



Life in Grace

DECEMBER 2011 VOLUME 13 ISSUE 12

OPENING HEARTS OPENING MINDS OPENING DOORS

A PUBLICATION OF: GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 216 S. MARKET ST, MECHANICSBURG, PA 17055

PHONE: (717) 766-3282 * FAX: (717) 918-4753

EMAIL: graceumc1@comcast.net * WEBSITE: www.gracewelcomesu.org

PASTOR: Rev. Mark F. Reisinger HOME: 697-2043 EMAIL: mreisinger@susumc.org

Lay Leader: Pat Emel

Custodian: Bob Griffiths

Director of Music: Timothy Hess

Secretary: Elena Yarlett

Pianist/Organist: Kim Badman

Children's Choir Director: Holly Kurten

The Pastor's Message

It happens every year. As long as I can remember, it's been going on. Around mid to late October, stores begin to slowly haul out their Christmas wares. Wreaths are being hung by the check-out with care and lovely artificial tree branches are pulled from boxes and assembled into a makeshift pine forest right next to sporting goods.

And then, just as automatically as you can count on stores heralding the Christmas season two months in advance, people begin complaining about it. The lamenting of this rushing of the season has become just as much of an annual tradition as the decorating itself.

And while I can sympathize with these well-meaning souls who simply want to celebrate one holiday at a time, there's a part of me that gets a little excited when I see the Christmas decorations coming out, even in October.

Andy Williams sang that *"it's the most wonderful time of the year."* I think he was on to something.

I love Christmas. I love everything about it. From the lights and decorations brightening the cold nights to the delicious holiday treats, it very well may be the most wonderful time of the year. What other season of the year brings its own music with it and then shelves it away again until next year? Go ahead; try to find a radio station playing *Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree* in May.

Christmas is a force all its own. And why shouldn't it be? For Christians, this is when we remember that GOD broke into our human existence. Because the creatures weren't good or smart enough to ascend to God, the Creator descended to us. God brought light into our darkness. God voluntarily took on the form of a man, lowering himself to experience all that we experience. No longer do we have to walk through life alone. Not only do we have friends on the journey, but now we've got a God who has also been there, done that.

Consider that...God so loved YOU that he sent his only Son so that YOU may not perish but have eternal life. God sent his only Son so that in this life you can be confident that God knows your joys and your struggles. God sent his only Son so that every day and every night you can rest in the assurance that God thinks you're pretty special...worth dying for, even.

If ever there was something that demanded a celebration that lasted longer than one day, or twelve days, or one month, surely this is it.

And so, this year, the next time I hear Christmas music playing on the radio (before Thanksgiving); I'm going to smile and sing along. The first time I see Christmas lights adorning a home, I'm going to give thanks that the light of Christ shines in the darkness all year long. And when a greeter at the mall wishes me Merry Christmas (or Happy Holidays, because after all, not everyone is of the Christian faith), I'm going to respond in kind because I'm pretty sure that's what God would want me to do.

So, go ahead. I invite you to join me. Crank the Christmas music. Hang the lights. Put up the tree. This year, rather than being dismayed at how early Christmas begins creeping into the world around us, go with it and join the party. Let's not wait to celebrate God's great love and the gift of Jesus Christ. Let's start the celebration and invite the world to join in! **Merry Christmas!**

Blessings,

Pastor Mark

Our Vision is to walk with Christ while making disciples.

STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

THE JOURNEY: WALKING THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM CHRISTMAS BIBLE SCHOOL –

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13 THROUGH SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17 5:30PM TO 7:30PM

Based on Adam Hamilton's "The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem", **children ages 4 through 9** will explore the story of Jesus' birth. Children will learn about the places where the story occurred, experience some of the culture of Bible times, discover what each character in the story teaches us about God, and discover the real meaning of Christmas!

The Christmas Bible School will offer activities, crafts, and stories to introduce the kids to the characters of the times. We will start each evening at 5:30pm with a kid friendly dinner. Invite all the kids you know!

The event is free to the community, but we are requiring pre-registration (to assure we have enough dinners). Registration form is located in the Sanctuary.

BIRTH NARRATIVES BIBLE STUDY & DINNER

Join us Monday nights in December (excluding Dec. 26) for a light dinner and Bible study as we read and think about the Christmas stories in Matthew and Luke. These verses have become familiar to many of us, so we invite you to join us as we consider them anew, preparing to truly celebrate the Christmas Season. Dinner is served at 6pm in the GUMC Fellowship Hall with Bible study following. If you bring a friend who has never been to a GRACE Bible Study...you and your friend will get a free gift!

ADVENT DINNER & DEVOTIONAL WITH WESLEY & MT. OLIVET UMC'S

We're once again joining with our sister United Methodist Churches, Wesley and Mt. Olivet, to share in weekly Wednesday Night Advent Dinner and Devotional times. Pastor Mark, Pastor Mary, and Pastor Norm will each lead a session as we meet in our various churches. Join us as you can, and bring a friend, for a light dinner and a meditation on the Advent Season.

Nov. 30, 5:45pm @ GRACE UMC

Dec. 7, 5:45pm @ Mt. Olivet UMC (5000 Simpson Ferry Road, Mechanicsburg)

Dec. 14, 5:45pm @ Wesley UMC (Simpson & Filbert Streets, Mechanicsburg)

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES:

Sunday, December 11—Children's Christmas Program @ 10:45am

(3rd Sunday of Advent Traditional Worship Service @ 8:15am)

Sunday, December 18—GUMC Choir Christmas Cantata @ 10:45am

(4th Sunday of Advent Traditional Worship Service @ 8:15am)

Saturday, December 24—Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols, Candlelighting Service @ 7pm

Christmas Eve Communion Service @ 11pm

Sunday, December 25—Christmas Day COMBINED Worship with Communion @ 9:30am

(NO Sunday School)

December 2011

OUTREACH AND FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

“THE SLEEPING MAT-TERS” MINISTRY PROGRAM - TUESDAYS

Join us **Tuesday evenings from 5:30 till 7pm** as we gather for the Sleeping Mat-ters ministry program.

Anyone can volunteer – no special skills or talents needed! From sorting, straightening, cutting, plarning, and crochet – there is something for all ages to do! ***If you are unable to come out Tuesday evenings, but would still like to help, we do have “jobs” for you to do at home.*** Special Note: We will not be meeting December 13 through December 27. We will resume in January.

GRACE UMC CHOIR SPECIAL PERFORMANCE @ BETHANY VILLAGE

Join us Wednesday, December 7 at 7pm at Bethany Village in Mechanicsburg as the Grace Choir entertains for the residents of Bethany Village.

A DAY OF CELEBRATION!!! SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

Following the Children’s Christmas Program during our 10:45am worship service, Pastor Mark and Alicia invite you to an OPEN HOUSE at the GUMC Parsonage from 1-4pm. Come as you are able to see our refurbished parsonage, enjoy homemade Christmas treats, and share in a time of fellowship, getting to know your GRACE sisters and brothers. We’ll then head back to the church Fellowship Hall for our annual Christmas Stocking Auction at 4:30pm. This is a great time to have fun with your GRACE family and get some awesome Christmas gifts with all of the proceeds going toward maintaining and improving our church facilities.

CHRISTMAS STOCKING AUCTION – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 4:30PM

The 6th Annual Christmas Stocking Auction will be held on Sunday, December 11 at 4:30pm. Create a stocking of your own design or fill a purchased stocking with gifts and goodies of your choice. They can be stockings for children, sportsman, cooks, couch potatoes, or your own home made goodies. Come up with your own creative ideas. For each stocking/gift bag, please place a 3x5 index card on the outside outlining the contents of the container. Centerpieces and other decorations are also appreciated. Stockings may be dropped off in the Fellowship Hall beginning December 4. Help support this fundraiser for the Trustee Fund – bring a stocking, bring a friend! Coffee and light refreshments will be served. See Jerry Graham for more details.

LUNCH BUNCH

The Lunch Bunch will meet on Wednesday, December 14th at Noon at Longhorn Steakhouse on the Carlisle Pike.

BLOOD DRIVE – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17 – 9AM TILL NOON

Roll up your sleeves and give the gift of life this Christmas Season! The bloodmobile will be onsite on Saturday, December 17th from 9am till Noon.

December 2011

SHOW US YOUR GIFTS & TALENTS – WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN OUR COMMUNITY

MUSIC NOTES

The adult choir will rehearse on alternate Wednesdays at 7:00 PM. ***New members are always welcome!*** Please contact Timothy Hess (979-7584) or Kim Badman for more information. Also, anyone interested in providing special music in worship, please contact Timothy or Kim. We look forward to making a joyful noise at Grace!

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Grace is blessed to have regular volunteer Sunday School teachers. Throughout the year, there are times when these teachers are away and substitutes are needed to cover the classes. If you are interested in becoming a substitute teacher, please contact Holly Kurten (Preschool Class), Therese Finney (1st through 3rd grades), or Taryn Herold (4th through 6th grades). *Please Note: Sunday School teachers and substitute teachers must be Safe Sanctuary certified. Details are available on our website, or contact Holly Kurten for more information.*

NURSERY HELPERS - 10:45 Worship Service
First Sunday – Tammy Wilder
Second Sunday – Sue Witters
Third Sunday – Katie & Zoe or Daniel Richwine
Fourth Sunday – Linda Minnich
Fifth Sunday- Christi Catalano

**On Call Person for
December:
Doris Martin 677-6539**

MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

RECYCLING: MISSION CENTRAL

Our recycle program for Mission Central has changed. We will no longer collect plastic containers for recycling. We would like to have only aluminum cans (soda cans, etc) only.

Thank You!
Rusty Garner

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2012:

**Sunday, January 1—*John Wesley's Covenant Renewal Service with Communion*
*COMBINED WORSHIP---9:30AM (NO Sunday School)***

Sunday, January 8—*Baptismal Renewal Worship Service @ 8:15am & 10:45am*



Grace United Methodist Church
216 S. Market Street
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
www.graceumc-mech.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Mechanicsburg, PA
17055
Permit No. 212

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

This Newsletter is sent
With a prayer to.....

Sunday Mornings at Grace:

8:15 am Worship Service * 9:00 am Coffee Fellowship * 9:30 am Sunday School * 10:45 am Worship Service

CREATION NORTHEAST 2012: TUESDAY, JUNE 26 - SUNDAY, JULY 1, 2012

Join Grace UMC – Mechanicsburg as we travel to Creation Festival 2012. Travelling in our car caravan, we will **depart Grace UMC on Tuesday, June 26 at 11am**, arrive at Mt Union, set up camp, and enjoy campsite fellowship time in the evening.

The Festival runs Wednesday, June 27 through Saturday, June 30. We will depart the Festival grounds Sunday, July 1st in the morning, and **arrive back at Grace UMC around Noon on July 1st.**

This is a great opportunity to enjoy 60 bands, 20 speakers, fellowship time, a camping retreat and more for one low price. A complete listing of bands and speakers will be available in 2012.

Adults (Age 12+) \$140.00: *The price includes admission to the festival, hot shower pass, “quick” continental breakfast (breakfast bars, granola, fruit, etc) and “quick” lunch (hot dog & chips, PBJ, etc) at our campsite. You will be on your own for dinner (and may pack to eat at the campsite or purchase dinner at one of the Festival concession stands). Contact Therese Finney for more information.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pastor’s Message.....	1	Gifts & Talents.....	5
Study Opportunities.....	2	Misc Announcements.....	5
Outreach/Fellowship.....	3	Mark Your Calendars.....	5
Calendar.....	4	Creation 2012.....	6