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September 2024

# GRACE NOTES

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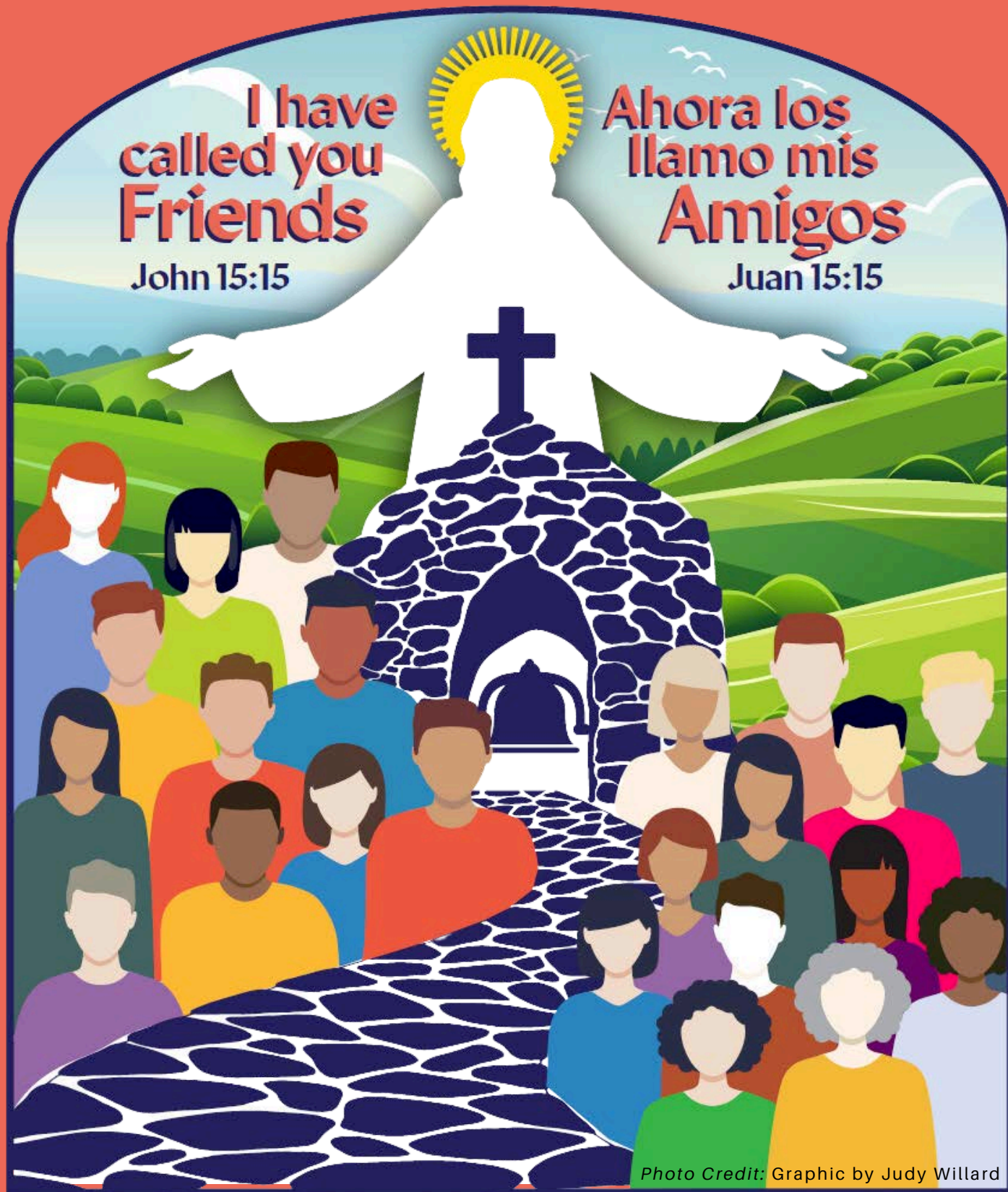


Photo Credit: Graphic by Judy Willard

# From Mother Abbott Bailey, *Bridge Rector*



## **I have called you friends: Entering into the Story of Grace**

A number of years ago, while serving as rector of St. Andrew's in Richmond, I was standing in our parish house with vestry members and our new group of Grace-on-the-Hill interns who were participating in our Episcopal Service Corps program. One of our vestry members excitedly welcomed them saying, "We have been waiting for you! We already love you!" And it was true. We had been praying for them and preparing for their arrival for months. Each one of them already held a place in our hearts.

As I write this in mid-August, I find this rings true to me as I contemplate the community of Grace. You already hold a place in my heart. In the mysterious way of God, our stories have already begun to be woven together for a time and, held in the love and communion of Christ, I already call you friends.

In the passages from John's Gospel from which this verse is taken, "I have called you friends," Jesus is intent on the disciples knowing the breadth and depth of his and God's love for them, and what that means for the breadth and depth of the love for each other that they are called to embrace. While the world may be intent on creating categories that define and divide us as insiders and outsiders, as an "us" or a "them," as powerful and powerless, Jesus calls us friends. In that friendship all our differences serve not to separate us, but instead to shape and hold us together in community according to God's design.



It is a vulnerable and risky thing to enter into each other's stories as friends in the way of Christ. We come together, each and every one of us, as one who serves and is served, as one who helps and is helped, as one who loves and is loved, radically equal before God. God has made a place for each and every one of us, and so we make a place for each other, and in so doing we make a place for all whom God draws to us and us to them. I look forward to being among you soon, entering more fully into the continually unfolding story of Grace, and, in the space between now and that time, hold you in my heart in love and prayer. I have (already) called you friends!



## In This Issue



We would like to thank parishioner Judy Willard for the amazing graphic design work on this year's Shrine Mont graphic, featured on the cover of this issue!

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### Grace Notes Submissions and Publication Schedule

Grace Notes is published every other month by Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia. All parishioners are encouraged to contribute articles and photos. The deadline for the next issue is October 15. Articles and photos should be emailed to [grace.notes@gracealex.org](mailto:grace.notes@gracealex.org) and will be subject to editing. The Grace Notes team includes Addie Budnick (*Design*), Chrissie Crosby (*Co-editor*), Kevin Hamilton (*Design*), Teresa Preston (*Final Proofreader*), and Kemp Williams (*Co-editor*).

# On the Mind of Father Santiago



**THE REV. SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ,  
ASSOCIATE RECTOR**

## **Jesus Calls Us Friends: Embracing the Gift of Friendship**

In John 15:15, Jesus says, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends." This profound statement reveals the depth of Jesus' desire for us to be his disciples, growing in intimacy with him. But this call to friendship extends beyond our relationship with Christ — it includes building strong, long-lasting friendships with others. Friendship, according to Jesus, is not just for certain stages of life; it is a lifelong journey that requires intentionality, vulnerability, and grace.

The need for deep, meaningful relationships starts early in life and continues throughout our journey. True friendship requires getting out of our own way and being intentional in our efforts to connect with others. It involves nurturing relationships, investing time, and praying for both our current friends and those we have yet to meet. Some of the most important friendships you'll have in your life may still be waiting to blossom.

Jesus wants you to invest in friendships. Unfortunately, we often believe many lies that hinder our friendships. The devil, often referred to as the enemy of our human nature, aims to isolate us, leading us into loneliness and despair. He whispers lies that keep us from cultivating friendships. However, Jesus inspires us to invest in these relationships, knowing that good friends are treasures and channels of peace, grace, and love.

### **There are three significant lies the enemy wants us to believe about friendship:**

#### **Lie #1: "Everyone Has More Friends Than Me"**

Social media can make it seem like everyone else is surrounded by friends and constantly engaged in fulfilling social lives. However, the reality is that even those with numerous friends may feel lonely or disconnected.

What truly matters is not the quantity of friends but the quality of our connections. Jesus calls us to be intentional — spending quality time with our friends, being present, and focusing on giving love rather than worrying about how much we receive in return.

Stop comparing your life to what you see on social media. Instead, reach out to those you care about and express your appreciation. If you want connection, take the initiative to connect.

#### **Lie #2: "I Have No Friends Because People Don't Like Me"**

We often convince ourselves that we are unlikable, too different, or insignificant. This self-doubt can keep us from forming meaningful relationships. However, the truth is that you do not need a large circle of friends. Research shows that having one or two quality friends — those who inspire you, uplift you, and stand by you — can make all the difference. Believe that just as you are, you are loved and accepted. People likely like you more than you think. Start living in that truth.

#### **Lie #3: "I'm Too Busy, Introverted, or Tired to Have Friends"**

Life can be overwhelming, and it's easy to feel too busy or drained to maintain friendships. While time alone and moments of solitude with God are essential, so too are connection and community. Friendship is not about the quantity of time spent but the intentionality behind it. Even amidst a busy schedule, carving out time for friendships can bring immense joy and meaning to your life. Jesus invites us to invest in these relationships, to be flexible, and to recognize that friendships may ebb and flow but remain a vital part of our journey.

Jesus calls us to a life of friendship — both with him and with others. By rejecting the lies that hinder us and embracing the truth of our worthiness of connection, we can experience the rich blessings that come from deep, intentional friendships.



# From Mother Emma

THE REV. EMMA BRICE,

ASSISTANT RECTOR FOR FAMILY MINISTRIES & GRACE SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

## A Time for Everything

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. -Ecclesiastes 3:1*

There is a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time for work, and a time for play; a time for certainty, and a time for unknowing.

In many ways, Grace Church has been in a prolonged season of unknowing for the past year. For many of us, uncertainty is an uncomfortable place to dwell. It is like sitting part way up a mountain trail, knowing there are still miles to hike and elevation to climb. We can't see the gorgeous vista yet, but we expect there is one. Perhaps we are eager to keep pushing ourselves and summit the mountain as soon as possible. Or perhaps we are out of breath, we are tired, we need to sit still for a little bit longer. Maybe there are days when we think turning around and going back down the mountain would be easier. Maybe we want to set up camp exactly where we are and forget about the vista for a while.

Our collective journey through this unknowing and hurting and healing is slow. It is difficult. And it also breaks open our hearts to new transformations and new movements of the Holy Spirit.

I think each one of us in a slightly different place on this metaphorical mountain trail, and that is okay. For myself, I feel restless after taking a long break this summer. I've caught my breath and feel excited to start climbing again.

This September the program year is starting for Grace Church, which means the return of weekly children and youth formation hour, regular youth events, and family formation opportunities. I'm hoping to experiment more this year with some new activities, and I'm excited to share the full calendar of events with you all very soon!

We will kick things off with Alpacapalooza and a Formation Hour Open House on Sunday, September 15. Then regular formation hour will begin Sunday, September 22. We have programs for all ages, and you can always reach out if you have concerns for your particular family.

In the meantime, I hope that you will take some time to reflect on where you are on the mountain trail. Are you needing a time to rest or a time to climb higher? Are you needing something different than the rest of your family right now? And how can you make time to honor wherever you are on your journey? God gives us time for every season under heaven; will you give yourself that same time?

### REMINDER: REGISTER TODAY!

The program year is coming soon! All children and youth need to be registered in order to participate in parish-sponsored activities such as Sunday School, youth nights, J2A, Rite-13, EYC, and more.

For planning purposes, please register by September 15. But the sooner the better! [Click here](#) to register via Breeze, or if viewing a printed copy, scan the QR code with your smart phone.



# OPS & COMM

*Operations & Communication @ Grace*



KEVIN HAMILTON,

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATION

Did you know that Mother Jenny and Mary Hix told me to get lost ... on behalf of the church leadership nonetheless?!?

Let me explain.

I am writing this article from Seattle, Washington, as my husband and I are on a four-day getaway to celebrate a friend/mentor's career and next chapter.

During a regular weekly check-in with Mother Jenny a few weeks ago, she asked if this trip was the only one I currently had planned ... it was. She shared with me that she and Mary Hix, Senior Warden, had a discussion and both wanted me to get lost. Not for good, but definitely for more than four days! They wanted me to at least take a full two weeks away, untethered from email and all things work, to recharge before the busyness of September arrives.

Mother Jenny shared with me the thankfulness of Mary and the vestry for my work, especially during this season of transition. She said staff, clergy, wardens, and office volunteers would pick up covering my duties as much as possible to ensure I don't come back to a mountain of catch-up work.

What a gift!

I am sharing this because I want to highlight the quality of leadership you have here at Grace. I know that the clergy and vestry aren't perfect because, well ... they're human. However, leadership with such a heart for people and desire to discern what is best for the health of the church overall (emotionally and physically in addition to spiritually) is unique. I know I surely am grateful.

I also want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the dedicated support/admin staff as well as the group of people who support the work of the Grace Church office each and every day as volunteers. The office volunteer ministry is an amazing band of servant leaders who quietly serve in whatever way they can and who provide office coverage for deliveries and phones while I am away. If you have three or four hours a month to volunteer and would like to try out this ministry, please contact the office volunteer ministry coordinator Barbara Ramm ([Barbara.ramm@gracealex.org](mailto:Barbara.ramm@gracealex.org)).

And yes, I know I am writing this while I am supposed to be totally off work, but I was reflecting on my blessings this morning during my quiet time of prayer and reflection. I was overcome with a deep sense of gratitude for the Grace Church family and didn't want to leave behind my thoughts in Seattle.



*Kevin & his husband Luke at the  
Museum of Illusions in Seattle, Washington*

# Music Notes from Alain



## Calling All Musical Friends

### *Three Opportunities for involvement in Music Ministry*

#### **Adult Choir**

Are you passionate about singing and looking for a way to share your talent with the community? Our church is excited to announce that we are recruiting new members for our adult choir! Whether you're an experienced vocalist or simply love to sing, we welcome you to join us. Our choir is a wonderful opportunity to connect with others, enhance your musical skills, and contribute to our worship services.

- Rehearsals are on Thursdays: 7:00 to 9:00 pm starting on September 12.
- The choir sings on Sundays at the 10:30 am service and other special services such as occasional Evensongs, Advent Lessons and Carols, and Holy Week services.

Come be a part of a supportive and joyful group that celebrates the gift of music. For more information or to sign up, please contact Dr. Truche at [alain.truche@gracealex.org](mailto:alain.truche@gracealex.org). We look forward to singing with you!

#### **Handbell Ensemble**

Do you have a love for music and a desire to create beautiful harmonies? Our church is thrilled to announce that we are recruiting new members for our handbell ensemble! Whether you have prior experience with handbells or are eager to learn, we invite you to join us. Playing in the handbell ensemble is a unique and rewarding way to contribute to our worship services and special events. We provide all the necessary training and support. This is a wonderful opportunity to develop your musical talents, meet new friends, and be part of a dedicated and joyful group.

- Rehearsals are on Thursdays: 6:00 to 6:45 pm starting on September 12.
- Play on an occasional basis at the 10:30 am Sunday service and other special services.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Dr. Truche at [alain.truche@gracealex.org](mailto:alain.truche@gracealex.org). We can't wait to ring bells with you!

#### **Choristers**

Are you a young singer with a passion for music and a desire to develop your vocal skills? Our church is excited to announce that we are recruiting new members for our RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) choristers program! This prestigious program offers exceptional training in choral singing, music theory, and performance. Open to children and youth, the RSCM choristers program provides a unique opportunity to be part of a dedicated and talented group, performing at worship services and special events throughout the year. Rehearsals are held weekly, and no prior experience is necessary — just a love for singing and a commitment to learning.

- Open to children and youth grades 3 to 12 for girls and voice change for boys.
- Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:00 pm starting on September 11.
- Sing twice a month at the 10:30 am Sunday service and at various other special services.

For more information or to join, please contact Dr. Truche at [alain.truche@gracealex.org](mailto:alain.truche@gracealex.org). We look forward to welcoming you to our musical family!



# Grace Episcopal School



**AMANDA  
HUNGERFORD,  
INTERIM HEAD OF  
SCHOOL**

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. –Ecclesiastes 3:1.*

The fall season is upon us, and in school life, that signals the start of a new school year to uphold our mission “to honor the gift of childhood.” The new school year begins after Labor Day with our students bonding in classroom communities, new and renewed friendships igniting, and a purposeful curriculum expanding young minds. A Grace education focuses on the whole child — mind, body and spirit.

The 2024-25 school year brings with it a change in school leadership. Early this summer, Patti Culbreth announced that the 2024-25 school year would be her last, but, unfortunately, due her husband’s recent cancer diagnosis, she announced an early retirement in August effective immediately. The school board appointed Amanda Hungerford as the interim head of school. Patti will serve remotely as a consultant to the team. Patti’s departure brings much sadness to the school community, as she was beloved by students, parents, and teachers alike. But she has built a strong team of dedicated administrators and faculty members at Grace who are committed to ensuring that the 2024-25 school year is a success. We ask that you keep Patti and her family in your thoughts and prayers as they face uncertain times ahead.

We begin the school year with 116 students in preschool through grade five. We welcome three new classroom teachers to our veteran faculty as well as new faces helping in our extended care program. Mother Emma continues to serve as our school chaplain as well as our religion teacher using the Godly Play curriculum.

The new year offers new opportunities for exciting experiences. Although our students take many field trips, one of our favorites in October is to the National Cathedral to celebrate National Episcopal Schools Week with our sister schools in the area. The early months of school also allow for our Fall Family Social, Back to School Night, school photos, and Halloween fun! Once the year begins, Grace School is a force of energy!

This fall, the school is also in the process of seeking a new head of school to begin in July 2025. A search committee, which includes representatives from the parish, was formed last June and is working with a consulting group, The Education Group, to select and appoint a new Head. The school will be sure to share the progress of this journey with the parish.

Despite our collective heartbreak for Patti, there is nothing quite like the excitement of a new school year. Our Grace students arrive with smiles and enthusiasm; they are our promise of a bright future. Let the new school Year begin!





# Vestry View



MARY LEWIS HIX,  
SENIOR WARDEN

In a sermon following Grace's participation in the mission trip this summer, Mother Emma told us of a debriefing practice that our young people often use. At the end of a demanding day of hard work, the participants are asked to respond to where in the day they experienced joy, junk, and Jesus. The Grace vestry met with Mother Anne and Shirley Smith Graham in mid August, and as a way to begin conversation and reintroduce ourselves, we riffed on the "joy, junk, Jesus" approach, renaming it "savor, sorrow, savior."

The vestry began our meeting with Mother Anne with worship: a psalm, prayers for reconciliation and intercession, a litany for the church, the Lord's Prayer. I began the "savor, sorrow, savior" sharing by savoring the memory of the marriages of my two sons, lamenting the grief over the deaths of parishioners in the past year, and saying that I had witnessed Jesus' active presence in the work of the vestry this year. Other vestry members spontaneously entered into the exercise, speaking about the many joyous experiences in the past year: the vacations, the new jobs, the delight in children, the profound moments in worship, finding joy in creation. The sorrows expressed were poignant: sadness about the events of the year at Grace and in the world, illnesses, loss of loved ones, the aging process, broken relationships, professional concerns, and exhaustion. And, to a person, all present at the meeting voiced the certainty of experience with God as savior during this year. God is present in community, in worship, in relationships, in creation, in honest conversation. Mother Anne and Mother Shirley participated in the exercise, and as it ended, I felt palpable care for one another, gratitude, and vulnerability.

The meeting continued with open dialogue around questions prepared in advance. Mother Anne had considered her responses and asked questions of the vestry. We probed, we laughed, we lamented, we encouraged one another, we wished for more time.

And so the process of mutual discernment continues. The time lapse between the writing of this article and its publication September 1 is significant. I do not know the outcome of the mutual discernment process that Mother Anne and the Grace vestry are engaged in. I do know that God is in the midst of the discernment and that all will be resolved in God's timing. As this period of discernment continues, I invite you into the exercise of contemplating "savor, sorrow, savior" that you have experienced in the past year.



# Campus Matters



ERIC WASKOWICZ, JUNIOR WARDEN

## Environmental Committee becomes Creation Care

The Environmental Committee met at the end of August. The agenda included talking with Father Santi about the importance of creation care as discussed at general convention, and planning a table during porch activities at Shrine Mont. The name of the committee is changing to the creation care committee as it becomes a regular standing committee dedicated to helping our Grace community become more aware of our collective creation care responsibilities, rather than the junior warden’s personal brain trust to fix, replace, and improve!

## Bike Rack

I was in Barcelona in June. So impressive how many people get around so easily on bicycles. Biking is certainly fun to do, good for you, and could save you a lot of money. What would it take for you to occasionally bike to church? Maybe what you needed was the bike rack we installed by the glass door.

## Garden by the Glass Doors

I think everyone appreciates the garden that Nat Ames developed with a lot of love over several years of work. It is a beautiful focal point for anyone entering the church or school from the parking lot. Now that Nat and Joyce are relocating, it’s terrific that Doug Prince, Barbara Ramm, and Lynn Rohrs are collectively taking this on. One of the themes of this garden is the high percentage of native plants which support our local ecosystem. There are a couple of pictures below of from both sides of the front garden.

## Library Door

We removed the exterior library door, sanded off the old layer of varnish and mold, re-stained, and applied a number of layers of spar varnish. Apologies for any inconvenience! Below left is the before picture. (I kind of like the way you could imagine the black part is the opening to a secret cave.) Please take some time to see what a difference the project made to our outward face!



Library door before removal for refinishing work.



The right and left sides of the front garden.



Photo Credit: Grace Church Archives



# Financial Matters

In this issue of Grace Notes, the finance team looks at an aspect of online giving: covering the fees for donations made through online platforms, such as Tithely or Breeze.

## What is “cover the fees”?

If you have ever given online through Tithely or Breeze, you may have noticed an option called “cover the fees” when giving a gift to Grace Church. For churches to use giving platforms such as Tithely or Breeze, there are transaction fees deducted from the total amount the church receives from each financial gift. Fees are often a percentage of the gift amount and vary based on the method of giving, e.g., credit card, ACH bank transfer.

## Why does covering the fees matter?

While the fees are a small percentage of each financial gift given to the church, they ultimately reduce the total amount in donations the church receives. In order to ensure that the full amount of your donation is received by Grace Church, you can opt to cover the fees. When you cover the fees, you are credited the total transaction amount (gift and fees) for tax purposes, and the church receives the intended gift amount. The fees are a small amount of the donation transaction but add up to a large impact for the giving to Grace Church and its missions!

## Adult Forum Schedule for September - October 2024

By Anne Clift Boris



Adult Forum will resume this fall when Sunday School resumes. We meet 9:40-10:15 am in person in the St. Mark room on the second floor, or via Zoom (the link is included each Sunday in the worship email). Topics and formats vary from week to week. Those already scheduled for the next two months are:

**September 22: Grace Church Architecture**, *presented by Fr. Santi Rodriguez*

**September 29: TBD**

**October 6: TBD**

**October 13: Grace at Work: Welcoming the Stranger**, *presented by Jennifer Ibanez Whitlock and Fr. Santi Rodriguez*

**October 20: Grace at Work: Service is My Business**, *presented by Elizabeth Legere and Donna Hall*

**October 27: Grace at Work: Healing**, *presented by Henry and Priscilla Ziegler*

We are still welcoming new ideas and topics, both in the "Grace at Work" series, where people describe how their faith is lived out in their work lives, and other topics. If you'd like to propose something, please get in touch with Anne Clift Boris at [awcboris@hotmail.com](mailto:awcboris@hotmail.com).



# Abrazando el don de la amistad

FATHER SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ, ASSOCIATE RECTOR

Uno de mis libros favoritos es Nubosidad variable de Carmen Martín Gaité. Es la historia de dos amigas, Sofía Montalvo y Mariana León, que se reencuentran después de muchos años y comienzan a escribirse cartas para compartir sus vidas. En una de sus cartas, Sofía escribe: "No nos damos cuenta, Mariana, de lo maravilloso que es poderle preguntar a alguien: ¿Te acuerdas?, y notar que sí, que se acuerda." Para ellas, el significado de la vida es tener amigos con quienes podemos compartir y crear memorias juntos.

En Juan 15:15, Jesús dice: "Ya no les llamo siervos, porque el siervo no sabe lo que hace su señor; pero le he llamado amigos". Esta declaración revela el deseo de Jesús de que seamos sus discípulos, creciendo en intimidad con Él. Cristo nos llama amigos para que formemos memoria colectiva de la fidelidad de Dios y del Reino de los Cielos. Este llamado va más allá de nuestra relación con Cristo; incluye también la construcción de amistades fuertes y duraderas con los demás. Cristo nos llama a que formemos amistades con otros para formar historias juntos y para hacer memoria de su amor: "Hagan esto en memoria de mí" (Lucas 22:19).

Según Jesús, la verdadera amistad requiere que seamos intencionales en nuestros esfuerzos por conectarnos con los demás. Implica cultivar estas relaciones, invertir tiempo y orar tanto por nuestros amigos actuales como por aquellos que aún no hemos conocido. Algunas de las amistades más importantes de nuestras vidas podrían estar esperando florecer.

Cristo desea que tengamos amistades significativas en nuestra vida. Sin embargo, a menudo creemos varias mentiras que obstaculizan nuestras amistades. El diablo, conocido como el enemigo de nuestra naturaleza humana, busca aislarnos, llevándonos a la soledad y la desesperación. Susurra mentiras que nos impiden cultivar amistades. No obstante, Jesús nos inspira a invertir en estas relaciones, sabiendo que los buenos amigos son tesoros y canales de paz, gracia y amor.

**Hay tres grandes mentiras que el enemigo quiere que creamos sobre la amistad:**

**La primera mentira es que "Todos tienen más amigos que yo".** Las redes sociales pueden hacernos creer que todos los demás están rodeados de amigos y constantemente comprometidos en vidas sociales plenas. Sin embargo, la realidad es que incluso aquellos con numerosos amigos pueden sentirse solos o desconectados. Lo que realmente importa no es la cantidad de amigos, sino la calidad de nuestras conexiones. Jesús nos llama a ser intencionales, pasar tiempo de calidad con nuestros amigos y enfocarnos en dar amor en lugar de preocuparnos por cuánto recibimos a cambio.

**La segunda mentira es que "No tengo amigos porque a nadie le caigo bien".** Nos convencemos de que no somos agradables o que somos insignificantes. Sin embargo, la verdad es que no necesitamos un círculo de amigos gigante. Tener uno o dos amigos de calidad, aquellos que nos inspiran, nos entienden y nos apoyan, puede marcar una gran diferencia. Lo importante es creer que tal como somos, somos amados y aceptados.

**La tercera mentira es que "Estoy demasiado ocupado, soy demasiado introvertido o estoy demasiado cansado para tener amigos".** La vida puede ser abrumadora, pero la amistad no se trata de la cantidad de tiempo que pasas, sino de la intencionalidad detrás de ella. Dedicar tiempo a las amistades puede traer una inmensa alegría y significado a tu vida. Siempre podemos encontrar tiempo para las amistades - y ellas nos llenan de alegría y propósito en la vida.

En conclusión, Jesús nos llama a una vida de amistad, tanto con Él como con los demás. Al rechazar las mentiras que nos obstaculizan y abrazar la verdad de que somos dignos de conexión, podemos experimentar las ricas bendiciones de amistades profundas e intencionales.



**July 29, 2024 Marked 50 Years of Women's Ordination in the Episcopal Church, but the Struggle for Women's Equality in the Priesthood Persisted For Decades**

*By Fr. Santiago Rodriguez and Liz Rugaber*

We honor the trailblazing Philadelphia Eleven in 1974 and Washington Four in 1975. These incredible women answered the call to serve and lead in the Episcopal Church, and their faith, strength, and dedication have enriched the church and paved the way for future generations.

These ordinations did not begin the journey towards women's equality in the priesthood, nor mark the end of the struggle. Indeed, these women's ordinations were unauthorized by the church and opposed by many. Loopholes allowing bishops to continue refusing to ordain women continued until 1997. Episcopal News Service has produced an interactive timeline of the journey toward women's ordination, beginning in 1855 with the establishment of an Order of Deaconesses in the Diocese of Maryland.

As to the historic events of 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1997:

The Philadelphia 11 women were ordained as priests at the Church of the Advocate, Philadelphia, on July 29, 1974, by three retired bishops who stepped forward and agreed to ordain a group of women deacons. The women were: Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Alison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Marie Moorefield, Jeanette Piccard, Betty Schiess, Katrina Swanson, and Nancy Wittig. The bishops were: Daniel Corrigan, retired bishop suffragan of Colorado; Robert L. DeWitt, retired Bishop of Pennsylvania; and Edward R. Welles II, retired Bishop of West Missouri.

Additionally, on September 7, 1975, four women deacons of the Episcopal Church — three coming from the diocese of Washington, D.C. and one from the Diocese of Alaska — were ordained at a service in Washington, DC, on September 7, 1975, in opposition to their bishops and the Bishop of Washington, DC. Bishop George W. Barrett, age 67, resigned Bishop of Rochester, New York, (and, in 1975, executive director of Planned Parenthood in Santa Barbara County, California), performed the service. The women were: (Eleanor) Lee McGee, Alison Palmer, Betty Rosenberg, and Diane Tickell.

These ordinations happened before the General Convention authorized the ordination of women in September 1976. Meeting in Minneapolis, the General Convention added a new section to the church's ordination canons that read: "The provisions of these canons for the admission of Candidates, and for the Ordination to the three Orders: Bishops, Priests and Deacons shall be equally applicable to men and women."

Also at the 1976 General Convention, the House of Bishops affirmed the validity of these "irregular" previous ordinations in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. by requiring the fifteen women to do "an act of completion" that would be "a liturgical incorporation of what was done on those two occasions" in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. The women were not required to be re-ordained.

And yet, the struggle for women priests in the Episcopal Church surely did not end in 1976. It took twenty years to close a loophole that allowed bishops to continue to discriminate against women who wanted to be priests.

Indeed, even before then — in fact the day after the ordination of the Philadelphia 11 — some of the 11 were prohibited by their bishops from priestly functions, some from deacon's service. On August 15, 1974, the House of Bishops called the action by the four ordaining bishops a "violation of collegiality," and they refused to talk with the 11, saying the ordinations were not valid. (Charles Willie, then vice president of the House of Deputies, who had been a lay preacher at the 11's ordination service, resigned in protest of the House of Bishops' action.) Ecclesiastical charges were filed against the bishops.

In 1977, the House of Bishops even issued a non-canonical "escape hatch" to those who continued to object to women's ordination. Even though this so-called "conscience clause" had no official standing, because it simply was announced during the October 1977 House of Bishops meeting, and was included in a pastoral letter calling for unity in Christ, and was not presented to nor approved by the General Convention, it was widely used to deny women the priesthood. This letter gave cover to any person who refused to follow the new canon because of "his or her conscientious objection." They said "no bishop, priest, or lay person should be coerced or penalized in any matter" for that objection.

Women were caught in this conscience clause web for decades, until 1997, when an act of General Convention (Resolution A052, agreed to in 1997 at the General Convention in Philadelphia!) finally eliminated the loophole. Episcopalians should note that vote was not unanimous. It was about 70% in favor and 30% opposed to prohibit denial of access to the ordination process to a person on account of his or her sex!

[Please click here to read "Women priests who were caught in 'conscience clause' hope the church remembers their stories,"](#) by the Episcopal News Service, written by Mary Frances Schjonberg, posted July 23, 2024. (If reading our print version and you would like the link or a hard copy, email us your request at [grace.notes@gracealex.org](mailto:grace.notes@gracealex.org))

### **Women in the Diocese of Virginia**

The Diocese of Virginia has put together an excellent [article](#) and [video](#) celebrating women's ordination to the priesthood in our diocese. It overviews the milestones achieved and features interviews with women priests and bishops in our diocese. Among the milestones it documents are: (1) the establishment of the early Deaconess Orders in the late 1800s, (2) the first woman ordained as a Deacon (not a Deaconess) in 1972 (who was also the first woman in the South to be so ordained); and (3) the 1977 ordination of Patricia Merchant Park to the priesthood in the Diocese of Virginia by Bishop Hall (she had served as a deacon at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill in Alexandria for two and a half years before her ordination as a priest). Our diocese has had two female bishops, the Rt. Rev. Susan Goff, who made history as the first female bishop, consecrated on July 28, 2012, and the Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris, who began her call as Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Virginia on April 1, 2023. She is also the first Black woman to serve as a bishop in this diocese.

### **Back to Grace**

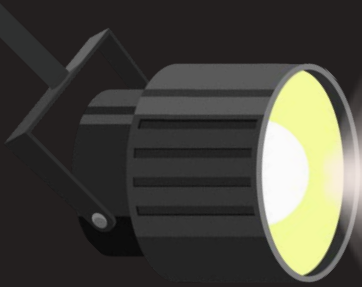
We are especially grateful for the inspiring ministry of women who have served at Grace as clergy and the women clergy nurtured at Grace! With our sincere apologies if we've inadvertently left anyone out of this list.

#### **Women clergy at Grace**

The Rev. Rosemari Gaughan Sullivan, 1985 -1987  
The Rev. Paula VanArsdale Woods, 1988 -1989  
The Rev. Mary Catherine Miller Sulerud, 1989 -1995  
The Rev. Penelope Maud Bridges, 1997 - 2003  
The Rev. Doctor Anne Michele Turner, 2003 - 2007, 2021...  
The Rev. Caroline Anne Kramer, 2007 - 2011  
The Rev. (Canon) Leslie Steffensen, 2012 - 2017  
The Rev. Elizabeth Locher, 2015 - 2017  
The Rev. Fanny Belanger, 2017 - 2018  
The Rev. Nina Bacas, 2021 - 2023  
The Rev. Amanda Bourne, 2022 - 2023  
The Rev. Emma Brice, 2023 - Present  
The Rev. Dr. Jenny Montgomery, 2023 - 2024

#### **Women clergy nurtured at Grace:**

The Rev. Jo Belser, The Rev. Jane Barr, The Rev. Deacon Theresa Lewallen, The Rev. Julius Sophia Rodriguez, The Rev. Deacon Kristin Waskowicz Woods, The Rev. Deacon Lynette Poulton Kamakura



# National Church News Spotlight



by Liz Rugaber

## 81st General Convention Recap and Upcoming Installation of Presiding Bishop-Elect Rowe

The General Convention is the governing body of The Episcopal Church. Every three years it meets as a bicameral legislature that includes the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. This year, the 81st General Convention took place in Louisville, KY, June 20-28.

The House of Bishops is made up of every Diocesan Bishop, Coadjutor, Suffragan, and retired bishop (technically “resigned” bishops as you never “retire” from being a bishop). The House of Deputies is made up of four clergy deputies and four lay deputies from each of our church’s 110 dioceses.

Grace’s own Father Santi was among the official deputation from the Diocese of Virginia. The deputies were elected at the Diocese’s convention two years prior to General Convention. Members of our entire diocesan deputation posted electronic “Postcards from Louisville,” with their reflections throughout the General Convention. You can access these reflections, which include videos as well as short statements, [here](#).

An excellent summary of what happened at General Convention can be found in this article by Episcopal News Service, “[81st General Convention wraps up in Louisville](#)” by ENS Staff, posted June 28, 2024. My excerpts from it and other summaries are below:

- **Overall.** At this year’s General Convention, the two houses handled 390 resolutions, elected the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe to be the 28th presiding bishop, reelected Julia Ayala Harris as House of Deputies president, elected the Rev. Steve Pankey as deputies’ vice president, passed a \$143 million budget for the next triennium, approved a constitutional change to clearly define the Book of Common Prayer, reexamined its clergy disciplinary canons while agreeing to consider how lay leaders might be disciplined for wrongdoing, and supported changes in the structures of seven of its dioceses.
- **Non-Legislative.** Outside the legislative chambers, several events brought together bishops, deputies, and visitors to mingle, socialize, pray, worship, and advocate. General Convention continued the church’s public witness against gun violence and hosted a panel discussion on the church’s role in [Indigenous boarding schools](#). Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s last signature revival service at the KFC Yum! Center drew a crowd of more than 2,000 people who heard him urge everyone to “choose love because love can save us.”
- **Budget.** The adopted budget maintains the 15% assessment on revenue that dioceses contribute to the national church budget. In a related action, the convention rejected a proposal that would have set a target for sharply reducing the assessment to 10% by 2033. The budget plan also calls for the new presiding bishop to oversee cost reductions over the next three years totaling nearly \$3.6 million, through what the Executive Council previously said would be a “strategic adaptive realignment of our institutional structures.”
- **Resolution Highlights.** The passed resolutions seemed to fall into four categories:
  - 1) [Title IV disciplinary reform](#). Title IV Canons govern clergy discipline. A series of proposals were submitted specifically in response to concerns across the church that the current disciplinary process sometimes causes secondary harm to complainants and that bishops are not always held to the same disciplinary standards as other clergy.
  - 2) [The Israel-Palestine conflict](#). At least sixteen resolutions related to the conflict were presented, with fierce debate taking place during a convention that saw two demonstrations and a Compline for Palestine prayer service and included intense discussion about the use of the words “genocide” and “apartheid.”
  - 3) [Changes in dioceses’ borders, membership](#). There were major structural changes including the union of the dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan, creating the Diocese of The Great Lakes, Navojoland being recognized as a missionary diocese, giving them the ability to elect their own bishop, and the reunion of the dioceses in Wisconsin.



## National Church News Spotlight Continued from Page 16

- 4) Liturgy and Music. Bishops and deputies refused to authorize a new supplement to The Hymnal 1982 (Resolution A131) but passed Resolution A130 authorizing the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to spend the next three years developing a digital collection of alternative versions of hymns to address “colonialist, racist, white supremacist, imperialistic, and nationalistic language.” The BCP got a new constitutional definition: “Those liturgical forms and other texts authorized by the General Convention per this article and the Canons of this Church.”
- 5) Creation Care & Racial Justice. There were double digit numbers of resolutions passed for each of racial justice & creation care matters. Some are not yet funded; that process will take place in September and October. To read more about the resolutions that passed, see the [Creation Care list](#) on the national church website and the Racial Justice resolution list [here](#).

### Bishop Sean Rowe Elected on First Ballot & Upcoming Installation.

There were five bishops who stood for election, four of whom were selected to stand to run in a years-long nominations process, and one who was selected by petition. To win, Rowe needed at least eighty-two votes from the 158 bishops who cast handwritten ballots. He received eighty-nine votes, while Nebraska Bishop J. Scott Barker received twenty-four, Atlanta Bishop Robert Wright received nineteen, Pennsylvania Bishop Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez received seventeen and Central New York Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe received nine.

Rowe becomes the youngest bishop ever elected to serve as the church’s presiding bishop and the second youngest overall since the first, William White, who was forty-one when his first of two terms began in 1789.

Mariann Budde, the Bishop of our neighbor Diocese of Washington, reflected upon his election in this way in a June 27, 2024 [post](#), [“A Leader for Our Time.”](#)

*“I’ve had the sense for years that God has been preparing Bishop Sean for this moment. In his late 40s, he has served longer than most active bishops and he has been a champion of what he calls “experiments for the gospel.” While bishop, he earned a PhD in organizational leadership and development. He has mastered the systems that are in need of reform, becoming the go-to person for church leaders needing help of any kind. As he said at a previous gathering of bishops, “I know where the levers of change are.” But efficiency is not an end in itself. “Reorienting our structures, our budgets, and our relationships,” he said, “will only matter if we do it for the sake of the gospel.” His is a quiet, deep faith, evangelical in his devotion to Jesus, broad in spiritual curiosity, with a passion for racial reconciliation and justice. Bishop Sean genuinely sees the good in everyone. He has the relational maturity to work across the divisions and often painful conflicts in our Church, all of which are present at this Convention. For the sake of the gospel, he exhorted us to seek higher ground: “I ask you to think of this time as a relational jubilee... We must create a beloved community in which we can disagree with each other without shaming, or blaming, or tearing each other apart. Let’s direct our anger at injustice instead of turning it inward on each other.”*

The service (the investiture) in which The Episcopal Church will pass the staff from one leader to the next will take place on November 2, just days before our nation’s presidential election, at the Chapel of Christ the Lord in The Episcopal Church Center in New York City, with a prelude beginning at 10 am and the service starting at 11 am. There will be an extensive livestream production to support churchwide access and participation.

### Gratitude to Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

The General Convention celebrated the transformative ministry of our outgoing Presiding Bishop [Michael Bruce Curry](#). The bishops had a reception, and the wider church enjoyed his words and blessings at the Saturday night Revival and closing Eucharist. Presiding Bishop Curry, our first Black Presiding Bishop, has led us through some challenging years, with a pandemic, political and cultural division, and wars. He has been instrumental in focusing the church’s mission to call us to deeper formation in following Jesus’ Way of Love, spearheading initiatives to dismantle oppression and racism, and in advocating for creation care and environmental stewardship, and he is beloved not just by the church but by the wider population.

In his [sermon at General Convention](#), Presiding Bishop Curry said that as part of his final performance review, he hoped that all Episcopalians would memorize and live by one passage from the New Testament:

*Beloved, let us love one another. Because love is of God, and those who love know God. Those who do not love do not know God because God is love.*

**-1 John 4:7-8**

Bishop Curry wants us to remember, as part of his legacy, that in whatever we say or do: If it isn’t about love, it isn’t about God.



Presiding Bishop-elect Sean Rowe is flanked by 26th Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and 27th Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. Photo Credit: Randall A. Gornowich, Episcopal News Service

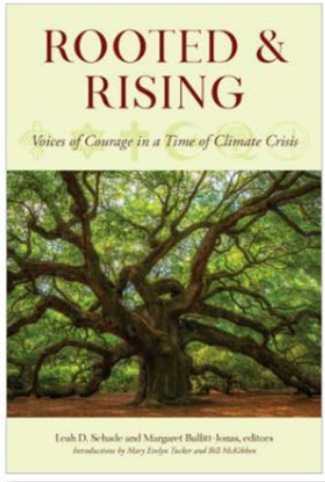
# Diocesan News



by Liz Rugaber

## Rooted & Rising: A Creation Care Book Study

September 5 @ 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm



The Spiritual Resilience Working Group (SRWG) of the Diocese of Virginia Creation Care Committee invites you to a virtual book journey using *Rooted & Rising: Voices of Courage in a Time of Climate Crisis*. Edited by the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas and the Rev. Dr. Leah Schade, this collection of essays from many faith traditions is rich in content and offers thought-provoking questions. "Building spiritual muscle" by the practice of meditation is included in the work of this book. Led by Deacon Salli Hartman and Kathy Ellis, the seven-week journey will begin Thursday, Sept. 5, from 7 pm to 8:15 pm, and continue weekly. Since the number of participants will be limited to allow adequate time for discussion, we ask that each be fully committed. Contact [creationcare@episcopalvirginia.org](mailto:creationcare@episcopalvirginia.org) for questions. [Register here.](#)

## Grace Church and VOICE: Why I'm Involved

by John Hall

Several years ago, many of us from Grace Church participated in Sacred Ground, the Episcopal Church's work for racial healing, reconciliation, and justice. Feeling empowered, I wanted to do more. I wanted to take action in order to help my community, something tangible and hopefully effective, where I could honestly make a difference. I found that action with VOICE, Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement. The name says it all, and it is truly an interfaith organization with members from churches, mosques, and synagogues. It is a wonderful mix of humanity, all living in the Northern Virginia area, and all dealing with similar issues. VOICE is well organized, choosing to focus on affordable housing, mental health, and more recently, drug abuse in schools.

So, how effective has VOICE been? In July 2023, VOICE organized a meeting with Gov. Youngkin, the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, and the Virginia Association of the Chiefs of Police. With nearly 1,000 people in attendance from over fifty congregations of different faiths (including many from Grace Church), VOICE was able to get Gov. Youngkin to agree to allocate \$58 million in the state budget for Crisis Receiving Centers statewide and \$10 million for hospital-based psychiatric emergency programs in rural areas. Additionally, VOICE helped secure \$750,000 in Arlington County funding to stand up new after-school programs so that the most vulnerable students in our community have safe and supportive places to go during after-school.

In the affordable housing campaign, VOICE collaborated with allies to achieve two major zoning reforms in Arlington and Alexandria, ending exclusionary zoning and Jim Crow-era laws enforcing racial segregation, while addressing lack of housing in our region. They also successfully reversed a planned \$10 million cut to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund in Arlington.

This is just a sample of the tangible victories won, and an example of what we can do when we organize as a community. There is still much to do, but if you want to be involved in your community and truly have an impact, come join us. For further details about VOICE and to get involved with this non-partisan group, please contact Jennifer Eckel, John Hall, John Boris, Mike Jones, or Pierce Klemmt. You can also visit their website at [voice-va.org](http://voice-va.org).

# BLAST FROM THE PAST...



Alexandra Barr posted this photo of her as crucifer with Liz Carter as taperer and Michael Stafford as banner bearer. Date would be sometime in the 90s.

We invite you to send in photos of Grace's history as you come across them. Scan them in for best resolution and please try to identify all people and approximate date!

**Thanks,  
Your Grace Notes team**

## Vestry Stewardship Statement- 2024 Stewardship Campaign

*"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." - 2 Corinthians 9:7a*

We, the Clergy and Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, have made up our minds. We are all in! We acknowledge that all we are and all we have come from God alone, and so, cheerfully, we return to God a portion of what we have received. Specifically, we commit:

1. To be faithful stewards of all the gifts entrusted to Grace Church.
2. Each of us will pledge, in proportion to our ability, of our time, talent, and treasure, recognizing the magnitude of the need, and the effect of God's grace to multiply each gift.
3. That our pledge is only the beginning. As circumstances and needs change, there may be future opportunity for us to again make up our minds, and to give more!

We invite all the members of the Grace Church family — young and old, long-time parishioners or newcomers, indeed, any who together with us participate in the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving that constitutes our Eucharist, our fellowship, and our outreach ministries — to join us in this transformative commitment.

We look forward with anticipation to the cheerful ingathering of pledges on November 3, 2024, but we will not wait — and neither should you! — to respond to God's grace in your life, and in our community.



# Photo Essay: Youth Mission Trip

*A photo essay of Mission Trip 2024 in conjunction with the Diocese of SouthWest Virginia's Youth (and Jenni Faires).*

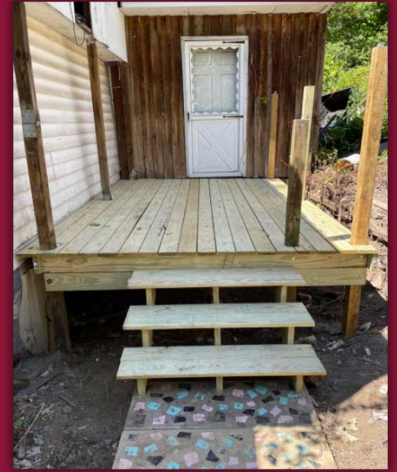
*They bonded.*



*They accomplished!*



*Replacing a rotted deck: What they started with, how they progressed (learning from some very experienced mentors), and what they ended up with!*



# Photo Essay: Youth Mission Trip Continued

*They became a community. Led by some of our favorite mentors, past and present!*



*They worshipped & played Together*

*They cooked & ate together*



*Most importantly, they came home to us! Well done, good and faithful servants!!*





Barbara Morris

# An Occasional WORD



Last week, for the first time in my 92 years I went to a Five Guys. It was my first time outside after a three-week illness. Still a bit weak, I used my trusty walker. With my hips, I push-angled myself and the walker inside the restaurant. Then stopped cold.

The place was huge, antiseptic, angular. Not a curve in sight. A massive, bold red and white check pattern covered the walls. The air was thick with raucous metallic music, rattling ice machines, sizzling vats of oil, and the low murmur of customers, mostly young people hanging around in jeans and cut off shorts, waiting for their orders. Two tall, thin boys looked regal in pure white ankle length robes, traditional Arabic garments called thobes. I fit in with my clod-hopper sneakers, faded jeans, and baggy, wrinkled T-shirt.

What instantly struck me was the angularity of everything. Unlike snug cafes with cozy, embracing chairs, here, under glaring light, the tables were vast, plain, flat, and strictly utilitarian, each flanked by a no-nonsense hard bench. I considered leaving, but the thought of the fat juicy hamburger after three weeks of tea and toast held me there.

"This is my first time in a Five Guys," I admitted to the extraordinarily cheerful girl who manned the "place order here" counter.

"Welcome," she beamed. "Let me explain the menu." She was as gracious and full of information as a maitre d' in a five-star restaurant. "You are order number 85," she instructed me and pointed me to the soda machine.

Good grief! It was so big, so bright, so swirled with color and shiny knobs. It boggled my mind. I poked, I pulled, I tapped, but not a sign of Sprite or ice.

I shuffled my walker over to a woman in a flowery dress who was heaping unshelled peanuts onto small paper plates. She was tiny and quite lovely. A Filipino, I guessed. When I asked her for help with the soda machine, she instantly made me her project.

She easily produced my Sprite, chose a table for me, stationed her husband near me to supply me with napkins and ketchup. And she brought me a plate of peanuts!

I sat stunned and mute except to exchange a few words with the beautiful young Hispanic woman who was sweeping and cleaning up. I complimented her on the extraordinary cleanliness and got a mile-wide smile. "I try to do my best," she said shyly.

When number 85 was called and delivered to me by the husband, I was amazed to see both the fry cook and my cheerful order taker send me high five signs.

Ten minutes later, the husband and wife left with gentle goodbye waves. Shortly after, when I headed for the exit, suddenly the double doors were thrown wide open dramatically with great fun and fanfare by three black teenage boys.

My walker and I sailed on through like a queen on clouds of laughter.

A perfect time, I believe, to say "I have called you Friends."

## Ed Arthur Voted One of Alexandria's Living Legends

In a story by Jeanne Theismann of the Alexandria Gazette Packet last week, one of our parishioners, Ed Arthur, was honored as a Living Legend of Alexandria. The founder of the Kathleen and Eddie Hearts of Love, Ed Arthur has dedicated endless hours to the Chirilagua neighborhood, working closely with the development director at Casa Chirilagua, and learning the local businesses. Hearts of Love is committed to a scholarship and youth program that provides educational support, mentoring, and tutoring, creating a nurturing environment that positively impacts their future.

Just to put it all in context, Ed's parents, Kathleen and Eddie Arthur, were longtime parishioners of Grace Church, very active in many ministries, including serving on the vestry and the Altar Guild. Their dedication to loving others in the city of Alexandria inspired their children to honor them and keep their hearts of love alive.

Ed and his sisters, Barbara Arthur Slate and Kathy Arthur Roche, grew up at Grace, and were also active Sunday School participants, acolytes (well, Ed was an acolyte), and youth members working on Grace mission trips. Barbara's sons, Geoffrey and Jonathan Lester, also grew up at Grace.

Ed has had some health issues in the recent past, but his work with Hearts of Love continues. He likes to say that the Hearts of Love Fund was birthed at Grace in 2019, then went to ACT of Alexandria, and is now on track to become an independent non-profit by the end of this year! Ed also told us that his health concerns will not stop him: "I consider like Paul, having a thorn in my flesh and if he could work through it to all the success he did, surely God's grace is sufficient for me as well. We are going to do great things for our brothers and sisters in the Chirilagua neighborhood."

[Please check out the website! ArthurHeartsofLove.org](http://ArthurHeartsofLove.org)

### **Below are excerpts from the Alexandria Gazette Packet:**

*The 2024 Living Legends of Alexandria have been selected with nine individuals chosen for the prestigious honor. "We are excited to announce the list of our 2024 Alexandria Living Legends," said Alexandria Living Legends president Mary Wadland. "This year we had a pile of nominations to consider. It's an important process, and the board gives each nominee careful consideration."*

*According to the organization's mission statement, the Living Legends of Alexandria is an honor bestowed upon individuals who live and/or work in Alexandria and have contributed to the community in an exemplary and lasting way that has significantly impacted the quality of life in Alexandria and inspired others.*

*Founded in 2007 by photographer Nina Tisara, the first Legends were honored in 2008 including former City Manager Vola Lawson, longtime state senator Patsy Ticer and Civil Rights icon Ferdinand Day. Today, over 147 people have been honored as Living Legends of Alexandria.*



### **This year's honorees are:**

**Ed Arthur** — A lifetime of giving led to Hearts of Love, a foundation Ed and his wife Kathleen started, dedicated to providing food and temporary shelter for abused and neglected women and children. It is now one of the most successful efforts to help provide food, shelter, employment, mentoring, tutoring, encouragement, and confidence-building opportunities for women, children, and families at risk or in need in Alexandria's Chirilagua neighborhood and surrounding communities.

[\(Click here for further info on the rest of the Living Legends.\)](#)

# Why Grace (Notes)?

Because "I have called you friends." from your new co-editors



Kemp and I decided to volunteer for this issue's "Why Grace?" column normally included in Grace Notes. Truth be told, we got ourselves a bit behind the power curve (or, I did!), and we hadn't recruited anyone else to write their story, so either there would not be a "Why Grace?" item or we had to step up to the plate. We actually both thought it a good idea!

For myself, the answers are myriad. First off, I have really enjoyed reading all the parts of Grace Notes over the past couple of years. I also love the bright format, the way we have it seeded with photos and other images and a variety of voices. I appreciate the regularity of commentaries (especially the notes from our Director of Operations and Communications Kevin Hamilton — isn't he just the best at describing our life and putting it in context of ministry?). I love that there are things for our youngest members to look at, solve, or even contribute. Please know that we will be trying out other ideas to keep that span of interest and information there.

More importantly, I have heard (through the Grace Church grapevine, which is pretty robust if you're listening for it) that others have also absorbed news and introductions to new people and new ministries. And if that is not the foundation for effective communication, well, I don't know what it would be!

So, KUDOS to Diana Jarrett and Joyce Ames for their imagination, dedication, and love for this community and its needs. Their work is a solid platform for us to continue!

All of this is to say that Diana and Joyce developed a way for this publication to help us all see each other as friends, and I feel a strong urge to continue that trend.

If you have any ideas, questions, or articles you would like to see published, please send them to Kemp and me (and Teresa Preston, as our final proofreader) at [Grace.Notes@Gracealex.org](mailto:Grace.Notes@Gracealex.org). We welcome your input!

*Chrissie Crosby*





## *Why Grace? Continued from page 28*

As Chrissie and I were learning from Diana Jarrett, Joyce Ames, and Kevin Hamilton what we'd need to do to ensure a smooth transition with Grace Notes, it occurred to us both that we probably wouldn't have time to solicit a volunteer for a "Why Grace" story, let alone give them time to write it. Chrissie suggested that she and I instead write a "Why Grace Notes" article, and I was immediately thankful that I'd have the opportunity to work with someone so creative to come up with a clever idea like that without skipping a beat. I think I'm going to enjoy this.

I'm excited that working on Grace Notes will give me the opportunity to participate in one of Grace's most important ministries, Communication. Diana, Joyce, and Kevin have been an extraordinary team, producing with issue after issue one of the best parish newsletters I've ever seen. Kevin will continue to provide his invaluable guidance in helping us shape the look and feel of the magazine. Chrissie is a fount of enthusiasm and new ideas, and I know her encouragement will help me do my best in this new role. We're delighted that Teresa Preston will also be joining us as final proofreader. Teresa is a magazine professional herself, so hers will be a very helpful pair of eyes.

It is fifteen years now that I've gone from being a Grace newcomer to becoming (I hope) a familiar face. It was in 2009 that I first asked someone in the parking lot how to get to the nave, and since then so many friends I made in those early days have departed. They've either moved away for work, retired and relocated, or left us for a place where we pray perpetual light is shining on them. But so many wonderful friends remain. In John 15:15, Jesus says to his disciples, "I have called you friends." At Grace, we are all his disciples and his friends, and I hope we can proclaim that message continually in the pages of Grace Notes.

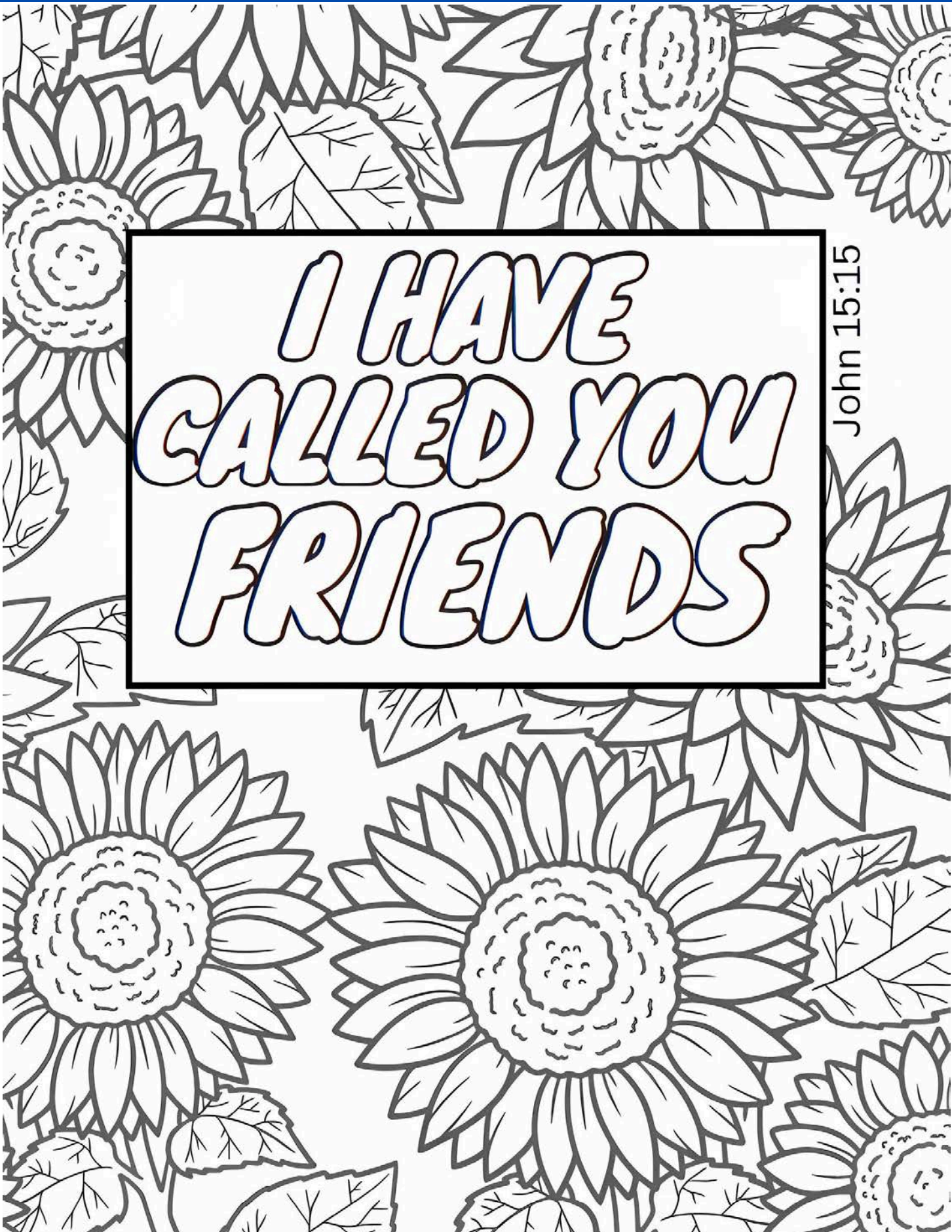


*Kemp Williams*



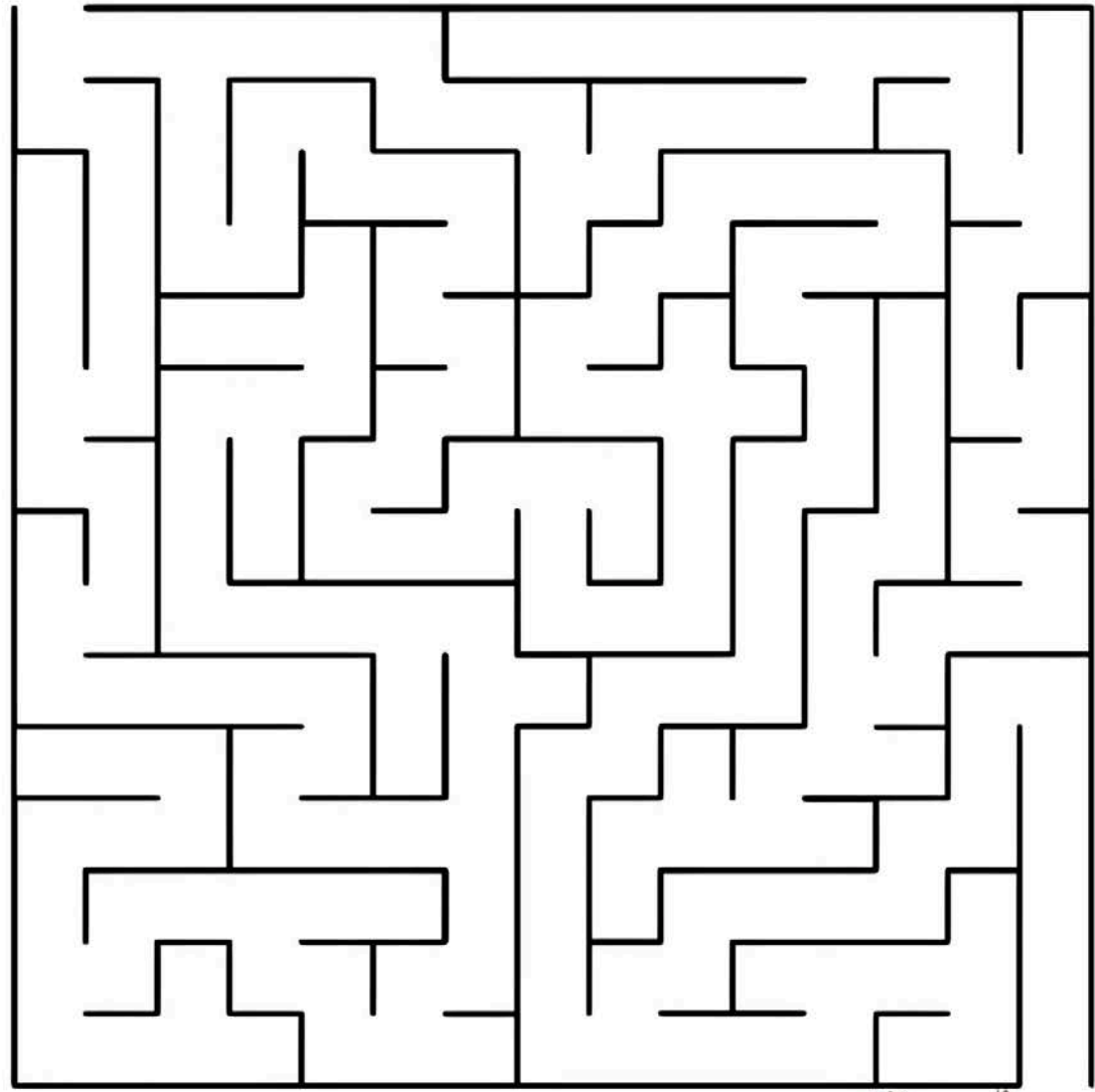
**I HAVE  
CALLED YOU  
FRIENDS**

John 15:15





Help Jesus' disciples  
find their friends





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## Vestry Class of 2024

Khacki Berry, *Youth Formation Liaison*  
Lauren Gustafson, *GES Board Member*  
Mary Hix, *Senior Warden*  
Dan Pattarini, *Evangelism Liaison*  
Rushad Thomas, *Children's Formation Liaison*

## Vestry Class of 2025

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

## Vestry Class of 2026

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

## Parish Team Leads

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



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