

The Grace Vine

Grace United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

25 East 2nd Street

Historic Downtown Frederick, Maryland

FEBRUARY 2018

In this issue:	Page:
Birthdays & Anniversaries	5
Calendar	Center
Caring and Sharing	5
Congregational Life	4
Daily Lectionary Readings	Insert
Finance & Property	6
From the Pastor	2
Leadership Directory	15
Outreach	10
Worship & Education	12

Important Dates at a Glance

Saturday, February 10

9:00 a.m.

Men's Fellowship Breakfast

Details on page 4

February 10-17

Emergency Family Shelter at Grace
Volunteers needed - see page 11

Wednesday, February 14

7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Worship

Sunday, February 18

Volunteers from Grace Church
serve at the Soup Kitchen

See page 10 for details

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

This has been an interesting year of firsts. This year we saw Christmas Eve fall on a Sunday. I don't remember that happening in my ministry before. After some research I realized it did, but that year I was teaching Religion in a parochial school and not in parish ministry, so I guess I didn't really care about it. This year Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day and Easter is on April Fool's Day! There is a sermon in there, isn't there?

As we begin February, we are aware of the cold barren world around us. The days are short, the sky is greyer than usual, our world seems to be dormant. Even for those of us who like winter (I am not one), there is often in February a yearning for the warmth and light of Springtime. I find myself yearning for March.

But how appropriate that this is the time of Lent: cold, dark, barren. During the Lenten season we journey the dark and barren road. We face the parts of life that lead us away from our covenant with God and we prepare ourselves to renew that covenant as our hope is renewed with the joy of the resurrection.

We need dark times. We need the gift of loneliness and sadness once in a while. We need to appreciate the difficult moments of life so that we can truly value the blessings of the good times. If your marriage never has difficulties, how will you ever truly appreciate the very good times? Life can't always be perfect and happy. Religions that focus on the prosperity side of faith and teach how much God wants to bless you do a disservice to the realities of life. Life is not about prosperity and blessings. Sure, they are there and they are wonderful when they happen. But Lent teaches us that there can be value in life even when the days are cold and dark. Lent reminds me that in the midst of February, March is coming. Pastor Tony Campollo reminds us that even on the darkest Friday afternoon...Sunday's coming!

May we enter this season and find in its darkness a sense of the abiding presence of our God. And may that reminder lead us through the darkness of life with sure and certain hope of the glory of the resurrection.

Have a wonderful and blessed February!
Pastor Rob†

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.

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

It's that time of year again...

Wondering if church events and activities are canceled due to the weather? There are several ways that you can find out:

CALL the church office (301-662-3312) and press 7 for the Inclement Weather Hotline. This voice mailbox will be updated as soon as a decision is made to cancel any services or activities.

CHECK your email. (Make sure we have your current email address!)

VISIT the church's website, www.grucc.com or our Facebook page.

We will make every effort to get these methods of communication updated as early as possible. Please be aware that power outages affect ALL of these methods of communication.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The submission deadline for the March issue of the *Grace Vine* newsletter is Monday, February 19th. The newsletter will be ready for pickup from the Narthex on Sunday, February 25th.

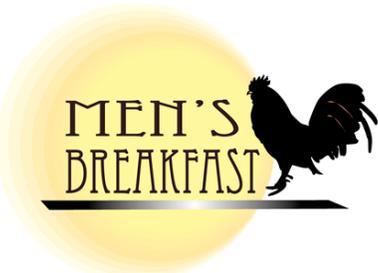
If you currently receive a paper copy of the *Grace Vine* newsletter, but would prefer to receive the newsletter by email, or read it online, please call or email the church office. Thank you!

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 Friday updates, please email the church office to be added to the list.

A friendly reminder from Pastor Rob:

Are you planning an event at the Church? If so, PLEASE remember to call Tara in the church office and make sure to get on the calendar ASAP. This means BEFORE you make plans, invite people, advertise, etc... The Church is getting increasingly busy throughout the week and we'd like to avoid embarrassing double bookings. Thanks so much!!

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



Men's Fellowship Breakfast

Saturday, February 10th
9:00 a.m.

Bob Evans on Route 40 (at the end of the Golden Mile)
All men are invited to join us!

Greeters and Fellowship Hosts Needed

Volunteer greeters are needed every Sunday morning to welcome our members and guests to worship. Volunteer fellowship hosts provide snacks and drinks after worship on the first and third Sundays of each month.

On the last Sunday of every month, the Congregational Life Commission will host a birthday party for everyone who celebrated a birthday during that month. (Please be sure that your birthday is on file with the church office so that you can be recognized!)

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 or speak to Rob Apgar ("Cop Rob").

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.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2 Lucien Winegar
5 Doug Crum
Matt Wright
19 Karen Kehoe



19 Lloyd Taylor
20 Holly Young
24 Rob Apgar-Taylor
28 Kelly Neuens

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY



*Bob Davis and Guy Johnson
February 7th*

Do you get cold in a big drafty church? Please know that there are knit shawls available for you to use as you need. They are spread throughout the Sanctuary. Please ask an usher if you don't see one near you. Many thanks to Pam Marshall for this idea and for making the shawls!

Caring and Sharing

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

Millie Davis
801 Pine Ave.
Frederick, MD 21701

Joe Free
1117 Rocky Springs Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

Pam Kehne
1632 Wall Dr.
Pasadena, MD 21122

Betty Linton *NEW*
990 Waterford Dr.
Unit 206
Frederick, MD 21702

Karlene Kaufmann
2100 Whittier Dr.
Apt. 405
Frederick, MD 21702

Jean Gaver
7407 Willow Rd.
AL 250
Frederick, MD 21702

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

FINANCE AND PROPERTY

Treasurer's Report



A LOOK at the BUDGET

December 2017

Income: \$74,040.17
Expenses: \$29,902.97
Difference: \$44,137.20

2017 Year-End

Income: \$239,760.02
Expenses: \$239,413.12
Difference: \$346.90

Offering Envelopes available in the Narthex

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 on the sign-up sheet next to the number that you've chosen.

Please discard any remaining offering envelopes that you have from 2017!

Envelope numbers have been re-assigned for the new year, and if you use last year's envelope (unless you took the same number) then your offering will be credited to someone else!

If you prefer to give electronically, we offer **2** options:

(a) the *UCC e-Giving* program allows you to have a regular, recurring donation drafted out of your bank account, or charged to your credit card. (*To get started, simply pick up an authorization form in the Narthex, or contact the church office.*)

(b) make donations through 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.

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.

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:Reprinted from the 2017 Year-End Giving Statements:
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:Dear Friends,
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:Over the past few years, we have spoken about, prayed about and worked
:hard to close the budget gap at Grace Church. I challenged you to help
:make this a reality by my first sabbatical. I knew this was a large task but
:that we could come darn close to making it a reality. That time is upon us
:and I am so happy to tell you that 2017 was a very good year at Grace!

:In 2016, we covered our daily expenses, but still took \$24,000 from the
:Housing reserves to cover the pastor's annual housing allowance. We antici-
:pated that. However, we ended 2017 and will NOT need to transfer the en-
:tire \$24,000 as we have every year in the past. This means we are being
:more faithful in our giving, we are in a healthier financial place than we have
:been in years, and the Housing reserve (from the sale of the parsonage
:many years ago) will last longer.

:I can't thank you enough for all you have done to make this happen. Let's
:make it a great 2018 and may we continue to strive to be faithful stewards
:of the gifts we have been given.

:Thanks again!
:

:Pastor Rob†
:

SUNDAY**MONDAY****TUESDAY**

February 2018

4 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education classes
 11:00 a.m. - Worship and Holy Communion (S)

5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)

5

6:30 p.m. - TFC
 Young Adult Group
 (2nd floor)

6

6:30 p.m. - Man-Kind Project (DR)

11 Transfiguration

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education classes
 11:00 a.m. - Worship (S)

5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)

12

7:00 p.m. - Finance
 & Property (Rm. 3)

13

6:30 p.m. - Man Kind Project (13)

18 First Sunday in Lent

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education classes
 11:00 a.m. - Worship (S)

5:00 p.m. - Soup Kitchen
 5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)

19 President's Day

6:30 p.m. - TFC
 Young Adult Group
 (2nd floor)

20

6:30 p.m. - Man-Kind Project (DR)

25 Second Sunday in Lent

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education classes
 11:00 a.m. - Worship (S)

5:00 p.m. - Redemption City Church (S)

26**27**

6:30 p.m. - Man-Kind Project (DR)
 7:00 p.m. - Council meeting (Rm. 3)

WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
		1 6:00 p.m. - FREE Zumba Class (GSR) 6:30 p.m. - GAM-MA (2nd floor)		2 Groundhog Day 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (GSR)		3	
7 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (DR)		8 6:00 p.m. - Zumba 6:00 p.m. - TFC Youth Comm. & Board (3)		9 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (GSR)		10 8:00 a.m. - EFS Setup 9:00 a.m. - Men's Breakfast (Bob Evans) 6:00 p.m. - EFS arrives (DR)	
14 Ash Wednesday 12:00 p.m. - Catoctin Ministerium (GSR) 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (GSR) 7:00 p.m. - Ash Wednesday Worship		15 10:30 a.m. - Lenten Study (Hmwd) 6:00 p.m. - Zumba 6:00 p.m. - FCHD (Room 13) 6:30 p.m. - Lenten Study (Room 3)		16 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (GSR)		17 8:00 a.m. - EFS clean-up (DR)	
21 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (DR)		22 10:30 a.m. - Lenten Study (Hmwd) 6:00 p.m. - Zumba 6:30 p.m. - Lenten Study (Room 13)		23 8:30 p.m. - N.A. meeting (GSR)		24	
28 6:30 p.m. - TFC Youth Group (DR)	<p align="center">DR = Dining Room GSR = Good Shepherd Room S = Sanctuary</p>						

OUTREACH



The Youth Group is hosting a Souper Bowl of Caring fellowship on Sunday, February 4th. Please join us for hot soup and chili right after worship. We will be collecting non-perishable food items, as well as monetary donations to support the Frederick Food Bank.

More than 28 years ago, the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group:

"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."

Since that day, more than \$135 million has been raised for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that is transforming the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving.

Through this mission, young people learn what it's like to make a positive difference in the world - as they collect food, raise money and volunteer to work in charities that provide shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry and compassion to those in need.

Be part of this movement that is sharing God's love with those in need. Please give generously on Super Bowl Sunday, February 4th. Every dollar and non-perishable food item donated here at Grace goes to the Frederick Food Bank at the Community Action Agency.

Service Opportunity

Did you know that volunteers from Grace Church serve at the Frederick Community Action Agency's Soup Kitchen on the 3rd Sunday of even months? It's a rewarding mission experience and we always have fun!

Our next service date is **Sunday, February 18th**. Won't you join us? Please speak to Carol Garrison or Sarah Travis.

Food Drive



THANK YOU

for your continued generous support of
the Frederick Food Bank!
Our Grace Groceries collection for
January was **103** items!

The Frederick Foodbank, operated by the Frederick Community Action Agency, is in need of non-perishable food items such as peanut butter, pastas, rice, spaghetti or tomato sauce, cereal, canned fish and canned meats.

The Emergency Family Shelter

Grace Church hosts the Emergency Family Shelter for one week every quarter. Our upcoming host dates are February 10th-17th. New volunteers to this program are always welcome! Volunteers must be over the age of 18, and a background check is required. Please contact the church office or speak to Sarah Travis or Carol Garrison for an application.

In addition to the trained volunteers who work with the shelter guests, we welcome anyone who would like to help with the set-up before the shelter comes, and the clean-up after its departure. This month we will need assistance after worship on Sunday, February 4th, on Saturday morning, February 10th, and on Saturday morning, February 17th. Thank you in advance!

FREDERICK SOUP KITCHEN NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The Frederick Soup Kitchen, operated by the Frederick Community Action Agency, is in need of volunteers to staff the soup kitchen and serve food to homeless individuals and needy families. The Frederick Soup Kitchen serves a free evening meal 7 days a week to as many as 110 hungry people a night.

Volunteers are needed Monday through Friday from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. to serve prepared meals and then clean up. It is an enjoyable and rewarding volunteer activity that does not require any special skills. (Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age.)

For more information or to sign-up to volunteer, please contact Sarah McAleavy, Supervisor at 301-600-6263 or smcaleavy@cityoffrederick.com.

Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership (SHIP) of Frederick County

According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are an estimated 1.5 million public school students who experience homelessness each year. These youth live in a variety of unsafe, temporary situations, including cars, parks, the homes of others, shelters, and motels.

In Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), at the conclusion of the last school year (June 2017), 822 youth had experienced homelessness during that same period. Of that number, 123 students were classified as “unaccompanied” and not living under direct supervision of a parent or guardian. Homeless students were found in 61 out of the 66 schools in the Frederick County School System. This issue cuts across all grades and all ethnic lines. These children are highly vulnerable for abuse, neglect, and trafficking. And sadly, the numbers continue to grow each year.

SHIP of Frederick County works closely with Frederick County Public Schools personnel at the school level to provide much-needed items on a regular basis. These supports include hygiene items, new clothing and shoes, youth activities and experiences, and emergency shelter.

Tax-deductible contributions can provide the following much needed items:

\$30 - a child will receive a new pair of shoes

\$40 - a child will receive a new outfit for school

\$65 - a child will receive one night of safety and shelter in a local motel

\$95 - a child will receive registration and equipment for a sports activity

To find out more about SHIP and to learn how you can donate and/or volunteer, go to www.shipfrederick.com.

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION



*Ash Wednesday Worship Service
and Imposition of Ashes*

Wednesday, February 14th

7:00 p.m.

Lenten Group Study for Adults:
"What Makes a Hero?" by Matt Rawle

The study begins on Thursday, February 15th with a morning session at Homewood at 10:30, and an evening session at the church (with pizza!) at 6:30. We'll meet every Thursday through March 22nd.

**Candlemas/The Feast of the Presentation
February 2nd**

Also called The Purification of the Blessed Virgin (Greek Orthodox Tradition), Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, Candlemas is observed on February 2nd in the Western Church.

According to the Mosaic law a mother who had given birth to a man-child was considered unclean for seven days; moreover she was to remain three and thirty days "in the blood of her purification"; for a maid-child the time which excluded the mother from sanctuary was even doubled. When the time (forty or eighty days) was over, the mother was to "bring to the temple a lamb for a holocaust and a young pigeon or turtle dove for sin"; if she was not able to offer a lamb, she was to take two turtle doves or two pigeons; the priest prayed for her and so she was cleansed. (Leviticus 12:2-8)

Forty days after the birth of Christ, Mary complied with this precept of the law, she redeemed her first-born from the temple (Numbers 18:15), and was purified by the prayer of Simeon the Just, in the presence of Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:22). No doubt this event, the first solemn introduction of Christ into the house of God, was in the earliest times celebrated in the Church of Jerusalem. We find it attested for the first half of the fourth century by the pilgrim of Bordeaux, Egeria or Silvia. The day (February 14th) was solemnly kept by a procession to the Constantinian basilica of the Resurrection, a homily on Luke 2:22, and the Holy Eucharist. But the feast then had no proper name; it was simply called the fortieth day after Epiphany. This latter circumstance proves that in Jerusalem Epiphany was then the feast of Christ's birth.

From Jerusalem the feast of the fortieth day spread over the entire Church and later on was kept on the 2nd of February, since within the last twenty-five years

Continued, next page

of the fourth century the Roman feast of Christ's nativity (December 25th) was introduced. In Antioch it is attested in 526 (Cedrenus); in the entire Eastern Empire it was introduced by the Emperor Justinian I (542) in thanksgiving for the cessation of the great pestilence which had depopulated the city of Constantinople.

No matter what the name or emphasis, Candlemas became a celebration of the end of the entire Christmas cycle. At times in Church History it was the official end of Christmas, much like Easter ends 50 days later at Pentecost. On a more secular note, celebrating Candlemas or The Feast of The Presentation on February 2nd was a way of "Christianizing" a popular pagan celebration of the anticipation of the coming of Spring and the lighter days. This celebration was popular in northern Europe and originally involved a honey badger, but in its present form involves a more American animal. We know it as Groundhog Day!

On Candlemas it has been the tradition to bring forth and bless all the candles which are to be used in the Church during the year. In olden days, lay people would bring all the candles from home and have them blessed as well. It was a reminder that as our candles give light to a darkened world, so Christ came to be a light to a people who lived in deep darkness (Isaiah). So too, we are called to be that light for the world around us. As on December 25th we celebrate the "Christ-Mass", so on February 2nd we remember the promise of Christ to be the light of the world by celebrating the "Candle-Mass".

Very rarely celebrated in protestant churches anymore, we did celebrate it at Grace Church a few years ago when it was actually on a Sunday! It's fun to remember our traditions and to remind ourselves that we stand in a very long line of faithful men and women who have come before us. We did not invent this thing called Christianity. It runs long and deep in our history and we are honored to be keepers of these traditions. In our home, we keep the tree up and the decorations lit until Feb 2nd as a way of commemorating the entirety of the Christmas cycle. (Plus...I just like the decorations!)

Upper Room Devotionals

Devotional booklets are available in the Narthex for anyone who would like a resource for daily prayer. There are regular and large-print versions, and there is no cost for the booklets, although donations are gladly accepted.

Grace Church Leadership Directory

COUNCIL OFFICERS

President	Missy Moxley	301-695-3852
Vice President	Jerry Princler	301-898-3877
Secretary	Vonnie Crum	301-898-5755
Treasurer	Lloyd Taylor	301-898-9259
At-Large	Oi Kettavong	240-457-2042
At-Large	Gary Johnson	240-460-0411

COMMISSION CHAIRS

Administrative	Steve Robeson	301-639-7039
Congregational Life	Matt Bonin	845-326-7468
Finance and Property	Mark Edwards	202-361-1559
Outreach	Sarah Travis	304-993-7233
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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