



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211
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Christ the Lord, IS Risen

Persons, places, vistas we have seen



May the Blessings of Easter be with us all.

APRIL 2020

From Our Pastors



Rev. Tran writes about dealing with life changes during the pandemic.



Rev. Erickson discusses offering kindness.

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Ministry Reports



Happy Easter

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Jennifer Wright reports on the March council meeting.

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Psalm 23

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Easter Thought

He didn't stay on the cross or in the manger,

He is Risen!

Catherine's Commentary

This is a difficult time we are in. I never imagined I would ever see churches closed and millions of people ordered to stay home for weeks. It is hard to imagine how our congregation will get through this time intact. It is easy to worry about losing people and running out of money to try to keep us afloat. But even with all these usual challenges, I know that the time will come when we will be together, and it will be sweet. I look forward to that day when we can be with each other again.

Until then, we must work at being community. There are ways to keep in touch. If you have not already joined us for Zoom services on Sundays, I

hope you will. It is so wonderful to see each other and catch up on how people are doing. It is reassuring to know that we can still be together to read scripture and pray. I am also working on getting permission from the Episcopal bishop to serve drive up communion. I feel confident that we can do that in a safe way and hope to have that permission in time for Easter.

Another way to keep in touch is to join the Google email group and receive information and announcements. Kathy Prather is also maintaining a prayer list for the group. If you are not in the Google group, contact Judy and

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I pray that when we get to the end of this trial, we will be stronger and more joyful than ever before. This hope gives me something to look forward to!

David's Column – Offering Kindness



There is a story told by a United Methodist Pastor of being kind and welcoming and it goes like this:

A man came into the sanctuary on a Sunday morning a little after the worship service had begun. He came in by himself and took a seat where nobody was close by. When we stood to greet one another and share the peace of Christ, the Pastor headed over to him to say hello. He stuck out his hand in response and said, "Good morning, Father" which threw the Pastor off guard. He clearly was not accustomed to worship in a United Methodist Church. We do not call the pastor "Father" around here. He was likely drawing upon some earlier practice he had known from his childhood or the movies. The worship service went on. For the rest of the hour, the Pastor wondered what this stranger would make of what we were doing. The Pastor hoped he might encounter something of God's love and compassion as well as God's invitation to live a higher calling.

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Church Council Report

by Jennifer Wright, Vice-chairman



The Grace Church Council met on March 8, 2020 at 10:50 am in the Parish Hall. Becky Arthur, Catherine Tran, Judy Epperson, Dorothy Miller, Susan Shampine, and Carolyn Hayes were in attendance.

Since we did have a quorum, Treasurer's report and minutes from January meetings were approved.

It was also voted on and approved that Mike Frosolono would be taken off the signature cards at the banks. The remaining signers are unchanged: Becky Arthur, Judy Epperson, and Dorothy Miller.

Dorothy Miller presented the Treasurer's Report. February's income was down by -\$958. We need to make sure to watch the Budget closely in the next few months to make sure our spending doesn't exceed our budget. The Treasurer's report was voted upon and accepted.

There was more discussion about the upcoming Council Retreat April 17-18. There is a possibility of using a house in Game Trail; otherwise we will meet Friday night and all-day Saturday at the Fellowship Hall. The purpose of the Retreat is to discuss goals for the upcoming year, and a Mutual Ministry Review will be included during the weekend.

Judy and David are working on a Church facilities fee list to standardize and update all the old ones currently in existence.

Sent Forth

by David Erickson

Can checking your email be holy? Can doing your laundry or mowing your lawn or going to a meeting be spiritual activities?

Every Sunday in worship we end with a benediction – a fancy word for blessing – and we are sent forth. Week after week we are blessed and sent, blessed and sent. We are blessed with the awareness of God with us. We are blessed with the reminder of the Holy Spirit living in us. We are blessed with the mission to live that presence of God in the world. And then we are sent forth.

However, we are often not sent to those big dramatic moments we may picture when we think of embodying the presence of God. Instead we are sent back home where there is laundry to be done, dishes to wash, and other chores to manage. We are sent back to our jobs where there are emails and meetings waiting. We are sent back to our everyday lives and routines.

So, can checking our email be holy? Can we carry that blessing of God's presence back into the humdrum routines of our days? Of course! In Liturgy of the Ordinary, author Tish Harrison Warren writes, "I want to do the big work of the kingdom, but I have to learn to live it out in the small tasks before me – the work of God in the daily grind." Our identity as people who are blessed and sent into the world transforms how we live in the world, not just in the big moments but also even in our unremarkable days.

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During the time the offering plates were passed, the man got up and headed towards the door. The Pastor was saddened to see him leave. Something had brought the man to worship that day. The Pastor was hoping that he found that something he was looking for, or at least found that here at this church there was something that would draw him to come back to keep looking. When he got up to leave, the Pastor was afraid that maybe he reached the conclusion that this was not the sort of place for him. Maybe something he heard upset him. Maybe he looked around him that day and saw hypocrisy, judgment, or the poverty of our worship. Maybe he did not like the idea of an offering plate being passed and a church interested in money. The Pastor will never know. He just got up and left.

When he was nearly out the door, a woman reached out her hand to him as he came by where she was sitting. Some words were shared, and a brief smile exchanged. Perhaps more took place in that simple act of kindness and warmth than in all the rest of the worship service. The woman offered kindness and hospitality. But when he was with us, someone extended to him a moment of human connection.

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Catherine's Column continued from page 2

she can send you an invitation. We are also using the parish email list for announcements and other things, so look for us in your email.

Bonnie has also sent out an invitation by email to send items like pictures, short stories of what you are doing, suggestions and advice to share. She will gather the information and keep us all updated and then post things on the bulletin board when this is all over.

Of course, there are still the old-fashioned ways to keep in touch by phone or by snail mail.

These are all good ways to keep track of each other and take care of each other. Grace has its wonderful way of being connected and caring, even under the most unusual circumstances. Our community is strong and loving, and no virus is going to change that.

I pray that when we get to the end of this trial, we will be stronger and more joyful than ever before. This hope gives me something to look forward to!

TRANSITIONS

Please pray for the country and the world during this pandemic and that people heed the advice of our leaders.

Pray for Grace Church as we weather COVID-19 storm and still be God's messengers to the community in these trying times.

Pray for Ray Stwalley and Bonnie Young as he continues to battle health issues.

Pray for Mary Hallman who is recovering from shoulder surgery.

Please continue to pray for Judy Epperson's granddaughter, Courtney. The doctors are having trouble regulating her medication.

Please pray for Ed Butler's brother, Bob, who is recovering from blood clots.

Pray for Janet and Bob Yinger's son, Joel, who has been tested for the COVID-19 virus.

David's Column continued from page 4

As people of faith and followers of Christ, we should never underestimate the power of what we do. By offering kindness to strangers, we entertain angels unaware. By offering a hand, a smile, a few small words, we can make a difference in the lives of others. Kindness is something we can give that costs us nothing but can be rewarding in many ways.

Council Report Continued from page 3

The Methodist Church Conference will be scheduled for October. We are also scheduled to have a visit from the new Episcopal Bishop, Kym Lucas, on June 28th.

There will be a Corona Virus plan from the Episcopal Diocese coming soon. Meanwhile, we will make hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes available in the Sanctuary and Parish Hall.



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Tish Harrison Warren writes that the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago was not just about a conflict in doctrine, but also about living vocation. "The idea that all good work is holy work was revolutionary. The Reformation toppled a vocational hierarchy that had placed monks, nuns, and priests at the top and everyone else below. The reformers taught that a farmer may worship God by being a good farmer and that a parent changing diapers could be as near Jesus as the pope. This was a scandal."

We sometimes are tempted to look at some work as holier than others. And we certainly see some work as more glamorous than others. But the scandal we receive when we are blessed and sent into the world is that God's Spirit lives inside us, and so all work that does good and not harm is equally holy, equally awash with God's presence. Living that identity as ones who are blessed and sent can seem distant when we are doing those annoying little tasks in our days that just need to get done but do not seem particularly holy. And yet we are people who live in that blessing that even when we are taking out the trash or doing the grocery shopping or responding to emails, the Spirit of God is alive and at work in us.

What would it look like to practice that awareness the next time you are doing a chore in your daily life? How would it change us to remember that we are blessed by God's presence and sent to live that presence even in those small daily tasks?

Palm Sunday



Sharon Robertson shared this idea she found on Facebook from the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit. I agree that this is a wonderful idea and we should all give it a try. I added the picture part because some folks may not have a green branch readily available.

What if everyone on Sunday April 5 in the morning, puts a branch or picture of a branch on the door of their house or on the window, to celebrate Palm Sunday?

It could be any green branch or picture of a green branch you can get. This would help, despite the social distancing, to be connected as we enter the Holiest of Weeks.

We may be physically isolated, but not separated. We are united as the body of Christ.

If you want, you can send me a picture of what you did at your house.

Grace, Peace, Comfort and Support,
David Erickson

Psalm for Contemplation

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He make me to lie down in green
pastrures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For his name's sake.

Uea, thought I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For you are with me;
Your rod and Your staff they cofort me.
You prepare a table before me in the
presence of my enemies,
My cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dewll in the hours of the Lord
forever.



Sherry's Pictures

Sunrises Over Mt. Princeton



God reveals His glory to a troubled world.

Easter Love

On Easter we celebrate love,
love coming down from heaven,
love blanketing the earth
in a transforming embrace;
unique and infinite love,
giving more than we can imagine
for us, to cleanse our sin,
a perfect sacrifice, Lamb of God,
the walking, talking Word.
He is teacher, role model, friend,
this God in human form,
dying, then rising from the dead,
proving all who believe
will also rise
to have eternal life, with Him,
Lord of all.
Oh, Happy, Happy Easter!

By Joanna Fuchs



Announcements

The church office is open every Wednesday from 9 am to 12:00 noon. If you need anything, please call Judy at the 395-8868 and she will be glad to help you with anything you need.

Since we are not meeting due to the COVID-19 situation, please mail your monthly pledge payments to the church at P.O. Box 1559, Buena Vista and it will get deposited. Judy is picking up the mail and Dorothy is coming in once a week to do a deposit. We thank you for your continued support of Grace Church.

If you have not yet received an invitation to join the Buena Vista Grace Church Congregation Google group, please let Judy know by emailing her at admin@gracechurchbvco.org and she will see that you get an invitation.

If you are not receiving the Grace Church group emails, please let Judy know at admin@gracechurchbvco.org, and she will add you to the list.

Since we are not going to have an Easter service at the church, we will not be flowering the cross this year.

Remember to put some green leaves on your door or in your window on Sunday to celebrate Palm Sunday, so we can feel unified even though we are not together.

Kathy Prather is sending out a prayer list weekly. If you need prayers for anyone, please email her at mountankat@gmail.com.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

4/2 - Nancy Fox

4/13 - Sherry Thomas

4/18 - Bonnie Young

4/25 - Kathy Prather

4/29 - Carolyn Hayes

4/30 Tam Tran

Anniversaries

None

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