

*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

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 a lot of good things in his story too. 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. Thanks-giving 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 it is 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 Miracle of the loaves and fishes  
by Giovanni-Lanfranco (1620-23)*

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.

Let me close with a couple of my own THANKS. To all of you who joined us on October 14 at the Community Celebration, thank you for your love, support, and faithfulness to our Lord. I am extremely grateful  
*(concluded on page 2)*

(concluded from page 1.)

that I could tell you all to go home after dinner and that you did not need to clean up. This leads me to a second big THANKS. Grace Christian Fellowship (Dayton, OH) made the last statement possible. Thank you, GCF, for the support you gave GFC by providing ten +/- people to do the “dirty-work” after the celebraion. You were a great gift to us!

Finally, we all want to thank our caterers, Carl’s Bratwurst (meal), and Uncle Dudley’s (pies), and the ARC Conference (fruit for those unable to enjoy the pies).

**Give thanks with a grateful heart.**

**Give thanks to the Holy One.**

**Give thanks because He’s given Jesus Christ, His Son.**

Photos from the GFC Community Celebration on October 14



Rick Widener (at left) and helpers from Dayton church (at right) preparing for the Community Celebration dinner.



Salad course (left) and table centerpiece (right) as they graced each table upon the guests’ arrival

## NOVEMBER 2017

### 1 Happy All Saints Day!

New Bible Study on I Timothy at 8:30 a.m. Multi-Purpose Room each Wednesday. See Eric or Jadaé. Connect Groups for all ages 6:30 to 8 p.m.

4 Men’s Prayer Breakfast at McDonald’s, Hanley Rd. 8 a.m. End of Daylight Savings Time: turn clocks back tonight!

5 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: Eph. 4:1-16. Turn in shoeboxes! Community Mtg. 6:30-8 p.m.

11 Men’s Retreat with Harvest Christian Fellowship at GFC. 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Register on line: harvestchurch-elyria.com (See bulletin board).

12 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: Eph. 4:17-5:21. Last chance to turn in shoeboxes & Coins for Kids

18 Women of Grace brunch and program 10:30-12:30 p.m. in the Tim Barber Youth Building.

19 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: Eph. 5:22-6:9.

### 23 Happy Thanksgiving!

26 Elder Rick Widener preaching: Eph. 6:10-24.



ARC President Tom Kelby reading the GFC Community Covenant Statement



GFCers bringing their signed membership papers to place “in the book.”

## A four-holiday week DONNA KURTZ

As I write today, it's Oct. 31st—Halloween or All Hallows Eve. Halloween developed from a Celtic holiday, characterized mostly by ghosts, when the spirits of the dead supposedly roamed throughout the earth. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III turned this holiday into one where all the saints in heaven were honored. This happened on Nov. 1st and was called All Saints Day (or All Hallows Day).

One year there was a Biblical All Saints Day Costume Party at Grace Haven. Some of you will no doubt remember this! One notable participant arrived as “St. Aub,” a saint no one recognized. Finally, however, the explanation was put forth: on Rt. 13 there was a street sign for Straub Rd. that omitted the “r.” For many months we had read, “St aub Rd.” Hence, a new “saint” was celebrated! At that same party a participant arrived wrapped in many layers of white paper table covering. It was Eunice Nethery as the Pillar of Salt!

On Nov. 2nd, there was All Souls Day, a time to celebrate the faithful dead. People went to the cemeteries to tidy up their relatives' graves before winter set in. Children would bake buns and take them around to their neighbors. Songs, poetry and drama presentations were their treats for friends.

Back to Oct. 31st again. Not only is Oct. 31st Halloween, but it is also Reformation Day when the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. These were written in Latin and were intended to provide discussion material for the academics. He had no intention of starting the Protestant Reformation, but his “protest” was toward selling “indulgences” to provide forgiveness for church members' sins (usually ones people *anticipated* committing). We can thank Luther for making it clear to the Church (and world) that forgiveness and salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ!

The next ten years, while he was essentially jailed in Wartburg Castle, Martin Luther completed a translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible into the language of the German people. Tyndale followed with an English translation.

One of my former piano students, Christy Gould, and her pastor husband, Isaac, are in Wittenberg today where they visited the Castle Church for the 10:00 service celebrating Luther's contribution to church history. As we hear more about the “Reformation Story,” or sing “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” let's be grateful for those who have gone before us who have given their

*(concluded on the next column)*

## Dan & Karen Gates welcome twin granddaughters!



*Ava and Elijah out for a shopping trip.*

Ava Grace Neal and Elijah Faith Neal both arrived in August weighing 7 lbs. 6 oz. and measuring 21 and 3/4 inches long. Their mother, Raina Neal, describes them:

*“They are both sweet, joyful, friendly and smiley. Elijah is a mover, bouncer and sweet. Ava is observant and sooo sweet.”*

Karen comments, *“I agree whole-heartedly!”* Congratulations to all!

## A four-holiday week *(Conclusion)*

lives for the advancement of the gospel throughout the world.

Here is Christy's picture of this morning's service via Facebook.



*Gottesdienst in the Schloßkirche in Wittenberg on October 31, 2017  
—the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.*

# Steve McKee leads nature walk

MITCH SCHWARTZ

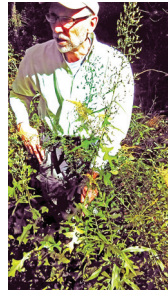
On Saturday, October 9, Steve McKee led an outing by the Clearfork Reservoir. Brian and Sue Judd joined Steve and me for a few hours on the trail that hugs the reservoir. Steve had us look and touch many plants. For some reason we did not touch the poison ivy! With some of the plants, Steve related some interesting historical facts.



Dissected Grape Fern



Ebony Spleen Wort



Steve McKee showing some wild lettuce

Brian brought his cameral along and took some highly detailed photos. He is developing into quite a plant hobbyist, especially when it comes to cataloging ferns. We had beautiful weather and we certainly stretched our legs on the nice long hike. Steve once again proved that he is not a bit green when it comes to knowing his plants.

## Congratulations, Pat Weaver!



Pat completing a Half-Marathon with a daughter on each side of her. What an accomplishment!

## Bartholomews dedicate new daughter from China



Home from Honduras, the Tim Bartholomew family at Grace Fellowship Church. as new daughter, Emma, is dedicated by Ray Nethery on Oct. 22.

# Madison honors longtime football coach Matt Godsil

LARRY PHILLIPS,  
Mansfield News Journal

MADISON TOWNSHIP--Matt Godsil may be the most interesting football coach ever to patrol a North Central Ohio sideline. The combination art teacher and gridiron boss was honored with a plaque midway through the first half of Friday night's game with Lexington, recognizing 34 years of service in the Madison program, nine years as head coach.

"There's nothing like Friday night football," Godsil said. "If you're driving along and you see those lights in the distance, it's one of the most beautiful things in the world..."

Godsil walked away from the head coaching position when his father entered hospice care in Mount Vernon. Matt spent time with his dad until his death...Godsil says he plans to continue in the district as an art teacher...We have a lot of friends here and I really enjoy what I'm doing."



Photo by Larry Phillips - Mansfield News Journal

## Elders, Circle Church leaders honored at "Gratitude Dinner" October 28

Thirty GFChurch and Circle Church leaders and spouses gathered at the home of John and Donna Kurtz in Bucyrus for "An Evening of Gratitude." Jerry and Laura King from Charlottesville, VA joined the group. Jerry spoke on "Reflections on Servanthood" and brought the latest news from the King family. The time was prompted by "Pastor Appreciation Month" and the theme verse, Hebrews 6:10.



Jerry King



Part of the group eating

### Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom Pastor/Elder

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