

Gender Road Christian Church

Senior Pastor John Romig

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-This Sunday there will be a brief Congregational Meeting at 10:30, between services, to discuss and vote on a Permanent Endowment Fund Policy for the church. The 9:30 service will conclude at 10:25. If you are here prior to 10:25, please be aware that worship is taking place and refrain from entering the sanctuary until the service ends unless you want to join in the worship with the other congregants.

-There will a "Family Night" gathering this Friday, Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. in the multi-purpose room. Parents with kids from 1 week old up through 8th grade are invited and will be able to meet other parents and fellowship. Of course bring the kids! Chi Rhoers (6th-8th grade) and Genesis (3rd-5th grade) will have their own Youth Group event between 7:30-8:30 and then re-join the group. There will be some activities for the young kids as well as time for the kids to just play! We will have some pizza & Kool Aide and you may bring a snack to share.

-New "Men's Group" will gather on Saturday, Jan 21st at 9:30 a.m. for about an hour in the Library for coffee and discussion about challenges unique to men with Pastor John. If you are a dad, husband or boyfriend to someone or a single then you need to be here.

-Perceiver's Point: New to GRCC? Perceiver's Point is the starting point for you! There is a gathering on Thursday, Jan. 19th from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the library. Child care is offered. Learn who we are and where we are going! Perceiver's Point is designed to help you decide how God is leading your life within the GRCC family and if you want to make GRCC part of your journey with Christ. Isaiah 43:19, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not **perceive** it?" Please RSVP the secretary@genderroadcc.com.

-Sunday, January 22nd, we are inviting all adults who would like to take part in some sort of FAST (you will have to decide whether or not you want to give something up or possibly take on something new like an hour a day without TV and replace that with prayer, etc.) for one week. The idea behind the Fast is to increase our time in prayer on a daily basis by being attentive to God in new ways as we get hungry, take on a new spiritual discipline or refrain from an activity that has been a past distraction. The Fast or prayer is specifically to ask God's guidance as to what God would have us do for our own personal ministries and also asking for guidance as to what ministries God would have for our church. Please note that if you are on medication, etc. you may need to check with your physician. The fast is optional and this Sunday we'll cover different ways it can be practiced.

Family Night on Friday Jan. 13th : 7:00 to 9:00 in the Multi purpose room at the Church: this is a great time for parents with children under the age of 12 to come to the church and let the little ones blow off some winter steam. We'll have pizza and if you want to bring a snack to share that would be great! It's a good time to watch the kids play and for the parents to get know each other. If you have been looking to meet other parents with kids similar in age to yours – this is the event! If you have been wanting to hang out with some other Christians who are trying to hold it all together as a parent – then this is the place. Please join Pastor John and his wife Tracy along with lil'John (8) and Jakub (6) for this fun time.

Perceiver's Point: Are you new to GRCC? Perceiver's Point is the starting point for you! Two different times are being offered: Sunday, Jan. 8th @ Pastor John's home from 4:00 to 5:00ish or Thursday Jan 19th in the Church Library from 6:30 to 7:30pm (child care offered at each). Pick the session that best fits your schedule. Learn who we are and where we are going! Perceiver's Point is designed to give you the information you need to decide how God is leading your life within the GRCC family and if you want to make GRCC part of your journey with Christ.

*Isaiah 43:19 "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not **perceive** it?"*
You are perceiving God's call on your life! Email secretary@genderroadcc.com to sign up or request more information.

Tuesday (Dec. 6): 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 States that we are to *"rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* What is clear in this scripture is that we are, no matter our current circumstance, to give thanks. Not necessarily for the trouble or heartache you are feeling, but to give thanks to God who is constantly with you in the moment. By giving thanks, you recognize God's divinity and power that is greater than your own and that God is in control of the situation that you cannot control. Being willing to let go and lean on God, to trust God, and to just call out, allows the release of the negative emotions that clog our minds and wreak havoc on our bodies. We truly turn it over to God and begin to feel the healing peace that has always been ready for us to embrace it. This writing is not a new revelation, and hopefully it sounds familiar. Perhaps so much so that you are inclined to brush it off. The message is simple, truly following it is not often easy. If you like control and order in your life, if you have always been able to direct and to bring about what you

want in your life, then letting go and truly opening up and trusting in God may prove to be difficult for you. But God is there, God is ready.

Friday: On the way home from visiting relatives for a few days, my wife and I had a chance to talk without interruption as both boys were sacked out in the van. We chose to talk about our relationship and marriage. I don't want to assume too much and I don't want to lose touch with who she is, what she wants, what she dreams about for the family or herself. I want to know that we are doing well as a couple. I mess up a number of things when it comes to relationships, but I keep trying to invest in our relationship. I want it to last until "death do us part."

This morning I was privileged to witness the love between a couple in their 80's. He was kissing her goodbye before she headed off to a risky four-hour surgery. More was spoken between them in the fleeting moments of the kiss and the look into each other's eyes than can ever be put into words. God was there. God was, God is and God will be in their relationship. Whether it be with your girlfriend, boyfriend, partner or spouse, I pray it is so with you.

This is the reading from the lighting of the Advent Wreath for the Hope candle from Sunday: For the family and friends of this church during the Advent season we all journey; we all seek a journey home. Ever since Mary and Joseph undertook the first journey to Bethlehem and the wise men traveled under starry skies, journeys have been part of Christmas. The journey gives meaning to the destination. Families retrace familiar steps leading home; perhaps to a warm fire, friends and loved ones. For some, the destination of their journey is but a doorway of unanswered questions, uncomfortable situations, strained relationships, the reopening of still unhealed wounds and the apprehension of an unknown future.

May we embrace together our journeys home, home to the arrival of our Christ, where we find the peace, joy and love completed in us by the Messiah. We journey in hope because God's promises have been fulfilled. The prophet Isaiah tells that the Lord God gives a sign, "the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel" Hope springs eternal. Hope comes to a people searching for the King. A voice cries out, "Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God! Fill every valley; level every mountain. Flatten the hills, make the rough places smooth. Then the glory of the

Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The Lord himself has promised this."

The promise is in the name. "Emmanuel" means "God with us." The promise is about to come true. Get ready for God to come! On our journey searching for the King, we have encountered the forces of life that seek to hold us back. So then let us rise up in faith and flatten down the hills. Build up the valleys. Smooth out the rough places. And lay out God's highway through the wilderness of our hearts.

God promises to come. We light the candle because we believe the promise. And we wait in hope, for Emmanuel. The Gospel of Matthew brings forth from the prophet Isaiah again to remind us of God's faithfulness to us, "And in his name the Gentiles will hope." Our Heavenly Creator and Living God, give us the hope, renew in us the hope and courage to prepare a road for you to, through and in our hearts.

Wednesday – See below for important info about Advent happenings. The December newsletter has been mailed and will be emailed on Monday. Check out the website for the Wednesday Mid-Week devotional.

We hear about how God loves us, and for some the almost 'sureness' of it is taken for granted. It is only until we meet people hurting so bad, feeling so abandoned by others and that are grasping for some foothold while in the pit of despair that we realize how essential and life giving God's love is. God's love is the most powerful 'thing' we can experience. Please do everything you can to live your life in a way that shows love to others. And that you also take the time to listen to someone who needs to know that God still loves them.

Tuesday Nov. 22nd - Advent 2011 "A Traditional Christmas, A Journey Home"

Good morning friends and family, here is some info for your planning purposes on Advent:

As we prepare to move into the Advent season, we are anticipating and preparing for "the coming" or "the arrival" of Jesus the Christ. And we will focus the four weeks leading up to Christmas on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Our musical aka cantata this year is Searching for the King and will be presented on Dec. 18th at 10:00 (note we will have only 1 service on the 18th). The musical helps

present themes for our advent celebration and spiritual life: journey, stars, military men and women and peace readily jump into focus. On the 18th, we are encouraging current or retired military personnel to wear their uniform to the single service; and to extend a special invite to friends and family who have or are in the military to be at the service.

In the Narthex, we will have a prayer tree where you can write your prayers on star ornaments. In the Sanctuary we will have two trees for you to bring in ornaments from your home that represent a tradition or memory. You can hang them on the trees any Sunday during Advent and we'll have a special reading for it on Dec. 4th. Another tree we have in the Sanctuary is a Picture Tree, please bring in photos of people, pets, past family Christmas times to place on the tree so we can pray over and hold special with you those times and people. Also, we are collecting pictures of any friends and family in the military and creating a collage in the Narthex for posting the pictures. You can add your pictures anytime throughout the season. The pictures can be recent or of loved ones no longer here but who served at any point in their life (e.g. WWII, Korean, Vietnam etc.). Our children are coloring Christmas pictures for posting in the Sanctuary to add to our theme of a traditional Christmas and be part the journey

Saturday Nov. 19th – remember to bring in 5 items for the CW food pantry. We are staking our items in the Narthex. See below for specific items that are needed or certainly anything you can bring.

Great morning setting up the church for the lunch tomorrow and listening to the instrumentalists begin practice for the Christmas musical.

Remember we have 1 service on Sunday at 10:00. Both the choir and His Embrace are playing and the order of service is different because it is a combined service.

Thursday Nov. 17th: God shows up in surprising ways. And as we sometimes wait impatiently for God to show up, we realize that the waiting has given us time to recognize our own issues (feelings, anger, agenda, pride, transference, jealousy, fear) that are clouding what we think is our purpose or role. When we learn to pray and let God show up without our own selfish attempt, truly awesome things can happen. I hope you take time today to pray and listen.

Last night was a good session on school bullying at Columbus State, and I am proud of our own Christy Drake who was the main organizer of the expert panel discussion.

You should have received via email a mid-week devotion. If not please let me or the church office know.

Can you bring 5 items?

This Sunday is our food drive for the Canal Winchester Food Pantry, Needed items are: canned fruit, boxed meals like Hamburger Helper, cereal, Chunky Soups, Flour, salt, Boxed baking mixes, personal items like soap, detergent, toilet paper, shampoo and toothpaste.

- In one week, the pantry can give out over 2,560 items from their shelves to families in Canal Winchester.
- The Pantry is serving on average 64 families weekly
- On average 3 new families are signing up weekly to use the pantry
- *Can you bring 5 items?*

We'll be having one service this Sunday at 10:00 followed by our free Community Thanksgiving Dinner at 11:30

Tuesday Nov. 15: PLEASE JOIN ME TOMORROW NIGHT

Christy Drake has coordinated a panel discussion in cooperation with Columbus State Community College on the issue of school bullying and harassment. It will take place tomorrow November 16th at 6:00 in the Workforce Development Ballroom on Columbus State's campus (315 Cleveland Avenue in downtown Columbus.)

As many of you know, school bullying and harassment is a hot topic right now. Media coverage has shined light on this issue with stories like the beating that occurred at Westerville South, November 3rd; and the media may be there as Columbus State did send a press release on the discussion. The panel is formatted for discussion from experts along with thirty minutes of audience Q & A, and then short reception will follow.

I will be in attendance. If you have any questions please contact me or Christy Drake directly at cdrake5@student.csc.edu or via phone at 614.287.5608.

Thursday, November 10, 2011: We are starting a new men's group and need an inspired leader – will you pray about it and let me know if you want to either lead, help or be part of something that helps men, dads and fathers live their faith.

Wednesday, Nov. 9: This Sunday's message will cover "The Parable of the Talents" in Matthew 25:14-30.

Today are the last two "Chat and Snacks" where you can stop by at time and get to know me a little more and I can get to know you. Times today are: 11:30 to 1:00 and 5:00 to 6:30.

On Nov. 20th GRCC will provide a free Thanksgiving meal from noon to 1:30 for the Canal Winchester community. We are serving in partnership with the Canal Winchester Food Pantry and David's UCC to reach a definitive population that is serving some 65 families weekly and for those who have signed up to receive a food basket from David's UCC. People will be able to come here and eat and then go pick up their food basket at David's UCC – both of these offerings come with no strings attached.

Weekly email updates: GRCC will be sending Faith in Action updates throughout the week about church events and programs. If you receive the Daily Prayer Update, you will automatically be added to the new Faith in Action list unless you tell us otherwise. If you wish to be on the Faith in Action list and do not already receive the daily prayer requests email, please email the secretary. We are creating the new Faith in Action list in order to maintain the sacredness and importance of keeping the prayer request emails related to just prayer issues and not involving church announcements.

November 20th Service will be at 10:00. There will only be 1 service that day followed by our thanksgiving lunch at 11:30. We will begin to decorate the church for the Advent season / Christmas immediately following the lunch. We need your help on this day. If you want to help in with the Thanksgiving Lunch set up, serving or clean up please see Jeff Edgerton or Kay. For decorating the church for Christmas, please see Amy Weinrich or Pastor John.

Advent Season: the first Sunday in Advent is Nov. 27th. During Advent we will create a collage of pictures of our friends and family that are in the military. Please bring in your pictures and leave them in the office. If you want them back, please ensure your name is on the back. Our Christmas Musical / Cantata will be Dec. 20th. We will have 2 services on Christmas Eve and on Christmas (Sunday) morning.

Archived Messages

Nov. 4th: Sunday will be a time of celebrating life as we honor our friends and family who have died and passed on before us. Our faith gives us the path for hope to carry us into the light of God's love and grace. Being able to grieve the loss is important and shedding tears as we remember our time with our parents, friends, grandparents or even our children who have died is ok and part of the healing process.

Sometimes we are afraid to ask person how they are doing after they have recently lost someone because we don't want to bring up any pain or we are afraid to tell a story about someone who has died for the same reasons when in fact this acts as if the person was never alive. When my mother died, people were hesitant to talk about her out of concern for me; when this was opposite of what I was feeling on the inside. I wanted to express my feelings, in both tears of joy and sorrow, and I wanted to hear their stories and memories about her. To never talk about her seemed to dishonor who she was.

This Sunday let's walk with each other as we grieve, celebrate and live a life in hope with Jesus.

Plan now for our community thanksgiving dinner at noon on Nov. 20th! We'll need to be ready to feed lots of guests. Poverty in this part of county is high. Here is a link from a recent Dispatch article:

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2011/11/03/povertys-grip-grows.html#print> We have been prepared by God to be an avenue where people can be fed. A warm place awaits all people and families to come and enjoy a hot meal with no strings attached!

This week there will be 3 more "Chat and Snacks" with me on Tuesday from 5:30 to 7:00 and Wednesday from either 11:30 to 1:00 or 5:00 to 6:30. These are informal and you can arrive whenever you want and leave whenever you want. We'll have some refreshments (Lena did a great job with the food on the first one) so if you have time during your lunch break or on your way home, swing by!