

# REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

## LIBERTY!

*By Pastor Brian De Jong*

Among our most cherished aspects of our American republic is “liberty.” Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is central to our heritage. One of the most fearful signs of modern decay is the taking away of our liberties.

While we accept liberty as our birthright, do we understand what it means? Even more, do we properly understand where it comes from, and how it is maintained. I’m afraid that today people think liberty means “the right to do anything I want, without any criticism.” In our modern scene, that can include the “freedom” for two people of the same sex to be joined in “marriage.”

Pushing the modern definition a bit further, people suppose that liberty means that the government will not only approve of me doing whatever I want, but will financially support my lifestyle choices. A sense of financial entitlement is wrapped up in modern notions of freedom.

In contrast to such ideas, we understand that all true liberty comes from God, and is exercised only in agreement with God’s word.

James speaks to this when he writes, *James 1:25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.*

God’s word is “the law of liberty.” As such, it is a perfect law. When a person gazes intently into the law of liberty



in order to do what it says, he discovers true freedom. Real liberty is not the freedom from restraint, but the freedom defined by the word of God. Moreover, it is not freedom to do anything you want. Rather, it is the opportunity to do what God wants for you. In being an “effectual doer” of God’s word, we find blessing. That blessing includes true happiness, lasting prosperity, and tangible success. In the doing of the word of God, a man finds joy and contentment.

Life goes the way it was intended by the Creator. Liberty means living according to His will, not our own. It is in submission to God that we find freedom, not in rebellion toward our Maker.

The person who is a forgetful hearer of God’s word, and doesn’t do what it says, is not blessed. Rather, such a person lives under the wrath and curse of God. Their lives are empty of any joy, and they do not succeed in what they do.

We might even say that when men throw off the word of God, what they inherit is not freedom but slavery. Rather than enjoying liberty, they suffer under tyranny. Life becomes more difficult when we insist on going our own way and doing our own thing.

Let us pray that more and more of our fellow Americans will understand that true liberty is rooted in God and His holy word. May our nation truly pursue life and liberty – as defined by the Lord of life and liberty.

Volume 10, Issue 7  
July 2015

<b>Inside this issue:</b>	
<i>Pastor’s Article</i>	1
<i>Ryle on Self-Inquiry</i>	2-4
<i>July Birthdays</i>	5
<i>July Calendar</i>	6
<i>Book Review</i>	7
	7
<i>Comments on Finance by Joel Moody</i>	8-9
<i>Golf Outing</i>	9
<i>Session Digest</i>	10
<i>Camp Westminster</i>	10
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	11
<i>Spurgeon Corner</i>	12
<i>Church Picnic</i>	12

### Mnemonics...

- *Golf Outing, 4th*
- *Fellowship Luncheon, 5th*
- *Church Picnic, 23rd*

# Ryle on Self-Inquiry

by J.C. Ryle

We live in an age of peculiar *spiritual privileges*. Since the world began there never was such an opportunity for a man's soul to be saved as there is in England at this time. There never were so many signs of religion [Pg 2] in the land, so many sermons preached, so many services held in churches and chapels, so many Bibles sold, so many religious books and tracts printed, so many Societies for evangelizing mankind supported, so much outward respect paid to Christianity. Things are done everywhere now-a-days which a hundred years ago would have been thought impossible. Bishops support the boldest and most aggressive efforts to reach the unconverted. Deans and Chapters throw open the naves of cathedrals for Sunday evening sermons! Clergy of the narrowest High Church School advocate special missions, and vie with their Evangelical brethren in proclaiming that going to church on Sunday is not enough to take a man to heaven. In short, there is a stir about religion now-a-days to which there has been nothing like since England was a nation, and which the cleverest sceptics and infidels cannot deny. If Romaine, and Venn, and Berridge, and Rowlands, and Grimshaw, and Hervey, had been told that such things would come to pass about a century after their deaths, they would have been tempted to say, with the Samaritan nobleman,—“If the Lord should make windows of heaven might such a thing be.” (2 Kings vii. 19.) But the Lord has opened the windows of heaven. There is more taught now-a-days in England of the real Gospel, and of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, in one week, than there was in a year in Romaine's time. Surely I have a right to say that we live in an age of spiritual privileges. But are we any better for it? In an age like this it is well to ask, “How do we do about our souls?”

We live in an age of peculiar *spiritual danger*. Never perhaps since the world began was there such an immense amount of mere outward profession of religion as there is in the present day. A painfully large proportion of all the congregations in the

land consists of unconverted people, who know nothing of heart-religion, never come to [Pg 3] the Lord's Table, and never confess Christ in their daily lives. Myriads of those who are always running after preachers, and crowding to hear special sermons, are nothing better than empty tubs, and tinkling cymbals, without a jot of real vital Christianity at home. [1] The parable of the sower is continually receiving most vivid and painful illustrations. The way-side hearers, the stony-ground hearers, the thorny-ground hearers abound on every side.

“Do we  
ever think  
about our  
souls at  
all?”

The life of many religious professors, I fear, in this age, is nothing better than a continual course of spiritual dram-drinking. They are always morbidly craving fresh excitement; and they seem to care little what it is if they only get it. All preaching seems to come alike to them; and they appear unable to “see differences,” so long as they hear what is clever, have their ears tickled, and sit in a crowd. Worst of all, there are hundreds of young unestablished believers who are so infected with the same love of excitement, that they actually think it a duty to be always seeking it. Insensibly almost to themselves, they take up a kind of hysterical, sensational, sentimental Christianity, until they are never content with the “old paths,” and, like the [Pg 4] Athenians, are always running after something new. To see a calm-minded young believer, who is not stuck up, self-confident, self-conceited, and more ready to teach than learn, but content with a daily steady effort to grow up into Christ's likeness, and to do Christ's work quietly and unostentatiously, at home, is really becoming almost a rarity! Too many young professors, alas, behave like young recruits who have not spent all their bounty money. They show how little deep root they have, and how little knowledge of their own hearts, by noise, forwardness, readiness to contradict and set down old Christians, and overweening trust in their own fancied soundness and wisdom! Well will it be for many young professors of this age if they do not end, after being tossed about for a while, and “carried to and fro by every wind of doctrine,” by joining some petty, narrow-minded, censori-

## Self-Inquiry Continued...

ous sect, or embracing some senseless, unreasoning, crotchety heresy. Surely in times like these there is great need for self-examination. When we look around us, we may well ask, "How do we do about our souls?"

In handling this question, I think the shortest plan will be to suggest a list of subjects for self-inquiry, and to go through them in order. By so doing I shall hope to meet the case of every one into whose hands this volume may fall. I invite every reader of this paper to join me in calm, searching self-examination, for a few short minutes. I desire to speak to myself as well as to you. I approach you not as an enemy, but as a friend. "My heart's desire and prayer to God is that you may be saved." (Rom. x. 1.) Bear with me if I say things which at first sight look harsh and severe. Believe me, he is your best friend who tells you the most truth.

(1) Let me ask, in the first place, *Do we ever think about our souls at all?* Thousands of English people, I fear, cannot answer that question satisfactorily. They never give the subject of religion any place in their [Pg 5] thoughts. From the beginning of the year to the end they are absorbed in the pursuit of business, pleasure, politics, money, or self-indulgence of some kind or another. Death, and judgement, and eternity, and heaven, and hell, and a world to come, are never calmly looked at and considered. They live on as if they were never going to die, or rise again, or stand at the bar of God, or receive an eternal sentence! They do not openly oppose religion, for they have not sufficient reflection about it to do so;—but they eat, and drink, and sleep, and get money, and spend money, as if religion was a mere fiction and not a reality. They are neither Romanists, nor Socinians, nor infidels, nor High Church, nor Low Church, nor Broad Church. They are just *nothing at all*, and do not take the trouble to have opinions. A more senseless and unreasonable way of living cannot be conceived; but they do not pretend to reason about it. They simply never think about God, unless frightened for a few minutes by sickness, death in their families, or an accident. Barring such interruptions, they appear to ignore religion altogether, and hold on their way cool and undisturbed, as if there were nothing worth thinking of except this world.

It is hard to imagine a life more unworthy of an immortal creature than such a life as I have just described, for it reduces a man to the level of a beast. But it is literally and truly the life of multitudes in England; and as they pass away their place is taken by multitudes like them. The picture, no doubt, is horrible, distressing, and revolting: but, unhappily, it is only too true. In every large town, in every market, on every stock-exchange, in every club, you may see specimens of this class by scores,—men who think of everything under the sun except the one thing needful,—the salvation of their souls. Like the Jews of old they do not "consider their ways," they do not "consider their latter end;" they do not "consider that they do evil." (Isa. i. 3; Hag. i. 7; Deut. xxxii. 29; [Pg 6] Eccles. v. i.) Like Gallio they "care for none of these things:" they are not in their way. (Acts xviii. 17.) If they prosper in the world, and get rich, and succeed in their line of life, they are praised, and admired by their contemporaries. Nothing succeeds in England like success! But for all this they cannot live for ever. They will have to die and appear before the bar of God, and be judged; and then what will the end be? When a large class of this kind exists in our country, no reader need wonder that I ask whether he belongs to it. If you do, you ought to have a mark set on your door, as there used to be a mark on a plague-stricken house two centuries ago, with the words, "Lord have mercy on us," written on it. Look at the class I have been describing, and then look at your own soul.

(2) Let me ask, in the second place, *whether we ever do anything about our souls??* There are multitudes in England who think occasionally about religion, but unhappily never get beyond thinking. After a stirring sermon,—or after a funeral,—or under the pressure of illness,—or on Sunday evening,—or when things are going on badly in their families,—or when they meet some bright example of a Christian,—or when they fall in with some striking religious book or tract,—they will at the time think a good deal, and even talk a little about religion in a vague way. But they stop short, as if thinking and talking were enough to save them. They are always meaning, and intending, and purposing, and resolving, and wishing, and telling us that they "know" what is right, and "hope" to be

## Self-Inquiry Concluded...

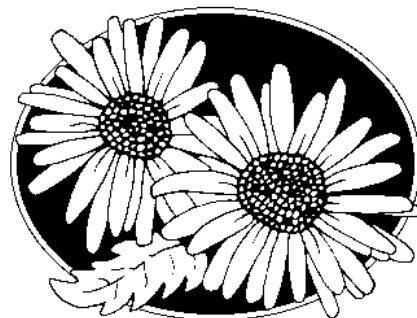
found right at last, but they never attain to any *action*. There is no actual separation from the service of the world and sin, no real taking up the cross and following Christ, no positive *doing* in their Christianity. Their life is spent in playing the part of the son in our Lord's parable, to whom the father said, "Go, work in my vineyard: and he answered, I go, sir, and went not." [Pg 7] (Matt. xxi. 30.) They are like those whom Ezekiel describes, who liked his preaching, but never practised what he preached:—"They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them.... And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." (Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.) In a day like this, when hearing and thinking, without *doing*, is so common, no one can justly wonder that I press upon men the absolute need of self-examination. Once more, then, I ask my readers to consider the question of my text,—*"How do we do about our souls?"*

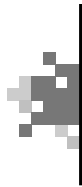
(3) Let me ask, in the third place, *whether we are trying to satisfy our consciences with a mere formal religion?* There are myriads in England at this moment who are making shipwreck on this rock. Like the Pharisee of old, they make much ado about the outward part of Christianity, while the inward and spiritual part is totally neglected. They are careful to attend all the services of their place of worship, and regular in using all its forms and ordinances. They are never absent from Communion when the Lord's Supper is administered. Sometimes they are most strict in observing Lent, and attach great importance to Saints' days. They are often keen partisans of their own Church, or sect, or congregation, and ready to contend with any one who does not agree with them. Yet all this time there is no *heart* in their religion. Any one who knows them intimately can see with half an eye that their affections are set on things below, and not on things above; and that they are trying to make up for the want of inward Christianity by an excessive quantity of outward form. And this

formal religion does them no real good. They are not satisfied. Beginning at the wrong end, by making the outward things first, they know nothing of [Pg 8] inward joy and peace, and pass their lives in a constant struggle, secretly conscious that there is something wrong, and yet not knowing why. Well, after all, if they do not go on from one stage of formality to another, until in despair they take a fatal plunge, and fall into Popery! When professing Christians of this kind are so painfully numerous, no one need wonder if I press upon him the paramount importance of close self-examination. If you love life, do not be content with the husk, and shell, and scaffolding of

*"{Are we  
trying to  
satisfy our  
consciences  
with mere  
formal reli-  
gion?"*

religion. Remember our Saviour's words about the Jewish formalists of His day: "This people draweth nigh with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain do they worship." (Matt. xv. 9.) It needs something more than going diligently to church, and receiving the Lord's Supper, to take our souls to heaven. Means of grace and forms of religion are useful in their way, and God seldom does anything for His church without them. But let us beware of making shipwreck on the very lighthouse which helps to show the channel into the harbour. Once more I ask, "How do we do about our souls?"  
*Ryle, "Practical Religion."*





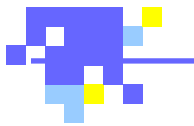
# July Birthdays



---

*Wedding Anniversaries*





Grace OPC

# July 2015

*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*



Church Office:  
4930 Green Valley Ln  
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160  
Website:  
graceopcshelboyan.com  
Email:  
revbriandjong@gmail.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 Youth & Young People's Gathering at De Jong's	4 Golf Outing
5 Fellowship Lunch	6 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Bible Study, 1:30 p.m.	7	8	9	10	11
12 Missions Sunday	13 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Bible Study, 1:30 p.m.	21 Session Meeting	22	23 Church Picnic	24	25
26	27 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	28	29	30	31	

## Book Review by Dan TenPas

### When a Nation Forgets God

#### 7 Lessons We Must Learn From Nazi Germany

By Erwin Lutzer

Erwin Lutzer breaks down this short read into seven chapters that explore the lessons that should be learned from the rise of the Third Reich in Germany and how it parallels modern day America. Lutzer examines the inaction of the culture and the church as the Nazi regime gradually and methodically diminished personal freedoms during the 1930's. Chapters are dedicated to the seem-

ing willingness of the people and the church to surrender personal liberties and convictions in the areas of economics, education, government, and religion for the promise of economic security and national prominence. Throughout, Lutzer loosely compares the trajectory of our culture with the environment and ideology of Nazi Germany. The final chapter is a charge to the Christian Church to live out the Great Commission with purity and humility in our increasingly hostile culture. I found the book an excellent read, very well written, and an eye opener as the author developed the historical comparisons.



# Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

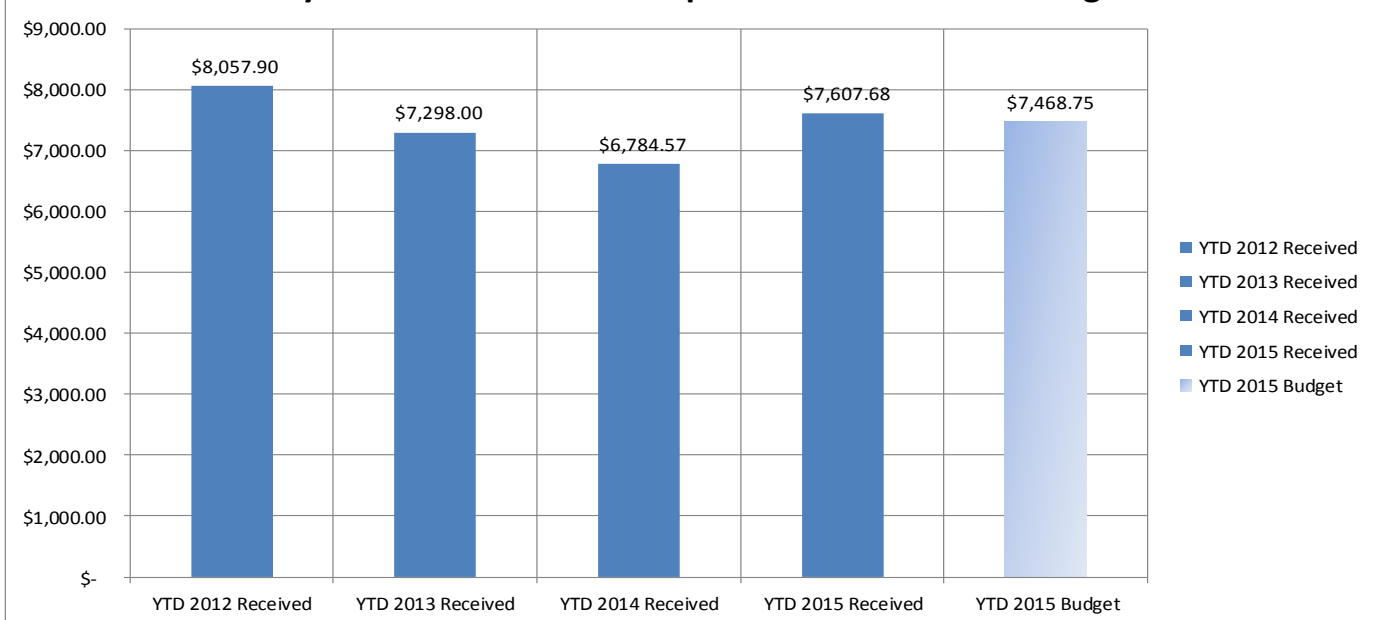
**General Fund** receipts for May totaled \$15,947.55 as compared to the budget of \$16,159.24, while General Fund disbursements for May totaled \$11,891.54. May year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$63,685.80 as compared to the budget of \$71,100.62 (a shortfall of \$7,414.82), while May year to date disbursements of \$66,670.08 were \$4,430.54 below budget. Through the end of May, the General Fund has decreased by \$2,943.02. Year to date General Fund receipts for May were 4.3% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 2.2% above the prior year.

**Benevolence Fund** Receipts for May totaled \$1,013.50 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$480.25). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through May totaled \$7,607.68 and were above budget by \$138.93. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget.

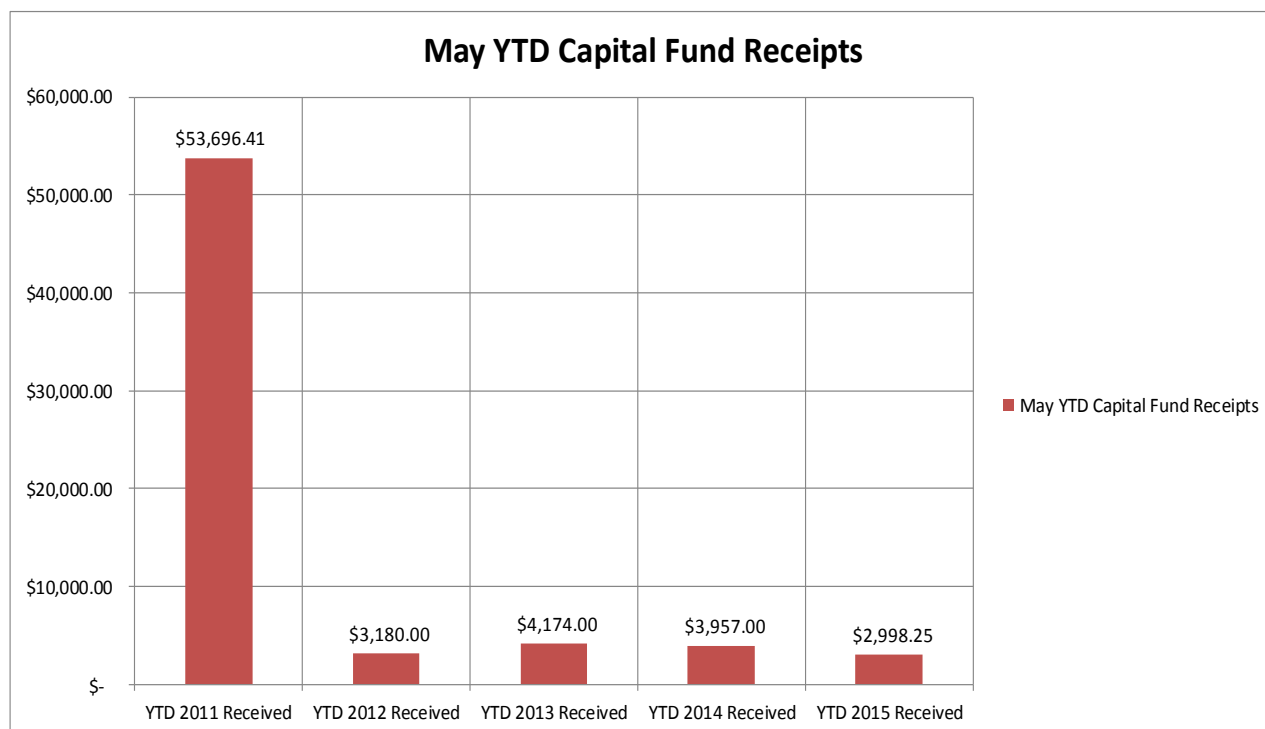
May Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$2,998.25. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the

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 computers, 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.

May YTD Benevolence Receipts Actual vs. Current Budget



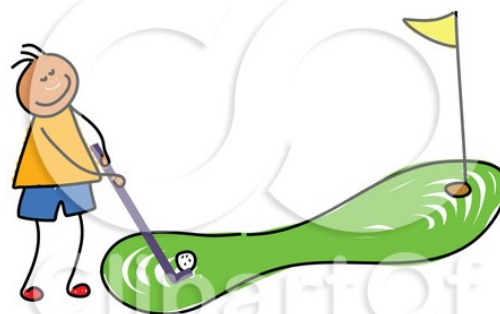




---

# Golf Outing

Mark your calendars for fun! The Grace Church Golf Outing will take place on July 4th, 9 a.m. at Sunset Hills. If you have any interest in attending or have questions, please contact Jeff Froh.



# Session Digest

Your Session met on Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>. The meeting included our deacons and our devotion from Psalm 133 focused on the blessing of brethren dwelling together in unity. Pastor Brian then gave an extended report on the recent General Assembly. We also had a visit from Dan LeMahieu on behalf of the New Hope Crisis Pregnancy Center. He

reported on the progress of the plans for this center, and its preparation to begin operations later this summer. He also gave us a financial report and explained the needs for funding. The Session decided to ask Dan to give a brief presentation to the congregation at some future date.

---

## Camp Westminster

August 3-7 is around the corner– Camp Westminster here we come! It's not just for the kids; individuals of all ages enjoy the lovely Green Lake Conference Center. This year's topic, Songs of Love and Praise, will be presented by the Rev. Matthew Cotta. Lodging that has been released may still be available, so contact them soon



## Peach Cake

- ★ 1 pkg. yellow cake mix
- ★ 1 lb. can sliced peaches & juice
- ★ 3 eggs
- ★ 2 Tbsp. salad oil

Put all ingredients into bowl and beat together for 5 minutes. Bake at temperature as shown on box. Top with whipped cream, ice cream, or the following:

- ★ 3.4 oz. instant vanilla pudding
- ★ 1 1/4 cup milk
- ★ 8 oz. carton cool whip

Beat pudding and milk until thick. Add cool whip. Blend together & spread on cake.

*Deborah Arndt*

“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.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

Church Office:  
4930 Green Valley Ln  
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160  
Website: [graceopcsheboygan.com](http://graceopcsheboygan.com)  
Email:  
[graceopc@tds.net](mailto:graceopc@tds.net)  
[revbriandejong@gmail.com](mailto:revbriandejong@gmail.com)

CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/  
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

**GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM**



*Spurgeon*

*Corner*

*“Get thee up into the high mountain.”  
(Isaiah 40:9)*

Our knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing one of our Welsh mountains. When you are at the base you see but little: the mountain itself appears to be but one-half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley, you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the foot of the mountain. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go higher, and you see the country for four or five miles round, and you are delighted with the widening prospect. Mount still, and the scene enlarges; till at last, when you are on the summit, and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Yonder is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and here the sea, and there a shining river and the smoking chimneys of a manufacturing town, or the masts of the ships in a busy port. All these things please and delight you, and you say, “I could not have imagined that so much could be seen at this elevation.” Now, the Christian life is of the same order. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of him. The higher we climb the more we discover of his beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has known all the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge? Paul, when grown old, sitting grey-haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, “I know whom I have believed,” for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like ascending another summit, and his death seemed like gaining the top of the mountain, from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of him to whom he had committed his soul. Get thee up, dear friend, into the high mountain.

*Morning, June 25th, by C. H. Spurgeon*

## *Church Picnic*

Mark your calendars for the annual church picnic, which will take place the evening of July 23rd. More details will be given later.

