

Grace

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

January 2025

Dear Grace Church Family,

As we welcome in the year 2025, I want to begin with a big “thank you” to everyone who participated in the worship and ministry life of Grace Church in the past year. From elders and deacons, to ushers and choir members, to staff and volunteers, to worshipers and prayer warriors—the amount of generous giving of time, talent, and funds is just extraordinary!

As I review the past year, an appropriate theme might be: **New Member and New Neighbors**. In 2024, we welcomed 16 new members in our congregation, an increase of 12%! This only happens when you, the church members and friends, welcome and include new folks when they attend worship and fellowship. Keep up the good work! (Also, please see the photos and brief biographies of the most seven recent new members.)

The **New Neighbors** is a reference to the opening of the Hope Village micro homes on the church campus. After years of hard work and effort, Hope Village was officially dedicated on December 10 with a crowd of more than 100 in attendance. Hope Village is the first of its kind in Contra Costa County and will be a model for similar faith-based affordable housing developments.



Soon we will be welcoming six new residents to our neighborhood, and our Outreach Team will provide them with new welcome mats for their front door and gift cards for purchasing necessities. This is a wonderful opportunity to live out God’s call for hospitality and Jesus’ command to love our neighbor.

In worship we will be continuing our readings from the Narrative Lectionary as we move into the Gospel of Luke (see the worship schedule on this page). Eugene Peterson writes, “Luke is a most vigorous champion of the outsider. He shows how Jesus includes those who typically were treated as outsiders by the religious establishment of the day: women, common laborers (sheep-herders), the racially different (Samaritans), the poor. He will not countenance religion as a club. As Luke tells the story, all of us who have found ourselves on the outside looking in on life with no hope of gaining entrance (and who of us hasn't felt it?) now find the doors wide open, found and welcomed by God in Jesus.”

I will close with a New Year blessing from the Iona Community in Scotland:

*May we not keep our blessings,
but give them away:
so that others might learn new dance steps,
so children might be fed,
so bridges might be built,
and so grace may flow to all in your world. Amen.*

New year blessings,

**Submit articles
for the next issue
by January 15, 2025**

Sunday Worship at 10 AM

www.GraceWC.org
[www.youtube.com/
@GracePresWC](http://www.youtube.com/@GracePresWC)

Office Hours: Tues - Fri
8:30 am—2:00 pm
Closed Monday & Saturday
**Closed 12/31 & 1/1 for New
Year's Day**

Reach us anytime by email:

Info@GraceWC.org

Phone: 925-935-2100

Sr. Pastor Mark Burnham
925-433-5459 or
Mark@GraceWC.org

Pastor Emerita: Charie Reid
Music Director: Jumi Kim
Treasurer: Linda Neyer
Asst. Treasurer: Wendy Watkins
Financial Scty: Faye Hutchings
Administrator: Debora Chew
Preschool Director: Joy Martin

JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

- January 5 - Luke 2:41-52
- January 12 - Luke 3:1-22
- January 19 - Luke 4:14-30
- January 26 - Luke 5:1-11

January Birthdays

Jim Griesemer	1/5
Tim Blaney	1/5
Lorna Barber	1/6
Betty Bell	1/7
Karen Hastings-Flegel	1/10
Patricia Smayda	1/16
Doris Gerber	1/18
Robert Flegel	1/20
Carol Parker	1/26
Betsy Werner	1/30
Rex Beach	1/31

Please accept my apology for birthdays that were listed incorrectly in our December edition. - Debora, Office Administrator

Welcome New Members to Grace Church

Over the past few months, we have been blessed to welcome the following new members:



John and Dottie Hardin

- **John and Dottie Hardin** - welcomed by Session into membership on Sept. 1, 2024. John and Dottie are Native Californians. They have been married for 71 years.
- **Jim Griesemer and Sheryl Ruzek-Griesemer** - welcomed by Session into membership on Nov. 3, 2024. Jim and Sheryl met in a ballroom studio in Philadelphia and still dance together today. They are both members of our choir and are talented musicians.
- **Lois Anderson** - Lois was welcomed by Session into membership on Dec. 1, 2024. She grew up on a small farm in Northern Ohio. Lois worked on the support staff at UC Berkeley for over 20 years. Her hobby is baking.
- **Steve and Jeanne McLaughlin** - were welcomed by Session into membership on Dec. 1, 2024. Steve was born in California. His father was a center for the Los Angeles Rams. Steve worked as a psychologist and loves caring for hurting people. Jeanne was born and raised in Pasadena and Altadena, CA. She retired in May 2024 after working 47 years in Accounting and Tax.

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to our new members!



L - R: Pastor Mark, Lois Anderson, Sheryl Ruzek-Griesemer and Jim Griesemer, Jeanne and Steve McLaughlin

2025 Pledge Update

A Big Thank You to all our 2025 Pledgers! We have received 56 pledges for a total of almost \$200,000 against our goal of \$250,000. For those who have not completed a Pledge Card, it is not too late. Please prayerfully consider your support of Grace Presbyterian and your church community.
Link: <https://www.simplechurchgiving.net/App/Form/d0a7bca3-4df8-4368-8318-da04fcb1e4c9>



as of
12/15/2024

Goal: \$250,000



You may scan this QR code with your mobile device's camera to access our Online 2025 Pledge Form.



NEW "Grace in the World (GITW)" Newsletter is **NOW** available via email.

Did you know that you can now sign up to receive the "Grace In The World" newsletter directly in your email inbox?

Benefits:

- Read it on your computer, tablet, or mobile phone.
- View full color photos and text.

Call the church office or send an email to: **Info@GraceWC.org** with your email address.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT (F4T) WINTER BREAK PROJECT

Twelve volunteers from Grace joined others from the Interfaith community in mid-December to complete the Food for Thought distribution of food to 720 families with small children at 15 elementary schools in Richmond. Each family received three boxes of staples (including tuna from Grace), fresh fruits and vegetables, breads, and a bag of poultry to help them through the holidays when school meals aren't available for the children.

Our volunteers were: Shirlee Anderson, Francesca Berta, Sally Day, Pat Devine, Marlene Hall, Lynn Lyons, Ann McCullough, Linda Neyer, Gail Peterson, Charlie Reid, MaryLou Thompson, and Jack Wright. These folks purchased and transported items, made and filled boxes, loaded them into trucks, and delivered all to the families at the 15 elementary schools on December 17th-18th. This project needed many willing hearts and hands! We're very grateful to those who did the physical work, the Outreach Team of Session for oversight, and all who gave their support in any way. Thank you!

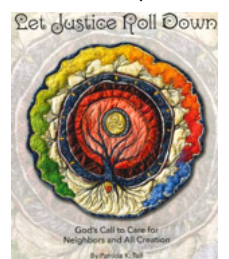


Hannah Circle welcomes women, and friends of Grace Church to join in fellowship on Tuesday, January 14 in the Fireside Room, from 10am to 11:30. Light refreshments will be served.

Our Lesson Booklet is entitled "**Let Justice Roll Down**" focusing on the care of our planet. This month we will study and discuss "**Air Quality**", using Scripture found in Genesis, Psalms, Job, Isaiah and Ezekiel.

The wind itself often signals a holy moment, and is related to both our breath and God's, both our spirit and God's.

Lynn Lyons (Moderator), Gail Peterson and Charlie Reid (lesson presentation). You may participate in person or via Zoom, a link will be provided.



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

Sunday Worship at 10 AM

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.

Prayer Chain

If you have concerns
that would benefit
from the power of
prayer, please contact
Faye Hutchings or the church office.



In-person SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES are at 10:00 AM.

Join friends for Fellowship time after church.

Livestream Worship on www.GraceWC.org — Every Sunday at 10:00 am.

Watch recordings of worship services anytime at www.GraceWC.org

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

Meetings and Gatherings

Sun. Jan. 5 Communion Sunday at 10:00 am

Wed. Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 (No class on Jan. 1): Bible Study with Pastor Mark at 10:00 am in the Library or via Zoom

Sun. Jan. 12 Session Meeting at 11:30 am in the Library or on Zoom.

Tues. Jan. 14: Hannah Circle Meeting 10:00 am Fireside Room

Sun. Jan. 26 Church Concert 3:00 pm Sanctuary (Free)

& Annual Congregation Meeting, Sanctuary immediately following worship service.