

*A Sanctuary of Hope and  
Jesus' Love for Everyone*



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**Grace-St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

## **GRACE NOTES**

**February, 2021**

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Greetings!

We have made it to February, signaling a further step into the new year. Usually, I find February a month to be endured; all of the holiday fuss is over, and spring is still a long way off. Often, there is just not much going on in February. I have learned to use the month as an opportunity for self-reflection, a kind of retreat in the midst of otherwise busy months. I believe that the past year has given us all ample opportunity for quietness and self-reflection! Though the world is mightily tired of the pandemic and its consequences, almost a year later we are still in its grip. We increasingly see light at the end of that tunnel, but there are still obstacles in the way, and we feel unsure. Naturally as human beings we all react differently. Some of us panic. Some resist with all their might. Most soldier on and do what they have to do. All of us pray that it is over soon.

The reality is that this virus has taken a lot from the whole world. We have lost lives, livelihoods, economic stability (is there ever such a thing?), relationships, restaurants, institutions, peace of mind, the list is all too long. The collective mental and spiritual toll is incalculable. And yet it continues. We realize that we live in a world where the pandemic is almost of primary concern in every conversation we have and every decision we make. It doesn't merely simmer in the background; it's on a hard boil right on the front burner. We live in constant tension and awareness of our weakness. Why bring it up so explicitly, you may ask. It is a fair question. Here's my answer: Lent.

As most if not all of you know, Lent is the 40-day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter where Christians are traditionally invited to enter a period of self-sacrifice. It is an opportunity to acknowledge Christ's suffering and to properly anticipate the incredibly joyful experience of Easter morning. A vessel cannot be filled unless it is emptied first. One of the overlooked aspects of the Lenten season is lament. To lament is not to just be a little down, or to be sad. Biblical lament is a visceral reaction to pain and suffering. It is a godly way to react to whatever it is that was lost. In the book of Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah gave vent to his emotions over the loss of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. Centuries later Jesus lamented over the same city, where His own people blindly refused to recognize Him as their Savior (Luke 19: 41-44). Yet He went to the cross anyway. The poetic genre of lament is quite common in the Bible, yet I believe Christians have largely forgotten the practice of lament because we have such a joyful message. Or perhaps in our cultural stoicism we conveniently overlook the need to acknowledge grief and uncomfortable emotions. The past year has given us all an opportunity to learn and embrace the spiritual posture of lament. Sometimes it is the only proper and godly posture to assume.

This month we will observe Ash Wednesday on February 17th at 7:00 PM at the church. More details will be forthcoming. We will find a way to perform the traditional imposition of ashes because it is important. As we observe Lent together, I challenge you to think and to pray about the practice of lament. Read the book of Lamentations. It will sound very familiar.

The idea is not to be completely depressed for 40 days; after all, Hope literally lives within you! The idea is to put yourself in a healthy spiritual position. It is to be willing to understand and accept that when we have nowhere else to turn, nobody else to be angry with, when we are overwhelmed with everything that besets us, the only proper response is to channel all of that negative emotion and energy to God and trust that He will hear it. Humans do not have the capacity to carry that burden for themselves, let alone others. God does. Trust Him with it.

*<sup>21</sup>"But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: <sup>22</sup>The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup>they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup>"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." <sup>25</sup>The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. <sup>26</sup>It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."* (Lamentations 3: 21-26)

God go with you,  
Pastor Tim

## Sunday Worship

**10:00 am- Please wear a mask- Social Distancing will be in place.**

Online livestreaming also available for this service. Please visit [www.gracestpauls.church](http://www.gracestpauls.church) for the link.

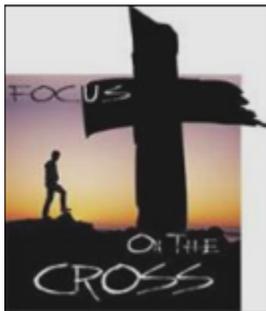
## Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 17th  
7 PM

At Grace-St. Paul's UMC

There will be the imposition of ashes, done as safely as possible.

Livestream will also be available.



## GSP Prayer Ministry

If you are in need of prayer, would like to participate in praying for others, or would like to volunteer to distribute requests, please email [gspumcprayer@gmail.com](mailto:gspumcprayer@gmail.com).

When submitting prayer requests, please keep the confidentiality of the person in mind. God knows the situation and all details are not always necessary.

Requests may also be submitted via our Facebook closed Prayer Group: GSP online Prayer Room

***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”***

**Acts 2:42**



## Bible Study

**Thursdays at 10 am**

We are studying the book of Acts.

Please join us in the church sanctuary. Social distancing will be in place and please wear a mask.

You may also join us online via Zoom. Please contact Pastor Tim for Zoom link.



## KidzZone

**Attention children of all ages and parents!**

Check out the church's website for information and web link for lessons for Sunday.

You can pick and choose what activity you like to do.

There are coloring pages, mazes, word searches, crossword puzzles, etc. for preschool to elementary ages. All lessons are from the church lectionary.

We miss you all. Stay safe.

- KidzZone Teachers

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**For greeters for in-person worship.**

**Please contact the church office by calling 570-325-9151 or emailing [gspumcoffice@gmail.com](mailto:gspumcoffice@gmail.com) to volunteer!!**

**Thank you!!**



## **Care Net Baby Bottles**

**If you have a Care Net baby bottle at home, please bring it to the church (even if empty) so it can be sent to Care Net.**

**Thank you!!**



Greetings to my brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have the opportunity to relocate near my daughter and am taking it. I will be leaving GSP the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. I didn't want to leave without a huge thank you to all of you. I experienced much healing and a wonderful sense of belonging in this church – one I've never experienced before. You have truly been the gift of God for me. I will continue to pray for all of you, the church, as I move forward with God into a new adventure in life. I pray God's blessings on all of you.

In Christ,

Barbara Pease

## **GSP Food Pantry**

**The GSP Food Pantry is well stocked.**

**If you have a need for some extra food help, please contact the church or Eva.**

**If you know of anyone in need of food this winter, please let them know we are here to help.**

## **Celebrations!**

**Happy Birthday to:**

Carole Adams	3	Emily Allem	3	Nancy Moyer	12	Peg Utsick	14
		Jayne Allem	19	Dave Nyce	26		

*\*If your special day is not listed, please contact Heather Bacsick (sweet88@ptd.net or 570-786-7120).*

***Did you know that the GSP Women's Ministry receives donations from the Jim Thorpe Market and Redner's when you save your register receipts?***

These donations go towards the missions supported by the GSP Women's Ministry. Some of the missions supported include: Prayer Shawl Ministry, Local Food Pantries, and Care Net of Carbon County.

If you would like to donate your receipts: please save your receipts from the Jim Thorpe Market (you do not need the Gold Card) and Redner's (you would need to use your Rewards Card). Use a pen or marker to cover any personal payment information. You may send the receipts to the church or place them in the can located in the church lobby.

Thank you so much for your support of this program!

Many thanks to the Jim Thorpe Market and Redner's for their generous donations to the GSP Women's Ministry!

## *Prayer Shawl Ministry*

The Prayer Shawl Ministry provides homemade shawls, cards, and prayer for those who are hurting or celebrating. These homemade shawls are made by ladies in our congregation.

If you would like a shawl sent to someone, please contact Irene Pyne.

Many thanks to the ladies for their dedication and time making/distributing shawls!

On Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, during worship, we will be celebrating our annual Blessing of the Prayer Shawls in church.



### **PENN-KIDDER MINISTERIUM AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

40 Church Road, Jim Thorpe, PA 18229

P. O. Box 2210, Albrightsville, PA 18210

570-722-1712 / [pkmasp@ptd.net](mailto:pkmasp@ptd.net) / [www.pkmasp.vpweb.com](http://www.pkmasp.vpweb.com)

*A Safe, Secure, Faith-Based Learning Environment for the Children of Our Community*

A few of us will remember our local one-room schoolhouses. We have one located on Unionville Rd. Well, from the beginning of December through the end of January, Grace-St Paul's hosted a little schoolhouse of sorts. Thirteen (13) children, attending the After-School Program, logged on to their computers and went to school via virtual learning. To say it was a challenge for the PKMASP Staff is an understatement. The Staff learned quickly to navigate Google Meet, See Saw, Xtra Math and many other applications the children logged on. Children were broken out into groups by grade. Staff members monitored their activities and, in many cases, aided the children in their studies. The Staff grew in their appreciation for the dedicated and ingenious teachers' efforts to present their lessons each day.

Distance Learning at PKMASP would not have been possible without the support of the Congregation of Grace-St Paul's. Internet access was critical to the children logging on to their "Meets" throughout the day. One Meet we all enjoyed was Physical Education. Have you ever seen a child performing Jumping Jacks with headphones on? They could hear the music but those around could not. This metaphor can be used to describe our relation with God. Some people just can't hear the Music and others do.

On behalf of the Families and Children served by the PKMASP, Thank You.