

**Grove Avenue
United Methodist Church**

501 Grove Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15902
(814) 539-8684

**THE
MESSENGER**

Newsletter of the Grove Avenue United Methodist Church

From the Pastor

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

Advent is a season of waiting and preparation, a time for Christians to reflect upon the birth and second coming of Jesus Christ. The Christ who came into this world in Bethlehem will also come again and will establish his reign. Wars will cease. Justice and peace will prevail. All creation will be what God created it to be. So what is our plan as a people who live between the two advents? How will we prepare our lives, to make room, to get ready for God’s plan for the world as we wait for our lives to gloriously unfold?

Blaise Pascal wrote: “All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone.” This reminds me of Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.” Our lives are filled with noise, busyness and clutter. Maybe we avoid stillness because we are afraid of acknowledging the true, ever pervasive presence of God. And yet isn’t that what we yearn for? Come, Lord Jesus, come!

During this season of Advent, this season of waiting, I encourage us to reflect and examine our lives, to simplify them, to focus on what is most important. To see within ourselves the birthing of God with us, God in us, and all that this means for our individual and congregational lives. To invite Christ into any emptiness we are carrying, even those places which we deny exists.

While we wait, you are invited to participate in experiences within the Charge to strengthen our connection with our God.

- Bible Studies Tuesdays at 2 PM Homestead Ave
- Contemplative Prayer Times Tuesdays at 6:30 PM at Grove Ave
- Community Dinner for Free Store Customers
- Saturday, December 14 @5:30 PM at Grove Ave
- Blue Christmas Service Friday, December 19 @ 7 PM at Grove Ave
- Christmas Eve Services 6 PM Homestead Ave and 11 PM Grove Ave
- Combined Christmas Service Sunday, December 29 @ 9 AM at Christ

To prepare our hearts to receive Christ, may we attend to our deep need for God; may we reach out to others who yearn for the Christ child to be born in them. For if we do, we will have a beautiful Christmas. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

God bless you and yours,
Pastors Carol and John

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

Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m.

Contemporary Worship Service/
Children’s SS
Followed by Fellowship Time

9:15 a.m.

Adult Sunday school

10:45 a.m.

Traditional Worship Service

Staff:

PASTOR: Revs. Carol & John Hickman

LAY LEADER: Eric Stuver

ADMIN. ASST: Jennifer Robertson

PRAISE BAND DIR: Denise Baldwin

NURSERY DIR: Destiny Wallace

CUSTODIAN: Jay Adams

CCW: Natalie Marionneaux

YOUTH LEADER: Ryan Thomas

Office Hours:

Mon.-Thurs. 8:00 am – 1:00 pm

Fri. 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

501 Grove Avenue,
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Website: www.groveaveumc.com

DECEMBER 2019

ISSUE OF *THE MESSENGER*

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 JANUARY 2020 ISSUE
ARE DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20**
Articles may be dropped off or emailed to the church
office.

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.

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 the church office.

December Birthdays

1 – Melah Toth
5 – David Graham
9 – Hans Esteban
16 – Todd Rose
18 – Lexie Roles
20 – Denise Baldwin
22 – Jennifer Robertson
28 – Laura Campbell
30 – Nadiyah Kmecak
30 – William Zolbe



December Anniversaries

17 – Bill and Gail Hiner
17 – Ron and Kathy Gindlesperger
18 – Joe and Sharon Scaletta
29 – Revs. John and Carol Hickman



Serving Grove Avenue in December

Ushers

Brenda Mills
Kim Fox
Bill Zolbe
Jack McLaughlin

Scripture Readers

Contemporary Service

1 – Lois Graham
8 – David Graham
15 – Karen Hohman
22 – Tom Charette
29 – Joint Service at Christ UMC

Traditional Service

1 – Heather Brice
8 – Tom Sabo
15 – Sue Birchfield
22 – Karen Allshouse
29 – Joint Service at Christ UMC

LOVE GROW SERVE



Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.

News Around the Pews

Our Sympathies

Our sympathies go to Alice Hughes on the passing of her husband, Lloyd Hughes. Lloyd passed away November 3, 2019.

Our sympathies go to the family of Nancy Horner on Nancy's passing. Nancy was a long time member at Grove Ave until her move to be closer to her children.

FYI

Office Closed

The office will be closed the following days:

- December 6th for Administrative Assistant's vacation day.
- December 25th, 26th and 27th in observance for the Christmas holiday.
- January 20 for Martin Luther King, Jr Day.

Robinson/Blough Scholarship Applications

Blough/Robinson Scholarship Applications are due in the church office **Tuesday, 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

December Meetings

The Finance, Trustees, and Council **will not** meet in December.

The NOW Committee will meet on their regular day and time...Tuesday, December 10th at 10:00 am.

Moving to One Worship Service

Council has approved to move to one weekly worship service. Each and every parishioner is encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings. What would one worship service look like? What would enhance your ability to worship our God? What time would be most convenient for you? And any other concerns of your heart.

The process will be transparent. **Nothing has been decided. Nothing will be decided without your input.** We want to ensure that all voices are heard, all opinions and feeling considered. To facilitate the process, a survey was included in the November newsletter. Also during fellowship time in November, parishioners were invited to participate in a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of having one worship service.

Here are the plans that have been formulated to this point.

- During January, February and March – there will be one combined service each month
- Easter Sunday will be the official launch of one service.

What has not been decided?

- The format of the service
- The time of the service
- And everything else!

Please pray about this change, remembering that we come together on Sunday mornings to worship and praise God for who God is, what God has done and will do. We come together to celebrate the love that is poured out upon us. May we keep our eyes focused on the worship of God, which enables us to be refreshed and restored. May we journey together closer to the heart of God.



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 4th at 1:00 pm**. Come learn the purpose of our mission and enjoy the fellowship. Snacks appreciated.



Christmas at the CGH Charge

Blue Christmas

We will host a Blue Christmas Service on December 20th. Christmas is a joyful time of year, but for many it is a time of sorrow for countless reasons including a loss of a family member or friend or loss of a job.

Christmas Eve Services

Christmas Eve services for 2019 have been set for 6:00 pm at Homestead Ave UMC and 11:00 pm at Grove Ave. UMC. The Charge is working to incorporate some of each our three churches traditions into the services. Note that in 2020, times and places of the service may rotate.

CGH Combined Service

Many thanks to all for making our first combined service on September 29th a huge success! The prayer, abundant food, hospitality, and fellowship was appreciated by all! Our next combined service will be the next fifth Sunday of the year, **December 29th** at Christ UMC. The 9:00 am service will be followed a soup luncheon.



CGH Charge Pictorial Directory

Dates: Tuesday 12/10/2019

Times: 2:00 thru 7:30 pm (scheduling every 10 mins)

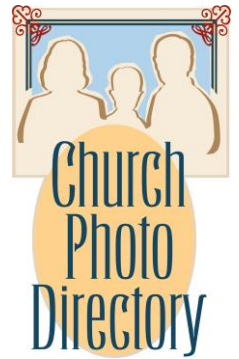
Place: Homestead Avenue United Methodist @ 101 Homestead Ave, Johnstown, PA 115902

Contact: Jane Gorze' 330-980-6929 after 6 pm or email: gorzeja@yahoo.com.

Members can use the below link to schedule:

<https://booknow-lifetouch.appointment-plus.com/b2hhvxlg/> or contact Jane at above info. If emailing, please put "church pictures" in subject time. Please do not wait. Need to fill the appointments.

Note: there is no charge for the directories. There is only a charge if you buy pictures. No is expected to buy any pictures. Everyone is free to say no! A photo directory is a valuable tool to help know who people are. Please make time to participate.



Please do not wait to make an appointment. Need to fill the appointments before Friday, November 29, 2019. If available appointments not filled the December 10 will be cancelled.

Available times: 4:10, 4:40, 5:00, 5:10, 5:40, 6:10, 6:30 and 7:40.

Denise Baldwin Music Presents... A Christmas Mosaic

A *flurry* or vocalists in a lively holiday show!!

December 8, 2019 at 4:00 pm at Grove Avenue UMC

Tickets can be purchased in advance from Denise or at the door. \$7 adult, \$5 children. ALL proceeds go to Grove Avenue UMC ministries.

Bring a pack of diapers for the church community store and receive \$2 off admission.

Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.

Is there a place for everyone at the table?



Each month we gather together to receive the amazing and mysterious blessing of Holy Communion. The table is the Lord's and every person is welcome – saint and sinner, young and old, believer and those struggling with their faith. There is a place for everyone!

Unfortunately, not everyone can gather around the table. Some of us are no longer able to attend church. As the Church of Jesus Christ, we must ensure that everyone is included in the sacrament, that everyone is being nourished. We are seeking volunteers who would be willing to carry Holy Communion at least 2-3 times a year to those who cannot attend church. You would be given the elements after the service. Some time on Communion Sunday, you would carry the elements to 1 or 2 members.

You would determine when you are available to carry Holy Communion. It is hoped that everyone would receive Holy Communion quarterly. A brief

training session to clarify your responsibility will be held in January. (It will be offered both in the afternoon and evening to accommodate your schedule.)

Please pray about this opportunity to be of service. If you are being called to this ministry, please let the Church Office know. We will start this ministry on February 2, 2020.

We want to ensure that there is a place for everyone at the table, even if the table is in their kitchen.

How do you find the perfect Christmas gift for all those on your list?

We search high and low, we rack our brains trying to find the perfect Christmas gift for our loved ones, our friends. Have you ever thought about what you can give to your church? What would the perfect gift look like? When we became a member, we vowed to serve Christ by serving our local congregation through faithfully participating in its ministries by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness. What does this mean not only at Christmas but also throughout the year.

1. We will pray for the church, its members, its ministry and its **neighbors**.
2. We will regularly attend worship with open hearts and minds, open to the Spirit working in and through us.
3. We will give generously of our resources – our talents and our money. Christmas is a perfect time to give a year end gift. **Include the Church on your Christmas gift list.**
4. We will dedicate time to the ministries of the Church and actively support the ministries through our service.
5. We live in such a way to proclaim the Word of God through our words and actions.

Your church needs you. Every member is called to these vows through our baptism. Live into their vows and you will truly have a blessed Christmas as Christ comes into your life in new and exciting ways. It will truly be the gift that keeps on giving!

Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.

Poinsettia Order Form

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 1.**

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 – 2019

| 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

Children of Grove Avenue United Methodist Church

Donna Bako has been hard at work with organizing the children’s activities and Sunday School. Here is an update on what has been going on.

- Trunk or Treat was held October 26th. We had around 200 children and 6 cars were decorated. The rain held off till the end. Fun time for everyone.
- **Please Note the following Change:** The Children’s Penny Fund will be collected the 2nd Sunday of the month starting in December. We use this fund for birthday gift cards, Christmas gifts, backpack materials, bible covers, crafts, etc. for the children. They also make cards for the homebound people of the church (Valentine, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.). Thank you for supporting our children.
- Twice a year we receive funding from the Robinson Education Fund to be used for Sunday School materials and new bibles for the children.

When you see Donna, let her know how much she is valued and appreciated for all the things she does for our children.



Hope-Filled Relationships

UMHS Love Tree

We will host a Love Tree for United Methodist Human Services. As you may remember the Love Tree was at the Galleria Mall for many many years. Due to declining foot traffic and closure of Bon Ton (where the Love Tree was set up) it forced UMHS to turn to the churches in the Johnstown District to help with this worthwhile cause. We ask that you purchase a heart at any donation you wish to put on the tree. UMHS programs include: Franklin St. Food Pantry, Project Shoes, Bridges to Success, Bundles of Joy, and CARE Program.

Unwrap Christmas In Moxham

Hope-Filled Relationships is planning a Holiday meal for our neighbors. Please consider offering your time, talent and/or donation to make this a fun and special evening. We will be working with Christ and Homestead and Moxham Lutheran to make this happen. You won't want to not be a part of it. Event will be Saturday, December 14 at 5:00 pm. Please let Natalie know you are interesting in volunteering.

THE HOLY SPIRIT – WITH US AND AT WORK

I know I could write something about Advent but instead let me share some thought about the Holy Spirit (by Richard Rohr).

The often forgotten third person of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit – I love the Holy Spirit and what she is up to. I can tell you that I call on her presence every day to be moving in and around me, Grove Ave. UMC and the Moxham community.

The Holy Spirit has been sent to the entire universe and since creation has been transforming [the universe], carrying it toward the final resurrection... think about that... She is actively at work not only helping us create the Kingdom now but to bring it to its coming!!! I don't know about you, but I find that pretty exciting. This same Spirit continues to renew us and ALL of humanity, AND all nations, NOT by imposing uniformity but by diversity. Hear that? It's not about being alike but about all of creation living out of its special uniqueness. Again, very cool stuff, don't you think?

Here's another thing - God is still creating.... Have you ever thought about that? All of history has been the age of the Holy Spirit; the universe is still expanding. Have you ever thought about that? GOD IS STILL AT WORK. And I don't know about you, but I find that EXTREMELY comforting as well as hopeful.

But we/the world pushes back, don't we? In spite of advances in consciousness, science, technology, and awareness, horrible wars and unbelievable injustices still happen, both personal and systemic oppression continues.

Alas, the good thing is, the Holy Spirit never gives up on us. Scripture's arc reveals the salvation of history and ALL of creation. God's divine covenants are with the people collectively — past, present and future. Individuals like Abraham and Moses and Mary as instruments and mediators... and us too.

Think about this – that each of us is caught up in this history, almost in spite of ourselves: Why? How? Are you and me part of this? Because YAHWEH shows mercy to Israel and their descendants forever. We are included also those decedents. God does not leave us; God does not break covenant no matter how many times we do.

Consider this: the Spirit is like a homing device put inside of us. For all of our ignorance and mistakes, there is in everything this deep, internal dignity convinced of its own value. This divine indwelling keeps insisting, "I am what I am seeking!" (meditate on this)

- It's God in you that loves God.
- It's God through you that recognizes God elsewhere.
- It's God for you that assures you that you are finally and forever okay.

To me, this is so affirming – God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit – living me seeking out more of what we are. I hope you think of God living in you, that you are part of the Holy, that you are part of the Kingdom that is and is yet to come... that's who we are as adopted children. Believe, believe in your goodness, your influence, God's presence in you to make a difference in someone's life and in the world – Christ lives in you. Celebrate it, share it, challenge the world where Jesus is not and be Christ's presence by merely being yourself. You are the gift to the world this season and every season – let your light shine, let the light of Christ in you shine. The world needs you. And it is all now, not just in the past and not just to come. COME, O HOLY SPIRIT, COME!!!

Blessings,
Natalie

Fundraisers

Trustees Flea Market

I would like to thank everyone who donated all their unwanted fleas that made our sale possible. To all those who worked all week putting the fleas in their proper places and on the days of the sale. I am forever grateful. – Pam Kehl

We made a profit of \$2,205.49. That amount includes the amount of \$106.79 from Goodwill. Goodwill pays us so much a pound for the remaining items.

Flocked by Flamingos

The flamingos have gone to a warmer climate for the winter. \$415 was collected for the General Fund this year. Thanks for supporting this fundraiser. – Donna Bako

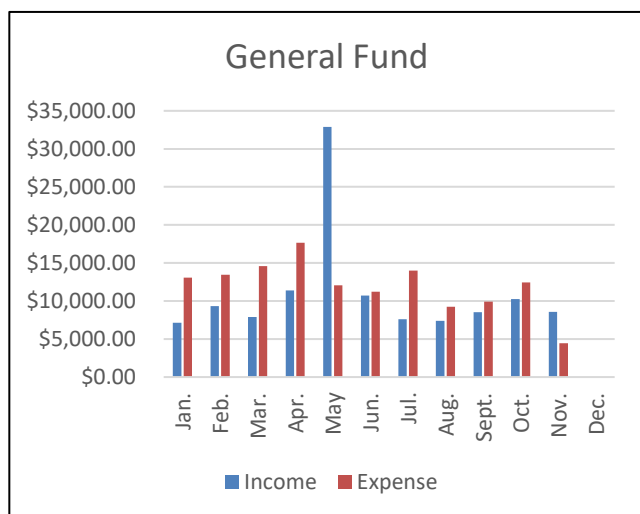
Gift Card Fundraiser

We put in our first order for our new gift card fundraiser. Thank you for the great response. We made a profit of \$172.83.

Amazon Smile

Doing any Christmas shopping at Amazon? Don't forget to go to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-0999187> and Grove Avenue UMC will receive a percentage of the purchase amount. Since 2018 we received \$41.25 from Amazon.

Finance Report



The chart shows the income and expenses as of November 20, 2019.

In May, we needed to transfer \$25,000 from our Memorial Endowment to the General Fund.

Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.