

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

## Conversing with God

RAY NETHERY

Christianity without prayer is like family life without communication. Communication—speaking and listening—is a key to successful personal relationships; this is true for husbands and wives, parents and children, friendships, and work relationships. How much more true this is for a personal relationship with God, one in which we grow in knowing Him and being known by Him.

Good communication is not like an instant cake mix: open the package, pour out the contents, add water, stir, bake, and enjoy. Communicating doesn’t happen that way; communication skills and sensitivities need to be developed.

Prayer practices often fall into two extremes. One is pompous and overly formal prayer, which implies God is removed, heavenbound, untouchable. God is lofty and regal and majestic; yet, at the same time, He has called us as His children and given us freedom to pour out our hearts to Him without fearing the results of our openness.

The other extreme is overly familiar prayer, prayer that lacks respect for God. In this type of prayer, God is related to “the man upstairs,” a divine peer whom we may approach with no sense of wonder or awe. God created the world and wants lordship over every part of it. His plan is that we cooperate with Him, allowing His presence and power to permeate our lives and affairs. But when we fall into formalism or overfamiliarity in prayer, we shut down a vital link of communication, through which He normally communicates His will.

So prayer is different from a casual conversation between human beings. After all, God is almighty, the creator of the universe, redeemer of humankind. He is divine; we are human. He is unlimited; we are finite. He is the greater; we are the lesser. He is independent; we are dependent. The way we speak to Him should reflect our position under Him: dependent, reverent.

We also bear God’s image. One of His attributes is creativity. Creativity lifts prayer out of the doldrum of formality, the windless hours of wondering if God even

exists as we repeat words that long ago lost their meaning for us. Through creativity, each aspect of prayer comes alive.

- \_\_ Thanksgiving for life, provision, and relationships.
- \_\_ Praise of God for His character and work in creation, and redemption.
- \_\_ Adoration of the Trinity, One God in Three Persons.
- \_\_ Intercession for God’s people and the salvation of the world.
- \_\_ Confession of our sins and shortcomings to the God of forgiveness.
- \_\_ Devotional reading of Scripture, allowing God’s Spirit to speak to us.
- \_\_ Contemplation and listening to God.
- \_\_ Solicitation of God’s Spirit for grace and empowering.
- \_\_ Crying out for help in times of need.

*Editor’s Note: Above we have reprinted an article written by GFC’s beloved elder emeritus, Ray Nethery, which originally appeared in the Spring 1986 issue of Commonlife, a publication of Grace Haven Ministries.*

## “Praying Hands” of Albrecht Dürer

One of the best known pieces of “religious art” ever created, this small (7.8” X 11.5”) pencil drawing was done on bluish paper, hand-made by the artist himself. It was a sketch made in 1508 while he was working on a large altarpiece in which the same hands are represented attached to one of the Apostles in prayer.





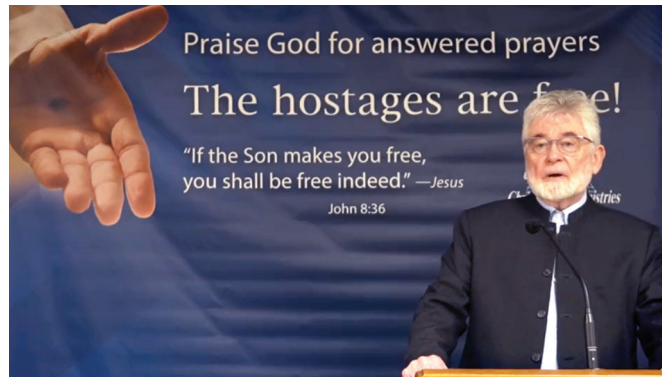


## All hostages in Christian mission group now free!

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti. Remaining members of a U.S. group who were kidnapped October 16 in Haiti escaped, Haitian police and the group said on Dec.16. They left in the middle of the night, walking 10 miles until finding someone who could make a call for help. A Coast Guard plane carried them to Florida.



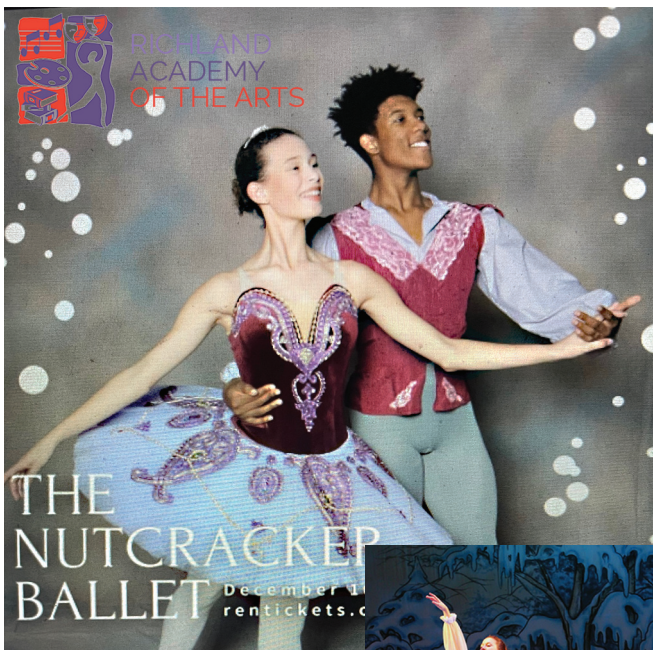
Nancy Kurtz Termer and family participated in the prayer meetings for the group in Hart, Michigan, home of one family.



David N. Troyer, General Director of Christian Aid Ministries, Millersburg, Ohio, makes the glad announcement on December 17.



The entire Haiti Mission Team reunited following the release of the first five earlier and the escape of the rest on December 16.



Justice Gardner returned to the stage with the Richland Academy of the Arts Ballet troupe in his role as the Prince in Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" on December 10 and 11. Above is a publicity shot and at the right from dress rehearsal. We at GFC are proud!



### JANUARY 2022

- 2** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on I Cor. 8:1-13. Buildings and Grounds Team meeting, time and location to be announced. Theology Class, 4-5 pm. Chapters 7-8.
- 6** Community Bible Study begins a 6 week study of Colossians, 6:45 pm, held at Crossroads-Ontario, 636 Lexington-Springmill Rd. Open to all. Contact Mitch Schwartz for more information.
- 9** Eric Byrom preaching on I Cor. 9:1-27. 🍷🍷
- 14** Kids Connect overnight, 5:30 pm to 10 am.
- 15** Kingdom Men's Breakfast, 9 am. Location TBD
- 16** Eric Byrom preaching on I Cor. 10:1-13.
- 23** Elder Jon Vega preaching on I Cor. 10:14-11:1. 🍷🍷
- 30** All Worship Sunday, 10 am.

**FEB. 18-20** Mid-year teen conference.



## Drummer in the Sky

In Memoriam for Doug Jackson  
by Jonathan Pahnke

Although I feel we just had met,  
I write these words to say  
You doubtless touched each single soul  
You met on every day

Your kind and friendly manner,  
To all whom you passed by  
Is now a treasured memory  
of the drummer in the sky

Your love for God and creature  
Was wide and broadly known,  
For all were blessed to see you  
At your work, or church, or home

Yet still, such shock upon the news  
That leaves us asking “why”  
God took our gentle giant  
The drummer in the sky

But take, dear one, this comfort  
That we’re offered when in Christ;  
Our life on earth, though oft sublime,  
Is really just a slice

Of glories that we’ll come to know  
in heaven up above  
When broken bodies, then renewed  
Unite with those we love

And so while now our hearts may grieve  
and moisture fill our eyes  
Please take to heart this comfort  
That ’tis gain in Christ to die

And know this too, without a doubt,  
That those who know God’s love  
Will ever be within our hearts  
And smile on us above

As hallelujahs raise to God  
And hands are lifted high,  
Remembering a life well-lived  
Our drummer in the sky

Nov. 13, 2021, RIP Dougie, J.P.



Your Grace Is Enough  
120 BPM, 4/4

**Groove 1**

Drumset H 4/4

**Groove 2**

Drs. H 4/4



## Iden Atlas Weberling

Born to Anna and Corey Weberling...

...on Nov. 22. He weighed 9 lbs. 4 oz. and was 21¾ inches long. Congratulations to the happy parents and grandparents, Bob and Kati Gardner and Bill and Bonnie Weberling.



## John Stott: An ‘ordinary’ Christian

TIM STAFFORD

*“An evangelical is a plain, ordinary Christian,”* John Stott told *Christianity Today* in a 2006 interview. From his conversion at Rugby Secondary School in 1938 to his death in 2011, Stott exemplified how *extraordinary* plain Christianity can be. He always turned to the Bible for understanding, and his unforgettable gift was to penetrate and explain the Scriptures. Kenneth Kantzer wrote, *“When I hear him expound a text, invariably I exclaim to myself, ‘That’s exactly what it means! Why didn’t I see it before?’”*

Stott knew exactly who he was and where he came from. Born into an emotionally close and cultured doctor’s family, he spent virtually his entire life in the same London neighborhood. As a child he attended All Souls Church. At his ordination in the Church of England in 1945, Stott became curate there and then in 1950, rector of the badly war-damaged church. He would remain on staff for the rest of his days. He was a life-long bachelor.

Right from the beginning, Stott was passionate about evangelism. The man who led him to Christ, E. J. H. Bash, worked for Scripture Union in the elite English public schools. Stott had been raised to attend church and read the Bible daily, but as a young student he had no understanding of personal salvation. Bash shared with him the scene from Rev. 3 of Jesus standing at the door and asking to come in. It seized Stott’s understanding, and shortly thereafter, he became a Christian. Bash soon put Stott to work, talking to other boys about what he had discovered. By the time Stott reached university, he was running evangelistic Scripture Union camps.

He was chosen speaker for a considerable number of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship week-long campaigns at British universities, particularly Oxford and Cambridge. These later extended to North America. From these talks came one of his best-selling books, *Basic Christianity*, (1958) which has been translated into 25 languages and has sold over a million copies.

Fundamentally, Stott was a church minister, one who became the leading figure in a resurgence of British evangelism, particularly in the Church of England.

Stott believed the mind was a gift from God. In an evangelical world tempted to rely on proof texts and emotive stories, Stott drilled down deep into Scripture to display its power. Many people, hearing him preach for the first time, said they had never heard the Bible expounded with such clarity and depth. His passion was to learn what God said and to let it shape his life.

His practice of evangelism demonstrated that *“plain, ordinary Christianity”* could appeal to all classes of people. What evangelicals most treasured—the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the Scripture that testified to them—he showed to be potent resources for winning the world. Largely through Stott’s leadership, British evangelicalism was transformed from a defensive backwater into an engaged and significant movement.

His books, too, continue to speak eloquently, clear, precise, stimulating, and balanced. His commentaries cover much of the New Testament, bridging the gap between scholarly works and thoughtful works for lay people.

For all his skill and intellect, his writing, his energy, and his brilliant preaching, Stott’s ultimate legacy may be the vast number of people he mentored and befriended all over the world. He made hundreds of friends, becoming a bridge between cultures.

*“By temperament, he was an introvert,”* remembers Chris Wright. *“He was very happy to be in his own company. Yet he gave himself to so many people, remembering names, knowing their children, writing letters, praying for them.”* One would like to say that such is the nature of plain, ordinary Christians.

Not all live up to it. John Stott did.

*Ed’s note: This article was originally published in Christianity Today in September 2011.*

### Grace Fellowship Church

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



Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder/Pastor
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heining	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Rick Widener	Treasurer
Kay Berry & Karen Gates	Women
Lori Barker	Missions
Andy Heining	Worship
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Kathy Barth, Manfred & Janet Adalem	Communion
Andy Anschutz	Sound/Power Point
John and Donna Kurtz	TrailNotes