



The Wesleyan Star

**West Grove
United Methodist Church**

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 December 2023 

Quote about Mary

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. ³⁸ "I am The Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-28, 31-32, 38)

How does a person prepare for what God can do? God is so creative and so extravagantly generous, while He is beyond our limited perceptions and abilities, he is with us, bringing blessings into life. Mary could barely begin to imagine how God would fulfill the promises He made to her, and a great leap of faith for us to live with too. Throughout her life, she was faithful and trusting; she must have been devoted to prayer that sought God's perspective. I believe the events of her life didn't "just happen;" she partnered with God, as we all are invited to do. As a girl growing up, she was faithful to God in the ways she lived and sought a relationship with God that prepared her for what God can do. So, as we begin sharing the blessings of Advent and God's promises, preparing for Christ entering our lives in new ways, we remember her faithfulness as we strive to open our hearts to God, and His creativity in our lives.

In November's worship, we shared several scriptures from Matthew 25, the parables Jesus told to teach us about our relationship with God and life itself, as we grow in our discipleship with Christ. They all urged us to understand more fully the freedom and choices we have and how we can exercise faith in the decisions we make. The story of the ten young women who needed to keep their lamps lit; the three servants entrusted with incredible amounts of money, and resources, and how they shared and applied them; and the shepherd who separated the goats from the sheep. They all point to the blessed results of faithfulness and the tragic results when we are not. The key dynamic in all of them is God's extravagant generosity in grace. It is the real treasure of our lives and journeys in faith that is meant to be shared, not hidden or buried, always aware of where its true strength and light comes from.

A life well lived, faithfully, is one where we share freely what God has entrusted to us, the food, water, and clothing, and above all His love in the friendships and relationships we share. Our prayer this season, is that through God's creative movement in our lives, we will reach past the conflict and the tragedies that seem so prevalent in so many lives today, and live fully in the hope His creativity in love can provide.

We can be a source of His light when we let it shine from our hearts, knowing always where its power comes from. We can keep our lamp lights trimmed and bright. We cannot allow those tragedies, and the resulting grief that turns into fear, and conflict, to hold us back from participating in God's creativity, and what He can and is doing. We seek to experience a true Advent season together, as Mary did so long ago, still living in the real hope of what God is doing, allowing faith to bring joy to our world. We pray you will join us.

From Tim –



Worship in December at West Grove UMC

Join us as we worship together by opening our hearts to Jesus, growing in God's way, and serving God's world.



8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Worship. Live Streaming on You Tube.

Worship December 2023 Advent

Advent is a time when we prepare for the very real coming of Jesus Christ into our lives and hearts in new ways. It is so incredible, almost unbelievable that God could be in human form. Why would God take on our dilemmas, our difficulties, and limit himself so, for us? It is because He loves us! What wondrous love is this, O my soul!? How sacred and precious our lives must be to God for God to reach out to us! Salvation and personal relationships with Christ often comes in unexpected ways; God is not under our control, nor anyone's control. God has made the decision to love us. We need to be prepared for the blessings God provides, or we may miss them. He does not reach out to us according to some formula that is predictable controlled by us; it is out of the creativity in generosity of His heart. From my personal witness, and experiences, being a loving parent, truly loving, means always leading children to God first, and not relating with them as a personal possession – And so it was with Mary, as she was entrusted with the life of Jesus in a most incredible way. We also have been entrusted with the life of Christ, his way of peace, joy, and hope. We hope to be meeting Christ every day, throughout our lives in all we do. We hope others meet Christ personally in us every day too. It starts with our commitment and dedication to worship and Sabbath, and our plans for Advent are shared below:

Dec 3 – Hope Isaiah 60:2-3 – Communion Sunday

God Gladly Reaches to us, Warms & Strengthens Our Souls – We'll hear from: Isaiah 64:1-9 – Isaiah pleads, please rip open the heavens & descend, bring heaven to earth, and be close with us Lord! Light a fire, in unexpected ways; For there is no One like you! And yet sadly, no one prays to You, then or now. On communion Sunday through God's mercy and forgiveness in grace, we pray that God remakes us, we are like clay in His hands, an open-source code. We'll also hear from Ps 80:1-7, 17-19, Give ear to God, express our confessions; we ask, give your hand of strength to us in mercy Lord.

Dec 10 – Christ as the Way Mark 1:4

Is 40:1-11 – Isaiah lifts up prayers for God's arrival: Comfort; Shout! What shall we shout? The people are grass and fade, at times it seems so hopeless. Yet God reaches to us, helps us climb, and be lifted up higher above the fray; God comes to us personally, and it is the greatest souse of hope as we live in the Way of Christ. We'll also hear from Ps 85:1-2, 8-13 – Our God is the Lord of restoration and forgiveness, let me and all of us hear him speak; for He shares great faithfulness, and His righteousness and steadfast love will meet us and bring transformation. We

will also likely hear from Mark 1:1-8 – perhaps as a call to worship: Prepare the Way of the Lord, following John the Baptist, we are quick to express confession of sins, and live in the promise of Holy Spirit.

Dec 17 – Joy Isaiah 35:10

Is 61:1-4, 8-11 – When we accept Christ, we seek to grow and mature as his disciples, the Spirit of God is in and upon us. We are blessed and anointed to share the Good News; it is a great message of joy, calling us to live in praising hearts, and not focus on doom! God will help us, lead us in returning home; for God loves justice; will reach out to the ends of the earth to bring it forth and bring righteousness into full bloom. We'll share Psalm 126 – celebrating, "A harvest of Joy." We also expect to share I Thessalonians 5:16-24 as part our worship liturgy – Rejoice always, do not quench the spirit; may God sanctify you, refining your love.

Dec 24 – Prince of Peace Isaiah 9:6-7

Luke 1:47-55 We'll hear Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1, where she is bursting forth, taking part in God's mercy and joy in the most intimate of ways, sharing and helping God in fulfilling His promises. We'll also hear from Luke 1:26-38, the visit of Gabriel to Mary and Mary's affirmation of her faith and service to God. It was not an easy time; it was extremely difficult circumstances, and yet Mary had been faithful to God throughout her life, and as she was faithful and trusting then, we can be also in our love of God today. Christmas Eve Candlelight Services 7PM Praise; 9PM Traditional. As we hear from Isaiah 9:2-7, "A child has been born to us." We experience a sign of hope, and joy. While our faith inspires us in taking responsibilities, we can rise above the fears of burdens and responsibilities it brings, to claim the hope, joy, peace, and love, for God is with us. Imagine someone entrusting the life of their child into your care. How would you respond? What would you do? You are the only one who has specific, incredible ways to bless and care for that child. It is so important and compelling for us to respond fully with our hearts. As difficult as life can be, as dark as the night and times may seem, God's love and light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

December 31 –

We continue the season of Christmas, celebrating God is with us as **Isaiah** proclaims in **61:10- 62:3**, Freedom to All Captives; sing for Joy to God, my salvation! I can't keep my mouth shut! Sing to all nations! (What God has done.) So is the great joy in knowing God in the personal ways we have and can through Christ. How will we share this incredible trust as individuals? As a fellowship? We share Luke 2:22-40; the fulfillment of God's promise in Christ as a child; the blessing of Jesus in the Temple brings blessings to Simeon's life, as his faith is fulfilled in the promised hope for the future in the blessing of Jesus as a child. We'll also hear from Ps 148. We pray you will join us throughout December and into the year ahead.

Grief Share, Surviving the Holidays

Begins Thursday, December 7 at 10AM It became even more clear to me this fall, as we shared the Grief Share materials, just how much the challenges and conflicts in the world,

are caused by not entrusting our grief and our whole hearts and lives to God. People often allow pain to fester and infect their hearts. Even among Christians, in our personal lives, among our families and fellowship, we can fall into a tendency of hiding or stuffing away emotions from life events, or avoiding them all together in many ways, when God is ready and seeks to empower us through our fellowship together in faith. By entrusting our grief to God, we are led to experience in new ways just how precious and sacred life is, and especially the love we share, all of which comes from God. God wants to help us live life fully, as Jesus showed and taught. I give thanks for the ladies that joined together with me this past fall to share the journey together. We are offering Surviving the Holidays on Thursdays at 10AM, and the group may offer a repeat of the thirteen-week study again in the year ahead. Please join us as you are able in this faithful endeavor. Preparing for Jesus, means understanding, working through grief, growing in our trust of God to be creative, personally helping us

Charge Conference 2023

Special blessings were shared on Saturday, November 18, as eight United Methodist churches in our area came together for Annual Charge Conference, the annual sharing of how God is at Work with us in our ministries as we also conducted the business or logistical requirements of the church. Thank you to the six people from our fellowship who attended. This year, our meeting was facilitated by Rev. Tom Davis-Shappell, an experienced pastor, leader and ordained elder who always seems focused on our relationship with God, when sharing and facilitating ministry. It was great to share the fellowship with other local UMC churches as we heard how God has been at work in their hearts and lives. We met Christo Rey's new pastor, Evodia Villalva, who has a genuine spirit for Christ and has been leading that congregation these past six months to grow closer with God within the UMC and our community. We connected more completely with additional churches, expressing our need at WGUMC for a praise band leader and bell choir leader, and received some contacts to pursue. Our annual reports presented to the Conference are available, including our planned 2024 budget, our list of leaders and assessments of where we are and plans and possibilities ahead for 2024; Tom is also a facilitator in the Conference's renewal ministry called, Pathways to Congregational Fruitfulness. In this ministry a congregation moves through an intentional process to prepare, assess, learn and grow in their understanding of what it means to be a healthy, fruitful congregation. Pathways provides spiritual and strategic resources presented by a trained facilitator to coach the pastors and a team of the local church leaders to discern a ministry plan which is organic and appropriate for our particular setting. With someone like Tom taking part, it is more than just another program focused on logistics, it can be one centered on faith. Please pray for our fellowship in discerning how to move forward with such a resource.

Don't Hold Back

Several times this past year, it felt like many people were holding back in their offering, attendance, and participation. Many people are distracted by a variety of events and dynamics that challenge our faith and friendships. I'm not sure what many people were or are waiting for, or what they might be unsettled, or unhappy with. We don't want to withdraw, or start to alienate each other, and draw stereotypes about each other. We want to be faithful to what Christ taught, sharing God's love, and reach out and engage in dialogue seeking to understand one another. Many have expressed to me that they are fearful of the future of WGUMC in the wake of UMC split, especially with so many

Peninsula Delaware UMC churches leaving the denomination. Many have family and friends that for years have attended the churches that are leaving. I've expressed to people that I have spoken with, that I/we can't control what happens at General Conference, or with the EPA Conference, but we can choose to serve Christ, stay close to God through prayer, devotions, Bible study, and engaging in our fellowship in ministry and outreach. I encourage you to engage in prayer, to seek God's understanding how we personally can faithfully respond to the year ahead. May God bless you in your efforts.

PASTOR JIM'S CHRISTIAN LIVING COLUMN

—God Watches Over Us As We Journey in Life—

November 2023

PASTOR JIM'S CHRISTIAN LIVING COLUMN BEGINNING THE NEW CHRISTIAN YEAR WITH ADVENT

December 2023

As I have noted in the past, the New Christian based year begins with the Season of Advent. The season begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. In 2023, Christmas is on Monday, making December 24th the fourth Sunday of Advent with the first Sunday being December 3rd.

Advent is observed by many Christian traditions as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ and the hope of His second coming. The word “advent” means “coming” or “arrival” which involves waiting. Advent then is a time of waiting, Waiting to celebrate Jesus’ incarnation on one hand and waiting for His return or second coming on the other.



Overall, Advent is a season of reflection, anticipation, and joy as believers prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and look forward to the fulfillment of God’s promises in the future. The specific customs and traditions associated with Advent vary among different Christian denominations and individual believers.

As United Methodists we use scripture and an Advent wreath, typically a circular arrangement of evergreen branches with four candles (three purple and one pink). Some wreaths have five candles with the fifth candle being white and in the center of the wreath. Each candle represents one of the four weeks of Advent. The candles are lit successively each week, and the central white candle, often called the “Christ candle” is lit on Christmas Eve/Day. The lighting of candles symbolizes the increasing light of Christ coming into the world and coming into our heart.

As we celebrate the New Christian Year may we look forward to praising God and giving thanks to Him for sending Jesus as a Babe, as a human man, to lead us to God, the Father through His teachings. Beginning on January 8 th , I will be leading a Bible Study on the teachings of Jesus in His “Sermon on the Mount.” His sermon appears in Matthew 5-7, and it is these three chapters that will be studied. Jesus was radical in his teaching compared to the authorities of that time, and perhaps you will find parts of this study that you may have difficulty understanding or accepting. This is why we can come together as Christians and share together. I hope you may want to be part of this study.

Advent He is coming, and we are patient in waiting. Pastor Jim



Jenner's Pond Residents!

Join us for worship on October 8, at 11 a.m.

Our Future In Children & Youth Ministries

WGUMC is so happy to welcome Xavier Feliciano as our new Youth Leader. Xavier joins us from his previous church Iglesia Pentecostal Roca De Refugio located in Toughkenamon Pa. He has his Bachelor's from Kutztown University. After graduation he decided to move to Kennett Square where he currently resides. Xavier has lots of exciting new ideas for growing his brand new role at West Grove UMC. He plans to foster Christian Education and community-building from childhood through young adulthood. Please feel free to reach out to him at any time or any day, with any questions or new ideas to help improve the youth program. xavierfeliciano5@gmail.com



We continue to search for a praise band leader, and volunteers to help share and empower both these ministries.

Areas of Immediate focus for us are:

- * We have openings to serve as a volunteer to teach and help on Sunday morning
- * We are planning on assembling Care Packages for College Students
- * And creating cards to send to members and friends who are less mobile
- * Adults who are willing to be with youth on youth nights and game nights
- * Adults who are willing to serve by attending special events with youth (concerts?)

There are so many ways to reach out to our primary school aged kids that can engage them and their families. There are so many possibilities for us, especially when we consider including the CMO families and their children and the families who come to Food pantry. It will take commitment and dedication from the fellowship to make it happen.

*** * * *Our Youth Pastor* * * ***

A couple of years ago, I prayed about how we might strengthen our ministries here, and what came to my heart was a need for us to have an additional, bilingual member of our ministries to help us reach out more effectively to the community. Maybe it might be someone who loved Christ who also worked on the Mighty Writers staff. I reconnected with old friends from Phoenixville, as one of the kids who was devoted to growing closer to God while attending there was an immigrant from Guatemala. Even as a boy, he blessed us through his participation. I thought he might come and help us here, but he was headed into the Air Force to begin the process of becoming a US citizen.

This past summer, as Melanie resigned from her position to move into a graduate program, the prayers moved me again to open my heart and mind to how God might lead us in creative efforts in our ministries. We've all grown to know and love the Tena family, Maira and Baldazar, and their daughter Kimberly, and two sons Fernando and Jonathan. They have, in a variety of ways, served Christ here for over fifteen years and have been a huge blessing. Their one son, Fernando applied for the open youth position, and he is an extremely strong candidate, willing to grow closer to Christ in his journey. Unselfishly, he also recommended a close friend apply for the position too, Xavier Feliciano Miranda. Xavier is also open to growing in new ways in his faith and journey with Christ.

Xavier was hired by the SPRC on a part time basis, to help lead our youth ministries. He works full time helping students at the Community College of Philadelphia as an admissions recruiter, and helping students apply their education and training in the workplace. We welcome him into our fellowship, excited with the possibilities for our youth and the outreach we can share with our community. We want our youth, our whole fellowship, and community to grow closer to God in personal ways. I believe Xavier will be a vital, integral part of the blessings our fellowship here shares. I'd also like to encourage us to engage with Fernando and encourage his continued participation too, as both men are great friends, and friends in Christ. Like Mary, so long ago, we can only begin to understand how God is creatively, lovingly at work today. Please feel free to introduce yourself to Xavier, his fiancé Sidney and share your hopes for faith in our fellowship with him as he and they grow to know us better.

Bishop's Days with Clergy in the Districts

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OF US TO COME TOGETHER, RECONNECT AND GAIN INSIGHTS INTO OUR SHARED MISSION AND VISION.

BISHOP JOHN WILL VISIT TWO FINAL EPA DISTRICTS ON TUESDAYS IN DECEMBER:

**WEST DISTRICT: DECEMBER 5, 9:30- 11:30AM. SALEM UMC, MANHEIM.

**SOUTH DISTRICT: DECEMBER 12, 9:30-11:30 AM. CEDARVILLE UMC, POTTSTOWN. “



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Your Missionaries Ngoy and Umba Kalangwa

Dear Friends and Mission Partners, Grace and Peace to you!

I hope this message finds you well, still cherishing the warmth and love that filled your Thanksgiving celebrations. As the holiday season unfolds, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude and share a message of hope with you. First and foremost, Ngoy and I want to extend our deepest appreciation for your support and boundless generosity throughout the years. Your belief in our mission has made a tremendous difference. Together we have brought hope, healing, and opportunities for growth to countless lives.

We want to share a progress update on the construction of the much-anticipated maternity ward. Thanks to your contributions, the building of the maternity ward is taking shape. Witnessing this physical manifestation of our shared commitment is both humbling and inspiring. The maternity ward will serve as a beacon of hope for expectant mothers and their newborns. As the construction progresses, we invite you to join us in envisioning the bright future that lies ahead. Please know that your support is deeply appreciated, and every contribution, no matter how small, has the power to create lasting change.



We wish you joy, peace, and abundant blessings as we embark on Advent and the Christmas Seasons.

May the Spirit of Christmas continue to inspire us, and may our hearts be filled with hope for a brighter tomorrow.



West Grove UMC Food Pantry

Weekly Hours:

Wednesdays: 5:00—6:30 p.m.

Thursdays: 1:00—2:00 p.m.

**Our Church Food Bank
Depends on You!**

November was a very busy month for us as we served an average of 112 families each week. With the help of our amazing volunteers, our Thanksgiving distribution ran very smoothly.

We are looking ahead to December and making plans for additional ways we can care for our neighbors who come to our food pantry. We will be receiving gently worn coats, hats and gloves through the month of December. If you have any donations, please drop them off in the church lobby where there is a rack and a box provided. We have been giving the children, who come with their parents, books that have been donated. We are always in need of children's books to replenish our library. The UMW have chosen to support the families by asking for donation of personal care items such as soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, deodorant, etc. We would love to have enough items (about 120) so that each family could choose an item. We need these personal care items to the church by Sunday, Dec. 17th.

Finally, we have partnered with Mighty Writers to purchase tortillas in bulk at cost from El Sombrero. We are excited about this opportunity, as tortillas the the most sought after food product we have available. The cost will be \$450.00 a month. If anyone feels led to financially help with this monthly purchase, please give your donation to the church and indicate that it is designated for the food pantry fund.

As always, thanks for your giving heart!

Do you receive the weekly Constant Contact emails from the church?

We publish a Weekly West Grove Wednesday edition and a Sunday Sneak-a-Peek about the sermon on Sunday and other information, including our newsletter, and a link to the 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!



West Grove UMC Calendar of Events

Be sure to check out the church calendar on our website. There are many activities, groups, events, studies and more going on every week.

Sunday School has classes for adults and children of all ages. Your church calendar is reviewed daily and updated with the latest events and meetings. Please refer to our website to get information, updates, calendar events, etc. www.westgroveumc.org

Retired Active People



Join us for our next gathering on December 8th at noon in the sanctuary. We will enjoy a covered dish lunch so bring your favorite dish to share.

Beverages and desserts will be provided. Our program will be presented by Matt Furches from the Utah-based Boulder Outdoor Survival School. Matt hails from Nottingham, PA, but after several years to further his study of outdoor skills and knowledge he now lives in Boulder, Utah with his lovely wife, Pam. Matt is also the nephew of our church and RAP member, Linda Brown.

Joyce Lewis will be our RAP leader for the day and will appreciate any help in setting up the luncheon and help cleaning up at the end.

We thank Dick Stuhrke for our November program of "Iconic Boats and Ships."



And a huge thank you to everyone who helped with the day. We appreciate everyone's help each month with setup and cleanup. Our monthly gatherings are not possible without our volunteers and those who bring our delicious desserts.

Thank you!

We look forward to our covered dish lunch in December and look forward to seeing you.

Everyone is welcome! Invite a friend or two; we hope to see you on December 8th. Please RSVP to Sara Ann Ramberger at sar57ver@verizon.net or 610-869-3863 to let us know you plan to attend so we may set up accordingly.

Christmas Services

8:30 a.m. Worship Service

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service

7:00 p.m. Family Candlelight Service with Music by our PraiseWorks Band

9:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service with music by our Chancel Choir



The Church Office is closed on Monday, December 24th, Tuesday, December 25th, and Wednesday, December 26th so that the staff may spend time over the holiday with their families.

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 a.m.-9:30 a.m.**

~ (There will be no meeting in December.)

More information will be shared as plans are made. All men and boys are invited to attend. Contact Pastor Jim or Michael Duvall with your questions.



METHODIST SERVICES 2023 HOLIDAY TOY, GIFT AND CARD DRIVE SPONSORED BY UNITED METHODIST MEN.

December 3rd is the last opportunity to share your blessings.

Ways To Participate

- **ONLINE:** Make a secure online donation via methodistservices.org & click "Donate Now" and Choose Holiday Gift in the drop-down menu.
- **BY MAIL:** Make a cash donation via check, payable to Methodist Services. Mail to: Methodist Services, 4300 Monument Road, Philadelphia, PA 19131 ATTN: Holiday Gift
- **DROP OFF & PICK UP – BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**
- If you'd like to donate new, unwrapped toys or gifts, gift cards, or arts & crafts, contact Carole Boughter at cboughter@methodistservices.org or 215.877.1925 ext.104.
- **THANK YOU FOR DONATING ONLY NEW & UNWRAPPED GIFTS!**
- We are moving up our in-hand submission date to the Week of December 11
- **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, etc.)
- **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
- **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 18-24 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.

*Christmas
Blessing*



Annual Christmas Gift Collection for Residents at Twin Pines

As we have done for many years, our church family will provide gifts to 15 residents at Twin Pines Care Facility this Christmas.

There will be tags hanging on the small tree in the lobby that let you know of requested gifts.

Please take a tag, or two, and sign your name on the paper provided to indicate which tag(s) you took.

All wrapped gifts need to be returned to the church by Sunday, Dec. 17th. Please make sure the recipients name is on the outside of the gift. You can simply tape the gift tag to the package. Gifts may be placed in the bin by the small Christmas tree.

Thank you for caring in this manner, as you follow in the example of the travelers from long ago who brought gifts to the Christ child.

A THANK YOU FROM THE WGUMC DECORATING COMMITTEE

We would like to thank the United Methodist Women for donating the funds to buy the two new banners that will be adorning the sanctuary. One is for Pentecost and the other for Epiphany. We are so looking forward to hanging them up in the sanctuary for all to enjoy.

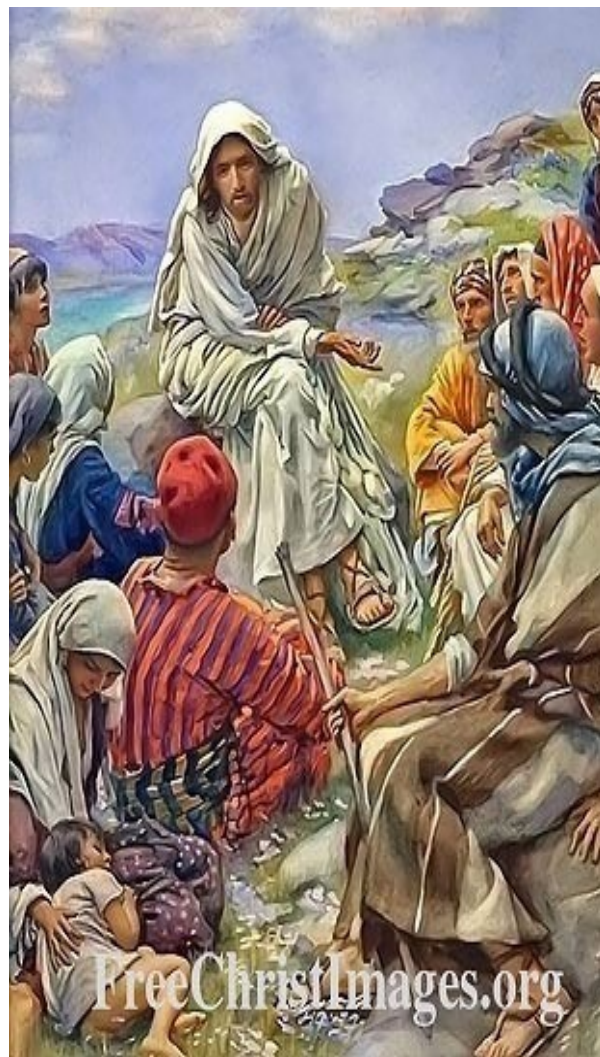
NEW YEAR BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Jim's next Bible study is planned to begin on **January 8th, 2024, at 6:30 pm.**, in the sanctuary of West Grove UMC. The study will be on the teachings of Jesus and how one is to live in the Kingdom of Heaven, here on earth.

We know this as the "Sermon On the Mount" found in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 5-7. Our study will take an in-depth analysis of what Jesus was teaching His followers. When Jesus taught, he spoke with clear authority that troubled and angered the religious elite (Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Priesthood), who saw His teachings as being radical. But the common people flocked to listen to him. His words challenged their souls and their way of life, but He also brought hope and an abiding peace to their lives.

In our study we'll seek to understand what Jesus is teaching at that time – then translate the principles into our own daily lives. If we can understand what Jesus taught and absorb that into our spirit, we can grow to become the kind of disciples that He wants us to be.

Please plan to join us as we examine Matthew's Gospel on the "Sermon On the Mount."



Advent Bags for Our Homebound

A huge thank you to Priscilla Barkman and Paulette Bryan for coordinating the collection of gifts and distribution of our annual advent bags to our home bound members and friends. Each year 20 bags are filled with 25 gifts with scriptures to be opened each day in December leading up to Christmas Day.

Thank you UMW ladies for your generous gifts which filled these bags with various goodies.

Thank you **Donna Fackler, Sharon Nersbitt** for helping Priscilla and Paulette assemble the advent bags preparing them for distribution. And, many thanks to all who gave of your time to visit and deliver the advent bags to their recipients. We are so grateful for our church family and friends and are blessed to let those who are not able to worship with us in person know that they are cared for and loved by West Grove UMC.



**Advent
Bags**



Annual Christmas Music Celebration

Sunday, December 3rd ~ 6:30 p.m.

Christmas brings out the best music in all of us! Bring your family and invite your friends! Our family-friendly time of 6:30 p.m. allows all ages to join in the festivities.

Welcome the Advent Season with music by the Chancel Choir, Memory Bells Handbell Choir, PraiseWorks Band, special musical numbers by our talented friends and, of course, a carol sing-along.

Stay after for delicious, homemade Christmas cookies and cider. Invite your friends and family to get in the Christmas spirit!

CMO UPATE:

The month of November came and went in a flash! Our Preschool Friends enjoyed learning about Thanksgiving, family and friends. They made friendship snack mix and shared with friends for a

Thanksgiving treat. Our PreK classes enjoyed eating together for a feast as well! We enjoyed the mild weather and made the most of playing outside while the weather was still on the mild side.

Our preschool held our very first ever Art and Vender Fair at the beginning of November. It was quite successful with 25 vendors participating and many people stopping in to browse and shop! The 22-bbq food truck as well as the Kona Ice truck were also in attendance. We were able to enhance our outdoor playground as well as purchase some new toys for indoor recess in the Sanctuary as well with some of the proceeds from the Fair. The children are having so much fun with the new toys! Thank you so much, everyone who volunteered, shopped, and attended!



Looking ahead, we will be having our "Happy Birthday Jesus" Celebration on Wednesday, December 20th and are looking forward to learning about the holiday season with our students in the month of December.



Is there someone who would like a visit? A joy of ministry is offering communion and times for fellowship and prayer, and I look forward to offering it as I have throughout the time I have shared in ministry. Please give me a call if you or someone you know would like me to visit. 484.720.8626 pastor@westgroveumc.org

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)?

ASK THE UMC!
Your questions, answered.
Explore the online library, live chat or email us.
[← LEARN MORE](#)

BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

- 12/02 Katie Barrett
- 12/02 Kay Yates
- 12/06 Sandi Hampton
- 12/06 Matthew Rinehimer
- 12/07 Grace Featherston
- 12/08 Harvey Chase
- 12/08 Timothy Shaub
- 12/08 Ed Tolmie
- 12/13 Anna Castaldi
- 12/13 Bill Ditzel
- 12/14 Jo Ann Coates
- 12/15 Sean Barrett
- 12/15 Karen Underwood
- 12/15 Dana Winters
- 12/16 Sydney Curtis
- 12/17 Ian Ditzel



Your church family wishes all of you a very happy birthday and a year filled with happiness and blessings!!

- 12/17 Len Kuch
- 12/17 Debbie Schneider
- 12/18 Sandra Carmichael
- 12/18 Jessica Jones
- 12/19 Roann Bates Schneider
- 12/20 Catie Weingarten
- 12/21 Kayla Springer
- 12/24 Mollie Miller
- 12/24 Carol Schoff
- 12/25 Brad Beauchamp
- 12/18 Kim O'Neill
- 12/29 Alexandra Smith
- 12/30 Christine Hilgar
- 12/30 Betty Lafferty
- 12/31 Max Herrera



West Grove United Methodist Church
OPEN • GROW • SERVE

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www.westgroveumc.org



2023

~ Open, Grow, Serve ~

At West Grove UMC, we love God by opening our hearts to Jesus, growing our faith and serving our community and world in His name.

The Reverend Timothy Carl Anderman, Lead Pastor

pastor@westgroveumc.org

Office Hours: Monday—Friday

9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Staff

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

Jim.mundell@westgroveumc.org

Xavier Miranda - Youth & Children's Ministry Director

Childyouthdirector@westgroveumc.org

April Spencer - Church Administrator

Office@westgroveumc.org

Donna Fackler—Financial Administrator

Donna.fackler@westgroveumc.org

Betsy Smith - Traditional Music Director

Contemporary Music Interim Director

Keyboardist

Betsy.smith@westgroveumc.org

OPEN—Handbell Choir Director

Abbie Gruscavage—Children's Morning Out Director

cmo@westgroveumc.org

Maira Tena - Nursery Attendant

Maira Tena—Sexton

sexton@westgroveumc.org

Christ Servant Ministers

Karen Hruz, khruz@hotmail.com

Peter Mullen, psmullen@petermullen.com

Board and Committee Leadership

Val Kapp-Benner - Interim Administrative Council Chair

Kim O'Neil - Trustee Chair

OPEN - Finance Chair

Valerie Kapp-Benner - Treasurer

Janice Bowers - Interim Financial Secretary

Dick Stuhrke - SPRC Chair

Michael Duvall—Tech Team Leader

Christian Education

Children's Ministry Team Contact

Valerie Kapp-Benner - Missions Chair

Dick and Caryl Stuhrke - Hospitality Committee Chair

Susan Paisley -Delegate to Annual Conference

Pastor Tim - Committee on Lay Leadership

Karen Hruz and Cindy Haley—Co-Lay Leader

Cindy Haley & Fran Miller - U.M.W. Co-Presidents

Susan Paisley - Prayer Ministry Coordinator

Joan Leaman—Emergency Food Pantry Coordinator

Amy Castaldi - Nursery Coordinator

Betty Mundell—Ad Council Member at Large

Cindy Hoover—CMO Advisory Board Chair

Cindy Haley and Sara Ann Ramberger—R.A.P Coordinators