

Grace Family News

January - March 2012

Special Points of Interest:

- MOPS
Jan 3, 8, Feb 7, 12, 26,
Mar 6, 25
- Food Pantry
Jan 7, Jan 15, Feb 4,
Feb 19, Mar 3, Mar 18
- AWANA Leaders Dinner
Jan 8, Feb 19, Mar 11
- JIF (Just In Fun) Jan 8,
Feb 12, Mar 11
- Senior Outing - The Barn
Jan 21
- Annual Church Meeting
Jan 22
- IMPACT Winter Blast
Jan 27-29
- Cake & Cookie Deco/
Candy Making
Jan 27
- IMPACT Girls Purity
Retreat Feb 10-12
- MOPS Dinner & Games
Feb 24
- AWANA T&T Quizzing
Feb 25
- AWANA Grand Prix
Mar 3
- Ladies Retreat
Mar 9-10
- AWANA Games
Mar 24
- MOPS Candy Making
Mar 30

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Pastor's Pen

Excellence Matters

A few years ago I was intrigued by the following statement listed as a value of a local church: "Excelling Ministry - believing that the spirit of excellence is a display of God's way and will for His children in their pursuit of constant and creative ways." I was so intrigued I wondered how many other churches used such terminology and to the best of my knowledge, there were none. We recognize "excellence" when we see it. It could be found in a painting of an artist or unique building design of an architect. Excellence could be found in the performance of a musician or the woodwork of a craftsman. We often see it displayed in athletic competition such as the Olympic games. But can excellence be found in the everyday life of a salesman, attorney, student, parent, or housewife? Can excellence be found in the ministries and facilities of Grace Church? Can it be found in the process of our spiritual maturity?

Far too often believers are satisfied with being "good enough" and this should be viewed as a sinful attitude. Paul instructs the Romans not to be "slothful in zeal" in our service to the Lord (Rom 12:11). Since our lives are to be considered an offering of spiritual service (Rom 12:1), whatever is worth doing in that service is worth doing with diligence and care. Therefore, I would suggest that excellence should be found in all areas of life and is expected by God.



God displayed excellence in the creation of the heavens, earth, and man. As God looked at the various elements of creation, He saw that "it was good" (Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25) and on day six when He looked at the totality of creation, He saw that it was "very good" (Gen 1:31). To the best of my study of the Hebrew word in which we translate the word "good" (טוֹב), it implies the concept of being rich, valuable, and

excellent, therefore God's creation was perfect. I appreciate John Calvin's thoughts on the excellence of God's completed creation: "After the workmanship of the world was complete in all its parts, and had received, if I may so speak, the last finishing touch, he pronounces it perfectly good; that we may know that there is in the symmetry of God's works the *highest perfection*, to which nothing can be added." *Highest perfection* can only be achieved from a being who is highly perfected. God himself, from the beginning of time, displayed excellence in His creation in order that His glory may be seen. Though our perfection will not take place here on earth, this should be our template of our heart attitude, to do our best in order that He may be glorified.

Israel's example of excellence can be found in the preparation of Solomon's Temple. As David was preparing for the construction, he acknowledged that "the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent" (1 Chr 22:5 ESV) and later tells Solomon that he has an "abundance of workmen: stonemasons, masons, carpenters, and all kinds of craftsmen without number, skilled in working gold, silver, bronze, and iron" (1 Chr 22:15-16 ESV - emphasis mine). David knew that any structure to be used as the house of the Lord had to be second to none, which would require skilled craftsmen using the finest building materials to produce a magnificent structure. All of this took place out of service to the Lord in order that God would have a permanent structure to reside among His people. God no longer resides in a structure, rather He resides in the hearts of His children. Still, the principle of excellence is still the same. People who desire to glorify God in all that they do will do so with the intent of doing it to the best of their ability. This is the example that we can draw from the construction of the Temple: "...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).

God expects excellence in all we do as we see this in Paul's letter to the Colossians: "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord

and not for men... You are serving the Lord Christ" (Col 3:23-24 ESV - emphasis mine). This scripture reference comes from Paul's instruction to slaves that they are to follow instructions of their masters not to please man, but rather God. The motivation of our service to God should never be extrinsic, rather Paul uses the phrase "work heartily" which conveys the idea putting the entire inner man to the task. Even Solomon, the "Preacher", with all his wealth and possessions, recognized whenever one finds an opportunity to do something, do it intensely, with all one's might (Ecc 9:10). Harold Best, in his book *Music through the Eyes of Faith*, defines excellence as a process "of becoming better than I once was." He goes on to say: "I am not to become better than someone else or even like someone else. Excelling is simply - and radically the process of improving over yesterday...God loves and honors people who are working at the edge of their stewardship, win or lose, gifted or normal."

How is your process of improving over yesterday? How are you excelling in your spiritual growth, your time in God's word, and your love for the gospel? Are you improving as an employee or student? Are you faithfully improving your role as a son, daughter, parent, grandparent, husband, or wife? How well are you using your gifts and abilities for ministry to build up the body of Christ, His church? Are you even using your gifts for that purpose?

God has given us gifts, abilities, and talents and it is our responsibility to faithfully steward or manage those to the best of our ability. "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Pt 4:10-11 ESV)

Scott Burdett

\$\$ Saving Money Together \$\$

The most important way to save money and time is to plan ahead. You say, "I don't have enough time", but actually we all have the same amount of hours in a day, how it's spent is what's different. The first symbol most children learn is McDonalds. If you eat out more than twice a month, it's time to start planning. And that doesn't mean planning supper on the way home from work with hungry crying kids in the backseat. Over the next few newsletters we will discuss various ways to save.

The following are helpful ways to save through couponing. You don't have to be an "Extreme Couponing" contestant to save. If you have kids sit them down with scissors and have everyone start cutting. You don't need to be "extreme," just practical. There are many coupon sites online that match up coupons to local stores and even make a grocery list. And don't forget to check out the loss leader ads on the front of the grocery ads. Those are usually items that are way below normal cost. All this can be done while you're watching "Dancing with the Stars" or "American Idol". Start your list, check your coupons; if you have a match, you are already saving money. If you use that item more than once a month, buy 4-6 weeks worth. Then you don't have to buy it again until it's on sale again. Try not to

buy anything that is not on sale or couponed. Don't think you can't afford buying in multiples, the money you saved in not buying fast food will help fund your stash. Eventually, you will have enough of these items so you might not have to go to the grocery store for a week or more. New products will frequently have a high value coupon. This is a good way to try out a new product.

Couponing is also a way to donate items to our church food pantry.

Toothpaste, pasta mixes, and cake mixes can frequently be found for under a dollar, after sale price and coupons.

Drug stores and discount store like CVS and Walgreens have great saving incentives if you shop one store regularly. Need positive reinforcement? Look at your receipt. Here's an example of a recent shopping visit: Green Giant boxed veggies were \$1.00 each at Giant Eagle (regularly \$2.00). I had 3 coupons for 60 cents off of 3 boxes. This doubled to \$1.20 off of 3. My nine boxes (\$18 worth) only cost me \$5.40 or 60 cents each. Most people who coupon regularly save 20-30% each trip and this can add up to over a \$1,000 a year!!!! That can pay for a vacation!

Most importantly, watch for seasonal

sales on meat. Though meat can be your highest priced staple, buying in bulk on sale can often make meat the lowest cost. In winter turkey and ham can be bought for under \$1.00 a lb. That's a lot cheaper than hamburger or bologna and much better for you. Great savings can also be found in bakery outlet stores. A month's worth of bread items will keep nicely and saves frequent trips to the store.

Challenge yourself to see how many weeks you can avoid fast food restaurants, and yes, that means your sweet teas, polar pops and cappuccinos. Keep track of how much you saved by fixing it at home. You will be surprised. Save the difference for a special overnight with hubby or event for the kids. You might even see a difference on your scale.

Another fun way to save is not spending \$15 to \$30 on birthday cakes. **Friday night, January 27th, we will have a class to learn simple cake & cookie decorating, and candy making. Watch the bulletin for sign up info.**

If you have any money saving hints, or questions, e-mail me at bh5519@aol.com. Next time I will discuss important appliances and the best ways to stockpile. Remember, "time is \$\$\$\$\$\$".

"A Year of Time ..."

Though even thinking on the subject of time may prove discomfoting, it is not a bad idea—especially at the beginning of a new year.

As we look into <year> we look at a block of time. We see 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds. And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchase it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as a part of life.

The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak—every man, woman and child has the same twenty-four hours every day.

Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on.

And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone, it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it.

Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or, as good stewards, we can invest it in the kingdom of God.

The new year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out the window, or will you make every minute count?

Steven B. Cloud



Missions Moment Highlight

We had a wonderful year in 2011 with our missionaries and missions partners. Nine people from our congregation went to Mexico to help those in Ensenada construct a building, fellowship, and helping to equip them with Biblical training. The Tanners, Metkos, Lowe children, and others in the



mission field were able to speak at Grace Church, stay in our homes, and provided enjoyable times of fellowship so we could know them better, and we could understand and help them more. We also were able to help send Ron and Vicki Letts to Australia in July. They have been a part of our church after stepping off of the mission field several years ago. They were able to return to Australia in 2011. Praise the Lord for all of His provisions!

Grace Church gave over \$44,000 to support our missionaries in regular support and in special offerings during 2011. Please pray for our missionaries. They are listed in the bulletin

every week as a reminder to pray. They need our prayers and support.

Thank you to everyone who supports our missionaries by works, monetary support, visiting them on the field, and most importantly in prayer.

There is much anticipation for what is coming in 2012 in missions. The Lowes will be on furlough starting in July 2012, and we are eagerly waiting to see them. If you have a burden for our missionaries, Grace Church is always looking for people to help in a variety of ways.

Roger Wilhelm

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT EVER

Happy Birthday, Jesus

Created by Celeste Clydesdale & David T. Clydesdale
Arranged by David T. Clydesdale

Beginning in September the 3rd-6th grade (and a couple 7th graders) Junior Church group began learning the songs and lines of the children's musical called "*The Best Christmas Present Ever!*" The story of a group of kids putting on the greatest birthday bash to celebrate Christ's birth and a very skeptical news anchor as he covers the beat of this small story with a BIG message. Most importantly, he learns about the real meaning of Christmas and he answers the "knock on the door of his heart."

Great job and kudos to Abbey Housley who played the part of Miss Wright leading the group of kids on their quest to invite the entire town to the birthday party. Zachary Jackson brought to life the arrogant part of Rod Stark, Anchorman, who in the end discovered that a 2000-year old (and counting) Jesus actually did change history and more importantly changed his heart. Thanks also to Ryan Taylor as supporting actor, the "dry-comedic" cameraman.

We are also so proud of Jared Bubar, Hunter Burdett, Marcus Dillon, Drake Duncan, Maryssa Duncan, Lauren Housley, Meghan Knarr, Abigail Longstreth, Reann Maino, Michaela Orris, and MacKenzie Wood who also shared lines and solos in dialogue and many songs.

The musical was completed with the supporting cast, voices and smiling faces of the Kindergarten through 2nd graders who also spent several weeks practicing and learning their songs. Great Job!! Russell Anderson, Lydia Bubar, Payton Curall, Riley Curall, McKenzie Dillon, William Forsyth, Elizabeth Howes, Jacob Howes, David Knarr, Grace Longstreth, Reagan Ochoa, Caleb Orris, Hannah Orris, Sarah-Joy Orris, John Wilhelm and Matthew Wood.



Special thanks to Calley Rose as the musical director and creative set producer with the support of Kathi Pritt, Don Rose in sound production, and Mike Pritt with video and lighting.

So...in the words of one of the songs... "What will you do with Jesus?" and "What will He do with Me?" Can't wait to see in 2012!!!

Kathi Pritt



2012 Events

- Senior Saints Outing / The Barn ~ January 21
- Annual Church Family Meeting ~ January 22
- IMPACT Winter Blast ~ January 27-29
- Cookie & Cake Deco/Candy Making ~ January 27
- IMPACT Girls Purity Retreat ~ February 10-12
- AWANA T&T Quizzing ~ February 25
- AWANA Grand Prix ~ March 3
- Ladies Retreat ~ March 9-10
- AWANA Talent Night ~ March 11
- AWANA Games ~ March 24
- Good Friday Service ~ April 6
- AWANA Awards Night ~ May 6
- IMPACT Summer Camp ~ June 10-15
- Vacation Bible School ~ July 22-26
- Church Family Picnic ~ July 28
- 2012-2013 AWANA Begins ~ September 9
- IMPACT Fall Retreat ~ September 21-23

Women of Grace

Ladies,

Are you ordinary? Do you thank God daily for being ordinary? A quick search of the word ordinary brings up the following words: humdrum, routine, settled, run-of-the-mill, mundane. Why would we ever want to thank God for being run of the mill? I was reading an article recently that smacked me right between the eyes. Is this your life: "The alarm clock screams you awake . . . you haul yourself out of bed, wincing as you step on some pointy plastic toy ... You take stock of the morning. The dog needs to go outside ... Mortgage payments, diapers, traffic jams, gray cubicle walls ... [A]s a youth dreaming about the future, did you ever picture it this way?" I'm sure NOT! If you're like me, we dreamed of a perfect husband who only works four hours a day, living in a mansion with an indoor heated pool, raising 4.0 GPA students who excel in sports, art, and music. We are a size 3, after having 3 children, and vacation a month at a time in Europe, or Hawaii during the lean years.

We now look back and think, "What happened?" Reality happened, actuality, existence, genuineness, how things are, truth happened. We may look at it as failure, but humans and God look through very different eyes. "The world values accomplishments and appearances, influence and wealth. God looks at the heart, the "integrity" of the woman. Whose approval do you wish to seek?

Mary was an ordinary young girl yet God chose her to be the mother of our Savior. Would we ever use the words "run of the mill" to describe her? No. And neither should we use ordinary to describe us. We are children of God. He made you for His pleasure. He made you for a specific task. Are you a humdrum secretary, mother, wife, or boss? Or are you His daughter, doing all "to the glory of God"? (1 Cor. 10:31)

"The average Joe who finds his significance in Christ is a steadfast model of faith, honor and character. He goes home at night to his wife and children. He mows the lawn, fixes the deck,

reads to his kids, listens patiently to his wife and serves his Lord. He doesn't expect to get rich or famous. He finds contentment in knowing that the One whose opinion really counts is pleased with him." Though this was written to men, rewrite it, make it personal between you and the Lord.

Go forth, dear friends, as *Thankful, Ordinary Women* for the Savior!

"God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
(1 Sam 16:7).

Quotes taken from "Average Joe", Thriving Family, December 2011, p.46.

LeAnna Burdett



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Congratulations to the Sladkeys on the birth of their daughter, Leita Belle, on December 8 at 8:16 p.m. 7 pounds 3 ounces, 20 inches long!!!