
Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church

Newsletter

February 2020

*The
Season
of
Lent*



Dear Members and Friends,

At the end of the month we will be entering into another Lenten Season in the life of the church.

According to the ancient plan of the church, Lent begins in the cold and dark, then journeys slowly toward warmth and light.

Now the old traditions of Lent include a lot of penitential acts that were meant to tame the willful flesh of its sinful desires. I was a little bit amused to come across a Protestant publication from the 1880s that suggested the following rules for Lent: “Eat nothing sweet. Do not put salt, pepper, or mustard on your food. Put no sugar or cream in your coffee or tea. Read nothing amusing, including novels, poetry, or humorous nonfiction. Eat no meat one or two days a week, and give the money you would have spent on meat to the church. Get up five minutes early each day to pray or read devotional literature.”

My first reaction to this list was, “Mustard? What about ketchup? Horseradish? Salsa?” If we were to extend the spirit of these rules to the 21st century, we might include: Watch nothing on TV but the news. Stay off social media. Don’t play that hot new game on your cell phone. It’s just 40 days, not

counting Sundays, for Sundays are never “fast days.”

No, I don’t often ask people to “give things up for Lent.” As a pastor, I’m much more likely to ask you to take up a good cause for Lent, or a good habit, or a productive activity. And yet...I’ve got to admit that there’s something powerful about occasionally saying no to our desires. There’s something compelling, perhaps even something wise, about practicing resistance against the constant urge to indulge ourselves.

When we deny ourselves the luxuries that we’re used to, we learn an amazing thing: we need very little in life. And though denying ourselves mustard doesn’t teach us what it’s like to be poor, it does remind us that there are those in the world who struggle to survive, who cannot afford even the smallest indulgences. When we deny ourselves the excesses of life, we learn a new appreciation for things we once took for granted. Most importantly, perhaps, when we say no to our desires, we become their master. And in a society that is largely ruled by its empty wishes and desires, how peace-giving and empowering it is to become their master. And all those abstract indulgences like gossip, self-pity, jealousy, rage... You’ll never regret giving those up for forty days, for after Lent is over, you’ll have learned that you have it in your power to

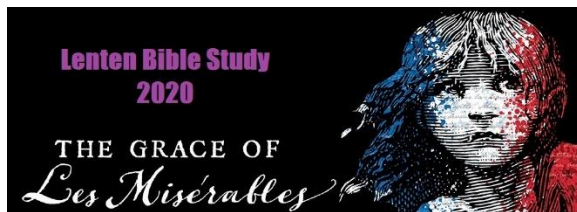
give them up for life, just by consistently refusing them.

Lent is a holy time, a joyful time to discover anew what it means to be spiritual, and follow the way of Christ. I hope you'll use this time intentionally and well.

In Christ's,

~Pastor Mike

PS: If you still don't know what to give up for Lent, allow me to suggest an hour and a half each Thursday evening from 6:30—8:00 P.M.! Our Lenten Bible Study.



Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* is a truly epic story. Whether you've tackled the 1,400-page 19th century novel, witnessed the Broadway musical (and memorized its soundtrack), or seen the several screen adaptations of it, you already know the power of its story.

In the six-week study *The Grace of Les Misérables*, author and pastor Matt Rawle dives into six ideals found in the story—grace, justice, poverty, revolution, love, and hope—each represented by a character in Hugo's story. As these imperfect and relatable characters interact, we can see how these ideals work together (perhaps even in spite of each other) out in the world

The study will meet on Thursdays at 6:30 P.M. from March 5th – April 9th. Please contact the church office for materials.



Summary for 2019

Christmas Gift for Female Inmate in Lebanon County Prison - 54 Total bags were filled. Each also contained 6 dollars for a thermal shirt. $54 \times \$6.00 = \324.00
Sharing with others - through UMCOR Disaster Response to help many areas recover from Wild Fire and Flood Disaster—This is through the United Methodist Church, thus 100% of the money collected is used for the project. Silent auction plus donations totaled: \$1,733.65

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. Donations totaled \$620.00 which will help to make 62 kits.

The Gifts for Jesus Project totaled:
 $\$1,733.68 + 620.00 + 324.00 = \$2,677.65$
Once again, through your generosity you have responded to Christ's command to feed the hungry, care for the sick, comfort the heartbroken and welcome the stranger in our midst. Thank you



Our Lenten journey begins with Ash Wednesday. This year the service will be on February 26th at 7:00 P.M.

This year Mount Gretna UMC will host the service. Cornwall UMC and Rocherty UMC will be joining us for this service.

Rev, Tim Kriebel will deliver the evening message. the service will conclude with Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes.



This year the Southern Lebanon County Council of Churches will NOT be holding Mid-week Lenten services. Instead the pastors and churches will be participating in a pulpit exchange on Sunday March 15th.

The pastor who will be coming to Mt. Gretna will be Rev. Jess Hailey, Pastor of Quentin UCC. Pastor Mike will be going to Rocherty UMC.

Easter Egg Hunt

The Annual Mount Gretna Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by our church will be held this year on

Saturday, April 4th at 11:00 A.M. in the



area around the Chautauqua playground and the Jigger Shop. Rain date is Saturday, April 11th at the same place and time.

BUT, before the eggs can be hunted they need to be prepared! For some egg



dyeing, fun and fellowship, please join us at 6:30 P.M. at the church on Thursday evening April 2nd. There are many eggs to be dyed and many dyers are needed. This is a great activity for the whole family and kids just love it!



Easter Sunday Services

Easter Sunday is April 12 this year and on that very special day our church will celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ at three worship services.

Easter Sunrise Services

Easter Sunday begins with a Son-rise service held at 7:00 A.M. **in the Campmeeting Tabernacle**. Yes, dogs are still welcomed to attend with their owners!

We will then gather for our Traditional Worship services at 8:30 & 10:00 A.M. in the church sanctuary.

Gathering Place

There is always good food and good fellowship to be found at the Gathering Place luncheons. All our friends and neighbors are invited to come out and share in this monthly time together.

Upcoming Gatherings for 2020 are: February 26, March 25, April 22, and May 27. All luncheons take place at 12:00 PM and are supported through the free-will offerings given by the attendees.



Your Trustees are looking for the following:

Parsonage Outside Grounds: Caretaker:

There's nothing to do during the winter months, but in the spring, summer, and fall we could use someone who is interested in planning the care and feeding of the property. This would include flowers, plants, beds, small trees, and leaves. It's not a huge job, but it is an important one. We would like to keep the parsonage grounds well maintained. And remember, there are members of Trustees that will assist in the actual work, but we need someone who could volunteer to do the planning and scheduling of work-days.

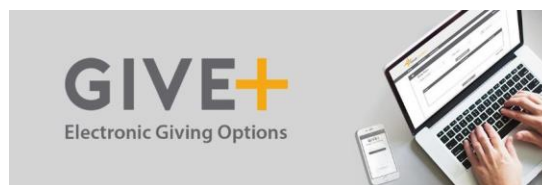
Used Tools: Don't go out and buy something new, but if you have any unused tools lying around the house, we could use them. We are looking for simple stuff like screwdrivers, pliers, hammer, adjustable wrench, hand saw, etc. We store tools in a tool box in the large storage room behind the furnace room, which come in handy for minor repair jobs at the church.

Small Push Ice Melt Dispenser: Does anyone have an unused broadcast spreader

(typically used for lawn fertilizer, and must be the 'broadcast' style)? This would come in handy on mornings/evenings when the parking lot is icy and we need to lay down some ice melt.

Please see me at church, or call me at 717-433-1089 if you can help.

Thanks – Don Bowman



Electronic Giving has arrived!

On January 1, 2020, a new milestone for donating to Mount Gretna United Methodist Church, Electronic Giving arrived. Electronic giving is fast and secure. Electronic giving is made available through GivePlus, a recognized leader in e-giving for over 22,000 churches. GivePlus is powered by Vanco Payment Solutions. To use the E-Giving option for your donations, you can use the online feature on the church's website (www.mtgretnachurch.org) or the mobile app (can be downloaded from either Google Play Store or Apple's App Store), or even texting (844-566-1473), whichever you prefer.

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

Thank you for all that have signed up and used the E-Giving.

Any questions please contact the Church office at 717-964-3241, or mgumc@verizon.net



2019 MGUMC FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

The year in review, financially that is: Electronic Giving (E – giving) was first introduced to become effective January 1, 2020. This contribution platform will offer online giving through the enhanced Mount Gretna United Methodist Church website www.mtgretnachurch.org ; through the mobile app Give Plus, which is found in either Google Play Store or the Apple’s App Store; and through a texting option. This new platform is in addition to the Envelopes and the Plate. So even if you miss a service, you forget to set your alarm clock, bad weather, the art show or too nice a day, you can still give. The addition of E-giving and the use of the recurring donations feature will help smooth out the cash needs of the church.

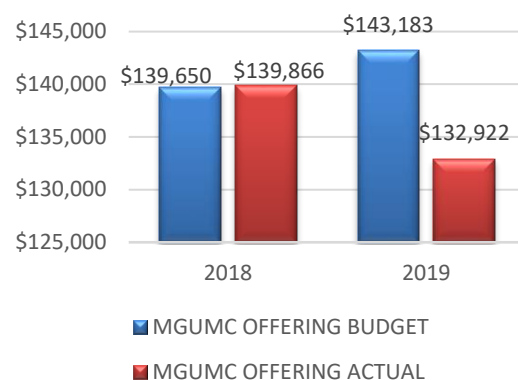
The year ended on a positive note, with Mount Gretna United Methodist Church (MGUMC) finishing with a surplus, in comparison to last year’s deficit. This surplus of \$2,547 was made possible by a transfer of funds from an allocated item (the funds were transferred back in January 2020) due to a cash flow issue, and the Nursery requiring only half of the funds budgeted for 2019.

The regular giving of Envelopes, Plate Offering, Church Sunday School and Building Fund unfortunately decreased year over year. Below you will find a chart (MGUMC OFFERING) showing the actual results for 2019 along with 2018, with a comparison to the appropriate budgets. It should be noted this “regular giving” is

relied on to offset operational expenses. The regular giving totals do not include any funds from the endowment that are also used for operational expenses along with any memorials or special offerings that the church would be fortunate to receive.

In 2020’s budget the amount contributed to the operational budget for 2020 was held to the same contribution as in 2019, \$38,004. This allows for more monies available for grants.

MGUMC OFFERING



Total operating income increased \$4,503 or 1.9% over 2018. This this can be attributed to increases in funds from the Drendall Endowment of \$5,923 or 18.46% along with Miscellaneous items such as matching funds from financial services companies and Ebenezer room rentals.

The operating expenses for 2019 declined \$39,341 from 2018, reflecting the lack of building projects (parsonage renovations) in 2019, along with the decline in overall utility costs, thanks to the work of the Trustee Committee in 2018 and the Nursery only needing half of the funding budgeted (\$4,000). Offsetting these declines were increases in Salaries and Benefits. It should be noted that for 2020 the salaries have not been increased.

The Drendall Endowment finished 2019 at \$2,602,286 compared to 2018’s \$2,267,253. The return for 2019 was 20.30%. Total

grants from the Endowment in 2019 were \$95,366 of which \$38,004 was a grant to MGUMC for operational expenses. For 2020, the total budgeted amount for grants is \$97,680 of which \$38,004 will be used for MGUMC operational expenses.

Thank you for your financial support of the ministries of MGUMC. Happy New Year!

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"
2 Corinthians 9:7

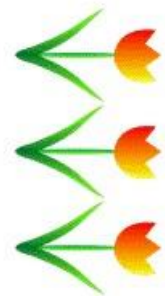


New MGUMC Website!

www.mtgretnachurch.org

Yes, our church has a brand new web page.

Visit it for announcements, activities, contact info., bulletin and Newsletter downloads, weather related delays and closings, and much more.



EASTER FLOWERS

Once again this Easter, we will be decorating the sanctuary with sponsored spring flowers.

If you wish to sponsor a flower, fill out this slip and place it in the offering plate or call the church office at 717-964-3241.

Orders are due by April 5th 2020.

Presented by: PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

Phone # _____

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

Flower	Price	Number
White Lilies (3-4 blooms)	\$7.50	_____
Mini Daffodils (6.5" pot)	\$6.50	_____
Daffodils (6.5" pot)	\$6.25	_____
Hyacinth (6.5" pot- 3 bulbs)	\$6.75	_____
Tulips (6 bulbs)	\$6.50	_____



Conference and Denominational News

West District Lay Equalizing Delegates to Annual Conference

Please let Kristin Reifsnyder know by Friday, March 6, 2020, whether or not you plan to serve this year and will be able to be in attendance at Annual Conference all three days. We will fill slots according to your replies.

Annual Conference will be the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, PA, June 18th @ 8 A.M. - June 20 @ 5 P.M.

District Conference will be on Sunday, May 17, tentatively at Salem UMC, Maheim, at 3 P.M. Equalizers are expected to attend District Conference.

If you served as a delegate last year, you're automatically a delegate this year, but if you're unable to serve, we need to know so we can remove you and open your spot.

If you have been licensed as a local pastor since the last AC you may not serve as a Lay Equalizing Delegate. If you are a Certified Lay Minister (CLM) you may serve as an Equalizing Delegate. Please let us know if your status has changed.

Thank you for your prompt reply.

To let the District know please email the District Office at westdistrict@epaumc.org

TOOLS FOR MINISTRY 2020 REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

March 7th, 2020

Church of the Good Shepherd
1500 Quentin Road, Lebanon, PA 17042

Cost: \$10 (Includes Materials, Continental Breakfast & Refreshments)

Registration Deadline: February 29th - Walk-ins will be accepted but the availability of workshops may be limited. In case of inclement weather, call the District Office (717-569-9673) for news of cancellation (snow date: March 21, 2020). Indicate workshops desired. Please note and detail any physical needs or disabling conditions. Payment must accompany registration. If the registration fee is an issue, please still register by calling the District office. Scholarships are available upon request. You may also register online at <http://bit.ly/WD-TFM2020> (case sensitive). No refunds will be available. Substitutes will be allowed.

Basic Schedule of the Day:

8:15 A.M. to 8:50 A.M. – Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:00 A.M. to 10:20 A.M. – Workshop Session I

10:30 A.M. to 11:50 A.M. – Workshop Session II

11:55 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. - Music/Announcements/ Meditation -- be sure to stick around for this

Check is only accepted for Mail Registrations

Payable to: EPAUMC, memo line:
WD TFM

If your organization would like to set up a display table in the registration area, please download the form below and return to the [District Office](#) no later than Friday, February 21, 2020. Space is quite limited

and will be available at first come, first served basis. There is no charge for display tables.

To View the brochure and to register please visit: <http://bit.ly/WD-TFM2020>

Message from our Bishop

Please take a moment to read this letter from our Bishop, Peggy Johnson concerning the decisions coming up in May at General Conference.

January 4, 2020

The people called United Methodists have been on a long journey of conversation and debate regarding human sexuality: specifically the marriage and ordination of homosexual people and what "the practice of homosexuality being contrary to Christian teaching" means. The Protocol Statement that was released on January 3, 2020 seems to be a significant break-through in this 47 year impasse. It was crafted by a diverse group of 16 key United Methodist leaders along with a professional mediator. My deepest appreciation goes to them for this faithful and courageous work.

This was initiated by Bishop John Yambasu, from the Sierra Leone Annual Conference in July 2019. He yearned for the United Methodist Church to remain a denomination in the midst of much talk of schism and the many unhappy conversations after the 2019 General Conference that included blame and shame.

This group of 16 continued to meet throughout the fall and the Protocol statement that was just issued will go to General Conference. It must also be considered by Judicial Council (constitutional legality), the General Commission on Finance and Administration

(financial impacts) and the Commission on General Conference (logistics and scheduling).

It is important to note that this must be approved by the delegates of General Conference (May 5-15, 2020 in Minneapolis, MN) for this to become a reality. This Protocol still needs to be written into legislation form and presented to the delegates. So it is not a done deal! My email inbox was flooded yesterday by numerous concerned pastors and laity and I was interviewed by three newspapers. The major concern was the same: The UMC has split!! Not so! Please tell people this is not a done deal!

This Protocol is significant, ground breaking, and has the potential to accomplish much good. Among the components of this protocol are:

- The moratorium on all complaints and trials with regard to homosexuality between now and the General Conference.

- It keeps the Global UMC intact. The plan is to have the UMC be organized in regions that will determine their way of living with regard to paragraphs regarding homosexuality.

- It allows the Traditional churches to leave with their assets and be able to create their own denomination. A sum of \$25 million dollars will be paid over the next 4 years toward this end. As a result, there will be no court battles over property matters.

- It sets aside \$39 million dollars from both the UMC and the Traditionalist denomination for reparations in acknowledgement of the harm done to people of color during past changes in structure and system. These funds are to support programs, training and agency work to ensure the health and vitality of our ethnic constituencies going forward.

-It also sets aside \$2 million dollars for any future denomination that might want to also be developed.

-It ensures that clergy will still keep their pensions as everyone will continue to have Wespath Pension services.

-It allows for Disaffiliation for churches that wish to go on their own. However they must follow the Disciplinary paragraphs regarding this process.

All of this takes a very long time and with the Protocols are time-lines and benchmarks that will spin out for at least the next four years. So it is not a done deal even at the close of General Conference. (There will likely be amendments and changes to the plan if it does pass so it will not look exactly like the statement we have before us.)

What do we do in the meantime?

-Dispel any rumors that we have already "split" as a denomination.

-Continue to follow the news articles about the developments with the Protocols (umc.org).

-Attend the General Conference delegate listening sessions that will be happening this spring.

-Continue with the ministry and mission of the church. Make disciples! Be the presence of Christ's love in this world.

-Most importantly PRAY. Pray for the United Methodist Church and its witness to the world. It is my hope that moving forward what we decide at General Conference will ultimately multiply our witness and we will be poised to reach more and more people for Jesus Christ.

I do offer a personal lament at this time. Being who I am, with the image of the "Body of Christ" as a central part of my theology and heart, it is important for me to offer my thought that with a divided body we will be less whole. A denomination or any church that separates over their understanding of God's truth has left itself

without the possibility of more understanding and growth. We can only mature spiritually and personally by the refining fire of discourse and collective prayer with those with whom we disagree. When we go to our respective "corners" I believe we will soon discover that we are "less than" we could be without the other.

However, having struggled together for 47 years, it is likely a season for this Protocol to be enacted for many practical and important reasons. Our witness has taken a serious hit as people from the outside see us as a warring body and much ministry time has been spent engaging in disagreeable conversations. May there come a day when we get back together, we people called Methodists. Just as the Apostle Paul apparently reconciled with John Mark (II Timothy 4:11) after separating from Barnabas over a dispute that had something to do with Mark's desertion (Acts 15:37), I am hopeful that we too can find our way back together in the future.

Peggy A. Johnson

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson
Philadelphia Area