



AMAZING GRACE

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER

2023

BACK PATS

(PAGE 2)

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BACK PATS

In the past several weeks I have officiated at a number of funerals and memorial services. Funerals are emotionally exhausting; I'm sure I don't have to tell many of you about that. But funerals are also very powerful gatherings of friends and family during a hard time in a person's life. Before and after funerals and memorial services friends and family rally around each other. There is a familiar sound that fills the rooms where that happens; it's the sound of back pats. Do you know that sound? It's the sound that comes in the middle of a heartfelt hug. The pats, usually 2 or 3 of them, seem to be sort of an exclamation mark at the end of the hug to indicate that this embrace is more meaningful, more powerful, than a regular hug. These pats add something to the hug; something good. I have been thinking about back pats a lot this week, probably because I have heard so many of them recently. I have been thinking that we could use more of them though. You see, I have this idea that a hug with back pats sends the message, "I am with you. I am hurting with you. I am walking with you. I am here...with you. I hope you feel that." I need that message sometimes and I suspect you do too. Psalm 133:1 says, *"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity."* Good and pleasant indeed! When I hear back pats I think of this unity. The politics may be different; the theology may be different; there may not be agreement on anything outside of that moment. But in that moment there is unity; there is love and compassion and mercy and grace and togetherness between two people. And it is so very powerful to witness. I think we need more of this. I think we need more moments when unity overshadows politics and theology and all of the other areas of division in our world. I think we need more back pat moments; moments of complete presence with each other regardless of anything else around us. I think we need more moments of intentionally telling each other, "You matter to me and I am here for you and I am here with you. No matter what." Back patting makes a powerful sound because back patting is powerful. I am going to do more of it; I hope you will too! Imagine a world, a community, a church, where unity and love and compassion were the main things. Imagine a world with more sincere back pats. I can imagine it quite easily and it is good.

Peace,
Pastor Jim

ADVENT STUDY

with PASTOR JIM CLARK

Begins November 28
Call the church office if you would like to join us!
574-288-4789

ALMOST CHRISTMAS

A WESLEYAN
ADVENT EXPERIENCE

ADVENT STUDY COMING SOON

In 1741, John Wesley preached his famous sermon titled "The Almost Christian" in which he encouraged people to follow Christ wholeheartedly, striving to be altogether Christians. In [Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience](#), authors Magrey deVega, Ingrid McIntyre, April Casperson, and Matt Rawl explore how we can make the same commitment to Christ during Advent, connecting our Wesleyan heritage with the traditional Advent themes of Peace, Hope, Love, and Joy.

I want to invite you to join me on Tuesday evenings from 6-7:30PM starting November 28 as we study this meaningful book together. Let's enter into the Christmas season with a commitment to be Altogether Christians, grateful for the gifts of Peace, Hope, Love and Joy, and ready to share them with others.

Please call the church office (574-288-4789) to let us know you will join the study. Books can be purchased on Amazon for \$18. If you need help purchasing your book please let us know.

I'm looking forward to studying and learning with you this Advent Season!

Peace,
Pastor Jim

NEWS FROM THE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT



CALLING ALL CHILDREN PRESCHOOL THROUGH 5TH GRADE!

Our children's Christmas program is December 17 during both worship services. We will begin rehearsing on Sunday, November 19 during Sunday School at 10:30AM. Nico will join us for about fifteen minutes at 11:30AM for a quick run through of music.

CHILDREN'S ADVENT STUDY

While Pastor Jim leads the Advent Study for adults, the children will have their own Advent Study, which will also be on Tuesday nights from 6PM-7:30PM. Dinner will be served at 5:30PM. We will be discovering the wonders of preparing for Christmas. Hope to see you there!

TRUNK OR TREAT

Thank you to everyone who came out and opened their trunks for our community event! The weather was miserable, but I know we all had a great time supporting the kids! Thank you to those who donated all of the candy! It was so sweet of you!



CROP WALK

On September 24, Matt Kayser led Grace UMC's small but mighty team in the annual St. Joseph County CROP Hunger Walk. They raised \$6,352 for local, national, and international hunger relief efforts. First time Walker Kim Ankrom raised \$400 and our youth group raised \$1,010, the largest amount by far by a Grace youth group. Even though several of our long-time walkers were unable to walk this year, our congregation showered its amazing generosity on those who did walk. Thank you to everyone who raised money, donated, and walked. We are blessed to be a blessing.

HOSPITALITY AT GRACE UMC

GRACE CARES

Grace Cares is a wonderful group that offers prayer in celebrations and joys, illnesses and grief. If you would like to be part of this meaningful group, the next Grace Cares meeting is on Tuesday, November 14 at 7PM in the parlor. All those interested in visiting and calling congregation members this Christmas season are encouraged to attend. Please contact the church office (ask for Melodie) at 574-288-4789. If you have joys or

concerns and would like to be lifted up in prayer, please send an email to the Grace Cares confidential email address at gracecares@gracemethodist.org.

GREETER TEAM

Calling all people interested in joining the ministry of the Worship Service Greeter Team. Given the size and layout of our church and with two services each Sunday, more team members are needed.

Not available on your scheduled Sunday? No worry, swapping Sundays with other team members is always an option. And there is also an option to be part of the "5th Sunday" greeter teams if fewer Sundays per year meets your schedule more easily. If you are interested in joining this ministry, please either email communications@gracemethodist.org or call Linda Ankrom (740-525-8141) or Joyce Kuehl (574-229-4286).



Raggedy Ann Preschool regrets to announce that due to unforeseen circumstances, we have to wish our teacher, Andrea, farewell.

We now have an opening for a Monday - Wednesday 3 year old /4 year old class teacher! Please contact Kim Holder at kringler4@gmail.com or (574) 344-1946 for more information and to apply!

Raggedy Ann Preschool would like to welcome our two new Teacher Aides; Kylie Mannoja and Elyse Chilton. Ms. Kylie and Ms. Elyse both have current and past students at Raggedy Ann!

The preschool would like to have more diverse representation in our home living pretend play for our students. We are in need of ethnic baby dolls. If you have any baby

dolls at home or would like to donate some to the preschool we would really appreciate it!

In honor of Homelessness Awareness Month, Raggedy Ann Preschool is holding a Blessing Box Drive for the Center of the Homeless downtown.

We are in need of shoebox sized plastic boxes with lids to hold the donated items. There are currently 87 residents, 18 of which are children. Items that are needed are as follows:

ADULTS:

- warm socks
(knee socks preferred)
- chicken noodle soup
- chewy snacks, such as chewy cookies or granola bars
- full size body wash

We are still waiting to receive a list of needs for the children. We will pass the information on once received.

October has been National Clergy Appreciation month since 1992. I heard God calling me and my family into ministry 10 years later, in 2002. So, for as long as I have been a pastor, October has been National Clergy Appreciation month. I have to admit, as a pastor, October is a wonderful month. I could not even begin to explain how nice it is to receive the cards and notes and all of the other tokens of appreciation that are shared with me and my family during the month of October. That is why I want to take this opportunity to offer a truly heartfelt, "Thank You," to our Grace UMC family for all of the ways you have expressed your appreciation to us this year. We hope you know how much it means to all of us to be appreciated by all of you.

In addition to thanking you for your expressions of appreciation for us; we would like to express our appreciation for all of you. When Paul wrote his first letter to the church in Thessalonica he started it with these words:

"We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul appreciated the people who made up the churches he served and I want all of you to know that my family and I appreciate all of you in the same way. We look forward to many more years of being in ministry with you.

Thank you Grace!
Peace,
Pastor Jim

"FIRST SUNDAY" POTLUCKS RESUME

The first Sunday of Advent brings back our "First Sunday" Potlucks!

Plan to join us for lunch in the Great Hall on Sunday, December 3 at 11:30AM. Pasta with / without meat sauce will be provided. Please bring a dish to share. The warming oven will be available. There's no better way to start the Christmas season than sharing a meal together!





BLOOD DRIVE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19 from 10AM - 1PM in the GREAT HALL
Please register at givebloodnow.com/donorportal/.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAYS

9AM & 10:30AM In-Person & Virtual Worship Service
10AM Coffee Fellowship Hour
10:30AM PreK - Adult Sunday School
11:45AM Youth Group

MONDAYS

1PM Pilgrimage Healing (by appt.)
7PM A.A.

WEDNESDAYS

7:30AM Bible Study

THURSDAYS

6PM Positive Outlook Basketball Group
7PM Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAYS

7:30PM A.A.

NOVEMBER 8

6:30PM Staff Parish Committee Meeting

NOVEMBER 9

1:30PM UMW Merry Missions Circle Meeting

NOVEMBER 11

10AM-12PM Paper Pantry

NOVEMBER 13

6:30PM Blue Star Mothers Meeting

NOVEMBER 16

6:30PM Angel Tree Meeting

NOVEMBER 18

9AM - 2PM "Made With Grace" Fall Bazaar

NOVEMBER 19

10AM - 1PM Blood Drive

NOVEMBER 28

6PM Advent Study Begins

NOVEMBER 29

11:30AM UMW Executive Meeting

6PM Missions Meeting

DECEMBER 2

8AM Men's Breakfast

9AM Hanging of the Greens

AMAZING GRACE NEWSLETTER



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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PHONE | 574-288-4789 WEBSITE | gracemethodist.org
FACEBOOK | [sbgraceumc](https://www.facebook.com/sbgraceumc) YOUTUBE | [SBGraceUMC](https://www.youtube.com/SBGraceUMC)

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICES | 9AM & 10:30AM (Livestream & In-Person)

ALTAR FLOWER DEDICATION CALENDAR

If you would like to celebrate or memorialize a loved one or event by dedicating flowers for the altar, please sign up at signupgenius.com/go/70a084eadae2aa4f94-altar. Please sign up by 10AM on the Tuesday before desired date.

THE MORE WE KNOW, THE BETTER WE CAN CARE!

If you or anyone in your life needs care, love, prayer and support, please contact Melodie at 574-288-4789 or email the Grace Cares confidential email address at gracecares@gracemethodist.org. Grace Cares about you!



MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO GRACE UMC

If you would like to contribute, please scan the QR Code or text 574-444-3044 and follow the prompts. Please remember Grace United Methodist Church when doing your estate planning.

NEXT AMAZING GRACE SUBMISSION DEADLINE | TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7