

Wesley Grove **Messenger**

December 2020

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I'm just wondering... Is there anyone out there who doesn't know the classic hymn, "Silent Night?"

It was a little more than 200 years ago that this Christmas classic made its debut on Christmas Eve 1818 at the St. Nicholas Chapel in Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Austria. The melody, by composer Franz Gruber, is instantly recognizable from the first few notes, and the text by Joseph Mohr has been translated from the original German into more than 140 languages. In 1914, just four years shy of the 100th anniversary of "Silent Night," the soldiers fighting World War I along the Western Front held a ceasefire in some areas out of mutual respect for the holiday. Soldiers from both sides exchanged gifts and stories with one another, played games, and sang Christmas carols together, including the beloved hymn, "Silent Night." Typically, churches all over the world gather each year on Christmas Eve to light candles, sing "Silent Night," and participate in this timeless tradition.

But this is 2020, and it seems that many of our timeless traditions have been put on hold. This Christmas Eve, we will be humming, not singing, Silent Night. Unthinkable, right? But, let's admit it - life as it was is no longer. This is our new reality, so adapting and pivoting is the order of the day.

Today, in 2020, our communities, our churches, and our world are torn and divided on so many issues. Families fight, politicians argue, and sometimes we feel that hope, peace, love, joy, and light are all missing from our lives. How do we inspire hearts and minds to move humanity forward in a positive, life-affirming way in times such as these? These are the questions we have been asking ourselves and each other throughout the past eight months and will continue to ask as we travel in the unknown of tomorrow. Perhaps this Advent and Christmas could be a time of ceasefire from our own sources of conflict. Perhaps this year, as we hum to celebrate the birth of Christ, we can do so with spirits of peace and love that transcend all barriers.

By practicing calm, perhaps we can also listen more deeply to the needs of others, especially those we feel "oppose" us in some way. This daunting task requires guidance. Just as the people yearned for God's presence in the social and political context into which Jesus was born, we also need God's guiding light for our time.

For me, the Good News is that God's guidance in the image of the star of our faith narrative continues to shine if we have eyes to see. God's peace, joy, love, and hope will spread if we claim our role and our agency to receive it, to tend it, and to pass it on, like the candles we light on Christmas Eve that slowly grow to fill the Sanctuary with light.

I want to close with a benediction I read recently... *May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ Child. God bless you now and forever.*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all,

Pastor Karen

Lectionary Readings

December 6, 2020
Second Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 82:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

December 13, 2020
Third Sunday in Advent

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

December 20, 2020
Fourth Sunday in Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:47-55
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

December 24, 2020
Christmas Eve

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

December 25, 2020
Christmas Day

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

December 27, 2020
First Sunday of Christmas

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



October 2020 Financial Report

Rick Monarch, Treasurer

Expenses

Apportionments	\$1,245.83
Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)	\$1,430.84
Associate Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)	\$463.20
Pastor's Benefits	\$0.00
Pastor's Professional Expenses	\$0.00
Church Secretary's Wages	\$1,342.00
Choir Director's Salary	\$0.00
Worker's Compensation Insurance	\$0.00
Substitute Musician Payments	\$0.00
Payroll Taxes	\$102.67
Capital Improvement	\$0.00
Grass Cutting Costs	\$0.00
Groundskeeper Costs	\$0.00
Custodian's Salary	\$302.25
Parsonage Expenses	\$343.91
Programs	\$73.79
Insurance	\$0.00
Office Expenses	\$52.13
Trustees - Maintenance Costs	\$806.23
Total Expenses	\$6,162.85

Income

Weekly Collections	\$7,427.00
Cell Tower Rental Fee - Sprint	\$2,042.92
Cell Tower Rental Fee - Verizon	\$1,478.31
In and Out Income	\$0.00
Rental Property Monthly Payment	\$1,000.00
Parsonage Expense Reimbursements	\$1,674.52
(from Salem and Mt. Tabor)	
Miscellaneous	\$0.00
Total Income	\$13,622.75

Holiday Missions Project

Judy Hughes, Chair

Through Faith Connections, Wesley Grove is sponsoring three local families with gift cards for groceries and gifts during the Christmas season this year. The first family consists of a mother, Alejandra, and her two children, Matthew (age 11) and Liska (age 2). The second family includes a mother, Amina, and her two sons, Majid (age 7) and Maleek (infant). The third family is a mother, Bianca, and her daughter, Naomi (age 9). All three families live in our area and greatly appreciate our help.

If you would like to donate toward this special project, please place your monetary donation in the red basket on the vestibule table labelled Christmas Missions Project. Donations can be in the form of cash or checks made payable to Wesley Grove UMC. We will collect these gifts through Sunday, December 13.

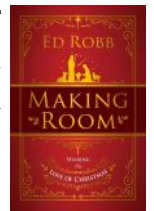
A very special thanks goes out to Mike Sherwood, who helped translate in Spanish for two of these families.

We also continue to collect all types of food for the Damascus HELP Food Pantry, but for the next several weeks, we will have a special emphasis on holiday foods made with gingerbread and peppermint. So, be thinking about teas, coffees, cocoas, baking mixes, cookies, candy, and other special treats. Please bring all of these food items to the church by Wednesday, December 16.



Advent Book Study

During this Advent Season, we will meet to study and discuss *Making Room* by Ed Robb. This book delves into the symbolism of that first Christmas — including exhausted parents after a long time of traveling to get home, lots of unexpected company coming and going, a messy (and probably smelly!) home, and the bringing of gifts — all things we all experience during the holiday season, making our lives hectic and crazy, yet at the same time filled with joy and amazing love. Rev. Robb has written a thought-provoking and meaning-filled book comparing the lives of Mary and Joseph with those of us in today's world. We will join together virtually on Monday nights at 7 pm for four weeks beginning on Monday, November 30.



Annual Tree Lighting

Join us Wednesday night, December 2, at 7:30 pm, as we light up our outdoor Christmas tree for all of those traveling on Woodfield Road and for those living in the Woodfield community. Unfortunately, to promote safety and social distancing, this event will be for only our church family this year, and not for the whole community. So, don your best holiday mask, add some antlers and bells, and bring on your best humming voice as we share the Light of Christ with all the world. Light refreshments will be served after the ceremony.



Holiday Family Movie Nights

Join us at the hall on two Friday evenings, December 4 and 18, for two all-time family Christmas classics: *Home Alone* on the first Friday and *Elf* on the second. Both will begin at 7:30 pm. Because these movies are classics, we thought you'd also like to wear your "classic" Christmas sweaters. So, dig deep in those closets and find your "finest, brightest, and most fun" holiday sweater. We ask that you also wear face masks. Holiday snacks will be provided. Hope to see many of you there!



Christmas Eve Worship

Our family-friendly Christmas Eve worship service will begin at 9 pm on Thursday, December 24. Due to social distancing and not wanting to overcrowd our sanctuary, we are asking folks to make reservations by calling Tammy at 301-253-0044. You will be assigned a seat, which will be marked with your family's last name. The service will also be livestreamed via Zoom for those of you wishing to stay home and safely worship from there.

Poinsettias



Once again, we will fill our sanctuary with gorgeous poinsettias on the Sunday before Christmas, December 20. If you would like to order one or more in honor or memory of your loved ones, please use the order form below. Copies of this can also be found in the vestibule.

You can take your plants with you after that morning's worship service. Or if possible, please leave your plants until after the Christmas Eve worship service. When you do take them, be sure to let Tammy know, so that she can check your name off the list. *The deadline for ordering and paying is Sunday, December 13.*

Name _____

Red Plants ____ # White Plants ____ @ \$8 each = \$ ____

My check made payable to WGUMC or cash in the exact amount is attached to this order.

Please circle either honor or memory and write the person(s) names below.

1. Given in honor/memory of _____
2. Given in honor/memory of _____
3. Given in honor/memory of _____
4. Given in honor/memory of _____
5. Given in honor/memory of _____
6. Given in honor/memory of _____
7. Given in honor/memory of _____
8. Given in honor/memory of _____

** Give completed form and check/cash to Tammy or mail to the church office . ***

Christmas Books and DVDs

We have created a mini-library of favorite holiday movies and Christmas novels on loan from various church family members. These are on display in the church vestibule. If you would like to check out any of these items, please sign your name and date on the check-out sheet. We just ask that you return DVDs within three days and books within two weeks, so that others may enjoy them as well.

Since we are adhering to the restrictions of social distancing, we ask that you please do not congregate at this display. Instead, allow just one family to browse it at a time. Feel free to visit our church at any time during the week that is convenient for you. Or if you know of a title that you would like to check out, let Tammy know, and she will put it aside for you.

If you would like to add any of your own movies or books to this collection for the next month or so, please drop them off in the church office with your name on each item. Tammy will add your titles to the check-out list and your books and movies to the library baskets.

All items will be returned to their owners in mid-January. Thanks in advance for sharing your beloved Christmas favorites!



December Birthdays

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



Are You in Need of Help?

need help?

This pandemic and time of isolation has made us all weary, fearful, and anxious in lots of different ways. If you need help with food, rides to doctor visits, utilities, depression, anxiety, etc., please call 301-253-0044 or email the church office at Wesleygrove208@verizon.net.

Our two pastors and office manager are here to help. We have a variety of resources available and access to many others. Please don't hesitate to contact one of us.

We ask that our Almighty Lord continue to watch over and bless each of you and your families in these difficult times.

Administrative Council Meeting

Monday, November 9, 2020

In Attendance: Cathy Burke, Rick Monarch, Bob Burke, Tammy Monarch, Steven Arndt, Terri Sherwood, Becky Lewis, Pastor Karen, Louise Burdette, Judy Hughes, Jim Kemp, and Sue Ketchum on Zoom

Opening: Bob began meeting at 7:35 p.m. Cathy read a devotion called "Loving the Stranger." he minutes from our September 14 meeting were approved.

Prayer Requests: Linda Chatterton's sister, Holly, for upcoming lung removal and cancer treatments; Mike Sherwood seeing a neurologist (possible fluid on the brain); Betty Duvall with severe pain in legs and back.

Good News: Church attendance between the Sanctuary and Zoom remains about the same as it was pre-Covid. Movie nights are filling a need for some folks.

Old Business: Information on existing defibrillator has been passed on to Skip to research cost for purchase of another for Sanctuary.

New Business: None.

Committee Reports:

Communications: We continue to send cards to church and community members as a need arises. Please make sure the Committee is informed of anyone that you believe could use a card.

Education: Our four-week Advent Book Study will be Monday nights, beginning on November 30 at 7:00 pm. We will hold class on Zoom. Please let Pastor Karen or Tammy know if you want to participate. A decision will be made as to how and when Sunday School will resume.

Fellowship: We are moving forward on tree lighting ceremony on December 2. It will be limited to church members only. We plan to put up outdoor nativity scene as well. Movie nights will continue in December and next year.

Finance: Jim presented the 2021 church budget of \$137,871.06 (which is about \$10,000 less than our 2020 budget). he original budget requests were for \$15,000 more, but lack of one cell tower rental next year and fear of no fundraisers in 2021 made the Committee skeptical

that we could find it, so sadly, cuts were made. This budget of almost \$140,000 is realistic based on our income and expenses this year. Brief discussion followed. Jim then made a motion to approve it. Motion was seconded; vote was taken; and 2021 budget was approved.

Missions: Our holiday giving project with Faith Connections will continue this year, but in a different way. We have been given three families to support. This year, we will give them gift cards only. To donate, give cash or a check payable to WGUMC to Judy or place in the basket in the vestibule. Food items for Damascus HELP are still being collected weekly.

SPRC: A meeting is scheduled for November 19 to complete our annual pastoral ministry evaluations and create pastoral goals for 2021. Terri will call our DS, concerning several issues, specifically changing from a 3-pt. to a 2-pt. charge.


Trustees: Hall heat pump needs to be replaced. We have three estimates and have decided on the one with the best price to replace the entire unit including indoor and outdoor parts at \$7,650.00. Steeple has been pressure washed and painted. Handrails have been repaired, and outside columns have been painted. Kitchen fryers have been cleaned. Two addenda of three have been sent from our attorney to American Tower concerning the lease buy-out of the tree cell tower. The other one still needs more discussion and work.

Worship: Decorating the sanctuary will be done by a few people in shifts. We are looking for Nativity figures to complete our existing set of large gold/bronze ones. Our Christmas Eve Service will be held at 9:00 pm.

Pastor's Report: Concerning the BWC document, "Commitment to Become an Anti-Racist Church," Karen has spoken to several members, and most feel that this is not the appropriate time for WG to make this a priority or to sign it, so this topic will be tabled for future discussion since the final decision is not due until 2023. Our annual Church Conference will take place November 21 at 11 am.

Closing: Devotions for our next meeting on Monday, January 11, 2021, will be led by Becky Lewis. Karen concluded with a prayer, and Bob closed the meeting at 9:38 pm.

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 7:30 PM— Outdoor Christmas Tree Lighting Cere- mony	3 3:00 PM— Book Club Meeting at Judy's house	4 7:30 PM— Holiday Movie fea- turing "Home Alone"	5 10 AM—12 PM - Holiday Bake Sale Pickup at Mt. Ta- bor UMC
6 <i>Advent—Week 2</i> 10:00 AM— Physical and Virtual Worship Service with Holy Commu- nion	7 7:00 PM— Advent Book Study	8	9 7:30 PM— Virtual Re-Entering Well Task Force Meeting	10	11	12
13 <i>Advent—Week 3</i> 10:00 AM— Physical and Virtual Worship Service <i>Deadline for Order- ing Poinsettias</i>	14 7:00 PM— Advent Book Study	15	16 <i>Deadline for Drop- ping Off Holiday Food for the Damas- cus HELP Food Pantry</i>	17	18 7:30 PM— Holiday Movie fea- turing "Elf" <i>Deadline for Janu- ary Newsletter arti- cles</i>	19
20 <i>Advent—Week 4</i> 10:00 AM— Physical and Virtual Worship Service with Poinsettias	21 7:00 PM— Advent Book Study	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Wor- ship Services - 4:00 PM @ Salem 6:00 PM @ MT 9:00 PM @ WG	25 Christmas Day 	26
27 <i>First Sunday of Christmas</i> 10:00 AM— Physical and Virtual Worship Service	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	1 Happy 2021!	

**Wesley Grove
United Methodist Church**

Church Phone: 301-253-2894
Email: 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



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

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