

TRAILNOTES

The Christian life is a journey.

JANUARY 2018

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

A Journey in Faith...without all the details

ERIC BYROM

Have you ever started off on a journey not sure where you will end up? It can be a disconcerting feeling for anyone and especially for those that like to be in control. Feeling out of control and not having a final destination in mind can cause people to do strange things. I was reading an article recently about hikers that get lost in the woods. Once they lose their sense of direction, they will sometimes wander in circles, throw away all their supplies and do other nonsensical actions.

When I first arrived in Central Asia to do mission work, one of the first parts of my “orientation” was to be dropped off on the other side of town and to find my way back to the house where I was staying. It was an exercise in language use and also self-sufficiency. I must say that I was nervous. I could barely pronounce the location that I had to get to. I would have to negotiate taxi fares with my limited language and hope that I didn’t get more lost. I didn’t have a guide. Like a hiker lost in the woods, I was tempted to walk in circles, throw away my supplies, and do other nonsensical actions.

This past year at Grace Fellowship, we have been on a journey. While we’ve tried to articulate where we hope to end up, no one knows for certain where the journey will take us. We hope that the course corrections we’ve made will bring us to a better place as a congregation, but in many ways we are walking in faith. That can be a difficult place to be, but it is often the best place to be.

“How can that be?” you may ask. As we look at Scripture, we see over and over where God tells people to strike out on a journey and doesn’t provide all the details. God tells Noah to build an ark a good hundred years before he will need it. God asks Abraham to leave Ur. God has the Israelites traveling in a desert and packing up camp when a cloud lifts and moves. Jesus tells His disciples to “Come follow Me” and doesn’t give



“Abraham on the Way to Canaan,” by Pieter Lastman, 1614



“Ruth and Naomi” by Pieter Lastman, 1614

all the details. When we are walking in faith, we grow in our faith and also in our trust in God. If we know all the answers or exactly where we are going, we can be tempted to trust in our own strength and wisdom rather than in God.

This January we will be journeying through the book of Ruth together as a congregation. The book of Ruth is a profound narrative about a woman who risks it all to move in faith. She is promised nothing and trusts in God to guide her on a difficult journey. It is my hope that we will learn from her life and examine something of what it means to go in faith even when all the questions are not answered.



“Noah and His Ark,” (after Charles Catton)
by Charles Wilson Peale, 1819.

Logan Robert joins the Burton household on Sep.27 at 11:38 pm

Logan weighed in at 7 lbs. and 13.8 ounces and was 20.5 inches long. He has already brought much joy to his parents, Elizabeth ("Biz") and Bryan.

Congratulations, Burtons!





Baby Logan, Biz and Bryan with siblings Ariana and Scarlett



Logan gets a big hug from Mommy

JANUARY 2018

- 3** No Connect groups.
- 6** Men's prayer breakfast at Burger King on Hanley Road, 8:00 am.
- 7** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching, 10:00 am. Ruth 1: 1-18.
- 10** Connect groups resume.
- 14** Rick Widener preaching, 10:00 am. Ruth 1:19-22. 
- 20** TrailNotes deadline. Send submissions to bucytalent@aol.com
- 21** Tom Kelby preaching, 10:00 am. Ruth 2:1-7. Community Mtg. 6;30-8 pm.
- 28** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching, 10:00 am. Ruth 2:8-16. IMAGE from Mansfield Christian School will join us for worship. 

Planning ahead: Friday, Feb. 23

Retreat:

"WORK AS WORSHIP"



GFCers sing the Hallelujah Chorus at conclusion of an "All Worship Sunday" on December 31, 2017. (Stills from video by Fred Linger)

CIRCLE CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Social Night for the McKee group

In the fall of 2017 our congregation was divided into eight "circle churches." Each week after the hour of worship and teaching, we go to our circle groups throughout the building where we discuss the sermon, share prayer requests and pray for each other's concerns. Each circle church group also acts as a service group every 8 weeks covering nursery care, greeters, children's Sunday School, refreshments, etc. for that Sunday. There is also a "visitors' group" assigned each week. Here is what the McKee Circle Group recently did as a special "social night" activity.



Carol Miller surveys her potluck cherry pie goodies



Elise Nunn working on a gingerbread house



L to R: Heidi Judd, Susan Judd and Elise Nunn begin the house construction. Look no blueprints!



Front: (L to R) Kathy Barth, Manfred Adalem and Penny Foster work on a puzzle with "house builders" (L to R) Heidi Judd, Susan Judd and Elise Nunn at the back table

(The above photos were taken by Steve and Deb McKee)

Ministry to Havasupai Indians 2017

STEVEN PHILLIPS, DVM

It was the 34th (23rd for me) mission to Supai, AZ in November and a great joy that my son, Eric, and his wife, Ashley, could join me.

The seven veterinarians stayed moderately busy throughout both days. Even though the horse population was down by 50%, and there have been several other veterinary groups serving the community this year, we still tended to over 160 horses and mules and about 90 dogs and cats.

It was wonderful to see many of our Havasupai friends again. To kick off our stay, VCF provides the funds and the native church families prepare the food for a very large community turkey and ham dinner on Sunday night.

The St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church from Southern CA with the help of the other women in our group put together a women's luncheon which always forges new relationships and rekindles old friendships.

They also put together a fun afternoon of children's ministry, complete with pirate costumes and a treasure hunt for Scripture and pirate booty. We've never seen so many kids participate.

We had four Western University vet students and one instructor on the trip. The students performed surgeries under the careful eye of experienced clinicians. They were able to see first hand how veterinarians can live out their faith through their profession. The students incur no expenses on this trip as VCF covers them.

We were blessed with safety during the entire trip and with good weather. On each of the three nights there was a message given in the church along with praise music. We encouraged tribal members to attend and they were invited to eat with us each night as well.

Thanks to all who prayed for us this year. It seems the past few years that more and more of the tribal members are responding to our efforts to share God's love for them through service and God's truth. Pray for them to see His truth and be delivered from darkness into His marvelous light.



*Eric, Steve and Ashley Phillips
at the bottom of the Grand Canyon*

Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom	Pastor/Elder
Tom Kelby	Elder
Rick Widener	Elder
Rick Widener	Treasurer
Robert Key	Finance Committee Chairman
Kay Berry, & Karen Gates	Women
Dan & Karen Gates	Worship
Angel Vega	Dance
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Circle Church Serve Group	Greeters
Kathy Barth, Manfred & Janet Adalem	Communion
Andy Anschutz & John Paul DeWalt	Sound/PowerPoint
John & Donna Kurtz	TrailNotes
Lori Barker	Missions

*The steadfast love of the Lord
never ceases; His mercies
never come to an end; they are
new every morning; great is
Your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:22-23

May your 2018 be blessed!