



The Messenger

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Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.

FROM THE PASTORS...

Dear Friends,

As I write this, it is cold and snowing; winter refuses to die. The promise of spring is close, but not yet a reality. But the signs of spring-renewal and growth-are beginning to appear. Daffodils are rising from the cold ground, and crocuses are blooming. In our garden, there is new growth in the midst of last year's dead stems.

A long time ago, in another garden, in another garden, the women discovered new life in the midst of the dead. The empty burial cloths in the vacant tomb demonstrated that Jesus' promises were coming true.

Easter calls us to celebrate the fact that the light of Christ has come into the world's darkness, providing hope for a future greater than we could imagine. It challenges us to seek a kind of living that goes beyond our expectations. It announces that love is more powerful than evil. Easter marks God's great **YES!** to all the NOs that life can put upon us.

The good news is that in all the dark and despairing moments of war, terror, persecution, suffering and death, the possibility of resurrection exists because no defeat is final, and no life is written off as hopeless. God has broken the power of the world's NOs and granted us the gift of life eternal – a life filled with joy, hope, and freedom. The Risen Christ gives us victory! His triumph over evil, pain, and death is ours. Death could not hold him, and it cannot hold us. God's love never fades, never falters. We know the end of the story: ***Christ is risen, risen indeed.***

We look forward to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. But before Easter comes Holy Week. Sometimes we are tempted to skip over the pain and the questions and the struggles of Holy Week - - Jesus' last supper, his arrest, his death - - and go straight from the excitement of the Palm Sunday parade to the joy of Easter: from glory to even greater glory. But we will not experience the power of the resurrection if we are not willing to walk the hard road with Jesus.

As Easter approaches, we extend the invitation to you and your families to join us in celebration of this great **YES!** of our Lord. Here are our scheduled Holy Week services **(subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions)** :

- April 9, **Maundy Thursday** – 7 pm @ Homestead Avenue UMC
- April 10, **Good Friday Service**, Stations of the Cross – 7 pm @ Grove Avenue UMC

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- April 12, **Easter Sunrise Service** – 7 am @ Christ UMC
- **Easter Sunday Services** @ 9:30 am (Christ), 10 am (Grove), 10:30 am (Homestead)

May the joy of Easter be your today and always!

Blessings,

Pastors Carol and John



ABOUT GROVE AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday: 8 am – 1 pm

Friday: 8 am – Noon

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

(beginning 4/12/2020)

9:00 Adult Sunday School

9:30 Fellowship

10:00 am Worship Service

STAFF

Pastors: Reverends John and Carol Hickman

Church / Community Worker: Natalie Marionneaux

Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Robertson

Music Director: Denise Baldwin

Custodian: Jay Adams

Nursery Director: Destiny Wallace

Lay Leader: Eric Stuver

FINANCIAL REPORT

(as of March 24, 2020)

GOB profit: \$370.94

GENERAL FUND (year-to-date): Income: \$27,810.61, Expense: \$31,674.05 (- \$3,863.44)

March 2020: A-47

G-\$1558.00

March 2019: A-69

G-\$1710.80

March 2018: A-75

G-\$2232.63

Monthly News

Due to restrictions regarding the coronavirus, the following precautions have been put in place:

- Church services canceled
- All groups/meetings canceled
- Staff can continue to work with precautions

Please call the church, check our website/Facebook page, or check your email for updated information.

Looking Ahead...

Our **Johnstown District Conference** will be held on Sunday, May 3, 2020 at Mount Hope United Methodist Church, 258 Mt. Hope Road, South Fork, PA 15956. Light refreshments will be served at 2:30 pm, and the conference will begin at 3 pm. All are invited to attend. Pastors are requested to attend.

Trustees Flea Market: Saturday, May 8 (8:00 am-1 pm)
subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions
Half-price sale: May 16 (8 am-Noon)

You are invited to start putting aside your unwanted treasures! Please drop them off in the church hall from May 4 through May 7 between 8:30 am and 4:00 pm.

We have great success selling old, but useable items. Please remember that there are several items we **cannot accept:** tires/rims, exercise equipment, hard-backed suitcases, encyclopedias, over-stuffed furniture, large appliances, Reader's Digest condensed books, non-functioning kitchen appliances, televisions, clothing, desktop computers, laptops and other outdated electronics. If you need help getting your items to church, please call the church office (539-8684).

We will need workers throughout the week of May 4. Please see Wanda Wilson to set up a time you can spend at task. We hope everyone who was gracious enough to help last year will join us again for a *fun-filled day* of working together!

CGH Charge Service: May 31 @ Homestead at 10 am. We plan to celebrate "Everyone's Birthdays!"

Charge Conference: June 11-13



APRIL 2020

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

3 - Sharon Robertson

11 - Zane Barrett

18 - Journey Escontrias

19 - *Happy Anniversary Rich and Sharon Robertson!*

21 - Rev. John Hollis

22 - Ruth Smith **

23 - Joseph Scaletta

26 - Darnell McLaughlin

**Homebound **80 or over*

Ruth Smith
185 Paul Street
Johnstown, PA 15905-4728

MINISTERS SCHEDULE

Ushers & Greeters

Kim Fox, Jack McLaughlin,
Brenda Mills, Bill Zolbe

Readers

Palm Sunday - Lois Graham,
Heather Brice

Easter Sunday - Bill Brice

April 19 - Georgia Miller

April 26 - Gail Hiner



NEWS The Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church has asked for the postponement of the 2020 General Conference, set to begin in six weeks, because of Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic.

The General Conference, the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church, meets once every four years to revise church law, as well as adopt resolutions on moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs. It was scheduled to meet in May in Minneapolis; as of 3/19/20 it has been postponed.

The bishops are also concerned about the essential value of a global church that gathers with a fairness of representation, adding that they believe that injustice would occur if a number of delegates from a particular area are not able to be present, due to visa or health.

GROVE AVENUE REMINDERS

Your **weekly contributions** can be made through our website.

Please **notify the church** of your family's: address or phone changes; births or deaths; hospital stays; accomplishments, milestone's celebrations.

If you have a **prayer request**, please call the church office, the Prayer Chain (John and Veronica James @ 266-6907) or fill out a card found in the church pews.

You shop. Amazon gives. Amazon will donate .5% of your eligible purchases to Grove Avenue UMC. Set it up at smile.amazon.com

Information to be considered for next month's Messenger should be sent to the church office by the 15th of this month.

A thought.... by David Haas

"We are Called to be ambassadors and messengers of mercy."



Let us not continue to hold the poor and ourselves in low regard. Let us not discriminate in our sharing and showing compassion, hospitality, and lavish generosity.

God has not, does not, and will never, haunt us with our sins.

So in kind, may we not haunt our sisters and brothers with our indifference. May all of us, full of faith and courage, embrace the call to "love God and the dear neighbor without distinction."

To be ambassadors and messengers of mercy is our highest and the most urgent calling. Let us choose to "put on Christ."

Thank you, Eileen Stuver, for all your hard work in creating our first Spaghetti Dinner Fund-raiser! You and your crew set up, prepared and served a delicious dinner shared by 85 guests, for a profit of \$662.13. Thanks, too, to all of you who donated money for salad and bread, and to our bakers ~ we enjoyed fabulous desserts!



HOPE-FILLED RELATIONSHIPS

Natalie Marionneaux

(nmarionneaux@umcmmission.org and 312-388-8631)

My Church and Community Worker Board has been meeting, and together we are defining exactly what Hope-Filled Relationships is and where we want to go. Here is what we have come up with so far:

Our MISSION STATEMENT: Inspiring the hope of Christ & building trusting relationships with the community one person at a time.

Our VISION: A Hope-Filled Community.

Our MOTTO: Moxham Proud.

Our GOALS:

1. Building relationship with church laity and leadership – yes, that's you. Are you committed to this ministry? If not, what is your reservation? What do you want to see happen? Are your spiritual needs getting met so that you feel moved to be part of being Christ in the world? What do you need? Without you, this ministry cannot happen. Please share your thoughts with me; I want to know. What needs to happen to get you to yes?

2. Meeting community partners – continue to meet and make connections with all Johnstown has to offer. Continuing to connect with the key players throughout the area. Becoming known for what we do and how we can partner together!

3. Being the church without walls (includes ministry of presence, provide for basic needs, group studies, need for more volunteers, ecumenical expansion, continue to build trust between all involved (including church members, churches, pastors, community, and ministry partners), assess needs in community, address food and security issues, shelter and clothing needs, how to deal with healing life trauma, address lack of sense of belonging & transient nature of neighborhood, examine the disconnect between church and community (is it merely a trust issue or more; it's more – how do we build connection in a broken world?), provide a holistic ministry around spirituality, economics, health, social, etc... Lofty goals and ideas, but thankfully we serve a big God and God is who is always faithful. I hope I can stay the course for Grove and Moxham. The brokenness of the world can be overwhelming, but may God continue to feed our souls and grant us grace and mercy to continue in the path of love and light.

In January, I was interviewed by five panels of the WPAC Board of Ordained Ministry and approved for Provisional Deacon Membership to be commissioned June 11 at Annual Conference. This means I will enter a 3-year residency in ministry program through the conference while still doing all my work at Grove Ave. UMC for Hope-Filled Relationships. Deacons find their own jobs and are not appointed to a charge like an Elder, but the Bishop does approve our ministry location. Technically, I am employed through the General Board of Global Ministries; GBGM requires a minimum commitment to a site location of 6 years but perhaps up to 10 years.

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(Just so you know, I'm not planning on going anywhere; you're stuck with me! I hope you can stand it. LOL!)

In conjunction with the Free Store, we are trying to have difference community resource guests each Thursday afternoon to be available to our neighbors regarding any information or services from which they may benefit. For example, we have had visitors from Goodwill, CareerLink, SNAP, Manpower and others. We look to also pull in people from The Woman's Center, county services, banks, health representatives and more so our neighbors can plug in with any services they may need.

I don't know if you knew, besides the Free Store providing clothing and household items, we also have emergency food available for families. Thanks to some generous Grove members who have donated food throughout the year, we can provide families with food when they are in need. Sometimes we have families who have just arrived in Johnstown and have nothing at all. Sometimes the month gets long and a family needs a few items to make it through the week. We are able to help them out. Can you imagine how hard it is to have to ask a stranger can I have some food for my children? We try to meet folks where they are, how they are, as they are with all the respect and dignity each and every one of us deserve. We hope that we are a place where they can feel safe and cared for, AND where there is no shame. We want people to know what beloved children of God they are, what incredible value they are to this world and God's plan. Would you like to meet Christ in the eyes of someone else? Come visit us on Thursday afternoon. See community at work. Be part of building the Kingdom of Heaven here and now. Jesus has no hands or feet but ours. Please join us.

This summer we will be a location for the Children's Summer Food Program – providing area children with free lunch. This project is sponsored through the Pittsburgh Food Bank and the Cambria County school system. It will employ 1 person for 1 hour, 5 days a week, and we will seek to have 1 afternoon once a week for youth activities like crafts or music. If you are interested in volunteering for the meal, crafts or music, or have ideas for activities, please call Natalie at (312) 388-8631. We need you!!! Let's get to know our young neighbors.

Volunteers. Participation. What are your gifts? How can you contribute? Sundays? Thursdays? Committees? How is God calling you to serve? Jesus has no hands or feet but ours. God needs us body and soul. We are the ones bringing in the Kingdom by doing God's work, not by waiting for it to happen. Let me say that again: we bring the Kingdom by being Christ's presence in the world; it's not going to come with us on the sidelines. The world is waiting for what each of us to join in and offer what we have.

Just when you think you have no more time or energy to give, God renews us and fills us up again. It's called today and God is waiting for us to share our gifts. Let's walk together. Let's build together. And Christ will renew us over and over again. We were not and are not meant to walk and build alone. God be with us, every step in every way. Thanks be to God.

Blessings,
Natalie

