



When I was growing up, we used to gather in a circle for stories after our evening meals. An older woman would come and share with us tales and stories about animals. Most of the tales were about lions and human beings. While some of them were awe-inspiring, lots of those were scary and enough of us would lack sleep that night. Yet, those stories were informative and used as ways to help young children learn. When I was introduced to movies with animation, talking toys, and animals, I was already used to stories where lions speak human languages.

One particular story I remember was about a tortoise, a Bald eagle, and a marabou stork. It was during the dry season when ponds and lakes were accessible for fishing. Birds of prey would frequently roam to the ponds to catch their meals. One day, a marabou stork spotted a tortoise and attacked it. However, the tortoise cleverly hid its head inside its shell, rendering the marabou unable to harm it. The terrified tortoise pleaded, "Please do not hurt me!" Touched by the tortoise's plea, the marabou felt sympathy and from that moment on, they became friends. Whenever the marabou came to the pond to hunt for fish, the tortoise would assist by diving into the water and locating the fish's hiding spots.

On another day, while the tortoise was by the pond, it noticed a Bald eagle perched on a nearby tree. Curious, the tortoise greeted the eagle with a simple "hey." To the tortoise's surprise, the eagle replied, "It's ok!" Over time, the two became friends. When the Bald eagle would visit, they would engage in friendly conversation while the eagle patiently waited for an opportunity to spot fish in the open waters. Every time the eagle left, the tortoise would witness a grand display of many eagles dancing in the sky.

However, it has been a few weeks since the marabou stork has been absent from the lake. His absence has brought about a period of bullying, harassment, and attacks directed at the tortoise by other marabou storks. The situation around the lake has become unstable and dangerous, causing the tortoise to yearn for a break from the chaos. One day, he spotted his friend and turned to the Bald eagle, and asked if it could accompany the eagle during its mesmerizing dance in the sky. The eagle, unsure how the tortoise could join without the ability to fly, questioned its plan. Undeterred, the determined tortoise insisted, "I can hold on to your claws with my fingers and my teeth." All right, if you say so, then I can take you," said the eagle. Relenting, the eagle agreed to take the tortoise, but warned it, "But please, I beg you, do not utter a single word while holding onto my claws. If you do, you will surely fall."

With an agreement in place, the two embarked on their journey into the sky one afternoon. They joined a formation of flying eagles, circling, and dancing gracefully. Those who witnessed the tortoise in flight were amazed and began to shout excitedly, "oh yeah the tortoise is flying" spreading the news of the tortoise's airborne adventure. Forgetting the eagle's warning and caught up in the excitement, the tortoise also joined in, excitedly exclaiming, "Yes, the tortoise is flying! Yes, I am flying!" In an instant, he lost his grip and fell back to the ground. Unable to move, the tortoise's shell shattered into pieces. Fortunately, it was his loyal friend, the marabou stork, who discovered him first in his

vulnerable state. With the tortoise's soft skin now exposed, he became an easy target for storks and other birds at the lake.

However, his best friend, the marabou stork, diligently rearranged the pieces of the tortoise's shell, saving him from further harm. And that is why, from that time on, the tortoise's shell has unique square shapes instead of being smooth. "When children ask why the tortoise's shell is square-shaped, tell them the tortoise had fallen down from the eagle's dance." "The end of the story," the woman would end the story.

This moral story teaches valuable lessons about hiding in a safe zone, the importance of friendship, and loving one another. Despite enduring harassment around the lake, the tortoise found solace in his safe place, the lake where he could dive into the waters and hide from birds. Similarly, like in the story of Easter morning, the two disciples strayed from Jerusalem in search of a peaceful environment in Emmaus, inadvertently putting themselves in further danger as darkness settled (Luke 24:29). However, through their encounter with Jesus, listening to his voice, and recognizing him, they were compelled to return to Jerusalem. In the story, it was only through the intervention of his friend, the marabou stork, that the tortoise was saved from his miserable fall.

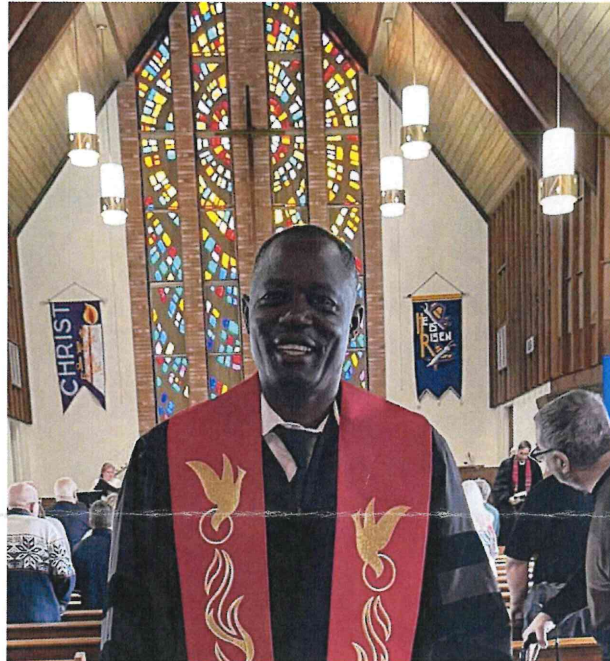
Peter reminds us in scripture that we were once like sheep going astray but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). It is safe with Jesus, our Good Shepherd and with fellow Christians. Scripture emphasizes the importance of persistence, faith, and trust in God during times of suffering. As Christians, we are called to fellowship and assist others because we all face trials in different ways. And Peter encourages us to treat everyone with respect and wholeheartedly love one another. Just as the Bald eagles, marabou stork, and the tortoise supported one another, may we also remind ourselves to support and celebrate each other, serving as one body with various gifts as we joyfully celebrate Pentecost.

Happy Pentecost

Owar

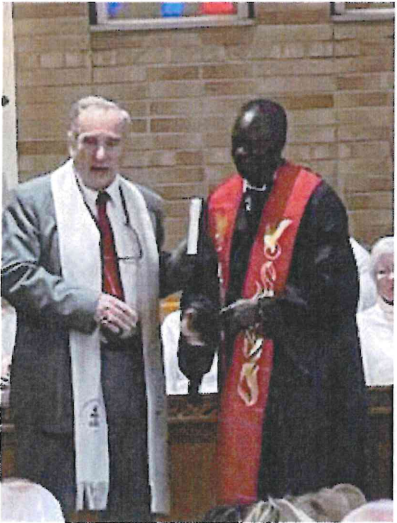
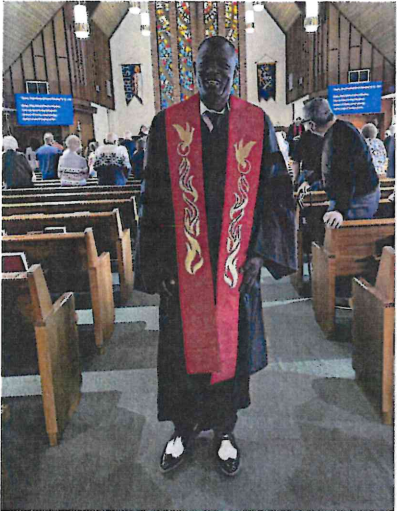
Rev. Dr. Owar Ojulu

Called to Serve!



*And I will give you
PASTORS
according to My heart,
who will feed you with
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING
Jeremiah 3:15*

Dr. Rev. Owar Ojulu's Installation on April 14, 2024



The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. -Gandhi

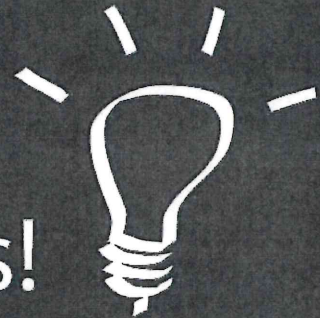


Thank you, Linda, Terri, Lisa, Melody, Glenn and Ellis, for being part of the April Knead Cafe team. So nice to see some new faces among the group is seasoned volunteers!

Thank you so much for your labor of love with the Knead Cafe. Your willingness to use your gifts and abilities has strengthened their mission and ministry. You have also been an example of servant-leadership and giving.

Teams are being formed for May 25th and June 29th.
Please consider joining one or both of these rewarding teams.

We want your ideas!



Last fall the Reachout Committee hosted the Autumn Leaf Cruise at Moraine State Park. The Advent season brought the advent wreath building event.

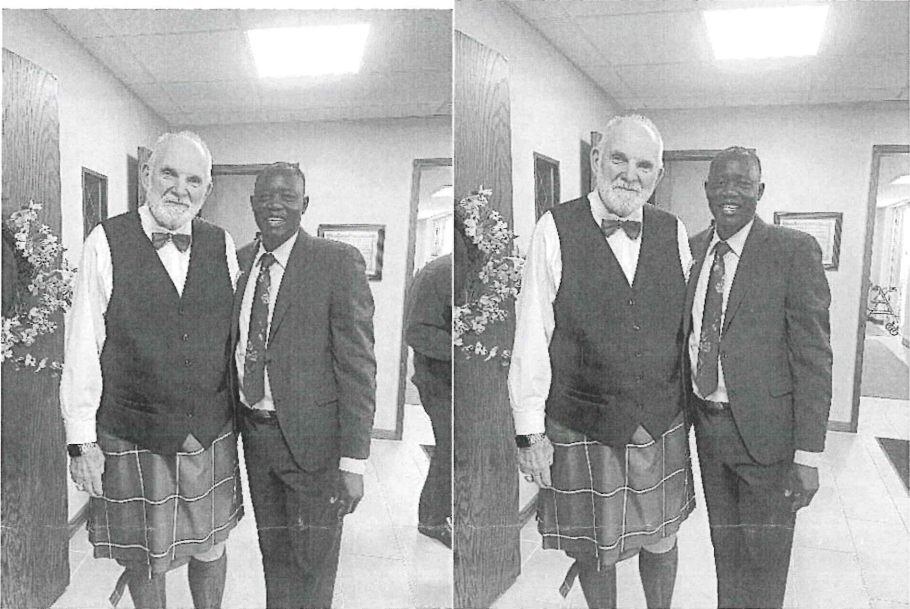
We would like to continue to host similar events, but we need to know what you, the congregation, would be interested in doing. Please share your ideas with us so we can begin planning events to provide fellowship opportunities for our congregation.

My idea for a congregational activity is:

Or email me at rupertsharon@gmail.com or call me at 724-664-0546

✝
KEEP
CALM
AND
CALL YOUR
PASTOR

Rev. Dr. Ojulu is available anytime if you have any concerns, want to schedule a meeting, or if you need a prayer. You can contact him at the office @ 724-339-9661 or his cell 507-304-5958.



St Patrick's Day. Sunday, March 17 John Irvin & Rev. Owar Ojulu



A celebration of our 2024 high school and college graduates is currently being planned. Please let the office know if you have someone graduating this spring.

Another successful fund raiser for Franklin Graham's Operation Christmas Child. The proceeds of these sales go to pay for shipping Christmas boxes to the poorest of countries in the world. Thanks to the volunteers who worked the sale and to the many people supporting the sale. By the way.... The pies, pizzas and sandwiches are all wonderful! The sale raised \$905.00.





A special thank you to all my Grace Church family: One thing I know for sure is when any member of this wonderful congregation needs special help and love and prayers, they appear immediately and with generosity. I want to thank those who took me to doctor appointments, brought me delicious food, called and sent cards. I am making my way back to better health, and I cannot thank everyone enough for everything. I pray I can return the same love and care to anyone who needs it.
THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH. Margie Bistline

Grace Church family:

Words cannot begin to express our gratitude for all you have done for my Dad and our family. You have made such a dark time much more bearable. The prayers, visits, calls and food were greatly appreciated. My Dad felt loved, and we will be eternally grateful. Your kindness has been truly overwhelming - we are so blessed.



Pastor Owar:

Thank you for your encouraging words and your visits. A funeral is not an ideal way to begin your leadership, but you handled it with such grace and kindness. I only wish you were able to meet my Dad. He was praying for the right person to lead the church and would be happy to know his prayers have been answered. We truly appreciate all you have done for us.

In Christ, Lisa Edwards and Barb Scott



We would like to thank those that hosted coffee fellowship and to our greeters for the month of April. Beulah Brown, Jackie & Chick Chickerella, Elsie Deem, Lisa Edwards, Dan & Teresa Howard, The Johnson's, Terri Ludwig and Stephanie Tutka. Again, thank you so much for volunteering each Sunday.

9:40am Sunday Greeters Needed

Church greeters are very essential for our church. A greeter spreads hospitality throughout our church as part of an effective first impression. Please consider volunteering to be a 9:40am Sunday Greeter. Contact the office at 724-339-9661 if interested.



Join the GCPC Chancel Choir



- ♪ Open to members and friends of Grace
- ♪ Join with people who want to praise God thru music
- ♪ Wednesdays at 7:00pm

If you are interested, please call 724-339-9661 or email: secretary@gracecommunitypresbyterian.org

Come join us for Bible Study



Who: Everyone
When: Every Tuesday @ 1PM
Why: Join in an in-depth study of the Old and New Testament Prophecy



May 02	Darlene Artman	May 03	Jack & Shirley Trinclisti
May 03	Luke Ludwig	May 10	Elsie & Bill Deem
May 04	Alma Woodhall	May 24	Marcia & Richard Sacket 55
May 14	Owar Ojulu		
May 17	Lily Householder		

If your name does not appear, or if the listed information is incorrect, please contact the church office so that the records can be updated.



We are collecting items for the next spring rummage sale, (Date TBD). Please help by bringing in your unwanted items for the next sale. Your items can be placed inside the upper-level door by the old sanctuary.
NO ELECTRONICS OR LARGE FURNITRE

Help fill shoeboxes all year long! The Operation Christmas Child items for the month of May are arts & craft supplies (colored pencils, crayons, watercolors, drawing paper and sidewalk chalk). Donations may be placed in the OCC box in the Narthex. Thank you.



There will be a new member's class starting in April. If you are interested in joining Grace Church, please call the church office @ 724-339-9661. Also if you are at Grace for worship, you can take the friendship pad at the end of pew and make your wishes known. Rev. Owar will contact you to set a date and time.

ATTENTION GRACE CHURCH BAKERS

Once again, the Chrisian Ed Committee will be holding a spring rummage sale – (to be announced). The Deacons will also organize a bake sale to be held in conjunction with the rummage sale. Please watch the church bulletin and listen for announcements of the date. We will be asking the congregation to donate baked goods to be sold on that date. We thank you in advance for your consideration and generous donations.





OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

The pizza, pie, and hoagie fundraiser brought in \$905, enough to process **90 shoeboxes!** Thank you to all who participated – this is the most we have raised yet at the Spring fundraiser. We hope you enjoyed your order even more, knowing you served as an instrument to show God’s love. Thank you also to those who helped distribute the orders on Saturday and to Wendy for collecting all of the forms.

Being the middle of the year, it is a good time to provide some educational materials on Operation Christmas Child. One area always of interest is “Can it Go in a Shoebox?.” Samaritan’s Purse’s guidelines have changed through the years. For example, we once were able to ship candy and toothpaste, but no longer due to experience gained by the distributing churches. Listed below are commonly asked about “Yes” items and “No” items, taken from the Samaritan’s Purse website. Of course, many other items go in a shoe box, but these are the ones most frequently asked about. One other note, bar soap will not be allowed sometime in the next few years (due to problems with customs). So, we will be depleting our inventory this year! If you ever have any questions, please ask Steve or Valerie Lester.

Yes, it can Go!	No, it cannot Go!
playing cards batteries (in original packaging or with both ends taped) wet wipes or plain alcohol wipes toy spiders/bugs/snakes superheroes or other licensed characters items with company logos all types of scissors squirt guns (that don’t look like real guns) glow sticks compact mirrors lip balm (non-medicated) playdough (store bought) solid stick deodorant makeup (non-liquid) adhesive bandages (non-medicated) disposable or reusable feminine hygiene products eating utensils marbles Bibles or other religious literature or symbols	used clothing or toys scary items (things that will frighten a child rather than bring joy) war-related items (such as toy soldiers, military vehicles, or wearable camouflage) liquid paint sets or liquid glue rubber balls with liquid filling liquid lip gloss lotions/antibacterial gel shower gel/shampoo and conditioner matches or fire starters seeds sand/rocks/shells gathered from nature all types of food, candy, or gum medications or vitamins toothpaste nail polish money or play money baby powder razors breakable items or glass containers aerosol cans Vaseline®

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/frequently-asked-questions>

Thank you for your continued support of this ministry!



2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	2 6:00pm CS Den Mtg 6:30pm Ladies Club	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4
5 9:00am SS 10am Worship/Communion 6pm Youth Group	6	7 1:00pm Bible Study	8 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 3pm CE Mtg 6:00pm CS Den Mtg	10 OFFICE CLOSED	11
12 9:00am SS 9am Reach Out Mtg. 10am Worship	13 6pm CS Comte Mtg 6:30pm Mission Mtg.	14 1:00pm Bible Study 6:30pm Garden Club	15 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	16 6pm Meris Club 6:00pm CS Den Mtg 6:30pm Ladies Club	17 OFFICE CLOSED	18
19 9:00am SS 10am Worship 6pm Youth Group	20	21 1:00pm Bible Study	22 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	23 6:00pm CS Den Mtg	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25
26 9:00am SS 10am Worship 11am Deacons Mtg.	27  MEMORIAL DAY	28 1:00pm Bible Study	29 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	30 6pm CS Pack Mtg	31 OFFICE CLOSED	

Coffee Fellowship Host(s):

May 5 Dan & Teresa Howard
 May 12 Volunteer(s) Needed
 May 19 Volunteer(s) Needed
 May 26 Volunteer(s) Needed

May Greeter(s)

Shirley Wilson
 Debbie Roskey
 Terri Ludwig
 Margie Bistline

CALENDAR SUBJECT TO CHANGE