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THE GRAND COMMUNICATOR

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Spring Edition

March - April 2024

Editor – Joan Miner

OR CURRENT RESIDENT



Magnify God, Proclaim the Gospel, Care for the Community!

The Church office is open Mon. – Thur. from 8:00am to 1:00pm

Please call if you have any questions or concerns 623-975-6262

Come Worship with Us

Weekly Schedule

Sunday Services

Bible Study at 9:00 AM ... Ministry Center

Worship at 10:00 AM ... Worship Center

Evening Worship at 4:00 PM ... Worship Center

Mondays	8:00 am	Men's Bible Study, Ministry Center Classroom
Wednesdays	4:00 pm	Bible Study & Prayer Meeting, Worship Center
Saturdays	10:00 am	Women's Bible Study, Ministry Center classroom

Pastor's Note



We are already well into 2024. Easter will be here before we know it. We will celebrate the resurrection with a SonRise Service, and the normal 10:00 am service will include the choir cantata. Easter this year is on March 31. It will be a great time together celebrating both the most central event of history and the greatest gift we have ever been given.

Here is why I call it the central event of history. I believe that all of creation was centered on the creation of man. We were not an incidental part of creation. We were the reason that all the rest of creation took place. Humanity is both the crowning point of the creative process and the overall purpose for it.

Since we are the purpose of creation, then the actions which secure our eternal place with God would be the central event of history thus far. This is what the life of Jesus was, it was God extending the opportunity toward us to choose to love Him. He took these actions to demonstrate His sacrificial love for us. The resurrection of Jesus is God demonstrating what it will be like when we enter eternity in our resurrected bodies, assuming we choose to be a Christ follower. It is proof positive point where our eternal future was made available and verifiable was the resurrection.

This is why I call it the greatest gift. Our resurrection is our entry into heaven, our all access pass. His resurrection is the first fruits, the starting point of our resurrection. These facts only apply if we know Jesus in salvation. That is to say you can only have the gift if you are willing to receive it. The Bible makes it pretty clear that a decision is necessary on our part. This is the kind of decision that changes your life dramatically. If you have questions about how to make that decision, or even whether you have or have not made that decision. Contact me, and let's talk it through. You will never regret being sure.

Welcome Our New Members!

*Cecil & Barbara Prier
Joined January 14, 2024*



*Lee Erickson
Joined January 21, 2024*



We wish to send a special "Thank You" to everyone who volunteered to make our picture taking days successful.

Greetings in the Name of the Lord!



It is not too late to join “The Potential and Power of Prayer” class. We will be studying the following topics: *Spiritual Warfare and Prayer, Why we Struggle with Prayer, Hindrances and Answered Prayer, and Practical Ways to Pray*. Remember that prayer is two-way communication. I talk to God and then I need to wait and listen as God speaks to me. I have got the talking part down. My problem is waiting and listening. This class on prayer is designed to help you spend more time in prayer and help you realize the varieties of ways one can pray.

Chris and I had a wonderful vacation as we celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary. Thank you for allowing us to have this time away. You are a blessing to us and we thank the Lord for the privilege of working with you as we serve the Lord here at Grand Community Baptist Church.
In His Service,
Brother Gary

Musically Speaking



I still recall hearing these lyrics when I was young:
“He [God] loves to hear the wind sing as it whistles through the pines on mountain peaks,
And He loves to hear the raindrops as they splash to the ground in a magic melody.
He smiles in sweet approval as the waves crash through the rocks in harmony;
Creation joins in unity to sing to Him majestic symphonies.

But His favorite song of all is the song of the redeemed,

When lost sinners now made clean lift their voices loud and strong.

When those purchased by His blood lift to Him a song of love,

There's nothing more He'd rather hear, nor so pleasing to His ear,

As His favorite song of all.” - *Phillips, Craig & Dean, "Favorite Song of All"*

As a church, we gather each Sunday and lift our voices together in song. As we do this week after week and year after year, though, we may come to view it as just habitual and commonplace. We become dulled to its importance as an element of our worship of the Lord...

The doctrine of “the priesthood of the believer” has long been a hallmark of Baptist theology. The veil separating us from the Holy of Holies, from the presence of God, has been torn open (see Matt. 27:50-51a; Heb. 10:19-20). God wants a relationship with each of us, and He wants to hear from us directly! So we are not called to be merely *observers* during corporate worship, but *participants*.

As fortunate as our church is with talented and hard-working musicians—such as our instrumentalists, soloists, or choir—and as much as they bless us with God-honoring songs, it’s still my belief that congregational singing is the “crown jewel” of our musical worship together precisely *because* of its togetherness, because of the direct involvement of all the saints present. In saying this, I am not diminishing our musicians’ skill or effort. Rather, I am encouraging you not to underestimate the importance of what you contribute to the musical portion of our worship!

As Psalm 105:1-2 says, “Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; tell of all His wonders. Glory in His holy name; may the heart of those who seek the Lord be joyful.” May this passage accurately portray what we do as we gather together!

In song for Him and with y'all,
- James Slaviero

IN MEMORIAM

Bob Wells 2-16-2024

Church Safety and Security

The Safety and Security Plan for GCBC was developed by the Church Safety and Security planning team and approved by GCBC members in 2018. The Plan was developed in conjunction with input gathered from the City of Surprise Faith Leadership conferences and site visits from the City of Surprise Neighborhood Police Dept. representative.

As with any plan, success is dependent on implementation and enforcement by the team put in place. Currently, the GCBC Security Team is composed of seven dedicated volunteers including one member with extensive experience in law enforcement. We propose that two Security Team members including the ex-law enforcement member are on duty at the Sunday morning service and at least one member available at the Wednesday and Sunday evening services.

If requested, a Security Team member will be available for other special services other than the normal scheduled days. Our team becomes over-taxed during the summer months as three of the regular members leave for their summer homes thus affecting the normal schedule of the other team members during May through September.

Our Team could really use some additional volunteers during that time frame to help relieve the schedule burden of the reduced team members. No prior experience is necessary, and Ladies are welcome to join the Team.

For more information, feel free to contact Ed Smith or Frank Plahutnik. Your reward is knowing that you are a part a Team that strives to help keep GCBC a safe and secure place to worship under the overall protection of our one true GOD.

Ed Smith, Security Team Captain.

HANDYMAN MINISTRY:

Handyman Ministry is an outreach from our church to help people who are no longer able to do the simple tasks themselves. This can be easy things like changing smoke detector batteries to changing light bulbs. Sometimes our members require help putting together furniture, electronic equipment, or even moving to assisted living. This past year we had more than 30 requests for assistance.

We have a list of 11 men and women that have graciously agreed to help people in our church.

So, we are looking for good hearted men and women to join the others on our Handy Men and Women list that have talents in the following areas and would like to serve other people in our church.

- *Plumbing
- *Carpentry
- *Cabinet Repair
- *Electronics
- *Moving Furniture
- *Electrical
- *Irrigation
- *other miscellaneous repairs

If you are interested you can call Frank Plahutnik at 480-440-1012.

So if you need a handyman, you can call Frank or leave your information with our Secretary, Joan Miner.
Frank Plahutnik

Missions

The mission committee distributes funds which givers have designated to “missions” on their offering envelopes. Biblically, we should first give a tithe (10%) to the budget of the church, but many people give beyond a tithe including to the missions.

These designated funds are separate from the special churchwide mission offerings of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, or the Arizona Mission Offerings. These 3 offerings are sent directly to the appropriate organization through our treasurer with the aid of the church office. The mission committee does play a role in setting these 3 offering goals and in promoting the offerings.

The designated mission funds are also separate from the general budget mission percentages given to the Cooperative Program, and the Estrella Baptist Association. These are set levels of giving through the church budget which are reviewed each year and voted on by the church body.

One of the missions/ministries in Arizona that our church donates to through your generosity of designated funds is the Along Side Ministries (ASM). Their motto is Seeing Lives Transformed. This is a prison ministry serving in 12 prisons, 21 yards (divisions within the prison’s population). ASM is in both men’s and women’s prison yards.

2023 Highlights include: at the Perryville Carlos yard- 300 to 500 women attended a worship service in November led by a Goodyear church. 974 discipleship group sessions were held, 372 new professions in Christ were celebrated, 513 mentor/mentee sessions occurred, and 41 baptisms were witnessed -15 from a women’s Bible meeting where 115 women were present. The Lord used 106 ASM volunteers serving 14, 295 hours in 2023 to accomplish His work among the prisons.

As a church we give this group \$300 monthly/\$3600 a year. Please pray for this ministry to help transform the lives it serves in the AZ prisons and for the Christians within the prisons as they grow in faith and allow Jesus to impact their lives moving forward. For more information about ASM visit their website: www.alongside-ministries.com



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Fun, Food and Fellowship

Need some “Save the Date” opportunities for spiritual family time with one another? Your planning team has in-vit-able events for you and any guests you would like to share Christ with. As we age our physical families get smaller in number, which is why building our spiritual family size needs to constantly be growing!!

What and When are these events? I’m glad you asked.
March 2, 2024 at 4pm

Annie Armstrong dinner: international cuisines and mission focused devotional
May 11, 2024 at 12 noon

Ladies appreciation Lunch: all your favorite items with a palatable devotion from the heart of a servant.
June 15, 2024 at 9 AM

Men’s appreciation breakfast Bayou: Every mans favorite early morning catch! No fish on the shore but a reminder of our Lords message to be fishers of men

Please look for the signup sheets in the foyer weeks prior to the event date.
In Christ alone: your Seven Servants: Ardy, Barbara, Becky, Debby, Georgene, Karen, and Joy



The Cookie Table



The Cookie Table is ready to serve another year. It is a time to start fresh, with a lot of fresh cookies.

I want to remind everyone that we have sugar-free and gluten-free, so if you hesitated to stop at the table before please come by for a cookie and also for some fellowship and to meet someone new.

There is no sign up sheet for bringing cookies. We accept cookies every week. We have four new cookie helpers this year that want to serve you.

We lost three faithful workers, Linda Austin, our loss to Heaven’s gain, and two others with health problems. God is so faithful. There is still time to help by baking but we also take store bought.

Thank you for letting us serve,

Marie Miller

623-546-2589

Linda Mackendrick

623-398-4633

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering



Our goal for this year's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) is \$10,500

This offering is above your tithe as a special offering and will go directly to the mission field for our missionaries in the US and Canada. Each Sunday morning in March and some of the Sunday evenings we will have a video to highlight missions/missionaries and family serving in the areas of Las Vegas/Henderson, NV; Boston, MA; Sterling, VA; Jacksonville, FL; Aurora, CO; Lansdowne, PA.

Watch for the periodic bulletin inserts in March highlighting AAEO.

For more information on the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering to support North American Mission Board missionaries, see www.anniearmstrong.com

Thank you for praying and giving to missions!

Mission Projects for April

If you choose to participate, we have 2 opportunities to impact lives for the God's Kingdom.

- 1) The Arizona City church we have contact with, has a need of 40 sturdy backpacks for children in grades K-6 for the school year 24-25. The plan is to give the backpacks to the children that attend the church's VBS in June. We will collect the backpacks April 7 through 28.
- 2) The baby bottle campaign--- grab a provided baby bottle to fill with loose change or cash/check to assist with the work of The Choices Pregnancy Center to inform women of their choices in the case of an unwanted or untimely pregnancy. Choices provides emotional support for both the woman, if possible, the man. There are Lifepath classes for parents, free emergency baby supplies/clothes , free ultrasounds, and more.

A Note From The Gideons

It was a great blessing to be a part of your worship service on Sunday, February 4th. The warm and gracious reception on behalf of Grand Community Baptist Church was genuinely appreciated.

Your congregation's love for a lost world and the Word of God is exciting to see. A praying body has tremendous impact in seeing others come to Christ. The generous offering that was given in the amount of \$2,245 demonstrates the faithfulness of God in the partnership between your church and The Gideons International. These funds will be used in their entirety to provide about 1,440 Scriptures in areas served by Gideons, both locally and across the globe. Please pray for many people to come to faith in Jesus Christ through these Scriptures.



Operation Christmas Child (OCC)

In 2023, our church provided 286 boxes for OCC, 82 boxes built with shipping covered by individuals (including 1 built and shipped online) and 204 boxes through church donations of supplies and shipping funds.

The team used all the funds donated to build quality boxes and send as many boxes as we could for this once in a lifetime gift. The boxes are generally handed out at a celebrative event at the local church sponsor in the receiving country.

It is exciting that the gospel story was told to the children and any family present. The boxes that were traceable through the Follow Your Box label program all went to the Philippines.

The one box built through the OCC website, went to a hard to reach and unpublished country. Pray for the children who received a box and their families that Christ will be made known among them.

The 2024 OCC project team is now. As some of our team leave for the summer, we have initial meeting(s) for planning in February and March. If you are interested in joining this team, let Stephanie Short know. Watch the announcements/bulletin for more information.