



GRACE NOTES

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211
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Thanksgiving

Persons, places, vistas we have seen



To give thanks in solitude is enough. Thanksgiving has wings and goes where it must go. Your prayer knows much more about it than you do. t

NOVEMBER 2018

From Our Pastors



Rev. Tran reports on her trip to Viet Nam.



Rev. Erickson writes about the importance of Thanksgiving.

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Ministry Reports



Remember friends and family on Thanksgiving.

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Evelyn Baker reports on the last Council meeting.

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Bonnie Young reports on various church projects.

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Headline by

Remember to set your clocks back one hour tonight before you go to bed.

We don't want you to beat the preacher to church!



Catherine's Commentary

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers while Tam and I and our son, Philip, traveled in Vietnam. We had a wonderful trip. For the most part, everything went very smoothly. We were able to fit a lot into our two weeks!

The highlight of our time in Vietnam was when several of Tam's half-sisters and half-brothers gathered to see us. Tears of joy quietly flowed as two or three would arrive and join the group with many hugs and exclamations. We spent several hours catching up on what had happened to everyone since 1975 when they had last seen each other. It was hard to leave when it was time to say

good-bye. We parted with promises to see each other again the next time we are in Vietnam.

We also visited with Tam's older brother who moved back to Vietnam when he retired a few years ago. Minh lives in the city of Can Tho in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam and it was good to see his life there. Minh met us in Saigon when we first arrived and, before traveling to Can Tho, showed us around Saigon seeing places from Tam's childhood. I was glad to see the homes they had lived in growing up and hear about some of the memorable events they

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We enjoyed being tourists in a place that was both familiar and brand new at the same time.

David's Column



...affirming and supporting our journey to whole and abundant life (John 10:10)

Did you know that thanksgiving has health benefits? Thanks - giving or gratitude is the act of giving thanks or being appreciative of what we have rather than feeling bad about those things we do not have. Expressing gratitude is a choice. People who are grateful tend to be happier, healthier and more fulfilled.

Counting our blessings evokes feelings of abundance and generosity. It increases mental well-being, which can lead to better daily lifestyle choices. Grateful people are also motivated to express sensitivity and concern for others.

Health Benefits of Gratitude include:

- Grateful people are able to see God working in their lives and answering their prayers.
- Grateful people take better care of themselves. They are more likely to pay attention to what they eat and how much they eat as well as quit smoking.

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Church Council Report

by Evelyn Baker, Chairman



As the year winds down, the Council is focusing on preparation for the year ahead. We look forward to welcoming new members as those who have served faithfully move on.

On Sunday, October

14, we held our Charge Conference for the United Methodist Church. We were blessed to have Margaret Gilliken, our District Superintendent, join us for this meeting. We also approved the 2019 salary for David Erickson to continue as our UMC pastor.

Our primary focus for the remainder of this year is to examine the needs for the upcoming year as we prepare our annual budget. We have been greatly blessed over the past year to have all our financial needs met, and we live with faith that this will be the same for 2019. If you have any items that you feel need to be included, or addressed, in the budget process, please contact our Treasurer, Cheryl Wilderman.

Finally, we will begin our annual review of our 2018 goals, how successful we were in meeting those goals, while setting new goals for 2019. We welcome any idea from the congregation as we work to set the schedule for events in the coming year.

Project Report

by Bonnie Young

Operation Christmas Child was the focus of Grace outreach in October. A total of 15 boxes were filled by Grace members. The cost to fill an individual box is about \$50. Grace Church pays for the \$9 per box for shipping. Thank you everyone who participated. Through the churches and various organizations in Buena Vista, over 1,000 boxes will be collected this year and taken to the packing center in Colorado Springs. The boxes will then be shipped and received by children around the world.

Church Grace Church just completed a full year of providing one of the community meals for St. George Episcopal Church in Leadville. The meals are available five times a week without cost to anyone who comes. On the first Saturday of each month, a Grace team organized and prepared a complete nutritious meal, traveled to Leadville, setup and cleaned up the meal. They had the pleasure of eating each time with those who came and over the year have made many new friends. Simply Eatery donated loaves of bread each month—one month they donated 10 loaves. The Ladies Bible Study provided financial assistance; the team members usually donated the food they prepared. This has been a wonderful outreach for Grace and will continue for another year. Anyone who wants to participate are welcome to provide some of the food or be part of the team. Contact Bonnie Young or Dorothy Miller.

Grace Women's Annual Christmas Brunch is scheduled for Friday, December 7 in the Parish Hall at 10 am, cost \$15. This is a morning of music, food, message, merriment and should be on a Must Do list.

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David's Column

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- Grateful people exercise more regularly.
- Gratitude reduces stress, which can help to decrease blood pressure and reduce heart disease.
- Gratitude boosts the immune system - making you less susceptible to disease. In contrast, negative feelings can weaken the immune system.
- With stress reduction, you are calmer, resulting in clearer thinking and increased concentration.
- When you maintain the feeling of thankfulness for as little as 15 to 20 seconds, breathing becomes deeper, increasing the oxygen level of your tissues.
- Gratitude helps to restore a positive mood and decreases depression.
- Grateful people get more hours of sleep each night
- Grateful people tend to have stronger marriages.
- Grateful people tend to be optimistic.
- *Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude*
- Look for people or things throughout the day for which you are grateful.
- Keep a daily gratitude journal - Write down 5 things each day that you are thankful or grateful for.

Catherine's Column

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experienced during the war, both positive and traumatic. I learned new things about Tam - things he has not talked about very much in the almost forty years that we have been married.

We then traveled north to Vung Tao and Nga Trang, which are beach towns in the central region of South Vietnam. Tam had spent time as a boy in Vung Tao and wanted to see the beach again. This part of our trip was very relaxing, and we enjoyed being tourists in a place that was both familiar and brand new at the same time.

Overall, it was a blessing for Tam to return to Vietnam after all these years. As a young man, Tam had some traumatic experiences during the war and he had no desire to revisit those memories. His younger brothers and sisters, who regularly travel to Vietnam, have urged him to go back for years, and he was finally ready this fall. It was a privilege for me to accompany him on this memorable journey.

TRANSITIONS

Ali Lufkin had surgery this week with cautiously positive results. She still faces many months of further treatment. We need to remain in prayer for her and her family as they face this tie of trial.

Please be in prayer for Fred and Ampy Swart as they continue to deal with health issues.

Remember Bev and Chuck Herle in your prayers. They are both not in the best of health.

Judy Epperson thanks everyone for their prayers for her recent broken ankle. It is healing nicely, and she will soon be walking on two good feet.

Please pray for our country and the upcoming elections.

Pray for our country's leaders and the leaders of the world that they will make informed and compassionate decisions.

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Express your gratitude each day to God, your spouse, family members, friends, and co-workers.

Scriptures to encourage you:

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NASB) In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:16 (NIV) I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

Ephesians 5:20 (NIV) always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord

Thank you for everything you do. Thank you for being you!

Lord Jesus, Thank You for your Love and Salvation!



Enjoying lunch at the craft show. Domino's pizza. Yum! Yum!

Project Report continued from page 4

The theme is An Old Fashion Christmas. Women of Grace and their guests will fill the decorated Parish Hall for a wonderful fun time to start the Christmas season. The Grace men are invited to be the hosts serving the meal. Please contact Bonnie Young or Judy Epperson for more information.



2019 Special Session of the United Methodist Church General Conference

by David Erickson

At the 2016 General Conference, the body voted to table all legislation dealing with human sexuality, and instead, ask the bishops to lead the denomination on this matter. The Council of Bishops met immediately following the 2016 General Conference and, in the fall of 2016, announced the 32-member Commission on a Way Forward, comprised of lay, clergy, and bishops, women and men, and gay and straight United Methodists from across our global denomination.

The Commission on a Way Forward completed its work in the spring of 2018, submitting their final report to the Council of Bishops in May of 2018. The called session of General Conference, meeting February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri will receive proposed legislation and deliberate as to how the church is to move forward. We simply do not know what the outcome of the 2019 General Conference will be. Below are the plans from the Commission on the Way Forward.

One Church Plan: The one-church model would allow different United Methodists in different places to make different decisions regarding ministry with or by ministry with or by LGBTQ persons rather than maintaining a single standard that operates everywhere throughout the worldwide church. This would remove restrictive language from the Book of Discipline and

give conferences, churches and pastors the flexibility to “uniquely reach their missional context in relation to human sexuality without changing the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church.”

Connectional-Conference Plan: This plan would create three connectional conferences based on theology or perspective, each having clearly defined values (accountability, contextualization and justice). The three connectional conferences would function throughout the worldwide church and the five existing U.S. jurisdictions would be abolished.

Traditionalist Plan: T

his plan would affirm the current language about homosexuality in the Book of Discipline and seek to strengthen enforcement for violations of church law.

Grace Church is unique in it being a combined Episcopal and United Methodist Church. The Episcopal Church has already addressed this topic. Like many churches, Grace Church is diverse in thought, background, gender and sexuality. We understand that each of us has arrived at our thoughts and positions regarding human sexuality and ministry with and by LGBTQ people in different ways and with various levels of personal cost. We are all different, and yet, together we faithfully engage in the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, even though we may disagree with one another.

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Ultimately, on February 27, 2019, regardless of the action of the General Conference, we will still be Grace Church, engaging in the same faithful and fruitful ministry that we had been doing the day before. Nonetheless, in the season after the 2019 General Conference there may be some decisions to be made or some changes that take place impacting our life together.

The following are some possible effects to Grace Church if one of the above plans is to be passed in its entirety by the General Conference.

One Church Plan: If the One Church Plan were to pass, there would no real change to Grace Church other than the United Methodist Co-Pastor could perform LGBTQ weddings. In addition to wedding changes, in time, it is possible that an openly gay or lesbian person could be appointed to serve Grace Church.

Connectional Conference Plan: If the Connectional Conference Plan were to pass, Grace Church's membership in one of the newly formed Connectional Conferences would first be determined by our Jurisdictional Conference, and then the prescribed timeline would unfold, with our leadership and membership ultimately needing to discern which of the three Connectional Conferences we most would like to be a member.

Traditional Plan: If the Traditional Plan were to pass, the clergy persons appointed to Grace Church would have to decide if they can remain a part of a denomination

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with the current prohibition on same-sex marriage and the ordination of openly gay and lesbian persons. The congregation would also ultimately have to decide if Grace Church could abide in a church with these same prohibitions.

The pastors, staff, and leadership of Grace Church invite all persons in our community to be in prayer, discernment, and conversation as we move forward together, both as a part of The United Methodist Church and as a congregation. There are hard copies of a more detailed paper on this in the Fellowship Hall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We need people to sign up for coffee hour. If you would like to provide snacks for our fellowship hour after church, please sign up on the list in Parish Hall.

We will once again be getting poinsettias for the church during Advent and Christmas. If you would like to dedicate a poinsettia, please fill out the form in the bulletin Sunday. The cost of the poinsettias is \$27.00.

Birthdays

11/5 Bill Fitzgerald

11/20 Judy Edmunds

11/30 Ed Butler

Thoughts by Mike Frosolono

You Gentiles are like branches of a wild olive tree that were made to be part of a cultivated olive tree. You have taken the place of some branches that were cut away from it. And because of this, you enjoy the blessings that come from being part of that cultivated tree. But don't think you are better than the branches that were cut away. Just remember that you are not supporting the roots of that tree. Its roots are supporting you. (St. Paul in Romans 11:17-18)

I frequently describe myself as a professing, albeit struggling, Judeo-Christian. I know that some people object to linking *Judeo* with *Christian*; however, I prefer the linkage in order to emphasize my understanding that Christianity grew out of Judaism. I also use the linkage to show I am against anti-Semitism.

The horrific slaughter of innocent Jewish American Citizens at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh led me to declare, "I am a Jew."

Antisemitism has been rampant in this country from our founding but seems to have intensified and become even more virulent with the development of the Internet and Facebook.

In our present troubled political milieu, we would be well-advised to recall and apply the statement by Martin Niemoller, a German Lutheran pastor supportive of the Nazis in the early years, but who eventually spoke out against the regime, which earned him seven years in a concentration camp:

"First, they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me."

Ladies Craft Fair



Beautiful Bronco Quilt

The Ladies Sewing Group held an outstanding craft fair this Saturday, November 3, 2018 in the Parish Hall. They had lots of great merchandise and an abundance of delicious baked goods to sell. It was a great day, and everyone had a wonderful time of fun and fellowship. See more pictures below.



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.

Please send articles and pictures to editor Judy Epperson at eppersonjudy51@gmail.com.