

**GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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**HELLO  
FEBRUARY**

**2025**

## Newsletter February 2025

The subject of mercy has recently been in the news. When Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde addressed President Trump at a prayer service at the National Cathedral asking him to show mercy, it created quite a stir. Some people thought it was inappropriate for her to ask President Trump to be merciful to LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) Americans and immigrants living in the United States. Bishop Budde cited the fear each of these groups are experiencing and suggested knowing someone is afraid can evoke mercy. Some people supported Bishop Budde's call for mercy, sharing their belief mercy is part of what God calls pastors to stress.

In thinking about this, I decided to see what the Bible has to say about the subject. The Old Testament established a structure that required deep and divine concern for people who were hungry, poor, or outcasts. This structure was to be a witness to the goodness of God. **Deuteronomy 4:5-8 says this: "See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the people, who, when they hear all of these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation has a God so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call him? And what great nation is there that has statutes and rules so righteous as all the law that I set before you today?"** Two things are immediately clear; laws that stressed mercy and empathy are foundational to Judaism and Christianity, and in fact all world religions, and following God's statutes is a witness to God's goodness. The Old Testament prophet spoke out against injustice and condemned the lack of concern for people experiencing hunger and cruelty regardless of what kind of government people were living under. You may read these texts yourself and judge their meaning: **Isaiah 32:7, Ezekiel 16:49, Amos 4:1-3, 8:4-7.**

The scriptures speak to the role and responsibilities of leaders that govern to care for all people, including people experiencing poverty, and cruelty of all kinds. **(Psalm 72, Jeremiah 22, Proverbs 31:8-9)** in the New Testament Jesus calls his followers to love their neighbors **(Matthew 22:39-40)** and warns that nations will be held accountable and will be judged for the ways that they have treated "the least and the lost" among them **(Matthew 25:31-46, Zephaniah 3:8-13).**

**Psalm 72 and Romans 13** emphasize the role and responsibility of leaders. These passages suggest that our leaders are servants for good, whether the leaders acknowledge that their authority comes from God. Through his example, the Apostle Paul showed how to

exercise his power as a citizen of Rome. The Apostle spoke out to governments leaders. In **Acts 21-26** we find Christians can also advocate for their governments to protect and to care for all its people.

Here's the thing, I don't see how a Christian can take issue with a pastor focusing on mercy as part of a worship service and sermon. Some argue that it was disrespectful for Bishop Budde to direct her plea for mercy to President Trump. However, President Trump is the most powerful human being in the United States and perhaps the whole world. There was certainly no one else in the room who has more potential to set the tone and path of our country than President Trump. Since a primary role of a pastor is to care for all people, should she have ignored President Trump's importance and need for spiritual guidance?

If anyone directed me to show mercy, I would wonder why they were not also talking to me about showing empathy, kindness, righteousness, hope, peace, love, and grace. But pastors can't say it all in one service or sermon. I don't discount the possibility that the Holy Spirit told Bishop Budde to speak of mercy. In the days of the Old Testament prophets, when the people didn't like what God told the prophets to say, they sometimes stoned the prophets to death. In this controversy, some people are making death threats against Bishop Budde. Some people are also using this controversy to attack women clergy and to point out that they believe women can't really be pastors. I have no time to waste arguing about any of it. I want to go on record: I am 100% in favor of mercy, empathy, kindness, generosity, hope, peace, love, and grace.

We used to live in a country where there were accepted standards of civility, courtesy, kindness, and respect. I miss those times.

To echo the words of **Micah 6:8**, **"God has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lords require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."**

Please pray with me: God of justice and mercy, give us the heart of the prophets as we hold each other accountable to live up to Biblical standards and to follow the example that Jesus gave us. Help us to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. In Jesus' strong name, we pray.

Amen.

*-Pastor Vicki Downing*

# At Grace:

## February Fellowship Hour

Sunday, February 9th, will be the next **Fellowship Hour** at Grace! Please join us in the Wesley Room after Sunday Worship Service to mingle and chat with the members of our community.



Everyone is invited to bring something to share, such as a casserole, salad, or dessert. This is a great time to meet new friends and learn more about your fellow Grace members.

## Soap Ministry

Thanks to everyone who helped make the 111 gallons of soap last month! It was a great success, after a confusing start. Our next soap making will be Tuesday, February 4th. Come join us!



## Methodist Women of Faith

The Women of Faith will be meeting February 17th, at noon. All are welcome for lunch and a lively discussion!

♥ happy ♥  
*Valentine's*  
♥ day ♥

February Scriptures

- Feb. 1 1 Timothy 4:12
- Feb. 2 Ephesians 6:14
- Feb. 3 Isaiah 42:16
- Feb. 4 Psalm 86:15
- Feb. 5 1 Corinthians 13:7
- Feb. 6 Romans 8:10
- Feb. 7 Luke 7:16
- Feb. 8 Psalm 60:12
- Feb. 9 Psalm 143:10
- Feb. 10 Ezekiel 38:23
- Feb. 11 Hebrews 5:14
- Feb. 12 Exodus 30:29
- Feb. 13 1 Corinthians 11:1
- Feb. 14 Leviticus 10:3
- Feb. 15 Psalm 108:13
- Feb. 16 Psalm 119:115
- Feb. 17 Jeremiah 50:4
- Feb. 18 Psalm 18:28
- Feb. 19 Colossians 1:22
- Feb. 20 Proverbs 27:9
- Feb. 21 Psalm 54:2
- Feb. 22 1 John 2:29
- Feb. 23 Romans 8:16
- Feb. 24 Exodus 31:13
- Feb. 25 James 1:27
- Feb. 26 2 Peter 3:11
- Feb. 27 Titus 2:7
- Feb. 28 Galatians 5:5

Prayers Needed:

Phyllis & Larry Garber

John Shough

Janet Blazer

Ron Stevens

Jeann Powell



Shower of Blessings

Recipient for February:

**Juanita Juergens**

**627 Basswood Dr.**

**Springfield OH, 45504**





# February

## February 2025

February 2025						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 11am Celebration of Life for Jack Yeager
2 7pm NA Meet- ing	3 6pm Men's Bible Study	4 12pm Soap Making  7pm NA Meet- ing	5 Choir Practice Cancelled	6	7	8
9 Fellowship Hour after Service  7pm NA Meet- ing	10 6pm Men's Bible Study	11 7pm NA Meet- ing	12 Choir Practice Cancelled	13	14  Happy Valentine's Day!	15
16 7pm NA Meet- ing	17 6pm Men's Bible Study	18 12pm Women of Faith 7pm NA Meet- ing	19 11:45 am Choir Practice	20	21	22
23 7pm NA Meet- ing	24 4:30pm Soup Kitchen 6pm Men's Bible Study	25 7pm NA Meet- ing	26 11:45 am Choir Practice	27	28	



<u>Position</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>February</b>	Greg Hosier
<b>Communion Set-up</b>	<b>Feb 2</b>	Pastor Vicki
<b>Communion Servers</b>	<b>Feb 2</b>	Mary Ahlborn & Mary Olmstead Betty Prosser & Connie Mitchell
<b>Communion Clean-up</b>	<b>Feb 2</b>	Betty Prosser
<b>Greeter - Front Door</b>	<b>Feb 2-9</b> <b>Feb 16-23</b>	Marilyn & Tom Martin Kim Stehle & Mary Ahlborn
<b>Greeter – Sanctuary Door</b>	<b>Feb 2-9</b> <b>Feb 23</b> <b>Feb 23</b>	Debbie & Ken Cooke Donna Myers & Pam Smith Mary Olmstead & Pam Smith
<b>Liturgist</b>	<b>Feb 2-9</b> <b>Feb 16-23</b>	Pattie Mumma Bruce Eckler
<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Feb 2-9</b> <b>Feb 16-23</b>	Donna Layne & Greg Hosier Dave Speas & Larry Campbell

<u>Counters</u>		<u>Special Music</u>	
Feb 3	Marilyn Martin & Pam Smith	Feb 2	Choir
Feb 10	Connie Mitchell & Deb Cooke	Feb 9	Pattie Mumma
Feb 17	Kim Stehle & Jackie Gregory	Feb 16	Choir
Feb 24	Mary Ahlborn & Deb Cooke	Feb 23	Becky Frantz

Rebus Puzzle—

Each picture represents a commonly used phrase . Can you decipher them all?

1 <i>another one thing</i>	2 <b>heart</b>	3 <i>thought But thought</i>
4 <b>LEAST</b>	5 MILL1ON	6 <b>FOOLING</b>
7 <i>historyhistoryhistory</i>	8 <i>musically</i>	9 <b>end</b>
10 <b>BRAIN</b>	11 <b>FILE</b>	12 <b>escape</b>
13 <b>ECNALG</b>	14 <b>LOVE   HATE</b>	15 <b>ALL THINGS</b> <i>all things</i>