

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...It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Greetings Church Family! I hope that this newsletter finds you blessed and still busy getting ready for Easter!

A few years ago, a little-known singing artist recorded a song that tends to get stuck in our heads every year. It turns out that he only recorded 43 albums in his career, of which 15 have been gold certified and three platinum certified. He was also nominated for six Grammy Awards. And he also hosted his own television variety show, from 1962 to 1971, along with numerous TV specials. Apparently, people liked him.

Andy Williams recorded "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" in 1963! Some of you probably remember way back then. Now, you may be wondering what this popular Christmas song has to do with us being in the month of March. When I started to write this article, I was thinking in terms of Easter coming on March 31st. And suddenly Andy's song popped into my head. I quickly checked the calendar to see if there had been some type of time explosion, and it was suddenly December instead of March. There wasn't.

"It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" is a great old song and every year it brings back lots of memories. And of course, its lyrics paint a picture of a glorious Christmas time of celebration. However, it is not the only "Most Wonderful Time of the Year."

In a few weeks we will celebrate perhaps the MOST "Most Wonderful Time of the Year," Easter! Easter is our most wonderful time of the year because it is our celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. In Jesus' resurrection, he demonstrated that he had completed his task of paying for the cost of our sins, and has risen to new life. The deed had been done! His horrible

Pastor Kip...continued

journey to and through the cross is over. The women will make their way to the tomb with terribly broken hearts to a surprise that will not only greatly shock them, but the entire world as well. "He is not here. He has risen just as he told you he would" said the angel to the women! And with those words, our world changed. Those who embrace his death as his saving action for their lives and accept him as Lord and Savior, will celebrate his resurrection as well! This is indeed the most wonderful time of the year (although I doubt we will sing Andy's song on Easter morning).

Here's a quick look ahead. Don't forget to move your clocks ahead this weekend. We will celebrate both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday at 1:00 pm. Then comes the celebration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. Everyone is hooting and hollering "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Then the wheels fall off the bus and suddenly it's Good Friday. Yet, behold! Everything changes in three days!

OK, that's it for now, the "last note has played" (think back to the Prelude on Sunday)! Enjoy these last weeks we have to ponder the meaning of Lent.

Blessings! Pastor Kip

Ways of the Kingdom.....Jan Wise

This past month we read in church about Jesus' baptism and how his father spoke from heaven saying, "You are my son; with you I am well pleased". (Mark 1:11) Those words must have encouraged and thrilled Jesus as he prepared for his earthly ministry.

My father was a farmer and cattle dealer in our rural area. As a man who knew and worked with many families in our community, he was respected for his honest dealings and his friendship with the people. I was a surprise arrival for my parents when they were in their mid-forties. My younger sister (by 18 years) was already married and due to have her first child. So, people were speculating on who and what this late-in-life youngster would become.

My dad's name was Charlie Reed, and I soon became known as Charlie Reed's daughter. I spent time with my dad in the fields, on the roads as he bought and sold cattle and, in his lap, as he told me story after story. Meeting a prospective farmer who wanted to sell a cow, Dad would be asked, "And who is this, tagging along behind you"? He would proudly say, "Oh, this is my daughter, Janice".

I loved being Charlie Reed's daughter until the week after my graduation from high school. Dad and I went to the bank, and my father asked if he could speak with Frank, the bank president. So here I was tagging along in my orange jeans, tee shirt and hair in pigtails. Imagine my embarrassment as my dad greeted Frank and introduced me as his daughter. Then he said, "She just graduated from high school and needs a job. Would you have a place for her"? (I had been taught how to dress for a job interview, and this was not it!) Frank appraised me as he talked with dad, and then said, "I think we can find a place for her. How about starting next Monday at 8 a.m."? Being Charlie Reed's daughter got me a summer job, a job every holiday vacation from school and even after I graduated, husband Tom would tease by saying, "I can't believe I got to marry Charlie Reed's daughter!" It was a small-town, local joke, but it meant so much to me, being known as my dad's daughter.

Ways of the Kingdom....continued

On the Mount of Transfiguration, God spoke again about his Son, this time to Peter, James and John who were there with him. God said, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

(Mark 9:7) How much it must have meant to Jesus, having his Father affirm his love and his confidence in his Son who was on his way to the cross.

If we have said yes to the call of Christ, today and every day the Spirit of God whispers to us, "You are my son" or "you are my daughter" whom I love." It means so much--to be a child of God.

Shingles, Lesson Learned...Karen Kline, Faith Community Nurse

I wrote this article some time ago, but did I listen to my own advice; not totally. I did get the Zostavax vaccine several years ago, but not the new vaccine. So, guess who is now recovering from shingles. Luckily the case was mild with no residual pain. But on the advice of my primary care, I will be getting the first of the two series vaccine in a few weeks. So please everyone talk to your primary about you getting the vaccine!

Through a process combining genetic materials, a new vaccine for shingles called Shingrix was developed and approved in 2017 by the FDA. For this reason, it is referred to as a recombinant zoster vaccine. In clinical trials this vaccine has shown to be more than 90% effective in preventing shingles and PHN (postherpetic neuralgia). The CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends that healthy adults 50 and older receive two doses of the vaccine separated by 2 to 6 months. Shingrix can be given even if a person has a history of shingles, has had the Zostavax vaccine, or is not sure if they have ever had chickenpox. If you have recently had the Zostavax vaccine and you want to get the Shingrix vaccine, it is recommended that you wait at least 8 weeks and talk to your physician.

Why a new vaccine for shingles when we already have one? Zostavax is a live vaccine that was approved in 2006. It is given in a single dose to healthy adults 60 and older. It is still available and your physician may recommend it if: a person is allergic to Shingrix, needs an immediate vaccination, Shingrix is not available, or the physician and/or patient prefers it. It has been shown that it reduces the risk of developing shingles by 50%.

Shingles is a nasty disease and is caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox. If you had chicken pox as a child, that virus is just sitting there and at some point, may trigger shingles. The disease is described as a painful blistering rash along with possible complications including searing nerve pain and pneumonia. It can sometimes be debilitating and have side effects which may continue for the rest of your life. You cannot "catch" shingles from another person, but you could develop chickenpox if you have never had it.

With any vaccination there is a chance of a variety of side effects that may occur. A person may experience pain, redness, soreness, or swelling at the injection site. A person may complain of headache, muscle aches, fever, shivering or fatigue. Usually if symptoms occur, they subside in 2 to 3 days. You should still get the second dose even if you have experienced any of these side effects. If you are considering receiving either the Zostavax or Shingrix vaccine you should discuss this with your physician so the best choice can be made for you.

Ladies of Grace Have a Busy Calendar...Sue Pagano

The Ladies of Grace hope that visitors to the February 25 Information Fair got a good look at the many programs and services available at our church. There are many opportunities to volunteer, make friends and benefit from support services.

The Ladies of Grace (LOG) focus on the needs of our congregation while developing fellowship and spiritual growth of our women. Our mission statement is: To faithfully serve and minister in our church and community through fellowship, service opportunities, spiritual growth and with social and worship events. Our signature scripture is *1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."* Please come to our monthly meetings and join in.

Mark Your Calendar for These Events

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| Tuesday, March 12, 10am-1pm | Craft and Chat
Bring your craft project (knitting, crocheting, quilting, beading, sewing, etc.) and visit with others. Feel free to bring a snack or lunch. Coffee available. |
| Sunday, March 17, 11:30am-12:30pm | Ladies of Grace Meeting |
| Tuesday, April 9, 10am-1pm | Craft and Chat
Bring your craft project (knitting, crocheting, quilting, beading, sewing, etc.) and visit with others. Feel free to bring a snack or lunch. Coffee available. |
| Sunday, April 21, 11:30am-12:30pm | Ladies of Grace Meeting |
| Friday, May 10, 10am-Noon | Mother's Day Cookie Exchange |
| Tuesday, May 14, 10am-1pm | Craft and Chat
Bring your craft project (knitting, crocheting, quilting, beading, sewing, etc.) and visit with others. Feel free to bring a snack or lunch. Coffee available. |
| Sunday, May 19, 11:30am-12:30pm | Ladies of Grace Meeting |

PLUS: First Annual Ladies Retreat

Saturday, September 14, 9am-4pm @ Grace Methodist Church

(Details will be shared later in the spring)

Special guest speaker will be Nancy Kennedy,
Author of Grace Notes and inspirational books

Comfort and Care Meals Offered for Congregation Members...Ladies of Grace

Returning home from a hospital stay or recovering from illness are times when people need to rest, relax and be nourished. The Ladies of Grace are offering support by providing a meal to church members in need. They will be contacted by the pastors, Stephen Ministers, or bible study leaders when a member needs assistance. Then a meal hostess will prepare and deliver the meal at a time agreed upon by the recipient.

This new service provides healthy, simple meals with attention to nutrition guidelines. Individualized orders are not provided, but we hope that the general recipes will be pleasing and helpful. For more information, contact June Kirschbaum @ 352-382-0424.

Ladies of Grace...continued

Looking Ahead to a Walk-a-Thon

Ladies of Grace have not completed plans on a walk-a-thon in support of the Citrus Pregnancy Center. However, save the date of **April 27** for the Great Stork Race Walk-a-Thon to support the Citrus Pregnancy Center. As plans develop, more information will be forthcoming.

WOMEN OF WORSHIP/WOW...Priscilla Frederick

Several weeks ago, we sent our latest batch of trimmed postage stamps to the Alliance Stamp Ministry in Ft. Myers. Due to a generous cash donation left in the stamp box, the postage was covered with enough funds left to cover the next mailing. Alliance Stamp Ministry reported to the Women of Worship that in the year 2023 the YTD total was \$35,000. The donations of used stamps have been a bit less than normal, so we have sought additional ways to “give back.”

Recently the WOW started a new endeavor of saving “tab tops” from cans of soup, vegetables, fruit or soda. Sharon Miller shared that each tab would pay for one minute of dialysis for a patient. A Collection container has been placed on the table in the activity room. We welcome your participation!

WOW meets the second Thursday of each month at 2 pm. Come join us, share, and bring your scissors!

SAVE THE DATES...Our Rummage Sale is Back!

The dates for the fall rummage sale will be on Friday, October 25th and Saturday, October 26th. Donation days are set for Saturday, September 7th and Saturday, October 5th from 9 until noon. Start that clean-up you have been meaning to do. Please use boxes or tubs for packing!

STEPHEN MINISTRY MOMENT...Unloading Your Backpack...Carol MacKenzie

I recently saw a bumper sticker that said simply yet eloquently: “Life Happens.” How true that is! Life happens. Everyday life.

Sure, some of us may have devastating hardships that hit us unexpectedly at times, and these can be difficult to deal with. But most of us have lots of other burdens and concerns—less devastating, but no less difficult for all that we carry around with us from day to day and week to week.

This reminds me of what happens when we watched our children get ready for school. They pack their backpacks with books, lunches, and sometimes a favorite possession, they head off for the day’s activities. At the end of the day, the backpacks are emptied and the evening tasks get underway. In much the same way, we adults pack our burdens and concerns each morning and carry them around on our backs throughout our daily routines. Unlike our children, we do not take off our backpacks at the end of the day and unpack them. We may take them off and set them in the corner for the evening, but the next day we pick them up again still full of the day before, and sometimes with a new item or two. We do this week after week, until one day we realize that our back packs have gotten so full and so heavy that we can no longer carry them.

Stephen Ministry...continued

Then I heard about Stephen Ministers who will meet with me almost every week and help carry my load. Some weeks, it was harder than others to open that backpack and look inside, but a Stephen Minister will always be ready to listen to whatever I am willing to share. Having someone who will listen can be a tremendous relief. Daily challenges may no longer be burdens that need to be carried. Having someone who is willing to share the load is a blessing.

Your backpack can become much lighter, and it may never seem to be as full. A Stephen Minister can remind you to unpack it now and then. Our Stephen Ministers are here for you. Call any one of our Stephen Leaders, Karen Kline, 382-7263 or Carol MacKenzie, 382-8926.

STEPHEN MINISTRY IN ACTION (Testimonials)...Carol MacKenzie

Several times a year we like to highlight testimonials from individuals who have been helped by a Stephen Minister. We would like you to hear from some of the care receivers who have had a Stephen Minister.

The care and support I received from my Stephen Minister was every bit as important to my recovery as the excellent medical care I received from the doctors and nurses. This is truly a life-giving ministry.

Tom

I've heard the phrase "the peace of God that passes all understanding" many times in church. My Stephen Minister has helped me experience that peace in a very real, very heartfelt way.

Anne

Within five minutes of meeting my Stephen Minister, I knew she was right for me. She listens and cares, never judging or criticizing me. She has shown me God's unconditional love, something I had never fully experienced before.

Sarah

Life is chaotic right now that I don't know much for certain. But I do know that my Stephen Minister is there for me and praying for me. I've come to realize that (even though I don't always feel it) God is there too and really is a work in my life.

Earl

My Stephen Minister listens—*really* listens. I never realized how helpful and healing such a simple act can be.

Michelle

My Stephen Minister was there during the darkest of times—patiently listening and trying to understand my pain. Looking back, I can clearly see how my Stephen Minister kept me connected to God when I was falling away.

Nathan

If you or someone you know would benefit from a caring, one-on-one, confidential relationship with a Stephen Minister, call Karen Kline at 382-7263 or Carol MacKenzie at 382-8926.

Vacation Bible School (VBS)...Miss Laurie

Don't forget! VBS is scheduled for June 10-14, and we need your help if we are to have a successful VBS. Please see Miss Laurie and tell her you will "help." It is important that we know who will be helping because there is some training that needs to be accomplished since

you will be working with children. Now don't worry, there is no test after the course. Miss Laurie will complete the course for us, so please let her know that you will support our children's program at Grace Methodist Church.

Pancake Breakfast...Kent Kester

"Thank You" to everyone who helped with our first pancake breakfast. It was a great success because of you. Mark your calendars for our next pancake & sausage breakfast, **March 23** from 9-11 am. Our Men's Prayer Group will continue sponsoring a community-wide pancake breakfast at no charge, but **DONATIONS** will be accepted. If you have any questions, please call Kent Kester at 814-553-2614.

Dates to Save

March 10, 2024 – Daylight Savings Time Starts – spring forward
March 12, 2024 – Craft and Chat 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
March 13, 2024 – Grace Board Meeting @ 9 a.m.
March 14, 2024 – WOW @ 2 p.m.
March 17, 2024 – Ladies of Grace @ 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
March 20, 2024 – SPRC...Staff Parish Relations Committee @ 9 a.m.
March 24, 2024 – Palm Sunday
March 24, 2024 – Blood Mobile 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
March 28, 2024 – Maundy Thursday Service, Communion @ 1 p.m.
March 29, 2024 – Good Friday Service @ 1 p.m.
March 31, 2024 – Easter Sunday
April 7, 2024 – Communion Sunday
April 9, 2024 – Craft and Chat 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
April 11, 2024 – WOW & 2 p.m.

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

Sun 11:30 am Ladies of Grace meet 3rd Sunday of each month
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 led by Sharon Miller
Note.... Women of Worship...Meet once a month on the second Thursday @ 2 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

Articles for future newsletters and if you have a testimony that you wish to share, please send to Alice Trusley @ atrusley@pantherbranch.com

Grace Methodist Church is a member of the



Thanks to the Participants in the INFORMATION FAIR

Find contact phone numbers & email addresses in the Grace Church Digital Directory

Bible Studies and Discussions

Wednesday Men's Prayer Breakfast

Pastor Bill & Pastor Kip

Thursday Scripture Study SOAP (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

Jan Wise

Thursday Ladies Lunch Bunch

Sharon Miller

Friday Bible Study at Meadowcrest

Pastor Bill

Friday Bible Lessons

Jan Wise

Blood Drives (quarterly)

Carolyn Bright

Children's Programs

Laurie Painter

Choir

Katherine Cornelius & Becky Jones

Congregational Care Committee

Carolyn Bright

Digital Directory/ Grace Gear Sales

Lou Espinoza

Ladies of Grace

Judy Chambliss & Sue Pagano

Leadership

Jim Trusley, Board President

Bob MacKenzie, Trustees

Memory Lane

Karen Kline

Men's Pancake Breakfasts

Kent Kester

Missions (Samaritans Purse, Food Collection, Eyeglasses)

Donna Farmer

Stephen Ministry

Karen Kline & Carol Mackenzie

Visitors/Welcome Table

Sue Pagano

Visits with Dutch/ God's Love Therapy

Kathie Henderson

Women of Worship

Sharon Miller