

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

USEFUL & FRUITFUL

By Pastor Brian De Jong

I dare say that every sincere believer wishes to be useful and fruitful. Can any follower of Christ truly desire to be lazy and listless, useless and fruitless? Granting the validity of my assumption, we must ask a question. How can a Christian be both useful and fruitful in God's kingdom? How does that happen?

Peter gives us a powerful explanation in the opening chapter of his second epistle. Consider the following verses: 2 Peter 1:5 ...*applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

At first glance it may seem that Peter is presenting a set of steps that starts with faith and finishes with love. A closer look reveals that he is saying much more. To your faith, you should supply moral excellence. Then adding onto those two, supply knowledge. With faith, moral excellence and knowledge, now add a good dose of self-control. On top of that, put on perseverance and godliness. So by now you have faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and godliness. This is not all, for you must supplement those with brotherly

kindness, and atop everything else comes love.

The end result is faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. But just possessing these qualities isn't all. Peter tells us we must be increasing in these virtues. Having them more and more. The result then is growing stores of faith and moral excellence, increasing amounts of knowledge and self-control. More and more perseverance and godliness and kindness and love.

When you possess these eight excellent qualities in ever-increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless and unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the contrary, if you lack these qualities you will be a useless Christian – blind and short-sighted, unfruitful in the kingdom of God.

You might say to yourself, "Boy, this sounds like a lot of work!" You are right. It takes time, effort, concentration and commitment to procure and exercise these virtues. That is why Peter introduces this challenge with the words, "applying all diligence..." You must strain every fiber of your soul to obtain and secure these qualities for yourself.

In an age of easy-believism, this kind of muscular Christianity seems extreme and unnecessary. Many Christians think that if they once asked Jesus into their heart, then their ticket for eternity has

been punched and nothing else matters...

Continued on page 13

Volume 9, Issue 5

May 2014

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Pastor's Article</i> | 1 |
| <i>Ask the Pastor by Pastor De Jong</i> | 2-4 |
| <i>Camp Westminster</i> | 4 |
| <i>Directory Correction</i> | 4 |
| <i>VBS</i> | 5 |
| <i>May Birthdays</i> | 6 |
| <i>Pine Haven</i> | 6 |
| <i>May Calendar</i> | 7 |
| <i>Comments on Finance by Joel Moody</i> | 8-9 |
| <i>Session Digest</i> | 9 |
| <i>What Follows A Retreat?</i> | 10 |
| <i>Fundraisers</i> | 10 |
| <i>Social Fellowship 2014</i> | 11 |
| | 12 |
| <i>Recipe Corner</i> | 13 |
| <i>Front Page Concluded</i> | 13 |
| <i>Spring Work Day</i> | 14 |
| <i>Spurgeon Corner</i> | 14 |

Mnemonics...

- Fellowship Dinner, 4th
- Spring Work Day, 17th

Ask the Pastor

by Pastor Brian De Jong

Last Sunday evening we looked at Colossians 3:18 and considered the topic of wifely submission. As that is always a “hot topic” among Christian women, I thought I would pose and answer some typical questions. This may help spur further thought and fill in some gaps that were not covered during that sermon.

Pastor, why are you telling me to submit to my husband? This is perhaps the easiest question to answer: because God says so in His word. Submission to your husband is God’s idea, not something I invented. As good Berean sisters, search the Scriptures to see whether these things are true. Start with Ephesians 5, Titus 2 and I Peter 3, and see what you find.

Why are women required to submit when men are not? This is a common assumption, but it is not accurate. While a wife is required by God to submit to her husband as her spiritual head, the husband is required by God to submit to Christ, who is his spiritual head. As Paul outlines this authority structure in 1 Corinthians 11:3, he tells us that Christ must submit to the headship of God the Father. Thus even our Savior was required to submit to the will of His Father.

What about an unbelieving husband – must I submit to him, if he’s not a believer? Again Peter is very helpful, telling wives to submit to their husbands so that even if any are disobedient to the word, they will be won without a word by the chaste and respectful behavior of their wives. Submitting to an unbelieving husband can pose unique challenges, but God’s word doesn’t make an exception in such cases.

Isn’t submission demeaning to a woman? While it might initially appear that submitting to her husband would rob her of her dignity, that also is a mistaken assumption. Obedience to God’s clearly revealed will ennoble the believer and shows the true dignity of submissive faith. One historical example stands out – Abigail the wife of Nabal. Read-

ing the story of this prudent woman in 1 Samuel 25, we cannot help but be impressed with her elegance, restraint, generosity and decency. Her husband’s boorish qualities stand in stark contrast to her noble character that simultaneously protects him from slaughter and stays David’s hand from unneeded brutality. A submissive wife is not a groveling slave to be despised, but a dignified woman who is praised by her admiring husband.

Don’t you think a woman should have some ‘spunk,’ and maintain independence from her husband? Another of David’s wives comes to mind – Saul’s daughter Michal. King Saul knew that his daughter was rebellious, and he gave her to David in order to be a snare to him. While Michal did show loyalty to David early in their marriage, she grew haughty, independent and “spunky” to the point of despising David when he danced with all his might before the Lord. She verbally chastised David for his holy enthusiasm, and spoke rebelliously against her husband. As a result, she died childless and rejected by her husband.

If I submit to my husband, won’t I become a doormat for him? Won’t this spell the end of any thinking or acting of my own? Proverbs 31:10-31 gives us the picture of an ideal woman. Reading through those verses you find a woman who is trusted by her husband and works tirelessly to serve him and their children. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. Yet she is no wall-flower. She is a woman of godly industry who not only provides for her own household, but is able to help the poor and needy with the labor of her hands. Godly female industry and humble submission are not antithetical or contradictory – they actually go together.

Should I submit if my husband commands me to sin? This does sometimes become an issue, and should be considered carefully. A husband can become so disobedient to the Lord that he demands his wife join him in rebelling against the Lord. When put into such a situation, a wife may need to grapple with

Ask Continued...

the question, “Who should I obey? God tells me to do one thing and my husband tells me to do the opposite. What should I do?” In such scenarios a wife must obey God rather than man. In a humble and submissive manner she should explain to her husband that he is requiring her to break God’s command. She has a higher allegiance and must obey her Lord. She could appeal to him to reconsider his wicked request, and give her liberty to obey God. If he steadfastly refuses to yield on the point, and continues demanding sin, she must politely and respectfully refuse to sin. An admittedly extreme example might help: Suppose the neighbor has his stereo cranked up to full volume at night. The husband becomes so irritated that he gets out his gun and hands it to his wife. “Go shoot him in the head so we can get some sleep,” the hubby says. Would the wife be required to murder their next door neighbor? Obviously she would be required to decline to commit murder on her husband’s instruction.

What if my husband requires me to do something I just don’t like to do? I don’t have to submit then, do I? If the request from the husband is not a matter of sin, but just a matter of preference, then submission is still required. For instance, if the husband likes to eat fried chicken, but the wife dislikes it, there is no issue of righteousness involved. Pure preferences are far different from matters of sin. While the husband should always take into account his wife’s preferences, and avoid forcing his preferences upon her, it does sometimes happen that he wants to do something and she doesn’t. If so, she should cheerfully yield to his choice.

If I’m sure my husband is wrong, and yet he insists on doing what I know is a mistake, do I have to yield then? There is a sense that submission doesn’t really come into play unless and until there is a disagreement. When both husband and wife are agreed, then they work together in cooperation and no one yields to the other. But when a difference arises (that is not a matter of righteousness), then the wife is called upon to yield to her husband and do what he suggests – even if she is sure he’s making a mistake. If a wife only “submits” when

she agrees with her husband, then she’s not really “submitting” at all – just agreeing and cooperating.

If I submit to my husband, won’t this make me “dumpy, frumpy and basically ugly?” Peter answers this objection quite clearly when he talks about the inner beauty of a quiet and gentle spirit. That “hidden person of the heart” is precious in God’s sight. A dazzling beauty who is loud, abrasive, abusive and rebellious is far uglier than the godly woman who adorns herself by submitting to her husband.

If I’m submissive to my husband, won’t he go crazy and become an uncontrolled monster? It is sometimes the case that husbands go overboard and start acting like dictators. Yet the Christian man is under the headship of Christ and the authority of his church. If the elders of the church notice a man in the congregation who is lording it over his wife and tyrannizing her, they can (and should) call this brother to repentance. They should regularly remind the men of the church to “love their wives as Christ loved the church, and laid down his life for her.” Exhorting husbands to Christ-like love is the counterweight to encouraging wives to submit to their husbands with respect and faith. Do you trust your husband to be a loving leader in your home and family?

No one in my family has ever done this. My mother ruled the roost and never submitted to my father. Why should I break such a longstanding family tradition? It may be the case that some Christian wives descend from a long line of strong-willed and independent women who staunchly refused to submit to their husbands. Perhaps it goes back 10 or 20 generations. But the argument “We’ve never done it that way” just doesn’t hold water. If a woman is a Christian and desires to obey the word of God, the habits of her ancestors have no bearing on her duty. Suppose you descended from a long line of horse thieves. Does that mean you are morally bound to steal horses for a living? Believers are to be governed by the word of God, not by their family traditions.

How on earth could I do this – especially in a



Ask Concluded...

day when feministic autonomy is commonplace? A wife's submission is done by faith in God. Believing that God wants your very best, and will bless you for your obedience to His holy word, you can act by faith to do what He has commanded. The words of the hymn are helpful: "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, than to truth and obey!"

This is too hard. It's just not realistic to expect me to submit to my husband. Ah, dear sister in

Christ, you are filled with the Holy Spirit. You can do all things through Christ, who gives you strength. It may seem difficult at times, but God never requires more than we can bear. With the command comes the promise that He will supply what you need, according to His riches in glory. If you find yourself struggling to fulfill this calling, you should pray and ask God to empower you to do what He commands!

Camp Westminster

Have you registered yet for Camp Westminster reservations at ... in Green Lake, Wisconsin on August 4 - 8? Lodging reserved for our presbytery will be released after June 3. Join with families and individuals of all ages for fun, fellowship and talks on the topic of *The Early Life of King David, Part 2* by the Rev. Dr. David VanDrunen. Please do not call the conference grounds directly, rather contact Joe & Judy Lewandowski for



Directory Correction

Tammy Voskuil's number:



May Birthdays



Pine Haven

The Board of Directors of Pine Haven Christian Communities is thankful to report that Pine Haven has been **awarded a 5-Star Rating** by the government for its Skilled Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center. This recognition reflects the blessings from God as the mission serving our fragile seniors, which started 64 years ago, continues to draw its leading and strength from values taught by Jesus Christ. Many people are to be thanked, but it is the full team of 300 employees, our volunteers and our supporting churches who faithfully serve Christ each day that have made this all possible. Please thank God for the blessings showered on all involved with the mission of Pine Haven, located right here in Sheboygan County.”





Grace OPC

May 2014

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website:
graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 Ladies' Brunch, 9:30 a.m. |
| 4 Evening Fellowship Meal | 5 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. | 6 | 7 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m. | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 Missions Sunday | 12 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i> | 13 Session Meeting, 7-20 p.m. | 14 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m. | 15 | 16 | 17 Spring Work Day, 8 a.m. |
| 18 | 19 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. | 20 | 21 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m. | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Lord's Supper, (a.m.) | 26 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i> | 27 | 28 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m. | 29 | 30 | 31 |

Comments on Finance

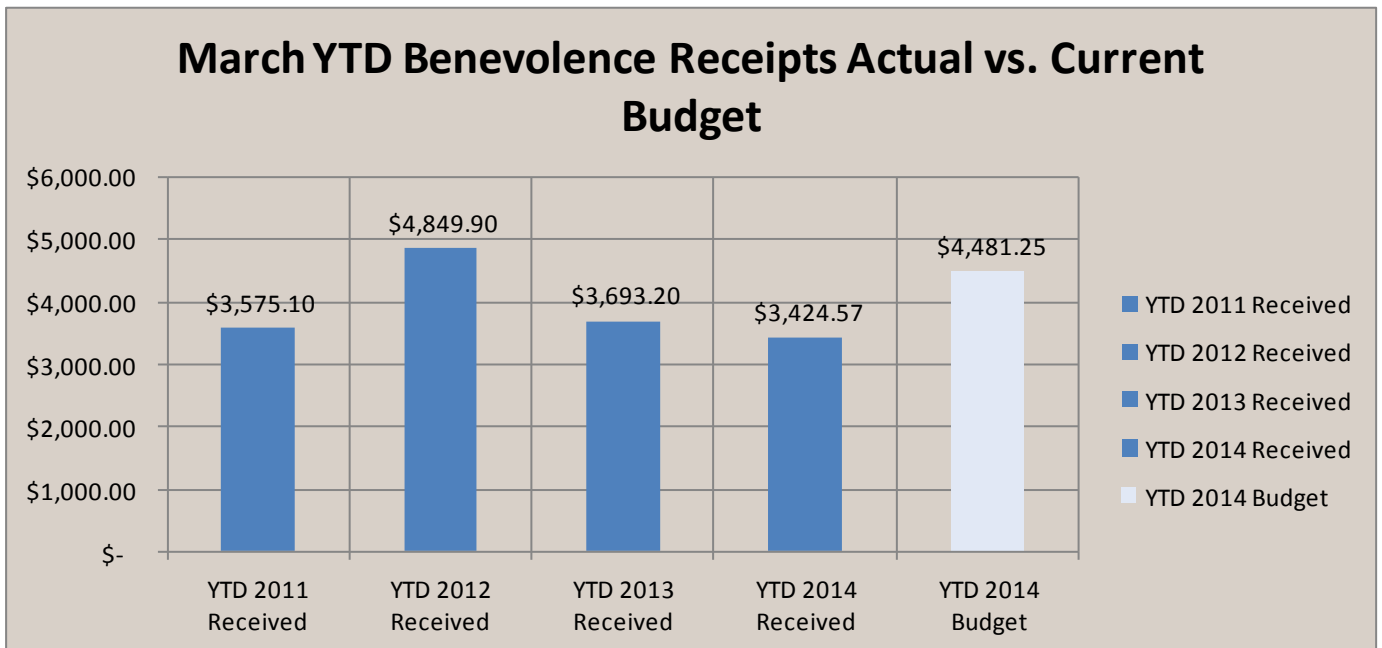
by Joel Moody

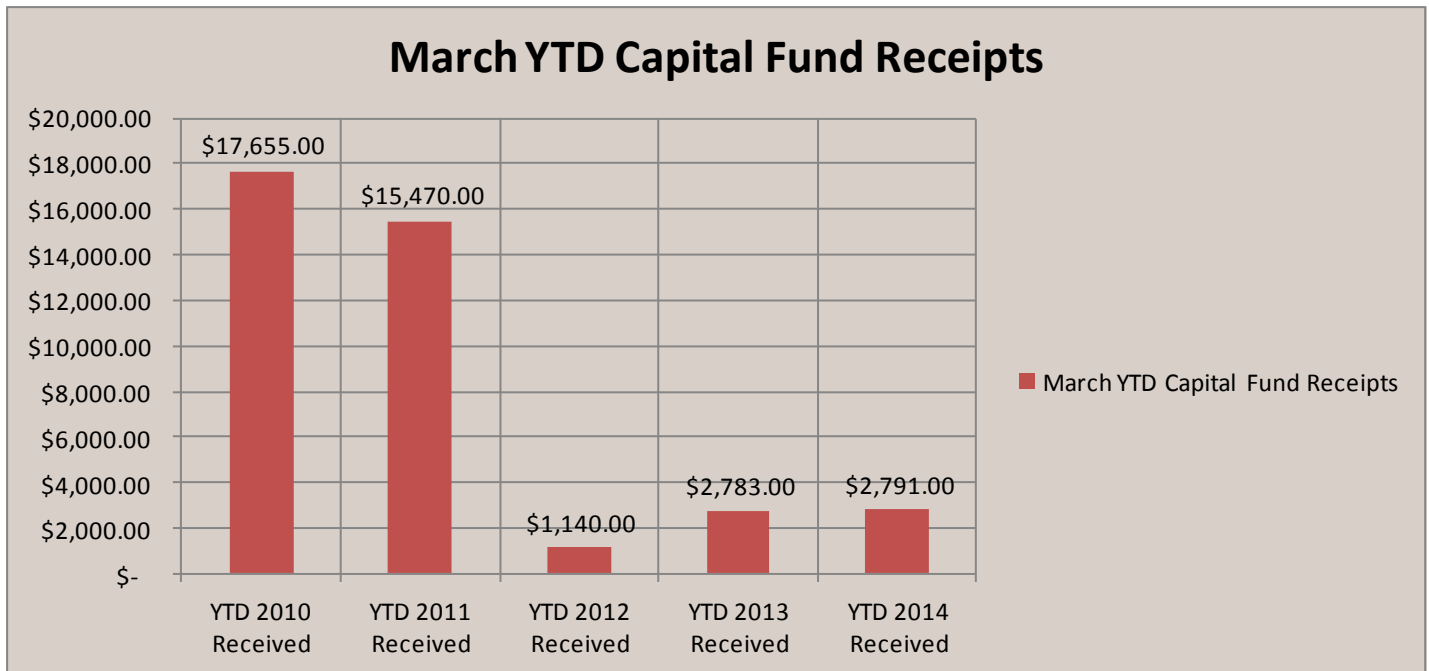
General Fund receipts for March totaled \$14,962.98 as compared to the budget of \$16,256.76, while General Fund disbursements for March totaled \$15,794.10. March year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$38,681.56 as compared to the budget of \$42,267.50 (a shortfall of \$3,585.94), while March year to date disbursements of \$43,876.66 were \$1,609.16 above budget. Through the end of March, the General Fund has decreased by \$5,169.93. The decrease in the General Fund was due to lower than budgeted receipts as well as higher disbursements. Year to date General Fund receipts for March were 6.2% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 5.1% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for March totaled \$1,382.57 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$111.18). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through March totaled \$3,424.57 and were below budget by \$1,056.68. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. ...

March Year to Date giving for the **Capital**

Fund was \$2,791.00. 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.





Session Digest

On Tuesday, April 8th your Session held its monthly meeting at the church. Our meetings open with a devotional from God’s word presented by the Pastor. He has been leading the Session methodically through 1 Timothy. This month we considered 1 Timothy 4:7-9. We then spent about 40 minutes in prayer for the congregation. Regular reports were received, including the various Sessional committee reports. Troy VanderWaal was named as the new coordinator for the mentoring program. The deacons were discussed in view of Dave Kuiper’s upcoming relocation. The deacons will meet with the Session at the May meeting. The Sunday School offerings for May through September were designated for ...The meeting adjourned around 9:00 pm with prayer. Our next meeting will be at 7:20 pm on Tuesday, May 13.

Members are welcome to attend our meetings to see what the Session does.



What Follows A Retreat?

written by Carla De Master

In 1999, five of us (Marge, Phyllis, Debbie, Carla, and Jean), went to the retreat sponsored by the Apple Valley OPC. Jean Wilke drove and we gabbed all the way to Imago Dei, a campground north of Appleton. The cabins were new and the fellowship cozy. It was February, snowy and cold. We were blessed and we wanted to keep that experience going in some way. Jean offered to lead a Bible study at Grace, which we eagerly agreed to. It was on Giving Christ First Place, with added incentive for weight loss and health care. Since most of us worked, this was planned for 6:30 a.m. We met on Tuesdays, then Thursdays, and ended up on Mondays. After work schedule prevented Jean from doing the second volume, Carla led for a few years, with Phyllis subbing often. We went through many books of the Bible. Many people joined and enriched the study over the years. By 2005, Lynn Baatz started leading and has done a marvelous job since.

We and others went to every retreat held (every other year) after that but for a time that was

discontinued. Now, we had an opportunity go to one again, this time sponsored by New Hope OPC. Ten of us (Phyllis, Ellen, Megan, Deb, Marge, Gail, Cheryl, Debbie, Audrey, and Carla) enjoyed the teaching of Kathleen Nielson on Psalms Alive. Probing Psalm 56, 51, and 138, Kathleen taught us how to "unpack" the Psalm, finding its theme, repeated words, pronouns, verbs, sections, purpose, historical setting, and response. Being a professor of English, Kathleen especially enjoys God's poetry and sharing its wonders. We were blessed. Other memories include dinner at Mackinaw, watching our 3 olympic swimmers at AmericInn, cold showers, double breakfasts, catered lunch, and expert drivers.

What follows? Maybe Create and Connect, or Books and Chocolate, both of which are done at New Hope OPC. Ask the participants for more of "what follows".

(Look for pictures in the next issue of Reflections)

Pine Haven Fundraisers

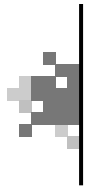
Check out the shelf in the foyer at church for slips for Pine Haven Fundraisers. If you bring one of the slips or flyers with while dining at Perkins or Big Apple Bagels and show them, Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary will receive a credit towards their fundraising for Pine Haven.



Social Fellowship 2014

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| February 7, 2014 | Taco Supper/ Game night |
| February 25, 2014 | Dessert Fellowship |
| March 9, 2014 | Fellowship Luncheon |
| March 24, 2014 | Game Night |
| April 4, 2014 | Worldview Movie Night |
| April 13, 2014 | In Home Hospitality Sunday |
| May 3, 2014 | Ladies Brunch/Banquet |
| May 4, 2014 | Fellowship Dinner - Evening |
| June 7, 2014 | Fry out for Widows at Pastors |
| June 19, 2014 | Mini-Golf Tom & Jerry's |
| July | Volleyball League |
| July 4, 2014 | Golf at Sunset |
| July (mid) | Sunday school Campout |
| July 13, 2014 | Fellowship Luncheon |
| July 31, 2014 | Church Picnic (<u>note change of date!</u>) |
| August 11-15, 2014 | Vacation Bible School |
| August 23, 2014 | Corn Roast – Rodney and Samantha Nyhof |
| September 5/6, 2014 | Church Camp-out Kohler Andre |
| September 28, 2014 | In Home Hospitality Sunday |
| October 10, 2014 | Worldview Movie Night |
| October ??, 2014 | Talent Night |
| November 1, 2014 | Reformation Conference |
| November 2, 2014 | Fellowship Luncheon |
| November 15, 2014 | Harvest Home |
| November 27, 2014 | Thanksgiving Football Game |
| December 7, 2014 | Fellowship Dinner (evening)-cookie exchange |
| December 30, 2014 | Bowling/Pizza/Game Night |
| January 11, 2015 | Fellowship Luncheon (Soup & Sandwiches) |
| January 17, 2015 | Sunburst Ski/Tubing |
| February 6, 2015 | Taco Supper & Game night |



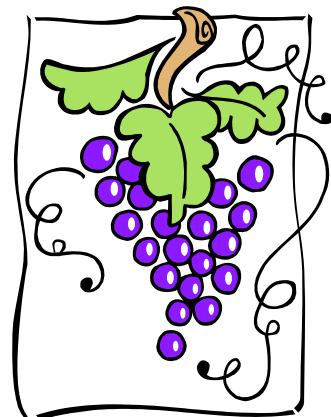




“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”

...conclusion of front page

...To go to such efforts would seem fanatical to the modern church. Yet if you look around at the church in our country, do you find it useful and fruitful? Are we being salt and light – preserving the culture and enlightening it with the gospel of Christ? Perhaps our society might be different if the church possessed these qualities in increasing measure? One can only wonder!





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

*“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.”
(Ephesians 1:3)*

All the goodness of the past, the present, and the future, Christ bestows upon his people. In the mysterious ages of the past the Lord Jesus was his Father’s first elect, and in his *election* he gave us an interest, for we were chosen in him from before the foundation of the world. He had from all eternity the prerogatives of *Sonship*, as his Father’s only-begotten and well-beloved Son, and he has, in the riches of his grace, by adoption and regeneration, elevated us to sonship also, so that to us he has given “power to become the sons of God.” The *eternal covenant*, based upon suretyship and confirmed by oath, is ours, for our strong consolation and security. In the *everlasting settlements of predestinating wisdom* and omnipotent decree, the eye of the Lord Jesus was ever fixed on us; and we may rest assured that in the whole roll of destiny there is not a line which militates against the interests of his redeemed. The *great betrothal* of the Prince of Glory is ours, for it is to us that he is affianced, as the sacred nuptials shall ere long declare to an assembled universe. The *marvellous incarnation* of the God of heaven, with all the amazing condescension and humiliation which attended it, is ours. The bloody sweat, the scourge, the cross, are ours forever. Whatever blissful consequences flow from *perfect obedience, finished atonement, resurrection, ascension, or intercession*, all are ours by his own gift. Upon his breastplate he is now bearing our names; and in his authoritative pleadings at the throne he remembers our persons and pleads our cause. His *dominion* over principalities and powers, and his absolute majesty in heaven, he employs for the benefit of them who trust in him. His high estate is as much at our service as was his condition of abasement. He who gave himself for us in the depths of woe and death, doth not withdraw the grant now that he is enthroned in the highest heavens.

Morning, May 9, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Spring Work Day

The Spring Work Day will be held on Saturday, May 17th. Projects range from outdoor work to inside cleaning. Come if you’re able! Work starts at 8:00 a.m.

