

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.

Matthew 2:10-11

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When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a star appeared in the sky. But this star didn't just shine in that Region. People in faraway lands observed its brilliant light. Some wise Magi, who studied the stars, wondered what the presence of this new star could mean. Convinced this new entity in the sky was a sign of a new earthly ruler, they decided to search for this new sovereign. They packed for a trip not knowing where they would end up or how long it would take to get there. It took time and resources to prepare for this mysterious adventure. With only the moonlight and the light of this new star, they moved slowly across the landscape into the unknown.

While working within Youth Ministry, one of my favorite events to plan was what I called, "**It's a Mystery!**" For several years, such an event appeared on our events schedule, however, just the date and time, I held the where and how close to my heart until we arrived at our destination. My favorite trip was to the *Philadelphia Museum of Art*. When we arrived another youth leader met us at the door, with pre-purchased tickets and a map of the museum complete with clues to our group's very own scavenger hunt. It was a day filled with fun, art, lunch and great intrigue. Teens looked forward to these events every year.

I think about these trips when I consider the great unknown the Magi faced as they set off to find their Messiah. Amid new and exciting astrology discoveries they eventually located Mary, Joseph and Jesus. Probably exhausted from their long journey, they knelt and celebrated the hope and light Jesus brings into the world. It's a mystery also can describe our new ministry together! My journey back to Grace, Hanover, although temporary, is full of excitement and hope. I look forward to what we can do together and pray that this time of transition will shed light on Grace's future. Hoping to visit you throughout the coming weeks. This may take time as I adjust to the schedules of both Grace and Trinity.

Blessings!
Pastor Fred Young

We praise you, Holy One, for visions of your loving ways. Stir our hope and fill us with the courage to imagine how we might journey in the paths you illuminate with the brilliance of the Christ child. Amen.

The Call

"Follow me." John 1:43

The comfort of my living room
Calls out to me each day.
The warmth and calm dispel all gloom
And banish fears away.
Sometimes I wonder if such ease
Creates an apathy
That may in some ways God displease
Who calls to challenge me.

To feed the hungry, aid the poor,
Visit the sick and ill,
Comfort the dying, and so much more -
If I follow God's will.
Our Savior's calling and true mission:
The Gospel preach and serve.
Let's put aside our own ambition
And from Christ's call not swerve.

The prophet Samuel replied,
"I'm listening, dear Lord."
And Christ said, "Yes," and for us died,
So all could be restored.
Disciples followed willingly,
Left all in faithfulness,
And that same call to you and me
Demands that we say, "Yes!"

Take up your
Cross 
and follow me...

Announcements

~Welcome to Pastor Fred as he leads worship today!

~Financial Summary from December Consistory Meeting

General pledge December 2023: \$8,414

General pledge December 2022: \$14,653

YTD income: \$179,577

YTD expenses: \$220,374

YTD deficit: \$40,797

~If anyone is interested in joining the Homewood Auxiliary, please contact Linda Bixler. Membership dues are \$3 for singles and \$5 for couples.

Grace Outreach Activities

~The Outreach Committee decided to assemble lentil brown rice soup mix jars January 27. They will be donated to HACC. Donation of ingredients will be welcome. The recipe is posted on the bulletin board by the elevator with a collection box for ingredients under the coat rack next to the sound room. The goal is to assemble 60 jars.

~February 25, immediately after the worship service, there will be a gathering for anyone interested in signing cards for any Grace off site saints, college students and those serving in the military.



Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

The Prayer Line 717-634-8865 is also the number to call in case of inclement weather.

January 14, 2024

Welcome/Announcements
Westminster Chimes/Prelude:

**Song: Soul on Fire ~Third Day

** Call to Worship

Lector: You are here for us, O God;

Congregation: you give us security in an uncertain world.

Lector: You encourage us to sing new songs;

Congregation: you joyfully set our worship free.

Lector: You challenge us as we go on the journey of life;

Congregation: it is your gracious way that leads to fulfillment.

Lector: There is no end to the love you lavish on us;

Congregation: we know your love is there for us, in time and beyond time

** Opening Prayer:

Lector: Something made the hairs stand up on our necks.
Was it you, O God?

Congregation: Was it you that we saw blowing over the water?

Lector: Was it you that we heard in those steps?

Congregation: Was it you that we felt in the beating of our own hearts?

Lector: Was it you that called our names?

Congregation: Come, O God. Come to search us. Come to know us again.

Lector: We were knit in your womb. We have tried to count your works.

Congregation: Come, O God, so that we can hear you calling our names. Here and now. Amen.

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

Response to Prayer
Prayer of Confession
Silent Reflection

Poem: "The Call"

** Hymn: TBD
Joys and Concerns

Assurance of Grace

Time for the Young at Heart
Sermon Text: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 and John 1:43-51

Message: "One ringa dinky!"

Thank you for sharing your tithes and offerings
** Doxology

** Prayer of Dedication

Communion

~Unison invitation to the table
~Communion Prayer/Lord's Prayer (sins)

~Words of Institution

~Prayer of Consecration

~Sharing of the Elements

~Prayer of Thanksgiving

Hymn: TBD

** Final Blessing

Please remain standing to sing "A Choral Benediction"
(Inside front of hymn book or on screen).

Postlude-

** Please stand, if you are able.

What growing older really means for you

That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.— 2 Corinthians 4:16

A new member of the bridge club showed up one afternoon wearing a beautiful gold locket. Another player approached her and said, “That’s such a lovely piece. Do you keep a memento in it”?

“Yes,” the woman answered. “It’s a piece of my husband’s hair I keep to help me remember.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry,” the player replied. “How long ago did he pass away?”

The newcomer quipped, “Pass away? Oh, he’s still alive. It’s his hair that’s gone!”

Someone once said, “Do not regret growing older. It is a privilege denied to many.” And with so much focus today on doing whatever it takes to stay young, many people completely miss out on a biblical understanding of what it means to age. They miss the fact that their gray hairs, baldness, wrinkles, and aches all have a purpose in the plan of God.

So what is the right biblical understanding of aging? Well, as we see in today’s passage, aging is a lifelong tradeoff of the physical for the spiritual. Young people may have more physical vitality, but are usually less mature spiritually. As we get older, however, we may lose our physical strength, but we grow spiritually and become more equipped to invest in others’ lives.

Be willing to make that tradeoff. Don’t despise growing older. **Instead, embrace your aging as a sign that while you may lose physical vigor, you’re growing each day in your spiritual strength!**

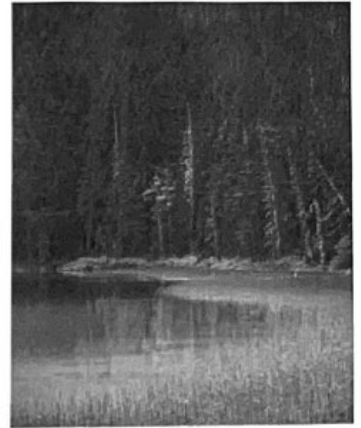
Prayer Challenge

Pray and ask God to give you a right understanding of aging as a lifelong tradeoff for something much better than physical strength.

Questions for thought

What is the one thing that gives you the most anxiety about aging?

How might this proper understanding of growing older as a tradeoff change your attitude toward aging, as well as impact your relationship with God and others?



Sunday, January 7, 2024

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

Don't make plans; make options. —Jennifer Aniston

The headline screamed an amazing and unheard of development: “105-Year-Old Sprinter Hidekichi Miyazaki Sets New Record!”

This was not fake news. On September 23, 2015, Miyazaki did, indeed, compete and win, and thereby became the Guinness World Records oldest competitive sprinter. Miyazaki ran the 100-meter dash and did it in 42.22 seconds.

There are three things impressive about Miyazaki. First, *he was not satisfied*. Published reports said he was not impressed by his performance. He complained of not being in good condition. He expressly said that he was not satisfied with his time.

Second, *he had a goal*. His target for this particular race was 35 seconds.

Third, his philosophy was that *it is never too late to start a new thing!* Miyazaki did not begin to participate in track and field sports until he was in his 90s!

What goals and records have you set your sights on for 2024?

The story of this Japanese centenarian has some valuable lessons for us.

First, it is easy for all of us, regardless of our age, to be satisfied with the status quo. We might be just fine with our level of physical fitness, or our spiritual growth. Perhaps we are okay with the state of our family relationships. They might not get better, but at least they won't get worse. “It is what it is,” we say.

Is this the attitude we want to have going into 2024?

Second, Miyazaki had a goal. Even though he was 105, he understood the importance of striving toward an objective. The apostle Paul acknowledged the importance of goal-setting in his letter to the Philippians: “Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own ... This one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (3:12-14).

Third, Miyazaki believed it was never too late to start over. This, indeed, is the essence of the gospel. Today is the day of salvation, renewal and change!

After his amazing record-setting event, Miyazaki lived for another three years, dying on January 23, 2019, at the age of 108. But while he was alive, he lived ... as though there was no tomorrow.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of another year, for allowing me to see the dawn of new opportunities. May I be strong and courageous and accept whatever challenges face me in 2024. In your name I pray. Amen.

Week of January 7, 2024

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Sunday: Genesis 1-12
Monday: Genesis 13-22
Tuesday: Genesis 23-31
Wednesday: Genesis 32-40
Thursday: Genesis 41-45
Friday: Genesis 46-50
Saturday: Psalm 1

READ
 THROUGH
 THE BIBLE
 IN ONE
 YEAR!

Each week, *HomeTouch* will provide daily readings from the Bible that will take you through the Bible in one year. Sometimes, we will suggest a **Verses to Remember**. Many *HomeTouch* readers try to memorize these verses; memorization stimulates both the mind and the heart!

LEFT OUT

Directions: Insert one letter set from column A in the spaces provided in column B to form a six-, seven- or eight-letter word. Each set in column A can be used only once.

COLUMN A

ARB
 AVO
 ELL
 ETH
 GIB
 HIN
 ILL
 KEA
 MAC
 MOG
 NOO
 TUI
 XIS

COLUMN B

1. FORE _____ N
 2. SP _____ XES
 3. HO _____ ENY
 4. GRI _____ ED
 5. LI _____ BLE
 6. TAN _____ LE
 7. GRA _____ TY
 8. FL _____ R
 9. UR _____ RA
 10. GE _____ OX
 11. DW _____ ER
 12. SE _____ MS
 13. SP _____ WAY

ANSWERS:

1. forenoon
 2. sphinxes
 3. homogeneity
 4. grimaced
 5. likeable
 6. tangible
 7. gratuity
 8. flavor
 9. urethra
 10. gearbox
 11. dweller
 12. sexism
 13. spillway

Genesis Pairs:

Adam/Eve
 Cain/Abel
 Noah/Ark
 Abraham/Sarah
 Isaac/Rebekah
 Jacob/Esau
 Rachel/Leah
 Ishmael/Hagar

GENESIS PAIRS

Directions: The Bible readings this week are from Genesis 1-50. Sort the names listed here into pairs. Each name can be used only once. (Use the white space to do your work.)

Rebekah
 Ark
 Cain
 Abraham
 Adam
 Noah
 Abel
 Ishmael
 Sarah
 Isaac
 Jacob
 Eve
 Rachel
 Leah
 Hagar
 Esau

January 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1 Samuel 3:1-10

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

BLIND
COVENANT
LAMP
SACRED
SERVANT

BOX
DIRECTION
LISTENING
SAMUEL
SLEEP

BURNING
ELI
LORD
SANCTUARY
SPEAK

Psalm 139:1-6 13-18

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

Actions
Knowledge
Speak
Working

Beyond
Protect
Thoughts

Deep
Resting
Understanding

New Beginnings

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

Forgiveness

Transition

Holy Spirit

Yoke

Covenant

Truthful

Stories

Love

Listen

Welcome

Grace

Trust

Hope

