



## WHAT'S GOING ON AT GRACE: JANUARY NEWSLETTER

FROM RECONNECTION TO GOING DEEPER IN FAITH,  
AS A CONGREGATION AND AS A COMMUNITY



### *Ministers' Message: Growing Deeper in 2023*

Happy New Year! As we embark on 2023 together, we say goodbye to 2022. As one chapter closes, another begins. What are we going to take with us from the past? What do we let go of? The start of a new year is full of promise and potential. We don't completely disregard the past, but it's an opportunity to reflect on the previous year and plan for the one ahead.

What was 2022 like for you? Were there unrealized expectations? Did you have any hopes that were met? Were any hopes not met? Perhaps some of us are quite ready to say good riddance to 2022 and move on with 2023. Maybe this will be the year that \_\_\_\_\_ (something happens).

No one knows what the future holds, but we know who holds the future – God. One translation of Psalm 90:12 reads, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

This verse has two parts which may be helpful as we approach a new year. The opening, teach us to number our days, helps us remember that nothing is forever. How do we use the time that is before us? What do we do with our time, talent, and treasure? They won't last forever, but how do we put them in God's service? The second part, that we may gain a heart of wisdom, helps us to remember that it's not just about us. God was, is, and will be. God is the Alpha and the Omega. God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. The opening verse of this chapter, Psalm 90:1 reads, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations." God has been with God's people throughout time – much longer than 2023 BC and will be present far beyond 2023 AD.

Whether you've made a resolution for the new year or not, whether you're looking forward to the year ahead or wish you could go back to the start of 2022, however you might be feeling, remember the promise of Emmanuel – God with us. This is not

just a promise for the Christmas season but a reminder throughout the year. God is with us and will be with us through 2023 and beyond.

God bless you, and may you have a happy new year!

- The Rev. Jake Van Pernis, The Rev. Christian Persaud, and The Rev. Maren Mclean Persaud (Rev. Maren is on parental leave until April 2023)



**A fond farewell to 2022 as we look ahead to 2023**

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## Congregation Story: Grace Bethany Group: Welcoming God's Grace in Scripture and Grieving in God's Grace

This January, the Grace Bethany Group is launching a 6 month pilot project offering Scripture Study and a Grief Group.

Everyone is welcome to attend the study, the grief group, or both sessions.

**Starts:** Wednesday, January 11

**Runs:** Wednesday mornings in-person at Grace Church

**Schedule:**

- 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.: God's Grace in Scripture
- 11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Fellowship
- 11:30 a.m. - noon: Grieving in God's Grace

**For more information:**

For more information, please RSVP to Barbara Henson via [office@gracecalgary.org](mailto:office@gracecalgary.org).

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## Community Story: How Outreach and Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Work Helps Create a Sense of Safety

Truth, healing and reconciliation is about much more than September 30 - it is about creating spaces that feel safe, welcoming and offers a sense of belonging for people who do not feel they do - particularly in a church. Grace's participation in this work led one Indigenous drummer to feel safe enough to enter a church and perform at the Grace's first OPEN MIC Night.

[Read More](#)

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Time, Talent and Treasure at Grace

Gratitude and Generosity



Grace Presbyterian Church  
*Transforming lives through God's grace*

## Embracing Evolving Culture Story: Stewardship

In the fall of 2022, a Stewardship Committee was formed. The committee is focusing on gratitude and recognition for volunteers and donors.

In October, more than 170 volunteers were personally invited by Cindy Stephenson, the Coordinator of Volunteers, to the volunteer recognition lunch *Blessed to a Blessing*, giving thanks for their gifts of time and treasure. In December, all those who gave gifts of treasure were also called by Cindy, as Convener of the Stewardship Committee, with a personal thank you for their contributions.

The responses to these calls were mostly pleasant surprise, with appreciation for Grace's ministries and the deep friendships within the Grace community. We do have much reason to give thanks!

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Take a moment to think about how you have supported local retailers and locally produced products



## Evolving Culture: Becoming Earth-Care Stewards

Grace has been learning about and sharing how to be a good Earth Steward this fall. Here is how buying local helps Calgary and our community as well as the Earth.

### Why Buy Local

The multiplier effect is the amount of local economic activity that is triggered by the purchase of one item. The more a dollar circulates in an area, and the faster it circulates, the more income, wealth and jobs it creates.

At the grocery store, when you purchase a tomato grown locally, the money spent at the grocery store will pay the distributor, who will pay the grower. The grower will pay staff, who will go to restaurants, movies and so on. When you purchase a tomato grown from California, for instance, the grocer will pay the distributor, who will pay the importer, who will pay the wholesaler. The money from the California tomato doesn't stay in the community.

When you're choosing between those two tomatoes, it's important to remember:

- many of the food items at the grocery store travel over 1500 miles to reach your plate
- regions with more local businesses have 26% fewer vehicle miles travelled by consumers
- local businesses typically set up in existing buildings which means less urban sprawl, habitat loss and pollution
- small businesses donate 2.5 times more per employee to local non-profit and charitable causes
- online shopping produced over 465 million pounds of plastic packaging waste in 2019
- for every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, \$68 recirculates and remains

in the local economy

- small local businesses are the largest employer with 90% new jobs created by locally owned businesses
- local businesses create a stronger tax base, which creates better public services

Local businesses create uniqueness within a community. They select products based on local interests and typically have better service.

Our spending habits have greater impacts beyond what we place in our shopping bags or online shopping carts. Shopping locally can help the environment by decreasing pollution from transportation, reducing waste and reducing packaging.

**Sources and more information:**

<https://sustainontario.com/2012/07/04/multiplier-effect/>

<https://sustainableconnections.org/why-buy-local/>

<https://shopappy.com/blog/post/how-does-shopping-locally-help-the-environment>

<http://gogreen.org/blog/the-environmental-benefits-of-buying-locally>



## CHURCH BUSINESS:

### MAJOR MONTHLY CONGREGATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, DECISIONS AND UPDATES

#### Monthly Fall Financial Update

Please find the [Financial Budget for 2023](#) along with the [Narrative Budget](#). The budget was approved at the Sunday, November 27 Congregational Meeting.

\*Find financial reports on the [Giving and Financials website page \(monthly, periodic, and annual financial reports, as well as Report to Congregation and Community with financial snapshots\)](#).

#### Lead Minister Search Committee Update

The Lead Minister Search committee continues to appreciate your supportive comments and your prayers. We have had a busy month in December with new applications and interviews. We remain confident that God is leading us to the right candidate and this will happen at the right time. We will be meeting again in early January to discuss next steps and will provide another update then. Meanwhile, we are thankful for our blessings at this joyous time of year.

Sincerely,

Janet Hyde (Co-convener), Clark Hanna (Co-convener), Flora Stephenson, Jennifer Lee, Elizabeth Cressman, Jan Dewar, Greg Retzer

### **Session Highlights: December (Session meetings take place monthly.)**

At its regular meeting on December 12, the Session:

- opened with reflection on Isaiah 35:1-20, God's promise of joy and the encouragement it brings
  - expressed its gratitude for all the work behind the scenes to have such wonderful events as Messy Church, Open Mic, and the All is Calm, All is Bright music concert, the joy of lonely people being welcomed and included, and the delight of Giyth's wisdom in the Time, Talent and Treasure Video
  - received encouragement from the moderator to continue to be intentional about cultural changes at Grace, around discussion of money, expectations of leadership, and seeking to become what Grace is called to be
  - approved the workplan for the Spiritual Growth Committee for January through June 2023. The July through December 2023 workplan will be finalized after consultation with Maren upon her return in April
  - supported the addition of Bruce Perrault and Ben Matthews to the Engagement & Service Committee
  - accepted minor edits to various definitions and policies included in the Session Manual
  - approved updates to the Roll; the number of Professing Members is now 389 and the number of Adult Adherents is 156
  - agreed to receive new members during worship on January 8, 2023
  - approved the wedding of Christiaan Laurejjs and Sharon Dias to be held in the sanctuary on December 31, 2022
- received updates from the Committees showing good progress in initiatives consistent with their workplans and our mission and values
- referred to the Facilities Committee a request to create a plan for the refurbishment of the front steps that would allow year-round use
  - closed with thanks and prayer.

### **Grace's Living Wage: Basic Needs at Minimum Wage**

Grace has been paying a living wage to employees for several years. Learn why a living wage is important and what it means in Alberta and Calgary.

#### **A Living Wage Versus Minimum Wage**

Alberta's minimum wage of \$15 per hour was established Oct 2018. At that time a living wage would have been \$20.76 per hour. Today, the living wage in Calgary is \$22.40 per hour.

When the minimum wage level was set in 2018, a single parent with two children would have needed to work 55.35 hours per week to meet basic needs. The working definition of Basic Needs doesn't include all of the costs associated with managing a household. For instance, transportation isn't considered a basic need.

Long working hours at minimum wage leaves households with very little time left for any activities beyond just living. Earning minimum wage can lead to a cycle of poverty that can last generations since parents are less able to support learning and development of their children.

Today, with high inflation, the \$15 per hour minimum wage can only buy 88% of the goods and services it would have been able to purchase in 2018.



A living wage is the hourly wage needed to cover basic expenses and afford individuals the means to participate in the community. It considers the hourly rate needed for a household to maintain a modest standard of living after government transfers and taxes have been subtracted. Grace church pays employees at living wage.

The Engagement and Services Committee (E&S) supports various programs to help individuals. In addition to hosting a satellite Food Bank location, Grace supplements the hampers with items such as toilet paper and dish soap. English Learning Language (ELL) and Never Too Late programs offer skills training to help increase opportunities for individuals hoping to eventually earn more than minimum wage. Additionally, the E&S Committee is planning to host a new tutoring & snacks program to help younger learners.

Sources: \*Sustainable Calgary – State of Our City 2020: An Urgent Call for a Just Transition <https://livingwagealberta.ca/living-wage/>  
<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

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## Winter Calendar: Activities, Events & Opportunities

*Committee planning is underway for the winter. Below please find activities with tentative dates, times - more details to come as they are approved and submitted.*

### January:

- Sunday, January 1: New Year's Day, 10:30 a.m. Communion Service (There is no Sunday School for this service.)
- Monday, January 2: Holiday, Church closed
- Friday, January 6: Epiphany
- Sunday, January 8: Baptism of Jesus
  - Grace Youth 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Lunch after Worship
  - Reception of New Members
- Monday, January 9: Meeting of Session
- *START: Wednesday, January 11: Grace Bethany Bible Study & Grief Group 10am-noon (Wednesdays going forward in January)*
- January 18-25: Prayer for Christian Unity
- Sunday, January 29: Lunch N Learn, Committee Convener, Session Liaison, Ministers, Senior Staff Meeting: The Wise and Foolish Builders: Stewardship and Committee Practices [RSVP here](#)

### February: Lent

- Wednesdays: Grace Bethany Bible Study & Grief Group 10am-noon
- Sunday, February 5: Presbyterian World Service and Development Day (PWS&D)
  - Grace Youth 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Lunch after Worship
- Friday, February 12: Valentine's Day OPEN MIC NIGHT: Details to come!
- Sunday, February 19: Transfiguration Sunday

- Monday, February 20: Family Day
- Tuesday, February 21: Shrove Tuesday
  - Save the Date: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party: Details to come!
- Wednesday, February 22: Ash Wednesday Start of Lent

### March: Lent

- Wednesdays: Grace Bethany Bible Study & Grief Group 10am-noon
- Sunday, March 5: First Sunday in Lent
  - Grace Youth 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Lunch after Worship
- Sunday, March 12: 2nd Sunday in Lent
- Sunday, March 19: 3rd Sunday in Lent
- Sunday, March 26: 4th Sunday in Lent

### April: Holy Week and Easter

- Wednesdays: Grace Bethany Bible Study & Grief Group 10am-noon
- Sunday, April 2, Palm Sunday
- Thursday, April 6, Maundy Thursday
- Friday, April 7, Good Friday
- Saturday, April 8, Easter Saturday
- Sunday, April 9, Easter Sunday

Worship: In-Person and Online

Donate Online

Visit our  
Website



## Feedback

Our goal is to create value with this newsletter, so it's helpful to know what you think. Send your feedback to [communications@gracecalgary.org](mailto:communications@gracecalgary.org). We may not always be able to incorporate suggestions, but we'll do what we can to respond to interest and need.

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