

Call to Worship *Exodus 20:12, 2 Timothy 1:5*

God's Word declares: "Honor your father and your mother,

**so that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."**

God's Word declares: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you."

**We thank God for grandparents who "grandly" love, nurture, and lead.**

Prayer of Invocation

**O Creator, who dost all human beings create, we hail the day on which a grandchild is born. We rejoice! And sing praises for the parents, the grandparents and all who are to be a part of their lives. We greet this day with joy, blessed by their potential in this world. Come, Holy Spirit, our hearts are glad. Amen.**

The Word Genesis 17:1-8; Romans 9:5; Acts 3:25

When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk with me and be trustworthy. I will make a covenant between us and I will give you many, many descendants."

**Abram fell on his face, and God said to him, "My covenant is with you; you will be the ancestor of many nations. And because I have made you the ancestor of many nations, your name will no longer be Abram but Abraham.**

I will produce nations from you, and kings will come from you. I will set up my covenant with you and your descendants after you in every generation as an enduring covenant.

**I will be your God and your descendants' God after you. I will give you and your descendants the land in which you are immigrants, the whole land of Canaan, as an enduring possession. And I will be their God."**

The Jewish ancestors are theirs, and the Christ descended from those ancestors. He is the one who rules over all things, who is God, and who is blessed forever.

**You are the heirs of the prophets and the covenant that God made with your ancestors when he told Abraham, 'Through your descendants, all the families on earth will be blessed.'**

Living the Word

"Grandparents Day from the Backside"

What does it mean? "Grandparents Day from the Backside." Even though we are all 'Children of God,' as I look around all of us are of an age to where we have the opportunity to influence others, especially the younger humans...Grandparents Day is a great time to celebrate, but rather than celebration ourselves, I thought we should instead celebrate the gift we have been given to help lead and guide the next two or three generations.

This is not going to be an easy task, but I have put together some thoughts as to how we might do this. I invite you to open your mind to what God is calling you to consider for your situation. There will be scriptures, prayers and information scattered within the message. Are you ready?

National Grandparents Day has more than one origin. Some people consider it to have been first proposed by Michael Goldgar in the 1970s after he visited his aunt in an Atlanta nursing home, Spending \$11,000 of his own money in lobbying efforts to have the day officially recognized, he made 17 trips to Washington DC over a seven-year span to meet with legislators.

Others consider Marian Lucille Herndon McQuade, a housewife in West Virginia, to have been the main driver for the day of observance. Throughout the 1970s McQuade worked hard to educate the people about the

important contributions senior citizens made and the contributions that they would be willing to make if asked. She also urged people to adopt a grandparent, not for one day a year and not for material giving, but for a lifetime of experience.

In any event National Grandparents Day was finally signed into law by President Jimmy Carter in 1978. Marian McQuade received a phone call from the White House to advise her of this event. Many people believe that National Grandparents Day was inspired by her efforts. A presidential proclamation on September 6, 1979, made this day official – it designated the “first Sunday of September following Labor Day” as National Grandparents Day.

Each year the President is requested to issue a proclamation to: designate the first Sunday in September after Labor Day as National Grandparents Day; and to call on people, groups and organizations to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Some of the people we call grandparents are such because they are our parents' parents — they are blood relations. And some of the people we call grandparents — or "elders" in some cultures — are such because of a quality of compassion, concern, wisdom, and generosity that they demonstrate toward us.

The Search Institute has identified that children who have at least five caring adults in their lives, in addition to their parents, are more likely to thrive and less likely to become "at risk." Every congregation is blessed with "grandmas" and "grandpas" who love and share their faith in ways that form us as an extended family, a tribe, a clan of people embraced by the love of God.

The United Methodist Church says: While the worship for the day need not focus on "Grandparents Day," this is an opportunity to give thanks for and to acknowledge the gift of grandparents in our experience. It can be an occasion on the cultural calendar to express our joy and sense of blessing in both having grandparents and in being grandparents.

How can I make a difference without grandchildren? Today, most children live far from their own grandparents. They still need the nurturing and knowledge that you may have to give. If your grandchildren are close you can still include others who may not have the same experiences as your grandchildren.

The scriptures we read this morning from Genesis, tells how God renamed Abram and made him the father and grandfather of many nations. We are a part of the legacy that began that day. We have God's story to tell. Romans then brings Christ in as part of addition – making a new covenant and then in Acts, we also are included in God's enduring covenant.

As the people of God, the legacy of Abraham's story and all of the generations before us is our legacy to hand down to the next generations. If you read the first chapter of Matthew, you will find there the list of ancestors from Abraham to Jesus.

I won't read all the names of the first 16 verses, but they are summed up in the 17<sup>th</sup> verse: <sup>17</sup> *So there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen generations from the exile to Babylon to the Christ.* That is approximately 52 generations of God covenant with the people.

Because the printed Bible Story doesn't go beyond a couple more generations, we would have to count them ourselves. 2000 years – give or take a few years would be about 100 more generations since Jesus. Now the covenant is 152 or so generations since Abraham...and it is still there. The legacy we have to share is still in place, as long as we help carry it forward.

In the beginning, it was shared by oral tradition. The stories of God were told by the elders, or grandparent figures of the family around the camp fires and the dinner tables. Not a word was changed. Soon the younger generations had them memorized word-for word and years later they told them to their children and grandchildren. That is how Jesus would have heard them as a child.

As far as we know, Jesus wasn't a father or grandfather, yet he retold the stories with more knowledge and understanding, with meaning and some new meanings behind each word. He emphasized the stories that were already in place. Even before Christ came, the words began to appear in print on scrolls that were read in the Temple and synagogues.

Then when the printing press was created the Word became available to more and more, along with the expectation that it would be shared by being read aloud regularly and often. So here we are 150 generations later. We all may know some scriptures, in fact some of us have read the whole book, and some know all of the 'good' stories.

One of my experiences growing up was often being invited next door to my grandparents home to have Swedish Pancakes for breakfast. Grandpa Pearson read scriptures every morning before anyone could take a bite. This influenced who I am as a person and a Christian, though I don't remember what he read at the time. Grandma Pearson – Nana influenced me by the amount of time she invited me over to watch her baked fresh rolls, by the dozens, always to give to a church event or for some family as a gift. This created in me a Christian sense of wanting to share what I have. someone else.

My Grandma Kistler was a single parent, raising my mom and my three aunts, back in a time when that was looked down on. Yet her stories and her faith taught me about endurance and independence while walking every step with Jesus.

Then there was Great Aunt Ruth who had no children or grandchildren of her own. She took time to teach me how to make the traditional Swedish Christmas cookies of Fatigman and Krumkaka – She also taught me this song, "O be careful little eyes what you see...for the Father up above is looking down in love..."

They helped make the scriptures alive for me. They passed on a living tradition. We need to keep telling the stories, giving them books and songs of God's story. Most importantly: to love them first, and then look for ways to teach them the ways to love, not hate.

We often think that the opposite of love is hate, yet even worse than hate is apathy. If you say you hate God that means you are acknowledging that there is a God. If you don't share the love of God, how will they know?...that is worse.

We do love the children! One of you wrote me an email this week that said: "If it is not too late, here is my thoughts about grandparents. We see our grandchildren as the most beautiful or handsome children. We love seeing them and being with them without worrying about their daily needs. We get to just enjoy them. If we are close enough we get to see them grow and change. How great that is!"

Let us pray a Prayer of Thanksgiving for Grandparents/Elders:

God of Abraham and Sarah, grandfather and grandmother in the faith, God of all generations, We thank you today for those who are grandparents and elders. We especially thank you for those who are or were grandparents to us — those who are grandparents by blood relationships, and those unrelated but older than we, who generously share their love and wisdom, their time and traditions so that we have roots, stories, and hope.

We bless you for the gift of grandparents, and we ask your blessing on them, that their days may be filled with delight in their grandchildren. May their giving and grace toward younger generations bring fulfillment to them and may they be a blessing to all they love and call grandchildren, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

It is different being a grandparent than it was being a parent. When you are a parent you are so concerned with 'doing the parent thing' right, that there isn't as much time to enjoy the children. It is still all loving and teaching, but as grandparents it is often easier to send them home at the end of the day or let the parents do the clean up and discipline...

Many children and youth in today's world don't have grandparents that live close by. Skype and Facetime are amazing, yet it is difficult to spend a day with them in that way...If you can't be with your grand children would you still like for them to have elders to guide them where they are? Possibly there are someone else's grandchildren near you that you can love and teach... Something to think about.

**Commercial:** Do you ever have difficulties making decisions? John Wesley has a process for you. It is free and easy, you can tell all of your friends and they will thank you for it! [Graceful Decision Making with the Wesley Quadrilateral.](#) You may not have realized it, but I am using it with you right now!

That's right grandparents and elders, while you have been listening to this sermon, I have been presenting ideas to you via Scripture, Christian tradition, my experiences(which might match yours in some way) and the fourth part of the quad, which we will go into next which is reason.

If after this sermon you aren't sure you got where the 'graceful decision making' comes in, you can join the women tomorrow morning here at 10am as I present the Wesley Quadrilateral and work you through 'graceful decision making' using everyday life examples...

Back to the sermon: Using reason with your grandchildren: One of the historical problems with grandparent, and older grandchildren has been: the Generation Gap. We often think about differences in music choices and hair styles, but it goes much deeper than that. Right now there is the generation gap around our understanding of Christian Education.

My grandparents went to Sunday School, my parents took me to Sunday School, I took my children to Sunday School. It was every week and all of these elders of my family also taught Sunday School at some point. "If it was good enough for us it should be good enough for our grandchildren."

Because of the way the children and youth learn today, in ways not even thought of when my grandparents taught, we, as the church aren't keeping up. For now until a generational solution is viable, the best tools we have is growing personal relationships by sharing our faith story through God's story told to us.

We don't have to know all of the gadgetry to tell the stories in creative ways, but we have to be sure to know the stories and be ready to share them in short sound bites when we can slip them into the lives of busy children.

Would you pray again with me: God of wonder and life, we bless you that from one generation to another you hold us in a web of relationships. We rejoice in our children's children. We rejoice in all children you prompt us to call "grand." We thank you for the delight of touch and love expressed. We thank you for the uniqueness of all the fun and little of the responsibility.

We thank you for songs to sing and Play Dough to shape, for laughter at silly stories, for moments of recognition, for hugs to give, for wisdom to share, and for knowing when we must simply pray silently. Lead us in forming faith with our grandchildren so that with them and all your people we may be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

We have to meet them where they are at and love them in their way. Love them enough to let them be them. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to move them to experiences that will get them to a place where they can feel it and acknowledge it before they will be ready to buy into it all.

If you have ever said or thought "I don't talk about that kind of stuff with them." Please rethink that. Take advantage of the time you have together. Show them God's world and tell them about God and creation. Show them how to care for others and tell them about who Jesus is.

Volunteer Together: A Community Dinner, visit the Nursing Home together. Plan a trip to a Local Park. Pick up litter, clear out paths, and remove weeds, all while being surrounded by the great outdoors! Check with the local parks department to find out what options exist or what opportunities could be created by an intergenerational team. Take a trip to the Animal Shelter. Enjoy a wagging together with the animals.

When you are with grandchildren be sure to talk the talk and walk the walk. Whenever my mom took us in the car- anywhere, she was always pointing out the trees, houses, animals, just anything. Sometimes shapes and colors. Once when I drove my boys from Hayward to the church camp, we took of the other boys along, too. After a while, I heard that boy saying in the back seat, "What is with your mom?" Jeff responded with Oh, she just does that." But now he is doing it with his son...

As grandparents and elders, we become mentors and examples if we want to be or not. The children are watching and listening to us, We need to be mindful about what comes out of our mouth and what influences we are having on them all of the time.

There is an organization that I have found on the internet named 'Generations United: Because we are stronger together.' They have suggestions for How can you make Grandparents Day a little grander this year? Share your wisdom, perspectives, and key civic values with the young people in your life. Then, reach out to policymakers and the media to make a grand difference for all children and youth in your community, state, or even nationwide.

Together, older and younger people can reach out to decision makers and begin one of the most important dialogues in our history: discussing how, as a country, we can address the many challenges facing future generations—from literacy to health and wellness to financial stability. What better way to celebrate the contributions of grandparents to our nation than joining together and reaching for greater heights for our future!

Do Something Grand Together! Whether they're down the street or across the country, you can do something grand together with the young people in your life. Our *Take Action Guide* provides you with meaningful suggestions and activities.

Read the guide, talk it over with the young people in your life, and commit to do something grand together.

- Do Something Grand on Facebook – make your profile picture of you and your grandchildren
- Do Something Grand on Twitter – let them teach you!
- Share your story
- Organize an intergenerational dialogue in your neighborhood to discuss how, together, you may be able to add value to your community.
- Take a Tour of Your Town. Learn more about your hometown, as well as your grandparent or grandchild.

Let us pray: Eternal God, faithful, merciful, tender, and stern, you are the God of all generations: Bless all grandparents, mentors, elders. May they know your call to share their wisdom and faith with others. May they have courage and confidence to hand on your gifts of experience and knowledge of stories, songs, and memories. May they continue to learn and grow with the young as good stewards of your world. May they delight in the wonder of each day. Bless them with length of days and joy at the last, through Jesus Christ. Amen.