

# 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.*



## **A Message from Pastor Bill**

***Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*** 2 Corinthians 9:15 (NIV)

Christmas is Coming

Excitement is brewing – in the next few days the church will have a different appearance. Seasonal decorations will appear. New preaching themes and Christmas music begin. Bells will play. A Christmas saxophone concert will be heard. And it's all in anticipation of the coming of the Christ Child –the One born and placed in a manger. The greatest gift ever given to the world, God's Son, will be celebrated again. However, this greatest of all gifts will be left unopened by much of the world.

As we open and receive the gift of God's Son – we find other gifts hidden in the package. Through Jesus, we experience God's unconditional love and the power to gift that love to others. As God fills our lives with his presence, we find His joy, peace, and hope welling up within, no matter what our circumstances. Our lives, once empty and aimless, are filled with God's purpose and calling. We experience real forgiveness – no matter what our past. And we begin to find the strength and freedom to forgive. Now claim these gifts for yourselves – then pass them on. Let's make everyone's Christmas special by sharing His Love, Joy, Peace, Hope, Purpose, and Forgiveness.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Bill Farmer

## **Faith Community Nurse (FCN)...**Karen Kline

Mary's Mother.....Have you ever thought about Mary's Mother?

Last summer scrolling on the internet I came across an article on just that subject and saved it in a safe file on my computer. I kept thinking about how great it would be as a basis for my December newsletter article. Well, I spent several days searching through every file I could find... found a lot of interesting stuff but not the article. So, I turned back to the computer and tried to find the article by searching for it. Didn't find it, but eventually found another one which was close. What I found is a short story written by Kristin D. Hammel, a Christian Historical Fiction Author. The story is based on Mary's angel visit and her journey to Elizabeth in Luke 1:26-56.

The story starts with Mary's mother worrying about her daughter traveling home from her visit to her cousin Elizabeth. She knew Mary would not come home until Elizabeth's child was born. Suddenly, she heard noise outside and when she went to see what all the commotion was about, she saw her daughter surrounded by neighbors anxious for news of her travels. Her mother, Anne, was quickly able to bring her daughter into the house.

Anne got her daughter seated and gave her something to eat, anxious to hear her news. Anne was thrilled to hear that her cousin Elizabeth had delivered a healthy son and had named him John. In listening to her daughter, Anne noticed that there was something different and concerning about her. Eventually Mary shared the news about the angel, Gabriel's visit, and the news that she was pregnant with a son who would be the Messiah. Anne knew her daughter, though quiet, had always been truthful. But any parent would be wondering... What??? Can you even imagine the thoughts that when through this worried mother's mind? Mary told her mother how she had witnessed Elizabeth's faith and how God had blessed her and had given her comfort. Mary knew this was God's plan and that he would care for her and her child. Mary even told Gabriel that as a servant of God, "May it be done according to your word."

Are we that trusting of God's plans for us, our children, or even grandchildren? Thoughts to ponder as we enter the season of Advent and celebrate Jesus' birth.

If you are interested you can find the story on the author's website:

<https://www.katrinadhamel.com/post/a-mothers-heart-a-story-of-mary-and-anne> " A Mother's Heart: A story of Mary and Anne".

Wishing all a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

## **Thank You Corner**

A Special Note of Thanks

I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness and thoughtfulness in our time of need. Words cannot describe how grateful we are.  
God Bless - S.O.S. Recipients.

Thank You Corner...continued

To my Church: You're a great example of everything that's right with the world. Love you all and "thank you so much." **Jeanette McDougall**

We can't "thank you" enough for your generosity. Your gift of the money to buy Doug new glasses was so thoughtful and helped us tremendously. It was an unexpected blessing that renewed my soul on many levels – a true act of Christian love. May God bless you always? **Vicki & Doug Raney**

**Stephen Ministers**...Carol MacKenzie

### **Are You Experiencing a "Winter" in Your Life?**

In addition to cooler/cold weather outside, many people experience "winters" in their personal lives. A recent loss through death, divorce, or relocation may leave you feeling lonely. A hospitalization, cancer diagnosis, or ongoing medical problems may leave you feeling isolated. The loss of a job, or a financial setback can devastate one's self-esteem. Family and personal struggles may leave you with nowhere to turn for support.

If you are going thru a difficult time, Grace Methodist Stephen Ministers can bring God's warm love back into your life. They provide *CONFIDENTIAL*, one-to-one Christian care. They meet with you privately on a weekly basis to listen, support, and encourage you, to pray with and for you, and to walk with you for the duration of your crisis.

Grace Methodist Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you! Contact Karen Kline at (352) 382-7263 or Carol MacKenzie at (352) 382-8926. We are here to listen.

**Mission Moment...Samaritan's Purse**...Donna Farmer

**Grace GMC is blessed and able to be a blessing to many.** Thank you for your continuing support for Missions. We continue to support Samaritan's Purse, SOS fund for local needs, and food bank at First U.M.C. for their continued local food ministries.

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

Don't forget the W.O.W.'s Christmas project of giving to seniors...Santa Seniors. There are still opportunities to help by selecting a bulb off the tree in the small fellowship hall. Make a senior happy at Christmas and put joy in your heart. 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 items in the small fellowship hall.

**Grace Place--News from the Ladies of Grace**...Sue Pagano

The Ladies are focused on supporting activities of other groups at Grace Methodist Church for the rest of the year. They encourage everyone to join in--Santa for Seniors, Pancake Breakfasts, Christmas Open House, and Christmas Concert with Eirinn Abu on December 15 and the December 29 blood drive. We are grateful for Judy Chambliss's support of Missions by leading the drive for Thanksgiving sides for the FUMC Food Pantry. Seeing the body of Christ work together is wonderful.

### **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](mailto:junekirsch13@gmail.com).

### **Be Part of the Community Christmas Open House, Dec. 15, 1-2:30 pm**

Our church is hosting a free Community Christmas Open House on Sunday, December 15, 1:00-2:30 pm, in the Fellowship Hall. Sign up to bring appetizers or cookies. This is an outreach event, a time to wish "Merry Christmas" to the neighborhood around us in a joyful, delicious way. We will have hors d'oeuvres, cookies, and Christmas punch for families, singles and snowbirds who stop in. No program is planned. We will simply meet and greet guests, sharing some of the joy that reflects life at our church. Flyer invitations are available and members are encouraged to hand them out. For more information, see Jim and Joan Veronici.

**Note:** The open house will end at 2:30 pm so that guests for the 3 pm concert can be seated.

### **Eirinn Abu Concert Features Christmas Music December 15, 3 pm**

Saxophonist Eirinn Abu is returning to our church for an encore performance on Sunday, December 15, 3 pm. He will be performing a beautiful Christmas Concert in the sanctuary at 3 pm. Tickets are on sale during the coffee hour. The cost is \$10 each. Community members can call the church (352-419-7702) or email: [suep@gracemethodistchurch.org](mailto:suep@gracemethodistchurch.org) to purchase tickets. Wouldn't it be a wonderful gift to invite family and friends to this Christmas concert? Bring them, too, to the open house!

### **THE WAYS OF THE KINGDOM**...Jan Wise

Sitting on the couch, reading my book, I heard the washing machine finish its wash cycle. Quickly I jumped up and headed to the laundry room to push the dial ahead to the spin cycle.

When I came back, Tom asked, "Where did you go in such a hurry"? "I'm in a hurry to get this wash done, I replied." So, I skipped the rest in between cycles and just moved it from wash to spin to hurry it along.

Tom gave me this horrified look, and I knew a lecture of some sort was coming--probably based on the mechanics of the washing machine. "Don't you know", he began, "your washing machine is designed to need pause times between cycles? If you keep pushing it to break that pattern, it will break down because of the stress on its system."

I heard what Tom was saying, but my teacher's mind had jumped to God's command regarding the way he had created our human bodies with a planned rest time to keep us from breaking down.

## **Ways of the Kingdom...continued Jan Wise**

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you or your son or daughter, nor your manservant or your maidservant, nor your animals nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh. Therefore, the Lord blesses the seventh day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:8-11)

Although we are no longer under the letter of the law because Jesus fulfilled it all, he cautions that the Law still exists and if we are careful to submit to his leading, we will fulfill the spirit of the Law in our daily walk.

Thinking about the times I have pushed to get one more thing done in an hour or in the day, I wonder if that's not a violation of the spirit of the law. How many times have I not listened to the Holy Spirit urging me to slow down or to give up a project that's stressing me and wearing my body out? And when I look at Sunday as a day (after church, of course) to get extra things done I meant to do during the week, am I not violating the Sabbath day of rest established by God for my good?

Jesus offers us rest, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light". (Matthew 11:28-30) Let's remember to respond to his invitation during the busy holiday season.

## **Kitchen Corner...Jim Veronesi**

The Kitchen Committee needs your help! When anything that is used in the kitchen such as coffee, creamer, sugar, etc and you see that these supplies are getting low, please fill out the clip board in the kitchen stating that these supplies need to be purchased. This will help the Committee to keep all items in stock.

Also, when using any paper and/or plastic products such as plates, napkins, cups, or plastic utensils and you see that these products are low, please fill out the clip board located in the kitchen stating that these products need to be purchased. Filling out the clipboard will help keep all kitchen items stocked. Thank you, and the Kitchen Committee will appreciate your efforts.

- December 1 – Communion Sunday and beginning of Advent Season
- December 8 – New Member Class
- December 11 – Grace Board Meeting @ 9:00
- December 12 – Women of Worship @ 2:30
- December 14 – Music (Choir & Bells Christmas Luncheon @ 12:30
- December 15 – New members joining Grace Methodist Church
- December 15 – Grace Open House – 1 to 2:30

December 15 – Erin Abu Christmas Concert @ 3 pm  
December 24 – Christmas Eve Service @ 5 pm

**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  
**Note...**WOW meets once a month on the second Thursday at 2  
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.

*Change your thoughts and you change your world....Norman Vincent Peale*

**Grace Methodist Church is a member of the**



*Merry Christmas from our home church to you.*