

Grace is the ultimate story. It's the Biblical narrative from the beginning of creation to the outpouring of God's Spirit transforming frightened followers of Jesus to courageous disciples. Take sometime this week to be amazed and to be awed that the same breath that swept the waters, brought life out of nothing, formed the church at Pentecost, is the same Spirit that sustains us each day and each breath we inhale/exhale. We live on grace upon grace. From the cry of a newborn baby in their parents' arms until the moments as they gasp for their last breath on earth and fully embraced in God's heavenly arms-grace upon grace. Or, to borrow a definition from popular pastor and author Max Lucado "Of all his wondrous works, grace, in my estimation, is the magnum opus." However, more than God's greatest idea, way, or piece of art, I'm convinced grace is the pouring of Godself out, kenosis. From the incarnation, Jesus' birth, to the cross, atonement, God surprises us by fully giving Godself to us. In short, grace is a gift! An unconditional gift. An unconditional gift for the world.

Grace Anderson has truly been a *gift* to all the people at Fort Myers Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Without a doubt, she has been and continues to be a gift from God whether singing or serving faithfully in a variety of other roles. Grace has become not only a talented vocalist bringing energy and a warm smile, but also she is a fine leader. Prior to the pandemic, you might recall Dr. Asya bringing a few of her young students to the church a couple times throughout the summer months to play a selection of music. The story is history from there as Grace has been regularly singing on rotation throughout the past two years. In fact, Grace has been a major blessing to me finding and empowering other vocalists from Florida Gulf Coast University. Among Grace's colleagues and friends, there is a little humor as Susie, Ricardo, and Kelsie roll their eyes and sarcastically say "There is not much Grace can't do." Well, we have learned that here at Fort Myers Christian Church as Grace has regularly led hymns and special music, substituted on the piano, played the violin and a few other instruments along the way. Grace has surprised us with her many talents but most of all her faithfulness to our church. In fact, when I found myself in a pickle, as our photographer cancelled last minute for a wedding, Grace was there to the rescue. She not only took the common pictures, but she had the now Mr. and Mrs. John and Carol Vickers smiling with a few extra poses. Let's not forget this past Easter, a sprang ankle and clutches were not enough to stop Grace from leading music on the Church's most glorious day! Most of all, I give thanks to God for Grace pouring herself out and sharing her talents with us here.



As much as it's been a pure joy to have Grace part of our church family and leading music with Dr. Asya, I'm excited about her bright future as well as the positive impact she will have in the lives of those around her and in the world. After several months of applying and receiving major scholarships to continue her education, I shared with a beloved member of our church Grace's decision. He replied "I'm surprised Grace chose MIT, because Stanford University would have the better name for music and theater. I smiled and shared with this member as talented as Grace is with music, she is continuing on with her PhD in ... Since it's way above my pay grade to go any further attempting to explain, I asked Grace to share what is next:

A Word from Grace

"After graduating from FGCU I will be moving to Boston to pursue a PhD in Materials Science Engineering at MIT. I will join the Furst Lab and work in bioelectrochemical materials for improving global health equity. Eventually, I plan to become a professor, pursuing research and academia at a top tier university! In the meantime, I will find local and university choirs to sing in to keep my passion for music alive. I have absolutely loved my time at FMCC and I am truly grateful for everyone's support, especially Zach and Asya!"



Grace's last day with us will be **Sunday, May 22**. Join us in the fellowship hall as we celebrate her ministry and wish her the very best!

Prayers and Praise to God from the Past Month

Family and friends of Rosie Langley, in the passing of Rosie, Church Family Cards can be sent to the following address:

Gay Royse (sister) 1075 92nd St. #205, Bay Harbor Islands, FL 33154

Family of Lee Camps, in the passing of Lee, Church Family

Cards can be sent to the following:

David Camps (son) 1056 Bayshore Ave., Fort Myers, FL 33919

Beth, recently diagnosed with breast cancer, Judee Buhlinger (daughter)

Joan, open heart surgery, Judee Buhlinger (sister)

Shirley Fizer, endoscopic and colonoscopy last Friday, Church Family

Asya Teruni-Minasya, praise as she is recovering from severe cold, Church Family

Sophia Condit, will begin Slippery Rock University in the fall, FMCC Vocalist

Ted Johnston, rehab and not doing well, Ron and Betty Johnston (Ron's brother)

Cynthia Williams, having pain in her legs, Johnny Blasi (coworker)

(New Update) Mackenzie Lee, upcoming surgery on Thursday, May 5, to remove cyst, Linda Lee (granddaughter)

(New Update) Joyce Turney, optimistic about spinal surgery last week and currently in rehab at Cypress Cove Lodge, Church Family

Pat Watts, released from the hospital after a recent fall, Church Family

Grace Anderson, sprained right foot and on crutches, FMCC Vocalist

Maggie Johnston, lymphoma, Ron and Betty Johnston (daughter-in-law)

(update) Pam Williams, back home from the hospital and doing better after COVID, Church Family

Charlie Fink, cyst in his kidney, Church Family



Join us for fun and fellowship on Saturday, May 14,
6pm

Outreach Corner

Do you have ideas for new outreach efforts at FMCC? Would you like to assist with Outreach on an on-going basis? If so, please reach out to Chana Weaver and let her know of your interest in becoming a part of the Outreach team.

On May 29 and June 5 we will be collecting the Pentecost Offering. This special offering supports Disciples new church development. Gifts for this offering are divided equally between the region in which they're given and the New Church Ministry which trains and assists new church leaders throughout the United States and Canada.

Our next Bags of Hope is scheduled for **June 9 at 6 p.m.** Please mark your calendars now for this meaningful event.

Looking ahead: July is our annual back-to-school backpack and school supply effort to support Tanglewood.



Guest Pianist, Ann with Sophia

May Birthdays and Anniversaries

(Email the office if your name is missing)

Charlie Fink	May 5
Jan Laughman	May 7
Pat Watts	May 7
Hildur Skaggs	May 13
Martha Furrow	May 16
Dr. Asya Teruni	May 19
Rev. Zach and Kate Seitz	May 21
Rev. Ed and Diane Bodanske	May 28