

# | FINDING NEW RHYTHMS OF LIFE | A NEW NORMAL

*Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, saying, I am with you, says the Lord, Haggai 1:13*

## Announcement

Aug 23 (Sun) HOME Worship Service

Church Re-Open! (Outdoor Service)

UG Time / Place: **Sep 13 (Sun)** 9:30 am @ UG Parking Lot

WG Time / Place: **Oct 18 (Sun)** 11:30 am @ WG Parking Lot

**\*\*Church Reopening Plan is subject to change.**

Aug 24 (Mon) Randy Cavoli's Birthday

Aug 25 (Tue) Dan Rodriguez's Birthday | Zachery Weiner's Birthday

Aug 27 (Thu) Sam Fox's Birthday

Aug 28 (Fri) Joshua Weiner's Birthday

| Lora Gaburo-Ashman's Birthday

## Opening Hymn (UMH 419)

I Am Thine, O Lord (<https://youtu.be/6CXFFmyxo1U>)

## Call to Worship

Life can sometimes be very difficult.

We look around and wonder where God is.

In the midst of our trials and tribulations, God is with us.

God surrounds us with love and courage.

Come, let us praise God for God's abiding presence.

Lord, thank you for always being with us, even when we don't recognize your loving presence. AMEN.

## Hymn of Praise (UMH 369)

Blessed Assurance (<https://youtu.be/g67LO5E6dJw>)

## Morning Prayer

We thank you, O Lord, that we are not alone. You watch over us, guide us, and lead us in your righteous pathways. When we stumble and fall, you lift us up and gently place us on that pathway again. When we doubt, you surround us with your mercy and peace, reassuring us of your presence through the love of others and of our savior Jesus Christ. Keep our hearts and minds open and ready to serve you, for we pray these things in Jesus' name. AMEN.

## Psalm Reading

Psalm 124 \_ UMH 846

## Scripture Reading

Acts 8:26-40

## Message

A NEW NORMAL \_ "Finding New Place of Life"

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/thegroveschurches/>)

Website (<https://groveschurches.org/>)

## Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles' Creed \_ UMH 881

## Offering

\*Offering (CHECK) by mail to:

UGUMC \_ Krissi Reed (50 Burt St, Bridgeton NJ 08302)

WGUMC \_ Cheryl Fox (1940 Coles Mill Rd, Franklinville NJ 08322)

\*\*Offering by ONLINE:

<http://www.gnjumc.org/onlinegiving> Or <http://groveschurches.org>

UGUMC Church number: 9068 (Norma)

WGUMC Church number: 9071 (Pittsgrove)

## Closing Song

I Give You My Heart by Hillsong (<https://youtu.be/9bQY2komrnA>)

## Benediction

[PRAYER REQUEST] \_ Let us pray together.

1. For all the congregation of Groves Ministries.

Lord, surround us with Your divine hedge of protection. Encompass us round about with Your strength and Your might. May You shelter us, that those who love Your name may exult in You.

2. For our nation and the world.

Lord, we pray for our nation and the whole world during the pandemic. Grant Your peace, Your comfort, and Your healing. Be with us, Lord. Amen.

# | FINDING NEW PLACE OF LIFE |

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it."  
So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. Acts 8:29-30

Groves  
Ministries

## A NEW

## NORMAL

Philip, one of the seven early church leaders selected help meet the practical needs of the Greek-speaking members of the church (Acts 6:1–6), was also a fruitful preacher (8:5–8), and an angel gave him specific instructions to go to a place where the Holy Spirit was already at work. Because he was already knowledgeable in the Scriptures, he was prepared for the task ahead. Philip immediately obeyed and encountered an important Ethiopian. Philip, the pastor-turned-missionary, used what the official was reading as a starting place to explain the good news of Jesus. The result was the conversion and baptism of a new Christian (vv. 26–39).

The meeting between the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip occurred in the early era of the church, not long after the coming of the Holy Spirit. The passion and power provided to those present on that meaningful, church-history-shaping day fueled the expansion of the church. "According to church tradition, this man [the Ethiopian official] was to become an evangelist among his own people". Phillip's obedience produced the man whom "some ancients viewed as the father of evangelism in Ethiopia".

Philip had a sudden "new normal": a new location for ministry. But he was ready and available for whatever the circumstances were going to be, and he relied on the Holy Spirit to lead. Faithfulness in our sudden life changes depends on our behind-the-scenes preparation of practicing spiritual disciplines and building muscles of faith (1 Timothy 4:7–10).

All Scriptures are applicable to our situations, our thoughts, and our futures—including the Old Testament. Philip knew the Old Testament and was able to apply it when needed. "We meet the same God in the Old Testament as we do in the New Testament".

Spiritual disciplines that help prepare us for a new normal or sudden change include Bible reading, meditating on Scripture, prayer, discipleship, and gathering with other believers for community and edification.

"Hang in there and hope" was Stephen Bradbury's strategy when competing for an Olympic gold medal in 2002: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vN7ih576VYM>. Do we have the same kind of tenacity and availability to God in our spiritual life? Are we presenting ourselves to God, willing for him to use us wherever he leads us?

### [Some questions to think about...]

- What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
- What new spiritual discipline could you use to help you prepare for serving the Lord in the future?
- How did knowing God's Word thoroughly help Philip prepare? What can we learn from that?