



**PERSONAL STATEMENTS FROM
CANDIDATES FOR VESTRY
ANNUAL MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2018**

KHACKI BERRY



How did you come to Grace and why did you stay?

Our family came to Grace Church in 1985 after hearing rave reviews from the Jean Reed family. We became close friends through our military days, having met first in 1979. We have stayed at Grace all these years because of the warm welcome we received, including our first trip to Shrine Mont for the parish weekend. Our youngest son Will joined the EYC that year and remains close friends to his pals from that era. Being military meant that we have had to leave Grace for postings elsewhere, but we have always returned to Grace, our home parish.

What two issues do you consider the most important for the Vestry and the Congregation to address in the next year?

It is vital for the growth of our parish to engage new parishioners, especially those with children, so they can share in our exceptional Sunday School program and Journey to Adulthood. I also hope we can enhance our music program. We have a top-notch organist and choir director who needs our full support.

What activities or ministries have you participated in at Grace and what activities or ministries are you interested in exploring in the future?

I have worked with youth at Grace, initially as acolyte warden, then as an EYC leader, going on ten of their mission trips, and finally as a Sunday School teacher. I also, love the liturgy of the church, serving as a LEM and on the Altar Guild. I would be honored to serve on the Vestry in whatever position is needed and where my experience could be most helpful.

ANNE CAPUTO



How did you come to Grace and why did you stay?

Our family found Grace Church via the Day School. When Chris was three and we were shopping for a nursery school we met with Shirley Tyler, then Head of School, and the rest was history. Realizing the support of the Church made the school possible we thought we should give Grace a try. This was in 1988 and we never looked back.

We stayed because of so many, many reasons. First, because of the deep, rich and satisfying liturgy which nurtures your heart, your head, your ears and your soul. Also because of the amazing people of Grace who offer hands to do good work, feet to walk with you and mighty fellowship along the way. Finally, Grace is a conduit to the greater Alexandria community for service and to the greater Episcopal church for its resources for doing good in the wider world.

What two issues do you consider the most important for the Vestry and Congregation to address in the next year?

Issues of recruitment and membership, which impact budget and all treats we can function as a church loom first in my mind. We need to hold fast to our core strengths while broadening our reach to remain a vibrant and viable church. We need also to focus on pastoral care, particularly for our aging population who have special needs and connections to our community. Additionally, beyond worship and pastoral care we need to continue our work with youth and families who will make our community vibrant in the years to come.

What activities or ministries have you participated in at Grace and what activities or ministries are you interested in exploring in the future?

I have been a member of the Vestry three times before this opportunity, also the Altar Guild and the Flower Guild, a LEM, a lector, an usher, and an acolyte. I have served as Stewardship co-chair, been a J2A sponsor, Sunday School teacher and and currently co-chair of COHI, the pastoral care group at Grace. I have co-chaired the Fellowship Committee and worked as a counter and a member of the School Board. If I had a voice I would have been interested in the choir, but in elementary school chorus the director told me "Just move your lips dear" and thus ended any thought I might have a future as a singer.

I continue to be interested in Pastoral Care, Worship and Fellowship or in any other capacity where I am needed.

JONATHAN DOELP



How did you come to Grace and why did you stay?

We returned from Germany in the fall of 1996 and soon started Episcopal church shopping. We were looking for a high church environment and upon finding Grace, our son stated, “this is it”. We’ve been here ever since and remain involved in numerous varied ways.

What two issues do you consider the most important for the Vestry and Congregation to address in the next year?

The Episcopal Church at large is under a lot of stress nationally, with far too many closures and other issues. So first off is for us to continue to keep our wonderful Grace healthy, growing and vibrant. We are good at this and must continue! Secondly, we have the usual infrastructure aging problems, the HVAC and main elevator being prime examples that will require considerable expense outlay. While these two examples are but two, it is always the surprise unknowns that challenge us and as such are the obligation of the Vestry as well as the entire congregation to address responsibly.

What activities or ministries have you participated in at Grace and what activities or ministries are you interested in exploring in the future?

I served on the Grace Vestry from 2000 to 2003 as treasurer and served eleven years as treasurer of the Grace Trust, starting in that position from its inception in 2004. I am a graduate of Education for Ministry and serve as a LEM and Lector and currently am convener of the lay committee for our seminarian William Campbell. My wife is the flower chair on the Altar Guild and serves as an office volunteer and with the Brown Bag lunch program. Returning to duty on the Vestry seems a natural for me.

JENNIFER LONG



How did you come to Grace and why did you stay?

I came to Grace in 2001, looking for a church where we could have our daughter Sasha baptized and raise her and (her brother) Nikolai in a community of faith that had a strong program for children. Little did I know they would love it so much that they would join the acolyte corps! Over the years I have enjoyed many different activities and ministries and am grateful that we chose Grace as our spiritual home.

What two issues do you consider the most important for the Vestry and Congregation to address in the next year?

I think our greatest challenge is the declining level of attendance generally - we are working on a number of different initiatives to address that and I would be happy to continue to be a part of those initiatives. I would also love to be part of brainstorming about how we can make Grace Church's financial position even stronger.

What activities or ministries have you participated in at Grace and what activities or ministries are you interested in exploring in the future?

I am grateful to have been able to serve on Vestry these last two years as well as serve on the Grace Episcopal School Board. In addition, I have been on the Altar Guild and served as a counter for the last several years. Last year, I joined the coffee hour hosts. This past year, I have joined the Outreach Committee and am enjoying learning about a variety of Grace ministries, including the Food Pantry. In the future, I look forward to training to serve as a LEM and in other ministries where there may be a need.

STEPHEN LOVELL



How did you come to Grace and why did you stay?

I was looking for a church that was theologically conservative but not socially conservative on certain social issues. While community is important, I also wanted a church that I felt could nurture my spiritual journey. It was not my desire necessarily to go to a “high church” but I talked to the Bishop and he said the Rector and staff at Grace take their theology very seriously – which I have found to be true. Also, I love that Grace has a cross section of different types of people. People from different social classes, backgrounds, political spectrums, etc. It’s hard to feel like you don’t fit in when there’s always several people at church you can share some of your ‘story’ with. I wouldn’t want to go to a church where everyone is “cookie cutter” same.

What two issues do you consider the most important for the Vestry and Congregation to address in the next year?

Since I am not on the vestry I am not sure of all the issues the church is facing. However, based on what I have heard it seems we have issues getting all members to pledge and we have issues getting people to volunteer. Those are the two I hear the most about. There is some side discussion also about how conservative vs social justice we should be as a congregation; and how much we should be rite I vs rite II. But in a diverse community (see 1 above) this is to be expected!

What activities or ministries have you participated in at Grace and what activities or ministries are you interested in exploring in the future?

I am a regular Usher. I have served tea on Mother’s Day. I mentor the Grace Bible Study at the Seminary. As far as in the future, I would like to serve Grace on the vestry, so I can assist in coming up with solutions for any problems the parish is having. I am an accountant and financial consultant so perhaps I could use my skills in that area? I have also been approached about becoming a LEM and am considering that role as well. I read at lessons and carols, so I am also considering joining the lector group.

LAURA WEIDENFELD



Why did I come to Grace and stay?

I originally came to Grace because I wanted to have my younger son Kyle baptized, and the priest who baptized his brother a couple years earlier in The Plains suggested Grace. I stayed originally because I thought it was important for my boys to learn about the Episcopal faith in which I had grown up, and then because I realized what a special community Grace provides for its members, particularly through the youth group program.

What two issues does I consider the most important for the Vestry and Congregation to address in the next year?

I expect that the Vestry is already considering issues that I'm not even aware of. Based on what I know, though, I think two issues are ongoing challenges for the entire church. The first challenge is making active participation in the church feel relevant to our current members and to prospective members, and relevant to our community outside of the church. In addition to the ways that members can get involved in the church, it would be great to have more opportunities (or perhaps better publicize existing opportunities) to help in the community. In this time of tension between people of different political beliefs, religious beliefs, etc., I believe it's our duty as Christians to reach out more to others in our community - people of different faiths and cultures, for example - to build bridges of understanding.

A second significant challenge facing the Vestry and Congregation is making all of our current members feel welcomed and included in the community. This would include making it easier for our members to get involved in activities within the church on an ongoing basis (as opposed to having to sign up at a particular time of year), as well as actively reaching out to and trying to include new members in activities.

What activities or ministries have I participated in at Grace and what activities or ministries am I interested in exploring in the future?

I participated as an evening youth group sponsor for Rite 13 for two years, and this is my third year participating in a forum group. I was briefly part of the St. Andrew committee (or I think that's what it was called), welcoming new members at coffee hour. My family and I have been to Shrine Mont a couple times, and I regularly attend the Altar Guild Tea. I am interested in serving on the vestry, obviously. I'm interested in serving as a lector but don't know whom to contact to sign up, or what the requirements are besides showing up on schedule dates. And once both my boys have gone to college, I plan to join the choir.