

Grace and Peace

A Newsletter from Grace Methodist Church (*The Miracle Church*)

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



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A Message from Pastor Kip Younger

Greetings Grace Church Family! My prayers and hopes are that you celebrated Christmas with much hope, peace, joy, and love. In this week between Christmas and New Years we find ourselves in between the past and the future, or the "was" and the "not yet". This is the week of pondering the wonders of this quickly closing current year in anticipation of the year to come.

We think about the things or events that we celebrated and the ones that caused us to reflect on how we might have handled things or events better. Our best hopes are to learn from such times and move forward, better prepared, and perhaps more aware of the realities of this world. However, is that enough? And can we do this on our own? In the second chapter of Colossians the Apostle Paul offers words of encouragement and direction that may be very helpful to consider in light of the coming new year. These are verses 6 & 7: *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.* Simply put, remain steadfast in Jesus! Live life in him, strengthened by him and celebrate thankfulness because of him! Verses 9 & 10 finish Paul's thoughts on living in Jesus: *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness.* The implication here seems to be that through the fullness of God in Jesus, we can find and live out the fullness of our lives.

Will there continue to be challenging times in the coming year? You bet. And here is the good news: God already knows all about them, he's waiting in these coming times for you to get there, and he's ready to walk through such times with you as you live in him, are strengthened by him, are thankful for him, and trust in him for the fulness of all you need to get through such times.

Our church is a great living example of these truths. God has seen us through the whole process of becoming established and is still leading and guiding our way through the process it extends into 2024. God knows the challenges of the coming year that we face as a new church and is fully prepared to lead us through each and every one of them. He is more than willing and able to do the same in our personal lives. Our role? Learn from the past, trust God for our future! May His blessings be ever so rich and abundant!

Peace, Pastor Kip

Church-Wide Christmas Project...Women of Worship (W.O.W)...Sharon Miller

Women of Worship would like to express their "thanks" to everyone who participated in Santa for Seniors. This was a great success with Grace donating 159 gift bags for the seniors. W.O.W. took all the gift bags to the Home Instead Office where they were distributed to the seniors who were thrilled with their gifts.

Don't forget the W.O.W. mission project which is to collect canceled postage stamps as a year-round project. Please place your stamps in the stamp box on the table by the Food Pantry items. W.O.W. trims the stamps and sends them to Ft. Myers where they in turn sell them to collectors and use the money they receive for Sunday School materials for third world countries and in the U.S.

Let's Celebrate!...Pastor Bill Farmer

Celebration is at hand. We have been meeting together to worship for one year on January 28, 2024. We won the right to vote. We lost the election. However, we won our independence to worship in a new environment. The seeds of a new beginning were planted, and new growth is happening weekly. The precious Holy Spirit of God fills our lives and our worship.

Sunday, January 28 is a special day, and we want to make it even more special. On that day we will have worshipped together for one year. On this anniversary day let's enjoy some great worship, fellowship, entertainment, and food. Rev. Jay Therrell, President *Pro Tem* of the Florida GMC Conference, will bring the message for the day. Following worship, we have some professional singers who hail from our native Indiana community. They will be sharing their gifts during the worship service, and we will have a great lunch featuring a baked potato bar with all the fixings, and you are asked to provide the sides.

We are asking the pie bakers of the church to make two identical pies. One of those will be cut into small pieces so that they can be sampled as dessert at lunch. As lunch concludes, our special musical team, Steve and Maria Gardner, will entertain us with a couple of songs and then we will auction off the masterpiece pies that were not cut. A specially selected auctioneer has been recruited and is coming from Indiana just to sell these pies. We will

have the best pies in Citrus County, maybe even in Florida, on sale that day to the highest bidders. All the money raised will go toward the renovation of our restrooms and building. Please be prepared for a great FUN–D Raiser.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Bill Farmer

Hope, Peace, and Joy Realized...Karen Kline, Faith Community Nurse

A year ago, I wrote an article about the effects of stress on our heart's health, stating that there is more to heart health than just the physical aspects. There is a spiritual part of our hearts as well, which is the key to experiencing profound peace, gratitude, joy, safety, and unconditional love. Proverbs 4:23: *"Above all else guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it"*. In the year 2022 many of us felt stress in the spiritual and physical aspects of our lives by experiencing depression, anxiety, anger, pessimism, mood changes, sleep issues, changes in appetite, and dissatisfaction with life in general.

As we approach 2024 and reflect on 2023, we realistically see a decrease in stress in our spiritual lives. Recently someone told me I looked happy, and they were right! When you reflect on Pastor Kip's Advent sermons explaining the difference between the Worldly and Devine differences of Hope, Peace and Joy, it all starts to make sense.

In a few weeks we will be celebrating our one-year anniversary of Grace Methodist Church! It is truly amazing what has been accomplished by following God's word, and the Spiritual Joy we will celebrate because of it. Give praise!

Help Design and Develop "Women of Grace"...Sue Pagano

Grace Methodist Church has established many valuable groups and programs during its first year. The weekly bulletin spotlights bible studies for men and women, local and international service projects by the Women of Worship (WOW), health and wellness meetings through the Parish Nurse, and work of the Congregational Care Committee (CCC).

As the year closed, an opening was identified for a group that offers fellowship in a variety of ways to women of the church. These could include spiritual growth, social activities, a one-day retreat, crafts and craft ministries, an information session on what bible studies offer, being available to support miscellaneous church projects like the Fall Festival/Rummage Sale and the first anniversary celebration, Children's Church, or the Congregational Care Team representing our church at community fairs and neighborhood outreach.

An exploratory meeting was held in December with 17 women attending and another dozen who were interested but had holiday scheduling conflicts. Ideas were flying and smiles abounded at the prospect of future fellowship and fun. Attendees decided to call the organization the Women of Grace and set the regular meeting for the third Sunday monthly, 11:30 am, in the Fellowship Hall following our church service. They also discussed a possible mission statement and brainstormed project ideas. Planning will continue at the next meeting on Sunday, January 21. We are looking forward to a bright future for our church and our Women of Grace as talents, interests, and needs are discovered. Plan on joining in the fun at the January 21st meeting. If you have questions, contact Judy Chambliss or Sue Pagano.

Blood Drive...Carolyn Bright

Thank you to all individuals who donated blood. Listed below is the Honor Roll of donors for the December blood drive:

Diedrich, Lois
Frederick, Andrew
Jones, Rebekah
Kline, Karen
Kline, Neil
Phillips, Suzanne
Rose, Robert
Stone, Karen
Trusley, Alice
Trusley, Jim

Also, our next blood drive dates are: 3/24/24, 6/16/24, 9/29/24, and 12/8/24. Please mark your calendars for these dates. Again, thank you for donating.

What are Stephen Ministers...Carol MacKenzie

The Stephen Ministry program is active and serving members of Grace Methodist Church. For those that are not familiar with Stephen Ministry below is a great explanation of what Stephen Ministers do?

Stephen Ministers: *The After People*

Frequently friends will ask, "I know you're involved in Stephen Ministry, so can you tell me exactly what a Stephen Minister is?" Stephen Ministers are the "**After People**." Stephen Ministers are there:

- ... after you've washed and returned all the last casserole dish.
- ... after you arrive home following the funeral and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.
- ... after the relationship has ended but the wounds are still painful.
- ... after the doctors have said, "there's nothing more we can do."
- ... after the phone call you'd always hoped you'd never get.
- ... after the nursing home director shakes your hand and says "Welcome to your new home".
- ... after the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- ... after you find the pink slip inserted with what is now your final paycheck.
- ... after your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the "**After People**" who are ready to come walk alongside you—or your friends, neighbors, co-workers, or relatives—and provide comfort and support and confidentiality for as long 'after' as needed. For more information about Stephen Ministers, please contact Karen Kline or Carol MacKenzie.

Adapted from a presentation made during a worship service by Enie Bourland, a lay Stephen Leader at Houston's First Baptist Church in Houston, TX. Copyright©2003 by Stephen Ministries in St. Louis, Missouri

Samaritan's Purse...Donna Farmer

You supported Samaritan's Purse all year long, which has been greatly appreciated. A big "thank you" for your caring response to our Christmas project for Samaritan's Purse. In case you missed it in the bulletin insert, we provided 3 dairy goats, sight to a blind person (cataract surgery), helped a farm family, 2 hives of honeybees, 36 chickens, 2 bundles of blankets & bedding, care for 2 orphans, helped dig a well, helped finance medical equipment, helped stop human trafficking, helped with cleft lip surgery, a bible, and cash to be used where needed. The response for this Christmas project was fantastic.

Also a big "thank you" for your 2023 gifts to missions! You responded immediately when we asked for funding for our SOS (Sharing Our Savior) Fund, and you regularly give food items to the food bank. These food items are taken to 1st UMC for their food bank, and they are grateful for our contributions.

Dates to Save

January 3 @ 9 am – Finance Committee
January 7 @ 10 am – Communion Sunday
January 10 @ 9 am – Grace Board Meet
January 11 @ 2 pm – Women of Worship (W.O.W)
January 19-20 – FL Provisional GMC Conference, Living Hope Church, Clermont, FL
January 21 @ 11:30 – Women of Grace
January 28 – Celebration Sunday...Woo-Hoo
February 8 @ 2 pm – Women of Worship (W.O.W.)
February 14 – Grace Board Meeting
February 14 – Ash Wednesday
February 14 – Valentine's Day
March 24 @ 8:00 – Blood Drive
March 24 – Palm Sunday
March 29 – Good Friday
March 31 – Easter Sunday

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

Mon 1:00 pm Memory Lane Support Group & Respite
Tues 9:00 am Weight Management Meeting (women & men)
Wed 7:00 am Men's Prayer Group at GMC followed by breakfast out
Wed 4:00 pm Choir Practice led by Katherine Cornelius
Thurs 10:00 am S.O.A.P. (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)...Jan Wise
Thurs 11:30 am 1:30 pm Women's Lunch Bunch Bible Study...Sharon Miller
Note.... Women of Worship (WOW)...Meets once a month on the second Thursday...**Next meeting is January 11 @ 2:00 p.m.**
Fri 10:00 am Bible Study led by Jan Wise (10:00-11 Prayer concerns, joys, & fellowship)
Fri 11 am -12 pm Bible Study...led by Jan Wise
Fri 10:15 am Bible study led by Pastor Farmer, Meadow Crest Clubhouse

Grace Methodist Church is a member of the

