

NEWS FROM THE HEART

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A NEW YEAR 2019 A NEW ROAD

Our life is a journey and we are always “On The Road”. Each time another January greets us we have an opportunity to pause, see where we have been, notice how far we have come, and think how that journey has been for us. Each New Year is a time to clear our vision, to take stock of our resources, do an inventory and refresh our dreams as we set out once more on the journey of 2019 that is ours. As I thought about the many Januarys of my life (January 19th is my birthday) I see how differently I entered some of the New Years. Sometimes I have been exhausted on the road, worn out and weary. Other times, I have rushed into the New Year with excitement about the possibilities ahead. There have been Januarys when I’ve begun the journey full of pain and heartache with tears in my heart at the death of my parents and friends. Or anxious over struggles and problems that loomed ahead. I can also remember meeting the New Year with peace and gratitude.



I ask you today to get out your road map of life. Look over your journey of 2018. It is helpful to find the places and people that...blessed us, affirmed us, enlivened us, enriched us. We need to reflect on the situations and people that challenged us, tested us, discouraged us. What are your inner resources? What are your outer sources of help and strength? We may need to confront something, make the changes and “Let go and let God” as we start 2019.

Maybe your year has been filled with commuter trains, buses, taxis or airplanes. We choose to board, but we have to TRUST another driver with our destination. (Like a good friend or sponsor). Sometimes it’s the decisions of others that greatly affect our lives. How do we feel about the choices others (family, friends, boss, co-workers) have made that affect our work or our hopes and dreams? When we walk into a New Year or a new day, we do not know the events along the way. We can only see life today, this moment. One day at a time. But we can risk the road because God goes with us on the journey. Be confident. Go where you will, your God is going with you. As we enter 2019, we trust God with our lives. We trust that there will be enough strength and beauty amid the challenges to sustain us and help us to “Keep on Keeping on”. God Bless You!

A NOTE ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

I came to Amazing Grace Interfaith Christmas Eve service with the hustle and bustle of the season on my shoulders and the old tapes playing (well it’s not my holiday, I’m Jewish). I was entranced by the beautiful alter with the numerous candles. I was happy to see everyone. As the service went on, I kept hearing about “the God within”. I related to that and felt happy to hear these words. When the music CD quivered and Rev. Mary said “Oh let us just sing Silent Night ourselves” I crossed another problematic conflict. I didn’t want to sing.

When I was around 7 years old in Public School, I was asked to write an essay on why Jesus was-

my savior. When I brought it home my mother, was very upset and forbade me from singing Christmas carols with my friends. It is amazing how these things stay with you 100 years later. But, here I was in the service with my interfaith people and so I decided to sing. As we did a sense of peace came over me. I felt one with everything. I thanked God for bringing me to this church as I have often done in the past. Love you, Charlotte

Charlotte is a member of Amazing Grace who was raised in the Jewish Faith, married a Christian man and raised her son as a member of our church.

**Rabbi Gelberman always said, "All religions must learn from each other
Never instead of, always in addition to."**

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A CANCER SURVIVOR'S RESOLUTIONS

Vernell Howell, age 77, retired public school teacher has a new lease on life. She wrote a soon to be published book, **"My Miraculous Journey, From Intensive Care to Intensive Living"** about her bout with cancer. Having a near death experience reminded her of some important lessons easily forgotten by the healthy. "Time is not promised and waits for no one," Howell writes. She took that lesson to heart, stopped talking about writing a book and wrote it. In her book, she emphasizes the things we should focus on. "Build closer and loving relationships with family and friends." "Never let circumstances of people change, postpone or cancel family plans." That's hard to do for some. Our work is too important. Taking that extra shift means more money, we argue. But the hard truth is that many of us will go to our graves knowing we disappointed our families for the wrong reasons. She says: "Do it before it's too late. Be grateful, not regretful". In 2008 her beautician noticed several small bumps on her scalp. The condition was diagnosed as cancer. It would take another year for doctors to pinpoint the source. T-cell lymphoma which affects blood cells in the bone marrow. "It was overwhelming. I just couldn't respond to anything," she writes. Her younger brother stepped up and became her donor. Her oncologists at John Hopkins received international acclaim for the breakthrough treatment. For Vernell it was a "miracle". A devout member of her Baptist Church in Virginia she put her faith at the top of her life lessons list. "Love the Lord God at all times," she writes. "He is with us, even in our darkest hour." "Meet new friends. Encourage and inspire other. Stay active. Keep a positive mind especially during tough times."

I am looking forward to reading this book!!!

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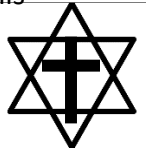
***I believe that if we relax and let go enough, extraordinary things begin to happen.
I suppose you'd call it spiritual surrender." Sir Anthony Hopkins***

Deep and simple is far more essential than shallow and complex. Fred Rogers

Man says, "Show me, and I'll trust you." God says, "Trust me and I'll show you."

One is loved because one is loved. No reason is needed for loving. Paulo Coelho

Question everything. Be curious forever and never forget that life is about people. Frank Gehry



AMAZING GRACE INTERFAITH MINISTRY



We had a beautiful **Thanksgiving Candlelight** service at Woodrow Methodist church and another wonderful **Christmas Eve at St. Simon's** with many candles and an arrangement of **magnificent flowers from Earl**. Thank you to **St. Clare's** for their continuous donations of children's clothing over the years and to their **Small Faith Community and Bobby Bulger** for their donation. Many blessings to **Our lady Star of the Sea the principal and Patty Gandleman** for the wonderful children's coats that we distributed in January and for all the toys that put smiles on many children's faces. I am deeply grateful to **Olivet Presbyterian Church, Pastor Melodee** for the many donations and all the volunteers who help set up and distribute items to the children the first Saturday of the month. **Francine, Dick, Maria, Warren, Janneth, Earl, Susan, Blanny, Jean, Tina, Joie, Raphael, Ian, Joe and family, David and family, Eileen, Carole, and our student helpers**. Many blessings on **Calvary Presbyterian Church** who has been our place of distribution for the last three years. We are so grateful for the space and their many kindnesses. Blessing on **Walter, Margaret, Keith** and their congregation. Thank you to **Morgan Green and Random/Penguin House** for their donation of **new children's books** from which will be distributed in February and March. Thank you to **Rev. Dr. Jerri Jacob** and all her patients who donated \$500 for the children. We are double blessed and grateful to **Adonia Riccardi and Komar Kids**, Jersey City, who have for many years sent us **new highend pajamas** that are given to each child at Christmas and for **Lois & Richard Nicotra** and the **Hilton employees Bright-Hearted**. We have written many letters to individuals who have donated money that enables us to purchase what the children need. If you are interested in volunteering to **help set up on Friday** or **distribute clothes on Saturday** in Feb. or March call me. **You are all the hands and feet of God helping these little ones in need. The kids have a need and God sent all of you!!!!**

Attached is a flyer with upcoming dates starting Tuesday evening, **February 11th** with a prayer and meditation on **"Love Is Letting Go Of Fear"**. On **Saturday, March 23 from 9:30AM to 2PM** there will be a **workshop on "Spirituality & Recovery"**. Coffee bagels, fruit will be served. Please mark your 2019 calendar with these dates and the **Women's Retreat** the weekend after **Mother's Day, May 17 to May 19th** at Villa Pauline Retreat House in New Jersey titled, **"Who Is Your Shepherd?"** I will be speaking to Sister the end of January re cost and any other Changes.




Prayers for Mark Ellen who passed away and his wife, Barbara who is living in NJ. Prayers for Bobby Bulger, Msg. Joseph Murphy, Bob H., Michelle M., Francine & Dick Hillpot, Adam Green, Anwen and Ethan for good health. Prayers for St. Simon's its congregation and governing body. Prayers for Amazing Grace Interfaith Ministry for guidance and good orderly direction. Prayers for Aneira, beloved dog of Magen, Mike and Ethan who went on to Heaven. She is still watching over Ethan who misses her very much. Prayers of gratitude for Magen and all the work she does for Amazing Grace, I could not go on without her exceptional help.

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*People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out,
But when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.*

Elizabeth Kubler Ross



IT WORKS – IF YOU WORK IT**JEALOUSY**


around, rejoicing that they have four legs. The birds, however, are hopping around, regretting that they have only two legs. Worse yet, the birds are jealous because animals don't have funny awkward appendages attached to their shoulders, as the birds do. The birds feel shortchanged by God. But then a curious little bird begins to experiment with his funny appendages. Suddenly he takes off into the air. Only then do all the birds realize how greatly God has blessed them and how stupid their jealousy was. How might I be like the birds? How might I go about discovering that God may have blessed me more than those I think have so much?

ACTION

AA's Big Book says the program is one of continual action. All the other literature I have ever read emphasizes action in the program if one wants to get and then stay sober. Why? Could it be that the authors found that knowledge itself without putting it into practice does not work? What happens to me when I am riding a bicycle and I decide to coast? For a while nothing, but if I persist, I lose my balance and fall down. What happens if I simply get theoretical with my sobriety? If I only think about it, but don't do anything positive to stay sober? If I stop pumping and coast? You and I both know, don't we?



The last time you went swimming, did the knowledge of how to swim from having done it many times keep you afloat? Did watching movies on swimming keep you on top of the water? I must be the one who kicks with my two legs, who paddles or strokes with my two arms, if I don't want to drown. The coach can stand by on the side of the pool and shout encouragement, give instructions and cheer me on. But if I quit moving my arms and legs I sink. I can go to hundreds of lectures, meetings, movies on booze and ways to stay sober, but if I don't use this knowledge by daily practicing in my life, then my sobriety and I are just like the guy who knows all there is to know about swimming but stopped kicking and drowned.!!

Please, God, grant that I may remember to constantly apply the knowledge I have learned and to ask for your protection and strength in carrying it out. God, may I never just take you for granted. Rather may I use all of these newfound insights of your power in my life to thank you for being who you are and for keeping me sober today. *Rev. Jack S. O.S.A.*

GRATITUDE

A man and woman gave a sizeable contribution to their church to honor the memory of their son who lost his life in the war. When the announcement was made to the congregation of their generosity a woman whispered to her husband "Let's give the same amount in honor of each of our boys." The husband said "What are you talking about? None of our sons was killed in the war." "Exactly, said the woman. "Let's give it as an expression of our gratitude to God for sparing their lives!" What we give in our life produces benefit in 3 directions. 1. It helps those in need, 2 it inspires others to give and 3. it forms character in the giver. Keep in mind that when you give, your giving brings sunshine to the lives of others and will return to you tenfold.

And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand. Pray for me. Love Mary

