

# Wesley Grove Messenger

December 2022

## From the Pastor's Desk...

My Dearly Beloved in Christ,

With deep joy and gratitude, I extend to you my prayerful best wishes for a holy and blessed Christmas. I invite you to pause for a moment and reflect upon these words from the Holy Scriptures...

*'Comfort, comfort, ye my people'. (Isaiah 40:1)*

*'But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.' (Luke 2:19)*

It is soon to be Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and I hope that you will take time to celebrate with all the festivities, food, fun, and family. I also hope that you take time to reflect and, yes, ponder just as Mary did on that holy night. I hope you allow yourselves to truly enjoy this Holy Season and find time to relax and reflect on the 'comfort' God in Jesus offers us.

Perhaps you feel overwhelmed with all that Christmas demands – shopping, decorating, baking, traveling, entertaining. But stop for a moment and think of Mary who may have felt overwhelmed herself — traveling to Bethlehem on the verge of giving birth; finding no place to rest her head; having to rely on Joseph to be her midwife, and cows and sheep to be her attendants. Yet, in her weariness and discomfort, she still found the energy to 'ponder' all that had occurred. Who am I to say I don't have the time or energy to just pause and take in the wonder of this most magnificent gift – the birth of the Messiah, of Jesus for me and for you? Is there anything more powerful for us to 'ponder'? Is there anything more that can bring us such 'comfort'? I think not, and I believe not!

Christmas is so much more than just a holiday; it is a Holy Day. It is a time when our God shows up in the middle of all the mess to bring us a message of hope and offers us a better way of life through unsolicited and unlimited gifts of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. Even in the midst of all the distractions and business and worries, there needs to be time for us to just absorb the peace and love and hope of this Christmas gift from God. The South Damascus Charge will be offering three opportunities on Christmas Eve to pause and celebrate God's greatest gift: Salem UMC at 4:30 pm, Mt. Tabor UMC at 6:30 pm, and Wesley Grove UMC at 9:00 pm. We will also join together in worship on Christmas morning at 11:00 am. We hope that you will join us for at least one of these services!

After Christmas, life will revert back to its usual pace, so let us allow ourselves to be reborn with this gift of the Messiah. Let us, like Ebenezer Scrooge, find the true meaning of Christmas, the spirit of joy and sharing with each other as we love and care for each other today and in each day that follows. God has brought great comfort to His people. To us! So let us comfort each other. We are a Christmas people, and Jesus is incarnated in every act of love and kindness we extend to one another.

God has given us Jesus the Messiah, so let us ponder the meaning of this gift throughout this season and every day of the new year. Let us rejoice and bring true joy to the world in song, in deeds, in our words, and in our faith. This is the gift that will truly change our lives and those of others. This is the gift that will not be forgotten or put away. This is the gift of Jesus, Our Messiah. So, as the angels sang to the shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest Heaven, and on Earth, peace among those whom He favors!"

*Wishing you a most blessed and joyful Christmas,  
Pastor Karen*





## Lectionary Readings

### December 4, 2022 Second Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19  
Romans 15:4-13  
Matthew 3:1-12

### December 11, 2022 Third Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10  
Luke 1:46b-55  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

### December 18, 2022 Fourth Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
Romans 1:1-7  
Matthew 1:18-25

### December 24, 2022 Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7  
Psalm 96  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-20

### December 25, 2022 Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98  
Hebrews 1:1-12  
John 1:1-14

## December Birthdays



|               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 3 Cathy Burke | 19 Ciarra Crawford |
| Matt Lind     | 20 Ollie Gray      |
| 6 Dave Wilson | 28 Sheryl Birkhead |
| 12 Josh Park  | 29 Roberta Grimes  |
| 14 Chris Lee  | 30 Peter Hughes    |
| 16 Nicko Hull | 31 Lorie Falk      |

## October 2022 Financial Report

*Rick Monarch, Treasurer*

### Expenses

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| BWC Mission Share                               | \$1,281.91         |
| Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)           | \$1,503.25         |
| Associate Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary) | \$389.86           |
| Church Secretary's Wages                        | \$934.75           |
| Substitute Musician                             | \$0.00             |
| Choir Director's Salary                         | \$0.00             |
| Worker's Compensation Insurance                 | \$0.00             |
| Payroll Taxes                                   | \$71.50            |
| Capital Improvement Costs                       | \$10,513.00        |
| Grass Cutting Costs                             | \$0.00             |
| Snow Plowing Costs                              | \$0.00             |
| Groundskeeper Costs                             | \$0.00             |
| Custodian's Salary                              | \$350.00           |
| Programs  | \$172.32           |
| Property Insurance                              | \$0.00             |
| Administrative Expenses                         | \$306.08           |
| Charge Treasury - Parsonage Expenses            | \$375.83           |
| Charge Treasury - Professional Expenses         | \$113.92           |
| Charge Treasury - Medical Insurance Cost        | \$286.67           |
| Charge Treasury - Retirement Contribution       | \$319.44           |
| Charge Treasury - Administrative Costs          | \$12.50            |
| Trustees - Maintenance Costs                    | \$1,787.85         |
| In and Out Expenses                             | \$0.00             |
| Miscellaneous Church                            | \$0.00             |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                           | <b>\$18,418.88</b> |

### Income

|                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Weekly Collections              | \$3,030.00        |
| Cell Tower Rental Fee - Sprint  | \$2,167.34        |
| Use of Hall                     | \$200.00          |
| Miscellaneous                   | \$0.00            |
| In and Out Income               | \$0.00            |
| Rental Property Monthly Payment | \$0.00            |
| <b>Total Income</b>             | <b>\$5,397.34</b> |

  
**MERRY**  
*Christmas*



## Fellowship News

*Becky Lewis, Chair*

It's here! The Christmas Season is upon us! And what better way to kick off the celebration than with our Annual Community Tree Lighting, starting the month and the season on Thursday, December 1. Come join our church family and the community in singing carols, listening to inspirational readings, and welcoming the joyous season. We'll gather outside the Fellowship Hall at 7 pm, and following the program, please stay for refreshments and a chance to visit with our neighbors.

The Christian Fellowship Committee will also sponsor a second community outreach event in December when our Christmas Caroling Caravan rolls through the side streets surrounding our campus on Sunday, December 18. We'll gather outside the hall between 4 and 4:30 pm to decorate our cars and tune our voices, with plans to start our singing tour at around 4:45 pm at the end of Garfield Drive. The caravan will conclude its journey at the home of Rick and Tammy Monarch, 9620 Watkins Road, for dinner and fellowship. Please sign up in the vestibule, so we know how many singers and diners will attend.

Speaking of dinners... as we so often do!... please sign up for our New Year's Pork and Sauerkraut Dinner following the worship service on New Year's Day. The committee will provide paper goods, beverages, roasted pork, and sauerkraut, a traditional New Year's "good luck" meal in some parts of our vast and varied country. Perhaps you grew up with a different tradition — such as black-eyed peas or collard greens? Then please sign up in the greeting room to bring that dish, or a side dish that goes with pork and sauerkraut, or anything else you'd like to bring to our post-service potluck.

## Christmas Eve Worship Services

The South Damascus Charge will offer three worship services this year on Friday, December 24. You and your family are welcome to attend any or all of these services...

Salem UMC @ 4:30 pm

Mt. Tabor UMC @ 6:30 pm

Wesley Grove UMC @ 9:00 pm



Wesley Grove will also hold its regular 11 am worship service on Christmas Day — Sunday, December 25.



## Education News

*Tammy Monarch, Chair*

Please know that you are welcome to join us any Sunday morning at 9:30 in the fellowship hall. Our multi-age, one room, Sunday School class is open to anyone wanting to learn more about Our Almighty Lord and to continue on his or her Christian journey.

This month, we are reading and discussing *All the Good* by four Methodist authors. This book focuses on practicing Christmas the Wesleyan way through means of grace, works of piety, works of mercy, and prayer.

Our Sunday School class will not meet on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. We will resume our lessons on Sunday, January 8, 2023 when we compare Christianity to Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. Yes, that's quite an undertaking for just 75 minutes on a cold Sunday morning in January, but we'll do our best to get it done!

## Missions News

*Judy Hughes, Chair*

The Missions Committee has received the names, ages, and gift wishes of the three families that we are sponsoring through Faith Connections this Christmas Season. Gift tags are available for pickup in the vestibule. You may also donate toward the grocery store gift cards for these families by placing your donation (either cash or a check made payable to WGUMC) in the small bucket that is on the table in the vestibule.

All monetary donations and gifts (wrapped and with their gift tags on them) need to be brought to the church by Sunday, December 18, so that they can be delivered later that week before Christmas Day.

Thank you in advance for helping with this very meaningful community service project during this busy Holiday Season!

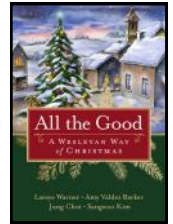


## Christmas Luncheon

We hope that many of you are planning to join us for our Wesley Grove Church Family Christmas Luncheon! This annual event will be held on Thursday, December 15 at noon at Morgan’s American Grill on Route 144 in New Market. The cost is \$25 per person, which includes a choice of sandwich or salad, a side, beverage, and dessert. Please sign up in the vestibule or email the church office, and be sure to give your cash or check made payable to WGUMC to Tammy by Sunday, December 11.

## Advent Book Study

Our Advent Season book study of *All the Good* by four different United Methodist authors from Duke’s School of Divinity and Emory’s School of Theology began earlier this week. We are meeting in two formats this season — in-person on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am and on Wednesday nights at 7 pm on Zoom. You may join us at either time (or both!) as we discuss the four chapters of this book.



And it’s not too late to join us! Even if you do not have a copy of the book and/or did not participate in week one, you can still join us for the remaining three sessions. Please contact Tammy if this is something you would like to do, and she will get you up to date with the rest of the group.



**A Great, Big, Huge**

**Thank You**

**goes out to all of Santa’s Elves  
who visited the church  
on Saturday, November 26  
to decorate it for  
the Arrival of the Christ Child  
later this month!**







### Poinsettias

If you would like to place a poinsettia in the Sanctuary in honor or memory of a loved one, please complete an order form found in the vestibule, or contact Tammy and she will email you one. The cost is \$10 per plant. All orders and payments (either cash or a check made payable to WGUMC) must be at the church by Sunday, December 11. These beautiful, red flowering plants will decorate the church on Sundays, December 18 and 25.



### Christmas Greetings for Our Pastors

Christmas cards, handwritten notes, baked goodies, and other small gifts for our two pastors may be brought to the vestibule any time this month. Please place your gifts in the two baskets marked Pastor Karen and Pastor Nick. These baskets of Christmas Cheer will be presented to the two of them during our worship service on Christmas Eve.



### Holiday Crafts & Gifts

Many beautiful items made to sell at our annual craft bazaar are still for sale in the Fellowship Hall. These items include hand-sewn Christmas table linens, hand-carved wooden reindeer and snowmen, cookie and soup mixes in decorative jars, gift baskets of all sizes, holiday centerpieces, all types of ornaments, and gorgeous wreaths for your front doors. If you would like to see and maybe purchase any of these craft items, please contact Tammy at 301-253-0044 by December 24.

### Season's Greetings from Berlin

*(Maryland, that is, not Germany!)*

Happy Holidays to each and every one of you, my Wesley Grove Church family and my Woodfield friends and relations!

My new home in Gull Creek Assisted Living is in a lovely part of Berlin; thus, I can relate to my dad's feelings of attraction for this area way back in 1932 when he was teaching agriculture to the lads from the flat, flat land around here. Some of you know that I was born over here in Salisbury Hospital, and we lived in the small town of Snow Hill until we moved back to Woodfield in the mid-1930s.

The area around here is quite attractive, and Gull Creek is a very pleasant and comfortable place to reside. The people here are friendly, and the food is good, plentiful, and very well-prepared!

Several of my recently acquired friends are from Baltimore City, so the talk and visiting with them is genuine "Baltimorean!"

If you are ever over here on the Eastern Shore and in the Salisbury/Berlin area, please feel free to stop by and visit. I'd love to "see and talk at ya!"

My new address is...  
Gull Creek Assisted Living  
1 Meadow Street  
Berlin, MD 21811  
And new phone number is...  
410-641-0172

Best Regards, Merry Christmas, and  
My Love to All!



*Mary Ann*

## Administrative Council Meeting

Monday, November 14, 2022

**In Attendance:** Louise Burdette, Bob Burke, Cathy Burke, Pastor Karen Davis, Judy Hughes, Jim Kemp, Becky Lewis, Rick Monarch, Tammy Monarch, Carol Stone, and Pastor Nick Works.

**Opening:** Meeting opened by Bob at 7 pm.

**Devotions:** Judy Hughes shared a reading based on Matthew 10:8 with a thoughtful Thanksgiving theme and concluded with a prayer.

**Prayer Requests & Updates:** John Lindsay, Randy and Elaine Falk's brother-in-law, passed away today.

- John Briggs has recovered very well from Bell's Palsy.
- Pastor Nick said that Carla is home from Korea.
- Dean David McCallister-Wilson of Wesley Seminary has had a stroke.

**Minutes:** The minutes from both September 2022 and October 2022 meetings were approved as presented in fall newsletters.

**Good News:** The Holly Days Craft Bazaar and Luncheon was very successful this past Saturday. We had lots of happy crafters, a good number of shoppers, and lots of satisfied appetites. It was a wonderful way to begin the Holiday Season!

- Yesterday's choir acapella music went well.

**Old Business:** Boy Scout settlement has finally come to closure. Trustees will meet with Scout leaders before the end of the year to sign a new facilities agreement.

**New Business:** None.

### Committee Reports:

**Communications** — Four cards have been mailed to folks since the last meeting, and several more will be mailed within the next few days.

- Josh has made many upgrades to our church's sound system this fall.
- Photos on the church website will be updated very soon by Brian, who has joined this committee.
- 2022 revisions to the church's policies and procedures manual are done.
- Church magnets will be distributed in our local neighborhoods when Becky passes out flyers about our Christmas Caroling Caravan in December.

**Education** — Sunday School is reading and discussing *Christianity and World Religions* by Adam Hamilton.

- Our Advent book is titled *All the Good*. We'll offer two options — Sunday mornings at 9:30 am in-person or Wednesday evenings at 7 pm via Zoom.
- SS will not meet on Christmas and New Year's Days. We'll resume class on Sunday, January 8.

**Fellowship** — Community Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on December 1 at 7 pm.

- The date for our annual Christmas Caroling and

Dinner has not been finalized yet.

- There will be a fellowship luncheon of pork and sauerkraut after church on New Year's Day.

**Finance** — All committees submitted their budget requests for 2023, and all were approved by the Committee with very minor changes. The overall 2023 budget of \$148,000 was discussed and approved unanimously.

**Lay Leadership** — All positions for 2023 have been filled, except for the chairperson of SPRC. We will vote on this slate of officers at Church Conference this Saturday, November 19.

**Missions** — We will be responsible for providing presents and grocery store gift cards to three needy families in the community this Christmas.

**SPRC** — Charge SPR Committee met last week to begin our annual pastor evaluation process.

- We will vote on our two Clergy Compensation Packages during Church Conference this Saturday.
- The Music Director position remains vacant; only one person has shown interest, and he was not suited for our needs.
- We still need someone to volunteer to serve as our SPRC Chairperson for 2023.

**Trustees** — Many assorted work projects are ongoing at the rental house, church, parsonage, and fellowship hall. See Trustees' minutes for a full report and specific details.

**Worship** — We will host the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service on November 23 at 7 pm; seven other local churches will be involved.

- Our worship service will begin at 9 pm on Christmas Eve. Salem's will be at 4:30 pm; Mt. Tabor's at 6:30 pm.
- We will have worship on Christmas Day at our regular 11 am time.
- Both choir and bells will perform throughout the month of December.

### Pastors' Reports:

**Pastor Karen** — She shared extreme gratitude to God for her family and our church members. She has visited various sick and shut-in since our last meeting in September, and she has written her Annual Pastor's Report for Church Conference.

**Pastor Nick** — He also shared his gratitude for this Charge and the wonderful ways that he and his family have felt welcomed by all of us. He helps to lead Sunday School and loves doing so! He is organizing our Thanksgiving Eve service and will be presenting that night's sermon.

**Next Meeting:** Scheduled for Monday, January 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm. Devotions will be led by Pastor Nick.

**Closing:** Bob adjourned the meeting at 8:28 pm.

# December 2022



| Sun  | Mon   | Tue   | Wed  | Thu   | Fri | Sat   |
|--|---|---|--|---|-----|---|
|  |   |   |  | 1<br>7:00 PM—<br>Outdoor Communi-<br>ty Christmas Tree<br>Lighting Ceremony               | 2   | 3   |
| 4 <i>Advent Week 2</i><br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service<br>with Communion  | 5   | 6<br>4:00 PM—<br>Choir Practice<br>6:45 PM—<br>Lions Club Dinner<br>and Meeting | 7<br>7:00 PM—<br>Session #2 of Ad-<br>vent Book Study via<br>Zoom                                | 8   | 9   | 10  |
| 11 <i>Advent Week 3</i><br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service<br><i>Poinsettia &amp; Lunch-<br/>eon RSVP Deadline</i> | 12  | 13  | 14<br>3:30 PM—<br>Choir Practice<br>7:00 PM—<br>Session #3 of Ad-<br>vent Book Study via<br>Zoom | 15<br>12:00 PM—<br>Christmas Lunch-<br>eon at Morgan's<br>American Grill in<br>New Market | 16  | 17  |
| 18 <i>Advent Week 4</i><br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service<br>4:00 PM—<br>Caroling Caravan                         | 19<br><br><i>January<br/>Newsletter<br/>Deadline</i>  | 20<br>6:45 PM—<br>Lions Club Dinner<br>and Meeting                              | 21<br>3:30 PM—<br>Choir Practice<br>7:00 PM—<br>Session #4 of Ad-<br>vent Book Study via<br>Zoom | 22  | 23  | 24 <i>Christmas Eve</i><br>4:30 PM—Service<br>at Salem UMC<br>6:30 PM—Service<br>at Mt. Tabor UMC<br>9:00 PM—Service<br>at Wesley Grove |
| 25 <i>Christmas Day</i><br>No Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service  | 26<br><br> | 27  | 28   | 29  | 30  | 31<br><br><i>Happy<br/>New Year's<br/>Eve</i><br>     |

 **Wesley Grove  
United Methodist Church**  
Church Phone: 301-253-2894  
Email: [wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org](mailto:wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org)

As a congregation that covenants to walk together in Christ's love, believes that all persons are created equal before God, and affirms the inclusive love of Jesus Christ, we welcome to our work and worship all regardless of race, gender, age, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or economic circumstance.

**We're on the Web!**  
[wesleygroveumc.org](http://wesleygroveumc.org)



# Christmas Eve Worship Services

\*\*\* Join Us at One, Two, or All Three! \*\*\*

Salem UMC @ 4:30 pm

Mt. Tabor UMC @ 6 :30 pm

Wesley Grove UMC @ 9 pm

To unsubscribe, please call the Wesley Grove UMC Office (301-253-2894) or email [wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org](mailto:wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org)

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