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May 2023

GRACE NOTES

A Monthly Magazine Published by Grace Episcopal Church

3601 Russell Road | Alexandria, Virginia 22305

May Theme:
Days of Lengthening Light



Original watercolor by parishioner Nancy Lorentz

From Our Rector



Dear Friends in Christ—

One of the strangest little stories in the gospel is the healing told in Mark 8:23-25, where Jesus gives new sight—but in stages:

He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, 'Can you see anything?' And the man looked up and said, 'I can see people, but they look like trees, walking.' Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

This is not one of the Resurrection appearances, but I think it is an Easter story.

Easter doesn't happen all at once, does it? Of course, on Easter morning, we celebrate the victory over death and we proclaim the shocking news of the empty tomb. But...then what?

Gradually, our eyes are opened. Gradually, we learn to see again. Gradually, we come to understand just what it means that this once-and-for-all event has changed our world. Gradually, we discover how that meaning will unfold in our lives.

The theme for this month's issue of Grace Notes—"days of lengthening light"—is taken from an Easter hymn, number 179 in *The Hymnal 1982*. But the phrase means so much more than just sunrise time in an almanac. These are the days during which we watch the light of Christ unfold in us. These are the days that might change how we understand ourselves and our place in the world.

We do this as individuals. And we are doing this corporately at Grace:

- Your vestry has been working on a Mutual Ministry Review, facilitated by Dr. Lisa Kimball, Vice President for Lifelong Learning and the James Maxwell Professor Chair of Lifelong Christian Formation at Virginia Theological Seminary. During this process, we have been examining the roles vestry and clergy play, how we have worked together over the past two years, and how we might strengthen our shared ministry.
- Mother Nina has been working with the youth formation team to look at big picture questions around our youth program. What are our goals? Do our curriculum, traditions, and norms support those goals?
- Father Santi has been working with the outreach team to think about the future of the Food Pantry. What are the needs and realities around us? What do we hope for as a church community?

These processes of study and discernment come back to the same question—not simply who have we been, but who is Christ showing us that we might become?

Our eyes are being opened, all the time.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne +".

THE REV. DR. ANNE M. TURNER



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Grace Notes Submissions and Publication Schedule

Grace Notes is published ten times a year by Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia. All parishioners are encouraged to contribute articles and photos. The deadline is the fifteenth of the preceding month. Articles and photos should be emailed to grace.notes@gracealex.org and will be subject to editing. The Grace Notes team includes Joyce Ames, Kevin Hamilton, Diana Jarrett, and Liz Rugaber.

Calling All Artists

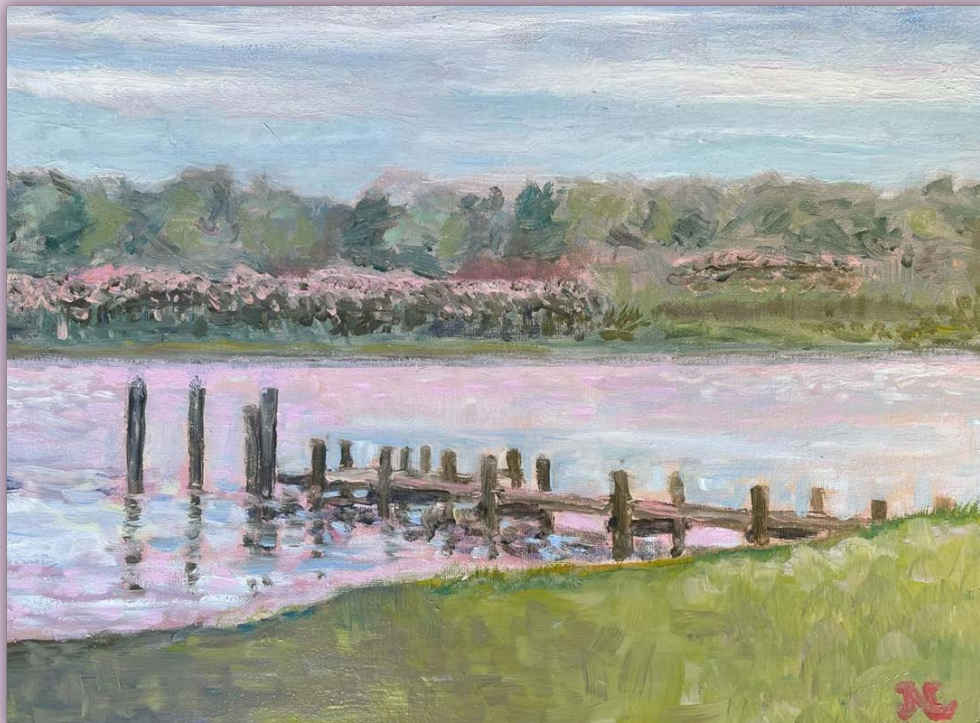
By Nancy Lorentz

At first, I balked at writing this. It felt extremely awkward. The reason is simple: after a pandemic-related move to Maryland in 2021, I somewhat vanished from Alexandria in general and Grace Church in particular. However, the invitation to submit a newsletter article was very kind. I knew space was being made for me at the table. My personal philosophy has always been “pull up a chair and see what happens.”

Unless you knew me before 2000, you probably don't know me as an artist. You won't know that I attended Tyler School of Fine Art in Philadelphia. You won't know that my first jobs were as a graphic artist and fine artist. You won't know that my paintings won places in Torpedo Factory shows and at Fitzgerald Fine Art Gallery in Old Town. You won't know that I was hired to paint commissions and murals. You also wouldn't know that, at my former places of worship, I was one of the artists called upon to design flyers, posters, and banners, and to make handprinted bulletin covers for special services. And why should you?

A lot happened between those “art” years and when we joined Grace Church. You probably met me as the mom of three amazing kids, an ESL teacher, a cancer survivor, a Girl Scout Leader, a soccer mom, the Walk-in-Love organizer, a Sunday School teacher, or as the founder-director-coach of the parkour non-profit, PK Move. No wonder I wasn't making much art by the time I met most of you! My family and close friends would ask me about it sometimes, but I would just shrug: “I don't have time.” “I'm too tired.” “It's inconvenient.”

It went on like that until the pandemic. My health, which was already trending in the wrong direction, quickly took a nosedive, even forcing me to step down as director of the non-profit. As I convalesced on Tilghman Island, I picked up my brushes again. Below is “Choptank River,” my first ever group plein air painting.



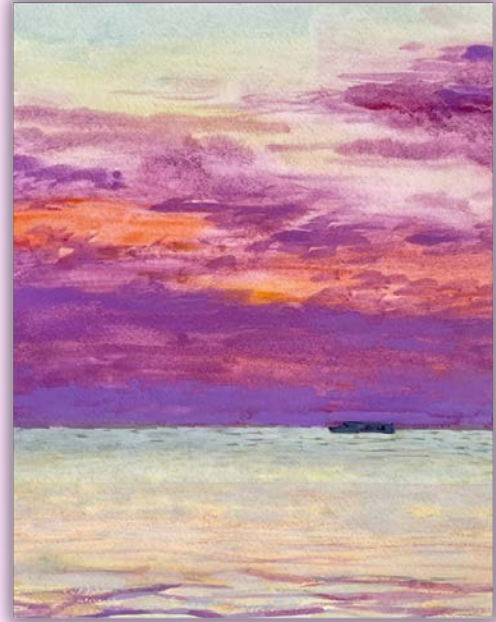
Now producing art at an astounding rate, I am filled with joy. I am also mentoring and teaching art classes at an afterschool program for low-income kids in Maryland. I entered a few juried art shows and am honored to have two works in the "Changing Chesapeake" exhibit at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland, through February 2024.

I reconnected with a friend who invited me to have a featured exhibit at her gallery, Local Colour, in Occoquan, Virginia. The show, "Bay Dreams," focuses on dreamy scenes from the Chesapeake Bay watershed. My art will be on display until mid-June. Maybe next time you get stuck on I-95, instead of fuming at the traffic, consider taking the exit for Occoquan.

Joking aside, I know many others returned to old hobbies or discovered new creative pursuits during the pandemic. I would love to meet up with other artists (all media) at Grace to get to know each other better. If you are interested, please email me at nancy.lorentz@gracealex.org and we will set something up. Let's see what happens.



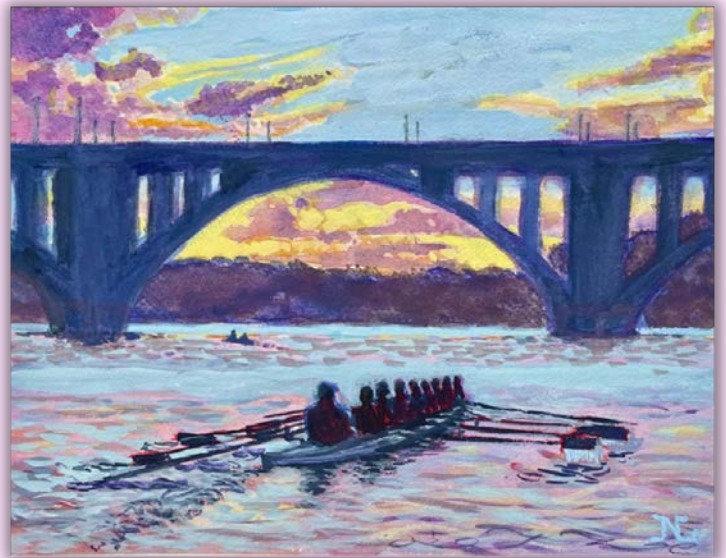
Langdon Farm Deer



Watermen's Sunrise



Two Ducks



Potomac Rowers

On the Mind of Father Santi



THE REV. SANTI RODRIGUEZ,
ASSOCIATE RECTOR

Let there be light. When the clocks went forward in March, they brought an additional hour of light. During spring, the days of lengthening light continue. The days get brighter by an average of two minutes every day until the summer solstice on June 21. For the followers of Jesus, that light symbolizes the light of truth, the light of faith, and the light of love. This light is Christ--the light of the world.

Let me share with you some of the ways I see the light of Christ illuminating our lives, our community, our neighborhood, and our world.

In Outreach, our focus this spring is to assess local needs and to learn more about local efforts in order to build strong partnerships and lasting collaborations with other people of good will. We are praying that God will shed light on these needs and illumine our efforts.

In Evangelism, our aim this spring is to continue to find ways to welcome the energy of newcomers and to connect them to the larger life of the parish. As new members arrive with a desire to serve others or with a hunger for community or a passion for worship, they can become catalysts for renewal and transformation. We want to continue to be tuned to inviting and nurturing the lives, voices, and hopes of our newcomers--to help their light shine brightly for all to see and enjoy.

In Adult Formation, our current classes (Durango's series on Dying, Death, and Resurrection, and Mother Amanda's class on Good Omens) are giving us opportunities to engage with an important aspect of our faith: the science of the Last Things.

These are important reflections. Our preaching, our teaching, tend to be one-sided, in that they are largely directed toward finding God here and now, and on the creation of a better world, while hardly speaking about the other, truly better world. It is profitable to ponder the Last Things--what theologians call "eschatology." The Apostle's writing that "Love is patient and kind" (1 Cor 13:4) applies to how we experience love here and now. It also implies that what we believe about love here on earth has consequences for our beliefs about death, God's grace, and eternity with God.

Our Lenten Series, our Bible studies, our Read-Along of the Gospel of Matthew, and our celebration of Holy Week and Easter have given us opportunities to engage anew with prayer practices and with Sacred Scripture. It is my heartfelt desire that we can continue to keep Sacred Scriptures close at all times. The Word of God illumines our hearts, minds, lives, and actions. I love it when we study Sacred Scripture with passion and perseverance. I hope we continue to study the Scriptures in the quiet of our rooms or read them with a friend or with our families. Reading the Bible together helps us to continue to share our faith.

May the days of lengthening light increase our hope in one another, our faith in God, and our love for all God's people. And may we grow in our contemplation of the light of truth, the light of faith, and the light of love.

Get Social with Grace!

Instagram



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facebook



facebook.com/
GraceEpiscopalChurchAlexandriaVa

Facebook Group



Grace Episcopal Church:
Members and Friends
(Alexandria, Virginia)

YouTube



Search for Grace Episcopal Church
Alexandria Virginia on YouTube.

Twitter



@graceepisalexva



Grace Episcopal School



**PATTI CULBRETH,
HEAD OF SCHOOL**

Spring has sprung, and Grace School is blossoming! We celebrated a successful VAIS Accreditation visit in late April that validated all the good work we do each day at the school. A visiting team of six professionals spent three days at Grace and reviewed over 400 documents to verify our good practices. The team was amazed by and complimentary of our strong Grace community and partnership with the church. We proved, once again, that Grace School lives its mission "to honor the gift of childhood." This review takes place every five years, and Grace maintains its full status of accreditation going forward.

Although the School Board, school administration, and teachers/staff worked hard on this accreditation review, our children just had fun talking about their school to visitors. It is heartwarming how much our students love their school home and, truly, they are our best ambassadors.

The school year is zipping by and we will soon hold graduation for our fifth graders in early June. The month of May promises a lot of outdoor play and exploration, more field trips, Earth Day, Field Day, and a spring performance for grandparents and special friends. We are winding up the academic year and celebrating the fact that we stayed healthy and happy while returning to our prized traditions. The Grace School community is alive and well!

May Spring bring renewal to all!



Begin with Grace.

Grow with Grace.

Lead with Grace.





BEHIND THE SCENES



KEVIN HAMILTON,
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION



My husband and I are blessed to have my mother live with us. In addition to being a wonderful mother, she is the ultimate "Meme" (grandmother and great

grandmother) to my nephews/nieces and their children. I can always tell when my niece, who lives close by, visits with one of her boys; there are little fingerprint smudges on the front door, the fridge, and everywhere else little hands can reach. It is like a visual capture of his day with Meme. And if there is candy anywhere near the vicinity of the house, the fingerprints may be enshrined in a thin film of milk chocolate.

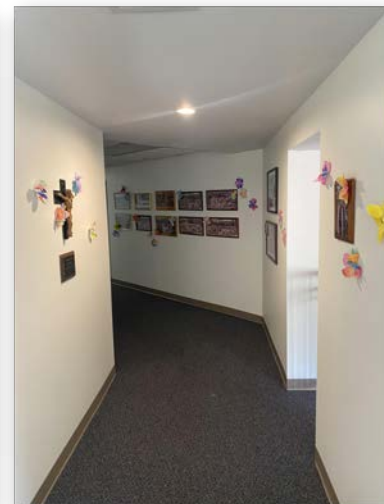
Yesterday I saw a little fingerprint on the walker my mom uses for support on her daily walks. It seems like an odd place to find a little guy's fingerprint, but not for our house. You see, the walker has wheels, so he begs his Meme to take him for a spin around the block while he sits on the built-in seat. It represents his special time with Meme, so it totally makes sense to see a little fingerprint or two on it.

You know, we get to see so many fingerprints of people here at Grace in the places that represent something special to them. These fingerprints may not be the kind that are enshrined in chocolate (although I am sure right after our annual Easter Egg hunt you may find a few), but they are instead the little touches on the campus or in our services/programs.

Some of those fingerprints are from current parishioners and clergy among us, some from those whose life circumstances moved them out of the area, and some from those who are no longer with us on this side of life's journey.



At the end of this month, we will all say goodbye to Associate Rector Mother Nina, as she moves on to become the rector for St. Bart's in California. I, for one, will miss her dearly, and I know many of you will as well. She has been a wonderful team member on the staff. As sad as I am to not get to work with her daily, I have such a feeling of gratitude for her and the opportunity to have worked with her. Her fingerprints will remain: some physical, like the current displays of children's artwork in the building to spruce things up, and some will be in programs that she has created or supported for the young people here. They will serve as reminders for a season of her time among the people of Grace and the fellowship shared.



I know that the personnel committee and Mother Anne will find a great new addition to our team, and I look forward to that person joining us in our shared work here at Grace. I know you join me in praying for their wisdom and the work they are in the midst of now. I am thankful that the person will be coming into a great program and that they will get the opportunity to work with an amazing group of volunteers, dedicated and involved parents/guardians, and the awesome children and youth who call this place their church community.

SAM SCHEFF,
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC



Notes from Sam

What is your mother's favorite hymn? I actually had to reach out to my mom to ask this question, as I could only seem to think of hymns she definitely does not like ("Spirit of Gentleness," I am looking at you). But what made me even stop to ask her were some fond memories of hearing her talk about her mother's favorite hymns.

I never met my maternal grandmother (she passed away from cancer before I was born), but sitting in church as a child and hearing my mother talk about how her mother would sing "Morning Has Broken" loudly, off key every morning suddenly made the grandmother I'd seen so often in photos come to life in my head.

I later learned that another of her favorite hymns was "Holy, Holy, Holy," which has become one of my favorites as well.

This is something extraordinarily powerful in a world where new songs are constantly on the radio; we never seem to know what "the kids" are listening to these days, and just as soon as you learn one song the trend has shifted to another.

I think this is also why we can be really resistant to new hymns; we crave what holds tradition and value to us and our family. I'm not trying to be the friendly parish organist once again nagging you to open your heart to something new (though there is certainly a time and place for that), but to remind you to stop and appreciate what is old and how it can connect you to valuable people in your life.

So, I'll ask again: What is your mother's favorite hymn? Turns out my mother lists "Morning has Broken" and "Holy, Holy, Holy" as her favorites too, and I feel confident that is no coincidence.



Campus Matters



ROBBY SCHRUM,
JUNIOR WARDEN

Easter is a season of renewal, and we're in the midst of renewing some notable portions of Grace's physical plant!

I hope you've noticed the newly accurate sign outside the old narthex doors. Special thanks from the junior warden to Ford Chinworth for helping to manage that project to completion.

You may also have noticed new stair treads in the stairwell outside the rector's office.

We have entered into an agreement with a contractor to undertake a water mitigation project on the side of Merrow Hall facing the parking lot. Work will begin sometime this summer.

We're preparing to reseal the parking lot as a follow-up to last year's big parking lot improvement program. This resealing is routine and considered a best practice. We plan to complete this work before mid-August.

We've entered into an agreement with a contractor to rehabilitate the cab in the elevator outside the church office. We have not yet scheduled that work but will communicate as far in advance as possible about when the elevator might be out of order.

The junior warden's to-do list remains long! But there's always room for more items. Please feel free to contact me at robby.schrump@gracealex.org if you see anything around the church in need of attention.



Racial Justice & Healing Pilgrimage

October 17-22, 2023

[Click here to Register](#)

The Diocese of Virginia invites you to join its inaugural Racial Justice and Healing Pilgrimage. We will journey by bus to historical sites in the fight for racial justice and equality. Beginning in Richmond, we will travel to Memphis, Tennessee, then Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama. Destinations include the National Civil Rights Museum at The Lorraine Motel, the Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the Legacy Museum, and the Civil Rights Memorial Center in Montgomery.

Our Racial Justice and Healing Pilgrimage is about creating opportunities, in sacred community, to think, reflect, pray, and be in dialogue with others who are engaging in ministries of racial justice and healing throughout the Diocese of Virginia. It is an invitation to have a deeply transformational experience in Christian community and expand one's understanding and practice of racial justice and healing.

Registration is now open. The cost for this trip is \$1,350 per person, which includes transportation, accommodations, daily breakfast, and museum entry fees. An installment payment plan is offered. Some scholarship assistance is available. Questions? Contact Jennifer Cox at jcox@thediocese.net.

Reprinted from an announcement by the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia



THE REV. SANTI RODRIGUEZ,
ASSOCIATE RECTOR

Un encuentro con el amor

Father Santi reflects on what the Resurrection teaches us about love.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, el autor de *El Principito*, fue un pionero de la aviación comercial. Voló en la Guerra Civil Española y en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Le encantaba volar. También le encantaba escribir sobre la amistad y el amor. Debido a esto, fue apodado el 'poeta alado'. En su libro *El Aviador*, de Saint-Exupéry escribió sobre cómo el amor nos transforma. El dice como cuando nos encontramos con el amor, el amor remodela o transforma nuestras vidas. El amor nos invita a contemplar un nuevo horizonte, el lugar donde nuestro corazón se encuentra con el corazón del amado. Como dice Saint-Exupéry, "El amor es más que mirarse el uno al otro. Consiste en mirar juntos hacia afuera en la misma dirección".

Los relatos bíblicos de la Resurrección nos señalan esta realidad. El papel que juega el amor en estas historias es extraordinario. En el Evangelio de Juan, María Magdalena es la primera en encontrar al Señor Resucitado. Él transformó su vida. Ella amó profundamente a Jesús y se convirtió en su discípula. Al pie de la cruz, ella fue testigo de la muerte de Jesús. En el jardín fuera de la tumba, ella fue la primera en contemplar a Cristo después de la Resurrección. Nadie podía visitar la tumba en sábado porque el viaje sería una violación. Así que fue el domingo por la mañana cuando María Magdalena fue al sepulcro. Ella fue muy temprano - fue a la tumba tan pronto como pudo. Todavía estaba oscuro cuando se fue porque ya no podía mantenerse alejada.

Cuando María Magdalena les dijo a los discípulos sobre la tumba vacía, Pedro y Juan corrieron hacia la tumba. Juan, siendo el hombre más joven, llegó primero que Pedro. Cuando Juan llegó al sepulcro, miró adentro pero no entró. Al llegar, Pedro entró. Pedro estaba asombrado por la tumba vacía, pero a Juan le sorprendieron por las vendas usadas para el entierro de Jesús. Estaban en la tumba aún dobladas, no como si se los hubieran quitado, sino como si Jesús simplemente se hubiera evaporado. Juan vio y creyó en la Resurrección.

María Magdalena, que amaba tanto a Jesús, fue la primera en la tumba. Aunque sus lágrimas no le permitieron reconocer al Señor, el amor abrió su corazón y le permitió reconocer a Cristo. Juan, el discípulo amado, fue el primero en creer en la Resurrección. Él fue el primer hombre en entender y creer. El amor le dio ojos para leer las señales y creer.

Cuando nos encontramos con el amor, el amor abre nuestros corazones y ayuda a nuestras mentes. El amor nos ayuda a comprender y a creer. A menudo oro con el Himno al Amor de Corintios 13: "El amor es paciente, el amor es bondadoso..." Cuando oro con él, suelo quedarme con la última parte: "El amor siempre protege, siempre confía, siempre espera, siempre persevera." El amor nos estira y viene en nuestra ayuda. Cuando nos falta paciencia y creatividad para darnos en profundo afecto, el amor nos sostiene. Ser amados profundamente nos da fuerza. Estar enamorados nos da coraje.

Cuando nos encontramos con Jesús, somos transformados y obligados a mirar hacia afuera. Cristo nos invita a ir al mundo y predicar el Evangelio a todas las naciones. Así le dice el Resucitado a María: Ve y anuncia la buena noticia a los demás discípulos. Cristo nos manda a ir al mundo para servir a su Iglesia y para sanar un mundo quebrantado. Ser amados por Cristo fortalece nuestro corazón para proclamar la buena noticia. Estar enamorados de la Palabra de Dios nos anima a servir a nuestras hermanas y hermanos y a trabajar juntos para sanar un mundo quebrantado.

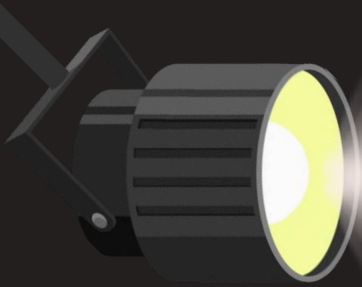


Palm Sunday, Holy Week,



and Easter @ Grace Church!





National Church News Spotlight



by Liz Rugaber



Photo Credit: The Episcopal Church

There's Another Election in 2024: A New Presiding Bishop for the Episcopal Church (In other words, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will have a successor next year, sniff sniff.)

Did you know that our beloved national Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who was elected in 2015, will be “replaced” in 2024? And that this is as it should be?

As explained in the November 2022 Grace Notes, the Episcopal Church is a democracy, reflecting the Church's core belief that, under God, the Episcopal Church is ordered and governed by its people: laity, deacons, priests, and bishops. The General Convention, which meets every three years, sets the mission priorities, budget, and policies for the Episcopal Church for a three-year period and elects various officers.

One such officer elected at General Convention for a term of nine years is our Presiding Bishop (who is technically also called the Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, and who serves as the Chief Pastor and President and Chief Executive Officer, as well as Chair of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church). The Presiding Bishop must be a member of the House of Bishops (i.e., already a Bishop in one of the Dioceses). This is all pursuant to the Canons of General Convention, specifically Canon Title I.2.2 [https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/23830#2_of_the_presiding_bishop], concerning the Office of the Presiding Bishop. In 1994, this Canon was amended to reduce the Presiding Bishop's term from twelve to nine years [https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=1994-A130]. Presiding Bishop Curry was installed as the twenty-seventh Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church on November 1, 2015, following his election at the Seventy-Eighth General Convention of The Episcopal Church in Salt Lake City on June 27, 2015.

While there is no rule preventing a current Presiding Bishop from seeking more than one term, the Presiding Bishop is subject to the mandatory clergy retirement age of seventy-two, and Bishop Curry is currently seventy. The Canon further provides that if a Presiding Bishop will turn seventy-two before the end of the nine-year term, then he or she must resign at the General Convention nearest to that birthday. That means 2024, the year of the eighty-first General Convention, is the last year that Bishop Curry can serve as Presiding Bishop.

Fear not, however, for a Nominating Committee is with us, as detailed on the next page.

How Do We Nominate Presiding Bishops in the Episcopal Church?

The Canons of The Episcopal Church require that a Joint Nominating Committee for the election of the Presiding Bishop be elected at each General Convention. This Joint Nominating Committee (JNCPB) consists of twenty members

[https://extranet.generalconvention.org/governing_and_interim_bodies/interim_bodies/1234/roster], with requirements to ensure cultural and geographic diversity, as well as representation by clergy, laity, and youth (those aged sixteen to twenty-three). The JNCPB is charged with the development and management of a process for soliciting and identifying qualified nominees for the office of Presiding Bishop, and they must provide at least three nominations at the General Convention, all of whom must be current members of the House of Bishops.

The JNCPB plans to release its profile and call to discernment for the next Presiding Bishop and begin receiving names on May 15, 2023. Names will be received until July 15. Bishops who discern a call to enter the nomination process will have until August 15 to submit their application. The committee plans to announce its slate of nominees in spring 2024.

The JNCPB plans to post three educational essays about selecting the next Presiding Bishop:

- The first essay discusses how the office of Presiding Bishop has changed from being the senior bishop by consecration who presides over meetings of the House of Bishops to the complex, multifaceted position it is today. https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/nominating-committee-offers-essay-on-history-of-the-office-of-presiding-bishop/?mc_cid=e469902353&mc_eid=9cdc97989f
- The second essay outlines the current roles, functions, and responsibilities of the presiding bishop. https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/essay-no-2-nominating-committee-outlines-roles-functions-responsibilities-of-presiding-bishop/?mc_cid=e469902353&mc_eid=9cdc97989f
- The third essay delineates the timeline and steps for the nominating and election process.

The first essay, about the evolution of the role of the Presiding Bishop and Primate from 1792 to the present, concludes:

Throughout this long evolution it has always been clear that the office of the presiding bishop is part of the larger authority of the General Convention, not above it. This is unlike the role of any other primate in the Anglican Communion. A reaffirmation of this distinction lies behind the rejection of the term “archbishop” in 1982, during the debate over adding “primate” to the description of the office.

The work, initiation, projects, and leadership of the presiding bishop are always subject to the Constitution and Canons and other directions of the General Convention. The General Convention sets the course of the church. It is the duty of the presiding bishop to function as pastor, executive, and prophetic voice whose statements must always be consistent with those of General Convention.

Essay number two is not easily summarized. Everyone is encouraged to take the time to read it, and there will be a quiz in the next issue of Grace Notes!

If you have questions or comments about these essays or the work of the JNCPB, contact pb28@episcopalchurch.org.

Opinion: Youth Perspective

Journey to Adulthood - A Retrospective

Annie Eason



Grace's J2A, or Journey to Adulthood, is a Sunday school program aimed at confirmation and teaching topics related to Christianity. Students are usually in high school and often come from Rite-13 classes. In these J2A classes, students have the opportunity to participate in many volunteer opportunities, learn about Christianity, do projects pertaining to the summer pilgrimage (often at the end of the school year), and also socialize with their peers. There are also after-school events (which I didn't do a lot of) and retreats (which I didn't do at all).

What did I think about J2A? As a J2A member and a first-time student of Grace's Sunday school program, I think it was pretty good, considering the fact that I didn't really do many after-school activities (they were inconvenient because of where I live). It was also a lot more fun than I thought it was going to be since the only experience I'd had with Sunday school at Grace specifically was me crying the whole time when I was around five years old because I really didn't want to go to school on a weekend. My only other experience with Sunday school was secular--I had to learn Chinese and how to sing--and while it was fun, it was really time-consuming. J2A was different, in a good way. I liked it because it was genuinely enjoyable at times. I was able to socialize with other people, have fun discussions, and even act in a play. I also liked that it wasn't too time-consuming as my Catholic friends had actual homework, study sessions, tests, and books they had to read for their classes for confirmation.

A memory that stands out for me was making hoagies with another friend. We had a lot of fun together assembling the sandwiches and doing other tasks in preparation for making them. I also really enjoyed handing them out; it was fun getting to see how working at a fast-food restaurant would be as I used to always play games about working at a restaurant. It also reminded me of Subway and stores of that sort. Another fun memory was the Christmas pageant. While it arguably wasn't the best Christmas pageant in the world, it was a very fun one. I love musical theater but, unfortunately, I just don't have the time to participate in my school's theater program, as rehearsals are sometimes twelve hours long on the weekends. Being able to participate in the pageant was a way for me to still do something that I love without having to spend too much time on it.

Confirmation was also a really fun ceremony. While it was awkward at times, especially when talking to Bishop Stevenson, as we were laughing the whole time or trying not to laugh, it was just fun to be there. Bishop Stevenson seems like a genuinely nice person, which is great to see.

December 12, 2022. From the Grace Episcopal Church Alexandria VA Facebook account. From the Christmas Pageant, Joey (left) as Joseph, me (right) as Mary, and Dylan (baby) as Baby Jesus. It was a really enjoyable and fun experience.



As fun as J2A is, there is room for improvement. One suggestion I have is perhaps more activities to help the neighboring communities. This could look like bagging food in the food pantry, buying items for homeless people, fundraisers that would then be used to buy supplies for homeless people, and money to just hand out to them. Not only would these activities be fun, but they would also actively help people. More activities like the Thanksgiving baskets would be great. There should also be more volunteer opportunities, which would go hand-in-hand with my first suggestion. Long-term projects would also be good, such as painting murals (street art) or even fostering community gardens or setting up community fridges in impoverished areas. Lastly, it would be great if the students were able to come up with new activities or projects to do, especially pertaining to activism within the community. These suggestions, however, may not be realistic, as they will probably require a lot of funding. Still, they are something to think about.

Overall, I would highly recommend it if you want your child to be confirmed. J2A is just a really fun program to participate in, as there are many opportunities to have fun, get volunteer hours, and meet new people. Even children who do not go to all the after-school events or pilgrimages will still probably have fun.



April 11, 2023. From the Grace Episcopal Church Alexandria VA Facebook account. From the meeting with Bishop E. Mark Stevenson. It was kind of awkward because we couldn't stop laughing for some reason.

2023 Confirmands from J2A

Brennan Caceres Yoc

Annie Eason

Caroline Legere

Macon Malone

Carlos Mejia-Gonzalez

Christian Portillo

Joey Portillo

Everett Ruff

Paul Rugaber

Willem Schultz

Nick Shriner

Seamus White



April 8, 2023, taken by Cleveland Eason. After the Easter Vigil service. J2A members and Bishop E. Mark Stevenson. Confirmation was a really good experience.

Thanks to Caroline Legere, Seamus White, Christian Portillo, and Joey Portillo for their contributions to this article. Thanks to all who have helped to make J2A a fun experience!

A Day in the Life of ... Pedro Hernandez, Sexton

By Kevin Hamilton

A series inviting Grace parishioners into an average workday of Grace Church staff

Pedro's day at Grace begins when most of the staff are wrapping up. Starting late afternoon, Pedro begins by walking the building to assess the state of things and create his game plan for the day's to-do list. As with any church, the work of the sextons can vary greatly depending on the calendar of events for that day. There are regular tasks Pedro performs, like vacuuming, cleaning, taking out trash, and making sure paper products are well stocked. There are also the ad-hoc items that may come up, like set-up for an activity or a random request for a small handyman type of repair.

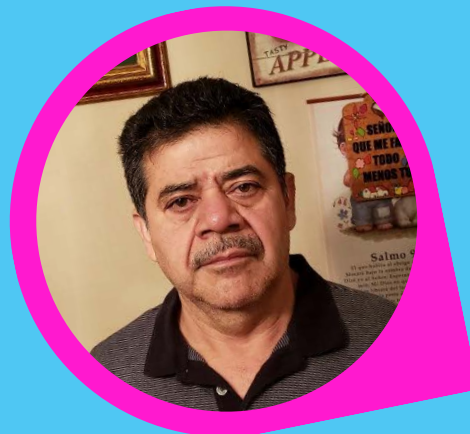
Pedro has been on staff at Grace for seventeen years. While Pedro started as a staff member, Grace has also become the church home for him and his wife, Bernarda. The Hernandez family attends the La Gracia service, a community of faith that has enriched their lives immeasurably. Pedro says that he couldn't imagine his life without Grace in it and wants the Grace Church community to know that he cannot find the proper words to express just how thankful he is to get to be a part of the staff and the church community.

Pedro finds great purpose in the work that he does at Grace. On Fridays and Saturdays, Pedro gives special attention to the nave and the narthex, as he makes sure the space is welcoming for those who call Grace their church home or are visiting us for the first time. Sometimes this care keeps him grounded on the floor, sweeping out the pews. On other days his work finds him towering over the chancel on a large ladder to change spotlights.

Another area of responsibility that Pedro takes very seriously is the care of the columbarium. When needed, Pedro's day may include preparing a columbarium wall or in-ground niche for a requiem service for a Grace Church member who chose our columbarium to be the earthly resting place of their cremains. Pedro prayerfully prepares the site for the service. Many of these niches are prepared for parishioners that Pedro has known and loved over the years. He keeps an eye on the area to ensure it is properly maintained and reports back to the Director of Operations regarding any notes for our landscapers.

In addition to all of the tasks that he completes, Pedro is also the face that many see if they are here in the evenings. He greets outside groups and ensures that their use of the facility is respectful of our policies and procedures, while greeting them with a smile and seeing if they need anything.

Pedro completes many more tasks here at Grace. Whatever he is asked to do is always done with a spirit of great humility and care for the church that means so much to him. Pedro is our full-time sexton and Amorita Quintanilla is our part-time Sunday sexton (and also covers for Pedro when he is out on PTO). We will take a glimpse into her day in another edition of Grace Notes. *Kevin Hamilton oversees our sexton staff and may be contacted with any questions or reports of building issues that may need special attention.*



Vestry View

BILL MALONE,
SENIOR WARDEN



Holy Fire

The first verse of Ecclesiastes 3 is so familiar it almost feels like a cliché: To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.

Seasons and their sequence, however, play a special role in the church. The glorious hope of Easter is naturally followed by the energy of the Spirit we celebrate on Pentecost this month.

Beyond the annual seasons, we also notice seasons of life in individuals, in our nation, and even globally. I was very moved by the 1947 letter that our treasurer, Evan Robinson, writes about discovering, in which parishioners pledged their financial support to build our church on Russell Road (see page 22). It's incredible to me that these parishioners had the hope and grit to risk so much in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Not all churches or communities took such an enterprising approach following trauma and tragedy. I've been looking at a history of the church my paternal grandfather attended in Georgia as a child--Sugar Valley Baptist Church, founded in 1884. There are many remarkable things in the slim volume, including a note about missing records from 1918 to 1922. It says, "This was the closing year of the First World War, and the thoughts of the people in the community were occupied with matters so grave that the recording of church minutes was of secondary importance, hence the lack of information as to the church's activities." Of course, I couldn't help but think of the devastating flu pandemic that ravaged the world those same years.

I'll say, with great respect and love to the large number of my ancestors who attended that little Georgia church, I am glad I ended up at Grace. I'm not sure if members of Grace were likewise excluded from the church at the turn of the century for "reveling and dancing," as some were at Sugar Valley Baptist, but I would venture probably not.

Now, to the bigger picture. I do wonder, as we move from Easter joy to Pentecost fire, in what ways we might emulate our brothers and sisters in Christ from 1947. I do like our current church building very much! But there are many types of dreams, projects, and callings that require the same commitment, ambition, and faith to do as they did.

What do you think the spirit might be calling Grace to dream about in this season? And what might he be calling you as an individual to pursue? I hope we can contemplate such questions together as we begin to anticipate the warmth, recuperation, and fellowship the summer will bring.

Yours in Christ,

Bill Malone

malone.bill@gmail.com



On

H O P E

Two Parishioners Consider the Meaning of Hope

Barbara Morris shared the following letter she wrote to *The Washington Post*:

Regarding Amanda Ripley's hopeful opinion piece on Friday, March 31, it offers several definitions of the word "hope."

Hope, she says, is one of three most notable needs for humans to thrive in the modern world, along with agency and dignity. The piece describes hope as more like a muscle than an emotion, a belief that your future can be brighter and better, that it is a process with well-being the outcome, that it is malleable and is a defiant way of being in the world on the lookout for what might be.

Granted, I agree with all of the above, except I have trouble envisioning hope as a muscle. My own definition of hope comes from a long-ago sermon by my then-priest, Father Robert Malm, former rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Alexandria, Virginia. His definition, which perked up my ears, is "Hope is to expect something you desire with confidence and with great sense of anticipation." I've posted his comment in my office, where it reminds me that before you can have hope, you must think. You must evaluate your ideals and back them up with truth before you can hope for them. In order to be fulfilling, Father Malm's definition requires work on the part of the hopeful person. When I do the work, I feel good. I feel hopeful.

Barbara's musing spurred Anne Clift Boris to recall something her father said in a sermon once and that she believes is also an approach found in the psalms:

Hope is based on our memory of kindness received and prayers answered in the past, which enables us to look forward with faith to the future.

Anne went on to say that she also likes the image of hope as something that seems to spring up as a gift without effort on our part, a kind of grace, as in the Emily Dickinson poem, "Hope is the thing with feathers."

Do you have a definition of hope that you would like to share with the Grace community? Please send it to grace.notes@gracealex.org.



Mission Focus



**Carpenter's
Shelter**

By Jonathan Wolcott

Founded in 1988, Carpenter's Shelter has become a beacon of light for the most vulnerable in the Alexandria community. Carpenter's Shelter's mission is to support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to achieve sustainable independence through shelter and housing placement, guidance, education, and advocacy. Through innovation, an exceptionally talented and dedicated staff, and the generosity and hard work of an extensive network of supporters and volunteers, Carpenter's Shelter is a leader and model of success in addressing homelessness.

Annually, Carpenter's Shelter serves over 600 families and individuals principally through:

- **Residential Shelter**, a sixty-bed facility. In addition to shelter and meals, residents are offered comprehensive life skills, financial literacy, education, mental health services, medical care, and employment assistance to address the barriers that led to their homelessness.
- **David's Place**, a day shelter that provides Alexandria's chronically homeless with essential services—including showers, mail service, laundry, and food.
- **Winter Shelter**, operated in collaboration with Alexandria City, that provides a safe refuge from illness, injury, and death during inclement weather.

Carpenter's Shelter provides its residents with focused case management, which continues for a year after a client has moved into transitional or permanent housing. The Shelter's rapid re-housing program provides both housing placement services and financial assistance to residents once they move out of the Shelter. This program has achieved a remarkable ninety-three percent permanent-housing success rate.

Carpenter's Shelter's status as a private homeless shelter not owned or operated by a government agency is rare. It relies on a combination of donor support, government funding (including several grants based on the Shelter's past success and innovative programs), and an incredible network of over 1200 volunteers who provide meals, education, administrative help, and large project services each year.

In late 2020, Carpenter's Shelter completed its New Heights project, which involved the Shelter relocating to temporary space in vacant Landmark Mall for over two years while a new combination shelter and affordable housing facility was built at Carpenter's Old Town location. The project is the result of a novel partnership between Carpenter's Shelter and the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation to address both homelessness and one of its primary causes (lack of affordable housing) in our community. The resulting seven-story building, named The Bloom, includes the Shelter on the first floor, and ninety-seven AHDC-owned affordable housing units above, including ten that are Permanent Supportive Housing units for chronically homeless individuals and serviced by Carpenter's Shelter. The project coincided with a successful capital campaign with tremendous support from the Alexandria community and beyond.

More recently, the Shelter has been transitioning its residential shelter program to exclusively service families (single individuals are serviced by an Alexandria City facility) and has instituted an innovation fund focusing on creative programs to address homelessness. The New Heights project has received numerous accolades and awards.

For many years, Grace Church has strongly supported Carpenter's Shelter in a variety of ways. The Outreach budget provides an annual donation. Also, a combination of Outreach members, LEMs, and Grace Episcopal School parents and staff prepare and serve a monthly meal to residents. Parishioner Jonathan Wolcott is the current Vice Chairman of the Carpenter's Shelter Board, slated to become Chair in 2024.

To become involved in Grace's support of Carpenter's important mission, contact Outreach.committee@gracealex.org.



The Letter in the Grace Church Lockbox

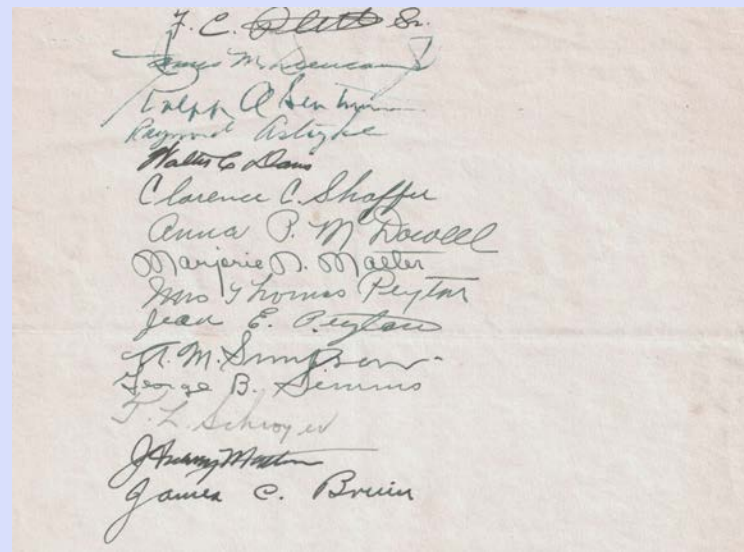
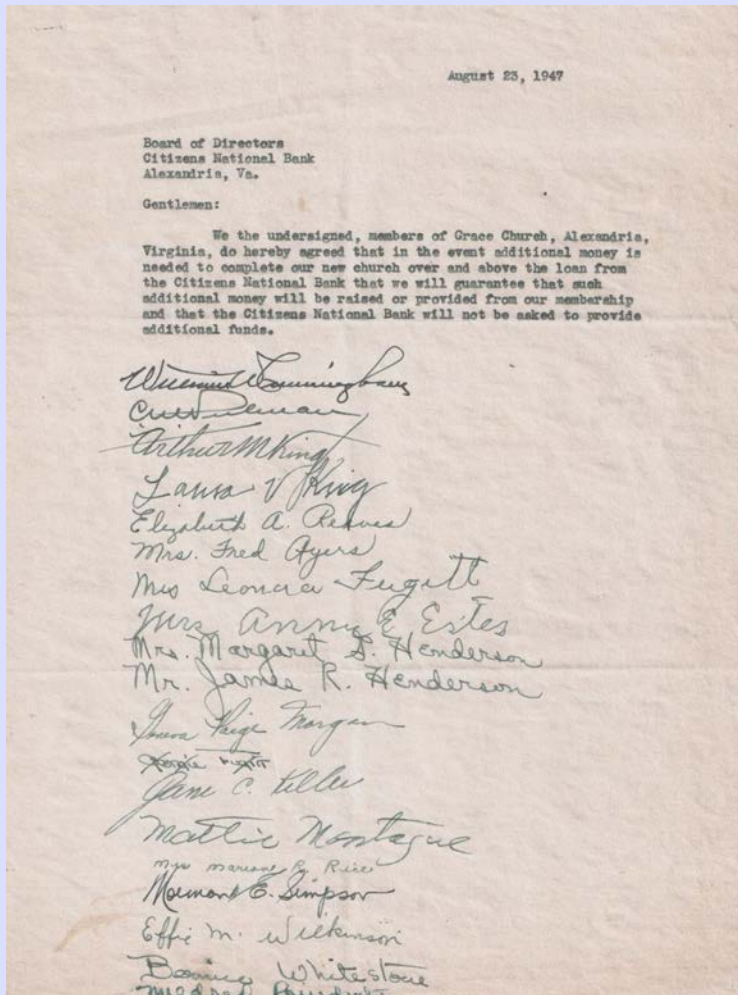
EVAN ROBINSON,
TREASURER

On March 31, representatives from Grace's vestry met at Truist Bank and opened our safety deposit box for the first time in several years. At the top of the box were numerous deeds for the different properties purchased over the years; certificates of title insurance; promissory notes (thankfully all marked "PAID"); loan, legal, and financial documents and correspondence; and several detailed nineteen-year-old inventories, including a five-and-a-half-inch floppy disk marked "GCL"--possibly Grace Church Library.

Farther down in the box we found titles and transfers of several burial plots and vaults in the National Memorial Park, donated to Grace by former parishioners or their families. If anyone is interested in buying such interment rights, or knows of others who might be interested, please contact the Director of Operations or Treasurer! Almost at the bottom were original 1947 agreements with Milton L. Grigg, the Architect; with Cowles Construction Company, the prime contractor; and with VEPCO to connect and turn on the electricity in November 1948. Sadly, as we reached the bottom of the box, we did not discover any gold coins, precious stones, or stock certificates from Apple or Standard Oil. However, at the very bottom of the box we found one final and very meaningful document: a letter dated August 23, 1947.

This simple, typed letter, signed individually by thirty-four members of Grace Church, guaranteed that "to complete our new church...[any] additional money will be raised or provided from our membership." Histories of Grace Church report that many parishioners made personal financial commitments to provide funds or guarantee loans to build the new church. This letter documents that commitment, reflecting the remarkable levels of faith, hope, and optimism from these founding men and women, who moved Grace Church from Patrick Street to Russell Road directly after World War II.

We plan to preserve and frame this letter (shown below) and hang it in an appropriate location with appropriate decorum. We'd also appreciate any additional details, background, or information on any of these thirty-four exceptional folks.



In Loving Memory



Mary Rose Hall

January 16th, 1931 - April 15th, 2023

Mary Rose Hall, 92, died Saturday, April 15, 2023. Born in Kannapolis, NC, she was the daughter of Clarence H. Hall and Mary Ellen Rose Hall.

A memorial service was held at The View in Alexandria, Virginia April 21, 2023 at 2:00 pm.

Rose attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (then called The Woman's College of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro) from Fall 1948 to Spring 1952 and majored in English. She graduated on June 2, 1952. She was approved for membership into The National Society Of The Daughters of the American Revolution on February 1, 1966 where she had a very accomplished career as the editor of the Daughters of the American Revolution magazine for over 35 years. Among other accomplishments she was presented The George Washington Honor Medal of the Freedoms Foundation for 3 successive years. Rose was an active member at Grace Episcopal Church in charge of the office volunteers. She loved poetry and enjoyed her poetry club at The View where she resided. Rose was always welcoming to everyone whether it was her place of worship or her home.

Mary Rose Hall is survived by cousins Mary June Rose (and son Jon Redmond, and wife Melodie & children) (NC), Robert Rose (and wife Susan) (IL), Judith Hall Pate (NC), and Mary Alice Wildman (NC).

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Grace Episcopal Church.



Barbara Morris

An Occasional WORD

I'd like to share an experience from twenty-five years ago when Ward and I, in a group of eight, toured the Holy Land. Our guide announced a treat: he would take us to Jesus' baptismal site on the Jordan River, although it wasn't on our schedule. He gave us clean bottles to collect water from the Jordan.

Our short walk from the bus to the secluded spot in the river led us on a quiet, narrow path through shoulder-high, plumed grass. The gentle curve in the river where Jesus was baptized by John was marked by a simple, flat stone in the shallow water. No one spoke as we leaned over to fill our water bottles. The others, like Ward and me, were reverently envisioning Jesus' baptism. It was a wondrous, holy moment.

After a few minutes of silent prayer, our group moved on along the river's edge, to a set of stone steps that led up a hill about forty feet high to a small stone chapel. A robed priest came out to greet us. He stopped us at a shallow stone basin set midway into the stairs. It was about twenty-four inches in diameter and held about four inches of water that was dusted with a fine, white, sandy powder and sprinkled with seeds, bits of windblown grass, and tiny, dried leaves. He explained that it was water from the river that he replenished and blessed twice a week to use for baptisms.

When he offered to give us some, we emptied our bottles and eagerly gave them to the priest. With the side of his hand, he gently pushed the debris from the surface of the water and dipped our bottles to fill them half-way. He murmured what I assumed were prayers as he worked.

As the oldest in the group, I was given the first bottle. Upon receiving it, suddenly, by my side there was a teenage boy in Jordanian military uniform! He was armed with a rifle almost as tall as he was. My heart pounded. What had I done wrong?

Nothing, it turned out. The smiling boy was there to help me up the stairs. There we were, arm in arm, a sixty-five-year-old woman and a Jordanian teenage soldier in a too-big uniform. He held me by one hand, his rifle in the other. I held him by one hand, my holy water bottle in the other. I struggled to hold in giggles as we climbed the stairs together.

What a wonderful day! Ward and I brought our water back to mingle with Grace Church's baptismal water.

Thank goodness our trip was twenty-five years ago. I recently googled the baptismal site. It has been "improved" by paving the quiet path, laying concrete steps and railings to the river's edge, and building pavilions for shade, benches, restrooms, etc. It attracts thousands of people, all of whom have to climb the steps alone.



The Baptismal Site on the Jordan River

Photo Credit: Canva.com

Why Grace?

By Katrina Dubee



You're home. Two words--more a feeling than words--that I felt the moment I stepped into the nave of Grace in early fall 2021. I had actually been attending services for about a year prior, on the livestream; I was out in California with my family but knew I'd be coming back to DC for work and wanted to find a church. As fate would have it, I'd actually grown up at St. Mary's in Arlington, where Mother Anne had worked for a while, so when I found out she'd taken the position as rector at Grace Church, I knew I had to check it out.

It took a while to get from California to DC, and then to get comfortable being in a space with strangers again, but eventually I was invited to a newcomer's reception on a Sunday afternoon. On my way around to the amphitheater, however, I got very badly lost (I'm sure some of you--if not all--can relate) and found myself instead walking into the evening service in the nave. Communion was about to start, and I heard it.

You're home.

A whisper, in the back of my mind, as I stepped across the threshold. I saw the stained glass and the altar, smelled faint incense from the morning service. And in that moment, I knew. I don't remember the words that were said or the end of the service, but I remember the feeling I had, standing in the church--a feeling of warmth and of grounding.

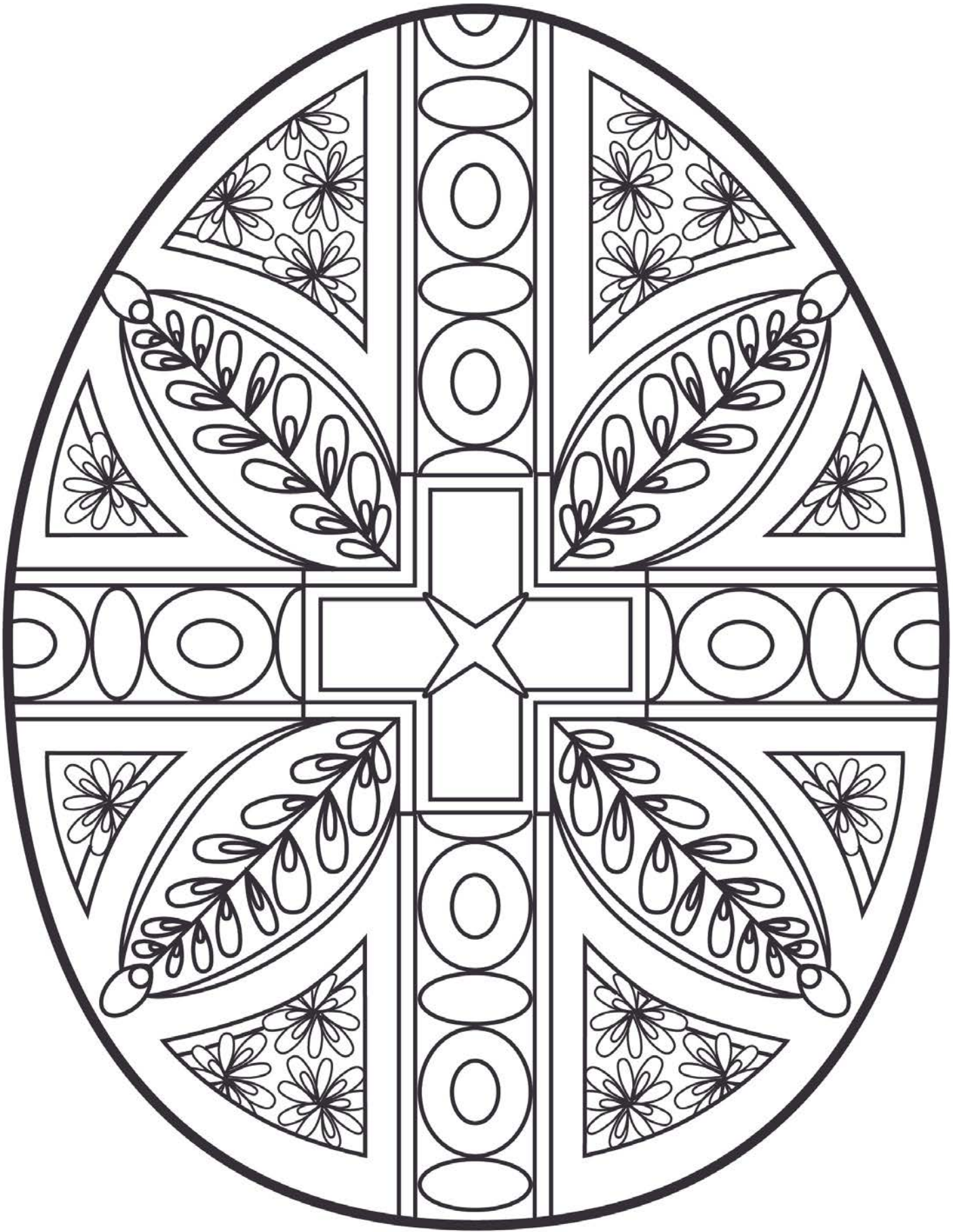


After the service, I managed to make my way out back, to where the newcomer's reception was in full swing, with drinks and sweets abounding. And that is the reason I stayed at Grace. Not the drinks or the food, to be clear; I stayed because of the people. Because, though something told me I was home when I walked in, the people I met made me believe it was true. They welcomed me in like they had known me for years, until we reached the end of the night and I found myself helping to pack up tables and put away chairs. And in that moment, I knew.

You're home.



Ukrainian Easter Egg





Easter Word Search

Q	M	D	G	B	M	O	T	H	O	R	N	S	X	H
Z	F	F	E	W	Q	U	S	C	R	O	I	V	A	S
N	O	I	T	C	E	R	R	U	S	E	R	N	W	Y
X	B	S	W	Y	A	D	D	R	I	H	T	F	L	P
O	R	S	P	H	T	I	A	F	E	L	X	W	H	H
W	E	Y	Y	S	Y	O	N	X	X	J	F	R	Z	W
E	D	M	F	B	E	V	A	C	R	O	W	N	J	T
O	E	E	P	O	V	Y	T	P	R	I	S	E	N	P
I	M	S	L	H	R	G	A	H	O	O	Y	F	Y	T
E	P	S	P	C	U	G	G	D	I	S	S	A	J	E
B	T	I	C	V	A	H	I	B	N	D	T	S	P	E
E	I	A	I	S	B	R	I	V	M	U	G	L	E	W
S	O	H	Q	Z	I	Q	I	K	E	A	S	T	E	R
E	N	V	T	R	N	R	L	M	Y	N	L	Y	P	S
U	L	K	R	S	A	C	R	I	F	I	C	E	D	F

APOSTLES

CAVE

CROSS

CROWN

EASTER

FAITH

FORGIVEN

LAMB

MESSIAH

MIRACLE

REDEMPTION

RESURRECTION

RISEN

SACRIFICE

SAVIOR

SUNDAY

THIRD DAY

THORNS

TOMB



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Rector
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Vestry Class of 2023

Carlos Arboleda - Assistant Treasurer
Tracy Enger - Pastoral Care Liaison
Evan Robinson - Treasurer
Robby Schrum - Junior Warden

Vestry Class of 2024

Lauren Gustafson - Youth Formation Liaison
Mary Hix - Outreach & Justice Liaison
Bill Malone - Senior Warden
Dan Pattarini - Member-at-Large
Rushad Thomas - Evangelism Liaison

Vestry Class of 2025

Bob Boyd - Worship Liaison
Keith Davis - Stewardship Liaison
Eleanor Reed - Register
Jane Rosman - Fellowship Liaison
Andrew Serke - Children's Formation Liaison
Geoff Whitlock - Adult Formation Liaison

Parish Team Leads

Lisa Bellantoni - Education
John Boris - Pastoral Care
Cindy MacIntyre - Evangelism
Jen Pease - Outreach
Lynn Rohrs - Fellowship
Erin White - Youth
Kemp Williams - Worship



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