

# GRACE NOTES

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

Volume 3 # 5 May, 2011

## CHURCH NEWS

### NEW MEMBERS: THE BRIDGEWATERS

Welcome to Khary and Jennifer Bridgewater, and their children Grace and William. They learned about the church through their relationship with Eileen and Jack Kooreman. They have known Eileen since 2005 when she was Khary's city coach for the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative. (He was the Boston city coordinator). Khary first met Pastor Jack while visiting Grand Rapids during the initiative. He even visited Grace a few years ago when Dr. Perkins spoke.

They were attracted by the welcoming atmosphere, commitment to prayer, children's ministry and strong preaching. The Bridgewater's have been committed to racial reconciliation work for years and are happy to see how Grace has lived this out over its history. Most recently they left a church plant in Ashland, MA where they both served in ministry.

Jennifer has three sisters in Atlanta. Khary has three adopted brothers in Saginaw, MI. The Bridgewater's have two children, Grace is three years old and William is only seventeen months old. Both children were baptized on March 6, 2011

Khary works as Program Officer for Congregational Initiatives and the DeVos Family Foundations, most recently Jennifer worked as Regional Administrator for the North East region of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship's Graduate and Faculty Ministry. They enjoy traveling, reading, watching movies, and spending time with family.

### UPDATE ON SHUT-INS: NANCY VANDER HEIDE

From her family,



After moving to a memory care unit in Fulton Manor Assisted Living last November, our mom, Nancy Vander Heide, has adjusted to her new surroundings. Her physical health remains good but she is having an increasingly hard time recognizing people and communicating with them. Please keep her in your prayers. We also want to thank you for remembering her birthday. Mom

had a lot of fun opening the many cards and reading your lovely notes. Grace Church has always been such a dear place in both her and Dad's hearts. We her family are very grateful for the love and concern you have shown her and Dad over the years.

## GEMS AT GRACE

A 6:45 pm on the first and third Wednesdays of the month—even during Spring Break-- the church doors are open for GEMS. But before then the counselors and helpers have been busy in the building—turning on the lights, putting out the yard signs that announce the meeting, getting the snack stuff into the church, and setting up the meeting rooms.

When the girls come in—some walking from down the block, some riding with their moms, some picked up by counselors and helpers—all 25-30 of them stream into the downstairs classroom next to the playground. That's where the piano is, and that's where the craft supplies are stored. To Nicole's lively accompaniment they sing some of their favorites including "Step by Step", "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me," and practice this year's memory verses.

By 7:15 all the GEMS have sorted themselves



into their classrooms—the sapphires (with Melanie Karr and Becca Timmermans) next to the lounge, the rubies (Becky VanDyke, Nicole Lenko)

amethysts (Emily Helder, Jill Hausman, Emily Derks), emeralds, (Brittany Dekker and Manda Hart) and diamonds (Jenny Dekker, Marla Hoekwater, Eileen Kooreman) upstairs—for their Bible lessons. Each class has a team of teachers—sometimes their own mom, sometimes a woman they get to know at church. While they are in class, Barbara and Megan Haviland are getting snack trays ready to bring upstairs, and the craft helpers (Kim Eggebeen, and Merideth Post Treman) are preparing the fellowship hall for craft time. Last week they made friendship bracelets.

By 8:30 the meeting is over. Books are back on classroom shelves, the kitchen is clean, the fellowship hall swept up. Girls carrying finished craft projects are walking or riding home.

Gems leaders plan their lessons all week. They meet their students with love, with discipline, and with attention to each person in their classes. They pray that God's love for each girl will speak to the GEMS through this program. The rest of us can help them by providing them their meeting place, by praying for them and by voicing our encouragement.

## **Search Begins for Director of Worship Arts**

A search committee to replace Emmanuel Phillips has begun its work. Joining Pastor Kooreman, who is chairing the committee, are Helen Brent, Becky Van Dyke and Tom Hoeksema. During April and May, they will clarify the responsibilities of the job, specify the qualifications desired in applicants, and identify networking avenues. The plan is to activate these networks during the summer, identify candidates, and interview them in early fall once the pastor has returned from his sabbatical. The committee encourages members of the congregation to inform them of potential candidates or people with whom we might network.

*Tom Hoeksema*

## **It's Party Time !**

You're invited to the party on Tuesday May 31 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Park at the church, listen for the music, and follow the barbecue aroma to the big tent up on La Grave Street. The Southgate Neighbors and the Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF) invite Grace Church members, local residents, and all friends of the neighborhood to a ground-breaking celebration. Music, food, games, and a ceremonial turn of the earth will take place on "Lot B"—the empty lot on La Grave just south of Wealthy.

This party marks the start of construction on the first two commercial/residential buildings of the long-delayed Wealthy-Jefferson redevelopment.

Jonathan Bradford, head of the ICCF, explained the plans for the redevelopment at a special meeting of the Southgate Neighbors on April 27. If you are interested in details, you can find them at the project web site [www.wealthyjeffer.org](http://www.wealthyjeffer.org).

## **Update on Ministry Plan**

Mike Bruinooge reported an update on the Ministry Plan to the Council at its May meeting since this is the third, and final year, of the current plan.

### **WITH OUR YOUTH**

Bob Crow continues to serve as youth elder. Our Communion services are now open to children under a process developed by the elders. We have a partnership with Youth for Christ through Jason and Erin Carrigan. We are partners in the De Vos-funded Believe to Become initiative. Through a Jubilee Scholarship Katie Lynn Knief will serve our church as a summer intern. Grace



House residents are friends to neighborhood children. We continue to recruit excellent Sunday School teachers.

Additional project are recommended: Continue to explore how to create a partnership between church and parents via conversation, mentoring, a handbook, or other means-and report to Council on results. Continue to work with the Worship Committee to involve youth in leadership roles in worship services. Continue to encourage and develop simple, informal ways for adult members to cultivate relationships with youth: learn their names, pray, send birthday cards, show interest.

## **IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

Karl Westerhof continues to serve as Minister of Outreach. Grace House is full with residents; Jason and Erin Carrigan and their son Oliver, Mary Nasca, Nicole Lenko, and Emily Derks. GEMS and Cadet Clubs are revitalized. Believe to Become, is part of our outreach. Our neighborhood Block Club has been re-energized. Additional projects in process are; Communicate with the neighborhood via newsletter & calendar, electronic sign, and message board. Also hold a Faith in Action Sunday-creating an inventory of assets and needs, and create an inviting external space, redesign entry way, and a community garden

## **IN OUR WORSHIP**

Tom Hoeksema continues to serve as Worship Committee chair. We were set back a little by Manny Philips' departure, however Nicole Lenko is filling in nicely as interim Minister of Worship Arts. Our Worship Committee and weekly worship planning team continue to help us blend different musical and liturgical styles into our worship services.

We continue to work of involving youth in Sunday services on a regular basis-drama, dance, readings, ushering, contribute to planning. Using testimonies in worship-based on life experiences, or tie-in with a specific worship theme. Provide a script of possibilities for blessing children during Communion.

## **IN OUR FELLOWSHIP**

Pastor Jack Kooreman has replaced Adele Vander Brug as interim lead person however, if Council approves the appointment of Khary Bridgewater as Minister of Congregational Life then he will serve.

We will continue to work on holding more potlucks-experiment with different kinds of dishes, and themes. Launch small groups based on common interests: bowling, Bible, brewing, knitting, books, crafts, ethnic foods, sports, movies, exercise. Build elder care groups for fellowship.

## **IN GENERAL**

In our congregational life we continue to work on two things: maintain a strong prayer ministry; and highlight the ministries of our church and various denominational and other ministries at various points during worship.

## **Fifty Years of Grace**

Council approved the appointment of a 50th Anniversary Committee at the May 11, 2011 meeting to celebrate God's blessing of fifty years since Grace Church became a recognized church congregation. The actual date would be in March, 2012. Several ideas have been proposed. The committee will develop a plan and present it to Council. Please share any names or projects with Administration Committee members.

If you have news items for Grace Notes, please pass it on to Chris and Greta Overvoorde. Call 616 956-7454 or email them at: [over@calvin.edu](mailto:over@calvin.edu).

For previous issues of Grace Notes go the Church's website: [www.gracegr.org](http://www.gracegr.org)