 6, 2019

On **Sunday January 6th**, GAUMC will hold a blended service the main purpose of which will be to discuss some major changes that are pending for the national United Methodist Church denomination, and for our own local congregation, with regard to persons in the LGBTQ community and the United Methodist Church. This issue has been pending for 10 years, or more, and seems to be finally coming to a vote at a special meeting in early 2019. We as a congregation need to have an open discussion of the issue and carefully review the three alternatives that are being presented.

The three plans were discussed at a general meeting at GAUMC last October, but the main topic was not well publicized and not many people from the Grove Avenue community attended the meeting. The document which was handed out at this October meeting and is available at the back of the church is discussed on the Conference web site: <https://www.wpaumc.org/newsdetail/bishops-recommend-one-church-plan-11355707> ; and on http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_Properties/council-of-bishops/news_and_statements/documents/Way_Foward_Report_-_Final_-_ENGLISH.pdf.

Please obtain a copy of the three plans to be presented, read them carefully, and join the blended service on January 6th for a discussion of the issues and how these changes will affect our Church family.

ADVENT – A Living Hope by Natalie Marionneaux

Matthew 40:36-44

Advent is our time of waiting and preparing for Jesus's coming in 2 ways:

1. It is our anticipation of the coming of the birth of Jesus, the Incarnation, God becoming one of us, the coming of our Messiah, Christmas. AND
2. It is also about being ready for Christ's second coming, the return of our Messiah. It is about hope. Expectant hearts... us waiting for that promise from God to be fulfilled.

It is the time of the year with the encroaching mark of darkness when the days become shorter... there is less light and more and more dark. We can also see and feel the edging darkness over last couple of years, can't we? Around politics, mass shootings, immigration turmoil - the veil has been pulled back –we see the depth of darkness in this country around racism, misogyny, xenophobia and homophobia with a 300% rise in hate crimes.

It is Advent – the Kingdom is coming to be with us. God-made-man -- born out of a promise from God -- to bring us back – a living God opened the door and invited us in by paying our price through his death. Then resurrecting – death and sin had no more power – we are reunited with God.

Sometimes it's easy to give Easter all the importance. I mean Christmas is important and we have a lot of great songs about it. And it's a good time. But yeah, Jesus was born, right... Here's why:

“Yet this is one historical event, the radically relational way of the living God broke into existence and continues to illuminate God's message that out of the separation and division within which the universe now exists, a relationality has irrupted that will enable the whole of creation to flourish.”

Now just what does that mean... This new creation, this baby, infant born of peasant parents, Mary and Joseph, stranded far away from home w/out means, in the bleakness and brokenness of this world, when the evidences of life seems most hidden, to a father who knows this child is not his own, to a mother who was little more than a piece of property w/in a patriarchal society in 1st century Palestine...THE GLORY AND WONDER OF THE LIVING GOD CAME FORTH... those with minimal voice and rights – a woman and child – take center stage.

The good news begins not with the claim that Christ died for us, but the incredible message is that God LIVED FOR US, God becomes flesh and ENTERS RELATIONSHIP WITH HUMANITY – WITH US. Not through some claim to power or privilege. But humbly, gently and lovingly - Asking only to be loved and cared for.

This is why we prepare, why we wait in Advent. Paraphrasing Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby...What has God done with this one life and how does it impact every person on this earth ever since? Jesus Christ comes to us – the light in the darkness and we didn't even know we needed it. Jesus Christ reaches out to each of us. It is nothing we have done – IT IS NOTHING WE HAVE DONE. And the pendulum of fear shifts to hope. God's work begins with God (not us). And we are the witnesses.

Now as witnesses, what are you going to do with it? Why does this matter? Right now, today, in this moment? Because we are of God, we are part divine, we were born with part of God alive in us. And through our Baptism, we have been marked, we have been called – we have been claimed as God's own. That light lives in us. In each and everyone one of us. Prepare the way for Christ's coming, make straight the path – Be ready.

Is our heart right with God? We get a chance everyday to make it right. If there was no promise, there would be no hope, then there'd be no need for faith but it is indeed the promise that is to come, that gives us hope. We are lights in the darkness preparing a path for the one who is to come.

Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.

Be your light, “live ready” in your faith and grace of our once come and second coming Savior. Because we meet Jesus everyday in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, sick and imprisoned... WE ARE CO-CREATORS of the new kingdom, the new earth that Christ brings. Let us walk and talk in this faith everyday; let that be our daily duty. Let us be kingdom builders.

We give hope to the future coming when we are steadfast and ready. Because Christ is coming. It is the certainty of the coming, not the timing that moves us. It is that certainty that motivates us, that has us ready to greet and celebrate Jesus’ arrival. Are you ready to meet the coming Christ? The longing for Christ’s return that calls us forth, gives us hope. The time is always now... to be ready, to be faithful, to be prepared. We need not worry, if our focus is on the Lord, we need not fear.

So in advent – we wait, we pay attention, we lean into the season with anticipation of the incarnation of the birth of our Messiah but also because we await Christ’s return. The Christ who is to come already lives among us now, today even as we expectantly await Jesus’ birth into our world. Because Jesus is A LIVING HOPE, a hope of a future coming and a reign where all will be made right. This Advent, let us lean into that promise, into that future, into the coming of our Lord, into the hope of that new kingdom, that calls us to live differently, to live for justice, to have mercy, as we seek to bring that kingdom forth daily in everything we do and say.

Maybe the surprise when Christ returns is that he was here among us all along.... Maybe it is how we walk in world: are we humble, do we look people in the eye, are we authentic in what we stand for, are we good stewards of the earth and what we have been given, are we generous in spirit, compassionate and forgiving, are we just and loving?

Maybe the surprise will be that he’s been calling and preparing us, gathering us together, guiding and blessing us all along, in the humble, meek places of our lives and of the world, where mercy and empathy live, where love conquers hate and grace pushing fear away – all of us who call upon the name of Jesus the Christ, our Messiah.

We wait with great expectation in His hope, in His coming. Amen.

(References/Ideas from: Mary Hoinkle, Arland Hultgren, Andrew Prior, Elaine Robinson, Danielle Shroyer, Ben Witherington)

Mission Projects

Salvation Army’s “Treasure’s for Children”

We will be helping Salvation Army help those less fortunate have a wonderful Christmas. Tags can be found on the tree in the back of the sanctuary. Salvation Army is asking that pajamas be purchased this year rather than an outfit along with the toy that is listed on the tag. **Bring gifts in a bag to the church no later than December 5th.** The church will take items to Salvation Army.

Park Avenue Food Pantry

As our Food Pantry's supplies are scarce this time of year, the NOW Committee is initiating a new program called FOOD FOR OUR FRIENDS. Each week during Advent our church members are asked to bring a non-perishable food item to Sunday services and place it under the Christmas Tree. All proceeds will be taken to Park Avenue UMC for distribution. Thank you for helping those who are less fortunate. You just may be providing Christmas dinner for someone!

Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.



Poinsettia Plants will be used once again to decorate the Grove Avenue Sanctuary on Christmas Eve. These plants have a two-fold service to our church – they honor our loved ones and bring beauty to our church.

You may order your poinsettia(s) “IN MEMORY” or “IN HONOR” of a loved one. Please fill out the order form below and return your order form with payment to the church office or place it in the offering plate. **Deadline for ALL orders is Sunday, December 2.**

Others may wish to make a contribution to the General Fund of Grove Avenue Church—in honor or memory of a loved one. Checks should be made payable to Grove Avenue United Methodist Church (earmarked Poinsettia or General Fund.) Please do not combine this check with your regular church offering.

POINSETTIAS – 2018

Number		Total
	Red (3-5 bloom plant) @ \$8.50 ea. =	\$ _____
	White (3-5 bloom plant) @ \$8.50 ea. =	\$ _____
	Pink (3-5 bloom plant) @ \$8.50 ea. =	\$ _____

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL FUNDS

Amount		Total
\$ _____	General Fund	\$ _____
GRAND TOTAL (poinsettia order Total plus Contributions to General Fund Total)		\$ _____

IN HONOR OF _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

PRESENTED BY _____