



# GOD'S GRACE PORTLAND & YOU

**G**RACE

As we look at all that God has been doing since we got here, we are amazed at how much has happened. In the span of the past six months, we have seen two visiting mission teams make an impact on our church and community. We have rejoiced in the work of the Root Cellar (see August Almquist Page for more on this ministry) reaching into our neighborhood, and through their community dinners we have begun to build relationships with families in need of God's grace. We have rejoiced in seeing the extent of the impact that the gospel is having on Maine – even in this short time (see sidebar, *A Big Impact*).

Even more important, we are seeing the depth of the impact of the gospel in individual lives. It has been a joy for us to get to know Franklin and Prudence, a couple in their 80s. It has been a difficult year for them: Prudence has lost a brother, most of her eyesight, and one of their children has wandered far from God and their family. And 80+ year-old Franklin is still building their house by hand! Through coming alongside them in these things, we have seen the gospel at work in their hearts and lives – and have had our own faith strengthened.

And yet, we continue to struggle with faith. Like the prophets who searched for Elijah after God took him up to heaven (2 Kings 2), we see God at work, we recognize and acknowledge it, and yet we still want to go looking, to reassure ourselves. Like toddlers who touch a hot stove just to see if Mom is right, we test God to see if we were told the truth. And God (unlike us in dealing with our boys sometimes), in his infinite grace and mercy, continues to give us more and more to strengthen our faith. We are reminded that even in the futility of our searching to know on our own, God strengthens our faith through what we already know in Christ.

**P**ORTLAND

Winter is coming! On Saturday as Kyle and Jason played soccer, the fields were completely white with frost and the forecast this morning contained snow for the first time this season (in the western mountains though, not Portland). Though we didn't receive any this time, we know to expect between 60"-90" of snow this winter. And though it has been chilly so far, we know to expect an average temperature in the 20's with "warm spells into the 30's" (as the Portland city web site puts it).

The winters are actually one of the things we are all greatly looking forward to. When Kyle and Jason were first told we were moving to Maine, more snow was all they needed to hear – though they keep wanting to know if we will get a snow blower like Grandpa.

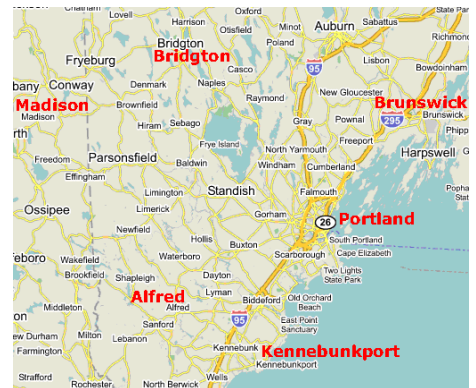
**Y**OU

Do you struggle with your faith? Do you forget that the focus is to be on God and his work, and not on your own feelings? We do. It is easy for us to see the enormity of the needs around us and how inadequate we are in responding to them and forget that it is God who is at work in us and through us.

Take a moment before Christ and let him remind you of his love, regardless of your struggles. While you are doing that, please think of us and how God might encourage his church in New England through you. Pray for us, call us, send us a letter, or come and visit. Remember that fall and winter are prime times to visit Maine to see foliage and/or snow. Our apartment is not large or luxurious, but we would love to show you around Portland.

## A Big Impact

Though we seek to reach the people of Portland with the gospel of Christ, Christ the Redeemer was planted with a vision for the entire state of Maine. And as we look at our congregation, we see God moving throughout the region. As we look at the people gathered to worship Christ together each week, we see people from an area larger than the state of Rhode Island stretching from 55 miles to the west (Madison, NH), 35 miles to the north (Bridgton), 30 miles to the northeast (Brunswick), and 30 miles to the south (Alfred and Kennebunkport).



The region currently being impacted by the gospel through Christ the Redeemer

# NOVEMBER 2005



What's fall in New England without apple picking? (the real question is how did Kyle hold it there while missing so many teeth?)

### Instructions for gifts and pledges

Checks should be made out to *Christ the Redeemer* and sent to the church at:  
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 relationships that we are beginning to build with neighborhood families who need to hear and see the gospel lived out in the neighborhood.
- The vision that the people of Christ the Redeemer have for planting churches throughout Maine and their desire to be a part of God's working in their communities.
- Kyle's 7<sup>th</sup> (13 Oct) and Scotty's 1<sup>st</sup> (18 Oct) birthdays and for the way that they are growing in wisdom and in stature.
- Beth's jobs – we are thankful for the income from her job at L.L. Bean, the one-day-a-week teaching position at Maine Classical School, and the potential for some private students.

## THE CHALLENGE

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

- The people we are meeting in our neighborhood through the Root Cellar ministry. Pray especially for Melissa and Tiffany, two women that we are starting to get to know a bit better, both with difficult home situations.
- The new home fellowship group that we are just beginning. What started as a way to get a few of us who live in Portland together has snowballed into potentially two separate groups of people seeking to deepen their relationship with Christ and share life with each other.
- Per as he completes the ordination process.
- The continued growth of partners in this ministry. We still need some additional funding in order to continue this critical work. Pray for an additional \$500 per month.
- The many in Maine who are already struggling to heat their homes through the northern New England winter. With the high cost of heating oil (by far the most common fuel here), the state expects more than 50,000 people to need more than \$40 million dollars in assistance to heat their homes this winter.

## FAITH

As you may have picked up in this Almquist Page, we have recently been reminded about the struggle with faith that we all have. God, in his grace, calls us to faith in him and offers us the blessings of a relationship with him. Yet even those of us who are Christians, who trust in Christ and know that we receive all through him, even we struggle at times. Much the same as Peter, who while walking on the water looked around and realized what was happening and held out his hands to Jesus to be saved, we look to him and know he is Lord and can handle it, yet we still test him, "That's great Lord, but I'll just do this small thing to make me feel safe."

The Bible reminds us that this is part of our fallen human nature. And throughout the Bible we are told that despite this we can still come to him holy and blameless with great joy through Christ. What a wonder it is that the Lord of all things loves each of us faltering, wayward children enough to promise never to leave. What a joy to know that our heavenly Father takes delight in the misshapen offerings we bring, much as an earthly parent delights in the unidentifiable picture drawn by their 3-year old child.



Scotty celebrating his first birthday!

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