



GRACE GAZETTE

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IUKA, MISSISSIPPI

"HOSPITALITY MEANS PRIMARILY THE CREATION OF FREE SPACE WHERE THE STRANGER CAN ENTER AND BECOME A FRIEND INSTEAD OF AN ENEMY."

— HENRI J. M. NOUWEN, REACHING OUT

THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU AT THE TABLE

One of the things I love about October is the sense of change that comes with it. The air cools, the leaves begin to turn, and we start settling into the rhythm of fall. This year, October also begins with World Communion Sunday, which gives us a beautiful reminder that while seasons change, the grace of God does not.

On World Communion Sunday, Christians around the world gather at the Lord's Table. We may speak different languages, sing different songs, worship in different ways, and come from very different backgrounds, but we come to the same Christ. The table belongs to Jesus, and every one of us comes because He has invited us.

That matters because we live in a world that is very good at dividing people. We notice who agrees with us and who does not. We notice who looks like us, thinks like us, or lives like us. Sometimes we become so used to drawing lines that we forget how often Jesus crossed them.

At His table, none of us comes because we have earned our place. We come because of grace. We come carrying different stories, different joys, and different hurts. Some of us are strong in our faith right now. Others may be tired, grieving, uncertain, or still asking questions. Yet Christ continues to say, "Come."

That is one of the things I hope people experience when they come to Grace. I want us to be a church where people know they are welcome, where they are treated with kindness, and where they can encounter the love of Christ. That does not mean we all have to be alike. It means we remember that every person we meet is someone Jesus loves.

It also means that the grace we receive cannot stop with us. When Christ welcomes us, He teaches us to welcome others. When He forgives us, He teaches us to forgive. When He serves us, He calls us to serve. Grace is never meant to be stored away. It is meant to move through us into the lives of other people.

As October brings opportunities for us to worship, gather, serve, laugh, and spend time with one another, I hope we keep remembering what the table teaches us. There is enough grace. There is enough mercy. There is room for one more.

We were invited by Jesus. May we be the kind of people who carry that invitation with us wherever we go.

Grace and peace,
Cheryl

OTHER STORIES
THIS MONTH:

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**OUR NEWEST
MEMBER! DELILAH
PEACH HORNSBY
WILL BE BAPTIZED
ON OCTOBER 18TH.
PLEASE COME AND
CELEBRATE THIS
FAMILY!**



"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy."

– Henri J. M. Nouwen, Reaching Out

WHY DO WE BAPTIZE INFANTS?

One of the questions people sometimes ask in the United Methodist Church is, "Why do you baptize babies if they are too young to understand what baptism means?" It is a fair question, especially for those who grew up in churches where baptism is practiced only after a person makes a public profession of faith. United Methodists baptize infants because we believe baptism begins with what God is doing, not with what we are able to understand or accomplish.

Throughout Scripture, God's covenant is never based on human achievement. God reaches toward us first. In the Old Testament, children were included in the covenant community before they were old enough to understand what that covenant meant. In the New Testament, we see entire households baptized when the gospel enters a family, as in Acts 16:15 and Acts 16:33. The Bible does not give us a detailed description of an infant baptism, but neither does it command the Church to exclude children from baptism. Instead, the larger biblical story repeatedly shows God drawing families and communities into His covenant grace.

That is at the heart of the United Methodist understanding of infant baptism. Baptism is a sign of God's grace already at work. John Wesley spoke often of prevenient grace, the grace of God that goes before us. Before we understand God, God knows us. Before we can choose Him, He is already reaching toward us. Before a child can speak the name of Jesus, that child is already loved by Jesus.

Infant baptism does not mean that a baby has made a personal profession of faith. It also does not mean that the child will never need to respond personally to Christ. As that child grows, the Church, parents, and sponsors have the responsibility to teach the faith, model the Christian life, and help the child come to claim that faith personally. This is one reason confirmation is so important. In confirmation, a young person is given the opportunity to profess the faith into which he or she was baptized and to take personal responsibility for living as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

When we baptize an infant, the congregation also makes promises. We are not simply watching a family ceremony. We promise to surround that child with a community of love and forgiveness so that the child may grow in service to others. We are saying that this child belongs among us, and that we will help teach, encourage, pray for, and support this child as he or she grows.

Infant baptism also reminds every one of us of something important about grace. None of us earns God's love. We do not become worthy of grace because we understand enough, believe strongly enough, or behave well enough. Grace is always a gift. A baby being carried to the baptismal font gives us a beautiful picture of that truth. The child comes with empty hands and receives what he or she could never earn.

Some Christians practice believer's baptism only, and they do so out of a sincere desire to honor the biblical importance of repentance and personal faith. United Methodists agree that personal faith is essential. We simply understand baptism a little differently. We see baptism not only as our response to God, but also as God's gracious claim upon us and our entrance into the covenant community of the Church.

This is also why United Methodists do not rebaptize. Baptism rests on God's faithfulness, not on the strength of our memory, our feelings, or even our faith at a particular moment. A person may wander from the Church, struggle with belief, or come to a renewed commitment to Christ later in life, but that does not mean God's grace in baptism has failed. Instead of baptizing again, we may reaffirm our baptismal vows and remember the promises God has already made.

That can be especially meaningful for someone who comes to a deeper faith as an adult. Reaffirming baptism allows us to say, in effect, "I now claim for myself the faith into which I was baptized." It honors both the grace God offered first and the personal response of faith that follows.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Matthew 19:14). When we baptize an infant, we are trusting that the same Christ who welcomed children into His arms still welcomes them today.

Infant baptism is not based on what the child knows. It is based on who God is. God loves first. God reaches first. God gives grace first. And throughout the child's life, we pray that the grace received and celebrated in baptism will grow into a mature, living faith in Jesus Christ.



*"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy."
– Henri J. M. Nouwen, Reaching Out*

FEEDING THE TEAM

Grace had the opportunity to show a little love and support to the girls' volleyball team at THS by providing them with a meal of spaghetti, salad, and dessert. It was a simple way to encourage these young athletes and let them know their community is cheering them on, both on and off the court. We are always grateful for opportunities like this to serve our neighbors, build relationships, and share the love of Christ in practical ways.



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Worship Information

Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Fellowship/Hospitality: 10:30 AM
Sunday Worship: 11:00 AM
Choir Practice: Sunday 5:30 PM
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

Our plan is to start Sunday Soup back up in November. Please be in prayer for this vital ministry. Grace United Methodist Church has an opportunity to help support the Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Mississippi and the children they serve right here in our communities.

Over the past two years, the Boys & Girls Club has experienced significant reductions in government grant funding. They currently serve approximately 350 children through clubs in Iuka, Corinth, Booneville, and Baldwyn, providing a safe place after school along with homework help, mentorship, activities, and opportunities for kids to learn and grow.

A one-time sponsorship of \$400 covers the after-school program costs for one child for an entire year. Our hope is to sponsor as many children as we can, but donations of any amount are welcome and greatly appreciated. Every gift can be combined to help provide another child with a full year of support.

If you would like to give by check, please make it payable to Boys & Girls Club of NE MS and place it in the offering box at Grace.

Thank you, Grace family, for continuing to find ways to love and serve the children in our community.

Jail Visits: Thursdays @ 2:00 PM

Stay Connected

[Facebook](#)

Website: graceumciuka.org

Contact: [Rev. Cheryl Farr](#)

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