

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 December 2023

Dear Grace-filled Friends:

Thanksgiving Day arrived early this year (November 23), so we have an “extra” Sunday before the beginning of Advent on December 3. As we shift from this time of giving thanks and Stewardship to the season of Advent, I want to first pause and offer my gratitude to the staff, elders, deacons, volunteers, and church members for your dedication and faithfulness this year.

Now a few items of interest in the life of the congregation:

Advent Blue

The Session’s Worship and Education Committee approved the purchase of blue banners and parament for the Advent season. Why blue instead of the traditional purple? First, a reminder that the liturgical colors used in the sanctuary orient us to the season of the church year and engage the sense of sight in worship.

Red symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit. White and gold symbolize the days and seasons of joy, and mark pivotal events in the life of Christ (e.g., Christmas, Easter). Green symbolizes growth and marks Ordinary Time, the seasons after Epiphany and Pentecost, when we focus on the mission of the church. Purple and blue have been the traditional colors of Lent and Advent, seasons of penitence and preparation.

In more recent times, a number of churches have adopted blue as the color for Advent and purple for Lent. Blue represents hope and expectation, while the purple represents preparation and penitence. Advent means “coming or arrival,” and the reason for the season is anticipation and preparation for the birth of the Christ. Deep blue is the color of the predawn sky, the color that covers the world in the dark, cold hours before the dawn. It is meant to inspire us in the hope of faith, and to encourage us to keep watch for the promised light of Christ, changing night into day, and darkness into light. As the color associated with Mary, blue reminds us that during Advent the church waits with Mary for the birth of Jesus.

Church Office Building Repair

Due to significant dry rot on the exterior of the building, some major repair work was done this summer and fall. The trellis on the front of the building was removed and the supporting beams were expertly repaired. The trellises over the courtyard and street-side entries were restored and repainted. The street-side exterior wall of the Narthex was stripped to the studs and completely rebuilt. Also, new entry doors were installed on the courtyard side. A big thanks to our Facilities Committee (especially Elder Gary Parkhurst) and to your generous donations to our annual Facilities Campaign.



Finally, don’t forget to mark your calendar for **Sunday, December 17 at 3:00 pm** when we gather for our Christmas Concert in the Sanctuary. Please invite family and friends to join you at this joyous celebration!

Peace, *Mark*

**Submit articles
for the next issue
by DECEMBER 13
Note: Early deadline
due to Christmas.**

Office Hours

**Tuesday-Friday
9:30—3:00**

**The office is closed
12/25-12/31 for the holiday**

**Reach us anytime by email:
gracepreschurchwe@gmail.com**

Phone: 925-935-2100

**Sr. Pastor Mark Burnham:
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



DECEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP

Dec. 3 (1st Advent)
Jeremiah 33:14-18

Dec. 10 (2nd Advent)
Isaiah 40:1-11

Dec. 17 (3rd Advent)
Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-13

Dec. 24 (4th Advent) 4PM Worship
Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

December Birthdays

Elsie Nungesser	1
Gary Brassler	3
Daniel Rogers	6
Jim Black	8
Pat Devine-Cummings	8
Timothy Hamilton	11
Ivy Knott	13
Mary Kay Zieminski	13
Geoff Eukel	18
Betty Foster	21
Dan Hasselbrink	21
Andrew Rogers	22
Elise Teagle	22
Frances Whipple	22
Julie Kim	25

Christmas Eve Worship 4 pm, Sunday, Dec. 24

Join us for a Christmas Worship Celebration with special music, candlelight and Christmas Carols. The music, organized by Music Director Jumi Kim, will include trumpet, trombone and vocal duets. Rev. Mark Burnham will deliver the sermon which always includes a moving Christmas story. Bring family, friends and neighbors, all are welcome here.



The Christmas Giving Tree

Witness and Ministry is sponsoring the Christmas Giving Tree again this year. Proceeds will go to **Hope Solutions**, Grace Church's partner in the tiny homes project, and the **Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties**.



You may donate by placing cash or check into one of the envelopes hanging from the tree in the Church Narthex. Place the envelope in the collection plate or give it to the office. Online donation is available at www.gracewc.org.

Thank you for your generosity!

The Witness and Ministry Team

Invite a Friend! Christmas Concert

Grace Chancel Choir
 Jumi Kim, soprano / director
 Kathryn Schumacher, alto
 Michael Foreman, tenor
 Kathryn Hoffer, violin
 Yung Kyung Han, flute
 Joe Lim, piano



**(Sun) Dec 17
3:00 pm**



GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 2100 TICE VALLEY BLVD
 WALNUT CREEK, CA 94595
 LIVE STREAMING ALSO AVAILABLE at
 YouTube: Grace Presbyterian Church Walnut Creek
 For more information contact us at 925-935-2100

FREE ADMISSION
 Donations are greatly appreciated.

The PW Annual Lifetime Membership Award

The award will be presented to **Mary Munsell on Sunday, December 3rd at worship**. Please join the Presbyterian Women and Grace Church in congratulating and thanking Mary for her years of outstanding service to the church.



Hannah Circle Meets Dec. 12 at 10 am, Fireside Rm

Join your friends at the Hannah Circle meeting where there will be a cookie exchange. Please bring a dozen cookies to share and sample with Circle sisters. We welcome new comers at any time and hope we see some new faces. We will enjoy cookies and have our usual Bible study to hear about and discuss lesson four about Mary and Martha.



Blessings & Peace, Jan Zimmerman, Moderator

Worship & Education News

A sincere thank you to all who have participated in our educational

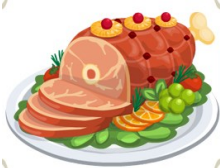


Education Sunday

opportunities this Fall. On December 5th we will be evaluating the program before planning opportunities for 2024. We would appreciate your feedback particularly relating to topics, venue, time, etc. You can share your thoughts with Jan Zimmerman, Lynn Lyons, Marlene Hall, or Mark Burnham via email, text or in person.

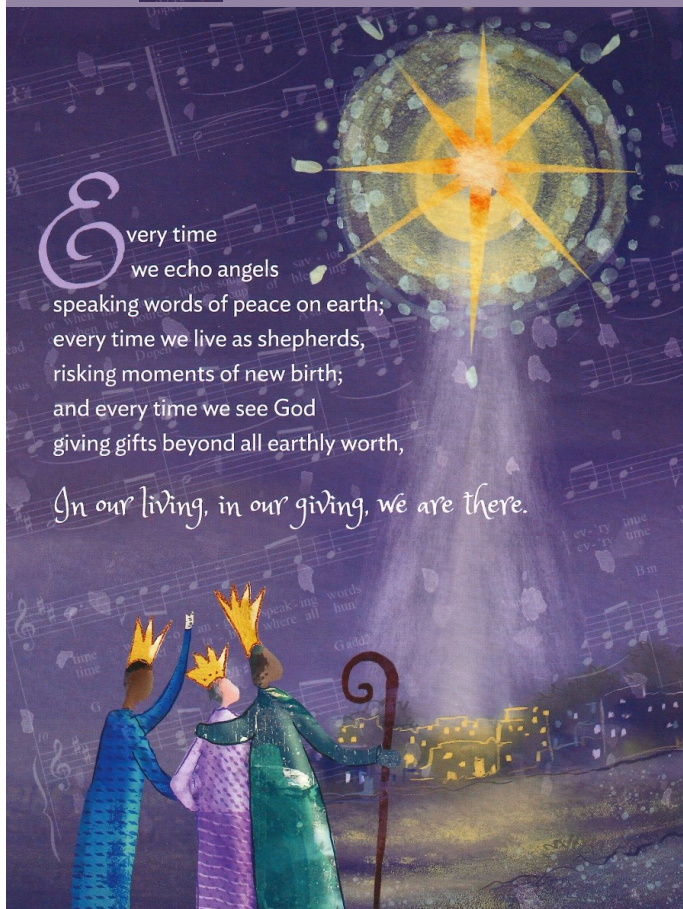
Marlene Hall, Worship & Education

Christmas Day Brunch will be offered in the Fireside Room on Monday, December 25th Time TBA. Food will be provided. Contributions of food will be graciously welcomed. Please sign up in the Narthex so we can plan appropriately.





2023 Christmas Joy Offering



Every time
we echo angels
speaking words of peace on earth,
every time we live as shepherds,
risking moments of new birth;
and every time we see God
giving gifts beyond all earthly worth,

In our living, in our giving, we are there.

Dear Grace-filled friends:

Dec., 2023

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we provide generous support of church leaders among us—past, present, and future. We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but now find themselves in critical financial need. We also honor and celebrate students in schools and colleges as we help to support them as they develop leadership skills and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world.

In the coming weeks, you will read stories about previous recipients of Christmas Joy funds in your bulletin inserts.

Last year's Board of Pensions gifts provided 1.1 million dollars that provided critical financial support and grants including:

- 272 retired church workers and their surviving spouses received assistance.
- 223 individuals were enabled to stay in their homes, assisted living or receive long-term care.
- 621 individuals were helped to face economic hardship.
- Further, our commitment to preparing the way for future leaders was evidenced in:
- Grants and other funding to support education and leadership skills for youth and communities of color.
- Support for Presbyterian institutions.

Thank you for supporting this offering. Your bulletin describes the three ways you may give: through our congregation's

offerings, or by using your credit card online or by texting to PCUSA.

If you decide to offer your gift online, please provide the name of our congregation so that the church will be credited for your gifts.

Thank you for your generosity-- when we all do a little, it adds up a lot.

Witness and Ministry Department –Meg Keeley, Liz Bradner and Gail Peterson

Please give generously, for “if we all do a little — together — it adds up to a lot.”

Explore the Grace Church website (<https://www.gracewc.org>) “Ways to Give” page and you will find information about different ways to make donations for special offerings and more.

If you need help with anything on the “Ways to Give” page, contact Linda Neyer, Treasurer, at gracepresbytreasurer@gmail.com or 925-433-5456; or Faye Hutchings, Financial Secretary, at afhutchings@sbcglobal.net or 925-588-3527.

An envelope is attached here and you may still submit your offering by check in the mail—drop it in the collection plate, or send to the office.

Thank you on behalf of Grace Presbyterian Church.

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

Address Service Requested
Dated Material

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U. S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 8241
Concord, CA

2024 PLEDGE UPDATE

CELEBRATING
ABUNDANCE



PLEDGE DRIVE 2024
GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOAL \$250K

\$157,105 RECEIVED AS OF TODAY



THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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

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

Church Membership: Please speak to Rev. Burnham for information.

DECEMBER GATHERINGS & MEETINGS

Every Wednesday at 10 am, *Bible Study* in the Library or on Zoom

Sunday, December 3 at 10 am, *Communion Sunday*

Wednesday, December 6 at 1:30 pm, *Deacons' Christmas Party, Fireside Rm*

Sunday, December 17 at 3 pm, *Christmas Concert and Reception*

Tuesday, December 14 at 10 am, *Hannah Circle Meeting* in the Library

Sunday, December 24, *Christmas Eve Worship*, 4 pm

Monday, December 25, *Christmas Brunch*

Office Closed December 25 through December 29