

Week of December 4, 2023

Dear Friends,

Our Christmas tree is up and decorated, but we had to put several bungee cords around the tree to anchor it to make sure that our new cat Neil doesn't knock it over if he tries to climb it. So far, so good. The house has been peaceful, and I love sitting quietly each night as I pray and prepare the Bible moment for the prayer line (717-634-8865). The lights about our fireplace light the room and the large angel on the mantel. Christmas can be a time of peace.

I am sadly aware that there are wars in Ukraine and Israel, and that there is much wrong with the world. Yet, I truly believe that there is much that is RIGHT with the world. If the first week of Advent allowed us to contemplate HOPE, this week will allow us to reflect on PEACE.



"Peace, goodwill to all people" (Luke 2:14), sang the angel chorus as the shepherds heard the proclamation of the Savior's birth. Those are the words we still need to hear, to sing, and to work hard to make them a reality. We pray for and need peace – in our hearts, in our homes, in our nation, and in the world.

We can begin in small ways, by forgiving others and ourselves, by healing broken relationships, and by refusing to give into our sometimes-selfish desires and compromise with others. Peace, like so many virtues and longed-for blessings, begins at home. We cannot change the world until we change ourselves.

As John the Baptist called to the Jewish people over two thousand years ago, we, too, hear the message: "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him," in John 1:3. Let us prepare the way for Jesus this Advent season. Let us make room for the Christ child in our hearts so that we can begin to feel the peace of God and work to bring that peace to all we meet.

Love in Christ,

Patti Miller



Announcements

- ~Special Thanks to Hellen Smith and Scott Fredericks on sharing their beautiful talent with Grace UCC.
- ~Sharing God's Grace donations to benefit the PAL (Provide-A-Lunch) program of the Hanover Area Council of Churches will be received during the last hymn TODAY. Envelopes are available in the pews. (The last collection will be today)
- ~A Congregational Meeting will be held after worship on December 17th to vote on the yoking proposal Memorandum of Understanding that has been available since Nov. 26th
- ~Mrs. Claus' Mailbox: Beginning today, if you have a Christmas card for an active member of the congregation, please drop it in Mrs. Claus' mailbox by December 17, and she and her elves will distribute the cards (no postage required). If you would like to send a Christmas greeting to someone who cannot attend church, a mailing list is available by the mailbox for you to mail from home.

~~Financial Summary from November Consistory Meeting

General pledge October 2023: \$5,866

General pledge October 2022: \$11,543

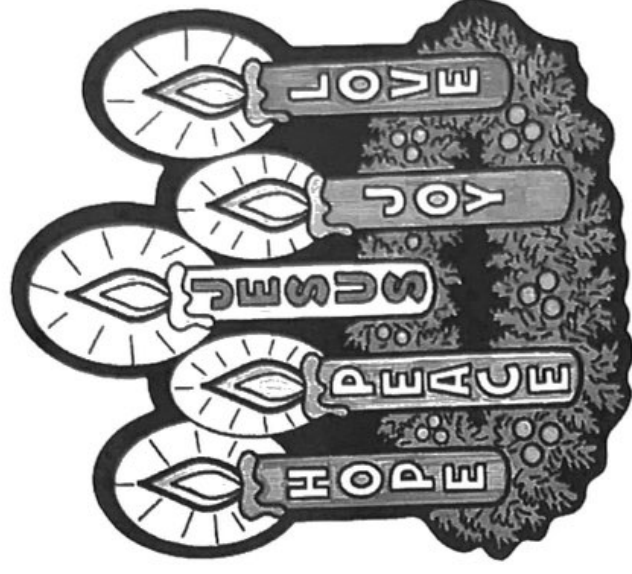
YTD income: \$13,2541

YTD expenses: \$194,885

YTD deficit: \$62,344

~Upcoming Events:

- ~ ~ Christmas Eve service will be held on December 24th at 10AM.



Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

December 10, 2023 –Second Sunday of Advent

Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes

Prelude: "Christmas Sanctus"-Dengler

~Helen Smith and Scott Fredericks soloists

**** Call to Worship**

Lector: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good."

Congregation: "His steadfast love endures forever."

Lector: "In His compassion, He comforts us."

Congregation: "We come before Him with gratitude in our hearts."

Lector: "The faithful love of the Lord never ends."

Congregation: "His mercies are new every morning."

Lector: "Let us worship the God of compassion and faithfulness."

Congregation: "We gather in awe and thanksgiving, for He is worthy of our praise."

**** Opening Prayer:**

Dear Lord, As we gather in Your presence today, we open our hearts to Your love and grace. Guide our thoughts, words, and actions during this time of worship. May the message of Matthew inspire us to embody Your compassion and kindness in our lives. Bless our time together, and may we leave this place with hearts overflowing with gratitude and a renewed commitment to live out the teachings of Your Son, Jesus Christ. In His name, we pray. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candle: PEACE

**** Hymn: "Angles We Have Heard on High" 132**

**** Sharing the Peace of Christ**

Song: "Joseph's Lullaby" ~ Mercy Me

Joys and Concerns

Prayers

Lord's Prayer video

Thank you for sharing your tithes and offerings

**** Doxology**

**** Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Sermon Text: Mark 1:1-8 and Isaiah 40:1-11;

Special music – "The Christmas Gift"-Chaplin
~Helen Smith and Scott Fredericks, soloists

Poem: "Peace"

**** Hymn: "Good Christian Me, Rejoice" 151**

Message: "Finding Peace: A Message of Hope"

**** Song: "Glory (Let There Be Peace)" ~Matt Maher**

**** Benediction**

Please remain standing to sing "A Choral Benediction"
(Inside front of hymn book or on screen).

Postlude- Carol Medley arranged by Fredericks

**** Please stand, if you are able.**

Peace

"Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts." Psalm 85:8

We light the second candle, peace,
And watch the bright flame burn.
We pray that war and conflict cease,
And for goodwill we yearn.
Each generation has been vexed
With nations fighting nations;
What does our Lord from us expect?
What are our obligations?

No magic answers do await;
The road to peace is hard,
But we must travel, armed with faith,
And our own anger guard.
Let us begin with tranquil hearts
That trust in Jesus Christ,
With willingness to do our part
And make a sacrifice.

The peace of God goes far beyond
Our selfish wants and needs.
Our hands don't hold a magic wand,
But they hold healing seeds.
Let's work for peace both near and far;
Our efforts should not cease.
Look to the candle and the star:
Christ is the Prince of Peace. Patti Miller



PEACE

How you can rejoice in the midst of loss

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.—Colossians 3:1-2



One night in December of 1914, a fire in West Orange, New Jersey, claimed Thomas Edison's manufacturing facilities and with it, almost \$1 million worth of equipment and the record of much of his work.

The next morning as he walked about the charred embers of much of his life's work, Edison said, *"There is value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Now we can start anew."*

When material possessions are lost – be it a family heirloom, a retirement account, or a home – we have a choice in how we will respond. We can either throw up our hands in despair, or we can remember where our real security lies and look for a way forward.

How we react to losing worldly possessions says everything about our priorities. If we truly set our hearts on things above, not below, then however devastating our loss is, we can rejoice in knowing we have treasures in heaven that can never be destroyed.

So when you see the things of the world passing away, let it remind you of the coming world where nothing will pass away. Set your heart on heaven – not your earthly possessions – and you'll be able to rejoice even amidst worldly loss.

Prayer Challenge: Pray and ask God to help you maintain a focus on heavenly things, not earthly things.

Questions for thought: Think of your most valued earthly possession. How would you feel if it were lost?

How might looking at every worldly object as something that's passing away help give you perspective in a time of material loss?

First Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2023

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9

The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer

In 1863, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote a poem, “The Sicilian’s Tale.” In it, King Robert of Sicily is sitting in his royal box at the cathedral, dozing through a Christmas cantata. Suddenly, he sits up straight. He’s caught a few words of what the choirboys are singing!

The king’s Latin isn’t so good, so he asks a nearby monk to translate. When the good brother gets to the part about the mighty being cast down from their thrones and those of low degree being lifted up, the wily king remarks: “’Tis good that such seditious words are sung in Latin, lest the peasants understand them.”

King Herod might have felt the same way if he had been eavesdropping on Mary when she burst into song while visiting her cousin Elizabeth. “My soul magnifies the Lord,” she sang, “and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47). Her song became known as “The Magnificat.”

She went on to sing, “He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty” (vv. 52-53). She was carrying the Christ child. She can feel a revolution in her womb! God has chosen to become a human, born in humble circumstances. It signals the dawn of a new era: the downtrodden finally have their day. Salvation for the righteous and the poor is at hand! Mary’s song is a beautiful hymn, but it also is a song of solidarity. It reminds us that the Christmas story is not primarily a cute story of a baby being born in a manger to the adulation of angels and shepherds.

No, it is much more! God is shaking the heavens and the earth! Change is coming!

Back to Longfellow and King Robert. God is offended by Robert’s pride, and installs an angel in his stead as king, and relegates Robert to the role of court jester. When Robert insists that he is the true king, he is denounced as a madman or a joker. Only when he confesses, “Thou art the king,” is he restored to his throne.

As we begin our observance of Advent, let us ask if we are prepared to be a part of this new kingdom that God in Christ has announced to us!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Almighty God, thank you for planting the seeds of your kingdom here on Earth. Help us to be sensitive to your will. Amen.

Week of December 3, 2023

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Sunday: 1 John 3-5

Monday: 2 John, 3 John, Jude

Tuesday: Revelation 1-3

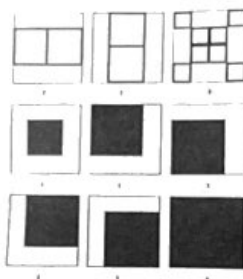
Wednesday: Revelation 4-6

Thursday: Revelation 7-9

Friday: Revelation 10-12

Saturday: Psalms 139-141

Solution to last week's puzzle: there are 18 squares.



?

What number should replace the question mark in the box to the right? *Answer to the right.*

6	2	4
9	4	5
8	7	1
4	1	?

ANSWER: 3. The numbers in columns 2 & 3 equal the number in column 1.

SWITCHEROO

DIRECTIONS: Change the position of only one letter in each word below to make a new word.

EXAMPLE: MINUTE, MINUET

1. HOWEVER _____

2. LINKING

3. ENERVATE

4. CUTTLE _____

5. TRUMPETS _____

6. DEIFIED _____

7. STOPPING

8. TICKLER

CRYPTOGRAM: PROVERBS 27:1

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
														D					O						

$\frac{O}{T \ D}$ $\frac{O \ T}{F \ D \ O}$ $\frac{O}{E \ D \ B \ P \ O}$ $\frac{T}{B \ E \ D \ Y \ O}$ $\frac{O \ T}{O \ D \ U \ D \ H \ H \ D \ L}$
 $\frac{O}{Z \ D \ H}$ $\frac{O}{G \ D \ Y}$ $\frac{O}{T \ D}$ $\frac{O \ T}{F \ D \ O}$ $\frac{O}{N \ F \ D \ L}$ $\frac{T}{L \ R \ B \ O}$
 $\frac{B}{T \ B \ G}$ $\frac{U \ B \ G}{E \ H \ A \ F \ M}$

ANSWERS: 1. Whoever, 2. Inking, 3. Venerate, 4. Cutlet, 5. Strumpet, 6. Edited, 7. Toppings, 8. Trickle. **Cryptogram:** Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

An Advent Word Search

P	R	O	P	H	E	T	S	W	Z	B	H	P	E	S	O	J
E	A	F	S	W	D	G	M	H	T	I	A	F	D	U	H	Q
L	P	N	C	U	R	A	I	A	J	C	A	N	D	L	E	S
I	X	O	G	V	S	E	R	N	R	J	W	M	I	C	A	H
G	U	K	H	E	I	N	A	K	U	Y	Y	P	D	L	W	H
H	X	P	V	S	L	Z	E	T	N	R	C	Y	B	M	J	J
T	Z	Q	Z	N	K	A	T	C	H	E	T	G	E	C	G	O
E	T	H	Y	M	S	D	X	P	F	W	S	L	T	O	N	Y
T	C	H	I	N	U	V	Q	P	J	O	I	S	H	U	I	K
S	X	A	X	T	C	E	V	E	W	N	R	Q	L	N	T	F
G	Y	I	E	S	U	N	F	E	L	D	H	M	E	S	I	K
G	A	L	M	P	J	T	B	G	A	E	C	D	H	E	A	F
R	N	B	P	Y	C	E	U	R	A	R	R	U	E	L	W	O
L	G	I	R	Z	M	G	S	P	K	F	B	P	M	L	K	P
L	K	U	M	I	R	E	M	U	Q	U	T	N	U	O	I	T
A	X	M	I	O	E	R	D	L	S	L	Y	M	G	R	F	B
V	A	B	J	H	C	L	H	A	I	A	S	I	G	F	A	V

ADVENT
CENSUS
DARKNESS
ISAIAH
LIGHT
PROPHETS

ANGEL
CHRIST
FAITH
JESUS
MARY
WAITING

BETHLEHEM
COMING
GABRIEL
JOSEPH
MICAH
WONDERFUL

CANDLES
COUNSELLOR
HOPE
JOY
PEACE
WREATH

Mark 1:1-6

Q Q Y Z V Y G B P D N A T S K X N
 E S U C C A W R Q R H B T N U Z W
 H W F R O Y U Z O T V J T V T R L
 L A E H E X O L I F E F J H B H Y
 M T R X V S A R Y D O W L Y O T P
 J O F U U Y T L T S C G F Q Z A G
 A I B P N A S O T S P O J P N B G
 S Z D Y L H N W R G E O T F F B F
 R H A B A E A A C E A D B Y J A A
 D F Z M W U I J A W D K U K O S T
 D A Y S F G D V Z D J O D M R X R
 F L Y R U O O S S E N D R A H N A
 O I M T L G R V N U I R Z H C T E
 R V S E G A E D E R E H T I W W H
 T E V L H N H I L E S N U O C S W
 H A B Y L Y J P H A R I S E E S P
 S F T I W S T B N O E I F C T K K

destroy	Herodians	counsel	heart	hardness
life	save	good	evil	unlawful
accuse	days	forth	stand	Pharisees
restored	synagogue	sabbath	withered	heal

Isaiah 40:8

H V L J W R Y A E U Z E T Q Z M X E T N P P Q N
V Y D D U X F S C X I U Q B D D I G B H C X T J
U E G O V B D A O A I K D B T W D L U N I V C F
W W D K H N G L J M G Z H S K H X X T J X Y W X
X J G G A N M T E Z U C H L E X E U R G G F W H
G X D T H N M S Z L C H L E P D H P A J M H I L
O U S F Q E K N Y W E N F A R M A E U W W N S A
O M Y A W H W J D M Z R A H U O U F F D S V I V
H V C N M L Y X Z N P O R F M I E W J C M R U F
Z A G L T J K Y A P P P L L E K O R I F C O R E
Z K T E H F L A G B I J L V I R O Y L T M T B Q
E V B U B X U N G S P V Y O P E O K R T H Z X W
Y Y J F F U Y Z D T I F Z K K V X M K S N E U W
T L R Q L H M O N D W U L G Y E A D H J E P R D
E J A R O L G D D G D V X O F R O T T N C B S S
P M X K W P V L D Y X Y J X T O X U L R F H R I
G C Z X E H H P X D C B E X B F Z P R J V F R V
E M J L R B G F S N R V B S D G B G X L N U X U
T G B L J H U B B R A O S T M L I H P X Q K G U
O B U N P R U J I E L A W G P D C J G M A R O Z
O B D M W T V T U E R A Q A K Q G V R O N B Y F
B W L P Y Q Z W H G F I X Y F G W K L I U Z W A
G L H E Q I S Q V Z J Q L K G P T R B B Q P S K
D B G L V O J W Z Z Y K M Y Q M V E X E D A Q N

but
forever
of
the

fades
God
our
withers

flower
grass
stands
Word