



ROOTS & BRANCHES

PleasantGreenUMC.org

JANUARY 2021

A WORLD WE HAVE NEVER SEEN

My sister has a message board in her kitchen and anytime I go visit her, the quote stops me in my tracks. Now, I don't think she had any kind of premonition last New Year's when she changed out the quote; nonetheless, it ought to give us all reason to pause. It simply says this: "We are creating a world we have never seen." We are creating a world we have never seen. This is precisely what we have been doing over the course of the past 10 months. I guess you could argue we were always doing this but then certain things happen – like a pandemic – and it speeds it all up. We have had to rethink, redo, reimagine relationships, church, work, connection, health, well-being, education, holidays and so on. And you know what? We're doing it. We are adapting and responding. It might feel awkward and ugly some days, but we are doing it.

To be honest, I am not really sure what to say at the end of a year like this one. My heart is heavy. Losses seem to abound and as I write this, there are so many traditions and people I am really missing. I don't have a lot of words, but I am trusting that there is still good news to proclaim. One of my favorite lines in the Christmas carol "O Holy Night" is, "His law is Love and His gospel is Peace." I do believe that one of the greatest gifts we have had and still have – is a community formed in love and called to be in love with God and each other. That is us, the church. We have learned this year that beyond our physical building and beyond our geographical space, we are a gathering of people called to live God's love and make sure everyone around us might experience and know the good news of God. It is in this truth that we find our peace.

And so, at the end of this year and the start of a new year, I am simply going to offer some encouragement and gratitude for the ways we have continued to be church in a pandemic. It has been a year that has been difficult beyond words. There has been so much change, so much isolation, so much loss. Yet God has been present. God has been with us. And God has been doing what God always does – finding fresh ways to move and be in the world. God is always about making all things new. We at Pleasant Green UMC are continually called to join in God's work. Here are some of those ways we have done so this year:

- We have evolved and adapted and worshiped online (together). We didn't skip a beat. It is now easier than ever to invite people to worship, to attend worship, and I know of numerous people who have tuned in who might never set foot in our sanctuary. Worship is now easy to access and we have faithful members who have been able to participate no matter where they find themselves on Sunday morning.
- A record number of people participating in worship leadership. We have had more scripture readers, musicians, and regular lay folk who usually sit in the pews up in front of folks helping lead the service. "Liturgy" literally means "work of the people." We are doing this better than we have ever done in person.
- We are successfully navigating Zoom! I know it's not everyone's favorite. But, we have done Bible studies, prayers, meetings, and check-ins with each other. It's not perfect, but we are grateful to have platforms that help us connect.
- Rediscovering home as the hub of discipleship. The steps are tiny, but they are there. Families and children are not showing up for Sunday school right now. There is no Sunday school teacher to rely on to teach our children. Right now, if spiritual formation is not happening in our own homes, then it simply isn't happening. The primary location of the early church was the home. Knowing this truth, we have tried to share ways to make the home a hub for spiritual formation for families – with fall "at home boxes" for children and "Advent Take Home Kits." I believe the future of the church will be dependent on all of us taking responsibility for making disciples – and not just leaving it up to the religious professionals among us.

- Generosity. It's no secret that many churches, non-profits, and small businesses are especially suffering in this pandemic. I can say with conviction that Pleasant Green has been faithful in giving – and because of this, we have been able to carry on many of our partnerships, ministry, and hospitality because of it. We have continued to be a missional and giving congregation.
- Adaptation. By the time we reached fall, I think many of us came to realize that this pandemic was here to stay awhile. The pandemic was not so much an interruption as a disruption. So we found new ways to do old things. The Halloween Carnival took on a new shape. The UMW auction we re-vamped. The Mission Market continued, but it looked a little different. Well done, good and faithful servants.
- Reclaiming our Connection. From its earliest days, Methodists have boasted of being a "connection." But over time, we siloed ourselves and have done less and less with our sister churches.... Until the pandemic. Thankfully, we pastors in Orange County had begun building relationships with one another. Once upon a time we would simply dream of what it would look like to work together and worship together. We have been able to unite with our neighboring churches in new and creative ways – and that has been a gift.
- Failing. Yes, failing. It's one I have wrestled with this year. I have tried a lot of things that just haven't worked. People didn't engage. It has forced me, as a pastor, to redefine success. And collectively, we can acknowledge that if we never fail, then we never try anything new. New things require courage. It's scary and risky. If we fail at something, at least we have been courageous and if we are never failing, we are never trying anything new. And that would be the greater tragedy.

I am grateful for the faithfulness, the persistence, and the love that is ever-more evident among the people at Pleasant Green. I will also remind you that you are so crucial in this work. That God created you with gifts and graces in this world. Without you, this church and this community is not able to be all that we can be. As so, as we shift our gaze into a new year, I would invite you to think about how you might engage in ministry at Pleasant Green in the new year. What resources, talents, time, energy, passion, and ideas do you bring to the table? This is not a call for money (though, that might be part of it) – this is a call to participate in the mission of God through the church. The mission is simply this: to create an ever-expanding community of love, centered on God's love for each person and Jesus's ministry in the world.

This Christmas, I pray that hope would be born anew in us. I pray that we might be filled with a sense of awe and wonder, so that our hearts are ready for angels to visit us, for stars to guide us, for new songs to rise from our lips. May we proclaim and live the good news: that God is with us and with the dawn of redeeming grace, we can join all creation in rejoicing.

With deep love and gratitude,
Pastor Laura



PGUMC Directory Updates

Please send any changes or additions from the 2018 directory to pgumc@ncrrbiz.com.

Financial Update

2020 Unified Budget	348,460.49
YTD Total Income to Operating Fund	284,516.19
YTD Operating Expenses	296,505.06
YTD Operating Fund Balance	-11,988.87
2019 Operating Fund Balance Forward	17,640.33
2020 Current Actual Operating Fund Balance	5,651.46
Current Building Mortgage Balance	240,649.86

Do you have a favorite plant, bush or flower growing in your garden? Or A special plant that has been passed down in your family?

We would like donations of plants or bulbs that mean something to you to plant around the church property. Please consider potting up this plant or digging up the bulbs for donation.

Fall is a good time to plant, so we can take donations now or in the Spring - whenever you have the plant(s) ready.

Please contact Cindy Stubbs at pmfcjs@aol.com or Van McCay at vmmcay@nc.rr.com with donations or questions!

Worship this month will be with Pleasant Green UMC at our regular time of 10:30am.



THANK YOU

- Thank you to Pleasant Green UMC for your support in providing resources for Orange County students. Your willingness to be a partner during this time has been amazing. We were able to provide online support, meals, as well as supervision to some of our most impacted children and their families during a pandemic and you were a big part of it.

We appreciate you and are thankful for your charity. We hope that you have a great rest of your holiday season and take care.

Best,
Richard W. Lewis, Ed.S.
Director, School Community Relations

- To the congregation at Pleasant Green UMC- I made it!!!
And I would never have done it without you. Thank you for the blessing of learning and serving with you. I share this day with you, for you all are essential for having raised me up for the work of ministry. I pray for your safety and joy.

Grace and Peace,
Ali

- Thank you to all who decorated our Church for Advent and the Holiday Season!
- Thank you from the PGUMC staff for Holiday gifts given by our Church family!



ORANGE COUNTY STOCKING FUND PROJECT

The Circle of Faith's Orange County Stocking Fund Project was a huge success!

It is always amazing to me that when help is needed, our Church family steps up and comes together to assist in making things happen. In this case, you made it possible for Orange County Social workers to feed families for Christmas.

A big thank you to all of you who donated gift cards, money and food. With the help of the UM Men's Group, Eleanor Walker Circle, Circle of Faith and all of you, we raised \$2,882 in money, gift cards and lots of food for these families. It would not have been possible to help these families without you.

We greatly appreciate all that you gave and wishing all of you a bright and wonderful New Year ahead. Thanks from the Circle of Faith.

God bless you all,
Martha Walker



Outside Mission Market & Online Auction

Thank you, PGUMC, for your participation in the online auction as well as the outside Mission Market. Things were different this year and we needed to be flexible and adapt – much like a mission trip! We are slowly learning new ways of communicating and connecting.

Praise be to God for new-given strength! We raised over \$4,000! A feat we did not expect, but God is good all the time. Thank you!

The Mission Market

Dream Weavers Christmas Mission

Thank you to the Dream Weavers Circle for spreading kindness and supporting a family in need this holiday season. Your generous giving provided clothes, toys, Christmas dinner and more to a single father and his five children. He was so appreciative of your support and generosity this Holiday Season.

January

					1 Yen Hoang Dill	2 Sue Parrish Susan Burke Patt Hatcher
3	4 Brenda Boffey	5 Max McCurdy	6 Epiphany of the Lord Martin Ferris Seth McCurdy Jennifer Procise	7 Read & Seed Patch 6:30pm Sheila Cook Elizabeth McCarter Ashley Totten	8	9
10 District-led Church Leadership Training 3-4:30pm Kent Godwin	11 Jonathan Fisher Jane Witt	12 FOOD FOR ALL	13	14	15 Ryan Link	16
17 Teresa Craig Marsha Schneider Debbie Covington	18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Melissa Nanney Linda Miller	19	20 Wendy Martin Angie Seeberg	21 Wanda Edens Walker Shelton	22 Scott Cook Heather Leonard Beth Nichols	23 Foy Hunt
24	25 Julie Barker Painter Paul Frank Jack Frank	26	27 Kristen Fisher	28 Robert Fonville Justin Poe	29 Jean Nichols David Shotwell	30
31 Dave Cook Morgan Fisher Stacey Keatts	<p>WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY</p>					

Read & Seed Patch

First Thursday of every month at 6:30pm.

“The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue” by V.E. Schwab
Reading more books and spending time with friends-
both are great goals for 2021!

Contact: Cindy - pmfcjs@aol.com
Meeting ID 251 251 2973 / Passcode 123456

Prayer Ministry

Third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm.

Please join us! All are welcome. We always feel
renewed at the end of the prayer meeting.

Contact: Gail - pruettg4mh@gmail.com
Email for more information, meeting ID and passcode

District-led Church Leadership Training

Sunday, Jan. 10th, 3:00-4:30pm



IT'S NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY REACHED THIS GOAL OR HAVE ALREADY BEEN PERFECTED, BUT I PURSUE IT, SO THAT I MAY GRAB HOLD OF IT BECAUSE CHRIST GRABBED HOLD OF ME FOR JUST THIS PURPOSE. BROTHERS AND SISTERS, I MYSELF DON'T THINK I'VE REACHED OUT FOR THE THINGS AHEAD OF ME. THE GOAL I PURSUE IS THE PRIZE OF GOD'S UPWARD CALL IN CHRIST JESUS.

Philippians 3: 12-14

Renewal Every Morning

In this time of goal-setting and New Year's resolutions, an article in the November-December 2020 Upper Room seems fitting. On November 25th, the meditation was titled, Every Step. The author wrote of her experience with renewed goal-setting every morning; to walk at least 10,000 steps that day. Some days she met her goal, then was faced with the same challenge the next day. Other days, she did not walk 10,000 steps, but was gratified that she had tomorrow to start over.

Isn't our spiritual life the same? How many of us ignored the challenge to walk to Bethlehem during Advent; or, even to contribute to the Compass Center in Chapel Hill or to the Project Agape? How many of us choose to sleep in on Sunday mornings, rather than participate in Sunday School or church? How many of us decide to watch a favorite television program rather than spending quiet alone-time with God? Even though we have good intentions and want to become more like Christ, we often fail by making choices that take us away from Him. The good news is that we have tomorrow to start over. It is a brand-new day. And, more important good news, as the verses in Lamentations above say, the Lord is steadfast and merciful. His blessings are new every morning. He does not keep score or punish us when we fail. Instead, he encourages us to become more like Him. He wants us to renew our commitment to Him every morning. The following prayer is a good one to pray every morning; to help us remember who we are following.

A Prayer of Relational Renewal:
My New Identity in Christ

“Father, I choose to live according to the peace that I have with You in Christ. I recall that one of Satan's primary tools is the power of his false accusation that You are not generously accepting and that, therefore, I am Your enemy. The power of the Gospel renews my mind to the assurance that I am Your child, Christ's bride, and the Spirit's best friend! I put on wholeness, consciously reflecting on and resting in who I am in Christ. I put on my new identity in Christ. I enjoy who I am in Christ and who I am becoming through Christ as I become like Christ. I renew my mind to my new core identity in Christ. I reckon on this, and I reignite and fan it into flame. I clothe myself in my new peace. I cover myself in my new cleared, cleansed, and good conscience. I envelop myself in contentment with who I am in Christ.” Amen.

Dr. Bob Kellemen,
RPM (Resurrection Power Multipliers) Ministries
<https://rpmministries.org/2011/09/six-prayers-of-renewal/>



THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD NEVER CEASES, HIS MERCIES NEVER COME TO AN END; THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING.

Lamentations 3: 22-23



For many of us, 2020 has been a year consumed by challenges and by tragedy. And through a pandemic, through historic climate events, and global social movements, small-scale farmers, farmworkers, and food workers have continued to work on the frontlines to support their communities. Many of these essential workers continue to do so without access to federal relief, adequate PPE, or mandatory labor protections.

This year has also demonstrated the power of solidarity and community. Across the country and around the world, this has been a time of increased awareness for the work we all have left to do to build a more just and equitable economy. As I reflect on this year, this is something I continue to come back to.

This year, Fair World Project's supporters sent tens of thousands of emails to Congress and OSHA demanding pandemic relief for small-scale farmers and safe working conditions for food and farmworkers. And when small-scale cocoa farmers called on Hershey's and Nestle to put the lives of farmers and their communities ahead of corporate profits, you stood with them. While these are just a few examples, I'm inspired to see so many of you show solidarity with farmers and workers at home and around the world.

In 2020, we paired Fair World Project's advocacy work with educational resources to help you stay engaged and knowledgeable about the food and farming issues you care about, like *new infographics* and an updated *Reference Guide to Fair Trade Labels*. And, we've been hard at work on a new project: I'm excited to announce that I'll be your host on our new podcast, For a Better World. Keep an eye out for the Season 1 Teaser coming very soon and for the full show's launch coming January 2021.

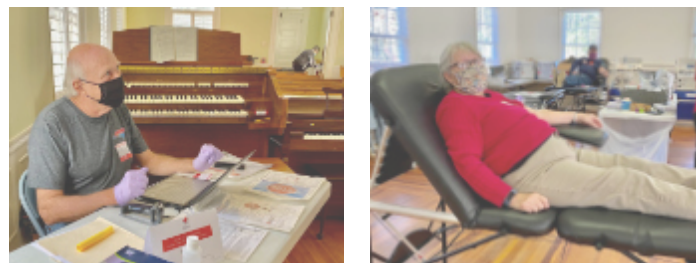
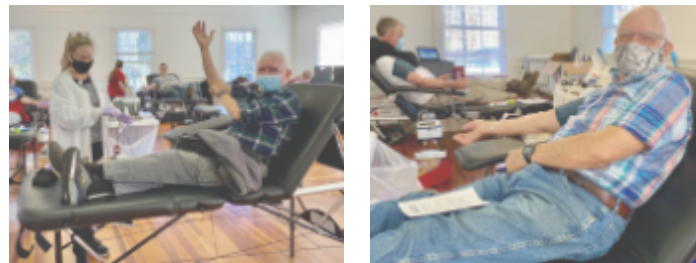
As we move into 2021, it's critical that we continue to build on this momentum. Support our work this year by becoming a monthly donor or by making a one time donation. We cannot do this work without you. With every petition you sign, each letter you send, and every donation you make, you are contributing to making a better world possible.

Thank you for all of your support in 2020 and here's to a brighter 2021,

Dana Geffner

December Blood Drive at PGUMC

Thanks to all who donated and volunteered!



Save the date for February 23, 2021!

Support UMCOR's Coffee & Chocolate Project!



This fair trade economic model provides opportunities for churches to support a system that nurtures rather than diminishes God's vision of abundant life. UMCOR's partner is the employee owned fair trade organization called Equal Exchange.

Coffee & chocolate for sale in the Clyde Walker Sunday school room and will be restocked soon!

GIVE
DONATE
HELP
SHARE
VOLUNTEER
PRAY



Habitat for Humanity

Helping build strength, stability & self reliance. Habitat for Humanity in Orange County remains hard at work and volunteers are needed! Please contact Jim Perry at perryjames@twc.com.



United Methodist Committee on Relief

Please consider donating to the U.S. Disaster Response and enable UMCOR to serve people impacted by the catastrophic wind, rain and fire events of this season. Help to provide the tangible items necessary for relief work including personal protective equipment that our volunteers will need to stay healthy.



Families Moving Forward Donations Needed:

- Diapers sizes 1,2,3,4
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Bath towels
- Toothpaste
- Bleach
- Clorox disinfectant wipes
- Brooms/Dust pans
- Small bottles of dish soap
- Low-sugar juice boxes
- Vitamin Water zero
- Gatorade zero
- Sugar-free water bottle packs
- New sheets/comforters/pillows (twin/full)

Dear Friends of Pleasant Green,
Thank you for your continued support and donations. Your partnership has meant so much to us- but especially this year. We are wishing you a safe and happy holiday season and a refreshing start to 2021. We look forward to continuing our partnership next year.
All the best,
Kathy Lambert, FMF

The United Methodist Women's "Christmas in July" Mission Project

Thank you to those who have donated "Back to School" classroom items for Orange County Schools! We have many items collected and ready to be given away.



Orange Congregations in Missions

Thank you for keeping our cart in the Narthex full! Please continue to donate to the food pantry for those who are food insecure in our community. Other items such as hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes, and other cleaning supplies are needed! Volunteers at OCIM are welcome, and financial donations can be made via check or paypal at www.ocimnc.org.

AfterCare Houseware Share Donations Needed:

- New or Gently used~
 - Wall decor/pictures
 - Rugs
 - Lamps
 - Clocks
 - Throw pillows / blankets
 - Other miscellaneous home décor
- Donations can be left in the Narthex for pick up.

*Aftercare Houseware Share provides household items for families who have transitioned into their own, permanent home within the past year.



Pleasant Green
United Methodist Church

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(919) 383-5764

Pastor: Rev. Laura Thompson
lthompson@nccumc.org
(919) 383-2339

Youth Parish Coordinator:
Carsten Bryant
carsten.bryant@duke.edu

WAYS TO GIVE

ONLINE: www.PleasantGreenUMC.org
SMARTPHONE: Text "PleasantGreen" To: 77977
ENVELOPE: Mail or slip under office door

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 in advance for your generosity!

DOWNLOAD THE PGUMC APP!

APP STORE: Search "Pleasant Green UMC"
SMARTPHONE: Text "PleasantGreenapp" To: 77977

Download and Explore! It's free! One of the features we're excited to share through this app is a "Daily Prayer." A place where you can click for a Bible verse, prayer, and thought of the day. A daily gift and inspiration for the whole family right at your fingertips.



Blood Drive at PGUMC

Tuesday, February 23, 10am-3pm in the Fellowship Hall. To sign up, contact the Church office at pgumc@ncrrbiz.com / 919-383-5764 or go to redcrossblood.org (sponsor code: Pleasant Green)



Support PGUMC when you purchase through amazon smile. They will donate 0.5% of your purchase price on eligible products to the "Pleasant Green United Methodist Church" charitable organization. We hope you'll consider this as we continue to find creative & generous ways to share resources together. Already have an Amazon Prime account? Go to smile.amazon.com and use your existing Amazon Prime account login. Pleasant Green's unique charity link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1152936>

**PLEASE
RECYCLE**

