



**Grace United Church of Christ**  
**128 E. Baltimore Street**  
**P.O. Box 448**  
**Greencastle, PA 17225**

**Church Newsletter**  
**May/June 2020**

## From the Desk of Pastor Mark.....

I write this article in the midst of a Holy Week unlike any other I've experienced. As the church, we are meeting only online. In the nursing home, there are no outside visitors and I can visit with the residents only if I (and they) wear masks...and we stay 6 feet apart from each other. I tune into the news a few times a day and each time I see the number of deaths caused by the Corona Virus going up dramatically. We have to ask, "What does our faith have to say at a time like this?"

I wanted to share something that has been helping me: to share my/our sufferings with Christ. Here's one way we can do that...by the great author named Joyce Rupp in her book *Praying Our Goodbyes*.

"When we are feeling overwhelmed by suffering, it is helpful to go and sit by the cross of Jesus, to hear his cry, to see his pain, to know that he understands and **sees ours**. Reflect on one dimension of the passion that most relates to your own particular suffering."

\*Sit with him [Jesus] in love at the table where he experiences the sadness of farewell (Luke 22:14-20)

\*Kneel with him in the garden of agony where he struggles with surrender (Luke 22:39-46)

\*Hear the jeers and insults flung at him (Luke 22:63-65)

\*Stand with his mother, bent in sorrow (John 19:25-27)

\*Cry out with him in surrender to the Father (Luke 23:44-46)

\*Bathe his wounds and gently lay him in the tomb (John 19:38-42)

\*Keep company with those who mourn his passing (Matthew 27:61)

I believe connecting our sufferings with Christ's.....makes them holy and helps us to draw upon Christ's strength. Perhaps this will be helpful to you.

To close, Joyce Rupp shares a prayer that I commend to you (based on 2 Cor. 4:5-12):

*God of Hope, I unite with your son, Jesus, and I renew my belief in your loving power and strength. I believe that even though I am in difficulties on all sides...that I shall never be hopelessly cornered.*

*Even though I see no answer to my problems, I need not despair.*

*I may feel as though I am persecuted, but I will never be deserted by you.*

*I may be knocked down, but never destroyed.*

*Always, wherever I may be, I can draw strength and courage from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*

*I will have my own time of transformation.*

*I open myself to your light shining in my darkness and I rejoice in the overwhelming fidelity of your love in my life. Amen."*

***Blessings from Pastor Mark***



Greetings Grace!

I hope that you are well! This time of staying at home and social distancing has been difficult in many ways . . . yet blessings in so many other ways. Life has slowed down in our home. It has been a time of missing family and friend get togethers, jumping in the car to run errands without thinking twice, and missing our church family and activities. BUT, we have learned to appreciate! We appreciate each phone call, Zoom gathering, and Facebook Live service. We appreciate the calm to do the little things when we just couldn't find the time to do before. The yard looks pretty good and has been mowed before it looks long. The birds are back in record numbers. Early vegetables are planted and starting to come up. Gracie, our boxer, has loved the walks and chasing her ball more than ever. Spring cleaning is taking place between reading, trying new recipes, woodworking, and online work. We appreciate the focus on our relationship with God through Bible study, prayer, and to seek God in all that is going on in our world. I can see so much to be thankful for!

We are now under an extended "Stay at Home" order through May 8<sup>th</sup>. This doesn't mean we will return to all activities immediately. We will need to continue to look for ways to reach out and connect with one another and those we love. Please, pick up the phone, send a card, text, or email, and check in with others. Reach out by calling any Consistory member, Pastor Mark, or the office if you have or know someone with a need. We will continue to keep you informed as to how Grace and its members are doing.

I pray for you each day! Stay safe and healthy!

Marg Stouffer

Consistory President



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

## **GRACE'S FREE CLOSET**

Grace's Free Closet is open weekly: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 am till 12:30 pm. They are also open the first Saturday of each month from 11 am till 1 pm, which is the same time we hold our First Saturday Community Lunch. Please note the Closet is temporarily closed till further notice due to the Covid-19 outbreak, but they hope to open again soon. Please check their Facebook page 'Grace's Closet Greencastle' for updates or call the church office. Thank you.

### **Called to Care Training**

Has been postponed till a later date. We will keep you updated as soon as we receive any further details. Please contact Pastor Mark, Sydnae Vanner, or Jeff Stouffer if you have any questions.

### **First Saturday Community Lunch**

Our community lunch for May 2 has been cancelled. Please check our Facebook page or call the church office for updates when we will start up again.

## **Scholarships:**

The deadline for the scholarships offered from Grace United Church of Christ has been extended till May 8, then we will review and announce the recipients in the future. Educational Sunday is scheduled for June 14. Please call the church office if you need to have an application mailed out.

The following scholarships are available:

**Kathryn Didier** - available to any member of Grace UCC

**Julia M. Bodes** - available to any GAHS senior planning to enter into the business field

**Ralph S. Geiman** - available to anyone entering the ministry

Any questions, please see Lorna Thomas.

## **Educational Sunday**

We will be honoring our graduates and scholarship recipients during Worship Service on June 14. Loose offerings on this date will go towards our Educational Fund. Following service there will be social time with coffee & refreshments to meet the scholarship recipients and their families.

## **Newsletter Distributions**

Due to our social distancing guidelines, we have found new ways to delivery information to our members. One of the new ways to provide you with church information is through our congregational group email. Going forward, you will continue to receive the newsletters via email. For those who don't have email or printer access, copies will be available on the table in the front vestibule and by the elevator area. If you prefer us to continue mailing your copy, please call the church office and we will gladly keep you on the mailing list. This helps us save time and money. Thank you all for understanding this new change.

## **VOLUNTEERS:**

We need volunteers for Greeters and Ushers, Communion Servers and Readers for May and June. Please help us out and sign up! Call the church office to sign-up or please see the sign-up sheet on the table when we return to worship service together.

## **Congregational Group Email**

**As an effort to communicate with the congregation during Covid-19 regarding postponements and cancellations we have created a congregational group email list which is being used to send out bulletins, announcements and any needed information to our members. If you are not on this group email, please contact the church office so we can be sure to add your information. We will continue to use our newly formed congregational group email for other distributions, such as newsletters. If you don't use email, that's okay, we still will get in touch with you by phone or snail mail.**

## **Facebook**

If you have access to Facebook, please 'like' our page, Grace United Church of Christ, as it will help keep you updated on events and changes. You will also find our online Sunday worship services being held Live at 10am on Sundays while our stay-at-home order is in effect. You can view past worship videos if you missed them. This is a great way to stay connected with everyone!

## **GUCC Pray Tree**



We have an automated prayer chain where we send out prayer needs for members, family and friends to help us pray for loved ones during troubled times. If you would like to be added to our prayer chain to help pray for others, please call the church office. Anyone is also welcome to submit any needed prayer requests to the church office. Thank you.

## **Condolences**

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Showalter Family,  
as Janice passed away on February 21, 2020.

Prayers are with the family of Lois Henneberger,  
as she passed away on March 18, 2020.



## **Presidential Primary Elections**

Primary elections have been postponed till Tuesday, June 2 due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. GUCC is one of the facilities that Franklin County uses for voting purposes. The elections will be held in our social hall, from 7am to 8pm, for those who use this location.

## **Church Weeding**

We need your help in weeding the front flower beds of the church. Please call the church office to sign-up for a week or two or see the sign-up sheet on the table in the front vestibule when we return to worship service together. We need volunteers now through the second week in September. The weeds are starting to grow quickly with all the rain we have been receiving.



## **Women in Christ Banquet**

The scheduled banquet for May 11th has been postponed till further notice. Grace Snyder Circle will discuss if they want to hold the banquet at a later time. Please see Nancy Myers for further questions.

# **Strengthen the Church Offering**

Please join us in this common mission, vision, and purpose by donating to the  
**Strengthen the Church Offering**  
on May 31, 2020!

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of all settings of the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised will support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. This Offering embodies the wisdom, **"together we grow stronger."**

Offering envelopes and flyers with additional information will be available in May on the tables in the front vestibule and by the elevator area.

## **Relay for Life**

Greencastle Relay for Life Event scheduled for May 15 & 16 has been postponed due to the current guidance and safety reasons concerning Covid-19. At this time they do not have a rescheduled date.

Please contact Marg Stouffer or anyone on our team, the Grace-ful Walkers, to keep you updated.







**Luncheon and Strawberry Social** to kick off the summer months.  
Date TBA.

**July 10 – Sidewalk Sales Days** – More information to come.



# Information Update and Directory

The deadline for collecting information to update our directory has been extended. We are in need of your help to update your information! There is a place on the form to check if you are willing to have us share this information in the Directory with the other members/regular attendees at Grace Church. Please return your contact information to the church office or you can put it in the offering plate when we return to service. Call the church office if you need an extra copy, or you will find them on the tables in the front vestibule and elevator area when we return to service. When this is completed, you will receive a copy of the directory. **Please include information for each member of your household.**

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (es): \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Anniversary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **Yes, I would like to have the above information included in the church Directory.**