

Grace Notes

April 2017

Monthly Newsletter of Grace Baptist Church



(From "Pivot" a blog by Karl Vaters- <http://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2016/april/is-sit-back-relax-and-enjoy-service-killing-church.html>)

Is 'Sit Back, Relax and Enjoy the Service' Killing the Church?

It sounds so inviting and innocent. "Sit back, relax and enjoy the service." But that may be one of the most dangerous sentences regularly uttered in church.

I expect promises of great customer service in a restaurant, an airplane, or a store. But the idea church is a place where we pay others to do ministry as we sit passively, consuming, and passing judgment on the product being offered, may be the greatest single reason for the anemia of the modern, western church. And the church I pastor is no exception.

We're not supposed to be in the customer service business. We're a community for life transformation. The church does not exist to serve passive consumers, but to equip and activate disciples.

But, like the monkey stubbornly clinging to the apple inside the cage, we'll never free ourselves to be biblically active communities for life-transformation until church leaders let go of our please-the-consumer mindset.

Let's Stop the Bait-and-Switch

I'm a huge proponent of making our church services a welcoming environment for everyone – especially for first-time attenders and seekers. But it's bait-and-switch to tell church-goers we're here to serve them, only to teach them a few months later at the membership class that – *surprise!* – you're not supposed to be a consumer. You're here to do the work of ministry.

And we wonder why people have become so skeptical about the church. It would be like going to Starbucks until you achieved Gold Card status only to get handed a green apron, on a volunteer basis, no less.

This audience-to-discipleship bait-and-switch doesn't create passionate, worshipful, loving disciples. It creates angry, confused, and resentful church-shoppers – and quitters.

How Jesus Called Disciples

When people came to Jesus, they weren't given false up-front promises they could sit passively while Jesus wiped their troubles away – all wrapped up in a delightful just-under-an-hour stage show.

They were told to take up their cross. Some were told to leave their nets behind (their only source of income). One man was told he had to sell everything and give it to the poor.

In one famous incident, Jesus told the growing crowds they were required to eat his body and drink his blood if they wanted to follow him. This was so repulsive that many left him. And Jesus let them go. He didn't soften his tone to try to win them back. (John 6:53-62)

This may seem harsh to some of us, but the upside of this approach is when following Jesus got really hard, no one could say they hadn't been warned or equipped.

Change 'Sit and Watch' To 'Come and Participate'

Years ago, I realized this 'sit and watch' issue was a problem for our church; so we're working to change the way we ask people to interact with the church. Imperfectly, to be sure.

We don't entice non-believers to come to a church service designed for them. Yes, we

(continued on page 2)

Inside This Issue:

Notes From The Board Spiritual Life	2
Notes from your Music/Worship Leader & Lay Minister of Church Life Outreach Building Accessibility And Functionality Committee Update	3
Calendar Birthdays Anniversaries	4
Grace-Full Grace Family Finances MUM's Open Hearts Pantry White Cross Ministries Mission Work Day	5

**MARCH
COMMUNION
SERVERS:**
Paul Young
Seth Young



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

As you likely recall, because we don't have a Moderator this year, Board members are taking turns every two months in working with the agenda and chairing the Board meetings. One of the other Board members is trying to keep track of the continuity of business from month to month and coordinating on the agendas, as well as taking minutes. So, being the Acting Moderator means running to play "catch-up." I want to comment that the 2017 Board is doing a great job of "teaming" and staying on top of things.

March saw two important efforts at Grace. The first was the Accessibility and Functionality Committee brought in our hired architectural consultant, and he has met with local construction engineers to start determining what is feasible to change/remodel in our building to make it a better place for ministry, fellowship, and spiritual growth within our congregation and the other congregations. There is a preliminary report from that Committee in this newsletter.

The other effort that began in March is the Board and other members of the congregation have been reading the book, *The Grasshopper Myth*, by Karl Vaters. Pastor Randy has also preached on some of the ideas from this pastor/author. At the March Board meeting the group began to address how we discern the Holy Spirit working with Grace as a "Small Church" in ministry to our community and neighborhood.

Carol Martin, Acting Moderator (March/April 2017)

SPIRITUAL LIFE

This is a continuation from last month's article. I am committed to Jesus Christ because of what he did for me. I know he died for my sins and now I can approach God to praise him, talk to him, and he gives me strength and breath each day. He has forgiven me for what I have done against Him. So why is it so hard to tell others these things? Am I afraid of something or someone? I suspect it is because I don't think others want to hear about it. I guess I don't see others wanting this same relationship I experience. I need to get close enough to someone so I can see the opportunity in conversation to share what Jesus has done for me and tell them he can do the same for them. Am I willing to get that close to others, in a world that is so easy to turn away and keep my distance?

In our class on Sunday mornings, we are studying the book of James. Interestingly the author says our faith, without deeds is dead. Things get in the way like our tongue, attitudes, pride, and a whole bunch of other things he elaborates on. Jesus is faithful and forgives us so why can't I tell others about him for their well-being, joy and relationship with God? Jesus, before he went to heaven to prepare a place for us and be with God until he returns, said to "Go into the world and preach the Good News" (Mark 16:15), and "Make disciples of all nations teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the ends of the age." (Matt. 28:19 & 20).

Why don't I/we tell people? Easter has happened and Jesus' power, through the Holy Spirit, has been given to all believers. With his strength and wisdom we can do all things. Lord, help me. I can't do this on my own. Amen.

Happy Easter everyone!

Blessings!

Paul Young, Lay Minister of Spiritual Life

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

invite them. And when they come, we greet them, help them, and explain things to them. But our church services put the emphasis on worshipping Jesus, teaching the Bible, and discipling believers, not entertaining passive consumers.

Instead of doing come-and-be-entertained Big Day events, when we do community service events, we encourage non-attenders to work alongside us. If you're new to our church, our hope is you'll see that following Jesus is about worship, discipleship and service, right from the start.

People Want to Worship, Connect and Serve

The church was never meant to be a religious stage show for passive audience members. And, let's face it, even if it was, those of us who lead and worship in small churches know we don't have the resources to put on as good a show as our big church counterparts. Oh, who are we kidding? Even megachurches can't compete with the quality of entertainment people can access 24/7 from the phone in their pocket. But we can be great at worship, community, and generosity!

When someone decides to disrupt their normal routine to go to church for the first time – or for the first time in a long time – it's not because they don't have other entertainment options. They're doing it to meet a need they may not even fully realize yet. They want to connect with God and with us through worship, fellowship, and service. A great, interactive church is the best place on earth to do that.

NOTES FROM YOUR MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER & LAY MINISTER OF CHURCH LIFE, JUDY YOUNG



"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast." (Psalm 139: 7-10)

On March 26, Ed shared the promise of God never leaving us as we go through this earthly life. God sees the WHOLE picture from beginning to the end and will carry us through the tough times as we trust in HIS strength.

In my devotion time just last week I read through Psalm 139. Again, here is a beautiful picture of God never leaving us and ALWAYS being with us. At times, all of us try to limit God to what our finite minds can conjure up and relegate Him to certain categories that are the product of our own speculation. But the Bible teaches us there is NO limit to God! There is no limit to His wisdom. There is no limit to His power. There is no limit to His love. There is no limit to His mercy. God NEVER changes! My devotion ended with this prayer: "Dear God, I limit You so many times, Lord. Forgive my feeble mind and fill me with Your wisdom, power and mercy, so that I can touch those You love this day."

Illness can be devastating, financial situations worrisome, and the responsibilities of family, work and life exhausting, but God will guide you and never leave you. Start each day by trusting Him and asking Him to be with you, carrying you through each moment.

Easter is Sunday, April 16. We will have our Annual Easter Potluck Breakfast beginning at 9:00 a.m. (No Sunday School.) Please bring one of the following: Egg dishes, potato casseroles, breakfast meats, breads, pastries, fruit or juice. Tableware, coffee and tea will be provided.



OUTREACH

The outreach ministry continues to meet. In our last meeting it was decided we would serve water at The Montavilla Neighbor Fair on Sunday, July 30. We will continue to work with Helen on the Rest stop. We are also starting to plan for an Advent activity we can involve the neighborhood in. We are looking at a Carol sing and lighting of Christmas Decorations on Saturday evening, December 3. We continue to see God's direction for a new ministry Grace can come along side and support.

Carol Martin, Lay Minister of Outreach

BUILDING ACCESSIBILITY AND FUNCTIONALITY COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Building Accessibility and Functionality Committee is currently working with our architect to put together a feasibility study related to changes to the building to add classroom space on the main floor. On March 17 the architect met with a structural engineer, an electrical engineer, and a mechanical engineer to assess the status of the building. The engineers will be submitting reports to the architect in April. The Building Accessibility and Functionality Committee also met with the architect on the 17th to discuss the ideas for the classroom space and in particular the suggestion for adding classrooms under the balcony. During April the architect will take the input from the committee and the reports from the engineers and develop plans for the addition of the classrooms. With the plans we should be able to better estimate costs and evaluate whether it is feasible for us to move forward with construction.

APRIL 2017

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 COMMUNION 8:30 am Praise/ Worship Team Practice 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Bible Study	3 5:00 pm Girlfriends' Annual Beach Retreat Planning Meeting	4 11:00 am Deaconesses' Meeting	5 6:30 pm Adult Bible Study & Prayer	6 7:00 pm Walleye Club	7  7:30 pm IVN Church Bible Study	1 6:00 pm IVN Sisters' Bible Study
9 8:30 am Praise/Worship Team Practice 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Bible Study Collect Food For Open Heart Pantry Palm Sunday	10	11	12 6:30 pm Adult Bible Study & Prayer	13	14 10:30 am Stocking Shelving Food @ MUM 3:00 pm MUM's Food Distribution 7:30 pm IVN Church Bible Study	15 9:00 am MUM's Food Distribution
16 9:00 am Easter Breakfast Potluck 11:00 am Worship Easter: He has risen; He has risen indeed!	17 1:00 pm Board Meeting	18	19 6:30 pm Adult Bible Study	20	21 1:30 pm Bridger's Harvest Share 7:30 pm IVN Church Bible Study	22 10:00 am Girlfriends' Birthday Breakfast @ Pig 'N Pancakes- 12110 NE Gilsan 1:00-8:00 pm IVN Anniversary Celebration
23/30 8:30 am Praise/Worship Team Practice 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Bible Study	24 MAY GRACE NOTES' ARTICLES DUE	25	26 6:30 pm Adult Bible Study	27	28 7:30 pm IVN Church Bible Study	29

April Birthdays

9 Laura Burch
19 Jessica Andrews

Happy Birthday

GRACE-FULL

The continuing good news financially is we received more income than we paid out in expenses in February and are maintaining a healthy balance in the General Fund, from which we make all of our operating outlays.

However, more exciting for me has been the pastor's sermons on the definition and role of the Small Church in today's society, basing much of his thinking on the book, *The Grasshopper Myth*, by Karl Vaters. The Board and others have been reading the book and catching a renewed vision of what Grace Church can do and be, rather than sitting around waiting for more bodies (preferably of a youthful age and/or accompanied by small children) and more money. We either ARE the church of Christ on this corner or we need to stop trying because God is not helping us TRY—He wants to help us DO. As your Finance Minister, I can tell you we don't lack money, so that is not an issue. No ministry has come before us in my time here (29 years) that we couldn't do for lack of money. We now need to look UP and OUT and away from OURSELVES and see what GOD wants for us. Please be in constant prayer on this because our future as a family of God is on the line if we fail to open up to the opportunities we can have.

Sharon Owen, Lay Minister of Finance

GRACE FAMILY FINANCES

FEBRUARY 2017

General Operating Fund

Monthly Budget	\$ 9,840.34
Income Received	\$ 10,083.41
Expenses	\$ 9,327.62
Net Received for Month	\$ 748.49

Mission Fund

Mission Giving Plan	\$ 1,129.05
Specified gifts/offerings	\$ 370.12

Liabilities

General Fund Balance 02/28/17	\$ 11,596.82
Payroll Tax Liabilities & Accounts Payable	\$ 1,278.40
GF Less P/R Liabilities	\$ 10,318.42

Building Fund

Building Fund Balance 11/30/16	\$ 12,033.90
--------------------------------	--------------

MUM OPEN HEARTS PANTRY

The people at Montavilla United Methodist thank us for the generous gifts and supplies we offer each month. The distribution days in April scheduled will be one week earlier this month. As they try to stay with the Third Saturday, this puts the shelving day on Friday, April 14. The food days will be at 3:00 pm on Friday, April 14th and Saturday, April 15th at 9:00 am.

Our donations will need to be in the white barrel on Sunday, April 9. April food distribution will be Easter weekend so keep this in mind when you shop.

Paul and Barbara will be doing the Sunshine food pickup on the first Tuesday (April 4). If you can help in this area, give either of these people a call.

Shannon Hastings, Liaison for Montavilla United Methodist Open Heart Pantry

WHITE CROSS MINISTRIES MISSION WORK DAY!

White Cross missions Rainbow Acres and First Crow Indian Baptist Church have on-going needs for supplies. I will again be sending gift cards to these missions in Arizona and Montana. Donations may be made through Grace with "White Cross" written on the memo line. I will be collecting funds for this over the next few weeks.

We will have a Mission Work day on Saturday, May 6, at 10:00 am. We will be rolling bandages and cutting surgical squares and working on other items as well. Refreshments will be provided. Please see me or Nancy Uhlinger for more information including project items that are needed.

Shannon Hastings, White Cross Chair person for Grace Baptist Church



Grace Baptist Church

200 SE 76th Ave.

Portland, OR 97215

Phone: 503-254-5111

Fax: 503-254-4688

Email: grace@graceportland.com

Web: www.graceportland.com

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MARCH

3 Girlfriends' Beach Retreat Planning Meeting

4 Deaconesses' Meeting

9 Palm Sunday

9 Collecting Food For Open Heart Food Pantry

14 & 15 MUM's Food Distribution

16 Easter and Easter Breakfast Potluck

17 Board Meeting

21 Bridger's Harvest Share

22 Girlfriends' Birthday Breakfast @ Pig N Pancake

24 Articles For April Grace Notes Due In Office



STAFF EMAILS

Pastor

Randy Pearson

pastorrandy@graceportland.com

Minster of Worship and Music

Judy Young

judy@graceportland.com

Secretary

Beth Jones

grace@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.