

JANUARY 2021

GRACE MONTHLY

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."

John 5:17



Expecting Miracles

by Yireh Park

With a new year having arrived, and considering the great disaster of a year we just had, I have a lot of expectations for 2021. Compared to last year my expectations have increased significantly in number, but they haven't grown in size. They've instead become much smaller and much simpler: I want to hang out with friends, go to prom, cough in public without feeling shamed, go to the theatre and I want no more ugly blue masks ruining my outfits. I miss Vision Hall, I miss the people at church and, oddly enough, I miss the folding chairs and how comfortable they were sometimes. (Especially when the chair in front was a perfect distance away for my feet to rest on.) I never thought I would be missing something like that. We've all come to appreciate these small things we lost last year and it has been a big wake-up call.

My expectations for God and my faith, however, have always been at a higher level and have remained the same throughout 2020. He is the creator of our world, our universe and me! That all seems so fantastic and so, that's what I've looked for and still look for from God - I want to experience spectacular miracles and crazy life-changing events like I see in the movies and read about in the Bible. Sometimes, I wanted more than a miracle and expected God to hand it to me, but my expectations have only ever led to disappointment. Then, last year, God dropped a nice big life-changing event on all of us, and all I want now is for it to have never happened.

I call my expectations for 2021 small and simple, as well as a big fat load of privilege, because **I realized that my life is a gift and a miracle in itself.**

God's greatness is not measured by how crazy the miracle or how big the blessing is, but is rather discovered in many of the things we don't pay attention to. **He is already working miracles in our lives and always has been.** It's just that in our eyes, they haven't been cool enough compared to the split sea or the blind man who could see. Yet, we have literally survived a pandemic (so far)! That's pretty fantastic if you think about it. In John 5:17, Jesus says, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." Just being able to wake up every morning and walk, eat and hug my loved ones is a miracle. The crazy beautiful sunsets we get to see, and the church community we have is all God's handiwork, gifted to us to enjoy and be thankful for. I can now say that I experience miracles every day!

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DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



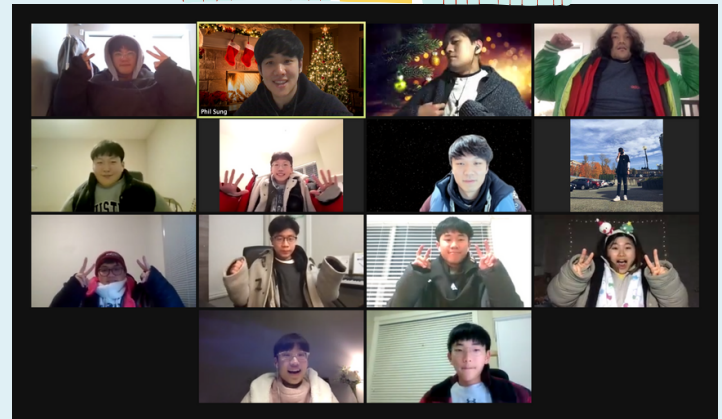
THE GREATEST GIFT

On Friday, December 11th, GEM Youth had their very own Christmas event on Zoom. The night's theme was "The Greatest Gift" and the dress code was to wear their favourite Christmas sweater. Students were able to have a time of fellowship with one another and got to participate in a big group game of Kahoot! The questions consisted of both Christmas related topics as well as silly facts about their beloved leaders. After the games, they entered into a time of worship to sing carols together, followed by a short sermon and a prayer to end the night off.



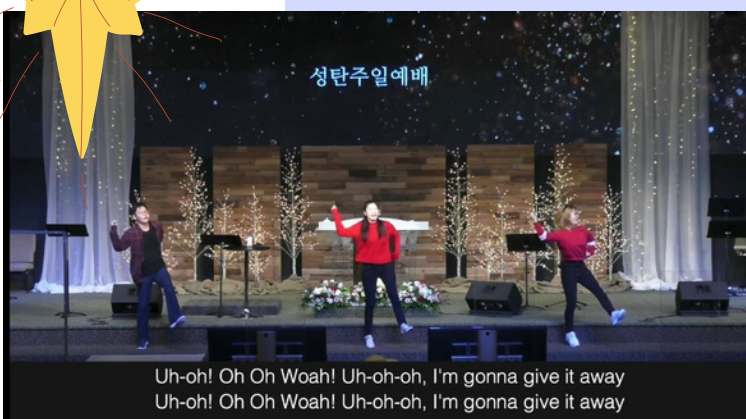
HOME ALONE

CLAY Youth also held their Christmas fellowship night on Friday, December 11th. On this evening, they came together on Zoom to play some games around the theme of "home alone." Even though it might feel like we are spending our time at home alone these days, it is on nights like these we are reminded that we are really not alone!



CHRISTMAS FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE

This year, GCC held their Christmas celebration event for the first time ever on a Sunday, December 20th as a family worship service. It began with a time of praise with the Shout worship team, and Pastor Kevin gave a sermon titled, "Oh Come, Let Us Adore Him." A video presentation was also prepared by Grace Youth, in which students were asked about what Christmas meant to them, and particularly how their faith in Jesus has been helping them endure through the pandemic season.



DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS cont'd

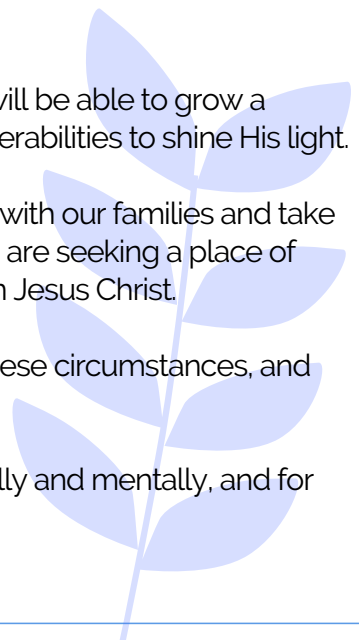
KALEO

Kaleo is an annual outreach project held every year. This year, Grace Youth students and leaders collected donations for the Surrey Women's Center. On Tuesday, December 29th there was also a joint worship service to remember that we can shine the light of Jesus to the world, even in this pandemic season!



Praise & Prayer


- **Praise** God for providing for the Surrey Women's Centre in this difficult season through our ministries' winter outreach project called Kaleo. **Pray** that the families and women receiving these donations would see beyond the acts and service to experience God's love and provision for them.
- **Praise** God for allowing us to end the year 2020 with assurance of His promises even through the hard seasons we've encountered. With 2021 ahead of us, let's **praise** God for His faithfulness toward us as He has given us each day as a second chance to turn towards Him and experience His unfailing love. Whatever seasons that may come, let's **pray** that we will face them with our faith grounded in God's truth, for we know that He is in control.
- **Pray** for our Grace Youth as we continue on our faith journey, that we will be able to grow a humble heart, allowing God to work through our weaknesses and vulnerabilities to shine His light.
- **Praise** God for providing us a safe place to celebrate the birth of Christ with our families and take this Christmas break to rest in God's presence. Let's **pray** for those who are seeking a place of refuge and safety in this cold season, that they will find hope and rest in Jesus Christ.
- **Praise** God for giving us the opportunity to continue learning even in these circumstances, and getting us through half the school year safely.
- Let's continually **pray** for those who are fighting this pandemic physically and mentally, and for one another as we continue to fight spiritually, the good fight of faith.



Quarantine Bingo

Winter Edition

This is a fun ice breaker provided by our GEM Youth Grade 10 leaders! Since the prolonged quarantine order came into effect, have you adjusted the way you spend your time now? How is your faith life? Personal life? Relationship with your family? See how many of the following apply to you. You can even try playing this with your small group on Sunday. Have fun!

Watched Netflix Last Night	Fell Asleep During Sermon	Wore Same Clothes 3 Days in a Row	Slept past 5am	Finished a Drama Series
Told My Leader the Camera doesn't Work	Finished a Bag of Chips by Yourself	Went for a 30+ min Walk this Week	Joined a Zoom Meeting in PJ/Sweats	Started a New Hobby
Finished a Book	Video Called a Friend	 FREE SPACE	Attended a Friday Youth Night	Cooked/Baked Something for the First Time
Cleaned My Room	Didn't Sing Along During Worship	Wanted to Go Back to Church	Told Someone to Stay Home	Missed Pastor Josh
Filmed a Tik-Tok Video	Said "Thank You" to My Leader	Had a Conflict with My Family	Made a Donation	Read at Least 1 Advent Devotional

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JANUARY

Fridays, Jan 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th (CLAY) Student Discipleship

Saturday, Jan 16th (GEM) Student Discipleship

Friday, Jan 22nd (GEM) Friday Youth Night

Friday, Jan 29th (GEM) Student Discipleship

Events are subject to change. Make sure to keep up with our latest updates with your small group leader, on our website, Instagram, or Facebook!

Abide in His Joy

This year's theme for our Grace Community Church comes from the passage, John 15:11

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

In John chapter 15, God compares our relationship with Him to a branch attached to a vine, for without the vine, the branch will wither away. We must remain in the Lord in order to experience His true joy and love. So, in order to abide in Him, how should we pray?

First: *Lord, grant us the joy of knowing truth, as we turn away from our sins.*

Second: *Lord, grant us the joy of seeing our worth in You.*

Asking for these things will shed light on our sins and we will witness the joy of our lives being transformed in the Lord. “Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” (John 16:24) This year, let us return to our Father's home and Abide in His Joy.