

Gray Weekly News



Week Leading to Sunday, December 12, 2021

Making the Most of our Time

By Jake Owensby, www.ministrymatters.com

Life is short. Even if you believe in life after life, you have to admit that our time on planet earth is limited. And once the truth of our finitude sinks in, we recognize the importance of making the most of the time we are given. Wisdom is the art of leading a life worth living.

A yearning for wisdom is what led me to become a philosopher and eventually a priest and then a bishop. That may sound strange to you, since some people assume that philosophers are atheists occupied with abstract ideas. But the words of the Stoic Epictetus always made sense to me. He said, “Don’t explain your philosophy. Embody it.” That’s what I say about faith to this day.

So it’s from that perspective that I hear the apostle Paul say these words to the Ephesians: “Be careful how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time.” (Ephesians 5:15-16a)

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Third Sunday of Advent

Zachariah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

“The Advent of Joy”

News and Notes

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 12

Please join us on Sundays at 11 am. If you don't feel comfortable coming in person, you can watch our livestream at graymemorialumc.org/facebook.com or graymemorialumc.org/youtube, at 11 am or any time after that at graymemorialumc.org/



If you have prayer requests, please contact Norma Adams, Jennifer Skinner or Gail Teems.

You may also call the church office at 850/385-6441 or send a text to 850/933-8469.

2021 Church Financial Report

Budgeted Amount thru 12/31/21	\$ 151,400
Giving Amount as of 12/5/21	\$ 126,964
Amount Needed thru 12/31/21	\$ 24,436

ONLINE GIVING NOW AVAILABLE: For your convenience, we have established online giving through the church management program, Breeze. Here is the link:

<https://gmumc.Breezechms.com/give/online>

If you prefer, you can **text a contribution to 850/695-3434**. If you have questions regarding this, please call Anita Durham at the church on Tuesday or Thursday mornings. You can mail a check to 2201 Old Bainbridge Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32303. Thank you!

BASKETBALL AND BIBLE



The new Basketball and Bible ministry effort has gotten off to a terrific start with the donation of more than \$2500 towards a new semi-professional basketball goal. Thank you to all who have contributed to this effort so far! Once the new goal is installed, the parking lot will be painted as a half-court with free throw area. There are already several groups of neighbors who frequent the one portable basketball goal often and enjoy having a location nearby that welcomes them. The new basketball goal and painted court will

be enjoyed by our members, their children and the surrounding community for years to come and will serve as a wonderful example of Gray Memorial's outreach efforts.

ADVENT POINSETTIA ORDER FORMS

Poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary again this year to celebrate Advent. The poinsettia plants are \$10 each and can be purchased to honor a loved one or in memory of a deceased family member or friend. Deadline for ordering is December 12. The poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary on December 19.



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He's not talking about getting your doctrine just right. Neither is he simply telling them to follow a clear-cut moral rule book. His point is that navigating the changes and the chances, the thrills, and the disappointments, the lucky breaks and the unfavorable winds of this life is an art. Faith is about wisdom every bit as much—and perhaps even more fundamentally than—right thinking and moral rectitude.

I'm a Jesus-follower. And I take Paul at his word when he says that Jesus is wisdom incarnate. In his words, Jesus "became for us wisdom from God" (1 Corinthians 1:30). And, like Paul, I recognize wisdom from God in some of the Stoic philosophical tradition.

Epictetus (A.D. 50-135) taught that wisdom requires a humbling admission. We are finite, and we must guide our actions accordingly. He said: "The chief task in life is simply this: to identify and separate matters so that I can say clearly to myself which are externals not under my control, and which have to do with the choices I actually control. Where then do I look for good and evil? Not to uncontrollable externals, but within myself to the choices that are my own."

In Epictetus' words you may hear an ancient precursor to the Serenity Prayer: *God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.*

I offer this prayer each morning before getting out of bed. And yet I understand Angela Davis' revision of it: I'm changing the things I cannot accept. Inaction and silence can offer tacit assent to and even collaborate with oppressive, inhumane circumstances.

Still, I find Epictetus' guidance helpful. One of my late seminary professors used to put it something like this: Identify the good that you can do and do it. He was not suggesting that we should resign ourselves to the injustices and evils of this world. Oh, he recognized how overwhelming and seemingly intractable many of our challenges and problems can be.

Nevertheless, he insisted that we should make whatever progress and put up whatever resistance we actually can. Despite appearances to the contrary, the good we do is never truly small or insignificant.

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That's because Jesus teaches us that to act wisely is to emulate him. To follow the way of love as best we can. The way of love—devoting ourselves to the well-being of our neighbor and to the healing of the world—is the way of God.

When we love, we draw upon and participate in God's own infinite, world-creating, life-redeeming love. Ultimately God's love wins. So love—no matter what—is how we make the most of our time.

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Prayer Requests

Dawn's children and parents-continued prayers for George, Nancy and Patty.

Restored health for many of our church family

Jennifer's neighbors on their recent move from California

Jennifer's friend's son suffering from 3rd degree burns from auto accident

Brenna MacKinlay, 17 yr old with leukemia, and her family

Bella Gray - continued prayers

Chris, Sarah, Rose, Nancy and George

Linda Webb, Gail's sister, with health issues

Mike Corley - family crisis

Caron family & friends-classmates killed in Michigan school shooting

All those who are suffering from accidents, illnesses and surgery



**Praise God for our wonderful
church family!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, Dec. 7	2 pm	UMW Meeting at Genny Smith's 1811 Mayfair Road, 32303
	7 pm	Finance Committee Meets via Zoom
Wednesday, Dec. 8	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
	7 pm	Advent Bible Study via Zoom, led by Pastor Beth
Thursday, Dec. 9	8:30 am	Yoga Class
	10 am	Bible Study
	5:30 pm	Yoga Class
Sunday, Dec. 12	9:30 am	Advent Study with Pastor Beth
	11 am	Worship Service
		LAST DAY FOR POINSETTIA ORDERS
Tuesday, Dec. 14	7 pm	Executive Council Meets via Zoom
Wednesday, Dec. 15	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
	7 pm	Advent Bible Study via Zoom, led by Pastor Beth
Thursday, Dec. 16	8:30 am	Yoga Class
	10 am	Bible Study
	5:30 pm	Yoga Class
	7 pm	Blue Christmas Service