

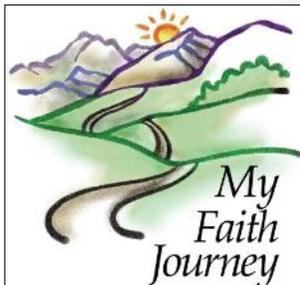
amazing

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

February 2020



By Grace Elder Lynn Lyons

My faith story starts before I was born! My mother was 1st generation American, my Grandparents having emigrated from Greece when they were in their youth. Being immigrants, my grandparents religious and social lives centered amidst the Greek immigrants. As such, my mother's



religious and social life was the same. When my mother met and decided to marry my father (an Irish Catholic) this caused quite the ruckus in the household.

My parents were married in the Greek Orthodox Church and decided to raise both myself and my older sister in the Greek Orthodox faith. We lived on Long Island in New York and both my father and mother participated in the beginnings of the St. Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church. Although my father did not attend weekly services, he was part of many fundraisers and events that the church sponsored.

What I remember from being a young girl in the church was that the service was held (for the most part) in Greek. We had small books in which we could follow along and read the translation. To this day I have fond memories of the richness of the service, the sounds, smells and colors.

In my adult years I continued to be a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. I found then (as I do now) that the richness in being a member was being involved in the church and volunteering. So, I was part of the "Young Adults" group, volunteering and attending retreats.

When I moved from Oakland to Sonoma my connection with the Greek Church became distant. After Matt & I were married I moved to Fremont and God spoke to me about being closer and I sought out to re-connect to a church family. I knew myself well enough to know that I needed a church that I could participate with and not just sit in a pew on Sunday. I knew that to make that happen I needed a nearby church. I began to seek where I should go and decided I would look into the Catholic church. I felt an affinity for the Catholic Church – much of the service and beliefs were similar. I started attending mass at St. Josephs and felt so very much at home. I was a Eucharistic Minister & a Lector there!

When Matt & I moved from Fremont to Walnut Creek I sought out where I might go to church. I looked for my church family first in the Catholic Churches in and around Walnut Creek however I did not feel at home. I would come to Grace from time to time with Sharon & Don (my in-laws) and I was always moved by the warmth, friendliness and connection I felt with people here. Along the way I became ill with my kidney failure and I always am grateful for the prayers of the members and the visits I received from Roger (even though I was not a member!).

I realized finally that this was my church home – and while God has led me from church to church the one thing I know in each of these places is that I felt God's presence both in the church and in my life at each of them.

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Karen Hastings-Flegel Recital

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:00 AM Sanctuary

11:00 AM Fellowship Time

Office Hrs. Tues - Fri 9-3

gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com

website: gracewc.org

925-935-2100

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 February 17 to be included in the next issue.



Welcome to our Guest Preachers

As our church continues to search for a new pastor, we are enjoying a period of refreshment when we are inviting a variety of guest speakers to our pulpit. Special thanks to Geri Rentz who books our guests. Let's take advantage of both familiar and fresh voices to increase our understanding of God's word, to broaden our perspective about worship, and to enjoy a bit of a surprise every Sunday!

Feb. 2020 Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM

Feb. 2 Souper Bowl and Scout Sunday
Clarita Wooldridge will preach *Spirit of the Living God—Fall A-fresh on Me!* on this Communion Sunday. Ms. Wooldridge holds a Master of Divinity degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary. She is a past Deacon in her Church, a Stephen Minister, and a DASD Spiritual Director, leading workshops/seminars and has a private practice in this discipline. She is a Coordinator and Leader for a weekly senior's program at LOPC.

Feb. 9 Charie Reid will preach Good News for Today! based on Matt. 4:12-17. Pastor Emerita at Grace Church, Charie was the founding Director of Grace Preschool in 1971. She joined the church staff, in 1974, was ordained in 1978, and served as Associate Pastor until retiring March 31, 2013. She moderates Session for Elmhurst PC in Oakland, and is liaison for the Pastor Nominating Committee at First Pres Berkeley.



Feb. 16 Rev. Terry Dwyer will preach *Spiritual Blessings in Christ* based on Ps 24:1-10 and Eph. 1:3-14. Terry is an ordained Presbyterian pastor and an APC (Association of Professional Chaplains) Board Certified Chaplain. Terry serves as a chaplain for Kaiser in Oakland and Richmond. He was called into ministry after a prior career in business and received his MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2012.



Feb. 23 Joel Mackey will preach.



TRIGGER: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence
What Can we do about it?
Wed., Feb. 12
Free showings:
1:30 & 7:00—Oak Rm
 Discussions after each showing.

After the film a discussion will be facilitated by the Rev. Will McGarvey, Executive Director of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County (at 1:30) and the Rev. Karen Hastings-Flegel (at 7:00).

The film is recommended by the national Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is described thus: "The *Trigger* documentary frames gun violence as a "disaster" and "public health" issue. It examines how one shooting impacts individuals, families and communities and gives voice to the questions and insights that arise. In the documentary, all those scarred by gun violence arrived at the question, "Why did this happen to us?"

Organ Recital

Grace's church organist, Karen Hastings-Flegel, will give a recital on Saturday February 22 at 2:00 p.m.

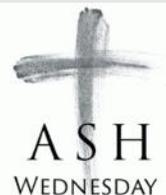


Karen holds a doctorate in organ performance from Stanford University and studied in Paris with legendary French composer, Jean Langlais. The program includes music from the Renaissance through the 20th century. Highlights include Langlais's amusing *Scherzo-Cats* (never heard during worship!) and Epilogue (pedal solo in 1-4 parts), César Franck's magnificent *Choral No. 3*, and J.S. Bach's iconic *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor*.

A reception will follow in the Fireside Room. The recital is free and Karen hopes you will bring a friend or neighbor to enjoy a nice afternoon.

Feb. 26 Ash Wednesday, 4:00 p.m. – First day of Lent service includes Imposition of Ashes, confession, music and singing. Related Scriptures: Genesis 3:19; Ps. 51.

Ash Wednesday is an important first step in our Lenten journey towards Good Friday and Easter. Ashes on the forehead remind us of our humanity and mortality, of repentance and turning toward God. The ashes are traditionally made by burning palms from last year's Palm Sunday. Please join us for a meaningful Ash Wednesday service in the Sanctuary.



Mission Study in Action.... How are we doing?

About the same time as you receive this newsletter you will have received a 2019 Annual Report at the January 26 congregational meeting. (Missed it? Copies of the Annual Report are available from the church office.)

The 2019 Annual Report, to be distributed on Sunday, January 26 at the Congregational Meeting, details how well we've done all year, VERY WELL considering we are in transition between senior pastors! I urge you to take time to study the report and recognize how much goes on "behind-the-scenes", and then take time to thank Pastor Karen, Office Manager Judy Williams, and the Session, Deacons, Mission Study Team, Pastor Nominating Committee, Transition Team, Choirs, Office, Fellowship and other volunteers who have contributed far beyond the call of duty.

In 2020 we welcome new session members and new deacons because terms have rotated. We welcome a new Church Nominating Committee who will be recruiting members of a new Outreach Task Force.

The Transition Team welcomes the new chairs of session departments: Worship & Education, *Rosalyn Cannelora*, Witness and Ministry, *Marlene Hall*, Discipleship, *Sara Allen*, and Business, *Geri Rentz*. *Jan Zimmerman* will continue to represent the Deacons.

Our New Year's resolution is to continue to work together in harmony, looking forward while keeping the church stable. If anyone would like a copy of the Annual Report sent to them, please email the office at gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com or call 925-935-2100 and one will be mailed to you.

Reta Wilcox for the Transition Team



Pastor Search Update by PNC

Your Pastor Nominating Committee is still hard at work at the task of selecting a new pastor for Grace Church.

The committee will interview a candidate soon. The candidate will also preach at a neutral location where the committee will be present. If the candidate is desirable our next step will be to seek approval from the Committee on Ministry. If that approval is given, more negotiations can take place. We can't report a lot more than this at this point, but rest assured that progress is being made on this important endeavor. Know that your PNC is a cooperative, collaborative and purposeful group with Grace Church's best interests at heart. Stay tuned for more information.

by Geri Rentz, Chair PNC



P A S T O R
Nominating Committee

Men's Club Meeting

*Friday, February 14,
10:00 am*



At the February meeting participants are invited to engage in a presentation of periodicals that publish positive perspectives. Bring a magazine that has an article or series that strengthens faith for living a Christian life in an age of conflict and confusion. Three samples from our denomination: *Presbyterian Outlook*, *Presbyterians Today* and *Grace in the World* will be on display.

A good time of shared wisdom is on the agenda. **Grace Men's Club invites others to join our support group that deals with fellowship and matters of faith and service.** Optional lunch follows at the Rossmoor Diner. Questions or suggestions may be directed to Bob Williams, 925-935-7377.

Wednesday Bible Study to Focus on Paul

In February, the Bible Study will continue with the study of Luke's story of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. The class will be led by Bob Flegel (M.Div. Princeton) and Pastor Karen Hastings-Flegel.

Everyone is invited to join us for these discussions. **We meet in the Library each Wednesday from 10:00-11:00.**



Key to Rooms

- C—Conference Room
- F—Fireside Room
- L—Library
- O—Oak Room
- S—Sanctuary
- 9—Room 9

AARP Tax Aide

Beginning on February 3, AARP Tax Aide will return to Grace to provide tax preparation service to lower income seniors and others. They will be at Grace from 9 to 2 on Mondays and Tuesdays through April 14, 2020.

For appointments: 925-405-6278.
The church office cannot make appointments.

For additional locations please visit www.aarptaxaide.com

Sunday, Feb. 2
9AM Bells warmup—S
10AM Worship—S
11AM Fellowship—F
11:30 Sermon
Discussion—L
11:30 Earth Care Team—S
7:30 AA—F

Monday, Feb. 3
Office is closed
Tax Aide—L
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
10AM Needle Arts/Crafts—L
7PM Scouts—S, F

Tuesday, Feb. 4
Tax Aide—L
9AM Relevant Theology—L
7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, Feb. 5
10AM Bible Study—L
11:15 Grief Support Grp—O
1:30 Parkinson's Grp—F

Thursday, Feb. 6
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
6PM Bell Rehearsal—S
7PM Choir Rehearsal—S
7:45 AA—F

Friday, Feb. 7
4PM Chess School F, L

Saturday, Feb. 1
11AM Standing Ovations—O
7PM PAS Student Concert—S

Saturday, Feb. 8
11AM Standing Ovations—S

Sunday, Feb. 9
9AM Choir Warmup—S
10AM Worship—S
11AM Fellowship—F
11:30 Sermon
Discussion—L
7:30 AA—F

Monday, Feb. 10
Office is closed
Tax Aide—L
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
10AM Needle Arts/Crafts—L
7PM Scouts—S, F

Tuesday, Feb. 11
Tax Aide—L
9AM Relevant Theology—L
10AM Esther Circle—F
7PM PAS Concert—S
7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, Feb. 12
10AM Bible Study—L
11:15 Grief Support Grp—O
1:30 Gun Violence Film & discussion—O
1:30 Parkinson's Grp—F
3:00 PM Worship & Ed.—C
7PM Gun Violence Film & discussion—O

Thursday, Feb. 13
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
6PM Bell Rehearsal—S
7PM Choir Rehearsal—S
7:45 AA—F

Friday, Feb. 14
9:30 Susanna Circle—F
10AM Men's Club—L
4PM Chess School F, L

Saturday, Feb. 15
9-10AM Parkinson's
Breakout—S, F, L
10AM Parkinson's
Meeting—O
11AM Standing Ov.—Break

Sunday, Feb. 16
9AM Choir Warmup—S
10AM Worship—S
11AM Fellowship—F
11:30 Sermon
Discussion—L
7:30 AA—F

Monday, Feb. 17
Office is closed
Tax Aide—L
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
10AM Needle Arts/Crafts—L
7PM Scouts—S, F, L

Tuesday, Feb. 18
Tax Aide—L
9AM Relevant Theology—L
11AM Deacons—L
7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, Feb. 19
10AM Bible Study—L
11:15 Grief Support Grp—O
1:30 Parkinson's Grp—F
3PM Session Exec.—L

Thursday, Feb. 20
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
6PM Bell Rehearsal—S
7PM Choir Rehearsal—S
7:45 AA—F

Friday, Feb. 21
10:30 PAS Concert—S
4PM Chess School F, L

Saturday, Feb. 22
11AM Standing Ovations—O
2PM Organ Recital by
Karen Hastings-Flegel
Reception following
concert in the Fireside
Room.

Sunday, Feb. 23
9AM Choir Warmup—S
10AM Worship—S
11AM Fellowship—F
11:30 Sermon
Discussion—L
7:30 AA—F

Monday, Feb. 24
Office is closed
Tax Aide—L
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
10AM Needle Arts/Crafts—L
6:30 Scout Parents—L
7PM Scouts—S, F

Tuesday, Feb. 25
Tax Aide—L
9AM Relevant Theology—L
7:30 SUBUD Group—F

Wednesday, Jan 26
10AM Bible Study—L
11:15 Grief Support Grp—O
1:30 Parkinson's Grp—F
4PM Ash Wednesday
Worship—S
Beginning of Lent
7PM Session —L

Thursday, Feb. 27
9:15 GITW Folding—F
9:30 Parkinson's
Exercise—O
6PM Bell Rehearsal—S
7PM Choir Rehearsal—S
7:45 AA—F

Friday, Feb. 28
4PM Chess School F, L

Saturday, Feb. 29
11AM Standing Ovations—S
8AM Pancake Breakfast
—O

Welcome New Members

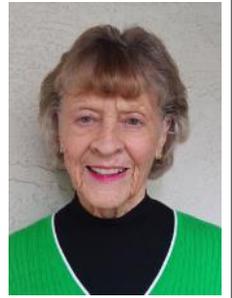
On Sunday, December 22, Grace Presbyterian Church had the pleasure of welcoming three new members to the church, Shirley Dal Porto, Nancy Lee and Judith Jones. We introduced you to Judith last month. This month we would like to introduce you to Shirley.

Shirley Dal Porto was born in Sacramento and raised on a sheep ranch outside of Rio Vista. She attended and graduated in 1957 from the University of California at Berkeley.

The same year as her college graduation, she married her husband, Don. The couple moved to Sunnyvale where they raised their two sons, Mark and Todd. The family lived there for 30 years. During that time Shirley taught elementary school then later became a travel agent.

Shirley and Don relocated to Discovery Bay where they lived for 17 years. Later they relocated to La Quinta, a resort town near Palm Desert, where they lived for 11 years before returning to the Bay Area.

Shirley has been a member of a Presbyterian Church since 1962. She was first ordained as an Elder during her tenure at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church and later served at Delta Community Presbyterian Church. She comes to Grace from Palm Desert Presbyterian Church. Welcome to Grace Shirley!



Special Sundays Recap

January 12 - Fourth Wiseman Play

Heartfelt Thanks to all who worked to bring us the wonderful play, The Fourth Wiseman, last Sunday, January 12. The production was months in the planning and rehearsing. A special Fellowship time was enjoyed after church. Much gratitude to Geri Rentz who led and directed the production, to Susan Blair for bringing the group the suggestion and for the wonderful artistic props, to guest Scott Snyder for his work in producing the sound effects and some of the props and to all the child and adult actors who brought the story to life. Much appreciation to Karen Hastings-Flegel for her leadership and vision.



Dave Fellner with "Obed" the camel.

January 19 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Another inspiring and moving sermon was delivered by former Grace Pastor Intern, Denia Segrest where Dr. King's work was honored. Pastor Denia states at the introduction to her sermon: "We honor Dr. King because, like Jesus, he knew that he would be killed for the doing the right thing, and he did it fiercely and publicly. Like Jesus, he was killed for speaking truth to the powerful and refusing to be silenced. Like Jesus, he aligned himself with the oppressed and challenged the system that pushed them down and kept them there. Dr. King took a deep breath, looked evil straight in the eye, and spoke truth unto death. We remember his vision. We remember his dream. We remember his courage. We honor his life and the difference he has made in the history of this nation that aspires to provide liberty and justice for all."



Denia Segrest



*....Until justice rolls
down like waters
and righteousness
like a mighty stream...*

Martin Luther King Jr.

Contra Costa Interfaith Coalition February Update

The calendars have been delivered. Thank you for bringing them to the church office and aren't you glad you had a place to put them where they will be used. That is what so much of CCIC is about. Furniture, household goods, linens, etc. all have place in the CCIC program. Since its inception in 1992, this organization has worked tirelessly to provide support of those moving into new housing space. Grace has been a big part of this program. So, keep cleaning out the cupboards of unused items – you get more cupboard space and CCIC passes on useable items to people who can use them. Donations of household items such as kitchen ware, linens and small appliances can always be brought to the church office.

Sharon Lyons, CCIC Representative



Fellowship Service in Real Need of Volunteers

Please consider serving on one of the teams that hosts Fellowship time - an important outreach to visitors and to our own members. The commitment is one Sunday per quarter, donating a food item and helping with setup and cleanup.



Contact Sara Allen at 925-296-0221 or allensa7@gmail.com.

Let's Tackle Hunger Together or Souper Bowl for Our Local Community

The holidays may be over but hunger is still present in our community. One in eight residents (Contra Costa-Solano counties) relies on the Food Bank for assistance.

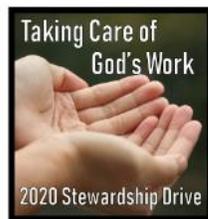


On February 2 we will observe "Souper Bowl"/Scout Sunday and encourage congregants to bring "dollars" or food to support the efforts of our local Food Bank.

Witness & Ministry Department

Our 2020 Stewardship Campaign Update

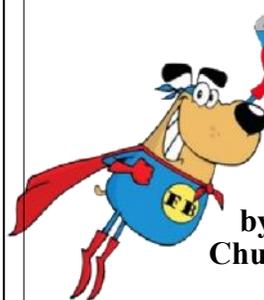
The Stewardship Campaign now stands at 80 pledges of a total of \$219,614. This compares to \$227,000 requested by the budget and \$226,770 in pledges last year.



Thank you to all those who have pledged. Giving envelopes are on the table in the back of the sanctuary for all those who have an envelope number, whether or not they have submitted a pledge for this year.

To date, the Christmas Joy offering has brought in \$3,647 in donations from Grace members and friends. The Giving Tree gift cards totaled \$335 and were donated to Contra Costa Interfaith Housing.

Contra Costa Food Bank News



At the time of this printing, January 21, the Food Bank just picked up another loaded barrel of food. **In 2019, over 641 pounds of food (534 meals) were donated by you, members and friends of Grace Church.**

Thank you for your generosity!

Consider bringing a can or box every time your visit church on a first Sunday. If most of you remember, we will fill the barrel again in no time.



New Address for Joy Maynes

4356 W. Ashlan Ave, #214
Fresno, CA 93722



In Memory of Grace Church Member

John Owen

March 19, 1934 to December 30, 2019



Grace Cooperative Preschool
31st Annual Pancake Breakfast
"Under the Sea"
Saturday, February 29, 2020
8:00-11:30 am
tickets \$5/adults, \$3/children
Raffle with a parade of prizes!

Bring your friends to the annual Pancake Breakfast to support Grace Cooperative Preschool. Breakfast includes eggs, bacon, sausage, juice, coffee, tea and of course, lots of delicious pancakes!

Prizes are always abundant, in great variety and make for a fun raffle. The Oak Room will be decorated in the theme of "Under the Sea". Featuring the work of the talented parent organizers and the adorable work of the preschoolers.

Earth Care Corner

It is almost time for recertification as an Earth Care Congregation. **The Earth Care Team will meet on Sunday Feb. 2 at 11:30 in the Sanctuary.**

Earth Care Tips: Many commercial household cleaners contain known or suspected carcinogens. Others cause respiratory problems. God provided numerous natural ingredients that clean just as well and are safe for human health and the environment. For example, baking soda cleans, deodorizes, and scours. Cornstarch can remove grease on carpets. Lemon juice is effective against most household bacteria. Unscented soap without petroleum distillates is biodegradable and will clean just about anything (found in the form of liquids, flakes, powders, or bars such as castile). Here is an all-purpose cleaner recipe, especially good for removing water deposit stains:

Mix 1/2 cup vinegar and 1/4 cup baking soda into 1/2 gallon of water. (For more ideas, please see <https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/>

Officer's Retreat Recap

by Reta Wilcox



New and continuing deacons and elders enjoyed a day dedicated to education, planning and communion on Saturday, January 4. The group focused on how to best use energy, intelligence and love to serve the people of the church.

The joint meeting of elders and deacons is an annual event. This year's gathering was led by pastors Karen Hastings-Flegel and Charlie Reid. They provided an overview of Presbyterian history, our theology, our form of government, and the documents that guide us. Participants were reminded in their ministry they must "try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ." Elders confirmed their responsibility to "watch over" the congregation, "providing for their worship, nurture and service." Deacons pledged to "teach charity, urge concern" and to help "the friendless and those in need."*

Each Session department and the Deacons considered action plans for 2020.

A formal Session meeting concluded the retreat. The Clerk of Session, Financial Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected to serve another year. Nominating Committee appointments were determined. It is required to include two elders a deacon and four members of the congregation. The Nominating Committee for 2020 is Pat Hansen (Chair), Gessica Johnston (Secretary), Mary Ann and Jon Littig (Deacon representatives). The Congregation Representatives will be announced after the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26. Dates for celebration of Communion throughout the year were established. These items of business are required by the church by-laws.

**Quotes from Ordination Questions, Book of Order*



Jennifer Wallace, Financial Secty.



Reta Wilcox, Clerk



Linda Neyer, Treasurer



Geri Rentz, Asst. Treasurer

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

Sunday Worship at 10 AM
www.gracewc.org
February 2020
Happy New Year!

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WELCOME STATEMENT

*We welcome and celebrate
all who join with 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.



O Let the
rgan Sound!

RECITAL BY KAREN HASTINGS-FLEGEL

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22
2:00 p.m.
Reception Following