



# Grace Notes

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211  
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## It's Christmas!

*Persons, places, vistas we have seen*



**Merry Christmas**

**And a**

**Happy New Year!**

### DECEMBER 2019

#### From Our Pastors



Rev. Tran writes about the division in the world.



Rev. Erickson writes about the importance of Advent

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#### Ministry Reports



Merry Christmas

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Ray Stwalley reports on the last Council meeting.

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Bonnie Young reports on the Shoe Box ministry.

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### God's Gift

"God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it."

Pope Francis

## Catherine's Commentary

It is difficult to know what to think or do with all the division and hate in our country right now. What has gone off the rails that this is happening? Why can't we human beings just get along? It is hard to sort it all out and make any sense of it when it seems we can't even talk to our neighbor.

Into this broken world, where human division and hate happen, Christ is born. Soon we will be celebrating this miracle of salvation history; God dwelling with us in this broken world, God dwelling with those who hate or divide, God dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. Even God dwelling with those with whom we disagree! God in our midst, grace, truth -

where are they in this moment of turmoil?

I trust that God is walking this journey with us. I trust that God is standing beside each one of us. I trust that God is filling our country with a holy presence. I trust that the Great Comforter is holding every broken relationship and disagreement. This is the promise of the Christ child. Grace and truth are with us even when darkness seems to overshadow all else. The dwelling of God is in these very broken places.

It is hard to say what this dwelling with God means when brokenness is so much a part of

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*Maybe we can even try talking to and loving our neighbor – yeah, that one, the one who holds a very different opinion and simply has it all wrong!*

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## David's Column – While We Wait



We seem to spend a lot of our time waiting. We wait for a project to be completed, for a doctor to see us, for the traffic light to change, or to be checked out at the grocery store. Waiting is not easy, particularly when we live in such a fast-paced society. Pre-packaged dinners, microwave ovens, and fast food are designed to meet our desire for what is quick and easy. Smart phones and Wi-Fi make instant communication possible. When we become ill, we expect to be made well now, not later. We want swift or instantaneous results.

The passages traditionally read during the season on Advent remind us that God's clock is wound a bit differently. God's time is not our time. Many years before the birth of Jesus, the ancient prophets talked about waiting for one who would be like a light for the darkness. Those to whom they spoke were tired of waiting. They wanted God to get on with it. They wanted the

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## Church Council Report

by Ray Stwalley, Chairman



As most of you know, Mike has moved to Texas to be closer to his family. We therefore have had to find a new council chairman. Most of you know me, I have been a member of Grace since the combined congregation was formed in 2002. I will do

my best to serve the church in the coming year.

1. We have completed the stewardship campaign. Most virtually all of you have returned your pledge cards indicating your support of Grace for the next year. If you have not yet returned your pledge, and plan to pledge, the finance committee will thank you for doing so. All of you who have returned your pledge, you have our thanks as you have made it much easier for both the finance committee and the council to do our financial planning for 2020.
2. The Nominating committee is in the process of filling the slate of candidates for presentation to the January congregational meeting. We have both vacancies and expiring terms to be filled, so the slate is larger than usual. If you are asked to serve, please consider the request carefully. Grace needs a full council to provide the leadership we need as we move forward.
3. In 2020, there are 4 fifth Sundays. In the past, Grace has invited retired ministers, either from the congregation, or from the community at large or a minister from a neighboring congregation to lead worship on fifth Sundays. We have been fortunate the have had excellent individuals available . However, the individuals we have utilized are no longer available, either by relocating, having health problems, just "completely" retiring. I am open to suggestions for providing worship leadership on those 4 Sundays next year.

## Children's Shoe Boxes

by Bonnie Young

This year Grace Church members had a choice of filling Christmas boxes for either - Operation Christmas Child, a project of Franklin Graham Samaritan's Purse or -Shoe Box Christmas, sponsored by Spirit Lake Ministry.

Both projects requested school supplies, hygiene items and toys. Operation Christmas Child sends their boxes around the world to children in mainly warm climates. Spirit Lake Ministry's boxes will go to children on reservations in North and South Dakota and Minnesota, definitely colder climates, so other items requested were for winter caps, hats and gloves.

We are joining the Calvary United Methodist Church in Colorado Springs in their ongoing mission for Spirit Lake Ministry. Rev. David Erickson, a member of Calvary, recommended this project and is the delivery person. Although, the boxes were due back by November 3, most of the boxes were returned before the due date.

Once again, Grace members have participated by packing 10 boxes for Operation Christmas Child and 10 boxes for Shoe Box Christmas. Congratulations and thank you for your generosity to the children who would otherwise not have a present. Grace Church pays for the shipping.

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## David's Column

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Messiah now. They yearned for God to arrive on their timetable. Meanwhile, years were added to years, and history moved on while God's priests and poets tried to keep hope alive.

The Advent season leading up to Christmas is a time of waiting. As Christians, we would much rather go directly to Bethlehem without pausing to listen to the words of the prophets or that wild man John out in the wilderness, dunking people in the muddy water of the Jordan. However, Advent does not give us permission to rush ahead to the manger. The season reminds us to wait, to watch, to be open to what is coming, but still not yet here.

Knowing how to wait and where to look for the signs of Christ's coming is essential. Some will wait with a sullen expression and a hollow stare. Others will wait with anticipation and a rapidly beating heart. Some will look for a sign of his coming in the reading of scripture, the thrill of a great novel, the majestic rhythm of an ageless poem, or in the sights, sounds and symbols of the church at worship.

## Catherine's Column

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our experience. If nothing else, it gives me hope. Light is coming into the world, and once again, we are in immense need of it. Advent is a time of recognizing that need and preparing the way for the great light. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth... From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." (John 1)

May our prayers and actions bring the presence of God into places of division and hate. As Christ is born in each of us once again, may we be instruments of God's healing, love, and light in this world. Maybe we can even try talking to and loving our neighbor - yeah, that one, the one who holds a very different opinion and simply has it all wrong!



## TRANSITIONS

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In these troubled times, let's all pray for renewed understanding among the people of the United States and the World.

Please remember Vi Hardy as she continues treatment for her cancer.

Pray for continued healing for Kathy Prather after hip replacement surgery.

Remember Bev and Chuck Herrle in your prayers. Bev is in Columbine awaiting a decision on hip surgery, and Chuck needs our prayers as he must take care of himself while Bev is gone.

Please pray for Bob Freed that he may be resorted to good health.

Please pray for all our members who are traveling over the Holidays. We want them to arrive safely at their destinations and return home safely.

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## Council Report

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I appreciate your support during the coming year and thank you in advance. If any of you have issues to bring to the council, or just want to discuss things you feel we as a church should be addressing, feel free to contact me either by email, telephone or in person.

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## Announcements

**Mini-Blessings will hold** their annual Christmas Fundraiser, Mini Lights of Central Colorado, from 5-8pm on Friday, December 14, and Friday December 21. There will be crafts for the children, refreshments, a beautiful light display and a silent auction. Admission is \$5.00. Please come out and join the fun and have your picture made with Santa Horse.

**Collegiate Peaks Chorale will** present their annual Christmas Concert on Friday, December 13, at 7pm at Mountain Heights Baptist Church, on Saturday, December 14, at 3pm at Mountain Heights Baptist Church and on Sunday, December 15, at 3pm at First Presbyterian Church in Salida. Please try to make one of these performances .

**If you are going to be in town on Christmas Eve,** and want to read at either service, please contact Junia Fitzgerald. We need several readers for each service.

## David's Column

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Knowing how to wait and where to look in our waiting is a prelude to the Messiah's birth.

Faithfulness, at least in part, is holding on to hope even when hope is slow to arrive. It is trusting in things not seen and the promises about God's steadfast love. As we make room in our hearts and hurried lives for the One who is to come, we are making room for Christ.

The times we find ourselves having to wait on others may be the perfect opportunities to train ourselves to wait on the Lord.



## Thank You, Bakers of Grace by Dorothy Miller

The November 26<sup>th</sup> Craft Fair was a big success! I wanted to make a special shout out to everyone who donated baked goods and treats. Your generous contributions were very much appreciated. Thank you to all who contributed and a special thank you to Maryanne Freed for her help in plating and decorating the goodies for sale.

Becky Arthur - Christmas Bread

Martha Bauman - Powdered Sugar Ball Cookies

Judy Edmunds - Preserves

Judy Epperson - Pumpkin Bread and Peanut Brittle

Maryanne Freed - Fudge, Pumpkin Bread, Chocolate Mice

Peggy Finkowski - Chex Mix and Chocolate Chip Cookies

Bill Fitzgerald - Swedish Wishing Cookies, Eggnog Snickerdoodles and Almond Spice Christmas Wreath Cookies

Mary Hallman - Jack Sparrow Caribbean Rum Cakes

Dorothy Miller - Buck Eyes, Turtles, Chocolate Dipped Pretzels and Bacon and Eggs

Danny Simpson - Gingerbread Men

Ampy Swart - Homemade Salsa

Sherry Thomas - Gluten Free Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies

Cheryl Wilderman - Mint Chocolate Chip Cookies

Carol Wimmer - Lemon Cookies

The disclaimer - Please accept my apologies if I missed someone, but rest assured we are grateful for your contribution.

Dorothy Miller

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### More Brunch Pictures

#### The Ladies Choir at the Brunch



#### The Joyful Noise Quartet



[Continued in next column](#)

## Ladies Advent Brunch

by Judy Epperson

The fifteenth annual Ladies Advent Brunch, Come to the Manger, was held on Friday, December 7, 2019. Fifty ladies from Grace Church and the community attended the catered brunch, which included an excellent meal, and a variety of entertainment.

The event started with Dorothy Miller reading a story called "Christmas in the Manger", a story of the birth of Jesus. This was followed by the meal.

After the meal, Rebecca Kemper-Poos gave an inspirational talk on the meaning of the manger in our everyday lives and the reasons we "come to the manager."

The Joyful Noise Quartet, consisting of Jennifer Wright, Becky Arthur, Susan Shampine and Dale Kettering, entertained us with Christmas selects, followed by the Ladies Choir, made up of Sherry Thomas, Cheryl Wilderman, Susan Shampine, Becky Arthur and Bonnie Young which sang three numbers. As a special treat, Ed Butler and Dale Kettering played selections using the "four-in-hand" technique of playing handbells, performed by Ed Butler, Margaret Butler, and Dale Kettering. It was beautiful and interesting to watch.

Many thanks to the brunch committee, Martha Bauman, Dorothy Miller, Judy Epperson, Sherry Thomas, Cheryl Wilderman and Junia Fitzgerald, for all their hard work in planning a great event to celebrate the beginning of Advent.

## Ladies Brunch

continued from column one

The event concluded with a sing-along led by the Ladies Choir and accompanied by Teresa Roorda.

Ed and Dale playing four-in-hand.



Having Fun with the dessert.





## Birthdays and Anniversaries



### Birthdays

12/7 Evelyn Baker

12/25 Cheryl Wilderman

12/27 Junia Fitzgerald

12/31 Barbara O'Donnell

### Anniversaries

12/27 David & Lenee Erickson



## A Musical Delight



*Chime Time Players*

Grace church was honored to entertain the Chime Time Players at the worship service on December 8, 2019. These delightful young people brought sweet music to the ears and delight to the hearts of all in attendance.

This year the choir consists of seven young ladies, an unusual occurrence, there is usually at least one boy in the group. They are an extremely talented group of young ladies and are to be commended for their dedication to the practice and performance schedules. They were doing two other performances after the one at Grace Church.

Many thanks also to Director, Randy Barnes and to Carole Barnes who accompanies the group on the guitar. The members of the group are: Paisley Crites, Sara Coates, Shelby Tombaugh, Georgia Yinger, Reagan Flavin, Trinity Leibseit and Serenity Harrington.

Thanks, again, girls. You brightened our day!

*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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