



The Grand Blanc UMC

December, 2020

"Connection"

Advent Services will be held in the parking lot (weather permitting) and are always available on Facebook and YouTube.



December 6
2nd Sunday of Advent
"Inconvenient Peace"
Luke 1:46-55



December 13
3rd Sunday of Advent
"Inconvenient Joy"
Luke 2:4-7



December 20
4th Sunday of Advent
"Inconvenient Love"
Luke 2:8-16



December 24
Christmas Eve
"O Little Town of..."
Luke 2:1-7



December 27
1st Sunday after
Christmas Day

Exercising Grace: Hard Stop

So, you may have caught on by now that this December newsletter article would be about the church's mission and vision statement again! In fact, it's the last one on this topic, and then we'll switch to something else come January – I'm thinking about something that elicits warm and cozy feelings. You know, in order to fend off the Michigan winter cold!

Today's key word is "grace." We find it right there in our mission and vision statement: ***"Friends in Christ Exercising love, hope and grace to enrich all lives."*** So, what does it mean to exercise grace?

"Grace" is a word that we probably use way too often! Kind of like "love," come to think of it. *"I love pizza!" "I'd sure love for my flight to take off on time." "I just love how the Hallmark Channel has Christmas movies on 24/7 during from October to March!"* (yes, I have a bit of a soapbox to stand on when it comes to Hallmark Christmas movies, but that's for another time, I suppose). Just like that word "love," we also say the word "grace" a lot, don't we? It's what we call the prayer before a meal. It's the word we use to refer to manners and social skills ("She has such grace!"). But we also talk about grace when it comes to God, so let's make that the focus of our time here.

God's grace is profoundly important to the Christian faith, but also profoundly confusing! It's confusing, because it doesn't play well with our understanding of what it means to earn or deserve things. In our world, we receive a paycheck for work done competently. We receive goods and services when we pay for them. We get things because we've earned them. The opposite is also true. When people receive things that they don't earn, we get a bit frustrated, if not downright angry! We call it "handout" and demand reform! So, it's no wonder that we get a bit confused when we talk about grace: an immense love and promise shared with us by God regardless of our deservedness!

You see the problem, don't you? God promises me grace, just as God promises grace to the person who is serving a life-sentence in federal prison (if we're made uncomfortable by this, then my point is well taken). Grace makes us uncomfortable because there is nothing we need to do to earn it, deserve it, take it, or anything like that. We simply need to be open to it and stop worrying about why we get it. *God loves you, and there is nothing you can do about it!*

Let's go back to our original question, "what does it mean to exercise grace?" If God loves me and pours out this amazing thing called grace upon me, regardless of anything I've done or have not done, am I permitted to just hold onto it? Is it mine to store up? Do I get to determine who gets a share of it? Who *else* deserves it? Of course not! Instead, God invites us to *extend* God's grace to others *regardless of being deserving!* We are to extend, share, and exercise God's grace to everyone! There is no checklist for who gets it. There is no test or pop-quiz to determine who gets more than someone else. Let's put it another way: *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* -Mark 12:31

As a church, we have the remarkable invitation from God to share the gift of grace with the community and world around us. That's it! There is no small print! There is no determination to be made. Share God's love and grace with the world. Hard stop.

Peace, Pastor Brian



In our prayers

FOR THE HOMEBOUND:

Marge
Woody

OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

Donna
Jim
Cheryl
Eleanor
Marilyn
Dick
Phil
Mary
Paul
Eileen
Robert
Norma
Mary

FOR OTHERS:

John
Chris
Michael
Randy
Robin
Tony
Alexandra
Bill
Ginger
Chris
Cal
Jim
Robert
Michael
Cathy
Fran
Karyn
Pat
Naomi
Evelyn
Connie
Gloria
Archie
Jeff
Ed
Marty
Natalie
Sunny
Tod

Greetings Grand Blanc family,

2020 has been a very challenging year, in more ways than one. The COVID pandemic has created, unfortunately, a new sense of normal. We have had to isolate from one another, not be able to spend time with friends and family, and not be able to worship as we are accustomed to.

Throughout the challenges of the year our staff has remained as dedicated to our congregants, church and ministries. They have had to adjust to a new norm of supporting our church but have done so with love, energy and commitment.

As chairperson, and on behalf of your Staff Parish Relations Committee, I am asking for your careful consideration in making a donation for a Staff Appreciation collection. We understand that finances may be tight for some but any donation is greatly appreciated. Let's please remember the work and leadership our staff provides as we enter this time of thanksgiving.

Any donation you care to give should be received by no later than **December 4**. Please designate your giving as "Staff Appreciation" whether you give by check or electronically.

Sincerely,
Alex Trinidad
Chairperson - SPRC



Have you been watching Pastor Brian's daily devotionals? He shares his recordings every morning, Monday through Friday. Go to our website: www.grandblancumc.org and you can find a link to the devotionals on our home page.



*During This
Time of Loss*

~We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Cathy Hubler. Cathy passed away on November 4, 2020. She is Donna & Dick Hubler's daughter.

~We also extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Richard Davis. Richard passed away on November 18, 2020. Richard is Cheryl Billings' father.



If you would like to receive prayer concern emails from the church, please contact the church office at office@grandblancumc.org. You can also receive church updates through email and this newsletter too! Just let us know!

Our C.A.R.E. Team is ready and willing to contact you or anyone you know who could benefit from a phone call or card or whatever it is that would help them with what they (or you) might be dealing with today.

Feel free to contact them at care.team@grandblancumc.org



Autumn Ridge of Clarkston
Great Lakes Christian Home

Shirley
Helen

WORSHIP INFORMATION

Sundays at 11:00a.m.

Outdoor worship in the parking lot this fall has been great!
We plan to continue worshipping in the parking lot (weather permitting)
for the Advent Season.

Pastor Brian's sermon series for December is "Inconvenient Advent."



Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus, in new
and exciting ways!

Mark your calendar for our Christmas Eve Services at
7:30pm and 11:00pm.

There will be a live nativity and candle lighting in the
church parking lot.

Come and join us, in person or via Facebook or YouTube.



Beginning the Sunday after Christmas, December 27, 2020 our worship services will be
available online, or through your car radio in the parking lot.

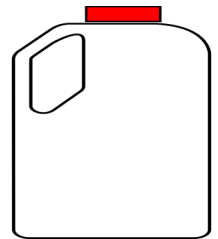
We will not present the worship service in the parking lot, after Christmas.



VOLUNTEERS
are key!

We are looking for volunteers for
Christmas Eve. We need drivers to
pick up anyone that would like to
attend but who does not drive at
night. If you are willing and able to
help, please contact the church
office. We will, of course, be
following all health guidelines
regarding masks and safety.

Please continued to bring your empty,
clean and dry plastic gallon milk jugs,
through Sunday, December 20, 2020.
You can drop them off at the church
when you come to attend Sunday
worship. Thank you!



FISH of Grand Blanc is currently providing
assistance to approximately 500 people
every week. If you would like to donate
any non-perishable food, paper products,
cleaning supplies or personal hygiene
products, you can drop them off at their
collection site at St. Christopher's

Episcopal Church, 9020 S. Saginaw Street on Wednesdays
between 5pm and 7pm and Saturdays between 10am and
noon. They also appreciate monetary donations and those
can be mailed to FISH of Grand Blanc, P.O. Box 367, Grand
Blanc, MI 48480-0367



LONGEST NIGHT

Pastor Brian is currently working
with fellow pastors on the possibility of
presenting a Longest Night Service online.
Please watch future emails for details.



~An almanac prediction states that if it
snows on Christmas, Easter will be
warm, green and sunny!

~December 12th is Poinsettia Day!

~December 27th is Nat'l Chocolate Day!

~December is Nat'l Read a Book Month

Merry Christmas!

Advent and "In lieu of Poinsettias" Donations

We will be supporting the Mujila Falls Agricultural Project with the "Advent" offering (the pink envelope in your box) this year. You are probably familiar with this project previously headed up by Paul Webster who has recently retired as a Missionary. This agricultural program is making a huge difference in the lives of the people of extreme Northwest Zambia who have the highest infant mortality rates and the lowest life expectancy of all tribes in Zambia. Their greatest need is to improve protein, vitamin and mineral content in the local diet and help families to increase incomes so they can provide for schooling, medical care, clothing, additional foods, etc. Please use the Advent offering envelope to support this important missionary work. You can turn it in with your regular offering or donate online by specifying Advent offering.

This year for the "In lieu of Poinsettias" mission offering we chose the Conference Emergency Preparedness & Disaster Response project. Due to COVID-19 we did not take up a donation for the Michigan flood disasters earlier this year like we normally would. This UMCOR program's funds stay local in Michigan and will help out disaster victims in our state. It's never too late to help out our fellow state residents.

Normally we would have a form to fill out for "In lieu of Poinsettias" where you could order flowers but due to COVID-19 we are not going to get flowers this year. Instead your full donation will go to the UMCOR project above. You should turn in your check or cash to the office and make sure to designate if you want in "honor of" or "memory of" someone and list their name. This information will be printed in the January or February Connection. If you donate online and designate "In lieu of Poinsettias" you will need to let the office know your preference.

Here's the information we need for your donation:

Memory of _____
(or)
Honor of _____

Given by: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR
MISSION PROJECTS!!



Poinsettia Trivia:

~A Mexican legend tells of a girl who could only offer weeds as a gift to Jesus on Christmas Eve. When she brought the weeds into a church, they blossomed into the beautiful red plants we know as poinsettias, known as Flores de Noche Buena in Mexico (Spanish for "flowers of the holy night"). The shape of the **poinsettia** flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ.

~Poinsettias get their American name from **Joel Roberts Poinsett**, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, who brought them to the states from Mexico in the early 1800s. They didn't become traditional holiday decorations until the entrepreneurial Ecke family started promoting them a century later

~While considered by the ancient Aztecs to be symbols of purity, in today's language of flowers, red, white or pink **poinsettias**, the December birth flower, symbolize good cheer and success and are said to bring wishes of mirth and celebration.



Bible Study with the other churches in our Zone!!

The Story

A Zoom Bible Study is being offered beginning Tuesday, January 12, 2021, and will continue every Tuesday for 33 weeks. They are offering this one hour study and would like to know if you would prefer to meet at 10:00am or 2:00pm. The study is using the book: The Story New International Version (The Bible as one continuing story of God and His people). Each participant is asked to purchase their own copy of the book. It is available from Cokesbury for \$14.29 (another source had the book on sale for \$5.00, at the time of printing this newsletter). Please contact the GBUMC office to sign-up for the study no later than December 15 (please let us know which time you would prefer and also, if you would like the church to order the book for you). They are hoping that each church in the Zone will participate.



DECEMBER

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthday Wishes

2nd Marcia, Amanda,
Eric
3rd Amanda,
Nicholas,
Donna,
Richard
4th Delany, Justin
5th Judi, Cayla
6th Jocelyn
7th Aaron, Daniel
8th Christine
9th Melissa
10th Robert
11th Terry
12th Debby
14th Sharel
18th Marianne, Andrew,
Chloe,
Kimberly
20th Val
21st Woody
22nd Duane
23rd Sallie, Joyce,
Stacey

24th Brian
25th Sean, Willow
26th Karen, Lisa
29th Alex, Mixsy,
Charles
30th Grace, Jerry,
Katie



Anniversary Blessings

5th Donna & Ernie
6th Jayne & Zach
11th Valorie & Robert
17th Mary & Paul
23th Mary & Shawn
26th Carol & Tom

Overeaters Anonymous (OA)

Meets at the church every
Saturday
10:00am to 11:00am

We are all Compulsive
Overeaters & Food Addicts.
Our program is built on the
Spiritual, Physical and Mental.
We follow AA guidelines.
Everyone who has an eating
disorder is welcome and no
cost to come. We are more
than happy to welcome
newcomers. If you would like
more information please feel
free to call the church office

We received a wonderful note, with a donation to the church, and we wanted to share it with you:

Dear Parishioners,

Our house abuts your property. My husband, Phil, and I would like to thank you for being lovely, considerate neighbors for all these years. Our children and their friends spent many happy hours playing baseball in your parking lot and now our grandchildren enjoy the playground. You take such good care of the grounds! Our two Newfoundlands know Bob's car, and rush to the fence to greet him and get pets. Please accept this gift from us to help fund future projects. Sincerely, Laura

Grand Blanc United Methodist Church
Building and Roof Mortgage Summary

MORTGAGE BALANCE (as of 09-30-20)

Mortgage Balance with UMF = \$183,122.52

Mortgage Reserve Fund Balance (as of 09-30-20) = \$15,015.52

Roof Reserve Fund Balance (as of 09-30-20) = \$17,034.90

Grand Blanc United Methodist Church
515 Bush Avenue
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

Church Office 810-694-9040 fax 810-694-1916
www.grandblancumc.org

Rev. Brian West, Pastor
Cathy Mitchinson, Office Administrator
Angela Campbell, Office Assistant
Dr. Lee Pelton, Organist/Choir Director
Gary Brandt, 9:00 Music Director/Director of Common Grace
Nancy Petrie, Bell Choir Director
Adrienne Jablonski, Nursery Supervisor
Allison Jablonski, Nursery Assistant



GRAND BLANC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FRIENDS IN CHRIST EXERCISING
LOVE, HOPE AND GRACE TO
ENRICH ALL LIVES



Youth Group

Senior High

Activities to be determined.

Senior High Leaders:

Jennifer
Brian

2021 UMC Camping!!!

Please check out www.umc Camping.org for information on this Summer's opportunities (for all ages)! What a great way to unplug and make some great friends and memories! GBUMC has a camp scholarship fund to help with expenses. Please contact the office with any questions.

Junior High

December 6th from Noon –1:30pm: Join us for a winter nature hike and let's explore God's beauty together. Dress accordingly (winter coat, boots, gloves and a hat!) Mask required.

Plans are changing for the Christmas party. Please watch your email for updates!

All events are subject to change based on public health recommendations.

Questions?
Call the church office

Would you like to watch our Sunday morning services live on Facebook, but don't have a Facebook account? Are you unsure how to set up an account? Are you worried that if you have a Facebook account then you have to be "on" Facebook all the time? RELAX. Setting up a Facebook account is EASY! Just follow these simple steps below:

1. Go to facebook.com and click Create New Account.
2. Enter your name, email or mobile phone number, password, date of birth and gender.
3. Click Sign Up.
4. To finish creating your account, you need to confirm your email or mobile phone number.

It is that quick and easy! Next, go to the upper left-hand corner of the page and there is a search bar. Type in "Grand Blanc UMC" to find our Facebook page. Click the thumbs up icon on the page to "like" our page. Go to this page every Sunday morning at 11am and you will be able to watch the live video stream of our services! Here is some other useful information about Facebook:

- Facebook has a wonderful, easy to use help features. Just type "help" in the search bar, or in Google and it you will get a whole list of topics.
- You can set your security settings so that you can't be "found" by others on Facebook.
- Lastly, remember that this is your account. If you only want the account to use for church on Sunday, then that is all you have to use it for.
- See you Sunday!!

