

Grace Notes

February 19, 2023

Mission Statement

To draw people to Christ,
nourish their spirits, and
prepare them for service to God,
the Church, and the world.

OPPORTUNITIES OF THE WEEK

Sunday, February 19

8:30 am Worship Service
9:45 am Sunday School
9:45 am New Members Conversations
10:30 am Chancel Choir
11:00 am Worship Service
1:00 pm Nurture Mtg.
5:00 pm WAVES

Monday, February 20

9:00 am Grace In Motion Walkers (gym)
1:00 pm Caregivers Support
2:00 pm Piano Tuning (gym)
7:00 pm Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, February 21

9:00 am Organist Practice
9:00 am Bible Book Club
5:30 pm Bootcamp
6:30 pm Admin Council

Wednesday, February 22

Ash Wednesday

10:00 am Staff Meeting
11:15 am Yoga
4:00 pm Organist Practice
6:00 pm Pancake Supper
6:15 pm Grace Ringers
7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Worship

Thursday, February 23

5:30 pm Bootcamp
5:30 pm Coastal BUDS Down to Cook
6:30 pm Basketball
6:30 pm Admin sub-committee

Friday, February 24

9:00 am Grace In Motion Walkers (gym)
9:00 am Organist practice

Saturday, February 25

Sunday, February 26

8:30 am Worship Service
9:45 am Sunday School
9:45 am Baby Shower for Kelsey
10:30 am Chancel Choir
11:00 am Worship Service
3:00 pm Service for Carol Ballard
4:00 pm Reception

In-person/Online Attendance & Offering for 2/12/2023

In-person Worship Service:

8:30 am 32
11:00 am 164

Online Worship Service:

89

Operating Funds Given \$ 7,911
Budget receipts needed weekly \$ 13,912
Building Preservation Given \$ 820

Apportionments are paid through January.

On-line Sunday Worship Services Continue

The service will be available Sunday starting at **4:00 pm**

This is the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAK2Z36cUQ1JzE6Ye7TzcGg>

Grace United Methodist Church

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website: gracedowntown.church

Give through Paypal at our website or Square

by using this QR Code.

(point your phone camera

at the box and click on the link that appears).



T-shirt fundraiser

The Youth are kicking off their T-shirt fundraiser. The shirts cost \$20 and will be sold as pre-orders. If interested in purchasing one, please fill out your information at the Youth table located in the Welcome Center. The sale will continue until the end of March. Please contact Jada Martinez at Jada@gracedowntown.net if you have any questions.

Share your testimony

The youth have expressed interest in hearing testimonies from members of the Grace. If you would be interested in sharing your testimony during the Sunday school hour with the Youth, please contact Jada Martinez at Jada@gracedowntown.net. They would love to hear it!

Pancake Supper this Wednesday

The Youth will be hosting a pancake supper at 6 pm on Ash Wednesday, February 22 to help raise funds for their mission trip to Pennsylvania. If you would like to participate please RSVP on the form located in the Welcome Center. Thank you for all you do to support the youth. Come for supper, then join us for worship!

Many Thanks!

"I would like to thank everyone for the wonderful baby gift basket Kanan received from Grace. It was truly appreciated. I am so thankful Kanan gets to grow up surrounded by the people of Grace. Thank you all for being so welcoming." —Jada Martinez.

Prayer Shawl Ministry needs more knitters

The Prayer Shawl Ministry has for many years provided knitted and crocheted shawls to comfort those who are ill or grieving the loss of a loved one, to celebrate friendship, marriage, anniversaries, personal achievements, or to welcome new babies into the world.



We blessed these during the service last Sunday. If you would like one for a friend, you can ask for one by going by the office any day it is open, pick one up and fill out a short form so that we know who received the shawl.

A small group of knitters meet the second Tuesday of every month at Panera Bread on Oleander Drive at 9:30 for breakfast, fellowship and knitting. We welcome you to our group whether you are a beginner or an experienced knitter.

For further information you can contact Marie Allison at alli7173@hotmail.com to participate in our ministry or visit www.shawlministry.com.

Prayer Requests

Dave Appert	Jason Powers
Family of Carol Ballard	Gary Rowe
Judith Crawford	Melissa Sesi
Michael Cupps	Sterling Smith
Sterling Foster	Bill Shaw
Julie Hamilton	Jerry Smith
Tom Jackson	Beth Stuber and family
Megan Long	Aaron Swaney
Frank Michaels	David Ward
Tom Namey	Don Wofford
Mary Neal	

Please keep the following military persons in your prayers:

ETN1 Anthony Augustine, USN	Capt. Benjamin Mabee, USMC
LCpl. John Capwell, USMC	LCpl. Seth Mack, USMC
Sgt. Tim Cobaugh, USMC	PFC Schuyler Marshall, USA
Col. John Delaney, USA	SSg. Emily Olinger, USAF
Ens. Elizabeth Downing, USN	Pvt. Steven Patterson, USA
E3 Hadden Scott Dubel, USN	Sgt. James Pritchett, USA
E6 William Chase Dubel, USA	CDR Kevin Ringelstein, USN
E3 Caylen Folmar, USAF	Col. Amy Moore Russo, USAF
E3 Taylor Folmar, USN	Capt. Brandon Showers, USMC
Sgt. Alex Gifford, USMC	AB Michael Sloan, USAF
Maj. Jason T. Hill, USSF	Capt. Robert Stockman, USMC
SFC Letty Long, USA	Michael Tate, USA
SFC Woodrow Long, USA	E2 Cassie Wenz, USMC

If you have a prayer request, please contact Marilee Tremlett at mtrem3@icloud.com.



No Nurture Open House

The Nurture Open House planned for February 26 has been cancelled. It will be rescheduled at a later date. Sorry for any inconvenience.

Want to go see "Moses?"

Interested in going on a bus trip to Lancaster, PA to see "Moses" at the Sight & Sound Theater? This would be a full day of travel on a Friday and returning on a Sunday. Right now, we are looking around April 28-30. If you are interested, please email gumctrustees1@gmail.com so we can start figuring out the logistics and move forward with the details.

Bible in A Year Book study:

This week's Scriptures & Videos...

Feb. 19 Psalm 43; Numbers 31-32, *Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness*

Feb. 20 Psalm 50; Numbers 33-34

Feb. 21 Psalm 51; Numbers 19-21

Feb. 22 Psalm 52; Numbers 35-36;

OT Overview Numbers

Feb. 23 Psalm 53; Deuteronomy 1-3:

Torah Series: Deuteronomy

Feb. 24 Psalm 54; Deuteronomy 4-6

It's never too late to start! Read along with us!

Migrant Worker Kits

It's time! Time for the UMW (UWF) to make and assemble the Migrant Worker Kits. This ministry, which is an important phase of our outreach, provides bags to North Carolina migrant workers. These drawstring bags are made from one yard of heavy fabric and contain personal toiletries for the workers. Many of these workers arrive with nothing, so these toiletries are certainly needed and appreciated. The migrant workers are in this country legally. Everyone must be here legally to be allowed to participate in the migrant program. These are the people that pick our food. Below you will find a list of items that are needed to put in the bags. There will be a container in the Welcome Center for you to place your items. There will be a list of items needed on the easel by the bin. We hope to have some bags made in the bin, so if you would like to fill a bag, please take one. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, we will be happy to do the shopping for you. If you have any questions, please contact Dianna Florea at (910) 398-8790.

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|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ◆ Single package toothbrushes with container | ◆ Hand (body lotion) |
| ◆ Toothpaste | ◆ Shampoo |
| ◆ Dental floss | ◆ Comb and hair brush |
| ◆ Deodorant | ◆ Safety pins |
| ◆ Disposable razors | ◆ Band-aids (reg. size strips) |
| ◆ Soap and plastic soap container with lid | ◆ Metal nail file |
| ◆ New bath towel | |
| ◆ New washcloth | |

In addition:

We will be collecting buttoned, long sleeved shirts this year. They can be used shirts so it is a great time to clean out your closets. Thank you in advance for your help and contributions to this worthwhile mission!

Reflections On My Snapshot of Poverty, Fall 2022

By Duckie Dawkins (*Editor's note, we will continue Duckie's story over the next few weeks. We're continuing this week with Duckie's experiences with the "poverty simulation."*)

...The nights are so long. You pull the collar of your shirt over your ears so you can lay your head on the ground. You curl up and pull the shirt over your knees because the ground is cool. You wake several times, sit up, walk around, curl back up on the ground.

You wonder about every sound you hear. You wake again to go to the bathroom behind a dumpster, in the bushes. The low is only 60 degrees tonight but your hips ache from the cool hard ground. You try to go back to sleep but the ground is wet now and there's a slight breeze. You're cold. Your legs ache from being curled up. You sit on the ground with your knees pulled up under your shirt and lean against the wall of a building with your back to the breeze. You have no idea what time it is. You just want the sun to come up so you can see again and feel a little warmer. Maybe if you had a drink or pill it would numb the helplessness you're feeling. Then after days the helplessness turns into hopelessness. You just want to numb it.

There are two places to go in Wilmington when the temperature drops below 30 degrees for two nights in a row. The Good Shepherd at 811 Martin Street sets up additional cots. The Warming Shelter sets up 90 cots in Trinity United Methodist Church fellowship hall.

(to be continued...)

Graced by Grace: A Familiar Place

It was a Monday, the first day of school. With my backpack secured snugly, using both shoulder straps and my lunch bag in hand, I nervously walked through the doors. The unexpected always includes a bit of anxiety. Will I make friends here? Will people accept me for who I am? Will I like it here?

The first person I met was a kind lady, who stood beside a table of notebooks, not far from the entrance of the school. She smiled warmly and asked, "What is your name?"

"Benton," I said. "Benton Oakes." In settings like this, I have learned to give people my given first name because that's the name they will need to look for me in their records.

"Oh! Benny," she exclaimed happily. "We lifted you up in prayer yesterday. I'm a member of Mount Bethel UMC in Bahama. I'm so glad to meet you!"

My thoughts raced, as I quickly made the connection she was making. Mount Bethel, a grace-filled, loving group of folks in rural Durham County, was the place where I was baptized as a baby, even before I knew I was in need of a Savior. Mount Bethel was the place I remember my preschool Sunday School teacher who always ended our class time together by saying, "Remember, Jesus loves you, and I love you, too."

At Mount Bethel, I discovered my family was bigger than I could ever imagine. Since Mom and Dad sang in the choir, I sat with different church family members every Sunday. Without being particularly loveable, I was loved anyway. I learned later that people would beg Mom and Dad for the opportunity to have me sit with them during worship. Can you believe that? People I hardly knew wanted the chance to have me sit with them during worship, even though I was not as well-behaved or well-controlled, either.

One Sunday during worship, I remember an uncontrollable moment that ended with embarrassment. Instead of letting my church family, I sat with that day know that I needed to use the bathroom, I tried my best to 'hold it' instead. Unfortunately, I wet my pants in the middle of worship. Saving me further embarrassment, one family member got word to my parents that another family member was taking me to their house for a chance to 'remember my baptism' in their bathtub, while their washer cleaned my soiled clothes. I happily ate snacks while we waited for my parents to pick me up after church.

The shame of having an accident during worship was overwhelmed and covered by the grace and love of God, working in and through the people of Mount Bethel. They were more than church members to me. They were my family.

As all these thoughts of Mount Bethel came flooding back to me when the nice lady said they prayed for me yesterday, I was puzzled. It had been years since I spoke with anyone at Mount Bethel. "You prayed for me yesterday?"

"Yes," she said. "We knew that today you are beginning your journey here at Duke Divinity School to become a pastor. We are proud of you and will be praying for you and your family every step of the way." With that, she handed me my orientation notebook – with my name on it – that would guide me through my first day in seminary. Her parting words were, "Welcome. We're glad you're here."

"I am, too," I said. "I am, too." Once more, I was overwhelmed by the grace and love of God speaking through a woman I just met. His perfect love calmed my anxiety and gave me the peace that far exceeds all understanding.

Since we arrived last summer at Grace UMC, I have been reminded over and over again of my childhood encounter with God's grace and love making me feel like I'm at home. Just like a family hangs pictures of themselves in their homes, we found a picture of the Oakes family hanging in the Welcome Center when we arrived. With the anxiety that comes with making new friends, somehow, some way, we knew we were home.

From day one, we have been loved by the family at Grace like we have known each other all our lives. Is it possible that we have always known and loved each other even before we knew each other, and now we have the chance to put a name with the familiar face of the family of God? More and more I am convinced that this is true because we are God's family, the body of Christ, created out of Love, created to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

My purpose in writing this letter is to simply share with you my gratitude for all of you. Through the gifts of your hospitality, your kindness, your sacrificial love, your abundant generosity, your forgiveness as well as many other gifts, we are participating with God, who is redeeming and renewing our present and our future. I am excited and cannot wait to experience with you what the future may hold.

Although we have been in Wilmington for less than a year, this seems like a familiar place here at Grace. This feels like home. Perhaps it feels like home because you have welcomed us like family.

I thank God for who you are, and I thank you for all you do to share God's love and grace so that others will find that this is home, too.

As you have reminded me, I will now remind you... "Remember, Jesus loves you, and I love you, too."

In Christ's love,
Benny+