

GRACE GRĂCIA

## GRACENOTES

A Bi-Monthly Magazine Published by Grace Episcopal Church

3601 Russell Road | Alexandria, Virginia 22305



## Graceful Gathering

See what matters to us

## From Mother Anne M. Turner *Rector*



Dear Friends in Christ,

Gathering meaningfully means this: "Committing to a bold, sharp purpose."

These words from Priya Parker's "The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters" came to mind as I thought about "Graceful Gathering," the theme of this issue of Grace Notes. We come together not just because we love each other or God (although we do, very much), but because we have reason to be together. Many of us return to parish life in September with renewed vigor because we feel the eagerness and anticipation of shared purpose. Now is the time that things are going to happen.

So, just what's happening? What's our purpose in gathering as a parish?

Our Visioning Team has recently completed its work. They presented their findings to the vestry in August. They then presented them to the parish in September, with a session at Shine Mont followed by three at Russell Road.

<u>Their report</u> is thoughtful, insightful, and filled with the Holy Spirit. They have identified six strands of mission—"golden threads" of our shared desires:

\* spiritual formation

\* institutional knowledge and communication

\* generational engagement

\* bridges for Grace and La Gracia

\* community and belonging

\* neighborhood outreach

The team also identified the need to root these desires in sustainable programs and physical space.

The report describes a church that is engaging, faithful, and exciting. I want to belong to this church. I get to be a part of building this church. So do you.

cont.

#### From Mother Anne Turner, cont.

I encourage you to learn more about this vision. It is our why. It is the reason we gather together and what we hope our shared life will accomplish. It is the compass we will use to figure out what is going to happen next.

The vestry is responsible for moving the vision forward, understanding what our resources are and what will be possible. But this vision came from the congregation as a whole and belongs to the congregation as a whole. You dreamed it. You get to make it real. I'm glad to gather together around this hope for our future.

Yours in Christ, Anne+



Graceful Gathering at Little Church during the Eucharist



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#### **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 November 15. Articles and photos should be emailed to <a href="mailto:grace.notes@gracealex.org">gracealex.org</a> and will be subject to editing. The Grace Notes team includes Chrissie Crosby and Kemp Williams (*Co-editors*), Teresa Preston and Jason Holleran (*Final Proofreaders*), and support from the Grace Operations and Communications staff.

# On the Mind of Father Santiago THE REV. SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ, ASSOCIATE RECTOR

Priya Parker's 2018 book *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet And Why It Matters* has been highly impactful and transformative for me. I was incredibly grateful for the chance to soak in the wisdom of Priya Parker while at the The Episcopal Diocese of Texas clergy conference in October 2021. Her insights on how gatherings can be purposeful and transformative resonated deeply with my own experience of church life. Too often, Parker observes our gatherings—whether meetings, parties, or even family dinners—become bland because we fall back on routine and politeness rather than intentionality. We lose our curiosity and our capacity to be fully present in order to connect with others.

Her central conviction is simple but powerful: gatherings flourish when they are designed around a clear purpose. That purpose should shape how we begin, how we host, and how we end. Parker names three essential practices for life-giving gatherings:

- Start with purpose. A gathering should exist not just for the sake of being together, but for something specific and bold.
- Host with generosity and intention. The host's role is not neutral; they actively guide, shape, and sometimes even narrow the focus to ensure the purpose is honored.
- End well. Strong endings help participants carry forward the meaning of what they've shared, ensuring it lingers beyond the moment.

If Parker were looking for the world's most enduring example of a gathering built on clear purpose, she would need look no further than the Eucharist. Here is a gathering that is not accidental or polite, but purposeful and transformative. At its heart is Christ's own command: "Do this in remembrance of me."



Priya Parker, 2021 Diocese of Texas Clergy Conference

#### On the Mind of Father Santiago cont.

The Eucharist is not simply a meeting of individuals who bring their own reasons for attending; though each of us comes carrying unique joys, burdens, and questions. Rather, the Eucharist is a gathering with a God-given purpose: to renew the Church by uniting us with Jesus Christ in his self-giving love. In this meal, we are healed, formed, forgiven, and strengthened. We do not leave as the same people who arrived.

Here in the Eucharist, Christ is our host—literally. And we all serve as members of that Body. When we gather gratefully—with purpose and intention—we can become instruments of peace, agents of love, and companions in the journey.

And then, like Parker's reminder that endings matter, the Eucharist sends us forth with intention. We are sent forth not to scatter aimlessly, but to live out what we have received. "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." That ending gives shape to everything that came before it.

In Parker's words, gatherings succeed when we are clear about why we meet. The Eucharist draws us into God's saving work and sends us to share it with the world.

So come. Bring your hopes and your anxieties, your families and your work. Gather gratefully. Here, in bread and wine, God takes all that we are and transforms it with love—so that we may be life for the world.





#### "One, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church"

If you had asked me to draw God as a five-year-old, I probably would have drawn my childhood priest—the Rev. Andrew Merrow. And if you had asked me to draw —I would've drawn the building I attended most Sundays. It wasn't until much later that the words we recite in the Nicene Creed began to sink in.

"We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church."

Church is so much bigger than Grace/la Gracia. Through beliefs and traditions, we are connected across geographical boundaries, denominations, and structures. We are One in the Spirit, and we are One in Christ Jesus our Lord. We share a special connection with the other Episcopal Churches in our region. In the Alexandria Region of the Diocese of Virginia, there are eight Episcopal Churches (Christ Church, Church of St. Clement, Church of the Resurrection, Emmanuel, Grace, Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, Meade Memorial, St. Paul's) plus the Goodwin Houses and all the Episcopal Schools. Geographically, we are the smallest region in the Diocese, yet we are jam packed with Episcopal communities.

Principles of supply and demand might imply that this puts us in competition with one another. But I don't think that is what Jesus would want for us. No, we are not in competition with the other Episcopal Churches in Alexandria; we are in collaboration. Together we can support each other's ministries and help all our siblings in Christ grow in faith and love.

There are many opportunities to witness this collaboration in action. On October 5 youth from Grace and St. Paul's carved pumpkins together that were purchased from the Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill pumpkin fundraiser (see photo!). On October 19th, youth from all the Alexandria churches will come together for a joint Halloween movie night and graveyard compline. On October 26th, Grace Church and School will partner with Emmanuel for our annual Trunk or Treat. October 31st-November 2nd, youth from around the Diocese will head to Shrine Mont for a high school retreat. November 6th-8th, two high schoolers from Grace, Celia Schultz and Perrin Chiow, will attend Diocesan Convention in Fredericksburg. And November 15th, elementary-aged children from around Northern Virginia will gather for a morning of spiritual formation and play.

If all those opportunities for collaboration are coming up in the next couple months, you can imagine the exciting potential for continued work together. Grace Church may be our church home that we come back to time and time again, but I wonder how we can be leaders for our region and diocese and how we can learn from our neighboring churches to better serve Christ.

To quote the words of a beloved song from Shrine Mont Camps:

We are One in The Spirit, We are One in The Lord.
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love.
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

# 

#### Mother Emma & kids carving pumpkins!



**Expandable map of the Diocese of Virginia** 





## OPS & COMM

Operations & Communication @ Grace

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION

If you have looked at the bulletins over the last couple of weeks, you have probably noticed a plethora of announcements. There are notices about various opportunities to get involved in ministries, take advantage of formation opportunities, form and strengthen relationships through fellowship, and causes for celebrating the many ways that Grace is living out our mission in Alexandria and beyond. With the many ways and purposes for which we gather, it is evident that a lot is going on. With so much activity taking place, our email inboxes are a bit more active in this season.

Unfortunately, we're not the only ones who are busy. Scammers—"bad actors" who send fraudulent emails—are increasingly targeting churches. Since these emails are fraudulent, Clergy and Staff can do little to prevent it from happening. To help keep our community safe, we all must be aware of these scams. Here are a few reminders to help us to identify potential phishing, the term that describes when bad actors impersonate a trustworthy person or organization to commit a cybercrime:

- 1. Clergy & Staff will email you from their gracealex.org email address. Scammers will often purport to be staff using staff names, but the "from" email address will not be from a gracealex.org address. Remember, it is very easy for someone to find out the names of our clergy and staff and then create email addresses using our names in the email addresses from familiar email providers (like Gmail, Hotmail, etc.). Please note, some more sophisticated scammers can "mask" emails to appear to come from legitimate gracealex.org addresses, so still be cautious, and when in doubt if an email is legitimate, feel free to call the church office.
- 2. Staff will never ask parishioners for money or gift cards. Church staff will never make a direct request to an individual parishioner for money or to make a direct donation of any kind of gift card. This is a common scam where the bad actor poses as a staff member, often clergy, asking a parishioner to help someone in need by buying gift cards and providing the gift card information. This allows the scammer to access the funds. Any opportunities for people to make a difference by donating to a special project, including gift cards, will be communicated in official church communications and not in individual requests to parishioners.
- **3. Do not click unknown links.** Be sure that you never click on a link from an email address that you do not recognize. When you click on active links, it could allow a scammer to access your personal information and/or potentially download harmful viruses or software to your PC/device.

Remember, if something looks fishy, it could be phishing, so don't take the bait! If something looks off to you about an email stating it is from church staff, you can always reach out to us. We want everyone to feel safe and confident about church communications. By staying alert and following these steps, you'll help protect yourself and our wider Grace community.



## Music Update from

## DR. ALAIN TRUCHE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Dear Grace Church Family,

I would like to share with you that I have submitted my resignation as Director of Music at Grace Episcopal Church. My final Sunday will be October 26.

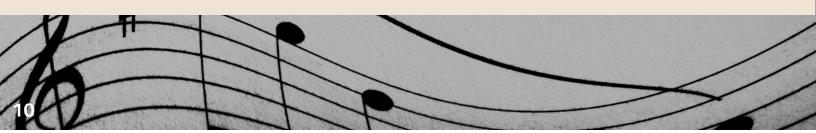
As I prepare to step down, I do so with a heart full of gratitude, love, and hope. Serving this community has been one of the great honors and joys of my life. Together, we have shared not only music, but moments of deep spiritual beauty, sacred silence, and joyful celebration. From the soaring hymns of Easter morning to the quiet stillness of Holy Week, it has been a privilege to offer music as prayer and praise alongside each of you.

I am especially grateful for the incredible musicians—choir members, soloists, and volunteers—who have given their time, talent, and spirit so generously. Your dedication and love for music have inspired me week after week, and I leave with deep respect for all you have contributed to our worship and community life. Grace is a place where music and liturgy thrive, and I have every confidence that this ministry will continue to flourish.

Though my journey is taking me in a new direction, Grace Church will always hold a special place in my heart. I will carry with me the memories of our time together and the beautiful sounds we created in the service of God and one another.

Thank you for your support, your kindness, and for allowing me to walk alongside you on this sacred path. I pray that God continues to bless each of you and the future of this beloved church.

With gratitude and love, Alain Truche Director of Music





AMANDA HUNGERFORD, HEAD OF SCHOOL

One of the greatest joys of serving as Head of School is experiencing the many ways our community gathers. We began this year as an administrative team, then as a faculty and staff during Teacher Work Week, and finally as a full school community on the first day of school. Each gathering brought its own sense of purpose and fulfillment, reminding me how powerful it is when we work side by side toward our shared mission.

At Grace, gathering happens every day—in both big and small ways. Sometimes it's a small group of students huddled over a math problem, collaborating and encouraging one another. Other times it's our entire school joining together for chapel, singing and praying as one community. Whether intimate or large, these graceful gatherings nurture connection, deepen learning, and help us live out our values.





Our families are eager to be part of the Grace community beyond the school day as well. We began the year with a Welcome Reception and Back-to-School Night, quickly followed by the GESPA Fall Family Festival. Each of these events offered children and adults alike the chance to connect, engage, and demonstrate the power of gathering.

We're excited to continue this spirit of community as we gathered with our Grace Church partners on October 5th for the Grace School Sunday service and coffee hour—the kick-off to our Episcopal Schools celebration. Later in October, we'll come together again for Trunk or Treat, another opportunity to build relationships, enjoy each other's company, and celebrate the season.

Grace does community beautifully, and as we move through the school year, I look forward to all the moments, planned and spontaneous, when our Grace family comes together to grow, celebrate, and support one another.

## Vestry Notes from Sarah Schultz, Senior Warden

As Mother Anne pondered in her September 19 Good News at Grace Weekly Clergy Letter, "Does it matter whether you put something in the offering plate?", she was referring to the physical act of putting our money into the plate at the offertory.

I give to Grace online, dividing my pledge into a monthly offering that is sent automatically throughout the year. It helps my family to budget, and brings consistency and predictability to Grace's financial planning. But I miss putting my check into the collection bag. Sometimes I look awkwardly away from the usher, or shake my head no. I feel a little ashamed not to be "participating," and am tempted to blurt "Bank of America sent my money!"

I notice the ushers looking a bit downtrodden as they walk past each pew with little engagement. I wonder what visitors think about our commitment to giving at Grace. Over the years, my kids have asked "Why don't we give money to church?" We do, I explain, but it happens electronically through an ACH....they zone out (as do I), and it doesn't quite nail the joy in giving that I would like to instill in them as Christians.

So let's try something new! Beginning on Founders Day, September 28, Grace is offering a way for those of us who give online to participate more fully in the offertory. Or perhaps you pay your pledge once a month, or every other week, and want some remembrance of that on the off weeks. In our pews, you will see tags hanging from clear Command hooks (no pews were harmed!) with the words "Bless my online giving." You are invited to drop one in the offertory bags or alms basin as a way to physically represent the giving you have done. I hope you—your families, children, visitors—will find this action satisfying, and a way to participate even more fully in the blessing.

Many thanks to all who have helped to shepherd this project along: Judy Willard, Liz Rugaber, Geoff Whitlock, Kevin Hamilton, clergy, vestry, and my dear husband, Robert, who installed 200+Command hooks.:)

Consider this Version 1. We'll certainly need to laminate the tags, and maybe we need to change some processes. Please share your thoughts and ideas!



#### If you are not on social media, you may have missed these photos from Grace!



A Graceful gathering for dinner hosted by La Gracia!









A graceful Gathering of alpacas, bunnies, goats, bubbles, and pythons, oh my!









#### Appreciation for Lynn Rohrs' 10-year ministry heading Fellowship!









Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives

## SHRINE MONT 2025 RECAP A Graceful Gathering of the Parish



A Graceful Gathering of Musicians



A Graceful Gathering of Giggles





## **SHRINE MONT** 2025



A Graceful Gathering of **Grateful Giving for Shrine Mont:** The Rector with Kevin Moomaw, Executive Director, Kirk Gibson, Director of Development, and Jay Legere, Shrine Mont Booster Extraordinaire

Since Grace Church is and has been for a long time the largest congregational group to attend Shrine Mont, we decided we should make a special gift to the Shrine Mont 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund. We kicked off the drive on August 3 at the 10:30 coffee hour with an historical T-shirt display and moving words from Jay Legere, our #1 Shrine Mont booster. Grace's generosity flowed, and on September 3, Mary Cyrus wrote a \$5,000 check to the Shrine Mont 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund, which Mother Anne and Jay presented to the Shrine Mont leadership on behalf of the congregation at our Saturday entertainment.



#### **SHRINE MONT 2025**

#### The Pledgers of Penzance

Sung by Geoff Whitlock during the Shrine Mont Follies (I am the Very Model of a Modern Major General)

#### Verse 1

I represent the Vestry for the program we call Stewardship It's difficult to rhyme that word but I found one or two that fit Our altar guild is expert at the pressing of the chasubles And flow'rs adorn the altar in a manner that is fabu-lose The eucharistic ministers and deacons help perform the rites I even have my daughter suited up to serve as acolyte Instructed by Ms. Molly Sim—we all can be quite sure of her To check up on the incense that is carried by the thurifer!

#### **Chorus 1**

To check up on the incense that is carried by the thurifer To check up on the incense that is carried by the thurifer To check up on the incense that is carried by the thurifer

#### Verse 2

Y tenemos servicios en inglés y en español Y todos extranamos a querida Padre Ignacio The coffee at the coffee hour that gives your afternoon a lift— These things are all made possible by something we call Stewardship

#### **Chorus 2**

The coffee at the coffee hour that gives your afternoon a lift— These things are all made possible by something we call Stewardship

#### Verse 3

Now let me speak of buildings, grounds, and properly securéd doors

An elevator that you can be pretty sure will reach your floor A kitchen with a faucet that will fin-a-lly pour water hot But HVAC in the Nave that will ensure the summer air is not! And thinking of our gardens, with geraniums and crocuses, How fortunate that volunteers have chosen these their focuses!

And all the sparkling cleanliness of toilets, sinks, and urinals And the food that Lucy Lee brings for your baptisms and funerals!

#### Chorus 3

The food that Lucy Lee brings for your baptisms and funerals! The food that Lucy Lee brings for your baptisms and funerals! The food that Lucy Lee brings for your baptisms and funerals!

#### Verse 4

The choir that sings so beautifully, for Monsieur Truche directs them well

His mastery of organ repertoire has us under his spell! And certainly the livestream with its faithful weekly viewership

These things are all made possible by something we call Stewardship

#### **Chorus 4**

And certainly the livestream with its faithful weekly viewership

These things are all made possible by something we call Stewardship

#### Verse 5

Now finally I turn to speak of Emma, Santi, and of Anne, These three do more than fifty or a hundred other clergy can! And Pedro, Amorita, Mary, Kevin, and the office folk: Of more efficient, helpful staff, I'm sure no one has ever spoke! Support for Carpenters Shelter and aid for migrant families The Haiti Micah Project, and the food pantry, and sandwichees!

To secure for your church and your community these benefits Then step up and give generously for two-thousand twentysix!

#### **Chorus 5**

Then step up and give generously for two-thousand twenty-six!

Then step up and give generously for two-thousand twentysix!

Then step up and give generously for two-thousand twentysix

#### Verse 6

Yes, offer up to God a portion of your treasure, talent, time I've fin'ly made it through this song with not too many awful rhymes

But all these blessings that I've named, plus one or two I may have skipped

These things are all made possible by something we call Stewardship!

#### **Chorus 6**

But all these blessings that he named, plus one or two he may have skipped, These things are all made possible by something we call Stewardship!

Song from the Pirates of Penzance by Gilbert and Sullivan (<u>link to original song, for your earworm!</u>)

### Grace Quirks

We invite you to contact us at grace.notes@gracealex.org if you have a quirky story to share.

#### **Founders Day 2025**

This is not a funny quirk as much as an example of the care and attention Grace parishioners pay to their ministries! This handiwork is from Chad Eckles, trained by the National Cathedral flower guild and naturally gifted in his eye for flowers!





#### **Adult Forum Schedule for Fall 2025**

#### **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.

October 12	Diocese of Virginia Racial Justice and Healing Pilgrin	mage Chrissie Crosby and Lynn Rohrs
October 19	Year-Round Stewardship Visioning	Elizabeth Legere and Robby Schrum
October 27	Grace at Work: The Banquet Table	Erin White
November 2	Grace Church: 1855-2125: Stewardship Funded Our S and Ensures Our Future	Start Barry Joyner and Elizabeth Legere
November 9	Poetry for Compassion and Shelter	Mother Anne Turner
November 16	Atonement Without Violence	Father Santiago Rodriguez
November 23	Graceful Memories	Grace Church Parishioners
November 30	Advent Intergenerational Events	in Merrow Hall Auditorium



#### **Vestry Stewardship Statement - 2025**

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." - Colossians 2:6-7

Our roots strengthen and nourish us; they connect us to the soil in which we have grown up. Over the past two years, we have drawn on our roots to sustain our activity through hardship and heartbreak, and through reconciliation and resurgence. Friends, these are some mighty roots!

Now it is time to tend to our roots—to fortify them as they have supported us; to build on what is good and helpful. It is time for us to put down the roots that will help us grow into our vision over the next year, and the next ten.

We, the Vestry of Grace Church, reaffirm and redouble our commitment to this work as part of this year's pledge campaign, "Rooted in Grace, Growing in Love." We commit to use such gifts as we have received from God to build up this body—to give unselfishly, to volunteer joyfully, and to pray vigorously for the health and flourishing of Grace Church.

Will you join us in this work? Over the coming days, please prayerfully consider the ways you can give of your time, talent, and treasure to tend to Grace's roots in 2026, and join us for the pledge in-gathering on Sunday, November 2.

3601 Russell Road, Alexandria, VA 22305



The Cathedral of Shrine Mont's Altar

Photos from Shrine Mont archives



The Hotel at Shrine Mont



#### **Parish Staff**

Betsy Bamford Jane Avery Nursery Workers The Rev. Emma Brice

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#### Dr. Alain Truche

Director of Music alain.truche@gracealex.org

#### The Rev. Dr. Anne Michele Turner

Rector

anne.turner@gracealex.org

#### 2025-2026 Seminarians from Virginia Theological Seminary

Seth Wise Buck Gabriel (Gabe) Oakes Miranda Peters

#### Vestry Class of 2025

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

#### **Vestry Class of 2026**

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

#### **Vestry Class of 2027**

Bill Eckel, Youth

Ramee Gentry, Assistant Treasurer

Colleen McArdelle, Fellowship

Rebecca Prosser, Grace School Board

Laura Weidenfeld, Pastoral Care

#### **Parish Team Leads**

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



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