

Grace Notes

January 2023
"Come Home to Grace"

From the Minister:

Keep or Change or Pitch?

What are we going to carry into the New Year?

As we enter 2023, we are now a few years out from the start of COVID (which is still with us!), about one year from the start of a war in Europe (thanks to Russia!), and maybe about five years away from the end of a 20 year long Fourth Turning (Google that). The world is not settling down just yet. The conflicts and tensions are merely changing from place to place and type to type. If it all seems to be chaos, chaos is the chief hallmark of a Fourth Turning. The Church (with a big "C" meaning Church universal) is also going through a "Great Emergence" which author Phyllis Tickle described in her book by that same name. The emergence of what the Church will be for about the next 500 years (no exaggeration, we've done this four times already!) will largely be settled in about five more years. These are all monumental changes and impact the economy, education, the rise and fall of governments, church policies, and societal norms. So, be patient and hang on. What God is creating, is not quite done yet!

But what about the Church (with a big "C") and the church (the local church, and Grace Church in particular)? The picture is just starting to get clearer of what are becoming and we need to become.

I was going through some stuff in my basement the other day and found a set of ankle weights. Remember those? You could also wear them on your wrists, if you wanted to make your arms stronger, but most people used them on their ankles to make their legs stronger and put an extra "spring" in their step! I don't need them anymore, nor want them at all, and they will be gone. In the garage also are a few hoola-hoops from my girls's childhood. Anna, almost 18 years old and bound for college next year, does not seem to be interested anymore! They will be gone. Now here's the question: What is it the church does not find useful anymore, has little interest in (meaning few people), and really, if we are honest, needs to get rid of, instead of trying to pump limited energy into and resurrect? I'm not going to answer that. But I ask you to think about it and let me know. Also, I found my bowling ball. That I AM interested in keeping and using from time to time. That will be saved. What is it we need to save, that is worth saving and pumping energy into? That is just as important a question.

We need to be more willing to be adaptable to change. "Change" is not exactly our middle name here at Grace, but we have changed before, are changing now, and will change in the future. We can embrace those adaptive and helpful changes, or we can fight against them and make them as painful as possible. When that happens, the church loses people, every time.

Continued on next page

We need to be “lighter” and “quicker” on our feet and not so “ponderous” in how we go about things. When I first came here (2007) there was a fight about using projection in worship or not, and how, if ever, to do it. Now it is taken for granted projection is part of how we teach and preach and worship and sing. Thanks Jolane! Will we fight about changes or work them out over time? Everybody wants a definitive answer the instant we face an adaptive change. We just need to be patient and find the best way to do something and how we are able to do it. Shared wisdom over at least a period of time, is always better than the instant strong pushing of private agendas. Sometimes, of course, quick decisions need to be made and we are able to make them with the resources we have.

One of the founding fathers of modern Congregationalism, Arthur Rouner, Jr. said that being Congregationalists, “we are the light cavalry of Protestantism.” That is, we don’t have anybody slowing us down, but us. No Presbytery. No Synod. No bishop. No superintendent. No regulations even from the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches we joined in 2006. So lets think deeply about what, as a church, we need to keep or change or pitch. What survives could be amazingly effective in promoting the Gospel. Sometimes all the church (little “c”) and Church (big “C”) needs to do is get out of its own way. Just some thoughts on the future.

Grace and Peace in 2023, *Pastor Rob*



Thank You!

GRO would like to thank you for all your generosity over the past year. With your help we were able to donate to many charities including The Rescue Mission, the United Way of Columbiana County, The Lord’s Blessing Food Pantry, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Second Harvest Food Bank, the ALS Foundation, and the Hospice House, to name a few. Our recent missions were the 4 C’s Food Bank, the Making Kids Count Giving Tree and the Robert Bycroft Adopt a Class Project. Once again, thank you and we look forward to continuing Bycroft Adopt a Class Project. Once again, thank you and we look forward to continuing these important missions this coming year. God bless you and may you have a blessed 2023!



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1/1 Matthew Jones
- 1/2 David McMaster
- 1/3 Jonathon Billings
- 1/4 Janis Sutherin
Emma Gala
- 1/5 Don Reash
- 1/7 Geoff Barnes
Quentin Barnes
- 1/8 Bonnie Sears
Mike Perorazio
- 1/11 Beth Palette
- 1/12 Nicole McMaster
- 1/16 Gary Weber
- 1/17 Tim Reash
Michael McMaster
Seth Kollar
Lexi Smith
Alivia Bell
- 1/18 Geri Whitfield
- 1/20 Becky Stearns
- 1/23 Chelsea Kimble
Sam Flynn
- 1/24 Alison Hoskinson
- 1/27 Katy Gala
- 1/31 Larry Snyder
Joyce McKee



Those Ministering This Month:

Liturgists: (Liturgists needed, please sign up!)

1/1
1/8
1/15
1/22
1/29

Usher: Chris Eisenbraun

Elevator Attendant: Jack Sitler

Candles: Alison Hoskinson



Looking Ahead:

Upcoming communion dates: 12/24 Christmas Eve, and for Epiphany, I suggest 1/22 which is the Third Sunday after Epiphany. We usually have it on the Sunday around Epiphany, but after the first Sunday of the year. On 1/1, I will be gone (last Sunday for vacation for 2022), and on 1/15 I will be gone (1/13-15: Anna at OSU HS Honor Band in Columbus). On 1/8 we will have **three baptisms, tentatively scheduled**. Having communion then would make for an 80-minute service, something I wish to avoid. Then the next communion is usually the Sunday after Ash Wednesday, 2/26, our Annual Meeting Sunday.

We should set up communion dates for 2023. Here's what I suggest:

1/22 Epiphany, 2/26 First Sunday in Lent, 4/6 Maundy Thursday, 4/9 Easter, 5/28 Pentecost, 7/9 Mid-Summer's Communion, 10/1 Worldwide Communion, 10/29 All Saints, 11/19 Sunday before Thanksgiving, 12/24 Christmas Eve. (10 times)

Next Consistory: January 2/ or 9th? Set up Consistory dates?

2023 Events: Minister's Convocation is 4/17-20. NACCC Annual Meeting is at Headquarters in Milwaukee 6/24-27. We should send someone. It has been a while.

Rob Vacation: Undetermined as yet.

Items of business:

Christmas Day is on a Sunday! Come and gather around the Christmas tree in the sanctuary for a special worship time! Come and get your special present under the tree!

Greenford, and others, are only online this day. Will you be in person to welcome the Christ Child?

IX. Unfinished Business: Chris read a revised contract for rental of the Church Dining Hall and Kitchen. Mark Frost made a motion to the revised contract that was read, second by Matt Bell, motion passed.

X. New Business: Motion made by Sharon Frost, seconded by Leslie Eisenbraun to approve the following Communion schedule. 1/22 Epiphany, 2/26 First Sunday in Lent, 4/6 Maundy Thursday, 4/9 Easter, 5/28 Pentecost, 7/9 Mid-Summer's Communion, 10/1 Worldwide Communion, 10/29 All Saints, 11/19 Sunday before Thanksgiving, 12/24 Christmas Eve. (Total of 10 times). Motion Carried.

Motion made by Sharon Frost, seconded by Tim Reeser to move the January Consistory to January 9th, 2023. Motion carried.

Motion made by Mark Frost, seconded by Tim Reeser to send Pastor Rob to the Annual Meeting of the NACCC and Ministers Convocation. Motion carried.

Mark Frost asked that the yellow pole be put back on the concrete wall by the parking lot, close to the Heartland School.

XI. Committee Reports:

-Evangelism (Leslie) – working on posting a position for Outreach Director. Notecards and Signs are ordered. Motion made by Mark Frost, second by Tim Reeser to host the dinner, at no Dining Hall rental charge, for the Columbiana High School Football team prior to their scheduled football games. Motion passed.

-Worship Design and Music (Rob) – organ will be tuned before Christmas.

-Pastoral Relations (Rob) – met w/ Jack Sitler

-Property (Chris) – continuing to work on roof repair. Gary wanted to thank Herb Roble, Greg Gustafson, and Bill Hoover for setting up the Manger Scene. Eve painting and Bell tower repair is complete.

-Elders (Jack) – working on Employee evaluations.

XII. Adjournment & The Lord's Prayer

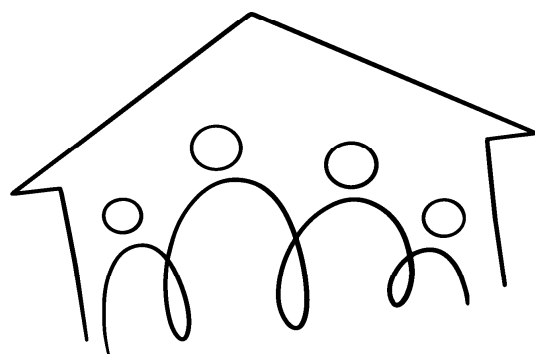
Next Meeting January 9th, 2023 at 7pm.



A VALUABLE *command*

God instructs children how to relate to their parents.

Directions: Arrange the words in alphabetical order. Then insert the circled letters in order to complete Exodus 20:12, NIV.



son	mother	father
daughter	honor	home
respect	family	obey
	love	

1. _ _ _ _ ○ _ _ _ ○
2. ○ _ _ _ _ _ ○
3. _ _ ○ _ _ _ _
4. ○ _ _ _ _
5. _ _ _ _ ○ _ _
6. ○ _ _ _ _
7. _ _ ○ _ _ _ _
8. ○ _ _ _ _
9. ○ _ _ _ _
10. _ _ _ _ ○

_ _ono_ _ your _ _ather and _ _our mo_h_r,
 so t_at y_u may _i_e l_ng in t_e land
 the L_RD _ou_ God i_ givi_g you.

EXODUS 20:12, NIV

Answer: 1. daughter, 2. family, 3. father, 4. home, 5. honor, 6. love, 7. mother, 8. obey, 9. respect, 10. son; Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Grace Notes

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