Generally most of us are delighted to receive the season’s “Christmas Letters” updating us on the lives of friends and family. Occasionally, though, there’s that letter that triggers eye rolling as we read the annual predictably glowing (bragging) chronicle of job promotions, growing portfolios, exotic vacations, and gifted children’s amazing accomplishments. Because little of the letter writer’s account seems related to our own world, as we read the letter, our own failures seem to loom larger, perhaps even momentarily engulfing us. But, likely a more troubling such disconnect is the one sometimes experienced between one’s own actual chaotic journey of faith and the discouragingly “perfect” one portrayed (with superiority) by the “super Christian”.

A. J. Gregory, author of *Messy Faith: Daring to Live by Grace*, addresses this in a very honest, constructive, readable manner. Openness and vulnerability characterize her writing, including her account of her journey in learning to know God. Because she has apparently done the work of processing her weakness and mistakes, including meaningfully rooting her insights in scripture, her authenticity tends to offer genuine hope, a thread she has woven throughout the book. She addresses difficult things such as temptations, doubts, jealousy, unforgiveness, and addictions; her perspective on addiction allows one to better understand the addict in a helpful way. She clarifies how brokenness in the process of wrestling with hard questions is basic to becoming a strong Christian – i.e. one who has experientially learned through dark times that God’s presence and perfect love for imperfect humans is real even when one is not aware of it. She proposes that another way to ask the question, “Is God going to take care of me?”, is to ask, “Does God care about me?” (Do I matter to God?) She responds to the question thoroughly, with no sugar coating, cliches, or pat answers. Through personal stories and scriptural accounts, she skillfully, and sometimes with humor, knits together insightful responses to hard questions.

**Ministry Care Line** offers the **Free Quarterly Resource**, *Messy Faith: Daring to Live by Grace*, by A. J. Gregory. The MCL Staff prays that the book will be instrumental in strengthening your own relationship with God.

To receive your copy, simply call MCL at 1-800-767-8837. We look forward to receiving your call. Supplies are limited so please call today. – L. Beaven, Editor