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First Presbyterian Church of Greenville
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Title: *We Could Be Dancing (Yeah!)*
Text: Colossians 3:1-4, 15-17, *The Message*

So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.

Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. Meanwhile, be content with obscurity, like Christ.

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

- Colossians 3:1-4, 15-17

Friendship is among one of the greatest of life's joys. There are those moments in life that will be imprinted in our minds forever – experiences with those whom we love. Our friends and our community of faith help us to learn from our mistakes, to live faithfully, to dance, to remember who we are: (and who are we?) we are children of God – we are God's beloved. Jesus says: “You (You, David Grant) are the Light of the world. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”

David Grant, I am sure that there are many people to whom you are thankful for who have brought you to this special, profound and meaningful time in your life – the day of your baptism. Those who have encouraged you. Those who have taught you, those who have given advice that you will never forget.

David Grant, the support of friends and family has taught me this: We are all riding on the shoulders of others; they carry us on their shoulders so we can see life!¹

We need our friends – we need community – so we can see life... and so we can live our lives to our greatest potential. We need the church to help us spiritually to put things in proper perspective. The New Testament lesson offers insight: “Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.” We simply cannot do this by ourselves; we need our friends in the church to help us to do this!

Jesus is always paying attention to what is right in front of him. He notices people: he sees and feels what is going on. His eyes are wide open.

Jesus appears, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wants John the Baptist to baptize him. John objects, "I'm the one who needs to be baptized, not you!"

Jesus does not baptize himself. He knows you do not give to yourself the grace of God. The grace of God is a gift that is given to us by God.

Jesus insists. "Do it. God's work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together right now in this baptism." So John does it.

When we think about the miracles of Jesus Christ, I think most people tend to think about the extraordinary quality of these miracles. And they are extraordinary! Yet – I wonder how many of Jesus' miracles happened simply because he paid attention. When a person makes their grief known in community and another person pays attention and gives that person the time of day, I truly believe that healing is already taking place. In the book of Mark, a leper approaches Jesus wanting to be cleansed; Jesus does not magically heal the person as I read it. “Jesus is deeply moved, he touches him...” Jesus is mindful of the leper; he pays attention to him.

Why is it so hard to pay attention?

David Grant, I must admit that I struggle with this. It can become so easy to attend to the business of the day, the daily routines and schedule. It is a common human struggle: to develop a rhythm in life – a normal way of doing things – which can lead us to shuffling along in life, self-absorbed in the things that are right in front of us.

¹ Insight given from William Barclay's *Autobiography*.

“Don't shuffle along,” Paul says “...eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.”

It takes the grace and mercy of Christ to lead us to live our lives with eyes wide open – singing our hearts out to God – dancing with joy and freedom – building up our community and world!

David Grant – notice the things that are right in front of you right now. Notice the gifts of friends and family, the gift of the church... What are the other gifts God has given you to do God's good work in the world?

Along with all the great miracles in the bible, let us not forget the greatest miracle of all. When we think of miracles, most tend to think of the healings of disease or Jesus' walking on water.

And yet - “The miracle is not to walk on water. The miracle is to walk on the green earth, dwelling deeply in the present moment and feeling truly alive.”²

When we know this – not just hear it! – but embrace it! – and live it!... our step changes from shuffling to dancing!

Let's not just shuffle along with our eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of us. What God really wants for us to do is: dance, sing, love God and others with your eyes wide open to God's grace!

In some cultures, if you are disheartened or depressed, and you go to a local healer, they'll ask you one of four questions:

When in your life did you stop singing?

When in your life did you stop dancing?

When in your life did you stop being enchanted by stories?

When in your life did you stop being enchanted by your own life story?³

² Thich Naht Hanh. *Coming Home*.

³ Angeles Arrien, from *The Four-Fold Way*TM: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary

Joy lies at the heart of the church... and joy is what lies at the heart of our worship. We encourage each other to be mindful and prayerful... to sing... to dance... to be enchanted by stories... to be enchanted with the story of the Gospel.

When people look at the church – when they look at our lives as individuals – they should be able to see that joy lies at the core of who we are!

Paul says: “Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other...And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.”

David Grant, I thank God for you. In confirmation class, I could see that you have extraordinary gifts; above all you are a just a good person. You are thoughtful and kind. The world needs good people like you. May the love of God, the compassion of Christ, and the creativity of the Holy Spirit be with you this day and forevermore.