



Grace United Church of Christ
128 E. Baltimore Street
P.O. Box 448
Greencastle, PA 17225

♪ ♪ GRACE NOTES ♪ ♪

January/ February 2024 Issue

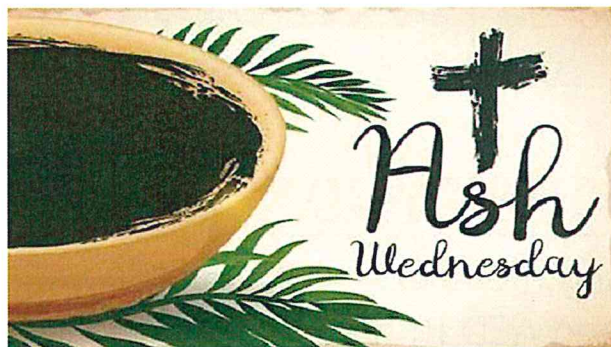
From the Pastor's Desk.....

This year Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day are on the same day. This happened a few years ago. It is always a creative venture to combine two different things and see what comes out of it. Ash Wednesday we remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. On Valentine's Day, we celebrate that love is strong and eternal. So, this got me thinking of devotional poetry—poetry in which we express our love back to God...because of God's foundational love for us. One great example of this comes from St. Ignatius of Loyola, he was a Spanish saint who lived in the 1500s and founded the Jesuit order. This particular prayer was translated by Gerard Manley Hopkins (and then adapted by me).

I love thee, God, I love thee—
Not out of hope for heaven for me
Nor fearing not to love and be in the everlasting burning.
You, my Jesus, toward me did reach Your arms out dying,
For my sake suffered nails and lance,
Mocked and marred countenance,
sorrows passing number,
Sweat and care and cumber,
Yes and even death, and this for me,

And You could see me sinning:
Then I, why should not I love thee,
Jesus...so much in love with me?
Not for heaven's sake, not to be out of hell by loving thee;
Not for any gains I see;
But just the way that You did me--I do love and will love thee.
What must I love thee, Lord, for then?
For being my king and God.

May you have a Loving Ash Wednesday!
Or an Ashy Valentine's Day?
Pastor Mark

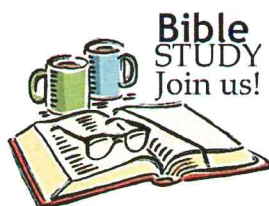


Annual Congregational Meeting

The Consistory board voted on changing our annual congregational meetings to the first Sunday in February. This allows everyone to have a little break after the holidays before you start to prepare your yearly committee and financial reports. Our annual meeting will be held on February 4th, following worship service. Please submit all reports to the church office by Thursday, January 18, to allow us time to put together the yearly agenda packet. Thank you.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Lenten Bible study will begin on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. Further details will be announced as they become available.



CHURCH SERVICE VOLUNTEERS:

We would love to have some new greeters/ushers, readers, and communion services. If you have interest....please contact any board member, current volunteers, or church office for further information, or just sign-up after worship! There are always open spots available. The sign-up sheets for January & February are located on the table in the front vestibule. **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED STARTING IN JANUARY!**

FIRST AID TRAINING

We thank the following members of our congregation who received their certification in CPR and AED to help if aid is needed: Margaret Stouffer, Jeff Stouffer, Patty Stepler, Nancy Myers, Cathy Keefer, Tony Homer & Lorna Thomas.

INVITING ALL WOMEN OF GRACE CHURCH

to a monthly social gathering of

“Grace UCC Lunch Bunch Ministry”

This new ministry provides a break from boredom, loneliness, chaos, or your regular routine. It provides a great opportunity to share memories and receive encouragement through fellowship, laughter, and girl time.

Our first social gathering will be
Tuesday, January 16, 2024
El Castillo in State Line, PA at 11:30 am.

There will be no dues and no textbook! The only cost to you is the food you ordered for lunch.

Bring your calendar so we can decide the next date, time, and restaurant for lunch.

Ladies willing to carpool will be needed. If you need transportation or have questions, call
Glenda Stenger (717-597-5584)
or Joann Snider (717-753-3448).

Condolences:

*Our condolences to Nancy Myers and her family,
as Charles, her beloved husband, has recently passed away.*

*Please keep the family in your thoughts
and prayers.*

May the *love* of those
around you
help you
through the
days ahead.

Activities & Fundraising Committee

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month in the meeting room at 7pm. We appreciate everyone who can volunteer your time to help support the ministries of the church. Please come and join us or contact Chet for further information.

Laundry Love

Laundry Love is being held at the Laundry Spot, located at 111 N. Carlisle Street in Greencastle. A monthly schedule with evening hours between 5-8pm is being planned for this new year. Volunteers are needed to help us hand out pre-made bags containing quarters, washer pods & dryer sheets. Please contact Carolyn Shoemaker for further information. We appreciate everyone's help!

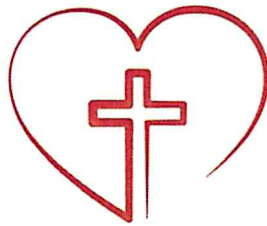
Monthly Refreshments & Fellowship

We enjoy fellowship and refreshments following worship services on the second Sunday of each month.

Our next social gatherings are scheduled
for January 14 and February 11!

Called to Care Committee

This committee helps with the pastoral care of our members. They have been trained in caregiving and visitations to help meet the needs of our members. Quarterly meetings are held on Sunday mornings before worship service. The next scheduled meeting is set for January 28 , at 8:30am, in the meeting room. If you would like additional information about joining this committee to help with the needs of GUCC, please contact Rev. Mark Ruzicka or Sydnae Vanner.



Chancel Choir

Our beautiful choir sings each week during Sunday service. Choir rehearsals are held Wednesday evenings, at 7:15pm, in the sanctuary. We welcome anyone who would like to join us for practice! Please contact Patty Stepler with any further questions or concerns.

We thank Patty, Susan and all the choir members for such a beautiful performance over the Christmas holidays! The special Christmas concert to celebrate our 275 years was absolutely beautiful, plus the Christmas Cantata and all the year round anthems are wonderful! We thank you all!

Worship & Spiritual Life Committee

Meetings are held bi-monthly. The first meeting of 2024 has been scheduled for January 21, at 9:30am, in the meeting room. Please contact Rev. Mark Ruzicka or Marg Stouffer if you would like further information about this committee. Everyone is welcome to join us!



Ash Wednesday

We celebrate Ash Wednesday on February 14.
We will announce details about the imposition of ashes
as they become available.

Happy Anniversary

Emory & Nellie Stahl just celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on
December 26! Congratulations and many more happy years!



Consistory

Board

Meeting

Next board meetings are scheduled for January 14, and February 18, both at 8:30am in the meeting room. (Please note the January meeting was changed to the second week of the month.) Please keep in touch with board members or church office for any changes.

Grace Snyder Circle

We thank everyone who attended our Christmas banquet in December. We had good food and holiday fellowship! Our monthly Guild meetings are held the second Monday of each month, at 1pm, in our meeting room. We would love to have some new members join us! Contact Nancy Myers or Darlene Bitner for further information.

GRACE'S FREE CLOSET

We are open Monday & Wednesday, from 9:30am till 12:30pm. We thank everyone for their generous donations throughout this past year! We also thank all the volunteers who have helped us sort, tag, and keep the rooms clean and organized! Donations can be dropped off at the Closet anytime during their open hours. (Please note the Closet is closed for the holidays from December 25 through January 3.) If you have any further questions, please contact Nancy Myers at 717-360-3021.



First Saturday Free **Community Meal**

Free Community Meals are held on the first Saturday of the month,
from 11am to 1pm, in our social hall.

You can eat-in or request a take-out container.

Menu for January 6:

Grilled Cheese, Vegetable Soup,
Brownie & Bottled Water

Menu for February 3:

Steamers, Tator Tots
Applesauce & Bottled Water

If you are homebound church member or in need
of a meal delivered, please contact Chet Nye
to make arrangements.

- * Everyone Welcomed ***
- * Donations Appreciated ***
- * Limited Quantities ***



Fundraisers

Our Annual Apple Dumpling Sale held this past November was a great success! We are happy to announce our profits of \$1722, which will truly help benefit the ministries of our church. We thank everyone for their help, donations, and purchases during this fundraiser. We couldn't have done it without YOU!



Grace Snyder Circle will be holding their annual Pie Sale in February. Dates and prices will be announced as they become available. Contact Lorna or any member of the Guild for more information.

Live Streaming of Worship

Live streaming of our services will continue to be available on our Facebook page for those who are unable to attend in person.

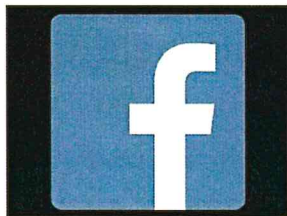
Please comment 'hello' so we know you are watching along with us!

You can find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchGreencastle/>



Facebook



If you have access to Facebook, please 'like' our page, Grace United Church of Christ, it will help keep you updated on events and changes. If you are out of town, or want to watch our worship service from the comfort of your home, please gather on our Facebook page at 10am on Sunday mornings for a live stream of our service. Comment 'hello' so we know you are watching with us. This is a great way to stay connected with everyone!

GUCC Website

Our weekly worship programs along with our newsletters can be downloaded from our website anytime!

You can make donations through our website. Just click on any DONATE button, use drop down box to choose where you would like your donation to be used. You will need your credit card. Once you submit any contributions, you will receive an email receipt for your tax purposes. Any questions with this new donate button, please contact Kate Kennedy or Elaine in the church office.

You can find us at: <https://www.graceuccgreencastle.com>





-----We thank our 275th Anniversary Planning Committee, Building & Grounds Committee, Consistory Board, Choir, and all the volunteers who spent time preparing, updating, fixing, cleaning, organizing, and performing during all the activities and celebrations this past year! We are so blessed to be able to continue serving the community! Everyone give yourselves a big round of applause! We thank you all! You are all appreciated for everything you do to help the ministries of our church! Thank you!

-----We thank Evangelical Lutheran Church in Greencastle, for their donation of \$300 towards our first Saturday free community meals. A thank you note will be sent out to them.

-----We thank everyone personally for their angel gift donations. You made a big difference to a child in our Greencastle community by helping them to have a happy Christmas! Thank you!

-----Thank you card was received from Ryan Poe (a member in the community) for providing him with quarters for his laundry in December. His thank you note is posted on the church bulletin board.

UCC Christmas & Emergency Fund

We thank everyone who donated to the UCC **Christmas Fund**. These donations help the UCC to provide emergency grants and supplementation of small annuities and health premiums and Christmas thank you gift checks each December to their lower income retirees throughout the states. We received a total of \$30 for this 'Grace Upon Grace' offering in December of 2023. Penn Central Conference Center encourages the congregation to donate directly to their secure website at www.christmasfund.org.

Upper Room Daily Devotional Brochures

The Upper Room is a daily devotional booklet published 6 times a year.

They guide you with daily prayers to help you with your devotional practice. The prayers and meditations are written by readers of the magazine and others who share their faith experiences through writing.

These brochures are available for anyone who would like to get more connected in faith. The latest January/February issues have been placed on the table in the front vestibule and the elevator area.

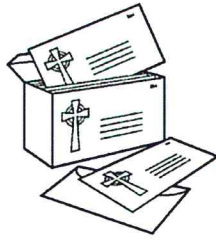
Pocket size and large print copies are both available. Pick up your free copy after Sunday's worship service or stop by the church office during the week.

Church Directory Update

Please review your church directories. If anyone has made any changes to your contact information that is listed (phone, email, address, etc), please contact me at the church office so I can make the updates. If anyone would like a new copy, just let me know. I can send you a copy via email or call me at the church office to make pick-up arrangements.



2024 Boxed Offering Envelopes



Our new offering envelope sets for 2024 have been distributed. Please verify that your name and address on the label is correct, and that the number on the label matches the envelope numbers. Please discard any old envelopes. If you don't currently have envelopes, and would like a box, please contact the church office. Thank you!

2023 Contribution Reports

If you need a year-to-date contribution statement for your 2023 taxes, sign-up sheets will be placed on the front table in the vestibule and at the elevator area in the beginning of January. We will have your statements available to be picked up during service on January 21 & 28 (they will be placed in a secure, sealed envelope in the area you signed sheet), or you can pick them up at the church office or request them to be mailed. Any requested statements not picked up by January 28 will be placed in the mail on January 29. Any questions, just call Elaine in the office.

Newsletter Deadline

Do you have anything you would like to share in our next newsletter? Members are welcome to submit any announcements, joys, news, articles or committee updates to share with our church family. Deadline to submit articles for our March/April issue of Grace Notes is Thursday, February 15, at 12 noon. You are welcome to drop off articles at church office or submit through our email of: gucc128@outlook.com

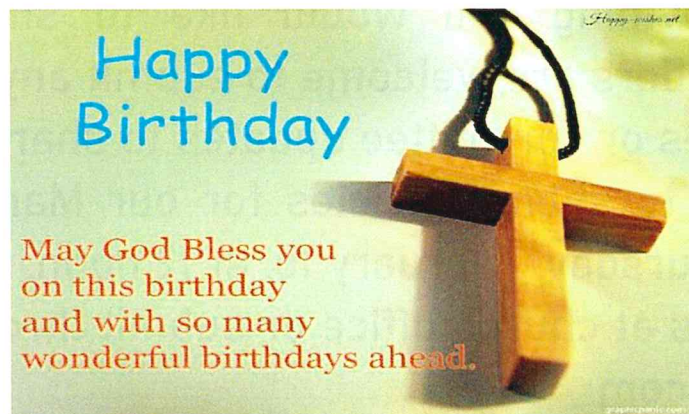
Member Birthday's

January

1/3 – Mary Lou Bryan
1/5 – Glenda Stenger
1/7 – Tony Homer
1/12 – Noelle Homer
1/19 – Cathy Keefer
1/19 – Mildred Minnich
1/28 – Rev. Mark Ruzicka

February

2/2 – Erma Foley
2/4 – Margaret Stouffer
2/6 – Marguita Storms
2/20 – Susan Dietrich



Office Hours

Monday – Thursday

8am – 2pm

Church Office will be closed on the following days:

January 1 (New Year's Day)



**MEETING
MINUTES**

CONSISTORY MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 15, 2023

Meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Co-President Carolyn Shoemaker.

ROLL CALL: Carolyn Shoemaker, Pastor Mark, Lorna Thomas, Tim Bryan, Ron Shafer
Chet Nye, Larry Stepler, Treasurer, guests Mark Stahl.

DEVOTIONS: Pastor Mark read Psalm 77.

CONSENT AGENDA: The minutes for September Consistory and the Treasurer's report was approved unanimously on a Ron/ Carolyn motion.

INFORMATION AGENDA UPDATES:

Activities/Fundraising – Chet reported that November 4th will be the Thanksgiving turkey dinner. Apple dumplings will be made on Nov. 17 with pick-up from 3-6pm. Any extra apple dumplings will be sold during the Christmas parade on Sat., Nov. 18th.

Carolyn reported that Laundry Love assisted 6 people on October 10th.

BUILDING and GROUNDS: Mark reported that new lights were installed inside the front entrance to the church and the Sanctuary. Tim installed two new toilets in the Ladies bathroom and the stall doors now open outward. In the hallway bathroom the toilet was rebuilt.

Still have significant increases in water bill for no apparent reason. The borough was requested to come over and check the meter and wiring to meter. Barry is also going to the Borough office to speak with them.

The water softener sample taken to Negley's to be tested shows 2 grains hardness should be 0 grains. Tim will continue to follow up softener.

FINANCE: Larry thanked the Fundraising committee for their work with various. We are approximately \$4000 over the \$10,000 we budgeted to bring in.

Larry will be sending a letter to Mike Evans thanking him and then closing the parsonage account as it is paid in full.

Larry is still dealing with the ERTC the IRS has a backlog. Larry received paperwork and the monies will be paid directly from the IRS.

Sunday, December 24th, the choir will present their Christmas Cantata during the morning service. Pastor Mark will present a sermon during the Candlelight service.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS for DISCUSSION:

The annual organ report from Lewis & Hitchcock was reviewed with no decision made at this time.

Election day is November 7th, Carolyn is checking to see if Jeff can open and close the church that day. Several consistory members plan to put the booths together on Saturday, November 4th after First Saturday meal.

Elaine and Cathy are in the process of getting forms prepared for sales tax refunds from previous years' electric and gas bills.

Action Agenda: n/a

Adjourned meeting 9:25 a.m. with Lord's Prayer

Next meeting: November 19, 2023, at 8:30a.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Lorna Thomas, Acting Secretary

CONSISTORY MEETING

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

Meeting called to order at 8:320 a.m. by President Cathy Keefer.

ROLL CALL: Cathy Keefer, Carolyn Shoemaker, Lorna Thomas, Ron Shafer, Deb Homer, guest Mark Stahl, Jeff Stouffer, and Larry Stepler Treasurer, absent Tim Bryan and Pastor Mark.

DEVOTIONS: Deb said a quick prayer.

CONSENT AGENDA: The minutes from September Consistory meeting were approved on a Cathy/Carolyn motion. Treasurer's report was approved unanimously on a Deb / Lorna motion.

INFORMATION AGENDA UPDATES:

Activities/Fundraising – Lorna reported on Frist Saturday meal, served 78 meals and had \$400.00 in donations. December, January and February meals are planned.

Carolyn reported that for Laundry Love, herself, Syd and Bobbie were there to volunteer. It was decided to only do evenings from now on, as not enough people come out in the mornings.

Building and Grounds –

1. Tim and Barry installed more LED bulbs in offices, bathrooms, etc.
2. Mark reported that painting of the ladies rest room is on the schedule.
3. Carolyn brought up that the social hall floor needs stripped and waxed, Mark is checking into this.

Worship and Spiritual Life –

1. We had a discussion on Lay Sundays, formed a committee to look into this.

Additional Topics for Discussion:

1. Piano and Organ will be tuned before Dec 9.
2. Atlantic Security fixed panel by social hall.
3. Holiday Concert is on December 9, in the sanctuary. Discussion on what to pay participants, checking with Marg on that.
4. The Christmas House Tour is December 10, our church is on it; so we need people to help.
5. Larry brought some interesting figures to us: income from fund raising in 2022 up to October was \$7,300 in 2023 it is \$16,000; member's donation's in 2022 up to October were \$51,200 in 2023 it is \$61,800.

6. Our contract with KONE Elevator is up in January. Jeff has some different prices from other contractors. We are leaving it up to the Building and Grounds Committee to look into this.
7. Trees at the church cemetery need trimmed.
8. Jeff is having surgery at the end of January, so we need other people to help with the sweeping of the church.
9. There is wax on the carpet in sanctuary under where the candelabras sit for Christmas Eve Service. We need to get something to set them on.
10. Grace's Closet is going to cancel trash collection and Jeff is going to take their trash to the dump. Grace's Closet will donate \$300 annually to the church.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 with Lord's Prayer

Next meeting – December 17, 2023 at 8:30am

Respectively Submitted, Deborah Homer, Secretary

GUCC's financial statement for
4th quarter (October thru December) will be
available in the next newsletter.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Please contact committee members, board members or church office for any questions or updates about any items listed below.)



- 1** New Year's Day
Church Office & Grace's Free Closet Closed
- 2** Activities & Fundraising Meeting, 7pm, meeting room
- 3** Grace's Free Closet Closed
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 4** Consistory & Committee reports for the month of December are due to church office
- 6** First Saturday Free Meal, 11-1pm, social hall
- 7** 10am Worship Service with Communion, Sanctuary
Communion Servers: TBA
Greeters/Ushers: TBA
Reader: TBA
Scriptures: Gen 1:1-5, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11
- 8** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Grace Snyder Circle Meeting, 1pm, meeting room
- 10** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 14** 8:30am Consistory Board Meeting, in meeting room
10am Worship Service, Sanctuary
Greeters/Ushers: TBA
Reader: TBA
Scriptures: 1 Sam 3:1-10, 1 Cor 6:12-20, John 1:43-51
Refreshments & Fellowship following worship in social hall
- 15** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
- 16** Ladies Lunch Bunch Ministry meeting at El Castello's in State Line at 11:30am.

- 17** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 18** Annual Congregation Reports due to church office
- 21** 9:30am Worship & Spiritual Life Committee, meeting room
10am Worship Service, in the Sanctuary
Greeters/Ushers: TBA
Reader: TBA
Scriptures: Jonah 3:1-5, 10, 1 Cor 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20
Yearly statements will be placed on the tables for those who chose to pick-up at service
- 22** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
- 24** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 28** 8:30am Called to Care meeting, in the meeting room
10am Worship Service, in the Sanctuary
Greeters/Ushers: TBA
Reader: TBA
Scriptures: Deut 18:15-20, 1 Cor 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28
Yearly statements will be placed on the tables for those who chose to pick-up at service
- 29** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Yearly statements not picked up by end of today will be mailed
- 31** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary



- 3** First Saturday Free Meal, 11-1pm, social hall
- 4** 10am Worship Service with Communion, Sanctuary
Communion Servers: TBA
Greeters/Ushers & Reader: TBA
Scriptures: Isa 40:21-31, 1 Cor 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39
Annual Congregational Meeting following worship

- 5** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
- 6** Activities & Fundraising Meeting, 7pm, meeting room
- 7** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
- 8** Consistory & Committee reports for January due to office
- 11** 10am Worship Service, Sanctuary
Greeters/Ushers: TBA
Reader: TBA
Scriptures: 2 Kings 2:1-12, 2 Cor 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9
Refreshments & Fellowship following service
- 12** Grace Snyder Circle Meeting, 1pm, meeting room
Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
- 14** Ash Wednesday
Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
Lenten Bible Study Begins this evening, details to be announced
- 15** Deadline to submit articles for March/April newsletter
- 18** 8:30am Consistory Board Meeting, in meeting room
10am Worship Service, in the Sanctuary
Greeters/Ushers: TBA
Reader: TBA
Scriptures: Gen 9:8-17, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15
- 19** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
- 21** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
Lenten Bible Study
- 25** 10am Worship Service, in the Sanctuary
Greeters/Ushers: TBA
Reader: TBA
Scriptures: Gen 17:1-7, 15-16, Rom 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38
- 26** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
- 28** Grace's Free Closet, open 9:30-12:30pm
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:15pm, Sanctuary
Lenten Bible Study



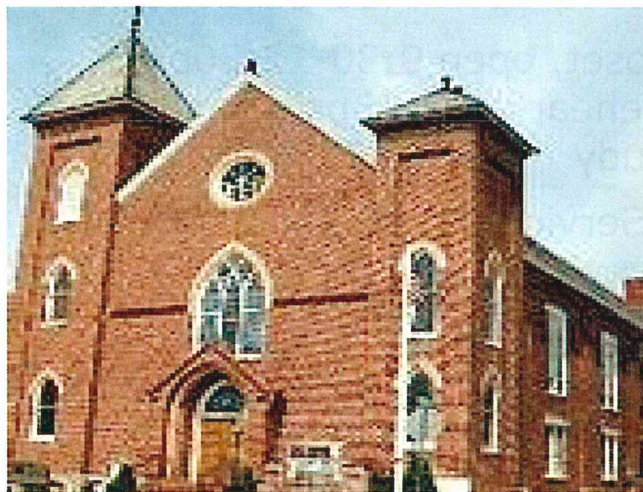
UPCOMING EVENTS & SPECIAL SERVICES:

March:

Ham Sandwich & Soup Sale
Scholarship Applications
Easter Flower Dedications
UCC One Great Hour of Sharing

April:

Palm Sunday
Maundy Thursday
Easter Sunday



MAY YOU HAVE A HAPPY AND BLESSED 2024!