

The Power of Stories: The BIG EVENT, Saturday, August 23rd

Greetings from Pastor Rachel! What are you reading this summer (besides this newsletter)? 😎 I've been making my way through two books. In the morning, I've been reading *Miles to Go Before I Sleep: Letters on Hope, Death, and Learning to Live* by Claire Gilbert. She often writes about my favorite theologian, Julian of Norwich, but this book is more like a memoir. Gilbert's letters to friends and family members tell the story of her experience of blood cancer and the ways she learned to live with hope despite serious illness. In the evening, I've been reading *Murder Before Evensong*, a cozy mystery novel set in a fictional English village. Its author, Rev. Richard Coles, is an Anglican priest, as is the book's main character, Daniel Clement. He finds himself working to solve crimes while also pastoring his local parish. I love a compelling story. Stories can move us emotionally, enlighten our minds, and humanize the issues we learn about in the news. As Mr. Rogers said, "There isn't anyone you couldn't learn to love once you've heard their story."

Explore The Power of Stories and Storytelling at **THE BIG EVENT**, Saturday, August 23rd at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Tucson, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. This gathering, equally open to men and women, will connect us to other Presbyterians and strengthen our Christ-centered engagement in this world, which is yearning for the love of Jesus and his followers.



The August 23 event will feature keynote presenter **Mónica Tornoé**. Born and raised in Guatemala, Mónica is a law school graduate serving as Director of Latino Programs at Austin Presbyterian Seminary, where she oversees the Undocumented Stories Project. She is an immigration activist and coauthor of *The Truth In Our Stories: Immigrant Voices in Radical Times* and the author of a children's book, *The Holy Stranger*.

To learn more about the August 23rd **BIG EVENT**, email pby.rec.office@gmail.com. Register in advance online and make a lunch reservation (\$12 per person payable by cash or check at the event; vegetarian & gluten-free options available). Visit azpresbyteries.org and click on Newsletters; then click on Newsletter-DC and you'll see an announcement containing a registration link. Consider coordinating or joining a carpool to attend the BIG EVENT with other folks from Mountain Shadows!

Yours in the unfolding story of God's love for all,

Pastor Rachel Srubas

Mountain Shadow's Presbyterian Church's Currently Serving Deacons:

Karen Koopmans, Alida Wilkes, Eleanor Birch, Jeff Mague, Connie Wortman



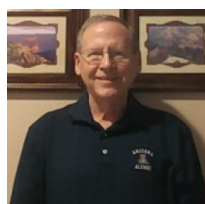
Karen Koopmans
Co-Moderator



Alida Wilkes
Co-Moderator



Ellie Birch



Jeff Mague



Connie Wortman

The ministry of deacon as set forth in scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the healing and redeeming love of Jesus Christ.

Deacons care through listening and prayer.

- Deacons practice confidentiality.
- Deacons practice kindness.
- Deacons listen to your joys and your sorrows and pray for you.

Every member and regularly attending friend of our church is part of a mini-parish and is prayed for regularly by one of our deacons. If you would like to reach out to your deacon for support but don't know who they are, you may email Judy Leonard, Office Manager, at mspcoffice@gmail.com or call 520-825-7858.

GATHERING

Sanctuary Flowers—Got a Fridge You Can Spare?

Some of you have been disappointed that there are no fresh sanctuary flowers during July and August. During these hot summer months, keeping the flowers fresh is a problem. **It would be helpful if someone has an extra refrigerator that they are not using and would be willing to put it in my garage.** This would help keep the flowers fresh until Sunday morning. It would be helpful other months, too. If you have a suggestion (or an extra refrigerator), please call me. My contact information is in the church directory.



Lynn Parker

HOSPITALITY

The Hospitality Team will be back in action starting on the first Sunday in September, September 7th. This means, coffee, tea, lemonade and all kinds of treats will be served after Sunday services, on the Ramada. If you would like to serve on our team just see me, Ginny Durand, after church on any Sunday. We can always use cookies (store bought or home made.) You can drop them off on Sundays in the kitchen, located in Room 4.

This is a great way to meet and get to know each other better during fellowship time.



See you on September 7th!!

Ginny Durand, Hospitality Moderator

A Women's Retreat: *Connecting in Love Through Our Stories*

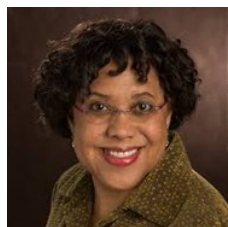


An opportunity for Presbyterian women to gather and grow in faith and friendship.

When? Friday and Saturday, October 24th through 26th

Where? Franciscan Renewal Center, a beautiful retreat setting in Scottsdale, Arizona, at 5802 East Lincoln Drive. <https://www.thecasa.org/>

For Whom? *All* Presbyterian Women of Arizona and New Mexico



Keynote Presenter & Workshop Leader? Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter, author of the women's Bible Study curriculum, *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*. Rhashell is a dynamic, respected leader in the Presbyterian Church (USA) who loves preaching, teaching, and building bridges in intercultural communities. She is a "big hit" when she leads Presbyterian Women's gatherings.

Cost? Single occupancy for 2 nights and six meals—\$435 per person; Double occupancy for 2 nights and six meals—\$345 per person. *Note: these costs are effective through postmark date August 15, 2025. Thereafter, additional late registration costs will apply.*

Payable to? Make checks payable to **PW Synod of the Southwest**

Address for mailing registration checks? Carol S. Marr, cmarr2142@gmail.com, 443 West Meadowlark Lane, Corrales, NM 87048; postmarked by August 15, 2025 to avoid late registration costs.

Registration Form? Paper registration forms are available at Mountain Shadows Church, to be mailed with checks in the amounts listed above (postmarked by 8/15/25).

Scholarships? If you need financial assistance to attend the retreat, please contact Pastor Rachel Srubas for a confidential conversation.

Questions about the retreat? Contact Chris Casanova, the Moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the Southwest, at 480-203-7567.

FRIENDSHIP Ministry

Friendship Ministry



The Friendship Ministry is a new ministry that is part of Mountain Shadows' Gathering Priority area, with Elder Pamela Schulz as moderator.

Our mission statement is based on **Matthew 22: 36-40 (CEB)**

"Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied, "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.*"

Continued

Loving our neighbors as ourselves also means we get to celebrate one another. Marking life together, taking time to celebrate significant life events, inviting one another to laugh, dance, cry and sing with us, and sharing meals together are ways we love our neighbors (based on sermon by Rev. Laura Munroe).

This ministry will focus on helping to coordinate activities outside Sunday Fellowship hour and/or the MSPC campus, such as *Table of Friends*, or others that are organized as our friendships grow and areas of common interests are discovered. We may host 2-3 events per year to which the whole congregation is invited.

Our first event, *Friendship & Refreshments Time*, was held prior to the Maundy Thursday worship service on April 17, 2025. Attendees were invited to submit their ideas for friendship ministries to explore. We received a lot – 61 ideas from 21 people. Thank you! Many had common themes to be explored moving forward.

Our second event was July 11th, a *Brown Bag Lunch and Ice Cream Social*. It was designed to be an opportunity for people to begin to get to know one another more in depth, and to provide an example of how one might seek out, greet and meet (really talk with) others that one does not know at Mountain Shadows church. We had a “Crowded Table” and a wonderful time.

We still have a lot of work to do to resume a new *Table of Friends* program, and organizing other opportunities to practice *philia* (φιλία–friendship love) together. Stay tuned.

WORSHIP & MUSIC A New Season for the MSPC Music Ministry!

It is a new season for Mountain Shadows’ Handbell, Choral Choirs, and instrumentalists! **You** are invited to join us! **PLEASE** contact me for more information.

Dates for the 3rd Annual Handbell Workshop will be announced soon. If you are interested in attending, **PLEASE** contact me!

Mountain Shadows Choir & Instrumental Ensemble begin formal rehearsals **Thursday, September 4 from 2:45-4 pm** in the Sanctuary! **Instrumentalists join the rehearsal at 3:45.**

September 14th officially begins our formal Music Ministry Season during the 10 am Service.

My October article will include information regarding the Tahoe Music Conference I attended July 27 through August 1. Thank you for your generosity in providing for my continuing education!

This year Karen Thomas & Suzanne Pennington joined me at the conference. I’m sure they will also have information to share with everyone!

Choir Rehearsals: Begin Thursday September 4 from 2:45-4pm in the sanctuary.

Instrumental Rehearsals: Scheduled with Music Director

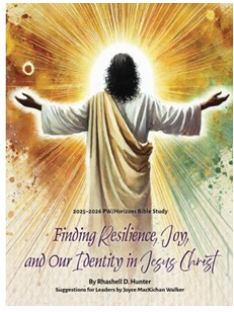
Handbell Choir & Newbies: WORKSHOP News & Dates coming soon!



PLEASE call, text, or send me an email if you would like more information about joining our Music Ministry! **WE NEED YOU!** 520-982-2437 bcdame@comcast.net

Charmaine Piane Dame, Music Director

LEARNING: Women's Bible Study



Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ

By: Rhashell D. Hunter

This fall, the Mountain Shadows Women's Bible Study group will begin to gather for thoughtful discussions based on the 2025-26 PW/Horizons Bible study, *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*, by Rhashell D. Hunter, with Suggestions for Leaders by Joyce MacKichan Walker. Resilience is the ability to spring back into shape and to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy and stress. Joy is more than happiness but instead relying on putting our full trust in God. Our Identity is not found in our titles and possessions, but only in Jesus Christ.

Mountain Shadows' Women's Bible Study group invites all women to join us for nine lessons on Tuesday afternoons at 1:00 pm, October - March (one or two per month, dates to be announced). We welcome Marilyn C. and Dorothy G. as leaders this year. If you are interested, please **RSVP by August 13th** to our Office Manager, Judy Leonard, at mspcoffice@gmail.com, using the subject line **"Women's 25-26 Bible Study"**. Please also indicate whether you would like a regular print or large print version of the study book. When you submit your request, please also send a check for \$18 payable to MSPC with "Women's Bible Study book" in the memo line.

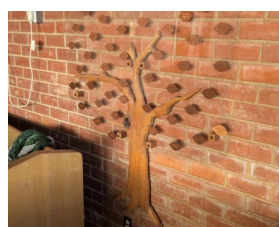
TENDING

SESSION of MOUNTAIN SHADOWS, Report from Session Clerk Jeff Mague

An opportunity to demonstrate our Christian love towards each other has come to us. The Community Presbyterian Church of San Manuel, pastored by Rev. Jeff Dixon, has made the difficult decision to close its doors due to a reduction in membership, making it impractical to maintain an active church. Officially, they will transition from a church to a fellowship, meeting in each other's homes each week. The church has served San Manuel and the larger Tri-Community for 68 years.

We now have the opportunity to fulfill one of their hopes that some of their church will continue to speak to God's creation and love for everyone. The Session has agreed on three items. A Celtic cross, which has been greeting congregants as they walk into their church, will be brought to Mountain Shadows and placed in the area across from room 1 in the multi-purpose building. We are also going to receive a beautiful tree of life, to be placed in our sanctuary. Most importantly, we will receive the ashes of two of their members that currently rest in their memorial garden, to be placed in the new extension of our columbarium, as it is not practical to keep the memorial garden maintained.

May God's blessings come to their current congregants with our prayers and support.





**We Stand With the Vulnerable: A Letter to the Church from Rev. Jihyun Oh,
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and Executive Director of the Interim
Unified Agency of the Presbyterian Church (USA)**

Dear Siblings in Christ Jesus and Fellow Disciples of our Crucified and Risen Lord,

Scripture reminds us that as Christ Jesus journeyed to the cross, he was also entrusting his earthly ministry to his disciples. Failing to understand, the disciples found themselves arguing about who would be greatest. To this, Jesus says, “The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted” (Matthew 23:11–12).

This is the heart of leadership, especially for any who would claim to be “Christian”—to serve others instead of insisting on one’s own greatness, to lift up others instead of pushing them down, to show honor to the least instead of denigrating their humanity, to use one’s power and authority to work toward the wholeness of God’s beloved world instead of harming those who are most vulnerable in society.

We find ourselves in a nation in which leaders who purport to be Christian are attacking those who preach the mercy and love of Christ Jesus, arresting those who pray for justice, and using their position of leadership to harm the most vulnerable and to enrich themselves and their friends and allies by impoverishing those who have much less. Instead of emulating Christ’s earthly ministry of justice and love that brought God’s reign of wholeness and peace, these leaders seek to create a society that is marked by fracture and violence, a society in which power matters more than truth, winning more than communion and the good of the whole. Instead of working for a world in which strangers and foreigners can become neighbors, the weak and sick are protected, and the young and lonely are embraced, they build up dividing walls of hostility, threaten the vulnerable, and ridicule the marginalized. This is not Christian. This is not Christian leadership.

As the Co-Moderators of the 226th General Assembly and I [wrote in December](#), as a Christian, Reformed, Presbyterian denomination, we as the PC(USA) will be a church for this time and place as God calls us to be. And we will act in accordance with our biblical and theological values that have also guided the actions of our General Assemblies, both PC(USA) and our predecessor denominations, in the discernment of our policies.

We will continue to stand with and for the most vulnerable in our society, whether that is because of status, identity, ability, resources, or any other factor; all bear the image of God. In our common life as a denomination, we will continue to pursue representation and full participation of all in the life of our denomination as we continue living into unity in our diversity. We will continue to stand with and for LGBTQIA+ siblings and communities and act to resist efforts to denigrate or harm them, or exclude them from the promise of the fullness of life.

We will work toward the day of God’s wholeness when all tears are wiped away, weapons are hammered into plowshares, hunger and violence are no more, Earth and all that inhabit it are restored, and God’s love and justice reign. (*Letter continues on the next page.*)

A Letter to the Church from Rev. Jihyun Oh—Cont'd

As Reformed Christians, our Sovereign God calls us to involvement in the world instead of being apart from it. And our involvement should be more than words. The Church's call is to follow Christ, "entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life" [PC(USA) Book of Order, F-1.0301].

As Presbyterians, the Lord of our conscience calls us to stand up against the abuse of power and authority, especially when it is done in the name of Christ but not in the image and likeness of Christ and his earthly ministry.

Our God calls us and our cloud of witnesses calls out to us and strengthens us by their witness to the love and justice of Christ Jesus in the world.

Taking a stand against the rise of the Nazi party, the Confessing Church movement in Germany drafted the 1934 [Theological Declaration of Barmen](#), asserting that Christ alone is Lord of the church and Sovereign of the world: "Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death" [PC(USA) Book of Confessions, 8.11].

Our God calls us and also sends us.

God sends the Church to work for justice in the world: exercising its power for the common good; dealing honestly in personal and public spheres; seeking dignity and freedom for all people; welcoming strangers in the land; promoting justice and fairness in the law; overcoming disparities between rich and poor; bearing witness against systems of violence and oppression; and redressing wrongs against individuals, groups, and peoples [PC(USA) Book of Order, W-5.0303].

So many in the church, in faithful discipleship to Jesus Christ, have been working for and toward God's justice and love in the world. In the coming weeks and months, more will be shared about what Presbyterians are doing and can join to do.

Romans 12:9-16, 21 reminds us:

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Let us not despair even as we grieve the brokenness and the pain we witness. Let us not lose heart. Let our discipleship be a faithful witness to what it means to be "Christian" in this time. May it be so for all of us.

The Rev. Jihyun Oh

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Executive Director of the Interim Unified Agency

FACILITIES

What's New Happening on MSPC Campus?



Oh, no we have a huge “Black Snake” on Campus. “Oh, yes! It’s a Good Snake.”

Pro Tip:

This is why you don’t kill black snakes/ king snakes/rat snakes which are constrictors and resistant to copperhead, rattlesnake, and cottonmouth venom, which is why venomous snakes are easy prey for them. They can easily overpower most venomous species.

Your property is much safer with these snakes allowed to be there.

- ♦ **You can join free:** Join *AZ Animals FREE* to get amazing animal facts, printable animal activities, and much more sent directly to you, Written by Emmanuel Kingsley Updated: April 10, 2023 <https://a-z-animals.com/blog/7-black-snakes-in-arizona/>

We always need volunteers to assist with facilities that includes Opening/Closing, etc. If you see a need for an improvement, please feel free to contact: Therese or Chris – our information is in the church directory.

Co-Moderators & Elders, Therese Griffin & Chris Maitin

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Below is a financial summary of the Operating Budget showing the most recent month, year-to-date results, the year-to-date budget, and the prior year-to-date results. Please **contact Church Treasurer Judy Mague if you have any questions.**

| Monthly Financial Report - Operating Budget | | | | |
|---|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| June 2025 | ----- | 2025 | ----- | 2024 |
| | June | Year-to-Date | Year-to-Date | |
| | Actual | Actual | Budget | Year-to-Date Actual |
| Regular Offerings | \$ 22,566 | \$ 151,455 | \$ 142,242 | \$ 138,232 |
| Other Income | 1,206 | 5,539 | 2,156 | 5,935 |
| Total Income | \$ 23,772 | \$ 156,994 | \$ 144,398 | \$ 144,167 |
| Total Expense | \$ 26,632 | \$ 134,130 | \$ 144,789 | \$ 144,896 |
| Income less Expense | \$ (2,860) | \$ 22,864 | \$ (391) | \$ (729) |

Judy Mague, Treasurer

*“Patience and diligence, like faith, remove mountains.” — William Penn
...a thought from the Legacy Ministry*

VENTURING

COMMUNICATIONS



Check Out Our Website

(www.mountainshadowschurch.org)

On the website, you can find current and historical information related to our church life. Note that each week, both the “[Weekly Update](#)” found on the opening page and the “[News and Events](#)” page are updated. As new information becomes available, other sites are updated. If you have suggested edits to the website, let Dan Engeljohn know.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Mission & Mercy: Presbyterians Respond to Flooding in the Texas Hill Country

This is an abridged version of an article by Mike Ferguson that you can read in its entirety at: <https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2025/7/5/presbyterians-respond-quickly-and-compassionately-rapid-flooding-texas-hill-country>

Destructive fast-moving waters along the Guadalupe River rose 26 feet in just 45 minutes before dawn on [July 4, 2025]. At least one Presbyterian was among the many who tragically died in the floodwaters. Jane Ragsdale, a ruling elder at [First Presbyterian Church of Kerrville](#), died in the flooding. She was camp director at [Heart O' the Hills Camp for Girls](#) in Hunt, Texas.

[Mo-Ranch is a beloved Presbyterian Conference center in the Texas Hill Country.] Many of Mo-Ranch's 83 full-time staff have been finding ways to help their Kerrville neighbors affected by the floodwaters.

The Rev. Kathy Lee Cornell, the Synod of the Sun's disaster response manager, said the floodwaters have impacted both Mission and [Tres Rios](#) presbyteries. Cornell said conversations are underway with [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) over sending an emotional care team into the affected area. "We want to pay attention to how folks are processing and grieving this event," she said. "We are monitoring, and we will share any information we learn and provide resources when they are needed."

The president of Schreiner University in Kerrville, Dr. Charlie McCormick, reported the university lodged some campers who had to be evacuated. Staff "created a space where some very fragile girls who had been through hell could find peace and a place to sleep," McCormick said in an email. "Throughout the night they kept watch, managing the despair of families desperately seeking information on their missing loved ones and the extraordinary reunion of each camper with her family. Some 50 first responders stayed on campus that evening, too, grabbing a few hours of sleep before leaving again for the rescue and recovery work."

Go [here](#) to donate to disaster relief for U.S. flooding. Funds in this account will help communities' overall relief and recovery efforts associated with flooding to include assessments, clean-up efforts, and rebuilding. Your prayers and faithful giving are deeply appreciated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



The next publication of the Oracle will be for October. Submissions for the **October 2025 Oracle** are due **Monday, September 15th**.

Email your submissions to mspcoffice@gmail.com.

Please limit your articles to 300 words or fewer.



Mountain Shadows'
Summer office hours are:
Monday through Thursday
9:00 am to 1:00 pm.
Closed Fridays





August 2025



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 1 Office Closed | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 Office Closed | 9 |
| 10 10:00 In-person/ Zoom Worship | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 Office Closed; postmark deadline, women's re- treat registra- tion | 16 |
| 17 10:00 In-person/ Zoom Worship | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 Office Closed | 23 BIG EVENT Az Presbyteries at Northminster Church |
| 24 10:00 In-person/ Zoom Worship | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 Office Closed | 30 |
| 31 10:00 In-person/ Zoom Worship: HYMN SING! | | | | <p>Mountain Shadows' Summer office hours are: Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Closed Fridays</p> | | |

September 2025



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|-----|--|--|-----|-----|
| Note: Pastor Rachel will take some study leave in September. Preachers to be announced! | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 10:00 Finance Mtg 2:45 Choir Rehearsal | 5 | 6 |
| 7 10:00 Communion Worship; Hospitality after worship resumes. | 8 6:00—OV Jazz Rehearsal | 9 | 10 1:00 Session | 11 2:45 Choir Rehearsal | 12 | 13 |
| 14 10:00 In-person/ Zoom Worship | 15 Oracle Articles Due 6:00—OV Jazz Rehearsal | 16 | 17 | 18 2:45 Choir Rehearsal | 19 | 20 |
| 21 10:00 In-person/ Zoom Worship | 22 6:00—OV Jazz Rehearsal | 23 | 24 | 25 2:45 Choir Rehearsal | 26 | 27 |
| 28 10:00 In-person/ Zoom Worship | 29 6:00—OV Jazz Rehearsal | 30 | <div>  <p>Mountain Shadows Church's Non-Summer Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.</p> </div> | | | |



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FAX: 520-825-7860
Email: MountainShadowsOffice@gmail.com
Website: www.mountainshadowschurch.org

Centered in Christ, Caring for Community

Mountain Shadows Presbyterian Church

Office Hours:
Mornings
Monday - Friday
Rev. Rachel M. Srubas, Pastor
(520) 664-6970
Charmaine Piane Dame, Director of Music
Judy Leonard, Office Manager
(520) 825-7858

Mountain Shadows Presbyterian Church

Centered in Christ, Caring for Community

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship Services

10:00a.m.

Fellowship and Refreshments

11:15a.m.

Mission Statement

Mountain Shadows Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), is a Christ-centered fellowship, called to live a disciples of Jesus Christ as we care for our community and our world.

We strive to share the good news of the Gospel with each other and the surrounding communities, and to interact with love and grace with all of God's creation.