



# GRACE NOTES

## DECEMBER PASTOR'S PEN

“It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!”



Volume 10, Issue 12

December 2021

Inside this issue:

Pastor’s Pen cont’d	2
Christian Education	2
Stewardship & Finance	3
Birthdays & Anniversaries	4
Elders	4
Monthly Activities	4
Spotlight	5
Bible Studies	6
Bible Studies Cont’d	7
Calendar	8
New Time Change!	9
Sermon Schedule	9
Missions	10
Poinsettia Orders	11
Prayer Shawl Ministry	11
Important Dates	12

Beloved Members and Friends of Grace EPC,

That happy song, sung most notably by Andy Williams, expresses my feelings about the Advent season. A psychologist would say that I love Christmas because it was the one time in the year that my family of origin got along together. But, it’s more than that. I love the music, especially the carols; I love the decorating; especially Christmas trees; I love the food, especially the thin sugar cookies covered with icing and sprinkles! At what other time of the year can you hear songs about Jesus in public places?

Christmas at Grace promises to be a time of joy and growth. The pastors will be preaching on the story of Christ’s birth as pictured by Matthew. My first message has the tongue-in-cheek title, “The Boring Genealogy,” but it is anything but that! The story of Christ’s ancestors is both amazing and thrilling. We will also ask the question, “Who Were the Magi?” Most people don’t know much about these Arabian travelers. The best known song, “We Three Kings,” is full of inaccurate statements. The truth is far better.

In addition to sermons, the choir will share a marvelous musical, “The Thrill of Hope.” Each Sunday will bring a different selection and the entire piece, with narration, will be presented on Christmas Eve. We will have a special guest preacher that night, Joseph, the stepfather of the Messiah!


I’m also excited about the sermon series in 2022. We will begin with, “Little Books With Big Messages.” Each Sunday, one of us will attempt to present the message of an entire book of the Bible. You may be familiar with books like Ruth and Jonah, but what about Obadiah and Habakkuk? “All Scripture is God breathed...” (II Timothy 3: 16) and that includes the Minor Prophets. Our Lenten series will focus on the conclusion of Luke’s Gospel with the marvelous story of the penitent thief on Maundy Thursday. The summer series will be, “The Corinthian Correspondence.” The message of First Corinthians tells us crucial truths for today’s church—among them, the importance of unity, the necessity of church discipline, the centrality of love and the historical evidence of the resurrection. I’m still thinking about the fall and next year’s Advent series, but I have some great ideas I’m tossing around in my head.



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I hope you can be with us for all of the Advent services and that the Babe of Bethlehem who is the Lion of Judah will bless you and your family with joy and hope as you worship Him.

Big love in Jesus,  
Pastor Dave



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

By Elder Linda Pool

### BE EXALTED O GOD

I will give thanks to Thee  
O Lord, among the people.  
I will sing praises to Thee  
Among the nations.  
For Thy steadfast love is great.  
It is great to the heavens,  
And Thy faithfulness,  
Thy faithfulness to the clouds.

----Brent Chambers

If you have ever been with someone who has recently fallen in love, you know that every other word out of the person's mouth seems to be about the new relationship. With starry-eyed enthusiasm, the person describes every detail, sometimes again and again!

That's a wonderful picture of how passionate God wants us to be about Him. All through Scripture, people just couldn't keep quiet about their love for God. David wrote psalms while his enemies were pursuing him. Paul encouraged the churches while he was imprisoned. Others were tortured and exiled, but they all focused on their love for the Lord. What could explain their commitment? Only a powerful love that had swept them away.

Every believer has a story to tell. What has God brought you through? How has He shown you His love? What unshakeable quality of His nature do you rely on? Ponder these facts. Be thankful for them. Let them sink into your heart and delight you. Then, maybe the next time you feel like singing praises to God in public or bringing up the "G" word in conversation, you won't stop. You'll be so in love with God that the world hears it--again and again. What better testimony could there be?

*Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.* Psalm 36:5

**PRAYER:** Ask God to open your eyes to His love that always surrounds you. As you go through your day, acknowledge every reminder that He cares for you. Thank Him and tell Him you love Him, too.

*From "Songs 4 Worship presents Open the Eyes of My Heart"*

*Psalm 36:5, NIV*



## STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

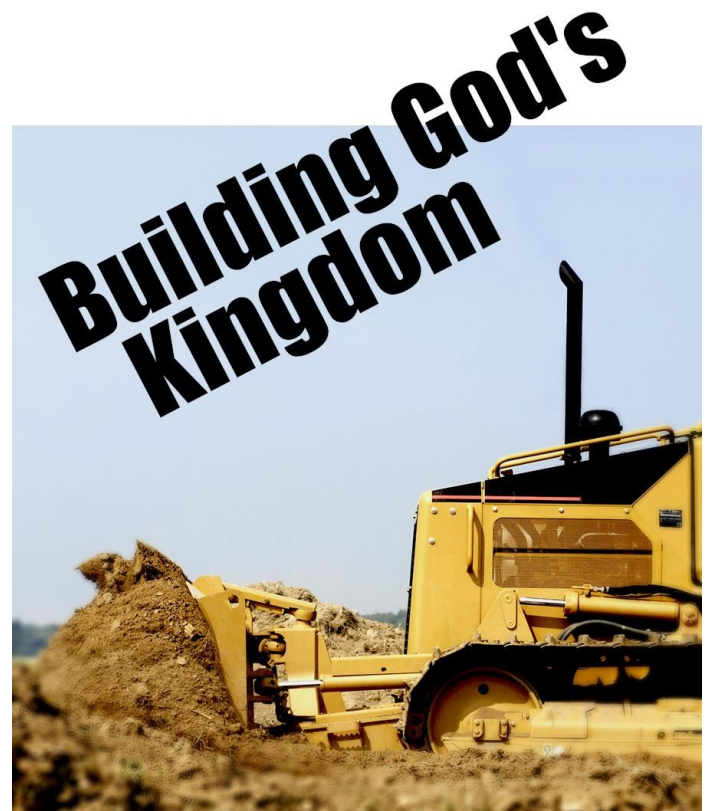
It is now December, and we will soon be celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior. Typically, we do this by exchanging gifts, so I want to encourage everyone to include our church on your gift list. I read an article recently that said that over 20% of all charitable giving happens on the last 2 days of each year. I am praying that you will not put it off until the last minute but instead prayerfully and cheerfully make your contributions earlier. Remember that it is only your giving that supports all our activities including the many missions that we help to fund.

Next let me remind all of you that many of us have received “more than enough” through the benevolence of our Lord. As a result, He expects us to use some of that excess for the benefit of others. This again happens as our church closes out this year with the final funding of those missions selected by the Missions Committee and making our contribution to the EPC. The EPC is also seeking to expand the kingdom by planting new churches. Speaking of expanding the kingdom I will also remind you that our area is exploding with growth, Howey in the Hills is planning over 1000 new homes. So, we must continue to pursue our own expansion in order to help provide the true meaning of our guidebook (The Bible) to those that have yet to become familiar with it.

We are looking into the future with a new facility on our property on US 27 but will need everyone to step up financially to help support this. Consider that our larger grocery chains seek to build new stores in areas that are scheduled for growth instead of waiting until after the growth has occurred and we should be pursuing the same plan. Let's build our facility so when the people arrive we can greet them with open doors and open arms. Also, and I have asked this in the past, which of you has worshipped in a facility built by those that came before? So then, should we not do the same for those that will come after?

MERRY CHRISTMAS,

Dave Hoffmeyer  
Stewardship & Finance





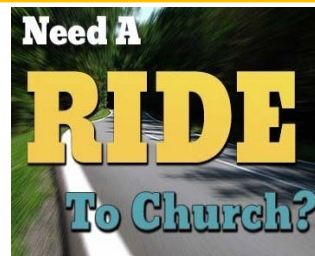
Rose Ashley - 3rd  
 Marvin Robertson - 8th  
 Jan Bass - 13th  
 Pat Newman - 18th  
 Lynda Spiegel - 20th  
 Jim Reed - 21st



Oswald & Joyce Lewis - 13th  
 Paul & Georgia McWilliams - 15th  
 Ben Schaeffer & Nancy Norwood - 16th  
 Rich & Holly Gailey - 17th  
 Cheryl & Craig Sexton - 17th  
 Dave & Pat Ghen - 26th



Need a ride?  
 Can we help  
 you with  
 anything?  
 Let us know!



The Last Friday Women's Breakfast  
 is scheduled for  
**December 31st at 8:30am**  
 at Perkins in Leesburg



Pastor Dave Dorst  
 Pastor John Fraser  
 Pastor Rick Rosenkrans  
 Larry Hochhalter (2021)  
 Jack Homoney (2023)  
 Wally Klee, Sr. (2023)  
 Kris Ogden (2021)  
 Marvin Pool (2023)  
 Shelby Reed (2021)  
 Al Rode, Jr. (2023)  
 Jim Teets (2021)



Prayer Time  
 with  
 Pastor John

December 2nd & 16th  
 at 1:00PM

We would love to pray for you!  
 GraceEPCLeesburg@gmail.com  
 (352) 552-0052.



Widow's End of Year Party  
**Thursday,**  
**December 16th**  
 11:30am at Sue's house

Please bring a \$5 gift for the gift exchange  
 which will be done as it was in previous years, and let Sue  
 know by Sunday, December 12th if you are attending.

## Muriel Littler



Muriel Littler lives in Waterman Village, Mt. Dora. She was born and raised in The Bronx, New York, and attended school, then college in downtown New York City, at what is now Julia Richmond College. After college she was employed as secretary at Seagrams Company, also in downtown New York City.


Muriel has 3 daughters, Lora in California, Diane in New York and Joanne in New Mexico. She also has one grandson and two granddaughters. Muriel lived in St. Marten for 26 years and was secretary to Charles Wathey, the head of the Island there. When she retired from her job there, she came to Florida to visit her brother who was living here at the time. He took her to Mt. Dora to show her how pretty and interesting it is and she fell in love with the town.

She bought a condo and lived in downtown Mt. Dora for 20 years before moving to Waterman Village, 2 years ago. Muriel spent earlier years crocheting for a hobby, but now enjoys jigsaw puzzles. She attends some of the activities where she lives.

Holly and Rich Gailey invited her to attend Grace EPC with them and she felt right at home, enjoying our pastors and their sermon messages, which she finds very meaningful. She joined our church this past summer and looks forward to attending as often as possible.



## Thank you Grace!

Rose Hoxie would like to express her thanks and gratitude to everyone at Grace for all the prayers, love, and help during this difficult time for her and the family. She greatly appreciates all of the help with Jack's memorial and the outpouring of love she has received from everyone . 



## Remembering Scripture

By Elder Pat Byrnes

The other morning, I (re)discovered an instruction from Deuteronomy for keeping God's word fresh in our hearts and minds. Dr. David Jeremiah's daily devotional for November is dedicated to the subject of remembering God's word. His title is "Witten on Your Heart – The Power of Knowing God's Word". He based his message on an instruction directly from God found in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy. God speaks of the time when Israel will demand that a king be placed over them, which happened at the time of Samuel as described in First Samuel Chapter 8. This was many, many years into the future but God foreknew it and gave specific instructions intended to maintain His law as the guiding precepts for the nation. God first tells them that when the time comes He Himself will chose the king. Then starting in verse 18 through to the end of the chapter, He specifies how the king of His choosing will govern the people/nation according to His law. It reads as follows... *"And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel."*

Having read the entire Bible several times, by definition I have come across this instruction several times. But to be honest, I didn't recall it. Probably because I didn't write it down! Kidding a bit but there is a key point here. When we look at the history of Israel's kings the only evidence that any of them might have hand written their own copy and then read in it all the days of his life is from Psalm 119 of David. I did a quick (but not exhaustive) search through the history of Saul, the first King of Israel, and did not find any evidence that he wrote his own book of the law. David on the other hand, likely did. I say likely because throughout Psalm 119, it does not specifically mention that he wrote his own book. But Psalm 119 is loaded with verses showing that David did indeed regularly have the words of God before him. Starting in verse 9-11, David says...

*"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you, let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* Then in verse 15-16... *"In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways."* Verse 30 *"I set your rules before me."*

David obviously had God's word before him, kept it before him, read it, studied it, meditated on it and strived to honor it. I would not be surprised at all if he wrote a copy for himself to do all these things because the scrolls of the law were kept by the priests. And he may have been the only king to have followed this instruction in the history of Israel.

Kind of interesting that God would specify to write it down. I recall a sermon of five or six years ago by Pastor Dave where he encouraged us to take notes during his sermons... to write things down. I don't remember all the statistics he gave us but the clear point was that recall probability increases dramatically when you go from just hearing to actually writing down what you hear.

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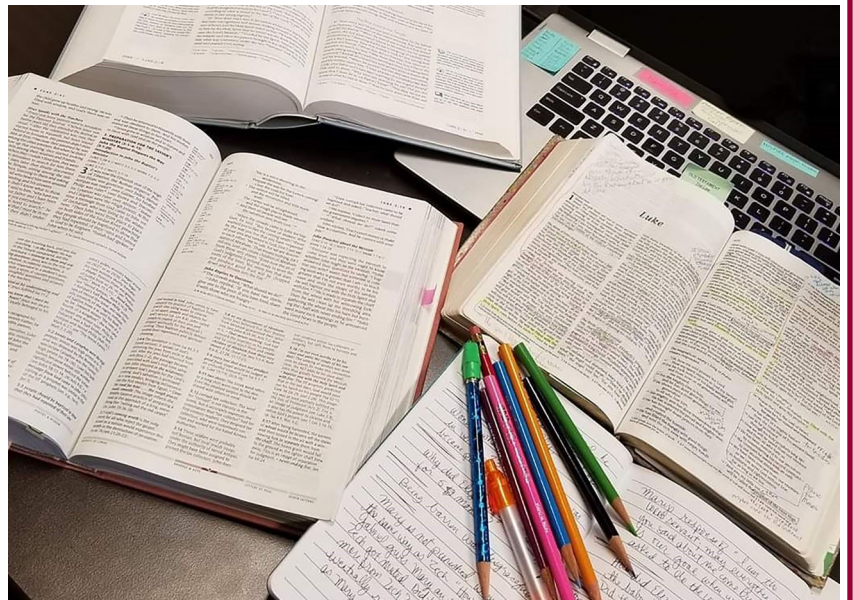
Here is a quote from an article I recently found on this matter... “Research shows that when we write by hand, our brain receives feedback from our motor actions, and the movements involved in writing with a pen or pencil play an important role in letter and word recognition and recall.” Same thing pastor Dave told us. God created us and knows the intricate details of our physical make up. He gave the same instruction... to remember it, write it down. To keep remembering it, go back often and re-read what you wrote down.

I have noticed this truth in a menial way... shopping lists. When I head out to Publix with the intention to purchase certain items, there are three possibilities. 1. I don't write a list and come home without several of the items I intended to buy. 2. I write a list, take the list and come home with everything I intended to buy. 3. This also happens... I write a complete list but get distracted and leave it on the kitchen counter. Amazingly, having written it down, even though I don't have it in front of me, I usually come home with everything... even if there are ten items!


David Jeremiah challenged his readers/students to try a “write it down” experiment. Upon request, he is offering a special journal for handwriting Paul's entire Letter to the Romans. So, I called and requested one and intend to try it. There are so many verses in this letter that are important to our witnessing or teaching activities that bringing them to immediate recall could be extremely helpful in those times. It will take a while but I promise to let you know how it works out. In the meantime, if you are beefing up your scriptural knowledge for witnessing/teaching, try writing it down.

That brings up one final thought. When I first started reading the gospels, I was amazed at the exactness of the descriptions of events, the conversations, and the sayings of Jesus. Perhaps as little as ten or as many as 20 years passed from the actual events/conversations/sayings and the recording of them in the gospels. How on earth did those four men do this? The answer is found in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, verses 25-26. Jesus is speaking of many things to the disciples during the last supper and says this... *“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”* Amazing!

Of course this is not out of character for God to take over and ensure recall of Him and His word. In the fullness of time, when the purposes He has determined for His chosen people are fulfilled, God will give them the knowledge and remembrance of His word. Jeremiah describes this in chapter 31 of his prophetic book. Verse 33 says... *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God and they shall be my people.”* Yes we can and should make our own efforts to place the Word into our hearts and minds and we can be encouraged that we have a helper.



# December 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9:45am Women's Bible Study 4:30pm Choir Practice	2 1:00pm Prayer Time with Pastor John	3 Rose Ashley Birthday	4 9:00am Narnia Class
5 Communion Sunday 9:30am Coffee & Fellowship 10:00am Worship 11:15am Sunday School	6 5:30pm Royal Highlands Small Group	7 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study	8 9:45am Women Bible St 2:30pm Villages SG 4:30pm Choir Practice Marvin Robertson Birthday	9 10:00am Finance Committee Meeting 10:30am Plantation Small Group	10	11 9:00am Narnia Class
12 9:30am Coffee & Fellowship 10:00am Worship 11:15am Sunday School	13 6:30pm Royal Highlands Small Group 6:30pm Howey Small Group Jan Bass Birthday Oswald & Joyce Lewis	14 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study 6:30pm Howey Small Group	15 9:45am Women's Bible Study 4:30pm Choir Practice Paul & Georgia McWilliams	16 11:30am Widow's Group Pizza Party 1:00pm Prayer Time with Pastor John Ben Schaeffer & Nancy Norwood Anniversary	17 Rich & Holly Gailey Anniversary Cheryl & Craig Sexton Anniversary	18 Pat Newman Birthday
19 9:30am Coffee & Fellowship 10:00am Worship 11:15am Christmas Carol Sing Along	20 6:30pm Royal Highlands Small Group Lynda Spiegel Birthday	21 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study 10:00am Session Meeting Jim Reed Birthday	22 4:30pm Choir Practice	23 10:30am Plantation Small Group	24 6:30 Christmas Eve Service	25 
26 9:30am Coffee & Fellowship 10:00am Worship Dave & Pat Ghen Anniversary	27 6:30pm Royal Highlands Small Group	28	29	30	31 8:30am Last Friday Women's Breakfast	





## New and Exciting Changes Coming in 2022!!!

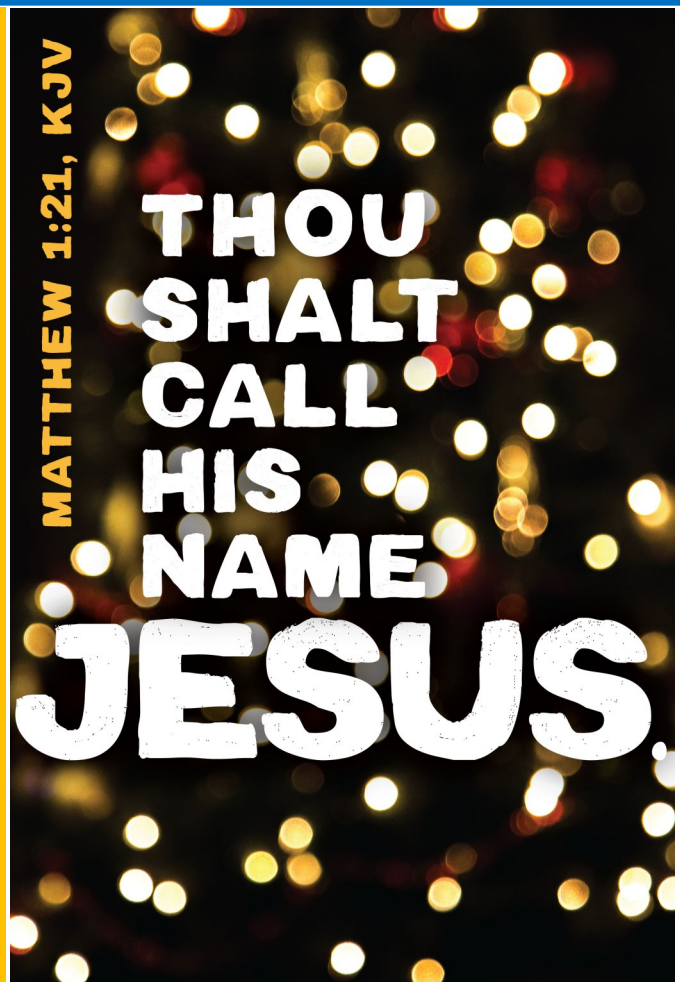
Beginning on **Sunday, January 2nd**, our schedule will be changing a bit. After much prayer and discussion, the decision has been made to have Sunday School before Worship, leaving the time afterwards open for additional studies or activities. The new schedule beginning **Sunday, January 2nd** will be as follows:

- 9:00am-9:45am Sunday School
- 9:45am-10:30am Fellowship Time
- 10:30am-11:30am Worship



### December Sermon Series Matthew's Christmas Story

- Dec 5th** The Birth of Immanuel  
**Dec 12th** Who Were the Magi  
**Dec 19th** The Exodus Reversal  
**Dec 24th** Christmas Eve—Meet Joseph  
**Dec 26th** Jesus, the Nazarene



## Operation Christmas Child ShoeBox Update



I want to send out a great big thanks to all at Grace EPC for your donations for Operation Christmas Child. We had enough to fill 103 boxes and enough money to cover the shipping. Also want to say thanks to everyone that was able to come out and help pack the boxes. You did a wonderful job. A special thanks to Al and Rose Rode for transporting them to the drop off site.

As the boxes make their trip around the world, please remember to pray for the children receiving them that they will enjoy their gifts and hear the message of Christ, that they will get to know Christ and share with their families and villages the good news.

Pray especially for all the volunteers at the packing center and everyone who travels with the boxes that they will have safe traveling.

In Jesus name  
Shelby Reed, Missions





## Poinsettias for Christmas!

Up until December 12th you can help us decorate for Christmas Eve by ordering a poinsettia (or 2)! We will have them displayed for the Christmas Eve service and then you can take them home that evening after service, or on Sunday, December 26th. They will be ordered for a \$10 donation and you can place your order in the offering plate on 12/5 or 12/12. You can use an envelope in the back of the chairs if you need and please make checks out to "Grace EPC". If you would like to place an order, please fill out the form that is included in the Sunday bulletins.



*Prayer Shawl  
Ministry*

**KNIT. CROCHET. PRAY.**

### Lion of Judah, Root of David, the Lamb that was slain—Lord Over All

*"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." Luke 2:7*

### See Amid the Winter's Snow

*Edward Caswall, 1858*

See amid the winter's snow,  
Born for us on earth below,  
See the tender Lamb appears,  
Promised from eternal years.

Sacred Infant, all divine,  
What a tender love was Thine;  
Thus to come from highest bliss.  
Down to such a world as this!

Merry Christmas Grace Church!

Blessings,  
Jill Fraser



Lo, within the manger lies  
He who built the starry skies;  
He, who throned in height sublime,  
Sits amid the cherubim.

Hail! Thou ever-blessed morn,  
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!  
Sing through all Jerusalem,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.





Worship: 700 S. 9th St., Leesburg, FL

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352-552-0052

Rev. Dr. Dave Dorst

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Website: [GraceEPC.church](http://GraceEPC.church)

Like us on Facebook: Grace EPC

**All activities are tentative and subject to change.**

**SUNDAYS:**

- 9:30 AM ~ Coffee & Fellowship
- 10:00 AM ~ Worship
- 11:15AM ~ Sunday School (12/19 will be a Carol Sing-Along during the Sunday School Hour)

**MONDAYS:**

- 6:30PM ~ Royal Highlands Small Group
- 6:30 PM ~ Howey Monday Small Group (12/13)

**TUESDAYS:**

- 8:00 AM ~ Men's Bible Study & Breakfast @ Perkins (NOT on 12/28)
- 10:00 AM ~ Session Meeting (12/21)
- 6:30 PM ~ Howey Tuesday Small Group (12/14)

**WEDNESDAYS:**

- 9:30AM ~ Women's Bible Study (NOT on 12/22 & 12/29)
- 2:00 PM ~ Villages Small Group (12/8)
- 4:30 PM ~ Choir Practice (Off on 12/29)

**THURSDAYS:**

- 10:00 AM ~ Stewardship & Finance Committee Meeting (12/9)
- 10:30 AM ~ Plantation Small Group (12/9)
- 11:30 AM ~ Widow's End of Year Party (12/16)
- 1:00 PM ~ Prayer Time with Pastor John - (12/2 & 12/16)

**FRIDAYS:**

- 8:30 AM ~ Last Friday Women's Breakfast (12/31) ~ *Perkins in Leesburg*

**SATURDAYS:**

- 9:00 AM ~ Chronicles of Narnia Class (12/4 & 12/11)
- 9:00 AM ~ Christmas Un-Decorating (1/8)