

The Wesleyan Star

January 2025

West Grove
United Methodist Church
Pastor DJ Choi

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

What is your “life’s Biggest questions”?

We all carry many kinds of questions—questions about family, career, pain, finances, society, politics, and even environmental crises. Yet we live in a world filled with overwhelming amounts of information, countless truth claims, and data readily available at our fingertips. And ironically, this abundance often leaves us more confused.

As we begin the new year of 2026, we hold great hopes, but we also anticipate the familiar struggles ahead. We quietly assume, “This year will probably bring the same difficulties as last year.” That is why I want to begin the new year by reading Timothy Keller’s book *Encounters with Jesus: Unexpected Answers to Life’s Biggest Questions*. Rev. Keller firmly states that the questions we carry can only be truly understood when we encounter Jesus Himself. He leads us to seek answers through the stories of those in Scripture who met Jesus, and through Jesus and the Holy Spirit themselves.

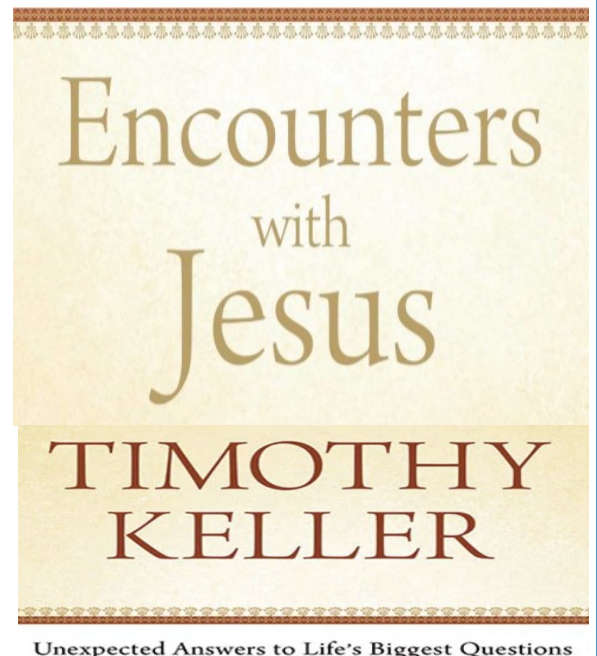
I hope and pray that all of us will encounter Jesus through this series. For those seeking faith or wrestling with doubt, this will be an invitation to believe. For those who are faithfully walking in their faith, I pray it becomes an opportunity to rediscover and deepen what they already believe.

I encourage you to purchase the book and read along as we journey together through this sermon series.

In Christ, Pastor DJ Choi

Encounters with Jesus: Unexpected Answers to Life’s Biggest Questions by Timothy Keller

January 4 The Skeptical Student John 1:43-51
January 11 The Insider and the Outcast John 3:1-7, 4:7-15
January 18 The Grieving Sisters John 11:17-32
January 25 The Wedding Party John 2:1-11
February 1 The First Christian John 20:1-18
February 8 The Great Enemy Matthew 3:13-4:11
February 15 The Two Advocates John 14:16-20, 25-27
February 22 The Obedient Master Matthew 26:39-44
March 1 The Right Hand of the Father Hebrews 7:25-28
March 8 The Courage of Mary Luke 1:26-45



As we approach the New Year 2026, may I ask you a question: What do you hope for in the new year? Health? Happiness? Career growth? Financial stability? Restored relationships? Some people say, “The new year won’t be much different from this year,” or “It’s always been that way.” That may be true—or it may not be.

Because what our sovereign God desires for us is not a life that stays the same day after day. God desires new change, healing, and spiritual awakening every single day.

Yet we often fall into temptation, and many times we fail those tests.

I say this with conviction: only when we are filled with the Word of God can we overcome those trials. The Bible is not just a book. It is the living Word, breathed by the Spirit of God and filled with power.

This year again, I am offering our church a one-year Bible reading plan.

Is there anyone here who has read through the entire Bible before?

If you read just three chapters a day, you can read the whole Bible in one year. Three chapters take about ten minutes a day. That is how I read the Bible consistently, and I can testify that the Word has power—it truly transforms my life.

If there is something you want to change, something you want to let go of, something you are seeking, or something you long to restore, I encourage you to begin the new year by reading three chapters of Scripture each day.

Our church will become more spiritually grounded and empowered. Our worship, our Bible studies, and our ministries will transform not only ourselves, but also our community—and even the world.

Please, I ask you to try this at least once. The one-year Bible reading plan was included in the December 28th bulletin and the January 4th bulletin and will always be available in the church lobby.

Let us become a West Grove Church that is transformed by the Word of God in the year 2026.

In the Word of God

DJ



West Grove United Methodist Church

In every season, God invites us to finish well — not just to complete a task, but to complete it with joy and faithfulness. As we close this year, we are deeply thankful for all that your giving has made possible: worship, discipleship, outreach, and connection.

If you find your giving has fallen behind your intentions, your year-end gift can help us finish the year strong and begin the next with confidence. Every gift, no matter the size, helps our church continue sharing Christ’s love in tangible ways.

Thank you for walking this journey of generosity and faith. Together, we are finishing well — and starting anew — in the grace of God.

You can send your gift to West Grove UMC, 300 North Guernsey Road, West Grove, PA, or use the current method you use to send your offering to us.

Pastor Jim's Christian Living Column
January, 2026



Discover Jesus Anew: Gospel of Luke Bible Study

Are you ready to meet Jesus in a deeper, more personal way?

Join us for a transformative Bible study beginning Monday, January 5, 2026, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, as we walk together studying the Gospel of Luke.

In this study, we will explore how Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man
- a title Jesus used repeatedly to describe Himself.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus comes:

As fully human — identifying with our joys, struggles, doubts, and hopes. Jesus lived among us, ate with outcasts, healed the hurting, and truly understood what it means to be human.

As servant and Savior — the One who came to seek and save the lost, offering mercy and grace to all who would follow Him.

As the promised One — whose life, suffering, and resurrection fulfill God's plan for salvation and hope for the world.

As the teacher of parables—learning spiritual stories using worldly concepts

Whether you've read Luke before or this will be your first time, this study will help you:

1. See Jesus more clearly — both in His earthly life and in His eternal mission.
2. Understand what Jesus meant when He called Himself the Son of Man.
3. Grow in faith, community, and love for the One who came "to seek and to save the lost."

Bring a friend. Bring your Bible. Bring a question. Bring your heart. Let's discover together what following Jesus really looks like.

Mondays • 6:30–8:00 PM • Starting January 5, 2026 • West Grove UMC

Led by Pastor Jim Mundell



Food Pantry

West Grove UMC Food Pantry

Weekly Hours:

Wednesday: 5:00 - 6:00 pm.

Thursdays: 1:00 - 2:00 pm.

FOOD PANTRY AND COAT COLLECTION UPDATE

Our church members and friends, along with the broader community have really stepped-up to generously give to our food pantry. We want to thank Bill Pardoe and Sharon Nesbitt for getting the word about our food pantry, out on social media. Many people have contacted the church asking how they might be able to help. Additionally, community members have been dropping off food and outwear to be distributed. We gave out many coats, gloves, hats, etc. the week before Christmas and have more to be distributed the beginning of January.

We will continue our monthly ask for specific items for the food pantry this upcoming year.

Diapers are always in big demand, so we will be collecting them in January. If you choose to donate, we need sizes 5 and 6.

RAP Luncheon January 9th

Do you ever worry about losing money through Frauds & Scams? Would you like to learn how to keep your money safe from frauds & scams targeted especially for seniors? Don't let your hard earned money slip away! Come on out on January 9th at noon to hear Peter & Jeff tell you how to spot a scammer before your money disappears!

If so, our January 9th luncheon is the place you will want to be.

Peter Mullen and Jeffrey Kropp will be sharing with us how seniors and others have lost billions of dollars every year. They will share a few tips how we can protect our assets. If you can walk away from our luncheon and learn just one thing about protecting your finances, it will be so worth your time.

Bring your bag lunch, beverages and desserts will be provided.

Spend time having lunch with your friends, and learn how you can protect your finances. A great way to spend a January afternoon. Looking forward to seeing you there. RSVP to Sara Ann at: sar57ver@verizon.com

P.S. A very special Thank you for leading our December sing a long to Betsy Smith and Pastor Jim. We sure had a wonderful time!

Looking forward to seeing everyone! Happy New Year!



GIFT COLLECTION FOR TWIN PINE RESIDENTS UPDATE

This year we increased the number of residents we provided with Christmas gifts to 25. The gift tags quickly went and we can only imagine the joy that our friends at Twin Pines experienced when they opened their gifts. This has been a tradition of our church for many years and is always very appreciated by our Twin Pine neighbors.



TWIN PINES CAROLING



What an uplifting experience we had singing Christmas carols with many of the residents of Twin Pines Care Center. They joined us in singing with gusto, appreciating the message of Good News that the songs portrayed. We look forward to going next Christmas season, but want to think of additional ways we can interact with the residents throughout the year. It was very evident that a good number of the residents appreciated the visit. We will be discussing ways to connect with our

neighbors at Twin Pines at our upcoming Mission Team meeting. If you have any ideas, please share them with someone from our team. The team includes Pastor DJ, Shirley Daddario, Paulette Bryan, Joyce Lewis, Caryl Sturkhe, Mike Duval, Kim Smith and Joan Leaman.



COOKIES FOR LUTHER HOUSE RESIDENTS

After a week's delay, due to the snow on Dec. 14th, we gathered after worship on Dec. 21st, to bag and prepare the cookies to be taken to the four buildings at the Luther House complex. For some who may not be familiar with Luther House, it is a community just behind the Giant store in Jennersville, comprised of 67 apartments for people with limited income. We were overwhelmed with homemade cookie, fudge and candy donations. After the bags were filled, tied and had a Christmas card attached, four teams each took a building and hung bags of cookies on each apartment doorknob. Included with this article are a few photos from that event and a letter of appreciation from the activities coordinator at Luther House.



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REASONS TO CONSIDER BECOMING A STEPHEN MINISTER

Is God calling you to become a Stephen Minister?

In Stephen Ministry, members of our congregation are trained and equipped to meet once a week, one to one, with someone going through a difficult time. Stephen Ministers provide a caring presence, a listening ear, and comforting words—supporting care receivers throughout their journey.

There are many reasons people become Stephen Ministers. Here are a few to think about as you prayerfully consider whether Stephen Ministry is the right place for you to serve.

As a Stephen Minister, you will . . .

1. Make a real difference in the lives of people who are hurting. Stephen Ministers walk alongside people going through life challenges like grief, divorce, a medical crisis, job loss, and more. They offer care, support, and encouragement, connecting hurting people with Christ's healing love during some of the hardest times in their lives.
2. Help our congregation ensure that no one suffers alone. Caring for one another is a hallmark of the Christian faith. As a Stephen Minister, you will play a crucial role in helping our congregation carry out that mission so that, even if we can't take away their pain, those who are suffering know our church truly cares.
3. Learn what to say and do—and what not to say and do—to care effectively for people who are suffering. Stephen Minister training teaches highly practical caregiving and relational skills that equip and empower you with everything you need to effectively care for others. In addition to preparing you for caring ministry, these skills can help you deepen and enhance relationships in all facets of your life—with family, friends, coworkers, and others.
4. Be involved in meaningful ministry that uses your spiritual gifts. Serving as a Stephen Minister gives people an opportunity to put their spiritual gifts into action—gifts such as faith, mercy, compassion, and encouragement. Ministry that draws on your gifts is personally fulfilling and touches people's lives in powerful ways.
5. Deepen your faith as you see God at work through your ministry. Providing care while trusting in God is at the core of Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministers regularly say how their faith deepens as they experience training, learn to use distinctively Christian caring tools, and witness God at work in the lives of their care receivers.
6. Be part of a group of caring Christians who support each other as they care for those who are hurting. One of the blessings of being a Stephen Minister is being part of a community of people who care, all of whom lift one another up as they strive together to provide the best possible ministry. The strong relationships you'll form are both rewarding and a great source of support.
7. Join a worldwide tradition of caring ministry. Congregations all over the world use Stephen Ministry—and have trained hundreds of thousands of Stephen Ministers who have gone on to care for millions of hurting people. It's this ongoing tradition of "Christ caring for people through people" that you'll join as a Stephen Minister.

On Sunday, December 21st, our congregation commissioned three new Stephen Leaders to oversee our Stephen Ministry here at West Grove UMC.

These Stephen Ministry Leaders will lead, train, and supervise the Stephen Ministers who provide care for those who are hurting and in need.



Staying Healthy with Chair Yoga **A Gentle Practice for Every Body**

Maintaining good health is important for our well-being, especially as we grow older or face mobility challenges. One wonderful way to stay active and support both body and mind is through chair yoga, a gentle form of exercise that can be done by anyone, regardless of age or fitness level.

Chair yoga involves performing traditional yoga poses while sitting or using a chair for support. This makes it accessible for people who may have trouble standing or balancing, and it's a great way to keep joints flexible, build strength, and reduce stress. Even a few minutes of chair yoga each day can improve circulation, posture, and overall energy.

Chair yoga sessions at WGUMC are every Tuesday, at 1:30pm sharp to 2:15pm in the sanctuary with Julissa Sanchez who is our certified yoga instructor, who also instructs at the YMCA in Jennersville.

Wear comfortable clothes, bring your water. A minimum \$5 donation is appreciated. No person will be turned away if a donation is a hardship.

Together, let's take steps toward healthier living, one gentle stretch at a time!

*** * * COMING IN JANUARY * * ***

Upcoming Dates to Remember

JANUARY

January 4th - **New Years Pot Luch Brunch**
January 6th - **Yoga Class**

January 5th - **Pastor Jim's Bible Study**
January 9th - **RAP (Retired Active People)**

Youth Dodge Ball & Pizza Night

January 11th - **Yoga Gathering**

January 12th - **Pastor Jim's Bible Study**

January 13th - **Yoga Class**

January 19th - **Pastor Jim's Bible Study**

January 20th - **Yoga Class**

January 24th - **UMM Breakfast**

January 26th - **Pastor Jim's Bible Study**

January 27th - **Yoga Class**



United
Women
in Faith

Did you know United Women in Faith at West Grove United-Methodist Church is 32 women strong?

Your next gathering is on Sunday, January 11th at 1:30PM and we have news for you! Two small groups have been created within the UWF and another to follow.

We will begin with a devotional titled “A Diamond Necklace.” ANY women are welcome; you do not have to be a member of UWF. Bring a friend! Sign-up Sheet is in the lobby.

United Women in Faith (UWF) are known nationally for their small groups of women within the larger group. These small groups share a common purpose: to serve others, deepen their faith, and build relationships. Fellowship is a characteristic of women’s small groups. The group plans together when to gather, where to meet, being open to any setting, whether it be at the church, or homes, or a public place. They decide together how to serve. A small group has opportunities to find amongst themselves the dynamics of the group. It may be thru knitting, creating crafts to help others, or a book club. It’s endless where God leads UWF at WGUMC!

Through missions and fellowship, the small groups of women become a source of strength and friendship. Bonds are formed within these groups which add to the church community, playing an energetic role in the spiritual and social life of the congregation.

Feel free to call Shirley if you have any questions. 484-268-0497.

*** * * C M O UPDATE * * ***

Happy New Year!

We hope that everyone had a fabulous Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year!

December in Preschool is filled with excitement, awe and wonder! Our students learned about the “reason for the season” while listening to stories, engaging in dramatic play, and creating lovely Christmas themed crafts and artwork.

We then finished off 2025 with a Happy Birthday Jesus Celebration for all of our students, parents, friends, and families. To kick off our celebration, the fundraiser baskets were raffled off! This was so exciting as many of our Preschool families and church members won a basket! Once that excitement was over, our students were very brave and each of our classes performed a song or two for a packed audience. We finished up the show with a reenactment of The Christmas Story, performed by our talented teachers! It was a fun morning for all!

We are all enjoying our much needed and deserved break, but are looking forward to coming back to school on January 5th!

All the best, Abbie



NEW YEARS POTLUCK BRUNCH

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.



WGUMC YOUTH GROUP

Dodge Ball and Pizza Night

*Come together for
faith, friendship,
and fun!*

**FRIDAY JAN
9TH 2026
6 TO 7:30 PM**

*Please bring \$5
Per family for pizza.*

*All youth Welcome
6th to 12th Grade*



300 N. Guernsey Rd. West Grove PA 19390

Any questions? Please contact Andrew Herman 610-470-9378 hermanandrew@yahoo.com

BIRTHDAYS IN JANUARY

01/01 Ray Leonardo
 01/02 Matt Hendrickson
 01/04 Nora Hendrickson
 01/14 Charlie Gruscavage
 01/10 Reed Smith
 01/15 Ken Rinehimer
 01/16 Karen Hruz



01/17 Joanne Frost
 01/23 Tom Adams
 01/25 Scott Renk
 01/27 Becky Rinehimer
 01/27 Aiden Seltzer
 01/24 Becky Rhinhimer
 01/29 Fred Sullivan

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.

There is no breakfast in the month of December.

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.-2:30 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

Betsy Smith - Traditional Music Director
Contemporary Music Director
Keyboardist

Betsy.smith@westgroveumc.org

Bill Pardoe—IT Director
billpardoe1@gmail.com

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

Mike DuVall, mwduvall@aol.com
Dan Elliot, Financialadmin@westgroveumc.org

Board and Committee Leadership

Dick Stuhrke - Chair Vision Team (Ad. Council)

Dan Elliott Financial Administrator, Chair of the Finance Committee.

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

Pastor DJ Choi - Chair of Lay Leadership Committee

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