

# Grace and Peace

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

5030 S. Memorial Drive, Homosassa, FL 34446

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

## **A Message from Pastor Kip...A Burning Bush**

**Genesis 3:2** *There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.*

The above text is from Mose' experience with a burning bush. A few verses later God speaks to Moses from the bush. If you recall this is where God commissions Moses to save God's people. And the rest is history!



Other people have had like experiences in their lives, where they believe that God has "spoken" to them or revealed a divine truth to them. Such experiences can be referred to as burning bush moments.

On the morning of this past Maundy Thursday, I had a burning bush moment! I followed my usual routine: I went to the Hen House for breakfast and then off to the two downtown Inverness parks to walk. I enjoy listening to music while I walk, and sometimes I listen to country music and sometimes I listen to Christian music. This was a Christian music day. When I arrived at Wallace Brooks Park, I was seeking a place to sit for a few minutes before heading home. I was still listening to music as I walked, a cool down lap around the park.

I noticed that the lyrics of the songs were strangely touching my heart. It was like the songs were highlighting exactly how I was feeling on this particular morning. Each song made me hungry for what the song lyrics highlighted. Each song's lyrics made me hunger for a reminder of God's love. As I walked, I spotted a bench on the pathway, and decided that this would be a good spot. I had never sat here before because this particular bench is typically in the sun, and I am not a "sun person". But for some reason the sun seemed appealing on this day.

I sat there for a while, continuing to listen to the songs and praying. Then it was time to go. As I leaned forward to get off the bench, I looked down and saw my burning bush right there between my feet. Someone had written a message on the concrete with blue chalk. I could barely read it at first. I had to study it for a moment because the light blue color of the chalk blended into the sidewalk too much. When I finally made out what it said, I was stunned and nearly fell forward, off the bench. I just stared at it for the longest moment.

I started thinking back to my prayers as I listened to the music and the powerful lyrics. I started to think about what I had been seeking just moments earlier. The message was perfectly clear. This is what was written on the sidewalk: Jesus loves you.

Now most folks wouldn't think much of this simple truth. But when you are hungry for good news, this is huge. When I read the message, I did not put the emphasis on the word "loves". But rather on the word "You". God loves YOU! This made it personal. This said that Jesus loves me! He knows me. He knows my thoughts and concerns. He knows what I need. And at just the right moment, he took me to a bench where someone had innocently written to anyone who sat on the bench, that Jesus loves them.

So, let me remind you that God is still with us and is still offering burning bush moments. Yours may be right around the corner. Keep looking. Keep hoping. Keep the faith. He knows you. He longs to bless you. Because Jesus loves you!

Pastor Kip

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

#### **Dementia and Firearm Safety**

Several weeks ago, David DeCarlo, Executive Director of the Office of Community Engagement and Transparency from the Citrus County Sheriff's Office came to our Memory Lane Support Group to discuss the issue of Dementia and Firearm Safety.

Dave provided group members with a copy of the book: "Dementia and Firearm Safety" by Dementia Education Inc. The book relates that those individuals who kept firearms in their home when their families were young, were probably very conscientious about practicing good firearm safety habits. In later years with the event of the "empty nest syndrome" many things may change in our lives: decreased dexterity and skills, eyesight and judgement and the possible onset of dementia. Families may unknowingly become relaxed with their safety measures. It is recommended that as we age, not only for our own safety, but for the safety of those around us, we should think of ways to strengthen our safety measures. A few of a quite long list are:

- Never leave a gun unattended, even if you are in the process of cleaning it.
- Always keep your gun(s) secured in your home in a safe place such as a safe, gun cabinet, or locked box designed for that purpose.

- Keep the safe/gun cabinet combination or key readily accessible to you, but secret from those not qualified to handle a firearm.
- Leave guns unloaded when not in use, and never leave a loaded gun unattended, even for a moment, to avoid accidental discharge or shooting.
- If you decide you no longer want to keep your firearms in your home, be sure to legally transfer ownership to a responsible party.

Since February 2018, Florida has what is known as a “Red Flag” law. This means that law enforcement agencies, with authorization from the court, can remove weapons from people when they become a danger to themselves or others.

Mr. DeCarlo provided a few extra copies of the book which you can borrow from our church library. It contains a lot of information about dementia in general and much more on maintaining firearm safety in the home.

Be Safe, not Sorry!

### **Stephen Ministers...Carol MacKenzie**

Our congregation has been blessed having Stephen Ministers available for consultation. Our current Stephen Ministers and Leaders are: Pastor Bill Farmer, Dick Bily, Carolyn Bright, Joyce Foxwell, Jane Hamilton, Kathie Henderson, Becky Jones, Jan Metcalf, Tom Metcalf, and Sue Philips. Our Stephen Ministry Leaders are: Karen Kline and Carol MacKenzie.

If you need help, our Stephen Ministers are available by calling either Karen Kline at 352-634-1781 or Carol MacKenzie at 382-8926 or cell 352-201-9380. A Stephen Minister will meet with you one-on-one, with total **confidentiality** because we are here for you...you are not alone. Someone to listen to you and pray with you.

### **Mission Moment...Donna Farmer**

Don't forget—all one-dollar bills will go to Residing Hope (Children's Home in Enterprise, FL). You can give by designating your gift to Residing Hope on your envelopes or by placing \$1.00 bills in the offering. Thank you for all your support of our missions.

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

Thank you, Grace Methodist, for all the support that you give to the WOW's projects. Don't forget to continue supporting WOW's collecting of stamps and soda pop-top tabs which can be placed in the respective boxes on the table by the Food Pantry in the small fellowship hall. WOW meets every second Thursday at 2:00. Come join the fun.

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

**Sweet Celebrations** We are excited to begin our preparations for Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations. Sweet Celebrations Cookie Boxes are returning for Mother's Day, May 11 and Father's Day, June 15. We, again, will give out gift boxes of sweet

selections to moms and dads with cookies, brownies, cupcakes, and candies contributed by church members. Join in by donating homemade or bakery treats. You can also bring gourmet chocolates like Lindt and Giardelli wrapped candies or Andes mints. On Saturdays (May 10 and June 14), bring contributions to church from 9-10 am. Our Cookie Committee, chaired by Rose Matchen, will place them in gift boxes. Sweet Celebrations will be given out after church. There is no charge for the boxes. Of course, love donations will be accepted. This was a popular project last year and we are very happy to offer it again this year.

**Helping Hands Ministry** Have you ever thought about how you can help others in our church by trimming trees before hurricanes, making dinner for someone who has recently been discharged from the hospital, organizing a garage, driving someone to a doctor's appointment, calling someone who lives alone to be sure that they are OK?

Katie Snowberger is heading up the Helping Hands Ministry that will offer help for these and other needs. Watch for future dates to sign up as a volunteer in this ministry.

**Attend the National Day of Prayer Service at Grace Methodist, May 1** In April, Pastor Bill and Pastor Kip hosted a breakfast for Homosassa church leaders. As they broke bread and shared experiences, they could see similarities and differences among their congregations. One has young families. Another has mostly retirees. One will host a food bank. Another will host meals and showers to people without a home. It will take more time to find ways to work together; however, the desire to build a stronger community for all Homosassa residents exists.

*A basic tenet of church life is to pray. In everything, pray.* As the first official group project, these pastors will join together in observance of the **National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 1. Beginning at 9 am, guests of all denominations and those who do not have church ties are invited to gather at Grace Methodist Church. The community prayer service will be held under the American flag on the front lawn.**

The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance held on the first Thursday in May, inviting people to pray for the nation. While created in 1952 by the United States Congress, this is the first time that Homosassa churches have hosted a community-wide service. It will be highlighted with prayers, scriptures, and music. The theme chosen for this year is "Pour Out to the God of Hope and Be Filled". It is based on the Gospel message of Romans 15:13. The event will hopefully become a Homosassa tradition that can rotate to other churches in the years ahead. Guests can bring lawn chairs and bottles of water for comfort. If the weather is inclement, the service will move inside.

### **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). She needs help with these meals, so please call her and volunteer to help.

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

**SCRIPTURE:** *As He (Jesus) approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it, and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and will encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you. (Luke 19:44)*

**THE STORY:** Pastor Bill included this part of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, a part we often miss because of our focus on the waving palms, Jesus riding on an unbroken colt and the exultant cries of the crowd. In the minds of the cheering people, Israel now had her king who would take his throne in Jerusalem. Then Israel would once again regain the greatness it had known in the days of King David.

But Jesus knew the people didn't understand he had come to be their Savior, that they needed a savior. A few had believed, but even those closest to him kept asking when he was going to restore Israel to its former greatness. Jesus knew what the Israelite people would have to go through in future years because they did not recognize him as "God coming to them". So, as the people around him rejoiced and sang, Jesus wept and spoke prophetic words about pain-filled days ahead. They could not see, would not accept, his predictions because their minds were filled with once again becoming a powerful nation, serving God under their new king.

**TO PONDER:** So today we are seeking the restoration of our nation as a law-abiding republic, needing both purpose and direction as to how we can bring that about. 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 7:14 gives us a promise of God that is as alive and active today as it was back in King Solomon's day: "IF MY PEOPLE, who are called by MY NAME, will HUMBLE THEMSELVES and PRAY and seek my FACE, I will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Let's ponder this and then make a decision, remembering that the biggest word in the whole promise is the word, "IF".

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING**  
Karen J. Stone



**IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ... IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO VOLUNTEER WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AT ANYTIME WITHIN THE CHURCH, YOU WILL NEED SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING**

In the Spring, 2024, 28 Grace Methodist Church attendees completed Ministry Safe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This training is important for all individuals who plan

on volunteering within our church where precious children are involved. The Global Methodist Church, and therefore our church, endorses using Ministry Safe for such training. The training and background check is free to the individual, can be done online from home, and takes a little over an hour to complete. **If you haven't already completed the training and plan to be a church volunteer at any time assisting where our precious children are involved (i.e. VBS),** please let Karen Stone know as soon as possible. She can be reached at 302-270-8273 or [karen.stone3@yahoo.com](mailto:karen.stone3@yahoo.com)

### **Renovation Committee Notes...Ron Snowberger**

LEI, the local architect/engineer company that the Renovation Committee is working with, has completed their preliminary drawings for the renovation of our church. After the committee meets on April 30 to discuss additional details and changes to be made to the plans, several committee members will meet with LEI to finalize the plans. This plan should provide a realistic cost expectation/estimation for the expansion. Once the Renovation Committee has finalized the plans and cost, plans will be submitted to the Administrative Board for approval. After approval from the Administrative Board, a contractor will be selected through a competitive bid process. At that time, the plans and cost expectations will be presented to the congregation.

### **RUMMAGE SALE**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THIS YEAR'S DATES:

**Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>**

**DONATION DATES ARE:**

Saturday, August 30 and  
Saturday, September 27

**NOTE:** Donations after September 27 will not be accepted.

On donation days, volunteers will be needed for sorting, pricing, boxing, and storing. Please volunteer! If you have questions, call Priscilla/Andy Frederick @ 352-212-4037

### **CATEGORIES BEING ELIMINATED:**

Books, CD's, VHS, DVD's  
Electronics...Furniture of any kind  
Linens

### **BABY BOTTLE TIME!**

Save your loose coins for the babies!  
Pick up your baby bottles starting

**Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Collect any loose change each day!

**All bottles will be due back on  
Sunday, May 11 – MOTHER'S DAY!**

Coins will benefit the Pregnancy and  
Family Center, Inverness

Contact Judy Awe @ 352-697-0100 if you have questions.

\*This is a joint project for WOW & LOG\*



**ATTENTION...SECURITY OF THE CHURCH...Bob MacKenzie**

In the interest of security and the safety of all at Grace, anyone that has been issued a key for access our building, PLEASE be vigilant in securing the location that you access. Recently, the door to the garage was found unlocked. I urge everyone that if you **unlock** it, please be sure to **re-lock** it when finished.



**GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH 2025 FLORIDA ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE...June 13 & 14, 2025**

Everyone is invited to attend the 2025 FL Annual Conference of the Global Methodist Church. The theme for this Conference is *"Preparing for the Presence"*. For non-clergy members the conference will be held from Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup> and will be held at Living Hope Church in Clermont, FL. For more information please refer to the following website: [annualconference2025.rsvpify](https://annualconference2025.rsvpify.com) How wonderful it would be to see an ocean of blue shirts representing our church at the conference. Lunch will be available at \$15 per person each day.

**IF ABLE...VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO CLEAN CHURCH...Karen Kline**

There's an old saying that goes like this..."Cleanliness is next to godliness." This means that maintaining a clean and tidy environment is considered almost as important as being morally good.

Of all the tasks that must be accomplished to maintain a smooth-running operation, whether at home, office, or place of worship, housekeeping is probably the least attractive to volunteers. However, I believe everyone enjoys being in a clean, well-maintained facility.

**YOUR** church needs volunteers, IF YOU ARE ABLE. If we could get enough volunteers, perhaps eight to twelve, we could divide the workload so each team of two or three only has to work one month and have three months off. Team members, would decide among themselves how the overall work would be accomplished. Step up and **volunteer**, even if only two weeks at a time which would be great. Contact Karen Kline at 352-634-1781 if you have questions.

**Please remember...no beverages other than water in the Sanctuary and PLEASE silence your cell phones.**



### **Dates for 2025 Blood Drive...Carolyn Bright**

June 8, 2025

September 14, 2025

December 14, 2025

Times will be 7:30 am to 11:30 or later until last doner has been completed.

### **Meetings for the Month of MAY**

- May 1 -- National Day of Prayer @ 9:00
- May 1 -- S.O.A.P. Bible Study @ 10:00 led by Jan Wise
- May 1 -- Lunch Bunch Bible Study 11:30 led by Sharon Miller
- May 2 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00
- May 2 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ Meadowcrest @ 10:00
- May 4 -- Communion Sunday
- May 5 -- Memory Lane Support and Respite @ 1:00
- May 7 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- May 7 -- Finance @ 9:00
- May 7 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- May 8 -- S.O.A.P. Bible Study @ 10:00 led by Jan Wise
- May 8 -- Lunch Bunch Bible Study 11:30 led by Sharon Miller
- May 8 -- Women of Worship (WOW) @ 2:00
- May 9 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00
- May 9 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ Meadowcrest @ 10:00
- May 11 -- Mother's Day**
- May 12 -- Memory Lane Support and Respite @ 1:00
- May 14 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- May 14 -- Administrative Board @ 9:00
- May 14 -- Worship Committee @ 11:00
- May 14 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- May 15 -- S.O.A.P. Bible Study @ 10:00 led by Jan Wise
- May 15 -- Lunch Bunch @ 11:30 led by Sharon Miller

- May 16 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ 10:00 @ Meadowcrest  
 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00
- May 17 -- Pancake Breakfast**
- May 18 -- LOG meeting @ 11:30
- May 19 -- Memory Lane Support & Respite @ 1:00
- May 21 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00  
 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- May 22 -- S.O.A.P. Bible Study @ 10:00 led by Jan Wise
- May 23 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ 10:00 @ Meadowcrest  
 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00
- May 26 -- Memorial Day**
- May 26 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- May 28 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00  
 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- May 29 -- SOAP Bible Study @ 10:00  
 -- Lunch Bunch @ 11:30 led by Sharon Miller
- May 30 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ 10:00 @ Meadowcrest  
 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00

#### **Future Dates to Remember**

- May 11 -- Mother's Day
- May 26 -- Memorial Day
- June 9-13 -- Bible School
- June 13-14 -- GMC FL Annual Conference, Living Hope Church in Clermont, FL
- June 15 -- Father's Day
- Oct. 24-25 -- Grace Rummage (garage) Sale...Dates & more information to follow.

*You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream....C.S. Lewis*

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

