

Grace Vine

Grace United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

25 East 2nd Street

Historic Downtown Frederick, Maryland

DECEMBER 2016

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Important Dates at a Glance

Saturday, December 3

4th annual Christkindlmarkt
See insert for details

Sunday, December 11

11:00 a.m.
Worship and Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 18

11:00 a.m.
Service of Lessons and Carols
7:30 p.m.
Weihnachtsgottesdienst
in deutscher Sprache

Saturday, December 24

Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship
7:00 p.m.

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As I write this, our country is in turmoil. Protests continue and the nation is wrestling with what the next 4 years will look like. Some are excited, others are fearful. On Sunday, as coincidence (or the Holy Spirit) would have it, the readings for the service focused on the impending ending of the world as we know it: wars and rumors of wars, the fall of the Temple, earthquakes, arrests and persecutions of those who keep the faith. These were real fears for the early church and for every generation since. What we focused on was the end of the story, the fact that in the end God wins! We know as people of faith that Love will indeed have the last word. "Yet not one single hair on your head will be harmed," Jesus assures us. How can that be? That's not my concern. All I know is that God's care for us is eternal and our hope is not in political parties, leaders and governmental structures. They are certainly important, but NOT the source of our hope.

So how do we react to the new administration? I will be very honest. I have real concerns about the rhetoric that was used during this election season. Words of exclusion and racism, words that denigrated, demeaned, and dehumanized entire groups of people for the sole purpose of self-aggrandizing, political gain. This is not who we are as a nation. This in no way reflects the Gospel values we profess. But that was then and this is now. Our nation has voted and we have a new leader. Our only question is how we will continue to be a part of the process moving forward.

Our calling as people of faith is two-fold. We are to respect our leaders. We are to pray for those in leadership and to support them in ways that we can. But we are also called by Jesus, the apostles and the example of the prophets of Israel to keep one eye on the government and one eye on the Kingdom of God. Where our leaders act and lead in ways that bring hope, love and compassion, we are to lead by example in our support and encouragement. But in areas where fear, division and bigotry lead to a straying from what we believe to be the values of our faith, we are called speak the truth in love.

Our job as the Church is to continue to be the moral compass for our nation. Not everyone needs to agree with my values or live according to my faith system, but certain things are non-negotiables for people of faith: justice, inclusion of the outsider, caring for the poor, the vulnerable and the out-cast, and compassion for those who live on the margins, service and sacrifice over self. These are Gospel values and when they are forgotten it is our duty to remind our leaders.

And so we enter a new era for at least the next 4 years. Let us pray for our leaders. Let us support them in their efforts to lead us. Their success is our success. But let us also be brave enough to call them on those things, both policies and words that we find miss the mark. May we also never forget that our ultimate hope lays in the end of the story as we know it to be true. In the end....love always wins!

Pastor Rob†

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: **A Pastoral Care note:** Due to the current HIPAA (Privacy) laws, hospitals are :
: not permitted to contact churches on behalf of patients. If you know of a :
: church member who is hospitalized, please inform the church office. In the :
: case of an emergency hospitalization (whether yourself or a family member), :
: please call Pastor Rob at 240-217-2767. :
:.....

UPDATE FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On Sunday, November 13th, the following members of Grace Church were elected to serve on the Church Council for the upcoming year: Jean Barrick, Matt Bonin, Vonnie Crum, Patti Flanders-Lombardi, Lisel Powell, Jerry Princler, Steve Robeson, Lloyd Taylor, and Sarah Travis. We thank them all for their willingness to serve.

We also offer our thanks to those who have just completed their service on the Council: Earl Bartgis, John Brehmer, Carol Garrison, and Karen Kehoe. Thank you for your hard work and your dedication to Grace Church!

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE



Let's keep in touch!

Each week, the Grace Church eNews is sent out to our members and friends to keep everyone up-to-date on upcoming events. If you haven't been receiving these updates, please call or email the church office to be added to the list.

Keep in mind that the church calendar is also available on our website - www.grucc.com.

Mark your calendar now! The submission deadline for the January 2017 issue of the *Grace Vine* newsletter is Monday, December 19th. The newsletter will be ready for pickup from the Narthex on Christmas Eve.

If you currently receive a paper copy of the *Grace Vine* newsletter, but would *prefer* to receive the newsletter by email, or read it online, please call or email the church office so that we can save the postage. Thank you!

Just a reminder that we have many outside groups who use space in our church building throughout the week and on the weekends. If you are planning an activity in the church, please remember to check with Tara in the office ***before scheduling an event*** to make sure the space you need is available. Thanks!

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Greeters and Fellowship Hosts

We have made a change to our fellowship schedule; snacks and drinks will be provided by volunteer hosts only on the first and third Sundays of each month. However, **we do still need greeters for every Sunday**

morning. If you would like to serve as a greeter or host the fellowship time one Sunday, please sign up on the sheet in the Good Shepherd Room.



Caring and Sharing

The following is a list of members and friends of our Grace Church family who are currently ill, home-bound, or hospitalized. If you know of anyone who should be added to this list, please call the church office or speak to Pastor Rob.

Harold Wenner
615 Biggs Ave.
Frederick, MD 21702

Millie Davis
801 Pine Ave.
Frederick, MD 21701

Joe Free
1117 Rocky Springs Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

Betty Linton
814 Trail Ave.
Frederick, MD 21701

Paul and Miriam Himes
9810 Masser Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

Pat Lowry
12 Rothschild Ct.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Bill Failor
Meadows Health Ctr.
7407 Willow Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

Pam Kehne
1632 Wall Dr.
Pasadena, MD 21122

Lay Caring Ministry at Grace

Many of the folks on our Caring & Sharing list really miss coming to church and would greatly appreciate cards, phone calls or visits from members of their Grace Church family. If you would like to get involved in the Lay Caring Ministry, please speak to Pastor Rob or Mike Stockman.



Join us on Thursday evenings at 6pm for our **FREE** drop-in Zumba class! Men, women and teens of all fitness levels are welcome! Invite a friend!

Church Directories

Do you need an updated copy of our member directory? Please contact the church office or speak to an usher on Sunday morning. Due to privacy concerns, we do not publish our directory on the church website.



Blue Christmas

While the holidays will be joyous time for most, there are many among us who will find the next few months to be a difficult time. Those who have suffered a recent loss, are grieving or battle with depression may find that the gap between the way they think they're "supposed" to feel and the way they're actually feeling can make their sadness or grief even more acute.

Unfortunately, even in the best of times, the holidays can burden us with unrealistic expectations that we feel we can never live up to. Here are some tips for those who may find this a difficult time of year.

- *Keep your expectations realistic.* Avoid the "tyranny of the shoulds." Every holiday doesn't have to be perfect; receive the season as it comes to you.
- *Accept your feelings.* If you "feel down," allow yourself to feel down! It's okay to feel sad or lonely, even if it's the holidays. You don't have to live up to the expectations of others.
- *Don't isolate yourself.* Try to get out and do things, and seek the support of others. Everything you do with others doesn't have to be holiday related, but make an effort to be with others you care about and who care about you. If you find it helpful, participate in worship and allow your church community to offer you love and support.
- *Avoid holiday burn-out.* At the same time, it's fine to say no sometimes. Do things you *want* to do, not things you feel that you feel you *have* to do.
- *Take care of yourself physically.* Get enough sleep, try to eat right, exercise. Try to get some sunlight by sitting by a window or getting outside. "Light boxes" which provide a type of light known to be helpful in seasonal depression can be bought at drug and department stores. I can provide more information about this.

Some churches in our area hold “Blue Christmas” services specifically to provide spiritual support and solace for those who struggle during the holidays. If you’d like to know more about this, give me a call at the number below.

If you find that the “holiday blues” are keeping you from doing the things you need to do, like going to work or even getting out of bed, or if you find yourself having thoughts of self-harm, tell a friend, your minister or your health care provider.

Mike Stockman, CRNP
Faith Community Nurse
mikecrnp@gmail.com
301-401-0327



FINANCE AND PROPERTY

IMPORTANT REMINDER REGARDING BUILDING SECURITY:

After worship each Sunday, the main doors to the Sanctuary (the Narthex doors) are locked from the inside. If you stay for the fellowship time after worship, please remember to exit by the side doors rather than the Narthex doors. Thank you for your cooperation!

THE GOOD SAMARITAN FUND

The Good Samaritan Fund is designated for emergency financial relief to members and friends of Grace Church. Only the pastor and person in need know who receives assistance from the fund.

Donations to the Good Samaritan Fund can be made at any time, in any amount. If you would like to help, please place a check in the offering plate made out to Grace Church with "Good Samaritan Fund" on the memo line. Thank you!

If you or someone you know from our church family is in need of assistance, please contact Pastor Rob directly.

SUNDAY**MONDAY****TUESDAY**

DR = Dining Room
GSR = Good Shepherd Room
S = Sanctuary

December

4 Second Sunday of Advent

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education classes
 9:45 a.m. - Choir rehearsal (Room 12)
 11:00 a.m. - Worship with Holy Communion (S)
 5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)

5

7:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)

6

6:00 p.m. - Man-Kind Project (DR)
 7:00 p.m. - Top Shelf Theology

11 Third Sunday of Advent

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education classes
 9:45 a.m. - Choir rehearsal (Room 12)
 11:00 a.m. - Worship and Christmas Cantata (S)
 5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)

12

7:00 p.m. - Finance & Property (Rm. 3)
 7:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)

13

6:00 p.m. - Man-Kind Project (DR)
 7:00 p.m. - Top Shelf Theology

18 Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education classes
 9:45 a.m. - Choir rehearsal (Room 12)
 11:00 a.m. - Worship (S)
 5:00 p.m. - Soup Kitchen
 5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)
 7:30 p.m. - Weihnachtgottesdienst in deutscher Sprache (S)

19

7:00 p.m. - TFC marketing comm. (Room 3)
 7:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)

20

6:00 p.m. - Man-Kind Project (DR)
 7:00 p.m. - Top Shelf Theology (Magoo's)

25 Christmas Day

No Worship Service this morning!
 5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)

26

7:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)

27

6:00 p.m. - Man-Kind Project (DR)
 7:00 p.m. - Council meeting (Room 3)

WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

	<p>1 World AIDS Day 10:30 a.m. - Advent Study (Hmwd) 6:00 p.m. - Zumba 6:30 p.m. - GAMMA (Room 13)</p>	<p>2 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (13)</p>	<p>3 9:00 a.m. - Men's Breakfast (Bob Evans) Christkindlmarkt</p>
<p>7 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (DR) 7:00 p.m. - PFLAG (Room 3)</p>	<p>8 10:30 a.m. - Advent Study 6:00 p.m. - Zumba 7:00 p.m. - TFC board (Room 3)</p>	<p>9 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>14 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (DR)</p>	<p>15 10:30 a.m. - Advent Study 6:00 p.m. - Zumba 6:00 p.m. - FCHD 6:30 p.m. - TFC (3)</p>	<p>16 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)</p>	<p>17 4:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church event</p>
<p>21 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (DR)</p>	<p>22 10:30 a.m. - Advent Study (Homewood) 6:00 p.m. - Zumba class (GSR)</p>	<p>23 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)</p>	<p>24 4:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church worship service (S) 7:00 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas Eve worship (S)</p>
<p>28 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (GSR)</p>	<p>29 6:00 p.m. - Zumba class (GSR)</p>	<p>30 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (DR)</p>	<p>31 New Year's Eve</p>



**A LOOK
at the
BUDGET**

Treasurer's Report

October 2016

Income: \$15,053.78
Expenses: \$16,139.71
Difference: - \$1,085.93

Year-to-date (as of 10/31)

Income: \$159,415.23
Expenses: \$199,300.95
Difference: - \$39,885.72

Giving Options at Grace Church

Boxes of offering envelopes are available in the Narthex for anyone who would like to use envelopes for regular giving. Simply pick up a box and write your name next to the envelope number that you've chosen.

If you would rather skip the checks and envelopes and give electronically, we now have **2** options:

1. You can sign up for our super-convenient *UCC e-Giving* program and have a regular, recurring donation drafted out of your checking or savings account, or charged to your credit card. (To get started, simply pick up an authorization form in the Narthex or the Library, or call the church office.)

or

2. ***You can now make donations on our website using PayPal!*** Simply click the button at the bottom of the home page - www.grucc.com!

If you decide to participate in our electronic giving programs, you can pick up some "I give electronically" cards to place in the offering plate on Sunday mornings.

OUTREACH

THANK YOU!

for your continued support of our Grace Groceries program!

Although non-perishable food items are always needed at the Food Bank, now that the cold weather is here, please also consider donations of gloves, hats and scarves for those in need.

UCC Special Offering for December:
The Christmas Fund
for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

HOW THE FUNDS ARE USED

One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees - the funds do not support programs or institutions, but people. With your continued generosity, more individuals will receive the support of the Church in their time of need.

MONTHLY PENSION SUPPLEMENTATION

for 464 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees

Our retired clergy and lay employees rely on this income supplementation for basic needs such as food, utilities, and living and medical expenses. Funds to meet this need come from three sources: the Christmas Fund Offering, Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), and the Ministerial Assistance Fund. The amount of pension supplementation totaled \$1,500,203 in 2015.

QUARTERLY HEALTH PREMIUM SUPPLEMENTATION

for 235 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees

These funds subsidize premiums for the UCC Medicare Supplement Plan with Rx so that individuals can afford and receive quality health care. Assistance totaled \$452,561 in 2015.

CHRISTMAS "THANK YOU" GIFT CHECKS

given to 528 retired UCC clergy and lay church employees

This special gift at Christmas time reminds these Veterans of the Cross that they have not been forgotten and that the Church is grateful for their service. Gifts totaled \$211,200 in 2015.

EMERGENCY GRANTS

for 58 active/retired UCC clergy and lay employees

Sometimes those who serve the Church need our help, and emergency funds are available to assist in covering costs that arise unexpectedly - for example, large medical expenses, or home damage resulting from natural disasters. Emergency assistance totaled \$91,694 in 2015.

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

Advent Group Studies: “The Redemption of Scrooge”

Join us during the 4 weeks of Advent as we discuss “The Redemption of Scrooge,” from Matt Rawle’s *The Pop in Culture Series*.

Ebenezer Scrooge is a man in dire need of a second chance. Is redemption possible for such a greedy, dark and sad character? “The Redemption of Scrooge” shows us how the teachings of Jesus can be found in Dickens’ Christmas classic. From the ghosts of Christmas past, to the Life of the present, and the resurrection of Christmas future, this Advent study will “bless us every one” and reinvigorate our spiritual journeys as we look at this familiar story through the lens of faith.

You’ll have 2 chances each week to join the discussion:

- On Thursday mornings at 10:30, beginning December 1st, we’ll meet at Homewood for a traditional group study incorporating the book and the DVD lessons.
- On Tuesday evenings, we’ll be reviving our Top Shelf Theology group, using the discussion questions from *The Redemption of Scrooge* as conversation starters. We’ll meet at Magoo’s Restaurant and Pub at 7:00 p.m. beginning November 29th.

Please join us as we “Go from ‘Bah, Humbug!’ to a Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!”

IMPORTANT: Christmas Worship Services

This year, Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. We will hold our traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service at 7pm on Saturday, December 24th; however, at this time, we are NOT planning to have a worship service on Christmas morning.

If you desire a worship service on Christmas morning, *and are willing to support the service with your presence*, please speak to Pastor Rob as soon as possible.

For All the Saints

Nicholas Ferrar - December 1st (1637)

Born in 1592, Ferrar was the founder of the Christian community located on the estate of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire, England. Prior to establishing the community, Ferrar had been an exemplary scholar at Cambridge (Clare Hall), spent several years traveling extensively throughout Europe, and had served as a member of Parliament and as Deputy-Treasurer of the Virginia Company.

Despite Ferrar's involvement in political and business ventures, he appears to have preferred a prayerfully-ordered, contemplative life. The manor at Little Gidding was purchased in 1625 by Ferrar's mother to provide such a retreat, and was soon occupied by numerous members of the Ferrar family, by several of their friends, and by their respective servants. Under Ferrar's direction, the estate's buildings (including a chapel) were renovated, a school was organized for the resident children (which later included children from the surrounding area), and a dispensary established as a center from which to distribute necessary food and medicine to sick and poor neighbors. Ferrar was ordained a deacon of the Church of England by Bishop William Laud on Trinity Sunday, 1626.

The occupants of Little Gidding were devoted to an austere and disciplined life of prayer and work. On weekdays, short services of hymn singing, psalm readings, and Gospel lessons occurred hourly from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., with leadership shared by male and female members of the community. Ferrar devised a lectionary system by which the whole of the Psalter was completed each day and the four Gospels were read in their entirety each month. The group gathered daily in the chapel for matins, the litany, and evensong according to the *Book of Common Prayer*. In addition, every night, two members of the community kept watch from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., and during those four hours they were expected to recite, by alternating verses, all one hundred and fifty Psalms.

Writings from the community, which remained in existence for at least twenty years, survive in the form of recorded conversations or stories produced from what became known as the "Little Academy," a discussion group organized to address matters intellectual, devotional, and moral. The literature and prayer of this community, in turn, inspired the creation of a poem by T. S. Eliot: "Little Gidding," the last of his *Four Quartets*.

- K B. Westerfield Tucker

An Update from the Grace Church Choir

As you already know, we have been invited to perform in Wittenberg, Germany at the World Reformation Exposition on August 25, 2017! 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and Wittenberg is the place where Martin Luther nailed the *Ninety-five Theses* to the door of the cathedral, beginning the Reformation. It is a HUGE honor to be a part of this celebration!!

Over the next several months, we will continue to hold fundraisers to help us pay for our airfare to Germany; however, a wonderful and generous opportunity is before us. We have received a challenge from an **anonymous source** to help raise funds for the trip. Until December 31st, 2016, this generous donor **will match any cash donations from other Grace Church members up to \$2,500!** So if we can raise \$2,500 in cash donations, we will have \$5,000 towards our airfare! Please help us make the goal by giving a donation as you are able. You can place a check in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. (Please write Choir Germany trip in the memo line.) Thanks so much!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Russell Haak
2 Jennifer Kaufman
7 Millie Davis
Dave Keyes
11 Cynthia Wachter
12 Henry Campbell
14 Bob Failor
15 John Taylor



17 Ted Haas
18 Charlotte Hoover
24 Mary Lou Thomas
29 Carol Garrison
Lorretta Mercer
Debbie Shores
31 Karla Robeson

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES



*Paula and Robert Pendergraft
December 21st*

*Paul and Miriam Himes
December 31st*

Grace Church Leadership Directory

COUNCIL OFFICERS

President	Patti Flanders-Lombardi	301-865-2984
Vice President	Jerry Princler	301-898-3877
Secretary	Vonnie Crum	301-898-5755
Treasurer	Lloyd Taylor	301-898-9259
At-Large	Donald Toms	240-446-7378
At-Large	Lisel Powell	240-651-5380

COMMISSION CHAIRS

Administrative	Steve Robeson	301-639-7039
Congregational Life	Matt Bonin	845-326-7468
Finance and Property	Eric Black	724-910-9295
Outreach	Sarah Travis	
Worship and Education	Jean Barrick	301-663-1203

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Robert Apgar-Taylor, Pastor
Jonas Dawson, Director of Music and Organist
Tammy Eyler, Nursery Attendant
Tom Tobery, Caretaker
Tara Plyler, Administrative Associate

Telephone: 301-662-3312

Email: admin@grucc.com

Web Site: www.grucc.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday

SUNDAY WORSHIP:

11:00 a.m.

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

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