

The Wesleyan Star

December 2025

West Grove
United Methodist Church
Pastor DJ Choi

300 North Guernsey Road
West Grove, Pa. 19390
Phone: 610-869-9334



MAX LUCADO

BECAUSE OF
Bethlehem

“A remarkable gift can arrive in an unremarkable package. One did in Bethlehem.”
Max Lucado

Everybody loves Christmas. Even though the whole world celebrates Christmas, have you ever wondered why? What are we really celebrating? Remember, Christmas is Jesus' birthday not ours.

When we look at the world today—so despair, violent, sorrowful, and hate—it seems far removed from the hope, peace, joy, and love that God intended Christmas to represent. So how can we truly celebrate Christmas this year?

In his book *Because of Bethlehem*, Pastor Max Lucado reminds us that the humble, personal, and seemingly insignificant birth of Jesus is what gives us the true reason to celebrate. This Advent season, I hope we can take this as an opportunity to recover the true meaning of Christmas. Let us journey together back to Bethlehem—back to where it all began.

Merry Christ's Mass!
DJ

Advent Series: Because of Bethlehem by Max Lucado

November 30 th	“God Has Face.”
December 7 th	“It's Never Too late.”
December 14 th	“Humility Shine”
December 21 st	“Crown, Cradle, and Cross”
December 24 th	“Every Day a Christmas, Every Heart a Manger”

Pastor Jim's Christian Living Column
December 2025

"The Great Gift of Jesus: Hope for the World and the Heart"

As Advent unfolds and Christmas draws near, Christians around the world pause to reflect on more than lights, trees, and presents. At the heart of this season lies the greatest gift ever given: Jesus Christ — a gift not wrapped in paper, but wrapped in humility, love, and eternity.



A. The Gift That Transforms

Long before Bethlehem, God had a plan: to give of Himself in the most radical way. As

John 3:16 reminds us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." This is not a distant promise — it is reality, it is God's personal offering to humankind. When God gave Christ, He gave us His love, righteousness, peace, and eternal life.

B. Light for a Dark World

The world Jesus entered was full of brokenness, injustice, and darkness. Into that brokenness, the Light came. John 1:4–5 says, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." As Christians, we believe Jesus still brings that light — a light of hope, healing, and reconciliation — into our communities and societies today, Isaiah's words still resonate:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:2) His coming is not just a historical event. It is a living, ongoing reality that invites us to live in and share that light.

C. A Gift for Every Heart

If you are reading this and feel distant, weary, or uncertain, the gift of Jesus is for you. He offers forgiveness, no matter what your past indicates. He gives you a new identity, as one who is loved. And having a purpose, for you are a child of God, by faith, you are part of God's family forever. This is a long-term relationship with God. John says, "To all who receive Him (Jesus), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become Children of God" (John 1:12).

D. Living in the Gift

Receiving God's gift changes everything, not just for us, but for how we live in the world:

- ☐ Receive: Accept Jesus by faith. Let His life, love, and sacrifice become real for you.
- ☐ Reflect: As we light candles on the Advent wreath, let each flame remind us of hope, peace, joy, and love — because in Jesus, all these are freely given.
- ☐ Respond: Let the gift of Jesus shape your generosity, kindness, and service. In

Him, we're not only recipients, but we also become carriers of His light.

E. Why This Matters for Our Time

In our fast-paced, fractured world, the gift of Jesus is not outdated — it's deeply needed. His incarnation calls us to humility. His life teaches selfless love. His sacrifice brings reconciliation. And His resurrection guarantees hope.

It has been quoted: Advent isn't just a look back to a stable, it's an invitation for Jesus to be "born anew" in our hearts. This season, may we prepare not just for a holiday, but to welcome the Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts, who changes everything.

please join us for our
RAP Luncheon

*At Noon
Friday December 12th*

Christmas Potluck Sing-Along

West Grove UMC
300 N. Guernsey Road
West Grove, PA

We will enjoy an afternoon filled with fun, food, and fellowship.

Betsy Smith pianist, and Pastor Jim Mundell will be leading us in song.

Bring a dish to pass

Beverages will be provided

RSVP to Sara Ann Ramberger at Sar57ver@verizon.net.



Food Pantry

West Grove UMC Food Pantry

Weekly Hours:

Wednesday: 5:00 - 6:00 pm.

Thursdays: 1:00 - 2:00 pm.

We had a busy month with each week seeing increasing numbers of families coming to the pantry. The week before Thanksgiving, we served 144 families.

In December, the pantry will be open the first three weeks and then closed Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1. We will resume regular hours the second week of January. We have been blessed by an abundance of food and monetary donations. It has been wonderful to be able to give a bit more to our families this season, as it has certainly been a trying time for many dealing with trying to feed their families. Both the church family and the community have pitched in to meet the growing needs.



We will begin distributing coats, jackets and other outwear the third week in December. Thanks to all who have taken part in the collection. November's special collection of pet food was a huge success. Lots of dog and cat food was donated, along with some pet toys. See page 5 for more details.

In December, we will be collecting bags or boxes of cookie mix, so families may make their own Christmas cookies. We do distribute oil and eggs, so if the mix requires those items, the families will have all they need. See page 5 for more details.



Christmas Music Celebration

Join us on Sunday, December 7th at 6:30 pm.
for beautiful Christmas music and various other forms of entertainment.

This is always a wonderful evening event.
So come, celebrate Christmas with us.



*Sounds
of The
Season*



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Starting November 30th, kids K through fifth grade will be dismissed from the worship service after the passing of the peace to the youth lounge for Sunday School. As always volunteers are an intricate part of our Sunday School, so if you could volunteer to be a teacher or assistant, or simply need more information, contact Judy Gambill jlg456@epix.net or Andrew Herman hermanandrew@yahoo.com.

TWIN PINES RESIDENT GIFTS

Most of the tags have been taken from the tree in the lobby. If you haven't gotten one, you will want to check the tree soon. All gifts should be wrapped, with the person's gift tag or name on the outside. They need to be placed under the tree by Sunday, Dec. 14th. Thanks for brightening the lives of our neighbors residing at Twin Pines Health Care Center



TWIN PINES CAROLING

We hope you and your family will be able to join us on Monday, Dec. 8th at 6:00 to sing carols with the residents at Twin Pines. We will be there for about 30-40 minutes. The address is Twin Pines Health Care Center is 315 E. London Grove Rd. West Grove. You can meet us there at 5:55 or at the church at 5:40 to car pool. Please sign the sheet in the lobby to let us know you will be joining us.



COOKIES FOR LUTHER HOUSE RESIDENTS

We are again baking Christmas cookies and sharing them with the residents at the four buildings of Luther House in Jennersville. There are over 220 residents, so we need LOTS of cookies. Plan on baking the cookies at home and bringing them to the church by Sunday, morning, Dec. 14th. After the worship service that morning, we will gather to bag the cookies and include a note from our church with each bag. We will eat bag lunches, brought from home, then travel to Luther House to distribute the bags of cookies. Please sign the sheet in the lobby to let us know what kind and how many dozen cookies you will be making. We particularly need ones that diabetics can eat, along with some that are nut free.



COAT AND OUTERWEAR COLLECTION

The coats, jackets and other warm outerwear have started filling our coat racks, at church. We are collecting new or gently used coats and jackets in all children, youth and adult sizes. You may also give new and gently used scarves, warm hats, warm socks, gloves and mittens. There is a designated coat rack, in the lobby, along with a box for the smaller items. On Dec. 17th, we will begin to distribute these donations to our food pantry families during our regular distribution hours. We will continue to allow families to select outerwear into January, until we run out of items.





“Your generosity helps us make holiday wishes come true!”
THANK YOU FOR DONATING ONLY NEW & UNWRAPPED GIFTS!

We are moving up our in-hand submission date to the Week of December 15

❄️ **Young Children: Infants & Toddlers**

Board Books, Toddler Toys, Mr. Potato Head, Peg Puzzles, Push & Ride-on Toys, Bibs, Diapers & Wipes

❄️ **Pre-School: Ages 3-5 Years**

Age-Appropriate Books, Mr/Ms Potato Head, Age-Appropriate Toys, Safe Blocks, Art Supplies (Paints, Finger Paints, Markers), Playdough, Fun Foam, Kinetic Sand, Craft Supplies (Ribbon, Yarn, Fabric, etc), Trucks, Cars, Active Toys, Dolls (African American, Latino, Other), Wooden Puzzles, Dress Up Clothing & Accessories, Learning Games

❄️ **Elementary School: Ages 6-10 Years**

Action Figures, Legos, 30 to 50 Piece Puzzles, Age-Appropriate Books, Sports Equipment, Team Apparel, Arts & Crafts Supplies, Trucks, Train & Car Sets, Dolls (African American, Latino, Other), Coding Toys, Sensory Toys/Fidgets

❄️ **Middle School: Ages 11-14 Years**

Age-Appropriate Books, Bi-Lingual Books & Games, Arts & Crafts Supplies, Science Kits, Robotic Sets, Beauty & Grooming Items, Sports Equipment, Team Apparel, Jewelry, Video Games, Gaming Systems, Coding Toys, Sensory Toys/Fidgets

❄️ **High School: Ages 15-18 Years**

Age-Appropriate Books, Gift Cards, Arts & Crafts Supplies, Sports Equipment, Beauty & Grooming Items, Jewelry, Video Games, Gaming Systems

❄️ **Young Adult: Ages 19-24 Years**

Pillows & Twin Comforters, Twin Bed Sheets & Mattress Protectors, Towel Sets & Washcloths, Shower Curtains & Liners, Dish Cloths, Board Games, Journals, Small Room Trash Cans, Dish Sets, Pots/Pans

❄️ **Adults in Our Programs**

Books, Jewelry, Beauty & Grooming Items, Personal Care Baskets, Hats, Scarves, Watches

Our families treasure Gift Cards of any value from Target, Kohl's, Walmart, Best Buy & Old Navy. Please mark the amount of the Gift Card on the envelope. Many of our programs serve young children and families who would also benefit from the donation of NEW car seats, bouncy seats, high chairs, boxes of disposable diapers (all sizes) and other baby care items. We also appreciate receiving wrapping paper, gift bags and bows.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

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<u>December 1st</u> - Pastor Jim's Bible Study	<u>December 2nd</u> - Yoga Class/Tuesday Bible Study
<u>December 7th</u> - Christmas Music Celebration	<u>December 8th</u> - Twin Pines Caroling
<u>December 9th</u> - Yoga Class/Tuesday Bible Study	<u>December 12th</u> - RAP
<u>December 13th</u> - Church Hike/White Clay	<u>December 16th</u> - Yoga/Tuesday Bible Study
<u>December 18th</u> - Stephen Ministry Meets	<u>December 23rd</u> - Yoga Class
<u>December 24th</u> - Christmas Eve Services: 6:30 pm. Family Candlelight Service 9:00 pm. Candlelight Service	
<u>December 30th</u> - Yoga Class	

JANUARY

<u>January 2nd</u> - Tuesday Bible Study/Yoga Class	<u>January 4th</u> - New Years Pot Luch Brunch
<u>January 5th</u> - Pastor Jim's Bible Study	<u>January 6th</u> - Yoga Class



PRAYER MINISTRY

Our WGUMC Prayer Ministry is looking for a few volunteers to bolster our fellowship in prayer.

Please contact Susan Paisley, sbrintonpais1@verizon.net / Carol McGinley, cmcginley@zoominternet.net / Sandi Hampton sandihampton6@gmail.com/or Pam Howard phoward40@comcast.net as you feel led to serve and if you have any questions.

Poinsettia's for Christmas!

Watch your Sunday Bulletins for your opportunity to order a poinsettia, in celebration of, in honor of or in memory of someone, to adorn the sanctuary during the month of December.

Plant price is \$7:00 each and orders must be in by December 17th.

Order forms are on the narthex welcome center, contact the church office at office@westgroveumc.org.

* * * C M O UPDATE * * *

The month of November came and went in a flash! Our Preschool Friends enjoyed learning about Thanksgiving, family and friends. So many fun turkey crafts were created this past month, as evidenced on our bulletin boards, make sure you check them out! Some of our classes made friendship snack mix and shared with friends for a Thanksgiving treat. Our Little Ladybugs even worked together to make homemade pasta! YUM!

Our PreK classes enjoyed swapping classrooms for a short period, how fun! We all enjoyed the mild weather and made the most of playing outside while the weather was still warm enough to enjoy outdoor time.



Looking ahead, our spectacular raffle baskets will be displayed starting at the beginning of December until our Happy Birthday Jesus Celebration on Friday, December 19th.

At our Celebration we will raffle off each basket!

Winners do not need to be present to win!

These baskets are seriously amazing and anyone may bid on any of the baskets.

Go ahead and check them out! Raffle Tickets are \$1.00 each and this is a fundraiser for the Preschool.

If anyone would like to purchase raffle tickets at Mass on Sunday, please find Paulette, Bryan, Cindy Hoover or Fran Miller and they will help with the purchase of the tickets.

You won't be disappointed, and good luck in the drawing!

Please remember to write your name and phone number on the back of each of our tickets. Thanks so much for your support.

All the Best,

Abbie

West Grove United Methodist Church

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

What does “A Stephen Ministry Congregation” mean? It defines a congregation that has organized, supervised, equipped and trained a team of caregivers to provide high quality compassionate Christ like care for people when they go thru life’s difficult transitions.

It’s a congregation that possesses what Dick Stuhrke recently called a “Blessed Assurance Policy” for the next life. However, the Stephen Ministry Congregation’s policy is also active for today. A Stephen Ministry congregation has your back when you face life’s difficult transitions. Such as divorce, the death of a loved one, coping with ailments loses in aging, dealing with an estranged spouse, even the changes a new child brings to the family, infertility, sickness, surgery, kids leaving for college, or job loss, and the list goes on and on.

To learn more about how a Stephen Ministry Congregation can transform lives of hurting people, please read The ‘After’ People, by Jessica Fischer.

Together in Christ Jesus,

Dan

Mighty Bright Tree Raffle

Hosted by **Mighty Writers El Futuro Kennett**

You’re invited to join us for a festive evening with food, drinks, and beautifully decorated trees, each packed with \$250 in gifts or more from local sponsors. **Event is free, purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win!**

Thursday, Dec. 4, 6–8 p.m.

121 Willow St., Toughkenamon, PA 19374



Event Details and RSVP: bit.ly/mightybrighttree

Support our free literacy programs and essential resources for kids and families!





Sunday, January 4th 2026! (After Worship)

Bring your favorite brunch item to church and celebrate the New Year with your church family after worship. Tables for food will be set up in the narthex before the service, including power strips for crock pots.



Sign up sheet in the church lobby. Contact Andrew Herman for more details at: hermanandrew@yahoo.com

Director Youth Ministry *15 - 20 hours a week/Facilitate youth programs/ Weekly youth group meetings/Fellowship activities/Plan, organize and lead opportunities for youth in worship, service, and fellowship. Please contact the pastor thru the church office - office@westgroveumc.org // 610-869-9334

WANTED

BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

12/06 Sandi Hampton
 12/06 Matthew Rinehimer
 12/07 Grace Featherston
 12/08 Harvey Chase
 12/08 Timothy Shaub
 12/10 Olivia Spencer
 12/13 Anna Castaldi
 12/13 Bill Ditzel
 12/14 Jo Ann Coates
 12/15 Sean Barrett
 12/15 Karen Underwood



12/17 Ian Ditzel
 12/17 Len Kuch
 12/17 Debbie Schneider
 12/17 Gary Spencer, Jr.
 12/18 Sandra Carmichael
 12/18 Jessica Jones
 12/19 Roann Bates Schneider
 12/18 Kim O'Neill
 12/29 Alexandra Smith
 12/31 Xavier Feliciano

The United Methodist Men hold a monthly breakfast at the church. There is time for scripture, sharing, some speakers and lots of fellowship.

We meet on the

Fourth Saturday of each Month, 8:00 -9:30 am.

This month's breakfast is December 27th

More information will be shared as plans are made.

All men and boys are invited to attend. Contact Michael Duvall with your questions. (mwduvall@aol.com)



Have a question about the UMC, it's worship (what is Pentecost?), beliefs (what is repentance?), the sacraments (what do I need to know about baptism?), or the UMC in general (are all Methodist churches part of UMC)? <https://www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/ask-the-umc-faqs>





**DO YOU RECEIVE OUR WEEKLY (WGUMC)
CONSTANT CONTACT EMAILS?**

We publish a Weekly West Grove Wednesday edition which features upcoming events or events that have popped up unexpectedly. Also a Saturday Sneak-a-Peek about the sermon on Sunday and other information, including our newsletter, and a link to the current week's bulletin.

If you are not receiving these two emails, perhaps you elected to unsubscribe or they are being treated as spam and are going directly to trash.

If you are missing out and would like to be on the list, email April Spencer, our Church Administrator, at office@westgroveumc.org or call the office at 610-869-9334. She will be happy to add you to the list!

~ Encounter ~ Empower ~ Engage ~

At West Grove UMC, we love God by encouraging Our community to be followers of Christ..

**Office Hours: Monday—Friday
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

Staff

Rev. DJ Choi, Lead Pastor,
pastor@westgroveumc.org

The Reverend Jim Mundell - Associate Pastor,
Chaplain at Jenner's Pond

Jim.mundell@westgroveumc.org

April Spencer - Church Administrator
Office@westgroveumc.org

Dan Elliott—Financial Administrator
Financialadmin@westgroveumc.org

Betsy Smith - Traditional Music Director
Contemporary Music Director
Keyboardist
Betsy.smith@westgroveumc.org

Bill Pardoe—IT Director
billpardoe1@gmail.com

Lavenia Civitella—Handbell Choir Director
Misslavenia@verizon.net

Abbie Gruscavage—Children's Morning Out Director
cmo@westgroveumc.org

Maira Tena—Sexton
sexton@westgroveumc.org

**Sunday Worship Service
9:27 am.**

Christ Servant Ministers

Peter Mullen, psmullen@petermullen.com
Dan Elliot, Financialadmin@westgroveumc.org

Board and Committee Leadership

Dick Stuhrke - Chair Vision Team (Ad. Council)

Dan Elliott Financial Administrator

Kim O'Neill - Trustee Chair

Vicki Owens - Treasurer

Cindy Hoover - SPRC Chair

DJ Choir - Missions Chair

Dick and Caryl Stuhrke - Hospitality Committee Chair

Open -Delegate to Annual Conference

Open - Committee on Lay Leadership

Shirley Daddario - U.W.F. President

Susan Paisley - Prayer Ministry Coordinator

Joan Leaman—Emergency Food Pantry Coordinator

Amy Castaldi - Nursery Coordinator

Cindy Hoover—CMO Advisory Board Chair

Sara Ann Ramberger—R.A.P Coordinator