

Connection

to inform and inspire

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
GRACE FELLOWSHIP
MARCH 2024

Better Than Bread

-Pastor Mark Johnson

I am hungry. In my mind I picture warm, fresh baked sour-dough bread. Add some butter, and I could make that a meal...or dessert. The smell. The taste. The satisfaction and comfort it brings. I could want for nothing else.

The most important phrase in the paragraph above? "I am hungry."

When Israel was in the wilderness, God allowed them to become hungry. Then God fed them manna. He allowed them to become thirsty. Then he miraculously gave them water from a rock. God explained that he allowed them to become hungry and to thirst so that they would learn that he loves them and is their faithful provider for all their needs.

This is what is meant by the statement: "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3).



God is the source of all that we need. He loves us. When we experience want in any form, we can trust that God sees and is drawing us to trust in him more fully with our needs. Sometimes this means that we must temporarily wait for his

provision – or – that what we think we need, we must learn that perhaps we don't actually need that at all.

When Jesus became hungry during his testing in the wilderness, Satan tempted him to supply his own need. Jesus countered by stating that more important than a full stomach is trusting in God who is faithful – quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.

The Apostle Paul appealed to this same principle when reflecting on his own times of need: *"Whether hungry or well supplied, I have found the secret of being content. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength"* (Phil 4:12-13).

Jesus, after miraculously feeding



Better Than Bread ...continued from front page

thousands on the remote shores of Galilee, instructed the crowd, *“Do not labor for food that spoils, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you”* (Jn 6:26-27). A reinforcement of this same message.

Are you hungry? Do you long for a resolution to the ache in your life? Instead of grasping for a quick fix, stop and consider the importance of this moment. Lean in. God loves you. He sees you. He knows your wanting and is faithful to give you exactly what you need. If you trust him with your whole life: your spiritual, physical, emotional and relational needs; God will always prove faithful.

~Pastor Mark Johnson

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

He is
Risen

MARCH 24 PALM SUNDAY

- (Kids performance during the 10:30 hour)

MARCH 31 EASTER SUNDAY

- Sunrise service 6:00am
- 2nd service 10:30am



Hopes Essence: Compassion & Faith

~Pastor Jonathan Casas

How Crucial Is Hope?

This is a question that I have grappled with my entire life. The impact of hope is profound - in its presence, problems appear manageable with promising possibilities of positive outcomes, while its absence can plunge us into states of desolation and despair.

A picture came to my mind of a man destitute, reaching to the sky for a helping hand as people pass by. No one stops, no one offers a jacket on a cold night, or food when clearly, he is malnourished. It begged the question, "How hopeless does somebody have to be before someone takes notice?" It's obvious at times that we simply feel like a "number" in our everyday society. We have a prevailing lack of genuine concern for one another. We can name countless examples of how we navigate through life with this pervasive feeling. I don't want to be too much of a downer here, but really, what does a human being have to do to be cared for by another human being?

My son, Andrew and I were driving home from CCS's skating party when he realized he had taken more free pizza than he could finish in one sitting. He looked so disappointed. (At that point his eyes were larger than his stomach.) As we pulled up to a stoplight, he noticed a man in need on the next block. As people passed, the man would raise his sign a little higher in hopes that someone would donate. Defeated, he would lower his sign again and again. When Andrew saw this, he said to himself in a whisper, "I wish I could give that man my pizza." To which I replied, "Why don't you?" He paused and came up with 2 or 3 reasons not to. He said that people in his class talk about the homeless all the time. And that there were several reasons why it would be a bad idea. To which, I didn't disagree. But by then, the light had turned green, and I had already made the decision to pull over and wait for his internal debate to conclude. The entire time he was

thinking, I was inching forward toward the man. As we did, the man saw we were heading his way, he stood up, held up his sign and started walking toward us. I rolled down Andrew's window and he offered his pizza. With a smile the man accepted. As we drove away, I asked, "why'd you do it?" He quickly gave me a few reasons: "He looked hungry. It was a good end for my pizza, and I didn't have to carry it home. It was a win-win." His rapid and thoughtful decision-making left a lasting impression on me.

Right before my father passed away, he told me of a person that he had been helping. He said, "Do you see that man over there? The one with black hair, a patch over his eye, cane, and one leg?" I replied, "yes." He said, "When I leave this earth, I want you to find this man and continue to help him." I confess, at first, I didn't think he was serious. But then I realized that this would be one of his last wishes for me.



Hope reaches all directions throughout the world, to all people no matter who they are or what they believe. Jesus Christ is the hope of eternal life. He reaches outward to all people, to rich and poor, the educated and the uneducated, to every race and creed. All who come to Christ have hope. *"You are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."* -Psalm 25:5

How crucial is hope? What is your experience with hope? Can hope save you? *"If you devote your heart to God and stretch out your hands (reach out) to Him, ... You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety."* – Job 11:13, 18.

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him." -Psalm 62:5

May we all find our hope in Jesus. May we let it be our compass. May we let compassion be our guide and faith in Jesus our steadfast anchor. May we weave a hope-filled life tapestry of kindness and care for our fellow man.

SPOTLIGHT ON

MISSIONS

Keith and Denise Ancar Across Nations (AN) Window Rock, Arizona

Keith is one of the featured speakers for the Grace Fellowship Missions Conference on March 3. He continues work to fulfill the mission of seeing Native Americans restored and transformed by the Word of God.

January was an exciting month, Both Keith Ancar and Andy DeHerrera from Grace Fellowship travelled to Cortez, Colorado to attend the Wisdom Keepers Conference. This conference was a meeting of many ministry partners to form new ministry strategy and vision for a campus property in Cortez. Unfortunately, this campus was being considered for closure and sale. Instead, new ministry partners have reached agreement to establish a 9-10 month Discipleship Program governed by a Formal Joint Resolution. The ministry partners will individually operate under the Vision & Purpose and individual MOU's to support the program's daily operational needs. Across Nations will act as the overall fiduciary for this greater Body of Christ movement.

Our goal is to see young people trained in the Word and mentored toward indigenous ministry and service!

Following the conference they traveled to the "rez" (reservation) to direct a visiting team from Pennsylvania working on HVAC and electrical at the new Media Center (Radio bldg.) and to pour a concrete slab for a remodeled youth room in the basement of the old Chapel (Notah Center).

Finally, on Feb. 8th, Keith travelled to attend the Association of North American Missions Conference in Phoenix, AZ and then back to the rez in Window Rock, Arizona to host a visiting team from an Albuquerque Christian School working on campus clean-up and beautification.

We at Grace Fellowship can experience a hands on role this year with some of their upcoming ministry goals. AN is adding 7th Grade to Hilltop school this year and needs to relocate the classroom and library portable. Computes, books, shelves, and other furnishings need to be removed, kept organized and replaced this summer along with new paint and upgrades to make these ready for next school year in August.

They are adding a new radio station (KOPI) on the Hopi Reservation and changing the station in Tuba City, AZ (KTBA) to a container build as well. Site-work, foundations, interior studios & offices, exterior stucco and roofing all need help toward completion. The new facilities and Body of Christ movement in Cortez, CO will also need preparation for the transition to a young adult discipleship center by assisting the maintenance person with various cleaning, painting and set-up projects. Prayerfully consider an "Encounter" week(s) of service ministry with Keith & Denise Ancar.

For more information check out:
acrossnations.cc ; acrossnations.cc/encounter ; hilltopchristian.net.



DON'T BE DECEIVED

~Duke Foster

Take a look at 2 *Timothy 3:13* "*But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived*". Pretty disappointing to know this.

How about us? *Jeremiah 17:9* says "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*" The sad part is, we easily fool ourselves. One of our many culprits is pride. *Proverbs 16:18* "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*". I remember a recent meeting with a nurse practitioner that had concerns regarding exposure to hazardous materials in my career. So, instead of saying that I was a park and recreation professional and environmental project coordinator, I went on about my first job out of college was a Chief Ranger and then all the other positions before becoming a director and then environmental consultant. When we left her office, I felt dumb and disgusted with myself. All she needed to know was that my career did not take me into hazardous conditions.

A few simple words from *Psalms 119:11* should help all of us to avoid deception – "*I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you*". His word is meant to change us. We can attend church every Sunday. We can read the bible every day. We can go through the rituals of personal prayers and saying the right things when mixed in with our fellow believers BUT if all these 'things' don't change us and put them into practice, we deceive ourselves.

Don't get me wrong, those things that we do, mentioned above, are critical in our walk but it's important to know that those building blocks of our faith is "*that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work*". (2 *Timothy 3:17*)

Constantly referring to negativity is not to put us down but to help build us up by looking deep within ourselves to correct our flaws. You've heard this example of the mirror many times but *James 1:23* hits the nail on the head "*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror*". We have to act on what we see. So, if you have a jimmy in your tooth do you just say "Oh well" and walk out the door?

Bear with me as I share this thought. Can you imagine being involved in any conversation and having Jesus standing right along side of you? The beauty of our faith is that He has given us the Holy Spirit to do just that. Don't let that free will spirit of yours over ride His loving care and direction.

It's much more than a mind game. Self-deception is very much alive in all of us but He is our refuge and strength. Keep that conversation going with Him 24/7 and you won't be deceived.

James sums it up by saying "Remembering the Word, doing the Word, and continuing in the Word---this is what changes character and counters self-delusion. Just like that mirror, the word of God will always show us the truth.





WOMEN'S MINISTRY

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?" -

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 NIV

Our sense of smell can usher us into awe-inspiring experiences in many ways. We can enjoy the aroma of freshly baked bread or chocolate chip cookies at a meal and give thanks to God for our food. We can hike in a forest and enjoy the scent of evergreen trees as nature reminds us of God. There are countless other ways that our physical sense of smell can lead us to spiritual awe. When that happens, our souls notice the wonder of God's work around us, and we're filled with gratitude.

One way we can thank God for being able to enjoy pleasing scents is to try to live in a way that smells pleasing to God. When we prioritize our relationship with God and ask for his help to be holy day by day, we become *"the pleasing aroma of Christ"* that the Bible

The Aroma of Christ Women's Ministry 2024 theme

describes in 2 Corinthians 2:15 NIV. Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV encourages us to: *"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."* In biblical times, people often used incense during worship so that a strong and pleasant fragrance would rise to God along with their prayers. Psalm 141:2 NIV says in part: *"May my prayer be set before you like incense..."* and the Book of Revelation describes people's prayers on earth showing up in heaven with the scent of incense.

Our physical sense of smell can remind us of the importance of living lives that give off the spiritual aroma of Christ. So, let's stay connected to God in prayer and do our best to live in ways that honor him. When we do, we'll please God and help others notice how sweet it can be to enjoy relationships with God.

αβγδεζηθικλμνξοπρστυφχψω

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega and Everything In Between

Children's Ministries

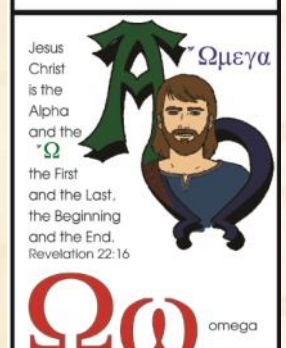
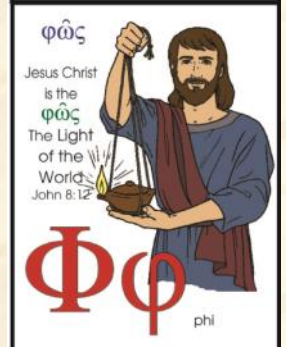
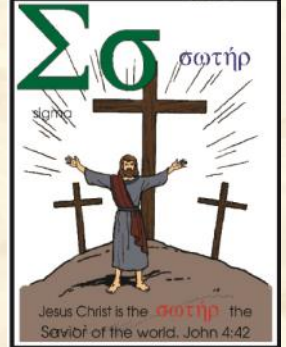
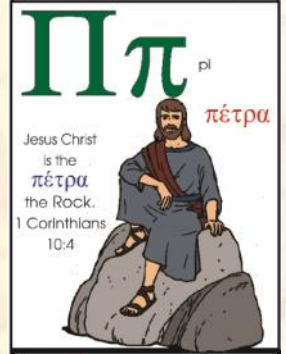
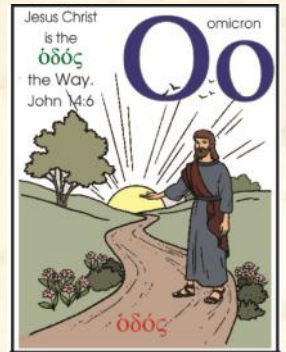
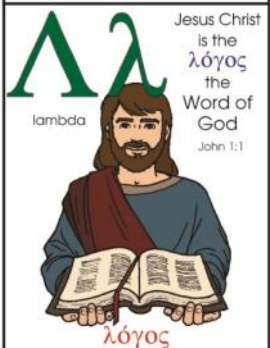
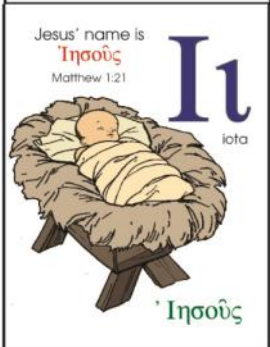
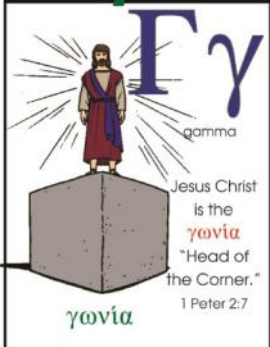
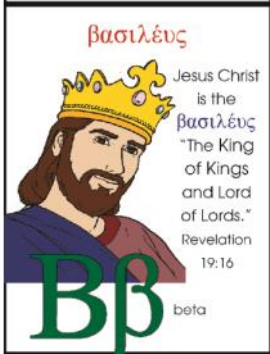
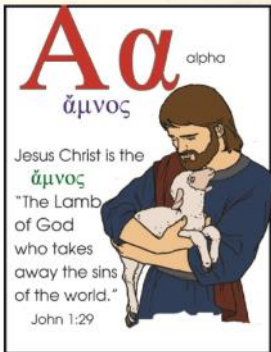
If you get an opportunity to talk to our Kindergarten through Second Graders and ask them what they're learning, they might answer, "Another language." That's right! What's Greek to you makes sense to them!

It all started when one day I was looking at the verse where Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega." I wondered, "Are You also the beta and the gamma and the other letters of the Greek alphabet?" Well, sure enough, in Greek there's a title for Jesus starting with nearly every letter, and the few that don't have a title have something very close. So, yes, our kiddos are learning Greek, specifically the alphabet. They practice writing the letters and reading basic words. But, what we're really learning are the many titles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek word for lamb begins with an alpha, so the first title of Jesus we learn is "Jesus is the AMNOS of God who takes away the sins of the world." BASILEUS means king and it begins with a beta. "Jesus is the Basileus of kings and Lord of lords." GONIA begins with a gamma and means corner - Jesus is the Cornerstone. Jesus' own name begins with an iota - IESOUS. There's lambda for LOGOS - the Word of God, omicron for 'ODOS - the Way, and pi for PETRA - the Rock.

A few weeks ago the kids were learning sigma. Sigma is for SOTER - Savior. They acted out the story of the woman at the well. When she learns that Jesus is the promised Messiah she runs and tells her whole village. Excited to hear, they come and listen. Jesus stays two days in this little village of Samaria. And, when it's time for Him to leave they say, "... we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the SOTER of the world!" John 4:42.

Greek is so much fun! But, learning all these titles of Jesus and their stories is the best!



~ Debbie King



**Get your blue suede shoes on and join us
for the "50's & 60's"
Prime Timer's Luncheon.**

**A delicious luncheon & fun program will
await you.**

**April 13th is the date for you to
"be there or go square"!**

Watch for sign-ups in the church lobby.

**If you have any questions:
(209)217-4715 Thank you!**





~Dan Conley

Randy is a friend of mine, though he doesn't remember me when I see him each month. I wear a name tag so that he can call me by name when we're together. We only see each other for about 45 minutes a month, but by the time our visit is over, he once again warms to me and walks me to the door just like old friends when I leave. I don't know how long he thinks of about me afterwards but I know that next month we will begin as strangers once more.

Trudy enjoys the singing we do together as a group of believers so we always invite her to come join us in our songs as we pass by her at the door. Once in a while she will join us, but usually she wants to wait by the door to watch for her family to drive into the parking lot for today's visit. As I have sat and visited with her near the door she talks about growing up as a girl in the Jackson Valley area. She talks about her mom and dad, her husband, kids and extended family... but Trudy hasn't lived in the present day since we first met a year ago. She just waits by the door for the past to come and visit, which only happens in her mind.

There is another gentleman, forgive me for I don't know his name, that is always asleep with a blanket pulled up to his chin and a stocking cap on for warmth. No matter how loud our music, he sleeps. The team walked out the door after service one day and were waiting to be let out the gate by a staff member, who had forgotten she was doing it for us. As I walked back in to remind her that we were waiting, this man was not only awake but he was leading the other residents in a rousing chorus of the same song that we had finished singing 10 minutes before.

Amador Residential Care Facility is a memory care unit in Jackson. The residents don't remember who we are from visit to visit. We wear name tags to help them have a sense of knowing and remembering us, but we don't

need to be remembered or called by name to be truly blessed by them. To be very honest, I am certain that each of us comes away from our gatherings being the ones blessed rather than the ones doing the blessing. The preceding stories are but a few that have blessed us by the ongoing relationships we have developed with our friends at this facility.

There is Margaret, with a smile that fills her entire face. Joanie, who never lets us forget that she is the proprietor of the place and that we are there at her request. Woody, who never says a word but continually expresses his gratitude to see us with his eyes. Dee, who never ceases to ask when we will be back to see her again, and too many more to mention in a short article. The Rest Home Ministry isn't anything that resembles an obligation on our part. Rather, it is an opportunity for each of our team to be blessed with the presence and relationship of these dear saints.

I remember feeling anxious and even intimidated about being involved in this type of ministry some 22 years ago when I first began going to the rest homes. There was the fear in my heart that I would have nothing to say or maybe even say the wrong thing. Little did I know that sort of fear was so very unfounded. All I would need is a genuine smile and a listening ear in order to reap the numerous blessings of being involved in relationship with these people. Sure, from time to time a face disappears from our usual crowd, and when we inquire, we get the news that they are no longer at home in this world. Bittersweet!

Matt. 25:40 - And the King shall answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done to one of the least of my brethren, you have done it to Me."

What a feeling of fulfillment the Rest Home Ministry gives. So little skill is needed for such great reward... both Heavenly and earthly. We meet at 9:50 AM the **third Wednesday of each month** and our visits last from 45 to 60 minutes. If this works into your schedule please come and join us!



The image shows a decorative card with a floral border. The border features various flowers in shades of orange, pink, and green, set against a light green background. The central text is enclosed in a white rectangular box with rounded corners. The text is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The card is placed on a light beige, textured surface.

“

**And let us consider how we
may spur one another on
toward love and good deeds,
not giving up meeting
together, as some are in the
habit of doing, but
encouraging one another—
and all the more as you see
the Day approaching.**

HEBREWS 10:24-25



Day Care Update



Research



Communicate



Present



In March, the Elders commissioned a dedicated group from Grace to explore potential avenues for additional income to enhance our financial support. The Income Discovery Team (IDT) operated under specific guidelines in their evaluation process: 1) Prioritize passive income, 2) Consider active income through fundraising, 3) Assess long-term/short-term sustainability, 4) Ensure ideas align with the Grace's mission, and 5) Thoroughly examine and review all proposed ideas.

During this period, the IDT received approximately 60 ideas from members of our congregation. Each idea was diligently considered, with the team conducting in-depth research on many. Ultimately, the IDT recommended a select few top ideas to the Elders. The standout proposal from this process was the establishment of a Day Care at Grace. This initiative is anticipated to generate a monthly income ranging from \$5,000 to \$7,000 and is designed to operate as a distinct, independent entity.

Currently, the IDT is in the final stages of preparing the lease. Simultaneously, discussions with the Deacons are underway to strategize the implementation of this opportunity. The commitment and hard work of the IDT have been remarkable, and we eagerly anticipate the potential of welcoming new families to Grace through this venture.

Day Care Leaders:

Charlie Throssel, Letitia Sexton, Mike Stromberg, Jonathan Casas

Good Things:

- Outreach opportunity to the community.
- Day Care owner is a Christian and ministry oriented.
- Potential new families to Grace.
- Open communication between Church and Day Care.
- Open communication between ministries regarding Day Care.
- High quality care by a Christian Day Care.
- \$4000/mo. rent to the church. Plus \$1000/mo. for PGE/Propane. Total \$5000/mo..
- Cost-saving measure: no cleaning services needed.
- Minimal changes to classroom walls.
- Day Care handles its kitchen affairs and cleaning/sanitizing.
- Day Care observes Church Calendar events.
- Potential building/play area improvements.
- Superior Day Care experience for the community's kids.
- Potential Day Care Committee for communication.
- Sanctuary won't be used for Day Care purposes.



Day Care Update



Discover Team Timeline -our progress in 2023- (major components)

2023	March	April-May	June	July-September	October - November
Discovery Team Process	Find Discover Team	Collect and Research ideas from the congregation. Narrow Ideas.	Day Care Idea materializes.	Analyze Insurance and Liability Cost Analysis, Research Tax Implications, Budget and Utilities Calculated Lease Considerations	Solicit Questions & Procure answers for Ministry Leaders
Communication	Update Elders	Congregations input. Update Elders	Update Elders	Update Elders/Communication with Day Care Owner/Communication with Ministry Leads begins.	Communication with Lawyers & CPA's regarding Lease & Viability
Day Care Preparations	--	--	--	Communication with Day Care Owner Begins	(October) Day Care owner tours the building/Input from Resource Connection/ Day Care Owner Meeting to Answer Questions/ Day Care Policy & Procedures Received
Elders Involvement	Elders Initial Mandate	Elders Updated	Elders Updated	Elders Updated/July 5th was the official direction to go ahead with the Day Care.	Elders Updated November Propose Lease to Elders
Ministries Involvement	--	--	--	August - Communication with Dana & Children's Ministry	Day Care Fact Sheet Created/New Hope Home Contacted

(2024) January – All Church Leadership Meeting to field questions and give updates. Elders Updated.

February – All Church Annual Meeting/Day Care Article in Annual Report/Day Care Facts Sheet placed on Church Center App.
Elders Updated

CONNECTION



2024



Happy Anniversary

David & Shelly Hartsuyker — 3/05

David & Jane Borgh — 3/14

Duke & Janet Foster — 3/16

Les & Lucia Altermatt—3/20

Darrell & Duranda Marchell— 3/28



Happy Birthday

Lucas Brusatori 03/01

Andrew Casas 03/01

Patty Banks 03/02

Jim Fuente 03/07

Elizabeth Larson 03/07

Zach Larson 03/07

Ethan Krieshok 03/08

Charlie Throssel 03/10

Mark Fine 03/11

Mel Hatch 03/14

Sarah Throssel 03/14

Barbara Richardson 03/17

Jeremiah Cavalli 03/18

Caleb Peckinpaugh 03/20

Andrea Hauser 03/21

Scott Larson 03/22

Brennan Chadwick 03/27

Debby Collins 03/27

Nancy Voight 03/27

Shelley Hartsuyker 03/29

Makenzie Johnson 03/29

Chris Larson 03/29

Abigail Cranfill 03/30

Rita Kerr 03/30

***“Grace expresses two
complementary thoughts: God’s
unmerited favor to us through Christ,
and God’s divine
assistance to us through the
Holy Spirit.”***

—Jerry Bridges

***For further details or questions on the
“happenings at Grace” look on our
WEBSITE (graceofamador.org),
weekly BULLETIN, Church Center, or call the
office.***



March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3 Missions Sunday & Luncheon 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts	4 6:00pm Women's Study & Support Grp	5 9:30am Men's Bible Study 10am Ladies Bible Study	6 6:15- Weds Night Church Prayer Meeting	7 7pm Men's Ministry video series	8 6:30am Men's prayer meeting	9
10 Daylight savings begins 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts	11 6:00pm Women's Study & Support Grp	12 9:30am Men's Bible Study 10am Ladies Bible Study	13 6:15- Weds Night Church Prayer Meeting	14 Deacon meeting 6pm prayer 6:30 meeting begins	15 6:30 am Men's prayer meeting 7pm Men's Ministry video series	16
17 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv 3pm Boy Scouts	18 6:00pm Women's Study & Support Grp	19 9:30am Men's Bible Study 10am Ladies Bible Study	20 9:50am Rest Home Ministry 6:15- Weds Night Church Prayer Meeting	21	22 6:30am Men's prayer meeting	23 9-12 Church work day
24 PALM SUNDAY 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv Children's Choir Performance 3pm Boy Scouts	25 6:00pm Women's Study & Support Grp	26 9:30am Men's Bible Study 10am Ladies Bible Study	27 6:15- Weds Night Church Prayer Meeting	28	29 GOOD FRIDAY 6:30am Men's prayer meeting	30
31 EASTER SUNDAY 6:00am Sunrise Service No 9 am Sunday School 10:30 Worship Srv						