



GRACE NOTES

A Bi-Monthly Magazine Published by Grace Episcopal Church

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This Edition's Theme: Many Hands Make Light Work



From Mother Anne M. Turner, *Rector*



Dear Friends in Christ,

This season, I write in praise of the glorious inefficiency of the church.

I can already imagine many of you reading with eyebrows raised. I know enough people at Grace Church to know that our parish is populated with engineers and designers and do-ers. If there is a way to streamline a workflow, our Altar Guild has found it.

I know the importance of efficiency for our work. We are now in the season of Pentecost—the season of the mission of the church. We have tasks to accomplish. If we are to feed the hungry, our food pantry had darn well better be organized about it.

And yet our mission is not only what we accomplish but how we accomplish it. The secular world values efficiency at the expense of human growth and connection. The church values efficiency only in service to these things.

When I praise the inefficiency of the church, I am thinking of the way Jesus meandered from place to place so that no one got left out along the way. I am thinking of the day of Pentecost, which was surely untidy and repetitive. I am thinking of church meetings, much like the meetings recorded in the book of Acts, that value the way a decision is made just as much as the matter that gets decided.

During our vision process, we identified two manifestly inefficient threads. One of them is Generational Engagement, the desire to connect young and old alike in our life. Slowing down to include the person with a walker or the little one not yet walking is neither quick nor easy and yet is deeply rewarding.

The other thread is Community and Belonging. Many jobs can be done just as quickly by a lone ranger. But that isolation doesn't build up community; instead, it undermines it. In the church we instead prioritize collaboration, shared effort, and shared engagement.

The theme of this issue is "Many Hands Make Light Work." I believe the point is not to get our work done as lightly as possible. It's to join as many hands as we can in the life of discipleship, the life of praying-by-doing.

If you know me, you know I like a short meeting and a snappy to-do list. But I like being connected to the body of Christ even more. I am grateful that our values at Grace put God's loving connection front and center. And I hope we never lose sight of that love.

Yours In Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Anne M. Turner



Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives

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Grace Notes Submissions and Publication Schedule

Grace Notes is published approximately six times a year by Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia. All parishioners are encouraged to contribute articles and photos. **The deadline for the next issue is July 15.** Articles and photos should be emailed to grace.notes@gracealex.org and will be subject to editing. The Grace Notes team includes Chrissie Crosby (*Co-editor*), Kevin Hamilton (*Design*), Jason Holleran (*Final Proofreader*), Teresa Preston (*Final Proofreader*), and Kemp Williams (*Co-editor*).



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

From Mother Emma

"The mountains are calling, and I must go." - John Muir

Each summer, magic happens in the mountains of Orkney Springs, Virginia. Children and youth from across the state and beyond gather to sing songs, play games, explore nature, and build a community that reflects Jesus' inclusive and expansive love. Magic happens at Shrine Mont Camps because from the moment a family gets out of the car at drop-off, they will receive the message again and again that they belong and are beloved.



I still remember the first time my parents dropped me off at St. George's Camp. I was nine years old and outwardly seemed thrilled to spend six days at sleepaway camp. But internally, I worried that I wouldn't make friends, that I would miss home, that I would be lonely or bored. Going to a new camp is scary. But my camp counselors and peers invited me in so completely that I was actually shooing my parents out of the cabin so that I could jump into this new community. By the end of the week, I had made friendships that continue to this day (over two decades later). However, the most powerful relationship I built at camp though was with my faith.

What makes Shrine Mont Camps unique is that they are unapologetically Episcopal camps. The staff and campers are not required to be Episcopalian, but everyone worships together, prays before meals, and enjoys Chaplain's Time each day. We dive into scripture through skits and activities, and sometimes we even pray by shouting at the top of our lungs. Even though I attended church every week at home, it wasn't until I ventured to camp that I felt God's presence. At camp, God wasn't far off and formal. God was integrated into every aspect of my day, and God was FUN! Even more, God's love finally felt realized in how people were treating one another. I still crave the closeness I feel to God at Shrine Mont Camps, and it keeps me going back even now!

In 2026, there will be 15 sessions of Shrine Mont Camps throughout the summer, each with a unique emphasis and age group. Whether you love sports or art or hiking or service projects, there is a camp for you! Grace Church supports this diocesan camp program by allowing me to serve as a camp chaplain, and we already have a number of Grace families registered for this summer!

If you have any questions about camp, please reach out. As you can probably tell, it is very dear to my heart, and I would love for more families to discover the magic of Shrine Mont Camps.

Visit www.shrinemontcamps.org for camp dates and registration information.



Throwback to Mother Emma leading worship at Shrine Mont in 2009.



From Father Jon

THE REV. JON SCARFFE,
INTERIM ASSISTANT RECTOR

Pride 2026

Dear friends in Christ,

In June 1969, the Stonewall riots took place in New York City. They served as a catalyst for the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement. It was an important year, a turning point, as was 1976 for the Episcopal Church. In that year, our General Convention first affirmed the full dignity and worth of LGBTQ+ people. It made a historic

proclamation that all homosexual persons are children of God and that they have a full and equal claim to the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church, along with all other persons (1976 - A069). It was a statement that launched a movement of transformation in our church.

“For decades, LGBTQ+ Episcopalians and allies have worked to make The Episcopal Church a place of belonging and inclusion. Its members have prayed, studied, and discerned, and in doing so, we have seen the evidence of God’s blessing in the lives and love of our LGBTQ+ siblings in Christ. In 2026, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of our church affirming that LGBTQ+ people have a full and equal claim to the love, acceptance, and pastoral care of the church. The journey to make that promise a reality continues today, as we remember the struggles, celebrate the joy, and give thanks for love and for lives that refused to be erased.”

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/organizations-affiliations/lgbtq/>

June is traditionally Pride month. During this month and beyond, I invite you to joyfully lift up the beautiful diversity of God’s creation and honor the LGBTQ+ community—beloved, affirmed, and made in God’s image. Let us give thanks to God for church families like Grace Episcopal for their love, inclusivity, and welcome, remembering,

You are beloved. You belong. No exceptions.

Fr. Jon





From the Office

KEVIN HAMILTON,
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION



When I was a child, one of my favorite activities when visiting my grandparents was exploring the creek behind their apartment. Often a cousin or two would be visiting at the same time. We would head down to the creek in search of crayfish, salamanders, and frogs. Occasionally we would put our engineering skills to the test and build a dam.

I learned early on a key lesson in building a decent dam ... many hands make light work. I would recruit a few of the neighborhood kids from the nearby playground to join us. With our ragtag team of junior builders assembled, we were knee-deep in pooled water in no time ... success!

On the rare occasion that I was alone at my grandparents, my grandmother would take me to the creek. I would get bored easily, lose interest, and ask her to take me to the playground instead. I learned that I could accomplish a lot more with the encouragement of teammates. **The lessons I learned at the creek as a kid still serve me well forty years later.**

The work that Grace Church does is good work, worthwhile work, work that sends positive ripples throughout our days and well beyond. While the work itself is definitely worth doing, even if alone, it is much better to do it in community with others. Being in the church office, I get to see the evidence of the power of teamwork all over the place.

Recently I had an email exchange with a newer member of the Altar Guild who was excited to join the team to help ready the nave for worship. I see and hear signs of life-giving community among the volunteers at the food pantry. The volunteers not only provide a life-giving service to those in need in our community, they create life-giving relationships with one another while serving.

This happens all over Grace. It happens among the office volunteer team, I see it among the vestry in their joint leadership, I experience it among the staff. Doing ministry can bless us in many ways, but doing ministry together can multiply those blessings and forge life-long friendships.

Interested in the office volunteer team but not sure it's the right fit? We welcome you to try it out for a day with no commitment. Email Barbara Ramm (barbara.ramm@gracealex.org) and let her know you'd like to try it out. Looking for another ministry but need some guidance? I know the clergy would be more than happy to help you in the search, so please reach out to them.



Photo Credit: Canva.com



From the Organ Loft

JOSH HARRINGTON,
INTERIM MUSIC DIRECTOR

Many Hands, Many Voices, One (Mostly) Right Note

When we hear the phrase "Many hands make light work," we usually think of a church workday or a potluck cleanup. But from the choir loft, I see this truth in action every single week. While my hands and feet may be busy wrestling with the organ stops and pedals, it is the collective "many hands" (and voices!) of our volunteers that truly carry the service.

To the congregation, a well-planned service feels seamless. The transition from a quiet prayer to a stirring anthem seems natural and almost effortless. Well, this is a beautiful illusion.

In reality, that "easy flow" is the result of significant heavy lifting. Members of our Parish Choir and our Handbell Choir are the ultimate multitaskers. On any given Sunday, they are:

- Translating my frantic hand and head gestures into actual musical phrases.
- Navigating the "varied" repertoire I've been throwing at them—because while we love the classics, God also enjoys a bit of syncopation and the occasional global rhythm.
- Mastering the handbell, an instrument that requires the coordination of a professional athlete and the patience of a saint.

If the music feels like a breeze, it's only because our musicians have spent their weeknights standing in the wind. We spend our rehearsals learning complex harmonies, studying the intricate rhythms, and occasionally debating which page we are actually on (don't ask the basses). It is a holy, demanding, and deeply rewarding labor. We do it because we believe music isn't just a simple insert somewhere in the service; it is a vital part of the worship experience that prepares our hearts to hear the Word.

Here is the honest truth: the work is lighter (and the chords are fuller) when there are more people involved.

We are always looking for more hands and voices to join our ranks. Whether you are a seasoned pro or someone who hasn't read a note of music since the third grade, there is a chair (and vestments) waiting for you. Don't worry—we promise to keep the music fun, and I only occasionally give "the look" when we miss a cutoff.

The Parish Choir rehearses every Thursday evening at 7 p.m. beginning the Thursday after Labor Day. During the Summer and beginning on June 7, interested persons are invited to join the choir Sunday mornings for an easy pick-up anthem. We would love to see you in the choir room at 9:45 am for a warmup and quick rehearsal! Come join us. We provide the sheet music; you provide the enthusiasm. Let's make some light work together.

In Song and Service,
Josh Harrington,
Interim Music Director



Grace Episcopal School



**AMANDA
HUNGERFORD,
HEAD OF SCHOOL**

As we head toward the end of the school year, we are given a wonderful opportunity to marvel at the sheer number of people at Grace Episcopal School who play a part in the development of the young people inside our building. We are a community that truly embodies the idea that many hands make light work, and every single person's contribution is vital to our collective success. Each of our community members has played an invaluable role in the triumph of this school year.

The closing weeks of the school year at Grace are brimming with activity, energy, and anticipation. It is a true showcase of incredible dedication that proves, once again, that our wonderful team is the heart of this campus. From poetry teas and wax museums to early childhood end-of-the-year celebrations and our spectacular musical theater club production, our faculty and staff have worked to creatively celebrate the immense growth of our students over the past year. It is this consummate innovation and unwavering dedication that ensures the growth of our students is not just academic, but deeply impactful.

Reflecting on this time, my heart is full of gratitude:

- For our dedicated faculty and staff, whose passion, expertise, and love for our students are the foundation of everything we achieve.
- For GESPA and our parent community, whose tireless volunteer hours, enthusiasm, and partnership enrich so many aspects of our community.
- For our students, the absolute heartbeat of Grace, who inspire us daily with their curiosity, hard work, and joy.
- For our extended family and special friends, whose presence, encouragement, and love anchor our students' lives.
- For our church leadership, staff, and volunteers, whose spiritual guidance, shared space, and enduring support keep our mission grounded.
- For our school board, whose strategic vision and faithful stewardship safely guide the future of our school.
- For our school leadership team, whose intentional guidance and behind-the-scenes dedication keep our community moving forward seamlessly.

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Our recent spring performance was a fantastic way to kick off the conclusion of the year, and we look forward to carrying this joyful momentum into our traditional Field Day. We will celebrate our last day just a few days later at our fifth grade graduation, where our oldest students and school leaders will share their own reflections on their years at Grace, a beautiful tradition that perfectly anchors us in our school's mission.



Photo Credit: Grace School Archives



Grace
Episcopal
School



Stitched Together with Love

By Hannah Sternberg

In my senior year of undergrad, my mom was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer, a shadow that has haunted many of the women in her family. I spent a lot of my last semester of college heading up to my parents' house on weekends and holidays to be with our family through her twelve-plus hour surgery, its grueling recovery, and the drudgery of months of chemo and radiation. One weekend I noticed a new wrap around her shoulders, the color of the sky. It was a prayer shawl from her parish. I saw it linger by her bedside through times of nausea, low white blood cell count, and her steady climb to a truly miraculous recovery (she's still cancer-free seventeen years later!). That was my introduction to what prayer shawl ministry could mean, and the comfort it could bring not just to a sufferer but to their whole family.

A prayer shawl can be like a hug that wraps you up with long-distance love, the thing that keeps you warm on a long cold night of despair, the first embrace of your church family for a new child, or a reminder you are loved when you feel doubtful or face a major life transition. And as any crafter can tell you, creating things for our friends is as heartening for the crafter as it is for the recipient. My heart rejoices when a friend sends me pictures of her cats lolling on a quilt I've made for her, or tells me they climbed under a blanket I crocheted when they were feeling sad. It reminds me that I, too, am a part of that circle of comfort, fellowship, and hope that is shared with me when I share it with others.

If you are a stitcher of any kind, the Grace prayer shawl ministry welcomes your participation. On the fence but not sure how to get started? We have ridiculously easy patterns for first-time knitters and crocheters. We can even supply a few skeins of free yarn to get you started. If you would like to receive a prayer shawl, for yourself or to give to a loved one, we would also like to help. Please reach out expressing your interest to Laura Weidenfeld (laura_weidenfeld@yahoo.com) or Hannah Sternberg (hesternberg@gmail.com). We want to hear from you, to help you start your crafting journey, continue or resume a longtime hobby, or share comfort with those you love. Beginners welcome!

“A River Flowing” in the Church Office

by Ruth Corlett

Thank you, Lorna Worley, for creating the beautiful new frontal for the desk in the church office. If you are wondering how it happened, here’s the explanation.

When I was volunteering in our church office recently, Lorna and I talked about our shared concern that what people saw when they entered the office was a jumbled mix of computer boxes, electronic equipment, and connection cords inside the big open space under the desk. And, yes, all of it needed to be there, but it wasn’t attractive. Lorna offered to make a covering that could be lifted easily when access to that equipment was needed.

With consent from Mother Anne, Lorna went to work. She used materials she had on hand from other projects over the years, decorative fabrics, ribbons, a few sparkly trims, and lace from a wedding dress she made for her niece! To protect the desktop, it is attached (only across the top) with Velcro and plastic clips.

Does it have a name? As she worked, Lorna thought about all the people who go through that office—the central hub of the building—every day of the week. Every one of them, riding the river of their lives. “A River Flowing”.

This work of art conveys a greeting of welcome, warmth, and joy. Be sure to stop by the church office to see it.



Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives

Meet Kim Savage, *Finance & Facilities Administrator*

Hello!

As many of you may have already heard, my name is Kimberly Savage and I am honored to serve as the new Finance and Facilities Administrator at Grace Episcopal Church. I bring more than fifteen years of experience in church administration and finance, along with management experience in the private sector and extensive work with nonprofit organizations.

I am truly humbled to step into this role and continue the excellent work of Mary Cyrus, who served Grace so faithfully as Financial Administrator. In addition to my financial responsibilities, I will also begin assuming several facilities-related administrative duties over the coming months.

It has already been a pleasure getting to know the Grace staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers, and I look forward to meeting more members of the parish community in the months ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the church office if I can be of assistance in any way.

Stay tuned for the inaugural edition of Kim’s recurring article in the next issue of *Grace Notes*. Kim will share helpful insights on finance and facilities-related matters here at Grace.

Dominion Energy Programs Help Grace See the Light



by Liz Rugaber

Do you know that Grace spends about \$4,000 per month on electricity for the school and church? The majority of our electric power goes toward lighting and air conditioning/heating. A motivated team of Grace school and church folks, led by Liz Rugaber, and including Amanda Hungerford (Head of Grace School), Eric Waskowicz (former Junior Warden), Bill Eckel (current Junior Warden), Juan Rojas (Grace School Facilities Manager), and Rich Kelly, is working to tackle our energy consumption to help lower greenhouse gas emissions and reduce costs.

We identified a Dominion Energy program called the Building Engagement Program (BEP), a free program that provides access to energy-saving information about our facility and coaching to reduce energy consumption. Since officially signing up for the one year program in January 2026, we have accomplished, with Dominion vetted contractors:

- a high-level, facility-wide energy assessment,
- a lighting assessment and installation of 317 new LED light fixtures,
- an HVAC duct sealing and coil cleaning.

The energy assessment was done by Dominion vetted contractor Michaels Energy, at no cost to the church or school, on February 25, 2026. The energy assessment report contains several useful items, including:

- a detailed description of Grace's complex HVAC system,
- energy use insights taken from our utility meter readings during 2025,
- benchmarking information (comparing our facility's energy usage to similar facilities), and
- low-cost/no-cost energy efficiency recommended actions.

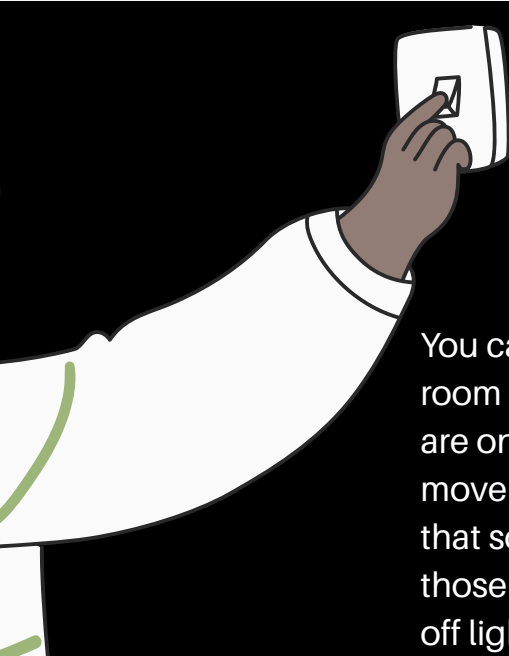
We will be working with Michaels Energy over the coming year to implement as many of the low-cost/no-cost efficiency recommendations as are feasible and desired. We have already implemented two significant improvements: replacement of almost all our fluorescent lighting with new energy-efficient LED light systems, and an HVAC ductwork sealing to seal and prevent air leaks.

Photo Credit: Canva.com

The duct sealing was done at no cost to the church or school by a separate Dominion vetted contractor Star Energy, and the light replacement (done by separate Dominion vetted contractor HBS Energy) was done at a fraction of the market cost (which, for our facility, would have been upwards of \$50,000 were it not for the BEP). Fun fact: Kristine Hesse found a resolution passed by the Vestry in 2012 recommending replacement of our old fluorescent lights with LEDs!

The new LED lights are high-quality, integrated systems that do not have any bulbs to change (the light source is part of the housing), and are expected to last 50,000—100,000 hours (ten to twenty years). Only certain lights were eligible for the Dominion program—they had to be a one-to-one replacement with motion sensors (no redesign), and only certain sizes were permitted. Almost all of our lighting is now integrated LED fixtures or uses LED bulbs, with just a few exceptions (including the choir loft stairwell, and other stairwells in the school and church areas). We also were out of date on some code requirements that call for emergency backup power to provide egress illumination in the event of a blackout, and we were able to complete that work as well as other necessary wiring as part of the LED lighting installation.

The new lighting is expected to lower our consumption and electricity bills. Our old lights were burning between 64-250 watts each (with the majority type—2x4 panels—burning 128 watts each), and the new fixtures burn between 11-50 watts.



What Would Jesus Do? Lights On or Off?

You can help us reduce energy by turning off the lights when you leave a room or hallway where no one will be for a while. Most of our new LED lights are on 1.5 hour motion sensors. This means they will dim one hour after no movement is detected, then completely turn off after 1.5 hours. (Be mindful that some of our lights, for code reasons, are hardwired to be “always on” — those will never turn off.) Help us save that 1.5 hours of energy by switching off lights when you can!



On Saturday, April 25, our Grace family came together for the fourth year in a row to participate in **National Rebuilding Day**. We were honored to spend the day serving at a group home in Arlington managed by **CRI**, an organization that has spent 45 years empowering those with disabilities and mental health needs.

Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers—including many of our youth!—the home has been transformed. Our team:

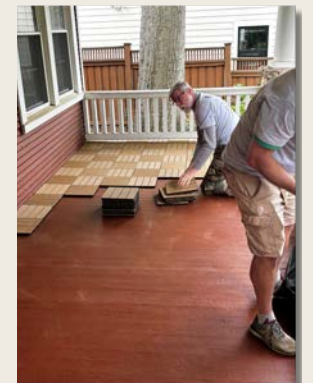
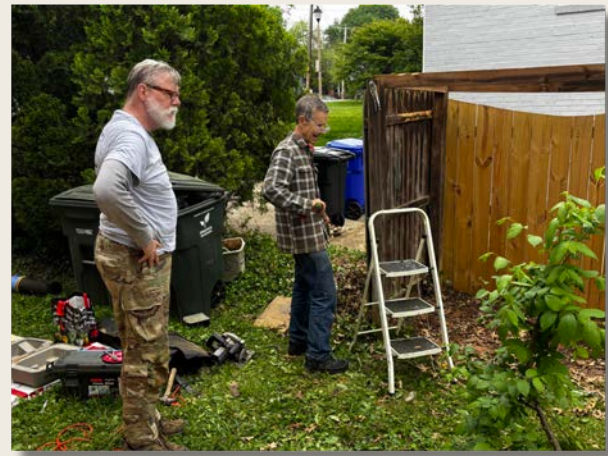
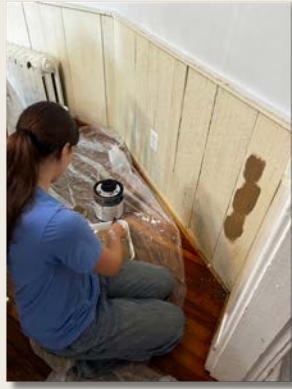
- **Installed new front porch decking** to greet residents and visitors.
- **Brightened the interior** with fresh paint in the common spaces.
- **Rebuilt the garbage enclosure** to keep the exterior tidy.
- **Refreshed the grounds** by trimming every bush and shrub on the property.

These updates have brought a wonderful sense of brightness and joy to the residents and the dedicated staff who support them every day.

A huge thank you to everyone who picked up a paintbrush, a hammer, or a pair of shears. Your hands and hearts made this project a success, proving once again that when we work together, we can truly make a difference.

We look forward to coming together again for Year Five!

Photo Essay: National Rebuilding Day



Everything in its Place

A Conversation on Personal & Practical Stewardship from the Adult Forum



by Elizabeth Legere

A few weeks ago, our adult forum gathered around a question that sounds practical on the surface but turns out to be deeply spiritual: what does it mean to have our affairs in order?

We tend to associate stewardship with our annual pledge or the offering plate, but our conversation explored neither of those things. As the saying goes, stewardship is "all that I do, with all that I have, after I say, 'I believe,'" and we can't do much unless we first take care of ourselves.

Caring for the Whole Person

The forum invited us to think about personal stewardship in four dimensions of care for self: spiritual, physical, social, and financial. Spiritual care looks like a raw journey of faith in practice, questioning, reading, praying even when all we can say is "help" or "thanks." Physical care comes through our choices of food, movement, and learning. Social care connects us to people who make us feel alive. And financial care is a spiritual matter, too—a reflection of our values and how we care for our families and our communities.

A small question we sat with was this: what is one small improvement in self-care this week that would help you show up more fully for life?

Planning Looks Different at Various Ages

Each of those four dimensions looks different as we move through adult life. The stewardship of someone in their first job is different from a young parent, and again different from an empty-nester. The priorities of someone newly retired differ from someone looking for a complete career change.

Personal Financial Stewardship

We walked through seven topics that each of us should proactively and prayerfully consider our personal financial stewardship: income, giving, savings, debt, insurance, retirement, and estate planning. None of these is reserved for the wealthy or the worried. They are the various rooms in the household of life, and each one asks for occasional attention. We talked about how we might be quietly avoiding some of these. That behavior is normal. How do you talk about—or avoid talking about—finances? The point is to try for honest prayerful awareness followed by a small next step. We were encouraged to name which area of the seven where we feel strongest, and which area where we feel we need more knowledge or collaboration to move forward.

Stewardship Through Action: What Are We Here For?

The middle of the conversation hit questions like, “What gives our lives meaning? How do our actions reflect our values? Who do we share life’s celebrations and heartbreaks with? What are we known for today, and what do we want to be remembered for?”

Reputation is what we are known for now—our kindness, volunteering, working in the world or in community with others. Legacy is what we are known for after we are gone: the sum total of our past actions and how they impacted others enough to be remembered. Both are shaped by our ordinary choices each day and each week: who we make time for, how we use our gifts, whether we rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

Practical Planning, for Yourself and for Others

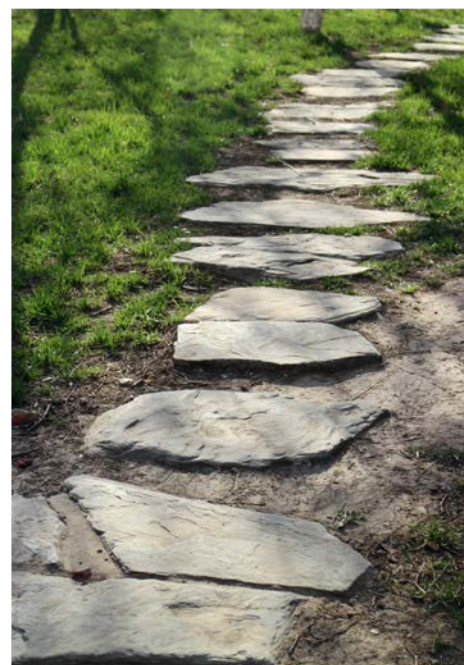
The forum closed with three checklists worth completing for yourself in case of illness, incapacity, or death. The first is a PDF for yourself: [how to organize your affairs at any age](#) from your 20s to your 90s. The second is a PDF [checklist of documents and information to gather](#) into one place (preferably paper file) that anyone could get for you. The third is the [Grace Church Funeral Planning Form](#). Organization using these lists can be a spiritual practice, a way of clearing the noise so what matters can shine through. (Reading a printed version? Simply scan the QR code on the back page with your smartphone to access a PDF with clickable links!)

Items for the Parish Office

It’s most helpful to Grace Church to let the office know of our funeral wishes and any estate plan bequests we have already outlined to the parish. At this stage, I admitted to the group I have had my funeral form drafted for some time, but on my home computer where no one would find it. My first action this week is to email a version marked “draft” to the parish office. I also have the Grace Trust listed in my will, but I’ve never told the parish office about that. My second action this week is to email that confirmation to the parish office.

A Closing Invitation to Take One Step

The above topics hold tender questions, hard for many of us to think or talk about, much less act on while we can. Putting everything in its place is not about tidiness. It is about finding freedom: the freedom to live fully now, the freedom to be a blessing to those around us, and the freedom to leave behind something that quietly speaks of love. Take one small step this week. Your future self, and the people you love, will thank you.





Campus Matters



BILL ECKEL,
JUNIOR WARDEN

It has been a busy season at Grace Church. The Junior Warden's elves have been busy behind the scenes making things happen. The main elevator is now working so we have full access to Merrow Hall. The ice maker and boiler pump were fixed by Rich Kelly. Eric Waskowicz, JW emeritus, purchased a 40-foot ladder so we can replace light bulbs in the chancel at the front of the nave.

The main accomplishment in March, though, was replacement of fluorescent light fixtures with LED lighting throughout the building, along with electrical work to bring us up to code on emergency lighting. All of this was done far below cost through a Dominion Energy program. We expect substantial savings on energy use and our electrical bill soon. Huge thanks to Liz Rugaber for heading up this effort and making it happen.

Also on the energy front, we are working with Dominion on an energy audit, with continuing support over the next year to address sources of energy wastage. We expect some quick wins by taking advantage of programmable thermostats we already have. Thanks again to Liz Rugaber for arranging the audit.

Over the next several weeks, the city is planning to complete renovations to Hillside Park behind the church, including removal of landscape timbers and the planting of grass.

The building and grounds committee, headed by Robby Schrum, is working to put into action the reserve study done for us some time ago, to address physical plant needs over the next several years. We are checking off projects already accomplished, prioritizing new projects, and planning for the use of Grace Trust funds in these efforts.

Finally, thanks to all Grace Church members for your support for me in this role. Come and say hello at coffee hour; I know there's something the Junior Warden needs to know.

Why I Serve on the Altar Guild

By Angie Crane

Do you enjoy mysteries? Like slowly discovering clues to help solve a puzzle, service on the Altar Guild provides an opportunity to connect to the reason and methods behind each aspect of our worship. In the beginning of my training, I was worried about learning terminology and dropping precious items, but I need not have been concerned. The crew members are patient teachers, passing along the treasure of Grace traditions and wisdom.

One pleasant discovery is that we begin our Saturday work collectively at the altar in prayer. Not in the rush we often feel at Eucharist on Sunday, but lingering, absorbing the morning light through the stained glass windows, and reflecting on why we are here and the very direct nature of our work that day on the worship experience for our congregation. We pray for all of you—together, aloud—and you are with us as we arrange the flowers, polish the brass, prepare the vestments, and do many other small but significant tasks. If you want to experience a deeper connection to our worship, discover what happens behind the scenes, or have new experiences—like censuring the church while Josh practices the organ—then it is time for you to begin solving this mystery for yourself and see where God leads you in service.





JUNE HUBER

Grace-ful Worship

Praying the 23rd Psalm

Hi everyone! I'm so glad that my back pain is sufficiently reduced that I feel like writing again.

Prayers can take many forms and come from many sources. There are all-purpose prayers that we are taught, such as "The Lord's Prayer," and that we pray by ourselves and in community. There are prayers that are meant for specific occasions such as grace at meals, morning and evening prayers, prayers for healing, prayers of thankfulness, and many others. We don't have to be creative because they already exist in the Book of Common Prayer and other sources.

Not long ago, Brad and I wanted to start praying a special prayer together before we went to sleep. As if by magic, we quickly agreed that we both knew and loved the 23rd Psalm, so we made a few changes and it became our special evening prayer. (The changes are in italics.)

The Lord is *our* shepherd; *we* shall not want.

He makes *us* lie down in green pastures: he leads *us* beside the still waters.

He restores *our souls*: he leads *us* in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though *we* walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *we* will fear no evil:

for *you are* with *us*;

Your rod and your staff they comfort *us*.

You prepare a table before *us* in the presence of *our* enemies:

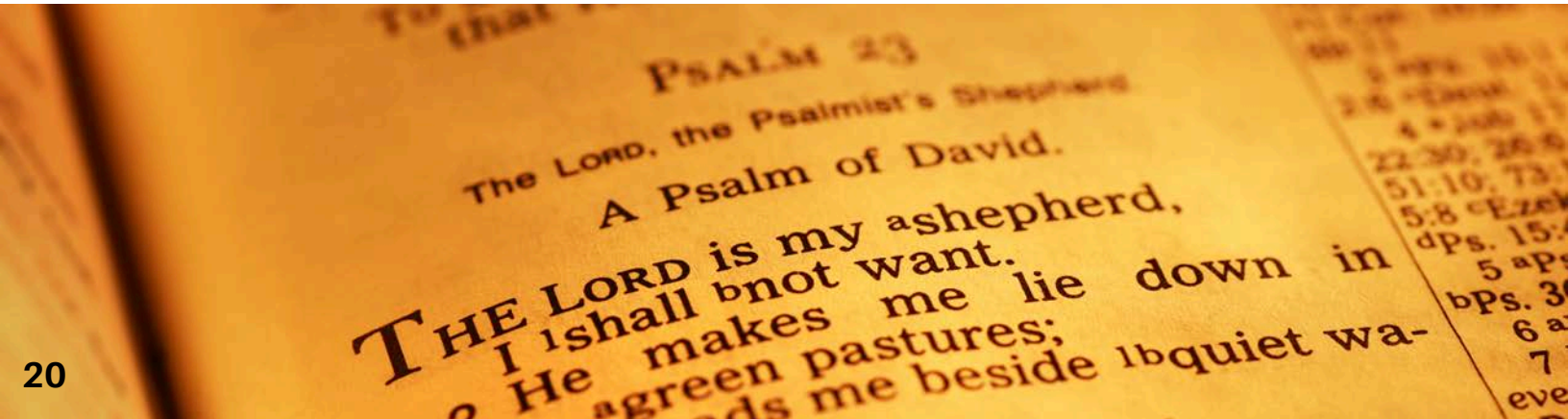
You anoint *our heads* with oil; *our cups run* over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow *us* all the days of *our lives*:

And *we* will dwell in the house of the Lord, *together*, for ever.

If you ever find yourself wanting a special prayer for any occasion, and if you aren't successful or comfortable writing one yourself, there are lots of different sources that can be turned into a prayer. Find something you like and give it a try. You can do it, too.

Photo Credit: Canva.com



Watercolors in the Garden



On a Saturday morning in May, Hannah Sternberg gathered a group of people interested in painting the various plants we have in Grace's garden.



Doug Prince gave a short talk on what the plants are before they began painting.

A good time was had by all!



Remembering Easter

Thank you to the Altar Guild for all of their hard work.



FAITH in Housing Passes and Governor Signs Legislation

By Jennifer Eckel

VOICE (Virginians Organizing for Interfaith and Community Engagement) and multitudes of other Virginia organizations achieved something really special during the commonwealth's legislative session. Our legislators heard us when we told them of a shortfall of 300,000 homes in Virginia, and through organized power and a lot of prayers, the governor signed five pieces of legislation that begin to ease this housing shortfall.

First to be signed is Faith in Housing. This legislation allows churches to bypass many local zoning requirements so that religious and tax-exempt nonprofit organizations can develop affordable multifamily housing "by-right" on their property. It took Church of the Resurrection over five years to build their Spire project. With this legislation, the wait time for a project like this will be cut by more than half. These new homes must be affordable to households making up to 80% of the area median income and the units must be affordable for 30 years. In Alexandria, the area median income is \$164,000. Additional legislation was passed that allows local governments to establish expedited administrative processes to approve affordable housing developments, bypassing lengthy rezoning and public hearing processes. Alexandria and Fairfax County are already taking steps to simplify the process to build affordable housing. With Faith in Housing, the governor also signed HB 888, enabling parking reforms in cities and towns. The new law focuses on reducing parking minimums to support housing affordability, especially when the homes are near transit areas.

In another action, the governor signed legislation that recognizes accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on single family lots starting July 1, 2027. This bill lowers permitting fees and streamlines the path to build these small homes in backyards or converting garages into dwellings.

Another bill the governor signed allows manufactured homes (a house built in a factory environment and transported to its final site) to be placed across the state. These homes cost less than a site-built home. It will be easier to place them on open lots, increasing affordability.

This legislation passed because people of all faiths saw a need and organized to speak up and speak to government leaders. Members met one on one in Richmond with leaders, organized writing campaigns, and held a big people power rally last October when nearly 2,000 people met to push for affordable housing. Grace and other Alexandria churches sent attendees to this big meeting. It was a wonderful experience to see a big church full of diverse people wanting the same thing. These activities showed that when we organize, we win. For more information about VOICE or to get involved with further activities to support affordable housing, contact Jennifer Eckel or a member of the outreach committee.



Photo Credit: Canva.com



Family Activity Page

Using the vases below, your imagination, and crayons or colored pencils, create your own unique flower arrangements for the altar below.





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Vestry Class of 2026

Chad Eckles, Outreach & Justice & Worship
Sarah Schultz, Senior Warden
Mary Stewart, Adult Formation & Stewardship
Eric Waskowicz, Pastoral Care & Liaison
to La Gracia Consejo

Vestry Class of 2027

Bill Eckel, Junior Warden
Ramee Gentry, Treasurer
Colleen McArdelle, Evangelism & Fellowship
Rebecca Prosser, Grace School Board
Laura Weidenfeld, Member-At-Large

Vestry Class of 2028

Mark Braza, Children
Christina Ritter, Register
Larry Thompson, Youth & Grace School Board
Elias Voces, Assistant Treasurer & Stewardship

Parish Team Leads

Adult Education - **Anne Boris**
Children's Programs - **Kristen Woodiwiss**
Evangelism - **Keith Davis**
Fellowship - **Angie Crane**
Outreach and Justice - **Jennifer Pease**
Pastoral Care - **John Boris**
Stewardship - **Barry Joyner**
Worship - **John Thompson**
Youth Programs - **Reba Winstead**



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