



GRACE NOTES

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

February 2019

WE CELEBRATED JANET!...

Without exaggeration, the Memorial Service for Janet Dudek was simply a joy. The aura of dear Janet filled the air and all breathed her in. A good number of those who, like Janet, do not have sight were there. The large number of these folks accompanied by their friends, service dogs and attendants, wanted to be with us and they came early and with intention. Many were called by Camille a good friend of Janet and pastor. Calls were made and the network was lit up with the news of her death. Dave Eberly gave us a bunch of names, Pastor Darrell Urban made contact with the Lions, a group that conducts regular dances and celebrations for the community

that Dave and Janet loved.

More names, and more calls. A beautiful obituary penned by Barbara Ruhe, arrangements made to have the bulletin prepared in Braille... thanks, again

to Darrell, all present were able to join in the singing, and the Liturgical elements of our worship.

From my vantage point I saw and felt the tears, was taken by the degree of silence and responsiveness, but most of all, there was the collective joy in having known and loved Janet shared by almost everyone present. Highlights of the service included the

wonderful voices of Wayne Dixon and Andrea Sokolowski, the wondrous spread that materialized from the magical hands of our Grace team including Lou, Rebecca, Judy and Emma (from afar), and others, and the shared memories of a life of giving, laughing, singing, dancing, dreaming and more laughing.

Janet was one of the only people at Grace who routed for the New York Yankees and she did so with glee and commitment. She loved music, and was surrounded by it the better part of most days. She had a variety of ways to hear music, but the one that I found the most unique was the transistor radio she routinely had by her side. It was the Holy Spirit that led Dorothea to St. Mary's with a fresh set of batteries so that she might have her beloved music with her as her journey came

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PASTOR'S LETTER...

Loss is Not Forever

As Christians, we know that the greatest gift that we have as believers is the salvation that comes to us through Jesus Christ. It is that gift that we think about at the time of loss of a loved one, a friend, a pet, or even a beautiful tree or plant that seems to be no more. We don't know a lot about these things, but we have God's promises. In every homily that I have done at a funeral or memorial service, I speak of the impact of loss, and our loving God's support and help in dealing with it. I also put myself in the company of those who trust in God, the Triune God, and the mysteries that are associated with our human understanding of things eternal.

In any case, without regard to what you may believe, death leads to loss. In fact, any change in our circumstances leads to loss, too. For example, people who win the lottery, experience unspeakable loss; so many who got all the material wealth that they could imagine found that the loss that came with it was too much. The relationships that changed, the impact on family and children, their inability to manage wealth and the streams of people trying to get a piece of their so-called good fortune all often lead to chaos and hopelessness. Go figure!

Similarly, when we get promoted at work, we think how wonderful that change is and what wonderful opportunities may now be in front of us. But, again, without an understanding of the loss, new relationships, different values (sometimes), fear about keeping up and a realization that family, the husband, the wife and the kids, are all impacted by that kind of change, too. That is not to say that these kinds of changes are bad it is merely to say that there is loss with all change.

Changes are felt when we have a new President, and for many of us these changes have been almost too much to bear. Add the difficulties associated with these changes to the interpersonal and human experience of all other types of change, we need to know how can we cope, and move on.

Although the concept of grief is something we have heard about, too many of us are unable to understand where we are as we find ourselves angry, depressed, losing it or hiding out. There have been many books written on the subject of grief, I would just suggest that we remember some of the basic concepts of dealing with grief. There is a process, and I suggest that this process was not concocted by any of us, but it has been observed and witnessed by all of us. Things of God are that way.

The first phase of grief is "denial". We do not want to believe that anything has happened. We deny death, the problems in our relationships, the aloneness and the immediacy of it. It is normal for us to be in denial, and it is the first step in dealing with our grief. We then get "angry". And, we can get very angry. Why should this happen to me, I've been praying, doing good works, we all have been doing the right thing, why me? Why us? God, how could this have happened? By the way, these different phases can exist for a short time or a long time. Sadly, some of us are so disturbed by a loss that we can get stuck either in "in denial" or "anger" or one of the other steps in the process of dealing with grief. The next phase is "bargaining", we try to negotiate a different outcome. We want to believe that we can impact

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to an end. She played piano, sang Doo-Wop music accompanied by a smiling Dave Eberly and a cheering audience of Friday Gatherers. Janet let nothing get in the way of her living a full life and she lived it well. Look for a letter sent by Pastor Eva Steege elsewhere in this

issue.



I loved the sweetness of Janet's voice and would say to her whenever she was the cantor, how beautiful a voice she had. She would just smile. She was also a very strong woman. After graduating from the Oakhill School she went to NYC for two years to be trained as a

medical transcriptionist, which led her to a thirty plus year career at St. Francis Hospital down the street from the church. Having retired, she decided that she no longer needed such an extensive wardrobe and figured others could use what she was no longer going to need.

A person without sight saw the needs of others and acted. Janet's Closet is a fixture at Grace even today, as it has grown and expanded and has offered thousands of pieces of clothing and shoes for so many years.

I smile whenever I think of Janet. It may have been her quirky and loud laugh, or her sweet voice or both; but, there was something else, too, that I admired. Janet was engaged in life, knew what she wanted and got it, and could be tough and stubborn, yet not to the point of being hurtful or dogmatic. The Janet in me is someone to be long remembered, celebrated and loved. I know that we at Grace share in these perceptions and the ultimate feelings of love and loss.

There is one other aspect of Janet's life and that was "Tommy", her cat. She was at St. Francis for a week, and each time I visited her she talked about her Tommy. She knew her sister Judy was taking care of him, but she missed him. They were companions who shared space, and I bet not just one or two bursts of laughter a day (although, honestly, I've never seen a cat laugh). But, come to think of it, Janet could see things that we sighted ones couldn't. And her sight was penetrating and real. As a sighted person, Janet and David have taught me that being sighted is not such a big deal. Knowing Janet Dudek, on the other hand, that was a big deal for me, her friends, her family, her fellow church goers, and everyone who crossed her path. I will miss her. I know you will, too.

AHNA Volunteer of the Month - Janet Dudek

Each month we try to feature someone whose thoughtfulness and generosity will interest our readers, both because it is inspiring and worth celebrating.

Beginning in 2013, Grace Lutheran Church started a small service for those in need called “Janet’s Closet”. Unlike other places such as Salvation Army or Good Will that offer second hand clothing for very low prices, Janet’s Closet was created for those for whom even the very low prices at these other charities were a barrier.

It began when Janet Dudek, retired from a 30 year career at St. Francis Hospital as a Medical Transcriptionist. She realized that she would no longer need the many business suits that she had acquired over the years, but rather than take them to one of the many second hand stores that would sell them, she talked to her fellow members at Grace about starting a free clothing bank. It took a few months to get organized, but eventually Janet’s Closet as it came to be called began, and for two hours every Wednesday where anyone in need can take from what it has, continued to the present. Needless to say, a lot more people than Janet have donated clothing, and in the nearly six years since its founding, countless individuals have been able to receive much needed clothing from the many who continue to donate.



Very recently, Janet’s Closet received another large donation when all of Janet’s remaining clothes were dropped off as was her wish. She passed on January 17th.

At the memorial service at Grace on Saturday the 26th, Janet’s Closet was just one of the many points of light that were celebrated. She loved music, friends and family, and the Yankees, and of course the blind and low vision community of which she was a part. To make donations to Janet’s Closet, call the office at 860 527-7792.

Photos of the celebration can be found at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/yEofXJwdinsgc3Fj8>

ALL OF OUR PETS ARE SPECIAL IN SO MANY WAYS...

We have already mentioned in this issue how important Janet’s cat “Tommy” was to her. In fact our discussions about her life and how she was doing always included a soliloquy about Tommy and how much she loved him. She described his roaming around, his stubbornness and his various behavioral quirks... just as I have done above about Kara. It was consequential that at the Memorial Service for Janet there were three dutiful and perfectly behaved service dogs supporting three individual people. We hear of soldiers who come home and manage to adopt a dog who may have saved their lives or the lives of their lost comrades. Animals are important and represent a precious part of God’s creation... as precious as all aspects of creation. Thanks be to God for the love and care of all creatures on earth, and those of us who particularly love, support and care for them.

what has already happened and is final. We ask God for help, our friends, our family, our pastor and anyone else who will listen. This can't be true, what if I did this and you do that?

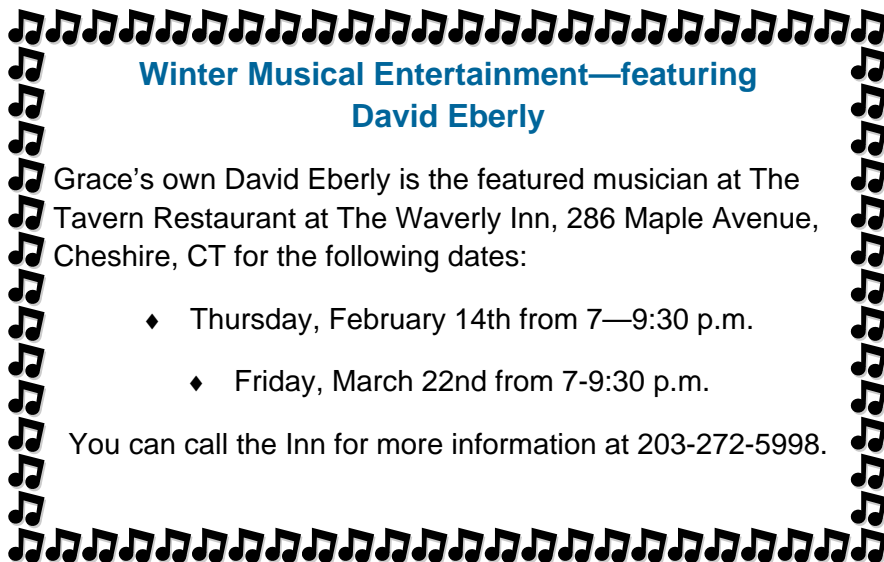
From there the process moves to "depression". When we are depressed we feel alone, empty, ashamed, and a whole host of other feelings. And, often our friends will try to "chirp" us out of it by cheering us up, dismissing the seriousness of what is going on and looking for other ways to get us to be ourselves again... to return to normal. Unfortunately that is not how the process works... we need to do our own grieving and interact with others when we are ready and in ways that will help us to accept the reality of what has happened and realize that this is, in fact, is not the end... it is a new beginning... or, at best, it can be.

God, prayer, dear friends and family are present to help us, to be there with us, to hold our hands, to cry with us, to care for us and to laugh when we are ready and able.... Ultimately as we work through our grief we reach a sense of normalcy and acceptance. We are now ready to go forward.

These days, not only do we grieve for the loss of wonderful and dear friends like Janet, we also experience other harms and distractions from what is wrong with the world around us and how it has changed in a way that has been hurtful. These are times when we must gather together and try to do good in the face of evil, trust in the face of hypocrisy and love in the face of hate.

Over my vacation I was exposed to a way of considering the word THINK. It goes like this...
T – Is it TRUE? H – Is it HELPFUL? I – Is it INSPIRING? N – Is it NECESSARY?
And K – Is it KIND?

This comes from the world of "Stressless Yoga." Let's think every day, learn to grieve and to recognize those that are grieving, and live our lives as Jesus taught us... for LOSS IS NOT FOREVER. Our loving God is here and with us. And, loss is not eternal, LIFE IS.



**Winter Musical Entertainment—featuring
David Eberly**

Grace's own David Eberly is the featured musician at The Tavern Restaurant at The Waverly Inn, 286 Maple Avenue, Cheshire, CT for the following dates:

- ◆ Thursday, February 14th from 7—9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Friday, March 22nd from 7-9:30 p.m.

You can call the Inn for more information at 203-272-5998.

THINK


T – Is it TRUE?

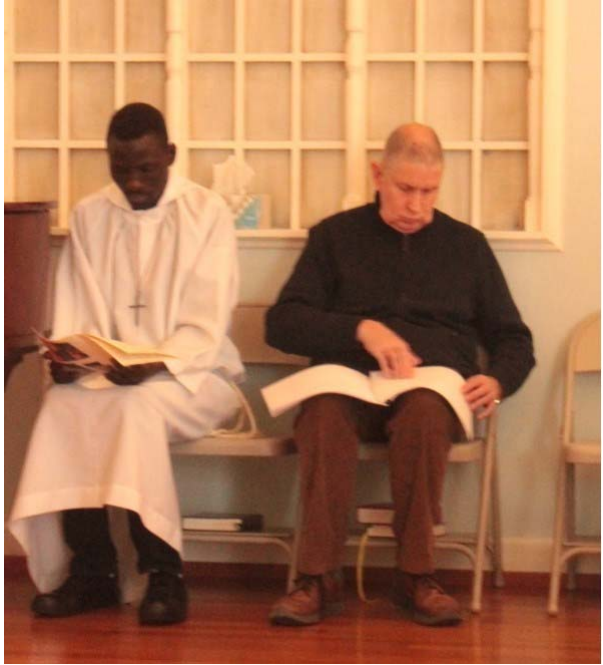
H – Is it HELPFUL?

I – Is it INSPIRING?

N – Is it NECESSARY?

K – Is it KIND?


STRESSLESS YOGA



Dear Friends,

Our condolences on the death of Janet Dudek. She was a vibrant and feisty woman, and a wonderful blessing to Grace Lutheran Church.

We remember that the very first day she came to Grace, she had taken a bus from where she was then living and then walked up Woodland on her own to find the church she had heard about. She immediately made it her home, and was immediately welcomed by all who met her.

Janet was fiercely independent and resourceful. She was also a loyal friend to her many friends. Even in the midst of numerous frustrations, she kept a jaunty spirit and a wicked sense of humor that lifted all our spirits.

The best example of her spirit was the time she gave a stewardship talk during an annual campaign. She had not alerted anyone; she simply announced in her talk that she was going to donate a whole pile of clothes to give away, and a rack to hang them on. She named it Janet's Closet, and that was that. Countless donations have been made since, countless people have gratefully received much-needed "new or gently used" clothing, and a whole social network quickly developed around the Closet.

Janet will be deeply missed, but we take comfort in the promise that her eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

Pastor Eva and Ted Steege

February Birthdays

Otto Koenig	2/4
Sally Nolen	2/7
Nina Kretschmer	2/9
Waltraud Jordan	2/15
Lee Whittemore	2/10
Melissa Brown	2/11
Martin Holmeen	2/16
Randall De Rosa	2/18
Susan Carey	2/22
Paul Yigel-Kaljob	2/23
Roy Nelson	2/23
Lisa Dugan	2/24
Joseph Kisiel	2/26

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

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

February Anniversaries

Otto & Annelies Koenig	2/9	57 years
Pastor Rick Kremer & Judy Butterworth-Kremer	2/9	45 years



HOW MUCH CAN WE REDUCE OUR USE OF PLASTIC DURING THIS LENTEN SEASON? Lent is often a time of “giving something up” as a life discipline. How about giving up plastic coming into your home? It might be harder than you think!



Previously I wrote about the problems with plastic and Caring for Creation (See October 2018 issue of Grace Notes). Plastic has become a regular part of our lives—bags, bottles, packaging, clothes, chairs, tablecloths, food containers and the list goes on. There are many advances that have been made using plastic that enhance our lives but our overuse and dependence on foam, plastic and “single” use items has also had dire effects on our planet, its waterways and wildlife. One can find documentation of whales, dolphins, turtles, birds all dying because their bodies are full of small bits of plastic that they mistook for food. And one can find pictures from all around the world of harbors and waterways overflowing and clogged with plastic containers and plastic bags.

So, as people of faith who care about this gift of creation, how are we to respond?

In the past article I raised the challenge of going a day or a week without bringing any new plastic into our homes. Did you try it? Here is what I found as I went through the week. I am old enough to go back to non-plastic days where mom used the paper grocery bags with a newspaper or magazine at the bottom to catch the drips. Most of my shopping is for food. It was easy to bring my own canvas bags, have them handy in the car and not accept any plastic shopping bags; but the remaining items were more of a challenge. All these things that I usually buy were in plastic—gallon of milk, hummus, yogurt, meats in foam and plastic, day-old bakery and organic lettuce in big plastic boxes, packaged produce, bottles of catsup and dressing—hard to find anything in a glass container anymore. So the next week, here is what I found, and here is what I did: I try to use organic produce whenever possible—there are several stores that have their produce without the packaging, so that was easy. Rather than a gallon of milk, two half gallon cartons. Stopped getting any day-old produce or bakery (don’t need those muffins and cookies anyway) as it all comes in foam and plastic. Started making my own hummus with canned beans and other good stuff. Dug out the old yogurt maker and now make yogurt every week. I brought my own containers for use at the deli (I can use these over and over again) and got split peas and black beans in the bulk section using a paper bag rather than a plastic one. Challenges—meat: am I willing to pay a higher price by going to a butcher shop where the meat is not pre-packaged? Maybe just eat less meat? And all the many food items that come only in plastic bags or plastic bottles? Am I willing to pay a higher price for something that comes in glass? Am I willing to change my dependence on all these convenience items just to reduce the use of plastic? Go back to bar soap? I’m working on it a bit at a time.

Whenever I get the urge to say, “Oh it really doesn’t matter”, I think of what kind of world do I want to leave for my children and grandchildren? Then I realize it really does matter, every little bit matters.

We will never eliminate plastic from our lives entirely, but as people of faith who have the charge of caring for God’s creation, we can become more thoughtful about how we are living and what we are leaving behind.

FOR SENTIMENTAL ANIMAL PEOPLE - KARA...

In the early morning hours a couple of weeks ago, our dear Kara succumbed to cancer. Most of us grasp the importance of animals in our lives. Kara was an energetic, shy, strong and wonderful dog. She was 10 years old, having suffered for a long time. She had two unrelated surgeries before the cancer. With a love so great that it could not be measured Judy took Kara to vets and cared for her daily whether it was making her special meals that might take 15 minutes to assemble, or driving to Granby for homiletic treatments, including acupuncture and chiropractic, or patiently cajoling her to eat, or writing instructions for others who would care for her in our absence... she did all any human could have done to save our girl. She woke me that morning to tell me Kara had left us.

We went into the sun room in the dark and sat with Kara for some time. We held hands, cried and tried to console each other. We prayed and commended her to God. Losing a pet is not unlike losing a friend, a dear one. Yes, she could be demanding, but she was also there for us whenever we needed her. Cuddling close, playing and trying to console us when we didn't feel well or as the storms of life seemed to be overcoming either one or both of us.

We caused her to have to live with Titan, this huge obstruction in her life who would not let her have a toy or a bone, who barked at her when she came close to him, and to whom all food had to first come to him. Yet, she was feisty and stood her ground. Our Siberian Husky became co-dependent with our Alaskan Malamute Titan. You could see them in the yard lying next to each other in the snow, or realize when one or the other had to go to the vet, that each of them looked for the other. They loved each other in a tender way, you could see it, watch it and give thanks for it. Kara was the older one and near the end about half his size, but she never gave up and barked right back at him, standing her ground, when she jumped on the couch to her place between Judy and me.



As you can tell we dearly miss our baby Kara (baby in the sense of relative size). I love her, loved her and always will. I also believe that like us there is a place for her where her pain and suffering is gone and only the good memories pave her way. She knows that we loved her. She would come to us for closeness and what we called a "rubby-dubby" or two (yes, we are seniors, and we still use baby talk!). She came to me yesterday morning, as usual, but it wasn't just because she wanted to go outside (which was the normal)... no, she came to me for that back rub and some time together. Little did I know that this would be my last with her alive. So, bear with our sentimentalism and deep love for this four-legged, gorgeous creature with the cutest face and dearest paws. She was special and will be dearly missed.

We thank God that she has been with me and us on our journeys. It is hard to imagine a greater gift than she. Goodbye Kara-Bara, goodbye.

FOR THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND...

Judy and Rick, we are so sorry for your loss. She was, indeed, such a sweet, beautiful girl. We know you are heartbroken.

We would like to pay homage to Kara by naming one of our most recent Guide Dogs after her. One of the puppies will be named Kara. We will share Guide Dog Kara's journey with you. From birth to puppy training to taking her out into the wider world where she will learn the important business of service. Perhaps we can go to the ceremony when training is complete and Kara will be placed with someone whose life will be forever changed by her presence and service.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you. We are here for you. We look forward to seeing you next week.

With love,
Deborah (Wendt)

Parish Administrator, Dawn Scagel, Moves On...

Many of you have known that Dawn is leaving Grace and today is her last day. In her characteristic joyful and expansive fashion yesterday she fixed the internal workings of our old toilet, raised concerns about a variety of administrative challenges, got an announcement out about our Council meeting tomorrow and attended and contributed to the Fresh Start Board meeting at Veeder Place. I have enjoyed working with this over-working person (three jobs) with a zest for life and other people, and an enduring faith that could be seen and felt by us all. We will miss her. I will miss her.

Grace Notes has improved, she has saved us \$\$\$ by watching for sales, testing new sources, and picking stuff up on her way home or to work. She has brought smiles to all who have encountered her at the front door, in the kitchen, during a Friday Gathering or in interacting with the workers and Board at Fresh Start. We decided to both write about her leaving. Her comments demonstrate what I have said here and so much more:

THANKS FOR ALLOWING ME TO SERVE YOU...

It has been an adventure serving the Parish of Grace Lutheran Church for these past almost two years. I have learned so much about service and how God asks each of us to meet the needs of "the least of these." We need to be open to the nudging of the Holy Spirit and respond accordingly.

I was captivated by the missions of Grace: the Friday Gathering Dinners; Janet's Closet; Fresh Start Pallet Products, to name a few. At one time or another in my life, I've experienced many of the insecurities addressed by Grace's missions. I have overcome these insecurities through my faith and by the Grace of God.

It has been a pleasure getting to know you all collectively. I am truly blessed to have two church families that not only care about me as a person, but have allowed my faith life to grow through service.

The time has come for me to move on to other employment opportunities – My part-time night job has offered me a full-time, benefitted position. I start my new hours effective this Sunday, February 17th. While a search is on for my replacement here at Grace, I will be available on a limited basis on Fridays to assist in training. It is not Good-bye; but 'til we meet again. Blessings, Dawn



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Lloyd Smith, Lay Minister

Louisa Barton-Duguay, Religious Worker

Artist in Residence for Outreach

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Lou Oliver, Vice President

Anna-Marie Potter, Assistant Vice President

Barbara Calogero, Secretary

Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer

Janice Potter, Financial Assistant

Dale Eberhardt, Organist

Walter Scott, Sexton

www.graceistheplace.org

