

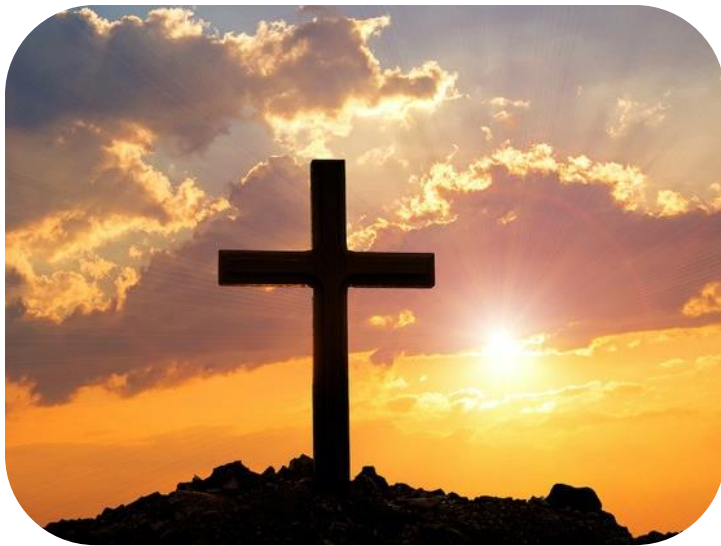


Grace Notes

The Newsletter of Grace Church • PO Box 1559 • Buena Vista, CO 81211
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Lent

Persons, places, vistas we have seen.



A Time of Reflection and Preparation

Re MARCH 2023

From Our Pastors



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3.14 – National Pi Day

March 14 is national pi or pie day. For the mathematicians it's pi day – because well, March 14 is 3.14, which is the value of pi. But for pie lovers, it could be national pie day. So on March 14, celebrate the value of pi by eating your favorite pie. You can have 3.14 pieces.

?

From the Desk of Rev. Seay -Ain't That a Shame

I was told in elementary school you should not write or say the word ain't because ain't; ain't right! So, I apologize to my elementary school composition teacher Ms. Clarke, and to you for using such a vernacular word. Yet, depending on where you are from It's OK, because people use it all the time. The point is, I am shocked by recent events of societal tolerations. Lying and being deceitful has become the norm by those leaders we have trusted to uphold moral decency, ethics, and truth. Like the deceitful resume of the politician who refuses to resign from office or a news media fraudulent news commentary and their inability to offer any kind of apology or

explanation to their public, saying "it's business." Yet, people are in prison because they believed it. Ain't that a shame.

Religious Prayer has been banned by law in public schools, but no law for the safety or security of students and staff, as it is in our court rooms and airports. The recent Super Bowl had television commercials about Jesus, and television commercials by atheists. Of course, Jesus like in the Bible, got the most complaints from viewers, saying it was an inappropriate commercial for a football game.

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*"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation."
(Romans 1: 16).*

Christy's Column



Lent is upon us...a time of intentional reflection on the life of Jesus as we attend more deeply to the faith we claim as our own. Lent is a time of fasting from our *inattention* to this life and to this faith that we claim, so that our deeper *attention* may grow and our devotion increase. Lent, unencumbered by the distractions of many of our other seasons, is a singularly Christian practice of faith.

To keep a Holy Lent or to practice Lent is to be decidedly religious. And, it is not so much in what we give up or what we take on (though these certainly may be an important part of our practice) rather, it is in the willingness to entrust our hearts and souls, our minds and bodies to God's gracious re-awakening and re-orienting of the whole of our lives into the deepest realities of the Love of God. Being religious is more than performing duties...it is attending to the reality behind them.

Verna Dozier in her book, *The Authority of the Laity* say this:

"If you tell people that the whole of life is religious, they think of somebody who gets up in the morning and says prayers, stops in the afternoon and says prayers, says

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Church Council Report

by Jennifer Wright, Chairman



We held both our Annual Church meeting and our Methodist Charge Conference on Saturday, February 18th, so Chris Carr (Our Methodist District Superintendent)

could attend. During our meeting, we heard from all our Committee Chairs about what they did in 2022, and we did a LOT!!! It's also amazingly wonderful that our little church can contribute almost \$20,000 to local charities and organizations! We approved Ann Taylor as our Episcopal Senior Warden, and elected Junia Fitzgerald as our Methodist Lay Leader. Both Ann and Junia will be Council members and on the Personnel Committee. We also re-elected Ed Butler and yours truly to the Council. Finally, we reviewed and approved our 2023 Budget.

Grace Church is ALIVE and WELL and looking forward to a GRACE-Filled 2023.

Thanks to all of our Council members for agreeing to serve!!! Copies of our Annual Report are in the Parish Hall – please make sure to pick one up and read it over! After our meeting, we had a lovely Church Potluck in the Parish Hall.

Continued Thanks to EVERYONE in our congregation for ALL you do! Please remember to Stop, Look, Listen, and Respond with LOVE to each other! We can continue to do Great Things if/when we work together!

Blessings – Jennifer

What Is Outreach

By Kathryn Prather

Outreach is a means to share the love of Christ by donating funds to help those in need, in the community.

At Grace Church, the Outreach mission is simple: "To disburse funds to organizations to help those in need." It's also important to mention that Grace Outreach focuses on the needs of organizations in Chaffee County. However, we have also sent funds through UMCOR for disaster relief throughout the US and at times the world. For example, in 2022, funds were sent to Florida for hurricane Ian and also to the Ukraine. Our team consists of Peggy Finkowski, Carolyn Hayes, Kim Prather and Kathryn Prather.

Where do the funds come from? They come directly from the generous tithe and plate offerings of our congregation. 10% of what is taken in each month is allocated to the Outreach fund. Also, individual members who wish to donate to Outreach directly can do so as well. This is important to know, since YOUR money is going to these worthy organizations and helping others in need. That is different from "Loose Threads", the sewing group, who raise their money through their work sewing and crafting and selling those items at Grace craft fairs. We are two separate entities with similar goals! We are striving to coordinate with all groups within Grace to provide the most support where needed.

Our committee meets on a regular basis to review funds and decide which organizations have the most pressing needs. We are a unique team in that we deal with funds in arrears since we can't give out any funds until they have been accounted for from the prior month. We met in January 2023, to disperse the final funds from December 2022 and close out our year. In 2022, the Outreach team gave out \$14,262.00!! Grace Church is small, but mighty!

Continued...

Christy's Column continued from page 2

prayers again at night, wears a cross, and says the Jesus prayer. *We seldom recall that being religious means that our whole life is so ordered that every moment we are aware that we are not the final explanation for ourselves* (italics mine). It means that the ethics that control our work are the ethics of a servant, because we are not our own masters. It means that our relationships to our fellow human beings are under the lordship of our Creator – whether we are married to those fellow humans or whether we are their parents, or are their friends or co-workers (or folks we don't even know). We do not have to stop and think about being religious because that is the way our lives are lived." ¹

Lent is a time to reflect intentionally on how our lives are ordered...how we live the faith that we claim. At the beginning of Lent, we are invited to "the observance of a holy Lent by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." (BCP 265) All of which are important acts of devotion and practice, all of which are decidedly religious acts that can, if we pay attention, draw us more deeply into the love of God. And the key is...*if we pay attention.*

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Rev. Seay's Column continued from page 2

I wonder if people can see the evidence of the times we are living in according to the Scriptures. It seems people do not care about the clergy's opinion anymore perhaps because people can't find it in the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul said to the world longest, most powerful ruling governmental power, the Romans. **"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation."** (Romans 1: 16) Meaning no shame unto our own deliverance, no shame to our healing as a nation, no shame to uphold truth. We have the power of God, shame evil with the truth and ani't no shame in that!

Blessing Extended

Rev. W. Clifford Seay

TRANSITIONS

Please pray for Dorothy Miller, who is battling pneumonia.

Jennifer asks for prayers for her friend Nancy whose mother died recently.

Please pray for Rick's friend, James, who is suffering from pancreatic cancer.

Becky asks for prayers of strength as she cares for her mother this week.

Pray for Susan Shampine. Her brother Al died on February 18.

Please remember the family of Tom Clark, who passed away last week.

Sherry asks for prayers of thanksgiving for her daughter-in-law Jenny, who is cancer free.

Margaret requests prayers for former president, Jimmy Carter, who is in hospice.

Please remember to pray for the United Methodist Church.

Pray for unity and peace in our country.

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This Lent, you are invited to try a different discipline...that of fasting from *inattention*. Fasting from the ways we seek to divert our attention away from our religious practice...away from or neighbor...away from the Love of God. We do this in a variety of ways. Some of us get or stay so busy we do not have time simply to be, and hence to reflect. Some of us prioritize according to accomplishment rather than presence, prayer, and love. Others of us may watch too much television or use it as a means of diversion. Some of us may work too much. Some may use exercise or recreational activity as the measure of the day or as the measure of one's worth...others as an excuse to avoid quiet and reflection.

Wherever you find yourself - whatever particular method you may have for practicing *inattention* rather than attention, you are invited to a Lenten fast. The first step is being honest enough with yourself to acknowledge this is something you do. The second is being honest enough with yourself about the ways you practice *inattention*.

The next step is pretty simple...it's paying attention to the ways you practice *inattention*! It begins in making a commitment - before you get out of bed! - to pay attention to the ways that, on this particular day, you use your practice of *inattention*. And, when you notice yourself doing it...stop! for just a moment and ask yourself, does this draw me more deeply into the reality and Love of God? Stop and ask yourself, can I fast from this, this time? If so, then do. If not, then recognize the choice and go on, you will have another opportunity to practice pretty soon.

And lastly, at the end of the day before you go to sleep simply review your day. Ask yourself, when did I practice attention? And give thanks to God. Ask yourself, when did I practice *inattention*? And give thanks to God. Taking the time to commit in the morning, look and listen during the day, and review in the evening is attending more deeply and is fasting from *inattention*. Giving thanks is acknowledging the deeper reality of the Love of God that holds us regardless of the outcome. And all is attending more deeply. All is growing in reflection and devotion.

Keeping or practicing a holy Lent is an invitation for all of us. Each year we have the chance to take the invitation, become more attentive and grow in religious devotion. Each year we have the chance more fully to trust God with our whole selves and be re-awakened in the Love of God. Each year we are reminded of this Love that awaits our response.

So how will you respond to God's holy invitation to you this Lent? How will you decide to attend more deeply to your life in Christ, the faith we claim, and the all-encompassing Love of God? It is an open invitation.

Blessed Lent to each,
Rev. Christy

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What is Outreach continued from page 3

Please see our **Bulletin Board in the Parrish Hall**, which we update regularly, so you can see where your funds are going. Also, please look for the monthly articles we place in Grace Notes highlighting and summarizing the many organizations we help fund.

If you would like more information about what we do, or donating directly to us, please contact Kathryn Prather 913-787-0740. 2/15/23.

UMCOR SUNDAY: March 19, 2023

United Methodist celebrate on specific days to unite and make clear the commitment of the church as the people of God, and to give everyone the opportunity to contribute to special programs approved and supported by the Church.

How our gifts on UMCOR Sunday help UMCOR.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to respond with extravagant grace. Through the **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)** we are able to make a difference in the lives of communities and individuals whose lives have been upset by storms, wars, fires, displacement, and climate change. This offering underwrites UMCOR's "cost of doing business," allowing UMCOR to keep the promise that 100% of any gift to a specific UMCOR project will go towards that project, not administrative costs.

To help with this, make checks out to Grace Church, and write UMCOR Sunday on the memo line. (This will go towards underwriting UMCOR's "cost of doing business.")

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Website: www.umcor.org

UMCOR is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. It assists United Methodists and churches to become involved globally in direct ministry to persons in need.

2023 Disaster Response:

Earthquakes in southern Turkey and northwest Syria.

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkey at 4:17 am on Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, the most powerful earthquake recorded since 1939. In the hours that followed, at least 78 aftershocks were reported, followed by a second earthquake of 7.5 magnitude. Tens of thousands of people have been killed, and responders are still recovering victims.

The earthquake also heavily impacted northwest Syria, where 4.1 million people depend on humanitarian assistance. The majority are women and children. At this time, Syria communities are simultaneously facing an ongoing cholera outbreak and extreme winter weather events, including heavy rain and snow. The humanitarian response is overstretched due to the devastation and cold weather.

UMCOR has released initial solidarity grants to longstanding partner, International Blue Crescent (IBC) and Forum for Development Culture and Dialogue (working in Syria) to help provide tents, heaters, blankets, warm clothes, ready to eat meals and first aid kits to those who have been displaced. IBC has offices in Turkey.

Graceful Generosity

Submitted by Paul Nervig

Materialism

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world ... the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does ... comes not from the Father but from the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

Webster’s Dictionary defines materialism as follows: “the tendency to be more concerned with material things than with spiritual goals or values.” Based on this definition, there is no doubt that we live in a very materialistic society.

Materialism involves greed, covetousness, and the love of money. It results in our envying others who have what we don’t have. It causes us to dwell on money and possessions and is characterized by an extreme lack of contentment. Materialism leads us to spend money we don’t have to buy things we don’t need to impress people we don’t even like.

Some of the symptoms of materialism are as follows: love of money, lack of generosity, and lack of contentment.

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure found in Matthew 13:44-45, reads as follows: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

The man understood that what he had found in the field was of such great value that he was willing to give up all he had to gain it. The parable does not imply that we can buy the kingdom of God with money, but teaches that,

we willingly surrender our past lifestyles and loves and devote ourselves completely to Jesus.

On the Lighter Side

A minister was walking along the beach one day and stumbled upon a lamp. Picking it up and wiping it off caused the lamp to shake and smoke, and a genie came out. The genie thanked the minister for this new-found freedom after years of captivity and offered him one wish.

The minister immediately said, “I’ve always wanted to visit the Holy Land, but I am afraid of flying. I just can’t bring myself to fly. And I get seasick thinking about boats. So could you build a highway across the ocean so that I could drive to the Holy Land?”

The genie looked at him in surprise and shock and replied, “You must be kidding. Do you realize the engineering challenges that would have to be overcome to achieve that feat? Even I have limitations. Can’t you think of anything else to wish for?”

The minister thought for a few minutes and then said, “Okay, I know what I want. I wish for all the members of the congregation I serve to become tithers.” To that the genie replied, “Do you want that to be a two-lane or four-lane highway.”

People want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the center of attention.

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Announcements & Want Ads

Handyman seeking interior or exterior work including scraping, prep work, minor carpentry/dry wall repair, painting, finishing, staining, clean up window washing, and deck painting or staining. Will also do vacation rental cleanup, maintenance, property inspection, and minor repairs as needed.

Detain oriented. No job too small, but not exterior work above one story. I will return your call. Happy to look at any job.

BV resident year-round. Grace Church Council member and property manager. Retired and healthy. Available Monday through Friday. Will also do occasional weekend work. Have tools, reliable transportation, and cell phone. \$30.00/hour.

Call J. Kim Prather: 913-205-4934

Grace Church will host the Lenten Service and meal on March 8, 2023. The Grace Women’s Bible Study will lead the service.

Easter Lily dedication forms will be in the church bulletin this Sunday, and every week following until Palm Sunday. Lilies will be on display for two weeks. Suggested donation is \$15.00 per lily.

The Grace Women’s Bible Study is meeting in the Parish Hall on Mondays via zoom. All the ladies of the church are invited to join us in Parish Hall Monday mornings at 9:30 am. Please join us.

The Grace Church Council will meet on Sunday, March 19, 2023 immediately following Coffee Hour in Parish Hall. Any member of the church is welcome to attend the meeting.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Birthdays

- 3/1 Carol Holze**
- 3/2 Chuck Covert**
- 3/14 Dorothy Miller**
- 3/24 Kurt Miller**

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