

**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

**December 10, 2023 Order of Worship**  
**Second Sunday of Advent, Heidelberg Catechism: Lord's Day 50, Q&A 125**  
**Scriptures: Deuteronomy 8, Luke 4:1-12**

**WE WELCOME GOD'S PRESENCE**

**WELCOME**

**VIDEO**

"Advent Intro" by Freebridge Media

**MISSION STATEMENT**

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**

In the Bleak Midwinter -Holst/Larson

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: All things bright and beautiful,  
**All: God created for our enjoyment.**

Leader: All things wrenching and difficult,  
**All: God holds with tender care.**

Leader: You and I, neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies,  
**All: God loves without condition.**  
**So let us worship God.**

**\*PRAISE SONG**  
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates #93



**CALL TO CONFESSION (based on Q&A 37)**

Leader: During his whole life on earth, but especially at the end, Christ sustained (in his body and soul)  
the anguish of God towards the sin of the whole human race.  
In response to Jesus' loving sacrifice, let us confess our sins to God.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**All: Most Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved You with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name.**

*(silence)*

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON (based on Q&A 21)**

Leader: The righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ.  
By faith, I have a deep-rooted assurance...that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ,  
I have been made forever right with God, and have been granted salvation.  
This promise is to me...and to all who believe.  
**All: Thanks be to God!**

**Week 2 - Advent Candle Reading and Lighting**

Reader: O God, we light the second candle of Advent.

(We now light the candle of Peace)

Reader: We seek your comfort. Both mighty and tender, you come.  
Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you.

We have sought such a God, both mighty and tender. We recall...  
(member now shares a time they sought the might and tenderness of God.)

Reader: Isaiah announced God's coming to a people exiled in a broken and parched wilderness. He declared that God's redemption would make a highway in the desert and change the rough places into plain. God would come as a shepherd—feeding, leading, and cradling the weary flock. This Advent, we seek such a God.

**All: Saving God, look upon your world and heal your land and your people. Prepare us to be changed.  
This Advent, teach us to be tender and just, as you are. Amen.**

### **PRAISE SONG**

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks #118



### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION OF SCRIPTURE**

#### **SCRIPTURES**

Deuteronomy 8      Please open to Old Testament, pages 206-207

Luke 4:1-12      Please open to New Testament, page 74

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

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

**All: Thanks be to God!**

### **CHOIR ANTHEM**

Celtic Advent Carol -Barrett



### **Lord's Day 50 of the Heidelberg Catechism: Q&A 125**

(Leader will read questions, **ALL** will read answers)

Question 125: What is the fourth petition?

**Answer 125: Give us today our daily bread. That is: Provide us with all our bodily needs so that we may acknowledge that you are the only fountain of all good, and that our care and labor, and also your gifts, cannot do us any good without your blessing.**

**Grant, therefore, that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures and place it only in you.**

### **SERMON**

### **SHARING OF PRAYERS, CONCERNS, JOYS & CELEBRATIONS**

## **MOMENT OF SILENCE AND REFLECTION**

### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER** (Please Pray 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 OFFERING** (based on Q&A 86)

Leader: We do good because Christ by his Spirit is renewing us to be like himself,  
so that in all our living,  
we may show that we are thankful to God for all God has done for us,  
and so that God may be praised through us.  
Let us receive this morning's offering.

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

### **OFFERTORY MUSIC**

Still, Still, Still  
-traditional German melody/Edwards

**\*WE SING A SONG OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD**

(NEW SONG for a new Season! Please sing together the refrain from “O Come All Ye Faithful”)

O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION FOR THE OFFERING**

**All: O Mighty One, You have done great things for us, and holy is Your name.  
Bless all we offer You—ourselves, our time, and our possessions—that through us  
Your grace and love may be made known to this world,  
For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.**

**WE GO OUT CARRYING GOD’S LOVE**

**\*BENEDICTION**

Leader:

Go forth into the world in peace.  
Be of good courage.  
Hold fast that which is good.  
Render to no one evil for evil.  
Strengthen the fainthearted.  
Support the weak.  
Help the afflicted.

Show love to everyone.  
Love and serve the Lord,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;  
and the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**All: Amen.**

**\*PRAISE SONG**

Angels We Have Heard on High #113



## POSTLUDE MUSIC

How Brightly Shines the Morning Star

-J.C. Bach/Edwards



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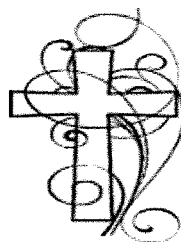
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**Contributions Received Week of 12/3:** Regular Offering: \$1255/ Loose Change Offering: \$10  
Communion Offering: \$93 / Building Fund Donation: \$65 / Organ Fund Donation: \$350

**Worship Attendance on 12/3:** In-House: 37 / Online: 4



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



## **GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

128 E. Baltimore Street - PO Box 448 - Greencastle, PA 17225

Pastor: Rev. Mark Ruzicka    Cell Phone: (717) 504-2923    Church Office: (717) 597-2983

Email: [gucc128@outlook.com](mailto:gucc128@outlook.com)    Website: [www.graceuccgreencastle.com](http://www.graceuccgreencastle.com)

Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/GraceChurchGreencastle/](http://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchGreencastle/)

### **Church Announcements for Week of December 10 2023**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Nancy Myers & Carolyn Shoemaker

**Reader:** Nancy Myers

**Advent Candle Lighters:** Noelle & Deb Homer

**Advent Readers:** Tony & Deb Homer

**Advent Reader** – One (1) more advent reader is needed for our 12/24 10am service. Please see the sign-up sheet on the table in the front vestibule.

**Greeters/Ushers** – We need one more volunteer to help us during our Christmas Eve Candlelight service, at 7pm, on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Please see the sign-up sheet on the table in the front vestibule.

**Newsletter Deadline** is this Thursday, December 14. Please gather your information for upcoming events that are scheduled for January and February and submit them to the church office. All members are welcome to submit anything that they would like to share with our church community.

**Upper Room** daily devotional brochures for November/December are available in the library room and elevator area. Please pick up your free copy after worship service.

**Christmas Poinsettias** – We thank everyone for their poinsettia orders. The poinsettias are dedicated to our loved ones, in their memory and honor, and will be displayed in the sanctuary for our 10am Cantata Service on December 24, and kept in place for our evening Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7pm.

**Grace Snyder Circle** will be holding their Christmas luncheon on Monday, December 11, at 1pm. Contact Nancy Myers for further information.

**Laundry Love** - Our next laundry love is scheduled for December 13, from 5pm to 8pm, at the Laundry Spot, located at 111 N. Carlisle Street in Greencastle. We need help handing out pre-made bags containing quarters and washer pods. If you can volunteer some time, please contact Carolyn Shoemaker.

**Consistory & Committee Reports** – If you haven't turned in your November reports to the church office, please do so as soon as possible. The consistory board meeting is scheduled to meet on December 17, at 8:30am, in the meeting room.

**The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund** - The United Church of Christ has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC for over 100 years. They provide emergency grants and supplementation of small annuities; health premiums and Christmas thank you gift checks each December to their lower income retirees. This year the Christmas fund theme is "Grace Upon Grace", words that unite us all in the UCC. *"From Christ's fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."* John 1:16. We will be receiving offerings for this fund during our December 17<sup>th</sup> worship service. Special envelopes can be found on the table in the vestibule and the elevator area.

**Commemorative Ornament** – Our church is being featured on this year's Chamber of Commerce Ornament. This will be a beautiful addition to your holiday memorabilia, commemorating our anniversary. Ornaments are available at the Greencastle-Antrim Chamber of Commerce, Lumber Direct and The Shop. They will also be available at the Holiday House during Heritage Christmas on the evenings of December 1 and 8. Cost is \$20 each.

**Angel Tree** - We are thankful that all the angels have been removed and everyone is shopping for a child in need. A guideline of between \$50 and \$75 was suggested for each angel gift. Gifts can be wrapped or placed in gift bags, just be sure to attach the angel to the outside of your package or gift bag. More information will be coming as when to have your gifts ready for the children. Contact Nancy Myers for any further questions.

**Cantata Service** will be held on Sunday, December 24, at 10am. Invite family and friends.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** will be held on December 24, at 7pm! Everyone is welcomed to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with us!

**Holiday Events** – **We thank everyone** who has been helping and volunteering in preparation for our holiday events. The church looks amazing! Everyone has done such a wonderful job decorating, organizing, cleaning, etc.. Thank you!

**The Holiday Concert** last evening was beautiful! **We thank** all the musicians and everyone who volunteered their time to put on such a lovely musical concert for everyone to enjoy!

**Chamber of Commerce House Tour**, is today, December 10th. Grace Church will be open for visitors between 1-5pm this afternoon. We encourage you to bring family and friends to enjoy the history and beauty of our church. Refreshments will be available in the social hall. If you have any questions, please see Marg.

**We thank** the volunteers for baking Christmas cookies for our holiday events! They all look so delicious!

**Grace Notes** – Our newsletters can be downloaded from our website at any time. There are a few extras available in the vestibule and elevator area.

**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. If it's found that your booklet is out of sheets, our greeters/ushers can refill your booklet, as extra pads are located on the back ledge in the vestibule.

**Chancel Choir** – Choir rehearsals are held weekly, on Wednesday evenings, 7:15pm, in the sanctuary. Contact Patty Stepler for further information.

**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.

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

**Grace's Free Closet** is open each week on Monday and Wednesday, from 9:30am till 12:30pm. Donations can be made during their open hours. Contact Nancy or Jean for any further questions.

**Live Streaming** of our services is available to watch from our Facebook page. If you can't make it to worship or you're out of town, please 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.

**Church office and Grace's Closet** will be closed for Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Thank-you Note** - Nancy Myers & family thanks everyone for their prayers, calls and concerns during her husband's illness and passing. Please see that note posted on the bulletin board by the church office.

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**Worship Volunteers for Sunday, December 17, 10am service:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Jim Thomas & Sydnae Vanner

**Reader:** Steven Miller

**Advent Candle Lighter:** Lu Miller

**Advent Readers:** Steven Miller & Patty Stepler





## "YOUR CHECK ARRIVED JUST IN TIME!"

*Each year, the Pension Boards receives many notes and letters of thanks from retired United Church of Christ pastors, their surviving spouses, and children, letting us know what a difference your gifts to the Christmas Fund have made in their lives. Here are just a few excerpts:*

"On behalf of my mother, I would like to thank you for the generous check from the Pension Boards. She has recently moved to assisted living at the age of 101! She was choir director at her church up until last year and was playing the organ for worship services once a month for the past 20 years. As a member of the UCC, I have often contributed to the Veterans of the Cross offering and it is wonderful to know my Mom is a beneficiary."

"What a joy to receive a check from the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance as a surprise Christmas gift! My wife (88) and I (95) thank you! It will help greatly in paying our bills at year's end."

"I want to thank you for the generous \$500 that was given to me by your Board. It really has been appreciated as I paid my house taxes for the winter. It would have been a very difficult burden without your check."

"Your check arrived just in time! It helped pay for a much-needed repair to my car, which I rely on since I live in a remote area and need transportation to medical appointments. I feel blessed to be remembered by you and the members of our UCC churches!"

### **In 2022, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:**

- Monthly pension supplementation for 218 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,042,726)
- Health benefits supplementation for 86 retired clergy and lay employees (\$181,389)
- Emergency grants for 55 individuals and families (\$138,022)
- Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 479 retired clergy and lay employees (\$278,500)

## **THE CHRISTMAS FUND**

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

Give online at [www.christmasfund.org](http://www.christmasfund.org).