



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211
719-395-8868 • gracechurchbvco.org

Happy New Year!

Persons, places, vistas we have seen



May you all have a prosperous and blessed New Year

JANUARY 2020

From Our Pastors



Rev. Tran writes about changes for the church in the New Year.



Rev. Erickson discusses being faithful in the New Year.

2

Ministry Reports



Happy New Year!@

1



Ray Stwalley reports on the last Council meeting.

3



United Methodist Church signs agreement.

3

Design for 2020

“New Year’s Day. A fresh start. A new chapter in life waiting to be written. New questions to be asked, embraced and loved. Answers to be discovered and then lived in the transformative year of delight and self-discovery. Today carve out a quiet interlude for yourself in which to dream, pen in hand. Only dreams give birth to change.” – Sarah Ban Breathnach

Catherine's Commentary

The Annual Meeting at Grace Church will be on January 26th after the worship service. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend! At the meeting, we will elect new Council members, review and report on 2019, and approve the budget for 2020. If you have any questions about the administration or management of the church, this will be an opportunity to ask them. Our Annual Meeting is also a place to bring your suggestions and ideas for how things should go at Grace Church. We will discuss the finances, attendance statistics, and the health of the parish.

One thing you should all be aware of is that my time at Grace

has been cut back. The Personnel Committee, Council, and I reviewed the needs of the congregation and the capacity of the budget, and discerned that we were a little heavy on clergy presence. I suggested we cut my bi-weekly visits to four days rather than five and the Personnel Committee and Council approved the change. So, I will be in BV from Friday to Monday on the second and fourth weekends. David's time remains the same.

Between now and January 26th, I will be preparing a statement about how I think things are going at Grace in

Continued page 4



I know the Annual Meeting is not the most exciting event at Grace Church, but your attendance at the meeting and concern for the life of the church is part of full membership

David's Column - Faithfully Yours



I do not know if there is a day of the year that solicits more prayer collectively than New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. We are all well aware that it is a new beginning. We understand that the old year lies behind, and a new year is dawning, but we know not what to expect. I can tell you one thing for sure that you can expect and that is this:

- God will never leave you nor forsake you. Hebrews 13:5-6
- God will cause all things to work together for the good. Romans 8:28
- You are an heir to eternal life. Titus 3:7

Because of these truths, and many more of God's promises, we can be confident about our lives in the days to come. God has good plans for you. God's word makes you this promise: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11. Knowing that should help us stave off worry over things that we cannot control. That being said, rejoice a new year is upon us. We can all pray that we will

Continued page 4

Church Council Report

by Ray Stwalley, Chairman



December is the time to wrap up the past year and look forward to the new year.

In this spirit, the Grace Church council has been finishing the 2019 reports for the Annual Meeting in January, as well as looking toward 2020

with a new budget and new members of council.

December is the season of Advent and Christmas. The Advent activities that have become traditional at Grace once again were part of our season: The Ladies Advent Brunch, The greening of the church, and Christmas Eve services.

The Brunch was the success that the ladies of Grace have made it for the past 15 years, it wouldn't be advent without the brunch. From my experience as a server, it wouldn't be Christmas to the ladies of Grace without the Brunch.

December is also the time when the nominating committee has the task of seeking your participation in the leadership of Grace Church. If you have been asked about serving, please give it your prayerful consideration. Church leadership has its own set of problems and rewards, but if we all participate, it doesn't fall too heavily on any one of us.

If you are head of a committee or activity, please review the report that you submitted for the Charge Conference in October. If there are no changes, you don't have to do anything, if there are changes, please submit them to the church administrator as soon as possible so that these changes may be included in the Reports of the annual conference.

Agreement Signed

From the United Methodist Church

(Washington, D.C.) - A diverse group of representatives from United Methodist advocacy groups with contrasting views and bishops from around the world has collaborated on a proposed agreement for the separation of The United Methodist Church (UMC) that has the unanimous support of all the parties involved.

The agreement, the [Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation](#), was achieved on December 17, 2019, and announced today. The action comes amid heightened tensions in the church over conflicting views related to human sexuality after the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference failed to resolve differences among church members.

Legislation to implement the [Protocol statement](#) — an eight-page document detailing the terms of a split of the 13+ million-member denomination — is expected to come before the United Methodist General Conference for a vote at their legislative meeting in Minneapolis, Minn. in May 2020.

The 16-member group came together as an outgrowth of a consultation initiated by bishops from Central Conferences located outside the United States. The parties sought assistance from prominent attorney Kenneth Feinberg, who specializes in mediation and alternative dispute resolution. Feinberg, who served as Special Master of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund and administrator of the BP Deepwater Horizon Disaster Victim Compensation Fund, along with a number of other complex matters, agreed to provide his services pro bono.

Meeting over several months, the unofficial group reached an agreement by signatories associated with all of the constituencies within the UMC for a mutually supported pathway for separation, bridging differences among other plans to be considered by the General Conference. "The undersigned propose restructuring The United Methodist Church by separation as the best means

[Continued...](#)

David's Column continued from page 2

put the past behind and joyfully embrace a new day and the New Year ahead. Let us start with this wonderful prayer by Mrs. Merrel Thompson.

Dear Lord, as I close the door on this old year, I ponder on the things I have done... on the things I have said and the joys I have had. .then I wonder, have I lost or won?

I have thought of the new friends I have made ,and of the old ones staunch and true... the path of the old year was made easier Lord ,because I have walked it with You.

I think of all the many times, when my burdens were so heavy to bear, and how my faith slipped away from me... but somehow You were always standing there.

Now as I open the door to this New Year, and carefully peep inside, I wonder what it holds for me... but I will throw the door open wide

And whatever it brings to me and mine, I will meet it with a heart so true... I know that, Lord whatever it maybe You will be there to carry me through.

Continued page 5

Catherine's Column continued from page 2

general. I have been asking people what they think. If I have not asked you, I am asking what you think here. If there is something you would like me to address or you have concerns about, please let me know. You can email me at cathctran@gmail.com or call me at 720-440-0059.

I know the Annual Meeting is not the most exciting event at Grace Church, but your attendance at the meeting and concern for the life of the church is part of full membership. I hope you will join us for this important event in our common life.



The Grace Choir
performs at the
December 22, 2019
service.

TRANSITIONS

Please remember Bev and Chuck Herrle in your prayers. They both are still have health issues.

Pray for Vi Hardy as she continues her cancer treatments.

We still need to pray for Barbara O'Donnell's son-in-law, Steve. He has advanced pancreatic cancer.

Continue to pray for Mary Lou Bauman and her health issues.

In light of the present world situation, we need to pray our president and the leader of Iran can maintain cool heads and solve the problems with our two countries in a peaceful manner.

Please pray for the state of the United Methodist Church in this time of uncertainty.

As we begin the new year, let us remember to love our neighbors and treat everyone and we would want to be treated.

David's Column

continued from page 4

I am praying for you as you read this now and expecting God's blessings that lie ahead. A new day, a new year and new outlook await us in 2020, let us work to make this a wonderful time going forward realizing we have the knowledge, experience and love from the past and present to support us.

Announcements

Thanks to all the members of Grace Church that attended the recent fund raiser for Mini-Blessings. Your support helped make the event a success and is greatly appreciated.

New sign up sheets for altar flower dedications and coffee hour will be on the bulletin board in Parish Hall starting next week. Please remember to sign up for both of these important ministries of the church.

The annual meeting will be held on January 26, 2020. If you are a committee chair, please get your report to Judy Epperson by January 15, so it will get in the packet. If you are running for the council, please send a short biography to Judy by the same date so it can be included in the bulletin.

There will be a potluck dinner on January 26, 2020. Grace Church will provide the meat so please bring either a vegetable, salad, or dessert.

The Ladies Sewing Group will resume on Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 9am. Please come join the ladies for some fun and fellowship while they work on items for the next bazaar.

Church Council Report

continued from page 3

The Grace Church annual meeting will be held January 19, 2020 immediately following the worship service. The meeting will be followed by a potluck dinner in the parish hall. Grace Church will provide the meat, so members are asked to bring side dishes and desserts.

Top Ten New Year's Resolutions

1. Exercise more
2. Lose weight
3. Get organized
4. Learn a new skill or hobby
5. Live life to the fullest
6. Save more money/spend less money
7. Quit Smoking
8. Spend more time with family and friends
9. Travel more
10. Read more

Agreement

continued from page 3

to resolve our differences, allowing each part of the Church to remain true to its theological understanding, while recognizing the dignity, equality, integrity, and respect of every person," says the Protocol Statement.

The document's signers include representatives from Europe, Africa, the Philippines, and the United States, and include persons representing UMCNext; Mainstream UMC; Uniting Methodists; The Confessing Movement; Good News; The Institute on Religion & Democracy; the Wesleyan Covenant Association; Affirmation; Methodist Federation for Social Action; Reconciling Ministries Network; and the United Methodist Queer Clergy Caucus; as well as bishops from the United States and across the world. The representatives have pledged to work together to support the proposal and develop legislation to implement it.

The Protocol anticipates the formation of a new traditionalist Methodist denomination. Once formed, the new church would receive \$25 million over the next four years and give up further claim to the UMC's assets. An additional \$2 million would be allocated for potential additional new Methodist denominations which may emerge from the UMC. Acknowledging the historical role of the Methodist movement in systematic racial violence, exploitation and discrimination, the Protocol would allocate \$39 million to ensure there is no disruption in supporting ministries for communities historically marginalized by racism.

Under the Protocol, conferences and local congregations could vote to separate from The United Methodist Church to affiliate with new Methodist denominations created under the agreement within a certain time frame.

Continued from Column 1

Churches wishing to stay within the UMC would not be required to conduct a vote. Provisions exist for entities that choose to separate to retain their assets and liabilities. All current clergy and lay employees would keep their pensions regardless of the Methodist denomination with which they affiliate.

Under the Protocol, all administrative or judicial processes addressing restrictions in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist related to self-avowed practicing homosexuals or same-sex weddings, as well as actions to close churches, would be held in abeyance until the separation is completed. The Protocol also references a plan which calls for a special general conference of the post-separation United Methodist Church. The purpose of the Special Session would be to create regional conferences, remove the current prohibitions against LGBTQ persons, and to repeal the Traditional Plan.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Bishop John Yambasu (Sierra Leone) stated, "All of us are servants of the church and realize that we are not the primary decision makers on these matters. Instead, we humbly offer to the delegates of the 2020 General Conference the work which we have accomplished in the hopes that it will help heal the harms and conflicts within the body of Christ and free us to be more effective witnesses to God's Kingdom."

The signatories to the Protocol have provided a [FAQ document](#) to provide additional information about the agreement. Comments and questions may be directed to the signatories at mediationprotocol@outlook.com.

Roll Out the Welcome Mat

contributed by David Erickson

Hi! I am Mariah. I'm new here." That is how an 8-year-old girl boldly introduced herself to the pastor of a church one Christmas Eve.

Most of us do not feel that brave, especially when worshipping during the holidays with an unfamiliar congregation. Some church members seem so engrossed in catching up with their family and friends that visitors end up feeling like part of the décor.

For some people, Christmas and Easter are the only times they go to church. Visitors seeking a church to call home – even a temporary home – want to feel welcomed. They want to feel needed and gain a sense of belonging to the community. That is why it is critical for congregations to have a strategic plan for welcoming visitors, especially during holiday services.

Truly welcoming visitors and future congregants requires more than a sign or mat with the word "welcome." People feel most comfortable when they see themselves reflected in the congregation.

Our welcome knows no boundaries, whether of age, racial or ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, economic or marital status, or physical or mental ability. We welcome all to share in the ministry, fellowship and blessings of full participation as members of Christ's body.

Continued from Column 1

Those all-inclusive words open a world of possibilities. After all, who would not feel included after reading that? Your church may be welcoming, but if it does not say so and does not walk the talk, prospective congregants may perceive the church as unwelcoming.

Here are a few welcoming activities and tips:

- 1 **Circle of 10.** Greet anyone who comes within 10 feet of you. Make a special effort to greet people you do not already know.
- 2 **Rule of three.** During the first three minutes after the service, talk to people whom you do not know or who are guests. Why three minutes? That is the average time it takes guests to exit after worship, so it is important to connect before they depart.
- 3 **Audit guests.** Ask a newcomer to share his or her experience from parking lot to door to departure and make sure the experience gets back to Church Council.
- 4 **Be a guide.** Reach out to visitors personally and guide them through the church.
- 5 **Coffee and Tea:** Invite visitors sitting near you to accompany you after the service to Parish Hall for coffee, tea, water or a treat. Walk them there and introduce them to other members along the way.

New Baby



An exciting new addition to the extended Grace Family for 2019 was Catherine and Tam's new grandson, Archer, who was born in November.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Birthdays

1/27 Mike Frosolono
1/30 Sharon Robertson

Anniversaries

1/1 Keith and Evelyn Baker
1/20 Barry and Carolyn Hayes



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.