

POINT GREY INTER-MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

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March 12, 2017

J. Evan Kreider - Giving (Part III)

Worship Leader:
Accompanist:

Andre Pekovich
Andre Pekovich

Music Leader:
Usher:

Angela Ruthven
Edward Epp

Last Sunday On the first Sunday of Lent, Thomas Bergen spoke on conformity to the message of the cross. The hymn of Cruciformity in Philippians 2:5-11 sets out the pattern that we need to understand God's power, love, faith and hope. Across the Apostle Paul's letters to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, we heard many Bible verses explain that Christ's costly obedience – even to death on a cross – is a model for us on how to humbly show love and have hope. May we live by the faith of/in the Son of God, who loved us by giving himself for us (Gal. 2:19-20). [KH]

Hear the message on your favourite browser at <https://pgimf.org/service/cruciformity/>

PGIMF News

March 19	Jonas Cornelsen	Lent III
March 26	J. Evan Kreider	Lent IV
April 2	Dr. Nasir Zaidi	Moral and Spiritual Messages of Jesus Christ in Islamic Resources
April 9	Laura Eriksson	Lent VI

Friday Group We'll meet on Friday, March 17, at 10:00 a.m. at the education building behind First Mennonite, 659 East 52 Ave. to continue our discussion of McLaren's book, The Great Spiritual Migration. All are welcome.

Abendmusik Tonight at **St. Philip's Anglican Church**, 3737 West 27th Avenue, Vancouver (note the location change!) All donations go to support the Menno Simons Centre.

Church retreat at Camp Luther Thank you to all the volunteers who have offered their help to put on the next church retreat at Camp Luther May 26-28. We're looking for a theme, activities and even more people to help put on the event. See Diane or Andre for more information.

Anabaptism: Beliefs and Practices. PGIMF offers a free 10 week course beginning Thursday, March 16 at 7:30 p.m. The class will meet weekly at the Menno Simons Centre. All are welcome. Class size is limited. Annika Krause will be the instructor. Contact Curtis Funk to reserve your place. See the flyer in your mailbox.

Wider Church

Regent College Two public lectures deal with the subject of the Reformer Martin Luther: Evangelical Mystic? as Reformation scholar Dr. Ron Rittgers explores the impact of Reformation doctrine and practice on early modern European culture and our world today. Two lectures on March 16th in the Chapel at Regent College - 11:zaam - 12:30 pm on Secularization through Solace, and the second from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm on Martin Luther as mystic. Free admission, all welcome.

RECORDING THE SERVICE

Please note that we now record the response time after the sermon. You are encouraged to share your thoughts as fully as you feel led with the proviso that no privacy can be guaranteed. The response time will not be posted to the website. You are encouraged to bring forth private issues during the time of sharing and prayer, which will continue to be not recorded.

Moderator—Curtis Funk (604-992-6913); *Worship*—J. Evan Kreider (604-228-1217);
Congregational Care— Lois Funk (604-992-8213); *Recording Secretary*--- Diane Ehling (604-904-1380);
Music—Ruth Enns (604-987-7430); *At Large*— Veronica Dyck (604-290-1627); Travis Martin (604-603-7843);
Finance — Janice Kreider; *Congregational Co-ordinator (bulletins)*—Andre Pekovich (604-879-0007)

West Point Grey "Lenten Prayer Series

Wednesdays at noon, for ½ hour, soup and bread lunch afterward (most weeks)

Lenten Prayer Vigils

March 15 - West Point Grey United Church, 4595 W. 8th Ave
Mar 22 - St. Helen's Anglican Church, 4405 W. 8th Ave
March 29 - Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, 4000 W. 11th Ave.
Apr 5 - West Point Grey Baptist Church, 4509 W. 11th Ave.

Women's Inspirational Day 2017 This year Marlene Kropf – author of the "Faith Travels" Bible Study Guide will walk us through an exploration of Lamentations 3:22-24 in a workshop entitled Who Am I Now? Trusting God In Life's Transitions. Cost: \$20 includes lunch, Saturday, May 6 from 10am-2:30pm (Sign-in & Coffee at 9:30am) at Emmanuel Mennonite Church (3471 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford). Register at the door or at: www.mcbc.ca/womens-ministry

MCBC AGM Resolutions Here is a summary of Resolutions from MCBC AGM that took place Saturday, February 25. All Resolutions presented in the AGM Booklet on pages 10-11 were carried with the following exceptions:

- Resolution #1 was amended then carried; the third bullet now reads: "that MCBC congregations will not appoint pastors or those in leadership positions who are in a same-sex relationship."
- Resolution #2 was defeated.

Messy Church WPG United invites you to join them for Messy Church Saturday MARth 18, 12:30 - 12:30 pm as they explore the Parable of the Sower through crafts, activities, songs and story. A Church experience of fun, fellowship and food for the whole family. Lunch included, everyone welcome - no experience necessary. At the WPGH United Church Hall (4595 W. 8th Ave., more info at www.wpguc.com

Announcing: SHOWCASE TALENT NIGHT AT MSC

March 24th, Friday evening coffee house talent SHOWCASE at Menno Simons Centre 8pm - 10 pm Calling performers and participants to a fun evening of entertainment and sharing at the Menno Simons Centre Chapel on Friday March 24 from 8pm - 10 pm. Members and friends of PGIMF and Menno Simons Centre are invited to share and showcase their talents with an opportunity to share a tune or song, or a poem, story, theatre or even a joke. Sign up with Doug or Curtis ahead of time, or just show up. Volunteers: Please let us know if you can help with setup and a bit of decorating, and coffee house type food and drinks. Contact: Doug Medley 604-328-2980 medley@shaw.ca or Curtis Funk 604-992-6913 chfunk4466

Genesis 12:1-4a

¹Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

⁴So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. [NRSV]

John 3:1-17

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. [NRSV]

Call to Worship

Psalm 121

Leader: ¹I lift up my eyes to the hills

People: from where will my help come?

Leader: ²My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

People ³He will not let your foot be moved;

Leader: he who keeps you will not slumber.

People: ⁵The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

Leader: ⁶The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

People: ⁷The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

Leader: ⁸The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

People: Amen

Giving in the Early Church

Acts 4:32-35 Enthusiastic giving in Jerusalem during the heady early days of Christianity

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them

all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet and it was distributed to each as any had need

Paul does fundraising for relief work for Christians suffering in Jerusalem

Acts 11:27-39

At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius [reigned 41-

54 A.D.] The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Now concerning the collection for the saints [*i.e.*, the Christians in Jerusalem]: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. 2On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you

earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. ³And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

2 Corinthians 8

¹We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; 2for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— ⁵and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, ⁶so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. ⁷Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

⁸I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the

genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something— ¹¹now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. ¹³I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between ¹⁴your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵As it is written, 'The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.'

2 Corinthians 8:6-12 Paul is specifically raising funds for the 'saints' in Jerusalem

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As

it is written [Psalm 112:9],

*He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever.*

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity [in order to follow the Law]; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Acts 20:35 (though Paul is on his way to Jerusalem, this may also be general advice)

In all this, I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord

Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' [apparently a saying of Jesus not included in Gospels].

Paul fundraising for his own missionary work

Philippians 4 Paul writes a thank-you letter for their financial support of his missionary work

¹⁰ I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. ¹²I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me. ¹⁴In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress.

¹⁵You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the

gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. ¹⁶For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once. ¹⁷Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. ¹⁸I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 9 Paul indirectly indicates that he is running low on funds, and that although “others” are getting support in Corinth, he is not - why not.

¹ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ²If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. ³ This is my defence to those who would examine me. ⁴Do we not have the right to our food and drink? ⁵Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? ⁶Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? ⁷Who at any time pays the expenses for doing military service? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not get any of its milk?

⁸ Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same? ⁹For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.’ Is it for oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever ploughs should plough in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop. ¹¹If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? ¹²If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. ¹³Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar? ¹⁴In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. [I am not able to find this in the Gospels, but it may have been understood by this time.]

¹⁵ But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that—no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting! ¹⁶If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe betide me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. [But is that really his point?]

Romans 12:6-8

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophesying, according to the word that is heard; teaching, according to the measure of our gift; exhorting, according to our faith; contributing, according to our ability; showing mercy, according to our kindness; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in cheerfulness.

An anonymous writer who calls himself “Paul” insists that Christians should first look after the essential needs of their impoverished relatives (early 2nd century)

1 Timothy 5:8

And whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.