

WORDS OF GRACE

A Publication of GracePoint Church

Prayer: God's Heart for Us

"And without faith it is impossible to please [God], for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Hebrews 11:6

Fruitful prayer is always grounded in faith in a faithful God.

Effectual prayer begins with trust in the heart and character of God. Faith that the God to whom we pray is longing to hear from us, and desiring to always respond out of His abundant goodness and steadfast love.

We pray because we know and trust in the goodness of our Heavenly Father who longs to bless us. If a child does not trust his or her father or mother, there can be no love relationship. If a child always experiences his father as stingy or mean, a child will not trust that what he asks for will be given. Even more tragic, if a child always experiences her father as abusive, she will not even ask for blessings from her father.

None of this is true in our relationship with the Trinity! Prayer always begins with trust in a Heavenly Father whose movement toward us, whose response to us, is always out of plentiful goodness, steadfast love, and indulgent grace!

If you do not have such trust, if you do not believe in your heart of hearts that Father God delights in you, and longs to bless you and bless those people and situations for whom you pray, then you will not pray often or with power.

Trust precedes prayer. Little trust = little or weak prayer. Much trust = much and powerful prayer. If you do not feel that you pray enough or pray with much fruit, your barrier is not primarily busyness or skill in prayer, it's a lack of trust in the goodness of Father God.

Prayer is the effortless fruit overflowing from a heart that trusts in Father God. God longs to bless His beloved sons and daughters. God uses prayer as His main weapon to establish Kingdom justice on earth now. God answers prayer to reveal and demonstrate His goodness, to manifest His magnificent and irresistible glory, and so to reveal who He is to all creation.

If you want to grow in your prayer life, you do not need more skill, you need more faith, which is simply trust in the goodness of God. Saturate your soul in God's Word and Presence, and watch your prayer life explode with power in Christ!

**". . . the
God to
whom we
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longing to
hear from
us."**



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Dubuque, Iowa
583-3929
gracepointdbq.org

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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

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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

He Found Me *at Home*

God brought me back rejoicing.

In my culture, when a man gets married, he gives a goat to his bride's family. It's a way of saying "thank you" for preserving the daughter's chastity. When my older sister's husband presented his goat to our mother at our home in Nigeria, he said, "I found your daughter at home," which meant he knew she was a virgin. I saw this as a little girl and told myself those words would one day be repeated for me. When a religious sister visited our village, though, my plans changed. I felt that God was calling me to become a nun instead. My mom told me that it would happen if it was God's will. While I waited, I decided to be as good as possible, trusting that God would protect me and answer my prayer.

My Darkest Night. After high school, I began to look for a job so that I could help support my mother. I asked my cousin, who lived in the city, to see if he could find work for me there. But instead of a job, he invited me to be his family's housemaid. I agreed, hoping that eventually he would find me work. He kept promising to find me a job, but he never did. Eventually, I decided to go home and try looking elsewhere, but my cousin refused to give me money for transportation. Then came the darkest night of my life. My cousin's wife had gone away, and I woke up feeling a hand touching my body. It was my cousin. I screamed, but he covered my mouth, held me down, and robbed me of my virginity. The next day I felt as if the universe was jeering at me, telling me I had lost my honor. No longer a virgin, I was convinced that no religious community would accept me. Whatever I did, whether I fetched water or went out to the market, I felt exposed. I kept replaying the ugly scene in my mind and blamed myself. But I also couldn't forgive God for allowing this to happen. Where was the One I had worked so hard to please during my childhood? Was this my reward for being good?

"I Still Love You." Since God didn't seem to care, I decided to destroy my life. I began to sleep with other men as a way of punishing God for keeping silent when I needed him the most. But each time, I would return home crying and filled with guilt. Then I became pregnant and had an abortion—my first. The abortion went smoothly, but on my way home, my eyes caught the sight of a dirty, smelly gutter. Just then, I felt as if I heard Jesus saying, "That is where you are now, but I can take you out, if you allow me." I shook it off and went on my way. I got pregnant again, but my second abortion didn't go as smoothly. I left the abortionist's office in pain, with my child still in my womb. A couple of days later I miscarried, and I was sick for nearly a week afterward. I felt tortured, as God's voice kept getting louder: "I still love you in spite of all of this." He seemed to be everywhere, even in my dreams. I cried constantly—I still couldn't imagine being loved by the God I had been hurting.

"Come Back to Me." In March 1998, [an important religious figure] visited my country. I made the trek [to the celebration he was leading], but I couldn't get close enough to see him. And it made me feel sad. That night, I thought to myself, "If you feel this way about not seeing [a man], just think of what it would be like not to see God in heaven." (*Continued on page 8.*)

Lenten Season

Of course we strive to deepen our relationship with God through spiritual renewal every day, but Lent is a special time to search and prepare our hearts as we look forward to celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. GracePoint will offer special worship services to launch us into this preparatory time as we celebrate key moments along the journey. Please find below the different venues and make space in your life to attend.

Ash Wednesday Service

Date: Wednesday, March 1

Time: 6:00-6:30pm

Venue: GracePoint

Seder Passover Meal

Date: Friday April 14

Time: 7:00pm

Venue: GracePoint

Resurrection Sunday

Sunrise Service, a joint worship service with First Baptist, First Presbyterian, and the University of Dubuque Seminary

Date: Sunday, April 16

Time: 6:00am

Venue: Grand River Center — River Room

Worship Service at GracePoint

Time: 10:30am

Also, please take advantage of other services and events offered around Dubuque, such as the Campus Ministry concert and the Contemplative Lenten services (shown on page 11). *If you need a ride to the concert, please contact Pastor Chris.*

Please look to the coming bulletins and April newsletter for further details.





Thank you for the boots!



thank you for the snow boots. I needed them. Now I don't need to use my brothers. He wanted his back to thank you again

THANK YOU
Love Maddox
M. and Mrs. Baker
for the new boots.

Thank you for the new boots i like them and they are comfortable. I'm gonna use them all the time thanks so much!!!
from: lex at audubon. PS- didn't get it all cold.

VINOSIQ

L71 C=4nic

Mrs. Gobel
Kindergarten

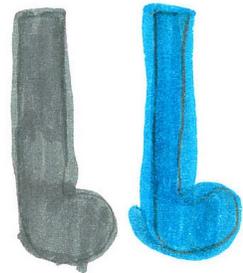
THANK YOU

girls were so excited to get them!

boots!! These two

Thank you so

much for the
Dear Dan and Sharon,



Boots.
Thank you

Anthony Tomr. Baker and to Mrs. Baker
thank you for the boots!
i am glad that I have boots so I can play in the snow. And my feet will not have no problems with the cold.

thank you,
Anthony

To The
persen
how
gave
the
boots
form,
TOSH

Thank you for the boots so we much.

Thank you for the pretty boots.



GLOBAL MISSIONS UPDATE

Jeff & Stacey Krohn In Transition from Peru to Ethiopia

From a teen in our congregation to a PhD-equipped missionary with SIM, Jeff Krohn has followed his call by God to ministry with vigor and passion. He (and his family) will visit GracePoint on Sunday, March 19, to share the gospel and give an update on how God is moving in mission.

Our congregation helps support Jeff's ministry financially. From the SIM website, here are prayer ways to support Jeff.

- ◆ Pray for the Krohns as they transition out of Peru to Ethiopia in August of 2017.
- ◆ Give praises they were able to sell their belongings in Peru and are currently settled in Wheaton, Illinois, finishing a year of home assignment.
- ◆ Pray for Jeff as he seeks to complete his PhD while here, including a possible trip to England in May to defend his dissertation.
- ◆ Give praises that Stacey will teach Spanish at Bingham Academy in Ethiopia.
- ◆ Pray for all the family members as they adjust to living in the US, and that the Lord will prepare their hearts for their move to Ethiopia.



Krohn family, complete with parents/grandparents, Bryce, and Pat - 2013

Please plan to worship with the Krohn family at 10:30am on March 19, and stay for the update after a GracePoint "family" meal in the Fellowship Center.

Beverly VanDerZyl

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

2017 March 2017

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast 6:00p Ash Wednesday Service 7:30p Campus Ministry Concert @ UD	2 6:30p Faith Sharing Group 7:00p Emmaus	3	4
5 8:30a Chapel 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 10:05a Prayer Room 10:30a Worship 6:30p Lenten Service at First Presbyterian	6 6:00p Food Pantry	7	8 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast 7:00p Deacons	9 6:30p Faith Sharing Group	10	11
12 8:30a Chapel 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 10:05a Prayer Room 10:30a Worship 1:30p Bethany Home 6:30p Lenten Service at First Presbyterian Daylight Savings Time Begins	13 6:00p Food Pantry	14 6:30p Task Force	15 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast Newsletter Deadline	16 6:30p Faith Sharing Group	17	18
19 8:30a Chapel 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 10:05a Prayer Room 10:30a Worship 6:30p Lenten Service at First Presbyterian 11:45a Mission Presentation & Potluck	20 6:00p Food Pantry	21 6:30p Spirited Exchanges	22 6:15a Men's Prayer Breakfast 6:30p Session	23 6:30p Faith Sharing Group	24	25
26 8:30a Chapel 9:00a GracePath 10:00a Fellowship Common Grounds Open 10:05a Prayer Room 10:30a Worship 6:30p Lenten Service at First Presbyterian	27 6:00p Food Pantry	28 6:30p Task Force			6:00p ProtoStar	

Membership to Date

Active	120
Inactive	6
Perm. Inactive	11
Total	137

Clerk's Report

March Session meeting changed to Wednesday, March 22nd, 6:30pm.

Remember the Easter Sunrise Service, April 16th, at the Grand River Center. Watch the bulletin for the time.

Remember DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME begins March 12th. Be sure to set your clocks ahead.

Don't forget the PILL BOTTLE FUNDRAISER is still in progress. Baskets for empty Pill Bottles and Filled Pill Bottles are in the Connect Way. The money received is used toward shipping the Shoe Boxes. It really helps.

Clerk's Report prepared by
Pat Kohler, Clerk of Session

**Treasurer's Report for
January**

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2017	\$2,162.00
Income	18,242.15
Expenses	13,569.73
Transfers	-833.33
Ending Balance, December 31, 2017	\$6,001.09


Thank You

To all our GracePoint family, a deeply appreciative thank you for the cards, prayers, flowers, and words of encouragement upon the death of our mother and grandmother Mary (Thompson) Hunt. There is going to be a burial service in May. I will inform you of details later.

*Cary, Paulette,
Ann, & John Kress*



BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Gaye Grote
- 2 Martha Intveld
- 4 Robin Schwarzmann
- 6 Karius Vander Broek
- 8 Angela Godwin
- 11 Mike Vandenberg
- 12 Sandy Tilton
- 13 Mary Scherf
- 13 Emily Wiest
- 17 Jenna Bell
- 20 Betty Emerson
- 22 Mike Boland
- 25 Scott Arnold
- 26 Andy Baumann
- 26 Vic Learn
- 29 Diane Conrad
- 29 Allison (Buol)Fortini



ANNIVERSARIES

- 12 Frank & Gaye Grote
- 15 Diane & Pete Conrad
- 17 Juanita & Dick Cottrell

(Continued from page 2.)

As I journeyed home, feelings of shame about my abortions overcame me, and I considered killing myself. In the silence, I heard Jesus again: "Why do you want to die? I am the river of life; come back to me and drink freely." He was speaking to me, but I couldn't bear to answer. Then one Sunday, I had a kind of vision. I pictured the Church looking like Noah's ark—and I was the only one left outside. My heart broke; I couldn't live like this anymore. After I received Communion, my heart finally fell silent. In a flash, I relived my most painful moments, but I never felt God condemn me. Instead, I felt back at home! Since I couldn't raise my face to his, he bent down and took me in his arms. Tears flowed as I heard him say, "This is not necessary now. I am here; we can talk." It was then that I realized that God was my heavenly Father. Instead of punishing me, he embraced me and told me not to worry.

I Forgave Him. I began to share my story with priest after priest until I met a bishop at a retreat. He told me that I never had to cry again for a sin God had forgiven already. Finally, I forgave myself and begged God to help me forgive my cousin. Though forgiving him felt like trying to break a rock, God's grace was at work in me, and the gradual process of healing and forgiveness became possible. My heart was even softened enough to visit my cousin and tell him that I forgave him. He was in poor health following a stroke and could barely speak. But he kept asking God to bless me. I thanked his family for their time and left, finally feeling free.

He Brought Me Back Rejoicing. So in the end, God did find me, the lost daughter, and brought me home rejoicing. What, then, can I offer to such a merciful God? I have offered him my life as a religious sister. At last, my husband found me at home.

Blessing Mmachi (a pseudonym at the author's request) writes from Nigeria.

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What's Brewing at Common Grounds?



- **Open Hours**

Sundays: 10am-12pm

Look out for *Spirited Exchanges*. Open conversations for young adults.

- **Classes**

Thursdays: 6:30-8:30pm
Crossroads Faith Sharing Group
Hosted by Patti Scheer & Sue Lemon.

- **Live Video Streaming**

Sundays: 10:30am

Watch Worship on TV.

Stories OF Grace

Following the Golden Thread of Hope

Today's test is tomorrow's testimony.

Got a story to share?

Glorify God.
Share your testimony. Inspire hope.

My family is a military family, although you may not think of us as one. For 24 years we lived a transitory life full of change and challenge, living in 15 homes in 24 years. Military families don't choose where to live or when to move. Military families "make do" a lot, with inadequate housing, poor schools, no jobs for spouses, and assigned medical care. At the base chapel you could choose to be Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish. To live well as a military family you had to accept that you weren't in control, making it so important for us to learn that God was always in control. Looking back we see that He used every assignment, community, challenge, and fellow believer to shape and grow us into His vision of who we could be in Christ. Here's how the Lord worked in our lives when He was in control.

- During our dental school years, Kevin joined the Navy as a reserve dental officer. By "coincidence" a wonderful pastor that I knew came to the area to fill the pulpit at a small church near us. Knowing him, we started to attend and got involved. It was through this pastor that Kevin came to Christ. We know God put Rev. Jerry Udstuen in our lives for that purpose.
- In 1984, the Lord moved us half way around the world, far away from family and friends, to Okinawa. During those years, God taught us how to depend on one another instead of our families, strengthening our marriage. God also used that time to teach us about being part of His family as He surrounded us with loving and caring Christians. They stood beside us as we struggled with our tiny "failure to thrive" baby, so far away from the support of our families.
- The years from 1989-93 saw us on the frozen tundra of North Dakota. This was a blessing because we were just a few hours away from our aging parents and thus were able to help them. In Grand Forks, God taught me that denomination doesn't really matter. God showed me that all worship in His name is beautiful and meaningful, even Lutheran liturgy. We loved Grand Forks so much, we wanted to keep our house for an eventual return. But God had a plan; we were forced to sell the house we loved. Just 4 years later, that house was destroyed in a flood. God protected us.
- On to Biloxi, where Kevin was in a residency. He wasn't home very much and when he was, he studied. The girls and I soldiered on, living largely independent of Kevin. I was hard-pressed to figure out how our two years in Biloxi were used by the Lord. Blessings weren't evident, church was so-so, the school was poor, and we were drifting apart. Now I understand that the trial of life there was itself the blessing. God used those "wilderness" years to prepare us for His next plan. He put us in a pit so that only He could bring us out. And He did that with another move—to Germany.
- It was in Germany that our faith really grew, starting with me. The Lord put me in the midst of strong women who loved the Bible, teaching me to love it, too. He then revealed my spiritual gift of teaching and gave me a mentor who challenged me to use it. My weekly prep involved listening to long leader tapes, so on our long drives to swim practice, Beth and Laura listened and learned, too. When they confirmed their baptisms, each one made a genuine commitment to Christ.
- Our final assignment was McGuire AFB in New Jersey. Coming out of a time of wonderful spiritual growth, we were again beset with trials: in our marriage, with our daughters, at our church. Isn't that frequently God's way? He knows we get complacent and usually experience the most meaningful growth from trials. God blessed Kevin with a mature Christian mentor, reigniting his faith. He protected the girls' hearts when rejection came at the hands of their church and "Christian" friends. And in New Jersey the Lord painfully stripped me of pride and self-reliance. All these experiences worked together to grow us individually and as a family in our faith.

And here we are now at GracePoint, living examples of God's good plan. Trust Him, not your own agenda. Allow Him to use change, even scary change, to grow you. Embrace the trials, relying on God to keep these promises from Romans. **8:28:** *God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* **8:31:** *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"*

Mary Hirschey

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 (March 5) Pauline Brimeyer
Barb Berg

Communion Servers (March 5) Don & Wilma Sanders
Sue Lemon

	Ushers	Greeters	Prayer Room
March 5	Don Sanders Wilma Sanders	Ben Temple Glenda Temple	Kelly English
March 12	Dwayne Intveld Martha Intveld	Vic Learn Marilyn Learn	Patti Scheer
March 19	Doug Mulder Mike Vandenberg	Steve Lemon Sue Lemon	Janet Metelak
March 26	Mike Boland Ben Temple	Andy Baumann Ann Marie Baumann	Karen Storlie

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

ChildCare

March 5 Pam DeMeester, Judy Godwin
 March 12 Mary Ann Hopkins, Steve Lemon
 March 19 Rachel Lemon, Marilyn Learn
 March 26 Sue Lemon, Glenda Temple

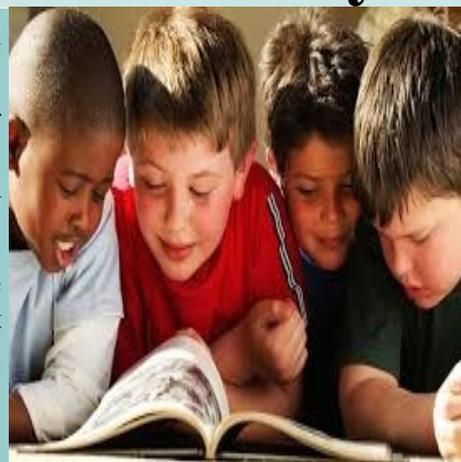
Check Out the Library

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.





Praise Band and Gospel Choir to Present Joint Concert

The University of Dubuque Praise Band and Gospel Choir will present a joint concert on Wednesday, March 1, at 7:30pm in John and Alice Butler Hall, Heritage Center. The praise band is under the direction of Dana Perreard, campus pastor and associate chaplain for worship, while the gospel choir is directed by Bridgett Boone, administrative assistant and ministry coordinator.

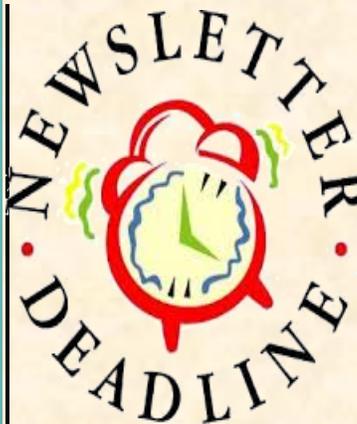
WHAT: UD Praise Band and Gospel Choir Concert

WHEN: Wednesday, March 1 – 7:30pm

WHERE: John and Alice Butler Hall, Heritage Center, University of Dubuque

ADMISSION: Free | Ticket Required

Admission is free; however, a ticket is required. Tickets are available Monday through Friday from 10:00am to 5:00pm at the Farber Box Office, Heritage Center, University of Dubuque, 2255 Bennett Street; by phone at 563.585.SHOW; or online at www.dbq.edu/heritagecenter.



**Wednesday
March 15**

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.

Contact Elder Robin Wlochall
or
Robert Boelk



Golden Oldies

Golden Oldies will starting up again in April after our long break. Watch for more details in the April newsletter and bulletins.

Varied programs will be held for all.

Beginning **March 5th**, First Presbyterian Church will host evening Lenten worship services (**March 5-April 2 @ 6:30pm**). Come and receive Christ! These are brief contemplative services of prayer, praise, scripture, quiet reflection, and Holy Communion. Each service is about 35-40 minutes in length.

Childcare is provided.



Used Book Sale

Venue: Reu Memorial Library @ Wartburg Theological Seminary

Dates: March 1 & 2 (7:30am—10:00pm); March 3 (7:30am—12:00pm)

Notes:

- ◆ Book Sale will be closed each day between 9:25am and 10:15am for chapel.
- ◆ Prices start at 25¢! Sealed bids accepted on larger works & commentaries.
 - ◆ Book dealers must wait until March 2 & 3.





3100 Windsor Avenue
Dubuque, IA 52001-8154

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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

All Church Spring into Spring

Sunday, March 19

immediately following Worship

Potluck & Missionary Update



- **Bring a dish or two to share.**
- **Bring your own table service.**
 - **Drinks are provided.**

