

Meet Mac MacCallum: New Pastor at Grace Family Fellowship

Greg "Mac" MacCallum is the new pastor at Grace Family Fellowship church. He arrived with his family- wife Julie and children; daughter Jaelynne, 17, and sons Luke, 15 and David, 9. The MacCallums are currently in the process of moving into the home they just purchased, formerly the Old Mill House Inn, and spent Spring Break unpacking boxes and getting settled.

"Vernonia is a great town, says Mac. "We love it here."

Mac is originally from Pendleton and has a Seminary Degree in Pastoral Studies from Multnomah University in Portland; Julie is from Hermiston and has a Bachelors Degree in Graphic Communication. The MacCallums moved from Helix, OR where Mac was the pastor for the last five years. Prior to Helix, Mac was a pastor in Eddyville, OR for eight years. Both were small churches and Mac seems to be very comfortable in a small, rural church and community.

"Eddyville is between Newport and Corvallis-a logging town like Vernonia," says Mac. "Grace Community Fellowship is a little bigger than the churches I've been at before, but I'll pretty much have the same approach to ministry and personal style that I've used at the previous places I've been. It's a terrific fit. This is a wonderful community with caring and loving people. And then, obviously at our church, too- a great group of people to work with

and enjoy the grace of god together."

Mac says his approach to being a pastor is to be a shepherding type of teacher who builds relationships and through those relationships, he can disciple people in God's word. "Not so much to learn the facts about the bible, but as transformation in their lives-to lead people into a closer relationship with God," says Mac. "Help them connect with God so they can be changed by the power of God."

Mac says his work at Grace Family Fellowship does include a little more administrative work and working more with staff and other church leaders than in his previous churches. "It's a very friendly atmosphere," says Mac. "It was clear when we got here that when they decided to rename the church Grace Family Fellowship that was a good name because all three of those elements are prevalent. It's really defined by good fellowship and has a family atmosphere and everything we do is about grace. About grace for each other and grace in our own lives."

Julie added that building relationships has always been Mac's goal. "He does that by meeting people's needs and working alongside them. There's a saying, 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care,' that has always been how Mac

has pastored. He doesn't like to wait for people to come into the church, he likes to see where the needs are and how we can contribute and serve the community."

Mac agreed with Julie. "I don't just do my work in the church. I like to

vice. "I'm not big on focusing on official membership," says Mac. "We pretty much consider everyone that comes as part of the family. For some people it's important to have the piece of paper that says they're a member and we understand that, but that is not our focus."

Mac says Grace Family Fellowship has an active youth group led by Mark Brown. Brown also organizes the music for Sunday services. The MacCallums also mentioned new, small, weeknight bible study groups that meet in people's homes; they currently have four groups in place with the hope of having ten by the end of the year. The MacCallums were also excited to know their church facility has hosted the Summer Meals Program for the last two summers and are looking forward to Vacation Bible School this June 19, 20 and 22.

The MacCallums are really trying to fit into both the church community and the community as a whole. Jaylynn and Luke both played JV basketball for the VHS Loggers this past year. Luke is looking forward to the upcoming football season.

Mac has been participating in weekly Thursday lunches where all the pastors from all the churches gather. Julie has the new bed and breakfast. Grace Family Fellowship worked with the Vernonia Christian Church to provide activities for families this past Halloween. The MacCallums will also be participating in "Make Vernonia Shine Day" on April 12, partnering with other church congregations to spruce up the Vernonia Community Learning Center.

For the MacCallums the entire community is important. "I hope that all of the churches can find ways to work together towards the common goal," says Mac. Julie agrees. "We're trying to build relationships and build trust and find ways to help each other out."

"It's going to take some time," says Mac. "We understand that. If we take one step at time maybe we can all head in the same direction."

"I just want the community to hear from me that we are here for them," said Mac in closing. "We have a comfortable atmosphere at the church and want everybody to feel welcome. It's not like they have to be a certain way or look a certain way to come in and fit in. If people come and check it out and see what it is all about I think they will feel comfortable and enjoy it."



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