

## A Message from Pastor Mary

Sometimes it is hard to know what to write in this Newsletter. What words of wisdom do I have? What advice can I give? This is especially true now. This issue of the Grace Notes is for the months of November and December – the Holiday months! With major holidays coming up, we will be filling our calendars with extra visits to or from family and friends. We have additional baking, shopping, and decorating to do. Our days are full of parties, dinners, and football games. Get the picture? We become busy! Or busier! Sadly, with the addition of extras, we tend to lower the normal things we do to make room for the new. We skip Sunday service to get ready for the family get-together. We lower our offering amount in order to purchase extra at the store. We skip the devotions, promising to make up the missed readings at night or next week, only to forget and never go back to them. Our priorities shift and our walk with God suffers.

That's why we wonder why we are not in the Christmas mood!!!

So, what do we do? We cut back the expectations we have placed on ourselves to decorate the perfect house, to bake the most cookies, to shop until we find the perfect gifts. We don't substitute holidays for God, we continue to make God the center of all holidays. Pray that we will have the courage to say "no" to extras in order to have time to be with God. Perhaps we could also serve in a ministry setting rather than watch the game or holiday movie on television.

Perhaps this could be the year that the holiday seasons will reflect our love of God rather than our love for things. Perhaps this is the year that someone will be blessed because you took the time to help them. Perhaps this is the year that you will be caught in the holiness of Thanksgiving and Christmas – and be blessed by the holidays, not tired from them!!

May your list of blessings be endless at Thanksgiving. May your Advent be well kept.

And may your Christmas be holy, happy, and safe.

Blessings to you all!

Pastor Mary

## Nine Weeks With God

Pastor Mary continues Nine Weeks With God. Each Friday, for 9 weeks, we will have time in the Sanctuary, for Communion, prayer (both silent and corporate), and reading of the scriptures and/or devotional readings. During the day, you can come and go as you

# 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

would like. Communion and materials for devotions, prayer time, and reading will be available as you come into the sanctuary. Nine Weeks With God continues through Friday, **November 10**.

## Communion Offerings

November – UMCOR

December – Care packages for shut-ins



## THANK YOU'S!

**T**hank you for all the prayers, the beautiful cards, the prayer shawls, and the meals. We love you all.

Thank you for your love,

Lisa, Clay, Mom, Eddy, Brandon, and Melissa

**T**o our Grace Church Family,

No words can truly express our deep appreciation for the prayers and many acts of kindness during our time of loss. You are surely a church showing God's love through action.

Mary Lou and the family of Neil Stallings

## WELCOME!

**W**e want to welcome, Tandy (Ted) Dix, as our new Organist/Pianist! His first Sunday playing for us was October 1<sup>st</sup>. It was fantastic to hear the organ being played again here at Grace!!

Tandy Edward (Ted) Dix hails from Westminster, Maryland, and holds degrees from Towson University, Westminster Choir College, and Peabody Conservatory in organ performance and music theory pedagogy. He was a finalist in the National Arthur Poister Scholarship Competition in Organ Playing, is a member of the national music honor society, Pi Kappa Lambda, and has performed throughout the United States and Europe, including The Basilica of St. Peter, Vatican City, Italy.



After a more than 30-year career as a full-time church musician and college professor he now resides in Winchester where he is also chapel organist at The Village at Orchard Ridge and enjoys his new part time career as a delivery driver for Advance Auto Parts. Aside from music he likes jigsaw puzzles, minor clock repairs, and spending time with his children Kati (13) and Tony (10) who live with their mother in Westminster.

Ted is grateful to have found Grace Church in Middletown and promises to do his best to provide spiritually uplifting music at a quality level. Please stop by the Choir Room, organ, piano, or Coffee Fellowship to meet him!

# Choir Voices Needed

## Message from Ted:

"I'd like to get as many folks together as possible for two Christmas Eve anthems. We'd rehearse the six Sundays prior from 9:45 to 10:15 am: November 12, 19, 26, December 3, 10, 17." If you are interested, please let him know!



## Prayer Shawl Committee

**Blessing of the Hats and Scarves:** Hats and scarves were blessed on Laity Sunday. A total of 367 hats and 33 scarves are being prepped for distribution. Thank you to all who have donated yarn or money. You can see we are putting it to good use!



## Lay Leader News

Thank you to all who participated in our Laity Sunday service on October 15th. It all came together perfectly!

A big thank you to everyone for your generosity with the Society of St. Andrew and the Thanksgiving food boxes. So many people will be fed with your donations. If you are unable to help financially, please consider donating your time. There are many organizations that need volunteers to fulfill their missions.



Thanksgiving food items and boxes



## SPECIAL EVENT



In honor of Children's Sabbath on October 22<sup>nd</sup> we asked members to bring pictures of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Thank you to everyone who brought a picture for us to see.

## PAST EVENTS

On September 5, 2023, we were privileged to host the wedding of Andres Gamez and Salome Swain from Dallas, Texas. Salome's parents and sister live here in Middletown and so a small ceremony was held at Grace UMC to allow them to be part of the wedding. We congratulate the couple!



## Congratulations Keller Cooley!

Keller was crowned King of Sherando HS Homecoming on 9/29/23.

Averi Thomas and Keller Cooley were crowned Sherando High School's Homecoming Queen and King during football halftime ceremonies on Friday at Arrowhead Stadium. Averi is the daughter of Darren and Kimberly Thomas and Keller Cooley is the son of Smith Cooley and the late Gretchen Cooley.

## Pastor Appreciation Month

During the month of October, we celebrated having Pastor Mary Lock as our pastor here at Grace UMC. She received many Thank You's throughout the month and we concluded with our 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Potluck Meal on October 29<sup>th</sup>. We had one service which included the wonderful Ambassadors of Joy throughout the service. A great time was had by everyone in attendance!



# Outreach

We are helping the Kingsway Apple Tree Project again this year. The gifts you provide will help fathers and mothers, in Virginia prisons, reach out to their children in the act of love in a manner that they would not be able to do without our assistance. There are envelopes on a Christmas tree in the entranceway to the sanctuary. Please take an envelope with the child's age, boy or girl, and the type of gift listed. **Do not wrap your gift (the guardians wrap and label each gift). You may also bring some rolls of wrapping paper and scotch tape.** Another way you can assist Kingsway in sharing the love of Christ and his birth is by bringing **individually boxed tubes of toothpaste (6 oz or smaller).** You may also donate to Kingsway by placing a check in your envelope with children's information, for the purchasing of these items. **All items need to be returned to Grace UMC no later than November 26<sup>th</sup> so that all the items can be taken to Kingsway in Harrisonburg together.**

The Outreach Committee will have a Ladies Luncheon on **December 6<sup>th</sup> at 12 Noon at Wayside Inn.** We look forward to seeing the ladies who signed up to attend.

We are collecting white socks, for women and men, for WATTS. Please place in the basket labeled WATTS.



## Save the Date

**November and December will be busy months for us at Grace UMC!**

**Middletown Community Thanksgiving Meal** will be held on **November 11** from 3 pm to 5 pm at Middletown Fire Department. This will be held after the Veteran's Day ceremony at the Middletown Veteran Memorial (Middletown Fire Dept. in case of rain) at 1 pm.

The Shenandoah River District Charge Conference will be held on **November 12** at 2pm at Macedonia United Methodist Church; anyone is welcome to attend!

**A Veteran's Day special recognition will be on November 12.** Please bring a picture of your Veteran(s) to be displayed on the table in the Garrett Room for all to see!

The Church will be closed for Thanksgiving on **November 23<sup>rd</sup>.** We hope everyone will have a safe and blessed holiday!

The Kingsway Apple Tree Project items are due on **November 26<sup>th</sup>.**

Pastor Mary will be starting an Advent Bible Study on **Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>** until **December 19<sup>th</sup>** from **1 – 2 pm** at Wayside Inn OR **from 6 – 7 pm** here at Grace.

The Outreach Committee Ladies Luncheon on **December 6<sup>th</sup> at 12 Noon at Wayside Inn.**

We will have a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion on **December 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Potluck Meal:** The next 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Potluck Meal is **December 31<sup>st</sup>** and we will have one service at 10 am. Please bring soup, sandwiches, or other type of finger foods to share!

The **Administrative Council** will call its next meeting, specifically for reviewing the Budget for 2024, on a Sunday yet to be determined, between services. The next scheduled meeting will be **January 17, 2024, at 6:30 pm.**

Our next blood drive will be **Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>** 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: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=graceum>



## Finances At a Glance

**M**any thanks to everyone who supports the church and the different missions such as UMCOR, ABBA, C-CAP and others through your financial gifts. However, undesignated contributions received in August and September have been less than expected with expenses exceeding income. These funds are used to pay Conference and District

apportionments, church operating expenses and salaries. Typically giving increases as we move into the final months of the year so hopefully this is only a short-term decrease in funds. Please consider and pray about what you can give and continue to keep Grace in your prayers as we serve the Lord both locally and globally.

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES\*

November	Date	December
Janet Cirrani, Marco Furman	1	Hannah Pembelton
	2	
	3	
	4	
Wanda Racey, Leah Hawkins	5	Jason Wisecarver, Grace Hope LeVan
Rachel Higgs Entsminger	6	Gary Strosnider
Karen Clowser	7	Andrew Paul
Leah Bowers	8	
	9	Bettie Callis
Frank Demko	10	
Brian Racey	11	Susan & Thom Bailey*
	12	Travis Tucker
	13	
Teresa Cutlip	14	
Susan Bailey	15	Ann Wisecarver
Daniel Cissel, Tom Cirrani, Amy Beall	16	
Owen Hahn	17	Sue & Wes Thornton*
	18	
Gail Hahn	19	
Richard Robinson	20	
	21	Roland White
William Rust	22	Thomas Quimby
	23	Gene Jenkins, Jr.
	24	
	25	
Russ Shull	26	Tom Keithley
	27	
Lee Demko	28	
	29	
Abby Tucker	30	Donna & Gary Crawford*
	31	Mary & Gene Dicks*



**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>