

**Issue 10 *News and Notes* Winter 2021**

**Fall 2021 Directors Meeting**

At its regularly scheduled Fall meeting, The Foundation Board recognized **Berniece Asel** for her eleven years of service to the Board. Berniece was elected in 2011 to fulfill an unexpired term and was then re-elected to three full terms. By mandate, directors are ineligible to continue after three full terms without a one-year break in service. Berniece has served as Board Chair since 2013 and has added extraordinary value to the Board. Thank you, Berniece for your excellent service.

**Pam Jenkins** (College First) joins the Board by action of the GLC Executive Board and will begin her term on January 1. **Julie Hall** (Reflection Ministries) and **Roger Rehm** (Wooster) were elected in 2021 as the Board was increased from seven to nine members.

**Pastor Craig Flack** will serve as Chair beginning in January; **Pastor** **Lance Finley**, **Sean Martin**, and **Dan Kennard** will serve as Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer respectively. **Pastor** **Bob Fall** and **Pastor** **Mark Walls** complete the nine-member Board; GLC Executive Director **Pastor** **Earl Mills** is an ex officio member.

The Board took action to continue the Micro Grant program for 2022. Congregations are invited to apply for a matching grant not to exceed $5,000 for ministries that focus on making disciples or provide missional outreach to the community. Applications for the 2022 program may be submitted throughout the year and will expire at the end of December 2022 unless extended by action of the Board.

The Board also approved the 2022 Timeline, noting the deadline for Preliminary Grant Requests as January 31, 2022, and setting the meetings of the Board as April 7, May 26, and October 13.

**The 2022 Grant Cycle**

Preliminary Grant Requests for 2022 are due in The Foundation

A group of people sitting together

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This *News and Notes* is brought to you by The Foundation of the Great Lakes Conference, 700 East Melrose Avenue, Findlay, OH 45840 and its staff, William Reist, President and Robert Stephenson, Financial Controller. We trust that you will have a joyous Christmas and continue to celebrate the wondrous birth of our Savior. For more information contact us at [www.foundationglc@cggc.org](http://www.foundationglc@cggc.org) or call (419) 425-9602 or (419) 957-2661.

office on **Monday, January 31, 2022.** Links to the *Guidelines for Grant Seekers* and Preliminary Grant Application may be found on the website or by contacting the office at (419) 425-9602 or (419) 957-2661.

The Foundation’s mission is to ***stimulate life changing ministry***. It looks for grant ideas that develop people as followers of Jesus by raising up leaders, deepening Christian faith, reaching those far from God, and transforming communities.

The Foundation has already received several applications. If you have ideas for a particular ministry do not hesitate to reach out to The Foundation for input.

**Micro Grants**

As announced above, the Micro Grant program will continue into 2022. This is an excellent chance for congregations to take risks in ways to develop disciples or reach one’s community.

Several congregations are involved in back-to-school programs for their community schools. Overflow Ministries strategized ways to interact with new students at Tiffin and Heidelberg universities. Seville is providing counseling sessions. College First started an Upwards football and cheer program. Call us with your creative ideas.

**An Advent Meditation**

During this Advent Season Judy and I are reading *Christianity Today’s* devotional guide entitled *The Gospel of Advent.* One of the readings focuses on the subdued quiet of a snowy night, sound absorbed in the blanket of insulating snow, still, holy, silent. Those silent nights evoke awe at extraordinary beauty and mystery.

And then the author (Jonathan T. Pennington) pivots from snowy silence to Zechariah’s silence, a speechlessness, rendered mute as  a judgment for disbelief at the angel’s outrageous word about his aged, barren wife bearing a son (Lk. 1:11-20).

I’ve long been troubled at the thought of this man’s inability to speak. We take for granted the gift of gab, sharing random ideas, making known our desires, unburdening our hearts. To think a thought or have a need and not be able to express it unnerves me.

As a young pastor I visited a parishioner who had suffered a severe stroke leaving him without speech. His helplessness was to me excruciating, and my inability to understand must have been to him equally frustrating. Years later my father developed a progressive aphasia, and by the end of his life was unable to speak. He had rarely met a stranger and always had an opinion. And now in grunts and poorly formed sounds he desperately tried to make his needs and wants and thoughts known to a family and staff who had extraordinary trouble with the translation.

For a decade following her stroke, until she died last month, my aunt, a sweetheart, a nurse in her husband’s neurology practice, the heart and soul of her family, a beautiful and gracious woman, was rendered mute. And I think of yet another woman unable to speak, and this for much longer than the nine or so months of Zechariah’s silence.

Here are four persons who struggled against silence. It’s hard to find in these kinds of experiences a gift. None of this was chosen. All four were/are outgoing, social persons rendered mute by broken health. Theirs was no silent, holy night or the still quiet of “the moon on the crest of the new fallen snow.” This was an involuntary, painful reminder of brokenness, part of the disorder and pain brought by our first parents’ disobedience.

But the Good News is that despite Zechariah’s silence, God is not silent. God has spoken and is at work in the world, in the face of disbelief and broken health and despair. The Word has become flesh! God has poured himself into this world in the small, unassuming Child of the manger to heal, transform, and save his people. And that miraculous Presence is more than enough to bring life for all who believe.

Sometime ago I read a jarring quote from the Puritan poet, Anne Bradstreet: “Oft have I thought, were it hell itself, and could there find the Love of God toward me it would be a Heaven. And, could I have been in heaven without the Love of God it would have been a Hell to me; for in Truth, it is the absence and presence of God that makes Heaven or Hell.”

Gwen Adams, who cited this reflection from Anne Bradstreet, writes, “What matters to the joy of our soul is not where we are but where we are in relation to God.”

In one of the scenes of the movie, *Bonhoeffer, Agent of Grace,* Bonhoeffer lies in his cell listening to whimpering through the concrete wall. Bonhoeffer identifies himself as a pastor, and wonders if the young prisoner would like to pray. “I don’t believe in God,” was the empty reply.

A guard came by and noticed. “Kitchener,” he said to the young prisoner, “it won’t do any good. You’ll be executed any day.”

Bonhoeffer did not give up: “I have my hands on the wall; put yours here as if we both touch.” No hands appear. But Bonhoeffer prayed, “Lord it’s dark in me, in you is day. I am alone, but you will stay. I am afraid, you never cease. I am at war; in you is peace.” Slowly the prisoner rested hands on the wall.

The next morning a single shot pierced the air. The same guard now more somber appeared at Bonhoeffer’s cell: “I thought you’d like to know: the young man from the next cell. Very calm. Surprised everyone. Executed this morning.”

“What matters to the joy of our soul is not where we are, but where we are in relation to God.”

What ultimately matters is not what we’re doing, but what God is doing. What ultimately matters is not our silence, but that God is not silent, that God is at work in this world, that in the birth of the Baby, all things are transformed.

Rejoice beloved! We have a Savior!

Pastor Bill