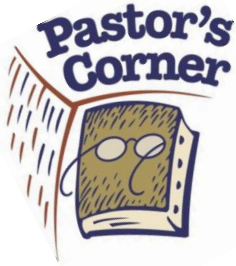

Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church

Newsletter

December 2019



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I think about Christmas this year, I have come to the realization that honestly, I can't think of a better time to celebrate the joy of Christian community than during the Advent and Christmas season.

It is a time when spending time friends and family is cherished and we look forward to seeing familiar faces around church. It is a time when the community is filled with hope and expectation.

Many of the scripture readings we use leading up to Christmas describe a community that is troubled but yet looking into the future with great hope:

"The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah." - Jeremiah 33:14

"At that time, I will gather you; at that time, I will bring you back home. I will give you honor and praise from people everywhere when I make things go well again for you, as you will see with your own eyes." - Zephaniah 3:20

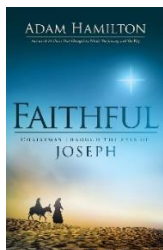
What a gift it is to receive the Christ child each year at the manger. It is a time for us to stand with each other and say as a community, "Peace on Earth, good will towards all!"

What better gift is there to share with the world, than to stand up in the face of all that is bad and broken in our world and rejoice at the coming of the one who came into the world to save it by bringing the true hope, love, peace, and joy into our lives that we need.

I pray that this Advent /Christmas season is one filled with hope, love, peace, and joy for you and your family. I also ask, that if possible, you consider making a donation to your church as a way of responding to God's love. May God bless our community, and may God bless you throughout this holiday season and into the New Year.

Peace,

Pastor Mike



Advent Bible Study for 2019.

Explore the life of Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus Christ

From his beginnings as a humble carpenter to his all-important role as the earthly father of Jesus Christ, Joseph's place in the nativity story is sometimes overlooked but contains valuable lessons for all of us.

Join Adam Hamilton as he examines Christmas through the eyes of Joseph. Absent from much of the biblical narrative, Joseph never spoke a word, but his courageous actions were crucial to the birth of Christ and God's salvation plan for humanity.

As you read this book, you will understand how Joseph's story is much like our own. In life, we encounter circumstances that we would never have chosen for ourselves. At times it can be tempting just to walk away.

Joseph provides us a great example of humbly obeying God even when we don't understand and faithfully moving forward in the strength that God provides.

Exchange your doubt for courage this Advent and Christmas season. The story of Joseph provides us a great example of humbly obeying God even when we don't understand and faithfully moving forward in the strength that God provides.

Chapter topics include:

1. A Carpenter Named Joseph
2. Whose Child Is This?
3. Raising a Child Not Your Own
4. The Journey to Bethlehem
5. The Rest of the Story

**The Study begins on Sunday,
December 1st at 6:30 P.M.**



This year our Church will again hold two Christmas Eve Services. The early service will be at 7:00 P.M. and the late service will be at 11:00 P.M. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend one of these opportunities to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.



On Sunday, December 22nd the Youth Group members and Sunday School children will present a Christmas program during our worship service. The Sunday School would like to include all the children who would like to participate in the program. They will practice each Sunday during the class time. Please plan on coming out to celebrate the birth of Christ and to support our children and youth.

Gathering Place

Gathering Place is a continuing ministry of our church. It offers a time for members of our community to get together in friendship and fellowship and to enjoy a good meal. The next Gathering Place will be on:
Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall.

All our friends and neighbors who are available at that time are invited to come out

and join us in this time together. A donation box is available to cover the cost of the food.

Upcoming gatherings for 2020 are: January 22, and February 26 and March 25. This ministry is supported through the free-will offerings given by the attendees.







A Birthday Celebration: Gifts for Jesus – 2019

WHOSE BIRTHDAY IS IT, ANYWAY????

Honor the birth of Jesus and testify to his mission of love and service by giving a gift of hope to those less fortunate.

1. **Christmas Gift for Female Inmate** in Lebanon County Prison. (We need 45) Must be brought to the church by December 15, 2019. Sign in with Sandy Hall for this project.

-  Thermal undershirt (\$6.00, place in envelope)
-  Shampoo (No larger than 15 oz.)
-  Deodorant (Stick **only**)
-  1 pair white crew socks

Please put these items in a gift bag. You may include a card or a note, but **PLEASE** no other items.

UMCOR

Information about United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Connections is the Core of UMCOR. It connects the United Methodist Church, its people and congregations to partner with others engaged in God's global work, which takes place in a variety of settings, countries and cultures.

2. **Sharing with others** - through UMCOR Disaster Response to help many areas recover from Wildfire and Flood

Disaster– This is through the United Methodist Church, thus 100% of the money collected is used for the project.

3. **Saving lives** – A need for **Birthing Kits**; a simple solution to unclean deliveries is the use of birthing kits which contain essential items for conducting the clean delivery of a baby. The components of the kit are meant to improve hygienic birth practices following the World Health Organizations (WHO) principles for clean delivery and cord care. Items placed in the kit total \$10.00.

“Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can”.
~ John Wesley~

May you experience the remarkable love and joy of the “real” Christmas.

Food Bank Sunday

The first Sunday of each month, food, paper products, toiletries and money are collected for the Lebanon County Christian Ministry Food Bank. The list of suggested items for each month is usually in the church bulletin and can become your shopping list when you go to the store. This project has been well supported. Keep up the good work!! A thank-you from the LCCM is usually posted in the narthex. They also include how many pounds we contribute each month. Thank you for your participation.



MGUMC Financial Snapshot OCTOBER 2019

| Category | Year-to-Date 2019 | Year-to-Date 2018 | Dollar Change |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Offerings | \$110,026 | \$112,921 | (\$2,895) |
| Contribution from Endowment | \$31,670 | \$26,581 | \$5,089 |
| Other Receipts | \$61,437 | \$62,183 | (\$746) |
| Non-Budgeted Receipts | \$49,704 | \$69,119 | (\$19,415) |
| Total Receipts | \$252,837 | \$270,804 | (\$17,967) |
| Total Expenses | \$252,308 | \$275,236 | (\$22,928) |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | \$529 | (\$4,432) | \$4,961 |
| Drendall Endowment Balance | \$2,495,719 | \$2,360,416 | \$135,303 |
| Endowment Annual Grants | \$57,362 | \$58,711 | (\$1,349) |

The above table is a snapshot of 2019 year-to-date results compared to 2018

Explanation of categories

Offering: Envelopes, Plate, Church School and Building fund

Contribution from Endowment: The amount of monies received from the endowment for operational expenditures.

Other income: Miscellaneous, Flowers, Bible study, Endowment grants

Non-budgeted income: Memorials, Camps, LCCM, Transfers, Special offering

Total Disbursements: Expenses/ transfers/ disbursements relating to the operation of the ministry of the church.

Drendall Endowment Balance: Period end balance of the assets in the endowment

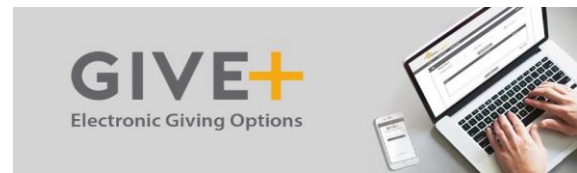
Endowment Annual Grants: Grants other than the "Contribution from Endowment"

Offering Envelopes

2020 Church Offering Envelopes are available in the lobby of the church. Please stop by to pick them up either on Sunday mornings or during our regular office hours: Monday – Friday 9:30 A.M. until 12 noon.

Help us grow:

Electronic Giving is here!



Effective January 1, 2020, e-giving will be an additional offering option for you at Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church. You will have access to e-giving through the church's website or the ability to download the GivePlus app for your Android or Apple phone through the respective app store.

Electronic giving is fast and secure. Electronic giving will be made available through GivePlus, a recognized leader in e-giving for over 22,000 churches. GivePlus is powered by Vanco Payment Solutions.

Give anytime, anywhere to your favorite church funds, as many as you wish!

Schedule and manage recurring donations

Make one-time donations to special appeals

More information will be available in the coming weeks, please check your bulletin and email!

A Word from the Trustees

Trustees' Update: The United Methodist Church doctrine defines trustees as **'Christian stewards of property God has entrusted to the congregation'**. With that definition in mind, our faithful and diligent group of trustees meets once a month to discuss property issues of the church, identify items that need fixed, items that need improved, and projects that are possibilities for the future.

One such issue that came to our attention was the need to better accommodate seating in the sanctuary for attendees with disabilities, especially someone who may be using a wheelchair. So, after discussion and reviewing options, we decided to designate an area at the rear of the sanctuary and mark it **'Reserved Seating'**. We relocated two chairs from the chancel area, so someone accompanying a wheelchair guest could also sit comfortably in the same area. We have received positive feedback from people who utilize the area, and others those who do not. But even though we have a designated seating area, we do NOT prohibit anyone from sitting in whatever location of the sanctuary they desire.

If you become aware of any issues that you think should be addressed by the trustees, please don't hesitate to contact the committee chairman, Don Bowman. If you feel moved to join our committee, also contact Don or Pastor Mike.

LCCM Council Of Delegates Meeting 10/15/2019

Mission Statement: Lebanon County Christian Ministries compassionately communicates God's love to the people of Lebanon County by serving their immediate felt needs, empowering their personal

sustainability and sharing the heart of God with them.

Bud and Sue Green are the delegates representing Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church (MGUMC) at the LCCM Council of Delegates Meeting.

The meeting was held at South Lebanon Community Church, 13 Evergreen Road, Lebanon, PA.

"LCCM offers a wide variety of programs and services to address basic needs of people in our community. Services provided are based on need. Although income and expense information are requested of each client, these are not the sole determining factors for receiving assistance. Interviews of clients are completed each time they present themselves in need of assistance – regardless of the number of respective visits to LCCM. LCCM services are available to all Lebanon County residents."

Upcoming events:

- *Lenten Breakfast – March 28, 2020*
- *26th Annual Golf Tournament- May of 2020 (date TBD)*
- *Box City Festival – August 21, 2020*

LCCM provides; emergency shelter, food bank, clothing bank, heating oil, natural gas, water/sewer, free noon meal, summer food program and TEFAP and CSFP.

LCCM is the designated agency for Lebanon County to maintain the federally funded Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

The FRESH START program continues to flourish, with members from various churches, including MGUMC, providing meals to guests at the LCCM facility. If interested in helping please contact the coordinator at MGUMC, Bob Lauver.

FRESH START Emergency Shelter and Resource Center does more than meals, it helps those who need to “get back on their feet”, with assistance with employment, housing or other resources to support the life of LCCM guests. In 2018/2019, LCCM provided 5,555 nights of stay, hosted an average of 15 guests per night and 130 guests were discharged to housing.

Bryan D. Smith was introduced as the new Executive Director succeeding Troy Williams who was committed to follow the Lord, to a new ministry, as he was provided an opportunity to serve the Calvary Church. Troy had over 14 years of service to LCCM and the Lebanon Valley.

LCCM is on a fiscal year (June 2018 to June 2019); therefore, the financials were presented by the Treasurer Alan Howe. Comparing the period of 2017-2018 to 2018-2019; the former generated \$234,363 in Net Ordinary Income, while the latter generated \$70,342. The income for the 2018-2019, was bolstered by an extraordinary gift from the former Tabor Endowment of \$94,000. Part of the drop can be accounted for through the decrease support from the United Way along with the decrease in the Capital Campaign.

Next meeting to be held in May 2020.

The LCCM is a fantastic Christian Ministry. Your contributions of clothing, foodstuff, cash or most importantly your time is greatly appreciated by all.

Scarves and Mittens

United Way, Stay Warm Campaign donations accepted through Sunday, December 8th. Hats, gloves, mittens, scarves welcome. There will be a basket in the lobby of the church Sunday, December 8th for

dropping off any donations you would like to give.

Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to order Christmas Poinsettias this year, please fill out the form below and return to the Church Office with your payment by December 16th. Order forms are also available in the weekly bulletin.



Once again this Christmas we will be decorating the church with sponsored Poinsettias. You will be able to pick up your plant(s) following Either Christmas Eve Service.

POINSETTIAS

If you wish to sponsor a plant, fill out the Slip below, mail it to the church, or call the Church office at 717-964-3241.

All flowers come in a 6.5" pot with 5+ blooms.

ORDERS DUE BY DECEMBER 16th

| <u>Poinsettia Color</u> | <u>Price</u> | <u>Number</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| RED | \$8.25 | _____ |
| WHITE | \$8.25 | _____ |

Presented by (Your Name) **PLEASE PRINT**

Phone: _____

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

Please make checks payable to:
Mount Gretna UMC
PO Box 427
Mount Gretna, PA 17064