

Grace Devotion

Week of July 12, 2026

³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. (*Genesis 25:34 NRSVUE*)

⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (*Matthew 13:8 NRSVUE*)

Dear friends,

Most of us have tried to grow something at some point in our lives. Perhaps it was a garden. Perhaps it was a houseplant sitting on a windowsill. Maybe it was a relationship, a hobby, or a dream. Whatever it was, we quickly learned a simple truth: things do not grow on their own.

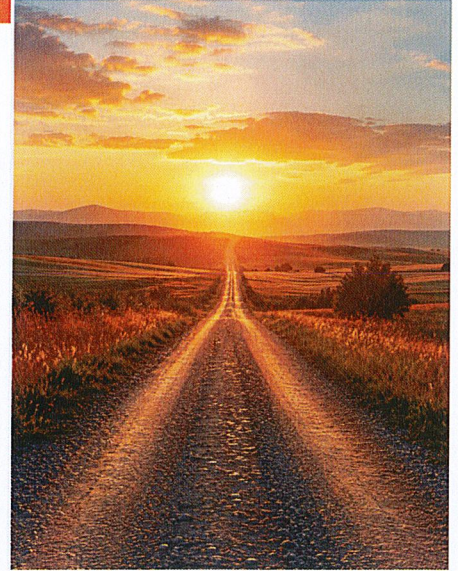
Seeds need water. Plants need sunlight. Gardens need attention. If we neglect them long enough, they begin to wither.

Jesus understood this truth when he told the parable of the sower. The same seed was scattered everywhere, but it did not grow the same way in every place. Some seed landed on hard ground. Some among rocks. Some among thorns. Only the seed that found good soil flourished. The parable invites us to look inward. What kind of soil are we offering God?

In Genesis, Esau faces a different kind of question. He comes home hungry and exhausted. Jacob offers him a bowl of stew, and Esau gives away something precious in exchange for immediate relief. In that moment, he chooses what feels good right now over what will matter in the long run.

While most of us have never traded away a birthright, we understand the temptation. We all face choices about what we value. We can spend our time nurturing gratitude or resentment. We can feed hope or fear. We can invest in faith or allow distractions to crowd it out. Little choices, repeated over time, shape who we become.

The good news is that God never stops scattering seeds. God continues to plant grace, love, hope, and truth in our lives. The question is whether we are making room for those seeds to grow.



As you reflect this week, consider what you are nurturing. What habits, attitudes, or priorities are receiving your attention? Are they helping you become the person God is calling you to be? Growth rarely happens overnight. But when we tend the soil of our hearts, God can bring forth something beautiful.

What are you planting today?

Prayer:

Loving God,

Thank you for the many ways You plant seeds of faith, hope, and love in our lives. Help us to recognize what truly matters and to nurture the things that draw us closer to You.

When we are tempted to focus only on what is immediate, remind us of the lasting gifts You offer. Remove the weeds that crowd our hearts and soften the places that have grown hard. Help us become good soil for your Word so that Your love may grow within us and bear fruit in the world around us. Amen.

With Grace and Love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Amy". The word "Pastor" is written above "Amy" in a cursive style.

Pastor Amy

July 12, 2026
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
“Changed Along the Way” Sermon Series

Westminster Chimes and Prelude
 Welcome/Announcements

**+“The Truth” #62

** Call to Worship
 Lector: We come carrying many things this morning...

Congregation: Some things help us grow and some things weigh us down.

Lector: We come with hopes and worries and joys and struggles
Congregation: God welcomes each part of who we are.

Lector: Let us worship the One who nurtures, shapes, and transforms us.

Congregation: We come ready to grow in faith.

** Opening Prayer: (pray silently or aloud)
God of New Life, You plant seeds of hope, love, and faith in our hearts. Sometimes we hold onto the things that keep us from growing. Help us let go of what weighs us down and make room for Your Word to grow in us. Nourish us, shape us, and help us grow into the people You call us to be.
Amen

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

**° Hymn: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” #43

Celebration of Our Gifts
 ** Offertory Response: “Doxology”
 ** Prayer of Dedication

#625

Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

Joys and Concerns
 Praying for Others
 Lord’s Prayer

**° Hymn: “Take My Life and Let it Be” #379

Scripture Reading:
Genesis 25:19-34
Matthew 13:1-9

Time for the Young at Heart

Message: “What Are You Holding On To?”

Holy Communion
 **Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, Thank You for meeting us at this table once again. Thank You for the bread that reminds us that we are nourished by Your grace and the cup that reminds us that we are deeply loved. Help us carry that love into the world around us and may it shape the way we care for others this week. Amen

**+“That’s Who I Praise” #73

** Final Blessing

** “A Choral Benediction”
 Postlude

** Please stand, if you are able.
 + Black contemporary folder ° Blue hymnal

Announcements

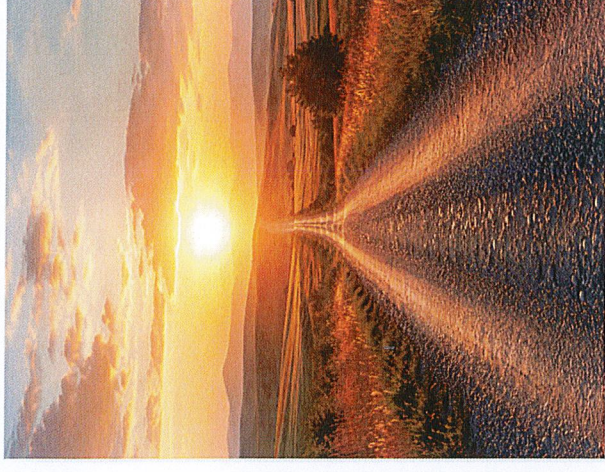
- Please consider sharing your talents by hosting snacks in the Gathering Place on Sunday mornings or acting as Lector. Both sign-up sheets can be found in the Gathering Place on the bulletin board.

Upcoming Events

- Widows Support Group – July 16th @ 12:30 at Tropical Treat
- PAL – Grace UCC Helpers – July 18th @ 9:00 AM
- Women's Ministry – In Person – July 22nd @ 7:30 PM

Upcoming Meetings

- Personnel Committee Meeting – July 13th @ 3:45 PM
- Search Committee Meeting – July 15th @ 3:45 PM
- Worship & Music Meeting – July 27th @ 4:45 PM
- Faith Formation Meeting – July 27th @ 6:00 PM



Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

Prayer Line: 717-632-1146 LINE 3

Thank you for today's Worship Leaders:

Pastor - Amy Fawks

Lector – Jenn Weaver

Guest Pianist –

Head Usher – Anita Kincaid & Susan Dienes

At Christ's table, all are welcome. Our bread and juice are always gluten-free so everyone may share in this meal.



Jacob's Dream

V F K O W T P L W H F I I Y F I F X W Y D H N S
 J W R N Q B V G F U J B P I U Z O G D I O P H R
 Z I L W U Y Z Q I J Q X H G O G R R A J Z D F I
 V Y Y N R I T A W B B Q H O B M C D A W K O Z E
 F S T O N E T K E G C B X S B O I Y C L M N Y D
 B J W S B B H Q L M Z T S S I S E N E G D Z X B
 R G X Y T Q B I W E U Q R W C F C C P E I W B O
 E L F M F A E H I X W E E N K S V N Q R S A U C
 B T H D I Z F B F H D S Y K I Z S Y U X H A P A
 W R X C Y O Y H O G V D A Z Z I H Z U F O H J J
 R E B E K A H H D M J R R W Q X E X Y J N B L F
 M U W M Z V J W R C J I P A W T S U R T E U R Y
 F T T S H M J S D A V A U X P E B L E S S I N G
 U D D P U S S Q X B F Z J M B E W X K Z T R K L
 K E W R X P J I D B L X L F B K Q J F W X E U F
 C S N X C U F A I T H T N B U U D S E G W K I K
 I C O Z W Q G N N G Q R I C J Y O I N W O K O R
 R E A T Z C O X G K O A A T Q L O X D I P W M I
 T N L E H S X Y N B B G L U M W Y J E V W X U E
 E D J W E D R Q T F M O P U X O L E E V C T A E
 I A R M G N O S D S J S R R V B B I I S E I S F
 O N Z U D N R I S A A C Y V I G O B E I E K E N
 C T Q V P I D T B X Y O Z A N X F F T U T S T B
 M S Z Y F J Q H Q P O T X M K W B T O S M I O W

descendants
 blessing
 prayer
 stone
 Jacob

first born
 Rebekah
 twins
 trick
 faith

dishonest
 Genesis
 trust
 Isaac
 Esau

MATTHEW 13

K M D X A T O U A F Q Y E Y G N Y M A O A F F Y
 D P U W T S A X U V O W E N F J V K N N P M A N
 Y T R W K C Q R F G X W S M J X B E K L Z D E X
 I S E Q V I Y W E H I I U G L C V W T X N B H Z
 H M E Z E K C K R G S S O L O A Z K M W I K M E
 E V D N R F J H I R T E U G E C W E G R D A U S
 V R I N E K Y X N A D I E H I E F K C F T D L W
 Y A S B W U Y G R F C Y W D T P A S D T K R J E
 X H Y O O H J D X N B F M H S D W U H I A H A X
 F I A H S L F S T E N E R O V X Q E N E S P M I
 C I W X W M K N I O E K F U N L W G P C N E Y A
 S G B S A M G E G F V J U S D G D Q H D R R X T
 O Y N O E R V V D L A G C E O O H O U C V U R G
 J S I N M W H E A T W D U H M E T Q H B N C D Y
 J E C X E T J S Y J R E Z O P Y N A Y Y L V L U
 J S L V E E B E P M R C H L X A N V S X Q V R B
 A A Z A H J T H L U C Q D D B T S E L U F O O O
 F I S E X V E R S B Q H K E J H Z S S T M P W X
 D F L A H T C A I O A O J R R Z D S K Q F U Z V
 R P G E E E E O J H F R F H R V B E F D E A M Y
 W J V N D R D J E O T J A Q I U F L U Z R X F U
 M O O Q T A D S W V O M Q P I O A S G K Z N C S
 U U Z B V Q Q L M F L E A V E N X X R G R V N J
 U R P D H Y S Q B V R I J U H G O L D S U H K V

householder

treasure

mustard

Parable

pearls

world

sower

old

thirteen

matthew

kingdom

heaven

leaven

fowls

wheat

new

merchant

vessels

wayside

scribe

seven

seeds

tare

net