

September 2024



WORDS OF GRACE

Monthly Newsletter

Inside the Issue

THIS MONTH'S PASTOR PAGE...

features the final installment of Elder Keith Bestul's series based on Thom Rainer's book "I am a Church Member". This month's article focuses on treasuring our church membership.

THE FALL PROGRAM YEAR IS HERE!

Parents, Grandparents, Singles, Couples. Kids & Youth of all ages this is for YOU! There are lots opportunities to learn and grow this year! Come get involved. See pg. 4

COME LET US WORSHIP TOGETHER

Our annual Worship Celebration is right around the corner! This special time of worship is one you don't want to miss. See page 4. Feel free to share with your friends!

SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS...

- Sept 1 Worship Service with **Communion, No Coffee Fellowship!!**
- Sept 2 Labor Day - Church Office is closed!
- Sept 7 "While We're Waiting", 1pm, Location TBD
Child & Youth Protection Training, 10:00-11:00am
- Sept 7 & 8 **Worship Celebration**, Sat. at 6:30pm, Sun. at 9:30am,
- Sept 8 **Kids/Youth Discipleship Classes** begin, 11:00-11:45am
Youth Parent Meeting, 5:00-6:00pm
- Sept 9 Elders Meeting, 6:30pm
- Sept 14 **Men's Breakfast @Edgewood Community Church FDL**
Steam & Gas Engine Show Outing, 10:00am
- Sept. 15 **Connecting with Grace Membership Class**, 12:00-2:00pm
AWANA resumes, 5:00pm
- Sept 17 Deacons Meeting, 6:30pm
- Sept 19 Missions Team Meeting, 6:30pm
Worship Tech Meeting, Time TBD
- Sept 21 Women's We-Pray Meeting, 9:00am
Fall GMLT Meeting at Grace, Time TBD
- Sept 27 & 28 Elders Retreat

PLEASE NOTE: WEEKLY STAFF MEETINGS ARE USUALLY MONDAY MORNINGS AT 9:00AM

"HE IS NO FOOL WHO GIVES WHAT HE CANNOT KEEP, TO GAIN WHAT HE CANNOT LOSE"

- JIM ELLIOT



PASTOR GRANT RETURNS ON SEPT. 3RD | RACHEL IS OUT OF OFFICE SEPT. 2-8



Just A Thought...

FROM ONE OF OUR ELDERS

The last chapter in the book entitled, "I am a Church Member" by Thom S Rainer, discusses why we should treasure our church membership.

I admit I had a little trouble understanding the author's direction in this chapter, but after digging in a little further I came to the following conclusion: **It begins in our belief of our salvation.** Let's look at John 3:16-18,

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

If we truly believe that we are saved by the shedding of Jesus blood on the cross, then we must believe He did this to show His love for us. If we believe He loves us that much and we have the desire to live like Christ, then we will want to share our life, our time, our talent and our treasures with others - our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ certainly, but those outside the church as well.

A real-life example of this in my life is the support Lue and I give the Haitian people through LESPWA International. The way Lue Anne came to LESPWA is a story in itself, and it is the thing that led me to be more missions minded.

Lue had been going on mission trips with LESPWA for several years, before I decided to join her on one. She always came home with stories of how lives were being changed, how fellow Christians were working in Haiti and the adventures that went with those trips.

I would choose to stay home, using excuses like "I don't feel God was calling me to Haiti," and "What could I do to help these people out?". When in fact, the Spirit was working on my heart and saying, "Why not you?" and eventually He opened doors for me to say, "It is time".

On Lue's previous trips, she had taken fellow sisters in Christ from our church, our youngest son Kyle and even my mother! When the next trip came up there was a request for someone to help with the technical issues that a few of the Haitian brothers and sisters were experiencing. That sounded like my window of opportunity and the Holy Spirit saying, "It is time." So away we went! That trip convinced me of my need to spend more time with these people - not so much to use my technical skills but rather to encourage them spiritually and financially. They, in turn, have built up my beliefs and stretched me through evangelism and teaching. I have also built lifetime relationships with some of the Haitian men. Some have visited our church. With our help and that of our church, we have gotten some of their families away from the turmoil in Haiti and over to the US. Others still struggle trying to get out, and yet others choose to stay and continue to serve their country and God in Haiti.

You may be wondering what this story has to do with me treasuring my church membership. **Here is my take on what I think the author is trying to express and how it fits in:** *I believe my Savior put a desire in my heart to help people in Haiti.* Without my belief in Jesus Christ as my Savior, along with my church membership, I might still be trying to serve God alone. I might be serving Him, while thinking my good works will get me to heaven someday. We all know that would not be true. We know that it is God's love for us that implores us to serve joyfully with full intent on God receiving credit for all that is done.

Jesus prayer for His followers in John 15:9-17 also explains where we find joy,

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that my JOY may be in you and that your JOY may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

I know I need belief in my salvation, love for my fellow Christians, and church membership to share my stories and help fellow believers going through some of the same struggles. Church membership helps me find like-minded Christians to help support me in my desire to help the people of Haiti; through their prayers, financial gifts, or even just words of encouragement. I believe without my church membership, this desire to serve the Haitian people would have died a long time ago. So I needed my church to help me walk through the doors that were opened and put me in the place God wanted me all along. My belief in God, being able to walk alongside fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and doing the things God intends for me to be doing in His church are what **bring me joy**.

Finally, what has God put on your heart to help further God’s Kingdom? How do you see Grace Evangelical Free Church working alongside you to further God’s Kingdom? Have you reached out to find like-minded people in your church? If not, do it! So much joy from the King awaits you when you do.

I believe this is the joy of being a church member, and when you have that joy, you can truly treasure your church membership.

Praying that we all find joy in our membership,
Keith

YOU’RE INVITED

Get involved with Life Groups at Grace



Fall is a great time to get involved with something NEW. And what could be better than jumping into closer community with other believers! If you haven’t had the opportunity to “plug-in” to a Life Group here at Grace we highly encourage you to do so. We know that many folks are curious about Life Groups, so here are the answers to some common questions we receive...

What is a Life Group?



Life Group is a place to connect with a small group of people for the purpose of friendship, fellowship, and following God together.

Why are they important?



The relationships formed in these groups can provide care and support, as well as opportunities to serve others, deepen our faith, and live out God’s calling on our lives.

Who is invited?



Groups may be intergenerational, or made up of individuals of a similar age, or who share like interests. So, whether you are single, married or part of a family with young ones, there’s a place for you!

Where do they happen?

Life Groups meet at various times throughout the week/month at various locations. **Pick up a postcard with our current groups & leader contact info.**



COME LEARN AND GROW WITH US THROUGH LIFE GROUPS!

NEWS & NOTES



CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING  **SATURDAY, SEPT. 7TH 10:00-11:00AM AT GRACE**

Sign up today at the Connection Center! **Deadline to RSVP is Wed. Sept. 4th.** Contact Jean Titel (titelcrew@gmail.com) or the Grace Office (office@gracechurchfdl.net) with questions!

DON'T MISS THIS VITAL TRAINING TO HELP US BETTER PROTECT AND SERVE THE CHILDREN & YOUTH OF GRACE!

Reminder! The Grace Office will be closed on **Monday, September 2nd** for Labor Day. Regular hours resume on **Tuesday, Sept. 3rd.**

PARENTS! Mark your calendars and plan to join us on **Sun. Sept. 8th from 5:00-6:00pm** here at Grace Church. This is an important meeting to attend if your youth (6th grade through Highschool) will be participating in youth group this year!

HEY PARENTS!

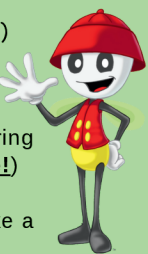
Our AWANA program is ramping up for our 2024-2025 season. Join us on **Sunday Nights from 5:00-6:30pm** (for 5K-6th grade) beginning on **Sunday, September 15th.** REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! Visit www.gracechurchfdl.org/registration or grab a paper form from the Info Board at church.

A typical evening at AWANA includes:

- **Game Time** which promotes team building, using competitive games & positive encouragement.
- **Small Groups** which are built to help kids grow in relationships with each other, while being encouraged by caring leaders. It also gives them the opportunity to memorize scripture and learn more about God and what the Bible has to say.
- **Large Group** time for the Sparks (K-2nd) gives the kids a chance to engage in a lesson and/or activity together.

OUR THEMES FOR SEPTEMBER:


- **Sept. 15th** - Welcome Back Night! (Sparks! Bring your handbook from last year **if you have one!**)
- **Sept. 22nd** - Baseball Cap Night
- **Sept. 29th** - Fun on the Farm Night (Dress like a farmer or your favorite barnyard animal!)



Interested in learning more about Grace? Plan to join us for our next **"Connecting with Grace" Membership Class** on **Sunday, September 15th.** This no-strings attached gathering is a great way to hear more about our church family and get to know our Elders. Sign up by **Monday, September 9th** at the Connection Center!

Connecting with GRACE Membership Class



Gentlemen, consider this your personal invitation to join with men from our fellow EFCA Church, **Edgewood Community Church** on **Saturday, September 14th** for a men's breakfast to discuss the theme, **"What's Holding Us Back?"**. This event will be at their FDL Campus (609 Thomas St, FDL). Doors open at 7:45am, event is from 8:00-9:30am. Pancakes and burritos will be served! Breakfast is free, with an offering box available for donations. Sign up today at the Connection Center.



HEY MINISTRY LEADERS! Save the Date for the **Fall Grace Ministry Leaders Team** (GMLT) Meeting scheduled for **Saturday, September 21st** here at Grace. **THIS NOTE IS FOR YOU.** Watch for more info & details coming soon!



COME LEARN AND GROW WITH US!

It's time to register for another year of Kids/Youth Discipleship classes! Classes begin **Sunday, September 8th** and meet weekly on **Sunday mornings from 11:00-11:45am.** These classes are a great place for kids & youth to be discipled, learn and grow together. Sign up today and plan to join us. Scan the QR code or pick up a paper form at the Info Board. Forms can be dropped off at the Church Office during the week or the Connection Center on **Sundays.**

IN THE FULLNESS of Time


SATURDAY, Sept. 7th at 6:30pm
SUNDAY, Sept. 8th at 9:30am

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT BAPTISM? We encourage you to speak to Pastor Brad (rutherford@gracechurchfdl.net) or one of the other Elders for details and more information!

JOIN US FOR THE WORSHIP CELEBRATION, "IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME". TOGETHER WE WILL WORSHIP OUR LORD THROUGH SONG, DRAMA & DANCE! DON'T MISS THIS SPECIAL TIME OF WORSHIP! POSTERS AND POSTCARDS AVAILABLE AT THE CONNECTION CENTER.

A FUN OUTING IS AROUND THE CORNER! Mitch Swanson is organizing an outing for all ages to the **R.S. Vintage Steel Steam & Gas Engine Show** on **Saturday, September 14th!** Tickets are \$3 for Adults, Kids 12 & under free. Bring a bag lunch or purchase food on the grounds! Limited seats available in the church van. Sign up today at the Connection Center. Contact Mitch for additional details!



Join us as we seek the Lord's face!
Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting
6:30pm at Grace in the Fireside Room

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

The Anchor Holds

by Jack Witte

“Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Do you not see it?” Isaiah 43:18-19

A young man asked an old man this question, “If you could leave me with one piece of advice, what would it be?” The old man paused for a few moments and then said, “Make mistakes ... But don’t regret them. Learn from them, because regrets are the hardest thing to carry when you get older.”

So many of us carry sins from our past and, although we have sought God’s forgiveness, we continue to carry them with us as baggage on our earthly journey.

God’s forgiveness is complete. Romans 4:7-8 insures us that forgiveness is complete, and sins are remembered no more. *“Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”*

Listen as God reminds you that **He has wiped the slate clean.** Let today be the day you release yourself from the regrets you have been carrying, for God is telling you, “See, I am doing a new thing! Do you not see it!” If **He has released you from your regrets, why shouldn’t you do the same?**

“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalm 91:1

Our pastor, Pastor Brad, used Psalm 91 in the closing of a recent sermon. If you haven’t read it recently, I encourage you to do so. It’s verses 14-16 that I want to highlight: **God’s promise to those who love Him.**

“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges My name. He shall call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.”

God loves us more than we can fathom. From the very moment of our existence, He has desired that we love him as He loves us. On the day that we accepted His love through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus, we became His and salvation became ours, and our love affair with our Heavenly Father became real. The promises of God became ours. The love and the promises of the Father that we carry with us today are ours to help us face whatever challenges life has brought us, and we can be confident of His presence through His Holy Spirit. I pray you will find strength in His word.

Your Anchor will hold ... in spite of your storms!



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CORPORATE PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES:

Sunday mornings at 8:45am
 Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm
 Wednesday AM Men's prayer at 6:00am.
 3rd Saturday of the Month Women's Prayer at 9:00am

*All meet at
 Grace Church
 building*

GRACE CHURCH STAFF

Head Pastor & Chief Shepherd - *Jesus Christ*

Lead Pastor - *Brad Rutherford*

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Administrative Assistant - *Carol Blain*

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Communications/Media Coordinator - *Rachel Titel*

email: cmc@gracechurchfdl.net

Custodian - *Jen Koenigs*

phone: 922-7211

Elder on Call: Friday, Saturday & Sunday

(920) 948-9262

Offering & Attendance

7/7/2024	\$7,826	156
7/14/2024	\$7,760	150
7/21/2024	\$6,735	184
7/28/2024	\$5,836	148

July Weekly Ave: \$7,039.25 165

**Weekly average needed to meet budget
 \$8,927**

Year to Date Givings \$28,157

Year to Date Expenses \$30,600

Y-T-D amounts reflect July month-end totals

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please contact the office at (920) 922-7211 or
 office@gracechurchfdl.net for information
 regarding the **new submission deadlines** for
 future editions of the *Words of Grace* newsletter

Office Hours are:

Monday-Thursday 8:00am-4:30pm

Friday 8:00am-11:30am