



November – December 2017 Newsletter

AKRON GRACE E. C. CHURCH

“On Mission WITH God”

To provide essential and appropriate ministries
of education, worship and service
so we become people on mission
for the Kingdom of God
by fulfilling the Great Commandment
and Great Commission.

The Kingdom of God

Luke 13:18 – 21 (NIV) . . . Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches.” 20 Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? 21 It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

So, what is the Kingdom of God like?

Luke 13:18 – 19 (NIV) . . . Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches.”

Jesus said the kingdom of God is like a teeny tiny seed, a mustard seed. And this image holds, even in light of the popular “launch large” and “be large” movements. This seed, the Kingdom, grows. Like the natural seed – planted, watered, and cared for – unto the harvest, so too does the Kingdom grow. Seemingly, it just happens, as if God has it hardwired to grow regardless of what we might do to get in the way. And we do plenty to get in the way.

This small seed becomes a significant plant that becomes a safe place for God’s creatures. Now, in this parable – if God is the sower, the garden must be his Creation, the seed is the gospel, carrying news of Jesus and his Church. And so it appears that the Kingdom, expressed in the local church, could (?should?) become the safe place where people gather.

Luke 13:20 (NIV) . . . Again [Jesus] asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? 21 It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

The Kingdom of God is like yeast, the living ingredient that makes bread rise. Without yeast, it’s all just crackers. And that is just so boring. I think God is more into the homemade, artisanal loaves; each loaf, each church, slightly different than the others. And yet all essentially the same, each church drawn from the same living source.

Yeast, being alive, travels; working its way through the whole mix. At first the baker must incorporate the yeast into the mix, but once incorporated, the yeast grows into every morsel of the mix. And it does so in such a way that if you break off a piece, and mix it into another batch of flour, the new batch is also leavened. It is alive! So is the Kingdom.

What does this mean for you and me? We are seed carriers. As we move about doing normal daily life, we plant seeds – and in this conversation, the Gospel into our relationships. We are farmers, or in this context gospel-ers, seed bearers. “Jesus helped me overcome that struggle.” “I’ve discovered purpose for my life as a member of a group of people meeting at Grace Church.” “Jesus gave me the strength to be the husband I needed to be.” “I would miss Jesus if he wasn’t part of my life.” Each statement could be a seed if planted in the right soil. **Lord, help us choose wisely the words we plant in our conversations.**

We are bakers. Not only do we drop the seed (yeast) of the message, we also get to massage the yeast into the mix of daily life and of our relationships. Not drop and run, but introduce and explain as opportunities arise. “Let’s look at this problem together.” “I’m sure you would find my friends eager to join us on

this adventure.” “Let’s see what the Bible says. Let’s read this passage together.” These ongoing conversations deepen our relationships and draw life from Jesus into our corporate lives. **Lord, fill us with your words as we continue these conversations.**

In the end, we find that sower and baker come together for the harvest and the meal. Lives are changed. Relationships blossom. And the Kingdom unfolds before us. As we make ourselves available, God uses us right where we are. And as God uses us, we find we have front row seats for the miraculous – God transforming lives. **Lord, give me eyes and ears that I might not miss you at work in my life.**

Pastor Les

Helping Hands for Helping Hands Day Care

You are invited to partner with your Daycare Ministry by purchasing supplies. Helping Hands uses the following non-perishable items on a regular basis:

- “AA, AAA and D” Batteries
- Baby Wipes
- Band-Aids
- Juicy Juice
- Napkins



Save the Dates – Holiday Calendar

November

November 4 – Craft Show & Bake Sale

November 23 – Thanksgiving



December

December 5 – Daycare Christmas Program

December 10 – Kids Christmas Program
Church Christmas Meal

December 24 – Christmas Eve
Christmas Eve Service

December 25 – Christmas Day

December 31 – New Year's Eve
Welcome 2018!

January 1 – New Year's Day

GO Matthew 28:18 – 20 (NIV) GO

Then Jesus came to them and said,
“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Sermon Info: November to December 2017

- November** **5** Youth Sunday
Our teens will lead us in worship – music, testimony and Word. Encouraged by Pastor Steve and the youth leader team, our teens will lead the service. **Family Friendly**
- 12** My Calendar and Checkbook Cry Out Selected Texts
“But Daddy, I AM ten!” Sometimes children cry out against their parents’ dishonesty (to save a few dollars). In a similar way, our calendars and checkbooks cry out against us. Regardless what we claim is important, what we spend our time and money on is what really is important.
- 19** 125th Anniversary Sunday w/Rev. Dave Swift (catered luncheon)
As the day finally arrives, we will enjoy a celebration of God’s goodness and mercy. 125 years – his power and presence among us. 125 years – the shoulders we stand on. Worship, fellowship and food. A perfect way to celebrate!
- 26** What? It’s My Stuff! Selected Texts
In a world where the one with the most toys wins, we find ourselves trying to balance what we have with who we are in Christ. Called to steward – take care of – what we have, we must grapple with the ideas of need, want and enough. Is it possible to live balanced lives in 2017? **Communion MMK**
- December** **3** **Advent #1** A Mary Mindset Luke 1:1 – 20 (esp. vs. 19)
Mary allowed God to fill her life. He called her to mother Jesus. She said yes. God showed her amazing things. She pondered them. God allowed her to touch his face. She loved him. God allowed her heart to break as she watched her son die. She pressed on. In what ways might our lives change if we embraced a Mary kind of mindset for daily life?
- 10** Kids’ SS Program in Worship **Advent #2**
Once again, we look to our children for a worship program – skits, readings and music, a Sunday school class adventure. **Family Friendly**
- 17** **Advent #3** A Shepherd’s Mindset Luke 1:1 – 20 (esp. vss. 17 – 18)
The shepherds are often treated as a cute side dish beside Mary and Joseph. They were there. They saw stuff. We admire, even try to imitate God for including the lowly. But what if the shepherds are not a side dish, but more of the main course? Would we see men eager to follow God? Would we see evangelists eager to share the Gospel? Would we see more of them in more of our lives? How might we do better as shepherd imitators in our daily lives?
- 24** **Advent #4** A Magi’s Mindset Matthew 2:1 – 12 (esp. vss. 2 and 11)
The Magi are a mystery to us. We don’t really know who they were. We don’t know how many they were. We don’t even know what their relationship with God was or involved. But we do know they recognized and extravagantly worshiped the One who was born to be King. Worship. How eager are we to worship Jesus? How extravagant is our worship?
- 24** **Christmas Eve Service**
- 31** New Years’ Challenge Run to Win the Race Hebrews 12:1 – 29
Hebrews 12 is filled with “therefore statements” we should not overlook. Every therefore is there for a reason. Perhaps this series of therefore statements might help us plan a strong and prosperous 2018. Let’s look closely at the author’s direction for choosing the lives we will live. **Communion**

Celebrating with Our Family

Do we have your birthday or anniversary information?

If not, please forward it to the church office
and we'll add you to the list.

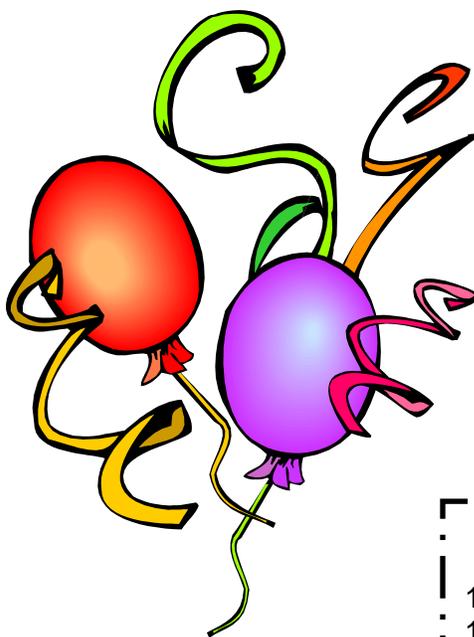
Thank you!

November Birthdays

2 – Melanie Sensenig
5 – Joyce Hoffman
6 – Jen Brubaker
6 – Nathan Cummings
6 – Dorothy Myer
9 – Mike Kapczynski
13 – Bob Groome
14 – Taylor Harsh
17 – Clarissa Augustine
18 – Gina Greene
20 – Mary Good
20 – Kelly Martin
20 – Ron Wanner
21 – Robin Haley
21 – Mary Grace Long
22 – Alicia Mease
24 – Carsyn Greene
26 – Dede Zimmerman
28 – Ben Martin
29 – Mike Brubaker
29 – Audrey Weik
30 – Jean Fulmer

November Anniversaries

17 – Andrew & Jen Brubaker
19 – Justin & Rene Gehman
22 – Ken & Rachel Royer



December Anniversaries

12 – George & Dawn Schleicher
16 – Josh & Kelly Weaver
22 – Ed & Martha Vondran
31 – Andy & Amanda Sell

December Birthdays

1 – Brenden Kapczynski
1 – Julia Rudy
3 – Joy Cummings
5 – Tim Zimmerman
6 – Lauren Holubec
11 – Kim Engle
12 – Tracy Zimmerman
12 – Steve Augustine
14 – Barry Heckman
16 – Sarah Gehman
19 – Deana Long
21 – Blake Zahm
29 – Brynn Theurer
30 – Tim Hoffman
31 – Lindsay Rollman
31 – LJ Sensenig

Treasurer's Reports

August 2017			September 2017		
CHECKING ACCT BAL 7/31		\$ 95,370.82	CHECKING ACCT BAL 8/30		\$ 106,867.12
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 60,170.50	TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 44,703.04
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 48,674.20	TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 54,423.03
CHECKING ACCT BAL 6/30		\$ 106,867.12	CHECKING ACCT BAL 9/30		\$ 97,147.13
RESTRICTED FUNDS:			RESTRICTED FUNDS:		
WE CARE	\$ 778.34		WE CARE	\$ 642.78	
TWIN PINES	\$ -641.00		TWIN PINES	\$ -641.00	
FRIENDSHIP SS CLASS	\$ 126.89		FRIENDSHIP SS CLASS	\$ 329.89	
R.O.S. SS CLASS	\$ 326.03		R.O.S. SS CLASS	\$ 353.03	
YOUTH GROUP	\$ 1,717.60		YOUTH GROUP	\$ 1,801.24	
TRINIDAD MISSIONS TRIP	\$ 19,739.19		TRINIDAD MISSIONS TRIP	\$ 19,739.19	
SHORT TERM MISSIONS	\$ 3,000.00		SHORT TERM MISSIONS	\$ 3,000.00	
OPERATING FUNDS 8/30		\$ 81,820.07	OPERATING FUNDS 9/30		\$ 71,922.00
HELPING HANDS DAY CARE:			HELPING HANDS DAY CARE:		
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 35,380.47	TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 23,295.63
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 25,625.35	TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 25,294.13
DIFFERENCE		\$ 9,755.12	DIFFERENCE		\$ -1,998.50
CAP CAMPAIGN ACCT BAL 8/31		\$ 11,961.00	CAP CAMPAIGN ACCT BAL 9/30		\$ 14,961.00
OFFERING NEEDED THROUGH 8/27		\$ 196,770.00	OFFERING NEEDED THROUGH 9/24		\$ 219,258.00
OFFERING COLLECTED THROUGH 6/25		\$ 184,361.00	OFFERING COLLECTED THROUGH 9/24		\$ 202,732.00
DIFFERENCE		\$ -12,409.00	DIFFERENCE		\$ -16,526.00

On Call	
Nov 3-4	Steve
Nov 10-12	Les
Nov 17-19	Les
Nov 24-26	Steve
Dec 1-3	Steve
Dec 8-10	Les
Dec 15-17	Steve
Dec 22-24	Les
Dec 29-31	Steve

November Memory Verse

"Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Budget Info as of 10/22/17

YTD Budget: \$241,746
YTD Offering: \$226,952
Difference: - \$14,794

December Memory Verse

"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."

1 Timothy 6:18

Point to Ponder

"There can only be two basic loves... the love of God unto the forgetfulness of self, or the love of self unto the forgetfulness and denial of God."

Saint Augustine

Did You Know?

Gifts and shopping for them . . . in days past, this involved a lot of time spent at local stores or malls. I love to give gifts. More recently, this has become more about giving money instead of "wrapped gifts." For my family, November and December are filled with gift-giving – birthdays, anniversaries, and Christmas. I recently looked up "gift giving" in the Bible and found eight different references:

1. Pharaoh's gifts to Abraham (Genesis 12)
2. Abraham's gifts to Melchizedek (Genesis 14)
3. Eliezer's gifts to Rebekah (Genesis 24)
4. Jacob's gifts to Esau (Genesis 32, 33)
5. Joseph's gifts to Jacob (Genesis 45)
6. Gifts for the Tabernacle (Exodus 35–40)
7. Queen of Sheba's gifts to Solomon (I Kings 10; II Chronicles 9)
8. The Magis' gifts to Jesus (Matthew 2)

Other gifts that were given range from the Pharisees' large gifts to the Temple (Matthew 15:5 – 7) to the widow's two mites/small copper coins (Luke 21:1 – 4). These gifts went to a Temple that had been refurbished, built with stones of twelve to sixty feet in length, under Herod the Great. The reconstruction included a new foundation, walls, and enlarged areas outside the Temple. The donations were gifts for the decoration of the Temple (included gold and silver plated gates, grape vine clusters, and Babylonian linen tapestries). This Temple was very beautiful, yet was destroyed in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Let's consider another gift – the gift of salvation through faith in Jesus, his work on the Cross. This is the greatest gift we can receive. This gift will never be destroyed. The gift given on the darkest day on earth became the brightest day of all. Jesus has made a way for us to go to Heaven. That is a great gift!

Have you received it? Take this moment to receive this wonderful gift!

Mary Martin

Pastor's Book of the Month

God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally

Doug Pollock, a GROUP publication

From the back cover of the book . . .

You've felt that tug...

A friend, co-worker, family member, or someone you just met is talking—and you sense God nudging you to say something. But what do you say? What don't you say? How can you bring God into the conversation without shutting it down?

Welcome to **God Space**.

Where the Holy Spirit can do amazing things through everyday conversations. Where honesty and transparency allow for discovery and deep connection. Where lives are challenged and changed.

Connect with these real-life stories of how ordinary people learned how to engage others in rich spiritual conversations that open doors instead of slamming them shut. You'll find fresh insights and practical tools for connecting with others about the things that matter most.

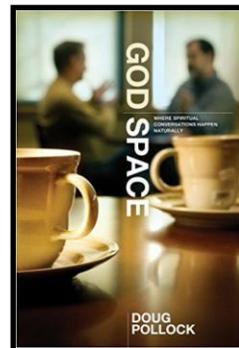
Les' thoughts . . .

So, you've been hanging out with your neighbor. And hanging out with your neighbor. Then there was that sermon about sharing the gospel. But that didn't happen. Not that time. Maybe not the other time, either.

Don't panic! This happens a lot. To you. To me. To that other guy. And not because we didn't want to, not because we don't want to.

Pollock shares stories and insights that help us recognize the moment, providing examples from real life accounts of God conversations that don't end with an awkward silence. In fact....

Read the book! Read the book with friends. Add some prayer. That's the formula for making the most of lessons learned.



Devotions on Stewardship from The Finance Commission

"But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving." ---2 Corinthians 8:7

Paul loved the church in Corinth as a parent loves a child. He witnessed the outpouring of God's gifts upon the whole believing community. They had been given salvation in Christ, an articulate testimony, knowledge, faith, and spiritual gifts that continued to enrich the community. It seems they lacked nothing. Even in the area of material and physical needs, the Corinthian community was very comfortable.

Yet, just as any loving and committed parent would, Paul continued to lead, teach, and advise the community at Corinth. In his second letter to the church, Paul encourages the believers to identify themselves with the greater ministry of the early Christian church. Paul recognizes their past support and yet admonishes them to continue to support the ministry going on in Jerusalem. He encourages them that their practice of generosity should match the same standard of excellence they demonstrate in other areas of their walk with Jesus. Specifically, they should count God as the owner of all they possess and give from that posture.

An individual who does not truly count God as the owner of all they have can never be truly generous. Generosity flows from a posture that sees everything as owned by God. Who owns your life, possessions, and wealth?

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Glocal Ministries Commission Update

Members – Sue Davidson, Bonnie Eberly, Sheryl Heffley, Marsha Watson,
Pastor Les Cool

2018 Missionary Speakers:

- February 11 . . . Pastor Steve; Waldmans in the house (MMK event)
- April 22 . . . Dan & Mary Lynne Wills
- July 22 . . . Joe Toy
- October 21 or 28 . . . Water Street Ministries

News & Information:

- Pray for our missionaries, their families, and their ministries. Stop by the tables in the narthex and get acquainted with the missionaries we support.
- Interested in missions? Feel free to visit one of our meetings or talk with one of our team members. We're here to serve you! Help us know better how to do that.
- GAIN . . . we continue our partnership, collecting flannel for LuoPads and advertising onsite ministry opportunities. A flannel collection box is in the church narthex.
- Short term mission trips and experiences are being considered. We would like to hear from you – what missional adventure would be valuable for your spiritual journey?



**And how can they preach unless they are sent?
As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
Romans 10:15 (NIV)**

November 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Family Night 7:00 p.m. Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	2 Bowling 7:30 p.m.	3 Craft Show Set Up	4 Craft Show 8:00 a.m.
5 Time Change Youth Sunday Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. Choir 7:15 p.m.	6 Ministry Council 7:00 p.m.	7 Election Day	8 Family Night 7:00 p.m. Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	9 Bowling 7:30 p.m.	10	11 Veteran's Day Men Praying 7:00 a.m.
12 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. Congregational Business Meeting	13	14	15 Family Night 7:00 p.m. Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	16 Bowling 7:30 p.m.	17 Ablaze Retreat	18 Ablaze Retreat
19 Worship 10:00 a.m. 125th Anniversary w/ Dave Swift Luncheon Choir 7:15 p.m. Ablaze Retreat	20	21	22 Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	23 Thanksgiving	24	25 Women Praying 7:00 a.m.
26 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. Choir 7:15 p.m.	27	28	29 Family Night 7:00 p.m. Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	30 Bowling 7:30 p.m.		

December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Advent #1 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m.	4	5 DC Christmas Program 6:30 p.m.	6 Family Night 7:00 p.m. Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	7 Bowling 7:30 p.m.	8	9 Men Praying 7:00 a.m.
10 Advent #2 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. Kid's Program Church Christmas Meal	11	12	13 Family Night 7:00 p.m. Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	14 Bowling 7:30 p.m.	15	16
17 Advent #3 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. Choir 7:15 p.m.	18	19	20 Family Night 7:00 p.m. Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	21 Bowling 7:30 p.m.	22	23 Women Praying 7:00 a.m.
24 Advent #4 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. Christmas Eve Service 7:00 p.m.	25 Christmas Day	26	27 Praise Band 8:15 p.m.	28 Bowling 7:30 p.m.	29 Old Year's Party	30 Old Year's Party
31 New Year's Eve Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m.						