WORDS OF GRACE

A Publication of GracePoint Church

Faith: The Sin of Unbelief

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus. . . . Take care, brothers and sisters, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." **Hebrews 3:1,12-15**

A foundational truth of our faith is that we are saved by faith alone, through grace alone, in Christ alone. Nevertheless, the New Testament never shrinks away from directly connecting faith to good works. The same faith and grace that saves you is the very same faith and grace that transforms and empowers you. It is impossible to have one without also having the other.

Thus our passage warns us, we remain part of God's people if indeed we hold fast our confidence. The author compares those who fall away from Christ to the Israelites who rebelled against God in the Wilderness, and so did not enter the Promised Land. This is the tragedy of choosing to live in the most horrific of all sin: the sin of unbelief! Don't be part of today's Wilderness Generation!

Piper warns, "All sins come from unbelief in the promises of God." The deceitfulness of sin, and the root sin of unbelief, as Genesis 4:7 warns, is always "crouching at our door." Piper admonishes, "We must battle unbelief every day!" Our passage gives us two potent avenues for battling unbelief: Christian community and meditating on Christ.

You simply will not live in faith, and you will most certainly slip into the sin of unbelief, if you are not a faithful participant in a faith-filled community. Most of us are dangerously under-fellowshipped! Our passage calls for a *daily* meeting together.

The antidote to unbelief is faith. Our passage reveals that faith is the fruit of pondering daily the magnificence of Christ, and the matchless power of His blood. What do you do each day to meditate on the splendor of Christ? As John Owens instructs, "Set faith at work on Christ for the killing of your sin. His blood is the great sovereign remedy for sin-sick souls. Live in this, and you will die a conqueror; yea, you will, through the good providence of God, live to see your lust dead at your feet."

Pastor Chris

GracePoint
3100 Windsor Avenue
Dubuque, Iowa
583-3929
gracepointdbq.org

Office Hours
Tues-Wed, 9:30-11:30am
Thurs-Fri, 9:30am-1:30pm

Volume 21, Issue 12
December 2017
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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Editor Karen Storlie
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GracePoint Elders
through January 2018

Equipping
Doug Mulder

Missional Outreach
Doug Storlie

Fellowship
Robin Wlochal

Prayer
Pam Hillary

Stewardship
Bob DeMeester
Dan Baker

Worship
Beverly VanDerZyl

GracePoint Deacons
through January 2018

Care Group	Deacon
1	Lisa Gaylor
2	Pauline Brimeyer
3	Shirley VanDuser
4	Janet Metelak
5	Barb Berg
6	Suz Birch
7	Nicole Roling*
8	Carolyn Arnold

Deacon Moderator
Shirley VanDuser

*Nicole has resigned due to increased family responsibilities. Her care group has been distributed to other current Deacons.

Exchanging Shame for Glory

Intensive Spiritual Formation Small Group

Come discover freedom and joy in Christ!

This is an invitation to participate in an intensive spiritual formation small group, designed to foster deep transformation in your soul by exchanging shame for a strengthened identity in Christ. If GracePoint truly desires to embrace a *Missional Soul Care Community* model, eventual participation for all in one of these groups will be essential, as shame is the strongest barrier in *every* soul to close relationships with God and others.

This group is open to any Christian in the tri-state area ages 18 and above. This soul care group is the fruit of 6 years of doctorate study, and fostered major healing and freedom in Christ for the participants of the first group. This will be a weekly small group that meets for ten, 2-hour sessions, and will also require 2 hours a week of activity outside of the group time.

***Every* person has deeply imbedded shame issues!** Shame is the inner voice of *ever* feeling inadequate, unable, not good enough in any area, or unworthy. Shame is the root of why you either pull away from close relating or respond defensively or critically to another. Shame is the thief of why you do not always feel deep joy. Shame is the barrier to releasing your full giftedness, talents, and creativity. Shame is the fear that while God may forgive and love you, God couldn't possibly delight in you.

When: There are two possibilities in 2018. Which dates are selected will depend on which of these two options works for at least 10 people, the minimum required to run this group.

January 9-March 13, every Tuesday for ten weeks, from 6:30-8:30pm.

April 3-March 29, every Tuesday for nine weeks, from 6:30-8:30pm.

Please fervently pray to discern if Christ is leading you to participate in this transformative experience, and then please let me know by December 15**.** *Thank you!*

Pastor Christopher English

GracePath Module 2 Decmber 3 - January 21

Unashamed Teacher: Pastor Chris English

In this study of Unashamed, Pastor Chris will help participants find freedom from believing they are fundamentally flawed and unworthy of acceptance and prepare them to step into their future, confident, dearly loved, created for a divine purpose. This class will help you to live unashamed!

Bonhoeffer Teacher: Doug Mulder

In the midst of Nazi Germany, Bonhoeffer gave witness to the Gospel, something desperately needed today. This class should facilitate discussion and inspire participants to think about what it means to be a Christian in 21st century America.

Doctrine Teacher: Ginger Vander Broek

Doctrine, a video-based series for high school students, covers the essential beliefs of Christianity, and doctrinal issues like the Trinity, the Church, sin, and salvation.

Special Christmas Offering for 2017

The Global Missions Team recommended, and Session approved, the recipient organization for the Special Christmas Offering to be The Salvation Army. All donations given in the special offering envelopes will go to the local division of The Salvation Army.

Services Offered: Disaster Services; Emergency Financial Assistance; Food & Nutrition Programs; Seasonal Services; Camping Activities; Visitation Services; Worship Services, Church; Christian Education; Worship Services, Sunday School; Women's Ministries; Boys' & Girls' Club; Character Building Programs; and Residential Camping Activities.

http://saheartland.org

PRECEPTS @ GRACEPOINT

2ND CORINTHIANS

January 11, 2018

at 6:30pm

GracePoint Church

Dubuque, Iowa

Second Corinthians is a book about ministry, various kinds of ministry. But in the midst of ministry, sometimes Christians are burdened beyond strength, despairing of life, having fears within, and conflicts without. How do we cope with those things? This book tells us how to be strong in the Lord when accusations and persecutions come; how to have confidence in Him and not lose heart.

GLOBAL MISSIONS UPDATE

In April's "Words of Grace" your Global Missions Team announced a new mission cause. Christian Aid Mission was the recipient of the special offering for Easter. Once more, GracePoint was able to reach out to the unchurched and unsaved around the world.

Christian Aid Mission is a world-wide organization that trains and sends local missionaries to plant churches where none currently exist. Christian Aid Mission provides financial support to indigenous ministries; they do not send Americans as resident missionaries. They help native ministries that are fully independent and work for Christ in their own countries, tribes, or language areas. Here is one of their stories.

PAKISTAN - In 2005, native missionaries led a group of people to Christ in a political region in Pakistan that is particularly hostile toward Christians. They faithfully worshiped the Lord in a makeshift tent for the next ten years, until gifts from Christian Aid Mission supporters made it possible for them to complete their very own church building in May 2015. For believers in this area of the world, a church building is a sign of stability, identity, and hope. This church is the first worship building ever built in this region in Pakistan. The building includes a baptistery where 100 people have already been baptized. "As I think of the future of this congregation, I have asked the Lord to give us 1,000 people to be baptized in the pool of this building," the ministry leader wrote. "It might sound a bit too much to some, but the Lord of the harvest is worthy to grant us much more that that. Would you please join with me in prayer to see this vision materialized?"

There are many other success stories like this one. For example, recently in Chad, Africa, church leaders from 22 evangelical denominations in Chad came together to establish a witness for Christ in each of Chad's 72 unreached Muslim people groups.

And we help support Sam and Elizabeth Schoofs as they minister in Chad. Indirectly, they (and we) are part of the efforts to reach the unreached with the Gospel of Christ.

Please keep all the missionaries who are a part of GracePoint's regular support in prayer as they live and work in places much less safe and comfortable than we do.

Submitted by Don Sanders

for the Global Missions Team: Scott Arnold, Ramona Hennings, Joseph Joseph, Pat Kohler, Don Sanders, Bev VanDerZyl

2017 December 2017

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	**2**
3 NEW SCHEDULE 9:05a Prayer Room Open 9:30a Worship 10:40a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 11:00a GracePath	**4** 6:00p Food Pantry 6:00p Missional Outreach and Fellowship joint meeting	**5**	**6** 6:00p Spirited Exchanges 6:30p Session Budget Meeting	**7** 7:00a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:30p Bells 6:30p Precepts	**8** 6:30p Crossroads at Scheers'	**9** Noon—4:00p Kress Baby Shower 5:30—7:30p **CHRISTMAS GATHERING!**
10 9:05a Prayer Room Open 9:30a Worship 10:40a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 11:00a GracePath 1:30p Bethany Home Chapel	**11** 6:00p Food Pantry 6:30p Property	**12**	**13** 6:00p Spirited Exchanges 6:30p Deacons	**14** 7:00a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:30p Bells 6:30p Precepts	**15** **Newsletter Deadline**	**16**
17 9:05a Prayer Room Open 9:30a Worship **Congregational Meeting to elect Elders and Deacons following Worship** 10:40a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 11:00a GracePath	**18** 6:00p Food Pantry	**19**	**20** 6:00p Spirited Exchanges 6:30p Session	**21** 7:00a Men's Prayer Breakfast 5:30p Bells	**22**	**23**
24 9:05a Prayer Room Open 9:30a Worship 10:40a Fellowship Common Grounds Open NO GracePath 7:00p **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** * * * * * * * * * * * * * **31 New Year's Eve** 9:05a Prayer Room Open 9:30a Worship 10:40a Fellowship Common Grounds Open NO GracePath	**25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!** Office is closed.	**26**	**27**	**28** 7:00a Men's Prayer Breakfast	**29** **Annual Reports DUE to the office**	**30**

TREASURER'S REPORT

CORPORATE TREASURER'S REPORT

General Fund:	
Balance, October 1, 2017	$-1,079.16
Oct Income	16,306.10
Expenses	-11,899.88
Transfers to Funds	-833.33
Ending Balance, Oct 30	$2,493.73

FINANCES Year to Date through OCTOBER

Budget Need (Jan – Oct):	$166,160
Income Received:	$155,375
Shortfall:	$-10,785

Bob DeMeester, Corporate Treasurer

Our Financial Secretary, Contributions, and Envelopes

PLEASE NOTE: The financial books for GracePoint officially close on December 31st. Contributions received January 1st and on will be credited to 2018.

To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, please do not file your income tax return until you have received written acknowledgment of your contributions from GracePoint. Any questions, contact Paulette Kress (556-6797).

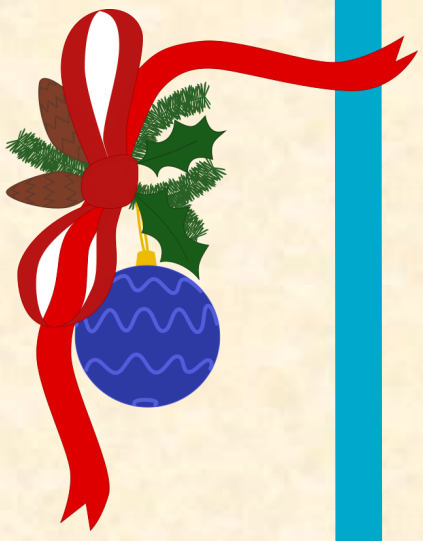
Financially Speaking: Some members of our congregation regularly use numbered contribution envelopes. Others do not. Here are some reasons the Stewardship Committee recommends their use.

For you: You receive a statement of your giving two times a year at minimum. This is useful for tax purposes as well as a benchmark for your giving. An envelope is an easy reminder for giving on a regular basis. Just keep your stack of envelopes in a handy place for your check or cash every Sunday morning. You will feel good about the discipline of regular giving and be reminded of God's goodness to you.

For GracePoint: It is easier for your church to keep track of giving patterns and to plan a yearly budget. All contribution records are confidential. Only the financial secretary and you know. Using envelops makes it much easier for us to acknowledge your contributions. It is the only way that cash gifts can be credited to you.

If you do not have numbered envelopes and would like them, please call the church office (583-3929) or the financial secretary, Paulette Kress (556-6797). As a bonus, you won't have to request them next year. You wil automatically be issued some before January 1.

Friday
December 15



BIRTHDAYS

3 Don Sanders
9 Connie Walsh
11 Lorene Hynes
13 Samuel Duehr
16 Zach Tilton
23 Marla Huston
24 Rebekah Godwin
26 Jan Jenner
28 Jennie Burns

ANNIVERSARIES

27 Glenn & Patti Scheer
29 Anthony & Mary Trenkamp
31 Dana & Katy Perreard

What's Brewing at Common Grounds?

- **Open Hours**
  Sundays: 9am-12pm

  Watch for *Spirited Exchanges,* open conversations for young adults.

- **Classes**
  Precepts
  Thursday evenings at 6:30pm

- **Live Video Streaming**
  Sundays 9:30am
  Watch Worship on TV.

In Thanksgiving for a Growth in Grace Experience

I would like to share my experience with a small group I was involved in from March to April of this year. The name of the group was From Shame to Glory. It far exceeded my expectations for personal and spiritual growth. It greatly increased my comfort in sharing in a small group. I was able to develop a close and caring relationship with a spiritual friend that is continuing. I discovered the important difference between shame versus guilt, which now empowers me to respond in healthy ways. Even though it was a steep learning curve for me to share, and to learn the practice of healing, centering prayer—becoming quiet with God in a new way—I've discovered how *Centering Prayer* can lead to centered living in Christ.

Thank you, Pastor Chris, for guiding this group, and for the support of other group members, and for my spiritual partner! Most of all, thanks be to Jesus!

Mary Ann Hopkins

GracePoint Christmas Gathering – 2017

Please join your Fellowship and Missional Outreach teams as they host a Christmas Gathering for all GracePoint members, regular attendees, and guests. We are planning something different from Christmas get togethers we have had in the past. We want to have a simple meal with Christmas music and time to sit, to talk, and to get to know each other better. This is in keeping with the new Soul Care identity we'd like to be known for at GracePoint. We need fellow Christians. Knowing each other better we will be more aware of how we can help each other when the need arises.

We will also be inviting the public. If you know someone who needs a new friend or a bunch of new friends, please invite them.

There is a sign-up sheet in the Connect Way to help with the meal, and also a sign-up sheet to help (kitchen, workers, etc.) during the celebration. Please sign up to bring some fruits or veggies or Christmas desserts. Plan on spending an evening of good food, good fellowship, and being part of GracePoint, a Soul Care church that cares for its members and regulars, our neighbors, and those we know are in need of help.

Our Christmas Gathering will be on Saturday, December 9th, 5:30 to7:30pm.

You Are Invited

The small group called CROSSROADS is now gathering the second Friday of each month to share food, faith, and God's Word.

We will begin at 6:30pm. All are welcome!

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December 8 at Scheers'
16790 Carmen Oaks Drive

PRAYER CHAIN

To start a prayer, call Pat Kohler.

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

Glenda Temple 582-0464

Kim or Jerry Bell 582-4956

Barbara Berg 608-732-3035

Sharon Baker 451-4557

Karen Storlie 556-7548

Volunteers are Priceless at GracePoint!

Worship Venue 10:30am

Communion Preparers (December 3) Lisa Gaylor
Janet Metelak

Communion Servers (December 3) Janet Metelak, Doug Mulder
Ben & Glenda Temple

	Ushers	Greeters	Prayer Room
Dec 3	Mike Boland Doug Storlie	Dan & Sharon Baker	Karen Storlie
Dec 10	Ray & Robin Wlochal	Rebekah Godwin Sara Scherf	Patti Scheer
Dec 17	LeRoy & Barb Berg	Dave & Lisa Gaylor	Betty Carlson Mary Ann Hopkins Kevin Hirschey
Dec 24	Mike Boland Doug Storlie	Doug & Karen Storlie	
Dec 31	Don & Wilma Sanders	Ben & Glenda Temple	Pauline Brimeyer

Please find your own subs. Substitute ushers are Mike and Ralph Vandenberg. Substitute greeters are Pat Kohler and Dixie Shaffer.

ChildCare

Dec 3 - Steve Lemon, Janet Metelak
Dec 10 - Sara Scherf, Suz Birch
Dec 17 - Rachel Lemon, Judy Godwin
Dec 24 - Glenda Temple, Anna English
Dec 31 - Sue Lemon, Martha Intveld

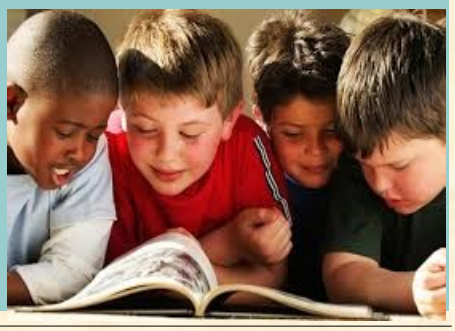
Check Out the Library

The library is open Sundays from 9:00am until noon. Videos and books are available for checkout.

Choose a book for Advent or Christmas reading, or videos for viewing, for children and adults. Donations of new books or videos are always welcome.

Questions?

Contact Bob Boelk, 557-9166.



Thank you to the many of you who donated school supplies or monies to purchase them this year! Your kind contributions to this project helped 600-700 children! Bless you, and please keep these children in your prayers!

The **Food Pantry** needs hams by December 18th to give out for Christmas dinners. Please contact Gerry or bring them to the church. Thank you!

Thank you to my GracePoint family for covering me in prayer, encouragement, cards, and food. It was so much appreciated through my surgery and healing process. Blessings, Dixie Shaffer

A Baby Shower! Members and friends of GracePoint, you are cordially invited to attend a family gathering!

A Baby Shower

The happy parents are John Kress & fiancée Anastasia Amador.

Saturday, December 9th, 2:00 to 4:00pm, in the Fellowship Hall

They are registered at Target & WalMart. RSVP to 556-6797. (Please leave a message if no answer, thanks!)

Rachel Lemon has a new address! 855 Kane Street, Dubuque IA 52001

Bob Boelk was able to bring **Mable** home from Missouri. She is at Care Initiatives, 2935 Kaufmann Avenue. Thank you for your prayers and thoughts during this recovery time.

Mike Vandenberg's new address: Michael Vandenberg, Linn County Corrections Center, Cedar Rapids IA 52406-0608

E-mail addresses! As we come into the season of uncertain weather, please take a few minutes to update your e-mail addresses with the church office. E-mail is a means of reaching you when weather prevents services or events. You may call the church office with your updated e-mail. Thank you!

Snow Days Cancellation Policy! GracePoint's policy for snow days and cancellations will be in effect during the winter. When there is bad weather affecting our Sunday service, alerts will go out in this manner. **E-mail** for all who have supplied their e-mail addresses; **local TV stations; local Radio stations;** and **GracePoint's website** (www.gracepointdbq.org). **NOTE:** The alert will be issued by **6:30am** on Sunday.

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

You may also honor a birthday, anniversary, or special event.

If baking is not your style, you may also bring a couple of packages of cookies to share.

Look for the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Center.

Contact Elder Robin Wlochal

December 10th is Sweet Cookie Sunday!

GracePoint

3100 Windsor Avenue
Dubuque, IA 52001-8154

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
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Dubuque, Iowa
Permit No. 474

Return Service Requested

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GLORIFYING GOD BY

CONNECTING people to God
LOVING God and each other
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Remember, the new Sunday schedule for GracePoint begins on Sunday, December 3rd!

With one worship, we will bring a unified voice in hymns, contemporary praise/worship songs, liturgy, prayer, the receiving of God's Word, and in experiencing the Sacraments together!