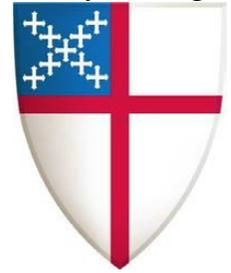


Our Vision: As a welcoming congregation, we share the transformational grace of God through worship and spiritual growth; we glorify God by building up each other and community through love, care, and outreach.



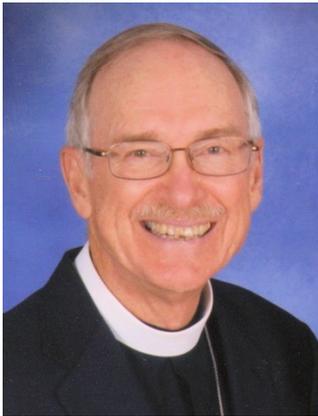
SHARING GRACE

December 2017

A Christian Newsletter of Community Caring of Grace Episcopal

FROM OUR INTERIM RECTOR

Dear Friends-in-Christ,



December is upon us, it's hard to believe that another year has passed, that is, Christian Year. We begin Advent and Revised Common Lectionary Year B on December 3rd. As you heard in the Instructed Eucharist, Year B is the year of Mark's Gospel account. Advent is a special season. It's a more penitential season, and the Gloria is replaced with the Trisagion. This calendar year has the last Sunday of Advent on December 24th, so we'll adjust our meeting time and have only one morning service at 9AM. After the service, we'll have the greening of the church.

By noon, the church will be ready for Christmas. Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 7PM and the Eucharist at 7:30PM. This service is always so moving as we celebrate the birth of Our Lord ending in the candles of Silent Night. Christmas Day our service is at 10AM as we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Christmas I service will be at 9AM on Sunday December 31st. This year we will celebrate with Christmas Lessons and Carols. For many this is a favorite celebration during Christmas.

Also on Sunday, December 31st, we will have a Watchnight Service at 7PM. Watchnight is time to renew our covenant as disciples. For some it is a very powerful service of commitment.

As we move toward the Christmas season, on Saturday, December 16th, we'll have a quiet but moving Blue Christmas service at 7PM. Blue Christmas is for those for whom the Christmas season bring unsettled memories. Unfortunately, tragedy strikes unexpectedly during the time when everyone else is happy and joyful. We'll recall those hard times and release them.

This coming year I want to continue the celebration of our Feast Days. Some of them fall on Sundays, others do not. The first is Epiphany, January 6th, Saturday. We will have an Epiphany

service at 7PM. The other Feast Days which are not on Sundays are: January 1st, Holy Name Day, February 2nd Presentation Day and May 10th Ascension Day, Transfiguration Day, August 6th. We will celebrate All Saints Day on Sunday, November 4th.

In December, we'll continue to receive your pledges for 2018 which will be a year of major change for Grace Church as we seek a Priest-in-Charge. We took a tumble in the Congregational Range published by the Diocese primarily due to the drop in the number of pledges. Our outreach giving was up, our operating expenses was up and we came close to meeting our total expenses for the year, but the number of pledges was down based on 2016 data. We can change that for our future.

On January 28th at our Annual Meeting, we will elect three to our Vestry as we will lose Gregg Wickham, our Senior Warden, James Fulmer, who is filling a one year slot, and Carol Allen, our Sesquicentennial Chair. We'll also elect three Lay Delegates to Diocesan Convention. Those same three will serve as electors in February 2019 as they will vote on our new Bishop. At this year's Convention, Bishop Barry, announced that he would be retiring on June 29, 2019.

Please begin to lobby those people who you believe will be good for our Vestry for the next three years. Nomination papers are in this Sharing Grace with some other information about the responsibilities of the Vestry.

For the last six years, I have celebrated Civil Air Patrol Sunday. On October 31st, I officially changed my membership from Active to Patron status, which is the equivalent of retirement. So I can no longer lead the service. CAP was something I enjoyed. I counted it up, and I gave 65 character development talks to the cadets at the Travis Squadron.

A topic that is on many minds is the completion of the overhaul of the two restrooms. Our ancient plumbing is the problem, and it will soon be fixed as will the tile in the entry to the women's restroom.

As we approach the end of the financial year of the church, I suggest, as I have each year, that you consider a 13th month pledge offering. I have done it for many years. We are within striking distance of finishing in the black financially. You can help make sure this occurs.

I want to thank each of you who have met your pledge and have provided such a solid financial position for the church. Many of you have also given offerings as dedicated funds. This has enabled the Vestry to accomplish many things which do not stress our operating account.

The greatest dedicated gift to Grace Church this year is the financing of our new organ. The "Michaels Organ" probably will arrive in January, but we don't have a date yet. I gave the organ a name as Jeanne Michael gave generously in memory of Mike. When it arrives, I plan to have a series of organ concerts for a few weeks.

Perry+

A Special Advent Message

from the Bishop



Advent, watercolor by Kathrin Burleson

Dear Friends in Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

We now enter the Season of Advent - as we have just celebrated Thanksgiving -both gratefully aware of God's abundant gifts to us, and mindful of those in our communities (possibly including our own households and even ourselves) for whom this is a time of loss and struggle. Our impulse to respond to those in need with generous compassion is a true sign that God is at work in our lives in such a time. It is in part an answer to the Apostle's prayer with which we ended the Season of Pentecost: that we might more truly, clearly know "the hope to which God has called us," and with it "the immeasurable greatness of God's power for those who believe." For us who believe.

May this Advent be a time of hope and of power. Hope in the One who stands at the horizon of our lives, who holds our future; power to transform our world and to be transformed, making that future a present reality.

May it be a joyful time as well as a challenging one. May it be a time of great, deep, and abiding blessing for you. May you be ready to receive it when it comes to you.

With you, looking for the One who is coming,

+ Barry

About the artist: Kathrin Burlison is based in Trinidad, California. Her work often explores Christian themes. More information on the artist is [available here](#).



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Making Disciples, Raising Up Saints & Transforming Communities for Christ

Advent and Christmas Schedule at Grace

Advent I December 3rd Rite I 8AM Rite II 10AM

Advent II December 10th Rite I 8AM Rite II 10AM

Blue Christmas Service December 16th 7PM

Advent III December 17th Rite I 8AM Rite II 10AM

Advent IV December 24th 9AM

Christmas Eve December 24th Carol Singing 7PM Eucharist 7:30PM

Christmas Day December 25th 10AM

Christmas Lessons and Carols December 31st 9AM

Watchnight Service December 31st 7PM



FROM GEM

-The Crab feed is scheduled for Saturday February 10, 2018. The event will start at 5:30PM. GEM will assist Jim Klopstock with obtaining the crab and shrimp. GEM will assist with clean-up detail at the end of the event.

-The coat drive began the week of November 19th and ends December 10th. The donated coats will be issued to the children, at Fairview Elementary School, before the Christmas break. Coats sized for children in grades Kindergarten thru 5th grade.

-Calendar collections for Year 2018 will start December 26, 2017 and end January 28, 2018. A collection box will be placed in the Narthex. The calendars collected will be issued to the Port of Stockton Mariners.

-Save the date, Saturday January 27, 2018. St. Brigid's clothing exchange. More details will be issued as the date approaches.

The next GEM Fellowship Breakfast meeting will be Saturday, December 2, 2017 at Huckleberry's Restaurant, 7:30AM meeting start time.



FROM ECW:

Thank you to all who came and contributed to a successful and fun meeting Tues. Nov. 7, 2017. We had 16 members present. Marajean S. called the meeting to order at 11:30 am. Pat M. gave our opening prayer and a spiritual reading from "Jesus Always". Then we all enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by Pat B. and Anna K. Thank you ladies.

Old Business: Anna K. reported bathroom is nearing completion and we will get clarification on costs for ECW.

Fundraiser: Tahoe Joe's Steakhouse Dec. 10, \$20.00 tickets please support

Boxtops for education-box in narthex boxtops will go to Fairview School

New officers Marajean S. Pres., Pat M. Vice Pres., Lynne S., Secretary. Thank you ladies and congrats.

New Business: Brainstorming for possible projects and volunteers to check on feasibility

1. Rebrass cross behind the Organ-Lynne S.
2. Security camera -Debbie

3. Chausables- Pat M. and Altar Guild
4. Pew cushions- Evelyn W. with Judy S.
5. Altar rail cushions-Anna K.
6. Side Chapel roll down shades-Heidi

Then we went around the table and everyone gave a few facts about their lives which was fun for all. Marajeau closed the meeting by leading us in the Lord's Prayer.

Our next meeting will be our Christmas Party. It will be Dec. 5, 2017 at 11:30am in the Parish Hall. We will have a potluck YUM! Also a fun game of gift exchange not to exceed \$10.00. All women of Grace are members. Come join the service and fun.



Safety Corner November **Personal Safety:**

Personal Safety Tips to ensure your personal safety, whenever possible:

Park in well lighted areas near your destination.

Avoid parking near strangers loitering or sitting in vehicles.

Remember where you parked so you can return directly to your vehicle.

Don't leave valuables in plain sight.

Don't carry a lot of items in your hands when you are walking to and from your vehicle.

Have your vehicle key in your hand ready to use.

Lock your doors immediately after getting into your vehicle.

Avoid talking on phone and texting while walking to and from your vehicle.

Walk confidently and at a steady pace. Make eye contact with people as they pass.

Listen to your sixth sense. If you feel uneasy about a situation or a person, call for help, walk the other way, ask for an escort, walk in a group, report the suspicious situation to the Sheriff's office or local police, etc.

CHECKLIST FOR THE VESTRY NOMINATIONS

Note: This form has been designed to assist you in the presentation of nominees for election to the Vestry of Grace Church.

PROPOSED NOMINEE'S NAME _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Can you answer affirmatively the following questions?

	Yes	No
1. Have you the person's permission to offer his/her name to the nominating committee?	_____	_____
2. Is he/she 16 years of age or older?	_____	_____
3. Is he/she a confirmed communicant of Grace? <small>(record of baptism must be on file here also)</small>	_____	_____
4. Does he/she attend worship services regularly?	_____	_____
5. Has he/she read the "Expectations of Vestry Members"?	_____	_____
6. If the nominee has served a three-year term on the Vestry, has he/she been off at least one year? (If not a former Vestry member, do not answer this question.)	_____	_____

Please fill in the following information and items of interest about the nominee:

1. Communicant of Grace since _____.
(year)

2. List parish activities in which the nominee has been involved.

Expectations of Vestry Members and Standards for Vestry Meetings

RESPONSIBILITIES

General

- The Vestry is charged with responsibility for the money and property of the Church. Regarding duties, the Canons of the Episcopal Church stipulate that “The Vestry shall be agents and legal representatives of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its Clergy.” We work together for the good of the whole parish. This includes the review and approval of the annual budget.
- Vestry elections are held yearly during the Annual Parish Meeting in January. The result of the voting is announced one hour after the annual parish meeting.
- Vestry members are expected to commit to serving a full 3-year term, unless there are extenuating circumstances, or the ballot is for a lesser term.
- Vestry members may participate in other parish ministries according to their own skills and desires.
- As spiritual leaders Vestry members also serve the parish by attendance and participation in parish functions: e.g., special congregational meetings, special worship services, etc.
- The work of the Vestry occasionally calls for a sub-committee or task force comprised of members of the vestry. Members may be asked to share in this special work.

MEETINGS

Annual Parish Meeting: All Vestry members are expected to be present at this meeting.

Vestry Retreat: All Vestry members must attend a weekend retreat every year in January or early February. This retreat is traditionally scheduled on the weekend following the annual parish meeting. At this function, Vestry members strive to get to know each other, discuss and choose liaison roles to ministries, review expectations of Vestry members, and talk about the priority tasks of the Vestry for the calendar year.

Monthly Vestry Meetings: All Vestry members are expected to attend a monthly Vestry meeting.

- Meetings are the third Tuesday of each month.
- Meetings begin at 6:45 p.m. in the Chapel for Holy Communion and continue in Room 6.
- A quorum (5) is required to conduct the business of the Church.
- Attendance at all Vestry meetings is very important. If a member must be late or absent, that Vestry member is asked to notify the Interim Rector or the Senior Warden prior to the meeting.

Vestry Meeting Agenda: The agenda is developed by the Senior Warden prior to the meeting.

- Requests to have items placed on the agenda should be made not later than the week before.
- Agendas and previous minutes will be emailed before the Vestry meeting.
- Only items requiring immediate attention should be added to agenda on the night of the meeting.

Special Meetings: Vestry members are expected to attend other meetings.

- The Senior Warden may call ad hoc meetings with respect to matters of immediate or pressing nature e.g.
 - To address items related to the development or passing of the annual budget.
 - Update the Vestry on any unusual or unexpected circumstances requiring their action.

Monday Matters (November 27, 2017)

by Rev. Jay Sidebotham, jsidebotham@renewalworks.org, RenewalWorks is a ministry of Forward Movement. <http://www.renewalworks.org>

I've been told that the preacher should always have the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Some days that's harder than others. Last week, there was no avoiding the intersection when I read a column in the New York Times which spoke about idolatry and heresy, of all things.

In this column entitled "[When Politics Becomes Your Idol](#)" (Oct. 30), David Brooks wrote about today's political climate, making use of terminology not often found in the secular media. Even in church circles, talk of idolatry and heresy can seem antiquated and exclusive, hierarchical and judgmental. And here those terms show up with my morning coffee.

I've been watching Mr. Brooks with interest for a while. He seems increasingly interested in the power of religion and the spirit in our common life, the importance of values and character, the forces of grace and sin. Maybe that evolution prompted last week's lament over hyper-partisan discourse in our time. He observes that these days people "often use partisan identity to fill the void left when their other attachments wither away - religious, ethnic, communal and familial." He wonders if political affiliation is now being used as a cure for spiritual and social loneliness. He notes that people on the left and on the right now use politics to find moral meaning, turning politics into an idol, idolatry defined as giving allegiance to something that should be serving only an intermediate purpose. Good definition.

Again, I've noted Mr. Brooks' spiritual evolution over the years. A sign of that evolution is his willingness to listen to a range of voices. In this recent column, he cites insights from Andy Crouch, editor of Christianity Today. Mr. Crouch has written a book called *Playing God*, noting that idolatry is seductive because at first it seems to work: "The first sip of the martini tastes great. A new smartphone seems to give power and control. Status from a new burst of success seems really sensational. But then idols fail. And what seemed to offer more control begins to control you. Idols fail to deliver on their original promises. They ask for more and more and give less and less."

All of that prompts Mr. Brooks to note that we need to put politics in its place. It needs to be displaced by more important dependencies: family, friendship, neighborhood, community, faith, basic life creed. And if we're going to get these kind of priorities straight, maybe a good place to start is to think about what Jesus might say on the subject, or more to the point, where he might lead us, or even more to the point, whether we are inclined to follow where he leads. As G.K Chesterton said: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says: "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." One of the desert fathers morphed that teaching as follows: "Do not give your heart to that which does not satisfy your heart." Jesus calls our hearts to love of God and neighbor. There ain't enough, ain't much of that floating around in today's politics.

With the help of Mr. Brooks writing about the idolatry of our current political climate, the heresy that it will be fulfilling, I wonder about the idols we worship. I wonder about where we give our hearts. Today's idols are not carved out of wood or stone. But we give them power, as we seek to fill the God-shaped space inside of us.

Pray this week for grace to give our hearts to that which will satisfy our hearts.

-Jay Sidebotham

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.

-Exodus 20

Because here's something else that's weird but true: in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship-be it JC or Allah, be it YHWH or the Wiccan Mother Goddess, or the Four Noble Truths, or some inviolable set of ethical principles-is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. On one level, we all know this stuff already. It's been codified as myths, proverbs, clichés, epigrams, parables; the skeleton of every great story. The whole trick is keeping the truth up front in daily consciousness.

-David Foster Wallace

Beware of any work for God that causes or allows you to avoid concentrating on Him. A great number of Christian workers worship their work. The only concern of Christian workers should be their concentration on God.

-Oswald Chambers

My Utmost for His Highest

We must overturn so many idols, the idol of self first of all, so that we can be humble, and only from our humility can learn to be redeemers, can learn to work together in the way the world really needs.

-Oscar A. Romero
The Violence of Love

Don't raise me up, I am but a messenger.

-Jimi Hendrix

December 2017 Sunday Altar Schedule

Position	December 3 Advent 1	December 10 Advent 2	December 17 Advent 3	December 24 Advent 4	December 25 Christmas Day	December 31
	8 AM	8 AM	8AM	9AM		9AM
EM	Charles Karnopp	Jim Klopstock	Evelyn Wickham	Scotty Hodges		
Acolyte						
Lector	Ellie Kulseng	Gary McEachnie	Tara Sutherland	Shane Tyler		Pat Benaquista
Usher/Greeter		Carol Allen	Ron Cupid	Peter Minkel		
Campus Monitor	Gregg Wickham	Linda Chandler	Jim Klopstock	Janet Heise		
	10 AM	10 AM	10 AM	7:30PM	10 AM	
EM	Carolyn Sheldon	Matt Thomas	Janet Heise	Scotty Hodges Carolyn Sheldon	Ruth Anne Wagner	
Acolyte		Wyatt Thomas	Marissa Grimes			
Lector	Phyllis Riley	Lynn Thomas	Joe Harper			
Usher/Greeter	Peter Minkel	Nora Del Ross	Tom & Mary Ann McKinney			
Campus Monitor	James Fulmer	Scotty Hodges	Matt Thomas			
Altar Guild	Nov 25-Dec 8 Anne Prather	Dec 9 – Dec 22 Pat Minkel	Dec 23 – Jan 5 Carol Allen			
		Sue Pokorny				

Coming Events



- December 2nd – Saturday – GEM Meeting – 7:30am – Huckleberry’s in Fairfield
December 5th – Tuesday – ECW Meeting/Christmas Potluck and gift exchange – 11:30am –
Room 6
December 10th – Sunday – ECW Fundraiser - Tahoe Joe’s tickets \$20.00
December 16th – Saturday - Blue Christmas service 7:00pm
December 24th – Sunday – 9:00am service
December 24th – Sunday – 7:00pm service
December 25th - Monday – 10:00am Christmas Day service (Office Closed)
December 31st – Sunday – 9:00am service
December 31st – Sunday – 7:00pm Watchnight service

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Kashy Hull 12/02
Pat Minkel 12/09
Noella Bond 12/10
Phyllis Riley 12/10
Nora Del Ross 12/11
Gregg Wickham 12/18
Jack Flynn 12/22

Carlo Teresi 01/15
James Klopstock 01/22
Anne Prather 01/23

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Operating:

<u>October 2017 Income</u>	<u>YTD Income</u>
\$10,170	\$105,181
<u>October 2017 Expenses</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>
\$12,530	\$119,895
<u>Net Income/Loss</u>	<u>Net Income/Loss</u>
(\$2,360)	(\$14,714)

November 2017 Income \$8,753 Expenses \$12,147 Net Income/Loss (\$3,394)

GRACE CHURCH STAFF

Interim Rector	The Rev. Perry W. Polk
Associate	The Rev. David Cavanagh
Organist	Lynne Secrist
Senior Warden -	Gregg Wickham
Junior Warden -	Shane Tyler
Treasurer-	Gretchen Smith
Vestry—	Carol Allen, Linda Chandler, James Fulmer, Janet Heise, Scotty Hodges, Jim Klopstock, and Lynn Thomas.
Staff: Office Mgr./Bookkeeper:	Kim Worthen

Our Mission:

Welcome • Transform
Build Up • Reach Out • Glorify God

PLEASE NOTE :

Sharing Grace Articles are due by the **20TH OF EACH MONTH**. Please email submissions to gracechurchff@sbcglobal.net as the office staff is consolidating information for the rector.

