



GRACE GAZETTE

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IUKA, MISSISSIPPI

A NEW SEASON OF GRACE

There's something about August that feels like standing in a doorway. Summer isn't quite over, but the rhythm is already changing. School has started again, calendars are filling up, and before long we'll be talking about cooler weather, fall activities, and, whether we're ready or not, Christmas.

The church feels that change in rhythm too. Summer tends to be a little slower. People travel, families scatter, and some of our regular routines loosen for a while. Then fall comes, and suddenly there seems to be more to do, more places to be, and more opportunities for ministry.

But before we rush into everything that comes next, it's worth remembering that God has been at work all along.

God was present in the busy weeks and the quiet ones. God was working through worship, Bible study, children and youth, fellowship, service, conversations, prayers, and all those little moments that never make it onto a church calendar. Some of the most important work God does happens quietly, in ways we don't recognize until later.

Jesus often described the kingdom of God that way. A seed is planted. Yeast works unseen in dough. A tiny mustard seed grows into something much larger than anyone would expect. God's work doesn't always announce itself with something dramatic. Often grace grows quietly. As we move into this new season, I hope we'll pay attention to what God is growing among us.

There will be opportunities to worship, learn, serve, invite, encourage, and care for our neighbors. Some will seem important. Others may look very small. But we never know what God will do with a kind word, an invitation, a meal shared, a prayer offered, a child encouraged, or a person welcomed through the church doors.

Our calling isn't to make everything happen. Our calling is to be faithful with the opportunities God places before us.

So as the pace begins to pick up, don't let the busyness become the point. Look for people. Look for places where grace is needed. Look for what God may already be doing and join Him there.

A new season is beginning, and I'm excited to see what God will grow among us.

Grace and peace,
Cheryl

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*"The best of all is, God is with us."
– John Wesley*

FASTING: A MEANS OF GRACE

When we hear the word fasting, many of us immediately think about food. We may picture someone skipping meals, giving up sweets, or going without something for a certain length of time. While fasting often does involve food, Christian fasting is about much more than simply not eating. At its heart, fasting is a way of intentionally making room for God.

John Wesley included fasting among the ordinary means of grace, those practices through which God works in our lives to strengthen faith, deepen our dependence on Him, and shape us into the likeness of Christ. Fasting does not earn God's favor. God already loves us completely. We don't fast to persuade God to bless us or to prove how spiritual we are. We fast because sometimes we need to quiet the things that compete for our attention so we can become more attentive to the grace God is already giving.

Jesus assumed fasting would be part of the life of His followers. In Matthew 6:16–18, He says, "When you fast," not "if you fast." At the same time, Jesus warns against turning fasting into a religious performance. It isn't something we do so others will admire our devotion. It is an act of prayer and surrender between us and God. Fasting reminds us of something we easily forget: not every hunger has to be satisfied immediately. When we voluntarily go without something, even for a short time, we become more aware of how quickly our habits and appetites can control us. That physical or emotional longing can then become a reminder to turn toward God.

Traditionally, Christians have fasted from food, perhaps missing one meal or eating very simply for a period of time. But there may be seasons when fasting from food isn't appropriate because of health concerns, medications, or nutritional needs. Fasting can also involve stepping away from social media, television, shopping, entertainment, or anything else that has begun to occupy more of our attention than it should.

The important question is not simply, "What am I giving up?" The better question is, "What am I making room for?"

If we skip a meal but never pray, fasting can become little more than hunger. If we put down our phones only to spend the whole time thinking about when we can pick them back up, we may have missed the purpose. The space created by fasting is meant to be filled with prayer, Scripture, worship, reflection, and attention to God.

Fasting can also turn our attention toward others. Hunger can remind us that many people do not choose whether they will eat. Giving something up can free resources that we can share with someone in need. Isaiah 58 makes clear that the kind of fasting God desires cannot be separated from justice, mercy, and care for others. A heart drawn closer to God should also become more sensitive to the needs of our neighbors. Like every means of grace, fasting is ultimately about relationship. It creates space for us to listen, to confess, to pray, and to remember that our deepest need cannot be met by food, possessions, entertainment, or anything else this world offers.

We need God.

And the beautiful thing is that when we turn toward Him, we discover that God has already turned toward us in grace. Fasting does not bring God closer. It helps us recognize how close He has been all along.





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A BABY SHOWER FULL OF GRACE

Grace United Methodist Church recently gathered to celebrate a very special occasion, a baby shower for Luke and Megann Hornsby, who are expecting a baby girl at the end of August. This little one already holds a special place in the life of our church because she will be Grace's first baby. It was a joy to gather around Megann as she prepares to welcome her daughter and to share in the excitement of this new chapter for their family.

The ladies of the church provided a wonderful meal of sandwiches, fresh fruit, and petit fours. Megan received many beautiful and thoughtful gifts, along with plenty of love, encouragement, and good wishes from her church family.

There was a wonderful sense of anticipation throughout the day as everyone talked about the baby and looked forward to meeting her. A new baby is always a reminder of the goodness of God, the gift of new life, and the blessing of being part of a church family that celebrates together. We are thankful for Luke and Megan and are keeping them in our prayers as the baby's arrival draws near. We can hardly wait to welcome Grace's newest and very youngest member!



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Worship Information

Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Fellowship/Hospitality: 10:30 AM
Sunday Worship: 11:00 AM
Wednesday Bible Study: 6:00
Location: 213 E. Eastport St. Iuka, MS

Online Worship

Live: <https://www.youtube.com/@IukaGraceUMC/streams>

[Sermons](#)

[Daily Devotionals](#)

Missions & Outreach

Game Night August 30 at 5:30 PM
Jail Visits: Thursdays @ 2:00 PM
Sunday Soup will resume this Fall.

Stay Connected

[Facebook](#)

Website: graceumciuka.org

Contact: [Rev. Cheryl Farr](#)

You are always welcome at Grace UMC. Come as you are.