

Grace Notes

December 2023

Phone - 814-723-9440 GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FAX - 814-723-6137
501 Pennsylvania Avenue East Warren, PA 16365
Email - office2@graceumcwarren.com Visit Our Website - www.graceumcwarrenpa.com
Visit Our Facebook Group - www.facebook.com/groups/embracegrace

To know Christ and to make Him known!

Senior Pastor: *Rev. William Beatty*
Director of
Congregational Care: *Cindy Price*
Choir Director: *Floyd Moore*
Organist/Accompanist: *Debbie Airgood*
Office Administrator: *Meghan Brooker*
Office Manager: *Mary Quiggle-Pickering*
Director of Children &
Family Ministries: *Amanda Slattery*
Director of Youth &
Family Ministries: *Nicki Egger*

Our Core Values

Extravagant Generosity

We give joyfully of our time, talent, and treasure.

Authentic Engagement

We want to shine the light of God's love in our whole community.

Transformational Discipleship

We seek God's will and God's way for our lives.

Extraordinary Grace

We are all sinners seeking God's grace together.

Word-Centered Mission

We believe the Word of God provides the foundation for all that we do.

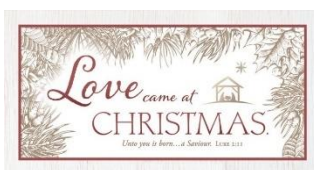
"God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

II Corinthians 9:8



December Meetings

December 7 - 7:00 p - Outreach/Witness



Our Christmas Offering this year will go to **Grace Church HOPES Fund**. Christmas offering envelopes will be in the Christmas letter and available for the Christmas Eve services.



This month's Communion offering is **Grace Church HOPES Fund**. Please use the special Communion envelope in your monthly packet for your

From the Pastor

Busy

There was a knock on my office door. “Hey, Pastor. Are you busy right now?”

How do you answer that question? Who isn't busy right now? And I don't mean that sarcastically. Ask just about anybody what's going on in their lives and, if they're honest, you better settle in for a long list because we're all going in a lot of directions. And this time of year seems to be the busiest. We've got all the regular life stuff – for me it's stuff here are the church, helping Lori when I can, doing things around the house – but then we add in all the holiday stuff – more church events, family events, Christmas parties, concerts, shopping, wrapping, scheduling the visits, cooking, eating, running around...sigh...

Who isn't busy right now?

But, as someone pointed out to me years ago, busyness is a **choice**. Or, well, maybe a whole series of choices. But the point is, we choose to be as busy as we are. When the girls were very young, they hated having to choose between two enjoyable activities (“You can go to this movie with your friends or come with us to the picnic.” Or, well, something like that...). They would cry and demand that it's not fair that they couldn't do both. And every time I would patiently tell them, “Life is about making choices.” They're adults now and they face these kinds of situations all the time, as do we all. It's hard for all of us. We all have to make choices – and not usually between something terrible and something wonderful, but between something good and something good. “I could spend the evening watching *It's a Wonderful Life* with my whole family or we could all go to the Christmas concert together.” Good and good.

So, I do my best to apply a principle I've preached on here: what is the *wise* thing to do. Paul writes in Ephesians (5:15-17), “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.” I try not to choose busyness, though every day seems pretty full, but I try to choose what honors God and honors others. That seems to be the wise thing to do to me. As I've said many times: we demonstrate our love for God by how we love other people. Not by how many tasks we complete for God. Not by how full our calendar is for God. Wisdom, it seems to me, is to honor God and honor people. And every day that looks different.

And that's why, when you are the person knocking on my door asking that question, “Hey Pastor. Are you busy right now?” I will almost always answer, “No. Come on in. What's up?” because busyness, no matter how good or how urgent, is never more important than the person right in front of me.

So, in this “busy” season, pay attention to your calendar, to your commitments, to your “busyness,” in light of what honors God and what honors others as we watch and wait for the Christ.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Bill

Choir Notes



THE CHRISTMAS CONCERT'S COMING! THE CHRISTMAS CONCERT'S COMING! Will you be there? The excitement is building, not unlike the anticipation of the Christmas eve child, waiting for the gifts of Christmas morning. Many of your musicians are preparing their gifts for you to enjoy on Sunday, December 10, at 4pm.

So, mark your calendars for the second Sunday in December, at 4 pm to receive your musical gifts from your Grace choir and friends. It will be wonderful if you mark your calendars and attend, but *much* more wonderful if you invite and bring your neighbors! Take up a whole pew! (We'll still be plenty warm.)

While you're inviting your friends and filling your pew, remember to celebrate each Sunday of Advent with us, either at 8:30, 9:30, or 11:00. Don't forget our new Christmas Eve services at 5pm and 7pm, and our combined Christmas Eve worship service at 10am. (Christmas Eve is December 24th this year). We have plenty of musical gifts to share!

THE CONCERT IS COMING! THE CONCERT IS COMING! Will You be there? Did I mention the punch and cookie reception following the concert? I can't wait!

See you in Church!

Floyd Moore
Choir Director
amfm123@verizon.net

Be the Light

American Christians and Jews are in the holiday season Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas. Hanukkah is also known as the Festival of Lights. It commemorates the recovery of Jerusalem in the 2nd century BCE. While there was only enough sacred oil for one day's lighting of their menorah, the wicks of the candles miraculously burned for eight days. Our own Miracle of Light comes as we celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas morn. He is the Light of the World!



Holidays are usually celebrated with family, if possible. In our gathering together, we show our gratitude for each other and for the provisions we are blessed with. And food is often a central theme as each holiday has its own special dishes. In my family, Mom's candied sweet potatoes are a MUST at Thanksgiving. On Christmas day, our kids expected to wake up to the smell of "Pop-Pop's" cinnamon buns. SPOILER ALERT: he never made them, he just loved to eat them!

As the Grace Church family, we gather together each Sunday to worship God through our traditions of prayer and praise. We can feel invigorated and challenged by Pastor Bill's message. We are comforted and emboldened by the hymns and songs of praise. With that, we are able to positively affect the "un-reached" in various ways.

Are you familiar with the phrase, "Put an extra bone in the soup."? I think this is a Depression Era mindset that no matter how little you have, you can stretch it a bit more to help others. Since we are blessed in so many ways, please join me in praying that we can all find ways to extend the love of Jesus to those around us.

With you in Christ, Cindy Price

After a month of learning about Thanksgiving and celebrating all the things we are thankful for, we are looking forward to our fall break! We are grateful for each day, week, and month we have safely gathered at school and pray for continued good health for all!



December is an exciting time to prepare for the Christmas season. We will be learning new songs, decorating our room, and creating gifts for our families. In the midst of our busy-ness, we will share the birth of baby Jesus and use some puppets to act out the story. We also plan to visit Pastor Bill in the sanctuary and hear the Christmas story using the Nativity. Our last day of school before Christmas vacation will be celebrated with a Fun Day where we will make crafts, sing songs, decorate (and eat) cookies, then say our good-byes until we return in 2024!

Registration for the 2024-2025 school year will begin in January with current preschool families & Grace Church members. If the classes are not full by the end of January, we will open registration to the public. Registration forms will be available in the church office or by calling 723-8011 during school hours.

We wish you all a blessed Christmas and Happy New Year!

Trish Gentilman & Jennifer Lynds



During Worship
9:30 a.m. (0-2 yrs.)
11:00 a.m. (0- 5 yrs.)
December 3 – Anna Peterson
December 10 – Melissa Zaffino
December 17 – Anna Peterson
December 31 – Melissa Zaffino



Along with the boxes packed by CREW, Grace Church sent **71** shoeboxes around the world for Operation Christmas Child.



Welcome new member:
Amy Morrison



Items for the **January 2024** Newsletter need to be delivered to Mary in the office mary@graceumcwarren.com by **Friday, December 15.**

Covered by Grace is a ministry that allows anyone needing winter items to simply take them from a clothesline on the front porch of the church. Donations can be placed in the bin across from Pastor Bill's office or visit our website for the link to our Amazon wishlist. The lines are up November through February so please keep those items coming throughout the winter.



This year, our Angel Tree will be benefiting children in Warren County by The Salvation Army. To help, pick a tag from the tree in Wesley Parlor. Each tag has a child's gender, age, clothing size, and a few toy options. Next, go shopping! Once items are purchased, return them **unwrapped** to The Salvation Army, 311 Beech St., Warren. Please have items returned by **December 15th.**



Flock Talk

“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:29

The greatest wish we can have this Christmas season is that God works through us so we can live out our faith every day. There will be gatherings and celebrations and for many, a heightened sense of concern as to whether we are “accomplishing everything”.

The world around us celebrates the traditions of Christmas, yet as Christians we keep the birth of Christ as our focus. Although, as humans we have a tendency to engage in the world’s activities at a slight cost. Daylight is scarce, seasonal depression is real and we are aware that another year has slipped through our grasp. We often spend too much money and sacrifice precious time for decorations and preparations that are temporary.

But! It is all worth the effort we expend when Jesus is first in our lives. Children are a treasured audience and are waiting to see if the manger scene has a special place in the home. If our attention is given to teaching the story of Christ and making His tradition above all else, then the time, the money and the fatigue are worth every penny.

Enjoy and celebrate and find peace in the stillness of His presence. Give Him this holiday. Praise Him with Christmas carols and a joyful heart!

Cheerfully,
Sue Toombs, Lay Leader

Our annual Christmas Concert, “We Sing Glory” will be presented on Sunday, December 10th at 4:00PM. The reception committee is asking for donations of cookies to be served following the concert and for volunteers to help set up, serve, and clean up. Signup sheets for cookies (2-3 dozen) and for volunteers to help are in Higginbotham Hall and the Wesley Parlor. You may also call the church office, 814-723-9440 or Linda Knapp, 814-726-1199, with further questions or to volunteer. Thank you for any help you may be able to offer.

Grace Church Ladies Christmas Tureen Luncheon

All women of Grace Church are invited to attend a Christmas luncheon on Thursday, December 14th at noon in Higginbotham Hall sponsored by the Ruth M. Smith Center Circle.

Please bring a tureen to share AND your own table service. Dessert and beverages will be provided.

There is no cost for this luncheon, but we would like reservations to be made by Dec. 11th to Suzette at 814-723-3964, Linda at 814-726-1199, or to the church office at 814-723-9440.

A short program is being planned, but we need your help. Following our devotions, those who wish to share a fond, favorite, or funny Christmas memory may do so. We will close with Christmas carols.

The Grace Church Food Pantry needs replenished! We are in need of **canned/boxed potatoes, jello/pudding, microwavable meals** at this time. Thank you to all who contribute!



Grace Church Finance Report

See below for the financials for October.



2023 Monthly and YTD Financials

	October '23	YTD
Total Income	\$35,878.59	\$278,020.34
Office Expense	\$299.98	\$5,375.51
Buildings & Ground Expense (Church & Parsonage)	\$4,104.77	\$72,197.05
Ministry Personnel	\$20,553.00	\$219,658.34
Church Council	\$111.30	\$429.09
Education Ministry	\$107.90	\$3,535.73
Nurture Ministry	\$187.24	\$1,599.32
Worship Ministry	\$306.46	\$2,250.68
Outreach Ministry	\$37.92	\$439.88
Connectional Apportionment	\$0.00	\$0.00
Witness Ministry	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Ministry & Expense	\$25,708.57	\$305,485.60
Net Income	\$10,170.02	(\$27,465.26)

Borrowed Funds

Account Balance 10/31/2023	(\$121,924.28)
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We praise God for the generous gifts and offerings.

Submitted by:

Brian A. Jurkowski, Finance Chair & the Finance Committee

Attention women!

*Are you looking to strengthen your relationship with Christ?

*Are you looking to bond with other women?

*Are you looking for an evening of sharing and caring with one another?

Grace church is offering a new women's ministry! "Full of Grace" will meet the Fourth Monday of each month in the Eaton Parlor from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. We will start with an intro, video lesson, devotional and pray time. No need to sign-up, just show-up! Hope to see you there! Questions, please contact Karen Conarro at: fullofgraceumcwarren@gmail.com

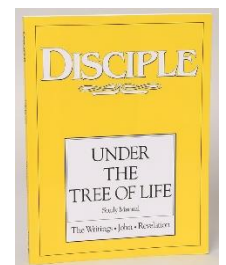


Disciple IV Class

Our next Disciple class will begin on Thursday, January 4th at 6:00pm in the Eaton Parlor. This will be the first half of Disciple IV and will be held weekly until the end of April. Anyone is welcome to attend and you will be amazed at the level of learning we achieve during these four months.

Disciple IV will focus on Revelation and all of the books of the Bible that help us comprehend the mystery of the end of times. We will discuss the importance of living in faithful community while setting our sights on God's victory in the future. This course will be enlightening and interactive with all the beloved qualities of a small group study.

There are books available, but please contact Sue Toombs prior to class to set one aside for you. Sue will be your instructor and is happy to answer any questions.



Do **YOU** feel called to help others in need? Here are 2 opportunities to be directly involved, coming up this spring.

Red Bird Mission trip **April 28 - May 3, 2024** in southeastern Kentucky. People of ANY skill level can be used to do a great variety of outreach projects. Grace Church has sent teams there 15-20 times over the years.

Samaritan's Purse project in eastern Kentucky, helping rebuild lives and housing after a devastating flood there last year. This is tentatively set for **March 17 - 23, 2024**.

More details will be forthcoming, but we wanted to give **early notice** for people to make arrangements at work, etc. If you're interested, please contact Keith Price at rkeithprice@hotmail.com or 814-688-2983.

Have you ever been Christmas shopping for that hard-to-gift person on your list, who has everything you can think of and more? Here's a suggestion! Grace's Outreach Team is offering the opportunity for you to donate to **Peace Promise**, a ministry to help people escape the tragedy of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

With your donation, a card will be sent to the person you designated, acknowledging your gift. Certain levels of gifting will also be accompanied by other tokens of appreciation: Gifts of \$25-50, \$50-100, \$100-150, and those over \$150. So, you can forego scouring loads of Christmas catalogs and give a gift with lasting meaning!

See the display in Wesley Parlor for details on how to give! And THANK YOU!



Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year.
We will be having one morning service at **10am** and then
Christmas Eve Services at **5pm** and **7pm**.



- December 1 – Bev Smith, Gene Burns, Pam Hahm, Rachel Beatty
- December 2 – Larry Willis, Alexandria Jansens
- December 4 – Alec Conarro
- December 5 – Erica Bailey
- December 6 – Casey Retterer
- December 7 – Buddy Birgel, George Broadbent, Michael Waseleski
- December 8 – Victoria Solberg
- December 10 – Phyllis Broadbent
- December 11 – Ashlynn Fry
- December 12 – Caitlin Barney
- December 13 – Janette Brown, Jayden Fry
- December 14 – Jim Armstrong, Joseph Glotz, Kolby Sabat
- December 15 – Logan Peterson
- December 16 – Caleb Ei
- December 17 – Karen Larson, Diane DeLarme, Larry Neal, David Anthony
- December 18 – Nancy Callahan
- December 19 – Steph Pearce, April Barr
- December 20 – Vicki Anthony, Austin Jerman, Benjamin Hampson, Jace Yaegle, Wallace Yaegle
- December 22 – Rayna Filek
- December 24 – Carol Baughman, Harrison Johnson, Christopher Danielson
- December 25 – Alexis Manelick
- December 29 – Jayce Messinger, Madelyn Messinger
- December 30 – Douglas Renwick, Betsy Miller, Theresa Barney
- December 31 – Peggy Grosch, Beth MacPherson, Paige Johnson





december



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:30 a Agape 9:45 a Sunday School 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing	4 5:15 p Christian Yoga	5 9:00 a Pickleball 11:00 a Staff Meeting 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Pickleball	6 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	7 9:00 a Pickleball 10:00 a Disciple 1 5:30 p Higginbotham Hall Reserved 6:00 p Caregivers' Support Group 7:00 p <i>Outreach</i>	1 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga 8 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga	2 9:00 a Praise Team 4:00 p Higginbotham Hall Reserved 9 9:00 a Praise Team
10 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:30 a Agape 9:45 a Sunday School 4:00 p Grace Choir Christmas Concert 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing	11 5:15 p Christian Yoga	12 9:00 a Pickleball 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Pickleball	13 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	14 9:00 a Pickleball 10:00 a Disciple 1 12:00 p Women's Luncheon 7:00 p Eaton Parlor Reserved	15 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga	16 9:00 a Praise Team
17 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:30 a Agape 9:45 a Sunday School 4:00 p Watson Home 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing	18 12:00 p Caregivers' Support Group 5:15 p Christian Yoga	19 9:00 a Pickleball 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Pickleball	20 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	21 9:00 a Pickleball 10:00 a Disciple 1	22 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga	23 9:00 a Praise Team
24 10:00 a Worship 5:00 p Christmas Eve Service 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing 7:00 p Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed	26 9:00 a Pickleball 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Pickleball	27 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	28 9:00 a Pickleball 10:00 a Disciple 1	29 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga	30 9:00 a Praise Team
31 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:30 a Agape 9:45 a Sunday School 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing	January 1, 2024 Office Closed			PROMISE PRESCHOOL is open Sept-May Mon, Wed, and Thurs from 9:00 – 11:30 am (3-year- olds) and 12:30 – 3:00 pm (4 year- olds) located on the ground floor.		

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
501 Pennsylvania Ave. E.
Warren, PA 16365

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December 2023

- Grace Praise Team -

*Pastor Bill, Lori Beatty, Jan Moore, Cindy Price, Keith Price, Tristan Johnson,
Shirley Shafer, Aaron Stearns, Chris Ei, John Lewis, Patrick Ward,
Alice Pedersen, Cindy Dziendziel, Walter Miller, Dave Moore*

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