

DECEMBER 2018



GRACE FOR YOU

Official Newsletter of Grace Presbyterian Church

WWW.GRACECHURCH-PCUSA.COM

PASSIONATE WORSHIP

BY PASTOR JOSH

I continue my newsletter series on the book by Missouri Methodist Bishop Robert Schnase called "*The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*." So far I have written about how "fruitful congregations" engage in: Radical Hospitality, Risk-Taking Mission & Service, and Extravagant Generosity. This month I will add that fruitful congregations engage in *Passionate Worship*.

Worship is where the Body of Christ becomes present within us, through us, and among us. As the people gather together, we seek to encounter Christ with eagerness through our experiences of singing, prayer, scripture, preaching, and the sacraments of communion and baptism.

People who are new to the Church or who are returning to the Church, seek worship experiences that are authentic, creative, alive, and comprehensible. They want their experience of worship to be life-changing, not affirming of their current life.

And *Radical Hospitality* is a critical aspect of *Passionate Worship* - because any church who doesn't welcome newcomers as though they were Christ himself, who doesn't have open doors for all, and who doesn't make visitors feel a sense of belonging or connection to the community, have already hindered that visitor's experience of worship.

Often the worship service is a person's first experience with the church - though the rapid development of social media is changing that. Visitors expect to find genuine warmth (not a quick "welcome" and then leaving them alone), an emphasis on excellence in the service (not something that feels thrown together or done on the fly), and a message that is presented in a form that engages them (in our current culture, that often requires images on a screen and talking about current issues.)

A church must fully understand the purpose of worship, otherwise people leave without having received an experience of God. *Passionate Worship* takes us out of our comfort zones so that we can experience the power of the Holy Spirit who transforms us into new people and helps us grow as Disciples of Christ. (Because one can never grow from a place of comfort.)

Each week the people should experience the power of resurrection. In the early Church, each Sunday was seen as a "little Easter" celebration because the resurrection is central to our identity as Christians. This emphasis on worship should wake us up, makes us say, "aha!", and give us an experience of the divine that takes us out of the lives we've made for ourselves and puts us into the plan that God has for each of us.

As far as technical aspects of *Passionate Worship* - it should engage all the senses - using both music and silence, visuals/focal points, smells, and even tactile experiences. *Passionate Worship* should also happen outside of regular Sunday services. Worship should also be integrated into committee meetings, mission trips, and church retreats. And each area of the church's ministry should be involved in helping to strengthen the community's worship including helping to lead worship, preparing liturgy/prayers for worship, and creating spaces for the people to engage in communal prayer outside of worship.

Worship should also end with ways that visitors can connect with the congregation after worship - be it at Fellowship Hour, an on-going bible study, a small group, prayer circle, or other upcoming activity. Those visitors should be invited by the members to these activities/events, otherwise they have no other reasons to return or contribute beyond Sunday services.

I am excited at the ways we continue to grow in making our worship more passionate. The Seasonal teams have done an excellent job of bringing us many creative ways to engage with the Holy Spirit during worship. I look forward to many more!

Calm and Bright :

200 Years of Silent Night

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

www.gracechurch-pcusa.com
@gracechurchcrystalcity

The 2018 Advent/Christmas Team:

Chris Gladden, Amy & Bob Petschonek, Mark Trautwein,
Paula Westbrook, Lillian Manning, & Pat Breeze

Theme & Worship

The Advent/Christmas Team's theme for 2018 is "**Calm and Bright**". This year is the 200th anniversary of the debut of "Silent Night". This hymn has become the best-loved worship moment of many Christians - even those who only come to church one a year. Something magical occurs as we light our candles and sing the hope of "all is calm, all is bright" - peace and light for the world. This worship series will celebrate the carol's message over the entire season of Advent and into Christmas as we highlight its call for our lives that can guide us all year long. Many events during this season will be very familiar but there are a few beautiful changes and powerful additions as well!

Hospitality & Mission

The Advent/Christmas Team has several ways for welcoming and serving our community and getting the congregation involved with the work of the church:

November 27 & December 4, 2018: *Words on Wood* at 6:30 pm. Two different opportunities to get a jump on making some decorations for your home or for making a unique gift for someone special. More info coming. Please see Amy Petschonek with questions.

December 2, 9, & 16, 2018: We have adopted **3 teens from the Homeless Youth Initiative** this year. These kids provide us with a list of items that they need to help them survive the school year and some items they would like to have. **The Team is challenging you to donate 10% of what you spent on Christmas gifts last year.**

Our support of these teens is crucial to get them through high school and on to college so they can become upstanding citizens and break the cycle of homelessness. You will have the opportunity to donate on three Sundays, December 2, 9, & 16.

Chris Gladden will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Dec 16, 2018: The Advent Team is serving **Brunch after Worship**. The Team is supplying all of the food and drinks. **In lieu of bringing a dish, we will take up a collection to benefit Ride-On STL.** This is an equine program that is located in Kimmswick, MO. They are a comprehensive therapy, conditioning and learning non-profit organization serving adults and children with disabilities, veterans and youth in and around the St. Louis area. We hope you could donate the amount of money you would have spent on bringing a dish. Any questions concerning Ride-On STL, see Lillian Manning.

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASON MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES



Twin City Christmas Parade Float Preparation - November 24

Twin City Christmas Parade work day at Kirk Jackson's garage. Time to be announced. All are welcome to help decorate the float. All supplies will be ready and waiting. We just need more hands to make the work go faster. More info on the parade is upcoming. Bob & Amy Petschonek are coordinating this event

Twin City Christmas Parade - November 26



We will have children ride on the float as well as a small bell choir.

The Harvest Team will serve hot cocoa, coffee, & cookies to the community from the gazebo. To help with making cookies or serving cocoa/coffee, speak to the Harvest Team members.

This year's theme is **Jingle Bells!**

Hanging of the Greens - December 2 - during worship

Hanging of the Greens with Clyde's Buddies.

If you would like to keep the same buddies you had before, please get together and let Chris Gladden know.

There are lots of ways that the children and adults can help with Hanging of the Greens, a traditional way that we can help decorate the church.

Watch for a sign-up sheet coming soon.



ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASON MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES



Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service - December 21 @ 7:00 pm

Come to this special evening service that occurs on the night of the Winter Solstice (the longest night of the year). The service focuses on comforting those for whom the holidays are difficult or painful either because of the loss of a loved one, personal struggles, or conflicts with family and friends. If you or someone you know will have their first Christmas without a loved one, this service is especially for you/them. The service is also a powerful reminder that even though the dark night feels long, Light is arriving soon...



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services - December 24 @ 4 pm & 11 pm



We will have two services to celebrate the birth of Christ: one at 4:00 pm, focused on families, and another at 11:00 PM. Communion will be served at both services.

Please plan on joining us at one of these services as it promises to be something very special - one you don't want to miss.

Bring all your family & friends!

Agape Feast - December 30 - during worship

For the 3rd year in a row, we will celebrate the Christmas season with our annual Agape Feast.

Bring your favorite sweet bread to share and your #experiencegrace travel mug for hot coffee or cocoa.

We will worship by singing Christmas Carols and enjoying each other's company as a church family. Feel free to wear your warm pajamas (or just dress casually).



SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY



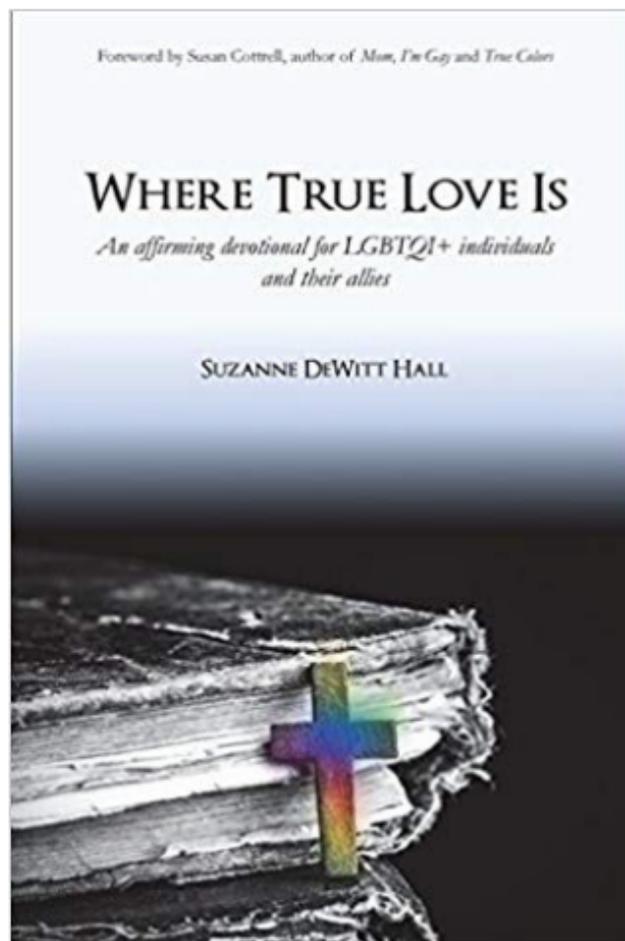
Bible Study: "Where True Love Is" by Suzanne DeWitt-Hall Thursdays, 6:30-8:00 pm - October 18 through December 20

The study of the devotional, *Where True Love Is* by Suzanne DeWitt-Hall continues this month and into December. Suzanne and her wife Diane have generously offered to lead a study of Suzanne's devotional and to invite the entire community to participate in the study as well. So far we have around ten people from at least three different churches participating in the study.

The study continues on **Thursday nights from 6:30-8:00 pm**, in the Fellowship Hall.

For more information, please go to the church's website (under "Sharing" and "Small Groups"): <http://www.gracechurch-pcusa.com/small-groups.html>

**This devotional study is for ALL people!
Feel free to join us, even if you haven't been able to attend yet!**



ANNOUNCEMENTS & GRATITUDE

Joleene McAually - Backpacks for Foster Kids

Dear Ladies of Grace Presbyterian Church,

I'm sorry I'm late in thanking you for the lovely quilts.

I do so much appreciate all your hard work and dedication.

I had cataract surgery recently and my "thanks" got pushed aside.

My apologies.

GRACE WEEKLY EVENTS

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THR

FRI

SAT

12/01/18

GRACE WEEKLY EVENTS

SUN

12/02/18

9:30 am - Adult Bible Study
10:45 am - Worship - "Heavenly Peace"
Hanging of the Greens
11:45 am - Hospitality Hour

MON

12/03/18

9:00 am - Prayerful Beginnings (Library)
6:30 pm - Stuff Care Packages for college students

TUE

12/04/18

6:30 pm - Words on Wood

WED

12/05/18

9:00 am - Park Work 9:30 am - Quilters/Handwork
11:30 am - Best Lunch in Missouri
7:00 pm - Choir Practice

THR

12/06/18

9:00 am - Ladies Social Breakfast
6:30 - 8:00 pm - "Where True Love Is" Study
(Fellowship Hall)

FRI

12/07/18

SAT

12/08/18

9:00 - 11:00 am - Breakfast with Santa

GRACE WEEKLY EVENTS

SUN

12/09/18

9:30 am - Adult Bible Study
10:45 am - Worship- "Glories Stream" - Baptism Jayden,
Kole & Raelyn Lewis, New Members,
Congregational Meeting
11:45 am - Hospitality Hour

MON

12/10/18

9:00 am - Prayerful Beginnings (Library)
7:00 pm - Session Meeting

TUE

12/11/18

9:30 am - Morning Bible Study
1:00 pm - Afternoon Bible Study

WED

12/12/18

9:00 am - Park Work
9:30 am - Quilters/Handwork
11:30 am - Best Lunch in Missouri
11:00-1:00 pm Twin City Ministerial Alliance
7:00 pm - Choir Practice

THU

12/13/18

6:30-8:00 pm - "Where True Love Is" Study

FRI

12/14/18

SAT

12/15/18

5:00-7:00 pm - Silva-Noah Open House
604 Jefferson Ave. Crystal City
(NOTE TIME CHANGE)

GRACE WEEKLY EVENTS

SUN

12/16/18

9:30 am - Adult Bible Study
10:45 am - Worship - "Redeeming Grace"
Ordain/Install New Church Officers
11:45 am - Brunch

MON

12/17/18

9:00 am - Prayerful Beginnings (Library)
7:00 pm - Deacon Meeting

TUE

12/18/18

WED

12/19/18

9:00 am - Park Work
9:30 am - Quilters/Handwork
11:30 am - Best Lunch in Missouri
7:00 pm - Choir Practice

THU

12/20/18

6:00 pm - Music Jam

FRI

12/21/18

7:00 pm - Blue Christmas Service

SAT

12/22/18

GRACE WEEKLY EVENTS

SUN

12/23/18

9:30 am - Adult Bible Study
10:45 am - Worship - "Let Us Sing" - Cantata
11:45 am - Hospitality Hour

MON

12/24/18

HOLIDAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
9:00 am - Prayerful Beginnings CANCELLED
4:00 pm - Christmas Eve Service
11:00 pm - Christmas Eve Service

TUE

12/25/18

HOLIDAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

WED

12/26/18

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
9:00 am - Park Work
11:30 am - KITCHEN CLOSED
7:00 pm - Choir Practice

THU

12/27/18

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

FRI

12/28/18

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

SAT

12/29/18

GRACE WEEKLY EVENTS

SUN

12/30/18

9:30 am - Adult Bible Study
10:45 am - Worship - Agape' Service, Backpack Sunday
11:45 am - Hospitality Hour

MON

12/31/18

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
9:00 am - Prayerful Beginnings CANCELLED
4:00 pm - Christmas Eve Service
11:00 pm - Christmas Eve Service

TUE

01/01/19

HOLIDAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

WED

01/02/19

9:00 am - Park Work
11:30 am - KITCHEN CLOSED
7:00 pm - Choir Practice

THU

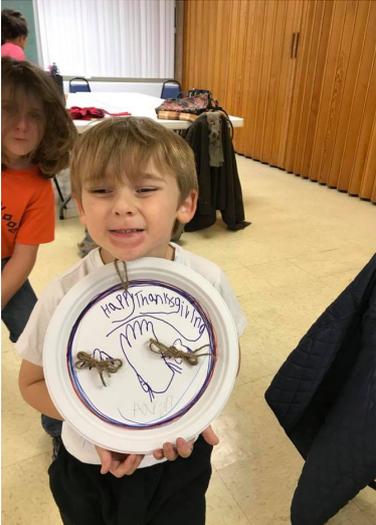
01/03/19

FRI

01/04/19

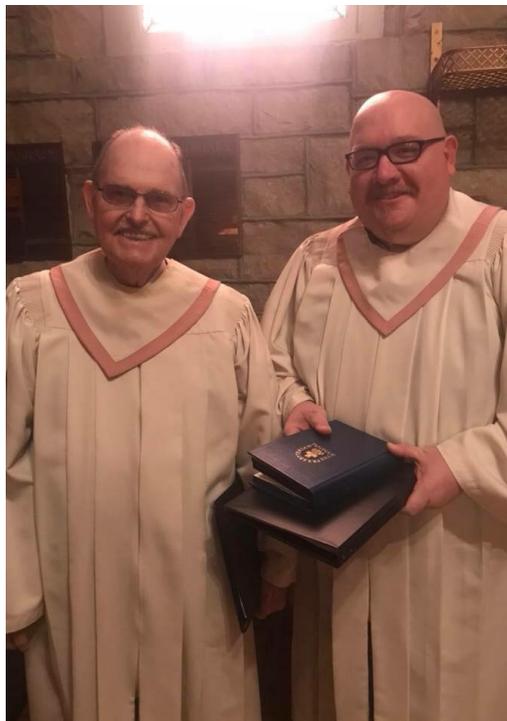
SAT

01/05/19





Veterans' Day Luncheon GPC Families Breakfast





Donation to the Vikings' Vault Food Pantry @ JeffCo



YOGA CLASS



TAI CHI CLASS



Twin City
Christmas Parade
2018

