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Grace Notes

Volume IV, Issue 6
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Grace Notes is the monthly newsletter for Grace Episcopal Church in Spring Hill. It is emailed or mailed to members and friends of the church and given to visitors and interested individuals. If you would like to contribute an article or comment, please reach out to a member of the Grace Notes committee: Carol Martinez, John Harvey, and Peggy Roberts. *It is the Mission of Grace Episcopal Church to bring glory to God, build the spirituality of our people, and bring Christ to our community.*

Events and Dates of Notes

Here are just some of the dates to note on the church calendar. Information on activities and programs at Grace will be sent to you via email and Facebook.

June 24	Nativity of St. John the Baptist
June 29	St. Peter & St. Paul, Apostles
July 22	St. Mary Magdalene
July 26	St. James the Apostle

Services and Continuing Events

Sun.	10 a.m.	Holy Eucharist (In person and Facebook broadcast)
Mon.	weeks 2 & 4	Creative Mondays, Faith Hall
Tues. & Fri.	7 p.m.	AA Meeting
Wed.	11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.	Father Joe, Office hours
Wed.	12:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist, in person

Vicar's Vagaries:

Thoughts on Hymn 370

On Trinity Sunday, we sang one of my absolute favorite hymns, "St. Patrick's Breastplate." It's the one that begins, "I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, the Three in One and One in Three." This hymn always affects me powerfully, and, especially the part in verse 3 about "the old eternal rocks."

This time, however, it was verse 4 that got to me.

*I bind unto myself today
the power of God to hold and lead,
his eye to watch, his might to stay,
his ear to hearken to my need;
the wisdom of my God to teach,
his hand to guide, his shield to ward;
the word of God to give me speech,
his heavenly host to be my guard.*

As we sang, almost too quickly to notice what was happening, I was feeling God's love expressed in teaching, comforting, leading, protecting, and other things God does for us; but I saw these things happening through people, as if they were his special angels, acting on behalf of God, serving among us to be God's strong hand to guide, to give the inspiration for the right word said at the right time to the person who needs it most, and to protect the vulnerable from abuse, bullying, and injustice. I saw God's love present in the love, strength, and support that comes to us from other people.

"Is this the way it happens?" I thought to myself, as the organ played on, and the words flew by. I could not catch up with the feelings and the images, but I recall seeing strong faces that shone as if lit by direct rays from the sun. And I felt relief, for the burden of straining to perceive the present yet invisible God was eased, and I could see God's presence through the actions and attitudes of his visible people, his "boots on the ground," most of whom do not even perceive the glory of the Lord shining through them. I can believe in God better because of these people in my life. Such people have helped us all embrace the faith that moves us now.

Can this be true? Could it be that God acts through the people in our lives? Could verse 4 of "St. Patrick's Breastplate" have a whole level of meaning that pertains to our own experience among God's people on earth? If he could raise Jesus from the dead, showing forth his love through people around us does not seem like such a hard thing to do.

And here is the real kicker: We ourselves are also God's agents. Imperfect as we are, though we may feel unlovable or unworthy, though we may know how selfish we are, we also can act in love for God's sake and the sake of other people. We can be a living sign of God's presence and his love for people who might not know him as well if not for our smile, or our hand extended, or our words of kindness, strength, or forgiveness. Today, we can be God's love incarnate for someone, maybe *everyone* we meet. How exciting the rest of this day will be, as long as we keep this possibility in our thoughts! I can't wait for the next thing I might do that will show forth God's love to another person, no matter who that might be.

Father Joe

Giving to Grace Church

To make a contribution to Grace Church, you may put a check in one of the offering plates at the front and back of the church; or you may send your offering in the mail to the office; or you may make a contribution online through our website or by scanning the computer code on the back into your smartphone.

Soon, we will be passing the plate again. If you would like to volunteer to help us with that task, let me, John Harvey, or Susan Austin know. We are grateful to all the people who have kept up with their pledges through online or in person giving.

If you have particular needs for prayer or other ministrations of the Church, please contact me, the office, or the senior warden.

Father Joe

Looking Down On Main Street

As many of you are aware, and for those who aren't, when the repairs to our bell and the painting of the belfry were in process it was discovered we had another problem. The wood of the cross atop the belfry was found to be severely rotted. Should you ever find yourself needing to replace a cross that size, don't waste your time looking on Amazon. Thankfully, we have a wonderful Jr. Warden, Susan Austin, who never seems to be overwhelmed by any of these "minor projects" that crop up. With the benefit of some ecclesiastical guidance from Fr. Joe, we began a search for the skills, experience, and

equipment to satisfactorily replace the cross. Luckily, Alicia Fitts said she had used a contractor who just might fit the bill.

Enter Shane Clark, owner of Clark Home Improvement. I learned long ago not to put too much credence in names and titles. Shane does do home improvements, custom remodels, etc., but he has also done quite a bit of restoration on historical venues. These include Rippavilla in Spring Hill, and The Athenaeum in Columbia. I am certain this was not the most profitable job Shane has ever done, but as he told me later, he felt he had been blessed in his business and we had a need he felt he should help with. Please join me in thanking him should you have the opportunity.

I've from time to time met someone during the course of a normal day that I immediately knew was worth getting to know more about. Shane has a gentleman who helps him on projects like this when his other crews are busy. Noel Willems is, if I remember correctly, 82 years old, and a longtime resident of Columbia. As he was described to me, "he's a good, honest, humble man." In talking with him, Noel relayed he had once told someone he was "just an old guy who made sawdust." I would disagree; Noel is a true craftsman, with a skill I wish I had. After the cross was removed and taken to the shop, it was painstakingly measured to ensure dimensional accuracy of the replacement. The new cross was constructed from a single solid cedar post. After priming and painting (and waiting for dry weather), it was replaced atop the belfry and should overlook Main Street for the majority of our congregation's lifetimes. Noel is working on another project for Grace; more on that in a future issue.

I hope you get one takeaway from this column. If I had passed Noel on the street, chances are we might have exchanged greetings and gone on our respective ways. I would have never known what a talent he possesses, and the loss would have been mine. The point is we should get to know each other better, especially after last year plus what we have been through. And you should share your talents, especially if you would like to become more involved at Grace. We will all have our lives enriched.

Christ's Peace, John Harvey

“Yes, Jesus Loves Me”

Text: Jesus Loves Me, by Anna B. Warner
Melody: JESUS LOVES ME by William Bradbury

Last Sunday I used an arrangement of “Jesus Loves Me” during communion. While it is a hymn for children, it has a lot to say to adults, as well.

Anna B. Warner (1827-1915) wrote the words in 1859. It was originally part of a novel for children titled “Say and Seal” which she wrote with her sister, Susan. They often wrote together under their own names and pen names. They also taught Bible classes for the cadets at West Point. After she died, Anna was buried at West Point with military honors, because of her service.

There is a popular story (which may very well be apocryphal!) about the theologian Karl Barth. When he was asked to summarize his theology in a single statement, he replied, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” Whether or not it is true, it is a profound statement of faith. This simple song weaves together the most basic truths of a Christian’s spiritual experience: Jesus loves me, Jesus saves me, and Jesus invites me to come to him.

The tune was written by William Bradbury, who began as a self-taught musician. He eventually taught singing classes, directed choirs, edited books of sacred and secular music, and established a piano company with his brother.

The next time you hear this song, I hope you will pay careful attention to the words—they are exceptionally meaningful!

Deanie Moore

Farewell From the Hawarahs

It is always very hard to say goodbye to friends when you move to another town. This is especially true when those friends have become like family.

The congregation at Grace church has become our family over the years and we will miss our time with you as we begin the next chapter in our lives.

The worship services, the get togethers in Faith Hall, projects we have worked together to complete, outreach efforts, and other experiences have been blessings to both of us.

We have faith that Grace church will continue to be a welcoming and wonderful place of worship just

like it was when we first visited there seven years ago.

We also have faith that we will be able to worship at Grace church again when we visit family in Nashville. Until then, God's peace to all and know we will enjoy the memories we made with you and how we were blessed to be part of this faith-filled congregation.

Richard and Marsha Hawarah

Farewell From the Strongs

We came to Spring Hill to be near grandkids. We had visited a few times before and had seen the little white Episcopal Church on the corner of Main. Coming from a quite large cathedral in Harrisburg, PA, this looked like a nice cozy, simpler place to be.

Steve Farrell greeted us, sat with us, and introduced us around. If you wonder why we don't remember Steve's name, it is because we went to a clean-up day the next Saturday with a largish group of folks, and when we went to the church the next day, Steve and his wife and half the people we had met had left – about half the church overall. We wondered what we were stepping into. But the half that stayed were nice people, and we stayed too. We were not ready to get heavily involved in anything but somehow within the first few months, Ed was the assistant treasurer in charge of income and assistant stewardship chair, too. Sadly, it was a few short years later that Mike Lee, the treasurer, died. Ed was it and was the stewardship chair too. He has pretty much held some office or role in the church since then. Probably his longest stint was stewardship chair. And here Ed sends thanks to Carol Martinez for stepping up a few years ago to one of the church jobs nobody really wants. The other one is junior warden. Ed did it for only one year but spent that year cringing whenever anybody said hello because that was usually followed by – by the way, the whatever isn't working or we need to do x, when we had no money for x, or y, or z for that matter. So, we tip our hats to Susan Austin the current Junior Warden and to Bill Rieger who held that job on and off forever. I think he only gave it up because Lynn said – no more!!

Toni got involved earlier than planned even though she was grandmother in residence to a newborn granddaughter. She has been a chalice bearer, choir member, a VBS volunteer, is a member of Grace

Chapter of the Order of Daughters of the King. We did miss a few Divine Swines but not many and still have some aching muscles to prove it.

That is one side of being here. The other is the bigger piece: the church family that we joined and easily came to know and love. This is a true community of faith, and both of our faiths have deepened as we participated in the worship life of Grace. That is the core of any church, we would hope, but it is definitely true for Grace. Ed thanks Father Joe for listening to him and leading him to books that enriched his journey. Toni is especially grateful to all the Daughters for their support and commitment. They are all true prayer warriors.

Everybody that we have met deserves special mention, but today we want to lift up Mama Flo, who is in rehab for her broken hip in Columbia now. I think we got started deeply with her after hearing how lonely Saturday nights were for her. She had lost her husband Bob not long before we arrived. They used to have steaks and martinis on Saturday nights. We did that together a time or two which led to Tuesday nights with Mama Flo. A long-standing tradition. She is an honest food critic but also appreciates what we always thought was the best Italian eating establishment in Spring Hill. But the bar was pretty low. Those Tuesday nights were a tradition and always absolute delights.

We have so many similar deep connections with so many people here. There is not time to name them all. But we will cherish them. We are moving on to a new chapter – going to Naples, FL where we have spent the past three winters and developed relationships there, too. Leaving Spring Hill and our church family is the proverbial bittersweet parting. We are going someplace that has also become special to us – all one floor to boot – but we are leaving behind deep roots that have been planted here and we hope will not end. We would say we love ya’ll but I think we have to give up the ya’ll part, but not the love you part.

Thank you all for all you have done for us. We will miss you but will cherish our memories of our time here.

Ed and Toni Strong

Treasurer’s Report

Total May revenues:	\$4,806.75
Total May expenses:	\$8,985.44
First Horizon checking balance	\$8,179.77
First Horizon savings balance:	\$67,602.23
Savings Account Breakdown:	
Organ fund:	\$23,500.00
Building fund:	\$26,540.00
Undesignated:	\$17,559.36
Large pledge escrow:	\$0.00
Interest earned:	\$2.87
Total assets:	\$75,782.00

Dave Thomas, Treasurer

Tech Updates

Several changes are being made relating to our presence on social media and the Web.

First, we have created a new Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/gracespringfacething>) to supplement our Facebook group. We hope that you will visit and “like” this page. We will be posting photographs there as well as cross-posting links to video of our Sunday services.

Second, we have a new camera for streaming our Sunday services. This was purchased as part of the memorial for John and Marie Aliano. It can be controlled fairly easily using a smartphone app called “Mevo.” We will be working on documenting the process for setting up and using this camera so that others in the congregation can put it to good use. This is a fantastic device and David Thomas deserves credit for getting this for us and all of the work he has put into streaming.

Finally, many of the website notices about our pandemic protocol are being removed as our community rebounds from COVID-19. Now that we are getting out of “crisis mode” we should soon be able to expand the website with more content.

James Dallas

Clergy and Staff

The R. Rev. Dr. John C. Bauerschmidt, Bishop
The Rev. Joseph N. Davis, Vicar
Deanie Moore, Director of Music
Susan Browning, Financial Administrator

The Mission Council

John Harvey, Senior Warden
Susan Austin, Junior Warden
David Thomas, Treasurer
Ed Strong, Assistant Treasurer
Laurie McNutt, Congregation Life
Les Bennett,
Will Pomeroy, Communications
Diann Schneider, Christian Education

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