

GRACE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Session Snippets
- Communion
- Hazelwood
- Mission Moment
- Kids Corner

ONLINE OR
IN-PERSON

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SUNDAYS AT 10:30AM

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Good Gracious Gracious

May 2024

Waiting & Dancing

When the Holy Spirit comes on you ... you will be my witnesses. – Acts 1:8

There was lively music playing when our daughter dropped in, so she and her dad tried some ballroom dance-moves. Between bursts of laughter, I heard: “Hey! Let me lead!”

For the dance to flow, one person needs to follow the other’s lead. Following doesn’t happen by accident. To follow, we need to pay attention. And to wait. Otherwise, the turns don’t work, and someone is sure to step on the other person’s toes.

When Jesus invites us to “follow him,” he’s asking us into a dance. He knows the steps—all that he wants to accomplish—in us and in the world. And for the dance to do what he has in mind, we must *let him lead*.

The *Book of Acts* portrays that dance with Jesus. *Acts* is a sequel to Luke’s Gospel. It’s about the Church getting started. But really, *Acts* is still the story of Jesus—leading his dance through the Holy Spirit’s melodies. You could call it *Jesus: the Story Continues*.

Acts begins as Jesus coaches his friends for the time they won’t see him anymore. Don’t leave town, he says. Don’t make your own plans. *Just wait*. “Wait for the gift my Father promised.” The gift is the Holy Spirit: God, with us to lead us.

At Grace Church we’re waiting for the Holy Spirit to teach us the next moves in our dance with Jesus in this neighbourhood. A dance that brings hope. A dance that demonstrates God’s love, his forgiveness, his justice, power, and compassion.

So, how do we let the Holy Spirit lead? We start by praying—confessing times we’ve taken the lead ourselves and stepped on toes. We *ask* him to lead. We commit to follow. We read the Scripture, listening for the tune of his guidance. We listen to Sunday sermons. We talk over what we hear with others who are learning to dance with Jesus.

Meanwhile, we get in shape. We practise the dance steps: Giving generous gifts. Trusting God. Speaking the truth. Advocating for justice. Offering practical compassion to neighbours and strangers.

And when all the music points in the same direction—our own sense of the Spirit’s leading, God’s voice through Scripture, and the counsel of God’s people—we *follow*. We put our actions, money, words, and gifts to work in his service.

Why wait? Because if we try to do this on our own, we will mess it up. We will end up proud and arrogant, or broken and discouraged... or all of the above. And we will hurt people in the process.

Why wait? Because *this is not about us*. Our ambitions; our dreams and plans—when we put our trust in Jesus, we *offer them to him*. That’s what trusting Jesus means. It means *letting him lead*.

Shall we dance?

This month Denise thanks God for Grant Wilson’s partnership for the last 9 months. May God bless Grant and his wife, Grace, in their retirement. And we welcome Rev. Meg Patterson, from St. Stephen’s Presbyterian, who joins Denise as Co-Interim Moderator.

*Denise Allen-Macartney, Grant Wilson, Meg Patterson,
Interim Moderators*

SESSION SNIPPETS – Linda Clarke (Co-Clerk of Session)

At the Presbytery meeting on April 16th, Grant Wilson's request for retirement officially set for August 1, 2024, was accepted and a few people were given the opportunity to speak about his fruitful ministry at St. Paul's and before. Heartfelt thanks was expressed to this servant of God. We at Grace are thankful for his leadership as co-Interim Moderator over the past 8 months. Meg Patterson, pastor of St. Stephen's Church on Parkdale Ave. was identified as our next co-Interim Moderator. Your elders were happy to welcome her to our Session meeting the very next evening. We are blessed to have such willing and capable leadership in Denise and Meg.

I attended the first ever Presbytery retreat last November where we discussed the book "When Church Stops Working". There is a follow-up day retreat on June 19th which I hope to attend where we will examine the art of prayer through journaling.

The moderator for the next PCC general assembly in June is Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls. She is a retired professor of Hebrew Bible and Dean of the faculty at Vancouver School of Theology. She is active in ministry in New Westminster and Burnaby, B.C. She has been active in the courts and committees of the PCC.

Two of our elders have answered the call to preach. Tomm Kuiperij and Brian Wilson attended a conference for lay preachers in Kemptville on April 20th where they received instruction on effective preaching methods. We look forward to hearing God's message through Tomm and Brian more regularly over the coming months.

The Monday evening bible study led by Tomm Kuiperij was completed on Easter Monday. Stay tuned for the next one likely in September.

The AGM was held on April 7th, commencing with a potluck dinner and moving on to the business meeting at 7:00 pm. The theme of the meeting was one of gratefulness for God's provision and for the hope for the future. The key is to keep our eyes focused on Jesus. We finished 2023 with a small financial surplus and are looking at a healthy first quarter of 2024. Praise God!

There are many people who provide valuable contributions to the life of Grace Church and this month I want to highlight and thank our treasurer, Suzanne MacDonald, who has held this important position for many years. She makes sure our staff is paid and that the financial records are accurate. The beginning of each year is busy filling out tax forms, financial statements and the statistical report for PCC. Thank you, Suzanne, for serving God in this important ministry. You are much appreciated!

Linda

Communion: What does this service mean to us?

This was the title of a sermon written on Nov 3, 1966, by Reverend Archibald Russell the Minister at Arbroath Abbey, a Presbyterian church in Scotland. He happens to be Maureen Martin's late uncle. I had been planning to write an article on the importance of celebrating communion monthly. Around that time as if by divine providence, Maureen offered to give me a few of her uncle's sermons when she heard that I would be preaching one Sunday at Grace. I happily accepted them. In the old brown leather folder, she gave me I found a powerful sermon on what celebrating communion means to us. I would like to share a portion of what he wrote with you now. Be aware that some words or phrases may sound a bit off in our time but the message is still very clear even 62 years later.

"All I desire to do today is just very simply to remind you of a very few significant things in connection with this service". ... What does this service mean to us? Primarily it's a remembrance of Christ's death". 'This do, in remembrance of me', "He said". 'As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup you do show forth the Lord's death till He come'... "We are gathered around the Cross: and never was there such a manifestation of love as Calvary's cross exhibited" So, we have come to celebrate this sacrament of Communion. ...

"But what is a sacrament? A sacrament is two things – First a sacrament is something, usually a quite ordinary and common thing, which has acquired a meaning and significance and value far beyond itself. This is not merely a theological truth, remote from life. This something which happens in everyday life. For this part I will forgo Reverend Russel's first two examples and offer my own example relevant for our time. The Stanley cup is not just a silver cup that sits on a stand with a bunch of names on it. It represents every team in the entire history of the National Hockey League and about 20 years before that who competed to become the best hockey team on the planet. The cup's value goes way beyond the cost of the materials used to make it. Its lure is so powerful that players earning millions of dollars a year are willing to play in a tournament for free, so that if successful by being the last team standing, can hoist this cup and say, "we are the champions". The Stanley Cup then, is a sacrament.

Reverend Russel's third example is still relevant today. "In our homes we all have a drawer filled with what anyone else would call rubbish or junk – lest we cannot bring ourselves to throw them out. Why??? Because everything in it speaks to us of some person or some occasion. When we take these things in our hands a person or presence of a memory comes back. That is a sacrament. The things which we value are clothed with a value far beyond themselves."

"Today, (during communion) we take into our hands the common bread and wine (or juice), and common bread and wine they remain – but, for (those) who (have) a heart to feel and an eye to see, and a mind to understand, they have in them all the glory of the love of God!!"

"But second, the word 'Sacrament' comes from the Latin word Sacramentum," meaning an oath of allegiance or pledge. "Roman soldiers were required as far as possible to return to Rome once a year and there renew their pledge of allegiance. All the duties that he will have to do and the risks which he will have to undertake are carefully explained and then comes the words 'Fiat sacramentum' Let a sacrament be made, Let the oath be given – And there and then the Roman soldiers swore obedience and promise to serve their Emperor and fight his battles."

“What ever else is hard to understand, this, at any rate is crystal clear – by coming to this table we take an oath of loyalty to Jesus Christ. We are saying again with Peter, ‘Though all (people) shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended — Though I should die with thee, yet will I never deny thee – and when we go from this place (people) know that we have taken that oath and that pledge, and they judge the church, and they judge Christ by us. Whatever else we may forget about this day let us remember that we pledged ourselves to Christ. And may God help us keep that pledge!!”

“This (sacrament of communion) is meant to do far more than make us remember. It is meant to bring us into direct living contact with the Living Christ. There are some places like whenever we visit them, we somehow are brought nearer to those whom we have loved and lost awhile. There is an old legend of Zacchaeus – Sometimes he vanished, and no one knew where he had gone. One day he was followed, and they saw him go out along the road and stand by a certain tree which he touched almost as if he would caress it. ‘Zacchaeus’ said the one who had followed him. ‘Why do you do that??’ ‘It was from this tree,’ Zacchaeus answered, ‘that first I saw my Lord; and when I get all hot and bothered and worried and tired, I come out here and I stand beside it and I meet Him again.’

“You see my point: Jesus Christ is not someone about whom we read in a book. He is not someone who lived and died and whose story we listen to and tell. He is someone we meet. He is not dead. He is here!! Sure, we can meet Him anywhere; but here above all we may meet our Risen Lord and see Him face to face. The last reason for this sacrament quite simply is: So that God might get home to us, this great love for us, this love for every one of us: ‘For God so loved the world.’ Sometimes we get a letter from someone who is very dear and precious to us. All that the letter contains interests us very much: but the bit that really matters is the bit at the end where the person sends us his or her love. Well, this is God sending His love. It is more than that. In most services of the Church the ordinary member has little or nothing to do. But today every one of us must put forth their hand and take. It is as if God offered this love, not to a congregation, but to each one of us individually and separately. In the last analysis this is God telling us that ‘He loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love.’ Isn’t that wonderful!! And was it not worth your while to come even to hear that??”

Yes, it is wonderful Reverend Russell. We thank you for sharing with us the significance of celebrating the Communion Sacrament. Thanks again Maureen for this wonderful treasure.

Prepared by Brian Wilson, Elder at Grace Church

Hazelwood May 2024

by Donald Corbett (Living Faith Bible Church)

“19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.” 1 John 4: 19-21 (NIV)

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! I am writing this short devotional while watching the Pacific Ocean roll by, as we make our way northward to our next port of call in Victoria, BC.

So far, this has been an amazing trip. We were blessed with two sunny days to tour San Diego with our daughter, our son-in-law, and our two grandsons. It was a perfect start to our trip. We then met up with my sister, and brother; and their spouses to cruise from San Diego to Vancouver. We are now into Day 5 at sea and it has been simply wonderful to hang out with all the siblings.

“We love because he first loved us.” Love is a very powerful emotion, and Jesus teaches us to *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”* 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)**

John is saying much the same thing in verse 20 and it seems to me, he is also suggesting that if you are not right with your brother; your sister; your parents; your children; or anyone else for that matter, you need to get that sorted out because it is preventing you from being right with God. In today’s society we find ourselves facing the strange situation that if you disagree with someone, you clearly dislike them as well; or, even worse, hate them. I don’t know how this has come to be, but I doubt I am not the only one who has noticed this. Hate is such a crippling emotion. It darkens your life and closes your heart to love. It causes you to belittle those with whom you disagree, and prevents you from being able to see any other perspective but your own. It makes me so sad to see that lively and honest debate has all but died.

Love on the other hand can make a rainy day something to enjoy. It allows you to stop and listen to what others have to say. This, in turn, gives you the opportunity to learn something; or to see a situation from different perspective. I have been blessed throughout my life with parents and siblings that have loved me unconditionally. Have I always deserved it? Definitely not! I know that I can be a very difficult person, but I also know that despite my failings, I love my siblings, and my entire family with all my heart; and by extension, I am working hard to love everyone I deal with. Am I there yet? Probably not; but since John tells us, “Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister”, I need to work on it.

Is there someone in your life that you find difficult? If there isn’t, I would love to know how you have accomplished that. In the meantime I plan to take it one step, one person, at a time, beginning with the fellow I see every morning when he’s brushing his teeth.

God Bless,

Donald

“Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.” 1 John 4:20

Mission Moment: by Linda Clarke



Centre Miriam Centre

This Mission Moment was first published in May of last year. I thought it would be appropriate to submit it again since we are having a fundraiser for the Miriam Centre in the form of a baby shower on May 5th. It's always good to be informed on where our donations are going.

Miriam Centre has been serving the community since 1988. It offers emotional and spiritual support as well as practical assistance to all who find the circumstances surrounding their pregnancy difficult. It also provides follow-up care and guidance after the birth of the child. There are 3 fulltime staff members and various volunteers.

Miriam Centre reaches out with love and compassion to those grieving the loss of a child through miscarriage, abortion or infant death, sharing their pain and helping them experience healing and peace.

The Centre receives no funding from the government. It could not exist without the generosity of its loyal supporters and the proceeds from various fundraising events.

As important as it has been and continues to be for Miriam Centre, this type of funding never really provided the level of stable and predictable income necessary for the efficient operation of any organization. This led to the creation of a sister organization in 1998.

MIRIAM CENTRE FOUNDATION

The Foundation is an autonomous organization, with its own Board of Directors, whose sole mission is to help Miriam Centre meet its financial requirements. The Foundation collects and invests the donations it receives; the interest produced by the investment of this capital is transferred to Miriam Centre.

In other words, while donations to Miriam Centre are used to cover ongoing expenses, donations to the Foundation are an investment in the future of Miriam Centre. Among other things, donations to the Foundation make long-term planning much easier, as they guarantee that funds will always be available to finance at least some of the work done by Miriam Centre.

The information above was taken directly from their brochure. The stamps that we collect all year long are given to the Miriam Centre, sorted and displayed and available for purchase at their annual stamp sale in May. Miriam Centre is located at 1803 St. Joseph Blvd, unit 107 in Orleans. When I'm travelling I usually try to pick up some stamps from the country I'm visiting to contribute to their collection. Financial donations are gratefully accepted too. Canadian Tire money, used or new jewelry are also accepted and appreciated.

MAY
2024

Kids Corner

May 5th we will have a “Baby Shower” in support of the Miriam Centre right after our Communion service. Bring along your baby items or give a donation and join us for some cake.

April’s Kids Club was held on the 26th and continued the spring theme with a spotlight on bugs and insects including fun activities like bug bingo, making butterfly crafts and enjoying a bug themed snack!

A big thank you to Stacey, Leslie, Anne and Cyndi for planning and leading this

important ministry. Also a shout out to Joan and our friends at Living Faith for their participation and support.

If you would like to help out with children’s ministry, please speak with Tomm Kuiperij, our Discipleship Elder or let me know! We are looking for “standby” volunteers Sunday morning to spend time with any children who might

come. No experience or prep required. We will also be looking for a dozen volunteers for our summer day camp happening the week of August 12th—group leaders, station leaders, game/activity supervisors, registration and more!

Arlene

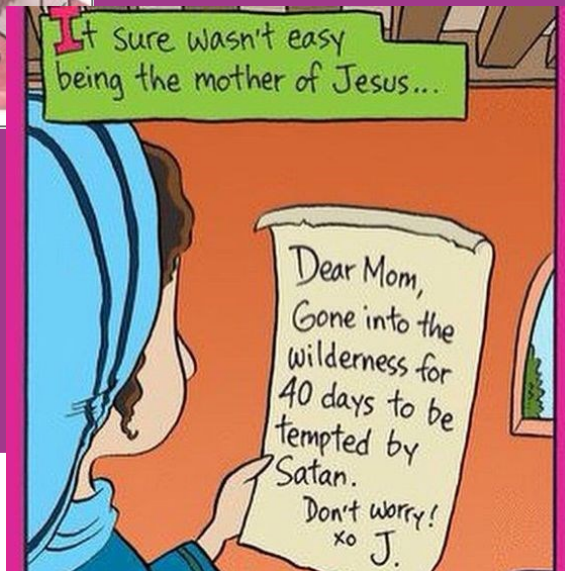


SHEPHERD'S VOICE

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. - JOHN 10:27 NIV



Grace's Ministry Groups

The six functional groups and their leaders are:

1. Worship Coordination: Brian Wilson
2. Discipleship: Tomm Kuiperi
3. Pastoral Care: Yohanna Kimoun
4. Faith Sharing: Linda Clarke
5. Temporal Support: Shirley Blank
6. Personnel Support: Linda Clarke



Opportunities to Serve!

- **Children's ministry:** We need people on "stand by" Sunday mornings to take any kids out for Sunday school. There are lots of ways you can help! We also appreciate your prayers.
- **Fundraising Committee:** looking for people to help plan, setup, take down, cook, and participate! Talk to Linda, Lauren or Arlene for more info.
- **We need volunteers to help in the sound booth!** Advancing the slides, camera work, livestream and sound board. Contact Judy Richmond or the office if you can help! Training is provided—no experience necessary just a willingness to dedicate the time Sunday mornings.

Contact the church office for more information on how you can help!
admin@graceorleans.ca or by phone at 613-824-9260.