

GRACE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

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Good Gracious Gracious

February 2026

Seasoned with Salt

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

On January 24, the Session met for a day of prayer, conversation, and imagining what God might have in store for the future of Grace. It was an encouraging day, and we are grateful that elders took time out of their busy schedules to devote a day to these activities. Our conversations were based around Colossians 4:2-6, which includes a call to prayer and these instructions above for how to interact with people outside of our church family.

How do you feel when you think about talking to people who don't share your faith? Some people are more comfortable than others about sharing their faith, often based on personality, life experiences, and other factors. Regardless of how we feel about sharing our faith, Paul anticipates that it will happen. And when it does, he offers one of my favourite analogies for how to speak to other people: may your conversations be "seasoned with salt."

February in Ottawa may make you think of road salt, but Paul is almost certainly thinking of salt for food preparation and preservation. In addition to having its own flavour, when we add salt to our food, it enhances the flavour of other ingredients. Just a small amount of salt makes the whole dish taste better. This should be true of our conversations with other people. When we talk about Jesus, it should make the whole conversation richer and fuller. We are invited to speak in a way that improves the experience for those present. That is how people know we are sharing Good News!

Paul also reminds us to approach conversations with wisdom and grace. Wisdom is about gauging the situation and knowing how much to say and what words to use. Wisdom is always dependent on the Holy Spirit, and it is amazing how the Holy Spirit shows up when we ask for and expect it! Grace is about using gentle language and remembering that those we talk to are beloved by God, just as we are. Of course, none of us can do this perfectly, and that is another place where grace plays a role. The amazing gift of grace from God means that when we insert a harsh word instead of a kind one, we can always go back to God in confession and try again.

We wish you a wonderful February as we enter once again into the season of Lent. May your conversations be full of grace and seasoned with the salt that only comes from knowing Jesus!

Denise Allen-Macartney & Meg Patterson, Interim Moderators

Session Snippets – Linda Clarke

I was touched by what Esther said on Sunday about not packing the light of Jesus up in January with the Christmas lights and decorations. It is our responsibility as Christians to radiate with Jesus' light year round. Let us be effective ambassadors for the Lord in 2026.

94 people worshipped at Grace on Christmas Eve as we welcomed Pastor Dan MacKinnon to preach the message. \$480 was collected for Matthew House (see the Mission article in this newsletter). 10 people came out to watch the movie "Christmas with the Chosen" Dec. 29th. 2 youth from Living Faith and 2 from Grace came out to the first ROKC meeting.



The elders are coming off a great time of retreat with our Interim Moderators last Saturday. The location was Genesis Garden on Page Rd., a lovely place where we were able to worship, pray, celebrate Communion, discuss, share a meal (and snacks) and do some vision casting. It was a wonderful and productive time. The photo was taken by Pastor Denise as we were worshipping together.

In our vision casting part of the agenda, we identified some areas that are lacking at Grace Church presently and were asked to imagine what we would like Grace Church to look like in 5 years. So...how do we get there? We did more brainstorming and dreaming but then identified some areas where we can start working immediately. To increase our dedication to prayer: stay tuned for an opportunity for an early morning Zoom weekday prayer meeting. More people would be welcomed to the existing Tuesday evening prayer meeting. We intend to start engaging people during the worship service to share their prayer requests out loud, not every week but occasionally. We would like to encourage people to join or start up a Bible study for spiritual growth but also for community building. We're excited for the start of a new youth group and admit that we need to be more intentional in inviting young families to worship. We have some ideas but we would welcome your ideas as well. We need to be relevant in our community and reach out to our neighbors.

The leaders are busy writing up annual reports and getting year-end financials settled. Mark your calendars for the AGM on Saturday, March 28th preceded by a potluck supper.

Paul wrote to the Colossians 4:2-3, Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. May God bless us in His work.

Mission Moment: by Linda Clarke

Matthew House Ottawa

Few had heard of Matthew House before it was time to decide where our Christmas Eve loose offering should be designated. \$480 was collected and given to them. Praise God!



“...I was a stranger and
you invited me in...”
— Matthew 25:35

Matthew House Ottawa is a non-profit organization that provides shelter, furnishings and community to refugees and those transitioning to permanent housing. For 15 years, Matthew House Ottawa has been a place of welcome, dignity and transformation. They are located in Bethany Baptist Church on CentrepoinTE Dr. in Ottawa.

Modelled after Matthew House in Toronto, the name derives from Christian roots. They are motivated by Jesus' call in Matthew 25:35 to feed, clothe, shelter, and serve global neighbours who arrive into our community. The key values that guide their work comes from their Christian foundation and include: hospitality, loving service, compassion, respecting human dignity and building community.

These values inform their programs and interactions between staff, volunteers, and the people they serve. They seek to serve in ways that offer dignity and humanity to those who have been marginalized.

Through their refugee services, they offer shelter, meals and compassionate support to refugee claimants arriving in Canada with no sponsors and nowhere to turn.

They also offer on-site support for making a refugee claim, getting a job, finding a house, and adapting to life in Ottawa. Whether it is connecting with a lawyer or doctor, or helping to write a résumé, Matthew House is there to make the transition easier in a highly stressful time.

Through their furniture bank they help furnish homes for those rebuilding their lives – newcomers, low-income families and individuals transitioning from homelessness. 900+ refugee claimants have been welcomed and provided with a bed, food and community. Matthew House provides essential settlement support until their residents secure a job and a place to live. They have helped more than 25,000 people (e.g. newcomers, women, children, homeless) make their empty house a home with essential furnishings.

The people who walk through their doors come with little more than sheer will and the clothes on their backs. After a few months, they leave with the skills, resources, support, and confidence to live independently in their new home in Canada.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the work of Matthew House is that the people served are themselves answering a call to serve others, to help those in need, and to build community and to offer hope. This is a virtuous cycle that will continue to transform our community and country for the better.

Hazelwood—Love is in the air! By Donald Corbett (Living Faith Bible Church)

I just love February!

First off, we have the winter cross-quarter – the exact half-way point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox – also known as “Mid-Winter”. The Celts call it St Brigid’s Day; while to the rest of the world, it’s Groundhog Day. But what’s really important is that we can celebrate the return of the light. You can hear more about the bleak mid-winter from my sermon on [January 18, 2026](#)

That said, probably the most celebrated day, in the shortest month, is February 14 – Valentine’s Day. It is not a Christian holiday, but it can certainly serve to remind us that love is sometimes best given to those who deserve it least. “*For God so loved the world...*” What have we done to deserve God’s love; and how might we possibly reciprocate? Let’s hold these questions for another time. Today, let’s talk about love itself. After all, on Valentine’s Day, everyone is talking about love; or at least the physical expressions of love, like buying gifts, flowers, or dining out. Is that what love is? What about the other 364 days?

Just for fun, I asked “Mr. Ai” for a definition of love, and this was the result: **“The true meaning of love is a profound, selfless connection built on deep affection, commitment, acceptance, and mutual respect, going beyond mere emotion to involve consistent action, support for personal growth, trust, and prioritizing another’s well-being, often requiring choice and effort rather than just feeling good. It’s about embracing flaws, fostering safety, and choosing to nurture the relationship through good times and bad, acting as a supportive partnership.”**

If you’ll forgive the run-on sentence, there is some good stuff in there. I suspect we all noticed the terms: “affection”, “commitment”, “respect” and “trust”. What really jumped out for me were the words: “selfless”, “deep”, and “consistent”.

When you willingly put another person’s needs before your own; and your feelings are growing well beyond the physical, then love is in the air. When you consistently value someone for the unique, flawed person they are; and you trust them enough to expose your own weaknesses, then love is in the air. When you each make a concerted effort to nurture one another through the difficult times and to celebrate the joys together; and when you put the definition into practice “24/7/365, and make everyday a day to love one another, there is a good chance that love is in the air, and that you are building a long-lasting and strong relationship.

So while Valentine’s Day is not a Christian holiday, there is no need to shun the opportunity to take the day and celebrate our love for one another. Allow this day to remind us that it is through acts of love that we show the character, and presence, of Christ in our lives.

Jesus said, **“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”** John 13: 34-35 (NIV). May we be inspired to love others as Christ loved us; and consequently, may we find in each day of the year, a new opportunity to celebrate the bond that unites us with God, and with one another.

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.” I Corinthians 16: 14-15 (NIV).

Donald

PS – Love is in the air! This year, Teresa and I will be celebrating our 54th Valentine’s Day; and May 15th will bring the joy of 50 years of marriage. One thing I have learned is that she makes very good choices, and I rarely question them. (After all, I was one of them. J)

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13: 34-35 (NIV).

Kids Corner

FEBRUARY
2026

Kids Club kicked off the new year with a Winter themed event on January 23rd with indoor snowball fights, making their own snowman squishy gel game, snacks and tons of games! A big thank you to Anne, Leslie and Belinda for organizing and a whole bunch of people for volunteering. We are blessed

with Joan and a bunch of young volunteers who come out on a regular basis to help.

The new youth group organized by Living Faith Bible Church and co-sponsored by Grace had their first youth event following kids club. (8pm to 11pm Jan. 23rd) "4 youth,

including from Grace and living Faith and an invited friend attended. There were 4 adult volunteers. It was an inspirational

evening that included a message by Janet, games, worship, and lots of food!" (Thank you Jacques for this update!)

If you would like to help by being a second body (a position I like to call "crowd control" LOL), please speak to Majelle Sunday mornings or contact the office.

If you have any questions or wish to help in children's ministry, please contact me in the office at admin@graceorleans.ca or 613-824-9260.

Arlene

LOVE LETTER



A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



www.joyfultoons.com © 2009 Michael D. Waters

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

— 2 CORINTHIANS 3:3 NIV

PRAYER PUPS By Jeffrey Smith



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GOD CREATED EVERYTHING. READ GENESIS 1:1-2

www.prayerpups.com

Grace's Ministry Groups

The six functional groups and there leaders are:

1. Worship Coordination: Brian Wilson
2. Discipleship: Linda Clarke
3. Pastoral Care: Yohanna Kimoun
4. Faith Sharing: Linda Clarke
5. Temporal Support: Shirley Blank
6. Personnel Support: Linda Clarke



Opportunities to Serve!

- **Fundraising Committee:** looking for people to help plan, setup, take down, cook, and participate! Talk to Linda, Shirley or Arlene for more info.
- **Want to be part of the meal ministry?** Contact the office or speak to an elder.

Contact the church office for more information on how you can help!
admin@graceorleans.ca or by phone at 613-824-9260.