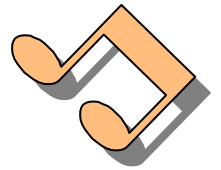


# GRACE NOTES



## GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF BLUE BELL

Skippack Pike & Lewis Lane, P.O. Box 122  
Volume XXXVII, Number 1

Blue Bell, PA 19422  
January 2018 Newsletter

*Grace Baptist  
Church of Blue  
Bell is a  
Christ-centered  
community  
sharing God's  
love with the  
world.*

### Sunday Schedule

9:30am Sunday School/  
Small Groups  
10:45am Worship

### Office Hours

Monday 9:00am-12:00pm  
Tuesday-Friday  
9:00am-1:00pm

### Church Staff

**George M. Hawthorne**  
Pastor  
ghawthorne23@gcbbb.org

**Casey Brookes**  
Director of Children and  
Family Ministries  
gracelandchildren@gmail.com

**Barbara Green**  
Director of Music/Organist

**Trish Simpson**  
Office Manager  
staff@gcbbb.org

## *From the Pastor—*

It's hard to believe, but the calendar tells us that 2018 is upon us. Christmas 2017 is now behind us and we are left remembering, wondering, hoping and maybe regretting. For some there is joy and many pleasant memories of this past Christmas season that will brighten the days ahead. For most of us there are also mistakes and misspoken words and inappropriate behaviors that won't let us go.



But how should we leave the experience of Christmas and begin a new year? Mary and Joseph left that first Christmas with responsibility. They fulfilled the requirements of their religious laws. They cared for the safety and upbringing of the Holy Child.

The shepherds left that first Christmas scene and returned to their common daily tasks. But they did so as new persons...for they returned to the ordinary glorifying and praising God.

The Wise Men who had journeyed far, after they had presented their gifts and worshipped the new born King of all kings, left to return to their homeland directed and guided by God. The Bible says that they went home "by another way"...probably physically and emotionally.

Now we find ourselves leaving another Christmas behind. And just how do we go? What is our attitude? What are the words on our lips? Do we take with us any of the feelings, any of the attitudes of wonder those first participants took with them?

Certainly we should leave Christmas behind and begin a new year with a new and improved attitude. I believe that this new attitude can be ours if we simply hear and receive the truth of the Christmas event. The announcement of the birth of our Lord was really quite plain and short: "To you is born this day...a savior...". Did you hear it? Really hear it? That is the message of Christmas. A Savior has been born to you and me.

This good news has our very personal and individual name on it...to you...to me...to us. Regardless of what we are or what has occurred in our lives. In spite of what we have done or not done, it is to you and me, that this message is addressed. It is a message of Good News... "to you is born this day...a Savior who is Christ the Lord." It is our message and when we hear it, really hear it; it can make an amazing and life-changing difference in our lives today and every day throughout the new year.

Happy New Year!

Pastor George Hawthorne



**JOIN US EACH SUNDAY AT 10:45AM**

**Sunday, January 7**

“Our Best Year Ever?” - Isaiah 60:1-22  
Service of Communion  
Rev. Hawthorne preaching  
*Congregational Meeting at 9:30 A.M.*

**Sunday, January 14**

“Sharing Your Faith, Part 1” - Acts 16:16-33  
Rev. Hawthorne preaching

**Sunday, January 21**

Guest Speaker—Pastor Steffan Carr  
Bruce Outreach Center, Westernport, Maryland

**Sunday, January 28**

“Sharing Your Faith, Part 2” - 1 Peter 3:15  
Rev. Hawthorne preaching

## January Birthdays

3 Garry Flower  
6 Drew Lehman  
10 Jim Foyle  
15 Nancy MacMullan  
17 Richard Taylor  
17 Santosh Philips  
19 Elfriede Young  
20 Obed Arango  
22 Betty Leech  
28 Emil Ortiz  
29 Joe Gallagher  
30 Doug Hargis



## Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico

**Update from Dr. Josué Gomez-Menéndez, Incoming  
President of the Board of General Ministries,  
American Baptist Churches, USA**

Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in every way it could. The biggest natural disaster to tear over our tropical island in many decades, the storm took so much from us. But it also showed that it's good to be part of a family—a great family joining with us on this journey of healing. The American Baptist family is one of the gifts that Maria gave to us.

At the start of the Advent season, my family received a gift, a string of battery-operated Christmas lights, from the Rev. Judy Fackenthal, president of ABCUSA. This is detail is significant because my home remains without electricity. As I write, it has been 75 days since Maria hit, and we continue to use a generator. My family hung the Christmas lights at the door between the living room and the terrace. Now, at night when everything is dark, everyone sees our Christmas spirit.

Last Sunday I awoke early for a brief jog before Sunday worship. I went to the sink, but nothing came out! The situation felt hopeless—75 days since Maria's landfall, and it's still like day zero. No electricity and no water. It's frustrating, unfair and wrong.

As I walked down the stairs, I saw our Christmas lights. I remembered that, for the last 2,000 years, a light has shown a path to hope for those still living in darkness—for the wise man, for the ones who work in the fields, for all those who are still looking! This holiday season, more than ever, I give God glory for the promise of light in the darkness—the darkness that still envelopes so much of my homeland, Puerto Rico.

Thank you, American Baptist family, for living this journey with us—for sharing goods, praying, texting, calling, and for your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing that help us so much. But, more importantly, thank you for being part of our family.

May the blessing of light be yours, my sisters and brothers in Christ, in this holiest of seasons.

*Donations to OGHs for Puerto Rico's restoration may be made via your church; via credit card online at [abhms.org](http://abhms.org)>Give Now; or via a check designated to "OGHS-Puerto Rico" and mailed to the attention of Kim Wilkins at American Baptist Home Mission Societies, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851.*

## **THE BOLICK REPORT** (excerpt—see the full report on the Missions Board) **CHILE—December 2017**



### **“Seed Bombs and the Kingdom of God”**

Nothing every turns out the way I imagined it. That’s a good thing. The ministries and projects we dream of or undertake, the words we speak, the prayers we utter, are like the seed and yeast Jesus mentions in his parables. They become something much more than we could have ever imagined or engineered. Yet God still asks us to imagine, and to plant seeds.

I am studying Permaculture these days. It is a method of designing productive ecosystems based on observation of natural ecosystems. One method used to recover and repair fields is to throw “seed-bombs” into them. These are a mix of clayey soil, compost, and vegetable, flower, or herb seeds, formed into a ball and thrown into the field. After time and rainfall, the balls break down and the seeds germinate. The compost and clay adds stability and nutrients.

What an image for the work of the kingdom, here in Chile and in your own place of service! I ponder it often as I reflect on the past year. Many times we have prayed about desired outcomes, hopes for projects, growth and transformation of people and relationships. Sometimes we grow weary praying, but keep plodding onward, at times forgetting the original goal. Then comes a day when we are chastened to realize that the prayer has been answered, the dream realized, but in ways we never imagined or expected.

**So here are a few of the surprising ways we have seen seeds planted begin to grow!**

### **Local Church Service**

Dwight finished a class this year with the leadership of our Temuco church, based on *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero. This is one of the most gratifying experiences of the year, seeing a real hunger for God, becoming mature in Christ, and relating in a healthy way to others, come to life in the leadership. Now these leaders are introducing the same themes in classes for the adult Sunday School. And we are beginning another study about spiritual formation with the leaders, discovering ancient/new paths in the church’s practice of spirituality.

### **Yarn Projects**

As Barb devotes most of her time now to the Girls’ Clubs, she serves in a consultant role to the three cooperatives she started. They all function with national leadership now, one in partnership with a municipality. Our good friend, Tomi Strock, a sheep rancher in Wyoming, has generously partnered with the cooperative in Repocura, helping them develop a market for their products in the United States.

### **Family Update**

Speaking of seeds growing into something magnificent, our sons have spent their entire lives here in Chile. Jack just graduated from high school, and Will is passing to eighth grade. (Their school year is March-December). They both love sports, Jack in mountain biking, and Will in training for a triathlon. Jack will be taking some time to get oriented to U.S. life before entering college late next year.

**We will be returning in April for home assignment for one year.** We have not taken a full year for home assignment since Will was born. We’re looking forward to spending time with you and letting our boys get to know their U.S. culture.

### **Three Requests:**

- ♦ We are looking for someone who might have an extra car that we could use during that year. Of course, we would pay insurance and maintenance costs.
- ♦ If you feel a kinship with our ministries and the nature of God’s mission in Chile, will you make a donation or a monthly pledge to our ongoing support? Please give to International Ministries and designate your gift.
- ♦ Will you take a minute and let us know what are the stories you would most like to hear from us about our life and work in Chile? E-mail us at [dbbolick95@yahoo.com](mailto:dbbolick95@yahoo.com).

May you have a blessed Advent and a merry Christmas!

Dwight & Barbara Bolick, International Ministries missionaries and Grace Baptist members

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# AROUND the CONGREGATION

Information and announcements for the newsletter are welcome. Please send to the church office by the third Sunday of the month.



**Congratulations** to Brad and Kelly (Gallagher) Price on the birth of their son, Luke Scott Price, on Thanksgiving Day, November 23. Luke Scott is the grandson of Joe and Kathy Gallagher, the great-grandson of Kathleen Viall, and the great nephew of Louise Markley.

**We extend Christian sympathy** to the following:

- Lloyd and Carolyn Paullin on the death of Lloyd's nephew, Bruce Pringle, on November 26.
- Larry Davis, Harriet Rintz and family on the death of Janet Davis on December 4 at Spring House Estates.

**Thank you!** Amy and I would like to express our gratitude for the generous monetary Christmas gift from the congregation. We also appreciate your thoughtful cards and remembrances. We are blessed to be able to spend another Advent and Christmas with our Grace Baptist family.-- Pastor George and Amy

**At the December 10 Congregational Meeting**, the Trustees received approval to proceed with the listing and sale of the 3+ acres of church property along Lewis Lane. Thank you to the Trustees for their due diligence on behalf of the membership. Also at the meeting, the 2018 Ministry Budget was approved with a large deficit. If you have not yet done so, please submit your 2018 pledge amount to Don Helpa or Marjorie Scharpf as soon as possible. Thank you to Marjorie, the Trustees and all of the boards for their work on the 2018 Budget. Thank you to the members who attended and discussed the items on the agenda. Our goal is to be responsible stewards of the resources we have and utilize them wisely as we do God's work in Blue Bell.— Kathy Gallagher, Moderator

### **Parents' Night Out, January 5**

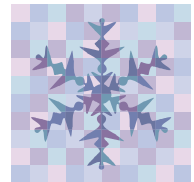
For ages 3-10 from 6:30-9:00pm. Only \$5 a family for a night of games, crafts, laughs, and fun. Sign up with Casey (610-389-2387 or [gracelandchildren@gmail.com](mailto:gracelandchildren@gmail.com)) by Wednesday, January 3.

The Board of Trustees has requested a special congregational meeting to continue the discussion from the December 10 meeting regarding the improvements to the sanctuary. This meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, January 7, 2018 at 9:30 AM**. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. At this meeting, the Trustees will have hard figures on all the proposed changes.



**The community is invited to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Service of Remembrance at 4:00 P.M. on Sunday, January 14, 2018** at Bethlehem Baptist Church (Penllyn Pike & Dager Road, Spring House). A Solidarity Walk for Peace & Justice begins at 3:00 P.M. from Wissahickon High School. Guest preacher for the service is Rev. Alyn E. Waller, pastor at Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, Philadelphia. Recipients of the 2018 MLK Award will be recognized: Ken Youngblood, Margaret McGoldrick, and Rev. Marek Zabriskie. The Bethlehem Baptist Church Mass Choir will minister in song.

## **WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY**



An announcement will be placed on the church website and answering machine by 7:00 A.M. if there is a change to the Sunday schedule due to inclement weather. Also listen to KYW (10.60) for a listing of church cancellations.

## ***Grace Baptist Church of Blue Bell***

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Blue Bell, PA 19422

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E-mail: [staff@gbcb.org](mailto:staff@gbcb.org)



If you would prefer not to receive future mailings,  
call or e-mail and let us know!

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GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF BLUE BELL

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***Happy New Year,  
Grace Baptist!***

***May the Lord bless  
you all richly in 2018!***

