

Grace Notes

Newsletter of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia

Rector's Reflections

The Word Made Flesh

We have a wonderful and unique liturgical tradition at Grace Church: the Celebrant and those serving at the altar genuflect during the Nicene Creed as we say, "...*he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man...*" This, of course, refers to Jesus, God's only son.

This is the truth St. John describes in the opening verses of his Gospel, "...*the word became flesh and lived among us...full of grace and truth...*"

It is this gift that we prepare for and anticipate during the season of Advent, beginning on December 2. It is the grace we celebrate every Christmas for 12 full days. It is the truth we proclaim and make manifest in our world during the season of Epiphany, starting on January 6.

We genuflect at other times during the liturgy, but this first genuflection, during the Creed, reminds us of how it all starts with the birth of Jesus!

Fr. Ronald Rolheiser in his book, *The Holy Longing*, writes about the three great gifts we receive because Jesus is "*born for us.*"

First, God is always and everywhere in our world.

God takes on flesh so that every home becomes a church, every child becomes the Christ-child, and all food and drink become a sacrament, God's many faces are now everywhere, in flesh, tempered and turned down, so that our human eyes can see him. God, in his many-faced face, has become as accessible, and visible, as the nearest water tap.

Second, God works through us – you, me, the Church.

...in the incarnation God has chosen, marvelously, to let his power flow through us, to let our flesh give reality to his power...What a wonderful description of the incarnation. It is too good to be true. It is precisely because of this incredible, unimaginable, goodness that we sing so joyfully in the Christmas carol: "Joy to the world, the Lord has come!" In Jesus' birth, something fundamental has changed. God has given us the power, literally, to keep each other out of hell.

Third, Jesus continues to dwell among us.

*The word did not just become flesh and dwell among us—it became flesh and **continues** to dwell among us. In the body of believers and in the Eucharist, God still has physical skin and can still be physically seen, touched, smelled, heard, and tasted.....If it is true that we are the Body of Christ, and it is, then God's presence in the world today depends very much upon us. We have to keep God present in the world in the same way as Jesus did. (p. 80)*

What does all this mean? Christmas is as much about us as it is about Jesus. Christmas is as real today and tomorrow, here and now, as it was in Bethlehem long ago.

The parish staff and I wish you all God's blessings for the holy seasons ahead.

*Grace, Peace, Love,
The Rev. Robert H. Malm*

Dec 2012/Jan 2013

Inside this Issue

Stewardship Update.....	2
From the Asst. to the Rector	3
Invitation to Ordinations.....	3
Music at Grace.....	4
Parish Register	4
GES News	4
Graceful Worship.....	5
Adult Formation	6
Circle Garden.....	7
Evangelism Update.....	8
St. Clement's Shelter.....	9
Who Can Join TNT?.....	9
A Silent Retreat	10
Dec/Jan Birthdays	11
Eco-Notes	12
Parish Staff.....	12
Christmas at Grace 2012.....	13



Worship Schedule

Sunday Schedule

Holy Eucharist Rite I.....	7:30 am
Child Care	8:45 am–12:45 pm
La Santa Eucaristía	9:00 am
Choral Eucharist Rite II.....	9:00 am
Christian Ed classes.....	10:15 am
Choral Eucharist Rite I.....	11:15 am
Holy Eucharist Rite II	5:00 pm

Weekday Schedule

Tuesdays, Rite II with healing...	6:30 pm
Wednesdays, Rite I	7:00 am
Thursdays*.....	12:15 pm

*Alternating Rite I and Rite II weekly

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. The deadline for submitting copy is midnight on the 15th of the preceding month.

The next *Grace Notes* deadline is January 15, 2013 for the February 2013 issue. Articles should be submitted by e-mail to grace.notes@gracealex.org. All articles are subject to editing.

Grace Church's newsletter team includes Amy Barron, Gary Carter, Kristine Hesse, June Huber, Lee Meeks, Sarah Schultz and Beth Wiggers.

Stewardship Annual Pledge Campaign 2012: Share God's Gifts And In All Things Give Thanks

As of November 25, there are 238 Grace Church families and individuals pledging a total of \$747,491.00 for support of God's work through Grace Church in 2013. The generous giving that we've seen thus far in the annual pledge campaign is exciting, not only for the potential it holds for increased parish programs, mission, and outreach, but more importantly because it reflects the Grace of God working among us and the commitment of the members of Grace Church to the ministry and mission to which God calls us as individuals, as a parish and as a diocese.

Members of the vestry began follow-up telephone calls on November 14 to parishioners and friends of Grace Church, whose pledges had not been received as of November 13, and follow-up letters were mailed on November 27. If you have not yet made your pledge for 2013, we ask you to review the stewardship information on the Grace Church website: "A Guide to Giving at Grace Church" and "Annual Pledge Campaign" at www.gracealex.org. Prayerfully consider what your commitment for 2013 should be. Then complete a pledge card, and place it in the offering plate next Sunday, or mail it to the parish office. You can also pledge online by following the instructions under "Pledge Form" on the website.

God gives us many opportunities for stewardship at Grace Church—returning to Him a portion of the many gifts he has given freely to each of us and supporting the many ways in which we minister to one another, the community, the diocese and the world, as we proclaim and spread the good news of Christ.

As the vestry builds the parish budget for 2013, your response to God's Grace—the commitment of your time, your talent, and your financial pledge—are important because of what that response makes possible, both in your own life and in our lives together in that part of the body of Christ known as Grace Church.

Please join us as we follow the example of faithful servants and courageous stewards who have witnessed to God's Grace for over 157 years: Share God's Gifts And In All Things Give Thanks!

*Peter Barnes and Jean Reed
Stewardship Co-Chairs*

THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

God willing
The Rt. Rev. Shannon S. Johnston
Bishop of Virginia
will ordain

JO J. BELSER
LAURA DOUD COCHRAN
DAVID MALCOM CROSBY
MEGAN LIMBURG
ROBERT LEE MORRIS III
BERNARD CAYCE RAMEY
AMY LYNN SPAGNA
LESLIE NUÑEZ STEFFENSEN
ANDREW BENNETT TERRY

to the Sacred Order of Priests.

Saturday, December 15 at 10:30 a.m.
The Falls Church Episcopal, Falls Church

The Bishop and the Standing Committee request
the honor of your presence.

Clergy: Red Stoles



From the Assistant to the Rector

Dear Grace Family,

As we head toward the celebration of the birth of our Lord, I am reminded of the Godly Play sermons for children. Each Sunday of Advent the storyteller begins, “We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas, but who will show us the way?” Each week, a different layer to the story is added with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds and the angels showing the way to Bethlehem.

I am coming into this Advent season with anticipation for my ordination on December 15. I find myself wondering, “Who will show me the way?” Ordination to the priesthood is a kind of birth into a new life and ministry. It is something familiar, yet new. As a deacon, you all have seen me wearing the clergy collar and you have addressed me as “Reverend Steffensen,” “Mother Leslie,” or “Madre Leslie.” I have dispensed the bread at communion time and offered prayers for healing. These things won’t change. You have seen me serve at the altar. There will be many times where I will continue to perform the actions of a deacon during the service. But, as a priest I will begin to

sometimes be the celebrant at the altar, leading the Eucharist for our community. I will also bless the congregation at the end of the service. Although these seem to be on one level a few simple additions in responsibilities to what I already do, it is a big shift for me.

Who will show me the way? I have been working with our music director, Kyle Babin, to learn the Festival Eucharist chants. This is an important part of the worship life of Grace Church, which I want to do well. The Senior Acolytes and Lay Eucharistic Ministers will continue to help me learn the rhythms of the movements at the altar during services. The lay staff has been working with me to learn the administrative and program side of our Church year. Father Malm has been a mentor, training me in the Anglo-Catholic traditions and how to serve Christ in parish life. And of course you, the Grace parish, continue to show me the way to priesthood in your faith in Christ and steadfast love for one another.

I sincerely hope that you will come and take part in my ordination this month and that you will celebrate with me my new priesthood through Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

*Peace and joy to you and yours this Christmas,
Mother Leslie*

Music at Grace

We kick off the season of Advent on December 2 with a Procession of Advent Lessons and Carols. **Please note that this service will now begin at 5 pm, followed by a simple Service of Holy Communion.** Our choirs have worked very hard for this service, so I hope you will join us for an atmospheric evening of wonderful Advent music and hymns. You won't want to miss it, and consider inviting a friend!



On Christmas Eve, there will be music for brass, choir, and organ at all three services. The prelude music for the 5 pm service will begin at 4:30 pm, consisting of congregational carols alternating with music for brass, organ, and handbells. The Alleluia Singers and St. Nicholas Choir will offer choral music during the liturgy. At 7:30 pm, a small ensemble from the two adult choirs will offer anthems. And at the 11 pm service, the prelude music will begin at 10:30 pm, comprised of congregational carols alternating with music for brass, organ, and choir. This service will be sung by the Schola Cantorum.

On Sunday, December 30, there will be one 10 am service of Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion, sung by the Alleluia Singers, Schola Cantorum, and St. Nicholas Choir. The Feast of the Holy Name on January 1 will have choral music. And finally, on Sunday, January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany will include a choral Mass setting at 11:15 am, and festival music at both 9 am and 11:15 am. The seasons of Advent and Christmastide feature a wealth of wonderful hymnody, choral, and organ music, so I hope you will join us for these celebrations! Also, please consider making a donation to help fund the brass for all Christmas services. We rely solely on donations to the Music Fund to provide this enhancement of the Christmas liturgies.

Kyle Babin

From the Parish Register

Baptisms

- ✚ Allison Lottie Gretchen Knippen, adult
- ✚ Jane Campbell Hastings, daughter of Corey Hastings and Jennifer Walden
- ✚ Sebastian Daniel Slack, son of Sam and Charissa Slack

Transfers in:

- ✚ Sara and Jonathan Causey, with baptized daughter Lila, from Christ Church, Alexandria
- ✚ Christine and Joseph Washington, with baptized son Alexander, from St. Paul's Church, Alexandria

Deaths

- ✚ Charles A. Gardner, Jr. (Chuck), husband of Gloria (Poppy) Gardner
- ✚ Elsie Gruver
- ✚ William C. Robinson

Grace Episcopal School

During the past 2 months, Grace Episcopal School students took part in many wonderful outreach activities for our community. In mid-October, every student "walked for the homeless." Each student walked for the required 15 minutes after an enthusiastic warm-up. All the proceeds for their walk were donated to Alive! House.

(Continued on page 5)

GES... (Continued from page 4)

Just before Thanksgiving, the students had a “construction” project and produced Bountiful Tom Turkey, using hundreds of boxes of cereal and hundreds of cans of food. The finished project was all donated to the Grace Church food pantry after it was disassembled.

In December, families are asked to donate hats, mittens, and gloves. These will be “decorating” our Mitten Tree and later donated to a local preschool for children less fortunate. If any parishioners would be interested in donating to the Mitten Tree, please feel free to place your donations on the tree. Many thanks to Autumn Vande Hei, GESPA Outreach Coordinator, and Aida Longo Knowles, GES faculty coordinator, for coordination of these projects. These are just a few of the many, many wonderful and meaningful outreach projects we do at the school to give back to our community.

Now is the time for Grace Episcopal parishioners to apply to Grace School. The application deadline is February 1, 2013. The school will be hosting another Admissions Open House on Wednesday, January 16 from 9:30-11:30 am. For further information, please call Benita Cathey, Director of Admissions, at (703) 549-5067, ext. 115. Please pass this information on to others who may be interested!

Chris Stegmaier Byrnes
11 1 1 1 1 1

Graceful Worship: The “Coming” of Advent

Advent begins this year on Sunday, December 2, the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The word itself is Anglicized from the Latin word *adventus* meaning “coming”, and the Latin word is a translation of the Greek *parousia*, commonly used in reference to the second coming of Christ. Advent is the beginning of our liturgical year and also a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of Jesus’ birth. The theme of readings and teachings during Advent is to prepare for the second coming while commemorating the first coming of Christ at Christmas.

From the 4th century through the Middle Ages, the Advent season was kept as a period of fasting as strict as that of Lent. In some localities it began right after November 11, the feast day of St. Martin of Tours. In some countries this feast was a time of frolic and heavy eating – similar to Mardi Gras -- since the 40-day fast began the next day. In the Anglican and Lutheran churches the fasting rule was later relaxed, with the Roman Catholic Church doing likewise later, but Advent was still kept as a season of penitence. The Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches still hold the tradition of fasting for 40 days before the Nativity Feast.

In many countries, Advent has been marked by interesting popular observances, some of which still survive. In England, especially in the northern counties, there was a custom (now extinct) for poor women to carry around the “Advent images”, two dolls dressed to represent Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. A halfpenny coin was expected from every one to whom these were exhibited, and bad luck was thought to menace the household not visited by the doll-bearers before Christmas Eve. In Normandy, farmers employed children to run through the fields and orchards armed with torches, setting fire to bundles of straw and driving out vermin that would damage the crops. In Rome, the Calabrian *pifferari* (bagpipe players) entered the city during the last days of Advent to play before the shrines of Mary, because Italian folklore stated that the shepherds played these pipes when they came to the manger at Bethlehem to pay homage to the infant Jesus.

The origins of the Advent calendar come from German Lutherans, who would count down the first 24 days of December physically. This might be as simple as drawing a chalk line on the door each day, beginning on December 1. Some families had more elaborate means of marking the days, such as lighting a new candle or hanging a little religious picture on the wall each day (these pictures became part of some Advent calendars). The candles might also be placed on a structure which was called an “Advent clock” and later “Advent wreath.” In Scandinavia there is a more recent tradition of having a so-called *julekalender* in the form of a television or radio show, starting on the first of December and ending on Christmas Eve.

June Huber

December Adult Faith Formation Schedule

+++

Advent Series: *Discerning the Word*

Seminarian Christopher Adams will lead an Advent series on the first three Sundays in December.

December 2—*Discerning the Word: In Scripture*

As Christians, we turn time and time again to Holy Scripture for guidance, inspiration, and transformation. Yet, some have remarked we are living in a “Scripturally-illiterate” way. On December 2, we’ll take heed of the Bishop’s challenge on learning to love Scripture ever more truly and discern together how we can study Scripture and discern Christ’s presence in it.

December 9—*Discerning the Word: In the Book of Common Prayer*

As Anglicans, we turn not only to Holy Scripture for guidance and formation, but we are also inspired and formed by *The Book of Common Prayer*, yet, so little of the Prayer Book is used on a Sunday morning. On December 9, we’ll look at the Prayer Book and the riches it has to offer, discerning how living with the Prayer Book connects us more faithfully with the Word of God.

December 16—*Discerning the Word: In Jesus*

As human beings, we have a profound need for connection and relationship. We look so often to friends and family to satisfy this connection. Yet, the affect of this human turn is often the forsaking of a deep relationship with God. On December 16, we’ll explore some spiritual practices that will help us discern the Word in an intimate and transformational way.

.+++

Inquirers’ Classes

The Inquirers’ Classes serve several purposes, including:

- ❖ Basic information for those adults new to the Episcopal Church and new to Grace Church.
- ❖ Preparation for Confirmation or Reception into the Episcopal Church from other faith traditions.
- ❖ Small discussion groups on Sunday mornings during the Christian Formation period, 10:15 am—11:00 am.

The classes are normally led by the Rector, Father Malm. Each session covers a topic of interest and concern. There is no required reading or preparation. Please contact the Rector with questions.

December 2—The Church Year: Sacred Time

December 9—The Gospel

December 16—The Two Christmas Stories

There will be no Inquirers’ Classes in January.

Circle Garden Restoration Nears Completion

An oft overlooked but very visible feature of the Grace Church grounds recently received a facelift from parishioners Brian Fourcart, Deborah Crabtree and Kristine Hesse. Planning began last May and progressed over the summer with planting begun in mid-fall.

A number of environmental conditions presented a challenge to the redesign of the garden:

- Due to the slope of the site the area experiences storm run-off.
- Plants that are tolerant of having wet “feet” had to be considered since the area has a high water table on one quadrant of the circle.
- Being circled by asphalt, the garden is in a heat island that makes it especially hot and dry.
- The crab apple tree has a shallow root system that can’t be disturbed by digging.
- The tree canopy limits what can be planted as rain water cannot reach those plants directly.
- The garden is subjected to “drive-overs;” for whatever reason, people find it necessary to drive over the curb and beds. In fact, during the installation, there was evidence that someone had backed through half the garden!
- Watering and maintenance were two issues taken into consideration as no one really wants to spend time watering and weeding!



A first draft of the proposed design was sent out to long-time St. Francis Guild members Kevin Sherlock and Barbara Ramm. Their historical knowledge of the conditions and what had worked/not worked was invaluable in formation of the final plan. In addition, the team turned to Simpson Garden Park Demonstration Gardens for inspiration on what type of plants would work in the conditions that we faced. For those of you not familiar with Simpson Garden, it is an incredible resource for water wise gardening.

The design was modified to provide meditative “stone gardens” using Christian symbols under the tree canopy, thus limiting the disturbance to the roots. These gardens are separated from the rest of the beds by a brick border and berms to be planted with lavender along the top to form an enclosing “wall.” Species tulips are planted on the inner side of the berm and Dutch irises on the outer side. Johnson’s Blue geraniums, lamb’s ears, liriopie and Blue Rug junipers fill out the beds around the perimeter.

(Continued on page 8)

Circle Garden... (Continued from page 7)

With the final plan in hand and “seed” money from the St. Francis Guild Fund, the team had five cubic yards of soil/compost delivered to the site. What originally looked like a huge pile was quickly absorbed in the bed and by the berms that were created. The soil was left to settle in over the summer until planting could begin in the fall. With in-kind donations from the team for plants, mulch and bulbs, planting began in mid-October and was recently completed.

Next to occur was the stone garden installation. Granite cobbles were used to make the symbols and a combination of gray stones and white marble chips were used to fill in around them. It was a trial and error process to find symbols that could be formed with the shape and size of the cobbles, and eventually four symbols were laid out. We invite you to see the garden and learn what symbols were finally chosen.

The garden will be completed next spring when the lavender is installed on top of the berm. The team is hoping the tulips will be blooming by Palm Sunday 2013, and successive blooming of the Dutch iris, geranium, lavender, liriopie and lamb’s ears will follow.

Kristine Hesse

Evangelism Update

Christ commanded His followers to go and make disciples of the entire world. The mission of our evangelism program is “to encourage Grace Church members to share their faith in Christ with those who do not know Him, and to welcome those who turn to Grace Church hoping to find Him in our midst.”

In the past, Grace Church has run a booth at Art on the Avenue, a festival held on Mt. Vernon Avenue in Alexandria each year on the first Saturday in October. We distribute balloons, dog biscuits and water for our four-legged friends, and information on Grace Church, including an invitation to the Blessing of the Animals the following day. By giving out balloons with Grace's name and logo, we help fill the avenue with color and make Grace Church known to the community around us.



This year was a little different from previous years. We had plenty of balloons with plenty of helium to fill them with and the weather was picture perfect and we had plenty of volunteers, even drafting some from Grace members who stopped by to say hi. This year, however, we and the other non-profit organizations had been moved to the “Kids Art Corner.” While we had some families, we did not have too

many visits from our canine friends. All in all, we did our best to spread the word about Grace Church to our neighbors and we hope we were successful.

To welcome newcomers, we have had two successful receptions, both of them occurring after 5 pm Sunday services. While having to be very quiet setting up in the new narthex, the area is the ideal space for this event. Since we combine easy access and the opportunity to host a reception for those faithful evening worshipers in addition to newcomers, we find the new narthex is busting at the seams for these receptions. In addition, St. Andrew Guild members also welcome newcomers with their morning smile before 9 am Sunday services and during coffee hour.

In addition, we have started a banner program. Occasionally, you will see a banner on the hill on Russell Road, informing those driving by about the various programs we have at Grace Church. We have banners announcing Holy Week, Easter Day services, Blessing of the Animals, and welcoming back the mission team. We have two banners planned for the months ahead, announcing Advent Lessons and Carols and the Christmas Pageant.

We also want to shout-out our thank you to all our volunteers! *And remember that all parishioners are members of the Evangelism Program when it comes to spreading the news about Grace and offering a warm welcome to anyone you do not know.*

Saint Clement's Shelter

Have you ever wondered just how serious homelessness is in our area? The answer may surprise you. According to Arlington County, in a recent one-year period, 27,546 Virginia residents stayed in some form of emergency shelter, while 55,000 requests were denied, primarily due to a lack of suitable accommodations. Youth under age 18 account for almost 25 percent of homelessness, while female veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan represent the fastest growing segment of homeless persons.

For more than a decade, our sister parish, the Church of Saint Clement, has opened its doors and offered radical hospitality to men who would otherwise have nowhere to go during the dangerously cold period from January to mid-March. All of the men are pre-screened by Carpenter's Shelter, and are those for whom there simply is no room at the shelter. Typically, the group sleeping at the church ranges in number from eight to fifteen.



Grace helps this vital program in two ways: by supplying two-person teams of volunteers who spend the night at the shelter and by providing funding through our outreach budget. In the coming weeks, we will again be seeking individuals willing to fill one of two shifts (8 pm to midnight or midnight to 6:30 am). The duties are minimal and there are lots of homemade refreshments. You also have time to get to know your volunteer partner, visit with those staying at the church, or read and watch television.

Both men and women over age 21 are invited to participate in this ministry. In early December, you will see reminders in the bulletin and there will be a sign-up sheet in the foyer outside the church offices.

Eric Bonetti

Who can join TNT?

When I joined Grace a few years back, I was super excited to find out there was a Twenties and Thirties (TNT) group. I noticed a lot of younger parishioners very active in the church, but when we held TNT events, we would always struggle with attendance. A bit discouraged, I began asking what's going on with TNT, where is everyone? Well to my surprise, I found three common misconceptions about TNT that I'd like to correct in an effort to break down our membership walls:



1. TNT is only for people in their Twenties and Thirties. No Way! Yes TNT stands for Twenties and Thirties, but our events are open to all as long as you are young at heart and want to spend quality time with "like-minded" people. The motto of our events is that we provided a "judgment-free zone." We encourage everyone to come to our events and participate in our lively discussions, as long as they do so judgment-free so it is a safe environment for new and experienced theologians to mingle.

2. TNT is only for single people. Once again incorrect! While TNT does have a single member or two, it is definitely not a singles meet-up group. Our focus is to meet and spend time with people that enjoy giving back to the community and asking and answering questions about difficult topics such as: What is God's plan for us? How do love, loss, career issues, family dilemmas and politics play into it? How are we supposed to talk about it with others our age?



3. TNT isn't for families. While the kids might not want to tag along for wine tastings and happy hours, most of our weekend events (apple picking, kayaking, etc.) are open to all and we encourage the kids to come. What helps us retain our youth better than spending time with our Grace kids? In the first quarter of 2013 we are actually working on coordinating with EYC to have a parent's night out (more details to come).

(Continued on page 10)

TNT... (Continued from page 9)

As Mother Leslie stated in last month's Grace Notes, TNT is more than just Twenties and Thirties, it is a network that becomes a new expression of what it means to be "family" for transplants like me or for Grace lifers. In an effort to reach out to the community we created a Meet-up group at <http://www.meetup.com/Grace-Church-TNT/> and our Facebook page. We have actually had a pretty decent turnout for a couple of events so far. The community seems very receptive to the idea of our group.



Don't forget about our regular events: Divinity on Tap every Wednesday at Cafe 1823 on the Seminary campus and monthly TGIF happy hours (thanks Rich Kelly for letting us meet at Hard Times Cafe in Clarendon). We are always looking for fun things to do and support! If you have suggestions please contact me (joy.st.john@gracealex.org) or Mother Leslie (associate.rector@gracealex.org). We would love to tell you more about TNT and get your ideas.

*Namaste,
Joy St. John*

A Silent Retreat

Thirteen travelers have committed to journey to The Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE) monastery in Cambridge, MA for a Silent Retreat June 27-30, 2013. Brother Luke will present a theme on which parishioners will reflect, discern, pray, read, journal and communicate with the Holy in glorious surroundings of the monastery chapel and campus. Participants will live in community with the Monks of SSJE: living in a monastery cell or simple, comfortable room for three days; dining daily with priests or brothers in silence in the monastery refectory; and attending various services of Morning Prayer, Noon Day Prayer, Evening Prayer, Compline and Sunday service with the local congregation.

SSJE is an Anglican religious order for men. The priests or brothers who reside at the monastery live under a Rule of Life, which at profession means they make monastic vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. The Rule of Life details how the monks are supposed to live their daily lives. One Rule of Life in particular stresses living in silence.

Prior to the retreat, Julie Simonton, Assistant for Family Ministries, will lead the group of Grace participants in a series of formation meetings to prepare the group for the rich experience ahead of them. Formation begins in early 2013.

Father Malm and Don Wills have been blessed to have attended different types of retreats at the monastery in the past. Father Malm joined a group of parishioners from Christ Church for several programmed retreats. At those retreats a brother presented a specific theme developed over several days in the form of meditations and addresses followed by time for reflection, prayer, discernment, reading of scripture or other related books, spiritual refreshment or rest.

Retreats, popular in today's Christian churches, were established by St. Ignatius of Loyola, patron saint of spiritual retreats. When one takes time away from the demands of everyday life to worship, to read, to reflect, to journal, to rest, to relax or to be quiet it enhances one's spiritual life. Retreats allow us to refocus our thoughts on what is most important as we continue our connection and conversation with God, or discern during a time of transition in our lives. In the setting of the monastery, many people experience retreats as a time when God seems particularly near, allowing the mysteries of God to unfold.



While this retreat is closed for 2013, the intention of the committee is to schedule additional retreats at the monastery for 2014 and to grow participation in this unique opportunity. We hope to share this experience with the parish at an Adult Forum.

Don Wills, Retreat Committee

December Birthdays

1 Florence Binari
1 Poppy Gardner
1 Rick Grimes
1 Homer Hunt
2 Elizabeth Zuidema
3 Connor Beyreuther
3 Sloane Mebane
3 Bobbie Wallace
4 Beck Hastings
4 Kevin Plunkett
4 Clara Shriner
4 Nicholas Shriner
4 Mary Walsh
5 Jennifer Henel
6 Ben Fowler
6 Reagan Hope
6 Del Hunt
6 Cameron Sweet
7 Lara DeMarco
7 Harrison Moore
8 Eddie DeMarco
8 Valerie Eudy
9 Deborah Crabtree
9 Zoe Moore
11 Will Berry
11 Juliet Carr
11 Kimberly Edgar
11 Alexander Everett
11 Lindsay Howard
12 Kristina Larson
13 Isabella Giacomo
13 Lucio Ovando
14 Mike Stancil
14 Mary Carol Tazewell
14 Lucy Waskowicz
15 Peter Eckel
15 Greg Whitlow
16 John Greely
16 John Sweeney
17 Julia Cooper
17 Mary Fox
17 Mary Lewis Hix
17 Charles Saphos
17 Sophie van der Sluis
18 David Dellefield
18 Clay Everett
19 Mac Rein
20 Pat Edelin
20 Graham Murchison
20 Sandy Olexy
21 Holly Henderson
21 Fiona Sullivan
22 Meghan Ames
22 Priscilla Hanley
23 Mary Lacey Reuther
23 Constance Troyer
24 Jack Blunden
25 Nicholas Ramm
26 Wanda Fraser
26 Eva Lorentz
26 Jessica Malm
27 Rob Cheron
27 Keagan Sullivan
27 Sam Waskowicz
27 George Winstead
29 Norma Alvarenga
29 Stanley Borgia
29 Linda Durand
29 Brett Medley
29 Steven Nider
30 Betty Alexander
30 Stephen Bagley
30 Jim Di Crocco
30 Gabriella Everett
31 Thomas Crabtree
31 Barbara Ramm

January Birthdays

1 Judy Miller
2 Mira Chiow
2 Jane Joyner
3 Chris Corlett
3 Yasuhiko Kamakura
3 Melanie Lund
3 Dina Salamanca
4 Michelle Cox
4 Bryce Fleming
4 Deborah Klaus
5 Dorothy Bakke
5 Jayce Barr
7 Colby Gustafson
7 Kaitlin Hazelwood
7 Karen Hoppe
7 Emily Smith
7 Sydney Toler
8 Wyman Howard
10 Chipper Fowler
10 Sawyer Morales
10 Sara Waskowicz
12 Suzanne Lawton
13 Margaret Smith
13 Nancy Velasquez
14 Anne Caputo
14 Renee DeMarco
14 Ryan Durkin
14 Claire Falatko
14 David McCombs
14 Suzy McQuilkin
14 Betty Mills
14 Kylie Payne
15 Dorothee Arnold
15 Luis Odria
15 Aubrilyn Reeder
15 Peter Spencer
16 Rose Hall
16 Evie McCombs
17 Caroline Legere
18 Cathy David
19 Jeannette Ovando
21 Jane Barr
21 Tom Donelson
22 Dorothy Daniel
22 Bill Eckel
22 Chris Kupczyk
22 Katherine Peck
22 Teresa Scalzo
22 Alison Smith
23 Nat Ames
23 Suzanne O'Malley
24 Brennen Ruff
24 Charles Winstead
25 Lizzie Goodnow
25 Michelle Searcy
26 Tania Shand
27 Robert Carpenter
27 Kathryn Pattarini
28 Nicholas Gentry
28 Nora Gentry
28 Lucy Medley
29 Avery Laboy
29 Morgan Miller
30 Charlie Reed
30 Henry Tazewell
31 Lisa Boci
31 Anne Boris
31 Sarah Gabbert
31 Carys Henel
31 Robert Steele
31 Sharon Steele

Eco-Notes

Hurricane Sandy posed the age-old question, “Does God give us what we can handle or does He enable us to handle what He gives?” Either way we look at it, Hurricane Sandy delivered a big message, and it was delivered before our national election. An election where environmental issues were hardly discussed until Sandy dumped wind, rain, and tide over a large part of the east coast. As Governor Cuomo quipped, “In the past two years, we’ve have had back to back, once a century storms.” Recently, I saw a table of Washington’s ten worst snowstorms. Five of them occurred during the course of my married life and the sixth happened the same year I met my husband.

In His earliest instructions to the Israelites, God called for care and stewardship of the environment. The term for sabbatical comes from giving the land a year of rest every seventh year. Our ethical obligation to care for all aspects of creation is reflected in Jesus’ commandment to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). After Sandy, we saw social media alight with pleas for help to citizens in New York and New Jersey. The inhabitants of those states need our help, but are their needs greater than those of the inhabitants of Bangladesh who will be displaced by typhoon flooding and rising seas. We have an obligation to care for everyone equally, whether they are fellow citizens or inhabitants of a faraway land. We cannot ignore the suffering caused by climate change. There is always much that can be done.

We’ve all heard the admonition to think globally and act locally. At this holiday time, we can act to limit our consumption of resources. We can take Metro to the malls and use less gas in our cars. Shop close to home and limit the pollutants tossed out by delivery trucks, delivering packages ordered on the Internet. It is a tough idea, but don’t give gifts at all. Consider a contribution in someone’s name to Episcopal Relief and Development, the Red Cross, or Heifer International. Let your love for your neighbor shine out like the lights on a Christmas Trees.

Please give the environment committee your gift of time. We have a need for committee members and mug washers. Can you give a couple of hours every month to this parish committee or about 15 minutes on Sunday morning drying and putting away our mugs? Consider the idea that the mugs represent an outward sign of our love for our neighbors and you can help them.

Jennifer Eckel



Parish Staff

Robert Malm Rector
(rector@gracealex.org)
Leslie Steffensen Assistant to the Rector
(assistant.rector@gracealex.org)
Christine Byrnes Head of School
(office@graceschoolalex.org)
Julie Simonton Assistant for Family Ministries
(family.ministries@gracealex.org)
Ruth Young Children’s Chapel Coordinator
(ruth.young@gracealex.org)
Kyle Babin Director of Music
(music.director@gracealex.org)
Charlotte Payne Wright Parish Administrator
(parish.administrator@gracealex.org)
Beth Wiggers Administrative Associate
(parish.office@gracealex.org)
Pedro Hernandez Sexton
Christopher Adams Seminarian
(christopher.adams@gracealex.org)

Vestry

Class of 2012

Amy Barron Junior Warden
Lisa Bellantoni Register
Kelly Gable Education
Theresa Lewallen Member-at-Large
Robby Schrum Senior Warden/TNT

Class of 2013

Peter Barnes Stewardship
Deborah Crabtree Worship
June Huber School Board
Lee Meeks Communications
Mary-Lacey Reuther Pastoral Care

Class of 2014

John Berry School Board
Elizabeth Legere Stewardship
Erica McFarquhar Treasurer
Mai-Lan Smith Evangelism
Kemp Williams Outreach

Alternates

Lisa Medley Youth
Lynn Rohrs Fellowship

Non-Vestry Coordinators

Gary Carter Fellowship
Chad Eckles Worship
Kristine Hesse Communications
Rich Kelly Youth
Nancy Lorentz Education
Cindy MacIntyre Evangelism
Jean Reed Stewardship
Joy St John TNT
Heather Hurley Pastoral Care
Mary Ann Ryan Outreach

CHRISTMAS AT GRACE CHURCH 2012

Christmas Pageant, December 16

5:00 PM Children's Christmas Pageant
followed by a pizza party and cookie exchange in the Merrow Hall Auditorium

Christmas Eve, December 24

5:00 PM First Eucharist of Christmas with procession to the crèche. (Prelude at 4:30 PM)

The Nursery will be available at 4:30 PM for children 2 years and under.

Children's Chapel will also start at 4:30 for those 3 years through kindergarten.

7:30 PM Holy Eucharist (Prelude at 7:15 PM)

9:30 PM La Santa Eucaristía (in Auditorium)

10:30 PM Choral Prelude

11:00 PM Midnight Mass of the Nativity of our Lord



Christmas Day, December 25

12:00 NOON Festival Eucharist

There is no Child Care or Children's Chapel Christmas Day

Saint Stephen, December 26

12:15 PM Holy Eucharist

Saint John the Evangelist, December 27

12:15 PM Holy Eucharist

The Holy Innocents, December 28

12:15 PM Holy Eucharist



The First Sunday after Christmas, December 30

7:30 AM Holy Eucharist

9:00 AM La Santa Eucaristía (in Auditorium)

10:00 AM Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion

5:00 PM Holy Eucharist

Feast of the Holy Name, January 1

12:00 NOON Choral Eucharist



The Epiphany of Christ, January 6

7:30 AM Holy Eucharist

9:00 AM Bilinugal Eucharist with La Gracia

11:15 AM Festival Eucharist

5:00 PM Holy Eucharist