

# Grace Notes

Newsletter of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia

Rector's Reflections

## Vows

We will celebrate 30 days of the Easter season this April, including four Sundays! And we plan for eight baptisms and two weddings in Eastertide. The vows, the promises made, in the marriage and baptismal liturgies, highlight our commitment to live together in the light and truth of the Risen Christ.

Both liturgies involve not just individuals making vows (in the case of a bride and groom; or a baptismal candidate, and/or parents and sponsors); the entire worshipping community is asked, "*Will all of you witnessing these promises (vows) do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?*" or "*...do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?*" (BCP, p. 303 and p. 425). When we attend marriage and baptismal liturgies we all make vows, promises.

Our support of marriages, families, persons baptized, confirmed, received and reaffirmed (including 11 adults at the Great Vigil) is a priority for each of our program ministries, especially the first five—worship, education, evangelism, pastoral care and outreach—based upon the promises we reaffirm at every baptism (BCP, pp. 304-305).

Jesus during the 40 days after his resurrection continued to teach his disciples. He asked them to make promises to continue his work. In one of my favorite Easter appearance stories, John 21:1-23, the Risen Christ asks Peter three times, "*...do you love me?*" Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times after Our Lord was arrested.

During Easter we consider our promises, our vows. Jesus continually asks each of us, "*...do you love me?*" The way we live our lives is the answer.

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

April 2013

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GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
SESQUICENTENNIAL  
1855-2005

## 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

Tuesday, Rite II ..... 6:30 pm,  
with healing  
Wednesday, Rite I ..... 7:00 am  
Thursday ..... 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 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

The next *Grace Notes* deadline is April 15, 2013 for the May 2013 issue. Articles should be submitted by e-mail to [grace.notes@gracealex.org](mailto: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.

## From the Assistant to the Rector

What does it mean to be an “Easter People”? It means sharing with the world the hope and joy we find in the good news that the tomb was empty and that Jesus was risen from the dead.

This spring, the Mission and Outreach Committee is discerning the possibility of an adult mission trip to Haiti in the fall of 2013. Mission is a theme that threads through our parish life. Our Christian education and formation programming for next year will be mission-focused, beginning with our annual Shrine Mont parish weekend in September. Our mission theme will continue with the Sunday school and Adult forum programs. The Mission and Outreach Committee wants to take the opportunity, while the whole parish is focused on mission, to deepen our commitment and ties to our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Haiti.

Grace Church supports the Haiti Micah Project (HMP), a safe home for orphaned and needy children and a daily lunch program at St. Peter's Episcopal Church elementary school in Mirebalais. Mirebalais is a large town, in the mountains north of Port-au-Prince. Although it does not suffer from the urban issues in the capital city, food security and extreme poverty stress the resources of the community. In 2011 Grace Church helped HMP to build a water purification system in the town. This small enterprise supplies the home and students with clean drinking water. It is also a business which sells extra water to the town, supplying revenue to support the HMP efforts in the community.

HMP has shared a vision with Grace church of building a vocational school for the youth who have graduated from the elementary school. It would be a place to learn highly valued skills such as metalwork and carpentry, skills Haiti needs to build a brighter future. Part of the mission trip will be in support of the vocational school. The trip will also be an opportunity to learn more about HMP's outreach work in the community. The Grace Mission Team will be witness to the transforming love of Christ in a very hard place.

The Mission and Outreach Committee will host an adult forum in late April. It will be an invitation to the congregation to learn more about Haiti and to join the conversation about overseas mission. The Committee will also sponsor a second spring forum on the Haiti Micah Project with Jim Snow, a member at Immanuel Church on the Hill, who goes on mission to Haiti frequently. If you are interested in supporting mission or exploring a call to join the mission trip, please feel free to contact me.

*Peace,  
Mother Leslie*

## Graceful Worship: The Church as Community

When someone says to you “I’m going to church,” what picture enters your head? If you’re like most people, it’s a picture of a building. It might be stone, or brick or wood; it might have a steeple; and it probably has a large door. But it’s a building where people gather to worship. Is that what Jesus had in mind when, in Matthew 16:18, he said, “thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church”? Is that what Paul meant when he addressed his Second Epistle to the Corinthians “unto the church of God which is at Corinth”? The answer is no. The early church wasn’t a “what” but rather a “who.”

The word used in the New Testament was *ecclesia*, which meant an assembly of people. Greek-speaking Christians chose this word to designate those whom Jesus had called and who had responded to his call with faith and obedience to live together as his people, his community. This term appears over 100 times in the New Testament. It’s used to identify local Christian communities as well as, in a universal sense, to mean all believers. And early Christians gathered together to worship wherever they could find someone’s home, in a cave or grotto, and in the open air. The building wasn’t the important part.

In his first letter, Peter writes about the responsibilities of the members of the church—as a community—to each other. “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” And in another first letter, John writes, “For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. . . . Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. . . . And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

It wasn’t until the New Testament was translated from the original Greek into English that the word “church” was used. The English word “church” is from the Old English word *cirice*, derived from West Germanic *kirika*, which in turn comes from the Greek *kuriakē*, meaning “of the Lord.” *Kuriakē* in the sense of “church” was most likely a shortening of *kuriakē oikia* (“house of the Lord”). As a result of this translation, some people may have started to focus on the building rather than the community. And this change in focus may contribute to the problems that some churches have in attracting and retaining members.

The “church as community” is like a big, wonderful family whose members have a wide variety of talents and resources that they can offer to support the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of each other and the world outside the community itself. They are guided by the Holy Spirit to love one another “in deed and in truth.” So much more than a building!

*June Huber*

### Twenties N’ Thirties (TNT) Group at Grace

Our Wednesday night Bible study, more popularly known as Divinity on Tap, will resume Wednesday, April 3, the first Wednesday after Lent, at 7:30 pm at Café 1823 on the campus of Virginia Theological Seminary. We decided to use Lent as a Bible study hiatus so as not to compete with the Monday night Lenten series and EFM. If you’re interested in joining future TNT events, please join our meet-up group at [www.meetup.com/Grace-Church-TNT](http://www.meetup.com/Grace-Church-TNT) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/groups/GraceTNT](http://www.facebook.com/groups/GraceTNT). Or feel free to email [andrea.santos@gracealex.org](mailto:andrea.santos@gracealex.org) or [joy.stjohn@gracealex.org](mailto:joy.stjohn@gracealex.org).

## Music at Grace

Although Holy Week and Easter will have passed by April, the choirs at Grace Church will still be hard at work for the remaining two months of the program year. It is never too late to join a choir, and we are especially in need of more members for both our 9 and 11:15 am groups on Sunday mornings. We have been steadily growing our handbell choir, but, again, we invite new members. Please contact [kyle.babin@gracealex.org](mailto:kyle.babin@gracealex.org) if you are interested. At Grace Church, music has the potential to be an extraordinary means of evangelism. Won't you join us in making this possible?



On Sunday, April 28, at 5 pm, the Adult Choir will offer a service of Choral Evensong for Eastertide. Please note that there will not be the usual Holy Eucharist at 5 pm; instead, a service of Holy Communion will immediately follow the Choral Evensong. I invite you to attend this beautiful service, which is a vital part of the Anglican musical heritage. Anglicans have retained the recitation (and singing) of the Daily Office—Morning and Evening Prayer—outside of monasteries, to an extent that surpasses other communions such as the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Church. Evensong is a great legacy of the English Reformation, due to the ingenious work of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556). When compiling The Book of Common Prayer in its original form, Cranmer combined the ancient monastic offices of Vespers and Compline into one service of Evensong. Thus in this rich liturgy, of which the psalms are the meat and potatoes, we get the singing of the Magnificat and the Nunc dimittis, in addition to psalms, hymns and anthems. Cranmer's distillation of the two ancient monastic offices has offered Anglicans an opportunity to take time out of our daily, mundane routines and reflect on God's revelation through scripture and prayer. On April 28, we'll add the luxury of choral and organ music. Consider attending this service, and think about bringing a friend!

*Kyle Babin*

## A Day of Ignatian Spirituality

On February 16, parishioners from Grace and other local parishes gathered at Virginia Theological Seminary for Grace's annual Lenten Spiritual Retreat. Over the course of the day, retreat leader Father Stephen Wade guided the group through a series of spiritual practices inspired by Ignatius of Loyola.

Ignatius of Loyola was a Spanish knight who during a convalescence at Loyola castle in 1521 found himself reading a life of Christ and a book on the lives of saints. These books inspired him to serve God, and he became the founder of the Jesuit order. For centuries, Christians have used his *Spiritual Exercises* to discern God's will. Even those who do not choose to embark on the structured 30-day discernment program in the *Spiritual Exercises* can benefit from some of the contemplative approaches to prayer and scripture developed and inspired by Ignatius.

Ignatian spirituality is considered "a spirituality for reflective people," and participants in the retreat were given opportunities throughout the day to practice reflecting in the tradition of Ignatius. Our first exercise in reflection, "The Narrative Room," involved writing about a moment when we felt close to God and sharing our stories in small groups.

*Continued on page 5*

## Senior Warden's Report

Engagement. No, not my daughter's, though that happy event occurred last fall. The topic of engagement with each other and our community, and more of it, dominated the March meeting of the vestry.

At the February vestry meeting, its first after the parish annual meeting, Father Malm suggested we split up into breakout groups to brainstorm priorities for the year. We separated into three groups of about a half-dozen members each. When we regrouped, we found we had identified eight major goals—you can see them for yourself in the minutes posted on our website. The first three were the following, in this order, and they related to each other: growing the congregation, including volunteer connections and opportunities; helping newcomers become involved and active; and reaching out to the community, witnessing to our liturgical tradition.

At the March meeting, we reviewed all eight goals. But these first three resonated with vestry members and sparked an intense, exciting discussion. It turns out they weren't the top goals by accident. We all recognized they are central to growing and sustaining our parish, its mission and ministries, as Episcopal churches everywhere struggle with membership challenges. First year vestry member Eric Waskowicz connected these three goals with one word: engagement. Comments, questions and ideas came tumbling out. Another first year member, Eric Bonetti, talked about "inreach and outreach." And a third newcomer, Joy St. John, discussed using social media tools to improve it, from email to an online "meetup" organizing website. It was clear something organic had happened and that we could have continued talking all night were it not for other items on the agenda. We concluded the discussion by agreeing to put "engagement" on the agenda for our next meeting. But once we had finished our business for the night and were folding chairs and putting away tables, members returned to the topic in one-on-one conversations or in small groups (some of us were still at it at our cars out in the parking lot). It appears we have decided to engage the issue of engagement this year on the vestry and more than likely take some kind of action to improve it. We welcome your ideas on this issue as we proceed, for in the end it may mean nothing less than the future of our parish.



*Peter Barnes*

### *A Day of Ignatian Spirituality...Continued from page 4*

After sharing our stories, we spent time in a more solitary practice called an Awareness Examen. This exercise asked us to imagine ourselves in conversation with Jesus as we review our day, considering moments of both thanksgiving and sorrow. Engaging in this practice daily enables us to see patterns in our lives that might indicate where God is at work in and with us.

The final activity was a Gospel Contemplation, a process similar to Lectio Divina. At the retreat, we focused on Luke 13:10-16, in which Jesus heals a crippled woman in the temple, but any gospel passage could be used. We read the passage four times, imagining ourselves in the scene.

We left the retreat with a tool kit of spiritual practices that we can use in our daily lives. But the challenge for each of us is to make the time to make them regular habits that transform us.

The Spiritual Retreat committee will soon begin planning for next year's retreat. If you have suggestions for themes or retreat leaders or would like to serve on the committee, we'd love to hear from you. Contact any of the current committee members if you're interested.

*Teresa Preston ([teresa.preston@gracealex.org](mailto:teresa.preston@gracealex.org)) on behalf of the Spiritual Retreat Committee:  
Bill Malone (chair), Susan Merritt Nelsen, Barbara Read and Karen Wires*

## Stewardship Is: Planned Giving—The Grace Church Trust

The Trust Fund of Grace Episcopal Church was established in 2000 as a general endowment fund in memory of those who have labored so diligently to establish, erect, maintain, and operate Grace Church; in gratitude for those who unselfishly gave and for those who continue to give of their time, talent and wealth, with the hope that those who follow will continue the work of Grace Church; and to provide funds for this ongoing community of faith. The Trust is a vehicle through which parishioners and others can consider and support longer-term financial commitments to the church's well-being through planned giving, estate planning, contributions, and bequests of cash or other assets (such as securities, life insurance policies, or real estate).

The purpose of the Trust is to ensure a firm financial foundation for the Church and our School and to provide funds for their capital acquisitions, improvements and replacements; major maintenance projects; and outreach. It is not intended that funds from the Trust supplement the annual operating budget of the Church or School for current expenses that are strictly administrative or operational in nature. Any invasion of the principal of the Trust in excess of the “annual distribution” may only be used for additions and capital improvements to the buildings and properties of the Church and to acquire other properties for the purposes of the Church.

The Trust is managed by a Board of Trustees consisting of five members recommended by the Rector and appointed by majority vote of the Vestry. To serve on the Board, a person must be a confirmed communicant of Grace Church. As required, the Board of Trustees develops and submits to the Vestry for approval any plans for the funding of specific endeavors identified by the Vestry.

All gifts and bequests to Grace Church in excess of \$1,000.00, unless specifically designated by the donor, are transferred to the Grace Trust. (Annual pledges and contributions made during any service are not included.) The funds received by the Trust are segregated from all other Church or School funds and invested through the Diocese of Virginia’s treasurer and administrator of trusts to maximize growth (through income and appreciation) in a manner consistent with the preservation of the principal of the Trust and the timing of the Church’s needs to pay for fulfillment of the purposes of the Trust. Earnings (e.g., interest, dividends, realized and unrealized capital gains) from investment of Trust funds are used to fund the purposes of the Trust, and undistributed earnings become part of the principal.

The principal of the Trust was established through an initial accrual period of at least three years, and will continue until the achievement of a minimum threshold of \$500,000. After that threshold has been reached, funds from the Trust may be made available to the Vestry for the uses outlined above, as follows:

- Five percent of the average of the net value of the assets (accumulated principal and earnings) as of December 31 of each year for the prior three years may be distributed each calendar year (the “annual distribution”) to the Vestry to fund expenditures falling within the purposes of the Trust.
- A greater amount may be distributed if approved by a vote of at least three of the five Trustees of the Trust and approved by a majority of the membership of the Vestry.

As reported at the parish annual meeting on January 25, funds in the Trust totaled over \$322,000 at the end of November. Fr. Malm will be appointing a new group of Trustees in the near future. If you have any questions about the Trust, or might want to consider a gift to the Trust as a part of your personal planned giving program, do not hesitate to contact the stewardship chairs for more information.

*Jean Reed*

## Grace Episcopal School News

Springtime is here and that means that it is time for the School's annual fundraising drive for the Financial Aid program. Last year, parishioners were very, very generous with their donations. Please remember to support Grace School's important outreach efforts by contributing to this program, which benefits students and families under financial constraint. This was so helpful to our financial aid program and made it possible for 9 children to receive aid and attend the school. Interest in financial assistance is ever growing, but the funds are never sufficient. Thank you to all who have so generously donated in the past and to those who continue to participate in this effort. Information about donating will be mailed to you soon. However, if we miss you, you can simply send donations to the school office with the notation in the memo line, "Spring Program/Financial Aid" (checks should be made payable to Grace Episcopal School). Or, you may use the on line method of donating. Visit the GES website ([www.graceschoolalex.org](http://www.graceschoolalex.org)), click on the tab "Giving", and follow the prompts for giving to the Spring Program Financial Aid.

I extend a special invitation to all parishioners to join us for chapel and the Grandparents and Special Friends Tea on May 17 starting with chapel at 9:00 am. The Tea follows the service in the new narthex. The students perform for the grandparents, special friends and parents after the tea in the auditorium.

Are you a Box Tops Detective? Can you find the box tops on products? We continue to collect "Box Tops" from many, many products that earn cash for the school. Please drop off any and all of your box tops to the school office. Hint: Check the many office products you use at work (reams of paper, mailing labels, pens, pencils) and you can find them on boxes of cereal.

You've heard of "Tom the Turkey" being constructed at Thanksgiving, so for a pre-Easter activity the School families donated items to create "Bountiful Bunny" on March 15. All items of cereal and canned goods benefitted the Grace Church food pantry.



*Chris Stegmaier Byrnes  
Head of School*

## Haiti Micah Project News

What does the Dr. Seuss story *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* have in common with the children of Haiti Micah Project? As part of their school's celebration of the books and poetry of Dr. Seuss, Grace Episcopal School set a goal of donating 500 books to the children of Haiti Micah Project.

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Just as hats kept appearing in the story, books kept multiplying, with students and families bringing new and gently used books. As part of the final day, *The Cat in The Hat* orchestrated the morning's activities as the Mistress of Ceremonies. The fourth and fifth graders masterfully performed the classic story on stage. Haiti Micah Project Board of Directors member Karen Wires was given the honor of announcing the total

books donated by that morning—493! Not willing to accept anything less than 500, the school continued the donations until well over 500 books were received and now are to be shared with the children in Mirebalais, Haiti.

*Karen Wires*

## Stephen Ministry Workshop—Not Just for Stephen Ministers!

Learn how to care for people who are grieving, and reach out to others who are facing difficult situations, in a distinctively Christian way. On Saturday, April 20, Grace Church will host a Stephen Ministry Workshop from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The half-day workshop is designed both to enhance participants' care-giving skills and to help other congregations explore ways to expand their caring ministry. Registration begins at 8:00 am, and refreshments will be served.

In the first session of the workshop, "Ministering to Those Experiencing Grief," participants will learn about the grief process — the stages of grief and how to minister to people in each of those stages. The goal of this part of the training is to gain the skills and confidence to better care for individuals who are grieving. The second session will provide an introduction to the Stephen Series, a system of lay ministry through which congregation leaders can equip members to provide one-on-one Christian care to people in need. The final session of the workshop will explain "How to Care in a Distinctively Christian Way." Participants learn what makes Christian care-giving unique and how they can use resources such as prayer, blessings and Scripture in their caring for others.

The "Stephen Ministry" name comes from St. Stephen, who was the first layperson commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need (Acts 6). The Stephen Series is a complete system for training and organizing laypeople to provide one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around the congregation. Stephen Ministry began in 1975 when the Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist, trained nine members of his congregation in St. Louis to be Stephen Ministers. They assisted him in providing Christian care and support to people in the congregation and community who were experiencing life difficulties. These trained caregivers were so enthused about their ministry, they encouraged Dr. Haugk to offer Stephen Ministry to more congregations.

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Over the next few years, Dr. Haugk traveled to congregations and trained Stephen Ministers. This quickly proved to be inefficient, since he could visit only a limited number of congregations, and these congregations were then dependent on him to train additional caregivers. So in 1978 Stephen Ministries held the first Leader's Training Course and trained the first Stephen Leaders—representatives of various congregations who then returned home to train and supervise their own Stephen Ministers. Since then Stephen Ministries St. Louis has specialized in "training the trainers" through the Stephen Series ministry system. More than 11,000 congregations are enrolled in the Stephen Series. They represent more than 160 different Christian denominations and come from all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and 24 other countries.

One reason we're glad to help other congregations learn about Stephen Ministry is because it has made a significant difference in the life of our parish. If you think you might be interested in being a Stephen Minister, attending the workshop is a great way to learn more. Members of Grace Church are invited to attend the workshop free of charge. However, it is still important to pre-register so that we will have plenty of materials on the day of the workshop. Please contact Cindy Diehl at (703) 494-9490 or [cindy.diehl@gracealex.org](mailto:cindy.diehl@gracealex.org) if you would like to be added to our list of participants. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity for personal growth and to learn more about Stephen Ministry.

## Habari za Tanzania (News of Tanzania—and The Lochers!)



Greetings from Tanzania! As we write this letter, we are about to reach the six-month mark since our arrival in Dodoma, Tanzania, and it has been a really incredible time so far. Although we have moved from one nation's capital to another, it has been a big shift. Dodoma is a small city, and though it has a couple traffic circles to help us feel at home, there aren't even any stoplights. The seminary where we live is well outside of town—several kilometers past where the paved road ends. It's rural out here, and our next-door neighbors have roosters to help us wake up each morning. We even had to chase a cow out of our yard about a week after we arrived!

Working with the students here at Msalato Theological College has been great. We have 46 students in the diploma program, most of whom are preparing to serve as priests in parishes in this region. In addition, we have eight students pursuing bachelor's degrees, who generally are preparing to teach theology here in the Diocese of Central Tanganyika or in other dioceses throughout the country. There are also programs for students and some wives of students to study English, and a secretarial program. We spend time with all of these students, whether teaching them in class, worshiping with them at our daily chapel services, or traveling with them to lead worship at local parishes.



Each teacher and each student at Msalato is assigned to a pastoral care group. These groups meet every Wednesday morning to sing, study Scripture, and pray for each other. These same groups go out each Sunday to lead worship at local parishes, in this seminary's version of seminarian internships. Ben's group serves a nearby parish, and Elizabeth's works with the girls' high school next to Msalato's campus.

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# Growing @ Grace



Upcoming Opportunities for Children, Youth and Parents

Shrine Mont summer camp registration is open! Visit [www.thediocese.net](http://www.thediocese.net) and click on “Youth and Camps” for more information.

## **Online VBS Registration opens on April 2**

Christ Church and Grace Episcopal Church will partner again this summer for Vacation Bible School. VBS 2013 will take place at Christ Church from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm the week of June 24-28, 2013. VBS is for children age three through fourth graders. Youth in 5th-12th grades can participate as volunteer youth counselors. If you're interested in joining the VBS 2013 leadership team to help plan and prepare for VBS 2013, contact Julie Simonton at [family.ministries@gracealex.org](mailto:family.ministries@gracealex.org).

## **Friday, April 5-Sunday, April 7—PYM Senior High Weekend at Shrine Mont**

Join senior high youth from around the diocese in the mountains! Registration is already open, so contact [julie.simonton@gracealex.org](mailto:julie.simonton@gracealex.org) to sign up.

## **Sunday, April 7@ 5:30 pm—Youth Dinner and Fellowship**

It's springtime, so join your fellow Grace youth for an evening of blooming fun!

## **Saturday, April 13@9 am-10 pm—Grace Youth Volunteer at Seminary Christian Rock Concert**

We're still working with the Seminary on details, but in the meantime plan to come for Quidditch and music! Here's what we know so far... Virginia Theological Seminary and the Center for the Ministry of Teaching are proud to announce the first VTS **Christian Rock Concert** on Saturday, April 13, 2013. The festival will feature an impressive and diverse line-up of the best in Christian rock: Joel Joa (urban), The Sloan River Project (contemporary rock), Fran McKendree (singer-songwriter), The Letter Black (hard rock), and headliners: Five Iron Frenzy (third wave ska). The groups hit the stage on the campus Grove at noon (following two high school bands) and will continue until 10 pm. In addition to the more than ten hours of amazing music, the VTS Christian Rock Festival will begin with a morning **Quidditch** clinic and tournament at 9:00 am, as well as poetry, spoken word performance, opportunities to meet the musicians and plenty of food vendors all day. **Rain or shine, the family friendly, ecumenical event is free and open to the public, including youth groups, although space is limited and registration is required.**

Contact [family.ministries@gracealex.org](mailto:family.ministries@gracealex.org) for information on all things children, youth and parents.

## April Forum Schedule

### ➤ **April 7—*The Gospel of Luke, Part III***

The Gospel of Luke is a challenging and often convicting account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Join Seminarian Christopher Adams in the last of a three-part series and dig deeply into the Gospel readings on the Resurrection in an attempt to discern the Word spoken to us and in the hope that we will be transformed.

### ➤ **April 14—*Property Committee Update***

### ➤ **April 21—*Haiti Micah Project Update with Jim Snow***

### ➤ **April 28—*Discerning the Word through Liturgy with The Rev. Dr. James Farwell***

Teachers mentor and train the students, who do most of the work of preaching and leading services. It is a great joy to work with all these students preparing for ministry, to see their enthusiasm and passion for Christ, to watch them grow in skill and confidence at leading worship, and to have the great blessing of worshiping Christ with his family in this region of the world. One of our favorite songs is “Katika Jesu tu familia moja” which means, “In Jesus Christ we are one family.” This song is always sung as a recessional and after the leaders recess, each member of the parish follows them out the doors and makes a huge circle in front of the church, shaking hands with every single person on their way around the circle.

It is an incredible thing to sing such a song and shake hands with everyone, from toddlers to grandmothers, some of whom don’t speak a word of English, but all of whom are singing about the deepest bond of brotherhood in the world: being part of the family of Christ.

The two of us each have our particular work and ministry here at Msalato, and we wanted to share our personal reflections on our life and service in Tanzania.

**From Benjamin Locher:** Last semester I taught first year degree and diploma theology students basic computer skills. Many of the students at Msalato arrived having never used a computer. Some did not even have electricity in their homes to run a computer. Soon after arriving, the students were presented with the daunting task of producing a well-typed, properly footnoted paper. So, it was quite a challenge that I was presented with on the first day of class, but it was exciting to watch the students progress through the semester. In the beginning, we started with such basics as how to turn on a computer, but by the end of the semester every student was able to give a PowerPoint presentation on an important saint of the church.



**Ben and Elizabeth worshipped at Christ Church Cathedral, Zanzibar, while studying Swahili.**

will be teaching spreadsheets, relational databases, and desktop publishing. One recent graduate of the secretarial program, Elias Malesa, recently received a job working with databases. Since then, I have been working with him one-on-one teaching him how to design a database. He gets quite a thrill when the computer can produce results on his command. This has been some of the most rewarding work I have done!

This semester, I am also teaching the Computer Applications course for the secretarial students. This course covers some of the same material as the theology computer course, but at greater depth. In addition to word processing and PowerPoint, I



**Parishioners line up to shake hands after a service at Mtakatifu Petro parish while the Mamas' choir performs, where Benjamin serves on Sundays.**

The rest of my time is spent trying to rescue broken computers from failed hard drives, thumb-drive borne viruses, and a host of other problems. While Msalato is fortunate to have three fairly well-stocked computer labs on campus, much of the equipment is aging, so there are enough problems to keep one busy. Our students who are on the degree track (generally people who want to teach at another seminary or university) are given a donated, old laptop computer which they will be able to take with them after graduation to use in their work. I spend a large part of my time rescuing these machines, the oldest of which is more than 12 years old. As an aside, if you are thinking of getting rid of an old (or new!) laptop, we can always use one!

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Though my work is largely ancillary to the goal of theological education, I am very much involved in the communal life of worship. I was invited to preach recently and you can find my sermon on the power of the Devil (and the much greater power of God) on our blog. Additionally, I, along with one other teacher, lead a pastoral care group which is assigned a local parish, Mtakatifu Petro (Saint Peter) also known as Muungano, about a 40 minute walk from campus. Worship in Tanzania generally and Muungano in particular, is very lively. It involves animated sermons in Swahili and music and dance from three choirs; the Mama's choir (which sings traditional music in the tribal language Chigogo), the main choir (which uses a synthesizer and sings in Swahili), and a children's choir.

**From Elizabeth Locher:** It has been an interesting experience teaching at a seminary so soon after graduating from seminary myself. I feel that my students and I share a certain freshness and excitement about our future ministries. I also share a deep empathy with them when they have lots of studying to do or essays to write. The tables have turned, and I have also come to a much deeper appreciation for how hard teachers work!

Last term I taught Church History, New Testament, and Christian Doctrine, and this term I am continuing on with the second half of the New Testament and two classes on the history of the Reformation. I really loved teaching theology last term—it was such an incredible privilege to meet with my students to contemplate the mystery of God. They were full of all sorts of questions, and together we would explore Scripture and discover how the Christian theologians who came before us had done so much to help us understand how the Christian account of the world fits together. And we would laugh as we realized that, as much as we tried to learn, God would continue to be infinitely more vast and mysterious than we could imagine.



The students at Msalato Secondary School sing and dance before a worship service. This is where Elizabeth serves on Sundays.

I have also found Church History to be a particular joy to teach. I love telling stories, and there are so many amazing stories in the history of the Church. So many of these stories were completely new to my students, and so for me the familiar stories of martyrs and popes and villains and saints gained a fresh power as I told them to people who were hearing them for the first time. My students and I have found so much joy in learning about the Church as it stretches all across the world and across time, and we rejoice that we, too, are part of this incredible story.



The center of the Msalato Theological College campus. This type of tree is known as a "Christmas" tree blooming each year at Christmas

When classes ended for the Christmas break, the two of us had the opportunity to go to language school to improve our Swahili, and we were lucky enough to find a Swahili school in Zanzibar. We spent two weeks living in Stonetown, cramming our brains full of grammar and vocabulary, and also exploring the city. We aren't quite fluent yet, but we have gotten better at basic conversation and at following along in Swahili-language church services! Now we are back in Dodoma, and excited for our new term. We are thinking of you all, and praying for you. Please continue to pray for us as we continue our mission to grow deeper bonds of love between Christians across the world.

*Elizabeth and Benjamin Locher*

## April Birthdays

4/1 Lenore Funkhouser	4/17 Molly Sim
4/1 Joseph Madigan	4/17 Mary Wallace
4/1 John Metz	4/18 Brian Foucart
4/1 Bernie Schroeder	4/19 Alexandra Barr
4/2 Page Tazewell	4/19 Maggie Corlett
4/3 Sean Kelly	4/19 Caroline Horwitz
4/3 Nancy Lorentz	4/19 Lindsey Malm
4/4 Stephen Falatko	4/20 Sasha Karamyshev
4/5 Jennifer Chriss	4/21 Barbara Morris
4/5 David Glazier	4/21 Kathryn Smith
4/5 Lynette Kamakura	4/21 Michelle Thissell
4/5 Christopher Koelbl	4/21 June Ward
4/6 Rachel Crabtree	4/21 Davis West
4/6 Cammie Griffin	4/22 Bibi Hatim
4/6 Mary Ann Ryan	4/22 Miguel Ortiz
4/6 Harvey Winter	4/22 Amelia Pattarini
4/6 Conway Zeigler	4/22 Ashton Summers
4/7 Phil Hickok	4/23 Adam Doelp
4/7 Kendall Metz	4/24 Peter Iovino
4/7 Eric Waskowicz	4/24 Keller Smith
4/8 Andrew Busker	4/24 Sarah Stancil
4/8 Barbara Ebersole	4/25 Evan Dobbs
4/8 Brittany Murchison	4/26 Gabriella Falcon
4/9 Fred Saalfeld	4/26 Jonathan Lewallen
4/10 Jenny Cline	4/26 Ellen Rugaber
4/10 Franklin Reuther	4/26 Beth Wiggers
4/10 Mary Stewart	4/27 David Ebersole
4/11 William Gillette	4/28 William Martin
4/11 Bailey Griffin	4/28 Avery Meeks
4/11 Ana Sosa	4/28 Donna Plunkett
4/13 Key Butcher	4/28 Richard Smith
4/14 Whitney Bruch	4/29 Mary Barnes
4/14 April Everett	4/29 Suzi Pease
4/15 Yasmin Hernandez	4/30 Victoria Howard
4/15 Gary Warner	4/30 Dick Rogers
4/16 Lisa Bellantoni	4/30 Henry Steffensen
4/16 Khacki Berry	
4/17 Duncan Carlson-Bancroft	



## Parish Staff

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 Pedro Hernandez ..... Sexton  
 Christopher Adams..... Seminarian  
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## Vestry

### Class of 2013

Peter Barnes ..... Sr. Warden  
 Deborah Crabtree ..... Jr. Warden  
 Bill Eckel..... Assistant Treasurer  
 June Huber ..... School Board  
 Lee Meeks ..... Member at Large

### Class of 2014

John Berry ..... School Board  
 Elizabeth Legere..... Stewardship  
 Erica McFarquhar..... Treasurer  
 Mai-Lan Smith ..... Evangelism  
 Kemp Williams ..... Register, Worship

### Class of 2015

Eric Bonetti ..... Fellowship  
 Lisa Medley..... Youth  
 Barbara Read..... Pastoral Care  
 Mary Ann Ryan..... Outreach  
 Eric Waskowicz ..... Education

### Alternates

Joy St. John ..... TNT  
 Teresa Preston ..... Communications

### Non-Vestry Coordinators

Gary Carter..... Fellowship  
 Chad Eckles..... Worship  
 Kristine Hesse ..... Communications  
 Rich Kelly ..... Youth  
 Nancy Lorentz..... Education  
 Cindy MacIntyre ..... Evangelism  
 Andrea Santos ..... TNT  
 Tania Wilkes ..... Outreach