

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

THE FULL EXTENT OF LOVE

By Pastor Brian De Jong

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

As Jesus prepared to finish his earthly ministry, He was anxious for His closest disciples to know of His deep love for them. All along through those three years, He had loved them. He had loved them in their best moments, and at their worst times.

Now, as the cross loomed, He intended to demonstrate the full extent of His love.

This idea is all the more amazing when you think about the infinite capacity that our Lord Jesus had for love. Being “infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth,” He could love to an infinite extent. No created being in the entire universe could come anywhere near the Son of God in His capacity to love.

Not only did He possess an infinite capacity to love, but He had the perfect experience of eternal love enjoyed within the Trinity. His Father loved Him, and He loved His Father. The Spirit loved the Son, and the Son loved the Spirit. This had gone on from eternity past in the fullness of true love.

Sometimes we encounter people who find it hard to love others because they’ve never enjoyed the love of anyone. They cannot conceive of what love looks like since they’ve never seen it dis-

played toward them. Jesus had seen constant and perfect love from the other members of the Trinity, and so He knew it completely. He had a true ability to love to the uttermost.

When we look at human relationships, we see that even the best of them is mixed and mingled with sin. All men and women are sinners, so their fallen condition taints their attempts to express love. But Jesus was sinless, and His love was unalloyed by iniquity.

One more consideration must be pondered briefly – His determination to love. How often we want to show love, but we grow tired, or are distracted, or get sidetracked on other good pursuits. Our good intentions often remain just that – intentions. But when Jesus decided to show the full extent of His love, there was nothing in heaven, on earth, or in hell that could or would hold him back from accomplishing this holy purpose.

So how did Jesus manifest the full extent of his love? In the context of John 13, it might seem that his act of washing the disciples’ feet fulfilled His determination. But there was something far more significant than the foot washing. Later that same evening Jesus told the twelve, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

The “full extent of His love” can only be truly seen in Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. By undergoing what Carson calls “crucifixion - the death of the damned”, Jesus suffered all of God’s...

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April 2014

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A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 9, Sections 6-7

by Richard Steele

SECTION VI

Grace & Strength in Christ to help against them.

The sixth encouragement under the burden of distractions is, that there is grace and strength in Jesus Christ to help you against these your distractions.

Without him we can do nothing to purpose; but that is a sweet word, and a true, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. There is a stock in Christ's hand for such needy souls as you. You find your grace insufficient for you, but then his grace is sufficient. Rest then on his power and pity, and derive thence divine strength, to help your human weakness. How can that little cistern be empty, that lies with a conduit to the ocean? How can that wife be poor, whose husband is a prince? How can that body languish whose head hath plenty of spirits, and power to convey them? Why, he was anointed with the oil of grace above his fellows, but it was for his fellows. He was rich for the poor's sake; he was strong for the weak's sake. "Be thou therefore strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 2:1. Your wound is not incurable; at this door others have succeeded, and so may you. Wrestle not therefore against these temptations only in your own strength. The devil is too strong for you alone, and the heart too deceitful. "Not I, but the grace of God with me," said Paul himself. If habitual grace be too weak for them, auxiliary grace is strong. Money in my friend's purse, especially in my father's, is as good as in my own, especially when it is there for me. There never was seen a Lazarus dying at this rich man's door for want. If there be any thing in heaven to please you that fear him, you shall not go without it.

SECTION VII

There will be no distractions in heaven.

The seventh encouragement is, that in heaven you will be perfectly rid of your distractions. There his servants serve him without wanderings. Here you would serve him, there you shall serve him. Here we have the world to cumber and draw us off, there will be no other world but heaven. Here the devil stands at our right hand to resist us, there he shall never come, nor once peep among the saints above. Here our flesh is continually suggesting evil motions, or crying, "Master,

spare thyself;" but flesh and blood shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor trouble us there. Here the crowding of friends distracts us in public, and the crying of children distracts us in private, but supreme holiness will be all the enjoyment in heaven, and no cries were ever heard above. Here one untuneable voice distracts us in the psalm; but there will be a perpetual unison, and the eternal hallelujah shall be sung without discord. Here this or that business calls us away, invades us in the middle and curtails us at the end; but there is no other business to go to, no company to fetch you out, nothing that can give you such content, no nor any content out of that blessed employment. All the outward senses, and all the inward faculties, will be so wholly taken up with the vision and fruition of the ever-blessed Trinity, that there will not be room for one passing thought or glance from that fair object to all eternity. run apace, and you will be shortly there, dispatch your work with all the speed you can, fly with a holy haste through all worldly business, cast anchor at no worldly comfort till you discover land, till your work be done, and your place in heaven be ready for you. And in the interim be not discouraged at your roving, for you are not yet in heaven. Perfection is reward as well as duty, and so is our aim here but our attainment there. And let that happy state be a copy by which you write your present duties. Think sometimes when you are dull and roving, you saw a casement open into heaven, and there beheld those celestial sacrifices, and their divine employment; and think withal, shortly shall I be among them, and do I pray here as I would sing yonder? doth this impertinent frame accord with yonder most blessed frame? "Why art thou cast down, my soul? I shall yet praise him, -who is the help of my countenance, and my God." And this may be for encouragement to poor souls that are fainting under the burden of their distractions.

And now at last we see the shore, and so shall only lay on some binding sheaves, and drive away; and that will be by noting some inferences from this subject, which is the tenth and last point to be handled.

Italian Night

The Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary will again be serving their Italian Night dinner at the First Reformed Church in Cedar Grove on Tuesday, April 22nd from 4:30-7:00 p.m. Please mark your calendars for this fun and delicious event.



Session Digest

by Pastor Brian De Jong

In an effort to improve communication, the Session will be providing a brief “digest” of important actions taken at recent Session meetings. Your Session met on Tuesday, March 18. All of the active elders were present. In addition to our normal review and oversight of the congregation, three important actions were taken:

Bob Boss was appointed as commissioner for the Spring Presbytery meeting March 21, 2014 in Joliet IL. Jim Onnink was appointed as the alternate.

After discussion at our meeting with Ryan and Kim Gartman, a motion was approved to transfer their family's membership to Bethel OPC in Oostburg.

Mr. Ethan Ver Velde had contacted the Session requesting to transfer of his membership to Orland Park CRC, Orland Park IL. Mr. Ver Velde informed the session of Grace OPC on March 10, 2014, that he had been received by Orland Park CRC. The session

removed his name from the membership roll of Grace OPC by motion and informed him of our actions.

One previous action might also be of interest: in February, the Session transferred the membership of Lisa Berenschot to Grace PCA in Seattle, Washington, at her request. Lisa has been attending Grace PCA and continues to grow in her faith, so the Session was glad to see her affiliating with this congregation of our sister denomination.



April Birthdays



Night of Praise

**NIGHT OF PRAISE—April 12, 2014
at Oostburg Christian School**

If you would like to come and not host a table, call Nancy DeJong ... or call Oostburg Christian School.

Save the date for this wonderful evening celebrating Christian education. Would you be willing to be a hostess? Please contact Nancy DeJong ... It's pretty easy—it will mean you invite six or seven other friends for a great evening.

You will be able to:

- eat some great food (Punch- 5:30 & Dinner-6:00)
- hear a great speaker (Dave Veldhorst)
- hear some great music (The Otte Family)
- and support a great cause.





Grace OPC

April 2014

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	3	4 Worldview Movie Night, 7:00 p.m.	5
6	7 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	8 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	9 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	10	11	12
13 Missions Sunday	14 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i>	15	16 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	17	18	19
20	21 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	22	23 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	24	25	26
27 Lord's Supper, p.m.	28 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i>	29	30 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.			

A Providential Trip

by Pastor Brian De Jong

Early on the morning of Monday, March 10, I loaded my family in the Yukon and headed out for Greenville, South Carolina. For the first time in several years, the Greenville Seminary Spring Theology Conference did not conflict with our Presbytery meeting. Having attended these events in the past, and profited from them, we were eager to return.

The first day was all driving. We ended our drive in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. This is just beyond Knoxville, and is close to the entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. After supper at Cracker Barrel, we had to choose between the Elvis Museum, the “As-Seen-On-TV” stores, and bed. We chose to sleep!

Early Tuesday we were off to Greenville, traveling through the National Park. Breathtaking beauty greeted us, especially at the very top of the park. Down the other side, we came through Asheville, NC on our way into the north-western corner of South Carolina.

It was about 30 miles from Greenville that providence struck. Laying on the road was a piece of flat metal. I saw it too late to avoid hitting it with my driver’s side tires. I thought to myself, “I hope that didn’t puncture a tire.” Within several miles, I realized it had punctured the front tire. Pulling over to the side, we quickly put on the spare and made our way to the nearest Walmart Tire Lube Express. In under an hour we had a new tire (quite a souvenir of our trip!) and were on our way to the conference. We gulped down some lunch and slipped into our seats during the opening announcements.

The first speaker was Dr. James McGoldrick. He is a faculty member at the seminary, and a recognized expert on John Calvin. Dr.

McGoldrick’s topic was “Christian vocations and the doctrine of Providence.” He did a survey of Christian thought on the idea of “callings,” showing how the medieval Roman Catholic church restricted callings to the clergy. The Reformers revived the notion that all lawful vocations can be callings. The shoemaker is called by God as surely as the pastor or missionary is called. This was a very practical talk with lots of encouragement to view your vocation as God’s call on your life – your special place in God’s kingdom.

*“It was about
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Next came Dr. Benjamin Shaw to tackle a difficult topic – God’s Providence and the problem of evil. If God has “foreordained whatsoever comes to pass,” then how and why do evil things happen in this world? How can we reconcile evil with God’s sovereign governance of the world?

Dr. Shaw dealt with this puzzle under three headings: the issue of truth, the issue of glory, and the issue of beauty. He argued that God is not the author of sin in the sense that He causes or forces men to commit evil deeds. He

also pointed out how God’s glory is not dimmed by evil, but rather enhanced by the contrast with evil. Lastly he spoke about the “beauty of evil” in that it is the backdrop for the sacrificial work of Christ on the cross. Evil points up the sovereign grace and goodness of our God and the salvation He provides.

Tuesday evening our family had supper with ..., so we did not hear Dr. Joel Beeke’s talk on the “Definition and Beauty of Providence.” We did, however, listen to it on our way home thanks to Sermonaudio. All of the conference presentations are now posted at www.sermonaudio.com Search for “GPTS Spring Conference 2014” and it should pop up. Dr. Beeke used several questions and answers

Trip Concluded...

from the Heidelberg Catechism for the basis of his definition of Providence.

Wednesday morning featured Dr. Joey Pipa, President of Greenville Seminary. His topic was the connection between God's Providence and human responsibility. Specifically he focused on the idea of "concurrency" between God's acts and man's choices. The Biblical example of Joseph was used. As Joseph told his brothers, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." Sometimes this is described as "God using sin sinlessly." He gave a Biblical definition of concurrency, always protecting God's integrity. God is not the author of sin, yet He ordains and uses it for His own glory and for the accomplishment of His purposes. He finished his talk with a brief case study of Job's experience in Job 1-2.

Wednesday also saw Dr. Derek Thomas give probably the most difficult lecture of the whole conference. He had to introduce us to something called "Middle Knowledge." He then critiqued it and refuted some of its main tenets.

According to some, God not only knows what could possibly happen, and what will happen, but what might happen if autonomous human beings make specific and particular choices. In other words, He knows every potentiality of every scenario that could conceivably take place.

While this might sound true on the surface, the problem lies in the assumption that human beings are autonomous in their choices and can make decisions apart from the will or control of God. This view is held in a mild form by Arminian theologians, and in an extreme form by the advocates of "Openness of God" theology. According to these radical advocates, God can't and doesn't know what will happen tomorrow because He can't predict or control man's actions or choices. So God doesn't know who will be in heaven, according to Openness of God theologians.

The Achilles heel of Middle Knowledge, Arminianism and Openness of God viewpoints is

the shared assumption that man is an entirely free agent outside of or beyond God's control. While the proponents of Middle Knowledge claim to be protecting God's sovereignty, they actually compromise His sovereignty by assuming man is autonomous.

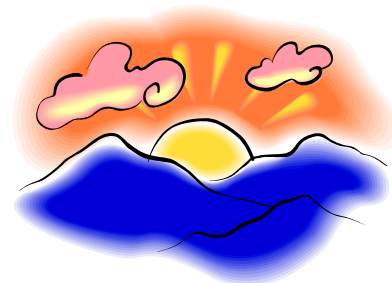
More down-to-earth was Pastor Ben Miller. He spoke about the intersection of God's providence and human suffering. He surveyed the book of Ecclesiastes to show the realism of the Scriptures in relation to human sorrow and pain.

Dinner Wednesday night was at the Seminary. ... After dinner we returned to the church for Dr. Pipa's talk on Providence vs. Fatalism.

Thursday morning wrapped up the conference with another heavy-duty talk on the problem of evil, and the difficulties of Middle Knowledge by Dr. James Anderson of RTS-Charlotte. Dr. Beeke's talk on the Heidelberg Catechism concluded the conference on a pastoral note of encouragement.

Leaving Greenville, we traveled through Atlanta to Huntsville, Alabama to stay with friends overnight. Friday we journeyed to Southern Illinois to see DeLou's family, and by Saturday we were home again.

All-in-all, it was a refreshing and stimulating trip. The Lord showed Himself faithful, as always. New insights were gained on the doctrine of Providence, and we enjoyed much good fellowship along the way.



Comments on Finance

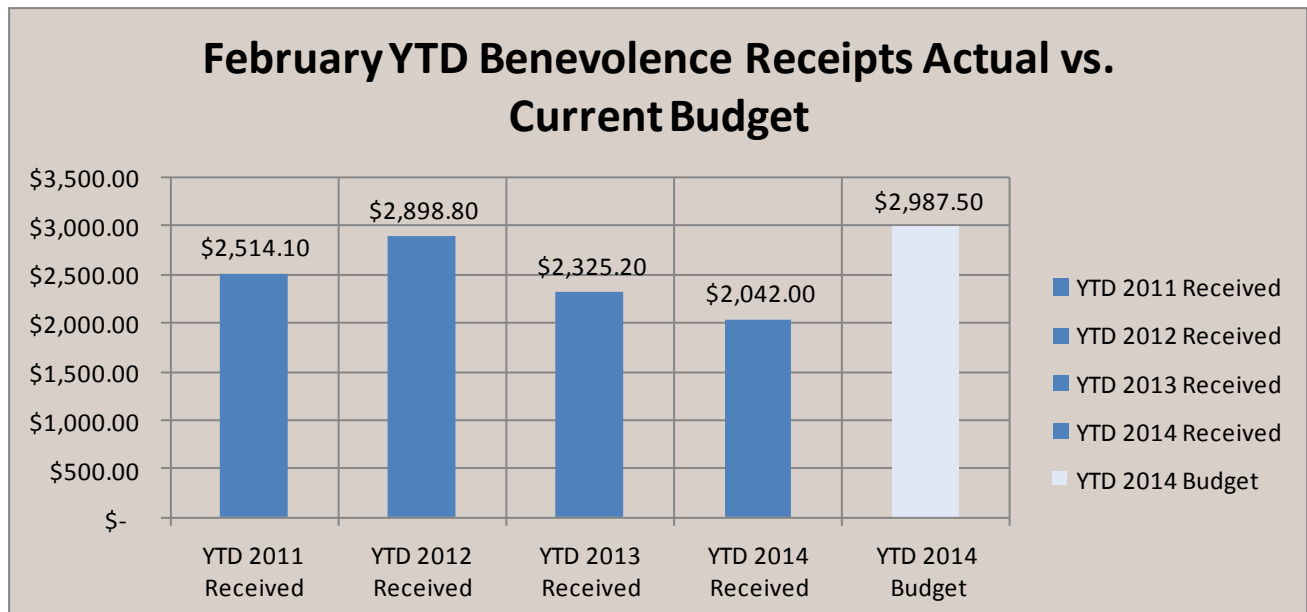
by Joel Moody

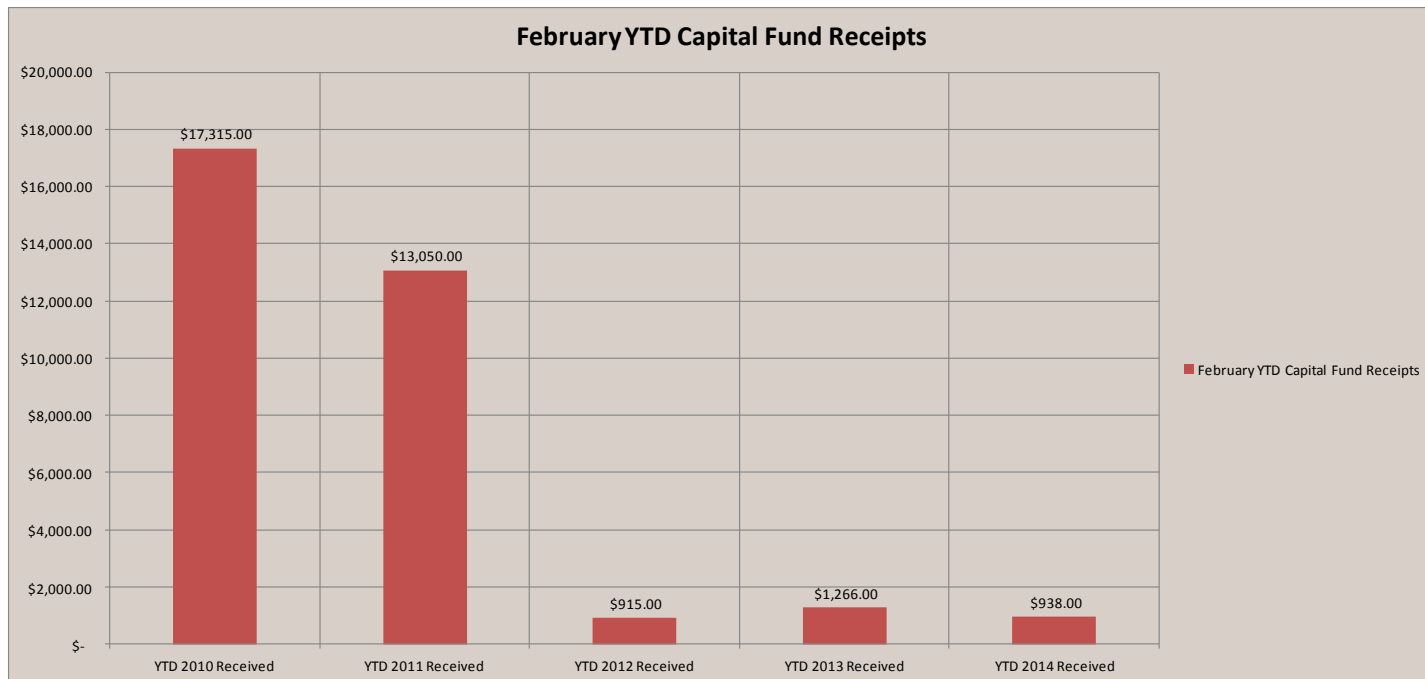
General Fund receipts for February totaled \$12,584.03 as compared to the budget of \$13,005.37, while General Fund disbursements for February totaled \$28,082.56. February year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$23,718.58 as compared to the budget of \$13,005.37 (a shortfall of \$2,292.18), while February year to date disbursements of \$28,082.56 were \$2,071.82 below budget. Through the end of February, the General Fund has decreased by \$4,347.48. The decrease in the General Fund was due to lower than budgeted receipts and higher disbursements in roughly equal proportion. Year to date General Fund receipts for February were 1.6% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 1.4% below the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for February totaled \$1,065.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$428.75). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through February totaled \$2,042.00 and were below budget by \$945.50. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During February, \$500.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach (WVO) for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and \$200.00 was sent to the

Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee (CHEX). During April, \$2,625.00 will be disbursed for the Midwest Hub-Spokes program in support of the work of ..

February Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$938.00. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Since some capital needs are quite substantial in nature, resources to finance and pay for these projects can take years to pay for them. Even though capital needs may not be large in the current year, we should wisely allocate our giving not only to current needs, but also to these future needs as well.





Save the date!

Women's Conference at
New Hope OPC, Green Bay
April 25 & 26, 2014
(Friday evening & Saturday)

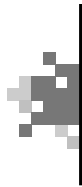
Speaker will be Kathleen Nielson,
author of the *Living Word* Bible Studies.
for more information, check at www.nhopc.org



submitted by Carla De Master

Notes Concluded...

THANK YOU



by Carla De Master

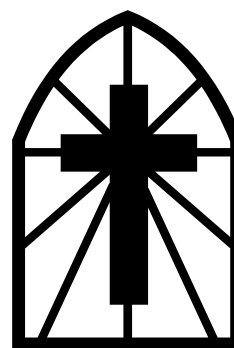


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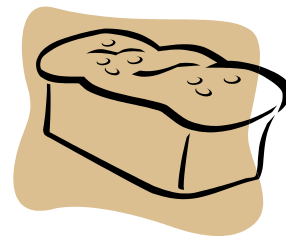
...wrath and curse due to us for our sin. He drank the cup down to its last drop. All the hell deserved by every one of God's elect from all ages was concentrated into that suffering.

He was so utterly forsaken and thoroughly crushed that He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast THOU forsaken me?" So he grappled hand to hand with the hosts of hell as He hung between heaven and earth. All this was done only for the love of His heart for undeserving, worthless, rebellious sinners like you and like me.

This is the full extent of His love – in finishing the work of redemption and purchasing us for God. So



Zucchini Bread



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”

- ★ 3 eggs
- ★ 2 c. sugar
- ★ 1 c. oil
- ★ 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- ★ 2 c. peeled, coarsely grated, loosely packed zucchini
- ★ 2 c. flour
- ★ 1 tsp. salt
- ★ 1 tsp. baking soda
- ★ 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- ★ 1 Tbsp. cinnamon
- ★ 1 tsp. nutmeg
- ★ 1/4 tsp. cloves
- ★ 1 c. chopped nuts (optional)
- ★ 1/2 c. raisins (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat eggs until frothy, add sugar, oil and vanilla. Beat until thick. Stir in zucchini. Sift together dry ingredients and add to zucchini mixture, mix well. Stir in nuts and raisins. Pour into 2 greased and lightly floured 9 x 5 x 3 inch bread pans. Bake 1 hour or until done.

Shary De Troye

Note: This recipe is from my mother-in-law, Liz. It is a family favorite! We can enjoy it year-round by grating zucchini in the summer/fall and freezing it in zip-lock bags for later use.



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

*“Who is even at the right hand of God.”
(Romans 8:34)*

He who was once despised and rejected of men, now occupies the honourable position of a beloved and honoured Son. The right hand of God is *the place of majesty and favour*. Our Lord Jesus is his people’s representative. When he died for them, they had rest; he rose again for them, they had liberty; when he sat down at his Father’s right hand, they had favour, and honour, and dignity. The raising and elevation of Christ is the elevation, the acceptance, and enshrinement, the glorifying of all his people, for he is their head and representative. This sitting at the right hand of God, then, is to be viewed as the acceptance of the person of the Surety, the reception of the Representative, and therefore, the acceptance of *our* souls. O saint, see in this thy sure freedom from condemnation. “Who is he that condemneth?” Who shall condemn the men who are in Jesus at the right hand of God?

The right hand is *the place of power*. Christ at the right hand of God hath all power in heaven and in earth. Who shall fight against the people who have such power vested in their Captain? O my soul, what can destroy thee if Omnipotence be thy helper? If the aegis of the Almighty cover thee, what sword can smite thee? Rest thou secure. If Jesus is thine all-prevailing King, and hath trodden thine enemies beneath his feet; if sin, death, and hell are all vanquished by him, and thou art represented in him, by no possibility canst thou be destroyed.

“Jesus’ tremendous name
Puts all our foes to flight:
Jesus, the meek, the angry Lamb,
A Lion is in fight.
“By all hell’s host withstood;
We all hell’s host o’erthrow;
And conquering them, through Jesus’ blood
We still to conquer go.”

Evening, April 21, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Worldview Movie Night

Our Spring Worldview Movie Night will be held Friday, April 4th at 7:00 p.m. at the church. The film we’ll watch and discuss is “Becket”. Popcorn will be provided. Other snacks & treats are welcome. Invite a friend!

