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April 2024

# GRACE NOTES

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April Theme:  
Easter Joy



Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives

# From Mother Jenny, *Priest Locum Tenens*



Growing up in Georgia, my childhood Easters perfectly coincided with azaleas in full bloom, and daffodils (or jonquils, as we called them) popping up in riotous shades of yellow. Flowering dogwood trees, with their four petals making the shape of the cross, were visible everywhere. To know for certain it was Easter, all we had to do was go outside and look around.

Going to church on Easter Sunday morning was especially exciting because now we were allowed to wear our new white patent leather shoes and lacy socks. (Note, these white shoes could be worn through Labor Day, but no later.) Frilly Easter dresses of pastel colors were accessorized with white gloves. And, for decades, I counted on these outward and visible signs of Easter joy.

Then we moved to upstate New York. During the seven years we lived in Clinton, the first snow often would begin to fall on Halloween, and— always—by Thanksgiving, the ground would be blanketed in white. Frigid temperatures and lake-effect snow made for many long months of seeing nothing green. There was not a single Easter when we were not wearing boots and heavy winter coats to shield ourselves from the cold and snow as we gathered on the village green to celebrate the Easter sunrise service. Where was joy to be found when Easter was no longer perfectly timed to spring?

Easter joy was and is discovered in the reality of our lives. And, while this joy may not be timed perfectly to “the Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox in March” (or between March 22 and April 25), as Christians, we are an Easter people. We believe in Resurrection and new life that comes from Christ’s love for us all. There is a truer story than suffering, sorrow, and loss, and this is why we hold on to Easter joy in the midst of difficult circumstances. This is why “even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.” (BCP, 483)

Praying that throughout these next fifty days, Easter joy will abound for us all,

*Mother Jenny*

The Rev. Dr. Jenny Montgomery

Photo Credit: canva.com





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### Grace Notes Submissions and Publication Schedule

Grace Notes is published ten times a year by Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia. All parishioners are encouraged to contribute articles and photos. The deadline is the fifteenth of the preceding month. Articles and photos should be emailed to [grace.notes@gracealex.org](mailto:grace.notes@gracealex.org) and will be subject to editing. The Grace Notes team includes Joyce Ames, Kevin Hamilton, Diana Jarrett, and Liz Rugaber.

# On the Mind of Father Santi



THE REV. SANTI RODRIGUEZ,  
ASSOCIATE RECTOR

Morning has broken. Holy Saturday is over. Very early on Easter morning a group of women gathers on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Among them are Mary Magdalene, Mary of Cleopas, and Salome. Needing the companionship of other disciples who have lost Jesus, they join in prayer before they hike to a hill nearby. As they cross the city gates and make their way to the tomb of their Master, they rehearse the sorrowful happenings of Friday. "Why did this happen?" The tomb is located on a rocky hill surrounded by a garden. As they make their way together through this garden, they take in the silence of the morning, occasionally broken by the dawn chorus of birds. Rows of trees and shrubs envelop the tomb. The women can smell the fragrance of the garden as they pass through.

As they approach the tomb, they see the guards and the sealed stone that covers the entrance. Suddenly, the ground begins to shake. The quake is slight at first but grows strong and lasts for a few moments. The women steady themselves and look up to see a figure approaching the tomb. The ground settles and the women watch as the angel rolls back the stone with no effort. The guards have fainted. Sitting on the stone, the angel turns to the women and says that Jesus has been raised from the dead. "How can this be?" The angel invites them to look inside the tomb and then to go back to the city to tell the other disciples.

Fearfully and joyfully, they hurry along the road back to Jerusalem. Their hearts are pounding. Mary Magdalene notices a person on the road just a bit ahead of her. It looks like he's waiting for her. He calls out to greet them and—behold—it's Jesus. It is him! "Hallelujah!" They run to meet him. It is a great joy to see him alive. They take some time to savor this moment. They are frightened and also filled with great joy. Jesus tells them, "Don't let fear distract you," and sends them on with a message for the other disciples. As they continue on their way, the women share with one another their deep gladness and practice the good news they will

**4** share with their friends. What a joy!

Easter joy sneaks in and takes hold of us. The heart pounds because we are not ready for joy. But joy is here to stay. Easter joy is the moment when beauty and wonder embrace. The women hiked to the tomb to anoint a corpse. But they encountered the Risen Christ! What? A joy!

Easter joy is a pool of gladness. The Greek word for joy is *χαρά* (*chara*). It can be translated as a great gladness. The joy of the Resurrection is the deep gladness of knowing Christ is alive in our lives. Mary Magdalene danced for joy when she saw her Lord.

Easter joy is a gift. *χαρά* (*chara*) can also be translated as the awareness of God's grace. We experience joy because of God's grace. All is grace. All is gift. Early on Easter morning, the women went to the tomb to finish anointing the body of Jesus. They wanted to do something for their Master—even after his passion and death. They never expected to receive the gift of being the first witnesses of the Resurrection.

Easter joy is a fear buster. It is the antidote to the anxiety and the dread that grab hold of our hearts. Easter joy beckoned to the women in the garden, "Don't let fear distract you."

Easter joy is a practice. The commitment to hike to the garden to be with Jesus. We cultivate these moments of connection with Jesus in worship, fellowship, and service. Easter joy is not something we do on our own. Easter joy is a communal practice. Jesus sends the women with a message for the other disciples: "Share the joy of the Resurrection."

This Easter season, let the joy of the Resurrection sneak in and take hold of you. Let it embrace you. Allow it to dispel your fears. Welcome the gift of the joy of knowing that Christ is alive in your life. Sing Alleluia. Practice Resurrection. Hike to a garden. Abide in the love of the Risen Lord. Lean into experiences of communal joy: in worship, in fellowship, and in service to all. Share the Easter joy.



# From Mother Emma

THE REV. EMMA BRICE,  
ASSISTANT RECTOR FOR FAMILY MINISTRIES & GRACE SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

## Christ is Risen...so why do I still feel Lenty?

It is Easter! Alleluia! Alleluia! Gone are the dreary days of Lent. Now, the flowers are blooming; new life surrounds us. Welcome, Happy Morning!

With the arrival of Easter, the atmosphere of worship shifts drastically from the quiet simplicity of Lent to a focus on bright and triumphant joy. And even though the liturgical season has changed, you may still find yourself feeling a little more "Lenty" than you wish. Maybe it doesn't yet feel like Easter to you. Maybe you're still waiting alone in the garden of Gethsemane, uncertain of what comes next. Maybe you are weeping loudly at the foot of the cross, wondering if God can hear you. Maybe you are scared of walking into the mystery of Easter. At least the solemnity of Lent is familiar, and familiar feels safe. Maybe today doesn't feel like Easter to you.

And that is okay.

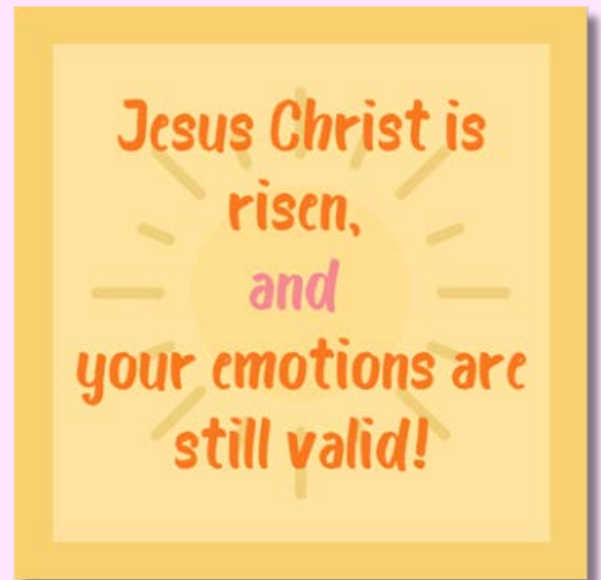
One of the many reasons I love Lent is that it seems to give us permission as a church community to confess our frailties. During Lent, it can feel more acceptable to cry in church, to say you're not fine, to ask for healing prayers. But just because Lent is over does not mean we have to plaster on our Sunday-best smiles and pretend that all we feel is joy.

### Jesus Christ is risen, and your emotions are still valid!

There is a beautiful note at the end of the funeral liturgies in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. It begins by saying, "The liturgy of the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all its meaning in the resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we, too, shall be raised." (BCP, 507) It goes on to describe how joy is a theme throughout the liturgy, and it concludes by explaining (and this is my favorite part), "This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death." (BCP, 507)

Easter is about joy and hope because we are reminded of the love God shares with the world through Jesus. Easter is also about sorrow and grief because deep love makes us vulnerable to deep pain. Both joy and sorrow are integral parts of the Easter story, and God is present equally in both.

If you are hurting, God is with you. If you are rejoicing, God is with you. Nothing, not even death, can stop Christ from loving you exactly as you are. Sad, mad, glad, or afraid—God loves you and welcomes you. And the Grace community is here for you; just reach out to any of the clergy to get connected.



# OPS & COMM

*Operations & Communication @ Grace*



**KEVIN HAMILTON,**  
*DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION*

I am not sure if there is a better illustration of the difference just a few days can make than that of the stark contrast between Good Friday and Easter morning. On the surface, Good Friday's central theme seems to be death, while Easter Sunday bursts forth in life. Talk about an emotional rollercoaster ride! It is hard to imagine the two days could be so close together.

However, in retrospect, Good Friday isn't so much about an end as it is about the hope of what is to come. In our culture, the topic of death is often shunned, and we try to avoid it at all costs. If you don't believe me, just ask a funeral director about the facial expressions of others when they are at a party and the inevitable question is asked, "So, what do you do for work?"

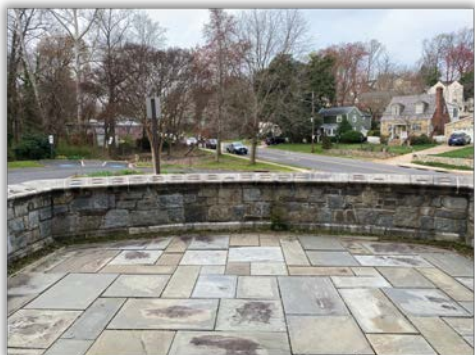
I get the discomfort some folks may feel around such a difficult topic. But Easter joy offers us a reminder of the hope found in the resurrection. I have heard our clergy proclaim it in sermons and in funeral homilies. I have heard hope echoed in the liturgy on Sundays at the table with thankfulness for [Jesus'] "... *mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto [God] most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same.*" (BCP, 335)

Here at Grace, we have something many modern church buildings no longer have—a columbarium. It is a resting place for many who have found so much solace and hope here at Grace Church. It is a resting place for some of those who were deeply connected to the life of this community and served in many of its ministries. It is one of those liminal spaces where death meets life, where tears may fall while at the same time hope rises, the same hope gifted to us in Easter joy.

Our columbarium has several components to its care and administration. Pedro Hernandez, our sexton, ensures the area is kept clean and in order; he handles the physical needs associated with interment of both in-wall and in-ground niches. There are also parishioners who assist when needed or if Pedro is unavailable.

The administration of our columbarium is handled by parishioner Jean Reed. Jean not only handles the paperwork and recordkeeping, but also procures the plaques for niches, performs record searches, and produces accounting records when requested. This ministry, while maybe not one that many have participated in, is crucial when families are planning for future arrangements or dealing with the death of a loved one who has made arrangements to be laid to rest in the columbarium.

I have witnessed Jean's meticulous recordkeeping, as well as his pastoral demeanor when communicating with families in grief. He is a great example of serving in an area that may not always be front and center but is so important. Is this a ministry that you might be interested in helping with? Please feel free to reach out to Jean at [Jean.reed@gracealex.org](mailto:Jean.reed@gracealex.org); he will welcome your support.



# Music Notes from Alain



## Easter Joy and “Haec Dies”

As I am writing this brief newsletter article, I am spending a couple of days in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, area to play an extended prelude before a mid-week Lenten service at St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral in Wilkes-Barre. I will play *Symphonie Romane* by French organist and composer Charles-Marie Widor. This four-movement organ symphony is the last of ten organ symphonies he wrote and is based on the antiphon “Haec Dies,” associated with Easter. The text, derived from Psalms 107 and 118, reads: “This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein. Alleluia.” It is a rather mystical, introspective kind of symphony. I wonder what Widor was thinking of when he wrote it. Does Easter joy mean grandiose music, or can it be sometimes introspective and subdued? I think maybe a bit of both is good, and that is certainly what Widor did in his organ symphony.



### Did you know?

During Holy Week, the choir sang on Palm Sunday, Choral Tenebrae on Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday. They also had an extra rehearsal on Tuesday. Make sure to acknowledge the great amount of work they have put in to lead all those services.

### Choristers and Handbells in April

After rehearsing just a couple of times, the choristers will sing on April 14 and 28 with the adults at the 10:30 Choral Eucharist. Make sure when you see them to give them a word of encouragement.

On April 21, the Handbells will play at the Choral Eucharist. They will play the prelude music and during communion they will play an arrangement of J.S. Bach’s “Sheeps May Safely Graze,” with me on the organ.



# Grace Episcopal School



**PATTI CULBRETH,**  
*HEAD OF SCHOOL*

As we celebrate the joy of Easter and the promise of God’s love, we enter our final, spring trimester at Grace. The school year continues to fly by with much to celebrate. Our students are brimming with scholarship, our school community has a strong bond, and our partnership with the church is thriving.

Spring also represents the admissions season, and we are happy to welcome fifteen new students to Grace for the 2024-25 school year. We are on track to meet our enrollment goal of 116 students in grades PS through five. We are full in most classes; however, we still have limited space in preschool and junior kindergarten. If you know of great families looking for a wonderful educational experience, please direct them to Grace at [admissions@graceschoolalex.org](mailto:admissions@graceschoolalex.org).



The warm temperatures of spring allow time outdoors for fun and play. A highlight of the start of spring is the Grace 5k by our Running Club. Watching the students proudly cross the finish line after spending ten weeks preparing for the race was so joyous! We also look forward to more Grace traditions, like our Free Dress days, Carpenter Shelter dinners, Food Pantry Spring Collection, Talent Show, Earth Day, Field Day, Grandparents Day, Spring Performance, and Graduation. So much to celebrate!

1 Corinthians 6:14: *"And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power."*

We wish everyone a blessed Easter and the glory of God’s love.





# Vestry View



MARY LEWIS HIX,  
SENIOR WARDEN

Easter joy indeed! The long, dark days of winter and Lent give way to light and new life all around. The days warm, the trees come alive, blossoms brighten the horizon, and, most importantly, God's promises are renewed. Gratitude overflows.

Winter has been a time of electing Grace's new vestry members and establishing our relationships as a team of laity in support of clergy. The vestry's charge is twofold: responsibility for setting and maintaining the spiritual mission of the parish and carrying out the secular duties related to church property, finance, and personnel. With gratitude for Mother Jenny's vision for the vestry, we met twice in February. These meetings established the norm of steeping ourselves in prayer and reflection as the basis for all that we do. After extended prayer and expression of interests by vestry members, the members of the Executive Committee were determined. At a following meeting, individuals pondered their particular interests and eagerness to lead program areas. Mutual discernment has been the norm in each of these meetings. We have been reminded that there are a variety of gifts, so that one is compelled to lead the worship program area, another has a passion for evangelism, another's heart is with the youth of the parish. And so the vestry program leads were determined.

While prayer and reflection are the cornerstones, the vestry is responsible for the secular affairs of the parish. These efforts are ongoing: follow-up stewardship letters, trips to banks to change signature cards, decisions about needed repairs to the elevator, contracts with exterminators, signing up for Sunday lock-up of the building, transitions in program leads, more Zoom meetings. As is true in all aspects of our human lives, it is a quest to keep balance: to respond to needs and to trust in God's providence.

Now the process of drawing parish members into partnership with the vestry is in full swing. Each of us is called to different and specific work in God's kingdom, according to the gifts that have been bestowed on us. Many serve, and all in the Grace community are needed. What role will you play in the ongoing mission of Grace?

In peace,

*Mary Lewis Hix*



## Campus Matters

ERIC WASKOWICZ,  
JUNIOR WARDEN



**So excited spring is here! A few updates:**

**Parking Lot Lighting:** An electrical fault caused the timer for the parking lot lights to fail. That has been repaired and the timer replaced. The wiring for one of the parking lot lights accidentally had been cut and was also repaired. And the security lights on Merrow Hall have been repaired. Thanks to Rich Kelly for spearheading that necessary work.

**Pest Control:** Many have noticed bold mice joining church and school meetings. Our Operations and Communication Director, Kevin Hamilton, has contracted with a company recommended by St. Rita's to make the mice unwelcome.

**Elevator:** During regular elevator maintenance, technicians found that the elevator jacks are leaking hydraulic fluid. Work on the elevator to the auditorium will happen on Friday, March 22. Work on the elevator to the back of the nave will take place on April 5.

**Security:** We will be changing the code for the glass doors in the tower lobby in the first week of April. The new code will be shared through the school, clergy, and program leads.

**Environment Committee:** The first committee meeting will be in April. The focus of the group will be building support for and communicating about projects around the church building and grounds.



# Las Apariciones de Jesús

## Resucitado: Invitaciones al gozo

*Father Santi explains how the appearances of the Risen Lord invite us to joy.*

**FATHER SANTI RODRIGUEZ, ASSOCIATE RECTOR**

En el Nuevo Testamento, se registran varias apariciones de Jesucristo después de su Resurrección. Estas apariciones se mencionan en los Evangelios de Mateo, Marcos, Lucas y Juan, y también en las Cartas de Pablo. Cada una de estas apariciones es una invitación al gozo:

**Aparición a María Magdalena (y posiblemente otras mujeres como María Cleofas y Salomé - Juan 20:11-18):** Después de la Resurrección, Jesús se aparece a María Magdalena, mientras ella está llorando junto al sepulcro vacío. Al principio, María no lo reconoce, pero cuando Jesús la llama por su nombre, ella lo reconoce y se da cuenta de que ha resucitado. Esta aparición nos demuestra que la Resurrección es una promesa de renovación espiritual, esperanza y fe en la promesa de la vida eterna. Nos alegramos en cada una de estas promesas.

**Aparición a los discípulos en el camino a Emaús (Lucas 24:13-35):** Dos discípulos caminan hacia el pueblo de Emaús cuando Jesús se les une en el camino, pero ellos no lo reconocen. Durante la conversación, Jesús les explica las Escrituras y luego, cuando están a punto de cenar juntos, se revela a ellos en la fracción del pan. La celebración de la Resurrección en la temporada de Pascua, es una época de reflexión y alegría por la salvación que ofrece Jesucristo. También es un llamado a reconocer las formas en que Jesús se hace presente en nuestras vidas y a celebrar su presencia entre nosotros.

**Aparición a los discípulos sin Tomás / con Tomás (Juan 20:19-25 / Juan 20:19-29):** Jesús se aparece a los discípulos reunidos en el cenáculo, pero Tomás no está presente. Cuando los discípulos le cuentan esto a Tomás, él duda. Ocho días después de la primera aparición a los discípulos, Jesús se aparece de nuevo, esta vez con Tomás presente. Jesús invita a Tomás a tocar sus heridas para que crea, y Tomás responde con la famosa confesión de fe: "¡Señor mío y Dios mío!". El don de esta visita a los discípulos es la paz. Este es un don que necesitamos todos antes de poder experimentar gozo en nuestras vidas.

**Aparición en el mar de Galilea (Juan 21:1-14):** Jesús se aparece a siete de sus discípulos mientras pescaban en el mar de Galilea. Después de una noche sin pescar, Jesús les indica que echen las redes por el lado derecho de la barca, y obtienen una gran cantidad de peces. Luego, Jesús comparte el desayuno con ellos en la playa. La resurrección no solo es un evento histórico, sino también una experiencia personal y transformadora para quienes tienen una relación íntima con Jesucristo. Es una invitación a compartir juntos como discípulos alrededor del altar, y a partir el pan juntos.

**Aparición en la montaña de Galilea (Mateo 28:16-20):** Jesús se aparece a sus discípulos en una montaña en Galilea y les da la Gran Comisión, instruyéndoles a ir y hacer discípulos de todas las naciones, bautizándolos en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo. La Resurrección es un llamado a la acción misionera y evangelística para la iglesia. Queremos compartir nuestro gozo e invitar a otros a acercarse a Jesús.

**Apariciones descritas por San Pablo (1 Corintios 15:3-8):** "En primer lugar les he enseñado la misma tradición que yo recibí, a saber, que Cristo murió por nuestros pecados, según las Escrituras; que lo sepultaron y que resucitó al tercer día, también según las Escrituras; y que se apareció a Cefas, y luego a los doce. Después se apareció a más de quinientos hermanos a la vez, la mayoría de los cuales viven todavía, aunque algunos ya han muerto. Después se apareció a Santiago, y luego a todos los apóstoles. Por último se me apareció también a mí, que soy como un niño nacido anormalmente." La resurrección de Jesús simboliza la restauración de todos, de toda la creación y la inauguración de un reino de justicia, paz y amor. Por lo tanto, la Pascua es vista como un momento de renovación y transformación tanto espiritual como cósmica. He ahí nuestro gozo.



# Opinion: Youth Perspective

By Annie Eason

## Children in the Pews

When we think of children at church, or in airplanes, we may roll our eyes in frustration. However, is this frustration warranted? The dilemma of children being present at church is similar to the dilemma of children being in airplanes. Both are places where people are supposed to be quiet, where immediate escape is difficult—unless you want to jump out an airplane or make it awkward—where children are often present and often act like the children they are, and where the children and their parents are sometimes given stares of condemnation.

Flights can be very stressful for children, as the change of pressure may be painful for them. Also, because they're children and haven't learned to manage their emotions yet, they may react in a way that can be disturbing to other people. Parents, often already generally exhausted, don't have many other options to keep their children sane other than giving them an iPad. Similar things could be said about church services; for children, they can seem boring and the seating is uncomfortable. Both on a flight and in a church, loud children—despite the reasons behind their presence—can be quite stressful to others, especially to those sensitive to loud noises. In church, noisy children in pews can also be distracting, especially to those who may seek solace and tranquility.

Grace Church does have options for young children on Sunday mornings, including a nursery that is open for those between three months and three years of age; "Little Church," a 9:00 am shortened service designed for families with young children; and "Children's Chapel," which happens during the 10:30 am service and shortens the amount of time children are in the pews. Children's Chapel also provides them with a short, children-led service and fun activities. Parents who are new to Grace Church can learn about these options from Mother Emma Brice, Assistant Rector for Family Ministries.

I distinctly remember how uncomfortable it was for me when I sat next to a parent with a crying baby on Easter Sunday last year, as I didn't have any other place to sit. It wasn't the baby that bothered me; it was the stares that I received by proxy sitting next to her. While I know it probably wasn't directed at me, I still felt very uncomfortable and almost ostracized. I have never seen the parent or her children again. I may not know the solution to this dilemma, but I do know that maybe empathy can at least alleviate it.

## Get Social with Grace!

Instagram



@graceepisalexva

facebook



facebook.com/  
GraceEpiscopalChurchAlexandriaVa

Facebook Group



Grace Episcopal Church:  
Members and Friends  
(Alexandria, Virginia)

YouTube



Search for Grace Episcopal Church  
Alexandria Virginia on YouTube.

X



@graceepisalexva  
(Formerly Twitter)

# From the Altar Guild

## Altar Guild members answer the question... What are moments that bring you joy?

Shiny brass alms basins after a good polishing. Light filtering through the chancel stained-glass windows in the morning as we work. Quiet of the church while working a daily.

- **Beth Yancey**

My favorite moment in Altar Guild happened the first time I was Easter president. I arrived around 5:00 pm for the Vigil. I had the building to myself. It was a sunny day and the afternoon light streaming through the stained glass onto all the flowers was just spectacular! What joy and peace I felt!

- **Sherryl Dodd**

My first Christmas presidency, after the midnight mass, cleaning up, everyone leaving until it was just me. I walked out into the darkened sanctuary, smelled the lingering incense, and felt an overwhelming peace.

- **Cindy Diehl**

My moment of joy came just recently. I was assigned to clean the votive stand. At first it looked fine to me. I did not understand why it needed a deep clean. I then read the directions which tell you to remove all the votives and take them to the St. Mark's kitchen. The directions go on: remove the metal plate from the burnt-down candle, then microwave the glass votives on a wet paper towel, making sure you change out the paper towel so as not to catch it on fire. Then clean off the loose wax carefully so as not to burn yourself. Over an hour later I returned the clean and shiny votives back to their vigilant spots in the stand, where they looked very ready to receive the light and prayers offered for loved ones. As I stood back to admire my work, I realized why we do a deep cleaning of the votive stand.

- **Cindy MacIntyre**

I still look with joy upon the needlepoint kneeler made and presented to the Altar Guild by seminarian Joseph Spittler in 1982. He had watched crew leaders kneel during the services on the stone step just outside the sanctuary and wanted to make it easier. The kneeler has a can of Brasso polish, an iron, and other symbols of our work. The kneeler was recently refreshed and re-blessed and still serves.

- **Lucy-Lee Reed**

This is what brings me great joy on Altar Guild Saturdays. First, I do the grubby work of polishing and buffing all the brass, bearing down extra hard on the hand rails that are loaded with fingerprints. When that job is done, I prepare the incense and perform the censuring of the church. The nave is dark and quiet, with streaks of light filtering in through the stained-glass windows. It is a very spiritual experience, sometimes enhanced by the choir director practicing his Sunday pieces on the organ. Alone in the dark church, smelling the incense, I feel very close to God.

- **Betty Mills**

I love a full sacristy of fellow Altar Guilders bustling about shining, dusting, arranging, but always taking the time to pause and have a laugh or a communal moment with each other. Getting together as we do twice a year for our semi-annual meetings is also a joyful experience. The laughter, caring, and sharing future plans and past accomplishments is a reminder of how much like a family we are for each other (not to mention the delicious food that is shared!).

- **Joyce Ames**

I get so much joy carefully folding the linens that Martha Mills stitched and Linda Waskowicz so lovingly mended for so many years. They are so precious, and such a tangible reminder of the love and care we bring to Altar Guild. The linens help me to think about a prayer we often say at the beginning of our Saturday work: "Lord, help us to use honestly and well this day all the talents which Thou hast given us, that the gain may be not ours only, but Thine and Thy Kingdom's; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

- **Sarah Schultz**



# Spring Adult Formation Series

By Anne Clift Boris

Please join Julia McClung and me as we gather for a six-week adult formation series this spring to grow and learn together, share our faith experience, and build community. We will explore our own life journeys with and to God through the lens of the ancient and modern spiritual practice of pilgrimage, and the biblical journeys of Moses, Elijah, Jesus, and Jesus' disciples. Our personal journeys can both test and build our faith, help us grow spiritually, and regain strength and courage to face our fears and live into our joys.

**We are offering two formats for meeting each week for a multi-hour session:**

**In-person at Grace:** Monday nights 4/15, 4/22, 4/29, 5/6, 5/13, 5/20

**Virtual via Zoom:** Tuesday or Thursday afternoons during the same weeks as above

For the Monday evening sessions, we will open at 6:30 for those who want to bring their own dinner and socialize, and then engage from 7:00 to 8:30. The exact time and day of week for the virtual format will be mutually agreed upon by the participants. There will be no fees or books to buy.

Preparation will include light reading provided in advance that can be done the night before the session, drawn from the Bible and writings on pilgrimage. We'll be looking for five to ten participants for the in-person series and at least three for the virtual series. Please reach out to Julia McClung ([julia.mcclung@gracealex.org](mailto:julia.mcclung@gracealex.org)) or me ([anne.boris@gracealex.org](mailto:anne.boris@gracealex.org)) with any questions you may have or to register. **We would like to close registration by April 7, 2024.**

**We can't wait to see you there!**

## Adult Forum Schedule for Spring

We meet in person in the St. Mark Room on the second floor, from 9:40-10:15, or virtually via Zoom (use the link to Adult Forum in the Sunday morning email). Feel free to arrive at 9:30 for informal chatting before the forum. Coffee and tea will be available just outside the St. Mark room.

**April 7: Our Faithful Response to Christian Nationalism** *presented by Father Santi Rodriguez*

**April 14: Seminarians at Grace: Ignacio Solano Gómez** *presented by Ignacio Solano Gómez and Mary Hix*

**April 21: Praying the Labyrinth on Paper** *presented by Mindy Van Wart*

**April 28: TBD**

**May 5: Family Ministries: What I've Learned in My First Year** *presented by Mother Emma Brice*

**May 12: Discernment on the Internet: Spotting a Fake** *presented by Scott Knudson*



# Pastoral Care at Grace Church

By John Boris and Father Santi Rodriguez

Grace is a caring community. At the heart of our faith lies the profound commitment to support, uplift, and accompany one another through life's myriad joys and challenges.

Whether it be caregiver burnout, chronic or terminal illness, depression, divorce, grief, infertility, loneliness, loss, parenting struggles, spiritual turmoil, or more, our pastoral care ministries at Grace seek to accompany parishioners and others in the community who are going through a difficult time in their lives. Ministries can also take note of heartening occasions in parishioners' lives.

In the rich tapestry of pastoral care at Grace, we embrace a holistic approach that encompasses the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of our parishioners.

Our pastoral care ministries make an enormous difference. Knowing that we have a community of faith that thinks of us, cares for us, and prays for us is a true blessing. These are the pastoral care ministries that enable us to care for one another:

**Eucharistic Visitors:** Home Communion is available for parishioners who desire this service for delivery by Grace Church Eucharistic Visitors every Sunday. Home communion will be in one form, bread only. This important pastoral care ministry allows those who cannot attend church in person and who desire communion to stay connected to the parish and to receive the sacrament.

**Flower Ministry:** Flowers arranged by the Altar Guild from our altar flowers are taken each week to those who are hospitalized or homebound or, in some cases, have cause to celebrate. Flower deliverers and recipients alike will tell you how rewarding this can be. The current roster of deliverers means that service in this ministry is a one- or, at most, two-day-a-month commitment.

**Card Ministry:** A word of encouragement goes a long way to comfort those who are sick or grieving, to celebrate a joyous occasion, and to share God's love. The Card Ministry allows us to show that we care even when we are not present physically. Grace keeps in touch with parish college or boarding school students, as well as those serving in the military or abroad. Specially designed cards signed by many parishioners are sent out at Christmas, at Easter, and from the Shrine Mont retreat. The Card Ministry also reaches out each week to those the clergy have identified as having cause for comfort or celebration. Stamps, envelopes, and a range of cards with views of Grace are available. This is another ministry in which even a modest commitment of time can make a real difference.

**Meal Ministry:** From time to time, clergy identify parish members whose spirits would be lifted by a home-cooked meal. These are usually people returning home from a hospital stay or facing a stressful or discouraging situation.

**Prayer Requests:** In addition to the informal care of members for one another, we maintain a prayer list and remember special needs in worship. Grace has a confidential prayer request form that goes to clergy and lay pastoral caregivers who pray daily for the needs of parishioners. Your message will go to our clergy and the lead for Prayer Requests. If you would like your prayer request to be included in our weekly bulletins, please let us know; otherwise your request will remain confidential.

**St. Francis Garden Pet Cemetery:** Grace Episcopal Church not only has a place to bury its parishioners, but also has a lovely spot to bury parishioners' pets. For the burial ceremony, the officiating priest offers prayers and blesses the ashes. A memorial book listing the buried pets and their owners is in the church office. The St. Francis Guild maintains the St. Francis Garden.  
(continues on next page)



## Pastoral Care at Grace Church (*continued*)

### How to Access Pastoral Care

Clergy and staff are available to provide pastoral care. Please call the church office at 703-549-1980 if you're ill or need pastoral care. For emergencies after hours, please call the After-hours Emergency Number at 703-261-9079, and the priest on-call will assist you.

Clergy are assisted in our pastoral care ministries by a group of lay pastoral caregivers trained by the Community of Hope International (COHI). The foundation of the community is St. Benedict's belief that all are called to love God and love each other in community. A member of the clergy serves as the hub to connect trained caregivers from our active Community of Hope with parishioners who would benefit from ongoing lay spiritual companionship.

The clergy is always available to call on those in need, whether at home or in a hospital or nursing facility, and are happy to pray with parishioners; offer healing prayers; and provide support, counsel, and comfort in the name of Christ.

At the core of our pastoral care ministry is compassionate listening. Our clergy, staff, and COHI pastoral caregivers create safe spaces where parishioners can openly express their joys, sorrows, doubts, and hopes. Through active listening, we seek to understand and empathize with the diverse experiences and emotions of our community members. Maintaining trust and confidentiality are of utmost importance to all pastoral caregivers.

The sacraments play a central role in our pastoral care endeavors. Through the celebration of Holy Eucharist, Baptisms, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and Healing Prayers, we offer spiritual nourishment, healing, and grace to individuals and families at various stages of their lives.

We believe in the power of prayer to provide solace, strength, and guidance in times of need. Through individual and communal prayer, as well as the sharing of spiritual resources and practices, we encourage our parishioners to deepen their relationship with God and find comfort in the midst of life's challenges.

# Diocesan News



by Liz Rugaber

The Diocese of Virginia is sponsoring an Anti-Racism and Spiritual Formation Book Group, based on Dr. Catherine Meeks' Brave Space Book Club. The group will continue to meet every third Thursday, with two time options: the first at 3:00 pm and the second at 7:00 pm. The first meeting was on March 21. The group will read about diverse cultural communities and gather virtually to discuss how we can follow Christ's pattern for ministry as we engage with those around us. It is co-facilitated by the Right Reverend Gayle Harris.

A list of Brave Space Reading Group materials is available at:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/13DDOogudIcZ4T\\_2tNQFtk7zL83ohhteDkFd04dThXQ/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13DDOogudIcZ4T_2tNQFtk7zL83ohhteDkFd04dThXQ/edit)

Here's a link to the registration page:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bravespace-book-group-tickets-790144271787?aff=oddtcreator>

If for some reason this link is not working, please call the Diocese at 1-800-DIOCESE to see if spots are still available.



Bishop Gayle Harris from [episcopalvirginia.org](http://episcopalvirginia.org)



JUNE HUBER

# Grace-ful Worship

## Finding Easter Joy

Easter Joy. Those two words kept coming to me at odd moments for days, over and over, ever since I learned that it would be the theme of April's issue of Grace Notes. Apparently, the words were trying to say something to me. One recent morning, they once again pushed the play button in my head, only one day before the deadline for submitting articles. I still wasn't seeing or feeling much joy. I had let this task go for too long, and I had several other tasks to complete that were already overdue for a variety of reasons. I was in a bad mood, I was feeling tense, and my neck hurt. The two words were annoying me, not inspiring me!

I decided to try laying my head back, closing my eyes, and emptying my mind. Taking this time for reflection allowed me to remember something I once read about looking for the good instead of just seeing the bad. I thanked God for that memory at that moment, and now I'll share it.

Sometimes we find it hard to see the good in people, places, and situations. We focus on the things we don't like and try to change them. There's nothing inherently wrong with this, because it's one way we make things better or make progress. But if we get too caught up in this way of looking at the world, we lose our ability to accept things as they are, especially those things we cannot change. Beginning with acceptance allows us to experience the joy of being alive in God's creation and the beauty of its many different parts. Then, if there are things we want to—and can—change, we can ask God to guide our hearts and our hands. This reminded me of the Serenity Prayer:

***God, grant me the ability to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.***

Now, back to Easter Joy. Over the past years, there has usually been something in my Lenten journey that led me to experience the joy of Easter in some way. But the Easter Joy that can be with us during Lent doesn't only happen at this time of year. Life can bring it at any time. Life can bring pain and suffering at any time as well. It's possible that I showed up to church on Easter ready to celebrate this joy. It's also possible that I wasn't ready to experience it. There's no easy path to those joyful feelings when the hard stuff of life happens.

However, Easter reminds us that resurrection will and does happen. Lucky for us, Easter isn't just one day—the Easter season lasts fifty days. We have time to live into and see God in the resurrection. Taking this time can help us live this Easter Joy even after the season has moved on. We can celebrate it in little ways throughout the year. We can reflect on the joy that comes into our lives in many small ways.

On that recent day, when I was feeling overwhelmed, I let God remind me that joy is often present. Easter is the reminder that helps us reflect and remember that the greatest joy we have comes from knowing that Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us, so that we can have eternal life.





# Books Worth Rereading

By Diana Jarrett

At the March 10 Adult Forum, Grace Church community members were asked to share books that they have returned to over time. Mary Stewart moderated the discussion. The following books were highlighted:

**Pierce Klemmt:** *Beauty* by John O'Donohue, which explores the all-encompassing nature and importance of beauty in our world, ourselves, and our faith

**John Boris:** *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. LeGuin, a work of science fiction that explores worlds both strange and familiar and ultimately provides relevant social commentary

**Mindy Van Wart:** *Simply Sane: The Spirituality of Mental Health* by Gerald May, which offers much wisdom, including the benefits of focusing on what we already have rather than blindly striving for more

**Cricket Blanton:** *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* by M. Scott Peck, which uses the lens of psychology to help us understand ourselves, love, and the love of God

**John Berry:** *A Treasury of the Familiar* by Ralph L. Woods, a fun-to-browse collection of timeless and famous literature, such as "In Flanders Fields," Mark Twain's thoughts on Satan, and Abraham Lincoln's "Farewell Address to the People of Springfield"

**Mary Stewart:** A second reading of John Le Carré's books that feature George Smiley leads to appreciation of more than just the plot—such as the beauty of the prose and life's larger, important questions, such as, "Where do we find truth?" and, when we find it, "How do we know it is true?"

At the end of the discussion of books, two other books were put forward as worth rereading: Cricket Blanton suggested *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr, and John Boris suggested *The Coup* by John Updike for its rich prose.



Photo Credit: Canva.com



## Our Story

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, our food pantry served between 30 and 45 families per week. This number increased to an average of 300 families per week during the pandemic. When other local food programs closed, Grace stepped up to fill the gap.

Volunteers from across the area joined our team to manage the increased demand. Since March 2020, we have distributed more than **250 tons of food** and over **54,000 bags** of groceries.

Unfortunately, the need has not subsided. **We need your support** to keep up with ongoing demand.

## Save the Date!

Grace Church Food Pantry will be participating in Alexandria's annual **Spring2Action** giving campaign on **Wednesday, April 24**. This event is an opportunity to raise funds to keep our doors open and continue to serve our neighbors in need.

Just **\$10.00** fills a bag of groceries and helps purchase other essentials, including much needed infant care, personal hygiene, and cleaning products. **Our goal this year is to raise \$10,000 to fill 1,000 bags.**

We hope you will join our local and national partners to fill the bags needed to continue serving our neighbors currently experiencing food and financial insecurity.



**Spring2Action**

Alexandria's Giving Day  
Presented by ACT for Alexandria



Barbara Morris

# An Occasional WORD

## Non-remembrance of Things Past

*(Apologies to Marcel Proust)*

I subscribe to Massachusetts General Hospital’s health newsletter. A recent issue featured an article about memory. Ironically, it triggered my memory of a long-ago conversation with my husband, Ward (now deceased).

Before I tell it to you, here’s a bit of background: The sad fact is that I keep forgetting stuff. Drives me crazy. Drives me crazy, too, that Ward forgot nothing. He remembered everything that so much as cast a shadow on his brain. Me? The facts have to be chiseled into my skull, and even then, two hours later, I’m saying, “What? Huh?”

That long-ago conversation began when Ward, gazing out at the first snow of the year, softly said, “Snow was general all over Ireland.”

Puzzled, I grunted. “Huh?”

Ignoring me, as if in a swoon, he continued. “It was falling on treeless hill ... falling softly upon the Bog of Allen ... faintly falling ... upon all the living and the dead.”

“Wow!” I exclaimed. “What’s that?”

“James Joyce. From ‘The Dead.’ Great stuff.”

“Terrific, but where did you learn it?”

“A freshman lit course.”

“A freshman lit course? We’re talking Pleistocene era here. And you remember it?”

Why was I so stunned? We’d been through this a million times. I knew he had a fantastic memory, but here he was remembering quotes from freshman lit!

Oh, sure, I can remember some stuff from college days. I’m not totally brain dead. I distinctly recall the Daliesque moment when, two hours before the freshman spring formal, twenty-one cold sores erupted on my lips like tiny, bubbling aliens. In my souvenir photo, my date—smiling rigidly—stands next to a potted palm behind which I’m crouching with my head buried in the leaves.

But back to this encyclopedia I married. Imagine living with a man who remembered stuff like the names of Wagner’s three Rhinemaidens (Wellgunde, Woglinde, and Flosshilde) and the difference between Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns (plain capitals, scrolled capitals, capitals that look like curled artichoke leaves).

My college memories, besides the cold sores, are (1) I lost five pounds on a three-day banana diet to squeeze into a cheerleader outfit and (2) I sold my blood for cash for tickets to a William Holden movie festival.

Hopefully, with lots of prayer, I can improve my memory right now!

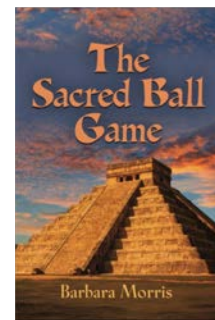
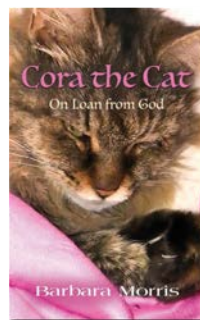
Here we go. Let’s start with Wagner’s Rhinemaidens—Wellgunde, Woglinde, and ... and ... and ... oh, yeah ... How could I forget?—Flosshilde!

That’s it! Flosshilde! Wellgunde and Woglinde. Got it ... but please don’t ask about the design of decorative columns. I completely used every memory cell in my brain when I tackled those seductive Rhinemaidens. They are gone, completely and totally gone—Gone with the Wind.

Ooops ... that jostled my memory cells ... now they are struggling to recall that hot-tempered romantic duo. Bogart and Bacall? No. Romeo and Juliet? No. Wait, wait ... it will come eventually.

And if not, at this stage of the game (I’m 91), do I really and truly care?

**Want to read more from Barbara? Two of her books are available for check out from the church library.**



# Congratulations, Father Durango Jenkins!

Father Durango Jenkins was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons on March 9, 2024, by Bishop Kimberly D. Lucas, Bishop of the Diocese of Colorado. Father Durango has been a great blessing to Grace, serving as seminarian for the last two years.



# Why Grace?

By Chrissie Crosby



I found Grace Church by moving into a Warwick Village townhouse at the top of the playground at the end of the parking lot. At the time, I wanted to live in Alexandria because my father had just graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary and I figured I could find a church where I knew a seminarian, even if no one else! As it happened, however, the newly ordained deacon I was “interested in” (but NOT in a long-distance relationship with, mind you) had grown up with the then-rector of Grace (now Bishop Robert Moody), and he simply suggested I go there one Sunday to send his regards.

Readers, I never left.

I was warmly welcomed into the church with invitations to join the choir, to become a youth group sponsor, to mark the Friday Funsters (a monthly adult fellowship group) gatherings on my calendar, to join the Altar Guild (and become an officer!), and, of course, to pledge.

I was excited by most of those. I confess to you all that pledging was at the bottom of the list until I married David in 1981. In fact, our first pledge to the parish generated a phone call from the treasurer’s home to double check our offering! It’s funny now. It was embarrassing then. I did penance by being the stewardship chair for a number of years.

I stayed at Grace because of all those invitations and because of the community of people who were part of all those groups. Some of my first youth group kiddos are now my close friends in the parish, part of the wider Grace Church Joint-Replacement Rehabilitation Team. And a lot of them are grandparents. For a long time, I felt incomplete if I didn’t have contact with middle schoolers and teenagers. Now I help lead music for the youngest Grace Church members. My claim to “fame” in a true sense of the word is that I directed the parish’s first production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and our Joseph was Chip Puskar, aka Charles Esten, a bona fide country music and TV star. (Lisa Rasco Bellantoni was in that production as well.)

The other reason I stayed is that I was welcomed even though the person I was dating (seriously, I thought) for much of the first three years I was here was NOT MUCH LIKED (a significant understatement) by the adults in the parish. My youth groups had a more positive opinion! But they all stuck with me and offered both advice and examples about the value of a good, true, faith-filled bond.

When I finally let that relationship go and began dating David Crosby, the son of my father’s VTS classmate, Grace Church rejoiced. David began attending church with me almost right away (the other guy only showed up for the parties). The then-rector’s wife (Lance Moody!) threw her arms around David when she first met him to welcome him into the family. I think he was also invited to be Sunday School co-superintendent that same day. Exuberance was contagious.

We were married at 7:00 pm on Friday, January 2, 1981, with a lot of the congregation in attendance. Eleanor Reed was our crucifer. Lisa Bellantoni sang with her best buds (all youth group members) in the choir. It was truly a glorious night.

The roots in Grace grew deep over the years. When David was called into ordained ministry, we left with both excitement and a lot of sadness. A decade later, after seminary finished and early calls were done, David began an active ministry as a Free Range Priest (supply and interim work). I was then able to come back to the place that knows me for who I am and accepts me with all my foibles.

Grace is where I can be myself.

# Why Grace? (Continued)



January 2, 1981  
The Reverends Grafton McFadden,  
Robert Moody, Derrill Crosby ...



AND Chrissie & David Crosby

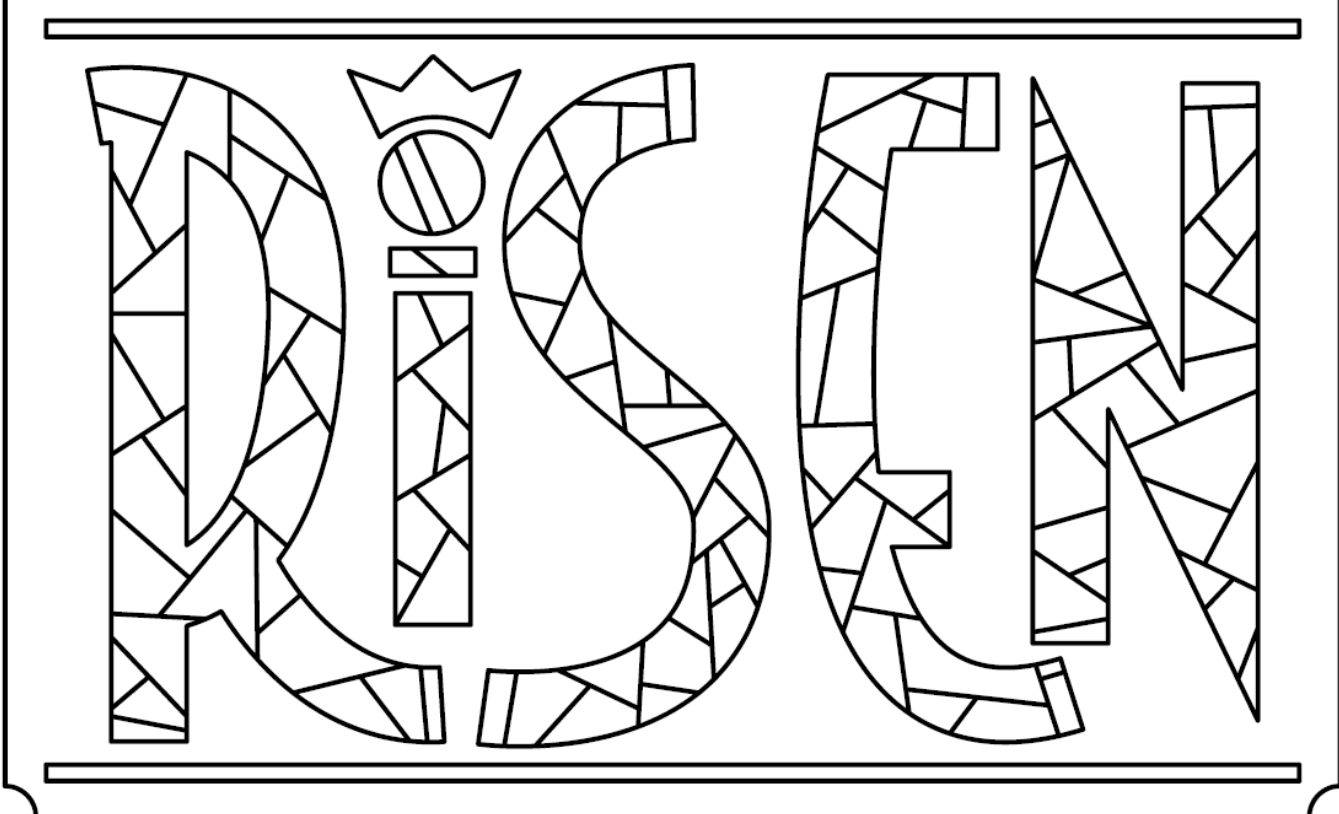
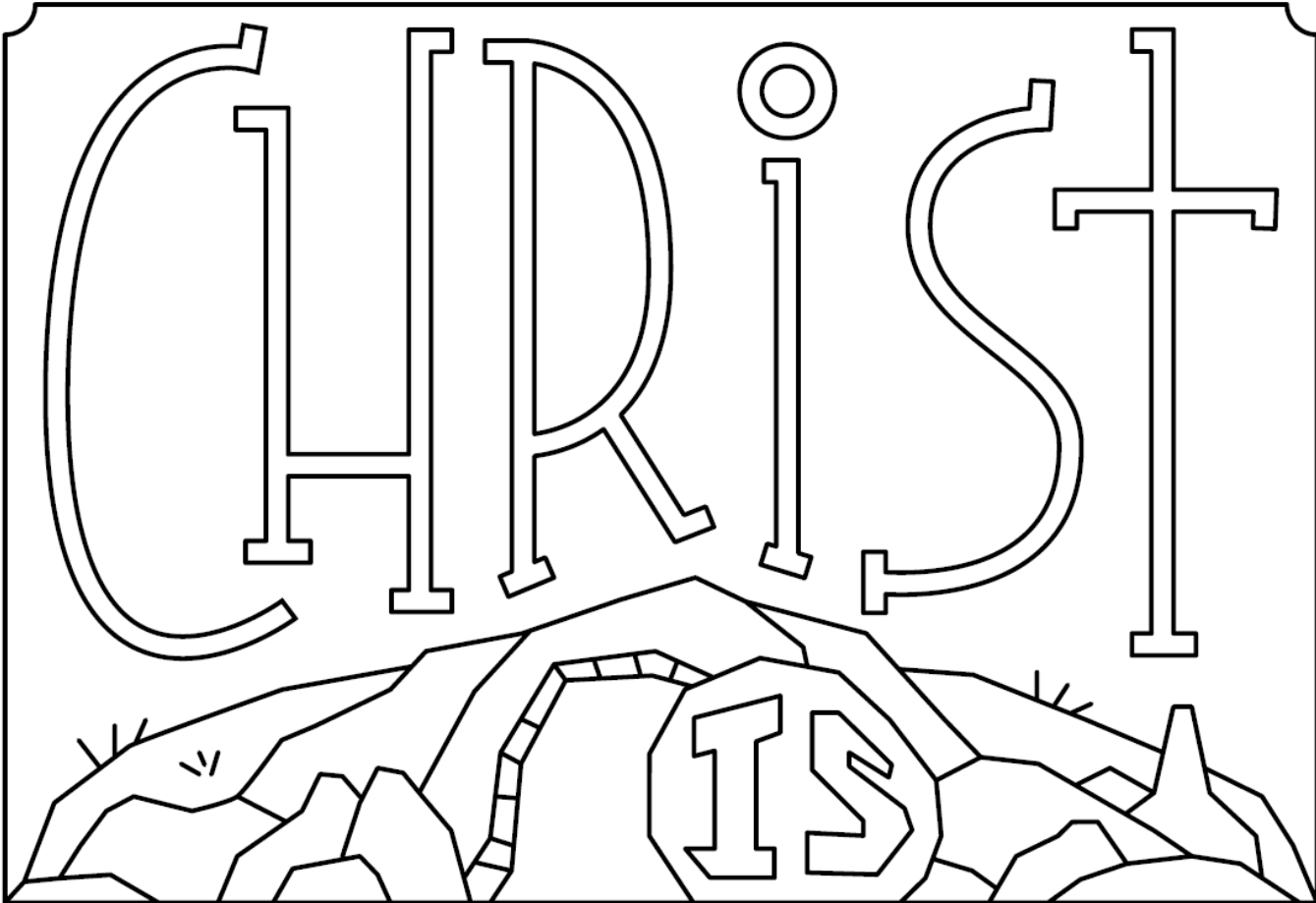


1982 HMS Pinafore chorus members



June 2, 2012

Part of the Grace team that made this possible:  
Charlie Iovino, Jane Rosman, Reverend Robert Malm,  
Reverend Derrill Crosby, Reverend David Crosby, Chrissie Crosby



illustratedministry.com



## Easter Word Search

N	P	T	M	E	O	R	F	J	Z	I	J	R	T	R
I	O	C	S	P	W	E	Q	X	B	O	F	S	I	O
Q	T	I	I	I	W	O	F	U	L	Y	I	S	F	Q
O	M	H	T	I	R	W	X	F	E	R	E	W	K	A
H	Z	F	P	C	K	A	U	Q	H	N	E	Q	B	J
J	J	K	A	G	E	C	H	C	M	Q	Y	C	C	H
N	A	B	B	Q	N	R	A	C	C	Z	N	Y	R	H
U	X	N	N	Z	D	E	R	Q	U	Q	E	G	O	T
J	V	N	B	V	N	X	O	U	C	E	K	V	S	M
Y	Z	G	K	A	O	V	K	W	S	H	S	I	S	V
P	W	S	B	M	B	Z	F	X	A	E	U	W	S	D
F	A	R	Y	Q	M	N	M	K	B	N	R	R	J	X
S	K	I	R	J	O	T	A	C	Z	P	E	B	C	Z
U	M	C	J	T	T	A	L	L	E	L	U	I	A	H
R	E	T	S	A	E	A	P	R	W	D	I	I	W	C



ALLELUIA  
 BAPTISM  
 CHRIST  
 CHURCH

CROSS  
 EASTER  
 EUCHARIST

RESURRECTION  
 RISEN  
 TOMB





## Parish Staff

**Betsy Bamford**

**Jane Avery**

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Assistant Rector for Family Ministries & GES Chaplain

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Priest Locum Tenens

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**Amorita Quintanilla**

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**The Rev. Santiago Rodriguez**

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**Addie Tapp**

Communications Support

**Dr. Alain Truche**

Director of Music

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**The Rev. Durango Jenkins**

[djenkins@vts.edu](mailto:djenkins@vts.edu)

**The Rev. Ignacio Solano Gómez**

[isolanogomez@vts.edu](mailto:isolanogomez@vts.edu)

## Vestry Class of 2024

Khacki Berry, *Youth Formation Liaison*

Lauren Gustafson, *GES Board Member*

Mary Hix, *Senior Warden*

Dan Pattarini, *Evangelism Liaison*

Rushad Thomas, *Children's Formation Liaison*

## Vestry Class of 2025

Keith Davis, *Asst Treasurer and Outreach/Justice Liaison*

Eleanor Reed, *Worship Liaison*

Jane Rosman, *Member-at-Large*

Andrew Serke, *Treasurer*

Geoff Whitlock, *Stewardship Liaison*

## Vestry Class of 2026

Chad Eckles, *Fellowship Liaison*

Morgan Miller, *Pastoral Care Liaison*

Sarah Schultz, *Register*

Mary Stewart, *Adult Formation & Stewardship Liaison*

Eric Waskowicz, *Junior Warden*

## Parish Team Leads

Lisa Bellantoni - *Education*

John Boris - *Pastoral Care*

Cindy MacIntyre - *Evangelism*

Jen Pease - *Outreach*

Lynn Rohrs - *Fellowship*

Erin White - *Youth*

Kemp Williams - *Worship*



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