

WORDS OF GRACE

A Publication of GracePoint Church

The Gamble of Grace

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John 1:14, 17

When the Trinity decided to use grace instead of the Law, trusting that love and grace are enough to overcome all evil within the world, and within each Christ-follower, they took an outrageous and scandalous risk. It was God’s gamble of grace.

Can the grace that makes us adopted, born-again, Christ-indwelt sons and daughters of God take the place of all the Old Covenant laws, rules, regulations, and rituals?

Will it be enough to redeem the world, to free God’s people from sin, and empower them to live lives of faith, hope, and love simply for the Trinity to pour grace, love us unconditionally, and fill us with the Holy Spirit?

Father, Son, and Spirit say, “Yes!” Can we also say “Yes!” to trusting in grace and in the Holy Spirit in one another?

When Christ-followers misunderstand or mistrust grace, they focus more on programs, Bible studies, and fellowship activities than on fostering vulnerable, identity-in-Christ-strengthening relationships.

They seek to foster transformation through Old Covenant Law, through rules, rituals, and techniques, instead of New Covenant grace.

However, it is Emmanuel, Christ within us, who is our hope and source of glory. If we are to release the masterpiece of Christ in one another, we first have to believe, deeply, truly, fully believe that there really is a masterpiece in each person, no matter how encrusted over, no matter how deeply imprisoned in sin and struggle.

Christ-releasing community requires us to believe that grace is sufficient to overcome sin and struggle, that truth in our innermost being is what transforms, and that who we are in Christ is always stronger than anything else that shapes us.

When we trust in the Holy Spirit in one another, we can celebrate the present work of Christ in each person, no matter how imperceptible, and we no longer try to force or program growth in others or ourselves. Instead, we simply enter into close, caring, vulnerable relationships to pour grace and truth, and so chip away all that encrusts each other’s new and true self in Christ, to reveal the restored image of God in one another.

Let us emulate Father God’s gamble of grace and risk of love.

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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Stephanie Lange

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Ken Godwin

Fellowship
Ray Wlochall

Prayer & Worship
Doug Storlie

Stewardship
Andy Baumann
Mary Burns
Tim Walsh

**GracePoint
Deacons**

Care
Group Deacon

- 1 Sue Lemon
- 2 Robin Wlochall
- 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

GRACEPATH

DECEMBER 15–FEBRUARY 23

GRACE-FILLED RELATIONSHIPS

This course is a repeat of last year's popular course led by Frank and Gaye Grote based on the book Families Where Grace Is In Place, by author Jeff VanVonderen. If you didn't get to participate in this in 2013, you'll want to be part of it now.

Recommended book = \$10.75

**SHARING YOUR FAITH IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

This course is new to GracePath this year and will feature Tim Keller's book The Reason For God. Led by Pastors Chris English and Alan Crandall, the course will focus on how to answer the God questions that can be barriers to faith for the unbeliever, equipping you to share your faith in our post-modern culture.



Recommended discussion guide = \$9.00

Optional book The Reason for God = \$12.50

Sign-up sheets will be available from November 24 through December 8. Scholarships are available.

Note: Late book orders will be charged an additional amount for shipping.

POINSETTIAS

The worship ministry will again be placing red poinsettias in the sanctuary for several weeks in December. If you would like to purchase a plant in honor or in memory of a friend or loved one, please fill out the form in your bulletin and put it in the offering plate or give it to Paulette Kress. The deadline for returning your form with a check is December 15th. If you have questions, contact Doug Storlie or Shirley VanDuser.



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 14 @ 6:30pm or
Wednesday, January 15 @ 9:00am

HOW LONG: 11 weeks until April 1 & 2

COST: \$22.50

Register no later than January 2, 2014.
Questions: Mary Hirschey 815-776-0171

GRACEPOINT YEAR-END MEETINGS

Congregational Meeting to elect new elders and deacons will be December 15th, immediately after the worship service.

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.



*The Food Pantry will
be closed December
23, December 30, and
January 6, 2014*



Hangings of the Greens

Join us Wednesday evening, December 4th, 5:30pm, to help decorate our church for the upcoming Christmas season. If you provide the willing hands, we will provide the food, sloppy joes and chips, and something to drink. A sign-up sheet is in the lobby so we'll know how many are coming. If you have questions, contact Doug Storlie, 580-0744.

GracePoint Kids Christmas Program 2013

We will be meeting on December 7th from 10am–1:00pm at GracePoint to prepare for our photo shoot for the children's Christmas program. Lunch will be served.

On December 8th, we will take the needed photos for the program starting at 9:00am. All children of GracePoint are invited and encouraged to attend both sessions to ensure they are in the program. If you are unable to attend, but would like your child/children in the program, please let Judy Godwin or Stephanie Lange know so we can make arrangements.



Thank you, families, for all your help.



Deacons Christmas Caroling December 15, 4:00pm

Everyone is encouraged to join us in the Fellowship Center for soup, sandwiches, and dessert. Afterwards, we will split up into groups and travel to our shut-ins at the various nursing homes, where we will sing Christmas carols and encourage our shut-ins.

Please sign up at the Connect Center. This event is sponsored by our Board of Deacons. If you have questions, contact your deacon.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

A MAN WITH A VISION

By Susan L. Lemon

From the fertile field of South Sudan to the rich farmland of Iowa, from absolute devastation and loss to the wealth of America, from ignorance and poverty to academics and opportunity...

The journey of Paul Both has not been unlike the missionary travels of the apostle Paul. Through trials, by perseverance and prayer, God is fine-tuning a vision. Paul Both, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS) student and SPM participant at GracePoint Church has come to us with a story of God's goodness and hope on the horizon.

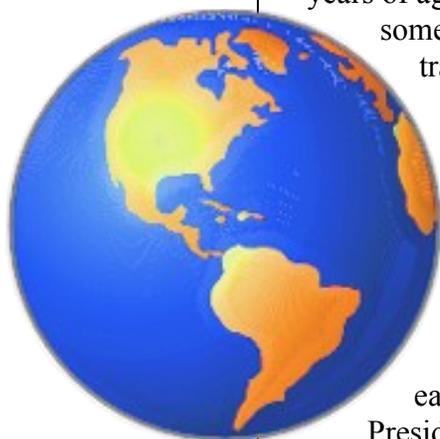
Pinythor, South Sudan, in the landlocked east-central region of Africa, is the place Paul calls home. He was born in 1972, one of seven children. His father was a farmer who died when Paul was only eighteen months old.

In 1983, conflict broke out in Sudan. Paul's village was bombed. At 11 years of age, Paul was taken away. By the grace of God, Paul escaped some of the violence of his war-torn homeland. As a refugee, he traveled by foot to Ethiopia. At the age of 13, Paul started his formal education, attending the first through eighth grades.

Paul was in Kenya for a time, and then came to the United States. In Denison, Iowa, at the age of 25, Paul received his high school education from Western Iowa Tech Community College. Paul took training to become a certified nurse's assistant (CNA) in 1997. He worked as a nurse's assistant at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa. In 1999, Paul attended Monroe Community College in Rochester, New York, and earned his associates degree. It was at this time, he served as the President and Executive Director of the American Sudanese Community. From 2004–2006 Paul attended a New York University (SUNY) in Rochester, NY, receiving his Bachelor of Science Degree. In 2008, he started school at Nazareth College in Rochester and acquired his Master's Degree in Social Work. It has been a long road, but Paul anticipates graduating this spring (2014) from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity. Paul has had lofty goals, but he has never forgotten the conditions or the village people in Pinythor.

Paul is a transplant. He was plucked from the adverse environment of his early life to grow strong in a new setting. Five times as an adult, most recently during the summers of 2011, 2012, and 2013, Paul has been able to return to Africa. Repeatedly, his 75-year-old mother, a devout Christian woman, has fallen to her knees to wash her son's feet in humility and thanksgiving. It has become increasingly difficult for Paul to come back to the states and leave behind the people he loves in Africa.

(Continued on page 11.)



2013

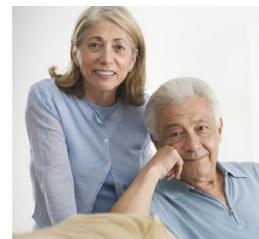


2013

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service	2	3 6:30p Precepts	4 6:15a Men's Pry Brkfst 9:00a Precepts 5:30p Church Decorating 5:30p Hand Bells	5	6	7 10:00a-1:00p GC Photo Prep
8 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service 12:00a All Church Potluck 1:30p Bethany Home 6:00p GraceUnderground	9 6:00p Food Pantry	10 6:30p Precepts	11 6:15a Men's Pry Brkfst 9:00a Precepts 5:30p Hand Bells 7:00p Deacons Meeting	12	13 	14 11:15a DBQ Rescue Mission Lunch
15 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service 12:00p Special Cong. Mtg 4:00p Deacons Caroling 6:00p GraceUnderground	16 6:00p Food Pantry	17	18 6:15a Men's Pry Brkfst 5:00p Golden Oldies 5:30p Hand Bells	19 6:30p Session	20	21
22 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service 6:00p GraceUnderground	23 NO Food Pantry	24 7:00p Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26	27	28
29 8:30a Chapel Service 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Time 10:30a Worship Service 6:00p GraceUnderground	30 Annual Reports Due NO Food Pantry	31				

Membership to Date	
Active	151
Inactive	5
Perm Inactive	<u>3</u>
Total	159

CLERK'S REPORT



GOLDEN OLDIES

Golden Oldies will meet on Wednesday, December 18th, 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

Administrative Bookkeeper's Report:

General Fund Beginning Balance, October 1, 2013	\$15,698.44
Total General Fund Receipts	<u>18,120.00</u>
Subtotal Beginning Balance & Receipts	\$33,800.44
General Fund Disbursements	\$21,579.09
Allocations & Transfers	<u>2,838.34</u>
Subtotal Disbursements, Allocations & Transfers	\$24,417.43
General Fund Ending Balance, October 31, 2013	\$9,383.01

A Christmas Message



Christmas holds the mystery
Of how God touched the earth
By giving us the Christ child
In a newborn baby's birth.

Great Awe was in young Mary's heart,
And in the shepherds' pace
As they ran quickly to the town
And found that special place.

These humble shepherds knelt before
This tiny newborn king;
And as they did so, they could hear
The lovely angels sing;

Fear not, for unto you this day,
The prince of Peace has come
To share God's love throughout the world.
Rejoice now, everyone!"

Peggy Ferrell



Friday
December 13

BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Don Sanders
- 8 Katy Perreard
- 9 Nick Lind
- 9 Connie Walsh
- 11 Lorene Hynes
- 13 Samuel Duehr
- 16 Zach Tilton
- 21 Isabella Shepherd
- 23 Marla Huston
- 24 Rebekah Godwin
- 26 John Hillary
- 26 Jan Jenner
- 28 Jennie Burns



ANNIVERSARIES

- 27 Patti & Glenn Scheer
- 30 Joan & Howard Higley
- 31 Katy & Dana Perreard

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. Be sure to check out the Advent and Christmas items in the library.



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

ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS POTLUCK



Sunday, December 8th
after the worship service

Join us for a time of celebrating the Christmas season and fellowshiping with our church friends and family. All are welcome! Bring a dish or two to pass. Table service and drinks provided.

Thank You GracePoint Family

Pastor Chris and Dana would like to express their heartfelt thanks for your strong show of support on Pastor's Appreciation Sunday, and for all the many encouraging cards and generous gifts! "We are abundantly blessed and give thanks often that our faithful Lord lets us be your pastors."

Thank you for your prayers, visits, flowers, and cards during my 4-night stay in Mercy Hospital. The ribs and lung are healing nicely, and I will avoid future entanglements with 8-foot ladders! Your loving care for me and Jan during this time was truly an expression of Christ's presence through his body, the Church. God bless you! In Christ, Alan & Jan Crandall

THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS

Youth Ministry is Elijah Ministry

Malachi 4:5-6 *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.*

Luke 1:16-17 *And he (John the Baptist) will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."*

Elijah ministry turns hearts to God in such a way that it restores families and preserves nations. Let's have a brief look at the work of the prophet Elijah from 1 Kings 17-18.

First, he stood up to idolatry seated in places of authority—he opposed King Ahab when Ahab serve Baal. Baal worship and Canaanite idolatry in general had four pillars that I observe.

1. "I'll do it my way." (As seen in its Babylonian roots and the tower of Babel)
2. Lewdness, as seen in the temple prostitution
3. Greed and fear over provision (Baal worship was a fertility rite.)
4. Destruction of the family as seen in child sacrifice (Family was the conduit that the promises of a Messiah came through. Covenants were made to people and their lineage.)

Elijah called the people of God away from these things to serve God. Secondly, he ministered to the one who was bereft of family (had a broken family, not broken by divorce but by death). Elijah provided for them as they provided for him. Elijah raised the widow's son from the dead. Essentially, to lead people toward God is to heal families and nations.

What does that have to do with you? What does that have to do with a December newsletter, with Christmas? I suggest that the best observation of Christmas we could offer to God is to function in the spirit of Elijah—to prepare the way of the Lord. So, to join God in His work of restoring the hearts of the fathers to their children and children to their fathers, I challenge you to oppose the four destructive forces of Baal worship.

(Continued on page 10)



Middle School &
High School
Youth

Fall Schedule
6:00—8:00pm
Sundays

(No meals are served on
regular nights.)

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

SERVANTS OF THE LORD**December****Worship Venue 10:30am**

Communion Preparers (December 1)	Barb Berg, Robin Wlochal
Communion Servers (December 1)	Pauline Brimeyer Steve and Sue Lemon
	Ushers Greeters
December 1	Pam Hillary Glenda & Ben Temple
December 8	Pam Hillary Karen & Doug Storlie
December 15	Wilma & Don Sanders Glenda & Ben Temple
December 22	Wilma & Don Sanders
December 29	Wilma & Don Sanders

Please find your own subs. Substitute ushers are Mike or Ralph Vandenberg. Substitute greeters are Pat Kohler, Dixie Shaffer, or Barb Berg.

(continued from page 9.)

1. Submit yourself fully to God's word. What you'd be looking for here is any area that you've been unconsciously saying to yourself: "It doesn't matter. My way is fine. God won't mind."
2. Rebuke the world's marriage, defiling sexual seductions from your mind.
3. Thank the Lord for His provision and trust in His ways to provide.
4. Test your heart to see if any hardness of heart has caused you to turn a deaf ear to the needs of children in your sphere of influence. See that there is no hatred or un-forgiveness toward children or youth in your heart.

I've come firmly to the conclusion that youth ministry needs to be an all-church effort with the church functioning as a family, and the family functioning as a church. That means that as a church seeks God's heart, the work of the Holy Spirit in the whole church will impact the lives of the youth. Also, families need to have their own youth ministry in a sense, stirring up the faith of the teens in the house from the dinner table and the living room couch. Come Lord Jesus!

Pastor Dana

(Continued from page 5.)

Paul's home, Pinythor, is an impoverished agricultural community of approximately five-thousand people. Since 1955, the villagers have struggled merely to survive in the aftermath of two ghastly civil wars. Famine, disease, and violence have killed millions of men, women, and children, including all six of Paul's siblings and his father. Paul was one of the fortunate few to escape, however, memories and nightmares linger as a part of his reality.

The people who remain in Pinythor live in humble homes constructed of native grasses and fibers. There are currently no medical clinics or school buildings in his village.

Witnessing over his lifetime the physical desolation of his home has driven Paul to passionately pursue a God-breathed vision; the formation of a non-profit organization called the South Sudan Education Mission (SSEM). The goal of the SSEM is to address the vital needs of leadership training/education as well as the financial and medical support of the Sudanese Americans and the people of the new nation of the Republic of South Sudan. The Articles of Incorporation for this organization have been legally approved by the State of Iowa. Paul has now received the approval of the by-laws and official recognition of the SSEM by the Federal government as a 501 (c) 3, non-profit entity.

In spite of the poverty in Pinythor, or perhaps partly because of it, Christianity is richly relevant. Our South Sudanese brothers and sisters are people of exemplary walk and a disciplined prayer life, ever mindful of God's presence in their daily existence. Their lives reflect radical faith.

Paul returned from South Sudan with a fresh awareness of the immediate physical needs there. His practical prayer list is lengthy. The newly constructed Pinythor church stands in need of five windows (cost: \$1,350), two doors (cost: \$1,279), and 300-500 chairs (@ about \$15 each). A church dedication ceremony scheduled for the summer of 2014 is an important priority (cost: \$750).

There is also a call for leadership amongst the South Sudanese. A deserving post-high school young person may attend college in nearby Ethiopia for a mere \$500 USD per year. Paul shared a plea for donors to come forward who are able to share in the education expenses of two especially promising young evangelists, Timothy and Moses, who await scholarships.

If you feel led to make a donation, please write out a check to "SSEM". SSEM is now a government- recognized 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Perhaps the Holy Spirit is leading you to become involved in the administration of a vision. Please contact Paul Both (585-313-8814, paulbth17@gmail.com) or Sue Lemon (563-581-3303, libertylemon@hotmail.com) about serving on the SSEM Board of Directors.



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.



3100 Windsor Avenue
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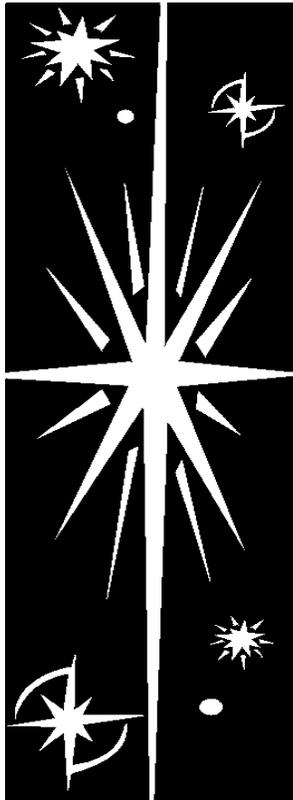
GLORIFYING GOD BY

CONNECTING people to God

LOVING God and each other

GROWING in grace and truth

SERVING Dubuque and the world



**CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

December 24th, 7:00pm
at GracePoint

The special Christmas Offering will go to EPC's Gratitude Gift Fund. The Gratitude Gift Fund provides help to retired EPC colleagues who need help to pay their out-of-pocket medical expenses.