

amazing

IN YOUR LIFE | IN OUR COMMUNITY | IN THE WORLD

Grace

A monthly publication of Grace Presbyterian Church in Walnut Creek, California

January/February 2024

Dear Grace Church Family,

As we welcome in the year 2024, I am very thankful for the faith, support, and generosity of the members and friends of Grace Church. The new year brings both opportunities and challenges for all of us personally and as a congregation. However, in this season of Christmastide and Epiphany we are reminded that God is powerfully present in the midst of our everyday lives.

In worship we will be continuing our readings from the Narrative Lectionary as we move into the Gospel of Mark. Eugene Peterson describes it this way: "There's an air of breathless excitement in nearly every sentence [Mark] writes. The sooner we get the message, the better off we'll be, for the message is good, incredibly good: God is here, and God's on our side."

Patient Trust by Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to do something
unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability—and
that it may take a very long time.

And so, I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances
acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.

Give our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
And accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

New year blessings,

Mark



"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6

Happy
New Year

**Submit articles
for the next issue
by February 12, 2024**

Office Hours

**Tuesday-Friday
9:30—3:00**

Closed Monday & Saturday

**Reach us anytime by email:
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Music Director: Jumi Kim
Treasurer: Linda Neyer
Asst. Treasurer: Geri Rentz
Financial Scty: Faye Hutchings
Office Manager: Judy Williams
Preschool Director: Joy Martin



JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

- January 7 – Mark 1:9-20;
2:1-12
- January 14 – Mark 4:1-34
- January 21 – Mark 5:1-20
- January 28 – Mark 5:21-43

FEBRUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

TO BE ANNOUNCED.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Tim Blaney	5
Lorna Barber	6
Betty Bell	7
Karen Hastings-Flegel	10
Patricia Smayda	16
Doris Gerber	18
Robert Flegel	20
Carol Parker	26
Betsy Werner	30
Rex Beach	31

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Joan Larsen	1
Ken Williams	5
Betty Adams	6
Jean Irvine	7
Tim Pennington	13
Wendy Watkins	15
Gary Parkhurst	16
Jennifer Wallace	16
Reta Wilcox	17
Mark J Werner	24
Linda M. Neyer	25
Florence Stone	28

2024 PLEDGE UPDATE



Giving at Grace

Thank you to the giving community of Grace Church members and friends! To all who give of their time, talent and treasure — to host events, provide and prepare food, to those who clean up after the events. To our church officers and their teams who provide for all the needs for the church. And to those who call on others, sing in the choir and volunteer for the myriad of other jobs required to keep the church strong and fulfilling it’s mission. Thank you and blessings to all of you in the new year 2024.

- Christmas Joy—\$3230
- Giving Tree—\$ 540
- Food Barrel—One full barrel in Dec.
- Food for Thought Project—
- Tuna purchase—\$2038.80, Cash donation \$400 + volunteers.

Tax Efficient Giving

In the spirit of stewardship, we would like to share some tax-smart ways to support the church and make the most of your charitable giving in 2024.

One tax-efficient method is to consider donating appreciated securities. By gifting stocks or other investments that have grown in value, you not only support the church but also may enjoy potential tax benefits. This method allows you to avoid capital gains taxes that would be incurred if you sold the assets yourself.

Additionally, for those who have reached the age of 70½ or older, the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) offers another tax-savvy option. If you have individual retirement accounts (IRAs), you can direct all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD) directly to the church. This not only fulfills your RMD but can also lower your taxable income.

We hope these tax-smart giving options provide you with additional avenues to contribute to the shared mission. If you have any questions or would like more information, please don't hesitate to reach out.



David Allen, CFP®
 Certified Financial Planner™
 True Wealth Advisory Group
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Submitted by Grace Treasurer, Linda Neyer

December Recap

December at Grace Church was a busy month. On Sunday, Dec. 3, Mary Munsell was honored at worship for her contributions to the church. The award presentation was followed by a delightful lunch sponsored by the Presbyterian Women



of Grace. The Grief Support group wrapped up their second session on Dec. 6. Jumi Kim and team presented to the people of the church and the greater community a wonderful Christmas concert on Dec. 17. Santa and Mrs. Claus visited the Preschool on Thursday, Dec 21. The Advent Season was enhanced by new, beautiful blue banners and color theme in the sanctuary and culminated with a meaningful Christmas Eve candlelight service with trumpet music, solos, and Christmas Carol singing. The final event on Dec. 31 was the wedding of member Kris Ludwigsen to Tom O’Hearn. Congratulations!



Hannah Circle kicks off the new year on January 9 at 10 am, Fireside Rm

The new year begins with the story of Martha and Mary welcoming Jesus to their home. **Come to the Hannah Circle meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 10 am in the Library.** Share your thoughts on what Jesus was telling us about his relationship with Mary and Martha. What is the message the Lord gives us regarding the role of women in the Church?

Lesson 4 of *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke* centers on the theme “Jesus called us to value the role of each person in the community of Faith.” **Luke 10:38-42:** *As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*

Please also mark your calendars for the February meeting on Tuesday, February 13th at 10 am.
Geri Rentz & Jan Zimmerman

2023 Winter Break “Food for Thought” Project

For a number of years, Grace has supported the Food for Thought project (Formerly Let’s Feed the Kids) which provides kids and their families healthy food during the winter break. When school is out of session, vulnerable children don’t receive the school provided breakfast and lunch. Food for Thought, an all volunteer grass roots organization, seeks to fill that void for kids in the Richmond school district. The Grace Witness & Ministry team, with Gail Peterson spearheading the project, worked with Linda Neyer (Grace Treasurer) in November-December to gather \$2,038.80 to cover the purchase of 1400 cans of tuna. This was Grace’s contribution to the three food boxes for each of 700 families with small children in need of food during the school winter break.

From December 11th-13th, Grace sent volunteers to help organize the worksite, build and breakdown boxes, pack 700 boxes of produce, and do the final delivery of 2100 boxes and 724 bags of chicken to 15 elementary schools in Richmond.

Our volunteers were: John and Barbara Bean, Liz Bradner, Ann Bergera, Sally Day, Marlene Hall, Bill Keeley, Carol and Gary Parkhurst, Gail Peterson, and Charie Reid.

A BIG “Thank you” to all who helped with this project to feed the kids. Your contributions of time, talent, and resources allowed us to lend a hand to some of our most vulnerable neighbors over the holidays.

Be Like Mary

These were the words Mark added as we honored Mary Munsell at the end of worship on Sunday, December 3rd.

Mary joined the list of 87 Grace Church women since 1959 who have been awarded *Honorary Life Memberships* in Presbyterian Women (PW), an organization of the Presbyterian Church USA.



Active in PW, and a Circle member since she joined the church, Mary has inspired all who know her with her kindness, enthusiastic participation and volunteerism. With her generous spirit, she has served as a member of the (former) Rossmoor Friends of Grace committee, a Deacon and Caring Caller, an Office Volunteer, the Newsletter Production Team, and on the Fellowship Team. Mary is always eager to step in and help.

On the pin which is presented to each recipient, the design element of the ‘Caring Hands’ represents women who seek to build an inclusive community. This more assuredly applies to gracious Mary Munsell. Congratulations and Thank you for your service and commitment, Mary.

By Marlene Hall



Marlene Hall and Charie Reid fill boxes.



Gail Peterson



Volunteers including Gail and Wendy Neal, original founder of Let’s Feed the Kids.

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www.youtube.com/@GracePresWC
January & February GITW 2024



Curious About Membership?

Visitors who want to learn more about Grace 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

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

Livestream worship in on <https://www.youtube.com/@GracePresWC>—Every Sunday at 10:00 am.
Recordings of past services available on our YouTube channel

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.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY GATHERINGS & MEETINGS

Sunday, January 14, Monument Crisis Center speaker, 11:30 am in the Library

Sunday, January 28, Glenn Staller Guitar Concert, 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary

Annual Meeting of the Congregation, date to be announced.

Annual Officers Retreat, date to be announced.

Sunday, February 4, Communion Sunday Worship, 10:00 am, Sanctuary and livestream on YouTube

Wednesday, February 7, Grief Support Group Session begins, 2:00 pm, Fireside Rm.

Sunday, February 11, Loaves and Fishes speaker, 11:30 am in the Library

Wednesday, February 14, Ash Wednesday, Service at 4:00 pm in the Sanctuary (Easter is 3/31)

Sunday, February 25, Piano Concert, 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary