



# GOD'S GRACE PORTLAND & YOU

## GRACE

When you last heard from us, we spent some time looking back at what God had been doing for us personally through the previous year. As we begin 2005, we look forward to all that God is going to be doing in this year. And while we will greatly miss the friends God has given us in St. Louis, we are eager to be a part of God's calling out to the people of New England, "You are my people and I will be your God." To be a part of his calling back a people that once sought him so zealously, and yet have drifted so far from his grace. In the book of Hosea, God is shown as a loving husband seeking to woo back his beloved wife who had left him for the arms of other men. It is this love that God has called us to share with the people of Portland – what a task!

## PORTLAND

We have gotten many comments regarding winters in Maine recently. Two weeks ago Per was shoveling the sidewalks at church after a light snowfall, leading to church members remarking about preparing for life in Maine. The following week was the big storm that hit the east coast, reaching New England on Saturday evening (Portland only got about 20 inches, not the 39+ inches of farther north). This led to many questions about whether we were glad to still be in St. Louis. Frankly, we were disappointed to have missed such a good snowstorm.



City folks snowshoeing in downtown Portland after the big storm, January 24<sup>th</sup>

So, to give all a better sense of the nature of winter in Portland, we thought we would share some numbers. Portland, being on the coast, has a more moderate climate than much of Maine. It does receive between 60 and 90 inches of snow each year on average with only 18 days a year with snowfall of more than 1 inch. The temperatures during the winter are generally in the 20's and as the city of Portland's web site puts it, "warm spells in the 30's are not uncommon."

We do have to confess that the winters are actually one of the parts we are all looking forward to. When Kyle and Jason were first told we were moving to Maine, the knowledge that they would get more snow made them eager to go – though they keep wanting to know if we will get a snow blower like Grandpa.

## YOU

The time is rapidly approaching when we will move to the next stage of ministry. As we have spent the past year preparing for this move, you have all (notice I did not say "ya'll" – none of that when you are "downeast") joined with us by carrying us to God in prayer. Your participation with us in this adventure through prayer (please continue to pray!) and financial generosity is going to continue to be just as important to us.

The time has now come for the fun to begin! If you have pledged financial support and not yet begun sending your donation, now is the time to start. We are currently setting up our actual budget and really need as accurate an idea of our finances as possible, so if you have thought about sending a pledge, please take a moment and send it in.

We continue to be humbled and learn that God loves us through each and every one of you, thank you. Our prayers continue to go up that you also might see God's love for you throughout your lives.

## Thomas Jefferson's list of differences between the North and the South

<i>Southerners</i>	<i>Northerners</i>
Fiery	Cold
Voluptuary	Sober
Indolent	Laborious
Unsteady	Independent
Zealous for their own liberties, but trampling on those of others	Jealous of their own liberties, and just to those of others
Generous	Interested
Candid	Chicaning
Without attachment or pretensions to any religion but that of the heart	Superstitious and hypocritical in their religion

**Downeast** is a term that is synonymous with coastal Maine. When people sail from Maine to Boston they sail upwind. The trip out of Boston is downwind to Maine, in short, "downeast."

# FEBRUARY 2005



Portland after the big storm January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005

### Instructions for gifts

Checks should be made out to *Christ the Redeemer* and sent to:

Christ the Redeemer  
33 Overset Road  
Portland, ME 04103



# OUR PARTNERS, THE CHALLENGE & FAITH

## Our Partners

God has done so much, join us in praising God for:

- All you who are joining in God’s work to transform Portland, ME and to call people to himself.
- Covenant Seminary allowing Per to remain salaried an extra six weeks so that we could retain benefits until we move.
- God continues to grant us peace. Despite the many changes and all that has to be done, we have been amazingly calm (not entirely, which is a challenge, but amazingly none the less).

## The Challenge

There is always more that we need God to do, please pray specifically for:

- Our daily and long-term needs to be met as we operate on a tight budget.
- A place to live (only 0.5% of the housing in Portland is currently unoccupied). While an apartment is more realistic, we long for a house.
- There are so many details that go into moving and changing jobs – establishing a new budget, new school for Kyle, new everything for everybody (pediatrician, dentist, etc.)...it is easy to become overwhelmed. Please pray for peace in our hearts.
- A job for Beth. Our financial support is lower than we had hoped. Please pray for a job that would allow Beth to be at home with the boys as much as possible.
- That’s enough about us! Pray for the people of Portland – pray that God is preparing hearts to hear and respond to the Gospel.

## Faith

We would never have come to this point without faith. Just the preparation has been such hard work, and this is only the beginning! Why are we leaving



Your missionaries hard at work...

incredible friends, secure jobs, a huge backyard (with a sandbox, woods, and a creek – a small boy’s paradise)? Why are we moving to Maine, anyway? It’s a question we ask ourselves now and again, especially when morale is low. It’s easy to get wrapped up in many of these details and lose sight of the things that will last forever. Why go? To beg for God’s mercy on Portland, New England, and the nation – and to be caught up in God’s

answer to our prayers. We were so proud to “be there” the night the Red Sox won the World Series here in St. Louis (apologies to our almost-as-beloved Cardinals) – how much more so do we want to be there the day God brings revival to New England.

Speaking through his prophet Hosea, God says, “In that day...I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD” (Hosea 2:18-20). We have faith that the day will come. That as we mentioned at the start of this newsletter, God is wooing back to himself his beloved bride, the people of New England. And we have faith that the promise given through Hosea of an everlasting relationship in his righteousness, justice, love, and compassion is worth giving up all for the sake of the call.

## *Our Wish List*

Items that would be wonderful to have

- Microsoft Office
- Adobe Acrobat
- Flat Panel Monitor to go with the computer that was donated (sans monitor)
- LCD Projector (e.g., Infocus X1A)
- Adobe Photoshop
- Piano for Beth to teach lessons at home
- Plane tickets for conferences
- MNA church planting conference

# FEBRUARY 2005

Volume 2, Number 1  
Issue 6

## **Per and Beth Almquist**

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**Watch this space for details of our new location to be announced shortly!**