

THE VOICE NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER - PASTOR JONATHAN EDWARDS



Greetings, brothers and sisters!

How have your disciple-making efforts gone thus far? Maybe it's gone well - or maybe you're frustrated. One truth we can be assured of is that our enemy, Satan, doesn't want us to have success at this important ministry. He would do anything he can to prevent us or discourage us from trying to encourage others to be more like Jesus.

Therefore, I'd like to ask, "What are some challenges we face, and what to do about them?"

First, we could be challenged by the fact that we don't have anyone to disciple. We may have a heart to encourage someone or train someone, but there isn't anyone available. In this case, I would suggest you ask yourself, "Where have I looked for a disciple?" If there isn't anyone at your church (probably unlikely), perhaps you should redouble your efforts at evangelism and see if God would provide a disciple through leading one to Christ.

A second challenge we face is that it is difficult to make time to spend with other people. Due to the reality of the fast-paced life we've chosen to live, making time to invest in others is a critical component of discipling. In order to do so, we must be willing to say "NO" to things that are good or even better, in order to prioritize the best things. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:15-16 that we need to walk as those who are wise, "making the most of our time, for the days are evil." Each of us must consider that we have just a very short time here on this earth and after that, we face eternity. There are two things we can't do in heaven: evangelize and disciple others. Because of this fact, what must we be willing to give up, so that we're using the few moments of our time in the ways that will impact eternity the most?

Finally, we might be afraid to disciple someone else because we're ashamed of our own walk (or lack thereof) with the Lord. When you begin a discipling relationship, you become vulnerable to others and you must reveal certain things about yourself that are often unpleasant: hidden sins, lack of prayer life and Bible reading, areas of continual struggle. Too often we want to save face and make the world (both believers and unbelievers) think we have everything together. We have a hidden pride that desires praise and adoration for how "good" we are and thus, we are unwilling to grow close with someone because we don't want them to see our warts. Brothers and sisters, this is not how it is to be amongst believers. Rather than hide our weaknesses, we ought to glory in them, for "[God's] power is perfected in weakness." Examining our weaknesses is humbling, but good for us, for it brings about repentance, a resolve to be transformed by God, and a recognition that all glory must go to Him who saved us and is perfecting us. Be open and honest and expose yourself to another; for a "chord of three strands is not easily broken." You both will grow together towards Christlikeness, to the glory and praise of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

CONFERENCE 2020

June 26 - July 1, 2020
THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL
5700 28th St., SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546
1-877-270-1393
616-957-1770

Mention Conservative Grace Brethren Churches, International or CGBCI for the group discount!

PASTORS' AND MISSIONARY WIVES AND WIDOWS' LUNCHEON

Hello Women of the Fellowship!

Please save the date for Sunday, June 28, 2020 from 12:30 - 2:30pm. At 2020 National Conference, we are opening up the "Pastors' and Missionary Wives and Widows' Luncheon" to all post-high woman of the Fellowship. This year's luncheon theme will be "Discipling One Another as Women". More details will be coming in the next couple of months.

Thank you!

Meredith Edwards and Joanne Simpson

NEWS FROM FELLOWSHIP CHURCHES AND OTHER MINISTRIES

ORRVILLE, OH GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH – PASTOR JOSH STEINER

Live-Stream Class on Salvation and the Christian Life (3 credit hours)

The class will be held Saturday mornings from 8:30 -10:30am (EST) from February 22, 2020 to May 16, 2020 at the Orrville Grace Brethren Church building, and can be watched live over the internet. This course will be taught by Pastor Ike. This is the fourth of 6 theology courses covering the major theological topics of the Bible in a systematic fashion. This course focuses on the biblical spectrum of terminology related to salvation such as election, predestination, calling, belief, faith, repentance, justification, sanctification, and how all these fit together in the plan of God for our spiritual growth and service to the Lord. A student is not required to have had Hebrew or Greek for this course, so it is available to anyone who would like to participate; either for credit or audit (\$50 to audit; \$150 to take for credit). Those taking it for credit will have collateral reading assigned and also will take a mid-term and final exam for the course grade. If you are interested in taking this course, please register with Pastor Joshua Steiner by February 10, 2020, in order to obtain the required course materials on time for the first class. Contact Pastor Josh Steiner at: strivingforphilippians314@gmail.com or by calling (330) 683-3526.

NEW TROY, MI GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH - PASTOR BOB MENSINGER

God is continuing to bless here at New Troy!

This was a very busy month. Pastor Bob has made several trips to the hospital to visit Pastor Russell Panico, who had blocked arteries in his legs and low sodium. The doctors were able to do the "balloon procedure" to open the artery in his left leg and he is home and doing much better now. Brother Harold Mensinger, and brother Cecil Stice were both battling pneumonia but are doing much better now.

Pastor Bob led in the Christmas Carol singing at the Community Center December 6, and the response from those in attendance was very positive. The Christmas Program for the evening of December 22, 2019, went very well and there was a good turn-out for the event. The Ladies Ministry made five fruit baskets for needy families in our area. The response from this ministry was very positive – thank you ladies!

We had to cancel our services for January 12, 2020 due to inclement weather but hopefully this won't happen too often!

Praise the Lord!

PERU, INDIANA GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH - PASTOR DAVE JODRY

The Peru Grace Brethren Church rejoices in announcing that God has blessed us with the addition of Pastor Jordan Bradley to our pastoral staff as an Associate Pastor. Pastor Jordan official began his ministry with us January 5, 2020.

NATIONAL EVANGELISTIC TEAM – NET '19 HIGHLIGHTS and NET '20 NEWS

We were glad for all of the team members' desire to work together for the outreach effort last summer. This month you can read comments from five of them as they think back over our time together on NET '19 and what was especially significant in their lives. The contributing team member's name follows the submitted recollection.

"My highlight from the trip was going door to door and the fellowship that we had as a team. Door to door caused me to get out of my comfort zone, and caused me to put trust in other team members, and in God. I realized I did not have to try to do it all alone. Getting to know team members I was placed with was a great experience. The training for door to door showed me different ways to share my faith and salvation with others. I also enjoyed the fellowship that the team had as we served together". - **ELLA PEARSON**

"One of my highlights happened at the first nursing home we visited. The residents there seemed to be quite fragile. Just to be there seemed to encourage them. There were a couple people that I could not understand when they tried to talk to me. They did not seem to understand me either. However, they appeared to find comfort in us being there with them. I believe most of them enjoyed our program and that was encouraging to me". - **SIMON MACALLISTER**

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time on NET! A few highlights for me would be our split devotions, which really spoke to me, going to the nursing homes, and the times we got to be all together growing closer as a team". - **DARIA MACALLISTER**

"I thought singing the National Anthem at the Greenville Reds game was really cool. I wasn't really nervous about it since the whole team was singing it together. We also had a captive audience to pass out fliers to after we sang. I personally didn't have any significant conversations at the ball game but some team members did, and if I were to do it again I would try to get into deeper discussions with the fans there.

I thought the John 9 skit went really well, it was a lot of fun to dress up, and perform that. I think the audiences appreciated the way we brought that Bible story to life. I also liked the way the skit transitioned into Johnathan's impersonation.

Other notable highlights for me were: campfire time, and cabin devotions at Camp Albryoca, deep conversations with the other guys during car rides, and going canvassing. Going canvassing was challenging but it was easier than I expected". - **GABRIEL MILLER**

One of my highlights was a conversation I had with one of the residents at a nursing home we visited. She had a great testimony about how God had saved her from her former life. I was also blessed to be able to pray with her and for her grandchildren who are not saved. - **CHRISTINA ELLIOTT**

Next month, Lord willing, we will be able to share the names of the NET '20 members and a few more details of what will be happening on this year's trip.

If you have questions about the ministry of NET, please contact PASTOR DEL AND GRACE MILLER at: at Orrville Grace Brethren Church, 2200 Paradise Rd. Orrville, OH 44667, Phone: (330) 683-3526 or: pastordelmiller@gmail.com

HOME MISSIONS UPDATE – JANUARY 14, 2020

REVITALIZE VERMONT - PASTOR BRYAN MALEY

IRASBURG and LAMOILLE VALLEY GRACE BRETHERN CHURCH

Ephesians 3:20-21 "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen".

The work in our churches in Vermont is going on! The holidays and the winter months present challenges for getting out, and meeting new people for sure. Christmas Eve presented Pastor Bryan with an opportunity to see God work beyond what he could have possibly imagined. Pastor Bryan, with the assistance of Aubrey and Cameron, did a lot of work to prepare their barn for something special. Maybe something that had never been done in that barn before! They created a Nativity Scene complete with animals, and invited people to come. There's no heat, no frills or technology, just the promise of a simple service to remember the real meaning of Christmas.

There was a chill in the air. People were touching, and petting the animals as they moved about making their familiar noises. Add to that the smells of the hay, the grain, the old wood, the earth, and smoke from distant fires burning. All these things worked together to create in the minds and hearts of those in attendance what it might have been like to be near that feeding trough where God's gift to the world was presented.

There was also a present wrapped in pretty paper with a light fixed upon it representing the glitz and glamour the world offers in stark contrast to the dusty old manger. The Lord created a simple, powerful setting for Pastor Bryan to offer a message from the Word of the eternal and life changing difference between the things that are temporal, and the things that are eternal.

To the surprise of many thirty-seven people came to the big old dusty barn! Of that thirty-seven there were six people they had never met before!! Where did these six visitors come from?? Here's the amazing part of the story ... not from the pastors or the regular attenders. They all came as a result of those who were being disciplined, they put the word out! It reminds me of the response of the shepherds who proclaimed all they had seen and heard. They invited people from their circle of contacts that the regular church folks probably didn't know. Isn't that wonderful? Six fresh souls that were seemingly beyond the church's reach were brought to a barn to hear the story of Jesus and the gospel! Isn't that the goal of reaching people one by one, and discipleship? This is just one fitting and timely story of things happening in Vermont. Please continue to pray for the ministry!

The Maleys continue to work through the black mold problem in their house. For the most part the mold is eradicated. Now they are working to put things back together as they have the funds to do so. They are praising the Lord for those who were moved to send gifts, and offer prayers concerning this situation. \$3,000 was sent to help with the project that will cost them over \$20,000 which was not in the budget.

It's not too late to give! If you would like to help, please send your gift to: GRACE BRETHERN CHURCH, REVITALIZE VERMONT, P.O. Box 217, Grimes, IA 50111. Mark it: "EMERGENCY NEED"

The Revitalize Vermont work has a support level of 68%, so there is opportunity to pray, and purpose to invest in the Lord's work here in Irasburg and Lamoille Valley. Pastor Bryan reports that he is \$3,000 short for the first quarter already.

Continue to pray for opportunities to CONNECT, GROW and SERVE. More news to come!

FOREIGN MISSIONS

P. N. G. TEAM #1 - CRAIG AND SARA NOYES and Team#2 - JOSH AND AUTUMN MILLER

By the time everyone reads this Josh and Autumn Miller should be in PNG with us! We're so happy to be with them again!

Our family has recently moved back into Madang City and we have several things going on. I, (Craig) will be running the office, the logistics for the organization, and helping in this work until the summer when the family coming long-term arrives. I will also be overseeing the orientation and Tok Pisin language learning that Josh and Autumn will be doing. It is mostly independent learning, using the tools, and skills they acquired in training to figure out the language. But, it is very helpful to have someone to check in with regularly. Hopefully I can provide direction for investigation and encouragement. That sometimes, it's just hard, and it doesn't mean they are doing anything wrong.

The last big "work thing" I'll be involved in is getting things organized to start doing tribal surveys this summer, and collecting materials for our house we'll be building in the bush. I'll also start building some of our furniture that we'll be building in the bush. Of course, the ministry of shepherding my family is always going on. I've been challenged recently to be more proactive in thinking critically, and strategically, in shepherding my wife and kids. There are areas of life where it's "easy" to react to problems when they come up rather than train, and teach proactively to avoid the things we see coming down the road. This has been a good season of reflection, and working to love them better.

It's both exciting and intimidating when thinking about all the things that are coming up this year. We are confident we are where God wants us to be. What more can you ask for?

Please be praying for JOSH AND AUTUMN to orient well to the field. Also, please pray for our families that we will keep growing in our walks with Him, trust Him for the results, and to open doors in this ministry.



We love to hear from you! Send us an email: JoshAndAutumnMiller@gmail.com and let us know what you're curious about or if you have a question (or two) that we could answer in a future blog post or email.

The "Voice Newsletter" is the communication tool of the Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International; and edited by: Pastors Ike Graham, Les Vnasdale, and Christopher Knight

REGARDING NEWS ARTICLES AND/OR MAILING UPDATES

Please forward all info to: Pam O'Kinsky at okinskys@comcast.net

Snail mail to: 135 Wildcat Road, Friedens PA 15541

**** Articles are requested to be received by the 15th of the month **
to be included in the next issue of the Voice Newsletter**

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!