

FROM YOUR RECTOR

For surely I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future, with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Dear Parish Family,

Recently I looked back at my January 2020 Communicator article introducing the 2020 Annual Meeting, and saw that I quoted Jeremiah as we looked forward to a new year and a new decade. At the time, a world-wide, once in a century epic COVID-19 pandemic was not even on my radar. Yes, I had heard about a virulent and capricious virus that was ravaging Wuhan, China, but who would have expected a year-long, going on a second year, shut down of everything? Truthfully, I can't say that I even remembered Jeremiah's words as we began wading through life in pandemic, but now that I look back, the question for us is do we trust that God continues to have wonderful plans for us and a future, with hope?

My prayer is that we will trust God with our future. The original people, to whom Jeremiah spoke God's Word, must have wondered how it could be that God would offer a future with hope. They were living in exile in Babylon, having lost their homes, their livelihoods, their Temple, and all of the items that went along with worship. And yet they not only had a future, they had life while in exile. Jeremiah told them to build new homes, grow their food, have their families, and worship God in new ways, until the day that God gave them their freedom and allowed them to come home. Likewise, Grace Church in 2020 experienced both an incredibly difficult year and at the same time fruitful year. We all mourned numerous losses, from financial to physical to spiritual. How we missed seeing one another, hugging, and sharing together in good times and tough times. The ubiquitous computer screen giving us yet another YouTube, Facebook, or Zoom offering, has been both a blessing and a tiresome burden. And yet we survived and grew. Creative use of the screen along with drive-thrus and socially distanced activities allowed for Sunday School, Youth Group, Bible Study, and all-parish activities to flourish and take on new life. Our Outreach programs never missed a beat; in fact Outreach opportunities increased in 2020. Our online worship capabilities grew exponentially, and aided by in-person outdoor worship, not a single Sunday service or special feast day was missed. The church doors may have closed, but the church did not close, making our story a story of hope and triumph in the midst of extraordinary sacrifices and difficulties.

Like our ancestors in the faith, you continued on in faith and hope in very new territory, and as God freed the exiles, so too will we be freed. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and I can hardly wait to see all of you in church, celebrating with the biggest party we have ever had on that day of full return.

In Christ's love,
Susan +

Senior Warden

“Don’t be afraid, for I am with you.
Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God
I will strengthen you and help you.
I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

Isaiah 41:10

These words have been a source of comfort for me over the past year. Whenever my heart became heavy with fear and worry about the looming pandemic, my faith in the power of God’s love lightened it and soothed my fears. Being part of the faith community at Grace has also been a source of comfort. Though the virus-related restrictions changed the way we worshiped over the past year, our community has endured and thrived. Our online and outdoor services have kept us connected to Christ and to each other. I want to thank Susan, Nancy, and Rick for their hard work in making these services happen. Also, it is wonderful that our children and youth programs have continued to flourish over the past year. Thank you Catie, Heather, and Jade for all your time in working with our children, tweeners, and youth. I also want to thank all of you for participating and donating to the drive-thru outreach programs during the Advent and Lent seasons as well as the donation of your time and food for the homeless shelter and monthly sack-lunch programs. Your time and talents have made a difference.

My hope and prayer is that you find peace God’s love and prosper in the upcoming year. Don’t be afraid. God is with you.

Sincerely,

Frank Boyd
Sr. Warden

JUNIOR WARDEN

I have always cherished my church. I think of our parishioners as a loving community and family. I have been honored to serve as your Junior Warden this last year of my term on Vestry.

We have endured a year navigating through this pandemic. I have missed seeing you all in person and I am proud of us as we adapted and reached out to one another. We have grown creating on-line and outdoor services to continue our faith together. We have worked together... seeing Rick edit our online services, our readers recording their readings from home, Rev. Susan rethinking and creating our Holy feast days, our Bible Study ladies learning to use Zoom and remain a committed group, to Marilyn Scranton taking on all of the flower creations that were gathered from her own yard. This has been a year of team work!

We have missed one another and the joy I felt seeing your faces driving through for our Blessing of the Backpacks, Blessing of the Animals, to our hot dog celebrations for Advent and Shrove Tuesday. It made me happy to drive through and see familiar faces and to greet you as you drove through. It brought me joy to bring Valentine's Day cards and candy to those who have lost their loved ones making sure they feel love from our church family. Thank you to Liz Sandona who has helped make and deliver them for the past two years. The year has brought me a greater appreciation for all of you and the special community we have.

I will miss working as a team with this Vestry and our goal to lead and support our parishioners this past year. My love for our "church that love built" will always continue.

With love,

Nancy Rice
Junior Warden

2020 VIDEO MINISTRY TEAM ~ LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

Who would ever think we would need such a ministry and on such short notice? With the pandemic coming over us like the darkness of night, we scrambled at the last minute to expand our knowledge and efforts in not only videoing our services, but how to produce those videos in an effective way. We were forced to learn new technologies, find new ways to reach all of you and keep the Church family connected on a regular basis. Starting from the ground up, we have reviewed our early attempts and giggle at our efforts, but we are also proud to see how far we have come.

From our first video casting with little knowledge and all new equipment to our today productions that rival even the biggest churches around us with unlimited budgets, we continue to strive to do our very best to keep informed and connected. The level of thanks needs to be spread far and wide. First for a Vestry that believed in our initial ideas and support our growing attempts. To our viewers, now across the United States, who support the weekly productions, we say Thank You. Our average number of views is about 130 each week and sometimes went as high as 250 viewers.

We need to especially thank Rev Susan for shifting gears and without hesitation jumping in front of the camera and continuing to lead this flock we call Grace Episcopal Church. She was able to trim the weekly service to better fit for a viewing audience and supporting some new ideas that we know were difficult. Reverend Susan deserves an Oscar for her roll in being a video Priest, for keeping us together, informed and still preaching the word of God. Thanks to all the readers that also jumped in front of a video camera or cell phone to participate and support the weekly service production. A new era for all of us, but together we were able to get it done.

Special thanks to Wayne Kawamoto for his camera equipment and talents as our camera man and production engineer during these latter months. To Patricia Meyer who never missed a service, once we moved filming into the Church. To Marilyn Scranton who was the flower guild for many months and allowed us to come into her home weekly, in the beginning, and create the service in her Dining room. To Nancy Rice for your dedicated talents with our graphic designs and bulletins each week and keeping our paperwork straight. Your talent and support did not go unnoticed.

Music was recorded and provided by many, our thanks to Rick England for his ideas and support. To Jackie Stong, Laurel McKenzie, David Aldrete, John Williamson, Susan Scranton, Janet Kawamoto and Mitchell Patterson for their solo contributions. Thank you to the Kawamoto and Patterson families for your musical contributions as well as to Sean O'Neal for his wonderful Organ Music. And of course, not to overlook the talents of our own Grace Choir and Bell Choirs for their recorded efforts that helped remind us of our Church. Music is a key ministry to our Church and we learned that lesson well this past year.

Although we are looking forward to the time, we can all return to "normal" and gather again in our home on Mountain View Avenue, in the meantime we will continue to do our best to keep us connected using the technology of the day. More important is our thanks to everyone that participates and help to make these broadcast possible. Your donation of time and effort make this new ministry successful from the very start.

One lesson we have learned is our achieve of over 15,000 photographs have helped us to laugh, remember and cherish our time together. As we move forward, remember to look at the camera and smile, it makes for great memories and friendships.

A big thanks to everyone. Everyone of us was part of this ministry, either in front of the camera or viewing our efforts, each of you made it possible and fun.

Rick Sandona

Just a small fish in a big pond of hard workers

LECTORS

Like so many other members of Grace Church, our Lectors have risen to the challenges posed by the pandemic lockdown, quickly becoming adept at video-recording readings of the Word of God. Our readers during the never-to-be-forgotten year of 2020 were David Aldrete, Stacey Aldrete, Jared Anders, Ron Anders, Frank Boyd, Miles Bresee, Lynn Colley, Margo Keller, Laurel McKenzie, Heather Moore, Micah Palpant, Bobbi Patterson, Garrett Patterson, Lucie Pelleriti, Debbie Pullen and Jon Sharp. We appreciate their efforts!

Respectfully submitted by

Janet Kawamoto, LEM and Lector Coordinator

USHERS MINISTRY

Although for only a few short months did the Usher Ministry serve the members of Grace Episcopal Church, it was our pleasure. We were the last ones to leave the facility as we closed for the pandemic and be assured, we will be one of the first ones to enter, when the time is right. We lost a key member of our group as we say goodbye to Randy Lakin as he left the Church during the pandemic. We thank him for his hard work over the many years he dedicated to our service. Thanks Randy, good luck on your new endeavors.

We extend our most sincere thanks to all members of the ministry including: Aaron Aldrete, Jacob Boyd, Miles Bresee, Carl Colley, Frank Hageman, Darren Hoffman, Patrick Hollanders, Randy Lakin, Alex McKenzie, Paul Meinholz, Guillermo Moreno Micah Palpant, Todd Rice, Peter and Ryan Stacy, and all the special volunteers that pitch in when the need occurs. We also extend a special thanks to Gene Haynes, Deb Pullen and others for tending to the 8 AM parishioners so well. A very special thanks to our Junior Ushers as well that do a lot of the hard work; Nicholas Hollanders, Nathaniel Olmos, Garrett Patterson, Stephen Rice and Mizuki Williamson. Sometimes I think the Junior Ushers could run the entire service without assistance. We also are supported and thank Mitchell and Morgan Patterson for volunteering on days we are short. Great job by our Juniors and Volunteers! Thank you!

As we come back together in 2021, we are in hopes to regroup and we would more than welcome others to join our ranks. I look forward to seeing the Ushers again serve our congregation. It truly has been a long and empty year.

With great thanks for those called Grace Ushers

Rick Sandona

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

2020 was a year to end all years! Faced with the Covid-19 pandemic, Grace was faced with the challenge of continuing our spirit of giving and community outreach with strict state shutdown orders. Grace Church continued to make a difference in our community with our many reimagined outreach projects.

On Sunday, January 12, 2020, many parishioners from Grace Church helped in making the Winter Homeless Shelter a success. We supplied food for breakfast and lunch, and served 200 people that evening. This was an all parish event, and we had wonderful help from scouts and scout families of Troop 486. Thank you to Frank Boyd for heading up this wonderful outreach and many thanks to all who donated money, helped cook, serve, and clean up.

On Monday, January 20, Grace hosted our third annual blood drive. Then everything changed. Schools closed, businesses sent staff home to work remotely, and the Red Cross cancelled hundreds of community blood drives. As a result, blood supplies reached critical amounts very quickly. This is when we were approached and asked if we would be able to open our doors for some additional blood drives. And that is what we did. We hosted two extra drives this year and had the following impacts across all three drives:

- January 20, 2020: 31 people came in to donate and we collected 28 units collected.
- July 31, 2020: 32 people came in to donate, 30 units collected.
- October 23, 2020: 28 people came in to donate, 25 units collected.

In total we were able collect 83 units, this means that we helped up to 249 people in 2020, and Grace will continue to host two more drives this spring because of all the major community drives postponed until further notice. Thank you to Catie Anders for organizing this event and her continued work as liaison with the Red Cross.

In February, the Lenten Project was going to be in support of the "Welcome Home Baskets" for the Union Station Homeless Services in Pasadena. This program was successful in 2019, but because of the pandemic, Grace had to reimagine the project to meet the immediate needs of Union Station. Debbie Pullen contacted them and it was decided that cash was what would help the most. Grace stepped up and donated \$1,738, money that was collected during Lent. Additionally, as people had already started purchasing basket items before the shutdown, Debbie delivered a carload of basket items, as well as some quilts from Karen Huss' quilting group. We appreciate all the coordinating efforts that Debbie made in the face of the pandemic. It should also be noted that Karen generously made over 100 cloth masks that she made available to parishioners free of charge.

Grace church also reimagined other outreach events by creating "drive-thru" activities to help parishioners keep in touch with one another and help combat isolationism and loneliness. Thanks to Nancy Rice and Susan Scranton for their tireless work planning, gathering, and organizing all the materials for these events.

August – Blessings for the New School Year. Despite Covid-19, the school year marks a new beginning for many people. So, on August 29 we welcomed people to receive blessings drive-thru style. People brought backpacks, briefcases, music cases, iphones, laptops, masks, symbols of businesses, and other items used in school or work or everyday life, and received blessings and a goody bag.

October - Blessing of the Animals: Our rector and a team of dog lovers (Debbie, Rosann, and Laurel) greeted each car with a blessing for their pet, some pet goodies, and a St. Francis prayer to go! The Patterson family went out with signs to bring cars in from Cullen. We had about 30 cars and enjoyed socializing from a distance of 6 feet.

December - Reverse Advent Calendar: Each car was given a hot dog dinner, plus the handouts for collecting food for Shepherd's Pantry. The result was an overwhelming amount of food collected and there was enough food that a representative from Shepherd's Pantry came by to pick it up. All your kind donations filled their pick-up truck to capacity! This event was the brainchild of Bobbi Patterson – thanks Bobbi for thinking of a great way to serve our community! Thanks also go to Frank Boyd for keeping all the volunteers on track.

In 2020 we continued to donate food to the Shepherd's Pantry on a weekly basis. Because the need for food was so great last year, Grace gave them a donation of \$1,500. We also participated in the Adopt-a-Lunch ministry at Union Station. Once a month 50 sack lunches were provided for homeless families in the San Gabriel Valley. These programs would be impossible if not for your donations of food and supplies. Thank you!

Thank you all for making 2020 a year of generous giving in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic!

Laurel McKenzie and Debbie Pullen, Outreach Coordinators

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: RED CROSS

In 2020 we held our annual drive as we normally did on January 20, 2020. Then everything changed. Schools closed, businesses sent staff home to work remotely, and the Red Cross cancelled hundreds of community blood drives. As a result, blood supplies reached critical amounts very quickly. This is when we were approached and asked if we would be able to open our doors for some additional blood drives. And that is what we did. We hosted two extra drives this year and had the following impacts across all three drives:

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In total we were able collect 83 units, this means that we helped up to 249 people in 2020!

Seeing that we are still living in the time of COVID-19 Red Cross has asked us to host a couple more drives this spring with all the major community drives postponed until further notice. They will be held on:

- Friday April 9th from 10am to 4pm
- Friday June 4th from 10am to 4pm

If you are willing to donate blood at our drive please the following link to sign-up:

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=GECCG>

With love and thanks! ~ Catie Anders

Education Ministries

ADULT EDUCATION

The beat goes on in Adult Education. Day: Wednesday. Time: 10:00 AM

Our Wednesday morning Bible Study thrived and flourished in 2020. We learned and prayed, laughed and cried. Nothing stopped Bible Study from continuing. In fact, having Bible Study via zoom has increased our ability to reach people. Throughout 2020, we studied the Passion Narratives, the Resurrection stories, the entire Gospel of Mark, assorted lectionary studies, and enjoyed Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas, a book and video series by Adam Hamilton. We all learned to use zoom, and I even learned how to screen share so that we all could watch videos. Feel free to join us as we study God's Word.

In Christ's love,
Rev. Susan +

SUNDAY SCHOOL

School has changed without a question this year. Our kids have been living in a virtual world and our Sunday School program didn't want to add one more Zoom/Virtual meeting to their week.

We tried a few things out before we found something that has had some great success. We started out with Bible Stories Reading Time over Skype, with some prayers and songs. Didn't work so well. Then summer came and so did the apathy.

Once the school year started we buckled down. With a Sunday School Parent's Zoom we were able to meet our kids where they were. We rolled out a monthly Sunday School Family Tailgate, where we would do a setup discussions about the materials we would be covering for the month and truck swap of materials. Our curriculum has been designed for families to self-pace Sunday School lessons and projects over the course of a week/weeks-Readings, Discussions, Crafts, Songs, and Prayer. This seems to have done the trick! Till December, everything went sideways again. But we stood strong, we have moved our monthly meeting to Zoom and still coordinated a truck swap for materials.

We are able to move forward with confidence and we will strengthen the faith in our children as best we can remotely. And, we look forward to the day that we can read, play, and do crafts together in the Sunday School rooms again.

With love,
-catie

Youth Group

Grace Youth Group started 2020 off strong with regular onsite meetings and our annual trip to Mammoth in February, which was a blast. That weekend was one of the last times we came together before our lives were forever changed by the pandemic. When Grace closed its doors in March, we shifted to virtual Youth Group meetings on Zoom, and found new ways to come together in fellowship. Things like Zoom scavenger hunts, online multiplayer games, Bible Jeopardy, creating Mother's Day tributes, recording the Prayers of the People for Father's Day and other services, and much more have kept the youth group close over the past year. During the summer and fall, when there was a downward trend in COVID cases, we resumed in-person meetings while continuing with the safety protocol of being outside, masked and distanced. This allowed for us to have some fun in-person again and go on a few outings! We had a Halloween party, helped out with the Blessings of the Animals, went hiking at the Botanical Gardens in Claremont, and recently went on a hike here in Glendora. We reverted back to virtual meetings during the COVID spike of the holidays, but haven't yet fully returned to in-person meetings. It is our hope that with the downturn of the pandemic, we will be able to come together again very soon as a Youth Group.

Respectfully submitted,
Jade Petteruto, Youth Director