

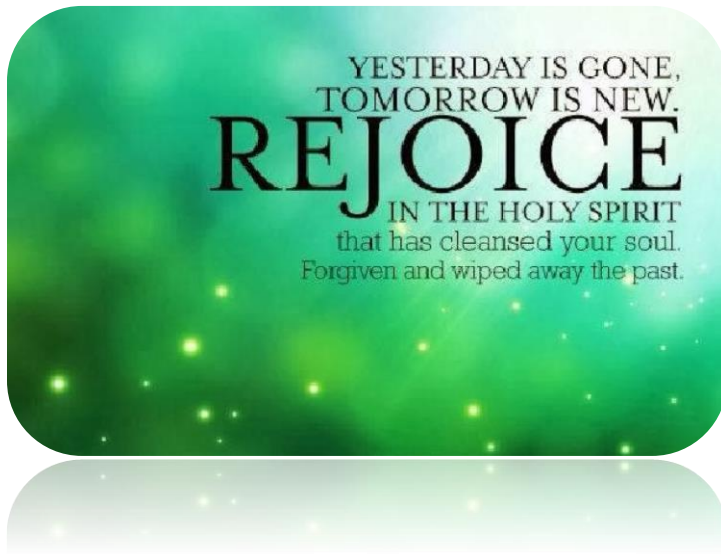


Grace Notes

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211
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Happy New Year!

Persons, places, vistas we have seen



JANUARY 2021

From Our Pastors



Rev. Tran writes about having hope in these troubled times.



Rev. Erickson gives us a dose of Reality.

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Ministry Reports



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National Bobblehead Day

If you are looking for another holiday to celebrate, as if we haven't had enough, January 7 is National Bobble Headed Day. These funny dolls have been around for several centuries, proof of their resilience. There have been Bobble heads made of presidents, celebrities, supreme court justices, Queen Elizabeth II, and even the Beatles. So, if you love bobble heads, take your favorite Bobblehead to lunch on their day, just to show you love them. Don't be shy. Everybody loves a Bobblehead. And put one in the window to show support for all the people that love Bobbleheads!

Catherine's Commentary

It seems like the whole world is happy to see the year 2020 behind us. In 2021, with the COVID-19 vaccine finally being distributed, the beginning of the end of the pandemic is here. Although it will be a while before we see changes to the restrictions we are currently living with, at least we know that they *will* end at some point. With this anticipation, 2021 will be a year of hope.

Hope is a spiritual gift. It is related to faith. Because we are people of faith, we have the hope of God's presence with us. We have the hope of Christmas – God with us, the gift of Christ born into the world, the gift of Christ born within us. This

coming year, Christmas is a gift to take to heart in a way we have never imagined before. God is with us as we and our loved ones receive the protection of the vaccine. God is with us as schools open and children return. God is with us as businesses are able to open again. God is with us as we are able to return to church.

Even though it looks like it will be months before many of us receive the vaccine, God is with us as we wait. It is hard to be patient! We must continue to wear masks, isolate, and keep our social distance. It is still not safe to be together. But even in

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Even in this time of waiting, God is with us in our hope, in our endurance, and as we open our eyes and see the beauty of God's presence all around us.

David's Column – Starting the Year With a Dose of REALITY



The wonderful story by Margery Williams "The Velveteen Rabbit" is the story of a sweetly stuffed velveteen rabbit that is received by a little boy as a Christmas present. Here is a portion of the story which describes Velveteen Rabbit discussing with the Skin Horse just exactly what really is REAL.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying sided by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

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Church Council Report

by Ray Stwalley, Chairman



This past year has been challenging both for the Congregation as a whole and for the council. The pandemic has affected all aspects of our church life and our community life. In person worship has

not occurred since last March and may not be happening by this March.

We as a congregation have been challenged in ways that some of our Buena Vista Neighbors have not been. The physical limits of our building have made compliance with the Public Health regulations more difficult and have severely limited the possibilities for in person gatherings. The guidance of our governing organizations has been more cautious than some other group, favoring an excess of caution over possible community spread of the Covid-19 virus.

The council and our clergy have been constantly trying to keep up with the changing guidelines and attempt to provide the best possible worship and social conditions for Grace and its congregation.



Outreach Report

By Kathy Prather

The Outreach Committee had a productive year, despite the COVID-19 shutdown and donated \$10,700, most of which went to local charities and non-profits.

The organizations that were supported by the monies of Grace Church are: Ark Valley Mission, \$500; The Alliance, \$500; Boys and Girls Club, \$1000; CUCC Back Pack Ministry, \$500; Ark Valley Helping Hands, \$500; Ark Valley Humane Society, \$500; BV Hope A21, \$500; Mini-Blessings, \$500; Elevate Her, \$500; BV Pregnancy Center, \$500; BV High School Toys for Tikes, \$500; Shop With A Cop, \$500; CCCF Emergency Response Disaster Fund, \$2200; Eshelman Missionary Fund, \$500; NAMI of Chaffee County, \$500.00, and Channel 7's Colorado Wild Fire Victims Fund, \$1000.

In all 14 organizations and programs benefited from the generosity of Grace Church in 2020. Please remember to thank the Outreach Committee - Martha Bauman, Kim and Kathy Prather, and Peggy Finkowski for their hard work and dedication during this difficult church year. Hats off to all them.



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"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a very long time. That is why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

My dear celebrants of Christ's birth, we are called to become people who understand. If we believe in the mystery and love of Christmas, we do so because Somebody called God has loved us into being Real just as God loved us enough to send us the embodiment of His love in Jesus Christ. Such is the message of the manger. It keeps telling us about a God who is forever luring the highest qualities from the humblest places, turning secular settings into holy ground, and making ordinary tasks flame with special meaning. God is constantly working with us, perfecting us, purifying us, and cleansing us.

In this Epiphany Season where we celebrate the discovery of the Christ Child by the Wise Men, let us seek to discover what it means

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Catherine's Column continued from page 2

this time of waiting, God is with us in our hope, in our endurance, and as we open our eyes and see the beauty of God's presence all around us.

Let us open our eyes and see the beauty of God's presence now, in the next few months, and after COVID-19. God is with us through it all. As people of faith, our hope endures.

December 29, 2020 Cold Moon



TRANSITIONS

Sharon asks for prayers for their friends, Pat and Tom who are struggling with multiple medical issues.

Sherry's son Scott's, father-in-law is hospitalized with a brain bleed, and her son Brett's wife has COVID. She asks for prayers for her family members.

Sharon and Max's friend, Terry is on a ventilator due to complications of COVID and they request prayers for her.

Please pray for Carol Holze's friend's husband is have a heart catherization, if they can get his kidney function and blood pressure in order. The family also has COVID.

Bev Herrle asks for prayers of thanksgiving for her great Christmas - her son and grandson were able to spend the holiday with her.

David asks for prayers for his brother-in-law and family who lost his father on New Year's Eve.

David's Column

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means to have this Christ Child in our lives. Let us turn to Christ as we set our patterns for the year ahead.

Let us begin our days by welcoming Christ into our hearts. Let us travel through our days acknowledging the presence of Christ and knowing that we are not alone in any of the decisions and challenges these days will bring. Let us turn away from sin and choose to go toward Christ-like actions. Let us recognize that being REAL as Christians means being and living as the Body of Christ.

Hold each other in prayer throughout this year. Make efforts to deepen your spiritual life seeking to REALLY discover what it is the Lord is calling you to do and be. If it is REALLY true that "once you are Real you can't be ugly," go forward into this year with hope in your heart. Be glad for who you are and excited about who you will become in Christ. Seek the glory of God in Christ and there find great beauty!

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory



Something to Make You Smile

contributed by David Erickson

I'm stuck between a rock and someone I would like to hit with it.

It's been a great blessing to be at home with my wife these last few months. We've caught up on everything I've done wrong in the last 20 years.

So let me get this straight, there's no cure for a virus that can be KILLED by sanitizer and hand soap?

How LONG is social distancing supposed to last? My husband keeps trying to come into the house.

Another Saturday night in the house and I just realized, even the trash goes out more than me.

Day 7 of SOCIAL distancing: Struck up a conversation with a spider today. Seems nice. He's a web designer.

Day 27 at home and the dog is looking at me like, "See this is why I chew the furniture."

Did a BIG load of pajamas so I would have enough clean work clothes for this week.

The spread of COVID-19 is based on two factors:

1. How dense the population is
2. How dense the population is



A Love Letter to 2020

by Jennavive “JJ” Joshua

My Dear Friend, 2020, I have only known you for one year, but WOWZA – you sure have changed me! You have shaken me, disillusioned me, startled me, broken me, and you have awakened me. I love you for that, thank you!

My Dear Friend, 2020, you have changed the way I think about this world, my country and myself. Changes that were long overdue. I love you for that, thank you!

My Dear Friend, 2020, you have shaken me down to my core! We all need a good shake up now and then to shake off the lies we have treasured, the misperceptions, the relationships that hurt us, the habits that weaken us. I love you for that, thank you!

My Dear Friend, 2020, you have disillusioned my assumptions that I held to be true. They were not. I believed I could always count on my basic needs to be met, like housing, toilet paper, chicken, the Post Office, in person time with friends and more. You have made me question every assumption I have ever held dear. I love you for that, thank you!

My Dear Friend, 2020, you startled me out of denial. I was so comfy and cozy in my beliefs about this country and the world. I was wrong about all of them. I love you for that, thank you!

My Dear Friend, 2020, you have broken my heart almost every day with the news of great suffering around the world, even before the pandemic was announced, huge dramatic suffering by peoples, animals and nature broke my heart – so the Light could get in. I love you for that, thank you!

Continued from the first column

My Dear Friend, 2020, you have awakened me to the depths of systemic racism and inspired me to learn more and to speak differently. You have awakened me once again to the ever-present capacity for greed in all humans when they are afraid, and to the fact that many of our social systems just plain don't work anymore, and to how viciously divided this country is. All of that has driven me to ask myself these simple questions which are more earnest in my heart now than ever before – How can I help? How can I love more? How can I get stronger today? How can I choose peace instead of this? I love you for that, thank you!

My Dear Friend, 2020 – it's true what they say, “What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.” I feel stronger in every way at the end of this year, well, except my physical fitness, oh boy do I miss the gym. But that will come back, I will get fit again. I am so much stronger that I was 363 days ago. I am ready to gain even more strength in 2021, less blinded by assumptions, habits, and with a heart that is broken open to the Light. I love you for that, thank you!



Continued in next Column

No Truer Words

by David Erickson

A newlywed young man was sitting on the porch on a humid day, sipping iced tea with his Father.

As he talked about adult life, marriage, responsibilities, and obligations, the Father thoughtfully stirred the ice cubes in his glass and cast a clear, sober look on his Son.

Never forget your friends," he advised, "they will become more important as you get older." "Regardless of how much you love your family and the children you happen to have you will always need friends. Remember to go out with them occasionally (if possible) but keep in contact with them somehow."

"What strange advice!" thought the young man. "I just entered the married world; I am an adult and surely my wife and the family that we will start will be everything I need to make sense of my life."

Yet, he obeyed his Father; kept in touch with his friends and annually increased their number.

Over the years, he became aware that his Father knew what he was talking about. Inasmuch as time and nature carry out their designs and mysteries on a person, friends are the bulwarks of our life.

After 70 years of life, here is what he, I and you will have learned:

Time passes.

[Continued in the next column](#)

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Life goes on. Children grow up.

Children cease to be children and become independent. And to the parents, it breaks their heart, but the children are separated of the parents because they begin their own families.

Jobs / careers come and go. Illusions, desires, attraction, sex ... weakens.

People cannot do what they did physically when they were young.

Parents die but you move on. Colleagues forget the favors you did.

The race to achieve slows.

But true friends are always there, no matter how long or how many miles away they are. A friend is never more distant than the reach of a need, intervening in your favor, waiting for you with open arms or in some way blessing your life.

When we started this adventure called LIFE, we did not know of the incredible joys or sorrows that were ahead.

We did not know how much we would need from each other.

Love your parents, take care of your children, but keep a group of good friends.

Stay in touch with them but do not impose your criteria.

Send this to your friends (even those you seldom see) who help make sense of your life.... I just did to you.

Announcements

If are a committee chairperson and haven't sent in your year-end report for the Annual Meeting Packet, please send them to Judy Epperson at admin@gracechurchbvco.org by January 11, 2021 so that I will have time to complete the packet. I know that it hasn't been a really productive year, but I do need to know what you did, even if it was before the quarantine. Thanks.

If you would like to have the daily devotional guides – Upper Room, Our Daily Bread, and Forward Day by Day, sent to you, please contact Judy Epperson at admin@gracechurchbvco.org and indicate the study guide or guides you would like to receive. They will be mailed to you.

End of year giving reports will be going out by January 31, 2021. If you have had change of address during the year, or if your address is incorrect in the directory, please contact Judy Epperson at admin@gracechurchbvco.org, so that your tax documents can be sent to you in a timely manner.

Even during the pandemic, St. George's continues to serve meals to the disadvantaged in Leadville. Grace Church can't take food in person, but if you would like to make a donation to support this important ministry, please mail your checks made out to St. George's Episcopal Church to Grace Church at P.O. Box 1559, and they will be forwarded to St. George's.

Photographs in this issue are by Sherry Thomas.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Happy Birthday and Anniversary to these Grace Church Members

Birthdays

1/30 Sharon Robertson

Anniversaries

1/1 Keith and Evelyn Baker



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