

| FINDING NEW RHYTHMS OF LIFE | A NEW NORMAL

Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, saying, I am with you, says the Lord. Haggai 1:13

Announcement

August 2 (Sun) Communion Sunday
Communion Offering for *Parvin Fund*

August 2 (Sun) Malaga Camp Evening Service @7pm
Location: 4488 Arbutus Ave, Newfield, NJ 08344
More Info: <http://www.malagacamp.org/>

August 5 (Wed) Church Council Meeting
Agenda: Reopening Our Church with results of the survey
Place/ Time: TBD (Pastor will reach out to leaders soon)

August 6 (Thu) Claudia Abate's Birthday | Dana Davis' Birthday

August 8 (Sat) Bill Jones' Birthday

August 9 (Sun) Jean Claypool's Birthday
Noah Gaburo's Birthday

Opening Hymn (UMH 111)

How Can We Name a Love (<https://youtu.be/Q-GbYWmdK7s>)

Call to Worship

Just when we are feeling most discouraged,
God bursts into our lives with healing mercy.
Lord, listen to our hearts, our cries, our prayers.

Give us peace and hope in our spirits.
Direct us in ways of service in your name!
Praise be to God!
AMEN!

Hymn of Praise (UMH 172)

My Jesus, I Love Thee (<https://youtu.be/Yqy9FoDz6go>)

Morning Prayer

Lord of mercy and hope, we come before you with fear. We know that we have fallen short of being the kind of disciples that you have called us to be. We have turned our backs on people in need; we have closed our ears to the cries of the voiceless. And so we hesitate to come before you because we believe that you are disappointed in us. Remind us again that you are merciful and your love transforms and changes our lives. When we falter and slide off the path of hope you place before us, you "pick us up and dust us off" and put us again on the trail, confident of your faithful presence with us. Forgive us our weakness. Strengthen us and give us courage;

help us to be bearers of your good news of peace. We pray this in Christ's name. AMEN.

Psalter Reading

Psalms 105:1-11 _ UMH 828

Scripture Reading

Haggai 1:1-2:23

Message

"Find New Rhythms of Life"

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/thegroveschurches/>)

Website (<https://groveschurches.org/>)

Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles' Creed _ UMH 881

Offering

*Offering (CHECK) by mail to:

UGUMC_ Krissi Reed (50 Burt St, Bridgeton NJ 08302)

WGUMC_ Cheryl Fox (1940 Coles Mill Rd, Franklinville NJ 08322)

**Offering by ONLINE:

<http://www.gnjumc.org/onlinegiving> Or <http://groveschurches.org>

UGUMC Church number: 9068 (Norma)

WGUMC Church number: 9071 (Pittsgrove)

Holy Communion

Closing Song

Lord, I Need You (<https://youtu.be/LuvfMDhTyMA>)

Benediction

[PRAYER REQUEST] _ Let us pray together.

1. For all the congregation of Groves Ministries.

Lord, surround us with Your divine hedge of protection. Encompass us round about with Your strength and Your might. May You shelter us, that those who love Your name may exult in You.

2. For our nation and the world.

Lord, we pray for our nation and the whole world during the pandemic. Grant Your peace, Your comfort, and Your healing. Be with us, Lord. Amen.

A NEW NORMAL

The Jews had been tasked with rebuilding the temple after its destruction in 586 BC by the Babylonians, but they had decided to focus on building themselves luxurious homes instead. Haggai the prophet reminds them of their high calling to prioritize the worship life of the community. God reminded his people that he was with them (Haggai 1:13; 2:4). As they began work, they were to be strong (2:4). God reminds the Jewish people that he was present with them in the past, but he promises that his glory will be even greater in the new temple when they obey him, and he pledges to grant peace there (2:9). God calls them to shift their focus and align their values with his.

“The dates in Haggai are agriculturally significant. The rainy season in the land of Israel usually extends from October to April. Barley and wheat were harvested in the spring. By the end of summer, in the sixth month (Hag 1:1, 15), farmers were calculating how much grain they could afford to plant so that their families could have bread to eat until the next harvest. Fruits were the main crops picked at the end of the summer dry season. The 21st day of the seventh month (Hag 2:1) was the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, celebrating the autumn harvest. The grapes, pomegranates and olives were being counted, and the poverty of the harvest would have been known. Two months later, by the 24th day of the ninth month (Hag 2:10), the rains should have been falling regularly on fields, vineyards and orchards. ... That day was the turning point from meager harvests to prosperity because the Jews had begun to work on the temple. God promised, ‘From this day on I will bless you’ (Hag 2:18–19)”.

Do you have any memories about when you moved to a new home or you helped someone else move into a new home? Maybe the furniture didn't seem to fit quite right. It took time to reconfigure, reorganize, perhaps replace a few ill-fitting pieces before the home felt settled and comfortable. This happens when we begin a new life stage (marriage, addition of a child, new job, death of a significant loved one), and we are forced to move on, attempting to reconfigure the old into the new. It's unsettling and unfamiliar, but with time we can begin to find familiar things in the new normal or learn to be comfortable in our new skin. This often requires giving ourselves (and those with whom we closely share life) an immense amount of grace and patience.

The people of God are to look to him to guide us through tricky times, when things don't look familiar. He wants to be near us and call us his own, but we often hide and reject his help. If we let them, though, the sudden changes can help reconfigure our values to be centered around God's values.

Questions to think

What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?

How have life changes helped you realign yourself with God's priorities?

What is your new normal right now? Do you see how God may be working to adjust your priorities in this time? (Or if not now, have you had to adjust to a new normal in the past?)