

GRACE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Session Snippets
- Mission Moment
- Hazelwood
- Kids Corner

ONLINE OR
IN-PERSON

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
SUNDAYS AT 10:30AM

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.CA



Good Gracious Gracious

January 2025

Gifts of God

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

The book of Hebrews is a pretty unique book within the New Testament. It is the only letter where we don't have a good idea of who wrote it. It is directed at Jewish Christians (though all of us can learn from it!), and it is full of Old Testament references and stories. In chapter 7, it has a fascinating comparison of Jesus to the priest Melchizedek from Genesis 14:18-20. In chapter 11, the author offers a wonderful list of people throughout history who were faithful to God, encouraging us to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus" (Hebrews 12:1b-2a).

The prayer that is quoted above comes from the final greetings at the end of the letter. It sums up for the readers all the hopes and dreams the author has for us. We are reminded of who we have to thank for the great gifts in our life, names Jesus as the great Shepherd who died for our sins, and it affirms to whom we give the glory for all God is accomplishing in our lives. It also reminds us that God has given us good work to do.

Thinking of good work, thank you to all the people who came out to our "Asset Mapping" exercise on January 19. It was lovely to meet so many of you and to see people of every generation engaged in making lists of gifts God has given to Grace Church. Our final list included about 100 items, and if we took more time or asked more people, I imagine it could grow even further. God has been so generous to us at Grace!

As we give thanks for God's goodness, we can look forward to how God is using these gifts to equip us "with everything good for doing his will." While we didn't focus on what that work is or will be during our Asset Mapping session, hopefully it is something you are continuing to pray about.

Here are some questions we have been pondering as Interim Moderators and with the Session, for your consideration:

What opportunities might we have with the other worshipping communities in our space to work together? (from the **Partnership** asset list)

How does our worship time, full of singing, faith, prayer, and Biblical teaching, connect with our lives throughout the week? (from the **Congregation** and **People** asset lists)

How is God inviting us to use our location, our big lawn and parking lot, and our many rooms to connect with and be a blessing to our neighbours? (from the **Physical** asset list)

If God gives you an idea, please share it with us or your elder. Happy pondering!

Denise Allen-Macartney and Meg Patterson, Interim Moderators

Session Snippets – Linda Clarke

Christmas decorations have been put away and preparations for end-of-year financial and ministry reports are next in mind. Our AGM will be happening on March 29, 2025 starting with a potluck supper. It will be a time to socialize, review the financial statements and annual ministry reports for 2024 and praise God for His faithfulness to us as we end the year in a good financial position with hope and prayerful expectation for the future.

The Christmas Eve service was beautiful and attended by approximately 120 people from Living Faith and Grace. It was wonderful to have Pastor Dan MacKinnon back in the pulpit and Dawn playing her flute. Many visiting family members and friends we see only at Christmas were in attendance. Christ's birth came alive to us again through the music and Scriptures.

Brian, Shirley and Linda are continuing with the online Missional Leadership course and as part of the homework from the last session, we held a congregational meeting on January 19 to complete a project called asset mapping. Over lunch, 31 people participated in listing the assets we recognize in the categories of Physical, Congregation, People, Financial and Partnerships. The exercise was led by Rev. Meg Patterson, co-interim moderator, who had completed the same process the week before with her own congregation of St. Stephens. It was very encouraging to think of and list all the assets we have, how blessed we are and to consider the opportunities available to us to use our assets to reach out to serve our community. The list we came up with will be used eventually in the formation of our church profile.

Belinda Barnes, Judy Richmond, Allan Smith and Linda Clarke will be working with Pastor Meg to establish a church profile over the next few months. Their first meeting will be January 29. Local statistics about our community will be compiled as well as a formulation of what Grace Church is, at this point in time and what we desire for the future. A pastor fund was established at our congregational budget meeting in November. The goal for that fund for 2025 is \$50,000. Eventually, God will reveal to us the right time to start the search for a pastor. It's not yet. In the meantime, we feel it is prudent to do some self-examination and planning for the future in order to be ready.

The preaching roster is complete 'til the end of June, thanks to Pastor Denise. We continue to be blessed by the variety of speakers who share their gift of preaching with us. We continue to be thankful for everyone in our congregation who has stepped into roles, big and small, that are necessary in the life of the church. Session is very grateful for your engagement!

I (Linda) attended a meeting on January 14 about Liberty of Conscience and Action. Respecting and showing love to one another continues to be key while interacting with people or congregations within the Presbytery and denomination who may not share with us the same doctrinal belief in some areas. We continue to be granted Liberty of Conscience and Action in these areas.

On behalf of Session, I would like to invite anyone who is not yet a member of Grace Church to consider this step. Seek God in prayer to ask for His guidance and will. Community is one of God's great gifts. If you feel God is inviting you to join Grace Church, please talk to an elder. We are open to welcome new members in the spring.

4 Questions to Ponder (Linda Clarke)

On January 12, 2025, Alaina Johnston was at Grace Church preaching from Genesis 1, the story of creation. She concluded her message by inviting us to take a moment to examine our beliefs about who we are, about who God is, about who other people are and about the created world. Alaina presented these 4 questions quickly at the end of her message so I thought it would be good to present her 4 questions again where we could truly meditate on them.

She said, “For some of you, it might be that you’re realizing that parts of your functional worldview is not fully in line with the worldview presented in Genesis 1. It can be easy for us as Christians to know what we ‘should’ believe, but if we’re being honest sometimes our priorities, our thoughts, our fears or our actions reveal that we are struggling to actually believe it. Or at least that we’re not living like we fully believe it.

Others of you may be able to say that you truly do believe these things about God, yourself, and the world. If that’s you, I would invite you to consider if there is one that the spirit is highlighting for you right now that is important for you to keep top-of mind in the coming week.

Whether you’re sensing that the Spirit is inviting you to reshape your worldview, or that He simply wants to remind you of things you already believe are true, I invite you to consider the following questions and pray about whichever one stands out to you the most:

How is God inviting you into deeper belief in His power, His goodness, and His presence with you?

How is God inviting you to see yourself as He sees you, as made in His image and called ‘very good’?

How is God inviting you to see others as He sees them, as made in His image and called ‘very good’?

How is God inviting you to use your dominion well as you relate to the created world?”

Hazelwood – Let me be your servant by Donald Corbett (Living Faith Bible Church)

Recently, our church established the Council of Elders and elected its first slate of leaders to take up the reins from the initial volunteer leadership team. A couple of weeks ago, these newly elected Elders were ordained before God to serve the congregation to the best of their abilities.

So here we have a group of people elected to lead, who at the same time, are expected to serve. How does that work?

A search for the definition of leadership will produce a plethora of statements about “influence”, “group cohesion”, “maximising effort”, and “achieving goals”. While these sorts of things work well in a business setting; how might that translate to a church congregation on a spiritual journey?

The opening verse of “The Servant Song”, by Richard Gillard is a good place to start.

“Brother, Sister let me serve you. Let me be as Christ to you. Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.”

The song’s main theme was inspired by Jesus’ words to his disciples, recorded in Matthew 20:25–28 (NIV), “...You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Servant leadership is an approach to leadership where the leader puts the needs of others before their desires, and acts as a servant first. It is less about power and authority and more about love and compassion.

Jesus is the ultimate example of a servant leader, and those who have been called to lead in his church would do well to follow his lead. Those called to leadership in the church draw their authority from God. They are fully accountable to him, and must ensure their plans and decisions will be pleasing in his sight; and that all follow on action will serve to glorify his name. To do so, they must look to God’s word for guidance, and to Jesus Christ as the example – the ways of the world have no place here.

Jesus Christ demonstrated servant leadership by washing His disciples’ feet – typically the job of the lowest servant. Even though Jesus was God in human form, He humbled Himself to serve His disciples. This act of service showed His humility and love for His followers. In John 13:14-15, Jesus said, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

Paul, in Philippians 2:3-4, demonstrates that he had learned from Jesus’ example when he writes, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Humility is a key trait of Christian servant leadership.

“I will weep when you are weeping. When you laugh, I’ll laugh with you. I will share your joy and sorrow, ‘till we’ve seen this journey through.”

Jesus demonstrated great compassion for others; and showed great care and concern for the sick, oppressed, and those rejected by society. In Matthew 9:36 we read, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

Servant leaders empower others by encouraging and supporting them to use their gifts and talents to make a positive difference in the world. This creates the opportunity for them to grow, learn, and succeed. It takes a certain level of humility but it creates a culture of collaboration and respect.

A servant leader puts the needs of others before their desires and acts as a servant first. Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of a servant leader, and His life and teachings show us how important it is to lead with love, compassion, and a servant’s heart. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to follow his example by showing compassion, empowering others, and creating a culture of respect and collaboration. Leading with love and humility for God’s glory makes a positive difference.

“Will you let me be your servant? Let me be as Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace, to let you be my servant too!”

In love,
Donald

“Brother, Sister let me serve you. Let me be as Christ to you. Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.”

YWAM Dunham – Dan and Sarah Hall



YWAM is a global movement of Christians from many cultures, age groups and Christian traditions dedicated to knowing God and making God known throughout the world. The movement began in 1960 and was started to get young people involved in outreach. They still do that today but they are involved in every kind of ministry and outreach imaginable. They have over 18,000 staff in over 180 locations in countries around the world. Their many ministries fit into 3 categories:

Evangelism – Everyone has the right to hear about Jesus

Training – to equip people to use their unique calling to evangelize. Everyone must complete an intense half year of DTS (Discipleship Training School) prior to completing a Mission trip

Mercy Ministries – giving hope to poor, sick and those suffering from injustice

Dan and Sarah grew up in Grace Church, led the youth group, married and joined YWAM serving in Dunham, Quebec. We have been supporting them prayerfully and financially throughout their journey for over 17 years. They have leadership roles in Dunham now.

Sarah is a talented artist, has her own studio and uses her art to reach out to the Dunham community to introduce the local artists to experience God through their art medium. An initiative she started last year called 'Beautiful Gate Arts Collective' is entering the second year. Artists from the area gather to work together and be encouraged, refreshed and empowered by the Spirit.

As part of the 6 month DTS (discipleship training school) that commenced in January, Dan and Sarah guided a couple dozen young adults and teens through the entire bible in one week. Even people from the local community joined in.

Dan and Sarah are off to Fanda, Senegal (West Africa) in February. This is a pastoral visit to a family sent out from YWAM Dunham to join a team pioneering YWAM in Fanda. Fundraising for this trip is going well but they are still short of the required amount to fly there. If you have on your heart to contribute to their expenses, please contact the office for ways you can do this.

If you are interested to know more about YWAM Dunham, check out their website ywamdunham.com



Kids Corner

FEBRUARY
2025

The new year has begun and the old has passed. Kids Club had their first event of 2025 on Friday January 24th with a fun winter theme. I know there was some winter crafts, games, snacks and an indoor snowball fight!

A brand new change table was installed in the accessible washroom in the narthex. No any parents with babies will be

able to change diapers without going through the whole building. We also have a few groups using the building with babies that will benefit from this additional location. Check it out for yourself! A big thank you to Lauren and Tomm for handling the purchase and installation!

If you have any questions or wish to help in children's ministry, please contact me in the office at admin@graceorleans.ca or 613-824-9260.

Arlene

GOD'S LOVE DISPLAYED

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

— ROMANS 5:8 NIV



"Look, Mom. A Valentine theme."

Grace's Ministry Groups

The six functional groups and there leaders are:

1. Worship Coordination: Brian Wilson
2. Discipleship: Linda Clarke
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, Shirley or Arlene for more info.

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