

GRACE NOTES

January 2024



Issue 01

Grace United Methodist Church is growing into an open, welcoming, and accepting Christ-centered community, committed to sharing the transforming love of Christ, and loving all people all the time!

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“If you can’t get out of it, get into it!” is one of the mottos of the Outward Bound program, an intense spiritual and physical challenge designed to help people better understand who they are as people and to grow deeper in their relationship with God. The motto addresses the question, “What happens when confronted with an unavoidable situation?” Well, if you can’t get out of it, get into it!

Romans was Paul’s letter to the church in Rome written at a time of great challenges and uncertainty in the church. Things were changing in Roman society and within the church that were unavoidable. A great, even life-changing, decision needed to be made by the people of the Roman church. Will they prioritize their personal wants and wills? Or will they choose the way that requires putting others’ needs ahead of their own, encourage one another, trust each other, and most importantly trust God?

Paul writes to the Roman church urging them to get into it.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

Confronting an unavoidable situation is hard, and the change required to address the situation can be even harder. Our bodies become tense and stressed. Our minds bounce between possibilities and helplessness. Our spirits seek guidance from the divine, but a part of us questions if the guidance is divine.

In the original stories of A. A. Milne, known to us as *The Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*, there is a scene where Christopher Robin comes down the stairs with his teddy bear bouncing off each step. The thoughts of the bear are shared, “As far as I know the only way to come downstairs is bump, bump, bump. But sometimes I feel that there really is another way. If only I could stop bumping for a moment and think of it.”

When faced with an unavoidable situation, it can be difficult to figure out how to stop for a moment and find the solution. Yet the reality is that the more challenging the situation, the more obstacles encountered, the more dramatic the change required, the greater the possibility of real transformation taking place.

Paul writes, *give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.* That stress you’re feeling because the situation keeps you up at night. The tension you’re feeling because you’re not sure you want change or to personally change. Remember how God has been faithful. Trust in God. Surrender control to God.

Don’t think you have to come up with all the answers. Instead, *let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.* Paul understood that working through an unavoidable situation is as much a battle of the mind as it is a battle of the body and soul. Paul believed that a renewed mind had freedom in the Holy Spirit to think for itself which would lead to understanding what is pleasing to God. Paul was confident that the church in Rome knew the solution to their struggle, but they wouldn’t let go and let God. They wouldn’t get out of the way.

As we enter the new year, we are faced with what might be considered an unavoidable situation. Our churches cannot continue with the status quo. In Romans 12:1-2, Paul teaches us how to approach our situation to discern the changes and direction God desires for us. It begins with sober judgment of who we are, and the place God has in or lives. It’s remembering that we are one part of a body of many members, brought together in Christ, and responsible to each other. It’s a call to set our minds on God and seek to know God more deeply. If we do that, we will discover what God wants us to do and what is pleasing to God. Will it be easy? Not likely. Will it be rewarding? Most definitely! Because with clear eyes (transformed thinking) and full hearts (living and holy sacrifice) we can’t lose.

Think about it, pray about it. See you in church.

Pastor Kevin

JANUARY



January 7

Isaiah 60:1-6
 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (UMH 795)
 Ephesians 3:1-12
 Matthew 2:1-12

January 14

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)
 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (UMH 854)
 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
 John 1:43-51

January 21

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
 Psalm 62:5-12 (UMH 787)
 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
 Mark 1:14-20

January 28

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
 Psalm 111 (UMH 832)
 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
 Mark 1:21-28



January Birthdays

David Hibbert	1/4	Marcy Sandberg	1/12
Blake Caudill	1/7	Rosemary Smith	1/15
Matthew Caudill	1/7	Warren O'Byrne	1/15
Stephen Caudill	1/7	Gayle McCoy	1/20
Kennedy Schwinn	1/7	Zoe Caryl	1/20
Nancy Taylor	1/8	Leona Fultz	1/24
Janice Spiker	1/8	Christopher Bowen	1/27
Adyson Caryl	1/8	Margie White	1/29
Breanna Chestnut	1/9	Robert Hastings, Jr.	1/30

January Anniversaries

- 1-04 Martin & Patty Hale
- 1-28 Ron & Margie Browning

Grace Vital Signs

We give thanks for your presence & presents each week.

	11/26	12/3	12/10	12/17
Attendance	closed	41	48	52

December 1 – December 22, 2023
 Received for operating expenses (thru offerings): \$6,781.00
 Transferred from another account: \$393.00
 Received other operating income: \$772.32
 Spent for total operating expenses: \$6,120.83
 Operating Acct Balance December 22, 2023: \$6,686.91
 Paid on Mission Shares to Date: \$3,000.00
 Total Balance from Memorial funds: \$10,456.89



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