

**FEBRUARY 2022**  
**Volume 3, Issue 2**

# Amazing Grace

**Grace United Methodist Church, 55 Albright Drive**

To the people of Grace Church:

Grace and peace of God our Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you. I am so very blessed to serve as your pastor and serve alongside the wonderfully gifted leaders of your church. We truly are a step above and God has richly poured out His Spirit generously on our congregation and its work in our local church and surrounding community.

Have you ever asked yourself the question “what is church?” Many of you may know a great definition something along the lines of “a group or community gathered together by the common belief in the person and mission of Jesus Christ” and you are right. That is our identity. We are a people called together under the banner of Jesus. This is the tie that binds us to quote the hymn. Ephesians chapter one tells us our identity in Christ. *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to*

*sonship through Jesus Christ” ... In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will...to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth.”*

This is who we are. Also, though, what does “the church” do? There are many answers that are possible but only one is the needed. That is as Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 28:21-22 *to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them all that I have taught you.*” This is the “what” of our existence. To know Christ and make him known as seek to live out our vision of what this looks like by Seeking God, sharing Grace, and Serving Our Community. Each part of our vision is important because it is the lens, the filter, the measure of all that we do at Grace. We want to share Jesus in Word, Sacrament, and Service.

The past January the leaders of Grace and myself spent a weekend together looking prayerfully at the direction our church needs to go and what that looks like. The overwhelming sense of God’s call for us is outward. We as of now have no real presence in our community. We are going to change that. We want Grace Church to salt and light, to be that shining city on a hill that leads others to Jesus. We want to be a discipling community that creates disciplined community. Every where we go. We want to be at the football games, the soccer fields, the band concerts, the parades, the outreach programs that serve that we can share Christ in conversation and build bridges that allow others to know Jesus in a real way. Here is the invitation, we want you with us. We want you ideas, your dreams, your interests, and most importantly your hands and feet. Help us go to the places we need to go and meet the people God is taking us to. Everybody in.

Amen.

Blessings,  
Pastor Todd Christine, MDiv.

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## Defenders of the Faith

### *“Discipleship, Truth and Love, & Your Personal Testimony”*

Discipleship is a calling for ALL Christians. Jesus told us to do so (Matthew 28:19-20). It is a fully orbbed intentional lifetime process headed and guided by the power of the Holy Spirit developing our faith and becoming more like Jesus. It involves continually growing and genuinely and actively living out our lives in Christ through prayer, reading and studying the Bible, fellowship in the community of other followers and witnessing to others. Theology (the study of God’s word), evangelism (declaring the faith), apologetics (the defense of the faith), and relationships through ministry, missions and daily interactions are essential components of Christian discipleship. We were made for community. It is important to understand that none of these parts of the whole are meant to work in isolation, but they complement each other. Discipleship is living a life of complete devotion to Jesus. It is our faith lived out. Ultimately, it is moving people from where they are to where God calls them according to His glory and will. (We will discuss discipleship in more detail in a future article and how the church has dropped the ball over the last 50 or so years in making this its primary focus.)

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John Stott said, “Truth without love is too hard, and love without truth is too soft.” Jesus had the perfect balance of clarity and charity that we are to strive to model. You cannot just ‘argue’ people into the Kingdom of God (HEAD without HEART). Truth not framed by love is uninviting, inflammatory, and cold (1 Corinthians 13:1-2). You cannot just ‘love’ someone into the Kingdom of God (HEART without HEAD). Loving actions can be done by anyone with ANY worldview. The truth of the Gospel **MUST** be eventually verbally presented. How would you explain to someone who asks what the Gospel is? Could you define it? Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6). The truth Paul is referring to is moral truth. Real love must be anchored in truth! Love speaks the truth; love AND truth (Ephesians 4:15). We need to be compassionate but not compromise our convictions!

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In Romans 10:14, Paul uses questions directed to fellow believers about the importance of declaring the good news of the Gospel. One way to approach this in conversation is to describe your own personal journey with Jesus Christ; your personal testimony. Mark 5:18-20 records the demon-possessed man that Jesus healed, and in John 9:24-25, Jesus healed the man born blind. Both men verbally shared his testimony after they were healed. What is a personal testimony

as it relates to Christianity? It is witnessing to others about your relationship with Jesus Christ. What are strengths of your personal testimony? It is nonthreatening, hard to argue against, can help lead someone to Jesus, encourage and inspire others, and can build up others. Your personal testimony can be particularly powerful with Jehovah’s Witnesses! They do not have the hope and personal relationship with Jesus in the Holy Spirit and the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life WITH Jesus. The best they believe they can do is be good enough to be on paradise earth WITHOUT the presence of Jesus. He will only be in heaven with the select 144,000. What is a limitation of your personal testimony? Unbeliever - “That’s so cool. I’m so happy you found something that works for you.” The test for reality is not just an experience, as you can have an experience in many places. Your personal testimony is very important and can be powerful in faith discussions, but anyone of any other worldview can have a personal testimony also. Your personal testimony is a wonderful tool in witnessing, but it has its witnessing limitations. What are some dangers in HOW you give your personal testimony (what should we be careful in NOT doing?) We could hyperbolize the testimony, we could brag or glorify ourselves intentionally or not, or we could make it more about us than Jesus.

A personal testimony is what we say AND how we live. “Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.” – Psalm 66:16

“You are the only Bible that some unbelievers will ever read.” - John MacArthur

“The unbelieving world should see our testimony lived out daily because it just may point them to the Savior.” - Billy Graham

“If you’re convinced that Christianity is true based on how it changed me, then you’ll doubt the minute you see me be a jerk. Because we’re all jerks in waiting. We’re going to do something or say something that’s going to embarrass us....If the whole reason why you thought Christianity was powerful truth was because I had some transformational experience, you’d say ‘what a hypocrite!’ You’re going to have doubts. But Christianity is still true, regardless [of] what kind of person I am on that day. What matters is not how I look today, or how any Christian looks today: it’s whether or not Christianity is true.” – J Warner Wallace





Happy New Year to you all!

2021 was another year that brought great challenges and sacrifices. Through God's grace we were able to meet those challenges and the needs of our community. And we thank you all for your gifts of time, talent, and funds that kept Red Bird Mission Work Camp alive in 2021.

As we enter 2022, we are preparing for new challenges and opportunities to serve. We have been working with Advent Health on a grant to target the needs of the elderly in our community and this will start in March! We also have been asked to assist the team from Tennessee with the next home build. Once I have their schedule we will be asking teams to work side by side with them throughout the home build. We also became an official NOMADS Project Site and will have additional volunteers assisting the work camp staff starting next Fall.

In 2021 we were able to work on 76 homes (a 281% increase over 2020), complete 149 projects (a 317% increase over 2020). This was accomplished with the help from 68 church groups and 682 volunteers (a 295% increase over 2020). As we enter the new year we are praying to double these numbers as some of our residents have been waiting almost 3 years to have their roofs, flooring, windows, plumbing, etc repaired.

Again, we thank you so much for your support of the Red Bird Mission and we are praying for a better 2022 for all God's people.

In His Grip,  
Bob

02-01 Nicole Downey  
02-03 Mary Zaleskiewicz  
02-05 Jonathon Johnston  
Angel Marchio  
Valerie Miller  
02-07 Louise Bankert  
Josephine Resh  
Gregory Thompson  
02-08 Elaine Foley  
02-10 Tyler Birgensmith  
Tom Foley  
02-11 Scott Kuntz  
02-12 Randy Hnatkowicz  
02-13 Mike Hnatkowicz  
02-14 Kathryn Trump  
Makenzie Yingling  
02-15 Kim Smith  
Katherine Study  
02-16 Alexander Martin  
02-18 Katherine Carroll  
02-19 Richard Mullinix  
02-21 Donald Prichard  
02-22 Katherine Blum  
02-24 Martha Prichard  
02-25 Scott Miller  
02-26 Ryan Garrett  
Amanda Myers

*Science and God are  
opposed, right?*

## Cultivate

We hope you have been enjoying our drama of Nicki and Jesus and that it has helped you in your own Christian walk.

Cultivate will have different things to look forward to every 3 to 5 weeks. Our next three weeks, starting Feb. 9, we will have a chance to have some of those questions answered that you have wondered about as you read your Bible or hear scriptures read. Or maybe a question has come up in one of your Bible studies.

We are asking that you start submitting your questions to Pastor Todd **now** by email, [tchristine@mygracechurch.org](mailto:tchristine@mygracechurch.org). It might be helpful to put "Questions for Cultivate" in the subject line of your email.

Please realize not all questions will be answered in these three sessions. We hope that in our time together you will have a chance to discuss what the answers might be with the people at the service and then we will come back together and share our thoughts, and then have Pastor Todd give us some clarification.

Following these three weeks we will be headed into Lent with a soup, bread and fruit supper before our Cultivate services. Each Wednesday we will be talking about a devotional that we will be reading for Lent.

Hope to see you there!

*If God knows everything,  
what's the point in  
praying to him?*

## Newsletter Information

Beginning March of this year (2022) we will only be sending newsletters through the US mail upon request. If you wish to continue receiving your newsletter via mail please contact the church office by February 15th. Hard copies will also be available at the hospitality desk in the main lobby of the church if you would like to receive your monthly issue but do not want to have it mailed to you. Unfortunately, we do not have enough folks who receive the newsletter through the US mail for us to qualify for our bulk mail rate. If you would like to receive the newsletter via email please contact the church office. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding.

If you wish to have an article or announcement featured in our newsletter, please contact the church office by the 15th of the month.



## CONNECTING WITH COUNCIL

**Chair:** Linda Mixer

**Members:** Denny Blum, Ron Carter, Pastor Todd Christine, Karen Coons, Ed Davis, Duane Myers, Amanda Myers, Amber Quance, Brian Jenkins

### January Council Highlights

- Amada Myers was moved from the SPRC to the Finance Committee. Brian Jenkins will now be on SPRC.
- Meredith is updating the Safe Sanctuary list.
- Pastor's door lock has been replaced. Lifetime tables are on backorder.
- Brian Jenkins has started a young men of grace group.
- Events committee is planning a super bowl party.
- Leadership retreat on Jan 7 & 8th was well attended and very informative. Wrap up will take place Jan. 25th.
- SPRC has 3 interviews scheduled for the part-time Treasurer's position.
- Staff meeting will be held Jan. 25th at 7:00pm at the church.
- Council approved the Church participating in the SW Football Booster advertisement program.
- Cultivate had a positive turnout.
- Council is working on getting people to return to in-person church services.

## How to donate money tax free from your IRA

Did you know that if you are 72 you can have all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) made directly from your IRA to Grace UMC (up to \$100,000 per taxpayer per year) **TAX FREE**? This law which affects Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) was made permanent in 2015.

This distribution is a convenient way to support Grace UMC and get a federal tax break while meeting withdrawal requirements for your IRA. However, you can't also claim the qualified distribution as a charitable deduction. The amount you donate is simply excluded from your taxable income (and your adjusted gross income), which can be an advantage if you do not itemize deductions. If you do itemize deductions this donation reduces your adjusted gross income for medical and dental expenses, and miscellaneous deductions which are figured on a percentage of your adjusted gross income.

To qualify the money must be transferred directly from your IRA to GUMC in order to be tax free. This is simple if you have check writing ability with your IRA. If you withdraw the money first and then give it to GUMC, you can deduct the gift as a charitable contribution (if you itemize), but the withdrawal amount will be included in your adjusted gross income.

If you are interested in doing this type of contribution please contact your IRA administrator or financial/investment advisor about the way to proceed that best fits your needs.



*Thank you to everyone who came out for our New Year's festivities.*



## **SCOUT SUNDAY**

**FEB 6TH  
11:00  
RSVP 1/18**



**Grace**  
Church  
A UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY

**55 Albright Dr.  
Hanover, PA 17331  
717-637-3100**

Service Project for  
Children's Sunday School  
Feb. 6, 2022

We are asking for donations of the  
following items for  
Grace Church The Shut-Ins

hand lotion, chapstick, nail polish, hard  
candies, crossword puzzles, sudoku, word  
searches, adult coloring books & colored  
pencils, lap blankets, tissue packets, warm  
socks, & toilet paper

Donation Deadline 2/6/22