SEPTEMBER 2026

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR LIFE TOGETHER AT GRACE UMC

PASTOR'S NOTE

LAY LEADER'S MESSAGE

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GRACE NOTES

Pentecost

by Pastor Jin-Jong Lee

In this column, I would like to revisit the subject of Pentecost—which we recently celebrated—to share some thoughts I was unable to cover at the time. According to Acts chapter 2, the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. This event marked a definitive turning point between the Old and New Testament eras. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God came upon only a select few—such as kings, prophets, and priests—in a limited manner; however, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit like a rushing torrent on Pentecost gave birth to the early church and ushered in the new era known as the New Testament age. As previously mentioned, God Himself established these festivals and commanded His people to observe them. Why, then, did God specifically choose the Day of Pentecost for the descent of the Holy Spirit?

Pentecost falls on the fiftieth day—the day immediately following the completion of the seven-week count that begins with the Feast of First fruits. Although Pentecost is often viewed as the same festival as the Feast of Weeks, which marks the end of that seven-week period, strictly speaking, the Feast of Weeks is the forty-ninth day, while Pentecost is the fiftieth. On Pentecost, a new grain offering was presented at the Temple; what distinguished it from ordinary grain offerings was the inclusion of leaven. This was the only grain offering presented at the Temple that contained leaven. What spiritual significance lies in this leavened grain offering, and how does it relate to the festival of Pentecost?

There is a close connection between the Feast of Unleavened Bread—during which unleavened barley bread is eaten at home—and Pentecost, when the priests consumed wheat bread made from a leavened grain offering. During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which occurs early in the agricultural year at the start of the barley harvest, people ate unleavened bread—prepared without leaven—as a symbol of renewal and the casting off of the old. In contrast, during Pentecost, which marks the final stage of the grain harvest with the gathering of wheat, leavened bread was consumed.

Unlike barley—which was primarily used as animal feed and served as a staple for the poor—wheat was the daily sustenance of farmers in Canaan. Pentecost, marking the completion of the harvest, signifies a return to ordinary life; it marks the end of the period of hardship spent eating unleavened barley bread and ushers in the consumption of leavened wheat bread—the normal daily food. This is akin to making a spiritual resolution too fast for a fresh start at the beginning of the new year, only to resume eating regular meals to sustain daily life once the fast concludes. In this sense, Pentecost can be viewed as the concluding assembly of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread marks the beginning of the agricultural cycle, which commences with the barley harvest. This cycle, initiated by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, reaches a milestone at Pentecost—the conclusion of the wheat harvest—and prepares the way for a new beginning.

In other words, Pentecost is the time to wrap up the grain harvests (wheat and barley) and prepare for the summer fruit harvests, which proceed from grapes to figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. Thus, Pentecost is a season of preparation for a new period and a new era.

After completing the Passover rituals and escaping Egypt, the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai two months later. There, God gave the Law to Moses, establishing new commandments and a covenant suited to this new era. Consequently, Pentecost became a festival commemorating the moment the Israelites received the Law from God and entered into a covenant with Him, thereby becoming a covenant community. The work of redemption, initiated by Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross during Passover, was brought to completion with the descent of the Holy Spirit; the disciples' reception of the Spirit ushered in the new era of the New Covenant. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was granted to establish a renewed covenant appropriate for this new age. **Shalom!**

BEING JOYFUL

by Lay Leader, Laurie Bedard

Welcome September! I have often in my life "mourned" the passing of summer. I love the warm days spent at our camp, reading on our dock and swimming in "my" lake! I still have some days left to do that according to some of the long range forecasts but they are getting to be fewer. This year however I am trying not to feel sadness about the time passing but instead to greet each new day as a blessed gift. I'm guessing this change in thinking is age related! I believe however that it's a healthy Biblical way to look at life. The Lord teaches us to be thankful in all things, content in whatever circumstance we are in, to only ask for "daily" bread and to trust Him to be with us always.

A new favorite Scripture verse that is printed on a pretty hand towel I have at camp is Romans 12:12, "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." I read this everyday and it reminds me to be thankful as I greet each new day. Will I longingly think of warm summer days and the sound of loons calling on the lake when it's a dark cold day in November? Yes, I probably will but I pray I can also be thankful for a warm home, for the love of family and the fellowship of friends gathered in my home for prayer or Bible study. Every season, every day is an amazing potential-filled gift from our God. THIS is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! Please remind me of these words if you hear me grumble about a shivery cold Sunday morning in January!

Blessings all, Laurie 🙏🏻

THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:7. God designed friendship as one of His sweetest blessings. True friends share burdens, multiply joy and reflect Christ's companionship. A faithful friend is evidence of God's kindness and care. Friendship, when rooted in love, becomes a sacred exchange of grace. (7/22/26 * 60 - Days of Prayer). Laurie Bedard's recent Facebook and e-mail expressed concern for the local homeless population. Let us pray about not only how how Grace UMC , but also how I can show Christ's love, kindness, care and friendship to them.

Grateful for my church friendships, Pam Smith

MINISTRY MATTERS

DONATIONS NEEDED

Our Community Lunch program is in need of Fall and Winter clothing to share with those in need. Please make sure all donations are clean and in good condition. Donations may be dropped off at the lunch on Mondays from 11am-12:15 pm, or at the church office Tuesday-Thursday from 9 am-noon.

REMEMBER:

September 6:	Grace UMC Service BEGINS at 10:30
September 13:	Children's church & Sunday School begins . A potluck lunch after the service will celebrate the children, the teachers and the new Sunday School year.
September 13:	Prayer Service at Health & Rehab at 1:30
September 20:	AD council after church (11:40); Joint SPRC to follow

UPDATES FROM TRUSTEES

During the last Ad Council meeting, Bernie Timson reported: the furnace is working well and downstairs floors have been waxed. Upcoming needs and projects include: completing elevator inspection, adding 3 cameras downstairs for additional area monitoring, updated sealing and striping to the church driveway, repairing carillon, and work on the parsonage windows, replacing/fixing the west side entry door.

WEEKLY MINISTRIES

Monday: Community Lunch
11:00am -12:15pm

Thursday: Prayer & Share at the Bedards @ 7:30am

Saturday: Bible Study with Pastor Lee
10:00-11:20am

MONTHLY MINISTRIES

1st Sunday: Holy Communion and Fellowship Hour

2nd Sunday: Prayer Service at Health & Rehab 1:30

3rd Sunday: Women's Group after the service

TREASURER'S UPDATE

Over the last 12 months $19,000 has been collected through the monthly (2nd week) special offering which has significantly helped with building maintenance. It will be continued during the next year. Thank you Faithful Grace members and friends! Shawn

Join our AGG (A Grace-ful Group)

THANK YOU!

Thank you to our Liturgists, Fellowship Hosts, Communion Stewards, Musical Talent, Sunday School Teachers, Audio-Video Team, Ushers, Greeters, Committee Members and Monday Luncheon volunteers for your valuable service for to Grace and our community

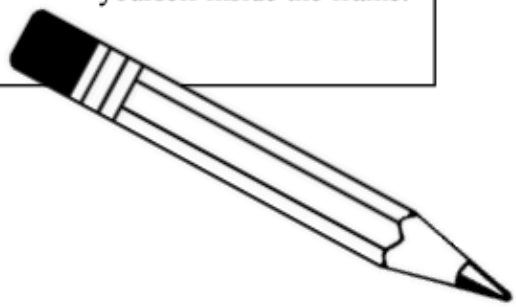
CHILDREN'S BIBLE ACTIVITY SHEETS

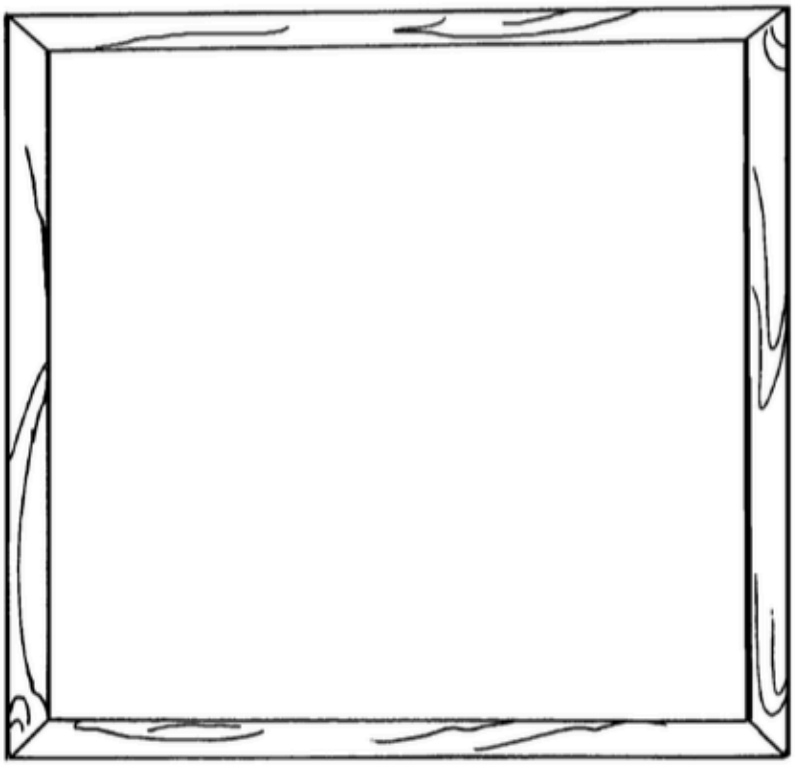
GOD CREATED AND KNOWS US

Psalm 139:1-24

God created us. He is familiar with all our ways.

Draw a picture of yourself inside the frame.





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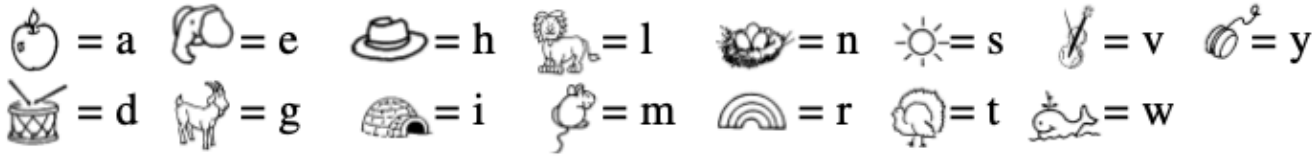

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 10:00 AM Sunday Worship	31 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	1	2	3 David & Jo-Ann Reed 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	4 Payton Grant	5 10:00 AM Bible Study
6 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	7 Kathy Merrill 9:00 AM No community Luncheon	8	9	10 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	11	12 10:00 AM Bible Study
13 10:30 AM Sunday Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School begins 1:30 PM St. J Health & Rehab Prayer Ser- 11:30 PM Pot luck	14 11:00 AM Community Luncheon ... Pot luck Lunch after church	15 Jill Geiger	16	17 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	18 Gary & He...r McGinnis	19 10:00 AM Bible Study
20 10:30 AM Sunday Worship 11:30 AM Ad Council following church	21 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	22	23 Linda Goyet	24 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	25	26 10:00 AM Bible Study
27 Brandon Bedor 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	28 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	29	30 Curt Geiger	1 Chuck & Linda Perkins 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	2 Dwayne &...l LaBounty	3 Lyn Chamberlin 10:00 AM Bible Study

GRACE NOTES

Grace United Methodist Church
36 Central Street
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
www.stjgracechurch.org

Worship with us

Join us for Worship — Sundays at 10:30 am