

GRACE NOTES

News from and about Grace Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan Vol.7 num.1 JANUARY, 2015



Dear Members of Grace Church,

This has been a fantastic year and its so hard to choose just 5 highlights from 2014. This is our best attempt at the top five: Which one's are we missing? What would you like to add to this list? Did you visit us this year or did you see prayers answered even while being thousands of miles away? We would love to hear your highlights! Please email what you would add to this list!

5. Successful Capital Campaign! When we didn't even know we would be able to do a Capital Campaign this year, we began and raised over the \$300,000 goal. We experienced in great ways that God's provision is more than enough!

4. Construction Project - Breaking Ground in late September, we dedicated the land, future school building, and all Jubilee's projects once again to the Kingdom of God.



Construction has also meant being able to employ over 30 workers who are dads, uncles, and grandpas of our students. Many of them shared this was the first time in months or even years to find a regular job. One of the workers exclaimed, ***"This is the first Christmas since I can remember that I will have money to buy food and some small gifts for my family!"***

3. You - Supporters, visitors, donors, friends, pray-ers who encourage and make the work possible! Your prayers, your calls, visits, emails, trips, donations constantly remind us and our staff that we are not alone in this work. Just a few days ago we received an expected phone call from a friend who said that he was moved by the Spirit to pray for us all day, and specifically for one of our teachers. It is an life-changing experience to depend on others deeply and see God's hand through the support of His people in great ways.

2. Incredible staff –More than ever before our staff is growing in unity, with one purpose and one goal – to reach the children, families and community of La Era. "This place is so different from anywhere I have ever worked before." When school was officially done for the end-of-the-school-year vacation, our teachers, on their own accord, decided they wanted to continue to help our principal with the online grading system and support various projects even during vacation time. **We are so thankful for our wonderful teachers!**

1. The little ones! We wouldn't exist if it weren't for the children. Experiencing transformation in children like Chyla

reminds us that God has incredible plans for each one of these kids! Chyla was struggling in all her classes and has repeated grades in the past. Her mom works 12 hour days and her father isn't around. This year, after she started doing daily one-on-one tutoring she began to hand in her homework on time, show interest in her classes, and even have confidence in herself and God for the first time since she started school! Real life transformation is possible and children

are a constant reminder that this is true. Thank you for being a part of the Jubilee family. Thank you for celebrating with us God's work in and among the lives of children and families of La Era! We look forward to what God has in store for 2015! Please don't forget to make a [tax deductible donation](#). We accept gifts of any size with gratitude and thank you for your support!

WORSHIP VALUES

What do you love about worship at Grace? Is it the same thing that the folks who sit behind you on Sundays love? Is it something we've done for a long time, or something new we've just started?

What do you wish was different? Could the thing you would change be something someone else loves deeply?

I came to Grace because I wanted a church that felt authentic, diverse, and welcoming. I wanted a place where my kids could learn about God and about other people -- lots of kinds of people. When we visited Grace, we knew it was the right place for us. But one of the hard parts about being a church with lots of different kinds of people is that we all think differently, have different preferences, have different histories. And this shows up on Sunday mornings.

The worship committee read a book called Diverse Worship last year. We began to wonder about the assumptions that we all make about worship at Grace -- why we do things the way we do -- and whether those assumptions are shared. We would probably all say we are committed to diversity -- but what that means for song selection, faces in the front of the service, organs and dancing and the way we pray.... It seems we all have different ideas about those topics. While we have all likely chosen Grace in part because of its diversity, we haven't had a way to articulate what Grace Church does in worship, and how it's different than another church.

So last January we called together a big group of members of Grace who participated in worship in some way -- planning, playing instruments, dancing, leading kids,

running sound, etc. We asked two questions: What do you love about worship at Grace? What do you wish was different? We learned a lot, laughed a lot, and got a lot of ideas about why each of us is drawn to this congregation.

The worship committee took a year to craft a statement that would help articulate how we worship at Grace, and why we do it that way. We're calling it our Worship Values. There are seven sections, and during the season of Lent, Pastor Jack will preach through those values one-by-one. We hope it will lead us to a shared sense of how God has uniquely called us to worship at this church.

We would also like to use these values as a way to learn more about one other. So we're asking you to tell us what you think! Each week, on Grace Church's facebook page (www.facebook.com/GraceChurchGR)

we'll post a question based on the sermon / value for that Sunday, and we hope you'll participate in the discussion.

Our hope is that this series of values will help us grow to speak with one voice about who God is calling us to be as the worshipping community of Grace Church. We hope it helps us experience God in old and new ways, and draw nearer to each other at the same time.

*Rev. Kate Kooymans, Chair
Worship Committee*

