

# Grace Notes



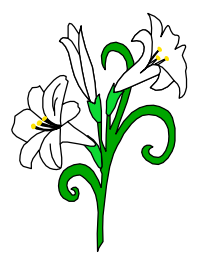
Grace Church Congregational  
1055 Williams Street  
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*Happy Easter!*  
*I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.*  
*John 11:25,26*



*Any submissions or suggestions for the next edition of this newsletter may be sent to [secretary.gracecc1@verizon.net](mailto:secretary.gracecc1@verizon.net)*



## From the Pastor's Desk

*So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)*

There seems to be something especially mercenary in talking so openly about numbers. It seems to give the impression that the number of noses is the sole criteria to determine the success of a church. Perhaps it reminds us of some popular televangelists of recent years.

There are of course those practical considerations of functioning as a church today. Attaining critical mass is not unimportant. For example, families with children typically look for other families with children, or people look for programs or ministries that will help them grow in their faith, and if these things are lacking then they might (and often do) go elsewhere. Not to mention the fact that churches need to pay their bills; just ask any church treasurer or board. But the question is who will commit themselves to make it happen.

All that said, I think we end up with a lop-sided view if all we see of the church is our own local institution. The words quoted above are a direct outgrowth of Jesus' promise in chapter 1, *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)* God adding three thousand souls to the church in a single day completes the description of the events that took place on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised, came upon his church. Yet that was only the beginning of Jesus' promise being fulfilled. It continues to today. Herein must lay our motive for church growth.

It is through the witness of the church that people's lives are changed by the power of the gospel, and it is within the context of the church that people's lives are transformed through spiritual growth. What I am saying is that the church is integral to the lives and spiritual well-being of those who would follow Jesus. But what that means is that the church (our individual congregation) must commit itself to fulfilling its role in both witness and nurture. That means being intentional about bearing witness for Christ and patiently making room for all those who still have need for spiritual growth in their lives (as we all do).

Do you know how many chairs we have in our sanctuary? One hundred forty. That's not counting the seven against the back wall, the five in the musicians' corner and the two behind the pulpit. Someone suggested that if we took some out it might make our make our sanctuary appear fuller. It might. Wouldn't it be better if we prayed for God to fill the chairs? I pray for God to fill one hundred twenty. (We can always increase that number and add more chairs in the back when God fills those.) If God were to fill one hundred twenty, it would have an impact on us as a church, and there would be growing pains. (Just think of what three thousand did to the church in Jerusalem) Are you willing? Will you pray with me?

God has commissioned his church to be his witness to the nations (and our community). We need not be too apologetic about desiring our church to grow.

Pastor Tom Bridgman





# Missions Corner

**A Story from South Sudan**  
*excerpt from Bob Kirkman's blog*

*This is a brief autobiography, from my friend Okot Emmanuel Taban - who we affectionately call Emma." Emma is a 'Child of Fallen Heroes,' a war orphan of the SPLA struggle against the north. He has been a great help to the mission here at Borongole since joining the staff last year.*

I am Okot Emmanuel Taban I am a KAKWA by tribe, born in Torit, Eastern Equatorial State on 26\11\1991. I am a Sudanese by nationality. When I was 6 I lost my Dad during the 21 year South Sudanese liberation struggle. When I was 10 my Mum was also killed brutally by the Muslims. I personally witnessed this tragedy and many atrocities of the devastating catastrophic war of the Muslim Sudan government against south Sudanese Christians. My sister, aged 13, and I struggled not to starve after that. Many of our relatives and friends perished during that period of time. This was what the Muslims called the jihad war, which means "spiritual war" that is still in prevalence up to this date. This war poisoned the mind of this young patriotic nationalist. My father was an officer in the SPLA. The assassination of my father by fellow countrymen stabbed me in the back and gave a heavy blow on my face. I immediately died inside and lost respect for any government institution and gave me strong hatred for the Arab race or anyone with colonial tendencies. I studied primary school in this country, but I finished in Uganda because of the aerial bombardment by jet and antinov bombers on my school and village. I went to Comboni College and Gulu central high school. But later I had limited chance of advancement because I had been supported by a missionary friend whose funds ran low. This interrupted my dream of becoming a lawyer or journalist, but all in all I am giving my gratitude to all the fallen heroes, widows, orphan, wounded heroes, liberation fighters, and international friends. This includes my beloved late dad, Mr. Taban Noah Lukudu, who had served as an operation commander in the liberating zone, and beloved mum Joyce Akio Dudu, who was also terribly killed. They all worked hard to see that we are free at last from the chain of oppression and prolonged marginalization. My generation now has a future to make. I thank God He has softened my heart toward all people, including those considered enemies. He gave me restored respect for the government and showed that the principles my dad and mum fought for were not in vain. I forgive the Muslims who killed my parents and tried to force us to forsake our Jesus. May Almighty God forgive them. I am happy that the gospel of Christ is not overshadowed by the jihad.

So, I Emma, still live by God's grace. By His hand I survived from many dead at the hands of Muslim fighters. I never thought I would go to school, but God touched the heart of an American friend, who saw to it that I would graduate high school. I believe the same God will provide a way forward for my continued education.

To my beloved comrade countrymen and future flag bearers of our newly born country I say what is of paramount importance is looking forward rather than looking behind. There is no future in the bitterness of what is past. We should start doing work rather than we expecting it to be done for us. The future belongs to those who do their home work, not to those who waste their lives, allowing their hair to turn gray just sitting in the moonlight.

Corruption, greed and laziness can become pandemic crops in our nation We nationalist youth share in the destiny of the land our fathers fought for. Let us cease from the undying hunger and greed for something better. It causes us to worship idols and brings only strife amongst us. Enough is enough for war and tribal division. My tears run and flow like a stream, when I see a crawling baby in anguish and hunger. That is more important than whatever else we may want. Anyway may the almighty GOD rescue us and bless us, I say all this for GOD and my South Sudan.

Amen

**POETRY, DANCE, & THE PATTERNED GLORY OF THE UNIVERSE**  
**Grace Church Congregational, March 11, 2012**  
*by Sorina Higgins*

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, something very exciting happened: My second child was born! Well, not a child, exactly: a book. My first full-length poetry collection, *Caduceus*, was published by Word Tech Communications / David Roberts Books, and on that day I received my copies via UPS. My mom, **JoAnn Kulberg**, was there to celebrate with me and my husband Gary. Then, a few weeks later, I came up to celebrate with Grace Church as part of a book-reading and book-signing tour.

Since February 20<sup>th</sup>, I have given eight readings of various kinds in many venues: just readings, lectures, discussions, workshops; in churches, schools, cafés, and artistic spaces. The event at Grace Church was my signature presentation: a combination of poetry reading, lecture, PowerPoint, music, and dance that I call “Poetry, Dance, & the Patterned Glory of the Universe.” And this evening was by far the most fun of all I've done yet! Thank you to all the wonderful people who came to see me, listen, read, talk, sing, dance, & eat! Some of you I hadn't seen for twenty years or more. And you were all really fun audience members!

Seriously, this crowd (most from other churches in the area, or other connections I had made in the Berkshires) was the most in-tune with my reading: laughing, sighing, groaning, and exclaiming at all the right moments. I felt you were all on the edge of your seats, taking in every word, understanding, pondering, applying all I shared.

There were a couple of stellar moments I really need to share so that those who did not attend can experience this, and so that those who did can re-live the best times! The first was the fact that three young people volunteered, at the last minute, to join me in learning & performing a dance demonstration. Thank you to the lovely, intrepid, and talented **Nadine Kulberg, Emily Graham, and Ian Bridgman**. The next marvelous thing was that our own lovely violinist, **Betty Barbour**, offered to play prelude music to us. She even chose Bach and other Baroque pieces that fit my theme for the evening.

## **I. POETRY READING FROM *CADUCEUS***

After the musical prelude, I read from my book. I naturally chose the most obviously theological poems from my collection. Here is one sample poem for you, entitled “Communion.”

I lifted up one tiny plastic cup  
out of its ruby fellowship: a drip  
slipped through a crack, slid down my fingertips,  
and dropped its scented moisture on my lap.  
I held it motionless at outstretched armlength,  
felt its stained-glass wine-and-water redness  
dripping cool and bloody down my wrists,  
and lifted to my lips, and sipped, Your death.  
Those stains I wore were memories of Yours,  
still soaked in drunk-on-Spirit scent; so full,  
taste on the tongue grew heady in my soul:  
the old, intoxicating, longing Joys.  
I wish that I could always live as if  
I tasted Your sweet dying sorrow on my lips.

## I. DISCUSSION & DEMONSTRATION OF METER, MUSIC, & FORM/PATTERN

Then things got lively! I began talking about meter in poetry, & the whole audience clapped along with the meter of an old Scottish ballad, “Sir Patrick Spens.” I then spoke about how meter calmed down a bit by Shakespeare's time (although actors probably accentuated the iambic pentameter in a way that would sound “artificial” to our 21st-century ears).

Then I talked about the musical pitch-scale of vowels, the psychological effects of various sounds, and the emotional content associated with poetic forms. And THEN, my wildly talented, hard-working, opera-singer, coloratura Mezzo-Soprano sister **Nadine Kulberg** performed a Rondo (Rondeau) to fit the theme about poetic forms. She sang “Che farò senza Euridice” by Gluck, explaining how the repetitive form expresses the character's grief. Her explanation alone was enough to bring tears to my eyes, never mind once she began to sing! It was glory personified.

Finally, as a visual demonstration of poetic form, Nadine and Betty volunteered to read my villanelle, “Wanderlüst,” with me, complete with a kind of choreography that visually reveals the repetitive structure of the poem.

## III. A DANCE DEMONSTRATION

The three marvelous volunteers mentioned above (Nadine, Emily, & Ian) joined me, and we performed an English Country Dance (think Jane Austen's time), “The Duke of Kent's Waltz,” in order to demonstrate that the visual effect of the dance was the same as the visual effect of the poem: whoever started at the front ends back at the front; between sections, everybody circles around each other; the pattern is regular and repetitive and symmetrical; etc.

And then the best part! We finished dancing, and I said to the crowd: “Well, that's it, we're done...unless YOU ALL want to DANCE!” And they did! We did a fantastic, super fun circle dance to the song “Marie's Wedding” by the High Kings. It's super lively and basically teaches itself as people's feet fall into the pattern.

For those of you who weren't there, or who were there when my supply of books ran out, please consider purchasing Caduceus on amazon or Barnes & Noble's website. If you want an autographed copy, please email me, [admonit@gmail.com](mailto:admonit@gmail.com) "[iambic.admonit@gmail.com](mailto:iambic.admonit@gmail.com), to make arrangements.

Finally, I have written about this event on my blog: <http://iambicadmonit.blogspot.com/2012/03/caduceus-book-tour-6.html>

# Vacation Bible School 2012

## The King Is Coming!



**Dates:** The week of June 26-30 Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 12 noon, with a closing program on Saturday followed by a lunch for parents and children.

**Theme:** *The King Is Coming!*

Plans for Vacation Bible School are in process. **Thank you** to those willing to fill the following positions. **Please prayerfully consider the positions still open** as to whether they may be a good fit for you! We would all appreciate your prayers that God will prepare and use us to proclaim the good news to families in our community.

### Teachers or Classroom Helpers (more needed)

Jessica Logsdon  
JoAnn Kulberg  
Ian Bridgman

Betty Barbour  
Betty DeNoble

### Skit Co-coordinators and Actors

Positions Open

### Recreation Coordinator (assistant also needed)

Positions Open

### Craft Coordinator (helpers still needed)

Brenda Wright

### Music

Ian Bridgman

### Snacks

Positions Open

### Wherever Needed/Saturday cookout

Positions Open

A few good men, women, or young people are also needed to staff the following positions: **Registration, transportation coordinator, publicity coordinator, craft helpers.** If you think God is calling you to be involved in this vital ministry, please speak to Charleen Bridgman, VBS Director, at church or at 499-3040, as soon as possible.

**Please be thinking about children to invite!**

**Invitations and flyers for distribution will be made available soon, so please be praying in advance for families you know that could be invited. Pray that God would be pleased to work in and through us to introduce children and their families to the family of God!**





# GRACE CHURCH NEWS



## Prayer Gathering

All are encouraged to join together for a special times of corporate prayer **Sunday, April 1st from 5:00-6:00 p.m.**, as we acknowledge our dependence on God, seek His direction for our church and our ministry in the community, and pray for His glory to be made known.

*"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." Psalm 127:1*



**Maundy Thursday Dinner and Communion**  
**Thursday, April 5th**, we will share a potluck supper at 6:00 p.m., followed by a **communion service at 7:00**. Please bring a dish to share. Beverages and dessert will be provided.



## Women of Grace

The monthly Women of Grace meeting will be **Saturday, April 14th, from 10 a.m.-1:00 p.m.** All women and teenaged girls are invited to join together for a time of Biblical nurture, prayer, and fellowship over lunch. Hope to see you there!



## Men's Prayer Fellowship

All men of the church are invited to join together for a time of devotional, prayer and light refreshments, **Saturday morning, April 21st, from 7:00-8:30 a.m.**, at the church.



## Haiti Missions Trip

**Dave Fairfield and Ian Bridgman** leave for Haiti on April 4th for a 10-day project with Samaritan's Purse. They will be aiding in the building of an orphanage. As they will be in the heart of voodoo country they would appreciate our prayer for protection and strength in the spiritual battle in which they will be engaged. Pray



## National Day of Prayer

The local National Day of Prayer celebration will take place **Thursday, May 3rd**, on the green of the Berkshire County Superior Courthouse in Pittsfield. The program begins at **12 noon** with speakers and special music, followed by prayer at the courthouse from 1:00-2:00 p.m.



# April 2012



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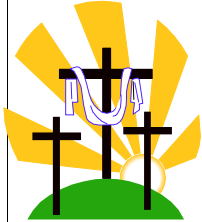
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<p>1</p> <p>9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship</p> <p>5:00 Prayer Gathering</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1:15 Ladies' Bible Class</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6:00 Maundy Thursday dinner and communion service</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Good Friday</p> 	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p><b>Easter Sunday</b> 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship</p>		<p>10</p> <p>1:15 Ladies' Bible Class</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Addictions Victorious</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>10 am-1 pm Women of Grace</p>
<p>15</p> <p>9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1:15 Ladies' Bible Class</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Addictions Victorious</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>7:00-8:30 a.m. Men's Prayer Fellowship</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>1:15 Ladies' Bible Class</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Addictions Victorious</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship</p>	<p>30</p>					