

# NEWS FROM THE PLEASANT GROVE PEWS

JULY 2026

## Summer Solstice

The long days of summer are upon us — lots of daylight to get out and enjoy all God has for you this season.

This summer is a season of transition for Pleasant Grove. Our new minister, Pastor Bill Koch, has hit the ground running, pitching in and filling the pulpit since June. In his first installment of “The Pastor’s Peace,” Bill delves into the Pleasant Grove mission that is at the heart of this church — To Know Jesus Christ and to Make Him Known — and notes how our mission flourishes in this rural community. Read more of his first impressions on page 2.

Also on page 2, take a moment to consider the less fortunate who are suffering in this hot July weather. Pleasant Grove will Fill The Cart this month with fans for SERVE, Callaway County’s local volunteer service agency. All fans and air-conditioning units collected will go to SERVE for distribution to those in the community who need them most.

NextGen Minister Kris O’Neal is looking forward to spending a week with our youth at UNITE

camp this month. This year’s theme is “In Tension,” which could be a puzzler to some until you read Kris’ take on tension. He says it’s all about learning to trust God and love others while walking through the tension in your life. Find out more on page 7.

Check out our calendar on page 5, and then get the details in our announcements on page 9. Turn the page for more news from the pews — you’ll see who was recently baptized and get to meet our new pianist.

Pleasant Grove hosted a festive sendoff for the Klepees family in June. We have photos on pages 12-14.

Outreach plans are front and center on page 17. If you’re looking for more ways to get involved in some of Pleasant Grove’s ministries, check out the opportunities.

As always, dear reader, you are the reason for *News from the Pleasant Grove Pews*. Share your news, events, photos and suggestions with Kathy Casteel at [kcasteel@ktis.net](mailto:kcasteel@ktis.net). We can’t wait to hear from you!

### PLEASANT GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

3686 State Road E  
Auxvasse, MO 65231  
Office: 573-387-4822  
[MyPGUMC.org](http://MyPGUMC.org)

*Our Mission: To know Jesus Christ  
and to make Him known.*

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For prayer requests, our Prayer Tree  
number is 573-597-2102,  
email [macy@mypgumc.org](mailto:macy@mypgumc.org).  
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BILL AND MARTI KOCH

## Living the Mission

BY PASTOR BILL KOCH

As I begin my ministry as your new pastor in rural Missouri, my heart is full of joy and gratitude. In these first days, I have already seen the warmth and kindness that make this community so special. It is clear to me that God is at work here, and I am honored to walk alongside you.

### Why Rural Ministry Matters

Rural ministry carries a unique beauty. It is shaped by deep relationships, shared history and a commitment to caring for one another. That is why our church's mission resonates so deeply with me: "To know Jesus Christ and to make Him known." More than a slogan, it is the heartbeat of who we are.

### To Know Jesus Christ

In the quiet rhythms of country life, we have a special opportunity to grow in close fellowship with our Savior. We know Him through prayer, Scripture and the encouragement we share with one another. Like a seed planted in Missouri soil, our faith must grow deep roots in His grace before it can bear fruit.

**AND LET US CONSIDER HOW TO  
PROVOKE ONE ANOTHER TO  
LOVE AND GOOD DEEDS, NOT  
NEGLECTING TO MEET TOGETHER.**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

### To Make Him Known

Knowing Jesus leads us to make Him known in the way we live and serve. We reflect His love in practical ways:

- Showing up for neighbors in times of crisis.
- Opening our doors to those who feel lonely or overlooked.
- Speaking hope into a world that is searching for peace and truth.

Our community needs the light of Christ, and we are called to carry that light into every home, farm and school.

### Looking Ahead

I am excited for the season ahead. Together, we will deepen our roots in God's love and reach out in service to our neighbors. Thank you for welcoming me into your community and your lives. Let us move forward with joy — eager to know Jesus more deeply and ready to make Him known to all. As the Franciscan maxim notes, "Teach others about Jesus; use words if necessary."

# FILL THE CART

THE HEAT IS ON

Hot time, summer in the city ... and out in the country! Hot summer temperatures are already baking the countryside and dangerously so. For those who aren't lucky enough to have air conditioning, life can become unbearable in the sweltering months of a Missouri summer. Pleasant Grove is helping out and will Fill The Cart this month with fans for SERVE, Callaway County's local voluntary action agency.

Each year many Missourians suffer from heat-related illnesses. Some die. Very young children, senior citizens and the chronically ill are much more vulnerable to the effects of high temperatures. A fan can make all the difference in a hot home. Fans save lives.

Every summer, SERVE distributes fans and air-conditioning units to those in need.

Donations such as wall fans, box fans and air-conditioning units are most welcome. SERVE will distribute Pleasant Grove's Fill The Cart donations among those Callaway Countians who need them most.

Find out more about the summer fan drive from the Pleasant Grove church office, 573-387-4822 or email [admin@mypgumc.org](mailto:admin@mypgumc.org).

**MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS, TO  
MEET URGENT NEEDS, THAT YOU  
MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL.**

TITUS 3:14

COFFEE WITH  
SISTERS IN FAITH  
HOSTED BY

*Joyce Loutzenhiser*

1332 COUNTY ROAD 263

SATURDAY, JULY 11  
8:30-10 AM







# **PLEASANT GROVE MEN'S GROUP**

**JOIN US ON THURSDAYS AT  
PLEASANT GROVE**

**3686 STATE ROAD E  
AUXVASSE, MO**

**JULY 2 & 16  
7 P.M.**

**RUSS HARDESTY  
573-819-0712**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

|                                                                                                   |                         |                                                               |                                   |                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                    |                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                   |                         |                                                               | 1                                 | 2<br>MEN'S GROUP<br><u>7 P.M.</u>                                                                                                                                      | 3<br>CHURCH OFFICE<br>CLOSED                       | 4<br>INDEPENDENCE<br>DAY                                     |
| 5<br>WORSHIP<br><u>9 A.M.</u><br>SUNDAY SCHOOL<br><u>10:10 A.M.</u><br>WORSHIP<br><u>11 A.M.</u>  | 6                       | 7<br>YOGA<br><u>8 A.M.</u>                                    | 8<br>QUILT GROUP<br><u>7 P.M.</u> | 9                                                                                                                                                                      | 10<br>CHURCH OFFICE<br>CLOSED                      | 11<br>COFFEE WITH<br>SISTERS IN FAITH<br><u>8:30-10 A.M.</u> |
| 12<br>WORSHIP<br><u>9 A.M.</u><br>SUNDAY SCHOOL<br><u>10:10 A.M.</u><br>WORSHIP<br><u>11 A.M.</u> | 13                      | 14<br>YOGA<br><u>8 A.M.</u>                                   | 15                                | 16<br>BABY GRACE<br>PICKUP<br><u>11-2 P.M.</u><br>SERVE FOOD BOX<br>PICKUP<br><u>11-2 P.M.</u><br>COMMUNITY<br>LUNCH<br><u>12 NOON</u><br>MEN'S GROUP<br><u>7 P.M.</u> | 17<br>CHURCH OFFICE<br>CLOSED                      | 18<br>BUILDING IN USE                                        |
| 19<br>WORSHIP<br><u>9 A.M.</u><br>SUNDAY SCHOOL<br><u>10:10 A.M.</u><br>WORSHIP<br><u>11 A.M.</u> | 20<br>UNITE CAMP<br>CMU | 21<br>UNITE CAMP<br>CMU<br>YOGA<br><u>8 A.M.</u>              | 22<br>UNITE CAMP<br>CMU           | 23<br>UNITE CAMP<br>CMU                                                                                                                                                | 24<br>UNITE CAMP<br>CMU<br>CHURCH OFFICE<br>CLOSED | 25                                                           |
| 26<br>WORSHIP<br><u>9 A.M.</u><br>SUNDAY SCHOOL<br><u>10:10 A.M.</u><br>WORSHIP<br><u>11 A.M.</u> | 27                      | 28<br>YOGA<br><u>8 A.M.</u><br>BOARD MEETING<br><u>7 P.M.</u> | 29                                | 30                                                                                                                                                                     | 31<br>CHURCH OFFICE<br>CLOSED                      |                                                              |



# SERVE and Baby Grace

*Pleasant Grove is a mobile site for SERVE food pantry and Baby Grace.*

**THURSDAY, JULY 16TH, 11 A.M.-2 P.M.**

(We are open every third Thursday of the month.)

If you are in need of a food box from SERVE,  
please stop by! You can register that day and  
participate in the food pantry.

The Baby Grace store offers free diapers, wipes and gently used or  
new clothing for ages birth through 5 years.



## COMMUNITY LUNCH

The Discipleship Sunday School class invites  
you to join us for a homemade meal.

Stay for a game of cards, dominoes, or  
bring a suggestion!

**THURSDAY, JULY 16TH, 12 NOON**

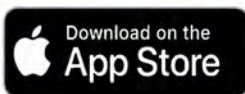
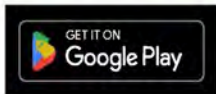




# The PG App



Powered by Ministry One



[HTTP://MYPGUMC.ORG/YOUTUBE](http://mypgumc.org/youtube)

Pleasant Grove is on YouTube!  
Check out this channel if you can't  
make it to church!



## NEXTGEN NOTES



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: KAYLA, KRIS, KIERSTYN AND KOURTNEY O'NEAL

## Trusting God, Even in Tension

BY NEXTGEN MINISTER KRIS O'NEAL

This month, many of our students will be attending UNITE camp at Central Methodist University in Fayette. The theme this year is "In Tension." At first, tension may sound like something negative, but the truth is that much of life is lived in tension.

We live in the tension between wanting our own way and serving others. Between anger and mercy. Between fear and peace. Between sadness and hope. Between division and unity.

Throughout the week, students will explore Jesus' teachings from the Beatitudes and discover that following Christ is not about pretending tension does not exist. Instead, it is about learning how to trust God and love others while walking through the tension.

One of the things I love most about our youth ministry is that we strive to create a place where young people can ask questions, wrestle with difficult issues, and learn to care for one another. We do not expect everyone to think exactly alike. We do expect everyone to treat one another with kindness, mercy and respect.

In a world that often encourages people to choose sides, attack others and build walls, Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. He calls us to listen, to love, and to see one another as children of God.

Our goal is not to divide Christians but to bring them together around the love of Christ. Please join us in praying that our students return from UNITE with deeper faith, stronger friendships and a renewed commitment to love God and love their neighbors.

**BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY**

**WILL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD.**

MATTHEW 5:9





**CENTRAL METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

**CONTACT:**  
**KRIS O'NEAL**  
**[NextGen@mypgumc.org](mailto:NextGen@mypgumc.org)**  
**417-718-4772**



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## A Scheduling Note for July

Church office hours are currently 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Administrative Assistant Nancy Linville will be on vacation July 2-12. She will be back in the office on July 13. Associate Pastor Macy Storts will return from a break on July 6. Pastor Bill Koch is usually available during office hours unless he is off-site performing other pastoral duties.

## Celebrate Callaway Youth

Many of Pleasant Grove's young people will be exhibiting at the Callaway Youth Expo, which runs July 6-11 at Lions Club Park, 600 E. Chestnut St. in Auxvasse. Fill your week with fair food and a full slate of events — 4-H and FFA royalty, Little Mr. & Miss contest, livestock shows, rodeo, pedal tractor pulls, livestock and ham sales, pies and much more! Come out and celebrate our youth and their achievements. It'll be fun!

## PGUMC Youth Set for UNITE

A horde of Pleasant Grove youth will attend UNITE camp July 20-24 on the campus of Central Methodist University in Fayette. The group will leave the church Monday morning and return Friday afternoon. NextGen Minister Kris O'Neal is coordinating the venture with a lot of help from an army of adult volunteers. Check your email, campers — Kris has all the details and will update you as needed before departure.

## On The Road ... to Branson

Pleasant Grove's On The Road Again travelers head to Branson in September. They will leave Wednesday, Sept. 23, and return Friday, Sept. 25. On tap is a visit to Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Education Center and Dogwood Canyon Nature Park, plus the dinner show at Hughes Brothers Theater, performances by the Haygoods at Clay Cooper Theater and the IMAX production of the gospel musical comedy *Smoke on the Mountain*.

Cost ranges from \$285 to \$440 per person, depending on hotel room occupancy. A \$100 deposit to reserve your spot is due on Sunday, July 5. A second payment is due Aug. 2 with the remaining balance due Sept. 1. Get details from Jan Hankinson, 573-999-2139 or email [janhankinson@gmail.com](mailto:janhankinson@gmail.com).



## Man Talk

The Pleasant Grove Men's Group will meet on the first and third Thursday this month, July 2 and 16. The meetings take place at 7 p.m. at Pleasant Grove.

For more information, contact Russ Hardesty at 573-819-0712.

## Coffee Time

Joyce Loutzenhiser will host Coffee with Sisters in Faith on Saturday, July 11, in her home at 1332 County Road 263 near Auxvasse. The group will meet from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Learn more about Sisters in Faith from Angie Raebel at 573-416-6438 or email [Plote.hogan@gmail.com](mailto:Plote.hogan@gmail.com).



# MORE NEWS FROM THE PEWS

## CELEBRATE BAPTISM!

Pleasant Grove welcomed two more into the family of God on June 14.

Grant Sterling McMurtry chose baptism by immersion followed by a laying on of hands by his parents Dan and Becky McMurtry and other family members.

The infant baptism of Drake Robert Storts carried special meaning for three pastors. Five-month-old Drake, son of Caleb and Macy Storts, was sprinkled by Macy's childhood pastor Ed Hankinson, Pastor Paul Klepees and Pastor Macy herself.



## MUSIC TO OUR EARS

Live music is once again filling the sanctuary in the 11 a.m. service. Dallas Dey, Pleasant Grove's new pianist, has replaced the recorded accompaniment the church had been using since longtime organist Nancy Erickson retired last year.

Dallas comes to us from Columbia, traveling a circuitous path to get here. He was born in Ketchikan, Alaska, one of six children. "My parents met at Mizzou and eloped to Alaska," he says. He and his siblings were home-schooled.

"Through my family I have a good heritage of history, education, storytelling, faith, gardening and appreciation of the natural world, folk music and rock n' roll, independence and activism," Dallas says. "That's why I like to tell people I am rich."

Music was an integral part of life in the Dey home; Dallas was 7 years old when he became interested in music. His mother signed him up for piano lessons and "I haven't really stopped,"



he says.

He caught the family travel bug. After studying economics and finance at the University of Missouri, Dallas moved to Aspen, Colorado, and worked as an accountant. That experience led him to cities across the country. His path included four years at St. Paul School of Theology and Vanderbilt Divinity School to earn a Master of Divinity degree. After graduate school, he became a postal carrier for a year, walking

more than 50 miles a week in the wind, rain and snow.

Dallas returned to Columbia in 2022, committed to sharing his music with family and friends. Currently he is recording some R&B songs he wrote and playing bass for a local country-folk group, The Ben Oesch Band.

He quit his accounting job in 2026 and vowed to work on what he found meaningful. "Church has been that for me in many seasons," he says.

"It's a special place for music and honestly, much more inclusive, because the focus is on the holy community."

Dallas is already comfortable at Pleasant Grove. "I'm there for the people, for the vibe, the music, the experience, the reflection, the communion and the potluck!" he says. "I try to bring a little love to give when I come to play music, and feel the love, too."





COUNTRY FRIENDS  
*Quilt Group*

All local quilters are invited for  
fellowship and fun! Bring your finished  
products to show off!

Pleasant Grove @ 7:00pm

We meet on the second  
Wednesday of each month.



# FARE THEE WELL

Pleasant Grove bid a fond farewell to Pastor Paul Klepees and his family — wife Margie and children Gibson, Ezra, Maverick and Spencer — on their last Sunday here, June 14, before they headed to Chillicothe and a new pastorate. Food, gifts and funny stories were the order of the day.



**THEN I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD SAYING, “WHOM**

**SHALL I SEND? AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?”**

**AND I SAID, “HERE AM I. SEND ME!”**

ISAIAH 6:8









Let's support and uplift each other  
through the power of prayer!



*Pray with us*

## FOUR WAYS TO REQUEST PRAYER

1. Submit your prayer requests through the PG App by tapping Contact and the Prayer tab. Fill out the brief form and submit.
2. On our website, MyPGUMC.org, click on the Prayer Request graphic on the home page or click on the Prayer Concerns under the Stay Connected menu (MYPGUMC.org/stay-connected/prayer-concerns). Fill out the brief form and submit.
3. Contact the church office at 573-387-4822.
4. Call the Prayer Tree at 573-597-2102 or email [macy@mypgumc.org](mailto:macy@mypgumc.org).



# Women's Ministries Yoga

*join us in the gym*

8:00 AM

*Every Tuesday*

FOR MORE INFO  
CONTACT  
JULIE HUFFMAN

[jfhuffman@hotmail.com](mailto:jfhuffman@hotmail.com)

(First yoga session is FREE)



# OUTREACH PLANS

## Let's Get Hospitable

Pleasant Grove is a welcoming church and we like to make everyone feel right at home. The Hospitality Committee has openings for volunteers to help set up on Sunday morning. Tasks include making coffee downstairs and upstairs, filling up the condiments, greeting and passing out bulletins. If you'd like to help, talk to Nancy Linville in the church office, 573-387-4822 or email [admin@mypgumc.org](mailto:admin@mypgumc.org).

## A Decade of Bethlehem Store

Plans are already underway for the 10th Bethlehem Store at Pleasant Grove, set for the morning of Dec. 5. A Christmas outreach of Women's Ministries, Bethlehem Store builds relationships with families year-round. Sponsors interact with a family, buying Christmas gifts for children in eighth grade and younger, checking in throughout the year and showing the families the love of Christ. The ministry, funded by donations and fundraisers, served 63 children last year.

Cindy Feutz, who has coordinated Bethlehem Store since its beginning in 2017, plans to step down from her leadership role after the 2026 event and is looking for another leader to step forward.

"My intention was to coordinate this outreach for 10 years," Cindy says. "If anyone is interested, I encourage them to contact me and walk with me through the ministry this year."

For more information on Bethlehem Store and this leadership opportunity, contact Cindy at 573-473-6316 or email [cfeutz53@gmail.com](mailto:cfeutz53@gmail.com).

## Disaster Response Training

If you'd like to help out when disaster strikes, catch the next Early Response Team training on Saturday, Aug. 8, at St. James United Methodist Church in Kansas City. Early Response Teams fill a specific need in the days after a disaster to clean out flood-damaged homes, remove debris, place tarps on homes, and otherwise help to prevent further damage, while providing a caring Christian presence. The training session runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$15, which includes lunch and supplies. Register at <https://missouri-reg.brapp.com/STJAMESERTtraining>.

For more information about Early Response Teams, contact Bambi Wheeler at [bwheeler@moumethodist.org](mailto:bwheeler@moumethodist.org).

## BLESSINGS

**BRING THE WHOLE TITHE  
INTO THE STOREHOUSE  
... AND SEE IF I WILL NOT  
THROW OPEN THE FLOOD-  
GATES OF HEAVEN AND POUR  
OUT SO MUCH BLESSING  
THERE WILL NOT BE ROOM  
ENOUGH TO STORE IT.**

MALACHI 3:10

Join us in our mission to know Jesus Christ and make Him known. Your generosity enables us to help more and more people experience a life-changing relationship with Him. We are truly grateful for your donations and hope the convenience and simplicity of our ways of giving are helpful to you.

1. Try scanning our QR code.



2. To use mobile giving, download the "Church By Ministry One" app to your mobile device. Search for Pleasant Grove by entering the zip code 65231.
3. Online giving can be found at [www.mypgumc.org/donate](http://www.mypgumc.org/donate).
4. Text "GIVE" to 573-312-2909.
5. Cash and checks can be placed in the offering plates during worship services or mailed to the church office at 3686 State Road E, Auxvasse, MO 65231.

Consider becoming a recurring giver. Church statistics show that churches with high numbers of recurring givers experience the most growth.

If you need assistance or have questions about our digital giving methods, please reach out to Nancy Linville in the church office Monday through Thursday, by phone at 573-387-4822 or email [admin@mypgumc.org](mailto:admin@mypgumc.org).



# Pleasant Grove

## W O R S H I P T I M E S

First Service 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:10-10:50 a.m.

Second Service 11:00-Noon

