



The Christian life is a journey.

*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: Not for OUR Sake...Thankfully

JON VEGA

When I was a teen, I used to look at the tree-covered hills surrounding Grace Fellowship Church and wonder if I could "do it." I would kind of scrunch up my eyes, furrow my brow, and concentrate.

Nothing.

I would repeat the sequence (scrunch, furrow, concentrate) over and over, each time with more and more intensity, until I would finally give up with a sigh. I did it for years. The results were always the same.

Nothing.

I thought, "Maybe when I'm a bit older, a bit wiser, a bit more [I don't know what.]"

Futility. My faith wasn't working.

Forget mountains. I couldn't even get a pebble to move unless I kicked it. It couldn't be done and I was continuously devastated by my inabilities. I was a failure. God promised miracles, but my faith made a mustard seed look like the mountains I wanted so desperately to move.

I was right.

Have you ever tried to pick yourself up by your bootstraps? It doesn't work. The phrase used to demonstrate a hopeless situation, a worthless expenditure of energy and will. Nonsense. Somehow, we forgot that. It's now a badge of honor and grit for the self-made man, a source of pride.

Yep. My faith wasn't too small.

My pride was too big! My pride was the mountain I couldn't move, the bootstrap I was trying to lift. No matter how much faith I could muster, it was never going to happen and no one held me in harsher contempt



Photo by Bethany Gant Sherrard - April 2013

for my failures of faith than I did. I had to change. I had to change my point of view, the source of my faith.

Ezekiel 36:22 *"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of My holy name.'"*

God doesn't need us and, in an act of obvious wisdom and infinite love and mercy, doesn't base our salvation on us. So, what is the basis of our faith? God Himself.

Matthew 19:26 *"Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'"*

Our job is not to be good enough, to muster enough will power, or to do anything depending on ourselves. That's the point. We are simply called to believe that God will do what He said in Scripture He will do. We must have faith that God is God.

Ezekiel 36:23 *"Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,' declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes."*

**So, are you having trouble moving mountains? Let go of your own bootstraps and, in full faith of God's goodness and power, watch Him move mountains through you!**

## The Women of Grace hear Penny Foster

KAY BERRY

At the Women of Grace gathering on Saturday, February 8, Penny Foster shared about her time with Dr. Steve Phillips and about 31 others who traveled to the Havasupai nation in Supai, AZ, in the the Grand Canyon last November. Several veterinarians and vet techs along with non-medical persons assisted in caring for the hundreds of mules, horses, cats, and dogs in this isolated village of several hundred people as an annual ministry of the Veterinary Christian Foundation (VCF).



Penny Foster tells of her adventure.

Penny asked Steve McKee to share some of his photos of the village and church in Supai, and she told how she prepared inoculations for the mules and horses. She participated in an outreach for the ladies of the village. The VCF group served its yearly Thanksgiving meal for the community and had biblical programs for the children as well.

Penny had the Women of Grace do an art project that the group had done in Supai. Each person painted a scene that brings her joy and then shared it with the group of 13.



Janet Adalem, Sara Tucker and Becky Roggio with their paintings!

## A letter from Japan!

Dear Grace Fellowship,

Hello! My name is Tim Case, and I have been a teacher-missionary in Tamura for almost two years. (*I am the guy with the red beard and glasses in the photo.*) I am thirty years old. I really like Jesus, I miss pizza, I never learned how to whistle, and I enjoy making short films. Our team in Japan consists of twelve dedicated American teachers. Some of us have been in Japan for four years, while our newest member arrived last month.



Top row: Tim Case, Andy Brubaker, Jesse Cade, Catie Lewis, Garrett Kaufman, Robyn Eisel;  
Bottom row: Nathanael Shifley, John Brandt, Allison Clay, Abbie Swartzbaugh, Mekayla Morrison, Endia Matthews.

I would like to thank you on my team's behalf for being so generous and encouraging toward us. I visited GFC about two years ago when I came for Japan orientation. There were many great traits about the church, but what stood out most to me was how content/joyful people were. Also, since being here in Tamura, I have personally received emails from a couple of members, full of wisdom and sound advice in connection with my Japanese neighbors. You also sent our team various candy treats for Christmas which were perfect gifts. We can't find most of these in Japan and receiving them helped ease our homesickness!

For some fun news...On January 25 we had a belated Christmas party for our Japanese friends (who did not seem to mind). We rented out a room at the community center, invited 30 friends to the potluck party, made some American dishes (jambalaya and deviled eggs), and we got to pray with our friends for the meal. Playing "White Elephant" was the most fun. Everyone brought a ridiculous, wrapped, inexpensive present and we took turns opening or "taking" someone else's gift. Japanese people tend to be reluctant to take something from another person even in a playful way. But they became competitive during the game, laughing throughout!

My favorite ministry is the Gospel Choir. We have four American teachers and twelve Japanese people. Even if they are not Christians, they participate in the choir to learn English. We're singing things like "Trading my

## Japan Orientation: March 23-29

LORI BARKER

Four new English teachers are headed to Japan! GFC will offer hospitality to them as they have orientation with Nathan Tucker. Let's pray for a fruitful time for them as they are with us from **March 23-29**.

**Monday, March 23.** There will be a **Meet and Greet** to welcome and get acquainted with the new teachers. It will be from **6:00 to 8:00 pm** in the **Upper Room**.

**March 23 to 29.** Lunches and dinners are needed each day during the orientation for the four teachers and Nathan Tucker during their stay. You are also invited to join them for your meal.

Please contact **Lori Barker** right away to tell her you could provide a lunch or dinner during the orientation week.

Lori's Email: [victorybark@aol.com](mailto:victorybark@aol.com)  
Phone: 419-989-0658



"Sorrows" and "Oh, Happy Day." We explain the meanings and how they apply to our lives. I love hearing the Japanese people singing praise to Jesus!

Some prayer requests: 1) Health of the team, our students, and the Maki family. The flu is going around. 2) Boldness to fearlessly minister the gospel. 3) Transitions: those going home in March and those coming in April.

Finally, thank you again for your wonderful support! We consider you to be our fellow team members. We would be happy to pray for your requests. Reach out to us! **And God bless you, you fantastic group!**

Tim Case



## The 2020 Wakakusa team

### Anselm Wooden: IL

My late grandmother was Japanese. She and my American grandpa were missionaries in Japan for 40 years, near where we'll be living. I spent a summer with them in middle school and my goal for 15 years has been to live and do ministry in Japan.



I have a BA in history and philosophy from Illinois State and an MA in theology. (My thesis was on I Peter: "What happens to people who have never heard the gospel?") I have spent 3-1/2 years teaching English in South Korea. I'm really excited to move to Japan!

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### Hilary Stanovic: CA

I currently work in an office environment, and while I've never taught professionally, I have been able to help lead the Children's Program at Bible Study Fellowship the last few years. I'm looking forward to gaining real world work experience in the classroom, as well as being able to live in Japan!



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I love Japanese culture but have never visited the country before. I have a BA in Asian Studies. We had to take two years of an Asiatic language. I took Japanese and I'm hoping to brush up on my Japanese and see for myself all the places I've learned about!

I play ukulele and guitar. I like reading and trying new foods.

### Jonathan Wiens: CA

It is a pleasure to be part of the Wakakusa team! I have held various teaching positions since I graduated from college in 2015 (history) and took a job as a middle school teacher assistant. Next, I spent 2-1/2 years teaching English in China. It was one of the best experiences of my life. Teaching is my passion. I hope to become a better teacher and I'm eager to experience the Japanese system.



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Japan peaked my interest after I visited Tokyo and Mt. Fuji. Then I started watching daily youtube videos about the country.

I enjoy cooking all types of Chinese food and playing badminton. Teaching ESL abroad the first time gave me a travel bug. I love meeting new people.

### Nicole Ludden: CA

I live in San Diego and teach English to adult learners.





I have a degree in sociology. I also volunteer as an ESL tutor for a local library. I discovered a passion for teaching so I went back to university for a Masters in Education. Right after, I went to China for 3 years to teach English in Zhengzhou.

It was not always easy, but the experience and friendships made it worth it.

I have always been interested in Asian culture. In 2015 I participated in a study abroad program and Japan really peaked my interest. Ever since then, I have had a desire to go back to Japan, not as a tourist but to live and work there.

When I'm not working, you can find me lying around the house with a cup of tea, reading a good book or binge watching a new series on Netflix. I also enjoy hiking, photography, and of course, traveling to various countries and cities.

### March 2020

- 1** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Rom. 3:21-31, 10:00 am.
- 7** Time change - "spring ahead!"
- 8** Pastoral Elder Jadae Fox preaching on Rom. 4:1-25.  Circle Church leaders meeting 12:45 pm.
- 9** GFC hosts the March of Prayer, 6:00-8:00 pm.
- 14** Monthly game night 6:00-9:00 pm.
- 15** Eric Byrom preaching on Rom. 5:1-11, 10:00 am.
- 21** Men's monthly prayer breakfast, McDonald's on Hanley Rd. at 9:00 am.
- 22** Pastoral Elder Robert Key preaching on "The Gifts of the Spirit," 10:00 am. 
- 23** "Meet and Greet" the new teachers headed to Japan. Upper Room. 6:00-8:00 pm.
- 24-28** Teachers going to teach in Japan have orientation here at GFC all week. Meals needed. Call Lori Barker to sign up. (See article p. 2)
- 29** Celebration Sunday. Teachers going to Japan will share with us in the morning service, 10:00 am.

NOTE: MCS choir, Image, will not be singing **April 19**. **April 24-25** Annual Table Fellowship conference, in Spooner, WI. (See information on p. 4)



# TABLE FELLOWSHIP

## 2020 Annual Conference - April 23-25

**For the love of Zion**  
*encouragement for the journey home*  
*(Psalms of Ascent: Psalm 120 - 134)*

*Learning, growing, risking with Christ*

Please join us for our 2020 Table Fellowship Conference. Our theme is "For the love of Zion". We will be considering the glories of the Christian's home city, the fight to keep it in focus, and the joyful and often difficult journey we are taking to get there. We will be focusing on the Psalms of Ascent - Psalms 120 - 134.



There will be a pre-Conference Dinner and Message Thursday, April 23. Please indicate on your registration if you plan to be with us for that.

**Register TODAY!**

at

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eg>

**Register Now!**

If you have any difficulty with registration or other questions about the conference or Table Fellowship please feel free to contact us at [info@thetablefellowship.com](mailto:info@thetablefellowship.com)

We hope to see you at the conference!

### When

Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 6:00 PM EDT

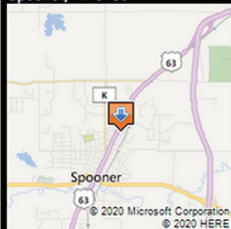
-to-

Saturday, April 25, 2020 at 1:00 PM EDT

[Add to Calendar](#)

### Where

**Cornerstone Christian Church**  
106 Balsam St.  
Spooner, WI 54801



## CONFERENCE FEES

Type	Fee
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Conference & lunch, dinner, lunch \$100.00 after Wednesday, April 1, 2020	\$80.00
<input type="radio"/> Conference & Friday lunch & dinner \$90.00 after Wednesday, April 1, 2020	\$70.00
<input type="radio"/> Conference & Friday lunch \$80.00 after Wednesday, April 1, 2020	\$60.00
<input type="radio"/> Conference only (no meals) \$70.00 after Wednesday, April 1, 2020	\$50.00

## The Keys & Godsils

have new grandchildren!



*Makenna Rose Key, born Jan. 24, 2020*

*6 lbs. 15 oz. 19 1/2 inches*

Congratulations Alicia and Joshua!



*Nathaniel Ray Lee, born Jan. 28, 2020*

*9 lbs. 6 oz. 20 1/2 inches*

Congratulations Andrea and Anthony!

## Grace Fellowship Church

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419-526-4699 • [gracefellowship01@gmail.com](mailto:gracefellowship01@gmail.com)

Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/Pastor

(A complete list of church functionaries  
will return next month)