

House Happenings



Spring 2026



Dear Friends,

One of the greatest blessings at Grace House Akron is the support of our Spiritual Advisory Board. We are thankful for this dedicated group of spiritual leaders who walk alongside our residents, families, staff, and volunteers every day. Their guidance, prayers, and steady presence mean more than words can express.

At Grace House, we support each resident through their end-of-life journey with compassion and dignity. Our spiritual care comes from many denominations, yet it is united by one powerful truth: the presence of someone who listens, and simply is present can bring peace and comfort at a time when it is greatly needed. During moments of fear, confusion, or loneliness, our spiritual advisors offer comfort and reassurance, reminding our residents they are not alone.

Our residents cherish the time they spend with members of the Spiritual Advisory Board—but their impact doesn't stop there. Our staff and volunteers also draw

strength from their words, encouragement, and support. The residents we care for become family to us, and while it is an honor to be present during their final moments, saying goodbye can be hard. The “caring for the caregiver” moments provided by our Spiritual Advisory Board help our team process grief, find comfort, and continue serving our friends in need.

We are grateful for this spiritual partnership and the role it plays in the mission of Grace House. If you feel called, we ask that you help spread the word about our ministry by sharing our mission with your congregation and community. Together, we can continue to surround our residents with love, dignity, and peace at the end of life.

With gratitude,

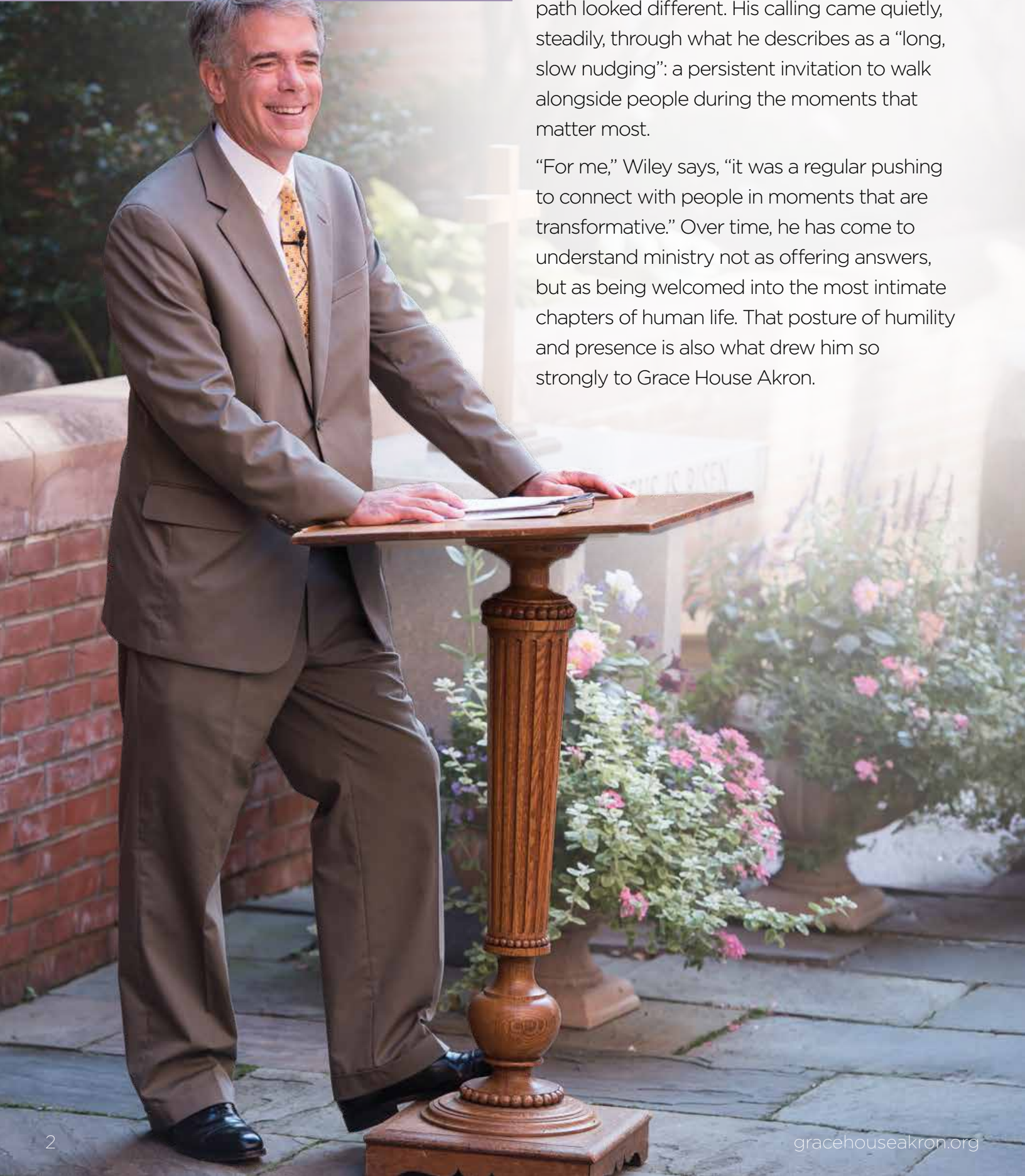
Holly Klein
Executive Director
Grace House Akron

NO ONE DIES ALONE

The Power of Presence: Rev. Dr. Peter Wiley

Some clergy speak of a single, defining moment—a lightning bolt of clarity—that called them into ministry. Reverend Peter Wiley's path looked different. His calling came quietly, steadily, through what he describes as a “long, slow nudging”: a persistent invitation to walk alongside people during the moments that matter most.

“For me,” Wiley says, “it was a regular pushing to connect with people in moments that are transformative.” Over time, he has come to understand ministry not as offering answers, but as being welcomed into the most intimate chapters of human life. That posture of humility and presence is also what drew him so strongly to Grace House Akron.



Reverend Wiley serves on Grace House's Board of Directors and the Spiritual Advisory Board—roles he embraced without hesitation. Although he has been asked to serve on countless boards over the years, Grace House was different.

“When I first heard about Grace House's mission, I immediately knew it was something I wanted to support,” he shares. “The idea of caring for, being with, and giving dignity to people who have nothing they can give back—except the wonder of their beings—was such a clearly right, faithful, and loving mission.”

At first, it might seem like an odd detail, but what truly sold me on Grace House was a can of Coke. I've visited many retirement homes, and in their community rooms you'll often find refrigerators stocked with soda that are usually generic. I've always found that a little sad. It quietly suggests that the people living there aren't worth the extra.

Grace House is different. Here, they have—genuine Coke. It's a small choice, but one that speaks volumes about dignity, respect, and care. These seemingly little details matter. They're the quiet decisions that say, “You

matter,” and they're what make Grace House feel not like a facility, but like a true home.

The Role of the Spiritual Advisory Board

The Spiritual Advisory Board plays a vital role in ensuring that Grace House remains a place of deep compassion, dignity, and respect for every resident. Made up of spiritual leaders from diverse backgrounds, this group guides how spiritual care is offered within the home—not as a program to be delivered, but as a presence to be shared.

At Grace House, spiritual care is not tied to any single faith tradition. Instead, they help shape an approach that is inclusive, gentle, and responsive to each resident's needs. In its simplest form, Reverend Wiley explains, spiritual care is “being a caring, non-anxious presence.” It means meeting people exactly where they are—emotionally, spiritually, and relationally—without expectation.

Sometimes spiritual care looks like prayer or ritual. Other times, it looks like quiet companionship, holding a hand, listening to stories, or simply sitting in silence.



Some members of our Spiritual Advisory Board who attended and spoke at our recent memorial service, from left to right: Father Norm, Pastor Jean Hansen, Reverend Sandra Selby, Andy Costigan, and Deacon Bob Bender.

Spiritual Care at the End of Life

While spiritual care can be deeply meaningful as life draws to a close, Reverend Wiley emphasizes the importance of resisting assumptions.

“Yes—and no,” he says when asked whether spiritual care is always essential at the end of life. “I think we make a mistake in thinking everyone needs the same things. For many, it can be healing, comforting, and bring great peace. But what matters most is that we listen for each person’s needs.”

That listening often reveals a common longing among guests at Grace House. More than anything else, Reverend Wiley has noticed people wanting reassurance that their lives mattered—and that they will not be forgotten.

Grace House serves individuals from many faith backgrounds, as well as those with no faith tradition at all. Spiritual care honors diversity by affirming each person’s value.

“We do that,” Wiley says, “by affirming people regardless of their faith background.”

A Call to the Wider Faith Community

Grace House offers something rare and deeply sacred: love without expectation, dignity without condition, and presence without agenda. These values are not just spoken; they are lived out every day through the compassion of caregivers, volunteers, and faith partners who choose to show up.

But this work is only possible because individuals and congregations say yes—yes to serving, yes to giving, and yes to walking alongside those facing the end of their journey.

Reverend Peter Wiley’s congregation supports Grace House Akron through hands-on volunteerism, First Serve projects, and generous financial contributions. For him, this partnership is not simply charitable—it is a living expression of faith.

“It would be hard to find a purer mission,” he reflects, “one that connects people of faith to the heart of what it means to live in care.”

We invite you and your faith community to join us. Whether through volunteering, project support, or financial partnership, your involvement helps ensure Grace House remains a home rooted in compassion, dignity, and love. Together, we can live out our faith in ways that truly matter.



Introduce Us to Your Congregation:

Are you a part of a congregation and know people who would want to learn more about 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 if you're interested in introducing us.

Ways Grace House Can Be Introduced to Your Congregation

• Guest Speaker During a Service

A Grace House representative can briefly share our mission during worship or announcements.



• Adult Education or Small Group Presentation

We can offer a short, informal presentation with time for questions about end-of-life care and our organization.



• Ministry Fair Table

A simple table with information, brochures, and conversation can introduce Grace House to individuals in a relaxed setting.



• Newsletter or Bulletin Feature

Sharing an article or short write-up helps spread awareness to the entire congregation.



• Volunteer or Service Opportunity Highlight

We can share ways individuals may feel called to serve, from volunteering to providing meals or comfort items.



If you'd like to help with any of these options, Grace House would be grateful to connect and walk alongside your congregation. Please connect with Ashley Manning, Director of Development and Communications at ashley.manning@gracehouseakron.org.

FIRST SERVE AND GRACE HOUSE

Since 2012, First Serve has united people from diverse cultural, ethnic, faith, and economic backgrounds with a mission to build relationships through service. Led by First Congregational Church of Hudson, First Serve hosts an annual Day of Service each September, mobilizing more than 500 volunteers to support partner organizations and residential sites throughout Akron's North Hill community. The organization also maintains a year-round presence, fostering lasting community connections.

First Serve's partnership with Grace House Akron began through collaboration among local faith-based organizations. Sue Wimer became involved after being invited to serve on a committee that gathered support for Grace House's fundraising efforts. Through this work, First Serve recognized a strong alignment with Grace House's mission.



Volunteering at Grace House has been a meaningful experience for First Serve participants, who describe the organization as warm and welcoming. Over the years, volunteers have assisted with organizing storage spaces, preparing meals, hosting volunteer appreciation activities, providing frozen meals for staff, and offering holiday gifts and gift cards for employees.

One especially meaningful project was the creation of the Remembrance Wall in 2024. Completed during First Serve's Day of Service, the wall honors past residents of Grace House and reflects both organizations shared commitment to dignity, compassion, and hope.

Rooted in collaboration and relationship-building, the partnership between First Serve and Grace House demonstrates the impact of community service. Organizations interested in supporting Grace House are encouraged to visit and learn firsthand about the many ways to make a difference.



Memorial Service: Honoring Every Life

At Grace House Akron, we believe every life matters, and every story deserves to be remembered. Our residents come to us from many different backgrounds, shaped by unique life experiences, challenges, and sometimes deep trauma. While their stories are all different, one shared fear we often hear is the worry that their life will be forgotten.

Each year, we hold two memorial services to honor the residents who have spent their final days with us. These services provide a peaceful space to speak their names, reflect on their lives, and celebrate their journey. Families, staff, and volunteers gather together to remember, grieve, and support each other.

These moments of remembrance remind us that every life leaves a lasting imprint, and it is a true privilege to honor our residents and ensure their memory lives on.



Honor a Loved One in a Special Way: Paver Program

A meaningful way to support Grace House Akron is through our paver purchase program. By donating a garden paver in memory or in honor of a loved one, you create a lasting tribute that will be placed in our beautiful garden—

a peaceful space enjoyed by residents, families, staff, and visitors.

Each paver tells a story of love, remembrance, and compassion, while directly supporting the mission of Grace House Akron to provide dignified end-of-life care to those in need.

To learn more about purchasing a paver or to make a dedication, please contact Ashley Manning, Director of Development and Communications, at ashley.manning@gracehouseakron.org. Your gift helps ensure that every life is honored and remembered.





475 North Howard St.
Akron, OH 44310

grace house

A COMFORT CARE HOME

NO ONE DIES ALONE.

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2025 Dashboard



Grace House Save the Date!



Walk for Grace: June 13, 2026

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!



Purchase tickets here:
<https://grace-house.givecloud.co/copy-walk-for-grace-2026-thjo5uelp>
or scan this QR code.



Graceful Gathering - Viva Las Vegas: October 24, 2026

Todaro's Party Center
1820 Akron Peninsula Rd, Akron, OH 44313

Bet on love!

Try your luck at a night full of laughter, lively games, meaningful connection, and a silent auction in support of Grace House Akron.

Formal attire encouraged.

Ticket Information Coming Soon!