



GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Church and Winter Streets, Hagerstown, Maryland
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Reverend Dionne T. Hall, Pastor

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August 31, 2025

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Series: Dear Children of God: Part 3

Lay Leader: Sandy Kendall

Greeting (responsive)

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: We've come this far by faith.

People: Our faith comes from God!

Leader: Creator of heaven and earth.

People: God is doing a new thing within us.

All: Glory to God. Amen.

Prelude 'Prelude on Rhosymedre' – Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The Light of Christ Enters the Sanctuary

Call to Worship (responsive)

Leader: Children of God, when we witness the needs of strangers and listen to the struggles of our friends, remember:

People: Let mutual love continue.

Leader: When we hear the struggles of those in prison and recognize the suffering of people near and far, remember:

People: Let mutual love continue.

Leader: When temptations to hoard more money, more power, and more influence surround us on every side, remember:

People: Let mutual love continue.

Leader: As we gather for worship, remember: God is here among us, surrounding us with love and forming us to live in love everywhere we go.

People: We choose to cooperate with God's love today and every day so that mutual love will continue wherever we go and whatever we do. Amen.

Opening Hymn "The God of Abraham Praise"

1. The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above; Ancient of Everlasting Days, and God of love; Jehovah, great I AM! by earth and heaven confessed; I bow and bless the sacred name forever blest.

2. The great I AM has sworn; I on this oath depend. I shall, on eagle wings up-borne, to heaven ascend. I shall behold God's face; I shall God's power adore, and sing the wonders of God's grace forevermore.

3. The heavenly land I see, with peace and plenty blest; a land of sacred liberty, and endless rest. There milk and honey flow, and oil and wine abound, and trees of life forever grow with mercy crowned.

4. The God who reigns on high the great archangels sing, and "Holy, holy, holy!" cry, "Almighty King! Who was, and is, the same, and evermore shall be: Jehovah, Lord, the great I AM, we worship thee!"

Opening Prayer (unison)

In the face of all our realities: We are the people who heal each other, who grow strong together, who name the truth, who know what it means to live in community, moving toward a common dream for a new heaven and a new earth. In the power of the love of God our Creator, the company of Jesus Christ, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Children's Message

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 2:4-13

Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the LORD:

What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me and went after worthless things and became worthless themselves? They did not say, "Where is the LORD, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?" I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.

The priests did not say, "Where is the LORD?" Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit. Therefore once more I accuse you, says the LORD, and I accuse your children's children. Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look; send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing. Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods?

But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked; be utterly desolate, says the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

Psalter: Psalm 81:1, 10-16 (read responsively)

Leader: Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob.

People: I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Leader: "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me.

People: So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.

Leader: O that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways!

People: Then I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes.

Leader: Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their doom would last forever.

People: I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Let mutual affection continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Through him, then, let us continually

offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Here ends the reading of the Word.

Gospel Hymn “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

1. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.
2. Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers; our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
3. We share each other's woes, our mutual burdens bear; and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.
4. When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain; but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

Prayer of Illumination

God of Wisdom, open us to the work of your Spirit, that we may hear and faithfully respond to your holy Word. Amen.

Gospel Lesson: Luke 14:1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.

But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Pastor: “The word of God for the people of God.”
People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

“Let Mutual Love Continue” Rev. Dionne T. Hall

Apostle’s Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; The third day he arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God,
You are a God of hospitality; there is none like you that invites all to come to you. You have invited all to your home, to your table, and to your arms. Lord, would that all would hear and

receive this good news. Lord, help us to remember that no one is better than anyone else in your Kingdom. Help us to then treat each other the way you treat people.

Generous God,
Because you treat us with your tender love, We take time to pray for our friends, family members and others who need you more than ever. Pour out your healing on all who need it. Be generous with your transforming love for those who needs it in their lives. Bring forth your reconciliation in families, and in places where it is needed.

Gifting God,
You give us the gifts of the spirit to use to further your Kingdom and to be the Body of Christ in the world. We take time to remember the people devastated by natural disasters and to thank you for the restoration that has already taken place. Empower us to continue to be your hands and feet to continue the work that needs to be done there

and in so many other places.

There is none like you God in your love, your generosity, your gifting and your hospitality. And we thank you that you are in our lives, working in us and through us to let people know your kingdom is open to all. In the name of your Son, who opened the doors for all and broke down barriers that kept people from you, Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.**

Call to Confession

God invites us to mutual love. But to find that mutuality, we must release our need for honor, our desire for privilege. In humility let us seek forgiveness, trusting in the promises of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Long-suffering One, we long to return to you with love and gratitude in our hearts. We yearn for food that satisfies, the bread of life you offer without cost. Refresh us from your living waters, as we stare into the cracked cisterns and the dry riverbeds of our petty complaints. Stand by us, Holy One, lest we forsake your glory in vain pursuits that neither profit us nor bring us joy. Amen.

Words of Assurance (responsive)

Leader: God offers these words and this hope: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.” God offers these words of assurance: “I will never leave you or forsake you.” God is faithful, even when we are not.
All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Passing of the Peace (responsive)

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.
People: And also with you.

Invitation to the Offering

God gives us more grace than we can ever earn and sustains us in ways we cannot imagine. With a spirit of generosity, let us freely offer ourselves and our gifts to the world.

Offertory Voluntary 'Pastoral' – Gustav Merkel (1827-1885)

Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Offertory Prayer (unison)

Faithful and Unchanging God you remain our firm foundation. You have called us into a life of mutual love, teach us to serve, welcome, and give with generous hearts. Bless these gifts, that they may extend your love to those who hunger, who seek justice, and who long for hope. Shape us into a people whose generosity reflects your own, that through our giving, we may proclaim your unshakable kingdom. In the name of Jesus Christ, our constant and faithful guide. Amen.

Closing Hymn “O Jesus, I Have Promised”

- 1. O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end; be thou forever near me, my Master and my friend. I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side, nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide.**
- 2. O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near; I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear; my foes are ever near me, around me and within; but Jesus, draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.**
- 3. O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still, above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will. O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control; O speak, and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul.**
- 4. O Jesus, thou hast promised to all who follow thee that where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be. And Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end; O give me grace to follow, my Master and my Friend.**

Postlude 'Finale' – Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

The Light of Christ goes into the world.

Charge

God graces us with abundance and inspires us to be generous.

Benediction

Children of God, go from this place in the blessing of the Triune God, our Helper and our Friend, offering your sacrifice of praise and sharing what you have as you spread the love of God in mutuality and care to the ends of the earth and back again. Amen.



Today’s Altar Flowers are given to the glory of God!

Available Sundays to sponsor flowers September 7, 14, 28, and the month of October.

**Grace Notes
August 31, 2025**

Mission Statement: *Glorify God ~ Draw All to Christ ~ Edify & Equip*

From the Pastor: This week we live into self-reflection and honesty of what it means to be a community of mutual love. We pray for the courage to love people who seem hard to love. Our songs this week are about love as a gift and a choice...loving God, loving our neighbors, and loving ourselves. Loving God, check. Loving neighbor, check. Loving ourselves...that one may be the most difficult of all. Let’s lean into what all this means for us as individuals and as a congregation.

In His Joy,
Pastor Dionne

Membership Reports: As faithful members of Grace UMC, we faithfully strive to remember our membership vows to support the church by upholding the church with our **prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.**

Prayers - Persons listed on Joys & Concerns will appear for two weeks. Please fill out a request card if you would like your request shared on Sunday morning and listed in Grace Notes. You may call or email the church office Monday thru Wednesday **(by 10am)** with those you would like to include or remove. If a person requires additional time, or has a long-term illness, request they be added to the “Long-term” list. The joys and concerns will list first name and last initial; no details will appear.

Joys & Concerns

Aug. 24: All spoken and unspoken

Aug. 17: All spoken and unspoken

Prayers (Long-term): John S., Paul H., Ron S., Joann M.; Kenny S.; Robin G., Lucy K.; Bill S., Erin B., Doris K.; Bill H., Wendi C., Margie C., Bev. B., Connie M.; Vickie S., Rhonda and Tony W.

The Revised Common Lectionary – A service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library

Sunday, August 31, 2025: Jeremiah 2:4-13; Psalm 81:1, 10-16; Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14

Monday, September 01, 2025: Psalm 58; Jeremiah 2:23-37; Hebrews 13:7-21;

Tuesday, September 02, 2025: Psalm 58; Jeremiah 3:1-14; Titus 1:1-9;

Wednesday, September 03, 2025: Psalm 119:65-72; Jeremiah 3:15-25; Luke 14:15-24;

Thursday, September 04, 2025: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; Jeremiah 15:10-21; Philippians 2:25-30;
Friday, September 05, 2025: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; Jeremiah 16:14-17:4; Colossians 4:7-17;
Saturday, September 06, 2025: Psalm 1; Jeremiah 17:14-27; Matthew 10:34-42;

Presence – Join us for worship in person or via Facebook Live.
Worship: 69 Sunday School: 37 Facebook Live: 136 Ladies T4U:

GIFTS – Your gifts offer HOPE to Grace Church and the community. When we tithe, we follow the example given to us in Genesis 28:10-22 by giving at least 10% to the **General Fund**. United Methodists value the tithe as a benchmark for giving, one we encourage our members to move toward and, once achieved, move beyond. We believe that there is joy in giving, and the greater the generosity the deeper the joy. The **General Fund** is responsible for ensuring all the needs of the church are met; this includes all of the ministries, missions, and operational costs of Grace Church. The One Board (as of May 14, 2023) asks that all tithes and offerings be placed in the General Fund except those for T.H.R.I.V.E., Micah’s Backpack & Building for the Future. Separate envelopes are provided for these ministries and located by the lectern. This is the only way to donate to these ministries. This will allow Grace Church to move towards fully funding all ministries and missions of the church. This will bring us up to date with current UMC budget practices.

General Fund: \$1,475.77
Endowment Withdrawal: \$
Estate Gift:
Music Fund: \$0.00
Needed for Weekly Budget: \$4,500
Building for the Future: \$50.00
T.H.R.I.V.E. & Micah’s Backpack: \$75.00

Service and Witness:
Ushers: J.C. Martin, Bill Thompson, Donna and Roy Shoop, Madison Shoop, Lucas Shoop, Ella Sholty, Justus Osuji
Greeter: Daisy Wolfensberger
Lay Readers: John Hess, Earlene Johnson, Sandy Kendall, Kurt Zimmerman
Media Managers: Donnie Bryan, Roy Shoop
Choir: Becca Bryan, Donnie Bryan, Patti Hull, Hannah Kamseuh, Polly Martin, Peace Osuji, Ryan Wetzel
Congregational Care Committee/Communion Stewards: Chris Jeter, Krista Zimmerman, Cindy Tedrick, Ruth Smith, Patti Hull, Helen Gilliam, Daisy Wolfensberger, Polly Martin, Rose Shank, Earlene Johnson, Sandy Kendall, Donna Bolinger, Amy Bryan, Becca Bryan, Jane Staley, Rhonda Weaver, Wanda Stouffer, Ruth Thompson, Pastor Dionne, Sonja Shearer, Cindy Swales, Patty Frazier, Caroline Jenkins and Vivienne, Margaret Hess

T.H.R.I.V.E. (Thankful, Hopeful, Revitalized, Intentional, Victorious, Educated). Continued needs are non-perishables, dry goods, feminine care products, hand soap, shower gel, razors, shave cream, individually wrapped paper towels and toilet paper, shampoo, toothpaste/toothbrushes, laundry detergent, etc. Monetary donations are gratefully accepted, and please use the indicated envelopes located by the lectern. **Closet 712** Volunteers are always appreciated. Donations drop off is Monday -Thursday 10am-12pm., **fall and winter clothing ONLY.** Both T.H.R.I.V.E and the clothes closet are open on Saturday, **October 11, 2025**, 10:00am – 11:00 am.

Pastoral Care and Emergency Contact Information: In case of an emergency, please contact Pastor Dionne at (240) 347-2345 (cell), Facebook Messenger, or pastordionne.hall@gmail.com. The church office number is (240) 850-2934. Please inform the hospital and/or funeral home that Pastor Dionne is the Pastor at Grace. **The Pastor and church should be notified of any illness or death of a member or family member first.** The Pastor will confirm availability dates for Services of Death and Resurrection with the funeral home director.

CALENDAR

Sun., Aug. 31
Hall

8:30 & 10:00 am

Coffee, Donuts & Fellowship is provided in Rider

9:00 am

Worship

10:15 am

Sunday school for all ages

Labor Day, Church and office closed

Mon., Sept. 1

Wed., Sept. 3

2:30 pm

Pop Up Pantry

Sat., Sept. 6

4:00 – 7:00 pm

Family Fun Day ~ Pool Party ~ Pot Luck at the

Zimmerman's.

Please see Kurt and Krista for additional information.

Sun., Sept. 7
Hall

8:30 & 10:00 am

Coffee, Donuts & Fellowship is provided in Rider

9:00 am

Worship, Communion

10:15 am

Sunday school for all ages

Mon., Sept. 8

12:00 pm

T4U Luncheon and meeting at Western Sizzlin

Steakhouse

Tues., Sept. 9

5:30 pm

Dinner followed by The Chosen, Season 3

CANCELED

Wed., Sept. 10

2:30 pm

Pop Up Pantry is **CANCELED**

Sat., Sept. 13

10:00 - 11:00 am

Food Pantry/Clothes Closet is **CANCELED**

11:00 am

Lay Readers meeting in Pastor Dionne's office

Sun., Sept. 14

8:30 & 10:00 am

There will be **NO** Coffee, Donuts & Fellowship

today

9:00 am

Worship

10:15 am

Sunday school for all ages. **The adults will meet**

in the sanctuary.

Tues., Sept. 16

5:30 pm

Dinner followed by **The Chosen, Season 3**

6:30 pm

Choir Rehearsal/Pizza Party

NOTICE

The One Board voted last week to have Bob Jones Plumbing reline the underground drains in the kitchen, food pantry/clothes closet, and Rider Hall areas due to severe deterioration. The work will begin on Monday, September 8th and will take a week to complete.

SEPTEMBER 8TH THROUGH SEPTEMBER 13TH - THE CHURCH BUILDING IS CLOSED

The following event dates have changed:

1. T4U meeting on Monday, Sept. 8th will meet at **Western Sizzlin Steakhouse** at 12:00 pm.

2. There will be **NO** pop-up pantry on Wednesday, Sept. 10th.

3. Senior Citizens meeting on Thursday, Sept. 11 has been **canceled** and will meet on Thursday, Oct. 9 at 10:30 am.

4. There will be **NO** food pantry/clothes closet on Saturday, Sept. 13th.

5. **Sunday school** will be held in the sanctuary on Sept. 14th. The children will meet in their classrooms.

6. **The Chosen** will begin on Tuesday, September 16th at 5:30 pm.

Rider Hall, kitchen, food pantry/clothes closet areas are **closed** from September 8 through Sunday September 14th. **No donuts or coffee will be served.** These areas will be cleaned and open for **Sunday, September 21st.**

Choir will resume rehearsals on Tuesday September 16th at 6:30 p.m. due to the plumbing work taking place in the church the week of September 8. We would be happy to welcome new members. If you have an interest in singing and joining the choir, please talk to Jonathan.

The Chosen – Season 3 will begin Tuesday, September 16th – October 28th starting at 5:30 pm.

The Chosen is based on the true stories of the Gospels of Jesus Christ. Some locations and timelines have been combined or condensed. Backstories and some characters or dialog have been added. However, all the bible and historical context and any artistic imagination are designed to support the truth and intention of the Scriptures.