

WORDS OF GRACE

A Publication of GracePoint Church

Grace-Full Community

'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' . . . 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'"

Luke 14:21-23

Christ likens the Kingdom of God to a great banquet to which *all* are invited, especially those normally denied access to fellowship and worship, so that God's house may be overcrowded. Grace-saturated, Christ-offering, Kingdom-demonstrating Christian community grants to *all*, regardless of current struggle, sin, or beliefs, the same full access to God's means of grace that each of us are granted. Christians simply can stop directly and indirectly, overtly and covertly, consciously and unconsciously leaking out judgment and requiring particular beliefs and behaviors before granting full belonging.

This does not mean that the Christian community stops calling Spirit-indwelt Christ-followers to transformation. However, the life and death difference between a life of obedience and a life of rebellion to Christ is not the degree of victory, but the degree of staying in the battle. So long as we are *'putting to death the deeds of the*

We all stand equally guilty before the judgment seat of Christ. . . . We all stand equally forgiven, accepted, and beloved.

flesh' by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are winning. Remember, the battle is the victory! Hence, we measure personal faithfulness and holiness by the willingness to struggle, *and* to be open about that struggle, not by outward conformity to a set of behaviors and beliefs.

We must stop singling out particular struggles as being unwelcome in worship, fellowship, and service. Grace precedes repentance. Belonging precedes and then fosters changed beliefs and transformed behavior. It is only when all are welcomed that all can be equally invited, equipped, empowered, and ennobled to Christlikeness. The ground is level at the foot of the cross! Sinfulness is sinfulness no matter how it manifests itself through each and every one of us every single day.

It is up to the Holy Spirit to convict and change. Our role is to offer *all* a place to come under the ministry of the Holy Spirit so He can, and for each of us to respond to the Spirit's work. Christ finds oppression and exploitation of the vulnerable, unforgiveness, judgmentalism, legalism, and denying people access to worship and grace far greater offenses that whatever sin we are condemning in others.

We *all* stand equally guilty before the judgment seat of Christ. That's the really bad news. The amazing, unbelievable good news is that we *all* stand equally forgiven, accepted, and beloved because of the life, cross, resurrection, and reign of Christ!

Pastor Chris



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Office Hours
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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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GracePoint Elders

through January 2017

Equipping

Doug Mulder

Missional Outreach

Vic Learn
Bob De Meester

Fellowship

Wilma Sanders

Prayer

Pam Hillary

Stewardship

Mary Burns
Dan Baker

Worship

Beverly VanDerZyl

GracePoint Deacons

through January 2017

Care

Group Deacon

- 1 Lisa Gaylor
- 2 Betty Carlson
- 3 Glenda Temple
- 4 Shirley VanDuser
- 5 Janet Metelak
- 6 Barb Berg
- 7 Suz Birch
- 8 Mary Ann Hopkins
- 9 Carolyn Arnold

Deacon Moderator

Shirley VanDuser

Let Your Heart Bleed Mercy

Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? -Matthew 7:3

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. -John 21:7

Once upon a time, a long time ago, but not too long ago to forget, as so happens with things that mysteriously — quietly — transcend and permeate time, there was a gentle soul confined within a stone façade built out of fear. She could barely tolerate many of the people crossing her path. When you carry the weight of a broken heart, the smallest of things either fill the broken spaces with gratitude or aggravate the wound.

Constantly crossing her path was an equally beautiful soul, smeared with the junk of long-formed sinful habits that sear the conscience into a false sense of comfort and a mistaken sense of righteousness. Imagine the destructive sparks that fly whenever the two meet! Her wounds fester at his lack of regard for others; his conscience is prickled by the gentleness that sometimes seeps through her tough exterior. Each crossing is a hurling of hurtful words, naming and pointing out the other's real and perceived flaws, each using the little they see to construct an image of the other that is all bad and no good, and a silent condemnation and crushing of the other. With each stone thrown, the walls go up higher and higher, and neither one is willing to back down because pride, insatiable by nature, demands more and more of another's misfortune.

One day, yet another meeting—the usual sparks fly. He silently judges, ready to crush. She quietly but visibly condemns. But as she readied to attack with haughtiness, a tiny whisper of a question filled her consciousness: "*Aren't you tired—won't you please let go?*" Would you believe it, she listened! Usually the race to superiority deafens the *quiet* plea, but by the grace of God, that time she listened! And the hurtful, well-rehearsed response gave way to the song that effortlessly rose up, breaking through the fog of fear and pain.

Lord, have mercy on me.../ Forgive me.../Like your wounded heart, let compassion flow from my wounds/Not the bitterness that drowns me/Or the resentment that chokes me/Help me, Dear One/for I am poor and needy.

Her gentle soul awakened and opened to the dawn breaking upon her. She realized that the evil she saw in him was in her, just manifested differently. She also realized that the false righteousness and seared conscience were walls of fear just like her own walls of indifference, cynicism, and judgmentalism. Different, but walls just the same.

Although he walked away seemingly unmoved, he could not ignore the emptiness of his unsated pride. As the penetrating words of her song continuously replayed in his head, he pondered the experience, and ever so slowly, his seared conscience began to soften. Each subsequent meeting was more of an encounter and less of a battle. Where he only saw snob and high-stuck before, he now saw reflected in her eyes his desire for kindness and genuineness. *(continued on page 8)*



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER

How life flows through our community.®

Got Blood? Please Donate, Because We Care.

Another opportunity to “*Serve Dubuque.*”

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center is very happy with all of our blood donations and greatly appreciates our support. They are reaching out to GracePoint to sponsor a third blood drive this year to help meet the great need for blood.

Date: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Venue: GracePoint Fellowship Hall

Time: 1-4pm

Please note that the hours for this blood drive are different than our usual hours. This is to accommodate staffing schedules.

Hosting an additional blood drive gives us another opportunity to fulfill GracePoint’s mission of *Serving Dubuque* as we are eligible to donate again by August 31. All of our donors will be entered into a car giveaway and a \$300 gas gift card drawing. By hosting an additional blood drive, GracePoint plays a vital role in the health and wellbeing of our community!

We will pamper our heroes donating blood.

- A healthy and colorful summer fruit salad
- Homemade treats
- Healthy juices

When you come to donate, please remember the following.

- Eat a nutritious meal at least 4 hours before donating.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Bring your donor card, driver’s license, or social security card.

To schedule an appointment, please sign up at the Blood Donation table in the Connect Way for a time that fits your schedule.

Questions? Contact Pam De Meester at 563-599-1921.

Correction

In the August issue, the *Thank You!* blood drive article stated that the 11 units of blood collected will save 33 lives. According to a report from MVRBC, the 11 units of blood donated will serve 44 people.

Pill Bottle Fundraiser—We Need Filled Bottles!



We received an abundance of empty pill bottles, and do not need more. We do need people to fill those empty pill bottles with pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and bills.

This money collected is used toward postage for the Shoe Boxes that are filled and wrapped at church. The cost to ship each Shoe Box is \$7.00. This money would otherwise come out of the Missional Outreach Fund, so whatever is collected in the pill bottles and used for the Shoe Boxes leaves funds Missional Outreach can use elsewhere.

The EMPTY pill bottles are in a basket on the shelf in the Connect Way. Please fill and return them to the basket marked FILLED pill bottles.

I thank all of you who participated in the Pill Bottle Project last year, and hope you will continue. Let's make the PILL BOTTLE PROJECT bigger than last year, collecting more money for the shipping of the Shoe Boxes.

Pat Kohler

Operation Christmas Child
Missional Outreach Ministry Team



Get kids involved by talking to them about Operation Christmas Child. Encourage them to put loose change in a pill bottle

and bring it back to church to help another child celebrate the joy of Christmas. This is an opportunity to open up your child to the needs of others around the world and the value of giving, serving, and sharing.



Thank you, thank you, thank you, to everyone who donated school supplies or money for the School Supplies Drive! We received a tremendous amount of donations, and through your help, we serve three of the poorest schools in Dubuque: Fulton Elementary School, Prescott Elementary School, and Audubon Elementary School. Your generosity enhances the students' learning experience; both the students and teachers greatly appreciate your kindness.

We will continue to accept donations until the end of October for use throughout the school year. The School Supplies Drive also accepts

monetary donations to purchase supplies as needed. Questions? Contact Barb Berg at 608-763-2950 or 608-732-3035.



GLOBAL MISSIONS UPDATE

Samaritan's Purse



Can you believe it? Another year went by and the Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box project will be collected the middle of November.

The mission project Operation Christmas Child is a project for everyone; whether it is packing shoe boxes with gifts, volunteering, giving financially, or praying for the children overseas; each person plays a vital role. In 2015 11 million Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box gifts to boys and girls were given in 108 countries around the world. Every single box represents an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with children and their families.

It is such an enjoyment to see children squealing with delight at what might be the first Christmas gifts they have ever received. In the coming months, millions of these children will also have opportunities to grow in faith as they participate in the Greatest Journey, the discipleship program Samaritan's Purse developed as a Gospel follow-up to Operation Christmas Child.

In a West African country, a village Pastor faithfully labored for 21 years without seeing a single soul accept Jesus. But once he handed out Shoe Box gifts to the village children, the Lord began to open doors and change hearts. Even the local iman was moved by what he recognized as God's love. For the first time young people gathered at the Pastor's home, where they have grown into a thriving church. In this one country along, at least 29 churches were planted through Operation Christmas Child and the Greatest Journey. There are other examples around the world.

Empty Shoe Boxes will be placed in the Narthex in September. If anyone wants one sooner, please ask me. A list of items that can be put in Shoe Boxes will be available in the Narthex. Remember, only place in the Shoe Boxes the items that are listed. Sales on school supplies are happening, so do some shopping now. If you want to just donate some items and not fill a Shoe Boxes, just give me the items and we will fill Shoe Boxes. I will take whatever items you want to give me. Also, we need empty Shoe Boxes, especially the larger size. Just leave them by the kitchen or in the Narthex.

Don't forget the Pill Bottle Fundraiser Project. The money collected helps defray the cost of shipping the Shoe Boxes, which is \$7.00 per box.

Thank you all for the support you have given to the Operation Christmas Child Project through the past years. Last year we collected 100 boxes. I would like to collect 150 this year; 200 would be super. Can everyone help?

I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart. God bless you!

Submitted by *Pat Kohler*

for the Global Mission Team: *Scott Arnold, Ramona Hennings, Joseph Joseph, Pat Kohler, and Don Sanders.*

2016 September 2016

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00p Emmaus	2	3
4 9:05a Prayer Room 9:30a Worship Service 10:40a Fellowship Common Grounds Open	5 6:00p Food Pantry	6	7 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast	8 6:30p Precepts	9	10
11 Regular Schedule Resumes 8:30a Chapel 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 10:05a Prayer Room 10:30a Worship 1:30p Bethany Home	12 6:00p Food Pantry 6:30p Property Team	13	14 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast 7:00p Deacons	15 Newsletter Deadline 6:30p Precepts	16	17
18 8:30a Chapel 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 10:05a Prayer Room 10:30a Worship	19 6:00p Food Pantry	20	21 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast 1:00p Blood Drive 6:30p Session	22 6:30p Precepts	23	24
25 8:30a Chapel 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 10:05a Prayer Room 10:30a Worship	26 6:00p Food Pantry	27	28 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast 12:00p Golden Oldies	29 6:30p Precepts	30	

Membership to Date

Active	149
Inactive	8
Perm. Inactive	4
Total	161

Clerk's Report

The blood drive held on July 6th was highly successful. The next blood drive is scheduled for January. Watch out for more information in both the newsletter and weekly bulletins.

Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box collection is coming up. Filled shoe boxes will be delivered in November. Watch for more information in both the newsletter and weekly bulletins, but start shopping for items now! List of items needed for the shoe boxes will be in the narthex and bulletina.

The summer worship schedule ends on September 4th, and the regular worship schedule resumes on September 11th. The regular schedule is as follows: Chapel 8:30-9:00am; GracePath 9:00-10:00am; Fellowship 10:00-10:30am; and Worship 10:30-11:40am.

The "Pill Bottle Fundraiser" is still in progress, and needs a lot of empty pill bottles filled. The money raised will help defray the cost of shipping the boxes.

Treasurer's Report for June

Beginning Balance, July 1, 2016	\$4,311.70
Direct Transactions	.00
Income	13,200.75
Expenses	-16,454.80
Transfers	-833.33
Ending Balance, July 31, 2016	\$224.32

Prepared by

Pat Kohler, Clerk of Session

**GOLDEN OLDIES**

Golden Oldies will meet this month on **September 28 at noon** in the fellowship Hall. The program for this month is **Iowa State University Extension & Outreach**, featuring speaker **Susan E. Taylor**. This program is good for all adult ages and families.

This is a brown bag lunch. Sign up in the Connect Way.

Note: This is the last Golden Oldies meeting until Spring of 2017.

**Christmas Party!**

GracePoint is planning a Christmas Party for December 3.

Watch for more details about time, activities, and volunteering in the coming months.

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Brenda Schwarzmman
- 2 Juanita Cottrell
- 4 Frank Grote
- 4 Jerry Bell
- 5 Patti Scheer
- 6 Raymond Wlochal, Jr.
- 9 Becky Pfiffner
- 18 George McIlrath
- 18 Beverly VanDerZyl
- 19 Harry Vandenberg
- 19 Christian English
- 20 Mary Burns
- 21 Kent Briden
- 22 Bob Birch
- 22 Barbara Berg
- 25 Mary Ann Hopkins



ANNIVERSARIES

- 3 Kevin & Mary Hirschev
- 10 Kevin & Melissa Donovan
- 12 Tom & Mary Scherf
- 18 Al & Deb Hakanson

(continued from page 2)

These poor souls still struggle to live out their Savior's message of love. They wander off and stumble, and sometimes it's hard to know what love calls for— but love guides and carries them. More than the splinter in the other's eye, they see the pain and suffering that drives to compulsion. The understanding that it is by the grace of God when we don't stumble grows in their hearts, and compassion takes place of condemnation.

Maybe things don't quite happen like this where you are, but they do happen, often times less dramatic and sudden. Sadly, we usually miss such invitations to mercy. When you harden your heart against one who deeply and painfully hurts you (who wouldn't want to?), or silently dismiss that annoying person who just can't get it right, consider that you yourself have deeply hurt, and continue to hurt, Him who would die for you again were it necessary. Yield to that prickle in your conscience that asks for the chance to consider a small step toward compassion. Make the difficult choice against all logic to forgive—He won't let you struggle by yourself in pursuing such a noble desire. And when you wander too far away and fall, just jump right back in and cry out, "Lord, have mercy!" The world will still teem with dumbfounding pain and evil that shocks the gentle soul and reduces the courageous heart to a heap of helplessness. But in the silence of the plea, "Lord, have mercy!", love abounds and bears fruit.

Humbly in Christ,
Seabelo

What's Brewing at Common Grounds?



- **Open Hours**

Sundays: 10am-12pm

More hours coming soon.

- **Classes**

Thursdays: 6:30-8:30pm

Precepts

Teacher: Mary Hirschev

- **Live Video Streaming**

Sundays: 10:30am

Watch Worship on TV.

Stories OF Grace

Following the Golden Thread of Hope

Welcome to Stories of Grace! Each month we will feature a story of how God's grace carried one of us through difficult times, and how we continue to experience the transforming power of this grace in our lives.

We welcome anyone wishing to share their story. Contact the office for more information.

Grace – (in Christian belief) the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings.

“Being born at the right place at the right time” is a humanistic way to define *grace*. As I look back over my life on this earth, I know God has bestowed blessings on me from conception.

Born in a small Midwest farming community with wide open spaces to roam, doting grandparents nearby, and only-child status for four years was a storybook beginning authored by God. Family and church were the center of my universe.

Now, many years of hindsight later, the obvious unmerited favor of God is clearly evident in my life. Cause and effect reasoning was not my way of making choices. I used more of the Nike slogan method – “Just do it!” – to make daily decisions and to determine direction in my life. The future wasn’t even on my mind much.

Thankfully, many aspects of my early life did not require choices. We worshipped each Sunday; I learned from God’s Word during Sunday School and then helped teach the Scriptures during Vacation Bible School. I participated in youth group each Sunday evening and lead worship with my peers. Of course, summer Bible camp at Camp Quaker Heights was an annual event and the setting for the biggest decision of my life – **C**, confessing my sins; **B**, believing Christ died for me; and **A**, asking for forgiveness and receiving salvation through Christ.

The second best decision I ever made also happened at a young age (by God’s design). During a Christmas movie at our high school, I asked a friend to ask a guy named Roger to come and sit by me. I was a freshman; he was a sophomore. Of course, I picked Roger because he was tall, dark, and handsome, and had the best flat top haircut of all the boys. God picked him for me to be a balancing factor in my life. A faithful commitment, which began that day in a high school assembly, has lasted through 50 years of marriage.

God placed me in the middle of corn fields with a loving support system and a committed relationship. I am humbled and thankful each day for the free and unmerited favor manifested in salvation and abundant blessings from God.

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Ephesians 4:7

Beverly VanDerZyl

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 9:30am September 4 only
Worship Venue 10:30am September 11 forward

Communion Preparers (September 4) Janet Metelak, Suz Birch

Communion Servers (September 4) Andy & Anne Marie Baumann
Pam Hillary

	Ushers	Greeters	Prayer Room
Sept. 4	Andy & Ann Marie Baumann	Steve Lemon Sue Lemon	Kevin Hirschey
Sept. 11	LeRoy Berg Barb Berg	Vic Learn Marilyn Learn	Pam Hilary
Sept. 18	Isaiah Roling Sara Scherf	Ben Temple Glenda Temple	Beverly VanDerZyl
Sept. 25	Andy Baumann Mike Vandenberg	Dwayne Intveld Martha Intveld	Karen Storlie

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

ChildCare

September 4	Mary Ann Hopkins, Janet Metelak
September 11	Sara Scherf, J'Neane Briden
September 18	Steve Lemon, Rachel Lemon
September 25	Suz Birch, Judy Godwin

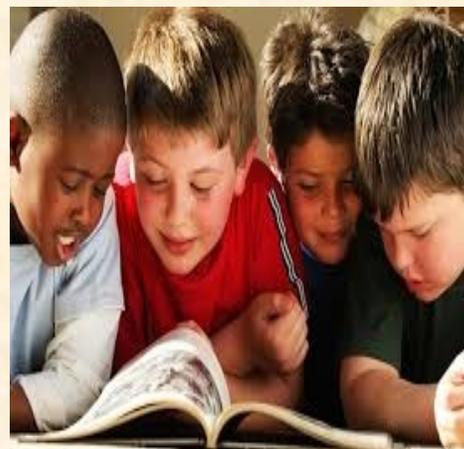
Check Out the Library

The library is open Sundays from 9:00am—noon.

Videos and books are available for checkout.

Stop by on Sunday to see the recently updated library!

Donations of new books or videos are always welcome. Questions? Contact Bob Boelk, 557-9166.



Our Deepest Sympathies...

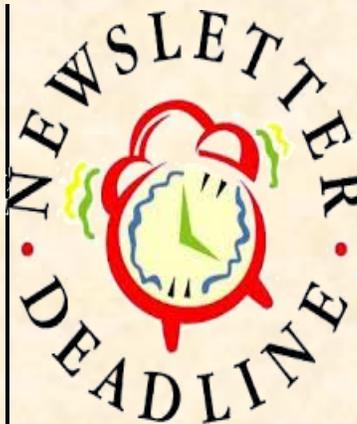
Lorraine H. Scherf

6/15/1922 - 8/16/2016



“May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way.”

2 Thess 2:16



Thursday
September
15

Regular Worship Schedule Resumes

September 11th!



Return to Regular Worship Hours

With school back in session and fall just around the corner, Grace-Point will resume its regular worship schedule and classes. The schedule is as follows.

- Chapel @ 8:30am**
- GracePath @ 9:00am**
- Fellowship @ 10:00am**
- Worship @ 10:30am**

Note:

- GracePath will begin with an all-church class, **Radical**.
- Precepts Bible study begins on September 8th, @ 6:30pm.

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

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

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





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Return Service Requested

GLORIFYING GOD BY

CONNECTING people to God

LOVING God and each other

GROWING in grace and truth

SERVING Dubuque and the world

Save the Date - Save Lives!

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center Blood Drive

Date

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Time

1:00-4:00pm

Venue

GracePoint Church



**Make an
appointment
to donate!**