



The Light Shines!

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). In the quiet of a candlelight service on Christmas Eve, the beautiful promise of that scripture is often easily grasped and believed. But can we hold on to it in the harsher reality of a new year?

When the holidays are over, we find ourselves back to the “same old grind”. The old year has slipped away, and the new year seems to bring little promise. Will anything really change? The answer depends, in part, on us.

Certainly our hope springs from God, who has given us the gift of new life. But, as with any gift, we must open and use God’s grace to unlock its potential! A clipping I have pasted in my Bible puts it this way:

“This is the beginning of a New Day.
God has give me this day to use as I will.
I can waste it or grow in its light and be of service to others.
But what I do with this day is important,
Because I have exchanged a day of my life for it.
When tomorrow comes, today will be gone forever.
I hope I will not regret the price I paid for it.”

Having celebrated Christ’s birth, we will enter into a lesser-known church season of Epiphany this month. “Epiphany” comes from a combination of two Greek words meaning “to reveal” and “upon”.

Here’s a multiple-choice question: The church season of Epiphany celebrates:

- a) the visit of the wise men
- b) the baptism of Jesus
- c) the first miracle (and others) performed by Jesus
- d) all of the above.

The answer is “d” - all of those events and more. Epiphany is a time we concentrate on God’s showing or revealing of salvation upon the earth, to all people: through the star of the wise men, through God’s voice and the dove at Jesus’ baptism, through Jesus’

Join us for worship in-person or online!

Worship

Sunday @ 10:15 am on
Facebook, YouTube, and
GraceDesMoines.org

Address

3700 Cottage Grove,
Des Moines, IA 50311

Phone

515-255-2131

Email

info@gracedesmoines.org

Website

www.gracedesmoines.org

Facebook and YouTube

GraceDesMoines

January Sunday School Offerings

The January Sunday School offerings will be given to the Free Tuesday Evening Meal. This ministry hosts a meal each week at no cost to anyone attending. Help support this vital ministry by giving generously to the Sunday School offering in January!

The Light Shined continued..

miracle changing water to wine, and in many other ways in Jesus' life.

Epiphany is older than Christmas. Originally, the early church celebrated the birth of Jesus as part of Epiphany. About the 4th century, the birth began to be celebrated as a separate holy day (from which we get our term, holiday) with a 'Christ mass'. The day of Epiphany is the 6th, so the first Sunday of Epiphany this year will be January 8th

One of the symbols of Epiphany is light: because of its 'revealing' powers. The scriptures are full of references to light: as a symbol for God's love, for God's people, for Jesus, and for good. Jesus calls us to be the "light of the world", reflecting the love which God revealed in Jesus Christ. As we enter this new year, I invite you to resolve to "open and use" God's grace to unlock your God-given potential to be a light in this world, revealing God's love to all those around you!

- Interim Team Pastor Bob Dean

Worship in January

Start your new year by attending our worship service at 10:15 am on Sunday, January 1. Rev. Bob Dean will be our guest preacher. We will celebrate communion and also incorporate John Wesley's Covenant Service. The heart of the service, focused in the Covenant Prayer, requires persons to commit themselves to God. The Covenant Service is most commonly held on New Year's Eve or Day and therefore is sometimes called a Watch Night Service. Historically, a Watch Night Service would be three hours or longer, including readings from Scripture and hymn singing. Our service won't last three hours, but we hope you will join us for a meaningful start to the new year.

On January 8, Rev. Judy Wadding will be preaching. We will be installing and recognizing incoming members stepping up as leaders at Grace for 2023. Thank you to Margaret Borgen, Nominations committee and to Shawn Mullen, Ad Council Chair for continuing the task of finding the right folks for leadership at Grace.

Rev. Jim Perdue will preach on January 15, Rev. Pam Deeds will preach on January 22, and Rev. Gary Armstrong will preach on January 29. We are indeed grateful for the retired pastors in our congregation who have been filling in as preachers during this interim period.

Game Night Returns Saturday, January 28

On Saturday, January 28 join us in the Activity Center for Game Night! Bring your favorite games from home or pick one that we have here. We will provide popcorn and a few beverage options, but please bring any snack item you would like to share. This is an event for all ages and interests! The rooms across from the Activity Center will be available for games that are need a quieter environment. And, Deb Eyestone will be teaching folks how to play Mahjong. Mark your calendar now for Saturday, January 28 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Game Night 

Committee Corner

In December we housed a Holiday Staff Party at the church with Grace Staff and the Pre-school Staff.

Starting January 1st - we officially welcomed our new Grace Director of Communications and Office Management - Katie Gazzo

Update on Pastor: As Ron Carlson our District Supervisor shared with Grace at our Charge Conference in November. The realistic timing of a new Grace Senior Pastor will likely be the standard appointment timing, which is July 1st.



Bible Year Begins Soon

A new small group of The Bible Year will begin in January. The goal of this group is to read the entire Bible in one year. We will be using **The Bible Year** as our guide, which breaks down readings into manageable sections. Commentary, weekly videos, and class discussions help participants understand the readings. The group will be meeting in-person with a Zoom option available for each session. Our meeting time will be determined by what works best for the participants' schedules. Those who were a part of this study in 2022 have said that being a part of the group helped them stay on schedule with the readings. Contact Coreen Witke (515.255.2131 ext. 230; coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org) to register for the class or for more information. We hope you'll join us!



THE BIBLE YEAR

*A Journey Through Scripture
in 365 Days*

MAGREY R. DEVEGA

Charge Conference Summary

On Sunday, November 20th, over 50 members of our congregation met in Fellowship Hall to participate in the annual requirement of a Charge Conference led by our District Superintendent, Rev. Ron Carlson who led worship that morning.

Our Book of Discipline notes among other elements: The primary responsibilities of the charge conference in the annual meeting shall be to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church (¶¶ 120-124), receive reports, and adopt objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of The United Methodist Church.

Sometimes several congregations gather together and hold a common Charge Conference. This year, because of the unusual pastoral situation we find ourselves in, Rev. Carlson asked us to hold our own conference. It was gratifying to have such a large and engaged group of members.

Interestingly, the Book of Discipline notes: Members of the charge conference shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the Church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the Church, are loyal to the ethical standards of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It shall include youth members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All shall be professing members of the local church, except where central conference legislation provides otherwise.

The elephant in the room, so to speak, was addressed by Rev. Carlson as he indicated our new incoming, Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, will act on the six open pastorates when she takes office in January with Grace being one of those priority congregations. He indicated that an announcement would be made sometime in the first quarter of 2023 with the actual presence of a new pastor beginning in July of 2023.

After a brief Q & A session, the meeting ended with a prayer and a song.

Grace United Methodist Foundation 2022 Update

Gifts to the Grace United Methodist Foundation are for only one recipient—Grace United Methodist Church. Because of the generous support of these donors, the Foundation can provide income this year of \$73,486. Listed below is how this endowment income is distributed:

Scholarships awards (Bolsinger and Hartline-Funaro) — \$21,421
GUMC Admin Council — \$34,241
Designated — \$17,824

Giving to the Foundation crosses many generations of faithful members of Grace who saw a vision for our church. We are blessed to reap and share this joy that these lasting legacy gifts that support the ministries, outreach, and operations of Grace.

Blessings,
Carolyn Nelson
Treasurer

Confirmation Class Starting in January

Our next Confirmation Class will begin in January! This class is for anyone who is currently in 7th through 9th Grade who wants to find out more about what it means to be a Christian, how United Methodists came to be, and some of the history of Grace UMC. Plus we will explore the why behind what we do in worship. The current plan is to meet on Wednesday evenings, but we will modify the schedule if it works for all class members. Contact Coreen Witke (515.255.2131 ext. 230; coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org) to sign up for the class.

Workshop on Protestant Prayer Beads

Have you heard about Protestant Prayer Beads? Similar to a Catholic rosary, each bead serves as a prompt for a prayer which helps shape each prayer. Using beads during prayer can be traced back to the third century CE when monastics used stones to keep track when reciting all 150 Psalms.

Anyone interested in learning about Protestant Prayer Beads is encouraged to contact Coreen Witke

(coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org; 515.255.2131 ext. 230). We hope to offer a four-week course with one-hour sessions each week as we learn about prayer beads and how we can use them to give our prayer life a boost. We will use the book "A Bead and a Prayer" by Kristen E. Vincent as our guide. If there is interest, we could also make our own set of prayer beads. Once we have a group of interested folks, we will decide when we will meet.



Upper Room Devotionals

The Upper Room Devotional booklets for January and February are in the church entryway. Both large-print and standard-sized print are available. These are free to anyone who would like one. Take one for yourself and one for a friend.

New Year's Day Worship

There will be a 10:15 am service on Sunday, January 1, 2023, that will incorporate John Wesley's Covenant Service, a service of renewal and commitment, and will also include communion. Rev. Bob Dean will be the guest preacher.

Grace Foundation Scholarships

Scholarship Applications are now available for the 2023-2024 GUMF Bolsinger/Hartline-Funaro Scholarships. Please visit the Grace website for the most current electronic form. Applications are due no later than March 31, 2023.

Iowa United Methodist Foundation also has a wide variety of scholarships for all college students. Please visit their website for more information.

Sunday Morning Youth Christmas Time Plans

Sunday Morning Youth (our 9 am faith formation option for middle and high schoolers) will take a break on Christmas and New Year's Day but resume on January 8th with an Epiphany Party featuring a King's Cake along with other "light" refreshments. (Extra points to anyone who gets the pun.)

Come enjoy traditional activities like Pin the Crown on the Wise Man and Chalking the door! Even if you haven't come this fall, it'll be a new year and we'd love to have you join us!

- The SMY Leadership Team
(Katie Gerlock, Bob Dean, and Jill Heilskov)

Goodbye Shabrina!

Shabrina will be leaving the Grace family, please send her your best wishes and all your love with her new journey.