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February 2025

# GRACE NOTES

A Bi-Monthly Magazine Published by Grace Episcopal Church

3601 Russell Road | Alexandria, Virginia 22305



*If I have not love, ... I am nothing.*

1 Cor 13:2

Cover Art by Lynn Rohrs

# From Mother Anne M. Turner

## *Rector*



Dear Friends in Christ,

My chief goal for ministry at Grace this spring is to build our vision for the future.

Grace is emerging from not just one difficult year but a period that has included pastoral transition and a global pandemic. The costs of this time are painfully evident. Yet these years have also brought gifts. I believe that this community is crystal clear about what matters and what doesn't. We understand the urgency of Christ's reconciling gospel. We are also equipped by our very struggle with skills in communication and problem-solving.

Now is the moment to turn toward our future. What lies ahead for Grace Church? What is our vision for who we want to be in five years? Ten? A lifetime from now?

I am asking this parish to undertake, together, the work of casting a vision for our future. I hope that we will pray, discern, and imagine our way toward a robust picture of what Grace might become.

The history of this parish is steeped in tradition—but it is also full of bold innovators who stepped out in faith. They are the ones who were convinced in 1855 that Alexandria needed a third parish. They are the ones who embraced the new movement of Anglo-Catholicism. They are the ones who mortgaged their homes to build a new church on Russell Road. They are the ones who welcomed women as priests when there were few female priests in the Episcopal Church and who embraced Latino worshipers not as guests but as fellow members of the body.

These women and men were bold. We can be bold, too.

We begin the process of vision during Lent, as we prepare our hearts to discern the future God wants for us. I plan for us to use the Lenten program to cultivate our communal imagination, to ready ourselves to dream. I hope this time will give us a common language to respond to God.

In April, we will have a series of small-group gatherings, followed by a parish-wide event in late May or early June. While these events will be in some respects like last spring's affinity groups—in that they will be a time of conversation and information gathering—they will be different in tone, driven primarily by creativity and hope.

These efforts will be led by a visioning team, made up of people both in and outside of the vestry. After the gatherings of the spring, they will compile what they have heard and present it to the full vestry, who will integrate these ideas into a full vision for the parish—a vision then to be implemented with conviction and vigor.

What animates this work? Love, of course. It is the theme of this issue: "without love I have nothing." Love is the cornerstone of our mission statement. It is our primary belief about who God is and how God works. It is our self-understanding, as well. All that we can imagine about ourselves and for ourselves starts and ends in love.

I look forward to imagining alongside you, to seeing what love incarnate can do.

Yours in Christ,  
Anne+

## **1 Corinthians 13**

### **Translation: The Message**

#### **The Way of Love**

13:1 If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. 2 If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. 3-7 If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always "me first," doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end.

8-10 Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over someday; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

11 When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

12 We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

13 But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.





## In This Issue

From Mother Anne Turner.....	2
On the Mind of Father Santiago.....	5
From Mother Emma.....	6
A Letter From Bishop Stevenson.....	8
Ops & Comm.....	10
Upcoming Music Highlights.....	11
Grace Episcopal School.....	12
Notes From the Finance Team.....	14
Vestry View.....	15
Adult Forum Schedule.....	16
An Occasional Word.....	17
Grace-ful Worship.....	19
Family Fun Coloring Pages.....	20
Praying With Jesus Prayer Chart.....	22
Lent at Grace Church.....	23
Grace Leadership.....	24

### Grace Notes Submissions and Publication Schedule

Grace Notes is published 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 February 15. 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*), Kemp Williams (*Co-editor*), Teresa Preston (*Final Proofreader*), Jason Holleran (*Proofreader*), and Addie Budnick (*Design*).



Lynn Rohrs is an experienced wheat weaver of both traditional and modern designs. She learned the craft in 1978 and joined the National Association of Wheat Weavers in 1989. Over the years, Lynn has taught the skills to children of all ages. This design is known as a Corn Dolly using black bearded wheat. Its most ancient forms honor Earth Mother, the universal symbol to welcome and embrace all creation. It incorporates four different techniques of weaving, including the Arabic Cage for the crown and the spiral technique for the arms.

Wheat weaving is one of the earliest forms of art and spanned the globe. Many designs illustrate the ancient concept shared among different cultures of entrapping the god (or spirit) of harvest and honoring it over the winter then mixing in its seeds when the new crops are planted.

*Cover art credit: Lynn Rohrs*



# On the Mind of Father Santiago



THE REV. SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ,  
ASSOCIATE RECTOR

## EVANGELISM

When you hear the word evangelism, do you picture someone with a megaphone on a street corner? Or maybe you imagine an awkward conversation where you have to “sell” church like a timeshare? Yeah... that’s not what we’re about. Evangelism is not as weird as you think.

At Grace Episcopal, evangelism isn’t about pressure tactics or memorizing scripts—it’s about invitation, welcome, and connection. Think of it like Ted Lasso inviting someone into the Diamond Dogs: a warm, open space where people feel seen, valued, and encouraged.

Hospitality, inclusion, and belonging are important values for us at Grace Episcopal Church. This year, we want to equip and empower all our parishioners to acquire practices of evangelism: inviting, welcoming, and connecting newcomers to worship, fellowship, and service.

Jesus gave us the ultimate mission statement: “*Go and make disciples of all nations.*” That sounds big (because it is), but it starts small—with a simple invitation. “Come sit with us.” “Join us for coffee.” “Want to check out this cool event at my church?” This isn’t about church growth metrics—it’s about transforming lives. It’s about making sure that when someone walks through our doors, they don’t feel like an outsider in a middle school lunchroom, but like they just found their new favorite TV show.

This is why we’re leaning into *Invite Welcome Connect* practices and tools that help us be a church of deep hospitality, inclusion, and belonging. It’s about making sure every person, whether they’ve been here for 20 years or walked in last Sunday, knows that they belong in this community of faith. We’re committed to being a place where newcomers don’t feel lost but feel at home, where immigrant brothers and sisters find a community that sees them and stands with them, where LGBTQIA+ siblings experience a faith family that celebrates them, and where people can ask honest questions and share their stories without fear of judgment.

This year, we want to equip you with practical ways to put the Gospel into action. That means learning how to invite someone to worship, a formation class, or even just a parish social event (pro tip: mention good food). It means discovering how to make new folks feel at home. It’s about helping people uncover their gifts and plug into ministries that bring them joy, and it’s about telling your own faith story in a way that feels real and relatable—like swapping stories over coffee rather than giving a TED Talk.

Ultimately, evangelism isn’t about grand gestures—it’s about everyday moments of grace. It’s about connecting people to the life-giving love of God, the source of all Grace. And guess what? You’re already part of this movement. Let’s do this together.



# From Mother Emma

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

## A Case for Rest and Play

During chapel each Friday, students and teachers join together in saying the Grace School Prayer, which includes the phrase, "We give thanks for time to rest and play." Last year, I rarely thought twice about this petition, but in recent weeks it has become a constant prayer on my heart. Nearly every day I find myself praying for time to rest and play and seeking to be grateful when unstructured moments present themselves.

More often than not, rest and play are the first things to get sidelined in a busy week. I am a recovering perfectionist and people pleaser who would rather drink another cup of coffee and squeeze a bit more out of my day than "waste time." And yet, the hustle-and-bustle is exhausting. It also does not align with my faith in Christ. Christ who calls his disciples to "come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while" (Mark 6:31).

In a world that prioritizes efficiency and productivity, rest and play are forms of resistance. The global trends in schools reflect less time for recess and longer homework assignments, and many children end up rigidly scheduled during every waking hour. Likewise, adults often jump from work to chores to caring for others without much time to breathe.

We are living in a particularly busy and overwhelming moment, and for that reason, I invite us at Grace to give thanks for time to rest and play.

When was the last time you laughed so hard you couldn't speak?  
How often do you get to go to sleep without setting an alarm or getting woken up?  
What brings you pure joy and playfulness?

Adults often speak about rest as an important part of self-care, but we do not always include play as an equally necessary component to our physical and spiritual wellness. Play is viewed as childish or useless, but I would argue that rest and play have many shared qualities that make them essential. They are both intentionally unproductive (beyond the act of resting or playing for its own purpose). They are voluntary and improvisational in nature. They can be collaborative or solo.



Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives



Both rest and play thrive when there is no time limit and the rhythms of a rigid schedule can be broken. They reduce stress, unlock our imaginative potential, and open our hearts to God's presence.

Rest and play are also unique for each individual. For some, reading a book or sipping a cup of tea is the pinnacle of rest. For others, dancing with friends or riding a bike is restful. Likewise, play is unique for each of us. Playfulness comes very naturally to some adults, but it can feel mysterious and unfamiliar to others.

Playfulness is at the center of our school mission. It is at the center of Little Church worship. It drives our formation hour curricula. And I wonder how we might invite play into all our ministry areas. God works through the silence and the laughter. Through the calm and the chaos. Let us all give thanks for time to rest and play.

## Scenes from Grace Church Chili Bowl (or GRACE at PLAY!!)



Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives



# A Letter From

# BISHOP STEVENSON

January 20, 2025

*“And Jesus said, ‘Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”*

*~ Matthew 25:37-40*

My Dear Siblings in Christ in the Diocese of Virginia:

I sit at my desk at the end of a momentous day; a day in which The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was remembered and celebrated across this nation and around the world, and a day in which this nation once again transferred authority from one democratically elected president to another.

Like many of you, I have watched and listened to speech after speech today, and public prayer after public prayer. I have been listening not just with the ears of an American citizen, but also with those of a disciple of Jesus, the Son of God. And while I am thankful for the safe and clear practices of democracy, I must say that I am troubled by much of what I heard in respect to how I am called to live as a follower of the One who defined power as love for others, and love as sacrifice of self-interest.

As Bishop and chief pastor of the Diocese of Virginia, I feel led to be direct about a couple of things in the days before us: First, every human being will be respected in our churches, regardless of race, creed, gender expression, nationality, or in any other category or classification of humanity. Every human being will be respected from our pulpits, in our pews, and through our ministries. Rhetoric in the public square that dehumanizes any person or group of people, or is designed to strike fear in people’s hearts, is contrary to the gospel and is to be called out as such.

Further, we are to remember that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were themselves refugees (see Matthew 2:13), fleeing for their lives for a season. And, as Jesus points out without equivocation in Matthew 25, how we treat the stranger and those in need has a direct bearing on our relationship with God in heaven. Given these things, we must provide safety to the fearful and stand boldly against tyranny of speech or action.

And, I must say that the use of Christian language, or of any scriptural language, to advance a case that God values one nation in this day and time more than another is contrary to the gospel. For God so loved the world, not one people, that he sent Jesus to bring salvation.

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My friends, Jesus is Lord—no one else. The Holy Spirit is the source of wisdom and comfort—not any political affiliation. Our Father in heaven is love and life—not any earthly ruler. We are the beloved of this God. All of us. And while none of us is worthy of that love, my prayer is that we do our best to honor it by our very lives.

Love Jesus. Embody justice. Be disciples. For we are the Diocese of Virginia.

Yours in Christ,

**The Right Reverend E. Mark Stevenson, Bishop of Virginia**



### **Episcopal Church's Corporate Body Fully Divests From Fossil Fuel Investments**

Fulfilling a directive from The Episcopal Church's General Convention, the church's corporate organization has fully divested from fossil fuel investments.

Proposed by the [Executive Council Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility \(CCSR\)](#) and approved by the 81st General Convention in June, [Resolution A029](#) calls for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) "to divest fully and finally from all companies in fossil fuel industries by December 31, 2024," and to reinvest those assets.

"As chair of CCSR, I am grateful that our church has followed through on this commitment to the care of God's creation—this Earth we all share," said Sarah Lawton, committee chair. "In all our work, CCSR will continue to consider our investments in terms of our deeply held values as a church. We encourage other church bodies with investments to do so as well."

Read more in the [Public Affairs press release](#) and an [Episcopal News Service article](#).

# OPS & COMM

*Operations & Communication @ Grace*



KEVIN HAMILTON,

*DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION*

Love... Isn't it odd how we can use the same word to describe the way we feel about the person we do life with "til death do us part" as we do for a decent slice of pizza? I know what you are thinking... but Kevin, have you tried my favorite pizza joint?!?

I could talk about the different words that get translated "love" in the New Testament and how in the original languages they are not the same word. Different words are used to better express the various ways and levels of intensity with which we experience love. However, I will leave that for the clergy (Go ahead and quiz them. Judging by the number of Episcopal priests showing up on *Jeopardy!* these days, I think they like that sort of thing).

When it comes to our community of faith, there is so much that we love. If I were to interview each parishioner and ask what they love about Grace, I am sure there would be a long and varied list. Undoubtedly there would be some repetition, like the aesthetic beauty of the nave or the rich relationships that are experienced amongst parishioners. There would also be some stark differences. For instance, a parishioner who serves as a lector may list their love of reading scriptures during the service, which would be the thing of nightmares for another parishioner who fears public speaking.

What about all of the behind the scene tasks? Now, I may be going out on a limb here, but there probably is not a large contention of people who would say they love helping a ministry by creating a new Excel spreadsheet or by updating a ministry policy. However, I know there are a few of my spreadsheet-loving friends who may relish the challenge of how to use a pivot table for the Kingdom of God! These types of behind-the-scenes operations help organize the work that we all do to make a difference, and it is the beauty of how God knits us all together as a community of faith.

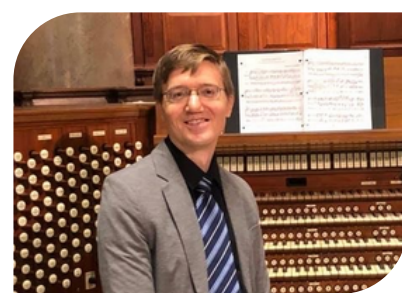
Just a few weeks ago we held our annual meeting. I have heard from more than a few of you that it was meaningful and that you loved hearing how the Spirit has been working in and through the people of Grace. There were so many people who played a role. For everything you experienced with your senses in the moment, there were many behind-the-scenes offerings from your fellow parishioners to make it happen. I started counting the number of people who pitched in to make the meeting all that it was, I was at 20 within seconds and stopped, and not just because I ran out of fingers and toes, but because I knew it would exponentially increase from there.

To all the behind-the-scenes superstars, we salute you because we know that without the important work you do at Grace, it wouldn't be the community we love. From creating that spreadsheet to polishing the fingerprints off brass, from setting up folding chairs for Little Church to shopping for paper supplies for coffee hour. All of you would be on my list of what I love about Grace!



# Upcoming Music Highlights

DR. ALAIN TRUCHE, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC



## Handbells on February 23rd



The Handbell Ensemble will play at the 10:30 a.m. service on **February 23**. One of the pieces they will play is an arrangement of “Shine, Jesus, Shine” that involves some fun use of mallets to strike the lower bells to create a percussive accompaniment to the melody.

## Choir Anthems

Typically, the Sundays after Epiphany are a bit of a low season for the choir; however, they will sing two longer and more involved anthems. On February 9th, they will sing the lovely “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” by Edward Elgar from his oratorio *St. Paul* originally for orchestra, choir, and soloists.

For Ash Wednesday on **March 5**, at the 7:00 p.m. service, the choir will sing a beautiful setting of the Latin text “Parce Mihi, Domine” (Spare Me, Lord). The text is from Job 7:17-21. The motet is from the larger work *Officium Defunctorum* (Office of the Dead) by Spanish Renaissance composer Cristobal Morales.

Another highlight is on **March 16**. The choir will sing an inspiring setting of Psalm 27 “The Lord is my light and salvation” by John Rutter, originally for choir and orchestra. The version they will sing is for organ and clarinet, where the clarinet is an essential part of the piece.



# Grace Episcopal School

**AMANDA  
HUNGERFORD,  
HEAD OF  
SCHOOL**

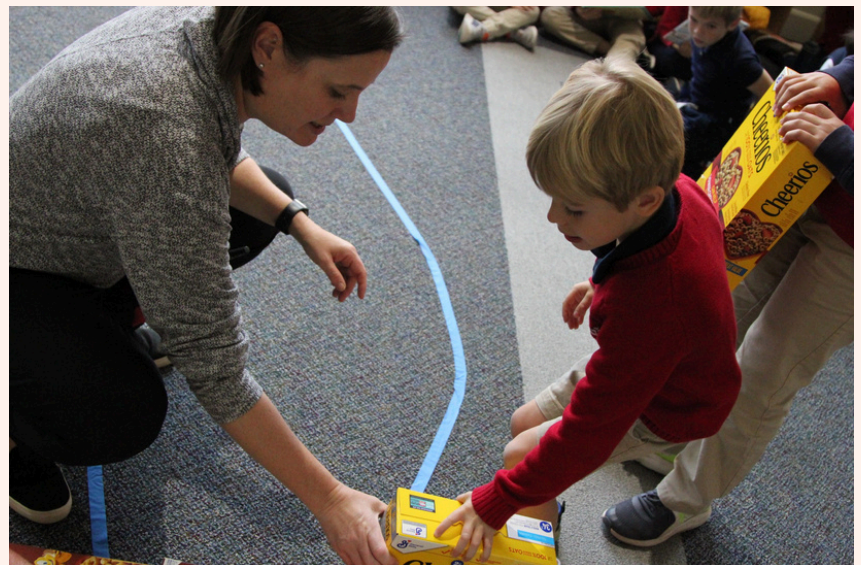


On January 31, 2025, the School Board named our very own Mrs. Amanda Hungerford as the new head of Grace Episcopal School effective immediately.

Amanda's journey to head of school began 19 years ago when she first came to Grace as a kindergarten teacher. Throughout her time at Grace, she has brought us the boys & girls running club and STREAM extravaganza, established new outreach opportunities, taught and inspired dozens of children, and worked tirelessly to enhance Grace's curriculum. Passionate about the education of young people, Amanda's philosophy, dedication, and love of the Grace community aligns her perfectly with our mission to honor the gift of childhood.



***"As we move forward, I am committed to listening, learning, and working collaboratively with families, faculty, and staff to ensure that we stay true to our mission and identity while exploring new opportunities for growth and innovation."*** Amanda Hungerford





# Grace Episcopal School



**AMANDA  
HUNGERFORD,  
HEAD OF  
SCHOOL**

I am truly honored to step into the role of head of school at Grace Episcopal as we embark on a new year. The past five months have been a whirlwind of learning and growth, but what has stood out most is the unwavering warmth and support of not only the school, but the church community. Thank you for your partnership and encouragement as I've navigated this transition. I look forward to continuing to strengthen and build upon the wonderful church-school partnership that is the heart of the Grace Episcopal community.

Continuing on our theme of the year—transitions—the school is thrilled to share that after several stages of renovation, the design lab is now complete with new cabinets, countertops, sinks, a wall-sized magnetic whiteboard, and abundant storage for projects. The goal of the redesign was to make supplies more accessible to both students and teachers, while creating a spacious environment for learning and growth. As fundraising permits, we plan to replace the tables, stools, and flooring over the remainder of the school year. We're thrilled that this renovation not only enhances functionality, beauty, and space for our students, but also supports the church's Sunday school classes.

The new year brings a renewed energy to our classrooms, and with it comes exciting opportunities for exploration, creativity, and hands-on learning. This winter, our students will embark on field trips to the Kennedy Center and Imagination Stage, witness science come alive during a special assembly, and take part in the Global Day of Play—joining schools both locally and worldwide in a morning dedicated to the essential role of play in a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Beloved community traditions like BINGO and the STREAM extravaganza are also on the horizon. Our community is busy working toward fostering meaningful connections, creating enriching experiences, and making this season one of growth, discovery, and joy for all.

Along with the activities mentioned above, we will also have the honor of celebrating the enduring legacy of our former head of school, Patti Culbreth. This special occasion will bring together current and former students, families, faculty, staff, and school board members to honor an incredible leader. We look forward to recognizing Patti's outstanding leadership and the profound impact she made during her time at the school. For those who wish to share their appreciation, a mailbox for Patti remains in the school office, ready to receive your notes of gratitude and celebration.

As we look ahead to all of these exciting events and initiatives, we are reminded of the strength, unity, and shared commitment that define our Grace Episcopal community. I look forward to continuing this journey alongside all of you, as we deepen our connections, celebrate our shared values, and work together to make this year one of meaningful growth and lasting impact for our school and church community.

AMANDA HUNGERFORD



# NOTES FROM THE FINANCE TEAM

## Giving at Grace Church

Grace Church relies on your generous support and donations to fund regular operations and many different ministries. Giving is easier than ever with the online giving platform, Tithe.ly, or at in-person events with our new Square terminal. Supporting Grace Church is only a tap, click, or swipe away!

### Give through Tithe.ly

Looking for a quick and easy way to give to Grace Church? Give online to Grace Church with Tithe.ly! Through Tithe.ly's online platform, you can set up and edit a recurring donation, make a one-time donation, and view your online donation history. When giving through Tithe.ly, don't forget to opt to "cover the fees" to ensure your full donation is received.

### NEW - Give through Square at Events and Fundraisers!

If you have attended a recent event or fundraiser at Grace Church, you may have noticed a new method for collecting payments—through the Square terminal. Square accepts payments by card (swipe, chip insert, or tap) or by mobile wallet. While the Square terminal is often being used for purchase of goods at church events, we also accept donations on Square! You may opt to have a receipt sent to you directly from Square by email or text. If you would like a donation receipt from Grace Church, please let us know at the time of your transaction and your donation will be recorded on your annual giving statement.

### Other Ways to Give

You can also give to Grace Church through other non-electronic methods, including by cash or check, automatic bank payments, or by a stock donation or IRA gift.



### Questions about how to give?

If you have any questions about giving, please contact the finance team at [giving@gracealex.org](mailto:giving@gracealex.org).



**MADELINE MANAKER,**  
**FINANCE ASSISTANT**

**MARY CYRUS,**  
**FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR**

# *Vestry View*

Notes From the Junior Warden

*Eric Waskowicz*

## **Elevator**

By the time this is published, we will have selected a company to modernize our elevator. We do not yet know when the work, which will take four to five weeks, can be scheduled.

## **Heating and Air Conditioning**

The heating and air conditioning unit for the nave is located underneath the sanctuary next to the St. Nicholas room. There are two fans which circulate hot or cold air through the sanctuary. One of the fans in the system failed recently. When it failed, the belt driving it generated a lot of heat and caused smoke to enter the sanctuary. The fire alarm went off and the school was evacuated. Once the HVAC system was turned off and it was determined that there was no actual fire, Rich Kelly and Juan Rojas removed the bad fan and the failed belt, which allowed the unit to effectively heat the nave with just one fan. One of the lessons learned is that the nave HVAC will need to be replaced this year or next.

## **Solar Roof on the Parking Lot**

Dan Pattarini has formed a group to vet companies or organizations that can manage installation of solar panels over the parking lot and possibly on the roof of Merrow Hall. This is one of the few projects a church can undertake that will pay for itself, in greatly reduced energy bills, within the next ten years.

## **Malm Narthex Doors**

We have a big volunteer project coming up this summer to strip and refinish the exterior of the very large wooden doors to the Malm Narthex. The current plan is to rent scaffolding so we can safely work on the upper part of the doors. To give some idea of the scope of the project, each coat of varnish needs 24 hours to dry before it can be lightly sanded and recoated. Up to seven coats are required to get a really good seal.

## **Assistant Junior Warden**

Colleen McArdelle has agreed to be the assistant junior warden this year. If you've been a junior warden before, or are just familiar with the building, you know it takes a while to know how the roof, heating, flooring, and security systems interact in the building, and even where some things are located. Point being that after a year, I finally have some idea of what's going on, and Colleen will know all the ins and outs by January of next year when she takes over.

# Adult Forum Schedule for February - March

By Anne Clift Boris

Adult Forum is offered Sunday 9:40-10:15 am in person in the St. Mark room on the second floor, or via Zoom (the link is included each Sunday in the worship email). Tea and coffee are available just outside the St. Mark Room from 9:30. All are welcome at any forum; no commitment required.

February 16	Grace at Work: Love in the Law Library	<i>Jennifer Eckel</i>
February 23	Grace at Work: Ethical Journalism	<i>Chris Rugaber</i>
March 2	National Rebuilding Day: Grace Working	<i>Cindy MacIntyre and John Berry</i>
March 9	Spiritual Imagination	<i>Mother Anne Turner</i>
March 16	Books That Bring Hope	<i>Mary Stewart and parishioners</i>
March 23	Restoration of Anglican/Episcopal Church in Georgia (Europe)	<i>Thoma Lipartiani</i>

## ADULT FORUM - CALL FOR PRESENTERS FOR 2025

We are now scheduling Adult Forum presenters for 2025. We would like to hear from more people in our "Grace at Work" series, where people talk about how they live out their faith in their work lives. There will be an opportunity in the spring to share meaningful books, and new topic suggestions are also welcome. If you have an idea of something you'd like to present, or something you'd like someone else to present, please contact Anne Clift Boris.





Barbara Morris

# An Occasional WORD

## Conversing with God & Crows

On the morning of January 3, four inches of snow covered my 13th floor balcony. The thermometer registered 18° F.

My thoughts instantly flew to the homeless cats, dogs, and wildlife in this bitter cold. Overcome by tears, I prayed. Over and over I cried out to God for those helpless creatures. Then, exhausted, I slumped next to the kitchen window, staring, as if frozen, into the cold, white world.

Later, as the storm quieted, a thin sun cast a faint light on the balcony. Suddenly, a quick shadow flickered, and I blinked to attention to see a large crow flutter to the balcony and settle on the icy rail. Then another and another until 10 crows were shouldering one another for space on the railing. All were turned toward the sun, heads raised toward its pale glow, their neck feathers ruffled in a light breeze. It was charming but also sweetly sad to see them seek warmth in the biting cold.

A fleeting thought reminded me that these were the creatures for whom I had cried to God for help. And I could help them! I had crackers, matzos—my favorite, plain, crisp cracker.

Within moments, I crumbled the matzos onto a paper plate and slowly edged toward the glass balcony door. The crows, alert to every movement, flew off as one flashing flock.

Quickly I opened the door about 15 inches and flung the crumbs out onto the snow. As soon as I was back indoors, the crows returned to inspect the crumbs, heads cocked with curiosity. Fifteen seconds passed. Then one brave little guy fluttered down and attacked the crumb feast with quick bobs of his head. Within seconds the flock joined him. Two minutes later the crumbs were gone.

When I tossed out a second plateful, the same thing happened—a fly off...a cautious return... quick pecking. But the third time—miracle of miracles—instead of flying off, the crows eyed me from the railing except for one small one who stood bravely in the slushy snow 15 inches from my hand! For one frozen, unforgettable moment, the bird and I connected. I felt myself studied—and trusted—by his tiny, bright black eyes. My own eyes glittered with tears.

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*continued from previous page*

A little later on, the crows left in a surge of flapping wings. I watched them go with a tinge of sadness. I also was filled with a deep sense of humility and wonder as I realized that God had answered my prayer. He had used me to help the creatures I had prayed for!

I whispered a prayer of thanks—and then burst out laughing as I recalled how we at GHBC try, in vain, to discourage crows from settling on our balconies to poop from the railings and to dig into our potted plants. Once, foolishly, I tried to frighten them off with two large, lifelike wooden owls, crows' enemies.

Afraid? Ha! Those birds—perhaps the same ones I had just fed—had perched boldly on the owls' heads—and you can guess what they did!

I thought of the crows who had just flown away. I knew from experience that they would return — to seek food, to sun themselves, perhaps to laugh at foolish me—and definitely to poop prodigiously.



*Photo Credit: ChatGPT*





# Grace-ful Worship: Love Shows Us the Way

I think you'll agree that we're living in a time of great stress. Life on our planet Earth is different due to climate change, and the effects will probably continue to be severe and sometimes chaotic (hurricanes, tornados, floods and wildfires), affecting peoples' homes and lives. Wars in Ukraine and Gaza have continued much longer than expected and threaten relationships between countries that support opposing sides. And the political climate within our own country can best be described as "us versus them," with no likelihood that it will improve anytime soon.

It's natural for us to react to these things with anxiety, or even fear. I certainly do, especially when I read the newspaper or watch the news on TV. But I think it's essential that we remember two things: God chose for us to be here at this time and in this place, and God loves every human being on Earth. There is always hope that our God of love will help humankind to act in the way of love. This is true even in situations that appear to be the opposite of loving at first glance.

Since God chose for us to be here, He also made us capable to rise to the challenges we find ourselves facing. We can choose to reflect on our own lives, and make any changes necessary to fully support humanity and the planet in loving ways. When we open our hearts in love instead of closing them in fear, we serve God's divine process. We are powerful beings who can, if we choose, serve our fellow humans and our planet.

When we pursue ways that we can serve others, our anxieties will decrease. (Mine do, even when I'm serving in a small way.) To begin with, we can serve by remaining calm and loving with our families, friends, and any others we encounter, even when the situation presents a challenge. We can also serve by giving support to people who need assistance of some kind (emotional, spiritual, physical, or financial). Some of us can even serve by going out into the world and actively helping to promote peace and love, in order to help rebuild lives, communities, and countries. Regardless of what actions we choose to take (or are capable of taking), the essential element will be the choice to act with love. Every act, small or large, can make a difference.

When it is difficult for us to remain in love, we can always call upon God for help. All we need to do is ask and then trust that we will be helped. The guidance we receive will be love itself, showing us the way.

– June Huber







## **Love For the Journey**





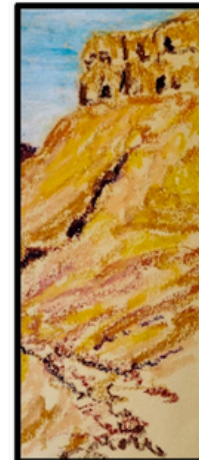
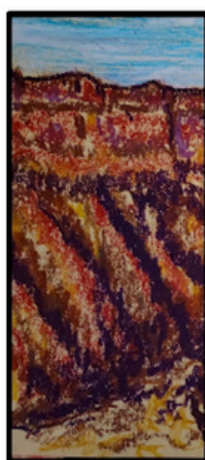
**IF I HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING.**

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:2**

# PRAYING WITH JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS PRAYER CHART

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					
Ongoing					
Extras					

Use this chart to keep track of your prayer requests throughout Lent. May the angels wait on you in your own wilderness time.



Art Credit: Chrissie Crosby





# Holy Imagination

## Journey With Us Through Lent

### Shrove Tuesday, March 4

6:00 - 7:30 pm Pancake Supper in the Merrow Hall Auditorium. All are invited!

\$6 per person for a short stack & \$8 for a tall stack.

Take home kits also available.

All proceeds benefit the 2025 J2A pilgrimage.

### Ash Wednesday, March 5

*Imposition of ashes at all services*

Ashes to go (Potomac Yard Metro) 7:00 - 11:00 am

7:00 am - Holy Eucharist, Rite I

12:00 pm - Holy Eucharist, Rite I

5:00 pm - Children's Service

7:00 pm - Bilingual Eucharist, Rite I

### Additional Programs During Lent

#### Thursdays

Confession Offered 11 am - 12:00 pm

Holy Eucharist with Healing, Rite II @ 12:00 pm

#### Fridays

Stations of the Cross & Eucharist, Rite I @ 12:00 pm

Via Crucis y Cenita (in Spanish) @ 7:00 pm

### Sundays During Lent

7:30 am - Holy Eucharist Rite I

8:45 am - La Santa Eucaristía (in Spanish)

9:00 am - Little Church

9:30 am - Adult Forum

9:30 am - Sunday School for Children & Youth

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

5:00 pm - Contemplative Eucharist for Lent

### Lenten Series: Holy Imagination: Learning to Listen for God

5:30-5:45 pm Evening Prayer (Zoom option)

5:45-6:30 pm Simple Lenten Supper

6:30-7:15 pm Program (Choose from three tracks)

7:15 - 7:30 pm Sung Compline in the Nave

Three Program Tracks: Youth Confirmation, Inquirers Class, and "Learning to Listen for God"

#### Topics for "Learning to Listen for God"

Join us as we discuss different forms of discernment and visioning. We will ask the important questions

"What is God dreaming for me?" and "What is God dreaming for a community I am in?"

March 12: Listening through Scripture

March 19: Listening through Play

March 26 : Listening through Culture

April 2: Listening through Music

April 9: Listening through Creativity



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## Vestry Class of 2025

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

## Vestry Class of 2026

Chad Eckles, *Register*  
Morgan Miller, *Pastoral Care Liaison*  
Sarah Schultz, *Senior Warden*  
Mary Stewart, *Adult Formation & Stewardship Liaison*  
Eric Waskowicz, *Junior Warden*

## Vestry Class of 2027

Bill Eckel  
Ramee Gentry  
Laura Weidenfeld  
Colleen McArdelle  
Rebecca Prosser

## Parish Team Leads

Children's Programs - *Kristen Woodiwiss*  
Evangelism - *Mindy Van Wart*  
Fellowship - *Lynn Rohrs*  
Outreach and Justice - *Jennifer Pease*  
Pastoral Care - *John Boris*  
Stewardship - *Sarah Glass*  
Worship - *John Thompson*  
Youth Programs - *Heather Kelly*



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