



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

Order of Worship for December 15, 2024
The Third Sunday of Advent

Scriptures: Zephaniah 3:14-20, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18

WE WELCOME GOD'S PRESENCE

WELCOME

Video: "The Promise of Advent: Joy" by The Skit Guys

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

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
-German carol/Smith

Call to Worship (Based on Joel 2:1)
Leader: Blow the trumpet in Zion;
All: sound the alarm on my holy hill.

Leader: Let all who live in the land tremble,
All: for the day of the Lord is coming.

Leader: It is close at hand.
All: Come, let us worship God.

***PRAISE SONG** O Come, All Ye Faithful #133



Unison Prayer of Confession

Gracious and loving God, open our hearts so that we can admit to You the fullness of our lives – that which is beautiful and good, and that which is hurtful and hateful.

**We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do.
We love with condition.
We judge others quite quickly and harshly.**

**We are ready to cast the first stone at others, knowing we have done something similar ourselves.
We disregard the big logs in our own eyes, while pointing out the little specks in others' eyes.**

**Most of all, we confess that we don't turn to You as the Healer of our every ill.
Have mercy on us and forgive us, we pray.**

(a time of silent prayer)

Words of Assurance

Leader: Do not fear, O church, do not let your hands grow weak.
The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will renew you in his love;
He will exult over you with loud singing.
In Christ, we are forgiven.
All: Thanks be to God!

Advent Reading & Candlelighting
Week 3- Candle of Joy

***PRAISE SONG**
Angels, from the Realms of Glory #143



WE READ GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION OF SCRIPTURE

SCRIPTURES

Zephaniah 3:14-20 Please open to Old Testament, pages 1073-1074
Philippians 4:4-7 Please open to New Testament, page 242

CHOIR ANTHEM One Small Child -Carter



Luke 3:7-18 Please open to New Testament, page 73

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 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 the Offering

Leader: What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.
Yet what I can, I give him, give him my heart.
Let us give our offerings to the Lord.

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

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Go, Tell It on the Mountain -traditional spiritual/Thygerson

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

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

**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 favor
may be made known to all the world,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.**

WE GO OUT CARRYING GOD'S LOVE

BENEDICTION

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord always;
All: again I will say, Rejoice.

Leader: Let your gentleness be known to everyone.
All: The Lord is near.

Leader: Do not be anxious about anything,
**All: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests
be made known to God.**

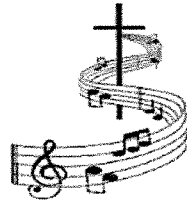
Leader: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
All: will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Leader: In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.

***PRAISE SONG** In the Bleak Midwinter #144



POSTLUDE MUSIC (Please remain seated to listen to the postlude)
On Christmas Night -English carol/Forrest and Wagner



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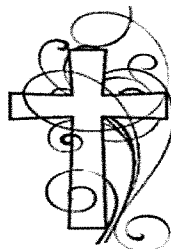
. “Prayer of Confession” written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, ‘Hold Fast to What Is Good’. Used with permission. Adapted by Rev. Mark Ruzicka

Offering prayers from *The Worship Sourcebook*, Faith Alive Resources.

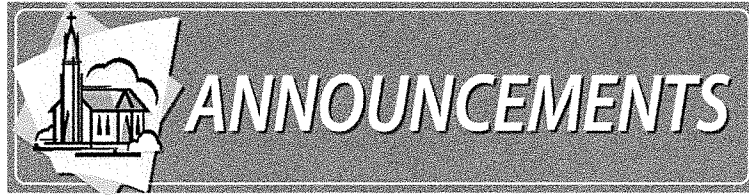
Contributions Received on 12/8:

Regular Offering: \$1077 / Loose Change Offering: \$37
Organ Fund: \$250 / UCC Christmas Fund Offering: \$20
Additional Donations Received at Office: Regular Offering: \$75

Worship Attendance on 12/8: In-House: 39 / Online: 5



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



Grace United Church of Christ

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Week of December 15th, 2024

Greeters/Ushers: Tony & Deb Homer **Reader:** Tony Homer
Advent Candlelighter: Noelle Homer **Advent Readers:** Tony & Deb Homer

Angel Tree - We thank everyone for donating gifts to the children in our community. The families picked up their child's Christmas gifts this past weekend. We thank you for helping to make a child's Christmas brighter!

Christmas Cantata Service is on Sunday, December 22nd, at 9:30am. Our choir has been practicing for this special performance! Church of the Apostles has been invited to join us! Loose change received during this service will be donated to the choir.

The **Christmas Poinsettias** that everyone ordered for their loved ones will be placed in the sanctuary for our Cantata service on December 22nd and remain on display until our Christmas Eve Candlelight service on December 24th. They may be taken home after our Christmas Eve service. If you need to make other arrangements, please call the church office.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is on **December 24th, at 6pm**. Please note the time change from our prior years. Everyone is invited to join us!

Church Bulletin Board – Please check the bulletin board weekly for updated information about upcoming events, fundraisers, community news and more!

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.

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 – Weekly rehearsals are held on Wednesday evenings, at 7:15pm, in the sanctuary. Anyone new interested in joining the choir, please contact Patty.

Grace Church Website: The history of our church, Moller organ and updated book from Jack Webb about the German Reformed Cemetery and be found on our website! Plus, you can download our weekly worship programs, newsletters, or donate online.

Grace's Free Closet is open on Monday & Wednesday's, from 9:30am till 12:30pm. Donations are accepted during their open hours. They will be closed during the week of Christmas. Contact Nancy Myers if you have any further questions.

Live Streaming of Worship Services - Sunday Worship begins at 9:30am. Join us on YouTube or Facebook at 9:30am to watch us live.

Upper Room Daily Devotional Guides for January/February are now available on the front welcome table and in the elevator area.

Mercersburg Academy will be hosting their annual Christmas Candlelight Service this evening, **Sunday, December 15th at 4 and 7:30pm** in the Irvine Memorial Chapel. This service is open to all, as seating is limited, it's suggested to arrive early. If you would like to donate a poinsettia to adorn the chapel at these services, you can place an order online at <https://events.veracorss.com/mercersburg/34-poinsettia> by December 2nd. If you are unable to attend in person, the 7:30pm service will be live-streamed at <https://boxcast.tv/view/Christmas-candlelight-service-cdguuhywbkjb1hldekax>

We thank everyone who wrote a Christmas message of cheer and gratefulness to our Veterans. The holiday cards were distributed to local veterans. We thank Lorna and Marg for leading this project.

Sunday Service Volunteers are needed for January and February. The sign-up sheet has been placed on the front welcome table.

The **2025 offering envelopes** are now available. Please stop by the elevator area to pick them up after worship or stop by the office during the week.

For over one hundred years, **The Christmas Fund** has provided direct monetary assistance to help secure the physical, financial, and spiritual health of our ministers, church workers, and their families. This year's Christmas Fund theme is "The Glory of God shone around them..." from Luke 2:9. We will be receiving this offering during the month of December. Special offering envelopes can be found on the front welcome table and elevator area. (Be sure to mark your name on the envelope if you would like it credited to your yearly statements.) Visit www.christmasfund.org to learn more or donate online.

Church office and Pastor's office will be closed on December 25 & 26 for the Christmas holidays.

Lunch Bunch will **not** be meeting in December. Enjoy your holidays and see you all next month!



Worship Volunteers for Sunday, December 22nd, 2024:

Greeters/Ushers: Barry & Jack Shoemaker **Reader:** Steve Miller
Advent Candlelighter: Cathy Keefer **Advent Readers:** Steve & Lu Miller

