

From the Pastor

Coasting?

“It seems like Grace Church is in a good place, like we’re coasting right along,” she said to me with a thoughtful look on her face.

“I think so, yeah,” I said, probably a bit distracted.

“But,” she said, “do you think we should keep on coasting or... start accelerating?”

I admit that I wasn’t ready for that question. Oh, I had been thinking very much the same thing for a few weeks now. Summer is almost over, and we get back into the “regular routine” of our lives. Most of us have taken advantage of the longer (and warmer!!) days for lots of outdoor activities: vacations, camping, family reunions, picnics, gardening, whatever. Summer really is kind of a time to “coast” a bit, enjoy some rest and re-create.

We are in the middle of our sermon series on Grace Church’s core values in our worship services and I want to challenge all of us to step up into being the church. To paraphrase a much more famous pastor, “There’s nothing like the local church, when the church acts like the Church.” The Church – the Greek word is EKKLESIA – and it means “the gathering of the faithful” or “the congregation” or “the whole body of believers.”

Church has nothing to do with the building, CHURCH happens when followers of Jesus Christ are together acting like, well, followers of Jesus Christ – wherever that may be. CHURCH happens when we lovingly respond to the obnoxious jerk who just insulted our beliefs. CHURCH happens when we listen more than we speak, when we trust more than we doubt, when we live our lives with “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” CHURCH happens when we are among the hurting and the lost and broken, and they hear words of hope and healing and comfort, when they see hands that are open, and eyes filled with compassion.

So, yeah, we’ve been coasting a bit. Things are good here at Grace Church right now. We get along pretty well (and even where we disagree, we’re pretty civil and patient about it). But coasting will lull you to sleep.

I can’t imagine Jesus saying, “If anyone wants to be my disciple, be comfortable and coast along...”

No, Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?” (Luke 9:23b-25)

So, are you ready to shake things up a bit? Stretch yourself. If you’ve never really studied the Bible, take advantage of one of our Bible studies (Galatians or Disciple “Fast Track” this fall, Disciple Bible Study in the winter/spring). Maybe come to men’s prayer breakfast on Wednesday mornings or the Women of Grace gatherings on the fourth Monday evening of each month and enjoy some fellowship with other believers. Maybe join the choir (what? You can’t read music? Guess what – neither can your pastor...) or the 9:30 worship team or tech ministry or help with some other ministry within here at Grace Church like Covered by Grace (free hats, gloves and scarves in the winter) or the food pantry.

If you feel led to serve God by loving other people, volunteer at one of the food banks (First Lutheran and First Nazarene both have regular days each month they would love to have volunteers to help distribute food), or the Sharing Place (Thursday free dinners based out of First Presbyterian Church) or the Crossing (free

breakfasts every Saturday morning and worship every Sunday evenings). Give the Salvation Army a call and tell them you'd like to volunteer to do something – I bet they have a BUNCH of ways you can serve. Heck, just like Grace Church, every church has ministries that you could lend a hand. You know, the church being the Church.

Closer to home: have some real, meaningful conversations about faith with friends, with family, with your church family. Mentor someone – and allow yourself to BE mentored. We who are of the AARP age can learn a lot from those who are much younger than us – are we willing to listen? Young people can learn a lot from our wisdom that is born from (often painful) experience.

Take a morning and clean up your neighborhood. Take a minute and say hello to that person you don't know who lives across the street (you know, in that kinda sketchy house...). Take a day where you are intentionally kind and gentle and loving in EVERY interaction with people and then take note of how it impacted them – and YOU!

And a hundred other ways!

There's nothing like the local church (the gathering of the faithful), when the church is being the Church.

In his most personal of letters (2 John), John wrote to a "lady chosen by God and to her children" reiterating the new command of Jesus:

"And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love."

-2 John 1:5-6

It's time to start accelerating – in the mission and ministry that God has called us to. To follow the truth and walk in love.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Bill

Look Both Ways

Part 2 Look ahead boldly

Last month I wrote about looking back at the times when we *know* God has been with us. Because we know God has been with us, we can look ahead and live with the confidence that He will not leave us today or tomorrow.



There are many times in the Bible that we are called to be encouraged. Here's only a few, you probably have more scriptures in mind that you can turn to for encouragement and courage. Read all of Romans 8 and be encouraged. Also read all of Psalm 103, which begins and ends with the command "Praise the Lord, O my soul"

Then there's Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." In Psalm 56:4 King David wrote "In God I trust, I will not be afraid". That's not a bad verse to put on our currency!

One of the many hymns marked in my dad's well used pocket hymnal is one that we can carry with us as well, "God Will Take Care of You".

GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU

Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you.

Chorus:

God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way;
He will take care of you, God will take care of you.

Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you
When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you
(Chorus)

All you may need he will provide, God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you.
(Chorus)

No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon his breast, God will take care of you.
(Chorus)

Get the point? God will take care of you! Count your blessings this month, and boldly know that God *will* take care of you. See you in church!

Choir Notes

Ready, set, GO!

And we're off! Our Wednesday night choir rehearsals will begin on September 6 at 6:30. We already have some new exciting music and we'll have fun just getting together again after a long summer. Warm up your voices gently and come join us in song. Everyone is welcome. If you have any questions, just ask any choir member, or me, but I'm already excited! See you soon!

Floyd Moore
Choir Director
amfm123@verizon.net

BUILD EACH OTHER UP!

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come from your mouths, but only that which is helpful for building others up in accordance to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

This is a verse that has guided me and become a favorite over the years. However, my children may not feel the same way! You see, I used this verse as a tool to teach them to think before they spoke. Because, if I heard any of them using "unwholesome talk" or speaking with an "unwholesome attitude", they had to write that verse a number of times. And, the number varied depending on the degree of "unwholesomeness"!



Our kids are now 31, 33 and 35 years old. And, truthfully, I had forgotten about that verse writing. However, I found out that they had not! Awhile back, when we were all together, some subject came up and Tim brought up the "verse writing punishment" AND recited it, albeit, in paraphrase! Praise the Lord! Something stuck! The

girls' also had strong memories of "verse writing". So, for all you young parents out there, REPITITION is key! In the years to come, you too may be surprised at what your children remember!

I am especially mindful of this verse now as our country is in a time of such division. Not only should we beware of the "unwholesomeness" of our talk, but take it to the next level so that what we say is "helpful for building others up ... that is may benefit those who listen".

Verses that compliment that are Matthew 5:44-45a: "I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the *energies of prayer*, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves." (The Message). We are called upon to energetically pray for those who are in opposition to us. While we may never "see" the change in them, we will often "feel" the change in us.

I pray that we will reach out to others as individuals who exemplify who God intends us to be.

With you in Christ,
Cindy Price

The summer has flown by, and our first day of preschool will be here before we know it! Our school year will begin with two Orientation Days, where we will meet with each family at a designated time and give them information for the coming school year. Our first full day of classes will be Thursday, September 7.



Our enrollment numbers are a bit lower than we'd like but not a surprise after the unexpected closing of the daycare. We still have openings in the 3-year-old class if you hear of anyone still looking for a preschool. We appreciate all the support we receive from our Grace Church family and ask that you would join us in praying for lots of patience and a successful school year.

THANK YOU!

Trish Gentilman & Jen Lynds
preschool@atlanticbbn.net



During Worship
9:30 a.m. (0-2 yrs.)
11:00 a.m. (0- 5 yrs.)
September 3 – Melissa Zaffino
September 10 – Anna Peterson
September 17 – Melissa Zaffino
September 24 – Anna Peterson



Grace Church,
Thank you for the
Amazon gift card!
Peyton Morrison

Dear Grace Church,
Thank you for the gift card. I appreciate your support and generosity.
Lily Brooker

The Church office has new hours! The office is now CLOSED on Fridays. If you need anything from the office, you can call Monday-Thursday 9a-4p or email Meghan (meghan@graceumcwarren.com) or Mary (mary@graceumcwarren.com).



The Grace Church Food Pantry is not in need of anything at this time. Thank you to all who contribute!



Items for the **October 2023** Newsletter need to be delivered to Mary in the office mary@graceumcwarren.com by **Friday, September 15.**



Flock Talk

"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in Him."

Psalm 37:23

Our pace begins to pick up at Grace Church! With fall weather around the corner and school resuming, we look forward to a new pace and great opportunities. As a church family, we are all on this glorious journey together.

Where do we start? If you are interested in joining a ministry or serving on a committee, now is the time. Our Nominations and Leadership Committee begins their work soon and will be looking for people with giftedness and skills in a variety of areas. We may not know what appeals to you and would love to have you talk to us.

With more time available to join classes, let's think about how many choices are available. There will be Sunday School and Bible study adventures ahead and you would be welcome to teach a class if you felt inclined. The children and youth will be at full speed and you may want to jump on board and explore your creative side!

The Fitness Ministry classes are going strong and offer advice on staying healthy and strong. The Walking and Hiking Clubs are putting on so many miles that we have had to increase the available times. There is a tremendous enthusiasm for enjoying God's beautiful creation together!

Keep an eye on the newsletter and bulletins for upcoming events. Never hesitate to step outside your comfort zone and let God do the rest!

Warmly,
Sue Toombs, Lay Leader



Yarn Angels now meets on the **second** Friday of every month from 10:00-11:30am. Anyone interested in knitting is welcome to come.

LIGHTHOUSE CONGREGATION TESTIMONY:



We chose to leave our previous United Methodist church due to their disaffiliation vote. Upon visiting Grace UMC, we were welcomed by friends and strangers alike. Without judgment or pressure, they listened to our concerns and feelings and invited us to visit again. It is for these reasons that

Grace UMC has been chosen as a Lighthouse Congregation. Thank you for making our transition as painless as possible.

Grace Church Finance Report



I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer and vacation season! Fall is nearly upon us. Please see below for the financials for July.

2023 Monthly and YTD Financials

	July '23	YTD
Total Income	\$29,868.27	\$194,263.12
Office Expense	\$158.60	\$4,306.56
Buildings & Ground Expense (Church & Parsonage)	\$9,877.59	\$52,784.97
Ministry Personnel	\$21,511.85	\$156,751.25
Church Council	\$0.00	\$317.79
Education Ministry	\$187.28	\$1,870.22
Nurture Ministry	\$67.52	\$844.45
Worship Ministry	\$213.70	\$1,734.22
Outreach Ministry	\$0.00	\$401.96
Connectional Apportionment	\$0.00	\$0.00
Witness Ministry	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Ministry & Expense	\$32,016.54	\$219,011.42
Net Income	(\$2,148.27)	(\$24,748.30)

Borrowed Funds

Account Balance 7/31/2023	(\$118,587.72)
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We praise God for the generous gifts and offerings.

Submitted by:

Brian A. Jurkowski, Finance Chair & the Finance Committee



The Outreach committee will be conducting their annual Rummage Sale **Saturday, September 16 from 8 am to 1 pm**. All proceeds will go towards our Grace Youth Group (CREW) **trip to SPARK (annual youth rally)** in early 2024.

Please bring your donations on **Friday, September 15 from 4 to 7 pm** to the front entrance of Grace Church. Children's clothes will be accepted but please no adult

clothing, and no TV's, computer monitors, or air conditioners.

Volunteers are needed for drop off times and to work the sale on Saturday. Sign-up sheets are in Wesley Parlor with time slots! Time to clean out those closets and garages!

Attention women!

*Are you looking to strengthen your relationship with Christ?

*Are you looking to bond with other women?

*Are you looking for an evening of sharing and caring with one another?

Grace church is offering a new women's ministry! "Full of Grace" will meet the Fourth

Monday of each month in the Eaton Parlor from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. We will start with an intro, video

lesson, devotional and pray time. No need to sign-up, just show-up! Hope to see you there! Questions,

please contact Karen Conarro at: fullofgraceumcwarren@gmail.com



Grace Hiking and Walking Clubs

Our explorations have been at full tilt this summer! The enthusiasm with these clubs has given us the opportunity to spend even more time on the trail and we plan on keeping that same pace. Please keep an eye on the bulletins for new dates and destinations. If you would like to be on the mailing list, let me know!

The friendships and the conversations are the best part. Having this time to be in the midst of God's creation and sharing stories is a treasure. If a hike feels like it would be too strenuous, feel free to join in on a walk. Anyone that would like to lead a hike or walk is welcome. This fall will provide some of our most beautiful times in the forest!

For more information contact Sue Toombs at fourwindsranch@verizon.net or 814-730-9996.

The Agape Class Study Group will begin meeting again on Sunday, September 17, 2023 at 9:30 am in the Winger Parlor. The class will finish the study *Forgiving What You Can't Forget* by Lysa Terkeurst. We will begin with session 5, The Compounding Effect of Unforgiveness. All are welcome to join the group and should not hesitate to do so just because they missed the beginning of the study. The two sessions left will provide you with some excellent guidance as you struggle to forgive. Join Agape on Sunday, September 17!

Galatians Bible Study

Pastor Bill will be leading a chapter-by-chapter study of the Book of Galatians on Sunday evenings and Tuesday mornings.

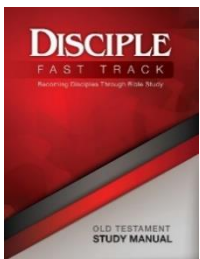
The book of Galatians is a letter written to the churches in the region of Asia Minor known as Galatia, one of the first regions that Paul traveled to in his missionary journeys. Galatians is among Paul's early letters and addresses a few specific problems that the church was facing in the early years, most notably, a belief that salvation could be earned by doing good deeds and living a good life. Paul's most important theme is that we are "justified by faith" not by works.



The Galatians study will be meeting in **Eaton Parlor** for six weeks starting **Sunday, September 10th at 7:00 PM and Tuesday, September 12th at 9:30 AM** covering one chapter each week. You only have to bring your Bible and a willingness to dive into God's word! Handouts created by Pastor Bill will be provided.

Disciple Bible Study (Something New)

We have been running **Disciple Bible Study** sessions at Grace Church almost continually for the past eight or nine years (Covid messed up 2020...). Disciple Bible Study has always been a daunting commitment: 32-34 weeks of in-depth study of the Bible. But everyone who has taken Disciple Bible Study has agreed that the amount of work is not only worthwhile, it can be life changing.



There's a new format for Disciple Bible Study that divides the studies into **12-week sessions** (they call it "Fast Track"). Now, I know that 12 weeks can seem like a lot (it is three months, after all), but I promise you that if you give one of these studies a try, you will not be disappointed. In fact, you'll read God's word in a whole new way.

Pastor Bill will be leading **Disciple 1 – the Old Testament** on **Thursday mornings (10:00-11:30) and Thursday evenings (6:00-7:30), starting September 28th and ending the study December 28th**, with two Thursdays "off" (October 26th for our annual Church Conference and November 23rd for Thanksgiving!)

We will meet in **Eaton Parlor**. A Study Manual is required for these studies, so please let the office know if you are interested in participating. The cost of the manual is \$18, and you will want to have yours a week before the study begins so that you can prepare for the first session.



September 1 – Peg Andersen

September 2 – LuAnn Saeli

September 3 – Ronda Morrison, Scott Lynds

September 5 – Helen Woods, Ron Amon, Collin Lord, Colby Barr

September 6 – George Wentworth, Meghan Brooker

September 8 – Emily Shepherd

September 10 – Timothy Tannler, Tanner Phillips, Lydia Card

September 11 – Rory Trisket

September 12 – Joe Saeli

September 13 – Dorothy Flemming, Cassandra Waseleski, Tristan Johnson, Emily Ickert

September 14 – Pat Esterbrook, Solomiya Savych

September 15 – Lillaine Price

September 16 – Michael Farr, Renee Magnuson

September 17 – Harold Wall, Ross Bryan

September 18 – Lanea Brooker, Susan Ball

September 19 – Marsha Larson, Breanna Wilson

September 20 – Kathy Keller, Patrick Berdine

September 22 – Nancy Trisket, Lori Beatty

September 23 – Nancy Gheres, Carson Farr

September 24 – Mary Hellman

September 25 – Cindy Dziendziel, Susan Speicher, Scott Stewart

September 26 – James Marshall, Joyce Carnahan, Judith Renwick, Savanah Sykes

September 27 – Carmen Pearce

September 28 – Melanie Braughler, Andrea Stapleford, Blake Peterson

September 30 – Ronna Tipton, Gwen Jones





September



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		PROMISE PRESCHOOL is open Sept-May Mon, Wed, and Thurs from 9:00 – 11:30 am (3-year-olds) and 12:30 – 3:00 pm (4-year-olds) located on the ground floor.			1	2 9:00 a Praise Team
3 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:45 a Sunday School 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing	4 Office Closed	5 11:00 a Staff Meeting 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p <i>SPRC</i> 6:00 p Pickleball	6 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 10:00 a Preschool Orientation 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	7 6:00 p Caregivers' Support Group	8 10:00 a Yarn Angels 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga	9 9:00 a Praise Team
10 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:45 a Sunday School 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing 7:00 p Galatians Bible Study	11 5:15 p Christian Yoga 5:30 p <i>Nurture</i> 6:00 p <i>Worship</i>	12 9:30 a Galatians Bible Study 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p <i>Property Trustees</i> 6:00 p Pickleball	13 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	14	15 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga 4:00 p Rummage Sale Drop Off	16 8:00 a Rummage Sale 9:00 a Praise Team
17 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:30 a Agape 9:45 a Sunday School 4:00 p Watson Home 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing 7:00 p Galatians Bible Study	18 12:00 p Caregivers' Support Group 5:15 p Christian Yoga	19 9:30 a Galatians Bible Study 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p <i>Finance</i> 6:00 p Pickleball	20 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	21	22 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga	23 9:00 a Praise Team 12:00 p Wedding
24 8:30/9:30/11:00 a Worship 9:30 a Agape 9:45 a Sunday School 6:00 p Worship @ The Crossing 7:00 p Galatians Bible Study	25 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:30 p Full of Grace Women's Ministry	26 9:30 a Galatians Bible Study 12:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p <i>Church Council</i> 6:00 p Pickleball	27 7:00 a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:15 p Christian Yoga 6:00 p Madrigals 6:30 p Choir 6:30 p C.R.E.W.	28 10:00 a Disciple 1 6:00 p Disciple 1	29 11:00 a Fitness Ministry 12:15 p Christian Yoga	30 9:00 a Praise Team

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Published monthly;
September 2023

- Grace Praise Team -

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Alice Pedersen, Cindy Dziendziel, Walter Miller, Dave Moore*

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Find us on Facebook under the group Embrace Grace!