

ROOTS & BRANCHES

DECEMBER 2022



In our secular culture, the start of the new year is typically quite noisy. There are fireworks, champagne, and parties. While there is nothing wrong with this way of beginning, I'm grateful that the Church starts the new year in its own way – typically its quieter. More spacious. Anticipatory. This new church year starts on the first Sunday of Advent. I always love the changing of the seasons in our world and I find the changing of the seasons in our liturgical year equally enlivening. One of my favorite spiritual writers, Henri Nouwen, reminds us that the seasons bring with them different atmospheres and messages. He says this,

"I have always felt that, if you want to talk about faith, you have to be able to talk about your doubt. If you want to talk about hope, you have to talk about despair. If you want to talk about joy, you have to talk about darkness. If you want to speak about salvation, or redemption or freedom, it's very important that you're willing to speak about what you're being redeemed from and what you're being set free from. The spiritual life is a constant choice to let your negatives become an opportunity for conversion or renewal."

To begin again. How hopeful. Even when my spirit has grown weary over the past 11 months, and maybe my prayer life has wavered, my soul is a bit parched, Advent always brings with it the chance for renewal. And that's what beginnings are about – the chance to begin again. This is the season when we light candles in the dark. This is the time when we wait for the light of Christ to dawn. This is the time when we can be honest with ourselves about the places in our lives that feel dark and where we need God to arrive, to Advent, and to come again into our hearts and lives.

My prayer for us this season is that we might ask ourselves that question: How is God inviting us to be present in this time? What places in my life have grown dark and is in need of the light of Christ? Perhaps it is an area where you are trying to dominate and control. Maybe it's in your work life, where your sense of worth is found in what you produce and not who you are. Or are there places in your home life that feels uncertain and scary?

May we be reminded that it takes great faith to poster our spirits in such a way that says "Here I am, Lord." It takes great faith to make ready the way of the Lord. As we prepare our homes, our worship spaces, and our hearts, I pray that your soul might

rejoice in a God who fills the hungry with good things and lifts up the lowly. In the midst of the frenzy of this season, let us also remember that spirit in which we begin – with stillness and quiet and spaciousness. Sometimes, it is only when we rest beside the weary road that we hear the angels sing.

Church, I pray abundance Advent blessings to you and yours this season. I am grateful that we are on this journey together and I continue to pray that God will order our steps so that we can delight in the freedom of walking in the light of the Lord. Peace to you.

Laura

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

- Worship Service**
Sunday's 10:30 am IN PERSON / [LIVE STREAM](#)
- Children's Church**
During Worship in the Old Sanctuary – [Volunteer here!](#)
- Advent Study**
9:15 am in the Fellowship Hall
Discussing the book "All the Good" available on the table in the hallway by the office
- Clyde Walker Sunday School Class**
9:15 am, In-Person or [ZOOM](#)



- LOOKING FOR AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL?**
- Kate Bowler has provided an online resource that you can download (in pg notes)– and if you would like a printed copy, we can provide one for you at church.
 - The book “Oriens: A Pilgrimage Through Advent and Christmas” by Father Joel Sember
 - The book “All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings” by Gayle Boss

FOR ALL EVENTS, SEE OUR ONLINE CALENDAR!
<http://www.pleasantgreenumc.org/calendar.html>

- Sat Dec 3 **Preparing greenery for the church 10 am**
- Sun Dec 4 **UWF Christmas lunch 12 pm**
- Dec 4 - 9 **Mission Market Online Auction**
www.32auctions.com/MissionMarket22
- Thurs Dec 8 **Cherry Making for the Mission Market 5:30 pm**
All are invited and a light dinner will be provided.
- Sat Dec 10 9-11 am (pg 8) 
- Sat Dec 10 **Christmas Carols at St. Mary's Chapel 4 pm**
- Sun Dec 11 **Children's Nativity Play**
during 10:30 am Worship
- Sat Dec 17 **Parents Night Out 4-7 pm**
Hosted by our Youth. Age 3 (potty trained) and up. \$15 per child / \$10 for siblings. Sign up [here!](#)
- Sun Dec 18 **Choir Cantata 3 pm (No 10:30 am worship)**
The combined choirs of PGUMC and Bethany United Methodist Church will perform *Have You Heard*. Reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.
- Sat Dec 24 **Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 5 pm**
- Sun Dec 25 **Christmas morning - Online Worship Only**
Worship will be posted online and sent out via email Christmas morning. We encourage families and friends to gather in their homes and worship together.
- Sun Jan 8 **Moravian Love Feast on Sunday evening**

an advent pause

Engaging the spiritual discipline of listening, silence, and reflection in community.

On Zoom
<https://nccumc.zoom.us/j/92651531260>

wednesdays at noon



2023 SPRING RETREAT!
Sign up by Dec 18!

May 5-7, 2023 at the Caraway Conference & Retreat Center.

Just over an hour from PGUMC, join our church family for a weekend of fun, community, and spiritual growth for all ages!

Cost is \$100 per person/\$150 per family and will cover all food, overnight stays, and activities.

Please sign up in the Narthex, contact the church office, or email Richard at rlc83164@gsk.com.



FINANCIAL UPDATE	
2022 Unified Budget	335,441.48
YTD Total Income to Operating Fund	250,438.59
TTD Operating Expenses	290,199.14
YTD Operating Fund Balance	-39,760.55
2021 Operating Fund Balance Forward	26,386.05
2022 Current Actual Operating Fund Balance	(13,374.50)
Current Building Mortgage Balance	142,449.80

NOVEMBER: BRUNSWICK STEW, COMMON THREAD, BLOOD DRIVE



MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!



Trevor Warren

June Stilley

Debbie Covington

PILGRIMAGE



PLEASANT GREEN 2023 SUMMER CAMP DATES

Week 1: June 19 - 23 →



Week 2: June 26 - 30 →



~ Closed July 3 - July 7 ~

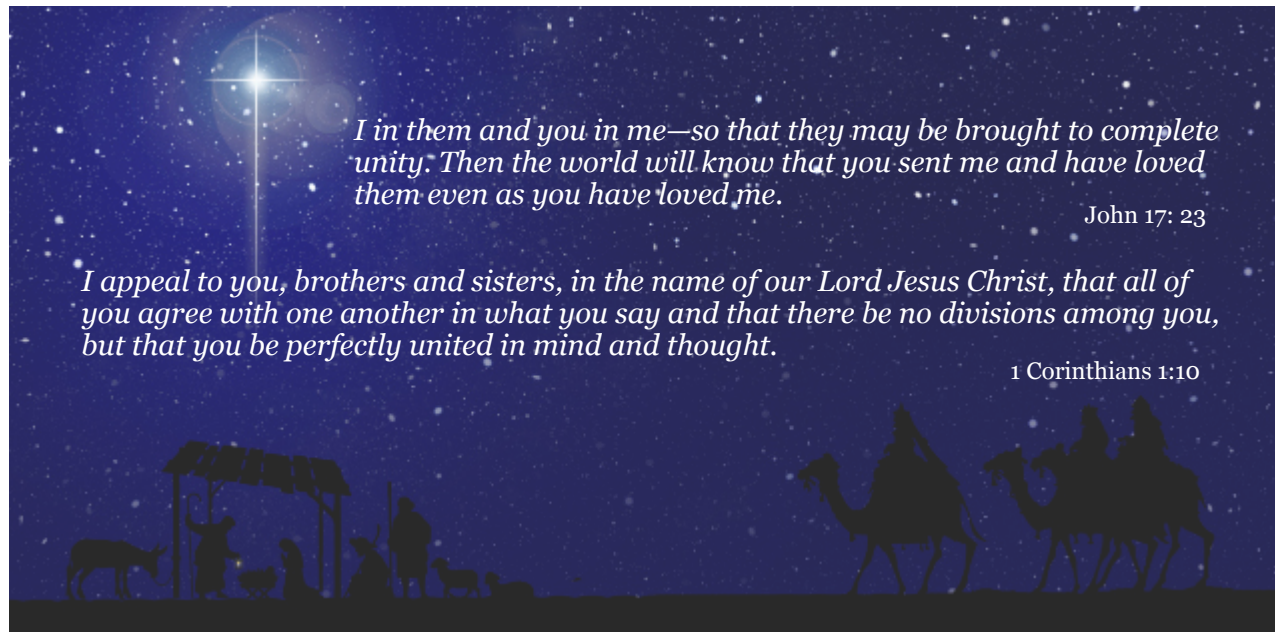
Week 3: July 10 - 14

Week 4: July 17 - 21

More Details
COMING SOON!

PLAYGROUND RENOVATIONS





I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17: 23

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 1:10

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR...AND UNITY?

In 1940, the Walt Disney Studios released the song, When You Wish Upon a Star. It was written by Leigh Harline and Ned Washington; sung by Jiminy Cricket in the movie Pinocchio. The lyrics go like this:

*When you wish upon a star
Makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart desires
Will come to you
If your heart is in your dream
No request is too extreme
When you wish upon a star
As dreamers do*

<https://www.lyrics.com/track/1050313/Disney/When+You+Wish+upon+a+Star>

When you were a child, did you wish upon a star, especially during this time of Christmas? Maybe longing for a new doll, cowboy outfit, football, or the latest electronic toy? What about now? Does the Christmas season find you looking to the Christmas Star, signifying Christ's Birth, wishing for a new car, set of new clothes, enough food, the ability to pay for medications, wanting to provide the best for your child? Of course, as Christians, we know that wishing on a star doesn't work. But what does? Since we know that God is always listening and wants a relationship with us, praying for things we want, especially when our requests are for others or requests that will bring us closer to Him, are often fulfilled in God's perfect

timing, wisdom, and planning. What is your wish this Christmas?

My wish is for unity. Unity of spirit, mind, body, and emotions within ourselves. Unity family and church family members. Unity among students in schools. Unity among state Government officials, national and international leaders. Unity among all peoples.

Unity doesn't mean total agreement or a passive "yes" mentality. It means an agreement to listen, respect, value, consider the viewpoints of others. It means amicably agreeing to disagree. It means acknowledging we do not have all the answers. It means we are not entitled to get our way. It means that God knows what he is doing; and has given us gifts and weaknesses that are complemented by the gifts and weaknesses of others. We are one body, with each person contributing a part of the whole.

If the wish for unity is in your heart, too, would you pray this prayer of confession and pardon? You may recognize it from the November 6th worship service:

God of the covenant, who calls all people to reconciliation, you have made us members of the very body of Christ: yet we persist in wounding that body with our divisions, our suspicions, and our neglect. Forgive us and teach us to nurture unity and peace. For the sake of Jesus Christ and the world he came to save, Amen.

Join the prayer ministry the third Wednesday of every month from 6:30 to 7:30 pm as we pray for unity, love, peace, healing, and reconciliation. The next prayer ministry meeting is December 21st at 6:30. We meet at the church or join us by free conference call. For more information, contact Gail at pruettg4mh@gmail.com or 919-696-7293.

THANKS

Dear Pleasant Green Family,

Thank you so very much for the outpouring of love shown to our family during the recent unexpected passing of David. We appreciate every act of kindness — the cards, phone calls, visits, meals and food provided, the donations in David's memory to PGUMC After School, and most importantly your prayers. We also extend a special "thank you" to Brian Wingo and Pastor Laura. Please continue to keep us in your prayers in the days ahead.

Love in Christ,

Cindy Fox and Stacy & Maddie Keatts

Dear Pleasant Green United Methodist Church,

Thank you for the weekly letters regarding remembering our family during these past months. The prayers of many have sustained us and will carry us forward into the unknown. Aren't we blessed that we don't have to personally know each other in order to pray for each other!

In His Love-

Jill Kelly & family

MENTAL HEALTH AND THE HOLIDAYS

Many of us are happy and joyous during the holidays, looking forward to visiting with family and friends, attending religious services, experiencing warmth and closeness, reliving, and creating happy memories...add baking, wrapping presents and watching Christmas movies to the list! It is important to acknowledge these good times in our lives to raise our moods and anchor happiness within us.

But tension, anxiety, worry and sadness can fold into the festivities. Sometimes these feelings are below the surface, barely noticed, sometimes they are in the forefront, over-riding all that is good. Loss of loved ones, inability to meet expectations beyond what is reasonable, changing relationships, a chaotic world, ongoing illness, feeling excluded...the list of reasons for our unhappiness can be long.

There is no cookie-cutter answer to how to help ourselves when we are having a tough time. But there are some things to remember that may help us through the next month.

It is possible to have lighter, more joyful moments, even when our general mood is sour. Notice the lighter moments. Sometimes, writing them in a journal or on a calendar can remind us we have more good times than we are aware, and that life is not all bad.

It is okay not to feel okay. There is no rule book that says we have to feel good all of the time. In fact, our feelings change, depending on what is happening around us or how we are talking to ourselves internally. Sometimes our feelings change quickly

and sometimes we have the same feeling for a longer time. Let us give ourselves permission to go with the flow rather than changing how we feel.

What if I don't like the way I am feeling? What if I want to get out of my sadness, anger, or anxiety? Then start small to make changes. Choose one or two of the following that are easiest for you to do.

- Go outside for 15 minutes. Sit or walk. Notice how you feel without judging.
- Call, text, or write to someone who is lonely or isolated. Reaching out to another person can lift spirits. "I am thinking of you." "You were on my mind today."
- Change the music to something more uplifting.
- Change the movies or streaming programs you watch to something more uplifting. Google feel-good movies.
- Write yourself a letter. In it, simply say, "God loves me. He created me to be loved. I am loveable." Read the letter with your full attention at least once a day.
- Decline to do at least one activity you do not want to do, "I am sorry. My plate is full. I cannot do any more."
- Practice a moment of peace. Breathe in for a count of 4, hold breath for count of 4, exhale for count of 4, do not breathe for count of 4. Repeat cycle at least 3 times.
- Change comes slowly. But repeating one or more of the above helps make those changes.



Pleasant Green

United Methodist Church

3005 Pleasant Green Road, Durham, NC 27705



PleasantGreenUMC.org | pgumc@ncrrbiz.com | 919.383.5764

Pastor

Rev. Laura Thompson
lthompson@nccumc.org
919.383.2339

Director of Family Ministries

Emily Robbian
emily.robbian@duke.edu

Duke Intern

Trevor Warren
trevor.warren@duke.edu

Ways to give

We know and believe that part of being a follower of Christ is being generous with our money. We also recognize that the world is changing, the church is changing, and giving trends are changing with new generations. Thank you for your generosity!

Online www.PleasantGreenUMC.org

Smartphone Text "PleasantGreen" To: 77977

Envelope Mail or slip under office door

Amazon Smile Support PGUMC when you purchase through amazon smile. They donate 0.5% of your purchase price on eligible items to the "Pleasant Green United Methodist Church" charitable organization. We hope you'll consider this as we continue to find creative and generous ways to share resources together. Already have an Amazon Prime account?

Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1152936) and use your existing login. Pleasant Green's unique charity link:
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1152936>



December 10th * 9 - 11 am

Online items: Dec. 4-9

www.32auctions.com/MissionMarket22

HOMEMADE BAKED GOODS

Cookies, cakes,
candies, breads,
chocolate covered cherries,
canned goods & more



HANDCRAFTED ITEMS

Jewelry, ornaments,
Salvadoran items,
stocking stuffers
and other gifts

Sponsored by the Mission Teams at Pleasant Green United Methodist Church

* 3005 Pleasant Green Rd. Durham NC 27705 * www.pleasantgreenumc.org *

PLEASE RECYCLE