

WORDS OF GRACE

A Publication of GracePoint Church

Christ-Releasing Relationships

“... put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness... Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”
Ephesians 4:24, 29

We can be Christ’s sculpting tool as we allow the Holy Spirit to give us a spiritually artistic eye to see always the beauty and glory of Christ in one another. Let us embrace a New Covenant model of spiritual friendships, based on a new model that I am coining “Grace-ability.”

Accountability assumes failure. Accountability asks, “How bad did you mess up this time?”

Grace-ability affirms grace in the face of sin and struggle, assumes the Holy Spirit’s redemptive work, and moves into the mess and mystery of each other’s heart to release the image of Christ already there.

Grace-ability asks, “How has the Holy Spirit been convicting, comforting, or changing you? Where have you seen God’s grace operating in your life this week?”

Christ’s movement toward us is never the “How could you?” or the “You should!” of shame and judgment. Christ’s movement toward us is always, and so our movement toward others can be, “You shall be!” “You can!” “You already are!”

No matter how deep your sin, struggle, or shame right now, Christ is always declaring over your life, “Yes, you are experiencing that right now, but if you run to my throne of grace, you shall experience forgiveness, empowerment, healing, freedom, and extravagant love.”

The thrust of the New Testament, the New Covenant, is never “Shape up, you lousy sinner!” Instead, it is “By the Spirit, put off that old, dead, false self, and put on who you already are in Christ, a saint, holy and dearly beloved.”

Christ is the master sculptor of our lives, always seeing us as Ephesians 2:10 describes us, as “God’s masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus.”

Let us pour grace-ability toward one another, always seeing the best in one another, always polishing the masterpiece of Christ already within one another.

As Christ declares over us, so we can declare over one another, “You *used* to be __ (and you can fill in the blank—an addict, a victim, a child of an alcoholic, a codependent, defined by greed or lust, etc.) but *now* you are a royal son or daughter of the King!”

Pastor Chris



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Office Hours
Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm
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Published Monthly

GLORIFYING GOD BY

CONNECTING
people to God

LOVING
God and each other

GROWING
in grace and truth

SERVING
Dubuque and the world

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Clerk of Session Pat Kohler
pkteada@yahoo.com

Editor Karen Storlie
karen@storlie.net

GracePoint Elders

Through 2013

EquippingMary Hirschey
Stephanie LangeMissional OutreachPam De Meester
Ken GodwinFellowship

Ray Wlochal

Prayer & Worship

Doug Storlie

StewardshipAndy Baumann
Mary Burns
Tim Walsh**GracePoint
Deacons**

Through 2013

Care

Group Deacon

- 1 Sue Lemon
- 2 Robin Wlochal
- 3 Pauline Brimeyer
- 4 Shirley VanDuser
- 5 Janet Metelak
- 6 Barb Berg
- 7 Suz Birch
- 8 Sharon Baker
- 9 Carolyn Arnold

Deacon Moderator
Pauline Brimeyer**GOT BLOOD – PLEASE DONATE****BECAUSE WE CARE!****JANUARY 8, 2014**

Last July we hosted our 8th blood drive for the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center. We have collected 118 units of whole blood in those 8 drives, and since each unit of whole blood is manufactured into 3 components, our drives have resulted in 354 safe and reliable blood products for area patients suffering illness or injury. Wow! This is definitely something to be proud of!

Most of us know people with heart disease and cancer who will likely need a blood transfusion. We cannot let up after the holidays, as there is an even greater need right now. We are asking you to give about an hour of your time to donate blood on January 8th. Don't let excuses keep you from saving lives. Please schedule an appointment time at the Blood Donation table in the lobby for a time that fits your schedule.

We plan to pamper our heroes who donate blood with some great home-made chili. In addition, we feel it would be nice to have treats such as cookies and bars. If you are unable to donate blood, please sign up for the food and drink donations also at the Blood Donation table in the lobby.

When you come to donate, please remember to eat a nutritious meal at least 4 hours before donating, drink plenty of fluids, and bring your donor card, driver's license, or social security card. If you have any questions, please contact Pam De Meester.

GRACEPOINT YEAR-END MEETINGS

Annual Reports are due in the office by December 30th. Please send them electronically to office@gracepointdbq.org. It would be helpful if you would put annual report as part of your title.

Annual Reports will be available to members and regular attenders in the lobby on Sunday, January 19th.

Annual Meeting is January 26, 2014. The potluck starts at 11:45am, with the meeting following.

PRECEPTS AT GRACEPOINT

Sermon on the Mount

Get a deeper understanding of the fruit and security that come with righteousness in the life of a believer. You'll never look at the Beatitudes the same way again. The videos will include teachings on- location in Israel.

WHEN: Tuesday, January 21 @ 6:30pm or
Wednesday, January 22 @ 9:00am

HOW LONG: 11 weeks, until April 1 or 2

COST: \$22.50

Register no later than January 10, 2014.
Questions: Mary Hirschey, 815-776-0171

Financial Stewardship Update

The Finance Team has been working to complete some "best practices" regarding our financial recordkeeping. Going forward, when requesting a reimbursement check for **personal expenses** paid on behalf of GracePoint (an example would be buying communion supplies), please use the Check Reimbursement Request that is available in the office. This will always be the current version of the form, and any changes that might be made in the future will be on this form. Only requests presented on this form with proper approval will be accepted.

Once the form is filled out and approval is signed for by the appropriate person, **checks for approved expenses will be issued on Thursday** and put in either the Elder's mailbox, the Deacon Moderator mailbox, or the Pick Up mailbox, as is appropriate. If approving Elders are not available during the time reimbursement is needed, the Elder to Finance has been given authority to approve expenses in their absence.

Bills will continue to be paid as received. Questions may be directed to Mary Burns, Elder to Finance. Thank you!

Woman to Woman Luncheon

Attention: All ladies (high school and older)

Please join us for the next **Woman to Woman** (formerly known as Women Mentoring Women) **luncheon**, 12:00–1:30 pm Sunday, January 12, 2014, in the GracePoint Conference Room. What a wonderful opportunity to share our lives with other women! Please let us know by Wednesday, January 8, if you'll be coming. We think you will enjoy the chance to warm up, inside and out!

An optional second feature of Woman to Woman is the opportunity to be paired one-on-one with another woman to share a walk or coffee, etc., during the upcoming month. This has been quite popular with those who have participated.

And the third optional feature of Woman To Woman is the opportunity to become a mentor or mentee where women are matched to come alongside another for Christian friendship, support, and growth.

You are welcomed to participate in any or all of these parts of this Woman to Woman program.

For more information or to RSVP for the January luncheon, please contact Pam Hillary at pam.hillary@gmail.com or 563.580.9523 OR Martha Intveld at martha.intveld@gmail.com or 563.581.6371 OR Karen Storlie at karen.storlie@mheducation.com or 563.580.0734.

Per-Member Asking

The Per-Member Asking for 2014 remains the same as 2013—\$40 per member per year. This amount is split between The Rivers & Lakes Presbytery and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). This is the primary means for funding the administrative budget for each of these entities. It helps pay for office operations for the various ministries: Office of the Stated Clerk, National Outreach, Student & College Ministries, Women's Ministries, and World Outreach Ministries.

GracePoint is asked to pay \$40 per active member as of December 31st, regardless of age, whether or not the members themselves donate using the Initial Offering envelope. Please contribute all that you can to this fund, both to support these causes and to help defray the amount that GracePoint has to take from the General Budget to cover this total. All amounts given are helpful, so please contribute whatever amount you are able.

GracePoint Elders and Deacons Beginning 2014

Elders:

Mary Hirschey
Stephanie Lange
Doug Storlie
Ray Wlochall
Kenneth Godwin
Pamela De Meester
Andy Baumann
Mary Burns
Pamela Hillary
Beverly VanDerZyl
Wilma Sanders

Deacons:

Barb Berg
Janet Metelak
Shirley VanDuser
Betty Carlson
Mary Ann Hopkins
Glenda Temple
Sue Lemon
Suz Birch
Carolyn Arnold

GLOBAL MISSIONS

Matt Welde to “Retire”

This past August the Global Missions Team received the news that Matt Welde is retiring as missionary, evangelist and teacher. For the past two decades he has carried out assignments around the world with gratitude to God for those opportunities. In his letter to us he states that by actual count he has travelled to 56 countries of the world and that he has preached and lectured in an estimated 30 of these countries.



Like Paul he acknowledges that he has kept his pledge to the Lord that he would be an obedient servant and go where God beckoned him—to small churches, medium churches, and large churches. He has conducted meetings in stadiums to many thousands of people. He also has preached to smaller gatherings in market places and churches. Many thousands have made decisions for Christ and are walking in newness of life.

He also attempted to love the people to whom he ministered. He walked in humility, recognizing always that the glory must be given to God in all that he did.

Matt and Millie, his wife, are both 81 years old. Matt’s health is still pretty good, but Millie has fourth stage cancer which restricts her activities and requires Matt to be part-time caregiver. Therefore Matt is eliminating his travel to cities and towns around the world, but praying that God will open new doors of opportunity for him to speak at churches and seminaries in the United States. In addition, he plans to do some writing on different subjects.

God willing, the Global Missions Team will continue to support Matt and Millie in their retirement years.

For the Global Missions Team, Scott Arnold

The above has been excerpted from Matt’s letter of August 6, 2013.

2014



2014

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Office Closed	2	3 6:30p Mission to Mexico Mtg	4
5 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service	6 No Food Pantry	7 6:30p Precepts	8 6:15a Men's Pry Brkfst 9:00a Precepts 5:30p Hand Bells 7:00p Deacons Meeting	9	10	11
12 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service 11:45p Woman to Woman Luncheon 1:30p Bethany Home	13 6:00p Food Pantry	14	15 6:15a Men's Pry Brkfst 5:30p Hand Bells 7:00 p Elder Ministry Teams	16 6:30p Session	17 	18
19 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service	20	21	22 6:15a Men's Pry Brkfst 9:00a Precepts 5:00p Golden Oldies	23	24	25
		Pastor Chris on Study Leave				
	6:00p Food Pantry	6:30p Precepts	5:30p Hand Bells		Presbytery	
26 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service 11:45p Potluck Annual Meeting	27 6:00p Food Pantry	28 6:30p Precepts	29 6:15a Men's Pry Brkfst 9:00a Precepts 5:30p Hand Bells	30	31	

Membership to Date:
 Active 151
 Inactive 5
 Perm. Inactive 3
 Total 159

CLERK'S REPORT

Blood Drive scheduled for January 8, 2014, 3:00 to 6:00pm.

Special Offerings for 2014 are Easter – Bethany Home; Thanksgiving – Dubuque Rescue Mission; Christmas – EPC Retired Minister's Fund. Frank Raymond Shepherd III, infant son of Carrie (Wlochal) & Frank Shepherd was baptized on November 15, 2014.

The following members were put on the Inactive Membership Rolls for a period of 2 years (November 21, 2013, to November 21, 2015) per Session action November 21, 2013: Jim & Vicki Fox, Samantha Fox, Tiffany Fox and Grant Zivojnovich.

The following members were removed from the Inactive Membership Rolls per Session action November 21, 2013: Loren & Dr. Tera Montgomery and David & Laura Zwart.

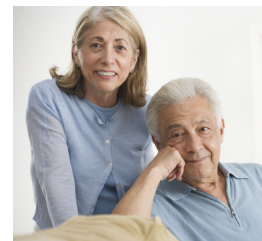
The officers for 3- year terms (2014, 2015, 2016) were elected at a Special Congregational Meeting December 15, 2013. Deacons: Betty Carlson, Mary Ann Hopkins and Glenda Temple. Elders: Mary Burns, Pam Hillary, Mary Hirschey, Wilma Sanders and Beverly VanDerZyl. The Nominating Committee members at-large for a term of 1 year: Ann Baumann, Bob Boelk, Bob De Meester and Karen Storlie.

Regular Session Meeting is January 16, 2014. Annual Congregational/ Corporation Meeting is January 26, 2014. A potluck follows the Worship Service, then the meeting. Presbytery will be January 24-25, 2014 at Highview Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Dausman, Wisconsin. Janet Metelak has resigned as Administrative Bookkeeper as of December 17, 2013.

Administrative Bookkeeper's Report:

General Fund Beginning Balance, November 1, 2013	\$9,383.01
Total General Fund Receipts	42,705.85
Subtotal Beginning Balance & Receipts	\$52,088.87
General Fund Disbursements	\$36,551.45
Allocations & Transfers	(691.66)
Subtotal Disbursements, Allocations & Transfers	\$35,859.79
General Fund Ending Balance, November 30, 2013	\$16,229.08

(Continued on page 8.)



GOLDEN OLDIES

Golden Oldies will meet on Wednesday, January 22nd, 5:00pm, at Sunshine Family Restaurant (401 Central Avenue). Sign up in the lobby the Sunday before or call Bob Boelk, 557-9166.

ALL SENIORS ARE



Friday
January 17

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Katelyn Wiest
- 2 Richard Merrihew
- 4 Erin Barsema
- 9 Paige Barsema
- 11 George
Schwarzmann III
- 13 LeRoy Berg
- 15 Amy English
- 15 Anna English
- 22 Ken Irión
- 24 Paulette Kress
- 25 Bob De Meester
- 26 Wilma Sanders
- 28 Betty Sheehan



ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Mable & Bob Boelk
- 3 Karen & Doug Storlie

Check Out the Library

There is always something new in the library. We receive donations of new and used books and videos all the time. The library is open Sundays from 8:30am–noon.



If you have any new books or videos to donate to the library, contact Mable or Bob Boelk, 557-9166.

(Continued from page 7.)

The 4th Quarter Mission Giving was approved at Session Meeting November 21, 2013.

EPC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Bailey, Ben & Monica – Middle East	\$200.00
Furr, Chris & Kirsten – France	300.00
Robert Hamd	575.00
Total Quarterly Giving	\$1,125.00

General Quarterly Giving

Aisenbrey, Lou & Debbie – Wycliffe	250.00
Woody & Barbara – Allegro Solutions	250.00
Clarity Clinic – Dubuque	225.00
Dubuque Rescue Mission	225.00
Elangewe, Isaac (Cameroon)	250.00
Grote, Scott & Jessica (MMS Aviation)	600.00
Hsu, John & Nellie – E Free Church	200.00
Jews for Jesus – Stan Meyer	200.00
Krohn, Jeff – SIM	250.00
John & Becky – Wycliffe	250.00
Prasad, Philip – Witnessing Ministries	275.00
Sam & Elizabeth – Frontiers	300.00
Shiloh Christian Children's Ministries	200.00
Siloam Eye Hospital – South Korea	250.00
UD Theological Seminary	100.00
Weber, B.J. – New York Fellowship	250.00
Welde, Matt	275.00
Yeats, Ted & Karey – Navigators	250.00
Total General Quarterly Giving	\$4,600.00

Other Special Giving

The Guest House at St. John's Lutheran Church	\$400.00
Memorial Gift (Wire Transfer) – Gilda Samuels	50.00
Transfer to Mission Trip Fund for Scholarships	3,250.00
Total Other Giving	\$3,700.00

TOTAL MISSION GIVING FOR 4TH QUARTER

\$ 9,425.00

Pat Kohler, Clerk



Middle School & High School Youth

Youth Ministry on Sabbatical

Your Elders on Session have discerned after much prayer, discussion, and dialogue with Pastor Dana that it is best to place all youth ministry on a sabbatical hold at least for the month of January.

With Pastor Dana no longer in direct leadership of youth ministry, we need this time to discern who will be in direct leadership, and how best to restructure our youth ministry around the giftedness of whoever this new youth director will be, and around whoever will continue to serve as youth leaders under this new director.

In January, we will schedule a series of meetings for prayer, discernment, and planning with Pastors Chris and Dana and with all those interested in serving on a youth leadership team. If you have been serving in youth ministry and sense a call to continue, or if you are sensing a call to begin serving in this area, please let Pastor Chris know, from January 3–8, so he can include you in these meetings.

Please be in much prayer for these gatherings, for the future of GracePoint's youth ministry, and for our youth as they grieve the loss of Pastor Dana and transition to a new leader and new format for our weekly youth gatherings.



Connecting,
Loving, Growing,
Serving

PRAYER CHAIN

To start a prayer, call Pat Kohler or Lois Trausch-Wolfe.

Daytime Prayer Chain

Pat Kohler
583-8978

Gerry Vandenberg
583-5338

Ramona Hennings
583-8739

Wilma Sanders
582-7346

Mable Boelk
557-9166

Sue Lemon
583-4454

Lois Trausch-Wolfe
583-0534

(Lois starts the evening chain.)

Evening Prayer Chain

Sharon Baker
451-4557

Glenda Temple
582-0464

Karen Storlie
556-7548

Kim or Jerry Bell
582-4956

Missional Donation Project Team Report

Can You Smell the Coffee?

The Fellowship Center Makeover continues, with the Coffee Café being installed next.

The board-and-batten wood walls have been installed, as well as the ceiling acoustical “Clouds”. New LED Light Fixtures are mounted on each cloud. The new lights are extremely efficient, burning only 35 watts at full brightness. One of these 2’ x 2’ lights replaces an 8 foot fluorescent fixture of four 40 watt bulbs!

The north half of the Fellowship Center is complete, to include the relocated screen, sound system, and additional lighting control. The Precepts Class will resume in the new space later in January.

A custom cart was built for the Hand Bell Tables. This cart stores under the new counter in the south classroom, and allows all tables to be moved together when needed in the sanctuary.

Work now is concentrating on the Coffee café. Cabinets and dishwasher have arrived, and supplies have been ordered. Installation is waiting on the electrical work.

There has been significant contribution of labor by a few faithful members. Many thanks for their dedication to GracePoint and this project. We look forward to having this re-envisioned space ready for new outreach ministries.

Your Missional Project Team,

Elder Pam DeMeester, Elder Ken Godwin, Dan Baker, Bob DeMeester, Sara Scherf

Church Christmas Un-decorating!

Please plan on being at GracePoint at 9:30am Saturday, January 11th, to help put GracePoint back to ‘normal’. Rolls and coffee will be provided. If you have questions contact Doug Storlie, 556-7548.



Dear GracePoint Friends,

Isaiah 55:8-11 says "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it".

As you read this you will have experienced the congregational meeting that included the work of releasing me to transition my call from GracePoint to another place. Looking back at the last five years, I'd like to give thanks to God for the most enjoyable ministry I've ever experienced and the incredible blessings our family received being at GracePoint and being in Dubuque. Together we can thank God for the outreach pipeline of relationships made with kids and youth through Music Theater Camp and GraceUnderground, for some connections with young adults over the years, for some new ways to express the inexpressible in worship, and for the general blessing of being together. In addition to the programmed ministry the church put together, a lot happened in the course of events that was directed by God for His purposes.

That's the stuff I'd like to give thanks for, but I can't seem to find the words to express it. Why did God bring us together for this season? What missions did we complete? How do we understand it all? I believe intuitively that our call to be together has as much to do with how we will serve God in the future as it does, how we served Him recently.

GracePoint really is a one pastor church. I have come to realize that I need to be the pastor of a congregation rather than a staff pastor. Embracing this is a key to serving God well in this next season. If we hold each other close and always value the time we served together, I believe we'll have a key ingredient of inspiration in the days ahead. Our season together may be like leaven for the blessing God has for us on our future separate paths. (Luke 13:20-21) And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened." We don't really know what kind of future we're looking at, but we do know the God we'll serve as we go into it. Keeping our hearts set on serving well will be fruitful.

So have faith. This is God's doing. If we're faithful in small things, we'll be given greater responsibilities. If we're faithful trusting God with the unknowns in this transition, we'll have the courage to hear Him challenge us to greater things. Let us never give up on giving our best service.

With love in Christ, Pastor Dana



Don't forget to sign up to bring treats for fellowship time on Sundays.

The sign-up sheet is in the Fellowship Center. You may also honor a birthday, anniversary, or special event.



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LOVING God and each other

GROWING in grace and truth

SERVING Dubuque and the world

POTLUCK AND ANNUAL MEETING

January 26th, 11:45am Potluck

Annual meeting follows the potluck.



Bring a dish or two to pass. Your table service and drinks are provided.