



November 2021, a Communications Ministry of
Grace United Methodist Church, Naperville

GRACE NOTES

Gather to Christ • Grow as Disciples • Go to Serve

“REJOICE ALWAYS. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING. GIVE THANKS IN EVERY SITUATION BECAUSE THIS IS GOD’S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.” 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

By: Rev. Eric Blachford

As I write this November Grace Notes article, I can't help but begin to think about Thanksgiving. In our family tradition, we share around the table that which we are thankful for from the past year. I have to tell you how thankful I am to be one of your pastors. I'm also very thankful that my family is adjusting well to a new home, community, and schools. I could write pages about all the things for which I am thankful. What about you? What is it that you give thanks to God for these days?

If you find it difficult to think of things you are thankful or grateful for, you aren't alone. While 2021 has certainly been better overall than 2020, this year has not been without its challenges in our personal lives, our church, our community, our country, and our world. It's easy to identify the things we are not thankful for. Each of us could probably create a lengthy list of everything we aren't thankful for rather quickly.

That's why, as we enter into this Thanksgiving month, I want to remind us that when it comes to giving thanks, Paul invites us not just to be thankful for, but thankful in. The Bible doesn't want us to be thankful for all things. Not only would it be impossible, it'd really be rather cruel to say, "I'm thankful for COVID-19 and the ongoing issues it's created." God doesn't expect us to be thankful for COVID or any number of additional problems we have encountered in the last year. We don't say thank you for everything. But we can say thank you in whatever circumstances we find ourselves

in at this time. Do you understand the difference?

I can be thankful in all things because God is able to do far more than we could ever expect or imagine. I can be thankful in whatever circumstances I find myself in because I know God is with me. I can be thankful in all things because Paul also tells us that in all things God is working for the good of those who are called according to his purpose. We can give thanks in all things because God can always bring hope, redemption and good from within, whatever situation we find ourselves. This means we really can learn to be thankful in all things because we believe God is with us. When we intentionally stop to reflect on where we see God at work blessing us in all things, the whole world looks a little less dark. It looks a little less hopeless.

So, I want to challenge us as a church to spend the month of November doing something that my family does during dinner. We each go around the table and name "three good things" we're grateful for from the day. Those three good things can be anything, big or small. I can't tell you how many times simply naming three good things we are grateful about has changed the day of one or all of us at the table. Hearing others' good things



sometimes reminds us of the good things in our own lives.

So what do you think? Are you willing to accept this challenge? At some point, every day, stop and thank God for three good things in your life, your church, or the world. Don't wait for Thanksgiving to remind you to be thankful and grateful. We are God's people who are called to rejoice always, pray ceaselessly, and give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for us. In a world full of negativity, grumbling, and complaining we can choose a different way (God's will or way) for us to live. Being thankful every day changes our hearts, returning them to resonate with whatever is good, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, and excellent and worthy of praise. It creates a joy that comes as we move from grumbling to gratefulness. Let's make this month one in which we live with a sense of thankfulness in all things.

IT'S BACK! MISTLETOE MARKETPLACE!

Did you miss those beautiful hand-crafted items, quilted items, baked goods, and the silent auction items and baskets made by our UMW members and the beautiful Mission Quilt hand-quilted by our Quilters of Grace? They will all be back for UMW's biggest fundraiser for Missions on **Saturday, November 13**. It will be back in **Fellowship Hall** this year. We have extended the hours for shopping from **9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** to accommodate our holiday shoppers!

The Quilters of Grace have hand-quilted their 2021 Mission Quilt entitled "Cherrytime" in service of mission fundraising. Donations for the quilt will be sold online at peopleofgrace.org/mission-quilt and after worship services on **Sundays, October 31 and November 7**. Donations will be \$1 for 1 ticket, \$5 for 6 tickets, or \$10 for 12 tickets. With your donation, you will receive a quilt pattern. The quilt drawing will take place at the Mistletoe Marketplace on Saturday, November 13, at 2:30 p.m. You do not need to be present to win.

Some items will even be available to order ahead and can be picked up on the day of Mistletoe Marketplace! Visit peopleofgrace.org/mmm-orders to pre-order the following items: the popular hand-crafted Scrubbies, the tasty Mrs. S's Super Duper Dilly Dip, the holiday Hershey Turkey Bars, and the Hershey Snowmen!



Not able to attend Mistletoe Marketplace, but still want to donate to help support the UMW Missions projects?

Donations can be made online at peopleofgrace.org/give or by check made out to Grace United Methodist Women. In the memo section, indicate donation for Mistletoe Marketplace. Checks can be mailed to Grace UMC, Attn: Grace UMW, 300 East Gartner Road, Naperville, IL 60540.

All Mistletoe Marketplace and Quilt Drawing proceeds will benefit UMW mission projects which support women, youth, children locally, nationally, and worldwide. Come, and bring your friends and neighbors and help us to provide hope, dignity, and a brighter future for these families. It is only possible with caring, faithful supporters like you!

We look forward to your assistance in helping others in need. For more information, contact UMW President Kathy Carey (percula4344@sbcglobal.net).

SILENT AUCTION ITEMS REQUEST!

Donations are needed for the Silent Auction at Mistletoe Marketplace on **Saturday, November 13**. New merchandise only, please! **Suggested items include:**

- **Gift Baskets: design your own or donate items and UMW members will create one**
- **Holiday Décor and Home Goods**
- **Sports/Entertainment Tickets**
- **Gift Cards/Certificates to local businesses**
- **Purses, Wallets, Totes**
- **Toys, Puzzles, Games**
- **Jewelry**

All of the money raised will be donated to Missions. Items may be dropped off in the container marked "Silent Auction" by the cabinets in the Gathering Space **no later than Monday, November 8**. Contact Ro Willard (willardrj1@sbcglobal.net) or Darlene Schille (darsquiltz@gmail.com) for more information.



AT HOME ADVENT WREATH MAKING KITS

In the season of Advent, we wait. We wait for God to reveal himself through the birth of his son, Jesus Christ. One tradition that can help in our waiting is the creation and lighting of Advent wreaths.

All are invited to visit peopleofgrace.org/advent-wreath and register for an Advent Wreath-making kit (to be completed at home). The cost of a kit is \$10 and will include: wreath form, 4 taper candles, 1 Christ candle, ribbon, greenery, and liturgy for reading as you light your candles each week.

Kits will be available for pick-up on **Sunday, November 21, following each worship service**. Contact Gaye Lynn (gayelynn.loufek@peopleofgrace.org) with questions or for more information.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Last year, the Reverse Advent Calendar collected over 2,700 pounds of food. Let's see if we can collect more this year!

“What is a Reverse Advent Calendar?”

Our Reverse Advent Calendar gives you a list of suggested items to put in a box each day to benefit the clients of the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry. The Food Pantry offers a wide variety of foods for their clients but the specific items in this calendar are always in high demand. If these items are not available for you to share, please feel free to substitute items you and your family choose as alternatives.

You can pick up bags and Reverse Advent Calendars as a part of our Advent Kit on Sunday, November 21, following each worship service. You can also use your own box and download the calendar after Monday, November 1, at www.peopleofgrace.org/advent-calendar. You can make as many boxes as your family would like to make. Have fun giving back to others this season and maybe create a new tradition!

Completed boxes can be brought back to the Church any time the week of December 27-December 30, or simply drop them off at the Candlelight Luminary Drive or Christmas Eve Services. Contact Lara Stanton (lstanton56@gmail.com) for more information.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Christmas poinsettias are back! Red Christmas Poinsettias will be available to purchase for \$11 apiece online starting on Thursday, October 28, at peopleofgrace.org/poinsettias or by contacting the Church Office at (630) 355-1748. The deadline to make your purchase is Sunday, November 21.

These beautiful plants may be purchased in memory, honor, or celebration of loved ones. Dedications to such will be printed and available online for Christmas Eve.

A SPECIAL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS HOUR

Calling all children! Mark your calendar and join us in person or online for our special Christmas celebration Sunday School hour **on Sunday, December 12, from 9:15 a.m. -10:15 a.m.** Doors will open at 9 a.m. Please enter the Children's Center door for check-in.

We will worship, have a fun and memorable retelling of the Christmas story, make DIY crafts and take home a few surprises that connect to the story of Jesus' birth. When we think of the Christmas season, we want our children to know how important this season is because of Christ, the true reason for the season! We look forward to seeing everyone then!

FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

November's pantry collection will benefit Loaves and Fishes of Naperville. Many Grace members volunteer weekly to prepare for meeting the needs of the 1,000 families that visit each week. Loaves and Fishes also operates a mobile market that serves 70-80 low-income seniors living at Marian Park in Wheaton and has a home delivery program for 120 other senior households. Please continue to donate money to the Love Loaf at peopleofgrace.org/give or directly to loaves-fishes.org/.

ONLY SIX WEEKS UNTIL CHRISTMAS!

Can you believe it? We are excited to be planning for our Advent/Christmas season at Grace. While there will certainly be additional events added to our calendars, here are a few things for your consideration:

All Church Advent Book Read: God Broke Through at Christmas

Written by United Methodist Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, God Broke Through at Christmas is a resource for both individuals and small groups to use in spiritual preparation for Christmas. Designed for small groups, classes, or personal reflection, it includes a study guide and daily devotions. The book focuses on four different aspects of life transformed by Jesus Christ's birth, ministry, and resurrection, with the following declarations:

- God broke through the silence with the word.
- God broke through the nights with the light of the soul.
- God broke through the impossible with a miracle.
- God broke through the chaos with peace.
- God breaks through hopelessness with hope.

God Broke Through at Christmas is sure to be a blessing to you during this season of preparation and expectation of God breaking through at Christmas.

The Luminary Drive: Friday, December 17, 5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Christmas of 2020 seemed like a dark time indeed, until Grace Staff and volunteers brought together the beautiful nativity story lighted by over 900 luminarias through the Grace Church property. Even though we are worshipping once more on Christmas Eve, we will also provide the Luminary Drive.

Christmas Eve Worship

Our Christmas Eve services will resume with the same schedule we used before the pandemic hit. We will celebrate at 12 noon with traditional worship; 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. with worship designed for all, but especially appealing to families with children; 8 p.m. candlelight service and 10 p.m. candlelight service with traditional lessons and carols.

THANK YOU, GRACE!

Harvest Home

Thank you to all who donated to UMCOR, our recipient for this year's Harvest Home collection. So far, \$3,365 has been raised. There is still time to contribute to their overwhelming efforts to help those affected by the tornadoes and other weather-related disasters and to aid the Afghanistan refugees arriving in our country.

Naperville Crop Walk

Many thanks to the Grace Church family for your support of the Naperville 2021 CROP Walk. To date, Grace UMC has raised approximately \$2,500 to help Church World Service (CWS) fight hunger locally and around the world!

Although the walk is over, donations are still being accepted online at napervillecropwalk.org, search for Grace UMC-Naperville, or by cash/check dropped off at the Church Office. Please write checks out to CWS and include CROP Walk on the memo line. Thank you, Grace!

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS GATHERING

Are you dreading the holidays, knowing everything has changed after losing a loved one?

Join us for our Surviving the Holidays, a Grief Share Workshop, on **Sunday, November 21, at noon in Room 231 or on Zoom** led by Pastor Cindy, Judy Cornett and Pam Riley-Valesh. This workshop will provide ways to cope and a time to be in community with others who are finding this to be a difficult time of year. There is hope!

Contact Judy Cornett (shottsja@gmail.com) or Pam Riley-Valesh (pamelariley@gmail.com) for more information and Zoom link.

DO YOU ADMIRE BEAUTIFUL QUILTS AND WONDER HOW THEY ARE MADE?

Come to the UMW Christmas Program and learn all about Quilts! On **Tuesday, December 7**, UMW will be gathering in **Room 231 at 9:30 a.m. or on Zoom** for our Christmas Program. (A Zoom link will be available at peopleofgrace.org/umw-zoom.)

This Christmas, we will take you on a journey on the history of Quilting. We will view a terrific video on this subject and then have what quilters call a "show and tell." You will get to see Christmas quilts, a crazy quilt, some antique quilts and many others done by our Grace Quilters. It should be a great deal of fun and may even inspire new quilters among us.

Interested in learning more about United Methodist Women? Visit peopleofgrace.org/united-methodist-women or contact UMW President Kathy Carey (percula4344@sbcglobal.net).

COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES

Connecting with our family and friends quite often in today's world comes through technology. Recently, however, 76 of our college-aged students received good old-fashioned snail mail! Thank you to ALL who participated in our first college care package shipment of the 2021-2022 school year. Our college students received lots of pre-packaged edible goodies, a few "must-haves" for completing college homework assignments, and a devotion reminding them, whether near or far, that they are loved and cared for.

Interested in participating in the College Care team or have a college-aged student you'd like us to add to our mailing list? Contact Gaye Lynn (gayelynn.loufek@peopleofgrace.org).

FOUNDATION HOSTS SUCCESSFUL WILLS VS. TRUSTS SEMINAR

The Grace Church Foundation hosted an informational seminar on "Wills vs. Trusts" on Sunday, September 26.

Estate attorney Ted Kuczek of Ted Kuczek and Associates presented the seminar in-person to 12 people at the church and another 12 people joined the session virtually.

Foundation President Scott Oats said it is important to provide such educational and complementary programming to our church family. "We hope Ted's presentation helped some members think about starting or updating their current estate plan."

The Grace Church Foundation's purpose is to endow and support the lasting impact of the church's ministry and mission by encouraging members to remember Grace United Methodist Church in their planned giving. Examples of past estate gifts include the addition of a new piano for the choir rehearsal room, the Lacy Garden, and the recent renovation to the church. Funds from the Foundation also help provide training and development for clergy and staff, and support youth and mission work.

Based on the feedback from this seminar, the Foundation plans to provide similar programs in the future.

CHURCH OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

There is an opportunity to volunteer in the Church Office. Receptionists are needed for half-day shifts on weekdays to answer the phone, greet visitors, and help the administrative staff and are the first point of contact for those who are contacting Grace Church.

If you would like to serve the church in this way, please contact Joan Meador (joancstarr@aol.com) for more information or to volunteer.

RAISE THE ROOF

Thanks to everyone who has committed to the Raise the Roof fund!

The following is the status:

- For 2021, 83% or \$249,467 has been committed and, of that amount, we have received 64% or \$192,288.
- For all 3 years, we have commitments for 53% or \$483,907 of our \$900,000 goal.

CHILDREN'S PRAYER CORNER

**By: Chamus Burnside-Savazzini,
Director of Children's Faith Formation**

As we embark on the month of November, how can we not give our gratitude to God for continuing to protect our children? Let us give thanks for our children! They are a blessing.

As we watch them grow, we pray that no harm will come to them and that they will make great choices in life. This month, let us thank God for guiding us in the way that sets a clear example for our children. We must be what we want to see in our children.

Let us pray: Gracious God, we thank you for trusting us to guide our children in the way they should go so that when they are older, they will remember and not depart from it. Amen

SPREAD THE LOVE FEEL THE WARMTH

Collecting new or gently used coats for 450 students in need.

Cashapp: \$donate4good

Contact Keia C. at 630-201-0115

Coat drop off bin: Grace United Methodist Church
300 E Gartner Rd
Naperville, IL

Drop off time: 9am-4pm

Donations due 11/19/21

THANK YOU FOR HELPING OTHERS KEEP WARM!

NOW YOU CAN TAKE GRACE UMC WITH YOU

Stay connected with us -
anytime, anywhere

Text: GRACEUMCAPP
to 833-779-8814
to download
our new app!



NOISY OFFERING SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21

We continue to **Change the World...** one quarter at a time!

It's that time of year again. The time when thoughts turn to all the good gifts around us, the blessings given, and the grace of God in our lives. As we recognize our abundance and are reminded that God calls us to care for those who cannot care for themselves, we look to ways we can be Christ's hands, reaching out to the least of these. Each year, the children's choirs take their Children's Sabbath directive to heart and collect coins – on their own, and in conjunction with you, our generous Grace family – to support the amazing ongoing mission of Feed My Starving Children through our Noisy Offering.

As always, the Noisy Offering falls on the Sunday just before Thanksgiving, which is **Sunday, November 21**, this year. So, gather all those coins and bring them to any of our morning worship services. Look for the red Radio Flyer wagon being pulled down our center aisle, beckoning your generosity in making it the noisiest one ever as we fill the stockpot to overflowing with coins and bills that will help us purchase the food we will pack at the February Feed the Need Mobile Pack. (You can also give online at peopleofgrace.org/give.)

Thank you, in advance, for your continued generosity toward this hands-on outreach that demonstrates for our youngest disciples how God works in and through us in small ways to make a big difference in the lives of those in need!

CHILDREN'S MUSIC MINISTRY

NOISY OFFERING

November 21
All Services

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN