

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

July 2020

Dear Grace Church Family,

The pastor’s article for the July newsletter is normally about summer vacations, cookouts, and VBS. Not this year! As we move into the summer of what has been a difficult and unforgettable year, we recognize that we no longer have a “normal” life—in the church or otherwise. So, I want to address perhaps the two biggest issues we are facing: COVID-19 and the widespread protests calling for racial justice.

COVID-19

A recent headline in the New York Times caught my attention: “*Bars, Strip Clubs and Churches: U.S. Virus Outbreaks Enter Unwieldy Phase.*” It’s not every day that churches are lumped together with bars and strip clubs! The reason is explained in this quote from the article: “Houses of worship, which were once shut down under governors’ orders in many states, are now emerging as sources of major clusters. Outbreaks at churches have been reported in states including Alabama, Kansas and West Virginia.”

At its meeting on June 24, the Session discussed a first step toward gradual, phased reopening of our church buildings. The foremost concern is the safety and protection of members, friends, and other visitors to our campus. With this in mind, the elders approved guidelines for both church-sponsored events and for the use of the building by other groups. Here are some highlights:

Regular facility users (e.g. AA, Scouts) who want to meet must first submit a plan for safely gathering and also follow Country and State orders. Approvals will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Church groups of less than 10 people (committees, small groups) can meet outside at the church provided masks are worn and proper distancing is maintained.

The sanctuary will remain closed for Sunday worship and other gatherings until further notice.

Racial Justice

The ongoing public protests across the country demanding racial justice have highlighted a disturbing fact: that racism is deeply embedded in the life and history of the U.S. An article I read recently said this: “Like many white Americans, I have for years consoled myself with a narrative of gradual progress. Yes, surely there is still much to do, but the Voting Rights Act and other civil-rights legislation provided a roadmap for at least a modicum of racial justice. We were on the right path.”

But more than 50 years after the enactment of Federal civil-rights legislation, the evil of racial injustice remains deeply rooted in our culture and change is happening too slowly. In order to explore the issue and understand how the church might respond, we are offering a Bible study on Wednesdays at 10:00 am. We are using a six-part study guide based on the PCUSA’s church-wide policy, “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community.”

You can find a link to the Zoom meeting for the Bible study on the back page of the newsletter. I hope that you will consider joining us for this important time together.

Grace and peace, *Mark*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Passionate Worship.....2
Gatherings cancelled, Ethel Vaughan, Outreach Committee

What’s Next at Grace.....3
Facilities Campaign, Graduates, Backpack Drive 2020

Mailer Page.....4
Virtual Gatherings at Grace

InsertEarthcare, My Story by Geri Rentz

We are Still Busy...

Church staff is here to serve you. Reach us anytime by email: gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com or phone: 925-935-2100 (calls will be returned.) Reach Sr. Pastor Mark at 925-433-5459 or revmrb@gmail.com. Reach Associate Pastor Karen at 925-433-5458 or korgan81@yahoo.com.

For information and to view worship services and more, go to <https://www.gracewc.org>.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:00 AM via Zoom

Sermon discussion follows the service

gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com
website: gracewc.org
925-935-2100

Sr. Pastor: Rev. Mark Burnham

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 July 20 to be included in the next issue.



Social Distancing is still in effect —

All in-person meetings and events (for the foreseeable future) have been cancelled due to the pandemic. All church meetings, Circles, Men’s Club and Bible Study are either cancelled or being held via conference call or video conference. Contact your group leader if you have questions.

Have you tried to join the Sunday Zoom worship services? If you need help to join through your email or on your telephone, please contact the church office. We would be delighted to help you connect. If you would like to get an email invitation to our services, be put on the mailing list, or just need

In loving memory of Ethel Vaughn, former member of Grace Church

Never one to be idle, Ethel Vaughn volunteered at Grace preschool after retiring from a long and meaningful career as an elementary school teacher. She was a favorite of the children, parents and staff as she could be counted on for her promptness, orderliness, and quiet demeanor. Separation anxieties were calmed, language development was encouraged, and social skills were practiced during her time at the preschool. And she loved sharing Family Camp at Westminster Woods!

Ethel was also a dedicated office volunteer and participated in most church activities. About eight years ago, Ethel moved to Kansas to be near family. For all of her life, she ‘religiously’ walked at least a mile a day. Even after her move to a senior community, we heard that she walked the halls. A good life lesson for all of us as she lived to 100+ years of age!



Ethel Vaughn with a young friend.

Outreach Task Force Update

Most Grace Church publications contain our ‘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 one another.”

These are not empty words. They reflect the feelings of the congregation of Grace Presbyterian Church. We are facing difficult times that are challenging our lives. Covid-19 has made us shelter-in-place, which in itself has made us take stock of what matters to us. We cannot live in isolation and not be aware of only our personal situation. The Protests about the racism that exist in our country awaken us and ask us to question ourselves and to reflect on the words of the Welcome Statement. If those words really represent what we feel as a church, it becomes our responsibility to work towards systemic change in our world. Let us be apostles from Grace and reach out.



Outreach Committee at a recent Zoom meeting.

Session has given our Outreach Task Force the responsibility to reach out and welcome more people to our church. This welcome has as its core the love of God and the desire to celebrate the uniqueness of everyone. Our task force has had four meetings, and we are taking action where we can and also making longer-term recommendations to the Session. These efforts include:

Increasing visibility: A first step is to appoint a correspondent to the Rossmoor News so that articles about church activities appear regularly and may attract visitors. Carol King has agreed to take this position.

Welcoming and sustaining newcomers: In the past Grace Church had an additional Session department, Congregational Life, responsible for warm welcomes, visitor follow-up and small groups. We recommend that this Session department be reinstated.

Engaging the Community: We are considering undertaking a high-profile mission/action project that might appeal to individuals and groups looking ways to participate in good works plus fellowship.

Task Force members include Mark Burnham, Rosalyn Cannelora, Shirley Dal Porto, Sally Day, Marlene Hall, Associate Pastor Karen Hastings-Flegel, Julie Kim, Jon Littig, Lynn Lyons (Chair), and Reta Wilcox.

There is much to be done as we reach out to our community. We encourage you to join us in this challenge.

Facilities Campaign 2020

*New Ways to
get together*



\$6,760 of our \$8,000 goal has been raised so far. Many thanks to the generous donors who sent money to support our goal of purchasing equipment and expertise to allow us to live-stream our church services.

With the matching program, we can add \$5,300 to your donations. With this amount, it is possible that we will be able to afford a hearing loop system in the sanctuary to aid those with hearing challenges.

Exciting development...in late June, Grace hired Tom Deans-Flegel, son of Karen and Bob, to consult with us in the purchase of needed equipment. As of this publication we are expecting a proposal with numerous options from Tom.

The campaign is still running for a while if you wish to send a donation. You may send a check or donate online. Check out the *Ways to Donate* page on the website for information.

PLEASANT HILL

GRAD GETS HIS DIPLOMA



Teachers and family clap as Ryan Joseph, 18, walks to receive his diploma during College Park High School drive-thru graduation in Pleasant Hill. Joseph was paralyzed from the neck down when he was 16 from a wrestling accident and has spent the years since in intensive therapy to regain mobility. Grace Presbyterian Church has been a supporter of the Joseph family. Ryan is a graduate of Grace Cooperative Preschool.

More cause for celebration, Cecile and Dan Hasselbrink's Granddaughter/niece, Abigail Cecile Hasselbrink, graduated from Holy Name high school in Oakland. She will be working and traveling for a year before attending Denison University in Ohio.

Backpack Drive—Pandemic Style

Considering today's challenges, one could lament . . . "But, what can I do?" and withdraw. We have an alternative. **Partnering with Hope Solutions (formerly Contra Costa Interfaith Housing) and Sydney Paige Organization, we can provide over 400 backpacks filled with much needed school supplies to children of formerly homeless or low-income families.**

Help us create smiles and empower self-worth in children who are part of the programs of Hope Solutions across Contra Costa County. **Due to COVID-19, our Backpack Drive looks very different this year, as we will accept monetary donations only through the month of July** and they will be forwarded to Hope Solutions, who says this about the campaign:

Hope Solutions heals the effects of poverty and homelessness by providing housing solutions and vital support services to highly vulnerable families and individuals. We envision a world in which everyone has a place to call home and the support of a strong community so that they can live with dignity and reach their full potential.

Sydney Paige mobilizes the power of business to provide low-income youth with quality backpacks and school supplies to help them learn & thrive in school. They believe that education is the best pathway toward long-term financial security and that all children, regardless of economic circumstances, should have access to the tools needed to succeed.



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

Sunday Worship at 10 AM
<https://www.gracewc.org>
July 2020

Address Service Requested
Dated Material

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 8241
Concord, 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.

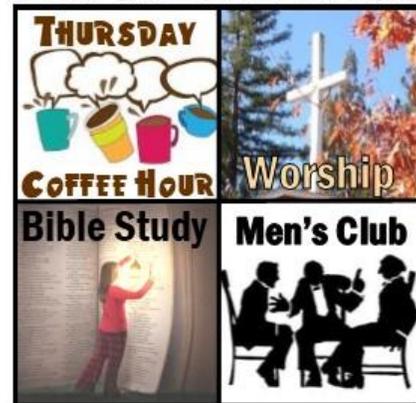
Since we can't meet in person, groups are now holding meetings on line with Zoom Video conferencing. Members and friends are welcome to join through their email or on the phone (voice only). Meetings require a password for entry.

To obtain the meeting ID and passwords so you can join the ZOOM meetings, please provide us with your email, or sign up for the *Weekly Message* mailer. If you don't have email, remember that you may join with just your phone.

With either of these access methods, you will be provided with the sign-in details that you need to join in the virtual meetings.

Please contact the church office to sign-up or to get help.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS



WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY:
10 am Wednesdays with Rev. Mark Burnham

THURSDAY CONVERSATION & COFFEE:
9:30 am Thursdays with Rev. Mark Burnham

MEN'S CLUB: Next meeting, Friday, July 10 at 10 am

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE: 10 am. Sundays:

Welcome and social time, recorded worship followed by discussion.

(Anyone can watch the recorded worship services anytime by going to the Website (<https://www.gracewc.org>). Go to the Sunday Services page and click on the links to view.