

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 September 2020

Dear Grace Church Family,

For the past 25 years or so that I have been writing monthly “From the Pastor” newsletter articles, the September edition usually began with a hearty “Welcome back,” expressing hope that everyone had healthy summer and was looking forward to the start of a new church program season. Well, like with so many other things, this year is different.

Since the middle of March, we have been dealing with the unfolding drama and devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sheltering in place and face masks have become commonplace as we struggle to find a path forward into the future.

Here is how church consultant Rev. Susan Beaumont puts it: “We are in a liminal season, stuck between an ending and a new beginning. The pathway forward is not knowable. The way we ‘did church’ a few months ago is done. We have literally been thrown out of our buildings by a pandemic....No one knows what normal looks like after sheltering in place. Likely, we will resume many familiar things, but congregational life will not be the same. We are disoriented and confused. There is grief and loss.”

There is no easy answer to how we move forward, but this “liminal season” does offer an opportunity to pause and reflect. Here are three practices that Rev. Beaumont offers:

1. **Surrender** - To surrender is to yield, but it does not mean giving up or giving in. It doesn’t mean we languish or grow lazy—quite the opposite. It means we lean into the disorientation and trust the leading of the Holy Spirit. We’ve done good industrious work, but now we find ourselves beyond the limits of our own resourcefulness and knowing. This next season requires adaptive learning—for leaders and followers alike. Learning begins with surrender. I acknowledge that I don’t have answers. I yield my spirit to God’s leading and invite my congregation to do the same. We attend to all that arises in response to our surrender.

2. **Use the Disorientation** All innovation begins with disorientation. The pandemic has thrown us into deep disorientation. Now, we have no choice but to let go of the old normal. We cling to structures, identities and relationships formed by our old experiences, although we know that those processes and practices will not serve us adequately moving forward. It would be a mistake to shore up the old structures and practices as things get “back to normal.” We need to take advantage of this moment to let old things die, to experiment, to take risks and learn.

3. **Attend to the Yearning** - Rational decision making assumes that human knowledge is enough to address the challenges we face. Rational decisions can’t guide us through the deep disorientation we face now. Instead, we need to pay attention to yearning, which is the language of the human soul. Letting go of what once was, we let ourselves be led by God who is drawing us forward and into our future. What is God calling us to do or become next?

Our new normal is already with us and it is also just beyond our reach. This is an exciting time to be the church if we are willing to stay in the disorientation for the time it takes to discover our next chapter.

Grace and peace, *Mark*

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**WORSHIP AT 10 AM ON
SUNDAYS VIA ZOOM**

SEPTEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP

- Sept 6 – Matthew 18:15-20
- Sept 13 – Matthew 18:21-35
- Sept 20 – Matthew 20:1-16
- Sept 27 – Matthew 21:23-32

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

Contact us:
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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 September 20 to be included in the next issue.



Happy Birthday in Sept.

- Mark Burnham..... 9/5
- Tung Au 9/8
- Jeanne Lauritzen..... 9/9
- Judith Black 9/10
- Stanley Dorst 9/10
- Claire Wait..... 9/15
- Barbara Livingston.... 9/17
- Ruth Babinski 9/21
- Susan Blair..... 9/23
- Jean Karkanen..... 9/23
- Maureen Allan 9/27
- Nancy Goelkel 9/28
- Elizabeth Allen 9/30

Preschool News

Grace Cooperative Preschool will be starting another year around Labor Day. This will be the beginning of our 50th year of providing education to preschool aged children and their families, and it will be unlike any we have previously experienced. We will be “Zooming” with the children in order to provide a preschool experience while protecting the health of children, extended families, and staff.

by Marlene Hall



The uncertainty brought on by the pandemic has dampened enthusiasm for enrollment, and we have offered a “delayed entrance” to families who want to be part of our community but are waiting for treatment and vaccine development and availability. We understand and affirm their position and look forward to the day when we can again safely share this campus.

We are challenged to use the best of our experience, creativity, education, technical abilities, imagination, and enthusiasm to create and present a program for preschoolers that they can engage in with their families.

Please pray for preschoolers (and all Zooming students), families, teachers and administrators.

Needlers Busy During Pandemic

The "Stay in Place" order has kept us inside our homes but that hasn't stopped our Needlers from carrying out one of our missions of Grace Church. As long as they have yarn



they keep busy knitting and crocheting. **In early August we sent 200 scarves to Operation Gratitude** where they will be included in care packages for our active military, veterans and first responders. In fact, today I already got a thank you letter for our efforts! Needlers offer just a little touch of home to show our gratitude to those who are working and have worked for us.

Donations of yarn are always appreciated and used for this worthy project. Contact the church office if you have yarn to donate.

By Marsha Stark

From the Earth Care Committee

by Karen Hastings-Flegel

Grace’s Earth Care Team met on August 16. We are excited about the approaching World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1. In worship on August 30, part of the liturgy will acknowledge this day. This tradition of praying for God’s creation on Sept. 1 began in 1989 in the Eastern Orthodox Church, by proclamation of Dimitrios I, Ecumenical Patriarch. Other denominations have gradually joined in. The World Council of Churches expanded this emphasis into a Season of Creation extending from Sept. 1 to Oct. 4 (St. Francis of Assisi’s feast day). Although Grace is not officially observing the whole season, you are all invited to observe the “Season of Creation” by praying a couple minutes each day for God’s creation.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Single-Use-Plastic-Free July. The Earth Care Team plans to plant some native shrubs this fall at church as a thank-you to the congregation.

A Prayer for Our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God ... Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

Backpack Drive

Our small church can’t fill the school supply needs of all of the young people served through the support services of Hope Solutions. However, members and friends of Grace contributed a most generous \$2,845 to the Backpack Fund! When this was added to the amount given by other faith communities and individuals, **Hope Solutions was able to provide backpacks and other school supplies to 41 young students they serve.**

Grace
members
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\$2,845!

Sept. 6 – Oct 4 . . . A Season of Peace

**May the God of peace . . .
give you peace at all times in all ways.**

2 Thessalonians 3:16

While challenged by COVID-19 and historic wildfires, we long for peace. On World Communion Sunday (October 4) we celebrate that Christ's peace extends throughout all creation and all time and all conditions. While the pandemic forces us to be apart physically, we celebrate that Communion brings us all together (even virtually).

Even as we remain in our homes, we are challenged to continue the work of building the household of God, with active peacemakers here at home and around the world. During "A Season of Peace," we are given the opportunity to support peacemaking and reconciliation in our community, region, and across the globe. The Peacemaking and Global Witness Offering is divided three ways with:

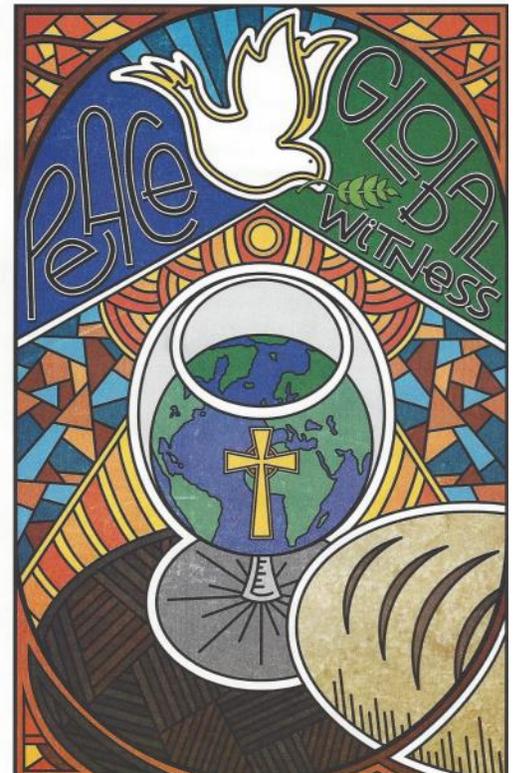
- 25% retained for local work,
- 25% sent to our Presbytery for efforts in our larger area, and
- 50% supporting global work being done by Presbyterians.

This year the 25% retained for local use is designated to support Trinity Center here in Walnut Creek. Trinity Center provides the community with services to meet the needs of persons experiencing homelessness and working poor residents of Central Contra Costa County.

Their services include daily meals, mail and telephone access, showers, laundry, emergency food and clothing as well as intensive case management and counseling re substance use. Trinity Center is considered an essential service and continues to operate its day program to meet the growing demand for services, particularly as a result of COVID-19.

No one of us can meet all the needs we recognize, but together we can do much. "We are the church together." Please give generously to the Peace and Global Witness Offering. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Your Witness and Ministry Department, *Freddie Delamain, Bob Flegel, Marlene Hall, Lynn Lyons*



Weekly Prayer Thursdays on Campus in September



Kathie Paul praying in the church courtyard at the August 6 prayer vigil.

On September Thursdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Grace will have a "Sacred Space" table in the church courtyard for prayer. The inspirational space will include a cross, a Bible, objects from nature, candles, and devotional materials. Feel free to come by for some quiet time with God. (The Oak Room deck and Fireside Room patio are also available for prayer.) Reservations are not necessary. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

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

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

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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.



Morning in Rossmoor, photo by Mark Burnham as seen in Walnut Creek Patch.

Each Sunday at 10 AM, more and more members and friends are joining in the virtual worship services. We hope you will too! Other groups are now meeting on-line with Zoom video conferencing. Members and friends are welcome to join meetings with their email, on the phone (voice only), by accessing your personal Zoom account. Meetings require an ID and password for entry.

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

10:00 AM WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY with Rev. Mark Burnham

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

10:00 AM MEN'S CLUB: Meets second Friday of each month

10:00 AM SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE: Welcome and social time, recorded worship followed by discussion. (Note: 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.

Call 1-925-236-2487

**Hear the latest Sunday sermon
anytime on your phone.**

