

Memories of Christmas

When I was young I hated Christmas. School was out for about two to two and a half weeks, which meant that I spent most of my time either at the library or at home reading...we did not have a TV and my grandfather completely controlled the radio. It was winter and often too cold to go outside and play in the snow, even for a short period of time. Boredom was a constant enemy.



Occasionally we would travel to some distant cousin's home for a short one-day visit. But they were usually older people and there were never any children my age. That meant a day of sitting and listening to adult conversation, which was only half understood. If it were not for the travel time there and back I would have rather stayed at home.

I longed for school to recommence, and yet I dreaded that day. While I really wanted to see my classmates and friends, I really dreaded the question, "What did you get for Christmas?" That's a tough question when you received a pair of socks and a new shirt along with your candy cane, apple and orange.

I remember the year that I lied about what I received for Christmas. I told everyone that I got a new rocket that actually flew high up into the sky. Of course then everyone wanted to see it and watch the next launch. I think I told them that I broke it the second time I tried to fly it. That explanation worked for most of them because it was true for them. But they still wanted to see it. I told them that because it was broken, I threw it away.

But then there was the Christmas that I discovered giving instead of receiving. My grandfather helped me make some toys out of scrap wood. They were really rather cool and had several moving parts. I was proud of the fact that I had helped make them. A part of me went with the gifts. Christmas has never been the same for me.

I remember the joy of those who received my gifts. They were in many regards poorer than we were, and my gift was their only gift. So that year when school restarted after the first of the year, I ignored the hated question and asked one of my own, "What did you give for Christmas?" It was exciting that most of my friends had no answer for that question.

That has remained the focus for Christmas for the rest of my life. Christmas has truly become my favorite time of the year. I have truly been more blessed by what I have given away than by anything that I have received. As we enter this Advent Season let us never forget the Great Gift that has already been given to us. May we pass it on, receiving blessing after blessing, as we give it away.

Greg Comer

Growing Grace



A Big Thank You to our Angels who came and helped get our Christmas Cards ready to mail to all of our neighbors that live within 1.5 miles of our church. 8,200 cards were ready in an hour and a half!

Chuck Carter, Rodney Curry, Ken & Fae Mattox and Brenda

Smith, you are all very appreciated and loved. Please, **be in prayer** for all the people that will receive this invitation. May God touch them in a powerful way to find Him and to find a Community of believers to grow with.

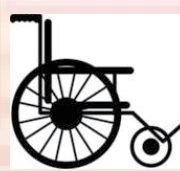


Special Thanks to the **FaithWorks Sunday School class** for their awesome work in the Prayer Garden. We love you all!

MEN'S PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

Want to get your week off to a flying start?

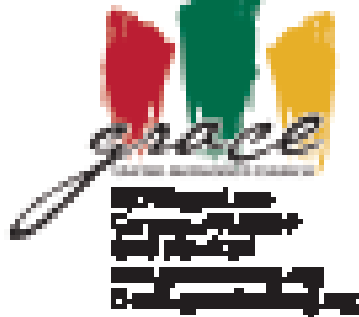
Join the Men's Prayer Fellowship that meets at **6:00 am every Monday morning in the Worship Center here at Grace**. We share a Scripture and short devotional, exchange prayer requests and spend a time before God in prayer. It's the pause before the storm of a busy week that renews and refreshes. Come join us.



McGee's Closet

Information is now posted online!

McGee's Closet is a **Medical Closet**; a virtual closet with a listing of the item(s) and the owner of such item(s) and how a person in need could get in touch with the owner. Its items you'd be willing to loan to someone in need for a short period of time. If you are interested, or you have items to add to our Medical Closet, please contact **Chuck Carter at 327-0645 or elaine@chuck@sbcglobal.net, or Bill Buchanan at 329-1117** and we'll add your name and items to our virtual closet list. If you need one of these items in our virtual Medical Closet, please contact the owner.



December 2011

Like Us On Follow Us On



Who is Grace Church?

We exist to help you develop into a spiritually mature follower of Jesus Christ. At Grace you can grow in your understanding of the Christian faith, experience the power of God through weekly and small group, and become the hands and feet of Jesus as God-empowered people in our community and around the world through you.

Reaching People

Growing Faith



Changing Lives



Mission Possible

The Mission Team needs you! Your commission, should you choose to accept is to **"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I [Jesus] have commanded you. And surely I [Jesus] am with you always, to the very end of the age."** Matt. 28:19-20.

Listening to the lead of the Holy Spirit, the mission team seeks to be obedient to Jesus' teachings by organizing and coordinating our church's mission as stated above in the gospel of Matthew. We seek to find ways to cross barriers and spread the message of salvation with all people. **We meet monthly, usually the first Sunday of each month right after the 11 am service.** If you are interested in being a part of this team, please join us for our next meeting, **Sunday, December 4th at 12:15 pm.**

If you have any questions about the mission team, please contact **Greg Comer at greg.comer@graceconway.org or Cinnamon Wheeler at cwheeler@conwaycorp.net.**

"Our mission is to develop spiritually mature disciples of Jesus Christ (around the corner and around the world)."



Changing Lives

Get E-mail updates about Grace

Visit the Member section at www.graceconway.org and join our Mailing List if you wish to receive email updates about Grace events or prayer concerns.



AccessACS Do you need to update your member information? Log in to your Access account through our website to update it.

Social Media Tools.....Keep up with the latest at Grace!

If you have a Smart Phone with a Data plan, you will be able to receive instant notices about Grace happenings through our Social Media tools. The best part? They are FREE!
 - Do you have a Facebook account? Help us get the word out about Grace by inviting your friends to LIKE us or checking-in when you come to one of our events. Plus, keep up with the latest events at Grace.
 - Don't have a Smart Phone or a Data Plan? Maybe you have Text Messaging... If so, Twitter is for you! Create a Twitter account online and FOLLOW us. You will receive text messages about Grace, instantly, to your phone.

WORD
Upcoming Sermons

DECEMBER 04th - "Preparing the Way of the Lord" Mark 1:1-8
 DECEMBER 11th - "Are We Joy-full?" John 1:6-8, 19-28. Bro. Greg Comer
 DECEMBER 18th - "The Difference Between Christmas and the Holidays" Luke 1:46-55, Romans 16:25-27
 DECEMBER 25th - "Humble Beginnings" Luke 2:1-20

Stewardship *our* prayers presence gifts witness service

November Giving and Attendance

Date	Attendance	Giving
11/06/11	266	\$13,653.00
11/13/11	242	\$12,257.00
11/20/11	292	\$12,162.00
11/27/11	301	\$ 5,717.00
November Avg.	275	\$ 10,947.25
YTD Funds Received		\$ 474,044.95
Needed Weekly Giving		\$ 11,065.00
Budget Needs for 2011		\$ 575,357.00

Grace United Methodist Church Service Times

Worship Services Sunday: 8:30 AM (Traditional), 9:45 (Contemporary), & 11:00 AM (Blended)
 Sunday School. 9:45 AM & 11:00 AM

Childcare provided.

The Youth Corner!



Grace Youth and Families:
 I'm dreaming of a Christ Christmas... just like the one's I used to know... Where the sanctuary glistens and the congregation listens... to hear God's story so they know... I'm dreaming

of a Christ Christmas...with every Christmas card I write... May your days be full of Mary and Christ...and may all your Christmas' be Bright!
Merry Christmas!
 Grace UMC. - Mr. David

Upcoming events:

- * Dec. 11 Angel Tree Gifts ready to be delivered!
- * Dec. 11 Christmas Progressive Dinner for GraceYouth ... 4 - 7 pm / Club 56 - College.

Special Bible studies offered this Fall!

What's Right...What's Wrong on Earth! / Ethics Study Every Wednesday night! These are great conversations and a place to be heard. All youth and college invited!

Addicted to God: Sunday Nights for Club 56 starting @ 4:30 pm.

Practical advice, scriptural guidance, and tons of activities and games for everyday Godly living!

The Journey ...An Advent Study / By Adam Hamilton / Sr. High @ 5:30 and College @ 7:30...Walk where the story of Christmas began so many years ago. Be a part of the story and know who we are following in a new way!

Mr. David

Christmas Tour of Homes

Renewal Ranch will be hosting its first Christmas **Tour of Homes, Saturday, December 3, 2011 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** You are invited to join us for this special afternoon filled with the sights and sounds of the holiday season.

The homes included on this tour are Don & Nancy Bingham at 1205 Montana Drive, Tim & Jane Morris at 13 Beaverfork Place and The Dooley Family at 19 Deerwood Drive.

Ticket prices are \$10-adult, \$5-child or \$25-family (limit 5 persons per family ticket). Tickets may be purchased at the door of The Dooley Residence on December 3rd between 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

For more information or to pre-purchase tickets, please visit <http://therenewalranch.org> or call (501) 350-1873.

Start your holiday off right by visiting these beautifully decorated homes!

PARENTS NIGHT OUT

Friday, December 2nd
 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Sign-up in the Children's Wing.
 \$15 for one child
 \$25.00 for two children
 \$35.00 for three children



pno MUST PAY IN ADVANCE so that we are staffed appropriately.

Children's Choir will sing on Sunday, December 11th at 8:30am service.



* Christmas Eve Services at 7 & 10pm (nursery provided at 7 pm service for infants through Pre-K only)

*December 25th Christmas Morning, 11:00am service only. No Children's Sunday School and No Nursery available.

Blessing of the Toys
 Sunday, January 1, 2012

Children should bring a new toy they received as a gift for Christmas to be blessed and children are encouraged to bring a "gently used" toy to be blessed and given away to a child in need.

* We are still in need of donations for 2 baby cribs at \$220 each.

Friday, February 4th, 2012, we will have a *Rummage Sale*. Please, bring any donations for the sale to the church and place in the last classroom in the children's wing, Room 208. If you would like to volunteer to help, please notify Christy Lemmer or Dave Sutton.



* Save the Date!
 VBS is June 24th - 28th

Conway Men's Chorus
Christmas Concert
 Tuesday, December 6th
 at 7 pm
UCA Reynolds Performance Hall
 Free Parking and Free Admission

The openers are the Dooleys, a country/gospel group and a piano selection by Paul Bradley.

The Conway Men's Chorus has sixty performing members. Come early for good seats because Reynolds Hall fills up quickly. Grace UMC members performing in the concert are: Steve Harrington, Marvin Stricklin, and Charles Yarbro.



Couponing 101

Thursday, December 1st at 6:00 pm in the Worship Center
 Mark your calendars! This will be the last class offered for awhile. You do not have to be a member of Grace to participate. This is open to the public so feel free to invite your

friends and family.

Also, at the end of the class we will be offering a brief training session for our new volunteers. So if you have offered to help with Coupons for Christ please be sure to attend. For more info, contact Monica at 501-499-2628.

Lunch Bunch will meet at **Whole Hog on Thursday, December 1st at 11:30am.** For more info, call Dylis Jenkins at 513-0276. This group is open to anyone who has Thursday's free for lunch and would like to join us for fellowship and breaking bread together. We eat at a different Conway restaurant each month.



The Sisters In Christ Silent Auction is Sunday, Dec.4 in the church foyer. Bidding will begin at 8:30 am and close at 12:15 pm. All proceeds from the auction fund our ministries for babies and children, including layettes and cars seats for CRMC.

Friends of Wesley
Christmas Banquet
 Friday, December 9
 at Grace UMC Fellowship Hall
 6:30 pm Hor's D'oeuvres & Silent Auction
 7:00 pm Dinner
 Cost: \$30.00 ticket Table (8): \$225.00
 Join us and support your Campus Ministry at UCA!
 Childcare provided.
 For more information, contact Rev. John Palmer at wesfound@conwaycorp.net or 501-327-7173.

Sunday, December 11
 at 11:00 am
Grace Choir
 will present
 "Tapestry of Light"
 A Celtic Christmas Celebration

Hilltoppers and Genesis UMW
Christmas Potluck
 Thursday, December 15 at 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
 7pm & 10 pm
 Nursery provided at 7pm.