

# House Happenings



Spring 2025



## Dear Friends,

At Grace House Akron, we recognize that end-of-life care extends far beyond physical comfort. It reaches into the heart of the human experience, addressing questions of meaning, connection, and peace. This is why faith and spirituality play such a vital role in the work we do.

We are blessed to have a dedicated Spiritual Advisory Board and a team of Pastoral Care volunteers who walk alongside our residents and staff, offering compassionate presence and support. These volunteers, from various faith traditions across the Akron community, help meet the spiritual needs of our residents—whether through conversation, prayer, or simply sitting in quiet companionship.

For many, the end of life brings deep reflection, sometimes accompanied by spiritual suffering. Questions like “Why is this happening to me?” or “Why am I all alone?” can weigh heavily on a person’s heart. Our pastoral volunteers are here to listen without judgment, to offer comfort, and to affirm each individual’s dignity and worth. Whether a

resident has a strong faith background or none at all, they deserve to be seen, heard, and cared for in body, mind, and spirit.

But spiritual care is not just for our residents—it is also for our staff. The work of caregiving can be both beautiful and difficult, and we recognize the emotional and spiritual burdens it can bring. Our pastoral volunteers are available to offer support to our team, providing a listening ear and encouragement to those who give so much of themselves in service to others.

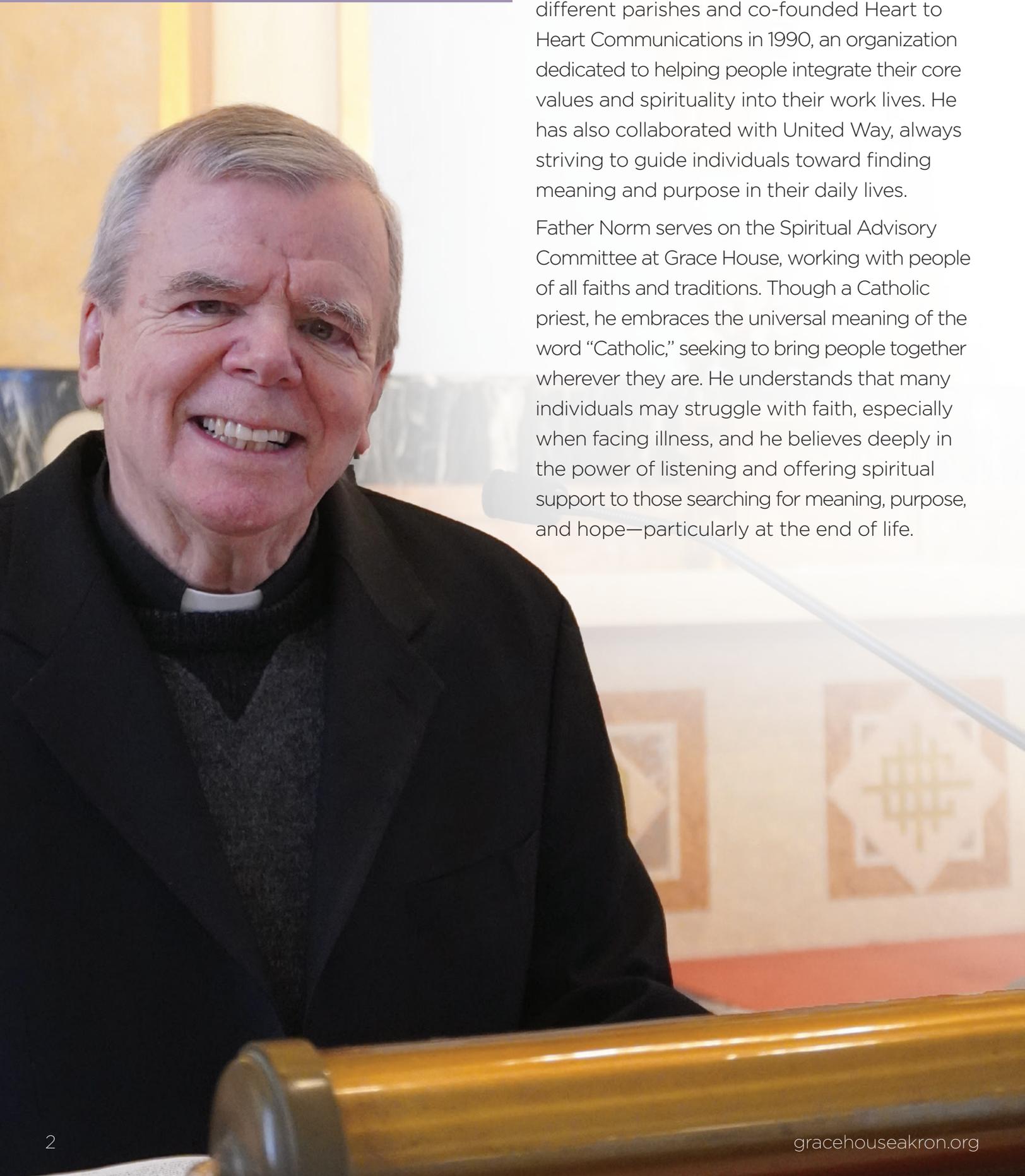
Grace House Akron is more than a place of comfort; it is a place of love, faith, and human connection. Thank you for being a part of this community and for supporting the mission of Grace House.

With gratitude,

Holly Klein  
Executive Director  
Grace House Akron

N O O N E D I E S A L O N E

## Meet Father Norm



Father Norm has been a pastor at St. Vincent Parish near downtown Akron for 50 years. Throughout his ministry, he served in five different parishes and co-founded Heart to Heart Communications in 1990, an organization dedicated to helping people integrate their core values and spirituality into their work lives. He has also collaborated with United Way, always striving to guide individuals toward finding meaning and purpose in their daily lives.

Father Norm serves on the Spiritual Advisory Committee at Grace House, working with people of all faiths and traditions. Though a Catholic priest, he embraces the universal meaning of the word “Catholic,” seeking to bring people together wherever they are. He understands that many individuals may struggle with faith, especially when facing illness, and he believes deeply in the power of listening and offering spiritual support to those searching for meaning, purpose, and hope—particularly at the end of life.

## **Involvement with Grace House**

Compassion has always been at the heart of Father Norm's ministry. One pivotal experience that shaped his perspective was the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. During that time, many people were hesitant to reach out to those suffering from AIDS due to fear and stigma. However, Father Norm saw this as a clear call to action. He attended numerous funerals, offered support to those who were sick, and provided comfort to their loved ones. He continues to advocate for compassion, especially toward communities that are often misunderstood or marginalized.

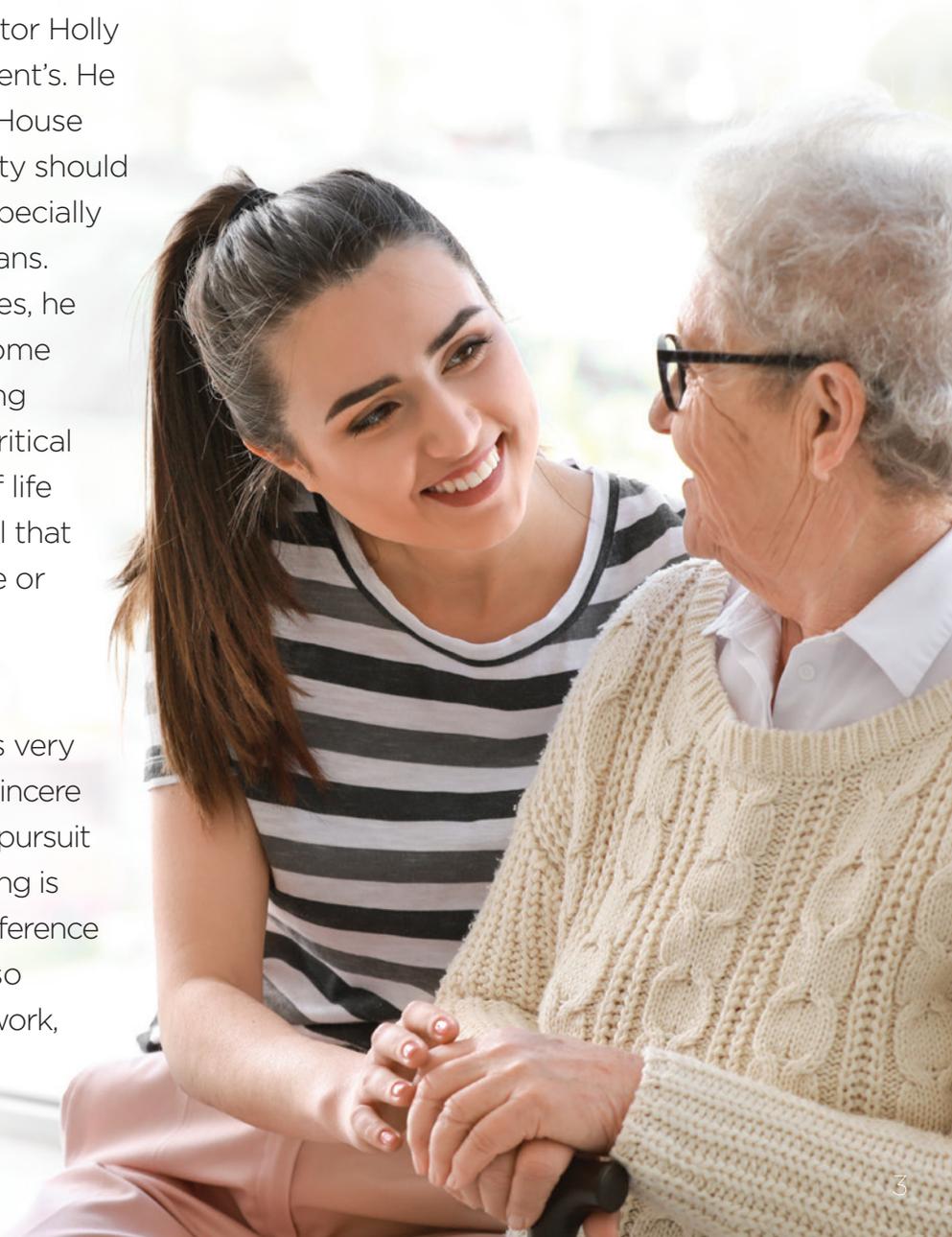
Father Norm's connection to Grace House began when he met Executive Director Holly Klein, a fellow parishioner at St. Vincent's. He immediately recognized that Grace House embodied the mission the community should uphold—caring for those in need, especially those without family or financial means. Throughout his years visiting hospices, he observed that most residents had some level of financial support or caregiving assistance. However, he also saw a critical gap—many people facing the end of life had neither. Grace House exists to fill that void, ensuring that no one dies alone or without compassionate care.

## **Volunteering**

Father Norm believes volunteering is very important and should be rooted in a sincere desire to serve others rather than the pursuit of personal fulfillment. True volunteering is about touching lives and making a difference without seeking recognition. He also underscores the importance of teamwork,

as each volunteer at Grace House plays a vital role in the collective mission.

He often speaks about the concept of the “wounded healer” when it comes to volunteering and helping others. He thinks that even if you've been wounded or rejected, it's important not to spread that wound but to heal others who have wounds. He warns against becoming a “wounded wounder”—someone who perpetuates their suffering onto others instead of finding healing. True service, he believes, comes from recognizing one's own struggles while using them to foster empathy and healing in others.





## Value of Listening

According to Father Norm, listening is one of the most profound ways to serve others. He stresses the power of genuinely hearing someone in a world where conversations often become a competition to speak. Many people feel invisible or unheard; by simply listening, volunteers and caregivers can offer an invaluable gift of acknowledgment and compassion.

He believes in learning from those he serves, asking questions such as, “What has helped you through the years?” and “What are your values?” He is consistently moved by the resilience of those who have faced hardship and rejection but continue to persevere. Often, individuals express that they have not felt God’s presence in their lives, but as they share their stories, they see how God has been at work all along. He reassures them that they are beloved children of God, whether they recognize it or not.



## Spirituality

As a member of the Spiritual Advisory Committee, Father Norm believes that Grace House not only supports its residents but also provides spiritual nourishment for caregivers, nurses, and doctors. He encourages those in ministry to worry less about having the right words and focus instead on being present and responsive.

He teaches that spirituality is not just about words—it is reflected in compassion, understanding, and accompaniment. Sometimes, simply walking alongside someone in their journey is the greatest act of love.



## Connections

Father Norm recalls a recent interaction with a resident who was uncertain about faith due to past negative experiences with religion. Instead of preaching, Father Norm simply listened. Through their conversation, the resident was able to see a new perspective—that God had always been there, even in moments of doubt.

Father Norm does not seek to impose beliefs on anyone. Instead, he encourages people to recognize God’s loving presence in their lives. He believes that God’s love is often best demonstrated through human connection and compassion. His role as a priest allows him to offer guidance, but his primary goal is to help others see faith through a new, healing lens.

## Advice

To those seeking to serve others, Father Norm offers simple but profound advice: “Come with a caring heart.” Whether from a Christian background or another faith perspective, he believes that recognizing God’s presence and allowing that presence to work through acts of love and service is essential. Sometimes, the greatest gift one can offer is simply being there.



He reflects on the words of Mother Teresa: “The greatest poverty is loneliness.” Grace House exists to ensure that no one faces the end of life alone. Through listening, presence, and genuine care, we can all play a role in easing the burdens of others and affirming the dignity of every human being.



# Introduce Us to Your Congregation:

Are you a part of a congregation and know people needing a place like Grace House?

If so, we would be happy to come and speak at your congregation. Although Grace House isn't

faith-based, many of our residents participate in different religions/faiths, and we want to reach out to those who need us most. The more people who know about Grace House and its purpose, the more people we can help. No one should die alone.

Please contact us at [info@gracehouseakron.org](mailto:info@gracehouseakron.org) if you're interested in introducing us.

## Memorial Service:

We house people who are homeless/alone at the end of their lives, and after people have passed, we want to recognize the people we cared for and pay our respects. Not everyone has the funds, so we like to offer the option of having Grace House host a memorial service for individuals who have passed. In addition to that, twice a year, we hold a memorial service for all our residents who have passed away. We welcome anyone who's made a relationship with a resident who passed, whether it's friends, family, caregivers, or volunteers. It's a special day to come together and support each other in a time of sadness, as well as celebrate the lives of those who have passed.



# Facing Death with Grace: Finding Comfort in Life's Last Moments

Death is an inevitable part of life, yet it remains one of the most difficult topics to discuss. Facing Death with Grace offers a compassionate and educational perspective on end-of-life care through the eyes of hospice and palliative care professionals. Facing Death with Grace provides a deep understanding of what happens physically, emotionally, and spiritually as a person nears death, offering guidance for families, caregivers, and individuals navigating this journey.

With real-life stories, medical insights, and heartfelt advice, the book demystifies the dying process, addresses common fears, and highlights the importance of dignity, comfort, and connection in a person's final days. It also explores grief, legacy, and how to find peace in the face of loss.

Whether you are a caregiver, medical professional, or simply someone wanting to better understand death and dying, Facing Death with Grace serves as an essential resource to help bring light and understanding to an often-difficult conversation.



Facing Death with Grace is now available for purchase on Amazon. <https://a.co/d/fCtTAp4> or scan this QR code.



475 North Howard St.  
Akron, OH 44310

*grace house*

A COMFORT CARE HOME

NO ONE DIES ALONE.

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CLEVELAND OH  
PERMIT NO. 498



# JOIN US

## Grace House Save the Date!



### **Walk for Grace: June 21st, 2025, The Akron Zoo**

**500 Edgewood Ave, Akron, OH 44307**  
**Join us for a Zoo Walk and Scavenger Hunt  
at the Akron Zoo!**

What's more fun than taking a trip to the zoo and supporting a good cause? Grab your friends and family to visit exotic animals and complete a scavenger hunt! You can win fun prizes and engage in our silent auction. After you finish your festivities, enjoy the rest of the day at the zoo with all-day access!



### **Graceful Gathering – Prom Night: Oct 23, 2025**

**The Tangier at Our Lady of the Cedars**  
**507 S Cleveland Massillon Rd, Fairlawn, OH 44333**

Grab your corsages and shine up your shoes – it's time for Prom! Enjoy a night out to feel young again. Treat yourself to good food and drinks and participate in our silent auction to support Grace House – Akron's only comfort care home.



Purchase tickets here:  
<https://grace-house.givecloud.co/walk-for-grace-2025>  
or scan this QR code.



Purchase tickets here:  
<https://grace-house.givecloud.co/graceful-gathering-2025-adult-prom>  
or scan this QR code.