

Wesley Grove **Messenger**

December 2023

From the Pastor's Desk...



My Dearly Beloved in Christ,

Welcome to Advent! Or, said another way: Happy New Year! Welcome to that most interesting of years in the Life of the Church: Year B of the Liturgical Calendar!

Chances are you already know that we are entering into Year B, but maybe you don't know. So, let me explain...

The Liturgical Calendar of the Church is a three-year cycle focused around the three Synoptic Gospels. These books are called *synoptic* because they share a similar structure and outlook — so similar that they are said to “see together,” which is literally what the Greek word *synoptic* means. The Scriptures in Year A focus on the Gospel of Matthew. Thus, if you noticed, we spent most of this last year reading and talking about Matthew. Now, we are entering into Year B and will focus on the Gospel of Mark. Year C is centered on the words of St. Luke. John's Gospel is not left out of this three-year cycle, but instead, is mixed in throughout. Readings from the Gospel of John occur mostly during the Advent, Lenten, and Eastertide Seasons.

Although the Gospels are the driving factor behind how this three-year cycle is structured, we also have readings from the Old Testament and the Epistles, which follow a particular pattern during this rotation. The Prophet Isaiah is generally read during the Advent Season, but there are also times in the Christmas and Epiphany Seasons when this book is read. The other prophets usually make an appearance during the Christmas and Epiphany Seasons. Most of the remaining Old Testament finds a home during the long stretch after Pentecost that is commonly referred to as Ordinary Time. The one exception is that there is a Psalm for every Sunday of the year. Easter is a special time in the Life of the Church in that there are usually no Old Testament readings read during this time other than the Psalms. The Book of Acts replaces the Old Testament lessons during Eastertide. The Epistles of the New Testament are rotated into the three-year cycle as the fourth reading every Sunday.

Since we are just beginning Advent, let us turn to the four words that rule our Advent experience — Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Hope is the theme for the First Sunday of Advent. On that day, the Church focuses on Hope and what hope might look like. Hope that Christ will return one day. Also, on this first Sunday of Advent, we pause to light the first purple candle, called the Prophecy Candle, and name our Hope as we await the Coming of the Messiah.

On the Second Sunday of Advent, we focus on Peace. We confess that we are waiting for Peace in a world that is anything but peaceful. We proclaim to the watching world that we who look for the Messiah are called to be a People of Peace. Thus, we light the purple Bethlehem Candle on the Second Sunday of Advent because we know that Peace comes only because of the Child of Bethlehem.

On the Third Sunday of Advent, we turn our attention to Joy. We confess the Joy we have as we await the Messiah. We may sing; we may shout; but whatever we do on the Third Sunday of Advent, we spend time rejoicing. Thus, this day is often called Gaudete Sunday. (*Gaudete* is the Latin word for rejoice.) On this day, we light the pink candle, the Shepherds' Candle, since the shepherds were said to have received the Good News of the Birth of the Messiah with such incredible Joy, which they then shared with all who heard their news.

Lectionary Readings

December 3, 2023

First Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
 Mark 13:24-37

December 10, 2023

Second Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
 Psalm 126
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Christmas Eve

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Isaiah 9:2-7
 Luke 1:47-55 Psalm 96
 Romans 16:25-27 Titus 2:11-14
 Luke 1:26-38 Luke 2:1-20

December 31, 2023

Sixth Day of Christmas

Watch Night

Isaiah 61:10—62:3
 Psalm 148
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:22-40

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 2023 Financial Report

Rick Monarch, Treasurer

Expenses

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| BWC Mission Share | \$1,184.16 |
| Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary) | \$1,563.42 |
| Associate Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary) | \$405.50 |
| Church Secretary's Wages | \$1,511.45 |
| Organist / Pianist | \$0.00 |
| Worker's Compensation Insurance | \$0.00 |
| BWC Annual Conference for Lay Delegate | \$0.00 |
| Payroll Taxes | \$115.63 |
| Capital Improvement Costs | \$1,500.00 |
| Grass Cutting Costs | \$0.00 |
| Snow Plowing Costs | \$0.00 |
| Groundskeeper Costs | \$0.00 |
| Custodian's Salary | \$350.00 |
| Programs | \$168.06 |
| Property Insurance | \$0.00 |
| Administrative Expenses | \$312.64 |
| Charge Treasury - Parsonage Expenses | \$390.85 |
| Charge Treasury - Professional Expenses | \$113.92 |
| Charge Treasury - Medical Insurance Cost | \$296.66 |
| Charge Treasury - Retirement Contribution | \$332.23 |
| Charge Treasury - Administrative Costs | \$12.50 |
| Trustees - Maintenance Costs | \$1,232.67 |
| Miscellaneous | \$0.00 |
| Total Expenses | \$9,489.69 |

Income

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Weekly Collections | \$4,955.00 |
| Cell Tower Rental Fee - Sprint | \$2,232.36 |
| Use of Hall | \$0.00 |
| Lion's Club Check | \$630.00 |
| Total Income | \$7,817.36 |





Fellowship News

Becky Lewis, Chair

Confess: You've been singing along with holiday music on the radio for a while now, right? You can put that practice to good use by joining your church family for our annual Caroling & Dinner on Sunday, December 17, when we'll meet at the hall at 4 pm, wearing our holiday best and sporting lights and decorations on our vehicles. The plan calls for caravanning to visit some of our church family who don't get out often and share some holiday cheer, and then finish up with a holiday dinner at the Monarchs, 9620 Watkins Road. You don't need to bring anything, but please sign up in the vestibule to give our hosts an idea of how many guests to expect.

We'll close out the Holiday Season and the year two weeks later on New Year's Eve, Sunday, December 31, with a "Watch Night" worship service to ring in the New Year (noon here is midnight somewhere) followed by a potluck luncheon in the Fellowship Hall. The Christian Fellowship Committee will provide drinks, paper goods, and a main dish of pork and sauerkraut, and you're asked to bring a traditional New Year's dish from your family or the area where you grew up. Think black-eyed peas, greens, or whatever dish means good fortune in the New Year to you. Please sign up in the vestibule for this event as well, and start thinking about what dish you'll bring!



Christmas Eve Worship Services

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

- Salem UMC @ 9:30 am
- Wesley Grove UMC @ 11 am
- Mt. Tabor UMC @ 6 pm
- Wesley Grove UMC @ 9 pm



Education News

Tammy Monarch, Chair

Please know that you are welcome to join us any Sunday morning in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 am. 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 *Heaven and Earth* by retired UM Bishop Will Willimon. This book focuses on our God, who is willing to show up amongst us and do something with us, here and now. God brings Heaven to Earth and changes everything. In Advent, we celebrate the Good News that God is coming to us. So, watch out and be ready because God is on the way!

Our Sunday School class will not meet on the mornings of Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve. The January newsletter will provide information on when we plan to resume our Sunday School class in the New Year.

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 grocery store gift cards for these families by placing your donation (either cash or a check made payable to WGUMC) in the small buckets that are 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 17, 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!



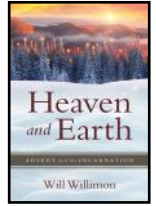
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Christmas Luncheon

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 this Friday, December 1 at 1 pm 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. If you have not signed up and you would still like to join in on the fun and merriment, please call Tammy immediately at 301-253-0044 to reserve your space.

Advent Book Study



Our Advent Season book study of *Heaven and Earth* by retired United Methodist Bishop and Duke Divinity School Professor, Rev. Will Willimon, starts this week. Our sessions will occur twice a week — in-person on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am at Wesley Grove and in-person again on Thursday nights at 6 pm on Mt. Tabor. 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. 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.

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The Fourth and Final Sunday of Advent focuses on Love. This day is often known as Mary’s Sunday because nothing compares to the Love of a new mother. On this Sunday every year, we learn of not just Mary’s gestational period spent with her cousin Elizabeth and on the road to Bethlehem, but also of the prophetic gestational period awaiting the Coming of the Messiah, and we light the last purple candle called the Angels’ Candle on our Advent wreaths.

The Season of Advent is marked by a time of preparing ourselves for the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that will all accompany the Messiah’s (Second) Coming, which we celebrate fully on Christmas Day when we proclaim the Good News to all that our Savior is Born!

*Wishing you a blessed and joyful Christmas,  
Pastor Nick*



### Poinsettias

If you would like to place a poinsettia in the Sanctuary in honor or memory of a loved one, please complete one of the order forms found in the vestibule or contact Tammy to receive one via email. 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 10. These beautiful, red and white flowering plants will decorate the church on December 17 and 24.



### 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 evening 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 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 and gift items, please contact Tammy at 301-253-0044 before December 25.



### Christmas Concert

On Wednesday, December 20, some of us will be traveling together to hear the fun and festive Christmas music of the contemporary Christian group, *Sidewalk Prophets*. You may not realize this, but all of you know at least one of their songs since we play it every month during our communion service. That song is called "Come to the Table."

The concert begins at 7 pm at the Living Word International Christian Church on New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring. Tickets are about \$20. We have already purchased a group of tickets for those people who signed up in advance, but if anyone else would still like to join us, it's not too late! Individual tickets are still available. Contact Tammy for more information.



### A Great, Big, Huge

### Thank You

**goes out to all of Santa's Elves who visited the church on Saturday, November 25 to decorate it for the Arrival of the Christ Child later this month!**



## Administrative Council Meeting

Monday, November 13, 2023

### In Attendance

Bob Burke, Cathy Burke, Pastor Karen Davis, Judy Hughes, Jim Kemp, Becky Lewis, Rick Monarch, Tammy Monarch, and Pastor Nick Works.

Meeting opened by Bob at 7:00 pm.

### Devotions

Pastor Nick: Psalm 23 and a reading by G. A. Smith about shepherds and their flocks.

### Prayer Requests

- Mike and Terri Sherwood: Mike is in the hospital; working to move him to rehab at possibly Asbury.
- Bruce Reed: Stage 4 colon cancer; pray for his treatment plan and healing.
- Lewis Burdette: Returned home this past Saturday. Pray for Lew and Louise as they learn how he can live comfortably and safely in their home again.
- Chan Ketchum: Thyroid cancer and lung mass being investigated for treatment.
- Greg Lynagh: Upcoming shoulder surgery.
- Continue prayers for Jonathan Works and family.

### Good News

- Successful fall yard sale in September.
- Charge Conference ran very smoothly and without any surprises or big concerns.
- Holly Days Craft Bazaar and Luncheon went well. Profit of about \$2,100 at this time with more to come between now and Christmas.
- Sunday's luncheon and birthday celebration for Lois and Becky went well.

### Approval of Old Minutes

The minutes from our September meeting as printed in the November newsletter were voted on and accepted by all.

### Old Business

None.

### New Business

None.

### Committee Reports

#### Communications

- Since September 12, 13 greeting cards have been sent.
- Pictures on the homepage still need to be updated although. Brian did post photos today from our craft bazaar. Josh and Brian continue to work on this.
- Rick noted that the upgrades Josh made to the soundboard have made its operation smoother.

#### Education

- Sunday School book study of the Psalms is going very well, with 10-15 in attendance each Sunday.
- Advent book study will begin on Sunday, November 26 at 9:30 am and last for four weeks. It will also be held on Thursday nights at 6 pm at Mt. Tabor UMC. Participants can attend either session each week.
- 2024 S.S. calendar has not been established yet.

#### Fellowship

- Tree Lighting scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 29 at 7 pm.

- Christmas Luncheon at Morgan's American Grill in New Market scheduled for Friday, Dec. 1 at 1 pm.
- Caroling and Dinner at the Monarchs is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 17 beginning at 4 pm.
- New Year's Eve Luncheon will be held after church on Sunday, Dec. 31.

#### Finance

2024 church budget was presented, discussed, voted on, and approved by all.

#### Lay Leadership

All 2024 church positions have been filled, voted on, and approved at our church conference on October 28.

#### Missions

- We will no longer participate in the Lord's Table Soup Kitchen based on their new procedures and a larger number of required participants.
- We have received our list of three families for which to provide food and gifts at Christmas.
- We will also participate in Toys for Tots.

#### SPRC

The committee is currently working on 2023 Pastor Evaluations and 2024 Pastoral Goals for both pastors.

#### Trustees

- Parsonage washing machine purchased and installed.
- Snow removal contract signed and delivered to Damascus Enterprises.
- Gutters and scuppers have been completed on hall.
- Cross and flames were painted on the hall and church.
- Handrails were painted at the hall.
- Fire protection contract for upgrade of suppression system is moving forward.

#### Worship

- A church member requested that we consider passing the offering plate again. The committee decided that this is not practical with our small number of church attendees. Instead, it was decided to place a note by the offering plate on the table in the vestibule and a note in the bulletin about what to do with your offering.
- We will decorate the church for Advent and Christmas on Saturday, Nov. 25 beginning at 9 am.
- Christmas Eve is on a Sunday. Therefore, our three churches have chosen to worship at the following times: Salem 9:30 am, Wesley Grove 11 am, Mt. Tabor 6 pm, and Wesley Grove again at 9 pm.

#### Pastors' Reports

*Pastor Karen* said that she is very grateful for her family, her three churches and her church families, and for God. She has visited various shut-ins and offered communion to those who want it. She shared that our DS, Rev. Dawn Hand, will visit Mt. Tabor on Sunday, Dec. 3 to discuss its future.

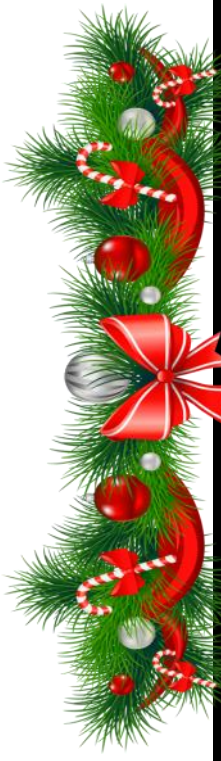
*Pastor Nick* reported being grateful for a place to worship and support from his three church families. He asked us to continue to keep Jonathan and his family in our prayers.


#### Next Meeting

Tammy will lead devotions at our next meeting, which will be held on Monday, Jan. 15, 2024, at 7 pm.

Bob adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

# December 2023



| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                         | Mon                                                                                                                                        | Tue                                                | Wed                                                                      | Thu                                                                | Fri                                                                                     | Sat                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                            |                                                    |                                                                          |                                                                    | 1<br>1:00 PM—<br>Christmas Lunch-<br>con at Morgan's<br>American Grill in<br>New Market | 2<br>3:00 PM—<br>Free Christmas<br>Handbell Concert at<br>Grace UMC in<br>Gaithersburg |
| 3<br><i>Advent Week 1</i><br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service                                                                                                      | 4<br>6:00 PM—<br>Charge SPRC<br>Meeting at WG                                                                                              | 5<br>6:45 PM—<br>Lions Club Dinner<br>and Meeting  | 6                                                                        | 7<br>6:00 PM—<br>Session #2 of Ad-<br>vent Book Study at<br>MTUMC  | 8                                                                                       | 9                                                                                      |
| 10<br><i>Advent Week 2</i><br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service<br><i>Poinsettia Deadline</i>                                                                       | 11                                                                                                                                         | 12                                                 | 13                                                                       | 14<br>6:00 PM—<br>Session #3 of Ad-<br>vent Book Study at<br>MTUMC | 15                                                                                      | 16                                                                                     |
| 17<br><i>Advent Week 3</i><br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service<br>4:00 PM—<br>Caroling & Dinner                                                                    | 18<br>7:00 PM—<br>Trustees Meeting<br><i>January<br/>Newsletter<br/>Deadline</i>                                                           | 19<br>6:45 PM—<br>Lions Club Dinner<br>and Meeting | 20<br>7:00 PM—<br>Sidewalk Prophets<br>Big Family Christ-<br>mas Concert | 21<br>6:00 PM—<br>Session #4 of Ad-<br>vent Book Study at<br>MTUMC | 22                                                                                      | 23                                                                                     |
| 24<br><i>Advent Week 4</i><br><i>Christmas Eve</i><br>No Sunday School<br>11 AM & 9 PM—<br>Worship Services<br><i>Watch Night 31</i><br>No Sunday School<br>11 AM—Worship<br>12:30 PM—Lunch | 25<br>Merry<br>Christmas!<br><br>1<br>Happy New Year! | 26                                                 | 27                                                                       | 28                                                                 | 29                                                                                      | 30                                                                                     |

 **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, Three, or All Four! \**

**Salem UMC @ 9:30 am**

**Mt. Tabor UMC @ 6 pm**

**WGUMC @ 11 am & 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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