

Grace Notes



Grace Church Congregational
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Pittsfield, MA 01201

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Honor Your Mother



Any suggestions or submissions for next month's newsletter may be sent to **secretary.gracecc1@verizon.net**, or put in the tray on the secretary's desk.



From the Pastor's Desk

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1)

When Christopher Columbus sailed for the new world for the first time, the farther he got from the coast of Europe the more apprehensive his crew became. Columbus was convinced the world was round and that he would eventually arrive in Asia, not knowing that the American continents lay in between. His sailors weren't so sure. Many were still under the impression that that the world was flat and that they were in danger of falling off the edge.

Several years ago when Charleen and I flew from a conference in Chattanooga during super storm Sandy we felt a little like Columbus' sailors. As soon as we had lifted off from Atlanta we were in the storm. We were flying completely blind; the clouds so thick they were green and we couldn't even see the end of the wings. It wasn't until we skirted the tops of the waves of Boston Harbor did we have any sense that we weren't lost. Not to mention the fact that it was the most turbulent flight I've ever been on! We could only believe that the pilots instruments were working properly and that we would make it to the tarmac alive.

For several decades a picture hung in the back of our sanctuary--an architect's rendering of an anticipated church building. That building never came to fruition, and we worship in a facility that looks nothing like that drawing. Needless to say 1960's architecture would be quite dated now. But the question remains, what is Grace Church's vision, and is it different from what it was fifty years ago? The real vision of Grace Church has always rested, hopefully not on bricks and mortar, but on our identity and calling as a community of Christians who are committed to following Jesus.

The Apostle Peter wrote, "*As you come to [Christ], a living stone... you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*". (1 Peter 2:4-5) There are few verses in the Bible that summarize the identity of the church better than these. As our caption on the internet puts it, "*Committed to the Sovereignty of God, the authority of the Scriptures, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ*". This is how we see ourselves and who we believe ourselves as a congregation to be. But where do we believe God is taking us? Generally speaking, we could say that our calling is to love God with our whole being, love one another within the fellowship, and commit ourselves intentionally to making disciples. But what does this look like in concrete terms?

Vision has to do with the picture that we have in our minds of our destination, but it is not limited by what we can or cannot actually see at this very moment. What is that picture that we have in our mind? Not a 1960's vintage building, I hope. Should it not be a robust faith in Jesus? Should it not be a corporate worship that is characterized by the joy and anticipation of being in the very presence of God? Should it not be a community of followers of Jesus who are committed to one another's welfare through thick and thin? Should it not be the Great Commission of Jesus to make disciples by intentionally engaging with those in our community as witnesses for the gospel?

It is our desire (that is the elders and mine) to hold a monthly gathering one Sunday after worship where we can enjoy a simple meal and each other's fellowship as we talk about the picture of where we believe God is taking us as Grace Church. More than that, this is intended to be a time for praying together as we seek God's specific vision for us as a church.

...faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.



Pastor Tom Bridgman

Missions Corner



News from Susan Stone

I have been reminded recently that, although it is good to pray specifically, it is also good to “stand in the gap” and pray for the “BIG PICTURE”, “THE FINAL RESULT”, what we think GOD’S PURPOSES are in a matter. So today I want to communicate to you the vision that I am praying for, and to invite you to pray these things along with me for remainder of my time in Romania (and beyond.)

That God’s Name would be exalted, that His Kingdom would come and that His will be done in Romania as it is in heaven by . . .

1. **Christian employees** who have a Biblical perspective of their work, a work style that is consistent with this and a resolve to fulfill God’s purposes for them at their workplaces.
2. **Churches** that instruct, encourage and pray for their members as missionaries in the mission field of their places of work.
3. **Towns** with growing networks of disciples of Christ, who have become to faith through the help of a Christians who they have come to know through work and professional contexts.
4. **Workplaces** that are functioning more according to Biblical values through the influence of Christians there.
5. **Professional fields** that fulfill better their role in society because groups of Christians in them have mobilized themselves for a greater positive impact together, in and through their professions.
6. **Government leaders and people of influence** who are competent, have integrity and are working according to Biblical values for the good of the people.
7. **Christian families** who, in their communities, have a reputation for doing good, are “light and salt” change agents and are active in evangelism and discipleship among their neighbors, relatives and friends.

Appreciate so much your intercession undergirding the ministry here. May God bless you for your time spent in this great work!

Be strengthened in the Lord,

Susan

WHY MUSIC?

Hope Academy of the Bronx

April 18, 2016

Betty Barbour

Tom and Charleen Bridgman graciously offered to drive me along with my violin and harp to Hope Academy in the Bronx so I could present some musical instrument demonstrations to the Scholars. Tom and Charleen are friends of Bob and Jeannie Hall who visited Grace Church last summer, when Bob gave the message and Naomi Woodmansee the school principal gave a presentation on the Academy.

There were two classes of 40-minutes each: one for nine 5th and 6th graders and one for seven 7th and 8th graders. My classes were based on the following plan, but changed as necessary to meet the direction the Scholars' interest took.

1. Music and you.

I started by asking the scholars why they like music. Which music do you like? Why do you like music? They filled me in on their thoughts: Music makes me sad and happy; it's relaxing; it's inspiring.

I shared why I like music:

- It's fun to learn, especially when you can tell you're making progress.
- After you learn, it's fun to play rather than just listen - like playing a sport rather than just watching it!
- Music provides opportunities: If you learn to read music, you can play in an ensemble. You can meet great people who also play. You can help others with music!

2. God tells us to use Music to praise Him

The Psalms tell us to use music for praising the Lord. The Scholars read out some passages from the Psalms that mention musical instruments (Psalms 57:8, 71:22, 81: 1-3, 92:1- 4, 150), and we made a list of the instruments, which fell into four categories:

Strings: Lute (similar to a guitar), harp, instrument of ten strings, Psalter (12 strings), lyre (like a harp)

Winds: Trumpet, flute **Percussion:** timbrel (a small hand-drum) **Human:** Voice and dance

I showed the Scholars pictures of what the ancient Biblical instruments of 3000 years ago may have looked like. There is an excellent collection of them in the Potsdam (N.Y.) Public Museum. These designs have been modernized for the instruments of today, as you can see from my violin and harp.

3. Some properties of Sound

3.1 Resonance. Sound has vibration. The frequency of the vibration determines the pitch of the sound. Sounds of slower frequency are lower than sounds of higher frequency. This frequency is measured in hertz (Hz). The normal vibrational speed of an item is called its resonant frequency.

The note A above middle C vibrates at 440 Hz. The normal hearing range for humans is between 20 and 20,000 Hz. Some animals can hear outside that range.

Things with the same frequency of vibrations resonate with each other. This is called sympathetic vibration. Let's see if the violin and harp will talk to each other! The scholars took turns sitting behind the harp and listening to the sound box when I played an A on my violin. They could hear the same note vibrating within the harp's sound box. The same thing happened if you sang a note to the harp. The singer's note resonates on the harp.

3.2 Entrainment is the changing of one resonant frequency by a stronger one. An increase in pulse rate can be caused by the tempo of fast music. Calming music might decrease the pulse rate.

(Information in this section is from: *The Power of Sound* by Joshua Leeds.)

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4. Use of music to influence the human body.

4.1 Music can also be used to cheer up people! A Scholar read 1 Samuel 16:23. *And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.*

4.2 If you study an instrument, you might consider going into musical therapy. Music can be used to influence such things as: blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing. It can decrease muscular tension and improve body movement and coordination. It can foster a sense of safety and well-being, and sharpen mental focus.

4.3 Music also revives feelings and memories. Several Scholars said they had had experienced that with a particular song. Also, people may be able to sing when they can no longer talk because singing and speech are controlled by different places in the brain. That makes music useful for therapy with older people. I suggested they might try this with some of their older relatives, finding out what songs they would have listened to when they were young and perhaps singing those songs to their relatives.

5. Violin demo. The violin is a beautiful-looking instrument but much of its design is dictated by ergonomics and how it can produce sound. For example, the cutout sections on the sides of the violin allow the bow to fit close to the instrument. The f-holes on the front of the violin allow the sound to reverberate from within the instrument. A Scholar covered the holes with her hands and the sound of the violin changed to a whisper. The wooden peg inside the violin that connects the top and bottom is also necessary for the instrument to make a resonant sound. The violin does not have frets like a guitar.

6. Harp demo. Based on 1 Samuel 16:23.

Scholars took turns playing the harp. They were told to visualize themselves as David playing music to calm King Saul. I played some quiet violin music to accompany them.

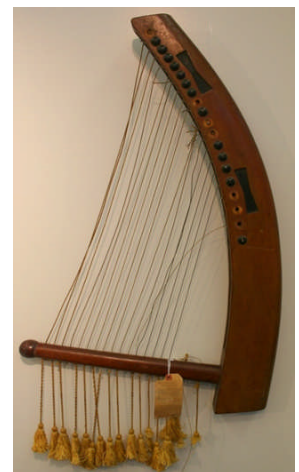
Some Stringed Instruments of Praise from the Psalms



Kinnor
Small Hebrew harp

Nebel - large harp.

Believed to have been the chief instrument accompanying the Psalms in the Temple Service in Jerusalem. It is mentioned many times in the Bible.



Kinnor - small harp.

This harp is copied from a design on a Jewish coin struck 160 B.C. The Jewish Talmud declares that King David hung above his bed a Kinnor of gold, that night winds passing over its strings made soft aeolian music.



Psaltery

This wooden triangular-shaped instrument is a descendant of a Hebrew instrument.



Real Talk

Ian Bridgman

Apparently everybody is a traveler these days. Or at least wants to be. Reading people's Instagram descriptions is getting downright formulaic. "Passions: Books, craft beer, traveling," reads one profile. "Photographer, surfer, world traveler," says another. "I love art, movies, and traveling," says yet a third. Travel, travel, travel, bla bla bla . . . bla. And that doesn't include those that talk about how much they would love to travel, but just don't ever seem to get around to it. I can't count how many of my friends have said how they wish they could squeeze into my suitcase and come with me on one of my adventures, or how many have said that they would try to join me at some point. I guess that with my country count currently at 31, I would be considered a "world traveler" of sorts. It's awesome, actually; I wouldn't dare complain about the incredible blessings I have experienced. While I'm sure that most of you already know better, I'm also pretty sure that I have friends who honestly think my existence is one constant string of spectacular mountain hikes and tropical sunsets. So before anyone else falls under that illusion, allow me to disclose a few things.

One is that there is an awful lot that I don't get to do. I watch my friends on Facebook finishing law-school, launching their own breweries, getting married (I am in no rush to get married by the way), and generally "moving up" in the world. But these things require staying in one place, putting in time and effort, and becoming part of one community. For those of us floating around from country to country, these things are not really an option. If I really had my way, I would be making a living coaching soccer and DJing parties (super spiritual pastor's son that I am). I've done both; they were the best jobs I've ever had. But to be successful in any field requires staying put, growing roots, and patiently moving up the ladder. I left both behind for a chance to live in the Caribbean. I have no regrets about that choice, but I have neither coached nor rocked a party since.

Another is that like every human being, the other backpackers and I crave affirmation. For some, it comes from the attention and admiration of friends, family, and community. For those always on the go, it often comes from Facebook likes, Twitter followers, and becoming *instafamous*. And sure, the pictures of foreign street art and people in traditional dress will get some clicks, but only to a point, and only for so long. When 3 months away turns into 12 and friends back home realize this isn't just a one-time vacation but a lifestyle, "outta sight, outta mind" sets in. Some will simply lose interest, while others just can't relate. It's too far outside of their experience, so it doesn't resonate. Still others will actually feel resentful, as if being "one of them" wasn't good enough. Either way, the interest will fade. It is inevitable. Yes, there will be other roaming bands of transient friends picked up along the way, but it is always only temporary, never permanent.

Another disclosure is that we've shed the old social hierarchy from our home countries only to set up a new one amongst ourselves. At the low end of the totem pole are the short term backpackers simply taking an extended break from their "real lives". They've worked, saved up, and come to play for a while. They're only low on the ladder because they're not taking the risks that many of us are, but they're happy with that, and soon they will return to their homes with a backpack full of dirty clothes, a camera full of amazing pictures and a few cool stories. For those of us actually trying to make a go of it here, things are different. We may occupy higher rungs but we also actually have responsibilities and things to stress over. There's the struggling wanna-be English teacher (me right now), the established successful English teacher, the hostel and tour company owner/operator, and the bar/nightclub owner.

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The latter two of these usually can be seen accompanied by their incredibly attractive South American wives. And at the very top is the shrewd, entrepreneurial genius, who comes up with a totally new idea, and through the perfect mix of hard work, perseverance, and being in the right place at the right time with the right people, puts his idea into practice and strikes gold. After a few years in one place, with a bank account flush with profits, he gets on a plane and jets off to a new place to start the process over again. This is the “one percent” of young expats. I’ve met one of them. He’s younger than me. He’s been featured in the New York Times. The sanctified sections of my soul are genuinely happy for him and appreciate the services he has brought here. My remaining sin disgracefully covets his success. This is embarrassingly shameful to admit, but it is also true.

And one more thing, sometimes Skype just doesn’t cut it. Last week, I was on top of the world. Everything appeared to be coming together, and I was feeling fabulous. This week has been the opposite. I had it coming, but was hoping I could somehow slip out of a long line of foolish decisions and unwholesome attachments unscathed. God had other plans, and the consequences have been emotionally crippling. 3-year olds need their families. 30-year olds do too. My parents are currently 4,870 miles away, my best friend is 7,009 miles away, and despite being able to see their faces on my screen, I have been feeling every single mile of that distance this week.

So there you have it. My current location, Rio de Janeiro, is an amazing place. They call it the *Cidade Maravilhosa*, the Marvelous City, and I couldn’t agree more. It is also a risky place, glamorous, violent, beautiful, and cruel, with a seemingly personalized selection of temptations for someone like me. So much so that after just one week, I started to doubt that this was actually where God wanted me to be. I even agreed to leave Rio and go to Sao Paulo, and team up with Operation Mobilization’s Brazil office. But it appears that the Lord has closed that door, my planned escape hatch, and I have had to stay to face both my fears and the consequences of my poor choices. I expected a challenge in trying to live here, but I have been faced instead with an entirely different trial. And it has been very hard.

For now, it appears that it will be Rio or bust. It is also entirely touch and go right now. I am committed to pursuing any means the Lord provides for me to be able to stay here, but unless He pulls some rabbits out of a hat, I will have to return home sooner than expected. I know that God is sovereign, but in my own mind, a sooner-than-expected return would be a failed mission. That too, would be very hard.

I am so thankful that many of you are praying for me faithfully. It is a critical comfort and encouragement. Please don’t stop. I need a church here. I need to heal emotionally. I need to be strengthened spiritually. I need to make serious progress in my Portuguese. I need a source of income. I need to not become self-pitying and self-absorbed, but maintain care and concern for the needs of others around me. Above all else, I need to be constantly reminded of who I am and Who I belong to.

God is good. I don’t know his plans for tomorrow, but at least for tonight, I am in Rio de Janeiro, the Marvelous City, and I am very happy to be here. May God bless this adventure.

On Having Respect for Your Mother: A Thank You to My Dad

Charleen Bridgman

There was the time I felt wrongly punished (what child doesn't sometime?). Mother and I had been arguing over something (who knows what now) and I didn't get my way. I was upset and left the kitchen to go upstairs. Unfortunately, the door between the kitchen and the hallway had a tendency to slam. I didn't mean to slam the door, but when I closed it, it sounded as though I had purposely done so. You had heard us arguing, heard the door bang, and assumed I had slammed it in anger at Mom. You admonished me for treating Mom so disrespectfully, and didn't believe me when I told you I didn't slam that door on purpose. You said something to the effect that such a disrespectful child had no business living in your house and put me out. It was drizzling and I had no place to go, so I found myself standing in the garage feeling very sorry for myself for being misunderstood and wrongly accused.

I don't know if it was that day or later that I realized I had learned an important lesson. What you taught me that day was that you would not tolerate disrespect for your wife, and when I realized that, I really appreciated it. You were teaching me that day, in no uncertain terms, to honor my mother. As a woman-to-be and most likely a future wife, you also taught me something that day about my own worth in your eyes, and about how I should expect a husband to treat me.

Thanks, Dad! I wish all men would teach their children, by example, to hold their mothers and wives in such high esteem.

From *Treasures from My Dad* by Charleen Bridgman, 1991



“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Ephesians 6:2-3



GRACE CHURCH NEWS



Women's Fellowship

Women of all ages are welcome at the Women's Fellowship, meeting **Saturday, May 7th from 9:30-11:00 a.m.** at the church. Learn with us as we look at the power of words and what the Word of God teaches us. Refreshments will be served.



Men's Prayer Fellowship

Men of all ages are invited for a time of devotional, fellowship and prayer, on **Saturday, May 21st, from 7:00 -8:30 a.m.** The men are using *Walking as He Walked*, by Joel Beeke. The meeting will be at the home of Doug Rose in Stockbridge. Breakfast will be served.



Church Work Day

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 14th**, for a church work day. Come on out with your rake, dust cloth, etc., and enjoy fellowship while we spruce things up for Spring. We'll be starting in the morning and coffee and refreshments will be available.



Prayer Gathering

All are encouraged to join us for our monthly prayer gathering as we seek God's guidance for our ministry in the community and His provision for the needs of our church. A time of corporate prayer will take place on **Sunday evening, May 22nd, from 5:00-6:00 p.m.**, in the sanctuary.

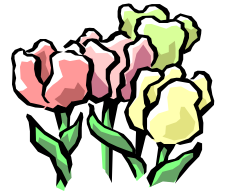


Happy Mothers' Day





MAY 2016



<i>S</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>S</i>
1 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	2 7:00 Addictions Victorious	3	4	5	6	7 9:30-11 am Women's Fellowship
8 Mothers' Day 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	9 7:00 Addictions Victorious	10	11	12	13	14 Work Day
15 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	16 7:00 Addictions Victorious	17	18	19	20	21 7-8:30 am Men's Prayer Fellowship
22 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 5:00 Prayer Gathering	23 7:00 Addictions Victorious	24	25	26	27	28
29 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	30 Memorial Day 7:00 Addictions Victorious	31				