



New Life for GCPC

As we close in on the end of the 1st month of 2011, we can look around the church and see new life all around us. We have an active Women's group that is looking to work in the community (and do ministry!). We have a newly ordained and installed elder, David Green, with his own ideas on bringing life back into the church. Our college students continue to worship with us when they are in town. We continue to have steady attendance and regular visitors. The elders and I are going to be visiting our church families in the coming months. The Pastor Search Committee has several people they are looking at. It seems that we are all set.

It is times like this that we have to be careful. We can become confident in our work and let it all slip away. God is at work in our church and this is

evident in the first month of the year. There are great things happening and we have room to celebrate but let's keep working and following God to continue to grow our church.

It is at this point that I challenge all of you to pause and to pray on how you can minister to the community. It is not about growing the church but ministering to our community. If we do ministry, the church will grow.

I welcome your ideas on how we can do further ministry in our community. I invite you to share your ideas or join me on Monday mornings at 9:45 at the Starbucks on Royal Oaks Blvd. I am beginning a community Bible study and would love to have you join me.

Together, we can grow Grace CPC.

MISSION OUTREACH TO FRANKLIN

Our CPWM is working with several community organizations to minister to the greater Franklin community. They are planning on working with My Own Backyard, Grace Works, continuing to follow up with our Christmas family, and staying in touch with our college students. The ladies of the CPWM have challenged the men of the church to reform the Men's Fellowship and follow their lead. Let's spread God's message to our community.

Church Events

- We have Sunday School each week. *Please note that beginning January 30, Sunday School will begin at 9:15 am.*
- February 6th – Communion Sunday – please bring canned good items for Grace Works
- February 13th - Reception for Jack & Donna Medina after worship
- February 20th - CPWM Meeting after worship
- February 24th - Session Meeting 6:00 p.m.
- March 9 – Ash Wednesday service 6:00 p.m.

So Pastors Only Work on Sunday?

Most people really don't know. Just what is a pastor anyway? What does a pastor do? Part 1

The most visible part of a pastor's job is leading the church in worship on Sunday mornings. Designing worship that lifts people towards God involves several hours each week. To give a provocative and helpful message entails another six to ten hours of careful preparation; if preaching looks easy it's due to long hours spent in study. The typical pastor is called on to preach or teach at least twice more each week, with

several hours needed to prepare each time. Unlike school teachers who can reuse lesson plans year after year, a pastor's material has to be fresh, up-to-date, and tailored for the particular needs of people. No repeating.

Pastors are organizers, too, especially when a new church starts from scratch. We're entrepreneurs for God, if you will. If you've ever managed a business or been president of

an organization, you have some idea of what's involved. Groups accomplish a lot more with a structure of tasks and responsibilities--and careful planning..

But our role doesn't stop at organizational management. Pastors seek to discover the unique and special gifts of each member, and then endeavor to help that person recognize and develop these gifts. We see you as God's minister; it's as if we're working ourselves out of a job.

Curious to read more? Part 2 is next month.

Philippians 4:4-5
Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith.—Henry Ward Beecher

Session News

The minutes of every Session meeting are available – please see Lee Bagby if you would like a copy. Here is a brief summary of actions from the Session Meeting on January 17.

- The pastor is going to focus on outreach in the community including volunteering at Grace Works and starting a new community Bible study. Members are encouraged to volunteer.
- The Pastor Search Committee will be traveling to several churches in the next month to hear possible candidates preach. An advertisement for a new pastor will be placed on the denominational web site.
- The 2011 budget was presented and adopted. It has been noted that there will be a shortfall at the end of the year.
- The Session noted that there are a number of projects around the building that need completed. There is a list of projects – please let the office know if you would like to help.
- The Elders and Pastors will begin visiting church families.
- The annual report will be prepared and presented to Columbia Presbytery.

Why Are You a Christian?

Faith and religion are not the same thing. Although my faith may falter, it has nothing to do with the constancy of God's love. Religion, which is the expression of faith, may find different expressions appropriate in different times and places and to different people, and the variety of these expressions can enlarge our perceptions and deepen our faith.

In my readings and in reading the news, I have heard of people who describe themselves as life-long members of religious organizations - organizations that are highly respectable and guided by the teachings of Christ. I respect their conviction but it is conviction and not faith that guides them.

I come close to defining and describing faith when I remember the great preacher Phillips Brooks, who was asked by an earnest questioner why he was a Christian. He thought seriously for a moment, then replied, "I think I am a Christian because of my aunt, who lives in Teaneck, New Jersey." Or another way to look at it, a Christian is someone who knows one.

If I have faith, it is because I have met faith. I have seen it in action. And this faith is never a vague kind of thing. Heaven is not good because life is bad. The quality of our lives while we live them is preparation for heaven.

Why are you a Christian?