

*TrailNotes* speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

## ElderTalk: ANOTHER CELEBRATION!

RICK WIDENER

**LOVE!** The commercial world can never wait until one season is over before it begins the next. Christmas is followed by New Years is followed by Valentine’s Day and Valentine’s Day is followed by... So this month finds our stores covered with red hearts, red roses, red streamers and chocolate. Some even change the decorations on their Christmas trees so they don’t have to take it down. (*Full disclosure: as I write this, our tree still stands lit in the corner of our living room, not waiting for re-decoration!*)

This year also finds us celebrating new Elders at Grace Fellowship. They will be installed on Feb. 11, during our Sunday service.

Wait! Valentine’s Day. Elders’ Installation...what is the common thread? It is the word that begins this column: LOVE!

The greatest Love Story in the universe and beyond is the love that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit share. Incomprehensible! From this great Love Story comes the story of God’s love for humanity and His Creation Story that reaches its climax in the Incarnation—God coming to man (full story during the Christmas season). Perhaps, though, the story that is often forgotten, ignored, or unknown is the love of God for *us*—for *me*! The Love Story between God and (put your name here) Yes, your story and your relationship

with the triune God is one of the best love stories there is. When was the last time you shared it, thanked God for it?

I had a chance to share just a piece of my story with a young man as we sat in the hot tub at the Y here in Mansfield last week. He shared some of his journey and opened the door a little so that I could share a little of mine. Talking about how Jesus Christ is the key to life and a future of joy, was fun. There is never an arrogance in my sharing because of my personal fears of getting it wrong. But telling my story is always safe. Did he convert? Nah! But I got to tell my Love Story! How about you?

Why would I include the Elders’ Installations in this column? Because I believe that Elders are a part of God’s Love Story with us. As we look through the Old Testament, we had patriarchs, kings, and judges ruling the Israelites. These point men were often God-fearing, God-following men, and human. In every case they fell short.

The New Testament gave us church leadership called Elders, generally a group of men who were called to govern: not just one man, but a group. No actual numbers were given, but they were referred to in the plural. Each of those men had their own flaws which is still true today; yet together they were responsible to seek God’s will for the church and God’s wisdom for His people. This is God’s love being poured out to the church: not *one* man, but a *group*, who *together* seek Him.

LOVE is not limited to a *month* or a *man*. It is a mandate from God,

***“This is My commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.”*** - John 15:12 (ESV)

Tell your story! Tell each other about the love of God for you! Tell anyone that will listen. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit loves *me*, loves *you* and those who *surround* you.

**Share your story!**



## “Susan” hats

DONNA KURTZ

Have you met Brian and Susan (“I like both Sue and Susan. Take your pick!”) Judd? They were living in Richmond, VA and both felt the Lord directing them back to Ohio. They are now in Steve and Deb McKee’s Circle Church.

Sue makes hats, hundreds of them. In the last three years she has knit 400 stocking caps and donated them to The James at OSU, the Salvation Army, and Harmony House.

Recently Deb McKee took a bag of 100 hats to the Matthew 25 ministry and Juli Parson’s Park project ministry. Jadaé Fox took a big sack to Prospect School. Brian says she likes the work. “It’s creative, she enjoys giving to others, and it is very relaxing.”

Now Sue makes most of her hats on a circular loom (see picture) and can turn out a hat in 4 hours. There are hats in many adult and children’s sizes and there are endless color schemes.

Thanks, Judds! We’re glad you’re here!



Susan Judd with some of her hat creations  
(photo by Brian Judd)

## ALERT for EASTER!

CHOIR will be starting the first Sun. in March for Palm Sunday and Easter. Rehearsals: **Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25 after Circle Church: 12:30 to 1:30.** Easter is April 1.

Some wonderful music for both days. Come one and all and **“Sing to the Lord a New Song!”**

WORK AS WORSHIP  
1-DAY LOCAL CHURCH RETREAT

**CONNECT  
FAITH &  
WORK**

**2.23.18**

Simulcast @  
Grace Fellowship Church  
365 Straub Rd. E.  
Mansfield OH 44903  
From 8:30AM-3:30PM  
(Doors open 7:45AM)  
Tickets: \$25 per person  
Lunch provided

## February 2018

- 3** Men’s Prayer Breakfast at Hanley Rd.’s Burger King. 8:00 am.
- 4** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching from Ruth 2:8-23. 10:00 am followed by Circle Church groups 11:10-12:10.
- 7** Adult Connect has just started a new Bible Study on I Peter. This week will begin with verse 9. 6:30 to 8:00. Kids and Teens meet at the same time. Nursery available “Don’t do life alone!”
- 11** Elders Installation Day! Our Elders are: Eric Byrom, presiding elder, Jadaé Fox, Andy Heining, Robert Key, Jon Vega, Rick Widener. 10:00 am. Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Ruth 3:1-18. 6:30-7:30 pm. S.S. teachers meet.
- 14** Ash Wednesday. Happy Valentine’s Day!
- 18** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: Ruth 4:1-12.
- 20** TRAILNOTES deadline: bucytalent@aol.com
- 23** Work as Worship simulcast 8:30 am.
- 25** Rick Widener preaching: Ruth 4: 13-22

# Wonderment, Thankfulness, Mercy, an army of Prayer Warriors



JULI PARSONS

January 29 at 8:45 am

The God of all comfort breathes His hope into the shattered places in our hearts. He uses the work of our hands to touch the broken hearts around us.

While I may have originally thought that this was a “neat project,” God used it far beyond that to minister to deep, hurting places.

Miss Teresa was the Sunday School Coordinator who knew she was going to have surgery and be gone for awhile. I will never forget the last conversation I had with her.

As she handed me the piece of glass she had picked for the stained glass window and wrote her name on it, she smiled and said, *“I picked purple. I love purple.”*

I told her about the glass she had picked and that the company that sold it had closed. That particular glass was no longer made. Purple is the color of royalty. There are times it’s incredibly difficult to get because of the materials it’s made of. It’s also very costly.

A few years earlier she had stood in my studio while purchasing a candleholder made of the same glass.

*“It’s my glass!”* she exclaimed.

*“Yes, it is the same glass as your candleholder!”*

She told me about her fears of the upcoming surgery. I wrapped her in a hug and prayed for her. As she walked away, holding onto her cane, with tears in her eyes, and that ever-present sweet smile on her face, she said, *“I’ll be back.”*

I was in Ireland, visiting family, when she went into the arms of Jesus. I thought of her and her smile, holding onto her cane, surrounded by bubbling, bouncing children.

How do you minister to grieving children who have lost someone they dearly love? I knew the parents had prayed with them and ministered to them in their grief. Little ones don’t even have words for their broken hearts when they lose someone suddenly. We adults can’t even put words to our grief. There are no words. Only tears.

Hard.



Teresa Devore & GFC S.S. teachers in 2016



Teresa's piece

Shortly after that, I felt a “wait” from the Lord on that window. I was only to pray and wait.

If God says wait, I will not move forward until He releases me. Last Sunday night that release happened and I told the church.

I thought I was going to be painting with the 9-12 year olds. As soon as I read the lesson about building the Lord’s Temple, I knew He had another plan. (I don’t even let kids near some of the glass equipment until they are 16. I am one of the few folks who will teach kids glass

and I am often told I am crazy. So I went about figuring how to do this safely.) Meanwhile, I’m doing safety, and praying...and God is working on healing hurting hearts.

Every project last week had a wall I couldn’t conquer. No matter how hard I tried to finish inventory or three other projects, there was something I needed, or there was no time to run the kiln. I had meetings and schedules to work on and I was still catching up with folks where I had put their projects aside to fight another round of Steve’s cancer battle and prepare Caleb to move onto campus..

*“What is going on? What am I missing that You need me to see? Open my eyes and my heart, Lord,”* I whispered to the sky on one of my “thankfulness walks.”...That morning I didn’t work but sat at my King’s feet and listened. There are many things I can’t do, but getting to my knees when I hit adversity is not one of them.

I remembered the precious piece of purple glass. I knew I held a treasure...Miss Teresa’s handwriting on the last day before her surgery, written on a piece of purple glass. *“O Lord, how do I do this one?”* Back to my knees. I am on Holy Ground.

As I showed the sweet children the purple piece, they took turns grinding and asked, *“How do we pray for a person who has died? They are already with Jesus.”*

*“You pray for their family. You pray for us who are missing them.”* As they prayed for Miss Teresa’s family with the most tender hearts.

I told them when someone has died or can’t do their own piece, I don’t cut their piece, but cut and grind the  
*(concluded on p. 4)*

## Wonderment...

(concluded from p.3)

others around it to fit. We continued to grind and work on their pieces when one of them piped up: “Did you notice that Miss Teresa’s piece looks like a house?”

Another said, “I know why! It’s because she lives with Jesus!”

Standing on Holy Ground. The Mercy Seat. Wisdom beyond their years. Out of the mouths of sweet children. This is the kind of Temple God wants you to build. You are going to live with Jesus in that house. Though bricks and mortar and wood and glass might be part of it, the Temple of the Lord is built with obedience, tears, and trust. It is built within the depths of your heart. You will carry it wherever and whenever you walk into a hurting world.

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## New babies arrive!

Matt and Miriam Roggio are the proud parents of *Levi Samuel Roggio* born Dec. 20—almost a Christmas baby! He weighed 7 lbs. 14 oz and was 20 inches. Grandparents Becky and Al Roggio are delighted with this one month old as are the Roggio siblings and all the cousins!



*Levi Samuel Roggio at 1 month*



*Juli helping kids grind the edges of glass pieces for the new GFC window*

### A Note from Steve Phillips—

“In last month’s *TrailNotes* article I used material from the newsletter of Greg Smith (Christian Veterinary Mission head). I received his permission but forgot to mention it.”



*Eliana Maria King at 2 weeks*

*Eliana Maria King* was born to Jenny and Jonny King on Jan. 11, 2018. She is their first daughter and Jerry and Laura’s first granddaughter! Eliana weighed 7 lbs. and 5 oz. and is 19 1/2 inches. Here she is at two weeks. Congratulations all!



*GFC in winter (photo by Suzy Linger in 2014)*

## Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder/Pastor
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heiningner	Elder
Robert Key	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Rick Widener	Elder
Rick Widener	Treasurer
Kay Berry & Karen Gates	Women’s Ministry
Lori Barker	Missions
Dan and Karen Gates	Worship
Circle Church Serve Group	Greeters
Angel Vega	Dance Ministry
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Kathy Barth, Manfred &	Communion
Janet Adalem	
Andy Anschutz	Sound
John Paul DeWalt	Power Point
John and Donna Kurtz	<i>TrailNotes</i>