

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



***No matter who you are, no matter where you come from,
no matter how God made you:
you are welcome here at Grace!***

**Worship: Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
In-Person & Livestreamed**

A very dear friend jokes that God pushed her and her family from an airplane to place her where she is.

I never fully understood what she meant until God plopped me in the middle of the desert last week. With a car that was missing a tire for four days. Nineteen miles from the nearest town. With just enough supplies to get by. And a very cute puppy to snuggle.

Yet the view was one of the most beautiful I had ever seen for an extended period - and I've seen a decent share of gorgeous places in my nearly forty-four years. I was blessed to have some wonderful people ensuring I was safe. And I did have what I needed to feed my mind, body, and soul.

Because sometimes we need to stop to see the things we have been missing. To get perspective. To find parts of ourselves we forgot that are essential to who we are.

So, the greatest wisdom I gained is that in the midst of the milieu of life happening - in the world, in our homes, and, yes, even in our church - is that God is present. God is working. And it will be okay. We may not know what that okay will look like. But there is a wonderful fullness of life already present in our midst that is beginning to take shape and blossom if we are wise enough to stop for a moment and take notice.

The second big lesson I remembered from both getting stuck and also losing two tires - one on either end of the journey - is this: DO NOT PANIC. No matter what may come or what we may think is happening, God is here. God is hard at work. We are taking part of God's work - not the other way around. So, do ask questions. Have conversations. Do the work that needs doing. But remember that we are in this for the long haul and working for Christ's mission here. Not our own. Giving into our fears and anxieties will do nothing but wear us out and slow us down.

And last, but not least, I learned to use my senses. Look at what is actually right in front of me and happening nearby. Listen for God's voice. Listen to your neighbor's voice. Listen to the voices on the margins. Listen for God's voice within you. Reach out and touch those who need it and connect. Seek beauty in our world. Smell the roses. But do not hide from the smells that tell you something is wrong. Taste and see the wonder of God's bountiful variety. Use all your senses to enjoy and to learn and to serve. God gave them to us for a reason - so use them.

Because here is what I hear and see and taste and smell and feel in our midst at Grace: not just God's presence in spades, but also a building that is alive with our community moving through the building nearly every day of the week. A congregation that loves to sway and dance a bit in worship and who is having a small rash of babies. A place where people's minds and bodies feed. Where children laugh on the playground and run up and down the stairs when most of the grownups aren't looking. Where

A graphic with the text 'From the Pastor's Desk' in a white serif font, overlaid on a background of handwritten notes on lined paper.

From the Pastor's Desk

God's creatures are embraced, even when they aren't the most obviously cuddly. Where adults are in the community reaching out to those on the margins. A place where Communion and coffee are shared. Where we laugh across tables around food and cloth. Where music streams down the hallways. Where joys and concerns are lifted up not just on Sunday but across cell networks throughout the week, ensuring that bodies and lives are carried. Where people are welcomed no matter who they are, where they come from, or how God made them.

It is a place where I feel blessed to do ministry.

Blessings,
Rev. Janie



Cinema & Conversation

Thursday, September 3
6:00 p.m.

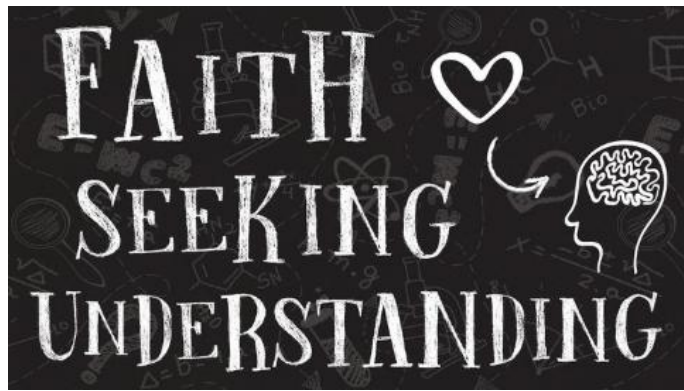
Join us as we discuss our faith through the lens of film to discuss the intersection of following Christ with the real world issues. A light supper will be provided.

WORSHIP NEWS

Communion:

We will celebrate Communion on Sunday, September 6, 2026.





Did you know that theology is actually a conversation?

It is a conversation with God. With Scripture. With one another.

The main textbook we used my first year of Divinity School (Seminary) was entitled "Faith Seeking Understanding." Because that really is what theology is. We are trying to explain the faith that we experience. How we understand God. And how all of that intersects with the life that we actually have.

That's really what Scripture is, too.

How real people have experienced God. Then handing those stories and words down to future generations. How the Spirit breathed in their midst. How God moved mountains. How God-made-flesh quite literally lived among us.

And how do we keep on living out this experience of God in the world. How God has shown Godself wanting us to live. And how prior generations have tried and failed, and tried again and gloriously succeeded at living out that calling.

All of this helps us speak to how we want to keep living together. How we want to show our faith in our thoughts, words, and actions. How we want to teach it to our children.

And that, my fellow beloved children of God, is theology.

It is what we do every Sunday when we gather to pray. When we sing. When we listen to the Scriptures and weave a sermon, listening and leaning into the Holy Spirit's leading. When we give of ourselves. When we break bread and pour water. When we gather for fellowship and drink coffee. And even when we go out into the world to do justice, love tenacious solidarity, and walk humbly.

Theology is not just words in a book that we can debate - though we can always have fun doing that, because we are Presbyterians after all. It is really everything we do as we live our faith. And we cannot do it in a vacuum



Join us on Sunday, September 13, 2026 as we Install our newest Deacon for the class of 2027: Dianna Rose during worship!

CREW NEWS



Great big thank you to our Summer Crew for all their work!!!



Yoga for Every Body

Mondays @ 2:00PM

Light Chair Yoga for All Bodies
Our class is being taught by our very own certified Yoga Instructor, Sarah Heim.

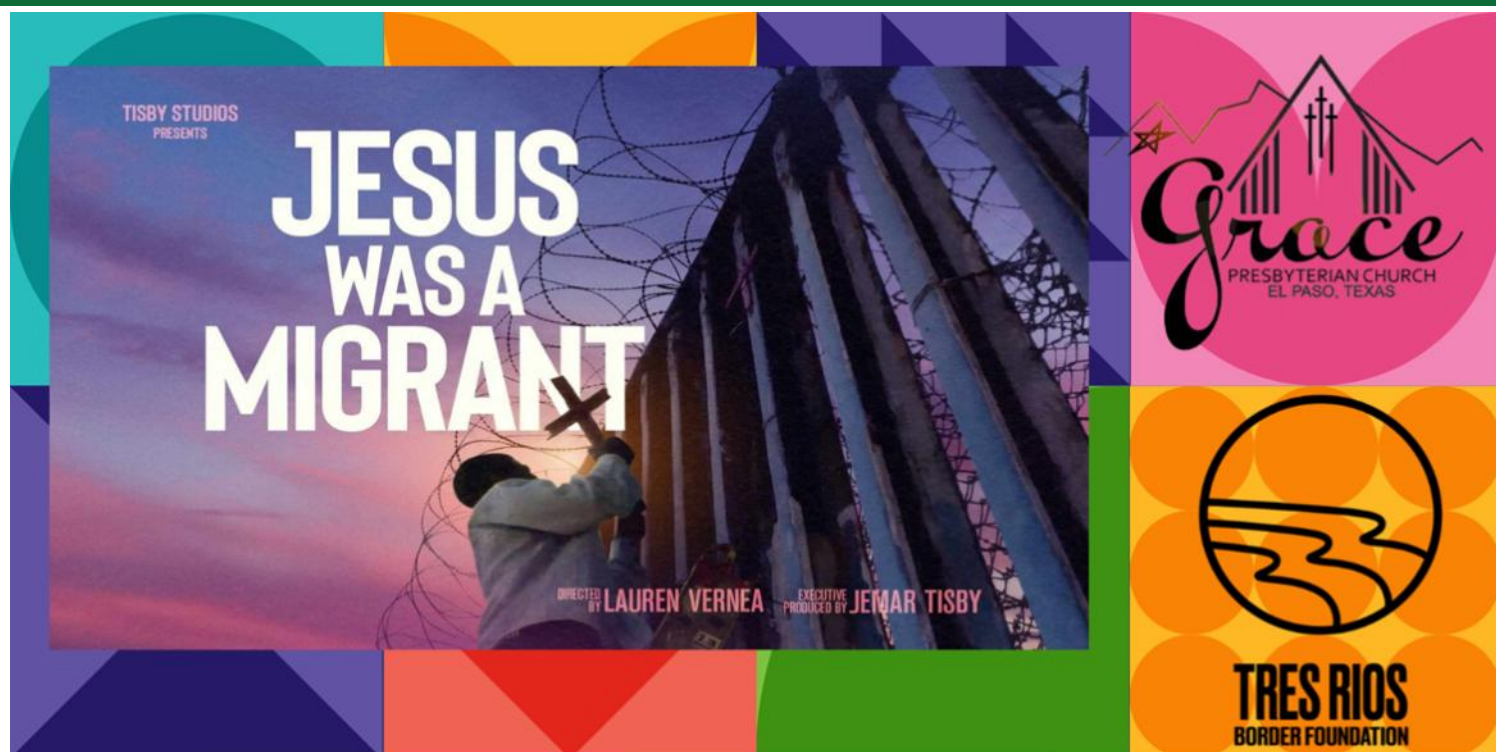


Church Picnic

Wade in the Water
Sunday, September 27
11:00 a.m.

Join us for our annual church worship and picnic - this year we will be traveling over the mountain for a very special event as we baptize new members. Which means that this year's annual picnic will be a pool party!!! So bring your swimsuits and a side dish and join us as we welcome the newest members of our church family!

Thank you to all who participated in our August Events!!!
Check out our online gallery of photos at www.epgrace.com.



WELCOMING
WEEK

FILM AND DISCUSSION

*Jemar Tisby's "Jesus was a Migrant" followed by a community discussion.
Sponsored by Tres Rios Border Foundation and Grace Presbyterian Church*

A documentary following NYT bestselling author and historian Dr. Jemar Tisby to the U.S.-Mexico border to examine the contradiction at the heart of American Christianity: the same faith that compels some to welcome migrants compelled others to shut the door on 270,000 of them.

September 17, 2026

6:30 pm

8001 Magnetic St,
El Paso, TX 79904

welcomingweek.org





A, Pat Bryant, Jim Burton, Susan Carr, Mary Dunn,
Mike Fenley, Christina Fenstermacher, Lili Gonzalez,
Bob Hedicke, Sarah Heim, Mildred Helm, Bob Jones,
Mike McMinn, Pete McMillan, Mary Province,
Zoomer Roberts, Judy Ruiz

8th - Kathryn McMillan
9th - Kofi Mantey
11th - Alma Loya
14th - Michael Rodriguez
16th - Morgan Herbert
23rd - Rhonda Diaz
22nd - Charles Bryant
27th - Kurt Fenstermacher



LEARNING NEWS



Cinema & Conversation

Thursday, October 1
6:00 p.m.

Join us as we discuss our faith through the lens of film to discuss the intersection of following Christ with the real world issues. A light supper will be provided.

Grace B4 Work
Tuesdays, 7:00 a.m.
@ ButterSmith

Gather to work through a book of the Bible together. Any questions? Contact Beth Jones or Donna Crafton



Circle will meet on Monday,
September 14 at 6:30 p.m. at
Grace.

COMMUNITY NEWS



If you would like to meet our dragons or have an opportunity to have them visit a group that you work with, please contact us at hopefordragonsep@gmail.com!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Cub Scout Trunk-or-Treat

Wednesday, October 28

6:30 p.m.

More information will be coming soon!!!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS: A Hauntingly good show is coming
Thursday & Friday, October 29 & 30 to a church near you...



LEADERSHIP NEWS

Elder of the Month: Kurt Fenstermacher

Deacon of the Month: Mark Norbeck



Session met for its most recent stated meeting on Wednesday, August 19, 2026. After discussing the importance of not "remain[ing] silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows" as we see people being oppressed in the world, as we were reminded in this month's selection from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, we approved the request to call a congregational meeting from the Congregational

Officer Nominating Committee. We received updates and reports from the majority of our committees and teams who have been meeting as the new school year gets underway. Highlights included the upcoming showing of "Jesus Was a Migrant" by the Mission Committee with the Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero, our Co-Moderator of the PCUSA General Assembly, leading conversation; the upcoming "Cinema & Conversation" Series from Spiritual Development; Confirmation Class coming in the winter/spring semester; and approving the location change for the upcoming Annual Worship & Picnic to the Davenport-Herbst House in order to baptize new members. In addition, we approved a new "Technology Use Policy" to encourage all of us to use our platforms as a tool to build community. Our next stated meeting will be on Wednesday, September 23.

FINANCE SNAPSHOT

	JULY	YEAR TO DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
Income	\$6,307	\$61,118	\$95,560
Expenses	-\$23,790	-\$176,711	-\$351,730
Reserves	\$0	\$100,000	\$256,170
Total	-\$17,483	-\$15,593	\$0

SEPTEMBER 2026

TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

6
Communion Worship,
10:00AM
Fellowship Potluck,
11:15AM
NA of EP, 3:00PM

7
LABOR DAY
Yoga, 2:00PM

8
GraceB4Work,
7:00AM
Deacons, 6:00PM
Book Club, 6:00PM

9
Grief Support EP,
12:00PM
Scouts, 6:30PM

10
Personnel, 11:00AM
Finance, 6:00PM
Quilter's Guild, 6:30PM

13
Worship, 10:00AM
Fellowship, 11:15AM
NA of EP, 3:00PM

14
PEO Group,
10:00AM
Yoga, 2:00PM
Unity Circle, 6:30PM

15
GraceB4Work,
7:00AM
CONC, 6:00PM

16
Scouts, 6:30PM

17
Jesus Was a Migrant
Cinema & Conversation,
6:00PM

19
Quilter's
Workshop,
9:00AM

20
Worship, 10:00AM
Fellowship, 11:15AM
B&G, 11:15am
NA of EP, 3:00PM

21
Yoga, 2:00PM

22
GraceB4Work,
7:00AM

23
Session, 6:00PM
Scouts, 6:30PM

24
Embroidery Group, 6:00PM

27
Church Worship
& Picnic, 11:00AM
NA of EP, 3:00PM

28
Yoga, 2:00PM

29
GraceB4Work,
7:00AM

30
Scouts, 6:30PM

Events & Celebrations

OUR STAFF

Rev. Janie McElwee-Smith
Pastor

Brandy Adams
Office Administrator

Angel Martinez
Technology Operator

Dajsha Perez
Asst. Nursery Attendant

Patricia Provencio
Pianist

Michael Rodriguez
Custodian

Brittney Williams
Music Director

Maribel Wongwui
Nursery Attendant

Grace Presbyterian Church

We are imperfect followers of Jesus Christ, continually being transformed by God's love and forgiveness. We are striving to build a vibrant, welcoming community that expresses that love in word and action. Together we will nurture, be nurtured, and bring help and hope to the world.

ADDITIONAL LINKS



SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
EL PASO, TEXAS

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Website: www.epgrace.com

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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El Paso, Texas 79904
-Return Service Requested.