



# The Messenger

December 2018



## Vision: Healing & Hope

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

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Pastor Matthew Yoder

To the saints at Grace Mennonite Church, in the name of Jesus, our redeemer and friend, season's greetings!

For many in our church family this has been a challenging year. Many of our lives have taken unexpected twists and turns due to sudden or unforeseen challenges and crises. It would be easy to close the year with a sigh of relief and hope for smoother road in the year ahead.

But the coming of the holiday season has reminded me how important it is to look with gratitude upon the blessings of the past year that have been sprinkled in amidst the challenges. As I reflect on the past year through the lenses of Thanksgiving and Christmas, my heart overflows with gratitude for God's goodness delivered in so many different packages.

Above all, I am thankful for each and every one of you. If you are one of those members of our church family who regularly donates your time and energy to the mission and ministries of our church both locally and abroad; if you helped plan potlucks and other church hospitality events, distribute food boxes, schedule or serve as ushers, greeters, or nursery workers, thank you. If you taught Sunday school, worked with the MYF (Mennonite Youth Fellowship, "Youth group), or helped oversee the Sunday school program, thank you. If you stewarded and tended our church facilities; if you worked with our church finances, thank you. Thank you to our Mission Peace and Service Coordinator and those who represented our congregation to MDS (Mennonite Disaster Service), MHCO (Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio), MCC (Mennonite Central Committee), Brazo en Brazo; to those who gave leadership to our community garden outreach, gleaning project, and comforter knotting, to all those who helped to plan and participate in our worship together in a wide variety of capacities. To all those who have served on Council, Shepherding Team and PPRC; to everyone whose time and efforts generously given have gone heretofore overlooked or uncelebrated, I thank you and I thank God for you. If you give regular financial support for these missions and ministries of our church, my heart overflows with gratitude for your generosity and I thank God for you.

Cont. on page 2

At a recent Everence seminar on cultivating generosity, I learned about the spiritual connection between gratitude and generosity. And it's true! All of this gratitude has motivated me to look for ways to continue supporting our congregation not only through ministry but also financially. I admit I've struggled this year to give regularly because I don't always remember to bring my checkbook or cash with me on Sunday morning. When the velvet bag passes me in the pew I often think, "next Sunday I'll remember." But that is not always the case. Fortunately, I recently learned something new from our church Treasurer that will make tithing at Grace easier than it's ever been. I learned that here at Grace we offer the option of setting up recurring automatic transfers directly to the church bank account! I plan to talk to our Treasurer before the end of this year to set up my own bi-monthly tithe transfer. If, like me, you are only just finding out about this giving opportunity and if, like me, you feel deep gratitude for the beautiful life of our congregation, I encourage you to contact our Treasurer, Christy Suter, to set up your own automatic transfer. Our congregation is financially very healthy, so now is a great time to think about maintaining the healthy practices that sustain us.

If you are looking for ways to give your time, energy, and skills as a gift to our church in the year ahead, look no further! Each Sunday throughout the Advent season, there will be a blue "Sharing Ourselves" form enclosed in your church bulletin. This form lists many of the areas in which our Ministry Coordinators are always looking for volunteers. Take some time to look over the form and consider how you might give the priceless gift of yourself for the life of our congregation in the year ahead. Check all the boxes for ministry areas in which you have interest in serving, and return the form to the clearly marked yellow box in the church foyer any time between now and December 23.

I am so grateful to God for each and every one of you, for what you contribute to our life together here at Grace, and for God's gift of Jesus Christ whose Holy Spirit lives in and among us, guiding us in all love, hospitality, gratitude, generosity and fellowship.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Matthew

**“May His Love and Presence fill you to overflowing  
and bring you a most Joyous Christmas.”**



# December 2018

Sunday, December 2  
The Lord is our Righteousness  
“Waiting”  
Pastor Matthew Yoder  
Scripture: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Sunday, December 9  
The Lord is our Righteousness  
“Proclaiming”  
Pastor Matthew Yoder  
Scripture: Malachi 3:1-4

Sunday, December 16  
The Lord is our Righteousness  
“Rejoice”  
Pastor Matthew Yoder  
Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sunday, December 23  
The Lord is our Righteousness  
“Blessing”  
Pastor Matthew Yoder  
Scripture: Luke 1:39-55

Sunday, December 30  
The Lord is our Righteousness  
“Revealed”  
Speaker: Ivan Friesen  
Scripture: Luke 2:41-52  
1 Samuel 2:18-20

For unto you is born this day in the city of David  
a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.  
Luke 2:11



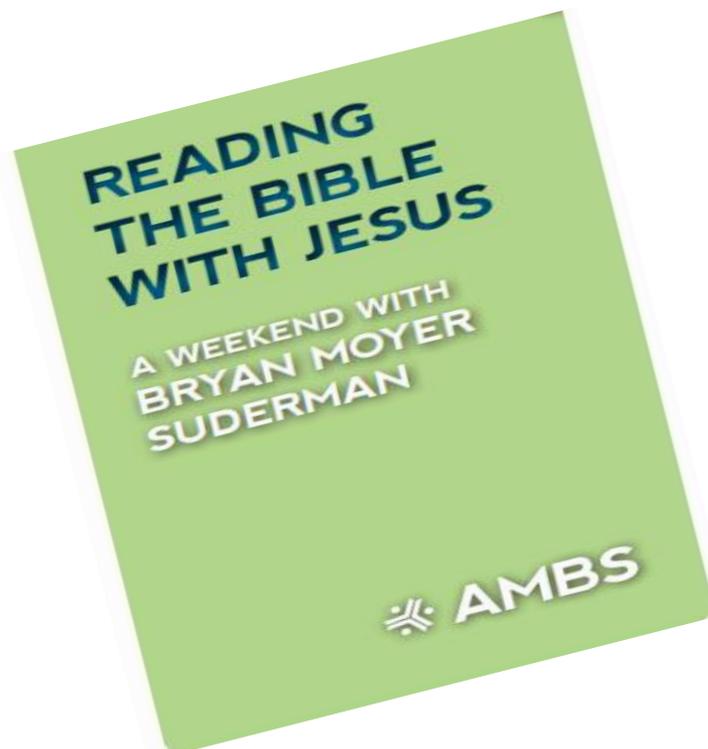
Grace Notes Choir



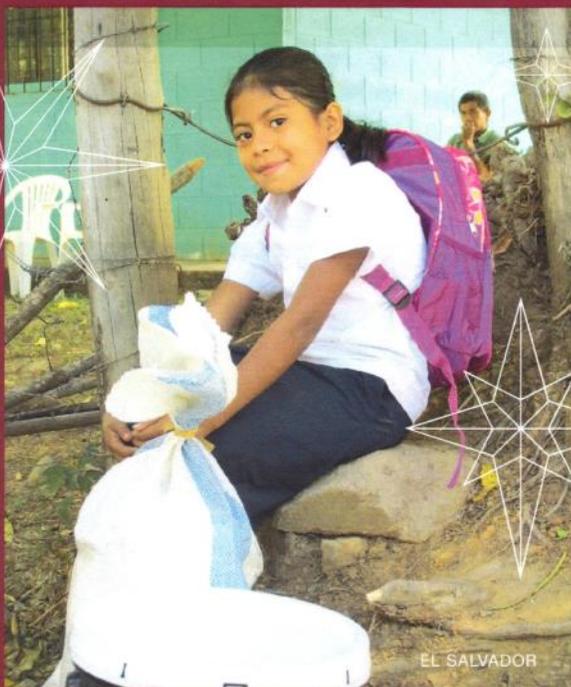
January 11-13 2019!

More details coming up!

Itinerant Bible teacher and singer/songwriter, known especially for his “songs of faith for small and tall,” Bryan Moyer Suderman of Kitchener, Ontario, has spent the last 25 years finding creative ways to engage all ages in Scripture. For five years he’s been working through each of the canonical Gospels, exploring how they portray Jesus as interpreter of Scripture in addressing the challenges and debates of the day. As a result of this study — now the focus of his master’s thesis and itinerant Bible teaching ministry — Bryan is finding that Jesus’ approach to Scripture has much to teach us. In fact, it has the potential to transform the way we relate to Scripture and to each other.



# Give a *kit* for Christmas



## MCC Relief Kit contents (NEW items only, in original packaging)

**4 large bars bath soap**  
(leave in wrapper)

**Shampoo**  
(1 or 2 bottles, totaling more than 20 oz; place in resealable plastic bag)

**4 large bars laundry soap**  
(such as Fels Naptha®, Sunlight® or Zote® brands)

**4 new bath towels**  
(medium weight, dark or bright colors; approx. 29 in x 60 in)

**4 adult-sized toothbrushes**  
(in manufacturer's packaging)

**2 wide-toothed combs**  
(6-8 in)

**1 nail clipper**  
(good quality)

**1 box adhesive bandages**  
(minimum 40, assorted)

**Sanitary pads**  
(THIN; 1 or 2 packages, minimum 28 pads total)

Place contents (listed above) in a box or bag and deliver to an MCC drop-off location (call 1-888-563-4676 or visit [mcc.org/kits/dropoff](http://mcc.org/kits/dropoff) to find a location near you). The kit will be re-packed in a new 5-gallon plastic pail with lid.

Thank you for limiting your generosity to the items listed. Feel free to donate **individual items** to contribute to a kit.



From hurricanes and flooding to conflict and drought, MCC is responding to many disasters around the world.

**This Christmas, why not gather your family and pack a relief kit as a gift to other families whose lives have been disrupted by war or disaster?**



Relief, development and peace  
in the name of Christ

[mcc.org](http://mcc.org)

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Did you know that...!?

You can set up regular recurring automatic transfers to Grace! If you have trouble remembering your checkbook or cash on Sunday morning but would like to give to Grace regularly, or if you're one of those who like to "fix it and forget it" when it comes to your giving, contact Christie Suter for bank account information to get started today!

Christie Suter  
419-233-6554  
[suter\\_chris@yahoo.com](mailto:suter_chris@yahoo.com)

## “News Among Our Members & Friends”

### HAPPENINGS IN AND AROUND GRACE.....By Shirley Sommer

**Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>** – Scripture lesson for today was John 6:27-35. Sermon was titled, “**Fasting**”. **Pastor Matthew** mentioned that on the seventh day, we are to REST for the Sabbath. **He** continued to say that our Christian faith “**Fasting**” could be keeping ourselves healthy; physically and spiritually. One could also give up some of these different items: electronic items, eating more than needed/sweets, shopping, entertainment, and many others. These are important to do to keep our Mental Health.

We enjoyed having the “Cherubic Choir” sing for us (11 young children) directed by **Joyce Schumacher** and her helper, **Olivia Schumacher**. The song was “**We’re here to praise the Lord today,**” along with actions when singing. Future singers at Grace and they did well!

**Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>** – Topic for sermon was, “**Celebration,**” by **Pastor Matthew**. Scripture was Luke 15:25-32. It mentioned about the son who was away for a long time, found out he did wrong and returned home. Other son was home all the time and was upset but father explained the situation to him and all was well. Hymn following the message went right along with the sermon, “**Christ is Alive.**” Words to remember for the week are “Celebration is a practice we can do every day and improve on it.

The other children’s choir, “**Grace Notes,**” sang “**Let All Things Now Living,**” directed by **Carolyn McDaniel**. There were 11 young children and they even sang parts which really impressed me and they did very well. They ranged from the fourth grade up thru sixth grade.

**Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup>** – 7:30 p.m., Bluffton University Chorale and Camerata Singers had a program at our church. The crowd was small, but the music sang to us was “powerful.” **Dr. Bo Young Kang**, director, does a wonderful job (her first year at Bluffton University) and looking forward to more music from them and their Christmas program. **Meghan Gibson Martin**, sang a couple of solos; and her husband, **Eddie**, accompanied a couple of songs with a flute and saxophone. Sure glad to see the groups again and hear the great music that made the sanctuary ring! I’m sure the people present left with music in their hearts!

**Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>** – Was the third Sunday of the month and we usually have a carry-in-meal which we did because we celebrated **Mission Sunday** today! Guest speaker was **Mary Raber**, our Mission Partner who is serving with Mennonite Mission Network in the Ukraine. **She** is a translator, teacher and ministers to the people there. During Sunday School hour, **she** spoke and showed pictures of the people and area she works at. **Mary** had the sermon for the morning and spoke about the coming of **God** and that we don’t know when but we should be ready. Suggestions were to read God’s word and stay close to him; keep your head clear( understand why you are here); love one another plus take care of others and last **WATCH!** Scripture was Mark 13:24-32.

On the back of most of the benches in the sanctuary were 28 knotted comforters which **Threads of Grace** made. It sure was very colorful and a great mission we can do at home. Thanks to the ladies for their part of **Mission** work!

Again, as usual, the noon meal was very inviting and a nice assortment of food – especially desserts!!

**Sunday, November 25** – Sermon was “**Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?**” Scripture was Romans 5:1-5. **Pastor Matthew** mentioned that **God** answers prayers all the time. Fellowship of suffering started long ago at the earliest roots of our faith. It was a community, a group who works together by helping each other. This is what we have as a church at Grace and so lucky. **He** mentioned that your suffering can be a gift or an asset for others. You can comfort others who are experiencing what you might have gone through by giving them support and a listening ear.

Special music was provided by a guest, **Kennie Cartier** from Pandora. He played the piano and sang, “**Lord Most Holy.**” Thanks **Kennie** for a great message in song and piano.

**OTHER NEWS ITEMS INVOLVING OUR CHURCH FAMILIES:**

-Congratulations to **Juli Suter and Ryan Yoder**, Middlebury, IN on their wedding, Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. **She** is the daughter of **Bob and Joyce Suter**. **Juli** is a nurse at Goshen Hospital and **Ryan** is a teacher at Middlebury.

-**Threads of Grace** had an all day knotting day on November 9<sup>th</sup>. They invited ladies from some area churches to help knot. A noon meal was enjoyed by all with visiting included. They completed around 14 comforters which was GREAT!

-**Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>**, **MDS Regional** meeting was held at Grace. **Brett Troyer, MDS Fleet and Logistics Coordinator** was the speaker via telephone. The new **Tool Trailer** was there for people to look over. A nice group of thirty or more were in attendance and a light lunch was enjoyed at noon.

-It was nice to have **Jodi Diller** back in church after being gone for several weeks. She went on a cruise with a friend and then last week (before Thanksgiving) her children and family all spent a week in Florida together. They rented a house and were able to all be together in it. Her comment was to me, "It was very nice for them all to be together for the first holiday."

**Some Dates to remember for December are:**

**December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2:30 p.m. Holiday Concert** by the Bluffton University Choirs, Concert Band, Jazz Band at Yoder Hall. At 4:30 p.m., a **Tree Lighting** ceremony at **Houshower House**, Bluffton's campus **Welcome Center** on the corner of College Ave. Everything is FREE at both of these activities and the open to the public.

**December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 p.m...Handel's Messiah** will be given at Yoder's Hall. Tickets are needed and one can pick them up at Marbeck Desk. They are FREE but just have so many seats there and so one needs a ticket for a seat. You may stop by now for them.

-Again, we want to remember several people who had operations or treatments last week or so. **Ruby Basinger** had knee replacement; **Oliver Bicker**, nephew of **Pastor Matthew**, receiving treatment for leukemia; **Guy Verhoff** recovering from kidney surgery and thyroid treatment; and **Gail Neff** who is almost finished with chemo after her lung removal. Plus remember the need of all the others who are still getting treatments they need for their cancer control. Pray for Teri Steinmetz as she continues to heal physically from the car accident earlier this fall.



*on the calendar*

Tuesday, December 4, Council meeting 7:00 pm  
 Sunday, December 23, Christmas Brunch 9:00 am.  
 Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve Office Closed  
 Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm  
 Tuesday, December 25, Christmas Day Office Closed



## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Tim & Cindy Luginbill	December 9
Ted H. & Beth Diller	December 15
Tom & Christie Suter	December 15
Brent & Heather Clum	December 19
Guy & Barbara Verhoff	December 20
Terry & Beth Schey	December 27



## December Birthdays

Jenny Baumgartner	December 1	Analise Nisly	December 13
Shirley Sommer	December 2	Steve Smucker	December 15
Mark Huber	December 5	Gary Augsburger	December 19
Erin Suderman	December 5	Carolyn McDaniel	December 19
Juli Suter	December 8	Frank Gibbs	December 21
Don Basinger	December 9	Kristyn Suter	December 30
Scott Kempf	December 9	David Lemley	December 31

**Deadline for the next Messenger is December 31, 2018**