

# GRACE NOTES

News from and about Grace Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

August, 2007

## Cleaning A Mural, A Basement And A Neighborhood

On Tuesday, July 24, a group of 12 high school students and their 2 mentors, all from Canada, came to our church to learn about inner-city ministries and to work at the church for a day. They were part of a group of 70 young people from various locations volunteering their time on a SERVE mission hosted by Plymouth Heights CRC.

When they came to Grace Church, Pastor Kooreman talked with them about the mission and programs of Grace Church and about the neighborhood. Then they got to work. One group went to Mrs. McNeal's house on Sheldon to help with outside projects there. Another group headed to our playground to pull the many weeds, to cut down a dead tree branch, and to sweep the area. They also cleaned the mural, tile by tile, on the north side of our building. (The large beautiful tile mural



was done in 1998



by our own Mary Kuilema and is dedicated to children. If you haven't taken time to look at it, you should do so! It surely is the most wonderful visible piece of art in this entire neighborhood. Thanks, again, Mary!

Another group of young people cleaned all the tables, walls and the floor in our church basement. Others washed some outside windows and also taped Psalter Hymnals with clear tape. The entire group went through the neighborhood picking up litter.

One very interesting aspect of the day was spent attending part of the meeting of the Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group that meets in our basement each day. The NA members spoke freely so the students learned first hand the difficulties that people with addictions face. They will not forget this experience and their day at Grace soon. We are grateful for their helping hands.

*Mary Van Harn, Reporter*

## The South Gate Block Club

The Southgate Block Club was involved in two recent events. The first was a hot dog and pot luck night at Sheldon Complex. This took place on Tuesday, July 17. The purpose of the night was for residents to come together and reminisce about what that space has meant to the neighborhood. Our own Pastor Jack grilled up the hot dogs. About 40 people attended, 30 of them kids! We had a nice time and did get to hear



some great stories from people who have lived in the neighborhood, some before the Sheldon Complex was built.

Why are we reminiscing about Sheldon Complex? Because it will soon be gone. The current building located at Sheldon and Franklin just two blocks south of Grace Church, will be razed and replaced with a new structure. The new building will be three stories, 42,000 square foot on each floor and will bring 400 employees to that location. It will stretch from Sheldon to Jefferson with the front of the building facing Franklin Street. The green lawn at the back of the building and several lots across Franklin will be turned into parking for employees and the clients that they will serve. The new building is projected to be finished in the fall of 2009.



The second event the Block Club hosted was a dumpster day on Saturday, July 21. This is a service the city provides as an incentive to active block clubs – like ours! Three giant dumpsters were placed in the Grace Church parking lot early on Saturday morning. Neighbors from the Block Club area were allowed to dump trash for FREE. They began to drive in at about 8:00am and kept on coming until noon. We reached our goal of filling all three dumpsters to the brim. It was a great success.

*Eileen Kooreman, Reporter*

## Council Reports:



Council elected Bob Bosch President, Helen Brent Vice-President, Mary Flikkema Clerk and Jackson Van Dyke Treasurer. The Deacons elected Ron De Waard as Chair, Dave Lucas as Vice-Chair and Cheniqua Pinder as Secretary. Elders chose Bob Bosch as Chair, Tom Hoeksema as Vice-Chair and a Secretary to be confirmed.

## Pastor Reports:

### Living in Freedom

We began a series of sermons back in April on the story of the Exodus of the people of God from Egypt. The stories of the Old Testament can be at times challenging and hard to interpret but properly understood they illustrate truths of the NT and our own Christian experience.

The story of the Exodus is a journey to freedom but freedom not as understood by most people today. Biblical freedom is not about restrictions on what you are able to do. True freedom according to the Bible is moving out of bondage of whatever kind and moving into and living in the presence of God. It is about being taken in by the beauty and power of God and it is about worship. It is a journey – one that we at Grace Church are taking together.

We will continue this journey to freedom as a study over the next months as we consider how God wants us to live. We will be thinking about the Law of God. Beginning after Labor Day, I will also be leading a Bible study on Thursday at 12:30 entitled “Living in Freedom.” If you are able please drop in and join us for lunch.

*Jack Kooreman*



## Introducing: Emmanuel Phillips



Emmanuel Phillips, known to some as “Manny” is our new Gospel Choir Director and is serving Grace in other aspects of worship, including planning and worship leading. Council is considering Manny for the part time position of Director of Worship Arts, previously held by Jana Vanderlaan. He comes to us from Lighthouse Ministries and has been encouraged by their pastor, Marvin Sapp to use his talents here at Grace.

Manny’s dreams and goals for Grace Church are for us to grow in our adoration of God in worship. He will work to build and enhance our worship by motivating our members and developing our gifts in worship. Growing up, Manny understood that God had given him multi-talents in music and the arts, including dance. He previously served as the gospel choir director of East Kentwood High School. Emmanuel has received training in piano, dance, singing and choir directing. He is committed to grow and develop the gifts and talents that God has given him.

He has a passion for working with youth. Manny now feels that God placed him in a position to share his talents with all of God’s people at Grace. In the context of Grace Church, he sees great potential for us as a church in our worship if members remain dedicated in their worship and the use of their gifts. Manny will direct the Gospel Choir and work closely with the Praise team, desiring to take them to “new heights”.

Contact Chris or Greta Overvoorde, .over@calvin.edu for questions or if you have articles - 956-7454

## An Image from History.

The First Council of Grace Church in front of the original building around 1962. From left to right: Elder Henry Washington, Clerk; Deacon Andrew Cross, Assistant Treasurer; Deacon Luther Ward, Treasurer; Rev. Martin Toonstra President; and Elder William Burrese, Vice President.

