

A Message from Pastor Mary

Greetings in the Name of Christ,

As I write this, we are just at the beginning of the Lenten Season. I pray you are in the midst of a time of introspection. The internal look of ourselves (our hearts, our minds, our souls) is such an important work. We need to check what we do and just as important, what our motivations are for doing them. For instance, when we give our offering on Sunday mornings, do we give out of habit or to give thanksgiving to the Lord for all we have received from God? Giving the offering is a good thing, but the reason to give has moved from praise to God to a mindless habit. Lent is a great time to examine our motives and follow through with any changes we are shown to do by the Holy Spirit's nudging.

I also pray you will have a blessed Easter! What a wonderful time as we celebrate all that Jesus did for us on the cross and in the resurrection. With the flowers blooming, trees budding, and weather gradually turning warmer, we have Spring around the corner to remind us of our new growth in Christ.

I am so glad God gives us the opportunities we have to become closer to God, and to grow in our Christian faith. So often we mourn our sinfulness as humans, and yet forget that God provides us with opportunities such as Lent and Easter Celebrations to repent and grow.

I hope you continue to have a meaningful Lent and a glorious Easter!

Blessings,

Pastor Mary

Pastor Mary started a 6-week Lent Bible Study: The Seven Last Words of Christ on Tuesday, February 20th through March 26th. We meet at Wayside Inn from 1 pm to 2 pm.

We will have a follow up Lent Bible Study, The Next Words of Christ for 7-weeks starting on Tuesday, April 2 to May 14 at Wayside Inn from 1 pm to 2 pm.

Congratulations to Rev. Bill Wade for joining The Society of Saint Andrew Board of Directors beginning January 1, 2024. The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) is a national hunger relief nonprofit dedicated to reducing food waste through gleaning excess produce from farms. Rev. Bill Wade has been committed to the work of SoSA for over 30 years through his work as a pastor in the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Rev. Wade is particularly passionate about the ways SoSA reaches people of every age through "gleaning events... but also in developing material for teaching and devotional use, thus nurturing and encouraging mature disciples to feed God's children both physically

GRACE

NOTES

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

MARCH & APRIL 2024



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:

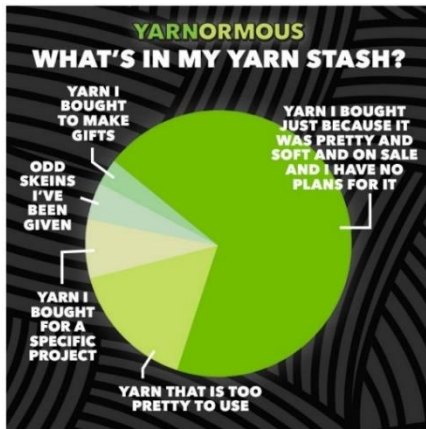
graceumcmiddletown-va.org

Email:

graceumcmiddletown@
gmail.com

and spiritually.” The Society of St. Andrew began in Virginia over 40 years ago, and actively gleans produce across the state to share with Virginians in need.

Prayer Shawl Committee



The Prayer Shawl committee would like to thank everyone for their support of our mission. We could not do what we do without you. We do need some help if we are to continue at the level we have these past few years. That help could be knitters or crocheters who would like to join the committee and our mission.

We are also going to need yarn. Do you know anyone who is looking to reduce their yarn stash or donate yarn from someone who is no longer able to use it? We could be glad to take it and put it to good use! All we ask is that the yarn be from a smoke-free home. Smaller quantities can be put in the box under the table outside of the office. For larger quantities, see Michelle. (Thanks to Joann Fabrics for the graphic!)

Missions

Mission Statement of Grace UMC: As we learn about how the different committees in the church lead us in living the church's mission statement, we come to those featured in March and April. In March, our focus is on the Worship Committee, chaired by Jody Osborne. Much of what they do is behind the scenes, so be sure to ask any of the committee members about how they serve Grace. In April, our focus is Lay Leadership. Our Lay Leader is Michelle Cissel. Each featured committee gets to choose the recipient of the communion offering for their month.

Ongoing Missions:



CCAP helps those in our community with food, clothing, and financial assistance, and they strive to help everyone who walk through the door as their resources allow. We have collection bins under the clothes rack for non-perishable foods, etc. For more ways to help CCAP, go to

www.ccapwinchester.org .

MAMA Program – This program helps the students at Middletown Elementary School. Their needs vary, but ways we have helped in the past include hats, supplies for the clinic, snacks, school supplies, and paying overdue lunch bills. There is a collection basket that will have what is currently needed listed. **Canned fruits, boxes of macaroni and cheese, and canned peas are being collected through March 10 for Easter food boxes.**

Prayer Shawl Committee – This committee provides prayer shawls to those who need comfort and prayers as well as hats and scarves to several organizations in the community who serve those in need. They are always in need of yarn. Worsted weight or sizes 4 and 5 are the most useful, but they can find a way to use whatever they are given. They have plenty of baby yarn currently.

Bright Futures Frederick/Winchester is currently supporting over 1,500 students in Winchester and Frederick County. We help with food for the backpack program, school supplies, and more as special needs arise. Look for the collection bin. Learn more about how you can help with Bright Futures at

www.brightfuturesfrederickcounty.org .

ABBA supports pregnant women, their newborns, and their families with education, resources, and more. There are baby bottles in several locations in the church for spare change.

Our own Thrift Shop – Bargain hunters, those on tight budgets, and the curious love shopping our Thrift Shop. Donations are accepted during open hours, and the Shop's proceeds help the church and the community.

Seasonal Missions:

Details on these missions are on the bulletin board and table at the back of the Fellowship Hall. These are larger mission projects. Help where you can, and your time can be the best donation of all.

Conference Kits are taken to Annual Conference. We are currently collecting items for **Hygiene Kits and Feminine Hygiene Kits**.

Society of St. Andrew – Your spare change can go a long way towards feeding the hungry in our area. There are **coin collection boxes that are due by September 29**. Watch for information on gleaning opportunities. Learn more about SoSA and sign up for gleaning at www.EndHunger.org.

Thanksgiving Food Boxes – This collection of non-perishable foods can provide food security and a holiday meal to those relying on food pantries. The **March focus is stuffing mix, canned fruit, and jars of applesauce**. **April's focus is canned tomatoes, canned corn, and canned mixed vegetables**. The full list is on the missions table.

Easter Choir Rehearsal & Performance Schedules

Adult Choir

March 3rd, March 10th, and 17th - Rehearsals in Sanctuary - 9:30-10:15am

March 17th - Sing at service - 10:30am

March 24th - Rehearsal in Sanctuary - 9:30-10:15am

March 31st - Sing at Easter Service - 10am

Handbell Choir

March 3rd - Play at both Lent III services

March 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th - Rehearsal in Sanctuary - 2-3pm

March 31st - Play at Easter service - 10am

Holy Week Services



Palm Sunday: Sunday, March 24th 8:30 am and 10:30 am

Holy Week Service with Communion: Thursday, March 28th at 6 pm. The church will be open from 5 pm to 7 pm to bring your Easter flowers

Good Friday: Church sanctuary will be open from 8 am to 12 pm for individual prayer and receiving flowers

Easter Celebration Service: Light breakfast available from 9 am to 10 am, One service at 10:30 am

Past Events

Thank you again to everyone who donated or was a volunteer for our **2nd Blood Drive** on Thursday, January 25th. We collected a total of 29 products (RC lingo), 23 whole blood and 6 power reds. Further information will be provided as it gets closer to our next blood drive date.

We had a **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** on Tuesday, February 13th from 5 - 6:30 pm. Thank you for everyone who came for pancakes, sausage gravy, cooked apples, drinks, and fellowship.

An **Ash Wednesday Service** was held on February 14, 2024, to prepare our walk through the Lenten days and onto Easter resurrection.

A **Black History Month program** was held at Grace UMC on Saturday, February 24th from 4 pm to 7 pm. Dr. Diane Newman, Middletown Councilwoman, coordinated the event. We enjoyed dancing from a youth praise dance ministry from Loving Souls Christian Church in Front Royal. Dr. Franklin Roberts, Second Guildfield Baptist Church in Front Royal and Middletown Heritage Society member Ellen Gant, among others, were speakers at the event.

Outreach/Nurture Committee

Many thanks to all who gave snack items for the Middletown Area Mission Action (MAMA) program during the months of January and February. The picture shows just a sampling of your generosity. **Canned fruits, boxes of macaroni and cheese, and canned peas are being collected through March 10 for Easter food boxes.**



We gave out 12 Valentine's Day care packages for our local Grace members who are near and dear to our hearts! We also mailed out Valentine's Day cards to Rev. Susan Garrett and to Rev. Christopher (Kit) Morse.

Thank You's

Many Thanks for your Valentine Day Greetings and extending to all the best of blessings during the coming days of Lenten Preparation for Easter.

Grace and Peace,
Christopher (Kit) Morse

Thank you to everyone for the Valentine's Day card. I appreciate your thoughtfulness, a lovely reminder of my Virginia friends.

Rev. Susan Garrett

Upcoming Events

The **Administrative Council** will meet on Wednesday, March 20th at 6:30 pm.

Deadline for the May/June Grace Notes Newsletter articles is April 23, 2024.

Vacation Bible School is coming back to Grace June 27-29, with our end-of-VBS presentation on June 30. We are just starting our planning, but please start thinking about how you are going to want to help. The program that was chosen has a camping theme, so decorating will be fun, and with June 30, being a fifth Sunday...Stay tuned for more information!



Finances At a Glance

Below is a summary of Grace Church's finances for 2023. Total undesignated offerings received to the General Fund increased 10.1% over 2022 while church expenses were unchanged from 2022 expenses. Many thanks for your financial support of the church and the various ministries during 2023.

Unfortunately, having to cancel services two Sundays in January due to snow and ice has not gotten 2024 off to a great start financially. Expenses exceeded revenue by \$2,002 (16.8%). While this may be a temporary decrease in funds, please pray about and give as you are led by the Holy Spirit.

Birthdays & Anniversaries*

March	Date	April
	1	Smith Cooley
Jesse Racey	2	
Jan Tusing	3	
Mary Beth Thompson, Joel Lock	4	Janet Keithley
Suzanne Furman, Melinda LeVan	5	
	6	Amanda Scheetz
Lincoln Hahn	7	
Gary Crawford	8	
	9	Jacob Charles Fauver
	10	Bardy Hinkle
	11	Carolyn Bell
Betty & Jock White*	12	Samara Quimby
	13	
Ray Steele	14	
	15	
Katie Fauver	16	
John Copeland	17	Donna Crawford
	18	
Gary Scothorn, Will Sperow	19	Amy & Steve Bell*
	20	John Keller
	21	
Rob Hahn	22	
Anna Clare LeVan	23	
Diane Wittreich	24	Myra Stewart, Corinne Cooley
Corinne Cooley, Bobby Wittreich, Allen Wittreich, Kayleigh Boone, Sarah Paul	25	Don Black, Michelle & Paul Cissel*
Kara Jenkins Gomke, Cate Lunde, Ellen Lunde, Gary Tusing	26	
	27	
Cynthia Wert, Teresa & Earl Cutlip*	28	
Bonnie Sperow	29	Patrick Chewning
J. Douglas Cornwell, Ann & John Copeland*	30	Amy Bowman
	31	
Jamie Beatty		



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>