

# B E A C O N

# December 2020 . . . Brief

**Gravel Hill UMC**

Dan Lebo, Senior Pastor

As we begin the month of December we find ourselves in the midst of a holiday season that feels different than what we are used to. We find ourselves between Thanksgiving and Christmas. We find ourselves in a continuing pandemic that has altered how we celebrate and honor these days that typically involve a lot of travel and gathering with our family and friends in our homes as well as gathering with fellow believers in crowded worship services to honor the holiness of the season. Unfortunately, this year had different plans for us. Many of us have altered our plans and are in a time of uncertainty leading into the Christmas season. This brings up a number of contrasting emotions for us. We are still eager for the holiday but increasingly frazzled and stressed in trying to decide what is best for us when answers aren't always clear.

It would be easy for us to lose the season of Advent being distracted by everything else going on. It may not seem like it but the circumstances that we are in are ideal for celebrating Advent. Advent, literally meaning "arrival," is a time where we are called to contemplate Christ's birth and what it means for the world. It is a time of preparation. It is a time to be mindful. It is a time to slow down and find the beauty of God being born into the world, often in simple or quiet ways. It is true that we find ourselves in unique times, but what is also true is that we will be able to find God in ALL situations no matter the surrounding circumstances. Remember the first Christmas was simple. It didn't have anthems. It didn't rely on presents or large groups gathering together. It was and always has been centered on the light of God shining in the darkness of the world. So as we enter this season, I encourage you find time to slow down and contemplate what it means for God to be born into our midst and in the words of Alfred Delp, "Light your candles quietly, such candles as you possess, wherever you are."

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas, Pastor Dan

Thank you for your patience with all of the COVID restrictions and procedures, but our persistence in taking care of our brothers and sisters in Christ is what will help keep us safe. Thank you for your care and concern for each other.

**Mid Week ZOOM Advent series: begins December 2, at 6:30pm. Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83634209233?pwd=cWFRclowdGVQK21LVFFtNnk2OVJ3QT09>

Meeting ID: 836 3420 9233 Passcode: 815940

**December 23** Christmas Eve Eve, 6:00pm at Gretna Glen. Dress for the weather—worship is outside, and bring a camp chair.

**December 24** Christmas Eve Worship Times

9:00-10:00am An open Sanctuary prayer time. Arrive/depart any time during this hour for prayer.

3:00pm Worship for families with young children.

5:00 & 7:00pm Contemporary candlelight Christmas worship with Praise Team music.

9:00pm Traditional candlelight Christmas worship with the Bell Choir.

**\*\*The Church Office will be Closed from December 25 through January 3.**

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Stay in the know: [www.gravelhillumc.org](http://www.gravelhillumc.org) • (717) 838-4721 • 131 Gravel Hill Road, Palmyra, PA 17078

Facebook: [Gravel Hill Church](https://www.facebook.com/GravelHillChurch) Instagram: [@131gravelhill](https://www.instagram.com/@131gravelhill) Twitter: [@GravelHill](https://twitter.com/@GravelHill) Visit our Sermons: [GravelHillUMC Video Gallery](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GravelHillUMCVideoGallery)

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## Worship Notes:

- Masks are required to attend worship. Even during the service, while in the Sanctuary.
- An [RSVP is required](#) to attend worship. Use the link from our website or call the church office.
- Please keep coats and belongings with you.
- Online Worship is available through [our YouTube channel](#) and also on our [FaceBook page](#). If you want to be notified when Gravel Hill goes live, access Gravel Hill UMC on YouTube. Click on the word SUBSCRIBE and click the bell to the right of the word to receive notifications.

## Special Announcements:

**YOUTH GROUP** — The Gravel Hill Youth Group is planning to participate in a mission trip from July 4– 9, 2021. Please watch for ways to support this effort through various fundraising efforts in the upcoming year. Your support is greatly appreciated!

## Teachers Needed:

Gravel Hill Christian Child Care currently has part-time and full-time openings for teachers and kitchen help. If you have questions, please call 717-838-3620. If you would like to submit your resume, you may email it to [ghcccdirector@yahoo.com](mailto:ghcccdirector@yahoo.com), attention Lori Cheatham.

## Online Giving Options:

You can access [online giving](#) from the GH website. There are two new accounts noted online to which you may provide your financial support. The first is shown to the left



as Worship Resources and Outreach. This will support the update of our dated audio/visual equipment in order to improve our recorded online presence by look and sound, as well as in person worship experience. The second new fund is for the Christmas Market. The 2020 Christmas Market will be all online due to COVID. If you have any questions, please email Dawn Schaffer at [dawn@gravelhillumc.org](mailto:dawn@gravelhillumc.org).

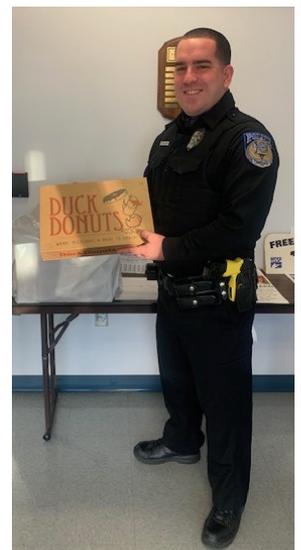
### Special Note from Tony Rose, Lay Mobilizer:

Dear Gravel Hill, It's with a mixture of sadness and anticipation that I begin a new chapter in my life. I have spent ten years at Gravel Hill UMC, and it has honestly been the most rewarding decade of my life from an employment standpoint. I want to take this moment to thank each and every one of you who gave of your time, talents, and money to make one, two, ten, fifty, or much more of the events and outreach ministries we have championed, led, or participated in over my tenure successful. Your belief in the mission of Gravel Hill to LEARN, LIVE, and SHARE Christ was proven each time you gave even a minute or a dollar to the missions, community events, and outreach efforts of our church. Thank you. Thank you to all of you volunteers and many of the staff who went above and beyond to promote and support all we accomplished as a Faith Community. Without you desiring to go beyond the brick and mortar walls of the church and the allotted obligatory hour on Sunday mornings, we would never have made such a positive and powerful impact on our community. Thank you for believing in the mission. I ask God for a blessing on all of you and may His grace and mercy be implanted in your hearts so that you can continue the work of His church, especially now. Thank you once again for supporting my ministry, me personally, and my family. God bless. ~ Tony

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[Picture on right] Coffee and Donuts for Police Officers: On Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup> I delivered 5 dozen donuts from Duck Donuts and 2 large carafes of coffee from 3J's to each of the following police departments: South Londonderry, North Londonderry, and the Palmyra Borough. Each was genuinely grateful for the gesture and thoughtfulness of our Gravel Hill members.

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A very special THANK YOU to everyone who supported the 2020 Christmas Market!

*Thank you*