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

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

**Grace Notes**

January, 2021



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Greetings!

At long last we have all greeted the new year, and we are entering the second year of this decade. There is no doubt that last year will be a pivotal year in the history of the world, one that future generations will see in their history lessons and draw conclusions about how the events and the reactions to those events changed the world. As we are living that history, we do not yet know how our corporate and individual experiences throughout 2020 will affect the future. We do not yet have the benefit of hindsight. All we have right now is the information we need in this moment to weather the storm as it rages; we feel swept along with the current and powerless to change it. Sometimes it seems that we are using all of our resources just to keep our heads above the water, let alone daring to dream of reaching the shore. As a student of history, both formally and informally, I can quote chapter and verse about people who have endured hard times in the past. In some ways it helps to have that hindsight, to understand that while many individuals (and even large populations) did not make it through the hard times; humanity as a whole always has. Every war has ended, every pandemic has faded out.

I think we all found out during this past year that it is much easier to read about and empathize with our ancestors than to endure the hard times ourselves. It is much different when the spotlight of history is focused on you. As a member of Generation X, I can say that I remember certain pivotal moments in history that changed things forever; the Berlin Wall coming down, the freeing of Nelson Mandela, and of course 9/11. But 2020 was the first extended hard time that my generation and those younger have dealt with, and it is hard! When you've had it so good for so long, it is hard to accept adversity. I think of my Great Grandfather Robert Cramer, born in 1874. He lived through coal mine strikes, World War I, the Spanish Flu pandemic, the Great Depression, and World War 2. His whole life was marked by struggle and hard times. Yet he had enough faith to bring ten children into the world. All but one of those children made it to adulthood and went on to help build the prosperity from which subsequent generations have benefitted.

 Why that litany of struggle and hardship? Why am I unintentionally making you feel small amid the sometimes-overwhelming currents of life in the 21st Century? Certainly not to depress you! It is to help point you to the idea that sometimes becoming small is a good thing. Our Epiphany sermon series "Go Smaller to Grow Bigger" explains why. We will examine the miracle of an infinite God taking on the shape of a human infant in order to help the entire cosmos grow in limitless love throughout eternity. We will see how something so small and humble can blossom into something incredible. We will learn to see the big picture through the smallness of our own realities. We will explore how each tiny part of the Body of Christ fits into the cosmos and becomes an essential part of the whole. We will apply those lessons to our own lives, as well as the life of our church. Join us for the season of Epiphany as we learn how every bit of our smallness adds up to something incredible.

Remember, God is with us, in us, and for us. As the prophet Isaiah assured God's people all those years ago, *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you: and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flames shall not consume you."* (Isaiah 43:2).

God Bless,

Pastor Tim

**Sunday Worship**

**10:00 am- Livestream only services through January 17th.**

Please keep an eye out for news about future services and returning to in-person worship.

Any questions, please contact the church office.

**Thursday Morning Bible Study**

**10 am**

We are studying the book of Acts.

Please join us online via Zoom through January 21st. We will discuss how we will meet for future sessions then.

Please contact Pastor Tim for Zoom link.



Tuesdays at 10 am

GriefShare is a 13-week program with video and discussion each week. $10 charge for materials, but scholarships available.

 If you or someone you know is grieving the loss of a close family member or friend, we are here to help.

Call Donna (570) 225-8565 or email gspumcoffice@gmail.com for info

Masks and social distancing required



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



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 or talk to Donna deVillers.

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***

**Celebrations!**

**Happy Birthday to:**

Heidy Otto 5 Karen Leeman 9

Don Meader 11 Kaelyn Knoll 18

Erick Moyer 19 Jared Jacobs 21

Adalyn Walker 27

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

GSP Women’s Ministry Meeting

All ladies of GSP are invited!

***Monday, January 25th at 10 am***

***via Zoom***

Zoom is an online video chat. There is also a phone call-in option.

For Zoom link and questions, please contact Heather Bacsick at sweet88@ptd.net.

**Holiday Food Boxes**

I want to thank everyone for your help with the food boxes. 14 Families received food and gift cards to the Jim Thorpe Market. The need this year was especially apparent, and most appreciated.

Thank you all again!

Eva