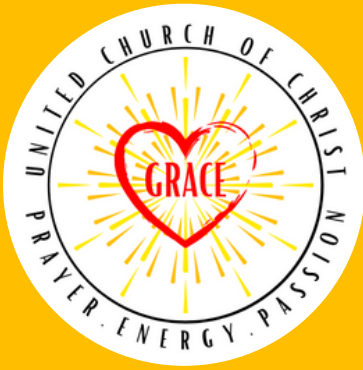


March 2024 Newsletter



CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor:

Bob Gutekunst

- office phone: 610-262-7186
- cell: 484-714-9245
- email: revgraceucc@rcn.com

Minister of Music:

Marisa Deshler

- cell: 484-226-7298
- email: mdeshler@ptd.net

Church Office:

Mary Dobish

- office phone: 610-262-7186
- email: graceuccchurch@gmail.com

Church Website:

www.graceuccchurch.com

Find Us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/grace.northampton

Hospital Code: #436

Use this code when you're admitted so that we know you're in the hospital.

Some Thoughts of the Season from Pastor Bob Gutekunst

It occurred to me that this year, during the season of Lent, one of the Sundays in Lent falls on March 17, St. Patrick's Day, a day that has become a pretty popular secular holiday in our country, a day typically associated with revelry and celebration. We celebrate St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, we celebrate all things green, we celebrate shamrocks and leprechauns, we celebrate all of these things even if we're not Irish.

I read up a little on this popular holiday, and I discovered some surprises regarding our traditional beliefs about St. Patrick. For one thing, he wasn't Irish. Who knew? He was actually born in either England, Wales or Scotland (nobody really knows for sure.) St. Patrick's Day actually started in America, not Ireland. Go figure. The color that is traditionally associated with him is blue, not green. The legend that he taught about the Holy Trinity by comparing it to a shamrock is also not true. And, to top it all off, his real name wasn't even Patrick!

Ironically, Patrick was a saint who was known for his rock-solid belief, but it turns out that many of the things people believe about him are not based in reality. They are mostly just traditional beliefs that have been passed down and accepted without much thought given to them. I wonder how many Christians treat our faith in God the same way.

I grew up in a religious household in which most of our church activities were done with a sense of obligation. I don't think I ever really questioned what I believed about God, Jesus, church, religion, etc.

Some Thoughts Continued...

If I had, I probably would have been grounded by my Mom. Since that time, I've come into contact with many Christians who might be regarded as "Sunday School Christians"- they learned all they needed to learn about their faith in Sunday School, and they haven't thought much about their faith since then.

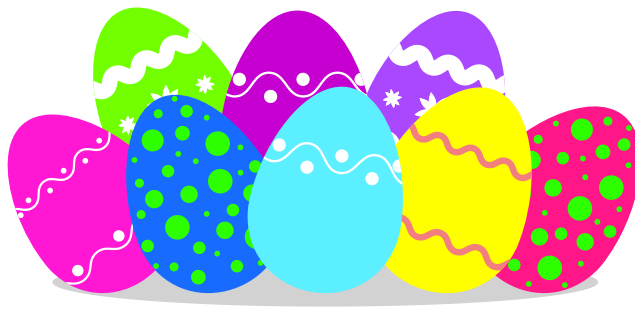
We recite some prayers and Scripture passages almost out of a sense of obligation, things like the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm and the Apostle's Creed, but do we ever really think about what those words mean? Do we give any significant thought to the things we say that we believe as Christians?

One of the characteristics that drew me to the United Church of Christ was freedom - the freedom to believe what I want. Of course, some basic beliefs must be agreed upon - like Jesus as Savior, and the Holy Trinity, and the sacraments of Baptism and Communion. But the rest is up for debate. We are free to disagree with one another, with the pastor, with the Conference, and with the National Church setting as well. But with that freedom comes responsibility. We are expected, as Christians in the U.C.C., to study, to learn, to grow, and to think about the things that we believe in. I know that my beliefs about God have changed pretty dramatically since my time as a Catholic altar boy.

The season of Lent seems like a good time, not just to examine ourselves, but to examine our relationship with God, and to examine what it is that we believe in when we say we follow Jesus. Since St. Patrick's Day falls on a Sunday in Lent, maybe it can remind us to engage in such reflections. Maybe between the green beer and corned beef and cabbage, we can remember St. Patrick's rock-solid belief, and think about what it is that we believe.

*Happy St. Patrick's Day and a Blessed Lent,
Pastor Bob*





Grace United Church of Christ

Message from Consistory

March 2024

Our next consistory meeting is Wednesday, March 13 at 6:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Church Easter Egg Hunt - TBD

Special Worship Services:

Maundy Thursday - TBD

Good Friday - TBD

Easter Sunday - 8:00 am and 10:30 am

Continental Breakfast 9:00-10:00 am - All our invited to attend!

Save the Date - Saturday, April 27th 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner, Basket Social & Bake Sale



Notes of Thanks

We received thank you letters from Phoebe Ministries and Lancaster Theological Seminary for our recent gifts to their organization. Thank you for supporting our missions. It is greatly appreciated.

Greeters Needed for 2024

Would you serve as a Greeter for worship services for a one-month period; arrive at church ½ hour prior to church services, welcoming and handing out bulletins to members and guests as they arrive. Please consider helping, there is a sign-up sheet at the back of the church, or contact Bonnie Horwith, bogash@ptd.net or 484-201-0412, to sign up. Your time and stewardship are appreciated!

Grace UCC Budget For Calendar Year 2024

January - December 2024

	<u>Budget</u>
Revenue	
Offerings	91,000.00
Christian Education	460.00
Flowers Income	2,400.00
Fundraising Income	39,500.00
Investment Income	18,660.00
PNEC Missions	500.00
Rental Income	12,000.00
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 164,520.00</u>
Expenditures	
Church Devotional Program	5,355.00
Church Programs/Supplies	11,400.00
Fundraising Costs	10,600.00
Missions	4,200.00
Pastorial Services Expense	92,280.00
Property Expense	23,500.00
Staff Salaries & Expenses	48,955.00
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 196,290.00</u>
Deficit to be covered by investments	<u>- \$ 31,770.00</u>

The Budget for 2024 has been approved at the Annual Meeting which was held on Sunday, February 18, 2024.

Highlights from Consistory Meeting February

Fellowship Committee will be hosting crab cakes and chicken fingers dinners during the Lenten season. Dinners will be held on Friday, March 1st, 8th & 15th from 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Consistory will be holding a pork & sauerkraut dinner on Saturday, April 27, 2024. More information to follow.

The Fellowship Committee's soup sale had a profit of \$794.28. Thank you to all who made and purchased the soup.

Organ repairs are now complete. Memorial Funds of Barbara Hanks, Robert (Whitey) Lindenmoyer and Steve Myers were used.

Fellowship Committee - The Fellowship Committee is looking for new members to join their group. Help is needed with various fundraisers through out the year. If you would like to join, please see Lee Ann Hortman, Sue Kutzler, Betty Miller, Sandy Andrews, Donna Damiter, Karen Kresge, Charlotte Leindecker, Gail Miller and Cindy Trively.

Christian Education 2024 Schedule

- **March 17th** - St Patrick's Potluck after the 10:30 service
- **March 31st** - Easter Sunday - No Sunday school
- **April 14th** - Family Sunday school (Spring Theme)
- **May 19th** - Family Sunday school (last day of Sunday School)



Heavenly Chocolate Easter Candy Sales

Order & Payment Deadline: Feb 25, 2024

Pickup Date: Saturday, March 23, 2024

10:00 am - 12:00 noon

Sunday, March 24, 2024 after worship

For your convenience, an order form is enclosed in this newsletter.

Want to Help Make Easter Candy?

We are looking for volunteers to help make candy, Candy making is scheduled for the week of March 18th. Monday through Friday - hours: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (approx.)

Making candy isn't your thing?

We could always use help with setup and cleanup. We welcome and appreciate any way in which you are willing to help.



CRAB CAKE DINNER

Crab Cake Dinners will be held the first three Fridays in Lent: March 1st, 8th and 15th from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall!

Dine-in & take-out. Pay at the door - no preorders.

The Crab Cake Dinner includes 2 crab cakes, baked potato, cole slaw, roll and brownie for dessert and the cost is \$15. The Adult Chicken Finger Dinner includes chicken fingers, baked potato, cole slaw, roll and brownie for dessert at a cost of \$10. Children Chicken Finger Dinner cost is \$4. Dine-in or take-out. Pay at the door.



Easter Flowers

Reminder to those who sponsored flowers. All flowers must be picked up after the 10:30 am worship service on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024 unless arrangements have been made with the office. Reminder that the office will be closed on Monday, April 1, 2024

Greeting Cards or Notecards

If anyone has greeting cards or notecards and would like to donate them to the church, please drop them off at the office. We send out cards to our shut-ins and members who are not feeling well. Thank you in advance.

Announcements, continued



Inclement Weather Update

In the event of inclement weather, church service delays and/or cancellations will be posted on WFMZ 69 News Storm Center stations (TV and online) and on Grace UCC's Facebook page and Website. However, please use your discretion whether you can make it to church safely. In the event of inclement weather Monday thru Friday, the office may be operating under various hours.



Monthly Hoagie Sale

Once again, we will begin having our monthly hoagie sale. Our sale is held once a month. Orders and payment are due by March 10th. Pick-up date is Wednesday, March 13th between 4:00 - 6:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. An order form is enclosed in this newsletter.

Northampton Food Bank Donations

The first Sunday of every month is our Food Bank Donation collection. Please be supportive for our community Northampton Food Bank. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Or, have you considered E-Giving?

Electronic giving is all about convenience for you and consistency for the church. Skip filling out your envelope every week by having contributions automatically transferred from your checking or savings account to Grace's bank account. Not only is it one less thing for you to think about, but it also helps your giving stay consistent even if you can't make it to service every week.

If you want to sign up, simply visit graceuccchurch.com/support/graces-mission, download the form, and return it in a sealed envelope to the church office. That's it!

Have you picked up your 2024 offering envelopes?

If not, please pick them up after worship service or call the church office 610-262-7186 to schedule a time during the week. Office hours are Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Redner's Receipts

Don't forget to save your Redners' receipts. Submit your receipts to Grace and we will earn 1% of your purchase total. Use your Rewards Card as usual and save your receipts to give to the church office. It must be the full receipt for us to receive credit.



Hoagie Order Form

Grace UCC Church			
902 Lincoln Avenue, Northampton, PA 18067			
Phone: 610-262-7186 ---- Office Hours M-F 9:00 am - 1:00 pm			
Website: graceuccchurch.com			
Email: graceuccchurch@gmail.com			
Orders & Payments due to the office by Sunday, March 10, 2024			
Pickup Date: Wednesday, March 13th between 4:00 - 6:00 pm Fellowship Hall			
Customer Name:		Phone #:	
Pick up Person:			
	All Hoagies on a 9" Lusitana Roll		
Qty.	Italian Hoagies	Band Color	Total
	Everything	Red	
	Onions - No Peppers	Blue	
	No Onions - No Peppers	Yellow	
	Peppers - No Onions	White	
	Tuna Hoagie	Green	
	Next Month date		
	Wednesday, April 17th		
	Type of Sandwiches - on a Egypt Star Kaiser Roll		
	Ham & Cheese	Blue	
	Tuna	Green	
	Total Hoagies	\$5.00	
	Total Sandwiches	\$3.50	
	Total \$\$ Due		



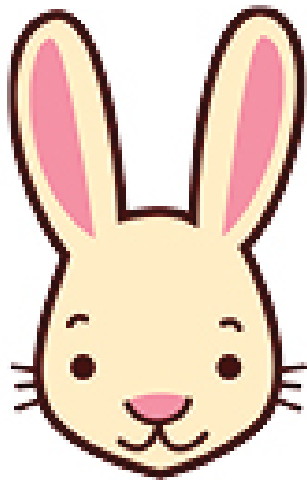
March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1 Crab Cake Dinners 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	2
3 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Communion Worship Service	4	5	6	7 Choir Practice 6:00 pm Handbell Practice 7:15 pm	8 Crab Cake Dinners 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	9
10 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service Hoagie Orders Due	11	12	13 Consistory Meeting Hoagie Orders Pickup 4:00-6:00 pm	14 Choir Practice 6:00 pm Handbell Practice 7:15 pm	15 Crab Cake Dinners 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	16
17 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service	18 Easter Candy Making	19 Easter Candy Making	20 Easter Candy Making	21 Choir Practice 6:00 pm Handbell Practice 7:15 pm Easter Candy Making	22 Easter Candy Making	23 Easter Candy Pickup 10:00 am - 12:00 Noon
24 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service Easter Candy pickup after service	25	26	27	28 Maundy Thursday Worship Service 7:00 pm	29 Good Friday Worship Service 7:00 pm	30
31 Easter Sunday 8:00 am Worship and Continental Breakfast 10:30 am Worship						

Easter Day

Word Hunt

DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the
vocabulary words
in the grid. Look
for them in all
directions including
backwards and
diagonally.



BASKET

BUNNY

CANDY

CARROT

CHICKS

CHOCOLATE

DAFFODIL

DECORATE

EASTER

EGGS

FLOWER

HUNT

JELLYBEANS

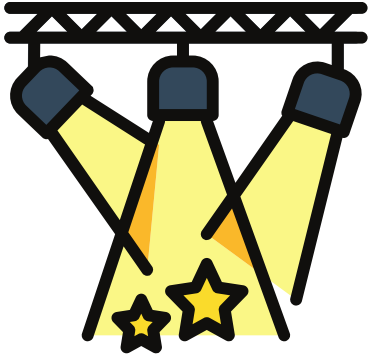
PARADE

SPRING

SUNDAY



GRACE'S SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL BUSINESS



Grace is committed to supporting our community, which is why we'd like to take a moment to shine a spotlight on some of our local businesses. By supporting local, you're helping your neighbors provide for their families, offer more jobs in the area, and keep more money circulating in the community where it can be reinvested. If you would like to join Grace in supporting local, please check out some of these great businesses below. And don't forget - please let them know you heard about them through Grace!



610-264-5507

www.DakuAutoBody.com

Click on "EZ Estimate Tool" Collision/Insurance Estimates Many Factory Certifications Family Run - Est. 1948



326 East 21st Street
Northampton, PA 18067
610-261-0440



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US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 627
LEHIGH VALLEY, PA
18002-9652



This edition of our newsletter
is presented by: Ed & Betty Miller

“Wishing Everyone a Blessed Easter”

Visit our Website
www.graceuccchurch.com

Find Us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/graceuccnorthampton

Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

**Holy Communion is the first
Sunday of every month.**

Office hours: M-F 9 am-1 pm