

 **Issue 7 *News and Notes* Spring 2021**

**Board of Director Meetings**

The next meeting of The Foundation Board will be held on April 8. I want to share significant items on the agenda and in our summer edition report not only on the activity of this coming meeting, but also the following one, scheduled for May 20.

At this April meeting the Board will welcome two new Directors, Pastor Robert Fall who serves the Seville congregation, and Roger Rehm, retired after founding and managing his own construction business employing as many as 40 employees. Roger is a member of the Wooster congregation and was active on the Camp Otyokwah Board until he completed the permissible number of terms. Pastor Bob brings leadership experience from his position in training and retention at a Michigan heavy equipment company as well as ministry in a growing congregation. We are grateful for the skills and experience that Pastor Bob and Roger will bring to the Board.

The Foundation continues to seek qualified individuals who may have interest in serving as a director. If you are aware of such individuals, please share their names with us.

At the end of 2020 assets under management exceed $9.2M. Of that amount, nearly $1M is held in Facilitator Agreements.

Fourteen Formal Grant Applications totaling $285,275 will receive preliminary review at the April meeting. Awards will be made in May for the grant year beginning June 1. These grants cover leadership development, program enhancements, cross-cultural support, technology development, partnership with a local elementary school, providing food pantry resources, and upgrading facility needs. The Foundation continues to affirm grants that directly develop people and programs for Kingdom outreach.

The Board will consider a proposal to offer Micro Grants for Kingdom Reach to stimulate missional outreach and/or reproducing disciple-making. More details will follow, and congregations are encouraged to think and pray about activities that will strengthen these two important areas of ministry.

One of the GLC congregations has approached The Foundation with an idea of creating a permanent endowment fund that would return a portion of its income to the church. The Foundation looks forward to developing this strategy as a way of helping local congregations manage their long-term cash assets.

**Looking Back: Grateful for the Opportunity to Serve**

The Wharton First Church of God used their 2020 covid-related fast-track grant money to partner with the Riverdale School District as a distribution center for food and homework. The Ohio National Guard joined in the distribution and provided high quality meat, dairy and vegetables which greatly stretched the grant dollars. Last summer and fall the church provided hot lunches.

Pastor Odegard reports that a key takeaway was the “relationships developed with the school, teachers, and community members who benefited. It was an important message for the community to know that our church was central to its life, and, as you can imagine, goodwill resulted. The relationship with the Riverdale School has continued to grow.”



*Riverdale students taking their ACT test in Wharton’s new building*.

We continue to rejoice in The Foundation being able to partner with congregations in support of relationship building and service.

**Charitable Gift Annuity**

The Charitable Gift Annuity is a gift that returns a steady income stream. In exchange of an irrevocable charitable contribution an annuity is established which provides a regular payment for life, a charitable donation, and a partial income tax deduction for the donation.

Contact your financial planner or The Foundation office for more information about a Charitable Gift Annuity.

**A Holy Week Meditation**

I write this during Holy Week as we remember again the wonder of our salvation. And I have been thinking about the complex disciple, Judas.

He was trusted with the disciples’ moneybox (Jn 12:6). But the Gospels make plain that in the end Judas was not a weak and helpless bystander to the tragedy of Holy Week: he took the initiative in seeking out the chief priests to negotiate Jesus’ betrayal and delivered him over for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32; Mt. 26:14-16).



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

Why did he do it? In his 24/7 reflection for March 30, 2021, Pete Grieg suggests that Judas’ motive may have grown out of a disappointment that Jesus was not living up to his (Judas’) expectations; or that he was trying to force Jesus’ hand; or he reacted with shame among those reproached by Jesus for harassing the woman who had just indulged him with very expensive perfume. Or perhaps there was nothing complex about his decision: he simply wanted what he did not have and stole what did not belong to him: he was a thief (Jn 12:6). Whatever the case, his behavior led to our Savior being led to his death, bearing the sins of the world and the cup of God’s wrath (Jer 25:15; Mt 26:39).

Much is made of the contrast between the betrayal of Judas and Peter’s denial. Both had the effect of abusing and rejecting Jesus; neither honored him nor loved him nor yielded to his leading; both acted selfishly and cowardly.

Before Jesus was crucified and spoke words of forgiveness from the Cross, Judas, filled with remorse, admitted his deed (“I have betrayed innocent blood”) and went out and made an end to his life (Mt 27:1-5).

Peter, no less remorseful after thrice denying Jesus, went out and wept bitterly (Mt 26:75). He is absent from the remainder of the Holy Week story until Easter morn and the subsequent post-resurrection appearances, chief of which was a second scene by a charcoal fire in which Jesus forgave, restored, and commissioned Peter (Jn 21:1-19). That profound act of love set Peter on a very different trajectory from which we are all blessed.

Now the question: what would have happened if Judas had had the courage to repent of his sin and to receive forgiveness from the risen Lord? Is there any sin so great that Jesus will not forgive, an act of rebellion so vile that it is beyond redemption? “Truly I tell you,” Jesus says, “people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter,” with one exception: “whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin” (Mk 3:28f). I take blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to refer to a defiant refusal to allow the recreating Spirit of God to recreate the defiant rebel. In short, Jesus promises forgiveness and restoration to all who repent and in humility seek forgiveness.

So, what might have happened if Judas in his remorse had moved to genuine repentance and humbled himself before a gracious Savior? As Pete Grieg asks, “What if he had held on long enough to encounter the risen Jesus and to receive forgiveness – with a kiss? Would Judas not have had the most power testimony of all the twelve? Would his preaching of the gospel not have saved countless people down the ages who considered their sins too great for grace?”

I fully understand the preaching does not save: Jesus saves! But Grieg is on to something: no sin, confessed and repented of, is outside the pale of a Savior who loves, forgives, restores and sends.

May you hear again the words, “Father, forgive.” from the lips of the Crucified Savior. And may you experience restoration and renewal to serve in his grace.

Pastor Bill