

Grace Notes

Newsletter of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia

Rector's Reflections

February 2007

"Lex orandi, lex credendi."

In a culture over saturated with verbiage, including blogs, e-mails, sound bites, voice mails and constant debate, it's important to remember one of the great maxims foundational to our identity as Christians, "*Lex orandi, lex credendi.*" This is the Latin translation for "*The rule of prayer is the rule of belief.*" How we pray becomes what we believe.

For at least three centuries before the Church decided on the Creeds and the Canon of Holy Scripture, Christians prayed. Their prayer life shaped what they came to know as the truth expressed in the Creeds and Scripture. Corporate prayer was set within the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Individual prayer used the image of the Holy Trinity; God the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier of all life.

We have seen the war of words recently in many media outlets including Washington's *Post* and *Times* as the conflict continues between our Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and parishes that have left. Legal battles over property have already started. National and even international attention has come our way. Perhaps family and friends from other parts of the country have asked you, "What's going on in Northern Virginia?"

Those who have left have tried to hide under their attempt to make this all a "theological issue." They have charged that those faithful to the Episcopal Church and our Bishop have abandoned the "great truths of the Bible and the Creeds." They maintain "The Episcopal Church no longer believes the historic, orthodox Christian faith..."

Do not believe these words. Do you witness any of this "revisionism" at Grace Church? Have you heard Bishop Lee deny the Incarnation or call the Resurrection "fiction"?

It is sad that those who have left have to resort to such self-serving judgments. We pray for them. We pray for our mission and ministry as a parish, diocese, national Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion. Living so close to the capital and to the life of politics should help us not to be shocked by this latest war of words.

In our individual silent prayer we can encounter the One, True and Living God. The Holy Spirit will guide us to all truth as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ promised. Our belief in God's grace and love grows out of the reality we encounter at every Holy Eucharist. May the present controversies deepen our life of prayer and our core beliefs. "*Lex orandi, lex credendi.*"

— *The Rev. Robert H. Malm, Rector*

Inside this Issue

Curate's Corner	2
From the Parish Register	2
The Sacrament of Penance	3
Stewardship	3
Clergy Wellness Fund	3
Senior Warden's Report	4
Holiday Giving Programs	4
Nave Needlepoint Project Update	5
Shrine Mont Reflections	5
February Birthdays	6
Graceful Worship	6
2007 Lenten Series	7
Parish Notes	7
What is the "Food Pantry"?	8



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SESQUICENTENNIAL
1855-2005

Worship Schedule

Sunday Schedule

Holy Eucharist Rite 1	7:30 am
Child care	8:45 am–12:45 pm
La Santa Eucaristía	9:00 am
Choral Eucharist Rite 2	9:00 am
Christian ed classes	10:15 am
Choral Eucharist Rite 1	11:15 am
Holy Eucharist Rite 2	5:00 pm

Weekday Eucharist

Mondays, Rite 1	6:30 pm
Tuesdays, Rite 2 with healing ...	6:30 pm
Wednesdays, Rite 1	7:00 am
Thursdays, Rite 2	7:00 am
Fridays, Rite 1	12:15 pm

Grace Church is:

- ✧ A center for worship and fellowship
- ✧ A school for discipleship and stewardship
- ✧ A community for healing and outreach

About Grace Notes

Grace Notes is published 10 times a year by Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia—monthly except for combined July/August and December/January issues. Deadlines for submitting copy are by midnight on the 15th of the preceding month. Next Grace Notes deadline: February 15 for the March issue. Articles may be placed in the Grace Notes folder in the credenza in the Commons, submitted by e-mail (grace.notes@gracealex.org) or faxed to 703-549-2832. All articles are subject to editing. Grace Church's newsletter team includes Barry Barr (editor), Michelle Cox, Jane Rosman, Ashby Rushing, Alice Russell, Beth Wiggers and Margaret Will.

The Curate's Corner

Talk Back to the Pulpit

This spring, I'll be undertaking a new project here at Grace Church: the College of Preachers Core Curriculum Program. The College has a special ministry of supporting and developing preachers; many of you may already be familiar with its gray stone buildings on the north side of the National Cathedral.

As a part of the Core Curriculum program, I'll be attending two conferences this spring, supplementing sessions I've already taken. More noticeably, I'll be working on my preaching on Sunday mornings. You may hear me preach in new or unusual ways, and a committee will be meeting with me to reflect on certain sermons. I'll also have those sermons videotaped as a

means of analyzing them in more detail.

The College suggests that “the program strengthens the totality of the preaching life for the preacher and the congregation.” It encourages me to preach in a way that listens to the congregation's concerns—and, hopefully, it encourages thoughtful listening and reflection on your part.

I encourage your comments and insights as I progress through the program this spring. You don't have to be a part of the listening committee to let me know what you think; I'm glad to hear from as many voices as possible as part of the preaching process.

— *The Rev. Anne Michele Turner,*
Assistant Rector

From the Parish Register

Baptisms

- Ava Grace Fraser. Daughter of Joseph and Rhonda Fraser
- Soma Mate Fulwiler, son of Matthew and Krisztina Fulwiler
- Joseph Francis Madigan, son of Matthew and Kathryn Madigan
- Avery Lane Ha Meeks, daughter of William and Maxine Meeks, granddaughter of Joe and Claudine Donovan

Transfers in

- Laurie Harwood and baptized children Barrett and Alston from St. James Church, Charleston, SC
- Patrick Bryan Harwood, baptized member

New members per baptismal information

- David W. Dellefield
- Diane P. Dellefield
- Erica Paule McFarquhar
- Christopher Glen Moore

- Richard Michael Slater
- Michael Soraghan
- Jessica Tefft-Soraghan
- Savannah Soraghan
- Sara Reed Zaza

Transfers out

- Joseph and Catherine McLean, with children Joseph and Miriam, to St. Alban's Church, Washington, D.C.
- Nancy Jo Poulton to the Cathedral Church of St. James, Chicago

Marriages

- Yara Irene Garcia Cespedes and Scott Christopher Hickok, son of Phil and Sharon Hickok
- Berkeley Mary Elizabeth Smith and Keith Michael Dobbs, son of Mike and Lina Dobbs

Burial

- Margot Hamilton

— *Dorothy Daniel*

The Sacrament of Penance

commonly known as confession and absolution

This Sacrament of the Church is always available, but traditionally it is emphasized during the Season of Lent. You will see in the weekly bulletin that there are special times set aside by the clergy for confessions or the opportunity to ask for an appointment. A summary concerning the Rite of the Reconciliation of a Penitent is found on p.446 in the Book of Common Prayer. There is also a small booklet in our tract rack you may use as a guide. If you make a practice of self-examination, it will not be hard to write down your sins (so that you will not forget them when you come to make your confession.) The General Confession we say during the Liturgy does not allow time for examination. A Sacramental Confession requires a special effort of recollecting your sins and feeling

contrition, sorrow, and sincere repentance for your sins. You will find Grace in counsel and absolution by a priest of the Church. Martin Thornton wrote in Christian Proficiency, “It seems curious that while so many good pagans want to be married in Church, so few bad Christians want to be forgiven in Church.” You may not be a bad Christian, but remember we all are sinners. Avail yourself of this Sacrament and you will find your soul cleansed and strengthened.

The clergy are always available to talk with those interested in both the spirituality and the practice of the Rite of Reconciliation, private Confession. Please contact the Rector or Assistant if you have any questions and/or wish to learn more about confession.

—Polly Spahr

Clergy Wellness Fund

The Vestry on October 17 voted to create a new Grace Church Clergy Wellness Fund thanks to a generous contribution from Forrest Rittgers in honor of his mother, Gail, our much loved parishioner who died January 16, 2005.

The money, \$20,000, will be invested with the Diocese of Virginia. Income from the Fund will be disbursed annually to Grace Church and used, at the direction of the Executive Committee of the Vestry, to “offset the cost of retreats, continuing education programs, conferences, and other programs that nurture and support the clergy of Grace Episcopal

Church” in the words of the official resolution creating the Fund. Others are welcome to contribute to this new Fund.

The Diocese of Virginia maintains financial portfolios to assist parishes with endowment and other investment needs. Grace Church established a Trust Fund a number of years ago to build a general endowment for the parish. The diocese also manages the Ruth Hastings Fund for Grace Church – a bequest from a former parishioner in which the parish benefits from the income but cannot use the principal.

— Cleve Corlett, Senior Warden

Stewardship Thanks You

At the start of our annual pledge campaign some months ago, Grace Church parishioners were reminded the best way to thank the Lord for their many blessings was to give some back to Him by giving to Grace Church.

Grace Church members responded enthusiastically. As this is being written, 356 Grace Church families, couples and individuals have pledged nearly \$880,000 for 2007.

Some highlights:

- This year’s pledges total an eight percent increase over last year.
- Fifteen percent were new pledges to Grace Church.
- Among previous pledges, forty-five percent were larger than last year; forty-two percent were the same.
- The average pledge amount continues to rise.

Thanks to you and God, Grace Church remains strong and can continue to spread His word throughout the kingdom of God.

Not Through Yet

The campaign is not over yet. We have yet to hear from a number of parishioners who pledged last year but have not yet submitted a pledge for this year. If you have not pledged for 2007, please do so. Members of the stewardship committee will be reaching out to those members who have yet to submit a pledge in the coming weeks.

— Stephanie Reed and Howell Medley,
Stewardship Coordinators

Senior Warden's Report

The year 2006 was a year of transition for members of Grace Church – a time between our gala sesquicentennial celebrations in 2005 and what is expected to be an ambitious plan of capital improvements in 2007 – replacement of the organ, remodeling the choir loft, and providing much-needed updating of our physical plant.

For the Vestry there were a number of important milestones:

- The beginning of a long-range planning process under the leadership of Barry Joyner.
- An agreement between the school and the church to share costs on a more equitable basis. Rather than a fixed contribution from the school to the church, we will now split costs as

evenly as possible according to actual use.

- Development of plans to replace the organ, which experts agree cannot be repaired in a cost-effective manner. These plans have been the subject of parish forums and were the topic of discussion at the annual meeting.
- An “energy audit” was done to secure recommendations for upgrading our aging HVAC system. It provides a wealth of information for possible modifications to the HVAC system as part of a capital campaign.
- In the spring of 2006, Grace was selected to participate in a survey of congregational life

among major American denominations; 274 Grace parishioners filled out a lengthy questionnaire. The results provide a wealth of demographic information that will be invaluable to future parish leaders and for consideration as we adopt long-range plans.

I close on a personal note. Serving as senior warden for the past year has been an honor and a privilege. I thank the Vestry, our clergy, our dedicated office staff, the many volunteers who work so hard to make this parish such a special place, and my patient wife Ruth for all their support and encouragement over the past 12 months.

— Cleve Corlett, Senior Warden

Holiday Giving Programs

Each year the Grace Outreach Committee (with the help of the Salvation Army) organizes Thanksgiving and Christmas giving programs. I have organized these programs for the past five years and each year I walk away feeling very blessed by family and material comfort, but more importantly for being part of a community that is loving and generous. This year we provided food for 40 families at Thanksgiving and you should have seen the food! No family received less than enough food to last a week and most probably two to three weeks! If you have not participated

in this effort in the past, I highly recommend it.

There was a family with young children scheduled to receive a Thanksgiving basket from Grace Church but we had an incomplete address and the phone was not working. They had a 2 year old and an infant –so they had to have the food! A member of the apartment office staff spent the entire day tracking down this family. I was taken by the fact that this lady did not know me, did not know the family, but felt it as important as I did to make sure that they received their basket. What a blessing to know that

there are kind strangers out there willing to help us.

Our Christmas giving program is no less impressive. Families received both food and gifts. This year 10 child angels, 10 senior angels and 6 families were sponsored. I do know that our parishioners are always anxious and excited to participate in this program and really enjoy bringing some holiday cheer into the lives of others. Thank you again for another good year. If you are interested in helping organize this program next year, please contact me at sally.schneider@gracealex.org or 703-683-1848.

— Sally Schneider

Nave Needlepoint Kneeler Project Update

NEEDLEPOINT KNEELER STATUS REPORT

We have reached 10% of our goal to cover all of the pews with hand-stitched needlepoint patterns that have been designed especially for Grace Church by Tricia Lamb Bamford. As we begin 2007, stitching is in progress on 30 additional kneelers. More donors and stitchers are welcome at any time. Call Connie Troyer (703-548-8249) for more information.

NEEDLEPOINT KNEELER DEDICATED

The 8th memorial needlepoint kneeler in the Nave was dedicated on December 31 during the 7:30 a.m. service. *Symbols of the Apostles* was donated by June Ward in thanksgiving for her husband, Carl Seward. June also did the needlepoint stitching.

MEMORIAL NEEDLEPOINT KNEELER BOOK

The Memorial Needlepoint Kneeler book that is now on display in the Narthex contains information about the 8 kneelers that have been installed so far in the Nave. As new kneelers are finished and dedicated, more pages will be added. The book contains information about the donors, dedications and names of the needlepoint stitchers as well as illustrations of the designs and a history of needlepoint in Grace Church. Maps showing locations of each kneeler are also available on the display stand. The project was begun in 2005 as part of Grace Church's Sesquicentennial commemorations. Each refurbished kneeler is a memorial gift to the church and will be part of our legacy for future generations of parishioners.

NEW DISPLAY CASES FOR MEMORIAL BOOKS

A new exhibit case is in place in the Narthex to display the Memorial Needlepoint Kneelers book. The solid oak glass-topped case with a hinged top and interior light was designed and built by Ralph Lewis in the workshop behind his and Mildred's home on Holly Street. Ralph is also handcrafting a matching exhibit case for the Grace Church Memorials book. The two pieces, which will be dedicated at a Sunday service, complement the oak tract rack (near the Narthex entrance) built by Ralph last year. The parish joins together in thanking Ralph for these magnificent gifts which add to the beauty of our church and enable us to share information about memorial donations.

— Ruth Corlett

Shrine Mont 2007: Renewed by the Spirit

— Come Empty, Leave Full

Have you experienced Shrine Mont yet? Are you thinking about going or returning next fall? To give you a glimpse of what you can expect, Shrine Mont 07 Coordinators Mike and Halina asked several parishioners to share what they enjoyed about their experience at Shrine Mont 06. Here is Alison Smith's story and strategy.

Shrine Mont Reflections **Alison Smith**

Knowing that my husband was previously committed to work during the weekend of Shrine Mont, I was very hesitant to register to go. I thought of all the possible negative aspects: feeling unfamiliar with what to expect, handling the burden of packing, and traveling alone with three kids under age 5! Then I thought of the biggest positive – getting to know the people of Grace Church in a relaxed, fun setting. So I

packed some toys for the baby, some movies for the kids, some wine for me, and off we went! Our experience at Shrine Mont was better than I could ever imagine. We felt welcomed immediately, and the activities that were planned for the kids and me kept us busy and having fun all weekend. I especially appreciated both the child care that was available all weekend and the offers of help from everyone there throughout the weekend. We will definitely make Shrine Mont an annual adventure!

February Birthdays

2/1	Christopher Moore	2/12	John Russell	2/21	Anne McFadden
2/1	Michelle Ort	2/13	Libby Padilla	2/22	Ned Goodnow
2/2	Laura Kendrick	2/13	Lucy-Lee Reed	2/22	Jean Goodson
2/2	Karla Merritt	2/13	Theresa Yeannakis	2/23	Claudine Donovan
2/3	Makenzie Brookins	2/14	Megan Laboy	2/23	Lauren Gustafson
2/3	Kyle Laemmler	2/14	Stu Perry	2/23	Jack Herring
2/3	Elizabeth McCann	2/14	Dawn Alee Yerkes	2/23	James Holloway
2/3	Tony Sosa	2/15	Catherine Giacomo	2/23	Carole Hunt
2/4	Adrienne Durand	2/16	Jack Hamilton	2/23	Evan Robinson
2/4	Emma Grimes	2/16	Aidan Koelbl	2/23	Nancy Robinson
2/4	Lottie Henry	2/16	Jose Rodriguez	2/23	Annice van der Sluis
2/4	Alma Deane MacConomy	2/16	Matthew Wiggins	2/24	Matt Centers
2/4	Mike Soraghan	2/17	Shirley Shaw Carroll	2/24	Carole Guzzetta
2/5	Paulette Fitzgerald	2/17	Kate Reeder	2/24	Connor Murphy
2/5	Marion Rice	2/17	Kevin Sherlock	2/24	Renée Rutkowski
2/6	Claire Terry	2/18	Jamie Grimes	2/24	Pat Schreiner
2/7	Alexandra Feeley	2/18	Catherine Terry	2/25	Mildred Lewis
2/7	Joseph Giacomo	2/19	Ashley Spencer	2/25	Kerrigan O'Malley
2/9	Eleanor McKay	2/19	Mary Toler	2/25	Amelia Page
2/10	Bert David	2/20	Lily Dougherty	2/25	Alberto Trejo
2/10	Laurie Harwood	2/20	Ella Negley	2/26	Jay Burgess
2/10	Betty Lawson	2/20	Robin Taylor	2/26	Betty Jones
2/12	Elizabeth Legere	2/20	Sophia Vassallo	2/26	Jeffrey Lundgren

Graceful Worship

Our New Church

On December 5, 1948 Bishop Goodwin laid the cornerstone for the new church, our new church. The old church, located at 207 South Patrick Street had been sold the previous year after the congregation recognized a great shift in the demographics of the area. Our congregation was 93 years old and had decided to relocate to a section of the city where many Episcopalians had moved. There were 151 communicants at that time and it is recorded that many members

mortgaged their own personal property such as houses and businesses to raise the money necessary to build the new church. Milton L. Grigg designed the building in the English Gothic style and it was constructed from local fieldstone. Many additions and changes have been added to the new church since 1948: the school, the beautifully carved wooden panels on the doors, and the memorial pulpit are just a few; the new church even has a new

narthex! Through all these changes there is a common thread; all is given and all is done to the Glory of God. As Bishop Gray instructed, "Stewardship is all that I am and all that I do with all that I have after I say I believe." There is much evidence that this is a congregation, old and new, that has lived into that message for a very long time.

— Michelle Cox

Discover "Living Water"

The Education Committee has planned a Monday evening Lenten series entitled "Living Water" that will help us examine our baptismal covenant and focus on how to more fully live it. Our experience with the speakers this year—some familiar to us and some new—is that they are holy people from whom we can learn much.

- "Living Water: Spirit" on February 26, based on the covenant "Continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers." We are still working on obtaining a speaker for this evening;
- "Living Water: Holy" on March 5, based on the covenant "Persevere in resisting evil and, whenever we fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord." This program will be led by the Rev. Martin J. Smith;
- "Living Water: Evangel" on March 12, based on the covenant "Proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ." This program will be led by the Rt. Rev. Jane Holmes Dixon;
- "Living Water: Love" on March 19, based on the covenant "Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself." This program will be led by the Rev. Elbert Ransom, Jr.;

- "Living Water: Right-Relationship" on March 26, based on the covenant "Strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." This program will be led by the Rev. Jesús Reyes.

We will celebrate the Holy Eucharist at 6:30 pm and serve supper at 7:15 pm. Talks begin at 7:45 pm and, with discussion, end by 8:45 pm. There are also programs for children and youth.

— Jo Belser and Donna Triplett

Parish Notes

UTO Report

This year we surpassed all other years in giving to the United Thank Offering (UTO) with a total of \$4,055.37.

Thanks be to God, and to the 117 participants who made it possible.

This amount is more than enough to fund any one of three grants from the 2006 list: to purchase mattresses to be used by migrant workers in North Carolina, to make a church and parish hall in Wisconsin accessible to persons with disabilities, or to staff a program in New York teaching computer skills to laborers to enhance their employability. "Bless those who will benefit from these gifts," we pray in the UTO prayer. And bless Grace Church for responding generously to the UTO appeal.

— Georgiana Greeley, UTO Coordinator

Parish Staff

Robert Malm Rector
(rector@gracealex.org)	
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(assistant.lector@gracealex.org)	
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..... Parish Administrator	
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Beth Wiggers Administrative Associate
(office@gracealex.org)	
Pedro Hernández Sexton

Vestry

Class of 2006

Tricia Bamford	..... Worship
Cleve Corlett	..... Senior Warden
June Huber	..... Register
Chris Kupczyk	
..... Executive Committee Member-at-Large	
Stephanie Reed	..... Stewardship

Class of 2007

Mary Hix	..... Evangelism
Mike Jones	..... School Board
Vola Lawson	..... Treasurer
Chris Rugazyk	..... Junior Warden
Barbara Sherlock	..... Outreach

Class of 2008

Jo Belser	..... Education
Cindy Diehl	..... Pastoral Care
Jane Rosman	..... Communications
Richard Smith	..... TNT
Jan Spence	..... Fellowship

Alternates

Linda Durand	..... Assistant Treasurer
Jennifer Eckel	..... Youth/School Board

Youth observer

Laura Bellantoni

Non-vestry coordinators

Michelle Cox	..... Communications
Donna Triplett	..... Education
John and Khacki Berry	..... Evangelism
Anne Caputo	..... Fellowship
Amanda Smoot	..... Outreach
Nancy Robinson	..... Pastoral Care
Howell Medley Stewardship
Jenny Wolff TNT
Joe Donovan Worship
David Crosby Youth

Grace Notes

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

What is the "Food Pantry"?

You've probably seen the signs and the notices in the bulletin, but don't know what or where the Food Pantry is. The Pantry is located across the Commons from the church office and is staffed by parishioner volunteers on Monday and Tuesday afternoons from 1-3 pm and Friday nights from 6:30-7:30 pm. The Food Pantry provides emergency food supplies to clients who are referred by the Alexandria Department of Human Services or other agencies. In 2006 we served 431 households, up 32% from 1996, and distributed 1010 bags of food. Donations to the Food Fund provide funds to buy supplies for the Food Pantry.

Our goal is to provide about a 3-day supply of food based on the number of people in the household. We try to provide a balanced assortment taking into account the food we have available. Because it is only for emergency needs, clients may not receive food more than once a month. For families with children, we also distribute a voucher for a small amount that can be used at the Foodway Market around the corner.

Food comes from several sources. The Capital Area Food Bank supplies some food at no cost (except paperwork) from the USDA. It is always interesting to see what is available – rice, canned fruits and vegetables, beef stew, salmon, shelf-stable milk and boxed cereal are typical. We can buy other food from the Capital Area Food Bank for 9 cents a pound. Grace Episcopal School regularly collects food for us. There is also a collection basket in the Merrow Hall entryway with a sign indicating what we currently need.

In 2006 Grace Church received an "Outstanding Agency Award" from the Capital Area Food Bank in recognition of our work providing emergency food supplies through the Food Pantry.

We are very appreciative of the support Grace Church parishioners give The Food Pantry – for the volunteers who provide staff and the contributions we receive. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara.Sherlock@gracealex.org.

— Barbara Sherlock, Vestry Outreach Coordinator
February 2007