

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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2026



From the Pastor's Desk

September 1, 2026

Romans 12:4-5 (NKJV)

4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.



Greetings Grace Church Family,

One of the things I continue to appreciate about the Church is that ministry was never intended to be something we do alone. God calls us into community, gives us different gifts, places different people in our lives, and then invites us to discover what becomes possible when we serve Christ together.

As we move into another season of ministry at Grace, there are several developments I want to share with you - some involving how I will be working here at Grace, and others involving some exciting opportunities beyond our walls.

Upcoming events

It is a prodigious time of year. Here it is late August, and on most days the heat of summer is still pervasive. Area schools are getting ready to begin their new school years, Lifewise Academy is preparing for a new season. Summer vacations are winding down, and fall activities beckon on the horizon. Jayme is in the planning stages of the Christmas Cantata, and the Worship Team have set December 13th as a tentative date. If we are going to host another Trunk or Treat, please get with me so we can make necessary announcements and advertise it properly. Also, the First United Church of Christ, where Amanda is now pastor, has embarked upon a Diaper Closet ministry, which addresses a profound need within our community. I would love to support her and their church in this effort, which is not only a great ministry to be a part of, but acknowledges their effort towards supporting our own Laundry Soap ministry (they have collected tons of donated empty jugs for us).

Working Together Beyond Grace

I am pleased to share that Pastor Ben Webster and I have been talking about ways our churches can support one another in ministry. Pastor Ben serves the South Charleston and Emory Chapel United Methodist Churches, and we have agreed to provide pastoral coverage for one another during vacations and other times when one of us needs to be away. But we also hope this partnership can become more than simply covering for one another.

We are beginning conversations about bringing our congregations together for a combined church picnic next spring, and we are also exploring the possibility of a combined revival event. Nothing about these possibilities changes the identity or ministry of any of our churches. Rather, they give us an opportunity to remember that the Church of Jesus Christ is much larger than any one congregation. We can encourage one another, worship together, fellowship together, and perhaps discover new ways of serving Christ together. I am excited to see where God may lead us.

Next, at a District event on Sunday, August 23 in Bellefontaine, Rev. Don Wilson, our District Superintendent approached me asking about our Haitian people and ministry. After a quick update on current happenings, he expressed Bishop Jung's desire to help out the churches in Springfield however the Conference can, and proceeded to ask me to coordinate a meeting between Conference leadership and all the clergy. To that end, I will be coordinating with all the pastors of several area United Methodist churches, which may include hosting a meeting at our church with the Bishop, District Superintendent, and our area pastors. There will be more to follow, and I will certainly share with you what I learn when I learn it.

Communication and Social Media

I am also making some changes in the way I use social media in connection with pastoral ministry. Social media can be a wonderful way to share encouragement, celebrate the life of the church, and communicate information. At the same time, it is not always the best place for pastoral conversations, church concerns, or matters requiring careful communication.

Going forward, I will be using social media primarily for sharing information, encouragement, and the public ministry of the church through the church's social media page. When something requires a pastoral conversation, I encourage you to speak with me directly rather than attempting to address it through social media.

Good communication is an important part of healthy Christian community, and I want to do everything I can to encourage conversations that are personal, respectful, and constructive.

Office Hours and Staying Accessible

At the time of my writing this, it is late August. Beginning this week and going forward, Wednesday will be my regular office day at Grace.

That does not mean Wednesday is the only day I am serving Grace, nor does it mean pastoral ministry happens only during office hours. Much of pastoral ministry necessarily takes place away from the church building - in hospitals, homes, meetings, community settings, sermon preparation, worship planning, and the many other places ministry leads us. Wednesday will simply be the regular day when members can expect me to be working from the church office. Any other day outside a regular day off, if a meeting is required for pastoral counseling or information sharing, I will be glad to meet with anyone at a local restaurant or coffee shop by appointment.

I will also be speaking with our Trustees about the possibility of acquiring a telephone answering system for the church that can forward appropriate calls to my cell phone. My hope is that this will make it easier for people to reach the church, and for important pastoral needs to reach me, even when ministry has taken me away from the building.

Partners in Pastoral Care

There is one other area where I would especially like your help. I would like to develop a small group of volunteers who are willing to accompany me occasionally on pastoral visits to our homebound members, or regular members when events warrant. This would not only provide additional fellowship

and connection for those we visit; it would also remind all of us that caring for the congregation is a ministry shared by the whole Church.

I would also like members of this group to be willing, when available, to be present at the church if I am asked to meet privately with someone there. Their role would not be to participate in confidential pastoral conversations, but simply to be present in the building when circumstances make that appropriate.

You do not need special training to volunteer. All you need is a caring heart, a willingness to listen, respect for confidentiality, and a desire to serve others. If this sounds like a ministry in which you might be interested, please speak with me.

The Work Belongs to All of Us

None of these things by themselves may seem particularly dramatic. A Wednesday office day, a better telephone system, a few people making visits together, churches sharing a picnic, pastors covering for one another.

But if you really think about it, that is how much of the Kingdom of God actually works. We show up. We make ourselves available. We care for one another. We find ways to work together instead of working alone. And little by little, God takes those ordinary acts of faithfulness, and uses them to build something larger than any of us could build by ourselves. I am grateful for the ministry we share at Grace, and I am looking forward to discovering what God has waiting for us in the season ahead.

Another motorcycle?

Not that I'm trying to follow some kind of trend or anything, but the picture included in my submission this month shows yet another motorcycle. Last month, it was a Harley Softail Standard 100th Anniversary Edition. This time around, it's a Kawasaki Vulcan Voyager. Amanda took that photo as we were gassing up and getting ready to head out on a day-ride from our house in Westerville, Ohio. That's the bike we rode to Niagara Falls around the same time, so we have very good memories associated with it.

In Peace and Love,

Pastor Rob Stufflebeam

Grace United Methodist Church

(740) 304-2518 rob.stufflebeam@gmail.com

September Scriptures

Sept. 1	Luke 12:21
Sept. 2	Isaiah 26:3
Sept. 3	Jeremiah 31:9
Sept. 4	Ruth 4: 15
Sept. 5	Zephaniah 2:3
Sept. 6	John 8:28
Sept. 7	Psalms 119:94
Sept. 8	Psalms 23:4
Sept. 9	2 Chronicles 14:4
Sept. 10	Proverbs 3:5-6
Sept. 11	Deuteronomy 8:2
Sept. 12	Psalms 3:3
Sept. 13	Deuteronomy 1:21
Sept. 14	Jeremiah 16:21
Sept. 15	1 Kings 8:23
Sept. 16	Ephesians 2:4-5
Sept. 17	Deuteronomy 8:18
Sept. 18	Romans 5:1
Sept. 19	1 Corinthians 2:5
Sept. 20	Psalms 29:2
Sept. 21	1 Peter 3:3-4
Sept. 22	Ezekiel 34:27
Sept. 23	Galatians 5:1
Sept. 24	Psalms 80:14
Sept. 25	Zechariah 8:12
Sept. 26	Psalms 68:20
Sept. 27	2 Timothy 4:7
Sept. 28	Jeremiah 20:13
Sept. 29	John 10:10
Sept. 30	Psalms 138:9

Prayers Needed:

Phyllis & Larry Garber
Jeanne & Shelley Powell
Jean Ann Baldwin

Shower of Blessings

Recipient for September

Barb & Dave Sheehan

PO Box 7

Medway, Oh 45341



September Worship Participants

Position	Date	Name
Acolyte	September	Larry Cambell /Greg Hosier
Communion Set-up	Sept 6	Pastor Rob
Communion Servers	Sept 6	Betty Prosser & Donna Layne Barb McCoy & Donna Myers
Communion Clean-up	Sept 6	Betty Prosser
Greeter - Front Door	Sept 6 & 13 Sept 20 & 27	Barb McCoy Kim Stehle
Greeter – Sanctuary Door	Sept 6 & 13 Sept 20 & 27	Marilyn & Tom Martin Bob & Ramona Keeton
Liturgist	Sept 6 Sept 13 Sept 20 & 27	Jackie Brewer Pattie Mumma Connie Mitchell
Ushers	Sept 6 Sept 13 Sept 20 Sept 27	Larry Campbell & Greg Hosier Larry Campbell & Greg Hosier Larry Campbell & Donna Layne Larry Campbell & Donna Layne

Counters

Special Music

Sept 8	Marilyn Martin & Deb Cooke	Sept 6	Jayne Tatro
Sept 14	Mary Ahlborn & Ramona Keeton	Sept 13	Jim Mayhugh
Sept 21	Kim Stehle & Gail Eckler	Sept 20	choir
Sept 28	Mary Ahlborn & Pam Smith	Sept 27	choir

FIVE WAYS TO HAPPINESS

Submitted by Dave Speas

There are days it feels almost impossible to escape sin. Sometimes it's when I come face to face with the greed, impatience, and pride in my own heart. Other times, I feel overwhelmed by the violence, hate, and fear pressing in from the world around me. I can only take so much heartlessness, so much brokenness, so many facebook arguments, before I find myself curled into a fetal position and refusing to leave the couch.

"What can men do against such reckless hate?" King Theoden asks Aragorn in *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. To be honest, I probably ask that question every couple of days.

Here are five beautiful ways the Bible shows us how to live with love:

1. Lift up the broken, enlarge the small, and favor the weak

But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"(Matthew 19:14).

This is one of my favorite episodes in Gospels. In a society that, in many ways, treated children as little more than property, Jesus refused to let them be brushed aside. Rather, he spent time with them, blessed them, and make a special point to teach his followers that his Kingdom was made for "such as these." I can't think of any higher praise!

Throughout his ministry, Jesus also blessed and worked alongside women - another people group relegated to the status of property and lesser citizens in most ancient cultures. He teaches them (John 4, Luke 10:39) heals them (Mark 5:24-34), and even chooses to reveal himself as risen Lord first to a woman, and commissioned her to be the first bearer of the Resurrection Gospel (John 20).

We can emulate the love and care Christ showed to the poor, the marginalized, and the sick. Learning from his example, we can remember to be kind to children and those who are socially disadvantaged. We can remember to show love by prioritizing those who have nobody looking out for them.

2. Have patience with each other

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other (Colossians 3:12-13).

Isn't it sobering that, even when we are surrounded by fellow believers, "bearing with one another" is still so hard? Patience is not something that comes naturally to most of us. But we can increase patience in our hearts by turning to God's word, and remembering his supreme patience.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

According to Peter, God longs for each of us to have life and right relationship with him. If an eternal and holy God can display such grace toward us in the face of our stubbornness, can we not show a portion of the same grace to one another? Patience in the midst of frustration and trial is one of the most shining examples of biblical love.

3. **Be generous**

There are two aspects of generosity. First, and the one that comes to mind for many of us when we hear the command “to give,” is the material sense. For, as James exhorts,

If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? The Bible has verse after verse reminding us that living with love means giving with love.

But generosity isn't just about dollars and cents. If we follow the example of Christ and other biblical heroes, we learn that being generous means living with an other-focused, self-sacrificing spirit. It means living with kindness, encouraging others, and offering our good works to one another. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

4. **Don't withhold forgiveness**

When we are hurt, it's tempting to reserve a secret place in our hearts to nurture bitterness, even long after apologies have been exchanged. And while it may be necessary to change or even break off relationships, true forgiveness sets us free and brings us closer to the Lord.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Colossians 3:13). According to Mark 11:25, forgiving others is an act of emulating God. God forgives our sins freely. Christ offered his friendship to Zaccheus before he even repented for his sin. He promised eternal life to the thief on the cross, who no longer had chance to try and live a righteous life. Forgiveness, we see in Scripture, is the path to wholeness.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed (James 5:16, emphasis mine).

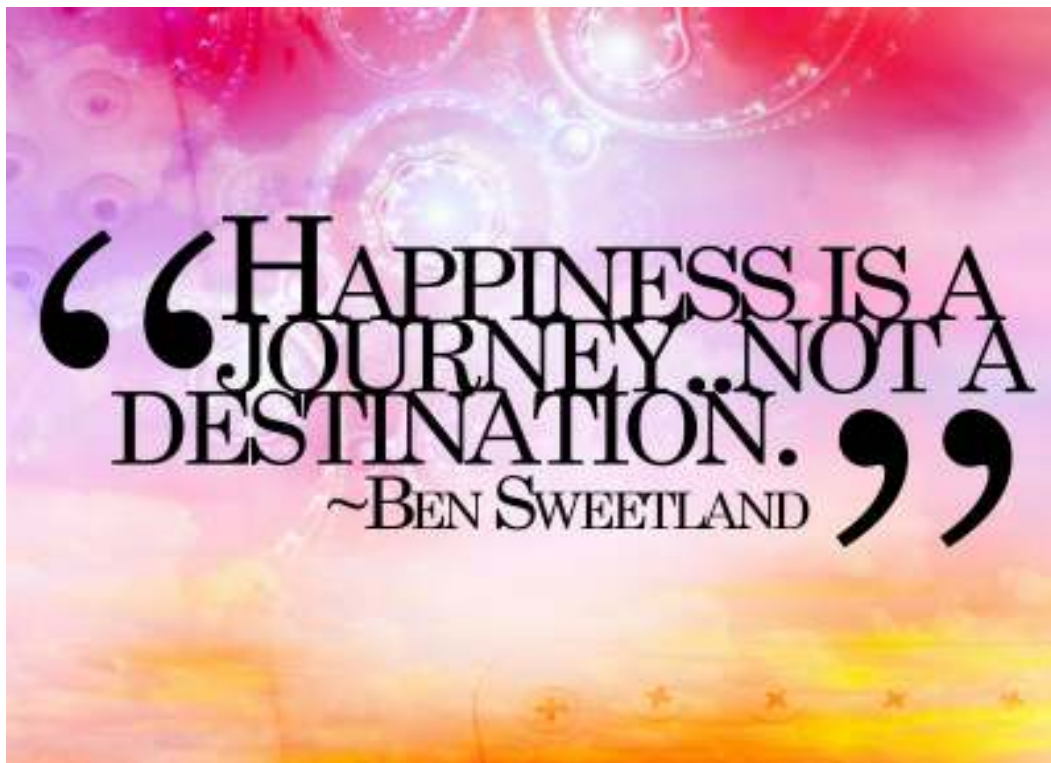
5. Keep Your Promises

Living a life of truth is, perhaps, one of the most concrete way to show God's love to those around you. But that requires more than just honesty: it means keeping our word. Psalm 89:4 is a resolution every godly man and woman should strive to keep:

I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

Keeping promises is so important for Christians because we serve a God of truth and love. Our consistency in this matter not only shows our respect for truth, but it serves those around us by building trust in relationships. It takes a true act of love to consider our words and actions so deeply before we choose to speak.

Christians serve a promise-keeping God: one who continued to sustain Israel through slavery in Egypt, exile in Babylon, and occupation by Rome. We worship a Christ who forgives us no matter what, is generous with his blessings, has patience with our shortcomings, and fights for the smallest and weakest among us. By following his example in these ways, perhaps we can teach one another (and ourselves) a little more about living with love.



September 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

		1 7 pm NA	2 10 am BS 11:45 Am choir 6 pm West End Association Mt	3 6 pm Trustee Mt	4	5
6 7 pm NA	7 7 pm Mens BS	8 7 pm NA	9 10 am BS 11:45 Am choir	10 6 pm All Church Mt	11	12
13 7 pm NA	14 7 pm Mens BS	15 12 pm Women Of Faith 7 pm NA	16 11:45 Am choir	17	18 10 Am Snyder Park Dedic- ation	19
20 7 pm NA	21 7 pm Mens BS	22 7 pm NA	23 11:45 Am choir	24	25	26
27 7 pm NA	28 4 pm Soup Kitchen 7 pm Mens BS	29 7 pm NA	30 10 am BS The Chosen 11:45 Am choir			

FALL SYMBOL SEARCH

Find each series of symbols in the grid below. Symbols will be arranged either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally in the grid.

