

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

VISIT
WWW.GRACEORLEANS
.CA



Good Gracious Gracious

April 2025

Neighbours

*The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.
We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son,
Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.*

(John 1:14, The Message)

It takes an effort to get to know the neighbours. Frankly, we're not so sure we want to. Funny thing about God, though: neighbours are high on his list.

God goes to great lengths for neighbours.

John opens his Gospel with God's *Good News*. Not a press release, but a person. The message about who God is and what God is doing arrived in-person, *became* a person, and took up residence. In Jesus, God became our neighbour.

Jesus comes into dark and broken places to bring God's light and life and hope. It's an uphill battle. The story of what it cost Jesus to move in, to bring God's rescue to neighbourhoods the world over, takes all of John's Gospel and more to tell.

You know how it turns out: All that light and life and hope come to a bad end. The uphill journey takes Jesus to a brutal death on a cross. In the eyes of Jesus' few hapless friends, the story couldn't be worse. When things go south, they all cut and run. And so, the failed messiah leaves behind a collection of failed friends. Lost hope.

But God's story is all about the surprise ending. God's future invades our bleak present. Resurrection arrives. Jesus is alive!

When Jesus returns to his Father, he gives his friends an assignment: "I'm in charge. I'm sending you. Take my love, my rescue, and my blessing to the neighbours. I'll be with you." (That's not quite word-for-word... but it's close. Check out Matthew 28:16-20.)

Once again, God moves into the neighbourhood: through *us*. The Holy Spirit, alive *in us*. *We*, who are baptised into Jesus, *are Christ's body*.

Grace Church is not simply a collection of rescued individuals. You are a family—formed by Jesus' life and death and resurrection, energized and guided by the Holy Spirit—to *love the neighbours*.

The Holy Spirit is here. Now. Equipping us to bless business people, community leaders, first responders, folks who wrestle with addiction, families and neighbours.

According to Jesus, God's purpose for us is summed up in twin assignments: to love God with everything we've got, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Look what God does: *he* loves *us*, and loves the world so much, that he moves right in. *He* became the neighbour who loved and gave himself completely.

For us. For our neighbours.

News so good, you can't keep a lid on it.



Denise Allen-Macartney and Meg Patterson, Interim Moderators

Session Snippets – Linda Clarke

Spring is in the air and with the revival of nature, I pray our faith and our energy will be revived as well. We are in the season of Lent. I want to share with you some Holy Week readings that were published by the Canadian Bible Society in 2012 (still relevant). Palm Sunday – Matthew 21:12-22. Monday – Matthew 26:1-30. Tuesday – Matthew 26:31-56. Wednesday – Matthew 26:57-27:2. Thursday – Matthew 27:3-31. Good Friday – Matthew 27:32-56. Holy Saturday – Matthew 27:57-66. Easter Sunday – Matthew 28:1-15. Please join us for a joint service with Living Faith Bible Church on Good Friday at 10:30 a.m. and then of course return on Easter Sunday with family and friends.

Brian, Shirley and I attended the 4th online session of the Certificate of Missional Leadership course on Saturday, March 22nd. We heard from a few churches on what they did to reach out to the community e.g. offered exercise classes, chair yoga, free seminars on cyber scam prevention. We were advised to be aware of how God is already working and join Him in that work. We received the challenge to come up with ideas for our own community. Another challenge was to be ready to share with anyone who asks to describe the hope that is in us, 1 Peter 3:15. This is a gentle and respectful way to evangelize.

The Profile Committee is looking forward to examining the results of the congregational survey that was circulated and due back on April 6. We are prayerful that there will be a good response and that we can identify some common threads. We are grateful to all those who have participated in this exercise. If questions have surfaced out of that survey, please don't hesitate to ask an elder to help you with the answer.

We are very excited to have the Pilkington/McDougall family affirming their faith on April 6 including the baptism of Kate and Jane. We are pleased to have Jocelyn and Krista Simon become members on the Communicant Roll as well. Jocelyn was a pastor in a Presbyterian Church in Mauritius before coming to Canada last year. Please come out to celebrate this joyous occasion. Praise God! Pastor Denise will be with us to officiate.

Our AGM was held on Saturday, March 29 to review the ministry and financial reports of 2024. We are encouraged by the progress made and so grateful to God for how He is blessing us. About 18 people came out for a potluck supper and fellowship prior to the meeting. We thank Pastor Meg for moderating the meeting and for spending her Saturday evening with us.

The worship service on Sunday, March 30 was cancelled due to the threat of freezing rain. Our preacher that Sunday was coming from Casselman so we didn't want to put him or anyone else in possible danger on the roads. There were many choices of services available online. Isn't technology wonderful!

Mission Moment: by Linda Clarke



Grace Church has been partnered with Dave and Judy Wright from 1996-2015 while they were in Papua New Guinea and since then in northern Saskatchewan. We are pleased to receive updates, prayer requests and occasional visits to hear of their ongoing ministry. Dave and Judy have dedicated their life's work to establish ways to bring the gospel to unreached peoples in their own heart language.

Why did they come back to Canada from Papua New Guinea? "While on furlough in 2015, a Woodland Cree Elder/evangelist pursued Dave, eager to learn how to effectively build a church that would continue to mature. He asked if what had been developed by Ethnos overseas could be shared with his people here. This was the beginning of 'Establish – A foundational disciple-making series.' Now, through Establish, God is beginning to bless both aboriginal and non-aboriginal churches right here in Canada." They have progressed to the second version of Establish 103 which is about Acts.

They have published a new tool entitled 'The Maturing Church' which is a tool to assess the maturing of the churches that they plant around the world.

Their 'equipping groups' are multiplying in Saskatchewan and Central America and they are praying for 100 more 'equipping groups' in 2025.

They are working on translating their 'Who is God?' booklet, an evangelizing tool, into Mandarin and Portuguese. They are waiting for funds to translate the booklet into Farsi and Arabic.

Their daughter Katie is raising her support team in order to go back to Papua New Guinea as a Bible translator on a new church planting team.

That's just a brief overview of Dave and Judy's ministry to bring the gospel to people in their own heart language. Please continue to pray for them and their daughter.

Ben's Book Notes

Submitted by Linda Clarke

The following is a book review written by a dear Christian man, an acquaintance of mine who we met on a bus tour in USA.

He read the book several years ago, "Red Sea Rules" by Robert Morgan. We all need to recognize this truth. **God is and always will be in control of the situation. And His purposes are good.** We might question this from time to time, but it is true!

If you're ever in a place where you wonder "**How in the world did I get HERE?? and How is God going to get me out of THIS ?! (or is He?)**" Here are the ten Red Sea rules for moving from fear to faith that are outlined in Robert Morgan's book:

Rule 1 - Realize that God means you to be where you are. It's comforting in a strange sort of way to know the Lord MEANS for us to be right here right now. Okay, then, we should probably not squirm and try to get away. This rule is usually the toughest for us to accept, but once that's done, it's a bit easier to move on to the rest. We face issues in our lives by God's appointment and for his purpose. We may not know what God's purpose in the situation is, but we can rest assured that God has not abandoned us. He has some purpose for us. That realization shapes our attitudes as we face our trials.

Rule 2 - Be more concerned for God's glory than for your relief. Scripture is full of situations where God received glory even in the midst of hard times, the greatest of which was Calvary itself. So why should our little life be the exception? **When we find ourselves in trying circumstances**, the first question that should come to our minds is not "How can I get out of this mess?" That's the question we all naturally ask. But we need to train ourselves to ask another question instead: "How can I honor God in this situation?" Jesus is our example. He did not try to escape from his death on the cross.

Rule 3 - Acknowledge your enemy but keep your eyes on the Lord. Take a hard look at your problem. Don't pretend that it is not there. Faith means that you evaluate your problem carefully and think about what God wants you to do. We don't want to confuse faith with denial. But we also don't want to be so consumed by our problems that we leave God out of the picture. God wants us to face our problems realistically, but he also wants us to look to him and remember he has promised to guide us through them. "The same God who led you *in* will lead you *out*."

Rule 4 - Pray! It's how we express that we need God. It's our way of telling Him how we feel, what we think we need, how much we need him, and to thank Him for what He's provided (providing?) In *The Red Sea Rules*, Robert Morgan makes an intriguing point. "There's something about praying with another person that intensifies prayer and sends it to heaven with greater velocity." It's good for us to pray together. God wants us to share our needs and join together in presenting our requests to him.

Rule 5 - Stay calm and confident and give God time to work. God's thoughts aren't our thoughts (or should I say our thoughts are not His?) His ways and methods are not ours, and our timetable very seldom matches His. I'm most content when I let Him be God. **Staying calm** doesn't come easily to us. We find it easier to panic! **Confident?** But worry comes rushing in without us even giving it any thought. **And give God time to work.** That's the hardest part of this rule. We must put this rule into practice.

Rule 6 - When unsure, just take the next logical step by faith. He'll show the next step when it's time. When we drive at night our headlights don't shine all the way to our destination either; just far enough to see what's next. But what do we do while we are waiting to see what God is going to do? **When unsure, just take the next logical step by faith.** Don't waste your time regretting the past. Don't dream about what might happen in the future. Go do what you can do *right now* and leave the results up to God.

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Rule 7 - Envision God's enveloping presence. Talk about comforting! When we live our life fully aware that God is with us RIGHT here RIGHT now, it changes the whole equation in front of us. The word *envision* connotes the idea of imagining something is true. If we are believers in Christ, we don't have to pretend that God is with us in difficulties. He really is! Another way to think of it is **Cultivate God's presence** or **practice God's presence**. Or **Learn to rest in God's embrace**.

Rule 8 - Trust God to deliver in His own unique way. God knows people we don't know, has resources we're unaware of, has perfect timing, and can see the long-term impact of all the scenarios. That's why He uses His own ways and methods so often.

Rule 9 - View your current crisis as a faith builder for the future. Every faith

success builds strength. Every failure can too. God is interested in more than our happiness. If we are a believer in Jesus, then **God is making us into a person who will live with him for eternity**. That's the way that God looks at us, and that's the way we need to look at ourselves. We are creatures being prepared to live in the heavenly presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords. It doesn't mean that happiness on earth is something bad. God created this world, and we should enjoy God's good creation. But as believers in Jesus, we also have to recognize that God has more in mind for us than our happiness. God is preparing us for eternity with Him.

Rule 10 - Don't forget to praise Him. Our relationship with God doesn't need to end when our circumstances get hard. Things happen as an example of who God is, and how He works with us. God is good all the time. Whether our circumstances come to an end or not, we'll always have him. Develop a perspective of PRAISE!! Praising God is to express delight in who He is and what he has done. We can praise God for the way He guides and stretches us, while He encourages us to grow in patience!

God delights to bring great victory out of certain defeat. At times He seems to go out of His way to ensure that the odds are overwhelmingly against His people so that when victory is achieved, there can only be one explanation: God did it!!

Blessings, Ben

Hazelwood – “The Light of the World is Jesus!” by Donald Corbet (LFBC)

Not that long ago, Teresa and I shared a wonderful week of relaxation, with little more than wilderness scenery, great conversation, and a stack of books to fill our days. One of my books was the most recent Louise Penney novel, “*The Grey Wolf*.” It is a well crafted tale that so completely held my interest I did not want to put it down. About midway through the book, the main character, Inspector Gamache, found himself trapped in the catacombs of an old monastery when the power failed.

“It was disorienting to be in complete darkness and utter silence. Instead of turning on his flashlight, he allowed his eyes to adjust. It was, he thought, a sort of metaphor. How easily humans could adjust to darkness. To dark thoughts and darker deeds. Until finally, the darkness became normal; and they no longer missed, or looked for, or trusted, the light.”

I stopped reading, and gazed out the window, as it dawned on me that with one brief, powerful thought, the author had invited this reader into something much more than a mystery novel.

In Genesis, Chapter 1, we see that one of the first things God did was to separate light from darkness. In fact, the separation of light and darkness is a recurring theme in the Bible.

In the Gospel of John, we read, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome [understood] it.” (John 1: 1-5)*

Have you ever found yourself in complete darkness? As a soldier, I became accustomed to operating at night and in the shadows; in fact, I remain quite comfortable with it. But the darkest night is nothing compared to complete darkness. Complete darkness can be very disorienting; you lose your sense of direction, your balance is compromised, and you have an overwhelming urge to get down onto your hands and knees and crawl. In most people it will quickly lead to panic; and panic can lead to death.

The effect of spiritual darkness is much the same. The onset, however, is rarely sudden; rather it is gradual, and before long you have “adjusted” to the darkness, and the light no longer seems necessary. Satan is crafty that way, but Jesus is stronger, and he will immediately turn darkness to light, showing you the way “*from the power of Satan to God*”. (Acts 26: 18); and this is exactly how, in Acts 26, Paul described his call to ministry; and there is no doubt that Paul focussed much of his ministry to leading people from the darkness into the light that is Christ Jesus.

In about AD 50, Paul planted a church in Corinth. At that time, Corinth was a young re-established Roman city, with shallow roots, filled with materialism, pride, and immorality – sort of how we might imagine a “wild-west” town we’d see in a movie. A couple of years later, the people of the church had slowly turned from the Gospel to the darkness which Paul describes as “the god of this age.” Consequently, Paul feels compelled twice to write to the leaders in an effort to set them back onto the way of the Lord. In Chapter 4 of his second letter, he writes, “*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.*” (2 Corinthians 4: 4-6 NIV)

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Hazelwood – continued...

We only need to consider what is happening in the world today to realise that these words remain valid.

My friends, the light of Easter is shining – calling us. Sadly there are so many who refuse to heed the call to turn from the darkness to the light and its healing rays of forgiveness, redemption and salvation. They have so adjusted to the darkness that it has become normal; and they no longer miss, or seek, or trust, the light. In the midst of that darkness, God is once again saying **“Let there be light.”**

In John 3: 21 (NIV), we read, *“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.”*

As we live by the truth that is Jesus, and walk in the light through the power of the Holy Spirit we cannot help but point others to Jesus. Sometimes, like a lifeguard who must enter the water to save a person in peril, we too may need to carry the light of Jesus into the shadows to lead others to the foot of the cross.

The light of the world is Jesus! Let us never be afraid to take up that light and plunge into the darkness, bringing the light of salvation to those who desperately need it; and let us do so with a song in our heart!

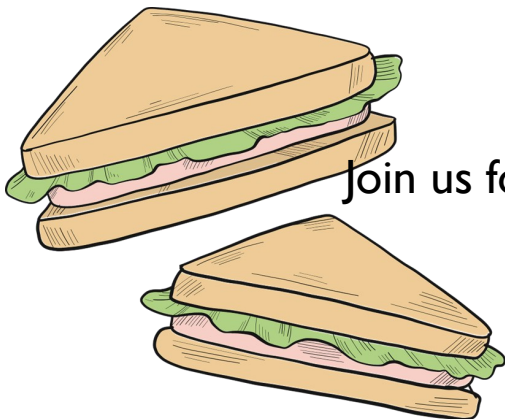
“Come to the light, 'tis shining for thee; sweetly the light has dawned upon me. Once I was blind, but now I can see: The Light of the world is Jesus!” (Hymn: “The Light of the world is Jesus”, P.P. Bliss, 1875)

God Bless,

Donald

Pause Table Reminder!

This is a friendly reminder that donations for the Pause Table (April 14th) need to be brought in by Sunday April 13th. We are looking for donations of baked goods plus pre-packaged snacks and drinks.



Join us for sandwich making after the service April 13th
supplies provided!

APRIL
2025

Kids Corner

This is a busy time in the church calendar as lent gives way to Good Friday and then the glorious celebration of Easter! Good Friday service will be Friday April 18th at 10:30am with Living Faith.

Kids Club just celebrated their Easter event on March 28th with a fun spring themed escape room style puzzle, hidden treats and of course the story of Jesus'

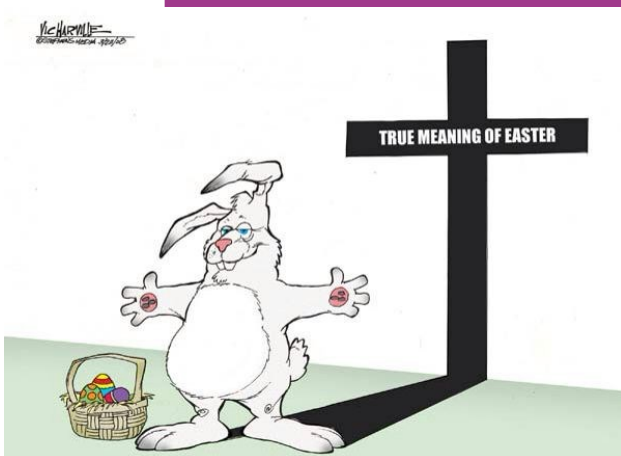
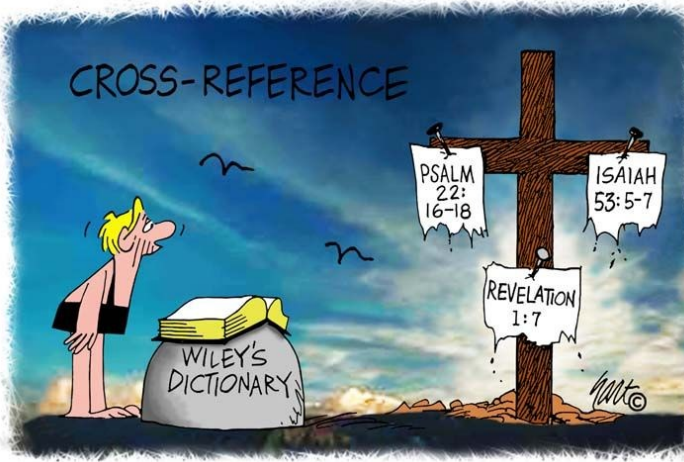
sacrifice and gift of eternal life!

Our camp registration is completely full with 30 kids registered plus another 2 families (4 kids) on a waiting list. The Step Right Up carnival themed camp will run from July 28th to August 1st 9am to 3pm. We will be looking for lots of volunteers to run this camp. The online sign up form is up.

(graceorleans.ca/events)
The physical sign up sheet will be up after Easter.

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



IMAGINE

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.