

April
2024

GRACE NOTES
ENCOURAGEMENT
FOR LIFE
TOGETHER AT
GRACE UMC



PERSONAL
TESTIMONY



LAY LEADER'S
MESSAGE



PASTOR'S
NOTE

GRACE NOTES

In February, 2024, three members of the Grace UMC congregation - Sue Timson, and Nancy & Clay Bailey - went on a Mission Trip with the James Project to Guatemala to serve at the Shadow of His Wings orphanage.

Why Me?

by Clay Bailey

My first question was why would God want me, of all people, to go this country. I really had a hard time with that question until I met the children at the facility and the people who run it. God was using them to draw me back to him, showing me how strong the love of God is among the children and the people of this country. I didn't know how to react when the first young person came up to me and hugged me and told me how she appreciated me coming to her country and spreading the word of God. I realized at that point that God knew how I loved young people and it would have more of an impact on me to have a young person expressing these feelings than an adult. This expression of love went outside the facility as we went to a nursing home and spent time talking with the residents and singing and performing gospel songs, all to people about whom the world had seemed to have forgotten. It was hard to say goodbye to these residents because they too were only looking for someone to love them and spend time with them.

The week passed quickly and I did not want to say goodbye. I left realizing these people were in good hands and God was the inspiration in their life. Unfortunately, I fell in love with all the children, their smiles and hugs, their appreciation of a guy like me spending time with them. I will have those memories for the rest of my life.

So, in closing, God did send me there for a reason, not only for me to find him but for me to see that even in a poor country, there is a lot of happiness and joy. I wish everyone in the United States could experience this!



Easter's Hope

by Lay Leader, Laurie Bedard

As I write down some thoughts for our April newsletter I am looking at a very rainy, gloomy Maundy Thursday morning but... the snow measuring stick in our yard which was buried last Saturday is now sitting on bare ground. Green shoots are showing up in my side garden and robins have found patches of grass where they happily seek out worms. Things change quickly in New England. My mom often spouted the old saying, "If you don't like the weather, just wait a minute."

I am thinking of how rapidly life changed for Jesus' closest companions. They had walked alongside him in triumphal entry into Jerusalem. They celebrated the Passover meal together then they watched his arrest, beating, humiliation, and crucifixion. Friday was horrific, Saturday must have been devastating, and then Sunday the unbelievable joy of the news — He is Risen!!

The events of Holy Week move rapidly. Easter Sunday morning comes and then is gone. We turn our calendars to April and dream about the signs of spring and warmer, sunshine filled days. At least we hope for that.

And that is what I see as Easter's great gift, the gift of hope. Hope of new life now as we accept Jesus, hope of life beyond what we can see as we believe His resurrection promise, and hope for His return making all things new.

**Join our AGG
(A Grace-ful Group)
on Facebook!**



As followers of Christ we don't leave Easter behind when we move on from Holy Week. We are called to be Easter people everyday, alive now in all the wonderful hopes we have in Him. I pray that Easter joy and hope might live in our hearts through every season no matter what changes life or New England weather might bring!

Blessings, Laurie

What has God been doing in your life?

Would you be willing to write a short testimony or reflection for a future Grace Notes newsletter?

Please consider sharing what God has been doing in your life, how you've heard his voice, felt his Spirit, or seen his hand at work.

Reach out to Cindy to participate in this opportunity to encourage one another with God's faithfulness. Thank you!

Contact Cindy at the church office:
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Pastor's Note

JOHN CALVIN: GENEVA AS A GODLY COMMUNITY

After seeing Luther's work in Germany, Calvin realized that, for a reformation to be successful, something more than the acceptance of formularies of faith was needed. He thought that one supreme authority, which would be completely free from State interference and strong enough to assert its power over the State, was necessary. Where could he experiment with his idea and test the theory of his doctrine? Geneva was the perfect opportunity.

On September 13th in 1541, Calvin returned to Geneva. The city council had decided to "beg him wholeheartedly to come and live" in Geneva. All the city magistrates rode out of the Cornavin Gate to welcome Master John Calvin,

whom they had expelled from their town three years earlier.

He hated to return but he could not refuse, as God had willed it. A kind of constitution for the church, "*the Ecclesiastical Ordinances*" was drawn up and great power with control over the city was given to Calvin. He thoroughly reorganized the church disciplines and made the whole life of the city subject to the commandments of God.

The *Ordinances* provided for a fourfold structure of ministry, with pastors, teachers, elders and deacons.

- *Pastors* were in charge of preaching, enforcing all disciplines.
- *Teachers* instructed to the faithful the true doctrine.
- *Elders* (or presbyters) looked out for the moral welfare of the community.
- *Deacons* were given charge of the poor and the sick in Geneva. The distribution of all charity was to be centralized and carefully regulated by the deacons.
- The number of churches were reduced to three parishes, served by ten pastors.
- Home visits by the clergy were mandated.
- On Sunday at noon, all children had to be brought to their parishes for religious instruction.
- Attendance at sermons was required of everyone, and so were punctuality, and attentiveness.
- Arriving late, leaving early, being noisy, or falling asleep were not allowed.

Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own,
but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will.
Put me to doing,
put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for you
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you
or brought low for you.
Let me be full,
let me be empty.
Let me have all things,
let me have nothing.
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all
things to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine, and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.
JOHN WESLEY

Calvin also established a disciplinary committee, *the Consistory*, which oversaw the behavior of all Genevans, defined godliness, and imposed penalties on offenders. Very serious misdeeds could result in excommunication. It controlled morals in Geneva and ensured its Christian purity.

Despite the conflicts and divisions for many years, Calvin's reformation finally bore much fruit in Geneva. A significant accomplishment in the Genevan Reformation was the founding of the Genevan Academy in 1559, which is the University of Geneva today. It was for the education of all citizens and provided not only liberal arts but also training for ministers and laypeople. The Academy became a kind of mission school for the spread of Calvinism throughout much of Europe. In December 1559, the city council honored Calvin by finally granting him citizenship, the right of bourgeoisie.

* * *

From the past two years of readings and writings on Luther's and Calvin's Reformation, I learned that those two great reformers had different interests and focuses. Luther's Reformation was heavily focused on theology and he thus stood up against the Catholic Church and its theology and

practices. On the other hand, Calvin focused more on reorganization of the church structure, disciplines and the morals of the city state, Geneva. Luther left the Church at the mercy of the secular authority, while Calvin charged the Church to collaborate with the State and eventually controlled the State, building an idealistic Christian community.

About 150 years later, John Wesley showed another approach. He stressed the transformation of inner being. Aiming at the reformation of the Anglican Church, he proclaimed the renewal of souls, minds and hearts. In order to spread and share his burning heart, John Wesley visited rural areas and preached in the field or outside of barns on Sunday afternoons. The focus of his message was on the importance of human free will and human response to God's grace.

These three reformers' ideas and models make me ponder: What is the main cause of the decline of the church? Is it a matter of theology, or policy (structure) or believers' spirit? Then I ask further questions for myself: What would be the most decisive factor for the revival of twenty-first century Christianity?

As I finish my article series, I invite you too to think about the crisis of the church today and your diagnosis and your solution for the revival of the church.

I am convinced that reformation is more effective and successful through grassroots movement rather than top-down management. In that sense, members of local churches like you are the most decisive element for changing our community.

That is why I boldly conclude:
The revitalization of local churches depends on you and so you are the future of Christianity!

Pastor *Kyu*



Reflection for Easter and for Every Day

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8 (NIV)

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

THANK YOU

to our Liturgists, Fellowship Hosts, Musical Talent, Audio-Video Techs, Ushers, and Greeters for your valuable services this month. Grace couldn't function without all of you. Thank you!

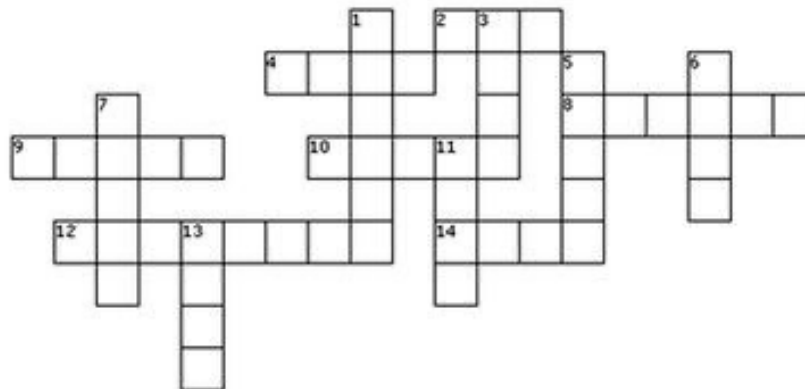
Let's Pray Together

Holy Spirit, we reflect on the joy of Easter. May the significance of Christ's resurrection linger in our hearts, guiding us in the days ahead. Help us carry the Easter message of love, hope, and redemption into the world, being witnesses to your transformative power.
Amen.



He is not here. He has risen!

Words taken from John 20:1-18 (NIV)



ACROSS

- 2. To shed tears
- 4. The opposite of alive
- 8. A heavenly being
- 9. The thing that covered the entrance to Jesus'tomb
- 10. The color that is the opposite of black
- 12. A person who takes care of plants and flowers
- 14. The name of the woman who discovered Jesus' empty tomb

DOWN

- 1. The male parent
- 3. Return to an upright position after lying down; to return from the dead
- 5. The opposite of late
- 6. A period of seven days
- 7. An adult female person
- 11. A place where someone is buried; another name for grave
- 13. The opposite of light

Words Used

early	angels	gardener	rise
week	white	Mary	dead
dark	woman	tomb	
stone	cry	father	

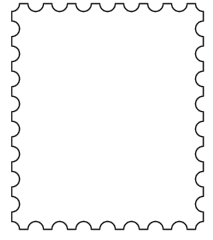
April 2024

- US Holidays
- Pastor's Schedule
- Anniversaries
- Birthdays
- Church Happenings

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 Linda Perkins Easter 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	1 April Fools' Day Pastor Kyu...Sabbatical 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	2 Pastor Sabbatical	3	4 Lisa Wood 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	5	6 Kay Ellis
7 Pastor Sabbatical 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	8 Don Bostic 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	9 Eid al-Fitr	10	11 Shawn & Nicquelle 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	12	13
14 Pastor Sabbatical 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	15 Mary Anne Hamilton Tax Day 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	16 Carlyle & Terry Pierce Jolene Geiger	17	18 Patrick Merrill 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	19 Brian Keith Bernie & Sue Timson	20 Durward Ellis
21 Pastor Sabbatical 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	22 Amy Bedor Passover Earth Day 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	23	24	25	26	27
28 Pastor Sabbatical 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	29 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	30 Chuck Perkins	1 Tim & Amy Bedor Carolyn Wright 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	2	3	4



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Join us for Worship — Sunday at 10:30am

