



GRACE GAZETTE

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IUKA, MISSISSIPPI

WHEN SUMMER SLOWS THE CHURCH DOWN

Every church has seasons. Some seasons feel full and lively, with packed calendars, special services, Bible studies, children's activities, community events, and the steady rhythm of Sunday worship. Other seasons feel quieter. Summer often brings one of those quieter stretches. Families travel. Children are out of school. Routines shift. Vacations, reunions, ballgames, camps, yard work, heat, and exhaustion can all affect church attendance and participation.

Sometimes we call this the "summer slump" or the "summer doldrums." It is that time when church life may feel a little slower than usual. There may be fewer people in the pews on Sunday morning. Volunteers may be harder to find. Giving may dip. Regular programs may pause. The energy that carried us through Easter, Pentecost, Mother's Day, graduations, and spring activities can begin to feel stretched thin.

But slower does not mean lifeless.

In sailing, the doldrums refer to a place where the winds grow calm and a ship may seem to sit still on the water. To the people aboard, it can feel frustrating. They are still in the boat, still on the journey, but there is not much visible movement. Church life can feel that way in the summer. We may still gather, still pray, still worship, still serve, but it may not feel as busy or as full as other times of the year.

The temptation is to measure the health of the church only by what we can see. We may look around on a Sunday in July and think, "Where is everybody?" We may wonder if the church is losing momentum. We may feel discouraged because the room looks different than it did a few months ago.

Yet Scripture reminds us that God is always at work, even in seasons that seem quiet. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." Not every season carries the same pace. Not every faithful season looks crowded, loud, or busy. Some seasons are for planting. Some are for watering. Some are for waiting. Some are for rest.

Summer can remind us that the church is not held together by activity alone. The church is held together by Christ. Programs matter. Attendance matters. Service matters. Fellowship matters. But underneath all of that is the grace of God, sustaining us when we are full of energy and when we are tired, when the calendar is packed and when the calendar is light. Jesus understood the need for rest. In Mark 6:31, after the disciples had been busy with ministry, Jesus said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." That was not a rejection of ministry. It was part of faithful ministry. People who serve also need to be renewed. People who give also need to receive. People who pour out love need to be filled again by the love of God.

OTHER STORIES

THIS MONTH:

[WHEN SUMMER
SLOWS THE CHURCH
DOWN CONT. 2](#)

[MEANS OF
GRACE/CELEBRATING
G LILY AND JILL 3](#)

[BACKYARD BASH 4](#)

[BACKYARD BASH
CONT. 5](#)

[WORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES 6](#)



*"The church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of its non-members."
– William Temple*

WHEN THE CHURCH SHOWS UP CONTINUED

The summer doldrums may actually offer the church a gift. They give us space to breathe. They give leaders and volunteers time to recover. They give families time to reconnect. They give the church a chance to reflect, pray, and prepare for the fall. They remind us that the life of the church is not only found in large events or full pews, but also in quiet prayers, steady faithfulness, and small acts of love.

This does not mean we stop showing up. In fact, summer can be a beautiful time to recommit to simple faithfulness. When we are in town, we can come to worship. When others are away, our presence encourages those who gather. When programs slow down, we can look for small ways to serve. We can check on someone we have not seen in a while. We can invite a neighbor to church. We can pray for our children, teachers, leaders, and volunteers as a new school year approaches. We can support the ministries of the church even when we are traveling.

The church does not take a vacation from being the church. We may rest, and we should. We may travel, and we should enjoy the blessings of family, friends, and creation. But wherever we are, we remain disciples of Jesus Christ. We remain people called to love God and love neighbor. We remain witnesses to grace.

Summer also gives us a chance to remember that every person matters. When attendance is lighter, it becomes easier to notice who is missing. That is not an opportunity for guilt. It is an opportunity for care. A phone call, a card, a text message, or a simple "We missed you" can become a ministry of encouragement. Sometimes people drift not because they have stopped believing, but because life has worn them down. A loving church notices, reaches out, and makes room for people to return.

The good news is that God is not absent in the slower seasons. The Holy Spirit does not only move when the sanctuary is full. Christ is present whenever two or three gather in his name. Grace is still grace in June, July, and August. Mercy is still new every morning. The gospel is still good news. The mission of the church still matters.

So, when summer feels slow, let us not lose heart. Let us receive the rest God offers. Let us practice steady faithfulness. Let us encourage one another. Let us pray for renewed energy, renewed vision, and renewed compassion. The winds may feel calm for a season, but God is still guiding the boat.

And when the pace picks up again, may we return not only busy, but refreshed. Not only active, but rooted. Not only ready to do more, but ready to love more deeply.

Gracious God, thank you for the changing seasons of life and ministry. When our church feels busy, help us serve with joy. When our church feels quiet, help us trust that you are still working. Renew those who are tired. Encourage those who feel discouraged. Bring rest to families, strength to volunteers, wisdom to leaders, and grace to every person who walks through our doors. Keep us faithful in every season, and help us remain the image of Christ to the world through faithful discipleship and service. In Jesus' name, Amen.



"The church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of its non-members."
– William Temple

COMMUNION: A MEANS OF GRACE

In the United Methodist tradition, we speak of the "means of grace" as the ordinary ways God meets us, strengthens us, and draws us closer to himself. Prayer, Scripture, worship, Christian conversation, acts of mercy, and Holy Communion are all ways God works in our lives.

Holy Communion is one of the most beautiful means of grace because it reminds us that grace is not just something we believe. Grace is something we receive.

When we come to the Lord's Table, we come at Christ's invitation. The table belongs to Jesus. He is the host. He is the one who offers himself for the life of the world. On the night before his death, Jesus took bread and said, "This is my body given for you." He took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:19–20). Through this holy meal, we remember his sacrifice, receive his grace, and are strengthened for faithful living.

John Wesley encouraged Methodists to receive Communion often because he believed it was a powerful way God gives grace. We do not come because we are perfect. We come because we need Christ. We come with our sins, questions, grief, weakness, gratitude, and hope. At the table, Jesus meets us with mercy.

Communion also reminds us that we belong to one another. We receive the bread and cup as the body of Christ, gathered by grace and sent out in love. We are fed so that we may feed others. We are forgiven so that we may forgive. We are loved so that we may love. The Lord's Table is simple and sacred: bread, cup, prayer, invitation, and grace. Every time we come, Christ meets us there.



CELEBRATING LILY AND JILL

Grace UMC had the joy of celebrating Senior Sunday as we honored Lily and Jill and gave thanks for this important milestone in their lives. Graduation is more than the end of one chapter. It is the beginning of a new season filled with opportunity, growth, decisions, and hope.

During worship, our church family surrounded them with love, encouragement, and prayer. We celebrated their hard work, their accomplishments, and the unique gifts God has placed within each of them. Senior Sunday reminded us that young people are not just the future of the church. They are already a meaningful part of the body of Christ.

As Lily and Jill step into what comes next, we pray they will remember that they are deeply loved by God and by their church family. Wherever life takes them, they do not go alone. God goes before them, walks beside them, and holds them close.

We give thanks for Lily and Jill, and we ask God to bless them with wisdom, courage, joy, and faith for the road ahead.





"The church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of its non-members."
– William Temple

BACKYARD BASH

Grace UMC had a wonderful time hosting our Backyard Bash for the community. It was an evening filled with food, laughter, fellowship, and fun as people gathered to enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs, homemade ice cream, games, and a blowup slide.

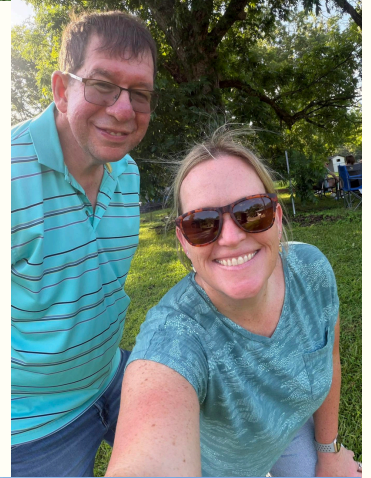
Events like this remind us that church is not only about what happens inside the sanctuary. It is also about making room for neighbors, building relationships, sharing joy, and showing the love of Christ in simple, welcoming ways. A meal, a laugh, a game, and a scoop of homemade ice cream can become small signs of grace when they are offered with love.

We are grateful for everyone who helped prepare food, serve, set up, clean up, supervise games, and welcome our guests. Most of all, we give thanks for the opportunity to spend time with our community and remind people that they are loved, valued, and welcome.





*"The church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of its non-members."
– William Temple*



*"The church is the only society on earth that
exists for the benefit of its non-members."
– William Temple*

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

Jail Visits: Thursdays @ 2:00PM
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.