

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 “Give thanks with a grateful heart”

RICK WIDENER

Ed. Note: Should this appear familiar, it is a “re-run,” from our November 2017 issue which seemed appropriate to use once again at this season in GFC’s body life.

Some of you may know of my penchant for all things “hot.” Hot tubs, saunas, and steam baths are, for me, a “day off.” Recently, I was enjoying a steam bath at the local Y and struck up a conversation with another man in the room. We talked about his employment and retirement, among other things. One thing that struck me during that conversation was that he immediately began talking about the negative things in his past 30+ years of employment. At one point I tried to steer the conversation into a more positive place, suggesting that there were also a lot of good things in his story. He acknowledged that but did not move the conversation in that direction

Why the story? Thanksgiving is right around the corner (even this month). Doing a quick search in my Bible study program I find 133 instances of thanks and only seven instances of complaint. Hmm? I think God is saying something to us. Thanksgiving was a standard part of the Old Testament. I’ll mention just a few:

- “Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!”
I Chronicles 16:34 (ESV)
- “Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate.”
Nehemiah 12:31 (ESV)
- “Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints, and give thanks to His holy name.”
Ps. 30:4 (ESV).

In the New Testament, to give thanks is also a frequent occurrence in the Gospels, Acts, and in Paul’s letters. Again to mention a few:

- “He took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks, He broke them and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds.”
Matt. 15:36 (ESV)

- “Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.”
Luke 17:15-16 (ESV)
- ...who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.
Romans 16:4 (ESV)



The Thankful Leper - Woodcut engraving after a drawing by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (German painter, 1794 - 1872), published in 1877.

Perhaps, because we live in a fallen world, our initial response to things seems often to go to the negative—all that is wrong, mentally. But we have been raised with Christ! With a little effort on our part we can change how we initially respond to people, situations, conversations, and God. We can see how God is working and moving in someone’s life (or our own) instead of their shortcomings. We can see the blessings of God rather than the results of the curse as our first response.

- “...He thanks you, as I do this day; the father makes known to the children Your faithfulness.”
Isaiah 38:19 (ESV)

This way of responding to things, revealing our hearts of thanksgiving also impacts our children and their relations with our Lord, which gives us another good reason to make the change.

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He’s given Jesus Christ, His Son.

“Making It”

MATT GODSIL

Last December I was hanging up my students’ artwork in one of the hallways in the school where I teach, and a student aid approached me to tell me that our financial secretary had a message for me and to stop by and see her. I immediately thought that I needed to pay a bill for service to my minivan by our auto tech department. So I stopped by to see her and she said there was a voice-

mail that concerned me that was left on her office phone. She played the message in which a young man named Andy was asking for a “Matt Godsil who is an artist and teaches at Madison Comprehensive High School.” He said that he was from NBC in Hollywood and that he would like to ask if I would be interested in being on the show, “Making It.” He left a number where I

could reach him. I immediately was suspicious that some of my fellow educators were pulling a prank on me and tried to get our secretary to come clean! She smiled and said she only knew that this call had been received. I went to the office where I suspected the culprits were hiding, but everyone was quietly engaged in their business.

When I returned to my classroom



and had a break, I quickly researched the show, “Making It,” which I had only heard about briefly. I found out that it was a reality talent competition show on NBC that featured 8 crafts persons hosted by Amy Poehler and Nick Offerman of “Saturday Night Live” and “Parks and Recreation” fame. The show had aired in August of 2018. It was very successful and had been renewed for a second season. I discovered all of this on the show’s website.

In this six episode competition, 8 of the most talented makers from across the country would take on a variety of handmade projects with the hope of impressing Poehler, Offerman and the expert judges. Every show would revolve around a central theme that drew inspiration from hugely popular nationwide trends in crafting and DIY.

Each episode of the competition would consist of two projects that would allow the makers to demonstrate their

specialized talent while sharing skilled insights and touching personal stories. First, the “faster-craft” round would be a timed challenge that would test their ability to not only work quickly but imaginatively as well. Next, the makers would move to the “master craft collection,” a one-of-a-kind themed challenge in which the competitors would need to use their expertise and get inventive in order to assemble a winning craft that would fit the theme of the week.

Blending the atmosphere of a serene outdoor setting and innovative cinematography designed to showcase the beautiful craftsmanship at work, this friendly competition would focus on the character and camaraderie of the crafting community, and through it all, Amy and Nick would provide heartfelt encouragement, guidance and plenty of laughs.

Now my suspicions shifted from thinking pranksters to scam artists. At lunch time I called Andy at the number

he had left, and the voice at the other end said that I had indeed reached NBC Studios. I was connected with Andy and he introduced himself and told me that he had found me in an article he had seen on the Richland Source website about an art show I had held at the Phoenix Brewing Company here in Mansfield. Andy told me that he was really intrigued by both my work and my background as an artist, a teacher, and a football coach. He asked if I knew about the show and if I would be interested and available to become a candidate. I said, “Sure.”

He proceeded to tell me that everything would start the next night with a skype interview in my studio in which I would be interviewed by the show’s talent director. I told him that I would be ready.

I told my wife, Karen, and we proceeded to get the studio ready. (A quick

(Continued on page 3)

“Making It” (continued from page 2)

note on my studio. I converted the garage into an Irish Pub which also serves as my art studio. It serves me well as an inspiration to my artwork.) We had things set up for the interview and the talent director called, interviewed me, and looked at some of my artwork in the Pub. The interview went on for about 45 minutes.

The following Monday I was contacted and told I was accepted in the first phase of the process. I had to fill out a myriad of application forms, background checks, artist’s statements and prepare a portfolio of my work to send to NBC. I did all of that, and then they wanted pictures of me with my grandchildren and of me teaching and coaching. Obviously, they were looking at a certain demographic to appeal to. I sent that in, and I was told that I had made the first cut. I was told that there had been over 4000 applicants and that there would be more tests to come. I was given the assignment of making a craft under a 3 hour time constraint in a project that depicted my family and that I needed to video it at various intervals and send it to them on YouTube. New territory for me.



“My family” project.

After submitting the video of the process of making this project, I received a congratulatory call telling me that I had made the cut to the final 32 craftspersons and that I was going to be flown out to Los Angeles at the beginning of February to do screen tests with the other candidates. But I was told that I had to plan to do another craft project that would reflect my character as an animal. I would need to bring my materials with me to California and the making of the craft with others in the room would be my screen test. So I planned my concept and went into design mode.

(Continued next month. You’ll want to follow Matt’s adventures in Los Angeles and see if we have a TV star in our midst!)



Our October 6 visitors from Japan: (L to R) Shinji Okubo, Mr. Tomohiro Sugai (Deputy Mayor of Tamura City) with Nathan Tucker

November 2019

- 2** Women of Grace potluck brunch 10:30 am to 1 pm in the Tim Barber Youth Building. Linda Mathias will speak. Turn clocks back tonight!
- 3** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: “Growing Down into Belonging” Hebrews 12:18-24. Prayer for the Persecuted Church.
- 6** Adult Connect will feature two offerings: “Marriage Nights” and “Wilderness Wanderings” with Mitch Schwartz in the Lion Room. Connect (for all ages) runs from 6:30-8 pm.
- 9** Family Game Night 6 – 9 pm at GFC.
- 10** Elder Jon Vega preaching on “Growing Down in Grace.” 🍷🍷 Bring your Shoebox gifts! Circle Church leaders meeting at 12:30 pm in the Multi-Purpose room.
- 16** Men’s Prayer Breakfast at Hanley Rd. McDonald’s. 9 am. (3rd Saturday now)
- 17** Elder Eric Byrom preaching on “Growing Down in Grace.” Last day to bring in Shoebox gifts!!
- 24** Elder Jadaé Fox preaching on “Growing Down in Thanksgiving.” 🍷🍷
- 27** No Connect groups tonight with Thanksgiving tomorrow.
- 28** **GIVE THANKS WITH A GRATEFUL HEART**

The Story of Grace Haven

ANITA HICKINBOTHAM

Ed's Note: We have just celebrated our 50th Anniversary. This is Anita Hickinbotham's account of our first 40 years presented with PowerPoint photos at the Community Celebration in February 2009. The account will be continued in future TrailNotes.

"Let's start at the very beginning..."

Back in the mid-1960's there was a man with a vision and some property on a hill just south of Mansfield. Harold, better known as "Hod" Bolesky, president of Therm-O-Disc at the time, was seeking God's leading for how to use his land and his resources.

Meanwhile, Gordon Walker, the director of Campus Crusade for Christ down at Ohio State, was seeing conversions occur among students, but also observed the lack of committed discipleship. He felt called to be available for the development of a "container" as he called it—a new expression of the body of Christ.

Not surprisingly, God brought the two men together. Within a short time the relationship strengthened and frequent trips were made to Mansfield where ideas brewed and before long, Grace Haven Farm was birthed—a place where college-age people could come to grow in faith. What had been envisioned as a weekend retreat spot soon became home to a small but eclectic group of semi-permanent residents. The earliest meetings were held in the arena barn, with folks sitting on hay bales and singing in unison with the supporting harmonies of the neighing horses, or in the basement of the Walker home just across the driveway.

The Nethery family, Campus Crusade colleagues of the Walkers, was in a time of transition. After leaving the west coast and spending several months visiting Francis and Edith Schaeffer's L'Abri in Switzerland, the Netherys arrived in Mansfield to join the budding work.

Up on the hill, the arena barn with its old white two-story farmhouse and a new cedar-sided ranch were already owned by Hod. But the pressing need for more space providentially coincided with the opportunity to purchase the Chillemi farm across Woodville Road. The acreage was purchased and included the white farm house behind the ponds. L'Abri was proving to be a model that seemed to fit both the needs and vision here and a similar work/study program was established. With the completion of the Nethery home, there was now space for housing in three locations, with a fourth just up Woodville Rd. soon to follow. By this time the grounds were buzzing with activity, prayer, and guiding words. The result was that in a short time all the homes were full and a need for a large meeting space led to the lodge being built in 1972. Thus began the small Christian community and the sharing of life together.

Kevin and Suzanne Springer, who had known Ray in California, came in the early 70's and were soon joined by another young couple, John and Lynette Caldwell, who had been invited by Gordon to join the ministry staff and be the first lodge house parents. They lived in an apartment in the lodge—the rooms where the nursery is now located.

Ray and Eunice saw and oversaw a lot in those days. There were Bible studies and teachings, work details, twice-daily milking at the dairy farm, candle making and hay-making, silk-screen poster printing, production of leather goods and jewelry, and picture framing in the Farm Bookstore (located where pastor and secretary offices are now) and cooking Farm dinners for 20-40 on a nightly rotation with the other "householders" as they were called.

The changing seasons invited a variety of activities, one being the making of apple butter in the crisp fall air in a huge kettle over an open fire at Russ and Susan Enzor's place up on Hanley Rd. You know that spot as the Roggio home.

There were regular worship gatherings where granny dresses, granny glasses, ragged jeans, and bare feet reigned, with song suggestions called out from the crowd. There were gardens and canning and horses and firewood cutting, and occasionally pulling a car out of the mud or a tractor out of the pond, and spiritual warfare and some hard life lessons being learned. How could you help but be changed in the cozy quarters with a dozen guys each in the basements of two of the homes or in what is now the Hickinbotham basement where up to 16 girls resided? There were also a remarkable number of people who arrived because their car "just happened" to break down near the Rt.13 and Straub Rd. intersection. Some found their way here after hearing it was a place to get a free meal or a night's lodging. There was something special going on though as many people were meeting Christ and beginning to be shaped by His love.

(to be continued)

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Jadaé Fox Elder

Andy Heiningner Elder

Robert Key Elder

Jon Vega Elder

Kay Berry and Jadaé Fox Office

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