

Grace Notes

Newsletter of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia

Rector's Reflections

The Birthday of Life

In the fifth century, Bishop Leo of Rome called Christmas, the Nativity of Jesus Christ, "The birthday of life." He probably had Jesus' words recorded in John's Gospel in mind, "*I am the Way, the Truth, the Life.*" (14:6)

Life is a constant theme in John's Gospel:

"In him was life, and the life was the light of all..." (1:4)

"...anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life...has passed from death to life..." (5:24)

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (10:10)

Our life at Grace Church in December and January proclaims the life we find through faith in Jesus Christ. The wonderful and beautiful liturgies of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany fill us with the beauty of holiness. The generosity of our people, giving to support our mission and ministry, is a reflection of God's giving to us. Finishing one year, beginning another, shows the hope we have for our parish, for Christ's Body, the Church.

"The birthday of life" is a celebration of past, present, and future. Christmas is always a time to give thanks for the lives of all we have loved, those who have spent or are spending their last Christmas with us. This season is especially bright for children, those just starting to understand about gifts, giving, Jesus, Saint Nicholas.

I know our celebrations of "the birthday of life" will be filled with family and friends, near and far, celebrating the joy, the peace, the wonder in God's gifts to us and our gifts to one another.

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

December 2015/January 2016

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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 classes10:15 am
Choral Eucharist Rite I.....11:15 am
Holy Eucharist Rite II..... 5:00 pm

Weekday Schedule

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

*Alternating Rite I and Rite II weekly

Grace Church is:

A center for worship and fellowship

A school for discipleship and
stewardship

A community for healing and
outreach

About Grace Notes

Grace Notes is published 10 times a year by Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia – monthly except for combined July/August and December/January issues. The deadline for submitting copy is midnight on the 15th of the preceding month.

The next *Grace Notes* deadline is January 16 for the February 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.



From the Assistant to the Rector

Winter Shelter

With our bellies full from Thanksgiving and as we look forward to Christmas and the New Year, we also remember those who have less than we do. We live in a prosperous region of the country, yet there are some among us who are struggling. With Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas gift cards, Grace Church does a lot to bring the joy and light of Christ to those in need in our world. As a community, we want everyone to be safe each night this winter.

The Church of St. Clement of Alexandria has provided an overflow shelter for the homeless for 20 years. In order to relieve overcrowding at the city's main shelter, St. Clement’s Church opens its sanctuary from January to March to provide space for homeless men to spend the night. This allows homeless families, women and children more space and privacy at Carpenter's Shelter during the coldest part of the winter. This is an effort that brings together many churches in support of St. Clement’s: NOVA Catholic Community, Virginia Theological Seminary, Church of the Resurrection, Christ Episcopal Church, Christ the King Anglican, and Grace Episcopal Church.

The Shelter provides a safe, warm and loving refuge from winter's deadly chill. The Carpenter's Shelter van arrives each evening around 7:45 pm. Before going to bed, our guests can watch TV and enjoy a light snack we provide. The men sleep in our sanctuary six nights a week on mats we provide and use our sheets, blankets and pillows. A van arrives at the church at 6:00 am the next morning to return our guests to the city's main shelter, or, in the case of the working poor, to their jobs. We also give each guest a gift card to be used for a fast food breakfast.

We are always in need of volunteers for the shelter operation. Grace provides four volunteers every other Monday, including shelter openers and overnight host/supervisors to facilitate this ministry. Please look for opportunities to sign up this winter and assist in the evening or for the over-night shift. You can be a part of this effort to save lives this winter!

For more information, please contact Scott Knudsen at sknudsen@earthlink.net or me at assistant.rector@gracealex.org.

Thank you in advance for the many ways you give of time and talent to support outreach ministries at Grace!

Peace,
The Rev. Leslie Nunez Steffensen

Lighting the Advent Candles

This year I have a personal Advent resolution: I'm going to use my Advent wreath. Every day.

Each year, I get excited about making or getting an Advent wreath and lighting those four candles as the season passes. And then, somehow, I lose momentum as the season gets busy. Or, I don't get started actually lighting it until a week of Advent (or more!) has gone by.

And Advent wreaths give you away, because if you haven't been lighting the candles each day, you don't get that lovely graduated effect of having four candles of differing heights. I always end up with two candles of essentially the same height at some point along the way. Or, I have to get strategic about spreading the heights out again.



So here's my resolution for the new church year: I'm going to try to light it every day.

Some years, Ben and I have said Evening Prayer around the table with the wreath, and that's a really lovely thing. Or, you can light it while reading your Advent devotional. Or, it can simply be the centerpiece at family dinner, and that's what it might be for us this year, because my modest goal is just to light it every day.

I often light a candle at the votive candle rack in the new narthex—often it's the first candle lit to start the flame for others on Sunday morning or during weekday services. And I often reflect on how lighting a candle can be prayer. Just that simple, mindful act of lighting the wick makes you pause for a moment. It makes you think of why you are lighting that candle, and it invites you to think about God, or about a person in need—and then there you are, praying!

Short prayers can be enough. Perhaps each week I'll say a different word: "Hope," "Peace," "Joy," "Love," and think of how God brought those into the world when he came in the form of a baby. And that will be enough—to pause and think of that, for just a few moments. Even if I then snuff the candle and go to bed. Advent is busy, and there's always temptation to add more activities. So one moment a day is going to be my practice. One moment of simplicity and prayer. Perhaps it will change the whole spirit of the season this year.

*In Christ,
The Rev. Elizabeth Locher*

Parish Register

Marriage

✚ James Alfred Anders, Jr. (Jim) and Charles Kinson Williams (Kemp)

Death

✚ Daisy MacIntyre, mother of Cindy MacIntyre, mother-in-law of Rich Kelly, grandmother of Heather, Erin, Sean, Shannon and Karlene Kelly.



Overheard in the empty nave.....

“He is coming.”

“Is it time? Good! We love this time of year.”

“I like it when they set up the crèche, with the animals and the shepherds. That way we have more company.”

“Don’t forget the wise men.”

“I like it when the pews are filled with children and their parents and grandparents. It makes my heart warm again.”

“The Altar Guild does such a beautiful job decorating our home.”

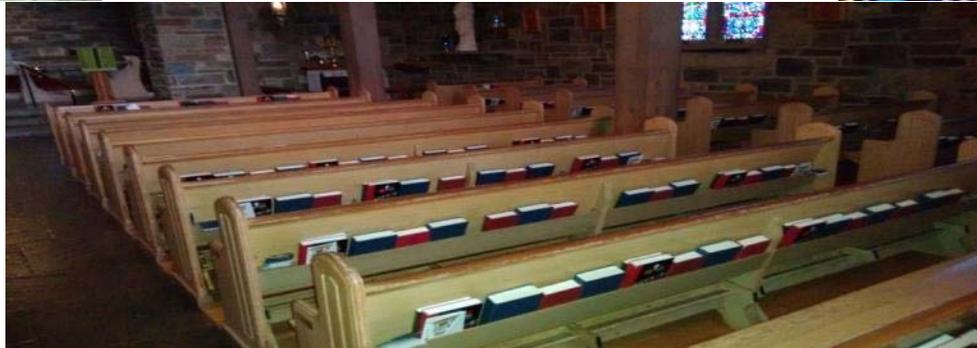
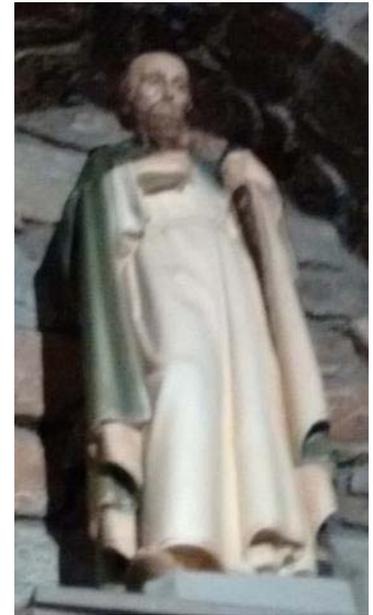
“And it smells so good when they use incense in their worship.”

*“And the music! *Adeste Fidelis*, O Come All Ye Faithful, is my favorite hymn.*

“I’m ready.”

“Me too.”

Are you?!



*“Graceful Worship” wishes you a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas”
—June Huber*

From the Library

The following books are missing from the parish library. Please search your bookshelves at home to see if they are there. These are books that should be on our library shelves. Thanks for checking.

Absolute Truths, by S. Howatch-FIC/HOW
A Book of Angels, by S. Burnham-235/BUR
Jesus Is My All in All, by B. Kolodiecchuk, ed.
Keeping Faith, by J. Picoult-PB/P
No Future Without Forgiveness, by D. Tutu-968.06/TUT
The Lion's World, by Rowan Williams-823/WIL

The following are book reviews of some of the interesting books in our library:

The Road to Daybreak: A Spiritual Journey, by Henri J. M. Nouwen-282/NOU
Nouwen spent the year 1985 in a community for handicapped men and women called *L'Arche* (The Arc) in a small town in France. This book is his diary from that time. He was searching to live more in Jesus' love and less in the mixed up modern world. He discusses his depression, his struggles, his questions and the answers he found. He says that in life, we must discover what is urgent and what is important. He asks why Holland has lost religion in one generation? (None of his young family relatives believe and yet his parents and their peers do believe.) After the year was over, he called it "the year of friendship" and he decided to join *L'Arche* community in Toronto, Canada, called Daybreak. Previously he had been a professor at Notre Dame, Yale Divinity School and Harvard Divinity School.

Angel Letters, by Sophy Burnham-291.2/BUR
In response to her first book, *A Book of Angels*, people wrote the author about their experiences and special times of contact with the spiritual messengers of God. This book tells about more encounters with angels, God, heavenly beings, unexplainable events, stories of healing, rescue, warnings and miracles.

Struggling with Scripture, by Walter Brueggemann, William Placher and Brian Blount-220/BRU
The authors are all biblical scholars and professors; there is one article by each author.

Discover The Real Jesus, by Bill Bright-232/BRI
Discover the Jesus that is your friend. The author tries to answer the questions: Who is Jesus and why is He important?

Silence, by Shusaku Endo-FIC/END
This novel is based on the true story of how Christianity was brought to Japan and how Christians were persecuted and murdered. Endo wonders about God's silence when Japanese Christians were burned to death.

Mere Christianity, by C. S. Lewis-239/LEW
This book describes what Lewis sees as the fundamental truths of the Christian religion. There are, among others, chapters on human nature; social morality; Christian marriage; and faith, hope and charity.

Wendy Cummings

Music

You are invited to join us for Advent Lessons and Carols on December 6 at 5:00 pm. The service begins in the Narthex, with the beautiful *Matin Responsory* of Palestrina. Next is heard Boris Ord's setting of *Adam lay ybounden*. It is a staple in most Lessons and Carols services all around the world. Ord was the organist and choirmaster at King's College, Cambridge where this service originated and this is his only published composition. Soon after, the choir will sing Paul Manz's, *E'en so Lord Jesus*. Manz wrote this intensely moving piece in 1953, at a time when his three-year-old son was critically ill. Of all the pieces the choir will sing during the service, Manz's text from Revelation encapsulates the whole Advent journey from darkness into light. Works by Stainer, Archer, and Ley fill out the rest of the service. A new piece to the choir this year will be *Nova! Nova!*, by Bob Chilcott. This folk-inspired Advent Carol has a mix of jazz-style chords, punchy rhythms, and a medieval text. Please invite a friend to join you at this very special service.

The holidays are always rich with music and we are blessed to have hard-working choirs to offer the music to the greater glory of God. Aside from the various services with special music and instrumentalists on Christmas Eve, we will sing Haydn's *Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo* for strings and soprano on the Feast of Candlemas, January 31 at 10:00 am.

Have you contributed to the Music Fund recently? The various instrumentalists at Christmas and other feast days are funded solely by the Music Fund, which is *not* part of the church's operating budget. If all Grace Church members contributed only \$5 a month we would be able to start a concert series in addition to providing first-rate music during the holidays. Please write Music Fund in the memo line of your check and place it in the offering plate on Sundays. It is also possible to set up a recurring contribution online. For more information, email me at richard.newman@gracealex.org.

Richard Newman



Grace Episcopal School

In this holiday season, we are certainly celebrating God's bountiful blessings at the school. Our fall has been filled with students embracing their academics and learning far beyond the classroom walls. We delighted in fieldtrips to Huntley Meadows Park, Ford Nature Center, National Cathedral, Claude Moore Colonial Farm, the IMAX Theatre and Goodwin House. Our recent Gala/Auction Fundraiser allowed us to budget for this exploration. Be sure to share with friends that Grace is the place to light a fire for learning intellectually, spiritually, physically and socially. Please consider an Open House to learn more or call our office, at 703-549-5067, to arrange a tour.

Patti Culbreth
Head of School

Thank You, Grace Church!



Generous donations from parishioners made these fully stocked Food Pantry shelves possible. Thank you one and all. By the time you see this photograph, all these supplies will be given out and the shelves replenished. Food Pantry volunteers know all about that!

John and Khacki Berry

CHRISTMAS AT GRACE CHURCH 2015

Christmas Pageant, December 13

5:00 PM..... Children's Christmas Pageant
followed by a pizza party and cookie potluck in Merrow Hall Auditorium
Pageant participants arrive at 4:00 PM; youth with speaking parts at 2:30 PM

Christmas Eve, December 24

5:00 PM First Eucharist of Christmas with procession to the crèche. (Prelude at 4:30 PM)
*The Nursery will be available at 4:30 PM for children 2 years and under.
Children's Chapel will also start at 4:30 PM for those 3 years through kindergarten.*

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

10:30 PM Choral Prelude

11:00 PM..... Midnight Mass of the Nativity of Our Lord



Christmas Day, December 25

12:00 NOON Festival Eucharist
There is no Child Care or Children's Chapel Christmas Day

Saint Stephen, December 26

12:00 NOON..... Holy Eucharist

The First Sunday after Christmas, December 27

7:30 AM..... Holy Eucharist

9:00 AM..... La Santa Eucaristía (in Auditorium)

10:00 AM..... Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion
*The Nursery will be available at 9:45 AM for children 2 years and younger.
Children's Chapel will start at 9:50 AM for those 3 years through kindergarten.*

5:00 PM..... Holy Eucharist



Feast of the Holy Name, January 1

12:00 NOON..... Choral Eucharist

The Second Sunday after Christmas, January 3

..... Fellowship Sunday: No classes

7:30 AM..... Holy Eucharist

9:00 AM..... La Santa Eucaristía (in Auditorium)

10:00 AM..... Choral Eucharist
*The Nursery will be available at 9:45 AM for children 2 years and younger.
Children's Chapel will start at 9:50 AM for those 3 years through kindergarten.*

5:00 PM..... Holy Eucharist



The Epiphany of Christ, January 6

7:00 AM Holy Eucharist
7:30 PM Festival Eucharist

December Birthdays

Kevin Plunkett	12/04	Greg Whitlow	12/15	Holly Henderson	12/21
Clara Shriner	12/04	John Sweeney	12/16	Wendy Wilmer	12/21
Nicholas Shriner	12/04	Julia Cooper	12/17	Priscilla Hanley	12/22
Mary Walsh	12/04	Mary Fox	12/17	Constance Troyer	12/23
Jennifer Henel	12/05	Mary Lewis Hix	12/17	Wanda Fraser	12/26
Cameron Sweet	12/06	Nasya Khanna	12/17	Eva Lorentz	12/26
Harrison Moore	12/07	Charles Saphos	12/17	Rob Cheron	12/27
Valerie Eudy	12/08	Sophie van der Sluis	12/17	George Winstead	12/27
Juliet Carr	12/11	Luke Carle	12/18	Matthew Tschetter	12/28
Alexander Everett	12/11	David Dellefield	12/18	Norma Alvarenga	12/29
Lindsay Howard	12/11	Clay Everett	12/18	Stanley Borgia	12/29
Isabella Giacomo	12/13	Moira Henel	12/19	Linda Durand	12/29
Mike Stancil	12/14	Mac Rein	12/19	Brett Medley	12/29
Mary Carol Tazewell	12/14	Diane Berry	12/20	Steven Nider	12/29
Lucy Waskowicz	12/14	Pat Edelin	12/20	Gabriella Everett	12/30
Peter Eckel	12/15	Graham Murchison	12/20	Barbara Ramm	12/31

January Birthdays

Judy Miller	01/01	Anne Caputo	01/14	Nat Ames	01/23
Edward Burkhalter	01/02	Suzy McQuilkin	01/14	Suzanne O'Malley	01/23
Mira Chiow	01/02	Betty Mills	01/14	Brennen Ruff	01/24
Jane Clare Joyner	01/02	Kylie Payne	01/14	Charles Winstead	01/24
Chris Corlett	01/03	Dorothee Arnold	01/15	Lizzie Goodnow	01/25
Yasuhiko Kamakura	01/03	Luis Odria	01/15	Michelle Searcy	01/25
Dina Salamanca	01/03	Aubrylyn Reeder	01/15	Tania Shand	01/26
Deborah Klaus	01/04	Peter Spencer	01/15	Robert Carpenter	01/27
Dorothy Bakke	01/05	Harper Dubsky	01/16	Kathryn Pattarini	01/27
Carter Kuch	01/06	Rose Hall	01/16	Nicholas Gentry	01/28
Colby Gustafson	01/07	Caroline Legere	01/17	Nora Gentry	01/28
Karen Hoppe	01/07	Cathy David	01/18	Lucy Medley	01/28
Emily Smith	01/07	Jeannette Ovando	01/19	Mark Stanley	01/28
Sydney Toler	01/07	Tom Donelson	01/21	Allison Knippen	01/29
Wyman Howard	01/08	Dorothy Daniel	01/22	Avery Laboy	01/29
Kristie Pichler	01/09	Bill Eckel	01/22	Henry Tazewell	01/30
Sawyer Morales	01/10	Chris Kupczyk	01/22	Lisa Boci	01/31
Sara Waskowicz	01/10	Katherine Peck	01/22	Anne Boris	01/31
Matthew Wszalek	01/11	Teresa Scalzo	01/22	Carys Henel	01/31
Suzanne Lawton	01/12	Alison Smith	01/22	Robert Steele	01/31
Nancy Velasquez	01/13				

Brown Bag Notice

While December 14 through 18 is a time of year when we all have too much to do, I hope you'll think about those in Alexandria who depend on the Brown Bag lunch program no matter what the season is. The sign-up sheet has been posted on the Outreach bulletin board on the first floor asking for volunteer servers and sandwiches. Instructions for making the sandwiches are posted there, too. You can also sign up by e-mailing me at linda.waskowicz@gracealex.org or to ask questions about the program. Thank you to those who have been so generous in weeks past with your time and sandwiches.

Linda Waskowicz

Grace Christmas Pageant – December 13!

Grace Church's annual Christmas Pageant will take place on December 13 at 5:00 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!

Parent Forum December 6: "Positive Discipline"

On December 6, we will welcome Carol Muleta from the Maryland-based Parent Encouragement Program (PEP). She will be speaking about how to establish a cooperative relationship with your children and presenting positive strategies for dealing with discipline and misbehavior. PEP has been serving the Washington, D.C. area for over 30 years, and we are excited to be able to host a speaker here at Grace Church! Come to the St. Mark's Room after the 9:00 am service for this Parent Forum.



Parish Staff

Robert Malm.....Rector
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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 GustafsonOutreach
John Metz School Board
Leo Ribeiro..... Education, TNT
Lorna Worley..... Evangelism

Non-Vestry Coordinators

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