

Dear Members of Grove UMC,

Wow!!! What a year 2020 has been. Actions such as mask wearing, social distancing, only congregating in small groups have become our new 'normal'. We were asked to refrain from getting together with family, friends, and neighbors for July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas, traveling, etc. Who ever heard of Zoom before this year? Now we rely on it to communicate with nearly everyone. What do you mean there will be no in-person church services? What is a virtual service or drive-in service? Come on, you've got to be joking. But of course, all of the above are now our new 'normal' and most likely will continue to be so for at least the first few of months into 2021. However, there is hope that things will improve now that the vaccines are being distributed and hopefully will defeat this terrible virus that has taken the lives of over 365,000 of our fellow Americans and over 1,000,000 humans worldwide.

While 2020 has been a terrible year for many businesses, groups, churches, and individuals, Grove UMC has still been here for us, our members, and for others in our geographical area and beyond. To our knowledge, we have not lost any members to COVID and we hope and pray that will continue. On the positive side in 2020, we were able to:

- have services online and/or drive-in;
- have several in-person services and small-group meetings before our regional COVID numbers once again began to rise rapidly;
- provide over 300 Thanksgiving meals to residents;
- conduct the business and ministry aspects of Grove UMC in a safe and efficient manner using online platforms when necessary;
- gain two additional part-time employees, Dana Watson as our Administrative Assistant/Finance Secretary and Joanna Corvin as our Comptroller;
- meet all our financial obligations with help from the income provided by:
 - o the rental of our building's lower level by the Radford City Public School System;
 - o the Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan;
 - o our reserve funds.

Although we were able to meet our financial obligations but not our budget, with the pandemic conditions that existed this year our income from our members decreased by nearly \$30,000 compared to 2019. We know that many of our church families also took financial hits in 2020 so we are thankful for the extra resources of income God provided to our church in 2020. We want to extend our gratitude to each of you who have continued to support Grove UMC with your gifts that include your prayers, presence, service, and witness as well as your financial gifts. Your faithfulness to God's ministry at Grove UMC has allowed our church to maintain and grow in ministry and mission.

With regard to our 2021 budget, while many line items are either set or predictable based on previous years expenses, we know that mission and ministries within and through Grove will look and cost different as we continue navigating through the pandemic. Our staff, ministry work areas and church leaders are being asked to consider their budgets for ministry and adjust as needed for new and innovative ways to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As we continue to

work on adjusting our ministry budget for 2021, we anticipate the cost of ministry to be near \$220K. Our member giving for 2020 was approximately \$130K so if we expect to come close to meeting our budget, we will need to find additional sources of funding. We will have the RCPS using our lower level through June and will be looking for a replacement for the school system. We now know that the PPP will be extended and it is possible that we may apply once again for this funding. But these and other considerations are only 'maybes' so we cannot depend on that support and we need your support once again in 2021.

Please prayerfully consider the manner you are called to support Christ's mission and ministry through Grove UMC in 2021. We ask that you complete the Commitment Card attached and return to Grove UMC by January 31, 2021. You may return your commitment card via:

- email groveumcsecretary@gmail.com;
- regular mail to Grove UMC, 1020 Tyler Avenue, Radford, VA 24141;
- the offering box at our 2 PM drive-in service (or 10 AM indoor services as available).

In addition to your financial gifts of faithfulness, we also request you indicate ministry areas or interests you would like to be engaged with as God calls you to support Grove UMC through your prayers, presence, spiritual gifts, service, and witness.

Thank you and God bless you as we together enter another year with Christ in ministry to the world.

The Finance Group of Grove UMC