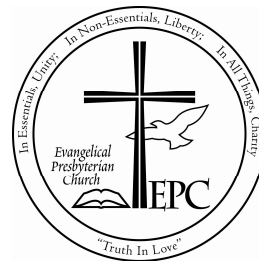


GRACE NEWS

Grace Community Church
An *Evangelical* Presbyterian Church
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Surprise, AZ 85374
(623) 975-9038 Web site gcc-epc.com



December, 2016

SHARING THE GOOD THINGS HAPPENING IN THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH

“Cherished Memories”

The older I get the more I am amazed that the story of Christmas is as new, fresh and vibrant today as it was when I was a child. The story never changes; the thematic remains the same. It's always *true*! The only thing that ever changes is with *you* and *me*! Each year during this wonderful season of Advent we can look to the future with great expectancy and hope because of events which happened in the past as foretold in the Scriptures. That's why this year we're changing our focus. During this year's Advent Season, the theme is titled, *“Then and Now.”* The question becomes: “Are we as unprepared for Christ's second Advent just as they were two thousand years ago when Christ was born? The world around us never seems to change. People are still as dumbfounded by the works of God, today, as they were then!

As I reflect on all the Christmas' past, I marvel at the way God is just as mysterious, wondrous and magnificent, today, as He was when I was just a child. And when Christ was but a Child! Perhaps this is the key to what makes Christmas so grand and glorious. In the final analysis, we must come to God as a child, endowed with a childlike faith, if we are to receive the Christ Child. Yes, I believe that's it!

Think of it. The angels in heaven rejoiced at His coming. Those lowly shepherds rejoiced with a reverent fear. Even the wise men from the East came bearing gifts to celebrate and pay homage to the Christ Child. And so, too, must we! Notice they all came from different directions. The angels came from heaven above, while the shepherds came from the fields below, and the magic came from a faraway land. But notice something else. They all came by way of faith. They believed in the Christ Child *before* they laid eyes on Him! It's been said, *“Seeing is believing.”* But how far greater it is if you can believe without the benefit of sight!

It's my sincerest hope and prayer that this Christmas will prove to be your best Christmas ever! Not just because of gifts under the tree, or having friends and loved ones close by. Rather, for the simple reason that the Christ Child will have paid a visit to you because of your childlike faith!

Have a care,
Pastor Cooper

Finance Committee Report

For the month of November our unrestricted contributions were \$30,392.00 and our expenses were \$24,818.88.

Facilities Maintenance Fund

Contributions to the Facilities Maintenance Fund totaled \$100.00 for the month of November. This fund is used for building and maintenance expenses and to cover emergency costs that may arise.

Your Finance Committee



"Christmas Sing A Long"

Will be taking place at Grace on Sunday, December 4th at 3:00 PM. Be sure to mark your calendar to attend the fun and fellowship. Refreshments will be served.



Coming in December - Our "JESUS STATION"



Beginning December 4, anyone who wishes to give a Christmas card to a fellow member(s) of Grace Community Church may deposit the card(s) with the receiver name(s) written on the envelope at the "Jesus Station" in the Narthex. The cards will be sorted alphabetically, by the **Station Angels**.

This is a delightful mission and totally voluntary. The Deacons will distribute cards to those not able to pick them up at church. We will be celebrating Jesus' Birthday, God's gift to us, and we share fellowship within our church family.

Dates to **drop off cards** are: Sunday, 12-4; 12/11; 12/18.

Dates to **pick up your cards** are: Sunday, 12/11; 12/18; 12/24; 12/25 and January 2. (In case your are away)



With much Appreciation



I would like to thank everyone for all prayers, cards of encouragement, greetings and loving care. A very special thanks for the Prayer Cover!
Ken Bell



Sunday Bible Study begins at 8:45 AM.

David Craig will be continuing his series: "Back to Basics - The Truth We Believe!" It is an overview of the Twelve Foundations of our Christian Faith. This month will be covering Truth11.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Carol Cornwell	12/06
Dick Sleeman	12/07
Jo Ann Smith	12/09
Marilyn Scott	12/10
Barbara Wilson	12/10
Howard Kast	12/11
Nelsine Ellsworth	12/13
Dick Rogeness	12/16
Robert Thompson (Pastor)	12/19
Katharine Dementis	12/20
Linda Schooley	12/21
Doris Davis	12/22
Andy Kavanis	12/27
Audrey Robinson	12/27
Nancy Gossard	12/31



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Ken & Lori Fawcett	12/18
Smokey & Patti French	12/24
Ed & Shirley Knox	12/24
Lewis & Carol Cornwell	12/25
Harvey & Vicki Johnson	12/27
Bill & Kathy Walker	12/28
Don & Elaine McIlheron	12/29



Our own Mike Blackburn and The Dry Heat will return to Grace Community Church on Saturday, January 28th at 7:00 PM. Plan to come early, as this group fills Grace Community Church! Doors will open at 6:00 PM.



The next Women's Bible Study, "The Cross" by John Stott, will begin on January 16, 2017 at 10:00 AM. The cost of the study book will be \$5.00. You may sign up beginning in December.



Dear Family and Friends of Grace,

I want to thank you for your prayers and all your help during this, for me, a very traumatic time. I am healing well, though it will take a long time for full use of my arm. God bless all of you.

Harriette Bjork



We are still in need of an Usher & Greeter Chairperson, and a Hospitality Chairperson. If you are new to the church, this is a wonderful way to get to know the members. Please contact Becky Reid.

Sound Booth: Chuck Lundeen and Annette Strangman, who both have faithfully served in the sound booth for many years, will be retiring. Therefore, we need for a volunteer to run the **computer**. Please contact Annette or Jan Evans. **We thank Chuck and Annette for their many years of service!**



Grace Community Library

Recently there have been nearly 30 books donated to Grace's book library. Below are some of the titles that you may be interested in reading. But we have a dilemma, *we do not have a librarian* to manage our 30 shelves of books. If you could help, please contact Becky Reid. Here are the new books.

The Message-New Testament, Eugene Petersen
Loving God, Charles Colson
When God Winks at You, Squire Rushnell
A Guide-The Westminster Confession of Faith
Commentary in Defense of Israel, John Hagee
Health Begins in Him, Terry Dorian PHD
In Six Days, J. Ashton
Becoming a Prayer Warrior, Elizabeth Alves
Loving God with All Your Mind, Elizabeth George
Revelation Unveiled, Tim Lahaye



Grace now has a benevolent fund for people in our congregation needing essentials. Please notify Pastor Bob or your deacon if you have a need.



Craisin and Cauliflower Salad

1 head of cauliflower
 7 ounces Craisins (dried cranberries)
 3/4 - 1 cup Peanuts, lightly salted
 2/3 cup mayonnaise
 1/3 cup sugar

Combine mayonnaise and sugar in a small bowl. Set aside for a few hours to give time for sugar to dissolve. Separate cauliflower into bite size pieces. No more than 1 hour prior to serving, place cauliflower, peanuts and craisins in a bowl. Stir in dressing to coat. That's it. Serve. **Michele Southerland**



Advent Then and Now: Who, When, How, Where and Why?

Advent Then and Now is the thematic series we are using as we celebrate Advent this year at Grace. It was written by Peter Schuurman and Mark Wallace from the Worship Branch of New Life CRC and published in the September, 2016 edition of Reformed Worship. Following is a paraphrase from the writer's introduction:

This Advent series is intended to be a recovery of the early church tradition of looking ahead to Christ's second coming and a corrective to the nostalgic tradition of looking behind to Christ's first coming. "Advent Then and Now" means we commemorate the first coming of Christ, but we also anticipate His second coming. We are people of both memory and hope. Each Sunday, beginning 11/27, is framed as a question about Christ's coming: who, when, how, where, and finally, why? The response to the question each Sunday comes in two parts with two corresponding tests, the first relating to Advent past, and the second relating to Advent future. "Joy to the World, the Lord has come, let earth receive her king. Let every heart, prepare Him room. And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing".

Did you know that we have made some changes to the Worship and Music leadership since last Spring? Officially we welcomed Sherry Bennett as our Accompanist late last Spring and most recently, the Choir Director baton was officially passed to Michele Southerland. Betti Pflepsen will continue as Song Leader as she selects the hymns and Singspiration and leads our singing.



December, 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Choir Practice 9:00 AM Ukulele Group 1:00 PM	2	3
4 Bible Study 8:45 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM <i>Communion</i> <i>Sing a Long</i> <i>3:00 PM</i>	5 Men's Breakfast 8:00 AM	6 Prayer Service 9:00 AM Finance Meeting 10:00 AM Session Meeting 1:00 PM	7 <i>Women decorate the "Chrismon Tree"</i> <i>10:30 AM</i> Women's Set Up For Luncheon	8 Choir Practice 9:00 AM <i>Women's Breakfast</i> <i>10:00 AM</i> <i>"A Few of My Favorite Things" Speaker: Lois Kuehnast</i> Ukulele Group 1:00 PM	9	10
11 Bible Study 8:45 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM	12 Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM	13 Prayer Service 9:00 AM	14	15 Choir Practice 9:00 AM Mission Meeting 1:00 PM Ukulele Group 1:00 PM	16	17
18 Bible Study 8:45 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM	19 Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM	20 Prayer Service 9:00 AM	21	22 Choir Practice 9:00 AM Worship and Music Meeting 11:00 AM Ukulele Group 1:00 PM	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve Service</i> <i>5:00 PM</i>
25 <i>Christmas Day</i> Worship Service 10:00 AM	26 Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM	27 Prayer Service 9:00 AM	28 Deacon Meeting 9:00 AM	29 Choir Practice 9:00 AM Ukulele Group 1:00 PM	30	31