



Pleasant Green *United Methodist Church*

PleasantGreenUMC.org

Roots & Branches

May 2020



“Grief comes when people miss one another. Grief is an emotional recognition that something is missing. To acknowledge rather than dismiss this missing is a sacred act of reverencing absence. We can miss what has been – a person, a thing, a relationship, or a commitment, that no longer exists. We can also miss what has never been.”

I've had a lot of conversations in the past month that have had phrases like these in them:

“I know it sounds silly, but.... “

“I realize other people are way worse off than me, but... “

“I know I shouldn't complain, however... “

“It sounds minor, but...”

We are all missing so much right now. Some of those losses we have quantified as “small” – hugging a grandchild's neck, being able to sit inside a restaurant, go to a choir practice. Some of those losses are quite large – not being able to walk at graduation, losing a job, having to do a familiar job in a brand new way, learning that a friend/family member has tested positive. I believe that the temptation is to assume that someone else is far worse off than we are or that there is somebody just a few miles down the road at Duke Hospital fighting for their life, so we need to not “worry with” our own losses, as small as they may be. And yet, **“to acknowledge rather than dismiss this missing is a sacred act of reverencing absence.”**

--That girls weekend that got cancelled? – that's a loss. A grief. Let's acknowledge it.

--That sinus infection that has made you more anxious than usual? That's a change, a loss, a grief. We can acknowledge it.

--Not be able to check on your friend/loved one in the nursing home even though nothing is “wrong.” – That's a loss. A Grief. Let's acknowledge it.

--Watching people dodge you on the walking trail because human beings are afraid of other human beings right now? That's a loss. Let's acknowledge it.

--Having to work from home – with a spouse – and children and some days just finding that it is plain hard. That's a loss. A grief. We can acknowledge it.

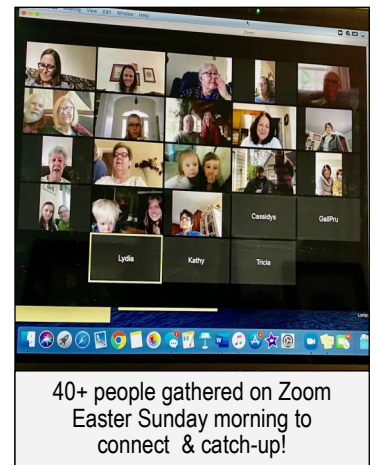
--Feeling really disoriented when you look at your calendar and there is nothing but scribbles from crossing out all your commitments and engagements. That is loss.

--Not being able to “make plans.” That's a loss. A grief. We can acknowledge it.

Part of the challenge for us as human beings right now is to surrender: surrendering our need for certainty, surrendering our control, surrendering our need to compare our losses or suffering, surrendering our self-critical judgements, and surrendering our need to completely understand. One of the many ways that we can heal and be present to each other is to honor the many ways we are experiencing life right now – knowing there is no right or wrong way, knowing that grief has no start or end date, and acknowledging the many ways we have lost something – physically, emotionally, or spiritually. I believe when we do so, we are little bit like Thomas, the disciple who, in the midst of so much fear and uncertainty, touched the wounds of Jesus right after that first Easter Sunday. This was the moment when he knew God-in-the-flesh was with them. This was the moment when that “peace” that Jesus announced started to become a reality. Part of being the church is bearing witness to each other, acknowledging what we are going through, naming our hurts, and honoring the journey of our neighbor. When we do, we engage in a sacred act of reverencing, we touch one another's wounds and we come a little bit closer to healing.

I give thanks for the ways we continue to share life together. Know that I am praying for God's peace to be with you in the midst of these days.

Pastor Laura



from the Prayer Ministry...

Celebrating the Risen Christ in Our Midst



Acts 1: 2b – 3 Before he was taken up, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus instructed the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed them that he was alive with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God's kingdom.

Our kind and thoughtful Janice sent this letter to the prayer ministry. It is such a powerful reminder of how we can and should live into the promise, teachings, and ministries of Jesus and His Disciples. We need to show the world that Jesus lives! This letter is used with Janice's permission.



Dear Pleasant Green Family,

I have missed seeing you and you are often in my thoughts.

During Holy Week, I was reading "Meditations on the Way of the Cross" by Mother Theresa and Brother Roger (of Taizé.) This passage seemed to be a mission statement for the Prayer Ministry (and, for all of us!), "What do you ask of us, O Christ? Above all to carry one another's burdens, and to entrust them to you in our prayer."

Lent and Easter have been so different for us this year. We began Lent with a beautiful Ash Wednesday service, but we soon had to cancel worship services and Bible studies and even Holy Week and Easter services. That period was marked for many of us by the things we couldn't do.

Some years ago, I was introduced to the concept of the "Fifty Great Days from Easter to Pentecost" by Elise Eslinger, a UMC worship consultant. (It is her communion responses that we most often use during Communion and she also wrote #666. Shalom to You, an oft-used benediction response.) I'm proposing that each of us in our own way make the days from Easter to Pentecost (Sunday, May 31) be meaningful. Maybe reach out to at least one person each day with a phone call or card or email. Maybe read that book we've been putting aside. Maybe use the money we're not spending on eating out or going to movies to send a check to an organization that is helping those most affected by the Covid-19 crisis. Instead of focusing on how long this social isolation is lasting, let's focus on the things we can do to celebrate the Risen Christ in our midst. These are things we can do. Shalom, Janice

Let us continue to celebrate Christ in our midst and spread His Good Works by praying...

Dear Father, Our Father and the Father of Jesus Christ, thank you for giving Him to us. We thank you and praise you for His example, His pure life, His compassion and His suffering. We thank you for raising Your Son from the dead so that he continues to live among us through the Power of the Holy Spirit. Help us with strength, love, guidance, and discernment so that we do not waste the powerful gift you have given us. Help us teach the world and show by example that He Lives! Provide opportunities for us to reach out to others in love. Help us to be generous and not selfish. We pray these things in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Prayer Ministry meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm. If North Carolina and our United Methodist Church are still in a state of emergency due to COVID-19, we will meet by free conference call on May 20th. Otherwise, we will meet in the parlor (Clyde Walker Classroom). Look for more information through the PGUMC emailed weekly news as we get closer to that date. You may also contact Gail at pruettg@frontier.com. Please join us! We would love to have you. The next meeting is Wednesday, May 20 at 6:30 pm.

***Please be in prayer for the Family of Mary Lou Mitchell as she passed away on April 30th.
A Celebration of Life Service will be planned at a later date.***

Dear Saints at Pleasant Green,

We are grateful for your continued prayers to the God of grace and mercies. It is encouraging to know that you are lifting us up, even though you don't even know us, but understand we have shared God's promises together with you. Thank you!

Love,
Dwight & Helen Doerring
(Columbus, Ohio)

Pleasant Green Family,

Perhaps you sent a card, or made a phone call, or best of all you prayed for our sweet Betsy... Whatever you did to think of our family, we are lifted up and encouraged and very fortunate for your thoughtfulness and love.

May God bless you!
In Christian love,
The Family of Betsy Bowden
(Larry, Julia, Jacob & Charles)

Dear Pleasant Green,

It may not have seemed to be a big deal to you, but it was to me. The fact that you have remembered me in your prayers has been a true blessing during a time of difficult changes in my life. I am doing much better now thanks to you and the good Lord.

Thank you,
Pat Boggan

Youth News and Updates!

We are excited to announce that starting in May, Pleasant Green is beginning a partnership with Hillsborough UMC and Union Grove UMC to jointly hire one Full-Time “Youth Parish Coordinator” that will serve as a youth director across our three churches and the greater Orange County area.

Youth Ministry has been an ongoing conversation and challenge among many smaller churches and part of what excites us about this possibility is the potential for more stable leadership, a larger more vibrant group with more “critical capacity,” and a more financially viable option for the churches who cannot invest in a full-time staff person.

In the coming weeks, we will announce more about what’s next in youth ministry, but until then, it is our pleasure and joy to introduce to you Carsten Bryant!

A note from Carsten:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

I’m ecstatic to be stepping into this newly created role as the OCP Youth Director, and I can’t wait to see what a harvest God brings about through our co-laboring in our shared field of ministry with the youth of Greater Hillsborough, even during this weird season of pandemic. To tell you a little about myself, I’m a candidate for elder’s orders in the South Carolina UMC and graduated from Duke Divinity School this year with my Masters of Divinity. My wife Christine and I started attending Union Grove when we moved here in August 2017, and she now serves as the children’s pastor at UG in addition to teaching fourth grade at New Hope Elementary. We’re also expecting our first child in July! When I’m not working, I love to make music, read old books, play golf, and enjoy all the things that make living near Hillsborough so delightful.

I look forward to meeting you and seeing all the good that God is already doing in our churches. I would love to talk and dream with our youth and our adults about what a vibrant shared youth ministry looks like during this season of shelter-in-place and afterwards.

In Christ, Carsten

****Carsten is excited to host a Zoom call Sunday, May 10th at 7pm with Youth and Parents.***



Pleasant Green welcomes our new Duke Intern Jessica Edelblut!

A note from Jessica:

I just finished my first year at Duke Divinity School where I’m currently pursuing my Masters of Divinity degree. I grew up in the Chicago suburbs but most recently spent the past few years living in Maine. I absolutely love spending my time at the coast or in cozy coffee shops having deep conversations. I have a deep passion for biblical discipleship and supporting young people as they seek God’s calling on their life. Despite the odd time we find ourselves in, I’m really looking forward to the opportunity to serve the community at Pleasant Green this summer!



A big THANK YOU to Hannah Sipes and Michael Larbi for their service at Pleasant Green. We wish Hannah well after graduation from Duke Divinity School. And we welcome Michael back for the summer.





*Congratulations to Ian & Lori Link Sollenberger!
Everett Abel Sollenberger was born in Santa Monica, California
on March 27, weighing 8 pounds 6 ounces.
Everett is the grandson of Becky & Bob Link.*



*Congratulations to Spencer and Sarah Shaw!
Samuel Grant Shaw was born in on Saturday, May 1st,
weighing 9 pounds 6 ounces
Spencer is serving Hampden Highlands UMC in Maine.*

From the Bishop on May 1st ...

Dear United Methodist friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you as we approach Good Shepherd Sunday, with the appointed lessons Psalm 23 and John 10.

Even when we walk through the darkest valley, we fear no danger because you are with us. - Psalm 23

Thank you for your partnership in compassionate care as we continue to be constrained from gathering face to face. We pray without ceasing for the lessening of danger for all people and for wisdom as we lead our churches.

As we await further guidance from public health leaders, we are making plans to help us safely re-engage our in-person communal gatherings. Experienced and knowledgeable professionals are guiding us as we create guidance for churches to be offered to you very soon.

Please remember that older and more vulnerable persons will not be able to gather safely for some time. Even when we begin to regather in smaller groups, please remember that virtual worship and groups will need to continue so that all people can be engaged in the life of the church.

May our Good Shepherd lead and guide you day by day, *Hope Morgan Ward*



Moments from Mike...

Mike Frese, our Superintendent in the Corridor District

In the Upper Room's devotional book, *Disciplines*, Michael Downey, the author for this week's readings, twice notes the context of [Psalm 23](#). I confess that even as I try to keep a passage's placement in a chapter and book, I rarely consider how an individual psalm relates to those before or after it. Downey, however, reminds the reader that this beloved psalm immediately follows the lament of [Psalm 22](#). With Holy Week still in recent memory, we recall with vividness Jesus' cry of dereliction from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," which is the opening verse of Psalm 22. The rest of that psalm seems to be a perfect poetic description of the crucifixion scene.

Whether or not the author of Psalm 22 and 23 is the same, it is clear that whoever placed the psalms together, thought these two belonged together. So the confidence and trust of Psalm 23 follows the situation of desperation and lament of Psalm 22. To the plaint, "Why have YOU forsaken me," comes the response, "YOU are my shepherd."

Downey's linkage of these two psalms seems appropriate for our current situation. There is much about our situation that is worthy of lament. Like the author of Psalm 22, we could easily identify a number of complaints about our current context. In fact, we may approach the 176 verse of Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible. It is important to note that lament is an expression of faith. It is sharing with God the deep ache in our heart as we see a world that does not reflect the goodness of God. The trials and tragedies of our COVID-19 world should bring cries of pain and sorrow to our lips. And who better to share these with than the God of the Universe.

However, as much as lament is an authentic expression of faith, so also is the expression of trusting God in the midst of unsettling circumstances. Yes, even in the midst of anxiety and distress, even when we do not see a clear path forward, we can trust that God will hold us in the present and lead us into the future. After all, this is the God of Easter. Death did not have the final word. The grave did not have the ultimate power. Life and love ultimately was the victor.

I pray that for you and for your congregation, you will allow lament to flow.

I hope that in these trying times, you will allow lament to flow. However, allow the voice of trust in a faithful God to speak as well. These two are not diametrically opposed, but the paradox of faith. Even if you find it hard to express the seeming calm words of trust, allow Psalm 23 to speak them for you. The Lord is our shepherd, our Good Shepherd, who faithfully guides us, calls us, and is present with us.



Support UMCOR's Coffee & Chocolate Project

Coffee - decaf & regular ground - \$8 per bag

Chocolate Bars - \$2.50

**Dark Chocolate with Almonds ~ Caramel Crunch
Mint ~ Orange ~ Dark Chocolate—65% and 80
Milk Chocolate ~ Milk Chocolate Caramel Crunch**



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.

"We all need to stay calm and unified and work together." Santiago Paz of the fair trade co-op, Norandino, said it best. This year, as we mark World Fair Trade Day on May 9th, we're also facing one of the greatest global crises of our lifetimes, the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet the words of Paz and other fair trade leaders provide inspiration. And fair trade values look more like a guide to a new future world, one that puts people before profit. As we have reached out to fair trade leaders around the globe, a clear theme emerges: We are stronger together.



Since the start of the novel coronavirus outbreak, UMCOR has been working with health boards, medical professionals, disaster management coordinators and faith leaders to prevent the further spread of this disease. Now it is clear that the impact of COVID-19 will be far-reaching and demands an even greater response. Through the UMCOR COVID-19 Response fund, grants will be rapidly released to equip partners to assist vulnerable populations around the world impacted by COVID-19, including racial/ethnic and indigenous communities in the United States. Grants from this fund will be disbursed quickly and efficiently to address health concerns, food insecurity, water and hygiene limitations and other pressing needs. Even as you shelter in place, you can be there for others. When you say "yes" to supporting the UMCOR COVID-19 Response, you will help bring God's love to life for those who need it most. Questions or comments? Please contact Tom Farley, Director of Development at tfarley@umcmission.org, or call (800) 862-4246.

You are part of an extraordinary legacy of undauntable human beings—people of action, people of compassion, people of mercy.

By giving to UMCOR's COVID-19 Response Fund, **you are:**

- Giving emergency food supplies
- Providing water and sanitation facilities
- Strengthening health care systems
- Responding to economic instability



Even as you shelter in place, you can **be there for others**. 100 years from now we will be remembered for how we respond to this pandemic. **Please give, today.**

Congratulations, Pleasant Green UMC for receiving a mini-grant of \$1,000 on behalf of Partners in Health and Wholeness!



Partners in Health and Wholeness is a program of the NC Council of Churches (a state-wide ecumenical organization promoting Christian unity and working towards a more just society). The program partners with churches across North Carolina to promote and encourage communities to live happier, healthier, more abundant lives. Churches who are members of the collaborative may apply for a mini-grant once a year and receive a maximum of \$1,000 to go toward "health ministries," with the understanding that "health" can be defined by many factors that support holistic well-being. The cornerstones of Partners in Health and Wholeness are healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco cessation, and mental health. When it is safe again to gather, the plan is to use this grant money to complete the work that has begun on the trail around our church property. Many thanks to the Duke Endowment and Blue Cross Blue Shield for their commitment to improve the health and well-being of people of faith!

PGUMC Financial Update

2020 Unified Budget \$348,460.49

Y-T-D Total Income to Operating Fund	\$96,995.27
T-T-D Operating Expenses	\$103,537.22
Y-T-D Operating Fund Balance	-\$6,541.95
2019 Operating Fund Balance Forward	\$17,640.33
2020 Current Actual Operating Fund Balance	\$11,098.38
Current Building Mortgage Balance	\$265,206.52



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- 1 Debbie Collins
- 1 Herb Fister
- 1 Cheryl Punt
- 3 Ellie Morris
- 5 Jim Crawford
- 5 Emily Hamm
- 6 Brian Wingo
- 6 Mike Whitfield
- 7 Bailey Allison
- 7 Bob Alley
- 9 Patsy Ward
- 10 Lisa Micol
- 10 Jeff Braddy
- 10 Mary Ann Hamm
- 11 Mike Quinn
- 11 Sara Witt
- 11 Eric Nichols
- 11 Sawyer Nicholson
- 11 Scarlett McCay
- 12 Scott Beaver
- 12 Campbell Bourlon
- 15 Cale Allison
- 15 Keith Procise
- 17 Laura Lockamy
- 20 Casey Stocking
- 21 Avery Morton
- 24 Kathy Thomas
- 23 Rebecca Crawford
- 25 McKenzie Almers
- 25 Ron Seeberg
- 26 David Almers
- 26 Nick Overaker
- 26 Caeden Poe
- 28 Jane Bass
- 28 Ella Rose McCay
- 29 Melisa Bryant
- 31 Kelly Martin Hall

All are invited to join the Book Group for discussions!

The Read & Seed Patch - *a place where we grow in our love of books*

R - relax, E - enjoy, A - attend, D - discuss & Seed

Our book for May: "What Alice Forgot" by Liane Moriarty.

Our next meeting: Thursday, May 7, starting at 6:30 pm.

Cindy Stubbs is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/494226846> Meeting ID: 494 226 846



*Thanks to Lisa McCurdy for making masks,
raising \$80 in donations for PGUMC!*



Pleasant Green continues to provide meals for the working poor of Orange County on the second Tuesday of each month. Thank you to Val Ostoyich for making masks to be distributed to the Food For All recipients in April.



Funds Needed for OCRA

As you know, Orange County Rural Alliance (OCRA), is a Meals on Wheels program that delivers meals to 80-85 seniors in rural Orange County. Since the Corona virus, OCRA has had to change the way it operates. No longer can we visit with the seniors, all we can do is leave meals on their porch. Because of COVID-19 and the required social distancing, families can't visit their aging relatives as often to bring them additional food. In addition seniors have difficulty getting to far-away grocery stores. As a result the seniors are in greater need now.

OCRA has stepped up to deliver five meals a week instead of just two. But our funds are stretched to the limit. The restaurants that used to donate some meals are closed and we are scrambling to find additional replacement meals.

We have made a video to tell more of the OCRA story and started a GoFundMe campaign to raise enough money to cover one month's worth of food and operating expenses. We are asking our friends to do two things to help OCRA at this time.

1. Make a donation of ANY amount
2. Spread the word on your social networks. The more exposure we get, the more likely we'll reach our goal.

To donate, simply click the link to the fundraiser below:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-ocra> ...and go to the Donate Button on the front page.

OCRA appreciates anything you can do to help us help the elderly in Orange County during these difficult times. Thank you.

Sincerely, Norma White (President OCRA & Executive Director OCRA Meals on Wheels)

Staying Connected During COVID-19:

- Worship on Sundays at 9, 11, or 5pm with the Orange Cooperative Parish pastors leading. Each week, a link is sent out via email.
- Several Sunday school classes are meeting via Zoom on Sundays – contact your Sunday school teacher for information!
- Wednesdays at 10:30am: a book group/discussion/Bible study via Zoom
- Handwritten letters, phone calls, and emails
- The Prayer Team is continuing to pray diligently for those on our prayer list and to “meet” monthly to update each other
- Weekly meditations and music posted on our YouTube channel and Facebook page
- Weekly emails with announcements and helpful information

Looking for something to do outside in this beautiful Spring weather?

Let's use our last weeks of social distancing to spruce up our church grounds!

If you are able and available to help out with the

following please contact Van McCay:

919-259-2721 or vmccay@nc.rr.com. Thank you

- Trimming bushes
- Pulling weeds
- Picking up sticks
- Spreading mulch
- Spreading pine straw
- Cutting Trees
- Working on the new trail



OCIM is in desperate need of food – please continue to drop off food items for the needy!



May – June Upper Rooms are available in the church Narthex.



Fair Exchange coffee & chocolate are still available on the cart near the kitchen.

April Red Cross Blood Drive

Message from the Blood Drive coordinator: *Wow, what a blood drive yesterday!!! We crushed our patient need goal and collected 49 units of blood saving 147 lives! I realize the donors were inconvenienced with the long waiting time to donate. The process takes longer with the new procedures and multiple power red donations which we need take loner. Thank you for your partnership with the American Red Cross in our life-saving mission!*



Thank you to church members who gave blood and staffed the blood drive! Stay tuned for information on our June Blood Drive!

Congratulations to Sandy Quinn



We join in celebrating Sandy Quinn as she has been approved by the District Board of Ordained Ministry to serve as a Certified Lay Minister! For those who may not know, a certified lay minister (CLM) is a person who has committed themselves to enhancing the quality of ministry in the local church by serving in various capacities such as worship leadership, program leadership, caring for the congregation, preaching, leading small groups, and participating in outreach ministry. CLM's have completed a one-year learning experience consisting of four modules, over 78 hours of training, plus a project. Pleasant Green is blessed to have such a diligent and faithful lay leader in Sandy Quinn and we join together to congratulate and celebrate your certification!



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

Church E-mail: pgumc@ncrrbiz.com

 Please recycle this newsletter. 

The Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide is provided free of charge to the Pleasant Green congregation by the United Methodist Women. *You may pick up a copy in the Narthex.*

From Pastor Laura...
 PGUMC will continue our Online Worship thru May 31 and potentially longer. No in-person gatherings of any size will continue throughout the month of May.



Updated Schedule
Pleasant Green 2020 Summer Camp
 Registration forms on church website

Week #1: July 6 - 10

Week #2: July 13 - 17
 at PGUMC

Week #3: July 20 - 24

VBS 9:00 - 12:30



Roots & Branches
 * NEWSLETTER NEWS *
In a continued effort to be good stewards of our resources and finances, we want to reduce the number of paper newsletter mailings. If you would like to help with this please contact the church office with your email.

Vacation Bible School
rescheduled to July 20 - 24 ~ 9:00 - 12:30

Quest for the King's Armor, invites children to be strong in the Lord

Registration site for children and volunteers:
<https://2020.cokesburyvbs.com/npcgumc>



Support Pleasant Green UMC when you make Amazon purchases!

What is it and how does it work? **The AmazonSmile program** offers Amazon customers the option of making a donation to your favorite charity. Amazon is able to provide this benefit to you when you choose to start your shopping at smile.amazon.com. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Now, you can choose "Pleasant Green United Methodist Church" as your organization. We hope you'll consider this as we continue to find creative and generous ways to share resources together.

For easy access please click Pleasant Green's unique charity link:
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1152936>

WAYS TO GIVE AT PLEASANT GREEN UMC

We know and believe that part of being a follower of Christ is also about 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. Listed below you will find three ways you may give to Pleasant Green UMC: the traditional gifts we receive in the offering plate on Sundays, online, or through text message. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

ONLINE
 www.pleasantgreenumc.org

MOBILE
 Text: "PLEASANTGREEN"
 To: 77977

ENVELOPE
 Check: mail or slip under the office door