



*January 2020*  
Monthly Newsletter  
of Grace in the Desert

# Gracegrams

## Mark Your Calendar

**01/05**

Epiphany Message: Mystery  
Unwrapped ... Light  
Revealed

**01/12**

“Jesus’ Baptism – This is  
My Son; Our Baptism – This  
is My Son/ Daughter”

**01/19**

Jesus – Lamb of God; Our  
Passover Lamb

**01/26**

Jesus – Our Proclaimer and  
Healer; Our Role Model for  
Proclamation

## A New Start

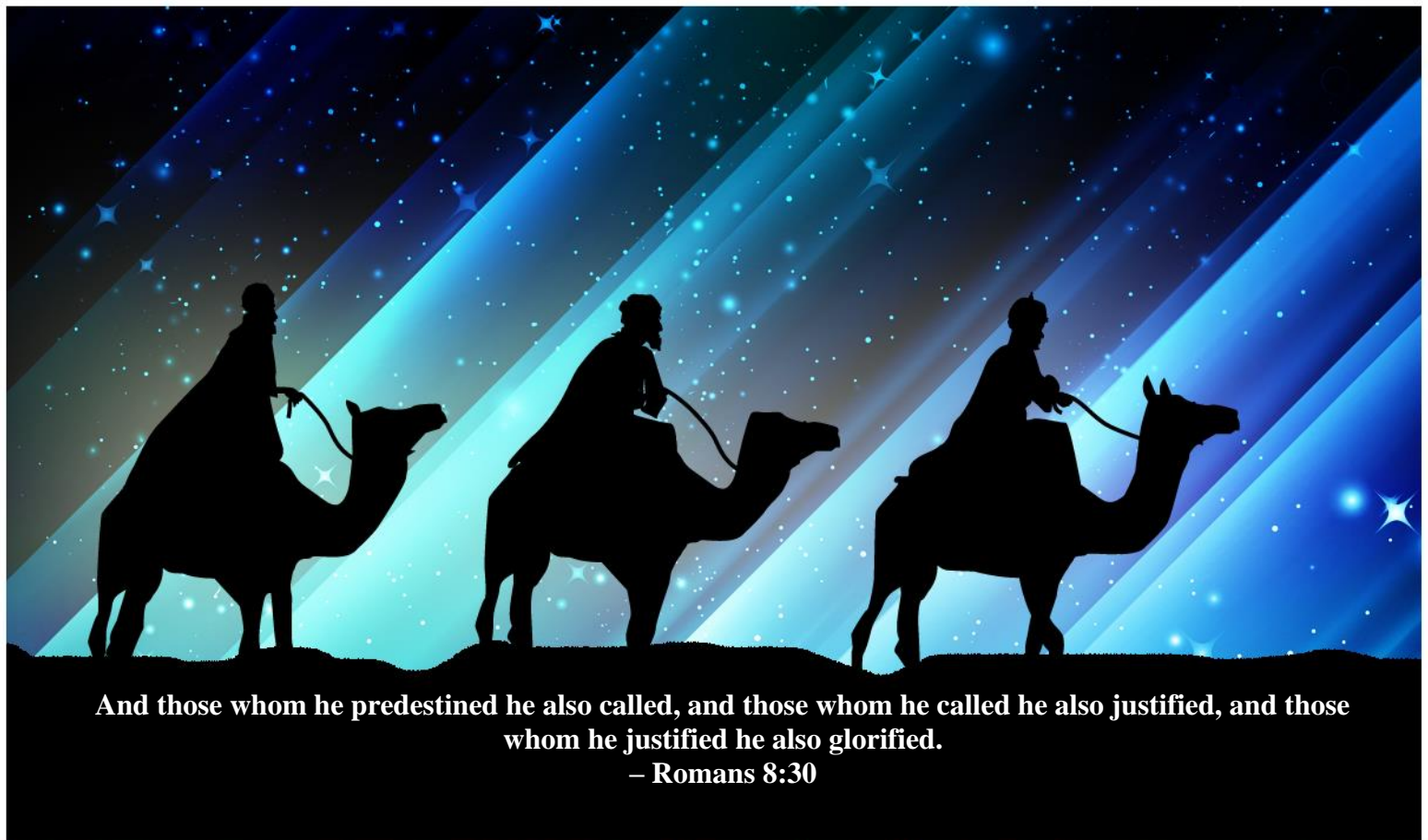
**Pastor Ceri’s Corner**

Happy New Year! ☺ Well, another year has come and gone – how did you do with your resolutions for last year? How long did they last? Personally, I do not make New Year resolutions. Why wait until the New Year to do those things that we need to do now? And always in the back of my mind is the fact that the vast majority of resolutions are not kept.

But, as we go through the year, we can resolve on a daily basis to do better. To recommit every morning to our Lord, to daily (or more often) confess our sins and receive the forgiveness that is ours just for the asking. I think New Year’s is pretty cool – but why isn’t it New Year’s every day for us who embrace Jesus as our Savior and believe in the life-giving sacrifice that He made for us on the cross?

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” And in Lamentations 3:22-23, we hear “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

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**And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**

**– Romans 8:30**

## EPIPHANY IS ...

An epiphany can be likened to an “aha” moment – it is a revelation of something that may have been in front of us, but we finally understand its true significance.

I think that the Feast of Epiphany was like that for the Magi who traveled so far to see this Baby who was to be called the King of the Jews. While they knew that He was going to be an important person in history, I doubt that they expected to worship Him and bow down to Him, but they did.

What will we find out about Jesus that we never realized before as we journey through this Epiphany Season and move toward Lent?

### Article Continued ...

Every day, as we ask for and receive forgiveness, we depend on the Word of God that we are made new if we are in Jesus and that His mercies are new every morning. We don't need to wait for New Year's Day to resolve to do better in our faith walk. We don't need to wait for a certain day to commit our lives to the One who gave His life for us, to worship more often, to be more involved in the workings and mission of the congregation. Just as His mercies are new every morning, so should our resolutions be to walk in His will and delight in His way.

It's never too late this side of Heaven to embrace the grace and salvation that we receive through Jesus. And it's never too late to walk more closely in the will and the path that He has set out for us in this world. So, what are we waiting for ..... let's get resolving and not look at the calendar to make sure it's the “right day.” Every day is the right day to resolve to do better – in our faith walk, in our health, and in our attitude.

God's Blessings to you for a marvelous and miraculous 2020 – I can't wait to see what God has in store for us at Grace in the Desert ....

In His Abundant Grace and Love,  
Pastor Ceri ☺

# Launch Team Update

## Suspended for a Time

Given the changes that are happening at Grace in the Desert – changing our worship place to the East Valley – we have suspended the Launch Team until we have a more clear picture of specifically where God wants us to be.

I want to thank publicly everyone who took the time and energy to embark on this journey. We did not know, when we started, where this would take us – and I certainly did not know that God would take us to a whole different part of the planet. But, as He so often does, He surprised us with this call.

So, while words of thanks are not enough to express my gratitude, they are all I have .... Thank you so much to Cher, Shawn, Peggy, Brian, and Greg for your insight and your time and energy in this adventure. I am eternally grateful to you for all of your ideas, challenges, and just overall for who you all are. You ROCK!



## CHANGE IS COMING TO GRACE IN THE DESERT

In our own lives, and in the life of every congregation, there come times when change is in order. For Grace in the Desert, this is one of those times. Over the last year, I have had an ongoing conversation with God – He has been guiding me to make a change that may be surprising to some, but that I believe we must make to be obedient to His will. January will be our last month in the Northwest valley. February will bring Facebook messages on Sunday mornings about 9:45. March will bring a move to the East Valley. All of the logistics of this move have not been totally worked out, but I can tell you that I am totally at Peace with this and know that this is the right thing to do.

Please stay tuned for updates about where to find us in the East Valley beginning on Ash Wednesday.

Your thoughts and prayers would be much appreciated during this time of transition.





## What is Your Jesus Story?

We all have a Jesus story – it’s just hard to share it most of the time, especially when we don’t know someone very well. That is why it is important to get to know others and then share with them the reason for the joy that you have even in the midst of pain and suffering. It’s called relational evangelism and it simply means that we share our faith with those we know – at least most of the time. There are also times when we will share with those we do not know so well – God will let us know when we should be sharing His Good News.

### The Gospel Is...

## The Good News of Jesus

“Gospel” means “good news.” In the context of our faith is means the Good News of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. This Good News translates to salvation and everlasting life for those who embrace Jesus as their Savior. One of our messages for this month is about Jesus as the Proclaimer of the Gospel – and the fact that He is our role model for doing the same. How good are we at letting people know who Jesus is and what He has done for us so that they, too, will want to embrace Him in faith as the One who came to save them from their sins? Yes, it is God, working through the Holy Spirit who creates faith but, as Paul says, people need to hear to know and that means that we need to let them know – proclaim the Word! ☺

## January Worship

### *It’s Epiphany – Time for Some Revealing*

As we move from Christmas to Lent, we enjoy the season of Epiphany. We will be using the Lectionary readings during this time to explore the revelations that are made about who Jesus is – and who we are in Him. This season will take us through to Ash Wednesday and the beginning of our Lenten journey.

Our themes/messages for January are:

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| January 5  | “Mystery Unwrapped – Light Revealed”   |
| January 12 | “Jesus’ Baptism – This Is My Beloved Son; Our Baptism – This is My Beloved Son/Daughter” |
| January 19 | “Jesus – Lamb of God; Our Passover Lamb”   |
| January 26 | “Jesus – Proclaimer And Healer; Our Role Model for Proclamation”                         |