

Grace and Peace

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

5030 S. Memorial Drive, Homosassa, FL 34446

Phone: 352-651-2502

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



A Message from Pastor Kip

Sherry and I were packing (neither of us can now remember where we were headed). I mentioned that the weather was very unpredictable and that I didn't know exactly what to pack. I grabbed an old sweatshirt (one of my favorites, stains, holes and all) and threw it on the bed, next in line to be packed. The sight of that sweatshirt seemed to set off alarms in Sherry's head, and suddenly there she was "helping" me see what else I could pack for cold weather. She mentioned a heavy blue sweater that I never wear. It's not as comfortable as my sweatshirt and doesn't look nearly as nice!

I felt I should at least humor her by taking it out, opening it up, examining it and then finding a reason not to take it. As I pulled out this sweater, I noticed something falling away from the sweater. Probably just that lost can of shoe polish that had also been missing. But it wasn't the shoe polish. It was a checkbook. A checkbook fell out of the sweater and landed in the dirty clothes basket sitting directly under the shelf containing the sweater.

Holy Cow! There it was! My missing checkbook! I asked Sherry to come over and look into the basket. She was as stunned as I was. After all these months of searching every possible location for my missing checkbook, and after removing all the clothes on the shelf containing the sweater, as well as all the other shelves several times, and never finding the check book, there it lay! Right before my eyes!

I carefully reached down and picked it up. I slowly opened it, and a significant amount of cash fell out! Holy Smokes! There was the cash I was sure was missing for good; right there hanging out with the checkbook. I didn't even know the two knew each other, not alone had a relationship!

I had already cancelled this checking account because I was sure I would never find the missing checkbook. So, I disposed of the checkbook. I took the cash directly to the bank and deposited it the next day! The cash and the checkbook would never get a second chance to run off together again!

You never know what positive surprises life will bring! I thought I had suffered a significant loss and would never recoup my loss. But there it was in the dirty clothes basket. Jesus told his disciples to never stop praying - thus never give up hope. I don't know if you have lost something recently, or if you are searching for something you have never had in your life. I do know you should not give up. Some day you may find it in the most unlikely place!

Blessings, Pastor Kip

Be Transformed By The Renewing of Your Mind

The Truth Project is a ground-breaking small group curriculum on the Biblical worldview. This video-based Bible study is the starting point for looking at life from a biblical perspective. I invite you to join Dr. Del Tackett, as he takes us through 13 engaging video lessons on the relevance and importance of living the Biblical worldview in daily life, featuring insights from biblical experts like R.C. Sproul, O.S. Guinness, and Gordon Pennington.



We have completed 8 sessions of The Truth Project which is held on Thursdays at 4:00 pm, concluding in March. The video portion is about 55 minutes and there is discussion following. I anticipate a 90-minute class or less. Please join us for the remainder of the class.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Bill Farmer

Faith Community Nurse (FCN)...Karen Kline

Polymyalgia Rheumatica.....My mother was 75 when she was given this diagnosis. At the time she and my father were visiting us in our then New Your State home. One evening when we were out for dinner with my parents, my mother started to complain about right-sided neck and shoulder pain. It didn't really seem like such a big deal, so we iced it, and she seemed to get some relief from over-the-counter pain medication. Shortly after this they returned to their Florida home.

Once home, they scheduled an appointment with their primary care physician who diagnosed Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR). She was treated with low-dose corticosteroids (Prednisone) which was gradually decreased until all of a sudden, she suffered a partial loss of sight in her right eye. At this point she was then diagnosed with giant cell or temporal arteritis and given higher doses of prednisone.

I had never heard of either condition and started asking a lot of questions and doing a lot of research. Polymyalgia rheumatica is an inflammatory disorder that causes muscle pain and stiffness. It is an autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the tissue

in and around the joints. It affects people around 65, but rarely those under the age of 50. It is commonly accompanied by another inflammatory autoimmune disease called giant cell or temporal arteritis.

Symptoms may include shoulder, neck, upper arm, buttock hips, or thigh pain. You may also have stiffness in affected areas in the morning. In the case of giant cell arteritis, you may experience blurred, double vision, vision loss or new, unusual or persistent headaches. PMR is usually diagnosed with blood tests. You may have an elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) and C-reactive protein. Imaging tests may also be done to rule out other conditions.

Treatment involves low doses of prednisone which is gradually decreased. A person will need to stay on the medication for a year or more. The goal is to keep the dose as low as possible without triggering a relapse. You will probably be referred to a rheumatologist to manage your disease. Doctors may also add methotrexate along with prednisone for those who experience a relapse or don't respond to the prednisone, which happened in my mother's case.

Please don't hesitate to see your physician if you experience any of these symptoms noted. Earlier treatment leads to better outcomes.

Stephen Ministers...Carol MacKenzie

Hope

If you only carry one thing throughout your entire life, let it be hope.
Let it be hope that better things are always ahead.
Let it be hope that you can get through even the toughest of times.
Let it be that you are stronger than any challenge that comes your way.
Let it be hope that you are exactly where you are meant to be right now,
And that you are on the path to where you are meant to be...
Because during those times, hope will be the very thing that carries you through.

Nikki Banas

Do You Pray?

I loved this interpretation of prayer.

What is prayer? Prayer doesn't just happen when we kneel or put our hands together and focus and expect things from God. Thinking positive and wishing good for others is a prayer. When you hug a friend, that's a prayer. When you cook something to nourish family and friends, that's a prayer. When you send off near and dear ones and say, "drive safely" or "be safe", that's a prayer. When you are helping someone in need by giving your time and energy, you are praying. When you forgive someone your heart, that's a prayer. Prayer is a vibration. A feeling. A thought. Prayer is the voice of love, friendship, genuine relationships. Prayer is an expression of your silent being. *Keep praying always*.

Stephen Ministers are available for you at Grace Methodist Church. You may call Karen Kline (352-382-7263) or Carol MacKenzie (352-382-8926), the Stephen Leaders. They will walk with you, listen, totally confidential, and pray with you. Just a phone call away.

Mission Moment...Donna Farmer

Don't forget—all one-dollar bills will go to Residing Hope (Children's Home in Enterprise, FL) which we began supporting in January. You can give by designating your gift to Residing Hope on your envelopes or by putting \$1.00 bills in the offering.

Thank you for your support in 2024, and we look forward to seeing what God and you have in store for our Missions Program in 2025.

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

Thank you, Grace Methodist, for all the support that you give to the WOW's projects. Also, 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. We meet every second Thursday at 2:00. Come join the fun.

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

Winter Mini-Retreat & Luncheon Warmed Hearts.....The Mini Winter Retreat and Luncheon on February 25 was an inspirational and fun event for the 45 women in attendance. The Fellowship Hall was decked out in shades of pink and red in deference to Heart Month and, of course, Valentine's Day. It's important to keep our happy hearts as healthy as possible. A delicious lunch was catered by Luigi's Restaurant. Door prizes were plentiful. New friends were made. Photos by Mary Trice were taken (and can be seen on our Facebook page).

Most important, however, was reviewing the origin, purpose and variety of spiritual gifts. We discussed how our members can work together, using their individual gifts for the glory of God and the welfare of Grace Methodist Church.

Guest speaker Nancy Kennedy is the religion writer for the Citrus County Chronicle, a syndicated columnist and author of three devotional books. Guests visited with her throughout the morning as she participated in the retreat. Her uplifting talk reflected on spiritual gifts, hope and praise in all circumstances.

Some of her memorable insights included:

- Maybe our brokenness is the real gift. God uses it to help us grow as Christians.
- When you feel that you've been buried, consider that maybe you've been planted. BLOOM.
- Hope does not disappoint; life does. Have hope in all circumstances. Trust God.
- "Hope deferred makes the heart sick; but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."

-Proverbs 13:12

Gratitude and praise go to the team that made it all happen: Pam Schram, Mary Trice, Joanne Hepner, Pat Cram, Kathy Klingel, Karen Stone, Judy Chambliss and Sue Pagano. Their ideas, energy and love for the women of the church were so very evident.

Join Us at the Next Ladies of Grace Meeting.....Our next meeting will be on Sunday, March 16 following the worship service. We welcome visitors who want to see our group in action and learn about our projects that include:

- Sweet Celebrations for Mother's Day and Father's Day
- Helping Hands Ministry
- Comfort & Care Meals
- Bible Verse Memory Project
- Crafts & Chats (Crocheting, Quilting, Sewing, etc.)
- Upper Room Library & Free Little Library
- Fellowship Hall decorating
- September Ladies Retreat

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

THE WAYS OF THE KINGDOM...Jan Wise

I am writing this as an encouragement and a warning of the perils that may develop during our reconstruction period. It can be a time of drawing closer to God and each other or a time when the enemy sows seeds of discouragement, frustration, and separation. Sometimes the challenge may seem simple but our answer holds the key to prospering as God's church: **Is it more important that things go my way or is it more important to keep the unity of the Spirit among us?**

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"It is time we thought about building a house". We had just moved to a trailer park near Syracuse, following Tom's graduation and a job offer. Our main challenge--we had agreed not to make a move in our married life where we would need a mortgage with monthly payments. I remembered the stories of my dad going through bankruptcy. All that saved our home and Dad's source of income was the fact that the farm was in my mom's name, inherited from her father. Plus, I knew the O.T. scriptures about borrowing and lending and didn't want to end up being the tail and not the head! (*Duet. 28:13, 24*) So it became a "to-think-about" idea. Then Tom came home from work one day all excited. A retiring co-worker planned to move to Florida, and he owned a 40-acre lot north of Syracuse and wanted to get rid of it--at a price we could afford!

Tom and I drove north to check out the lot. Winter north of Syracuse meant lots of snow. Tom's walk over the lot consisted of climbing six-foot snowbanks, trudging around in deep snow, and admiring the wooded area surrounding the corner where we would build. Tom pronounced the corner location "perfect", and I agreed. God had prepared us for the task ahead as we both grew up in the country, had experienced heavy winter snows, and really wanted a rural, tree-embraced lot. God had made a lot available for us that would not destroy our budget. We bought the property!

When spring came to the northland, we went to really "see" the lot. Tom loves trees, but he hadn't planned on what we discovered...our first setback! Someone had planted rows of young pine trees everywhere in the areas of flat land where we planned to build. My immediate thought was "bulldozer", but Tom's love of trees created a more time-consuming decision. We would transplant every small, healthy tree before we began to build. This resulted in an unhappy wife, but one who knew how important this first big decision would be. So, Tom dug them up, I put them in a bucket and carried them to the "save-the-trees" area; Tom followed and rooted them in their new home. As I wearily lugged my bucket, sputtering as I went, it became clear "our building a house" decision had a lot more to it than I had anticipated.

Finally, with Tom and the trees happy, we had a well drilled and moved our trailer from the niceties of the trailer park to the "wild". We decided we would draw our own plans for the house and complete the perfect plan. One night, as we were admiring our handiwork, I asked Tom where the stairs would be located. What stairs--oh, the ones we need to get down to the basement! But we did eventually build from our plans after a few major adjustments.

Renovation Committee Notes...Alice Trusley

The Renovation Committee will be meeting with LEI, the engineering firm that we are using, on March 5th at 10 am. The committee will be discussing with LEI the input received from the congregation so that we can move forward.

Meetings for the Month of March

- March 2 -- Communion Sunday
- March 2 -- Fran McCrady Celebration of Life @ 1:00 pm
- March 3 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- March 5 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- March 5 -- Finance @ 9:00
- March 5 -- Ash Wednesday @ 4:00
- March 5 -- Choir Practice @ 5:00 (immediately after Ash Wednesday service)
- March 6 -- SOAP Bible Study @ 10:00
- March 6 -- Lunch Bunch @ 11:30
- March 7 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ 10:00 @ Meadowcrest
- March 7 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00
- March 9 -- Daylight Saving Time Begins
- March 9 -- Grace Church Service @ 10:00
- March 9 -- Blood Drive @ 7:30
- March 10 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- March 12 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- March 12 -- Grace Board Meeting @ 9:00
- March 12 -- Worship Committee @ 10:30
- March 12 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- March 13 -- SOAP Bible Study @ 10:00
- March 13 -- Lunch Bunch @ 11:30
- March 13 -- Women of Worship (WOW) @ 2:00

- March 14 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ 10:00 @ Meadowcrest
- March 14 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00
- March 15 -- Pancake Breakfast @ 8:00
- March 16 -- Grace Church Service @ 10:00
- March 16 -- Ladies of Grace @ 11:30
- March 17 -- St. Patrick's Day
- March 17 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- March 19 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- March 19 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- March 20 -- First Day of Spring
- March 20 -- SOAP Bible Study @ 10:00
- March 20 -- Lunch Bunch Bible Study @ 11:30
- March 21 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ 10:00 @ Meadowcrest
- March 21 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00
- March 23 -- Grace Church Service @ 10:00
- March 24 -- Memory Lane Support @ 1:00
- March 26 -- Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7:00
- March 26 -- Trustees Meeting @ 2:30
- March 26 -- Choir Practice @ 4:00
- March 27 -- SOAP Bible Study @ 10:00
- March 27 -- Lunch Bunch Bible Study @ 11:30
- March 28 -- Pastor Bill's Bible Study @ 10:00 @ Meadowcrest
- March 28 -- Jan Wise Bible Study @ 10:00

Future Dates to Remember

- April 13 -- Palm Sunday
- April 13 -- First Day of Passover
- April 18 -- Good Friday
- April 20 -- Easter
- May 11 -- Mother's Day
- May 26 -- Memorial Day
- June 13-14 -- GMC FL Annual Conference, Living Hope Church in Clermont, FL
- June 15 -- Father's Day
- October -- Grace Rummage (garage) Sale...Dates & more information to follow.

Dates for 2025 Blood Drive...Carolyn Bright

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.

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

