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REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary
 9:30 a.m. Children’s Sunday School
 10:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School

7:00 a.m. & Comcast Cable Channel 6
 2:00 p.m. Comcast Cable HD Channel 914

Anytime or any day, watch the service on our YouTube channel, Grace Methodist Church of Decatur Online.

Our webpage is www.decaturgace.com where you will also find a link to the worship service on YouTube.

REGULAR OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



Grace Notes

Grace Methodist Church • 901 N. Main St. • Decatur, IL 6252 • 217-429-5374
 Volume 169 Number 5 May 2024

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UPCOMING SERMONS

April 28 –
 Catching God’s Vision:
 Restoring God’s World
 (Part 4) Nehemiah 5:1-13

May 5 -
 Catching God’s Vision:
 Restoring God’s World
 (Part 5) Nehemiah 3:1-14

May 12 –Mothers Day
 The Canaanite Mother
 Matthew 15:21-28

May 19—Pentecost:
 Come Holy Spirit,
 Welcome Holy Spirit
 Acts 2:1-21

May 26 –
 Yielding to the
 Holy Spirit
 John 14:15-27

Dear church family,
 Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I pray and hope this note finds you well and enjoying the warmer weather.

Once again, I thank God for our church and how you all are offering yourselves through worship and participation in various ministries of the church to demonstrate your love for Christ and His Mission. It was great to see many of you attending the prayer session that we had on March 28th; thank you for taking the time to fast and pray for God’s direction and the future of Grace church.

I believe, the time of feasting and envisioning the future of Grace Church on April 7, 2024, was another very significant event in the life of our church. On this day we took time and did a critical analysis of our congregational demographics, the current state of the church, and its Implications for the future of the church. We realized that it was time to catch God’s vision for Grace church. It was a time to press the reset button, to rebirth and become a church that God called us to be. God is in the business of rebuilding broken lives, broken families, and broken communities. Now our focus is clear. We are in God’s business.

Let us give ourselves fully to expand Christ’s kingdom in the city of Decatur, the surrounding communities, and the world. Let us focus on raising the next generation. Making our church facility a place of outreach and nurturing ministry for younger kids, youths, and families. I am sure, you are as excited about the future of Grace as I am. Let’s become intentional in reaching out to people out there in the community, among our family, friends, and relatives, and invite them to church, and share the gospel with them so that they may come to know the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. People need the Lord. Ask people how you can pray for them, and keep the conversation going with them, even if they are not ready to come to church yet. Pray for them that the Holy Spirit will prompt their hearts to respond to the gospel. Some in our congregation have experienced significant health concerns and some the loss of their loved one. Please pray with me for God’s healing touch for the sick, peace, and comfort for the members of our church family who have recently lost their loved ones.

Always Remember: You are a vibrant community of believers who come Together to worship the Lord, study God’s word, pray, enjoy each other’s fellowship, and support one another through small groups. We are committed disciples of Jesus Christ and passionately reach out to the world through the preaching of the Gospel and by participating in God’s mission locally and globally.

It is my joy, privilege, and honor to serve Christ Jesus alongside you all. With Love, prayers, and blessings,

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift His countenance upon you, and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

Pastor AP

DISCIPLESHIP

SOAPY Personal Daily Reading Schedule



We use our SOAPY daily readings for preparation for worship. You'll find the daily readings corresponding to the coming Sunday's message. As you read and study the texts, you will be preparing your hearts for worship and plowing up the ground for receiving the seed of God's Word. In case you have not yet engaged the SOAPY readings, you may wonder what is SOAPY?

SOAPY stands for: **S**cripture, **O**bservation, **A**pplication, **P**rayer and **Y**ielding.

Here's how to put the SOAPY principles to work: You might want to keep a SOAPY journal for notes. If you are able to find a place of solitude for your time of reading, read aloud the Scripture passage for the day. Hearing the Word is a powerful spiritual discipline. Make some Observations in your SOAPY journal by asking these questions:

- 1) What is the **Scripture** about?
- 2) **Observe:** What does this passage mean?
- 3) What truth or teaching can I **Apply** to my life?
- 4) Then write and offer a **Prayer** that helps you
- 5) **Yield** more of your life to Jesus so that your study is not for information only, but for transformation as you grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ and into His likeness.

April 21	John 8	May 12	Matthew 15-16
April 22	John 9	May 13	Matthew 17-18
April 23	John 10	May 14	Matthew 19-20
April 24	John 11	May 15	Matthew 21-22
April 25	John 12	May 16	Matthew 23-24
April 26	John 13	May 17	Matthew 25-26
April 27	John 14	May 18	Matthew 27-28

April 28	John 15	May 19	Acts 1 -2
April 29	John 16	May 20	Acts 3 -4
April 30	John 17	May 21	Acts 5 -6
May 1	John 18	May 22	Acts 7
May 2	John 19	May 23	Acts 8
May 3	John 20	May 24	Acts 9
May 4	John 21	May 25	Acts 10

May 5	Matthew 1-2	May 26	Acts 11 -12
May 6	Matthew 3-4	May 27	Acts 13
May 7	Matthew 5-6	May 28	Acts 14 -15
May 8	Matthew 7-8	May 29	Acts 16
May 9	Matthew 9-10	May 30	Acts 17
May 10	Matthew 11-12	May 31	Acts 18 -19
May 11	Matthew 13-14	June 1	Acts 20

DISCIPLESHIP

Be Disciples
By Carol Perry

While at the Great Lakes Clergy Conference at New Horizons Church in Champaign the first week of April, I saw one of the talks given was titled "Be Disciples". Since I was on the prayer team, I wasn't in the sanctuary but rather in the prayer room. I could see through the tinted window of the room and kind of hear what was being said on stage but not well enough to repeat what the message was. But it did get me to thinking about being a disciple.

This is something I don't really focus on a lot. I think more about discipling. That's what Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." But can you effectively disciple others if you yourself aren't a disciple? Am I a disciple? Are you a disciple? What is a disciple?

The standard definition of "disciple" (noun) is someone who adheres to the teachings of another. It is a follower or a learner. It refers to someone who takes up the ways of someone else. Applied to Jesus, a disciple is someone who learns from Him to live like Him - someone who, because of God's awakening grace, conforms his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesus.

Jesus said, "follow me", and I will make you, I will transform you, I will create my likeness within you. Because we are fallen humanity, we cannot become like Jesus all on our own. We can get head knowledge by reading the Scripture, especially the 4 Gospels, going to church, Bible studies, reading devotions but that is not enough to be a disciple of Jesus. We need to get Jesus into our hearts, minds and souls.

When Jesus ascended to the right hand of God in Heaven, He sent an Advocate. John 14:26 says, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." It's by the Holy Spirit we truly became like Jesus. As we are transformed into the likeness of Jesus, we start thinking, taking and acting like Him. What kinds of things was Jesus doing while He was on earth? Going to lonely places to pray and worship His Father in Heaven, serving the poor, healing the sick, raising the dead, teaching and preaching. As disciples we should be following His example.

To follow Jesus means to worship Him exclusively. This is at the heart of Jesus's ministry on

<div style="float: left; width: 20%; text-align: left;"> </div> <div style="float: right; text-align: right;"> <h1 style="margin: 0;">May 2024</h1> </div>						
<u>Sun</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tue</u>	<u>Wed</u>	<u>Thu</u>	<u>Fri</u>	<u>Sat</u>
Don't Forget Mother's Day is Sunday, <u>May 12th</u>	Every Monday morning at 7:45 am - Prayer at Hope Academy	<u>May 8th</u> - Anchored Kids Awards & Graduation Night at <u>5:30</u>	1 <u>10:00am</u> - Sisters in Christ <u>4:30 pm</u> - Anchored Kids <u>5:00 pm</u> - Men's Bible Study	2	3	4
5 <u>9:30</u> -Worship Service <u>10:45</u> - Adult SS	6 <u>6:00 pm</u> - Bible Study <u>7:00 pm</u> -NA Narcotics Anonymous	7 <u>6:30am</u> -Men's Bible study <u>4:00pm</u> -Prayer Gathering <u>5:30pm</u> - Dr. Paul's IBS bible study workshop	8 <u>10:00am</u> - Sisters in Christ <u>4:30 pm</u> - Anchored Kids <u>5:00 pm</u> -Men's Bible Study	9	10	11
12 <u>9:30</u> -Worship Service <u>10:45</u> - Adult SS MOTHERS DAY	13 <u>6:00 pm</u> - Bible Study <u>7:00 pm</u> -NA Narcotics Anonymous	14 <u>6:30am</u> -Men's Bible study <u>4:00pm</u> -Prayer Gathering <u>5:30pm</u> - Dr. Paul's IBS bible study workshop	15 <u>10:00am</u> - Sisters in Christ <u>5:00 pm</u> - Men's Bible Study	16	17	18 John Goldan's Memorial Service 3pm. Visitation 2-3
19 <u>9:30</u> -Worship Service <u>10:45</u> -Adult SS	20 <u>6:00 pm</u> - Bible Study <u>7:00 pm</u> -NA Narcotics Anonymous	21 <u>6:30am</u> -Men's Bible study <u>4:00pm</u> -Prayer Gathering <u>5:30pm</u> - Dr. Paul's IBS bible study workshop	22 <u>10:00am</u> - Sisters in Christ <u>5:00 pm</u> - Men's Bible Study	23 <u>5:15pm</u> -Church Council Meeting	24	25 Gilbert Fletcher's Birthday party 2-4pm Fireside room
26 <u>9:30</u> -Worship Service <u>10:45</u> - Adult SS	27 <u>6:00 pm</u> - Bible Study <u>7:00 pm</u> -NA Narcotics Anonymous	28 <u>6:30am</u> -Men's Bible study <u>4:00pm</u> -Prayer Gathering <u>5:30pm</u> - Dr. Paul's IBS bible study workshop	29 <u>10:00am</u> - Sisters in Christ <u>5:00 pm</u> -Men's Bible Study	30	31	

Prayer and What It Means to the Global Methodist Church Leaders

By Carol Perry

If you go to the Global Methodist Church website this is the first part of what you will see on the prayer link.

PRAYER: THE GRAND MEANS OF DRAWING NEARER TO GOD. Founder of the Methodist Movement, John Wesley said: "Prayer is certainly the grand means of drawing near to God, and all other means are helpful to us only so far as they are mixed with, or prepare us for, this." Surely the Lord invites His people to draw near as also spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "Call on Him now while He is near." (Isaiah 55:6b)

In the Global Methodist Church, we believe the Lord answers when we call to Him in prayer. The GM Church seeks to saturate our Methodist movement in prayer at every level of development for guidance, wisdom, and empowerment. You are welcome to join us on this journey as we draw near to the heart of God in prayer.

As the Illinois – South district prayer team leader for the Great Lakes Region of the GM Church I am looking to gather people of prayer at Grace to be a team that prays not only for each other but for the needs of the church, our new denomination, the city, state, country, the world, and the Church.

We already have a wonderful email prayer team. This new team I am looking for would be in prayer through a list of monthly prayer prompts as well as when ministry needs arise around Grace, Decatur, the denomination and the world. This is not just praying for our congregational needs, it would be taking the above needs before the throne of God.

The GM Church leaders are looking to saturate the Church in prayer. Seeking God at every level for guidance, wisdom, and empowerment while also repenting not only for ourselves but for the church, I think we are all familiar with 2 Chronicles 7:14, "if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." But look at the promise that come next in verse 15, "Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place."

I'm on the search for people willing to pray continuously for Grace and the GM Church. That we would saturate the Methodist movement and seek God for all our needs. And occasionally fast and pray for those needs.

We are trying to grow Grace and the kingdom, but we need to seek God in that process to know His will and not move on our own wisdom and strength. Are you such a person? Would you be willing to help pray for such needs and lay them before the Lord?

Prayer isn't a spare wheel that you pull out when you are in trouble. We should use it as a Steering wheel that keeps us on the right path throughout our lives. We need to steer Grace and the GM Church on the path God is laying before us. As Dr. Paul said recently, "People who neglect prayer in God's business, they cannot get God's business done." Are you willing to take on God's business? Prayer is not a burden but a joy. It's a joy to be in the throne room before our God. It's an opportunity not only to ask for the needs we see around us, but to hear what the God of the universe is saying to us. How we can partner with Him for a better future and a fuller kingdom.

In the coming weeks, please don't avoid me as I approach you. I will be seeking out those who God has put on my heart so ask to join me in the throne room. The beauty of it is you don't have to leave your prayer room, house, car or wherever you pray, all you will need to do is pray.

Prayer is the most talked about but most neglected discipline. Let's make Grace a house of prayer as it says in Isaiah 56:7, "These I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." It's a simple way to serve the Lord. Just call on His name and He is faithful to answer. And with prompts and verses to pray, it's all the easier.

Here is a sample of prompts and verses that will be used. **Pray for prayer as we depend on the empowerment of the Lord to accomplish His purposes in the world and in the Global Methodist Church: To make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.** *I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.* (Ephesians 3:16)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20) **Pray for personal awakening in all of us. Our awakening hopes emerge from our own fresh encounter with Jesus leading to the humility and repentance that opens all channels to His working.** *If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened,* (Psalm 66:18) I am praying and fasting that the Lord will set apart a group of prayer warriors at Grace who are willing to seek the Lord in prayer for the work He is calling us to on behalf of Grace and to the ends of the earth. And saturate it in prayer.

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

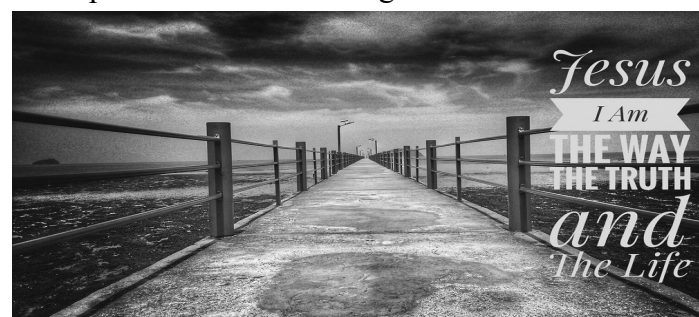
earth. As he told the woman at the well, the Father is seeking "true worshipers" - not faux worshipers, but true worshipers - those who worship Him in "spirit and truth" (John 4:23 -24). If we will follow Jesus, we must worship God - through Jesus, because He is our Mediator (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5), and Jesus himself, because He is God (John 10:30; 20:28-29).

In John, another picture of the Jesus we're to worship, He is kneeling before His disciples to wash their feet (John 13:5). Jesus is a servant. He came to earth not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as the rescue for sinners (Mark 10:45). To be a disciple of Jesus means to serve like him. It means to serve, even when it's an inconvenience to you.

When it comes in the commission of Jesus, He said to his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21; see also John 17:18). Witnessing is another aspect of being a disciple. As a disciple of Jesus, we have good news to tell. Because of the joy in us, we should want to share that joy, which comes through us through the love of the Father. Jesus was sent for a purpose - to reveal God and redeem sinners (John 1:14, 12).

To be a disciple in the GM Church the Transitional Book of discipline reads: "The disciple's character and practice are informed by the Scriptures, nurtured by the community of faith, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The disciple's mission is to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus through works of teaching, service, multiplication, mercy, and justice making more obedient disciples who will reflect the character and mission of Christ and expanding the boundaries of Christ's Kingdom further out into the world."

The goal of transformational discipleship ministry in the Global Methodist Church is to make, develop, and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ through small groups where each person is invited, challenged, supported, and held accountable in living sanctified lives that reflect the practices, character, and mission of Christ. To be a disciple of Jesus means to point people to Him. In other words, that we gladly seek more worshipers-servants-disciples. Let's fill the Kingdom!



CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Hang in there, summer is coming. This has been a crazy spring with warm and then cold. God will get us leveled out with hot weather before long and we will be praying for it to cool down. Only He knows the plan for us as all things should be in the hands of our all powerful Lord. May all of you have a blessed summer.

Anchored Kids will be having their award night on May 8th at 5:30. They will be entertaining parents and visitors with scripture readings and music. They were so good at the Ash Wednesday service. Congratulations to the volunteers that work so diligently with the kiddos leading them to Jesus.

The prayer group is still meeting at Hope Academy every Monday at 7:45 a. m. to walk and pray with the students and teachers. If you would like to join them, they welcome everyone. I know they feel the presence of the Lord. Members also still meet every Tuesday at 4:00 p. m. in the sanctuary for an hour of prayer. You can pray silently or aloud for anything that is on your heart.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! These greetings are for all that are homebound or in care facilities-Judi Mast May 11 , Barbara Higdon May 23, Mary Alice Newsham May 29. If you do not know where to send a card feel free to call either Karyn or me at 429-5374.

THE LITTLE RED WAGON! We are still collecting breakfast and snack items in our little red wagon for the Oasis. Jeff always has a room full most of the day. They especially like the coffee and breakfast items. Jeff and his staff appreciate all the donations. May God bless your generous hearts.



May God be with you and I will see you next month.

Living under God's love and protection,
Mary Grace

EDUCATION

From your Christian Education team....

Anchored Kids are finishing up their study of the Lord's Prayer, and learning about the miracles of Jesus. We have a great song to help us memorize the Lord's Prayer, and the kids are doing a great job.

Speaking of that – we will be singing that song and a few others at our Awards & Graduation Night on **May 8 at 5:30**, in the Sanctuary!

Please join us for this short program, and see what these kids have been learning. It means so much to these kids to have people in the congregation, as they sing their songs.

We are continuing our support of and prayers for Hope Academy. We will provide a lunch this month for the staff, during Teacher Appreciation Week, and we are still helping staff their food pantry once week as well.

We have also been asked to help with a Mother's Day/Special Person Tea! We could use your help on this! The kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders are each inviting one person who is special to them to come have tea with them on this special day.

The help they need is this – some kids, unfortunately, will have no one there for them. They are asking for volunteers to sit with kids who have no one there, and enjoy some tea together. No skills required - just drinking tea and sharing God's love through the giving of your time. We don't want any child to be without a special person.

Guys - you are needed too! Yes, it's

technically a Mother's Day Tea, but it doesn't have to be a female to fill this role as a special person!

There is a sign-up sheet outside the office - please sign up to be a special person to one of the kids.

The date is May 10, at 1:30. We'll meet at 1:15 in the Hope parking lot.

VBS is coming up soon! We will be doing SCUBA – Diving into friendship with God!

The dates are Sunday, June 9 – Thursday June 13.

It's for kids leaving kindergarten through kids leaving 5th grade. Please invite your kids, grandkids, and neighbors. They can sign up online at decaturgrace.com, click on Happenings and then Anchored Kids.

GRACE FAMILY

Grace Methodist Church Foundation

Lupton Scholarships

Perhaps the most prominent ministry of the Foundation is the Lupton Scholarship Fund. Earnings from donations designated for the scholarship fund provide stipends to church youth pursuing college degrees.

The application period for the 2024-2025 academic year is approaching. Applications for Lupton Scholarships are available in the church office. Completed applications should be returned to the church office no later than September 1. To be eligible the student must be a member in good standing of Grace Methodist Church. Recipients may re-apply in succeeding years as long as he or she is enrolled in a qualified post-secondary institution of higher learning.

As always, the Foundation asks that you keep us in mind as you develop your giving plans for the year.

We surround these families with Love & Sympathy:

Tama Davis and family
Jeanette Golden and family

In Loving Memory:

Vern Davis
John Golden

Contributions to Grace Methodist Church:

Mark & Patricia Pieske
Steve Hynds
John & Sue Allen
Carreen Northway
Bill & Janet Aikman
Gary & Joanne Boldt
John & Cindy Sellers
Craig & Dianne Shaw
Bruce & Rhonda Kaylor
Dorothy Browning
Sharman Sandberg
Mike and Donna Rutledge
Ann Irwin

To Our Church Family-

I would like to thank you all on behalf of Vern & Our family. I cannot begin to thank you for how much love, support & prayers you have shown and given to us the last 5 years & with Vern's passing.

Thanks You- Tama & Family

**God is saying to you today...
The pain will end.
The tears will stop.
The doors will open.
A season of miracles and blessings are on the horizon.
Don't give up.**

Amen.



Come Join -

Gilbert Fletcher
in the Fireside room from
2-4pm on May 25th
to celebrate his
90th Birthday

Economy Shop

Spring is in the air at the Economy Shop! Stop in soon to see our fabulous Spring fashions as well as our beautiful new floor. Dresses, knit tops, slacks, and capris abound in fresh Spring colors. Accessorize your new outfits with trendy jewelry, shoes or purses. Freshen up your home décor with Spring bouquets, knick knacks and colorful glassware.

The Economy Shop thanks our Grace congregation for their continuing support. As you begin your Spring cleaning, please remember that the shop accepts donations of clean, used clothing and household items on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

Spring volunteers are needed at the Economy Shop. We currently have a special need for workers on Tuesdays. If you might consider volunteering for a 2 ½ or a 5 hour time slot, please contact Judy Madding at 864-4522 or Marj Cline at 855-5060. Come join our cheerful crew!

FINANCIALS

Grace Methodist Church
Summary Financial Information: March 31, 2024

YTD Income	\$124,265.83
YTD Expenses	181,831.29
Net Income (deficit)	(\$57,565.46)