

May 20, 2018



# THE NORTHWESTER

## News and Notes

### Guest Preacher

Our guest preacher today is Jerry Taylor, who has been in Chicago leading the Racial Unity Leadership Retreat. Jerry is a professor in the Department of Bible and Ministry at Abilene Christian University. Welcome to Jerry, his wife, Pat, his daughter Alisha, and his son Jeremiah.

### Fellowship Lunch

Our monthly fellowship lunch is today after Sunday School. Visitors are welcome to join us for a great time of fellowship and food.

### Graduation Announcements

Harding If you or someone in your family is graduating from any level of education, let *Diana Allen* or *Liz Motyka* know so we can recognize your accomplishments!

### POLAR BLAST VBS: Jesus will always love you

Mark you calendars for VBS! This year it will be Saturday, **July 14**, from 9:30-3:00 and Sunday, **July 15**, from 11-11:45. It will be the coolest activity this summer! On Saturday we will have Bible stories, games, crafts, and lunch for ages 2-teens. And join us for worship on Sunday at the regular times and a special VBS celebration during class time.

### VBS Supplies Needed

Clean, empty milk jugs are being collected for VBS. See *Jana Kalkowski* for more details.

### VBS Help Wanted

If you would like to help with VBS in any way, please email [Cathy](#) or [Laura](#).

## Gathering Times

### Sunday

Worship (English, Korean)	9:30 AM
Bible Study (All)	11:00 AM
Worship (Spanish)	12:00 PM
Worship (English)	4:00 PM

### Wednesday

Bible Study (All)	7:30 PM
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## Upcoming Events

### May

**20** Fellowship Lunch — 12 PM

**Welcome to Northwest!** We're glad you're here today. If you're a visitor, please consider yourself an honored guest.

Please feel free to join in worship this morning to whatever extent you feel comfortable. Please fill out a visitors' card and put it in the offering plate so we can have a record of your visit.

[Sermons are available online.](#)

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## Servants

### Help Wanted!

We need volunteers every Sunday to work in our **food pantry** from 1:00 - 3:30.

[Sign up Here](#)

### Winston Manor

5/20/18 Clarence Thrasher

5/27/18 Perry Littrell, Van Wilson,  
Kwaku Osebreh

5/13/18 Noel Martinez, Rene Torres

### Help Wanted - Communion Prep

Can you prepare communion before the 9:30 worship service?

[Sign Up for a Sunday Here](#)

## Last Sunday

Sunday School

AM Worship

PM Worship 9

Wednesday PM 30

Offering

Regular \$3,631.10

Budget \$5,205.00

## Online Directory

[Click here for the online church directory.](#) See *Patrick* if you need the password.

## Worship Gathering

### 9:30 AM

Singing: Rawn Reinhard

### We Worship Together

663 *There Is Sunshine in My Soul*

44 *Anywhere Is Home*

*Heaven's Road*

Responsive Reading — Joel 2:28-32

288 *I Need Thee Every Hour*

225 *Heaven Holds All to Me*

*I Will Rise*

### We Hear the Word of the Lord

Reading: Dan Allen — Philippians 1:15-26

Sermon: Jerry Taylor — *Life's True Purpose*

*This Little Light of Mine*

**Prayer for the Needs of the Church:** Dan Allen

### We Come to the Table

*Lord I Need You*

Communion Meditation: Rich Byham

Table: Kwaku Osebreh, Jim Gunter, Tom Rucker, Mike Thrasher

**Offering and Announcements:** Dan Allen

### We Go Out As Witnesses

*Will the Circle Be Unbroken?*

Prayer: Edison Kannakai

### 4:00 Worship

Singing: Matt Bain

Opening Prayer: Alan Bain

Meditation: Perry Littrell

Closing Prayer: Josh Odum

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## Patrick's Points

*If God says something is acceptable, don't say it isn't.*

*-Acts 10:15 (The Message)*

Grace is great to experience. It's wonderfully liberating to know that God forgives us and accepts us just as we are. It's thrilling to realize that our sins don't make us too vile for God to love, and that he loves us enough to wear flesh and carry a cross and enter a tomb to save us. It's a blessing to know that we are not judged on the basis of our faults. It frees us to forget the past and push on toward the future that God has promised us.

It's wonderful to experience grace from another person, too. You know what I mean if you've experienced the forgiveness of an offended friend, the unconditional love of a spouse, or the admiring gaze of a child who thinks you can do no wrong. Another human being can give us no greater blessing than the assurance that they love us in spite of our frailties, that they believe in us in spite of our failures, and that they don't judge us on the basis of faults.

Grace is wonderful to talk about. Everyone loves John 3:16. The spark of the Reformation was Martin Luther's rediscovery that we don't have to lift ourselves to heaven with our own bootstraps. Christians throughout the ages have rejoiced in the Bible's insistence that Jesus came to save the wicked, not congratulate the righteous. And the church has long benefited from reminders that we are to be instruments of grace to the poor and undeserving of our world.

Yes, grace is inspiring to talk about and wonderful to experience.

Giving it, however, is another story.

To show mercy, forgiveness, generosity, and acceptance to someone who you'd normally cross the street to avoid is difficult. The difficulty of it was driven home to me once in a conversation with an Afro-American brother in Christ. We were discussing the state of race relations in the church in our city, and he gave me an insight into the problem. Talking about his pre-Christian life, he said to me very matter-of-factly, "I would just as soon have seen a white man's head where his feet were." At least he owned up to his struggle. I have a hard time even doing that.

Maybe you find yourself struggling with prejudice toward one race or another. Maybe it's contempt for the poor that prevents you from showing God's grace toward them. Maybe your moral outrage over sin obscures your love for sinners. Maybe your sectarian dogma won't allow you to reach beyond your own circle to find brothers and sisters in Christ.

Or maybe it's more personal. You have trouble showing forgiveness to the wife that's hurt you. You're consumed with bitterness for the parents who failed you. You're full of criticism for the church that's let you down. You're angry with the friend that's disappointed you, or the person who's used you.

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Don't deny it, now. Go ahead and own up to it. There are people to whom showing grace seems distasteful. You can think up all kinds of reasons to justify it, but only one really explains it. You don't like those people, and it galls you that God could love them just as they are.

Well, you aren't alone. Grace, quite frankly, is too big for all of us. We all run up against people who seem undeserving of the love of God. For Peter, it was the Gentiles. In his experience, God's people had always been the Jews. Being right with God was defined by such things as circumcision, the keeping of the Law, and worship in the temple. It went without saying, then, that God's grace was only extended to them. Certainly not to pagans.

For us, it might be people who don't go to church, or who don't believe in God, or who flaunt their sexuality or their hedonism or their selfishness. Maybe it's immigrants we don't care for; maybe it's people who don't care for immigrants. Maybe it's a particular economic group or political party. "Surely God hates them as much as I do," we tell ourselves. Because it rationalizes the prejudices we already hold.

[Peter had his thinking straightened out over lunch](#), from a menu that was completely unacceptable according to Jewish food laws. "Have something to eat," said a voice. Peter, no doubt thinking it was some kind of test, said, "No way." It was indeed a test, and Peter flunked. "If God says something is acceptable, Peter, then who are you to say it isn't?"

But God wasn't really interested in getting Peter to change his eating habits. So as soon as Peter had his preconceptions challenged, [God put a Gentile right in his path](#). He had the chance to try out this new, broader definition of grace immediately on a Roman army officer named Cornelius. And it sounds like Peter got the idea. He said of Cornelius and his family, "If God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

I'm guessing God will challenge you, too. I'm betting that if you'll seek his heart, like Peter was doing, your definition of grace will be stretched, too. I imagine that, one by one, God will start to pick at the walls that keep you from offering his grace to that person or this person. And likely, he'll do it in you just like he did it in Peter. He'll put you face to face with one of the people that you struggle to love, and challenge you to love him.

You'll make mistakes. Peter did. Given a little pressure from others who shared his old prejudice, [he found himself sitting at the "Jews-only" table](#). It took some pretty strong words by a guy named Paul to make him see that he was rebuilding the walls Jesus had torn down.

Own up to your prejudices, admit the walls in your heart, and go along with God's work of tearing them down. Seek opportunities to serve exactly the people who you resist serving. Otherwise, you'll stubbornly refuse to hold out grace to those you don't deem acceptable, forgetting that God could have legitimately put the same label on you.

Come to the table of grace. You'll be amazed at who you'll find yourself dining with.

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## Prayer Requests

**New Requests and Updates** (Please don't forget to give updates to Diana Allen.)

*Carlos Estrada's* brother-in-law, *Ricardo Amador*, is in the hospital in Honduras with a perforated lung and damaged large intestine. He asks for prayers for Ricardo and his family.

Please pray for the *McManus* family in the loss of their son, *Brian*. *Brian's* sister, *Lauren*, is a former classmate of *Josh Odum*.

*Wayne Mitchell* is thankful that his sister is doing better and he also asks that we pray for a second job prospect and his upcoming court date on June 13th.

*John Mudloff* is recovering from surgery.

*Celina Turman* asks that we pray for her mother, who has been in the hospital for blood pressure. Celina also asks that we pray for her as she returns home for the summer.

### Ongoing Concerns

Sister *Tomasa Agosto* needs our prayers due to her health issues.

*Dan Allen's* aunt, *Willa Cott-Meissel*, has a tumor on her leg and will need radiation therapy.

*Brother Baker*, a resident at Winston Manor, has asked for general prayers for Booker T. Houser and family, the Lotts, the Burns, the Taylors, and the Schafers.

*Don Ballarini* asks that we pray for his brother, *Ronald*, who is suffering from dementia and other health problems.

*Hillary Beata* asks that we keep *Rachel*, a member of her parent's church, in our prayers. She is a young mother who was just diagnosed with cancer.

*Wilma Brumley* is grieving the loss of her son, *Daniel*.

*Elida Cano* is still fighting cancer.

*Jess Cobb*, *Patrick Odum's* cousin, is recovering from quadruple bypass.

*Ranae Collins* asks that we remember her uncle in our prayers due to his health problems.

*Richard Cooper* has asked that we continue praying for the brethren in Guinea.

*Jennifer Duff's* sister, *Judy Duff*, is still fighting cancer. Jennifer's mother also has some health concerns.

*Carlos Estrada's* friend, *Madeline Badea*, has a degenerative bone disease.

*Barbara Foucher's* cousin, *Jonathan Williams*, has been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis.

*Maria Fuentes*, who lives at Winston Manor, is dealing with severe pain in her back and side.

*Jan Gunter*, *Jim's* wife, needs some radiation therapy.

*Darrell Hutchens* has moved to Manteno Veterans' Home, Room 423 West, One Veterans Drive, Manteno, IL 60959. Cards are appreciated and visits are welcome.

*Irma Rae* from Winston Manor asks that we pray for issues in her life.

*Perry Littrell's* brother-in-law, *Joel Dallas*, has three bulging disks in his back.

*Martha Lucunza*, a dear friend of *Susan Thrasher's*, is going through treatments for bone cancer.

*Mary Lynn*, friend of a resident at the Oak Park Nursing Home, has a leg that needs healing.

*Mervin Manzanares*, minister in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, is receiving treatment for his abdominal pain.

*Maria* from Winston Manor asks that we pray for her daughter and granddaughter.

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*Linda McNeal* is coping with dizziness and other medical issues.

*Linda McNeal's* husband has some health problems.

*Maria McNeal*, *Linda's* mother-in-law, broke her hip.

*Jay Min* asks for prayers regarding his mother's diabetes.

*Wayne Mitchell* asks that we pray for his court date, which was rescheduled for June 13th. He also asks that we pray for his brother, whose wife passed away recently, and his sister's health problems.

*Gus Ramirez*, a friend of the *Thrasher* family, has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

*Marge Reavis* asks that we continue to pray for her brother, *Jim*, who has cancer, and her brother, *Rick*, who needs to rebuild his strength to be able to have heart surgery. Marge also asks that we pray for her living situation and a recent car accident.

*Anabel Rice* is dealing with lupus.

*Celeste Rucker's* father, *Bob Konczal*, is struggling with chronic pain due to scoliosis and arthritis in the lower spine and hip.

*Celeste Rucker's* mom, *Barbara Konczal*, is struggling with chemotherapy side effects in her battle with cancer.

*Tom Rucker's* aunt, *Sally Rucker-Dobbs*, is recovering from a recent stroke.

*Tom Rucker's* best friend's niece, *Katie Fearer*, has a large mass in her shoulder, lungs, and spine, and is waiting to be admitted to a cancer center in Houston. Her father, *Zane*, was in a bicycle accident and has multiple injuries, which has left him with no use of his arms. Please keep *Katie*, *Zane*, and their family in your prayers during this very difficult time.

*Vicki Sebela*, *Laura Odum's* cousin, is still recovering from eye surgery, diabetic retinopathy, and breast cancer.

*Herb Sherrod*, a former member at Northwest, is in the process of obtaining a new kidney so he can go off dialysis.

*Mary Smith's* cousin, *Jim*, fell and broke his hip during physical therapy. *Jim's* brother, *Stan Thompson*, had a stroke recently.

*Mary Smith's* friend's father, *John Brecht*, has prostate cancer that has spread.

*Mary Smith's* son-in-law, *Jay Kijer*, has heart problems and pulmonary edema.

*Mike Thrasher* needs prayers for continued guidance and direction in his life and with his Tourette's and OCD.

*Eugene Urbaszewski*, *Celeste Rucker's* uncle, has been diagnosed with a form of liver disease.

*Liz Van-Klingerin/Sumner*, *Clarence Thrasher's* sister, has a leaky aortic valve and may need surgery.

*Johnny Vera* asks for prayers for his family, health, and relationship problems.

*Cynthia Webster*, *Barbara Foucher's* sister, is in rehab recovering from a coronary. She is also dealing with kidney and immune system problems brought on by lupus.

*Calbert Williams* asks that we continue to pray for his struggles with diabetes, blood pressure, and mild chest pains.

*Daniel Williamson*, *Miriam Williamson's* husband, needs our prayer for recovery from his health problems.

*Willie*, a resident of the *Winston Manor Nursing Home*, has cataracts and glaucoma.

*Bill Wooten*, *Evelyn's* brother, has pancreatic cancer.