



AMAZING GRACE INTERFAITH MINISTRY

**894 Sheldon Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10309
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January/February 2024**

To: All Friends of Amazing Grace & News from The Heart Readers

Thank you and God Bless all of you for your continued support, love and prayers over many years.. Enclosed is an Amazing Grace calendar 2025. I pray it's a good year for all!!

To start the year, I am sharing with you a text Francine sent me. You and everything you do makes a difference:

**You may think you are insignificant in this world
but someone drinks coffee from their favorite cup that you gave them.
Someone heard a song today that reminded them of you.
Someone read the book you recommended and helped change their thinking.
Someone smiled after a hard day at work because they remembered the joke you told.
Someone loves themselves a little bit more because you gave them a compliment.
Never think that you have no influence whatsoever.
Your touch, your smile, your words, your kindness that you leave behind cannot be erased.**

PATTERNS

It's easy to get stuck in a pattern of behavior. Think of the people you know. Do they do some of the same things over and over? Do you? Do I? Yes. To be human, to be alive, is to fall into patterns of behavior. Just as slumping for hours in the same position can be bad for our backs, it is also true that taking the path of least resistance can cause our lives to become a bit stuck in place. We become outdated algorithms needing a new and bigger sequence.

As Tara Brach put it, "Perhaps the biggest tragedy in our lives is that freedom is possible, yet we can pass our years trapped in the same old patterns.... We may want to love other people without holding back, to feel real, to breath in all the beauty around us, to dance and sing. Yet each day we listen to inner voices that keep our life small." What can I do to begin to change that in my life today, right now!!!

*Today I will take enough time to do something good for myself
I will buy myself a gift or spend time walking in nature.
I have enough time
I deserve this.*



*

SMILE, JESUS LOVES YOU



As I placed groceries into the bag, a customer asked, "Will it all fit?" "Yes", I replied. "It's a little heavy and a little awkward, but it will all fit." She sighed, "Story of my life...a little heavy and a little awkward."



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THERE'S FREEDOM IN LETTING GO

Sometimes we gain freedom not only by letting go of ourselves but by helping someone else let go of us.

A child rounds a corner on her little purple bike, one training wheel clattering on the sidewalk, the other high in the air. Her father calls her over and tells her that today is special. Today, she has finally outgrown those training wheels and will learn to ride the bike like big kids!

“But what if I fall? Or, I can’t balance? I’m not ready!” she complains. Finally, after many assurances that he will be right beside her, she lets daddy take the wheels off.

At first, he holds tightly to the bike, and she sits there frozen, unable to pedal, rigidly gripping the handlebars. “Relax” he says. “It’s okay. I’m right here by your side.” She relaxes. Then she starts to pedal. Dad releases his grip slightly. He gets going and runs alongside. She looks over and laughs. “Daddy don’t let go! I’ll fall!” And then, the inevitable happens; she falls. But, she gets back up. He holds on again. And again. And again. Until near suppertime, daddy runs beside, lets go of the bike, slows to a walk, and watches his little girl ride off on two wheels.

If there is something or someone in your life that you need to let go of in order to grow? Is there someone you need to help let go of you? Sometimes it’s tempting to keep people dependent on us. It makes us feel needed and powerful. It makes us feel good. But it may be holding them and us back.

Go ahead. It’s time. Take off the training wheels. Help them ride off into the sunset. Set both of you free.

BE UNIQUELY YOU

We have much in common with each other. And recovery, growth, and change are strengthened by honoring these similarities. But each of us is unique. We each have our own strengths, weaknesses, gifts, vulnerabilities – our own personalities.

The purpose of spiritual growth is not to eliminate the personality. It is to allow each of us to express ourselves creatively. You are not meant to be just like anyone else. You are you. The wonder comes in finding your own dance, your own way of seeing the world, your own brush stroke, or special combination. There is an old story about a writer who goes to his teacher and said, “Teacher, all the stories have already been told. There is no need for me to write. Everything that needs to be said has already been written.”

“It’s true that there are no new stories,” the teacher said, “The universal lessons have been taking place for a long, long time. And the same themes have influenced humanity since time began. But no one sees that story through your eyes. And no one else in the world will tell that story exactly the way you will. Now return to your desk, pick up your pen, and tell the world what you see.”

Be uniquely You!



thank
you!

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AMAZING GRACE INTERFAITH MINISTRY

Once again Thank You for all your contributions, prayers and support this year. I couldn't do it without all of you! Many blessings on Olivet Congregation for setting up and distributing items for the monthly Kids Connection Susan, Jean & Jim, Blanny & Rob, Also, blessings to Calvary, Keith, Danna and all the Congregation for allowing us use of the church hall. To Dr. Jerri, Raina, and Jerri's office for new hats, scarfs, coats and gloves. Roxanne, Fran, Dick, Joie, Raphael, Charlotte and Hector. Thank you to all of you who donated new children's coats with tags. This was the first event I missed in 30 years of Ministry. God continued on with the work He wanted done. My energy is slowly coming back, and I am grateful to God and to all of you.

As you know, since COVID we close the **Kids Connection** in January and February and return in **March** until June. In **March** we will be collecting **New underwear, socks and baby diapers along with lunch items and clothing as usual.**

When I was in the hospital our good friend and volunteer **Tina from Olivet** passed. I didn't know until awhile after I was released. Tina was a monthly volunteer for the Kids Connection and loved giving clothing, lunch items, arts and crafts to the children. She especially loved Christmas. She will never be forgotten and will always be with us in Spirit when we open up the door for the monthly giveaway. May God grant her peace.

PRAYERS for Francine (a true miracle) and Dick, Rachel, Rob, Robbie, neighbor Kim's husband Mike in Sloan NYC brain cancer, Ruth, Matt, Matty, Pat Reardon, Susan and Ralph, Diane Senerchia's husband passed, Charlotte recovering from hip surgery and awaiting test Michael Alson's father Steve's heart procedure. Mary, Willy, Ian, Briana, Adam, Morgan, Anwen, Ethan.



I am so grateful to my daughter, **Magen**, who does all the church work for me. She is always there when needed, does an amazing job, organizing, setting up, ordering items, printing. I have been saying the following affirmations daily since I fell in August. God Is Good. God Loves Me, God Will Provide, God Is Healing Me Now!!!

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is our most direct line to God and the angels.

If we take the time

No matter how crazy and troubled we feel

We can find something to be thankful for.

The more we seek gratitude

*The more reason the angels will give us
gratitude and joy to express in our lives*

gratitude



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LOVE

If I am here to master myself then Love must be the hallmark of everything I do. The other day, I was standing in line at the grocery store – the express line, when you’re supposed to have 15 items or less. Two people ahead of me was a woman who clearly had a cart with what appeared more than the limit, so I mentally counted the items in her basket. I grew indignant when I counted 22 items, and less than loving thoughts began to swirl in my mind toward this scofflaw. “How dare she come in this line!” and “I should say something to her about this breach of etiquette!” were my thoughts. Then I remembered that I was working on vulnerability, and I smiled to myself. What a learning opportunity. The woman was teaching me to extend love, even when I was clearly in the right. Another teachable moment. *Sally R.*

MORE THAN COINCIDENCE

I held the brief eulogy I’d prepared for my mother’s funeral that May morning. I sat restlessly waiting for my turn at the podium. I hoped the words I’d written could somehow convey the love I felt for her, that I prayed she could feel even now. I hadn’t been the best son. At a young age, I fell prey to drugs and alcohol, lying and stealing to get what I wanted. Once, in the depths of my addiction, I shouted that I didn’t love her. She was in such despair that she actually sat shiva for me. Sitting shiva is the Jewish mourning ritual for the dead. That’s how bad things had gotten. Finally, when I was 20, Mom threatened to kick me out of the house if I didn’t check myself into a treatment facility. She loved me, but she had enough.

Rehab saved my life. By the grace of God, I have never used drugs or alcohol again. I joined the Navy and was stationed in various places. Mom and I visited back and forth. I tried to make amends for how I’d hurt her. She loved birds and collected blown glass figurines of them. Whenever I came to see her, I’d bring a beautiful new bird for her collection.

I visited Mom often and would see the birds I’d given her prominently displayed in her house. To me Mom’s collection spoke of forgiveness and healing, though I could never quiet the ache of regret for my past behavior.



As I stood to walk to the podium, I wondered if I could ever express the gratitude I felt for Mom’s love. Just then I heard a whirling sound, a soft beating that echoed through the room. I looked up and saw a dove on a rafter above me, perched attentively. I caught my breath. My mother was there, as if watching me through the eyes of the dove! I felt it in my heart with certainty. Mom had a perfect view from on high. I began my eulogy; certain my words would be heard by the one who deserved them the most. *By Samuel Pennock*

And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand - love and prayers Mary

Our Zoom Services are the **first 2 Sundays of the Month at 11AM**
Meeting ID 82340530576 Password 068808

