



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211
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Joy of the Season

Persons, places, vistas we have seen



Merry Christmas!

DECEMBER 2020

From Our Pastors



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A Song Was Heard at Christmas

By Timothy Dudley-Smith

A song was heard at Christmas
To wake the midnight sky,
A Savior's birth, and peace on earth,
And praise to God on high.
The angels sing at Christmas
With all the hosts above,
And still we sing the newborn King,
His glory and His love.

Catherine's Commentary

As we begin this season of Advent, I look ahead over the next few weeks to a time that is relatively quiet on my calendar. Usually, this is a time when so many things need to happen in preparation for Christmas. Between shopping and cooking, there are normally a few parties and family gatherings to attend. Or there might be some extra grandparent commitments. But this year, these events are not happening. We are entering an "unbusy" Advent!

In this unbusy Advent season, it feels to me like we are in exile. Normally, exile takes us away from our homes, but this time we are exiled *to* our homes. We

are exiled from church and the communion table, from holiday gatherings, family, and anything that brings us in contact with anyone outside our household. This is an extreme exile – and a very odd Advent to say the least.

This Advent season, then, becomes a once in a lifetime opportunity (let's hope!). In these next few weeks, we have an opportunity for quiet reflection, prayer, and meditation like we have never had before. This might be a good time to pray through the birth narratives in the gospels or begin a new intercessory prayer

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This unbusy time is a gift from God that we can enter into with intention, taking hold of it and savoring it. I doubt that we will ever have an Advent like this again

David's Column – Advent in the Midst of the Gift Wrap



"Are you ready for Christmas?" asked the DJ on the radio. I thought of the list of gifts that needed to be bought, the food that needed to be prepared and the holiday events to attend, and I shook my head. "Hardly," I said as I laughed aloud.

As I sat in the car driving down the road, I turned off my radio and let my mind ponder that question a little deeper. "Am I ready for Christmas?" This time I thought about the meaning of the holiday – the Son of God coming to earth to dwell among us and show us the way to eternal life. Again, I shook my head and murmured to myself, "Hardly."

It was then that I vowed to take advantage of every opportunity to prepare my heart for the coming of the Christ Child into the world – the world you and I live in.

What I discovered was that if we know what we are preparing for, everything we encounter on the way to Christmas can prepare us for the coming of Christ, not only in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago but also into our homes, our families, our

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Church Council Report

by Ray Stwalley, Chairman



The council and clergy have been trying to keep up with the rapidly changing virus situation as it affects our church. The congregation has been sent emails to notify them of

changes as they occurred.

To summarize, Due to quarantine restrictions, we have temporarily ended drive by communion as both of our clergy live outside the county and would have to quarantine for 2 weeks if they come to Buena Vista. The council decided that there was no benefit to either the clergy or to the church to have them drive to Buena Vista and sit around the annex to do a Zoom service they could do just as well from home. Hopefully, the virus situation will get better and we can resume the limited in person activities or even return to in person worship.

At present, we were able to green the church, the Ladies Brunch gathering is going forward, not as a real brunch, but as a virtual gathering, individuals desiring to have a prayer vigil in the sanctuary may do so by appointment (email or call Bonnie Young or Ray Stwalley to schedule) on Saturday afternoons. Those who do take advantage of the opportunity will get to enjoy the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary, For pastoral care, either of the pastors may be contacted directly. Christmas services will be held as usual although it will be virtual, not in person.

St. George's Meals

By Bonnie Young

St George Episcopal Church, Leadville continues to serve a hot lunch meal 4 days a week and opens the church pantry 2 days a week. The staff relies heavily on rescue food; but must spend about \$4,000 a month purchasing the necessary food to support these missions.

They still need our financial help until we can serve a Saturday meal in person. If you would like to donate, either send check directly to St. George Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 243, Leadville, CO 80461, or Grace will accept checks written to St. George and send them together. Grace address P.O. Box 1559, BV

Next week, about 50 knitted hats and scarves that Carol Slater made this last year will be taken up to St. George. We continue to keep them in our prayers and in our donations. Thank you.



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workplaces, and our communities. The usual December distractions can instead become holy moments when we find the Christ Child in our midst. And, in 2020 the distractions are even greater with the pandemic, politics/election and civil unrest.

Having the right attitude and perspective on the season will help you and your family avoid the excesses that make certain Christmas preparations frantic, yet draining and disappointing. As theologian John Shea says, "The task seems to be the delicate one of learning to make the customs and traditions of Christmas serve the Spirit."

Look at some of December's demanding activities with new eyes, eyes that fully expect to find God in every moment of this season of hope. Only a saint could maintain the patience needed to confront Christmas shopping, Christmas stress, and Christmas credit card bills. That is too bad because something else is overlooked in the rush—and that is Advent. Therefore, here are a few brief ways to enjoy yourself over the next few weeks.

First, get to know Advent. This liturgical season is a time of waiting—something that we all do: we are waiting for some good news, for a better job, for our lives to improve and an end to the pandemic. Advent is a time when we think about waiting for God, so it fits in perfectly with our natural human longings.

Catherine's Column continued from page 2

discipline. This is a time to use our imaginations and do something extraordinary in our prayer journey. This unbusy time is a gift from God that we can enter into with intention, taking hold of it and savoring it. I doubt that we will ever have an Advent like this again



One of our regular members was caught playing in the snow last week.

Picture by Sherry Thomas

TRANSITIONS

Thanks to all who worked on the Advent gathering and all who volunteer to keep Grace Church going.

Please pray for Catherine's daughter, Helen and her family as Helen recovers from COVID-19.

Prayers for Lenee' Erickson. She had surgery on December 2, 2020.

Carol Holze requests prayers for her surgery on two of her arthritic fingers on December 3, 2020.

Please pray for our bookkeeper, Sarah Roecker as she battles some serious health issues.

Prayers are requested for Becky's sister Suzanne and her family who have tested positive for COVID-19.

And pray for continued strength and faith for all of our Grace Church Community.

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"Come, thou long expected Jesus," as the hymn goes. Advent is also the time of beautiful Scripture readings, like those from the Book of Isaiah. "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom." These are readings to give all of us hope! In addition, Advent is the season for beloved church traditions, including the Advent wreath, which can easily be translated into home rituals.

Second, cut back on the craziness of Christmas preparations. Here are just a few suggestions: send cards only to close friends and family; drop one present per person from your list; and stay home and be safe instead of going to holiday gatherings. Does that sound selfish? It is just the opposite! It will give you time to spend with those you really love, and more time to spend in prayer.

Maybe Advent is when you can really settle into your spiritual life, by finding joy in the season and less stress in Christmas. In short, Advent may be the time that you have been waiting for!

May you and your family and friends stay safe and healthy and have a Merry Christmas!



Council Report continued from page 3

The council and I appreciate your continued support of Grace Church, both personally and financially. One day soon we will be able to gather, worship and fellowship as we have in the past, but until then, To quote Tiny Tim, "God Bless Us Everyone".

For the Council,

Ray Stwalley

Greening of The Church by Bonnie Young

On Saturday, November 28, members of Grace prepared the church for the Advent/Christmas season.

Thank you to: Maryanne and Bob Advent wreath and wall hangings; Dorothy and Kurt Christmas tree, including lights; Judy and Susan decorated tree with the Crismons; Ray and Bonnie Nativity scene; Judy and John 3 new outside door wreaths on the church and Parish Hall.

Poinsettias are on the Altar. The Church is lit every evening and can be seen by the community.

The church is open on Saturdays from 1 pm to 3 pm until Christmas for meditation time. Contact Bonnie Young at 719-395-8414 or email her at

byoung81211@gmail.com for a reservation

Greening of the Church 2020



Sewing News by Martha Bauman

Season's Greetings all.

This is the ladies sewing group calling on behalf of the outreach committee. We were unable to have our 2 fundraisers for outreach this year. (Guess why)

Anyway, one option we thought of is sharing Becky Arthur's ETSY site. She was gracious enough to do that so we might make some funds for outreach, in addition to what Grace Church puts in.

Sooo...you may find some lovely things on "QueenArthursQuilts"...Becky's and our things too, not just quilts. Should you buy something of Becky's it will be helping a small business! Rest assured, we are sewing up a storm to have a stash so, God willing, we can be ready for our Fourth of July and Christmas Craft sales next year (if we can have them.)

And, of course, my plug for those of you that like to Sew and would like to help with this fun, rewarding mission, please give me a call. We're here to help and get you started. You don't have to be a quilter...we make a variety of things. Even things that don't require sewing! Imagine that.

Stay safe, merry Christmas and God bless
Martha Bauman
395-8471



Mini-Blessings Fund Raiser



Mini-Blessings is pleased to announce the return of our

SPECTACULAR LIGHT DISPLAYS

including new scenes and Disney characters for your holiday enjoyment

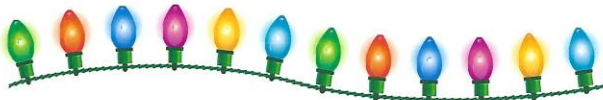
Friday, December 11 & Saturday, December 12
6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Drive-thru light display in
McPhelemy Park in Buena Vista

(Cars enter the park from the north on Hwy 24
and leave by the south, only using the right
hand lane on Hwy 24)

We are raising money to support
our programs and wonderful mini
horses for the coming year

\$3/person or \$10/car



Grace Church lost our beloved Carol Slater on November 25, 2020. She passed away peacefully in her sleep. She was 89 years old. We send our sincerest condolences to her family on this devastating loss.

Carol was active in Grace church or many years and served on the Church Council, Secretary o the Church Council, the Ladies Advent Brunch Committee and was a devoted member of the Women’s Bible Study. (Who could forget her Creation story with the snake named Vladimir.)

He cheerful smile, friendly manner and quick wit will be truly missed by all the members of Grace Church.

A memorial is planned for some time in the summer.

Announcements

Congratulations are sent to Christina and George Randle on the birth of Christina's grandson Wilder Lawrence Haley. He was born on November 19, 2020, weighed 8 lbs. 7 oz and was 20.5 inches long.



We welcome Wilder to the Grace Church family. What a handsome boy. We all know he gets his looks from his grandmother.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

12/7 Evelyn Baker
12/8 Olivia Powell
12/25 Cheryl Wilderman
12/31 Barbara O'Donnell

Anniversaries

12/27 David and Lenee' Erickson



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