

METROGRACE

Developing Urban Churches

January 2018

MetroGrace is developing gospel-centered, community-based churches in neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia. Currently, we are working in four urban communities. Please pray with us!

Holmesburg



Recently, three teens were charged in connection with the murder of a homeless man in this neighborhood. The incident drew national and international attention. Our church in Holmesburg has been working with one of those boys; he is just fourteen years old. He made a profession of faith, was baptized and participated in our children's ministry. He's been less involved as he moved into high school. Now, a foolish decision has brought tragedy to the victim, his family, the boys and their families. Please pray for our church as we seek to honor the Lord while serving this family. Pursuing justice for the victim and showing mercy to the accused is a difficult

balance.

This heartbreaking incident reveals the depth of personal sin, the generational brokenness of families and the systemic failure of urban structures. Ultimately, we must depend on divine intervention:

"The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds." Jeremiah 17:9-10

Please pray for committed Christians to build their lives in the city, exemplify a biblical family and serve to transform a neighborhood. Could the Lord use you?



Wissinoming

Pete Forshtay is working to transform his neighborhood by using the Philly 311 app to report needs: "The number one issue I report is vandalism in the form of graffiti... I imagine... what I would say... if I ever caught them tagging public property... First, I would give them a good, 'Shame on you! This isn't yours.' I'd follow that up with a, 'Don't you live here?! You're trashing your home!' Next... 'I'm telling your parents,' or, 'Let's see what the police have to say about this.' I've even gone as far to imagine I'd take their

picture with the can of spray paint in their hands and upload it to some social media platform. Is all of this good and right? It's certainly not merciful, but it's what I've daydreamed.

"So Wednesday night, my wife, Danielle, and I [were waiting with two teens at the Wissinoming facility when]... a man... walked up the church steps and was nose-to-door with the church building.

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Dr. Jim Brown,

Executive Director

We weren't immediately certain what he was doing. A Bible study meets here in an hour; perhaps he was just early. Trying not to call attention to the situation out of concern that the man was urinating on our doors, as that's happened before on more than one occasion, and not wanting our teens to make a scene, I approached quietly with my wife accompanying me. We were already running late... so I knew...I needed to make it quick. I introduced myself and asked whether he was there for the Bible study. He turns around to say, 'Yeah.'

"Immediately noticing steel wool in his hand and his initials sanded into the church doors, my wife was quick and to the point: 'Why did you vandalize our church? Just what do you think you're doing?!"

"The man, yes a grown man, appearing as if he was high, sheepishly said, 'Oh, sorry, I'll clean it up.'

"Again, short on time and our primary focus on our teens...all I ended up saying was, 'It can't be cleaned now. It needs to be painted. We can talk about this later. Why don't you come to church on Sunday and we'll figure out what needs to be done afterwards.'

"Ok, what time?"

"Eleven. See you then!"

"Then he left. That's it. No speech. No picture. No report. No police. No grandstanding. No shaming. Not even mercy, because if I had the time, I would have all-of-the-above! Nothing now but a prayer this man shows up to church on Sunday and that this frustrating situation turns out for the good of this man's soul and eternal destiny. Stranger introductions have happened.

"I got no name from this man, but be praying that he does accept the invitation to church and meets Jesus."

"And pray for me, for patience and a merciful disposition. Though I want others to face justice and some sort of punishment, I definitely don't want those things to apply to me; and praise God for His mercy and forgiveness, they don't have to."

Rhawnhurst



Please continue to pray for Mike and Margarete Connor as they lead our church planting team in Rhawnhurst. Pray for Mike as he works full time, grows through his internship and reaches out to the neighborhood.

Pray for Margarete as she cares for four children, works part-time and leads the worship team. A family game night is planned for January. Please ask the Lord to use this event to connect the team with new friends.

Bridesburg

Pete and Danielle Forshtay are also leading our outreach effort in this neighborhood. Please pray for five hundred families who were invited to worship last month. Ask the Lord to help our team develop relationships with these new contacts. We're grateful to be working closely with one family in the neighborhood. Please pray for Shaliney, her husband and children Shanell and Jemone. Jemone has connected with the Forshtays and has begun attending Thrive, our ministry for teens. Please pray, too, for a church planter or church planting intern who can lead the work in this neighborhood. Could the Lord use you or someone you know to serve in the city? Contact Jim Brown at jim@metrograce.org.



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