

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 in Grace Fellowship Church.

Yesterday at Grace Haven: 1972

The building of the Lodge JUDY NICHOLS

Some people were reluctant to approve the construction of anything that might be viewed as a "church building." Like "Sunday School" a "church building" was something to be avoided at all costs. However, necessity won out in the end, and construction of the Lodge was completed in the spring of 1972. The chalet-style building contained a large meeting room, an institutional kitchen, ample library and study space, several rooms for artisan shops, two bedrooms for staff and an apartment for married staff.

Breakfasts and lunches were now served in the Lodge, relieving the homes of this duty. Daily devotions, classes, and personal study time took place there in the mornings. Afternoon work details were assigned at lunch, including work at the dairy or in the artisans' shops, Lodge and grounds chores, and helping with cleaning and cooking at the home that was hosting the farm dinner that evening.

It has been said that variety is the spice of life. If that is true, life at Grace Haven over the years has certainly been well-seasoned. From the very earliest days until the end of the work-study program, there was no predicting what kind of people would come, where they would come from, what their backgrounds and needs would be, or how they would fit in with the existing population. Although most of the people who came to Grace Haven were college age, there were a few younger ones and some older. Once in the early days, Grace Haven hosted a retreat for a high school group. After having to rout several exuberant youngsters out of the hay loft at 2 am, it was decided to focus on college age and older!



MELISSA DOAN: "So many memories here—made up of strong friendships that will last an eternity. Remembering the day I got married to my wonderful guy and celebrated with all our dear brothers and sisters in Christ in this lovely place!"

Melissa entered her heavenly home on July 2, 2020 at the age of 53, while surrounded by her husband Steve and their children.

Karen L. McCluney-Jackson

August 7, 1949 - July 12, 2020

with the Lord!



Karen Louise McCluney-Jackson, 70, of Mansfield, passed away Sunday, July 12, 2020, at OhioHealth Mansfield Hospital. She was born August 7, 1949, in Mansfield, the daughter of Robert Joel and Francis Ellen (Davis) Harper.

Karen worked as a Registered Nurse for over 43 years at various places such as Boston City Hospital, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and several adult and juvenile correctional facilities. She was a wonderful caregiver, especially to her family and church family. She lived in a number of places including Boston, the Philippines, and Japan, to name a few.

She was an active member of Grace Fellowship Church. Affectionally called "Mama J" by all, she loved the children at church and demonstrated that love by cooking for many camps and conferences. Also, her famous "candy bag" was shared every week, and Easter Lollipops were passed out every year.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death on January 28, 2002 by her husband, Curtis Douglas Jackson, Jr., whom she

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Mama J. holding “one of my babies” in June 2014 photo

Looking back: Karen Jackson retires with blessings

For two months Karen Jackson, who gives the announcements Sunday mornings, informed the congregation of how many days before she retired. After the Big Day arrived, Fred Linger interviewed “Mama J.” We learned that she and her husband Curtis, a corrections officer, came to Mansfield from Boston in 1988 with their two boys, Brandon and Dougie. A nurse by profession, her recent position was managing all the health care at the Indian River Juvenile Correctional Institution for 158 boys. She supervised 12 nurses in the clinic.

“I like taking care of people,” Karen commented. “I drove 138 miles a day to minister to those who were wounded.” Our children are special to Karen, as is she to them. She dismisses her “babies” to Sunday School and they hunt her up after church for their weekly treat. “I applaud all of you,” she says to the parents as she reminds them to “watch the babies by the pond!” Her cooking is famous, especially the meatballs. Many a potluck has benefitted from her culinary talents.

Congratulations, Mama J! We love you!



June 2014: The Elders pray blessings on Mama J. In retirement she hopes to be “working with kids” in some capacity.

Karen Jackson (continued from p.1)

married Mar. 7, 1977, and two brothers, Robert Harper, Jr. and Stewart Harper.

She leaves to cherish her memory her children, Brandon McCluney-Jackson and C. Douglas Jackson; sister, Ahn (Tony) Wheat; stepbrothers, Minh Harper, Hoa Harper; stepsisters, Bich Thuy Dang, Thanh Thuy (Darrin) Warner; brothers-in-law, Robert (Joyce) Jackson and Jerome (Joyce) Jackson; her beloved dog, Squirt; several grand-dogs; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and dear friends.

The funeral was held at noon on Monday, July 20, 2020, at Grace Fellowship Church, conducted by Pastor Eric Byrom. Burial followed in Mansfield Cemetery. Friends called at the church before the service.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints.”

AUGUST 2020

July 31-Aug.2 DTS “Encounter” for Grades 7-12

2 Presiding Elder Eric Byrom preaching on Romans 14:1-23

9 Elder Jadae Fox preaching on Romans 15:1-13 🍷🍷

Circle Leaders meet 2:00 pm

13 Women of Grace Bible Study in the Psalms. 6:30-8:00 pm

15 Men’s prayer breakfast. 9 am (Location to be announced)

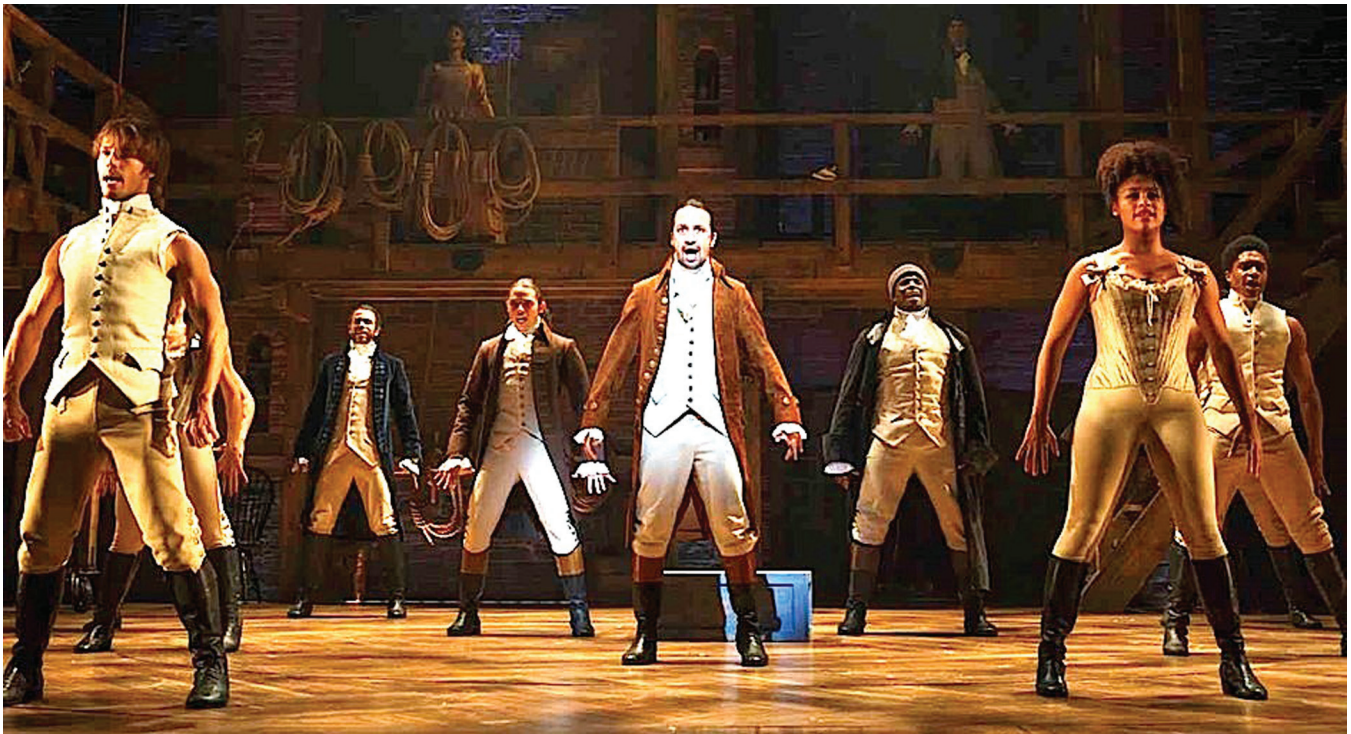
16 Benevolence Sunday; Eric Byrom preaching on Romans 15:14-33

23 Eric Byrom preaching on Romans 16:1-27 🍷🍷

27 Women of Grace Bible Study in Psalms 6:30-8:00 pm

29 Community Celebration

30 Celebration Sunday with picnic lunch following outside with your family



The Gospel Takes Center Stage in ‘Hamilton’

INTERVIEW BY SARAH ARTHUR of
KEVIN CLOUD, author of **God and Hamilton**

Ed’s Note: I’ve been waiting for 5 years to see ‘Hamilton!’ and on July 3 Disney+ brought it to the TV screen. I watched it three times straight through that day, after we borrowed an Amazon Fire Stick to turn our old TV into a Smart TV! I hope you all will watch it! Incredible.

If not for the outbreak of COVID-19 the wildly successful Broadway musical *Hamilton* would embark on its fourth tour this fall. Instead, to the delight of fans and penny-pinching show-goers, a planned film version featuring the original cast members (with composer Lin-Manuel Miranda in the title role) began streaming over a year ahead of its original theater release date.

Hamilton’s screen debut is also noteworthy in that it comes at a time of social unrest in America. Many people are anxious about racial injustice, police brutality and hyper-polarized politics. For church planter Kevin Cloud, the show, with its moral vision and artistic innovations, offers an invaluable lens on both our current moment and our Christian responsibilities within it. Cloud, the author of ***God and Hamilton: Spiritual Themes from the Life of Alexander Hamilton and the Broadway Musical He Inspired***, leads workshops drawing on his book. Writer Sarah

Arthur interviewed him: **Why has this story about a distant historical figure struck such a chord?**

I don’t think anyone could’ve imagined how this musical would catapult Alexander Hamilton from a forgotten Founding Father into a cultural icon. A number of different dynamics have worked together, creating a deep resonance within our culture.

First, *Hamilton* is an extraordinary work of art. It won 11 Tony Awards in 2016, including best musical, and a Pulitzer Prize for drama. I agree with Michelle Obama, who called it “*the best piece of art in any form that I have ever seen in my life.*” As a genre-bending, multi-racial retelling of history, it truly is a work of genius.

Hamilton also resonates because the story intersects with a number of critical social issues of our time including immigration, race, gender equality, and diversity. Hamilton himself was an immigrant from the Caribbean, and a major theme throughout the musical is Hamilton’s battle for dignity and equality. We see this exact same battle being played out in the protests across our country today.

More broadly, the story centers on

fundamental themes of the human experience: grace, forgiveness, death, failure, and redemption. Watching these themes play out on the stage gives us hope, challenges us, and casts a vision for what our lives might look like. I’ve heard countless stories of people who said seeing *Hamilton* changed their life.

There are many spiritual themes in Miranda’s storytelling. I’m thinking of George Washington’s parting song, “One Last Time,” where he quotes Micah 4:4. How can churches interact with the movie version to spark faith conversations?

After seeing the musical, I read everything I could about Hamilton, including Ron Chernow’s biography which inspired the musical. Hamilton practiced a sincere and authentic faith throughout much of his life. It blossomed as a young boy in the Caribbean. He wrote powerful hymns in his youth, which articulate an intimate knowledge of life with God:

*Hark! Hark! a voice from yonder sky,
Methinks I hear my Saviour cry,
Come gentle spirit come away,
Come to thy Lord without delay.*

(continued on page 4.)

Hamilton *(continued from p.3)*

When Hamilton arrived in New York City in his later teens, he studied at King's College and participated in the school's rhythms of religious devotion: morning chapel, evening prayers, and services twice on Sunday. His roommate once journaled about the fervency of Hamilton's prayers.

Yet Hamilton also experienced seasons where he drifted from his devotion. His wife, Eliza, was probably more devoted while Hamilton had alternating seasons of faith and doubt. We see this struggle in the powerful song, "It's Quiet Uptown," which shows Eliza and Alexander enduring the death of their eldest son who was killed in a duel. The struggle between faith and doubt can encourage us as we wrestle through the seasons in our own lives.

Hamilton is a man who lives with remarkable initiative. In the most famous lyric Hamilton declares, "I am not throwing away my shot." He had become the second most powerful man in the newly formed country. When Christians behave as though we can't overcome major challenges, such as existing systems, Hamilton's story challenges us to see our circumstances differently.

Alexander's wife, Eliza, struggled with forgiving her husband for his extramarital affair with a woman named Maria Reynolds, which became public knowledge. Eliza eventually forgave Alexander in one of the most powerful moments in the musical.

The chorus sings out, "Forgiveness. Can you imagine?" In that moment you can feel the atmosphere in the theater change. We must decide if Eliza's example will inspire us to forgive those who have hurt us. Miranda says that these moments, which he calls "moments of action," are one of his favorite aspects of live theater—much like the parables of Jesus.

One woman, as she listened to the soundtrack, was seriously contemplating suicide. When she heard George Washington sing, "Dying is easy, young man/Living is harder," something shifted inside of her. She realized that taking her life would be the easy way out—that the harder path was choosing to live. God used this story literally to save this woman's life.

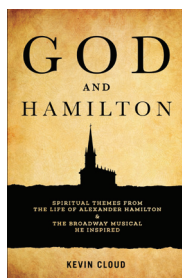
There's so much genre-bending in Hamilton, including the use of hip-hop, rap, and spoken word poetry on a Broadway stage, as well as casting people of color in the roles of America's Founding Fathers. What's the takeaway for faith communities as they engage the arts?

Each year, as church and community leaders watch this story performed on the stage, it fuels their imaginations. These performances have led to countless examples of building bridges across racial divides in our city. The story helps city leaders imagine how we might better pursue racial reconciliation today. Is there a more pressing issue for faith leaders to grapple with right now? Also, Christopher Jackson, who played George Washington in the original cast, said, "By having a multicultural cast, it gives us, as actors of color, the chance to provide an additional context just by our presence onstage, filling these characters up."

You make the case that Miranda's take on Hamilton's life is ultimately about forgiveness and hope, despite the tragedy in scene after scene. How can we look to this story for signs of hope amid our own national unrest?

The final scene of *Hamilton* features one of the most powerful artistic representations of redemption I've ever witnessed. In the final song, Eliza sings about the orphanage she eventually founded in New York City. "I help to raise hundreds of children/I get to see them growing up/ In their eyes I see you, Alexander/ I see you every time." The musical ends with a brilliant white spotlight shining on Eliza's face as she looks up to heaven and smiles, her face exploding with joy as the theater fades to black. Her orphanage still exists today.

At times, our world feels overwhelmed by darkness, suffering, and tragedy. But the promise of the gospel is that some how, in some way, God will eventually make it beautiful. Our role is to speak and live out this hope, not merely as a response but as a catalyst.



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A new Phillips baby! Edison Ely Phillips

was born to Ashley and Eric Phillips on June 29, 2020 at 5:34 am. He weighed 7 lbs. 14 oz. and was 19.5 inches long.



"We couldn't be happier and are so thankful for the incredible staff at Ohio Health who supported us throughout the whole process. He and Ashley are healthy and I'm a proud dad looking forward to getting to know this bundle of joy more every day. My wife is amazing."

Happy grandparents are Steve and Pam Phillips.

Welcome! River Weberling

River was born to Meghan and Ryan Weberling at her parents' home on July 2, 2020 at 9:30 am. He joins older brother, Finn. Bill and Bonnie Weberling are the paternal grandparents.



Grace Fellowship Church

365 Straub Rd East • Mansfield Oh 44903
419-526-4699 • gracefellowship01@gmail.com

Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heining	Elder
Robert Key	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Kay Berry and Jadaé Fox	Office

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