

Grace 2 U Newsletter

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My wife's dog, Ranger, likes to accompany me to the office in our church building. He sleeps on my couch or under my desk, wanders down the hall or the basement stairs to visit the ladies' Bible study and beg for treats, and greets all the visitors who come to the door. A few times a day we will go for a walk around the building to make sure the grass is sniffed and the bushes are watered.

Oftentimes, when we are making our circuit around the property, we will hear Ranger's name shouted from one of the many cars that drive by all day long. It seems Christy's beloved pooch is a well-known presence around here, and local drivers are often happy to see him outside so they can call out a greeting as they negotiate our intersection. Ranger the mini goldendoodle is a familiar and recognizable member of the community, especially visible thanks to the centralized location of his frequent rest stops.

That's the blessing of Grace Presbyterian's physical location in Dawsonville. Whenever I meet someone who asks me where our church building is located, their response is almost always a positive affirmation that they know exactly the place I mean. Many of the visitors we welcome on a regular basis will say that they have driven past here many times and felt drawn to check us out. Our building's local visibility has played a significant role in alerting the community to our presence.

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As Dawsonville and Dawson County continue to experience impressive growth, there will no doubt be more people who see our building, more drivers who read our sign, and by extension- more visitors who experience one of our worship services. With population growth comes opportunity, and Grace will be uniquely positioned to experience opportunities of our own, and not just from drop-in visitation.

Your session (Grace's board of ruling elders) is praying, discussing, and planning for ways to grow our congregation in tandem with the increase in our population. We want to maximize our spiritual impact in the Kingdom, the congregation, and the community, not just in numbers, but also in ministry, depth of commitment, and willingness to serve.

We are beginning to develop new outreach materials and strategies to alert people to our presence. We want people to know more about Grace than just our centralized location, including our uniqueness in style of worship, our high-quality musical offerings, our denominational distinctives, our unusually friendly people, and our commitment to ministry and justice.

As Dawson County continues to transition, we hope to transition right alongside our neighbors, and continue to be a church for our community in multiple meaningful ways. As a pastor and session, we are participating in a transitional ministry workshop soon that will help us develop the tools and strategies to become more influential than ever in transforming lives with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Invite your new friends and neighbors. When you tell them where we are, they might just say they know exactly where to find us. Maybe they will shout at Ranger when they drive by one afternoon, and maybe they will shout for joy

one day when they realize they have found their new church home.

Grace to you,
David



ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The Administrative team had a busy first quarter in 2024:

We initiated the concept of paying off the mortgage as a means to address our cash flow problem. The campaign was started in February and as of March 19, we have had generous donations totaling over \$34,000. Our mortgage balance is around \$60,000.

The team has recommended to the session that we consider replacing all of the wooden doors in the sanctuary with updated fire safety doors. The team continues to be conscious of and monitor congregational safety during Sunday services.

Joe Fortune
Administrative Elder



DISCIPLESHIP TEAM

How's Your Prayer Life?

In the Christian church, important discipleship disciplines include: worship, studying scripture, prayer, service, stewardship, and fellowship. In past articles, I've written about study, service, and stewardship. At Grace, we do a pretty good job with fellowship with after worship refreshments, the annual picnic, and the various luncheons held throughout the year. As a group, we like to eat. Our worship services strive to glorify God with song, scripture, preaching, and prayer. Many of us give of our time in service to others.

What about personal prayer though? Do you pray on a regular basis other than during worship? Have you thought about your personal prayer life lately?

Prayer is a direct line of communication with God. In prayer, we lay our hearts before God and seek Him in humility and praise. Prayer aligns our hearts with God's purposes. It helps us seek His guidance in things big and small. We pray for His will to be done. Through prayer, we become more aware of God's constant companionship. Experiencing Him leads to awe, strengthens our faith, and encourages deeper trust. When we pray for others, we prioritize their needs over our own, recognizing that God is the center of the universe, not us.

The Bible assures us that God hears our prayers. In 1 John 5:14, it says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." God's faithfulness means that He cannot ignore our heartfelt cries. God's timing and perspective are different from ours. He may not always act immediately, or on our timeline, but He does act according to His plan.

If you don't already, find a quiet time during each day to pray. It doesn't have to be long or eloquent. The pattern of daily prayer connects us with centuries of Christian tradition and Jesus' own practices. Daily prayer serves as a bridge between public worship and personal affairs, helping us to live out our faith each day. If you find it helpful, use the ACTS model to form your prayer:

- Adoration: Begin by praising God for who He is—His character, love, and awesome majesty.
- Confession: Acknowledge your shortcomings and seek forgiveness.
- Thanksgiving: Express gratitude for blessings, both big and small.
- Supplication: Present your requests and intercede for others. Pray for our church, our leaders, our family, friends, and our enemies.

After praying, listen to your heart. God responds to genuine intent and sincere hearts. He engages with faith. In your seeking, trust that God cares deeply for you. Keep praying, seeking wisdom, and remain open to His guidance. Remember, you are never alone in your journey of faith.

Peace,

Church



EVANGELISM / MISSION TEAM

As you probably know, I am new to this leadership role at Grace. Please bear with me as I learn the ropes. Mary Ann Sheehy has been kind enough to guide me and I'm gradually finding my way. The Evangelism and Mission Team met in January. Team members include Margie O'Byrne, Joann Keller, Dan Scott, Priscilla Taylor, and Jane Miller.

As you know, the pandemic dealt a pretty severe blow to our attendance. We've been recouping quite nicely of late, but we recognize the need to attract new individuals and families who are looking for what we have to offer – great worship services with traditional liturgy, dynamic preaching, and wonderful music! Not to mention a friendly, welcoming congregation. Our current focus has been to try and find ways to connect with new people and build our attendance and membership.

We have started using Visitor cards for new folks and a couple of families have already filled them out. If you see a new family or visitor, you can invite them to fill out a card. The pastor sends a letter to all the new visitors and I have begun calling them with great results. Most people love our church!

We have purchased a couple of portable signs with the Grace logo for use when we are at off-campus events. We are going to begin sending an email blast to everyone on our email list for special events (members as well as visitors for which we have an email). The first email is going

out for our Easter Brunch and we will continue to invite everyone for upcoming special events and meals.

Pastor David and the Session are working on scheduling "Come and See" Sundays in the near future. These will be Sunday services when we encourage you to invite friends and neighbors to attend. More to come on that.

Other outreach and mission activities are continuing:

Pastor David continues his "Pub Theology" meetings in Dahlonga as well as his involvement in Youth leadership Dawson.

Thank you for trusting me with this vital role. I am truly excited to see what God will do.

Grace To You,

Andrew



FELLOWSHIP TEAM

The Ladies of Grace, and especially the Fellowship Team, get lots of credit for the memorable events the church celebrates in the fellowship hall. And rightly so. They take time from family and friends to serve Grace; sharing their many talents (not to mention the awesome food they prepare).

The Team has begun preparations for the Easter celebration. Watch for forthcoming announcements.

But the person who deserves the real credit is Joe Fortune. Joe is the one who sets up the

tables and chairs so "the ladies" can do their work, and he does it with joy and shakes off any thanks and praise. So, the next time you enjoy an event in the fellowship hall, thank Joe. He is the one who does the heavy lifting. Bless you Joe. With eternal thanks from The Ladies of Grace.

Betty Powell



SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM

Joey and I were coming out of Kroger last week when we happened to find a wallet on the ground. "Someone lost their wallet" I said. "We should try to get it back to them" replied Joey.

Maybe it was his...Maybe it was hers... Maybe just theirs. How important are pronouns?

I have had the good fortune to learn firsthand about the LGBTQ + community. My firstborn, Katie, is queer, non-binary, and uses they/them pronouns. After 30 years of she/her, the pronouns have certainly been a learning curve. But you know what? I am a better parent and person for the lessons I have learned since our journey began. Native American cultures venerate a "two-spirit" child, something they have accepted and acknowledged throughout their history. What you see depends on how you decide to see it.

My child is exceptional in so many ways. After graduating from The Savannah College of Art and Design they were off to the Big Apple

where they founded their company, The Handy Ma'am. www.handymaam.nyc has been featured in the Huffington Post, The New York Times and most recently in this month's AARP magazine. As a parent, they give me a lot of bragging rights. Far and away my greatest pride in their accomplishments is the way they respect every person they meet. They ask questions we are too timid to ask. Not out of curiosity, but out of respect.

Respect.
So simple to give, so lovely to receive.

One of the young people in our church recently pointed me in the direction of The Trevor Project. The Trevor Project (www.thetrevorproject.org) is a resource for at-risk LGBTQ+ youth navigating their place in the world when it doesn't feel like a place exists for them. Helplessness, Suicide. Resources. Advocates. Education. Information and resources for parents. The work they do is immeasurably important to families in our community and in our church.

Chords that cannot be broken.

Social Justice at Grace Presbyterian is social justice for everyone. Our members, our visitors, the parents.... We are all out there sitting with you every week and I know that our little church has understanding enough for whatever the Lord puts in our path.

It is ok to have questions. It is ok to ask the questions. If you are interested in learning more or have concerns, please reach out to me by phone or text 706-429-6800. We make a commitment when we take the hand of our neighbor on Sunday morning. All different. All connected.

Bind us together with Love...
Kristie Myers-Homans
Social Justice



GRACE NOTES

Our long Lenten journey is at its end and Easter is almost here. This is a time for renewal of our spirits and we hope the music throughout this season has impacted your journey in a positive and meaningful way.

We are excited to have welcomed Margaret Lassen and Emma Teems to the Chancel Choir! They have already made a huge impact on the group, and we look forward to their continued contributions to choir and to Grace. We also will soon be saying goodbye to our three high school interns: Jaycey, Sydney, & Chris. As they prepare for graduation and their future education, we will enjoy the short time we have left, and celebrate their time here at Grace Presbyterian.

We are always looking for new voices to join us and right after Easter is a perfect time to drop in for a rehearsal and see what we're all about! Our first rehearsal after Easter will be Wednesday, April 10th at 7pm, hope to see you there!

Grace2U - Gene

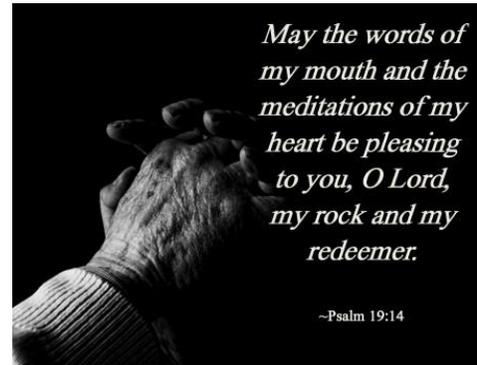
2024 has brought new member to Ladies' Bible Study for the Max Lucado Study, *God Never Gives Up On You*, which was "paused" for a Lenten study, *24 Hours That Changed the World*, by Adam Hamilton. Both studies are being led by the most capable, Sarah Achuff. The Max Lucado study will resume after Lent and conclude later this Spring.

We meet on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 beginning with our Bible Study lesson followed by a prayer session for those we hold in need of prayer. There's always room for more, please join us!

The January Ladies Luncheon was held at the church with a menu of soup, salad, bread, and of course desserts! There was a plan created for the luncheons planned by various members for the rest of 2024. The monthly luncheons will be communicated the month prior by church e-mail. Please respond as requested. Thanks to all who volunteered to coordinate luncheons!

The February Luncheon was planned by Betty Powell to honor two dear ladies, Sandy Grimes and Zoe Putnam, who reside at Manor Lake Retirement home in Dawsonville. A sweet fellowship was enjoyed by all who gathered. Our March luncheon is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th in Dahlonega at Shenanigans, planned by Barbara Quintrell and Joan Davis. Please contact Barbara if you plan to attend as she needs a head count.

Last but not least, our group voted to make a substantial donation to the retirement of the building mortgage, from the Women's Benevolence Fund. This fund is a result of dollars collected weekly at Bible Study and donations given at the monthly luncheons. Proof that all of us contributing a "little" can help in a "big" way!



Join Us! Looking forward to more Ladies Fellowship in 2024!

Marsha Loftin

In Our Prayers: John and Susan Adams (Marsha Loftin), Connie Alford (Shirley), Frank Ball, Ruth Ann Ball, Gretchen Blackwell, The Bollinger Family (Peggy), Tyler Chadwick, Susan Davis (Joe), Frank Duke (Kay Parrish), Mike Eason (Joey), Lisa France (Margie), Grace (Chuck), Margaret Hunt (Jim Hambright), Doug Jones (Margie O'Byrne), Shelby Lee, Vic Lemus (Chris Seese), Martha's Family (Dan Scott), Ms. Packham (Ruby), Pat (Ruth Ann Ball), Brenda Reagans (Kristie), Suellen and Skyler, Nancy Smiley (Ruth Ann Ball), Susan (Ruth Ann Ball), Peggy Thornton, Carol Watkins

Assisted Living: Sandy Grimes, Marian Hopkins, Zoe Putnam



March 24: Palm Sunday

February 11: Souper Sunday

February 14: Ash Wednesday

March 24: Palm Sunday

March 28: Maundy Thursday Service 7pm

March 29: Good Friday Service 12 noon

March 31: Easter Breakfast 9:30am, Easter Service 11:00 am, One Great Hour of Sharing

May 12: Presbyterian Homes of Georgia Offering will be received

May 19: Pentecost Offering will be received

USHER /LITURGIST SCHEDULE

Liturgists:

April

4/7 Susan Atkins
4/14 Chris Seese
4/21 Grace Walden
4/28 Joey Homans

Ushers:

April

Bill & Joann Keller, Betty Powell
Joey & Kristie Homans, Marsha Loftin
Jim Hambright, Margie O'Byrne, Priscilla Taylor
Elaine Coker, Nancy McCue, Chris Seese

Liturgists:

May

5/5 Margie O'Byrne
5/12 Logan Collins
5/19 Peggy Thornton
5/26 Katie Schumacher

Ushers:

May

Betty Powell, Barbara Quintrell, Chris Seese
Joann Keller, Dan & Jane Miller
Susan Atkins, Gordon & Jeannette Brand
Kristie Homans, Bob & Peggy Thornton

Liturgists:

June

6/2 Nathan Steritz
6/9 Chuck Achuff
6/16 Susan Atkins
6/23 Andrew Permenter
6/30 Lynette Steritz

Ushers:

June

Dan & Jane Miller, Priscilla Taylor
Michael & Joyce Ball, Barbara Quintrell
Ron & Elaine Coker, Marsha Loftin
Jerry & Susan Atkins, Bob Thornton
Nancy McCue, Margie O'Byrne, Peggy Thornton



April Birthdays

- 10th - Pat Tracht
- 11th - Dallas Kelley
- 12th - Nathan Steritz
- 13th - Daniel Miller
- 13th - Dan Scott
- 17th - Gretchen Blackwell

May Birthdays

- 3rd - Bill Weeks
- 9th - Martha Lynn
- 11th - Mickie Schaide
- 14th - Warren King
- 22nd - Sara Achuff
- 24th - John Kinney
- 26th - Barbara Crouse
- 27th - Marty Horne
- 30th - Logan Collins

June Birthdays

- 1st - Gene Seese
- 7th - Michael Ball
- 7th - Karen Permenter
- 10th - Sharra Kelley
- 16th - Mary Ann Sheehy
- 22nd - Ruby Lorenz
- 23rd - Alexander Herrit
- 26th - Bill Keller
- 26st - Amanda Herrit



April

- 8th - Jane & John Joh
- 18th - Gretchen and Roy Blackwell
- 29th - Barbara & Tom Quintrell

May

- 22nd - Chrisy & David Jordan

June

- 3rd - Joann & Bill Keller
- 4th - Jeannette & Gordon Brand
- 6th - Elaine & Ron Coker
- 12th - Linda and Andy Clemons
- 14th - Margie O'Byrne & Jim Hambright
- 17th - Sara & Chuck Achuff
- 30th - Kristie & Joey Homans