

Grace of Christ Presbyterian Church

Together at Grace

GRACE ALIVE

Loving God & Loving Others

Iglesia Presbiteriana Gracia de Cristo

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2026 VOL 158

YAKIMAGRACE.COM





Pastor

— *Rev. Dr. Gregory Wagenfuhr*
Lead Pastor



Dear Friends of Grace of Christ,

Over the past year we've been working to rediscover the heart of the church in the Bible. What did God establish his people for? We've come to some solid theological conclusions: Church is the people of God, on the mission of God who is reconciling all things to himself, becoming the image of God in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, participating in God's glory. This makes us ambassadors of reconciliation. Now that we've established these theological foundations, we can move on to consider what that means for us at Grace of Christ in Yakima in 2026 and beyond. Rather than asking how we can grow, how we can improve our budget, how we attract new people to attend on Sunday, we wanted to ask the more basic question... how do we best be the people of God today?

We answered that with, "by being ambassadors of reconciliation." The time has come to translate this into a practical strategy. How are we going to take our Presbyterian heritage, our institutional resources, our incredible building, and above all, our incredible people, and think about them afresh for the next generation? What things are we going to do? How are we going to staff it? How are we going to make it sustainable? How are we going to ensure we're pursuing God's glory and not visions of our own glory? These are the questions we've established a strategy team to address, and the initial answers will help us pave the way toward a new year and a new strategy as we come to October and November.

We aren't planning on changing the core of Sunday morning services. Instead, we're thinking about how Sunday worship should be the goal of a community that celebrates and mourns its genuine life-together in the presence of God, rather than the gateway that draws unbelievers into a worshipping community. In other words, we're going to imagine what a Christian embassy community looks like first, before we discuss what a Christian worshipping community looks like.

In a world of social media, artificial intelligence, political division, international trade, the decline of traditional family life, the shrinking of real wages in the face of inflation and

other cost pressures, what does the good news of Jesus have to say to a hurting world now and how do we create a community of reconciliation in a world that thrives on division? And what does a community that resists the world, by revealing the Word look like today?

Stay tuned to this space and others as we bring you exciting updates as we honor the past and imagine the future.



Olivia Hart, GOC
Director of Strategy

In order to achieve this, we've hired Olivia Hart, initially in a part-time capacity. Olivia is our Director of Strategy, a position that will greatly benefit this time of thinking about retooling for the future. Olivia is Vice Principal and a teacher at La Salle High School here in Yakima, and has a wealth of experience in ministry and educational spaces. She and I share a background in academic accreditation and administration. And if there's one thing I can tell you about academic spaces, it's that a commitment to rigor and quality is the bedrock of thriving schools. I think the same can be true of churches as well, though with the obvious balance of pastoral care. Olivia will be instrumental in enabling me to focus on teaching and pastoral work as she helps research, plan, evaluate, and design a future strategy and business plan.

The future of the church is bright, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear that the good news of Jesus Christ is the message the world is begging to hear in our time. If we can authentically embody the Word of God as his people, there's no telling what God can do through us! Join in praying for and continuing to support the community at Grace of Christ.

Blessings in Christ,
Rev. Dr. Gregory Wagenfuhr

Deacons

Grace of Christ Church Family,

Three years ago, I lost my mom, and my sister and I started planning her Celebration of Life. However, on the day of her Celebration, everything was put on me to handle, and I was busy setting up the tables, centerpieces, food, and drinks, as well as cleaning up after it all. I was so exhausted that I wasn't able to say "Goodbye" to my Mom. I don't even think I could tell you who all came to the service. I didn't get to hear the stories from friends that traveled to say their goodbyes. I was left tired and grieving alone.

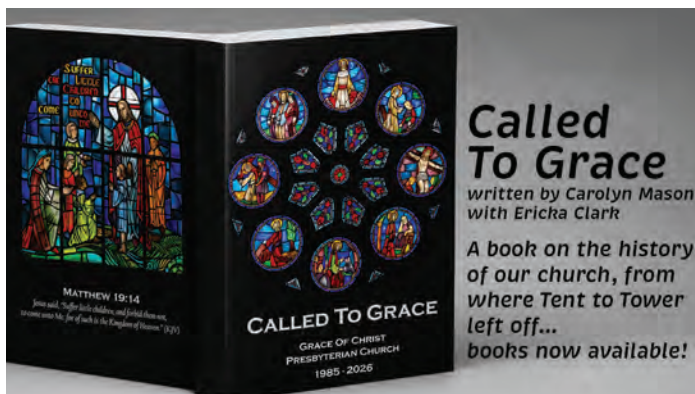
Fast forward to last year when I lost my Dad; I came to the church for assistance with his funeral. The GOC deacons did such a wonderful job! The service was special and heartfelt, and the reception was thoughtfully personalized, creating a meaningful way to say goodbye to my Dad! The support of our Deacons, allowed me to grieve and say goodbye – it was a gift that meant more than words can express.



Kick Off Sunday

Sunday | Sept 13 | Grace of Christ North Lawn

Join us on the North Lawn between services for Hot Dogs, Shaved Ice, Games, Live Music, No-Cost Raffle w/ Prizes & Face Painting! Everyone is welcome!



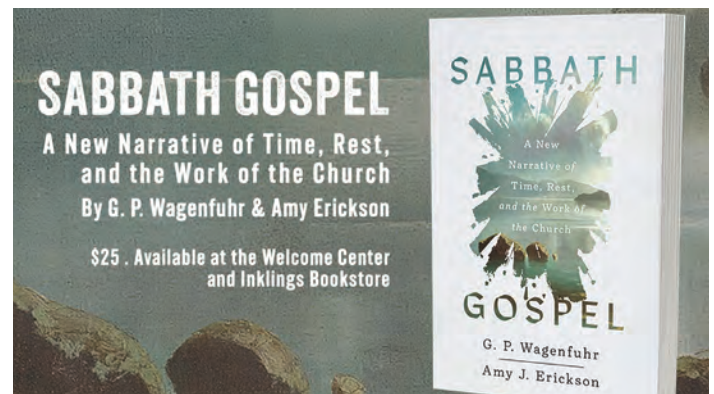
Now, I need to say THANK YOU to our congregation for allowing me to answer God's calling and serve as one of your Deacons. As well as allowing me to take the lead for our church's memorial receptions. When Dorothy Stotz and I volunteered to fill the lead position for the church's memorial receptions last winter, we knew we were filling a large void left by Peggy Steere, which is why there are two of us.

For those of you who have not experienced this, when someone is planning a funeral, they are already reeling with the loss, plus all the tasks to handle the estate; all these decisions need to be answered within weeks of this loss, all while the grief is fresh and raw. As deacons, we want to help alleviate as much of the stress as we can; this is our gift to the grieving family, a moment in time of not having to think about what needs to happen and to trust and know they will be taken care of with love.

I pour my heart into every aspect of the reception, knowing the family is grieving, and my calling is to help them through this special moment by letting them know they are not alone. These receptions are precious moments to allow the family and friends to laugh and cry as they say goodbye, to help them heal. The transformation of the family's mood after the reception is so rewarding; they seem more at peace knowing they have honored their loved one, and they were given time to grieve with the support from their church family. This small moment of peace gives them the support they need to carry on. Of course, this is all possible because of the generous help of our entire church family, all the volunteers who help prep, set up, cook, serve, and clean up.

If you are interested in hearing more about our Deacon ministry and possibly join this wonderful team, please reach out; we would love to share with you.

– Siegie Daniel

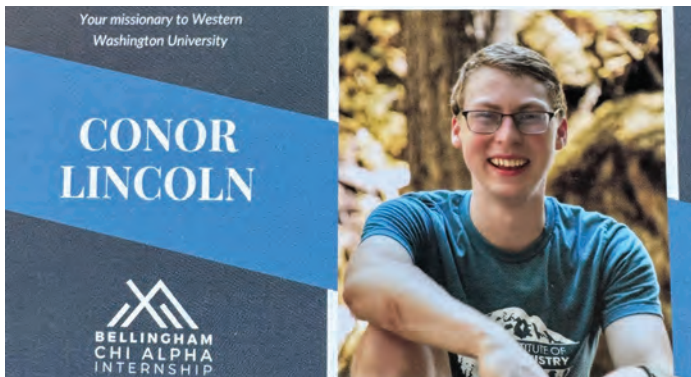


Mission Ministry



**Find Your Mission.
Find Your Passion.**

Conor Lincoln, Campus Christian Fellowship



Greetings Grace Family!

It's been four years since I have regularly attended Grace as a student at A.C. Davis High School, and this spring I graduated from the Honors College at Western Washington University as I earned my degree in Economics/Political Science with emphases in energy policy and interdisciplinary studies. After an intense four years of studying, working, leading, and serving, I'm following God's next steps for me to be on mission to university students at this surprisingly strategic hub for U.S. missions here at home.



Conor Lincoln serving at WWU Campus Christian Fellowship

I'm joining a faithful missions team known as Chi Alpha, organized under the auspices of the Assemblies of God, to support an amazing cross denominational outreach ministry at Western known as Campus Christian Fellowship. This community radically reoriented my own faith as a freshman, witnessing how Jesus exposed my circumstantial faith and began building it on His foundation instead of the faulty sand of the career in politics I had always desired most deeply. While God hasn't permanently shut those doors as I continue to pray for how He will choose to use my life beyond these next two years, I have been decisively led into reaching and discipling students at Western in this excellent internship program that will see Jesus build me up as a more faithful disciple and disciple-maker for the rest of my life.

Every week during the academic year at WWU, I will be continuing to lead student small groups, meet with students I am pouring into as they dive deeper into the Gospel and what it really means for their lives, and support our regular worship service that CCF facilitates for 150+ students. As I transition from being a devoted student leader in our ministry to serving full-time as a campus missionary, I will be delving into advanced and practical ministry training, from Biblical studies and theological issues to preaching "labs" and beyond throughout the year, as well as learning how to lead student missions to other campuses.

Thank you for your prayers and support as this year unfolds. I've been able to spend precious weeks here in Yakima this summer as I have been building my prayer team for my ministry and raising financial support for my monthly budget as a fully support-raised missionary. I have been so blessed with the support and prayers of the Missions Ministry Team, Foundation, Temple Choir, and so many partners here at Grace. I've been so encouraged to witness how this church supports missions, and I want to lift you up throughout the year as I share monthly updates via newsletter.

As a student, I've already seen incredible fruit across our community and in my own small group known as "core." From guys who have been routinely attending church for as long as they can remember to guys who have never known God's grace (sometimes, the same people!), faith is made new when they step into genuine fellowship that disciples their hearts in following Jesus as adults, grounded in the Word and stretched in a secular world that beautifully challenges their trust in God to grow. I'll be continuing to live in a fantastic ministry house of 11 guys and will be co-leading them as their administrator.

Please pray for:

- Abundant wisdom, discernment, and trust in God for me, especially in dating my girlfriend as we pray about marriage
- Missions pathways to new and returning students, especially in WWU's Model United Nations team
- New student leaders to say "yes" to serving the Lord on mission, from leading small groups to worship
- The gospel being preached across WWU's 14,000 student campus

**To join my newsletter, get in touch with me at:
(360) 328-3765 or conorl@ccfministry.com!**

*Thank you for sending me, Grace!
- Conor Lincoln*

Prayer cards for Conor are available in the Garden Room.

Mission Ministry

Peter Whitney, Camp Ghormley



Peter Whitney serving at Camp Ghormley

I have been coming to Camp Ghormley since I was in the 4th grade. I came to four years of main camp, then after the COVID-19 Pandemic, I started attending Water-ski Camp as a camper. At the same time that I began attending Ski Camp, I also began volunteering at main camp, first in the kitchen, then for two years on the program team. The summer before my senior year of high school, I was hired as a maintenance assistant, then last summer I joined our college summer staff as a counselor, and I am reprising that role this summer.

Camp Ghormley has always been such a special place for me. It is really, truly my second home. When I drive up into the forest and step out of my car at Ghormley for the first time every summer, I take a deep breath and feel a deep sense of peace. That sense of peace doesn't always last as we tackle the challenges of the summer, but the feeling of being home does.

Over the last six summers of working at camp, I have seen staffers come and go, and more campers than I can possibly remember come through our camp. These are campers from so many different backgrounds, who come from all around the state and country (sometimes even different countries!), but who are all welcomed with open arms to this place that loves everyone unconditionally.

Our mission is *"Lives transformed by Jesus through exceptional camping experiences."* I have seen this happen in my own life, as my greatest seasons of spiritual growth have happened while at camp. Ghormley has provided me with the jumping-off point to facilitate my faith journey, and my mentors at camp have discipled me through the years. This is not an uncommon experience. This summer, we have four new summer staffers who were previously campers. And listening to campers talk about their experiences week after week, it is clear that Camp Ghormley is a special, sacred place.

As I write this, I am preparing for our last week of camp this summer. I am excited for the campers to arrive and for the moments that we will share. I pray that each camper arriving has a heart open and fertile for the messages they will hear and the love being poured out on them. I pray that each staff member does everything they can to make this an exceptional camping experience. And I pray that lives are transformed by Jesus this week, whether we see it or not.

– Peter Whitney

Epilogue to Five Conversations: An Update From One of our Ministry Partners

July 6, 2026

"I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." – Matthew 16.18

Dear Prayer Partner,

Jesus promises to build his church. He will raise his church to full growth and maturity despite everything hell raises against it. Everything includes the big barriers, and the small and mundane. The reason I shared with you the five conversations with the young men at our English language church here is because they are part of the core group preparing to start a new local language church. I see in them beautiful saving faith but also interests that seem frivolous or irrelevant. These young men remind me of myself not so long ago! And through people like these young men, Christ builds his church.

Please pray for grace and wisdom for a small group of us from my English language church here who are working with Philip (pseudonym), a mature and well-qualified man who will lead the new church plant. Pray for us as we continue to meet and talk with these young men, that we would all walk in and by our union with Jesus in his death, burial and resurrection, and discern his perfect timing for the new church to begin.

Pray for me, for much fruit of the Spirit, as I transition to giving most of my time to church, including by God's grace serving future local language churches, such as the one to be led by Philip.

Grace and peace!

P.S. If you have questions or want more details, ask a Missions Ministry Team Member.

Prayer cards for our unnamed missionary friend are available in the Garden Room.

Mission Ministry



Our Recent Visit to Sacred Road

On Tuesday, June 9th, a group from Grace of Christ went to visit Sacred Road Ministries in White Swan, one of the missions we support. We went on a Tuesday to see the youth group in action, which is a large part of their ministry to the community. Sixty-five young people came, had dinner and games, worship and teaching.



Tuesday Night Youth Group at Sacred Road Ministries



GCPC visiting Sacred Road Ministries in White Swan

The kids are picked up from their homes in buses and vans and delivered safely home again at the end. We had dinner with the students and got to interact with them for a few minutes before observing their activities. It is eye-opening and inspiring to hear about and see the daily outreach and intentional meeting of practical needs in the community, sharing the love of Jesus in word and deed.

Pray for Sacred Road, and plan to go the next time we take a group out there.



Thrift for a Purpose



Organizing your closet or house for the upcoming fall season? Want to help BOTH the Yakima Union

Gospel Mission (YUGM) and Grace of Christ?

Announcing **YUGM's Thrift Stores Gift Card Program** where you can bring gently used items to one of the YUGM's thrift stores. There, if you name Grace of Christ as your choice of recipient during drop-off, Grace will receive thrift shop gift cards—proportionate to your donation—to give to people in need in our community. And, by supporting the thrift shops, your donations will in turn, help to fund the Mission and its programs.

You can donate clothing, shoes, accessories, home décor, housewares, linens, furniture, electronics, toys, jewelry, and more to the following thrift store locations:

Selah Thrift – 111 Pleasant Ave, Selah

Mission Thrift – 2011 W Lincoln Ave, Yakima

Summit Thrift – 5606 Summitview Ave, Yakima

(However, due to safety concerns no used mattresses or baby equipment such as car seats, cribs, or helmets will be accepted.) In addition, while you are at one of the stores, you might as well check out the merchandise yourself, as all purchases help move people from homelessness to wholeness.

The Yakima Union Gospel Mission has a long-cherished relationship with Grace of Christ. According to the Yakima Herald Republic, YUGM took root in 1936 when five men met at the First Presbyterian Church of Yakima to address struggling and unemployed individuals finding refuge on North Front Street. The initial location at 21 South Front Street

Mission Ministry



Mention Grace of Christ as your choice of recipient during your donation drop-off at a UGM Thrift Store

consisted of a soup kitchen and bare bones style dormitory. Now located at 1300 North 1st Street in Yakima, present day operations focus upon a holistic approach to help individuals move from homelessness to wholeness.

Part of this encompassment means that YUGM offers more than just an overnight stay or a stopgap effort to the 150-200 souls who on any given night would otherwise be on the street.

“The Yakima Union Gospel Mission doesn’t just have an emergency shelter,” explains Chief Executive Officer Scott Thielen during an informational gathering on July 14th at West Side Church for area churches/pastors to learn more about the current happenings at the mission. **“It has built a developmental process spanning over two years to complete that leads people into the direction of wholeness.”** He also states that part of wholeness includes following Christ.

Come autumn, think of the Mission and how you can partner with it via the Mission thrift stores. Donate goods, shop at the stores, or volunteer. These are practical ways churches can invest to bring support and guidance around homelessness, trauma, addiction, and ministry engagement. More information can be found at yugm.org.

Praying for Huichol in Mexico

On June 7th, there was an exhibit in the Fireside Room on the Huichol people group of central Mexico. They are the last unreached indigenous People group in Mexico, meaning that there are fewer than 2% of believers in Jesus among them. But there are some believers, and there are missionaries working among them to share the gospel. However, the terrain is so remote and rugged that accessibility is a problem. That is why this people group has managed to retain so much of their ancient culture and religion.

The interest in the Huichol came about because of the Perspectives classes that Mariana Giles, Ana Lucas - Garcia, and Bladimir River, took, Mariana in person and the others online. As part of the class, students are required to do a culminating integrative project, which all three did on the Huichol. Bladimir came to the Missions Ministry Team last year and asked if we could encourage people to pray for this people group. So we launched a series of articles in Grace Alive, and then followed up with this exhibit, magnified greatly thanks to Rich Milhorn's expert printing and matting of beautiful photographs of Huichol people by professional photographer Marianne Mangold, who graciously invited us to keep the prints to raise money for missions.

There remain two photographs available for a donation to Grace of Christ Missions! Contact Rebecca Whitmore if you are interested in acquiring one of them. And please pick up a prayer card from the Missions table in the Garden Room to remind you to keep praying for the Huichol.



Huichol Photography & Informational Exhibit at GOC



Youth and Young Adults

— Kara Candid
Student Ministry Director

Luke 10:36-37 – “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”



Repainting our youth room

I have been realizing, lately, that many of my assumptions about “What God requires of me” (and those around me) were formed in my childhood, when structure and clarity were a priority and thus the mysteries of God were lovingly simplified in a way that my young and finite mind could understand. I am grateful for the foundations of humility, wisdom, kindness, selflessness, prayer and other attributes of Jesus that were ingrained in me. But without being balanced by a fuller understanding of the mysteries of God’s character, other assumptions have settled in alongside those good foundations. Things like striving to “be holy as God is holy” to the point of adopting the exhausting habits of a perfectionist and impossibly high standards. Or taking the words “consider others to be better than yourself” to such an extreme that I disown my own worth and adopt an unsustainable practice of self-sacrifice. Another example being: A focus that is so homed in on the proverbs of wisdom... on the “do’s and don’ts”... that I began to carry the weight of responsibility for my welfare and that of the entire world’s on the back of my own choices and decisions.

As I follow God’s invitation to become aware of my destructive habits and their roots in what I had mistakenly adopted to be “Godly values”, I have begun to look around me at



Student Ministry interns plan for the 2026-27 school year over coffee

the youth and young adults that I am overseeing and think to myself: “God help me preserve these precious humans from carrying the same millstones I have!” I have begun to ask myself how I can teach the truth of the proverbs about consequences; while also conveying the absolute grace and mercy and abundance of God as well. How do I coax them away from self-centeredness and invite them to care for others; while also cementing their absolute value and goodness as God’s perfect creation.

While we wrestle with this holy task of coming alongside our youth and young adults with hopes to share the freedom of Christ without the slavery of religion or the illusions of empire, I take comfort in the compass point given in Luke 10:36-37. How can I be a neighbor to them? Well, I come alongside them exactly where they are and with compassion. I begin, not with my own agenda of which attributes of God are most important to emphasize, but rather with understanding what matters to THEM right now and having compassion for that.

The true love of Jesus shows up in our compassion. If I point them, in their struggle, to Jesus, I can be sure that Jesus will point them to the attribute they most need to know. Selflessness or self-worth? Discipline or grace? Confidence or humility? And when we make a practice of that... when we practice seeing our youth and young adults with compassion for what matters to them right now... helping them point themselves at Jesus in the midst of that situation... and allowing Jesus to show Himself in the way that they most need His life, love, power or light, then we can rest assured that we’ve done our best to lead them in the most loving way. Not to worship some particular value or character attribute. But to experience the reality that JESUS IS ALIVE. JESUS LOVES YOU. JESUS IS THE WAY... the way to ALL the truth... and the BEST of LIFE. And He can be counted on to light your path in any place and at any time down the road.

Youth and Young Adults



Camp Ghormley Water Ski Camp



Grace Students gather for a summer swim



TACO TUESDAY (Replacing Youth Group)
Tuesdays | Sept 15 – Dec 22 | 6-8pm | GCPC Gym

NEW – High School and Middle School Students now meet at Grace of Christ on Tuesdays for Tacos and Youth Group.



Hiking trip with mentees

JOIN US! – CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday Club	Sundays	Sept 13th-Dec 20th	9am-10am	GCPC
Taco Tuesdays! (Replacing Youth Group)	Tuesdays	Sept 15th-Dec 22nd	6pm-8pm	GCPC Gym
High School Home Group	Fridays	Sept 25th-Dec 11th	6pm	The Strother's Home
Cider Press	Friday	Sept 18th	6pm	The Strother's Home
Fair Outing	Tuesday	Sept 29th	4pm-9pm	
Nerf Night and Parent Council	Tuesday	October 27th	6pm	GCPC Gym
Pumpkin Carving	Friday	October 30th	6pm	The Merrill's Home
Young Adult Leadership Training	Wednesdays		10am-11:30am	GCPC Lounge
Young Adult Bible Study	Wednesdays		1pm-2:30pm	GCPC Lounge



Family & Children's Ministry

— Sarah Huck
Family & Children's
Ministry Director

TASTE OF AFRICA

A VBS EXPERIENCE ROOTED IN CULTURE, COMMUNITY, & GOD'S LOVE



When I began dreaming with God about what He desired for our children this summer, the vision took an unexpected and beautiful turn. Africa kept coming to my mind, its colors, its rhythms, its stories, its people. I sensed the Lord inviting us into something deeper than a theme. He was inviting us into connection.

In the past, I had always used pre-packaged VBS curriculum. But this year, I felt led to create something unique, something rooted in culture, community, and authentic experiences. Taste of Africa became a week where children could encounter God through cooking, worship, storytelling, crafts, games, and prayer – all shaped by the richness of African heritage.

Looking back, I don't believe it was accidental that every person chosen to lead a station had meaningful ties to Africa. God wove together a team whose stories, passions, and lived experiences became the heartbeat of the week.

Bible Stories with Rebecca Whitmore

I intentionally asked Rebecca Whitmore to lead our Bible stories. Having grown up in Cameroon, Rebecca brought a depth of knowledge and personal experience that was invaluable. She helped the children see Scripture through a broader lens—reminding them that God's family spans continents and cultures.

If you haven't had the chance to sit under Rebecca's teaching, I strongly encourage you to do so. She is a gifted communicator who held the children's full attention, not only through Bible stories but through her personal photo albums

and artifacts from Africa. These treasures were a highlight for the kids, giving them a tangible connection to the world beyond their own.

Prayer with Tina Wanamaker

Our prayer station was led by Tina Wanamaker, whose ministry experience in Africa shaped the gentle, grounded environment she created. Having visited multiple times, Tina shared stories and insights that made prayer feel real and accessible.

One child told me, "She is just so calm and makes me feel so safe." That is the gift Tina brought—an atmosphere where children could slow down, listen, and discover that prayer is not a ritual but a relationship with their Heavenly Father.

Worship with Kara and Valerie Kanu

Valerie Kanu, who assisted Kara with worship and grew up in Nigeria, was the unexpected gift we didn't know we needed. Her joy, energy, and love for music were contagious. Through authentic African worship songs, the children learned that worship looks and sounds different around the world—and yet we are united in praising the same God.

Crafts with Michele Elledge

Michele Elledge brought creativity, fun, and vibrant energy to the craft station. With strong ties to Kenya, she filled the space with imagination while sharing her own stories and artifacts. The children didn't just make crafts—they learned about another part of God's beautiful world through Michele's experiences and enthusiasm.

Cooking with Chef Gilbert Kalombo

One of the most unique parts of the week was our cooking station, led by Chef Gilbert Kalombo. Born and raised in Zambia, Gilbert brought his expertise, culture, and personal story to life through food. The children experienced Africa in a hands-on way—smelling, tasting, and learning that food is more than nourishment. It is storytelling. It is tradition. It is hospitality.

Games with Gerardo & Jenny Mendoza & Joseph Leary

Our game station, led by Gerardo and Jenny Mendoza along with Joseph Leary, added joy and energy to the week. While they didn't have personal ties to Africa, they played a vital role in creating a welcoming environment where children could laugh, play, and build friendships. Their presence reminded us that community is built through shared joy.

A Moment of Humor and Insight

Even my own son captured the fun challenge of the week when, after several days of African foods and culture, he asked, “When are we going to make American food!” We all laughed—but his question also highlighted the beauty of what was happening. The children were stepping outside what was familiar, trying new things, and discovering the incredible diversity of God’s world.

The Heart of It All

One of the greatest gifts of this VBS was watching the children realize that God’s kingdom is much bigger than what they see every day. Africa was not just a theme—it was an invitation to learn, listen, celebrate, and appreciate the beauty of God’s people around the world.

My prayer was that the children would leave not only remembering the crafts they made, the food they tasted, or the songs they sang, but that they would remember they are part of a much bigger family—the family of God.

Every volunteer who served at Taste of Africa brought something unique. Together, they created a picture of what the Church is meant to be: people of different backgrounds, gifts, and experiences coming together to love and serve the next generation.

I am deeply grateful for every person who helped make this week possible—and for the way God faithfully brought together the exact people needed to create something truly special for our children.



Family & Children's Ministry

Greetings Grace Family,

Never in all my years serving as your Family and Children's Director has a child looked at me and asked, "Can you help us, Sarah?"

A few Sundays ago, I was introducing our lesson on Mary anointing Jesus' feet when one of my second graders quietly interrupted me.

"Can I talk to you privately?"

I assured her we would make time after the lesson. When class was over, I pulled up a chair beside her and asked, "Is now a good time?"

She looked at me with urgency and said, "Yes."

I gently asked, "What's going on?"

With tears in her eyes, she said, "My dad is really mean to my grandma, and it hurts me. I'm scared for my grandma, and I'm mad at my dad for being mean... Can you help us, Sarah?"

I have heard children ask many questions over the years. I've comforted scraped knees, dried tears, answered difficult questions about God, and prayed through countless fears. But never had I been asked those words.

Can you help us?

In that moment, my heart cried out to God. In my mind, I imagined bursting through the gates of heaven, throwing open the courtroom doors, marching straight to the Judge's throne, sweeping every book from the desk, and crying out,

"Enough! Enough! Send Michael. Send Gabriel. I don't care who You send—but send them now! This tyranny of abuse is over. Now."

As vivid as that picture was in my mind, I was still sitting beside a little girl whose world felt frightening and uncertain.

She wasn't asking for a theological explanation.

She wasn't asking for an easy answer.

She was asking whether someone would help.

So I did what I know to do. I listened. I prayed with her. I reminded her that God sees every tear and hears every cry. I gave her some practical tools, and I made sure the appropriate next steps were taken so she would not have to carry this burden alone.

As I reflected later, I couldn't shake her question.

How many children are silently carrying burdens they were never meant to bear?

How many are simply waiting for a safe adult to notice... to listen... to care?

Church, our children are watching us. They are learning whether the body of Christ is a place where people are seen, protected, and loved. Every conversation, every smile, every prayer, every moment spent investing in a child matters more than we often realize.

Jesus welcomed children not because they were the church of tomorrow, but because they are part of His Kingdom today. Sometimes the greatest ministry we will ever do is simply to stop, kneel beside a child, and let them know they are not alone.

Please continue praying for the children in our church and in our community. Pray that they would know the love of Christ. Pray for families who are hurting. Pray for wisdom for those of us who walk alongside them. And pray that Grace will always be a place where a child feels safe enough to ask for help—and where, by God's grace, they find people willing to answer.

*Grace and peace,
Sarah*





Grace of Christ Preschool

— Becca Mailand
yakimagrace.com/preschool

Changing Seasons

This year we have changes coming to our classroom... new decorations, new furniture, new carpet, new paint, new students, and a new direction! When I took the director position in 2021, it was to try and rekindle a program with only 6 kids enrolled for fall. No one knew if this program would continue or if it should close, but we decided to keep the school open as long as parents wanted their children to be here. Over the years our preschool has stabilized, and I am confident in our staff, board, and church family to keep this program going.

It's been 5 years and my role is changing. Our enrollment is full for this school year. Our reputation is solid. The future is bright and ready for change. I'm stepping back from a hands-on director role this year and working to support the preschool through my job in the office. I'll still help with administration and stay on the board to help with fundraising and enrollment. I'm listening for how God will ask me to use my energy and talents next.

We should be so excited to witness the changes happening, the growth in our teachers, the stability of our program, and the opportunity to step back and see what God has done and all that He is still planning to do! Pray for the teachers and students as they start this year. And pray for wisdom and vision to see where our preschool is heading in the future!



Preschool Pie Sale Fundraiser!

Order in October and Pick-up in November

Preschool pie sales start Sunday, October 11. Purchase your handmade Dutch Apple Pie from our preschool for your holiday celebration! They are made by many church and parent volunteers, with ingredients donated by grocery stores and companies around the valley. Pies come ready to bake or can be frozen for at least 3 months. Thanks for supporting our preschool!



S'mores, Flowers, Bubbles and Chalk Art



Hitting some balls like the Yakima Pippens



A special guest visits preschoolers in the gym



Hospitality

— Linda Mathews

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we did not give up. Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” – Galatians 6:9-10

Welcoming the Fall Season

We are in the fall season, after having experienced fires, complete with loss, smokey air, intense heat and concerns over water supply. *“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, to plant and to uproot, to kill and to heal, to tear down and to build, to weep and to laugh, to mourn and to dance” Ecclesiastes 3:1-3* This is just a small portion of things that change in the seasons of our lives. *“He has made everything beautiful in its time.” Ecclesiastes 3:11.* Let us not be weary.

In early June our church welcomed 20+ cyclists with the Fuller Institute to spend the night in our building. They were just beginning their trek across the US, doing projects along the way. They have stopped in Yakima a few other times over the years, staying in our church. We loved welcoming this fun cycling group (picture below)! Our hospitality team greeted them with ice-cold beverages and snacks, followed by a delicious dinner that evening and breakfast the next morning. We sat with them, heard their stories, and broke bread together. It was a fun evening!

Things are ramping up for the Hospitality Team! We have multiple activities on the horizon and are attempting to change how we do things, making it easier for volunteers to sign up. For example, the time slots for the Welcome Center have been

shortened so volunteers can still attend most of the service. We have recruited our Sunday custodian Stephen to help the Refreshment team—he brews the coffee and keeps us all happy (and caffeinated!) in doing so!



Refreshments: Our Sunday refreshment team is looking for a few more to join! Set out cookies, water, and condiments for the coffee & tea. Be present during the fellowship time to greet people, and restock items as needed. It is a great way to help behind the scenes – we’d love to welcome you on board, let us know if this interests you.



Ushers: Have you met Donnie? If you have, he has most likely asked you to consider ushering on Sunday. You’ve probably noticed how much fun this group has – they laugh and offer warm handshakes as they hand out flyers on Sunday mornings. This team is always welcoming new people, just let Donnie know you are interested and he will make it happen!



Greeters & Welcome Center: Please take note of the new, shortened, time slots for the Welcome Center. We hope this makes it more appealing to all of you considering joining our team. These people help make Grace the warm, inviting place it is. You get to welcome in friends, visitors, families and people looking for a place to belong.

A smile and a hello are all you need to do this job! We love having people at the entrances, including as you walk into the sanctuary. You can greet once a month, or even once a week if it’s your jam!

People at the Welcome Center get to connect, answer questions (we help provide the answers you’ll most likely need!), and show our church family and visitors the goodness of God through the gift of hospitality.

If you have questions, please contact either Linda Mathews or Cathy Campbell. We will be happy to help!



Music at Grace



Ring a ding ding! BELLS OF GRACE

Fall Ringing Roundup is a one-day event of ringers from eastern Washington. Anyone know where Uniontown is? We have a handful of folks coming from this little burg. Guest director, Kendra Symonds of Portland, OR, will lead a day of rehearsal, concluding with an informal concert at the end of the day. This year's event finds Yakima as one of the host venues on Saturday, September 26th. Yours truly is spearheading the local event.

Pieces we are looking forward to playing this fall include “*Owed to Joy*” arr. Jim Winslet, a fun unaccompanied arrangement of variations of Beethoven’s “*Ode to Joy*.” “*We Gather Together*” arr. Matt Johnson, a quartet piece that will challenge our ringers with bell sharing, is an appropriate tune for the Thanksgiving season. Mt. Olive Lutheran Church has invited us to play for their “*Longest Night*” service on December 21st. Advent is a great time to find good music for worship. Hopefully a quartet piece will be played at the Christmas Eve “*Carols and Candles*” service at Grace of Christ.

As we have ringers from Mt. Olive and Bethlehem Lutheran Churches and St. Timothy’s Episcopal, we will play at each of those locations throughout the year. They love having us share our music!

Are you intrigued by the bells? Think you want to give it a try? You are welcome to join us with no commitment required. Come play alongside us or commit to one “season” by rehearsing for six weeks, then play in church just one Sunday. You must have basic music reading skills. Contact me, Julie Hunziker, at jbhunziker@gmail.com or (530) 209-4329.

Bells of Grace will resume rehearsals Tuesday, August 25th, at 6:30 in the Mid-Hi Room.

– Julie Hunziker



An Invitation to Join the TEMPLE CHOIR

One of the great privileges of the church is lifting our voices together in praise to God. If you have ever considered singing in the choir, I would like to personally invite you to join the Temple Choir. Our choir is open to adults of all ages and musical backgrounds. No audition is required. While the ability to read music or sight-sing is certainly an asset, it is not a prerequisite. A willing spirit, a commitment to faithful participation, and a desire to glorify God through music are what matter most.

The Temple Choir rehearses each **Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m.** and gathers each **Sunday morning at 10:15 a.m.** to prepare for the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Whether you have sung in choirs for many years or are considering joining one for the first time, I encourage you to come and experience the joy and fellowship of leading God’s people in worship through music. I would be delighted to welcome you personally. If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please don’t hesitate to contact me. jason@yakimagrace.com

– Jason Wickson



Wanna Join the PRAISE BAND?

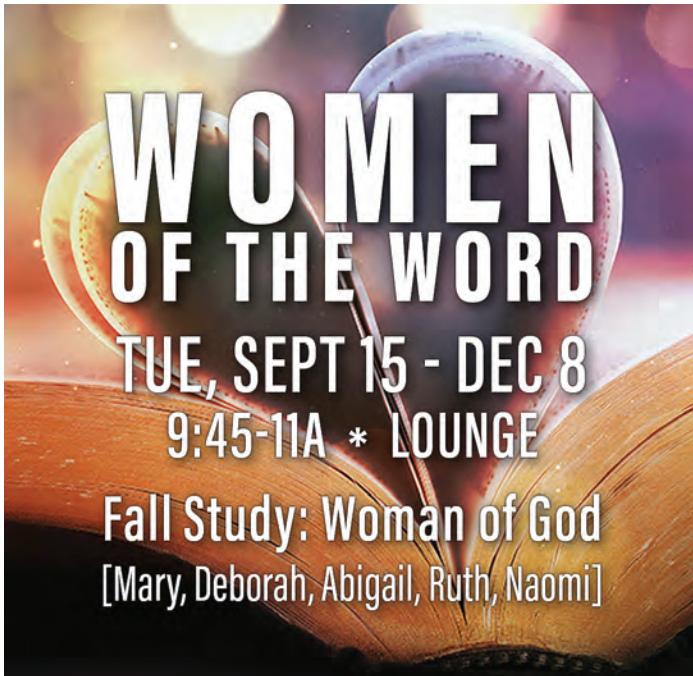
Do you love to sing? Love to play an instrument? Do you love to worship, whether you have formal training with any of those things or not? Would you like to use that love to honor God and help others find Him in worship as well? Come join the praise band! We would love to have you join us, no matter your skill or talent level, and we would love to see how God uses you in that act of service.

We meet for rehearsal on Thursday nights from 6pm to 8ish, Sunday mornings starting at 7:30, and we have a monthly fellowship hangout typically on the first Monday of the month. Connect with Nathan, or any other worship team member, and we’ll find a way to get you plugged in. While we’re here, if you’ve been around anyone who should be sharing their talents, please encourage them to connect with us, too! Nathan@YakimaGrace.com

– Nathan Gross



Women's Ministry



WOW Women of the Word

Tuesdays | Sept 15 | 9:45AM-11AM | Grace Lounge

The fall session of WOW (Women of the Word) a Bible study for Grace women, begins September 15th, 9:45AM -11:00AM and meets in the Grace Lounge. Our fall Life-Guide study is entitled *“Woman of God”* and per author Cindy Bunch *“will explore what it means that God has created us as women who are uniquely gifted.”*

We’re blessed with a team of teaching leaders who will guide us through a look at five women in this study—Mary, Deborah, Abigail, Ruth and Naomi. We’ll be encouraged and challenged by their Godly attributes and obedience.

Please feel welcome to invite friends and family members. Join us for this time of fellowship and growing together in Christ. WOW begins September 15th, ends December 8th; meets 9:45-11:00 AM in the Grace Lounge.

Donna Fuhlman or Dorothy Stoltz are happy to answer any questions.



Sisters in Faith Fall Study

Thursdays | Sept 24 | 6PM-8PM | Grace of Christ

Thursdays at 5:30PM for social; 6PM – 8PM for the book study. Classes will begin on September 24th and run weekly through November 12th. Meet in the church lounge.

If you’re so busy—caring, serving, working, and trying so hard—that you can’t even hear God’s voice anymore, then this might just be what you need! *It’s All Under Control* is a book for every woman who is hanging on tight and trying to get each day right—yet finding that life often feels out of control and chaotic. Perfect right before the holidays to help de-stress your life.

It’s All Under Control: A Journey of Letting Go, Hanging On, and Finding a Peace You Almost Forgot Was Possible by Jennifer Dukes Lee.

Class is limited to 35 women; used books are available in class for \$10 each.



Camp Ghormley

YOU'RE INVITED! FALL FUNDRAISING DINNER & AUCTION

SPONSORED BY GRACE FOUNDATION OF YAKIMA

Saturday, October 3 | 5:00-8:00 PM | West Valley Church Yakima

**Join us at West Valley Church on October 3rd
for a wonderful evening of fun and support!**

Enter to win amazing prizes at the silent auction, enjoy a delicious dinner prepared by the fabulous Camp Ghormley staff, and show your support for Camp Ghormley!

RSVP HERE:



Can't attend? Give Online: campghormley.com



Sunday Services

9AM SUNDAY SERVICE

- 9am** Contemporary style worship, classes for children of all ages. Childcare available.
- 9am** Grace Kids (K – 5th grade) in KidZone 2nd Floor
- 9am** Middle School and High School Clubs (6th – 12th grade) Mezzanine and Lower Level Classrooms
- 9:15am** Deeper Roots Adult Bible Study (Adult Ed Room)

11AM SUNDAY SERVICE

- 11am** Traditional style worship with choir and pipe organ. Childcare available.
- Prayer** Available at the front of the sanctuary after each service.
- Communion** Served the First Sunday of each month at both services, unless otherwise noted.

Weekly Meetings and Classes

MONDAYS

Preschool 9am
Trailseekers 2:45pm Gym
Men's BSF 7pm-9pm Sanctuary

TUESDAYS

Preschool 9am
WOW Bible Study 9:45am Lounge
Youth Taco Tuesday! 6:00pm Gym
Handbell Rehearsals 6:30pm Mezzanine

WEDNESDAYS

Preschool 9am
Temple Choir Rehearsal 7pm Sanctuary

THURSDAYS

Preschool 9am
Sisters in Faith Book Study 5:30pm Lounge
Worship Team Rehearsal 6pm Sanctuary

FRIDAYS

Preschool 9:00am

SATURDAYS

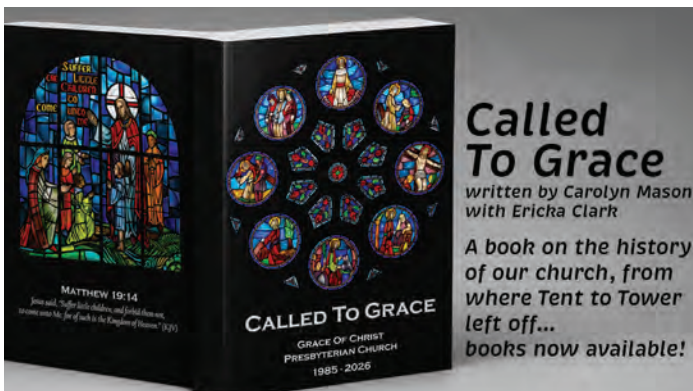
On Fire Ministry Youth Bible Study and Dinner 6pm Gym



Kick Off Sunday

Sunday | Sept 13 | Grace of Christ North Lawn

Children & Youth Programs Begin Sunday, September 13th. Join us on the North Lawn between services for Hot Dogs, Shaved Ice, Games, Live Music, No-Cost Raffle w/ Prizes & Face Painting! Everyone is welcome!



Calendar of Events September-October

DATE	EVENT	WHEN	WHERE
Wed, Sept 2	Preschool Meet the Teachers Orientation	6:00pm	Preschool Classroom 103
Thur, Sept 3	Preschool Meet the Teachers Orientation	9:00am	Preschool Classroom 103
Fri, Sept 4	Sewing Group	9:00am	Lounge
Sat, Sept 5	Communion Set Up (Deacons)	10:00am	Fireside Kitchen
Sun, Sept 6	COMMUNION SUNDAY	9:00am & 11:00am	Sanctuary
Mon, Sept 7	Labor Day - Church Closed		
Tue, Sept 8	Preschool First Day!	9:00am	Preschool Classroom 103
Tue, Sept 8	Mission Team Meeting	3:30pm	Adult Ed Room
Wed, Sept 9	Business Ministry Team Meeting	3:00pm	Library
Thur, Sept 10	Sozo Leader Training	6:00pm	Adult Ed Room
Sun, Sept 13	KICK OFF SUNDAY! Children & Youth Programs Begin Food, Music, & Face Painting on Lawn!	9:00am 10:00am - 11:00am	North Lawn
Sun, Sept 13	Deacon Meeting	12:20pm	Lounge
Tue, Sept 15	Staff Bible Study	10:00am	Adult Ed Room
Tue, Sept 15	WOW Bible Study Begins	9:45am	Lounge
Fri, Sept 18	Youth Cider Press	6:00pm	Offsite*
Tue, Sept 22	Mums Ready for Pick Up	Afternoon	Garden Room
Tue, Sept 22	Session Meeting	6:00pm	Adult Ed Room
Thur, Sept 24	Sisters in Faith NEW Book Study	5:30pm (social) 6pm (study)	Lounge
Sat, Sept 26	Wedding - Private Event		
Tue, Sept 29	Youth Fair Outing	5:00pm	Fairgrounds*
OCTOBER			
Fri, Oct 2	Sewing Group	9:00am	Lounge
Sun, Oct 4	Preschool Apple Pie Fundraiser Begins – Place your order in office or at Welcome Center		
Sat, Oct 3	Communion Set Up (Deacons)	10:00am	Fireside Kitchen
Sun, Oct 4	COMMUNION SUNDAY	9:00am & 11:00am	Sanctuary
Tue, Oct 6	Staff Calendar Planning	10:00am	Adult Ed Room
Sun, Oct 11	Deacon Meeting	12:20pm	Lounge
Tue, Oct 13	Mission Team Meeting	3:30pm	Adult Ed Room
Wed, Oct 14	Business Ministry Team Meeting	3:00pm	Library
Sun, Oct 18	MISSION SUNDAY	All Morning	Sanctuary & Garden Room
Tue, Oct 20	Staff Bible Study	10:00am	Adult Ed Room
Oct 23-25	Young Adult Retreat	All Weekend	WA Family Ranch*
Sat, Oct 24	TRUNK OR TREAT!	5:00pm	Parking Lot
Tue, Oct 27	Youth Nerf Night	6:00pm	Gym/Mezzanine Youth Room
Fri, Oct 30	Youth Pumpking Carving	6:00pm	Offsite*
Sat, Oct 31	Communion Set Up (Deacons)	10:00am	Fireside Kitchen
Sun, Nov 1	COMMUNION SUNDAY	9:00am & 11:00am	Sanctuary

**Get Details from Leaders*

FAMILY FRIENDLY FUN
TRUNK OR TREAT
SAT, OCT 24 * 5-7P

..NEEDED..

**CANDY, CAKES, CARS
& VOLUNTEERS!**

LET US KNOW YOU WANT TO HELP!

GRACE OF CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | 9 SOUTH 8TH AVENUE, YAKIMA, WA 98902 | YAKIMAGRACE.COM