

# CONNECTION

point

Winter 2016 || 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.

## Are there any really simple ways to get involved beyond worship gatherings?

- Receive a call! Our Gracepoint Connects team is focused on making sure you are known and know how to connect into the caring and growing life of our community. When you're ready to let us know who you are through a connection card, call, or email, you will get a call from someone in your part of the city. All you have to do is simply answer!

- Find a place to serve. There are endless ways to serve alongside others, make connections, and make a difference.

- Join a Discipleship Group: there are many forms among us of life together, one will fit you!

2 Send an email to [info@gracepoint.ca](mailto:info@gracepoint.ca) or call the office (604-538-1825) and talk to Tracy—she'll know who you should talk to!

## 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

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# JESUS IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH

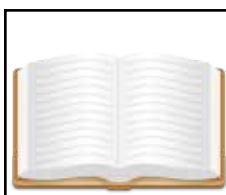
Jesus promised 2,000 years ago that He would build His church and He continues to do that. We here at Gracepoint are one strain of the Church body.



I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

Words of Jesus (Matthew 16:18)

As I write this, we are fresh off our Christmas Eve services where we saw the highest attendance in four years. We also had a record offering come in for the sponsorship of our refugee family. Thank you Gracepointers for again demonstrating incredible hospitality and generosity!



Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.

Revelation 2:7

And as we move forward in 2016, we are excited about what God will continue to do.

We follow what the Holy Spirit is already doing. Our job is to look, listen and respond to what He is up to. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is like the wind, it blows where it will (*see John 3:8*).

I am grateful for your part in helping us grow larger *and* smaller in 2016. As you and I reach out, share our faith, invite people, etc. we will grow larger in 2016. We will celebrate together the new life God does in our midst.

Together, we will also grow smaller as we reach across the foyer to have conversations with people we don't yet know or engage with a teenager we just introduced ourselves to. Together, we'll grow smaller as more and more of us engage in discipleship groups in 2016. Together, as a church, we'll grow wider and deeper as the Spirit does His work in us.

Listen to what the Spirit has to say to you in 2016! He is always trying to get our attention. God didn't develop laryngitis when the Bible was written. We read the Word, we seek God, we pray by ourselves and with others and the Spirit directs us.

I believe God has great things in store for you in 2016. He wants to advance his Kingdom through you. What would it look like for your dreams and ambitions to be unleashed in 2016? Is there a "holy discontentment" that God is stirring up in your life that you need to take action on?

Perhaps, like Peter, you're being called to step out of the boat (*see Matthew 14:22-31*) in 2016 in some way. We're here to cheer you on as you take that risk. We're here to applaud one another as we step out of our comfort zones. At Gracepoint, every person is a participant and every member is a minister. We aren't spectators sitting on the sidelines, but rather contributors to the kingdom calling. We each have a unique contribution to God's work in our world. Your serving matters. Follow the Spirit as He leads you and we'll have your back.

I'm told that one horse can pull about two tons but that two horses can pull up to 23 tons! Wow, what a difference when we pull together. Imagine how much can and will be accomplished when we all pull together this year.

I'm looking forward to standing shoulder to shoulder with you in 2016 as together we move forward and we'll celebrate the mighty things that Jesus does in our midst this year.



**Rick Bayer**

Lead Pastor

[rick@gracepoint.ca](mailto:rick@gracepoint.ca)

# All about the Al-Gburi Family & Gracepoint's Refugee Sponsorship

## THE FAMILY

The Al-Gburi family is a family of eight from Iraq via Syria. They are now awaiting tickets to Canada from a refugee camp in Turkey and will arrive February 16!

The family fled Iraq because of religious persecution.

The father's name is Yaseen and the mother's name is Hana.

They have three daughters: Maria, Maryam and Maimoonah - ages 13, 11 and 10; and three sons: Mustafa, Yousif and Ahmed - ages 8, 6 and 4. The two youngest sons were born in Syria.

Yaseen has experience working as a hairdresser and Hana in housekeeping.

They are all Arabic speaking so we do not know if they will be able to communicate in English.

## THE SPONSORSHIP

We were told by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) blended sponsorship agent they will likely arrive one to three months after November 24, 2015. We eagerly await their arrival.

We have secured accommodation for them for the year and we are busy planning their schedule for the first two weeks after they arrive. We have also been busy preparing their new home.

A Gracepoint welcome reception for the Al-Gburis will be planned at a Sunday lunch shortly after their arrival and we will try to notify all who signed up as volunteers with a special invite.

Our steering team is faithfully served by the following individuals: Lois Waterton (Chair), Lisa Terrace (Treasurer), Deb Mitchell (Care Teams), John Howatt and Ernie Isaac with assistance from care team coordinators: Tamara Raison, Terry Tucker, Warren Terrace, Ed and Maggie Thiessen, Vince and Dana Penner and Cecil Rast. These care teams will meet all the practical needs of the family including socialization, transportation, accommodations, medical and dental, shopping, language and education.

Thank you to so many who have contributed with finances, time, ideas and donated items. Thank you to over 50 volunteers who have expressed interest in helping! We are going to need you all as the year progresses and please contact any of the steering team with questions or expertise. Please know how blessed we feel to be welcoming the Al-Gburis with the support of the whole Gracepoint family.

It is so exciting to be doing something knowing that God's will is to give this needy family hope and a future. We are convinced that God is able to do far more than we ask or imagine for His glory.

Thank you all for your prayers and love and ongoing support.

Lois Waterton

A HUGE *thank you* to 50+ volunteers for such an enthusiastic and willing response to support the refugee family.

*Thank you* to the hundreds of Gracepointers who contributed financially for the Al-Gburis. Our Christmas Eve offering raised a record *24,000+* and the total money raised is just shy of *\$35,000*. Praise the Lord!!





# EXPERIENCE GOD

photo by Aleah Kaethler





Over the fall and winter, Gracepoint Youth had lots of adventures, deep conversations and great connections and community. There was the Youth Retreat, Amazing Race, Christmas Banquet and many weekly D-groups (discipleship groups). Each slot on the calendar represented a different opportunity to grow our youth in Christ – sometimes more focussed on building community, sometimes more focussed on getting connected with God.



A huge shout out to our youth leaders who take time with our Grade 6-12s week in and week out. The connections and discipleship happening is fantastic. Just take a look next Sunday in-service at the back risers and you will see how “tight” this group is.

If I can offer one challenge for 2016 to the entire Gracepoint community, it's this: take a little time this year to intentionally invest in just one young person. It may be your friend's child or grandchild or may be someone you notice every Sunday. Whoever it is, take some moments this year to talk with them, pray for them, get to know them. They want to know you (even when they don't show it) and you might be surprised at the connection you make!





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Young Adults Weekend

You can download a brochure or register online here:  
<http://stillwood.ca/event/young-adults-weekend/>

It would be better for us if you registered through Gracepoint, as then we can send a free leader along.

February 12-14, 2016

## STILLWOOD

### YOUNG ADULTS WEEKEND



• Community • Zipline • Rock Climbing •  
• Coffee • Worship • Games • Food •  
Cost: \$130 • Register online at [www.stillwood.ca](http://www.stillwood.ca)

The easiest way to stay up to date with all that is happening with Gracepoint Youth is to contact Chris ([chris@gracepoint.ca](mailto:chris@gracepoint.ca)) and ask to be added to the weekly email. We also have a calendar you can check out on the Gracepoint website under the youth tab.



# GRACEPOINT

## YOUTH

### D-GROUPS



Thursday Discipleship Groups  
Grades 6-12

Our weekly Thursday meetings are about gathering to care for one another and grow in our faith. We always spend part of the evening as a larger group before we break into smaller age specific groups.

# STUDENT LEADERSHIP



Leadership Development  
Grades 10-12

This group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month at Gracepoint with the specific intention of developing our older students into leaders both within the church community and at their schools.

Ascent.

GRACEPOINT YOUNG  
ADULTS

We gather monthly as young adults for a potluck on the first Sunday of the Month. We also had a Discipleship Group launch this past fall, led by Vince and Dana Penner, which is a weekly gathering of young adults.

# JUNIOR HIGH BREAK AWAY



Junior High Break Away  
Grades 6-9

This is a bi-monthly opportunity for our younger students to gather for some more intentional teaching on Sunday Mornings. Students will be dismissed along with our Children's Ministry and gather in the youth room on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.



2016:  
A New Year  
Upon Us

Brothers and sisters loved by  
God, I know He has chosen you!  
1st Thessalonians 1:4

Many of us make resolutions and one month in, some of us might have already given up, waiting until next year to start again. For me, I pray that God would hear my heart. I want to be more like Him: a little more every minute, every day, every week, every month, every year for all the time I have left on this earth. Sound impossible? It would be without relying on our Lord and His Word.

You might already know one of these scriptures which inspire me to believe I can do it!

*"With Him all things are possible," Matthew 19:26 and "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ." Phillipians 1:6*

Memories from the last few months ring out inside me with joy - to have seen the hand of God moving in so many ways is a gift! New friendships, answered prayer, joyous gatherings-both large and small, reconciliations, stories of people being touched with God's salvation, strength, peace and more. As I write, I am thankful to remember all these blessings.

The Bible study participants in Beth Moore's "Children of the Day" (based on 1st & 2nd Thessalonians) formed deeper bonds with God and each other. Hearing testimonies of faith, healing and salvation encouraged my heart more than words can adequately sum up. The number of participants also grew and strengthens my faith that even more women will take studies in 2016.

We will begin a six week study beginning in February called **"Stepping Up: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent,"** based on Psalms 120 through 134. Groups will be meeting throughout the week. Contact [women@gracepoint.ca](mailto:women@gracepoint.ca) for more information.

Loralyn Lorch is also offering **"The Significant Woman"** study in her home beginning the end of the January. Sneak Peek: I took this course with Loralyn and found myself s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d in a very healthy way. I do not think I would have had the confidence to serve as I do without the support of other study participants and the personal growth I found in the material!

The photos in this article come from two events late last year. **The Chocolate Fun-do** in October provided delicious fun and joyous fellowship. I was excited to see a coming together of age groups at this event.

The other photos are from our annual Christmas in November: **"Joy Unspeakable"**. This was one event where we certainly saw the hand of God pulling all the details together quickly. How thankful we were for Deb Mitchell's willingness to MC and speak. Also a heart-felt thank you to four fabulous women - Christie Weigel, Barb Steele, Barb McNabb and Linda Joyce - with father and son accompaniment (Murray and Sam Poliski) for our music.

I was deeply touched by the support of Gracepoint men, many  
Connection Point





who came last minute to serve dessert. It was an honour working in the kitchen with you all. One of them, upon hearing that our babysitter fell through, took on that job for us - thanks Rick!



Keep your eyes and ears open for an event hopefully coming April 8th. "Girl's Night" will be a pajama/lululemon wearing "sleepover" with salty snacks, a candy bar, nail polish, a movie and most importantly: girl talk. More details coming soon, but this will be great event to easily invite your non-church friends too.

I leave you with two scriptures burning in my heart.

"Carry each other's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 and

"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand, shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven."

(Matthew 5:14-16) (MSG).

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" Philippians 4:13 (NKJV).

May you have a blessed and prosperous 2016!

In our Lord's service,  
Kelley Beazely  
Women of Gracepoint



# KIDS UNLIMITED

It's a new year and we are **BEYOND EXCITED** to be planning for 2016 as we work with our families to disciple the kids of Gracepoint so they can begin "to hear God through Scripture and prayer and do what He says as they live their lives."

Our ministry is **GROWING!** The last couple Sundays, we have had more than 65 kids and we wait with anticipation to see what God is going to do in our ministry this year as we follow where He calls us. We keep serving and leaning on Him, He keeps bringing more. Can you be in a better place than that?

That bring us to our next noteworthy item. We would love to have some fresh faces join all the buzz in **KIDS UNLIMITED**. **BECAUSE** we are growing, we could really use some additional little-people-disciplers – particularly in Grades 1-5. If you are interested in knowing how you can be part of things, email Loree at **lore@gracepoint.ca** or Kim at **kim@gracepoint.ca**. We'll even treat you to a coffee!

As we move forward in kids ministry this year, two big(ish) things are on the horizon. One is that we will be starting to look for a Children's Ministry Director in February. Ideally, we have been praying that "the person" will come from within Gracepoint and already

call our church home. We will be doing some shoulder tapping to encourage a few of our Gracepointers to consider embarking on the discernment process and seeing where God leads them with regard to taking on the role but we also **ENCOURAGE** anyone to apply if they feel called to lead this ministry into Gracepoint's next chapter.

The second piece of news is that we are currently **NOT PLANNING** to host Wonderfaire this year. Without a Children's Ministry Director, it's not possible to pull off a huge undertaking of that scale without direct staff support. To date, no one has stepped forward indicating that would be willing to lead as Wonderfaire Director. If you feel called to lead Wonderfaire as the Director, we encourage you to contact Kim at **kim@gracepoint.ca**. Planning for summer 2016 needs to start by mid-February at the latest.

We are **THRILLED** to be on the adventure God has for us this year in KU. We count it such a privilege to be the ones who have the opportunity to invest into little hearts and minds. Pray that we lead well and that God will continue to bless and grow our ministry in 2016!



## Children's Ministry Director

Love the faith potential of kids? Want to build and be part of an amazing team? Have energy that is overflowing? Like to keep yourself organized and have

vision for the future?

**THEN** – this role might be right for you. Contact Kim at **kim@gracepoint.ca** to learn more.



## Little-people Disciple Makers Needed!

Join us as we help kids learn how to have Jesus in their life. It's always an adventure and we

would **LOVE** you to have you be a part of it.

Contact Loree at **lore@gracepoint.ca** or Kim at **kim@gracepoint.ca** for more information.



# 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.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine..." Ephesians 3:20

### 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.

## MIDWEEK DISCIPLESHIP

### GEMS

Girls, Grades 1-5



**G**irls  
**E**verywhere  
**M**eeting the  
**S**aviour

*A club for girls to learn about God, His Word, and His world.*

*Wednesdays @ 6:30-8pm, Studio A*

For more information, contact:

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604-543-5917

Counsellor Theresa  
[theresa@theresawiebe.com](mailto:theresa@theresawiebe.com)  
604-715-6357

Or, check out [www.gemsgc.org](http://www.gemsgc.org)

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHARING GOD'S GREATEST GIFT SINCE 1993



A small shoebox can have a big impact. Thank you to all those who shared God's love with children around the world in a tangible way through a simple shoebox gift. There were over 216 boxes donated from Gracepointers!

**A SPECIAL "SHOUT-OUT"** to John & Dorothy Howat and Walter & Rochelle Paetkau who showed up bright and early to count the boxes and deliver them to our local OCC collection centre.



## New in 2016

We are introducing a couple elements to assist parents disciple their kids.

### Table Talk:

Check out the weekly Sunday program for a couple questions to chew on in the car or at the dinner table with your kids. Enjoy where the conversation takes you.

## Monthly Theme:

Each month, Kids Unlimited will have an underlying theme for the lessons in addition to the content of the sermon series. January was prayer. Coming up:

**February:** Scripture: reading our Bible

**March:** Loving one Another: Being Family

## Memory Verse:

Scripture is a gift and we want our kids to value it early. Check out your child's take-homes. They will have the memory verse on it. Help them practice it so those words can be written on their hearts!



# FEBRUARY

# MARCH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 GEMS Girls' Bible	4	5	6
7 KYOUTH: Grades 1-5 join Grades 6-9	8 FAMILY DAY	9	10 GEMS Girls' Bible	11	12	13
14 Valentine's Day  FAMILY SERVICE: no Grades 1-5 program	15	16	17 GEMS Girls' Bible	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 GEMS Girls' Bible	25	26	27
28 JUNIOR YOUTH: Grade 5s join	29	1	2 GEMS Girls' Bible	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 GEMS Girls' Bible	10	11	12
13 JUNIOR YOUTH: Grade 5s join	14	15	16 NO GEMS (Spring Break)	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 NO GEMS (Spring Break)	24	25 G O O D FRIDAY	26
27 EASTER FAMILY SERVICE: no Grades 1-5 program	28 EASTER MONDAY	29	30 GEMS Girls' Bible	31		

# A Love Story

In this edition of Connection Point I'd like to let you in a little on the process of getting ready for a major season in the Christian calendar and what that looks like in the worship arts ministry. Let's take a look at Advent through Epiphany. For those who are unfamiliar with these two terms as they relate to what is more generally referred to as the Christmas season, here are a couple of definitions.

## **Ad·vent**

/ˈædvənt/

1. (noun) the first season of the Christian church year, leading up to Christmas and including the four preceding Sundays.
2. (noun) CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY - the coming or second coming of Christ.

**Synonyms:** arrival, appearance, emergence, materialization, occurrence, dawn, birth, rise, development.

## **E·piph·a·ny**

/əˈpɪfənē/

**noun:** Epiphany; **noun:** epiphany; **plural noun:** epiphanies

1. the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12).
2. the festival commemorating the Epiphany on January 6.
3. a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being.
4. a moment of sudden revelation or insight.



**HOPE** - At the beginning everything feels empty and void—full of creative possibilities and yet impossibly empty. And then along comes the first piece of the puzzle. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Andrew, Linda and Stewart Joyce for a great Advent through Epiphany set design. Every week for six weeks there are significant set changes that need to take place in order to remind us all this season is about the birth and revelation of Christ and the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love that He brings into our lives. As the Joyce family set to work back in October of 2015, I began to feel the hope of greater possibilities more than the emptiness.

**JOY** - In early October I sent an email to a number of individuals who love to express their worship through the theatrical arts. I am so grateful that Deanna Pfortmueller, Linda Mott, Amanda Mott, Annie Mitchell and Hannah Baker all answered the call. Through most of November and December we met regularly in Studio B. The group started by playing hilarious and energetic drama games relating them back to the theme of 'Indescribable Gift'. From this playful beginning, monologues began to emerge in the minds and hearts of the players. Then something unexpected happened. Someone read the worship arts article from the last Connection Point and was inspired to join in this creative process. A big thank you to Terry Tucker for bringing your spirit of creativity and willingness to help us with props and design ideas. Those nights during Advent with this team were some of the most joy-filled I experienced in a long time.

Connection Point



Winter 2016





**PEACE** - Music is always such an integral piece of the puzzle for Christmas Eve. And I know it is always an enormous ask for musicians to serve on this holy night. Not only are there rehearsals during the busiest social season of the year, but also there is an eight hour schedule on the 24th. Thank you so much to Trevor Buvyer, Gareth Braunberger, Sheila Bayer, Ron Koehn, Tracy Baker and Mia Jones for pouring your passion and musical giftedness into our Christmas Eve worship service. Having such capable musicians with amazing hearts brings such peace in a potentially stressful time. It was a great joy to serve alongside you. I'm still singing 'Noel' in my head on many occasions. Come and see what God has done.

**LOVE** - Now you might be asking yourself, Gregg where is the love? You said this was a love story. You don't even have a picture of the LOVE letters. I would say to you the LOVE was infused throughout the entire process, from every design element, every note played and sung, to every word written and delivered. The Love was wrapped up in what God has done. This is truly love come down. Amazing.



By the end of a crazy season like this, at the beginning of a new year all I feel is love and gratitude. I am reminded how much I love to see God's kids light up as they worship Him in the way He made them.

Now there is another major season coming: Lent and Easter. If you feel so inspired why not get in touch with me about sharing your latent or nascent creative gifts. God is most glorified as His people do the work of worshipping Him. That's Leitourgia. That's a love story.



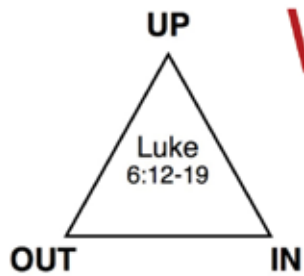




# ENGAGE OUR WORLD

photo by Lucas Koehn





# Whose pattern of life is shaping yours?

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me."

Matthew 16:24



Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example.

Philippians 3:17

In our culture, the idea of being labeled as "a follower" has negative connotations. When it is said "she or she is a follower," it implies that they cannot think for themselves. However, I can think of two exceptions where following is viewed favourably. It is acceptable to admit to being a follower (or to follow) when someone speaks of following someone's blog and when we are talking about someone having a certain amount of *Facebook* followers.

The truth is, we are all followers of those before or around us. If you disagree, check out your dress style, the way you speak, the authors you read, the podcasts you listen to, who you aspire to be like, whose sports stats or earnings you keep an eye on, or who you admire.

To follow means to pattern our lives after someone, to imitate them. Patterning our lives or following someone worthy of intimating should be celebrated. Following the ideas of those who have been successful in an aspect of life (anything from fitness to business goals) is commendable.

Similarly, it is important to make sure that we pattern our lives after the ONE who offers us the greatest success in life. What have we gained if we do not address the core of who we are? There is so much we want to be successful at. However, we must give priority to being

successful in what really matters. Otherwise, we can become distracted by numerous secondary pursuits.

Jesus said,

And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when He returns in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

Mark 8:36-38

This is a hard saying of Jesus. Yet, Jesus said it because He loves us. He does not want us to ultimately spoil our lives by the worship or endless pursuit of lesser goals like worldly riches, hard bodies or fame that will rob us of joy. If Jesus is not the center of our lives, we fail to follow him. It's an issue of primary and secondary priorities.

Our greatest pursuit should be to grow as followers of Jesus. To follow Jesus, means we pattern our lives around those practises that lead us to be spiritually, physically, psychologically, and emotionally healthy. Jesus gave us a pattern to live. We are to balance the relationships of life (see Luke 6:12-19). An "UP" relationship with the Father (v.12), "IN" community with other disciples (vv.13-16) and "OUT" in ministry to the lost (vv. 17-19). By this pattern our desire for love, transformation, peace, rest, service and significance are met.

In my own quest to follow Jesus more deeply, I am waking up earlier to pray. As well, I have submitted myself to meeting with a more experienced Jesus-follower in order to be a growing follower. Whose life are you patterning yours after? What practises are you doing this year to show that you are serious about growing as a follower of Jesus?

Contact me if you would like to explore ways to grow as a follower or to understand the UP, IN OUT pattern of Jesus' life!



**Steve Bains**

Community Development Pastor

[steve@gracepoint.ca](mailto:steve@gracepoint.ca)

604-538-1825 x215

# There is room... *For You!*



Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25

What could you do if you want to grow in your knowledge of the Bible, get answers to tough spiritual questions, really get to know others who attend Gracepoint? What if you wanted to make friends, get involved in a ministry, exchange life stories and embarrassing moments too, laugh, cry, pray, be inspired, challenged and enjoy some great dessert or snacks? It's simple - join a Discipleship Group.

I am convinced that to grow as healthy disciples of Jesus, we need others in our lives who can shape us, rely on us and gently expose our spiritual blind spots. We need a community to speak truth into our lives, who we can serve and who can show us where we need to grow (even by the way they irritate us).

There are groups for men, women, young adults, families, couples and various ages. Groups meet every night of the week and some during the morning. Groups can be found from North Delta to Cloverdale, from Guildford to White Rock.

In the past year over 65 percent of our Sunday morning adult population enrolled in a group. You can register to join our group on our website, through the Connection Card Tab found in the Sunday morning Program, or by contacting me in person, by phone (604-538-1825), or by email ([steve@gracepoint.ca](mailto:steve@gracepoint.ca)).





# Life gets better... Together!

## Surrey / Delta

Theresa & Kevin Wiebe

123 & Northpark Cres

David & Diana Mark

62 & 125 St

Jeremy & Cathy Wilson

110 & Southridge Rd

Ryan & Shari Zindler

(Hosts: Kaley & Sheena Hoffman)

117 & 90 Ave

## Surrey / White Rock

Bill & Margit Tonelli

146 & 32 Ave

Sandeep & Shereen Sawhney

33 & 155 St

Kevin & Lorna Parker

13th & Winter St

## Surrey / Newton

Emily & Austin Malnis

150 & 58 Ave

Rick & Sheila Bayer

147 & 61A Ave

Melanie Kartye

137 & 74 Ave

Gregg & Tracy Baker

63 & 142 St

Harry & Cathy Warkentin

78 & 143a St

## Surrey / Fleetwood

Ernie & Marie Issac

85 & 162 St

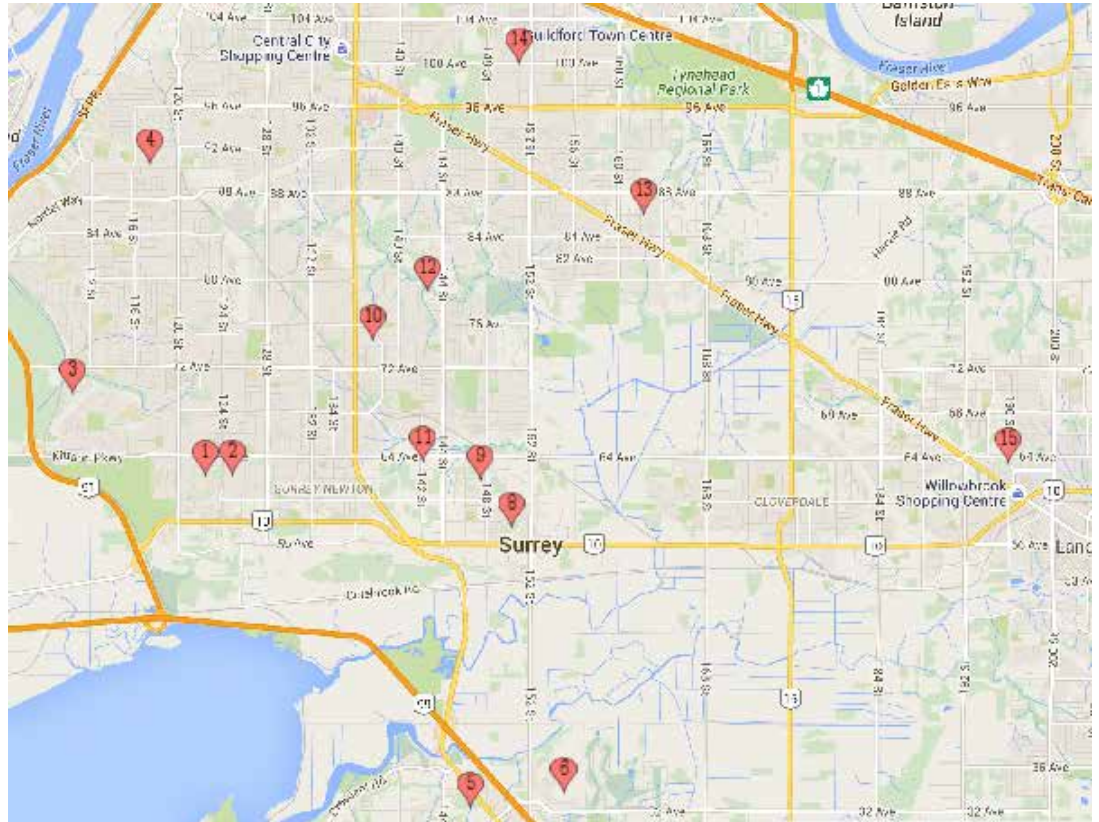
David & Liz Raison

100 & 151 St

## Surrey / Cloverdale

Phil & Jen Wagler

63 & 195b St



### Men's Groups

Thursday mornings at Gracepoint  
(7-8am) with breakfast following.

Contact Arnold

[dr.rrsp@visionvest.ca](mailto:dr.rrsp@visionvest.ca)

Thursday mornings (6:45am)

Whitespot (152nd and Hwy10).

Contact [steve@applesecurity.ca](mailto:steve@applesecurity.ca)

### Freedom Session

Sundays at 6pm.

Contact Gord Wookey

[freedom@gracepoint.ca](mailto:freedom@gracepoint.ca)

### Women's Bible Studies

Contact [women@gracepoint.ca](mailto:women@gracepoint.ca)

### Intercessory Prayer Group

Fridays at 9:30am

14764 61A Ave

Contact Sheila

[sheilabayer66@gmail.com](mailto:sheilabayer66@gmail.com)

### Marriage Ministry

Contact Ron and Judy Marshall

[heyjudemarshall@icloud.com](mailto:heyjudemarshall@icloud.com)

### Young Adults

Contact Vince & Dana Penner

[vnsnt@hotmail.com](mailto:vnsnt@hotmail.com)

Contact [steve@gracepoint.ca](mailto:steve@gracepoint.ca)  
if you would like to join a group.



For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me.

Matthew 25:35-40

Gracepoint has an amazing outreach service through the weekly Sunday Night Community Dinner. The dinner takes place right in same room that the congregation meets in on Sunday morning. By mid-afternoon the room is set-up to host 200 people. Our friends and family in Christ are the hungry, elderly, lonely, hearing impaired, mentally ill and the working poor. People of all ages—from seniors to mothers with babies and young children—are part of this community. As a church, we practice hospitality by providing a full course nutritious meal in a welcoming, non-threatening, non-judgmental, safe environment.

As well as food for the body, there is nourishment for the soul. 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.

During the week, members of the Community Dinner leadership team follow-up with counseling, rides to appointments and hospital and home visitations.

### Three Examples of God's Faithfulness:

- a car dealership drew our name out of a list of 50 potential charitable recipients to receive a \$3,000 donation
- a local realtor donated \$2,000 because he had heard about the effective outreach of the dinner from others
- the Newton Rotary Club donated \$900 and came to serve a meal

Some recent highlights from the dinner include:

**22 Record Attendance:** 275 people for dinner on December 20th

**Giving Back:** \$700 raised by our dinner family in support of our Refugee Family (this is in addition to the \$1,650 that was donated for the Mexico Mission trip in July)

**Family Feel:** There is a growing movement of dinner attendees advancing from strangers, to friends, to family members.

**Unity:** The volunteer and financial support of area churches makes this work possible.

**Christmas Blessing Bags:** Thank you to all of you who provided a blessing bag for a dinner attendee. They appreciated them.



If you are interested in becoming involved with the Sunday Night Community Dinner, please contact me at [steve@gracepoint.ca](mailto:steve@gracepoint.ca) or just show up at 4:30 pm to join us for dinner to observe and/or take part.



## MISSIONARY REPORT:

### Kristen Corrigan

Gracepoint Missionary serving at ETEM-IBVIE

We continue to see God's blessings being poured out, even (or perhaps especially) amidst the trials. We continue to grow, have opportunities to serve.

ETEM-IBVIE is about to change its name and become one entity. Comprising of the Mennonite Brethren School "ETEM" and the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada School "IBVIE," the new name will be École de Théologie Évangélique du Québec - ÉTEQ (the Quebec School of Evangelical Theology). Our relationship with Laval University continues to be strong - through which we now offer three certificates including a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's in Theology.

We are thankful that God continues to bless our ministry. Enrollment has climbed steadily over the past four years - we anticipate another increase in the winter semester with more than 80 students, up from 70 students just a year ago.

We need prayer for Garry. The doctors think he may have lung cancer. He has had a biopsy and PET scan. We will receive results in late January/early February.

I was planning on being in Vancouver the weekend of January 17th but have now cancelled that trip.

We both appreciate your prayers in this difficult time and trust in our sweet Heavenly Father as we seek him during this season both personally and in ministry.



# WHERE ARE YOU FROM?



those serving King Jesus in global work need to know where they've come from – they need the support of a church community who does not forget about them. And, they need to know whose they are! They need to steep in their identity in Christ and their unique call. If these two pieces—knowing where you've come from and whom you belong to—are missing missionaries don't tend to last.

Knowing whom you belong to is the journey of intimacy with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is key for every follower of Jesus

**Ever heard of Punkeydoodle's Corners?** It's one of the greatest names for a corner to be found don't you think? This non-descript, triangulated bend on a southwestern Ontario road is where my better half, Jen, comes from. Believe it or not, she's not the only Gracepointer who comes from within "spittin' distance" of Punkeydoodle's Corners – have some fun guessing who that might be!

**Where are you from?** Some of us are from cities, some from small towns and some from other countries. The truth is, where we start out is not always where we end up. Life is full of change and when the Spirit of God gets a hold of you, that change can be quite unsettling. So, imagine what it must be like to leave your known corner for a completely unknown place of the world? In reality, it is highly stressful. Imagine only being able to talk with the limited understanding and vocabulary of a toddler in a new language? Imagine trying to figure out who you can trust? Imagine adapting to new foods, rhythms and pace? Imagine being plopped into a team of people, only to realize that it's going to take a while to figure out where you fit? At first it sounds quite adventurous, but the reality is that

anywhere, period. Knowing where you've come from opens up a whole new reservoir for resilience. In my work, I am struck by how empowered workers are when they know their sending community supports them, has not forgotten them and is in their corner.

The Holmes-Rahe Scale that measures stress sets a yearly level of 200 as an indicator that significant health problems are likely – not to be mention relational or spiritual fallout. Applied to global missionary workers, this assessment revealed that the typical missionary averages a level of 300 and that missionaries in their first term could hit 900! Yikes.

So, should people just not go to other cultures with the Good News? It's interesting we might think that way, for wouldn't we say that disobeying the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit is the opposite of the call of Jesus?

Yes, people should go—and will—because the Spirit of God leads us to find the greatest joy in the greatest surrenders. Are we not to surrender our will for the Father's will every day and everywhere?





**So, what should we do?** Well, let's remember the church is the body of Christ. Some parts of our bodies reach places and are exposed to stresses other parts aren't (my fingers are more susceptible to getting burned than my spleen for instance), but that doesn't make the exposed parts more special; it just means they are parts of the wonderful and necessary variety for my body to function. In the same way, let me encourage you who are called to live on mission closer to your "home" culture to not forget those parts of the body who are reaching somewhere else. Pray for them, learn what they're facing, show grace, support them financially, encourage them,

and keep valuing the extension of the body of Christ to corners where the light has not yet shone.



Phil Wagler serves on MB Mission's Lead Team with oversight of training of global workers. Come to the office in Abbotsford for a visit sometime or connect with him when Gracepoint gathers ([philw@mbmission.org](mailto:philw@mbmission.org)).

## MISSIONARY REPORT: The Power of Influence

Arlene Friesen

Gracepoint Missionary serving with Youth Unlimited

In all our lives we have influences that are generational. Some are very good and others can be destructive. In many of the kids' lives that we work with, most influences are negative. Everyday as I connect with the kids I am challenging them with the question, "Are you the one that will break the negative generational cycles in your life?"

There are strongholds in all our lives that can stop us from growing. There are times when I have to ask God to pull me away from some of the strongholds in my own life that can keep me from being all He has called me to be.

This is the verse tattooed on the arm of "J," a young girl

*I can do **all things** through  
Christ, who strengthens me.*

Philippians 4:13

that I have been walking alongside for a few years. We met regularly throughout last summer and one day in July she asked me if I could take her to a medical clinic to see if she was pregnant. We were both relieved that the test result was negative. We have had many talks about life choices and putting herself at risk of getting pregnant but the influences surrounding her have made it difficult for her to change.

It was about two months later that she confided in me again that she was pregnant. She had just celebrated her sixteenth birthday. My heart broke for her, but I told her I would walk through this chapter of her life with her and support her in any way I could. We talked about the difficulties of being a young teen mom and I brought up

the possibility of giving the baby up for adoption. Her own mother was just 16 when she had her, so "J" was following her family's generational cycle. She told me that her grandmother had raised her and that both her grandmother and mother have addiction problems. She has grown up in this environment all her life.

My hope is that she does not repeat the cycle of addiction with the pressure of raising a child at 16. My prayer is that the verse tattooed on her arm will bring her to believe that God wants to walk alongside her. Our job as a community is to surround her, and all the "others" - to offer the strength needed to break the negative cycles.

With a good support system and a God who answers prayers, I am confident to say anything is possible.

Thank you for helping us here at Youth Unlimited and being a part of what God is doing in the lives of these kids. Extra thankfulness you for giving me the opportunity to help these teens as they face life—obstacles and all—even when they choose poorly. Most of these teens just want to be loved and it is privilege to be on the front lines, offering out that love in lavish measure.

Blessings,  
Arlene





TOGETHER

photo by Lucas Koehn



# SERVANT LEADERSHIP

## 2016 Leadership Team

Ralph Kison, Chair	Austin Malnis	Judy Klassen
Diana Mark,	Cecil Rast	Ron Koehn
Vice-Chair	Deb Mitchell	Vince Penner
Arnold Machel,	Gurj Banbait	
Treasurer	Harvey Rempel	

On January 10th we had the great joy of commissioning two new leadership team members: **Judy Klassen** and **Gurj Banbait**. These two leaders offer their gifts with a deep, mature faith and a marked desire to follow where God call's them – both personally and at Gracepoint. Thank you to **Diana Mark** and her discernment team who sought congregational input on candidates and prayerfully put Judy and Gurj forward for affirmation in 2016.

Leadership team elders are nominated from within the congregation by their peers and go through a discernment process culminating in individuals being put forward for consideration and affirmation. Generally, elders serve for a three-year term and are eligible to serve for a second term if there is mutual agreement to continue in the role.

Celebrate with us as we welcome Judy and Gurj to the team. They will be a wonderful addition to the leadership at Gracepoint. As always, the Leadership Team welcomes perspectives and comments. Feel free to connect with them anytime!

**Don't get me wrong**, there are people who do this all the time. Studies show the process actually has many mental health benefits. Some might say it is like visiting an old friend. There is an emotional response which links the action to a specific moment in your past.

But, I don't do it. Or I should say, I hadn't done it.

That is, I hadn't read a book more than once, ever...until I reread the books of my childhood to my daughter Miranda. Every night, Miranda would ask me to read a book before she went to bed. I believed that reading to her would stimulate her imagination and motivate her to be a reader. I dutifully read the classics: "Anne of Green Gables," the "Little House on the Prairie" series, even "Pippi Longstocking" and many others. I thoroughly enjoyed the stories myself and excitedly regaled Miss Miranda with each adventure.

Knowing the storyline, and many times having seen a movie based on the book, I remembered the plots and could recall the characters. I knew, for the most part, that the story would have a happy ending. Of course, seeing the stories again through a young child's eyes made them come to life in a new way.

Like I said before, I don't usually reread books. I did, however, read and study many of the books of the Bible during my two years at Columbia Bible College. Back then, there weren't a lot of study majors. Courses such as "the Pentateuch," "I & II Corinthians" and "the synoptic Gospels" required that I read these books as part of the curriculum. As well, participating in various Bible studies over the years through church and Sunday school, I have read the Bible in its entirety in my lifetime.

So as a new year has begun, it is a tradition to make resolutions of all kinds, I resolved to (re) read the Bible in 366 days. I get an extra day, it's a leap year.

I started with YouVersion's "the One Year® Bible", which is an app on my mobile phone. There are different ways to go about it, but usually you need to read several chapters each day. Suggestions on different plans of reading through the scriptures include chronological, historical, Old and New Testament together, beginning to end or a blended way. There are many plans out there and it is simple to start your journey.

There are many reasons to read through the Bible, too. A guaranteed result will be getting more in tune to God and His will. I believe that by getting into His Word, you will also have your eyes open to knowledge and God's will for your life.

By daily commitment to scripture reading, you fight a natural lack of desire to seek Him. You become more of the person God created you to be.

**"For You look deep within the heart and mind, O righteous God" Psalm 7:9b**

*by Karen Epp*

What is less simple is sticking to the commitment. A commitment to continue once you begin reading may have its challenges. I suggest tackling it with a friend or spouse, a home group or triad. If you fall behind in reading, don't get discouraged or give up. The goal of reading the whole bible within a year isn't the goal. The goal is growing closer to God. As you read, be in prayer and ask God what He is teaching you through the text.

"The only sure rule is to remember that the Bible is indeed God's gift to the church, to equip that church for it to work in the world, and that serious study of it can and should become one of the places where, and the means by which, heaven and earth interlock and God's future purposes arrive in the present". N.T. Wright.

Already, in the first few days of my challenge, I have come to new realizations and understanding. Just like reading the children's stories to Miranda, the stories of the Bible are coming to life in a new and exciting way. And I know it has a happy ending...

We are “upping” our game and getting more “social.” Over the next weeks and months, you will notice our ministries increasing their use of social media as a tool for discipleship and connection. We won’t be spending all our time doing this, but a little.

We’ll post ideas, scriptures, events, questions. Content that gets you thinking about Jesus.

It is one way to connect with you and help you connect with the Saviour. ***Bring on the social...!***



Gracepoint Community Church



@gracepointca



@gracepointca  
@gpyouthca  
@rickbayer