



## ElderTalk *(Continued from page 1)*

Finally, in Luke 9:37-43 we see the OUT section of the mountain. This is the zeal to do the mission of Jesus. The mission of Jesus is for others to know He is the savior of the world and experience that in their own lives. We are directly involved in this. We are called to tell the world about the salvation Jesus offers and then to help them follow Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This is the OUT section of ministry in our lives.

The way this tool can be helpful is for us to regularly evaluate our lives and see if we are giving priority to these three areas: UP, IN, and OUT. Are we spending time with God alone in the UP time? Are we spending time in radical community with other believers in the IN time? Are we spending time declaring and demonstrating the Kingdom of God to non-believers in the OUT time? Most of us prioritize some of these times but have challenges prioritizing all of them. Mature disciples will be keeping these three in balance in their life.

Let's use "The Jesus Pattern Tool" to ask ourselves regularly, "Am I in balance as Jesus was in His life?"

### A Japan update!

### 日本からの最新情報!

*Maria McCreadle*

Hello, Everyone,

Happy Holidays! I am currently on winter vacation, as I am sure many of you are as well. While Japan celebrates Christmas and the New Year a little differently, it has been a good time to rest before we approach the last semester of the school year (school years end in March and begin in April). Some of the team members got together for a lovely Christmas dinner. For New Year's, I rested and did a little bit of baking.

As for school, things are going smoothly as I finally settle into a rhythm. I love participating in after-school activities with the kids. Lately, it has been so cold here that I have regularly been attending the art club so that I can stay indoors. Please pray for continued relationships with students and co-workers as we wrap up the school

I do not know if I will be placed at the same school next year (in March), so the next few months are important to build connections.

During this time, I am still co-leading the Team Bible Study. The team has almost completed the book of Acts. Acts has been a good reminder to us of what the early Church was like. As the local church building has only been open since spring, it has been amazing to see how the Lord is working here as He did in the early Church. Alongside this, I am also now co-leading the High School Bible Study. This entails teaching English lessons to local students along with using stories from the Bible. We have been so blessed to finally have regular attendees at this study, and we would love it if you would continue to pray that more will attend.

On church attendance, though, our normal Sunday service remains about the same, we had a wonderfully packed church for our Christmas service. The pastor was able to preach the message of Christ's birth. Some of my teammates made a video of the Christmas story by drawing the manger scene while reading the narrative in English and Japanese. With so many new people in the church, this was a great way to introduce them to Christianity and the gospel. Please pray for those who attended and that they would be impacted by the service. *(Editor's note: stills from video below)*

*Artist: Allison Clay. Narrators: Allison Clay and Lara Fischer (English), Matsumoto Sensei (Japanese).*



#1 "The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus just as the angels had said."

#2 "In this way people from all walks of life can welcome the

newborn Jesus. And so every year we remember the story and celebrate the wonderful gift that God gave to the world, His Son, Jesus Christ."

I hope you had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!  
Maria マリア

## Doxology: Thomas Ken (1637-1711)

NANCY KURTZ TERMER



Portrait of Thomas Ken by F. Scheffer,  
National Portrait Gallery, London

The Doxology: some refer to it as “The Anthem” of the church. The writer of these four lines is Thomas Ken. He was born in England in 1637, and his parents died shortly thereafter. He was adopted by his sister and her husband. Thomas was sent to a boarding house and raised by the church. He was later ordained as a minister and at 25 became a bishop in the Anglican Church. With a strong sense of passion for the holiness of God and the conviction of God’s word, he held the line personally.

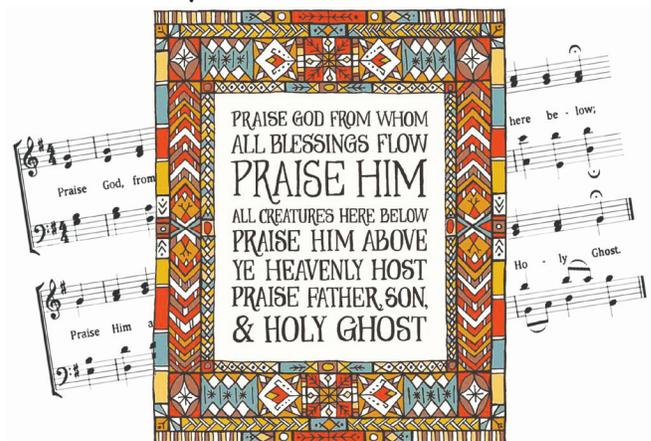
While he was a chaplain at Winchester boys College he had a burning desire to write hymns. This was revolutionary because during this time in England it was illegal to sing anything other than the Psalms. Thomas felt writing hymns was an overflow of love in his heart for the Lord and thus passed this on to his students. He wrote three songs to be sung in the morning, evening, and at midnight, if one was unable to fall asleep. Each of these three devotional hymns ended with the four lines of the Doxology and were thus used to encourage these young men to tune their hearts to the Trinity.

Thomas demonstrated conviction when King Charles of England was traveling through the town

where Thomas lived, Hamlet. The King was in need of lodging for his mistress, Neil Gwyn, a famous actress. The King sent a message to Thomas, “I need your house for my Nelly.” Thomas responded, “I will not let my house be used to aid and abet adultery, even by the King.” Then Thomas summoned a builder to remove the roof from his house so it would not be safe accommodations. Later, that same King, on his deathbed, asked for Thomas because he knew Thomas would be honest about getting right with God and not pardon him but be a man of truth.

Again and again, Thomas Ken held the line. When it was demanded that Thomas sign his approval to the “Act of Indulgences,” which would acknowledge actual payment for one’s sins, Thomas said, “No! Sin has been paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ; you won’t pay for it again.” Thomas was ordered to be put in the Tower of London, known as the “bloody tower,” to be persecuted, tortured, and ultimately to die. In protest, most of England would riot, and as a result Thomas was released on the shoulders of the townspeople.

Thomas lived in poverty and in privacy. After his death a collection of his diaries and poetry was found along with his hymns that were not legal to publish at that time. Thomas Ken understood God’s holiness, and he would not cave to sin. He knew the importance of singing praises as an overflow of love for the Lord and to sing these devotions daily.



Some 400 years later we still sing these words of devotion. May we continue to sing this anthem of praise and, when doing so, let us always use it to tune our hearts to the King of Kings!

**Pat Weaver (1954-2015)—she ran a good race!**

*DONNA KURTZ*



As most of you are already aware, GFC lost a dear friend and former member, Patricia Jeanne Weaver, whom we all knew as “Pat,” back on Christmas Day. Now she can actually see what the face of her husband Brad

looks like! Although she will be missed by many, we know that she is now safe in the arms of Jesus and, no doubt, has already been put to work among the heavenly musicians. Pat’s memorial service was held at GFC on January 3, 2026.



**Would the real St. Valentine please stand up!**

*JOHN KURTZ*



St. Valentine was a priest or bishop of the church who lived around the 3rd century. His exact identity is somewhat uncertain, but the most widely recognized story involves him defying the orders of Roman Emperor Claudius II. Claudius had outlawed marriages for young men, believing that single soldiers were more effective than those with wives and families. Saint Valentine, however, secretly married couples, defying the emperor’s decree. For this, he was arrested and eventually executed on February 14, around the year 269 AD. Today our celebration of love and affection on Valentine’s Day recognizes his act of kindness and devotion to others.

**February 2026**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

- 1** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on “Being Diligent.” (Ephesians 6:5-8)
- 1, 8, 15 & 22** Child Evangelism Fellowship Coins 4 Kids collection. Banks are due on Feb. 22.
- 7** Games Reach Family Game Night at the Foursquare Gospel Church, 383 Davidson St., Mansfield, 6:30-8:30 PM.
- 8** Elder Matt Godsfil preaching on “Being Compassionate.” (Matthew 25:31-45)
-  **15** Elder Jadaé Fox preaching on “Being Grateful.” (Luke 17:11-19)
- 20-21** American Heritage Girls use our facility Friday evening and Saturday.
- 21** Worship Dance Workshop, 9:30-11:30 AM.
- 22** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on “Being Passionate.” (Exodus 14:12 and Luke 1:39) 

**Grace Fellowship Church**

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Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/ Pastor  
(A complete list of church functionaries will return next month.)