

# GRACE NOTES

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

March, 2008

## Norman Ward

May 2, 1928 - March 7, 2008

I had the privilege of knowing Grover C. Ward, Sr. and Jessie Lee Ward in the late 1970s. Their six sons were stalwart and vigorous: Nathaniel (Lansing), Grover, Jr., Norman, Chester, Luther, and Cedric. The family had attended True Light Baptist Church since its beginning on Williams St. SW. Norman was baptized there in 1939 at the age of 11.

Three Ward brothers would eventually become members of Grace Church: Luther became a deacon on the original council in 1962, Chester and Norman also joined Grace under his influence. Three brothers from the family remain to this day: Nathaniel, Grover, and Luther.

Norman's influence developed through his friendship with Randolph Douglas Edmondson, the late husband of Beverly Burrell. In 1987 Randy and Beverly lived on Oakdale St., adjacent to Norman's house on Evergreen St. When Randy became terminally ill, Beverly was teaching in the GR public schools and needed daytime help to care for him. Norman, a friend since childhood, provided daily support. On my regular visits with Randy for prayer, two miracles of grace happened: Randy was baptized at a bedside service in the presence of family members, Norman, and Grace elders and deacons on January 8, 1989, and Norman's interest in the gospel and Grace church resulted in his profession of faith ten years later on April 25, 1999. Randy died at the age of 40 two months after he was baptized.

Norman never missed worship at Grace if he could be there. He could not keep quiet about his gratitude for brother Luther. He called Grace Church his family. Nor did he miss an opportunity to testify to his faith in Christ and his love for the church. Norman was known best in the community as a recovering addict; at Grace Church he was known as a child of God and



a faithful servant of Jesus Christ.

Eight weeks ago Norman noticed that I was using my walker at church. He asked

if I could use a cane if I had one. The next Sunday he brought his cane and gave it to me because "you need it more than I do," he said. That cane is a visible reminder of Norman's generous character and alertness to the needs of others. I cherish the cane and will use it until someone needs it more than I do. Then I can tell someone Norman's story.

*Roger Van Horn*

In the relatively few years I have known Norman as a fellow church member, he became my friend and more important, my Christian brother.

Although I didn't know Norman when he was younger, he told me enough about his early years to demonstrate to me what he means to be redeemed. I always looked forward to Tuesdays when

he, Luther, and I picked up food at West Michigan Gleaners so that some of Grace Church's neighbors could benefit.

We shared both health and family concerns. He shared his earlier experiences with dialysis in such a way as to keep my spirits up. He never missed a Sunday encouraging me, rather than feeling sorry for himself.

In sharing personal accounts of his earlier life, Norman frequently mentioned the impact of family, particularly Luther and his mother's prayers. He taught me never to give up on others.

He never missed a chance to be thankful for what most of us might consider "small things." He is the only person I have ever met who could speak positively about the bills he got -- because he, at least, could pay them. Norman we know you are in a better place, but we miss you!

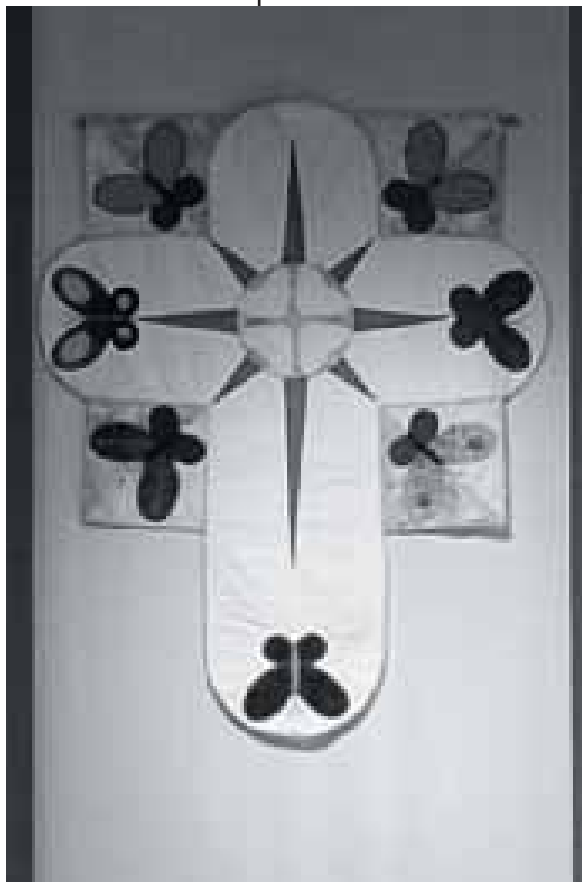
*Ted Rottman*

## The Worship Committee

**Mandate:** The mandate of the Worship Committee is to enable the congregation to join together in celebrative worship that reflects the church's vision, mission, and core values. To this end, the committee, under the supervision of the Council and with the advice of the elders, has responsibility for planning, carrying out, and reflecting on the worship services of the church. The regular tasks of the committee include planning the annual calendar of services, arranging for the staffing and scheduling of the services, preparing liturgies for worship and preparing for the administration of the sacraments. The committee reports to the Administrative Committee, and presents it with brief annual outline of priorities that include its budget needs.

The committee has seven members: pastor Jack Kooreman, Mike Bruinooge (chair), Tom Hoeksema, Melanie Karr, Emmanuel Phillips, Stephanie Rottman, and Elizabeth Spears.

Actually, for almost three years now the committee has delegated the actual work of planning each week's worship services to another group of Grace members: Marla Hoekwater, Trudi Ippel, and Liz Westerhof. These three people meet with pastor Jack and our Minister of Worship Arts, Emmanuel every Tuesday and prepare the entire liturgy—the pattern of songs, responses, prayers, and teaching—that is used the follow-



ing Sunday. The worship committee is under the supervision of the elders and the full council, which is why there is always a committee member who is an elder and can facilitate good communication between the elders and the committee. This is currently Tom Hoeksema.

Grace's worship committee wants worship to be reverent, inspiring and full of grace—and to reflect a variety of cultures and tastes, especially in music, while being faithful to the Reformed pattern of liturgy. This is a challenge!

In 2006 and 2007, the committee was approved for a "worship renewal" grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. For one year, the committee led the congregation in exploring how dance and movement in worship could be used to create a stronger multicultural worship experience. Since then, a liturgical dance study group has continued to meet under the leadership of Manny Phillips.

The committee wants to be responsive to all Grace members, and invites anyone with a concern or suggestion to contact one of its members.

*Mike Bruinooge*