

*This curriculum frees people to live their Reformed faith by*

**REMEMBERING • RECLAIMING • REARTICULATING**

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT WHO GOD IS AND WHO WE ARE  
SO THE PATTERNS OF OUR LIVES EMBODY THE  
LIBERATING LOVE AND GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST.



**TESTIMONY**

**VOCABULARY OF FAITH**

• A SIX-WEEK CURRICULUM •

WHO IS GOD 1 *ALMIGHTY*  
WHO ARE WE 2 *IMAGO DEI*  
GOD IN RELATIONSHIP 3 *COVENANT*  
GOD WHO SAVES 4 *GRACE*  
GOD OF ACTION 5 *LOVE*  
GOD OF BELONGING 6 *CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY*

The Presbyterian  
**OUTLOOK**



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## VOCABULARY OF FAITH

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**OUTLOOK**

# Outline


- Why this class? Why this curriculum?
- What is Grace... in a general sense?
- A Typology of Grace – Modifiers Matter
  - **Covenantal Grace**
  - **Justifying Grace**
  - **Sanctifying Grace**
- And Grace is... A Presbyterian Church in Springfield, VA
- ***“So what?”***
- In closing... **Amazing Grace** is “How Sweet a Sound!”

# Why this class? Why this curriculum?

*This curriculum frees people to live their Reformed faith by*

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# Why this class? This curriculum?

- “How do we articulate what we believe fluently...  
... and in ways that clearly demonstrate our faith to the world?”
- “How do we live and move and have our being...  
...in ways that embody our deepest Christian commitments?”
- “Having heard from church leaders that they struggled to find accessible, affordable, engaging materials from a Reformed theological perspective...  
...the Presbyterian Outlook (conducted) a project that resulted in *‘A Vocabulary of Faith.’*”
- “What key concepts should be understood for discipleship to take hold and be embodied?”
- “What words and ideas do we need to remember, reclaim, and rearticulate in our chapter of God’s salvation history?”

# Why this class? This curriculum?

- “The curriculum writers, **in good Reformed fashion** began with God.”
- “Unit One of *A Vocabulary of Faith* explores **Testimony...**”
  - “What do we know through **Scripture, Tradition, and Experience** about God?”
  - “Unit One covers various attributes and actions of God...”
  - “... inviting participants to not only intellectually assent to these theological and biblical concepts...”
  - “...but seek to live them in ways that demonstrate the liberating love and grace of Jesus Christ.”
- “Unit Two... focuses on our response to God through exploring the multiple ways we bear witness to God who claims and calls us.”

# What Is *Grace*... in a general sense?

*What the curriculum says...*

- “Grace is who God is and what God does.”
  - *“Grace is who God is: God’s character is revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*
  - *“Grace is what God does: By the power of the Holy Spirit, God’s promise, forgiveness and salvation free humanity to participate in God’s work of reconciliation with gratitude, joy and peace.”*
- “Grace is a free and unmerited gift from God.”
  - *“Grace: The unmerited, eternal promise and gift of God’s love to the world, given so that humanity is free to participate in God’s work of redemption, gratitude and joy.”*
- “God’s grace comes first.”
  - *“We do not deserve grace. We cannot earn grace.”*
  - *“Repentance and gratitude are our responses.”*



# *A Vocabulary of Faith's* Typology of Grace – Modifiers Matter

- “**Grace** is who God is and what God does.”
- “**Covenantal Grace** is God’s loving promise and pursuit.”
- “**Justifying Grace** is God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.”
- “**Sanctifying Grace** is God’s power by the Holy Spirit that sets us free.”

# A baseball analogy on Justification and Sanctification from Pastor Ben

- There is a baseball player who is trying his hardest to make the baseball team. No matter what he does, he keeps making errors, booting easy grounders, throwing balls into the stands.
- The coach of the team comes to him, and says, “You don’t have to be anxious. I want you on the team because I value you, I know what you can do, and you belong here.” ***That is justification.***
- ***This is what Christ does for us,*** including us and loving us without our having to earn our "spot" on God's team.
- Because the boy has been given the assurance that he is on the team, he wants to live up to the coach’s faith in him.
- Because of what the coach has done for him, it opens up his ongoing potential. He becomes free from the burden of his own anxieties. This is ***sanctification.***
- ***This is what the Holy Spirit does for us,*** continually transforming us and opening us up to love and joy.
- ***Both of them are God at work in us.***

*And now, Let's have some gracious  
(But focused and brief\*) conversation...*

- **“Covenantal Grace** is God’s loving promise and pursuit.”  
**By Breakout Group 1**
- **“Justifying Grace** is God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.”  
**By Breakout Group 2**
- **“Sanctifying Grace** is God’s power by the Holy Spirit that sets us free.”  
**By Breakout Group 3**

(\*12 minutes)

# Covenantal Grace is...

- *The Bible says... In John 1:14, 16-17...*
  - <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>16</sup>From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*
- *And the Teaching Points say...*
  - *"God's covenant (oath) of grace is eternal, transcending all time and space and tethering the narrative of God's people throughout Scripture and beyond."*
  - *"God's covenant of grace is rooted in God's steadfast love (in Hebrew, chesed/ he-sed)."*
  - *"God's faithful pursuit to be 'at one' with humanity is persistent."*
  - *"Grace is tenacious, honest and loving even in the face of suffering and failure."*
- *And African-American Pastor/Theologian Howard Thurman once preached...*
  - *"Then he looked around, and discovered he was alone... That is, that all the sheep had gone. And he began crying aloud."*
  - *"And then the shepherd, who had many sheep, missed him when he got back to the flock, and he left his ninety and nine... and he went out to try to find this sheep that was lost."*
  - *"And Jesus says, 'God is like that.' Nothing heavy or theological about that... Just that here is a shepherd who loves his sheep..."*
- *And what do you **in Breakout Group 1** say?...*

# Justifying Grace is...

- The Bible says... In Luke 15: 21-32...

*<sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.*

*<sup>25</sup>Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.'*

*<sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.*

*<sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.*

*<sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!'*

*<sup>31</sup>Then the father[d] said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"*

- And the Teaching Points say...

- *"The prodigal son of this familiar tale was not simply a lost sheep; he lost sight of who he truly was and to whom he belonged. Sin separates us from God and one another."*
- *"We are neither justified by our attempts to be good enough (the older son) nor justified by our 'turning back' (the prodigal son). The father's abundant and gracious love preceded both the older son's understanding and the younger son's repentance."*
- *"We cannot save ourselves. God must do what we cannot. Grace must come first, otherwise all of salvation would depend on humanity's imperfect, inadequate, incapable actions as opposed to God's loving act of grace."*

- And Theologian Karl Barth wrote in his "Church Dogmatics"...

- *" 'The atonement [is] a sovereign act of God's Grace,' in which God chooses to cross 'a yawning abyss' separating God from sinful humanity long before our knowledge or understanding of sin or even faith. This act of justifying grace and reconciliation is embodied in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus."*

- And what do you in **Breakout Group 2** say?...

# Sanctifying Grace is...

- *The Bible says...*

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13... *"<sup>13</sup>But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth."*

And in 1 Corinthians 6:11... *"<sup>11</sup>And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."*

- *And the Teaching Points say...*

- *"Redeemed and renewed by God's grace, we are invited to participate in the redemptive work of God's grace."*
- *"By the power of the Holy Spirit, God's sanctifying grace sets us free. This freedom leads us toward a Christian life of continual regeneration, obedience and joy together."*
- *"The grace of God in Jesus Christ is the sum of the gospel; it is God's initiative and God's identity revealed, promised, given, experienced and engaged."*

- *And Valerie Geer in her writing about the Mujerista (Latina-Womanist-Liberation) theology of grace...*

- *"Salvation is defined and experienced within the framework of relationship."*
- *"Salvation means having a relationship with God, a relationship that does not exist without love of neighbor; the two concepts are inseparable..."*
- *"Sin is viewed as that which hurts relationship. While sin is personal and harmful to one's relationship with God, it is not private because it negatively impacts the entire community."*

- *And what do you **in Breakout Group 3** say?...*

# *And now, Let's report back...*

- **“Covenantal Grace** is God’s loving promise and pursuit.”  
**By Breakout Group 1**
- **“Justifying Grace** is God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.”  
**By Breakout Group 2**
- **“Sanctifying Grace** is God’s power by the Holy Spirit that sets us free.”  
**By Breakout Group 3**

# *And Grace is...*

## *A Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Virginia*

- **Why are we named “Grace Presbyterian”?**
- **Our Historian Elder Philip Spiess presents this history...**
  - 1951:** Early in the year, Edward R. Carr and the Crestwood Construction Company begin to build the “town” at the interchange of Shirley Highway and Franconia Road.
  - 1952:** In October, the first families begin to move into the first parts of the Springfield subdivision. Anticipating a need for churches, the Presbytery purchased a new house at the corner of Floyd Avenue and Grayson Street — the beginning of what would become Grace Presbyterian Church.
  - 1953:** On November 1, the first service of our church was held in the living room of the Presbytery-owned house, which later became the church’s manse, the Rev. Kirk Hammond being the acting minister.  
  
This was to be a temporary church; the permanent site was to be located on 4 1/2 acres adjoining Brookfield Park, the Presbytery Committee on Church Extension making the down payment.  
  
The street at the end of the church property had not yet been named by the Crestwood Construction Company, but it was to be one in an alphabetical line [Ellwood, Flora, Grace, Havelock, June]; the street in question was to begin with the letter “G.”  
  
A decision was made by those attending the service in the house on Grayson Street to call the new church “Grace Presbyterian Church” — and therefore the street was named “Grace” also.
  - 1954:** The official organizational service, with 50 charter members, was held on January 17, the first communion being held on January 24, 1954.
  - 1956:** Worship services moved from the house at the corner of Grayson and Floyd Streets to Crestwood School.
  - 1963:** The first worship service was held in the present building on the corner of Bath and Grace Streets.”

*“It is my contention, based on no known facts other than those existing in my “word-play” brain, that the group was inspired to come up with the name “Grace” after “Grayson Street,” which is where they were meeting at the time. (Take it or leave it as an idea.)”*



*And Grace is...*

*A Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Virginia*

- **AND WE ARE THAT CHURCH...**



- So how have you experienced God's Grace at Grace Presbyterian Church?
- And how has your experience at Grace Church helped you to understand what God's Grace is?

# Remembering/Reclaiming/ Rearticulating

- Hopefully now we have **Remembered** what Grace is and know better who God is and who we are!
- We then must ask, ***“So what?”***
- How might we **Reclaim and Rearticulate Grace** through the ways we live our faith in the Springfield, in our country, and in the world?

# And finally, there is **Amazing Grace...**

THANKSGIVING

649 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound'. It is written in G major and 3/4 time. The score consists of five systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system contains the first five lines of the hymn. The second system contains the next five lines. The third system contains the final five lines. The score ends with a double bar line.

1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that  
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I  
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his  
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
grace my fears re - lieved. How pre - cious did that  
have al - read - y come. 'Tis grace has brought me  
word my hope se - cures. He will my shield and  
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found, was blind, but now I see.  
grace ap - pear the hour, I first be - lieved!  
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

As was his custom, the author wrote this hymn to accompany his sermon on 1 Chronicles 17:16–17, preached on January 1, 1773; he called it “Faith’s Review and Expectation.” Much of its current popularity comes from this now-familiar tune, an association that began in 1835.

TEXT: Stanzas 1–4, John Newton, 1772; stanza 5, *A Collection of Sacred Ballads*, 1790; Navaho, Albert Tsosie  
MUSIC: *Columbian Harmony*, 1829; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1910, alt. AMAZING GRACE  
Text Phonetic Transcr. Cherokee, Kiowa, Creek, and Choctaw © Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference; CM  
Phonetic Transcr. Navaho © Albert Tsosie

# *Amazing Grace is Our Closing Prayer*

*“1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind but now I see.”*

*“2 ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace, my fears relieved.  
How precious did that Grace appear  
the hour I first believed!”*

*“3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come,  
‘Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and Grace will lead me home.*

# ***Amazing Grace is Our Closing Prayer***

*“4 The Lord has promised good to me;  
his word my hope secures.  
He will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.”*

*“5 When we’ve been there ten thousand years,  
bright shining as the sun,  
we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise  
than when we first begun.”*

*And let all the people say... **AMEN!***

# BACKUPS

# From the Curriculum



## CORE VALUES

- » We can live into our baptismal vows.
- » We can learn to live our theological witness.
- » We live our best theological lives.
- » We manifest the transformational nature of our baptism by living into its radical reality.
- » We can intentionally decenter whiteness, achievement-based worth and other death-dealing practices and attitudes.
- » We value, live into and intentionally build  
    authentic,  
        relational,  
            trusting,  
                intimate  
communities so that the stories we tell ourselves and our children - about who God is and who we are - shape our embodied faith in ways that reflect the life-giving liberation of God's best intention for all who are created in the Divine Image.

# Words Matter... A Moment of Grace?

- A recent meeting with Pastor Ben led to me discovering a book by Episcopal priest Barbara Brown Taylor
  - *“The Luminous Web – Essays on Science and Religion”*
  - One essay in particular: *“Between Science and Faith”*
- “While not everyone welcomes discussions like this one... I believe that the dialogue between science and religion offers benefits to both sides...”
- “I discovered the benefits first-hand in my correspondence with a retired scientist who took me to task for the way I wrote about quantum physics.”
- “Point by point, he walked me through the difference...
  - between *micro* physics and *macro* physics...
  - between *intelligent communication between particles* and *quantum entanglement.*”



# Words Matter... A Moment of Grace?

- “At first I was irritated by what I considered to be a lot of picky attention to detail.”
- “As a narrative preacher, I am used to grabbing the metaphor implicit in an event and running with it.”
  - “I am concerned with ‘big ideas,’ not trifling facts...”
  - “... but as I did I... I experienced a kind of enlightenment.”
  - “I understood what a sloppy thinker I had become, at least from a scientific point of view.”
  - “I relearned the value of paying exquisite attention to detail...”
- “Above all, I gained a great deal of respect for the discipline required by scientific method, which will not tolerate fuzzy or wishful thinking.”