



The Wesleyan Star

December

2024

**West Grove
United Methodist Church
Pastor DJ Choi**

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

“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you...Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Luke 1:28, 31-33

It is absurd. “I got cancer.” “I got laid off.” “I got divorced.” “I got too many deaths.” Life is full of bad news. Absurd things happen without notice or warning. Mary got a bad news that turned her life upside down. She was engaged to Joseph but she got pregnant. Is this God’s favor? It is not. It is disastrous and deadly for her because the people will not believe in her and kill her. But, ironically, the whole world had been celebrated this good news over 2,000 years.

What a mystery and an oxymoron truth!

So that we will celebrate Christmas again in the year 2024 of our Lord. Are you ready to celebrate this mysterious truth? Sadly, the whole world include many Christians celebrate consumerism on Christmas not the birth of Jesus. Santa Claus took over Christmas from Jesus Christ long time ago. People take Christmas as the time for shopping, eating and drinking. Of course we don’t want to follow the pattern of the world. But How? This Advent, I would like to share messages on the book titled, “Advent Conspiracy: Can Christmas Still Change the World?” Each Advent Sunday we will journey to the Manger in Bethlehem by Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All. Our goal is transformation of our lives to change the world. Our hope is that as we will discover Christ and be transformed by entering Jesus’ absurd story.

Please join me and Merry Christmas!

In Christ,
DJ Choi



Worship in November at West Grove UMC

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



Worship Service 9:30 am. Youth Group Tuesday, 6 to 7 pm.

December 1st:

"Worship Fully"

Luke 1:46-55

Pastor DJ Choi

December 8th:

"Spend Less"

Matthew 6:24

Pastor DJ Choi

December 15th:

"Give More."

Matthew 1:18-25

Pastor DJ Choi

December 22nd:

"Love All"

Philippians 2:5-11

Pastor DJ

December 24th

"Christmas People Can Change the World"

Christmas Eve Services

6:00 pm. Family Candlelight Service with PraiseWorks

9:00 pm. Candlelight Service with the Chancel Choir

PASTOR JIM'S CHRISTIAN LIVING COLUMN

WHICH STAR ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

December 2024

Isaiah 9:2: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light" Have you ever wondered how sailors are able to navigate the sea and arrive at their destination? During the day, they have the sun for guidance, rising in the East and setting in the West. However, they have the stars of heaven as their guide during the night. Stars are fixed in the sky relative to the Earth, making them reliable markers for navigation. The North Star (Polaris) is the most used star because it is located near the North Pole, indicating true north. Sailors also used the Big Dipper (Ursa Major) constellation as the dipper's handle points to the North Star.

In scripture, stars are often depicted as signs of God's presence, promises, and sovereignty over creation. Isaiah 40:26, "Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name." This trust in divine order reflects how ancient people depended on the stars for direction and stability.

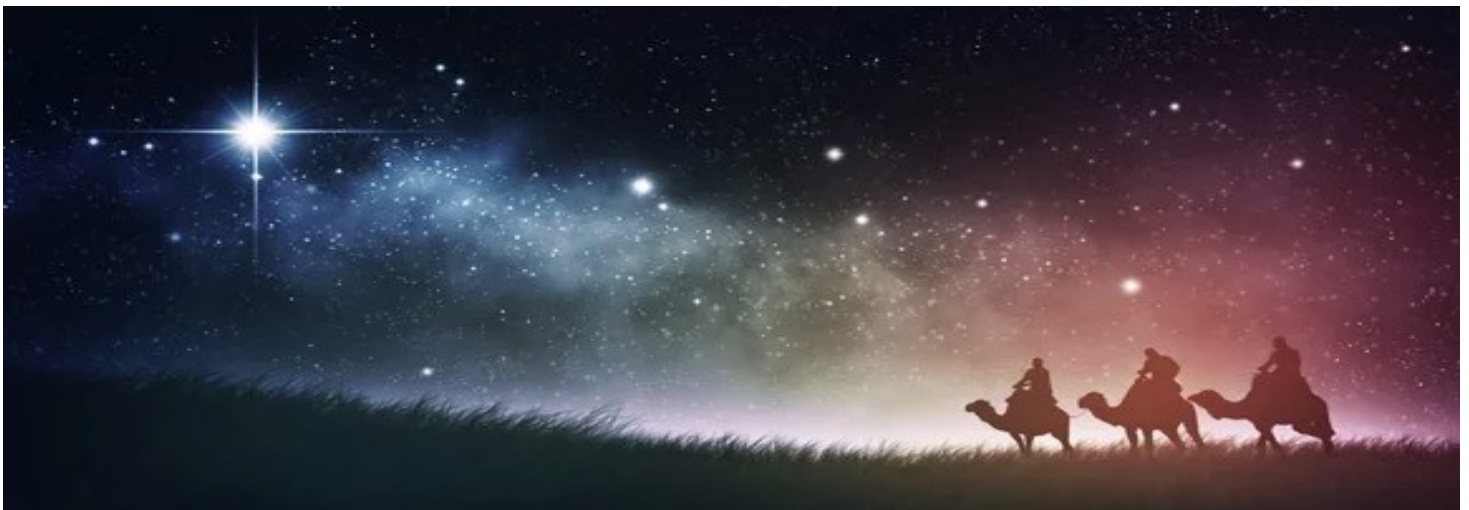
The Magi (Wise Men) followed a Star, and their long journey led them to the Christ Child, Jesus. They saw that Star and followed the light as it guided them. Their journey was one of faith, curiosity, and perseverance. God's light leads us out of darkness and into the truth. As we travel through Advent, waiting for the coming of the Babe, born as our Savior, are we actively seeking God's light? Are we willing to follow the Light of the World, even when the journey may be long and uncertain?

What star are you following? There are many. There is the Star of Materialism, one that seeks power and success but leads to a life of emptiness. Or are you following the Star of Self-Centeredness, pursuing personal desires, ending in ruin rather than seeking out God's calling of Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace?

This Advent, let us seek out the "Star of God." Let us find it and follow the True Star that leads to a new life. Jesus is the "Light of the world" (John 8:12). His light dispels darkness and shows us the true way of life. As we align our lives to His Star and follow Him, surrendering and allowing Christ to guide us and adjust our priorities to His, we too can be like the Magi, coming to worship Jesus, offering ourselves as gifts, and having a changed heart.

WHICH STAR ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

Pastor Jim.



United Methodist Women News

We have been very busy this past month. The beginning of November, we sent snack boxes to our eleven college students. We also collected items and prepared twenty Advent Bags which have been distributed to our church family and friends to brighten up their Christmas.

In addition, we were able to financially support various local and global missions with the funds from our rummage sale.

On Monday, November 18, several women met at the church for a fun Cupcake decorating class presented by Simply Sweet a local cupcake company.

As always, we thank our church family and friends for supporting our various areas of missions.



Retired Active People



RAP

(Retired Active People)

RAPs next gathering is Friday, December 13, 2024 at noon in the sanctuary. Join us as we celebrate the Christmas Season with a potluck luncheon. Bring your favorite dish to share with others.

Desserts and beverages will be provided. Our group leader for the day is Joyce Lewis. We are delighted to have Betsy Smith & Pastor Jim Mundell join us again this year to lead us in a sing-a-long of our favorite Christmas hymns and music.

We are truly grateful to everyone who helps make our gatherings possible. Thank you to Austin and Colton McCummings for setting up our tables and chairs last month. Thank you Sharon Nesbitt, Linda Brown, Karen Underwood and Cindy Haley for the delicious desserts in November.



A huge thank you to Dick Stuhrke for the interesting history program last month on "The Wright Brothers and the Birth of Aviation." And, thank you Caryl Stuhrke for being our leader in November. We welcome help with setup and cleanup each month, as well as, those signing up to bring desserts.

Everyone is welcome! Invite a friend or two and enjoy an afternoon of good fellowship and great programs. Hope to see you in December as we celebrate the birth of our Savior with music!

Please RSVP to Sara Ann Ramberger at sar57ver@verizon.net or 610-869-3863 to let us know if you plan to attend so we may setup and plan accordingly.

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

YOUTH NEWS

JOIN US DURING THE 9:30 SERVICE FOR OUR YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM.

Dear West Grove UMC Family,

As I reflect on the past five months, from July through November, my heart is filled with gratitude for the incredible journey we have shared together as a community. Over this time, 22 different youth have attended our various youth events, whether it was a Lock-In, youth group, basketball games, or any of the other events hosted by West Grove. This is a testament to the vibrant energy and spirit of our youth and the amazing work God is doing in their lives.

I am deeply thankful for the youth who have continued to show up week after week, bringing their enthusiasm, their questions, and their willingness to learn and grow in faith. Your dedication and commitment to our youth ministry are inspiring, and I am blessed to see how you have become a true reflection of God's love in your actions and relationships with one another.

I am also filled with joy for the new faces we have had the privilege to meet and welcome into our community. It is an honor to be able to share in your journey, to listen to your stories, and to walk alongside you as we continue to discover the endless love God has for each of us. Every new person that walks through our doors brings a unique light and energy, and we are so excited to see how God is going to continue to work through each of you.

As we continue to grow together, my prayer is that we remain a place where all youth feel seen, heard, and loved, and where we can continue to show the love of Christ in everything we do. Thank you for being part of this beautiful community, for allowing us to serve you, and for letting us inspire and be inspired by you.

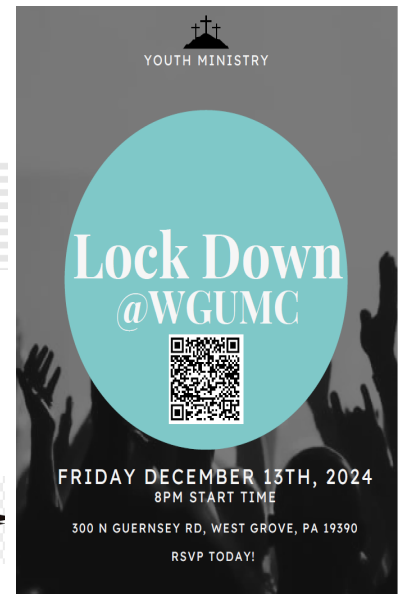
With deepest thanks and continued prayers, Xavier Feliciano, Director of Children & Youth Ministries West Grove United Methodist Church.



PIZZA & WINGS
Sunday, December 8th at 4:00 pm.



WGUMC YOUTH LOCK DOWN



**MEETS TUESDAY'S IN THE YOUTH ROOM
FROM 6:00—7:00 PM.**

CONTACT XAVIER @ childyouthdirector@westgrove umc.org



Christmas Music Celebration



*Sounds
of the
Season*

Sunday, December 8th at 6:30 pm.
Come and join us to celebrate
the joy of the Advent Season

COAT/JACKET DRIVE

This year, we again, will be conducting a coat/jacket drive: Nov. 17th through Dec. 15th. We're asking for donations of new or gently used coats and jackets, of all sizes. There is a rack in the lobby to receive your donations. Coats will be made available to the families registered with our food pantry. We are happy to be partnering with ICU nurses from Christiana Hospital, who are extremely generous with their coat donations. Last year they donated over Thirty coats to add to those donated by church members and friends. We reciprocate that generosity by giving them prayer shawls and lap robes, made by church members and friends, to support families dealing with end-of-life situations. In addition, we will be offering knit hats that were lovingly created by Betty Mundell. Her kindness, gifts and spirit remain.



CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR RESIDENTS AT TWIN PINES CARE FACILITY

For many years, we have collected gifts for our friends living at Twin Pine Care Facility in Chatham. We will do so again this year. Residents are asked what they would like for Christmas and that list is sent to us. We will provide gifts to twenty residents. A small tree is in the lobby at the end of November with gift tags for you to take. Gifts need to be brought to the church by Tuesday, Dec. 17th.



West Grove UMC Food Pantry

Weekly Hours:

Wednesdays: 5:00—6:00 pm.

Thursdays: 1:00—2:00 pm.

Add Thank you to West Grove Fire Company

Food Pantry Update

We are thrilled to have two groups of new volunteers join us on Wednesday mornings when we receive our food order from the Chester County Food Bank. The first Wednesday of each month, we have about 10 students and aides from the Adult Life Skills class at the Chester County Intermediate Unit, coming to help us unload the food, set-up the shelves, organize the produce and prepare our space for the distributions that week. We also have a home-schooling family who provide the same help two other Wednesdays of the month.

Fifteen food pantry recipients completed the six sessions of nutrition classes offered by the Penn State Extension. The classes were very well received and we look forward to hosting another class in the new year.

Due to Christmas and the Food Bank being closed the least two weeks of December, there will be no distribution of food on Dec. 25th and 26th. We will have our distributions on Jan. 1st and 2nd, with limited food offerings, since we won't receive our regular delivery from the Food Bank.

Twin Pines Residents Christmas Gifts

Thank you to all who selected gift tags to provide some extra joy to residents at Twin Pines Care Facility. Please be sure to have your gifts to the church no later than Tuesday, Dec. 17th as the gifts need to be taken to Twin Pines on the 18th.

Coat and Jacket Collection

We will continue to receive gently used and new coats and jackets through Dec. 15th. We are collecting coats for all ages, which will be offered to the families that frequent our food pantry. We encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors to donate coats and jackets, as well.

TWO PIZZA THURSDAY FUNDRAISER




WHO DOESN'T ENJOY A NIGHT OFF FROM COOKING?!

EACH KIT INCLUDES TWO PIZZAS

Kits can be picked up on Thursday at noon or Friday between 9-12.

The kits can be refrigerated overnight and used on Friday



Pay by Cash or
Check, Tuesday,
the week of the
fundraiser



Wow, another month has already come and gone! You know what they say, time flies when you're having fun, and that is certainly true here at Preschool.

In the month of November our students worked on science experiments with floating (or sinking?) pumpkins, painted with legos and corn husks, learned about Thanksgiving and made friendship snacks and enjoyed Thanksgiving feasts with their friends!

We enjoyed the warm November and had fun playing with our friends outside.

The Preschool held a successful craft fair at the beginning of the month with numerous vendors taking part. It was a fun and busy day!

Looking ahead, we are looking forward to learning about the reason for the season and celebrating Christmas. Our preschool will have a Christmas show on the 18th where all of the children will sing a song or two and we are hoping to have a visit from a special guest!

Enjoy December and all it has to offer!

Abbie

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 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. (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>



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
 12/10 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
 12/25 Brad Beauchamp
 12/18 Kim O'Neill
 12/29 Alexandra Smith
 12/31 Xavier Feliciano

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



**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!

~ 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.

**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

Xavier Feliciano - Youth & Children's Ministry
Director

Childyouthdirector@westgroveumc.org

April Spencer - Church Administrator

Office@westgroveumc.org

Valerie Kapp-Benner—Financial Administrator

Financialadmin@westgroveumc.org

Betsy Smith - Traditional Music Director
Contemporary Music Interim Director
Keyboardist

Betsy.smith@westgroveumc.org

Lavenia Civitella—Handbell Choir Director

Misslavenia@verizon.net

Abbie Gruscavage—Children's Morning Out Director

cmo@westgroveumc.org

Maira Tena - Nursery Attendant

Maira Tena—Sexton

sexton@westgroveumc.org

**Sunday Worship Service
9:30 am.**

Christ Servant Ministers

Karen Hruz, khruz@hotmail.com
Peter Mullen, psmullen@petermullen.com

Board and Committee Leadership

Val Kapp-Benner - Interim Administrative Council Chair and
Financial Administrator

Kim O'Neil - Trustee Chair

OPEN - Finance Chair

Vicki Owens - Treasurer

Dick Stuhrke - SPRC Chair

Children's Ministry Team Contact

Open - Missions Chair

Dick and Caryl Stuhrke - Hospitality Committee Chair

Susan Paisley & Cindy Haley - Delegate to Annual Conference

Open - 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

Cindy Hoover—CMO Advisory Board Chair

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