



GRACE GAZETTE

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IUKA, MISSISSIPPI

WHEN THE CHURCH SHOWS UP

If the last couple of months have reminded us of anything, it's this: church isn't just something we attend. It's something we live.

When the ice storm hit our community, life got hard quickly for a lot of people. Power outages, burst pipes, dangerous roads, and homes that were suddenly cold and unsafe created real stress for families across Tishomingo County. What I watched happen next made me incredibly proud of Grace UMC. People checked on neighbors. Folks opened their homes so others could shower, do laundry, and warm up. Volunteers served at warming centers. Meals were provided through partnerships with local businesses. Some of you delivered supplies. Some of you gave financially. Some of you prayed. Most of you did more than one of those things. It wasn't flashy. It wasn't organized by a big plan. It was simply people loving people. That's the church at its best.

Not long after that, we gathered for Soup Sunday, and once again Grace showed what community looks like in action. We served around 200 people that afternoon. Two hundred neighbors who were welcomed, fed, and treated with dignity. Events like that don't happen without a lot of hands working behind the scenes, cooking, setting up, serving, cleaning, and making sure everyone feels comfortable. Soup Sunday isn't just about food. It's about connection. It's about reminding people they matter. And it's about reminding ourselves that generosity grows when we practice it together.

Another exciting piece of life at Grace right now is the restart of our youth program. For a long time, one of the things many of us have prayed about is seeing young people reconnect with church in ways that feel real and meaningful to them. We're beginning to see that happen. Youth ministry isn't just about activities. It's about relationships. It's about helping teenagers know they belong somewhere safe, somewhere honest, somewhere that points them toward Christ while also letting them ask questions and be themselves. We're still building, still learning, and still growing, but this is an important step forward for our church family. And then there was Ash Wednesday.

This year, instead of a traditional service alone, we shared something deeply meaningful through the self-guided prayer stations. People moved quietly from space to space, praying, reflecting, confessing, and preparing their hearts for Lent. Some stayed a long time. Some came in for just a few minutes. Every person encountered God in their own way and at their own pace. That kind of sacred space matters. It gives people room to breathe spiritually, to be honest with God, and to remember that faith is not about performance but about relationship.

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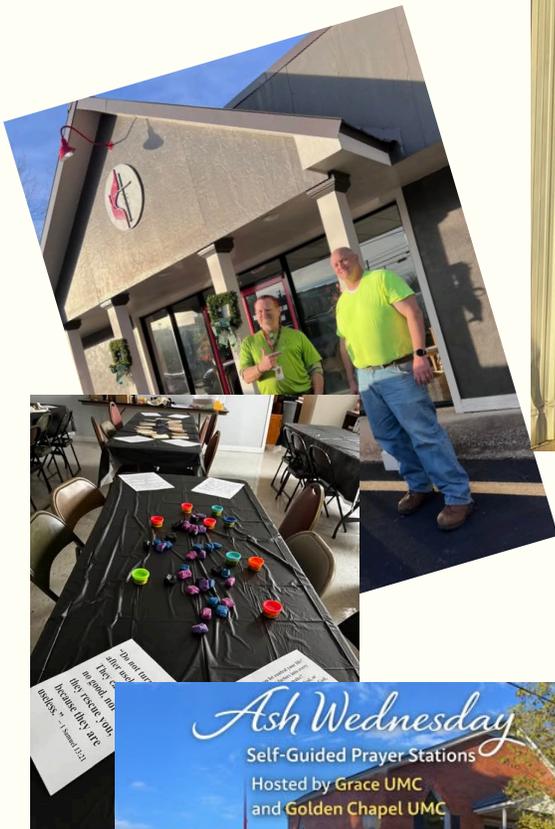


*“The church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of its non-members.”
– William Temple*

WHEN THE CHURCH SHOWS UP CONTINUED

When I look at everything happening, from storm response to meals, from youth ministry to prayer stations, I see a common thread. Grace UMC is learning what it means to live our faith outside the walls as much as inside them. We are a church that shows up. For each other. For our neighbors. For our community. And that matters more than we may ever fully realize. Scripture tells us, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). I see that harvest beginning to grow already in the kindness, generosity, and faithfulness of this church.

People of Grace, you are making a difference.
And we’re just getting started.





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MEANS OF GRACE

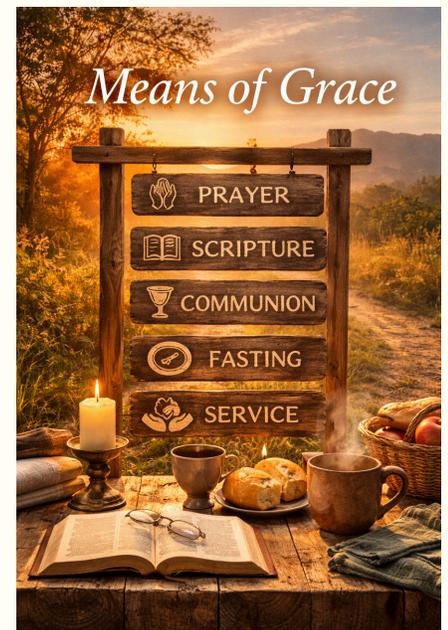
John Wesley spoke of the means of grace as the ordinary places where God has promised to meet us. They are not spiritual achievements or ways to earn God’s favor. Grace always begins with God. The means of grace are simply the ways we place ourselves where God’s grace is already at work, shaping us, healing us, and drawing us deeper into life with Christ.

Wesley named several core means of grace that were central to Christian life: prayer, searching the Scriptures, the Lord’s Supper, fasting or abstinence, Christian conferencing, and the works of mercy. These practices were never meant to stand alone. Together they form a rhythm that keeps faith grounded in both devotion and love of neighbor. Wesley believed that neglecting the means of grace weakens faith over time, not because God withdraws, but because we stop paying attention to the places where God has promised to be present.

At the heart of these practices is the conviction that God desires relationship, not religious performance. The means of grace are not about doing more for God, but about becoming more open to what God is already doing in us. Over time, they shape our habits, our desires, and our responses to the world around us, forming us into people who love God more fully and love others more freely.

One practice that helps us slow down and notice God’s presence in a different way is called *visio divina*, which means “divine seeing.” Just as *lectio divina* invites us to listen to Scripture slowly and prayerfully, *visio divina* invites us to look slowly and prayerfully. It uses images instead of words. These images might be sacred art, photographs, nature scenes, or even ordinary moments of life. The purpose is not artistic analysis. It is spiritual attention. We are learning to notice where God may be speaking through what we see. Scripture itself reminds us that God often communicates through visual experience. Jesus pointed people toward lilies, birds, seeds, fields, bread, and light as ways to understand God’s kingdom. Creation itself reflects God’s glory. When we slow down enough to truly see, we often discover that God has been present all along. *Visio divina* can be especially helpful for people who find their minds wandering during reading or who connect more deeply through images and imagination. It reminds us that prayer is not limited to words. Sometimes God speaks through beauty, emotion, memory, or a quiet sense of recognition.

The practice is simple, but its impact can be meaningful.





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VISIO DIVINA

When many of us think about prayer, we think about words. But prayer can also begin with simply paying attention.

Visio divina is a prayer practice that invites you to encounter God through what you see. You do not need special training or artistic knowledge. You only need a willingness to slow down.

Begin by choosing an image. This might be a photograph, a piece of artwork, a nature scene, or even something simple in your everyday surroundings. Sit comfortably and take a slow breath. Ask God to speak to you through what you are about to notice.

Start with Look. Spend a minute or two simply observing the image. Notice colors, shapes, expressions, movement, and details. What draws your attention first? What surprises you? What emotions surface? There is no right or wrong response.

Move into Reflect. Ask gentle questions. What might this image reveal about God? What does it reveal about people? Where do I see myself in it? Does it connect to anything happening in my life right now?

Then Respond. Speak to God about what you noticed. Share your thoughts, feelings, or questions. Prayer does not need to be polished. Honest words are enough.

Finally, Rest. Sit quietly for a moment. Allow yourself to simply be in God’s presence. You do not need to figure anything out. Trust that God is at work even in silence.

When you finish, you may want to write down one sentence about what stood out to you. Over time, you may begin to notice patterns in how God speaks to you.

Visio divina reminds us that God’s presence is not confined to church buildings or quiet devotion time. God meets us in the beauty of creation, in human connection, and in the ordinary moments we might otherwise rush past.

Sometimes seeing becomes believing in a whole new way.

Visio Divina *grace*

..... SACRED SEEING

Visio divina is a prayer practice that invites us to encounter God through what we see. It is a way of paying attention to where God may be speaking through images, sacred art, or the created world.

..... FOUR STEPS

- 1. LOOK**
Gently observe the image.
What stands out?
What emotions surface?
- 2. REFLECT**
Ask where God might be speaking through what you see.
What is being revealed?
- 3. RESPOND**
Sit with God. Share your thoughts, feelings, and prayers honestly.
- 4. REST**
Rest quietly in God’s presence for a few minutes.
Simply be.

GRACE United Methodist Church



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MARCH 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Born from Above John 3:1-17	2 <u>Psalm 128;</u> <u>Numbers 21:4-9;</u> <u>Hebrews 3:1-6;</u>	3 <u>Psalm 128;</u> <u>Isaiah 65:17-25;</u> <u>Romans 4:6-13;</u>	4 <u>Psalm 128;</u> <u>Ezekiel 36:22-32;</u> <u>John 7:53-8:11;</u>	5 <u>Psalm 95;</u> <u>Exodus 16:1-8;</u> <u>Colossians 1:15-23;</u>	6 <u>Psalm 95;</u> <u>Exodus 16:9-21;</u> <u>Ephesians 2:11-22;</u>	7 <u>Psalm 95;</u> <u>Exodus 16:27-35;</u> <u>John 4:1-6;</u>
8 Meeting Jesus at the Well John 4:5-42	9 <u>Psalm 81;</u> <u>Genesis 24:1-27; 2</u> <u>John 1:1-13;</u>	10 <u>Psalm 81;</u> <u>Genesis 29:1-14; 1</u> <u>Corinthians 10:1-4;</u>	11 <u>Psalm 81;</u> <u>Jeremiah 2:4-13; John 7:14-31, 37-39;</u>	12 <u>Psalm 23; 1</u> <u>Samuel 15:10-21;</u> <u>Ephesians 4:25-32;</u>	13 <u>Psalm 23; 1</u> <u>Samuel 15:22-31;</u> <u>Ephesians 5:1-9;</u>	14 <u>Psalm 23; 1</u> <u>Samuel 15:32-34;</u> <u>John 1:1-9;</u>
15 Opening Our Eyes John 9:1-41	16 <u>Psalm 146;</u> <u>Isaiah 59:9-19;</u> <u>Acts 9:1-20;</u>	17 <u>Psalm 146;</u> <u>Isaiah 42:14-21;</u> <u>Colossians 1:9-14;</u>	18 <u>Psalm 146;</u> <u>Isaiah 60:17-22;</u> <u>Matthew 9:27-34;</u>	19 <u>Psalm 130;</u> <u>Ezekiel 1:1-3, 2:8-3:3;</u> <u>Revelation 10:1-11;</u>	20 <u>Psalm 130;</u> <u>Ezekiel 33:10-16;</u> <u>Revelation 11:15-19;</u>	21 <u>Psalm 130;</u> <u>Ezekiel 36:8-15;</u> <u>Luke 24:44-53;</u>
22 Come Out John 11:1-45 Sunday Soup	23 <u>Psalm 143;</u> <u>1 Kings 17:17-24;</u> <u>Acts 20:7-12;</u>	24 <u>Psalm 143;</u> <u>2 Kings 4:18-37;</u> <u>Ephesians 2:1-10;</u>	25 <u>Psalm 143;</u> <u>Jeremiah 32:1-9, 36-41; Matthew 22:23-33;</u>	26 <u>Annunciation of the Lord</u>	27 <u>Psalm 31:9-16; 1 Samuel 16:11-13;</u> <u>Philippians 1:1-11;</u>	28 <u>Psalm 31:9-16; Job 13:13-19;</u> <u>Philippians 1:21-30;</u>
29 The King Who Comes Gently Matt 21:1-11	30 <u>Monday of Holy Week</u>	31 <u>Tuesday of Holy Week</u>	<u>Wednesday of Holy Week</u>	<u>Maundy Thursday</u>	<u>Good Friday</u>	<u>Holy Saturday</u>

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Worship Information

Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Fellowship/Hospitality: 10:30 AM
Sunday Worship: 11:00 AM
Wednesday Bible Study: 6:00
Location: 213 E. Eastport St. Iuka, MS

Online Worship

Live: <https://www.youtube.com/@IukaGraceUMC/streams>
[Sermons](#)
[Daily Devotionals](#)

Missions & Outreach

Sunday Soup March 22 3:30 PM until ...
Please have soup at the church at 3:00 PM

Stay Connected

[Facebook](#)
Website: graceumciuka.org
Contact: [Rev. Cheryl Farr](#)

You are always welcome at Grace UMC. Come as you are.

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