## Pleasant Grove .....

NOVEMBER 2025

#### **Count Your Blessings ... and Give Thanks**

It's November already! The clocks have been reset, the leaves are falling, the harvest is in, and Thanksgiving is on the way. We have a cornucopia of news and events for you this month.

Pastor Paul Klepees considers the blessings in our lives and encourages us to make gratitude a daily practice. Read more on page 2.

Also on page 2, learn how Pleasant Grove is going to Fill The Cart this month with donations for Christmas boxes we'll be giving to the families of our Feed The Children ministry.

Pastor Paul previews his sermon series for November on page 7. "It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)" will take us past the doomsday, negative news mindset with Scriptures that call us to endure, to trust and to remember who is truly in charge.

Pastor Macy Storts is looking at family time in the busy holiday season as a chance to be more intentional. She invites us all to join her in an intentional journey of personal study and devotions next year. Read more on page 11.

NextGen Minister Kris O'Neal

says we hear a lot of voices in our world that carry the weight of influence in our thinking. Who do you listen to? Kris makes some surprising points on page 13.

You saw our full calendar on page 5, so check out the details in our announcements on page 15. Then turn the page for More News From The Pews.

We have lots of photos for you this issue. On pages 8-9, see how the On The Road Again gang spent a day in Walt Disney's hometown. On pages 18-19, we have snapshots of Pleasant Grove folks enjoying Craft Day. And our second annual hayride was a rousing success on a beautiful fall evening. See the photos on pages 22-25.

In these uncertain times, we're especially concerned with filling the needs of the hungry. Read how you can help — or get help — with this outreach on page 27.

We are thankful for you, dear reader. You make News from the Pleasant Grove Pews what it is. Share your news, events and photos with Kathy Casteel at kcasteel@ktis.net and Betsy Bell at mammabell003@gmail.com. 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

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

#### **PASTOR** Paul Klepees

pastor@mypqumc.org

#### PASTOR OF CARE & CONNECTION

Macy Storts macy@mypgumc.org

#### NEXTGEN MINISTER Kris O'Neal nextgen@mypgumc.org

For prayer requests, our Prayer Tree number is 573-597-2102, email macy@mypgumc.org.

For announcements or Information Tree: nalinville.church@gmail.com.



News from the Pleasant Grove Pews is published monthly by Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church. ©2025 All rights reserved.

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT FRONT: SPENCER, PAUL, GIBSON BACK: MARGIE, EZRA, AND MAVERICK KLEPEES

#### Gratitude and Thanksgiving

By Pastor Paul Klepees

As we move through the season of harvest and reflection, it's a perfect time to pause and consider the blessings in our lives. Gratitude and thanksgiving are more than just polite responses — they are spiritual practices that shape our hearts and deepen our relationship with God.

Scripture reminds us to "Give thanks in all circumstances: for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) This verse calls us to a mindset of gratitude, even when life is messy or challenging. Recognizing God's hand in every situation helps us cultivate joy and peace, no matter our circumstances.

Gratitude invites us to slow down and notice the small gifts often overlooked: a warm meal, a smile from a stranger, the laughter of children, or the beauty of creation surrounding us. By naming our blessings, we align our hearts with God's love and cultivate a spirit that is aware of

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR

HE IS GOOD; HIS LOVE ENDURES

FOREVER.

PSALM 107:1

His ongoing provision.

Thanksgiving also has a communal aspect. Sharing gratitude with others strengthens relationships and encourages generosity, reminding us that God's blessings are often experienced most fully in community. Whether it's a simple word of thanks, volunteering or celebrating together, expressing gratitude can ripple out, touching lives in meaningful ways.

This season, I encourage you to make gratitude a daily practice. Start a gratitude journal, share a note of thanks with someone, or pause each day to lift a prayer of thanksgiving. In doing so, you'll find your heart more attuned to God's presence, your spirit strengthened and your life filled with a deeper joy.

## FILL THE CART

FEED THE CHILDREN

In this season of plenty, Pleasant Grove will Fill The Cart with supplies for Feed The Children, our supplement to the Buddy Pack program. Feed The Children provides weekend food packs to 36 children at Hatton-McCredie Elementary School, as an addition to Buddy Packs to cover North Callaway's three-day weekend schedule.

In December, Feed The Children puts together family boxes in quantities that students can take home over Christmas break. Items needed for Christmas boxes include family-size nonperishables such as:

- Cereal
- Pancake mix and syrup
- Pizza mixes
- Taco shells
- Spaghetti sauce
- Pasta
- Potatoes
- Canned fruit and vegetables
- Chips and salsa
- Crackers
- Cookies
- Cake and brownie mixes
- Fruit juice
- Gatorade

Checks for monetary donations made out to Feed the Children can be left at the church office. If you would like to help with this ministry, contact Debbie Shryock at 573-219-6244.





# CALENDAR SEVENTS



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M.  SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M.  YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8:30 P.M.	SISTERS IN FAITH 7 P.M. 3	YOGA 8 A.M. 4 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 9:30 A.M.	KFJ 6-8 P.M. LIMITLESS 7-8:30 P.M.	MEN'S GROUP 7 P.M.	7	8
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M.  SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M.  YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8:30 P.M.	10	YOGA 8 A.M. WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 9:30 A.M.	LIFT 6-8 P.M. 12 QUILT GROUP 7 P.M.	13	ON THE ROAD AGAIN TO ST. LOUIS 7 A.M.	15
WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. 16 SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M. YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8:30 P.M.	17	YOGA 8 A.M. 18 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 9:30 A.M.	KFJ 6-8 P.M. LIMITLESS 7-8:30 P.M.	BABY GRACE PICKUP 11 A.M2 P.M. SERVE FOOD BOX PICKUP 11 A.M2 P.M. COMMUNITY LUNCH 12 NOON MEN'S GROUP 7 P.M.	21	CHARGE CONFERENCE 10:30 A.MNOON
REIGN OF CHRIST 23 WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M. YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8:30 P.M.	24	YOGA 8 A.M. 25	PANCAKE SUPPER 5-7 P.M.	THANKSGIVING 27	28	29
ADVENT BEGINS WORSHIP 9 A.M. & 11 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:10 A.M. HANGING OF THE GREENS NOON YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8:30 P.M.						

#### **CONNECT WITH US!**



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INSTAGRAM.COM/MYPGUMC



MYPGUMC.ORG/YOUTUBE





#### IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT (AND I FEEL FINE)

By Pastor Paul Klepees

No one has these verses framed on the wall or printed on a coffee mug. The Scriptures we'll explore over the next few weeks, leading us right up to Reign of Christ Sunday, are among the most difficult in all of the Bible. They raise unsettling questions and press us to ask: Where is God when things go wrong?

We live in a world that thrives on negative headlines. Fear, hopelessness and even talk of the "end times" seem to dominate our news cycle. But what if those same apocalyptic texts that unsettled the early church could still speak hope to us today? What if, instead of fueling despair, they could actually point us toward faithfulness, perseverance and even joy?

This sermon series, "It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)," will take us deep into four passages that call us to endure, to trust and to remember who truly reigns in the midst of chaos.

- Nov. 3: The Work of Waiting (Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:1–4) God is at work in the dark places, even when we cannot yet see it.
- Nov. 10: Skipping to the End (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17)
  Even when it feels like the end is near, we are

called to keep going in faith.

- Nov. 17: Full Disclosure (Luke 21:5–19) Jesus never promised an easy walk, but one of sacrifice and endurance.
- Nov. 24: Proving Who You Are (Luke 23:33–43) On Reign of Christ Sunday, we are reminded that our true identity is found in Christ our King.

Come prepared to wrestle with hard questions, to see God's hand in unexpected places, and to discover that even in apocalyptic times — ancient or modern — hope is never out of reach.





## A VISIT TO Disney's World

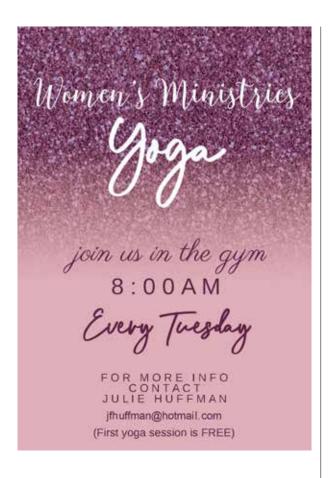
The On The Road Again gang traveled to Marceline in October to explore Walt Disney's roots, where he said the magic began. The group visited the Walt Disney Hometown Museum, the site of his boyhood home and the "Dreaming Tree." They also checked out Marceline's quaint downtown, which served as a model for Main Street USA in Disney parks, and its local shops and eateries.













HTTP://MYPGUMC.ORG/YOUTUBE

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



# THREADS OF CARE

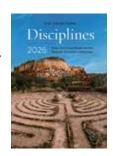


KALEB AND MACY STORTS WITH BOONE

#### Let's All Strive to Be More Intentional

BY ASSOCIATE PASTOR MACY STORTS

It's that time of year! We get busy, we plan meals, we plan gatherings, we are occupied with what our calendars demand of us. With Thanksgiving upon us, it seems like time goes by much quicker than usual. The best part is that we get to do it together!



There is beauty in taking on this busy season together as a family and church family. How can we be intentional about our time together? How can we use these gatherings to express our gratitude? By expressing it, of course! It can be hard, but telling someone we are grateful for them can be healing, encouraging and enhance our connection. Not only is a new holiday season approaching — so is the new year! I know, I know. You're thinking "Pastor Macy, that's so far!" To which I say, "It's never too far to start thinking about next year's intentions!"

In Matthew 15:32-36, Jesus shows compassion for the large crowd that was with him for three days. He is intentional about their time together. He takes the little food he has, gives thanks, and blesses the crowd with a meal before they go on their long journey. This next year, I plan on being intentional about my personal devotion and study time. Will you join me? I'll be using this book *The Upper Room Disciplines 2026*. It's packed with short devotions, thoughtful messages and Scripture for every day of the year.

Interested in joining me in this study next year? Send me an email at macy@mypgumc.org! Know you are blessed and good, friends.

HE TOLD THE CROWD TO SIT DOWN ON THE GROUND. THEN HE TOOK

THE SEVEN LOAVES AND THE FISH, AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN

THANKS, HE BROKE THEM AND GAVE THEM TO THE DISCIPLES,

AND THEY IN TURN TO THE PEOPLE.

### PLEASANT GROVE MEN'S GROUP

JOIN US ON THURSDAYS AT

#### **PLEASANT GROVE**

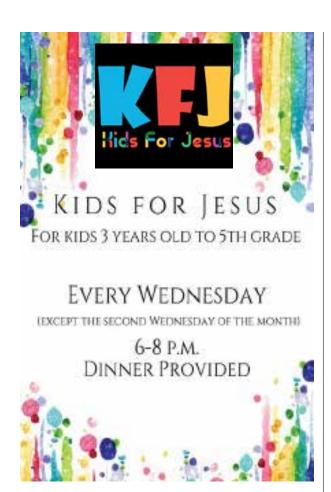
3686 STATE ROAD E AUXVASSE, MO

**NOVEMBER 6 & 20** 7 P.M.

**CODY JONES** 

573-826-0926

BRANDON CRAWFORD 573-220-5347







PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT FRONT: KOURTNEY, KIERSTYN BACK: KAYLA, KRIS O'NEAL

#### Been There, Done That

BY NEXTGEN MINISTER KRIS O'NEAL

We live in a world full of voices — athletes, musicians, influencers — all telling us how to live, what to value, and who to be. Some of those voices lift us up, and others slowly pull us away from what's good and true. The Bible reminds us, "Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm." (Proverbs 13:20) Who we listen to matters.

It's easy to admire someone famous for their success or talent, but God calls us to look deeper — to the heart and the choices behind the fame. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Bad company corrupts good character." (1 Corinthians 15:33) That doesn't mean we shut people out when they've made mistakes. In fact, sometimes the best voices to listen to are the ones who've been through the struggle and found their way back to truth.

Take the rapper Eminem, for example. When asked if he believed in Jesus, he admitted, "Not always. I used to think if there was a God, He hated me. I got clean, was given a second chance, and now, yeah I do." That's growth. That's redemption. Should we judge someone for their past or celebrate that they've changed? Proverbs 19:11 says, "A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense."

So, who should you listen to? Listen to those who point you toward what's right — even if they had to fall first to learn it. Because God's grace isn't just for perfect people; it's for anyone willing to change and walk in His light.

LET THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD TELL THEIR STORY —

THOSE HE REDEEMED FROM THE HAND OF THE FOE.



#### Lift Up the Joy

L.I.F.T. (Ladies In Faith Together) will meet Wednesday, Nov. 12, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the church. The group continues its series on "Joy in the Journey." This month, they'll discuss how to be joyful in service. For more information, contact Sarah Peck at 573-808-2324 or email cspeck428@gmail.com.

#### On The Road Again ... to St. Louis

The intrepid travelers of On The Road Again will get an early dose of the Christmas spirit when they travel to St. Louis on Nov. 14 to see a performance of Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* onstage at Missouri Baptist University. The show starts at 9 a.m. with lunch to follow, catered by Chick-Fil-A. Total cost for the show and meal is \$25 per person. Contact Jan Hankinson to make your reservation and get a ticket, 573-999-2139 or janhankinson@gmail.com.

The group will carpool to the event, departing from the Kingdom City Hall parking lot at 7 a.m.

#### Mmm ... Pancakes!

Pleasant Grove's annual Thanksgiving Eve Pancake Supper is set for Wednesday, Nov. 26, from 5 to 7 p.m. Let the Limitless youth group serve you a meal of pancakes, eggs and sausage while you enjoy visiting with neighbors and friends in the church gym. A free-will donation will help raise funds to defray camp costs next summer for youth.

#### **Advent Begins**

Advent begins Sunday, Nov. 30, the season of waiting and preparation for Christmas. Hanging of the Greens will take place at noon, after second service. Throughout Advent, Pleasant Grove will collect a special offering to benefit the Super Sam Foundation of Fulton, which raises awareness, funds research and supports families in the fight against pediatric cancer.

#### Accompanist Needed

Pleasant Grove is seeking an accompanist for the traditional service at 11 a.m. The position requires piano abilities; organist talent is a bonus. Pay is negotiable, based on experience. If interested, contact Pastor Paul Klepees at 573-597-2166 or email pastor@mypgumc.org.



#### Sisters in Faith Gather

Suzie Baldwin will host Sisters in Faith on Monday, Nov. 3, at Pleasant Grove. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. To learn more about Sisters in Faith, contact Angie Raebel at 573-416-6438 or email Plote.hogan@gmail.com.

#### Men's Group Meets

The Pleasant Grove Men's Group will meet on the first and third Thursday this month, Nov. 6 and 20. All men are welcome. For more information, contact Cody Jones at 573-826-0926 or Brandon Crawford at 573-220-5347, or visit the Pleasant Grove Men's Group Facebook page.



# MORE NEWS & PEWS

#### **POPPIN' FOR CHRIST**





Pleasant Grove hosted a prayer booth at Craft Day last month, handing out Tootsie Pops and "Jesus Loves You" bracelets. A prayer basket was available for people to put their names in and ask for prayer. The basket filled up with 87 prayer requests, and Pastor Paul Klepees prayed over them in the afternoon.

#### THANK YOU, JEFF!



Country Friends Quilt Group gifted Jeff Linville with a quilt last month in appreciation of his service to Pleasant Grove. The youth group gave the quilt to him at their Oct. 15 meeting. The quilt's railroad motif is a nod to Jeff's passion for trains.

#### FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

#### **PGUMC 3RD QUARTER FISCAL OVERVIEW**

The third quarter is in the rearview mirror and it's time for an update on Pleasant Grove's finances. Here's a brief recap of key financial indicators through the end of September:

	2024	2025
Total Giving	\$162,618	\$175,367
Total Income	\$165,209	\$176,856
Total Budgeted Income	\$182,243	\$182,848
Total Expenses	\$168,817	\$199,446
Total Budgeted Expenses	\$182,243	\$191,140



#### SERVE and Baby Grace

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

#### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 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.

<del></del>

#### 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, NOVEMBER 20, 12 NOON



# Delebrating Community

Hatton's annual Craft Day brings a crowd to our little corner of Callaway County every October. It's a lot of work and a lot of fun, bringing our community together for 53 years.































# LI.F.T.

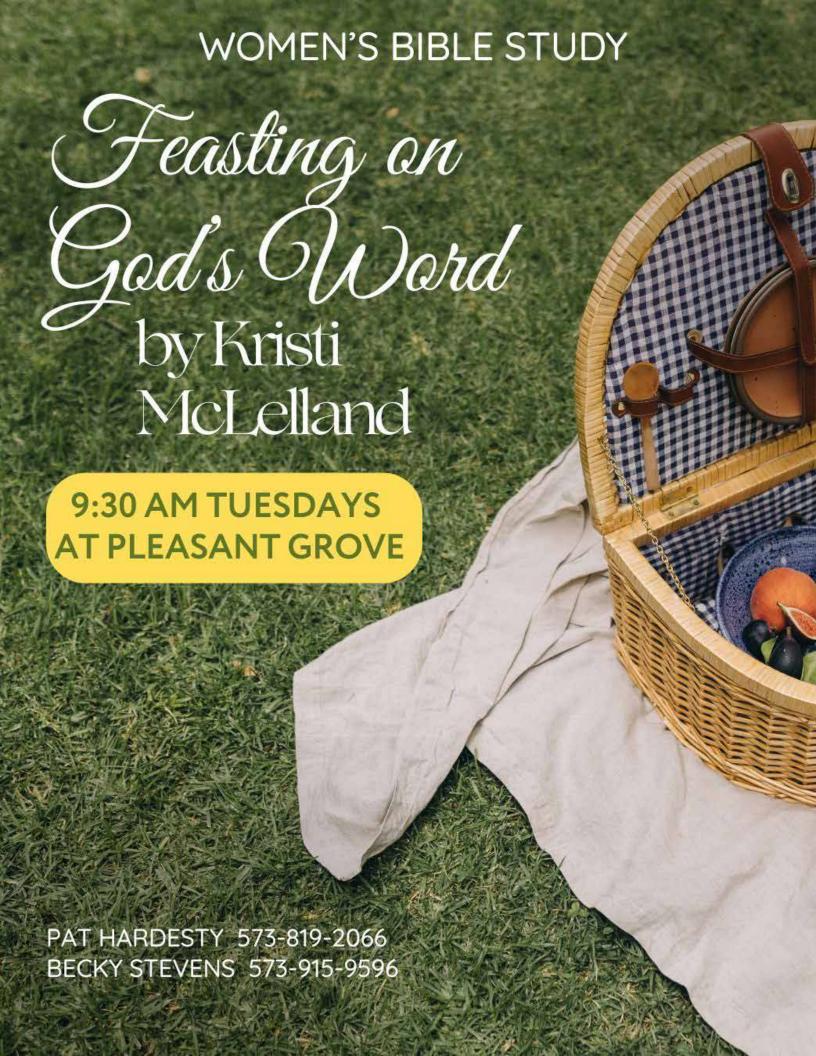
#### LADIES IN FAITH TOGETHER

PLEASE JOIN US AT PLEASANT GROVE WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

6-8 P.M.

SARAH PECK cspeck428@gmail.com 573-808-2324





# hit the hay(ride)

A picture-perfect fall evening was the setting for Pleasant Grove's second annual Ol' Fashioned Hayride. More than 50 people turned out to play games, enjoy a cook-out and visit with friends before loading up two hay wagons for a ride through the countryside. Special thanks goes out to Bennie Young and Kris O'Neal for setting up the rides and games and to Women's Ministries for the planning and the food.



























#### **JOIN US FOR NEW SERMON SERIES**

NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



# **S**

#### Help for the Hungry

The prospect of suspended food benefits has shined a light on the very real problem of food insecurity in our community. If you or someone you know is struggling to access enough food, please know that Pleasant Grove is here to help with our community ministries. Our food pantry, in partnership with SERVE, brings food resources to northern Callaway County. We also offer resources through our Baby Grace ministry to support families with young children. Both of these ministries are open monthly on the third Thursday; the next pickup day is Nov. 20. Contact the Pleasant Grove office, 573-387-4822, for more information or to get signed up.

Our Feed The Children ministry supplements the Food Bank's Buddy Pack program with an extra day of food to help hungry students at Hatton-McCredie Elementary School get through North Callaway's three-day weekends. Contact Debbie Shryock to find out more about how Feed The Children works.

If you are in a position to give, remember that matching funds and bulk purchasing enable cash gifts to go much further than a donation in kind. Donations to any of our food ministries may be left at the church office. Learn more about how to help from Rev. Paul Klepees or Rev. Macy Storts.

#### Wrappers Wanted

The 2025 Bethlehem Store opens Saturday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. to noon in the church basement. Bethlehem Store is a Pleasant Grove ministry of building relationships with families year-round. At Christmas time, sponsors provide gifts for children eighth grade and younger.

Volunteer wrappers are welcome, as are donations of wrapping paper, bows, gift bags and tissue paper. For more information, contact Cindy Feutz at 573-473-6316 or email cfeutz53@gmail.com.

#### **Quilt Auction Opens for Bids**

Festival of Sharing hosts its annual quilt auction this month to raise funds for the Church World Service Blankets Program, which provides blankets and other essentials to thousands of disaster survivors each year. Bidding in the online auction begins at 10 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 2, and runs until 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 8. Preview auction items, get bidding instructions and other information at FestivalOfSharing.org/quilt-auction.

#### **BLESSINGS**

BRING THE WHOLE TITHE
INTO THE STOREHOUSE
... AND SEE IF I WILL NOT
THROW OPEN THE FLOODGATES 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.
- 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.
- Give through your Venmo account through our electronic giving platforms.

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 the church office by phone at 573-387-4822.



**DON'T MISS PLEASANT GROVE'S 2025** 

# Hanging of the Greens

NOVEMBER 30TH NOON

CARRY-IN SOUP LUNCH FOLLOWED BY THE FAMILY EVENT OF THE HANGING OF THE GREENS