



# The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church  
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Rev. Ryan Irmer, Pastor  
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November 2016

## *The Power of Grace*

After recently giving a sermon on the topic of Grace based on the well-known story of Zacchaeus and now preparing for Bernadine McRipley's funeral where we will sing "Amazing Grace", I am writing this with "Grace" on my mind. So I'd like to share with you a somewhat modern-day story that resembles the life of Zacchaeus: Charles Colson.

Colson was one of the first to be well known for the political scandal of "Watergate." In those dark days he was the most vilified figure in Washington after Richard Nixon. In the role he relished as "Nixon's hatchet man" he schemed in many dirty and underhanded tricks and was imprisoned for his part in Watergate. Yet an interaction with a friend who was a Christian turned his world upside down. Here is Charles Colson describing his own conversion experience to the Harvard School of Business at their Commencement many years ago:

*I took that little book he had given me, Mere Christianity, and began to read it and study it as I would study for a case. I'd take my yellow legal pad and get down all the arguments-both sides. I was confronted with the most powerful mind that I had ever been exposed to, I saw the arguments for the truth of Jesus Christ, and I surrendered my life 18 years ago. My life has not been the same since and can never be the same again. I discovered that Christ coming into your life changes that will. It gives you that will to do what you know is right, where even if you know what is right-and most of the time you won't-you don't have the will to do it.*

After Colson's time in prison and as a new Christian who had experienced God's grace, he started *Prison Fellowship*, a ministry to prisoners and their families. Here was a man who was at the pinnacle of power, had all the accoutrements of that power, all the money and other things that went along with it, and it left him empty and ruined, just like Zacchaeus. But also like Zacchaeus, when Jesus came into his life, he then devoted himself to helping the most powerless people in our society---prisoners and their families.

God is still at work today as He was in the life of Zacchaeus and in the life of Charles Colson. It is amazing to witness the power of God's love and grace! I truly believe it is the most powerful force in the universe. My hope and prayer is that we continue to accept God's gift of grace in our lives and allow it to transform us, our church, our neighborhoods, and our world in new and amazing ways.

Your pastor,  
Ryan Irmer

## SESSION ACTIONS – OCTOBER 19, 2016 MEETING

At its regular meeting in October, the session took the following actions:

- set the date for the 2017 annual congregational meeting for January 29 following worship;
- approved monetary donations to the Rescue Mission of Trenton, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Arm in Arm (formerly Crisis Ministry), Mercer Street Friends, NAMI, and ISLES;
- authorized funds to replace the toilet in the vestibule lavatory;
- authorized funds to install four energy efficient lights in fellowship hall;
- approved the church's participation in Womanspace's "Communities of Light" event on December 5;
- approved plans for Consecration Sunday on November 20 including mailings, guest preacher and covered dish luncheon.

## FALL RUMMAGE SALE

Every rummage sale is different...and the same. We see some of the same faces of participants, some of whom we now know on a first name basis. We have the same faithful church members and friends who help us during the sale, this year we had 28 helpers. Thank you, thank you, thank you to all those who helped out for the sale!! What was different this time was that the storage shed wasn't full of items. Given the lack of items and the smaller number of participants (did construction on Route 1 play a part??), we were pleased to have made just short of \$1,900 at the sale. Thanks be to God!

Terrie and Bill Mansmann, Co-chairs

## CHURCH CLEANUP NOVEMBER 5TH A SUCCESS!



Thanks to all that showed up to clean up the grounds for the winter. Many plants were trimmed and garden areas cleaned out. Six loads of brush and leaves were taken to the recycling area. Thanks to a great crew from Slackwood and Grace Church for a terrific job that was completed in three hours! Look to join this group in the spring for our next cleanup.

## MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

The next meeting of the "Breakfast Club" will be held Friday November 18<sup>th</sup>. We will gather in Fellowship Hall at 9:00 am for breakfast and conversation. Following breakfast we will complete a few "little" jobs around the church. Hope to see the men of the church there!



## STEWARDSHIP CONSECRATION SUNDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2016

We will celebrate Consecration Sunday on November 20 at our usual 10:30 worship service, welcoming The Rev. Tom Kort as guest preacher. This is an important time for Slackwood, when we reflect on all God has given us and prayerfully consider what portion of our gifts God is calling us to contribute to the work of our church for 2017. Pledge cards will be distributed during the service. A covered dish luncheon will follow the service to celebrate the faithful commitments of our congregation. Hope you can join us for this very special gathering as we worship together and rejoice in the many ministries of our church.

## THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Tuesday, November 22 at 7:30 pm will be the Lawrence Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at First Baptist Church of Eggerts Crossing. Please plan to join your neighbors and friends for this service to celebrate our thanksgiving to God for His abundant blessings.



## ADVENT SOCIAL



Everyone is invited to celebrate the season of Advent on Saturday, December 10 beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Anand and Lilly Veevaraj are graciously opening their home to the church family for good food, beverages (wine and non-alcoholic drinks) and carol singing. Those attending are asked to bring an appetizer or a dessert. A sign-up sheet will be in fellowship hall so you can indicate if you plan to

attend and which dish you will be bringing. The Veevaraj home is located at 22 Colonial Lake Drive. If you need a ride, please let Carol Belles know. It will be a fun, relaxing evening. Plan to attend!

### ST. ANDREW'S DAY SERVICE OF WORSHIP

This year's St. Andrew's Day Service of Worship will be held on Sunday, November 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The Rev. Dr. George Toole will preach. The service will include bagpipe music and refreshments will follow the service. Plan to attend and welcome those who will be visiting Slackwood that evening.



### CHRISTMAS PAGEANT FOR EVERYONE!! DECEMBER 18



Have you always felt left out of the Christmas story? Wanted to be a part of the action? This year we will **once again** repeat last year's "everyone can play a part"

Christmas pageant. You will have an opportunity to be a part of the nativity scene. During the morning worship service, we will have an "interactive Christmas service". Worship attendees are asked to **arrive 15-30 minutes before the 10:30am church service**. In fellowship hall we will have tables of costumes from which you can choose what character in the story you would like to dress up as. There will be costumes for angels (who can forget last year's angel....Dirk Hofman?), shepherds, various barn animals, and townspeople. Once the worship service begins, a narration based on the Gospel of Luke's telling of Jesus' births is read/shared with the congregation. At various breaks in the narration, while the congregation sings a corresponding song, folks with certain costumes will go to the front of the sanctuary and help create a live nativity scene. **THERE ARE NO SPEAKING PARTS.** You only need to be a part of the story by following along with the prompts in the church bulletin. If you only want to sit in the pews and watch the story, that is ok too. If you have a costume, or would like to donate one, please see Terrie Mansmann. We hope you will mark your calendars for this special worship service and be a part of the Christmas spirit of joy, hope, peace, and love.

### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Our Presbyterian Women made their annual donation to NGA (New Garments Always). It was taken to Ewing Presbyterian Church at 9:00 am on October 18, 2016 by Marilyn Stebbins. NGA then sorts and delivers clothing to various charities in the Trenton area. All clothing must be new clothing. PW donated 210 pieces of clothing plus \$150 for the NGA staff to purchase more items as needed. Due to my not being able to shop or drive, we did not have our usual donation of 400 pieces, but we supplemented our contribution with money this year.

Thanks so much!

Arlene Filson  
PW Committee

### SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

From Cathy Salvatore

**Faith and Wisdom**  
Read Romans 5: 1-5  
James 2-5

All of us need help to balance the tension between living well in this world but we seem to worship material things instead. We must try to focus our sight on the Kingdom of God.

Let us pray to the Lord to help us to believe by transforming us to notice each other. Keep us to be faithful and give us wisdom so we can journey well in this world with generosity and passionate justice to lift burdens others carry with merciful justice and power to come to gain opportunities in our struggles and character with hope in our lives.

Prayer:

Through Christ we are justified by faith that we will have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray to our Lord to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## IN SYMPATHY

Our condolences are extended to the family of Bernadine McRipley, whose passing the morning of November 3 at Twining Village has deeply saddened the Slackwood family. Everyone knows what an amazing person Bernadine was as she touched all of our hearts in very special ways. We can all be comforted with the knowledge that she is safe in the arms of her Savior as God has surely welcomed her with open arms for one of his most faithful and steadfast servants.

Bernadine first came to Slackwood when she was a student at Princeton Theological Seminary and completed her field education requirement working with our Christian Education committee. The love that quickly formed between her and our congregation was the basis of her decision to make Slackwood her church home. She served as Parish Associate for many years, and even when she worked a distance -- especially in the Washington, DC office of the Presbyterian Church USA -- she still considered Slackwood her home. We were all pleased when she retired and moved to Levittown, PA and was able to again attend worship, preach on occasion and officiate at the sacraments. Bernadine was passionate about her ministry and about her call to work for equality and justice for all people. She will be greatly missed by many, many people.

Please pray for Bernadine's sons -- Ron, Michael and Marc, as well as their spouses and children. Let us thank God for her life and for the visit she was able to have last month with her brother and his wife. Let us also pray for the many, many people Bernadine cared about -- the poor, the homeless, those in need of food, those in prison, and those still marginalized in our society.

Calling hours for Bernadine will be at Slackwood Church on Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm, followed by a service of witness to the resurrection at 2:00 pm.

Bernadine often quoted 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you..." Let us hold on to that knowledge.

## *I'm Drinking from my Saucer...*

*I've never made a fortune,  
And it's probably too late now.  
But I don't worry about that much,  
I'm happy anyhow.*

*And as I go along life's way,  
I'm reaping better than I sowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.*

*Haven't got a lot of riches  
And sometimes the going's tough.  
But I've got loving ones all around me,  
and that makes me rich enough.*

*I thank God for his blessings  
and mercies He's bestowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.*

*I remember times when things went wrong.  
My faith wore somewhat thin.  
But all at once the dark clouds broke  
and the sun peeped through again.*

*So Lord, help me not to gripe  
about the tough rows I have hoed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.*

*If God gives me strength and courage  
when the way grows steep and rough,  
I'll not ask for other blessings,  
I'm already blessed enough.*

*And may I never be too busy  
to help others bear their loads.  
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.*

*Author Unknown*

## A STORY OF FEELINGS

Author Unknown

Once there was an island where all the feelings lived together. One day there came a storm in the sea and the island was about to drown. Every feeling was scared but Love made a boat to escape. All the feelings jumped in the boat except for one feeling. Love got down to see who it was...it was Ego. Love tried and tried but



Ego didn't move. Everyone asked Love to leave Ego and come in the boat but Love was meant to Love. It remained with Ego. All other feelings were left alive but "Love died because of Ego."



## Slackwood Presbyterian Church November 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 6:30 PM Christian Education Committee	3 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	4	5 8:30 AM AA Meeting  10:00 AM Fall Cleanup
6 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship and Communion 12:00 PM Property and Finance 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	7 7:30 PM AA Meeting	8  <i>ELECTION DAY</i>	9	10 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	11  <i>VETERANS' DAY</i>	12 8:30 AM AA Meeting <i>Services for Bernadine McRipley</i> 1:00 PM Calling hours 2:00 PM Witness to the Resurrection
13 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	14 7:30 PM AA Meeting	15 7:00 PM Membership and Outreach Committee	16 7:00 PM Session meeting	17 12:00 PM Pres. Women 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	18 9:00 AM Men's Breakfast Club 8:00 PM Daughters of Scotia	19 8:30 AM AA Meeting
20 <i>Stewardship Consecration</i> Sunday 9:30 AM "Messy Church" Intergenerational Activity 10:00 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship – Rev. Tom Kort preaching 12:00 PM – Covered Dish Luncheon 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	21 7:30 PM AA Meeting	22 7:30 pm Lawrence Interfaith Thanksgiving Service	23	24  <i>THANKSGIVING DAY</i>  6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	25	26 8:30 AM AA Meeting
27 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 11:45 AM Worship Committee 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service 7:00 PM St. Andrew's Day Service	28 7:30 PM AA Meeting	29	30	31 6:30 PM AA Meeting  7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous		

*Upcoming Events: December 10 – Advent Social  
December 18 – Christmas Pageant*

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November 2016

*To be yourself in a world  
that is constantly trying to make you something else  
is the greatest accomplishment.*

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Newsletter of the Slackwood Presbyterian Church