

GOD'S GRACE PORTLAND & YOU

GRACE

Psalm 23 begins, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." And it is amazing to see God shower his grace upon his people. As we have moved and started settling in to Portland, there has been (and continues to be) much that we desire. Things that we "need." And yet, we have seen God provide time and again in ways that go beyond those needs.

We look no farther than our arrival a few weeks ago to see his grace. As we arrived on a cold (39°) rainy Saturday evening, we went straight to our apartment to see it for the first time. As we got the keys from our landlord, he mentioned that somebody from the church had been by earlier that day with some stuff for us. We walked into an apartment that had food, a microwave, towels, bedding, pots, and dishes. It was almost two weeks before we had to cook our first meal instead of eating meals provided for us by our new church family.

We are continually seeing how God showers his grace upon us in community and how he uses others around us to remind us of his love.

PORTLAND

As we are learning many things about Portland, one of the most important discoveries so far has been a sandwich. That's right, a sandwich. We discovered the Italian on our own just after moving here, but didn't realize its significance until one of you sent us a copy of an article from the April issue of *Gourmet* magazine that features the Italian.

According to Jane & Michael Stern, who write the Roadfood column for *Gourmet* (and make appearances on NPR's *The Splendid Table*), "Portland, Maine, is the one and only home of a well-stuffed sandwich that stacks up with America's best." The Italian is found not in places you typically go to eat, but rather are the specialty of small convenience stores, delis, and butcher counters. The city is full of small stores with names like Colucci's, DiPietro's, Amato's, and Donatelli's. It is here that you find the Italians, real (salami and provolone) or regular (ham and American cheese - the original recipe created by local baker Giovanni Amato in 1902). These are then smothered with



tomato, green pepper, pickle, olives, onions, and a dressing of oil, salt, and pepper. All of this is served on some of the softest bread ever.

Pay us a visit and we'll see that you get both the seafood and the Italian for some real Portland cooking.

YOU

Try making your own Italian for lunch, and as you do please remember us in prayer. Life is an adventure these days, and we so much need the grounding of God's love for us as we face even more adventures ahead!

*I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like thine can peace afford.
I need thee every hour, stay thou nearby;
Temptations lose their power when thou art nigh.*

"The weather outside is frightful..."

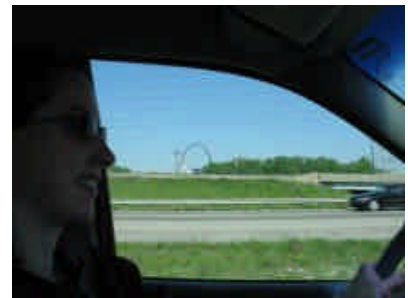
Ok, so it's from a Christmas song, but this line has been true here since we arrived as well, even though it's now June! One Friday the National Weather Service said we had had nine minutes of sunshine the previous Friday - the last time we had seen the sun (and about the only time in two weeks). Despite that, we have been enjoying our time and have managed to get out and see some of the area. On Memorial Day we took a ferry ride out to Peaks Island, one of the many in Casco Bay. We enjoyed rock collecting on the beach, searching tidal pools, and having Italians and ice cream.

(And yes, the weather has improved - it is currently 79° and sunny.)



Scotty's first boat ride taken on the ferry to Peaks Island (we live on the bump behind Beth's head)

JUNE 2005

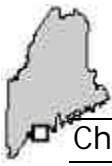


Goodbye St. Louis!

Instructions for gifts and pledges

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:

- The love and grace shown by the people of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church!
- The love and grace shown by our friends in St. Louis who gave so much to get rid of us.
- Safe travel to Portland and for Ken and Linda Morris helping us make the drive.
- Scotty's baptism on May 22nd – we rejoice in God's covenant promises! And also that both sets of grandparents and one set of cousins were able to make it for the celebration.

THE CHALLENGE

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

- Christ the Redeemer as we finalize plans to move into a new facility late this month. That the move would not just be a provision of a place by God, but also an increase in our ability to worship God in community and extend his grace.
- The continued growth of partners in this ministry. We still need some additional funding in order to give us the ability to do all that we hope. Pray for an additional \$500 per month.
- For Beth as she looks for a teaching job. She has had a few interviews and desires a position where she can remain faithful to her first calling as wife and mom.
- For us as we begin getting to know the people of Christ the Redeemer and our neighbors. That God would show us where he is at work.

FAITH

It is so easy in the midst of life to feel like God has abandoned us. We all feel it from time to time, whether we are Christian or not. We see the evidence of the universality of the emotion in such varied venues as Dolly Parton's song, "Hello, God," Judy Blume's book *Are you there God? It's me, Margaret*, and the psalmist, crying out in Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Christians tend to be ashamed when we feel that way. After all, our theology tells us that God will never forsake us (Deuteronomy 31 and Hebrews 13). Yet, our experience sometimes seems to tell us otherwise. What are we to think?

Psalm 22 is part of our inspired worship book – the Psalms. In it we see these feelings brought to God in worship! As a friend recently put it, the psalms tell us to "bring your broken and turbulent heart with you."¹ We can come to God in the midst of our doubts; he isn't afraid. By doing so, we will see that God indeed never forsakes us. Even when we feel his silence as the psalmist does, our God is a faithful God who keeps his covenant promises. Ultimately it all ends the same way as Psalm 22, "for he has done it."

Even as Christ himself cried out those poignant opening words of feeling forsaken and abandoned by God, he also cried, "It is finished." Christ is the ultimate sign that God will not abandon us – he himself entered into our suffering and mortality so that he could finish it! Amazing love, indeed!

¹ Ewan Kennedy, "The Psalms and the Pathway to Healing", *Covenant Magazine*, 20:2 (Summer 2005), p.19.

Scotty's baptism



May 22nd, 2005
Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church

JUNE 2005

Volume 2, Number 4
Issue 10

Our new address!

Per and Beth Almquist
24 Cleeve Street
Apt. 2
Portland, ME 04101
207.899.1709
per.almquist@MainePCA.org
www.MainePCA.org