Advent at Grace

Join us on Sundays in December as we study “Almost Christmas, A Wesleyan Advent Experience”. In John Wesley’s famous sermon, “The Almost Christian”, He encouraged people to follow Christ wholeheartedly. We will explore how we can make the same commitment to Christ during advent, and connect our Wesleyan heritage with the traditional advent themes of peace, hope, love and joy. Join a Sunday School class or Small Group to go even deeper. Books and devotionals will be available for purchase in the church office.

Christmas Eve at Grace

6pm Children & Family Candle-Like Service
8pm Traditional Christmas Eve Service
December 2019

Christmas story is one we hear every year. It may be tempting to think, I know this story, and pay minimal attention as we are checking our seasonal to-do lists with another part of our brain.

There’s a reason we remember this story every year. The message of God’s overwhelming love for us is worth repeating! God loves us so much that God’s Son came to live among us and be Emmanuel—God with us. This month we will consider the Christmas story from the perspective of those who experienced it. We will begin with Mary’s story. Mary certainly didn’t expect to be visited by an angel. Next we will tell Joseph’s story. Even before the angel appeared to him, Joseph had already decided not to follow the law to have Mary stoned to death. After the angel’s visit, Joseph took Mary as his wife. Joseph’s willingness to trust God gives us a good idea of who was Jesus’ earthly father. God is at work among ordinary people, choosing to send Jesus as a message of God’s love in an unexpected and unconventional way.

December 2019

Our culture starts the celebration now in mid November, however in the Church, the weeks leading up to Christmas is something different. It is called Advent, something different altogether. This year, together with our church family, the youth will journey in the study “Almost Christmas; A Wesleyan Advent Experience. “ We will focus on preparing our hearts and minds for all the ways that Jesus enters our world. We will focus on the four key themes: Peace, Hope, Love and Joy. Together we will realign ourselves to the true meaning of Christmas.

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**GRACE VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS**

**VISION**
Where God’s grace is changing lives and making a difference

**MISSION**
We are a multigenerational community of faith called together by God’s grace to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

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**CHURCH STAFF**
Kenneth Carter, Florida Conference, Resident Bishop
Rinaldo Hernandez, District Superintendent, SW District
All Members of the Church, Ministers
Robin Hager, Pastor
Jim McWhinnie, Congregational Care Pastor
Beverly McFarland, Administrator
Suzanne Berndt, Organist/Director, Traditional Music
Mary Jeanne Moorman, Pianist
Rich Hager, Praise Team Leader
Vicki Mackey, Student and Family Ministry Director
Faithe Johnson, Preschool Director
Tia Fisburn, Office Assistant
Frank Hall, Custodian
Karen Bowles, Housekeeper

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**GRACE PRESCHOOL NEWS**

Venice Lions Recycle Project was a success in making a positive difference to the community! Thank you to all who donated their soda tabs and usable eyeglasses!

Our annual Christmas program will be held Tuesday, December 17th at 6:30p.m. in TFEC!

Grace will be closed for December 24th, 25th, 31st and 1st for the Holiday season! Winter camp will take place December 23rd to January 3rd for all enrolled and pre-registered students. Classes will resume Monday, January 6th.

We hope that everyone has a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
### DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

**USHERS:**
- Harry Beeck
- Bob Bainbridge
- Judy Johnson
- Tami Weaver

**GREETERS:**
- Carol Gruder
- Noris & Jean Mead
- Linda Spar
- Lois Hannigan

**VAN DRIVERS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PICK-UP</th>
<th>TAKE HOME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Steve Boone</td>
<td>Steve Boone</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 8</td>
<td>Robert Waldron</td>
<td>Robert Waldron</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>Bob Bainbridge</td>
<td>Bob Bainbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 22</td>
<td>Bob Bainbridge</td>
<td>Bob Bainbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 29</td>
<td>Steve Boone</td>
<td>Steve Boone</td>
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**MINISTRIES**

### MINISTRIES

**VISITING MINISTRY TEAM**
**Bringing Our Church To God’s People**

This ministry is an opportunity for us to address a need in our church family and community. Visiting the sick, homebound and those living in care homes provides them with a sense of belonging and spiritual connection to our church and the Body of Christ. Your willingness to listen, share God’s Word and when requested bring Holy Communion is a wonderful way to be of service to one another. Is Jesus calling you to “Step out of the boat, out of your comfort zone and follow Him?” Please say YES!

Contact Annette Scott 724.516.8181

**MINISTRIES**

**If you know of someone in assisted living, rehabilitation or homebound (even if they have a caregiver), call the church office with their name and location. We want to make sure we are not missing anyone and we want to do a better job in reaching out to our homebound members.**

Thank you for your assistance.

Email: gracecares@graceontheisland.com

**MINISTRY, MISSION, GROUP**

*Every active person in our Grace Church*

**Family is encouraged to have a M, M, and G!**

**MINISTRY** – At least one ministry within the church

**MISSION** – At least one mission to those outside the church

**GROUP** – At least one group during the year for spiritual growth and accountability

Do you have a Ministry, a Mission, and a Group?

**MISSIONS**

Vision Program provides free eye care and glasses. There is a large box located in the front office (main building) where you can donate your used glasses, cell phones and hearing aids. For more information there are brochures located in the front office or you can call: 941-486-6065.
Church. She office for the authorization form.

2. AUTHORIZE GUMC TO DO A MONTHLY DEBIT payment or your utility payment via your local bank just as you would your mortgage.

ONLINE BANKING

1. BILL PAY THRU YOUR LOCAL BANK VIA

Saving Box Tops for Red Bird Mission

Box Tops: it’s the little label that says ‘Box Top’ including the expiration date. Turn them in at the front office. Henderson Settlement uses the box tops for school supplies for the two schools that are part of the mission. They also were able to buy 29 Ford vans. On some snacks, there is a note on the front of the bag that a box top is there.

There is a note on the front of the bag that a box top is there. If you find it in your heart, funds can be added to the scholarship in Freda’s name. They also were able to buy 29 Ford vans. On some snacks, including the expiration date. Turn them in at the front office.

I have served as a Pastor for 41 years. In that time, I have served rural, urban, suburban congregations, both traditional and progressive. For many years I served as Chaplain at the University of Florida while at the University United Methodist Church and Student Center. I have worked as a minister to young families and a minister of discipleship.

My education includes a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, a Master of Divinity with emphasis on pastoral counseling from Asbury Theological Seminary, Master of Education in Counseling from University of Kentucky, a Doctorate in Higher Education from the University of Florida, along with graduate studies in Church History at Notre Dame and Yale. While in seminary I served as student chaplain at University of Kentucky Medical Center and at Eastern State Mental Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky.

I am married to my wife Debbie, a teacher of the hearing impaired in the Sarasota County school system. We have two grown sons, Shawn a pharmacist at Sarasota Memorial Hospital, and Scott, an animator at Blue Sky Studios in Connecticut. My avocations are watercolorist, photographer and poet. I am also a Protestant Brother in the Benedictine Community, where I am known as Brother Anthony of the Cross.

But foremost, I am a follower of Christ of the reverent and contemplative kind, serving with every fiber of Being. I serve Christ who is my Lord and Savior, my Guide and Sustainer, my Hope and my Peace.

Let me introduce myself … I am Pastor Jim McWhinnie, minister of congregational care at Grace United Methodist Church of Venice, Florida. My work is focused on pastoral care and spiritual direction. I do this through writing, visiting, conducting personal and group sessions, and through confidential counsel.

I am a charter member of Grace. Because of her love for children, it is our honor to have this scholarship in her name. If you find it in your heart, funds can be added to the scholarship in Freda’s name.

We encourage you to give through online giving here are some options to choose from:

1. BILL PAY THRU YOUR LOCAL BANK VIA ONLINE BANKING - set up your weekly/monthly giving via your local bank just as you would your mortgage payment or your utility payment

2. AUTHORIZE GUMC TO DO A MONTHLY DEBIT TRANSACTION - this method will need an authorization form signed at the church office. Please contact the church office for the authorization form.

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**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Notable BOT projects completed during 2019:

1. Installed a new air conditioner for the choir room.
2. Installed a new air conditioner for TFEC. $5000.00 was given to the BOT by the men’s club to help offset the cost.
3. Purchased a used pick-up truck for grounds maintenance.
4. Purchased a new zero turn commercial lawnmower.
5. Purchased a new carillon. The cost was reimbursed by the Memorial Committee.
6. Installed oversized gutters around the preschool.
7. Installed new security cameras at the preschool.
8. Rescreened both lanais at the preschool.
9. Resurfaced the flat roof on the main building.
10. Repaired the wood rot around the main building roof areas.
11. Installed the Stas picture hanging system in the café/library.
12. Installed new fluorescent lights in the narthex, front office and office hallways in the main building.
13. Installed new LED high-intensity lights in TFEC.
14. Installed new LED emergency lights in TFEC.
15. Had the carpet in TFEC professionally cleaned.
16. Repaired a roof leak in TFEC.
17. Had the kitchen stove hoods and ducts professionally cleaned in TFEC and Punch Hall.
18. Had the dishwashers in the TFEC and Punch Hall kitchens inspected and serviced.
19. Repaired the wheelchair lift on the van.
20. Had safety checks and repairs made to the bus and van.
21. Had major air conditioner repairs made to the van.
22. Had repairs made to two backflow preventers on premises.
23. Repair and installation of sprinkler lines and sprinkler heads in front of the church, the memorial garden and around the chapel.
24. Rented a lift and had Matt Delaney trim trees around the chapel.
25. Installed a hot water line to the sink in the café/library.
26. Installed a cold-water line to the icemaker in the work room.
27. Purchased new furniture for the youth room in TFEC.
28. Purchased new LED high-intensity lights in TFEC.
29. Purchased new zero turn commercial lawnmower.

The John Clay Memorial Crop Hunger Walk will take place on Sunday February 23, 2020. The Walk begins at 3 PM and starts and ends here at GUMC. Please reserve this date. More information will follow.

![Memorial Wellbury Brick](image)

Bricks may be engraved in memory of loved ones. In order to maintain consistency throughout the walkway, memorial bricks will be engraved with your loved one’s name, year of birth and year of death. A dedication ceremony will be held once a year on All Saints Sunday, the first Sunday in November. Someone from the church will notify you of the date and time should you wish to attend. Forms are located in the Church front office. Return the completed form and check in the amount of $100.

**ALTERNATIVE FLOWERS**

Kindly consider enhancing the beauty of our worship areas by placing flowers on the altar. Flowers can be given IN MEMORY OF or IN HONOR OF loved ones or friends. Bouquets are $30.00 each or $60.00 for two and yours to claim after the 11:00 AM service. Sign up on the flower calendar in the hallway and Please pick up a form to fill out in the church office.

**NEWSCASTER DEADLINE:**

Please submit all articles by December 10th for inclusion in the January Newscaster. Thank you!

**DECEMBER MEETINGS:**

- Finance Meeting: Tuesday, December 10th at 8:00am in Punch Hall Back Conference Room.
- Board of Trustees Meeting: No Meeting this month.
- Staff Parish Meeting: Tuesday, December 10th at 6:00pm in the Parlor.
- Church Council Meeting: Monday, December 17 at 6:00pm in the Chapel.

**ATTENTION:**

The Tour to Florida Southern College Christmas Show DATE HAS CHANGED TO DECEMBER 7th.

**BROADWAY BOYS**

Dinner and a Show Saturday January 24th, 2020 at 5:00pm

Broadway Boys – Venice Performing Arts Center 4 Course Dinner before in Punch Hall by UMW

The Broadway Boys is a collection of Broadway’s finest male singers. By adding elements of pop/funk/gospel/jazz to traditional show tunes, The Broadway Boys have redefined the musical theater genre. The Broadway Boys represent such shows as HAMILTON, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, JERSEY BOYS, WICKED, MAMMA MIA, THE BOOK OF MORMON, LES MISERABLES, THE LION KING and many more. You will watch it all from your center balcony seat. Tickets are limited. Cost is $60 per person.

**The Piecemakers For Peace News**

The Piecemakers had a very successful Open House. Thank you for supporting “the quilters” in our mission. Look here next month for news of how the proceeds from our sale will be used. If you missed the open house, you are welcome to stop by any Wednesday to check out our inventory of quilts and handmade items, or you can find our table at the Pancake Breakfasts. We take special orders too!

We meet in the East Wing on Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. New members are welcome. We always have a variety of quilting and sewing projects to work on. Our mission is “to support each other in fellowship and love as we create quilts for our babies, shut-ins, and friends of Grace United Methodist Church who need comfort.”

**TRAVEL CLUB**

The Pancake Breakfast and the Country Store Sale will be every 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 9am—10am ending on April 4th 2020.

**GROUPS**

First men’s club meeting will be on Monday, December 2nd at 7:30 AM in punch hall. Breakfast will be provided.

**CONCERT**

Paraguayan harpist, Nicholas Carter, will be making beautiful music once again in Venice this December. Several concerts are planned in the area and we are fortunate to have him giving an afternoon concert at Grace on Saturday, December 7th at 2:00. Please put on your calendars, spread the word and bring a friend, or two. (Suggested donation $10.)

**GRACE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN’S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TEA**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10th, 2-4 PM IN PUNCH HALL

Once again this year Grace United Methodist Women are extending a special holiday treat of music, tea, and food to the women of Grace Church and their friends. The music will be presented by saxophonist Eirinn Abu, a renowned musician, who plays a smooth sounding saxophone of contemporary Christian music and Christmas music. This event is guaranteed to get everyone into the spirit of the season.

Persons attending may bring a donation of FROBS. FROBS stands for flour, rice, oil, dried beans and sugar. A donation of one of these items would be appreciated. These items go to Cornerstone Ministries in Tampa, Florida.

Come join us on Tuesday, December 10th for a wonderful holiday time!