

GROVE AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

AUGUST 2020

The Messenger

501 Grove Avenue, Johnstown, PA 15902

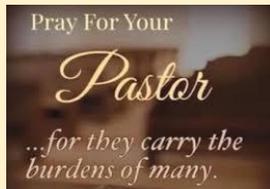
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www.groveaveumc.com



Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.



A PRAYER for CAROL and JOHN

Almighty, eternal God, have compassion on Pastor John Hickman, who in great bodily weakness is drawing near the gates of death. Send your dear Son to meet with him on the way, and to stay with him, for the day is now far spent, that he may comfort John with the Word of your goodness, and break with him the bread of eternal life.

Receive him into your kingdom that you have mercifully prepared for him and all believers from the beginning of the world. Graciously release John, O Lord, and comfort him eternally with the elect.

Father, help John discover your peace. Calm his soul as he moves into the afterlife. May he spend eternity with you; may he live forever in your presence.

Loving God, bring Pastor Carol peace. Provide the Hickman family with your comfort. Let them know you tenderly care for each and every one of them. Sit with them in their waiting. Let your presence provide rest. Lead them to be reunited with their loved ones someday.

Thank you, for the gift of life that John has brought to the world. May he rest peacefully with you for eternity. Amen.

On the Calendar in August

Our church building remains closed due to increasing Covid infections in Cambria and surrounding counties. We pray for the day we will safely be able to open wide our doors and welcome all members back to worship!

Our sister church, Christ UMC, will also continue to suspend worship services in their building.

The third church in our Charge, Homestead Avenue UMC, is formulating a plan to reopen.

God of knowledge and wisdom, we ask that you would dwell with all the scientists who are working daily to develop an effective and safe vaccine to combat this virus. Help them to collate current knowledge and be conduits of new knowledge regarding the secrets of the COVID-19 virus. Grant them the wisdom to unlock the keys that will provide helpful COVID-19 therapies and vaccines.

Bishop Ernest S. Lyght,
retired bishop of
The United Methodist Church



are extended to

Gail Hiner and Family, on the death of
Gail's husband, Bill.

Rest in Peace,

Good and Faithful Servant!

ABOUT GROVE AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



All Are Welcome!

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday: 8 am-1 pm

Friday: 8 am-Noon



Pastors: Reverends Carol and John Hickman
(on short-term medical leave)
Acting Pastor: Reverend Deb Groeger
Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Robertson
Music Director: Denise Baldwin
Church / Community Worker: Natalie Marionneaux
Custodian: Jay Adams
Nursery Director: Destiny Wallace
Lay Leader: Eric Stuver

Called to Serve

	August Ministers	
	Lois Graham	2
	Georgia Miller	9
	Gale Hiner	16
	David Graham	23
	Heather Brice	30
POSTPONED		
	Kim Fox Brenda Mills Bill Zolbe	



GROVE AVENUE REMINDERS

- **Prayer requests:** call the church office or the Prayer Chain (John & Veronica James @ 266-6907).
- Please **notify** the church of your family's: address/phone changes, births or deaths, hospital stays, milestones, accomplishments and celebrations.
- **You shop. Amazon gives.** Amazon will donate .5% of your eligible purchases to Grove Avenue UMC. Set it up at smile.amazon.com
- **Next month's Messenger** information is due by the 15th of the month.

AUGUST



- 2 Tom Charette
- 2 *Happy Anniversary, Jim and Karen Hohman!*

- 6 Lisa Rose

- 7 Lilly Hagens

- 10 *Happy Anniversary, Eric and Eileen Stuver!*

- 12 Shaddai Esteban, Haydon Brosig, Landon Brosig

- 17 Brayden Stevenson

- 19 Chuck Beam (1932) *,** , Suzannah Mayer
- 19 *Happy 70th Birthday, Darwin Gindlesperger!*

- 20 Laurel Furdella

- 21 Jane Wertz *

- 22 **Happy Birthday, Pastor Carol Hickman!**

- 24 Dave Allison, Charles Kmecak

- 25 *Happy 60th Birthday, Kim Fox!*
- 25 Veronica James

- 28 *Happy 50th Anniversary, John and Ruth Anne Hollis!*
- 28 *Happy Anniversary, Pablo and Heather Escontrias!*

- 29 Eric Stuver

- 31 *Happy Anniversary, David and Lois Graham!*

Our friends who are *Homebound and **80 and Over

Cards may be sent to:

*, ** Chuck Beam
1432 Solomon Street
Johnstown, PA 15902

* Jane Wertz
Lutheran Home
807 Goucher Street
Johnstown, PA 15905



GROVE AVENUE UMC FINANCIAL REPORT

(as of July 31, 2020)

GOB profit: *no report*



GENERAL FUND (year-to-date)

Income: \$61034.45
Expense: \$65478.68

(- \$4444.23)

ATTENDANCE AND GIVING

July 2020: A- 0
(church in lockdown)
G-\$2002.75

July 2019: A- 58
G-\$1537.25

July 2018: A- 72
G-\$1661.40

Please!

Send in your offerings

(via mail or on-line)

In order to keep our

Church viable!

Thank you!



UMC NEWS ANTI-RACISM PLEDGE

"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

James 2:17 (NRSV)

As followers of Jesus and as leaders in the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference, we lament that systemic racism, white privilege and prejudice continue to harm Black people in our country. We grieve the recent deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd - and many others, named and unnamed, who have been victims of violence fed by racial injustice.

Many leaders have called in recent days for movement beyond words, including **Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi**. We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and communities. We pledge to join the Spirit in that work through action. This initiative was created by Program Staff and is supported by Cabinet, the Anti-Racism Team, and members of Conference Staff. The time is now to answer this call, move past words, and **ACT**.

Our faith compels us to act together as faithful people of **ALL RACES**. Yet, many of us do not know where to start or how to learn new anti-racism skills on our own. Thus, we are pledging to learn and to act side by side to practice skills that disrupt white privilege, racial injustice, and systemic racism in our hearts, our churches, and our communities.

When you sign the pledge you will receive a monthly email with two anti-racism challenges focused on education and action (and a "stretch goal" for those who wish to go further in their work). Learning a new skill can be difficult and sometimes frightening. It is normal to feel awkward and uncomfortable at first. The "Now, Act Pledge" tasks may bring us out of our comfort zones, but will not be beyond our reach when we do them together. They may ask you, for example, to watch a movie or television show by a Black creator; research local history or policy; write letters to legislators; seek conversation partners in your church or town; attend a town hall or other gathering to listen and learn; donate to anti-racist organizations; or seek out and patronize Black-owned businesses.

So...if you've decided that the time is now to take action and you want to be part of this anti-racism pledge, email ActionPledge@wpaumc.org for more information. The Pledge reads as follows:

We acknowledge that as the United Methodist denomination, we have practiced- actively or passively- white privilege and systemic racism. We have turned a blind eye to violence and injustice against people of color for generations.

Today, we **REPENT** of those sins. We long, instead, to practice racial equity, social justice, and anti-racism.

Our faith compels us to act together as faithful people of **ALL RACES**. Yet, many of us do not know where to start or how to learn new anti-racism skills on our own. Thus, we are pledging to learn and to act side by side to practice skills that disrupt white privilege, racial injustice, and systemic racism in our hearts, our churches and our communities.

By signing this pledge, I commit to:

- * Working towards dismantling racism in my home, church, and broader community
- * Completing monthly tasks (provided by the conference) geared towards anti-racism education and action for a full year
- * Opening my heart and mind to new ideas and concepts, with the understanding that they may challenge and discomfort me

HOPE-FILLED RELATIONSHIPS

Natalie Marionneaux * nmarionneaux@umcmmission.org * 814-410-5457

My church is tired! How do we overcome missional paralysis?

(Excerpts from an article by Michael Adam Beck, Director of Re-Missioning for Fresh Expressions U.S).

Churches across the country have been doing amazing work during this incredible time of disorientation. Yet it seems as the COVID pandemic rages on, much of the energy and creativity is beginning to dissipate. How are some churches continuing to innovate and thrive, while others seem to be stuck?

Some pervading sentiments throughout the country are the grief, content overload, pressure from congregants, no easy answers, exhaustion and screen fatigue. With the spiking of the virus, and loss of a clear plan, many of us have fallen into a state of “missional paralysis.” Missional: Missional is derived from the term *Missio Dei* (Latin for *mission of God*). In the basic sense, *missio* means “sent” and comprehends mission as a primary attribute of God. Paralysis: the loss of the ability to move (and sometimes to feel anything) in part or most of the body.

Recently I have found encouragement in Hebrew 12:1-2. To know we are surrounded by a “great cloud of witnesses,” and that times of great challenge and cross-carrying are not unfamiliar to Christians across the ages. But most importantly, the instruction to “fix our eyes on Jesus, faith’s *pioneer* and perfecter.” We follow in the slipstream of a Jesus who is always out ahead of us, making all things new, and innovating a new reality, “the kingdom” that is breaking into the world. As the church we are called to join Jesus in this activity.

None of us have ever lived through a pandemic like this before. Additionally, we are experiencing a time of massive social upheaval, as the evil of racist policy is being confronted. Needless to say, life in the local church is challenging these days! Every congregation, in their own way, has been learning, adapting, and finding new ways to be the church. Here are five key learnings from leaders across the country that may be helpful to overcome *missional paralysis*:

1. The health of our congregants is the top priority. The virus is very real, and it is deadly. The grief and loss is also very real. “Loving our neighbor” and the well-being of our parishioners should be our top priority, everything else is secondary. The church needs healers right now, and we need to be innovative in how we do that work.

2. Self-care. Are we taking time to encounter the risen Jesus daily? Are we spending time in prayer, meditation and searching the Scriptures? Are we going outside on a scavenger hunt for beauty, goodness and truth? Are we eating well, exercising our bodies, finding a way to stink and sweat every day? Are we taking time for Sabbath, family, play and fun?

3. Grow the center, experiment on the edge. In this time of liminality, we have to manage the tension of caring for what is, while creating what will be. We have had to redefine the center and create new ways to care for our people.

4. To default or pivot? That is the question. We all operate from a particular “mental model” - deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. These mental models determine not only how we make sense of our environments, how we see, but also shape how we act. At my church we decided not to return to in-person worship until even the most vulnerable among us can do so safely. We are not “closed,” we are just finding new and creative ways to worship, care for isolated persons, continue our food pantry/recovery ministries/ in-house rehab, add new members, and plant digital fresh expressions. For us, the availability of a vaccine will be our cue to return to in-facility worship. Taking the long view like this, and committing to pivot, has released us to be more creative.

5. Discern actionable dimensions and prototype forward. Effectiveness cannot be replicated in another context without adaptation to the context. Every success must be achieved, every game won, on its own terms and in its own context/time. Missional vitality requires unlearning what we think we know and learning the immediate context with fresh ears and eyes. COVID-19 has placed every church in a new context. There are multiple problems, many layers of complexity, and multiple ways to solve them. We can start by defining multiple possible problems. Then we decide which one of those problems is actionable. Then we dream up prototypes to move forward. Each small step we take, opens new possibilities.

I hope these thoughts will spark some ideas appropriate for your own context. Remember, we are following the great “pioneer” through a challenging but rewarding journey of innovating a new future together!

