

# Grace Notes

## December 2013

Monthly Newsletter of Grace Baptist Church



### PASTOR RANDY'S NOTE...

Most of our celebrations of Advent begin with these words:

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
 And ransom captive Israel  
 That mourns in lonely exile here  
 Until the Son of God appear  
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
 Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Unlike Israel at the time of Christ's birth, we are not captives who need to be ransomed, nor do we have to mourn in lonely exile. Because Christ was born in a manger over two millennia years ago, we live each day set free with a new home awaiting us.

When we celebrate Advent, we do so looking both to the past and to the future. Before Jesus the Messiah came into the world, there was no hope for humankind and there was need for ransom. Paul puts it this way, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time." (1 Tim. 2:5-6) That is what God did in the past, and during the Advent season we celebrate that coming and that ransoming.

But sometime we forget the future aspect of Christ's Advent. Because He came the first time, and ransomed us, He is now ordained to come again and perfect us. John tells us, "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as He is. All who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure." (1 John 3:2-3) At the Second Advent, Christ will perfect that which He began at the First Advent.

This year, as you celebrate Advent, remember the babe who came in the manger to bring salvation to the world is the same person who will bring this present age to an end. John reminds us, "Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6)

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

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### DECEMBER COMMUNION

**SERVERS:**  
 Steve Hiatt  
 Diana Hiatt  
 Leon Jones  
 Johnni Beth Jones



## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

My almost-December musings are very positive: We are seeing more unity of purpose in our church body; we are taking more time for prayer in our meetings and gatherings; we are corporately (as a group) praying about what Grace should stop doing and what we should start doing instead. I am writing before mid-November and we have already seen and felt the Holy Spirit moving among us and helping us be both more like-minded and more focused on God's way, rather than our way or *my way*.

Pastor Randy's sermons and writings on being disciples have been a real jolt to me. My personal focus has been to hear a disciple is committed to [constant] change—in order to keep up with what God wants for that person and for the body of which they are a leg or chin or pinkie finger as their part/role. Pastor has done a great job of slamming me in the face and challenging me—and I hope that's true for you also—with my need to move from the position of steering my life and into letting God do so. I love the routine of the worship service, the rhythm of doing the same things every Sunday. I only like certain songs and certain tempos and short sermons... What difference does it make what I like when it is about God, about Jesus, about the Holy Spirit and not, amazingly enough, about me? I know I have a long road before me in order to truly, and at the molecular level, embrace what I've just said, but I can feel the change happening- the cramping, gut-wrenching change happening.

Last year in this article I made a plea for taking hold of the holiday season and not letting it run me—or you. I again pray, as we approach this time, we don't let ourselves be distracted by "what I have to get done." Pray for help and plan to drop something else this year. And have a blessed holy season remembering, thanking and praising God that He came to earth as a helpless infant and grew to become the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the world—and to each of us.

With you in His work,  
Sharon Owen, Moderator



## SPIRITUAL LIFE

Merry Christmas, Grace:

It is that hustling and bustling season again! Can you believe it is Christmas 2013? The Christmas Holiday is so busy, but let us remember to take time for some important things:

- Remember the reason for the season - the Birth of our Savior.
- Remember to give Him thanks for the many, many blessings He has given over the year.
- Remember to bless someone who really needs it.

A Christmas Project – we have come up with a wonderful little project for the kids this year. I think they will enjoy doing it; and I hope everyone will enjoy watching the finished product.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year- God Bless You!!

In Christ,  
Theresa Benson, Lay Minister of Spiritual Life



## EDUCATION

It's amazing what you may find when you clean neglected corners in your house! I found this amazing Christmas story my mother-in-law gave to me when I was a young mom. I would like to pass it on to you. Hopefully this will touch you as it touched me. The author is unknown, but it is worth reading.

### TEACH THE CHILDREN

Just a week before Christmas, I had a visitor. I just finished the household chores for the night and was preparing to go to bed when I heard a noise in the front of the house. I opened the door to the front room and to my surprise, Santa himself stepped out from behind the Christmas tree. He placed a finger over his mouth so I would not cry out. "What are you doing?" I started to ask. The words choked up in my throat as I saw he had tears in his eyes. His usual jolly manor was gone. Gone was the eager boisterous soul we all know. He then answered me with a simple statement, "Teach the children." I was puzzled. What did he mean?

He anticipated my question and with one quick movement brought forth a miniature toy bag from behind the tree. As I stood there bewildered, Santa said, "Teach the children! Teach them the meaning of Christmas. The meaning children nowadays have forgotten!"

Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a **fir tree** and placed it before the mantle. "Teach the children the pure green color of the stately fir tree remains green all year around, depicting the everlasting hope of mankind. All the needles point heavenward making it a symbol of man's thoughts toward heaven."

He again reached into his bag and pulled out a **brilliant star**. "Teach the children the star was the heavenly sign of promises long ago. God promised a Savior for the world, and the star was the sign of the fulfillment of that promise."

He then reached into his bag and pulled out a **candle**. "Teach the children the candle symbolizes that Christ is the light of the world, and when we see this great light we are reminded of He who displaced darkness."

Once again he reached into his bag and removed a **wreath** and placed it on the tree. "Teach the children the wreath symbolizes the eternal nature of love. Real love never ceases. Love is one continuous round of affection."

He then pulled out from his bag an **ornament of himself**. "Teach the children that I, Santa Claus, symbolize the generosity and good will we feel during the month of December."

He reached in and again pulled out a **holly leaf**. "Teach the children the holly plant represents immortality. It represents the Crown of Thorns worn by our Savior. The red berries represent the blood shed by Him."

Next he pulled out a **gift** from the bag and said, "Teach the children 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...' Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. Teach the children the Wise Men bowed before the Holy Babe and presented Him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We should always give gifts in the same spirit as the Wise Men."

(Continue on page 5)



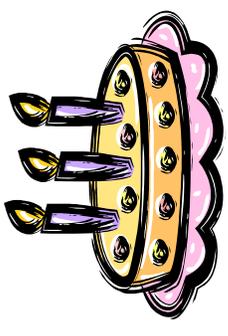
# DECEMBER 2013

Fellowship Fund offering is received the first Sunday of the month.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 COMMUNION 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship Celebration 6:00 pm Bible Study @ Church	2	3	4	5 6:30 pm Christmas Music Rehearsal	6 2:00 pm Set Up For Santa Breakfast 6:00-9:00 pm Iglesia Vision Nueva Church Bible Study	7 8:00 am Santa Breakfast
8 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship Celebration 6:00 pm Bible Study @ Church	9 11:00 am Cookie Distribution To Shut-Ins	10	11	12 6:30 pm Christmas Music Rehearsal	13 2:00 Meals For Minds @ Bridger 6:00-9:00 pm Iglesia Vision Nueva Church Bible Study	14 9:30 am Outreach Meeting 5:00 pm Adult White Elephant Christmas Party
15 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship Celebration Collect Food For Open Heart Pantry 6:00 pm Bible Study @ Church	16 JANUARY GRACE NOTES' ARTICLES DUE	17 6:30 pm Board Meeting	18	19 6:30 pm Christmas Music Rehearsal	20 12:00 pm Stocking Shelves @ MUM 3:00 pm-6:00 pm MUM's Food Distribution 6:00-9:00 pm Iglesia Vision Nueva Church Bible Study	21 9:00 am-12:00 pm MUM's Food Distribution 10:00 am Girlfriends' Birthday Breakfast @ Village Inn 11:30 am Girlfriends' Secret Santa
22 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship Celebration 6:00 Bible Study	23	24 Office Closed 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service	25  Merry Christmas! Office Closed	26	27 6:00-9:00 pm Iglesia Vision Nueva Church Bible Study	28 11:30 am ABW White Elephant Christmas Lunch @ Gateway Applebee's
29 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship Celebration 6:00 pm Bible Study @ Church	30 Happy New Year's Eve! Office Closed! 	31	<p><b>“Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life.”</b></p> <p><b>-Corrie Ten Boom</b></p>			

### December Birthdays

4 Dan Jones  
 6 Carol Morton  
 8 Lance Giancone  
 11 Maribel Kamsard  
 14 Doug Thompson  
 15 Dakota Stewart  
 21 Destiny Husted-Kamsard  
 29 Pastor Randy Pearson  
 31 Ralphine Martwick



### December Anniversaries

30 Ed & Betsy Vulgan



## CONTINUATION OF “TEACH THE CHILDREN”

Santa reached in his bag and pulled out a **candy cane** and hung it on the tree. “Teach the children the candy cane represents the shepherd’s crook. The crook on the shepherd’s staff helps to bring back strayed sheep to the flock. The candy cane is the symbol that we are our brother’s keeper.”

He reached in again and pulled out an **angel**. “Teach the children it was the angels who heralded in the glorious news of the Savior’s birth. The angels sang, ‘Glory to God in the Highest, on earth, peace, and good will toward men.’”

Suddenly I heard a soft twinkling sound; from his bag he pulled out a **bell**. “Teach the children the lost sheep are found by the sound of the bell; it should bring man to the fold. The bell symbolizes guidance and return.”

Santa looked back at the tree and was pleased. He looked back at me and I saw the twinkle was back in his eyes. He said, “Teach the children the true meaning of Christmas, and to not put me in the center, for I am but a humble servant of the One that is, and I bow down and worship Him, our Lord, our God.”

-Anonymous

Merry Christmas, Everyone! Remember, Jesus is the Reason For The Season!

Love in Christ,  
Beth Jones, Lay Minister of Education



## NOTES FROM YOUR MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER & LAY MINISTER OF CHURCH LIFE

by Judy Young

On November 9, all the singers and musicians of our praise team ministry met to create a “Praise Team Covenant.” It was a great time to get together and talk about what our ministry really means for Grace. A few of the things that came out of this meeting:

1. It’s about God, not about us!
2. This is a ministry to which we have been called.
3. Do our best for God!

As we strive to serve our Lord and minister to the church family, we want to be sure to cover our practices and worship times with prayer and remember God gave us a gift to share. Peter put it this way in I Peter 4:10, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

Christmas is here! Many extra activities fill our time and stretch our pocketbooks. Let’s all try to take a deep breath, not stress, and put Christ in the center of it all! Take time to spend with the Lord each day, in His Word and prayer.

We will be presenting a fun and thoughtful play on December 22, “Through a Child’s Eyes.” It would be a great time to invite family and friends to hear the Christmas story and enjoy Christmas carols! **Merry Christmas!**

## OUTREACH

**THANK YOU** very much for the many hours you've all given to support our Outreach activities during 2013. You have made a significant impact in our community and served faithfully as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ.

I would like to also say a very special THANK YOU to the faithful members of our Outreach Committee, Shannon Hastings, Diana Hiatt, Lorretta Mason and Betsy Vulkan. Please take time to express your appreciation to them for all the time and effort they've given this year.

- Our ongoing relationship with Bridger School continues to strengthen and grow. We look forward to even more contact with the school during 2014.
- In the spring we collected toiletries and filled 25 bags to meet the needs of the homeless here in Portland.
- Many have faithfully given groceries and/or their time to help support the Montavilla United Methodist food program.
- Mission giving through the end of October 2013 is over \$13,000.00.
- At our third annual Community BBQ in August, we hosted well over 200 people from the community. With the many volunteers we did set-up and clean-up in record time. Undoubtedly I have forgotten (or am not even aware of) the other ways our congregation has been out sharing the gospel with our community. Thank you for serving in so many ways.

Since this edition of our newsletter will go out before our December 7 Santa Breakfast, let me thank all of you in advance for making this another successful effort to reach our community for Christ. I'll plan to share pictures with you in the January newsletter.

As we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth, I wish you all God's joy, peace and blessings! Try to take time during this busy season to spend time with the Lord. And remember to invite Jesus to His birthday celebration!

**Merry Christmas** and a very Happy 2014.

In His Service,  
Helen Pearson, Lay Minister of Outreach



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Based on the approval of the 2014 church budget, our paid janitorial service will be cancelled as of December 31. Starting in January, we are asking for volunteers to help keep the church building clean. Our hope is to form at least four teams of four to five people so that teams can rotate and only have responsibility once a month. We will have a check list of things that will need to be done each week as well as cleaning carts on each floor to reduce the need to carry cleaning supplies up and down the stairs. If you are willing to volunteer to serve in this way, please contact Helen Pearson or me as soon as possible so we can have teams in place by January 1. Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this need.

Larry Martin, Lay Minister of Administration



## GRACE FAMILY FINANCES

### OCTOBER 2013

### JANUARY-OCTOBER 2013

**General Operating Fund**

Monthly Budget	\$ 10607.92
Income Received	\$ 12093.85
Expenses	\$ 9265.44
Net Balance for Month	\$ 2828.41

General Fund Balance 10/31/13                      \$ 5885.70

Boiler Fund Balance                                      \$ 1510.18

**Mission Fund**

Mission Giving Plan	\$ 1136.09
Specified gifts/offerings	\$ 927.00

AVERAGE MONTHLY BUDGET:	\$10607.92
AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME:	\$ 9293.03
AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENSES:	\$10203.28
DIFEERENCE:	\$ (910.25)

MISSION GIVING PLAN TD	\$12428.71
SPECIFIED GIFTS.OFFERINGS TD	\$ 4615.96

**Liabilities**

Payroll Tax Liabilities	\$ 438.55
Loan from Building Fund to GF Loan	\$ 8051.46
Boiler Loan	\$ 9260.60

## COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

As we enter the Christmas season and our celebration of God’s ultimate gift to us in Jesus, I pray we can intentionally step back from the busyness and activity to truly appreciate all God has done for us as individuals and as a church family. O come let us adore Him.

Blessings,  
Barb Furman, Lay Minister of Finance/Treasurer

## MONTAVILLA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH’S OPEN HEART PANTRY

Montavilla Methodist Open Heart continues to meet the needs of the community with the monthly food giveaway. In November, 32 families were helped. Six turkeys were given to larger families. December 20 and 21 will be the next food pantry dates. Remember to bring items that would complement Christmas Dinner. Frozen turkeys would be helpful as well. If you are able to donate a frozen turkey, please let us know so we can communicate that info to them. You may bring frozen turkeys to the Methodist church on Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, and they will put them in there freezers. If you would like someone to pick up the turkey for you, please let us know. Reminder: many grocery stores will give free or reduced price on turkeys when you spend extra dollars.

Cash donations are welcome as well.

Shannon





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*All we do inside these  
walls prepares us to do  
God's work outside.*

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## **WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DECEMBER**

**6 Set Up For Santa Breakfast**

**7 Santa Breakfast**

**10 Cookie Distribution To Our Shut-ins**

**14 Adult White Elephant Christmas Party**

**21 Girlfriends' Birthday Breakfast @ Village Inn**

**21 Girlfriends' Secret Santa**

**24 Christmas Eve Service**

**25 Merry Christmas!**

**28 ABW Christmas Lunch @ Gateway Applebee's**

## **STAFF EMAILS**

**Pastor**

Randy Pearson

[pastorrandy@graceportland.com](mailto:pastorrandy@graceportland.com)

**Secretary**

Beth Jones

[grace@graceportland.com](mailto:grace@graceportland.com)

**Worship/Music Minister**

Judy Young

[judy@graceportland.com](mailto:judy@graceportland.com)

## **GOD'S VISION FOR GRACE BAPTIST**

Making disciples of Christ, in a relational environment,  
to share in God's mission to the world.