



WHAT'S GOING ON AT GRACE: APRIL NEWSLETTER

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER: SEEKING



Ministers Message: Holy Week and Easter Seeking: Honest questions for deeper faith (A Sanctified Art)



seeking: honest questions for deeper faith

"Who are you looking for?" This is the poignant question Mary is asked by the risen Jesus standing outside the tomb on Easter morning.

Throughout the season of Lent we have been invited to engage in the spiritual practice of seeking by staying curious, being open, softening our assumptions, and expanding our perspectives to be drawn more deeply into life and into God's heart. We invite you to continue the practice of seeking in Eastertide (Easter and the 40 days following Easter, celebrating the Risen Jesus) by thinking about the question, *"Who are you looking for?"*

Here are a few ways we are invited to remember the spiritual practice of seeking and think about the question of *"Who are you looking for?"* as we prepare for Easter and Eastertide:

- By waving palm branches together as a congregation of all ages in celebration of Palm Sunday, on April 2. On this Sunday we will welcome Rev. Maren back too!
- By remembering the new commandment Jesus gave to love one another at a Maundy Thursday service at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 6.

- By being drawn together to the foot of the cross at the Good Friday service on Friday, April 7 at 11:00 a.m.
- Sharing the words “He Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!” on Easter morning, Sunday April 9, as we celebrate the good news of God’s love and grace being stronger than death with the celebration of communion, music shared by Foothills Brass and Grace’s choir, and again here Jesus question, “*Who are you looking for?*”

Here are some ways to deepen the spiritual practice of seeking in the upcoming days:

- Notice if there are buds on trees, if crocuses coming up in sunny areas, if there are vees of geese flying north or robins in the trees, or if the ice is melting on the Bow River or Elbow River.
- Notice the amount of daylight we have each day and the warmth of the sun.
- Notice the celebratory music sung during Eastertide during worship at Grace.
- Notice if you are thinking about planting seeds, gardening, or the bloom of flowers.
- Attend the book study on *All Our Grievs To Bear* written by this year’s Preaching Grace guest the Rev. Dr. Joni Sancken on Tuesday evenings in April. The study invites participants to engage with themes like collective trauma, storytelling, and blessing.
- Sign up to attend Preaching Grace (May 5-7) to hear Dr. Joni Sancken share about resilience.
- Notice volunteer opportunities in the bulletin that spark your curiosity and commit to connecting about these opportunities.

As we think about the question, “*Who are you looking for?*” we invite you to consider if the Jesus being sought out is comfortable or familiar or allows things to remain as they are? Or is the Jesus we are seeking the one who calls each of us by name, invites us into new life, and invites us to share the good news?

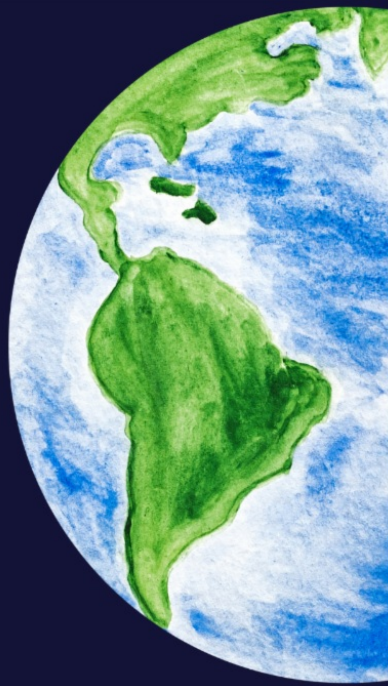
May we continue our seeking and may it lead us to a deeper faith!

Easter Blessings,

Rev. Jake, Rev. Christian, and Rev. Maren

- **Holy Week and Easter:**
 - Sunday, April 2: Palm Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Worship
 - Thursday, April 6: Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00 p.m.
 - Friday, April 7: Good Friday Service at 11:00 a.m.
 - Sunday, April 9: Easter Sunday 10:30 a.m. Worship





EARTH DAY



Stewardship Spotlight on Earth Care: Simple Steps for E-Waste Management

Don't Let Your E-Waste Take a Toll: Simple Steps for Responsible E-Waste Management

Electronic waste, also known as e-waste, refers to discarded or unwanted electronic devices, including computers, cell phones, televisions, and other electronic equipment. With the rapid pace of technological innovation, electronic devices are becoming obsolete at an increasingly rapid rate, leading to a growing problem of electronic waste.

[Read More](#)

Preaching Grace 2023 Presents:
Resilience, Hope and Healing
with Dr. Joni Sancken



Dr. Joni Sancken, PhD, is professor of Homiletics at United Theological Seminary. An ordained minister in Mennonite Church USA, Joni is also the author of several books reflecting a theological and interdisciplinary approach to preaching.

Hear Dr. Joni Sancken speak about Trauma, Soul Wounds and Healing with God's Help

Dr. Joni Sancken comes to Grace this May to talk about Resilience, Hope and Healing with God's help - both as individual Christians and as individuals.

Friday is a free online and in-person lecture, and Saturday is an **in-person only** workshop and lunch. At this time, 29/70 seats remain. Early Bird tickets are available for \$40 while seats remain, or until April 16. From April 17 on, tickets are \$50.

Get a sense of Dr. Sancken as a speaker by clicking the video below.

You can also register for the event below - and join the book study on her latest work. Sign up below.



Register for Preaching Grace! Friday is free (in-person/online)IN-PERSON Saturday workshop and lunch: EARLY BIRD \$40 (29/70 tickets remain)

Register for Preaching Grace IN-PERSON BOOK STUDYStarts Tuesday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church



CHURCH BUSINESS:

MAJOR MONTHLY CONGREGATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, DECISIONS AND UPDATES

Financial Update

Financial trends and comments for February.

February has seen the continuation of positive trends. The Operating deficit for February is \$85,000 less than budget and \$61,000 less than the same period last year. Revenues are approximately \$24,000 greater than in 2022. Expenditures are approximately \$92,000 less than budget and \$38,500 less than the same period in 2022. Please find more comments as well as detailed numbers in the [February Financial](#) report.

- Year end financials will be shared in the May 28 Annual General Meeting. A snapshot of 2022 financials will appear in Report to Congregation in April 2023
- Please find the [Financial Budget for 2023](#) and the [Narrative Budget](#). The budget was approved at the Sunday, November 27, 2022 Congregational Meeting.

Report to Congregation and Community 2022 is coming this week

- The Report will be emailed the afternoon of Monday, April 3 at 4:00 p.m. - in the spirit of stewardship, the report is digital.
- If you would like a printed copy of the report, there will be limited copies in the church that can be picked up following worship in April

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

Update from the Minister Resource Committee (from Sunday, March 19)

The following is an update from the Minister Resource Committee about Grace's ministers. Following God's leading, both Rev. Maren and Rev. Christian will be preaching for the call at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Calgary at the end of this month (March 26). After preaching for the call, the congregation of Westminster will need to vote to determine whether or not they will sustain the call. If sustained, the presbytery will need to meet to approve the call. We will continue to be in conversation around timing for when a possible transition may begin.

Rev. Jake will start his 35-week parental leave in July. We all wish Jake and Kate every blessing as they look forward to this special time as a family.

Of course, these changes mean there may be several intermediate needs for ministry and pastoral care at Grace in the upcoming months. The well-being of our members and adherents and the continuation of meaningful worship, care and ministry is the chief concern of our ministers, Session and the Minister Resource Committee. In order to address these needs, the Minister Resource Committee is presently speaking with a very suitable minister who is open to a temporary position starting in September, for up to one year. We will be having the same conversation with two other ministers as we look at our overall needs for the immediate future. Pulpit supply has been secured for May and June on an as-needed basis.

The Minister Resource Committee is also exploring full-time summer coverage with two other experienced ministers. God has opened these doors very quickly and there is gratitude for these doors being opened.

In addition to our worship, we are actively taking steps to ensure our ministry of care continues without interruption. We will have supports in place so we can continue to be there for pastoral care, hospital visits, bereavement support and homebound visitation.

The Minister Resource Committee will let the congregation know as soon as we have firm commitments and details for the provisional ministers willing to help fill Grace's intermediate needs.

Please also keep in mind and in prayer the on-going Lead Minister search. Our Interim Moderator and the Lead Minister Search Committee are continuing their work to help call a lead minister to Grace. Between now and June, we are still blessed to have the leadership of Revs. Jake, Maren, and Christian and Children & Youth Coordinator, Kate. As they look forward to new phases in life and ministry, let's all be sure to support them and wish them well.

We have many strengths in our congregation that stem from a deep-rooted faith in our Lord: as we walk our Lenten journey of discernment and reflection, may we find reassurance in God's presence and may we lift our voices to Jesus in gratitude for the ways we have been blessed, in faith for the future that is unfolding, and in praise for God's continuing guidance.

Blessings,

Minister Resource Committee: Mary Lil Rozsa de Coquet, (Session Liaison), Rev. Greg Smith (Interim Moderator), Len Wolstenholme, and Jim Campbell

Lead Minister Search Committee Update

As we enjoy warmer weather and look forward to the blessings of Easter, the Lead Minister Search Committee is actively recruiting candidates through advertising, reaching out to PCC Ministers to see if they would like to consider Grace, staying in touch with past candidates of interest and interviewing new applicants. We are hopeful God will soon answer our prayers and are very thankful for the support we receive from the congregation.

Blessings,

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

Session Highlights: (Session meets monthly)

At its regular meeting on March 13, 2023, the Session

- opened with prayer and reflection on Exodus 17:1-7; reminding us that God goes in front of us and God keeps promises, even in the wilderness
- gave thanks for Jiebiemi Nyajwok's leadership in organizing an event in recognition of World Day of Prayer
- expressed appreciation for the training on pastoral conversations for elders, deacons and homebound visitors
- supported plans to reintroduce the option of bread and juice distributed at stations through-out the sanctuary when Holy Communion is celebrated Easter morning
- was advised by the Rev. Maren McLean Persaud and the Rev. Christian Persaud of their plans to preach for calls at Westminster Presbyterian Church on March 26. This information is being shared with the congregation expeditiously
- received updates from Ministry Resource on prospects for temporary ministers in light of the anticipated departures of the Rev. Maren McLean Persaud and the Rev. Christian Persaud in May or June and the parental leave of the Rev. Jake Van Pernis starting in July. Communications to the congregation on these prospects will also be a priority
- agreed to reconsider the ministerial model in light of the above developments, while continuing to search for the Lead Minister
- approved the donation of the trailer originally used for Mexico Mission trips to Umoja, a not-for-profit organization in Calgary providing a culturally appropriate food program, community based tutoring, after school programming and soccer
- agreed with an update to the Roll, which now stands at 390 professing members and 160 adult adherents, for a total of 550 adults
- referred the question of which committees might best support and provide oversight of the Wednesday Bible Study and Grief Circle to the Governance & Planning Committee
- received updates on the chapel renovation discussions and the review of the requirements to restore the front steps
- expressed its confidence in God's continuing guidance as Grace works to fulfill God's mission, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ
- closed with prayer.

4 Month Calendar: Activities, Events & Opportunities

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

April: Holy Week and Easter

Preaching Grace Book Study on Guest Preacher Dr. Joni Sancken's book All Our Grieffs to Bear: All Our Grieffs to Bear: Responding with Resilience after Collective Trauma

- Tuesday evenings in April: Preaching Grace Book Study: Led by Elizabeth Cressman covering Dr. Joni Sancken's book All Our Grieffs to Bear: Responding with Resilience After Collective Trauma [Sign up here](#)
- Wednesdays: Bible Study & Grief Group 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Sunday, April 2, Palm Sunday 10:30 a.m. Worship
- Thursday, April 6, Maundy Thursday 7:00pm

- Friday, April 7, Good Friday 11:00am
- Saturday, April 8, Easter Saturday
- Sunday, April 9, Easter Sunday, 10:30 a.m. Worship
- Saturday, April 22: Earth Day

May:

- Wednesdays: Bible Study & Grief Group 10am-12:30pm
- Friday, May 5: Preaching Grace FREE Public Lecture with the Rev. Dr. Joni Sancken All Our Grievs to Bear: Building Resilience ([Register now!](#))
- Saturday, May 6: Preaching Grace PAID Workshop and Lunch with the Rev. Dr. Joni Sancken - Morning: Words of Hope: Scriptural Resources for Trauma; Afternoon: Compassion Fatigue ([Register Now! Early Bird Tickets Until April 15](#))
- Friday, May 5: Red Dress Day
- Sunday, May 7: Worship Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Joni Sancken, Preaching Grace
- Thursday, May 18: Ascension Day
- Sunday, May 21: Healing and Reconciliation Sunday
- Sunday, May 28: Lunch and Annual General Meeting after worship: Lunch at 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.; Meeting from 12:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. [RSVP here](#)

June:

National Indigenous History Month

- Wednesdays: Bible Study & Grief Group 10am-12:30pm
- Monday, June 5: Pentecost
- Wednesday, June 12: Trinity Sunday
- Sunday, June 18: National Indigenous Peoples Sunday
- Grace Leadership Retreat: Friday, June 23: 6:00-8:30 p.m.; Saturday, June 24: 8:30-3:30 p.m.

July:

- July 1, Canada Day

Worship: In-Person and Online

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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. 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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