

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



Reflection from Pastor John Denton

Believe it or not, Ash Wednesday is just a few weeks away. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season, the start of Jesus' path to the cross. On this day we are reminded of our mortality and the truth that we belong to Christ. During Lent, we journey through the ashes, which lead us not only to Jesus' death on Good Friday, but ultimately to the joy of resurrection on Easter Sunday.

This year, I want to encourage you to take on a Lenten practice—either by starting something new to strengthen your spiritual life or by removing something that has become a distraction, creating more space to surrender control to the Lord.

In my own life, I often see Lent as an opportunity to remove distractions. When we fast, we declare that food does not have power over us. When we give up daily phone usage, we say our devices do not control us. When we step away from television, we affirm that we are made for more than consuming content. Would your life look different if you removed some of these distractions? Would you find yourself more focused on the Lord if your attention wasn't pulled in so many other directions?



As you remove distractions, what might happen if you added a spiritual discipline in their place? What if you intentionally set aside time each day for prayer? What if you walked your neighborhood and prayed for each home? Could you replace television with Scripture reading for the 40 days of Lent? Consider adding practices such as prayer, fasting, Sabbath-keeping, gratitude, hospitality, journaling, solitude, or generosity—giving what you would normally spend.

As we enter the Lenten season, let us desire what God desires. As James K. A. Smith writes, "Jesus's command to follow him is a command to align our loves and longings with his—to want what God wants, to desire what God desires, to hunger and thirst after God and crave a world where he is all in all—a vision encapsulated by the shorthand 'the kingdom of God.'"

Less of us, more of God.

Rev. John Denton

Ways you can give your tithes, gifts and offerings:

- In person at the weekly worship service.
- Online at www.gpcvista.org. Choose the "Donate" button and you can pay by credit or debit card or with a PayPal account or scan the QR code to the right.
- Mail or drop off to the church office (if office is closed, drop into the mail slot near the front door to the Fellowship Hall) at 1450 E. Vista Way, Vista, CA 92084



Stewardship Corner

Your First Love

"We love, because He first loved us." (1 Jn 4:19)

Americans are projected to spend a record \$27.5 billion for Valentine's Day, averaging about \$188.81 per person, with significant spending on significant others, family pets and coworkers, including popular gifts like candy, flowers, jewelry and dining out. These gifts are meant to show love for those who love them.

In 1 John 4:16,19 John tell us "We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.... We love, because He first loved us." Also, in John 3:16, Jesus says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

Jesus, in Revelation 2:4, in His letter to the church in Ephesus, commends them for their deeds and their labor and perseverance, but criticizes them by writing: "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

This Valentine's Day, when you are giving gifts to show your love, don't forget your first love. Think of all God has provided because He loves you. Show your love by giving a gift to support God's work on this earth.

Financial Statement As of December 31, 2025

	Dec. 2025	YTD 2025	YTD 2025 Budget
Income	\$ 67,151	\$ 607,681	\$ 760,500
Expense	\$ 58,855	\$ 594,410	\$ 750,483
Net Income	\$ 8,296	\$ 13,271	\$ 10,017

Note: Income includes 12-month distribution from the Legacy Fund; and unbudgeted \$45,249 from the government Employee Retention Credit program.

OUR SESSION

Grace Presbyterian Church is a Session led church. The Session of Grace has twelve installed and ordained Elders who are nominated to represent the congregation for a three-year term. An Elder can serve two consecutive terms then they roll off for a minimum of one year. Our Pastor moderates the Session.



Heather Russell
Missions

Heather Russell works at her brothers CNC Machine shop as the HR Manager. She has been a member of Grace for at least 10 years. Heather has served on Personnel, Missions and Session. She enjoys spending time with her family and gardening.



Duane Weston
Buildings and Grounds

Duane Weston has been involved in the construction industry for over 40 years. He is an avid saltwater fisherman, enjoys golfing, camping, woodworking and being Papa to his 5 grandchildren.



Larry Luther
Personnel

Larry Luther retired from a 43-year career with RYERSON Steel, a National Metals Distributor. He started in their Los Angeles plant and transferred to the Emeryville plant in 1964 working in Sales Management, retiring in 2001. Larry joined Grace Presbyterian Church in 2018.



Frances Hummel
Worship

Frances has made music in North San Diego County for churches, mortuaries, many special occasions, and 14 years at Camp Pendleton chapels, after the family relocated from Iowa in 1965. She came to GPC in 1985 as organist, has served as Moderator of PWC and as Deacon.



Arlene Cratsa
Fellowship

Arlene Cratsa has been retired for three years after working a successful career at California State University, San Marcos for 26 years. She has been attending Grace since 2007. When she's not watching her grandchildren, she enjoys singing in the choir, playing bells and spending time with her family.



Sue Bouchard
Worship

Sue has been working in the Quilting industry for over 30 years. She designs, writes and teaches quilt patterns throughout the United States and Western Europe. After becoming a member of GPC she volunteers in the office and has served the congregation as a Deacon.



Ken Sanger
Finance

Ken Sanger retired in 2021 after working for 45 years in two hospital laboratories in Fresno. He and Tricia moved to Vista in 2022 and joined Grace 2023. He serves on the Finance Committee. Ken enjoys photography as a hobby.



Chris Nolf
Christian Education

Chris has always had a passion for the outdoors and has chosen career paths that allow him to work outside. He has been employed for the past eleven years at Vista Unified School District as an equipment operator in the grounds department. Chris grew up attending Grace and has been an attendee of the congregation since the late 1970s.



Scott Huston
Buildings and Grounds

Scott Huston worked as an engineer in his early career life, he has since taken over the operation of his family's business. When he isn't working hard at work at his office, he is leading a dedicated team of musicians at Grace.



Russ Whisler
Christian Education

Russ Whisler retired in 2002 after spending 35 years as a Social Studies teacher. He has been a member at Grace since 2016. He enjoys traveling and being with his grandchildren.



Tom Bryan
Finance

Tom Bryan has worked as a real estate broker, investor, and property manager for over 40 years. As a hobby, he enjoys cycling. He has been a member of Grace since 1998.



Alice Nolf
Missions

Alice Nolf is a retired nurse. Alice has served multiple terms on session here at Grace and enjoys attending church with her adult children and grandchildren.

Men's Breakfast in February

FEBRUARY 2026

Join us on February 7th at 8 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a full breakfast, good fellowship and time in the Word and prayer. It is a great opportunity to feed your body and soul.



Congregational Meeting



Join us after the service on Sunday, February 1st, in the Sanctuary. The meeting will consist of a presentation of the 2026 Budget and a vote on the Pastor's Terms of Call.

Sanctuary Flowers

Would you like to beautify the Sanctuary with a flower arrangement? Sign up in the Narthex on Sundays or contact the Church Office and please make sure to specify what they are for and if you'd like to keep them after the service. Flower Arrangements are \$35 each. Thank you!



Valentine Brunch

VALENTINE'S
Brunch
FEBRUARY 8 AFTER CHURCH

Sign-up on the Patio
or contact the church office to RSVP

Choir

do you like to sing?



**Consider joining the choir
for Lent and Easter.
We'll start working on
Lenten music Feb. 5
7:00**

**Contact Jayne Parker for more details:
choir@gpcvista.org**

Linda Huston



We are truly grateful to recognize Linda Huston for her incredible heart for service and her faithful support of Grace Presbyterian Church Preschool. Linda has played an important role in helping us refresh two of our preschool classrooms, contributing her time, care, and encouragement to create welcoming spaces where our students can learn and grow. Her willingness to step in and help has made a meaningful difference in our preschool environment. In addition, Linda generously volunteered to host Family Chapel, warmly welcoming our families with coffee and pastries. Her hospitality helped create a sense of comfort and community as families gathered to worship together. Linda is always quick to volunteer and serves with joy wherever there is a need. With her big smile and kind spirit, she brings warmth to everyone she encounters. We are truly blessed by her presence and support, and we are thankful for the many ways she reflects Christ's love through her actions. Thank you, Linda, for being such a wonderful part of our preschool community.

— Frankie Zavala, Preschool Director

Linda Huston lives a life of faithful service to the church. Over the past three years, I have watched Linda show up consistently and faithfully, serving wherever she is needed.

As a parent, I am especially grateful for the time she spends ministering to the children of our church through Sunday School—my kids love when Mrs. Linda is teaching. On Tuesdays, you can often find Linda in the kitchen preparing meals for the soup kitchen. It seems that wherever I walk on campus, or whatever ministry I am participating in, Linda is there, serving with grace. Thank you, Linda, for living a life of ministry and service to the Lord. We at Grace are truly blessed by all that you do for the church.

- Rev. Denton, Pastor

When I think of Linda Huston, I think of her infectious laugh and beautiful smile. Linda has been a joy to all she comes in contact with, whether it's preparing/serving food, teaching Sunday school, as a Deacon, or as a caring friend. Linda has served so faithfully at Grace in many different areas and we are blessed.

Thank you Linda for your servant's heart and love for others!

- Christie Elliott, Director of Church Operations

Linda is a wonderful example of a servant of the Lord. Linda has served in many areas of the church; Sunday school teacher, deacon, soup kitchen, food distribution. She is readily open to help in any way she can. I appreciate her compassion, service to others and sense of humor. It has been a joy and honor to serve alongside of Linda. Thank you for lending your time and talents for God's Kingdom gain.— Maria Haigh, Community Outreach Director

When I think of Linda Huston and all the ways she volunteers at Grace I think of the puzzle book Where's Waldo. You know she's on campus helping in some way but can you spot her? She may be in the pantry putting together boxes of food for distribution. Maybe that's her just pulling up with another load of donated food. Could that be her cooking a meal for the Tuesday dinner? Did you happen to find her in the Sunday School classroom? I've even spotted her sitting on the floor in the fellowship hall with a paint brush. And did you know she's also a Deacon. About the only thing I've never seen Linda do is say "No". Linda is truly a good and faithful servant and Grace church is blessed to have her as part of our family.

- Denise Stockman

As we wrap up the month of January, our preschool has been filled with joy, learning, and spiritual growth. We were excited to welcome our students back after Christmas break and jump right into a new lesson focus: **self-control**.



Using the Bible story *Jesus Tested in the Desert*, our teachers helped students understand what temptation is and how we can stay strong through it. The children were given real-life examples they could relate to and were presented with a small piece of candy. They were told, “We know it is hard and we are tempted, but the rule is that we cannot eat it.” The teacher explained that if they were able to listen and resist the temptation, they would receive something better—without telling them what it would be. At the end of the lesson, the students were rewarded with a mini cupcake for their self-control!



This hands-on activity helped our students understand that when we push away small temptations, it is often for something bigger and better—just like the love of Jesus. We don’t need to choose things that feel good right away when we trust that Jesus will provide what we truly need. Impulse control is hard even for adults, and giving our students a safe and meaningful way to practice now helps set them up to make better choices in the future.

In addition to our Bible lessons, January was filled with winter learning! Our students explored cold weather and Arctic animals. They worked together to build an igloo, created dens for hibernation, and learned about camouflage—encouraging creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving.



Looking ahead to **February**, we will be focusing on **kindness** through the story of The Good Samaritan. We are also excited to welcome **three new students** to our program this month! In January, we were blessed to add a new staff member as well—please join us in welcoming **Ms. Abby** to our preschool family.

We are so grateful to witness what God is doing through our teachers and students each day and look forward to all that February will bring.

The Grace Presbyterian Church Preschool Staff



Operation Hope



Dear Friends of Operation HOPE–North County,

This holiday season, families across North County did not face homelessness alone — because of you.

Through your generosity, volunteer service, and compassionate partnership, families found safe shelter, children experienced warmth and joy, and parents began rebuilding their lives with dignity and hope.

Because you chose to give, families were able to:

- Sleep safely instead of in cars or motels
- Share warm meals around our tables
- Keep children in school and connected to caring mentors
- Begin healing from trauma and taking meaningful steps toward stability

Hope for the Holidays | A Season of Impact

This year's Hope for the Holidays was a beautiful reflection of what happens when our community comes together with compassion and purpose. Because of your support, every child and parent in our shelter and alumni families received age-appropriate gifts, essentials, and moments of celebration that honored their dignity and restored their sense of joy. No child in our program went without a thoughtful holiday surprise.

We are deeply grateful to North Coast Church – Vista Campus for their incredible Christmas Outreach. Their coordination of gifts and generous financial contributions helped create moments of laughter, comfort, and connection for families who needed it most.

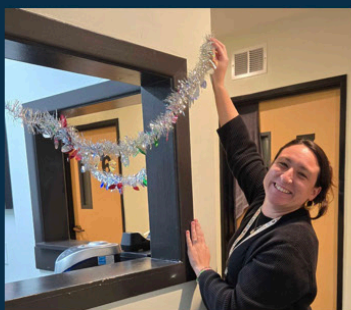
We also extend heartfelt thanks to Hope Church, Pastor Jim, and sweet Stella, for their donations and continued encouragement, and to our Stuff the Stocking partner, Shawnie Dumaran, whose generosity ensured every child had something special to open this holiday season.

To every individual, community, and faith-based partner who gave, volunteered, encouraged, or shared resources — thank you. Your partnership strengthens our mission and reminds every family we serve that they are not walking this journey alone.

From every family whose life you touched, thank you for being the reason HOPE is possible — this holiday season and in the year ahead.

With deepest appreciation,

The Staff of Operation HOPE–North County



Join our
Grandparents@Prayer
via email monthly.

Generation G: Leaving a Spiritual Legacy (or Hot Topics on Grandparenting) -by Gramma Pat Whisler



There is much talk about Legacy when speaking about grandparenting. Legacy - the lasting impact, we leave behind, shaping future generations through our influence, after we're gone. We, as grandparents, want to be remembered as we pass over to our Lord's arms. We have to do this intentionally with special impact upon our family, especially grandchildren. Our Lord has left the tool for this to happen. It's memory. My niece, JoAnn, went to live with our Lord on Dec 16, 2025. Her granddaughter, Miranda, posted a tribute to her grandmother on Dec 23, JoAnn's funeral day. She and the rest of her grandchildren call her Baby Jo.

GOD'S WORD: *He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.* 1 Peter 3:18

This month's GP Hot Topic: **DEATH US DO NOT PART**



*Baby Jo and Miranda
creating a memory.*

She was strong in family.

"I've been kind of quiet about the last few days just trying to wrap my mind around the loss of grandma, Baby Jo... She was the glue that held our family together, ...a true matriarch."

She helped when needed.

"This is the woman who took me, my former husband and our 5 animals in without hesitation when we found ourselves in a pickle at the fall-through of a house sale. She never complained once and often reminded us that we were welcome to stay as long as we wanted even if that meant forever. That time gave us so many opportunities to have long talks in her hot tub, countless family dinners, and memories that I will now hold near and dear to my heart. This is just one of the many examples of how Baby Jo supported me in one of my hardest moments."

JoAnn wore her faith on her shirtsleeve.

"She was a woman of God, a true faithful servant to the Catholic faith.

She was a family woman through and through. If you knew her, she loved you unconditionally. She would welcome you in with open arms no matter your life story."

She left a legacy and minds full of memories.

"The point is, there will never quite be another woman like my Baby Jo. Though there is a void in so many of our hearts without her, I am so grateful to be a recipient of her love for the last 30 years"

My niece has left memories for all of us who knew her. We, as grandparents, need to intentionally do this while we still walk on this earth. We need to create memories that will last longer than we do. Talk, pass on an ancestral item, write you feelings down and make sure they read it, help them if needed and let them know you love the Lord. There are many more opportunities that life will create. And what is best of all is our Lord has provided memory so our loved one will stay with us.

- **Prayer:** Father God, Thank you for the memories; for building that into us. Yes, some of us have memories better than others but they can lie within our soul. Death often saddens us but because you have created our minds to remember, they have not left us alone. Lord, we love you for all the wonderful things you bestow in our life. It is good. In Jesus name, we pray. *Amen.*
- **Action:** Reflect on your legacy. How do you want to be remembered, Grandma, Grandpa. Is God in your legacy? Make your mark on the world.
- Thanks to Miranda Kays for praising Baby Jo and posting it for all to read and feel.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS

9am How to Read the Bible Class
 9:30am Prayer Group
 10am In Person Worship (Sanctuary)
 10am Online Worship

MONDAYS

6:30pm Evening Bible Study
 7pm AA

TUESDAYS

8am Food Pantry Distrib.
 9:15am Preschool Chapel
 10:30am Staff Meeting
 2:00pm Meals of Grace

WEDNESDAYS

2:30pm ASP Tutoring (no 2/18, 2/25)
 6:30pm AA Men's Group
 7pm Worship Band Reh. (no 2/18)

THURSDAYS

9:15am Bible 101: Spanish (no 2/5)
 10am Women's Bible Study
 7pm Choir Rehearsal



FRIDAYS

8am Food Distribution

SATURDAYS

9:30am Soul Line Dance Class



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1 11:15am Cong. Meeting 11:30 Worship Committee	2	3	4 12:30pm Personnel Comm.	5	6	7 8am Men's Breakfast
8 11:15am Valentine Brunch 	9	10 6:30pm Deacons	11 9am B & G	12 8:30am PEO	13	14 ♥HAPPY Valentine's DAY♥
15 11:15am Christian Ed. Meeting	16 	17 4:30pm Fellowship Comm.	18 12:30pm Finance Comm. 7pm Ash Wednesday Service	19	20	21
22	23	24 8am Preschool Family Chapel 6:30pm Session	25	26 8:30am PEO	27	28 10am PCSS



1	Sue Weston	20	Carolyn Greenway
8	Ken Bouchard	24	Ed Paradis
19	Steven Sailors		



Do you have an anniversary in February? Let us know so we can include it here next year.

If you have a birthday or anniversary in February and your name does not appear above, please contact the church office at 760-724-0077 to update our records. Thank you!

John Adams

Krasovic Family

Judy Ambrose

Annie Kumar

Rex Bassett

Suzy Long

Apollo Bostian
(Elizabeth Bostian's Son)

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Eliza Newton
(Sailor's friend)

Browning Family

O'Malley Family

Bev Bush

Maureen Russell

Roger Corley

Christine Sailors

John Earnest

Judi Salazar

Michele Earnest

Tricia Sanger

Gary Eldridge

Robert Sawyer
(Terry-Jeanne's Son)

Helen Frederick

Terry-Jeanne Sawyer

Laurie Gilmore
(Pat Sexton's Sister)

Kim Sparkman & Family

Nancy Haigh

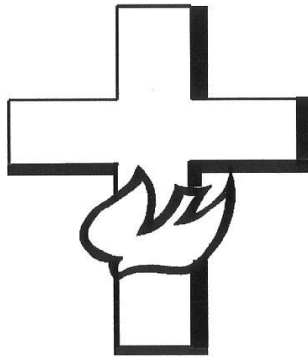
Arcilia Tauber

Betty Haver

Whisler Family

Chandy Jacob
(Annie Kumar's Brother)

Mary Wilhem
(Arlene Cratsa's Sister)





GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Address Service Requested

WHERE GOD'S FAMILY
GROWS



facebook.com/GPCVista

Church Staff

Pastor/Head of Staff
Director of Church Operations
Preschool Director
Preschool Teacher
Preschool Teacher
Preschool Support Staff
Dir. of Community Relations
Custodian
Music Director
Organist
Praise Band Leader
Financial Specialist
Choir Section Leader

Rev. John Denton
Christie Elliott
Frankie Zavala
Miriam Mojica Santos
Abigail Beaman
Denise Stockman
Maria Haigh
Savannah Haigh
Jayne Parker
Frances Hummel
Scott Huston
Albina Lumetta
Chris Nolf



GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IS A CONFESSING CHURCH,
and we believe:

That Jesus Christ alone is Lord of all and the way of salvation.

That Holy Scripture is the triune God's revealed Word,
the Church's only infallible rule of faith and life.

That God's people are called to holiness in all aspects of life.