

GRACE notes

GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



JANUARY 2012 VOLUME 55, ISSUE 1



MOVING FORWARD:

*After a Year of Goodbyes and Celebrations,
GCPC Enters 2012 with Eyes on the Future*

On November 28th, Grace Covenant elected its Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). Since then, the PNC has met once and elected a chair (Jack Shirek) and secretary (Jim Malcolm). At that first meeting, they were joined by Scott Wesley, our presbytery liaison, and Dr. Paige McRight, our Executive Presbyter, who shared with the PNC the task and boundaries that exist for them. As you know, the PNC has been elected to seek our next pastor. This task of discernment is an intensely spiritual and emotional one, which means that the best thing the rest of us can do to help the PNC accomplish its work is to stay out of its way, respect the confidentiality of the process, pray fervently for its work, and respond to any requests it may have of us. The PNC will regularly report to the congregation on its progress. These reports will come from the pulpit and appear on our website and in our newsletter.

Yet, the time has not arrived where the PNC will be sequestered, doing its work apart from the congregation. In fact, we are entering perhaps the most intensive phase of congregational participation. Already, you have provided very important information for the PNC, and their first request was for a **summary of the "Beginning Conversations" [see below]** so many of you participated in last Fall. Almost two hundred people participated in those talks over four weeks, and many others contributed written responses to the questions laid before you. There were diverse perspectives represented and expressed, but several common themes emerged. Here are a few (not in order of importance!):

Openness & Welcome - GCPC is a community of believers where we strive to make everyone feel welcome. We are more driven by hospitality and warmth than ideological or theological purity. We are more likely to emphasize God's love and the wideness of God's mercy than to chase after the latest hot-button social issue.

Growth & Education - Despite this openness, GCPC has a long and proud tradition of education, lay leadership, involvement in our higher governing bodies, and commitment to our community and beyond. In short, we are a church that seeks to nurture, grow, and use the gifts that God has given us in service to others.

Continued on Page 11....

DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR:

- Jan 9– Ruth Circle
- Jan 14– Stitch and Knit
- Jan 17– Family Fun Nite
- Jan 19– Study and Fun
- Jan 22– Annual Congregational Meeting and Luncheon
- Jan 29– Family Communion Class

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A NEW MOMENT INTIME: Sermons from Mark

The Gospel of Mark is known for its urgency. One of the words it frequently uses is “immediately,” as though something incredible and new is happening! God is at work, and the world is about to change. Sounds like a great way to start a new year...and continue to anticipate what God is up to during this interim time. The scriptures, sermons, titles, themes and events for the next six weeks are below. This new year is a great time to re-read the Gospel of Mark!

| Date | Text | Sermon Title | Theme/Events |
|------|--|---------------------|---|
| 1/8 | Mark 1:4-11 Psalm 29 | “Dive Bombing Dove” | God’s Disruptive Grace Baptism of the Lord Sunday Ordination/Installation of New Officers |
| 1/15 | Mark 1:12-13 1 Samuel 3:1-10 | “Driven” | Discerning God’s Will |
| 1/22 | Mark 1:14-20 Jonah 3:1-5 | “Dropping By” | Opportunistic Moments Annual Meeting |
| 1/29 | Mark 1:21-28 Deuteronomy 18:15-20 | “Dreading Change” | New Perspectives |
| 2/5 | Mark 1:29-39 Isaiah 40:28-31 | “Doing It All” | The Exhaustive Claim of Faith |
| 2/12 | Mark 1:40-45 2 Kings 5:1-14 | “Dealing with Dirt” | Clean slates |
| 2/19 | Mark 9:2-9 2 Kings 2:1-12 | “Dazzled” | Awe and Wonder Transfiguration of the Lord |



Come join in a lively discussion on Sunday mornings...

9:30-10:30 AM

ROOM 16

John Calvin Memorial Hall

January 8th

Breakfast and Planning

January 15-February 5th

Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt

Led by Dr. John Cole



Attention: All Deacons and Elders

The Worship Committee is looking for church officers who are interested in serving extended communion to some of our homebound members. This entails attending a brief training session of 30-45 minutes to learn the basics. Extended communion is served to church members unable to attend our worship service; two or more ordained officers of the

church following worship on Communion Sunday serve them the elements. This is a direct extension of serving the Lord's Supper to the congregation.

I would like to hold a training session in mid-January 2012. If you are an ordained officer of the church and want to explore this blessed experience, please call me. In addition, if you have already had this training and would like to make sure we have your name on the list, please call me.

Eileen Silvers

Women's Circles



RUTH CIRCLE will meet on Monday, January 9, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room, second floor of John Calvin Memorial Hall.

We continue with our study of The Beatitudes, and this lesson is entitled: "Greatly Honored Are Those Who Show Mercy!" The Scripture reference is Matthew 5:7; Luke 10:25-37, and the key idea is that Jesus calls disciples to imitate God by showing mercy through emotion, action and dedication.

Please join us for ninety minutes of Bible study and fellowship. Everyone is welcome.



The first program meeting of 2012 will be held on **Thursday, January 5th in John Calvin Memorial Hall at 11:00 A.M.** A special guest speaker is planned. Additionally, much fun and camaraderie will be enjoyed. Please watch your Church Bulletin for further details.

In December, the group met only once, and enjoyed one of our two annual covered dish luncheons. One would not believe the expertise of our gourmet chefs. Should you care to sample this absolutely gourmet meal or show off your cooking skills, the next opportunity will be the first Thursday in May.

Our next field trip will be on January 19, 2012. Tentatively, a trip to Gatorland is planned. Be sure to watch the church bulletin for details and any changes in the planned destination.

Study and Fun is a group for men and women ages 55 and older. The only requirement for membership is a desire for enjoyable fellowship in the quest for greater knowledge. One does not need to be a church member so friends, relatives and neighbors are welcomed to participate.

Study and Fun meets twice per month, September through May. On the first Thursday a study program is presented in the John Calvin Memorial Hall conference room. Lunch is brown bag with drinks and dessert provided by the hostesses for the month.

The second monthly meeting is a visit to a fun or cultural destination, usually on the third Thursday. Afterwards lunch and fellowship are enjoyed at a nearby restaurant.

To learn more please contact Roberta Eckard, Shirley Adamission or Margareta Douglas



Tuesday, January 17

6:29 pm

Conway Hall

Join us for a time of great food, fellowship and fun. We start with a covered dish dinner (drinks, dessert and bread are provided) and spend time in fun and games around the table. All are invited!



We will be meeting on January 14th, 2012! Wow! We continue to collect items on Sunday morning but would like to get our group together for fellowship and stitchin! We have some new patterns and we need to come up with ideas to use up the yarn we have had donated! Please mark your calendar and make the time to be together! If you want to learn to knit or crochet we would be happy to teach you! We also need busy hands to help cut things out so there is a need for all talents! We hope to see you on the 14th.

Donna Fraser or Sandee Smith

There will be a prayer chain meeting on the 15th of January. It will be held in Room 16 in John Calvin Memorial Hall right after church. The meeting will be open to regular members and any who would be interested in joining the prayer chain. The pastors will be present and it would be wonderful if all can make the meeting. Hope to see you there. Please contact Kitty Mishler if you need any information.



Beginning January 8, Pat Maio will be leading a class entitled: "The Lion, The Witch and the Writer".

The Class will meet in Room 8, upstairs, Smith Hall from 9:30 – 10:30 am on January 8, 15, 22 and 29.

All are Welcome!



Elementary children and their families are invited to a class designed to help in the understanding of this sacrament of the Church.

We will meet on January 29 following the 10:45 worship for a sandwich lunch and a time for families to explore together this special act we call Communion.

Please RSVP to candy@grace.to or 407-898-6571 so we can have food and materials for all attending.



**NOTICE:
THE ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING AND LUNCHEON**

January 22 after the 10:45 a.m. worship service.
Committee Reports & Budget will be presented.
Please bring a covered dish to share.



The month of December was an exciting and meaningful time for the children and families of Small Blessings. The children celebrated the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord. They even had a "Birthday Party for Jesus" on December 16, as well as their own classroom parties.

The Operation Christmas Child was very successful as the children surpassed their goal of filling 25 boxes and even had items left over which they donated to Grace Covenants collection for the same project. The K4 children helped Mrs. Candy load her car trunk with the boxes.

"Someone Has a Birthday" was the Christmas pageant presented by the K4 children on Thursday, December 8. Families and friends attended the performance and were served home made refreshments afterwards. The children did a magnificent job! Christmas Craft Day was great fun on December 14th as the children participated in various games and crafts guided by volunteers from GCPC.

It is time for SBCC Board members, Trudy Phelps, Phyllis Cornell and Paula Craig to leave the board. The GCPC Session approved the new members who were nominated by the present SBCC Board to serve for the next three years. The new members are Danielle Alchin, Rob McCormack, Ann Taylor and Robert Taylor.

GCPC hopes all of the SBCC families had a Merry Christmas and wishes them a very Happy, Healthy and Blessed New Year.





Music Notes

In keeping with giving thanks in November, take the time to give thanks in the New Year for all we have received in 2011.

During the Advent and Christmas season, church musicians have many things for which to be grateful. Again, here are some of the many blessings we have received.

- A volunteer group of musicians who steadily prepare and improve in order to provide beautiful music for all seasons. Their faithfulness is unfailing and deserves many thanks from our congregation.
- Composers and arrangers who have been inspired to create such inspiring music. J.S. Bach, Handel, and anonymous composers of early Christian music, created music that has endured for hundreds of years. These early music composers, modern composers and arrangers have been inspired by scripture. I am inspired when I find music that amplifies the spirit of these scriptures. A musician's objective is to reflect the intent of these composers. I hope we honor them with our musical offerings.
- Members of the congregation who support worship services with scripture readings and joyful sounds of music throughout the season.
- A progression of Advent that keeps our hearts and minds looking forward to Christmas, when "Love Came Down".
- A Christmas that lives with us throughout the year. Keeping Christmas in our hearts throughout the year, keeps us moving forward as we reach out to those in need, and continue to grow as an inspired and energized congregation serving Christ.
- A Board of Deacons who prepared cookies for shut-ins, and members of the congregation who joined in to deliver these cookies and carol as we went along. This was a wonderful way to casually bring love to those who can't be with us throughout the year. I hope that next year, more will join us in visiting and caroling. It was so much fun, and reminded us of how fortunate we are. Thanks to Susan Smith and Barbara Bell for organizing, and Tim Venable who drove the church bus for 12 singers who could be heard from Westminster Towers, all the way down Curry Ford Road!

Pray for God's Blessings throughout 2012

Beth Meadows

Thank You, God!



We ordered altar flowers to celebrate our 60th wedding anniversary on October 23rd. When the bill did not come, we called to inquire and were informed that one of our "church friends had already taken care of it and wished to remain anonymous". We are dying of curiosity and can only say a heartfelt thank you to our "special friend". How about confessing!

Bill and Harlean Finney

Thank you and God bless all the volunteers who took time during the busy holiday season to serve Daily Bread at the Christian Service Center.

Ann Stegman

Thank you for the gift card I received from the congregation when I recently retired for the office staff after 14 years of service in the financial office.

I will miss being a part of the office staff, but I look forward to becoming involved in other activities of the church and other areas of volunteer service.

Blessings to all,

Mary Morgan

Dear Friends,

Thank you. This year together we changed lived. There is enough for all.

You helped people eat. You dug wells for clean drinking water. You helped children learn. You sheltered the refugee.

With your support, CWS is out there everyday, doing what we do best. You give people the world over a chance and they want to say thank you.

In thanks and honored to have your support,

Rev. John L. McCullough

Executive Director and CEO

Church World Service



Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him



Family Promise

(Formerly known as IHN)

.....come, share a smile, a conversation; don't turn away--meet their eyes and see Jesus' face.

If We Were Homeless

*Especially for Sally & Rob

If we were homeless

Camping in a woodland,

Our shelter a simple nylon tent,

I would want an end to our uncharted dwellings
beneath the stars—

But, short of that,

After the coats, blankets, and cast-off garments
From generous families' seasons past

It would help to have a helpful bureaucrat

To push the system, rather than the people who
need it—

Or, short of that, a first-aid kit,
Excellent mosquito repellent,
Or a place to wash every day
As we preserve propriety and self-respect.

More than that,

I would like a nod, or hello

From those we pass each day

And to lock eyes with one person

Who won't turn away.

I would like to share a smile,

And a conversation ...

Yes, we would talk, my visitor and I,

About the politics of pain:

Those who have, those who have not,

Those who can not, or will not

Stand another day.

Then I would guide my guest

Along the brushwood path

To our soft-walled impermanent home,

For biscuits, more talk,

And I would brew two cups of battery-powered,
boilerplate tea.

Sara Schlossman 2004

Sally and Rob live in the woods off Goldenrod Rd. near UCF.

**As interviewed in "Welcome to the Jungle," article by Emily Ruff,*

published in Orlando Weekly, 1/29/04



Evangelism Committee

✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕
*Go therefore and make disciples of
all nations, baptizing them in
the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to
obey everything that I
have commanded you.*

Matthew 28: 19-20

**What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done;
there is nothing new under the sun.**

Ecclesiastes 1:9

Christians have always used technology as part of our worship. There's a reason that most churches before the age of microphones were long rectangular spaces (awesome acoustics). We were the people who popularized the codex over the scroll, and gave the printing press it's first reason to exist. Churches are probably the biggest professional users of presentation software in any industry.

As we enter 2012, technology continues to change and we as a Church must continue to embrace the various ways we can proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. Our Technology Committee and the team that works with them each week does just that! Thank you Tech Team for keeping this Body of Christ a viable voice in the world today. With your support, we stay connected to the world and proclaim God's word to the world and to our congregation as we continue to be active participants in our worship services and the world.

MOVING FORWARD...Continued from page 1

Worship & Tradition - GCPC embraces its Reformed heritage through worship, and many commented on our fine music program. However, there was a restless desire to grow and develop this aspect of our ministry, to strive to be fresh and relevant in a changing culture while remaining rooted in our identity and traditions.

Family of Faith - GCPC is a place where generations gather in worship and ministry. Young and older enjoy the rich diversity of age, background and perspective, where multiple generations of families worship together weekly. Yet, within this was again a restlessness to do more, to grow our youth programs and take advantage of our fine new facilities to appeal to and embrace young families and those in our community.

That should be enough to get the PNC started. Our next pastor will need to be visionary, yet recognize that this is a congregation that is intensely proud of what it has accomplished and has a strong self-identity. Another theme that emerged was that GCPC has very fond memories and appreciative feelings for its pastoral leadership (even *interim* pastors like Earl Tyson!). We joked some about specific hopes for a pastor who sings in the choir, does wood-working, installs water heaters, enjoys doing quirky, character-based sermons, or possesses legal training, but recognized that, as much as anything, this was just a congregation that loves all that makes its pastors unique.

At its core, we found that GCPC is simply a place where we love to gather, to pray for one another, to care about one another's hopes, dreams, and journeys of faith. We certainly love to eat and laugh with each other. It is one more reason I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve among you, and why I cannot wait to see what God has in store for this amazing church in 2012!

~Dr. John Cole

JANUARY 2012



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To:



A NEW MOMENT INTIME: Sermons from Mark

January 8– February 19

See page 2 for more information on this series that will focus on discipleship!