Brothers and Sisters,

I bring you greetings in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. 1 Samuel 11:1 NRSV

We remember this biblical account because of what occurs next. He takes notice of this beautiful married women named Bathsheba. In the spring of the year the time when kings go out to battle, David remained in Jerusalem.

How would this account read if David had done what kings did in the spring of the year?

Before we savagely beat up David, we need to question ourselves. Have our decisions and actions been in concert with the appropriate requirements of our vocational or occupational positions? David at this time abandoned his responsibility. Have we abandoned our responsibility?

David was given the duty to govern Israel and to oversee the proper worship of Israel. In this case he did not accomplish his task. He did not go out to protect his citizens and he committed murder. I would submit to you my brothers and sisters that we too have erred. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We cannot say that we love and worship God if we do not love our neighbor. Nathan confronts David. David does not make any excuses for his sins but immediately acknowledge his sins. Please read Psalm 51 for this is David’s reply to God for his sins.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9 NRSV

(Continued on page 2)
When we consider the actions or inactions to our brothers and sisters which we know to be in contradiction to God’s law and we do nothing, how do we justify this? Did we stay in Jerusalem? Grace, you have taken the lead to continue the work to become the “beloved community.” This is hard work. However, this is what God calls us to do. We are called not only to proclaim with our lips but to demonstrate by our actions.

The peace of the Lord is always with us,  

Fr. Michael B. Guy Sr., S.T.S.

“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness…”  

(Psalm 96)

During the past month, we have begun outdoor worship services in both English and Spanish. Each Sunday morning we gather at 8:00 a.m. in the amphitheater for Holy Eucharist in English, and then La Gracia gathers for La Santa Eucaristía in the picnic area behind the amphitheater at 9:00 a.m. We use these two different outdoor areas simply because there is not enough time to disinfect the seating surfaces between services.

It has been hot outside at 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.! But as the heat of the summer begins to dissipate, we hope these services will become more pleasant to attend. We also hope to expand our offerings with services at different times as weather permits. If you haven’t joined us yet, for those who are able, we hope you will join us soon. Outdoor services are limited to 40 people for social distancing, so watch for the link to sign up in the Wednesday and Friday parish emails.

These services have been a blessing to all those who participate and attend, despite the rules and regulations we are required to follow, so that all remain healthy and safe. There is no distribution of communion, there is no congregational singing, masks are required, temperatures are taken at the door, and we share a contactless Peace. This is not the Sunday worship we all know so well, but some things we do know for certain: it is a privilege to gather together as Beloved Community; it is an honor to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness even in a new physical space; and the line between heaven and earth becomes thin as we gather. God’s presence is known to us in the breaking of the bread.

*A note about our recorded video services: our talented videographer, Scott Nurmi, has included a short recording of the bells played on our Verdin Carillon to begin our worship video. The Verdin Carillon was generously donated by Grace parishioner Michael Heintz, and it’s wonderful to hear the bells even when we cannot gather in person. The recording begins with the Signature Melody of eight notes composed by Michael in memory of his late husband, John Garverick, using the letters of their names.

Blessings,

Father Jason+
Get Souls to the Polls —
A Message for the Twelfth Week After Pentecost

I write this message as the Democratic National Convention has drawn to a close and the Republican National Convention is about to begin. I watched much of the first and will watch much of the second. This commitment of time, prayer and discerning thought is part of my preparation to exercise a profound responsibility of all American Christians.

As American citizens, it is our privilege and duty to vote. As Christians, it is our privilege and duty to ensure that all citizens may exercise their right to vote. In the words of our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, “It is a Christian obligation to vote, and more than that, it is the church’s responsibility to help get souls to the polls.”

Why? Jesus taught by word and example that the most important commandment of all is to love our neighbor as ourselves. He taught who our neighbor is in the scandalous story of the Good Samaritan in which a despised and rejected one proved to be a true neighbor to the man who was attacked and left for dead (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus reminds us in one of the last parables of his ministry that whenever we give food to someone who is hungry or visit someone who is in prison or give clothing to someone who is naked or cold, we do it for him (Matthew 25: 31-46). Literally. Because when we see someone in need, as Mother Teresa said, we see “Jesus in distressing disguise.”

Because of the example of Jesus and the faith we have in him, we Christians have much to say to our elected officials whose decisions and actions significantly impact the lives of the people of this nation. We care deeply in Jesus’ name about healthy food and safe water, education for everyone, care of God’s beautiful earth, safety in our neighborhoods, access to health care and so much more. Voting for the candidates who reflect our Christian values gives us a powerful voice in the public square.

A resolution adopted by the 2004 General Convention of The Episcopal Church put it this way: “the Church recognizes that a faithful commitment to voting is an extension of our baptismal covenant to ‘strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being.’” The resolution went on to “ask all Episcopalians to actively engage in advocating for voter rights, encouraging voter registration, getting out the vote, and volunteering to assist voters at the polls.”

Of course, churches as nonprofit organizations must follow certain IRS rules when participating in elections. Churches may not campaign, openly or otherwise, for or against candidates for public office. Churches, however, may and should involve their members in the political process by helping them to understand the issues, registering and encouraging them to vote, inviting candidates to address them and talking about how our faith shapes our votes.

So vote this fall. Examine your faith and choose the candidates whom you conclude best represent the values of the Church and the teachings of our Lord.

What else can you do?
• If you are not registered to vote, register now!
• Encourage friends and neighbors to register and to vote.
• Help those in your community and in other nearby communities to vote.

(Continued on Page 4)
(Vote - continued)

• On election day, if you feel safe doing so, help others to get to the polls.
• Advocate for the rights of every citizen to vote. In a democracy, voting rights are fundamental. We as Christians recognize those rights as part of what gives dignity to every citizen.
• In this season of global pandemic, be vigilant about safety - your own and that of others. Vote absentee if you don’t feel safe going to the polls. Encourage vulnerable people to vote absentee. Offer to witness and/or mail completed ballots. Wear a mask and keep appropriate physical distancing when talking with others about faith and the vote, and while at the polls. Honoring the dignity of others always includes honoring their health and safety.

Vote. Get souls to the polls. Two concrete ways to love our neighbor as ourselves, in Jesus name.

Faithfully yours,

*Susan*

You can find more suggestions and reflections about voting in this season in the Vote Faithfully 2020 Election Toolkit of the Episcopal Church.

Updates and information will also be posted on the website of the Diocese of Virginia and will be shared frequently on our social media platforms.

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**Matthew’s Ordination to the Priesthood**

My heart is humbled and overjoyed! In less than a month, on the feast of Hildegard von Bingen, God willing, I will be ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church and will celebrate my first ever Holy Eucharist in English, Polish, and Spanish. What an incredible journey this has been! Three continents and over 20 years of searching. So many people have walked this road with me through the years, so many have contributed to my growth, so many have shared their treasures, joys and pains, and so many have shown me the power of God’s abiding and reconciling love. I humbly invite you all to join me virtually for this live-streamed service. Please pray for me as I hold you all in my heart that day. God is good.

Matthew Dumont-Machowski

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**Live Stream on Thursday, September at 10:30 a.m. from St Paul’s, Richmond: at [http://bitly.com/3h5Pkw](http://bitly.com/3h5Pkw)**
Reflections of the Senior Warden

This charming story was making the rounds of the Internet last week.

The Calendar
Frog looked at Toad’s calendar. The April page was on top.
“Toad,” said Frog, “do you think it is still April?”
“No,” said Toad, “I know it is August. But my brain feels stuck in April.” “Mine too,” said Frog.
Frog ripped off the April page.
“Toad,” said Frog, “I do not understand time anymore.”
“Time means nothing now,” said Toad. “It is just the thing that happens between snacks.”

From FROG AND TOAD TENTATIVELY GO OUTSIDE AFTER MONTHS IN SELF‐QUARANTINE
BY JENNIE EGERDIE

So in this time between snacks Grace has been active and engaged in serving our parish with worship, fellowship, outreach, stewardship and care for our campus. Here’s what’s happening.

Worship and Fellowship
As we move toward the end of summer we continue to offer weekly videotaped services for Sunday morning Eucharist and Wednesday Evening Prayer. You will read more details elsewhere in this issue about worship plans in the coming weeks but in summary we began outdoor live worship in English at 8 am and in Spanish at 9 am in the last few weeks. We have learned a lot about the logistics of coordinating in‐person worship which will help when we are able to return inside to worship together. We are also planning for the installation of cameras in the nave for live taping of services both before and after we can be together again.

Shrine Mont under COVID conditions returns on September 11‐13 with the theme “Rejoice in hope. Do good. Push on prayer.” Come see all of the creative ways Shrine Mont traditions adapt to current times. Enjoy worship, fellowship, dancing, Follies, scotch tasting, fried chicken, conversation with the Clergy, porch activities and more. Thanks to the Eckels and their team of planners for an experience never to be forgotten.

We move from our summer experience talking about The New Jim Crowe into a deeper understanding of Becoming Beloved Community which includes books discussions, speakers and the Sacred Ground series of films and small group discussions. Find more about this elsewhere in this issue.

(Continued on Page 6)
Caring for Others

Our food pantry efforts continue with about 350-400 families served each week. The efforts of volunteers to prepare, bag and distribute food to our neighbors. The need is great and continues to benefit from our support both in donations and helping hands. The hours of service have changed to Tuesday and Friday nights, 6:30-7:30.

The Crisis Assistance Fund remains a lifeline to our neighbors who need emergency assistance with rent, utilities and other critical support. Thanks for your support.

At this writing, Grace School will begin in person teaching just after Labor Day. The school has worked hard to provide a safe environment for students and staff with virtual alternatives for families who want that experience. We are proud of our school and the extraordinary efforts they take to make a major difference in the lives of children and families.

Communications

In addition to the Friday eNews blast and the monthly issue of Grace Notes, we post regular updates on Face Book and our website. We rely on these venues to supply you with news about our worship, fellowship and stewardship activities. Please let Peter Hanke, at parish.administrato@gracealex.org, know if you need help getting connected to these communications which are vital to understanding how we come together as a parish.

Stewardship

Thank you for your faithful support to Grace through your continued pledges, contributions to special funds such as the Food Pantry and the Crisis Assistance Fund. Please continue to support Grace with your pledges and other donations. Even though we are not together our expenses continue. Tithe.ly, Breeze, the green donate button and old-fashioned mail or drop off also work.

Rector Discernment Committee - the process continues in the confidentiality stage in which candidates are evaluated and interviewed. We are thankful for the efforts of this team and pray for their wisdom and faithfulness in this task.

The Vestry and Wardens encourage your questions and comments as we work together to keep Grace strong and vital in a time when patience and fortitude are required by everyone.
Parish Survey -- July 2020

The survey was taken to solicit parish feedback on a number of issues to help guide the vestry in planning the use of resources to best serve the needs of the parish. 139 responses were received.

Most responses were from parishioners over age 50 who have been attending Grace for more than 10 years. The responses all reflect the risks associated with the pandemic

Worship.
- Most responders are comfortable with meeting outdoors for worship (64%)
- Fewer were interested in attending indoor services (45%)
- Over 86% responded favorably to using some method of online reservation system for managing service attendance

Shrine Mont
- The vast majority (68.9%) did not favor attending Shrine Mont in this pandemic environment
- There was mixed response to doing virtual Shrine Mont activities at Grace. (38.9% for, 33.3% against, and 26.9% needing more information before deciding)

Recorded Services
- Grace started providing recorded Sunday service on March 22 and Wednesday Evening Prayer services on April 29. Most responders view the Sunday service at least once a month, with just over a third viewing it every week.
- About a third of those responding watch the Wednesday Evening prayer service at least once a month.
• Staying Musically Active
I must admit that it is quite challenging to prepare this season’s choral music! Are we only allowed to have a soloist sing, perhaps a trio, a barbershop quartet, will we even sing hymns as a congregation again?! These are only a few things I ponder as I set out to keep our choirs musically active. My current idea for the Adult Choir is to conduct online choir rehearsals starting in the next few weeks. I will provide sheet music via pdf and links to tracks where I play each voice part for at home rehearsal. This is far from ideal, but it will keep music in our lives, and we will be in shape to sing when we are allowed to gather as a group again. The Boys and Girls Choir will operate similarly but will use smaller online groups or individual lessons. Please keep me and our choirs in your prayers as we navigate together through this difficult time.

• Joining the Handbell Choir
Come one, come all to join the Handbell Choir! Perhaps you have been on sabbatical from the Handbell Choir or you would like to learn a new instrument or learn to read music, now is the time to join. Since we are not yet able to sing in choir or congregation, the Handbell Choir remains the only group musical offering at this time. We are able to keep proper distancing and use face masks. You will see us on the recorded Sunday services until we are able to meet again in the church.

Our three-octave Schulmerich bells were expertly restored by Mark Bond, known nationwide as “The Bell Man”, in early 2019. We need more people to join so that we may use all three octaves. This is a low time commitment choir, meeting weekly on Thursdays from 6:30-7:20 p.m. Our first Fall rehearsal will be announced in the weekly parish email. Please contact me if you are interested; we would love to have you!
An Update from the Rector Discernment Committee

The Rector Discernment Committee begins every one of our Zoom meetings with Bible study and prayer as we seek to be grounded in God’s will for our parish.

In this stage of the discernment process, we are not permitted to speak about the number of applications we’ve received, the demographics of those who have applied, or the timeline for our work. We can say that the deadline for receiving applications from interested clergy ended on August 10, and we are now actively assessing candidates. We have assured the applicants of confidentiality in this stage of the process.

Each applicant has submitted a cover letter, a resume, and an Office of Transition Ministry portfolio. In the OTM portfolio, each candidate answers questions similar to the ones we answered in our parish portfolio. Each member of the Discernment Committee has thoroughly reviewed each candidate’s materials. In part because of the pandemic, most candidates have posted sermons and led worship online.

During this period of time when the discernment process does not allow for open communication with the parish, we ask for your forbearance, your trust, and most importantly, your prayers.

We close with the prayer we say at each of our committee’s meetings:

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path we may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Martha Clarke Bethea (Age 83)

Our sister and friend died peacefully surrounded by her family on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at Fairfax Hospital having experienced multiple organ failures. Father Michael was with her earlier in the day for Last Rites. Martha grew up in Louisville, GA. She graduated from Agnes Scott College in 1959, and started her banking career in Atlanta, GA and worked there until the Federal Reserve Bank recruited her. She moved to Alexandria where she had a long career with the Federal Reserve, retiring in 1998. She was a strong supporter of Grace — a former Jr Warden, active in the Altar Guild, office volunteer and a good friend to many, known for her kindness, loving heart, and independent spirit. A memorial service will be held at Grace Church. A graveside service will be held at the Louisville City Cemetery, GA at a date to be determined.
Opening With Cautious Optimism....

... Grace Episcopal School will reopen for our students after Labor Day. Carefully following the Governor’s Reopening Guidelines and taking advice from both the Diocese and the Alexandria Health Department, the School has created a reopening plan with strict mitigation efforts to keep our students and faculty safe and healthy.

In early August, we surveyed our families and learned that 87% hoped for a reopening of the school with new safety protocols in place. Thirteen percent of families have opted to have their children return to the classroom virtually and take part in a Distance Learning Plan. This hybrid of both in class learning and virtual learning options allows each family to choose what suits their needs and level of comfort.

Our Grace School family will join together to follow new protocols with the safety of our community in mind. Faculty and students will wear masks each day, and desks are separated with a combination of 6 feet of distance, individual desk barriers and plexiglass walls. Our schedule now allows children ample opportunities to be outside for learning and play. Our students and faculty will have multiple health checks during the day and remain in small cohorts to minimize any community spread of COVID-19. Cleaning efforts will be frequent and robust.

Although a very different look to the year, we are nonetheless very excited to welcome our in-class students back and “see” our virtual students each day. The fact that Grace is small by design has allowed us to remain nimble throughout the challenges we face during this unprecedented pandemic. We stand ready to offer a quality educational experience to all our students, and we are ready to pivot as we did last spring to Distance Learning if needed.

Our teachers are the true heroes in this new normal, and we are blessed to have a dedicated group of educators who care deeply for our students. Please keep us in your prayers as our students begin with Grace, grow with Grace and lead with Grace in this new school year.

Grace has adapted remarkably to the challenges.

Thanks to the school for providing this wonderful amphitheater for our outdoor worship.

See photos of our outdoor worship on page 13, and the efforts of the Altar Guild throughout the pandemic on page 22.
**Grace Church’s Family Ministries and Evangelism (FAME) is Running a Hybrid Program!**

Think about this: If you had read the title six months ago, would it have made sense? What does it mean now? Well, it means that WHEN WE CAN, we will be doing these ministries for everyone both virtually and in person. Right now, this translates to inviting our youngest members to virtual Children’s Chapel weekly at 9 AM. We sing, we pray, we wiggle, and we tell stories about Jesus with an awesome story teller in Caroline Legere.

We are also welcoming people who come to our outside worship services with enthusiasm and genuine interest. This is not hard to do; we ask “How did you find out about our early morning services?” We are learning the true power of social media’s reach. Our video services have garnered much deserved praise and interest as well. We look forward to continuing and expanding these kinds of services even once we are able to gather inside for worship.

REMEMBER: We are ALL evangelists. In person and online.

Hybrid also means that we are exploring virtual and in person education formats for all ages. We have seen very successful summer forums exploring racial reconciliation and the theme of Becoming Beloved Community. Expect to hear much more about those opportunities, which will remain virtual until a later date. Some of the programs will be small group focused so that we form new relationships on our journeys.

My Family Ministries & Evangelism brain trust (a group of people with vested interest in all of these subjects) is planning virtual Sunday School classes in multiple ways. The FAME group suggested we offer opportunities for projects and activities at home—in family groups, small (socially distant!) meetings, or alone. We hope to create emails with links to videos, articles, worksheets, games, coloring pages, cutouts, etc. We might also offer packages to pick up with supplies—our Back to School Blessings, for example, had bag tags, stickers, do-it-yourself bagtags and bookmarks—for pickup or delivery, plus an in person blessing at 1 PM this past Sunday afternoon. (Special thanks to Judy Williard for her graphic design work with the blessings!)

Our youth groups will return with separate Sunday meetings for each group. We plan to have regular “fun” activities at least once a month as we did previously. When we can, we will introduce youth dinners (with all appropriate safety measures!) As of September 1, we do not have the green light for in person gatherings.

The FAME group will be looking/planning for all fall events in a two track mode, pending positive news trends in our areas.

Trust me when I say that many, MANY people are imaging new and fun ways to continue learning about our faith and our lives together. Stay tuned for more information about the fall, Advent, Christmas and beyond!
CHRISTIANS AND RACE: BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY AT GRACE.

Since the murder of George Floyd on May 25th, many of us at Grace Church have discerned a fresh commitment to the call for racial justice and healing. Our parish has offered a Litany of Repentance, and has conducted a six-week study of systemic racism using Michelle Alexander’s book, The New Jim Crow, as a springboard for dialogue. As Christ has sealed us through baptism to strive for justice and to respect the dignity of every human being, God calls us to recognize that this work must continue. We have decided to grow our community of reconcilers, justice-makers, and healers, for at least the 2020-2021 year, by expanding our education and formation opportunities on racial reconciliation, and by fully and formally embracing the broader Episcopal Church’s Becoming Beloved Community framework.

What is Becoming Beloved Community? At the Episcopal Church’s General Convention in 2015, Resolution C019 was passed, calling on congregations to engage in a journey towards Becoming Beloved Community, in the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, building a society in which all are embraced and none are discriminated against. It provides a positive, theologically and biblically based ideal around which Episcopalians may address racial injustice and grow. Becoming Beloved Community is not so much a particular set of programs as it is an invitation to take up your cross and follow the loving, liberating, and life-giving way of Jesus toward racial reconciliation. The labyrinth is used as a way to visualize this journey: the quadrants of (1) Proclaiming the Dream of a community in which all are loved, (2) Telling the Truth about racism, (3) Practicing the Way of love to build bridges and see Christ in all persons, and (4) Repairing the Breach where individuals, systems and institutions have been broken, will be explored. You may walk these quadrants many times, gaining new insights and identifying new challenges with each visit.

What Will Becoming Beloved Community Look Like at Grace Church? As part of the journey towards Becoming Beloved Community, Grace will:

- offer antiracist education and formation activities, including discussion groups using films and books as guideposts, as well as contemplative prayer groups;
- gather and distribute racial reconciliation resources;
- highlight opportunities for action to confront and dismantle racism; and
- measure our participation in these activities and be open to other transformative paths to which the Spirit leads us.

How Can I Participate in Becoming Beloved Community? Notice of upcoming opportunities will be given in our e-newsletters, and summaries of activities will be described in Grace Notes. Some activities will be lay-led; others will involve the clergy. Eventually, we will post resources on our website as well. Participation is free will and free range, no matter how prepared or unprepared you may feel, come as you are to as many activities as you wish. Children will also have opportunities to participate. Activities in Becoming Beloved Community will be marked with the labyrinth. Grace’s recent and upcoming Becoming Beloved Community programming includes:

- August 23rd. We sponsored an Adult Forum featuring Elizabeth Jones Valderramma, Executive Director of Offender Aid & Restoration (OAR), to learn more about the truth about racism and...
you and OAR can combat it right here in Alexandria;
• In September, speak truth about racism through a discussion group using Robin DiAngelo’s book *White Fragility*;
• In the fall, we plan to invite VOICE to speak about housing and the perpetuation of racial inequality.

If you have any ideas, questions, or comments, or would like to help out, please reach out to Liz Rugaber, liz.rugaber@graceaLEX.org. Together, we can share the journey and become instruments of the healing and reconciling love of Jesus.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
- *Psalm 96:6*

Come join us for 8am Sunday outdoor worship!
*Call to reserve a seat today!*
Grace Episcopal Church
www.GraceAlex.org | 703.549.1980
Mark Your Calendar: September 11-13

Shrine Mont 2020
“Rejoice in Hope, Do Good, and Push on in Prayer”

Plans are rapidly proceeding for the first (and fingers crossed only) Virtual Shrine Mont. Bill and I as coordinators prepared a schedule that brings some of the best Shrine Mont moments to Zoom, but “We can’t do it without the support and help from the Grace Community,” says my husband Bill. Resources from around the parish helped in putting together the awesome event happening, September 11-13, 2020. For further details about the schedule, look to your Friday blast and special webpage at GraceAlex.org.

The theme this year is “Rejoice in Hope, Do Good, and Push on in Prayer.” It is a very loose paraphrase of Romans 12:12. “The theme came to me as I was reading some of our selected scripture readings. I was deep into the fine print, and something popped into my head,” reported Jennifer. It is a change from an earlier theme created before the many challenges of 2020 became apparent. The year has given us many things to hope about; many ways to do good; and a need to pray more than ever. The theme is active.

One of our Shrine Mont activities will be collecting pictures or short thoughts about how we have brought joy into our quarantined lives. For example, for Bill and me this might mean a special picture of a bird from a birdwatching hike, or a picture from our garden. In these dark COVID times share something that has brought hope, beauty, and joy into your life. You can also write a few sentences or draw a picture of a positive change wrought by the lock-down. These pictures and thoughts will be collected for the Grace Church archives. Or do you have a special Shrine Mont photo that captures a place or emotion? We will collect those as well and make a separate archive for them. We know we will miss the annual Parish Photo taken at the Virginia House on Saturday afternoon. Instead, we are asking you to take a selfie, or camera photo at 1:00 on Saturday, and submit it for the Photo Wall.

Tea Shirts, Shrine Mont Masks

Many have asked about T-Shirts. We will offer T-shirts to order now, and through September 13, and the end of the Shrine Mont weekend. We will place the order for the Tees, golf shirts after that. There is an order form attached to the special Shrine Mont pages. And new this year, are Grace Church masks. They incorporate the special Rose Window design.

As at any Shrine Mont, there will be many activities to consider and participate in. All you need is a computer and Zoom connection to join in the fun.

Friday

Events commence late Friday afternoon with a Happy Hour beamed directly into your home. There is a Zoom dance Friday evening with hosts Heather Hurley and Leo Ribero. Do you have a tune that says Shrine Mont, and that will get you up and moving? Send your requests to Heather [Heather.Hurley@gracealex.org e-mail address]
Saturday

Saturday morning brings conversations with the Rector and the Associate Rector. Surely, there can be a few challenging questions thrown their way! After that, there is the bi-lingual service in the amphitheater. Attendance is limited. Please use Sign-Up Genius to register for this service.

Saturday afternoon beginning at 1:00 o’clock are the famous Porch Activities. There will be cooking demonstrations, a book-club discussion, and an audience participation reading and recording of the Book of Ruth. Assistant for Children’s Ministry and Family Life Chrissie Crosby is leading this event. No one has lines to memorize, but an ability to read a few verses aloud is needed. Another exciting event is role-playing through Dungeons and Dragons. David Murphy is leading a two-hour adventure designed for those with assigned bedtimes, and newcomers to this role-playing imaginative game. David will also run a session on Saturday night for those without assigned bedtimes. Prepare to stay up late! The Grace Follies are virtual this year. While we have not been together very much, 2020 offers much fodder for thought and entertainment. There might be a joke or two about life on the Food Line. And naturally, there will also be a Scottish Heritage event hosted by Evan Robinson and others.

Sunday

Sunday morning the weekend continues with the early 8:00 a.m. Eucharist service. This service propels our community into the Academic Year with special readings and prayers and a limited amount of solo singing. After the service we will gather again for a Zoom coffee hour that will show off some of the Weekend’s handiwork, offer conversation, and fun thoughts. And at about noon, we hope to see a line of car’s at Grace Church picking up boxed lunches from Mindy’s Catering. Sadly, there will not be fried chicken on the menu but food with a style that reminds us of Orkney Springs and Basye, Virginia. Keep checking the website for more details and plans about this virtual Shrine Mont.

We’ll be back next year - Wait & See...
News from the Church Office

While coming by the church has been a challenge in recent months in the age of COVID-19, so much is new in the Church Office for when you return! Thanks to many parishioners who have donated odds and ends, especially Amy Barron who donated two sofas to the church, the Office has been updated to be a bright and welcoming space for fellowship, with a K-Cup machine for coffee and comfortable chairs to sit in.

When the health crisis has passed and it is again safe for parishioners to return indoors at church for fellowship and to volunteer, all are welcome to come to the Office, visit during the week and try out the new facilities!

Peter Hanke
Parish Administrator

Need to Find Someone? It’s a Breeze if you Login – Literally!

The church has moved to an online directory system so parishioners can keep in touch more easily and have up-to-date information to stay connected with one another. Many of you have logged in to use the system, but have you uploaded a picture for the directory? If not, WE NEED YOUR HELP, AND IT’S SO EASY! Please take just two minutes to update your directory information and upload a head shot!

The Breeze system is easy to access:
(1) Go to https://www.breezechms.com/ Then log In to Grace Episcopal Church (gracea lex). If the parish office has your email address on file, you will find your name in the listing of people. (2) If your name does not appear on the site, contact Peter Hanke at parish.administrator@gracea lex.org or call 703-549-1980 to add your email address and information to the system.

Be sure to download the Breeze App on your phone! (The app gives you access to our online directory as well as the church calendar and events.)
On my last day, my students were quite formal as they delicately opened a gift box, removed an exquisite Hakata doll and placed her, precisely centered, on a waist-high polished wooden stand. I gasped. I had learned of the affection and pride the Japanese had for their “signature” Hakata dolls, which were small works of art, made from white ceramic clay. Now, I became a student in “how to view/appreciate a Hakata doll.” You do not gleefully pick it up and exclaim about its beauty, especially if, like mine, it’s a model of decorum and grace—a slim, young Japanese woman, kneeling and delicately holding a pottery water pot, as if about to bend over a sparkling brook to fill it. Except for simple pine needle designs at the hem of her kimono, her hair, skin and kimono are in the traditional, soft white of Hakata clay. I watched, and mimicked, the movements of the judges. Slightly bent at the waist, hands clasped behind our backs, slowly, almost reverently, we circled the wooden stand. In hushed voices, they admired the liquid flow of her kimono sleeves, the finely modeled features of her peaceful, oval face, the delicacy of her slim, graceful fingers and particularly the elegant line of her fine neck. I was humbled by such a beautiful, meaningful gift.

In the fifty years since then, in all of our moves around the world, our doll has knelt quietly in our living rooms. Often, passing her, I have fleeting thoughts of Hakata, then hurry on to meetings, classes, aerobics, lectures, etc. Then, yesterday, as I sank down on the sofa with a chilled Chardonnay, with a sudden revelation, I realized that I was not just snatching a quick glance at our doll; I actually had the time to recall all the circumstances of being presented with her as my parting gift. I relished the memories of all I’ve written here—the white-gloved chauffeur, the delicacy of lifting the doll from her padded box, the judges’ soft, respectful voices as they admired her, our slow, circling and admiration of this small work of art. The memories that I now had time to recall in detail were rich and fulfilling.

Delighted by this revelation, I looked around the apartment and realized there were stories and memories in every nook and corner. Perhaps I’ll have a chance to reflect on more here in this long pandemic time.

Barbara Morris
I’m occasionally questioned by non-Anglican friends who want to know about saints in the Episcopal Church. Do we believe in saints and do we create new ones to commemorate like the Catholics?

The answer is, yes, we believe in saints. Whether we create new ones is another matter.

For those of us who grew up with the 1928 Prayer Book, the saints we commemorated were Biblical figures – the 12 Apostles, John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene and others. There were also events commemorated – the Annunciation and the Presentation in the Temple being examples.

One of the outcomes of the Liturgical Movement of the mid-20th century was a recognition that Calendar needed to be reformed. In the Roman Catholic Church, scores of saints were removed from commemoration – usually because the accuracy of their historical existence was shaky. For Anglicans, including the Episcopalians here in the United States, there was a newfound understanding that our sparse Calendar did little to show the remarkable depth of faith demonstrated in the lives – and sometimes the martyrdom – of individuals over 2,000 years.

So, along with a new Prayer Book in 1979, the Episcopal Church began adding to its Calendar. Scores of holy men and women were given days of recognition, collects were written to be said or sung at a commemorative Eucharist; and a new book – Lesser Feasts and Fasts – catalogued their stories. But we don’t call these newcomers “saints” – at least not officially.

In the early centuries of Christendom, the people often declared their own candidates for sainthood. There were echoes of that practice when the throng of folks who attended the funeral Mass of Pope John Paul II began shouting “Santo Subito!” (Saint Now!). The Vatican waived its usual five-year wait before a person could be considered a saint and he became Saint John Paul in record time, complete with two miracles to his credit.

While the Episcopal Church does not officially bestow the title “Saint” on additions to the Calendar, that has not stopped others from appropriating the title for their favorites. In several dioceses, new churches have been named “Saint (fill in the blank).” This was perhaps anticipated. The preface to Lesser Feasts and Fasts states clearly that the Church “recognizes that there is a diversity of understandings in the Episcopal Church about what it means for someone to appear on the calendar and a range of practices in how the calendar is used.”

Some of the additions – Frederick Douglas, Thurgood Marshall, Frances Perkins, or William Wilberforce to name just a few in this category – were public figures who played major roles in social or political reform. Others in the Episcopal Calendar are post-Reformation Roman Catholic Saints we have come to admire. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, and Pope John XXIII are perfect examples.

Anglicans do not recognize the Roman belief in the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. But we have added Mary to the Calendar on the same date (August 15) as the Assumption and the Collect for her commemoration begins the prayer by stating that God has “taken to [Himself] the blessed Virgin Mary.” Also interestingly, we now commemorate the nativity on September 8 of Mary, but leave aside the Roman commemoration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary on December 8.

(Continues on Page 19)
Some additions to the Calendar are clearly worthy of Sainthood. Just two examples:

- Jonathan Myrick Daniels was a young Episcopal seminarian and civil rights activist. In 1965, while working for civil rights in Selma, Alabama, he was murdered by a shotgun-wielding special county deputy, while in the act of shielding a 17-year-old girl, Ruby Sales. Commemorated as a Martyr of the Faith, Washington National Cathedral commissioned a sculpture in his honor and describes him clearly as a “saint.” He is commemorated on August 14.

- The Martyrs of Uganda were a group of 23 Anglican and 22 Roman Catholic Christian converts. They were burned to death in 1886 on orders of Mwanga II, the king of Buganda, now part of Uganda, for a number of reasons, including their Christian faith and their refusal to have sex with the king. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Uganda have built major shrines in their honor and Popes visiting Uganda have included the young Anglicans in their commemorations. Their day of observance is June 3.

So, yes we believe in saints. And I would argue that we’ve offered up scores of men and women who deserve the title.

The stone carving of Jonathan Myrick Daniels joins depictions of Rosa Parks, Mother Teresa, Eleanor Roosevelt, Bishop John Walker and Archbishop Oscar Romero in the Cathedral’s Human Rights Porch.

Jean LeDonne Goodson

Jean passed away on August 20 after a courageous battle with cancer. She was predeceased by her loving husband Neal. Jean’s parents emigrated from Italy. She grew up in Adash, PA, the daughter of a coal miner. Moving to Washington, DC for a job at the United Mine Workers, Jean met the love of her life on a blind date. Jean and Neal were married in 1954. Their incredible life together spanned 66 years taking them to Jamaica, Argentina and Kenya where Jean was engaged in many social and philanthropic activities supporting her husband as a Foreign Service Officer. Returning to the U.S., Jean worked as a Concierge for 25 years at the Marriott Crystal Gateway and as a member of the prestigious Clefs D’Or Association, she and Neal traveled globally. All who knew Jean experienced her kindness, grace, and thoughtfulness. She was truly a remarkable woman, sharp as a tack to the end and loved by so many.
A Busy Summer at the Grace Food Pantry

Summer 2020 continued to see big numbers of clients come to the Grace Church Food Pantry. In August, volunteers gave out 1,229 bags of food, even during the thunderstorm on Friday, Aug. 28th! From volunteer Chrissie Crosby: “We had a spectacular thunderstorm. Managed to serve 77 clients in spite of the rain. Everything got very wet.” Thank you to all those volunteers as well as all of the volunteers and helpers who support the Food Pantry every week.

GCFP Begins New Hours of Operation

Tuesdays & Fridays: 6:30-7:30 pm
Great new volunteering opportunity!

Due to Grace Episcopal School’s opening for Fall classes, the Grace Church Food Pantry changed its dates and times of operation on September 1st. Flyers in bags of food and signs on the parking lot doors went up to alert our clients of the new hours: Tuesdays and Fridays ONLY, 6:30-7:30 pm

To all current and potential volunteers: Now that there are TWO evening shifts where you can help, consider volunteering after work! Log in and sign up on LotsaHelpingHands.com. If you need assistance with LotsaHH, contact judy.willard@gracealex.org

GCFP is open to residents of Virginia. Clients are allowed two visits to GCFP per month and may receive one bag of food per household per visit. To ensure the safety of our volunteers and clients, GCFP requires that masks are worn at all times; no exceptions! Rules for acceptance and participation in the program are the same for everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap.

The GCFP Food Wish List: Why These Foods?

The Food Pantry has learned a lot during the years it’s been helping our neighbors in need – especially since more Hispanic families came to the Arlandria “Chirilagua” area in the 1990s. What foods are most needed and appreciated? Here’s a guide to what to buy when you shop for foods to donate:

- Dried Black & Small Red (Salvadoran) beans are the most popular with our clients. Why are dried beans preferred over canned beans? Each 1-lb. bag feeds more than two 15 oz. cans and weighs less – making it easier for GCFP clients to carry home (most clients walk to GCFP), Vegetables for cooking. Masa Harina or Maseca (corn flour) used to make tortillas, Rice and Corn Meal. The Capital Area Food Bank has been out of these staples frequently during this pandemic. That’s why our GCFP Wish List is very specific about what to donate. If you can’t shop, your financial contribution helps purchase needed foods. Note ‘Food Pantry’ on your check. Thank You!

“Caraa Cares!”

Thank You Caraa Sport

Caraa (a New York City-based sport bag and accessory company) donated 4,000 face masks for distribution to the Grace Church Food Pantry and Project Healthy Together clients. Masks are being distributed to our Chirilagua neighbors in need. Providing these families with proper face masks helps prevent the spread of Covid-19 in their homes and community. Thank you Liz Rugaber for your efforts arranging the generous donation from Caraa. And THANK YOU to all the generous GCFP Partners who have helped during the pandemic.
The Altar Guild and the Pandemic

On February 15th we held our semi-annual brunch meeting filled with great food and fellowship. But as we moved into the rest of February things were changing. We were aware that COVID 19 was spreading from Europe and China and was now affecting Washington State and New York and a few other hot spots. It had begun to effect local Episcopal churches. People we knew were being asked to quarantine.

As we approached Ash Wednesday, unaware of how dramatically things would later change, Nancy Robinson, as the next Easter President, partnered with me and we sailed through four services. I was really looking forward to all our Palm Sunday and Holy Week preparations.

On the 29th we instituted new procedures for handling the elements and sanitizing the sacristy. The next week we stopped taking wine from the communal cup and removed the Holy Water. On March 9th we hosted the simple supper for the Lenten series. Sometime in the midst of all this Lisa and Jonathan Doelp were stuck at sea on a cruise ship, our members in community living were told to stay in their apartments; many of us moved home to work, if we lucky to have that option; our kids came home for distance learning. Everyone was trying to adjust to a new reality.

On March 15th our worship life changed dramatically as the Bishop called for an end to in-person gatherings. I was thankful for the Bishop’s guidance to keep us all safe. The Lenten series and simple suppers were cancelled. The Joyce Stancil funeral was postponed. On March 21st we supported the first recording of Sunday services and we continue to do so today.

At that time, we turned our attention to planning on how to support recordings and minimize the number of people gathering at one time. We hauled out every cleaning supply we could find, and the sacristy frequently smelled like a surgical suite. Eleanor Reed donated some of our gloves to a personal protective equipment (PPE) drive. We gave the rest to the food pantry which was quickly growing to meet a whole new level of community need. Karen Hoppe made masks for the food pantry workers. Over the following weeks it was amazing to see the expansion of food pantry services.

And as we approached Holy Week, I was very worried about asking anyone to come in to help. I recall an evening phone call with Senior Warden, Anne Caputo, who talked me off the ledge. Both she and Eleanor Reed encouraged me to think though the “basics” and that was enormously helpful. Questions arose and were resolved... Do we keep the candles burning if no one is there? Yes, and Sarah Schultz can help. Can we use silk flowers instead of fresh? Yes, and Lisa Doelp has silk flowers we can borrow. Can we get the work done with smaller crews? Yes! How will services be modified for virtual delivery without acolytes, in person lectors, etc.? Well, that changed frequently, but always worked out one way or another.

By Palm Sunday I found myself trying to give palms away to no avail. I went to the Roman Catholic church, to the Lutheran church, to other Episcopal churches, and to the shared Baptist/Presbyterian church, to no avail. I ended up drying them at home and my husband burned them for us. The ashes are now back in the sacristy for our use next Ash Wednesday. Maundy Thursday flew by with a last-minute build of the altar of repose. I appreciated the chance to do a virtual watch that evening. Personally, I really missed walking the Stations in person, and reading my Good Friday reflection, but the stark solemnity of the recorded Good Friday service, with the bare altar and black cassocks, just really took my breath away. Easter was a joy, and a relief we were back to fresh flowers and the gold chalice and paten and the lovely vestments.
After Easter, I knew that many of the Guild members were really missing church, missing the work in the sacristy, and missing each other. Some members were suffering illnesses and accidents and undergoing surgeries themselves, at the same time as many were caring for others, getting their kids through virtual learning, graduations, work disruptions, and planning for an uncertain future. On the brighter side, some members welcomed grand babies and young adults returning from school, and many found new ways to assist with ministries here at Grace, at Goodwin House, and in other organizations. In the following weeks I had lots of time in the sacristy and sanctuary by myself. It was like being in the eye of a hurricane, and honestly, I think that’s part of what kept me sane, and the pandemic was at its worst in the DC area.

We marked the passing of Dabney Holloway, a longtime Guild member in April. I know that she was loved by many here. In May we postponed the Altar Guild Tea, but Eleanor Reed hosted a virtual scone baking event to tide us over. Paul Bellantoni re-keyed the chancel and nave doors, cleaned out our sink drains, scheduled stone repairs at the Altar rail, and managed the re-installation of our refurbished stained glass windows. So, there was a lot going on behind the scenes. In June we added fresh flower arrangements and added a second weekly recording for La Gracia on Fridays. And in July we returned to Saturday crews with flowers done on Wednesday and a quick Thursday check before the recordings on Thursday early evenings.

I want to thank the small, but mighty, team of folks who have been supporting recorded services since March. You have served with grace and love. I want to give special thanks to the folks who mentored me and gave encouraging feedback, especially Eleanor Reed, Lucy Lee Reed, Kristine Hesse, Anne Caputo, and Charlie Iovino. I add many thanks to Father Michael and Father Jason who were patient, supportive, and thoughtful about how to retain the best of our liturgy while keeping everyone safe. And it has been a joy to have Matthew here, for Grace to have seen him through his ordination and to have his continued support with La Gracia. And I thank Ali-son Campbell for offering to take on the next term, and Nancy Robinson for taking the term after that.

It’s not for nothing that we have a prominently displayed sign in the sacristy that says “Keep Calm and Carry On”! We did just that!

Thank You Julia!

Anyone can hold course on a calm sea. It takes a mariner to hold course on a rough sea. Many changes were needed and are continuing to take place due to the pandemic. As the clergy made necessary changes, these changes had a ripple effect on the Altar Guild. All of this is going on and Julia does not even blink. Did I mention that during this she needed to attend to a medical issue? Regardless of the changes that needed to be made, the altar was always properly prepared.

While we may not be responsible for a situation presented to us, we are responsible for how we address the situation. Julia adapted and overcame without a complaint.

Fr. Michael+
The Grace Church Bells

One Sunday morning during the past year – before the pandemic – I was in the garden and heard our church bells. (I could hear them because we live one block from Grace Church.) I felt like the bells were calling me to stop whatever I was doing and say a prayer, so I did. I said a prayer of thanks for the music of the bells and for the generosity of Michael Heintz. Then I started to get the inspiration for composing my very first hymn. After scribbling bits of it, I set my work aside and I didn’t pick it up again until today. This little hymn, which can be sung to the music of Hymn 154, is dedicated to Michael.

The Grace Church bells are ringing, 
We hear their joyful sound. 
As if a choir were singing
Each week the whole year ’round.
Through air, each hymn, it travels
And lands upon our ears.
Somehow it knows to find us,
So that we all can hear.

The Grace Church bells are ringing, 
And birds sing back in tune.
We hear them in our gardens
Before the afternoon.
We know it’s time for pausing
Our work and, too, our play.
They tell us that the hour’s come
To worship and to pray.

The Grace Church bells are ringing. 
A song of love and peace. 
Our burdens and our worries
Now find a sweet release. 
The bells together ringing,
Their melodies so sweet, 
And if we would but listen,
We’d know God’s love complete.

The Grace Church bells are ringing, 
They ring for you and me.
For everyone that hears them,
Their message holds the key.
The bells, they now are ringing
A hymn we all can sing:
“All glory, laud and honor
To thee, Redeemer King!”
A few weeks ago our rhythms of quarantining at home were feeling very normal, already accepted ingrained routines. We’d replaced errand-running with online lists and virtual purchases, grocery store shopping with driveway delivery, restaurant night with curbside pickup, and family reunions with Zoom chats. By the start of summer, old routines of work and church and home life had been replaced with more comforts of home, YouTube church services, Zoom coffee hour, online bible study and book groups, Facetime teenager hangouts lasting hours, and distanced visits with our neighbors when old sidewalk conversations turned into across-the-street shouting visits.

But one routine was calling us, too hard to dismiss and impossible to replace. Summer camp drop off at Shrine Mont Camps.

It’s a rite of summer for camp staff, counselors, clergy, campers, and parents - with no easy replacement. The Shrine Mont Camps staff and crew had announced that virtual programs would replace overnight camps this year, and they were working diligently on “Light In the Valley,” the at-home Shrine Mont Camps program for all campers to enjoy at home. While they were packing activities and delivering “camp in a box,” by mail, we parents were missing packing duffels and delivering our kid to camp. It dawned on us: our camper would miss in-person connections and the messages of God that youth find so easily in camp community: the shared meals, healthy outdoor routines, community worship, walking while singing, whispering in new cabinmate friendships, quiet prayer time. We’d miss the grown-ups getaway experience of an actual drive getting out of town, rolling through the Virginia countryside, to arrive at the calm shadow of the Shrine Mont hotel and the spiritual soothing of our mountainside Cathedral of the Transfiguration under the canopy of forest trees.

There’s no virtual mountain. No online breezes. No quiet place apart without WiFi in the home office we see every day. Simply, there’s no curbside Shrine Mont.

But after one Shrine Mont closing announcement, came a Shrine Mont opening announcement. There was hope!

(Continued on next page)
As Shrine Mont Camps staff were prepping the “Light in the Valley” virtual program, the Shrine Mont office and staff were prepping for limited opening of cottages and individual rooms for adults and families to come to the mountain and stay overnight, with strong guidelines for social distancing among all guests.

We jumped at the chance! And not alone. Together the Legere family, with four other adults and three other kids, rented rooms in the “upper campus” cottages you all may know as “up around the circle.” We were able to get out of town, drive with anticipation through Virginia’s farmland, and roll up Orkney Grade with the peace of retreat time settling around us as we settled in our cabin.

The experience felt safe and appropriate. The logistics of advance reservations and instructions, check in, meals, and even swimming had all been modified with new rules published by the Shrine Mont staff clearly to adjust routines for health and distancing. So, while we picked up meals cafeteria-style from the Shrine Mont kitchen and ate on our own front porch under the mountain breezes, the kids played outdoors, hiked with us to North Mountain, walked with us to The Cross, and generally had retreat time far, far away from the worries and close confines of their own living rooms.

Shrine Mont’s mission of being “A Place Apart” led them to re-open with reduced capacity and new rules. We are very thankful for that decision. We’d encourage anyone who wants to take their own individual trip, or couple’s weekend, or family bubble up to Shrine Mont - we say Go For It! Hit the road. Roll through the valley. Go up the mountain. Find the Holy Spirit in the country breeze where there is no WiFi, nor grocery store, nor TV news to interrupt your chance to reconnect with God.

Here’s how to reserve an individual room or cabin as a Place Apart for yourself at Shrine Mont:

https://shrinemont.com/covid-19/
https://shrinemont.com/visit/accommodations/

In peace, and with the greater peace of spirit after a few nights at Shrine Mont,

Jay and Elizabeth Legere
September Birthdays

September 1 Cleveland Eason
September 1 Jeremy Means-Koss
September 1 Teresa Preston
September 1 Lorna Worley
September 2 Nancy Macklin
September 2 Brendan Means-Koss
September 5 Charlie Pease
September 6 Blythe Su Davis
September 7 Colin Broome
September 7 Cathy Puskar
September 7 Philip Smith
September 7 David Tuma
September 9 Mike Reed
September 10 Ronald Wishart
September 12 Michael Heintz
September 14 Jerson Perez Acabel
September 15 Kayla Dagne
September 15 Jay O’Malley
September 16 Nancy Graves
September 16 Cole Ruff
September 16 John Wires
September 18 Rosemary Falcon
September 19 Robert White
September 20 Hermann Gerber
September 22 Donna Hall
September 22 Jennifer Long
September 23 Janet Baker
September 23 Sarah Faires
September 23 Neille Russell
September 27 Richard Eudy
September 28 Tracy Enger

NOTICE: If your birthday is not listed, or not listed correctly, you need to enroll in BREEZE which is the parish file on parishioners. You can get to your entry in Breeze at <grace-alex.breezechms00.com>