



Grace Notes



Grace Church Congregational
1055 Williams Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

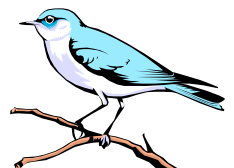
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"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him." Psalm 103:13

Happy Fathers' Day





From the Pastor's Desk

I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

(1 Corinthians 9:22-23)

As someone who grew up in Pittsfield, I can vividly remember the days when North Street was crowded every Thursday night with shoppers. There was no mall, GE was booming, and, well, Pittsfield was a different place. Drugs and crime were in places like New York City and Boston. Things have changed a great deal in the past generation.

It's not just Pittsfield that has changed though. Our culture as a whole has changed. That is true for virtually every part of the country. For those of us who are older, it is easy for us to wonder what ever happened to the "good old days".

Churches have changed too. When we were kids, you never thought of going to church without getting all dressed up; no shorts, T-shirts and flip flops. The services were predictable too, three hymns, an offering, a prayer and a sermon. (Kind of like Grace Church) Electric guitars and drums? Why that was out of the question. I think we are one of the few remaining evangelical churches that hasn't gone "contemporary".

But when I think about how much our culture has changed I often wonder what the next generation holds for Grace Church. Will my generation be the last? Will we be the ones to turn out the lights and lock the doors for the last time? Should we change in order to reach our culture with the gospel? Many churches are asking these very questions, and believe it or not, they are not bad questions to ask.

But before we jettison everything familiar for the sake of change, perhaps we need to step back and ask ourselves some deeper questions, such as, what is the real motive for either changing or not? If our motive for not changing is simply because we prefer what we are used to, then that's not good enough. Frankly that's selfish, and God won't let us get away with it. Remember, God forced change on the early Christians as we read in the Book of Acts. Churches have died for just such an attitude.

On the other hand, what is the motive behind making changes? Is it so that we might appear relevant to our non-churched culture? We certainly don't want for our non-Christian neighbors to perceive of what we do as a church as irrelevant, but we need to be careful here. For one thing, I'm not sure we want secular culture to set the agenda for the church. Besides that, the secular culture in which we live has been in the entertainment business for a long time, and we will look silly if we merely try to compete. But then that leads us to a more important consideration, and that is, "What is our ultimate goal?" Perhaps this is the question that is most often overlooked by the church today.

You see, there are some things in the gospel that never change. "Who is God?" "What is the gospel?" "Why do we need salvation?" "Why the cross?" "What is the mission of the church?" "What is our ultimate calling as Christians?" These questions have to do with our foundations – our theology if you will; and if these things aren't in place as our core values, then, in reality, we cease to be the church, and in which case we really are irrelevant. Sadly to say, I believe that there are some if not many "evangelical" churches that have either intentionally or unintentionally ignored these things for the sake of numbers. It is awfully shortsighted to sell our birthright for a bowl of porridge.

The fact is that change is inevitable. We live in a changing world. On the other hand, the gospel never changes. So the real question is, how can we most effectively communicate the unchanging core values of the church to a world in constant flux? We need to pray that God would give us the grace to understand the difference.





Missions Corner



News from Tuvya Zaretsky *excerpts from his April newsletter*

Last month we observed the completion of my 37th year on staff with Jews for Jesus.

Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, has invited me to teach two courses in June. One of the courses is *Jewish Religious Thought*. This is a core course for our Jews for Jesus staff who are going through the Master of Arts in Ministry and Leadership. It is a privilege to invest in the lives of our missionary leaders from England, Brazil, South Africa, the U.S. and Israel.

Please pray for Stevie B. He is a Jewish music producer and a serious seeker after God. In the past month, he has taken wonderful strides toward faith in Christ. While he longs for a return to the earlier glory days of his career, he knows now that he must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Stevie is a single father of an eight-year-old daughter. My heart goes out to him as I pray for his salvation. God is clearly moving in his life.

I have another source of joy! In 2008 I served as coordinator for a theological consultation in Berlin, Germany. The theme was “The Uniqueness of Salvation for the Jewish People of Europe Today.” The published reports of that meeting produced some “excitement” among the Jewish leaders in Europe. It was a huge encouragement to European Christians, especially in Germany. Paternoster Press has just published the papers, including mine, in book titled, *Jesus, Salvation and the Jewish People*, edited by David Parker. Copies will be available for purchase through Jews for Jesus’ Purple Pomegranate Productions.

In March, when my family gathered to celebrate Purim, we remembered how God spared our people in ancient Persia from enemies who would have annihilated our nation. Together we read the Scroll of Esther in celebration of the Lord’s covenant grace and protection (Esther 9:26-28). In light of current Middle East developments, we draw courage from the promises of God that even modern foes in Iran will not be able to thwart the plan of God.

I am enthused to see so many Israeli Jews turning to faith in Messiah Jesus. That growing movement seems to follow the same pattern by which the Lord brought many in my generation to faith in the U.S. during the 1970’s. Please pray for my work with our Israeli branch and my colleagues who are serving there today. We are planning for the next phase of the Behold Your God campaigns starting in Spring 2012.

Ellen and I are grateful for the many ways that God is moving and for your prayers with us in these matters. Thanks for the part that you all have to enable our evangelistic efforts at this time.



GRACE CHURCH NEWS



Summer Schedule

The last day of Sunday School will be June 12th. Beginning on **Sunday, June 19th**, we will change to our summer schedule. For the duration of the summer **worship will begin at 10:00 a.m.** Sunday School will resume in the fall.



Men's Prayer Fellowship

Men of all ages are invited to join together for the Men's Prayer Fellowship, **Saturday morning, June 18th, from 7:00-8:30 a.m.**, at the church. Come for a time of devotional on Psalm 51, and for prayer. Light



No June Meeting for Women of Grace

There will be no June meeting of the Women of Grace fellowship this year. Our monthly meetings for Biblical nurture, prayer, and fellowship over lunch will resume in the fall. All women are encouraged to continue in Bible study and fellowship during the summer months in informal



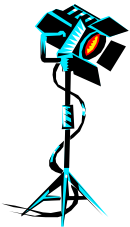
Prayer Gathering

All are encouraged to join us as we seek God's guidance and His provision for the welfare of our church and our ministry in the community. A time of corporate prayer will take place on **Sunday evening, from 5:00-6:00 p.m. on June 26th.**



Spotlight on Students

Congratulations to our graduates! Jeffrey Durkee graduated this spring from Siena College in New York. Alexandra Lanoue graduates from Pittsfield High School this month.



Vacation Bible School: Faith Expedition

We're going on a journey, on a **Faith Expedition** starting **Tuesday, June 28th through Saturday, July 2nd.** **Children entering kindergarten through those completing 4th grade** will be joining us. Please be praying for the staff, preparations, and the families who will be sending their children. Pray that Jesus would be exalted and that lives would be transformed through this outreach.





JUNE 2011



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5 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	6	7	8	9 7:00 Addictions Victorious	10	11
12 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship	13	14	15	16 7:00 Addictions Victorious	17	18 7:00-8:30 a.m. Men's Prayer Fellowship
19 Father's Day 10:00 Worship	20 Summer begins	21	22	23 7:00 Addictions Victorious	24	25
26 10:00 Worship 5:00- 6:00p.m. Prayer Gathering	27	28	29	30 7:00 Addictions Victorious	Vacation Bible School	



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Faith Expedition: God's Treasure Revealed

Dates: June 28-July 2nd (Tuesday-Saturday)

Time: 9:00 a.m.-12 noon (Saturday there will be a closing program followed by lunch for the children and their families).

What? Songs, Bible stories, crafts, recreation, and snacks

For Whom? Children entering kindergarten through children completing 4th grade

Help us get the word out. We have flyers and invitation postcards available. If you know of families with children, grab some flyers and pass them on! If you know of a place of business where you might be able to put up a flyer or poster, ask if you can put one up. You can also let Charleen Bridgman (499-3040) know of names and addresses of families with children and we will see that invitations are mailed out.

Please be praying for the staff that we will be well-prepared and ready to serve the children and their families. **Pray for our need for a pianist/keyboard player.** Pray for the children who will be attending, that the week would be a time of blessing and fun. Pray that all would be done for the honor and glory of our Lord.



HAPPY FATHERS' DAY!
JUNE 20TH
Thanks, Dads, for all that you do.



Learning & Arriving: He Does All Things

I am the Lord, and there is no other,
besides Me there is no God;
I equip you, though you do not know Me, Learning & Arriving: He Does All Things

that people may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none besides Me;
I am the Lord, and there is no other.
I form light and create darkness,
I make well-being and create calamity,
I am the Lord, who does all these things. Isaiah. 45:5-7

Among the several aspects of God's covenantal relationship with mankind, God made a covenant of creation: He conceived of and formed everything that exists in time and space and devised the time-space continuum itself. "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made." Romans 1:19 - 20.

There are twelve attributes of God that we see reflected in His creation: twelve faces of the covenant in which we have been shown and can plainly see the majesty of God. We know that creation is:

1. Unilaterally created by God alone;
2. Universal & boundless;
3. Eternal, unending, & permanent;
4. Real & actual;
5. Unique & singular;
6. Complete & well-ordered;
7. Immutable & incapable of being destroyed;
8. Sustained & sustaining;
9. Sufficient & necessary;
10. Beautiful;
11. Holy; and
12. The forum of Christ's incarnation & revelation.

We are part of His creation, and all of these aspects and attributes of God are reflected in us, including our filial relationship to Jesus, our Lord & Savior. God has equipped us for our journey, and His providence is evident in our lives. "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." Romans 8:19. He makes both well-being and calamity, He forms the light and creates darkness. He is our God. He is our Creator. He is our Sustainer. Most importantly, from our fallen perspective, He is our Redeemer.

Doug Rose