

Grace United Church of Christ



Sunday, December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Theme: Love

Welcome

Passing the Peace

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude - Of the Father's Love Begotten - arr. Wilbur Held

Candle Lighting Liturgy

***Gathering Prayer** (In Unison)

Holy God, The stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before. We've arranged the nativity scenes. We've read the children's books. We've seen the movies. We've sung the songs. But as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: help us begin again. Clear the distractions from our minds. Center us in this space. Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now. We are listening. We are hopeful. Amen.

***Opening Hymn** "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" NCH 107

Pastoral Prayer

We invite you to pray this prayer using the words that are closest to your heart.

Our (Father/Mother/Creator) 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, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering Hymn "Come, O Long-Expected Jesus" NCH 122

***Doxology** (music #780, text #778)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen

***Prayer of Dedication**

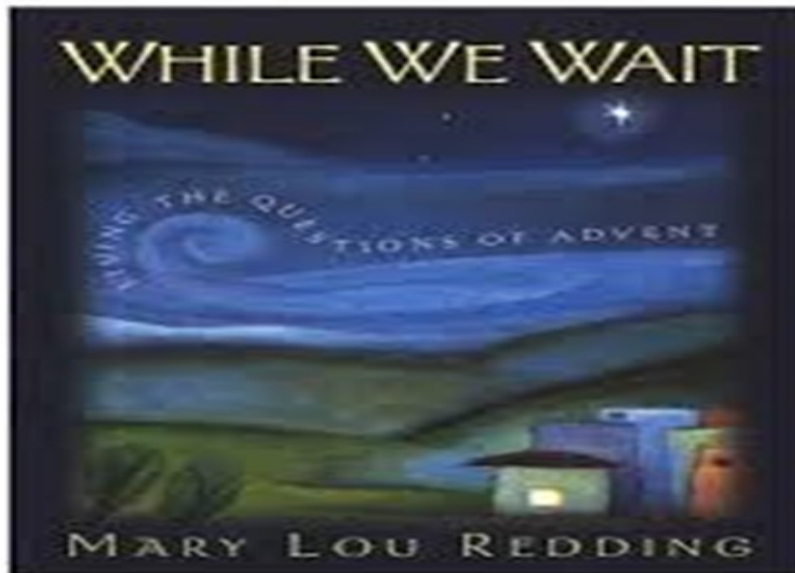
Loving God, as we present our tithes and offerings to you this morning for your blessing, we remember the greatest blessing the world has ever received: your precious Son, sent to redeem us, to pay the price for our sins. Thank you for showing us how to give from the heart. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Announcements

Grace Church Choir presents Vivaldi's "Gloria" - see insert

Benediction

As you leave this place, may you have the wisdom to lean on one other. May you have the courage to hold onto hope, the compassion to do the good that is yours to do, and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing. For in a world full of dead ends, Advent invites us to begin again. So start here. Start now. Start with love and begin again. In the name of Christ, our new beginning, go in peace.



Well friends, believe it or not, Advent is upon us. This year I invite you into an Advent Study based on the book *While We Wait: Living the Questions of Advent* by Mary Lou Redding. Sometimes we struggle to believe we'll experience anything new as Advent comes around. What could we possibly learn that we haven't seen or heard before? If you're looking for an Advent study of a different slant, *While We Wait: Living the Questions of Advent* offers new ways of connecting the story with your own questions of faith and approaches an all-too-familiar narrative from perspectives we may have missed. You'll read about biblical figures mentioned in passing in the "original" Advent. Somewhat surprisingly, Tamar, Ruth, Mary, Zechariah, Elizabeth, and the Magi asked questions that resonate with contemporary Christians.

There are three opportunities each week for you to participate in the study. The dates/times/locations are as follows:

In-Person on Sunday Dec. 1, 8, 15, and 22 from 12:30pm-1:30pm in Sunday School Room at Grace

Via Zoom on Sunday Dec 1, 8, 15, and 22 from 7:00pm-8:00pm

In-Person on Tuesday Dec 3, 10, 17 from 10:00am-11:00am at Dublin Roasters

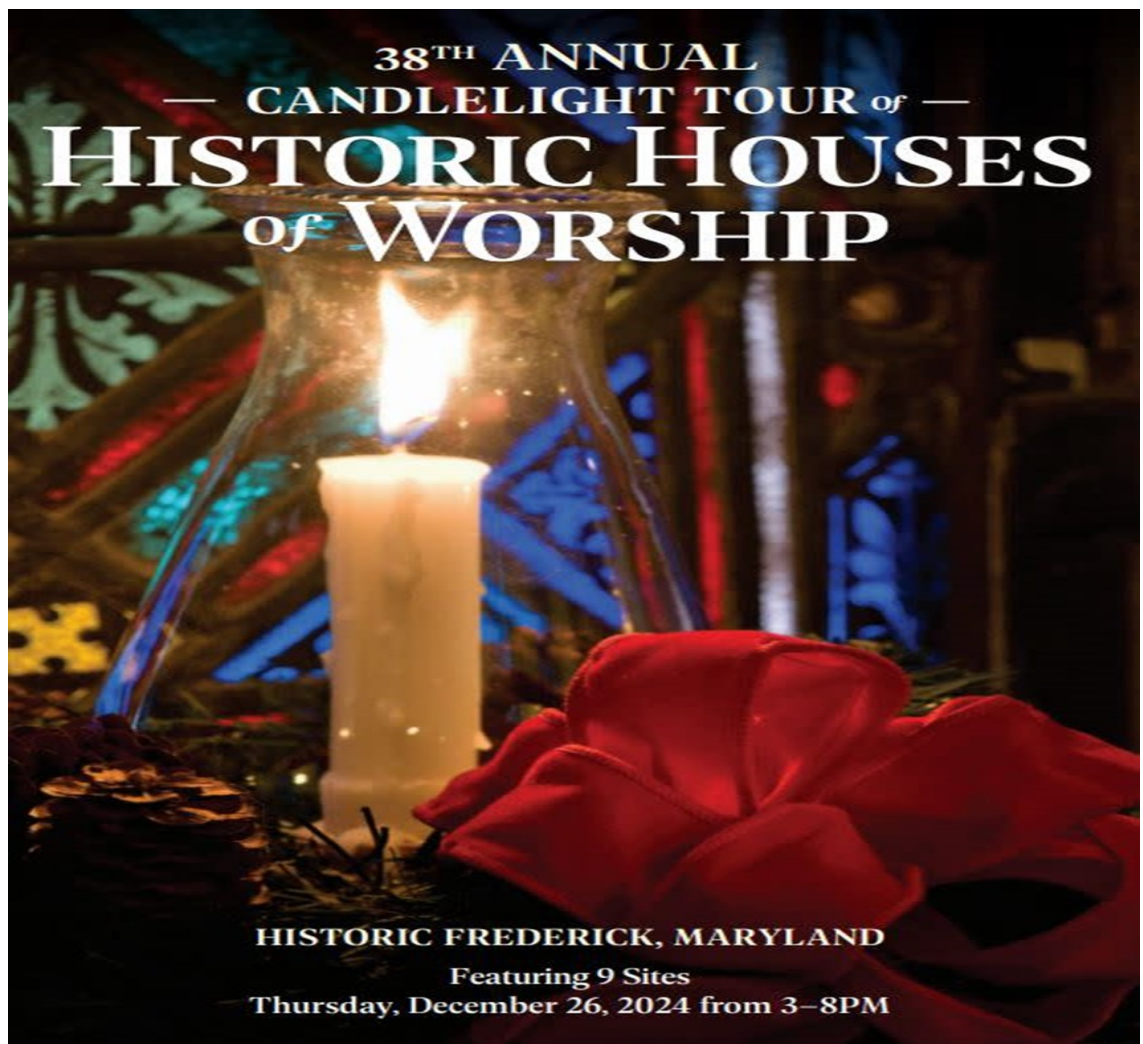
Purchasing the book is not required, but if you would like to purchase a copy for yourself, you can find them on Amazon at the following link:

<https://www.amazon.com/While-We-Wait-Living-Questions/dp/083580982X>

We hope to see you there!



We hope that you and your family/friends will make our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service a part of your time together this year. The festive organ musical prelude will begin at 7:00 pm and the lessons and carols service with organ, trumpet, choir, soloists, and congregational carols will begin at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary. This year will be a service of “Lessons and Carols” and we are looking for volunteer liturgists. If you are interested in helping with this, please email Pastor Chance at pastorchance.graceucc@gmail.com.



Thursday, December 26 - House of Worship Tour music schedule:

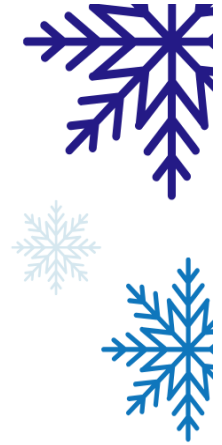
- 3-3:30 - Nathan Strite, organ
- 3:30- 4- Carol Singing
- 4-5- Terry Sparks piano student's recital
- 5-6- One God- One Voice Choir
- 6-7- Justin Furnia, piano
- 7-8- Nathan Strite, organ



Sunday, December 29, 2024 will be Breakfast Church with carols led by guitar, as well as music from the handbells in their last performance under James Taylor's direction at Grace. We will gather for worship around tables in the Good Shepherd Room at 11:00 am. No need to bring anything but your appetite! Everyone is welcome so come and see us...won't you?



Homeless for the Holidays



Homeless for the Holidays Annual Hygiene Collection

November 1-December 31, 2024

If you could, stop for a moment and picture the holiday season. For most of us, the holidays are a celebratory time to gather amongst family and friends to spend time together under a warm roof and catch each other up on the excitement of the previous year. For hundreds of young people in Frederick County, this time of year is incredibly difficult. This Holiday season, we're seeking hygiene donations to provide for our students! All items collected from the hygiene drive will be distributed to students experiencing homelessness within Frederick County.

Top items requesting for hygiene donations:

- Ethnic Hair Care Products
- Deodorant
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Body Wash
- Laundry Detergent
- Razors
- Hand Soap
- First Aid Items
- Dental Floss

- Mouthwash
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Feminine Hygiene Product
- Shaving Cream
- Body Lotion
- Hair Brushes
- Hair Ties
- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper

New and sealed items only, please do not donate used hygiene items.

Thank you for supporting SHIP of Frederick County!

For additional information on how to donate,
scan the QR Code:



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:

Sleep In Heavenly Peace!

SHP (<https://shpbeds.org/>) is a national organization of local chapters that build bunk beds for children in the local community who otherwise wouldn't have a bed. Grace Church has been very generous in donating sheets, pillows, mattress covers and quilts over the last couple years.

The Frederick County Chapter of SHP has building events every month or so, mostly on Saturdays, and volunteers of all skill levels (including none) are welcome for tasks like cutting lumber, constructing and finishing the beds, transporting them, or sorting items, cleaning up and prep work.

This is a great opportunity to contribute to a great organization. Contact Michael Davies (fluidmosaic@gmail.com) to be notified of upcoming builds and be part of the team when you can!

“No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town!”



Antiracism 2025 Cohort

Grace UCC began having antiracism conversations during The Rev. Dr. Gerry Hanberry's tenure here as Interim Pastor. Several of you have voiced to me your desire to continue these conversations as we learn what it means to be antiracist. With this in mind, beginning in January of 2025 we will begin what The Rev. W. Benjamin Boswell calls *A Spiritual Journey of Reflection, Conversation, and Transformation*.

Throughout this journey we will read the works of authors and scholars such as Ibram X. Kendi; Michelle Alexander; Ijeoma Oluo; Robin DiAngelo; James Baldwin; and Rev. W. Benjamin Boswell; Jim Wallis; as well as others. We will also invite guest speakers to join us from time to time via Zoom, and there is already a seminar scheduled with The Rev. Mia McClain who is ordained in the UCC and currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington, DC. She will be joining us for a seminar centered around "Decolonizing Liturgy" on Saturday, May 31 and leading us in worship on Sunday, June 1.

Members of this cohort will be taking a deep dive into conversations about race, colonization, nationalism, and much more. Some meetings will be in-person and others will be held via Zoom. My hope is that we can begin with a cohort of 10-12 people, journeying together throughout the year, with a new cohort being offered in subsequent years. While the desire is to keep the cohorts small (to foster deeper connections and conversations), there will be many opportunities open to everyone at Grace and the community at-large, such as the seminar referenced above.

If you are interested in being a part of this first cohort, please email Pastor Chance at pastorchance.graceucc@gmail.com to be added to the list. I hope you will consider joining me on this journey.

Grace United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

25 East 2nd Street, Frederick, Maryland, 21701

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Pastor: Rev. Chance Martinez	pastorchance.graceucc@gmail.com
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Bell Choir Director: James Taylor	Bells@grucc.com
Children & Youth Ministry: Amy Duray	worshipgraceucc@gmail.com
Nursery Attendant: Joan Princler	Joan.dancer@comcast.net
Custodian: Kaden Hansen	Admin@grucc.com
Church Admin: Tricia Baptiste	Admin@grucc.com

Choir Section Leaders: Anna Kovacsics, James Taylor, & Donald Toms

SUNDAY WORSHIP — 11:00 AM — Virtual and in person

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of every month.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Liturgists:	Catherine & Charlotte K.
Children's Message:	
Children's Church:	
Altar Guild:	

Follow us!



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OF CHRIST**

