

# Together

## Grace Communion International News

June-July-August 2010

[www.gci.org/together](http://www.gci.org/together)

Volume 5, Number 3

## Conference Update—Workshops Announced

Interest in our international conference this July in Florida has been great, and our registration numbers continue to grow. **This year's theme is "GCI: Renewed in Christ."** Confirmed attendance now exceeds 900, and we have used over 90 percent of our room block at the conference hotel. We look forward to seeing all who can make it to our first denominational conference as Grace Communion International.

The registration fee for persons staying in the host hotel is \$59, and is \$109 for those staying elsewhere. **The last day to register for the conference is Wednesday, June 23.**

### Main speakers and topics

Each day includes a time of praise and worship. A tentative schedule for the speakers is as follows:

**Thursday:** After opening remarks by Joseph Tkach, Dr. Gary Deddo will give a presentation titled "Sharing in Christ's Life and Ministry: Moving Beyond Burnout or Bitterness." After a break, Cathy Deddo will speak on "The Shape of Love: John 17." (For more details on our guest speakers, see the conference website.) In the afternoon, participants can choose between the Holy Land Experience Tour, or a variety of workshop topics.

**Friday:** Workshops will be offered in the morning. In the afternoon, Mike Feazell will speak on "Seated With Christ." Dr. Elmer Colyer will then give three presentations on Trinitarian renewal: 1) "Where Does It Come From? The Triune Source of Renewal," 2) "What Makes It Work? The Transformative Dynamic at the

Heart of Renewal," and 3) "What Does It Look Like? The Social Embodiment of Renewal."

**Saturday:** Ed Stetzer will speak in the morning on "Compelled by Love." After more workshops, Ed Stetzer will speak again, on "Living on Mission." Joseph Tkach will conclude the afternoon with a presentation called "GCI Yesterday and Tomorrow."

**Sunday:** The conference will close with a worship service in the morning, including a message from Dan Rogers, offering, and communion.

### Confirmed workshops

There will be a wide variety of workshops at the conference, led by conference exhibitors, pastors, denominational leaders and staff, and all our guest speakers. Topics include:

- Using social networking effectively in the local church
- Ways to use new technology effectively in the local church
- Simple tools for building and maintaining a website
- What does it really say? A brief guide to better Bible study
- T. F. Torrance, theology, science and human freedom
- Achieving reconciliation in any circumstance
- What is Jesus' dream? The Nazareth Manifesto
- Creating an effective Trinitarian worship service in the local church
- The mystery of union with Christ—spiritual formation as true sons and daughters of God
- Implication of God's love for human relationships

- Generations Ministry
- Trinitarian ministry with children and teens
- Mentoring young emerging leaders
- Postmodernism—the challenges and opportunities
- Effective coaching
- Establishing boundaries in pastoral ministry
- Leadership development
- Heart issues and marital struggles
- Connecting with your community
- Transmissional pastoring

More topics will be announced as they are confirmed.

### Transportation discounts

JetBlue Airlines, Avis Rental Car and the Mears Shuttle Company offer discounts for our conference. For further details, see <http://2010.gci.org/category/transportation/>

### Holy Land Experience Tour

The registration deadline for the Holy Land Experience Tour is June 24. This is a wonderful opportunity to enter a living, biblical museum that takes you 7,000 miles away and 2,000 years back in time to the land of the Bible. Its combination of sights, sounds, and tastes will stimulate your senses and blend together to create a spectacular new experience. For more details, see <http://2010.gci.org/2010/02/hlet-details/>.

For more conference information, see <http://2010.gci.org>. To register, go to <http://go.gci.org/2010> on or before June 23!

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To submit an article for *Together*, send it by email to michael.morrison@gci.org, or by U.S. mail to P.O. Box 5005, Glendora, CA 91740. If you want an article or photo returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**Our new address: [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org)**

**The navigation bar**

Whenever the mouse is over one of the words in the navigation bar, the menu automatically expands to offer the user more choices.

Under “God” are these menu options: Who is Jesus? Who is the Holy Spirit? Why are humans in the image of God? and So what?

In the Media column, we list the audio-video program series we have: *Speaking of Life*, *You’re Included*, *GCI Together*, *Word From Our Sponsor*, and *Other videos*.

Under Publications, we have *Christian Odyssey*, *Together: GCI News*, *The Gospel*, *The Bible*, *Church and Ministry*, *Discipleship and Spiritual Growth*, *Old Testament Laws*, *Biblical Prophecy*, and an alphabetical index.

**Interactive map**

Whenever the mouse is over one of the continents, the name of the continent is displayed, and if the mouse is clicked, the user will be taken to information on what the church is doing on that continent.

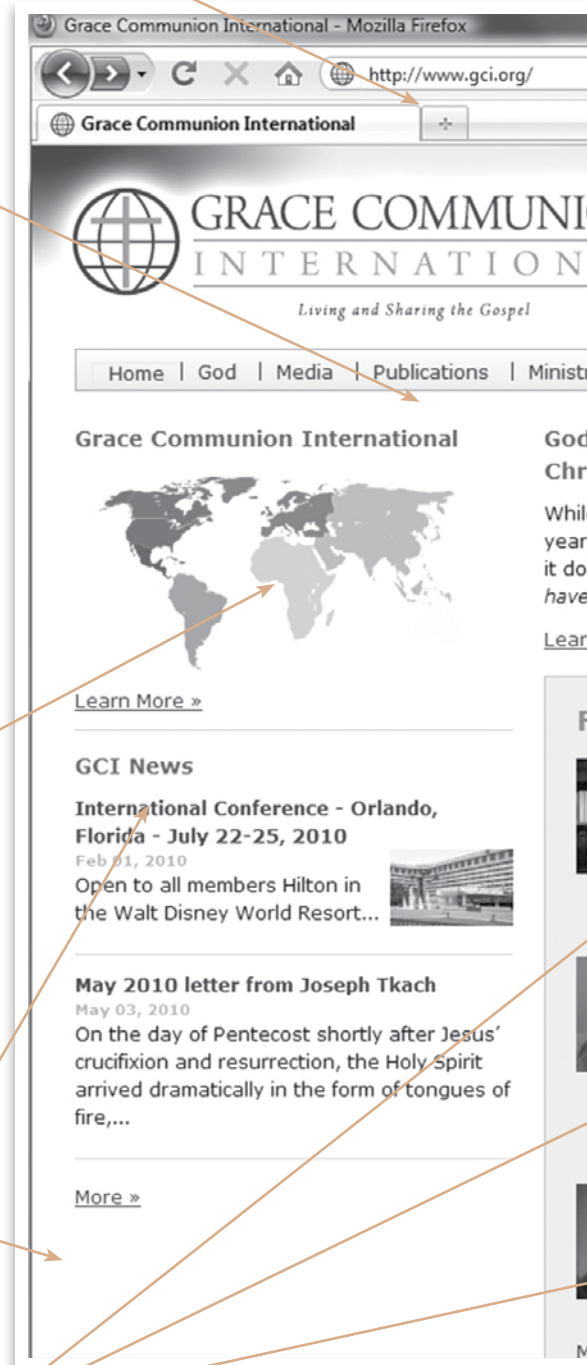
**News block**

Two recent news articles (often from *Together*) are displayed on the home page. If the user clicks on “more,” the website will display the ten most recent news articles, with links to pages for yet older articles.

**Video programs**

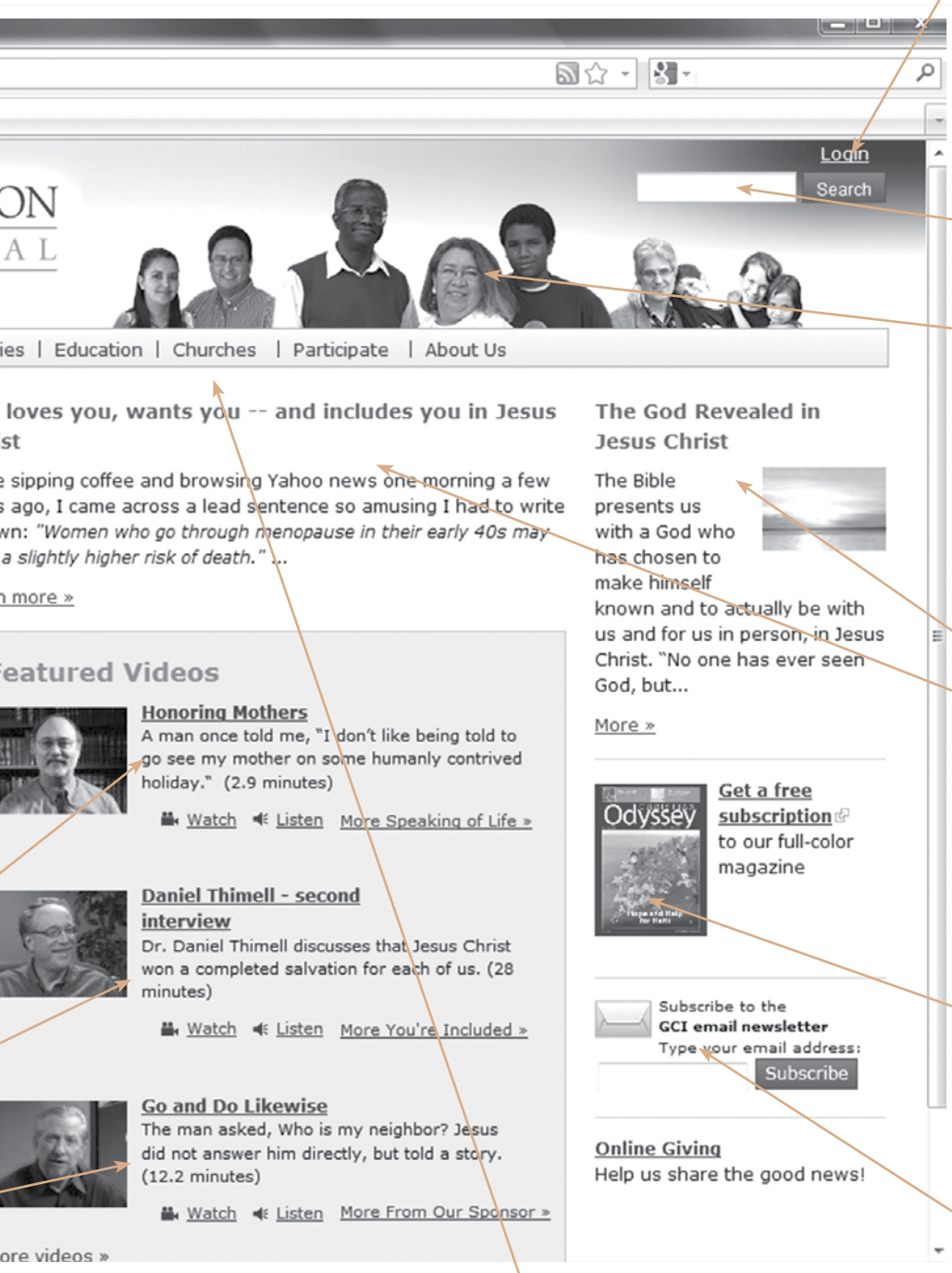
The home page always displays the most recent *Speaking of Life* program, the most recent interview in the *You’re Included* series, and (depending on which is more recent) either *GCI Together* or *Word From Our Sponsor*. We offer options to watch, listen, download different formats, and in some cases, read the transcript.

After many months of development serve the needs of the church.



# Website Launched

and design work, we are pleased to announce a new website to  
Even if you don't have internet access, it can help *you!*



## Login for registered users

Pastors, church treasurers, and others are given access to different materials on the site.

## Search

If you can't find what you are looking for by following the menus, then search for a word or phrase.

## People make the church

To make the website more warm and friendly, we added a few random people. And we do mean random—the user might see any one of four montages of people we found in our photo files.

## Two featured articles

Each Friday, we post new video programs and two articles. The articles aren't always new—we sometimes choose articles to go with a particular video program, and we try to provide variety throughout the year.

## Link to *Christian Odyssey*

To help readers learn more about the good news of Jesus, we encourage people to subscribe.

## Weekly email newsletter

We send an email message once each week to let people know what's new on our site.

## Navigation bar, continued

With the "churches" menu item, users will find links to information about what the church is doing in their region, with a link to the websites for the GCI churches in that region. In the United States, people can search to find a church nearest their zip code—so even if no one in your church has internet access, you could be visited by someone who does! We also offer several ways to "participate"—to check out upcoming events, to get literature, or give a donation.

It looks like this...

## A Personal Care Pantry Ministry

By Sam and Denise Butler

Typically, effective ministries are born out of a particular need. Such is the case for the personal care pantry ministry of New Life of Christ, the GCI congregation we pastor in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

With unemployment at about 15 percent, and the rapid influx of immigrants into the city, many of Grand Rapids' families lack food, household goods and personal care items. Our personal care pantry ministry helps to alleviate these needs, and in doing so, shares with people the love and life of God.

We partner in this ministry with United Church Outreach Ministry.

### *Introducing IT LOOKS LIKE THIS...*

With this issue, we introduce "It Looks Like This"—a new column in *Together*, and a new website at <http://gci-usa.blogspot.com/>. Both celebrate the journey of our U.S. churches from union to communion, making disciples with Jesus.

This journey involves our churches in what Jesus is doing within our communities to seek the lost; nurture believers; equip workers; and multiply leaders, ministries and churches. "It Looks Like This" tells and shows what that looks like in print (in *Together*) and in videos and pictures (in the online blog).

We invite you and your church to celebrate with us as we give thanks to the Father for including us in what he is doing, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit. And we invite you to tell your church's story in "It Looks Like This." For questions, assistance in writing, and to submit articles, contact Ted Johnston at [Ted.Johnston@gci.org](mailto:Ted.Johnston@gci.org).

They distribute food, and send needy families our way for personal care items. When they come, we feed them a meal of chili. We're open once a month, staffed with about 20 volunteers from our church (which has about 40 members). A few non-member relatives and some teens from the community help us.

The beginning of this ministry goes back about six years. As a congregation, we were actively seeking a way to minister to the community where we were meeting. We wanted something that would work with our small size, and thus be sustainable over a long time. We were meeting in a beautiful hall in an affluent suburb. But we were not finding ways to connect with that community. So we began to shift our view. And after much prayer and discussion, we decided to relocate into the city.

I (Sam) took a first step by connecting with other city pastors. As a result, we were offered a meeting hall in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood. I started developing



relationships with community leaders and began helping at a local food bank. One day, over coffee with the food bank director, our conversation turned to ministry needs in the

community. Out of this conversation came the idea for a personal care pantry ministry.

We began by serving 25 families each month. An early concern was bridging cultural and language differences. But it turned out not to be hard. The area children (mostly second-generation Americans) were eager to serve as Spanish-English translators. As then we found that as friendships



developed, cultural barriers were transcended.

Our pantry ministry now serves about 125 families each month, representing over 500 people. We not only provide personal care items, we also receive prayer requests. In addition, we've helped several area children attend a GCI Generations Ministries camp.

Two years ago, we realized that our pantry ministry needed to move from cultivating to planting. We were cultivating friendships, but we wanted to be more active in sharing the gospel with these friends. And so we started a Vacation Bible School (VBS) with the children of the pantry families. Twenty children attended the first year, and 40 the second. Parents participated in an ending ceremony, and the second year we included several of the older children in helping run the VBS. Two of these children now attend our congregation regularly.

Last year we also began to involve pantry families directly in



pantry operations. This has worked well because people often feel bad about receiving help—now they can both give and receive. Also, sharing pantry operations provides greater opportunity for our members to build relationships with pantry families.

Clearly, our pantry is filling a significant community need. But it's also greatly benefitting our congregation.

The first benefit is ministry multiplication. I started the ministry, and then our outreach ministry leader stepped up to develop it. Then another member stepped up to become pantry director. This has allowed me to focus on other aspects of our outreach. One is my participation in Roosevelt Park Ministries, a faith-based organization that serves our focus community. I am now board president, and one of our elders, Harvey Wierenga, is a board member. This ministry recently conducted an extensive community assessment, helping us connect to the heartbeat of the community as we learn what they truly need.

A second benefit is partnerships with other community organizations. This has helped us become community-based. A side benefit is that

our pantry is now nearly self-funded through the financial support of outside ministry partners and friends.

A third benefit is the transformation of our congregation. The pantry has given our members a clearer understanding of what Jesus is doing, in the Spirit, to advance the Father's mission within our community. Our growing understanding of Trinitarian Incarnational theology and ministry is transforming both our thinking and acting. Our members are growing in their love for one another and for those outside our fellowship. Their commitment is high, and their financial support is up. And, we are having fun! We are learning that Jesus truly loves our community, and we love the fact that we are joining him in what he is already doing in our community.

## What's happening?

Read more at [www.gci.org/together](http://www.gci.org/together)

### Update on the Pastoral Internship Program

The new GCI Pastoral Internship program in the US is under way with the hiring of Skyeler Lewkowicz. He is working alongside Tim Sitterley, pastor of the GCI congregations in Eugene and Salem, OR.

Skyeler has a Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from Northwest Christian University and plans to begin graduate studies. He has a short history with GCI that began two years ago when he met Pastor Tim Sitterly through an internship for college credit. I met Skyeler on a recent visit to the Northwest. He says he greatly enjoys fellowship with GCI folks and fully embraces GCI's theology and doctrine.

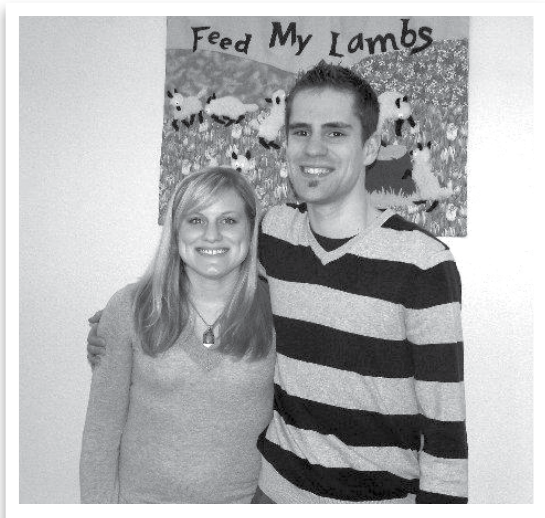
My wife Susan and I joined Pastor Tim, Skyeler and the rest of the Living Hope Church in Salem, OR for Easter Sunday. I had the privilege of bringing Tim, his wife Linda, Skyeler and

his wife Tracy forward in the service to pray for them, asking for God's guidance and blessing for the internship. Skyeler and his wife have a wide range of experience in Christian ministry, and their current desire is to work with a gathering of young adults within the context of the existing GCI congregation.

Skyeler heard God's call on his life,

and has pursued education and experiences in response to that call. We are excited for he and Tracy, and we ask for your prayers on their behalf as they move deeper into ministry with Jesus within GCI

*Greg Williams*



**Pastoral intern:** Tracy and Skyeler Lewkowicz.

GCI is looking for men and women who are being called of God to pastor a GCI church in the US—either an established congregation, or a new church plant. If you would like to explore the possibilities, including participation in the Pastoral Internship Program, please email Greg Williams at [Greg.Williams@gci.org](mailto:Greg.Williams@gci.org).

### A new GCI congregation in North Carolina

Joy! Accomplishment! Challenge! Those were some of the feelings experienced on February 14 when the members of King of Kings Community Church (Kings Mountain, NC) heard that they would become



**New church:** King of Kings Community Church, in Kings Mountain, NC.

a chartered congregation of Grace Communion International.

From the beginning we have clearly seen this as a work of the Holy Spirit. God has provided every need. It all began in the spring of 2003 with a small group of 10 members of Church of the Living Waters GCI (Charlotte, NC). This group started meeting twice a month in Kings Mountain. Members of the group invited friends and family members to attend an outreach event in the fall of 2006. One month later they met, with invited friends and family members, for a Sunday worship service in a garage owned by one of the members.

For the first year, they met once per month. In November 2007, the group began to meet twice per month. During this time, pastoral and core members received training and guidance from Church Multiplication Ministries (CMM). Randy Bloom, CMM Director, encouraged the Kings Mountain group to develop as a multi-site church affiliated with the Charlotte congregation.

Meetings continued through August 2008, with attendance in the twenties. In September, the group began to meet in a larger rented building. Three months later, they began to meet each Sunday. Attendance has ranged from the twenties to thirties. Last year, seven attendees were baptized, and the church roll has increased to 50 people.

The congregation is focused on spiritual growth, disciple-making, leadership development, and outreach. Luke wrote concerning the Jerusalem church in its beginning, “Everyone was filled with awe” (Acts 2:42). There is a similar sense in this new GCI congregation.

*Randy Bloom*

### **Pastor produces video about the homeless**

When Luciano Cozzi (West Warwick, RI) became a part-time pastor, he had to find a second job. So that he could be available for members and their needs, he decided to start his own business: Cozzi Video Productions. Last year was a very slow year, but we decided instead of sitting still, we might be able to do something to help not only our community but also those around the country.

A conversation had taken place with someone who wanted to open a shelter. This person tried to get permission from the town but was turned down because they didn’t want “those kind of people” in our town. Of course all towns already have “those kind of people.”

With the contacts Luciano has from Leadership Rhode Island,

we were able to interview heads of many of the departments and shelters in RI. We also spoke to the many who are or were homeless. Their pain and frustration was obvious and long-lasting. After a year of work, and with several of our church members as “extras,” *The Hidden Face of Homelessness* was finished.

It is being very well received around the state and is sold on Amazon.com. It has been used in many other states, such as CA, WA, IN, PA, MA, NY and will be included in the Insight Media Fall Catalog for schools around the country. It was aired on Rhode Island PBS on April 17-18, and they have a four-year contract to continue showing it.

You can find information and a trailer at <http://homeless.cozzivideo.com>.

Many of our congregations are helping the homeless. They might find that the video helps them understand the complex issues they face everyday and helps remove myths and prejudices.

Luciano was recently in Haiti and met with Pastor Joseph Franklin while there. You can see a slide show of his trip on [www.cozzivideo.com/productions](http://www.cozzivideo.com/productions) and then click on “Don’t Forget: Haiti’s Cry for a New Beginning—Documentary.”

*Suzanne Cozzi*

### **Musical sermon in Florida**

On March 28, Palm Sunday, the Ocala, FL, congregation of New Beginnings Christian Fellowship was honored by a musical sermon given by Ross Jutsum. Ross is a native of



Queensland, Australia, and now lives in Sierra Madre, CA, with his wife, Tammy. They have two daughters, Lisa and Heidi.

Ross received his doctorate of musical arts at the University of North Texas, his master of arts degree in piano performance at California State University at Los Angeles, and his bachelor of arts degree at Ambassador University. He is the founder of “State of the Heart” Ministries, an inter-denominational ministry of reconciliation and renewal of life worship, dedicated to building bridges in the Body of Christ.

There were 56 in attendance at the service including a number of members from the New Beginnings Christian Fellowship Church of Gainesville. Ross invited the children to join him in playing some musical instruments during the service and played a beautiful song that he dedicated to his wife of 31 years, Tammy.

Services were followed by a “gourmet buffet” and fellowship to the accompaniment of Dr. Jutsum’s recorded music on CDs.

*Sylvia Oakley*

### Women’s retreat in Tyler, TX

On March 6, 2010, Tyler Women’s Ministry (New Covenant Fellowship) held their seventh annual women’s retreat. The theme was “A Walk in the Garden.” About 40 ladies attended from Tyler and surrounding areas. The speeches were titled “Be-



ing a Vine” by Sandra Adair, “Joy to the World” by Shelia Graham, “I Never Promised You a Rose Garden” by Donna Patillo, and “Warmth and Light” by Sandy Orban.



**Love Wichita Outreach:** Twenty three members of Grace Fellowship, our congregation in Wichita, Kansas, participated in Love Wichita on April 24. This outreach was comprised of nearly 40 churches around the city representing several denominations. Love Wichita is an annual event in which churches share Christ’s love in action by completing service projects at homes, schools, and city parks in the community. This year, our congregation did outside cleanup, yard work and painting at the home of an elderly, disabled woman.

For special music, Vera Gibbs performed “We Praise and Worship,” which was written by Vera’s husband, Doc Gibbs. The retreat included praise and worship sessions between the speeches, a break for lunch provided by the Tyler Women’s Ministry, and at the end of the day, the ladies shared their testimonials with the group.

*Janalee Swisher*

### Leaders seminar in WA

Thirty-four members of the Seattle/Bellevue and Everett, WA, congregations attended a Steward Leaders seminar provided by Randal Dick.

The Steward Leaders’ Game is a facilitated simulation event available from Design For Ministry. The game brings together the three critical components of effective stew-

ardship, develops leadership perspective, and improves teamwork.

For three fast-moving hours, the members had the opportunity to simulate an entire year of managing a congregation’s finances, with a view to sustainability and fulfillment of mission.

*Bill Miller*

### Gathering in the Harvest for Jesus fifth anniversary fall conference Myrtle Beach, SC

This year’s conference, with the theme “Kingdom Authority,” will be held October 7-10 at the Springmaid Convention Center, 1200 South Ocean Blvd., Myrtle Beach, SC. The celebration begins Thursday evening, 7 p.m., with a message from Paul David Kurts, pastor of the GCI church in Hickory, NC. Friday’s speaker is Charles Young, pastor in Atlanta, GA; on Saturday, Dr. Dan Rogers will speak. The conference ends on Sunday with a message given by Howard Blakeney, pastor in Myrtle Beach. For more information, phone Mr. Blakeney at 843-206-5388.

## "On to Maturity"

Dells Celebration, September 30-October, 2010

You're all invited to our annual Dells Celebration at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI, from September 30 through October 3, 2010.

Our theme this year is "On To Maturity." Join us on this four-day journey as we examine four major areas of life that reflect maturity in our walk with Jesus.

**Step 1:** Reserve your room at the Kalahari by Sunday, August 29, 2010. Phone 1-877-525-2427 for reservations. The Kalahari is the premier family resort in the Dells featuring *the world's largest indoor water park* and a new theme park. HUT— \$109.00 per night plus tax, 1-4 people only  
LODGE SUITE—\$129 per night plus tax, 1-4 people only  
COMBINATION SUITE (lodge and hut) —\$238 per night plus tax—sleeps up to 8 people  
VILLAGE (lodge and two adjoining huts)—\$347 per night plus tax—sleeps up to 12 people

You must call the Kalahari Resort no later than August 29 to reserve your room. After August 29, the low prices we've negotiated will no longer be available! Let the reservation personnel know you are with Grace Communion International or the Worldwide Church of God. The Kalahari reservation number is: 1-877-525-2427.

You may also book your room online: Go to: <https://res.kalahariresort.com/VIWeb/GroupComments.aspx>

Then enter:

Group ID: 14215

Password: 244

Contact Password (Optional): leave this blank

Click on "Make Reservation" and follow the prompts.

**Step 2:** Register with Grace Communion International HQ online at: <http://go.gci.org/wisconsin>. Follow the prompts and pay with your credit card.

Or...you may download a registration form from [www.gci.org/events](http://www.gci.org/events), fill it out and mail your registration with a check to:

Grace Communion International

PO Box 5005

Glendora, CA 91740-5005

Or...if you do not have internet access, contact Dells Coordinator Doug Johannsen by phone (763-576-1086) or by mail: 14210 Uranium St NW, Ramsey, MN 55303, and he will mail the forms to you.

**Step 3:** Come celebrate Jesus with your family and friends. Enjoy good food and many other activities! The Kalahari is a VERY family activity oriented facility!

Any questions, contact Pastor Doug Johannsen at [doug.johannsen@gci.org](mailto:doug.johannsen@gci.org) or by phone at 763-576-1086.



## Announcements

### Obituaries

**Benjamin James Farbaniec**, 92, died Sept. 15, 2009. He had been in ill health for one year. He was born Sept. 23, 1916, in Elizabeth, NJ, where he lived all his life.

He served in the U.S. Army in World War II in the Ardennes, Rhineland, and throughout central Europe. Benjamin was the recipient of the Victory Medal, the American Theatre Ribbon, and the Middle Eastern Ribbon with three bronze stars.

Benjamin was preceded in death by his parents, a sister, Pauline, two brothers, Walter and Robert. His sole survivor is a niece, Mary Anne Costanza.

**Merle Christian Opperman**, 109, died on Feb. 1, two days before her 110th birthday. She was born Feb. 3, 1900, in Newhall, IA, to Martin and Mary Schonborn Luther. She

attended Newhall and German Lutheran schools. She married Henry Jacob Opperman on Sept. 24, 1919, at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Strawberry Point, IA. They spent almost all their married life farming in that area. She lived eight years with her daughter and son-in-law before breaking her hip and entering into the care center.

Survivors include one daughter, Beverly (Doran) Welch of Cedar Rapids, 17 grandchildren, and approximately 145 great, great-great, and great-great-great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; two sons, Richard (Celia) and Arnold (June) and one daughter, Vernita (Walter) Faust; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; two brothers, Otto and Clarence Luther; and a sister, Esther (Ralph) Peck.

She was a long-time member of the Family of Faith GCI church in Cedar Rapids, IA. Pastor John Bailey conducted the funeral to a full church. Over half the attendees were her descendants.

**William Gerald Slaughter, Sr.**, 77, passed away April 17, in Newark, NJ, after a lengthy illness. He was born March 26, 1933. He was a member of the 24-7 Community Church, and has been a member since 1964. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Mary Slaughter, two daughters, three sons, seven brothers and sisters, 11 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends. He was loved dearly by many and was very concerned about the future of the youth. He was a family man, loyal employee and a true man of God who will be missed dearly.