

# FILL IN THE **BLANKS**

From your weekly memory verses. (All verses are from the NKJV.)

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is \_\_\_\_\_, he cannot see the \_\_\_\_\_.’” John 3:3

“That which is \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_, and that which is born of the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.” John 3:6

“Do not \_\_\_\_\_ that I said to you, ‘You must be \_\_\_\_\_.’” \_\_\_\_\_ 3:7

“And as \_\_\_\_\_ lifted up the \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, even so must the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ be lifted up.” John 3:14 ✧



**2:00 to 4:00 PM**  
**21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019**  
**SATURDAY**

**JOIN THE FUN!**

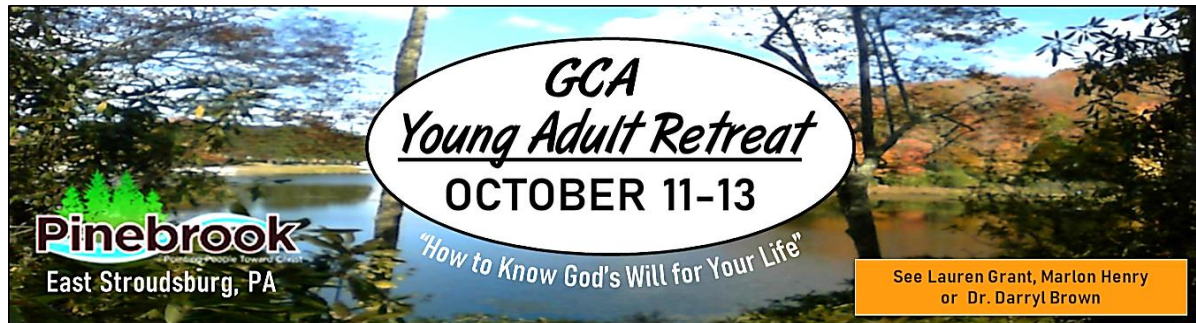
Sponsored by  
**The GCA Sunday School**

**Bowling**

**The Big Event**  
 Entertainment Experience

1536 North Kings Highway  
 Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

**Cost is \$10 per person**  
 which includes 2 hours of bowling,  
 shoe rental, pizza and unlimited soda!



**GCA**  
**Young Adult Retreat**  
**OCTOBER 11-13**

**Pinebrook**  
 East Stroudsburg, PA

*“How to Know God’s Will for Your Life”*

See Lauren Grant, Marlon Henry  
 or Dr. Darryl Brown



**June 29<sup>th</sup> Free Paper Shredding Event**

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September 2019  
 Volume 7, Issue 3

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# GCA Reflections

Quarterly Newsletter of Germantown Christian Assembly



## An Extraordinary Week at Word of Life Camps!

By Lorita Grant  
 Youth Ministry

On August 11th, fourteen GCA teens and eight Bible Club teens travelled to beautiful Schroon Lake, New York. The middle school students enjoyed an amazing week at The Wild and the high school students boarded boats for Word of Life Island. We are grateful for our drivers who sacrificed their time to help make this possible. In addition to all the fun activities, the Word of God was delivered in an intentional way multiple times each day. The goal of Word of Life is to take each camper to a higher level spiritually. A few of the teens received the Lord as their Savior and several ‘threw their stick in the fire’ as a public profession of rededication (I give my whole life to God for whatever He wants!). It is safe to say that the teens had a memorable time at camp for many of them are already talking about next year! We thank the Lord for all of His blessings that week and we also thank Word of Life ministries for continuing to pour Jesus into young people through their camps (Nick, my husband, was a teen camper there). **Thank you GCA for your prayers and support!!**

*Continues on page 3.*

The Purpose of this Newsletter

This ministry newsletter is intended to support the vision of the church—to be Christ-centered, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to build lives that glorify and worship God by emphasizing the Word, Evangelism, Discipleship and Caring for the whole man. We hope this newsletter will play an important role in encouraging the members of our assembly to fearlessly stand closer together, for the cause of the gospel of Christ.



GCA Reflections is published quarterly for the members and friends of GCA.

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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in each of the articles herein are those of each individual author or contributor and not necessarily those held by the GCA Reflections Staff or GCA leadership.

Each issue will be available on the GCA website under "News & Events".

A special thank you to all who contributed to this issue of GCA Reflections.



**Graduate Gerardine Elie's Response:**

Good morning, church family and graduates! I have to say I was honestly not at all prepared to deliver a speech to you all today. Yet here I am. I had about four days to construct a speech and I kept asking what on earth am I going to say. I had so many thoughts going through my head. It was not until at choir rehearsal that I heard the two phrases that inspired me, "My help cometh from the Lord" and "Thank you, Lord." The song, 'My Help' basically quoted from Psalm 121:1-2 says "I will lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord..."

Now, I do not know about the rest of you graduates but I know that I would not have made it this far without the help of my GCA family and more



importantly, the help of our heavenly Father. That degree or diploma you and I received or will receive was given to us by the grace of God through our faith in God. God ordered our steps through those tough classes and He guided our hands as we wrote that paper. You know, that huge, final paper you did not think you could write. Through our faith in Him, He allowed us to overcome our challenges. James 2:18 says "But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

The second phrase I thought of was "Thank You, Lord". I find myself saying, Thank you, Lord, for this church and the members whom You have placed in my life. GCA feels like a home jam-packed with so many people who have become my extended family; sisters, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles and cousins. I am never afraid to be home. Even after absences, whether short-term or extended, GCA makes you feel like you had never left when you return. Home is a safe place to be whether you're feeling discouraged, heartbroken or just going through a tough time. You can always come home and find someone who will listen to you, offer advice or just give you a shoulder to cry on.

*Continues on page 3.*

*Rededication Reflections 2019*

By Pastor Brian Grant



Good morning everyone. Welcome to our special rededication service (July 21).

Today marks a significant milestone in our journey of faith; a journey that began 46 years ago when the newly established GCA rented space at both the Church of the Atonement and the YMCA in Germantown.



In 1974, the church purchased a 3-story house at our current location which became our home. The church continued to grow, and plans were being made to expand. But before we were ready, in 1976, a fire destroyed the roof and seriously damaged other parts of the building. For almost 9 months we operated with just a layer of plastic protecting us from the elements. That was no easy task, as every time it rained or snowed, a major clean-up was needed.

But even through the fire, God was showing His hand. Since the building was damaged, our plans to expand the building were expedited. Eventually, the city granted us permission, not only to fix the roof, but to add a wing to the house, which seated 200 people. That building was dedicated to the Lord in 1978 and within a few years it became clear another expansion was needed.



The next expansion would be even more challenging, as the building that was erected in 1978 would have to be completely demolished with a mortgage still outstanding. God graciously provided the funds and this building was completed and dedicated to the Lord on Good Friday 1990.

Twenty-nine years later, it was time for a refresh. After reviewing what needed to be done, it was evident that we did not have all the funds to complete the project. As a result, the members gave the leaders permission to apply for a new mortgage on the building.

But God had another plan in mind.

One of the roofers who submitted an estimate, indicated that a few shingles may have been damaged by wind and we should call our insurance company. To our pleasant surprise, the carrier agreed that there was wind damage. Only God sends wind, and as a result of this "act of God", the insurance company has paid almost \$200,000 to fix the building. Praise the Lord!

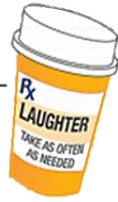
We are confident that God has big plans for us at GCA and has freed us from this debt so we can continue to aggressively pursue opportunities to expand the Kingdom of God.

So today, as we rededicate this sanctuary to the Lord, I pray you'll make it a time of personal rededication to the Lord and to His commission to go and make disciples of all nations.

May God bless you and may He continue to bless the ministry of GCA. ✨



To your *health*  
By Margaret Aitcheson



LAUGHTER  
as Good  
MEDICINE

Life can at times be challenging, filled with suffering, periodic bad news and unrealized expectations. These may leave us feeling helpless, especially when they are beyond our ability to intervene and rectify. No matter how bleak our situation, God says we should not be anxious about anything (Phil. 4:6). However, it takes spiritual discipline and training for our minds not to go to that place of worry; for even as we surrender our problems to the Lord we find ourselves taking them back, ruminating about them and worrying about outcomes. We become dejected and lose our joy and vitality in life.

God wants us to be joyful in the midst of our tough circumstances (Gal.5:22, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy...."). God the Great Physician has provided the gift of laughter to lighten our load, improve our health and bring real joy into our lives.


**A Few Helpful Verses:**

1. *Psalm 126:2 (NIV)*  
"Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them'".
2. *Proverbs 31:25 (NLT)*  
"She is clothed with strength and dignity and she laughs without fear of the future."
3. *Ecclesiastes 3:4 (ESV)*  
"A time to weep and a time to laugh..."

Laughter is natural. Children laugh multiple times daily but adults burdened with serious issues tend to do so less frequently. When we seek out opportunities to lighten our mood and laugh, we can improve our wellbeing and outlook. Counting our blessings will help to banish the negative thoughts that block humor and laughter. We can cultivate a heart of rejoicing and praise to the Lord thus improving our relationship with Him and reminding ourselves that He is with us in the storms of life.



Laughter is good for our health. It relieves muscular tension and stress. It strengthens the immune system thereby increasing our resistance to disease. It triggers the release of endorphins which promote an overall sense of well-being and can also temporarily relieve pain. "A joyful heart is good medicine (Prov. 17:22)." ✧



*Walk Through The Bible*  
A study through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation  
**A New Sunday School Class**  
9:30 AM Beginning September 8th

# An Extraordinary Week at Word of Life Camps!

Continued from page 1.

Now a word from one of the campers, Hannah Walton:

I recently attended Word of Life Camp along with the youth group here at GCA. I got a chance to interact with youth from across the country, take part in various outdoor activities and draw closer to God. I enjoyed this camp experience because it was different from past youth retreats, which had only been for a weekend in the winter.



Being on an island for a week gave me a chance to swim in the lake, attend campfires, and other activities such as mountain biking and zip lining. Throughout the week, there were "rallies" where everyone would come together to hear messages about the overall theme of being a renegade (a person who leaves a group or deserts his or her cause). I learned over the week that sometimes it is necessary for Christians to be a renegade, especially when the world is doing wrong. I also had opportunities to grow in my faith during quiet time and devotionals. Overall, I enjoyed my time at Word of Life and would recommend it to anyone who wants to get to know God or who simply wants to mature spiritually. ✧

## GCA Graduates Honored June 2nd

Continued from page 2.

So, to my brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, deacons, elders and my Pastor Brian Grant, thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you for your consistent, unending love, your unending prayers and your never-ending concern for us.

I leave you all with this verse from II Thessalonians 1:3, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other." ✧



Join Us! **8th Annual Friends and Family Day**  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20<sup>th</sup> 2019  
10:45 a.m. Worship Service  
1:00 p.m. Fellowship Brunch  
Invite friends and family to come join us for a day of worship and a FREE scrumptious brunch!



By Ruth Peters

We thank God for a blessed week of VBS 2019. The theme "Incredible Race" talked about how God loves all the people of the world and encourages us to love people no matter which country we come from, as we all belong to one human race. Just as we did last year, we had the children rotate to different stations: arts and science; games; and Bible story time. Ms. Christine used Speedy the puppet for an added part to the Bible story for the children's interaction.



The children learned about missions on different continents--North America, South America, Africa, Asia and Europe. We saw videos which showed children from other countries who don't have access to many luxuries of life as we have here in North America. This encouraged them to pray for them. They were taught about different missionaries on these continents and mainly about our missionaries whom we support through our church. The children were asked to come forward each day to pray for these missionaries. It was so precious to see little children pray for them. They also were encouraged to bring an offering so we could send it to one of the missionaries who work with poor children. This year we chose to send our offering to Maria Gusmao in Brazil. We collected about \$500 to send to the poor children in Brazil. Praise the Lord!



A drama team had skits each day and they were done so well by our actors Olivia Grant, Alexis and Hailey Toliver and Evin Raines. They did a fantastic job on memorizing and acting.

Snacks for children at Run Away Cafe included food from different continents. Game time was fun as they learned about the sports of different countries. Our decoration team featured decorations from different countries in the sanctuary, foyer and fellowship hall, with their flags, dresses and animals.

In the evening of the fourth day of VBS, we had an international food and family fun night. The parents of the children joined us. There was food from different countries, games, face painting and a bounce water slide. The children had fun and we had the opportunity to meet the parents and talk to them. It was a good time.

An average of 65 children attended each day and we thank the Lord for bringing these children to us so we could love them and minister to them. Most importantly, we praise God for the 6 children who accepted Jesus as their personal savior, Hallelujah! We thank Jesus Christ our Lord for the privilege He gave us to share His Word with the children.

We thank all our volunteers who helped us this year with VBS and made it a great and fun time of learning for the children. All the junior volunteers did a great job with the children. We thank our church family and leadership for praying and supporting us in the ministry of VBS. ✧



## Discovering How God Calls Servant Leaders

By Brenda Wilford – Sunday School

Delightfully, our present 'Explore the Bible' Sunday school material, which is used in our GCA Junior High classes, is both current and in-depth. Its weekly lessons encourage both biblical understanding and personal growth. Its goal aligns with my Christian passion to not merely have our students study the Bible for knowledge, but to ultimately inspire ongoing heartfelt worship and service. "We want *our* GCA students to catch a *personal* vision for the glory, greatness and goodness of our sovereign loving Lord God".

In our Sunday, June 23rd class, while studying 1 Timothy 3:1-13, we discussed this essential truth: "Christ-like character - God demands Godly character of all His children particularly those who lead His churches". Before we studied what Paul shared in 1 Timothy, students Eternity C, Jonathan J., Mckai H. and McKayla H. generated and agreed on two characteristics which make someone a good leader: being a good listener and a problem-solver. After students read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and prepared with cross scripture references such as Acts 14:23, Acts 20:28, Titus 1: 5-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, we discussed functional terms such as "above reproach", "without a temper", "hospitable", "respectful", "able to teach" plus the roles of overseers (or elders) and deacons. The students relisted in their own words what these passages say about how God cares about the character of those who lead His church. Through this lively discussion and our class interviewing one of our own GCA servant leaders, Deacon Clairmonte Richards, our class had the special opportunity to further understand "God cares about the condition of our hearts and wants us all to live in a manner that demonstrates His lordship to the watching world".

Brother Richards had graciously accepted my invitation to come to our class for the students to personally get to know him as they interviewed him about his role as a deacon, In addition to the above mentioned preparation, students also refreshed their awareness of the names of our current elders and deacons listed in our weekly GCA church bulletins. Students also prepared questions to ask during our interview. Questions included: What does your role as deacon entail? What does being a deacon mean to you? How do you feel when you read the qualifications Paul lists for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-13? How has being a deacon changed how you think about our church and your role in it? What is meant by a "sitting" deacon or elder? Brother Richards thoughtfully, patiently, reflectively, personally and thoroughly addressed each of the students' questions, while as God would have it, further reinforcing the biblical characteristics of servant leaders and the thoughtful church process of selecting elders and deacons within our GCA family structure. Our class learned he has been serving as a deacon for about 26 years, noting that it has been a particular blessing to witness the growth at GCA, especially our spiritual growth, as seen in our concern for one another, thoughtfully leading by example within our church family.

Brother Richards concluded by praying for our students and encouraging each of them to seek God to grow them in character and use them to help and serve in areas they see and to offer suggestions and ideas to our church leaders as we grow together to live for and share the Lord with others. The class thanked Brother Richards for his time, insight and dedication of service to our church family. ✧

