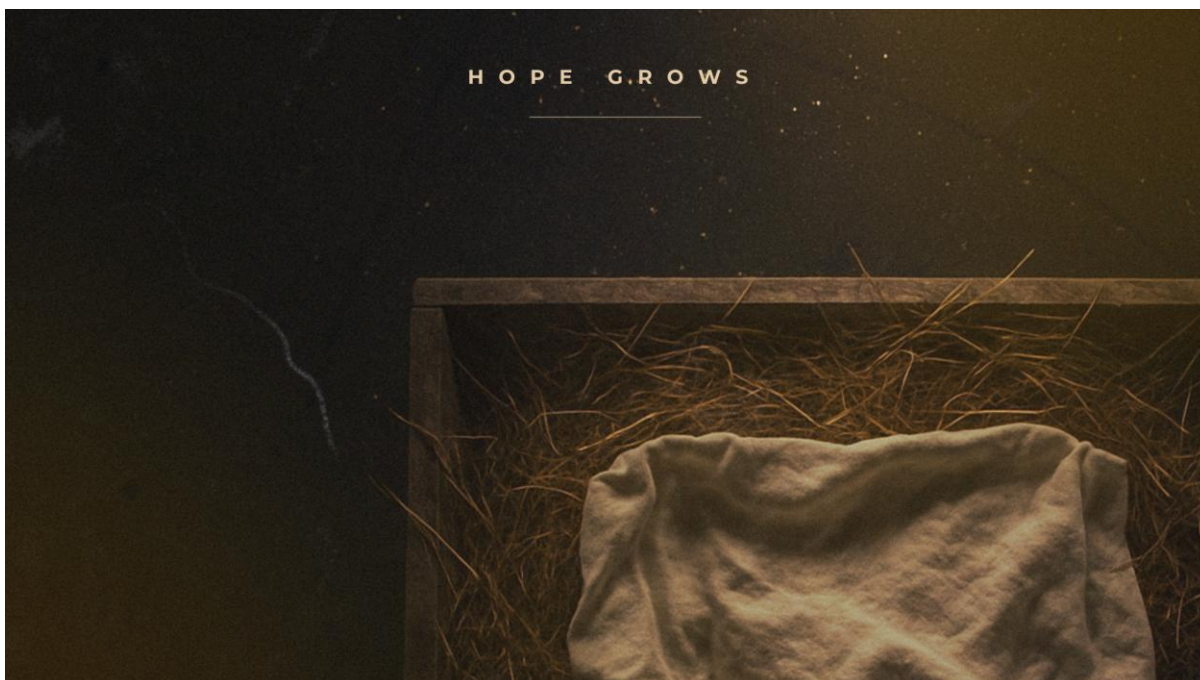




GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Church and Winter Streets, Hagerstown, Maryland
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Reverend Dionne T. Hall, Pastor

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If you are on Facebook, "like" our page at www.facebook.com/graceuntoyou

First Sunday of Advent
November 30, 2025
Sermon Series: From the Manger
Advent Theme: Hope Grows

Prelude 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme'

– Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The Light of Christ Enters the Sanctuary

Introit - He Came Down

He came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
Hallelujah forevermore.

Lighting the Advent Candle

John: A long time ago, a baby was born in a town called "House of Bread." His name was Jesus. Mary, his mother, laid him in a feeding trough to rest. Soon, he would grow up to be called the Bread of Life. He would fill their hungry bellies; then, he would feed their hearts with love and truth.

Congregation: Today, we light the candle of hope. Hope is believing things can get better with compassion and imagination.

Pastor: As we light this candle we are reminded that, from the manger, hope is growing...growing to be God with us. His name is Jesus, the Bread of Life.

All: Light the Advent candle, one: Now the waiting has begun; we have started on our way, time to think of Christmas day. Candle, candle, burning bright, shining in the cold winter night; candle, candle, burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Call to Worship (responsive)

Leader: Sojourners of faith, today we begin the journey to Bethlehem, to the city called “House of Bread.”

All: We take one step toward Christmas, the first step of many. Let this journey transform us from beginning to end.

Leader: Whether your belly is full or empty, whether your heart is broken or whole, look toward the manger, toward the stars over the city of David, and find hope.

All: We look with hope because Christ is coming to fill hearts and satisfy bellies with goodness and peace.

Leader: Come, let us worship as we journey to the House of Bread, where our Brother and Friend will be born.

All: Glory to God, there is hope today. Let us worship!

Opening Hymn “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring. By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

***Opening Prayer (unison)**

Loving God, we rehearse this beloved story, year after year, because, in this world where people are hungry and creation is suffering, the story gives us hope—that all people will be fed and creation will be restored! We gather to worship in this season of hopeful expectation, knowing you are faithful to meet us here in song, prayer, and scripture. Nourish our hearts as we worship, and prepare us to serve the hungry around us. Amen.

Children’s Message

First Gospel Reading: Luke 2:7

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Gospel Hymn O, Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!
3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given; so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Prayer of Illumination

Loving God, as we turn our hearts and minds to your message for us today, illuminate the scriptures before us. We begin the season of Advent and remember the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, laid in a manger in Bethlehem, the town called “House of Bread.” Open our eyes to the profound mystery of the Bread of Life born to dwell among us. As we recall the birth and life of Jesus, may we be transformed by the deep connection between the manger and the miracles, between the humble beginnings and the abundant provision. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, we pray. Amen.

Second Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:13-21

A reading of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, *“This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”*

Jesus said to them, **“They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”**

They replied, *“We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”*

And he said, **“Bring them here to me.”**
Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Pastor: “The word of God for the people of God.”
People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

“Hope Grows” Rev. Dionne T. Hall

Apostle’s Creed, UMH #881
I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

The third day he arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***Gloria Patri, #70**
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer
God, our Creator and Provider, we humbly remember occasions we’ve been hungry or in need. Just as Jesus had compassion upon the hungry multitudes of his day, we recognize the hungry multitudes around us and are filled with compassion.

For folks within our community who struggle and stress to have enough to eat, we pray for relief, and we commit ourselves to immediate solutions for hungry bellies.
We pray you would give our dear siblings in Christ the courage to make their needs known, so we might be the body of Christ in action.

For our neighbors around us in our region who struggle and stress to have enough to eat, we pray our faith community might be part of their relief.

Show us how to meet the needs of the people around us whom we may not even know.

For a world where systems and structures keep some people malnourished while others waste food and hoard resources, we pray that we might be part of systemic solutions.

May we be dissatisfied with temporary fixes and charity, and filled with relentless hope for holistic and better ways. And just as we pray for the hungry in our midst and in our world, we remember those who suffer and grieve among us...
(Insert community specific prayer requests here)

We pray all these things to the One who fed the multitudes, hoping for transformation and relief. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Call to Confession
Let us confess the ways in which we have reacted to the needs of the world with hopelessness.

Prayer of Confession (unison)
God who cares for every sparrow and every child, we confess the enormity of the world’s hunger feels overwhelming. We do not know what to do about famine and starvation, so we look away and distract ourselves from suffering people and all creatures, great and small.
We confess we neglect small acts of generosity because the problems seem so big.

We confess we shrink back from true solutions because the sacrifices seem too great.

May your hope compel us to make choices reflecting our love for our neighbors and creation. You take our feeble efforts and magnify your glory. May the world be fed with hope. Amen.

Words of Assurance (responsive)

Pastor: Hear the good news: God is a loving parent with endless compassion who desires all people to flourish.

People: Even when our hope falters, and we feel helpless to address the hunger in our world, God’s steadfast love emboldens us to persevere so all creation can be fed.

Pastor: Receive God’s pardon and be at peace.

Passing of the Peace (responsive)

Pastor: Hope compels us to make peace with others because we know we will be serving alongside one another to meet everyone’s needs. So take this moment to pass peace to your family, friends, and neighbors, for we cannot make this long Advent journey to the manger alone.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Invitation to the Offering

Beloved of God, the baby born in Bethlehem came to restore and redeem the whole world. The bread he broke was broken for all. The fruit of the vine he poured was poured out for all. As we enter this time of thanksgiving, let us remember hope grows. Come, let us find hope in Jesus.

Offertory Anthem 'The Eyes Of All Wait Upon Thee' - William Harris (1883-1973)

Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Offertory Prayer (unison)

Generous God, these gifts and offerings are a tangible expression of our hope in Christ. May they nourish those who hunger and spread your love and justice. Bless our giving, inspire us to share with compassion, and help us trust in your abundant provision. Amen.

Closing Hymn O Come, All Ye Faithful

**1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!
Refrain: O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

**2. True God of True God, Light of Light, Eternal,
lo, He shuns not the virgin's womb; Son of the Father, begotten not created;
Refrain: O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

**3. Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
Refrain: O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

**6. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n! Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
Refrain: O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

Postlude ‘Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland’

– Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The Light of Christ goes into the world.

Charge

May Christ, the Bread of Life, who brings hope to the hopeless, be with you.

Benediction

May the love of our Creator,
who calls us to care for the hungry and the oppressed, surround you.
And may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to imagine a kindom where all hunger is satisfied,
strengthen you now and always.
Go in hope to feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of Christ’s coming.

*Today's Altar Flowers are given to the glory of God,
and as Kurt and Krista celebrate their 2nd wedding anniversary on December 1st, they give praise to the
Lord for the blessing of their marriage.*

Placed by Kurt and Krista Zimmerman.

Available Sundays to sponsor flowers is December 14, 28, and
the month of January 2026.

Grace Notes

November 30, 2025

Mission Statement: *Glorify God ~ Draw All to Christ ~ Edify & Equip*

Membership Reports: As faithful members of Grace UMC, we faithfully strive to remember our membership vows to support the church by upholding the church with our ***prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.***

Prayers - Persons listed on Joys & Concerns will appear for two weeks. Please fill out a request card if you would like your request shared on Sunday morning and listed in Grace Notes. You may call or email the church office Monday thru Wednesday (**by 10am**) with those you would like to include or remove. If a person requires additional time, or has a long-term illness, request they be added to the “Long-term” list. The joys and concerns will list first name and last initial; no details will appear.

Joys & Concerns

Nov. 23: Drew M., DeeAnn V. and family, Candy D. and family

Nov. 16: Larry H. and wife thank everyone for their prayers; Richard and Barb E.

Prayers (Long-term): John S., Paul H., Ron S., Joann M.; Kenny S.; Robin G., Lucy K.; Bill S., Erin B., Doris K.; Bill H., Wendi C., Margie C., Bev. B., Connie M.; Vickie S., Rhonda and Tony W., Harriett H., Jane H., Babs W., Donna M., Johnny B., Frannie J., Michael L.

The Revised Common Lectionary – A service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library

GIFTS – Your gifts offer HOPE to Grace Church and the community. When we tithe, we follow the example given to us in Genesis 28:10-22 by giving at least 10% to the **General Fund**. United Methodists value the tithe as a benchmark for giving, one we encourage our members to move toward and, once achieved, move beyond. We believe that there is joy in giving, and the greater the generosity the deeper the joy. The **General Fund** is responsible for ensuring all the needs of the church are met; this includes all of the ministries, missions, and operational costs of Grace Church. **The One Board (as of May 14, 2023) asks that all tithes and offerings be placed in the General Fund except those for T.H.R.I.V.E., Micah’s Backpack & Building for the Future. Separate envelopes are provided for these ministries and located by the lectern. This is the only way to donate to these ministries.** This will allow Grace Church to move towards fully funding all ministries and missions of the church. This will bring us up to date with current UMC budget practices.

General Fund: \$1,184.47
Endowment Withdrawal: \$
Estate Gift:
Music Fund: \$300.00
Needed for Weekly Budget: \$4,500
Building for the Future: \$30.00
T.H.R.I.V.E. & Micah’s Backpack: \$175.00

Service and Witness:

Ushers: J.C. Martin, Bill Thompson, Donna and Roy Shoop, Madison Shoop, Lucas Shoop, Ella Sholty, Justus Osuji
Greeter: Daisy Wolfensberger
Lay Readers: John Hess, Earlene Johnson, Sandy Kendall, Kurt Zimmerman
Media Managers: Donnie Bryan, Roy Shoop
Choir: Becca Bryan, Donnie Bryan, Patti Hull, Hannah Kamseuh, Polly Martin, Peace Osuji, Ryan Wetzel
Congregational Care Committee/Communion Stewards: Chris Jeter, Krista Zimmerman, Cindy Tedrick, Ruth Smith, Patti Hull, Helen Gilliam, Daisy Wolfensberger, Polly Martin, Rose Shank, Earlene Johnson, Sandy Kendall, Donna Bolinger, Amy Bryan, Becca Bryan, Jane Staley, Rhonda Weaver, Wanda Stouffer, Ruth Thompson, Pastor Dionne, Sonja Shearer, Cindy Swales, Patty Frazier, Caroline Jenkins and Vivienne, Margaret Hess

T.H.R.I.V.E. (Thankful, Hopeful, Revitalized, Intentional, Victorious, Educated). Continued needs are non-perishables, dry goods, feminine care products, hand soap, shower gel, razors, shave cream, individually wrapped paper towels and toilet paper, shampoo, toothpaste/toothbrushes, laundry detergent, etc. Monetary donations are gratefully accepted, and please use the indicated envelopes located by the lectern. **Closet 712** Volunteers are always appreciated. Donations drop off is Monday -Thursday 10am-12pm., **fall and winter clothing ONLY**. Both T.H.R.I.V.E and the clothes closet are open on Saturday, **December 13, 2025, 10:00am – 11:00 am**.

Pastoral Care and Emergency Contact Information: In case of an emergency, please contact Pastor Dionne at (240) 347-2345 (cell), Facebook Messenger, or pastordionne.hall@gmail.com. The church office number is (240) 850-2934. Please inform the hospital and/or funeral home that Pastor Dionne is the Pastor at Grace. ***The Pastor and church should be notified of any illness or death of a member or family member first.*** The Pastor will confirm availability dates for Services of Death and Resurrection with the funeral home director.

CALENDAR

Sun., Nov. 30	8:30 & 10:00 am 9:00 am 10:15 am	Coffee, Donuts & Fellowship is provided in Rider Hall Worship, <i>First Sunday of Advent</i> Sunday school for all ages
Tues., Dec. 2	6:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal
Wed., Dec. 3	12:00 pm 1:30 pm	Lunch and Advent Bible Study in Rider Hall Pop Up Pantry/Clothes Closet
Sat., Dec. 6 Church	4:00 pm	AGO presents A Christmas Recital at St. John's Lutheran
Sun., Dec. 7	8:30 & 10:00 am 9:00 am 10:15 am	Coffee, Donuts & Fellowship is provided in Rider Hall Worship, <i>Second Sunday of Advent, Communion</i> Sunday school for all ages
Mon., Dec. 8	12:00 pm	T4U Christmas Luncheon and Meeting in Rider Hall
Tues., Dec. 9	6:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal
Wed., Dec. 10	12:00 pm 1:30 pm	Lunch and Advent Bible Study in Rider Hall Pop Up Pantry
Thurs., Dec. 11 Steakhouse	12:00 pm	Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon at Western Sizzlin
Sat., Dec. 13	10:00 – 11:00 am	Food Pantry/Clothes Closet
Sun., Dec. 14	8:30 & 10:00 am 9:00 am 10:30 am	Coffee, Donuts & Fellowship is provided in Rider Hall Worship, <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> <i>Annual Church Christmas Party in Rider Hall – All are invited!</i>
		There will be NO Sunday school today
Tues., Dec. 16	6:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal
Wed., Dec. 17	12:00 pm 1:30 pm	Lunch and Advent Bible Study in Rider Hall Pop Up Pantry
Sat., Dec. 20	9:00 – 12:00 pm	The Chosen Season 4 and Fellowship
Sun., Dec. 21	8:30 & 10:00 am 9:00 am 10:15 am 4:00 pm	Coffee, Donuts & Fellowship is provided in Rider Hall Worship, <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> Sunday school for all ages <i>Blue Christmas</i> Candle Lighting Service
Tues., Dec. 23	6:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal
Wed., Dec. 24	5:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
Mon., Dec. 29	1:30 – 3:00 pm	Pop Up Pantry/Clothes Closet

Christmas Greetings! - Members are given the opportunity to send greetings to their friends at Grace, and at the same time help those in need by including a gift to the food pantry or Micah's Backpack. The cards will be placed in the Narthex, and the names of those who sent

them will be listed in the December 21st bulletin. Your support of these outreach ministries is sincerely appreciated.

The Chosen – Join us on Saturday, December 20th for Chicken, Waffles, Hot Chocolate, and The Chosen from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.

AGO – *The Cumberland Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents A Christmas Recital.*

This is an afternoon of holiday keyboard music performed by our local musicians! The event will be held on Saturday, December 6, 2025 at 4:00 pm. St John's Lutheran Church, 141 S. Potomac St., Hagerstown, MD 21740.

Bible Study – will be held on Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and 17 at 12:00 pm. Join us for lunch and an Advent Study in Rider Hall.

Choir rehearsals are on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. We would be happy to welcome new members. If you have an interest in singing and joining the choir, please talk to Jonathan.