



Grace Lutheran Church  
46 Woodland Street  
Hartford, CT 06105



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Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer  
Janice Potter, Financial Assistant  
Dale Eberhardt, Organist  
Walter Scott, Sexton

[www.graceistheplace.org](http://www.graceistheplace.org)



# GRACE NOTES

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 46 WOODLAND STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06105 860-527-7792

January 2020

## SUMMING IT ALL UP: Joy, Peace, Love and Service

After a frenetic end to a difficult, challenging and deeply troubling year, the three congregations of Grace – Grace Lutheran, First Calvary and CT Myanmar Baptist gathered together to worship the same God, to embrace our commonality and our differences and to realize just how blessed we are to be in the same place, at the same time, on the same day. It was a first for all three, however Grace and First Calvary have come to know each other by sharing worship a few times and supporting each other's community initiatives. But this day summed up what 2019 meant to most of us. Not separation, competitiveness, differences of all types and sizes, or just plain dislike of the other, we simply have come to believe together that we are more of what God hoped we might be, when we cared for, worked with and served each other.

Summing It All Up — pages 1 & 4
Pastor's Message — page 2
Yes, Grace Guests Can Be and Often Are Heroes! — page 3
Ct Myanmar Baptist Invites People / A Special Trip to a Special Museum — page 5
Exploring Asylum Hill— Churches PT 2 — page 6
Needed Items /Janet's Closet / Anniversary / Birthdays page 7
ELCA—Presiding Bishop Eaton Message—page 8
Akeva Koulla / Could We Have Had More Than 700 People? / TED—Talk —page 9
Solar Energy, Generosity, and Getting Our Building Back In Shape page—10
The Talking Christmas Tree—page 11



That's what we hoped and longed for... that is why we are here on this planet, sharing this building and coming to know and understand each other, our stories, our hopes and our dreams.

The sign outside of the church says, "We welcome immigrants and refugees" and we do. There is another sign that speaks of peace and justice. Another speaks of our Friday Gatherings (free meals, clothing, music and information) having completed our ninth year at this last Friday. That is, we have fed up to 137 people on every Friday for nine years!

And, now our chefs include people from Grace, from other churches and from First Calvary.

(continued on page 4)

**Pastor’s Message—WHAT HAS GOD GOT IN STORE FOR US?**

If the last two months of 2019 are any indication, the answer to this question is “a lot more than we expect of ourselves.” From a memorial service to a wedding to solar panels to the church being cared for again (I can’t thank Lee enough for the latter). I believe over 700 people came to our church in the last two weeks of the year. Then there was the first Christmas on Friday night the 20<sup>th</sup>, Advent whooshing by, new people coming and some older people returning, joint planning, joint dreaming, a gift of life for the church, and another of a series of gifts to the ministry of the church. Giving thanks, praying, realizing that there are no limits, only the ones we set for ourselves. I must say how thrilled I am to be with you, and how excited I am for our future and our now. These things came all from the same place, and not from any one of us. It came from a loving God, one who has shown us more than we ever thought we could absorb and continues to do so, Sunday after Sunday, Friday after Friday, Wednesday after Wednesday, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and the rest of the week too.




God does not give us a score card, nor does he demand specifics, or written plans and/or hopes. He asks us to trust him. He asks us to learn from his Son, to trust his mediation in our lives and to know that all that comes our way is because it was a part of a much bigger plan. One that we can scarcely understand or even see or comprehend.

For a good portion of my tenure in this place, having completed the eighth month of my sixth year, and for the first time, we had some money in the bank care of others. Having worshiped together we now have three dear and beloved congregations using our church with a fourth incubating. Yes, we do hope to have a Spanish speaking congregation at Grace. And, we hope that we might expand our relationship with others... coming to learn that we are all a part of the body of Christ, that we all worship the same God, that whatever language we speak or the color of our skin, we share our humanity as a gift from a loving God. And, it is fun and challenging and deeply meaningful to establish relationships with neighbors no matter how far or close to us they may be.

We rejoice in every day that the Lord has made. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon us... We could hope for nothing more.



God is in charge at Grace... can we keep up? Do we want to? Are we able to? All tough questions as a few of us age and begin to be challenged by all this stuff. Well, please remember that God gives us just exactly all that we need. He wants us to look out for each other and for everybody else, just as he does. Let’s try to keep up with him. Let’s give him our life-defining appreciation and gratitude for what we have here in this place and as faithful, albeit sleepy/tired sheep; may we follow him.



**This  
Holiday  
end a quarrel.  
Seek out a forgotten  
friend. Dismiss suspicion,  
and replace it with trust...  
Write a love letter. Share some  
treasure. Give a soft answer. En-  
courage youth. Manifest your loyalty in  
word and deed. Keep a promise. Find the  
time. Forego a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Listen.  
Apologize if you were wrong. Try to understand.  
Flout envy. Examine your demands on others. Think  
first of someone else. Appreciate. Be kind; be gentle  
Laugh a little. Laugh a little more. Deserve confidence.  
Take up arms against malice. Decry complacency. Express your  
gratitude. Go to church. Welcome a stranger. Gladden the heart  
of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak  
your love. Speak  
it again. Speak  
it still once  
again.**



## Solar Energy, Generosity, and Getting our Building Back in Shape

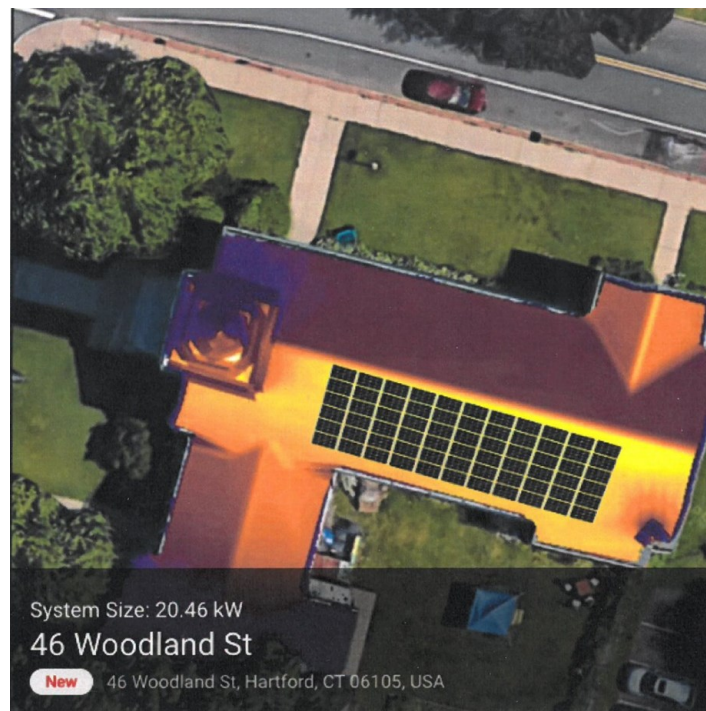
We have completed a feasibility study to implement a solar energy project on the south side roof, with 60 solar panels. At a special congregation meeting and shortly after, we determined that doing the project was not only fiscally responsible, but also reflective of our responsibility to God's creation. It is remarkable that we have been given such a perfect roof for this purpose.

There are many variables that will impact the final cost. Some of these are dependent on next step analyses. For example, the final costing out of the electrical hookups including an assessment of whether there is a cost associated with modifications to our existing electrical system. We are also hoping that we will qualify for a special bonus program that has provided people in CT an incentive to go solar.

The congregation and council have now approved this action. The pastor will be responsible for the project and keep everyone informed on progress and other issues. He will not be making decisions without getting the approval of the council president and the council as a whole.

God has once again provided the resources that we will need, and that has included a very generous bequest from Bernie Biederman and another generous gift from the Wendt family, friends of pastor and Judy.

On other matters related to our building, Lee Whittemore was able to get someone from AA who is a licensed plumber and has done work for us in the past to repair the hot water pipe in the sacristy allowing us to have hot water back again. Lee is working on the community room floor, and we are also examining steeple leaks and planning to replace our kitchen stove, grill and ovens.



## YES, GRACE GUESTS CAN BE AND OFTEN ARE HEROES!

While not having a lot of stuff, even being poor, hungry and sometimes in need of medications, clothes and a place to sleep... all those things do not mean a whole lot more than you could be down on your luck, or unable to find a good job or a good place to live. But more often than not, we have found our guests at Grace to be a whole lot more than that. They are real people, people who care about others and look for ways to help each other.

Some number of weeks ago, Geraldine, a long-term regular at our Friday Gatherings was following an elderly person walking across the street. It is a fairly regular phenomenon that people drive a bit fast in our neighborhoods, and particularly on the wide and sometimes clear roads. Everybody is in a hurry, aren't they?

Well they often are and too often these fast drivers hit someone and injure them or seriously hurt or kill them. On that day, the person walking across the street in front of Geraldine was lucky. Because as Geraldine followed the older person across the street she heard the screech of the tires and saw a car driving very fast, right at the elderly woman. Geraldine acted swiftly and with little thought for herself. She grabbed the person and pulled her away from the speeding car as the car just missed them both.

She wasn't the only person to witness this near disaster. A policeman came to be sure that they were both alright and subsequently made Geraldine aware of the fact that he was going to recommend that she be named a "hero" by the City of Hartford. Geraldine's reckless concern for the life of another had her put herself in harms way to save another's life.

Thanks be to God they were both saved. Geraldine now has received considerable recognition for her fete, but to tell you the truth, we at Grace are not surprised. We know who Geraldine is and we have loved her for years. It may be her willingness to bring food to someone in a wheel chair or otherwise handicapped, it may be her humor as she joins in with some kidding with her friends at one of our tables, but Geraldine is always there as a person to be seen and loved and appreciated. Congratulations, Geraldine. Thanks for saving two lives on that day, and we are so thankful for who you are and have been for your life with us.

Amen.





**SUMMING IT ALL UP: Joy, Peace, Love and Service**

(continued from page 1)

We hope to have our CT Myanmar brothers and sisters join with us on Fridays soon. Two AA meetings occur each week, Bible Study by First Calvary, Janet’s Closet from Grace and volunteers providing free slightly used clothing on Wednesdays, and Fridays before dinner. And, there is Fresh Start Pallet Products a business building wonderful furniture and lamp products out of used wood pallets, and other old and odd materials that come our way. See all about it at: [www.freshstartpalletproducts.org](http://www.freshstartpalletproducts.org). People who need food, clothing, lodging, help with health issues and jobs are throughout our communities and we care about them. This little church that’s discovered it could, has been engaged for decades in trying to help those suffering and vulnerable.

Look at the tree on the last page here and read every word. A member shared it with us. It reminds us who we are as people at a time that we can benefit from a reminder of the joys, the peace and the love that grow out of service. We love Asylum Hill. We love our churches. But, most importantly, we love our God.



**Akeva Koulla - Receives Special Recognition**

We collectively miss Elsa Koulla and her family. They have found a home at Emanuel Lutheran Church. I was thrilled to see Akeva recognized as Volunteer of the Month for Asylum Hill.



The Hartford News Asylum Hill Section features an article and a picture of Akeva who has been tutoring children and taking the lead in a Avon High School UNICEF program.

She always was a wonder, and still is. Elsa was beaming last night, and well should be. Blessings+ to them all!

**COULD WE HAVE HAD MORE THAN 700 PEOPLE AT GRACE IN TWO WEEKS’ TIME? REALLY!**

Well, let’s see: two Friday Gatherings (215), one birthday party (25), four AA meetings (75), one Advent service (45), one Christmas Eve service (75), one Christmas Day breakfast (35), two Janet’s closets (12), one Christmas Day CT Myanmar Baptist worship and celebration (150), Unity Service (70), and donators and deliverers (6).



E—Talk  
Everyone Talks  
Discussion Group  
Jan 15 Wed 1—3pm

TED TALKS are short video presentations on every imaginable subject by passionate people. They are humorous, informative, and inciteful. Come and join us to watch and discuss a new talk every week. If you would like to choose a TED talk and lead a discussion there is an opportunity for you to receive a stipend. For people who come 5x or more they will be able to receive a 10 ride bus pass, as long as funds last.

To explore TED TALKS go to [www.tedtalk.com](http://www.tedtalk.com)

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46 Woodland St. Hartford, CT



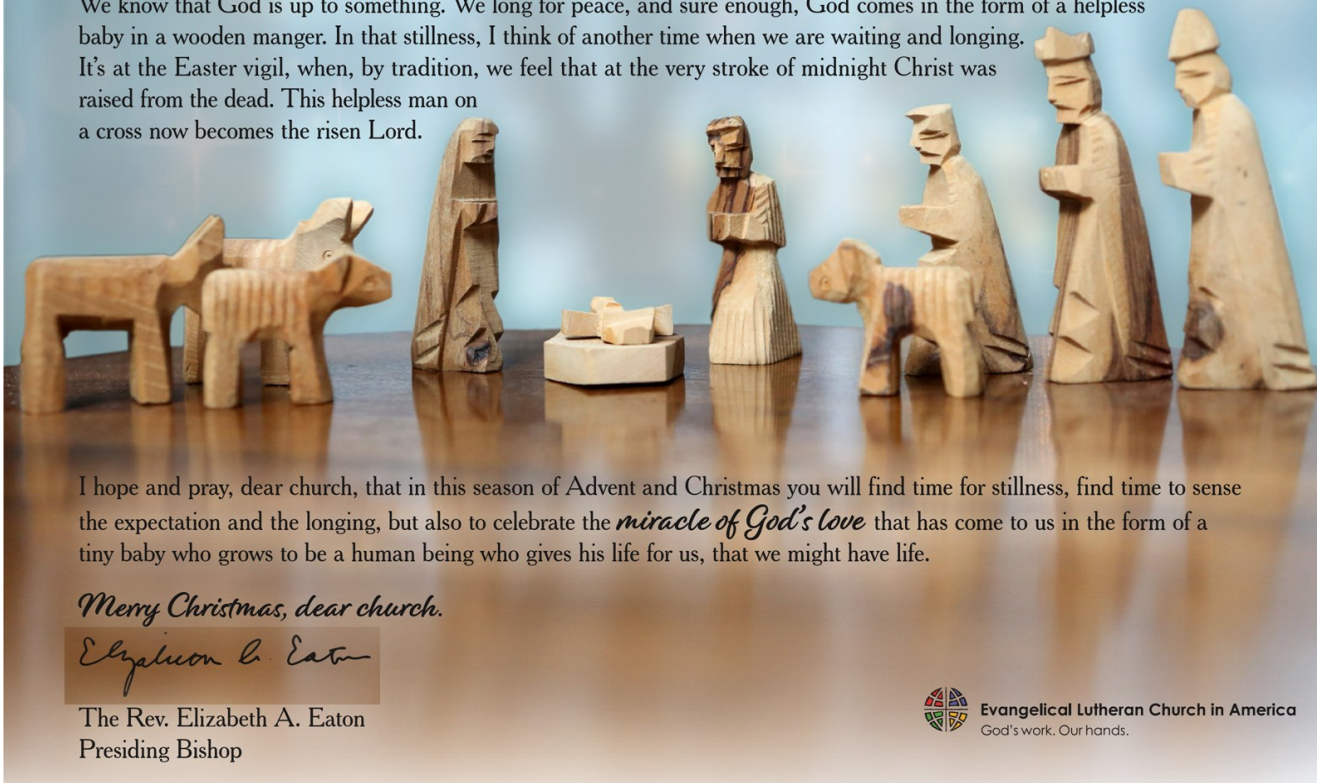


**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

On Christmas Eve there always comes a time when everything is finally still. After all the preparations and Christmas pageants, after all of the rushing, it's wonderful just to settle into that stillness and have a chance to think about the *miracle of Advent and Christmas*.

For me that came after the 11 o'clock candlelight service and after going home. With my husband and children in bed, I could think and settle into that stillness and marvel at the miracle that had happened.

We know that God is up to something. We long for peace, and sure enough, God comes in the form of a helpless baby in a wooden manger. In that stillness, I think of another time when we are waiting and longing. It's at the Easter vigil, when, by tradition, we feel that at the very stroke of midnight Christ was raised from the dead. This helpless man on a cross now becomes the risen Lord.



I hope and pray, dear church, that in this season of Advent and Christmas you will find time for stillness, find time to sense the expectation and the longing, but also to celebrate the *miracle of God's love* that has come to us in the form of a tiny baby who grows to be a human being who gives his life for us, that we might have life.

*Merry Christmas, dear church.*

*Elizabeth A. Eaton*

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Find the error in this issue of Grace Notes and you will be mentioned in the next issue as a Grace Sherlock Holmes!

## CT MYANMAR BAPTIST INVITES PEOPLE TO COME FOR CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE AND CELEBRATION

One of the wonderful congregations meeting at Grace is the CT Myanmar Baptist Church. They are made up of many people from Myanmar seeking a place for the families in this country and region. They worship in Burmese on Sundays at 3:00 pm. However, as we moved towards the end of the year, they married a wonderful young couple and members of their church, and Pastor Rick was glad to participate in the service. But when they decided to invite people from their country and surrounds to attend a Christmas Day Service at Grace, and a bit of a celebration afterwards, they were surprised how many came. More than 150! Both Pastor Kam and his wife Lun, partner in his ministry, were amazed that so many people came and were thrilled, too.

See the picture to the right and you will know just why it was that they were so happy. If it were a Friday Gathering, they would have set a new attendance record. Hooray for our friends from Myanmar.

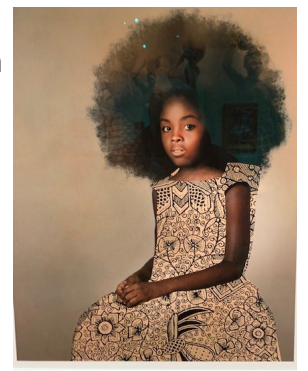
The pictures say it all.



## A SPECIAL TRIP TO A SPECIAL MUSEUM OF ART

We do spend quite a lot of time at Grace with people coming to visit with us, worship with us and seek help and advice. But, every once in a while, we come upon an invitation that we just can't miss. Sue Carey invited two groups of people from the Friday Gathering to come for a personally guided tour of a wondrous new, exhibit at the Wadsworth Atheneum called Afrocosmologies – American Reflections. We spent

well over an hour seeing a fraction of the exhibit which took two floors in this beautiful museum of art and culture.



The art, much of which was created by artists who came from or who live in Connecticut, was simply mesmerizing. We urge all to take a look for yourself. I have included some small pictures of some of the pieces as a means to give you a reason to want to see more yourself. What a remarkable resource to this community and what a pleasure to be guided by one who has lived and breathed opening this treasure to all of the people of Hartford.

Thanks, Sue!



## Exploring Asylum Hill – Churches Pt 2

(taken from the Asylum Hill section of the Hartford News by Bernie Michel)

As we continue to explore the various faith communities that are or have been here in Asylum Hill, we are finding more and more. For example, while the sign for Mohammed Mosque #14 was up above the door at 248 Farmington Ave for many years, they moved to 2550 Main St about four years ago, and were replaced by Masjid Salam, but more on that in a future article.

This month we'll spend a little more time looking into both the Myanmar Baptist Church of Connecticut and also First Calvary Church Hartford. Both of them share space at Grace Lutheran Church, and they have recently begun a tradition of worshipping together on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month whenever there is one. December 29<sup>th</sup> was the most recent. It was an especially lively experience as it seemed that each of the three communities served as host to the other two as well as guest. The music as well as the prayers and even the sermons were given by each of the three pastors.

Pastor Kremer began the service by reminding all present of the biblical command to “take care of the foreigners and the poor” reminding them that all are equal in the eyes of God. Each Pastor had the opportunity to speak and pray in the way that they customarily do for their community, and it seemed that all enjoyed the diversity as well as the commonality of their traditions. Pastor Holloway accompanied by his musicians, Ray Brown on piano and Randy Calloway on base, delivers passionate prayers with the music adding emphasis. Dale Eberhardt, Grace's long time organist contributed the majestic accompaniment to several of the hymns, and everyone sang along.

Jesus' often quoted promise “wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst” seemed to apply even more to three communities. It was especially telling at the time of the offering as each congregation had a separate basket into which those who chose could contribute their offering, many contributed into all of them.



## Needed: gently used household items

Sofa/couch  
Dresser or chest for clothing  
Vacuum cleaner

One of the guests at the Friday Gathering was homeless and has been placed in an apartment. If you're considering replacing any of these items, consider donating your used objects.



## Janet's Closet

*Grace's clothing ministry*



Janet's Closet is open to the community on Wednesdays from 11 a.m.—1 p.m.

Donations of all types of gently used and season appropriate clothing are requested and always appreciated. Donations can be dropped off at the church when Janet's Closet is open.

Can't make the donations when Janet's Closet is open? Call the church office, 860-527-7792. If we don't pick up use option 3 to leave a message, or email the church office at [officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net](mailto:officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net)

## January Birthdays & Anniversaries 2020

*May you all be blessed  
as you celebrate your  
special days!*

<p><b>Darrell Urban</b> <b>Rebecca Lewis</b> <b>Cynthia Potter</b> <b>David Budhoo</b> <b>Bruce Klotz</b> <b>Gisela Scholz</b></p>	<p><b>06-Jan</b> <b>08-Jan</b> <b>08-Jan</b> <b>13-Jan</b> <b>17-Jan</b> <b>18-Jan</b></p>	<p><b>Happy 60th Anniversary!</b> <b>Guenther &amp; Edith Mamet</b>    <b>01/30</b></p>
<p><b>Judith A Dudek</b> <b>Madison Boodhoo</b> <b>Maya Boodhoo</b> <b>Bear McLaren</b> <b>Matthew Friedrichs</b> <b>Anne Edwards</b> <b>Guenther Mamet</b></p>	<p><b>18-Jan</b> <b>21-Jan</b> <b>21-Jan</b> <b>23-Jan</b> <b>24-Jan</b> <b>27-Jan</b> <b>29-Jan</b></p>	

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary?  
Contact the office,  
860-527-7792  
or email  
[officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net](mailto:officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net)  
to update our records.