

GRAPEVINE

December 19, 2007

Parson to Person

Recently I came across a gem of a book, out of print and written by a British pastor and theologian named W. A. Vanstone. From a chapter entitled "The Self-Emptying God" in this book titled The Risk of Love I pass along the following for your reflection as Christmas approaches:

On a certain Saturday night, shortly before Christmas, I stood in the beautiful Church which was ready for Christmas; and the quiet light of candles enhanced its tranquility and beauty. It was very late: but the beauty of Christmas and of its symbols seemed peculiarly intense that night; and I was glad to receive it while I might. I was disturbed by a noise behind me: a dull thud: and I saw, against the glass door which led into the Church, and no more than a couple of feet from the bottom of the door, a face pressed, and grotesquely distorted by the pressure. A man was half slumped, half kneeling against the door. He was drunk; and when we talked and he gradually became more sober, it was clear that, though he was quite young, he was already an alcoholic. His experience of life was nothing but the experience of conflict and squalor: and at Christmas he expected nothing different. When at last I retired to sleep my mind must have dwelt on the tragic and distorted face which had, so to speak, invaded the beauty of Christmas. For I dreamed: and in my dream a rubbish-collector came to me and told me that he had been clearing up after a riot; and I myself saw the huge pile of stones and cans and waste paper and scrap metal which he had collected. Then the man touched my arm and said, "But what am I to do? For deep within the pile, buried at the bottom of it, I have seen a living face." Though my own eyes did not see the face, I knew in my dream that it must be the face of God.

A few hours later, when I preached in Church, I was compelled to speak of my dream. For it seemed to suggest a different way in which the truth of Christmas might have been disclosed - a harrowing and appalling way. It made one newly sensitive to, and grateful for, the graciousness of the way in which the truth of Christmas is in fact disclosed to us. But, in substance, it was the same truth. It was the truth of a God who, in love, is totally expended for the being of His creation: so that He is helpless under its weight and barely survives for its everlasting support; so that, in the tragedies of the creation, in its waste and rubbish, God Himself is exposed to tragedy: so that the creation is sustained at the cost of the agony of One Who is buried and almost wholly submerged within the depth of it.

(pages 71 - 72)

Faithfully Yours,

Inside:

- Mission Trip Meetings
- Kids Club
- Dinners for 7/8
- Small Group Ministry

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:00 p.m.

Traditional Worship
Birthday Party for Jesus

5:30 p.m.

Contemporary Worship
Contemporary Music Team

7:00 p.m.

Family Worship
Children's Vocal & Bell Choirs

8:30 & 10:00 p.m.

Traditional Worship
Adult Vocal Choir & Brass

Christmas carols and candle-lighting at each service.

Nursery care at each service (except 10:00 p.m.)

**Christmas Fair Extended
to Dec. 23**

Due to the inclement weather last weekend, the Christmas Fair will be available on Sunday, Dec. 23 from 9:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Give someone on your holiday list a special gift by donating to one of our six mission projects. Other gifts available include many types of coffee and tea, Heifer International T-shirts, and donated crafts. Come do your very last-minute shopping!

HELP FOR CHRISTMAS EVE!!!

We still need volunteers for the church nursery on Christmas Eve. If you can help at the 5:30, 7:00 or 8:30 p.m. services please contact Phyllis ASAP in the church office at 334-1235, ext. 5 or gpcdce@embarqmail.com.
ô Thanks!

There will be
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL classes
on Sunday, Dec. 30.

All classes will resume on
Sunday, January 6, 2008

PAGEANT VIDEOTAPE

Did you or anyone you know videotape our Nativity Pageant on December 9? Because we didn't!! The family of one of the participants would very much like to copy your videotape. Please contact Phyllis at 334-1235, ext. 5 or gpcdce@embarqmail.com if you can help.

Thanks for a Beautiful Pageant

It was a memorable night. About 225 adults and children gathered as we sang Christmas carols and enjoyed the wonderful story of that first Christmas.

Thanks to the following participants for making the pageant possible:

- Director - Jen Beegle
- Primary Choir - led by Amy Hieber & Sonja Brown
- Chapel Choir - led by Tammi Swartzbaugh
- Accompanist - Becky Wareham
- Two Narrating Angels - Emily & Molly Clark
- Mary - Alexa Wilhelm
- Joseph - Danny Beegle
- Angels, Shepherds, Star Bearer and Wisemen - Middle and High School Youth
- Costumes - Teresa Gard and Libby Crowe
- Spotlight - Steve Swartzbaugh

A special thank-you also goes to Cheryl & Megan Gochenauer, Marlene & Bill Tindall, and Kathy Dudash for setting up and hosting the potluck dessert. And we appreciated all the delicious goodies that were shared!

**Mid-Ship Small Group
Bakes/Delivers Cookies**

On Tuesday afternoon, 12/11/07, the Mid-Ship small group baked dozens of cookies and delivered them to the local firehouse, police station, and the Gettysburg Hospital Emergency Department with cards of appreciation. Thanks to Emma Adams, Danny Beegle, Joanna Birkner, Daniel Crowe, Ben Dudash, Ally Ecker, Micah Gard, Jordan Garrett, Kasey Rathgeber, Cody Smith, and Brett Williams for their culinary and artistic efforts. Special thanks to advisor Kathy Dudash who helped throughout and to Deb Litten who helped with delivery.

The Mid-Ship group would like to wish everyone in the church a joyful Christmas and a relaxing start to the New Year.

Blessings,
Libby Crowe

Monthly Financial Report

As of November 30 we were 92% into 2007.

Receipts to date are 92% of anticipated.

Expenditures to date are 93% of budget.

Total donations / receipts to date are: \$613,550

Total expenditures are \$625,400 of our 2007 budget of \$669,295.

Upcoming Events

December Music Schedule

12/23	8:15	Pat Conklin Adult Choir Cantata
	11:00	Rachel Doehring Adult Choir Cantata
12/24	4:00	Alexandra Chandon
	7:00	Steve Swartzbaugh Chapel Bell Choir Chapel Choir
	8:30	Brass Quartet Sue Lindsay Sean Mott Adult Choir
	10:00	Brass Quartet Sue Lindsay Sean Mott Adult Choir
12/30	8:15	Rachel Parmentier
	11:00	Rachel Parmentier

January Music Schedule

1/6	8:15	Early Choir
	11:00	Adult Choir
1/13	8:15	Early Choir
	11:00	Adult Choir
1/20	8:15	Early Choir
	11:00	Adult Choir
1/27	8:15	Adult Bell Choir
	11:00	Youth Bell Choir Youth Choir

MidSHIP Schedule

January 6	5:30 - 7:00	Fellowship / Games
January 13	5:30 - 7:00	Fellowship / Games
January 20	12:15 - 3:00	Pizza / Bowling *
January 27	5:30 - 7:00	Winter Games with SHIP
February 3	3:00 - 5:00	Souper Bowl Game **

* Bring \$5.00 for bowling

** Bring a can of soup to donate to the Food Kitchen

Lenten Breakfasts begin on Wednesday morning, Feb. 6th from 6:45 to 7:10 a.m. and continues during Lent.

HIGH SCHOOL FELLOWSHIP

January 6, 2008	5:30—7:00	New Year's Tree Visits
January 13	5:30 - 7:00	Fellowship / Games

YOUNG @ HEART JANUARY 10TH

Covered Dish Lunche on @ 12:00 p. m.
Barber Shop Quartet following lunch

South Dakota Mission Trip Meeting

January 27, 2008 @ 6:30 p.m.

A meeting for all those interested in this year's South Dakota Mission Trip will be held on Sunday, January 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the MacAskill / Heritage Room. Come join us whether you want to sign up or just get information about our trip to the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation from July 17 - 27, 2008. If you have any questions, please contact Phyllis in the church office 334-1235, ext. 5. Hope to see you January 27!

Honduras Mission Trip Meeting

On Thursday, January 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the MacAskill / Heritage Room there will be a meeting for all people interested in our June 14 - 28, 2008 annual medical and dental mission trip to Honduras. If you are entertaining thoughts of going to Honduras this year or some future year, you are encouraged to attend. We welcome anyone who has not gone to Honduras with us and is considering doing so. It is very important that all who have registered or who intend to register for the June trip attend this meeting. If you are planning to go to Honduras in June 2008 but cannot attend the January 24 meeting, please be sure to have a family member or friend attend for you and call Rev. Dan Hans (334-1235).

P.S. There is some financial aid available for GPCers who want to join this mission team but find the cost prohibitive.



BIRTHDAY PARTY for JESUS!!

Held during the 4:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve.



For children ages 2^o Grade 2, a special "Birthday Party for Jesus" will be held during the 4:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve. The party will include songs, the Christmas story, crafts, cupcakes for Jesus, and a special gift for each child.

Children will begin the service with their families in the sanctuary and exit shortly thereafter. All children ages 2^o Grade 2 are welcome to attend this meaningful celebration.

High School Ski Retreat



If you are in high school and want to go on the ski retreat, come to youth group January 6, 2008 to get a registration form. The retreat will be January 19 - 20th (this is a change from the original calendar) at Camelback Ski Resort (near Stroudsburg, PA). If you can't make it to SHIP on January 6th then call or email Rev. Lou Nyiri in the church office (334-1235 ext. 4) or gpclou@embarqmail.com (put "SHIP Ski Retreat" in the subject line). This retreat is open to all youth and their friends who are in 9th through 12th grades. Pre-Registration is Required.

KIDS CLUB

Twenty-three children in Kindergarten - Grade 2 met each week in October to study the life of Joseph. What fun we had reading the Bible, and memorizing scripture and prayers. We also played games, sang, made crafts and painted cut-outs of Joseph and his 11 brothers.

As we studied the life of Joseph we learned that: God will always be with us, God can help us forget our troubles, and God can turn something bad into something good. Thank you to our volunteers who helped make Kids Club so special: Lori McNair, Alva Ecker, Kim Landauer, Kathleen Kiick, Susan Paul, Andrea Crowe, Beth Freeman, Ashlyn Sowell, Lori May, Larry Sanders, Lou & Candace Nyiri, Teresa Gard, Jordan Breighner, Jen Tindall, Paulette Brabender and Chrissy Ely.

Kids Club (K - Grade 2) will start again in February. We're looking forward to it!

In His Service,
Pam Rowland

All-Church Lunch and Congregational Meeting January 27th

The congregational meeting will be held during the lunch beginning at 12:15PM. Please do your church's fellowship team one favor! Let us know how many will be attending from your family so we have enough food for the lunch. You can let us know by leaving a message in the church office (334-1235, ext. 4), by returning the slip below via the offering plate or by emailing Rev. Lou Nyiri at gpclou@embarqmail.com.

A free will offering will be collected to help defray costs. A donation of \$2.00 is suggested.

All-Church Lunch & Congregational Meeting

Yes, the following number of people _____ will be attending the all-church luncheon and Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 27, 2008.

**Dinners for Seven or Eight (DF 7 - 8)
Are Coming Soon!!**

The goal of DF 7 - 8 is to provide an environment where church members can enjoy the fellowship of other members in our congregation. DF 7 - 8 will be coming to a church members home sometime in March, April, and May. Will you be in attendance? You will be if you want a casual dining experience and the opportunity to get to know better seven or eight other members of your GPC family.

The way it works is that you will sign up using the form below or stopping by the table in Fellowship Hall. After sign-ups are over, a schedule will be made up which designates one person to host the event in their home (you get to choose if you want to be a host). The host will then contact the people in their group and coordinate the date & time for the meal. The host also prepares the main course & drink for the evening. The host will inform the other parties involved so they can create appropriate accompanying dishes which will be a vegetable dish, salad or dessert.

A different person will host each month's dinner and you will be paired with six or seven different people. You can also sign up on our substitute list to be called if a regular participant runs in to calendar problems and cannot attend a particular month's meal. As a substitute you would assume the meal portion of the individual(s) you are replacing. The dinners are to be casual and adults only. The last day to sign up is Feb. 3, 2008.

*******Registration Form (DF 7 - 8) *****
Attention Lou Nyiri
(return form by Feb. 3, 2008)**

___ Yes, I wish to be a REGULAR part of Dinners for 7 or 8

___ Yes, I wish to be a SUBSTITUTE part of Dinners for 7 or 8

Name(s) _____

Street Address (where dinner will be held when hosting) _____

Town _____

Phone # _____ Best time to call _____

Wish to Host: _____ Do NOT wish to Host: _____

Wished to host last year and did not get to: _____

Put a % by the month you would most like to host, % by your second choice, & % by your third choice:

March _____ April _____ May _____

**GPC SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
2008 LENTEN SMALL GROUPS**

**The Beatitudes for Today
by Rev. James C. Howell**

Blessed are those who sign up for Lenten Small Groups, for they will grow in wisdom!

Now is your chance to be a part of an exciting opportunity for spiritual growth and fellowship! Our Lenten Small Groups will explore together the revolutionary teachings from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Found in Matthew's gospel, the Beatitudes can be seen as attitudes to emulate, steps to spiritual maturity and keys to social change. But more importantly, the Beatitudes are divine blessings and promises for those who follow Christ.

Groups will meet weekly during the six weeks of Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 6th. Groups will meet in homes, at the church and at local restaurants. You will be contacted by your group leader about the exact starting date and location. Each session will run approx. 75 minutes and will include a time of prayer, informal discussion and fellowship. Please call Candace Nyiri at 337-2939 if you have any questions.

DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS JANUARY 27th

2008 LENTEN SMALL GROUP SIGN UP

(Please mark 1st & 2nd preference - exact locations to be announced)

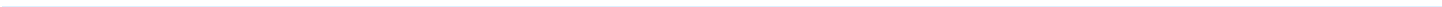
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|---|------------------------------|
| ___ Sunday 12:15 p.m. Lunch Group | ___ Monday Morning 9:30 a.m. |
| ___ Tuesday 7:00 a.m. (Dunlap's Restaurant) | ___ Tuesday 9:30 a.m. |
| ___ Tuesday Evenings 7:00 p.m. | ___ Wednesday 12:00 noon |
| ___ Thursday 7:00 p.m. | ___ (Brown Bag Lunch Group) |

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ EMAIL _____

Cost of the book is \$11.00

(Calendar Page)



DECEMBER CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

9:30 am in the Sanctuary

Join us for worship in a relaxed, creative style!

Dec 24 - **Christmas Eve Service** at 5:30 in the sanctuary

Dec 30 - Service of Communion

January 2008

Jan 6 - Epiphany - *It's a Wonderful Life*

Jan 13 - *Survival Guide for Holy Living*

Jan 20 - *A Cure for Cabin Fever*

Jan 27 - Service of Communion

"Come and hear... and I will tell you what God has done for me" Psalm 66:10

**Next Newsletter Deadline:
Noon, Thursday, January 3, 2008**

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