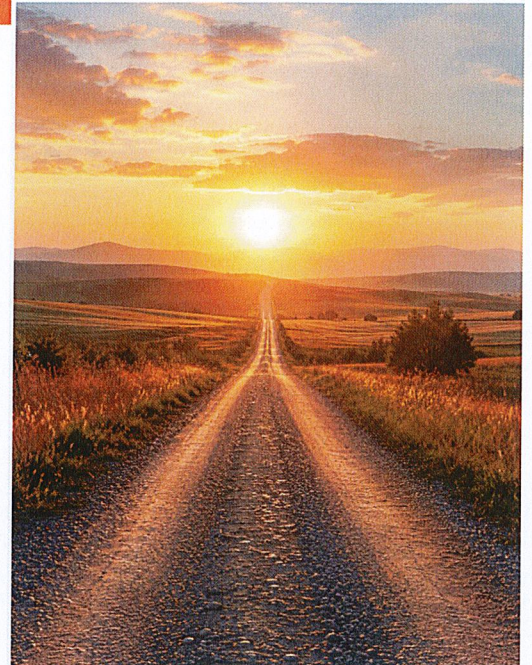


Grace Devotion

Week of August 2, 2026

²⁴ So Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. (*Genesis 32:24 NRSVUE*)

¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. (*Matthew 14:14-19 NRSVUE*)



Dear friends,

There comes a point in every journey when we can't outrun what is ahead of us. Jacob has reached that point.

After years of conflict and distance, he is heading home. He is going to face Esau, the brother he deceived, the brother he is not sure he can face again. Jacob sends his family and everything he owns ahead of him, and he spends the night alone by the river. That is where he wrestles. The story never fully explains who he is wrestling with. A man. An angel. God. The mystery is part of it. What is clear is that this is not just a physical struggle. Jacob is also wrestling with his own life. His choices. His fear. His past catching up with him. He has spent most of his life trying to secure blessing on his own terms. Now he holds on for something different. He will not let go until he receives a blessing, and that blessing comes in a new name: Israel. He leaves that night changed. He is wounded. He is also different. He limps forward, but he is no longer the same person who went in. What could have broken him becomes the place where God reshapes him. Sometimes God does not remove the struggle. Sometimes God meets us inside it.

We see something similar in the story of Jesus feeding the crowd. People are gathered in the wilderness. It is getting late. There is not enough food. Not enough resources. Not enough anything, really. The disciples see what is missing. Five loaves. Two fish. That is it.

Jesus takes what is there. He gives thanks. He breaks it and gives it to the people. In his hands, what was not enough becomes more than enough. Everyone eats. There is even food left over. What looked like scarcity becomes the place where grace shows up.

In both stories, God does not always take the struggle away. God meets people in it. Jacob wrestles. The crowd is hungry. Nothing is fixed quickly. But something deeper is happening. God is present. God is shaping. God is working in ways they cannot yet see. Struggle is not the absence of God. Sometimes it is where God is closest.

This week, pay attention to what you are carrying. The questions that don't have answers yet. The situations that feel unfinished. The places where you feel stretched thin. Ask where God might be meeting you there. Not to rush you through it, but to shape you through it. Like Jacob, you may find that what leaves you limping also leaves you blessed.

Prayer:

Faithful God,

You are present in every season of our lives—even in the ones that leave us struggling and uncertain. When we wrestle with fear, doubt, or change, hold us with Your steady love. When we feel stretched beyond what we can carry, remind us that Your grace is enough. Shape us through the hard places, not just around them. Give us courage to trust that even in struggle, You are forming something new within us. Amen.

With Grace and Love,



Pastor Amy

August 2, 2026 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost “Changed Along the Way” Sermon Series Westminster Chimes and Prelude Welcome/Announcements	Celebration of Our Gifts ** Offertory Response: “Doxology” ** Prayer of Dedication **New Creed Joys and Concerns Praying for Others Lord’s Prayer **° Hymn: “Just As I Am” Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace Scripture Reading: Genesis 32:22-31 Matthew 14:13-21 Time for the Young at Heart Message: “Blessed By the Struggle” **+“And All the People Said Amen” ** Final Blessing ** “A Choral Benediction” Postlude ** Please stand, if you are able. + Black contemporary folder ° Blue hymnal	#625
**+“This Is Amazing Grace” ** Call to Worship Lector: We come carrying our struggles, our questions, and our hopes. Congregation: God meets us in every season of our lives. Lector: When the road is difficult and the night feels long, Congregation: God remains with us and gives us strength. Lector: Let us come and worship the One who brings blessings, transformation, and new life. Congregation: We come to worship God with grateful hearts. ** Opening Prayer: (pray silently or aloud) God of Grace, You meet us in our struggles and walk beside us through every challenge. When we feel weak, remind us of Your strength. When we feel that is not enough, remind us of Your abundance. Transform us through Your love and help us trust Your presence on every step of our journey. Amen **° Hymn: “In the Garden” ** Sharing the Peace of Christ	Joys and Concerns Praying for Others Lord’s Prayer **° Hymn: “Just As I Am” Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace Scripture Reading: Genesis 32:22-31 Matthew 14:13-21 Time for the Young at Heart Message: “Blessed By the Struggle” **+“And All the People Said Amen” ** Final Blessing ** “A Choral Benediction” Postlude ** Please stand, if you are able. + Black contemporary folder ° Blue hymnal	#21
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Announcements

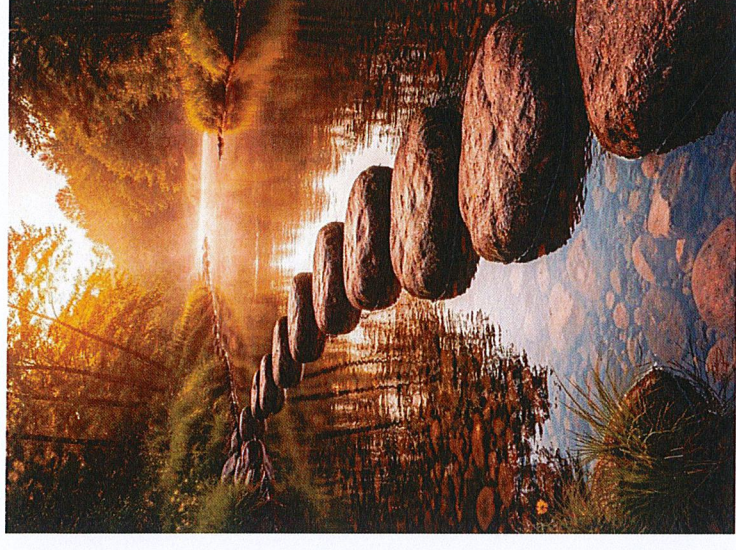
- Please consider sharing your talents by hosting snacks in the Gathering Place on Sunday mornings or acting as Lector. Both sign-up sheets can be found in the Gathering Place on the bulletin board.
- **5th Sundays Are Special – August 30th!** Join us for a special outdoor worship service, Continental Breakfast Potluck and our Blessing of the Backpacks and Briefcases as we prepare for a new school year. Enjoy a morning of worship, fellowship, and community!
- Join us for Blessing of the Pets September 12th @ 1:00 PM
- Confirmation & Sunday School Kick off, September 13th @ 9:00 AM

Upcoming Events

- Second Saturday Event – August 8th @ 1:00 PM
- Women's Ministry – ZOOM – August 12th @ 7:30 PM
- Monthly Movie – August 14th @ 3:00 PM
- Women's Ministry – In Person – August 26th @ 7:30 PM

Upcoming Meetings

- Consistory Meeting – August 10th @ 5:00 PM
- Worship & Music Meeting – August 24th @ 3:30 PM
- Faith Formation Meeting – August 24th @ 5:00 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 -

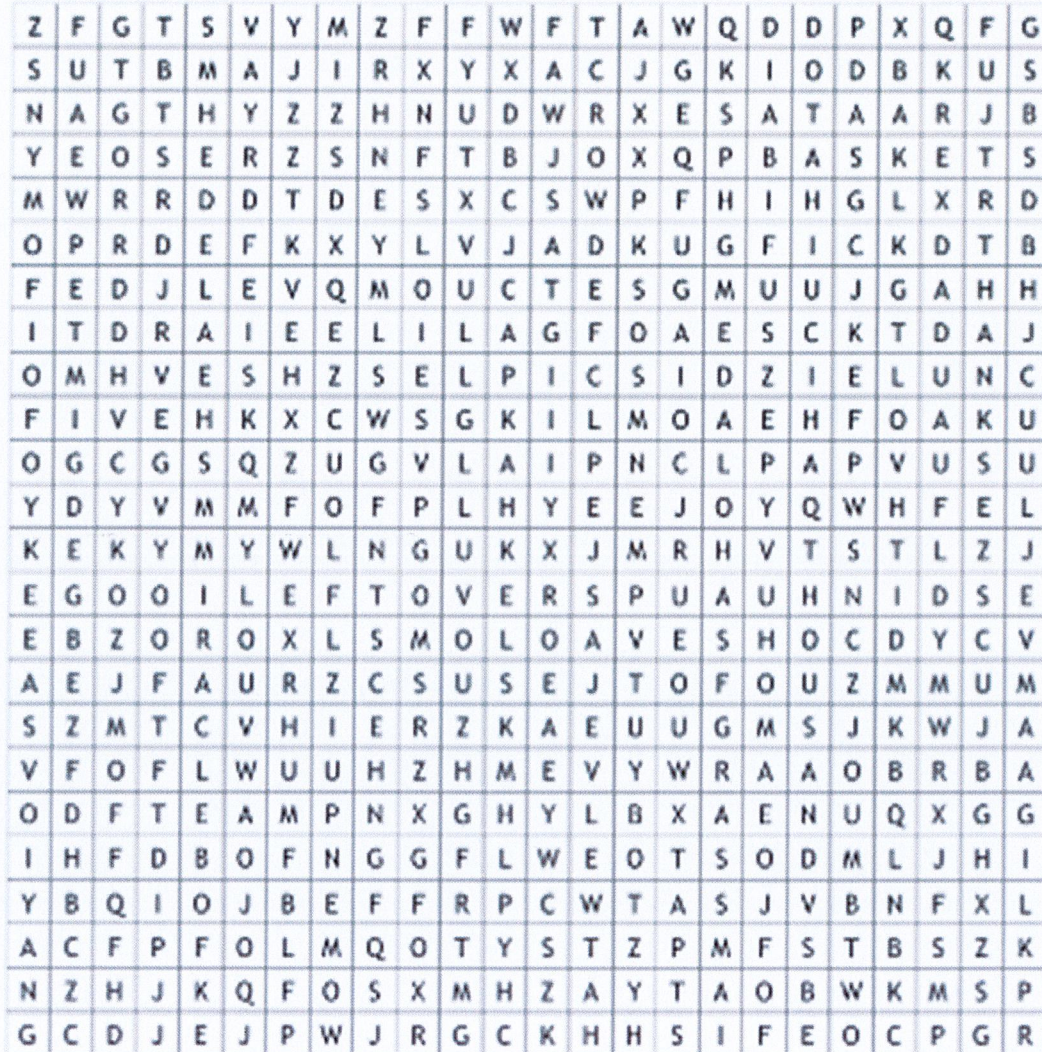
Guest Pianist – Grace Neilson

Head Usher – Chelsey Topper, Vickie Arnold, Joleen Fennel



NAME

JESUS FEEDS 5,000 MATTHEW 14: 13-21



SEA OF GALILEE
THOUSAND
HEALED
TWELVE
JESUS
FIVE
TWO

DISCIPLES
BASKETS
HUNGRY
BREAD
WOMEN
FOOD

LEFTOVERS
MIRACLE
LOAVES
CROWD
BOAT
BOY

CHILDREN
PROPHET
THANKS
GRASS
FISH
MEN