

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 February 2023

Dear Grace Church Family,

"In life and in death we belong to God." That is the first line of "A Brief Statement of Faith," which was added to our Presbyterian *Book of Confessions* in 1991. "In life and in death we belong to God." Nine short words that contain an enormous claim. Those nine words also began the cover story of the magazine "Presbyterians Today" a couple of years ago.

The article is titled "The Death Café Phenomenon." The author is a Presbyterian pastor who writes that our "American culture keeps the reality of mortality hidden from public view, even within the church." She cites a study on American attitudes toward dying, by an anthropologist who describes "the prevailing cultural view of death as a battle to be won, rather than an expected biological transition to be accepted."

Instead of recognizing death as a natural and inevitable condition of life, we look for heroes to save us from it. Dying has become an isolated act, rather than a generative process that invites society to live more fully in its humanity. In response to this inability to face the reality of death, the Death Café concept was started in 2010 in England.

It operates with a simple objective: "to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives." As a discussion group, rather than a grief support group, the model allows for flexibility according to the needs of each location. To the expectation is that we live forever (or we don't talk about it), Death Café has an alternative, giving space to ask this question: "How do you want to live, knowing you are going to die?" I even discovered recently that Rossmoor has its own Death Café, hosted by the "End of Life Concern's Club," that meets on the second Friday the month at the Hillside Clubhouse.

All of this talk of death is by way of introduction to a new Grief Support Group being formed here at Grace. We will begin meeting on Wednesday, March 1 from 2:00-3:30 pm in the Fireside Room. New member Bill Patten, who has a Master's in Pastoral Counseling, and I will be the facilitators. The group will meet weekly for 8 sessions and then take a break. Church members as well as friends and family members are welcome to attend.

The primary resource for the Group will be the book "Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart" by Dr. Alan D Wolfelt. You can find more information on the book and the author at <www.centerforloss.com>. Look for more information soon on the Grief Support Group.

The month of February also brings us into the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. The forty days of Lent are a time for each of us to take stock of our own lives; to engage "the dark places in our lives that we may come face to face with them, name them, understand them, and seek forgiveness for them." It's not about feeling guilt or shame but rather about being freed from the control that our fears and anxiety have over us.

Lent invites us is to recognize that nothing—not even our failures, not even the ending of our most noble dreams, not even death—can separate us from the love of God. It's to recognize that nothing is wasted. There is, in the lyrics to that old hymn, a great faithfulness which we can count on, whereby "morning by morning new mercies I see."

Grace and peace *Mark*

Submit articles for the next issue by **Feb. 17**

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

GRIEF
SUPPORT
GROUP



FEBRUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

- February 5 – Matthew 7:1-114
- February 12 – Matthew 13:24-43
- February 19 – Matthew 16:24-17:8
- February 26 – Matthew 18:15-35

February Birthdays

Joan Larsen	2/1
Sheila Whipple	2/2
Ken Williams	2/5
Betty Adams	2/6
Jean Irvine	2/7
Tim Pennington	2/13
Wendy Watkins	2/15
Gary Parkhurst	2/16
Jennifer Wallace	2/16
Reta Wilcox	2/17
Linda M. Neyer	2/25
Florence Stone	2/28

Curious About Church Membership?

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

Note: Those interested in membership may join at anytime. For those who have questions and want more information, the next Membership Exploration Class will be held on Sunday, March 5.

2023 Grace Presbyterian Church Monthly Concert Series

Presents

Celeste Stella Trio

(SUN) FEB 26 @3PM

Jiwon Evelyn Kwark, violin / Hyunji Park, piano / August Lee, cello



FREE ADMISSION

Donations are greatly appreciated.

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2100 TICE VALLEY BLVD
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94595

Free Concert - February 26 at 3 pm

The fabulous Celest Stella Trio returns in February!

The popular monthly concerts are performed by superlative professional musical artists and are free. Concerts are about one hour and 15 minutes. There is plenty of seating and free, easy-access parking. Grace appreciates your free-will offering to help offset the cost of production. Please invite a friend to this sure-to-be stellar performance. You may view the recordings of previous concerts at <https://youtu.be/RaTfdl4NoxE>

Giving News

Late Year Donations:

- \$1,146.25 Food Bank, plus 149 pounds of food (124 meals)
- \$525 Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa
- \$1,000 Trinity Center
- \$1,000 Hope Solutions

Pledge Update:

- 68 pledges have been received, for a total of \$231,203.54, 92% of the goal in 2023 of \$250K.

January concert income from donations: \$640

Thank you for your support.



Micro Homes update

Firm Foundations and Hope Solutions are moving forward with plans for Affordable Housing Units to begin construction in April in the Grace parking lot if all the requirements are met.



Because Grace holds the Church property in trust for the Presbytery, the Legal department is still working out the Lease arrangements.

There is a Community Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 21 from 6-9 pm in the Oak Room. The City of Walnut Creek plans to be part of the presentation.

2022 PW Circle News

We welcome members and friends to join our Hannah Circle Meeting on **Tuesday February 14, 2023 at 10 am in the Library.**

Because last month's meeting was cancelled due to rain, we are combining Lessons 5 and 6 during our study period.

Prepare for lessons from our study guide, "Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight".

Lesson 6 - Sabbath and Hospitality. Scripture: Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Lesson 5 - Sabbath and Servitude -Scripture: Genesis 2:15 and 3:17-19; Exodus 31:12-18, 35:1-29, and 36:1-7

Newcomers are always welcomed and encouraged to join our meetings. Study Guides are still available for a \$10 donation. Women don't need to be church members to attend.

Submitted by Jan Zimmerman and Geri Rentz

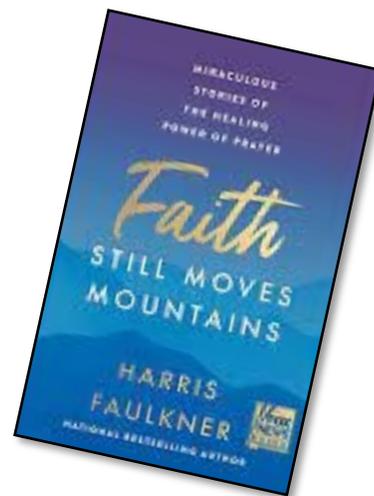


Book Club Meeting - Sunday, February 19 11:30 in the Library

The GPC Book Club February selection is "Faith Still Moves Mountains", by Harris Faulkner. The author shares nineteen true stories that speak to the power of prayer and the unwavering grace of God. Through these testimonies, we learn prayer isn't just a ritual, it's a vital spiritual strategy in a world that wants us to give up the fight.

Faulkner is an Emmy Award winning TV journalist and best-selling author. She currently hosts the "Faulkner Focus" on Fox News. In addition to her work as a journalist, she is a motivational speaker, writer and philanthropist.

- Blessings and Peace, Geri Rentz



New Session Team Assignments

At the Annual Retreat in January, Elders agreed to serve on the following leadership teams. Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to all who have agreed to guide Grace Church for 2023. Special thanks to those members of the congregation who are not currently on Session and are aiding the worship teams.

Business: Reta Wilcox, Earnie Cunningham, Gary Parkhurst
Discipleship/Congregational Life: Pat Devine Cummings, Rosalyn Cannelora, Sara Allen
Witness & Ministry: Liz Bradner, Gail Peterson, Meg Keeley
Worship & Education: Jan Zimmerman, Marlene Hall, Lynn Lyons

Grace Church Welcomes New Members

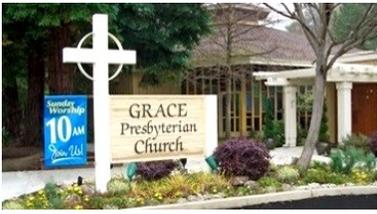
On October 30, 2022, **Bill Patten** was welcomed by Session into membership. **Hilde Olds** and **John and Barbara Bean** were welcomed into membership on January 14, 2023. **Mark and Betsy Werner** were welcomed on January 22, 2023. We couldn't be more delighted with all our new members.

Meet Bill Patten, who is new to Rossmoor. He was born and raised in the Chicago area. Bill was married for 25 years when his wife passed away in 2015. He has four adult children and eight grandchildren, all living in the Chicago area. Bill worked in Corporate Healthcare Management for 30 years. In 2017 he returned to college and obtained a Master's Degree in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola University in Chicago. Bill states that he is happy to be a member of Grace and looks forward to starting a Grief Support Group here at Grace. Stay tuned for information about the new Grief group.

Hilde Olds, a former member of Montclair Presbyterian Church, had been attending church at Grace for two years before deciding to join in January of 2023. She is originally from Eugene, Oregon. Hilde is the mother of two sons - Mike, who lives in Portland, Oregon, and her eldest, Steve, who lives in Oakland. Prior to moving to Rossmoor in 2013, Hilde and her two sons resided in Oakland. Her career, which spanned almost 40 years, was spent as a Lawyer. She worked in various capacities for Alameda County. During the first eight years of her career she was a public defender. Hilde has jumped right in to membership. She has been seen helping with Fellowship and with *Grace in the World* production.

In the next issues you will meet John and Barbara and Mark and Betsy. Welcome to all our new members!





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

Address Service Requested
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U. S. Postage
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Prayer Chain

Are you aware that
If you or loved-ones have
concerns that would
benefit from the power
of prayer, please contact
Faye Hutchings or the
church office. All requests
are strictly confidential.

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 the Library or on Zoom
Tuesday, February 14 - 10 am, Women's Circle Meeting in the Library
Sunday, February 19 - 11:30 am , Book Club in the Library
Tuesday, February 21 - 6 to 9 pm , Micro Homes Informational Meeting in the Sanctuary
Wednesday, February 22 - XX pm, Ash Wednesday Worship in the Sanctuary
Sunday, February 26 -11:30 am, Meeting of Session in the Library
Sunday, February 26 - 3 pm, Celeste Trio Concert in the Sanctuary
Friday, January 27 - Holocaust Remembrance Day
Wednesday, February 1 - 1:30 pm, Deacons Meeting in the Library