



Grace
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

August 2026



"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

MESSENGER

A Message from the Pastor:



Church Staff
Office: 636-240-7621

Reverend James R. Hilker
Pastor
pastorjimgraceucc@gmail.com
Jon Garrett
Music Minister
jchgarrett@gmail.com
Volunteer office manager:
Cheryl Howard
graceuccoffice@gmail.com
Angie Hinzpeter,
Custodian
Cindy Rose, Hal Witt
Fred Bruner & Vicki Staples-
Financial Team

2026 Church Council

President
Dana Buchanan
dbuch31@gmail.com

Vice-President
Daniel Fahnestock
dfahnestock@scc.mo.org

Secretary
Vicki Staples
vstaples29@gmail.com

Treasurer
Cindy Rose
cindyro60@msn.com

John Thomas
jpthomas4@yahoo.com

Kevin Boiles
Kevin.boiles@gmail.com

Laura Roberts
laurawrob@gmail.com

Harry Peters
hgpeters323@yahoo.com

Linda Clark
lindaclark61@gmail.com

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

wearegracechurchucc.org

Do you remember the song "I am the church! You are the church?"

The refrain goes like this:

I am the church! You are the church!
We are the church together!
All who follow Jesus,
all around the world!
Yes, we're the church together!

Yes, we're the church together! Grace United Church of Christ is one of about 150 churches in the The Missouri Mid-South Conference. MMS Conference is the collection of local congregations belonging to the United Church of Christ in Missouri, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tenn. Together, these congregations are more than 20,000 members strong.

One of the things we do as a conference each year is gather for the annual meeting. Conference Annual Gathering or CAG for short is when the local congregations gather somewhere in the conference for learning, business, worship and fellowship. This year CAG will be held nearby at St. John UCC in St. Charles on November 6-7 2026. The theme of this year's gathering is: **"Reclaiming Our Connection."** Some of the things you will see at CAG are inspiring worship; learning events, and time for fellowship and fun. keynote speakers, Robb McCoy and Eric Fistler, host of the acclaimed Pulpit Fiction podcast, will teach us and inspire us. And we also have a business meeting, where we will learn about the state of the conference and various ministries in the conference as well as adopt a budget for 2027 and elect folks to serve as leaders in the conference.

The Rev. Phil Hodson, our Missouri Mid-South Intentional Interim Conference Minister, will be leading us in interim work and discernment as we dream about new vitality for our Conference as well. Your input is especially needed as we work together to strengthen our relationships as the church!

Continued on page 4.....



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The Christian Education team has been meeting this summer to update Grace's Safe Church Policy. That document contains information on selecting and training volunteers who work with our children. This update is being performed in conjunction with recommendations from our church's insurance company. The CE team will submit the policy to our church council for approval soon. Picture below is of our June 29TH meeting.

Last Sunday of Summer Sunday School is August 9th. We will be teaching the parable of the talents. Jesus taught us many life lessons thru his parables and this is one good lesson for the children.

Regular Sunday School will begin on September 20th and we will have a Rally Day party.



JULY 2026 ATTENDANCE

	In Church	YouTube	2026 Total Average	
7/5/20026	42	17	68	
7/12/2026	59	9	68	
7/19/2026	42	16	68	
7/26/2026	48	9	68	

AUGUST HELPERS & LITURGY FOR SUNDAYS:

DATE	LITURGIST(S)	YOU TUBE	SCRIPTURE & MESSAGE
8/2	John Thomas	Dana Buchanan	<i>Matthew 14: 22-33</i> "When All Seems Lost"
8/9	Debbie Jones	Shaughn Uebinger	<i>1 Corinthians 2: 1-16</i> "Open Hearts, Open Hands"
8/16	Mary Ann Sutton	Laura Roberts	<i>Isaiah 56: 1-8</i> "My House Shall Be for all Peoples"
8/23	Need help for this Sunday	Cindy Rose	<i>Guest Minister</i>
8/30	Dan Birchen & Deb Teson	Vicki Staples	<i>Romans 12: 9-21</i> "Practical Love"

MESSANGER



Mission of the Month: OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION

Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 10:30 Wor- ship with Al- tar commun- ion	3 7—GLWD 7 Scouts	4 ELECTION DAY! 	5 7pm— Chris- tian Ed mtg	6 Hiroshima Day of Re- membrance	7 1 / 8 1st—8a.m. Mens Group 8th-10 a.m. Book Club
9 10 a.m. Chil- dren's Sun- day School 10:30- Worship 11:30— Mis- sion Team	10	11 7pm- Council	12	13	14
16 10:30- Worship	17 Pastor Jim	18 Will be on	19 Vacation	20 From 17th	21 Thru 23rd
23 10:30- Worship, Guest Pastor	24	25	26	27	28
30 10:30 Worship— <u>Potluck fol- lows wor- ship</u>	31				

A note from the pastor continued:

Every church in the Conference is entitled to two lay voting delegates and one youth delegate (age 18 or under) in addition to the pastor. And guests are welcome too! Delegates represent the local church. A delegate's role is to read materials for the business meeting, including the budget for 2027 and nominations for conference ministries. During the business meeting on Saturday, they will be listening to discussions about conference business and vote when required. One final role for the delegates is to report back to the church with what they learned or what actions need to be communicated to the council and the congregation.

Hope we might have some folks interested in attending CAG with me and many other folks from Missouri, Arkansas, and Memphis Tennessee. If you have further questions or interest, please see me or visit: <https://missourimidsouth.org/>

God Bless, Pastor Jim

Please keep our HOMEBOUND FOLKS in your June prayers.....

Liz Birchen- Garden View Care Center

Judy & Ken Harris-Victorian Place of Washington

Roger Miyasaka—Twin Oaks Care Center

Clifford Scott—home

Book Club News

The Grace Book Club is back on schedule. We meet the second & fourth Saturdays of the month. We just read “The Secret Book of Flora Lea”, a fairy tale and a WWII war story, all in one. Our next book is “Becoming Mrs Lewis”, about the wife of C.S. Lewis. Many of you will remember him from the Chronicles of Narnia. This is her side of their story. And next we will be reading “James”, a new take on Huckleberry Finn. If interested in joining, please let us know.

Dana Buchanan & Cheryl

Howard, co chairs



Wasn't it wonderful to see so many children at Sunday School and children's time on July 12th? Thanks to our SS staff & Pastor Jim to make their experience so valuable

Grace Missions



AUGUST MISSION OF THE MONTH: OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION

Jesus famously turned five loaves and two fish into enough food to feed a multitude. When Jesus started sharing his food, it inspired people to share food they had brought tucked into their garments and bags – a loaf here, an extra fish there, maybe even some wine. What, at first seemed like a moment of scarcity, became an experience of abundance as people realized they had all the resources they needed. Our Church's Wider Mission of feeding others, educating others, initiating Christian programs world wide, and we could go on and on, is THE mission of our denomination. Being Jesus! We, the Mission and Outreach team, are asking for you to "be Jesus" this month and help us give to the Our Church's Wider Mission. Watch for envelopes on the back tables & consider donating to this great program.

Thank you, Cheryl Howard, team member

Letter to the Editor

There is a group of people who are meeting regularly to choose, read, rate and discuss books. This group is a fluid group with some members meeting regularly. Some meeting when they can and some just follow the group's book choices. There are also some who do not attend, but suggest book choices and quite often their suggestions become some of our most cherished reads. The group, after rating their experience with the book, are led in discussion with questions that have been raised in discussion kits or, often, at the end of the book. It may be the books we read, which cover a wide range of genres, but we are often led to theological discussions of the contents.

To me, this group has become more than just a group of people who enjoy reading, (yes, we do have male participants and would welcome more), but has developed friendships and deepened those already made. It has also led to discussion of other small groups that might offer similar benefits.

A big acknowledgement needs to be made to Dana Buchanan and Cheryl Howard, who initiated this group!! Please join us! We are a welcoming group!!!

Barbara Grindstaff

GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WELCOMING COVENANT



Grace United Church of Christ strives to be an Open and Affirming Christian community that welcomes and affirms all people in all ways. It is a place where love binds us together in the tapestry of life. We affirm our Still-speaking God ministering to and with all of God's children, including all ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and differing abilities.

AUGUST Birthdays:

2-Carol Hasten
4-Don Shelton
5-Erin Burke
8-Alexandria Fuehrer
8-Alicia Miles
9-Wren Burke
9-Ola Martin-Cooksley
11-Randy Megathlin
12-Eva Van Allen
14-Karen Burton
16-Michael Jones
25-Carol Miller
30-Amy Peters



NEW POLICY FOR WORSHIP ATTENDANCE.....

We will be reserving the back pews on both sides of the sanctuary for visitors and folks with children. You will see reserved tent cards on these pews and please, push yourselves up a row and give this back pew for those who may need it. And wear your name badge so that folks can remember your names. Thanks so much!



Sunday, July 12th, we celebrated Pastor Jim's 3rd anniversary with our church. My, how time flies! We cherish all the time we've had with Jim and we hope the relationship continues for many, many more years.

RUMMAGE SALE—OCTOBER 17TH !

Spread the word to family and friends. Donations of clean, gently used items can be brought to church in mid September. Reminder that we do not accept TV's or furniture. Clothes, household items, and jewelry are the bulk of our sales. There are also baked goods available for purchase. Grace's budget depends on each rummage sale to generate \$2,000. We can again reach that goal with your help!

Grace Member Spotlight — Last month we mentioned that our fellow member Sheila Dunn has written a memoir about our dear Roger Miyasaka. Roger was born in California before World War II. After Pearl Harbor was bombed, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 that forced 125,000 Japanese Americans along the western U.S. to leave their homes. Roger's family was forcibly sent to Jerome Arkansas where they were interred for about two years. Despite this event in his young life, Roger worked hard and lead a successful life, including service in the U. S. Army. You can read the book and learn more details about Roger's life. We are so appreciative of Sheila's diligence with visits and interviews with Roger to create his memoir!



Message from Church Nurse

The heat and humidity has arrived. Now is a good time to remind everyone that many medications do not mix well with the heat and the summer sun. Please discuss with your primary care provider if there are any precautions you need to take to avoid these interactions.

The most important self care thing anyone can do is to make sure they are staying hydrated. Dehydration causes most of the problems that occur as a result of the summer heat. If I can be of any assistance please feel free to contact me by email at sadunn1952@gmail.com) or by phone or text at 618-9380. Yours in Christ. Sheila D.

MARY

MARTHA SHOP

Mary Martha opportunities for the rest of the year are on the opportunities board. As a refresher, Mary Martha Thrift Shop is located in Wentzville, MO and is run strictly by volunteers. It provides low cost clothing, household goods, toys, etc because of volunteers like us. Grace doesn't have enough people to work an entire week so we pair up with Faith. If you have time to devote a 4 hour shift, we would be glad to have you. The work varies depending on the day, the inventory is rotated weekly and clothes need to be put on hangars and hung up, or placing items that have been priced on the shelf on the household side. If you are interested, please let me know, I will add you to the list.

Sandy Silger, 314-640-6470

TREASURER'S REPORT, June 2026

Missions (amount collected in the noted month, annual donations may be higher):

January – Pastor Discretionary Fund \$230

April – Pridefest \$630.53

February – Hope Food Pantry \$340

May – Strengthen the Church \$490

March – One Great Hour of Sharing \$495

June – Emmaus House \$685

As of the end of May:

.

In His Service, Cindy Rose, Treasurer

Please use this QR code, should you want to set up electronic giving.



The Church Universal

I thought this sounded like our Grace church. It comes from an ONA church in New Orleans, LA:

Love isn't meant to be whispered. It's meant to be **lived out loud.** ❤️ 🌈

A place where LOVE IS LOUDER THAN HATE.

A place where WELCOME IS LOUDER THAN EXCLUSION.

A place where GRACE IS LOUDER THAN JUDGEMENT

A place where EVERY PERSON IS REMINDED THAT THEY ARE A BELOVED CHILD OF GOD!



Mark your calendars—November 6-7 is CAG, Conference Annual Gathering. See Pastor's message regarding this very important event for our conference. And since it is so close to us this year, at St John's UCC in St Charles, we could send a delegate or 2 and have anyone else who would like to go join in. This is an excellent way to see how our conference functions amongst all the churches in the Missouri Mid South Confer-

Don't call 1-800-Got-Junk, just see Don, Cheryl, Sandy, Mike and Jon. They have been busy cleaning out the church garage for about a month, and even worked in sweltering heat on July 28th! They are making a dent in something that has been needed for decades.

Thanks so very much!!





Here are the requested items for **AUGUST:**

BOXED DRYED POTATOES (SCALLOPED, JULIENNE, AU GRATIN)

MASHED POTATO PACKAGES

CANNED PEAS

RICE A RONI

GRAVY PACKETS



We are very thankful for your generous giving. We do accept other dry good products, canned foods, etc.

For the month of July, Hope served 996 individuals and 308 families. With the price of groceries going up and the need going up, donations are necessary now more than ever. Hope is taking on new families and individuals every week. If your finances allow and you can find it in your heart, please give to Hope Food Pantry. The items above are just the most needed at the time, but they will take all grocery items. Remember, HOPE stands for Helping Other People Eat.