

Grace Notes

Community of Grace Presbyterian Church

January 2008

January Highlights

From the Pastor's Desk:

[National Speaker Coming to COG.](#) Prominent speaker, Dr. Al Staggs, is coming to our church on March 15 & 16. Tickets will be available on January 6th & 13th.

[Annual Congregational Meeting Called.](#) Session has called a meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, January 27, 2008.

[Feeding Your Own Mind, Heart & Soul](#)

Our Church Community

[Special Speaker Coming to COG.](#) Our own Tim Keene will be sharing his experiences on his recent mission trip to Rwanda.

[Session Notes.](#) Here is a quick review of December's Session meeting.

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

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

[End of Year Financial Update](#)

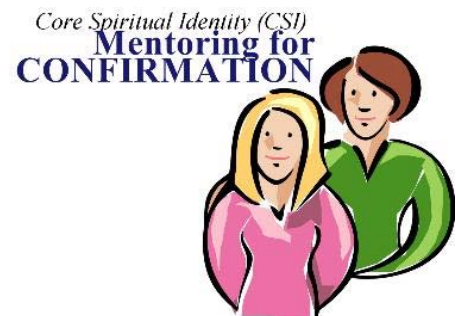
Children & Youth

[Confirmation Class Described.](#) The confirmation process at COG is different. It is designed to be an intensely personal experience for senior high youth. Read how.

[Carrying the Message of Christmas.](#) Twenty of our members and youth volunteered in the Crossroads "Turkey Give-Away" program.

[Holey and Holy go just fine together!](#) Enjoy this warm story of thoughtfulness by a member of the iLight choir.

[A Reflection on Christmas.](#) Maria Soriano shares this reflection following a concert featuring our own iLight Choir.



[ACTS Program Registration](#). January is bringing new opportunities for service and participation in the community for our 5th and 6th graders, including registration on January 11.

[ACTS Kids Christmas Sing-A-Long](#). Here we receive a report from one of our young ACTS participants on their December visit to a residential senior center.

Adult & Family

[Vitamins for Vietnam](#). Our 5th annual Children's Vitamin Collection is taking place between January 6 and 27.

[January Prayer Calendar](#). Click here for this month's prayer calendar.

Presbyterian Women (PW)

[Cooking Demonstration Seminar](#). Details for the Rhodes Cooking Seminar on February 7 can be found here.

[Ruth Circle](#). "Ruth Circle," another way for women to connect at COG.

Feeding Your Own Mind, Heart & Soul

by Pastor Marty

If you do not know of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, you need to learn about him. If you have not experienced the power of his life and thought, you need to grasp his message and willingness to risk his life for faith and goodness. If you already know of him, you need to experience his voice from prison. If you want to be inspired, you need to purchase a ticket and come to Community of Grace Presbyterian Church in March. Along with dinner and an evening of laughter, your ticket will give you the gift of powerful, healthy spiritual food.

For the first time, under the leadership of Dede Carpenter, we are offering a quality, national speaker to come and share with us his talents to portray one of the greatest theologians of the past century. The Rev. Al Staggs specializes in bringing to life Christian leaders and thinkers who made a profound difference in their time. When he joins us in March his keynote presentation will give us a powerful glimpse into the thought and life of one of the most renowned German theologians of the 20th Century. In addition, he will preach the sermon on that Sunday in the character of Clarence Jordan, one of the greatest American Christian leaders of the last century.

As you look ahead at your schedule in March, I encourage you to buy your tickets right away before they go on sale to the broader community. We believe that we will sell

about 325 tickets and this event will be sold out, so we are giving our congregation exclusive purchase rights till January 13.

Make a choice to feed your own mind, heart and soul today.

Annual Congregational Meeting Called.

Session has called a meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, January 27, 2008, in order to 1) report the final results of the Stewardship Campaign, 2) share the budget

Congregational Meeting



with the Congregation, 3) ask motion the Congregation to approve the Pastor's Terms of Call for 2008, and 4) to elect the Nominating Committee for 2008. The meeting will take place in the sanctuary immediately following the 11am service of Worship.

A.C.T.S.! Update

(Accepting - Caring - Telling & Sharing God's Love)

by Melissa Venable

JANUARY REGISTRATION. 5th and 6th graders who love to serve others and have fun can register for A.C.T.S.! on Jan 11th. Parents and their ACTS kids attend to review program details and complete registration forms. We will hear from Erin Basta, our guest speaker from the Road Home, a homeless shelter in Salt Lake.

UPCOMING SERVICE PROJECTS. We start our service events serving dinner at the Road Home on January 21st. After that we will have opportunities to help the Utah Food Bank meet need in the community as well as help Tree Utah restore natural habitat along the Jordan Parkway. We will assist with Special Olympics and learn about people who have served around the world as missionaries or veterans, and how they have made or are making a difference with their lives. We end our program with an ACTS Overnight Adventure in May that is sure to be fun and let you serve one last time together.

NEW "FRIDAY CONNECT." New this winter is "Friday Connect" with ACTS. Kids will have an opportunity twice a month to get together to play, pray, and share their experiences serving others. The themes will coincide with our monthly service activities.

Be sure to review the full schedule, ask Melissa Venable questions, and don't miss the kickoff on Jan. 11th!

ACTS Kids Christmas Sing-A-Long

by Katie K.

The ACTS Kids, their friends, and families sang with several church members at their homes recently. Here is a report from our own Katie Krause on what happened:

On Friday, December 14, our ACTS group went caroling. Santa came with us which was cool. When we would sing, the people who we were singing to would smile and thank us for remembering them. We had many homemade cookies and hot cocoa when we sang at the retirement home with Mr. Adamson and his friends. It made me feel special to have this opportunity to sing to these people, especially when they smiled back at us and thanked us for singing with them.



Special Speaker Announced: Tim Keene

"How God is at work in Rwanda"

All are invited to hear our own Tim Keene who has recently returned from a mission trip to Rwanda, Africa. Hear Tim's first-hand account of how God is working in this struggling area of the world.

Sunday, December 30th

9:45

COG (The Message Room)

AFRICA NEW LIFE MINISTRIES, RWANDA MISSIONS

Rwanda 2007

Here is an excerpt from the online details of the mission trip:

<http://www.rwandamission.blogspot.com/>

"Thursday, November 29: Today we spent the morning at the Dream Center with the street kids. These are boys who have no real homes and at times have to steal to survive. Half don't have shoes. Some only have a single T-shirt which they wear as pants. They are as young as 5 or 6 years old. And today was their day to party. We had only expected 125 or so but by the time we got done with worship and had moved outside the crowd had probably grown to around 400. After some songs and an awesome drama performance, the kids decided to put on a show for us. A group of guys with an age range of probably 10 years spent the next 20 minutes showing off their amazing gymnastics skills. We then had them do cartwheel races (every kid there could do a perfect cartwheel, I hurt myself every time I try and that's daily) as well as a footrace against the "Muzungus" (white people). This entire morning was absolutely fantastic. I really can't remember the last time I laughed that hard. But at the same time, it was impossible to not have watery eyes after thinking about what these kids go through every day. Just the fact that one of the main reasons they were excited to be there was because they actually got a meal with a Fanta that day."

Session Notes (Meeting of December 18, 2007)

by Dave Adamson

- **STEWARDSHIP REPORT.** Session received a very favorable report on the recently completed stewardship campaign. Pledges exceeded our pledge goal of \$382,000. (It was noted, however, that this goal was derived from a budget based on a very modest 2% growth.) Nevertheless, the support of our members was noted and is very much appreciated!
- **BUDGET.** The work of refining the 2008 budget continued. It is the goal of Session to have a final budget ready to present to the congregation in its annual meeting scheduled in January.

- **MEMBERSHIP ROLLS.** The Session took action to move several members to inactive status. These are members who have moved, changed churches, or who have not attended for three or more years. Changing the status of these members is a routine duty that all churches must periodically complete. It was noted, however, that a member can be reinstated to active status by simply making a written request. As of December 18, 2007, COG now has 284 active members.
- **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.** The Session voted to calendar the annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 27, 2008, immediately following the second service. The purpose of this meeting is to 1) review the 2008 pledges received and the 2008 budget; 2) elect four members to this year's Nominating Committee; and 3) to approve the pastor's terms of call.
- **2008 NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** The Session elected two of its members to serve on this year's Nominating Committee: Dave Adamson (moderator) and Ron Barnett.
- **PASTOR'S PERFORMANCE EVALUATION.** A special meeting of Session has been called for January 6 for the purpose of completing the annual performance evaluation of the pastor.

Link to the Denomination

Because we are a local congregation of the Presbyterian Church USA, some might be interested in following some of the progress being made in our denomination.

[Home Page, PCUSA](#)
[Presbyterian 101 \(Facts about Presbyterians\)](#)
[Expressing our Faith: National and International Service](#)

Children's Ministry

by Lorrie Gaffney

Bringing Christmas Back

by Maria Soriano

[Maria writes this brief reflection following the Holiday Pops Concert with iLight Choir, Studio A Children's Choir, West Valley Symphony and Choral Arts Society of Utah]

When I was hungry, you fed me
 When I was cold you gave me warmth
 When I needed to feel you, I heard angels.....

My last couple of Christmas seasons have been the crazy, commercialized, plagued, "I am not talking to so and so", no time to breathe, time of the month. Just that.... Another month. I have missed the peaceful, quiet time where I will sit down and listen to beautiful music, when I hear my Lord's voice through my little ones, when my spirit got uplifted.



I truly believe My Lord hears my sadness and my sorrow and I also know he/she has a great sense of humor. Last Saturday December 1st my Lord gave me back Christmas in the most humbling way. But it was in an interesting way. It was after missed meals, crazy practice times, nonstop rehearsal, etc. Think of all the things that are worthwhile in this world, think of all art, think of all the work that masters went through to leave a legacy of mastery and beauty.

Our beautiful master musician Gael Shults through her amazing talent, her deep commitment, her true spirit, her feisty nature, took my daughter, and many other daughters and sons, and turn them into angels. Seeing my daughter among all the talent, seeing our COG children being part of this amazing performance, was one of the most humbling yet beautiful Christmas experiences.

Gael, you brought me in the mood. You reminded me what it is all about. If you ever feel that is too much, just remember how you let me hear angels in Christmas time.

Holey and Holy go just fine together!

iLIGHT! Choir kids had been working hard on their Christmas pieces. Part of choir is enjoying a few minutes of play time together after an hour of singing.

Last Wednesday, as the kids made their dash to the gym, one of the young boys held open the door for everyone. Now, when you hold open the door you don't get to the gym first!

I was touched by his thoughtfulness, and I remembered his older brother doing the same thing for Children's Worship kids a few years ago. I said, "thank you for being so kind to let others go first. I remember your brother doing the same thing. You must have good *genes*".

He looked at me with a beautiful smile and said, "oh no, look, my *jeans* have holes"! He lifted his leg up to show me, and sure enough, they had holes!

Opportunities for Youth

by Lorrie Gaffney

Confirmation

Confirmation at Community of Grace is an opportunity for Sr. High youth to meet with a mentor and as a group to explore discipleship. At the end of the program youth can choose to confirm the earlier baptism promises made for them by stating their desire to follow Jesus Christ as members at Community of Grace.

AT COG, our Core Spiritual Identity (CSI) describes 5 key tools, or characteristics, that are essential for development as Christian disciples. Tools to help us grow are:

Connecting with other Christians

Growing through study

Serving others
Sharing our faith with others
Worshipping God as a community

One of the nice things about Confirmation is that each of those 5 key pieces are built into the program. Youth are **connected** with a mentor in a one-on-one relationship, as well as with other Christian youth who have made a commitment to the program. The foundational beliefs of our Presbyterian faith are **studied**, as well as reading the book of Luke together. Each month a **service** activity is completed. Monthly **worship** activities include visiting another church and exploring similarities and differences. At the conclusion, each confirmand who joins the church will **share** with the congregation their faith in Jesus Christ, and their desire to follow Jesus as best they can by continuing their journey of connecting, growing, serving, sharing and worshipping.

Carrying the Message of Christmas

Dec. 21 twenty people from Community of Grace helped carry turkeys, pies and fixings for a Christmas meal, to assist those in need through Crossroads Christmas Turkey Give-away. Betty Pizac has been instrumental in connecting our church with the Turkey Give-aways and each time our group is blessed by serving people who express abundant gratitude as they come in the cold and snow to pick up their holiday food.

We started off our service time with a devotion that was sent by email from a COG member. It was the story of a couple who gave their elderly father a plain wooden bowl and set him in a corner away from their table because he was such a mess and clumsy with his food and dishes. That was *until* their small son was pretending that he was making a wooden bowl for when *they* get old and are sent away from the table. The question of *“how would you want to be treated if you were in that position”* is worth reflecting on. The turkey give-aways are set up so that the people coming in to receive their food are well served and cared for by many volunteer hands.



If you haven't participated before, talk to one of this year's participants and ask if it was worth arriving in an early morning snow storm to serve others!

Vitamins for Vietnam

by Dede Carpenter

Make a Difference in the lives of Discarded Children

This January, we have the opportunity to help those in need with COG's 5th annual Children's Vitamin Collection for orphaned and poor ethnic minorities in Vietnam.

Last year we collected enough for over 230 kids!

January 6 through January 27 is this year's collection. Please drop a check in the offering plate with a notation that it is for "Vitamins for Vietnam." Or bring in Children's chewable Vitamins *without iron*, but not the "gummy" kind and put them in the red wagon outside the Sanctuary doors.

Be sure to mark your calendar for **January 27th because after the 11:00 p.m. Service, we'll have our first ever "Count the Vitamins" Family Service Project in the gym.** All are welcome to help package the vitamins into baggies with a note of love from COG.

One of our new members, Micaela Choo, will hand deliver the vitamins on the March Medical Mission trip led by Children of Peace International. The vitamins will be distributed to hundreds of needy children attended to during the two week trip. Children of Peace is a humanitarian organization that cares for 5000 orphaned and abandoned children throughout Vietnam.

Thank you for 'seeing as God sees' as we help care for these discarded children who are considered to have no value in their own society.

National Speaker Coming to COG

by Dede Carpenter

**March 15th & March 16th 2008
The Message of Making a Difference
A 26-hour experience at Community of Grace**

The message of making a difference becomes real when what we profess to be essential in our lives is consistent with how we live.

Al Stagg's message is peace and justice. That message becomes real on a stage as a story unfolds...It is the voice and thoughts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor speaking from his cell in a Nazi prison camp before his execution. It is the voice and experience of Clarence Jordan, a Baptist preacher in Georgia who founded an interracial community called Koinonia in the 1940's.



An undeniable truth comes to us from these men of faith whose message is their life. Our 26 hour experience begins Saturday night as we celebrate God's gift of laughter and fellowship before journeying into God's message of peace and justice Sunday. Tickets go on sale beginning January 1st to the Community of Grace church community; General public January 14th

- **Laughter for Life** performance and dinner, Saturday evening March 15th (**Ticketed adult event**)

- **Clarence Jordan and the God Movement** at both Worship services Sunday morning March 16th (Palm Sunday)
- **Bonhoeffer lecture** during the Adult Sunday School hour
- **A View from the Underside: The Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer** Sunday evening March 16th (*Ticketed event for mature youth & adults*)

Tickets will be available in the Narthex Sunday January 6th & 13th

[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

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. Maps to the Rhodes Demonstration Kitchen are available, and we will also carpool from the church

Ruth Circle

We meet the 3rd Monday of every month at 7:00 in room 1A.
 We share a time for study, prayer, and fellowship.
 Any questions can be directed to Karen Durrant at 561-1024.

End of Year Financial Update

Thanks to the generosity of the members and friends of this congregation, we have once again ended 2008 on a high financial note. Our ministry budget ended the year in the black. With all bills and payroll made, we had expenses totaling about \$379,000 and income totaling about \$380,000. In typical COG fashion, 97% of pledges made were fulfilled. Thanks again to everyone for your generosity.