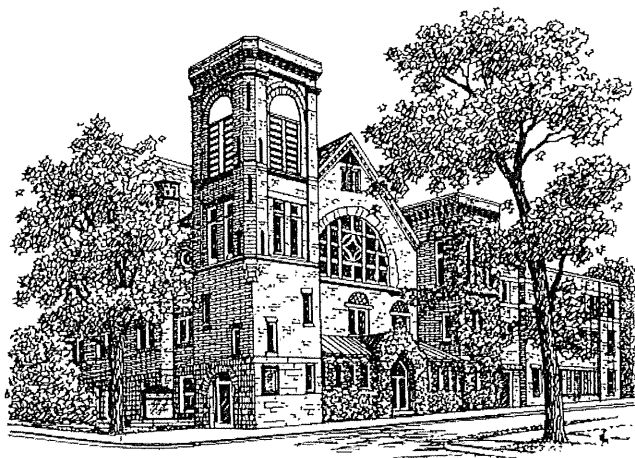


GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
100 CENTRAL AVENUE  
OIL CITY, PA 16301  
(Address Service Requested)

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Oil City, PA 16301



# GRACE NOTES

March 2023

## Grace United Methodist Church

100 Central Avenue, Oil City, PA 16301

**Pastor Ron Geisler**

**Phone:** 677-3013 (office) 677-3345 (parsonage)

**Church Office Hours:** M-Thurs 9AM – 2:00PM

**E-Mail:** [church@graceoilcity.org](mailto:church@graceoilcity.org)

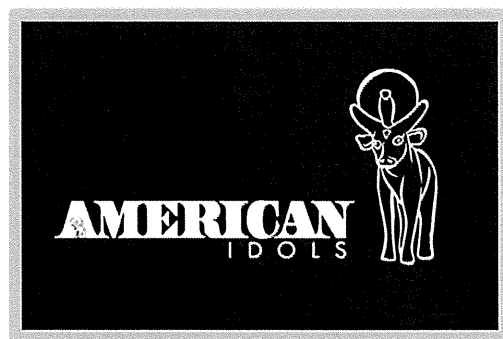
**Website:** [www.graceoilcity.org](http://www.graceoilcity.org)

**Facebook:** Grace United Methodist Church in Oil City

**Worship Service Online:** <http://www.graceoilcity.org>

**Sunday School:** 9:30AM

**Weekly Sunday Worship Service:** 10:45AM



### Lenten Sermon Series

6-week Lenten teaching series  
on the 10 Commandments

# March 2023

## BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES



OFFICE HOURS  
Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM  
Closed for lunch noon - 1:00 PM

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				Deborah Moore Gale/Donna Boocks	Steve/Patty Sherick	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Patrick Meals Jack Travis	Casey Hassan Seth Updegraff	Kaylee English Curtis Hawke Elissa Myers Gary/Kris Flinchbaugh	Taylor Meals Marie Sweigert	Matthew Myers	Bill Hoyle Dan Myers David/Barb Walentosky	Caden Highfield Christine Jazwinski Dustin Jazwinski Maggie Motter Georgia Strawbridge
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Samantha Duarte Janette Wolfong	Bailey Cyphert Macayla Yount	Sara Flockerzi Jenny Wheeler Bob/Lynne Delaney	Cadince Delaney	M.J. Eckert Mark Patterson Tina Ziegler	John Davidson Sheila Updegraff	Sass Galla Sue Seidle Ian Sterling
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Hanna Lepley	Pat Black Pauline Case Cindy Jordan Amy Middleton	Debra Bennett Miriam Myers		Dameaka McDonald Travis Seefried Mary Yount	Jennifer Delaney Mike Gegogaine	Ron Shiley III Brandon Siler Debbie Stahl Christopher/Kelly Kossman Ron III/Joy Shiley
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Amy Highfield Penny Lehnortt Tom Lehnortt	Wesley Scheer Ed Woolcock Linda Whren Pat Zerbe Randy/Donna Aaron	Philip Erion Diane Stephenson			Barbara Swavey Barb Walentosky	



# Message

FROM OUR PASTOR

Grace Church,

As you receive this newsletter, we are moving deeper into the season of Lent. Traditionally, Lent is a time of preparation for Easter. The six weeks (and 40 days) involve significant actions like confession, repentance, fasting, compassion, generosity, and a plethora of other spiritual disciplines. All of this is right and good and I encourage you to practice all of this.

However, this year I invite you to use the season of Lent as a time of spiritual awakening. Joel, which is one of the primary Biblical resources we use during Lent calls us to an awakening when he writes, “Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God...” (Joel 2:13, NIV). Lent is a season of returning to the Lord, of waking up to his presence and his work in your life, in your church, community, and world.

## How can I experience an awakening?

It begins with surrender. Surrender yourself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We get some clues to awakening when we examine its profound power in the life of Isaiah.

In chapter 6 of his book, Isaiah shows us how awakening occurred in his life and what we can expect. Let me pull a few ideas from Isaiah 6 for us.

1. Awakening (surrender) begins with confession. “Woe is me,” says Isaiah. He knows his sin in light of God’s holiness.
2. Awakening continues through forgiveness. When his lips are touched with the hot coal, Isaiah is assured of the forgiveness of his sin and acceptance by the holy God.
3. Awakening produces fruit when we say “yes” to God’s call. Spiritual awakenings are wonderful moments, yet they only see their purpose when we allow God to use our lives in mission and ministry for his kingdom. Isaiah’s response to his own awakening is, “here I am, send me.”

Are you hungering and thirsting after more of God? Let this desire take shape during Lent. Here’s a simple prayer that might be helpful for you in this season of Awakening.

**Father in heaven, it’s me (say your name), I want to know you. I want to live an awakened life. I confess I am a sinner. I have failed myself, others, and you in many ways. I know you made me for a purpose and I want to fulfill that purpose with my one life. I want to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus, thank you for the gift of your life and death and resurrection and ascension on my behalf. I want to walk in relationship with you as Savior and Lord. Would you lead me into the fullness and newness of life I was made for? I am ready to follow you. Come, Holy Spirit, and fill me with the love, power, and purposes of God. I pray these things by faith in the name of Jesus, amen.**

Live On Purpose,

Pastor Ron

## GRACE CHURCH MARCH SOAP READINGS

Using the SOAP method of Bible reading can keep us on the disciple's pathway. You're invited and encouraged to use the following Bible passages each day of the month. Here's a quick reminder of SOAP.

**S** – Scripture. Use the ones listed on the calendar

**O** – Observation. What is God speaking through these verses? What do these verses mean?

What do you observe in your reading? Jot these observations in a journal or notebook.

**A** – Application. How does what you read apply to your life, right now? What is God saying to you? What principles can you apply to your life today?

**P** – Prayer. Close the time in prayerful conversation with God. Thank him for what you learned and for how this applies to you right now.

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During March, Grace Church will read through the Scriptures about confession, repentance, and holiness.

March 1	1John 1:9	March 17	Revelation 2:5
March 2	James 5:16	March 18	Luke 15:10
March 3	Romans 10:9-11	March 19	Joel 2:13
March 4	1John 4:2	March 20	Luke 17:3
March 5	John 20:23	March 21	Ephesians 2:8-9
March 6	Titus 3:5	March 22	Jeremiah 24:7
March 7	Acts 2:38	March 23	1Peter 1:15-16
March 8	Matthew 3:11	March 24	1Corinthians 3:16-17
March 9	Matthew 6:24	March 25	Galatians 5:22-23
March 10	1John 1:6	March 26	Hebrews 4:12
March 11	Romans 6:14	March 27	Ephesians 4:30
March 12	Acts 3:9	March 28	Romans 8:9
March 13	2Peter 3:9	March 29	Romans 8:11
March 14	Matthew 4:17	March 30	Isaiah 6:1-10
March 15	2Chronicles 7:14	March 31	Acts 1:8
March 16	Matthew 3:8		





# PARISH REGISTER March 2023

## Our March Servants

### Counting Team

Rhonda Cubbon, Carla Wheeler, Amy Ziegler,  
Rob Ziegler

### Ushering Team

Captain – Jim Carner, Steve Scheer, Ian Scheer,  
Bill Lamberton, Tom Peebles

### Sharing Grace Ministry fna TV Ministry

#### Director/Graphics/Audio/PowerPoint

Mar 5 – Ian Scheer/Rodney Campbell/Tom  
Eberle/Wesley Scheer

Mar 12 – Bill Lamberton/Ian Scheer/Jim  
Whaley/Charlie Motter

Mar 19 – Ian Scheer/Rodney Campbell/Jon  
Sterling/Brea Fennick

Mar 26 – John McCullough/John McCullough/ Ian  
Sterling/Rob Ziegler

### Greeters

Captain – Lynne Delaney

If you would like to be a greeter for the month of  
March, please contact Lynne Delaney

### Coffee Bar

Mar 5 – Open Door Class

Mar 12 – Disciples Class

Mar 19 – The Net Class

Mar 26 – Youth Group

### Worship Leaders

Mar 5 – Lynne Delaney

Mar 12 – Lynne Delaney

Mar 19 – Ron Black

Mar 26 – TBD

If you would like to be a Worship Leader, please  
contact Anita Eberle.



The following members have  
passed away since the previous  
edition of Grace Notes.

**David Carl Puleo**, son of Jim Puleo, passed away  
January 9th.

**Donald Stillings** passed away on January 19<sup>th</sup>. He  
had been a member of Grace Church since May  
1948.

Record of our Faithfulness	2022	2023
	January	January
Avg Sunday School Attendance	47	37
Average Worship Attendance	85	70
Ministry/Operations Offering received	\$18,118	\$15,517
Ministry/Operations Expenses paid	\$16,742	\$14,618
Mission Offering received	\$4,139	\$1,544
Mission Expenses paid	\$1,708	\$0

Thank you for your generosity!

Your routine giving supports the ministry of Grace Church.

We encourage your online giving on our website:

[graceoilcity.org/giving](http://graceoilcity.org/giving)



### CHURCH MEMBERS ON OUR PRAYER LIST:

- Nora Heber's brother-in-law, Jeff Heber, passed away. Also, Nora had a severe reaction to medication and continues to recover.
- Ginny Taylor as she receives chemo treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- Loraine Puleo whose sister passed away in February.
- Nancy Simpson as she recovers from breast cancer surgery on 2/24.
- Jim & Loraine Puleo's son-in-law, Dewey, for healing of a 5mm spot on his lower left lobe that was not there in June 2022, he will be scanned in 8 weeks.

To add someone to the Prayer Chain or if you would  
like to be added to the Prayer Chain email, call or email  
Donna Boocks. 814-676-4423 or donigale@icloud.com

### Congratulations!

Sara Solida and Joel Bagdon  
were married on January 21<sup>st</sup>

We wish you joy, love, and  
happiness as you begin your  
new life together."



# GRACE CHURCH CONTACTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:30 AM

## PRAISE & WORSHIP SERVICE

10:45 AM

### Contact Us

Email:

[church@graceoilcity.org](mailto:church@graceoilcity.org)

Eva Palmer:

[secretary@graceoilcity.org](mailto:secretary@graceoilcity.org)

Leeann McCullough:

[financialsec@graceoilcity.org](mailto:financialsec@graceoilcity.org)

Pastor Ron Geisler:

[rgeisler@graceoilcity.org](mailto:rgeisler@graceoilcity.org)

### Phone:

814-677-3013

814-677-3345 Parsonage

**Website:** [www.graceoilcity.org](http://www.graceoilcity.org)



Grace United Methodist Church in Oil City

### Church Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 9-2:00

Closed noon-1:00

### Web Live Broadcast:

Worship service live @ 10:45 via our website at

<https://www.graceoilcity.org/worship-service-recordings.html>

Previous recordings also available on YouTube.



## On the Church Calendar:

Continue to check the weekly bulletins, our website and Facebook pages for calendar updates. Meetings are always being added throughout the month.

**Mar 5** – Youth Luncheon, after worship

**Mar 9** – Trustee meeting, 7pm

**Mar 13** – SPRC meeting, 7pm

**Mar 16** – Administrative Council meeting, 7pm

## Grace Church Scholarships for 2023 High School Graduates

Grace Church offers high school graduates a scholarship for their first year of post-high school education. To qualify, students need to be an active member of Grace Church, be a full-time 12<sup>th</sup> grade student or a previous graduate of one of the local high schools, and be accepted for enrollment as a full-time student in an associate degree, bachelor degree, approved registered nursing program, trade school, or school of business at a regionally or nationally accredited school of higher education.

Applications are available in the church office. Students need to complete and submit their application, along with all the required documentation as noted on the application, to the church office by April 22, 2023.

*This Lenten season, rather than giving  
up something as an act of worship, why  
not ask for more of something?*

*Ask for more of Jesus in your life and  
for the Holy Spirit to fill your days  
with joy and the knowledge of His  
presence!*



# GRACE CHURCH MISSIONS/MISSIONARY UPDATES

## Child Evangelism Fellowship

Kelsie is looking for youth leaders! Summer is just around the corner and planning has begun for the 2023 Good News Camp. This year's camp is set for July 17-21. There are opportunities to serve in the CEF "Youth in Action" program. You will attend a one-week training in June and the CYIA assignments offer a wage. If this is something you or your youth may be interested in, call Kelsie at 814-676-6319 for the details. Grace supports CEF with an annual donation of \$1,800.



## Mi Refugio

Kari Engen gives us some encouraging news from San Pedro, Guatemala. One of the greatest blessings is that the children are back in the classrooms. They have made it through COVID and they are stronger. Home study was not a realistic option for this school. Now that things are seeking a new normal, the work of educating children, (who's actual normal is sharing their family's survival responsibility by searching the city dump), in a Christian environment continues. Kari is excited about a number of projects planned for the summer and is enlisting volunteers to make these projects happen. She ends her 2022 year end letter with this encouraging note. *"We may not know what this year will bring us, but one thing is for sure, God will never leave us or forsake us, we will keep our eyes on Him at all times and teach those in our charge to know and follow our precious Lord."*

## Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

Grace church sent 112 filled shoeboxes last November to be distributed to children in need around the world. We thought you may be interested in where these boxes ended.



**Nigeria** is located on the western coast of Africa. It is Africa's most populous country, with more than 250 ethnic groups and hundreds of languages spoken there. Samaritan's Purse began distributing shoeboxes in the country in 1999 and launched The Greatest Journey, our follow-up discipleship program, in the nation in 2013.

A shoebox recipient said, "I learned that there is no friend we can depend and trust so much like Jesus. Because of the love Jesus had for me, He died to save me. I will use this story to tell others the unlimited love that Jesus has for me and for us. I will share with others about the great and wonderful friend I have who is loving, caring, gentle, and at my point of need. All they need to do is to commit their hearts and minds to Him, and He will accept their friend request."

**Madagascar** is an island nation located in the Indian Ocean off the coast of east Africa. It is known for its lemurs, baobab trees, vanilla, and pepper. Samaritan's Purse began delivering shoeboxes to children here in 1993. Since 2010, they have offered these shoebox recipients our follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

Tsodrano, a girl whose name means "blessing" faces many challenges in her village. There is a lack of food, water, and education, and worse yet, spiritual darkness. Yet Tsodrano and her little sister were invited to an Operation Christmas Child outreach event where they received gift-filled shoeboxes. To Tsodrano's delight, among the many fun items in her shoebox was a flashlight! Now, every day when it starts to get dark, Tsodrano turns on her flashlight at the door of her home, so her family and neighbors can all enjoy the light! After a ministry partner mentioned that Jesus, the True Light, had come into their home, 12 of her family members accepted Him as their Lord and Savior and were baptized.

**Burundi** is located in east Africa and has been known for centuries, in part, for its political instability and violence between the rival Hutu and Tutsi peoples. Samaritan's Purse began distributing gift-filled shoeboxes to



## GRACE CHURCH MISSIONS/MISSIONARY UPDATES

(Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes cont'd) this nation's children in 2008 and launched The Greatest Journey, it's follow-up discipleship program, here in 2013.

In a very rural and remote village, a grandmother practiced witchcraft and secretly used her grandson in her "business". This young boy, however, received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox gift and enrolled in The Greatest Journey follow-up discipleship program where he surrendered his life to the Lord Jesus Christ. This broke his grandmother's power over his life and after learning that her spells no longer worked, she also became a believer and now regularly attends church.

### Andrew & Amy Funka

(in a recent email)

Dear family and friends,

We hope this finds you well. As we prepare this letter, the season of Lent is approaching. In the USA, this is often marked by the observance of Ash Wednesday. In the Czech Republic, despite so few people being Christians, masopust ('meat fast') is often celebrated at the beginning of Lent. In our neighborhood, there is a costumed procession that is fun for the whole family (pictured). It is also an unusually public observance of a Christian tradition in Czech culture.



Thank you for praying for the Czech presidential elections in January. The new Czech president will be retired general Petr Pavel. He will officially take office in March. The election was peaceful and uncontested and brought the largest voter turnout in the history of the Czech Republic. Let's continue to pray that God will raise up political leaders who are men and women of integrity, honor and wisdom.

We have some good news to report about our local church, CB-Smíchov. We have been pleasantly surprised by the improving situation at Smíchov, particularly since the arrival of our new pastor, Pavel Bischof, in September. This is certainly an answer to prayer! Andrew has therefore decided to invest more in helping with the renewal of this congregation, which has been a blessing to us despite its struggles. After Easter we will not continue to help directly with the church planting project in Úholičky, although we remain in contact with our friends there and ask that you join us in continuing to pray for them.

Andrew recently spent a day in Brno with the board and founders of the Via Comenia Foundation to make some important strategic and development decisions. The goal of this organization is the transformation of Czech society through education. Various programs train, inspire, and equip Christians involved in education in the Czech Republic, and recently beyond the Czech Republic with the introduction of training and support for Ukrainian teachers. It has also been able to provide two no-interest loans for building expansion and renovation projects at two different Czech Christian schools. You can learn more about Via Comenia on the website.

The Wholehearted School is facing some decisions as we grow and work to bring the vision to reality. February and March mean webinars and Open Houses for potential new students, and we want to present an honest picture of the school and what we can and can't offer. Amy continues to learn fun vocabulary and dust off her compass and straight edge skills as she keeps at least a few steps ahead of her math students. Her English students have been discussing the school's values. Faith, hope and love are pretty solid, but we'll be practicing pronouncing "curiosity" and "tenacity" for a little while longer.

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and support that make our mission in the Czech Republic possible. We are so grateful that you are part of our lives!

Yours in Christ,

Andrew and Amy Funka