

A country preacher was preaching, reminding his church of the need to grow and expand. The preacher said, "This church needs to walk". A man in the back said, "Amen, brother, let it walk." The preacher said, "This church needs to run." The man said, "Amen brother, let her run." The preacher said, "This church needs to fly." The man said, "Amen, brother, let the church fly." The preacher then said, "You know folks, it's gonna take money to let the church fly." There was silence for a moment, and then the man in the back said, "Let the church walk, preacher, let it walk."

In many churches you can speak on almost any subject except money. But giving is one of the greatest tools that God uses to grow our faith and to test the sincerity of our love for Christ.

Why should I give?

First, let me tell you a story. One day James was spending time with his **six year** old son Dave. He asked Dave what he wanted to do. Dave wanted some french fries from McDonald's. So off they went to the golden arches. His Dad made the order. And Dave's heart pounded when Dad said – "**Super-size** the fries." His Dad took out his wallet and paid for the fries and a drink.

Dad said a brief grace, "God, bless this food. Amen", but it seemed like way too many words to Dave who was eager to sink into the fries. James was so happy to see Dave enjoying something so simple. So he decided to join in the fun and reached over to get a couple of Dave's fries for himself. To his surprise, his son quickly put his arms around his fries as though building a fort. Dave said, "No, these are mine."

James was in a state of shock. He couldn't believe it. James pulled back his hand and began to reflect about his son's attitude. He wondered: Does Dave realize that I provided the fries, that I gave him more than he was expecting since I supersized the fries? Why then is he talking about "my fries"? Also, since I am 6ft 4in and 220 lbs, I have the power to take all the fries despite his little arms surrounding them like a fort.

Dad didn't really need the fries; after all, one or two fries couldn't satisfy him if he was hungry. What he wanted was for Dave to invite him into the wonderful little world he had made possible for him. He wanted his son to be willing to share the very blessing that he had provided.

Has God provided you with any fries? Did he **supersize** it? Sadly, just like Dave, many of us want to put up a little fort around the "fries" God has given us. We don't want to share our resources with the God who gave them to us; the God who can take everything we have away. God doesn't **need** our money. The cattle on a 1000 hills are His. All the silver and gold are His. And yet this almighty God desires us to share with Him the very blessings He's given to us.

So why should we give?

1. I Give - As an act of Worship. There are at least 2 motivators for this worship:

A. Gratitude. Read 2 Corinthians 9:12. He's the one who gave us all the fries. Amen. It's in Him we live and move and have our being. Everything we have comes from God's hand. The most meaningful way you can show your gratitude to God for how He has blessed you is to generously share the resources He has entrusted to you with Him. Don't miss what verse 12 is saying - generously giving to God's work is an overflowing expression of your gratitude to God.

But there's an even greater motivator for worshipping God with my giving:

B. Love. Read 2 Corinthians 8:8-9. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 8:8 our giving shows the sincerity of our love. I know folks will argue with this but I'm glad I'm not the one making the statement. So let me ask you, if giving is a test of the sincerity of your love, how do you measure up?

Please return when we continue this sermon in the next issue. ✧

June 2014
Volume 2, Issue 5

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GCA Reflections

Quarterly Newsletter of Germantown Christian Assembly



By Margaret Aitcheson

Annual Retreat

On Friday afternoon 5/16/14, a group of GCA members and friends traveled to Long Beach Island, New Jersey for our annual weekend retreat. We had such high expectant spirits that not even drenching rains could quench. We arrived at Harvey Cedars conference center to find a haven by the ocean, a vacationer's paradise. We knew we were in for a good time and thankfully had bright sunshine for the rest of the weekend.

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My First Missions Conference at GCA

By Nora Brown

As a new member of GCA, it was enlightening for me to work with the Missions Committee for the first time. Now that the conference is over, I truly appreciate Psalm 133:1, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people dwell together in unity." Unity is strength, and it was clear that, while planning this conference, we needed each other's strength

A lot needed to be done— planning for the missionaries' arrival; making arrangements for their accommodations; providing for their needs while here; organizing the various events for each day, etc. Not

knowing what to expect, I just decided to throw myself out there, willing to learn and get involved as much as possible. I was glad when I was quickly put to work.

It was exciting to me that once all the missionaries were here we were able to greet them in person. I found it rewarding to learn about the lives being transformed through the spreading of the Gospel and by showing the love of Jesus as they provided for the basic needs of those whom they served. The true desire of these missionaries was that God's transforming power would change the lives of those to whom they ministered.

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The Purpose of this Newsletter

This Ministry Newsletter is intended to support the vision of the church—to be Christ-centered, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to build lives that glorify and worship God by emphasizing the Word, Evangelism, Discipleship and Caring for the whole man. We hope this Newsletter will play an important role in encouraging the members of our assembly to fearlessly stand closer together, for the cause of the gospel of Christ.



GCA Reflections is published quarterly for the members and friends of GCA.

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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in each of the articles herein are those of each individual author or contributor and not necessarily those held by the GCA Reflections Staff or GCA leadership.

A special thank you to all who contributed to this issue of GCA Reflections.

GCA Hosted Evangelism Explosion Workshop

GCA hosted an Evangelism Explosion Workshop Sat., May 3 in conjunction with Limerick Chapel, Limerick PA. Participants heard riveting testimonies from a Muslim who had come to know the Lord after many years in Islam, and a Jewish man who stayed with the Jehovah's Witnesses for many years. One could choose workshops on presenting the Gospel to Muslims, Jewish people, unsaved Protestant or Catholic people, Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons. The GCA website was used to accept the workshop registrations. There were 74 online registrations, but about 150 actually attended! The "brave" ones went out in teams in the afternoon in various neighborhoods to practice what they had learned, and returned to share. The Golden Eagles helped by confirming registrants, helping to provide and serve breakfast & lunch, and cleaning up. ✧



A warm welcome to our newest GCA members, Stephen Kelly & Daena Cunningham, who received the right hand of fellowship on Sunday, April 27th. May you experience the rich blessings of the Lord as you enjoy growing with us.



GCA's 41st Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, June 22 at 10:45 a.m.

**Speaker: Pastor James G. Murray, Jr. of
Philadelphia Bible Fellowship**

**Consecration of Bro. Brian H. Grant and his wife Sherry!
following the worship service.**

7 p.m. GCA Graduation Celebration

Letter from Lanora Williams

A Tribute to Jean Brewton



To: The Jean Brewton Family

Friday, April 18, 2014

Lanora Williams I've known Jean over 40 years, since I became her new neighbor. My son Carlton and Jean's nephew Keith became friends, playing everyday at my house or hers, just in the driveway with many other children in the neighborhood.

God led Jean to start a Saturday afternoon Bible study for the neighborhood children. Jean taught them about Jesus Christ and how to live as Christians. God blessed Jean's ministry for several years, with trips and events, and leading me and others to help her build a foundation of faith in both my sons and many other children.

Jean was more than a friend, she was like a sister. We talked on the phone for hours, shopped, took trips together, and when we left our last church, we joined GCA together. We visited a lot of churches, but GCA was the one where God would grow our relationship with Him and friendship with each other. He blessed us with our sisters Alice and Gloria whom I love as I do Jean. We were baptized there. We encouraged each other to give our all for God, joining many ministries: Evangelism, Bible Study, Discipleship, Care Group, Deaf Ministry, and the Golden Eagles. Of course, Jean joined Vacation Bible School and Sunday School where she used the skills God developed in her to guide even more children. Jean contributed with her life.

As a sister, when I needed something, Jean was there. If I needed to go somewhere, she was there. She helped me when my mother, aunt and sister died. And the 3 times I was in the hospital, Jean was there. She was a godly woman and helped anyone who needed help. The Lord blessed our friendship!

Pray for her family and my family and me. I have lost another sister. But, my hurt turns into rejoicing for her gain. **This is a celebration of the life of Jean Brewton.** Jean is happy now because she is at rest and in glory with Jesus—singing, worshiping and having a good time with our Lord! Well done Jean!

Lanora,

Your Sister in Christ

Excerpts from the endorsement from the elders:

Continued from page 6.

We thank the Lord for Bro. Brian and his ministry. We all know and have been blessed by the exercise of his gifts of leadership, teaching and pastoral care. These gifts, we believe, have equipped him to be the elder to fill the role as pastor of GCA at this time. Since GCA believes in the plurality of leadership, Bro. Brian will carry out this role in concert with the other elders. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we will make decisions as a team.

Bro. Brian has agreed to serve without pay and will reduce the time spent in his business to ensure that the needs of the assembly are met. We believe Bro. Brian has been called at this time to help provide inspiration and leadership to bring us through this period of transition and move us toward the exciting and expanded vision God has given to the elders for the assembly. We'll share more of this vision in upcoming months. ✧

History Being Made At GCA

From e-mail:

Continued from page 5.

We are excited about the future at GCA, and we are sure that you are as well. As we start on this new path, please keep the church family at GCA, our leaders—and especially Bro. Brian and Sis. Sherryl—in prayer.

The saints who served on the Search Committee were: Bro. Jim McConnell, Chairman; Sis. Margaret Aitcheson, Secretary; Sis. Lorita Grant, Assistant Secretary; Bro. Kirk Wheeler; Dr. Elijah Korich; Sis. Peggi Watson and Bro. Merv Caruth. ✧

Excerpts from the public announcement from the Search Committee on April 14, 2014
(Having served since May 2013)

The bottom line in our deliberations was to discover the mind of the Lord in this matter. It is HIS church, and not ours. We proceeded along this new and different pathway, well-watered with prayer. We reached out to other well-respected pastors and assembly leaders informing them of our search and asking for any recommendations or advice. Our first order of business (in accordance with the mandate from our elders) was to draw a “picture” of the man we would be looking for. First was a list of non-negotiables--the qualifications and character required of those who should be overseers over the household of God as found in **1st Timothy 3, Titus 1, 1st Peter 5, Matthew 20 and Acts 20.**

The second was a 12-point list of our expectations that must also importantly be true of the man we are looking for, but expectations that would nevertheless allow for some flexibility owing to the fact that no man is without his own particular short-comings, limitations, and differences in abilities.

The committee ultimately settled on inviting six candidates to participate in our search process. **The candidate we would ultimately recommend to the elders must possess the gift of pastor/teacher. He must also be a man who subscribes to our statement of faith and who understands and values our roots.** ✧

Excerpts from the endorsement from the elders:

We thank our brother Jim McConnell and the Pastor Search Committee for the fine work they have done, the valuable time and effort spent on this project. It has been a learning experience for all of us; but our God is faithful! He continues to answer our prayers.

GCA believes that God gives His people special spiritual gifts that enable His Church to become strong and mature, to expand and be well equipped for service. Among the gifts with which God blesses His people is the gift of the pastor/teacher.

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Annual Retreat

Continued from page 1.

The program was structured giving us ample time between Bible expository sessions for good food and wonderful fellowship. We lingered over light and serious conversations. We continually gazed at the beautiful ocean and ventured into the surrounding areas, admiring the architectural beauty of the surrounding homes, enjoying brisk or just leisurely walks, exploring flea markets and estate wares. Some of us climbed to the top of Barnegat lighthouse, some 217 steps and were rewarded with a 360° splendid panoramic view of Barnegat shore.



Harvey Cedars Bible Conference Center, NJ – May 16-18, 2014

Our theme was "Unleashing the Power of the Holy Spirit." We had excellent, inspiring teaching from Pastor Tom Troutt. He said that Christians have the advantage of the Holy Spirit, God's power and the dominating force living in us and equipping us with indispensable spiritual gifts, critical for the body of Christ to live victoriously, do ministry and evangelize the world. We should be filled with the Spirit, yielded to the total domination of God allowing ourselves to be used of God. We should be 100% participants in using the gifts of the Holy Spirit and not settle to be paralytic spectators. Powerful in what it can accomplish, prayer is a way to partner with God, so let's be persistent in prayer and leave the results to God.

Needless to say we left Harvey Cedars recharged and challenged with the desire to be more fully engaged in God's work for His glory. ✧

UPCOMING EVENTS

Men's Breakfast
Saturday, June 28 – 8:30 a.m.

Younger Generation Sunday
June 29

GCA's Vacation Bible School
July 12-19, 2014



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Maria Gusmao



Ed & Ellen Carwheel



Carmen Harris



Ron & Zita Charles

My First Missions Conference at GCA

Many missionaries attended including Wali Ahmad, Ellen Carwheel, Lorraine Stirneman, Lisa Lambert, Christine Wigden from Philadelphia; Ron & Zita Charles from Guyana; Maria Gusmao from Brazil; Carmen Harris from Willingboro, New Jersey; and Dr Elijah Korich, representing Kenya. Each shared about his or her specific ministry with great, heart-felt enthusiasm. A story that stood out was about a young boy growing up in Brazil with his mother, father and a sister. At a young age, the boy noticed his mother treated him very differently from how she treated his sister. At some point, he questioned this and eventually asked his mother **why**. His mother in anger replied: “Because I hate you. I did not want a boy. If I knew you were a boy, I would have aborted you before you were born.” With this, the boy ran away, took on the life style of a gangster, quickly became a homosexual, and changed his appearance to look like a girl. The missionary, Maria, ministered to the young man for years. Because of the bad area where he lived, she normally met him in a camp area. After what seemed like many hopeless years, this boy, now a young man, came to Bible camp and gave his life to the Lord. Today, he desires to become a missionary to minister to homosexual teens.

As I listened to the sacrifices these missionaries made, their unselfish love, their obedience to the call of God to spread the gospel, my heart melted. My prayer to God was to use me. Although I might never be called to go abroad, I realize there is a lot to do here at home by supporting our missionaries and spreading the Gospel. I have always desired to be involved in missionary work, so I thank God for directing me to a church that is mission-minded. I trust, as I make myself available to Him, that my gift and calling will be revealed.

It is clear to me when God’s people dwell together in unity great things get accomplished. By the grace of God, the conference was a success. I pray that the conference will not only be seen as a yearly event to look forward to, but rather that each heart will be challenged to get involved. I am convinced that as we present ourselves to God as willing vessels, He will use us in ways we never thought possible. I am greatly encouraged; I can’t wait to see how God is going to use me (and you too).

ALL PRAISE AND GLORY BE TO GOD
AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



By Roger Walton

Wow! Do You Believe It? The Sunday School Easter Play Went on Tour

After two practices for the Easter play participants, our first missionary journey took us to the Stenton Family Shelter on May 31st at 6:30 PM. To my knowledge, the Sunday school has **never** gone beyond the doors of 610 E. Mt. Pleasant Ave. This was a special opportunity to do good and share the Good News of the love of our God. Does it get any better? I think not. Matthew 5:16 says “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

We had been invited to bless the families at the Stenton Family Shelter. At our last visit the previous month, some of the children did not want us to leave. Ask any of our teens that went for the family fun night at the shelter in April; they can tell you how they felt and about their experience. We presented the play first, then ice cream and snacks

were enjoyed. Think about the memories created! Parents can talk with their children about their part in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in the days and years to come.

Our next missionary journey took place on June 8th at 2 PM at Ivy Hill Nursing Home. GCA has a church worship service every second Sunday with the residents of the nursing home. Bro. Carlton Henry directs this program and thought the residents would enjoy the Easter play. Even though many of the residents are in failing health, I get the impression that they look forward to the worship service on those second Sundays. As an “older” person myself, it is always a blessing to see young children being used by God to let others know of His love. The residents feel the same way. Please pray for the participants, those who saw the play, and for God’s glory in and through their lives. Please pray for other missionary journeys to come. ✧



History Being Made At GCA

We of the GCA Pastor Search Committee wish to let everyone know that we have completed the task of searching for the man whom the Lord intends to provide the primary pastoral leadership of our assembly at this time. That man is our own dear Brother Brian Grant.

Our elders received and endorsed the committee’s recommendation of Brother Brian. An announcement of the conclusion of our search, followed by an endorsement from the elders of that conclusion, was presented to the congregation at a well-attended business meeting called for that purpose on Sunday, the 13th of April. We are gratified to tell you that this announcement was enthusiastically and joyfully received by all those assembled.

Continues on page 6.