

GRACE *and Truth*

Celebrating 25 Years
GRACE†
1992-2017

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For the law was given through Moses, but GRACE AND TRUTH came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

June, 2017



A Tale of Two Churches, Part 2

by Jennifer Wilkerson

Last month we covered church history from its beginning until 1992 when Bryan Hult became our pastor. This month we'll cover 1992 through 2003 and finish up in July's newsletter.

Once Grace moved into the little building on a hill at 6829 South Emerson Avenue and continued to establish itself as a church, it began many fruitful and effective programs that blessed not only the ones who attended but the surrounding community. The VBS turnout was so great that every "nook and cranny" had to be used in this building that was already becoming too small. An appealing part of this particular outreach was a thriving puppet ministry. A lending library was soon established, and a phone-based (pre-email!) prayer chain was organized. Small groups began meeting in homes. "Discipling the Heart," a study with the objective of discipleship which ran on Wednesday nights and used the "self-confrontation" manual produced by the Biblical Counseling Foundation, was offered for the first time.

"Grace Evangelical Church's Women's Ministry exists to encourage each woman to know and follow God's Word, serving God and others, so that each woman's life will glorify God in her sphere of influence." This was the mission statement of the women's ministry as it offered many different opportunities. There was always at least one Bible study to attend, and many different books were used by authors such as Beth Moore and Nancy Leigh DeMoss. There were prayer groups, play groups, prayer partners, spring luncheons and fall retreats. Also in these early years, groups of women met weekly at Grace to talk, share and learn as their young children were taken care of at MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) meetings. MOPS is an organization whose main goal is to reach others, and many who drove by the church and saw the name on its sign were introduced to Grace as a result!

Indiana Winter Camp was a fun getaway for many who

joined up with other churches in locations such as Iowa and Texas. There they enjoyed Bible classes, worship and "Team Olympic" games, which included a 120 yard dash while pulling sleds in the snow!

In 1995, this brand new congregation wanted to hire someone who would assume the title of Director of Worship and Christian Education, and this need was met by another Bryan – this time with the surname of Elmore. He rounded out the full-time pastoral staff and served at Grace for two years. And, those who came during this era may have known a family that would later have a positive impact on our country. Mike and Karen Pence and their children Michael, Charlotte and Audrey were regular attenders, with Mike present at the men's prayer group and Karen the women's Bible study. At this time, Mike was an attorney in private practice and hosted a political talk show.

With the turn of the century came two more major changes for this growing and changing assembly. The first
(Continued on page 3)



The Men's Ministry Breakfast was held on Saturday, May 20th. Pancakes, sausage, egg casserole and Long's donuts were served. In addition to a great breakfast, Brandon Brunner gave his testimony. The next breakfast will be on July 15. Pictured are some of the cooks and clean-up crew: (front row) Steve Conlin, Gary Johnson, Cyrus Amir, (back row) Michael Smith, Ryan Steenburg, and Brandon Brunner.

Visit our website at www.indygrace.org

— **Sunday Morning DiscipleLIFE Classes** —

TELL SOMEONE: YOU CAN SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

Have you shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with anyone before? Have you ever wanted to share but weren't quite sure how to go about it? Maybe you share regularly and are looking for more tools to put in your toolbox. If any of these apply to you, then this class may be for you! It is based on the book **Tell Someone – You Can Share the Good News** by Greg Laurie. *Taught by Michael Smith and Brent Hendricks in room 112/113.*

1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

Sometimes considered Paul's eschatological letters, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians extensively discusses the second coming of Christ. In both of these letters, Paul writes to encourage the believers in Thessalonica to provide guidance on godly living and to reassure the believers about the return of Christ. *Taught by Steve Agal and Rick Storm in room 109/110.*

ABIDING IN JESUS

A class geared for teenagers.

Inspired by John 15, this study teaches that abiding in Jesus leads to trusting Him in all life's situations and bearing spiritual fruit in Him. The study features interactive

teaching with small group discussion, application, prayer, and fellowship time. All middle school and high school students are welcome to attend. Parents are encouraged to participate too. *This class is taught in room 115.*



DISCIPLELIFE: CHILDREN'S WING

The Children's Wing uses the **Answers in Genesis** curriculum during the DiscipleLIFE hour. Nursery (birth to 2 years of age) is in room 108. Fantastic Foxes (3 years to 5 years of age) meet in room 103, and elementary grades meet in room 101/102.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

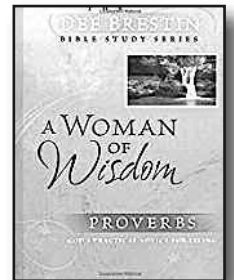
by **Bunny Conlin**

Tuesday Morning at Grace is one of my favorite places to be with some of my favorite people. We are women of all ages who gather to study God's Word and pray for one another. We meet at Grace from 9:00 until 10:30 a.m. every Tuesday.

In the past, we have studied a variety of books of the Bible, and most recently, a book written by Nancy Leigh DeMoss called **Lies Women Believe**. In this book, Nancy addresses 40 lies commonly believed by women, but she doesn't stop there. She taught us how to identify the lie and replace the lie with the Truth of God's Word which has the power to set us free. We decided that **Lies Women Believe** is a good reference book to keep for our own review and to equip us to better counsel those women God may bring into our lives. If you did not attend this study but are interested in reading the book, there is a copy in the church library.

Beginning June 6th, we plan to study the book of Proverbs using Dee Brestin's **A Woman of Wisdom**. Summers are busy and an effort has been made for each week to stand alone. So if you are not able to come every week, in order to be blessed and be a blessing, come when you can.

Books may be ordered through the church by signing up on the Women's Ministry board or you may order online. It is not necessary for you to buy a book – scholarships are available for the asking. Child care will be provided during our meetings. Please direct any questions or concerns to Jo Witmer at jowitmer1978@gmail.com or Bunny Conlin at conlins2@att.net. Let's grow wiser this summer by studying the book of Proverbs together!



News From the Children's Department

by **Holly Phoenix**

The Children's Department is in need of nursery workers during second hour. If you are interested in helping, please let me know.

We're looking for bouncer seats and jumpers for the nursery. If you have gently used items you would like to donate, the Children's Department could use them.

I would like to get pictures of all of our children (youth included!) with their dad's for a Father's Day project. These can be photos of dads and individual kids or photos of dads and all kids. These can be emailed to me at holly@indygrace.org, or I can use hard copies. Hard copies will be returned.

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A TALE OF TWO CHURCHES, PART 2 (Continued from page 1)

was an official partnership with the Evangelical Free Churches of America (EFCA). Some of you may be wondering, as I was, exactly what this organization is all about. This association has been encouraging the churches affiliated with it for many years, and the reason the elders pursued this relationship was twofold: Grace is very missions-focused and therefore wanted to become involved with EFCA'S like-minded international ministry. Also, this body of believers wanted to take advantage of their main ministry, which is to make available resources for pastors and their congregations, educating them on everything from the sanctity of life to doctrine and the writing of Christian apologists. This benefit takes the form of a multitude of articles that can be downloaded directly from their website. Here, EFCA'S statement of faith is also revealed, with a clear explanation of Biblical truths of basic theology including the virgin birth, inerrancy of Scripture and the Triune God, among other equally important tenets. The word "free" means that churches who are affiliated with EFCA are independently governed, meaning that they choose their own pastors and conduct business matters between themselves.

In the year 2000, Grace's choice of Gary Walker as its senior associate pastor reflected this alliance with EFCA. Gary was experienced with this type of church, having just completed almost ten years of ministering at an EFCA church in California. One of his areas of oversight was the Triple Cord Ministry for men which was based on Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, and he communicated the essence of it well when he said "None of us is designed to live out the life of Christ on our own. We were created to be connected to God and the rest of His family!"

The coming year would see even more major changes for this still very young church on Emerson Avenue as its steady growth made more space a necessity. More than one option was considered, to no avail – adding another story or enlarging at ground level would be too costly, and the acreage, part of which was on a flood plain, was landlocked by other businesses. Grace was already running two services, and using a few modular buildings to contain the Sunday school overflow was not enough, so it was decided that the best option was to sell.

After more than one attempt to sell the property failed, the Lord would provide for Grace in an unexpected way. Those of us who shop at one of the many stores around the Southport and Emerson Avenue intersection know that it is very different now than it was at that time, both in commerce and topography. In 2001, Target built a superstore across the street and other commercial developers followed, building more stores, restaurants and other businesses in this area. As a result, the eleven acres that the church building sat on was worth much more than the building itself. This enabled Grace to sell its property for over a million dollars that year, which was much more than previous offers. (Today, if you stand about halfway between Qdoba and Aldi you'll be in the approximate place that this building existed.)

After considering the area where the subdivision Misty Woods sits presently, the elders decided that the 27 acre plot on Southport Road was the best location and price for the move, and Grace purchased it in 2000. This large plot of land would allow for future goals which included starting a Christian school and building a soccer field someday, increasing Grace's outreach to the community.

Construction began in August of 2001 and while the new church was being built, the congregation met temporarily at the building that Southport Presbyterian Church had formerly used for their services. Once built, Grace's new meeting place was a roomy 27,000 square feet, about four times the size of the church on the hill. It featured two items that were lovingly brought over ... the steeple and the entire baptistery! Several years later Allen Sparks would not only frame a brick that had also had been saved, but craft the sanctuary's podium and cross.

The following February, Grace's home was a buzz of activity as the final finishing details were completed for "initiation day" – its first service, which was held on the 10th. And on that mild and somewhat cloudy Saturday, family and friends gathered together to watch Cristi Witmer and Zach DeHoff become one, making theirs Grace's very first wedding at this new address. Rich Witmer, who had led the worship on Sunday, would again stand before the congregation – this time to give his daughter away.

Word Of Life is a ministry whose objective is to reach children for Christ and encourage character building while discipling them, and in the year 2002 Grace introduced its program for its children. The age range was from two up to 6th grade (the "Gopher Buddies" and "Olympians"). Also, a mission statement was established for the men's ministry: *"Men's Ministry at GEC exists to glorify God by introducing men to Jesus Christ, helping them to grow in Christ, encouraging them to develop vital relationships with other men, equipping them to be spiritual leaders, and exhorting them to serve God wherever He leads them. We will accomplish this mission through prayer, Bible study, worship, fellowship, training, and mentoring."*

This year also proved to be a memorable one for the Hults as Pastor Bryan earned his doctorate degree and took a six week sabbatical, accompanied by his wife Barbara. Touring Europe, they visited, encouraged and worked alongside missionaries supported by Grace. And soon after this, he reached another milestone in his life – a new rank of Colonel in the National Guard where he had served as a chaplain for the last ten years.

The year 2003 saw the Women's Ministry introducing a mentoring network, and in September the familiar faces of Dick and Pat Witmer rejoined the Grace family as Dick became the "Pastor to the Seniors," leading the group known as the OWLS (Older Wiser Loving Saints). This class was close-knit but at the same time welcoming to others, and enjoyed monthly luncheons.

We'll continue the rest of our story from 2003 to the present in July's newsletter.

Servant's Heart Food Pantry



Bill Boone

Cooneys, Belchers, Suttons, and Jerry Cobia. Once again Southport Chick-fil-A graciously provided 150 sandwiches to feed the volunteers and carriers. Even though the weight was down by 62% we ended the day with a great variety of food to stock our shelves. The total for this year was 7,540 pounds.

Servant's Heart is now picking up product three days a week from Beech Grove Walmart. Through April and May we have collected about 20,000 pounds of food and we now have a produce aisle.

We had several families come and work together in collecting and sorting. They have now become part of our regular teams to serve at the pantry. We just love to see families serving God in our mission field.

We had several new client families this month. Some with special needs and some just getting their home established. For the first time we served two Muslim families, and they were very appreciative of the clothes and furniture we provided.

In March, I shared a story of a dad struggling with the loss of his son to a heroin overdose. James and his wife were one of our last clients on Saturday. I asked his wife, "Where's James?" "He's in the car," she answered. So I went out to see him. You know that I don't believe in random opportunities, but Divine appointments. I inquired what was going on since the last time he and I talked. His heart was still full of pain from the loss of his son. He was trying to sort out how God was going to use him. I asked him if he knew Jesus as his Savior. He said, "No!" He was confused about the Trinity. Some of the church services he had attended seem to make matters worse for him. I told him that if he was not saved the Scriptures would not make sense to him. I was able to share about what Jesus meant to me and how it was very simple to trust Him, and I gave him a copy of the Bible that I carry and offered to disciple him.



A stocked food aisle at Servant's Heart

Keep us in your prayers as we continue to reach out to James and others about Jesus. The Holy Spirit was definitely tugging on James' heart. I hope that the next time I see him, he will tell me that he has made a decision to trust Jesus. I firmly believe that reaching the dads for Christ will change the future of our clients.

This is just one of the continuing stories of how we are touching lives. The devil doesn't like it either. Many of our families, volunteers and board members are under attack. Please keep all of us in your prayers. We look forward to seeing you come and become part of our teams serving the needs of families for Jesus.

The budget of the Missions Committee operates solely from designated giving, and not from the general offering. In order to support the Grace Evangelical Missions outreach, you need to mark your offering envelope with the specific amount you wish to go to MISSIONS. We pray that everyone regularly attending Grace will give to the Missions Ministry so that 100% of those who call Grace their home church will be participating in our church mission program.

by **Bill Boone**

The second Saturday in May is always a time we look forward to. It is when we partner with the Postal Carriers of Beech Grove, Garfield Park, New Palestine and Plainfield post offices for their annual *Stamp Out Hunger* food drive. This year we had 60 volunteers spread across the four stations. Big thanks go to our team leaders: the



JUNE

- 6/10 Hellen Sahn
- 6/12 Dorothy Miller
- 6/13 Nelson Hart
- 6/15 Harper Hedden
- 6/16 Eowyn Moxley
- 6/16 Tessa Moxley
- 6/17 Elena Georgen
- 6/17 Jubilee Georgen
- 6/19 Holly Phoenix
- 6/21 Brady Ball
- 6/21 Mikayla Steenburg
- 6/23 Bill Belcher
- 6/23 Mike Smith
- 6/23 Diane Menchhofer
- 6/29 Nicole Georgen

ANNIVERSARIES

- 6/01 Jimmy & Shelli Engle
- 6/01 Larry & Wanda Cooney
- 6/02 Steve & Bunny Conlin
- 6/02 Rick & Carol Storm
- 6/03 Rich & Jo Witmer
- 6/17 Dave & Cindy Bannon
- 6/23 Kevin & Maria Via
- 6/24 David & Paula Dale

"A father is a thing that growls when it feels good – and laughs very loud when it's scared half to death." – Paul Harvey

