

Grace Notes

Newsletter of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia

Rector's Reflections

November "Pledges"

The word "pledge" has come to mean for many Episcopalians, including those of us at Grace Church, a formal, written declaration of the amount of money we will give to the parish in the calendar year ahead. Our stewardship leadership hopes all those who consider Grace to be their church will fill out a pledge card and return it (electronically, in person or in the mail) by Sunday, November 8. All of our pledges will be blessed as a part of our liturgies on November 15.

This annual process guides the Vestry in preparing a yearly budget. Almost 90% of our budget is funded by our pledges. This year's stewardship letter, "The Gift of Joy and Wonder," and the title of the pledge card, "A Giving Community," remind us that to pledge literally means "a solemn promise" and "something given to guarantee the fulfillment of an obligation."

Each year our pledge campaign is supported by the many celebrations we share reminding us of our continuity with those who have inspired us by their giving, their sacrifice, their sense of obligation, their thanksgiving, their love.

Of course, it starts with All Saints. We remember all those faithful men and women who through history have shown us God's love. The Saints comprise a great "cloud of witnesses"; they are truly those who have shared "the gift of joy and wonder" in following Jesus.

A short time later, we celebrate Veterans Day. Our veterans, past and present, make up "a giving community," dedicated to peace and justice and the defense of our nation. We are so blessed to have a number of active-duty service men and women, as well as retired veterans, in our parish. In times of peace and in times of war, they witness to sacrifice and to devotion and to duty.

On Thanksgiving Day we continue this celebration of gifts; the gifts of all creation, the gift of this nation, the gift of family and friends. Eucharist means thanksgiving, specifically giving thanks for Christ and the sacrament of Holy Communion, "the bread of life and the cup of salvation."

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November 2015

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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
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 15th of the preceding month.

The next *Grace Notes* deadline is November 15 for the December/January combined 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, Kristine Hesse, June Huber, Teresa Preston, Sarah Schultz and Beth Wiggers.

...*Rectors Reflections, continued from page 1*

The Church’s liturgical year ends with the Feast of Christ the King, November 22, and then, starts anew on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29. These liturgical celebrations anchor us to the gift of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, who has promised to be with us always.

Our parish life is rich and full during this month. I hope each of us will participate by making sacrificial, joyful pledges and by sharing in these wonderful liturgical celebrations. Giving is at the heart of all we believe. As God gives so abundantly to us, we can respond with our gifts to help Grace Church continue to be a life-changing community.

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

From the Assistant to the Rector

Paul wrote in his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, “...encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. (5:11)” I think that the community of believers in Thessalonica was much like Grace Church, Alexandria in that they had a dynamic worshipping core and cared for one another. Friendship helped them weather the storms of persecution that threatened them – they supported one another in their faith and leaned on one another for strength and courage. I am sure that they would have faced the joys and hardships of life with the same steadfastness, drawing from their faith as witness to Christ’s love, healing power, and mercy.

On November 21, we will offer a day of retreat for the women of Grace Church. The focus will be on friendship: Biblical stories of women who were friends with one another and with Jesus Christ. My hope is that this will be a time of reflection for us on the way our relationships at Grace sustain us and how we might go deeper as friends in our faith journey together.

We will be led in our reflections by Susan Sevier, a deeply gifted singer, performer, and storyteller, who recently graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary. She will be leading us in storytelling, bringing the experiences of women in the Bible alive into our own experience of friendship and faith in community.

*I look forward to our time together!
The Rev. Leslie Steffensen*

From The Assistant for Parish Life and Family Ministries: Celebrating Simply

We're about to begin the holiday season. I love the excitement and fun of this season, the time focused on family, and the drama of Advent and the story of the Christ child.

But it is an easy time of year to lose focus on the important things, to get overwhelmed by preparations, shopping and even a full party calendar! By the second week of Advent, I always see so many people who are exhausted and stressed. For those of us who are students with final exams at this time of year, that's understandable. But for those of us who aren't in school, it would be really nice if this time of year didn't feel so much like exam week!

As you begin to prepare for the holidays, I want to share an interesting website Mother Leslie pointed out to me two years ago called Advent Conspiracy (www.adventconspiracy.org). The group that runs this website and the Advent Conspiracy program try to offer an alternative to the frenzy and also the excessive spending that can go on during this season.

Advent Conspiracy has 4 points: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All.



Worship Fully – Remember why this season exists. Take part in and love the services of Advent and Christmas, from Advent I, to the Christmas Pageant, to Christmas Eve. Savor the beauty and wonder of the story of God coming to earth as a human child.



Spend Less – Try to not let shopping define the season. Choose a few gifts your friends and family will really value. This allows you to use more of your time and resources in other ways this season.



Give More – Give more of yourself. Give the gift of quality time with family and friends. Give of yourself in love and service to others, including those in need.



Love All – In a season that focuses so much on family, remember those in our community who may be lonely, forgotten, or suffering. Volunteer to make and serve a meal, or visit sick or homebound people, such as some of our Grace Church members. Use some of the money you saved from shopping and give to charitable organizations.

When I first visited Advent Conspiracy's website, I felt as though it seemed kind of minimal. But then I realized that is the point! They didn't create a new kind of to-do list for the Christmas season; they are offering a simpler alternative. So this holiday season, consider stepping back and treasuring the simplicity of loving, giving, and celebrating the simple wonder of our newborn God.

*In Christ,
The Rev. Elizabeth Locher*

Fall Back

Daylight Saving Time ends at 2:00 am on Sunday, November 1. Set your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, October 31 to get to church at the right time!

Graceful Worship: Clergy Visitation

Last month I wrote about Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) and, as part of that article, I touched on the privilege of visiting the sick and shut-ins who cannot come to church. That got me to wondering what members of the clergy do when they visit us that is different from what LEMs do. I was visited when I was in the hospital but, to be honest, I wasn't in any condition to take notes. So I asked Father Malm to enlighten me.

The Order of Worship that is used is "Ministration to the Sick," found on page 453 of the *Book of Common Prayer*. There are three parts to the service: Ministry of the Word, Laying on of Hands and Anointing, and Holy Communion. One or more parts of the service can be used.

A lay person can lead the Ministry of the Word; however, the confession and absolution change. A priest may listen to a general confession or a special confession, and will then grant absolution to the penitent. A lay person will say the general confession with the person who is visited, and will request a generic absolution, substituting "us" for "you" and "our" for "your."

A priest will lay hands upon the sick person and say a prayer for healing and blessing. The priest will then anoint the person with oil. At Grace, we have three small vials for anointing, and they come in a portable container with a small stole. A lay person may lay hands upon the sick person, but may not do any anointing.

For Holy Communion the priest has two choices. The priest can bring some of the reserved Sacrament (the bread only) in a pyx (a small round brass container) in the same way as a LEM will do, and will say a shortened version of the Eucharist. But the priest can instead choose to consecrate the elements at the time of the visit, saying the full Eucharistic service. At Grace, we have a portable Eucharistic set in a small box. It contains two bottles, a chalice, a paten, a spoon and a small stole.

Ministering to the sick and shut-in is an important part of Grace Church's ministry of Pastoral Care. I know how much it meant to me when I was visited, and I try to keep it in mind when I visit others.

June Huber

Parish Register

Baptism:

✚ Abigail Wells, daughter of Greg and Sarah Wells

Transfer Out:

✚ Cheryl and Peter Barnes to St. Paul's, Alexandria

Thanksgiving Services

Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 8:00 am and a Choral Eucharist at 10:00 am on Thanksgiving Day, November 26.



Evangelism

I have had many conversations over the years at Foyer dinners, in committee meetings, at coffee after church and just hanging around with Grace Church people. Very often the conversation turns to, “How I came to Grace Church.” What these conversations have in common is the love of and excitement about our church. We talk about family, worship, the chance to serve others, and the feeling of belonging. We think we have the Best! Church! Ever!



So it follows that when someone visits our church, we draw them in and encourage them to be a part of this wonderful community. Well, actually, we often don't. We have our small children, our committee work, our worship job—choir, acolyte, LEM, reader, altar guild. We need to talk to people at coffee hour. We run to teach Sunday school or do choir warm up. Those new people? Someone else will talk to them. Or maybe we tried to talk to a new person who wasn't really new. “Hi, are you new to Grace?” “No, I've been here 30 years.” And you feel like an idiot. I've done it, so I know.

I have some suggestions:

- Does the person in the pew in front of you, whom you've never seen before, look like they know what they are doing? Or are they looking furtively around trying to figure it out? Maybe move to sit with them; hand them a prayer book or hymnal when they need it.
- When you go to coffee hour, if there is someone there that you have never seen or not seen in a while, introduce yourself. Say, “Hi, I've never met you. I'm _____.” Or, “Is this your regular service? I haven't met you before.”
- When you greet a new person at coffee hour, introduce them to others standing around.

If you think you would be interested in being involved in a more deliberate effort to bring new people into our parish life, please contact me at lorna.worley@gracealex.org, or Mother Elizabeth at elizabeth.locher@gracealex.org. We would like to make it a parish wide effort, but we can start with you.

Enlarging our parish family is done one person at a time and it's not just the clergy's responsibility. *We* make Grace that church we love and are excited about.

Lorna Worley, Evangelism

Grace Episcopal School

Thank you to Grace Church and Fr. Malm for celebrating National Episcopal Schools Week with Grace School at the 9 am service on October 18. We were delighted to share the morning with the whole Grace community and live out the words of Psalm 133: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”

Please plan to join the school at our annual GALA on Saturday, November 7. For more details, contact office@graceschoolalex.org.

Patti Culbreth, Head of School

From the Library

When Pope Francis was in Washington in September, he spoke to Congress about three men and one woman that he called “representatives of the American people.” They were Abraham Lincoln, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Thomas Merton. He described them as “four individuals and four dreams: Lincoln, liberty; Martin Luther King, liberty in plurality and non-exclusion; Dorothy Day, social justice and the rights of persons; and Thomas Merton, the capacity for dialogue and openness to God.”

To learn more about these special Americans and their dreams, see any of the following books that are in the parish library:

- *Lincoln's Devotional*, 242/LIN
- *Love is a Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day*, BIO/DAY
- *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, BIO/KIN
- *Gospel of Freedom: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail and the Struggle That Changed a Nation*, 323/RIE
- *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*, BIO/MER
- *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*
- *The Seven Storey Mountain*
- *The Sign of Jonas*
- *Thomas Merton in Alaska*
- *A Book of Hours*, 242/MER
- *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*
- *The New Man*
- *What is Contemplation?*
- *Life and Holiness: Merton's Practical Guide to Holiness in the Workaday World*, 248/MER and P/M
- *Seeds of Destruction*, 261/MER
- *Seasons of Celebration: Meditations on the Cycle of Liturgical Feasts*, 269.1/MER
- *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, 271/MER
- *The Waters of Siloe*
- *Contemplative Prayer*, PB/M
- *The Monastic Journey*
- *Praying the Psalms*
- *Praying With Thomas Merton*, 248/SIM
- *A Seven Day Journey With Thomas Merton*, 269/DEW
- *No Man is an Island*, 248/MER

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CHANGE IN THE LIBRARY: Fiction books have been moved to five of the lower shelves on the right near the library door.

Wendy Cummings

Food Pantry News



Many thanks to all who have dropped off items for the bonus shelves in the food pantry. Toiletries are especially appreciated by our clients. And thanks also to the wonderful food pantry angels who continue to contribute financially. Your donations are THE reason we can keep the pantry open and serve those in need in our neighborhood.

We have been blessed by a special delivery lately. Instead of normal birthday gifts, several children from Grace School and Grace Church asked their friends to bring food items for the food pantry as gifts. Great bonus items and a true Christian spirit!

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...Food Pantry News, Continued from page 6

Another blessing has come from donations of food from the ALIVE! Food Center, a converted warehouse on South Payne Street. The building space was made available by the Alexandria City Council, in collaboration with Hunger Free Alexandria, for use by Alive! and other food providers as a storage center for donated food. The warehouse opened by receiving \$23,000 of free non-perishable items from Whole Foods on Duke Street. Grace Church, as part of the Hunger Free Alexandria campaign, benefitted substantially from this donation by receiving some of this food. Remember that big pallet of food inside the church entrance? This donation really helped to stretch our food pantry budget!

John and Khacki Berry

"Seek and Serve Christ in All People:" November 2015 Forums

Nov 1 ***Here if you Need Me***
Pastoral Care Book Series, Part 2
St. John Room

Nov 22 **Finding Christ in Hospital
Chaplaincy**
with June Huber and Pat Dickson
St. John Room

Nov 8 ***Here if you Need Me***
Pastoral Care Book Series, Part 3
St. John Room

Nov 29 **Advent Intergenerational Crafts**
Merrow Hall Auditorium

Nov 15 **Seeking Christ as a Pilgrim: The
Way of Santiago de Compostela**
with Mary Anne Ryan
St. John Room

Announcements

Parent Forum – November 1: Celebrating the Saints with Children



From shoes filled with candy on St. Nicholas Day to blessing bonfires on John the Baptist's birthday, the Christian year is full of fun traditions you can do with your family. Join Mother Elizabeth on November 1, after the 9 am service, for a parent forum exploring fun ways to mark the seasons and saints of the year with your children, and learn about sweet, fun, and even wacky traditions that go along with them. This forum will be held in the St. Mark Room and coffee will be provided.



Intergenerational Advent Craft Day – November 29

Join us in Merrow Hall Auditorium on Sunday, November 29, after the 9 am service, for an intergenerational day of fellowship, crafts, and formation to welcome Advent and celebrate the new church year!

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...Announcements, Continued from page 7

We will have many crafts including making Moravian stars and gift boxes, painting Christmas ornaments, and wreath-making. Advent devotionals for adults and families will also be available, along with Advent Calendars! If you'd like to make an Advent wreath with fresh greens, please sign up by November 15 by emailing Mother Elizabeth at elizabeth.locher@gracealex.org or signing one of the sign-up sheets that will be posted around the building.



Grace Christmas Pageant – December 13!

Grace Church's annual Christmas Pageant will take place on December 13 at 5 pm! All children and youth are welcome to take part, and can learn more from their Sunday school teachers or by contacting Mother Elizabeth (elizabeth.locher@gracealex.org). Adults are very welcome, too! We are looking for volunteers to help with everything from rehearsals to costumes to snacks, so please contact Mother Elizabeth to join in the fun!

November Birthdays

Kathie Burgess 11/01	Maxine Meeks 11/12	Ryan Reyes 11/22
Sarah Low 11/01	Anne Zuidema 11/12	Olivia Lawton 11/23
Michael Plunkett 11/01	Jim Peck 11/13	Leo Ribeiro 11/23
Gregory Steffensen 11/01	Ashley Alvarenga 11/15	Holly Bray 11/24
Andrea Sanchez 11/03	Derin Baird 11/15	Susan Crabill 11/24
Caroline Sweet 11/03	Jennifer Eckel 11/15	Elmira Vogtmann 11/24
Alex Willson 11/03	Meredith Green 11/15	Christina Iovino 11/25
Bob Blunden 11/04	Jeff McQuilkin 11/15	Ben Joyner 11/25
Bette Yancey 11/04	Anna Tilton 11/15	Jim Rubin 11/25
Haile Dagne 11/05	Christopher Hayden 11/16	Katie Zeigler 11/25
Walter Davis 11/06	Douglas Prince 11/16	Lisle Bean 11/26
Judy Micklish 11/06	Denise Bean 11/17	Stephen Boris 11/26
Jennifer Pease 11/06	Joanne Lukens 11/17	Sean Harris 11/27
Carol Schroeder 11/06	Richard Thompson 11/17	Geovanny Portillo 11/28
Amy Barron 11/07	Mickey Craven 11/18	Joe Reeder 11/28
Mia Howard 11/07	Jonathan Lorentz 11/18	Joy Lamb 11/29
Barbara Simmons 11/08	Joyce Gillum 11/19	Julie Mills Cizek 11/30
August Gannon 11/09	Brett Mellish 11/19	Todd Egaas 11/30
Dabney Holloway 11/09	Grace Pattarini 11/19	Valli Haas 11/30
Patricia Ridgely 11/10	Benjamin Henderson 11/20	Liz Imphong 11/30
Amanda Fowler 11/11	Everett Pichler 11/20	Cindy Long 11/30
Philip Hall 11/11	Malcolm Eckel 11/21	Christa Warner 11/30
Vera Havener 11/11	Abigail Dagne 11/22	
Michael Madigan 11/11	Noah Hayden 11/22	

Funeral & Burial Instructions

(Please return a copy to Grace Church and keep a copy with your records.)

Date: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Full Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

The person ultimately responsible for making plans for my funeral and burial is:
(Please include name, address, telephone number and relationship.)

I own a cemetery lot at: _____

Or, will likely be buried at: _____

I wish to be cremated and my ashes placed as follows:
(Please note, cremation does not affect the nature of the service or place of burial.)

The funeral home likely to be responsible for me is:

I have already made arrangements with the funeral home, as follows:

Subject to the wishes of my family, I wish to be given the following type of service:

Funeral (body / ashes present): _____

Memorial service (body / ashes not present): _____

Burial service: Rite I (BCP, p. 469): _____

Burial service: Rite II (BCP, p. 491): _____

Holy Eucharist: _____

Church:

_____ Church service with burial immediately following - for family and friends

_____ Church service with burial afterward - the latter for family only

_____ Entire service at the gravesite

_____ Other: _____

If it is possible, I would like the following clergy to officiate and/or assist at my service:

If my service is in the church, and necessitates the use of pallbearers, I would like the following persons to be invited by my family:

I would like my funeral service to include the following hymns:

Whether in church or at the graveside, please include some of the following Psalms and Lessons:

In lieu of flowers I would be grateful if my family would consider memorial gifts in my name to:

On my casket please use:

The Church's pall: _____ (Note that flowers are never placed over the pall)

The American flag: _____ (Customarily reserved for military personnel/veterans)

I am to be an organ donor, the particulars of which are known to, or recorded at:

Special requests to my church and clergy:

From the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP, p. 445)

“...all persons (are) to make wills, while they are in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting, if they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses.”

_____ Please send me information for including the Church in my will.

Signed: _____

Form updated: September 2014

We Need Your Flower Donations!



Please **print** your name here: _____

It's time for Christmas Flower and Greens donations. The Altar guild invites you to help make Grace Church beautiful with seasonal decoration. If you wish to contribute to the Christmas decoration fund, please fill out the form below and enclose a donation of \$40. Your form may be dropped in the Sunday offering or sent directly to the church office. Please note 'Christmas Flowers' on the check memo line. The deadline for notices to be included in the Christmas Flower Bulletin is **Monday, December 7**. Questions? Call Lisa Doelp, Altar Guild Flower Chair, at 703-239-1302.

Please circle one of the choices below and **print** the remainder of the message exactly the way you would like it to appear in the Christmastide booklet:

“In loving memory of” or **“In thanksgiving for”**

Given by (**print** the name or names of the donors exactly as you want them to appear):

Stewardship: The Gift of Joy and Wonder

2016 Pledges

The pledge campaign for 2016 began on Sunday, October 4, with a festive brunch, jazz, and pledge cards handed out. Those who didn't attend the 10:15 am celebration were mailed pledge cards and a letter introducing this year's theme, "The Gift of Joy and Wonder" and explaining "proportional giving."

We hope all pledges will be returned by mail, electronically at www.gracealex.org/pledge, or in the Sunday offering in time to be blessed on Sunday, November 15. After the 15th, the Stewardship Committee will contact parishioners who haven't yet pledged. We need every active parishioner to pledge generously to meet our hopes for the 2016 Budget.

2015 Budget

Contribution statements for the three-quarter mark of the year are available for pick-up in the Merrow Hall foyer. We started the year with a deficit budget, and our expenses continue to exceed our income for 2015. We need a strong finish to 2015 income during the last two months of the year.

The Vestry has reduced the expense budget and sought additional income to help reduce the deficit. Normally November and December are very strong income months as parishioners complete their pledges and with the special Thanksgiving and Christmas offerings.

Parish Staff

Robert Malm.....Rector
(rector@gracealex.org)
Leslie Steffensen Assistant to the Rector
(assistant.rector@gracealex.org)
Elizabeth Locher.....
Assistant for Parish Life and Family Ministries
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Pedro Hernandez Sexton
Jason Roberson..... Seminarian
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Ian Lasch Seminarian
(ian.lasch@gracealex.org)

Vestry

Class of 2015

Lisa Medley Senior Warden
Mary Ann Ryan Register
Eric Waskowicz..... Junior Warden
Judi Willard Youth
Jan Wolff School Board

Class of 2016

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

Class of 2017

John Boris.....Pastoral Care
Colby Gustafson Outreach
John Metz School Board
Leo Ribeiro..... Education, TNT
Lorna Worley Evangelism

Non-Vestry Coordinators

Gary CarterFellowship
Chad Eckles Worship
Tracy Enger Outreach
Kristine Hesse..... Communications
Rich Kelly..... Youth
Cindy MacIntyre..... Evangelism
Lucy Tschetter..... TNT

