

# GRACE NOTES

News from and about Grace Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan Vol.7 num.5, July, 2015

## NEW AND OLD COUNCIL MEMBERS

The men and women who take up the offices of Elder and Deacon serve God and Grace Church. We are grateful to God for his faithfulness in always providing willing and qualified men and women to serve our church. Elders and deacons at Grace are elected by the church members to serve 3-year terms. As your pastor, I congratulate you, the newly elected and installed elders and deacons. I welcome you to the council. I pray that the Lord blesses you and helps you carry on his work at Grace through His Holy Spirit.

### THE NEW ELDERS ARE:

**Pat Harper.** Pat has been a member of Grace since 2013. She works in the offices of "World Renew", which was formerly known as the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. This is her first time serving as elder. Pat will be taking over the elder care team of Jennifer Bridgewater.



### **Marcus and Janise Cole.**

They are serving as an elder team. They have been members of Grace since 1996 and have both served in council leadership positions in the past. They are the parents of Danielle, Ryan and Devan, all of whom have

made professions of faith at Grace. They will be assuming responsibilities for the care team of Arie and Pat Knoester.



### **Ryan and Sarah Schreiber.**

They are also serving as an elder team. Both Ryan and Sarah are graduates of Calvin Seminary. They are back at Grace Church after a few years in South Bend. Ryan is presently working in nursing and Sarah as a

professor of Old Testament studies. They will be assuming the responsibilities for the care team formerly served by Bob Crow, who is taking on the care team of Bettye Higgins over his last year as elder.

### THE NEW DEACONS ARE:

**Roger Forrest.** Roger is a newer member of Grace, who has come to us from the Narcotics Anonymous group meeting in our church. He has also become involved with Pastor Jack in the work of Alternative Directions, leading a 12 Step group that meets there as well as driving residents to Grace, each Sunday.

**Irene Kraegel.** Irene is serving as a deacon for the first times at Grace, although her husband Ken finished a term as deacon (and deacon chair) just a year ago. They are the proud parents of Milo. (I can't profess to have favorites among the many really beautiful wonderful kids at Grace, but if I could have favorites..) Irene is employed at Calvin College as a counselor.



**Jill Hausmann.** Jill is serving her first term as deacon. She is married to Ron Hausmann and is the daughter of Ted and Ellen Rottman. The Rottman family, along with the Overvoorde family, were the first white families to join Grace Church. They joined in 1966, with son Russell and daughter Jill. (So Jill has been a part of this community of Grace for a very long time.) This is her first time serving on council.

Thanks be to God for guiding our process and providing servant-leaders for our church. I also want to thank God for the faithful service over the past 3 years of our retiring elders and deacons.

### THE RETIRING DEACONS ARE:

**Dave Lucas.** Dave is a long time member of Grace. He joined along with his family in 1983 and he with Marcia, have served the church well in various offices and positions. Dave finished his term as deacon, serving as deacon chair over the last months.

**Devetta Clayton.** Devetta is of course well known here at Grace as great liturgical dancer. She has been involved and continues to be involved in various aspects of our worship and outreach.

**Mike Foster.** Mike has served as deacon chair and has been deeply involved in our outreach ministries including the food pantry. He has also served on the Administrative Committee.

### THE RETIRING ELDERS ARE:

**Jennifer Bridgewater.** Jennifer served well as an elder and in addition served as Council President over the last year, which is a very challenging and time-consuming role. She is going to continue to serve Grace in various aspects of outreach ministries and Grace House along with Pastor Khary, which we will talk more about in the very near future.

**Bettye Higgins.** Betty has been a member of Grace since 1981 and has worked in every possible position of leadership and service, for which we are very grateful. Bettye also attended Synod, the yearly meeting of CRC denominational leadership as an elder delegate in 2014. (If you look closely at the painting “Grace Through Every Generation” done by our own Chris Stoffel Overvoorde, for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Christian Reformed Church, you will see Bettye.)

**Arie and Pat Knoester.** Pat and Arie served together as an elder team. They have been members of Grace since 1976 and have also served in every possible position of leadership at Grace. They have both been known as just extraordinary Christian School teachers, now entering into their retirement years. We wish them many great years in their retirement.

On behalf of Grace CRC, I want to thank every one of you for all the time and devotion that you gave to our church. You all served well and were an example for all of us to see and follow. We thank you for your hard work. Our congregation has grown stronger through your efforts. We give thanks to God for you and your work. May the Lord our God bless you for your service to Him. *Pastor Jack Kooreman*

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## NEW COUNCIL OFFICERS

Council President	Paul Ippel
Council Vice President:	Gordon VanHarn
Clerk of Council:	Ann Geenen
Treasurer:	Char Jansens
Elder Chair:	Bob Crow
Elder Vice Chair:	Marla Hoekwater
Elder Secretary:	Ryan and Sarah Schreiber
Deacon Chair:	Kim VanHarn
Deacon Vice Chair:	Jill Hausmann
Deacon Secretary:	Ann Geenen

Ad Com members: Char Jansens, Nikki Pinder, Ann Geenen, Paul Ippel, and Jack Kooreman

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## WORDS FROM THE PASTOR

Remarks of Sunday June 28.

This was a historical week in America. President Obama’s participation in the funeral of Rev. Pickney was amazing. It was remarkable. The Supreme Court’s sustaining of the Affordable Care Act and now the ruling in support of same sex marriage on June 26 are significant events in the life of this country.

It is a joy for me to pastor a diverse congregation. Grace is that. We are diverse in so many ways. As a diverse body of believers, we are not all in agreement about the



Supreme Court ruling as to “Marriage Equality”. In fact, most churches are in agreement about such things. You can go to St. John’s UCC, where I have preached and find that there is no ambiguity about how they feel. They are celebrating. You can go to Borculo CRC, where I have preached and there is no ambiguity about how they feel either. They are angry and lamenting.

As your pastor, more important to me this morning than how we feel as individuals is how we speak about this issue with one another, recognizing our differing perspectives.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4, “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

The world is looking at the Christian community right now for how it will react. We are a church called Grace. Let’s not allow our reaction to be one of derision or anger. Show love to everyone. While the world is watching us, let’s be a picture of a loving caring people as we continue to discuss this as a people of grace and people who believe in the truth of God’s Word.

This ruling isn’t personal. I don’t see it as an attack on us as Christians. I think that the calling this morning is for us to forget the sad, broken and polarizing politics of our society and just imitate Jesus. Respectively, we are to fear God and to keep his commandments, we are to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves, and we are to make disciples. We are to maintain our unity in the Spirit.

Remember that we are Christians first. We must remain primarily focused on Jesus, and He must not be second to anything else in our lives. In a country full of many opinions and ideas of what America is and what it should be, we should instead focus ourselves on figuring out what it means to be a Christian in this society and culture. What is it to represent Jesus in these days?

If you are concerned with the political drift of American culture and I trust we all are that, lets recommit to the gospel of grace. Let us seek the common good. Advocate for the last, the lost, and the least. Speak the truth in love.

Lastly, If you are this morning deeply troubled with the Supreme Court’s decision, my pastoral advice is to simply keep perspective. In this and every other matter, always remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Let us all pray for a great spiritual awakening, a revival in our country!  
*Pastor Jack Kooreman*