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March 1, 2023

FAITH FAMILY FORUM II

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE



I've been doing a fair bit more thinking about the covenant that God has made with His people recently. I think about the heart of the covenant promise found in Exodus 6:7 and many other places: "I will be your God and you will be my people".

Pastor Karl Thompson This covenant promise, and all the other related covenant promises are given to us so that we will understand the faithful nature of our God. In reality, the promise does not make anything more sure, because there is nothing more sure than the character of God.

But these promises are a helpful condescension to our own weakness, making us more sure. The covenant promises put God's faithfulness on clear display for us, so that when we doubt, we can examine His promises and learn once again that He is faithful.

That is why, when we are overwhelmed with doubt and fear, we need to look to the Word of God and the promises given to us there. Then we will see the faithful nature of our God and know we can depend on Him.



Want to hear more from Pastor Thompson? His sermons are on the faithgp.org website and you can click here to see the <u>RECENT MESSAGES</u>

Recent Messages



Sanctification

Karl Thompson, 2/12/2023



Play (34 min)



The Atonement part 1

Wayne van Delden, 2/12/2023



Play (43 min)





Who is worthy of this kingdom?

Karl Thompson, 2/5/2023



Play (30 min)





Justified

Karl Thompson, 2/5/2023



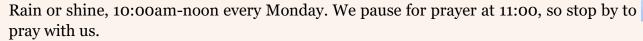
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STAND FOR LIFE

Every week is a new adventure. Observe first hand how those driving by respond to 'life of children' and reminders that God is the creator and sustainer of all. Occasionally some give encouraging waves and honks of their horns, but some responses not so honoring to the Lord. Hearts are challenged as the Holy Spirit works!

God creates life. Life is important to our Lord, so to it is to His beloved (us). How do we at Faith let the world know God's heart? Take time to join us next to the front of Planned Parenthood to pray and hold a sign proclaiming Truth about life and faith in our Lord!





Don't forget to set your clocks 1 hour ahead on March 12th

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

By Karl Thompson

I'm sure you have noticed the building project going on next door to the church. I have been watching them prepare the ground, build foundations, and recently they have started constructing the wood frame build-

ings. A lot of work is going into preparing a place for 150+ people to live. Next year at this time there will be over 150 people moving in next door. A genuine mission field moving in right next door to us.

As the builders are preparing for the people to move in, we should also be preparing to effectively reach out to our new neighbors. We are starting with prayer, and we will be bringing this issue to the Lord on a regular basis. We will be asking God to prepare those who are coming to hear the Word of God, and to prepare us to reach out



effectively. Then we will be brainstorming and experimenting with different ways to reach out. We have one year to be ready to minister to our new neighbors, so I encourage you to add this to your regular prayer items and seek the Lord's blessing on this ministry.

POOCH CORNER



Can you guess the owner of this little cutie? Read the hints and you can turn to the last page of the newsletter to find out who owns this feline*.

Cap'n Jack came to us on August 1st at 8 weeks of age. His older brother, Kirby, is 7. Kirby was not impressed by the kitten, but the kitten had no fear at all.

So we gave him a brave and hilarious name to match his personality. He is now 8 months old and spends most of his waking hours attacking mouse toys, or wrestling with Kirby, who has decided he isn't so bad after all.

*Look on the last page to see who's the owner of this adorable feline.

My Journey to Faith

By Kerry Goodwill

I grew up in a very moral home. My father was a Methodist minister but had decided that Jesus wasn't God, just a good moral teacher, and that God was in nature, so that is what I was taught. When I was about 10, my father started a Quaker Meeting. I would go every Sunday, sit in silence for an hour and wonder who this God I was supposed to be meditating on was. The only answer I got was that he was a good moral teacher.

During my growing up years, I also started taking Ballet lessons from a woman in the Quaker meeting. It was for my health, and I fell in love with the art.

When I graduated from high school and left for college, I stopped attending "church" because it wasn't relevant to me. I was busy with all the music classes at school and was also dancing 6-7 days a week during my sophomore and part of my junior years with the Marin Civic Ballet School and company.

I returned home after getting my BA in music education and began teaching piano for the local music store. My Ballet teacher had been forced to close her Ballet school, and I was soon being asked to teach Ballet by many of the local folks that had seen me dance. And so, I started teaching Ballet and soon had a school of almost 100 students with 3 teachers working for me and a Ballet company. It kept me very busy, and I loved it. I was able to do the Nutcracker Ballet with my students for about 6 years until I got married and stopped teaching full time.

During my time away at college, my Ballet teacher had been called by the Holy Spirit into God's family and as she was encouraging me with the Ballet school, she also began to talk to me about Jesus. Of course, I didn't agree with her, but I'm sure she was praying for me.

During this time, I became involved with the local drama group and was playing the part of Jossie, the sister of George M. Cohan in the musical story of his life. It was great fun, singing, dancing and acting. However, during this time my Mother was also battling cancer, and, unknown to me, had renewed her faith in Jesus as Lord. She died on opening night of the musical. But, before she died, she had asked my sister and myself to read Catherine Marshall's book *Beyond Ourselves*.

I will never forget that night in October when I finished reading it and finally realized I had all those questions from my youth answered. So, I asked God to take over my life, believing in Jesus as God, Savior and Lord. There was an immediate sense of a huge burden being taken off my shoulders and a desire to find a good church home, which I did.

When Christmas season came around a few months later, I found that all the Christmas carols I had been singing since I was 2 years old came to life in a totally new way. The words and truth about Jesus, and why we celebrate His birth all made sense. It was the most wonderful Christmas season I had ever had.

That was many years ago, but I still love the Christmas season and praise God for calling me into His family!



NEWS FROM RACHEL VANDER WALL

Dear Friends and Family,

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm sending this update to ask for your prayers as the Lord has opened the door for me to visit Nepal with my brother, Joshua, this coming March. We will spend the first two weeks together there, and I'll remain for an additional 12 days after he returns to Michigan. We will be spending time at a hospital that is part of a larger local organization, called SAHODAR, seeking to bring the Good News to the Ne-



My brother Joshua, his wife Chelsea, and I in Nepal in 2018.

pali people through medicine, education, and a local church. Please visit their website https://sahodaruk.weebly.com/ to learn more about their work.

In 2018, I visited a different region of Nepal where I was first introduced to SAHODAR, and I've been praying about the possibility of working with them long-term since then. Our goals for the visit include assessing short- and long-term methods to best support their outreach, specifically as the hospital seeks to expand its ability to care for the impoverished population in the area, assisting with education and training of hospital staff and local people, and joining with local believers in their worship and ministry.

Please pray that we would be able to have meaningful and God-glorifying interactions with patients and staff despite language barriers, that we would be a support and encouragement to believers in the community and in the local church, and that we would be an asset to the medical team as we come alongside them for this brief time. Most of all, please pray that as we've been given gifts and abilities to serve, we would be a blessing to God's people and bring glory and honor to Him (I Peter 4:10-11).

In Him,

Rachel Vander Wall

Expected costs for the trip will be about \$2,500. If you would like to financially partner, please visit https://faithlife.com/fopc-i/give, select the deacon's fund, write "For Nepal Mission" and include your mailing address in the Comments section; or you can mail a check to Faith OPC, 2033 Harbeck Rd, Grants Pass, OR 97527 and indicate "For Nepal Mission" in the memo line.





*Rachel will be leaving Oregon March 4th at 5am and will meet her brother (coming from Michigan) in Chicago. They will fly to Qatar (in the Middle East) then on to Kathmandu, then to Pokurah and another 4-5 hour drive to the hospital area. LONG TRIP. Rachel said it will probably be 30-40 hours of traveling.

GET YOUR PLANTS READY- GRANTS PASS AREA

Cold crops like **broccoli**, **cauliflower**, **and cabbage** can be direct seeded into your garden around March 29, assuming the ground can be worked, but it's better to start them indoors around March 1 and then transplant them into the garden around April 20. Do the same with **lettuce and spinach**.

Plant **onion starts and potatoes** around March 11. Sow the seeds of **peas** (sugar snap and English) at the same time. If the ground is still frozen, then plant these as soon as the ground thaws.

Do you want to grow **tomatoes**, **peppers**, **and eggplants**? Start these indoors around March 1. Then, around May 6 you should start watching the weather forecast and, as soon as no frost is forecast, go ahead and transplant those into the ground. May 15 is usually a decent date.

Now, for all the summer vegetables like **beans**, **cowpeas**, **corn**, **squashes**, **pumpkins**, **cucumbers**, **watermelons**, **gourds and sunflowers**, you should plant those seeds directly into the ground around May 10, or if your soil is still very cold, once the soil is near 60° F in temperature. Having said that, we note that your location has a shorter than average growing season. Many summer vegetables need more days to mature than your area will provide. For that reason, we recommend you get a head-start by starting these summer vegetables indoors around April 20, and transplant those seedlings out after the danger of frost is past.

The National Gardening Association

GOOD FRIDAY MUSICAL PROGRAM Friday, April 7th at 7:00pm

Come and worship with other churches, sing, and listen to a wonderful musical program put together by Kerry Goodwill and the Faith OPC Choir

TEACHABLE MOMENT By Karl Thompson

Parents are told to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). In past columns I have reminded you that the nurture is the positive encouragement and the admonition is the necessary correction. Remember, they need to be encouraged toward the right and warned away from the wrong.

But, the very heart of the nurture and admonition of the Lord is their need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When wrong, they need to be corrected away from that wrong, and toward the right. But the process repentance is never primarily about a change of behavior- It is primarily about a change of relationship.

When we repent, we turn from rebellion toward God. Our main goal with our children is not to turn them toward better behavior, but to turn them toward Christ, and His saving work. Same also with the nurture. Good deeds done for the sake of being good will never please the Lord (Hebrews 11:66).

When we encourage our children toward the good, it starts with a heart that is fixed on pleasing God and a knowledge of our dependence on Christ's saving work for any real good to actually be accomplished. That is why we need to be constantly brining our children to the cross of Christ and calling them to rest in His redeeming grace.

Pascal's Proposition



Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a Frenchman, a child prodigy taught by his father; he gained fame as an inventor, scientist, physicist, mathematician, writer, and philosopher. Today his name means a unit of pressure, a computer language, and more.

He was a believer, a Jansenist, which was then a new sect within the Roman Catholic faith; they were strict Augustinians and stressed predestination, sin's seriousness, and a complete dependence on God's grace. Although close to Calvinist beliefs, Jansenists were firm Roman Catholics. However, Pascal and the Jesuits were at odds because of his Jansenist views. Reason was the fashionable philosophy of the Enlightenment in France in the 17th century. In

the *Pensées*, which means *thoughts*, Pascal presents his famous argument for faith: the wager. Since reason cannot give one absolute certainty, he argued, every person must risk belief in something. Either God exists or He does not. Everyone must wager. When it comes to the Christian faith, he said, a wise person will gamble on it because, "If you win, you win everything; if you lose, you lose nothing." In essence, faith is the basis for believing in God, not reason, which is insufficient for belief in God.

Belief comes through the "heart," which for Pascal was not merely feelings and sentiment but the intuition that understands without having to use reason. God's grace is what makes it happen: "Do not be surprised at the sight of simple people who believe without argument. God makes them love him and hate themselves. He inclines their hearts to believe. We shall never believe with a vigorous and unquestioning faith unless God touches our hearts; and we shall believe as soon as he does so."

Pascal also posed the problem of for whom Christ died. He theorized there are four possibilities. I will number them for ease of reference although the order is mine. #1 Christ died for all the sins of all men. #2 Christ died for all of the sins of some men. #3 Christ died for some of the sins of all men. #4 Christ died for none of the sins of any man.

For purposes here, I will use Scripture as the basis for proving or eliminating each of the above. While there are many possible Scriptures that could be used, for the sake of brevity, I will use only one or two references. Let's begin.

#1 is universalism; everyone will be saved. Their primary argument is that a loving God would not send some people to Hell forever. It has a long history starting with Origen in the 3rd century. Today in the US the Unitarian Universalist Association (1961) holds these beliefs. However, Matthew 25:31-46 makes it pretty clear that some will go to everlasting fire and punishment. So #1 is not Scriptural and is eliminated.

Similarly #4 is eliminated by the same passage since the righteous go to eternal life. Thus we can see that Christ's death was efficacious for some but not all. Who believes #4 today? Atheists and those religions that deny Christ and His substitutionary atonement fall into this camp.

Now we are down to #2 and #3; the question is how the two groups, the saved and unsaved, are determined. The Bible teaches that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3;23) and that sin separated man from God (Gen 3:24). It also tells us that Christ came to save sinners (I Tim 1:15) and that they are identified as His people (Matt 1:21). So, how much sin has to be atoned for? James 2:10 gives us a clue, all of it. And Colossians 2:13 tells us believers are forgiven of all trespasses. Thus, #3 is insufficient for salvation, so that leaves only #2, Jesus died for all the sins of some people. We Calvinists call it limited atonement. Praise God for saving some.

The good will of God is, oftentimes, best seen and appreciated in hindsight. Ron

was born in North Dakota. Leanne was born in Minnesota. How were they to meet and begin life together? Easy, the families move to California!



Church always played a part in their lives.

Leanne, whose father was a Lutheran Pastor,

absorbed and appreciated liturgical worship with historical hymns, written prayers and Bible-based preaching. Ron's family, attended First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood with Rev. Lloyd John Ogilvie serving as pastor. Both participated in their church's music programs including the handbell choir.



Off to college both went, attending California Lutheran in Thousand Oaks. Founded in 1959 it is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Both were active in choir and band. In addition to studies, both became interested in one another. Somewhere along the way Ron realized that he needed to get serious about the Person of Jesus Christ. He confessed Christ as Savior at 20. While Leanne, growing up in His Church, always knew her Redeemer and confessed Him as such. She was confirmed. She graduated in 1986 with a BA in Math, Science and Physics. They were married on June 14, 1986. In 1989 Ron graduated with a degree in Political Science.

The necessity of finances found Ron earning income in broadcasting, with a format of Jazz and Show tunes. Leanne greatly enjoyed her work at NCR, greatly enjoying the early days of computer graphics. Ron began to work in Orange County (OC), CA politics serving as an advisor to various individuals. At the time, OC served as the hub and influence of Conservative political thought and action. Two daughters, Tianna and Ariel were born. Their education, Biblical and meaningful education brought homeschooling to the forefront. That also brought them to cross paths with Richard and Kathleen Emmons. A lot of uncertainty revolved around Y2K. Simply wanting to move out of the concrete, highly populated society in which they were living was used by the Master Mover as a catalyst to moving out of Southern California. The Emmons had already moved and so, now, in 1998, did the Stroms. They were not convinced that Grants Pass was their destination as they looked at various options heading north. The Lord granted peace and they settled in Josephine County.

Initially, they attended, getting very involved, at Jerome Prairie Bible Church. They home schooled their

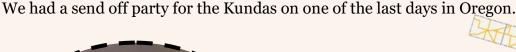
(Continued on page 8)

daughters, and desired a closer fellowship with other like-minded parents. This led to the development of the Grants Pass Household of Faith Church where they attended from 2007-2019. Both were greatly involved there with many other homeschooling families. Ron, serving as an Elder, would regularly teach and preach there. The Church family was very involved in developing their children's opportunities in music, drama, debate, oratory skills. Their daughters were homeschooled through graduation. Both, still living in Grants Pass, are now married, each having two children. While Leanne was primarily responsible for the education of their daughters, Ron began to work at World Net Daily in 1999 providing the necessary income to live.

In 2003, they sold their house to a family moving to town from out of State. Today, we know that house as the home of our Pastor and family, the Thompsons.

They greatly enjoy genealogy, primarily studying their family's history. Leanne has developed an entire wall in their living room of charts and familial information on their family going back six generations. They are thankful that daily they can acknowledge God and His Word as special and vital to their lives. Their desire is for others to know and enjoy Christ and His Word as well. "Our transition to Faith OPC has been good." I add, good for them and for us.

LEAVING OREGON FOR OKLAHOMA





WHAT'S ON THE CHURCH WEBSITE



On the main page of our <u>website</u> near the bottom is an updated calendar of events. You can find out what's happening when and you don't even need to be logged in or be a member.

Watch Live—Sunday worship service is listed here, both morning and evening.

Messages—Pastor Thompson's sermons can be found here.

Ministries—All information about men, women, and youth ministries are on this page.

Visitors —What we believe.

About Us —This page is devoted to our leaders in the church.

Giving—You can tithe to the general fund, deacon's fund, or to the building fund.

Members—This link will take you to our church directory, the bulletin and announcements, our library, and many other member only treasures. If you have trouble logging in please contact Linda Gay.

Calendar—Clicking on this link will show our church google calendar a month at a time.

Church Yearly Calendar—Just a listing of the events for our church in a year.

Newsletter—You can look at old newsletters and current, download or view online.

2023 Bible Reading Plan—This year and next we will be going through the Bible chronologically, download the weekly list.

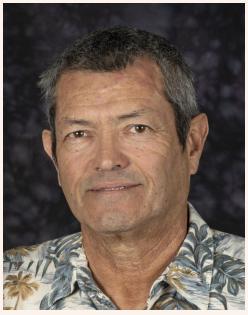
Every once in awhile someone will challenge to you to find an error site to look as good as possible and Linda Gay.



catch an error on our website...so it's a and point it out to me. I want our webyour help is always appreciated.



NEWLY INSTALLED DEACON—TOM VELASQUEZ



Thomas (Tom) was raised in Shafter, California. He was baptized as an infant and later confirmed at age 14 at the local Roman Catholic church which he attended during his youth. While in high school, Tom would meet his future forever wife Cindy. Upon graduation from high school, Tom and Cindy continued to see each other when Tom was on leave and communicated through letters (before the days of email!). In March 1981, they were married in Shafter's Ebenezer Reformed Church (RCUS), where Cindy attended. Tom received instruction on the Reformed Doctrine and became a member at that time.

After discharge from the Navy, Tom and Cindy, along with their infant daughter, Jacqueline, moved to Vallejo, California. They would travel to Novato to attend the Trinity OPC being pastored at that time by Rev. Richard Miller. After a couple of years in the Bay Area, they returned to Shafter and the Reformed Church. Their daughter Jacqueline would

blater be joined by brothers, Matthew, Zane and Jakob, all of whom were baptized and confirmed in the bReformed church. In addition to their four children, they now have six grandchildren.

In the early 1990s, Tom became more involved in their church, teaching children's Sunday School and later becoming the Sunday School Superintendent. Tom was ordained as a deacon in 2002 and continued as deacon through 2018. After his retirement in 2019, Tom and Cindy moved to Grants Pass and transferred their membership to Faith OPC in 2020.

On February 26 we had our Annual Congregational Meeting and a paper ballot voting for elder and deacon. The vote was 51 and 1 abstention. Frode will continue as elder and Tom Velasquez will be deacon for three years. We are thankful to the Lord for these men.

COMING UP

March 5 Fellowship Meal

March 11 7am—Men's Breakfast

March 12 & 26-Choir Rehearsal

March 24 5pm-Spaghetti and Game Night

March 27 6pm-Men's Meeting

April 7 7pm Good Friday Musical

April 20-22--Ladies Retreat

10am Monday—Stand for Life

10am—Tuesday—Ladies Bible Study

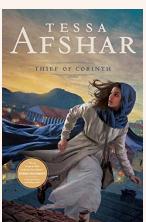
6:30pm—Tuesday Night Book Study

Youth Night—2nd & 4th Wednesday

6:30pm—Thursday Bible Study (3rd Thurs-6pm*)

*6pm—Thursday Food and Devotion night

FROM THE LIBRARY



Thief of Corinth **By Tessa Afshar**



January 1, 2023 Frode rated it 4 stars
Goodreads review by Frode Jensen
This book is available in the church library

Oh, wheels within wheels on this one. The author must have had a headache to keep it all straight. It was an enjoyable read. I liked the setting; Tessa Afshar did a good job on Corinthian housing and the various foods and some of the trends in clothing, fads we call them. The plot is convoluted; I liked that. The characters were realistic and all were hiding something; these things unravel slowly throughout the course of the book.

The family was a mess; we would say today that they were dysfunctional, all of them. The parents are divorced. Dad lives in Corinth; mom lives in Athens. There are three children, two boys and a girl. The older boy is Dionysius; he is quite bright, a Stoic logician and rising in the ranks in Athens. The other two are younger and the same age. Theodotus is a foundling; Ariadne is a legitimate child, but the two are like brother and sister and initially enjoy one another very much. They run off to Corinth together to be with Galenos, the dad. Justus is a neighbor, a champion charioteer and a straightforward kind of fellow although it turns out he has a secret also.

Ariadne is the principle character. She is full of herself, thinks she is right and knows what is best for others and herself. She sort of breaks a societal rule in a sense by competing in the Isthmian games as a sprinter. Women aren't supposed to be athletic unless one is a Spartan. Ariadne loves to run, and she is very good at it; she is a good athlete. While it is an asset, it also allows her to use her talents in unsavory ways, which creates some unfortunate circumstances.

The Biblical characters are few. Paul of Tarsus shows up about two-thirds of the way through the book. He is a bit player; Silas accompanies him on one occasion, and at one point Priscilla has a few lines to say. Tessa weaves in some theology without it being overly preachy. There is a miracle of healing, but the rest is pretty straightforward in philosophical and religious discussions. These are usually short but direct.

To say more about the plot and the unraveling of all the secrets would be to spoil the book. It is a good book to give to folks who like Biblical fiction, or even unbelievers who like historical fiction. This is the fifth book by Tessa Afshar that I have read, and I will likely read another here and there. She writes well, and this story was pretty engaging. It would be a great book for a church library.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tessa was born in the Middle East and lived there for the first fourteen years of her life. She then moved to England, where she survived boarding school for girls, before moving to the United States permanently. Her conversion to Christianity in her twenties changed the course of her life forever. Tessa holds a master of divinity from Yale University, where she served for one year as co-chair of the Evangelical Fellowship at the Divinity School. She worked in women and prayer ministries for nearly twenty years before becoming a full-time writer. Tessa is a devoted wife, mediocre gardener, and chocolate enthusiast. Visit her online at Tessaafshar.com.

FAITH 2023 BIBLE ACADEMY

The session has decided to do a chronological approach to the Bible reading this year.

You will be given a chart each week. It will be on the church website, www.faithgp.org, sent via email, and printed off and on the table in the foyer each Sunday. The reading will begin in the Old Testament this year at the very beginning, Genesis 1. Using this plan we will not get through the Bible this year. The reading will consist of about a chapter per day except for Sundays. Sunday will be a review day; you will not have to read anything but your chart. The session is asking you not only to read the Bible but also to react to it. The goal is to get you to think a little about what you are reading. You will find space to write on the chart; we are asking you to do two things; see below.

You will be asked to generate a short thought about the reading, probably 15 words or less will fit in the space given. It can be a summary, a reflection, whatever you decide. For instance, let's say you were asked to read Leviticus 25. It is relatively long being 55 verses, and it covers a lot of material: the Sabbath year, the year of the jubilee, and the redemption of property and of the poor and enslaved in that year. You could make a summary statement about content. It covered the Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee. You could reflect on the chapter's content. God gave them specific rules for redeeming property and people. The 50 year redemption is a shadow of Christ's ultimate redemption. I don't think the jubilee system would work today. You might even ask a question? How would this affect investing in property in year 48? The point is to get you to think a bit about what you have read.

The second thing you are asked to do is copy a verse you like. You are not asked why you liked it. Just pick a verse you happen to like for whatever reason and copy it down with the reference, V14 for instance. Sundays are review days. Again, you are asked to write two things. First, look at your chart and make some sort of statement about the reading for the week. Second, pick one of the six verses you had previously copied down. Write this verse in the review section and think about and maybe even jot a note as to why you picked it. At the last Sunday evening service of the month, we will talk about your review items, 1st week, 2nd week and so forth. It would be helpful for you to bring your sheets with you to that service. This is an experiment. We think it will take about 15 minutes or so per day to read and fill in the chart. After a time, maybe a couple of months, we will take a bit of time for evaluation of the process. Our desire is to get you involved with your Bible on a daily basis. If you have some other reading plan already in place with which you are comfortable and believe is profitable for you, that's fine; you can continue to follow that in lieu of what we are proposing.

*Pooch Corner— This sweet cat, Cap'n Jack belongs to Keith and Sonja Anderson.

A lot of care, time, and effort went into the publishing of this newsletter and we would love to hear your comments, recommendations, and thoughts. Drop us a line at:

office.faithopc.gp@gmail.com

Special thank you to the proof readers, Marylou Hansen and Frode Jensen. Also thank you to those that took photos and Sarah Young our new church photographer.

