

GROVE AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
DECEMBER 2020

The Messenger

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Reaching people with Christ, one person at a time.

From Pastor Carol

"The people walking in darkness..."

As we reflect on 2020, we have been living in darkness. The darkness of isolation, social distancing, wearing masks, lack of civility and strained relationships. The good news is – that is not the end of the story! We, the people, "walking in darkness have seen a great light. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in – Christ is always coming, continually being born into the world! He brings healing, peace, and love, abundantly providing whatever is lacking in our lives. This Advent and Christmas season is different than ever before. Traditions that we have cherished, custom that have brought comfort will not be practiced. Although the outward trappings are different, the important thing remains the same – Christ is coming. We wait, keeping an eye out for signs of God's presence among us, looking for signs that God's promise is unfolding around us and knowing that the fullness of God's plan is yet to come. As we engage in this season of active waiting, I'd like to share a poem by *St. Teresa of Avila*, the 16th century Spanish mystic:

*Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

This poem speaks to our situation, the in-between time. We wait for the celebration of Christ's incarnation, Christ's birth. We also wait for the end times when Christ comes again in finally glory. Our advent call is to see more fully Christ around us, embodied in our love for others and in the moments of grace that touch our lives. I invite you, in this advent season, to look for times when you see Christ's body in the world or observe God at work. Hold those instances in your heart. Pray for more visible signs of Christ being present among and within us. Reflect, examine, and focus on the coming of Christ. Ponder what this means for our lives, individually and collectively. Invite Christ into any emptiness we are carrying around and may deny even exists. Attend to our deepest need for God during this season, and be present for others who yearn for the Christ child to be born in them. Then we, the people who walk in darkness will truly see the great light and will carry the light into the world. Searching for Christ among us will deeply enriched our Christmas experience. Christ is always coming. May you be ready to receive the Christ child.

Blessings,
Pastor Carol

*The people, walking in darkness have seen a great light.
For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. Isaiah 9*

ABOUT GROVE AVENUE UMC

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Reverend Carol Hamil Hickman, Pastor



OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday: 8 am-1 pm

Friday: 8 am-Noon

CGH Charge SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:45 Facebook Service

9:45 Grove Avenue UMC Worship

11:00 Homestead Avenue UMC Worship

STAFF

Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Robertson

Community Minister, Hope-filled Relationships:

Deacon Natalie Marionneaux

Custodian: Jay Adams

Keyboardist: Harriet Miller

Lay Leader: Eric Stuver

Music Director: Denise Baldwin

Nursery Director: Destiny Wallace

GROVE AVENUE UMC FINANCIAL REPORT (as of November 23, 2020)

GENERAL FUND (year-to-date)

Income: \$90,563.84

Expenses: \$103,774.83

(- \$13,210.99)

ATTENDANCE AND GIVING

November 2020: A- 26
 G- \$1317.75

November 2019: A- 64
 G-\$1355.20

November 2018: A- 72
 G-\$1593.75



Altar Flowers

In Honor of...

In Memory of...

Please call the church office (539-8684)

to arrange your donation of flowers

to adorn our altar!

A Prayer for the New Year

Adapted from Van Varner, Guideposts

Heavenly Father,
at midnight when 2020 dies,
and the new year comes bounding in,
I draw strength from knowing
that in the next twelve months
the snows will go, the buds will burst,
the heat will rise, the leaves will fly;
that all these things will happen
according to your schedule and in your time;
that there is order in your universe,
and that I am part of it.



The Story of Saint Nicholas

(feast day celebrated on December 6)

This is the story of St. Nicholas, a real man who lived in Asia Minor about 1700 years ago. St. Nicholas was a kind and wealthy man. He always gave money or food to people who were in need.

One story tells about the time he traveled through a bitter snowstorm to get food to a village. The people in the village had run out of food, and a terrible blizzard had been blowing over their village for days. You can imagine how desperate they were. Mothers and fathers worked hard, trying to keep their families warm inside their small huts. Fathers were busy chopping wood to try to keep the fire going. Mothers searched their cupboards for even a tiny bit of bread to give their poor children. Everyone was losing hope that they would survive this terrible winter. So imagine their great joy when one morning, just as the blizzard seemed to be ending and the sun was glinting off the great snowdrifts, the villagers discovered a huge basket of wheat in the middle of their town. Someone had managed to get through the terrible storm to bring them this wheat! The villagers divided up the wheat carefully, making sure each family got their share. The mothers used a grindstone to grind the wheat into flour, and the fathers built big, roaring fires so the flour could be baked into bread. And the whole village survived that terrible winter. Can you imagine who brought that basket of wheat to the starving villagers? It was St. Nicholas, of course! And today, there are still families who remember St. Nicholas by putting a basketful of surprises on their neighbors' doorsteps, ringing the doorbell, and running away.



Please hang this paper snowflake on your front door, or on your mailbox, if it is hard to see your door from the street.

Make a copy of this story and a new paper snowflake and put them in a small basket (or gift bag) of treats for someone on your street who does not have a snowflake on their door. Don't be nervous about giving a basket to a family you don't know very well. By Christmas, we should have a whole street full of houses with snowflakes on the doors!



Our friend, Gail Hiner, has had back surgery. She is doing well, and she is recovering in a Pittsburgh rehab facility temporarily until she can return to Laurel View Village. You can send her get well wishes and holiday greetings at:

Gail Hiner
HC 289
Concordia South Hills
1300 Bowerhill Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15243



Advent Prayer Initiative: Members of the Coordinating Cabinet invite laity and clergy to join them in daily devotions using d365, an online devotional that speaks to a broad audience, including youth and young adults. Cabinet Dean Pat Lenox said the hope is that using the same devotional material will help us all grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus Christ, which in turn will make us more available to be used by God to share God's love and the joy of salvation through Jesus Christ with others. Coordinating Cabinet members have been using d365 for over a month and "have seen God using it to draw us closer to God," he said. d365 is available by email, via an app from Apple and Google Play, or online at d365.org.

Who are the Laity? We are not ordained clergy or just the Lay Leader, Committee Chairpersons or the Lay speakers in the local church. **We are the congregation, those not ordained but equally called to do ministry.** The Conference Laity Board, *your voice*, is the elected lay leadership of the Annual Conference. The board represents and is accountable to the Annual Conference.

The *2016 Book of Discipline* (Paragraph 631) is clear that the Board of Lay shall have responsibility for the following: *fostering an awareness of the role of the laity, developing the advocacy role for laity, increasing the participation of laity in the life of the church encouraging laypersons in the general ministry of the church, developing and promoting programs to cultivate an adequate understanding of the theological and biblical basis for lay life and work, developing and promoting stewardship of time, talent and possessions, providing for the training of lay members to Annual Conference, providing support and direction for such lay programs as lay speaking, the observance of Laity Sunday, and the work of lay leaders on the local and district levels, and organizing a conference committee on lay speaking ministries.*

Peace be with you!

HOPE-FILLED RELATIONSHIPS

Natalie Marionneau
Deacon, United Methodist Church
Community Minister, Hope-filled Relationships
(nmarionneau@umcmmission.org and (814) 410-5457)



UNWRAP CHRISTMAS 2020 in Moxham: our second year!

The event will be on Saturday, December 12th from 4:30-5:30 pm. It will be a **takeout dinner**.

We need volunteers...

Would you like to help in the kitchen to fix the meal?

Can you bake a cake for us?

Would you like to donate a monetary gift for the expense of the meal ~ or gift cards for the families?

Please let Natalie know. Contact her directly at (814) 410-5457.

2020 has been a hard year. We have struggled and so have our neighbors. Please, can you offer a helping hand this year so Moxham knows it is not forgotten?
THANK YOU!!!



*December
Birthdays
and
Anniversaries*



- 1 Melah Toth
- 5 David Graham
- 9 Happy 20th Birthday, Hans Esteban!
- 16 Todd Rose
- 17 *Happy 25th Anniversary, Ron and Kathy Gindleperger!*
- 18 Lexie Roles
Happy Anniversary, Joe and Sharon Scaletta!
- 20 Denise Baldwin
- 22 Happy 50th Birthday, Jennifer Robertson!
- 28 Laura Campbell
Happy Anniversary, Bob and Patty Hagerich!
- 30 William Zolbe
Benjamin Mayer
Nadiyah Kmecak



On DECEMBER's Calendar

The CGH Charge will be meeting via ZOOM on Thursday, December 2nd @ 6:30 pm to discuss recent Covid-19 recommendations and our plans for celebrating the season of Christmas.

Please watch your emails for updates. Stay safe!

Merry Christmas to all!

