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GRACE TRANSFORMS

by Dr. Sean Michael Lucas, Senior Minister



My dear friends:

What will this new year hold for us? For you and your family? What possibilities await? What changes will come? A new year always brings these sorts of questions. And I have to admit that I find a new kind of energy entering a new year because of these questions, because of the unknown of the future. But we can only have energy in the light of the future if we know that the Sovereign Lord holds our times in his hands (Psalm 31:15) and he rules over the future for his glory and our good.

This month we begin our Wednesday night activities again with new electives; we also restart Four Corners Café on Sunday nights and explore God's work in his world. We will be blessed to have our new

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WEDNESDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES

by Dr. David Jussely, Minister of Teaching and Discipleship

ADULT ELECTIVES

Wednesday night supper and activities will resume on January 9. Below is a list of the adult electives and a reminder of the Children's activities for this winter/spring.

1. "Church History for Armchair Theologians"--Many of us would like to know more about the history of the Christian church, but are unsure where to begin. This twelve-week survey of church history will hit some of the highlights of the church's two thousand year history: from the Arian controversy to the Pelagian controversy; from Charlemagne to the Crusades; from Luther to the Pietists; and some modern day movements. Join Dr. Sean Lucas on a fast-paced, informative tour of church history for armchair theologians!
2. Rod Little will continue leading a study and discussion of Tim Keller's book *The Gospel for Life*. Keller's book and Little's discussion will cover themes like gospel-centered living, dethroning idols as the key to real growth, spiritual growth through community, generous giving, and justice in our society. Come to this elective, and you will broaden your perspectives on the ways the gospel addresses all of life including your heart, your City, your work, your witness and your future.
3. Dr. David Jussely will examine the theme, "Forever," using Paul Tripp's video series and discussion guide. Tripp writes, "This present life is not all there is. There is a forever on the other side of life. It is the product of God's plan and design. And once you believe in forever and live with forever in view, not only will you understand things you have never understood before, but you will live in a radically different way than you did before." Each class will include discussion and application of the material presented in the Forever DVDs. Although we all have sin, we all have great value in God's sight and we are all on a journey of growing and becoming more like Christ. "Forever" will help you on your journey that will one day lead to seeing your Savior "face to face."

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Children's Wednesday night activities will kick off on January 9. There are classes and children's choir for ages 2 years old through 6th grade. Each class has either has Bible study time or Catechism Club for 1 session, and children's choir for a second session. Please note that children's programs begin at 6:15 p.m. with Gathering Time in Currie Hall room 205.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

By Caroline Grubbs, WIC President

How can it be 2013 so soon? That seems to be the reaction for many of us as we seem to be on a treadmill so many days doing all of the things that we deem important. Each new year is an opportunity to start anew with our priorities for each day. Most of us start each new year with a plan - a plan which includes improvement of daily activities. Those who call themselves “professional organizers” suggest that we make a limited list of resolutions for the new year which allows us with less changes on which to concentrate. The Women in the Church focus every year on one resolution which is that “every woman know Christ personally and be committed to extending His Kingdom in her life, home, church, community and throughout the world.” Every project that we undertake each year falls into this resolution, and our leading focus is to know Christ personally.

“Knowing Christ personally” is a commonly used phrase that is often said without understanding its impact and the change in our current daily routine. “Knowing Christ personally” indicates that we want and need to spend time with Him not just sometimes but in every waking minute! How do we do that? By staying in His Word, hearing His Word taught, and reacting to His Word. Reading and studying His Word opens the door to KNOWING him.

The Women in the Church weekly Bible study will begin this month. The study is held on Thursday for one hour weekly for 6 – 10 weeks. The Women in the Church monthly study is taken from Legacy of Faith by Lydia Brownback. The study takes place on the second Tuesday of each month in the morning or on the third Monday of each month in the evening. If you have not been participating in the monthly study, it is never too late to join the study. Lydia Brownback will be conducting a Mini Retreat on Friday evening, March 22, 2013, from 6 – 9 p.m. Mark your calendar and plan to treat yourself to an evening of Bible study. You will learn amazing things about our loving Lord at any and all of these opportunities.

Let all other 2013 resolutions go! Make “knowing Christ personally” be your one and only focus for the coming year. He promises to give you joy and peace!

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH MINISTRY

by Rev. Knox Baird, Minister of Missions and Outreach

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” Galatians 6:9-10

In mid-November, the FPC Hattiesburg sent our Haiti Medical Mission Team to Haiti to serve in a small town about an hour’s drive outside of Port-au-Prince. Our team consisted of two physicians, two dentists, and three support members; we joined two on-site nurses and partnered with “But God Ministries” to minister over a four-day period. Drs. Joel Flynt and Dan Mitchell saw over 500 Haitians over that four-day span. Joel’s son, Warren, served as the pharmacist for the medical clinic. Drs. Leigh Kuyrkendall and Drew Middleton pulled over 350 teeth and also trained Jored (a Haitian translator, who had some previous training from another missionary dentist) and Tony West (a physicians assistant who lives on-site) how to care for people’s teeth. Janie Young, one of our students, patiently took patient information along with blood pressure while preparing them to see one of the doctors.

While there, we visited a near-by village in which “But God Ministries” had been at work. A well had been drilled which provided clean drinking water for the village; a newly completed orphanage awaited its own well before it could accept twelve children; and fifteen new homes that provided livable space for thankful families. All of this was done to show the love of Jesus in a very dark place in the world. Such ministries like “But God Ministries” and our own missions outreaches seek to do good in word and deed because Christ loved us even to the point of death. How can we not respond by taking the Gospel everywhere we can? We are planning another trip to Haiti for November 2013; if you are interested in coming, please contact Knox Baird, or call the church office at 601-268-0303.



Left to right: Janie Young, Joel Flynt, Leigh Kuyrkendall, Knox Baird, Dan Mitchell, Drew Middleton, Tony West and Warren Flynt

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

by Kathy Young, Director of Children's Ministry

Have you ever experienced euphoric and ambitious New Year's resolutions followed by despair and apathy a few short weeks (or perhaps hours) later? I think we often set unrealistic expectations for ourselves in many areas of our life. Sometimes these expectations don't line up with what God wants for us. They are merely expressions of our desires for self-improvement. We do seem to like to rely on ourselves to improve, rather than being humbly and totally reliant on the Lord to direct our paths and lead us in ways of righteousness. Book publishers stay in business with the self-help solutions that fill the shelves and e-reader files. With that being said, there are times when we are to be more diligent about an area of our lives. I know I have a long road to go in the path of sanctification, and many struggles remain in one state or another. I just wonder sometimes why we choose the first of the year to become more resolute to address these struggles. Doesn't it seem that if we are prayerfully aware of a need for obedience that we need to start today? Today is a good time for renewal, but so is any day that we have been made aware of something that needs to be dealt with. Right? I am so very thankful that grace covers all of my shortcomings, that God loves me just the way I am, and that He cares enough about me to show me ways that I need to follow Him more closely. He doesn't want us to be stuck in the cycle of determination and guilt. Our guilt has been removed by Christ's blood. Beating ourselves up when we mess up is not what we were created for. Repenting and relishing in that sweet mercy is a far better way to spend each day. This causes me to think about how our Christian life is made up of small steps. A friend has been using the phrase "putting one foot in front of the other". We won't always feel so determined about the steps. They won't always be giant leaps of faith. We are just made to keep plugging along with readiness to remain in God's will. The Bible tells us that these small steps produce a harvest. As I saw the sanctuary fill with children at the White Gift Service, I was overcome with tearful joy. We have a community of believers who are taking those small steps week after week to bring their children into faith, one class, one worship service, one fellowship at a time. It's not always easy. In fact, it's rarely easy. But, the

Lord uses that obedience and diligence of godly parents, grandparents, and teachers to bring about His kingdom! I think I saw a glimpse of it that precious Sunday night as our youngest members sang praises over the birth of our Savior King. Glory to God in the Highest!

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 (NIV)



4 year old choir



K-1st grade choir



2nd-6th grade choir

SENIOR ADULTS' MINISTRY

by Rev. Norman Bagby, Minister of Visitation and Senior Adults

2013 is upon us. What will the Senior Adults be doing this year? Well, I'm glad you asked! Also I'm thankful for suggestions some of you have made for programs. Let's look at what has been set up for 2013.

In January we will have a representative for Pine Meadow Alzheimer Special Care Center. Many are concerned about how this disease is becoming more prevalent in our society. We have had several of our members at Pine Meadow. It is an excellent special care facility. The representative will share with us about the Alzheimer disease, how to diagnose it, how to care for loved ones with it, and other helpful information. That will be Thursday, January 17, 2013.

In February, we will have back with us Jim McQueen. We were blessed in April, 2012 with his beautiful scenery set to music and his explanations of God's creation, "Love is a Many Splendored Thing." I have asked Jim to do his presentation on "It's Not Over Till It's Over" a comparable uniqueness in the lives of Yogi Berra, Peter Tchaikovsky and Simon Peter. This will be Thursday, February 21, 2013.

March brings us close to tax time. Many are seeking to know what to do with some of their assets. We have received at First Prez several sizable bequests this past year. What a blessing it is for a church in the midst of the economic downturn of our society to receive generous gifts in this way. It not only helps the general budget, but also the Building Fund. We need to know how to set this up. So Rob Jackson, Jr. will be with us on Thursday, March 21, 2013, to share with us about estate planning. Most of us are at that age when we want not only to help our families when we are gone, but to help our church. Mark your calendar to come and hear Rob Jackson, Jr.

We will be in for a special treat in April as a relative of Dick and Lil Thomae will come from the Jackson area to share with us gospel music in concert. His name is Bill Baker and was recommended to me by Lil Thomae. We will take up a special love offering for Mr. Baker.

In May, we will have Bill Penn from Belhaven University. Dr. Penn was with us several years ago, when he spoke about our spiritual gifts and how to recognize them. This time I have asked Dr. Penn to help us see how we can best use on spiritual gifts for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. That will be Thursday, May 16, 2013.

Then in June we will have our youth, along with Ben Griffith, to share with us what the youth do, especially in the summer time. They will share with about the RUF Youth Retreat, about Hope for Hattiesburg, and what will be happening with Soul-to-Soul this year. We will be taking up a special offering to support the youth programs of our church. That will be on Thursday, June 20, 2013.

Mark these dates on your calendar. We will continue to have dominoes at 10:00 a.m. each morning before the Senior Adult Luncheons, as well as playing dominoes on the first Thursday of each month. It is amazing how many come and enjoy the fellowship with other members of First Prez, as well as visitors who come from time to time.

There is one trip planned at this time. That will be to the Festival of Flowers at Providence Hospital in Mobile on Saturday, March 23, 2013. We have enjoyed this trip in the past. Put this on your calendar for 2013. If there are other trips that you would like to take, let me know, and help me get information for them.

Thanks for your prayers, support and encouragement for the Senior Adult Ministry.



DISCIPLESHIP

by Dr. David Jussely, Minister of Teaching and Discipleship

GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD

There is no better way to begin a New Year than to own up to the fact that you are a needy person. The prayer that Jesus gave us to use helps us to confess our neediness for His grace.

In the last three petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the possessive adjective changes from "Your" to "our." We turn from

God's affairs to ours. After praying for God's glory, we now express our humble dependence on His grace. Even though our personal needs are placed in a secondary place, they have not been eliminated.

Some of the early church fathers like Tertillian and Augustine thought that Jesus did not intend for our request to be for literal bread, but for the invisible bread of the Word of God or the sacramental bread of the Lord's Supper. The Protestant Reformers were more down to earth and correct in their interpretation of this petition. Calvin called their allegorizing "extremely absurd", and Luther wrote that bread was a symbol for "everything necessary for the preservation of this life, like food, a healthy body, good weather, house, wife, children, good government and peace." The Shorter Catechism says that this petition teaches us to pray "that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy His blessing with them."

Although most of us must work to earn a living, we acknowledge our ultimate dependence on God, who normally uses human means through which He fulfills His purposes. Nevertheless, Jesus wants His disciples to be conscious of day-to-day dependence. The Greek phrase "our daily bread" can also be translated "for the current day." It is a prayer for the immediate future. We are to live one day at a time. One of the most valuable habits to cultivate in 2013 is to daily acknowledge your neediness! Re-read what Martin Luther wrote at the end of the previous paragraph.

So, "HAPPY NEW NEW YEAR", dependent disciples of Messiah Jesus, The Lord.

"My times are in thy hand; why should I doubt or fear?
My Father's hand will never cause His child a needless tear.

My times are in thy hand, Jesus the Crucified;
those hands my cruel sins had pierced are now my guard and guide."

CHURCH HISTORY

by Mrs. Mary Wicht, WIC Historian

UNION CHURCH PRESBYTERIAN—PCA

Union Church, Mississippi

(Third oldest PCA church in Grace Presbytery)

Established in 1817

PART TWO (an update from the February 2011 article)
More information has come to light on one of the oldest churches in the Old Southwest.



Union Church Presbyterian Church (Present building built in 1854)

GRIERSON'S RAID (April 28, 1863)

Grierson's Raid was a Union Calvary raid during the War Between the States. The raid started in LaGrange, TN on April 17th. Their main goal was to destroy the Southern Railroad's Meridian - Vicksburg line at Newton Station in central Mississippi. After destruction of the rail line, Colonel Grierson was to return to Union lines. He actually had planned to go to Port Gibson to help General Grant with the Vicksburg Campaign, which was the point of the raid.

The next morning, Union spies had determined there was a large Confederate force about 2 miles west of the small town of Union Church near Hurricane Creek, waiting to ambush the Union troops. Col. Grierson then decided to go back a short way east to the N.O. and Jackson Railroad and then move south away from pursuing Rebel forces. Consequently, Union Church Presbyterian, the town of Union Church and the area around were not burned or destroyed by Union troops.

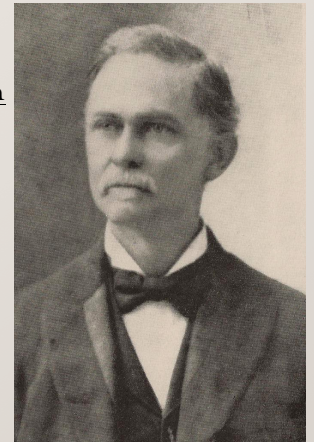
Col. Grierson had planned to meet up with General Grant near the small town of Grand Gulf. (Which is no longer there). It is believed that their meeting may have

taken place, at some point, inside of the Union Church Presbyterian Church.

This church building is still in use for worship with Dr. Joseph Martin, from Belhaven University, as Stated Supply Pastor.

REV. C. W. GRAFTON, D.D. LL.D.

Excerpts have been taken from the book, Life and Thought of a Country Preacher, C.W. Grafton by Allen Cabaniss, Ph.D.; and from the family history of Sam Duncan and his Mother, Marjorie, both FPC members. Rev. Grafton was the great uncle of Marjorie Duncan.



Rev. C. W. Grafton

Cornelius Washington (C.W.) Grafton was born December 21, 1846. He attended "Ole Miss" and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1868 with highest honors. He attended Columbia Theological Seminary in South Carolina which greatly influenced his thinking and life. His son has said that Rev. Grafton's Bibles were quite worn and his most intimate everyday thoughts and words were deeply Biblical. Sometime during his seminary days he was a groomsman at the wedding of Woodrow Wilson's sister.

In the summer of 1872, he supplied the Union Church pulpit and became a popular preacher. He continued to serve and preach at the Union Church Presbyterian Church for 61 years. When he died in 1934, the Daily Clarion Ledger paper in Jackson carried as its first page editorial with this heading,— "Mississippi's Greatest Minister Goes to His Reward." An era in the history of religion in Mississippi had come to a close with Rev. C. W. Grafton's passing.



Historical Marker Located in front of Union Church Presbyterian Church



2012 Youth White Horse Retreat



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GRACE TRANSFORMS *continued from page 1*

elders and deacons ordained and installed and our officers retreat with Dr. Jimmy Agan from Covenant Theological Seminary. And at the end of the month, many of us men will make the journey up to Jackson for the annual Mid-South Men's Rally; on Friday, January 25, 2013, Dr. Wilson Benton will be preaching that night.

That's the part of the future we know about. But there are other things that we do not know—but we know the God who knows the future: and that's enough for us!

In the grip of God's grace,
Sean