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August/September 2025

# GRACE NOTES

A Bi-Monthly Magazine Published by Grace Episcopal Church

3601 Russell Road | Alexandria, Virginia 22305



## Restoring Grace

Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives

# From Mother Anne M. Turner

## *Rector*



Dear Friends in Christ,

I think a lot about how we do church. How do we structure our life in this place?

Commitment looks very different than it did for generations before us. In our society, church is no longer an assumed obligation; it must be chosen among a vast number of possibilities for community, identity, and service. (This situation is especially true for our youth, whose lives are scheduled with obligations in a way that would have been inconceivable a few decades ago.)

This social change has been hard on churches. But it brings a gift: we who come to church come with more clarity and intentionality. No one is here out of convention anymore. No one is phoning it in just to fit in.

What does this shift mean about how we do church, then? “Ministry” is a churchy word, but it really just describes what we are doing whenever we share God’s love. We are of course still ministering. But the way we do it needs to change.

Here’s what I see as sustainable and life-giving in our ministry at Grace Church now:

- *Ministry is episodic. We get involved in ways that can be measured in days or weeks rather than months or years. That doesn’t mean that we don’t have a lifetime of connection. But the ways in which we connect are more fluid. Think of something like National Rebuilding Day, which allows for a profound but relatively brief connection.*
- *Ministry has a low threshold. We don’t expect expertise to get started. No one should have to know what a thurible is, or when ordinary time is, or even where the Saint Mark Room is to do something at Grace.*
- *Ministry is shared. No one person should have the responsibility or the power of “owning” a tradition for too long. There was once an understanding at Grace that any leadership position should rotate every 2-3 years, and I would like to see that understanding return.*

My challenge to you: embrace your life at Grace in a way that is sustainable and life-giving for everyone.

If you lead a program here at Grace, think about how you structure its work. Do you depend on the same people to return with their accumulated knowledge, or do you create simple opportunities for new people? Are you willing to step aside even if it means the program might lie fallow for a while?





If you are just putting your toes in the water that is Grace, can you try something new, knowing that you are not required to make a forever commitment? Can you put yourself forward with the trust that your desire to connect is all that you need?

When we talk about restoring grace (which is the theme of this issue and the theme of Shrine Mont), it can sound nostalgic, as if we are trying to get back to an ideal place and time that maybe never was. But restoration is not about the institution. It's about the world, and the way our response to Jesus can alter the world in this place and time.

We work together to extend the reign of God on earth. Our work has to change—but may it never cease.

Yours in Christ,  
Anne+

***We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.***

BCP, p. 306



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## Grace Notes Submissions and Publication Schedule

Grace Notes is published approximately every other month by Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia. All parishioners are encouraged to contribute articles and photos. **The deadline for the next issue is September 6.** 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 Chrissie Crosby (*Co-editor*), Teresa Preston and Jason Holleran (*Final Proofreaders*), Kris Varga (*Design*), and Kemp Williams (*Co-editor*).



# On the Mind of Father Santiago



THE REV. SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ,  
ASSOCIATE RECTOR

Grace only exists in gift form. Ask Saint Paul. Ask Saint Augustine. Grace is a gift. That is what grace means - gratia - gift. Given freely, never earned, never owned. Everything we have, all that we are, is gift. All is gift. Or as Georges Bernanos puts it in *Diary of a Country Priest*, "tout est grâce." Everything is grace.

And because it's all gift, it all begins in love. Grace flows from God's unceasing love for us. But here's the thing: we can't hold on to grace like it's a possession. We can only give it away or pass it on. The more we give, the more room we make to receive. It's a divine economy - not of scarcity, but of abundance. Kathryn Tanner calls it the "gift economy," or the "economy of grace." It's a rhythm: receive, give, receive, give. This is the sacred loop. The loop of grace. And it is how lives are transformed. Grace begets grace.

This is the pattern we see in the lives of people like Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., and Helen Keller. They received grace and gave it all away - through compassion, love, forgiveness, and courage. And in doing so, they became instruments of grace themselves. To participate in the economy of grace is to live with open hands and open hearts. In this rhythm, we receive and release, release and receive. This is how we are restored. Grace is restoring - transforming.

This way of life is profoundly countercultural. The world tells us to achieve, to accumulate - to build the résumé, the dream home, the carefully curated life. But the Gospel calls us into a different rhythm. "Freely you have received," Jesus tells the disciples in Matthew's Gospel, "freely give" (Mt 10:8). We are invited into God's generosity, into a life of giving with joy and receiving with humility.

Of course, this isn't always easy. Some of us find it hard to give: our time, our forgiveness, our gifts in service of others. Others struggle to receive. We fear vulnerability. We've been hurt. We've grown proud or too self-reliant. We don't trust the loop. We don't trust others.

Restoring grace is the invitation to return to the loop of grace and love and peace. To experience the healing that allows us to receive the love and understanding we need. It begins when we allow ourselves to be healed, forgiven, held. It begins when we give ourselves grace - and in turn offer it to others.

Restoring grace is not a single moment. It is a way of life. It's a series of small prompts from the Spirit of the Living God: nudges toward trust, toward generosity, toward love. Grace restores us as we accept the invitations to step into the holy dance of receiving and giving, again and again and again. To trust the Giver of all good things. And to let grace heal us and transform us - one gift at a time.



# From Mother Emma

THE REV. EMMA BRICE,

ASSOCIATE RECTOR FOR FAMILY MINISTRIES & GRACE SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

Summertime is a period of reflection and renewal in the world of children and youth ministries, and this summer has been no different. After gathering surveys and having countless conversations with youth, volunteer leaders, parents, and colleagues, I feel the Holy Spirit calling us to celebrate those things which are working well and to let go of those things which no longer serve us.

Of course, change can be intimidating, especially when a clergyperson references it vaguely in a newsletter. But that is why change in the church does not originate with one person or even one group of people. Change in the church originates with the transformational grace of God acting in the world around us. We start by listening for God and looking for how God is using the gifts already present in our community.

One passage I've returned to again and again this summer comes from Paul's letter to the Romans: *"For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness."* (Romans 12:4-8, NRSVUE)

At Grace Church, the success of our children and youth formation programs depends on the diverse gifts offered by all of our many members. Formation is not only the work of Sunday School teachers and parents; it demands that we all use our gifts according to the grace given to us. Our gifts for creativity, for kindness, for strategic thinking, for planning. Our gifts for laughter and patience, our gifts of hope and grace.

In the coming months, we will be trying on some new curricula with our middle and high school youth. It will be a period of experimentation and continued learning. We are also redesigning our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Formation Hour class to better honor the wisdom and leadership of those children. We continue to reinvigorate our youth group events, and our youth will have new leadership opportunities at the parish and diocesan levels. All of this means that we will need curious and passionate leaders to bravely try on working with our young people.

We are entering into an exciting season of transformation and growth, and I am eager to see where the Holy Spirit continues to lead us!

**To register your children and youth for the 2025-26 Program Year, parents/guardians must complete one form for each child. Scan the QR code for this year's form.**

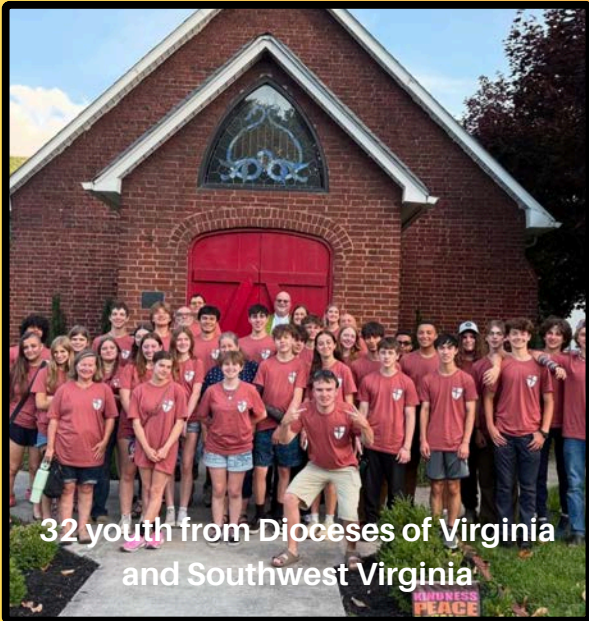
English form



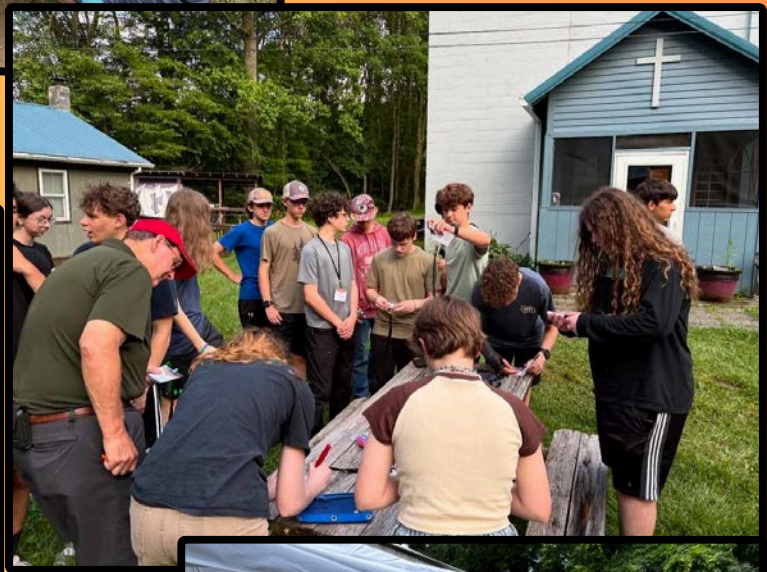
Spanish form







## YOUTH MISSION TRIP 2025





# OPS & COMM

*Operations & Communication @ Grace*



**KEVIN HAMILTON,**

**DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION**

Whether it is gingerly floating on a raft in the cool blue waters of a pool, sipping a cold glass of iced tea in the shade of a porch, or listening to the giggles of little ones chasing after fireflies in the evening, there is something about summertime activities that remind us to slow down. For many churches, summertime is also a season of rest and relaxation for the community. We feel summer's differing pace here at Grace in some ways, too, as certain of our regular programs are on break—people involved in those ministries enjoy much needed vacations, impromptu getaways, and family reunions.

Now, before anyone thinks we all are grabbing a hammock and setting out to find a nice, shaded spot on the church grounds for a nap, reality calls us out of the summer breeze. It has been a remarkably busy start to the summer with a lot of projects in play as well as diving into work needed to prepare for the fall. The pace may be slower at 3601 Russell Road in the summer, but it certainly is not slow.

This issue's theme of Restoring Grace aligns well with the work ahead for this amazing community of faith. As we enjoy the more restful season of summer, there is a sense of vigor and rekindling of the creative spark that invites the people of Grace to dream together of all that can be. For that work to continue, there is always a lot going on behind the scenes operationally to prepare. I would like to highlight just a few of the challenges and opportunities we have experienced in operations and communications.

First and foremost, thank you to the entire Grace community for your flexibility and patience in dealing with service location moves necessitated by the HVAC issues in the nave. As you know, we had a contract in place for the fall, but the system had other plans. Our vendor was extremely responsive and worked hard to get the project moved up and finished almost two weeks BEFORE the stated minimum timeframe. We now have this in the done column so we will not have to experience HVAC work and the modernization of the elevator near the church office back-to-back this fall (more information coming soon about that work).

We have almost completed the second phase of our Breeze database clean-up. While much of phase two has little impact for parishioners, it is critical to ensure the database more accurately reflects current and active membership. You will hear more about this project very soon, especially to help us update the database even further by reviewing your information and providing updated pictures.

We implemented a new access control system. While new systems always come with challenges, the transition has been smooth thanks to all of you! I have received several comments from parishioners who are grateful for the update to our failing system and for the enhanced safety and security that comes with it. I am very thankful to the joint church and school team that came together to review the various vendors and provide leadership in choosing the new system.



While these are just a few of the highlights of some current projects, I believe they speak loudly to something so very true of Grace—it takes many hands to do what we do. Thank you to all parishioners who make a difference through the various ministries. Looking to join a ministry and make a difference? See the last page of Grace Notes and talk to a member of any ministry team, either clergy, vestry or the parish laity. Anyone would love to help you find a ministry that fits your passions and interests.

I also would like to thank the leadership of the church during these very busy last few months. Grace vestry, clergy, and executive committee members are committed not only to leading the church, but to also rolling up their sleeves and jumping into the work that needs to be done. I cannot count the number of times these individuals asked me how they could help. When I looked up, I would find them just filling in where they saw a need. The best things we do, we do together in community. When we all join together, our efforts aren't just cumulative, they are exponential!



# Music Notes from Alain

DR. ALAIN TRUCHE, *DIRECTOR OF MUSIC*



## COME ENJOY SUMMER CHOIR!

Until the last Sunday in August, the summer choir serves as our vocal leaders. If you would like to sing one or more of those Sundays, **come to the choir room (St. Cecilia room) at 9:30 am on Sunday** to learn the day's anthem and psalm (Simplified Anglican Chant).

No need to worry about vesting. During the summer, the choir does not vest.

If you don't have the time to commit to choir during the program year, this is a perfect opportunity for you to have fun singing with no strings attached.

*How can I keep from singing?*







With the rush of the end of the school year and 5th grade graduation behind us, we're grateful to turn our focus to summer—a season of restoration and renewal for our school and its community. This time offers our students, faculty, staff, and administrators a well-deserved break—an essential part of our community cadence that allows for rest, reflection, and rejuvenation.

In addition to stepping away from daily classroom responsibilities, our faculty and staff are engaging in self-directed professional learning as a way to reflect, re-energize, and re-engage with their calling as educators. Their summer growth plans may include reading, listening to podcasts, attending webinars, taking coursework, and more—each chosen to spark fresh ideas, expand perspectives, and deepen the joy of teaching and learning when we gather again in the fall.

Summer is an essential time for our school facility to take a breath, and under the leadership of Mr. Juan Rojas, our campus is undergoing a thoughtful refresh. In June, we completed a major clean-out of Merrow Hall and the second-floor activity room, added shelving to three closets to better utilize storage, and began updating equipment for physical education and extended care. This effort will allow us to update our physical education and extended care equipment and create a dedicated workspace for teachers upstairs. July and August will bring buffed tile floors, cleaned carpets, freshly painted hallways, and new mulch and sand across campus—all in preparation for a vibrant start to the new school year.

Meanwhile, our campus continues to be abuzz with energy and excitement as students participate in Grace's very own summer camp. In past years, our space was rented to outside camp providers, but this summer we are proudly running four weeks of camp in June and July for Grace students. Led by our dedicated extended care staff and designed by the talented Ms. Thalia Orellana, the program provides playful, enriching experiences inspired by weekly themes—all in familiar spaces and with familiar faces. It's a true win-win for families and school administration alike.

The campers' energy and enthusiasm is a joyful reminder of our purpose and provides daily inspiration for the admin team working steadily through the summer. As we pause to reflect and offer gratitude—essential components of renewal—we are especially thankful for our partnership with the church, the unwavering support of our community, and the passion and care our faculty and staff pour into each school day. Together, we look forward to the year ahead with hope, purpose, and excitement.



**2025 Grace Episcopal School graduates**  
post graduation ceremony

*Congratulations!*



# Grace Seminararians 2025



**Gabriel (Gabe) Oakes** (they/them) is a 3rd year (senior) at VTS from the Diocese of Olympia and will be an informal presence at Grace during this coming year, which means they have no requirements to fulfill, just experience to be gained. Expect to see them in the pulpit, on the altar, leading some forums perhaps, or just being a pew person!

Gabriel studied theology in undergrad, and since then, has worked in a variety of positions, including as an Episcopal Service Corps member serving at the Youth and Family Center in St. Louis, where they helped manage the food pantry. At VTS, Gabriel is the co-manager of the Flamingo coffee shop, and serves as president of the Justice and Reconciliation Society, engaging with their vocation for justice work. They note that “the more that I have fallen in love with God and with the gospel, and felt my calling to preach, proclaim, and celebrate Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, the more I have felt thrust deeper into commitment to struggling for justice. I know that my call is to serve Christ and his church, and that the church that I am called to serve and the God I am called to worship do not stop at the physical walls.”

Gabriel married their wife, Rachel, in 2024.



**Miranda Peters** (she/her) is a 2d year (middler) international student at VTS from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Canada. She spent this past summer here in Virginia fulfilling her Clinical Pastoral Education requirements.

Miranda also has a lot of experiences working and living in different environments. For example, for two years she lived in the Community of St. Anselm, a monastic gathering of young Anglicans from around the world.

Her words about what happened there: “[The Community] gave me the incredible opportunity to learn from the ancient spiritual traditions of Franciscans, Jesuits, and Benedictines. With the counsel and guidance of leaders and mentors from many different Christian traditions, I experienced deep healing from the burnout I had experienced and received God’s love in a new way. I learned how to pray in an imaginative Ignatian way and to identify the desires that Christ placed in my heart when I was created. It was here where I discovered my passion for ecumenism and spiritual formation in the context of community.” The community then requested she remain for another year as a mentor to the incoming class!

Miranda self-discloses that she is “outgoing, personable, with a passion for mentorship, spiritual formation, and life in community.” All of this is true, once you get a chance to meet her! Her supervisor will be Mary Hix, and Jane Rosman will serve as the facilitator of the Lay Support Team.





**Seth Wise Buck** (he/him) is a middler at VTS from the Diocese of Colorado (yes, he knows Durango, although Colorado is a big state!).

With a background in social work, Seth has been working in a variety of “ministries” as part of his discernment process. One of the more formative ones he talks about is his years as a bartender, where he “learned to celebrate with others, as well as lament with them.” The other important ministry was working in child protection, which taught him “to see God in all people, even in those traditionally we find difficult to love.” He notes “I get to walk alongside others as we lean into the love of Jesus Christ. The

priesthood for me is a place where I can be in fellowship with the community, working in my passion for social justice and equity while keeping the ministry of Christ and his sacraments as a central foundation for practice.”

Seth and Brooke have been married since December 2021. They are expecting their first child in early August. Seth’s supervisor will be Chrissie Crosby, and John Kendrick will facilitate his Lay Support Team.

But wait! There’s more...

Both Miranda and Seth spent the summer in a chaplaincy program at St. Elizabeths Psychiatric Hospital in Washington, D.C. St. Elizabeths Hospital is “the District’s public psychiatric facility for individuals with serious and persistent mental illness who need intensive inpatient care to support their recovery.” Look for the two seminarians to give us some insights to how that unfolded and what their experiences entailed! They were truly serving the least, the lost, and the left behind in so many ways!

## Updates from Former Grace Seminarians

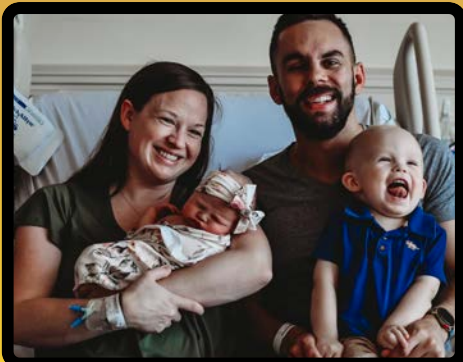
**Noah Aukerman**  
has been serving  
at Grace most  
of summer 2025



**Ignacio Solano Pickett** with new  
husband Jimmy, June 2025  
Western Massachusetts



**Durango Jenkins** with  
husband Keith, Dec 2024  
New York City, NY



**Ashley and Taylor Mather** with son and  
brand-new daughter, July 2025  
Ellensburg, WA



**Paul Evans** with newest son, wife Molly with both sons, June 2025  
Richmond, VA



# SHRINE MONT 2025

## *Restoring Grace*

### Registration is still open!

[Click here for the English form](#)

[Click here for the Spanish form](#)

[Click here for the Saturday Only form](#)

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you (Isaiah 42:3)  
My grace is sufficient for you (2 Corinthians 12:9)  
Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10)

#### Shrine Mont Costs

**\$225 for an adult sharing a room**

**\$285 for an adult single room**

**\$115 for kids (8-13 years old)**

**\$90 for kids (4-7 years old)**

**Free for kids 3 or younger**

*Scholarship help is available.*

*Contact Father Santiago.*

### Shrinemont Night Live

New this year, Saturday night at Shrinemont will feature a full-fledged variety show, and you are invited to be a part of it!

Pull out your tap shoes, dust off the ukulele, grab your magic hat, or any other talent you want to share. The floor will be all yours (for around 3 minutes)! This is not a talent contest, there is no judging—and there are no prizes—just the opportunity to share your gifts with our church community along with lots and lots of fun!

If interested, send a note to [Shrinemont2025@gracealex.org](mailto:Shrinemont2025@gracealex.org) with a brief summary of what you want to present during our very own SNL—what we are calling, “Shrine Mont Night Live”—and get to practicing!

Here are the details:

**WHO:** anyone who has a gift they want to share. No age minimum! No age maximum!

**WHAT:** any talent you want to share (singing, dancing, magic tricks, juggling, skits, poetry reading, etc.)

**HOW:** your presentation can be any length but should be no more than 3 minutes long. You will need to provide everything necessary for your talent (props, musical accompaniment, etc). You only get the stage, 3 minutes of our attention and our love & affection.

**ON SITE:** there will be on practice session on Saturday after dinner and then the show is on!

**DEADLINE TO SIGN UP:** August 31, 2025

**QUESTIONS? Contact [Shrinemont2025@gracealex.org](mailto:Shrinemont2025@gracealex.org)**

*continued on next page*



## ***New This Year***

We're trying several new things this year. Please be patient with us—we really want to know what worked, what didn't, and what should be tweaked. We'll solicit your kind and thoughtful feedback after the weekend!

### **Room Groupings (Quiet Hours)**

We're trying to allow for different needs/desires for quiet times by creating locations that are quieter in the morning, quieter in the evening, both, and neither. This may mean you're in a different room than usual. Give it a try, see what you think!

### **Saturday-Only Option**

Not really new: we encourage you to invite friends (from church, from work, from wherever) who might like to see what we're all about to come up for the day on Saturday. Bonus: parishioners who can't commit to the entire weekend, please join us at least for the day!

### **Shrine Mont Guides**

A chance for those who know Shrine Mont well to assist those with a lower familiarity level. Guides have agreed to share their knowledge and love of the Mountain, so query all you want!

### **Expanded Packing List**

Please consider bringing (but label clearly if you want back!):

- Nail polish (for nail painting and/or "potpourri")—it's okay if you're not sure it works!
- Games (for any time, but especially Saturday night's gaming rooms)
- Shrine Mont songbooks (green/red)
- Unwanted arts & crafts supplies (corks, popsicle sticks, felt, markers/crayons/pens, stickers, beads, string/yarn, old calendars...)
- Portable craft project
- Unplugged instrument for Jam Band/SNL
- Dress-ups/costumes for photo booth at Friday's dance
- S'more-roasting sticks
- Picnic blanket for stargazing

### **Language Preference Stickers**

Always wanted to approach La Gracia members but got hung up on a potential language barrier? Willing to try out your Spanish (or other language!) but unsure how to start the conversation? This year, we'll have optional colored stickers for you to indicate your language preference available at check-in.

### **Friday Night Campfire**

Now as a singalong! We'll sing camp songs while we roast s'mores.

We'll keep the fire going a bit longer this year, for those for whom the dance is just a little too much.

### **OR....Stargazing**

An alternative to dancing all night. Meet on Pennsylvania lower porch.

**Keep reading for more NEW options and ideas...**

### **Soccer Game**

For those who choose action over conversing with the clergy, La Gracia will host a soccer game Saturday morning.

### **Extrovert Lunch**

For one meal—just one!—we encourage you to break bread with someone you don't know. At Saturday's lunch, seek out a stranger and trade stories. Many of the rest of us will feel just as awkward, we promise!

### **Arts & Crafts "Potpourri" Porch Activity**

If you enjoy makerspaces or mixed media, or just the chance to play with art supplies, this is a Porch Activity for you! If you have art supplies/craft materials lying around that need a home/use, this is THE Porch Activity for you! Bring your leftovers and your creativity and see what the Spirit inspires.

### **Jam Band session**

You are all officially invited to join the **Grace Jam Band** @ Shrinemont for our first ever **Pray for the Talentless Tour** during porch activities. Todd Egaas has a setlist featuring summer classics by Credence Clearwater Revival, Men at Work, Otis Redding, Don McLean, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty, the Cure, Bruno Mars, and Taylor Swift. Don't be intimidated. No matter your musical abilities, you've got a place in the band.

If you already play an instrument or sing, bring your instrument and a tuner. If you have a ukulele, bring it (you should really carry it around with you always). If you are musically curious, we'll have extra ukuleles and chord sheets to provide free instruction that will get you strumming away in minutes. Don't worry. If you are not as musically inclined, you'll still find your place in the jam band rocking away with a shaker, kazoo, tambourine, or wooden guiros.

For the musically inclined, most of the entire setlist will consist of songs with the chords of Am, G, C, D, F, and Em. Top songs have been built with less. For those who are interested, we'll share setlist lead sheets later this summer.

If you plan to bring an instrument or have some songs you'd like to include in the setlist, please contact: [\*\*todd.egaas@gracealex.org\*\*](mailto:todd.egaas@gracealex.org).

### **Trivia**

Join us for Trivia Night! No experience necessary - it's all about having fun in community. Just bring your sense of humor. All are welcome! Whether you're a seasoned trivia pro or just looking for a good time with friends, there's something for everyone!

### **(Sunday) Morning Nature Walk**

The Woodiwiss family will lead a youth nature walk after Sunday breakfast. Give your kids the chance to run, play, and connect with nature while you enjoy a leisurely coffee, conversation, or participate in the Spanish Eucharist. Open to all ages, but ages 4 and younger must have an adult (or responsible middle/high schooler) to accompany them.



# HAITI MICAH PROJECT: Urgent Assistance Needed!

Grace Church has been a key supporter of the Haiti Micah project for many years through our annual fundraising campaign and allocations from the outreach budget.

In better days, this funding was used to support the school in Mirebalais, Haiti, which provided food and educational programs for local children experiencing significant hardship. There were many success stories of children who graduated from the program and went on to get advanced degrees and become a lifeline for their families and community.

## The Current Situation...

Since last year, the program has had to relocate away from Mirebalais due to the armed gangs that have taken over the city. This has caused a humanitarian crisis. Schools and churches are closed, and families are traumatized. Hunger and poverty are worsening, increasing misery and instability.

This year's campaign aims to provide urgent relief and restore hope to those affected.



**YOUR SUPPORT  
MATTERS**



## What you can do ...

**Donate** - participate in the Grace Church annual Haiti Micah fundraising campaign now through Labor Day.

To donate, please write a check to Grace Church referencing the 'Haiti Micah Project' in the memo line or select 'Haiti Micah Project' to designate your contribution in Tithely or Breeze.

**Contact Jen Pease at**  
[jennifer.pease@gracealex.org](mailto:jennifer.pease@gracealex.org) for additional questions about giving through Grace.

# Pray mightily!!

*Image Credits: Haiti Micah Project and Canva*



# Grace Quirks

A new column inviting members of our community to share a strange, funny, or quirky happening they've experienced at Grace.

Nancy Robinson offers some stories and photos of pastoral care practices.

We invite you to contact us at [grace.notes@gracealex.org](mailto:grace.notes@gracealex.org) if you have a quirky story to share.

Imagine being stationed far from family and friends — at an Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya or in a war zone in Iraq or Afghanistan ... or stressing over your final exams or papers — and then receiving a small care package from Grace Episcopal Church. What do you expect to find inside?

Probably not Nativity Rubber Duckies! And a Grace Advent card signed by dozens of parishioners. Hopefully, the combination would make you feel a little less stressed, a little less lonely, and loved by your friends at Grace.

Grace pastoral care has been sending cards and care packages to college students since the early 2000's, then expanded to military and diplomats serving overseas. Grace has been our home parish since 1976, even though we spent 14 of the first 17 years stationed overseas (or in Nebraska), so we wanted to strengthen those connections for others through prayers, cards and ... rubber duckies.



The first college care packages were lovingly assembled with contributions from parishioners: snacks and homemade treats and notes to share treats with friends. We've included Advent Duckies since 2009 but abandoned the large care packages for college students after learning that some weren't opened until kids got home from college in May with brownies and snacks still untouched! In addition to college freshmen we send out the duckies to new Seminarians and staff members, and diplomats and military newly posted abroad. We've lost count of the numbers we've sent out over the years, and there have been a few ups and downs.

During COVID, supply chain shortages dramatically disrupted Rubber Ducky imports, and they could only be found on eBay for as much as \$25-\$50 a set. One difficult year, some students received Nativity rubber fingertip figure puppets — a poor substitute, in our humble opinion! Postage costs have also climbed, so last year we hand delivered most of them to students' homes, saving the \$10-\$12 postage. This year, they've reappeared online (OrientalTrading.com), so we replenished our strategic national stockpile to cover at least the next couple of years. Current and previous treasurers are all happy that costs for the duckies and postage are funded by donation, and not the pastoral care budget!

We usually don't get much of a response from the recipients, but there are exceptions: Erika Olander sent an email from the Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, headed: "Received!! Quack." —

*Dear Santi and Nancy,  
Thanks to everyone for sending me the lovely card, and the duckies are very cute! As you can see, someone else here is also very fond of them...I'm wondering if you also had him in mind!*



Peregrine and Crispin Enger put their duckies out every Christmas. The Pattarini family received their first set at the Embassy in the Gulf Kingdom of Oman, and now all three children have their own sets acquired as college students. When Charlotte Steffensen, daughter of Mother Leslie and Kirk, was studying abroad in Germany, she sent a photo of her duckies floating (mostly upside down) in her host family's pool. To the right, Charlotte and Michael Reed (LucyLee and Jean's grandson and Eleanor's nephew) share a photo of their graduation ducks!



Rubber Duckies have quacked up at other times at Grace. Graduation duckies and new baby duckies make appearances from time to time, and a Graceful Procession of duckies (thurifer, crucifer, acolytes, choir, subdeacon, deacon, celebrant & altar guild) — was sold at the 2001 Grace Silent Auction and is still in the acolyte vesting room.

So, smile when you see the Nativity Rubber Duckies, and remember to sign all the Pastoral Care Cards at Easter, Shrine Mont, and before Christmas. It's not a duty you should let fall through the Quacks.





# CREATION CARE

## Parking Lot Island Work

*And God saw everything that God created, and behold, it was very good. Genesis 1:31*

### Grace Church's Newest Native Garden

If you've been an early arrival attendee at Grace, you have probably noticed the improved island garden in the parking lot. The area was rejuvenated by Nick Shriner and members of his Boy Scout troop 647 in fulfillment of his Eagle Scout Service Project.

Working off a plan developed by Kristine Hesse, Nick researched the native plants that had been proposed, offered substitutions, and implemented the removal of existing vegetation, prepped the soil, and planted native Virginia plants.

Nick worked closely with members and staff of the church, coordinating when the work could be completed over the weekends of May 10, and 17-18.

The garden is designed to provide all-season color with plants that do well in sun and dry to drought conditions. The layout takes into consideration the expected full size of the different plants, so while it may look bare now, it will eventually fill out. The garden could use some native ground covers such as *chrysogonum virginianum* (green and gold), creeping phlox, or sedums. If you have any you would like to contribute, please contact [kristine.hesse@gracealex.org](mailto:kristine.hesse@gracealex.org).



*What the area was before*



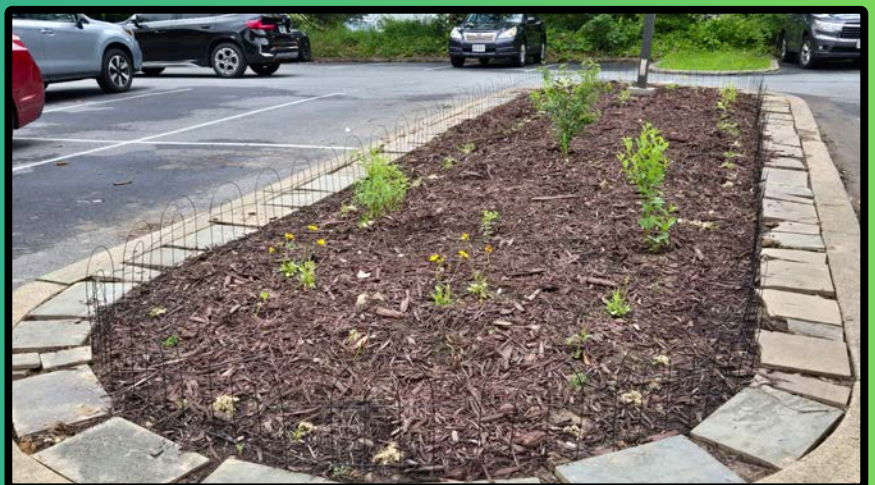




The team that worked on the project



**A major project underway**



Awaiting growth in the years to come!



# ENVISIONING TOPICS FOR ADULT FORUM

By Anne Clift Boris

As we come and go from our summer activities, visiting old friends and new places, transporting our children to and from their summer adventures, let us keep our minds open for new ideas for the fall. What **new topics would you like to hear presented?** What **wisdom or experience might you feel ready to share?**

The 2025-2026 program year for adult forum will resume when Sunday school resumes in late September. We will be continuing the very popular “**Grace at Work**” series, where people talk about how they live out their faith in their work lives. We already have some “Grace at Work” presenters lined up but would like to hear from many more. Sessions in which people share **how they first came to Grace**, or tell about **books, people, or moments that have been particularly meaningful** to their life journeys, are also planned. We expect to hear updates from our **creation care and outreach teams**.

If you are interested in presenting in any of these areas, or want to suggest another topic you might present, or want to request a topic that you would not be presenting yourself, please contact [Anne Clift Boris](#).

# STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION FOR SUMMER

July 1, 2025  
Q2 Reflection

Dear Members of Grace Episcopal Church,

At the time of writing, I'm getting ready to move. By this time next week, my family and all my stuff will be in a different place than the one I'm sitting in right now. The whole process is stressful and expensive, but packing boxes is by far the worst of it. Estimate how many boxes you think you need; buy double that amount, and make sure you leave time to run and get more—you'll probably need them.

The only good thing about packing all those boxes is that it makes you think carefully about why you have the things that you have. Every time I pick up an item to put it into a box—a book, a frame, a glass—I am forced to ask myself, "Is this something I want to hold onto?" Is it important enough for me to spend the time packing it, the money to have it moved and stored, and the space in my future home to place it in?"

Most of the time, I'm not having to make those kinds of decisions hundreds of times in an afternoon, and thousands of times over the course of the whole pack-up experience. But I do often make that same calculation—we all do. We choose the things, experiences, and causes that are important enough to invest in. We don't always make the choice thoughtfully, which is how junk accumulates—but we do make it. We commit to a thing or an idea as something that we want to carry with us, because it's that important.

You're receiving this note because you have made that choice about your relationship to Christ and your belonging at Grace. You have put your money where your values are; and so today, I am not going to ask you for more money. Today, I simply invite you to reflect on what you have put in your box—the things that prompted your pledge in the first place.

What is it about our Grace community that you choose to carry with you? What makes you say, "I may not know where my life is headed, but I know that I want this to be a part of it?"

Thank you for carrying those treasured things! Thank you for preserving and protecting them, and for helping to move them forward through your support of Grace Church. With all of us carrying our boxes—ours and each other's—we can be certain that we will have all that we need.

Lift with the legs—not with the back!

*Geoff Whitlock*  
Vestry Lead for Stewardship



# Grace-ful Worship

## “Prayer Plus Action Equals Results!”

In the last issue of Grace Notes, I shared with you some thoughts about the power of prayer. This time I'm going to take us a step further...

One day when we were traveling, I saw someone wearing a T-shirt that I will never forget. On the shirt was a small drawing of a person digging at the base of a tall mountain. Below it was written the following words: “Faith Can Move Mountains, But You’d Better Bring A Shovel.” I love it!

Faith and prayer carry a lot of weight in our lives, as they should, but it is by adding our own action that we can help God to bring results into being. This is what we mean when we say to one another that “actions speak louder than words.”

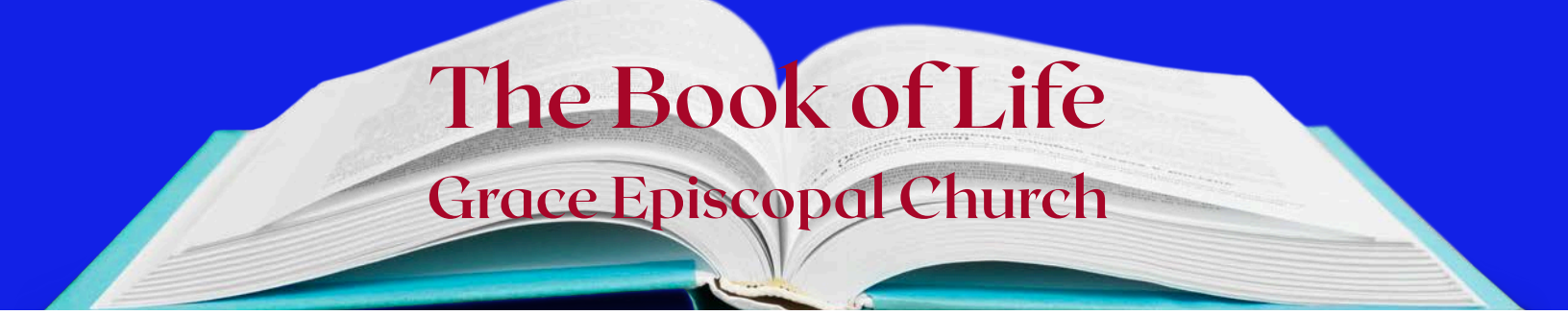
In many cases, what we do doesn't necessarily line up with what we are saying, reminding us that it's easier to talk about doing something than it is to actually do something. It's a good idea for each of us to take a serious look, once in a while, to see if there's alignment between what we pray for and what we actually do to help bring it about. For example, it's relatively easy to ask God for peace on earth, but it takes a lot more energy and effort for us to take the many small steps that might actually lead to bringing peace on earth—anywhere on earth—into reality. If all we ever do is talk about it and then pray for it, we begin to lose faith in ourselves, in humanity, and maybe even in God, because nothing seems to change. In this way, being all talk and no action is a form of self-sabotage.

It's always helpful to notice what we pray for and then to observe what we are actually doing in the world. Sometimes we realize that our actions haven't caught up with what we are praying for, and at other times we see that we might need to change our prayers to better reflect what we are doing in the world (if anything) to help out. Either way, the more we align our words and our deeds, the clearer we are in expressing our truth to the world, and the more powerful we are in helping God to bring our prayers into reality.

I used “peace on earth” as an example in the last two paragraphs because it's something that I imagine we all pray for, but it's a big and complicated issue. Let me share a much smaller one from my own life. Each morning I pray that I might help others who need love and encouragement to deal with their own physical and/or emotional problems. That's the mountain that needs to be moved. I have total faith that God hears my prayers and will help me to do this. But it's unlikely that God will magically drop these people into my lap. My role is first to find out who needs help, and then to reach out and listen to them on an individual basis. That's what I can do.

With help, and using my own shovel, and with others like me who are members of Community of Hope International (COHI) using their shovels, too, the mountain eventually (and hopefully) gets moved!

– June Huber



# The Book of Life

## Grace Episcopal Church

### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 01 - Spencer Foucart  
August 01 - Emily Graves  
August 02 - Wendell Thomas  
August 04 - Maddie Prosser  
August 08 - John Barker  
August 08 - Kimberly Reyes  
August 08 - Olivia Woodiwiss  
August 09 - Erica McFarquhar  
August 12 - Violet Woodiwiss  
August 13 - Grant Miller  
August 13 - Peter Schrum  
August 15 - Cynthia Fors  
August 15 - Catherine Voces  
August 18 - Isaac Reyes  
August 19 - Lucy Williams  
August 21 - Elizabeth S. Anderson  
August 23 - Keith Giacomo  
August 23 - Clifton Killian  
August 24 - Jack Hennigan  
August 25 - Hudson Chiow  
August 25 - Kristen Woodiwiss  
August 27 - Lane Barker  
August 27 - Evelyn Woodiwiss  
August 28 - Mary Shaver  
August 30 - Stephen Lovell  
August 31 - Susan Hayduchok  
August 31 - Amorita Quintanilla  
August 31 - Timothy Willard

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

September 01 - Cleveland Eason  
September 01 - Anne Glass  
September 01 - Teresa Preston  
September 01 - Lorna Worley  
September 03 - Lilian Medrano-Lopez  
September 06 - Blythe Su Davis  
September 07 - Colin Broome  
September 07 - Cathy Puskar  
September 09 - Michael Reed  
September 10 - Luke Border  
September 10 - Ronald Wishart  
September 14 - Keaton Brathwaite  
September 14 - Parker Brathwaite  
September 14 - Emery Serke  
September 15 - Jay O'Malley  
September 16 - Lori Doyle  
September 16 - Nancy Graves  
September 16 - Cole Ruff  
September 17 - Drew Bryant  
September 17 - Caroline Shaver  
September 19 - Bobby White  
September 20 - Hermann Gerber  
September 22 - Donna Hall  
September 22 - Jennifer Long  
September 23 - Janet Baker  
September 25 - Luke Braza  
September 26 - Mallini Gumti

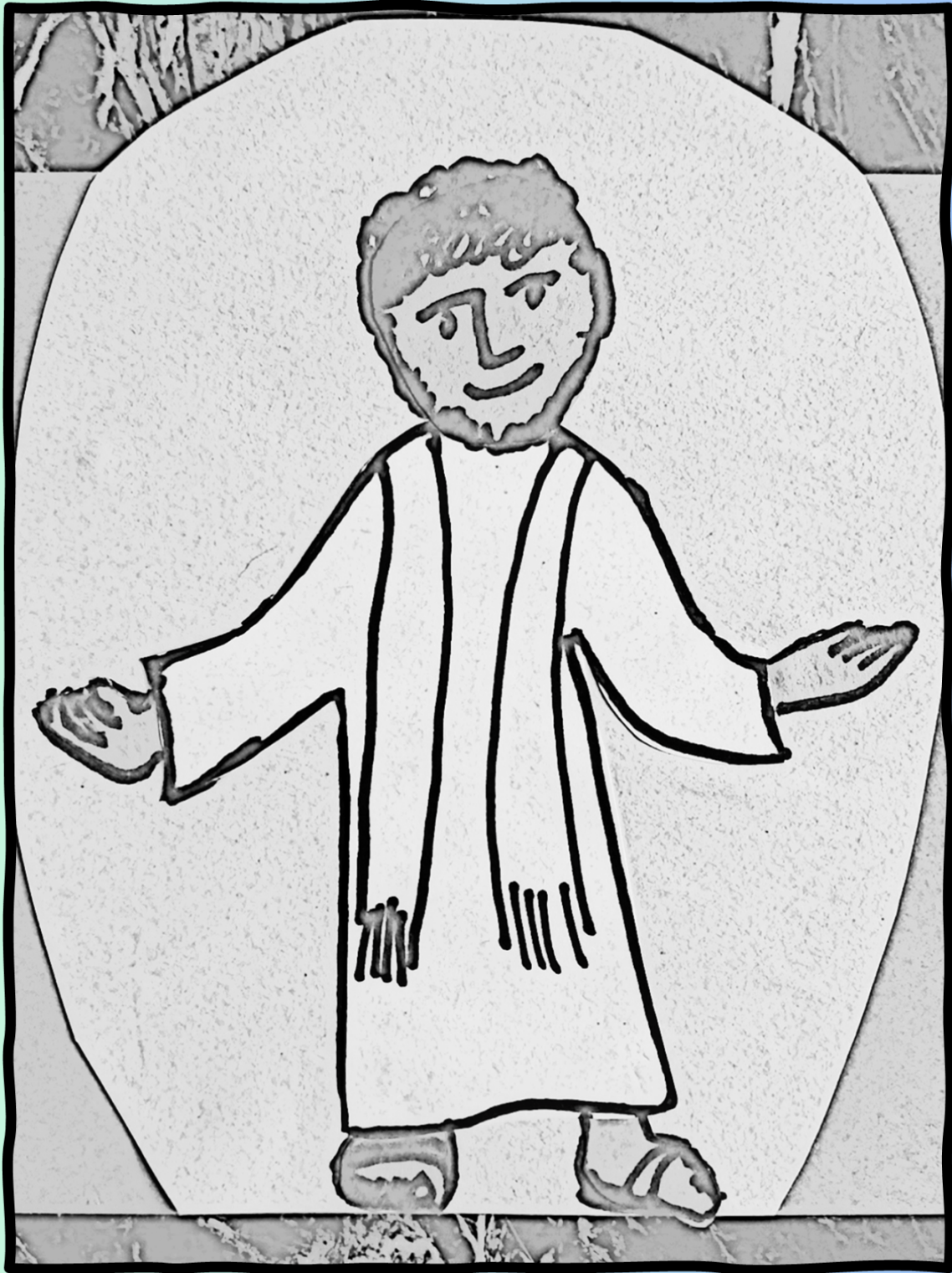
### FUNERALS

July 29 - Tina Anderson

**NOTE:** All information is either from the Breeze Database or from bulletins. If we have missed anyone, please note that information to us and we will correct our records and identify our misstatements. *Your Grace Notes team*



# Family Fun Page



Welcome FLAT JESUS

We invite you to color Jesus and take his picture with you on vacation! If you send us your photo, we'll publish all the places Jesus got to this summer.

[GraceNotes@gracealex.org](mailto:GraceNotes@gracealex.org)

# 2025-2026 Calendar of Grace Church Parish-Wide Events

Sunday, August 17	Blessing of Backpacks at Little Church and Children's Chapel
Monday, September 1	Labor Day Holiday; Office Closed
Friday, September 5	Shrine Mont Retreat Begins
Sunday, September 7	One service only at 10:30 a.m.
Thursday, September 11	Handbell and Adult Choir Rehearsals begin
Sunday, September 14	9:30 a.m. Formation Hour Kick-Off and Llamapalooza
Saturday, September 20	5:00 p.m. La Gracia Getting to Know You Dinner
Sunday, September 21	9:40 a.m. Formation Hour Classes Begin
Sunday, September 28	Founders Day and Pledge Campaign Kick-off
Saturday, October 4	Art on the Avenue (partnered with Grace Episcopal School)
Sunday, October 5	10:30 a.m. Grace Episcopal School Sunday 4:00 p.m. Blessing of the Animals
Saturday, October 11	Youth Acolyte Lock-in National Cathedral Youth Acolyte Festival
Monday, October 13	Indigenous Peoples Day Holiday; Office Closed
Sunday, October 26	3:00-5:00 p.m. Trunk or Treat (co-hosted by Emmanuel Church)
Friday, October 31-	Diocesan High School Retreat at Shrine Mont
Sunday, November 2	All Saints' Sunday and Pledge Ingathering 5:00 p.m. Requiem Eucharist
Tuesday, November 4	Day of Prayer for the Elections
Tuesday, November 11	Veterans Day Holiday; Office Closed
Saturday, November 15	K-5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Regional Children's Fellowship Day
Saturday, November 22	Thanksgiving Basket Preparation & High School Lock-in
Sunday, November 23	Thanksgiving Basket Distribution



Thursday, November 27	Thanksgiving Day Holiday; Office Closed 10:00 a.m. Festival Eucharist
Friday, November 28	Office Closed
Sunday, November 30	9:30 a.m. Intergenerational Wreath Making, Card Signing
Saturday, December 6	9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Advent Quiet Morning
Sunday, December 7	St. Nicholas visits church at all services 5:00 p.m. Advent Lessons and Carols with Choral Eucharist - Followed by Newcomers Reception
Sunday, December 14	5:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 21	6:00 p.m. Greening of the Church
Tuesday, December 23	7:00 p.m. Las Posadas
Wednesday, December 24	3:00 p.m. Family Service with Holy Eucharist 5:00 p.m. Festival Eucharist with Procession to the Creche 7:30 p.m. Festival Eucharist 11 p.m. Festival Eucharist
Thursday, December 25	12:00 noon Festival Eucharist
NOTE: Office Closed Wednesday, December 24 - Thursday, January 1	
Sunday, December 28	10:30 a.m. Christmas Lessons and Carols with Choral Eucharist (no 7:30 a.m. or 5:00 p.m. services)
Thursday, January 1	12:00 noon Festival Eucharist
Tuesday, January 6	Epiphany Bilingual Festival Eucharist Festive Reception following
Monday, January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday; Office Closed Day of Service
Sunday, January 25	10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Annual Meeting (no 7:30, 9:00, or 5:00 services) Potluck Lunch to Follow (12:00 noon)
Sunday, February 1	5:30 p.m. Chili Bowl
Saturday, February 7	Hoagie Assembly
Sunday, February 8	Hoagie Distribution 6:00-8:00 p.m. Family Super Bowl Party with Grace Episcopal School

Monday, February 16	Presidents' Day Holiday; Office Closed
Tuesday, February 17	6:00-7:30 p.m. Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Wednesday, February 18	Ash Wednesday 7:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist 7:00-10:00 a.m. Ashes to Go 12:00 noon Holy Eucharist with Hymns 5:30 p.m. Family Service 7:00 p.m. Bilingual Eucharist
Tuesdays in Lent	5:30-8:00 p.m. Lenten Series
Thursdays in Lent	11:30-12:00 p.m. Confessions
Fridays in Lent	12:00 noon Stations of the Cross and Holy Eucharist 7:00 p.m. Via Crucis y Cenita
Sunday, March 29	Palm Sunday 9:30 a.m. Intergenerational Palm Crosses, Card Signing
Monday, March 30	7:00 p.m. Contemplative Eucharist
Tuesday, March 31	7:00 p.m. Contemplative Eucharist
Wednesday, April 1	7:00 p.m. Choral Tenebrae
Thursday, April 2	Maundy Thursday 7:00 p.m. Festival Eucharist with Foot Washing Prayer Vigil until Midnight
Friday, April 3	Good Friday 7:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Day with Reserved Sacrament 12:00-1:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross 1:00-1:30 p.m. Organ Meditation 1:30-3:00 p.m. Liturgy of the Day with Reserved Sacrament 5:30 p.m. Family Service with Stations of the Cross 7:00 p.m. Via Crucis y Cenita
Saturday, April 4	Holy Saturday: 9:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Day Easter Eve: 8:00 p.m. Easter Vigil Agape Feast to Follow
Sunday, April 5	Easter Day 6:00 a.m. Sunrise Outdoors Service 8:45 a.m. La Gracia Santa Eucaristía 9:00 a.m. Little Church 9:30 a.m. Egg Hunt 10:30 a.m. Festival Eucharist No 5:00 p.m. Eucharist



Monday, April 6	Easter Monday; Office Closed
Friday, April 17- Sunday, April 19	Diocesan Middle School Retreat at Shrine Mont
Saturday, April 18	3:00 p.m. La Gracia BINGO
Saturday, April 25	National Rebuilding Day
Thursday, May 14	7:00 p.m. Ascension Day Choral Eucharist
Sunday, May 17	Last Day of Formation Hour 5:00 p.m. Choral Evensong ~ Followed by Newcomers Reception
Sunday, May 24	Pentecost Day Ice Cream Socials following 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Services
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day; Office Closed
Sunday, May 31	Trinity Sunday 10:30 a.m. Youth Sunday Bilingual Eucharist (no 7:30 a.m., 8:45 a.m., 9:00a.m., or 5:00 p.m. services) 12:00 noon Parish Picnic Shrine Mont Registration Opens
Friday, June 19	Juneteenth Holiday; Office Closed



## Parish Staff

Noah Aukerman  
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Betsy Bamford  
Jane Avery  
*Nursery Workers*

The Rev. Emma Brice  
*Associate Rector for Family Ministries & GES Chaplain*  
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Kristopher Varga  
*Communications Support*  
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Amorita Quintanilla  
*Sextons*

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The Rev. Dr. Anne Michele Turner  
*Rector*  
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## Vestry Class of 2025

Keith Davis, *Outreach/Justice & Evangelism Liaison*  
Eleanor Reed, *Member-at-Large*  
Jane Rosman, *Worship*  
Andrew Serke, *Treasurer*  
Geoff Whitlock, *Stewardship Liaison*

## Vestry Class of 2026

Chad Eckles, *Register*  
Morgan Miller, *Children Liaison*  
Sarah Schultz, *Senior Warden*  
Mary Stewart, *Adult Formation*  
Eric Waskowicz, *Junior Warden*

## Vestry Class of 2027

Bill Eckel, *Youth*  
Ramee Gentry, *Assistant Treasurer*  
Colleen McArdele, *Fellowship*  
Rebecca Prosser, *Grace School Board*  
Laura Weidenfeld, *Pastoral Care*

## Parish Team Leads

Adult Education - Anne Boris  
Children's Programs - Kristen Woodiwiss  
Evangelism - Mindy Van Wart  
Fellowship - Lynn Rohrs  
Outreach and Justice - Jennifer Pease  
Pastoral Care - John Boris  
Stewardship - Barry Joyner  
Worship - John Thompson  
Youth Programs - Heather Kelly

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