

“No matter who you are or where you’re from, you are welcome here”

MESSENGER

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00a-3:00p
Closed Fridays, Holidays and Fort Zumwalt No School Days

Sunday Worship: Traditional Service-8:45 am
Contemporary Service-11:15 am

Community Outreach Programs:

Girl Scout Daisy Troop 2811

N.A.M.I. (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month

Grace Preschool: 2 years-Pre-K (Please call 636-240-5856 for details!)

GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

8326 Mexico Road

O’FALLON, Missouri 63376

Phone: 636-240-7621

Website: www.wearegraceucc.com

E-Mail: graceuccoffice@gmail.com



OUR MISSION IS TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIS LOVE KNOWN TO ALL



Facebook.com/graceuccofallon



O’Fallon@WeAreGraceUCC

A WORD FROM YOUR PASTOR

~ A NEW THING in 2020~

“Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth.
Do you not perceive it?”
(Isaiah 43:18, 19a)

Dear Grace Family and Friends,

Greetings and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, The One True Light of us all! Last month we began thinking about what new thing is God wanting us to live into for 2020. At our annual meeting we decided we would do two things to help us toward this end – One is to correct our bylaws. Two is to develop a vision statement to help us live out our mission statement. We will do both over the next months to clear the way to more efficiently live into our life together.

In this second month of 2020 we must begin to prayerfully perceive the direction God is calling us to go as a congregation. As I mentioned about 2019, and we can see since we are already into February, life seems to be moving fast. That being said, I’ve already had at least five team meetings where my pastoral presence was needed. Each team meeting necessary and good – but each different.

So if you’re called by God or asked to prayerfully consider being on the bylaw revision team or to help brainstorm a vision statement please know these teams need you. There is a reason you’re being asked. The reason is God is doing a new thing with us. “Do you not perceive it?” Each of these teams will not meet for the sake of meeting. We will meet together and do the work God is calling us toward. So ... if you have gifts in creativity and / or in ‘legalese’ please contact one of your Council Members, Rev. Susan Shumway, or me and we will ensure to find you a place on one of the teams.

In closing, as I said in January, every season of life brings changes. There is always a new thing that God is doing – may we open our hearts and spirits to perceive it unfolding. May God bless our Grace United Church of Christ with 2020 vision!

As Always, in Christ’s ministry with you, and sent with Love,
Pastor Polly

A WORD FROM YOUR STUDENT PASTOR

Did you know that our country has the highest incarceration rate in the world? Year after year, we beat much bigger countries like India and China, and more totalitarian governments like Russia and the Philippines, for putting the highest ratio of our people in jail and prison. But it hasn't always been this way. Between 1980 and 2015, the number of people we incarcerate grew from about 500,000 to over 2.2 million! And many groups are challenging this, saying that our incarceration rate is too high, the system is unjust, and that arresting and incarcerating people isn't making our communities any safer. There are big racial disparities in how we imprison people, too. African Americans are imprisoned at more than 5 times the rate of whites. Although African Americans and Latinos make up 32% of the US population, they were 56% of all incarcerated people in 2015. This is just not right!

In Luke 4:18, Jesus proclaims that He has come to set the prisoners free. Isn't it odd that a country that identifies as "Christian" would imprison more people than anyone in the world? I think that as faithful people of the gospel, we ought to be concerned.

This January I had the opportunity to take a group of 18 middle and high schoolers to see the film *Just Mercy*. If you haven't had a chance to see the movie, I highly recommend that you do! The movie chronicles the work of young lawyer Bryan Stevenson, who is today a world-renowned civil rights defense attorney. I won't spoil it for you, but let's just say that Bryan takes on a seemingly hopeless case, trying to free a wrongly condemned death row prisoner in Alabama named Walter McMillian.

The movie highlights the humble beginnings of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), which is now a powerhouse organization. EJI has worked on thousands of cases of wrongful conviction since the 1980s. They have also worked to reform the criminal justice system. You can learn more about their work at eji.org.

Do you have any thoughts about this? I encourage you to share and be in dialogue with me and others about it.

Christ's Love,
Pastor Annie Girresch



ATTENDANCE AND FUNDRAISING

JANUARY 2020: 249 as of 1/19

JULY: 305

FEBRUARY: 246

AUGUST: 306

MARCH: 349

SEPTEMBER: 461

(not including Wednesday Lenten Services)

APRIL: 406

OCTOBER: 344

MAY: 300

NOVEMBER: 322

JUNE: 450

DECEMBER: 527

Scrip Announcements!

In December \$13 was donated to Evangelism and \$13 was donated to the Capital Campaign. A profit of \$103.63 was made in December. Shop with scrip - www.shopwithscrip.com

Evangelism

A meeting to plan out events such as Pride St. Charles will occur on Monday, February 17 at 7p. Please contact Susan Shumway for any questions and suggestions.

Amazon Smiles 😊

You can designate Grace as your charity to receive a percentage of the amount you purchase at Amazon. Copy this link into the browser <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/43-098919>

Culver's Fundraising Nights

Our next Culver's fundraiser will be on Tuesday, February 4. If you are unable to attend, please take a flyer and share with others to invite them as the youth will receive 10% of ALL sales from 5pm-9pm

Ink Jet Cartridge Recycling helps Camp MoVal Scholarship fund!

Any inkjet cartridge with a print head can be recycled, regardless of brand or type. Bring in your empty OEM inkjet cartridges (placed in the original box that you would have thrown away to keep it safe from spills and damages, or a Ziploc bag) to church (Note: Epson cartridges cannot be recycled – they don't have a print head.). We get paid up to \$4 per cartridge. For any questions, please contact Cindy Rose.

Grace's Backpack Program

This month, please consider donating Ravioli, Spaghetti O's, Soup, Canned Veggies, and basically anything that would fit in a backpack without breaking or getting smashed. If you prefer we did the shopping for you, we will happily take your money donation to do just that. Thank you so much for supporting these children. In this country no child should ever go to bed hungry!

FOOD PANTRY ITEMS

Needed for February: Saltine Crackers, Canned Stew/Hash, Hamburger Helper, Kleenex.
THANK YOU!

NOTE: Rev. Susan Shumway is a notary and is offering free notary services to church

Grace Opportunities

Every Child's Hope

Gifts will now be available all year long through Hope Chest for our young peoples' giving needs- Mother's Day, Father's Day, Birthdays, Graduations...and Christmas too! Please contact Sarah Dewesse, Volunteer & Community Relations manager, 314-427-3755 x299 or sdewesse@echmail.org. Mark items "Store/Sarah" or "Hope Chest/Sarah." (Pick up is also available).

Re-Group

Re-Group is a fellowship time for adults ages 18 (post high school) and older. All adults are welcomed to join us at any or all of the events. We meet informally at least once a month. Often we go out to eat a meal and fellowship together. Other times we meet at various activities. What this means is you can drop into any event, anytime you can join us. We have a fun time getting together with our Grace Family. If you have any questions or would like to host an event please contact Ana Kniesel. The next Re-Group meeting is on February 29 at Grace United Church of Christ in the fellowship area at 5:30-8:30pm. Shaughn and Gina Uebinger will be hosting a game night. Please bring your favorite game and a snack to share. Please RSVP by using the signup sheet or by contacting Shaughn or Gina by February 26. Hope to see you all there!

National Alliance on Mental Illness

For more information, 314-962-4670 or www.namistl.org/programs-2/nami-family-to-family/

Every Child's Hope Ladies Aid

Gift cards for youth across all programs (Target, Wal-Mart, grocery stores, Amazon.) For Winter: baby items for pregnant/parenting youth Steppingstone – Diapers, wipes, formula, bottles, blankets, onesies. For more information please call 314-427-3755.

TIME AND TALENTS

Volunteering, offering a donation of time or a talent that may assist in an event OR using your place of business as a resource are just some ways to give without having to use your personal funds. Many companies have a charitable program in the form of either matching funds for donations or volunteer hours. Please check with your personnel department or check out http://nnedv.org/downloads/Other/Matching_gifts_companies.pdf for a complete list.

Adult Sunday School

You may sign up on the Ministries Opportunities board or just show up. We meet in the church office at 10a.

Cleaning Up O'Fallon

Save these dates in 2020 for your next chance to help clean up O'Fallon: March 14, May 9, June 13, July 11, September 12, November 14. Thank you!

If you are feeling called to a new ministry, please look at the "Ministry Opportunities" board right outside the office. There are Lay Reading, Usher, Greeters, Acolyte, Fellowship Hosting, and many other opportunities for you. Each of these ministries are important in Christ's Church and we have many others if you're feeling called to Bible Study, Youth Ministry, Care Giving Ministry, and so many others.

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Every Child's Hope

Every Child's Hope, formerly known as the Evangelical Children's Home, serves children from abusive and neglected backgrounds throughout Missouri. ECH provides housing, therapy, worship opportunities, and schooling; they provide sports and summer program activities, as well as foster care programs and education. The finance, parenting and nutrition classes offered, help many young people out of residential placement and out of the system. In addition, ECH offers help for unwed teen mothers. Their early education programs and daycare programs are available to the community.

ECH receives no federal funding and no help from United Way. They are dependent on private funding from individuals and from churches like ours.

The Mission and Outreach Ministries' area of focus for this month is Every Child's Hope. Please contribute generously to make this mission a success!

Our November 2019 focus was Hope Food Pantry. We collected cash for turkeys, hams and gifts. Total collection was \$697.

December 2019 focus was the Ministers' Retirement Fund. Total collection was \$683.

Respectfully submitted by Sherry Webster

MUSIC MINISTRY

Thursday evening rehearsals: Risen meets at 6p. Please watch your emails and the Weekly Update for changes. Choir will meet as scheduled for special services.

*Grace Choir wants YOU! If you are interested in joining the Choir, please contact our business office at graceuccoffice@gmail.com or talk to Jon Garrett after Sunday Worship Services. *

*Bass guitar player wanted. Auditioning sessions may be scheduled by contacting Jon Garrett at graceuccoffice@gmail.com or in person after Sunday Worship Services. *

24 Hour Famine

24-hour Famine will be Sat Feb 22 - Sun Feb 23rd. We will gather at Friedens Peace at noon Saturday. There will be games, a service project, time to relax, and learn about world hunger. It will end with attending and helping with worship at 10 am and then we breakfast with a wonderful breakfast. All middle and high school youth invited.

Please gather donations from friends/relatives/others to support you going without food for 24 hours. All money is forwarded to World Vision. People can also donate on-line. There are prizes for amount of money raised. Below is a link to the team page. It's ready for you to sign up and begin fundraising.

<https://www.30hourfamine.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donordrive.team&teamID=22906>

Anyone who wants to register for the famine or to volunteer to help should contact Julie Loika jll8084@outlook.com;

Church address: Friedens Peace UCC, 3560 Mill St. New Melle MO church phone is 636-828-5980 Julie Loika 636-399-5742 Pastor Karen Phone is 720-351-2319.

Kid's and Youth Stuff

Sunday School

“Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men!” said Jesus. We are learning about the disciples and what God is calling each of us to do in our lives. Bring your child to church on Sundays at 10:00am to experience our class!

Safe Church Child Protection Policy

Grace has a document, updated and approved by the Church Council, which details the procedures in place to keep everyone safe. Just a reminder that during the ten o'clock hour on Sundays, only trained volunteers, students, and their parents should be in the youth area on the east side of the lower level.

SCUMY

15-17 February – CYE (9-12) \$120-\$130

22-23 February – 30 Hour Famine by Friedens-Peace Julie Meyer

26 February – Ash Wednesday

NURSERY

There is a trained teen at second service each Sunday to care for the children in the nursery. The Nursery Staff includes Lexi Hagl, Mollie Garrett, Alexandria Fuehrer, and Melissa Megathlin. Look for their picture and biographies hanging on the Nursery door each Sunday. In accordance with Grace UCC's Safe Child Church Policy, we are requiring that **ONLY ADULTS** pick up children from the Nursery. Children/Parents are assigned a number that is used in the pick-up procedure.

Our Faith and Sexuality Retreat

Our first retreat and learning about sexuality was very successful. There were eight teens and five adults present.

These are the topics we discussed: Language of sexuality, Body image and feelings, Influence of media/advertising, Body parts and their functions, Sexual response cycle models (how the human body responds to sexual stimuli) and sexual functioning/dis-functioning, Reproductive and sexual health care, Laws specific to Missouri related to sexuality, Technology use/abuse, Sexual harassment/abuse.

There were lively discussions and much factual information was shared, with an emphasis on making healthy and life-affirming decisions. We look forward to our next day of learning to take place on Saturday, April 18 at Faith UCC in Wentzville.

Respectfully,

Susan Shumway (S.C.U.M.Y. Coordinator (St. Charles United Ministry for Youth))

Jim Hilker (Faith UCC Pastor in Wentzville)

Carla Boster (Grace UCC youth leader)

Dana McNamara (Christian Education/Youth Director at Friedens UCC in St. Charles)

Mary Ann Sutton (Intentional Faith Development Chair at Grace UCC)

Youth Event at Kokomo Joe's



BIRTHDAYS AND COUNCIL CORNER

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY'S

08 Michael Silger
09 Carl Sandstedt
10 Becky Brocklesby
11 Stephanie Shelton
13 Jim Hagl
21 Caitlin Silger

25 Gloria Masterson
27 Kevin Boiles
27 Peter Kniesel
28 Alysia Lund
29 Garry Rose

Council Corner

The church council met on 12/18/2019 with all members present. Polly's devotion was from Ephesians 5:25 and she asked us to think about what we say to other people about our church. It's a good question....one that everyone should consider and hopefully we put our church is a very good light.

The numbers are in for the Second Mile Giving. We raised over \$1000 and the \$5 Stewardship campaign brought in a lot of money also. The quilts raised close to a \$1000.

The Finance Team is looking at the insurance policies to see if there are any savings they can find there. They would like to finish the doors/window in the kitchen area so that that area can be closed off.

Our budget for 2020 is approved and will be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting on January 19th. Polly has asked that the council look at our bylaws/constitution. It is seriously antiquated and needs to be updated. A committee will be formed to revise the constitution in 2020. We will also consider a new mission and vision statement.

We are in need of volunteers for ushering, lay reading and hosting coffee hour for both services. If you would like to serve on one of the ministry teams, the council also welcomes more volunteers to those teams. Please see Office Manager or Pastor Polly for the contact person to each team. And check the ministry opportunity board should you wish to volunteer for a job during service. ~Cheryl Howard

MINISTRY NEEDS

Your Grace Council is asking that various groups volunteer to host fellowship time after each worship service one Sunday a month. Please also note there are plenty of other opportunities for Lay Readers, Ushers, Greeters, and more. "Each one should give what s/he has decided to give, not reluctantly or regretfully. For God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) Sharing your time and talents in various ways is a wonderful way to give joyfully! Please take some time to prayerfully consider volunteering for one or more of these important ministries!

MISSION POSSIBLE

23 FEBRUARY

10:00 A.M. & 12:30 P.M.

DECODE THIS:

**MK 16:15+ACTS 1:8+PH 4:13=
YOUR MISSION**

**YOUR ASSIGNMENT, SHOULD YOU
CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT IS TO FIND
YOUR MISSION. YOU HAVE A
CHOICE – WILL YOU ACCEPT YOUR
MISSION FROM GOD?**

Grace United Church of Christ, 8326 Mexico Road O'Fallon, MO

PROJECTED CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY – Mission of the Month Every Child’s Hope

1: Men’s Group 8a

SUNDAY 2: Birthday Sunday (Polly in CT Pastor Heather’s Installation) Jon Garrett Preaches

3: Grace Life 7p

4: Preschool Parent/Teacher Conferences in Sanctuary 9a-2p, Community of Practice 11a-2p

5: Preschool Parent/Teacher Conferences in Sanctuary 9a-2p, Staffing 10:30a, POP 4:15p

6: Preschool Parent/Teacher Conferences in Sanctuary 9a-2p, Crafty Corner 9a, Risen Practice 6p

7: Preschool Parent/Teacher Conferences in Sanctuary 9a-2p

8: Worship Design 7:30a

SUNDAY 9: Mission/Outreach 10a

10: Worship Design 7p

11: SCUM 12:30p, Grace Care 6p

12: Staffing 10:30a, POP 4:15p, Preschool Mom’s Night 6-7:30p

13: Crafty Corner 9a, Preschool Mom’s Night 6-7:30p, Risen Practice 6p

14: Preschool Half Day of Classes Teacher In-Service

15: CYE 2020 leaving Grace at 10a-2/17

SUNDAY 16: CYE 2020, Messenger Deadline, Pastor Annie Girresch Preaching

17: OFFICE CLOSED – Presidents Day (&FZS No School Day) , Return from CYE 2020

18: Council 7p ,NAMI 7p

19: Staffing 10:30a, POP 4:15p

20: Crafty Corner 9a, Risen Practice 6p

21:

22: Set up for “Mission Possible” 10a, 24 Hour Famine @ Friedens

SUNDAY 23: “Mission Possible” 10a and 12:30p, Daisy Girl Scout Meeting 4-5:30p

24:

25:

26: Staffing 10:30a, POP 4:15p, Ash Wednesday

27: Crafty Corner 9a, Risen Practice 6p

28:

29: Re-Group @ Grace UCC 5:30-8:30p – Game Night (bring a game and snacks to share)

THANK YOU

Thank you to all church members present at the congregational meeting in January. Your presence made it possible to have votes carried and welcome in new council members.

Thank you for all of the special Christmas cards sent into Grace. We enjoyed seeing them displayed in the fellowship area for all to see.

A very special thank you from the Staff for the thoughtful Christmas gift. We all felt quite appreciated and loved by our Grace family.

"A big shout out" to all who helped with the Hanging and Unhanging of the Greens this past season! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU! I super appreciate everyone's patience while I try to organize this church tradition. I believe we are almost there, a couple more tweaks, trials and errors and I think we will have it! God Bless each of you for your service and I look forward to working with you again! In service, Debbie Jones

The City of O'Fallon, its elected officials, city staff and residents are grateful for those who contribute to better our community. Thank you for making a positive difference in the City of O'Fallon this past year. With sincere thanks and best wishes for a wonderful new year, Kathy A. Halstead, CVA, Volunteer Services Manager. This was part of a letter and "Certificate of Appreciation," that we received from the City of O'Fallon for the mile we clean on Mexico Road. You can see the certificate in the business office.

In December we had 30 scarves, 46 hats, 14 ear warmers, 42 pairs of gloves/mittens, 92 pairs of socks (Amazing – people need socks year-round) all donated from the tree in the foyer going to H.O.P.E. Good Pantry to help people stay warm this winter. Thank You! P.S. Donation can still be brought in and placed in the box by the door.

~Mission Outreach Ministries

Prayer List

Sara Andler, Glen & Sandy Andler, Pastor Beebe, Baby Wesley, Cathy Blake, The Clements Family, Dana's Dad, Dave Counts, Sheila Engelmeyer, Fritsche Family, Krysten Gray, Heather Henderson, Matt Jackson, Jeanne, Jason Jenks, Yvette Karcher, Randy McWilliams, Helen Meyer, Family of Rigo Perez, Rebeckah, Scott, John Scotto, Steve, Tara & Family, Willie Vogel, Nicole Whiteley, Kelsy Wong, The Family in Brooklyn, Praise for a successful lock-in, The people involved in the Somalia killing, People-Wildlife-Firefighters in Australia, Everyone at Grace, Puerto Rico, Members of Philips Seminary, homeless, Our Military Men, Women & Families, Kids who are bullied, Government Leaders & all Americans, Those who have no prayers offered for them.

In Care

Betty Bauer, Liz Birchen, Jan Sutton, Bernice Watson