



CONNECTION point

Winter 2017 || Gracepoint Community Church

Who is Gracepoint Community Church

We're ordinary people united by our mission: Growing followers of Jesus who experience God and engage our world together. In other words, we believe God's focus is growing whole people through Jesus Christ and so that's what we want to be about too! We care deeply about lavish grace, active love, and intentional community and seek to incorporate these convictions in all we do together.

How do we live this out?

We Gather...to worship together as recipients of God's lavish grace and to be stirred by the beauty of His kingdom.

Sunday morning (including times for children, youth, adults, worship, and occasional meals)

Sunday night dinner (a meal shared among diverse people with God's grace at the centre)

We Go...to share God's active love with our world.

We see everywhere we go and live as the place to live this out. We seek to be generous and involved in the adventure of being God's people in our households, neighbourhoods, and world.

We Get Connected...because we need uncommon intentional community that spans generations and boundaries to help us grow.

We seek to be involved in smaller groups where friendship and true community make us more whole and alive.



God has Good News for all people!

We believe in God as eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God created and sustains the universe and is worthy of worship.

The eternal purpose of God the Father is to create a people who will bring glory to God forever.

We believe God became human in Jesus Christ to restore the world because humans have rejected God in disobedience. Jesus taught and modeled the way of God's kingdom. He died on the cross, making a renewed relationship with God possible, and rose from the dead, breaking the power of sin and death, and frees us to live in obedience to God's will.

We believe God the Holy Spirit invites us to be reconciled with God and join God's global family who confess their faith, are baptized, and join together in the Lord's Supper. By the Holy Spirit and guided by the Bible, we seek to live as followers of Christ and invite others to experience His new life.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to turn:

- from ignorance of God to a personal relationship with God
- from bondage of sin and past mistakes to freedom, forgiveness, and healing
- from individualism to interdependence with others in the local church
- from lifestyle choices that harm us, others, and the earth to choices that nurture wholeness, healing, joy, and peace
- from hating enemies and ignoring neighbours to showing love and justice to all
- from loving possessions to sharing with all in need
- from aimless existence to a mission of representing and proclaiming God's kingdom on earth

And, we look forward to the day when God will again send Jesus to bring all things under God's eternal rule.

Adapted from the confession of faith of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, a nationwide fellowship of over 250 churches, of which we are part.



Experience
God

Engage
Our
World

Together

Contents

- 4 **I Will**
Pastor Rick Bayer
- 5 **Blessed to be a Blessing**
- 7 **Breathe...**
Gord Wookey
- 8 **Women of Gracepoint**
- 10 **Story Speaks**
Deanna Pfortmueller
- 12 **Ministry Opportunities**
- 13 **Kids Unlimited**
- 14 **Gracepoint Youth**
- 16 **Those Who Have Ears Can Hear**
- 19 **Offering**
Gregg Baker
- 20 **Living the Jesus-Shaped Life**
Steve Bains
- 23 **Al-Gburi Update**
- 24 **Missionary Report**
Kristen Corrigan
- 25 **Life on Mission**
Phil Wagler
- 27 **Generosity Appreciated**
Steve Bains

OUR STAFF



Rick Bayer

Lead Pastor

rick@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x208



Kim Savage

Director of Ministry Operations

kim@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x214



Steve Bains

Community Development Pastor

steve@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x209



Tracy Baker

Director of Administration

tracy@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x204



Gregg Baker

Worship Arts Pastor

gregg@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x213



Chris Reitmayer

Student Ministries Pastor

chris@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x211



Loree Mitton

Children's Ministry Administrator

loree@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x203



Gord Wookey

Building & Grounds Maintenance
Freedom Session Director

gord@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x205



Deanna Pfortmueller

Director of Children's Ministries

deanna@gracepoint.ca

604-538-1825 x207

I WILL



When I was a teenager, I tried out for - and made - the badminton team at my high school. The coach encouraged myself and another player to join a private club in downtown Kitchener—the Granite Club—to better improve our skills. It was expensive for adults but relatively cheap for students so Keith and I biked over to the Granite Club one afternoon after school and signed up.

We stepped on one of the courts to play. We were playing barely 30 minutes when a long-time member pulled us aside to inform us the club had a rule, that badminton players had to only wear white on the courts. He looked me over disapprovingly as I was wearing neon everything (it was the early 80's!). Clubs have memberships where you pay the dues and follow the rules and in turn you enjoy the perks.

The apostle Paul said we are a different kind of member: **Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.** (1 Corinthians 12:27 NASB)

Membership in the body of Christ is not about rules, dues and perks. It's not about preferences or personal benefits. The Church of Jesus Christ is no country club! It's not about an "I want" mentality - it is about an "**I WILL**" one.

We are members of one another Paul writes to the church at Corinth. He compares the church to the human body with each part of our body indispensable to the totality of the human body. The church needs you and you need the church.

When we come with an "**I WILL**" attitude, it becomes a win-win as you are blessed by others and you are a blessing to others. So in this season of Gracepoint, say "**I WILL**." I will participate with others. I will grow with others and not be a lone ranger. I will be more than just a spectator.

Say that to yourself as you look around on Sundays. What if each of us said, "**I WILL**" to the next generation? Whether you are 25 or 45 or 65 we ought to be mindful that our church is only one generation away from closing. Today's teenagers carry their anxiety around like a new iPhone. We have a responsibility to mentor and disciple those around us, including those who are coming behind us. We want to fulfill the words of the Psalmist: "**One generation commends your works to another**" (see Psalm 145:4).

As we do this together, the "**I WILL**" becomes "**WE WILL**." We will be God's people in how we engage with one another. We will strive to create a community of warmth and hospitality.

And as we march forward, as the church of Jesus Christ, influencing our region as Christ's salt and light we will be the people of God for such a time as this. As gospelized people, the life of Christ spills out of us through deeds and words.

We have a crisis in our city with addictions, Fentanyl, and homelessness.

As people who engage our world, we believe that we can say "**WE WILL**" to helping bringing about God's peace

in region. We will host a forum in the upcoming provincial election around poverty reduction to remind our political leaders about Jesus' mandate towards the poor. We will be a hub for the Surrey homeless count in March and host training for volunteers involved in this. Feel free to volunteer with me to gain first hand experience in engaging with the homeless. We will move forward in pushing back darkness in whatever area in 2017.

We do this all as in response to the one who came for us in our darkness. When we were lost and wandering He came and got us and gave us a new identity and purpose.

I look forward saying "**I WILL**" together with you this year.



BLESSED

TO BE A BLESSING

The start of 2017 marked a moment. A moment of incredible, humbling gratitude and awe. We as a staff and leadership team felt compelled to say THANK YOU and recognize how our church was able to be a light in the community this year. Not just with financial resources, but with service and care. Have a read on some of the things we accomplished together as we followed where God called us.

Year in Review

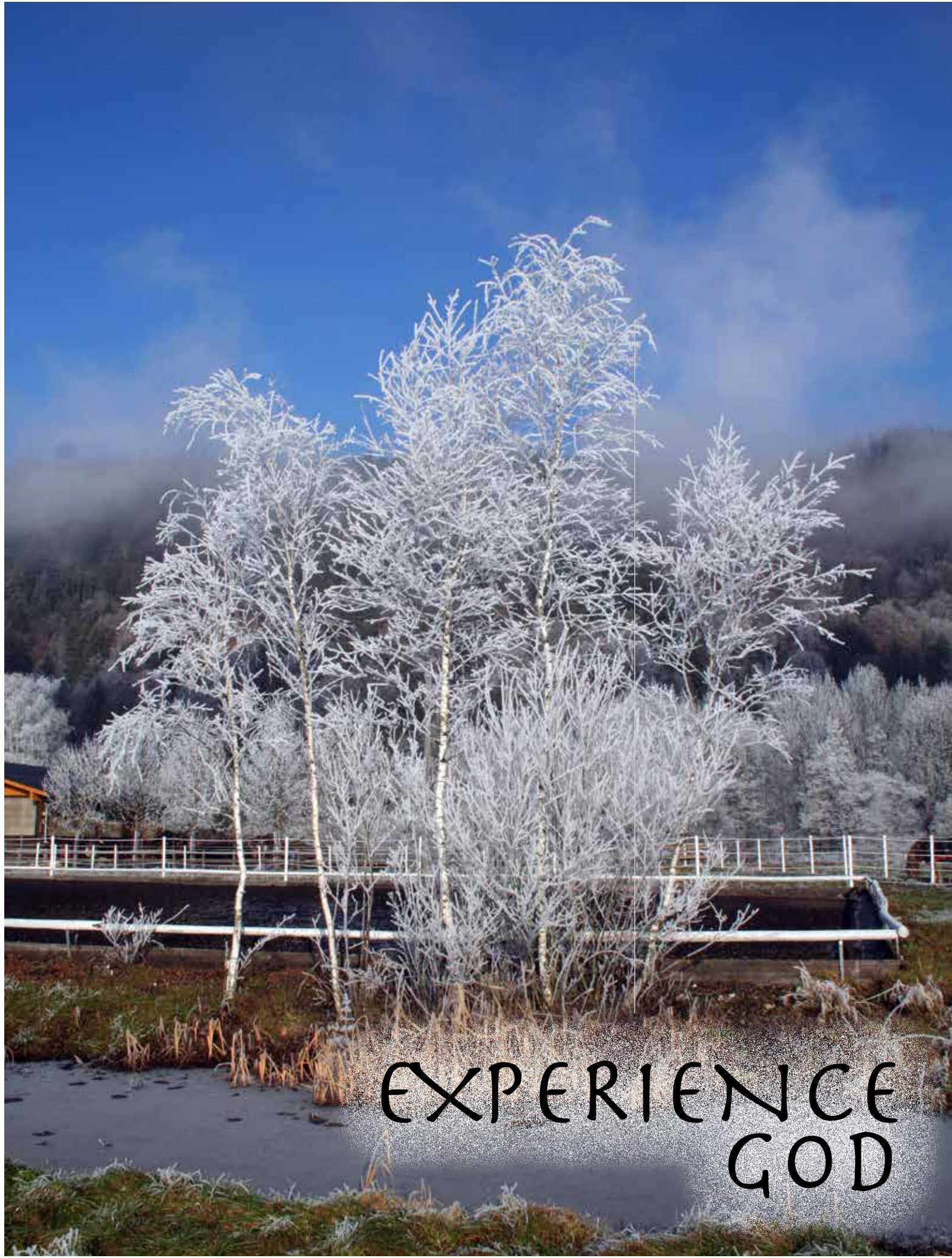
- Year-long sponsorship of the Al-Gburis
- Connection, relationship and practical support with at least 10 other refugee families
- Financial support of Fort McMurray wildfire disaster
- Financial support of White Rock fire victims
- Church building stewardship and mortgage paydown
- Support of missionaries locally and around the world
- 12 Christmas hampers for struggling families
- Adopt a school breakfast program spearheaded by Ernie and Marie Isaac
- Community Dinner to thousands of people in 2016
- PAIS team: and through them,
- Connection with three high schools.

When we start “counting” it is exciting to see how God moves among us and calls us to serve in areas. We look forward to 2017 and what the Holy Spirit will do at Gracepoint in the next year.

Thank you...

for your trust in the leadership and direction of Gracepoint.

Your giving and engagement blesses those we touch and our community.



EXPERIENCE
GOD

Breathe...

not just an exercise in staying alive!



On the first Sunday of each month, we have the opportunity to gather together for a time of worship, teaching and prayer. We use this time to slow down, take a breath and allow the Holy Spirit to breathe something new into our lives.

A past Sunday, as we met in Studio A, the question we asked was this: **"what in your life would you like the Holy Spirit to fan into flame this year?"** This is a great question to ask as we begin a new year. I don't know how many of us want 2017 to end without any change or growth in our spiritual walk. In my own life, I have seen a great change this past year as God has challenged and stretched me in so many new ways. Allowing change is sometimes hard. Hence the questions we ask so as to spur us on to seek the Giver of Life and to allow change to bring a new focus on what is truly important.

As the time of praying came to a conclusion on this Sunday, we saw again how many wanted to just sit quietly...in peace! We have received so many comments about how "peaceful" it is in the room. It is in this space and time that as we gather to worship, learn and pray together, we experience what the Bible says.

When we seek Him, He allows us to find Him. And as we find Him, the

Giver of Life, His peace and presence changes everything. That's what *Breathe* is all about. Us gathering together to worship Him and Him, inviting us to go deeper and find new meaning and purpose to our lives. In doing so, our lives change as Holy Spirit fans into flame something new.

This question resonated deeply with me this past Sunday as I have experienced real challenges this past year. To place Freedom Session on sabbatical for a year and to then take on the challenge of a ministry like *Breathe* and as well to lead a discipleship group took me from what was familiar to what was

unknown.

It is in these challenges that I have experienced God's presence and His provision of people to walk with me so that the journey was not my own, but a collective. What I have experienced is that journeying with others takes you farther than if you go by yourself!

If you would like to take time to slow down and take a breath, we would invite you to join us on the first Sunday of each month in Studio A at 6:30 pm.



Prayer
In the Spirit

Do you have a love for people? Have you experienced the power of prayer in your own life or the lives of others? Do you have a relationship with Christ that is ever-growing? If you answered yes, then we encourage you to consider being part of Gracepoint's Prayer Ministry.

We are expanding our team and looking for people to come along side and be part of this vital ministry. Contact gord@gracepoint.ca for more information...or better yet bring him a coffee and come chat!



Women in the Word

On various days and times of the week, leaders facilitate groups, using a variety of content resources. These are great studies to build your understanding and application of Scripture. It is also an incredible time of prayer connection with other women. Studies take place at the church or in homes.

Drum Roll Please! You've been asking for the new line-up and here it is! To sign up or for more info, email women@gracepoint.ca

ENTRUSTED: A STUDY OF II TIMOTHY - BETH MOORE

Duration:

6 weeks

Start Date:

Wednesday, January 18

Completion Date:

February 22

Time:

7:30 - 9:00pm

Facilitator:

Christine Weigel

Location:

12984 16 Avenue

Cost: \$25 for the workbook (please contact Christine so she can pre-order the book for you)

This study will also be held on Tuesday mornings, led by Shawna Melnyk, starting February 28.

You will be encouraged to guard what God has entrusted to you, to further His kingdom by sharing Christ with others, and pour into future generations just as Paul once mentored Timothy. In this journey of joy and hardship, we need one another to stay the course and live lives of faithfulness.

CHRISTIAN JOURNALING - SEEKING A DEEPER WALK WITH GOD

Duration:

8 weeks

Start Date:

Monday, January 16

Completion Date:

March 20

Time:

7:30 - 9:00pm

Facilitator:

Pat Corder

Location:

15718 20 Avenue

Cost: \$15 for the book (please contact Pat so she can pre-order the book for you)

Group Limit: 10

This study will help you to recognize God working in your life, and to notice the progression from who you have been to who you are meant to become. A personal copy of the book is needed, and there will be some homework.

STUDY OF THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

Duration:

7 weeks

Start Date:

Tuesday, January 10

Completion Date:

February 21

Time:

9:30 - 11:00am

Facilitator:

Judy Klassen

Location:

Gracepoint

Cost: \$0 - plan to bring your Bible and a binder to put your materials into

Learn the inductive Bible Study method as we explore the Book of Colossians together. Be prepared to do a small amount of homework in the week as we meet to discuss our findings. We will look closely at Paul's letter looking for themes and insight so as to grow closer in our walk with our Saviour. You will receive the book of Colossians in a study form in the NASB version as well as other study materials.



MEXICO MISSION TRIP

July 2 - 9, 2017

Join Gracepoint and One Life One Chance Ministries as we venture down to San Quintin, Mexico for a life changing week of service and seeing God at work.

More info?

Rod & Shawna Melnyk

thunderthumb16@gmail.com



Want to go for Coffee?

Women of Gracepoint want to connect and know each other well. Want to get plugged in and make a new friend? Email **women@gracepoint.ca** and we would love to meet you and buy you a Starbucks or Tim's.

PS...we mean it! Even if you don't email us, we may invite you!

STORY SPEAKS

by Deanna Pfortmueller
Director of Children's Ministries



I've heard there's music in everything. So, I'm listening. I'm awake, eyes and ears open to catch the sound. Maybe, being one who loves storytelling, I'm more likely to hear story threads and conversational threads that connect us all instead of noticing musical reverberations...

Nonetheless, I'm making connections that bring deep joy and the recognition that Aslan (Jesus) is on the move in **KIDS UNLIMITED**.

Fans of J.R.R. Tolkien's & C.S. Lewis' fantasy novels know that these master storytellers imagined a multi-dimensional universe. They described the creation of the world using mythological and fantastical imagery - and music.

Musical sounds filling the void. Creation springing to life in response to the sound waves. Aslan bounding and leaping, his laughter and song and touch of his paws causing earth and all things green and growing to exist out of nothing. Everything Comes Alive.

Fantasy, allegory, fiction, non-fiction, historical fiction, biography = story.

Whatever your preferred genre, story speaks to the heart about truth and glory - deep and unfathomable. Story reflects glimpses of humanity and eternity. Music touches memory

and spirit. Visual art captures emotion and beauty beyond words. Dance speaks glory through movement. These are just examples. One could go on and on.

For instance, upon reading all seven of the Chronicles of Narnia, I had a Kairos moment that was pivotal. I'd previously felt guilty reading fiction because of the time spent (read: wasted). But I knew intensely in this moment that Lewis' fantasies captured spiritual reality more clearly for me than non-fiction could do. I knew I HAD to read fiction. This was Kingdom stuff, and after all, it IS an invisible Kingdom.

Art is a mirror of humanity (where eternity can also be glimpsed because it's always there as an invisible reality). The mirror sends refractions our way of an invisible world more real and enduring than this temporal, physical world that's passing away.

I thank God for Tolkien's and Lewis' vivid and sanctified imaginations! I thank God for my imagination because he uses it in prayer and worship to help me hear what His Spirit is saying. To grow me in hope, help me abide in His love and feel His joy. And, I thank God for the glimpses he gives us all of the beautiful story He is telling.

Our God is weaving a tapestry with His Kingdom. Colourful people and story threads connect us all. He sees the whole beautiful big picture on the finished side.

We see loose threads, the mess, things that do not make sense. We have faith that there's a bigger picture but we can't see it yet. Suddenly, in a Kairos moment, we see just a glimpse, in a mirror, of eternity. Then we must reflect back to each other the glorious truth of who we are, who He is, and the eternal reality of the Love that we are to meant to abide in.

Lately in **KIDS UNLIMITED**, we have been learning to pray like Jesus, follow Jesus, listen for His voice and do what He says. Doug Stuart and Josh Weiss asked us to conceptualize an "upside down Kingdom" where the King becomes a servant. Tim Blaskovitch asked us to consider Our Father our number one priority, our Rock, and to put the Big Rock in our jar daily, before the other ones. Phil Wagler, sowing seeds of expectancy in KU elementary kids, asked us to believe with God (like Mary did) for big Kingdom things. We brainstormed what God's Kingdom, Power and Glory might look like in our daily lives.

In January, KU Shepherds asked kids, "Let's pray and listen. What is the next step you can take to bring God's Kingdom to your world?" We traced each other's feet and put action words on them. (Those feet are on our KU bulletin board where we're looking at the way ahead, our vision framed in faith, trusting God's unfailing love and asking Him to "show me the way to walk".)

You know, the kids' responses are really cool! Our kids are praying for YOU: for new things, for healing, peace, rest. They're also taking the first step of talking to new kids at school. They're praying for and loving classmates and neighbours. And, some of these amazing kids are choosing to pray and listen some more, leaving their footsteps blank and ready while they process. How cool is this!?

God's Kingdom is expanding and it's exciting. Each next small step our kids take leads to the next and the next. And every step has a ripple effect in the Kingdom. We are all connected in something much bigger than us.

We will be sharing our stories of taking our steps and imagining, praying together for our next-next-steps. We never journey alone in the Kingdom. We are on an adventure with our team, on a quest with our fellowship, on a mission in our family.

We are going to use our imaginations in **KIDS UNLIMITED** in the upcoming months to celebrate Bible truth through teaching, drama, art, dance and music. *God's Big Adventure Book* by Jason Byerly will tell us about God's forever love, His COVENANT, and his forever KINGDOM.

The adventure story God is telling us: a story we get to be part of!

May everything come alive! May our hearts sing along with the music, mystery and magic. May we make connections between the truths in these stories and the stories God is telling in our faith family and in our personal lives.

Maybe you're hearing a similar song the Holy Spirit is playing on your station? Or you're seeing the threads of a beautiful picture and you're sensing the tapestry is growing in beauty...

When we see Kingdom connections, see a portion of the tapestry, we come alive in a way like no other.

KIDS UNLIMITED

Ways you can support your KU kids at home...

Read together. Engage in storytelling. Ask your kids questions about what Bible characters might have been thinking, feeling, wrestling with. Read between the lines. Encourage imagination. Ask 'What ifs.' Feeding imaginations is crucial to growing our faith.

Take home memory verse reminders from the KU bulletin board and encourage memorization and meditation on the Word. Chew on it. Talk it over. Make up silly songs to help remember.

Get a copy (by donation) of your kids' new KU learning material: *God's Big Adventure Book*. It'll be fun & meaningful for them to take a copy home and share with you what they've learned, engage you in discussion and activities, read to their siblings, and pour over pages with KU Sunday memories attached to them.

Pray the Lord's Prayer with your children, pausing to pray simply in your own words. Use the acronym we learned in KU to help guide you:

P--praise & thank God for His personality, promises (and even your problems)

R--remake the world into God's Kingdom; repent & believe

A--ask & believe for daily needs; ask & believe for forgiveness, res-cue/deliverance

Y--yes! celebrate God's goodness in His Kingdom, power, glory; praise & thankfulness

Hyland Elementary

Have you noticed the growing desire among Gracepointers to be involved in local mission? Perhaps you too have been wondering how you can get involved in making an impact in the lives of others.

Recently, we began exploring how we could partner with local organizations to be a blessing to our region. Hyland Elementary



(Newton) expressed interest in partnering with Gracepoint to address the needs of their students and families. Ernie and Marie Isaac agreed to meet with school representatives to consider how we could be part of the Adopt A School Program.

The school was so impressed with how Ernie and Marie met the needs of a local school family, that they have asked them to be involved in the school's breakfast program on Mondays, and Fridays. Nutrition is key to creating a successful learning environment. Now Ernie and Marie are feeding 25 children (K- Grade 7).

However, with "Growing followers of Jesus who experience God and engage our world, together" as our church mission statement, Ernie and Marie would love to have other Gracepointers join them in this local mission.

Are you someone who enjoys spending time with children in a mentoring role? Mentors are needed after school to help students with reading, and other school assignments. If this interests you, please contact Marie and Ernie at erisaac22@shaw.ca or 604.572.0236.

Ministering to Muslim Families



Another way we can live out God's call to love others is helping local Syrian families to adjust to life in Canada. A small team of Gracepointers is assisting several families in North Surrey. The team is on the search for others to join them. Opportunities to serve include assisting adults (women, and men) with conversational English skills, an individual with administrative gifts who will locate needed furniture and other items, and organizing others to distribute them, and individuals willing to be part of an email prayer team.

For more information, contact Pastor Steve at steve@gracepoint.ca or 604.538.1825.

KIDS UNLIMITED

FOR CHILDREN FROM 1 MONTH TO GRADE 5

Gracepoint's kids' ministry offers Sunday, midweek and seasonal DISCIPLESHIP opportunities to foster hearts and minds in little people as they Experience God and Engage our World Together.

Children are led and loved by an incredible team of volunteers who invest into our kids weekly. Our desire is to help each child discover God in a personal way and partner with parents as they nurture their children's faith.

POLICIES

KIDS UNLIMITED CHECK-IN

(for kids 2 years - Grade 5)

Check-in at the KU table in the lobby before the service. Worship with your kids in-service until they are invited to the front and dismissed to their teaching time with their leaders. Parents are more than welcome (and encouraged) to accompany their children to their classes. Please check in babies 0-23 months directly in the Nursery.

KIDS UNLIMITED REGISTRATION

(for kids 0 years - Grade 5)

If you're new or haven't already completed a KU Registration or Visitor Form, please do so you can stay up to date on what's happening. Visit the check-in table in the lobby today.

KIDS UNLIMITED DROP-OFF / PICK-UP

For safety purposes, children (Nursery-Grade 5) should remain with their parents until they are dismissed from the service. Parents must pick up their children immediately following the service.

CLASSES

NURSERY

(0-23 months)

Parent-Participation Nursery opens at 10am. Volunteer Caregivers will be on duty to supervise and assist in the Nursery once children are dismissed from the service (approximately 15 minutes after the service begins).

The Fireside Room is available for nursing moms from 10am until noon.

Baby Mum Mums are available upon request as a snack. To keep the Nursery allergen-free and food-safe, no other food is permitted

EARLY CHILDHOOD

(2-3 years & 4-5 years)

Parents of preschoolers are welcome and encouraged to accompany their children downstairs to their classes when dismissed from the service.

ELEMENTARY

(Grades 1-5)

Children join their grade group outside of Studio A before going in for their large-group teaching time. They will then go to their small group classroom. Parents pick up after the service in the classrooms.





The mission statement of Chapel is to invite and unite a generation to see God move in our city. Chapel functions as a once a month worship night committed to uniting the

Church and kindling faith. During interdenominational gathering of youth groups, teens will have the opportunity to interact with peers from across the city. Chapels

generally meet on the last Friday of the month. Check the website for up to date information and location: chapelmovement.com/surrey

SYNCED LAUNCH: JANUARY 2017



One of the practical outcomes of these monthly gatherings has been working towards a synched youth alpha launch. This January in half the high schools across the Lower Mainland, students will be

inviting their friends into gospel conversations, perhaps for the first time. Pray for the young people taking this bold risk! Pray God would move in our high schools!

If you are a young person who would like to get more involved in this, talk to Chris or email him at chris@gracepoint.ca.



Those Who Have EARS Can Hear

by Chris Reitmeyer
Student Ministries Pastor

1 Samuel 3:10

Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."

Listen.

If you were to comb through the Scriptures, repeatedly you would come across this word (or some form of it). Listening is one of the very foundations of the Christian faith.

We all listen to all sorts of things, from music, to sermons, to people.

And to whom we listen is of the greatest importance.

In Genesis 3:17, God says to Adam "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you..."

The issue here is that Adam has listened to the wrong voice. We would be wrong to blame Eve for leading Adam astray. If Adam was listening to the right voice, if he had been listening to God's voice, as he was created to do, he could have protected both himself and his wife from the misery that was to unfold.

You see one of the greatest tragedies in this life is neglecting the voice of God.

God speaks. And he speaks in a myriad of ways. Sometimes it's the still small voice crying out through Scripture. Sometimes it's the deep peace found in prayer and contemplation. And sometimes God's voice is heard in the most mundane and unexpected of circumstances.

Those who have ears can hear. You don't need a degree in theology. You don't even need a high school diploma. You just need to be willing to listen.

All too often we forget to listen. Or we're too impatient to listen.

Or perhaps we're even afraid to listen. We're afraid of what God might say to us. Or maybe we're afraid that we might not hear anything at all. Or perhaps we're afraid of what others might think of us if we claim God spoke to us.

Over the past few months, I have heard numerous stories of people hearing God's voice. The common theme has been, that when God speaks, something changes.

At youth we have been trying to create space for our young people to hear from God—and some have heard God speak for the very first time.

Please join me in praying that God would continue to speak to our young people. And please join me in praying that we would be a church that listens. Pray that we all might have ears to hear.

Disclaimer: Perhaps you have been longing for God to speak to you and you feel like that God is silent. You are not alone. Many of the Psalms reflect this very experience. In Psalm 13, the writer declares his feeling of abandonment by God—yet he declares his trust even in his experience of abandonment. He recognizes that the experience of the present is not the full picture of reality. If you are struggling through these waters, read the Psalms, especially the Message translation. Also talk to someone you can trust who will encourage you to persevere and keep listening. God will speak. God ALWAYS does.



Since August 2016 we're enjoying working with our new church and we are blessed to be part of this family. Over the past few months, we have deepened our relationships with our Youth small groups and we are enjoying mentoring the students. Besides that, we established a Girls Bible Study group, two Soccer and Bible Study Groups and Jonni is supporting the Youth Band. Some highlights of this past season were the Youth Retreat, serving with the students at the Community Dinner, and the Youth Christmas Banquet in December.

Besides working in the church we've also been pursuing the mission to go into local public schools and to build a bridge between schools and the church. Looking back at this year and our ministry at the schools, we've been immeasurably blessed. Beginning with the opportunity to help a soccer team from one of the local High Schools we also started to join in the school's Stage Crew to help to organize the musical "Annie" which is going to be performed in April. However, we also experienced some disappointments with other schools which did not want us as volunteers. Nevertheless, we started working with refugees and underprivileged kids at a Middle School and by now each of us works together with two different teachers and supports them in class. We are also excited to announce that we are going to organize the "Dared To Love" week with the refugee kids in January in order to teach them how to show love and thankfulness towards the people around them.

We are looking forward to another 6 months of building God's Kingdom here in Surrey.



SHINE 2017

SPRING RETREAT

April 7-9, 2017

IN APRIL we will
 ONCE AGAIN HEAD TO
 STILLWOOD FOR SHINE.
 THE COST OF THE
 RETREAT IS \$125.

How to Register

Registration forms can be obtained from Chris or downloaded from the church website under the Gracepoint Youth tab (<http://gracepoint.ca/youth/>).

Forms and payment are to be submitted to Chris by Tuesday February 28, 2017.

Cheques can be made out to Gracepoint Community Church.

What to Bring

Sleeping Bag	Towel
Pillow	Bible
Warm Clothes (that can get dirty)	Money (for the General Store)
Extra Shoes	Donations for Cyrus Centre
Swimsuit	A Denim Outfit
Toiletries	

Do NOT bring valuables!

stillwood.ca
 604.858.6845
 44005 Lindell Beach, BC V2R 4X9





GRACEPOINT YOUNG ADULTS

As we enter 2017, we are excited about the way God has been stirring among us. A little over a year ago, Vince and Dana Penner sensed a desire to lead a weekly discipleship group with Young Adults. What began as a small group steadily began to grow until this past Fall when we realized the group was getting so big it was time to start a second group.

As we began to ponder who could lead such a group, Gregg and Tracy Baker sensed a stirring of their own, a desire to walk alongside young adults—and almost as quickly as we asked the question, we had an answer.

This January, we began the process of launching the second group and we look forward in anticipation to how God will move next. Who knows how or whom God might stir next?

In addition to our weekly discipleship groups, we also meet on the first Sunday of the month for a young adult potluck. If you are looking to get connected – contact chris@gracepoint.ca



First, I would like to give a hearty thank you and publicized hug to **Emily Malnis, Pat Corder, Margit Tonelli, Andrew and Stuart Joyce** for their hours of creative toil and excellent collaborative efforts that were seen by all throughout the Advent and Christmas season. I know that many commented on the beauty and richness of the decor in the sanctuary and foyer. When you share your creative decorating gifts with the whole family at Gracepoint it really enhances our experience of God together in this place. Thank you so much!

Second, I would like to thank **Sarah Busch** for helping out with video and photography during Advent. It is always great to be able to look back and recall some of the experiences of our gathered worship with the help of video and photographic documentation.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our musicians, vocalists, audio and lighting technicians, and Mediashout operators for your faithful and dedicated, creative and declarative service all year round! You are all amazing children of God and it is pure JOY to serve with all of you!

~~Gregg Baker, Worship Arts Pastor

!! An Offering



Starting with this issue of Connection Point I had planned to write a series of articles on worship but then on December 4th (the second Sunday of Advent) a group of young people stepped up and in 4 minutes and 21 seconds physically demonstrated much of what I would likely spend a few thousand words describing. I'll still write those articles one day but for now let's start with a brief analysis of what took place here during this gathered worship service.

If you weren't in the room on the December 4th you missed a very meaningful performance. As we approached that time in the service where every congregant has the opportunity to participate in the worshipful act of offering, four young people—Jonni Schiffner, Kelsey Bayer, Tristan Peters and Joel Melnyk—came forward and took their place on the platform to offer a fresh take on 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen'. I believe this seemingly simple act of offering a song has at least two significant points regarding the heart of what it means to bring an offering into our gathered worship services.

First, the offerings we bring before the Lord should be joyfully given

and call for our greatest gifts. This is how we worship God: we declare His infinite worth by offering our greatest gifts back to our Maker as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). There's an old Matt Redman song that captures this beautifully. In it he writes, 'our greatest gift would be the least You're due' (Befriended--emphasis added). I don't know what those words do for you but I can well up with tears of gratitude and joy at their utterance.

As these young people gathered for rehearsals, they talked about how excited they were to make a musical offering together. While they all have several different gifts (like most of us) I think each would agree that music is their greatest collective gift. Getting together to make music is the best thing they could do together. They could have tried to create a painting or sculpture together but it would certainly not have been their best offering. This is something for each of us to keep in mind as we seek to bring honour and glory to God: our offerings should entail our very best gifts.

Second, our offerings should be costly to us—a sacrifice. In order to prepare for this particular offering

on the 4th, the group met together for several rehearsals. Jonni and Kelsey had to learn the phrasing, melody and harmonies while Joel and Tristan had to work out their rhythm section parts to support the whole thing. Finally on the 4th they had to show up early for rehearsal and soundcheck. All in they had to set aside several hours for a four minute and twenty-one second offering. If you would like to see this offering again, or maybe for the first time go to: <https://vimeo.com/199060725>

As we enter 2017 there are two great questions for each one of us to ask:

1. What are my greatest God-given gifts or talents? What am I best at?
2. How am I using that greatest gift in a costly manner to bring honour and glory to God?

This is our spiritual act of worship. 'Our greatest gift would be the least You're due.' Let's spend our gifts lavishly on Jesus this year! He is more than worthy.



Living the Jesus-shaped Life



The goal of discipleship groups is to help Jesus followers know him more deeply and live a Jesus-shaped life. As disciples of Jesus, we want to learn from his pattern of life, and follow his example of living a spiritual life in our secular culture. As we examine Jesus' life, we see that by his example and teachings, he called us to live a balanced spiritual life. Luke 6:12-19 (among other passages) helps us to see how Jesus balanced his life around three dimensions: private devotional time with God, time with other disciples (discipleship group), and mission together with his disciples reaching out to non-believers. Some have described this pattern as the UP-IN-OUT dimensions of Jesus' life. We can see this triad of spiritual life evident not only in the early disciples, but in healthy disciples throughout the ages.

Most believers do two of the three UP-IN-OUT rhythms well. Some find time with God and missional living easy, being challenged to walk with other disciples. Others can find devotional times a struggle but thrive with IN and OUT relationships.

A majority of believers though have a tendency to do the UP and IN dimensions well—struggling with

the OUT piece (i.e. mission to others). However, members of several discipleship groups recently demonstrated that when we do the OUT dimension together with other disciples, it is not so difficult.

Recently, a family in South Surrey went through a difficult time. Due to



the father being laid off, money was in short supply. The cupboards were bare. It took courage to ask for help.

The family reached out to a friend for help. The friend knew that Deanna, our children's ministry director, went to a caring church. The friend asked if our church could help this family, Deanna accepted the opportunity but was uncertain how God would provide her with the items to help this family.

Meanwhile, two discipleship groups had teamed up to help a needy family in Newton. Just as the group was planning to deliver the groceries to the family in Newton, the local school counselor (who had requested the help) called me to say the family had suddenly moved to Richmond to

live with relatives. Now what? Just as I was wondering what to do with the collected items, Deanna came to me with her request. Deanna's prayer's for groceries were answered.

Deanna and her family took the food collected by the discipleship groups (see picture) to the needy family in South Surrey.

The response of Chris and Lauren (recipients) to the love shown by the discipleship groups was amazing.

The couple wrote,

Wow, we can't thank you enough. I haven't stopped crying (Chris). We can't believe your generosity! We will be paying it forward in any way we can! Bless you and Happy Holidays!!

Deanna also texted me to say that the family went on Facebook to say how blessed and emotionally impacted they were by the kindness of Gracepoint.

Deanna's husband, Victor, texted me to say, "Very cool... thanks to you and your D-groups for the huge blessing you were able to provide for this family... God's timing and provision is so cool." The truth about our generosity continues to spread.

While we do not serve and live on mission for recognition or accolades, sometimes the response to our missional living can be an encouragement. The events that took place with two D-groups and Deanna's friend are just one example of how God work through us when we follow His call and live missionally for Him—out of the overflow of the relationship we have with him.


Together, we can help each other grow as disciples of Jesus who love God, one another, and live the mission together. Together we can become disciples, and call others to be disciples of Jesus too.

If you are interested in joining a discipleship group, please email me at steve@gracepoint.ca or call me at 604.538.1825.

Gracepoint Discipleship Groups

You can register for a group through the church's website, through a Connection Card, or by contacting Pastor Steve Bains in person, by phone (604-538-1825) or email (steve@gracepoint.ca).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ernie & Marie Isaac	Ryan & Shari Zindler Kim Savage (Women only)	Harry & Cathy Warkentin Sandeep Sawhney & Shereen Kumar	David & Liz Raison Bill & Margit Tonelli Melanie Kartye (women only) Vince & Dana Penner (Young Adults) Kevin & Theresa Wiebe Lloyd & Heidi Laroche Gregg & Tracy Baker (Young Adults)	Rick & Sheila Bayer Men's Prayer Group (AM) Men's Breakfast (AM)	Jeremy & Cathy Wilson Intercessory Prayer Group (AM)	



ENGAGE
OUR WORLD

Al-Gburi Update

Yaqoub (Jacob) Al-Gburi arrived in the wee hours of the morning of Sunday, January 8th at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster. He is the seventh child of Hana Alizzi and Yaseen Al-Gburi.

Hana was supported through a high-risk pregnancy and birth by a dedicated medical team of Gracepoint volunteers. Hana, her daughter Maryam and one-day-old Yaqoub arrived home to a very proud and devoted father, Yaseen. Maria, Maimoonah, Mustafa, Yousif and Ahmed would arrive home from school an hour later to welcome their precious new Canadian baby brother.

Gracepoint Community initiated the sponsorship of the Al-Gburi family of eight in November 2015. A group of 35 volunteers from Gracepoint welcomed the family at the Vancouver International Airport on February 16, 2016. The Al-Gburis have been permanent residents of Canada for nearly a year now.

Hana and Yaseen and their seven children will be moving on January 31 to their three-bedroom townhome in South Surrey off 20th and 152nd. We are very grateful for the decision by Peninsula Housing Society to accept our very large family as tenants. They are very happy to be closer to shopping, schools, transit, work and finally: no HILLS.

Maryam, Maimoonah, Mustafa, Yousif and Ahmed have completed nearly a year at Peace Arch Elementary and have made many friends. They all participated in the school musical Oliver. In February three of the elementary age children will attend H.T. Thrift while two remain at Peace Arch until June. Maria will transfer from Earl Marriott to Semiahmoo for the semester beginning January 30. Please pray for all the changes the whole family is facing throughout January and February.

Yaseen is still in need of a full-time job with a family supporting wage and benefits. He is working at Adib's Barber Shop 1542 Johnston Road in White Rock. This is a great way for Gracepointers to stay connected with Yaseen over a haircut.

Yaseen and Hana have been managing their family budget and finances with the oversight of the finance team. They are becoming independent with their shopping and are getting around with local buses and SkyTrain. Gracepoint Church will be ending our formal year of sponsorship mid-February. However, there will be continuing friendships and connections informally and assistance when requested.

There is no doubt that God has given us this opportunity to know and love and guide and serve the Al-Gburi family. It has been amazing to see all the help so graciously offered by all the volunteers from Gracepoint and friends and organizations in their community. When asked if there were any words they would like conveyed to the people of Gracepoint both Yaseen and Hana replied, "Thank you all with gratitude."

Mustafa gets an award at the pre-launch of his school's library reading program for reading to his three younger brothers.



News from Quebec's ETEQ

(École de théologie évangélique du Québec – formerly ETEM-IBVIE)

Please pray for our team and new and existing students. May they be filled with the Holy Spirit as we begin a new semester. We now have 108 registrations and pray for 136. We would be grateful if you could support us to meet our fundraising goal. We have now reached 39% of our yearly fundraising goal of \$320,000. We have exciting upcoming events in February. Stay tuned.

Kristen Corrigan serves as a missionary in Quebec, providing leadership to ETEQ.



Esdras Germain, admin assistant, and Danielle Lajeunesse, Church liaison set up for our Christmas Mennonite student, staff and faculty dinner that was prepared by volunteers Grace and Ruth Klaassen, volunteers from Winnipeg.



Garry and I enjoying Montreal winter.

MISSIONARY REPORT: Life on Mission

Phil Wagler

MB Mission

We are getting used the concept of tiny houses here in the Lower Mainland as housing prices push many to the brink and cause them to rethink things. So, this cool tiny house isn't such an odd consideration, until you look just a little closer. Focus in, what do you notice in the background? Yes, you're right, that's a barn and wide open spaces! In fact, that's a tiny house on the Kansas plains. With all the space in the world, this young couple has made the decision to live simply, with a larger vision in mind.

Danae and Kyle (in the shadows of the front porch) are testing a call to long term cross-cultural work with MB Mission and their way of life is an example of living life large in a backwards kind of way. They built the house themselves and have decided to begin living out the way of life they sense the Spirit leading them toward as they prepare for a different life in another culture. It's not for everyone—I looked around

wondering how our family with 6 kids would have ever survived—but being with them for a scrumptious meal on a fold-away table and hearing what God is stirring in their hearts challenged me to think again



about how large life can be without big things.

Isn't it interesting that many who live with big things live life small, while those who live life large seem to

think small. When a guy pronounces he'll follow Jesus wherever he goes Jesus says, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). The guy wants to live life large, Jesus invites him to think small if he's to do so.

Is God stirring your heart to a larger life? Perhaps like Danae and Kyle you are being stirred by the Spirit of God to joining his mission somewhere beyond your home culture? Or, equally valid, perhaps the Spirit is calling you to new risk right where you're at? In either case, don't be surprised if the realization of a larger life coincides with Jesus calling you to a more focused and simple life; a life centered on him and his upside-down kingdom. It may not mean a tiny house, but it may very well mean taking new risks and abandoning a life of tiny thoughts.

Phil Wagler oversees training as a member of the lead team of MB Mission.



"Jesus replied, 'The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these.'" *Mark 12:29-31*

In the last year, it has been exciting to see how Gracepointers have joined together to love their neighbours. You may be aware that several members of our congregation have been caring for our church sponsored-refugee family, the Al-Gburis. However, were you aware that there are two additional ministry teams composed of Gracepointers who are also engaged in loving other refugee families in our region?

In December, a growing team of Gracepointers (and friends), who have been serving several Syrian refugee families in North Surrey, decided to organize a Christmas party for them. My wife Harjit had agreed to host the Halal Christmas dinner in our townhouse complex clubhouse.



Many people wanted to be part of this loving activity. To start, the strata council waived the clubhouse facility rental fee. Strata members (who had never met any of the refugee families) also offered to bring food. Ministry team members organized rides for the Syrian families. My niece and nephew (who had never met any of the families) also helped to transport the Syrian families. Ernie and Marie Isaac (our church kitchen managers) gave of their time to cook the meal. Friends from other churches joined in to help as needed. When Harjit's fellow nurses heard that Harjit was hosting the event, they collected several hundred dollars for the purchase of gifts. It seemed that everyone wanted to be part of a team that loves their neighbours.

During the meal, the Christmas story was shared in Arabic. After dessert, the families walked over to our townhouse. Each family was presented with gifts. The children received gifts, while parents received more practical items, including a box of groceries.

If you would like to be part of joining a ministry team that serves Syrian families, email me at steve@gracepoint.ca or phone me at 604.538.1825.





Gracepoint has an amazing outreach ministry through the weekly Sunday Night Community Dinner. On average, the Community Dinner welcomes up to 200 guests every Sunday night. The dinner feeds the elderly, lonely, deaf, mentally ill and the working poor.

Besides meeting the nutritional needs of those who attend, the dinner provides an opportunity for guests to build relationships that allow them to further develop their own positive, social-support networks. The devotional time each evening creates space for people to have their spiritual needs met. Prayer, counseling and referral to services (shelters, mental health facilities) are also provided.

GENEROSITY *appreciated*

Every Sunday of the year, Gracepoint hosts a Community Dinner to offer practical help and care to struggling people. During the week, members of the Community Dinner leadership team follow-up with counseling, rides to appointments and hospital and home visits.

This year the Community Dinner occurred on Christmas Day. There was no shortage of volunteers to help. Once again Dorothea Bergen, Carol Hickman and many others went to great lengths to make the Christmas day dinner extraordinary.

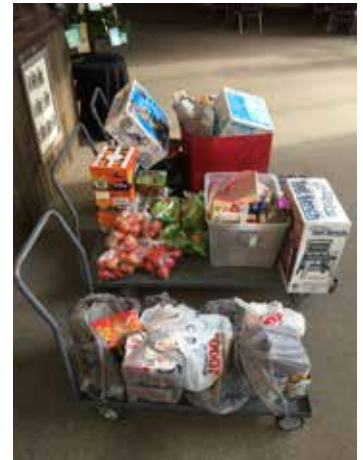
Carol Hickman made sure that each dinner guest received a goody bag containing gloves, hats, socks, fruit and other treats. Thank you to the Gracepoint family for providing these gift items. Bob Grewal (another Gracepointer) organized a food and children's gift drive among his business clientele, with the proceeds to benefit the guests of the Christmas day dinner.

Our generosity made a difference in the lives of people. One dinner attendee wrote the following comments in response to the dinner and gifts she received:

"That was the best Christmas dinner-dessert amazing. The hat and gloves were very nice... wore them yesterday and wearing them today. The flashlight is also great because when I walk my dog early, it is dark same with late evening very handy so nice."

"I thank you very much. You and all your staff and volunteers thank you very much. Everyone was so nice. It was the only place for me to go yesterday and it appreciated all very much it."

Families (of all ages), believers, and non-believing friends, are encouraged to take part in this amazing ministry as often as their schedule permits (weekly, monthly, quarterly). If you are interested in being involved, please contact me at steve@gracepoint.ca or 604.538.1825.





TOGETHER