



June *newsletter*

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN: "SUMMER DINNER PARTY"

Would you like to make some new friends at Grace? We'd love for you to participate in our "Summer Dinner Party"! For two weeks later this summer, Grace is going to coordinate a couple dozen dinner parties around the Seal Beach area, and we want you to join in! Just let us know what days you are not available between July 29-August 13 and whether or not you'd be up to hosting. We'll connect you with some new friends for an evening of fun, conversation, and food. If you have questions, contact Pastor Bob.

SPECIAL MEN'S BREAKFAST: GRADUATING SENIOR GUYS

The Men of Grace are inviting all graduating senior guys to be our guests at our next breakfast on **June 3 at 8:30am**. We would like to encourage, buy your breakfast, give you a super cool gift, and send all graduates off with a blessing. Students please RSVP to Pastor Tim (tim@gracesealbeach.org). If you have questions, please contact Bob Wissmann (562.889.2728).

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Did you know that God created every star, every planet, and everything on earth and in space, too? This amazing God also has a plan for every single person, including you! This year at VBS we'll be looking through the lens of science and discovering the wonderful universe God has created, finding our place in God's great story.

Sign up **TODAY** to be a part of this amazing week! We are also looking for anyone who wants to step in as a volunteer for the week to lead these little ones.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Women's Retreat

With "Blessings in Disguise" as our speaker's theme, the nearly 60 women who attended this year's retreat were inspired and challenged by Trish Williams' insightful teaching from the book of Ruth. Great encouragement was given as we considered Ruth's character and realized that God wants *us* to move forward and to follow Him in spite of life's obstacles. When we love God and stay committed to Him in even difficult circumstances, this love for God will sustain us through times of temptation and trials that otherwise might tear us apart! Living our life as a faithful Christian doesn't exempt us from difficulties. The book of Ruth reminds us that God has a plan for us, even when we don't see it, even when we are tempted to give up and even in the



seemingly worst circumstances. God brings us hope as we surrender our perception of our situation to Him and allow Him to mold our character to be like Him. Trish was conscientious in her provision of many scriptural references that teach how to be close to God in troubled times; a resource that all will find beneficial in the future.

In addition to biblical input, many enjoyed the extended time of worship provided by this year's music team, headed by Dorothy Wineman. Judy Murphy shared a moving testimony of how the Lord has used several severe trials in her life to make her the woman she is today. Small group discussions, door prizes, a mixer, as well as several opportunities to connect with friends and to meet new ones, rounded out our memorable day together.

Summer Bible Study – *Being a Disciple: Counting the Real Cost* by Kay Arthur – Six week study

What is the difference between a true follower of Jesus Christ and others who merely call themselves "Christian"? What are the distinctive marks of a disciple of Christ and how can we make sure they are true of us? What does it mean to count the cost, deny yourself and follow Christ? Join us this summer for an eye-opening study of passages from the four gospels that will bring you face to face with what it means to deny yourself and follow Christ.

We'll begin **Tuesday, June 20, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.** and **Friday, June 23, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.** Both groups meet in the Offshore Room. Study guides cost \$6 and will be available after services on June 11 and 18. We will not meet the week of July 2 (as the 4th falls on Tuesday), nor during VBS week; the following week.

CONGRATULATIONS DAVID PALKA

Congratulations to David Palka, recipient of the Leftwich Leadership Trophy, the Marine Corp's highest annual honor for Captains. Contact the church office if you wish to view the video highlighting David's leadership and service. David, Julie, and their family are part of the Parents Online life group and attend the 9:30 service.

GRADUATES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our July newsletter will feature all recent graduates – high school, vocational school, college/university (any kind of degree or certificate), and/or military academy. The deadline for this info is Sunday, June 18. Please contact the church office at 562-596-1605 or info@gracesealbeach.org.

Lambano Sanctuary was founded in 2001 to help HIV positive children with little chance of survival.

Now, in 2017, they care for 28 orphan children aged 9 to 19 years in 4 group homes in Germinston, South Africa. All these children have life limiting and often life threatening medical conditions and many came to Lambano as babies and toddlers who were very close to death. They are raised in the Christian faith in a nurturing environment of love, compassion, and godly discipline.

Lambano also operates the only pediatric step-down facility and children's hospice in Gauteng province (Johannesburg, the largest city in South Africa, is in Gauteng province).



There are 16 beds in the accredited facility which has a full complement of trained medical personnel. Here they treat children with critical medical conditions including HIV/TB, cancer, burns, renal, cardiac, respiratory, brain damage, and genetic defects.

Lambano currently receives children from five public hospitals and plans to expand their relationships to several additional public facilities and to a number of private hospitals as well.

With such extensive expertise, they have expanded their ministry to include home based care which provides for the needs of mothers caring for their sick children at home. In addition, they have a "sustainability project", which is a skills development initiative for these mothers who often struggle or fail to make ends meet.

If you are interested in learning more, see <http://www.lambano.org.za/>. You may also donate to Lambano by designating your gift through their website or through Grace Community Church. It costs approximately \$600 per child per month to educate, feed, clothe, house and provide the needed medical services. Last year, Lambano operated on a total budget of only \$635,000.

SUMMER FUN?

Tax Season is over and most of us are enjoying the spring and planning and getting ready for summer fun! Vacations and Holiday trips take a little bit of planning to get the most out of the time and money spent.

Taxes – which are not fun - are not first and foremost on our minds at this time. Just like vacations however, taking advantage of opportunities that are available to us in the tax code, requires a little bit of planning.

Every April, tax day rolls around and we are reminded once again about how much we spend every year in support of our state and federal governments. For most of us, it's not a pleasant reminder but we soldier on with the understanding that taxes are a necessary part of life. Many Americans are unaware of just how generous our nation is when it comes to encouraging charitable giving and how our own generosity can significantly reduce or eliminate some taxes altogether. This is particularly true when it comes to our personal estates. For instance, did you know that at the death of a surviving spouse, there is a tax liability on any funds left in your IRA or 401(k)? It's called an IRD tax (Income in Respect of a Decedent) and it's totally avoidable. Yet, the vast majority of family estates experience this tax due to a simple lack of awareness.

Winston Churchill said: "There is no such thing as a good tax." Fortunately, there is a very simple and powerful way to avoid the IRD tax and that is by directing part or all of what remains in your retirement

funds to charity. By making a simple beneficiary change on your IRA or 401(k) you can reduce or eliminate some taxes, still provide generously for your heirs, and perhaps make the largest charitable gift of your lifetime. This gift will go to charities of your choice at your death, and this designation does not change your ability to use these resources for your needs during your lifetime.

Are you curious about what this would look like for your estate? Take few minutes to complete the My Legacy Planner (MLP) at: <http://gracesealbeach.org/offering-donations/legacy-planning>

This free, secure and confidential tool will illustrate the kind of impact you can have while also avoiding one of the most overlooked taxes in our country. By using Grace's My Legacy Planner, we hope to help you turn the unpleasant reminders of Tax Season into a blessing by learning how to avoid future taxes while making a huge difference in the world around you! Take a little time now and get ready to take advantage and get the most out of your available resources.

If you prefer to speak to an informed individual about how this might benefit you, please call Grace's representative Ron Blomberg by phone at: 562-879-9525. You can also email Ron at: ron.blomberg@biola.edu

Just remember that this is a free, *confidential* consultation. Please know that none of your information is given to anyone at Grace. Ron is sponsored by Grace, so there is no cost to you to speak with him about your questions and options.

UPDATE ON YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

Hello Parents!

This past year of serving as the Interim Director of Youth Ministry has been an enormous blessing on my life. I am so grateful for all the support you have given me and the Youth Ministry Team throughout all the transitions. Through much prayer and council, I believe I am being called to serve in the future as the Director of Middle School Ministry rather than the previously planned High School Ministry. We have been searching for a Middle School Director for nine months. Throughout this time we have had a difficult time finding exactly who God had for us. Through this well thought process my heart began to shift toward the idea of becoming the director myself. I approached Pastor Bob and Pastor Tim early in my heart's sway toward Middle School. After discussing this option with the elder board, praying over the ministry, and confirming with me this is truly where I believe God is calling me, we have decided to move forward in this direction. I am so truly excited! I will be serving as the Interim Director of Youth Ministry until we are able to find the right High School Director.

My hope for our parents and students is to be assured the relationships we have built will continue and I am still available to all of you. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I am eager to hear from you and eager to see where this next year takes this ministry and our church.

Thank you for partnering with me, pursuing your students, and guiding them to become lifelong disciples of Christ.



Randi Kisner,
Interim Director of Youth Ministry

From Pastor Bob

Randi is a terrific leader, and I'm grateful that she'll be leading our middle school ministry, hopefully for years to come. Her desire to serve the church and community throughout this search process has been a huge encouragement to me. Please join me in praying that God will bring the right person to partner with our high school students, volunteers, and parents in ministry.



GRACE STORIES

What is happening around Grace? Glad you asked. I'm looking forward to sharing with you some of the stories I hear about God's work in our church, and what I'm looking forward to.

Known by Name

- *Grace Stories* - If you weren't at Grace on Mother's Day, you missed an incredible Grace Story from Fiona Keller. She described how God's grace was with her through the challenges of raising a special needs child. (You can hear Fiona's story by visiting the church's website or contacting the church office)
- *All-Church Picnic* (June 4) - This is a great chance to make some new friends, enjoy intergenerational fellowship, and relax in a park with our community. Liz Fukumura has done a great job organizing this again this year. It will be at a different location (Rossmoor Park) this year, as the other location (Rush Park) is under construction.

Participatory Worship

- *Devotionals for Mother's Day and Father's Day* - In addition to the standard candy suckers, we purchased devotionals from Christianity Today branded for Mother's Day and Father's Day to distribute. This is part of a larger plan to make more devotional resources available to the church. Let me know what you think of these tools.
- *Lent Audio Devotional* - Thank you to Pastor Justin for recording and posting online a series of audio devotionals tied to the themes of Lent.
- *"Will of God" one-day retreat* - Pastor Justin hosted a helpful one-day retreat on the topic of the "will of God" at the end of May. If you weren't able to attend, but interested in the topic, he'd love to have coffee with you and talk about it.

Missional Life

- *Atlanta mission trip (High School/College)* - At the end of June, the high school and college ministries are hosting a short-term mission trip to Atlanta with Encompass. We'll be praying for them on June 11th in the worship services.

- *Seal Beach community events* - Grace will have a table at the "Be More Healthy Expo" (June 3) and the "Leisure World Expo" in September. If you want to help us expand our community presence, let Pastor Justin know!
- *Middle School Seal Beach mission trip* - Our youth ministry is built around helping students move "Up" (toward God), "In" (Christian community), and "Out" (mission). During the weekend of Memorial Day, Middle School had a local mission trip where the students served our local community through the laundromat on PCH ("out"), helped repaint a room at the church ("in"), and spend time with God in prayer ("up").

Faithful Compassion

- *Good Neighbor Team* - After completing training through World Relief, one of our Compassion Ministry partners, a group of Grace members welcomed a refugee family from Syria this month at John Wayne airport with practical needs, transportation, and the love of Christ.
- *Stephen Ministry* - Our Stephen Ministers continue to provide outstanding care for people in our church and broader community. While confidentiality prevents me from sharing specific stories, I am so grateful for the life change I see happening through these ministers.

Biblical Worldview

- *Women's Retreat* - Women's Ministry hosted a one day retreat at the Mary and Joseph Center on April 29. Trish Williams spoke on "Blessings in Disguise" from the book of Ruth.
- *Summer Life Groups* - Have an idea for a summer Bible study? Let Pastor Tim or I know, we'd love to help it happen.

Grateful to get to serve with you all!

Pastor Bob



LEADING WITH GRACE

Something that's been on my heart since assuming the chair of the Board of Elders in January has been starting a column for this newsletter. In the recent transitions, a few have suggested it might be helpful to hear more from the Elders, and I agree.

To start things off, I should make some introductions. Our current board includes (from left to right):



Bob Wissmann – bobwissmann77@gmail.com
Robert Harrell – harrellr@gmail.com
Glen Fukumura – liz83glen81@msn.com
Bob Wriedt (Senior Pastor) – bob@gracesealbeach.org
Travis Greene (Chairman) – travisgreene@juno.com
Tim Culling (Associate Pastor) – tim@gracesealbeach.org
Tom Enyart (Vice Chairman) – taenyart@verizon.net
David Gray – dave.rx@verizon.net
Matt Archuleta – mattjarchuleta@gmail.com
Ken Quarnstrom – kennethquarnstrom@gmail.com (not pictured)

We each make it a priority to serve and be involved in the life of the church, so you may be more familiar with some of us than others. But feel free to reach out to any of us with questions, ideas or constructive criticism. We love hearing from you and we welcome your prayer requests and prayer support of our work. Also, if you'd like to see the minutes from our meetings, they are published in a binder in the library marked "Elder Board."

For this month, I'd like to address a question I've heard recently, which is, "what is the role of the Board of Elders?" There is some confusion – does the board operate like a corporate board that oversees a CEO (our senior pastor in that analogy)? Or is it more like the Supreme Court, guarding our doctrinal beliefs and overruling Pastoral decisions when they go out of bounds?

Thankfully, neither of those analogies fit. Our system of church governance is referred to as a "plurality of elders." We view the Biblical role of an elder as one who is a pastor or shepherd to the congregation in a form of shared leadership and authority, under the headship of

Christ. In fact, the New Testament makes no distinction between the terms "Elder", "Pastor", "Bishop" or "Overseer", using those terms interchangeably.

What that means is, none of us on the board, from the senior pastor to the newest elder, outranks anyone else when acting in the role of elder. When we meet, we seek to collaborate and strive for unanimous decisions that are in keeping with Scripture and the leading of the Spirit. Practically, what that means is that when we cannot achieve a unanimous consensus on a decision (and vigorous debate happens from time to time), we will table a decision until everyone can support it. That usually means additional prayer, research or adjusting the action.

We also are active shepherds to the congregation. While we do have staff pastors (Bob, Tim and Justin), who are educated and gifted with abilities to lead and teach in ways that call for full-time vocational ministry, our lay elders share the responsibility of caring for and leading the church, balancing one another's weaknesses, lightening the workload, and providing accountability.

Although no one elder has greater formal authority than any of the others, certain elders will emerge as natural leaders in particular areas, and thus provide helpful leadership that the other elders will respect. Also, it is appropriate for the elders of a church to focus on varying shepherding responsibilities. For example, one may be primarily responsible for preaching on Sunday mornings, another for overseeing life groups, another for missions, children, youth, worship, and so forth.

With this level of authority and responsibility comes a significant level of qualification. In Scripture, we refer to Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-4 for qualifications and guidance. We have also found that those who prioritize service in the church tend to make good elders. Other qualifications can be found in our [Bylaws](#).

If you are a member of Grace Community Church of Seal Beach, you have a responsibility as well in electing nominees to the Board of Elders at our business meeting each year. This is a significant act in the life of our church that allows for the continuation of our plurality of elders model, as elders term out after a maximum of six years of service.

I hope this brief explanation helps you to understand better the role of our elders and pastors, but let me know if you have further questions. Something good is happening at Grace, and I'm honored to be leading with you into this new season.