

Grace United Methodist Church

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NEWSLETTER

March/April 2021

Those who are currently facing challenges, or are in need of our ongoing prayers:

Lisa Lontz - kidney stones in a transplanted kidney
Brooke Jury - upcoming surgery
Don Markel - hospitalized with Covid and stage 4 cancer
Troy Rowe - upcoming carpal tunnel surgery on wrist and elbow
Evelyn Schwartz - upcoming surgery
Tammy Markel - hospitalized with Covid
Chad Lebo's father Melvin - died from Covid
Kay Matter - hospitalized with intestinal troubles.
Gary Matter - recovering from Pneumonia, treating for cancer.
Mary Buffington - healing from past hurts
Mary Lou Schoffstall - Ina's mother-in-law - at Hershey Med recovering from stroke
Doug Bailey -
Garrett - age 9 - in a coma and on life support
Ryan Shoop - recovering from Covid
Lois Watson - brain aneurysm
Tom Carl - battling blood clots
Chuck Landgraf - recovering from auto accident
Pat Nissel - moved to hospice care
Cassie Harris - stage 4 lymphoma
Tammy Dalton - stroke
John Schoffstall's Aunt Ginny - impending breast cancer surgery
Roy Witmer - torn rotator cuff
Family of Denise Koperna
Jenny and Dan - both with Covid
Betty Hepner - Pickle's Mom - moved to rehab
Barb Douty - currently in rehab
Chad Lebo - Covid
Geretta & Bob Shutt - recovering from surgery; illness
Marsha Troutman - Diagnosed with ALS
Angela Seebaugh - breast cancer
Dana Foltz - brain surgery recovery
Jim Coyle - shoulder injury,
Jim Hockenstein - colon cancer
Simon Campbell - heart problems
Marsha Michael - cancer and Kidney disease
Larry Paul - awaiting a lung transplant
Brad White - continued recovery from brain injury
Bradley Deitrich - Health and life challenges
Colleen Kerber - battling cancer
Cathy Atchison - kidney failure
Janet Rush - spinal tumor

John Haines - Back pain, having tests
Sherry - Robin Davis' sister - Leukemia
Robin Davis - skin cancer surgery
Jeff Stroehecker - heart failure challenges

2021 Spring Confirmation Class

Initially, the decision had been made to postpone the spring confirmation class until fall because of our continuing battle with Covid-19. However, since there will undoubtedly be a number of changes in our fall scheduling, a decision was made to move ahead with Spring Confirmation.

Classes will be held on Sunday afternoons, beginning March 14th, from 4:00 - 5:45 pm. A light supper will be served so that your youth will be ready for Youth Group activities at 6:00pm. Please call Pastor Alan or Jane in the church office to sign up.

The Reception of Confirmands into the church will be celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd.

Holy Week and Easter Services

Palm Sunday - 10am in the Sanctuary, and 9:45 am on Zoom

Maundy Thursday - Gather with us for an in-person service in the Sanctuary beginning at 7pm, as we celebrate Holy Communion and remember together.

Good Friday - No services

Easter Morning - One great service of Celebration, beginning at 10am in the Sanctuary, and 9:45 on Zoom

Women of Faith Candy Sale

The Women of Faith Group is selling Chocolate Covered Peanut Butter Crackers for \$1.25 each and 1lb. Bags of Chocolate Covered Pretzels for \$6.00 each. Please see the form on the Welcome Desk to order or call Tina Fetter at 717-395-0498. Candy will be ready Friday, March 26th .

Easter Egg Project

We are looking for volunteers to help make our delicious Easter Eggs. We work Monday and Tuesday during the day and evening and also Wednesday morning. You are welcome to stay for the day or just for a while. All help appreciated!

Easter Flowers

Because of the difficult circumstances encountered by so many people this past year, we are offering you the opportunity to remember and/or honor family members and friends this Easter season by placing flowers in the sanctuary for our Easter Celebration Service. We will be ordering Lilies (\$10); Tulips (\$8); and Hyacinths (\$8) in a wide variety of colors to be placed in our Sanctuary. Please place your order in person, via email, or leave a message on the church office phone, along with the name(s) to be honored or remembered no later than Sunday, March 21st. Contact information is found on the front page of the newsletter. Or you can contact Jane at 717-395-6567.

GRACE UMC's Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt

will be held on Saturday, April 3, beginning at 9:00am, with each consecutive group beginning after the previous group is finished. Groups will be as follows:

9:00am 1-2 year olds
3-4 year olds
5-7 year olds
8-10 year olds

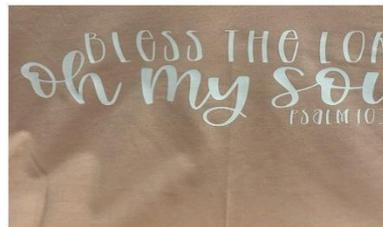
We need lots of candy to make this a success, so please place your candy donations in the boxes in the overflow area! For questions, please see Lisa VanOlden or Alicia Spicher.

Help Needed

There is a need for people (male or female) to help with grass mowing at the church. The work consists of mowing 1/3 of the church grass on a rotating schedule of once every three weeks. Please consider being part of this team of dedicated volunteers! All that's needed is a willing heart - mower and training will be provided. Please contact Larry Bellis, Trustee Chair, at 717- 692-3540.

Youth Mission Trip T-shirt Sale & Fundraiser

There are Easter-themed T-shirts (\$15) plus some other designs (\$10) for sale on the display racks in the overflow area. This is a cash and carry sale. There is a money drop box on the table for your convenience. There will also be youth at the table on Sunday mornings should you need any assistance or have questions.



PIC·COLLAGE

Youth Mission trip

The 2021 youth mission trip has been booked, and finalized!!!

I am so excited to be back on this journey again, I cannot express my excitement and I hope your youth can join us! This year we will join forces with Youth Works - a Youth Mission organization which is very similar to Group Missions, whom we have partnered with in the past.

Here is a link to check out a short video: https://youtu.be/P_MmiaiHEn0

Because of the challenges presented by Covid-19, there will be limited spots available, so please let me know as soon as possible if your youth is interested. The cost per youth will be \$50. Should this pose a financial burden, also please let me know. As in years past, the remaining cost of the trip will be paid for by pre- and post-trip fundraising and donations.

Please know that while there will be other groups joining us from other churches - which I know is very important to our youth - Youth Works has taken great precautions to ensure our safety, and the safety of our youth - including following safe protocols and practices.

While there will be more details to come soon, please feel free to reach out with any questions and/or concerns!

The Jr. / Sr. High Youth group will meet each Sunday evening from 6 - 7:30 pm at the church for fellowship, activities, a weekly lesson, and recreation, **except for the dates listed below:**

April 4, 2021 Happy Easter - He is Risen! **No youth group.**

April 18, 2021 **Youth Outing to be determined**

May 23, 2021 **Youth Outing to be determined**

June 6, 2021- June 11, 2021 **Youth Mission Trip to Niagara Falls, NY**

Your very excited Youth Leader,
Alicia Spicher :)

Hearts of Grace Food Ministry -

Both Hearts of Grace and JFY would like to take a moment to say **thank you** to Becky Witmer. Becky has been with our program from the very beginning, but is retiring to Florida with her husband, Roy. She has been our hands-on coordinator for both programs, keeping track of families in need of food boxes; placing Food Bank orders; working with our school contacts; seeking new sources of funding; putting out pleas of help for dry good donations; and caring for the monthly updates in our newsletter and church bulletins. We will miss Becky and Roy during their hiatus in the winter months, but look forward to seeing them when they are back in Pennsylvania for the summer months. God Bless and safe travels!

We also would also like to thank the Millersburg Boy Scouts for a successful food drive! The scouts collected over 3000 food items - splitting them between the Hearts of Grace food ministry, and the St. Paul's Lutheran church food pantry.

Items Needed: After packing our food boxes for February, we are in need of the following items: Brownie mixes, Cake mixes, Cookie mixes, Spaghetti Sauce, Spaghetti

Noodles, Pancake Syrup, Canned Fruit, and Cereal. Items can be placed in the shopping carts both inside and outside the main doors of the church.

We are also seeking 38 Easter hams for March 25th. Please contact a committee member if you are able to donate one or more. Average weight can be 8 to 10 pounds. Committee contacts are **John Ramberger, Janine Boyer, Debb Bowman, Terry and Carol Uhler , Karen Travitz, Diane Nestler, and Beth Spicher.**

The next distribution will be March 25th from 5:00 - 5:30pm. We continue to do curbside distribution for at least 38 families.

JFY Food Backpacks

By now, I am sure most of you know about our JFY program at Grace Church. **Just For You** packs are provided to low income students in our school district so they have something to eat over the weekend.

Becky Witmer has guided this program for several years, but has moved to Florida about one month ago, and I have taken over the program. I want to begin by thanking Becky for her dedication to the program. Her heart for these kids was evident in her desire to do God's bidding in helping those in need. She will be missed. While the leadership will change, nothing else will. The lunches will continue to contain the same items as before.

We provide the students with two breakfasts, two lunches, two drinks, a sweet, a salty, a fruit, peanut butter and jelly. These items are all small, personal-sized and targeted to being liked by kids. Since we are not given student names, we don't get much feedback on the lunches. But every now and then there is a parent who knows someone from the church who is part of this and thanks us for doing what we do. These weekend lunches **are** appreciated.

Typically, the lunches are packed on the first Monday of the month with the exception of the summer. Dates for the rest of the year are as follows: March 1, April 5, May 3, September 7 (this is a Tuesday because the 6th is Labor Day), October 4, November 1, and December 6. We pack either in the Family Life Center or the area off the entrance on the North side of the church. We begin at 3:00 to set up the tables and get the food items ready. The actual packing usually begins around 4:00 - depending on how much help we have with setup.

There are any number of different ways that you can be a part of this ministry.

1. Because food prices continue to increase, monetary donations are always appreciated. Just write JFY on the line on your envelope.
2. Help pack lunches. We pack once a month, except for the summer, and if you are able to make any part of that time, we would love to see you at the church.
3. Pray for our program and the kids it reaches. We may never know how these lunches impact the life of child.

Thank you to each one of you for your help and continued support of this program over all these years.

God Bless, Debb Bowman

March / April Birthdays



March 1 - Carl Eiswerth Todd Peiffer
March 2 - Nancy Snyder Aiden Harman
March 3 - Erik Bolig Lucas Dewees Clair Fulkrod Hunter Green
March 4 - Ashley Lubold Carol Uhler
March 5 - Kim Sitlinger
March 6 - Jordan Hubler Laine Goodling Emma Reed
March 7 - Nichole Underkoffler
March 8 - Karen Lentz Dave Martin
March 9 - Emily Myers
March 10 - Adrian Fulkroad John Witmer
March 12 - Peyton Goodling
March 13 - Tracy Wertz
March 14 - Becky Witmer
March 15 - Rowan Tobias
March 17 - Jacob Haddock Judy Stoneroad
March 18 - Blake Rothermel
March 19 - Grant Smith Brenna Bordner Jerry Marks
March 20 - Bailey Leshko John Mantzouranis Abigail Vallier
March 21 - Ron Barcavage
March 22 - Karleen Bell
March 23 - Amber Brosius
March 24 - Brenda Kessler Christine Shiffer Bob Snyder Tom White
March 25 - Rachel Feidt Hannah Hill Francis Reinoehl
March 26 - Bill Lentz Megan Okafor
March 27 - Janine Boyer Kirby Brosius Joshua Feidt
March 28 - Olivia Garay Brenda Fultz
March 30 - Sarah Novinger

April 1 - June Carvell Amelia Orr Caroline Orr Karen Raker
April 4 - Debbie Himmelreich Don Lebo
April 5 - Kori Bell Rachel Portzline
April 6 - Cayden Warfield Tina Fetter
April 7 - Austin Davis John Haines III Jordan Mallon
April 8 - Doug Weiss
April 11 - Ryan Davis Andrew Bolig Colby Schaffner
April 12 - Jake Mallon
April 14 - Hannah Hubler Haley Hubler James Carvell
April 15 - Taylor Fite
April 16 - Devyn Kintzer Mary Lebo
April 18 - Bennett Bingaman Linda Danner John Green
April 19 - Ron Brooks
April 20 - Dave Troutman
April 23 - Tava Warfield
April 25 - Diane Nestler Sierra Troutman
April 26 - Lee Phillips
April 28 - John Schoffstall
April 29 - Albert VanOlden Caleb Gordon Jennifer Leshko
April 30 - Keaton Leshko Kelsie Davis



Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

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February 26, 2021

*“Comfort, comfort my people”, says your God...
“... but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.” (Isaiah 40:1, 31)*

My beloved Sisters and Brothers,

Grace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, Healer of our Brokenness, and Hope of the World!

We have lived in the midst of the COVID pandemic for at least a year. With tears in our eyes and with a heavy heart we have learned that over 500,000 people in the United States have died because of COVID. Two and a half million lives have been lost from COVID worldwide. The number of deaths is staggering and so difficult to comprehend.

While we cannot grasp the enormity of that number, it is far more than just a statistic. Each one counted in those numbers represents a mother, a father, a grandparent, a child, a husband, a wife, a sibling, a beloved child of God. To each of us, they are the faces of our loved ones—our family, our neighbors, our friends, and members of our churches. They are the people who mentored, nurtured, cared for, and loved us. They are the ones whom we cherish in our hearts and minds and memories. They are greatly missed.

We are living in a time that none of us has ever experienced. At times it feels as though all is dark and hopeless. Like the Psalmist we cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?” (Psalm 22:1). We hear “great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children” (Matthew 2:18) echoing in our ears. We hear our friends and family mourn those who have lost their lives and we weep for those we know in our own churches who have been lost.

We cannot explain why COVID has happened. We have no words or phrases that will suddenly make our grief go away. What we can do is give witness to a God who cares for us far more than we can ever know or comprehend, even for such a time as this. In the midst of our deepest valley, we know we are not alone. The God who knows the depth of our pain is with us. The God we worship and serve is a tender, caring, and nurturing God who wipes our tears away, comforts us in our sorrows, and surrounds us with loving arms.

Psalm 22 talks about how forsaken we sometimes feel, especially in the face of death. The very next Psalm, however, Psalm 23, is one of solace and assurance. Our God is like a shepherd who safely and securely cares for us. This God, even in the midst of COVID, leads us to the calm waters where our souls can be comforted, rested, and refreshed. Eugene Peterson says in *The Message*, “Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I’m not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd’s crook makes me feel secure.” He finishes that familiar Psalm with the words, “I’m back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.”

What I know, what I have experienced, and what I believe with all my being is that even in the darkest times our God is with us. Those dark times may linger, but the dawn will surely break through. Just as a rainbow appears after the storm, the light of hope and healing will ultimately pierce the darkness and shine bright.

In these weeks of Lent, we walk with Christ in the final weeks and days of his life. When Lent is over, we will welcome in the new dawn of Easter. Joyfully we will join Christians all over the world as we proclaim: “Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!” This Easter, even with tears and sadness our hearts will sing our alleluia:

*Lives again our glorious King, Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Once he died our souls to save, Where’s thy victory, boasting grave?
Soar we now where Christ has led, Following our exalted Head,
Made like him, like him we rise, Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.
 (“Christ the Lord is Risen Today,”
by Charles Wesley; United Methodist Hymnal, 302)*

May God continue in these times to keep you and your loved ones safe, strong, and hope-filled. May you know more fully the love of our God who loves us more than we ever deserve or can imagine. May you be comforted and assured that God’s love will never ever let us go.

In God’s Comfort and Care,
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park