

gracepoint grows in Pittsboro

By Kevin Sonney

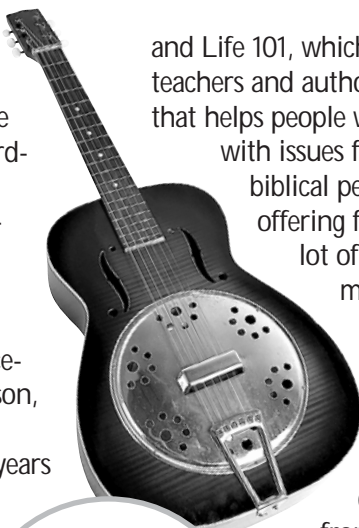
gracepoint has a 21st Century edge. From the moment you walk in, you sense something is different. A neon coffee cup sign in the window warmly welcomes visitors. The coffee bar and café tables exude a feeling of comfort. James Taylor and Michael W. Smith videos on a big screen give you a hint that you are not in a typical, "church."

Yes, gracepoint (with a lower case "g") is a church. It's not the bricks and mortar that define it, it's the welcoming culture. "We have a vision to provide a venue for music, movies, conferences, and worship," says gracepoint Pastor Terry Dorsey. The new location at 1089 East Street in is a small version of what Dorsey plans to build in Pittsboro.

For more than three years, gracepoint has offered events like the SoulJourn Music Fest and the Fall

Harvest party that reflects a faith community with an outward focus. There are plans to add a small recording studio that will enable bands to produce live recordings of their shows and offer CD's for the conference speakers.

One of the regulars at gracepoint has been Jim Abrahamson, founder of Chapel Hill Bible Church. With more than 30 years of teaching under his belt, Jim likes the more intimate setting of a coffee house that allows for interaction while he challenges people with his messages. "I resonate with the gracepoint mission to teach biblical and theological literacy in a laid back style that gets people involved," said Abrahamson. Every summer gracepoint offers Faith



The church will feature open jam nights on the first and third Fridays of the month beginning April 3.

and Life 101, which is a dialog with teachers and authors like Abrahamson that helps people who want to wrestle with issues from an informed biblical perspective. "We are offering folks depth without a lot of traditionalism in

more of a living room setting, which we realize is not for everyone," Dorsey said.

Martha Mills came to gracepoint from a traditional church in Chapel Hill, and has not looked back. "I was on every committee, and rarely missed worship, but I was just spinning my wheels," Mills said. Reluctant at first about the casual atmosphere at gracepoint, Mills soon found herself growing in ways she never imagined and is now part of the leadership team that oversees the mission.

"We sometimes scare more traditional church folks away, but the few like me who stick around discover gifts and talents they never knew they had," Mills said.

gracepoint also has a unique team dynamic. Team members from management to media are challenged to find a focus of ministry that benefits Pittsboro and not just gracepoint. Much like small groups, team members share their spiritual highs and lows and

work on projects like the upcoming Earth Day Celebration, complete with an adoption day and pet food drive to benefit CORA. "I spent more than 30 years in the Baptist Church, and I still love those folks, but now gracepoint fills a spiritual hunger in me in a big way," said Jackie Collins, a member of gracepoint's Creation Care Team. Those who visit gracepoint are not expected to give offerings or serve on a team. Dorsey added, "We prefer that they visit and learn about the mission, the vision and the DNA for a year before they commit, although some jump right in and get involved."

Among some of the upcoming gracepoint events are a dance for high school students on Friday, March 13 at 8 p.m., a Women's Self Defense Workshop on Saturday, March 14 at 10 a.m., Open Jam Nights for musicians on the first and third Fridays of the month beginning Friday, April 3, and the Earth/Adoption Day on Saturday, April 25 at 10 a.m.

Sunday mornings include God's Kids Gone Wild for all ages, the SoulJourn Café's for adults at 9:35 a.m., and Engaging Worship with music and media at 10:20 a.m. Call gracepoint at 542-3244 or check out www.gracepointcommunity.org.

Kevin Sonney is a Boy Scout leader and an information technology consultant with over 18 years in the computer industry. He is the founder of Dark Canvas Media and the sound expert at SoulJourn Media.

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