

GRACE AVENUE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

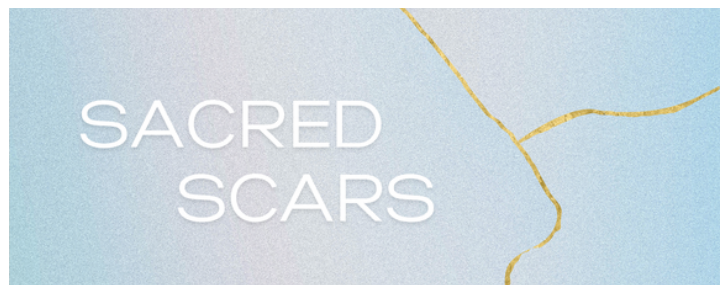
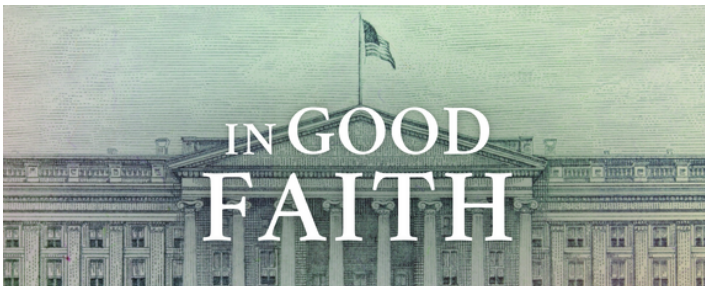
ATLAS

SEPTEMBER 2024 - JUNE 2025



3521 Main Street | Frisco, TX
graceavenue.org | 972.335.2882

A YEAR OF WORSHIP AT A GLANCE:



For more information about programs, missions, ministries, and other events at Grace Avenue, visit graceavenue.org.



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CREDO

WHAT WE BELIEVE

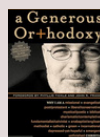
Whether we realize it or not, everyone has a belief system. It is the thoughts and things we hold most dear. A belief system motivates us to do the things we do. It often determines who we associate with and with whom we will create community.

Christians have spent great amounts of time and energy developing and defining systematic belief systems. Often, Christians have held to these belief systems to the point of suffering and martyrdom. Not all Christian belief systems, however, are the same. At times these belief systems are challenged, and many feel the need, therefore, to defend what they believe. Sometimes efforts are made to find common ground in order to articulate "essential" beliefs.

Credo is a Latin word that literally means, "I believe." The Church has a rich tradition of creating creeds that capture essential beliefs and speak to a wider population. It is important as individuals to examine our beliefs and not blindly assent to a creed simply because it has been passed down through the ages. All beliefs should be re-imagined and communicated in ways that speak with relevance in the present age.

In this series, we will examine five of our most basic Christian beliefs. We will explore their potential impact on our world today. Most importantly, we will be challenged to "own" these beliefs for ourselves so that our daily living aligns with what we say we believe.

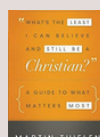
RESOURCES



A Generous Orthodoxy
by Brian McLaren



Reconsidering the Apostles' Creed
by Brand Eaton



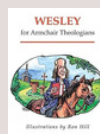
What's The Least I Can Believe & Still Be A Christian
by Martin Thielen



Methodist Theology
by Kenneth Wilson



Christian Faith: Dogmatics in Outline
by B.A. Gerrish



Wesley for Armchair Theologians
by William J. Abraham



Creed
by Adam Hamilton



United Methodist
Church's Beliefs



Grace Avenue's
Belief Statement

September 8	Who is God?	Exodus 3:1-15
September 15	Who is Jesus?	Philippians 2:1-11
September 22	Who is the Holy Spirit?	John 14:15-27
September 29	How are we Saved?	Ephesians 2:4-10
October 6	What is the Church?	Ephesians 2:19-22

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out of context

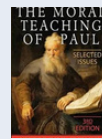
In the sermon series, "Out of Context," we will delve into the critical importance of understanding Scripture within its original framework. Just as a single puzzle piece can't reveal the entire picture, verses pulled out of their biblical context can lead to misunderstandings and misapplications. This series will encourage us to dive deeper into the historical, cultural, and theological backgrounds of key passages, equipping us to interpret God's Word more faithfully.

Taking things out of context is not a problem unique to Scripture. Imagine someone overhearing a snippet of your phone conversation where you say, "I'm going to kill it tonight!" Out of context, it sounds like a threat, but in reality, you're just excited about your performance in a play or your presentation at work. Similarly, if someone hears you say, "I just can't stand him," they might think you have a personal grudge, when in fact, you're just talking about your frustration with a character in a TV show.

Consider the phrase "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). It's often used as a motivational mantra, but its true power lies in understanding Paul's context of enduring hardship and finding contentment in Christ, regardless of circumstances. Without this context, we might mistakenly think it guarantees success in all our endeavors.

Join us as we journey through these scriptures with fresh eyes, seeking to honor the intended message and uncover the richness of God's Word. Let's have some fun, share a few laughs, and deepen our understanding together. Remember, "I can do all things through a verse taken out of context" — but let's strive for more!

RESOURCES



Moral Teachings of Paul
by Victor Paul Furnish



Making of Biblical Womanhood
by Beth Allison Barr



Inspired
by Rachel Held Evans



Making Sense of the Bible
by Adam Hamilton



1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted Culture
(documentary film)



Walking the Bridgeless Canyon
by Kathy Baldock



Reading the Bible from the Margins
by Miguel De La Torre

October 13	Silenced Voices	1 Timothy 2:12
October 20	Outcasts or Overcomers?	1 Corinthians 6:9-11
October 27	Authority and Anarchy	Romans 13:1-10

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IN GOOD FAITH

The phrase "In Good Faith" calls for honesty, sincerity, and a genuine commitment to doing what is right across all areas of life. By embracing and practicing good faith in personal relationships, business dealings, and community interactions, we contribute to a more trustworthy, ethical, and harmonious world.

Historically, the concept of good faith has deep roots in religious, legal, and philosophical traditions. To cultivate generosity, we need a mindset of empathy, active listening, and continuous reflection on one's actions and motives.

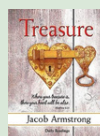
In an era where uncertainty can dominate our lives, it is essential to turn to the wisdom of Scripture to guide us. The Bible provides timeless principles for managing our resources in ways that honor God and benefit our communities. This four-week sermon series, "In Good Faith," will explore stewardship through the lenses of Legacy, Trust, Integrity, and Gratitude.

Each week, we will delve into a different aspect of stewardship, anchored by Psalms that offer profound insights into God's guidance and provision. We will begin on All Saints Sunday and conclude on the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving. As we study these powerful and familiar Psalms, we will join together in looking forward to 2025 and how we live out our generosity "In Good Faith."

RESOURCES



The Good Ancestor: A Radical Prescription for Long-Term Thinking
by Roman Krznaric



Treasure
by Jacob Armstrong



The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom
by Miguel Ruiz and Janet Mills



Healing the Heart of Democracy
by Parker Palmer



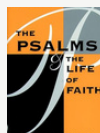
I Think You're Wrong (But I'm Listening)
by Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers



Open & Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life
by W. David O. Taylor

STEWARDSHIP SERIES

As we learn how generosity informs our faith, Walter Brueggemann's "Psalms & the Life of Faith" will guide us.



Psalms And The Life of Faith
by Walter Brueggemann

November 3	Legacy	Psalms 22: 25-31
November 10	Trust	Psalms 23: 1-6
November 17	Integrity	Psalms 24: 1-6
November 24	Gratitude	Psalms 24: 7-10

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UNRAVELING

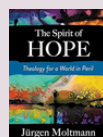
ADVENT 2024

Have you ever tried to untangle a necklace or headphones? It's a delicate process. If you fight the knot too hard, strands end up breaking. We wonder how it ever got so bad. Unraveling a knot requires some patience. We can't fix it when we're getting worked up over how irritating the knot is, so we have to find composure and take a breath. When we slow down, we begin to see where the individual strands cross over each other. As we start to be gentle with the knot, it loosens.

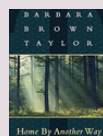
Maybe you've noticed – our world is tangled up in knots. We often find ourselves in the middle of these knots, unable to see where it started or how to pull it apart. We try to work around these knots, yet we feel them constantly, and we don't have time to stop and figure them out. But the Advent season gives us an opportunity to do just that – to slow down and let these stories remind us of all that was unraveled in preparation for the peace of Christ to nestle into our lives.

Each of the characters we meet in the Gospel of Luke - Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Mary - finds themselves in some kind of knot. They're stuck in hopelessness, frozen by big expectations, and numbed by loneliness. But we know the Advent story offers us Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as alternatives. As we follow each of these stories of unraveling, when we're left with disconnected threads, we come to Christmas Eve. Then, God takes these threads and weaves us back into a tapestry. Intertwined, not entangled.

RESOURCES



The Spirit of Hope: Theology For a World in Peril
by Jurgen Moltmann



Home by Another Way
by Barbara Brown Taylor



Honest Advent
Scott Erickson



Untamed
by Glennon Doyle



Unraveled
by Leanne Hatch



Inside Out 1 & 2
(Pixar Movies)



How the Grinch Stole Christmas

December 1	Unraveling Hopelessness	Luke 1:5-17
December 8	Unraveling Expectations	Luke 1:46-55, 65-66
December 15	Music Sunday	
December 22	Unraveling Loneliness	Luke 1:67-79
December 24	Christmas Eve: Wrapped in Glory	Luke 2:1-7

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BREAKING GROUND

holy ground • solid ground • common ground

A new year often feels like a new start. When we think about Breaking Ground, some of us might imagine that first shovel hitting the dirt before something new is constructed. Others of us might think of a groundbreaking development in medical science or a game-changing idea.

The ground beneath our feet often represents that thing that is known, certain, and safe. When there is a break in the place where we are used to sure footing, it can feel surprising, uncomfortable, and maybe even a little scary.

As we walk along this sacred ground, you will have an opportunity to reflect on God's big ideas for you this year. Maybe it's time for you to get out your metaphorical shovel and start the thing that God has placed on your heart. Or maybe, it's time to let the idea of God's big love break ground in your life.

AS WE BEGIN 2025,

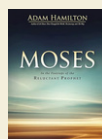
we invite you to consider all the ways that God teaches us about the ground we occupy.

How is God trying to get our attention in this new season?

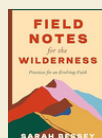
How do we establish a foundation in Christ that allows us to follow the new things God is calling us into?

How do we work toward a world that is a more merciful, loving, and gracious place for all people?

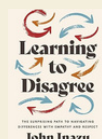
RESOURCES



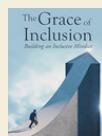
Moses: In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet
by Adam Hamilton



Field Notes for the Wilderness
by Sarah Bessey



Learning to Disagree: The Surprising Path to Navigating Differences with Empathy & Respect
by John Inazu



The Grace of Inclusion: Building an Inclusive Mindset
by Fidelis Teresa D'Cunha PhD



Now What?: How to Move Forward When We're Divided
by Sarah Holland & Beth Silvers



Finding Our Way Again
by Brian D. McLaren



Holy Openings
by Karen Kaiser

January 19	Holy Ground	Exodus 3:1-15
January 26	Solid Ground	Matthew 7:24-28
February 2	Common Ground	Acts 10:1-16; 34-48

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(RE)MEMBER

Thanks to our amazing libraries, robust bookstores, Audible, Kindle, and our many other apps and access points, we are blessed by a wealth of access to great literature. You might be a fan of memoirs, biographies, or fiction. Fascinating books have a way of transporting us out of our own stories and into someone else's.

In this series, we are going to remember some of our most remarkable faith stories. Each week, we'll read about a biblical character whose life was a mix of difficulties, triumphs, terrible mistakes, brave decisions, pain, and joy. We'll remember how, despite his trickery of Isaac and plot against Esau, Jacob became a father of a nation. We'll consider how when Naomi lost almost everything, her daughter-in-law's faithfulness ultimately resulted in redemption. We'll discuss the many ups and downs of King David's life and how God uses us despite our worst mistakes. We'll talk about how despite her fear, Esther used her position to save her people.

All of these characters had moments of being lost, yet we are reminded time and again of God's faithfulness to go with us, and that even when we've messed up, we are never on the outside of God's grace. God always "re-members" us into the community of Christ, even when we've wandered away. The stories of Jacob, Naomi, David, and Esther are all of our stories. We invite you along as we recognize ourselves, learn from the past, and move forward with the knowledge of God's abundant grace.

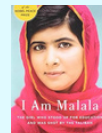
RESOURCES



All My Knotted Up Life: A Memoir
by Beth Moore



Counting the Cost
by Jill Duggar



I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education & Was Shot by the Taliban
by Malala Yousafzai



I Take My Coffee Black: Reflections on Tupac, Musical Theater, Faith, & Being Black in America
by Tyler Merritt



This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, & the Stories That Make Us
by Cole Arthur Riley



Remember: God's Covenants and the Cross
by Susan Robb



Coco (Pixar Movie)

February 9	Jacob	Genesis 32:22-32
February 16	Naomi	Ruth 1:6-22
February 23	David	1 Samuel 17:41-50
March 2	Esther	Esther 4:9-16

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in the clearing

LENT 2025

So often we pray to God for clarity. We want clarity about our jobs, our families, our finances, and the thousands of decisions we need to make every day. Lack of clarity can paralyze us into making no decisions at all. We get bogged down in the clutter of life and see no way forward. Lent offers us a time to seek clarity in a different way.

Perhaps we don't need clarity in the details of life, but in our purpose. Rather than fretting over every detail, we need to clear space to explore who God has created us to be.

WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES?

WHERE ARE WE CONNECTED?

During this series, we will explore what it means to clear space for God's wisdom in our lives. In the clearing, we might just find the clarity we seek.

March 9	Clarity of Priorities	Luke 4:1-14
March 16	Clarity of Mission	Luke 4:16-30
March 23	Clarity of Purpose	Luke 9:51-55
March 30	Clarity of Connection	Luke 15:11-32
April 6	Clarity of Identity	Luke 19:1-10
April 13	Clarity of Suffering	Luke 19:28-44, 22:39-46
April 20	Easter	Luke 24:1-12

RESOURCES



Practices of Love: Spiritual Disciplines for the Life of the World
by Kyle David Bennet



The Lives We Actually Have, 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days
by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie



Everything is Spiritual
by Rob Bell



The Divine Spark
by Paula D'Arcy



Can You Drink the Cup?
by Henri J.M. Nouwen



The Wisdom of Insecurity
by Alan Watts



The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up
by Marie Kondo

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SACRED SCARS

Have you ever thought about the stories behind your scars? Maybe it's the scar on your leg from falling off a bicycle or the stitches you got while chasing after a sibling. These visible scars mark us. But what about the scars on your heart from times you've been rejected, hurt, made fun of, or left out? These invisible scars shape who we are, yet we often try to hide them.

In our series, "Sacred Scars," we'll explore the idea that our hurts and wounds aren't meant to be the end of our story. Our Sacred Scars are the places where we've been hurt but healed, allowing us to empathize with others, share our stories, and let people know they are not alone.

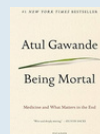
Our scars, both seen and unseen, make us who we are and enable us to be "wounded healers." Through our struggles, we develop deep empathy and understanding for others. When, like Jesus did with Thomas, we are able to show others our scars, we offer a deep vulnerability and compassion that we can't do otherwise. So often we speak from our wounds instead of our scars, but a scar is a symbol that something has healed.

So, are you ready to learn how your sacred scars can bring healing and love to your life and community? Join us as we explore these incredible stories and discover the beauty in our own scars.

RESOURCES



Wounded Healer
by Henri J.M. Nouwen



Being Mortal
by Atul Gawande



No Cure for Being Human
by Kate Bowler



Healing Spiritual Wounds
by Carol Howard Merritt



Learning to Walk in the Dark
by Barbara Brown Taylor



The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief
by Jan Richardson



The Book of Forgiving
by Desmond Tutu & Mpho Tutu

April 27	Thomas: Wounds of Doubt, Scars of Faith	John 20:19-31
May 4	Peter: Wounds of Denial, Scars of Grace	Matthew 26:69-75
May 11	Paul: Wounds of Persecution, Scars of Redemption	Acts 9:1-20

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PROPHETIC HOPE

Too often we interpret the book of Revelation through a lens of fear. "The truth is that Revelation offers a vision of God's healing love for the world." (Barbara Rossing, *The Rapture Exposed*). Prophetic Hope is a worship series designed to delve into the Revelation of John focusing on the themes of hope, divine promise, and renewal. Despite its complex imagery and apocalyptic tone, Revelation offers profound messages of encouragement and faith for our world. Over three weeks, we will explore key passages that highlight the good news found in God's ultimate plan for creation.

May 18	Letters of Promise	Revelation 2-3
May 25	The Great Multitude	Revelation 7
June 1	New Heaven, New Earth	Revelation 21:1-7, 22-27, 22:1-7



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RESOURCES



The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation
by Barbara R. Rossing



Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church
by N. T. Wright



Unlocking the Mysteries: 150 FAQ's About Revelation
by Samuel F. Parvin & C. Stephen Byrum



Interpretation Bible Studies: Revelation
by William C. Pender



Podcast - The Bible for Normal People
Episode 259: Robyn Whitaker on The Book of Revelation

LOOKING TO GO DEEPER? JOIN A STUDY OR GROUP

There are several bible studies, small groups, and classes that dive deeper into each worship series as we move through the Atlas.

Read about each one at graceavenue.org/atlas, or scan the QR code to the right.



AT GRACE AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,

OUR VISION is to make disciples and make a difference through Jesus Christ.

OUR MISSION is to eradicate homelessness in whatever form it presents itself. We believe that everyone needs a spiritual home, an emotional home, and a physical home.



SANCTUARY WORSHIP

9:15 & 10:30 in the Sanctuary

Rev. Billy Echols-Richter, Lead Pastor
Rev. Laura Echols-Richter, Executive Pastor
Laurie Hanson Roberts, Minister of Sanctuary Worship



MODERN WORSHIP

9:15 A Different Door in the Worship Center
10:30 service in the Worship Center

Rev. Christopher Vaughan, Lead Pastor of Modern Worship
Rev. Karyl Patredis, Pastor of Modern Worship & Outreach
Vaughn Faison, Director of Modern Worship



LIVE STREAMING & ON DEMAND SERMONS

Stream & watch all services at graceavenue.org/worship/streaming

HOLY COMMUNION

Communion is celebrated in all services on the first Sunday of each month. On all other Sundays of the month, communion is offered at 9:00am in the Sanctuary.