



# *Growing with Grace*

February 2018

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*Welcoming All • Sharing Love • Proclaiming God's Grace*

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## **Isn't It Romantic?**

"We love because He first loved us" 1 John 4:19

Valentine's Day is coming. This means ads will be full of pictures of roses, chocolate, and teddy bears, as well as the suggestion that if you don't buy those and more, then you don't love your partner enough. Then there will be that group of people who refuse to celebrate, claiming the holiday is simply made up by card companies in order to sell things. Truth is, neither group is right.

There are all sorts of stories about the actual roots of the holiday, about who St. Valentine might have really been. The reality is that love didn't begin with a saint or chubby flying cherubs. Love doesn't look like an abundance of presents, nor does it look like a protest fist held high. Love goes back way before all of that.

Love goes back to when all of that which is God funneled down into all of that which is human and came to walk among us. Love goes back to when all of the prophets were given repeated messages about salvation and love, and promise. Love goes back to when the first people were set to live within Paradise. Love goes back to when Spirit blew over the waters and the very seeds of creation began to spread and sprout.

Love is no small thing, and it is time that we remember this and act accordingly. Love is sacrifice and covenant and generosity and the very essence of everything around us. Sometimes, when we are surrounded by anger and suspicion, and conflict it's hard to remember that love is all around us, in the building blocks of our reality.

Love is so much more than chocolates and greeting cards, and it deserves our focus more than once a year. Love is above all, the strongest and yet most fragile thing in our lives. Hold it closely but loosely. Cover yourselves in it. Leave it everywhere you go. We love because He first loved us. Teach the world to love because we first loved it.

Amen,  
Pastor Katie

## Partners in Faith

Why do you attend Grace United Church of Christ?

Have you asked yourself that question lately? I ask myself, wouldn't it be much easier to go to a large church where you could slip into the crowd and have much less responsibility? And I must admit it is very tempting at times when I feel a little overwhelmed. But then I remember why I come to Grace Church, because we accept everyone unconditionally no matter who you are, where you come from, the shade of your skin, or where you are on your spiritual journey. We are able to openly share our joys, our concerns, as well as our questions and doubts and not have the feeling we are being judged at Grace Church.

We are a church that truly honors Christ's teachings:

- Love God
- Forgive often
- Care for the poor
- Love your neighbor
- Accept any person, no matter what
- Work for peace, justice, equality for everyone, no exceptions
- Grow spiritually through worship, prayer, study and action

Pastor Katie's sermons inspire us into action for marginalized persons and justice for all. In today's society of such division, anger and violence; we need a place to share the anxieties and frustrations we face in our lives. So if you come and feel welcomed and accepted for whom you are and where you are on your spiritual journey, you are in the right place.

Do you know someone in need of that kind of welcome and acceptance? If we are to continue to be a light in this community and to each other; we need to be proactive in sharing this message. When Jesus called his disciples, he asked them to give up everything – family, friends possessions – to further his ministry in the world. What are you willing to do to share the “Good News” to those in need?

Yours in Christ,

Karen K. Wentz  
Assembly President

## Little Shepherds Update

Working with the Little Shepherds has been a joyful learning experience for me. They have worked through the Old Testament so far this year. Now that Christmas has come they will be studying the life of Jesus, his miracles and his parables. The younger group is using "Godly Play" while the older group has a new workbook called "Journeys with Jesus". Amy Southall is providing the craft ideas. We meet the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month. All children are welcome.

~ Verna Labrador

### How Offenders "Groom" Children: What Every Adult Needs to Know

As part of the Samaritan Safe Church training, our congregation is learning to keep children safe from sexual abuse, not just in church, but in the community. People of faith have an important role in preventing sexual abuse. Don't miss this important workshop for parents, grandparents and everyone who works with or loves children.

Together we will:

- Learn how offenders engage children (and often their parents) in a trusting relationship before the abuse begins.
- Discuss Internet safety
- Identify the red flags adults often miss
- View a DVD

Join us for this one-hour workshop on Sunday, February 11 after worship in Fellowship Hall. Soup and bread will be served, and child care will be available for children under 12 years old.

### Bring a Friend

Grace, Grub, and Gab will meet on Wednesday, February 21 at 6:30pm at Tellus360. Join us for a bite to eat and a tasty beverage ... and a bit of open, thought-provoking conversation about faith, life, and everything in between. This month's topic is "Praising God through the storms of our lives." Bring a friend -- hope to see you there! If you'd like to attend but don't want to drive at night let Amy Fishburn know.

## February 2018 Worship Participants

*Please remember it is your responsibility to find a substitute or swap dates with another participant as needed, and then notify the church office of any changes. A complete list of worship volunteers -- to help you know who else has volunteered for each role -- is posted in the lobby and also available from the church office.*

### **February 4, 2018**

Greeters — Verna Labrador, Suzy Luber  
 Ushers —  
 \*Beth Bowers, Cathy Hainley, Holly Keller  
 Lector — Kellie Wilson  
 Liturgist — Jeff Dombach  
 Communion Set-up/Clean-up —  
 Christen Chew, Denise Pfeiffer  
 Prayer Candle Lighter — Herb McCollom  
 Fellowship Hosts —  
 Heather Eshbach & Amy Southall  
 Counters — Don Leayman, Karen Wentz  
 Bulletin Volunteer 2/2 — Ve Wolfe

### **February 25, 2018**

Greeters — John Markley, Jessie Dombach  
 Ushers —  
 \*Kay Charles, Christen Chew, Kellie Wilson  
 Lector — Nick Santaniello  
 Prayer Candle Lighter — Sara Ulrich  
 Fellowship Host — Jim & Karen Wentz  
 Counters —  
 Heather Eshbach, Jessie Dombach  
 Bulletin volunteer 2/23 — Jessie Dombach  
 Newsletter Volunteer — Ve Wolfe

### **February 11, 2018**

Greeters (10am) —  
 Herb McCollom, Sara Ulrich  
 Ushers — \*Jessie Dombach, John Markley,  
 Suzy Luber  
 Lector — Jeff Hackenberger  
 Prayer Candle Lighter — Kay Charles  
 Fellowship Hosts —  
 Beth Bowers & Cathy Hainley  
 Counters — Tom Miller, Jeff Hackenberger  
 Bulletin Volunteer 2/9 — Verna Labrador

### **March 4, 2018**

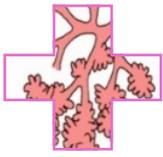
Greeters — Jim & Karen Wentz  
 Ushers —  
 \*Verna Labrador, Nick Santaniello, Jeff Wolfe  
 Lector — Fay Kasapidis  
 Liturgist — Holly Keller  
 Communion Set-up/Clean-up —  
 Tom & Marilyn Miller  
 Prayer Candle Lighter — Herb McCollom  
 Fellowship Host — Sara Ulrich  
 Counters — TBD  
 Bulletin Volunteer 3/2 — Verna Labrador

### **February 18, 2018**

Greeters (10am) —  
 Cathy Hainley, Suzy Luber  
 Ushers —  
 \*Sara Ulrich, Jim & Karen Wentz  
 Lector — Jennifer Swank  
 Prayer Candle Lighter — Holly Keller  
 Fellowship Hosts — Jeff & Jessie Dombach  
 Counters —  
 Donna Devine, Jeff Dombach  
 Bulletin Volunteer 2/16 — Herb McCollom



\* Denotes head usher



## Parish and Community Health Resources

### Ask Dr. Trudie: *"Oh I Would Not Give You False Hope"*

For those of you not of a certain age, the above title is the opening line of Simon and Garfunkel's "Mother and Child Reunion." Read on; I promise it will eventually all make sense.

Recently, a friend called to ask my medical opinion on a treatment he was considering for his COPD. He was preparing to take the first step, quitting smoking, and was investigating various therapies. Unless you live under a rock and never watch TV, I'm sure you've seen ads for various medications meant to relax the airways, reduce inflammation, and make breathing easier. Like most folks, his wife had taken to the internet to google treatment options and became excited about what she read on the Lung Institute's site. The Institute has a number of clinics where they offer stem cell therapy to treat a variety of pulmonary conditions, including COPD. Since stem cells have the ability to develop into any number of specialized cells, they collect a sample from a patient's bone marrow, isolate the stem cells, and then reintroduce them into the bloodstream. The idea is that with all these extra stem cells floating along, the lungs will grab some and rebuild the damaged tissues. While stem cell research is a real thing, the FDA hasn't recognized it as proven therapy. However, because stem cells aren't a drug, the FDA can't regulate their use by companies like the Lung Institute. In the same vein, since stem cell treatment isn't considered to be proven to be effective, your insurance won't cover it. The closest location is in Pittsburgh, so getting there wouldn't be an issue for our friend; the \$20,000 price tag, on the other hand, gave him pause.

I personally find the idea of stem cells as a treatment modality exciting. What better thing than to use your body's own natural recuperative powers as a way to overcome disease? I told my buddy I'd do some research and get back to him. I started by going to the Institute's website. It's aimed at laypeople, so the scientific aspects were described in simple terms. Still, it gave a clear description of the theory behind the treatment, followed by lots of testimonials from patients who reported that their quality of life had improved.

Since I needed a more scientific analysis, I went to the American Thoracic Society and learned stem cell research has not proved to be effective in treating pulmonary disease. The Society is very concerned that "stem cell tourism" has become a cottage industry, selling hope to patients desperate for a cure. In addition to clinics in India, China, Thailand, Mexico, and the Caribbean, a growing number of clinics are within the US. The Lung Institute has clinics in Pittsburgh, Tampa, Dallas, Scottsdale and Nashville. Do they combine hope for a cure with a nice vacation? This quote is from their website: "While considering treatment with the Lung Institute, think about what else you would like to experience while visiting us. Your trip can be both about health *and* pleasure. Are you interested in visiting a historic Civil War battlefield, an old western cowboy town or the white sand beaches of the Gulf of Mexico?" Sounds like fun, but if I'm shelling out 20 large for the treatment, it's going to seriously cut into my partying money.

*[Continued on page 6]*

## Ask Dr. Trudie *[Continued from page 5]*

Could it be that there are actually studies giving some credence to stem cell therapy? Good medicine is evidence-based, so I went to the USDA's website, looked for clinical trials using stem cells to treat COPD, and found a handful. Some had not published results, one had been withdrawn, some were recruiting patients, but two did report their findings.

One study was actually done by the Lung Institute. It enrolled 200-plus patients and evaluated them before and after treatment for quality of life, which is subjective, and FEV1 (the percentage of air you forcefully blow out in a second, compared to your total lung capacity), which is objective.

In any study, you tend to lose patients to follow up, but about half of the enrollees were evaluated six months after treatment. Of these patients, most reported improved quality of life. However, only four patients' FEV1's were reported, and of these four, even with a 12% improvement, their numbers were below normal. Why only report on four patients? Did they not re-test the others, or were the results too dismal to report?

In another very small study done overseas, the patients actually DID have worse FEV1's. So why did so many people in the Institute's study report improved quality of life? Maybe the placebo effect (like when your mom kissed your boo boo and

made you feel better). Maybe after shelling out all that money they couldn't afford cigarettes any more. I don't know, but I was convinced that the pilgrimage to Pittsburgh didn't sound like something I could support.

Medical tourism is nothing new. While working in the ER, I often encountered patients who had travelled far for various procedures because, even with travel expenses, the cost was less. Many people go to Mexico for dental work and lots of Amish patients used to go to Canada for hernia repair because they had a technique that allowed quicker recovery and return to work. I've seen people who had cosmetic surgery done in South America. Although sometimes these patients have a post-op complication like infection, generally they come to see us for routine follow up such as suture removal. These patients are receiving treatments or procedures that are accepted medical practice. On the other hand, with stem cell clinics, COPD patients are paying exorbitant amounts of money for treatments that just haven't proven their worth. Slick advertisements are selling false hope to folks looking for miracles. Are the snake oil salesmen still with us?

*[Dr. Trudie welcomes readers' comments and suggestions for future columns. Contact her [clo\\_graceucc@comcast.net](mailto:clo_graceucc@comcast.net)]*

### **February Joyful Noise to Benefit Boys & Girls Club**

The mission of the Boys & Girls Club of Lancaster is to enable all young people, especially those who need the Club most, to become productive, caring, and responsible adults. Since the Club's inception, its mission has consistently aimed to provide youth with a safe and positive place to spend their time after school hours.

## Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

The following notes of thanks were received:

- Joyful Noise recipient Finefrock & Stumpf Golden Gloves Center: “Thank you very much for your contribution” With your support “we are making a difference for young people.”
- Joyful Noise recipient Love INC Manheim Township Home of Hope Transitional Housing: “There are many families facing homelessness in our community, and your gift will make a real difference...”
- Carla DiClemente, Manheim Township School social worker, on behalf of families receiving Christmas gifts donated by Grace members: “I have no doubt that there will be some very happy children with big smiles on their faces on Christmas morning because of your thoughtfulness and generosity!”
- Elizabeth Watson-Martin, Director of Pastoral Care, Penn State Hershey Medical Center: “Thank you for donating your Bibles to our chaplaincy department... Thank you for helping provide for the spiritual needs of our patients and their loved ones.”

## Volunteers Needed for YWCA Winter Shelter

This winter, Grace and other local faith communities will be volunteering with the Lancaster County Council of Churches and the YWCA at their emergency cold weather shelter for women and children. We will be volunteering from Monday, February 19 through Sunday, February 25. Please see Pastor Katie for more details or to sign up.



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