



GraceBFC.org

Grace Bible Fellowship Church

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Follow us on Twitter: @Gracebfc

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Grace News is normally published the last Sunday of each month. Submit upcoming events and articles to Barb by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Send to office@gracebfc.org

Questions and suggestions can be sent to Pastor Mark at mbickel@gracebfc.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 1	Stewardship Saturday (8am - noon)
Dec. 9	Congregational Meeting (10:45 am)
Dec. 12	Final day for fall Family Night groups
Dec. 15	CityTeam Toy Drive (Noon - 4 pm)
Dec. 16	Communion (9 am) CityTeam Toy Drive (bring to worship) Family Carol Sing (4 pm)
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Service (6 pm)
Dec. 25	<u>Merry Christmas!</u>

Full Calendar at Gracebfc.org

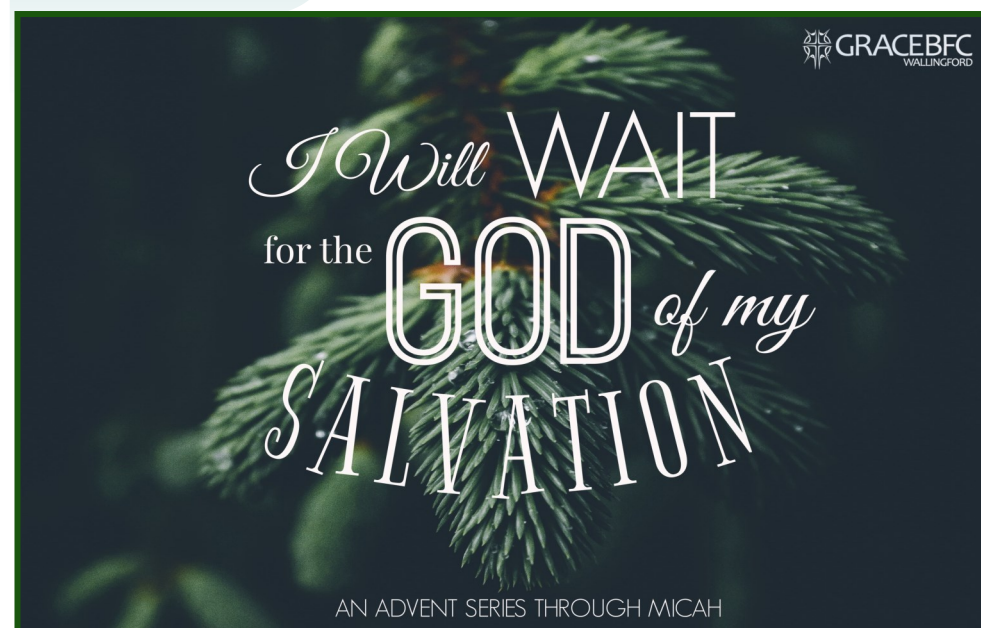


Grace News

December 2018

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A SEASON FOR HOLY DISCONTENT

Pastor Aaron

Discontent doesn't feel like a state of mind a Christian ought to linger in. It seems a sign of taking for granted the undeserved grace of God we enjoy day after day, or belittling the cross of Christ borne for our forgiveness, giving into covetousness, or forgetting the blessings of Church, family, life, and the Spirit? And it certainly can be a sign of those things. Yet, in a sense, Advent is a season where we wade into, express to one another, and even pray (groan) to God a genuine discontent.

In Advent, we remember that the unleashing of God's graciousness has only just begun. We remember there is a day *yet to come* when God will wipe away every tear from every eye. We *wait* for a day when God will rain down justice upon a world withering under the influences of corruption and greed. We *anticipate* a day when death will be drowned in defeat as the rising sun consumes all lingering shadows. We *long* for the day when God will again walk alongside His people in the gardens and cities of a new creation.

When we immerse ourselves in all that God has yet in store for His people, contentment almost seems foolish, like a struggling patient content with his curable ailment...or a Midwesterner content with steak and

cheese on a hot dog bun. Or put another way, when we do hope rightly, there stirs in our hearts a natural longing *and* a holy discontent *even as* we give thanks for all we are beginning to enjoy by Christ's renewing Spirit.

And it is that discontent that helps me hold more loosely the broken treasures I tend to store up. It's that discontent that makes me want to advocate now for the beauty and justice that will one day be. It's that hope-filled discontent even that frees me from, or causes me to hold with contempt the momentary grief and hardship that can seem all consuming when I live only in light of the present.

So go ahead, let discontent have its day. Or better, let discontent have its season – *Advent*. Let us remember how foolish it would be to be over-enthralled with the present and lose sight of God's riches in store. Let us remember that with the coming of Christ in Bethlehem is the initial coming of the king who will one day reign without resistance in His great kingdom of peace.

And let us stir one another on, in hope, and holy discontent as we wait faithfully for that day.

Web Version of Grace News

A complete print version is available from the Church Office:

office@gracebfc.org

To protect people's privacy private phone numbers, addresses, birthdays and anniversaries have been removed from the online version of Grace News. If you need to contact the leader for any group feel free to contact the Church Office.

From time to time articles may be altered or removed due to the sensitive nature of the material.

January Grace News
will be available on
January 6

Bible Classes – Sundays 11 am - Noon

Join us in the gym for coffee, refreshments and fellowship between Worship and Bible Classes



Grace Life 101

Baptism & Membership





Consider the Sermon



LADIES CLASS



33 THE SERIES



Regular Adult and Teen Bible Classes will not meet on **December 14** so you can all attend Congregational Meeting

Gospel Project: wraps up “The Church on Mission” in December and begins “Letter’s to God’s People” in January.

Congregational Meeting - Sunday December 9, 10:45 am

- Review 2019 Budget (copies available in the lobby)
- Elect Elders and Deacons
 - Elders: Bob Evans, Chip Harper, Dick McIntyre for 3 years
 - Deacons: Matt Piasecki for 1 year
- Annual Reports from Staff, Elders and Deacons

Family Night – Wednesdays 7:00 – 8:15 PM

September 12 – December 12, 2018



Regular Wednesday Night Groups will end for the fall on : **DECEMBER 12**

Winter Groups will begin again: **JANUARY 9**

GRACE FAMILY NEWS

New Address:

Matt and Trina Kessler

1616 McCay Ave

Boothwyn, Pa. 19061

Ryan and Caroline Jones

520 E. 21st Street

Chester, Pa. 19013-5514

Thank You

I would like to thank our church family for all the thoughts and prayers during my sister Arlene’s illness. It was such a blessing to know that spiritual support was with us through this most difficult time.

In Christ Love, Vince Urbano

On Advent or the Coming of Christmas Pastor Richard Taylor

Disclaimer: I did not attend a school where the Grinch was headmaster. And, Ebenezer Scrooge is not in my genealogy. Both are fictional so any actual connection between me and them is fictional. By the way, Scrooge gets a bad rap. “...It was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man possessed the knowledge.” I guess he was not so bad after all.

I noticed Christmas started at the beginning of October this year. The advent seems to get a tad earlier each year. I notice because it is a sore spot with me. I love what Christmas celebrates and many of the events that surround Christmas. But (and you knew there would be a but), the significance and joy of Christmas is being gutted by the desire of retail stores to sell things. Christmas is about buying things for people and you should get started early because there will be a rush and you can set aside Black Friday to stand in long lines for bargains or the following Monday which is dedicated to on-line purchases and be sure to take advantage of any sales.

My complaint is not that people buy gifts to be nice and I don’t begrudge merchants who want to turn a profit. I have my own ideas about what is wonderful about the Christmas season. I enjoy seeing decorations, the special events, family gatherings and our holiday worship times. Yes, you will notice I did not mention gifts. I guess we have Magi to thank for that and if we must blame someone, let’s blame them. But perhaps it should be noted that they did not stop at Walmart on the way to Bethlehem nor did they check on line for the latest bargains. They brought gifts to Jesus to worship Him. “And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11-12). That seems somehow far removed from standing in line on black Friday.

The first giving of gifts came as an act of worship. I am not suggesting that you not give any gifts if that brings joy to you and others. And, I am not suggesting that you limit the number of parties you attend or how many Christmas cookies you eat. I am suggesting that you focus on Christmas as a time to worship and appreciate what God did in sending Jesus to us.

We have to peel away the encrusted layers that now cover Christmas. Peel away the need to buy gifts for people who have everything. Peel away the stressed schedule. You may even need to peel away some of the Christian traditions. Peel enough and you will come to the incarnation and the celebration of Jesus, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us.

In the words of that fictional immortal Tiny Tim, “God bless us, every one!” May the joys of Christmas be yours in abundance!



A great big **THANK YOU** to all who participated in Operation Christmas Child 2018. Some of you packed shoeboxes on your own, some made crafts, some sewed, some donated supplies and gifts, some attended packing parties, some wrote letters to go in the shoeboxes, and some of you prayed. It is all important and so much appreciated! As a church family, we worked together and **packed 322 shoeboxes** that were filled with love and prayer and packed to the brim! That is 322 more children that will hear the gospel and be given the opportunity to learn more about Jesus, the greatest Gift of all. Please continue to pray for the children who will receive these boxes that their hearts will be open as the gospel is presented to them. As soon as we learn the destination of our boxes, we will let you know.



THANK YOU for your generosity at our Missions Conference in November. **\$19,588** was given toward our Missions Offering. A portion of that will be used for Short Term Missions teams in 2019, and a portion will go towards the "A Promise Kept" campaign to build a new Camp Promise in Montana to serve for those with special needs.

CAMP PROMISE

If you want **more information** on "A Promise Kept", or want to give directly, please contact Jeff Ort at montanaorts@bresnan.net or by mail at 230 4th Ave W, Kalispell, MT 59901 or online at bigskybiblecamp.org/apromisekept/



Young at Heart Christmas Lunch - Tuesday, December 11

If you would like to join us for our annual Young at Heart Christmas Dinner at the Concordville Inn on December 11, please see Joyce Bromley by December 3. *(this will replace the meeting at Grace)*

THIS CHRISTMAS GIVE
TOYS TO KIDS IN NEED



CITYTEAM
CHESTER



CityTeam Toy Drive

Dec. 15 & 16

- Buy a toy for a child - suggestions on the Christmas Tree in the church lobby
- Bring **UNWRAPPED** toys to Grace Saturday Dec. 15 from Noon-4pm or Sunday Morning December 16 ... See Mike Norquist with questions

Family Carol Sing - Sunday Dec. 16 at 4 PM

Join us for a traditional Christmas Carol Sing! There will be special music from families throughout the church as well as lots of opportunity to sing your favorite carols. It will be enjoyable for the entire family. There will be Christmas cookies and beverages. We encourage you to bring a plate of your favorite Cookies to share. Hosted by Bob Evans.



Booklets, Bibles and Tracts Available in the Church Lobby

LESSONS & CAROLS
A CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

CHRISTMAS EVE - 6:00 PM
GRACEBFC.ORG

LESSONS & CAROLS
service on **Monday, December 24 at 6pm** with readings from the Biblical account of Christmas. Our Children will be leading us in worship for a portion of the service. We encourage all to come, and bring your families! Great service to invite friends to be our guest. Invitations will be available in the lobby.

GRACE kids

This month in **Children's Church** students will be preparing different skits and songs for the Christmas Eve service. Any children interested in being a part of the Christmas Eve service must be at *most* of the Children's Church classes during worship services between November 25th and December 23rd. Contact Fuzzy (Dan Phillips) with any questions!

The last **Wacky Wednesday** of 2018 will be on **December 12, 2018**. We will start back up with our weekly program on **January 9th, 2019!**

Victory Valley's Winter Blast!

Victory Valley in Zionsville, PA hosts an incredible weekend program for children ages 7-12, full of Bible teaching, worship, games, food and hopefully some tubing too! Many children from Grace will be attending on the **weekend of February 8-10**. The cost of the weekend is \$99 per child. Find more details in the brochure or at www.victoryvalleycamp.org where you can also register your child. **Requests for scholarships can be sent to dphillips@gracebfc.org*

Contact Fuzzy (Dan Phillips), our Children's Director, at dphillips@gracebfc.org

GRACE YOUTH

Thank you for letting your teens be a part of our youth program. We have had a wonderful school year of real and honest conversations which we hope are spilling over into your own homes. The youth staff is honored to be entrusted with your teens so that we can pour the love of Jesus into each one.

Normal Wednesday youth group will end for the fall on **December 12**. We will take off for a few weeks and resume youth group on **January 9th, 2019!**

Sno Glo is a fantastic weekend of fun, fellowship, worship, and learning for both the middle school and high school groups. We will be going to Sno Glo together during the same weekend this year. Please contact a youth leader or send an e-mail to gbfcyouth1@gracebfc.org with any questions.

When: **January 11-13, 2019**

Where: **Pinebrook** (East Stroudsburg, PA)

Speaker: **Mark Evans**

Topic: **Follow Me**

Deposit: **\$25 Due by December 12th** (*** There will be an extra \$10 fee for any student who misses the deadline.*)

Total Cost: **\$120** *Remaining \$95 due when students arrive at church on Jan. 11th)*

**Scholarships are available upon request*

Contact Youth Leadership Team at gbfcyouth1@gracebfc.org