

A Message from Pastor Mary

Happy New Year!

I love January 1st! The start of a new year is always exciting for me. It's a chance to start anew in every aspect of our lives...physically, emotionally, intellectually, and especially spiritually. We have the opportunity to take stock of our lives and see where we could improve ourselves. Do we need to get more exercise or more rest? Do we need to begin a journal of well-being? Do we need to take a class at Laurel Ridge or through the Parks and Rec? Do we need to begin reading our Bibles or a devotional every day?

The new year is perfect for making plans that will help us in life. It is a special gift from God. And it is God who will lead us into this new year. With God, there are fresh possibilities for us. We only need to claim it and live it. Then walk with God each day of the new year, celebrating the precious gift of life that is given to us.

But lest we only think of ourselves, I pray we will also look at this new year as new opportunities to serve others. To pray for others. To visit the sick. To give as you receive. Look for new ministries in which you can participate. Perhaps you even have an idea for a ministry Grace UMC can begin!

Thank you everyone who participated in any way in our Advent and Christmas Season worship services. Thank you for your generous gifts. May God begin a new and great work among us in 2024!

Blessings,

Rev. Mary Lock

Retired Clergy Report from Rev. Dr. Susan S. Garrett:

I unfortunately missed attending the Virginia Annual Conference last year because of a particularly badly timed case of Covid. In June I had flown to Connecticut to spend a week with my two sisters before visiting friends in Virginia and attending annual conference. I must have caught the virus while traveling, as three days after I arrived in Connecticut, I tested positive—by that point having spread Covid to my sister, my brother-in-law, and my cousin.

In spite of that unhappy event, I did manage to virtually attend the annual conference sessions in June. I also participated in the sessions schedule over the next year through Zoom, in addition to a few smaller group Virginia Conference meetings. I am so grateful for this wonderful communication tool, which has kept me in good

GRACE

NOTES

**A NEWSLETTER FOR
MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
OF GRACE
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH, MIDDLETOWN,
VA**

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2023



Pastor: Rev. Mary Lock

540-303-1076

marylock@vaumc.org

Worship Services:

Sunday Worship:

8:30 & 10:30 am

Sunday School:

9:30 – 10:20 am

Address:

PO Box 61, Middletown, VA
22645

Street: 7882 Main St,
Middletown, VA 22645

Phone: 540-869-1008

Website:

graceumcmiddletown-va.org

Email:

graceumcmiddletown@
gmail.com

contact with my beloved Virginia Conference, and thankful for all the ways in which I can keep up with my dear Grace Church community.

In terms of other ministerial activities, my major one this year was designing and leading a Grief Support Group at my church out here. It as well received. After ten weekly sessions, the group decided they wanted to continue meeting, so we changed to a monthly format, and have had new people joining the group periodically.

The most import event in my personal life is that I am moving—three miles away from my present apartment, to a really beautiful 700 square foot “Accessory Dwelling Unit” in my son Josh and family’s backyard, which hopefully will be soon after Thanksgiving this year.

My thanks-giving is continual, and I am grateful for all my friends and colleagues in Virginia. Blessings to you all as you celebrate the holidays!

Susan

THANK YOU’S!

A message from Middletown Community Meal Planning Committee:

Dear Grace UMC,

Thank you so much for sponsoring our Community Thanksgiving Meal. Together we served approximately 245 meals, a substantial increase from last year!

All of your time and talents helped make the event a huge success and demonstrated what we can accomplish when we work together!

We look forward to collaborating on next year’s community meal and wish each and every one of you a blessed and joyous holiday season!

A message from Ted Dix:

Dear Grace Family,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their time, musical talent, and generous Christmas gifts this season. The sanctuary, music, and services were all extraordinarily beautiful. I feel blessed to have become part of your worship life and look forward to many great years ahead.

Happy New Year!

Ted Dix, Organist and Choir Director

Thank you from Flower Committee:

Many thanks to all who participated in flower donations for Sunday worship services this past year.

If you would like to give flowers in honor or in memory of a loved one, we would appreciate your help.

You may purchase flowers at a place of your choice, donate from your yard or garden during summer months.

Please see Sherry Jenkins or Helen Steele or sign up on the flower chart as you enter the hallway to the Hamilton Fellowship Hall.

Blessings for the New Year! Helen Steele



Prayer Shawl Committee

Hats and scarves were blessed on Laity Sunday. A total of 367 hats and 33 scarves were distributed to Middletown Elementary School, WATTS, Winchester Rescue Mission, C-CAP, and others. Thank you to all who have donated yarn or money. You can see we are putting it to good use!

Lay Leader News

A big thank you to everyone for your generosity with the Thanksgiving food boxes—we collected 26 food boxes! Twenty went to C-CAP (Brian came to pick them up) and 6 went to Brookside Church for their new food pantry. So many people were fed with your donations.



OUR THEME FOR 2024 IS.....

Happy New Year! As is often the case when the new year rolls around, we take time to look at the past year while making plans for the new one. Last year, the theme our church worked on was “Feeding the Hungry”. We did a good job of that through donations to C-CAP, Bright Futures, Middletown Elementary School, volunteering with The Society of St. Andrew, and our holiday food boxes, just to name a few of the ways. These missions will be ongoing as Jesus tells us that feeding the hungry is feeding Him.

Our theme for 2024 is based on the church mission statement. Did you know that Grace had one? It is: *Empowered by the Holy Spirit, We will serve God by sharing the love of Jesus Christ.* This year, we will be looking at the church and how each part of the church is working to meet the mission statement.

The first part of the mission statement is “Empowered by the Holy Spirit”. We will be examining this portion through Pentecost. How? Each month, a different committee from the church will be featured. This will give them the opportunity to let you know who is on the committee, what they do, and how they fulfill this part of the mission statement. Each committee will also choose the recipient of the communion offering for their month.

It will be up to each committee to decide how to promote themselves. Here is the schedule for the committees for this first part of the mission statement:

January: Administrative Council, Chair – Charlie Higgs

February: Nurture (part of Outreach), Chair – Teresa Cutlip

March: Worship, Co-Chairs – Jody Osborne & Anne Legge

April: Lay Leadership, Lay Leader – Michelle Cissel

May: Library, Librarian – Sandy Good & Tara Walter

This year’s theme is an opportunity for you to learn more about the operation of the church, how you are already a part of that operation, and how you can take a more active role in helping Grace live its mission statement. Together, we will grow in fellowship and the love of Jesus Christ.

MISSIONS

Our church supports many missions, and you, the congregation, make it all happen. Many of our missions are ongoing: the Thrift Ship, C-CAP, Bright Futures, ABBA, Prayer Shawls, for example. Some of our missions are only once a year or occasionally. Examples of these missions are: Kits for conference, holiday food boxes, Middletown Elementary School, Kingsway Prison Ministry (Apple Tree), and Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes.

Some of us can freely donate, others can sometimes donate, and others wish they could do more. Any time you donate, whether it is financial, specific items, or your time, you help make our missions successful. To help you help others, we will be spreading out the collection times for some of our occasional missions throughout the year. Watch the large bulletin board in the social hall for more information.

SPECIAL EVENT



In honor of Veterans Day, we asked members to bring pictures of beloved Veterans. Thank you to everyone who brought a picture for us to see.

Outreach/Nurture Committee

Thank you to Teresa Cutlip for organizing a Ladies Luncheon on December 6th at Wayside Inn. We all had a delightful time meeting as a group again!

We are collecting food items for the Middletown Area Mission Action (MAMA) program during the months of January and February. See the table in the fellowship hall for specific items.



The Communion offering for February will be for Valentine's Day care packages for Grace members who are near and dear to our hearts! Further details will be announced soon!

Thrift Shop

Happy New Year from Grace UMC Thrift Shop Volunteers: Joyce Tucker, Lisa Higgs, Amy Beall, Betty Callis, Mary Lou Stallings, John Copeland, Tom Cirrani, and Lucy Peters.

The Thrift shop has enjoyed a most profitable 2023 and we thank all of you for your generous donations. All Thrift Shop money is used for missions which include but not limited to: UMCOR, ABBA, Bright Futures, Middletown Elementary School, church utilities, and Thrift Shop supplies. We also purchased the church's maintenance building located in the back of the church.

We are open Thursdays from 10 am to 3 pm, Fridays from 10 am to 3 pm, and Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm. Please stop in for a visit; we have coffee and snacks available.

Trustee Committee

Many thanks to Steve Beall, Gene Jenkins, Randy Jenkins, John Keller, and John and Mary Lock for mowing and trimming the church lawn throughout the season. Special thanks to John Copeland for taking the trash to the curb every week.

Trustees Committee



Save the Date

The **Administrative Council** will meet on Wednesday, January 17th at 6:30 pm.

Our next blood drive will be **Thursday, January 25th** from **11 am to 4 pm**. If you have any questions about the frequency of donating, please contact the local chapter of the Red Cross for further information. To schedule your donation, click [here](#)

We will hold a **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** on Tuesday, February 13th from 5 - 6:30 pm. Donation/Free Will Offering

Ash Wednesday Service will be February 14, 2023, at 6:00 pm. We will be preparing ourselves with Scriptures, Prayers and Ashes to walk through the Lenten days and onto Easter resurrection.

A Black History Month program will be held at Grace UMC on Saturday, February 24th from 4 pm to 7 pm. Dr. Diane Newman, Middletown Councilwoman, is coordinating the event. This event is open to the public and more information will be shared soon.

Deadline for the March/April Grace Notes Newsletter articles is February 23, 2024.



Finances At a Glance

The 2024 budget for Grace was approved by the Administrative Council on Dec. 10. Any questions can be directed to the Administrative Council.

A financial summary for 2023 will be distributed sometime in January.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES*

January	Date	February
	1	Leandra Hahn
Rosalie & Doug Cornwell*	2	
	3	
Michael Cutlip, David Garrett, James Reilly	4	
	5	
Joyce Owen	6	Sandra Good
Keller Cooley	7	
	8	
Alice Compton	9	
	10	
	11	Nell Lunde
	12	Lisa Higgs
	13	Myra & Steve Stewart*
	14	Mabel Frye Wetzel
	15	Diane Carper, Lisa & Charlie Higgs*
Rosalie Cornwell	16	Mary & Russ Shull*
	17	Susan Garrett
	18	Karson Rust
	19	
	20	
Landon Rust	21	
	22	Elise Paul, David Zimmerman
	23	Madison Roberts
	24	Linda Scothorn
	25	Avery Lunde
	26	Rachel Clowser
	27	
Tim Roberts	28	
Lisa Beauchamp, Joseph Lunde	29	
	30	
	31	

Please let us know if your special dates are missing or incorrect! 540-869-1008



Grace United Methodist Church
PO Box 61
Middletown, Virginia 22645

Church Office:

Diane Wittreich, Administrative Assistant
Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs 10 am – 2 pm
Phone: 540-869-1008

Prayer Requests during the week: Call or email the church office or call Barbara Steele 540-869-2430. Please leave a message if prompted.

Grace Thrift Shop Hours: Thursdays & Fridays, 10 am – 3 pm; Saturdays, 10 am – 1pm. Donations accepted during shop hours.

Electronic Donations: Visit our website and look for PayPal Donate link, or visit:
<https://paypal.me/GraceUMCMiddletownva>