

Grace Notes

Community of Grace Presbyterian Church

February 2008

February Highlights

[Celebrating 2007 Mission Giving at COG.](#) Mission giving at COG exceeded 17% of our budget last year...a good reason to celebrate!

From the Pastor's Desk:

[Getting Dirty](#) Preparing for Ash Wednesday that this year falls on February 6.

Mission to Africa:

[A Personal Reflection](#). Our own Timothy Keene shares his reflection on his recent mission trip to Rwanda. His experience provides us yet another example of making a difference for people in need.

Our Church Community

[Ash Wednesday Service Announced.](#) We will be observing Ash Wednesday on February 6 with a special worship service from 7 to 8 pm.

[Session Notes.](#) Here you will find a synopsis of the January Session meeting.

[February Calendar.](#) The February church calendar is available at this link.

[Link to the Denomination.](#) Here is a helpful link for those who are interested in our denomination's work at the national level.

[Presbytery in Transition.](#) There have been a number of recent changes in the Utah Presbytery. Melissa Venable summarizes them in this update.

['Open Forum' Scheduled.](#) February 20 is the next 'Open Forum,' this time focused on Worship.

Children & Youth

[The Journey of Confirmation.](#) The confirmation process at COG is now under way. There are many participants besides this group of High School sophomores, including YOU, the congregation.

[The Journey of Inner-City Mission.](#) A delegation from COG is preparing for a mission trip to San Francisco to engage with people living in poverty.

[God on Skid Row](#) The Center for Student Missions (CSM) provides opportunities for people to see, interact with, and be touched by Third-World living conditions in major cities within our own country. We will send a mission team from CoG this summer to the third-world streets of San Francisco.

2nd Graders to Receive Bibles. On February 24 all second graders will be presented their own Bibles. They need not be enrolled in Sunday School, so parents please check to be sure they are signed up.

ACTS Kids Meet and Serve the Homeless. Our 5th and 6th graders served a meal at the "Road Home" homeless shelter on January 21 to make a difference for others.

Easter: All Things Bright and Beautiful. Children and Youth are invited to join iLIGHT! Choir for a special Easter performance.

Adult & Family

Food Boxes for the Homebound. On February 23 we will be delivering food boxes to those in need in a partnership with the Utah Food Bank. Families and individuals of all ages can help decorate, pack, and/or deliver boxes. Follow your heart!

Looking to Connect? New small groups starting up. February is a great time to join a new or existing small group. Find the details here.

New Adult Sunday Class on Bonhoeffer. We will be offering a new adult drop in class on Dietrich Bonhoeffer beginning February 17 leading up to the Al Staggs event on March 15-16.

Crossroads Food for the Month. The Crossroads Food of the Month for February is powdered or canned milk. The most needed item in the Crossroads Urban Center Thrift Store is warm clothes: long sleeve shirts, coats, gloves, and hats.

Presbyterian Women (PW)

Cooking Demonstration Seminar. Details for the Rhodes Cooking Seminar on February 7 can be found here.

Celebrating 2007 Mission Giving at COG

by Pastor Marty

We have a lot to celebrate! In addition to every hands-on project of service; every direct in-kind donation; in addition to the more than \$15,000 of donated mission auction items; our congregation gave more than \$77,000 to mission causes here and around the world. That is really something to celebrate. That represents more than 18% of all revenue going to mission. For this congregation, we have greatly exceeded a long-term goal of giving 10%. Thank you to everyone who made this possible and made a real difference in the lives of those in need outside of our congregation.

From the Pastor's Desk:

Getting Dirty

by Pastor Marty

Ashes to ashes, fun to funky, we know Major Tom's....wait a minute...I'm supposed to be thinking about Ash Wednesday not David Bowie....Isn't it amazing how the mind works, you are thinking about one thing and all of a sudden your singing a favorite song from one of your favorite artists. Is that crazy? The Holy Spirit? Both? Neither?

Be that as it may, we will be worshipping together on Ash Wednesday, Feb 6 from 7-8 pm. If all our plans go well, our Adult and iLight Choirs, our Spirit of Joy Band and our youth dancers will be using their artistic talents to lead us in worship. I encourage you to come and join us in the special service of worship to begin spiritual preparation for Holy Week and Easter.

If you come this year, and I sure hope you do, I hope you will be prepared to get a little dirty. You see....the ashes placed on our foreheads during the service are to remind us that from this earth God created us and to the earth we shall all return. Yet, and here is the truth, through it all, God's love and care go on forever. Our lives may begin and end, but God's love goes on forever

This year, at the Ash Wednesday Service of Worship, not only will we get a few ashes on the forehead, but I will be asking people to take home a little of God's good earth. What you do with the dirt is totally up to you. All I will be asking is that you do something with it that symbolizes God giving you life. And then, hopefully, some of you will share your stories of what you did through these very articles of Grace Notes.

You see, I love the image of Genesis 2 where God takes up dirt and out of it, we are fashioned. In essence, we are intimately and profoundly connected to this earth and our God. When God makes us into our human form from the dirt of the earth, God then breathes into us our first breath giving life to all. Our life, our every breath, is lived in response to the one who breathes into us first. I like to imagine my children's first breath upon birth as the breath of God.

As you prepare for Holy Week and Easter, why not join us for worship on Ash Wednesday. Come and get a little dirty. Come and be inspired by the music and dance. And may the breath of God fill you with love, courage, laughter, and purpose.

Mission to Africa:

A Personal Reflection

by Timothy Keene
Student in Oregon, former COG member

I learned a long time ago that it's not enough for me to read, hear, or talk about certain things; I have to experience them for myself. Remember when you were young and your parents would bug you about finishing your vegetables? I guarantee most of you at some point heard the phrase, "Eat your peas, there are starving children in Africa!" Well it wasn't enough for me to hear about those kids, I had to see them up close.

The day after Thanksgiving I left for the central African country of Rwanda where in 1994 almost 1,000,000 people were killed in just 100 days, leaving hundreds of

thousands of children orphaned. I went with a company called Africa New Life Ministries (ANLM), who in addition to running a child sponsorship program, also work very closely with local street kids, at risk women, and refugee camps. During my three weeks in country I worked with over 1,500 children, met and delivered gifts and food to my sponsor child, set up a new sponsorship for my parents, and watched as a local Portland church's gift of \$5,000 was used to feed 1,300 refugees on the border of Burundi.

Now I'm back in Portland after spending the last two months traveling between Philadelphia, Rwanda, Las Vegas, Salt Lake, and finally, home. I don't think my experiences have really hit me yet, and maybe they never will. But as time slips by and the memories of Africa begin to fade, the lessons I took from it are not only impossible to forget but also difficult to keep to myself. Community Of Grace contributes to many different mission organizations including Worldvision and the Heifer Project. I can tell you from personal experience just how important it is to support these organizations and to continue to find new ways to give. God calls upon us to be his light in the darkness. Our purpose as Christians is to show his love to the rest of the world. By participating in charity and mission work we are giving up a part of ourselves for someone else, just as Jesus Christ did for us. There is no greater gift you can give to God then to show his love for someone in need. Because, believe me, those starving children you heard about are real. I've seen them, I've been to their homes, I've met their families. Each of you have the power to do something about it, so I strongly encourage you to find a way to give whatever you can. For more information about Africa New Life please visit www.anlm.org, and please contact me if you have any questions or would like to hear more about my trip by emailing whoistim@hotmail.com

Thanks for reading and God bless,
Timothy Keene

Session Notes *(Meeting of January 15, 2008)*

by Dave Adamson

1. BUDGET FY07. Session received a positive end of year financial report. Not only did we meet the budget, but mission giving for the year was above what we anticipated (see lead article in February Grace Notes). Staff was commended for their careful stewardship of funds, with several line items coming in below budget.
2. BUDGET FY08. Final adjustments were made to the FY08 budget. This included a discussion of our contributions to Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. This budget will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting of January 27.
3. PASTOR'S LEAVE & EVALUATION. Approval was given for the pastor to carry over unused study leave time and money into 2008. Having completed the pastor evaluation process on January 6, members reflected on the new process and developed recommendations for a similar procedure to be conducted next year. In this performance review, the Session determined that overall, the pastor is doing an

excellent job. We found the evaluation procedure to be productive and improved over prior years, but more time-intensive for members of Session.

4. STAFF MONTHLY REPORTS. Monthly reports from the staff were received. Session will consider a streamlined format for these reports to consume less staff time while still providing the essential information that the Session needs.

5. OPEN FORUMS. There was a discussion about scheduling Open Forums so that a broad representation of the congregation can attend. It was decided to cancel the January forum and re-schedule it to a Wednesday night in February when choir was not scheduled to rehearse.

6. ELDER JOB DESCRIPTION. With the nominating process scheduled to begin in February, Session reviewed our documents describing the expectations of elders. No changes were recommended.

7. ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING. The agenda and elder assignments for the annual congregational meeting were reviewed.

Link to the Denomination

Here are some helpful links for those who are interested in our denomination's work at the national level:

[Home Page, PCUSA](#)

[Presbyterian 101 \(Facts about Presbyterians\)](#)

[Expressing our Faith: National and International Service](#)

Utah Presbytery in Transition

by Melissa Venable

There have been a few changes recently in the organization of the Utah Presbytery. As we explore ways to work together with other Presbyterian churches across Utah, what will these changes mean for us?

First of all, you may be wondering, what has changed? Our Executive Presbyter/Executive Congregational Consultant, Marvin Groote, has accepted a position in Texas and moved there with his wife Adele. Adele worked with us here at Community of Grace for many years. Marvin was our Executive Presbyter for eleven years. Instead of posting this role and filling it immediately we are in the process of looking at what our mission and vision for the Presbytery are at this time. If we want to adjust our structure or organizational aspects, this would be a good time. At the October Presbytery meeting, we authorized the Coordinating Council to seek candidates and hire a part time "Transitional Presbyter" to lead us. You may have noticed the posting for this position on the community bulletin board not too long ago. The Transitional Presbyter will lead us through this interim period of reflection and planning for the future.

Good news for us because the position has been filled by Laura Stellmon who was Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Ogden. Rev. Stellmon will be working on assembling a task force to help develop and implement a process for listening to

churches in the Presbytery and developing a plan for the structure and leadership for the Presbytery. She will be meeting with every church and every session in the Presbytery.

How is God calling the Presbytery of Utah, the greater Presbyterian Church, and us here at Community of Grace to move in the future? What is our role in the community and in the larger church? If you have suggestions that will help us as we consider this and as we prepare to meet with Rev. Stellmon, please share your thoughts and ideas with any member of session. Our current elders are: Ron Barnett, Dave Adamson, Tim Fluetsch, Melissa Venable, Pat Holmes, Chuck Stolfa, and Rev. Shelton-Jenck.

'Open Forum' Scheduled

by Dave Adamson

Our next "Open Forum" is now scheduled for February 20 at 7:00 pm. The focus topic of this discussion will be the area of Worship. The purpose of this facilitated discussion will be to hear directly from interested members about the various aspects of worship in our church. Staff and elders will be available for this interactive discussion. This evening time slot was selected to give more members an opportunity to participate. (The choir will not be rehearsing this particular Wednesday.)

Children & Youth

Youth Ministry

by Lorrie Gaffney
Children and Youth Director

I'm leaving on a trip this afternoon; a short jaunt to San Diego over MLK, Jr. Holiday. I think of it as a trip, and not a journey, although the dictionary doesn't support this concept. The online dictionary refers to a journey as simply "an act of traveling" or a "process likened to traveling." I think of a journey as travel that involves greater cost – especially cost in time, effort and distance covered, and consequently, having a greater impact on the traveler. Two programs for our youth and adults that I see as a *journey* are: the journey of Confirmation and the journey of serving in inner city San Francisco with the Center for Student Missions.

The Journey of Confirmation...

Multiple groups are involved in the journey of Confirmation. One of them is you, as a member of COG. We have a church for people to gather and grow in faith because of the financial and ministry giving of our members. God *is* community (Creator, Son, Holy Spirit) and God calls all followers to embrace the community we have been given as children of God.

Another group involved in Confirmation is student's parents. Parents have been given a child as a precious gift from God. Parents work to care for that gift by providing for them physically, emotionally and spiritually. Parents are a part of the covenant of confirmation, promising to encourage and pray for their youth and the mentor.

Mentors are a big part of the Confirmation program. They give up a lot of time, but more importantly, as a primarily one to one program, they agree to offer their heart and work towards a genuine, caring relationship that points toward God. The students

are key travelers of this journey. They make a covenant to study, worship, serve and engage a program of personal discovery of the foundations of the Presbyterian faith and their own faith.

Many others will be met along the journey: perhaps a female Rabbi as we worship in another place, funeral home director who deals with the reality of death, our Pastor as he meets with the teams towards the end of this program – (end of *program* NOT the journey of faith!)

We want you to join us on this journey. Please pray for the following Confirmation Team members over the next three months - that they will experience God in a personal relationship as they develop a powerful relationship with another Christian.

Confirmand/Mentor Teams

Brad Marshall/Dave Adamson
Doug Pizac/Scott Wedertz
Aaron Tyrell/Rob Riley
Taylor Packard/Kelly Harris
Eryn Gorang/Connie Marshall
Audrey Marshall/Lisa Wiscomb
Kelsey Pizac/Sandy Killion
Jess Gaffney/Natalie Roth (pre-baby),
& Kristin Gorang (post-baby)



The Journey of an Inner-City Mission...

Another journey that is being prepared for this summer is an inner-city mission trip that engages people living in poverty and need in San Francisco, so that God's love for all can be made real. Please read the following story of a student who attended the Center for Student Missions and what she discovered through serving. Please pray that a pre-site visit in February with CSM San Francisco Director will lead to the experiences that will help our group grow profoundly through reaching out to meet real need – primarily the need we all have to own God's love as a reality for all life.

CSM San Francisco Inner City Mission Team

Connie Marshall	Taylor Thurman
Maxine Marshall	Eryn Gorang
Brad Marshall	Lorrie Gaffney
Audrey Marshall	David Gaffney
Jo Ann Neisen	Jessica Gaffney

God on Skid Row

20 July/August 2007 | YouthWorkerJournal.com

by Sarah Sotelo



Students from Circle-Rock Prep School in Chicago and CSM participants gather together one last time after enjoying the day together.

For many teenagers (and adults) who grow up in middle- and upper-class America, grasping the concept that poverty exists in our backyard is sometimes difficult. We glimpse what's happening in our cities on the news every night. But words like homeless, gangs, hunger, or murder are mostly just attached to statistics. To picture a face and know the individual stories behind the statistics is impossible— unless we are willing to open our eyes to what's happening right next door.

The Center for Student Missions (CSM) dares to do just that—to expose groups through short-term mission trips in nine urban centers in North America.

The concept is simple. There is hurt in the city; we are called to be Jesus' hands and feet; we meet those needs in practical ways with the love of Christ.

At present CSM works in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Nashville, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Toronto, and Washington, D.C. Each city has at least one full-time employee living and working in that specific community. Their presence is key in cultivating relationships with the ministries CSM partners with. When short-term groups come to serve, they are partnered with these community-based ministries to provide the manpower they desperately need.

Seeing with God's Eyes, serving in Los Angeles with CSM opened my eyes and challenged my world view in countless ways. I will never forget my first prayer tour, a unique experience CSM provides each visiting group. The tour involves driving around the city they will be serving in. The CSM City Host (an employee appointed to each group) explains the specific challenges each city faces and shares how participants can be praying for it. With van windows rolled down, group members are able to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of the city—to see the city just as God does. As we drove that first night, our City Host challenged us to look at Los Angeles with a renewed vision. The host began to explain the contrasts we might see (such as rich versus poor, different cultures, and so on).

Having grown up in a suburb outside of Hartford, Connecticut, it was mindboggling to see a "third-world city" in our first-world nation. In Skid Row, a 10-block-by-10-block area known to have 10,000 homeless people, we drove up streets lined with tents, cardboard boxes, and blankets on the cold, hard sidewalk. Two blocks from swanky shops and towering buildings we passed sweatshops, where undocumented immigrants worked long hours in small, crowded rooms for meager wages. Across the street was 9th Street School—an elementary school originally built as a temporary solution to the increasing population of children in that area. Its portable classrooms are now a permanent structure for kids who live on Skid Row. Hundreds of youngsters are dropped off in the early morning hours and picked up in the evening by parents.

Urban America

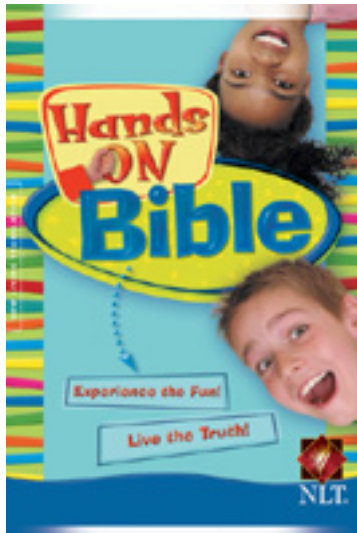


CSM participants get challenged to a basketball game by CSM participant tutors a student at Circle Rock students from Circle-Rock Prep School, a Christian school in the heart of Chicago.

Children's Ministry

by Lorrie Gaffney

Adult and Family Director



2nd Graders get their Hands On Bibles Feb. 24 in a celebration at 9:45 with parents and the 1st/2nd Grade Sunday School class. 2nd graders do not need to be in Sunday School to participate. Please make sure your second grader is signed up on the Sunday School door so we have enough food, Bibles and materials, as we engage this tool for knowing God's love, and celebrate together.

Bringing the Bibles to our kids: A special thank you to Presbyterian Women who purchase the Bibles, and Sunday School teachers Dorothy Fluetsch, Jenn Ross, Jane Cooper and Herman Branath who bring the Bible into the life of our kids.

Thanks from the ACTS Kids & Residents at 'The Road Home'

ACTS Kids Meet and Serve the Homeless

by Melissa Venable

ACTS Program Leader

Thank you to everyone who helped make it possible for us to serve dinner at The Road Home. Your generous contributions of food, crock pots, plates, and cash were much appreciated.

The families loved the spaghetti dinner. As people came in the kitchen they were really happy to see us and everyone left very full! One of my favorite people was a young man with 2 kids. As he came in the kitchen and walked down the serving line he kept saying, "Now this is what I'm talkin' about... this is good!" Little girls with froggie

slippers, kids in monkey pajamas, moms and dads, all had plenty to eat.

Your generous contributions allowed us to provide some food for the women and the mens' shelters as well. Beyond that, we had cash donations that we used to purchase towels and toiletries for the families. Everything was received with big smiles and gratefulness. Thank you for your contributions that allowed ACTS kids to make a difference by sharing God's love through a warm plate of spaghetti!



Easter: All Things Bright and Beautiful

by Lorrie Gaffney
Adult and Family Director

Children and Youth are invited to join iLIGHT! Choir for a special Easter performance. If you have a limited ability to commit to the choir throughout the year, but enjoy sharing a message of God's love through music, join the choir: Feb – Easter Wed. evenings from 5:30-6:30 pm. If you want to join the choir on regular basis, please pick up a covenant at the Welcome Center and come to regular practice on Wed. from 6:00-7:00 pm.

Diverse ages from Pre-school through Sr. High strengthen the choir and all are encouraged to share the "voice of God" with others. The cost for the choir is covered through the regular budget of Community of Grace. Questions? Contact Gael Shults or Lorrie Gaffney

Adult & Family

Make a Difference by Following Your Heart!

Food Boxes for the Homebound

by Dede Carpenter
Adult and Family Director

This month we're partnering with the **Utah Food Bank** and sharing our hearts as we deliver colorful boxes with food to those who are in need and homebound. Families

and individuals of all ages will be decorating boxes on Sunday February 17th, then sorting and packing the food boxes on Monday February 18th and finally delivering food boxes to those in need on Saturday morning the 23rd.

This is a wonderful opportunity to get the whole family involved in a team effort for just one or all three events! Make a choice to follow your heart in service.

<i>Sunday 2/17</i>	<i>Food boxes decorated</i>
<i>Monday 2/18</i>	<i>Food boxes sorted and packed</i>
<i>Saturday 2/23</i>	<i>Food boxes delivered</i>

Called to Connect...listen to your heart

Small Groups Starting Up

by Dede Carpenter
Adult and Family Director

Busy? Most people are with schedules that would mind boggle any air traffic controller! Time seems to be shrinking and technology has fast tracked us from family appointment calendars that once graced a kitchen wall to day planners we could carry in briefcases and purses to pocket size Palm Pilots and BlackBerrys.

In the midst of accelerated scheduling do you hear God's call?

Do you hear a call to be still?

Do you hear a call to reflect?

Do you hear a call to connect with God in time spent with others?

Listen....can you hear the response within you?

It is your heart answering.

Joining a small group is an intentional step towards connecting and building a stronger relationship with others and God. It is realizing that God puts us in community for a reason. We see and experience God's love through others.

Can you listen to your heart and find the time to join or lead a small group? Consider the possibilities.

Starting in February Men's Group (From Wild Men to Wise Men) led by Pastor Marty, every other Thursday night, Women's group (Who told you that you were naked?) led by Dede Thursday mornings, Co-ed Walk/Running Group led by the Horels Saturday mornings.

Ongoing – Monday & Thursday Taekwon Do, Thursday morning Prayer Group, Supper Clubs, PW & Emmaus bible/book studies...and...?

Listen...do you hear God's call to you?

Al Staggs & Dietrich Bonhoeffer –

Want to know more?

by Dede Carpenter
Adult and Family Director

The adult Drop in class offered 2/17 thru 3/9th will focus on writings by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as we lead up to the Al Staggs event (March 15 & 16th). [See our flyer on our home page in [Events](#) for more details on the weekend, buy your tickets now!]

[You are invited to visit Al's website at www.alstaggs.com to learn more about this gifted performer who will be with us in March!]

PW Baking Demonstration Coming

by Sandy Killion
Presbyterian Women

The next PW program is a Baking Demonstration Seminar on Thursday, February 7, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Please plan to arrive at the Rhodes demonstration kitchens, 5121 So. Murray Blvd. by 6:50 p.m. that evening. Our demonstration will include baking tips, recipes, and plenty of tasty treats to sample. Each guest will leave with a free package of frozen dough. There is no fee for this event, but reservations are required. To reserve a spot, please call Karen Durrant at 561-1024 or Laura Barnett at 944-8477, or sign up in the Narthex between services. Please notify Karen or Laura if you plan to carpool or if you need a map.

February Prayer Calendar

by Millie Nielsen
Prayer Coordinator

1. God of peace, thank you that I can always have peace with you through our Lord Jesus Christ and help me to live at peace with others.
2. Lead Pastor Marty and also Dede and Lorrie as they, the executive team, plan and implement the ministry of Community of Grace.
3. Bless our worship today and touch us with your Holy Spirit.
4. Lord, help me always to stand firm in your truth.
5. Bless our deacons as they serve the members of Community of Grace and give them joy in their service.
6. On this Ash Wednesday mark me with ashes and the sign of your cross to remind me of the kind of sacrifice to which you call me.
7. Lord, bring peace to all the troubled areas of the world.
8. Father God, help me to clean out the clutter within myself.
9. Lord, guide the leaders of Immanuel Church, Kiraro in Kenya, and bless their ministry.
10. Heavenly Father, bless our musicians as they praise you through music in worship today.
11. Lord, I pray for self knowledge so that I might more clearly reflect God.

12. Oh loving God, you are the light and love that I love to see in other's eyes.
13. Lord, show me areas of my anger so I can resolve it with your help.
14. This Valentine's Day help me find that quiet, still room within my heart where I can open the gift of your love in Jesus Christ.
15. Lord, teach me to cultivate stillness, breathe harmony, and become tranquility.
16. Oh Christ, bless me and give me the grace to bless everyone I see.
17. Lord, bring us closer to you through our Christian education program.
18. On this President's Day we give thanks for those presidents who have served our country with integrity and commitment.
19. Lord, bring our session members close to you as they meet to make decisions for Community of Grace.
20. Oh God, my great physician, heal my hurts.
21. Lord, I pray for healing for those who are ill and suffering.
22. Today I take a few moments to remember I am soaked in Christ.
23. Merciful Lord, please reveal to me anyone I haven't forgiven and give me the grace to help me forgive completely.
24. Touch us with Your grace in worship today.
25. Lord, I ask for healing within and among people.
26. Help me to recognize God's presence in the people I see.
27. O Christ, guide those who are weeping today into your peace and lead me to be caring for their tears.
28. God, I ask for strength for people struggling with addictions.
29. Lord, kindle in my heart a love for my friends and for my foes.