



APRIL 2024

Inside This Issue

Page 1-2

A Message from the Pastor

Page 3

Birthday's of the Month

Page 4-5

Theology Matters

Page 6

Mission / Benevolence
Spending Plan

Page 7

Church News

Page 8

Finance Tips

Page 9

Council Information

Page 10

Path Youth

Page 11

Grace Preschool News

Page 12

Church Humor



Amazing
GRACE
NEWSLETTER

*Grace Church of Hanover
55 Albright Drive*





Pastor's Message

**Greetings in the name of the one who brings peace, restoration, and promise to our lives
Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Shalom to each of you.**

Some time ago, I was listening to a scholar give a lecture and began speaking about the roots of the tree. A tree is always growing in two directions simultaneously. It grows up to the sky as well as down into the earth. If it is possible to dig up a tree by its roots and not harm the roots while removing the dirt, the tree looks almost identical below as above. For every amount of effort made to the sky so is equal effort made below. Growing tall requires growing deep.

Methodist history is on my mind this April of 2024 and in particular on one of the first bishops of American Methodism—Francis Asbury. Francis was ordained in 1784, serving before that as a Methodist Circuit Rider and missionary. John Wigger wrote a comprehensive account of Bishop Asbury and his relationship to the spread of Wesleyan Christian practice throughout America. Asbury was quiet and reserved. He preferred sleeping on the floors of his poorest parishioners than staying in opportunities of comfort. Asbury lived Luke 10 as Jesus sent his disciples out without any baggage depending solely on the hospitality of the people while sharing the Gospel. In his forty years as a Circuit Rider, he crossed the Appalachian Mountains sixty times and said Methodism grew to some 214,000 people. While by today's standards that doesn't seem impressive let this statistic sit with you. Methodism was growing at such a rate that if it continued into the 20th century at the same rate there would have been more Methodists than residents in America. October 15, 1924, President Calvin Coolidge, our thirtieth president dedicated an equestrian-style statue with the likeness of Asbury at the intersection of Mt. Pleasant and Sixteenth St. in Washington D.C. stating "He is entitled to rank as one of the builders of our nation" (We still have our acceptance letter on display in the church lobby) We are expecting vibrancy as being a part of this new Holy Spirit-led movement and as a pastor in this new denomination, and as the pastor of Grace Church I can only emphasize that we must as Christians grow deep as we grow tall. We must rediscover our rich heritage of Methodism that made its mission "to spread scriptural holiness across the land". This requires more than we may have expected.

Christian vibrancy comes through intentional practice. We must practice a serious faith by living our faith out in word and practice. In public and in private. In Matthew, Jesus warns the Scribes and Pharisees “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.”(Matt 23:27-28, NKJV). John Wesley who ordained Asbury said “ *I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid that they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out*”

John the Elder wrote in Revelation 2:4, when addressing the church at Ephesus “yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place.” If we as Global Methodists and especially at Grace Church seek a transforming faith we have to do the work that produces the circumstances in which God’s Spirit will pour out in our midst. This is not legalism but a participatory faith action. We as Christians do the holy things so that we will be ready and serving to experience the holy things. We desire to lead lives that look like Jesus.

So what does that mean for you? I have an invitation for you today. Evaluate. What does your daily prayer life look like? What does your daily worship look like? What is your life focus? Christians are called to grow up and deep. We have a rich heritage that has shaped our world most especially in the United States. Methodism is a Holy Spirit-powered movement pouring out to share the good news of Jesus with all. We are intentional about living out our faith. We pray, study, worship, serve, give, and gather together to emulate the earliest practices of our faith tradition. May God bless us and I hope that you will join me as we rediscover who we are and what we have to offer the world in the name of Jesus.

Blessings in Christ,



Rev. Todd A. Christine

Senior Pastor of Grace Church





Birthday Month April

	1 Abby Sullivan	2	3 Melia Garret Kathy Jones	4	5	6
7	8	9 Ed Davis Kassidy Rebert	10 Denise Warner	11	12	13 Karla Kramer
14 Lydia Salisbury	15 Breanna Cue	16 Kayla Dehoff	17 Sarah Adkins	18	19	20 Kathy Birgensimth Jacob Parker
21 Paisley Parker Scott Rabenstine	22 Ray Johns	23	24 Neil Myers Anna Mae Terry	25 Skylar Grudziecki	26 Abigail Leonard Samantha Sullivan Allison Sullivan	27 Andrew Brookhart Rhonda Clark
28	29 John Nickey	30 Sarah Hanses				



Rev. Matt Sichel



April 2024

EASTER! Yes. We just celebrated it, and I hope you were able to enjoy the power of Christ's resurrection from grave. Just in time for the centerpiece of the Christian story, we come to the article of the Apostles' Creed which fixes our gaze on Easter.

At the beginning of Holy Week, I wrote elsewhere about the way that the world now seems to ignore Easter. I was in a meeting at my secular job as a civil engineer, and on the Friday before Palm Sunday, I mentioned that the next week would be a holiday. I got blank stares from those in the meeting, and someone asked, "What's the weird holiday that we're being told to celebrate now?", as if it was some new, minor governmental holiday about which he could roll his eyes. My jaw dropped. This holiday was not new or minor!

What is going on with people who claim to be "Christians," but have no idea that the highest and most important part of the Christian calendar is Easter? We lose our ever-loving minds over 3 months of Christmas *mania*, but we have no clue that there would be no Christmas without Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter! That brings us directly to Article 5 of our creed.

Article 5: "[He descended into hell]; the third day he rose from the dead;"

If you've grown up reciting the Apostle's Creed in the Methodist church, then you, like me, are used to skipping these words that I have put in brackets here. We know the creed moving directly from, "he was crucified, dead, and buried," to, "the third day he rose from the dead." However, everyone else in the Christian world puts the bracketed words in. If you've ever gone to another church that recites the creed, you would have stumbled here.

Why are these words bracketed, and why do we skip them in the Methodist church? The answers are not clear. In the earliest printings of American Methodist worship resources, the phrase was seemingly omitted from the creed because of mixed messages from John Wesley about the doctrine to which it referred: *The Harrowing of Hell*. The phrase itself was not included in the earliest versions of the creed, and it was possible that Wesley was uncomfortable with the theology behind it. I have also heard that it was a simple printer's error which omitted it, and people simply accepted it that way. Either way, the theology behind the line is somewhat strange.

This line in the creed is based upon a handful of verses in Scripture, with 1 Peter 3:18-22 and Ephesians 4:7-10 being the most quoted. These verses present vague references of Jesus going to "the lower parts of the earth" and "preaching to imprisoned spirits." In this, the church has deduced that on Holy Saturday, between Good Friday and Easter, Jesus was rescuing the dead from the shadowy places of the underworld (*Hades* in Greek and in Hebrew, *Sheol*, and better translated "place of the dead") and bringing them out into the light of Paradise. This vision was, of course, greatly embellished during the Medieval years and caused much speculation about how Jesus saves us. It is quite possible that John Wesley, never a fan of speculative things from the Middle Ages, did indeed exclude this line to eliminate much superstition that had developed.

What should we take away from it? In my theological mind, I choose to understand this line as helping us to see the very large contrast between death and life. Jesus experienced death, and he also experienced the darkness of it, with its separation from God and murky, shadowy gloom. Remember, we were never meant to be mortal creatures. God intended his human regents to live forever in his presence from the beginning. Death was not a part of his original, good creation, but was an invader after Adam and Eve disobeyed in Eden. This is what we recall on Ash Wednesday, “For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.” Thus, if Jesus was here to experience everything that sin brought to the earth, he had to experience the darkness and malevolence that death is. Only then would he be able to destroy it, and we see the glory of what he did on Sunday morning.

This is what makes the next line and the celebration of Easter so very important to everything we believe. Jesus is the only person in history to die and then come back on his own from the dead, destroying its power. Jesus defeated the hold that death has on all human beings who trust in him. Paul’s wonderful writing in 1 Corinthians 15 provides the full description of what Christ’s resurrection accomplishes for us:

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. When our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ – 15:56-57, 54-55

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:26). That is what Easter is about. Do not miss the power of it. Since Eden, we have cowered in fear of the destruction caused by humanity’s cooperation with the enemy. But, early on Sunday morning, that changed in one moment as the God of the universe began the New Creation. He breathed in, got up, and walked out of the place of death into the light of glory. Now he must reign until all enemies are trampled under his feet (Ps. 8:6, 110:1, Mic. 7:19, 1 Cor. 15:27-28), *and the last enemy is death.*

This is the centerpiece of the creed, and Easter is the highest and most important part of our lives as Christians. Don’t get me wrong, Christmas is beautiful, and the incarnation is important, but

*“If Christ has not been raised, then your faith is **useless**, and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. – 1 Cor. 15:17-20*

This is good news. Go tell **EVERYONE**.

Love to you all in Christ,

Matthew S. Sichef

-Rev. Matt



2024	GRACE CHURCH Mission / Benevolence Spending Plan	
National & International		
	Red Bird Mission	\$1,000.00
	Red Bird -School	\$1,000.00
	Mission Central	\$1,000.00
	Haiti Mission School	\$4,000.00
	Little Dresses for Africa	\$500.00
	World Renewal Face to Face Ministry **	\$4,000.00
	GMC Disaster Relief	\$500.00
	Total International	\$12,000.00
Local		
	HACC:	
	Fair Share	\$3,000.00
	PAL	\$3,000.00
	Changing Lives Homeless Shelter	\$1,500.00
	Ruth's Harvest	\$600.00
	Tender Care Pregnancy Center	\$300.00
	Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$500.00
	Fruitbelt Farmworker Christian Ministry	\$500.00
	Spousal Abuse Prevention	\$500.00
	Adams Christian Prison Ministry	\$500.00
	Church Sponsored Mission Trip	\$1,500.00
	Mission Committee General Expense	\$200.00
	Grace Garden	\$500.00
	Mission Discretionary Fund	\$2,000.00
	UM Home for Children	\$2,000.00
	York City Summer Day Camp	\$1,500.00
	New Hope Ministries	\$1,500.00
	Olivia's House	\$500.00
	TruNorth, Hanover	\$1,000.00
	Total Local	\$21,100.00
	Total Missions/Benevolences	\$33,100.00



Grace Church
**Grocery Card
 Fundraiser**

Available at the Hospitality
 Desk



Are you looking for a gift idea for a loved one?
 Consider purchasing a Giant Grocery gift card.
 We have several different increments for
 purchase. Proceeds will benefit our campus
 improvement fund.

Hosted by Bethlehem and Greenmount
 United Methodist Churches

May 4th 1-3PM at Jefferson Fire Hall
 31 Berlin Street Codorus PA 17311

Join us in the Fight against Hunger

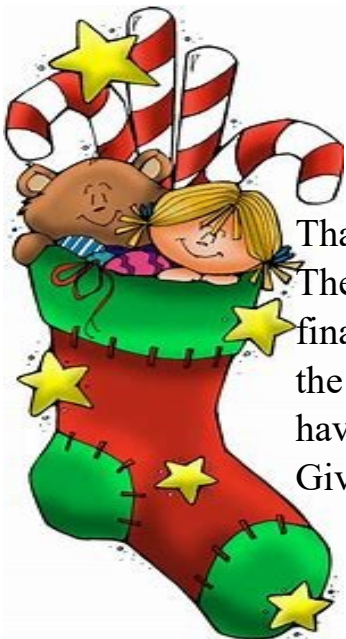
Volunteers needed on May 4th to make
 10,000 plus meals for Rise against Hunger

Sign up to help or to donate on Bethlehem's
 Facebook page , under events

Any questions contact us at

bethlehemgreenmount@gmail.com

Christmas Stocking Program



Thanks to all who participated this year in filling the Christmas stockings. The contents were counted one by one and the tally kept growing to a final total of **\$706.32**. It was decided that these funds would be sent to the Global Methodist Church in support of the Disaster Relief Fund. We have combined this amount with \$500 from our Benevolence/Mission Giving to send a total of **\$1,206.32** to support this mission of the GMC.





How to donate money tax free from your IRA

The amount you are required to withdraw from your IRA is recalculated at the beginning of every year based on the prior year ending balance of your accounts. You can have all or part of this Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) made **directly** from your IRA to Grace Church (up to \$100,000 per taxpayer per year) **TAX FREE!** The amount sent to the Church in this manner would be a Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) which is not taxed as income but is still considered as part of your RMD requirements.

This distribution is a convenient way to support Grace Church and get a federal tax break while meeting withdrawal requirements for your IRA. However, you **cannot** also claim the qualified distribution as a charitable deduction. The amount you donate is simply excluded from your taxable income (your adjusted gross income), which is an advantage especially if you do not itemize deductions.

To qualify the money needs to be transferred **directly** from your IRA to Grace Church in order to be a QCD and tax free. If you withdraw the money first and then give it to Grace, you can deduct the gift as a normal charitable contribution (if you itemize), but the withdrawal amount would not qualify as a QCD and therefore be included in your adjusted gross income.

If you are interested in doing this type of contribution, please contact your IRA/401k administrator or financial/investment advisor about the way to proceed that best fits your needs.

***Reminder** for those that have been required to withdraw funds from their IRA or 401k and information for those that are just beginning with the RMD requirement (turning age 73).

Ed Davis

Assistant Treasurer
Grace Church of Hanover
A Global Methodist Church

**From Council:**

In February, we approved the purchase of additional wireless microphones, as well as additional up lighting for the sanctuary.

In March, Council approved the fund leftover from purchasing new tables for the multipurpose room be used to purchase a new cart for the tables.

The previously titled Office Manager position has been filled by Miriam Lopez, and she is serving as the Pastoral Administrative Assistant. Please welcome Miriam when you see her in the office! Chris Parker updated the parking lot lights to LED and we want to extend a sincere thank you to Chris for this! Up lighting is in use for the 9:00 Service and has received positive comments.

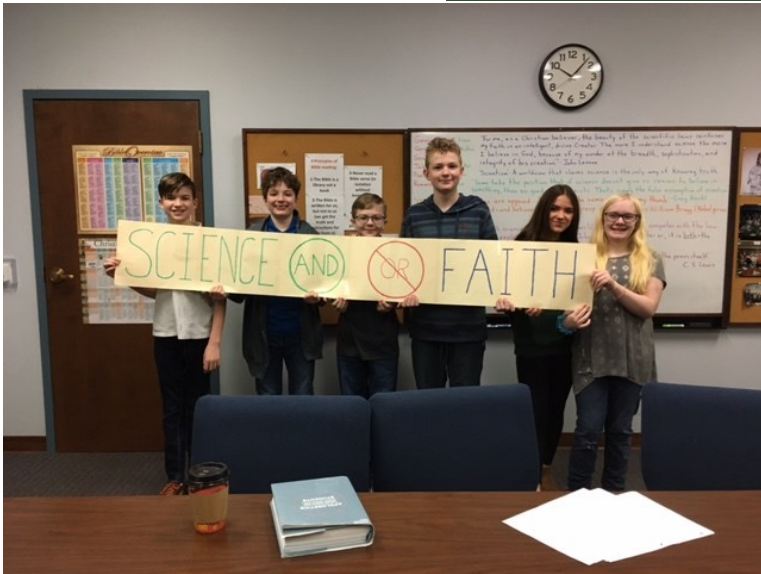
Council approved the purchase of materials for a retaining wall to cover the mini split unit at the front of the church, to provide symmetry in the landscape when looking at the entrance. The labor was provided voluntarily by Adam Hartman, thank you Adam, it looks great!

The Rummage Sale is scheduled for July 16-20th, more details to come!

Darren Myers is looking for anyone who may be interested in heading up a young people's group. Please see Darren for more information.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kim Smith,
Grace Council Chair

Path Youth



The JP class recently started its second quarter session in the Advocates apologetics study with the lesson on the subject of science and how science actually leads us to God. “Christianity and science are opposed... but only in the sense as my thumb and forefinger are opposed-and between them I can grasp everything.” – Sir William Bragg (Nobel Prize for Physics 1915)

Operation Christmas Child Grace Church of Hanover A Year of Collections

- What is Operation Christmas Child? The Samaritan's Purse project Operation Christmas Child collects shoebox gifts filled with fun toys, school supplies and hygiene items—and delivers them to children in need around the world to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way.

Thank You

Path Youth is collecting donations for Operation Christmas Child. Each month will be a different collection for a final packing party in late October or early November. Our goal is to pack and ship 100 boxes.

April's Collection is
Fashion Accessories





Registration For 2024-2025 School Year Open Now!

What better to introduce the school environment to your child than in this fun, faith-based Preschool?

Our curriculum is designed to help your child develop the skills and confidence necessary in making a smooth transition into kindergarten.

Your child will enjoy learning letter and numbers, social skills, fine/gross motor skills through centers, calendar/weather, games, movement activities, bible lesson, and songs.

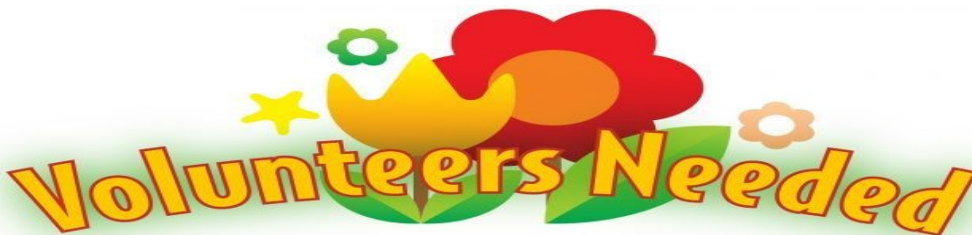
We offer a 3's class as well as a Pre-K (4's class).

Preschool runs from 9:00—11:30 daily.

Space is limited so call for a tour and reserve your spot today!

Registration forms and more information can be found on the website:

gumpreschool.weebly.com



Grace Preschool is in need of volunteers who are available Monday-Friday to be on our Substitute list. If you want to be part of our amazing preschool staff please email us at

jfreeman@mygracechurch.org



Church Humor

A pastor asked an older farmer to say grace for the morning church breakfast.

"Lord, I hate buttermilk", the farmer began. The pastor opened an eye to glance at the farmer and wonder where this was going.

The farmer loudly proclaimed, "Lord, I hate lard". Now the pastor was growing concerned.

Without missing a beat, the farmer continued, "And Lord, you know I don't much care for raw white flour". The pastor once again opened an eye to glance around the room and saw that he wasn't the only one to feel uncomfortable.

Then the farmer added, "But Lord, when you mix them all together and bake them, I do love those warm fresh biscuits. So, Lord, when things come up that we don't like, when life gets hard, when we don't understand what you're saying to us, help us to just relax and wait until you are done mixing. It will probably be even better than biscuits. AMEN!"

Within the prayer there is great wisdom for all when it comes to complicated situations like we are experiencing in the world today. Stay strong, my friends, because our LORD is mixing several things that we don't really care for, but something even better is going to come when HE is done with it. AMEN!

Author Unknown