

The Power of the Small

By Rev. Cindy Marino

I have learned over the years, as a person of less than average stature, the power of small. I'm sorry to say I can't credit my learning to some intellectual study of nanotechnology or microbiology as many of you have endeavored in this Naperville science and technology corridor. No, my learning of the power of small comes from a different source. You see, I have been to a lot of gift exchanges over the years. Some have wonderful gifts and others are, well, they're called "White Elephants."

When I was a novice at these exchanges, I would go for the biggest, prettiest package. Experience, however, has taught me to be wary of large gifts or those with the most luxurious wrapping. I have learned the power of small. Especially memorable is the year I brought home a harvest

gold, non-working four-slice toaster.

This is the message that Christmas always seems bent on teaching us, even in the midst of raucous holiday music, heavy traffic, blinking lights and bigger-than-life, air-filled Santas on the front lawns.



One small voice transforms silence.
One small light transforms darkness.
One small prayer transforms the world.
One small child transforms lives.

Where is the "small" in your world? Where is the Christ Child crying out for attention?

May this year's Christmas season bring you the blessing that comes in the smallest of packages as the power of God's presence among us lifts us to new heights in a broken world.

Merry Christmas!

Want Grace Notes in Print in 2018?

There are two ways to receive Grace Notes in print in 2018:

1) Call the Church Office and give us your name and current mailing address so that we can add you to our mailing list, or stop by the Church Office and complete the Grace Notes in print request form.

2) The print edition of Grace Notes will also be available for pickup outside the Church Office on Sundays and at the Reception Desk in the Church Office during the week.

This will be the last Grace Notes mailed out unless you have requested a copy be mailed to you. We want you to receive them, so please get your request in as soon as possible! We hope this will save dollars in postage and printing costs and make good use of the funds you provide for the church.



**Have you experienced a loss in your life?
Are you looking for ways to deal with grief?**

A new session is starting soon that can help you as you journey through your grief. This 13-week class will be utilizing resources from the Grief Share program to help you face the challenges of grieving and move toward rebuilding your life. Facilitated by Sandy Bray and Gay Craig, the class will start on Sunday, January 21, from 1 - 3 p.m. in Room 254. Contact Pastor Mark Himel (mark.himel@peopleofgrace.org) or (630-355-1748) for more information or to sign up.

Celebrate Christmas Eve With Us!

Christmas Eve Sunday Morning Worship will be held at 9:30 a.m. with the Youth Bells and Youth Choir.

Christmas Eve Services:

Noon Traditional Service with Communion and the Grace Bell Ensemble

3 p.m. Intergenerational Service with the Grace Children's Choirs

4:30 p.m. Intergenerational Service featuring the Grace Praise Team

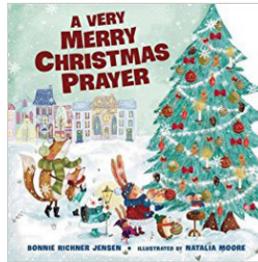
8 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service with Communion and New Life Singers

10 p.m. Traditional Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service with the Chancel Choir



Children's Christmas Book Review

A Very Merry Christmas Prayer was written by Bonnie Rickner Jensen and illustrated by Natalia Moore. This children's book features eye-catching images of Christmas scenes that connect us to gifts for which we can be thankful. It reads like a poem and eloquently builds a relationship between our current symbols of Christmas and the historical birth of Jesus Christ.



For example, the strings of lights that remind us of the star that leads the wise men; our warm cozy beds reflective of the manger that kept Jesus warm; Christmas songs that remind us of the host of angels that were there. Other gifts mentioned are green trees that remind us of the glory of God filling the earth and yummy treats made with love just like the love God gives us.

This title reminds us to be thankful for the intangible gifts this Christmas and makes the connection between Christ's birth and the symbols we see today. This book is highly recommended and available in the Grace UMC Library for all of our families, along with several newly-acquired titles for all ages. Please check them out!

"Thank You!"

To our friends and family of faith,

A heartfelt thank you to all of you for your continued support during the illness and death of our mom/mother-in-law/grandma, Fran Bennett.

Thank you for cards, phone calls, prayers, flowers, and to those who traveled to be with us in southern Illinois. Whatever your expression of sympathy, compassion, caring, and love has been, we have felt it and are so grateful for each and every one of you.

May God continue to travel life's journeys with all of you, and may you find the same love and caring in your church home as we have.

**In His Name,
Gaye Lynn, Rick, Brentley, & Hayley Loufek**



Did you know?

All of Grace's Sunday services now stream LIVE via www.peopleofgrace.org/live. Join us no matter where you are, even on Christmas Eve!

Grace UMC Foundation News

Year-End Tax Planning

With stock markets reaching all-time highs, now is the time to consider donating stock. There are tax advantages to donating stock that has appreciated in value. The IRS allows you to value your donation at the current market price and you do not have to pay tax on the capital gain if you donate the stock directly.

For those over 70 ½ years old, the IRS allows you to donate up to \$100,000 from your IRA to an eligible charity, the distribution will not be included in your income, and the distribution will be counted towards your required minimum distribution (RMD). The donation must be made directly to the eligible charitable organization and there are some procedural requirements.

At Grace Church, you can donate stock to share the blessings God has bestowed upon you to help Grace fulfill its mission. Your donation can fulfill or add to your 2017 pledge, prepay your 2018 pledge, or establish a fund in the Grace Foundation for a specific purpose. If you would like more information about donating stock or making a charitable distribution from your IRA, please contact John Abe (john.abe@stifel.com).

Scholarship for North Central College

The Grace Church Foundation is again offering a \$1,000 scholarship for the 2018-2019 school year at North Central College. These funds are available through North Central College Scholarship Funds established by generous donations from Anna Stephenson and the Robert Lehman Memorial. The scholarship could be matched by the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation as part of its Dollars for Scholars program and, also, by North Central College for a total scholarship of \$3,000. If you are a current student or plan to enroll for the fall semester and are a member of Grace United Methodist Church, you are eligible to apply for the scholarship. Online application forms will be available January 1, 2018, and can be completed online (www.umhef.org). After the online application has been submitted, you must complete the Confirmation Form attaching a photograph and a personal biography, which includes a description of your involvement in Grace Methodist Church and your community. These must be placed in Merle Clewett's mailbox located in the lounge no later than February 19, 2018. The Foundation will select a candidate or candidates and forward the application with a Foundation check for \$1,000 to the UMHEF before the March 1, 2018 deadline. Contact Pastor Marino (cindy.marion@peopleofgrace.org) or Merle Clewett (mclewett@msn.com) for more information.

Celebrating the Gift of Christmas

Join us on Sunday, December 10, at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a special Children's Sunday School to "Celebrate the Gift of Christmas." We will have a time of praise and worship, hands-on activities and a special sharing of the Christmas story. Each child will receive a special Christmas gift, so please bring them! Invite family, friends, and neighbors! Contact Chamus Burnside-Savazzini (chamus@peopleofgrace.org) for more information.



Children's New Year's Eve Countdown

All children and friends of Grace, ages 3 years to 5th grade, are invited to an end of the year Sunday School Party at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 31. We will open with praise and worship, play a few games, have Bible story time with reflection, music, and end with a fun ball drop in Fellowship Hall. What a way to close out the year. Friends and family are welcome and encouraged to join in. Contact Chamus Burnside-Savazzini (chamus@peopleofgrace.org) for more information.



Christmas with Over 50 Fellowship

It's time to celebrate Christmas at the Over 50 Fellowship with "Memories of Christmas: Angel's Wings, Chinese Turkey, and My Two Front Teeth" presented by Dick Trondsen on Thursday, December 14, at noon in Fellowship Hall.



Dick will take us on an adventure to reminisce about Christmas with clips from Classic Movies, TV shows and Songs from the past. You will not want to miss this creative way to remember Christmas favorites with food, fun, and friends.

Sign up in the Church Office by Monday, December 11, at noon. \$10 cash payable at the door. All are welcome!



UMW Christmas Meeting

Join us for the December United Methodist Women meeting on Tuesday, December 5, at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.



Dick Trondsen will present "Memories of Christmas: Angel's Wings, Chinese Turkey, and My Two Front Teeth." Dick will take us on an adventure to reminisce about Christmas with clips from Classic Movies, TV shows and Songs from the past. The gathering will also include a Remembrance Service and Installation of Officers for 2018.

The luncheon will be catered with the UMW Leadership Team as the hostess. Contact Phyllis Pepiot (ppepiot@gmail.com) for more information.

Two Ways to Give to Grace UMC While Christmas Shopping

Did you know you can earn money for Grace UMC while you shop online at Amazon or UMCmarket for Christmas?



When shopping with Amazon use www.smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com. Then select Grace United Methodist Church as your charity and start earning 0.5% on your purchases for our church. Every quarter, Grace UMC will be sent the amount earned from all of our purchases.

Easy! Start today! You shop, and Amazon gives.

- AmazonSmile is the same as the Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same services
- Support your church by starting your shopping at smileamazon.com



UMCmarket is another easy way to provide contributions to Grace UMC through your everyday online purchases. The UMCmarket portal gives a percentage of your online spending at thousands of participating retailers directly to Grace UMC.

All you have to do is go to www.umcmarket.org and click sign up in the top right corner. Simply choose Grace United Methodist as your charity and start shopping.

Looking Ahead to 2018 ...

January 9: The Westminster Choir from Princeton, NJ at 7:30 p.m.

January 21 - April 22: Grief Share (13 - week class) at 1 p.m.

January 26-28: Created by God Human Sexuality Class 5th and 6th Grade

February 11: Cin Sunday (Youth Summer Missions Fundraiser)

February 11: Youth Summer Missions Kick-off at 7 p.m.

February 14: Ash Wednesday Worship Services

February 17-18: Feed the Need MobilePack at North Central College

March 4: Evensong Pre-Service Concert at 3:30 p.m.,
and Choral Evensong at 4 p.m.

March 18: Mark Burrows, Guest Worship Leader at 9:30 a.m.

March 21: Holy Week Experiential Worship Service (pre-Spring Break)

March 25: Palm Sunday

March 29: Maundy Thursday

March 30: Good Friday

March 31: Easter Saturday Resurrection Service at 5 p.m.

April 1: Easter Resurrection Services: 8:15, 9:30 and 11 a.m.
(Special Easter Sunday School hour at 9:30 a.m. for children)

April 7: Lakeside Singers Concert at 7:30 p.m.

April 8: Confirmation Sunday at 11 a.m.

April 13: Hamball Luncheon from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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April 21: Open Doors Ministry Training Event

April 21-22: Youth Musical (tentative)

April 22: Evensong Pre-Service Concert at 3:30 p.m.,
and Choral Evensong at 4 p.m.

May 6: Holy Smokes BBQ (Youth Summer Missions Fundraiser)

May 11 & 13: Children's Musical

May 20: Senior Celebration Worship Service at 9:30 a.m.

May 20: Spring Choral Worship Service at 8:15 & 9:30 a.m.

June 2: Touch A Truck

June 3: Suds on Sunday (Car Wash) from 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the
Lower Parking Lot

June 3: Side x Side Commissioning at 8:15 a.m.

June 9-17: Side x Side

June 24: Side x Side Slide Show

June 25-29: Vacation Bible School

July 15: Hope @ Home Commissioning at 11 a.m.

July 17-19: Hope @ Home

July 29: Hope @ Home Slide Show at 7 p.m.

For more information about these and other events throughout the
year at Grace UMC visit us at www.peopleofgrace.org/get-connected