

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 *Waiting and Ready at the Door when it Opens* JON VEGA

You can always tell your story at a Vega's dinner table and my mother's table was no exception. Of all the friends, family, and guests that ate at her table, none captivated my attention like Mike Palasek, a local surgical nurse and avid mountain climber. It may have been the light coming from the large windows in the dining room or his very thick glasses, but his eyes would light up as he talked.

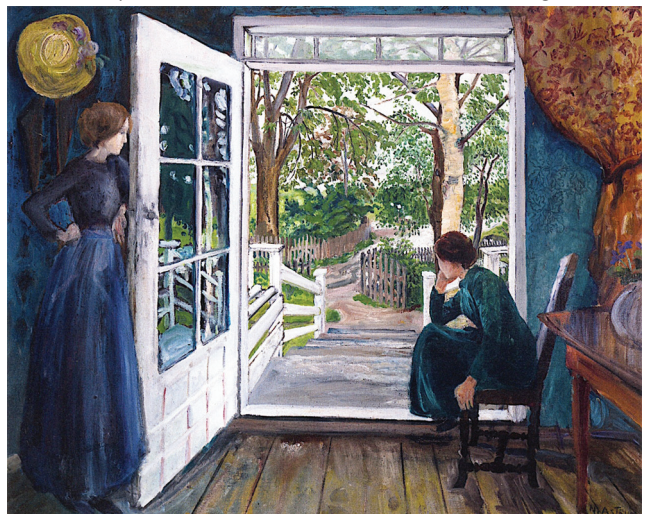
Once or so a year, Mike would travel with a surgical team high into the mountains of central Asia and perform life changing and sometimes life saving operations in remote villages that were often accessible only by experienced climbers. To a young kid, he seemed like a type of Indiana Jones and would come back to the States with glittering treasure, pictures of some of the surgeries he had helped with. Over plates of meat loaf or beef roast, the pictures of cleft palates, huge tumors, large gallstones, and the like would be passed around the table as he recounted his latest experience. I loved it!

Proverbs 8:34: *"Blessed are those who listen to Me, watching daily at My doors, waiting at My doorway."*



*At The Entrance To The Temple Mount, Jerusalem - painting by Gustave Baueernfeind (1848-1904)*

Even through my incomplete studies of Engineering, English Literature and Creative Writing, the fascination with medical missions was always in the back of my mind. I couldn't shake it. So, when the opportunity presented itself for nursing school, I jumped in with both feet and wondered if God would ever use me abroad. I was in my late twenties when I started nursing school.



*By the open door (1902-11) - painting by Nikolai Astrup (1880-1928)*

More than a decade later, God has opened a door, a door I've been waiting for for most of my life, a door to medical missions in Africa...but now the doubts are creeping in. What if I get there and don't have what it takes? What if something goes wrong and I don't make it back? What if I can't get what is needed for the trip? What if?...

Not that I identify with Moses, but I now understand a little better when he says, *"Pardon your servant, Lord,"* and then proceeds to show his anxieties about what he has been asked to do and argues with God about His choice of vessel (Exodus 3-4).

Revelation 3:8: *"I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an **open door** that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied My name."*

No one can shut the door. The Evil One (the accuser) can't shut it, but neither can we. We linger at the open doors before us and debate God's goodness and our own

*Continued on p. 2*

## MARCH 2019

### 1-31


March of Prayer: every evening throughout the month (and into April!) in area churches from 6 to 8 pm (see page 4 for locations)

**2** Men's Monthly Prayer Breakfast, Hanley Rd. McDonald's at 9:00 am

**3** Elder Eric Byrom preaching: Phil. 2:12-18


**6** Ash Wednesday - Lent begins. (usual Connect groups)

**9** Family Game Night at GFC, 6:30 to 9:00 pm

**10** Elder Eric Byrom preaching: Phil. 2:19-30  
Communion   
Image, Mansfield Christian's choir, will join us

**17** Elder Eric Byrom preaching: Phil. 3:1-11

**18** GFC hosts March of Prayer, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

**24** Elder Jadae Fox preaching on "Slavery to Christ"  
Communion   
GFC hosts the new teachers headed to Japan to teach English. They will participate in the service on the 31<sup>st</sup> as they finish up their orientation. (See article on page 3.)

**31** Celebration Sunday with potluck afterwards

## Waiting and Ready...concluded

wisdom and strength. In doing so we repeat the original question, "Who will I serve?" All too often we answer with the original lie, the original sin, "I will open and close my own doors."

2 Corinthians 12: 9: "He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me.'"

God already knows about my lack of strength and your lack of strength. What He's really interested in is our faith to "keep His word" and not deny His name. So I move forward through the open door with the certainty of His glorification through my weakness. A door, His door, that I have been watching and waiting at, anticipating and preparing for.

Are you preparing for your door to open?

Are you waiting and ready?



## TABLE FELLOWSHIP

2019 Annual Conference - April 12 & 13

The Workmanship of Risk

Grace Church, Toledo, Ohio

We are called to be disciples. And we are called to make disciples. It is not difficult to do either of these things poorly. Nor is it difficult to have short-term success in these endeavors. But to do these things well ... and to see lasting results ... that's something different altogether.



Jesus is, obviously, an expert at making disciples. But He calls us to join Him in this work. And because of this, we are always involved in the Workmanship of Risk. So is He. This, the risk-filled business of being disciples and of making disciples, is what we'll be considering at Table Fellowship's annual conference.

This conference is not just for leaders. Everyone is called to be and to make disciples. Please invite your friends to attend.

Register TODAY! Go to: <https://events.r20.constant-contact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eg3bhue5998e29ff&oseq=&c=&ch=>



Daniel in the lion's den...or "A scary sleepover" as the GFC Sunday School curriculum titled it. Left to right: Joel, Ashley, Truth, Josiah and Ezra wearing the lion masks they made. The children's mouths are shut because God closed them and protected Daniel. Photo by Deb McKee.



THEY'RE OFF TO JAPAN! 彼らは日本に行っています!

## GARRETT & TESSA, ANDY...



Newlyweds: Garrett and Tessa Gibson

新婚カップル: ギブソン、ギャレットとテッサ



NATHAN TUCKER

Once again in March, Grace Fellowship Church will be hosting the new teachers who are joining the Wakakusa English Program in Tamura, Japan. GFC has been supporting the sending of teacher-missionaries to Japan since 1964 when Karin Kurtz of Bucyrus, OH was the first "pioneer."

This year 3 new teachers will be going over to join the team currently working in Tamura, Japan. Their names are Garrett and Tessa Russell Gibson (newlyweds as of this Sat., March 2!) of Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Andrew ("Please just call me Andy!") Brubaker of Dublin, OH.

Andy, Garrett and Tessa will be arriving in Mansfield on Sun. afternoon, March 24. That evening there will be a Welcome Dinner for them in the Upper Room, starting at 6 pm. The entire church is welcome to attend the dinner. Please come!

From March 24-31, the teachers will take part in a week-long orientation and training program at the church led by Nathan Tucker. They will be able to join the church service on March 31 and share all that God is doing in their lives and in Japan. Lori Barker is organizing several meals for the teachers, so if you have an interest in providing one of their lunches or dinners during the training week, please contact her.

The teachers look forward to making connections with GFC church members, so be sure to introduce yourself and say hello!

...アンディからのより多く

**MORE FROM ANDY...** "I'm 27 years old and have lived in Ohio all my life. I'm a graduate of Ohio Northern U. and currently live in the heart of Ohio, Columbus. Too bad I'm a fan of the U. of Michigan Wolverines.

"I first went to Japan last summer on a Mission Trip with my church to Ishinomaki, an area affected by the 2011 tsunami and earthquake. Since then, the Lord has placed it on my heart to return to Japan. Joining the Wakakusa team is my answer to the call.

"I love to meet new people, exploring new places, hiking, tennis, and volleyball. If staying in, I like to play table top games, and party games on my Nintendo Switch with other people. I play euphonium and am a novice guitarist. (I can play at least three chords!) It's a little known fact that I really like to cook."

Continued on page 4.



Andy Brubaker  
アンディ・ブルベーカー

Andy has a B.A. in Business Administration. He currently teaches adult English classes to foreign people living in the US. He also teaches Sunday School classes.

“I have a personal goal to be fluent in Japanese by the end of my time in Japan. I am very eager to meet everyone on the team and to be an ambassador for Christ in Tamura and wherever else in Japan the Lord will lead me.”

**TESSA...** “I’m Tessa! I’m 23 years old. I grew up on the beach in Florida and later on, our family lived in a missionary community in St. Petersburg. My creative passions are singing, dancing, design, drawing, and creative writing. But even as I was scrambling to be on stage any chance I could as a kid, I was fascinated with Japan, so I began learning all I could, praying that God would use me in some way there. God answers prayer!

“I’m a big nintendo fan and can’t wait for Animal Cross Switch. I think what I’ll bring to the team is that I like to find new ways to solve problems and make day to day efforts more seamless and beautiful. I enjoy finding ways to make kids smile by cracking a joke or surprising them with a random burst of song or a little gift.

“I’m excited to eat Japanese foods and learn to cook them. I can’t wait to have others to study Japanese with (a rarity here in the South!) and I’m excited to have a small group Bible study again.

“I have been teaching drama at Woodland Heights Elementary School. The fact that I can work in Japan as part of a team with other Christians makes me feel confident that I can do my part in the Body of Christ with their support.”

**GARRETT** has a B.A. in Theatre from South Carolina University. His employment has included music direction for his university, guitar teaching, play direction. His church activity has centered on prison ministry, playwriting and directing, accompanying (piano, guitar, banjo), gospel singing.

“As a teacher I’m always looking for new ways to include Christ in education. This opportunity interests me due to my love of working with children.”

Garrett is 26 years old.



*Japanese students during Sports Day exercises*

**A March of Prayer locations in March - 6 to 8 pm**

1. Living Hope Community - 670 Kentucky Ave
2. Point of Grace - 2 Marion Ave
3. Zions Refuge - 1400 Lucas Rd
4. St Peters - 104 West First St
5. Linden Road Presbyterian - 160 South Linden Road
6. Oakland Lutheran - 575 Crall Road East
7. Mansfield Foursquare Gospel - 383 Davidson St
8. Ambassadors for Christ- 150 Cline Ave
9. The Way - 172 Sturges Ave
10. Mansfield Alliance - 291 West Cook
11. Holy Trinity Lutheran - 525 West Cook
12. Crossroads - 1188 Park Ave West
13. Mansfield First EPC - 399 south Trimble Road
14. Southside Christian - 2055 Middle Belleville
15. Sar Shalom - 2510 West 4th st
16. Shiloh Baptist - 130 East 2nd st
17. Belmont Community Church - 1119 Belmont Ave
- 18. Grace Fellowship - 365 East Straub Road**
19. Kingdom Grace Fellowship - 105 Reba Ave
20. Potter’s House - 374 Willowood East
21. Journey Life Center - 2578 OH 39
22. Oasis of Love - 190 Chester Ave
23. Freedom Ridge Church - 2200 Bedford Blvd
24. Open Bible - 1150 Rayfield Dr
25. First United Methodist - 12 North Diamond
26. First Christian Church - 200 West 3rd St
27. First English Lutheran - 53 Park Ave W
28. Church Requel - 2 Marion Ave
29. Fusion - 220 Industrial Drive
30. Community Life Ministries - 12 North Diamond
31. Mosaic Church - 296 Park Ave West

**Grace Fellowship Church**

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|                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Eric Byrom                          | Presiding Elder   |
| Jadaé Fox                           | Elder             |
| Andy Heining                        | Elder             |
| Robert Key                          | Elder             |
| Jon Vega                            | Elder             |
| Jon Vega                            | Treasurer         |
| Kay Berry & Karen Gates             | Women             |
| Lori Barker                         | Missions          |
| Andy Heining                        | Worship           |
| Circle Church Serve Group           | Greeters          |
| Angel Vega                          | Dance             |
| 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        |