

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 November 2021

Dear Grace Church Family,

I'll begin by noting that in this newsletter you will find a Stewardship brochure along with a pledge commitment card for 2022. Our theme is "The Spirit Moves Us" as we focus on the three core practices of the congregation: *Inspiring*, *Caring*, and *Reaching Out*. Please take a look at the materials and I would ask that you prayerfully and generously continue to support the ministry and mission of this church.

Stewardship season is always an invitation to look toward the future as we consider budgets, programs, and directions for the coming year. One of the best books I've read in recent years about the future of the church is the late author Phyllis Tickle's "The Great Emergence." Tickle suggests that the Church renews itself every 500 years or so.

If you look at the last 2,000 years or so of Western history, you can identify some great upheavals that occur in Western culture and Christianity about every 500 years: The Reformation (1500s); The Great Schism (1054); the Council of Chalcedon, Fall of Rome and Gregory the Great (590), and at the time of Jesus, the Great Transformation or Change of the Eras.

Tickle contends that the Church is in the middle of yet another vast transformation in the way that Christianity is understood. Some have termed it a kind of "rummage sale" where we get rid of the clutter and hold tight to the treasures of our faith. In other words, everything is up for grabs during this time of emergence. Over the past generation or two, there has been both great confusion and fear as well as great opportunity as a Church "re-forms" itself.

The big question, of course, is what are we, both locally here at Grace Church and as a global church, to do in during this "rummage sale" time? Do we hold on tightly to everything stored away in the church's collective closet for the past 500 years? My sense is that the answer is, "No." But then what do we give away? What practices and programs have outlived their usefulness? And how much do we try to hold on to?

There's no easy answer to these questions, of course, but some have suggested that we look to the Early Church for inspiration and guidance. After all, our ancestors in the faith also endured a time of great change and transformation. In Acts 2, we find the practices and distinctive elements of the early church. The first church members 1) devoted themselves to the Apostles' Teaching; 2) devoted themselves to Fellowship; 3) devoted themselves to the Breaking of Bread; 4) devoted themselves to Prayer.

So, what might it mean for us that the 21st-century Church likely has more in common with the 1st- and 2nd-century Church than with the 20th-century Church? How might that change our priorities about how we conduct ministry here at Grace? What if we also focused on *Teaching*, *Fellowship*, *Eucharist*, and *Prayer*—and trust that God will provide all that is necessary for the future?

I'd welcome your comments and conversation on the "rummage sale" idea of faith. And thank you for your continuing support and prayers for this church as we go about the practices of *Inspiring*, *Caring*, and *Reaching Out*!

Grace & Peace,

*Mark*

## Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday 9:30—3  
Sat. – Mon. by appointment

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[gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com](mailto:gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com)

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Office Manager Judy:  
925-433-5454

**For information and to view  
worship services and more,  
go to the church website:  
[www.gracewc.org](http://www.gracewc.org).**

Pastor Emerita: Charie Reid  
Office Manager: Judy Williams  
Treasurer: Linda Neyer  
Asst. Treasurer: Geri Rentz  
Financial Scty: Faye Hutchings  
Headshot Photos: Carol King

## NOVEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP

- Nov 7 – Practice 2: Caring
- Nov 14 – Practice 3: Reaching Out
- Nov 21 – John 18:33-37; 19:6-16
- Nov 28 – 1st Sunday of Advent



Submit articles by Friday,  
Nov. 17 for the next issue.

## NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Michelle Stoffregen	11/4
Meg Keeley	11/6
Cecily Wait	11/10
Karen Haus	11/14
Marjorie Bradley	11/16
Madelyn Cocoz	11/19
Gerl Rentz	11/21
Don Lyons	11/27

***We Welcome New Members***

Visitors who want to learn more about Grace or seek membership, are invited to let one of the pastors know of your interest. We'll set up a meeting with a small group of Grace Elders and a pastor to answer your questions about being a Presbyterian and/or a member of Grace Church. We look forward to serving you.

—Discipleship Department

**We welcome long-time friend, Jim Martin, to Church membership** by reaffirmation of faith. Jim has been attending Grace Presbyterian Church for many years and decided to join in membership with Grace. He was born in Flushing, Long Island in the state of New York. During his career he worked in the field of earth moving equipment distribution. Jim has three adult children, James Martin III, Athena, and Mary Frances. A warm welcome to Jim!

***Earth Care News***

Heartfelt thanks to our local Boy Scout Troop #302 for spreading the mulch around our church campus. A gift of \$40 was given to the troop for their efforts. This money stemmed from a donation that was given to the church on the International Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation in early September. Thanks to Chris Chapman of Horticultural Services for the generous donation of wood chips. *Pat Devine, Earth Care Team*

***Membership Exploration - Sunday, November 7 after Church***  
**Are you wondering what it means to be a member of Grace Presbyterian Church?** Help yourself to a beverage at Fellowship Time and join Pastor Mark Burnham in the **Library** to have your questions answered. We look forward to sharing information with you and hope those who are curious will join in the conversation.

***Lighting the Advent Wreath***  
**in the Tradition of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love**

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter season, and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that great day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

***The Presbyterian Women invite you to an***  
**ADVENT PROGRAM**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021 AT 1:00 PM**  
**GRACE SANCTUARY**

**The Honorary Life Membership Award will be presented to an outstanding Presbyterian Woman**

**Followed by the Madrigal Singers who will entertain with holiday favorite carols and songs**



Put on your holiday best and come to the Advent Program. We are delighted to return after missing the program last year. Come and find out who will be honored with the lifetime achievement award at the program. It's always a surprise! Then, the *Madrigals* return to Grace by popular demand. This terrific a-cappella group of Northgate High School teens always delights with their heavenly voices singing holiday favorites. The Advent Program this year will be for the congregation of Grace Church and their friends, so please invite a family member, neighbor or friend. The Presbyterian Women hope that you will join them for coffee, tea and light refreshments after the program. No RSVP is necessary.

***Presbyterian Women Begin New 2021-2022 Season***

The Circle group has been studying the Gospel of Matthew and the influence of the women in Christ's history. Our Bible Study Guide is titled, *What My Grandmothers Taught Me*. Lesson three is centered around Rahab's Story. Rahab is a socially unacceptable outsider who is intelligent and strong. A marginalized woman, she recognizes the power of the God of Israel. When God's own people are melting with fear, her wit and presence of mind allow God's plans to come to fruition. Joshua 2:1-24; 6:22-25. Study Guides are still available and all women are welcome to join the Circle group that meets monthly.

**The next Circle Meeting is Tues., November 9 at 10 AM in the Library. A Zoom option is also available. Contact: Gerl Rentz.**

**The Needlers are meeting in person again. All knitters and crocheters are welcome to join the group. They meet Mondays from 11 am—2:00 pm in the Fireside Room. Contact: Marsha Stark.**

## Land Acknowledgements

At a recent Sunday service, Meg Keeley gave a presentation about *Indigenous Land Acknowledgement* in which the East Bay native tribes who experienced dispossession and displacement by Spanish colonization were acknowledged. She reminded us that we stand on “Holy Ground” formerly occupied by the Ohlone, Saclan and other tribes. While this practice of Land Acknowledgement may be unfamiliar to us, it is a common practice in indigenous communities in the United States, Canada and Australia. Many cultural institutions are now adopting this practice. The value of acknowledgements in our church community is that it connects us to the historical past of the tribes who lived here in this beautiful Tice Valley, such as the Saclan, and to their legacies as well as to our present-day responsibility to confront the long-term effects of their dispossession.

**On Sunday, November 7, another Indigenous Land Acknowledgement will be given honoring people of the Saclan tribe who lived on the land where our church and a Rossmoor site are now located.** After the service, church members who are interested in paying respect to the former Saclan community grave site adjacent to St. Anne’s Church, are asked to meet in the Grace parking lot where car pools will be formed to take people to the site – truly a visit to “Holy Ground.”

*Pat Devine, Earth Care Team*



## Grace Book Club

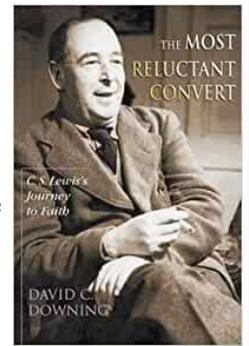
The club has reviewed the options for the next three months and found those present were agreeable to schedule the following reads. All are welcome to participate in the Book Club. Contact: Geri Rentz.

### Nov. 21 - *The Most Reluctant Convert: C S Lewis Journey to Faith* by David C Downing.

We have a unique opportunity with this choice:

1. We can read the book by Downing
2. We can attend a new film of the same title on Nov 3 at a special showing in Pleasant Hill
3. We can request from our cable provider a copy of the DVD featuring a solo Presentation in three acts by Max McClean
4. Or all three choices or any combination.

**Dec 19 - *Advent in Narnia: Reflections for the Season* by Heidi Haverkamp.** Haverkamp takes the spirit of Lewis's creation and weaves into the Advent Season. Publisher's Description: C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* fits naturally into the Advent season. “Walking into Advent can be like walking through the wardrobe; with its enchanting themes of snow and cold, light and darkness, meals and gifts, temptation and sin, forgiveness and hope—and even an appearance by Father Christmas.”



## Have Yourself a Green Christmas

Have you ever thought about how the way we do Christmas has a huge impact on our planet? Last season, I looked all around me and saw such utter waste, and I saw how I was personally contributing to this continual cycle. How can we honor the sacredness of Christmas in a way that is good for the planet? The organization, *The Friends of the Earth\**, offered helpful suggestions:

**Trees:** Millions of Christmas trees are purchased yearly. According to the *Friends*, if you can't plant your own tree, purchase a live one! Look for the FSC certification which means that it's organic and pesticide free. Local recycle services can shred used trees into mulch or compost. Use artificial trees and décor *year after year* to delay/prevent these items from going to landfill.

**Paper Waste:** The millions of gifts that are wrapped using traditional wrapping paper is impacting the planet. Wrapping paper uses trees and contains plastic. Alternatively, use brown parcel paper as gift

wrap. If one is a seamstress, make up reusable cloth draw-string gift bags. Statistics show 1.5 billion holiday cards are received yearly - and then thrown away. Better choices - cards made of recycled paper or e-cards will help cut our carbon footprint, save trees and money. This year, I plan to make phone calls instead of sending cards.

**Gifting:** My family honors each other with gifts to a charity or environmental organization. Alternatively, give healthy fruit baskets or seasonal plants. Gifting children is a matter of concern because the toy industry is dominated by the use of plastic. Look for local artisans who make products from natural materials. Check online for fair trade products or for toys made from natural non-toxic materials. Gift money to children to put in an educational savings account.

*Pat Devine-Cummings, Earth Justice Team*

\*(<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/lifestyle/21-ecofriendly-christmas-tips>)



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

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

Address Service Requested  
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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.

**In-person SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES** are at 10:00 AM.  
*Fellowship follows in the courtyard and Fireside Room.*

Livestream worship is available Sundays at 10:00 AM  
through Zoom. Video or telephone option.  
*Contact the office to get on the guest list.*

Watch recordings of worship services anytime at  
<https://www.gracewc.org>.

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

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

**10:00 AM MEN'S CLUB** with Rev. Mark Burnham:  
*Friday, November 12, 10:00 AM in the Fireside Rm.*

**11/9 AT 10 AM, WOMEN'S CIRCLE**  
All women are welcome to join a Women's Circle.  
For more information and to join the Zoom  
conference, please call Faye at 925-588-3527 or  
email: [AFHutchings@sbcglobal.net](mailto:AFHutchings@sbcglobal.net)

