

# GRACE NOTES

Vol. 30 No. 6

JUNE 2021



## PREACHING SCHEDULE

Sunday, June 6 - Rev. Amy McCullough  
Sunday, June 13 - Pastor Dane Wood  
Sunday, June 20 - Rev. Amy McCullough  
Sunday, June 27 - Pastor Dane Wood

## An Announcement from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

On Sunday, May 9, Michelle Riddle, chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, announced that Bishop LaTrelle Easterling has appointed Pastor Dane Wood as the lead pastor at Lansdowne United Methodist Church effective July 1. Pastor Dane has served at Grace for the past three years as our Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Missions. While he will be missed amongst us here, we are excited for this step in his ministry and wish him all the best as he begins this new appointment and leadership role. Pastor Dane's final Sunday at Grace will be June 27<sup>th</sup>. On that day we will celebrate his ministry with us and wish God's blessings upon both Dane and Megan for their future. Look for more details about that day's worship and a farewell reception in the weeks ahead.



### *Bringing back Hymnals and Bibles to the Sanctuary*

A few volunteers gathered on May 6<sup>th</sup> to wipe down hymnals and Bibles that have been in storage for the past year and brought them back to the Sanctuary pews for use in our in-person worship. Thank you to those who helped with this task that day to help restore some normalcy to our worship experience.

## MUSIC NOTES: Coming events

**SUNDAY, JULY 4<sup>th</sup>** - Independence Day pre-recorded Concert. Be watching E-Notes as well as Grace's website ([www.graceunitedmethodist.org](http://www.graceunitedmethodist.org)) for more details about this virtual on-line concert

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17** - Two Piano/Four Hand Piano Concert rescheduled for 7:30 p.m. With things slowly opening up, a new date has been set for this exciting concert featuring Kathryn Locke and Chris Schroeder as they present Edvard Grieg's *Romanze* and Johannes Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*. The concert will be live-streamed. At this point, we hope that a limited number of audience members will be allowed to attend in person. Please watch E-Notes and Grace's website for details to follow.



## Happy Birthday

to those of our church family celebrating in June:

- 1 Karen White
- 2 Ed Caster, Erica Underland
- 3 Duncan Barnes, Holland Barnes, Bob Gayler, James Thorne, Angie Wasylak
- 5 Tom Gordon
- 6 Piper A'Hern, Jackson Davis, Drew Landgren
- 7 Anna Mae Frederick, Lani Sinfield
- 8 Annette Beachler, Christen Bradley
- 9 Lynne A'Hern
- 10 John Thorne
- 12 Genevieve Schuh
- 13 Jeanne Achuff, Grace Hayes, James Topper
- 14 Lorraine K. Foley, David Haile, Thomas Lynn
- 15 Kitty Allen, Molly Thomas
- 17 Hailey Benson-Williams
- 18 Casey Humbyrd
- 19 Susan Hennighausen, James Pflaum, Chelsea White
- 21 Joyce McKissick, Kwesi Turkson
- 22 Susan Schumacher
- 23 Chelsea Doak
- 24 Emma Draper
- 26 Diane Chambers, Lois Wellener, Marie Yeh
- 27 Corey Schmidt
- 28 Sharon King, David Klindienst, Gregory Ruff
- 29 Judson Arnold, Sarah Guth
- 30 Rob Murray

## SPECIAL GIFTS

We acknowledge with gratitude the following special gift

in honor of the marriage of Dr. Edward and Ethel Ankeny

who modeled Christian love and marriage for us by Pastor Cliff Krcha

to Mission Outreach in memory of Lee Starkey by

Thom and Sue Rinker



## Grace Book Club

For the June 14<sup>th</sup> Zoom meeting, the book will be *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell. It was voted one of the New York Times best 10 books for 2020. Questions? Contact [maur.danz@verizon.net](mailto:maur.danz@verizon.net)



## FOR JUNE 2021

(For additions or corrections, please contact Claire Greenhouse at 410-337-7404)

THE FLOWERS ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND . . .

**June 6** - in loving memory of her brother William on the anniversary of his death by Dr. Doris Franklin

**June 13** - in loving memory of Tom Jackson on his birthday by Kelly Jackson

**June 20** - in loving memory of Tom Jackson by his daughter Kelly Jackson and in honor of all fathers; and in loving memory of Dr. F. Norman Van Brunt by his daughter Carol Cathcart and Family

**June 27** - in honor of our soloist Patricia Hengen and Anthony Shields on their wedding day.

### Looking ahead to July

July 4 - Barb Starkey & Greenhouse, Sharpe, Benfer

July 11 - Carl Weber and Janet Ander

July 18 - Christine Pierpont and Mimi Corry

July 25 - Kristin Turner and \_\_\_\_\_



Rev. Amy and third-grader James Adams during the Bible Blessing on Mother's Day, May 9

## Psalm 23

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.*

### The Sheep and the Shepherd

*Sermon preached by Pastor Dane Wood - Sunday, April 25, 2021*

Who has this as one of their top 5 scriptures? Psalm 23 - This is a big favorite, even for people who have never been in a church or picked up a bible. Perhaps it's most common at funerals. There is something reassuring, especially in hard times, about the image of green grassy meadows, and a cool stream and pool of water to rest beside. No matter how dark the day or path, there is someone to guide us along. And as we end our journey along the path, we are bathed in oil and welcomed as a guest of honor at the table, or into the barn... wherever sheep end up. It's very comforting to know we have a shepherd... but if we have a shepherd... that means we are... Sheep.

There's just one problem with being a sheep. Sheep are dumb. I think one of the reasons we love Psalm 23 so much is the truth hidden inside its words. We are dumb, just like sheep and we NEED a shepherd to guide us. The ancient Hebrews had to swallow a lot of pride when the priests and later Jesus called the people sheep. They knew quite a bit about them, as they were the main livestock of the area. Sheep are handy animals in that they give us wool, you can drink their milk or use it for cheese and butter, and they taste pretty good too. But sheep are a pain to herd, ask any shepherd. Sheep stick their head in the grass, munch away and just meander about, paying no mind to where they are going or what they are doing. They'll walk into a pond or rushing river, walk over the side of a cliff, or right up under another sheep in front of them. They are concerned with eating to solve that personal feeling of hunger; they mate to solve that personal feeling of connection, and they sleep, to solve that personal lack of energy. It's a pretty selfish life. And single sheep will generally have a very short life because of this, they have a knack for walking into disaster. A lot like us, really.

In order to live a bit longer, sheep will follow each other. They keep their heads down, still munching away and they just look for the feet of another sheep nearby and follow them. They don't pay attention to where that sheep is going, whether it's good or not, they just follow, blindly. Then if you think about it, a little bit... who's the lead sheep following? No one... well... the herd ends up wandering about and walking into the lion's den. Not so good either. Again, a lot like us... many of us, churching or not, spend a lot of time head down, minding our own selfish business and then when we do follow something, oh say achievements or pride, wealth or material gain, well, turns out we are just following another sheep. Not exactly a great plan... a little better than going it alone, but still a rocky road.

Now, raise your hand if you want to be a sheep? It means we are fools, blind, and have no care for ourselves or others. This is about the point I want to be a goat, stronger, independent, and more outgoing... but then I remember what happens to the goats in another parable... (hint: they get thrown in the fire and gnashing teeth). So, sheep it is? It's not exactly a compliment to be called a sheep, but we've been told the conventional wisdom of the world will be turned on its head by Christ. The first will be last and the last will be first... so we're to be the dumb sheep and not the strong goats.

But if we admit we are sheep, then that's where Psalm 23 sounds so wonderful to us, it feels so warm in our souls, because we know we need that shepherd to guide us along a good path. Our lives can be a mess, just like sheep, if we have no one to guide us properly. And so, we must find a good shepherd.

And who shall our Good Shepherd be? The Hebrew people were waiting for their shepherd, their savior... and Jesus came to lead them. "I am THE GOOD SHEPHERD." Jesus is our guide, he is the one that shall lead the sheep out of the bad rocky land, away from the wolves, and into a land of milk and honey.

How do we know the Good Shepherd? What does one look like, what do they do? We are told from the very start the most important thing... The GOOD SHEPHERD lays down his life for the sheep. The shepherd has to lead the sheep away from danger and be willing to stand in harm's way in order to save them. But it's more than that. Jesus didn't say he was willing to die for his sheep... no... The Good Shepherd lays down his life... Jesus will die, he did die, for his sheep.

This is the difference between the Good Shepherd and just any old hired hand or bad shepherd that might be out with the flock. The hired hand will see the wolf coming, look at the sheep and say, "Nope... not worth it." He'll drop his staff and run. They ain't his sheep, no sense in dying for them. But the hard question is... who is the hired hand? If you are sheep and Jesus is the Good Shepherd... that only leaves one person in this room... Who is the hired hand? Me.

Sorry, I know this is sort of bad news... but I'm only human. I've got problems and sins just like sheep. I may try to be a decent shepherd, it's sort of my calling... but at the end of the day, there is not a Pastor, Priest, Rabbi, or Right Reverend on this planet who can be called the Good Shepherd. Pastors are the hired hands. Now am I trying to abandon the sheep to ruin? Absolutely not. I'm working hard with the Good Shepherd to make sure the flock gets where it needs to go, but when the wolves come, when my life is in danger, when things are getting rough... Let's just be real... I might run. I don't want to... but I might. I want to stand up here and tell you I am a Good Shepherd, that I will sacrifice my life for you, and I want to believe that, you want to believe that... but it's not true... not like it's true for Jesus.

There are too many sheep in this world following hired hands. The hired hands don't own the sheep, they didn't pay for them... with blood. Remember that the next time you want to tell someone how great a pastor or preacher I am... which I know you do every day... multiple times... but you don't belong to me... you belong to Christ, for he is THE GOOD SHEPHERD. There's only one.

Jesus is the one who knows you and if you are following him, you will know him. This isn't just "knowing about" you or you "knowing about" Jesus. This is to Know... in the biblical sense. We usually say that with a sexual meaning, from the Old Testament... but here in the New Testament, this Greek word is the same. Jesus knows you from the inside out, every detail, every flaw and every perfection. The hired hand will never know you like that and you will never know me like that. But if you follow the Good Shepherd, you will know him as he knows you, and there will be no doubt that Jesus will give up his life for you.

The wonderful news here is that Jesus has done this of his own choosing. No one has taken it from him. He knows us so much, loves us so greatly, that to lay down his life is his privilege, his right, his choice. And the wonderful Easter miracle is that he has laid down his life and picked it up again, risen to guide us in life and death and life eternal. That is why he is the Good Shepherd and not anyone else.

We are sheep and Jesus is our only Good Shepherd... so how do we follow him? Who knows John 3:16? Who knows 1 John 3:16? Add this one to your memory, and I might argue it's more practical and useful for your everyday life. 1 John 3:16 "This is how we know love: Jesus laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." If we are sheep and Jesus is our shepherd, then we need to follow him. In following him we know Christ and we find out that what love is. And how do we show the Love of Christ in our hearts? 1 John 3:18 "Little Children... [Little Sheep...] let's not love with words or speech but with action and truth. This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts in God's presence."

John is laying it out pretty simply for us now. We are sheep, we are children... but we are God's children. We are to rejoice and be thankful! We have not only a shepherd or hired hand, we have THE GOOD SHEPHERD to lead us, guide us, love us, and lay down his life for us. How do we follow the Shepherd? We lay down our lives for each other, we love not only in thought or belief. We can't just say to the hungry man who comes to our door, "Oh, I'm sorry, I won't give you any food, but I love you." No... we have to back it up with action, we have to let our faith be within us, but be us. If we are following the Good Shepherd, then we know Jesus and he knows us... we must be his sheep... we must know his love... we must BE his love.

## *A message from the Zimmerman family in Nepal*

*Breathe on us, breath of God*

8 May 2021

Dear Friends,

When I entered the COVID ICU yesterday morning it was in a state of pandemonium. Nurses scurried along the aisle between the two long rows of patients and each bedside scene pulsed with barely contained panic. Here was a doctor using a bag to squeeze air into a patient beside a stalled mechanical ventilator. At another a nurse dangled an oxygen line in front of a patient's nose. At another a relative stood fanning air towards his patient's open oxygen helmet, while a woman at the next bed desperately massaged her husband's legs. The usual beeps of alarms had multiplied to a screaming chorus.

"What's going on here?" I asked the doctor squeezing the bag.

"The central oxygen's been off for the last ten minutes!" he hollered. "This is the fourth time!"

I looked down the line for a patient without an attendant. There were sixteen patients in the ICU, ten supposed to be on ventilators and the rest on other high-flow oxygen devices. Meena was a 56-year old patient with henna-dyed hair who'd somehow managed to give me a smiling namaste each day on rounds. Now her "helmet" oxygen device sat flaccidly on her head, its 'hatch' open to the air, her face flickering fear.

"Don't worry, Meena, don't worry, the oxygen will come back," I offered tenuous reassurance before going off to search for a spare oxygen cylinder to lug back to her. On bedside monitors patients' blood oxygen saturations read 38, 62, 34, 28, 49, 75 and plummeting – dangerously below the acceptable 90%.

Then, in a voice tinged with as much anxiety as relief, someone shouted "It's come back!" We re-attached patients to their support devices and the monitor numbers promptly began to climb.

Nepal's first COVID surge hit us in September. While it was rocky at times, the Patan Hospital COVID census peaked at 140 patients, which turned out to be manageable. In the meantime, knowing the pandemic had entered countries in successive waves and with less than 2% of Nepal's population fully vaccinated, we expected a second surge. The hospital ordered a new oxygen plant to replace the old one, deemed beyond repair, and went on using portable cylinders connected to a hospital pipe grid with single cylinders distributed around the hospital. Considering India's recent calamity, twelve days ago the Nepal government ordered a lockdown.

We don't know what variants have entered Nepal, but over the last month the disease here appears to spread more rapidly and take a more severe toll on the middle-aged than during the first surge. Coronavirus can ravage the lungs, leaving the worst-affected patients in a state of unrelenting air hunger. Although there are several marginally-effective drug treatments, the foundation of COVID care is simply to provide lots of supplemental oxygen for as long as needed.

Last night, despite subsequent oxygen stoppages, all the patients in the ICU survived and our junior doctors even managed to move two patients off their ventilators and onto lower levels of oxygen support. This morning we met as a medical team and made oxygen conservation plans. The four teams rounding in 'COVID' today were to turn down all oxygen flow so as to keep patients at no more than 90% saturation (we usually aim for over 94%).

The hospital's oxygen 'manifold' station sits beneath a slanting corrugated roof between the maintenance department's workshop and a narrow road bordered by broken trolleys and fragments of discarded furniture. The station consists of a long horizontal pipe suspended six feet off the ground from which, at one-foot intervals, copper pipe tendrils spiral down with attachments for cylinders. Twenty four of these connectors hang along a line extending to the left of a control box and twenty four more to the right.

When I arrived there, four men from the maintenance department were looking at the dials of the blue control box from which three red lights shone.

"Thirty minutes. Forty five at most. That's all the oxygen left down here."

"You mean, there are *no* other cylinders?"

"No. Not one. This is it. The very last," said Dhruba, who wore a Nike hat with brim pulled low, motioning along the line to the right, "When these twenty finish, the hospital flow stops."

As we stood waiting, their comments verged on gallows humor, but their faces betrayed worry. They glanced between their watches and the pressure dial.

Then Dhruba's phone rang and he announced flatly "Truck's come. Get ready."

With that the four swung into action, disconnecting empty cylinders along the left line of the manifold to make way for the batch coming on the truck. The cylinders were painted gray or brown, flecked with rust, with white numbers scrawled around their tops. Each was 5 feet high and weighed 60 kg (130 pounds).

When the hospital's dusty, gray pick-up truck pulled up, three men jumped out to begin tipping full cylinders off its tailgate. Each landed like a gong and someone rushed to spin-walk it across to the station and screw it into a dangling connector. Within five minutes the monitor's dial showed a nearly full system and the collecting pipe emitted a continuous 'twing,' indicating oxygen was gushing into the needy hospital. Unseen in the depths of the sprawling medical complex, they'd managed to preserve flow to the ports of roughly one hundred serious patients, including in the ICU.

"These will last just two hours. No more. They didn't have time to fill the bottles completely." One man split from the group saying he'd not eaten while the other two immediately drove off in the truck to pick up the next apportionment of oxygen.

Of all the examples of leadership I've witnessed over my career, Patan Hospital's response to this pandemic is exceptional. In a 700-bed hospital receiving only modest government funding and previously caring for 350,000 patients a year, management has created a central block dedicated to COVID care. This meant erecting barriers in each of the four floors to cordon off sections which could be entered only in PPE. Supply lines of medicine, equipment, food, drinking water, and oxygen course into this isolation bubble, with a single freight elevator linking the floors. Although many hospital staff have tested positive, not one has become seriously ill and all are now fully vaccinated.

Outside the canteen, Dr. Paras Acharya was pacing on the sidewalk talking loudly into his cellphone while Dr. Rajesh Gongal stood to the side. Paras, the Registrar, is a tall man around fifty with gray-streaked hair and a manner some in the hospital call 'dashing.' Rajesh, the overall head of the institution, is short and balding with delicate features and a reserved manner. He chuckles even when he's not pleased, which he was not when I walked up today.

"We've got a meeting now with the Health Ministry," Paras announced. "They *have* to take this matter into their own hands. Oxygen's being purchased at plants by every Tom, Dick and Harry, while we hospitals are left high and dry. Individuals are just snapping it up. The army has to take control."

According to Paras, the new plant ordered from Slovakia will not be in Nepal and functional for another month. Until then the hospital's patients will be dependent on the cylinder-ferrying system, which in normal times supplies just over 100 cylinders per day, enough to comfortably cover hospital needs. The current COVID demand is nearly 400 per day and outside oxygen plants who'd promised Patan regular supply have reneged.

The half mile road to the Patan Industrial Estate is usually packed to the brim with buses, cars, and minivans but today it was deserted except for a cluster of military men standing idly with guns. Off a back road under a purple jacaranda tree stood the barn-like buildings of *Sagarmatha Oxygen Pvt. Ltd.* Six pick-up trucks, including Patan Hospital's, were parked at all angles, spilling out of the plant courtyard into the road. At one end of the plant two turbines roared. In the cavernous space at the other end hundreds of empty cylinders stood like a terra cotta army waiting their turn at the 29-head fill-up station. Working around the clock as it has over the last week, with six or seven men continuously shifting cylinders, the plant can supply 800 cylinders a day. It's one of eleven plants in the Kathmandu valley. The trucks waiting in line were from hospitals located in different corners of the valley. The Patan Hospital driver looked at his watch and shrugged, wondering if he'd be able to get refills back to the hospital in time. The hectic routine of the last three days was steadily eroding any sense of optimism.

When I returned to the nurses' station outside the COVID ward, Gyani the nurse in charge reported there'd been no more stoppages of oxygen that morning. And no deaths.

"Patients are afraid, though. Some have left the hospital to look for private hospitals where they think the oxygen will be more reliable. Four visitors to the ICU patients have arranged cylinders on their own and brought them to their bedsides as back-up. So much tension."

"I want you to know I think your nurses in there are doing heroic work."

It's hard to say where this ends – a hospital taking in batches of oxygen cylinders like a patient drawing her last breaths, not knowing when the flow next breaks. The hospital has now closed to new COVID admissions, which will limit the internal demand, but by all indications Kathmandu is full of hospitals whose collective oxygen consumption has swelled beyond the valley's production capacity.

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PLEASE RUSH

## Graduating?

Please send name of the student, the school, any honors and achievements, and plans for future education or career to Kitty Allen, editor, at [kitty.allen@verizon.net](mailto:kitty.allen@verizon.net) so we may celebrate this accomplishment in the next issue of *Grace Notes*.

## Affirming Our Call

We gather today, affirming our call  
To live what we say: In Christ, all means all.  
No gender expression or gesture of love  
Is deemed a transgression in heaven above.

If we in the past caused harm in Christ's name,  
Now let us hold fast to the promise we claim:  
To follow the will and the way of the One  
Who pleads with us still: With our judgments be done.

Today in this place, we've vowing anew  
To greet and embrace as our Savior would do,  
With hearts open wide and our church doors as well  
With welcoming pride as His family to dwell.

Text copyright 2021 by Mark Gruber-Lebowitz

Text written by Mark Gruber-Lebowitz for Grace's 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Reconciling Congregation

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Today wasn't my day to make rounds and others have administrative responsibility for the hospital, so I went and found a quiet alcove behind physiotherapy to sit and pray for awhile. Please join me. I think that's the best way to help in this situation. Thank you. Love, Mark and Deirdre (Zachary and Benjamin both in the U.S.)