

# Grace Notes

Newsletter of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia

Rector's Reflections

## Blessing with Peace

Most of us are quite familiar with the prayer for peace which comes with every blessing at the end of the Holy Eucharist, "*The peace of God, which passeth all understanding...*" (BCP, p. 339). We also use this at the end of Rite II even though it is not printed in the Prayer Book and is considered optional. Sometimes we use a seasonal blessing at the end of the liturgy.

Some will remember the blessing frequently used in older liturgies, "...*the Lord bless you and keep you...the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you...The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace...*" (BCP, p. 114). Whatever blessing we use, we know that God wants us to know peace, to share peace.

St. Paul witnesses to God's blessing with peace through his letters, most especially in his letter to the Philippians. Paul was probably in prison when he wrote this letter, awaiting his execution. For Paul, faith is built upon peace, joy and forbearance (Philippians 4:4-8).

During the 50 days of Easter we have an opportunity to discover anew this blessing of peace. St. John tells us that the Risen Christ came to his startled disciples and said, "*Peace be with you...*" Jesus did this at least twice (John 20:21 and 20:26). The first Easter message of peace with blessing is repeated at every Eucharist.

During my recovery as I've attended worship at Grace, sitting in the back pew, I have experienced my own sense of peace at three distinct moments: when we pass the peace to each other before starting into the Holy Communion; when I receive Holy Communion; and when I hear the final blessing from the presiding Priest. It is this peace that has sustained me through difficult days and sleepless nights.

This blessing of peace so powerfully experienced during Holy Week, Easter Sunday and, hopefully, all of Eastertide can support us in the darkest moments of life. I felt this support as I anticipated the start of the Great Vigil, waiting in the darkness and silence of the church. Light will shine, peace will come, Christ is risen, even in the darkest of times.

The month of May brings the fullness of spring with flowers and warmth and long days of sunlight. May this month ahead also bring the fullness of God's blessing with peace.

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

May 2014

## Inside this Issue

From the Asst. to the Rector .....	2
A Word from Mother Elizabeth.....	3
Music at Grace.....	4
From the Library .....	5
Prayer Shawls .....	5
Shrine Mont 2014 .....	6
VBS .....	6
Lifetime Theological Ed .....	7
Haiti Micah Project.....	8
Children and Youth Events.....	9
Thank You from Fr. Malm.....	10
Parish Register .....	10
Messick Ordination.....	11
May Birthdays .....	12
Parish Staff .....	12



## Worship Schedule

### Sunday Schedule

Holy Eucharist Rite I.....	7:30 am
Child Care.....	8:45 am–12:45 pm
Children’s Chapel.....	8:50 am–9:30 am
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 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

The next *Grace Notes* deadline is May 15, 2014 for the June 2014 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, Teresa Preston, Sarah Schultz and Beth Wiggers.

## From the Assistant to the Rector

The whole month of May we will be celebrating the Easter season. The bunnies have disappeared from store windows, the last of the Cadbury Cream Eggs have been sold, and all of the visible secular signs of a celebration one Sunday in Easter are gone. Being a member of the Grace Church community, you know Easter to be something entirely different. The visible signs are still with us at church: big and colorful flowers in the nave and on the altar, Festival Eucharists every Sunday, and white vestments. The hymns we sing are bold and bodacious with their “alleluias.” The lectionary readings testify to the amazing things that happened while the risen Jesus Christ walked the earth with his friends. These fifty days of Easter are what we are essentially all about. We continuously celebrate this life in the “after” times of when God manifested His glory in the resurrection and changed the rules.

I am writing this on one of our “Lay Eucharistic Home Visit and Healing” Sundays. This morning I was struck by the requests for laying on of hands and prayers. There are so many ways that we, or our loved ones, can feel broken by the world. The experience of illness, broken relationship, stress, and death of a loved one weigh us down. They are real events that sometimes feel like they have brought us to a snapping point. As people kneel at the Lady Altar rail and tell me what is going on with them or their family, I too feel the burden. We come to our knees before the cross because there is nowhere else to take such sadness and pain. We feel overwhelmed.

But it is in that affirmation from God in the resurrected Christ that gives us the message that this world is not all there is—there is something more. The promise of a place prepared for us, of wholeness and perfect health that is on free offer. In the Noah story, God drew a rainbow in the sky to mark a promise that he would never destroy the world again. In the Jesus story, God drew his son up from the grave as a promise that all he has will be ours. The promise is that the weight of fear, sin, and death does not hold us: God does. Prayers and sharing in the Eucharist continually connect us to that promise.

*Peace and Happiest of Easters*  
*The Rev. Leslie Steffensen*

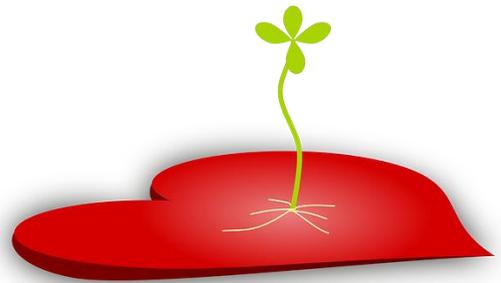
## A Word from Mother Elizabeth Unexpected Hope

A few weeks ago, my husband Ben and I decided that this year we wanted to have a garden. We live on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of an apartment building, so that's not the easiest wish to grant, but we are blessed with a balcony, and so we decided to start a balcony garden.

We bought 14 plastic pots, a lot of dirt, and a wide range of seeds, and we set to work one cold and windy Sunday afternoon when we hoped the weather would soon turn. We could have started with seedlings, but beginning all the way from seeds sounded fun. (And was easier on the budget as an added benefit!)

But as the days began to pass, I realized that we might have invested all our efforts in starting a balcony collection of dirt. Nothing was happening! I wondered if I had overwatered. Underwatered? Bought bad seeds? Maybe started when the weather was still too cold? I kept diligently watering, but I started to feel a little silly about it as the days passed.

And then, one morning, I thought I saw something in one of the flower pots. I peered closer, half wondering if it was a speck of paper or debris of some sort. But no, it was small and green and fresh looking—it was the first hint of life! One pot, at least, was going to be more than a pot of dirt!



The days have ticked by since then, and more and more pots have begun to sprout. At the time of writing, we have 12 out of 14 with green shoots in them, some getting quite big! It was amazing how one after another life suddenly sprung up in a new pot, and genuinely surprised me each time. Even now, I worry that these last two pots aren't going to yield anything, but how could I abandon hope when I have seen life miraculously make itself known again and again?

This experience, my first real foray into gardening, has been on the edge of my thoughts all through Holy Week and now into Easter. As I looked into my pots of dirt and wondered how anything could ever grow out of them, I couldn't help but think how nothing seems like a more hopeless place to look for life than a tomb. And yet Mary Magdalene looked inside a tomb, saw nothing, and then turned around and found the risen Christ.

Hope is sometimes hard to grasp hold of, especially when some part of our life feels barren or desolate. And yet we know that our God is a God of the unexpected. He shows forth His power and His love in the most unlooked-for ways and in our moments of deepest doubt and hopelessness. His presence offers the promise of new beginnings, of hope beyond despair, of life beyond death. I pray that in this Easter season you feel anew the miracle of our risen savior, and find new sprouting shoots of hope.

*In Christ,  
Elizabeth Locher*

## Music at Grace

On May 11, the Adult Forum topic will be “Music at Grace Church: Where Are We Now, and Where Can We Go?” Since I joined the staff in August of 2012, we have seen many changes in the music ministry, so hopefully our time during the Forum will allow us to explore various aspects of these changes in greater depth. Please bring your questions. We will also look at potential for growth in the future. Obviously, I won’t be part of much of this future, since I will be leaving for seminary in July, but I hope that we can initiate a conversation—based on changes in the past year and a half—that will establish a framework for my successor to continue developments in the music program at Grace Church. As you are well aware, our time together during the Adult Forum will be brief (especially since I have to do a choir warm-up for the 11:15 am service). Therefore, I want to pose some questions for you to think about prior to our discussion on May 11:



- What role do you think the music ministry plays at Grace Church now? What role do you see it playing in the future?
- How can we strengthen the function of music as a means of evangelism in this parish?
- What are the weaknesses of our music ministry, and how might we address those?
- What potential do you see in our budding chorister program?
- How can we all work together to increase our music budget to fund the following:
  - a quartet of paid section leaders or the hiring of choral scholars;
  - an endowment fund for organ maintenance;
  - a concert series;
  - what else?
- How is music a means of mission at Grace Church?

I hope you will join our discussion on May 11!

—Kyle Babin

### Eighth Grade Diocesan Shrine Mont Retreat—May 16-18

The Diocese of Virginia is hosting its annual 8th grade retreat weekend at Shrine Mont three weeks from now, **Friday, May 16 to Sunday, May 18**. Registration is now open. Registration is \$150 per student and scholarships are available. Anyone looking for a scholarship can contact Mother Elizabeth at [family.ministries@gracealex.org](mailto:family.ministries@gracealex.org). We are also looking for adult chaperones to join the group—please contact Mother Elizabeth if you are interested. Registration forms can be found on the Diocese of Virginia's Parish Youth Ministries blog (<http://diovayouth.wordpress.com/forms-and-brochures>). Registration forms should be passed along to Mother Elizabeth.

## From the Library

### ***Warrior Mom***

Are you worrying about your children's spiritual development or behavioral issues? Struggling to practice patience? Wondering how to get it all done when you never seem to have enough time? The library recently acquired *Prayer Warrior Mom—Covering Your Kids with God's Blessings and Protection* [248 APU] by Marla Alupoicei. The author invites you to walk with her through fifteen life-transforming principles that will empower you to effectively intercede for your children.

The library has over a dozen books that address the challenges confronting Christian parents (and grand-parents) in today's society. Check out the listings in the *Looking For Something to Read?* binder in the library.

*Ex Libris*

## Comforting Prayer Shawls



Prayer Shawl: A soft, warm rectangle knitted by one of a very special group of parishioners at Grace Church. Making a prayer shawl is an occasion for the knitter to pray for the health and well-being of the person who will receive it. A soft, scrunchy type of yarn with a tactile quality that feels especially cozy is used to make the prayer shawls. When one is completed, it is placed in the sacristy to be blessed by a priest, who will then deliver it to an ill or distressed person.

I received a prayer shawl a few years ago when I was hospitalized. My prayer shawl was knitted of soft blue and green yarns and it was a great physical and mental comfort to me, both in the hospital and when I was recuperating at home. I felt special knowing that someone had prayed over it and a priest had blessed it before presenting it to me. I would place it around my shoulders or spread it across my lap.

It still has its place, folded on my living room sofa, to be used for warmth in a cool house or just as a comforting presence to be leaned on.

*Barbara Read*

## Round Out The End of Your Summer – Shrine Mont 2014

Since it's May, it's time to start thinking about Shrine Mont 2014. This year's parish retreat will be held as usual the weekend after Labor Day, in this case September 5-7, 2014. If you are a regular, we hope that you can join us once again. If you've never had a chance to come or are new to the parish, we hope this year finds you in a position to make the trip.

Shrine Mont is in Orkney Springs, VA, an easy drive into the Shenandoah Valley. By all accounts, it's a wonderful weekend of rest, relaxation and reflection. It's a great time for fellowship; to enjoy the company of those you already know and to meet others in the parish.

Sign-ups will begin soon. We will offer online registration through the Grace Church website, or in-person registration during coffee hours. Payment can be made via credit card or check.

Shrine Mont wouldn't be possible without an army of volunteers. There is something for everyone, talk to Lisa or Howell Medley if you are interested. We have big jobs and small jobs, something sure to match all talents. Contact either of us at [lisa.medley@gracealex.org](mailto:lisa.medley@gracealex.org) or [howell.medley@gracealex.org](mailto:howell.medley@gracealex.org).

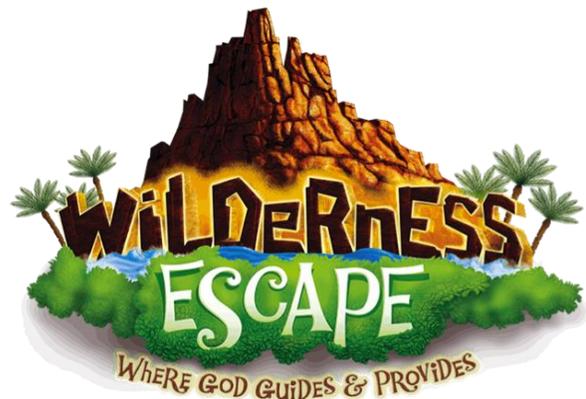
We hope to see you there.

*Howell and Lisa Medley  
2014 Shrine Mont Coordinators*

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## VBS—Calling all Volunteers!

Online registration for Vacation Bible School is open to volunteers and campers through the Grace Church website: <http://www.gracealex.org>. You can find the VBS link in the “News Room” and “News” sections of the homepage. Grace Church will be hosting VBS with Christ Church in Old Town Alexandria. VBS will run **June 23-27, 2014** from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at Christ Church for 3 year-olds through 5th graders. The theme this year is Wilderness Escape: Where God Guides & Provides. Youth currently in 6-12th grade can register to be volunteer counselors. We are looking for youth and adult volunteers, so please go to the website to learn about all the exciting ways you can get involved! The cost is \$50 for church and Grace School members, \$60 for non-members, and \$10 for youth counselors.



Questions? Contact Mother Elizabeth at [family.ministries@gracealex.org](mailto:family.ministries@gracealex.org).

## Spring Opportunities From Lifetime Theological Education

Below you will find exciting workshops and classes offered at Virginia Theological Seminary.  
**Learn More** at [www.vts.edu/lte](http://www.vts.edu/lte).

### Grant Writing Workshop

May 24-25, 2014

Virginia Theological Seminary and Grant Writing USA will present a two-day workshop where you will learn how to find grants and write winning grant proposals.



This training is applicable to grant seekers across all disciplines, including government agencies, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations.

Tuition is \$435 and includes the two-day training, workbook, and resource CD.

### Sparkling in the Darkness: The Spirituality of Pauli Murray

May 2, 2014

9:00 am-3:00 pm

Pauli Murray's spirituality was a driving force in her work as an activist, attorney, poet, professor, and priest.

VTS Professor Donyelle McCray will help you trace the contours of the Rev. Murray's spirituality and celebrate her many gifts to the church.

Registration is \$40.

### PREPARE/ENRICH:

May 2, 2014 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm

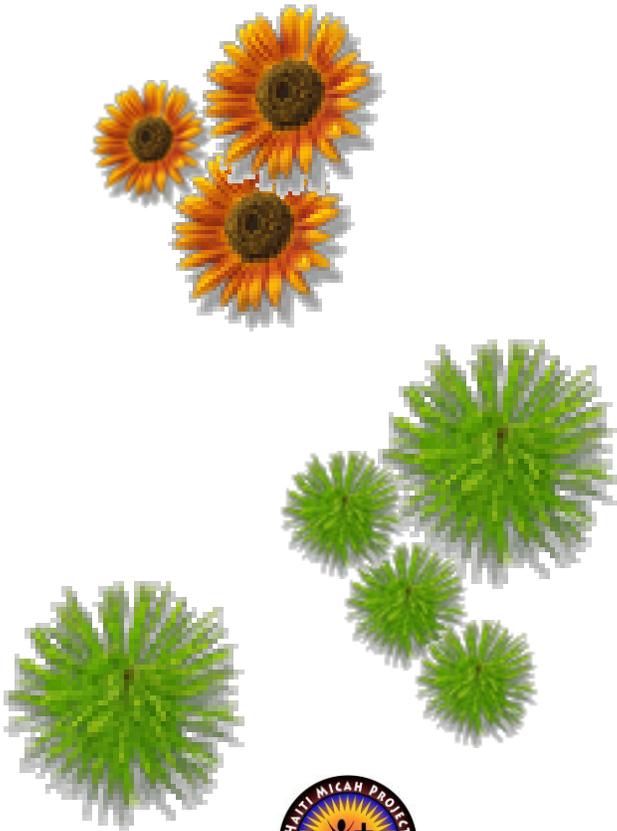
May 3, 2014 8:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Registration Fees: \$180;

\$140 for VTS Field Education Supervisors;

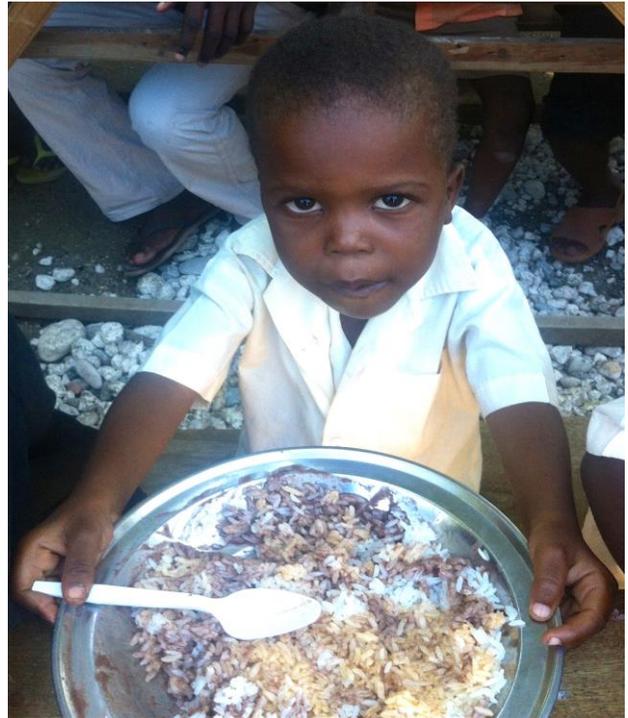
\$70 for VTS Seminarians

PREPARE/ENRICH is one of the most widely used tools for working with couples preparing for marriage and married couples wanting to improve their relationships. The Rev. David Gortner, a psychologist and Episcopal priest, will offer this training which will include a Friday evening option to introduce religious frameworks and other useful tools in working with couples.



*Thank you  
to our Grace Church  
Sponsor A Child donors  
and  
Haiti Micah supporters.  
Come Sunday, May 4, 10:15-11:00  
Adult Forum, Grace Church.  
Celebrate with Haitian food  
and learn what is happening  
at HMP.*

*Mèsi Anpil  
Thank You Very Much*



## May-June Events for Children, Youth, and Families

Sunday, May 4

- 10:15 am—Parents' Forum on Children and Grief (St. Mark Room)
- 5:30 pm—Youth Dinner (Merrow Hall Auditorium)

Friday, May 16-Sunday, May 18

- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Diocese of Virginia Shrine Mont Weekend

Sunday, May 25

- Memorial Day Fellowship Sunday—no Sunday School or forums

Sunday, June 1—Last Day of Sunday School classes

- 9 am—Sunday School Teacher/Sponsor Recognition during service
- 10:15 am—Forum on Christian Formation for kids and adults (Merrow Hall Auditorium)
- 5:30 pm—Final Youth Dinner (Merrow Hall Auditorium)

Sunday, June 15—Trinity Sunday-Beginning of Summer Service Schedule

- 10 am—Youth Sunday service with Graduating Senior Recognition
- 11:30 am—Parish Picnic

Monday, June 23-Friday, June 27

- 9 am-noon—Vacation Bible School at Christ Church, Alexandria

## Thank You from Fr. Malm

Leslie and I want to thank all those who made donations to the most generous purse the parish presented to me recently. Your gifts are so very thoughtful and they symbolize the affection we share together, priest and parish.

God has truly “zapped” me in your expression of financial support. Last year when our Wardens, Peter Barnes and Deborah Crabtree, talked with me about a purse in thanksgiving for my 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Rector (coming this June), I told them I did not want the Vestry to ask the congregation for a purse or any kind of collection for me.

When I came home from the hospital, our current Senior Warden, Elizabeth Legere, told me that several parishioners had “stepped forward” on their own, and the Vestry thought it best to set up a purse, given my accident and recovery. I deeply appreciate your support and kindness.

We can't be sure of what added expenses will come our way. Thank God for an excellent insurance plan, set up by the Diocese and fully funded through the parish budget. Your gifts will certainly assist us as we meet any of these extraordinary costs.

Your gifts, your cards, the meals brought to us, so many expressions of support and concern have been overwhelming. I am eager to see all of you. And while I have not been given the names of those of you who have contributed to the purse, the anonymity of this gift does not diminish my thanksgiving nor my hope of returning soon.

To give thanks is to know God. Blessings always.

*Grace, Peace, Love,  
Bob*

## From the Parish Register

### Deaths

- ✚ Andrew Alford, son of Eugene Alford
- ✚ Georgiana Greely, wife of John Greely
- ✚ Al Simmons, husband of Barbara Simmons

At the Vigil,  
With The Rt. Rev. Edwin F. Gulick,  
Assistant Bishop of Virginia

### Adult baptism, with the laying on of hands by the Bishop

- ✚ Anthony Eugene Berry

### Confirmation

- ✚ Jody Lynn Ashman
- ✚ Jeffery Mitchell Chiow
- ✚ James Kimball McCully, Jr.
- ✚ Richard Kirk McPike
- ✚ Matthew David Tschetter

### Reception

- ✚ Diane Margaret Berry
- ✚ Andrea Louise Santos
- ✚ Michael Frederick Smith
- ✚ Christopher Douglas Stuard

### Reaffirmation

- ✚ Paulette Eveon Fitzgerald





By the Grace of God  
The Right Reverend James J. Shand  
Tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Easton  
will ordain

Joshua Elliott Messick  
to the Sacred Order of Deacons  
in Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church  
on Saturday, June 7, 2014  
at 11:00 a.m.  
Trinity Cathedral  
315 Goldsborough Street  
Easton, Maryland

Reception following the service.  
Your prayers & presence are requested.  
Clergy, red stoles  
RSVP by June 1, 2014  
410-822-1919 or [lynn@dioceseofeaston.org](mailto:lynn@dioceseofeaston.org)

## May Birthdays

5/1	Emma Meeks	5/17	Sonia Hernandez
5/1	Richard Wilmer	5/17	Magnolia Lipsky
5/2	Max Bryan	5/18	Cheryl Barnes
5/2	Hayden Laboy	5/18	Gary Carter
5/2	Rick Smith	5/19	Martha Bethea
5/4	Mary Blouin	5/19	Amanda Chandler
5/4	Natalie Page	5/19	Jackson Fray
5/4	Claire Schwentke	5/19	Jan Wolff
5/4	Melissa Woodhead	5/20	Mike Barron
5/5	James Burkhalter	5/20	John Berry
5/5	Virginia Chandler	5/21	Camila Alvarenga
5/5	Katie Kilbride	5/21	Frank Carroll
5/5	Jeff Lipsky	5/21	Anna Gabbert
5/5	Andrea Santos	5/22	Alison Campbell
5/6	Emery Morales	5/22	Chip Fowler
5/6	Christian Portillo	5/23	Thomas Crabtree
5/8	Jared Smith	5/23	Amelia Cronin
5/8	Emily Summers	5/23	Joe Donovan
5/8	Ruth Young	5/24	Eleanor Cooper
5/9	Vylma Khanna	5/24	Madelyn Curry
5/10	Amanda Ruff	5/25	Duke Chiow
5/11	Madeleine Doherty	5/25	Jeffery Chiow
5/11	Gabriella Lipsky	5/25	Ramee Gentry
5/11	Lee Meeks	5/25	Stewart Hall
5/11	Skitsi Rein	5/25	Walter Lukens
5/12	Meghan Groves	5/25	Kevin Martin
5/12	Reginald Jones	5/25	Dan Pattarini
5/12	Marc Lauterbach	5/26	Nancy Davis
5/12	Meg Sullivan	5/26	Nicholas Pattarini
5/13	Nina Pfeiffer	5/26	Christina Peck
5/13	Cynthia Shen	5/27	Fiona Brown
5/13	Christine Washington	5/27	Raymond Curry
5/14	Ben Locher	5/27	Doug Miller
5/14	Evelyn Ovando	5/28	Daniel Plunkett
5/14	Caleigh Warner	5/28	Michael Reed
5/15	Walt Baumann	5/28	Ashby Rushing
5/15	Caroline Jamison	5/29	William Holland
5/15	Erin Kelly	5/29	Victoria Portillo
5/15	Hunter Lambeth	5/29	Noah Yerkes
5/15	Pearson Lambeth	5/30	Yolonda Brawley
5/15	Debbie Schultz	5/30	Heather Kelly
5/16	Halina Banas-Jones	5/30	Joshua Messick
5/16	Mike Dobbs	5/31	Earl Durand
5/17	Lois Hatch	5/31	Hudson Palmbly

## Parish Staff

Robert Malm	..... Rector
( <a href="mailto:rector@gracealex.org">rector@gracealex.org</a> )	
Leslie Steffensen	..... Assistant to the Rector
( <a href="mailto:assistant.lector@gracealex.org">assistant.lector@gracealex.org</a> )	
Elizabeth Locher	.....
Assistant for Parish Life and Family Ministries	
( <a href="mailto:family.ministries@gracealex.org">family.ministries@gracealex.org</a> )	
Kyle Babin	..... Director of Music
( <a href="mailto:music.director@gracealex.org">music.director@gracealex.org</a> )	
Christine Byrnes	..... Head of School
( <a href="mailto:office@graceschoolalex.org">office@graceschoolalex.org</a> )	
Ruth Young	..... Children's Chapel Coordinator
( <a href="mailto:ruth.young@gracealex.org">ruth.young@gracealex.org</a> )	
Charlotte Payne Wright	.. Parish Administrator
( <a href="mailto:parish.administrator@gracealex.org">parish.administrator@gracealex.org</a> )	
Beth Wiggers	..... Office Administrator
( <a href="mailto:parish.office@gracealex.org">parish.office@gracealex.org</a> )	
Pedro Hernandez	..... Sexton
Chandler Whitman	..... Seminarian
( <a href="mailto:chandler.whitman@gracealex.org">chandler.whitman@gracealex.org</a> )	
Joshua Messick	..... Seminarian
( <a href="mailto:josh.messick@gracealex.org">josh.messick@gracealex.org</a> )	

## Vestry

### Class of 2014

Elizabeth Legere	..... Sr. Warden
John Berry	..... School Board
Erica McFarquhar	..... Member at Large
Kemp Williams	..... Register
Mai-Lan Smith	..... Evangelism

### Class of 2015

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

### Class of 2016

Jeffrey Chiow	..... Fellowship
Lina Dobbs	..... Communications, La Gracia
Bill Eckel	..... Treasurer
Bill Malone	..... Stewardship
Easter Thompson	..... Worship

### Alternate

Leo Ribeiro	..... School Board, TNT
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### Non-Vestry Coordinators

Eugene Alford	..... Stewardship
Gary Carter	..... Fellowship
Mickey Craven	..... Education
Chad Eckles	..... Worship
Kristine Hesse	..... Communications
Rich Kelly	..... Youth
Cindy MacIntyre	..... Evangelism
Andrea Santos	..... TNT
Mike Smith	..... Pastoral Care
Tania Wilkes	..... Outreach