

THE FLAME



May 26, 2025



Monday, May 26
Memorial Day
OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday, May 27
Coryell Cupboard 8
Men's Coffee Group 8:30
Intercessory Prayer 9
Coryell Cupboard 4
Suzi's Music School recital 6

Wednesday, May 28
Bible Study Via Christi 10
Youth Ministry 5:30
Choir 7

Thursday, May 29
Annual Conference-Tulsa

Friday May 30
Annual Conference-Tulsa

Saturday, May 31
Annual Conference-Tulsa

Sunday, June 1
Sunday School 9
Church Service 10



Get your poodle skirts out
and get ready to celebrate
the sock hop in the
Pavillion on June 8 at 7
p.m.

Seventh Sunday of Easter



- *Acts 16:16-34*
- *Psalms 97*
- *Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21*
- *John 17:20-26*



★ MEMORIAL DAY ★

HONORING WHO ALL SERVED



First United Methodist Church
will be closed Monday, May 26



200 S 6th Ponca City
580-762-1681

Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

This is a third in a series of Social Principles of the United Methodist Church. These principles are NOT law but are based on the Wesley's General Rules which inspire United Methodists to faithful practices that will do no harm, do good, and follow the ordinances of God. We declare our faith that God's grace is available to all and "nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord." We recognize the

challenges before the church to engage with honesty and compassion through deep listening, hard conversations and shared ministry, even when we do not agree on all matters.

The Social Community

The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social, no holiness but social holiness, (John Wesley, preface, Hymns and Sacred Poems)

As diverse as we may be, we are all a part of the same body under the sovereignty of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31)

The Nurturing Community

Nurture and support are fundamental to the proper functioning of families. We, therefore, urge all family members to treat one another with love and respect. We encourage parents and other caregivers to exercise appropriate diligence and care, raising their children in ways that promote their physical, spiritual, emotional, and moral growth. We celebrate the contributions of single people and reject all social practices that discriminate against them or subject them to bias and prejudice. We respect the decisions of single people regarding marriage and we affirm the many ways in which they may participate in family and community life.

We affirm human sexuality as a sacred gift and acknowledge that sexual intimacy contributes to fostering the emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of individuals and to nurturing healthy sexual relationships that are grounded in love, care and respect.

We affirm marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith into union with one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.

We reject marital relationships with children and youth under the age of 18. We cannot endorse the practice of polygamy. We reject attempts to ostracize the families who are or have been in polygamous relationships. We urge pastors and congregations to extend the same gracious welcome and hospitality to all those in need.

We recognize that divorce may become a regrettable but necessary alternative when marital relationships are strained beyond repair or become destructive or when spouses become irrevocably estranged.

Other Social Issues

We urge United Methodist to refrain from the use of any licit or illicit intoxicants, drugs or other substances that foster addiction, impair mental faculties and physical abilities, and result in long-lasting damage to individuals, families and communities.

We decry all forms of bullying.

We call on individuals and congregations to educate themselves about the troubling legacies of colonialism and to seek repentance for our continued involvement.

We affirm that God's abiding love and care remain with us as we transition from life to death to greater life. We affirm the right of people in the process of dying to participate actively in the decision-making process.

We reject the practice of gambling.

We support both gender equality and gender diversity.

We support freedom of public expression.

We strongly oppose pornography.

We support medical experimentation and research procedures that hold potential eradicating illness and disease and/or extending and improving the quality of human life. We support organ donation.

We support the provision of comprehensive, age-appropriate education for sexual health, as well as access to consistent, effective, and affordable contraception. We unconditionally reject abortion as an acceptable means of birth control or a mechanism for gender selection and other forms of eugenics. We support the use of a variety of reproductive strategies for those desiring to have children including fertility treatments, IVF, embryo or sperm donation, surrogacy and others.

We condemn racism, ethnocentrism, tribalism and any ideology or social practice based on false and misleading beliefs or ideologies that one group of human beings is superior to all other groups.

We condemn sexual harassment, abuse, and assault and consider them grave violations of the established behavioral norms within the church as well as our larger society.

Excerpts from Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

Youth need help with parking duty during the annual Herb Fest-first Saturday in June. If you have a few hours to help, please contact Bill Elliott.

Special Offering—*Peace with Justice* Sunday, June 1, 2025

WHAT IS PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY?

The United Methodist Church uses this day to speak out for peace and justice. Our Social Principles call us to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as peacemakers in resolving conflict. We renew our commitment that to live into our mission of transforming the world, we must prioritize collaboration among nations, work to reduce the use and need for weapons, and foster just, equitable and durable solutions to the root causes of conflict.

Contributions support programs that witness to God's demands for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world.

The United Methodist Church has a historic commitment to peace and justice. Through the General Board of Church and Society's consultative status with the United Nations, we engage in UN meetings to promote peaceful and just efforts.



Last year, over \$160,000 was raised to support these vital ministries through the Peace with Justice offering:

- **► Fifty percent** of the funds raised on Peace with Justice Sunday stay within the United Methodist Annual Conference to enhance and support local social justice ministries. The Conference Coordinator focuses on providing educational resources, fostering relationships, and mobilizing networks for social advocacy and action.
- **► Fifty percent** of the donations collected support national and international peacemaking ministries and grants. We strive to achieve peace with justice by collaborating with the World Council of Churches, interfaith and ecumenical organizations, and secular groups dedicated to social justice. Our mission is to promote shalom for all of God's people. Two distinct grants are offered to United Methodist congregations and organizations that focus on Ethnic/Minority Local Church ministries and programs related to Peace with Justice Sunday.

One of the beautiful things about The United Methodist Church is that, together, we can accomplish far more than we could on our own. Together, we renew our commitment that people of faith should work to build peace with justice.

Book Review: *What's So Amazing About Grace?*

By Phillip Yancey

Right in the introduction, Philip Yancey explains that his book, *What's so Amazing About Grace*, is most certainly not a theological primer. Despite the split in expectations, Yancey's book is excellent. There are many anecdotes from his life and a number of varied stories all connecting to grace. The result is not only an enjoyable read but also an insightful one.



Here are some observations from *What's So Amazing About Grace?*

- Yancey uses the story of *Babette's Feast* to demonstrate the example of grace by the giver. Babette gave all she had—10,000 francs—to bestow a feast upon the tiny community. Grace always costs its giver something, and this element is too easily overlooked and taken for granted. To do so treats poorly the grace that God offers through Jesus.
- Yancey defines “grace” as follows: “Grace means there is nothing I can do to make God love me more, and nothing I can do to make God love me less. It means that I, even I who deserve the opposite, am invited to take my place at the table in God's family.”
- Yancey discusses a weekend event he helped facilitate to build community between a group of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. A Jewish representative commented: “I believe we Jews have a lot to learn from you Christians about forgiveness. I see no other way around some of the logjams [between reconciling our groups]. And yet it seems so unfair, to forgive injustice. I am caught between forgiveness and justice.”
- Yancey makes a comment I haven't heard before: “the opposite of sin is grace, not virtue.” I don't know that I would have answered, “what is the opposite of sin?” with the answer of grace. It's far too easy to fall into the legalism trap that virtue is the right answer when it's only God's grace that overcomes sin. This idea is central to living in freedom and not according to rules. The challenging corollary of this freedom is you can't just follow the rules. Living by the Spirit means being open to His guidance.

It is a final point on politics where I give my strongest endorsement of *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Any Christians who have an interest in politics should place this book at the top of their reading lists. The most recent election cycle has been shockingly harmful to the reputation of Christians among non-Christians. Yancey's book places politics in the right focus. This book was not what I expected. *What's So Amazing* is a quick and enjoyable read, and it is one I expect to recommend to others in the future.

Book review written by Nathan Eberline.

To unsubscribe, please send an email to fumcpc.business@gmail.com. Flame articles should be submitted by 5 p.m. Sunday evening.

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