

WORDS OF GRACE

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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RICK'S REVELATIONS

Don't Forget to Remember

There are many things we experience in our lives that we would like to live over, if only in our minds. Some of these memories we would like to re-live because they bring us joy that we once felt and we would like to feel again. Other memories we would like to live over again because there are things we would do differently if we had a second chance. There is an old song you might remember, called "The Way We Were", that contained a line that really made you stop and think about your own past, and how it has shaped and directed us. The line in the song said: "What's too painful to remember, we simply choose to forget." I have always struggled with those words because I know that if I were to choose to forget all the painful times and lessons and accidents in my life, I would miss out on the education of my own mistakes that holds the power to help me avoid making those errors again. I believe that there is a difference between recalling our past, and truly remembering. Recalling the facts can be helpful but it is just a collection of facts without any attachment or ownership of the emotion that we felt as we lived it out. Remembering is a way of truly connecting with the passion of the past, and it has the power to restore the hopes and dreams that made tomorrow worth living for. The art of remembering is an essential part of our faith, and it always has been, going all the way back to the roots of our brothers and sisters of ancient Israel, who preserved the Word of God by sharing the memories of their history as God's people together. We have to do more than just recall the events that took place between God and mankind from the beginning, we need to try to remember and revive the feelings that can stir our souls from their slumber. How can we make sure we don't forget to remember? We need to celebrate our connected history and the common blessed future we can share if we will decide to choose that path to preserve and celebrate the

emotion of the monumental moments of our past, both joyful and painful. We need to remember especially the times that are difficult to re-live in our minds and in our hearts because, as much as it hurts to remember those times, they are the events of yesterday that will shape our destiny of tomorrow. Events like the Last Supper of Christ, as Jesus predicted the betrayal and His suffering and death that would result from it. The crucifixion of Christ on the Cross is another difficult image that we might want to choose to forget, especially when we also remember that it was all for our sakes that Jesus suffered and died. Would it be right or wise to choose to ignore the pain of the Cross that Jesus bore because it makes us feel uncomfortable? We could just choose to remember and honor only the good memories, the ones that we would like to live over just for the pure joy of them, but to skip over the difficult memories would be to all but erase the most powerful and formative moments of our faith in Christ. Jesus gave his life for every sin of Mankind, and we need to remember that labor of Divine Love that he willingly completed to completely redeem us from all sin. Pearl Harbor, September 11th, the Holocaust, all of the wars... to end all wars, all of these bring back photographic memories that we might want to forget forever. But we need to remember them. We need to pause in reverence to the selfless sacrifices that were made to defend our freedom. When we gather together to worship our Lord and Savior, and especially when we share Holy Communion together, we need to allow our hearts to become aligned with our faith, so that we will become emotionally involved in our remembrance of Jesus Christ and His acts of Love that have set us free indeed. All that Jesus suffered for our sake may be painful to remember sometimes, but it would be foolish to forget.

Pastor Rick

If you have anything to put in the monthly newsletter please contact us via email at graceumcpc@verizon.net or call 659-3718.

Please remember on the fifth Sunday of the month a special offering will be taken up for the Florida United Methodist Children's Home.



The Flower Donation Sign-up Sheet is in the foyer. The cost to buy a pair of flower arrangements for the altar is fifteen dollars for the two altar bouquets or twenty-five dollars for the one large one. **Please help support this ministry.**

PRAYER LIST: If you have a request to add a person's name to the Prayer Chain please contact: **PASTOR RICK PHILLIPS** 813-503-7933 (Cell or e-mail-graceumcpc@verizon.net)



The Christian Fellowship Brunch will be held Friday, September 25th, at 11:30 A.M. restrictions permitting. The location will be decided upon and announced as soon as determined. Everyone is Welcome!

WEDNESDAYS

Bible Study is at 10:00 a.m. All are Welcome!



CHURCH SERVICES

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH

10:00 A.M. Worship Service
HOLY COMMUNION

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH

10:00 A.M. Worship Service
Potluck Luncheon

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH

10:00 A.M. Worship Service

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH

10:00 A.M. Worship Service

(LIVE Services require social distancing guidelines to be followed by all)

SEPTEMBER IMPORTANT DATES

- 4 th - Newspaper Carrier Day
- 6 th - Communion Sunday
- 7 th - Labor Day
- 8 th- International Literacy Day
- 11th - 9/11 Remembrance Day
- 13 th - Potluck Sunday
- 13 th - Grandparents Day
- 13th - National Pet Memorial Day
- 15th - POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 16th - Mexican Independence Day
- 17th - Citizenship Day
- 20th - Wife Appreciation Day
- 21st - International Peace Day
- 22nd - Autumn Equinox - Fall Begins
- 25th - Native American Day
- 26th - National Hunting & Fishing Day
- 28th - National Good Neighbor Day

Money Matters -JULY 2020

Beginning Balance -	\$ 32,975.34
Expenses -	\$ 3,507.55
Income -	\$ 2,722.00
Ending Balance -	\$ 32,189.79

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- Bob O'dette 4th
- Nelda Johnson 13th
- Marianne Carpenter 30th

Have a fun-filled day and a blessed year!

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Raymond and Carol Wright
September 18th
Congratulations!

The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread. ~Mother Teresa

God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus. - Max Lucado

"You can see God from anywhere if your mind is set to love and obey Him" - A.W. Toze



NEXT CHURCH POT LUCK LUNCHEON

WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH DEPENDENT UPON CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON GATHERINGS. COME SHARE IN THE FELLOWSHIP AND FOOD DIRECTLY AFTER THE SERVICE! INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS AS WE COME TOGETHER IN CHRIST! ALL ARE WELCOME!

The Three Trees

- Author Unknown

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up. The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!"

The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain. The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his ax, the first tree fell. "Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest, I shall hold wonderful treasure!" The first tree said. The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his ax, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me," he muttered. With a swoop of his ax, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feedbox for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with saw dust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail to an ocean, or even a river. Instead she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened?" The once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God..." Many, many days and night passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the

feedbox. "I wish I could make a cradle for him." her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and the sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful." she said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world. One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through with the wind and the rain. The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew she was carrying the king of heaven and earth. One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world. The next time you feel down because you didn't get what you want, sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give you.

Rain

-Brenda Hunter

One rainy afternoon I was driving along one of the main streets of town, taking those extra precautions necessary when the roads are wet and slick. Suddenly, my son, Matthew, spoke up from his relaxed position in his seat. "Mom, I'm thinking of something."

This announcement usually meant he had been pondering some fact for a while, and was now ready to expound all that his six-year-old mind had discovered. I was eager to hear. "What are you thinking?" I asked.

"The rain!," he began, "is like sin, and the windshield wipers are like God wiping our sins away."

After the chill bumps raced up my arms I was able to respond. "That's really good, Matthew."

Then my curiosity broke in. How far would this little boy take this revelation? So I asked... "Do you notice how the rain keeps on coming? What does that tell you?"

Matthew didn't hesitate one moment with his answer: "We keep on sinning, and God just keeps on forgiving us." I will always remember this whenever I turn my wipers on. In order to see the rainbow, you must first endure some rain. We must continually come to the Lord and seek His forgiveness.

REMINDER

Newsletter items need to be to Pastor Rick by SEPTEMBER 22, for the OCTOBER Newsletter. Call 813-659-3718 or e-mail - graceumcpc@verizon.net

I CAN, YOU CAN

On the First Sunday of the month, Communion Sunday, please bring a can or non-perishable food item to be donated to the local Food Bank of Plant City. Put it in the basket as you enter the church . Thank you for caring!

REMINDERS

Just a reminder we recycle aluminum soda cans at the church. Please rinse them and bring them to the church. The money raised by this endeavor is given to the Children's Home. This is another thing we can do to help out.

Also Soda tabs are being collected by John Houck for a Mission Project.

Have you noticed the Brown Box on your left when you enter the Sanctuary?

This is there for your spare change.

All this money goes to the Children's Home.

God Bless You and thank you!

New Building Fund

We have made many improvements over the last few years to our aging church property, we were able to pay for them in full, thanks to your extravagant generosity! We do have other repair projects that will need to be addressed and if you would like to support those efforts you can make a donation to our new Building Fund. God Bless You!

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Thanks to All WATCH OUT ... IT'S SURPRISE BAPTISM DAY 07-14-2005

Local Ministry Opportunities

We are currently helping our local food bank of Plant City on Alsobrook street on one Tuesday of each month from 9-11 am. We are helping them sort and date the various food donations to help them be able to distribute the food in a timely manner. Anyone is welcome to join us in this cooperative ministry effort that helps us fulfill the call of Jesus to feed the hungry in His name. We will be helping them again Tuesday, **SEPTEMBER 8TH.**

Charge Conference 2020 -

Our District is requiring that all Charge Conferences will be held virtually instead of in person this year due to the Covid virus. The conference will be held online through the "Zoom" application, and anyone interested in joining the Zoom conference must register with the church to be included. Our virtual conference will take place on October 11th at 1:30 PM. Please let pastor Rick know if you would like to take part and we will make the necessary arrangements.

Thank you for your support! I just want to take a moment to thank all of you once again for your support to the church in these challenging times. Your generosity in getting your tithes and offerings to us by mail or other means has been inspiring and heartwarming. Please let us know if any of you are in need of any kind of help from the church. I want you to know that I am here for you, and praying for you every day, and may God bless you greatly for your faithfulness! - ***Pastor Rick***

Church Re-Opening - We have resumed our 10 am Sunday Worship Services in person, and it is great to be able to meet and pray and worship together again! We will continue to meet and to observe any of the guidelines for gathering as a group to worship together that may be in place. We will continue to offer an on-line worship service for those who may not feel ready to return to our in-person style of worship. Please check the website, our face book page or call or e-mail us for the most up to date information on the continuing phases of our church re-opening.

