



The Wesleyan Star

**West Grove
United Methodist Church**

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Website: www.westgroveumc.org



January 2024



From Tim

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

The letter of Philippians has often provided us with great assurance and strength to live out our faith in Christ when we really need to hear from God. A paraphrase of verse six reads, "Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns." Paul urges us when times are challenging, to turn even more deeply and personally to God, and let God provide the wholeness, assurances, and guidance we need. God's presence in prayer and the Word, leads us away from being full of, and solely focused on worries, anxieties and fears. Instead, we are empowered by grace to be the people God made us to be, made in His image. A people of extravagant generosity of heart, mind, and spirit. Great assurance and guidance for 2024.

God wants to be close to us, and have us turn to Him for help and direction, in tough times, and also in joyous times of growth when we begin new and exciting, creative endeavors of faith. Journeying with Christ in life as his disciples can many times present huge challenges, as it also leads us to new opportunities for growth, development and progression in faith. I think of Mary, mother of Jesus, and how God transformed her faithful life into something beyond expectation. It took great faithfulness on her part, the years before, and then the lifetime after the birth of Jesus. God is at work in ways we are often not aware of. God can take what is the most difficult and bring forth new creativity, crucifixion is transformed into resurrection.

Mary's servanthood, sacrifice, and the servanthood and sacrifice of so many faithful people over the past 4,000 years, have come together for us to take part in. It does not seem like a very attractive dynamic for many people today, to be part of God's movement of faith. With technology and media presentations today, our attention spans have narrowed. With limited capacity for listening and hearing each other and spending less time in person with others, the world continues engaging in its conflicts and an ever increasing, hectic pace of change. In the midst of this darkness, God's light can shine through, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it."

⁹ So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time (in due season), if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all (people) and especially for those (who are) of the household of faith.

Please, always remember that a main reason Christ came to us, God reaching out to us, is because God loves us all. Christ came so that we see the freedom we have to choose how to live life, choosing to

draw closer to God, allowing Him to lead. A main difference among many Christians is that some people think that a person's life and the future is predetermined and God "knows the future." While God sees all the possibilities, God entrusts us in freedom with a partnership with Him and each other to make decisions and grow and mature through them together. We are not puppets or robots, we are children of God, made in God's image, with God's DNA for generosity in extravagant grace that can help us claim the possibilities and creativity that come from His heart. His Covenant with us, helps us leave enslavement behind, taking us out from slavery, and taking the slavery out of our hearts and minds. May we always be true to His call to us, fulfilling our promises of prayer, presence (attendance), gifts (talents, friendship, and financial), and service. May the year and lifetime ahead continue to be full of blessings as we receive and share the grace God intends for us all,

TIM



Thank You



Julie and I want to thank so many of you for letting us be part of your lives these past three and a half years. I feel sad for many who never really opened up, or reconnected with the church, often because of past grief and even conflicts they have faced. It was an unusual time to come and try to share fellowship in Christ together, and we faced many unique challenges, and we also have been blessed with special insights and joys. Special thanks to several people who stepped up to provide real fellowship and leadership in grace. Those times included those people who faithfully shared worship and fellowship as often as they could in Bible study, Sunday School, and collaborative work together. I'm fearful if I start a list, I might leave out someone and their faithfulness. West Grove UMC has some very unique opportunities going forward, and with God at the center of all its ministries, fellowship in Christ can bring blessings of God's joy in grace. The Food Pantry, CMO preschool, music ministries, Bible studies in caring fellowship, along with other studies of social issues, and youth and children's ministries, can continue to grow as they bless the community, when they focus on efforts as ministry serving God. I am hopeful a praise band leader will respond to the church's need, for today's music provides great expression of our hearts in the love of God. The future will present great challenges, as it always has, especially in a world where so many are focused on self-fulfillment over the greater perspective and love God seeks to provide. So, while the focus of our lives may shift during its different chapters and stages, we still stay focused first on God, and the grace of Jesus Christ.



Tech & Media Changes



A decision has been made that in the long run, we hope will help our church, as the worship services will not be live-streamed, but will be recorded and then posted as soon as possible on the internet with easy access on YouTube and links on Facebook. It just will simplify the efforts on Sunday morning. The equipment we have is not sophisticated enough, is getting older, internet demands are high during worship and it limits capacity. With the shift, it will make it much, much easier for new members to learn how to run the equipment on Sunday mornings and make it less difficult for everyone. We are hopeful this change will not keep anyone from viewing and feeling part of our fellowship. Thanks for your flexibility. Most views happen during the week, and not at 11:00 am. on Sunday.

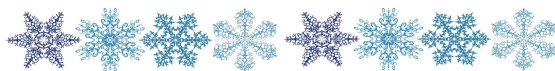


Our Relationship & Future Plans



For the next several years, Julie and I anticipate living in Avondale. We enjoy the area, and while we would like to be closer to family in Lancaster, we are staying where we are for now. It is required that we stay away from WGUMC for a time, at least a year, and be especially careful to not interfere with, or interject ourselves into the life of the church. We will be attending worship in other churches. This approach is required and provides the church and new leadership time to develop intentional, healthy relationships. We will miss you. We are also committed to the church's health and well-being. We can

always be friends and look forward to times ahead when we may connect. Please remember that issues with the church need to be taken to new church leadership, especially the pastor. I hope you all have kept copies of the Membership Covenant I shared with you. It can be an extremely helpful, sacred guide when you allow it to be. Please make your commitment of Time & Talent and your financial giving for 2024. We always turn to rely on God and God's guidance for the help we need.



Lives Transformed Living God's Possibilities

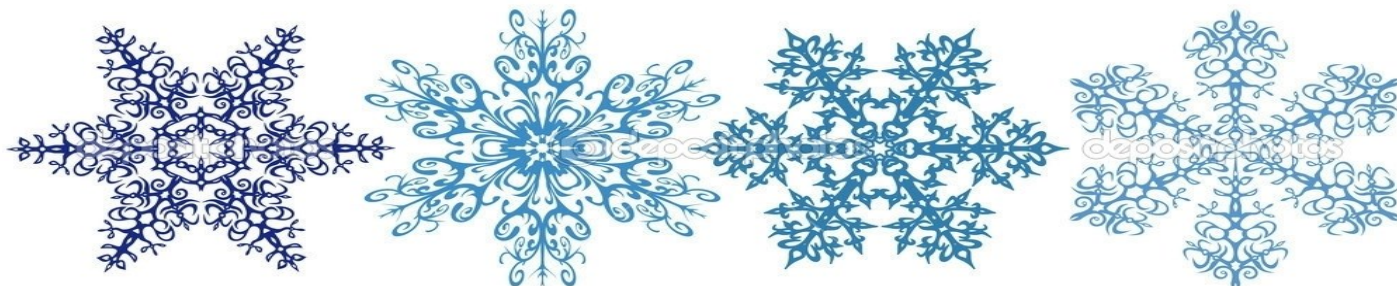
Jesus Christ came, so that we might have life, have it abundantly. I have shared how I have been blessed to have personally known many people who have experienced their lives transformed from one of despair, to one of great hope, joy, and possibility by God's love and grace as they sought a deeper, more personal relationship with God. God responds when we are authentic and open to hearing the Word, receiving and sharing grace.

I have known so many people who seem trapped in an outlook on life, an identity of themselves, that comes from what others have told them about who they are. Many times, it was young women who were entrapped into behaviors and lifestyles that kept them under someone's dominance and control. We must turn to God, and allow God's Word, combined with our prayers in worship and fellowship together, to lead us to claim, live, and share healthy identities. It is a promise for us all, whatever our starting point.

Jackie Hill Perry is an author, wife, mother and Christian who experienced God's grace in incredible ways. She has written several books and blogs about her experiences and journey, and how God transformed her life and sense of identity. She had experienced a horrible start in life, when few people showed any real care and love for her, and often there was abuse. It caused her to develop a distorted, confined view of what life could be. Then she came to know Christ, grew in faith, and her life blossomed for her as a wife, mother, and great, faithful friend and disciple. Her journey is found a book I have shared with several people while I have been here, and she has quite a story to tell. I hope to read more of her work in the next year.

God and our practice of faith, leads us to reach out and learn and grow from each other in new ways, with all kinds of people. I pray we have the courage, grace, and love of God to stay faithful living in God's creativity and hear one another's stories of our journeys in faith. they can be sacred moments when we seek to understand each other, especially people who have experiences that are different from ours.

May God bless and be in the midst of our efforts, always.





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



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

January 7

Baptism of the Lord
 Reverend Jim Mundell Preaching
 "Attitudes Tell the Story"
 Matthew 2 1-16

January 14

Second Sunday after the Epiphany: Human Relations Day
 Reverend Melvin Leaman Preaching
 "Are You Sure You're Up for This?"
 Mark 8:27-38

January 21

Third Sunday After Epiphany
 Reverend Melvin Leaman Preaching
 "Ten Lepers. How Many Miracles?"
 Luke 17:11-19

January 28

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
 Reverend Jim Mundell Preaching
 (If our interim pastor has not been assigned yet)

PASTOR JIM'S CHRISTIAN LIVING COLUMN

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.”

January 2024

As we begin a new calendar year, many people make personal resolutions to make things different in the new year. However, if you have done this in the past, you realize that we never follow through with them, and shortly after the new year, we give up, and our good intentions fall by the wayside. Has this ever happened to you? Well, don't despair; our human nature seems to get the best of us in what we had hoped would be a lasting change in our lives.

The new Bible study, beginning on January 8th, is about Jesus and His “Sermon on the Mount”. While preparing for the study, one of the beatitudes spoke to me. Matthew 5:6 says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Have you thought something was missing from your daily walk of life and couldn't put your hands on what was missing? If you think a little deeper, you may realize that what may be missing is the lack of spiritual understanding in your life. The first beatitude says, “**Blessed are the poor in spirit.**” These are the ones who realize that they lack the third part of their being that God created them to be. I see ourselves as a triune being consisting of body, soul (mind), and spirit. We grow our physical body and strengthen our soul through education, but we forget to establish the third part, our spirit, our relationship with God.



God wants us to be a complete person of body, soul (mind), and spirit. As we begin the new year, it may be the time when we think about our lives. When we realize our lack of spirituality and only see Jesus as a Biblical figure, we need to re-assess our life to see what is missing. Am I poor in spirit? Do I lack that third part of my being? Those who recognize their need for spiritual development, who hunger and thirst for spiritual fulfillment, are the ones who seek God's blessing of righteousness within their lives.

As we begin this new year, you may ask yourself, am I the person God made me to be? Have I included God and His Son, Jesus, to be part of my life? It is never too late to seek God and the ways of Christ in our life. Only you can evaluate your life and ask God to give birth to the spirit within you. John 3:3 tells us, “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he/she is born again,” one who is born of the Spirit.

It is not like a New Year's resolution that may fade away when one makes that decision. A decision to follow Christ is an eternal one, and our internal spirit hungers and thirsts for the fullness of God, seeking His righteousness. And the result of this is “they will be filled.” Are you spiritually undernourished? Seek God and His blessings. He yearns to hear from you. May I be of help to you?

Pastor Jim



Jenner's Pond Residents!

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



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!

December was a very busy and exciting month for our church food pantry. Some highlights are listed below :

Thanks to the collection done by the United Methodist Women's group, we were able to give out lots of very desired personal care items during our special Christmas distribution.

All children received small Christmas gifts.

Donna Fackler's daughter-in-law (Ashley) spearheaded a coat, blanket and baby items collection at her place of work.

The response was overwhelming. Obviously, the families were thrilled to be able to select something warm for the winter, or something new for their little ones.

A local family decided to sponsor our pantry this Christmas by asking friends and family to donate food.

The two shopping carts full of donated food was a welcomed gift!

Four new volunteers came on board in the month of December.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to invite the families coming to our pantry, to a special distribution on a Sunday in January during the Sunday School hour. The specific Sunday will be determined soon. Besides receiving some food, they will be given a tour of the church, by Xavier,

and learn of ways they and their families may choose to get involved at WGUMC.

If you would like to help during that hour, please contact Xavier Feliciano or Joan Leaman.

Prayers for the families to feel welcomed and valued would be appreciated.

*** * Heartfelt Thanks * ***

I would like to thank the decorating committee (Formally known as Creating Spaces) for all their hard work beautifying the church for the past year.

Thanks to you all: Virgil, Linda and Michael Brown, Paulette Bryan, Heather and Bill Ditzel, Joyce Lewis, Kim Smith, Kim O'Neil, Dick Stuhrke (for making the outside animals).

Gene Aucott and Bonnie Wolfe

If you would like to join us in beautifying the church for Sunday Worship and Holiday Seasons please contact me— Linda Shiplet at littlered2111@gmail.com or 610-613-5899.

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



RAP gathered on December 8th for a delicious potluck luncheon. Thank you to everyone who attended with good food and desserts for a fun afternoon of fellowship.

We appreciate all the help in setting up for our lunch and for the many volunteers who stayed to help with cleaning up. Thank you Joyce Lewis for being our leader for the day.

Unfortunately our scheduled program presenter was ill and not able to be with us. We are very grateful to Betsy Smith and Pastor Jim Mundell for stepping in at the last minute to bring us Christmas cheer. Thank you so much for leading us in singing some of our favorite Christmas songs.



RAP will meet again on Friday, January 12th, 2024 at noon in the church sanctuary. We are happy to welcome our church and RAP members, Reed and Joyce Smith, who will share with us highlights of their recent trip to Africa.

Join us for a new year and new programs. If you are able to help with our setup and /or cleanup, please let us know. We appreciate everyone's delicious desserts each month. Look for signup sheets at our welcome table to sign up for these opportunities to help.

Invite a friend or two and join us for a wonderful afternoon of fun and fellowship. Bring your bagged lunch. Desserts and beverages are provided. We look forward to seeing you in the new year! All are welcome! Please RSVP to Sara Ann Ramberger at sar57ver@verizon.net or 610-869-3863 so we may set up accordingly.

Your RAP Committee, Paulette Bryan, Cindy Haley, Joyce Lewis, Sara Ann Ramberger, and Caryl Stuhrke

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 Michael Duvall with your questions.



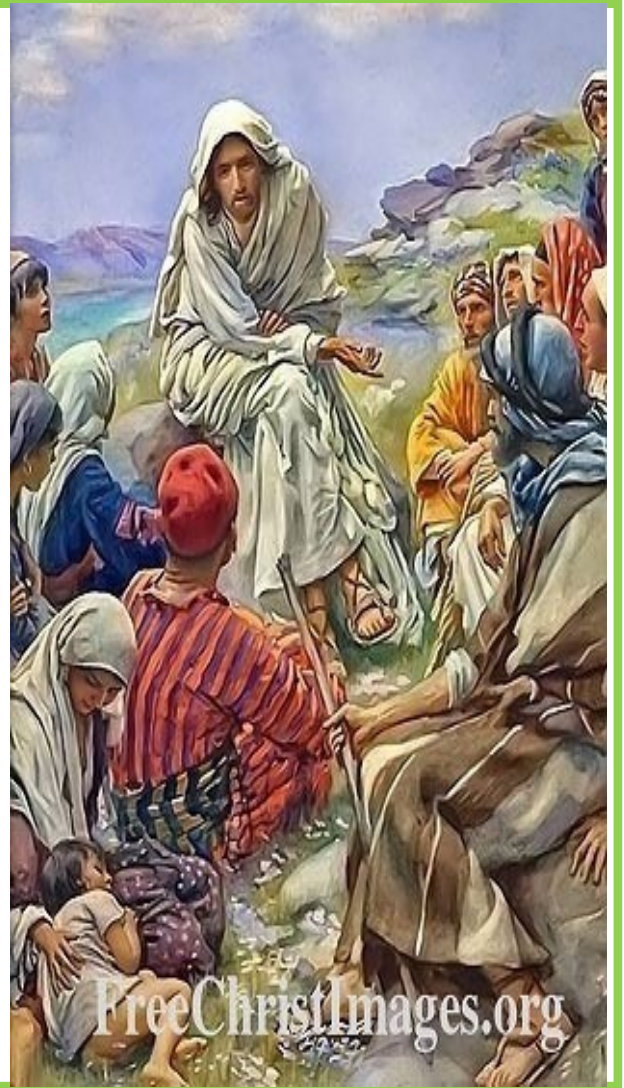
NEW YEAR BIBLE STUDY

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."



UMW/United Women in Faith News

Again, we wish to thank everyone who helped put together the Advent Bags and to those who helped With their distribution. We are so blessed to share these gifts of the season with our families and church friends.

We have been very busy with collecting personal care items for distribution to our food pantry families. Thank you to everyone who donated these much needed items. A huge thank you to Nancy Howard for making sure these donations were delivered to Joan Leaman.

Please join us on Sunday, January 14th at 3:00 pm. in the church lobby as we gather again for tea and cookies. Carol McGinley will bring us a gathering devotion and prayer. We welcome your input for upcoming programs and mission projects. Mark your calendar for our Spring Rummage Sale scheduled for April 26th and 27th.

We look forward to connecting more regularly in order to support one another as Women of Faith in our church and community. All women are invited! If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us.

We hope to see many of you on January 14th.

Cindy Haley and Fran Miller, Co-Leaders



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 JANUARY

- 01/01 Carson Dunn
- 01/01 Ray Leonardo
- 01/02 Matt Hendrickson
- 01/03 Chase Crowder
- 01/04 Steve Croft
- 01/04 Nora Hendrickson
- 01/05 Clarissa Robinson
- 01/08 Ashley Irwin
- 01/10 Reed Smith
- 01/15 Ken Rinehimer
- 01/15 Elizabeth Luscavage
- 01/16 Karen Hruz
- 01/17 Joanne Frost



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

- 01/17 Jerry Gula
- 01/18 David DiRamio
- 01/18 Ava Kirwin
- 01/18 Abigail Stephenson
- 01/23 Tom Adams
- 01/23 Liz Hadley
- 01/24 Isaac Armstrong
- 01/24 Asher DiRamio
- 01/27 Becky Rinehimer
- 01/27 Aiden Seltzer
- 01/29 Logan Wolfe
- 01/29 Fred Sullivan
- 01/30 Mike Reisinger



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OPEN • GROW • SERVE

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2024

~ 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 Feliciano - 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