

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 January 2021

Dear Grace Church Family,

Well, the year 2020 is finally over—hurrah! It’s difficult to imagine that just twelve months ago most of us had not heard of COVID-19 and had no plans be intimately familiar with the word “pandemic.” But as the new year of 2021 dawns, there is a light of hope on the horizon. I want to thank everyone for their support, patience, and faith over the past many months.

To start a new year, please receive the prayer below from Howard Thurman (1899–1981), an African-American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,*

*The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost, To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.*

Grace and peace, *Mark*



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Christmas Joy Offering, Commemorations.

WORSHIP AT 10 AM ON SUNDAYS VIA ZOOM JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

- January 3 – John 1:10-18
- January 10 – Mark 1:4-11
- January 17 – 1 Samuel 3:1-10
- January 24 – Mark 1:14-20
- January 31 – Mark 1:21-28

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

Contact us:
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or 925-935-2100

Sr. Pastor Mark Burnham:
925-433-5459 or
revmrb@gmail.com

Associate Pastor Karen Hastings-Flegel: 925-433-5458 or
korgan81@yahoo.com.

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

Business Department Updates

by Linda Neyer

The Business Department has stayed busy maintaining our church campus in anticipation of welcoming our return in 2021. Recent projects have included:

- Worked with Boy Scouts to plant winter flowers out front (once the rains are here), and longer term enhance our Memorial Garden with refinished Memorial board kiosks and benches, plants and irrigation.
- Worked with Karen to order an organ dolly using the Stacey Trust funds.
- Worked with Judy to purchase a new PC and monitor.
- Worked with Matt Lyons on dry rot and roof repair in the office building with planning for more work to be done in the Narthex/Sanctuary building in 2021.
- Maintained our HVAC with new MERV13 filters and plan work to replace a failed fan motor in the Sanctuary.
- Repaired the Narthex bathrooms countertops and replaced broken faucet
- Removed fallen Oak tree behind parking lot
- Various irrigation repairs made to preserve water
- Drafted agreements and plans in preparation for welcoming back our facility users.

Thanks to everyone who has helped us with these projects!

All Articles must be submitted by January 22 to be included in the next issue.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Tim Blaney	01/05
Lorna Barber	01/06
Betty Bell.....	01/07
Karen Hastings-Flegel.....	01/10
Patricia Smayda.....	01/16
Doris Gerber.....	01/18
Robert Smayda	01/18
Robert Flegel.....	01/20
Jeremy Flegel	01/24
Carol Parker.....	01/26

Stewardship Drive Successful



Many thanks to all of the members and friends who have pledged your commitment to supporting Grace during this difficult time. As of mid-December, there are 64 pledges totaling \$224,570. This is more than had been pledged at this time last year, but with only 64 vs. 80 pledges! Income from facilities fees and plate offerings will continue to be very low for at least six more months, so your support is very important. Our goal is \$245,000.

Pastors Mark and Karen have blessed us with many ways to participate and celebrate in worship, Bible study, music, and fellowship. You have insured that your giving has continued while there were no in-person services in the church.

Most of you have mailed your gifts, while 15 have used the new online giving portal or Zelle to make transfers (totaling nearly \$12,000). Others have set up payments in their online bank accounts (which result in the bank mailing a check to Grace.)

We thank each of you for being instruments of God's Grace and Peace.

By Sara Allen and Linda Neyer

Department News

Annual Reports are due from the 2020 department heads on **January 6th**. If you have any questions, please contact Judy in the office.



Congregational Meeting

Please plan to attend the congregational meeting on Sunday, January 31 right after church (on Zoom.) At this meeting the congregation will approve the terms of call for the pastors. The budget and the Annual Report will be presented.

Essential Services in our Oak Room

Since the beginning of the shut-down in March the campus has been empty of facility users. However there are a couple of exceptions. In the fall, Lifeline screening was here twice. This company operates all over the country doing life-saving ultrasound screenings for heart disease, strokes and more at a more cost effective price than most insurances offer. They will be here again in February 2021.



Secondly, on January 14, the Oak Room will be open to Vitalant for a blood drive which supports the constant need for live-saving blood. Vitalant has operated for 75 years and provides blood products to over 45 hospitals in Northern California. They rely 100% on volunteer donors.

In preparation for these activities, the Business Department has arranged for the installation of enhanced heating/air conditioning filters which trap finer particulate matter than the standard filters.

The 2021 Officer's Retreat will take place on Sat., Jan. 9 from 10 am to noon.



The meeting will take place on Zoom. An email will be sent to elders and deacons in early January.

The format of the meeting will be different this year as we have just two hours when the retreat is usually six hours.

At this meeting the new class of elders will choose the department to which they will focus their efforts. Thank you again to those willing to serve in these important roles.

Missions Update

You are a steadfast and generous congregation. As of December 14, you have contributed the following amounts to our Christmas Mission efforts: **Christmas Joy: \$2,835 and Giving Tree: \$825.** Contributions continue to come in. Gratitude abounds.



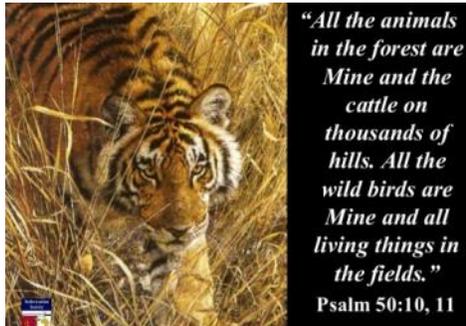
In Memory of Phyllis Hewett

December 1, 1930 - July 1, 2019

Earth Care Corner

Some interesting Biblical references to Animals

Have you heard that in Noah's time, God made a covenant with animals as well as humans? (Genesis 9:8-17) Adam, Eve, and the serpent are



described by a Hebrew word that means both naked and crafty - a Biblical pun (Genesis 2:25; 3:1,7,9) In New Testament Greek, dove and pigeon share the same name. Biblical animals include the chameleon, ape, roebuck, cicada, gecko, skink, peacock, bear, ibex, hyena, and hoopoe. (Unicorn myths arose from seeing ibexes in profile.) Some creatures are considered not very bright, such as the ostrich: "The ostrich's wings flap wildly, though its pinions lack plumage. For it leaves its eggs to the earth, and lets them be warmed on the ground, forgetting that a foot may crush them, and that a wild animal may trample them." (Job 39:13-15) Other animals are admired, such as the badger, locust, and lizard (Proverbs 30:24-28) and the industrious ant of Proverbs 6:6, "Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise." "The stork in the heavens knows its times," when people do not know God's ordinances (Jeremiah 8:7). In Joel 2:21-22, God talks to the animals and to the dirt. "Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green." God observes "the calving of the deer." (Job 39:1) God cares for the earth and God's creatures!

A Prayer: Creating God, you are the source and loving sustainer of all that lives. Help us daily to accept your call to care for this diverse and imperiled web of life, as advocates and active stewards. In Jesus' name. Amen. *By Karen Hastings-Flegel*

Thank you to all who have donated flowers for the sanctuary this past year.

The 2021 cost will remain at \$75 for an arrangement.

Thank you to Fran Whipple who donated this glorious poinsettia for Advent.

Contact the office to get on the 2021 schedule.



Preschool Update

What do you get when you take a chunk of recycled 4 x 4 redwood, milk bottle caps, yarn, ribbon, googly eyes, buttons, glue and a knit cap? If you're one of the Grace Cooperative preschoolers attending class on Zoom, you get a snowman of course! Even a pandemic does not stop the creativity of young children when presented with an interesting assortment of



Emma Almeida makes her snowman craft at home. Photographer and dad, Kevin Almeida, was at Grace Preschool way back when Charie Reid was the director.

materials. Especially when that creativity is related to preparation for Christmas. And so, children have made wreathes, Rudolph puppets, decorated trees, and created jingle bells to use when singing to Miss Lavenia's accompaniment.

Many of our favorite traditions have been foregone in order to keep our community safe and healthy. Our food drive has been limited to driving by the barrel and dropping in our contributions on dates assigned by the teachers. Our caroling has been on zoom calls with our classmates. And though children were eager to see him, we've explained that Santa is also sheltering in place.

We send you our warmest wishes for happy and healthy holidays.

Grace Preschool staff and families

Food Bank/Food Boxes—An Explanation

We are still accepting food for the food barrel. **However, during the time of the pandemic, check donations are strongly encouraged.**

The Food Bank/Barrel are one-in-the same. Your checks go to the Food Bank.

The Food Box Project is overseen by Sharon Lyons. Your checks go into a Grace account and funds are drawn upon by Sharon who puts the boxes together. These specially packed boxes go to Contra Costa Interfaith Coalition who delivers them for distribution by Contra Costa County social workers. Sharon has just delivered the 780th box from Grace!

When making your contribution, write your check to Grace Presbyterian Church and indicate "food bank" or "food boxes" in the memo of your check. There is also a place to designate this with online donations. Thank you for your generosity!

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

Sunday Worship at 10 AM
<https://www.gracewc.org>
January 2021

Address Service Requested
Dated Material

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

*The church campus is closed for now.
All meetings are conducted via Zoom. Contact the
church office for help connecting.*

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

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

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

11:00 AM WOMENS' CIRCLES: Times TBA

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

Watch the recorded worship services anytime by going to
<https://www.gracewc.org>. Go to the Sunday Services
page and click on the links to view.

*Listen to the latest Sunday sermon on your phone.
Dial 925-236-2487 anytime.*

