



“ABUNDANT GRACE” NEWSLETTER



Vol. 2, No.1

July, 2024



A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

Greetings Abundant Grace family, I hope this message finds you all doing well. Can you all believe it has been one year? A year ago, we did not exist, but after months of visioning, planning, scheduling, executing, realizing, we became Abundant Grace United Church of Christ. And since that time a year ago you all have hit the ground running. While we were still getting ourselves organized and structured, that has not stopped you from living out your ministries personally and collectively. Give yourselves a round of applause for staying engaged, doing the heavy lifting, and allowing God to use you for God’s purpose. Celebrate, reflect, and praise God, for being a faithful and a consistent God in all that God has planned. It is such an awesome experience to be a part of God’s plan and watch the people of God move in such a faithful and dedicated way.

So here we are, one year into being Abundant Grace United Church of Christ. I am still in amazement of what God has done, and the plans God has for us. All the promises of God are available to us. How awesome is that! We are free to vision and pursue God’s plan, equipped with the lessons, triumphs, and experiences, of our collective pasts; but we are not burdened by a past that will block us from moving forward. Therefore, as the newness continues to wear off and we become more and more comfortable in who we are, we must now concentrate on

walking the path God has in front of us. We must be even more prayerful, vigilant, dedicated, and committed, to God’s plan to fulfill what God is calling us to do and be. God is calling us to be a positive impact in this world. Therefore, we must continue seeking, humbling ourselves, turning away from wickedness, and praying.

2 Chronicles 7:14 states:

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land”

Some may be asking, “what’s next?” Well, I am glad you asked. We still have more planning and executing to do. We still have more coordination to accomplish. But we are now able to become more of a presence in the community. We are now in better position to address the concerns and conditions that trouble God’s heart. We are now ready to be more engaged with the community to understand how we can meet the needs of the community as well as making sure we are taking care of ourselves. I believe in a big God who empowers us, protects us, and provides for us. Nothing is too big for God to handle. We can accomplish great things:

Philippians 4:12-13 states:

“ I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any, and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens m”.

*Blessings,
Pastor Emory*



FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR

ABUNDANT GRACE, as my term as Council Chair has ended, I have so many memories, conversations, and thank-you's in my mind and heart. Coming together to form a new church has been an amazing journey for all of us. We know that God had a plan for us. We have gathered, we have become comfortable with changes, and we have the opportunity every Sunday to hear Reverend Emory sharing God's words with us. We have given to those in need, and have cared for each other. We are blessed with all that we have!

I wonder what our next steps will be. How will we know what we should do? What will be next? I think we should ask ourselves:



What is God calling us to do?
Who are our neighbors? How can we care for all people?

These are questions that will need conversations, discernment, and prayers. The part is that God knows what the answers are! God also provides ways to find our journey's steps. The Bible is filled with words to guide us.

Here are some assurances:

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all

- sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 2 Corinthians 1:3
- And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 1:14
- Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrew 4:16

God assures us of God's love for us - let's sing our answer:



HERE I Am Lord

Daniel L. Schutte

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.
Praise God!

Jean Wildermuth

CONGRATULATIONS, PARNELL HUGHES!

Thanks to Parnell and a few scout members, the fencing around the west side heating/air conditioning unit has a new fence. This was part of Parnell's Eagle Scout project, and it was a job well done. Thank you, Parnell!





July
BirthDays

A decorative graphic for July Birthdays. The word "July" is in large red letters, and "BirthDays" is in blue letters below it. The text is surrounded by several stars in red, blue, and white. A decorative flourish with a candle in the center is positioned below the text.

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| 2 | Kenneth Hill |
| 3 | Pam McDonald |
| 3 | Debbie Page |
| 7 | Peggy Anderson |
| 10 | Scott Miller Sr. |
| 11 | John Lester |
| 15 | Tina Tong |
| 22 | Mae Brandon |
| 24 | Vange Luna |
| 31 | Sam Coniglio |



WOMAN'S BOOK CLUB

All women are invited to join us **Thursday, July 18, at 10:00 am**, in the Gathering Room at Abundant Grace. We will be discussing “*The Frozen River*” by Ariel Lawhon, and would love for you to join us for a discussion about a remarkable woman who had the courage to take a stand in 1789.



WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY

Worship and Music will be reviewing the elements of our worship service in August, and we would like your input. Please let us know what you really like, would not miss, or think should be revised. Is there anything that you don't understand; or the way it is expressed from the ministry? Something missing? Just drop a note in the W&M mailbox

behind the reception desk, or talk to anyone from the ministry. We would love to hear from you.



MINISTRY AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE CHAIRS MEETING

Last winter, the ministry chairs decided to have quarterly meetings to share ideas, ask and answer questions, coordinate our activities, and to envision the future. The meetings will be held **quarterly in July, October, January, and April**. The next meeting date is **TBD**. Please send me topics you would like to discuss during the meeting. I look forward to seeing all of Chairs, or a representative from each ministry and Council Committee. Thank you for all you are doing for God and this Church!

Jean Wildermuth



WOMEN OF GRACE

Save the date: **Thursday, August 8, 1:00PM**. Illinois Attorney General Office Presentation; Learn about *Scams & Frauds*.





DO-ABLE COMMITTEE

Well, generous people of AGUCC, this committee made it through our first fiscal year, and the grocery cart never stopped filling up. We gathered food for Respond Now and bought hundreds of toiletry items for ANEW's closet. We did both, at the same time in numbers almost too big to count. We were off and running and we have not stopped.

The fall and winter found us filling dozens and dozens of bags of groceries for Thanksgiving and Christmas for Respond Now, ANEW, and Rich Township Food Pantry. Our beautiful Christmas trees sent socks to PADS, hats, scarves, and gloves to Respond Now, not to mention lots of candy and gift cards to teenagers. As you may recall, our end-of-the-year monetary amount, including grocery gift cards to purchase the perishable items of bread, eggs, cheese, and milk peaked at: \$6,038.

Who can forget the start of the New Year with our "Tower of Tissue" which took off for two months of growth and reached the ceiling with a total of 784 rolls! What an accomplishment.

The first six months of this year have grown as we looked at various options: Easter food baskets, Arts & Crafts projects for the children at the ANEW shelter, Breakfast Blessings at

Respond Now, and we are completing June with a donation to the Manteno VA complex as we say "Thank You" to our veterans.

Our last six months take us to the end of our fiscal year for an additional amount of \$3,266 which leaves AGUCC a grand total of \$9,304 for our fiscal year.

As we continue to look forward to the next fiscal year, we are going to prepare a tote bag for each of the 20 children in the shelter at ANEW, that is encouraging them to enjoy summer with summer toys, snacks to eat, and books to read. "Enjoy Summer" will begin on **July 7th**.

A big "thank you" for joining us on this journey as you make life more enjoyable, many meals possible, and life a little easier for so many people and groups of children, that God has shared with us. You are generous, kind and give so abundantly.

Thank you!

*Sharon Platt, Annette Demchuk,
Judith Vicari*

THANK YOU.

We Made A Difference.

You Made It Possible.



ALMOST COMPLETE!

The Faith Development Ministry is in the final phase of completing the SAFE CHURCH/SAFE CONDUCT Policy for Abundant Grace United Church of Christ (AGUCC). Our ministry has held several open invitational sessions to discuss the contents of this policy and promote a better understanding of its potential impact on churchgoers, visitors, volunteers, employees, and employers. Those occupying space at AGUCC as Shared Partners will have an opportunity to view the draft document of AGUCC's Safe Church/ Safe Conduct Policy and give input. Multiple opportunities were provided for those who wanted to share their ideas or have their questions about the policy addressed. In the upcoming weeks, please take the time to review the draft which defines behaviors that are acceptable or unacceptable when interacting with one another at AGUCC. It is the intent of the SAFE CHURCH/SAFE CONDUCT Policy to create an environment that is safe for all persons, including, but not limited to, youth and vulnerable adults. You can expect the ministry chairperson to share a draft copy (supplied by Faith Development Ministry) of the Safe Church/Safe Conduct policy with

their ministry members, during the month of July. Final edits are due by the last week in July. It is the intent of the Faith Development Ministry that the SAFE CHURCH/SAFE CONDUCT Policy be brought before the congregation for a vote of acceptance in August. Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact either, Dr. Sharon Bean or me.

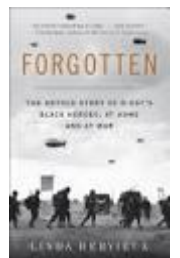


Blessings,
Rev. Melbalenia Evans



ABUNDANT GRACE MEN'S BOOK CLUB

The newly formed Men's Book Club will meet on **Saturday, July 13th, at 10:30am** in the Gathering Room. We will welcome two new members, and any other men wishing to join us. This meeting we'll check the progress of our read, "Forgotten" by Linda Hervieux, and set a date for the discussion of the book.



Calvin Brandon



July

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> 4TH OF JULY OFFICE CLOSED	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>7</u> COMMUNION GIFT CARD ORDERS 9:30 AM – WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 AM – BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> 10:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY 12:00 PM – PASTOR, CHAIR, V. CHAIR	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> 10:00 AM- MEN'S BOOK CLUB
<u>14</u> 9:30 AM – WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 AM – FINANCE COMMITTEE	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> 10:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY 12:00 PM – PASTOR, CHAIR, V. CHAIR 1:00 PM- PROPERTY MTG	<u>17</u> 12:30 PM- PRC MEETING	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> 9:00 AM- COUNCIL MTG 10:30 AM- SATURDAY MORNING MANNA
<u>21</u> 9:30 AM – WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00 AM – FAITH DEVELOPMENT MOVIE MATINEE “DOUBT”	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> 10:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY 12:00 PM – PASTOR, CHAIR, V. CHAIR	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>28</u> 9:30 AM – WORSHIP SERVICE	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> 10:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY 12:00 PM – PASTOR, CHAIR, V. CHAIR	<u>31</u>			