



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

♪ ♪ GRACE NOTES ♪ ♪

November-December 2025

A Christmas Prayer

Lord,

You came upon

A Midnight Clear

to bring

Joy to the World

and draw us near.

It was a Holy Night,

when you came from above,

to fill our hearts with hope and love.

Thank you,

Sweet Jesus Boy,

for clothing us with

Comfort and Joy.

Sunday Worship Service:

9:30am in the Sanctuary

(You can also join us on YouTube or Facebook
to watch live-streaming of the service)

Pastor's Office Hours

Tuesday & Thursday

9am – 12noon

Church Office Hours

Monday – Thursday

8am to 2pm

Offices Closed on Thanksgiving,
Christmas and New Year's Day.

Grace's Free Closet Hours

Monday & Wednesday

9:30am to 12:30pm

2nd & 4th Saturday of the Month

11am – 2pm

Office Phone: 717-597-2983

Email: gucc128@outlook.com

Website: www.graceuccgreencastle.com

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

YouTube Channel: Greencastle Grace UCC

From the Pastor's Desk.....

I have been in a “historic mode” recently, since we have just observed the 300th anniversary of the German Reformed Church in PA. One of the great writers and teachers of our history is a man by the name of John Williamson Nevin who taught at the Mercersburg Seminary in the mid-1800s. He wrote a book called *The Mystical Presence* which is an invitation to enter into a kind of union with Christ... and letting Christ's Spirit (His life-force) impart a new purpose and meaning to our lives. I think of the great line from the hymn “O Holy Night” that goes: “Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth!”

I can't help but think that this is what we celebrate at Christmas. We learn to **center our lives** around the historical fact and good news that God became one of us in Jesus of Nazareth. Nevin writes, *“let the great fact of the incarnation be apprehended with full faith, as a world fact—the center of all history—the fountain of a new creation, which is still present...in the church.”* Here's another quote from Professor Nevin: *“[People] are brought to God, not by doctrine or example, but only by being made to participate in the Divine Nature itself: and this participation is made possible to us only through the person of Christ.”*



Another of our beloved ancestors is the Rev. Henry Harbaugh. He preached at the dedication of our current church sanctuary. He loved Christmas as well! Here's a funny little anecdote about that from the Mercersburg Historical Society's website:

"Within a few months of his arrival in Mercersburg, he complained about the Presbyterians and wrote that they "spend the day working as on any other day. Their children grow up knowing nothing of brightly lit Christmas trees, nor Christmas presents. God have mercy on these Presbyterians...."

Harbaugh enjoyed celebrating Christmas so that he wrote Christmas stories, the most famous of which is "The Star of Bethlehem: A Christmas Story for Good Children" and wrote about Christmas customs in other countries, his own memories of Christmas, and Christmas stories translated from the German...

On December 31, 1867, his many friends, former students, and colleagues attended his funeral in the Reformed Church in Mercersburg, which was still decorated for Christmas, a holiday he had always loved."

You are all invited to a special Christmas Celebration at the Harbaugh Church this year. See the flyer on the pages to follow.

In Christ, Pastor Mark



A Harbaugh Christmas Celebration
Saturday, December 6, 2025 at 3 pm



*A Community Event supported by
the Waynesboro Historical Society,
to be held inside
Beautiful and Historic
Harbaugh Church (built in 1892).
14223 Harbaugh Church Road, Waynesboro*



Please note: The church does not have a restroom and is not fully accessible. Parking on church property is limited; but parking is permitted on the macadam road in the church cemetery immediately east of the building and on the cemetery grass parallel and next to the county road, provided the ground is not soft.

Call the Church of the Apostles at 717-762-4113 with any questions.

Pastor: *Rev. Mark Ruzicka*
Organist: *James Heefner*
Church of the Apostles, UCC



Toten Fest, Sunday, October 26th

We are holding a special service this Sunday, October 26th, at 9:30am, in remembrance to all those saints of the church that have passed since the last All Saints Day. During this worship, we shall light candles in their memories and share a special prayer for them.

Annual Congregational Business Meeting

Our annual business meeting will be held on Sunday, November 9th, following worship service. We encourage all members to attend. We will review and vote on the 2026 budget. We will also vote at this meeting to change the terms in our by-laws to shorten the length of service for our consistory members from 4 years to 3 years. Besides the budget, we will vote on two new consistory members to replace the two that have fulfilled their obligations. Committee reports and the final year's income/expenses for 2025 will be shared with the congregation in the new year once all reports are received. If you are interested in being a board member, or have further questions, please contact Lorna Thomas or Mark Stahl.

FALL BOOK STUDY GROUP

Our **Book Study** will be holding their last session on Wednesday, October 29th, from 6-7pm, in the Chapel. We thank everyone who was able to join us for these past few weeks. If you are interested in studying on your own, you can purchase the book on Amazon: '*A Little One Shall Lead: Small Congregations Create New Ways of Being Church.*'

CHURCH SERVICE VOLUNTEERS:

We would like to see some new greeters/ushers, communion services and scripture readers for Sunday services. Please contact any board members or the church office if you would like more information about volunteering.

Activities & Fundraising Committee

This committee organizes the 1st Saturday Free Meals as well as other church fundraisers and activities. Meetings take place on the first Tuesday of each from September through June. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 4th at 7pm in the meeting room. Everyone is invited to join them! For updates on meetings or specific needs, please contact Chet Nye or Marg Stouffer.

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 church family. Quarterly meetings are held.

Their next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20th, at 1pm, in the meeting room. If you would like additional information about joining this committee to help with the needs of GUCC, contact Pastor Mark or Sydnae Vanner.



Monthly Refreshments & Fellowship

On the second Sunday of each month, volunteers provide and serve refreshments in the social hall after service. This time allows our members to get to know each other better. Note: Due to the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 9th, there will be no refreshments served. We will be back on December 14th. If you would like to volunteer to provide refreshments, please refer to the sign-up sheet on the welcome table in the front vestibule or contact Carolyn Shoemaker for more information.



Worship & Spiritual Life Committee

This committee works with and supports the pastor to provide meaningful worship, social events, and meet the needs of the congregation. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 30th, at 8:30am.

If you would like further information about this committee, please contact Pastor Mark or Marg Stouffer.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch fellowships are held at 11:30am on the last Tuesday of each month. The group selects the next location after each luncheon, and restaurant details will be shared once confirmed. All are welcome to join them for good food and fellowship.

Next luncheon will be held on Tuesday, October 28th, at the Velvet Café, at 145 W. 3rd Street, Waynesboro.

For more information, contact Glenda Stenger or Joanne Snider.

Men's Breakfast & Fellowship

The men of Grace UCC and the Church of the Apostles enjoy a monthly breakfast & fellowship on the first Saturday of each month. They meet at the Velvet Café in Waynesboro at 9am. Their next breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, November 1st. Bring a friend and join them.

Chancel Choir

Our choir practices weekly, on Wednesday evenings, in the sanctuary at 7:15pm. We welcome any new singers who would like to join us. Contact Patty Stepler for further information.

Consistory Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the 3rd Sunday of the month, at 8am, from September through June. We are looking for two new members to join the board in 2026 to replace the two who have fulfilled their obligations. If you are interested in becoming a board member, please contact Lorna Thomas or Mark Stahl.

Grace Snyder Circle

Monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of the month from September through April, with their banquet being held in May. Meetings are at 1pm in the small conference room. If you would like to join them, please contact Nancy Myers for further information.

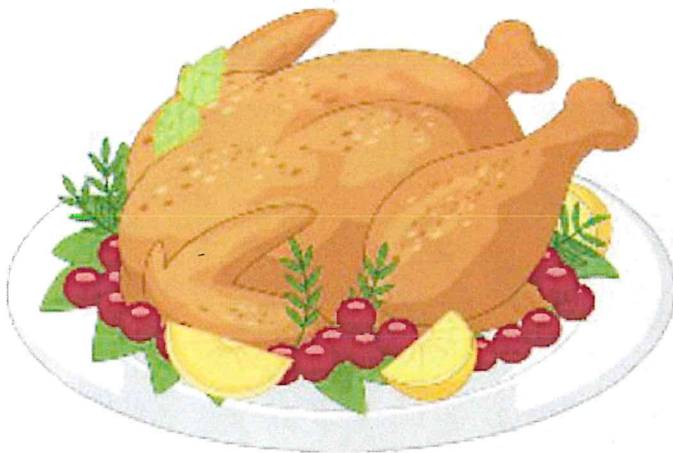
GRACE'S FREE CLOSET

The Closet provides free clothing to the community for individuals of all ages, from infants to adults. Additionally, other items such as home decor, dishes, glassware, utensils, books, sheets, baby toys, and more are available at no cost. The Closet operates through the week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30AM to 12:30PM. For those who are unable to visit during the week, they are now open twice a month on Saturdays. They will be open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday each month, from 11:30AM to 2:30PM. The Closet is efficiently managed by dedicated volunteers including Nancy, Chet, Mildred, Pat, Kathy, Tammy and other community members. Donations of clean, smoke-free clothing and miscellaneous items are welcomed during their operating hours. In inclement weather, the Closet will be closed if Greencastle Antrim School District is closed or on a one-hour delay. For further inquiries, please contact Nancy Myers.

1st Saturday Free Community Meal

We have a holiday meal planned for November 1st with all the fixings! Everyone invited to join us! Contact Chet Nye if you have any questions or would like to volunteer with us!

1st Saturday **FREE** **COMMUNITY LUNCH**



November 1st
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

THANKSGIVING MEAL

Roast Turkey, Stuffing & Gravy,
Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans,
Assorted Pies & Bottled Water.
(Limited Quantities)

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128E Baltimore St., Greencastle, PA 17225
717-597-2983 www.graceuccgreencastle.com

ALL WELCOME! DONATIONS ACCEPTED. EAT IN OR TAKE-OUT!

Municipal Primary Elections

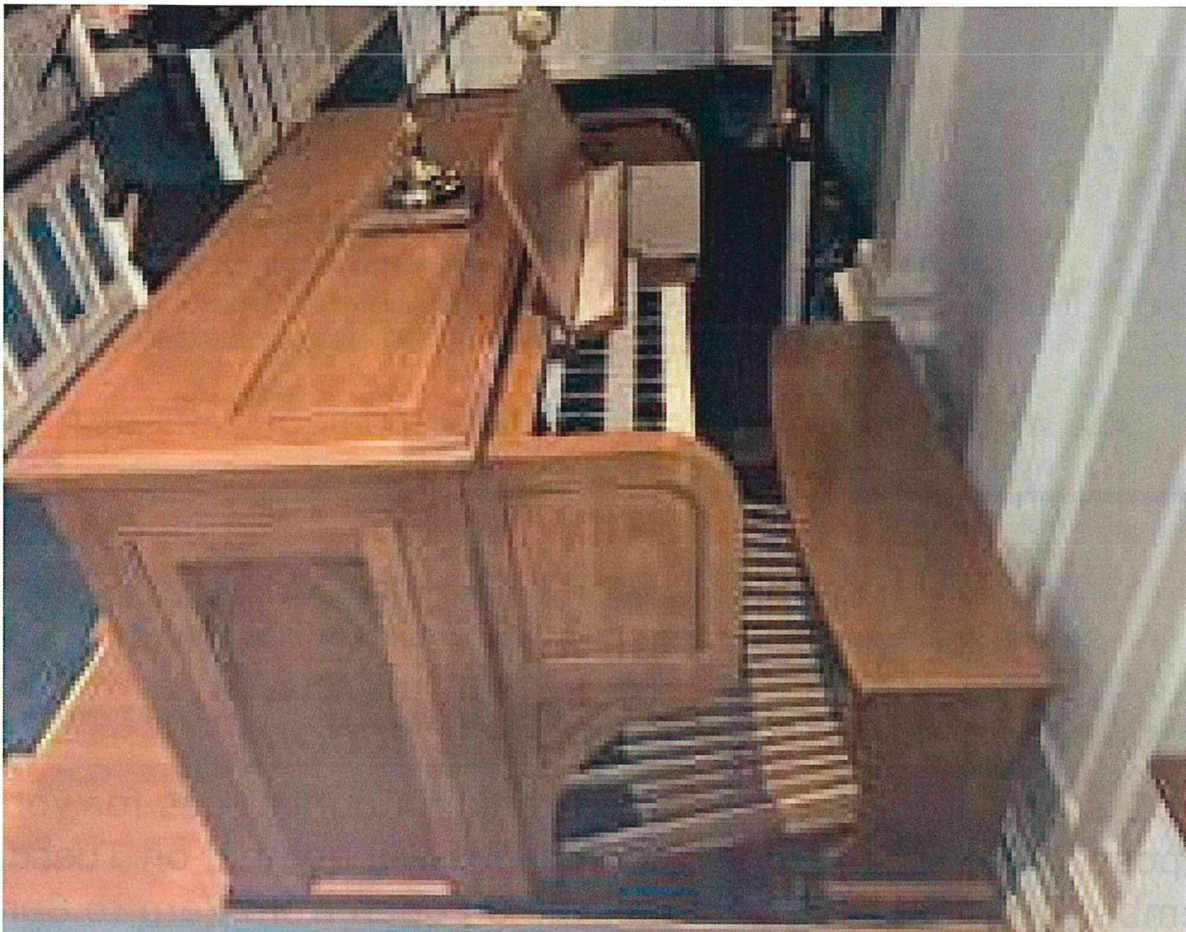
GUCC is one of the facilities that Franklin County uses for voting purposes. The 2025 Municipal elections will be held on Tuesday, November 4th, and the social hall will be open from 7am to 8pm for those who use this location to vote.

ANNUAL LUNCHEON & CHURCH DECORATING DAY

Following service on November 23rd, we will be decorating our church for Advent and the celebration of Christmas. A light meal will be served after worship. Everyone is invited to join us in the joy of decorating and fellowship!

ORGAN RE-DEDICATION SERVICE

A special re-dedication for our recently refurbished organ will be held during the worship service on Sunday, November 23rd.



Fundraiser Profits

We are pleased to announce the profits from our fall Ham Sandwich & Soup Sale which was held in September. We successfully sold almost 400 sandwiches along with numerous containers of soups. The profits of \$3113 generated from this fundraiser will benefit our church. We extend our gratitude to Martin's Famous Pastry Shoppe for donating the sandwich potato rolls and matching that donation. Thank you to our members for providing ingredients and volunteering. Additionally, we express our thanks to all who purchased meals in support of our church.

Newsletter Deadline

Submit your announcements, joys, news, articles, or photos to share with the church family by Thursday, December 4th for the Jan/Feb 2026 issue of Grace Notes. Please note, the deadline is a little earlier this month due to upcoming holidays. You are welcome to drop off articles at the church office or submit through our email of gucc128@outlook.com Thank you.

Upper Room Daily Devotional Brochures

The Upper Room is a daily devotional booklet published six times a year, offering daily prayers to support your devotional practice. Written by readers and others who share their faith experiences, these booklets are available for anyone seeking to deepen their faith. Please pick up a free copy from the front vestibule or elevator area. The November / December issues were put out last week.

APPLE DUMPLING SALE

Grace United Church of Christ is holding their Annual Apple Dumpling Fundraiser on **November 21, from 3 to 6pm**, in the social hall. Dumplings will be available at \$5 each, with both regular and sugar free options offered. We are accepting pre-orders till November 16th. Orders forms are located on the welcome table in the front vestibule and the elevator. You can place your orders in the boxes provided or drop them off at the church office during the week. Payment is due at time of pick-up. Any orders not picked up on November 21, or leftovers, will be sold in front of the church on Saturday, November 22, prior to the Christmas Parade, starting at 8:30am till they are all sold out. You don't want to miss getting some delicious apple dumplings made by our dedicated volunteers! Contact Lorna Thomas or Marg Stouffer if you have any questions. We thank you for supporting our fundraisers.



Christmas Poinsettias



If you'd like to dedicate a poinsettia to someone special, we will be accepting orders beginning in November. This year we are offering Red or Marble Poinsettias. They are \$11.25 each. Order forms and envelopes will be placed on the welcome table in the front vestibule and elevator area in the beginning of November. Completed orders can be placed in the Sunday offering plate on November 2, 9, 16, or 23, or dropped off at the church office during the week.

Deadline for all orders is at noon on Monday, November 24. Please be sure to print clearly and remember to include your payment with your order. Checks can be made payable to Grace UCC

The poinsettias will be placed in the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, which will held on Wednesday, December 24th, at 6pm. You will be able to pick up your poinsettia after the candlelight worship or call the church office to make other arrangements.

Angel Tree

Our Angel Tree will be set up in November to support children in the Greencastle Community. Each numbered Angel will display a child's age, gender, and suggested gifts listed on the reverse side.

When you see the Angel Tree, please take an Angel to help a child. There will be a list near the tree for you to write your name down next to the Angel number you picked. (This helps us keep track of the Angels.)

Kindly ensure that the gifts are either wrapped or placed in decorated gift bags, with the paper Angel tag securely affixed to the outside of the gift. Families will collect their gifts prior to Christmas for their child.

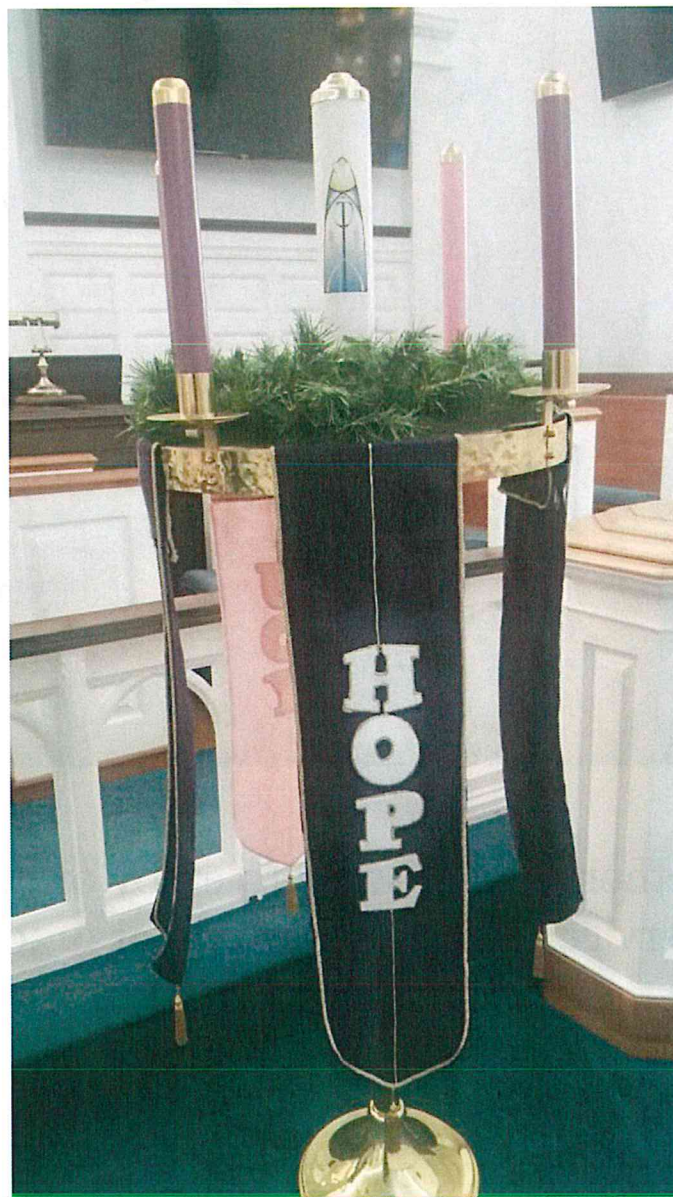
Nancy is working with the Greencastle Area School District to obtain a list of children in need. Once everything is confirmed, she will share the dates when gifts should be returned to the church.

Thank you for supporting the Greencastle Community and bringing joy to the children.



Advent Season

First Sunday of Advent will be upon us soon! We need volunteers to light the special advent candles and lead a small reading part from November 30th through December 21st, and during Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, December 24th. Please see the sign-up sheet on the welcome table in the front vestibule to participate in these special services.



CHRISTMAS CANTATA

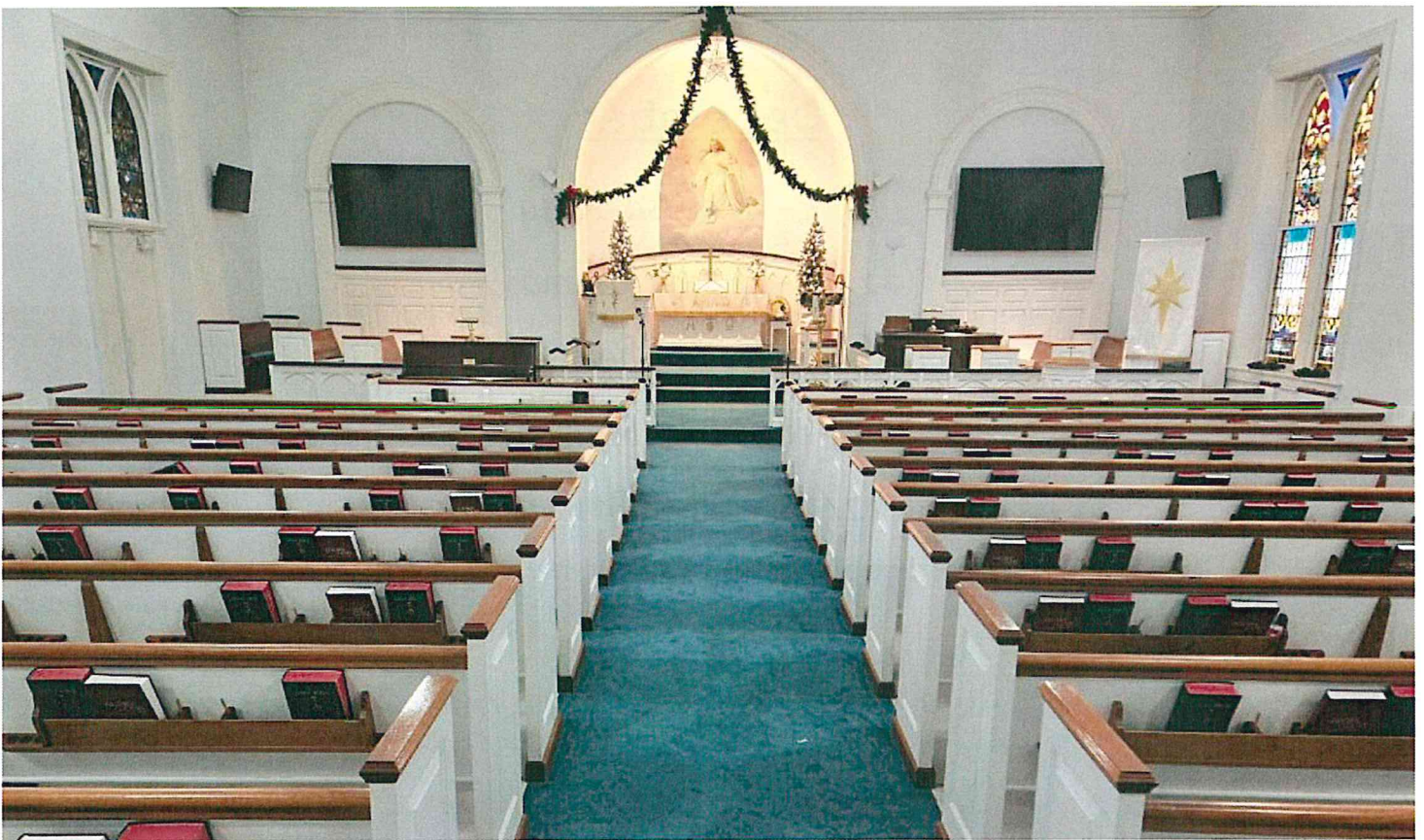


Please join us together as we gather to enjoy our special Christmas Cantata worship service on December 7th, at 9:30am. (Please note that we are holding the Cantata a little earlier this year.) Invite family and friends to join us! The choir is starting to prepare and rehearse for this performance. Loose change offering received during this worship will be donated to the choir.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Join us for our beautiful Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve, December 24 at 6pm in the Sanctuary. The sanctuary will be decorated for the celebration of Christmas. Invite family and friends! Those who ordered poinsettias for a loved one, can pick them up following this service. If you need to make other pickup arrangements, please call the church office.

Have a Blessed Christmas!



GUCC Website

Church updates, scholarship applications, newsletters and weekly worship programs can be downloaded from our website anytime! Donations can also be made through our website.
<https://www.graceuccgreencastle.com>

Member Birthday's

November

11/3 - Gladys Doyle

11/12 - Mark Stahl

11/19 - Debi Pirtle

11/24 - Nellie Stahl

11/25 - Carolle Patrick

December

12/1 - Melissa King

12/11 - Tina Thomas

12/16 - Onnie Shoemaker

12/18 - Ron Shafer

12/22 - Tim Bryan



Facebook & Live Streaming

If you use Facebook, 'like' our page, Grace United Church of Christ, to get updates and stay connected. Join us for our Sunday worship live stream at 9:30am on Facebook, or watch us on YouTube. It's an easy way to stay in touch!

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

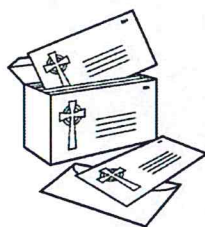
YouTube Channel: Greencastle Grace UCC

Penn Central Conference UCC

We thank you for helping support the UCC. We received \$70 towards "Neighbors in Need" UCC offering, between September and October. We also received \$20 for Strengthen the Church offering. Thank you for your support.

The next mission that we help support is their Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross & Emergency Fund. We plan on receiving these offerings during worship service on Sunday, December 21st. This fund helps to care for active and retired clergy, helping to provide emergency grants and monetary supplements at Christmas time to the lower income retirees throughout the United States.

2026 Boxed Envelope Sets



We expect the 2026 offering envelopes to be received towards the end of December. They will be placed on the welcome table in the front vestibule when available. They will be labeled with your name and address on the outside of the box. Once received, please verify this information is spelled correctly on the label and discard your old envelopes. Contact church office for any questions.

International Day of Peace

The International Day of Peace event took place at the Waynesboro YMCA this past September, sponsored by Church of the Apostles with Pastor Mark leading the prayers. Families participated in music, enjoyed refreshments, engaged in crafts, and the program concluded with a live dove release at the Dove Sculpture near Summitview Elementary. We appreciate everyone who was able to attend and contribute to the occasion.





— END OF YEAR —

GIVING

STATEMENTS

2025 Contribution Reports

Year-to-date contribution statements will be available in January. Please call the church office if you would like to receive a statement of your offerings for tax purposes or see the sign-up sheets which will be placed on the welcome table in January. We will gladly mail them out to you, or you can choose to pick them up, either at the office or at the front welcome table.

Church Directory Update

If anyone has made any recent changes to their phone, address or emails, please let us know so we can keep our directory updated. If you are not listed, and would like to be included, or need a new copy, please contact Elaine in the office.

Annual Picnic & Joint Worship at Church of the Apostles held in September

We thank the Church of the Apostles for coordinating this picnic!
We thank everyone for the delicious food. More photos are posted on our welcome bulletin board in the lower hallway.







MEETING MINUTES

Consistory Minutes of Meeting

September 21, 2025

Roll Call: Lorna Thomas, Mark Stahl, Ron Shafer, Barry Shoemaker, Tim Bryan, Steve Miller, Lu Miller, Pastor Mark Ruzicka, Larry Stepler. Deb Homer was absent

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by President Lorna Thomas.

Devotions: Scripture, Psalm 113 was read by Pastor Mark Ruzicka.

Consent Agenda: The June minutes and budget review minutes and Treasurer's report were approved on a Tim/Steve motion.

Information Agenda:

Pastor Mark

1. Local News 1 is a website that articles can be submitted to, and they will have a write up. It was felt that this would be a good way to advertise upcoming events. This was discussed and tabled for the next meeting.
2. Pastor Mark will be on vacation November 16th. Scott Bowerman will preach the sermon, and Tony Homer will assist.
3. Ministerium meeting October 13 @ GUCC. Nancy and Chet from Grace's Closet are both aware.
4. On October 15 in the evening a worship service will be held in Colonial Park in Harrisburg to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the first communion service. Pastor Mark will be attending. Book study that night will be self-taught.

Activities and Fundraising Committee

1. It was suggested possibly changing the form to clarify the information given.

Building and Grounds Committee

1. Dependable Roofing will be starting the roof in late October. Barry asked for an inspection of the roof soon. They want 1/3 down when starting the repair, which will be approximately \$20,000. Larry will address which accounts to draw that money from.
2. The company that usually does our elevator 6 month inspections is no longer in business. A list of third-party companies will be given to Barry.
3. A member of the Guild asked about hiring a professional cleaner to strip and wax the floor in the social hall to be paid by the Guild. Barry will be getting estimates for this.

Worship and Spiritual Life Committee

1. October 19 is to be Friend Sunday – Bring a friend to church.
2. An organ recital to celebrate our refurbished organ return will be discussed at the next meeting.

Finance Committee

1. Larry discussed which accounts will be used to finance the roof project.
2. He reported that the air conditioning project is completely paid.

Grace's Closet

Nancy Myers asked for consistory permission to open the closet for an additional 2 Saturdays a month, the second and fourth Saturdays, for clothing to be dropped off. This was approved on a Barry/Ron motion. It was suggested that the bags of clothing be inspected when they are dropped off and can be rejected if not meeting criteria.

Second request was for Nancy to purchase a shed in memory of her mother and father to house the tubs of clothing. The shed will be placed in a corner of our parking lot. This was tabled until next meeting so Nancy could check with the borough regarding any specific requirements.

Additional Topics for Discussion:

1. November 9th will be the Congregational Business Meeting reports are to be given to Elaine by the middle of October

2. Make up of consistory – On a Lu/Steve motion, it was decided to shorten the length of service to 3 years but remain with 8 members. This will be brought up at the congregational meeting.
3. Newsletter – tabled to next meeting.
4. Municipal Elections will be November 4th. Barry will open and close.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be on October 19, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Lu Miller



<p style="text-align: center;">Grace United Church of Christ 3rd Quarterly Statement Financial Income and Expense Report July - September 2025</p>

General Operating Account:

Beginning Balance	\$2,787.49
Income	\$24,424.53
Expense	\$23,327.79
Ending Balance	\$3,884.23

Building & Grounds Maintenance Account:

Beginning Balance	\$47,459.32
Income	\$19,687.00
Expense	\$37,212.13
Ending Balance	\$29,934.19

Organ/Memorial/Trust Account:

Beginning Balance	\$19,335.73
Income	\$15,104.61
Expense	\$9,142.37
Ending Balance	\$25,297.97

Special Account (Outreach/Other Non-Operating Funds)

Beginning Balance	\$11,493.86
Income	\$2,450.26
Expense	\$3,675.65
Ending Balance	\$10,268.47

* Please contact Church office if you would like a detailed report of the income and expense statement. Thank you.



January:

Welcome 2026

February:

Annual Pie Sale

March:

Ash Wednesday

Spring Ham Sandwich & Soup Sale

Scholarship Applications Available

Easter Flower Dedications

UCC One Great Hour of Sharing

