

A PUBLICATION OF GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2012

# GraceNotes

A close-up photograph of a human hand held palm-up, dripping water. The hand is positioned above a dark surface of water, and several droplets are captured in mid-air, falling towards the surface. The impact of the falling water creates concentric ripples that spread outwards. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue gradient, suggesting a sky or a large body of water. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

## RIPPLES OF GRACE

A Look at the Vision for Grace

# Mark's Musings

## The Vision for Grace

### New Vision to Propel Congregation

Recently, the Church Council adopted a new Vision Statement for Grace Church: "Spreading ripples of grace by loving God completely, loving people compassionately, becoming like Christ, and leading people to Him." We spent a number of months in prayer and discussion before we arrived at this statement. It was a challenging, but also thrilling process. I am personally energized by this vision of who God calls us to be and what God calls us to do. We hope that God will use this vision to inspire the whole congregation to greater levels of commitment and ministry.

In February I will be preaching three sermons that will further flesh out this vision for all of us, but I want to share some brief thoughts in this article. In the fall of 2007 I preached a sermon that was titled, *Ripples of Grace*. Many people responded positively to that message. Eventually, we developed the new church logo that depicts the cross of Jesus and the ripple effect of grace that is created when his sacrificial love touches our lives. Our Vision includes this image and expresses our desire to spread God's grace in ways that produce a continuous ripple effect.

This continuous ripple effect of grace begins with our own response to God's grace that leads us to love God completely. The truth is that God's love for us engenders our love for God. The more we immerse ourselves in God's love the more completely we love God. Jesus' first command is to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and body. In other words we bring all that we are to God as an expression of our love for God.

When we love God completely we are moved to love others compassionately. This love welcomes newcomers and turns strangers into beloved members of our community. Compassionate love also causes us to do good even to our enemies. We come alongside of others, empathizing with

them, seeking to understand their situation and doing all we can to fulfill their greatest need. This is the fulfillment of Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves. When people encounter this kind of love it transforms them. The grace they experience spreads through them to their circle of family, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

In addition to loving God completely and others compassionately, we are also called to become like Christ so that others see him reflected in who we are and what we do. This is a life-long process of transformation: the more we honor Jesus as our Savior and Lord, the more the Holy Spirit transforms us into his likeness. The more we are like Christ, the more people are drawn to Him through us.

When we love God completely, love people compassionately, and become like Christ our lives bear testimony to the transforming power of God's grace and the ripple effect of grace multiplies through us and touches many others. All this is to glory of God.

This is the vision. I invite you to consider this vision and what it can mean for your life and our life together. I hope that you will begin to pray that God will write this vision on our hearts and begin to shape our everyday lives and our ministries in such a way that we will witness a powerful movement of God's grace through Grace Church.



Mark

# Journeying Through Lent

Pastor Derby

Our Lenten journey begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 22**. Our focus this year is on the Call and Cost of Discipleship. Each Sunday we will explore the lectionary scriptures which focus on the gospels of Mark and John. Our journey will include the intensive week between Palm Sunday and Easter that we know as Holy Week.

I'm sometimes asked why we say there are 40 days in Lent when the number of days between Ash Wednesday and Easter is actually 47. The reason is that the Sundays during Lent are not included in the total because they are considered "mini" Easters. On Sundays worshipers are encouraged to break the fast and celebrate.

## Lenten Schedule

**February 22 – Ash Wednesday | Services - 12:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.  
Imposition of ashes and communion**

**April 1 | Palm/Passion Sunday**

**April 5 | Maundy Thursday | Service at 7:30 p.m. with communion**

**April 6 | Good Friday | Services at 12:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.**

**April 8 | Easter Sunday | Community Sunrise Service at Bohrer Park - 6:30 a.m. Services in the sanctuary - 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**

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## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Ronna Keagle

**Tuesday, February 21** - Join us for our annual Pancake Breakfast/Supper/Dinner and help us raise funds for the youth's annual Work Camp mission. We will begin serving Supper at 5:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. Even if you don't eat breakfast for supper come on out, we will serve you supper for supper as long as you like pancakes for supper. Please RSVP to Pastor Nick at [nworks@graceumc.org](mailto:nworks@graceumc.org) or 301-926-8688 ext 15

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## IN MEMORIAM

- Our Deepest sympathy is extended to the family on the death of Tom Lewis who died on January 12, 2012.
- Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Harriet Gartner who passed away Monday, January 16, 2012.

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## Thank You From the Grace Church Staff

The Grace Church Staff greatly appreciates the thoughtfulness and generosity of the congregation. Thank you for the Christmas Love Gift. Heifer Project International received a gift of \$650 from the Grace Church staff. Instead of exchanging presents with each other, the Grace staff chose, as they have been in the past few years, to give to the Heifer Project because these gifts keep on giving.

# GraceNotes

**February 2012  
Volume 1, Issue 5**

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## Upcoming Deadlines

February 5  
March 5

# GROWING TOGETHER

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JULY 9 - JULY 13



Every kid wishes they could fly... So imagine transforming Grace Church into the boundless blue sky! At Sky Vacation Bible School, kids discover that by trusting God, everything is possible. Sky VBS will help kids discover God's Word in a fun and unforgettable way! Each day, kids learn a single Bible Point that is reinforced with a Bible verse and Bible story—which makes it super easy to teach and simple enough that your kids will remember what they learned. Look for more information and registration forms soon!

## [workcamps™]

### BUILDING. REPAIRING. RELATING

A Workcamp is a big, high energy camp experience where our group will serve people in need through challenging home repair projects!

For six days, our youth will join other young people to repair sagging porches, rebuild unsafe steps and wheelchair ramps, and paint homes. They'll transform a house and God will transform their faith.

This summer our work team will travel to Owego, NY from July 22 - July 28. Look for more information in future Grace Notes, weekly bulletins and by Pastor Nick's office.

## The Wonder years

Brittany Gillen

Another year is upon us, and we have some fantastic events in the planning stages for our fellowship. Mark your calendars for the following dates. Times and details will follow. Look for them in the Sunday Bulletins, Wonder Years e-mails and future editions of Grace Notes. If you are not on our e-mail list, but would like to join our fellowship, please e-mail me at [brittany@gillinator.com](mailto:brittany@gillinator.com). We invite all families with children between the ages of zero and five years old to join us. As always, if you have any suggestions, would like to join our planning committee, or are interested in picking the location of an informal lunch, please let me know.

Saturday, February 11	10 a.m.	Meadowside Nature Center
Sunday, February 19		Informal Lunch
Tuesday, February 21		Attend Shrove Tuesday Pancakes
Saturday, March 10		Tot Swap & Lunch
Sunday, March 18		Informal Lunch
Sunday, April 15		Informal Lunch
Sunday, April 15	9:15 a.m.	Begin final Marriage Sunday School class
Saturday, April 21		Earth Day Event
Saturday, May 12		Park Playdate
Sunday, May 20		Informal Lunch
Sunday, June 10		Informal Lunch

# CELEBRATING OUR YOUTH

## Almost Christian?

Pastor Nick Works

One of the books that I frequently read or reread is a great book, *Almost Christian*, by Kenda Dean. Dean is a professor of Youth Ministry at Princeton Seminary and a United Methodist Elder. The book is a theological explanation on the largest survey of Youth and Religion ever done. I know what you're thinking, BORING, but Dean more than anyone I have ever met captures the Zeitgeist of this generation of youth. Dean writes that the Youth "approach religious participation, like music and sports, as an extracurricular activity: a good well-rounded thing to do, but unnecessary for an integrated life." The teenagers in today's churches are best described as "Almost Christian." What is surprising is that this book isn't intended to run down "Youngsters Today." The real point is that teenagers today are the type of Christians or Almost Christians that their parents and churches have formed them into.

I will never forget the first time I saw the commercial about the parent confronting the teenager about drug use and the father asked the young man, "who taught you how to do this stuff?" The young man angrily said, "I learned it from watching YOU!!!" If we have teenagers that are indeed "Almost Christians" it is only because

that is the lifestyle that we have modeled for them. We have taught them that sports are important, grades are important, getting into the right college is important, and after that we can talk about a relationship with God and God's church.

It is my hope that the Youth ministry of Grace church teaches our young people that what God intends them to be is completely committed to the scandalous God found on the cross. The kind of God that asks devotees to do dangerous things, like share their faith, go on mission trips, or dare to take a job making thousands less out of a desire to serve God and God's people. This is a God that never asks disciples to do safe and easy things, but pushes us all out of our comfort zone into the realm of missional living. This is the kind of God that calls young people to worry more about inviting their friends on the lacrosse team to church than playing lacrosse. When we as a church teach our teenagers that the most important thing they will ever do in life is cultivate a strong relationship with God, and then we live that out in front of them we can turn tomorrow's "Almost Christians" into tomorrow's "Simply Christians" and the world will be a better place for them.

## Calling All Youth

Mary Lou Gundersen

Grace Church, Pastor Mark, Pastor Tom and Pastor Nick invite the young people of the church in grades 5-12 to join the Acolyte team. Being an Acolyte is a rewarding experience and is a special way for a young person to contribute to the life of his or her church.

Training will be held Saturday morning, **March 17**, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., in the Wesley Room. If you are interested in serving the Lord and Grace Church as an Acolyte, please call or email the Acolyte coordinator, Mary Lou Gundersen, at 301-869-5625, or [gmlgundersen@comcast.net](mailto:gmlgundersen@comcast.net), (subject – Acolyte) by Monday, March 12, 2012.

## Lock-In

Deb Demeritt

All 4th through 6th graders are invited to participate in our 5th Annual Lock-in! Arrival time is 6:00 p.m. on **Friday night, February 24th**, in Fellowship Hall. We will be serving dinner at about 6:15 p.m., followed by Bible Study and crazy, wacky games! After our night of fun, we'll be cooking our own breakfast. Pick-up time is 9:00 a.m. Please be sure to bring everything you need to camp out at Grace. Watch your email for more information or contact Deb Demeritt at 240-274-1413.

KidsClub wishes to thank all of the members of the congregation who contributed to the Spirit of Giving Campaign this year. We wrapped and delivered over 200 gifts to Gaithersburg Elementary School.

# WORSHIPING THROUGH MUSIC

## Children's Choir: The Big Picture Work Begins on Final Program



Each Tuesday evening from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. children from the ages of 4 years old through 7th grade rehearse and learn musical skills in the Children's Choirs. The three age groups are led by Renee Varga (Cherub Choir), Mindy Ward

(Caroling Angels) and Sandy Brunk and Diane Haines (Older Children's Choir). Our theme this year has been The Big Picture which helps children learn that God has given us all gifts to share with others and shows us how those gifts can tell others about Jesus. All children are welcomed to join us on Tuesday nights. If you would like more information, contact Diane Haines, Director of Music [dhaines@graceumc.org](mailto:dhaines@graceumc.org) or by calling the church office, 301-926-8688.

Our FINALE will be celebrated on **Sunday, May 20th**, when the children will present a full program that shares The Big Picture with all ages. Mark your calendars now to attend the afternoon production! More to come in future GRACE NOTES.

## Join the Devine Winds

After a short January break, the *Devine Winds* will begin rehearsals anew in February. The *Devine Winds* is made up of woodwinds and brass players of all ages and is always looking for more players!

If you might be interested in joining the *Devine Winds*, or just would like to know more about the group, please contact Tammy Ripley [rripley01@verizon.net](mailto:rripley01@verizon.net), 301-384-2946 or Diane Haines [dhaines@graceumc.org](mailto:dhaines@graceumc.org), 301-926-8688 x 18.

The *Devine Winds* usually rehearse twice a month on Sunday afternoons at 4:30 p.m. and play on hymns and present a prelude or offertory during the 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services once a month. Their schedule for rehearsals/worship leading is as follows:

**February 12 & 19** rehearsals; **February 26** Lead in Worship  
**March 11 & 18** rehearsals; **March 25** Lead in Worship

## Happy Birthday to...

1	Luckshika Arudchandran	9	Anne Meininger	20	Joyce Derby
1	Maxwell Freeburn	9	Ruth Samorajczyk	20	Harry Perry
3	Anne Wilson	10	Barbara Newbury	22	Martha Ball
4	Tyler August	11	Ajeetha Arudchandran	22	Beth Gardner
4	Benjamin Barrientos	12	Lauren Brunk	22	Doreen Williams
4	Stephen Bonhag	12	Alessandra Mejia	23	Jennifer Martin
4	Cameron Newrones	13	Zelah Conley	23	Paul Moore
4	Brayden Varga	13	Kyle Lyons-Burke	23	Joan Muller
5	Frieda Price	13	Rick Smith	23	Daniel VanLeer
5	Blake Sanchez	14	Chris DiMisa	23	Svetlana Vanwagner
5	Conrad Tucker	14	Sima Ibiebele	24	Mary Moore Payne
6	Curtis McCormick	14	Abby Reed	24	Deborah Saucedo
8	Carly Austin	14	Jordon Reed	24	Karen Wolske
8	Emily Chiswell	17	Ian Brunk	25	Brooke Ripley
8	Charles Gray	18	Ashley Anderson	25	Jamie Spickler
8	Katherine Powell	18	Elizabeth Anklam	27	David Bartelt
8	Missy VanLeer	18	Dick Carelli	27	Ryan Schmidt
8	Rachel Wolske	18	Ann Potteiger	27	Jonathan Works
9	Teresa Llewellyn	19	Myrtle Painter		

# SERVING



## Grace Goes Green

Bill Ruff

As the year goes on, we come across interesting facts concerning energy production and use, climate change, etc.

Did you know that:

- plants, animals and birds are shifting their habitat ranges to higher and cooler regions worldwide 3X faster than scientists have predicted
- the white bark pine, a vital food source for grizzlies, is becoming extinct due to climate change
- in July 2011 all 50 states set high temperature records
- the number of cars in the world has now reached 1 billion
- renewable energy production in the US now surpasses nuclear energy production
- after dropping in 2008 and 2009, US CO2 emissions increased by 3% in 2010
- Canada will phase out dirty coal-fired power generation after 2015
- last year the US solar industry employed 93,500 workers, 9,000 more than the steel industry; the number will grow larger by 26% in 2012
- wind energy is the fastest-growing source of power on the planet; in the US the wind industry employs more people than the coal mining industry
- by 2030 the US will produce 20% of its power from wind; the state of Iowa does that now
- offshore wind farms in the Netherlands are found to attract harbor porpoises, perhaps due to increased feeding opportunities around the support pilings
- the world is losing top soil by erosion 10 to 40 times faster than it is replenished

Please give us your suggestions for new energy conservation projects at the Church. Check out our board in Fellowship Hall for ideas. You can leave a note at the Office, or send an email to the Office - attn. GGG. And do keep reflecting on things we all can do, at Grace and in our homes, to help God's and our planet cope with human activities - past, present, and future.

## Share Your Love

Diane Tarka

On **December 20 and 21**, Grace UMC opened its doors for the Share Your Love Program. We have worked together with the City of Gaithersburg's Holiday Giving Program since 1998. Grace UMC served as a center where gifts were delivered and distributed to families in need. Over the two days, we served 100 families. We felt the joy of giving and saw the smiles when families received their gifts. Thanks to everyone who helped by supporting Share Your Love with your gifts of money and time. We greeted people, checked people in and delivered gifts by being elves. Thank you for your financial support. This year we were able to give \$4,000 at Thanksgiving and \$4,000 at Christmas. Your generous giving also enabled us to be able to donate \$5,000 to UMCOR for the victims of the famine in the Horn of Africa.

## Board of Childcare

Paul Moore

Thank you for your continued support of the Board of Child Care and the Strawbridge School. On **January 3**, because of the many recent contributions from the congregation, 433 General Mills Box Tops for Education (worth \$43.30), 10 Campbell's V-8 caps, and 1044 Campbell's UPC Labels for Education points were sent from Grace Church. A new article about Strawbridge School is posted on the collection box in Fellowship Hall. Please note that the Board of Child Care does not accept Betty Crocker coupons. If you know of some place that can benefit from these coupons, please let me know so that I can send on those that have been donated.

For more information, contact Paul Moore at 301-926-0779.



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If you are receiving this newsletter in error, please contact Donna Lyon, church administrator, at 301-926-8688, via e-mail at [graceumc@graceumc.org](mailto:graceumc@graceumc.org), or in writing to:

Grace United Methodist Church  
119 N. Frederick Avenue  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Thank you!

## Thank You

- \* Thank you to those who assisted in the arrangement of the poinsettias in the church sanctuary on December 14th and December 22nd. The congregation was blessed by your gifts and service throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons.
- \* Thank you to everyone who bought poinsettias and wreaths for the church. Your purchase made the church look lovely again this year.
- \* Thank you to those who assisted in the decorating and un-decorating of the church and to the Cook Crew who prepared two delicious dinners for the hungry workers. Everyone's assistance was greatly appreciated.