



GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

December 2018—January 2019

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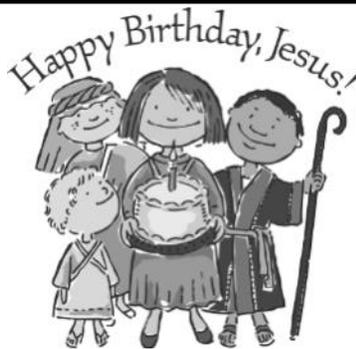
Women's Community Prayer Breakfast - Saturday, December 8, 8:00 a.m.



The Dorchester County Women's Prayer Breakfast will be held at Grace United Methodist Church on Saturday, December 8th at 8:00 a.m.

A Christmas message will be presented in the sanctuary followed by breakfast in the Baraca Room. Bring a friend!

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

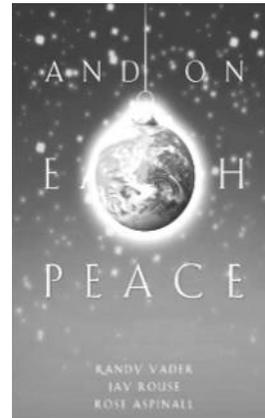


Sunday, December 9th
11:00 a.m.

Worship Service to Follow

Once again this year Grace United Methodist Church will be stepping out in faith to celebrate Jesus' birthday by loving others through giving. We will give all of our Christmas Eve offerings, as well as any monies given through our Christmas envelopes, to the Cold Weather Shelter.

If you would like to contribute to Jesus' birthday present this year, please give to these offerings. You can make your check payable to Grace United Methodist Church and include Christmas offering in the memo line.



SENIOR CHOIR CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Sunday, December 23
9:45 a.m.

In the Sanctuary
ONE SERVICE ONLY

BRING A FRIEND!

In the beginning was the word. The Word - Holy, Sacred. Just. Eternal. God in Christ. Christ in God. In the beginning. And suddenly the word was flesh. Incarnate. Human. Breakable. Common. Morning light into darkness. And that life-light blazed out of the darkness and the darkness could not put it out. Redeemer, Savior! Messiah, Lord! His name, Jesus. This is the story of the birth of the Prince of Peace. This wonderful new work by Randy Vader, Jay Rouse, and Rose Aspinall brings to life those amazing moments when our Savior took on flesh to be born in a manger. He is called the Prince of Peace and his coming brought the fulfillment of scripture to pass.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Monday, December 24
7:00 and 11:00 p.m.



FROM PASTOR DAN

Why is Christmas Marked on December 25th?

One of the questions (and criticisms against Christianity) I hear with a degree of frequency pertains to the dating of Christmas.

Is Christmas foundationally Christian or is it a pagan holiday supplanted by Christians to counter the dominant pagan culture of the Roman Empire?

The history of Christmas is uncertain if only because of the number of differing accounts of how Christmas came to be. Generally, most Christians seem to know that there is some pagan history to Christmas.



Some note that a number of the symbols of Christmas are based upon pagan rituals and beliefs.

The ancient Romans did indeed celebrate the end of the harvest season during mid-December that included the preparation of special food, gift-giving, decorating homes with greenery, and singing. These celebrations honored Saturn, the harvest god, and Mithras, the god of light. The commonality between this celebration and Christmas seems evident. Nevertheless, there is reason for establishing the 25th of December as Christ's birthday – Christmas day.

The first verifiable mention of Jesus' birth occurring on December 25 dates to 336 A.D., recorded in a Roman calendar of that year. The first substantive evidence of Christmas as a celebration was recorded by theologian John Chrysostom of Antioch on 12/25/386 A.D. However,



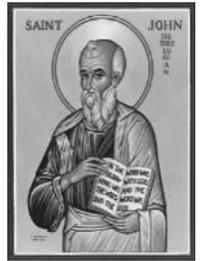
Roman Emperor Aurelian began a celebration predating the earliest Christian evidences by 64 years on 12/25/274 A.D. called, "Birth of the Unconquered Son." Aurelian's purpose for creating the feast purportedly was to counter an already significant number of Christmas celebrations occurring throughout the empire. Thus, it is

reasonable to believe that Christ's birth was celebrated in some form or another very early in church history.

Interestingly, the now common strongly held belief that Christmas was taken from pagans did not originate until the late 1600's through the early 1700's. A German Moravian, Paul Earl Jablonski, used Christmas as a means to demonstrate how the church had degenerated from the 4th century due to Roman Catholicism.

Despite the medley of information relating to Christmas' history, one significant reason why the church seemed to be settled on the 25th of December as Jesus' birthday is based on Jewish understandings of the birth dates and death dates of its prophets.

Following the account in John's Gospel, we start with Jesus' death. According to the Jewish Lunar calendar, Jesus died on 14 Nisan (March-April). Scholars seem to agree that Jesus' death could only have occurred in 30 A.D. or 33 A.D. because these were the only years when the eve of the Passover occurred on a Friday. Those dates are 4/7/30 or 4/3/33.



Despite that evidence, the two dates that are generally accepted for Jesus' death include April 6, as marked by the Orthodox churches and March 25, 29 A.D. as proposed by the early church theologian Tertullian (c. 155-230). Worthy of note is the fact that 3/25/29 was not a Friday and Passover was not even in March in 29 A.D. Despite the fact that the dates 4/6 or 3/25 are untenable, these are the dates that have prevailed and form the basis for a 12/25 Christmas.

A widespread belief in Judaism during the time of Christ was that prophets died on the same date as their birth or conception. The early Christians applied this idea to Jesus. Focusing on 3/25 as Jesus' death as marked by western churches, 3/25 also prevailed as the day of Jesus' conception and is marked almost universally within the church as the Feast of The Annunciation, the time when it is believed that the angel Gabriel announced the Incarnation to the Mary.

Simple math does the rest. Adding nine months to 3/25 yields 12/25. Thus, you now know why we celebrate Christmas on 12/25.

Of course, this does not settle the issue that 12/25 is the right date of Jesus' birth. In all likelihood, 12/25 is not the right date. In all likelihood, we will never know the precise date of Jesus' birth. Nevertheless, you now have some information that explains why we celebrate Christmas on 12/25 and perhaps most importantly, the notion of Christmas countering a pagan holiday is not only flawed, especially in light of Jablonski's efforts, but it may be that the pagan feast was established to counter Christmas.

(Note: It is entirely possible, though it cannot be verified, that the church could have celebrated Christmas on 12/25 as early as circa. 200 A.D. If Tertullian, as noted earlier established Christ's death and conception on 3/25, it is reasonable to assume that he could add 9 months as well to get to a 12/25 birth date.)

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Dan

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Holly Spicer & Heather Kozak
Co-Superintendents

It's the most wonderful time of the year! The time when we get to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior!

The Sunday School will be participating in a mighty way! On December 9th, we will be presenting our annual Christmas program entitled "**Happy Birthday, Jesus**" during the 11:00 service under the direction of Mrs. Bonnie McCollister. A lot of work is going into this production. You won't want to miss the holiday message our children will share!

The following Sunday, December 16, the Sunday school children will be the guest singers in Baraca. They will share a few holiday favorites and have a visit from the North Pole.

We wish you a very merry Christmas and a New Year full of blessings!

JUNIOR & CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Bonnie McCollister, Director



Choir News

The Children's Choir has been doing a great job and I love their enthusiasm. I also want to thank Holly Spicer and Miss Iris for all their help with them.

On another note I have decided to disband the Junior Choir. The girls are getting older and have a lot of outside activities that prevent them from participating in the choir. I have enjoyed working with them and thank them for their contribution over the past years.

We all wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



TRUSTEES COMMITTEE

Skip Redmer, Chairperson

The year, 2018 is quickly ending. As the trustees look back through the year, we realize, once again, we have been dealt with many, many issues.

After making the decision not to renew the lease agreement with the State of Maryland at 503 Race Street, the State opened new discussion prior to the expiration of their lease extension and after several months a new 3 year lease agreement was finalized.

Many other items have taken place this year. All the fire extinguishers at the church and 503 Race Street have been replaced. We have also added approximately 6-8 new extinguisher location to comply with code. A new ice making machine was installed and is doing a great job supplying ice.

With several leaks in the church slate roof and a couple of areas in the roof over the Dr. Hines building addition, we can say, as far as we can tell, we are now leak free. Many thanks to Brandon Spear and Atlantic Roofing for their efforts in getting us to this place.

Due to the leaks, interior walls in several places were damaged. We have finally begun to move in a positive direction with these repairs. J.W. Tyler has completed drywall repairs in the stairwell across from the church office. Wayne Towers has graciously contributed his talents of scaping, sealing and painting of the wall areas damaged by the water leaks. Kudos to both J.W. & Wayne.

The agreement with Young Life Ministries has been reviewed, revised and renewed. They use the second floor of 503 Race Street to gather and work with youth in our community. The focus is to share the saving Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and bring the youth into a fulfilling relationship with Jesus.

Recently, Pastor Dan, the finance committee and the trustees gathered to discuss the future of our parsonage on Oakley Street. Currently the building is vacant. It needs much repair in many areas. We have reached out to the Pen-Del Conference to assist us with this decision-making process. and will keep the congregation in the loop as we move forward with this process.

We are looking forward to the parking lot getting new lines painted before the end of the year. The Choptank Community Health administration in Denton are willing to pay for the lining. They are very grateful to Grace Church for allowing the Fassett-McGee patients the use of our parking lot.

The trustees thank our congregants for their patience and understanding as we strive to tackle the many issues that rise up with maintaining these old buildings.

From all of us, Val Brown, Ed Kinnamon, Ricky Fitzhugh and myself, we wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a very Bless New Year.



BRENDA'S CORNER

Brenda Gremlion, Music Director

It is hard to believe that Christmas is almost here! This is my favorite season, with all the excitement of the holidays, families gathering, decorating the tree, hot chocolate and maybe even some snow! My favorite activity during this season is directing our Senior Choir in the presentation of our Christmas Cantata. This year, we are presenting, "And On Earth, Peace.". The music is beautiful and many of the pieces you will recognize, such as "Do You Hear What I Hear" and "Let There Be Peace on Earth."

There is nothing more pertinent and pressing in our world today, as the story of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The world needs the peace and joy that can only come from a relationship with Him. Celebrating the miracle of His glorious birth is such a great joy for Christians everywhere! Invite your friends to our church on Sunday, December 23, at 9:45 a.m. service to hear this heartfelt and beautiful Cantata.

I also want to express my gratitude for all of the support and help Grace Church gave me these past several weeks, due to an emergency move. The outpouring of love and caring were beyond anything I could have ever imagined! The love of Christ was evident in all the love and support that was given. I

will never forget your generosity and kindness. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to Pastor Dan and Missy, my Church Family, Ginger Brannock, Hubert Trego, the Baraca Class, Dr. Hines Class, WinGS, and my loving choir. There were individuals who reached out to me, as well. I will always be grateful to each one of you for all you did.

May God bless you through this season of joy and celebration! I wish each of you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Remember, Sunday, the 23rd!! I can't wait to see you there!

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Bill Brooks, Chairperson

Collections for the year are at much lower levels than some of our best years. It takes approximately \$230,000 to fund the operations of the church on an annual basis. We have a \$13,000 deficit for the year as of October 31, 2018. Historically the Advent Season seems to bring out the generosity of our members. Please prayerfully consider the mission of the church and the good works going on at Grace and support them with your tithes and gifts.

There are many ways to help with the financial needs of the church beyond your weekly envelopes. Stocks can be contributed instead of cash or you can bequest money from an estate. If interested in more information concerning these different ways to support the church, please contact me.

Also, feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the finances of the church. Bill Brooks 410-228-8376 billbrooks52@yahoo.com.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Gene Skinner, Chairperson

I am glad to see church members, other than those on committees, attending the One Board meetings. It's good to get feedback on important issues. Thank you for showing an interest and sharing your ideas. Please feel free to contact any Board member at any time.

The One Board meetings are normally held every other month, on the second Tuesday. The committees meet at 6:30, in closed session. Then the full Board comes back together around 7:15 to share information and make decisions. Any church member can attend this part of the meeting, but only Board members may vote on presented motions. So, if you feel you are being left out of the loop, get involved. Tell Pastor Dan you would like to serve, or attend a meeting and show your support for Grace Church. The next meeting is February 5, 2019.

With the holidays coming up, it is important to look at the needs of others. It is unfortunate Grace Church was not able

to sponsor the Thanksgiving Dinner this year. For the past several years, it has been difficult to get all the food prepared in a timely manner. And most of the work has fallen on a handful of people. Also, the number of dinners we serve has become very large. Our kitchen facilities are not suitable to prepare and serve over a thousand meals. So, we need commitments from other churches and enough helpers, if Thanksgiving, 2019 is a possibility.

Some of our parishioners recently had the opportunity to visit the Sight and Sound Theater, in Lancaster, PA., and see the production of "Jesus". Needless to say, it was quite a performance. If you didn't feel the love that day, you never will. The Bible says, "Love never fails". Why? Because love is not dependent on your emotions or circumstances, it is a servant of your attitude and will. Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you". So, share the love with others this holiday season, and keep the "Christ" in Christmas!

WOMEN IN GRACE SERVING (WINGS)

Diane Twilley, President

Women of Grace are united in Christian fellowship and vow to love God and encourage one another to use our God given gifts and talents in service to Grace UMC and our community.

At our first meeting in September after the summer hiatus, the group decided to sell coffee mugs and tumblers as a fund raiser. This was a huge success and we appreciate all those people who placed an order. At this same meeting the ladies brought school supplies which were delivered to Sandy Hill, Choptank and Maple Elementary Schools.

Our next meeting was October 18th and we put together a list of shut-ins and college student's to prepare gift bags for.

At our November 8th meeting, we combined with the Membership Committee and prepared the gift bags for distribution.

The overwhelming support of our tumbler/mug fundraiser and the money we raised has helped with our Christmas project for this year. We have voted to shop for the Eastern Shore Hospital Center patients for Christmas. During the 2017 holidays, 27% of the hospital's patients were determined to be unremembered, with no family or friends to provide gifts for them. We are thankful for this opportunity to share what we have with them in the true spirit of Christmas. Also, as an individual, you can adopt a patient without family and remember him or her during the holidays and also, if you chose, for birthdays or other times during the year. Contact Judy Slaughter at Volunteer Services, ESHC 410-221-2358 for more information

Our next meeting will be Thursday, December 13th at 5:30 p.m. where we will fellowship with our Christmas covered dish dinner.

If you are interested in joining WinGs please come and share our meal. We meet on the 4th Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. with the exception of November and December.



GRACE CHURCH MISSIONS

Diane Twilley, Chairperson

Since August 25th, Missions has been delivering snacks to Pre-

K and Kindergarten classes at Sandy Hill and Choptank Elementary Schools. We began delivery of 16 back packs to Warwick Elementary School on September 14th .

The Hyatt contributed boxes of school supplies donated by their employees which they have done for the past several years. They are a generous group of people and we so appreciate partnering with them to help out the schools. We are actually holding on to some of the supplies to be delivered after the holidays when they will be needed the most.

On October 16th a few volunteers went to Pleasant Day Adult Day Care Center to decorate a Christmas tree. We have decorated this Angel themed tree for them for many years. If I say so myself, it was extra pretty this year. I believe someone must have slipped us some new Angel decorations. A big thank you to Randy Roberts and Sue Foxwell for helping out with that project.

Missions distributed Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes on October 28th. Participants had two weeks to fill their boxes, and, oh boy, did they ever fill them! On November 13th, 42 bulging shoe boxes were delivered to the local drop off at St Paul's Church. Thank you to everyone that shopped and returned their box. Please don't forget to pray for the children that will receive them.

On November 9th, 20 tags were picked up from the Salvation Army for the Angel Tree Program and passed out on November 25th to interested congregants. Again this year we are asking that you might consider partnering up with someone so the child will get everything on the list. Gifts must be returned **no later than December 9th**. We are instructed not to wrap the gifts, but to place them in a large trash bag with the Angel Tree card attached to it. Please leave the bags with gifts in the back of the Baraca room.

This is such a fun thing to do and I try to imagine the child that will get up Christmas morning and have something under the tree. And imagine how the parent or grandparent feels to be able to have something for their loved one to open and not have to choose between paying rent, a bill, or buying a present. We are so blessed to be able to do this and I thank you for giving so sacrificially.

Our next big project is the Soup and Sweater Day on Friday, January 25, 2019.

GRACE CHURCH NEWS

OUR DEARLY DEPARTED

Bonne Fitzhugh
8/27/18

Margaret Brigham
10/19/18



BAPTISM

Eleanor Grace
Mastandrea

Daughter of John & Michelle
Mastandrea
11/18/18

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Beverly Mullikin, Chairperson

For All Saints Sunday, November 4th, Pastor Dan remembered our departed church members from the past year and recalled each name individually with a photo and bell toll. It was a moving way to remember our loved ones.

On Sunday, November 11, we recognized our 50, 60 and 75 year members with a certificate and pin. Fifty year members are Faye Bromwell, Ted Brooks, Robert Lucas, Charlotte Robinson and Starr Trego. Sixty year members are S. Jean Nichols, Yvonne Dayton, Faye Sellers and Robert Parks. Seventy-five year members are Ogle (Timmie) Cannon and Rebecca Willey. Look for these pins in church next time and congratulate these faithful members.

In November, the Membership committee and WinGS members put together gift bags for our shut-ins and college

students. We want them to know we are thinking of them, especially at Christmas time. The student bags will be mailed and the shut-in gift bags will be delivered with visits.

The committee members have congregation names to keep in touch with to let you know we care about you and would love to continue seeing you in church and sharing fellowship. If you are interested in helping with this mission, let call me at 410-228-3650. We always need more volunteers. Should you need a prayer, have family members who need a visit at home, hospital or nursing home/ rehab, please call your member contact person. To find out who that is, call me and I will put the two of you in touch.

Our next Membership meeting will be Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



IT HAD A STAR ON TOP SO I FIGURED IT SHOULD HAVE A MANGER AT THE BOTTOM.

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



THAT'S THE BEST ONE STAR HOTEL I'VE EVER SEEN!

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



REMEMBER THAT NEW YEAR RESOLUTION YOU MADE TO TRY NEW THINGS?

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
SUNDAY SERVICES 8:45 a.m.—Early Morning Grace 9:45 a.m.—Sunday School 11:00 a.m.—Traditional Worship						1  7:30 a.m. Breakfast followed by church decorating 
2  Worship on Radio Holy Communion EMG & 11:00 a.m. Missions Offering	3	4	5	6 Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.	7	8 Dorchester County Women's Prayer Breakfast 8:00 a.m. Grace Church 
9  Sunday School Program 11:00 a.m. **Poinsettia orders DUE **Angle Tree gifts DUE	10	11	12	13 WinGS Covered Dish 5:30 p.m. / Dr. Hines Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.	14	15
16  Kids sing in Baraca Santa Visit 9:45 a.m. Worship on Radio	17	18	19	20 Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.	21	22
23  Senior Choir Christmas Cantata 9:45 a.m. ONE SERVICE ONLY	24  Christmas Eve Candlelight Services 7:00 and 11:00 p.m.	25  Christmas Day	26	27	28	29
30  Worship on Radio	31  New Year's Eve / Watch Night					

January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
SUNDAY SERVICES 8:45 a.m.—Early Morning Grace 9:45 a.m.—Sunday School 11:00 a.m.—Traditional Worship		1  New Year's Day	2	3 Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.	4 UMYF Youth Rally in Ocean City Thru the 6th	5  7:30 a.m. Breakfast followed by church un-decorating
6  Worship on Radio Holy Communion EMG & 11:00 a.m. Missions Offering	7	8	9	10 Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.	11	12
13 Junior Choir sings for 11 a.m. service	14  Martin Luther King Jr. Day	15	16	17 Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.	18 Due date for articles for February/March newsletter	19
20  Worship on Radio	21	22	23	24 WinGS meeting 5:30 p.m. / Dr. Hines Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.	25  Soup and Sweater Day	26
27	28	29	30	31 Sr. Choir Practice— 7p.m.		