

Grace and Peace

A Newsletter from Grace Methodist Church (*The Miracle Church*)
5030 S. Memorial Drive, Homosassa, FL 34446
Phone: 352-651-2502

Grace Methodist Church where people gather to celebrate, serve, and grow in Christ.



A Message from Pastor Bill

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, Revelation 1:4b

Hello Friends:

The family Christmas gathering ended. Had we been to Christmas worship service or just opening presents? It was so long ago. Something I do remember from that night is still alive. I was sitting in a chair. It was well after midnight. There was a scrubby little Christmas tree glowing across the room, but I was all alone with my thoughts. Well not quite. Jesus was there leading a discussion with myself. Have you been there? It is a humbling experience to find yourself in the hands of God. You need to move forward but which door do you walk through? Is God leading, pushing, coaxing, pulling or just observing? That night was a turning point. It opened my life to new thoughts and ways. It still took several years to get fully focused – doors began to widen. Vision became clearer.

Part of Jesus statement verse said, “*Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come.*” This partial verse really fits everyone. It is essential to see and know where we are in life. To know the past is over but learn its lessons. Then we can think about the future. However, I have realized that the future is entirely in God’s hands. My best laid plans have fallen far short, but God seems very capable of opening doors that lead to hope, joy, peace, and love.

Here at Grace Methodist, we are amid a loving, caring fellowship of Christians. It is a wonderful place to worship and gather with God’s people. The Spirit of God and the love

that is felt is heartwarming. There are many doing their best to bring hope and peace to others. At the last Church Conference Karen Stone listed major happenings: Growth from 55 in attendance the first week to averages around 120 recently. There are many outreach ministries like: Pancake breakfasts, Memory Lane support Group, Health Fair, CPR classes, Stephen Ministers, Bible Studies, Prayer groups and many more. Grace Church is doing what it is meant to do here and now. I see parishioners using the talents they have acquired through study and experience to make Grace what it is today.

What does the future hold? I know from experience that I don't know. What I have learned is listen, and when God opens a door, you walk through it. Our experience here at Grace has demonstrated what can happen when people love God with all they are and have a heart for their neighbor. It comes down to these folks, I know where I am going, and I know who I am going with. I just don't know the time table, or the routing yet. But I am onboard with Jesus — I pray that you are also — and let's enjoy the journey into a new year and beyond.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Bill Farmer

Be Transformed By The Renewing of Your Mind

The Truth Project is a ground-breaking small group curriculum on the Biblical worldview. This video-based Bible study is the starting point for looking at life from a biblical perspective. I invite you to join Dr. Del Tackett, as he takes us through 13 engaging video lessons on the relevance and importance of living the Biblical worldview in daily life, featuring insights from biblical experts like R.C. Sproul, Os Guinness and Gordon Pennington.



I, Pastor Bill, am considering presenting this 13-week study beginning January 2 at 4 pm on Thursdays. The video portion is about 55 minutes and there will be discussion following. I anticipate a 90-minute class or less. It will run for 13 sessions concluding late March.

I would like to have at least 12 people involved in this class. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall if you are interested. Lon McAllister has taken this course and will be my backup and can answer questions you might have about this course.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Bill Farmer

We Are Listening — Speak to Us

Pastor Kip and I would like to hear from you. Not your complaints, we already know about them. We would like to hear what you want to hear from the pulpit. How can we make our sermons most meaningful for you. Following is a plan for you to be heard.

On Sunday, December 29, we plan to put two 3 x 5 cards in each bulletin. We want you to take them home and ponder what word, phrase, Bible verse or group of biblical verses you would like to hear more about. Write that out on both cards. You keep one for a reference and bring the other one back to church. You can sign it if you please so we can contact you about the subject, but you can leave it anonymous if that is your pleasure.

We will probably post most of these cards where they can be read, and we will work out a way of trying to preach on these biblical topics. They may also prompt various prayer groups to pray for what is on your mind.

This is an experiment. It is our attempt to speak to the scriptural issues that you ponder.

Grace Pastoral Team
Pastor Bill and Pastor Kip

Greetings from the Renovation committee...Ron Snowberger

Exciting things are being planned to expand our church, which will bring the building up to date and improve the overall comfort and operational function of the facility as we continue to grow and serve God.

The renovation committee has spent the past several months meeting with the hired architect/engineering firm, Local Engineering Inc. (LEI) to have as built plans and conceptual ideas developed for renovations. These plans and ideas were sent to the Citrus County Building Department and the Fire Marshal's office for review. We have discovered, that "any" renovations to the facility will require the building to be brought up to current fire and building code regulations and requirements.

At this time, the renovation committee has gained approval from the Board of Trustees and will seek the approval of the Administrative Board on January 8th 2025 to continue having LEI to prepare the "design plans" for the renovations inclusive of all required code compliance needs. During 2025, the committee hopes to further update the congregation by presenting the plans and projected costs that would include, but not be limited to following "new" areas.

- Sanctuary expansion
- More welcoming foyer and entryway to sanctuary
- New restroom facilities
- Kitchen expansion
- Expansion of fellowship hall
- Addition of ample office space
- A defined Children's ministry area
- Choir storage

The committee looks forward to see where the Lord will lead us and the congregation in 2025.

In his service, Ron Snowberger

Faith Community Nurse (FCN)...Karen Kline

I received this today in the weekly News Blast from the Faith Community Nursing and thought, with their permission, it would make a great inspirational New Years resolution.

A Prayer to Love Unconditionally

Lord, You modeled the height of agape love when you gave us your Son Jesus so we may have Eternal life. I repent for not showing love at that level. Today, I pray for the ability to love unconditionally without expecting anything in return. Help me to let go of the need for validation or recognition and instead focus on giving love freely and without hesitation. Give me a heart that freely gives without thinking of what I will get in return. Help me to cultivate a deep sense of compassion and understanding. Show me areas where I can give of myself and my resources, areas where the recipient can give me nothing in return. I want to be a servant to others. **Mark 10:45** **“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** May my love be a source of healing and transformation for those around me, and may it inspire others to love without condition as well. Help me to remember that love is not about what we receive in return but what we are willing to give. Thank you for your infinite wisdom and grace. May your love fill my heart and guide my actions each and every day. Amen.

Thank You Corner

A Special Note of Thanks

Grace Methodist, thank you so much for your donation to Faith Responders to help those impacted by the hurricanes. I hope you all are doing well and have recovered. We greatly appreciate your generosity and consideration.

Many blessings,
Rev. Laura Lambert
Faith Responders Disaster Response and Recovery

Thank you from 1st UM Church

Dear Grace Members,

Thank you for all the food you donated for the Thanksgiving Turkey give away. We fed 100+ families here at 1st UMC. They all received a 13-15 lb turkey and all the fixings your members donated. So many families were blessed because of you. Prayers go out for you all and for all the help you give to others. Thank you very much.

Melody Gherke and Wayne Brown

Mission Moment...Donna Farmer

Thank you from the Mission Committee...Your mission giving has been outstanding in 2024. You have given substantially more this year than last. When we get a year-end report, we will let you know the numbers. God is blessing and will continue to bless Grace Methodist Church for its faithfulness.

As you probably know, we will be celebrating “Christmas in July” with our special gifts to **Samaritan’s Purse**. This will be an opportunity for you to pick from a catalog of projects - the one that you think will make an impact.

Also, we will be adding an additional mission in 2025. **Residing Hope** is a children’s home established in 1908 in Enterprise, Florida. It was formerly known as the United Methodist Children’s Home and has an excellent reputation. To learn more about this mission, Google will provide the details.

Grace has a plan for gathering your support. All one-dollar bills (or designated gifts) that come in the offering basket will go to **Residing Hope**. If you wish to be able to document your giving, please place your gift in an envelope and write your name and **Residing Hope** on the envelope. Our Finance Team will provide you with a giving statement for tax purposes at year-end. Thank you for your support of missions.

Grace Place--News from the Ladies of Grace...Sue Pagano Women’s Spiritual Growth & Fellowship in 2025

The Ladies of Grace are celebrating our first anniversary this month. It has been a fun and fruitful year. We invite all women to grow and go with us on our Christian walk. We have been providing service to our church and our community. Here are three updates and dates to put on your calendar for fellowship and spiritual growth in this new year:

- Ladies of Grace meeting; **Sunday, January 19, 11:15, Fellowship Hall**. We will review the projects of 2024 and discuss what we want to plan/accomplish in 2025. All women are invited to attend and learn about our service.
- Ladies of Grace meeting; Sunday, February 16, 11:15, Fellowship Hall
- **Ladies Winter Mini-Retreat & Luncheon**
Tuesday, February 25, 9:30am-1:00pm
Grace Methodist Church
\$20 per person (tickets on sale in January)
- **Women of Grace Methodist and your interested family/friends are invited**
- **Agenda:**
 - Fellowship time with drinks and goodies
 - Recap & Insights of Spiritual Gifts Discussion: Have We Grown?
 - Presentation by writer, author and humorist **Nancy Kennedy**:
“WHEN YOU’RE IN A DARK PLACE”
 - Lunch

Comfort & Care Meals...June Kirschbaum

The Comfort and Care Meals committee continues to deliver meals to folks who need a little help to get through a rough patch due to illness, grief, or any of life’s speed bumps.

These meals nourish the body and the spirit. To arrange a confidential delivery, contact June Kirschbaum by phone: (352) 382-0424 or email: junekirsch13@gmail.com. If you would like to help, please contact June at the number listed.

Women of Worship (W.O.W)...Sharon Miller

Thank you so much for all the support that you gave to the W.O.W.'s Christmas project for seniors...Santa Seniors. Also, don't forget the W.O.W is also collecting stamps and soda pop-top tabs which can be placed in the respective boxes on the table by the Food Pantry in the small fellowship hall.

THE WAYS OF THE KINGDOM...Jan Wise

It is the beginning of a new year, the start of something different, the challenge of making 2025 the best year ever. There is something about a "new" year that stimulates us to assess our way of life, both individually and as a nation.

We hear negative assessments from the mouths of those who feel our country is going the wrong way--away from greatness, the respect and the role of being the leader on the world stage. After each school shooting, we hear, "This is not who we are; this is not the kind of thing that happens in our country". But it does. With each tragedy, our composure based on the ideal of the American way of life gets a little more frayed. Who are we, abiding in a country whose reputation as "Christian" has long been shattered?

I would like to urge a new way of thinking in 2025. In Psalm 50, written to Asaph, a leader of the Temple choir, God testifies against those of his chosen people who have strayed from his ways. How would he speak to us who get caught up in the frenzy of the uncertain scene around us, and begin thinking contrary to what our Lord teaches, resulting in an irrational fear of what is happening in our country. We forget the reliability of the teachings of God and fall back on our human wisdom and fleshly behavior.

God ends his words against the back-sliding people of Israel with these frightening words: "Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue: **He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God. (Ps.50:23)** So, as God always does, he offers his way of escape for those who recognize the danger of our situation.

Are we ready to thank God for the outcome of the recent election, knowing the Bible says God is the One who raises up and brings down those in authority over us? Are we willing to thank God for the riots, the evidence of decline in the godly focus of our country's leaders? In it all, are we ready to praise our God who allows situations that frighten us?

What happens when a favorite antique vase drops on the floor and shatters? Or a fisherman loses his best lure? Or a loved one dies expectedly? Can we learn to offer the **sacrifice of thanksgiving** to the One who is over every detail of our lives? God promises that through **every** sacrifice of thanksgiving, he will show us his salvation, a blessing to

anticipate. Can we say, no matter how hard or seemingly unfair the situation, "I thank you for this, Lord, and look for your salvation."?

In the Old Testament, there is a book written by the prophet Habakkuk. He tells of the Israelites living life their own way, neglecting the teachings of God. So, he asks God what he will do to the people of Judah for their disobedience.

God tells him the Babylonians, an ungodly nation, will attack and punish the disobedient Israelites. Then Habakkuk asks how God could send a godless nation to punish a nation of believers in God. God explains that after he uses the Babylonians to punish the wayward Israelites, he will then punish the nation of Babylon.

Although God's plans for Judah left Habakkuk terrified of the future, he made a pre-determined decision to rejoice in the Lord no matter how bad things might get. He said, **"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.** Then Habakkuk proclaims, **"The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights"**. (Hab. 3:17-19)

Can we do that--rejoice, offer thanksgiving to our God, no matter how bad things may get? The world is in turmoil; our nation is in turmoil. But God knows exactly what he is doing, so we, too, can make a pre-determined decision to offer our sacrificial thank offerings, to rejoice in our God...no matter what happens.

2024 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS...Karen Stone

If you would like a 2024 contribution statement, please complete the "2024 Contribution Statements" signup sheet in Fellowship Hall. On the form, please indicate whether you would like the Statement e-mailed, printed and given to you at church, or mailed if you will not be available at church. If you have any questions, please talk with Wanda Ashley, Treasurer. She can be reached at 352-228-2253 or talk with her at church.

Upcoming Month Activities

- January 2 -- Truth Project Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind @ 4:00
- January 5 -- Communion Sunday
- January 6 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- January 7 -- Weight Management @ 9:00
- January 8 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- Grace Board Meeting @ 9:00
- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- January 9 -- Women of Worship @ 2:30
- Truth Project Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind @ 4:00
- January 13 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- January 14 -- Weight Management @ 9:00
- January 15 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00

- Renovation Meeting @ 9:00
- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- January 16 -- Truth Project Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind @ 4:00
- January 18 -- Pancake Breakfast @ 8:00
- January 19 -- Ladies of Grace @ 11:15
- January 20 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- January 21 -- Weight Management @ 9:00
- January 22 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- January 23 -- Truth Project Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind @ 4:00
- January 27 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- January 28 -- Weight Management @ 9:00
- January 29 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- January 30 -- Truth project Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind @ 4:00
- February 25 -- Ladies Mini-Winter Retreat @ 9:30

Bible Studies, Prayer Groups, & Other Meetings at Grace Methodist Church

- Mon 1 pm Memory Lane Support Group & Respite
- Tues 9 am Weight Management Meeting (women & men)
- Wed 7 am Men's Prayer Group at GMC followed by breakfast out
- Wed 4 pm Choir Practice led by Katherine Cornelius and Becky Jones
- Thurs 10 am S.O.A.P. (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)
- Thurs 11:30 Women of Worship (W.O.W) Lunch Bunch Bible Study
- Fri 10-12 am Bible Study, prayer concerns & fellowship led by Jan Wise
- Fri 10:15 am Bible study led by Pastor Farmer, Meadow Crest Clubhouse

Dates for 2025 Blood Drive...Carolyn Bright

March 9, 2025

June 8, 2025

September 9, 2025

December 14, 2025

Times will be 7:30 am to 11:30 or later until last doner has been completed.

A quote from John Wesley...Prayer is where the action is. Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God

Grace Methodist Church is a member of the

