

Wesley Grove **Messenger**

December 2021

From the Pastor's Desk...

“Arise, shine, for your Light has come, and the Glory of the Lord rises upon you.”

~~~ Isaiah 60 ~~~

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Once again, we are coming to that special day of the year when we celebrate the Birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We will gather on Christmas Eve and hear once more the familiar story about the Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. You know — Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the angels on high. But there's another Christmas reading too – one we're not as familiar with – that declares in different images the true meaning of the Christmas event. It comes from the first chapter of John, and it sounds like this:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of all people. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

You see, John's Gospel doesn't zoom in on the crib in the manger. Instead, John wants to get at the deeper meaning, the cosmic significance. He tells us that Jesus is the Coming of the Light to break apart the oppressive, permeating darkness, the depression, the despair.

Christmas is about the incredible, boundless love of God for humanity – a love so strong that God came among us at Christmas as a babe in a manger, a babe who would grow and rekindle a flame of hope in a small band of followers, then suffer and die on a cross – for the sake of love. And Christmas is about light – about a star over a manger, about an emergency flashlight on the dark highway of life, about a lighthouse – a beacon of hope to guide us on a sometimes stormy sea. Christmas is about newborn hope seen under the faint light of a star. It's about light illuminating the darkness.

One of my favorite resources throughout Advent and Christmas is Howard Thurman's "The Mood of Christmas." In this book, the philosopher-theologian offers this poem:

*I will light candles this Christmas:  
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage where fear is ever present,  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,  
And candles that will burn all the year long.*



Wesley Grove Church, I thank you for being a beacon of Christ's Love, and I appreciate the many ways you bring the Light of Christ into our community and our world. God is indeed using each of you to change the world. I look forward to celebrating this Season with you and seeing you on Christmas Eve as we light candles to celebrate the Birth of the One who came to bring light into our darkness.

In God's peace,  
Pastor Karen

## Lectionary Readings

**December 5, 2021**

*Second Sunday in Advent*

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6

**December 12, 2021**

*Third Sunday in Advent*

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

**December 19, 2021**

*Fourth Sunday in Advent*

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:46b-55

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-45

**December 24-25, 2021**

*Christmas Eve and Christmas Day*

Isaiah 9:2-7, 52:7-10

Psalm 96, 98

Luke 2:1-20

John 1:1-14

**December 26, 2021**

*First Sunday of Christmas*

1 Samuel 2:18-20,26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52

## October 2021 Financial Report

*Rick Monarch, Treasurer*

### Expenses

|                                                 |                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| BWC Mission Share                               | \$1,413.58        |
| Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)           | \$1,473.76        |
| Associate Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary) | \$389.86          |
| Church Secretary's Wages                        | \$1,189.50        |
| Choir Director's Salary                         | \$0.00            |
| Worker's Compensation Insurance                 | \$0.00            |
| Payroll Taxes                                   | \$91.00           |
| Capital Improvement Costs                       | \$0.00            |
| Grass Cutting Costs                             | \$0.00            |
| Groundskeeper Costs                             | \$0.00            |
| Custodian's Salary                              | \$350.00          |
| Programs                                        | \$115.98          |
| Property Insurance                              | \$0.00            |
| Administrative Expenses                         | \$139.70          |
| Charge Treasury - Parsonage Expenses            | \$368.44          |
| Charge Treasury - Professional Expenses         | \$29.57           |
| Charge Treasury - Medical Insurance Cost        | \$286.67          |
| Charge Treasury - Retirement Contribution       | \$313.18          |
| Trustees - Maintenance Costs                    | \$1,074.67        |
| Miscellaneous Church                            | \$56.57           |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                           | <b>\$7,292.48</b> |

### Income

|                                             |                    |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Weekly Collections                          | \$7,451.36         |
| Cell Tower Rental Fee - Sprint              | \$2,104.21         |
| Evening Circle Contribution - Paid for Year | \$0.00             |
| In and Out Income                           | \$0.00             |
| Rental Property Monthly Payment             | \$1,000.00         |
| Miscellaneous                               | \$0.00             |
| <b>Total Income</b>                         | <b>\$10,555.57</b> |

## 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      |



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 \$9 each and all orders must be at the church by Sunday, December 12. These beautiful red flowering plants will decorate the church on Sunday, December 19.





## Fellowship News

*Becky Lewis, Chair*

Start the month and the Holiday Season off in a joyous mood by attending our Annual Community Tree Lighting Ceremony on Thursday, December 2, at 7:30 pm. There'll be music from the choir and the handbell quartet, participation from members of our community, and some tasty Christmas treats afterward. Please contact Tammy at 301-253-0044 to find out what you can do to help. Readers, cookie bakers, and more are needed.

Later in the month, climb aboard our Christmas Caroling Caravan on Sunday, December 19, to spread some joyful noise throughout our local neighborhoods! We'll meet at 4 pm in the hall parking lot to assemble, and then take a preannounced route through the local side streets to sing carols and spread Christmas cheer. Look for the sign-up sheet in the Greeting Room to let us know if you plan to sing and if you have a vehicle with an electric outlet that you're willing to drape in lights and decorations to help form the caravan. If you have an older car – like a certain 2004 CRV – we'll find you a seat in someone's newer model. After we finish singing, we'll share a fellowship meal of pizza and salad to wrap up the evening.

## Christmas Eve

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 @ 4:00 pm  
Mt. Tabor UMC @ 6:00 pm  
Wesley Grove UMC @ 9:00 pm



## Education News

*Tammy Monarch, Chair*

Are you feeling a little “Grinchy” or a little “Scroogey” this month? If so, you’re not alone. We all feel a little down or a little grumpy during the holidays at times. That’s normal with all of the hustle and bustle this month to add to our already busy and stress-filled lives.



To help combat, lessen, and maybe even alleviate these feelings of resentment, stress, or just plain grouchiness, try joining us in Sunday School this month. We are all reading and discussing Matt Rawle’s Christmas book, *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes*, based on Dr. Seuss’ Grinch who just *hates* Christmas until he realizes that it isn’t just a thing that you can steal. Instead, the Grinch learns that Christmas is something deeper — something that takes over and fills your heart — thus, causing his to grow three whole sizes to fit all of his newly discovered hope, peace, joy, and love. Even the Light of Our Lord changes him from the simple black and white line drawing of Dr. Seuss to the brightly colored, chartreuse character that we all love today!

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 Lord and to continue on his or her Christian journey.

Looking to the end of this month... Our Sunday School will not meet on the day after Christmas (December 26) or the day after New Year’s Day (January 2). We will resume our class on Sunday, January 9, 2022.



### Missions News

*Judy Hughes, Chair*



The Missions Committee would like to thank everyone for your generous donations of warm socks and long underwear during the month of November. We collected enough to fill three large boxes. Please know that all of these items are being delivered the Open Heart Mission in West Virginia in plenty of time for Christmas. From the bottom of our hearts, thanks again and again!



### Christmas Luncheon

We hope that many of you are planning to join us for our annual Wesley Grove Church Family Christmas Luncheon! This will be held on Tuesday, December 14 at noon at the Twin Arch Tavern in Mt. Airy. If you have not yet signed up or have any further questions, please contact Cathy Burke at 301-865-5299 or Mary Jane Walter at 301-972-3089.



### Looking to January...

Our Sunday School members will once again be filling meal bags for the homeless. Donations of individual canned meats (tuna, chicken, etc.), fruit cups, pudding cups, granola bars, crackers, cookies, hand sanitizer, cases of bottled water, hand and foot warmers, and small packs of tissues and sanitizing wipes will all be gratefully accepted. Please bring these items to church to be blessed on Epiphany Sunday, January 2, just as the Magi took their gifts to the Baby Jesus so many years ago.



### Advent Book Study

Our Advent Season virtual book study of *The Journey* by United Methodist Pastor Adam Hamilton began earlier this week. We are meeting on Zoom on Mondays at 7:30 pm to 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 still like to do.



### 2022 Calendars



There are plenty on the table in the vestibule from just about every non-profit organization that you can think of — both full wall size and pocket size. Please help yourself to as many as you would like!



A Great, Big, Huge

### Thank You

goes out to all of Santa's Elves who visited the church on Saturday, November 27 to decorate it for the Arrival of the Christ Child later this month!



## Administrative Council Meeting

Monday, November 1, 2021

### In Attendance:

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

**Opening:** Bob began the meeting at 7:33 pm.

**Devotions:** Judy read from a daily devotional about living a life of gratitude, which was especially appropriate since Thanksgiving is later this month.

### Prayer Requests:

- Continue to pray for Jenny Mirani as recovery from her back surgery last June is taking longer and is more painful than she had thought it would be. She could use cards, calls, and/or visits to help keep her spirits up.

### Good News Items:

- Greg Lynagh appears to be recovering well from his back surgery in September.
- Fall Craft Sale this past weekend was a success! We made a profit of about \$2,500, and we will continue to sell these items until Christmas Eve. Please contact Tammy if you want to browse or purchase something.
- Sunday School/Confirmation Class is ongoing with two confirmations and three baptisms occurring during the worship service on Nov. 14.

### Approval of Past Minutes:

Rick motioned to approve the minutes from our September 13 meeting. Jim seconded, and all were in favor.

### Old Business:

- All of the lines on the church and hall parking lots are now freshly painted.
- The parsonage driveway has been sealed and looks good.

### BWC Annual Conference 2021:

Steven shared the highlights of the 237<sup>th</sup> Session of Annual Conference of the BWC which occurred on October 25-27. They include...

1. Number of actions were voted on and most passed, including equitable compensation for all clergy, which raised their minimum required salary, although Pastor Karen is well above this figure given her many years of service.

2. The BWC's finances are in good shape although the total amount that it received from 2020 mission shares was down since many churches did not receive what they expected to in 2020 either.

3. The BWC's 2022 budget is \$18,000,000, of which \$15,000,000 comes from mission shares. This budget includes a 2.5% pay raise for all Episcopal Office Staff.

4. There was a lengthy discussion about how the 2022 mission shares will be calculated. The resulting motion proposed basing them on an average of 2018-2020 individual church spending since 2020 was not a true picture of any church. A vote was taken, and this motion passed.

5. The BWC Board of Trustees sadly reported that nine churches in our Conference have closed their doors since the last Annual Conference.

6. Resolutions were shared that debated changing how delegates are named and elected to higher level conferences, how Annual Conference deadlines are set, and how the UMC continues to maintain the cemeteries of its closed churches.

7. The BWC asked each church to have a courageous conversation on how to resolve our nation's problem of gun violence, to create a green team to help with care of the Earth and its limited resources, to actively promote the Human Rights Amendment to the MD State Constitution, and to endorse the "Separation with Grace of UM Churches." The timeline for conferences and churches to leave the UMC has changed from when it was written several years ago and is still being revised at this point.

8. Discussion occurred on where churches in the BWC are in dealing with the Black Lives Matter protocol. 23% have embraced this movement and have moved forward; 8% have done nothing; and the remaining 69% are somewhere in between.

9. There was a formal ceremony for the retirement of 28 conference pastors and the ordination of new elders to replace them.

### New Business:

- Our hall trash dumpster compound burned

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last Thursday night. The MoCo Fire Investigation Team is working to determine if this was purposely set. Rick called our trash company today for a new replacement dumpster, and he also called our insurance company. We have a \$2,500 deductible.

Committee Reports:

Communications — Posts on Facebook and Instagram about the Fall Craft Sale reached over 800 people. Cards continue to be sent to those who are sick or in need. Committee will meet after Christmas to discuss updating church website.

Education — Our Sunday School continues each week averaging about 10 people on Sunday mornings. Confirmations of two youth and baptisms of three are scheduled for Sunday, November 14. Our virtual Apostles' Creed Study on Tuesday nights has one more session, and then we will begin a four-week Advent book study on Monday nights via Zoom. Advent Sunday School lessons will focus on a book that explores Christian themes and motifs in How the Grinch Stole Christmas! All are invited to join us in both of these Advent studies.

Fellowship — Fall craft sale was a success! Reception for newly confirmed members is planned for after church on November 14. Tree Lighting Ceremony and Caroling Caravan are both planned for December.

Finance — Rick presented the proposed 2022 church budget of \$138,671.03. Most of this is comprised of salaries, utilities, insurance, and mission share costs. Only about \$11,300 is actually budgeted for church programming and outreach. There was some discussion about the need (or not) for offering envelopes and about the cost of a payroll company. Jim then motioned that this Council accept the proposed 2022 budget as presented. Steven seconded, and all were in favor.

Missions — Along with MT, we are collecting both socks and long underwear for Open Heart Ministry in WV this month. In December, we will work with Faith Connections to supply Christmas gifts for three needy families in the area. The Lord's Table Soup

Kitchen at Epworth UMC has just recently reopened after closing for COVID in March 2020. WG will continue cooking and serving on fifth Mondays, starting on November 29. All volunteers must be fully vaccinated and masked. A donation will be made soon to the Strawbridge Home Foundation in New Windsor, MD.

SPRC — We are currently working on 2021 Pastor Evaluations and 2022 Congregational Goals. Both of these forms are due to the BWC by Wednesday, December 1.

Trustees — The burned trash compound will be replaced soon. Playground ark has been re-stained, and its steps fixed. Courtyard benches have been refinished. Hole in the blacktop outside of hall door on church side has been filled. Flowers in pots and ground have been changed for the season. Parsonage has gotten new garage doors. We are currently looking at and getting estimates for new roof on rental house, buckled and rotten wooden floor in old part of hall, and gutters on back side of the hall. MoCo HOC has conducted two inspections of rental house in last two weeks. Lots of problems were found with broken windows, water leaks, broken garage doors, missing appliance parts, etc. HOC's recommendation is to terminate the lease of current family on January 1. WG agrees with this decision. At that time, our Trustees will have decisions to make involving repairs, maintenance, replacements, and a new rental family. They are also currently investigating a new HVAC system for this house as the current one is old and needs to be replaced.

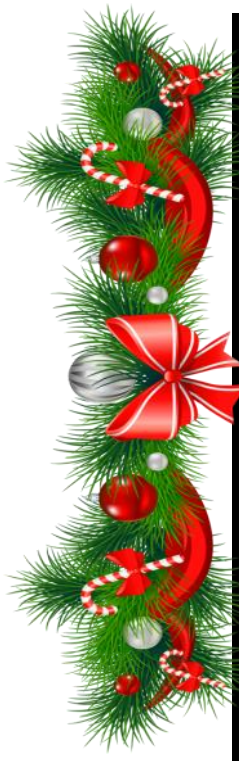
Worship — Our choir will begin practicing and singing periodically again this month along with our handbell quartet. Both choir and bells will be involved in Tree Lighting Ceremony. Christmas Eve Worship Service at WG will begin at 9 pm.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Karen shared that she's made 21 calls, 2 home visits, and performed 2 funerals since our last meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 10 at 7:30 pm with devotions led by Pastor Nick.

Closing: Bob adjourned meeting at 9:23 pm.

December 2021



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | | 1
6:00 PM—
Bell Practice
7:00 PM—
Choir Practice | 2
7:30 PM—
Outdoor Communi-
ty Christmas Tree
Lighting Ceremony | 3 | 4 |
| 5 <i>Advent Week 2</i>
9:30 AM—
Sunday School
11:00 AM—
Worship Service
with Communion | 6
7:30 PM—
Session #2 of Ad-
vent Book Study
via Zoom | 7
6:45 PM—
Lions Club Dinner
and Meeting | 8
6:00 PM—
Bell Practice
7:00 PM—
Choir Practice | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 <i>Advent Week 3</i>
9:30 AM—
Sunday School
11:00 AM—
Worship Service
<i>Poinsettia Deadline</i> | 13
7:30 PM—
Session #3 of Ad-
vent Book Study
via Zoom | 14
12:00 PM—
Christmas Lunch-
eon at Twin Arch
Tavern in Mt. Airy | 15
6:00 PM—
Bell Practice
7:00 PM—
Choir Practice | 16 | 17 | 18

<i>January
Newsletter
Deadline</i> |
| 19 <i>Advent Week 4</i>
9:30 AM—
Sunday School
11:00 AM—
Worship Service
4:00 PM—
Caroling Caravan | 20
7:30 PM—
Session #4 of Ad-
vent Book Study
via Zoom | 21
6:45 PM—
Lions Club Dinner
and Meeting | 22
6:00 PM—
Bell Practice
7:00 PM—
Choir Practice | 23 | 24 <i>Christmas Eve</i>
4:00 PM—Service
at Salem UMC
6:00 PM—Service
at Mt. Tabor UMC
9:00 PM—Service
at Wesley Grove | 25 <i>Christmas Day</i>
 |
| 26 <i>First Sunday
of Christmas</i>
No Sunday School
11:00 AM—
Worship Service | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31
<i>Happy
New Year's
Eve</i> | 1
 |

 **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



Christmas Eve Worship Services

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

Salem UMC @ 4 pm

Mt. Tabor UMC @ 6 pm

Wesley Grove UMC @ 9 pm

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

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