



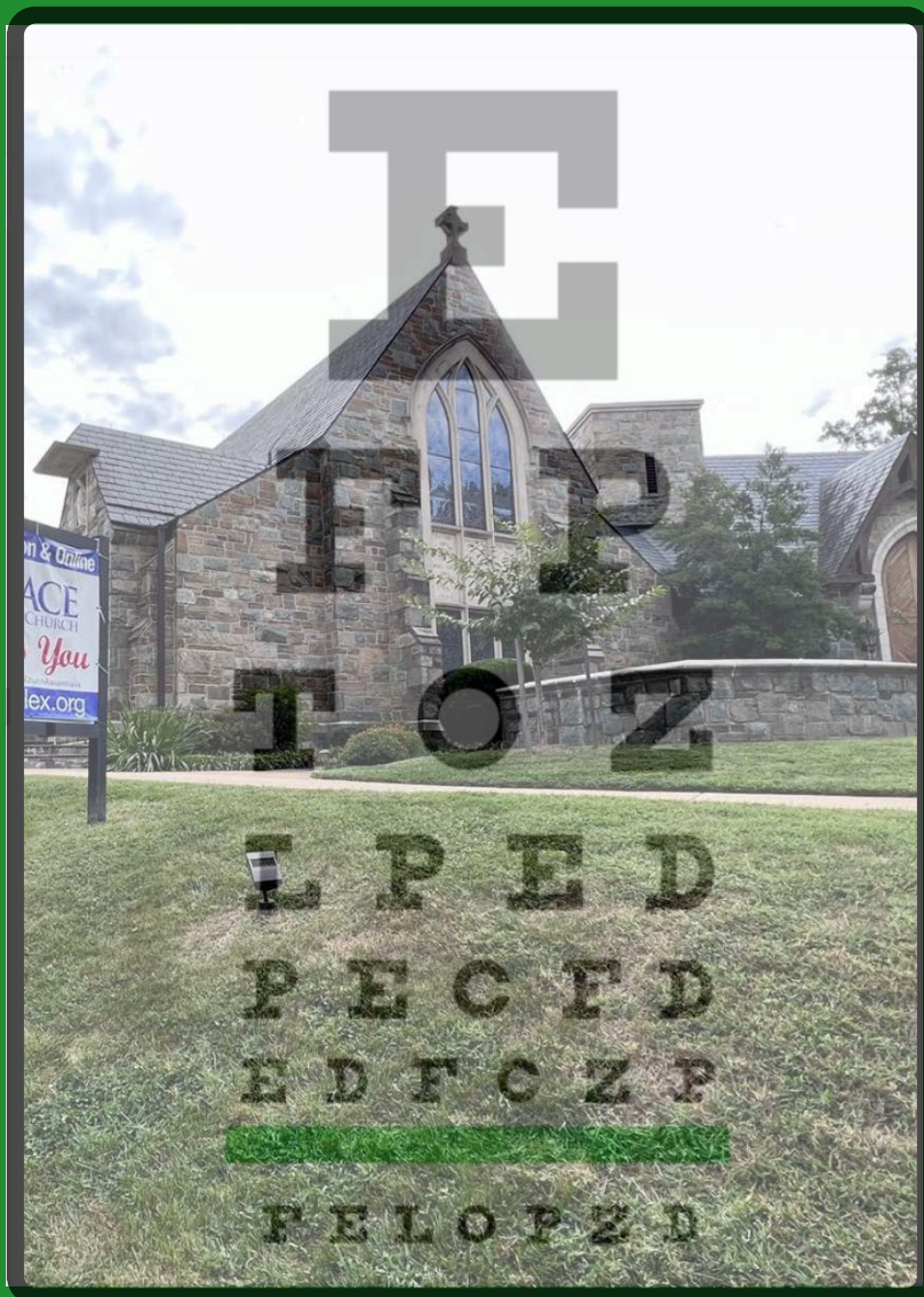
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June/July 2025

GRACE NOTES

A Bi-Monthly Magazine Published by Grace Episcopal Church

3601 Russell Road | Alexandria, Virginia 22305



HOW'S YOUR VISION?

Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives

From Mother Anne M. Turner

Rector



Dear Friends in Christ,

What are you beginning to see?

Over the past few weeks, a picture for the future of Grace has begun to emerge. It has been a delight and a privilege to watch parishioners engaging with one another about the possibilities before us. I have seen some ideas that were a complete surprise and others that were no surprise at all because they were such a perfect extension of our tradition. Both are deeply valuable.

As a reminder, we start from our core values:

- **BELONGING:** You belong, just as you are. Grace is a safe and joyful home for all, where we seek relationships across generations, languages, and life experiences.
- **LOVE IN ACTION:** We serve our neighbors and seek justice as acts of faith. Love here isn't abstract—it's how we live, lead, forgive, and care.
- **WORSHIP ROOTED IN MYSTERY AND TRADITION:** Beauty, awe, and sacred rhythms ground our spiritual life.

Now, we are imagining what those values will look like when incarnated in the future. What might belonging look like in 2035? What will it mean to love actively? How will our worship look?

(As a reminder: if you haven't participated in one of the sessions, you can still give feedback.)

Over the next few months, the visioning team will synthesize what they have heard from you and present these findings to the vestry. The vestry will then adopt a vision for our future. And—where a new reality begins—they will start to think about how to resource that vision and bring it to life.

You have a job, too.

One of the benefits of this visioning process is the way that it engages us. As we think about our future, we also become invested in that future. A vision and a strategic plan do not only belong to the vestry. They belong to all of us.

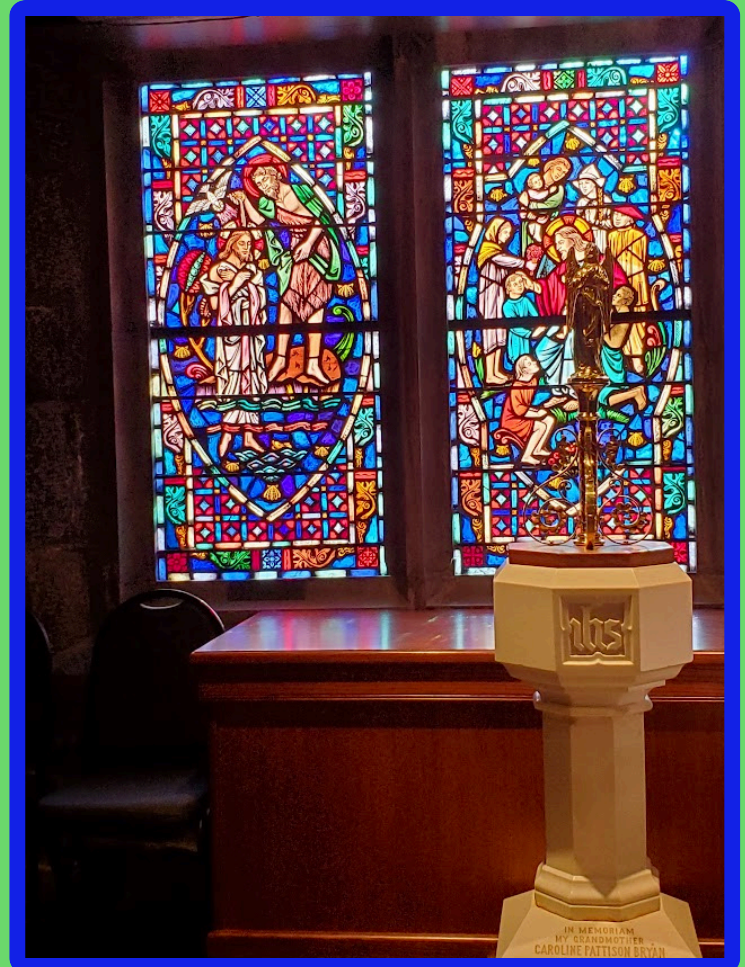
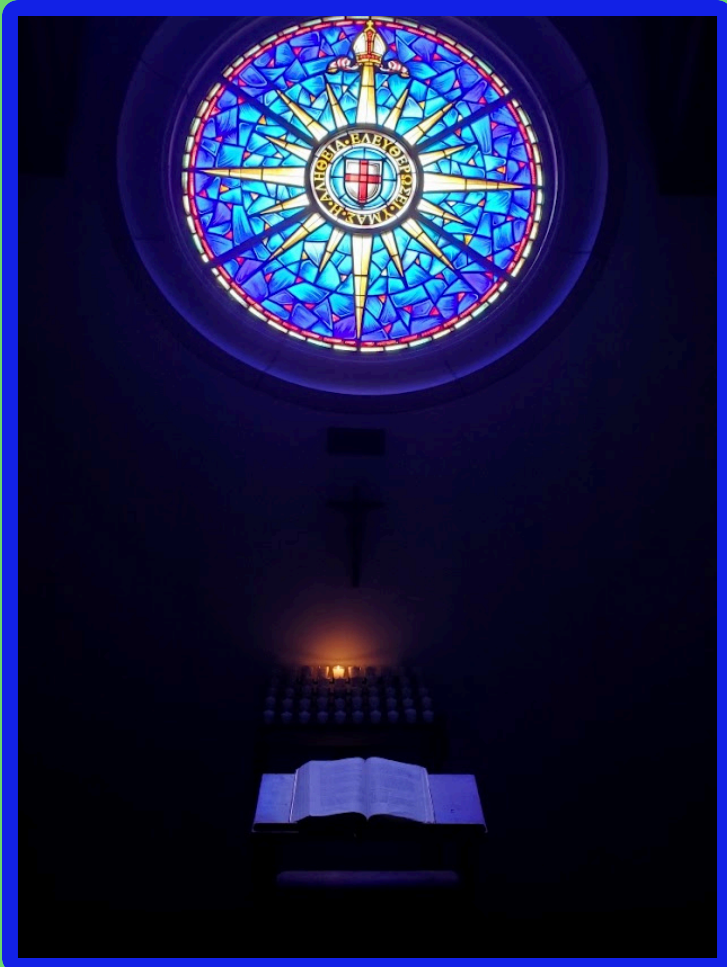
My hope for you is that you stay engaged. As you imagine what could be in our future, I hope you imagine your part in that future as well. Are you committed to the Eucharist? Perhaps you would be fed by serving at the altar. Are you passionate about youth? Perhaps you could help organize a game night. Do you believe that we should be more connected with our neighborhood? There's a place for you in the food pantry or VOICE.

I am not asking you simply to fill a volunteer spot. I am asking you to think about your role in the kingdom. As we move into Pentecost, our focus shifts toward mission and ministry, and our Sunday lessons all summer long talk about the ways that disciples (which is to say people like us) become real students of and friends to Jesus. How can your involvement in the church make you more like the person you want to be?

Yours in Christ,
Anne+

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the Parish, BCP, p. 817





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Grace Notes Submissions and Publication Schedule

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

On the Mind of Father Santiago



THE REV. SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ,
ASSOCIATE RECTOR

I woke up on the morning of my birthday with a weirdly clear thought: “I think I’m going to consecrate this new year to the Holy Spirit.” Now, I hadn’t had any coffee yet. My dog was staring at me like, “You good?” And this wasn’t something I’d planned or journaled about the night before. The idea felt like it had just...arrived. Which is probably why I took it seriously.

Still half-asleep, I put on my shoes and headed out the door for a walk with the dog. I needed some air and a little movement to help me figure out what this consecrating-my-year-to-the-Holy-Spirit thing actually meant. As I walked, I tried to define it. “Okay, Santiago,” I said to myself. “What does it actually mean to consecrate a year to the Holy Spirit?” And why did it feel like I was making a New Year’s resolution with a divine roommate I barely knew?

The word consecrate is a fancy one, sure. But it really just means to set something apart—to dedicate it to something holy. So if I were to consecrate this year, I’d be setting it aside for something deeper, something sacred. And then I started thinking about the second layer of the word. When we consecrate something (like an altar or a chalice), we don’t just use it for holy stuff; we declare that it belongs to something beyond everyday use. A chalice isn’t just a cup after it’s consecrated. You’re not going to fill it with orange juice on Monday morning. It’s been claimed, blessed, and set aside for something bigger.

Which got me wondering—what would it look like to treat my own time that way? I thought about baptism. That’s when we, as people, get consecrated. Not to become monks (necessarily), but to live in such a way that our daily lives can be set apart for love, for justice, for the holy. You don’t have to pray in a chapel all day to live like that. You just have to be present—to yourself, to others, and to God.

By the time I got back to my house, one thing was clear: If I was going to consecrate this year to the Comforter, I needed to stop treating the Spirit like a theology topic and start treating the Spirit like...a friend. A guide. A companion. It’s not that I need to read more about the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. I probably will, but that’s not the point. The invitation I felt was about relationship. About trust. About taking those nudges and whispers seriously.

Father Jacques Philippe (who writes very short and very holy books) once said that “the shortest path to spiritual maturity is faithfulness to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit” (In the School of the Holy Spirit). I love that. It’s not about climbing some holy ladder. It’s about learning to recognize the nudges of the Spirit of truth and justice.

So here I am. I don't have a three-part method or a twelve-step plan. I don't know exactly how this year will look. But I'm calling it a holy experiment. An adventure in being Spirit-led. I want to befriend the Spirit of peace and patience, to get curious about how God is moving around and within me. Maybe even laugh a little when I get it wrong.

And I'd love some company on the journey. Maybe you've been feeling some spiritual nudges of your own. Maybe you want to experiment with faithfulness and holy curiosity too. If so, let's walk this road together. May the Fire-ever-burning—that beautiful, holy, sometimes surprising Spirit of God—kindle in us the fire of divine love.

LA GRACIA B-I-N-G-O Day Results

On Saturday, May 17, La Gracia hosted its Second Annual Bingo afternoon in Merrow Hall Auditorium. This family-friendly experience directly benefits the "La Gracia Fund." The day's total reached \$1,123. You still can make donations via check or contribute electronically via Tithely with the memo Line "La Gracia Fund."

Graduations from Virginia Theological Seminary May 8, 2025



Noah Aukerman , MDiv

The Rev. Ignacio Solano Gomez , MDiv

Addie Budnick, MDiv

(with supervisors Chrissie Crosby, Mary Hix, and Prof. Dr. Stephen Cook)



From Mother Emma

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

Mother Emma unselfishly turned over her page to honor our seniors graduating from high school

Congratulations High School Graduates



Brennan Caceres

Annandale High School
Next year: TBD

Annie Eason

James W. Robinson Jr. Secondary School
Next year: College of William & Mary as a W&M Scholar; plans to major in marketing and minor in entrepreneurship



Caroline Legere

Alexandria City High School
Next year: James Madison University; plans to major in music education with a specialty in vocal performance



Ariel Lopez Bonilla

Alexandria City High School
Next year: TBD



Macon Malone

Alexandria City High School
Next year: Northeastern University; plans to study architecture and history

Christian Portillo

North Stafford High

Next year: Northern Virginia Community College;
plans to study to become a chef



Paul Rugaber

H-B Woodlawn

Next year: Wake Forest University; plans to study
environmental engineering



Glory Shriner

The Sycamore School (a year early!)

Next year: Marymount University; plans to
study fashion merchandising and marketing



Seamus White

Alexandria City High School

Next year: College of William & Mary as a
Posse Foundation Leadership Scholar



Class of 2025

2025 GRACE COLLEGE GRADUATES

Stewart Hall - graduated from the University of Louisville in Kentucky with a degree in sports management. He starts June 2 as a consumer sales representative at the iconic Churchill Downs horse racing venue. He is the son of Donna and John Hall, and brother of Savannah.



Kevin Hernandez -- graduated Old Dominion University with a major in criminal justice and a minor in cyber security. He is the son of Vilma Hernandez and is the brother of Liliana Medrano-Lopez.

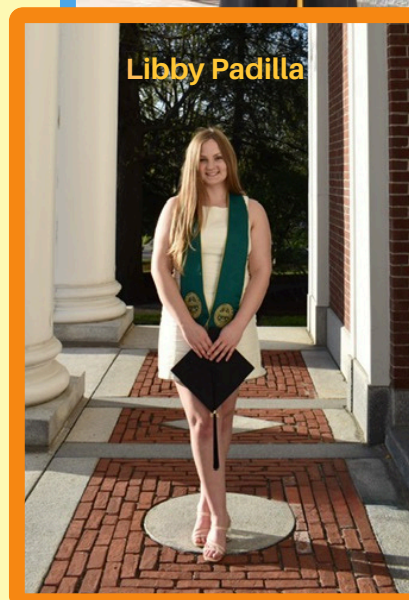


Elizabeth Jamison - graduated from Northeastern University in Boston with a degree in computer science. She is working for an airline company and stationed in Clarendon in Arlington. She is the daughter of Meg Riley-Jamison and Robert Jamison, and sister of Caroline.



Karlene Kelly - graduated from Longwood University in Farmville, VA, with a bachelor of liberal arts with a concentration in special education. She is working as a special education Teacher at Discovery Elementary School in Arlington and has started on her master's in special education. She is the daughter of Cindy MacIntyre and Rich Kelly and sister of Heather, Erin, Sean, and Shannon.

Libby Padilla - graduated from the University of Vermont, double majoring in history and art history. She is the daughter of Beth Yancey and Dennis Padilla and the granddaughter of Bette Yancey.



Aidan Smith - graduated from Virginia Tech, majoring in economics and finance. He is the son of Phil and Mai Lan Smith and brother of Jared. The Smiths moved to Atlanta two years ago.

Emily Smith - graduated magna cum laude from Davidson College, majoring in psychology. She will work as a medical assistant at Pediatric Associates of Alexandria while applying for medical school. She is the daughter of Alison and Richard Smith and sister of Tyler and Andrew.

OPS & COMM

Operations & Communication @ Grace



KEVIN HAMILTON,

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION

One of the greatest leadership lessons I have ever learned about vision can be summed up in two words... it leaks. Vision is never a single, one-time pronouncement. Often the hustle and bustle of life throws so much on our calendars and the pace speeds to roller-coaster status at which point we often kick into survival mode. However, vision is not about just surviving ... it's about thriving! When we craft a vision for the future, leaders do well to communicate it often and keep those inspirational fires burning when even the most focused of us get sidetracked.

This is why I am excited that Grace is in a season of visioning. No, the overall vision and beauty writ large of the amazing and messy and life-giving endeavor we know as the church hasn't changed since its birth those thousands of years ago. However, what does change is how each individual church lives out this greater vision. I am so looking forward to hearing how the people of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, cast a vision to continue flying the banner of love for Alexandria and beyond, equipping people to do those things that help bring the kingdom of God to 3601 Russell Road and beyond.

Operations/communication has the unique privilege of coming alongside of the church and the visioning work you are doing (and will continue to do) to create systems and provide support to help said vision find operational grounding. In other words, I am looking forward to helping bring some of these collective aspirations and intentional plans into reality in some small way.

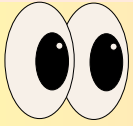
There are a few recent projects either completed or close to it as we look towards the future, knowing regardless of the shape of the vision, these are needed enhancements. These are things like the recent internet and phone system upgrade that happened through a strong school/church partnership. Our previous phone system was so outdated that we could no longer get replacement parts. I would like to give a major shoutout to Amanda Hungerford, Head of Grace School, for her dedication to the project and to Ashley Entwisle, GES Admin, for all her amazing administrative support!

We also completed the first two major phases of updating Breeze, the church database, a project that will be extremely useful for communications and future endeavors. Through the work of a cross-functional church/school team, the coming installation of our new access control system at the tower doors that (again, replacing an outdated system) will provide enhanced control and safety. We are also supporting some safety enhancements led by Mother Anne to ensure Grace is a safe and prepared community of faith.

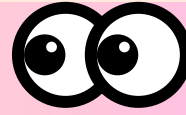
Through these efforts and many more to come, we will continue to provide the support needed for the way forward. I hope you are also excited about the future of Grace and the impact that you are making now and will make in the future. Remember, vision leaks so it will be important to keep talking about it, keep encouraging one another, and of course ... have a blast living out the calling God has given to every person who calls Grace their church community.

Music Notes from Alain

DR. ALAIN TRUCHE, *DIRECTOR OF MUSIC*



SEE YOUR WAY TO SUMMER CHOIR!



From Sunday June 22 until the last Sunday in August, the summer choir serves as our vocal leaders. If you would like to sing one or more of those Sundays, come to the choir room (St. Cecilia room) at 9:30 am on Sunday to learn the day's anthem and psalm (Simplified Anglican Chant).

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

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



How can I keep from singing?

Our newest choir of trebles sang for Little Church in May



Image and Photo credits: Canva and Grace Church Archives



It's amazing how time flies. With just 16 days left of the school year, it's hard not to count all the "lasts" coming up—the last field trip, the last chapel, the last free dress day, the last day of school (June 10). But we should also remember that it has been a year of tremendous firsts. For our first graders, this year marked the first time being on the second floor as official "graders;" many of our younger students celebrated their first time completing the monkey bars; as well as first essays written, first time leading Chapel, and so many more.

In a big "first" for Grace Episcopal School, this summer we are excited to host four weeks of our very own "Camp Grace" Summer Camp for Grace students only. While we have had Baroody Camps at Grace for the past several years, "Camp Grace" will allow us the opportunity to make our own summer camp vision come to life. The camp will offer programming for Grace students ages 3-11 and help Grace families fill in the childcare gap during the summer months with familiar faces and fun adventures on the playgrounds and in classrooms.



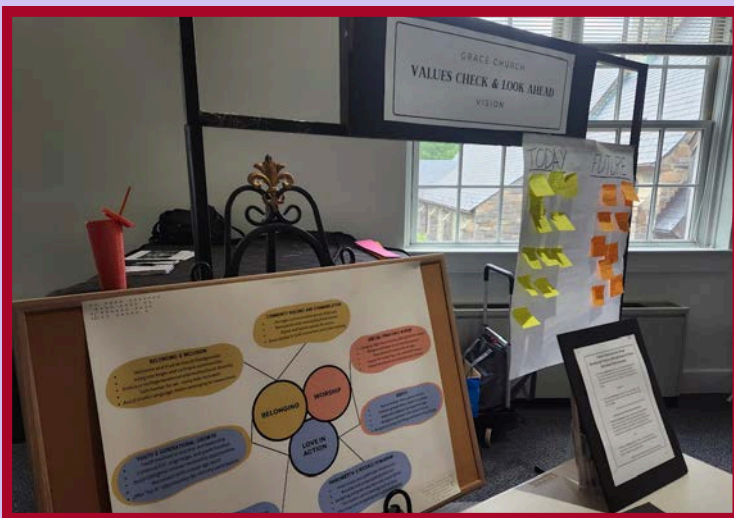
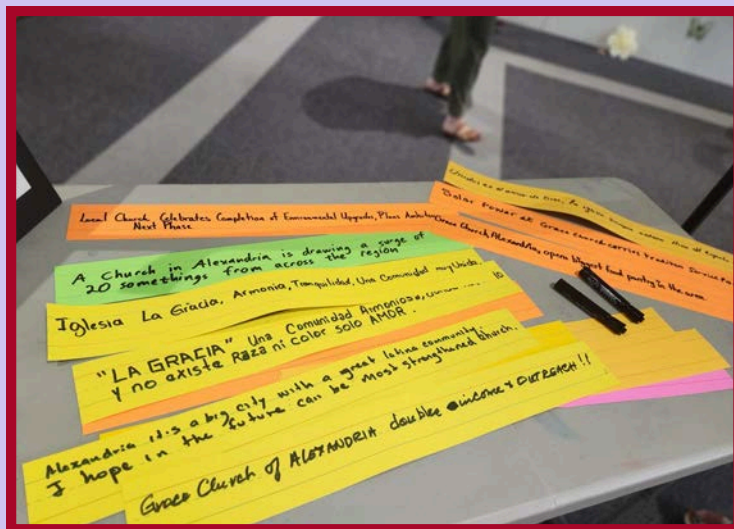
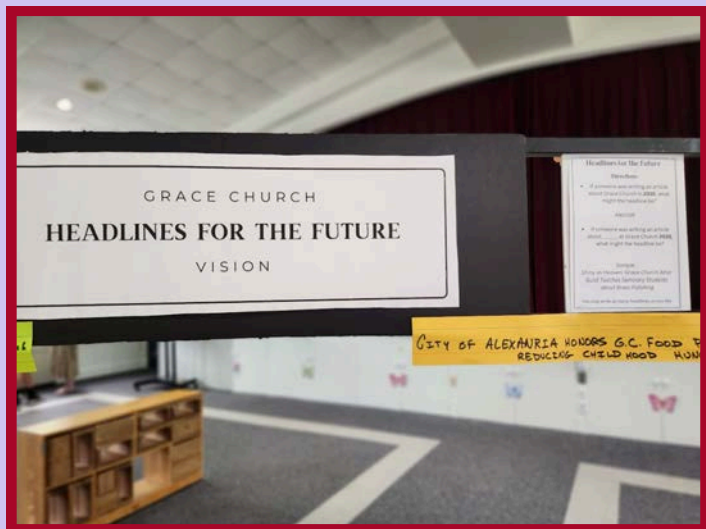
Another big "first" lies up ahead, with the 2025-26 school year being my first full year as Head of School. I look forward to leading this amazing school and community: Carrying on the tradition of educational excellence, building new traditions, like our student vs. faculty spirit game day (pictured here), and continuing the wonderful partnership with Grace Church.



Vestry View



From the Visioning Committee Exercises in May



Exercises in sharpening our vision

Two separate Sundays in May, the visioning committee invited parishioners to think about the parish's future from the "big picture perspective." As the photos indicate, people responded. Even young children had hopes and dreams they translated into 2035 headlines! Some really good ideas popped up, and we look forward to hearing more about them. In the meantime, if you missed the in-person events, try the online option with this QR code or type in the following URL:



<https://bit.ly/visionfeedback25?r=qr>



Vestry Leads and Lay Partners in Ministry

Class of 2025

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

Class of 2026

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

Class of 2027

Bill Eckel - Youth
Ramee Gentry - Assistant Treasurer
Colleen McArdelle - Fellowship
Rebecca Prosser - Grace School Board
Laura Weidenfeld - Pastoral Care

Clergy Team Leads

Children's Programs - Mtr. Emma
Evangelism - Fr. Santiago
Fellowship - Fr. Santiago
Outreach and Justice - Mtr. Emma
Pastoral Care - Fr. Santiago
Stewardship - Mtr. Anne
Worship - Mtr. Anne
Youth Programs - Mtr. Emma
Adult Formation - Fr. Santiago

Parish Team Leads

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



When the vestry calls, we hope you'll answer!

Across the next several months, the Grace vestry will be calling members of the parish, with the goal of reaching every member of Grace by midsummer. We hope you will answer! The purpose of these calls is simply to connect: you to your vestry, and your vestry to you. We want to check in, offer information about upcoming church events, offer access to resources like Breeze and weekly emails, and address any questions, ideas, or concerns you may have. Mostly, we are just grateful for your commitment to Grace and want to thank you for your presence! If you have questions, we miss you in our calls, or anything else, please reach out to any vestry member, including Sarah Schultz, Senior Warden (sarahschultz9@gmail.com/703-399-0646).



SHRINE MONT 2025

Restoring Grace

Registration is now open!

[Click here for the English form](#)

[Click here for the Spanish form](#)

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

Shrine Mont Costs

\$225 for an adult sharing a room

\$285 for an adult single room

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

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

Free for kids 3 or younger

Scholarship help is available.

Contact Father Santiago.

Father Santiago asked (on social media) for one word that describes what Shrine Mont is to YOU. Here are responses from parishioners.

Immersive

Peace

Joy

People

Food

Fellowship

Intoxicating

Serenity

Memories

Rest

Fresh Air

Lima Beans

Music

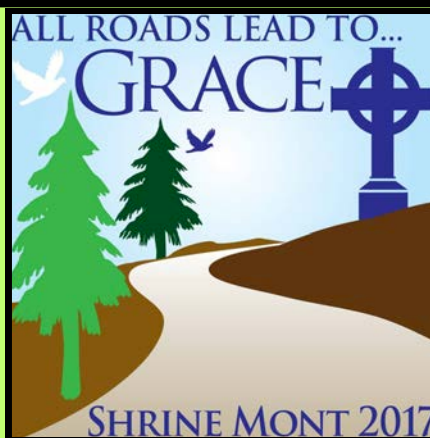
Friends

Special

Count your Blessings!



Grace at Shrine Mont 2016!





HAITI MICAH PROJECT: Urgent Assistance Needed!

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

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

The Current Situation...

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

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



What you can do ...

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

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

Contact Jen Pease at jennifer.pease@gracealex.org for additional questions about giving through Grace.

Pray mightily!!

ENVISIONING TOPICS FOR ADULT FORUM

By Anne Clift Boris

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

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

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

Grace Quirks

A new column inviting members of our community to share a strange, funny, or quirky happening they've experienced at Grace. Eleanor Reed offers this insight to Altar Guild practices. We invite you to contact us at grace.notes@gracealex.org if you have a quirky story to share.

Setting the Office Lights

This article is not about flipping the light switches on in the church office. This is about candles. The office lights are the six big candles on the back of the altar. The two candles on the left and right front corners of the altar are called the Eucharistics, and those are only on the altar when there is a Eucharist (easy, see?). Office lights are always there, because another term for a prayer service or baptism or funeral, etc., is an office. (Don't bother to Google it because all you will get is the address for the national church.) Whenever the frontal is changed (that's the fabric on the front of the altar that is different colors for different church seasons or events), all the candles need to be removed. The frontal is changed, and then the candles need to be reset.

Here is the quirky part. Because there are other items that go on the altar—like flowers, the communion stack, books, and other little items (including a tiny spoon in case a bug gets into the wine)—everything needs to be in pretty much the same place every week. You can't just go slinging the candles up there like it's Buffet Night at the Sizzler. Enter the American Psalter.

The Psalter is a book in the sacristy that has psalms and other devotions, but that is not what we use it for. We use it for spacing the candles. You put the first office candle up with about a thumb's worth of space from the edge of the altar. After that, you place the Psalter beside that candle and then put the next candle up on the other side of the Psalter. You then move the Psalter to the other side of that second candle and use that spacing to place the third candle.



continued on next page

We actually have two copies of the Psalter on the bookshelf so that two people can work at the same time if needed. This all may seem fiddly, but it actually makes it easy, because you don't have to worry that the spacing isn't even, and you, loyal reader, can sit in the pew, feeling a sense of peace and harmony, because there is no random spacing distracting your eye.

Before Father David Crosby became a priest, he was a dedicated member and a two-time president of the Grace Altar Guild. When he was off to seminary, we gave him a copy of the Psalter as a gift, so that no matter where he went, he could go in the confidence of the Lord's word, and in confidence that his candles would always be evenly spaced.

So this is definitely a quirky little thing, and the frontal and the bug spoon could have chapters of their own. If you're curious and would like to know more, please send in your questions, and maybe we can make this a Quirks and Advice column.

"Dear Auntie Altar Guild: What the heck is a communion stack?"



Eucharistic peace and harmony



Committee Notes

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

A creation care committee was revitalized in September to help envision, energize, coordinate, and formalize many ongoing efforts and desires for Grace to live into our God-given responsibility (and joy!) of stewarding our environment. We look forward to providing regular updates of our progress and activities and welcome ideas and volunteers. Contact Eric Waskowicz, ericwaskowicz@gmail.com, if interested.

A Vision: Grace Vestry Passes Resolution For Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2045.

The first step of the creation care committee was to define the areas of focus, and get a churchwide blessing in the form of vestry approval for these areas for our further recommendations and action. We model our focus in alignment with the Diocese of Virginia, which, at the 2021 Annual Convention, passed a Declaration of Climate Emergency, Commitment to Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2045, and adoption of Episcopal Covenant for the Care of Creation.

The Diocesan resolution encourages all congregations to recognize the climate and ecological emergency that threatens all of creation and to respond to this threat by achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. It also adopts the national Episcopal Church Covenant for the Care of Creation, that encourages loving, life-giving and liberating practices in individual, congregational, diocesan and church-wide ways: (1) in formation to love the Earth, (2) in advocacy to stand by marginalized people particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, and (3) in conservation to live more gently on the Earth to care for God's creation.

Approved by the vestry in December 2024, Grace Church's Resolution on Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions and to Advance Creation Care Initiatives adopts the Diocesan call, and recommends that Grace Church engage in three initiative areas toward realizing a path for achieving net-zero emissions:

1. Conduct an energy audit and implement efficiency Solutions.
2. Develop a creation care plan for the Grace Church grounds.
3. Examine consumption patterns and habits.

CREATION CARE COMMITTEE

WORK BEGUN

Possible energy efficiency improvements

- Adding solar panels
- Conversations with outside firms
- Potential government and nonprofit partners to include: City of Alexandria, Dominion Energy, and the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions.

Grace campus grounds

- Plan for native plants
- Removal of invasive species
- Increase shade areas

How consumption patterns could better love the Earth and reduce emissions

- Review Grace's cleaning products
- Investigate composting options
- Analyze our current waste disposal practices and contract.

The school has been involved in some of these conversations so far, and will be a critical participant as we move forward to generate more ideas and solutions.



THANK YOU to Nick Shriner for his Eagle Scout project revitalizing the parking area island with clearing of weeds and incorporating native species as pollinators!

Why The Earth is Not the Same Temperature as Space: the Simple Science of Climate Change

Written by Liz Rugaber, based on a reading of *Fire Weather* by John Vaillant.

We have all heard about “greenhouse gases,” but do you really understand what they are and what they do? Can we hold a vision for the future without understanding present science?

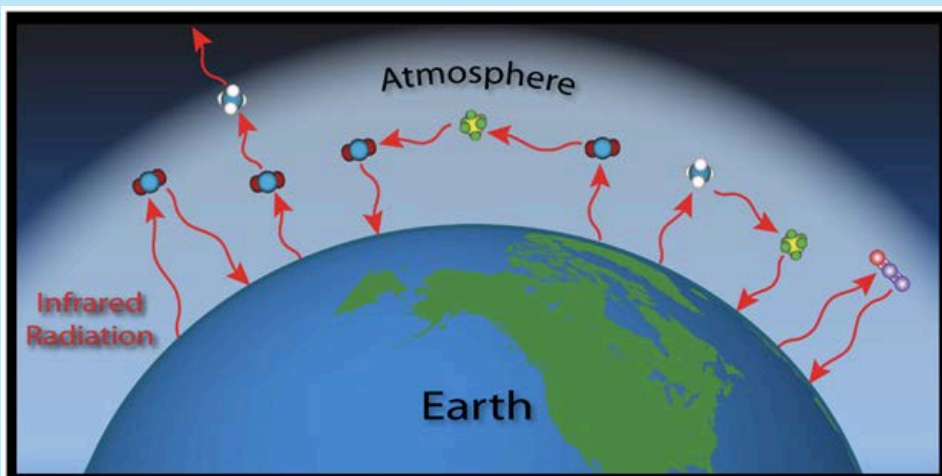
Earth’s atmosphere today is composed of only a few gases: nitrogen (about 78%), oxygen (about 21%), and argon (about 0.9%). These gases do absolutely nothing to keep the Earth warm, since they do not absorb any of the sun’s rays. It is the remaining 0.05% of the other gases in our atmosphere that do the work of warming, creating a “greenhouse” around our planet that sustains life, just like a plant greenhouse keeps the plants inside warmer than the temperature outside and helps them survive. Since the remaining 0.05% of gases in Earth’s atmosphere work like a greenhouse, they are called “greenhouse gases,” a term first coined, more or less, by Swedish physicist and chemist Svante Arrhenius in 1896 (!!!), with his publication of the first climate model that explained the phenomenon. Without greenhouse gases, Earth’s temperature would be freezing, just like the moon, which is roughly the same distance from the sun as Earth, yet whose temperatures on a lunar night reach negative 300+ degrees Fahrenheit.

The top three most plentiful Earth greenhouse gases are, in order of abundance, water vapor (yes, from clouds and rain!), carbon dioxide, and methane. These greenhouse gases work by absorbing some of the sun’s rays (specifically, infrared radiation, also known as heat), causing their molecules to vibrate, which then re-emits the heat in all directions. Some of the heat gets directed back to the Earth’s surface and is effectively trapped, preventing it from escaping back into space. That trapped heat then warms the Earth. Some greenhouse gases absorb more heat than others, such as methane, which absorbs 28% more infrared heat than carbon dioxide.

So, how does this relate to climate change? Quite simply, when fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) are produced and burned, they release large amounts of carbon dioxide and some methane into the air. Scientists are able to measure air trapped in Antarctic ice cores to measure past atmospheric conditions, and the NOAA-operated Mauna Loa Observatory has been recording actual carbon dioxide levels in the air since 1958. Since the first oil pipeline was built in 1862 in Pennsylvania – in just 163 years of the 300,000 years of human life on planet Earth – the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere has increased by about 50%. The atmosphere’s concentration of methane, the largest sources of which come from agriculture, fossil fuels, and decomposition of landfill waste, has more than doubled over the past 200 years. Scientists estimate that this methane increase is responsible for 20 to 30% of climate warming since the Industrial Revolution began in 1750, and carbon dioxide is responsible for two-thirds of climate warming.

These significant increases in greenhouse gases of carbon dioxide and methane mean more heat is trapped in our atmosphere. In fact, according to the World Meteorological Organization, the last time the Earth had a comparable concentration of carbon dioxide was 3-5 million years ago. During that time, the temperature was 2-3°C warmer and sea levels were 10-20 meters higher than now.

For a more comprehensive discussion on how greenhouse gases work, [check out this NOAA page](#). Or read the Pulitzer Prize Finalist in General Nonfiction for 2024, *Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World*, by John Vaillant (Knopf) for a fascinating and deep history of the science of our atmosphere and climate, and human’s history of rapacious natural resource extraction since the 1760s, through the lens of the extraordinary fire in petroleum capital Fort McMurray in Alberta, Canada, in 2017.



Source: Barb Deluigi, NOAA

Grace-ful Worship

“The Power of Prayer”

Throughout my childhood and teen years especially, I experimented with prayer quite a bit. A lot of my prayers were emotionally immature and manipulative. I tried bargaining with what I conceived to be an authority outside of my own being. I asked for things and told God I would do things for him if he agreed to grant my request. As you might expect, these prayers didn't work so well.

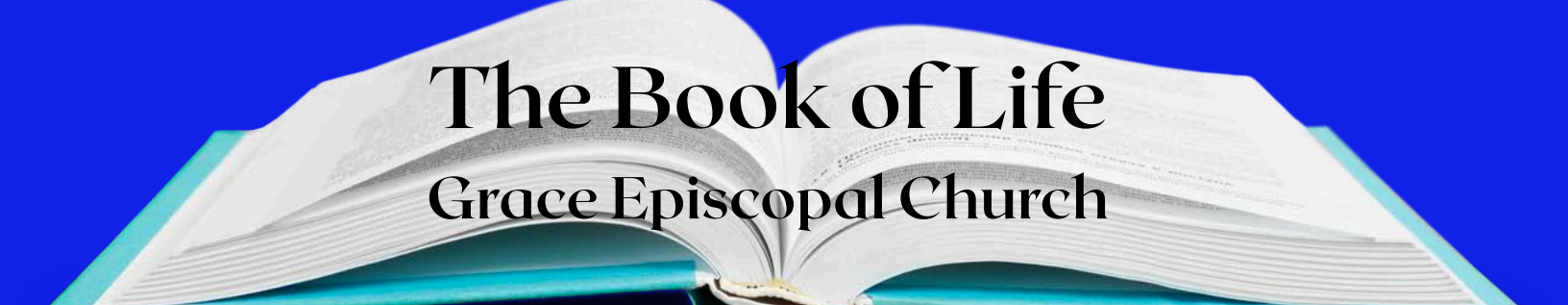
A breakthrough came when I was 16 or 17, and I had just heard devastating news from Rob, a boy I thought I loved. I learned that he had a crush on Breda, a girl I didn't know, and he told me this “because I was such a good friend.” What I realized was that I needed to let go of my belief that our relationship was more than friendship. I prayed to truly release the relationship I thought we had and asked God to help me. I suddenly felt a God that was everywhere and invisible but somehow personal and loving. I can't explain it, but I let my idea of the relationship go to that energy, which I realize now to be a kind of ever-present grace. It was amazing. I never imagined I would be praying for not only myself but for others, too, but here I am! I have learned so much about prayer in these past 40+ years through praying for all sorts of people as well as myself. And I always include the words “If it be thy will.” These words reemphasize to me that the outcome of each prayer is truly out of my hands.

There's a growing recognition of the profound power of prayer — not just for deepening spiritual connection, but for dissolving despair, promoting healing, nurturing forgiveness, and reigniting passion and purpose. Neuroscience now confirms what ancient traditions have always known — prayer doesn't just feel powerful, it is powerful.

It doesn't seem to matter who you pray to — whether you call upon God, a Spirit, the Universe, or any other source of higher guidance. The act itself transcends labels and invites us to tap into a divine connection that is unique to each of us. When we pray, we activate specific areas of the brain that encourage relaxation, emotional harmony, and a beautiful sense of connection between ourselves and the world. This creates a ripple effect that nurtures not only our minds but also our bodies. In fact, praying has been shown to help lower stress hormones, reduce blood pressure, and strengthen the immune system — improving our well-being on every level.

Incredible, isn't it? With each prayer, we unlock the boundless potential for healing, growth, and transformation. It's in these moments of stillness that we can access a deep state of peace, which allows us to tap into a wellspring of clarity and joy, while empowering us to embrace life with an open heart and a renewed spirit.

In closing, I pray that, if it be His will, God will allow you to learn some new insight from what I have shared in this article—or at least strengthen something you have already discovered for yourself.



The Book of Life

Grace Episcopal Church

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 01 Alex Washington
June 02 Jonathan Gonzalez
June 03 Nate Cline
June 03 Sarah Schultz
June 04 Mary McGoldrick
June 04 Roberto Sanchez
June 06 Mario Funes
June 06 Cynthia Puskar
June 06 Wolf Ramm
June 06 AJ Tillinghast
June 08 Eleanor Reed
June 09 Lisa Cassady
June 10 William Kendrick
June 10 Jane Rosman
June 10 Linda Waskowicz
June 13 Daniel Shaver
June 14 Joyce Ames
June 15 Rich Kelly
June 17 Katie Hayden
June 17 Sarey Hayden
June 18 Al Baker
June 18 Patricia Burch
June 18 Katie Madigan
June 18 Sally Stone
June 20 Cindy Diehl
June 20 Otto Wolff
June 22 John Boris
June 24 Jonathan Doelp
June 25 Fabian Alvarenga
June 25 Brynn Miller
June 25 Judith Willard
June 26 Edward Arthur
June 27 Jean Hawes
June 27 Isaac Reyes
June 28 Chinggis Amarburen
June 28 Paul Bellantoni
June 28 Rebecca Funes
June 29 Margaret Hillsman
June 29 Erin White
June 30 Carlos Mejia-Gonzalez

JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 01 John Thompson
July 02 Lily Braza
July 02 Camille Davis
July 02 Sherryl Dodd
July 03 Kit Williams
July 05 Summer Jones
July 06 Danielle Davis
July 08 Mike Gentry
July 08 Kirk McPike
July 09 Robert Schultz
July 10 Kimberly Broome
July 10 Woody Torrence
July 13 Anna Serke
July 15 Lina Dobbs
July 16 Karlene Kelly
July 16 Chris Rugaber
July 18 Chrissie Crosby
July 18 John Hall
July 18 David Murphy
July 18 Ruth Schrott
July 18 Celia Schultz
July 20 Reba Winstead
July 22 Carl Eckel
July 22 Barry Rosman
July 23 Vance Allen
July 23 Reagan Cline
July 23 The Rt. Rev. Bob Moody
July 24 Chris Caputo
July 24 Michael Jones
July 25 Jean Reed
July 27 Kevin Hamilton
July 28 Annie Eason
July 28 Julia McClung
July 28 Jane Weaver
July 30 Emma Imphong
July 31 Stephanie Reed

CONFIRMATION RECEPTION/REAFFIRMATION

April 19, 2025

Drew Bryant
Keaton Brathwaite
Parker Brathwaite
Nicholas Gentry
Perrin Chiow
Tyson Bethke-Rodriguez
Rebecca Leigh Prosser
Simon Kupczyk
Victoria Portillo
Ted Cooper Prosser III
Cole Ruff
Celia Schultz
Hannah Sternberg
Rachel Oakes

BAPTISMS

April 13 Igor Bosnjak
April 19 Drew Thomas Bryant
April 20 Mina Loren Campos
April 20 Rosalie Frances Gist
April 20 Hartley Battle Gist
May 25 Samatha Christine Bragado

FUNERALS

February 3 Mary Ann Ryan
April 22 Barbara Ann Morris
(*Goodwin House service*)
April 26 David Adams
May 5 Mike Hopkins
May 9 Igor Bosnjak
May 17 Donald Smith
May 17 The Rev. John Rick
(*St. Louis MO, service*)

WEDDINGS

April 19 Stephany Rodriguez & Kudzai Munzvandi
May 3 Erin Kelly & Dan Bartley

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



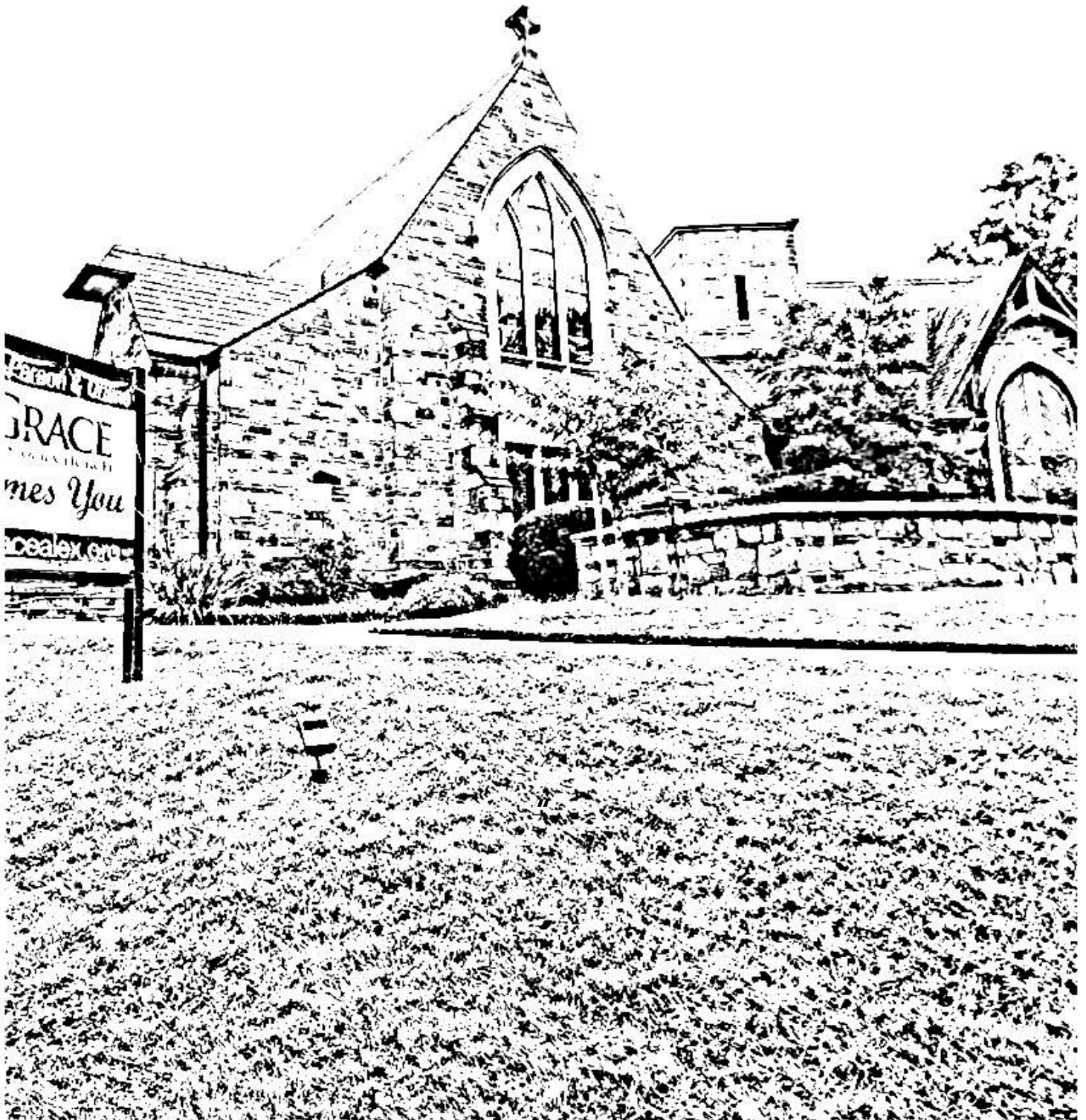
A Look Back...
Glimpses of the
youth and children
program year.





Family Fun Coloring Page

See Grace Church in new colors!





SEEING THE FUTURE

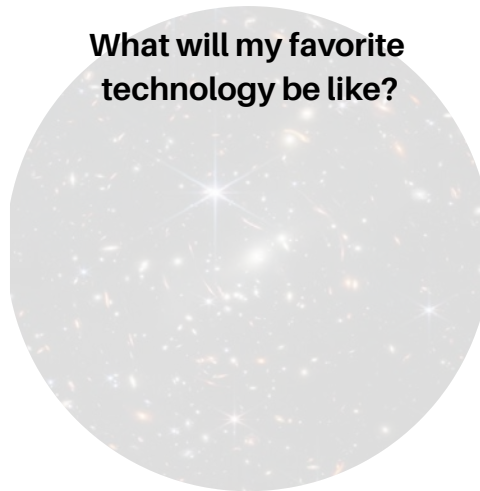
In ten years, how old will I be?



What will I be doing?



What will my favorite technology be like?



In twenty years, how old will I be?



What will I be doing?



What will my house look like?



In thirty years, how old will I be?



**What have I invented?
What does it do?**



How does my invention help the world and its people?





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Jane Avery
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The Rev. Dr. Anne Michele Turner
Rector
anne.turner@gracealex.org

Vestry Class of 2025

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

Vestry Class of 2026

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

Vestry Class of 2027

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

Parish Team Leads

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

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