

TRAILNOTES

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.

DECEMBER 2019

ElderTalk

All these gifts... JADAÉ FOX

I remember the fear I felt when I was first learning to drive. Driving is a big deal to any new driver, but it was especially challenging for me. You see, I have no depth perception, which means that I struggle to gauge distances. I also have cerebral palsy (CP), making it hard to coordinate my legs. I felt overwhelmed at the thought of driving a car. Praise the Lord Who gave me strength and grace to overcome these struggles! And...yes, I am safe on the road.

In I Timothy 1:12-16 Paul is thankful that through the Holy Spirit he has been given **strength**. He says, “the **grace** of our Lord was **poured out on me abundantly**, along with the **faith** and **love** that are in Christ Jesus...” Look at all those words again. These gifts are not just Paul’s but they are given to **every** believer as well!

More than that, the Lord has **entrusted** him to be an **example** that others would come to faith. God used Paul to display **mercy** and **patience** to those in his life that they would believe in Jesus and become His servants.

When you become a believer in the Lord Jesus, all these gifts Paul is thankful for, are yours as well. God has **entrusted you** to be an example to those in your life too. God has appointed **you** to this service.

All believers have a general call to the Great Commission. (Mt. 28:18-20). We can and should expect and look for opportunities to showcase the grace, mercy and love of God to those around us. Opportunities to be salt and light, to share our faith and even lead others to Jesus. Surely this service that God has appointed you to includes the people that you uniquely have contact with, such as your friends, family, and co-workers.

My prayer is that we all would live confident of these wonderful gifts given to the believer through the Holy Spirit—that we would pray for and strive towards a life that would be an example that others would believe in Jesus and receive eternal life. Consider this verse:

15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

During this Christmas season it is my desire to reach out to members of my family that I have lost touch with. Not to throw my
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“Was CHRISTMAS Worth it?”

DONNA KURTZ

A sermon by Pastor Jerry King, preached at Grace Fellowship years ago, stayed with Samuel Heininger to the extent that this year he wrote a musical using that title and theme. It will be performed by the Grace Production Company on Christmas Eve here at 6:30 pm by both teens and adults. You will want to bring all of your family members and Christmas guests.

Samuel, who is a senior at Ohio Northern University, Ada, OH, is currently leading a young adult (post high school) Circle Church group after the Sunday am service (where he is often on the worship team.) Rehearsals of “Was Christmas Worth It?” take up most of Sunday afternoon. Then he heads back to college with more music and engineering courses. Thank you, Samuel!



DECEMBER 2019

- 1 Advent 1:** Pastor Eric Byrom preaches on “Zechariah: Growing Down in God’s Grace.” Luke 1:5-25
- 8 Advent 2:** Eric Byrom preaches on “Mary: Growing Down in God Grace.” Luke 1:26 ff
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- Circle Church leaders meeting 12:45 pm.
- 14 GFC Christmas Party 6 to 8:30 pm.**
Soup Supper in the auditorium.
- 15 Advent 3:** Eric Byrom preaches on “Joseph: Growing Down in God’s Grace.” Mt. 1:18 ff
- 21 Men’s Monthly Prayer Breakfast** at Hanley Rd. McDonald’s. 9 am
- 22 Advent 4:** Eric Bryom preaches on “Shepherds: Growing Down in God’s Grace.” Lk. 2
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- 24 CHRISTMAS EVE 6:30-8 pm** including performance of “*Was Christmas Worth It?*”
- 29 5th Sunday Celebration Worship** 10-11 am. Potluck lunch 11:30 am.

from Japan:

Sharing the love through music

ANDY BRUBAKER



Our band’s latest performance was in September where “The Loose” played songs by the group “Blue Hearts,” a well-known Japanese band at a Folk and Pop Culture Concert. Many recognized the songs and sang along.



Tim-Sensei (another English teacher on the team) and I represented Wakakusa on the concert by singing worship songs in English that were simple

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All these gifts (concluded from p.1)

beliefs in their face, but to spend time with them, to make sure that they know that I love them, praying that they can see the love of Christ in my life, and looking for the chance to invite them to trust the Lord. I want to listen for the prompting of the Holy Spirit and respond to Him when He speaks.

When I was learning to drive, I was unsure if I had what it took to drive. We can feel that we are not up to the task of the Great Commission and sharing our faith as well. In fact, Paul left to himself was not up to the task. He says that he is the worst of sinners. God has given *you* the strength for the service He has appointed you to.

Like Paul, let’s be thankful for the way God has equipped us for His service. May we, like Paul, be found faithful and trustworthy.



Sharing the love... (concluded)

and included gestures so the audience could participate. This included *Father Abraham* and *Awesome God*. It honestly felt like we were publicly worshiping God while performing at the concert.

On Dec.1, four of us (Endia, Garrett, Tim and I) will be sitting for our JLPT, Japanese Language Proficiency Test. This test is not required for me to take as a teacher. However, I am pushing myself to study for this test and it has allowed me to speak better in Japanese in and out of the classroom.

Pray I can do my best so that one day I can better communicate and carry out the ministry God has placed me in.

Bye! **Andy**



Ed's Note: Last month we left Matt having heard that he had made the cut from 4000 contestants for the new TV program, "Making It" to 32. He is headed to California for screen tests and to meet others in the 32.

I collected my materials and tools, loaded them in my bag and got on the plane. I was a little concerned that bringing wire, plastics, tools and such in a bag through Cleveland Hopkins Airport security might be a problem, but I made it through hassle-free.

I was picked up at the airport with a few other contestants by an NBC limo and taken to the Universal City Hilton, I was warmly greeted and hugged by the production team and I felt a little bit like a celebrity. I was shown to my room and told to meet downstairs in a meeting room of the hotel at 5 pm. I was in the first group to be filmed. It was comprised of a young mother from Miami via Cuba who was a professional theme party crafter, a woodworking dentist from Portland, an ObGyn miniature dollhouse maker from Philadelphia, a professional cake decorator/mother of 6 from MI, a sculptor from Oakland, another woodworker from Long Island, a multimedia artist from Dallas, and myself.

We were informed of tomor-

row's scheduled shoot and we proceeded to go to Universal City to have dinner together. We really got to know each other and found out that each of us was pretty sure we were all out of our league and were just glad to have the experience.

I got up at 5:00 the next morning and was whisked off to the studio of NBC. We were taken with our materials to the set, shown to our work tables, miked up, and given the preparatory talk. We were given the signal to start and all 8 in our group began furiously working.

The hosts and a film crew came around to each of us while we were working to interview us as we worked. There was another film crew who filmed us at work, but especially zeroed in on anyone who was conversing with each other as artisans. Although we weren't supposed to take any pictures ourselves, I did sneak off a picture of my piece. I made an old ram out of discarded water bottles, decoupage vintage maps around the body, mounted on a mountain precipice. I placed butterfly wings made up of watercolor paintings to show my metamorphosis from teacher-coach to artist, from non-believer to a new life in Jesus Christ. I got to share this with all who

were there. So we finished up our session with more interviews.

We were taken back to the hotel and had the rest of the day and night to ourselves. Our group of 8 went back to Universal City and hung out together, laughing, and having some deep conversations. I found out that there were several Christians in our group and we really connected over our art.

I flew home the next morning and was greeted by my wife in -35 degree windchill Cleveland temperature. A week later I got a call from the talent producer; I had made the next cut—from 32 down to 16. They wanted to do one more skype interview to make it down to the 8 who would be on the show.

In the final interview, I was asked, "If you had to choose between winning a state championship in football as the head coach, or creating a masterpiece in art that would be internationally famous, what would you choose and why?"

I thought about it carefully and said I would choose the football championship because that experience and the bonding relationships involved with so many young men would have a ripple effect on many lives and

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“Making It” *(Concluded)*



Matt's project in California: a Madison ram with butterfly wings!

communities.

The talent producer said that she didn't expect that answer and she seemed to be disappointed. My wife was eavesdropping on the conversation and she concurred.

Two weeks later, I received an email thanking me for my participation. They loved all my work but regrettably informed me I had not been chosen for the show. I really wasn't that disappointed because I had had a great experience and made many new and valuable relationships with other artists from around the country with whom I talk continually. The second season of “Making It” will air between Christmas and New Years this December. I look forward to watching it and seeing who actually made it and what challenging projects they were asked to make.

I am thankful that God provided this adventure as it stretched me in good ways—in relationships, artistically, and in faith. I never saw this coming but I am grateful God surprised me in such a way.

McKee's Circle serves homeless...



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Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/ Pastor
Jadaé Fox Elder
Andy Heinger Elder
Robert Key Elder
Jon Vega Elder

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