

# Gray Weekly News



WEEK LEADING TO SUNDAY, October , 2021

## IN TIMES OF STRESS, TURNING TO CONTEMPLATION CAN BE HELPFUL – WHY RELIGIONS EMPHASIZE REST

By Kristin Lucken, [www.ministrymatters.org](http://www.ministrymatters.org)

Over a year of dealing with COVID-19 has left a lasting imprint on our daily lives. The pandemic disrupted usual work routines, with the majority of Americans having to work from home for long spells. While working from home has some hidden benefits, such as no daily commute, it also resulted in longer workdays and high levels of stress for many.

A global study of the communication patterns of 1.3 million workers during the global lockdown showed the average workday increased by 8.2% during the pandemic, and the average number of virtual meetings per person expanded by almost 13%. Many in the workforce felt overloaded with never-ending online meetings and unexpected family obligations that added pressure to the lives of working parents and other caregivers.

People's well-being can be profoundly impacted if work-life balance ignores the need for rest and recuperation. As a scholar who studies the sociology of religion, I know that the themes of rest and contemplation are woven throughout the fabric of most religious traditions, and they remain equally salient in our lives today.

*Continued on page 3*

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost



Job 1:1, 2:1-10

Psalm 26

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

Mark 10:1, 1:13-16

**“Being Childlike”**

## News and Notes

### THIS WEEK

**Sunday, October 3**

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](http://graymemorialumc.org/facebook.com) or [graymemorialumc.org/youtube](http://graymemorialumc.org/youtube), at 11 am or any time after that at [graymemorialumc.org/](http://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

<b>Budgeted Amount thru 9/30/21</b>	<b>\$ 113,400</b>
<b>Giving Amount as of 9/26/21</b>	<b>\$ 89,180</b>
<b>Amount Needed thru 9/30/21</b>	<b>\$ 24,540</b>

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!

### Prayers Requested:

For all of our friends and family suffering from illness, surgeries etc.

For Bella Gray, improving and out of ICU - still needs our prayers

For Brenna MacKinlay, 17 yr old with leukemia (friend of Pastor Demme's family)

For Lori Durham, Anita's friend recovering from cancer surgery

The Grissom family on death of mother, Susan

Margie Hall, Juan & Wendy's cousin, with health issues

Jamie Sanford, Margie Hall's daughter, with torn ligament

Toni's friend Bekah and her brother, Larry, both with Covid

Sam as he undergoes cancer treatment

Sylvia, Genny, Gail, Joyce and Dawn

### Yoga Class Is Cancelled This Week

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the yoga class will not be held this week. Please plan to join us next week, October 2, 8:30 am or 5:30 pm, for a time of peace and mindfulness.

*Continued from page 1*

The Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam view a day of rest each week as a sacred right and responsibility of believers. The traditional Jewish Shabbat offers a 24-hour period beginning at sundown on Friday when the busyness of everyday life halts. Participants gather to worship, share a meal, study and pray. Similarly, practicing Muslims celebrate their holy day on Fridays. This is a time when Muslims step away from work to attend a midday *jumah*, a prayer service at a local mosque, where imams offer sermons on a range of intellectual, spiritual and practical topics and lead congregations in prayer.

Although attendance numbers are declining, many Christians observe the holy Sabbath on Sundays through church attendance, communal worship, music and the sharing of the Eucharist, when Christians consecrate and consume bread and wine representing the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Christian Sabbath represents a time to rest, pray, worship and spend time with family.

Branches of Islam, Christianity and Judaism additionally call for regular times of prayer and contemplation as part of daily and yearly cycles. In the Islamic tradition, stopping to pray throughout the day represents one of Islam's five pillars of faith. Through the practice of meditation, religious traditions quiet the senses in order to achieve a mindset of rest that they believe brings about heightened consciousness. Hindus, Buddhists and Jains teach the concept of *dhyana*, which generally translates to "contemplation."

Through yoga, meditation and other contemplative practices, practitioners can achieve a state of meditative consciousness and self-awareness that can lead to better mental, physical and spiritual health.

Religions emphasize the need for rest and quiet reflection so our over-cluttered minds can focus on prayer and other contemplative practices. The Apostle Paul discusses how cultivating the "fruit of the spirit" through prayer and contemplation moves us toward patience and away from egocentrism. Buddhists believe that quieting the mind through meditation can help people recognize that their feelings, perceptions, worldviews and even the self are impermanent features of life that can cause suffering. It can also help people contemplate their connectedness to the world around them.

Rest and contemplation help connect religious people with the deeper sources of meaning they seek to cultivate through scriptural study, meditation and prayer. As the American Trappist monk Thomas Merton explains in his 1948 autobiographical book "The Seven Storey Mountain," contemplation is a time of rest, the suspension of activity and a "withdrawal into the mysterious interior solitude in which the soul is absorbed in the immense and fruitful silence of God."

Medical science has become religion's unexpected partner in confirming the benefits generated by these religious practices. Researchers have found an association between downtime, learning and creativity. Sleep, nature walks and exercise offer a number of life-enhancing benefits,

*Continued on next page*

*Continued from previous page*

including improved memory, productivity and physical health. Recent advances in neuroimaging technologies have allowed researchers to observe brain changes during times of intense prayer, yoga and mindfulness meditation. Scientific evidence suggests that engaging in these practices may lead to improved health and well-being.

A broad range of clinical studies on mindfulness, decentering and acceptance therapies note that regular meditation can physically alter the brain and how it responds to the world. For instance, these practices have been found to transform the brain's neural pathways and create new neurological networks that can lead to improved health and well-being.

Research on the practices of Japanese and Chinese Buddhist monks reveals benefits for physical and mental health. Furthermore, active meditations, such as yoga, qigong and tai-chi, are found to increase a sense of well-being through the regulation of mood and the reduction in anxiety and depression.

Even in the midst of a pandemic – or a stressful work week – taking time to rest, exercise, sleep, meditate or pray can lead to improvements in our everyday physical, mental and spiritual health.

###

Florida Historic Capitol Museum Presents

**“Movie Nights”**

Friday, October 1 - 7:30 pm

Movie will be *“National Treasure”*

Capitol Courtyard (between the old and new Capitol buildings)

This event is free and open to the public. Complimentary popcorn and sodas.  
Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, picnic dinners, etc.

Other movie events this fall include: Thursday, October 28 - *“Coco”*  
Friday, November 19 - *“Cinderella”*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>Tuesday, Sept. 28</b>	<b>7 pm</b>	<b>Board of Trustees Meet via Zoom</b>
Wednesday, Sept. 29	7 pm	Bible Study on Acts via Zoom
Thursday, Sept. 30.	<b>No Yoga This Week</b>	
	10 am	Bible Study
Sunday, October 3	9:45 am	Dean Memorial Sunday School
	11 am	Worship Service
<b>Monday, Oct. 4</b>	<b>7 pm</b>	<b>Citizens Climate Lobby via Zoom (No in-person meetings right now)</b>
<b>Tuesday, Oct. 5</b>	<b>7 pm</b>	<b>Finance Committee Meets</b>
Wednesday, Oct. 6	7 pm	Bible Study on Acts via Zoom
Thursday, Oct. 7	8:30 am	Yoga Class
	10 am	Bible Study
	5:30 pm	Yoga Class
<b>Saturday, Oct. 9</b>	<b>PUMPKINS ARRIVE!!</b>	
Sunday, Oct. 10	9:45 am	Dean Memorial Sunday School
	11 am	Worship Service
<b>DAILY THROUGH OCTOBER 31</b>	<b>12 noon to Dusk</b>	<b>Pumpkin Patch Open!</b>