

♪♪ GRACE NOTES ♪♪

**January/February 2021**

# *From the Pastor's Desk.....*

Pastor Mark's Newsletter Article for Jan/Feb 2021

As I am writing this article, it is about two weeks before Christmas. This whole year of 2020 has been unlike anything we have ever experienced. I bet you learned a lot about yourself this year...because you had to face your fears, be more isolated than ever, and learn how to observe holidays in new ways. It was/is a time to look for new ways of being...to sing new songs to God. As a church, we had to learn (on the fly) to stream our services and stay connected to one another. I'm proud of how we pulled together this past year. I think we will be changed people when we emerge from this COVID experience...hopefully more full of faith, hope, and love. To begin this New Year, I'd like to share a quote with you. It is written by Howard Thurman in his book *The Moods of Christmas* and it is called "I Will Sing a New Song."

“The old song of my spirit has wearied itself out.  
It has long ago been learned by heart;  
it repeats itself over and over,  
bringing no added joy to my days or lift to my spirit.  
I will sing a new song. **I must learn the new song for  
the new needs.**  
I must fashion new words **born of all the new growth**  
of my life—of my mind—of my spirit.  
I must prepare for new melodies that have never been  
mine before,  
that all that is within me may lift my voice unto God.  
Therefore, I shall rejoice with each new day,  
and delight my spirit in each fresh unfolding.  
I will sing, this day, a new song unto the Lord.”

May 2021 be better!

O God, give us enough joy to make up for the sadness  
from 2020, Pastor Mark



## **Live Streaming of Worship**

Grace United Church of Christ has suspended our in-person worship through the month of January. We will be having live streamed services. You will be able to access the service through our Facebook page, Grace United Church of Christ at: <https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchGreencastle/>

We will keep you updated when we return to in-house worship services.

## **Pastor's Christmas Gift**

We have gifted Pastor Mark a beautiful heirloom mirror specially made by Jeff Stouffer for Christmas. If anyone would like to make a donation towards this gift, please send it to Elaine in the church office or give your donation to any consistory member. Thank you and blessings in the New Year!



## **NEW MEMBERS:**

We welcome our newest church members into our congregation. Rashaw and DeBorah Alston have joined us on November 1, 2020. We are blessed to have them! Welcome to our GUCC family!

## **Activities & Fundraising Committee**

Our meeting for January has been postponed. We will announce when we will hold the next meeting.

## **GRACE'S FREE CLOSET**

Grace's Free Closet is temporarily closed. They will stay closed through the month of January and let us know when they plan on re-opening. Please 'like' their Facebook page 'Grace's Closet Greencastle' to keep updated on any changes or contact Nancy Myers.

## Chancel Choir

There will be no choir rehearsals till further notice. Patty will keep us updated when we are able to meet safely for practices.

## Worship & Spiritual Committee

We are meeting on January 10, at 9am, in the social hall. We will be practicing social distancing and wearing masks. Please contact Rev. Mark or Jeff/Marg Stouffer for further details. You are welcome to join us!

## Consistory Board Meeting

Our next monthly board meeting is scheduled for January 17, at 8:30am, in the social hall. Please submit committee reports for December to church office as soon as possible. We will be practicing social distancing and wearing masks.

## Cherry Pie Sale

Grace Snyder Circle has decided to postpone their annual cherry pie sale at this time.

## **First Saturday Community Lunch**

Our first Saturday Community Lunches  
are postponed till further notice

## **Laundry Love**

Postponed till further notice

## **Coffee & Refreshments**

Postponed till further notice

## **Single Ladies Luncheon**

Postponed till further notice

## **Newsletter Distributions**

You can view and download our newsletters any time from our website. If you need us to print out a copy, please contact the church office.

## **CHURCH SERVICE VOLUNTEERS:**

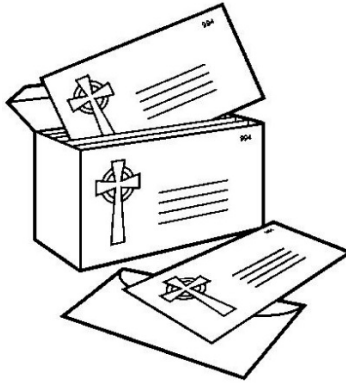
No greeters/ushers or readers will be needed for January as our services will be live streamed only. We will need greeters/ushers, readers and communion servers starting in February, as we hope to return to in-house worship at that time. Please call the church office if you can help us in February and we will add you to the schedule. Thank you.



### **Annual Congregational Meeting**

Our Annual meeting is scheduled for January 24. Please submit all your reports to the church office as soon as possible to allow us time to put together the agenda packet. Further details about this meeting will be announced as they become available.





## **2021 Boxed Offering Envelopes**

Please contact church office if you haven't picked up your new 2021 offering envelopes.

## **Reverse Advent Food Donations**

Thank you for helping Grace Snyder Circle with your generous food donations. All the items collected were donated to the food bank at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Greencastle. It was a great help to those in need. Thank you!



END OF YEAR  
**GIVING**  
STATEMENTS

**2020 Contribution Reports**

Year to date contribution statements will be available in January.

Please call the church office if you would like to receive a statement of your offerings for tax purposes. We will gladly mail it out to you, or you can pick it up if you prefer.

**Thank you note from GUCC members:**

We received a lovely thank you card from the family of Floyd Baker. They thank everyone for their prayers, cards, phone calls and visits during Floyd's illness and following his passing. Your compassion & sympathies were truly appreciated by the family.

-Faye, Jeff, Tom & family

Our condolences to the family & continued prayers go out to the Baker family.



## **Facebook**



If you have access to Facebook, please 'like' our page, Grace United Church of Christ, it will help keep you updated on events and changes. If you are out of town, or want to watch our worship service from the comfort of your home, please gather on our Facebook page at 10am on Sunday mornings for a live stream of our service. This is a great way to stay connected with everyone!

## **GUCC Website**

Our weekly worship programs along with our newsletters can be downloaded from our website at anytime!

You can also make donations through our website. Just click on any DONATE button, use drop down box to choose where you would like your donation to be used. You will need your credit card. Once you submit any contributions, you will receive an email receipt for your tax purposes. Any

questions with this new donate button, please contact Kate Kennedy or Elaine in the church office.

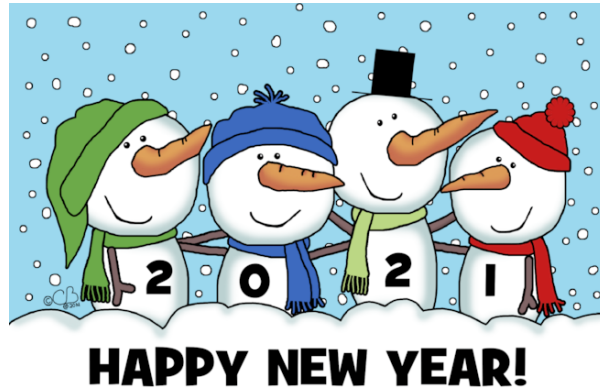
You can find us at: <https://www.graceuccgreencastle.com>



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Ham Sandwich & Soup Sale (date TBA)
- Scholarship Applications (information TBA)

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## Consistory Minutes of Meeting

October 18, 2020

**Roll Call:** Margaret Stouffer, Steve Miller, Jeff Stouffer, Mark Stahl, Sydnae Vanner, Lu Miller, Larry Stepler, Mark Ruzicka

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am by President Margaret Stouffer.

**Devotions:** Prayer by Pastor Mark Ruzicka.

**Agenda Additions and Subtractions:** Motion by S. Vanner/ M. Stahl to add Sale of Parsonage and Vision for the church for 2021 to the Information Agenda passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda:** Motion to accept the consent agenda by J. Stouffer/ S. Miller passed unanimously.

### **Information Agenda:**

1. Margaret reported she received an email from Nora Faust that the Committee on Ministry has recommended Censure with Plan of Growth for Pastor Brenda. It was suggested that we have someone

from the conference to meet with members of the congregation after church services one Sunday to answer any questions they may have regarding the decision once we have the final paperwork from the Fitness Report.

2. Finance Committee –

a. Jeff reported that he had been in contact with Atlantic Securities and the bill should be adjusted by approximately 30%.

b. He was also in contact with the engineer who looked at the parsonage. He asked for detailed bills and was told that they will work with us on the bill, which consistory felt was a little high. He is waiting for a response from Lebo.

c. Insurance Company – Larry and Elaine met with the agent. The whole building and content is insured for \$5.5 million. This includes the stained glass windows and the organ. Electronic equipment is added on separately. The garages and contents are insured for \$1500. This can possibly be removed from the policy for minimal savings. The deductible will increase to \$2500 in January. Larry will ask if the damage to the ceiling tiles outside the sanctuary is covered for repairs.

3. Steve reported a license for live streaming is cost prohibitive at this time and recommended keeping the streaming of the service as it currently is.

4. Christmas decorating luncheon is scheduled for Nov. 22 with spaghetti meal provided. This will be in-house with proper distancing.

5. Guild Project Advent Food Pantry involves collection of foods to be distributed to the local food pantries. More information to come.

6. Sale of the parsonage – It was suggested a committee be set up consisting of some consistory members plus representatives from the congregation. Chris Johnston, who owns the business next to the parsonage is very interested in making a cash buying arrangement, asking that the floors be finished and the building cleaned, but no need to paint or replace floors in kitchen and laundry room. The parking lot issue will need to be resolved. The Courthouse has the parking lot as part of the church deed, but the Tax Office has it as part of the parsonage. Margaret will be looking further into this issue and setting up a committee.
7. Vision for the church for 2021. Grace's Closet, First Saturday meals and church services to continue the same. Laundry Love will depend upon Covid numbers decreasing. We would like to have a Bible Study for Easter. We would like Pastor Mark to continue as our minister. He did ask what the consistory would like him to focus on, for example Bible Study, Membership, etc and how to move forward. It was decided to form a Worship and Spiritual Committee focusing on stewardship consisting of Pastor Mark, Margaret and Lu and possibly members of congregation. Pastor Mark's call agreement is nearing renewal. Pastor Mark, Larry and Margaret will meet. Consistory agreed that we want to keep Pastor Mark as our designated pastor. This will need to be put to a congregational vote. Pastor Mark will be taking PTO days on Nov. 29 and Dec. 27. Pastor Mark will ask Julie Brown to fill in as minister for Nov. 29. It was suggested we ask Patty Stepler about a Christmas hymn sing for Dec. 27.

### **Action Agenda:**

1. Building and grounds:
  - a. Update on parsonage. Floors are still being repaired.

- b. It was decided the ceiling at top of stairs outside of sanctuary should wait until the roof is repaired. Bonded Applicators was asked to give an estimate on repair along with obtaining a quote from John Lehman, Mt. Tabor Construction. We are waiting for a quote from Lehman for repair to the ceiling.
- c. Snow removal. Proposal from Mark's Lawn Care for snow removal at the church sidewalks, parking lot and for removal from the sidewalk at the cemetery on Carlisle Street was accepted on a M. Stouffer/ S. Vanner motion.

2. Other items:

- a. Consistory membership was discussed. There will be 4 people going off consistory beginning 2022. It was suggested we ask 2 people to join consistory for 2021 and 2 more for 2022. Each term would be for 4 years.
- b. Congregational meeting usually is the third Sunday of January. Consistory will consider moving that date.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35am with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be Sunday, November 15 at 8:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lu Miller

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**Consistory Minutes of Special Meeting**

**November 1, 2020**

**Roll Call:** Steve Miller, Lu Miller, Sydnae Vanner, Mark Stahl, Mark Ruzicka, Carolyn Shoemaker; Margaret Stouffer and Jeff Stouffer via teleconference.



The meeting was called to order at 9:20 am by President Margaret Stouffer.

For discussion of changes that need to be made due to the rising Covid-19 numbers. The conference has recommended if meeting indoors, masks be worn during the entire service, adequate air flow, social distancing and use of hand sanitizer. It was decided we would have the congregation vote on shutting the church and only live streaming the service, which would be from the pulpit or continue as we have been having for our services. In the absence of Margaret, Lu would present this to the congregation for vote during announcements prior to the service today. The choir had discussed the recommendations from the conference at practice and decided they would stop singing anthems, but would continue to practice the Cantata. It is hopeful that if the church does need to be closed the Cantata would be live streamed as the service. The greeters before services would need to be instructed to encourage hand sanitizer entering and leaving the building.

November 22 decorating the church for the Advent season and meal was discussed. It was decided we would not have a meal, but would still decorate the church immediately after services, wearing masks and social distancing.

The apple dumpling sale was discussed. On a S. Vanner/M. Stahl motion it was decided to postpone the fundraiser. Motion carried.

First Saturday Meal was discussed. It was decided to move forward with the meal as preparations had already been purchased. A decision for the December meal will be decided based on Covid-19 numbers increasing or decreasing.

Poinsettia purchases were discussed. We will move forward with offering to the congregation the option to purchase poinsettias to be placed in

the sanctuary. If we are unable to have services, members who have purchased any poinsettias may pick them up at the church office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 am.

Lu presented to the congregation the options of closing the church and live streaming the services or continue as we have been with wearing masks during the entire service and social distancing for vote. The vote was in favor of continuing as we have been with live in person services.

Respectfully submitted,

Lu Miller

### **Consistory Minutes of Meeting**

**November 15, 2020**

**Roll Call:** Margaret Stouffer, Jeff Stouffer, Carolyn Shoemaker, Sydnae Vanner, Steve Miller, Lu Miller, Mark Ruzicka

The meeting was called to order by President Margaret Stouffer at 8:32 am.

**Devotions and Prayer** by Pastor Ruzicka

**Work of the Church:** Discussion was held regarding notifying the congregation if a member tests positive for Covid. Margaret will work on a script.

**Church Work:**

**Consent Agenda:** Motion to accept the consent agenda by J. Stouffer/ C. Shoemaker passed unanimously.

**Information Agenda:**

1. A letter was distributed to members for a Plan of Growth for Pastor Brenda from the conference.
2. Finance committee will be working on the budget for 2021. A letter was received in the church office offering accredited appraisal of assets. Jeff Stouffer will contact our insurance company to verify this letter/company is legit.
3. Christmas decorating of the church will be Nov. 22 after church. It was decided instead of offering a meal, a Grab and Go meal would be offered to the congregation, regardless if they were staying to help decorate or not.

### **Action Agenda:**

1. Updates on parsonage – the floors are finished and cleaning is taking place. Steve M will contact Layton Electric to find out how to separate the electric bill on the parsonage and two car garage.
2. Roof and ceiling outside sanctuary – Steve presented a quote from Bonded Applicators for repair of the entire roof and a separate one for repair of the area that leaked onto the ceiling. It was decided we needed to get a second quote and Steve will contact Dependable Roofing. It was also decided the repair to the roof needed to be completed before repairing the ceiling and that the roof repair should be done before winter weather sets in.
3. Jeff was in contact with John Lehman regarding the engineer's bill for the parsonage. It was reduced by \$1500. On the recommendation of John Lehman, Jeff paid the rest of the bill and will be reimbursed by the church.
4. Audio in the sanctuary – Steve purchased a better microphone and stand to enhance the audio portion of live streaming the services. This is to be tested today.

5. Music and Ministry Committee consisting of Margaret Stouffer, Jeff Stouffer, Steve Miller, Patty Stepler and Susan Alsip-Lawson will meet prior to practice on Wednesday with the purpose of discussing salaries for the 2021 budget.
6. Sale of parsonage – Letters went to the two interested parties and both responded to Kellie Stouffer with questions. A contract will need to be developed between Grace Church and Kelli Stouffer for her representation as realtor.
7. Spiritual and Worship Committee consisting of Margaret, Lu, Patty Stepler, Larry, Pastor Mark and possibly Susan Alsip-Lawson will meet Sunday, November 22 at 9:00 am
8. Margaret reminded consistory members to look at the budget when Larry presents it.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer at 9:30 am

Respectfully submitted,

Lu Miller

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**Consistory Minutes of Special Meeting**

**November 29, 2020**

**Roll Call:** Margaret Stouffer, Jeff Stouffer, Mark Stahl, Carolyn Shoemaker, Sydnae Vanner, Lu Miller; Steve Miller via teleconference

The meeting was called to order by President Margaret Stouffer at 9:00 am.

1. An addendum to the Procedure Manual to include Treasurer as below was discussed and passed on a M. Stouffer/C. Shoemaker motion. Addendum:

#### Article 8 Property

#4 The President of the Consistory shall be the acting chief executive officer of the corporation and along with the Secretary of the Consistory and Treasurer of the consistory shall sign all legal documents as authorized by the Consistory or the congregation.

2. Reparations for Parsonage repairs:
  - a. It was discussed that and approved that Larry Stepler, Jeff Stouffer and Steve Miller would be the contact persons with Brenda Clark for reparations for the repairs to the parsonage.
  - b. Larry Stepler will contact the Conference for guidance and advice from their legal counsel (if there is one) regarding the time frame for payments (2 years was agreed upon) and any late payment charges.
3. Suggestions for 2 additional persons to join Consistory was discussed. Terms are for 4 years. This will bring the total consistory members to 9 for the year 2021. There will be 4 members going off Consistory in 2022. At that time, we will add 2 more members bringing the total consistory members to 7 for the year 2022.

The next Consistory meeting will be December 13, 2020, one week early due to the choir Cantata on December 20.

Respectfully submitted,

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GUCC's financial statement for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (October to December) will be available in the next newsletter

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Please note: due to increases in covid cases in this area, we have suspended and/or postponed some of our regular activities and services, please check with consistory members or call church office for any updates or concerns. Thank you.)



- 1 Have a Blessed New Year!**
- 3** 10am Worship with Communion, live streamed from Sanctuary  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: Jer 31:7-14, Eph 1:3-14, Jn 1:(1-9),10-18
- 4** Consistory reports for December due to church office
- 6** Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 10** 9am Worship & Spiritual Committee will be meeting in the social hall  
10am Worship Service, live streamed from Sanctuary  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: Gen 1:1-5, Acts 19:1-7, Mk 1:4-11  
9am Worship & Spiritual Committee (will announce if we postpone meeting)
- 11** Consistory agenda packets will be sent to board members via email this week
- 13** Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary

- 17** Consistory Board Meeting, 8:30am, social hall  
(will announce if meeting is postponed)  
10am Worship Service, live streamed from Sanctuary  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: 1 Sam 3:1-10 (11-20), 1 Cor 6:12-20,  
and Jn 1:43-51
- 20** Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 24** Annual Congregational Meeting, details to be  
announced  
10am Worship Service, live streamed from Sanctuary  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: Jon 3:1-5 & 10, 1 Cor 7:29-31,  
and Mk 1:14-20
- 27** Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 31** 10am Worship Service, live streamed from Sanctuary  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: Deut 18:15-20, 1 Cor 8:1-13, Mk 1:21-28



- 1** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm  
Activities/Fundraising Committee, 7pm, social hall



- 3** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm  
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 7** 10am Worship with Communion, in the Sanctuary  
Communion Servers: TBA  
Greeters/Ushers: TBA  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: Isa 40:21-31, 1 Cor 9:16-23, Mk 1:29-39
- 8** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm  
Grace Snyder Circle Meeting, 1pm, social hall  
Consistory reports for January due to church office
- 10** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm  
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 11** Deadline to submit articles for March/April newsletter
- 14 Happy Valentine's Day!**  
10am Worship Service, in the Sanctuary  
Greeters/Ushers: TBA  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: 2 Kings 2:1-12, 2 Cor 4:3-6, Mk 9:2-9
- 15** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm  
Consistory agenda packets will be sent to board members via email this week
- 17** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm  
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary

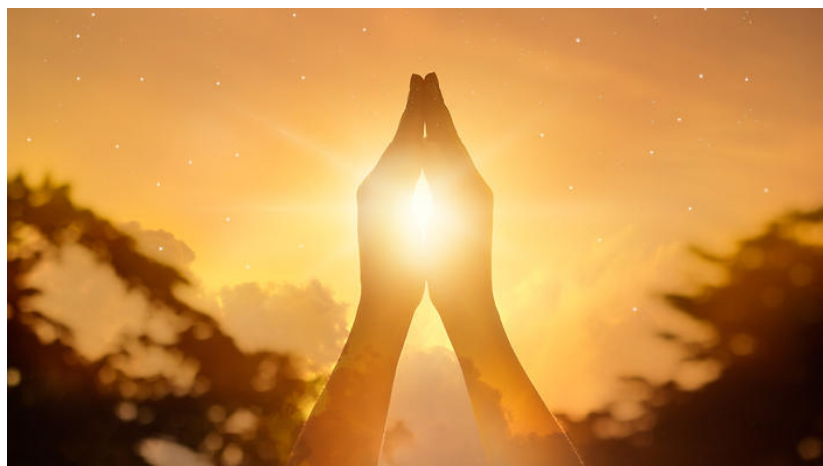
**21** Consistory Board Meeting, 8:30am, location TBA  
10am Worship Service, in the Sanctuary  
Greeters/Ushers: TBA  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: Gen 9:8-17, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mk 1:9-15

**22** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm

**24** Grace's Free Closet open 9:30am-12:30pm  
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary



**28** 10am Worship Service, in the Sanctuary  
Greeters/Ushers: TBA  
Reader: TBA  
Scriptures: Gen 17:1-7 & 15-16, Rom 4:13-25,  
and Mk 8:31-38



**Have a Happy  
& Blessed 2021!**

