

November

GRACE NEWS

THANKSGIVING THEEFOLD

Our annual Threefold Communion will be held on **Sunday, November 19** at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. The Love Feast will be carry in; please provide the following food items based on your last name:

A-H: Main Dish, **I-R:** Dessert, and **T-Z:** Salad or Vegetable. Please bring enough to serve 10 people. Questions about our Threefold Communion? Find a "Frequently Asked Questions" form on the second floor bulletin board.

ALL-CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

Join us on **Sunday, December 3** at 4pm in the Sanctuary. We'll be presenting on:

- The Grace Report Card, where we report on how we did at living out our five core values this year in ministry.
- Vision and ministry goals for 2018.
- The finances of the church and the 2018 budget (with voting)
- Nominees for the board of elders (with voting).

Note: You must have Grace Membership and be 18 year+ to vote. If you do not know if you are a member please contact the church office at 562.596.1605 or info@gracesebeach.org.

Grace Worship Services

November 5 (Pastor Bob)

- Romans 8:18-25
- "Waiting for More"
- All-Saints Sunday

November 12 (Pastor Bob)

- Romans 8:26-30
- "What is Good About Weak Faith"

November 19 (Pastor Bob)

- Romans 8:31-39
- "Bulletproof"
- Thanksgiving Sunday

November 26 (Pastor Justin)

- Psalm 100
- "Thanksgiving: the Password to the Kingdom"
- First Sunday of Advent

EMBRACE WEAKNESS IF YOU WANT TO ABIDE IN CHRIST

Leading with Grace, November 2017
By Travis Greene

Some Christians like to have what is sometimes called a “life verse.” A favorite passage of Scripture that is particularly meaningful for them. That provides them inspiration, hope or motivation. There are some common ones such as Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through him (Christ) who strengthens me.” That one made a recurring appearance on Tim Tebow’s eye black when he led the Florida Gators to two national college football championships. Or maybe Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” I once met someone who would quote that a couple of times a day, making it difficult for me to refrain from explaining to him that in context, [it doesn’t mean what he thinks it means](#).

It’s telling that I’ve never heard anyone select a life verse like Matthew 10:38 – “And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” Or James 3:9-10 – “With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.” We tend to gravitate towards verses that make us feel better about ourselves rather than reminding us of our own weakness.

Scripture, though, tells us we should embrace weakness more. Paul talks about being given a “thorn in the flesh” in 2 Cor 12:8-10: “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

We tend to gravitate towards verses that make us feel better about ourselves rather than reminding us of our own weakness.

This idea of boasting of weakness is so foreign to me – really to the whole of our culture. We revere the most beautiful celebrities, cheer the fastest athletes and elect the most prideful politicians. When someone posts something we disagree with on social media, rather than asking questions to try and understand, our first tendency is to react with the strength of our argument. When we hear of a friend who has lost a loved one, are the words we use to comfort borne out of a heart of pride, demonstrating that we are really good at comforting, or do we admit, “I don’t know what to say, but I’m here for you.”?

Do we long for a strong church—a church that sings just the right songs set to just the right music before the pastor preaches just the right sermon to a room filled with just the right mix of people who happen to agree with us on just about everything? Or do we value a church that is crafted of obviously imperfect people struggling with weight gain, anger, depression, pride or physical infirmities, and yet willing to admit weakness and serve in whatever capacity possible for the sake of the Kingdom? What would it say about God if He did miraculous things through a church of people who admitted their weaknesses?

In Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth, he reminds them, “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.” (1 Cor 1:27) If I’m being honest, this doesn’t resonate with me. I know there are times in scripture where, for example, God chooses a tiny nation of former slaves to displace the Canaanites in the promised land. Or selects a poor girl from the backwater town of Nazareth to bring the Son of God into the world. But how strong is too strong? How weak do I really need to be? Is this even about me as an individual, or is this more about the church?

It’s difficult to abide without first embracing weakness.

I’ve been thinking about this as I prepare to lead worship at All Church Camp at the end of October. Our theme this year is taken from John 15 – Abide in Jesus: apart from Him you can do nothing. I hear that and I want to incorporate it into my life deeper. But suddenly I’ve come

to the realization that it’s difficult to abide without first embracing weakness. What need do I have to abide if I can do things under my own power?

I have a tendency to run out ahead of God to do His work. In my zeal and certainty of my convictions, I’m prone to prioritizing planning over prayer. I’m largely unaware of many of my own weaknesses, a bubble punctured every so often by catching a glimpse of how dense I’ve been to miss an obvious truth like “you can’t abide until you understand that you are weak.”

I’m grateful for brothers on the Board of Elders who help one another to see where we need to abide more. I’m grateful for an opportunity to dwell deeper on abiding and weakness at camp. What a gift to be able to take that time and learn. If you aren’t going to make it to camp this year, let’s chat about it – I’d love to learn how you see this playing out in the life of our church. See you around Grace.

MEET THE RICAFRANCAS!

In the next few weeks, you'll get the chance to get to connect with our newest staff member and his family. Jason officially begins as our new High School Director on November 1, but about 90 of us will get a sneak preview of the whole family at church camp.

I recently asked Jason a few questions to help us get to know them a bit better. By the way, if you want to know how to pronounce their last name, just ask any of our staff members.

Q: What are 3 words you'd use to describe your family?

A: Playful, Caring, Hospitable

Q: What are you most looking forward to as you consider coming on board at Grace?

A: Having fun and creating new friendships

Q: Outside of family and ministry, what do you and Annie enjoy doing?

A: Eating out, watching movies, going on long drives, and joking around

Q: Anything quirky about you or the Ricafranca family that you'd like to share?

A: We're a pretty goofy bunch. Give us enough time and we'll do something silly and possibly embarrassing in front of you

I, for one, can't wait to see all the embarrassing moments, but especially how God is going to use the Ricafrancas to minister to our youth and contribute to God's great work here in Seal Beach. Keep them in prayer and be sure to welcome Jason, Annie and their 3 adorable children next time you see them.

- **Pastor Tim**



PROJECT
MISSIONWISH
— SHARING GOD'S GIFTS WITH MISSIONARIES AROUND THE WORLD —

Do you want to connect with our missionaries in a unique and tangible way?
We have an opportunity to show our love and share our gifts
with them at Christmas time.

Stop by our table on the patio throughout November, or contact Karin Greene,
so **YOU** can take part in connecting with our missionaries.

Sign a Christmas card, choose a gift to purchase for them or you can make a
monetary donation to go towards purchasing gifts.

Monetary donations may be given during offertory or dropped off
at the PMW table on the patio; please designate PMW.

Questions? Contact: Karin Greene kwolffgreene@gmail.com, 562.500.7084

Each month, there is so much good that happens in and through our church. Here are a few of the things from the last month that I'd love for you to hear about. - Pastor Bob

Known by Name

- Wave 3 Celebration Picnic - After the services on 10/22, we had a great time celebrating the successful completion of our Wave 3 renovation project. We received generous donations of food from a variety of Seal Beach restaurants, so please thank Z Pizza, Javatinis, O'Malley's, Hennesey's, Old Town Café and Sweet Jill's next time you're there! Thank you, too, to Jaime Townzen who organized the picnic and the Men's Ministry for grilling the food.
- Welcome Luncheon - We hosted about a dozen people who were new to Grace for a "Welcome Luncheon" in October. If you're newer to Grace and want to participate in the next one, talk to Pastor Tim.

Missional Life

- Christianity Explored - Our second "Christianity Explored" course has built off the strength of the first time through, which is an encouragement. Some who went through it the first time brought friends or coworkers with them this time, which is our goal. Additionally, a number of people are coming who saw the press coverage about it in the Sun Newspaper. A great team of volunteers is running it, under Pastor Tim's leadership.
- Veteran's Day event - We are co-hosting this event with the Lion's Club, and details are coming together well. Travis Greene and Riley Whaling will be speaking, Pastor Justin will be leading music, and Pastors Bob and Don lead in prayer.

Biblical Worldview

- Life Groups - In addition to our numerous on-going groups, Jerry Wiltz is leading a new group this fall ("Astrophysics and Us") that is seeing a good response. Pastor Justin & Heidi's course "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" also started with a full-house.
- Children's Ministry - Our Search Advisory Team is continuing to make progress in interviewing potential candidates. In the interim, we're grateful for the volunteers and the interim Sunday School coordinators, Gaby Fukumura and Calee King.
- Leadership Lab - Our leadership lab topic for October was, "How to Lead When You Aren't In Charge." The November leadership lab topic will be, "How to Recruit Volunteers," on 11/12. Pastor Justin will be leading the time.
- Grandparent ministry - Pastor Steve's life group on Grandparenting is standing room only. He's planning to go to the Legacy Grandparenting conference in Texas in November.

Participatory Worship

- Worship kick-off event - Pastor Justin hosted a beginning of the school year dinner event for the volunteers in the worship ministry at his home this month. He shared vision, celebrated volunteer successes, and previewed the year to come.
- All-Church Camp - We had about 90 Grace folks head up to Oak Glen for a weekend of worship, learning, rest, play, and connection. Our speaker this year was Brandon Cook, lead pastor of Long Beach Christian Fellowship.

Faithful Compassion

- Hurricane relief - People from Grace have given generously to the FGBC's response to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Amanda is working with volunteers who have indicated an interest to participate in the short-term aid teams.
- Women's Charity luncheon - Our women's ministry hosted a luncheon to highlight a ministry that helps stop domestic sex trafficking. We had a very strong response, from women as young as middle school to older adults.
- Homeless ministry - because of the generous donations from Grace members, our homeless resources are fully stocked with sleeping bags, blankets and toiletries for those in need who drop by Grace during the week. Sheila Barnes, who serves with the Compassion Ministry, has come on as our homeless liaison to help keep supplies stocked and serve in various other ways.

Christmastime at Grace

- **Seal Beach Christmas Tree Lighting (11/11):** Would you like to help us share God's love with hundreds of families gathering in our "backyard" (Eisenhower Park)? We're putting together ideas and a team to reach out at this event. Please contact Justin (justin@gracesealbeach.org) ASAP if you'd like to be a part!
- **Seal Beach Christmas Parade (12/1):** We'd love help with crowd engagement ideas, parade participants, technical consultants, truck/trailer owners or drivers. Please contact Justin (justin@gracesealbeach.org) if you're interested in being a part!
- **"Seal Beach Christmas Carol Sing" (12/7):** Don't miss our annual celebration; singing carols together, plus enjoying the choir and potluck dessert! Invite a friend! 7PM on Thursday night, Dec. 7
- **Christmas Eve Services (12/24):** Join us as we celebrate the real reason for the season. We will offer four services - 9:30am\11:00am\4:00pm\5:30pm.

VETERAN'S DAY

Grace will be co-hosting a Veteran's Day event with the Seal Beach Lions Club at Eisenhower Park (the bluff overlooking the ocean) on November 11. If you'd like to participate, we need help with greeters, singers, and set-up/tear-down.

We hope to see you there!

Contact Pastor Bob:
(bob@gracesealbeach.org or
562.596.1605 x11)

CHURCH CHRISTMAS DECORATING

Come join us on **Tuesday, November 28** as we prepare the church for the Christmas season. We have a variety of decorating jobs!

To sign up please contact Christa at
562.596.1605 x18.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Fall Event - Ladies Day Off

As ladies we have a lot of demands on our time as we are often nurturing and caring for others. Somehow in the process, we can often neglect ourselves. This year's fall event, under the capable leadership of Donna Barr, was geared to encourage and to refresh even the weariest among us. From the lobby entrance and throughout all rooms in use that day; beauty, creativity and tasteful seasonal decorations were purposeful in encouraging and uplifting each participant. After an hour around the tables to enjoy fellowship, a light breakfast with a coffee/tea/beverage bar, short videos, and a mixer game with prizes; ladies were able to choose two of three breakout sessions. Cheryl Yacoubian and Shawna Enyart shared their remarkable and moving personal stories followed by a Q & A time with resources available related to their topics. The second option was a mini-pumpkin succulent craft and the third option was coloring and relaxation to music.



Thirteen children participated in the children's program where they enjoyed snacks, a children's video and time outside in the church's new play area. Most importantly, they had the opportunity to create over 80 "Socks of Love" kits which will be distributed to the homeless among us. Thank you to all who contributed items for this important outreach.

The written comment of one woman summed up her experience in this way:

"I thought today was awesome. Such a beautiful mix of familiar and new faces. Every room I walked into, I saw the Lord at work bringing together wonderful fellowship. And as I have said more than once today, those were two of the most powerful testimonies I have ever heard. It was truly a blessed morning."

Upcoming Women's Events

Single Women of Distinction – Sunday, Nov. 5

This is an opportunity for women from early 20's and up to make new acquaintances and to strengthen friendships around a meal shared together. Meet in front of the church after the third service and we'll walk over to Main St. together.

PSST Evening – Friday, Nov. 10 (7 -10PM)

Looking for something fun to do on a fall evening? Come join us for a time of playing Pictionary, socializing combined with a snack time. If you would like to bring a snack, we welcome your contribution. Invite a friend! Sign-ups on Nov. 5.

Christmas Ornament/small Gift exchange

When: Monday, December 4 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Where: Offshore Room

Bring an item valued at \$7-10.

Sign-ups: after services on Nov. 26 and Dec. 3.

MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP

As we enter a time of thanksgiving and the holiday season, we reflect on our blessings and the importance of family - our biological and church family. The Men of Grace will gather to share their experiences and insights on gratitude. How do we develop an attitude of gratitude? As men we can often be consumed by our fears and worries. Is that because we struggle with trusting God? What instruction can we get from Scripture to live a life of gratitude? Come join us on **Saturday, November 4** at Malarkeys Grill in Long Beach at 8:30 am. Looking forward to seeing you there for good eats, fellowship, and coffee on the bay.

RSVP: Scott Batstone ([562 431-4042](tel:562-431-4042))
(the restaurant can plan accordingly)

QUESTIONS: Bob Wissmann ([562-889-2728](tel:562-889-2728))