

**GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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## Newsletter December 2024

**Ephesians 5:8, "For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of the light..."**

It is ironic to me that light is such an important part of the Advent and Christmas season when it happens during the darkest season of the year. Every year when the time changes, I mourn the loss of the morning light and the evening sunsets. Usually, it is dark when I get up and dark when I get home.

Still light is one of the most pervasive signs that Christmas is coming. Houses are already lit with outdoor lights, Grace Church will decorate our church home on November 25, 10:00-2;00, and our homes are being decorated for the season, as well. We will light the Advent wreath beginning on December 1.

Our Silent Auction will be held on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 PM. This will be a great opportunity to have fun together, buy gifts for others or yourself, and raise some money for the ministries of Grace Church. Grace Church's Choir will be presenting their annual Cantata on Sunday, December 15, during the 9:30 service, this will be a special all music service. Christmas music is already playing on the radio reminding us to look for the Christmas Star, the bright lights of the city, and tells us to celebrate Jesus as the light of the world.

Still, we must remember the most important lights this Christmas will be the light of Christ shining in our hearts and on our faces. In **John 8:12** we read of Jesus saying, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."** So, as followers of Jesus God calls us to be the light of the world in **Matthew 5:14-16**, **"You are the light of the world. A city cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to the whole house."**

So, there you have it, it's not just what we are doing, it's how we are doing whatever we are doing. When asking what you can to bring to any gathering, remember the most important thing you can bring is the Spirit of Jesus. Make sure you bring the light of Christ, the peace of Christ, the hope of Christ and love of Christ, these are the what's most needed in every circumstance.

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us now and forever.

*Paster Vicki Downing*

Dear Friends,

Some of you may have already heard through the grapevine that I will be retiring at the next annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, scheduled for June of 2025. At that time, we will have completed sixteen years together. It has been one of the great joys of my life to serve here at Grace Church as your pastor. I have seen the face and spirit of Christ in your faces many times over the years. We have had many challenges, successes, and failures. We have served in many ministries over the years, such as Eagle and Dove, Open Hands Pantry, Emmaus, Springfield Soup Kitchen, and as Snyder Park Elementary School partners. We have served Chili, Soup, Beans, and Chicken & Biscuits Dinners. We have studied the Bible, had Advent and Lenten studies, hosted Narcotics Anonymous groups and welcomed every single person God has brought into our church. We have faithfully executed an Emergency Fund helping families from within the church and community with financial emergencies. We have produced and distributed over 15,000 gallons of laundry soap. We have raised the roof, replaced broken trusses, cracked ceilings, and removed pews and replaced them with comfortable chairs. We have refinished all the wooden floors in the building, including revealing the beautiful oak floors in the Wesley Room. We have laughed together, cried together, we have welcomed babies, baptized infants and adults, and we have celebrated the lives of the saints who have died during these sixteen years. I will hold Grace Church forever in my heart.

The UM Church has a mandatory retirement age for pastors of 72 years. I turned 72 on Oct 15, 2024. Even if there was not a mandatory retirement age, I believe it is time for me to retire. Truly, I have given my all here. I believe that God has a special pastor in mind for Grace Church, who will be able to take Grace Church to a new level of ministry in our community.

I will be here until June. I will work until then as I have to the best of my abilities. We have work to do together to get ready for your new pastor. This will be an exciting time of getting ready to see what wonderful things God has in mind for Grace Church. This comes with my deep love and appreciation for all that I have learned about love and grace during our years together. Let's not get lazy; there are important things for us to do to prepare for the future of Grace Church.

In Christ's Love, *Paster Vicki Downing*

# In Our Community:

## December Fellowship Hour

Sunday, December 8th, will be the next **Fellowship Hour** at Grace! Please join us in the Wesley Room after Sunday Worship Service to mingle and chat with the members of our community.



Everyone is invited to bring something to share, such as a casserole, salad, or dessert. This is a great time to meet new friends and learn more about your fellow Grace members.

## Silent Auction

Grace Church Silent Auction Fundraiser—Saturday, December 7 @ 6pm

Join us and get a start on your holiday shopping! We have something for everyone, from gift cards to handmade blankets. Invite a friend! If you are able, we are looking for donations of finger food on the night of the auction.



## Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Everyone is invited to join us at 7pm on Christmas Eve for a candlelight service. The time of waiting is nearly over; Jesus Christ is almost here.



## December Scriptures

Dec. 1	Psalms 29:2
Dec. 2	Peter 3:3-4
Dec. 3	Ezekiel 34:27
Dec. 4	Galatians 5:1
Dec. 5	Psalms 80:14
Dec. 6	Zechariah 8:12
Dec. 7	Isaiah 40:3
Dec. 8	Matthew 7:24-25
Dec. 9	Matthew 9:27-30
Dec. 10	Isaiah 40:1-2
Dec. 11	Mark 1:1-4
Dec. 12	Isaiah 35:3-4
Dec. 13	Matthew 18:12-14
Dec. 14	Matthew 11:28-30
Dec. 15	Isaiah 41:19-20
Dec. 16	2 Peter 3:8-9
Dec. 17	Isaiah 61:1-2
Dec. 18	1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Dec. 19	Psalms 25:4-5
Dec. 20	Matthew 1:1-2, 15-16
Dec. 21	Luke 1:13-15
Dec. 22	Luke 7:14
Dec. 23	Luke 1:26-29
Dec. 24	Luke 1:30-31, 38
Dec. 25	Luke 1:41-44
Dec. 26	Luke 1:46-49, 52-53
Dec. 27	Luke 2:1, 4-5
Dec. 28	Isaiah 9:2, 6
Dec. 29	Luke 2:6-7
Dec. 30	Matthew 2:11
Dec. 31	John 1:1-5

## Prayers Needed:

Cindy & Jack Yeager  
Phyllis & Larry Garber  
John Shough  
Janet Blazer  
Ron Stevens  
Jeann Powell



## Shower of Blessings

Recipient for December:

**Juanita Juergens**  
**627 Basswood Dr**  
**Springfield, OH 45504**





<u>Position</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>December</b>	Bruce Eckler
<b>Communion Set-up</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b>	Pastor Vicki
<b>Communion Servers</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b>	Donna Layne & Greg Hosier Donna Myers & Mary Olmstead
<b>Communion Clean-up</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b>	Betty Prosser
<b>Greeter - Front Door</b>	<b>Dec. 1, 8</b> <b>Dec. 15, 22</b>	Mary Ahlborn & Kim Stehle Deb & Ken Cooke
<b>Greeter – Sanctuary Door</b>	<b>Dec. 1, 8</b> <b>Dec. 15, 22</b>	Connie Michell & Donna Layne Ramona Keeton &
<b>Liturgist</b>	<b>Dec. 1, 8</b> <b>Dec. 15, 22</b>	Marilyn Martin Connie Mitchell
<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Dec. 1, 8</b> <b>Dec. 15, 22</b>	Larry Campbell & Dave Speas Donna Layne & Greg Hosier
<b>Advent Wreath Lighters</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b> <b>Dec. 8</b> <b>Dec. 15</b> <b>Dec. 22</b> <b>Dec. 24</b>	Marilyn & Tom Martin Donna Myers & Mary Olmstead Pat & Gene Hart Mary Ahlborn & Kim Stehle Becky Frantz & Jayme Tatro

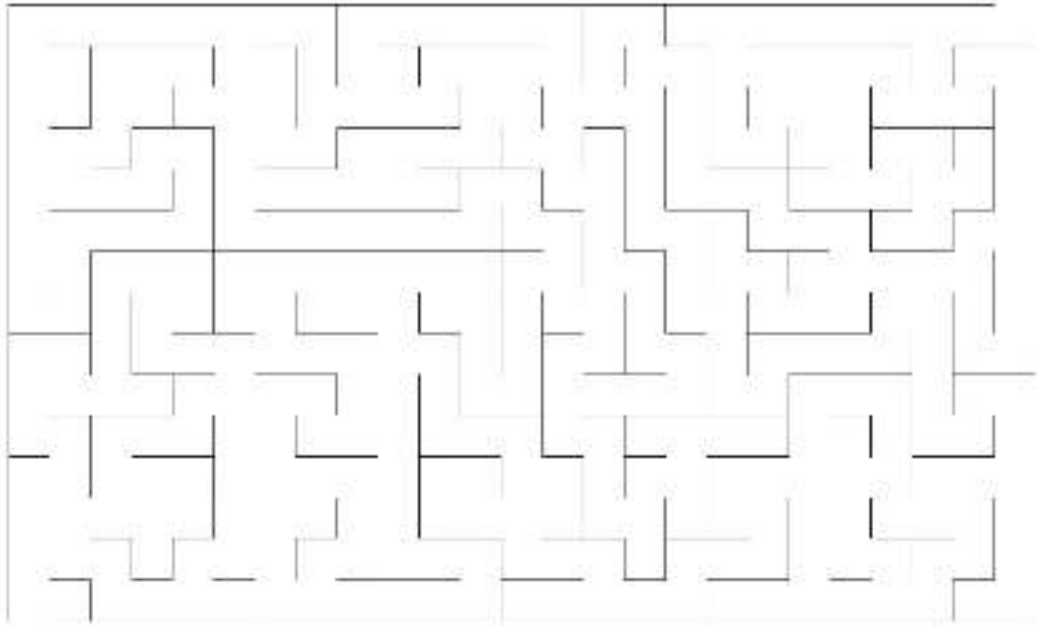
<u>Counters</u>		<u>Special Music</u>	
Dec. 2	Marilyn Martin & Connie Mitchel	Dec. 1	Choir
Dec. 9	Mary Ahlborn & Deb Cooke	Dec. 8	Jim Mayhugh
Dec. 16	Kim Stehle & Mary Ahlborn	Dec. 15	Cantata
Dec. 23	Marilyn Martin & Pam Smith	Dec. 22	Pattie Mumma
Dec. 30	Connie Mitchell & Jackie Gregory	Dec. 24	Pattie Mumma

# DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thurs-	Friday	Saturday
1 7pm NA	2 6pm Men's Bible Study	3 7pm NA	4 6:30pm Choir Practice	5	6	7 6 pm Silent Auction
8 Fellowship Hour after Sunday Worship 7pm NA	9 6pm Men's Bible Study	10 7pm NA	11 6:30pm Choir Practice	12	13	14
15 7pm NA	16 6pm Men's Bible Study	17 12pm Women of Faith 7pm NA	18 Choir Practice Cancelled	19	20	21
22 7pm NA	23 6pm Men's Bible Study	24 7pm Christmas Eve Worship Office Closed	25 Christmas Day – Office closed	26	27	28
29 7pm NA	30 6pm Men's Bible Study	31 New Year's Eve 7pm NA				

# Happy Holidays!

## Santa Holiday Maze



Can you help Santa get to his sled?

www.Livelaugh.com

Find the ten differences between the two pictures.

