

GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
128 East Baltimore Street
Greencastle, PA 17225
(717) 597-2983



Pastor: Rev. Mark Ruzicka
Choir Director: Patty Stepler
Organist: Susan Alsip-Lawson
Ministers: All Those Present

November 27, 2022
1st Sunday of Advent / Hope
Stay Alert

Revelation 22:1-7 | Isaiah 2:1-5 | Romans 13:11-14 | Matthew 24:36-44

WE WELCOME GOD'S PRESENCE

WELCOME

VIDEO

The Wonder of Hope
by The Skit Guys

Leader: Welcome to Grace Church where we are God's people.

**All: United through Jesus Christ on a journey to grow, to share our faith and
serve others in the Greencastle area and the world.**

PRELUDE MUSIC

Joy to the World
-G.F. Handel/Smith

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Giver of hope!"
All: We come today with eager expectation.
Our feet are standing within God's gates.

Leader: Come, let us go up to the mountain
that the Giver may teach us the way of peace.
All: We come today with holy expectation.
Our hearts are lifted with grateful praise.

Leader: We gather at the edge of the throne of justice.
All: Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

*PRAISE SONG

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night #097



INVOCATION

All: God of the faith that the bleak past taught us,
God of the hope that the present has brought us,
We call on you in this hour of worship.
We know that You need no invocation for You are already and always with us—
Emmanuel, even before the child was born.

Yet, we open our hearts to receive Your gifts,
For You are the Giver of hope, the Giver of peace,
The Giver of joy, the Giver of love.
Make Your presence known as we make ourselves available to You.
Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND TRANSFORMATION

All:
In a world full of hopelessness,
We have sometimes forgotten that You are our hope, dear God.

Consumed by the chaos of the world,
We lean into helplessness instead of Your loving embrace.

**We cling to the stony roads and the bitter rods
Felt in days when unborn hope had died;**

**We've forgotten that You promised us hope for a future.
So, stimulate our memory, dear God.
Remind us of that hope You assured us of.**

Be with us as we cling to it in the midnight hours of waiting.

(Silence is Kept)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND GRACE

Leader:

Let us know that God gives us unmerited hope for a future, peace like a river, joy everlasting, and eternal love.
No misstep can separate us from the gifts of God. In Christ, we are forgiven.

ALL: Amen

ADVENT READING AND CANDLE LIGHTING

Revelation 22:1-7

And he said to me:

*'These words are trustworthy and true,
for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets
has sent his angel to show his servant
what must soon take place.
Listen! I am coming very soon!'*

Advent began in a dramatic way one year when seven potholers emerged unscathed after ten days underground, in France's largest rescue of its kind. Trapped by flooding, forty meters down, they managed to stretch their three-day supplies and survive the freezing conditions. People searching the cave system had been drilling through rocks and lowering microphones without detecting any signs of life.

Two groups of people, each listening for the other in the darkness, hoping the other was there. Neither had known for certain, but they had kept going as if life depended on it. Which it did.

*'Listen! I am coming!
Saved by the listening. And by looking.
And by not giving up.*

Real humanity is sometimes buried very deep.
In our society. And within ourselves.
Sometimes we can only hope it is there:
we cannot know for certain.
But it can be found and reached, touched and healed.
And, little by little, brought back to the surface.
It is possible, if there is listening.

Listen from deep within.
And listen on behalf of others.
Whole communities can find their humanity
if a few keep on listening.
It is not always necessary to listen for words and instructions.
To listen simply for signs of life
is enough to make the connection.

But those who come to our rescue will need to listen as well.
For even God listens --
very close to us, down in the darkest places, patiently seeking us out.
Listening is our salvation. Listening, and not giving up.
We are saved by a listening God.

(We now light the candle of Hope)

A prayer

*I have been stumbling around in dark alleys for too long, God.
I am not expecting you to show me an easy way out;
but I am crying out for you to come and find me,
to let me know you are with me
in the darkness. Amen.*

***PRAISE SONG**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus #083



WE RECEIVE GOD'S GIFTS

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 2:1-5 Please open to Old Testament, page 773

Romans 13:11-14 Please open to New Testament, pages 197-198

CHOIR ANTHEM

An Advent Alleluia -Wagner



WE ASK GOD TO OPEN THE BIBLE TO US

WE READ GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

Matthew 24:36-44 Please open to New Testament, pages 33-34

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Leader: This is the Word of God for the People of God!

All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

SHARING OF PRAYERS, CONCERNS, JOYS & CELEBRATIONS

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND REFLECTION

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER (Please Read Together)

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever.
Amen.**

WE GIVE BACK TO GOD

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Leader:

As recipients of the generosity of God, let us share our generosity with each other and the community.

(Please sign the attendance pads found in the pews,
and pass the top sheet to be collected during offering.)

OFFERTORY MUSIC

O Little Town of Bethlehem

-Redner/Broughton

***WE SING A SONG OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD** (Please Sing Together)

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, above ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

All:

For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community, we dedicate these gifts.

For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission, we dedicate these gifts.

May these gifts strengthen our resolve to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly. Amen.

WE GO OUT CARRYING GOD'S LOVE

***BENEDICTION**

Leader:

Go forth with the gift of hope
guiding you toward the path of peace.

Go forth with the gift of joy
guiding you toward the path of love.

Go forth with anticipation,
trusting that God will bless and keep you,
that God's face will shine upon you,
And that God's grace will never leave you.
Amen.

***PRAISE SONG**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #088



POSTLUDE MUSIC

The First Noel

-English Carol/Harmon



Rev. Mia M. McClain is the Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington D.C. She is an ordained UCC minister. Adapted by the Rev. Mark Ruzicka.

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Contributions Received on 11/20:

Regular Offering: \$877 / Loose Change: \$10

Building Fund Donation: \$20 / Roof Fund Donation: \$100

Worship Attendance 11/20:

In-House: 34 / Facebook Viewers: 5



The Reverend Ralph S. Geiman, Pastor, 1967-1995



GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/GraceChurchGreencastle/

Church Announcements for Week of November 27, 2022

Greeters/Ushers: Lorna Thomas & Nancy Myers **Reader:** Nancy Myers

Advent Reader: Marg Stouffer

Advent Candle Lighter: Carolyn Shoemaker

We thank everyone who helped decorate the church for Advent and the celebration of Christmas last week! It looks beautiful! Thank you.

Volunteers needed for next Sunday, December 4th. We need a volunteer to light the Advent Candles, and one more volunteer to help serve the communion elements. Please see the sign-up sheets located on the table in the front vestibule to be part of this wonderful season!

We thank everyone who ordered Christmas poinsettias. The poinsettias will be displayed in the sanctuary for dedication or honor of your loved ones during our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24. You will be able to pick-up your poinsettias after our Christmas Eve service or call the church office to make other arrangements.

Chancel Choir – Weekly rehearsals are held on Wednesday evenings, starting at 7:15pm, in the Sanctuary. Anyone is welcome to join us. Please contact Patty Stepler for further information.

Attendance Pads are located at the end of each pew. We ask everyone who attends worship to please sign and pass the top sheet to be collected during offering.

New Church Email – We have transitioned over to a new email address. Please be sure our new email address is added to your contacts and send all correspondences to our new address of: gucc128@outlook.com

There are a few **Upper Room** daily devotional brochures still available for Nov/Dec. Pick up your free copy from the front table in the vestibule or by the elevator area.

Grace United Church of Christ Facebook: Please like our Facebook page to keep updated on our church activities and connect with others in the community. You can join us weekly, at 10am on Sundays to watch the live streaming of our worship service. Please comment or say hello on our live stream so we know you are watching with us.

GUCC Website: Please look us up on the web to see the history of our church, Moller organ and German Reformed Cemetery! You can download our weekly worship programs, bi-monthly newsletters, or donate from our website.

Grace's Free Closet has new Fall/Winter hours starting in November. They will be opened on Monday and Wednesday, from 9:30am till 12:30pm. They are accepting gently used fall and winter clothing and holiday décor items for our seasonal room located downstairs. Contact Nancy Myers if you have any further questions or if you can volunteer your time to help us sort, clean and tag items. We thank everyone for their continued support of the Closet.

Live Streaming of our services are available to watch from our Facebook page. If you can't make it to worship or you're on vacation, please try to join us on Facebook. Comment 'hello' so we know you are watching with us! If you are unable to view our live streaming, please contact Elaine at the office and we will provide you with a copy of the bulletin.

Greeters/Ushers, Readers, Communion Servers are still needed for a few open dates in December. Please note, for our Christmas Eve service, we need four (4) greeters/ushers. Please see the sign-up sheets on the table in the front vestibule. If you want more information about becoming a volunteer, please contact the church office. We thank all our volunteers who help us out on a weekly basis! We appreciate YOU!

There are a few extra copies of **Grace Notes** still available on the table in the vestibule and elevator area. You can also download our newsletters anytime from our website.

First Saturday Free Meal will be held on December 3, from 11am to 1pm. Please see Chet if you can help volunteer during this event.

Our **Angel Tree** is set up near the middle of the hallway. The angels represent children in our local community that could use a little extra holiday cheer. We thank everyone who is shopping for angel gifts. Please wrap your gifts or use decorative bags and be sure to attach your angel to the gift, then return your gifts under the tree. Nancy Myers will announce when the gifts need to be returned, as the families will be picking them up before Christmas.

Activities & Fundraising Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, December 6, at 7pm, in the social hall. Please come out and join us!

Consistory and Committee Reports for the month of November will be due next week, December 5, so please start putting your notes together to submit to the church office.

Refreshments & Fellowship will be held on Sunday, December 11, following worship service in the social hall. Please join us!

December Birthday Wishes go out to Tina Thomas, Carolyn Shoemaker, Ron Shafter and Tim Bryan! Happy Birthday! Their addresses and phone numbers can be found in our church directory if you would like to send out birthday cards and happy wishes to them.

Worship Volunteers for Sunday, December 4, 10am:

Greeters/Ushers: Sydnae Vanner & Jim Thomas **Reader:** Patty Stepler

Communion Servers: Lorna Thomas & TBA

Advent Reader: Nancy Myers

Advent Candle Lighter: TBA

