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February 2024

GRACE NOTES

A Monthly Magazine Published by Grace Episcopal Church

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*February Theme:
The Way of Love*



From Mother Jenny, *Priest Locum Tenens*



I admit it. I am a romantic. Always have been. So, for me, what first comes to mind with this month's theme for February, The Way of Love, is our wedding anniversary and Valentine's Day. And yet, it's also interesting that this year Valentine's Day is Ash Wednesday—the beginning of Lent when we will commit to forty days of self-examination and repentance. Our foreheads will be marked with an ashy cross as a sign of our mortality and penitence. We will read Psalm 51, asking God to wash us and cleanse us and to create in us clean hearts. We will pray together the Litany of Penitence, confessing aloud the ways we fall short of loving God, loving creation, loving others, and loving ourselves. We will do this collectively for our own soul's sake and for the sake of our hurting world that we might become instruments of peace, hope, love, mercy, and compassion.

Six years ago, Ash Wednesday also fell on February 14. That afternoon I was with others at Trinity Church in Newtown, Connecticut, getting ready for the evening service when one of our youth cried out while looking at her phone. She was seeing the news reporting that nineteen-year-old Nikolas Cruz had opened fire on students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, killing seventeen people and injuring seventeen others. Not only was this horrific, it was retraumatizing for everyone who had experienced the Sandy Hook School shootings. Needless to say, it was a hard Lent. And yet, the way of love won out. The youth of Newtown stood in solidarity with Parkland High School. A prayer vigil was held. Parents reached out to parents. There was attentiveness to sorrow and grief, tears flowed, hugs were given.

This is what the way of love does when lived out faithfully as a spiritual practice--when we truly risk feeling and no longer ignore, avoid, or deny the realities of life. Our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry surely knew this when in 2018 he called the Church to practice The Way of Love, commending seven ways to practice a Jesus-Centered life as we turn, learn, pray, worship, bless, go, and rest.

In the coming months may we commit together to live The Way of Love.



Grateful,

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 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

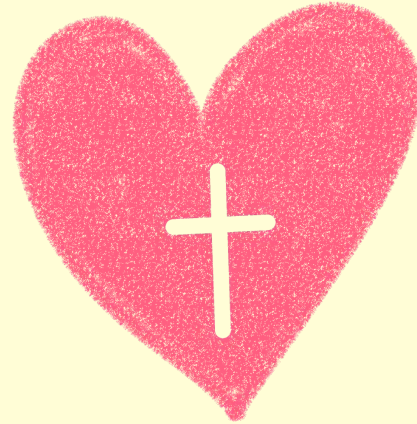
The Way of Love

Over the last nine years, our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has invited every Episcopalian to take up The Way of Love as a commitment to follow Jesus. The Way of Love is an intentional commitment to seven practices for a Jesus-centered life: turn, learn, pray, worship, bless, go, and rest. You can learn more about these practices on the website for The Episcopal Church (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love>).

Let me turn our attention to the word “way.” The earliest Christians were referred to as followers of the “Way”-- those who followed in the way of Jesus. It can mean both a manner of doing something, and a road to travel along. In the case of The Way of Love, it means both. Love is our way of proceeding. It’s also the path we walk upon.

Jesus calls us and equips us to choose the way of love. In baptism, Jesus anoints us as Apostles of Love. In prayer, which is the school of love, Jesus forms us to be faithful witnesses of love. In all our relationships, Jesus gives us the tools and the opportunities to practice mindful loving. In the Eucharist, Jesus feeds us with the Sacrament of Love. In our commitment to justice and peace, Jesus sends us out into the world as faithful witnesses of love. In all things, Jesus commands us to love that we might undo the loneliness and the suffering that lovelessness inflicts in our world.

Lovelessness is absence of love. It destroys and corrupts. It is the cause of abuse, apathy, fearmongering, and violence. This lovelessness is pervasive in our world today. The only antidote to lovelessness is love. Not the idea of love, but choosing and embracing and walking in the way of love.



Love is the formidable force that restores and transforms the world. Love is choosing the good of the other. Love is committing to justice in all our relationships. Love is letting our hearts speak truth in hope. Love is accepting ourselves as we are, while recognizing our need for God’s joyful and merciful love. Love is a way of being that follows in the footsteps of Jesus. Love is the way of the Cross and the power of the Resurrection.

Love is possible, and we are able to practice it, because we are created in the image of God. Love is never finished. It is never-ending. It is always being made. It is always expanding and creating. Love is always restoring and transforming. It releases fears and illuminates our hearts with hope.

As members of the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, we are beckoned to walk the way of love. We are reassured that love will heal and transform us even while risking loss, hurt, and pain. As followers of Jesus, walking in the way of love, we are bestowed with peace, joy, and hope. We are promised that love will keep us together. We abide in the love that God has for each one of us.

Let us hope and pray that the one who became Love Incarnate may give us the grace to make love manifest in all things. That is the way of love.



From Mother Emma

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

Journey to Ordination



I was just a baby when my parents and godparents made promises on my behalf to raise me following the way of Jesus. The Reverend Andrew Merrow baptized me at my home church, St. Mary's in Arlington, and I remained an active community member there throughout my entire childhood.

I sang in choir, served as every type of acolyte, attended local and diocesan youth events, spent my summers at Shrine Mont Camps, and even went to the denomination-wide Episcopal Youth Event. I remember attending weekly confirmation classes and studying like a total church nerd for the pre-confirmation exam at the end of the course. I only got one-half point wrong because I spelled "trespasses" as "trustpasses" in the Lord's Prayer, which is perhaps an embarrassing mistake but also still feels like it captures the spirit of the prayer.

I was only 18-years-old when I felt called to become an Episcopal priest, but that idea felt completely overwhelming and impractical at that time. Now, ten years later, being a priest still feels overwhelming, but it also brings me a deep sense of peace. I feel like I'm doing exactly what I'm meant to be doing.



I'm still not sure if I can articulate exactly what my priestly ordination has meant to me. I just know that a deep gut sense has been pulling me toward this vocation for many years, and now I feel a deep exhale of relief—as well as a fair bit of imposter's syndrome. I hope as you look at the photos below and on the next page, you can feel the joy, the support, and the hope for many years of ministry ahead!





Ordination Photos

From Mother Emma (continued from page 5)



OPS & COMMS

Operations & Communications @ Grace

KEVIN HAMILTON,
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION



It is amazing just how quickly the landscape can change in a city like Alexandria. Here at Grace this past week, we saw this fact in action as two of the neighboring houses on Glebe road were gone in a day to make way for a small, multipurpose retail/living space. It seems the old saying is true indeed: the only thing certain in life is change. Just as our physical landscape has changed a bit recently, so has the landscape of our Operations team.

As many of you know, Madeline Manaker, Operations and Finance Assistant, joined the Ops team back in June. Madeline was a wonderful addition to the team. In December, Madeline let us know that she had made the decision to pursue more opportunities in music, the field that aligns so well with her Masters in Music (*Vocal Performance*). Madeline will stay on in a fifty percent reduction of her part-time hours, supporting finance approximately ten hours a week while we reevaluate our operational needs.



Addie Tapp

While I will miss Madeline's support with communications, primarily bulletins and mass email communications, I am very happy for her decision to follow her passion. I am also happy to share with you that Addie Tapp, a seminarian at VTS, has agreed to once again contract with us to support bulletins and mass email communications. Addie served in this role last year while we completed our search for Madeline's position and did a fantastic job. You may see Addie on occasion attend a service here at Grace, and if you do, feel free to say hi!

Announcement submissions still follow the same guidelines; email announcement requests to announcements@gracealex.org and both Addie and I will receive those requests. The deadline for submissions is always noon on the Monday of the publish week for the bulletin/email. Thank you to all for your support!

Sunday Morning Adult Forum Schedule

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.

Feb. 4: Saints in Light II: Grace Church Windows, presented by Father Santi and Anne Clift Boris

Feb. 11: Seminarians at Grace: Call and Formation, presented by Noah Aukerman and Chrissie Crosby

Feb. 18: Seminarians at Grace: Call and Formation, presented by Durango Jenkins

Feb. 25: Discernment: Listening with the Heart, presented by Mother Jenny



Music Notes from Alain



I am truly delighted to have led the choir and congregation in song for the first time on Sunday, January 14. The clergy, staff, members of the choir, and church members have been most welcoming. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone and would love to talk to all of you during coffee hour.

As you get to know me, you will find I am a person of few words. At the same time, I realize communication is important, especially when it comes to explaining musical choices. For example, I value the congregation's participation in song—that is the bread and butter of corporate worship—but there is also a different beauty in having a choir singing and praying on behalf of the congregation, a tradition well practiced in the service of Choral Evensong. I believe there is a balance to strive for. Before I start communicating on those choices and promoting special services or musical happenings, I would like to introduce myself more fully.

Since I was very little, I've been involved in music. While my mother would play the piano, I would walk around in tempo. She enrolled me in musical classes for children, and that's where I learned the basics. Eventually, after hearing Wynton Marsalis play trumpet on a recording at eight years old, I decided that I wanted to learn how to play the trumpet. I was born with a cleft palate, so a brass instrument is not the easiest thing to learn due to the stiffness of the upper lip, but I tried anyway. Shortly after, the whole family moved from Strasbourg in the north of France to the south, near Nice. I was recommended to another trumpet teacher; however, I had to enroll in the local conservatory. That's where I further learned music theory and how to play the trumpet. During those years I also had some piano lessons, but nothing too serious. My mother did inquire at the conservatory about my wanting to take piano lessons, but they said I was too old already. I was ten.

We moved to Michigan when I was thirteen. Then, after taking piano lessons for about a year, I don't remember why, I asked to take organ lessons. What I failed to mention is that my mother is also an organist, and I had seen her play for Mass on a weekly basis while growing up. So, I started to take lessons when I was fourteen, and I've been hooked ever since.

I completed my undergraduate degree in Organ Performance at Central Michigan University where I studied with the same teacher I started with in high school. I went on to study with Dr. Marilyn Keiser at Indiana University for my Masters, and I completed a Doctorate in Musical Arts degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, studying with Dr. George Ritchie. While in Lincoln I met my husband Josh. I spent six years with him in his native Taiwan and was involved in the organ scene there. As I am a performer at heart, I played many concerts on a wonderful Dutch instrument at a university near Taipei, and I even got to play on what was then the biggest instrument on the island at the National Concert Hall. I also played in my native France, most notably in Marmoutier on the famous 1710 Andreas Silbermann organ that has been largely untouched and on the 1899 Walcker organ at Saint Paul Reformed Church in Strasbourg.

I have held various church positions over the years, but it was while being Assistant Organist and Choirmaster at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Winston-Salem that I fell in love with the Anglican musical tradition. It is there that I gained valuable experience with the "Voice for Life" program from the Royal School of Church Music. It is a wonderful, graded program for young choristers to learn the basics of music and sing in a choir. I'm sure you won't be surprised to learn that I would like to resume the program at Grace, and I hope children who are passionate about or even just interested in singing will give it a try. I would also like to take the adult choir, and possibly the choristers, on a trip to sing in one of the cathedrals in England for one week during the summer. It would take about two to three years to prepare and plan; however, it would be a life-changing experience for people involved in the music ministry.

I am so glad to be a part of Grace Church, and I look forward to serving the church to the best of my ability.



Alain and Josh in front of the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC



Grace Episcopal School



**PATTI CULBRETH,
HEAD OF SCHOOL**

As we enter February, the month of LOVE, we delight in our mission to honor the gift of childhood. February means Valentine's Day and a special time to share loving messages with friends and teachers. It is a time to reflect on the love we see and feel each day at Grace School.

Sharing the love from our students:

I love school! -Benny, PS

I love to learn, especially about spiderwebs! -Amen, JK

I love Grace because I love my teachers, and my favorite subject is lunch! -Patrick, K

I love my school because I learn so much! -Julia, 1st grade

I love my teachers, classes, friends, recess, math, chapel, lunch in the Grace Cafe, PE, library and Spanish. -Ellington, 2nd grade

I love my school because the teachers are just so nice! -Geordie, 3rd grade

I love Grace because it feels like we are all a big family. It is so nice to have that kind of connection with other people. -Catherine, 4th grade



I love my school because there is always someone there to cheer me up if I am sad, It is like my classmates are my brothers and sisters, -Rebecca, 5th grade

I love Grace because the staff shows kindness and love to all the students, -Blythe, 5th grade

What I love about Grace is how welcoming everyone is, You always feel at home with the good energy from both faculty and students, -Ashley, Staff

I love Grace because I get lots of attention and love from the students! -Charlie, The Office Poodle

Winter keeps a chill in the air, but Grace School is warmed by the hearts of the children and lots of love for their school and one another. Jesus says, *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."* (John 15:12)





Campus Matters

ROBBY SCHRUM,
JUNIOR WARDEN



My term as your junior warden is at an end. You can find a fuller account of the past year of Grace's plant and property in the parish's 2023 annual report.

I will close my contributions to Grace Notes with three points.

First, thank you to everyone at Grace for your support and care for our physical inheritance this year. Many, many parishioners and friends have my profound thanks for volunteering their time, talent, and treasure to help take care of our church home. I was blessed this year to have so many people to turn to for help executing the junior warden's duties. Thank you.

Second, take note of the many physical gifts we have at Grace: a beautiful nave, meeting spaces for church and community alike, plenty of outdoor space, a well-outfitted kitchen, and the expanse of Merrow Hall, to name just a few.

Many of our physical gifts will need to be repaired or replaced in the near future. And that work will be expensive. It's incumbent upon the church to save judiciously for those expenses. We take care of this place not just for ourselves but for the next generation of people who will call Grace home.

Finally, please consider volunteering to help the next junior warden as you are able to take care of our physical plant. There's always something to do to help make our building and campus more beautiful, or functional, or resilient. I look forward to joining the ranks of "angels" at Grace Church who help take care of this place without fanfare--and ensure that we can engage in the ministry God is calling us to do.



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)



El Privilegio de Amar

Father Santi reflects on the privilege of teaching our children how to love.

FATHER SANTI RODRIGUEZ, ASSOCIATE RECTOR

Una de mis canciones favoritas es El Privilegio de Amar, que interpretaron a dúo Mijares y Lucero. Como soy novelero, también vi la novela del mismo nombre, que fue una adaptación de una telenovela Venezolana de los ochenta, llamada Cristal. Las dos novelas son buenísimas, pero ese chisme es para otro día.

La canción, aunque todo el mundo la relaciona con el amor de pareja, es sobre la relación entre un padre y su hija. Es una canción para todos nuestros hijos. Trata de todo lo que les queremos enseñar del mundo y del amor. Hay dos enseñanzas que siempre recuerdo de esta canción. La primera es que amar es un privilegio. Y la segunda, nunca te olvides de Dios. Estoy completamente seguro de que las dos enseñanzas están relacionadas. El privilegio de amar es un don de Dios. Dios es amor y Dios nos creó para amar.

La canción me recuerda el increíble privilegio de enseñarles a nuestros hijos a amar. Hay muchos valores y varias enseñanzas que podemos pasar a nuestros hijos e hijas. A respetar y ser amables. A ser agradecidos y aprender a valorar lo que tienen. A apreciar el estudio y a aprender la integridad en el trabajo - y en todas las cosas. A reconocer los errores y saber pedir perdón. En fin, hay muchas enseñanzas. Y entre todas ellas, las más importantes son el privilegio de amar y la necesidad de siempre tener a Dios en sus vidas. A aprender a amar a Dios sobre todas las cosas y al prójimo como a sí mismo.

Como Padre amoroso, Dios siempre nos recuerda la importancia de amar. Esa fue una de las partes más importantes de la vida y el ministerio de Jesús. Él nos llama y nos equipa para amar plenamente. En el bautismo, Jesús nos unge como Apóstoles del Amor. En la oración, que es la escuela del amor, Jesús nos forma para ser testigos fieles del amor. En todas nuestras relaciones, Jesús nos da las herramientas y las oportunidades para practicar el amor en todas sus formas. En la Eucaristía, Jesús nos alimenta con el Sacramento del Amor. En nuestro compromiso con la justicia y la paz, Jesús nos envía al mundo como testigos fieles de amor. En todas las cosas, Jesús nos ordena a amar para que podamos deshacer la soledad y el sufrimiento que el desamor inflige en nuestro mundo.

El desamor es la ausencia de amor. El desamor destruye y corrompe. Es la causa del abuso, la apatía y la violencia. Este desamor está omnipresente en nuestro mundo actual. El único antídoto contra el desamor es el amor. No la idea del amor, sino amar activamente a los demás.

El amor es la fuerza que restaura y transforma el mundo. Amar es elegir el bien del otro. Amar es comprometerse con la justicia y la verdad en todas nuestras relaciones. Amar es aceptarnos a nosotros mismos tal como somos, reconociendo al mismo tiempo nuestra necesidad del amor de Dios. Amar es seguir los pasos de Jesús. El amor es el camino de la Cruz y el poder de la Resurrección.

Una de las tareas más bonitas que tenemos como Cristianos es la de enseñarle a nuestros hijos e hijas a amar. Y de recordarnos y ayudarnos los unos a los otros a amar.

Que Papa Dios nos inspire y nos ayude a amar plenamente. Y que comunidad de fe, sepamos siempre como ser una comunidad que de testimonio del amor de Dios.





Opinion: Youth Perspective

Liberation Theology in Latin America and in the United States Civil Rights Movement

Annie Eason

According to the Oxford Dictionary, liberation theology emphasizes liberation from social, political, and economic oppression in anticipation of ultimate salvation. Rooted in religion, liberation theology rose in prominence in the 1950s in Latin America and in Black churches in the United States as a response to the oppression that both groups experienced. In many Latin American countries, many citizens who were not a part of the elite class suffered under military dictatorships. In America, Black people were lynched and loathed for simply existing, and suffered under Jim Crow laws and systemic racism—in some sense, they still do. In searching for hope under these often-hopeless conditions, many have turned to liberation theology.

Christian liberation theology has served a critical part in many civil rights movements, including those in Latin America and the United States. However, Islamic liberation theology was also instrumental in the Black civil rights movement, and Jewish liberation theology was instrumental in building solidarity with oppressed groups. Many who believed in liberation theology cited the Sermon on the Mount as the basis for their belief, as the Beatitudes often reflected their lives. For example, people were persecuted for advocating for peace or were treated horribly for being in poverty. Jesus was known for helping the poor and the oppressed, which was seen as revolutionary in societies that looked down on those groups.

Liberation theology in Latin American civil society was a Catholic movement that emphasized the biblical notion to help oppressed groups in society and charity as one of the seven virtues. It was also believed in by some Protestant churches and rooted itself with class struggle and the fight against exploitation and imperialism. Radical Catholics who believed in liberation theology worked with revolutionary socialists and worked in factories with the poor; some clergy worked with insurrectionists; some praised Jesus Christ as a revolutionary.

The Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo is one example of liberation theology in action as the group members peacefully protested against the murders of their daughters by the Argentine government. However, most Catholic clergy denounced liberation theology during this time period.

Liberation theology also grew in Black churches in the United States, focusing on advocating for the wants and needs of the oppressed groups in society. Preachers were persecuted and killed for their activism—the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), is one example. The SCLC was involved in many things, such as the Montgomery bus boycott, calling for a ceasefire in Vietnam, and Operation Breadbasket. The Free Breakfast Program with the Black Panther Party and St. Augustine's Episcopal Church may come to mind.

Grace Episcopal church, implicitly or not, operates somewhat on these principles, as seen in the church's work with Casa Chirilagua and helping with housing for Afghan refugees. If Grace wants to act more in line with liberation theology, perhaps the church could set up ministries that help build communities (such as community gardens) or strengthen and broaden our refugee support program. As the world at times appears increasingly bleak and hopeless, perhaps liberation theology can motivate us to work for a better future in mutual aid.

Author's note: This is a very brief summary of liberation theology and civil rights movements. Movements that involve liberation theology are very diverse in their beliefs and methods. I recommend looking into these topics more in depth to get a better, fuller understanding of liberation theology and a bigger picture of history, as liberation theology can be found in worldwide movements, in the past and in the present.

Sources I used in my research include *A Brief History of Argentina* by Jonathan C. Brown and *The Cold War and the Americas 1945-1981* (second edition) by Vivienne Sanders.



UPDATE

Update on Recent Activities of the Alexandria Region and the Diocese of Virginia Executive Board

During the December 12, 2023, Alexandria Regional Council meeting, the Council agreed to allocate existing funds for outreach and decided to start an inventory process to better inform churches in the Alexandria Region about the various active outreach ministries. The Council also elected Kat Turner of Church of the Resurrection as the new Alexandria Region representative to the Virginia Diocesan Executive Board. The Council expressed their gratitude toward her for accepting this role.

The outgoing representative, Reverend Jo Belser, shared a summary of her final meeting with the Board in the Council's report. Jo Belser and Kat Turner attended the turnover meeting of the Executive Board on December 14. At that meeting, the Board reappointed Dab Gandy from St. Mary's, Arlington, as an at-large member and as the Executive Board liaison to the fund's trustees. The Board also heard from Mark Eastham, the Secretary of the Convention, that the follow-up to the four resolutions made during the convention had been taken or was in the works. This included:

- Forwarding R-1a to Amend the Canons to Retain a Printed Form of the Book of Common Prayer to General Convention to be considered at its next meeting
- Forwarding R-2 to Amend the Canons to Provide for the Transfer of Bishops and Deacons to Churches in Communion to General Convention to be considered at its next meeting
- Communicating the R-4s Resolution Regarding the War Between Israel and Hamas to the Diocese so that congregations and people can pray for peace in the Middle East
- Preparing to forward the text of the R-3s Resolution on Congregations and Affordable Housing, which asks the Virginia legislature to give churches by-right use of their property for affordable housing

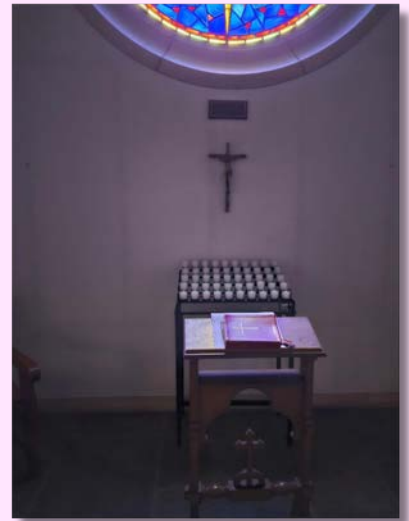
The Board also reviewed and endorsed a plan of St. Mary's, Berryville, for a memorial to the enslaved on their property generated by a committee of fourteen descendants of enslaved individuals who lived in Clarke County, where the church is located. Additionally, the Board approved housing resolutions for 2024 for the bishops and all ordained members of the diocesan staff, approved the 2024 budgets of six of the diocese's regions, and heard leadership reports from four executive members of the Bishop's staff, including his Chief of Staff, the three Canons, and the Chief Financial Officer.

A Special Place in Grace Church

By Lucy-Lee Reed

In the Malm Narthex under the beautiful rose window given by the Caputo family and the crucifix given by Martha Bethea stands a wrought iron votive candle stand given by Charles Nelson in honor of his father, Charles Bryan Nelson, Sr.

The stand contains fifty glass cups. Each holds a votive candle that, once lit, will burn for fifteen hours. The candles are refilled weekly, as needed, by the altar guild and the excess wax is removed from the cups monthly by special altar guild volunteers using an exotic process involving a microwave oven and loads of paper towels!



A few times we discovered all fifty candles burning at once! A rumor to the effect that a gathering of young, vested persons after the recessional may have been involved has never been proved!

Have you lit a candle in love, or memory, or prayer for someone? Have you knelt at the prayer desk (an item from the old Grace Church on South Patrick Street)? Did you light a candle there during our recent Advent Monday gatherings? Please come to the Malm Narthex and find this special place of memories and prayers!

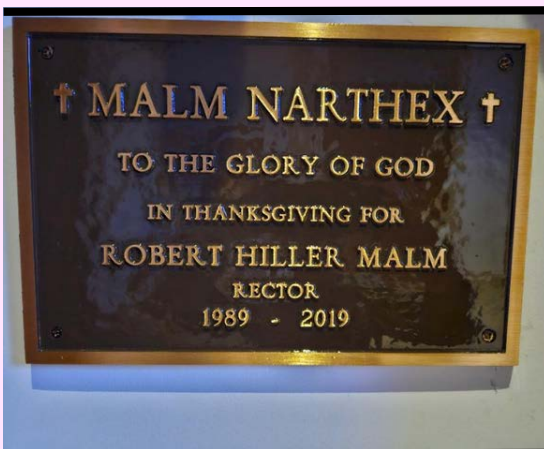


Photo Credits: Diana Jarrett and Lucy-Lee Reed

Mission Focus: Grace Church Food Pantry

By Jen Pease

Our Invisible Angel

You may not know that there has been a wizard working behind the proverbial velvet curtain at the Food Pantry whose contributions are not always visible to the naked eye.

Have you ever wondered

- ✓ Who orders the food we distribute?
- ✓ Who manages volunteer requests, scheduling, and notifications on Lotsa Helping Hands?
- ✓ Who is the face of Grace with the Capital Area Food Bank, Hunger Free Alexandria, and other community partners?
- ✓ Who collects and records the mountain of statistics and creates the reports that tell the story of our great work?
- ✓ Who creates the amazing graphics used to publicize and promote the pantry?



**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**
THANK YOU!



If you haven't guessed, it's Judy Willard, who has become the heart and soul of the Food pantry over the past ten years.

This program would not have flourished and grown without her hard work and tireless pursuit of excellence. Her wisdom, dedication, and leadership are a blessing to both the community we serve and our church.

We want to take this opportunity to recognize Judy's tireless dedication to this important ministry as she takes a step back to enjoy a well-deserved retirement. Judy, you are truly one of Grace's angels. Many, many thanks for your many years of service.

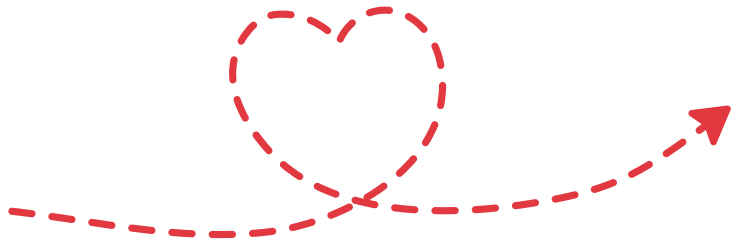




JUNE HUBER

Grace-ful Worship

Is THIS the Way of Love?



Ever since I was young these words from the Bible have stuck in my mind: "... visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations." Now I ask myself, is THIS the way of love? Would the loving God that I have worshipped all my life punish children for their fathers' sins? It makes no sense. I know that the God of the Old Testament often punished individuals, and sometimes whole peoples, when they didn't do what He told them to do. But to punish a child for the sins of his/her father isn't the act of a loving God.

In my ongoing project to read my way through the Bible--reading slowly and skipping nothing--I recently read Ezekiel, chapter 18, and I think I finally found the answer.

But first, I did a little research, and now I'll share with you the four places where my troublesome words are found, so that you can read them in context.

In Exodus 20:3-6:

"You shall have no other gods before Me ... For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

In Exodus 34:5-7:

"Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him [Moses] there, and proclaimed ... 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation'."

In Numbers 14:18:

"The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation."

And finally, in Deuteronomy 5:8-10:

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image ... you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

In two places the troublesome words stand alone, but in the other two places they are qualified by additional words: "... of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love me and keep my commandments." It makes a difference, doesn't it?

Is THIS the Way of Love? (continued)

Now I'll share an excerpt from Ezekiel 18:19-32 that gave me my answer. The prophet is sharing God's words with the people of Israel, and he's in the middle of a conversation.

"Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says not that he should turn from his ways and live?" ...

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD.

"Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore, turn and live!"

Ezekiel helps us see that THIS is the way of love: by assuming individual responsibility for our sins and repenting, we receive God's forgiveness, which is available to all, and at a most affordable price.

A Day in the Life of ... Madeline Manaker

My day begins with hitting the snooze button a few times too many before I get up and take my dog, Carmen, for her morning walk. She is a Great Pyrenees mix, so the cold winter mornings are her favorite--especially if there is some snow! Next I head to Grace. If it is a Wednesday, it's finance day at Grace! I begin with entering the weekly deposit in our system and processing any requests for the financial office. I also spend my time assisting our finance director, Mary Cyrus, in overseeing the day-to-day financial tasks as well as helping to support the larger financial operations of the church.

In the afternoon, I leave Grace for my private voice and piano studio, where I spend the rest of the day teaching. Finally, it's back home for a little bit of down-time--usually reading a book out of my ever-growing pile or working on a knitting project. After a long but fulfilling day, it's time for bed!



Annual Meeting Highlights

By Diana Jarrett



Attendees enjoy post-meeting refreshments.

In her reflection, Mother Jenny focused on the principle of loving God and loving our neighbor so that our joy may be complete. She asked attendees to think about where they find joy through Grace Church. Mother Jenny invited attendees to share highlights of the past year and recognize individuals and programs for their contributions.

Those warmly recognized included:



Attendees join in the singing of a hymn.

- **Judy Willard, Jen Pease**, and all the **Food Pantry volunteers**
- **Alain Truche**, our new Music Director, who is already sharing his special gifts with the choir
- **Lynn Rohrs** and all who work to provide fellowship
- The revitalized **children's program**
- The **Altar Guild**
- The **Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Acolytes** and **Molly Sim**, and all who are a part of our worship
- **Anne Clift Boris** and **Julia McClung** for their work on the Adult Forum and other adult program offerings
- **Lisa Doelp** for her long tenure as flower chair
- **Father Santi** for how much he has done during the past few months and the way in which he has done it
- **Parents** who manage to get their children to Grace for services and Sunday School
- **Kevin Hamilton**, who is the glue that holds the parish together
- **Liz Rugaber** for all her work on Sacred Ground and furthering Beloved Community as well as being a liaison with the Diocese of Virginia
- **Bill Malone** for shouldering the especially heavy burden of being Senior Warden during the past few months and the extreme skill and calm presence with which he did it
- **Robby Schrum** for his work as Junior Warden
- Outgoing Vestry Members **Carlos Arboleda, Khacki Berry, Tracy Enger**, and **Evan Robinson**
- **All involved in pastoral care**, including those who work on the ministries for cards, flowers, visits, and phone calls
- **Jay Legere** and all those who work on the livestream ministry
- For all those who work to support La Gracia, including **Carlos Arboleda, Bernarda & Pedro Hernandez**, and the **Escobar family**



The peace is exchanged.



Attendees respond to Mother Jenny.

- **Mother Emma** and all who make Grace Episcopal School's Friday chapel so special
- All those who further **Grace Church's welcoming spirit** and atmosphere
- The **counters** and all **those who work behind-the-scenes**
- **Mother Jenny** for leading us with openness, grace, and love
- All **Little Church musicians**, especially **Chrissie Crosby, Mike Jones, and Halina Banas-Jones**
- **Rich Kelly** for all his work and generosity with youth programs
- **Diana Jarrett** for her work on Grace Notes
- **Lay Support Team members**
- **Rite 13 teachers**, especially **Heather Wishart-Smith** who organizes it

Evan Robinson, Grace Church Treasurer, provided an overview of the 2024 budget. He noted that revenue exceeded expenditures in 2023 and emphasized that all must be cautious with spending if the Church is to avoid running at a deficit. It is not too late to make a pledge for 2024. Evan welcomes questions at any time; a Vestry goal is full transparency and openness with regard to the budget.



The Annual Meeting & Eucharist was held in the Merrow Hall Auditorium with 189 in attendance.

Six parishioners were elected to the Vestry:



Five will serve three-year terms, and one (yet to be determined) will serve for one year but will be eligible to run again next year for a three-year term.



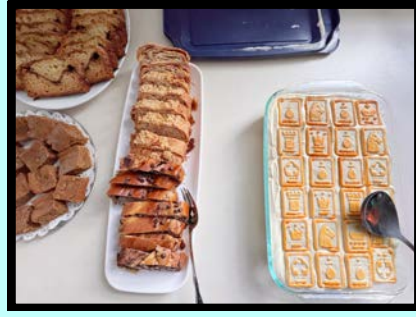
Mother Jenny Montgomery

**THANK
YOU!**
❤️



Mother Emma Brice & Father Santi Rodriguez

Photo Essay: Altar Guild Luncheon





Barbara Morris

An Occasional WORD

Jesus and the Crackers

It happened in Candolim, India, a dusty seashore city on the Arabian Sea. I was returning to the hotel from a morning of shopping when I came upon a huddle of three beggar children--a dirty, bedraggled one-year old who was slumped against a scrawny, scruffy girl of about three in a faded, shapeless, and torn dress. The third barefoot child was a boy of four or five in shabby shorts and a ragged T-shirt. With large, liquid brown eyes shadowed by short, coal-black bangs and a soft, shy face, he was extraordinarily beautiful.

Earlier that day I had dropped a few coins into their outstretched hands despite our tour guide's warning to ignore beggars or we would be hounded by them. They were too pitiable to ignore.

Now, it was even harder to pass by because the children were pleading for food, gesturing feebly to their half-open mouths. I had to help. These kids tore at my heart.

In that moment, I suddenly remembered the crackers--the cheese-flavored snacks my husband and I always tucked into our carry-ons when we traveled. But they were in our third-floor walk-up hotel room, two long blocks away. And it was hot. And I was tired. And I had already given them coins. I took a step forward when a question popped, unbidden, into my head: What would Jesus do?

The answer was obvious. Jesus would go for the crackers.

As luck (?) would have it, there were exactly three packs of crackers. I returned to the children. I was overcome with distress and compassion when the two smallest ones mutely snatched the crackers, frantically tore off the cellophane and crammed the crackers into their mouths.



But suddenly I jerked, startled as I felt something warm and moist on my bare, sandaled feet. I looked down---and froze. The little boy was huddled at my feet. He was kissing my toes!

I was too stunned to think clearly. My mind whirled with shock, pity, sadness, humility, and even horror. I recall gasping. "No. No. Get up. Get up." I think I leaned over to raise the child, but I'm not sure. My only clear recollection is of the frail, huddled body at my feet and the warm lips on my toes.

Somehow, I broke free and walked away quickly. After a short distance I turned to look back and buckled at my waist with emotion, for the child was solemnly watching me. His hand was raised, his fingers clenching and unclenching in a childish goodbye. Over and over. Goodbye. Goodbye. His large eyes never left my face.

I waved back, then forced myself to continue walking. Another twenty feet, I turned again. He was still there. I had a strange sensation of something tangible connecting us--an almost physical tug. Three more times I turned and waved. The child still stood there, waving--until a bend in the road cut off our line of sight.

LENT @ GRACE

LIVING GRACE

Grace Episcopal Church
3601 Russell Road
Alexandria, VA 22305



Shrove Tuesday, February 13

6 - 7:30 pm - Pancake Supper in the Merrow Hall Auditorium.

All are invited!

\$5 per person for a short stack & \$7 for a tall stack.

All proceeds benefit the J2A 2025 pilgrimage.

Ash Wednesday - February 14

Imposition of ashes at all services.

7 am - Holy Eucharist Rite I

7-9 am - Ashes to Go at the Potomac Yard Metro Station

Noon - Holy Eucharist Rite I

6 pm - Family Service

7 pm - Bilingual Eucharist Rite II
(Childcare available / Livestreamed)

Lenten Read-Along

Join fellow parishioners in reading the entire Gospel of Mark during the season of Lent, with prompts and discussion on social media.

Sundays During Lent

7:30 am - Holy Eucharist Rite I

8:45 am - La Santa Eucaristía

9:00 - Little Church

Nursery open until noon

9:40 am - Adult Forum

9:40 am - Sunday School for Children & Youth

10:30 am - Choral Eucharist Rite I (Livestreamed)

5:00 pm - Holy Eucharist Rite II

Weekdays During Lent

Mondays - 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Confessions (starting 2/26/24)

Thursdays @ Noon

Holy Eucharist with Healing, Rite II

Fridays @ Noon

Stations of the Cross & Holy Eucharist Rite I

Fridays @ 7 pm

Viacrucis & Cenita (en español)

Lenten Series: Glimmers of Grace

Join us for our Wednesday Evening Lenten Series (February 21, 28, March 6, 13, and 20).

5:30-6:00 pm - Evening Prayer (Zoom & St. Mark's Room)

6:00-6:30 pm - Simple Supper in the Auditorium

6:30-7:30 pm - Adult Program on our Sacred History

6:30-7:30 pm - Youth Program



Glimmers of Grace

2024 Lenten Series Grace Church Alexandria

"Glimmers of Grace"

Wednesdays 2.21.24 – 3.20.24

Simple Supper served 6:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Youth & Adult Program 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

(activities for Children will be offered simultaneously)

Session One – February 21: Glimmers of the Past Fifty Years

A timeline of Grace Church from 1974 – 2024 will be created; participants are encouraged to bring photos and to record the date they became members as well as celebrations such as baptisms, confirmations, and weddings; other significant milestones will be added.



Session Two – February 28: Sacramental Grace

Participants will be asked to share their baptismal stories as we ground ourselves in the outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace known to us in Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist as well as Unction and Reconciliation.

Session Three – March 6: The Grace of Sacred Conversations – Part I

Guidelines for Mutuality will be introduced and participants invited to reflect on the years 2021-2023.

Session Four – March 13: The Grace of Sacred Conversations – Part II

Guidelines for Mutuality will be reviewed as the conversation continues about the events that transpired in September 2023.

Session Five – March 20: The Grace of Sacred Conversations – Part III

This session is an opportunity to name any elephants that remain in the room and begin to imagine a way forward. What more needs to be said? What is left undone? Where do we go from here? What would help?



Why Grace?

By Mary Stewart



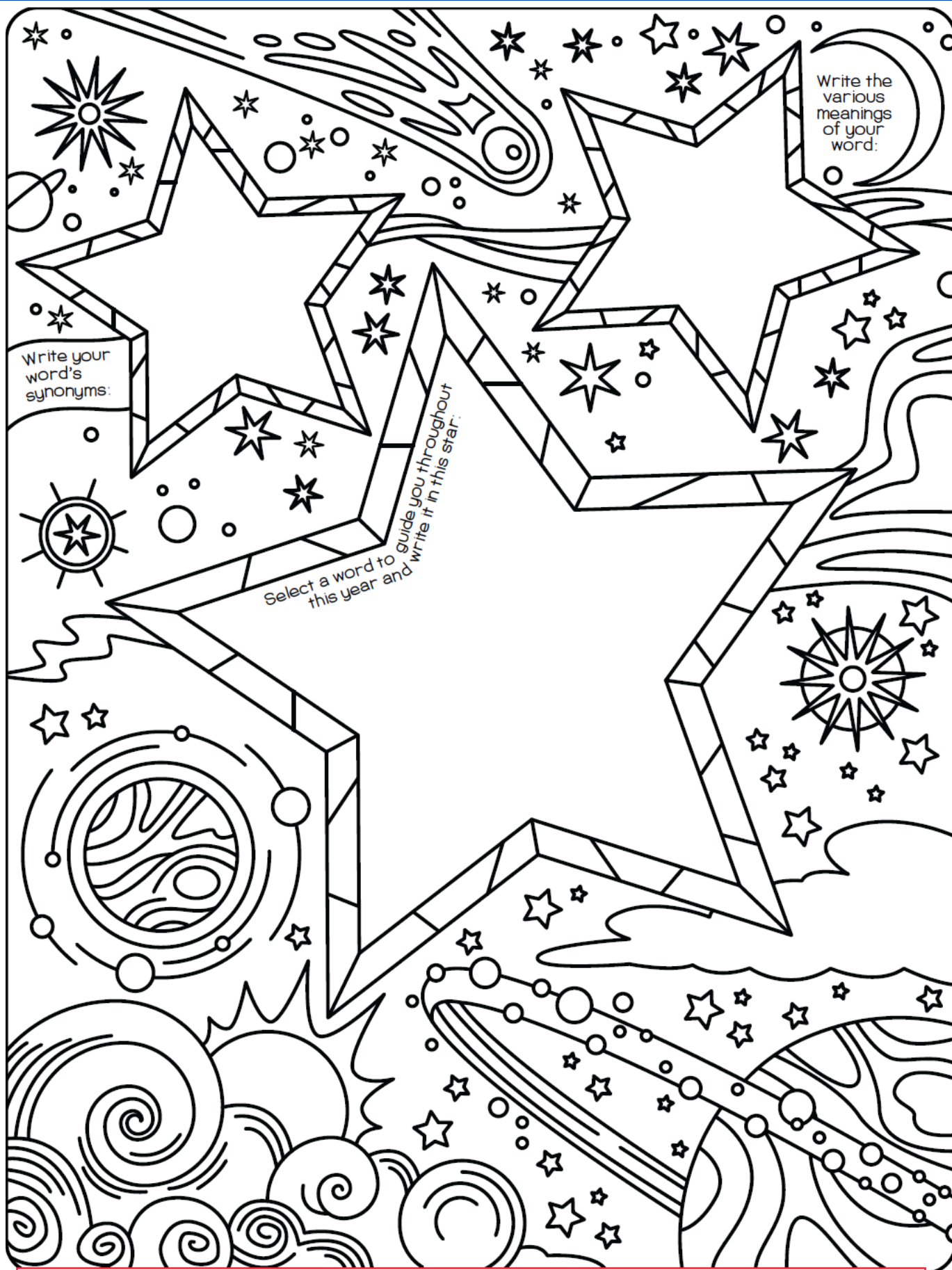
Alexandria and Arlington are blessed with many Episcopal churches, and when I found myself wanting a church home, I (being nothing if not methodical) visited each of them and then went back to a few for multiple services, accumulating experience from which to make an informed decision on where to join. I was seeking a place where I could quiet my mind and open my heart in devotional worship. The beauty of this church, the sung services, and the high church form all appealed to me, but so did the communion customs of Immanuel, the music at St. John's, and the setting of Christ Church. Usually, I went alone in my search, wanting to be able to focus on the service without my two squirmy kids beside me.

Silly me. For all that pondering, what brought me to Grace was not my solitary intellectual choice but gifts of connection. On a day I brought my children to Grace and they were particularly restless, the woman in the pew ahead turned around right before the service began. I thought she would shush my kids. But Dorothy Daniel instead welcomed me, encouraged me to fill out a newcomer's card, and afterwards walked us through the labyrinth to coffee hour. Father Malm called me later that week, encouraging me to come by to meet. As I spoke to him about seeking a still, quiet place to worship, he smiled and said something about not just keeping God to myself but finding Him in community with others and through faith in action. Oh, remembering that moment still makes me tear up. I suddenly saw the world differently and saw God differently.

What brought me to Grace is still there—the solemn worship, the cherished liturgy, the swinging of the incense, the insightful preaching. But that's not why I have stayed. I've stayed for the community, the people who "congregate." Those squirmy toddlers went through Grace School, a loving and joyful place for them during a rocky time in our home life, and are now, evidently, adults. Through my divorce, the death of my sister, and the long decline of my mother through dementia, parishioners I knew well or just in passing were sources of solace and care. And along the way, in the weekly arcs of decades, I have also found warm friends, fellow seekers, and dedicated members of a community. Being engaged in service through this church and leaning in to participating in the life of this congregation is not an add-on to solo spiritual practice but a profoundly moving and joyous expression of God's blessing. What endures and grows here is not a physical place but the power of the congregation—people coming together to worship together: hearing other voices in common prayer and singing and discussions and outreach and conversations about things secular and sacred, all in the context of a shared journey of faith and love.



Family Fun Coloring Page





Family Activities Page



Dear Grace

and families,

Family Activity Idea: Try writing your own prayer using candies or snacks from around your house!

This Way of Love candy prayer was made by Mother Emma and is based on one by the Rev. Furman Buchanan of St. Peter's, Greenville, S.C.

We pray that **The Way of Love** will bring you lots of sweetness

this year! When you're in a  always remember

you can **TURN** to Jesus. Be  for Jesus, and **LEARN** of His



Many and Marvelous works!



to **PRAY**

with God each day! Find



in **WORSHIP** with



of praise! Be a



and **BLESS** others with



. You are



to **GO** into the world and

spread



of God's Love! And when you need to



REST in God's grace!



and



from your Grace family

Our Mission



To Love, Proclaim, and Serve God through

† life-giving liturgical worship

† joyful community

† empowering others

Nuestra Misión

**Estamos llamados a amar,
proclamar, y servir a Dios**

a través de

† adoración que da vida

† comunidad llena de alegría

† ofreciendo una mano al prójimo





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Lauren Gustafson
Mary Hix
Dan Pattarini
Rushad Thomas

Vestry Class of 2025

Keith Davis
Eleanor Reed
Jane Rosman
Andrew Serke
Geoff Whitlock

Vestry Class of 2026

Chad Eckles
Morgan Miller
Sarah Schultz
Mary Stewart
Eric Waskowicz

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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