

METROGRACE

Developing Urban Churches



December 2018

MetroGrace connects **supporting, serving** and **stationed** partners to develop gospel-centered, community-based churches in urban neighborhoods.



During this season, we praise God for the wonderful gift He has given us in Jesus!

MetroGrace develops churches that are proclaiming his birth, life, death and resurrection, bringing salvation to all who believe. May the joy of the Lord Jesus Christ be fully yours this Christmas! We're grateful for the team the Lord has grown to support our ministry! Thank you!

At the end of October, a dozen adults gathered in Bridesburg to share candy, meet neighbors, advance the gospel and invite new friends to our ministries. About a hundred people stopped by, enjoyed some cider and learned about the developing church. It was a great evening of

outreach!

The following Sunday, three boys aged 10, 12 and 14 joined us for worship. Our location makes it possible for neighbors to walk to church. The boys participated politely and enjoyed a snack. The ten-year-old, Derrik, seemed particularly sensitive to spiritual things. On the way out, he asked if he could have a Bible. The following week, he returned by himself. I asked if he had read the Bible. He told me that he might have read the wrong part. He had read the front matter. I smiled and told him we would help him after the service. He sat next to Coleen; she knew Derrik from the neighborhood.



Coleen lives down the street; we met her this past year. She knows the Lord, but she had been away from church for many years. She is concerned for her adult children and often cares for her granddaughter.

Our simple service includes songs of praise, worship through giving and a biblical challenge. This Sunday, our study included a gospel explanation. At the end, Coleen asked Derrik if he would like to trust Jesus for salvation. He said, "Yes!" When Coleen brought Derrik to me, I invited her to join us in a small room where we could explain the gospel. She came. We used a simple gospel tract for children. Derrik read it, understood it and placed his faith in Christ. Although Coleen might not have felt worthy, God used her to bring this boy to salvation!

As we were wrapping up, I encouraged Derrik to read part of the gospel of Mark and tell his mother about the decision he had made. Then Coleen told me that Derrik's mother had



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**7721 Torresdale Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19136
215-533-3396
www.metrograce.org
Dr. Jim Brown,
Executive Director**

passed away. Derrick said she died in 2015, when he was just 7. I felt awful. I told him how sorry I was and urged him to tell his dad instead.

Derrick was at church the following Sunday. Coleen knocked on his door and brought him. He had told his dad about trusting Christ. His father was pleased and supportive. He had read Mark and was thrilled to tell me what he had learned.

Please pray for Derrick. I am hopeful that Coleen will do some follow-up with him. Pray for his family, too. Ask the Lord to lead them to salvation. Praise the Lord for using Coleen! Pray that she would see the many new ways the Lord might use her for His glory.



In all our busyness, my wife Danielle and I don't always have time to spend exclusively with each other. We seldom feel like we can get away without everything falling apart. When we have managed to get away, it is usually accompanying friends or staying with family. The last time we were away together was about five years ago. We had a wonderful time and swore we'd do that again; life has only become more hectic.

This year was particularly challenging, preventing us from taking a regular vacation, so by the end of summer we were tapped out. We decided to go away for Danielle's birthday in October. Mike Connor was able to preach and others in the congregation stepped up to serve.

We booked a small two room beach house in Ocean City, New Jersey for one week. Danielle didn't have vacation time, but her manager gave her permission to work remotely. Though we had some responsibilities, we were finally able to spend some time alone.

On Sunday, we visited a couple of churches. We enjoyed worship and fellowship with other believers. At both congregations we found that we had many kinds of people in common; and, we got to see that from Philly to Ocean City there were no major differences in the worship services.

The remainder of the week we had fun! We ate at a few nice places, had our desserts, swam, yes, swam in the warm ocean with the cold air around us, played games and enjoyed being together.

When we returned, our busyness was there waiting for us along with a few new issues; but, because we had time to rest, be refreshed and enjoy God's creation we could boldly tackle those things. Although we had told ourselves that if we left things would fall apart, to our delight nothing did. Quite the opposite, it presented an opportunity for others to grow in their service to the Lord.

I'm reminded that God gives us everything we need for life and godliness, but we don't always tap into what He has already given us. We've told ourselves that unless we do it, it won't get done. In reality, God does not need us. He is able to do it all. If anything, we can get in the way. I continue to learn that I am privileged to be allowed to serve the Lord. It is an honor to do so, and it is easier to see these things after having some time away with my bride.

Pray for us, that we set some more time to be together, and that we would never lose sight that what we do in service to the Lord is a blessing and a privilege.

We're grateful for God's goodness! This year has had its share of challenges, too. One of those concerns has been financial. Offerings have been almost twenty percent below budget this year. Could the Lord use you to provide a year-end gift that might help close that gap? Please pray with us for God's provision.

Merry Christmas to All!

I would like to add or change my address, phone number or email address: