



GRACE NOTES

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211
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Happy New Year!

Persons, places, vistas we have seen



May God give you an abundance of blessings in 2017.

JANUARY, 2017

From Our Pastors



Rev. Cummings talks about the importance of the New Year.



Rev. Tran discusses the problems of transition.

2

Ministry Reports

Happy New Year!



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Sherry Thomas reports on the last Council meeting and

3



Brenda Nesbitt reports on changes in outreach projects.

3

From "A Prayer for the New Year" by Helen Stiner Rice

God grant us this year a wider view

So we see through the eyes of you.

Teach us to judge not with hasting tongue

Neither the adult ...nor the young.

Give us patience and grace to endure

And a stronger faith so we feel secure.

Instead of remembering,

Help us forget.

The irritations that caused us to fret

Cummings Commentary

A new year is always fraught with possibilities. My mother understood this very well. As a new year rolled around she was fond of saying, "Next year I am going to get organized!" For the record, she was a very organized person. Sometimes, the ending of the old year was marked with a sigh of relief. My parents had some pretty tough times financially due to the cyclical nature of my father's work. At the end of one of those years my mother would express the hope, "Next year has got to be better."

Humans did not always mark time or celebrate the turning of the years. Only through observing the movement of the

sun and moon did our ancestors begin to develop a sense of time. When they figured out that it takes the earth 365 days to orbit the sun, the concept of a year entered our consciousness. When they figured out the movement of the moon around the earth, the concept of months broke down the period of a year into twelve segments. Days were first counted from sundown to sundown. Midnight as the demarcation between days came later. Sundials and clocks became important to the monastics so they had a way of marking the daily times for prayer that were central to their religious communities. Our

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We are directed at all times by God's providential love and grace. We can greet the New Year with this same certainty of faith.

Catherine's Column



2017 will be a year of transition at Grace. Don will be leaving us at the end of June and we are already grieving the loss. We'll miss him and Bonnie and are grateful for all they have done for us over these past years.

With the coming leadership changes, it is not surprising that we might get a little anxious about things. Transition is not often easy or comfortable. At times like this, we are called to be our best selves, to be gracious and level-headed. And if we attend carefully to the work of transition, this coming year can be a very positive time of growth and productive enthusiasm.

We will have a new Methodist Co-pastor coming on board and our congregation will be different. We don't know what we will become – this new creation that God is already forming – but we do know that we have a part in shaping our transition and co-creating ourselves with God.

So that we can work intentionally through this year of transition, I will suggest to the Council that we have a Transition Committee to guide us along our way.

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Remembering 2016



Outreach Projects

By Brenda Nesbitt

After reading the congregational responses to the recent Outreach Committee survey concerning our monthly projects, we have made the decision to only have a project every other month this year. Our first project will be in February. More details will follow soon. Thank you for your input. With your help, we know Grace Church will generously serve our local, state and global communities through our bi-monthly projects this year.

We had a successful year and want to thank everyone who donated to the monthly projects and other outreach projects. We appreciate everything that you do.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

1/6 Rob Wimmer

1/7 Burl Gibson

1/15 Bonnie Cummings

1/26 Connie Rezac

Anniversaries

1/1 Keith & Evelyn Baker

Catherine's Column

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Resources from the Episcopal Diocese and Methodist Conference are also available to us and the Diocese has consultants that can help.

In times like this, when we feel anxious, when we are grieved, when things seem a little out of control or uncertain or just different - it is even more important that we remember who we are and what it means to have the name Grace. In grace, we can reach out to each other, we can listen with open hearts, we can refuse to listen to gossip and get the facts, we can assume the best of each other, let go of judgment, and draw deeper from the reservoirs of love in our hearts.

My hope and prayer is that we will drink deeply of the grace of God. Let us make this a year of Grace. Let us be Grace!

Catherine

Don's Column

Continued from page 2

sense of time and how to use it developed slowly. In some ways, we are still learning about time and its value and uses. Bidding farewell to an old year and greeting a new one has come to hold significance to us.

In Psalm 31:15 King David gives us the best insight we know into how to understand time. He wrote, "But as for me, I trust in you, O Lord, I say, "My times are in your hands; deliver me from those who pursue me." David knew what it meant to be pursued. He had enemies. There were people who wished him harm. But in this statement of faith, he was saying that all of life's circumstances are under God's control. We are directed at all times by God's providential love and grace. We can greet the New Year with this same certainty of faith. I like the way one commentator put it: "Our times are in God's hands, and therefore to his holy providence we must leave them."

See in church.

Don

TRANSITIONS

It was great to see Jan Schmidt and Tom Clark back in church after long illnesses. Please continue to pray for their recovery.

The organ music sounded great in the service Sunday. Great to have you back, Ed. Please remember him in your prayers as he continues to recover from his broken leg.

Thanks to Junia Fitzgerald for filling in for Ed Butler during his absence in December.

Special thanks to all who participated in the Christmas Eve services. They were both beautiful.

Thanks to everyone who came on Monday, January 2, to help take down the Christmas decorations. With your help, we got it done in no time.

Human Family

I note the obvious differences
In the human family.
Some of us are serious,
Some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived
As true profundity,
And others claim they really live
The real reality.

The variety of our skin tones
Can confuse, bemuse, delight,
Brown and pink and beige and purple,
Tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seas
And stopped in every land,
I've seen the wonders of the world
Not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women
Called Jane and Mary Jane,
But I've not seen any two
Who really are the same.

Mirror twins are different
Although their features jibe,
And lovers think quite different thoughts
While lying side by side.

We seek success in Finland,
Are born and die in Maine.
In minor ways we differ,
In major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences
Between each sort and type,
But we are more alike, my friends,
Than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
Than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
Than we are unlike.
By Maya Angelou

Sharon Robertson shared this poem with
the Ladies Bible Study group and I thought
it expressed thoughts that it would be good
for all of us to remember at this time.

Judy Epperson

Editor

Thanks from the Clarks

Smiley and I wish to sincerely thank the Grace family for your thoughts, prayers and care for us during our extended stay in MN while going to the Mayo Clinic. We especially want to thank Bonnie & Ray and Mary & Peter for taking care of Bode for some 49 days. It was very comforting and humbling to see/hear of all the people that were praying for us. Mayo Clinic was able to identify the problem (several auto-immune diseases) and start a treatment plan (prednisone). So now I am doing much better than when we left on 11/2 and am on the road to restored health. Peace and God bless

Natural Wonder



The super moon sets over the mountains.

Photo by Sherry Thomas

Grace Notes is a publication of Grace Church in Buena Vista, Colorado

Grace is an Episcopal-United Methodist Ecumenical Fellowship where people of all Christian faith traditions are finding a spiritual home.

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