



The Messenger

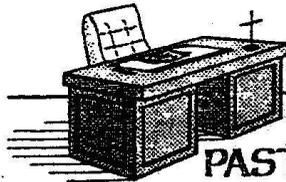
Grace United Methodist Church

16 Hillcrest Drive

Ravena, NY 12143-1409

Rev. Judith Johnson-Siebold, Ph.D.
Pastor

Rev. William F. Rogers, S.T.M.
Pastor Emeritus



**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**

July 2012

Dear Friends,

It was in math class that I first learned about grace. Grace is a theological term for unearned love and forgiveness, so that's not really what it was called in math. Instead, the teacher called it trial and error. She made it seem like a game.

I had been struggling mightily with the seemingly impossible task of multiplying three digit numbers by a single digit. I had the right idea; I had learned how to perform the operations; I just kept making errors in computation as I doggedly attacked each problem. When corrected homework papers were passed back, I would determinedly erase each wrong answer and try to get it right, erasing so often and with such vigor that holes would appear in the paper.

"Look!" my teacher said one day after watching my errors pile up. Does it make sense that 156 multiplied by 2 would be 212? Could that be possible?" I had never asked that question; I had only followed the rules and felt irritated that my obedience was not resulting in the correct answer. I had to admit that when she put it that way it did not make sense.

"Let's do some guessing" she said. "Let's guess how much these two numbers would be. What would make sense? 156 is only a little over 150. Around how much do you think twice that might be?"

I was amazed. My teacher was asking me to guess! Coming from a strict family where I always had to be right, I could not believe that my math teacher was encouraging me to be almost-right. In my experience close enough was not good enough.

But there was such freedom, such joy, such fun in thinking about the meaning of the questions instead of blindly performing computations solely to get the right answer.

I think about that teacher whenever I find that just following the rules isn't resulting in the joy for which I had hoped. There's more to our faith journeys than simply having the right answers. Our God encourages us to grow by trial and error, and the only thing that makes that possible is knowing that we will not be punished for wrong answers, but instead we will be asked to think about the meaning of the events in our lives. Our faith teaches us that God is there not to punish us but to help us grow. Grace is the freedom to grow even at the cost of making mistakes.

Nature is growing all around us. (Has the grass ever grown so fast before?!) Every plant is stretching and reaching and expanding, soaking up the rain and the sun, piling cell upon cell. We were designed to do the same.

May this summer be a time of real growth for you and for me.

Faithfully,

Pastor Judi





Grace UMC invites all children to get ready to dive into fun at Operation Overboard: Dare to Go Deep With God Vacation Bible School. Explore and experience God's underwater universe at VBS! The fun begins July 23rd and ends July 27th from 6-8:30pm (includes supper) at Grace UMC, 16 Hillcrest Drive, Ravena, NY 12143.

The adventures include regular Deep Sea Voyages into Bible fun and creative crafts, hand-on mission work, water science, and great music. To be a part of all the excitement at Operation Overboard: Dare to Go Deep With God, call Pastor Judi at 518-756-6688.

BARGAIN SHED & BOOK NOOK

Ravena Garage Sale Day on June 2nd started out as a rainy, dreary morning, but the Bargain Shed & Book Nook both did incredibly well. There was a

steady stream of customers in spite of the weather. Thank you to all who helped in any way – before, during and after.

Donations to the Bargain Shed have been on the light side, so please remember us when you are considering what to do with your excess clothing, jewelry, household items, linens, knick knacks, small furniture pieces and other miscellaneous items. (We can't accept tv's or computers.) **Thanks so much!!!!**

As of June 17th, sales for the Bargain Shed totaled **\$2,258** and for the Book Nook...**\$4,871**. Excellent job everyone!! Donations are always gratefully accepted.

JULY'S CHICKEN BBQ FUNDRAISER

(The proceeds of the June BBQ weren't available at the printing of this edition of *The Messenger*.)

The next BBQ with Frese's Catering is July 19th at the same location...the old Crossroads Ford site from 4:30pm until sold out. Contact Ginny Pearson for advance tickets. All ticket prices are \$10.



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Best wishes go out to all those who will be celebrating in the month of July:

- 3 Joshua Dedrick
- 3 Janet Mantynen
- 3 Quaniesha Porterfield
- 5 Alan Baumbach
- 5 Jean Lyons
- 7 Christine Frazee
- 10 Mike Ellis
- 10 Mark Gordon
- 12 Lidia Ruso
- 13 Jan Bradshaw
- 14 Ken & Cindy Bliss
- 14 John & Pam Ginder
- 14 Ethan Roe
- 14 June Baumbach
- 16 Matthew Ginder
- 22 Mike Mattick
- 25 Leland Case
- 26 Karen Black
- 27 Adam & Donna Newton
- 29 Trey Coryell



FUN DECIPLESHIP

We often imagine Jesus straight-faced because he came to do such serious work. Yet he also enjoyed fun times. One was the wedding celebration at Cana, which had wine in abundance. When it ran out, Jesus miraculously produced more (see John 2:1-11).

Jesus also welcomed children (see Matthew 19:13-15). Picture Jesus lifting an infant into the air or tickling a giggling youngster while another child, grinning, climbs on his back. Because summer allows more time for fun and play, use it to teach the kids in your life — and to remind yourself — that Jesus came in love so our “joy may be complete” (John 15:11). Laughing, playing, having fun, relaxing and enjoying life are all part of living as faithful disciples.

BAPTISM

Congratulations to Margarite Kennedy and Preston Lambert on the baptism of their daughter Emma Louise Lambert. God’s blessings to Emma!





A Special Friend

A little birdie (her niece) tells us that Pat Hamilton will be 96 on July 24, 2010. If you'd like to send good wishes her way, Pat's address is:

Pat Hamilton
Harkness Pavilion, Apt. 13
Woodlawn Commons
156 Lawrence Street
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

THE LOCAL FOOD PANTRY STILL NEEDS YOU

Grace UMC is still collecting food donations for the Food Pantry located at St. Patrick's Church in Ravena.

Please remember the hungry when doing your weekly shopping. At a loss as to what is needed? There is a handy list just outside the church office with plenty of ideas for the needy.

SUNDAY SCHOOL & CHOIRS WRAP IT UP FOR THE SUMMER

Choir Sunday 2012 was a delightful mix of the Nightingales Children's Choir and the Senior Choir.

The Nightingales choir includes Juliann Banahan, Elizabeth & Will Robertson, Ginny Frazee, Sydney Young, Andrew Ginder, Chloe Canham, and Paddy & Maddy McTigue.

They sang such songs as "The Gospel Train's a Comin'," "Kum Ba Yah" (accompanied by Juliann Banahan on the clarinet), and "Oh How He Loves You and Me," as well as "Stand Up and Be Glad You're a Christian" and "Get On Board Little Children." Paige Roller sang "How Can I Keep From Singing." Christine Frazee, Director, presented cards to each of the children and to Sharon Phillips, Guitarist. They are to be commended for their work with the children.

The Senior Choir included Adrienne Seymour, Sue Healy, Grace & Gwenn Buckley-Crist, Liz & Brianna Spence, Jay Ingraham, Mark Gordon, Rodger Coryell, Ken Bliss, Ray Bradshaw, and George June.

The choir delivered a beautiful rendition of “Hallelujah” by Leonard Cohen, expertly done. “Order My Steps” was another outstanding piece, passionately delivered in wonderful harmony. Also sung were “We Shall Overcome”, and “Let All the World Rejoice.”

Music Director Lisa D'arcangelis was thanked for her work with the choir who presented her with a gift.



FINDING YOUR WAY

Need directions? These days, online map services can tell you how to get to just about any destination. Yet even these sites make no guarantees. Disclaimers absolve them of responsibility if the directions run awry. “These directions are for

planning purposes only,” one site warns. “You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly.”

Fortunately, the Bible has no such disclaimers. God’s Word always gets us where we need to go. In fact, when the unexpected happens, that’s when Scripture is at its best!

CROP WALK SUCCESS

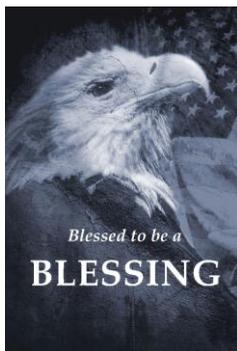
The grand total for the Ravenna Crop Walk was \$4,454.11. Eight churches participated. Grace UMC raised \$1,193! Thank you to the walkers and all who donated. You did an outstanding job, and due to your generosity, area food pantries will be receiving \$1,112. Thanks again for supporting this important outreach. Thank you to Jan Bradshaw for leading us in the endeavor.

FALL FAIR PLANNING

September may seem far away, but it will be here before we know it, bringing with it our 47th Annual Fall Fair on Saturday, September 29th, under the direction of Ken Bliss.

Wonderful new activities and displays will be offered, as well as those we have come to count on, like the Sweet Shop, Fall Produce, the Craft Room, and the Cafe serving Breakfast and Lunch.

This year's event will have a printed program, and local businesses will be encouraged to purchase advertising space at the rate of \$25.00 to have their business card reproduced in the program.



God promised Abram, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you ... so that you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:2, NRSV). Especially on the Fourth of July, we in the United States remember that God has blessed us as a nation, too. That isn’t to say everyone here has an equal share of resources. Our government isn’t perfect, and our land

isn’t necessarily more beautiful than any other place on earth. It doesn’t mean we alone model “liberty and justice for all” — or that we do so flawlessly.

Rather, God’s promise to Abram and us means we aren’t to hoard our blessings. We are to share our wealth generously, cultivate liberty and justice, and pass on to the world the gifts we enjoy in this land.



WHEN YOUR DUCKS AREN'T IN A ROW

On the surface, people, like ducks, can seem to glide effortlessly through life. We’re often the picture of calm, in perfect control. But underneath, we may be paddling like mad to keep up a façade — or just to keep up.

Although we like to look and feel as if we have it all together, the truth is we often don’t. Think how much better we’d feel if we could just admit our weaknesses and doubts. Think how much more genuine our churches would be if we didn’t have to pretend we’re okay when we’re actually struggling.

Surely, God wants the pretense to stop. Set an example for friends and fellow worshipers by ending the mad paddling, embracing honesty and helping one another.

COMFORTING WORD

A florist loved preparing bouquets for weddings, birthdays and joyful occasions. But he dreaded funerals, never sure what to say to grieving families. Over time, the florist learned from his assistant, who routinely stopped her work, brought tissues and sat down with survivors. Few, if any, words were exchanged, but *the* Word — of God — was present. Thank-yous,

hugs and even smiles often followed the tears.

Like the florist, many caring Christians struggle with offering sympathy. We may ramble meaninglessly or unintentionally say something hurtful. Comments such as “It was God’s will” or “God needed her in heaven” might upset a mourner who likely thinks, “But I need her here!”

Instead, simply say, “I’m sorry” or “You’re not alone.” Or just be present and let God’s Word offer comfort.





KNOW THE WAY

Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (John 14:5, NIV).

Directions: To read Jesus' reply, shade in the letters that contain an asterisk (*) and write them in order on the blanks below.

u.n.s.w.e.r.e.i.a.m.h.w.a.
y.a.n.t.l.r.u.t.c.h.l.f.i.v.e.
n.o.o.n.a.e.c.s.o.x.m.e.s.
f.a.z.t.h.e.r.r.o.u.c.d.g.h.
p.u.m.r.x.e.s.t.j.v.g.o.h.n.

Jes ___ ans _____ d, " ___ the ___
___ d the _____ and the _____.
_____ to the
_____ except th _____."

_____ 14:6, NIV

Answer: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6, NIV

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

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 from Sunday's Service sermon title and hymns to meetings and special events.

OR VISIT US ON THE WEB:

www.graceumcravena.org



Deadline for articles for the **August** issue of *The Messenger* is **July 22nd**. Please send or e-mail articles to Barb Bullock at:

bbullock812@gmail.com

or

fax to: **731-8994**