

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

April 2020

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.*

- John Newton, "Amazing Grace"

Dear Grace Church Family,

The old Yiddish proverb, "*Mensch tracht, un Gott lacht*" (roughly translated as "Man (Humanity) plans, God laughs"), seems an appropriate way to begin this article. Just two weeks ago (I'm writing on March 20), our plans to move across the country and to start at Grace on April 15 were all set. I don't know if God is laughing, but our plans certainly are in flux. Suddenly, the terms "shelter in place" and "social distancing" are all too familiar.

In preparation for this pastoral transition, I purchased a resource titled "The Right Start: Beginning Ministry in a New Setting" from Lewis Center for Church Leadership. Guess what? There's no article on "How to deal with a worldwide pandemic"!

So, friends, we are in this together, learning as we go and depending on one another's faith and strength. That is, of course, what the church should do at all times, but especially in times of uncertainty. A pastor friend recently wrote that a minister's essential task is to remind us who we are and what God created us to be. My hope is that we, members and pastors alike, can remember that we are under God's care.

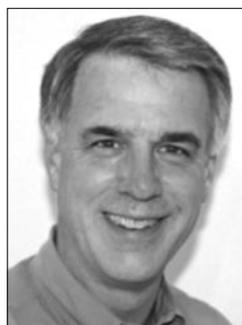
I want to thank the Pastor Nominating Committee, the Session, and the church Staff for their unwavering support through these unsettled times. Please keep them all in your prayers as they continue to guide the congregation in the coming weeks. We are all trying to figure out the best way to "be the church" in the time of the coronavirus.

Regarding our move, the current schedule has us packing up and moving on March 26, driving on Interstate 80 for a few thousand miles across the country, and arriving in Walnut Creek on April 2. I still plan for April 19 to my first Sunday but don't know precisely what or how we will worship. However, I do trust that we will figure it out together!

The text from the hymn "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" below was written by Isaac Watts (1674-1748) as a paraphrase of Psalm 90. May it be our prayer and our hope in these strange times.

*O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
O be our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.*

May the peace of Christ be with you, Mark Burnham



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We are Still Busy...
The staff of Grace Church is not sitting idle during this time of *Shelter in Place*. Because we are a very small staff we have the luxury of coming into the office, *one at a time*, and maintaining some church operations. Thank you to **Elzbieta Lupkowski**, our long-time custodian and volunteer **Carol Parker** for tackling some of the deep cleaning jobs throughout the campus for which there is not time during the regular work week.

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 April 20
to be included in the next issue.**



All Gatherings Cancelled or Postponed

All of our facility users have cancelled or postponed their meetings and events due to the pandemic until at least April 7, therefore you will not see a calendar in this issue of Grace in the World. This shelter in place order may extend beyond that date and the church is obligated to follow government mandates. Our musical partners such as Sierra Chamber and Performing Arts Society have cancelled events for the remainder of the season. Preschool is not in session. There are many unknowns. All church meetings, Circles, Men’s Club and Bible Study are either cancelled or being held via conference call. Contact your group leader if you have questions. Church leaders are working on getting Zoom video conferencing up and running for meetings, classes and worship. More information will follow.

Meanwhile, please keep all of our church family and facility users in our prayers as we navigate uncertain waters.

Deacons Reach Out

By March 20 all of us heard Governor Newsome tell the citizens of California to stay home for the foreseeable future. The Session and Deacons have taken action to stay in touch with all of you. The next day the Deacons began a calling campaign to reach every member and regular attender of Grace Presbyterian Church by phone. If a phone call could not happen then an email or card was sent. By now scores of calls have been made to Deacons’ parish calling lists and by others trying to do their part in keeping people in contact with their friends at Grace.

The reports are that people, particularly those who are shut-ins, are appreciating the contact and wanting to talk. Many adult communities are on lock-down and the period of time that this restriction may be in place is unknown. Many places are limiting visits, even from family. This can be a time of isolation bringing on feelings of anxiety and depression. Please don’t hesitate to reach out. See the article on the next page for ways we can keep in contact.

Heartfelt thanks for the extra effort on the part of our Deacons for helping the church stay in touch during this unprecedented time.

The good feelings these calls generate is felt on both sides of the telephone. “I was stunned at how much joy I received in making my calls,” said Deacon Faye Hutchings.

A Prayer of the People

From Praying for the Environment, A Liturgical Resource developed by the working party for Calling Melbourne 2 Prayer group and the Reverend Canon Rachel McDougall

Creator God, we thank you for the beauty of the earth, for the diversity of land and sea, for the resources of the earth. Give us the will to cherish this planet and use its riches for the good and welfare of all. God of life, hear our prayer.



Creator God, we thank you for the warmth of the sun, the light of the moon, the glory of the stars and the clean air we breathe. Save us from wasting or abusing the energy upon which all life depends. God of life, hear our prayer.

God of grace, we thank you for the gift of life you give us. Pray for those who work to care for creation: those preserving forests and oceans, air and water, animals and plants. Help us to protect the environment so that all life may flourish. God of life, hear our prayer.

God of wisdom, guide us in the choices we make each day, in what we buy, how we travel, and in what we reuse. Enable us to live in harmony with your creation. God of life, hear our prayer.

God of every time and place, we pray for the future of our earth. Help us to be good stewards of the gifts you have given us that future generations may rejoice in your many gifts to us. God of life, hear our prayer.

Submitted by Meg Keeley on behalf of the Earth Care Team

In loving memory of church members

Allen Teagle

January 22, 1934 to March 5, 2020



Rita Chorné

July 22, 1937 to March 21, 2020



MISSION STUDY IN ACTION... HOW ARE WE DOING?

Like everyone else in the Bay Area, the state, the nation, and the world, we are doing *the best that we can* to cope with the Coronavirus pandemic.

We have cancelled our worship services and other gatherings through April 7, as required by Contra Costa County. As of this writing (March 20), the best hope is to be able to gather during Holy Week for a brief Maundy Thursday commemoration, individual prayer on Good Friday, and an Easter Sunday service, but we realize shelter-in-place may be extended. Clearly, we must step back from Fellowship Hour and serving food indefinitely.

The Transition Team and the Session are meeting by telephone conference call. We have created a communication plan with both short term - low tech and longer term - higher tech components.

Short term we'll be in touch with you:

- By phone: The main church office number, 925-935-2100, will be monitored. Please call 925-433-5458 anytime if you are in need of pastoral care. Pastor Karen Hastings-Flegel wants to hear from you, and Office Manager Judy Williams is managing contacts with all groups and facility users. Deacons and other volunteers are telephoning all members.
- By mail: Postcards have been mailed to members and friends. The April newsletter will go out as always.
- By email: Constant Contact messages will be sent twice a week, on Sundays and mid-week. These will contain updates and devotional material.
- By website: Check www.gracewc.org for posted updates.

Longer term projects are underway. Pastor Karen and volunteers are researching the equipment and expertise needed to:

- See and hear one another during virtual meetings by linking in through computers or mobile devices.
- "Broadcast" a presentation or worship service by video and eventually through live streaming, so it is possible to watch on a computer screen.

Members and friends will be notified by email when these options become available.

We are praying for our church family, for all those suffering illness, and all the medical personnel and workers who are helping us through this crisis.

Reta Wilcox for the Transition Team



Spring is in the Air

Even if you can't come to church right now, you can drive by and see the lovely spring flowers under our sign in front of the church and the flower beds adjacent to the parking lot. These were planted thanks to the boys and girls of troop 302. Thank you to the troop and the leaders for making this happen.



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

Sunday Worship at 10 AM
www.gracewc.org
April 2020

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Walnut Creek, CA

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.



Worship Plans for April, 2020

If the shelter in place mandate is lifted the following are modified plans for Holy Week and in-person worship for the rest of April. If the mandate for social isolation continues, we will continue to be in communication through the website, Constant Contact, US Mail and Facebook.

Maundy Thursday April 9

7:00 PM -Worship Service. We will not have a potluck supper this year.

Good Friday April 10

12 - 3:00 - PM the Sanctuary will be open for contemplation and prayer; a brief worship every hour & half hour.

Easter Sunday April 12

10:00 AM Worship. We will not have fellowship time or an egg hunt this year.

Sunday, April 19

10:00 AM Worship. **Pastor Mark Bumham's first worship service at Grace Church.**

Sun. April 26

10:00 AM Worship with Pastor Mark.