

# GRACE NOTES

VOL. 30 No. 9

SEPTEMBER 2021



## Worship and Preaching schedule

**10:00 a.m. virtually via Facebook or YouTube**

September 5 - Rev. Amy McCullough  
September 12 - Rev. Amy McCullough  
September 19 - Pastor Levon Sutton  
September 26 - Rev. Amy McCullough



## The Children's Ministry Virtual Sunday School **WELCOME BACK!**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 - 9:00 AM**

Join us as we celebrate God's love for us and our world.  
We share Good News! Sing songs! Stories! Arts & Crafts!  
Sign language, games and more!

Teachers will share the link for Zoom Sunday School via e-mail as well as being posted in all GUMC communications. If you need assistance with Zoom, or if you are new to our Sunday School program and would like to register, please contact the church office - 410-433-6650 ext. 111, or e-mail [Carolyn@graceunitedmethodist.org](mailto:Carolyn@graceunitedmethodist.org). The Children's Ministry Director will be more than happy to assist you.

+ + +

We are in need of teachers for children, preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, please contact Carolyn Young at [carolyn@graceunitedmethodist.org](mailto:carolyn@graceunitedmethodist.org) for more information.

## Music at Grace Concert Series TWO PIANO/FOUR HAND PIANO CONCERT

**Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.**

presented by artists Kathryn Locke and Chris Schroeder

Edvard Grieg's *Romanze*

Darius Milhaud's *Scaramouche*

Johannes Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*

This concert will be live streamed. We hope that individuals will be able to attend in person but that will depend upon any new restrictions related to the pandemic. Watch E-Notes or check our website for updates. Also watch for a mailed concert brochure in early September with more details regarding the other programs planned for this year's Concert Series.

We look forward to welcoming you back to Grace Church for live music!





## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

on the front lawn

**Pumpkins - Food - Fellowship**

**Moon Bounce**

**Bring the family!**

If you can help with set-up/clean-up, contact

Kelly Jackson: [klynn95@yahoo.com](mailto:klynn95@yahoo.com)

410-746-0056

## WITHIN THE FAMILY AT GRACE

### DEATH

Carol J. (Mrs. William E.) Polk

July 14, 2021

### BAPTISMS

Helen Louise ("Nell") Williams and  
Harrison McIntosh Williams

children of Ann and Mac Williams

August 1, 2021

The Williams family writes to the Grace community:  
"It was a beautiful ceremony and we can't wait to watch  
and nurture our children as they grow in faith and love."

### BIRTH

Aubree Louise Cook

Parents: Matthew and Amanda Cook

Grandparents: Ken and Juliana Eicher Cook

Great grandfather: Bruce Eicher

August 9, 2021

\* \* \*

Dear Grace friends and family,

On behalf of my family, I am writing to express my gratitude for all of your prayers and warm wishes for my mother, Judy Coates. I am so thrilled to report that she is doing very well and has moved from treatment for her cancer to the maintenance phase. Thank you, Grace friends!

All the best,  
Amy Madsen

## SPECIAL GIFTS

We acknowledge with gratitude the following  
special gifts

in memory of Carol Polk by

Kitty Allen

Jacquelyn Meadors

Janet Ander

in memory of Lee Starkey by

Janet Ander



The Hospitality Committee offers a ministry of love, compassion, and presence to members of the Grace Community during times of life transitions. This summer the committee has helped to host the farewell reception for Pastor Dane and Megan Wood and the welcome reception for Pastor Levon Sutton and his family. The committee plays an important role during funerals hosting a reception following the service if requested by the family.

The committee is chaired by Vicki Saxon and has a strong core team. They are seeking additional volunteers to join them in the set-up, serving and clean-up of these occasional events.

This is a ministry of service, and an especially tender one as we create space for connection and community. If you would be willing to serve on the Hospitality team, please reach out to Vicki Saxon ([vsaxon@comcast.net](mailto:vsaxon@comcast.net)) directly or speak with one of the pastors.



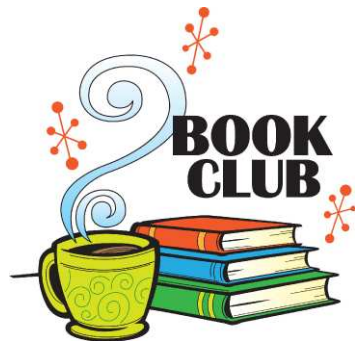


*Congratulations  
to those of the Grace  
Church family  
celebrating birthdays  
in September:*

- 1 Kemp Heath, Steve Mullan, Joyce O'Dwyer
- 2 Cory Farrugia, Patrick Onley
- 3 Jack Grandsire, Tyler Wellener
- 4 Kimberly Stansbury
- 5 Scott Bayne, Virginia Green, John Harris, Cath LaCosta, Bradley Reppert
- 7 Avery Paul, Ann Kaiser Stearns
- 8 Gail Roche
- 9 Devan Muhly, Kathleen Phelps, Nick Stetz, Kacey Shannon Thomas
- 10 Alverta Conyers, Stephen Frank, Jr., Ray Howington, Susan Wallace
- 15 Kendall Hayes
- 16 Nathan Ander, Howard Francis, Cyndi Greenberg, Lawrence Griffith, Paul Redline
- 17 Laura Gamble, Hawon Lee, Sharon McIntire, Ben Starkey, Tyler Wasylak
- 18 Elizabeth Bissett, Rebecca Guth
- 19 John Casey
- 20 Melayn Dorfler
- 21 Trey Heath III, Jonathan Perry
- 22 Maria Berzins, Virginia Starkey-Stephen, Gordon Stetz, Ethan Weidner
- 23 Terry Kneip
- 24 John G. Danz, Jr.
- 25 Jennifer Covington, Ilva Doggett, Butch Sharpe
- 27 Sean Harris, Irene Moses, Betty Jean Tyler, Josh White
- 28 Edith Scouten
- 29 Susan Clark, Michael Madsen, Greg Wasylak
- 30 Diane Cole, Heather Grandsire, Diane B. Topper

## Grace Book Club

The book club selection for our September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting is *The Last Flight: A Novel* by Julie Clark. We will be meeting in the Parlor at 7:00 p.m. and new readers are always welcome. Contact Maureen Danz with any questions: [maur.danz@verizon.net](mailto:maur.danz@verizon.net)



### Proposed Facility Renovation Plan

There will be one last discussion session regarding the upcoming renovations on

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**

**in-person at 11:15 a.m.**

following worship

Please sign up online in E-Notes or by calling the church office: 410-433-6650.



Altar Flowers

#### FOR SEPTEMBER

The flowers on the altar are given to the Glory of God and...

- September 5 in loving memory of Milton Volker on his birthday by his wife Pat; and Ross Pierpont by his daughter Christine P. von Klencke
- September 12 in loving memory of Eleanor Crocker on the anniversary of her birth by her cousin Tish Swam; and Ruth Ann Beachler by Lynn and children
- September 19 in loving memory of their parents, Mr. & Mrs. M. Nelson Bond, Jr. and grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Scott by Kitty Allen and Barbara Bond; and Rev. Mark Boling by his wife Francette
- September 26 in loving memory of "Ike" Simmons by Glenn and Kittie Simmons

#### LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER

- October 3 Debby Jencks and Diane Topper
- October 10 Tom Lynn and Sara Nichols
- October 17 Jeaneen Wingate and Claire Greenhouse
- October 24 Janet Ander (1) and Claire Greenhouse
- October 31 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact Claire Greenhouse if you are interested in remembering someone by sponsoring an altar flower arrangement or with any changes to the above orders: 410-337-7404.

# Seeing (Believing) the Possible in the Face of the Impossible — John 6:1-21

Sermon preached by Pastor Levon Sutton on July 11, 2021



There is a story about a widow and her eight children. After the father and primary breadwinner died several years prior, the family was forced to sell much of the property owned by the family to several people in the small town they lived in. This incident happened during a time and a period in our society when women (especially a widow) were considered incapable of owning a significant amount of land. In years past, this land served as the primary source of food and security for the family. Each year, the four sons of the household would attend to the farm the family managed on the property. The daughters too would care for the crops. At the time of harvest, the family's farm would yield an abundance of vegetables and grains which the family was able to use as their source of food and income as neighbors and members from the surrounding area would buy food for their respective household. This family was not a wealthy family. In fact, this farm and the small 2 room home they resided in were the only real

possession the family was able to claim ownership. But all of this changed when the patriarch took ill and eventually died. This devastated the family. The sons, three of the four were teenagers at the time, now faced the reality of leaving their education behind to find work to support the family. The daughters too each now required to not only increase their responsibilities of maintaining the home, were also obligated to care for their youngest male sibling as well as support a grief-stricken mother. This family had to adjust their already modest lifestyle even more as their only objective was survival.

Eventually, the mother was able to find work outside of the home. She became a housekeeper for several wealthy individuals who too owned a large amount of land. Both with crop yielding farms and livestock. In fact, one of the homes the mother attended to was for a family whom the mother was forced to sell a significant plot of her family's land to just to avoid losing their two-room home.

If you are like me, you may be thinking: "What an unfortunate turn of events. What a tragedy. Truly, this was not only a great form of injustice, but it was also a demonstration of the inequity many people in this country have faced for many years. This story is the story of many families and many households who through no fault of their own are subject to a set of unfortunate circumstances that result in some form of displacement.

This mother, trekking through what used to be an extension of her property, now the possession of her employer — maintained her dignity as she needed this job to earn enough to provide for her family. But her income was not enough by today's standard of living. Nor was it sufficient even for the times she was living in. Talk about a case of adding insult to injury.

Still this mother did what she had to do — to survive. She kept house for another family. She cared for the family's young children, she performed domestic duties around the home. She prepared the meals for this family while her own family went hungry, washed the clothes of others and then after working using 10-12 hours each day, she would go home with not even enough money to buy food to support her own hungry children.

On several occasions, the mother would ask, rather beg the woman of the household she attended to for a portion of food from the farm. Keep in mind, a portion of the land was once the possession of this widowed mother and her family. But now it belonged to her employer. And the widow asked the woman of the home for food. The woman often scoffed at the widow's request, even demanded the widow pay for whatever she took. And out of desperation, the widow paid for whatever she was allowed to take from the farm. Usually, it was never enough and always cost her the entire portion of her daily earned wages.

The mother would trek back home to her family with whatever she could buy from her employer in tow — a few ears of corn, grains for meal, snap peas, and a portion of salt pork. This was usually all she could afford, and all her employer would allow before being forced to borrow on credit.

At home, the widow would prepare a meal for her family with items she acquired. It was never enough it seemed, but no one complained. They all were grateful both for the sacrifice their mother had made and for the fact that they were still able to remain together under one roof — even if their situation were less than what we would deem tolerable or humane. You would not know from the widow's smile, the pain she carried. Late at night when the children were sleeping you would hear the weeping from the mother. All you ever really saw was her determination not to allow her circumstances dictate her faithfulness. Faithfulness to her family. Faithfulness to her God and true source of strength.

*Continued on next page*

## SERMON, continued

This widow not only saw, but she constantly believed in the possible in the face of the impossible.

Some of you may be wondering what significance this story has within the context of our text on this morning. How do the two intersect?

Here in the 6th chapter of the gospel of John, the writer presents to us two incredibly momentous events in the public ministry of our Lord: The feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water. I would offer to you that here in this text, we have John demonstrating again that Jesus is both Messiah and Son of God. When we look at the feeding of the 5,000, John's recording of this miracle emphasized its strategic importance in two ways:

1. it demonstrates the creative power of Christ more clearly than any other miracle, and
2. it supports John's purposes of demonstrating the deity of Jesus Christ while also serving to set the stage for Jesus' discourse on the "bread of life" in the verses that follow. Interestingly, if we take the earlier creative miracle of Jesus at the wedding of Cana where our Lord turns water into wine and the feeding of the 5,000 and the multiplying of bread — we see in them elements of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion.

Now the stage for the feeding of the 5,000 is set on account of the attention that Jesus receives on account of the signs he performed. In fact, the crowds were drawn to him — not because they believed in him but out of curiosity concerning the miracles Jesus performed. The attention Jesus receives and the influx of people who are drawn to him is like what we call in our current time as a viral event. Imagine if YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram was around during Jesus' time. And while all this attention may be overwhelming for some, the compassion Jesus has for the people is what persuades him to heal the sick and feed them.

Speaking of feeding, notice the dialogue Jesus has with his disciples: Jesus, lifting His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where do you suppose we are to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" Here Jesus is asking in a real sense how are the disciples to experience what is possible in the kingdom of God in the face of what appears by all human accounts to be impossible?

Again, we are talking about 5,000 people. I would argue the 5,000 is merely the number of men that had gathered. Surely there were women and children among the crowd that came as well. By all accounts, it is conceivable that the actual number gathered exceeded 10 maybe even 20 thousand men, women, and children. And here Jesus is asking where can we find enough bread to feed this multitude of people? This question that Jesus poses is of course a test. But their response:

First Philip offers two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little. In first century, Judea, one denarius was the equivalent of a day's pay for a common laborer. 200 denarii would have been 6-8 month's wages. Still, the crowd was so large that feeding them would have been an impossible undertaking. But Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter suggests "Hey" there is a young person here with 5 barley loaves and two fish, what are these for so many people?

Here are two answers begging the question: How can we see the possible in the face of what is clearly impossible?

This is often the question we ask when we encounter challenging circumstances: How can we attend to the needs of others when we find ourselves strapped and operating from limited resources?

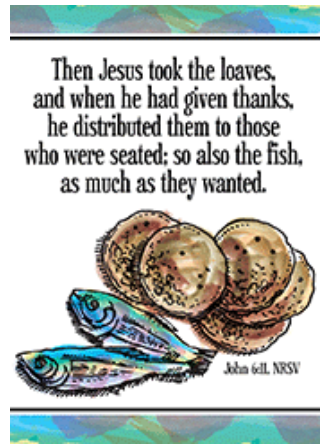
How can we be filled when there is little to begin with and more mouths to feed than food to distribute?

How can we as the body of Christ care for and provide to the least and the left out when our resources are stretched already beyond measure? In other words, is there truly enough to go around? To provide for everyone. How do we see the possible when facing the impossible?

Despite this impossible dilemma, we ask our Lord's response to and actions amid to what appears impossible but in the kingdom of God is simply a mere picnic. Jesus instructs the people to sit on the hillside, and Jesus then took the loaves and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated and the same with the fish. All were not only fed but there were leftovers by those who had eaten.

No to the average person, the response to this miracle is "that's just plain impossible." But Jesus is challenging both his disciples as well as each of us — see the possibility when you look beyond what you deem to be impossible. For nothing is impossible with God.

Many of us have experienced first-hand how with the help and trust in the Lord we are able to accomplish



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## SERMON, continued

impossible. We have seen scientists and engineers develop crafts that propel out into space. Just this past week, many witnessed both the oldest woman ever to fly out into outer space as well as the youngest individual. 2020 continues to remind us of the possibilities available in what has been an exceedingly difficult and impossible obstacle to overcome due to the pandemic.

Community organizations such as **Baltimoreans United In Leadership Development** (or BUILD) reported they were able to deliver over 83,000 meals to families during the height of the COVID. Many faith and civic communities in our region and throughout our nation have banded together to provide support and resources to ensure everyone has an opportunity and a seat at the table. All because they saw and believed what appeared to be impossible is possible through our faith. Through our commitment to one another. Trust that at the heart of all that we can accomplish are the power and provisions available through Christ our Lord.

The feeding of the 5,000 is a reminder for us that we can accomplish much more in community than we can in isolation. It requires seeing and believing the possible in the face of the impossible.

This, beloved, is the process of faith. The faith experience. Often, we find ourselves overwhelmed with the task that we give up just before we experience the miracle of Christ's activity in our lives. We consider our present circumstances, or we belittle our available resources to the point we never release them to God. Instead, we hang onto them because we feel they are all we have. Faced with our sense of inadequacy, we refuse to let go. Or we insist God perform the task clearly the Lord is capable of performing without our participation.

My prayer for each of us is that we learn to release what we have — our resources to God, trusting that God can multiply what we may be called to subtract from our possession. Multiplication by subtraction. I believe the more we can give, the more God can and will provide increase both in our lives and in the lives of those we are called to serve.

The widow lost what for many of us may appear to be everything. She lost her land and the livelihood that came along with it. She lost her husband and primary breadwinner and provider. Some may even argue that she lost a part of her dignity as she was forced to beg it seems for even a little to provide for her family. The blessing and lesson for us is that despite what may appear to us to be her lost, she gained so much more through her faith in Christ. Her children all grew up and became contributing individuals in society. She was even able to migrate from the deep south to the north - which brought with it an abundance of opportunities for her family. And today, though she has transitioned from life to eternity now some 3 decades ago, her legacy continues to thrive even more because she saw and believed in the possible even when her situation was impossible.

You may be asking yourself: Pastor, please share with me the source of this fact. I would offer that you look no further than me.

I invite you to pray with me:

*God of abundance, too often we look at our situation and determine that what we are called to do is impossible. We refuse to consider your provisions and block you by our refusal to consider your activity in and through our lives. How many ministries and missional opportunities do we miss on account of our unwillingness to see your possibilities amid what we have already declared to be impossible. Help us to see your presence. Help us to see your activity. Strengthen us to recognize your abundance even in the face of our lack. Help us to give over what we have to your able hands such that through our subtraction, we can see and participate in your ability to multiply and increase for your kingdom's sake. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

## Grace is a caring church

We invite members to share their times of sickness or other situations when a pastoral visit or phone call would be helpful. Your privacy will be respected, and all information you share will be held in confidence. Grace's appointed pastors, along with Jack Danz, our Lay Minister, are available for a visit, a phone call, and a caring presence. A message to the church office to make us aware of your needs will enable us to respond to you and your loved ones as part of Grace's caring ministry.

Grace United Methodist Church  
5407 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21210-2024

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This issue mailed August 23, 2021  
PLEASE RUSH

## In-person learning at Grace Preschool

(from *Baltimore Fishbowl*)

We learned a lot from being open during the Pandemic.

We learned that being outdoors is magical and we should have been outdoors for a majority of the day before anyone knew of COVID-19. We learned or maybe remembered that social-emotional learning is really at the heart of preschool.

More than anything, we learned that life lessons and skills you learn in preschool really do shape the person you become. Preschool is a special place, and at Grace, we respect young children, we embrace and praise their strengths, and we delight in building the confidence of our future leaders.

Are you new to Baltimore? Are you concerned that there will be academic gaps among early childhood students in school this year because of the Pandemic that teachers will not be able to address? Are you still looking for a dynamic, in-person, hands-on program for your little one? Most of our classes are full, but we have a few open spaces in our Pre-Kindergarten and First Grade classes! Grace is a perfect preschool to gain independence and become a confident little learner before jumping into the deep end of elementary school.

Our school is conveniently nestled at the corner of Charles Street and Northern Parkway in the Roland Park/Homeland area, and we serve families from all over the Baltimore area. We promise to provide small class sizes, a safe and happy environment, and an atmosphere that fosters the magic of childhood.

At Grace Preschool, we believe in teaching the whole child. We believe that social-emotional learning is just as important as literacy and mathematical skills. Our main goal is to connect with students and help them make meaningful connections with each other and the world around them.

Our teachers are highly qualified, dynamic leaders who not only love teaching, they love children. Over the last year, we were fully open, and were able to keep the love of learning alive. With ample outdoor play space and lots of creativity, we made the magic happen.

Our school has classes for students ranging from two-year-olds to first grade and has flexible schedules for the differing needs of area families. Connect with us at:

**<https://www.gracepreschoolbaltimore.com/> or call 410-532-2235.**