



The Messenger

Grace United Methodist
Church

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Rev. Kim Krause, Pastor

Working together to put our faith and love into practice.

**Services are held at 9:30am - Parking Lot Grace FM-89.7,
Fellowship Hall, & Facebook**

March 2025

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

Dear Family and Friends of Grace UMC,

We survived the harshest part of winter thus far, and hopefully there will not be any major snow storms this month, but we all know that winter in this area of New York can still surprise us. The weather certainly disrupted our worship services. I'm glad we were able to at least begin and end the month together hearing God's word and gathering to share our time with one another.

The first week of March also brings with it the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday is March 5th, and we will gather at 4pm in to receive ashes and start this Holy Season together. This year we will be exploring the elements of beauty, wonder, meaning, curiosity, delight, connection and self-giving during this Holy Season. The series is called *Purveyors of Awe: Elements of Curating a Life of Spiritual Depth*. I believe that this series will help us deepen our spiritual life, and in turn, help us to navigate these turbulent times. Here is the description from *Worship Design Studio*:

Awe is a profound emotional response that can significantly impact our wellbeing and perception of the world. Awe often arises from experiences that transcend our usual understanding, such as viewing vast landscapes, listening to powerful music, encountering extraordinary acts of kindness, or feeling heightened devotion and a Divine Presence connecting us all. To be a "Purveyor of Awe" is to be intentional about curating a life of spiritual depth. This has implications not only for one's own life, but also as motivation to tend to the wellbeing of others. Let us approach this Lent with awe.

There is a small book study and a guide to spiritual practices of awe available for anyone that is interested.

We are in a pivotal time in the life of our congregation, here at Grace UMC. The next few months will determine what the future holds – whether that be selling the church and finding a new place to be the church within the community or needing to disband the congregation and turn over all properties and assets to the conference. Your input and help is needed. For those that continue to give financial support and/or support in our ministries – thank you. For those that maintain their membership and have not, your support is needed now. The only way that Grace will continue to be a place of grace and love, is for those that are a part of Grace to step up in whatever way you are able.

During this time of Lent, a time of reflection, may we seek God's will in our lives and the life of the congregation. May we continue to work together to put our faith and love into practice.

Peace for the Journey,
Pastor Kim



MARCH 2025 SPECIAL DAYS

Some of the special days celebrated in March are:

Transfiguration Sunday — March 2, 2025

Ash Wednesday — March 5, 2025 – 4:00 pm Service

World Day of Prayer — March 7, 2025

Daylight-Saving Time begins — March 9, 2025

St. Patrick's Day — March 17, 2025

First Day of Spring — March 20, 2025

Christian Unity Service – March 23, 2025 – 3:00 pm

Congregational Christian Church



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

6–Fran Lobdell
20–Erick Mattick
21–Ray & Jan Bradshaw

21–Emily Buckley-Crist
26–Mary Alice Van Wie
27–Joseph Bliss

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED



You are invited to join Church Women United World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 7, 2025 at 12:30 pm. The place is Congregational Christian Church, Main St., Ravenna, with Pastor James and Susan Williams. Bring a sandwich; home-made soup, dessert and drink will be provided. Catherine Pierce and Ruthie Welch will be playing and singing for your enjoyment. Looking forward to seeing you. Any questions? Call Lou Nolan 518-756-6982.

RESTING IN JESUS



An old hymn declares:
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest.
Lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary,
worn and sad.
I found in him a resting-place, and
he has made me glad.

(Horatius Bonar, 1846)

Many people these days feel exhausted by division, the news, hatred that seems louder than love. More than ever, we who are "weary, worn, and sad" need to hear Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest." Jesus wants to be our resting place — but not so we can hide forever from reality. Instead, he offers a place of refreshment where we can relax long enough to remember that not everything is bad; there is gospel to share. Not everything is hatred; God's love is stronger.

Resting in Jesus, we focus on God's goodness. We are reminded of love shown by kind people to those in trouble, bold voices speaking for justice, warm friendships that brighten our days. Gladdened by rest, we rise again. Jesus walks with us, as always. We can lean on him every step of the way.

—Heidi Hyland Mann



FASTING AND FEASTING

During Lent, consider this practical — and biblical — advice from Arthur Lichtenberger, a former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church:

- Fast from criticism, and feast on praise.
- Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy.
- Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace.
- Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment.
- Fast from jealousy, and feast on love.
- Fast from pride, and feast on humility.
- Fast from selfishness, and feast on service.
- Fast from fear, and feast on faith.

ON THE PATH TO VICTORY

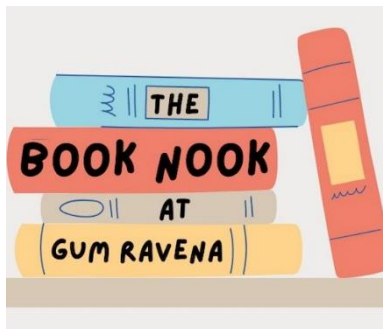
After moving to a college town, Pastor Kendra Thompson learned about the athletic phenomenon known as March Madness. And after a nondenominational upbringing, as a young adult she learned about Lenten traditions.

Lent and the NCAA college basketball tournament, which usually coincide, both point to the divine, Thompson argues. “In Lent, with each day we are drawn closer to the crushing reality that we’ve crucified our God. And yet we are also faced with an impossible victory: that death did not win, that our God is raised in Jesus Christ,” she writes. “Likewise, watching college basketball invites us into a season of hoping in unlikely possibilities, marveling at upsets, and giving thanks to God for the connection we find as his people.”

Like fans swept up in high-stakes games, Jesus’ disciples abandon everything to follow him. Lent might be “holy madness,” Thompson muses. It’s “an opportunity to ‘feel’ our religion, not just in our heads but with our skin, our voices, even in the anxieties of our prayers.”

BOOK NOOK NEWS

The Book Nook is open on Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 9:00 until Noon. We are accepting donations whenever we are open.



The Book Nook is open Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 9:00 am – Noon. Thanks to everyone who help us further our education mission.

And don't miss our drop in Friends Around the Table on Tuesdays. Good conversation *and* free snacks.

LOOK FOR OUR BLOWOUT DOWNSIZING SALE

We're working on a sponsoring a sale of no longer-needed-items in May to help us be ready to move to smaller quarters when the opportunity presents itself and to help pay for the \$21,000 installation of a new boiler system in the church building. Yes! We now have heat throughout the church building. The sale will be almost anything goes. Dates to be announced in April.

AMID LIFE'S STORMS

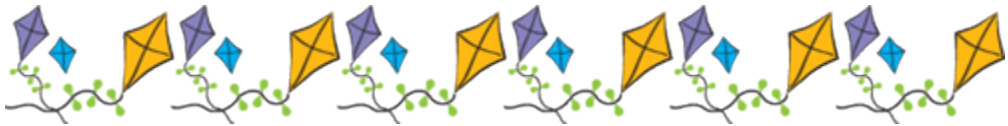
The hurricanes that battered the East Coast in fall 2024 also battered my soul. I was over the rain and humidity. I was tired of lugging my two preschoolers through the downpours and driving through flash floods at night. Yet I had no reason to complain. Our house was still standing, with no damage.

The news around us was worrying and heartbreaking. “What if that was us?” I wondered. “Would I be strong enough?”

Then the kids asked to play outside. Even though I knew they’d get wet and muddy, I gave in. When a rainbow appeared, I’d never been more humbled as I remembered: I don’t need to be anxious. I don’t need to be strong enough. God watches over us all. He knows the hurt and sorrow. And he promises to be “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1, ESV).

Lord, forgive my unbelief. “Hear my cry, O God ... when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (Psalm 61:1-2, ESV).

—Kristen Greene



“Of one thing I am perfectly sure: God’s story never ends with ashes.”

—Elisabeth Elliot

CHRISTIAN SYMBOL

Ankh, Or Ansaté Cross — Originating in Egyptian hieroglyphics, this symbol represented life and regeneration. The shape and meaning made perfect sense to ancient Christians, who appropriated it as a sign of eternal life.

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If you are on Facebook, please join the Church page by liking us at Grace United Methodist Church, Ravena, NY. Find out what's happening each week, including meetings and special events.

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