

# GRACE NOTES

News from and about Grace Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan Vol.7 num.3, May, 2015



## NEW MEMBERS

**Amy Pearson** may forever be known as the woman who walked up to Pastor Jack and said she “wanted to be baptized.” She says she had come to realize that baptism was part of being a Christian and being a member of the church after she “read the Bible from cover to cover.”

She came to Grace because she lives in the neighborhood, and she lives in the neighborhood because she came from South Haven, where she grew up, to Grand Rapids for “something different. South Haven is such a small town.”

She has two sisters in GR. Asked what she would like to say to Grace church in this article, she said, “I’m happy to be part of the church and God bless everybody.”



**Tammie Baker** came to Grace through the food pantry and the NA program. She started coming to services because she “felt comfortable.” Asked what she likes about Grace she said, “I like everything but I particularly like the people. David Turnbull has been important to her as she lives nearby. She describes Pastor Jack as “so awesome.” When asked what that meant, she replied he is “a good listener, especially when something is heavy on my heart, and he gives good advice.”

She attended Madison Square CRC for 19 years but never joined, and has been attending at Grace for about a year. Tammie has three children and six grandchildren, 1 to 13 years old.



**Dorothy McKinney** says she first knew of Grace through her mother-in-law Mary McKinney. She remembers helping Mary plant flowers and work in the kitchen years ago. She’s been attending Grace “off and on” for about 10 years, she says. When she started coming more regularly she “fell in love with the church and the warm and

caring people.” Because she is a home health caregiver, she sometimes needs to work on Sunday, but has asked her employer to leave her Sunday mornings free as much as possible.

She is glad to be in a church that “praises the Lord the way we do” and is “proud to be a member.” She has one son living in Milwaukee, and is married to Mary McKinney’s son Willie.

**Manny Phillips** has been part of Grace church for years, as part of the music ministry and as Minister of Worship Arts for a time. He was originally, as a child, part of a church in Chicago and decided to join Grace because he wanted a greater “sense of belonging to the body of Christ.”

He finds Grace to be “accepting of all walks of life,



accepting of the community they live in,” and says we live out our name – grace.

Manny is the Artistic Director of Up and Out Dance studios near Eastern and Baxter. They teach dance to people from 4 years old to adults and teach Classical Ballet, Modern Dance, Contemporary

Dance, and African Dance.

Manny was trained in Classical Ballet in Chicago, and by Patrick Johnson at GRCC.

*Karen DeVos*



*The Easter Sunday Morning service included the Public Confession of: Willem Van Houten, Cheyenne Pinder, Branden Pinder, Tammie Baker, Lydia Hart, , Amy Pearson.*



## SOUTHGATE BLOCK CLUB -

### Makin’ the Neighborhood Pretty!

Neighbors gathered at the church for pizza and doughnut holes, and

then we gathered up our orange bags and hit the streets. Along sidewalks, in empty lots, in the streets, and down the alleys, volunteers from the neighborhood spread out and picked up trash. The team that worked around the Family Dollar did such a good job that the manager invited them in for free drinks. We stuffed our bags and brought them back to the church parking lot where the city picked them



up the next day. Seeds of Promise, the umbrella organization for Southgate Block Club helped make the arrangements with the city. It really did look good when we were finished. Southgate is on the move. We’ve had visits from our neighborhood police officer, ICCF,

Black Lives Matter, a cooking demonstration, Well House, to name a few of the resources we are learning about. Every month on the first Tuesday evening of the month at 6:00 we gather at the church for a light meal and a discussion topic. YOU are welcome.

*Karl Westerhof*

## TIGER TIGER!

A Story for Memorial Day by David Kwiatkowski

In the jungles of Viet Nam there are all kinds of strange flora and fauna, most of which will bite you, stab you, or sting you. Seems like sharp teeth and poisonous fangs are everywhere. "Poison ropes" we called the snakes; one was called the "two step" -- if he bites you, you walk two steps and you're dead. There were bats the size of small dogs, and beetles the size of mice - one was good to eat, tasted like shrimp only not so salty.

When we would slog through the swamps and rice paddies we would have to stop and do personal inspections to get the leaches off. Some of us would use salt to get the leaches off, but I would use a lit cigarette. It gave me an excuse to smoke.

While I was overseas I became expert in jungle survival and concealment, which was very important to our mission. My role was that of the rescuer. During the closing days of the Viet Nam war, President Nixon escalated the war by bombing North Viet Nam in an attempt to get them to the bargaining table. It was called Operation Linebacker. This put many planes in the air, both large and small, from all the commands, Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. With this many airplanes in the air, it was inevitable that a few would be shot down over hostile territory. That was where I came in. This was before the days of GPS, and every aircraft had an ERB (Emergency Radio Beacon) so that when an aircraft was shot down, a signal was broadcast. To save battery, the signal was broadcast for a brief amount of time, at the same time every day. In this way we could get within a square mile or so of our downed fliers.

My rescue squad was then deployed and we would repel down into the jungle from helicopters, or parachute in. It would all depend on how quiet we had to be. Stealth was a factor in all the rescue missions. We were to go in, find our man, get him out alive if possible, and all without being seen. We were good at what we did. And like I said, good at concealment.

On this particular day we were going into the jungle in Laos to find a downed flyer. In Laos the jungle is very thick, and the terrain hilly and steep. We repelled down from the chopper, and found no sign of the enemy. We knew we had a very limited amount of time to find our man and get out, because the noise of the choppers would bring the enemy in very quickly. We deployed at dusk, and our seven-man squad disappeared into the bush. To try to signal to the downed pilot would have been suicide, so we had to try to track him by finding signs and by listening to the jungle. The jungle has an "all is well" sound. Insects make a steady background hum when not disturbed. But they go silent when disturbed. The animals are tattle-tales too; the birds

squawked and the monkeys would scream at you when you moved.

We waited until dawn and then began to hunt for signs. We would stop and listen. It did not take us long to find his touch-down spot. His parachute had been hastily buried.

By then I had reached the rank of sergeant, and I ordered the parachute to be more thoroughly concealed, and I sent out our best scout to see if he could pick up a trail. We reported to command center that we had found sign that our man was alive, and then our scout reported that he had found the trail. We followed a trail of broken twigs and occasional footprints until late afternoon, and then there was nothing. The trail went cold. Time was running out. We knew the Cong would be arriving on the scene at any time. We were at the foot of a steep hill with no way to go but up if we wanted to move in the direction of friendly lines.

We deployed a phalanx to proceed up the hill. This is a man on point, then two men on 45 degree angles behind him, then two more behind them, and so on. (I was number 2 on the right.) This way gave us the best chance of picking up the trail if our man had come this way. As we proceeded up the hill, the terrain became steeper, full of fallen trees and thick undergrowth. I came to yet another fallen log. The first rule in the jungle is to watch where you step, because you never know where those poisonous ropes might be lurking. I saw nothing dangerous. I stepped over carefully, and put my boot down on the ground. I started lifting my other leg up over the log, and then I looked down again to see where to place it. There was a tiger cub playing with my shoe string. "Not good," I said to myself, and I jerked my foot up. And a second cub appeared. "Really really not good," I thought, and that's when I heard a really loud roar - close up.

I was a blur heading back down the hill. The next man saw me running and he started shooting, and that brought the rest of the squad pell mell down the hill, all shooting back into the jungle. We all fell back to the rally point, all the boys still shooting wildly. "Did anyone see the enemy?" someone asked. "Where's the enemy?" "Quit shooting, you fools, I shouted, "there is no enemy! It was a tiger!"

We must have scared the tiger, because we never did see her, but our man was close by and he heard our English. He made contact with us, we called for the evacuation, and I got a new nickname, "Tiger Dave" until I left Viet Nam in January of '75. My squad had been on 83 rescue missions; I was on 44 of them. We brought back 78 air crew members alive. We had only three FTF (fail to find) and brought back only 2 bodies.

