

amazing

IN YOUR LIFE | IN OUR COMMUNITY | IN THE WORLD

Grace

A monthly publication for members and friends of Grace Presbyterian Church in Walnut Creek, California

August 2019

MY FAITH JOURNEY

Proverbs 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

by Reta Wilcox

I grew up in the church office. My mother was the church secretary and I had to check in there every day after school. On Sundays we went to church again. Yes, this is the faith journey of a lifelong Presbyterian.

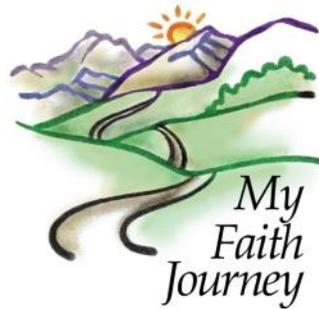
At first “faith” and “the church” were interchangeable in my mind, both meant **stability and comfort**. I went to Sunday school and learned Bible stories from flannel graph presentations. At camp I memorized Bible verses. I “spoke my piece” on Children’s Day. I officially “joined the church” at age 12 and could then take Communion. I did not question the way, and the truth, and the light, or that on Wednesday evenings we went to the potluck supper.

As a teenager I learned faith and the church presented a **challenge** by demanding a commitment to social justice. This was the civil rights era, and we were eager to right the wrongs of history. We collected books for schools in the south. We listened to Dr. Martin Luther King preach. I realized that true faith could be about disruption rather than stability and danger rather than comfort. I absorbed a forever lesson, that a Christian helped the oppressed.

Throughout my adult life I’ve had occasion to move frequently and learned again and again that faith and the church provided **community**. I’ve attended churches different in size and scope: a tiny chapel on an Army post, a thriving suburban church of young families, a towering landmark in New York City. All offered welcome, a place to contribute, friends with shared faith and values.

Now I’ve retired, and somehow I spend a good many afternoons checking in at the church office. On Sundays I go to church again. There is tremendous **comfort** in the familiar worship, the hymns, the prayers. There is tremendous **challenge** as we strive to be inclusive and confront social problems. There is tremendous support from a **loving community**. Faith is still my “shelter from the stormy blast” and the church “my eternal home.”

While we search for a Senior Pastor we will feature stories from individual members about their faith journeys in the space usually reserved for the “pastor’s letter.” If you would be willing to write your experiences for publication please contact me, Reta Wilcox, or the church office at 925-935-2100 or e-mail gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Passionate Worship/.....2
Guest Preachers, PNC News, Save the Dates for Fall Activities, Men’s Club
- What’s Next at Grace.....3
- Calendar4
- New Members.....5
- Risk-Taking Mission and Extravagant Generosity6
CCIC, Food Bank, Notes from our Treasurer, School Supplies Drive
- Grace News.....7
- Mailer Pg.8
Hymn Sing and Ice Cream Social with special guest, Hymn Writer Barbara Hamm.

SUNDAY WORSHIP
10:00 AM Sanctuary
11:00 AM Fellowship Time
gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com
gracewc.org

PASTORS AND STAFF:
Assoc. Pastor/Music Director
Karen Hastings-Flegel
Pastors Emeriti
Charie Reid and Robert Williams
Parish Associate: Diana Barkley
Office Manager: Judy Williams
Treasurer: Linda Neyer
Asst. Treasurer: Geri Rentz
Financial Scty: Jennifer Wallace
Headshot Photos: Carol King

**All Articles must be submitted
by August 19
to be included in the next issue.**



A Few Words About Guest Preachers

Grace Church is experiencing a **period of refreshment** when we are **inviting a variety of speakers to our pulpit.**

In June and July we have heard from some dear favorites: Pastor Emerita Charie Reid, Associate Pastor Karen Hastings-Flegel, and Christian Educator Bob Flegel. We also welcomed our warm and caring neighbor Rev. Cindy Towle Kephart and Rev. Randy Young, an outstanding presenter with a special musical style.

In August we look forward to seeing Rev. Denia Segrest, our former intern and forever friend, and Rev. Teresa Chávez Saucedá. Special thanks to Geri Rentz who is booking our awesome array of guests.

***August 2019 Sunday Guest Preachers
10:00 AM in the Sanctuary***

August 4



The **Rev. Cindy Towle Kephart** will finish up her sermon series on the wisdom of the psalms. Pastor Karen will pick appropriate music to complement the service. Communion will be served.

August 11

Our former Pastor Intern, and a favorite in the pulpit, the **Rev. Denia Segrest** returns to preach on scriptures: Acts 8:26 and Isaiah 56:1-8.



August 18

Pastor Emerita, the Rev. Charie Reid will bless us with her wisdom on this Sunday.



August 25



Welcome to the **Rev. Teresa Chávez Saucedá PH.D.**, who brings her experience in a variety of ministry settings, including hospice ministry, community ministry with immigrants in San Francisco, and denominational ministry, as Associate for Racial Justice Advocacy in the mission agency of the PCUSA. She is a member of San Francisco Presbytery and serves as Parish Associate for Community Presbyterian Church in Pittsburg, CA.

PNC News

By Geri Rentz, Moderator PNC



PASTOR
Nominating Committee

On June 23, the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) met with Rev. InHo Kim, of the Committee on Ministry (COM) for training on completing our Ministry Information Form (MIF), the first step on our road to searching for a new Senior Pastor. The MIF introduces Grace Church to potential candidates and puts forth what we are seeking in a Senior Pastor.

At our initial meeting we discussed how to incorporate the results of the Mission Study Report. For the next two weeks, **we worked to complete the MIF in time for Session review and approval at the July 24 meeting.** After Session approves the MIF, it will be submitted to COM for review and approval. Upon their approval, our search document will be uploaded to the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) for access by internet to ministers in search of a call. **We will keep you up to date as to our progress in each issue of Grace in the World.**

Save the dates: September 8 for Homecoming! Details are in the works for fun after church activities.

Wednesday Bible Study will resume Sept. 11 at 10 AM on the Book of Titus chapter 1. Led by Pastor Karen.

Circles resume second week of September. Esther, Sept. 10 at 10 AM; Susanna, Sept. 13 at 9:30 AM. All women are welcome.

Choirs resume on Thurs., Sept. 5. Bell rehearsals are 6:00-6:55 PM, vocal rehearsals are 7:00-8:30 PM.

Peacemaking Sunday, Sept. 22. Plans TBA

World Communion, Sunday, Oct. 6. Plans TBA

Harvest Thank You, Sunday Oct. 20. Luncheon and activities after church.



Men's Club Meeting; September 13th, 10 AM

In a culture with conflicting claims, how do you discern what is true?

All men are invited to share what works for them in making choices that ring true. Our faith proclaims, **"you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free!"**



Please invite another man to come for a discussion that will be healthy and helpful in making life's decisions. You have the month of August to reflect on your answer and to invite a friend. Bob Williams, 925-935-7377. See you in September.

You might be wondering how the church is managing without a senior or interim pastor. For several weeks Elders have been discussing how best to serve the Church and continue the search for a Senior Pastor. The Session working with Associate Pastor Karen Hastings Fligel and Office Manager Judy Williams have developed a Transition Team and plan to take us to the end of 2019. Part of our planning includes a regular review of how well this Transition Team is meeting the needs defined in the plan. We will also be discussing options to better serve Church needs including the hiring of an Interim Pastor and/or Leader.

At the Session Meeting, Wednesday, June 26th, The Session authorized a Transition Team that will provide pastoral and administrative structure and support to Grace Church through the end of 2019. The Grace Transition Team will include members of Session Executive: Earnie Cunningham, Liz Bradner, Sharon Lyons, Susan Blair; Associate Pastor Karen Hastings-Flegel; Clerk of Session, Reta Wilcox; and Treasurers, Linda Neyer and Geri Rentz.

The focus of the Transition Team is to maintain a stable and consistent environment for our Church to meet the needs of the congregation and friends of Grace Church. They will prioritize activities and streamline work to aid Pastor Karen and Office Manager Judy who support all pastoral and administrative functions of the church. **Specifically, the Team will maintain and support:**

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

Grace Church is committed to making every Sunday an inspirational experience with insightful and informative sermons, sermon discussions, and lovely fellowship social times. Some of our smaller groups and special outreach events will 'take a pause' or be combined with our Sunday Celebrations to support our plans to enhance Sunday worship through Sunday fellowship celebrations. Sunday worship pulpit supply is being obtained and organized by Geri Rentz.

PASTORAL CARE

Karen has organized four new Home Communion serving teams to assist her in serving those who cannot come to church on Sundays. In addition, Deacons will step up their involvement in pastoral care, and the office volunteers will make friendly 'caring calls' under the direction of Karen.

COMMUNICATION

A new and modern telephone system will be installed soon which will enhance our abilities with the telephone and make it easier for those wishing to leaving messages. More notifications will be broadcast through email, using Constant Contact. Grace in the World Newsletter will continue to be a major communication tool. For the remainder of this year, a feature replacing the pastor letter in Grace in the World will be the sharing of individual members' faith journeys. Stay tuned for these interesting and inspirational stories.

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship campaign and your pledges provide the main source of church income that make up the operating budget. The Transition Team will work in conjunction with the Discipleship Department to put forth a fall campaign to create a budget for 2020.

FACILITIES USE AND MAINTENANCE

The Continued care and maintenance of our campus is important to the Church. Facilities rentals provide an important source of income to the Church. Their presence helps us meet our annual Budget.

The Pastoral Nominating Committee is in place and has been trained. They are already meeting and working on the Ministry Information Form (MIF), which is the first step in identifying the credentials needed for a Senior Pastor. The current target for completion of the MIF is to have it presented to the July Session Meeting in anticipation of forwarding it to the Committee on Ministry for Approval. Session and the Transition Team are acutely aware of the importance of the Mission Statement of Grace Church "Guided by the Holy Spirit, with open minds and hearts we celebrate and share the love of Jesus Christ, and are instruments of God's grace, justice and peace."

We welcome your ongoing input and thank you for your faith and support!

Key to Rooms

C—Conference Room
 F—Fireside Room
 L—Library
 O—Oak Room
 S—Sanctuary
 9—Room 9
 Office Hrs:
 T— F 9 to 3 PM

Sunday, August 4

9AM W & M—C
 10AM Worship—S
 11AM Fellowship—F
 11:30 Sermon
 Discussion—L
 3PM Hymn Sing / Ice
 Cream Social —S, F
 7:30 AA—F

Monday, August 5

All Day Standing Ovations
 Theater Camp-O, F, S
 10AM Quilters—L
 10AM Prayers
 for Grace-S
 7PM Scouts, S, F

Tuesday, August 6

All Day Standing Ovations
 Theater Camp-O, F, S
 7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, August 7

All Day Standing Ovations
 Theater Camp-O, F, S
 11:15 Grief Support Grp-9
 Evening Perf.— O, S

Thursday, August 8

All Day Standing Ovations
 Theater Camp-O, F, S
 1PM Worship & Ed. —C
 Evening Perf.— O, S
 7:45 AA—F

Friday, August 9

All Day Standing Ovations
 Theater Camp-O, F, S

Saturday, August 10

Sunday, August 11

10AM Worship—S
 11:00AM Fellowship—F
 11:30 Sermon
 Discussion—L
 7:30 AA—F

Monday, August 12

10AM Needlers—L
 10AM Prayers
 for Grace-S
 7PM Scouts, S, F

Tuesday, August 13

7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, August 14

11:15 Grief Support Grp-9
 12PM Business—C

Thursday, August 15

All Day Standing Ovations
 Theater Camp-O, F, S
 7:45 AA—F

Friday, August 16

All Day Standing Ovations
 Theater Camp-O, F, S

Saturday, August 17

9-10AM Parkinson's
 Breakout—S, F, L
 10AM Parkinson's Meeting
 —O

Sunday, August 18

10AM Worship—S
 11AM Fellowship—F
 11:30 Sermon
 Discussion—L
 7:30 AA—F

Monday, August 19

10AM Quilters—L
 10AM Prayers
 for Grace-S
 7PM Scouts, S, F

Tuesday, August 20

7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, August 21

11:15 Grief Support Grp-9
 4PM Session Exec.—C

Thursday, August 22

9:15 GITW Folding—F
 12PM Deacons' —L
 7:45 AA—F

Friday, August 23

4PM Chess School—F, L

Saturday, August 24

Sunday, August 25

10AM Worship—S
 11AM Fellowship—F
 11:30 Sermon
 Discussion—L
 7:30 AA—F

Monday, August 26

10AM Needlers—L
 10AM Prayers
 for Grace-S
 7PM Scouts, S, F

Tuesday, August 27

7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, August 28

11:15 Grief Support Grp-9
 7PM Session Meeting—L

Thursday, August 29

7:45 AA—F

Friday, August 30

4PM Chess School—F, L

Saturday, August 31

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

by Carol King

On July 14 Pastor Karen introduced three new members to our congregation. In this month's *Grace in the World*, we are highlighting two new members, **Marianne Seals** and **Jean Irvine**. In the September issue, we will highlight **Mariane Anderson**.

Marianne Seals and her husband John took their goal to travel very seriously. After retiring from a 38-year career as a registered pediatric nurse, the couple sold their Sebastopol home, bought a super-size RV and began to travel. They visited 38 states during their more than 20 years as RVers.

"My favorites states were Texas and Southern California," said Marianne. "In Texas we could not locate a Catholic Church, so we worshiped at the Baptist Church. I fell in love with their Bible teaching and friendly people."

The couple eventually settled in Coarsegold (near Yosemite) in their RV. Then they began to focus on international travel, visiting 32 countries over the years. Marianne's favorites included Russia, China, and Africa, where they went on a safari.

Two years ago John passed away, after 57 years of marriage. Marianne recently moved to Rossmoor, to be near her children. David resides in Danville; Stephen lives in Cloverdale; and Richard lives in Oregon. Their family includes four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Marianne's hobbies are movies, reading, and Bible study. While attending a Rossmoor Bible group, Marianne met long-time Grace member Geri Rentz, who invited her to visit Grace Church. Last September was Marianne's first visit to Grace – and she's been attending services ever since. Marianne is a greeter and a member of Esther Circle.

Jean Irvine was born in Seattle, WA, but has lived all over the country as a former Navy wife. Prior to coming to Walnut Creek five years ago, Jean lived in Irvine, and was active in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach.

Many of her church activities involved her professional expertise. Jean is a retired registered nurse and licensed clinical social worker and diplomate. She practiced over 45 years, mostly in the field of mental health, chemical dependency, and geriatrics. While a member of the St. Andrews congregation, she was on the Mental Health Outreach Team, led workshops on Divorce Recovery, and also helped create a film on Divorce Recovery.

Jean moved to Rossmoor to be closer to her children and grandchildren; Diane resides in Livermore and Jim lives in Tracy. They share five grandchildren and one grand dog. "I see my family often and I love that," she said. Jean shares her home with her cat Olivia, "who is a lot of company."

Jean's hobbies include her book club and water aerobics. At Grace Church, Jean leads a Grief Group and participates in the Contra Costa Parkinson's Support Group also at Grace. In addition, she leads a Women's Support Group in her home.

"Grace Church was not hard to find after moving to Walnut Creek," she said. "I feel very much at home here."



Marianne Seals is a greeter and member of Esther Circle.



*Jean Irvine began her association with Grace several years ago as an Affiliate Member.**

** Affiliate members keep their membership at a "home church" while being in association with Grace Church. Want to keep your home church membership, but are attending Grace regularly? Speak to Pastor Karen about being an Affiliate Member of Grace Church*

RISK-TAKING MISSION AND SERVICE AND EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY

Contra Costa Interfaith Coalition News August Update

CCIC continues to collect household goods for distribution to those moving in to new housing in Contra Costa County. Keep bringing things to put under the table in the church office – I'll deliver all of it.

Sharon Lyons, CCIC Representative



Backpack Drive a Success

It's a big win for school-aged children in Contra Costa Interfaith Housing subsidized apartments in Pleasant Hill and Antioch. Throughout the month of July Grace members and friends brought in school supplies to aid these children (and their parents) as they prepare for another school year. Backpacks and school supplies were collected for students who will return to school in mid-August (what happened to back to school after Labor Day!!). The drive was spearheaded by Gail Peterson who will deliver the supplies at the end of July. **The average cost of outfitting an elementary aged student in basic supplies is well over \$100 presenting a burden for struggling families.** This cost doesn't include clothing, electronics or the money collected by the classrooms for basic supplies. Your generosity has again supplied abundantly proof of God's love and care for those in need. Extra supplies will be used for Home Work Club at each location during the school year. Thank you to all who donated!



The Dog Days of Summer

Food Bank News

During these lazy days of summer think about helping out with the food barrel. Children who don't get school meals sometimes go hungry. Families still struggle to put food on the table.

Possible items to purchase:

- 1 lb. pasta
- 1 jar/can spaghetti sauce
- 1 lb. egg noodles
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can tuna/meat
- 1 large box cereal
- 1 lb box saltines
- 1 lb box graham crackers
- 2 lb jar peanut butter
- 1 jar jelly
- 2 macaroni/cheese
- 2 cans pork/beans
- 2 package ramen soup
- 2-3 packages dried milk
- 6 cans soup
- 6 canned vegetables
- 6-9 cans of fruit

Thanks for your support during the summer months.

Pat Devine, Deacon

Treasurer's Q&A August 2019

By Linda Neyer

Question: We are over halfway thru the year. How is Grace doing financially?

Answer: As you might recall, we entered the calendar year 2019 with a budget deficit of \$39,154. This means we were expecting to spend more than the pledges, gifts, investment and other income we generate. Although we have approved budget deficits in the past, this was the largest in the past 10 years. We have almost always been able to overcome the gap thru increased giving, gifts or unexpected investment income. If we are not able to close this gap, we would need to consider using cash and investment resources.



We have been tracking very close to budget. However, with the departure of Pastor Tom, we expect to benefit by \$30,000 (his salary/benefits offset by costs of pulpit supply). This would get us within \$10,000 of being able to close our 'gap' for 2019. As our Associate Pastor Karen and Office Manager Judy with support from Session and key volunteers continue to provide Sunday Celebrations, Pastoral Care, and Communication, we hope you will prayerfully consider your gifts to Grace....whether they be volunteer support, mission or contributions.

Home Communion Volunteers Make First Home Visits

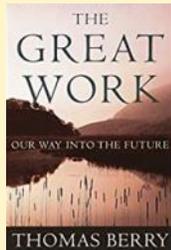
In early June four pairs of Home Communion servers were trained and have made their first visits furthering the reach of Grace's pastoral care ministry.

More teams will be trained in July. The qualifications, aside from the desire to serve our shut-in population, are past or present service as an elder or deacon. Questions - or do you want to be added to the list or know someone who might enjoy a visit? Just talk to Pastor Karen. Call her at 325-7742, or email (korgan81@yahoo.com).



Earth Care Team News

"The earth is a community of subjects, not a collection of objects," says Theologian/Geologist Thomas Berry in his book, "The Great Work." **Berry believes we are being called to participate in a "great work" during this time of transition in the history of the planet.**



Erudite, wise and ecumenical, he illuminates the path humanity needs to take in the realms of ethics, politics, economics, and education in order to live gently upon the earth with all other life forms. **The Earth Care Team will be holding a discussion of the book in the latter part of August.** We hope many of you will join our discussion of this important work! Check with Karen or Pat Devine Cummings for updates on the discussion.

Pat Devine, Earth Care Team Member

A Message From Ethel Wood

Prior to her passing on June 9, Ethel Wood wrote the following message to our congregation.



Dear Grace Friends,

Thank you for your cards, letters, and visits. I appreciate so much receiving your mail and visiting with you. My Grace friends are on my mind often. May God bless you.

Sincerely, Ethel Wood

In Memory of Ethel Wood
December 7, 1929 to June 9, 2019

A memorial service for Ethel will be held at Grace Church in the future.

There is a New Group in Town

This year the Boy Scouts of America opened their program to girls. In February, 10 girls and two uniformed leaders began meeting at Grace. Please stop by and see all the activity over 50 youth bring to our campus Monday nights.

*Yours in Scouting, Carol Parker
your Chartered Organization Rep.*

The Tree

by Angie D.J. Shin

**The sun,
In the days of June,
Did it shine so brilliantly
To teach us the meaning of darkest green.**

**The garden,
Finally lush green,
Became shade for the thirsty,
Imbuing this hard-hearted world
With beautiful color of all variety,
Left, one by one, as fallen leaves.**

The trees, in mourning, wailed, all winter.

**Long silence,
Since then, flowed;
When the springtime of hope returns,
once again,
Healing over deep wounds, like that
of cherished medals,
Then, like a miracle, on the limbs of trees,
Sprout tiny buds of fuzz
And grow, slowly, into leaves of radiant green.**

Heartfelt Thanks

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for your prayers, cards and notes. You helped me approach surgery with confidence, and to be patient during the healing process. I was so surprised and pleased to receive the beautiful bouquet of flowers. I'm so grateful for your support.

Blessings, Linda Hohenfeldt



Dear Grace Friends,

Our hearts have been warmed again and again by your prayers, cards and meals in response to Ken's recent back surgery. He is much improved. We felt your prayers and well wishes throughout the process and are very grateful for our Grace family's love and support.

Gratefully, Judy (and Ken) Williams

Grace Presbyterian Church
2100 Tice Valley Boulevard
Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Sunday Worship at 10 AM
www.gracewc.org
August 2019

Address Service Requested
Dated Material

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 241
Walnut Creek, CA

WELCOME STATEMENT

*We welcome and
celebrate all who join us*

—the young and the old,
the rich and the poor,
the gay and the straight,
the strong and the weak,
the meek and the brave—
and though we are
different one from
another, we are united
in loving and praising God
and in loving each other.



HYMN SING AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL **Special Guest — Hymn Writer Barbara Hamm** **Sunday, August 4 at 3:00 pm**

**All are invited to join us at Grace Presbyterian Church
2100 Tice Valley Blvd. Walnut Creek, CA 94595**

We welcome hymn writer Barbara Hamm as guest lecturer and music maker.

Join in the fun of singing and learning about some of Barbara's own hymns and some old favorites. She will also offer a selection of Taize hymns. Afterward stay and socialize and create an ice cream sundae of your own design.

Dr. Hamm began playing the piano as a young girl, learning to improvise on gospel hymns at a small Baptist church in the Midwest, an experience that led to a lifetime of music making in the church.

She has served as Director of Music at various churches for 38 years, is a recognized and published author of numerous hymns and has done workshops at the national, regional, as well as the local level.

The event is free and no rsvp is necessary.

