

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 2023

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us...” (John 1:14a)

Dear Grace Church Family,

As we welcome in the year 2023, I would imagine that the images of the New Year are familiar to most of us: the ball dropping in Times Square, a baby crawling in as the old year (an ancient figure with a long beard) departs. The beginning of the New Year is also marked by reflections on the past twelve months and resolutions to do better in the coming twelve. For many of us, the coming of a new year is like turning a new page in life.

In the first chapter of his gospel, John is also describing a new beginning, but one much more profound than the start of a New Year. Here is the awe and wonder of the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the world—the event of God coming to us in human form.

In verse 14, John proclaims the stunning news, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” I love the way Eugene Peterson translated this verse in *The Message*: “The Word became flesh and blood, and ***moved into the neighborhood.***”

In the original Greek, the phrase literally means “to pitch a tent.” So, John is telling us that the Word, the One who existed before the creation, the One from whom all life comes, has pitched his tent in our midst and moved into the neighborhood.

Think for a moment what this means: God knows first-hand the pangs of hunger, the grief of losing a loved one, the pain of a lost friendship, and all the other human feelings and experiences that we know. By choosing to dwell among us, the God who created the universe is declaring God’s deep and abiding love for us. The birth of Jesus is the beginning of a whole new way of understanding the world, each other, and ourselves.

So I want to encourage us—as individuals and as Grace Church—to move out and carry God’s gift into the often difficult, challenging, frustrating, yet wonderful world for whom the gift has been given. You see, God’s incarnation is also a call to action—to go out into our neighborhoods and local communities and embody the good news of the gospel. We in the Church are the delivery system for the work of finding and healing, rebuilding and peacemaking.

As we start the year 2023, I want to invite us to imagine that the Lord is here pitching a tent, and is going to stick around in Walnut Creek. Here is my prayer: “*Lord, give us ears to hear, and imaginations to envision the possibilities of your reconciling and transforming work here in our lives and circumstances. May your Holy Spirit shape us more fully as a community into the image of your Son Jesus Christ!*”

New year blessings,
Mark



Submit articles for the next issue by **Jan. 20**

Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday
9:30—3:00

The office is closed on Monday and Saturday

Reach us anytime by email:
gracepreschurchwc@gmail.com

Phone: 925-935-2100

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

Pastor: Rev. Mark Burnham
Pastor Emerita: Charie Reid
Music Director: Jumi Kim
Treasurer: Linda Neyer
Asst. Treasurer: Geri Rentz
Financial Scty: Faye Hutchings
Office Manager: Judy Williams
Preschool Director: Joy Martin
Headshot Photos: Carol King

JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

- January 8 – Matthew 3:1-17
- January 15 – Matthew 4:1-17
- January 22 – Matthew 5:1-20
- January 29 – Matthew 6:7-21

**Annual Meeting of the
Congregation -Sunday,
January 29**

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 Flegel	01/20
Jeremy Flegel	01/24
Carol Parker	01/26
Joan Larsen	02/01

Visitors who want to learn more about Grace Church or seek Church membership are invited to let Pastor Mark know of your interest. He will answer your questions about being a Presbyterian and what you need to do to be a member of Grace Church.
—Discipleship Department

Keyboard Extravaganza!

J. Brahms
S. Rachmaninoff
G. Gershwin

W. A. Mozart
A. Piazzolla



Hyunji Park



Bukyung Shin

(Sun) Jan 22
3pm

FREE Admission!
Donations are greatly appreciated.

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2100 TICE VALLEY BLVD
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94595
LIVE STREAMING ALSO AVAILABLE at
YouTube: Grace Presbyterian Church Walnut Creek

Free Concert January 22 at 3 pm

Join us for an Exciting Keyboard Extravaganza! The popular concerts are performed by incredible musical artists and are free. Concerts are about one hour and 15 minutes. You may view the recordings of previous concerts at <https://youtu.be/RaTfdl4NoxE>

Thank you 2022 Contributors!

Fellowship service has been faithfully supported by you with very few hitches. Thank you for your faithfulness and the goodies provided; everyone appreciated them. We have added some volunteers for 2023 Fellowship and the complete list, February 2023 to through January 2024, will be in the mail shortly. (Special thanks to the stuffed eggs providers – a crowd favorite!)
— Discipleship Team

New Church Officers

A heartfelt “Thank you” to those who agreed to serve as church officers. The Annual Retreat for current and new officers is Saturday, January 14 from 10am —1pm. Welcome new Elders and Deacons.

ELDERS

Class of 2025

- Earnie Cunningham
- Meg Keeley
- Lynn Lyons
- Gary Parkhurst

Class of 2023

- Gail Peterson

DEACONS

Class of 2025

- Barbara Raines
- Mary Ann Sanchez
- Jean Savage



Financial News



Mission Report:

Special Offerings: The Giving Tree = \$1060.00. Christmas Joy = \$4,453.55

Concert Series: October = \$323, November = \$307, December = \$532

Treasurer’s Report

Pledge Update: A big thanks to all of you who have provided 2023 pledges which now total \$213,180 or 85% of our \$250,000 goal. Of those pledges, we’ve received 8 new pledges and 20 increased pledges. We are truly blessed by your commitment to the Grace Community! We also know we will not have renewal pledges totaling \$26,700 due to those we’ve lost in 2022. For those who have not yet pledged, please prayerfully consider Living Generously in 2023 to help meet the \$250,000 goal.

Financial Update: Thanks to our very generous Grace Community, we exceeded our 2022 pledge/plate goals by over \$32,000, and our 2022 year-end Activities Cash Account Balance is \$55,124 or 23% over 2021 ending cash balance. We are grateful to you all!

Reminder about new Sanctuary Flowers Policy

Thank you to all who have donated floral arrangements for the sanctuary. A reminder that as of January 2023, due to increasing costs, the donation for arrangements will be \$100. The church will continue to subsidize the actual cost of \$150. The sign up board is in the Fireside Room.

2022 PW Honorary Lifetime Membership Award

On Sunday, 12/18, Marlene Hall and El Nungesser were honored for their years of service to Grace Church and to the Presbyterian Women. The Lifetime Membership Award was presented at worship and a Fellowship Tea was held afterwards. Special thanks to all who supported this effort including: organizer, Faye Hutchings, decorations, Roz Cannelora, Beverages preparation, Sharon Lyons, and to all the decorators, food preparers, setup and cleanup crews—the event was a success due to the efforts of many.



Marlene and El

A thank you note from El: *To my Grace-filled friends: Saying thank you seems insignificant when I think of the many hands required to make happen the presentation of the Honorary Lifetime Membership Award and reception. When I entered the sanctuary and saw all my Grace friends, I was in awe. It had been all-too-long since I have had the opportunity to be there in person. So, thank you, my friends, for honoring me. It was serving you that made this all possible.*
—El Nungesser

Are you downsizing or redecorating?

Music Director Jumi Kim is seeking a small buffet to be used in the sanctuary. It can be up to 4 feet in length and preferably dark wood with cabinet doors beneath. If you have one you think might be appropriate, please contact Jumi or the church office.



A big shout out to each of our volunteers who were at the heart of our effort to *Feed the Kids* over the winter school break:

Liz Bradner, Carolyn Choy, Sally Day, Marlene Hall and grandson Andrew, Kathryn Hoffer, Faye Hutchings, Bill Keeley, Lynn Lyons, Victoria Lucido, Linda Neyer, Bill Patten, Carol and Gary Parkhurst, Charie Reid, Norma Van Cott and Mark Werner.

To these folks and to the entire congregation, thank you for your gifts of time, treasure, muscle power, guidance, encouragement and support -- each in your own way. You made a big difference for 600 families over Christmas!



Book Club Meeting - Sun., 1/15, 11:30, Library

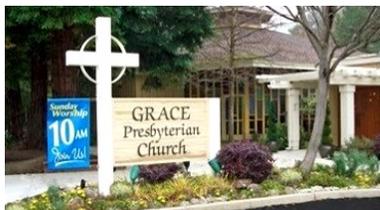
The January book is "All the Light We Cannot See", a Pulitzer Prize winner by Anthony Doerr set during World War II. *Marie-Laure LeBlanc lives with her father in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where he works. In June 1940, when she is 12, the threat of a German occupation of Paris grows too great to ignore. Marie-Laure and Daniel flee and with them they carry what might be the museum's most valuable and dangerous jewel. Meanwhile, young Werner Pfennig grows up in an orphanage in Germany with his sister. He finds an abandoned radio and learns to repair and rebuild electronics. At sixteen, Werner is in the military tracking down civilians using illegal radios in occupied German territory. Werner tries to ignore the moral conflict he experiences seeing the cruelty of war. By spring 1944, he and his colleagues are sent to Saint-Malo.... and then...* The novel is 530 pages long and worth the read.

Blessings and Peace, Geri Rentz



In late 2022, Grace had the privilege of welcoming Pat Burnham, Bill Patten, Hilde Olds, John Bean and Barbara Bean into membership. Read about Pat and next month we will introduce our other new members to you.

Pat Burnham, wife of Pastor Mark Burnham, was born in Wheeling West Virginia. She was a member of South Presbyterian Church in Bergenfield, NJ where Mark was the Senior Pastor before coming to Grace Church. Pat spent her career working as a school guidance counselor. She has served as a Greeter on Sunday mornings and most recently as a Liturgist. We are happy to have Pat as a member!



2100 Tice Valley Boulevard
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Sunday Worship at 10 AM
<https://www.gracewc.org>
January 2023

Address Service Requested
Dated Material

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

Note the new (long-desired)



signage through-
out the
campus.
Funds
were
raised
through
the 2022
facility

campaign. Thank you
Business Team and Mark
Burnham for completing this
project.

In-person SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES are at 10:00 AM.
Join friends for Fellowship time after church.

A Livestream worship link is at www.gracewc.org - Sundays at 10:00 am
Watch recordings of worship services anytime at www.gracewc.org
Listen to the latest Sunday sermon on your phone. Dial 925-236-2487

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Every Wednesday - 10 am, Bible Study in-person the Library or on Zoom

Sunday, January 8 - Congregational Meeting to elect new elders and deacons

Tuesday, January 10 - 10 am, Women's Circle Meeting in the Library

Sunday, January 15, Book Club — at 11:30 in the Library

Sunday, January 22 at 3PM, Keyboard Extravaganza Concert

Friday, January 27 - Holocaust Remembrance Day

Sunday, January 29 - Congregational Meeting to distribute the Annual Report
and Budget, elect the Nominating Committee and approve Pastor Terms of Call

Wednesday, February 1 - 1:30 pm, Deacons Meeting, Library