



MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor:

Bob Gutekunst

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Marisa Deshler

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Church Website:

www.graceuccchurch.com

Find Us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/GraceuccNorthampton

Hospital Code: #436

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

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE SEASON

from Pastor Bob Gutekunst

I remember taking a class at Moravian Seminary. The professor was comparing two individuals who had been raised from the dead, Lazarus and Jesus. Whereas Lazarus had been raised back to the same, old life he knew before, the professor said, the Resurrection of Jesus was about living a completely new and different life. Jesus was transformed. Jesus' life was changed.

It seems fitting then that we, the members of Grace United Church of Christ and me, as your new pastor, are beginning this new chapter in our faith story together during this Easter season, a season of change. In fact, there are many changes going on in the life of this community, as Mary, in the office, has just started at the beginning of this calendar year and we are welcoming a new Music Director in May. Lots of changes in the works.

I know that change can be uneasy, scary even, especially in the church. I remember hearing a story about a man, who was approaching his one-hundredth birthday. He had been a member of his church since birth. A younger member of his congregation said to him, "Wow! You must have seen a lot of changes in your life." "Yup", he replied, "and I've been against every single one of them."

Well, for my part, I promise to take things slowly. My first order of business is to get to know Grace U.C.C.- the church, the people, the history, the traditions, the stories that are meaningful to this faith community. What priorities are most important for this community of the Body of Christ?

Some Thoughts Continued...

What does the gospel of Jesus Christ look and sound like in this time and place? One we get to know each other a little bit, my hope is that, whatever changes we explore and embark upon, they will be positive ones.

As you get to know me, one of the things I hope you will discover is that I have a sense of humor (at least I think I do- others may disagree). I don't take myself too seriously, but I do take my responsibility as pastor very seriously. So, if you have any kind of pastoral care need, please call me. In fact, if you just want to chat, I would love to talk with you. My hope is that, over the Spring and Summer, I can get out and visit with as many of you as possible. But please know that I am always available. And I am excited to get started.

*Many blessings,
Pastor Bob*



GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

May 2023

Message from Consistory

Welcome!

Pastor Robert Gutekunst began his ministry at Grace UCC on April 10th. He was previously a minister at Forks UCC in Stockertown for 12 years. Pastor Bob lives in Plainfield Township with his wife, Ronda. They have 5 children and 2 grandchildren, and another grandchild due in May.

Marisa Deshler has accepted the position of Minister of Music at Grace UCC and will be starting on May 7th . She has over thirty years of experience as a church organist, pianist, and choir director. Marisa is also employed as an elementary school teacher in the Bethlehem School District. She resides in Northampton with her husband and daughter.

Thank you---

Pastor Michael McGowan's last day with Grace UCC was on April 9th (Easter Sunday). Pastor Mike served as a Transitional Pastor at Grace for nearly 2 years. We are grateful to him for his ministry to the church and community during his time here and wish him well in his future endeavors.

Dr. Allan Birney has served as our organist and pianist for the past several weeks. His last day was April 30th . We are grateful to him and to all the other organists who have filled in each Sunday this past year.

Bonnie Horwith, Past Consistory President, coordinated Pastor Mike's thank you luncheon, the Easter egg hunt, and the Easter Sunday breakfast buffet, all in the month of April. Thank you, Bonnie!

Graduations---

Grace UCC would like to honor new graduates in our congregation in the June newsletter. If you have a family member graduating this year that you would like to have recognized, please submit their name, the school where graduating from, and their plans for after graduation, to the church office by May 24th.

Church Summer Hours---

Beginning June 11th , Sunday Worship services will be at 9:30 am, until after Labor Day. There will be no Sunday School classes over the summer.

GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Easter Egg Hunt – I would like to thank everyone who participated in the egg hunt. If you donated eggs, decorated eggs, or helped with the set-up and/or conducting the egg hunt, thank you! For all the children that attended, thank you and I hope you had a wonderful time. And I hope everyone had a happy and blessed Easter.
Bonnie

Here are the "highlights" from the March 8, 2023 Consistory Meeting:

- The Fellowship Committee's crab cake dinners had a profit of \$4,764.92. Thank you, to the members of the Fellowship Committee, for your hard work and dedication to the Church.
- A Thank You Celebration for Pastor Mike McGowan was held after the worship service on April 2, 2023. The funds raised for the Mission trip was \$1,740.00. A thank you to everyone for all the food and monetary donations.
- A Worship Committee is being formed.
- Marisa Deshler, the new Minister of Music, will begin on Sunday, May 7, 2023.
- The last day of Sunday School will be on Sunday, May 14, 2023.
- Primary elections will be held in Fellowship Hall on May 16, 2023.

Farewell Luncheon for Pastor Mike and Diane

A farewell celebration was held in honor of Pastor Mike and his wife on April 2, 2023. We enjoyed having Pastor Mike serve our church for the past two years. We wish you well on your upcoming mission trip and your future endeavors.



Hello Friends,

I am writing this the day before Diane and I leave on our mission trip to Guatemala. As we prepare to start our journey of what will be a new and exciting experience I want to say how grateful we are knowing you are praying for us. As we travel it will be a comfort to know how Grace UCC is supporting us in this, our first trip to Tucuru'. Will there be more mission trips in our future – who knows – but Diane and I are certainly thankful for all the support this church has shown to us both as we served as transitional ministers and in our effort to do some good in the world. We wish you nothing but the best as you move forward in your own ministry as a loving and caring church.

We especially want to say Thank You for your generous giving to support the wonderful organization we will be ministering with. They do great work and your support of \$1740.00 will allow them to continue to help the indigenous Mayan people of Guatemala in the future. Again, thank you for all of your support and we can't wait to report back after this trip is complete. Peace and blessing to you all our dear amigos.

In Christ's service,
Pastor Mike and Diane McGowan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

Calling All Soup Kitchen Volunteers

Grace family and friends are invited to volunteer with Pastor Bob at the Lehigh Conference of Churches Kitchen, located at 457 W. Allen St., Allentown. Our day to volunteer is the third Tuesday of every month. This month, that date is May 16th. The day begins at 9:30 am, with lunch being served at 11:45 am. Please contact the church office if you're interested in participating. We can't wait to see you there!

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!

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.

Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) of the USA is collecting monetary donations. Contributions can be sent directly to the UOC of the USA - PO Box 495, South Bound Brook, NJ 08880 - payable to the UOC of the USA and marked "Let's Help Ukraine." Donations may also be made via a secure online link Donate to Humanitarian Aid at the UOA of the USA website: uocofusa.org.

If you would like to include Ukraine in your prayers, you can visit Assumption of the Virgin Mary's website: holyassumption.org for a prayer they have listed.

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. However, please use your discretion whether you can make it to church safely.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AROUND THE LEHIGH VALLEY



Happy Spring! Think about getting out to help a neighbor in need. Consider volunteering for SpiriTrust Lutheran Home Care & Hospice. Make friendly visits to hospice clients in Northampton County or make supportive phone calls to grieving families. For more information please call Cathy Sweeney, Volunteer Coordinator at 570-599-5390.

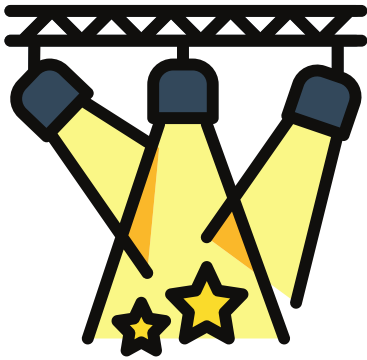
Zion's Stone UCC Church is selling Meat & Seafood Raffle tickets from Thomson's Meat Market to benefit the Bell Tower Repair Fund! We are SO CLOSE to completing this project, after 4 long years and a lightning strike! You can purchase tickets for yourself or grab some to sell! They are \$10/ticket with 20 chances to win any of the prizes that are valued at \$30 each - and if you win something you don't like, you can trade it! Send Jeannette an email (zionsstoneucc@gmail.com) to get your tickets!

May 2023






Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Communion Service	8	9	10 Consistory Meeting	11	12	13
14 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Service Mothers' Day	15	16 Soup Kitchen - Volunteer	17	18	19	20
21 9 am Family Sunday School - Last Day until Fall 10:30 am Service	22	23	24 Graduation Submissions due	25	26	27
28 10:30 am Service	29 Memorial Day	30	31			

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!

<p>D&S FLORIST</p> <p>2145 MAIN STREET, NORTHAMPTON PA 18067 WWW.BATHPAFLOWERS.COM</p> <p><small>"MAKE SOMEONE'S DAY BRIGHTER: GIVE THEM A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER ARRANGEMENT."</small></p> <p>DJRETROPRODUCTIONS MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT WWW.DJRETROPRODUCTIONS.GODADDYSITES.COM</p> <p>FOR ANY OCCASION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEDDINGS • ANNIVERSARY • BIRTHDAY • SYMPATHY • MOTHER'S DAY • EASTER • VALENTINE'S DAY • THANKSGIVING • CHRISTMAS <p>DOROTHY - 484.747.2715 SCOTT - 484.403.9554</p>	<p>Kim's Styling Shop</p> <p>610-261-2290 <i>appointment only</i></p> <p>229 S Front St. Coplay, PA 18037</p> 	<p>TAX TIME</p> <p>TILGHMAN</p> <p>ACCOUNTING + TAX SOLUTIONS</p> <p><small>Professional Tax Preparer</small></p>
<p>Daku's Auto Body Shop, Inc.</p> <p>610-264-5507 www.DakuAutoBody.com</p> <p>Click on "EZ Estimate Tool" Collision/Insurance Estimates Many Factory Certifications Family Run - Est. 1948</p>	<p>3 DAUGHTERS CONSTRUCTION</p> <p>Anthony Kutzler 484-725-3296 3daughterconstruction.com</p>  <p>Ed Szerencsits Owner</p> <p>Eightyproof Screenprinting</p> <p>229 S Front St. Coplay, PA 18037 484-767-5045 pingzing1@rcn.com</p>	<p>484-274-6979 3021 College Heights Blvd Allentown PA 18104</p> <p>Individual + Small Business Tax Return Preparation</p> <p>JOHN L. OBRECHT Attorney at Law</p> <p>1731 Main Street Northampton, PA 18067 610-262-0230 jlobrecht@verizon.net</p> 
<p><small>"Special Order Services on more than 65,000 Items"</small> Mon thru Fri 7-7 Sat 7-4</p> <p>MILLER SUPPLY</p> <p>ACE Hardware</p> <p>Computerized Paint Color Matching Roofing • Siding Roof-Top Delivery Window & Screen Repair Key Cutting • Propane</p> <p>Rt 329 & Savage Rd Northampton, PA 18067</p> <p>610-262-4566</p>		

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

"In honor of all the women of
Grace UCC. HAPPY MOTHER'S
DAY!"

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 9am-1pm