



GRACE NOTES

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

Persons, places, vistas we have seen



May all of you have a special Christmas and experience the joys of the season the whole year through.

DECEMBER 2018

From Our Pastors



Rev. Tran talks about the pastors at Grace.



Rev. Erickson discusses the importance of Advent

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Ministry Reports



Merry Christmas

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Evelyn Baker reports on the last Council meeting.

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Bonnie Young writes about Operation Christmas Child and other projects.

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Christmas Eve Services

Remember our Christmas Eve Services at 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm. We will be doing the traditional Lessons and Carols at both services followed by communion at both services. Comes join us in the celebration of the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Catherine's Commentary

One of the unusual things about Grace Church is that we have clergy from two denominations. With our Episcopal and United Methodist roots, we are pleased to be able to draw on the best of both traditions and carry on those traditions by having both Episcopal and United Methodist clergy. Over the years, we have figured out a way to make this clergy configuration practical and affordable.

One reason we can make this work is that I am half-time and David is quarter-time. For me, that means being in BV for two five day periods each month. These five day periods coincide with the 2nd and 4th Sundays. I

usually arrive on Friday mornings and depart on Tuesday afternoons. During the winter, the weather may effect when I drive, but Friday till Tuesday is my usual stay. I also work from home about 1 ½ days per week doing things such as preparing my sermon, answering email, or making hospital calls in the Denver area.

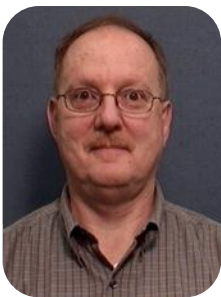
David's co-pastor agreement requires 10 hours per week including Sunday mornings. He is here for the first and third Sunday mornings, and depending on weather, may arrive in BV on Friday or Saturday evenings and return

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I encourage you to make "good use" of the time that your pastors are around and never hesitate to let us know of your needs.

David's Column



It is beginning to look (and sound) a lot like Christmas! Advent and Christmas festivities are in full swing. People are heading to the shops and stores looking for that perfect gift for those they love. Neighbors are donning their homes with lights and colorful Christmas characters. The sights and sounds remind us that the Christmas (Advent) season is upon us.

Christmas preparations fill our time with decorating, purchasing, wrapping, traveling, and celebrating. Christmas parties, special events, and gatherings help us experience the joy and good cheer of the season, but also make a full schedule even fuller. Sometimes we might wonder if we will have the time to get everything done before December 25th. We may even start looking past Christmas, yearning for Christmas to be over so we can finally rest and relax.

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Church Council Report

By Evelyn Baker, Chairman



The Council meeting for November was held on the 11th. Cheryl, Wilderman gave the financial report and discussed the upcoming budget process that will continue through December, with a new budget for approval at the annual meeting in

January. If you have any items that you feel need to be included in the budget process, please contact our Treasurer, Cheryl Wilderman. The Stewardship Campaign is on track to meet our anticipated budget needs, but if you haven't yet made your pledge, please do so to help ensure we will have adequate funds to support our financial needs for 2019.

On a practical note, Cheryl has come up with some new forms for check requests and purchase orders that will help streamline the payment process, and will ensure easier reconciliation during the annual audit.

As the year winds down, the Council will continue to prepare for the year ahead. If you have any ideas that you feel the Council should add to our goals, please contact a board member. We welcome all ideas.

We have four nominations to fill upcoming openings on the board. They are Becky Arthur, Mike Frosolono, Danny Simpson, and Ray Stwalley. These nominees will be providing their bios for review by congregational members. The nominees will be presented for approval at the annual meeting in January.

Missions Here and There

By Bonnie Young

St George Community Meals

A heartwarming thanks you to everyone who has participated in our ministry of providing the first Saturday each month's evening meal for the St. George Episcopal Church Community Meals. We have now passed one year of providing -- 12 main dishes, 17 salads and 29 desserts made by members of Grace. Simple Eatery donated 62+ loaves of bread. We averaged 5 people per time, translating to 75 Grace members who either prepared dishes or who went to Leadville to set up the meals and eat with the attendees. There were from 10-20 people who attended the meals each time. Last December, Grace presented St. George with 60 place settings of dishes, bowls, cups and serving pieces. The Ladies Bible Study has financially supported this monthly ministry. Grace Outreach and the Ladies Sewing Group have provided financial support where ever needed. We are so thankful for the continued response to this need at St. George.

Going to St. George

Rev. Catherine will be conducting the Worship Service for St. George Episcopal Church on Sunday, December 9 for their 5 pm evening service. We are encouraging Grace members to accompany her in showing our support to St. George in this difficult time. We will be taking the knitted scarves and hats that have been completed by Grace members, plus Christmas cookies for their children and a monetary gift. Please plan on joining the carpool going to Grace. We can meet at Grace at 4 pm and drive together. If you are interested, please let Bonnie Young know.

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David's Column

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Those of us who follow Jesus want to make sure that all the Christmas celebrations and preparations do not crowd out the true reason for the season; Jesus. In our pursuit to celebrate Christmas, Jesus sometimes gets left out.

With all the hustle and bustle, we have to be intentional to keep Jesus at the center of our celebration. If we do not pay attention, Jesus can slip out of focus and we might not even notice.

There were many who looked past Jesus the faithful morning of his birth. People were busy going about their day and living their lives. They were not concerned about Christmas trees or making Eggnog, but they had other tasks keeping them busy.

Only a few discovered what God was doing in that feeding trough in Bethlehem. The shepherds heard the Good News of Jesus' birth from angels and went to see God's gift of love, then went back praising God and sharing the Good News of great joy with all. The Magi were far away following a star when Jesus was born. They were actively seeking the true King, but would arrive about two years after Jesus' birth.

Catherine's Column

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home on Sunday afternoons. His other work time includes things such as working at home on his sermon, attending special church events in BV, or making hospital visits in Colorado Springs.

David and I are both available to you anytime (pastoring is a 24/7 calling), but especially when we are in BV, we hope you will not hesitate to visit with us or let us know how we can be present to you. I am available to meet with you at the church or visit with you in your home. As the lead pastor or rector, I am more involved in the management and ministries of the congregation and can help you with any concerns you may have about those things.

I encourage you to make "good use" of the time that your pastors are around and never hesitate to let us know of your needs. And don't hesitate to reach out to us when we are at home. I can be reached on my cell at 720-440-0059 and my email is cathctran@gmail.com. David's cell is 719-659-2943 and his email is deericks@comcast.net.

TRANSITIONS

Prayer are asked for Bev Herrle's son, Randy who has a leg infection and is also taking chemo therapy.

Remember Evelyn Baker's brother, Rand, who fell off a roof and has multiple injuries.

Shella Love asked for prayers for her cousin, Kirby, who lost his grandfather last week.

Pray for Ali Lufkin who is recovering from cancer surgery and is beginning therapy,

Also, pray for the congregation of St. George's as they await Ali's return.

Remember Ampe and Fred as they deal with Fred's health problems.

Pray for the people of Honduras seeking safer homes.

Remember the leaders of our nation and pray that they make good decisions for the country,

David's Column

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Those who encountered Jesus would never be the same. The world would never be the same. God loved the world so much that he gave...he gave his one and only son. While celebrating the miracle of Jesus' birth may we not miss the reality of his life.

May you keep Jesus at the center of your celebration and may he bring you hope, love, joy, and peace.

From David on the Christmas Brunch

I would like to congratulate you on an outstanding Women's Advent Brunch. Lenee' and I were glad to be able to attend and be a part of such an amazing event. We enjoyed the speaker, music and food and most importantly being able to be with such a great group of people during Advent. For all you do, you deserve more than having some men wait on you.

Thank you for your love and support to each other and to others in the church and community.

Merry Christmas!

Church Council Report

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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 ideas from the congregation as we work to set the schedule for events in the coming year.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

12/7 Evelyn Baker

12/8 Olivia Powell

12/8 Micah Rem

12/19 Mille Cochran

12/27 Junia Fitzgerald

12/29 Bob Cockran

12/31 Barbara McDonnell

Anniversaries

12/27 David and Lenee' Erickson

Missions Here and There continued from page 3

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to those who participated in packing a box for the 2018 Operation Christmas Child program. Grace turned in 14 boxes with the shipping amount of \$9 per box paid by Outreach. The churches and organizations in Buena Vista collected over 1,000 boxes this year. These boxes were taken to the distribution center in Colorado Springs last week and will now be on their way. Including the entire United States collections, tens of thousands of children around the world will receive a box by Christmas.

Ladies Craft Fair by Danny Simpson

You could feel a preview as you walked across the parking lot to the building. The room was filled with the glow of pride and teamwork as you entered.

Tables were piled high with beautiful, handmade Christmas items representing hundreds of hours of hard work. The creativity that was displayed made the decision of what to buy difficult. There was so much to choose from.

The bake sale selections were overwhelming. Everything looked so delicious. The “artistic” presentations of every offering made Martha Stewart look like an amateur.

Most impressive of all was the atmosphere of you and team work that exemplifies what Grace Church is. All of the people involved in the Grace Church Christmas Bazar are an example to all of us of how it’s done.



Advent and Christmas

by David Erickson

During Advent, we prepare for, and anticipate, the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for, and need of, forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming.

The Advent wreath, four candles on a wreath of evergreen, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In some churches, four purple candles, one for each week in Advent, are used with one larger white candle in the middle as the Christ candle. Other churches prefer three purple or blue candles with one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy.

While the Advent wreath with its four candles did bring light to churches, it was not to illuminate the interior as much as to symbolize the coming of Christ. The Advent wreath began in the time of the Protestant reformer Martin Luther.

During each Sunday of the Advent season, we focus on one of the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Others consider the lighting of the first candle to symbolize expectation, while the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day reminding Christians that Jesus is the light of the world. The order and exact wording vary among churches, but the wreath continually

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reminds us of whom we are called to be as followers of Jesus.

Although we are accustomed to celebrating Christmas on a single day, in both Christian tradition and on the Church calendar, the Christmas season lasts sundown on December 24 (Christmas Eve) through Epiphany of the Lord (January 6). This is sometimes popularly referred to as "the twelve days of Christmas."



Announcements

The Mistle-tones is a movie about a musical group and the challenges they have when they enter a competition on Christmas Eve. It is a movie that was on the ABC family channel a few years ago. It was written by Scott Thomas, Sherry's son, and his writing associate, Jed Elinoff. The family channel goes by a different name now. I think the name is Freeform. It is showing on Dec. 14. If you have direct tv, the channel # is 311.

In checking on this, I see that it is scheduled to be on at 11:05 am. I am recording it. If you don't record, you could search other times. Often they run these Christmas shows are run several different times in December, if another time would be more convenient.

Mini-Blessings is holding its annual Christmas fund=raiser, Mini Lights of Buena Vista, on Friday December 14, and Saturday December 15 from 4pm to 8pm. Come join us for the unveiling of the new animated light displays, entertainment, crafts, s'mores by the fire, door prizes, a silent auction and pictures with one of the cute little horses.

All the proceeds will go to support the programs of Mini-Blessings which aid at risk children and children with learning disabilities.

Catherine will be preaching at St. George's on Sunday, December 9, 2018 at their evening service. A group from Grace Church is going up to hear her. If you would like to be part of the group, see Bonnie Young.

Ladies Advent Brunch



Awesome Decorations

The Ladies Advent Brunch was held on Friday, December 7, 2018, and was a great success as always. Thanks to Bonnie Young and her committee for the beautiful decorations, wonderful food, and excellent entertainment.

The theme "An Old Fashioned Christmas" brought back memories of Christmases past to all who attended. Marge Dorfmeister's entertaining talk on her memories of childhood Christmases, was enjoyed by all, as did the Grace Ladies Choir's Story of Christmas. The program ended with a sing-a-long of old Christmas favorites.

Thanks, also to the men of the church who severed the meal so that the ladies could enjoy the morning.

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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