

THE GARDEN

“...some of the seed fell on good soil” Mark 4:8

Dec. 2025 – Jan. 2026
Newsletter

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**Pastor Barbara’s Office
Hours:** Available
Mondays, Wednesdays,
and Thursdays by
appointment.

Green Pond United
Methodist Church
www.greenpondumc.com

Why We Need to Sing the Old Carols Again by Pastor Barbara

Every December, as the sanctuary fills with evergreens and candlelight, something sacred happens the moment the congregation begins to sing the first familiar strains of a Christmas carol. We experience a sense of homecoming. We know these songs. They know us. They have walked with us through many Advents—through seasons of joy, seasons of grief, and seasons of uncertainty.



And that familiarity is not a weakness. It is a gift. Many of us can recite lines of Christmas carols without looking at a hymnal. And when life becomes disorienting, these memorized lines become a kind of spiritual muscle memory.

This Advent season, each week, we will explore the story behind a favorite carol as well as the ways these special hymns point us once again to the mystery of Incarnation.

Consider the depth of theology packed into a single line from *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*: “*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th’ incarnate Deity.*” In just a few words, we proclaim the mystery that the eternal God became flesh—not just appearing like us, but **with us**, fully divine and fully human. Singing this line as a congregation teaches a core doctrine of our faith in a way that is accessible and beautiful.

Or from *O Little Town of Bethlehem*: “*The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*” Every human longing—every worry carried quietly into the sanctuary—meets its answer in Christ. When the church sings this line aloud, it is not simply poetry; it is a proclamation—a reminder that the child in the manger is the fulfillment of God’s promise.

And from *Silent Night*: “*Son of God, love’s pure light.*” This is not just sentimental imagery. It is the heart of the gospel: Christ is the radiant light of God’s love breaking into the world’s darkness. Singing it by candlelight on Christmas Eve allows the theology to reach not only the mind but the senses.

Each Advent we are different people than we were the year before. We bring new experiences, new questions, and sometimes new wounds, and yet, when we sing the old carols, they meet us in our new place and speak a fresh word. The child who once sang “*Away in a Manger*” with wide-eyed wonder grows into the adult who hears: “*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay...*” and realizes this is a prayer of lifelong dependence.

Announcements

GPUMC FINANCE SUMMARY OCTOBER 31, 2025

	OCT. 2025
COLLECTION	
OTHER	16,888.13
INCOME	
HOUSING	3,585.13
REIMBURSE	
EXPENSES	(23,333.62)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(2,860.49)
	YTD 2025
COLLECTION	157,094.44
OTHER	
INCOME	22,619.96
HOUSING	
REIMBURSE	18,333.30
EXPENSES	(221,565.57)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(23,517.87)

The one who sings “*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel*” discovers, year after year, that there are still places in their own heart and life that long for liberation.

Finally, singing Christmas carols is not merely a personal devotional act—it is communal testimony. When we sing together, we declare the same hope with one voice:

- Christ has come.
- Christ is here.
- Christ will come again.

In our fractured, polarized world, this shared song is itself a witness.

So this Advent, as you hear the first notes of *Joy to the World* or join the chorus of *Angels We Have Heard on High*, allow the repetition to be more than nostalgia. Allow it to be a fresh word of formation. Let the words you know by heart draw your heart more deeply into the story.

Let the old carols remind you that the hope of Christmas is not merely remembered—it is sung into being, year after year, until Christ’s light breaks again into our world.

So may our singing be loud and our hope be deep.

And may Christ be born anew in each one of us this season.

Bible Study—Pam Boddy

Starting in January, we are excited to offer Bible study on a regular basis throughout the year. We will begin with “Unearthing the Treasures of the Bible”, a five-week introduction to Bible study, led by Jim Cyr. Two times will be offered; one on Tuesday afternoons and one on Thursday evenings. Raylene Frankenfield, Harold Ziegler and Pam Boddy will each lead a study as the year progresses. In Psalms 1, the writer says this of those who study scripture:

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither

December & January at a Glance—Pam Boddy

November 30: first Sunday in Advent

December 5: Family Advent Night, 7 PM

December 7: Poinsettia order forms due

Tree of Giving: gifts due December 7; teens shopping December 14

Collection for Christmas Dinners: cards delivered December 15

December 24: Christmas Eve services at 3:00 and 7:00pm

Beginning in January: Bible study

A Cheerful Giver—Pam Boddy

Why should we give to church? John Lennon wrote the song “Imagine”, in which he asked us to imagine a world with no religion, no heaven, no hell. Would this be a good thing? What is church good for, anyway? Consider the following:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that faith-based organizations operate about two-thirds of the community food kitchens and pantries in the U.S.
- Faith-based organizations operate a minimum of 30% of emergency shelter beds for families and single adults nationally
- 75% of organizations that help rebuild communities after a disaster were faith-based

Consider the following:

- Who visits, calls you, and sends notes when you are fighting a terrible diagnosis, or home bound?
- Who holds your hand when the person you love passes away?
- Who, every week, provides a message that challenges you to be the best version of yourself? Where else will you find a community to walk with you throughout every stage of your life?

Above all, if there were no churches, how would people learn about how much they are loved by God? When you give to your church, you are supporting God’s mission in the world, strengthening your local community, and nurturing the relationships that sustain us all.

2 Corinthians 9:7. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver

Qualified Charitable Distribution—Brad Schaeffer

Do you give to the church? Do you own an IRA? Are you over age 70 ½? If so, you have an opportunity to give directly from your IRA to the church tax free! The IRS calls this arrangement a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) and it reduces your tax bill by excluding from income your charitable donation. The amount of savings will depend on your personal tax situation, but it could be meaningful. As you reflect on your giving, please consider how a QCD might help you and the church reach your goals together.

Key points:

- IRA owner must be over the age of 70 ½
- Contribution must be paid directly from your IRA to Green Pond United Methodist Church
- Able to exclude up to \$108,000 of QCD from your taxable income

Benefits:

- Reduced taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions
- Your tax savings could allow a more generous gift than simply donating cash
- Can count towards your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year (if applicable)
- Potential reduction in Medicare surcharge premiums due to lower adjusted gross income

This article is for general educational purposes and does not constitute specific financial, tax, or legal advice. Contact a professional for precise advice applicable to your personal financial situation.

Youth Room Dedication—Jen Biddle

On November 9, 2025, we dedicated the teen room in honor of Jack H. LaFever, a lifelong member of the First United Methodist Church who was very active in the youth program. Pastor Barbara led us in a blessing, and our teens read scripture emphasizing the importance of this gathering. The room was prepared with love, prayer, and purpose, and we now set it apart as a place of worship, reflection, and spiritual growth. We are grateful to the Educational Assistance Fund and our church congregation for their contributions, as well as to the teens and trustees who worked diligently to assemble the room.

Spotlight On...Pam Boddy—Mary Anne Constable

We are blessed to have such an uplifting and talented music ministry at Green Pond United Methodist Church. Much of its success is driven by Pam Boddy, our Director of Music Ministry. She is a talented musician, spiritual guide and devoted member of the staff. Pam's deep Christian faith and dedication to her role is a testament to God.

Pam (Waters) Boddy was born at an Army base in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Her family moved quite frequently in the early years before settling in Abington, PA. Pam's love of music developed at an early age. She started piano lessons when she was about 9 or 10 years old. Her first piano teacher was Lydia Artymiw, who has gone on to have a brilliant career as a concert pianist. Pam says that she was lucky to know her when Lydia was just a student herself and needed to earn a little money. Pam wishes she had a tenth of Lydia's ability (we know that she has at least that!), but Lydia was able to impart a love of music to Pam, for which she will always be grateful. Pam took voice lessons for two years in high school, which is when she began singing in public. She sang mostly in musicals, although if you lived in Philadelphia in the early '80's you might have heard her voice in a few local radio commercials!

Pam graduated from Dickinson College, majoring in English. She met her husband, Alex, at Durham University, in England, where she spent her junior year abroad. They have two children: Michael and Helen. Michael recently married a lovely girl, Anna. And we are blessed to have Helen on our GPUMC staff. Pam's parents, John and Shirley Waters, live in Forks Township. Pam and Alex recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary!

After working in insurance for many years, Pam began teaching at The Wyndcroft School in 1998 where she taught Early Childhood and Music and Drama. She was also Choir Director of New Hanover United Methodist Church for 11 years.

When Pam's family moved to Easton in 2010 she joined Green Pond UMC and sang with the choir. A few years later she was called to start our Praise Team. And now as part of the worship planning team, Pam assists the Pastor in selecting music that will support the message, and compliment the talents of our diverse group of accompanists.

The team tries to blend traditional and contemporary elements in each service. After the weekly meeting, Pam creates an outline and sends it to everyone involved in the service, so that slides can be created, and all the details of the service run smoothly. Pam leads practice with the singers on Wednesdays and Sunday mornings. She tries to attend to as many of the details of the worship service as possible; to be a help to the pastor on Sunday mornings so that she may focus on delivering the message and spending time with the congregation.

In her spare time, Pam likes to read and do puzzles, especially Sudoku. When asked what she likes best about her position in Music Ministry at Green Pond UMC, Pam said that she always wants the worship service to be an offering to God, where we have given our best. She wants the service to be uplifting for the congregation. When that happens, she feels God smiling and there is no better feeling.