

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.

May 16	Grace's Consecration anniversary (1878)
May 23	The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday
May 30	First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday
June 2	Wednesday Noon Eucharist
May 31	Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary
June 11	St. Barnabas, the Apostle
June 24	Nativity of St. John, the Baptist

## Services and Continuing Events

Sun.	10 a.m.	Holy Eucharist w. Hymns
Sun.	10 a.m.	Facebook Live Service
Tues.	10 a.m.	Zoom Bible Study suspended
Tues. & Fri.	at 7 p.m.	AA Meeting
Wednesday	noon	celebrations of the Eucharist resume on June 2.
Fr. Joe	will normally be in the office	Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

## **Vicar's Vagaries:**

When Jesus told the disciples he was going to the Father, he mentioned that his departure made them sad, but he told them, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate (Comforter, Counselor, *Paraklete*, Helper) will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." (John 16:7) Once I asked an adult class if they would

prefer to have Jesus present physically on earth instead of ascended to the Father and having the Holy Spirit poured out upon us. To my surprise, one man admitted he would prefer to have Jesus here on earth, even living in Jerusalem, if he could go see him and talk to him.

That man's honest words made an impression on me. He listened to me explain how it was better to have the Holy Spirit present in every Christian than it would be to have Jesus still alive on earth, but only present in one location at a time. I quoted Jesus saying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12) But unless a person has a very developed sense of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit inside himself or herself, it is hard to believe that we are better off than we would be if we could go even once in a lifetime to visit Jesus, and could look upon his face, hear his voice, see how he treats people, and hear his proclamations on the state of the world, if only he had remained in the flesh on this earth.

Jesus seems easier to know than the Holy Spirit. The New Testament is mostly about Jesus. It even says he became human so we could know see and know the Father in him. Christians learn how to interpret the Old Testament so that we learn more about Jesus through the scriptures that were his own Bible. The Holy Spirit is present in the Bible, but not so prominent, and not so vivid. The Holy Spirit is cloaked in mystery. Because Jesus was what we are, because he could suffer, die, and rise again, because he could be nailed down, literally, we think we know him better. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of scripture, and he is present in our reading scripture and in our prayers, but because he is Spirit, he eludes our comprehension.

Let's also admit a reality about the Church year. We spend 50 days celebrating Easter, and well we should. The Sundays after Epiphany may be called "ordinary time," but their scripture readings follow a definite pattern that explores how God makes

himself known to us, which is the essence of what “epiphany” means. By contrast to Epiphany and Easter, only Pentecost Sunday is devoted to the coming of the Holy Spirit and his work. And the next Sunday is Trinity Sunday, which, by emphasizing a doctrine rather than an event, dissipates any momentum for developing the meaning of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit within the members of the Body of Christ. The Church that decides to pour out glory, laud, and honor upon the Holy Spirit in full measure must overcome the lectionary and the calendar; and that’s not easy to do.

Just about every Pentecost, I read in the inspiring little book *Holy Spirit*, by Michael Ramsey, the 100<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury (1977, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 137 pp., counting footnotes). Every year, I am surprised to see that there are 10 chapters, and that each chapter fully deserves at least the space Lord Ramsey gives it. I ponder, “What if I decided to preach on the Holy Spirit every Sunday this summer, regardless of what the lectionary does? Surely, somehow, since the entire Holy Trinity is present and at work whenever one person of the Trinity is involved!” And yet, I have never succeeded in bending the lectionary to my intentions. I hope this is because the lectionary knows better than I; but I suspect that we, at least in the Western Church, do not place enough emphasis on the importance of the Holy Spirit.

Let’s resolve to study, ponder, and pray about this issue. In our prayers, let’s tell the Holy Spirit, “Come and inspire your Church to give full recognition to who you are and all the good you do in the world!” It would be meet and right so to do.

Jesus said, “If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.” (Mt. 17:20) There would be no faith, there would be no power exerted to move the mountain, if the Holy Spirit did not animate and empower the souls of those who move the mountains.

Father Joe

### **Tuesday Morning Bible Study via Zoom**

When we gather to worship on Sunday we are blessed to hear Gospel, Old Testament, and New Testament readings, as well as the collect of the day.

These readings are appointed by the Lectionary and organized into years A, B, and C. As is the case with all scripture, the readings are inspired by God and are useful in providing a pattern we can follow in our daily lives.

To help us better understand the message in each of the Sunday readings Father Joe schedules a weekly, in-depth Bible study each Tuesday at 10 am via Zoom. The study generally lasts about an hour and a half and encourages input from everyone in the session. The lessons and collect we study are those appointed for the upcoming Sunday service.

I find that there is a lot more to learn from each of the readings than I realize by just hearing them on Sunday morning. As expected, Father Joe provides teaching on each lesson and unpacks the guidance each passage provides for our relationship with God and those around us. In addition to his explanations, everyone in the study learns a great deal from each other as we share the message we get from the readings. By including the collect, gospel, and scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible study provides instruction for all the lessons in the upcoming Sunday service.

I recommend this study to anyone wanting an in-depth look at the appointed scriptures that offer so much and are such an important part of our Sunday worship experience. If you can attend the study via Zoom contact Father Joe who can provide the meeting ID needed to log into the weekly session

Richard Hawarah

*Note from the vicar:*

*I am reluctant to announce, after such a fine article, that the Bible study is temporarily suspended for the summer. I am going to be at the office and will be celebrating the Eucharist on Wednesdays at noon as we did before the coronavirus came along in March of 2020.*

*Father Joe*

### **Study the Book of Luke**

The Daughters of Grace, our Chapter name as part of the Order of the Daughters of the King®, have continued to meet via Zoom every two weeks and have completed a Study of Luke over the last three months. We used a book by Heather M. Dixon entitled, *Determined – Living Like Jesus in Every*

*Moment.* The author states the following in the Introduction of the book stating "...It's easy to wander through life without appreciating the gift of every moment we've been given....We should want to make *every* moment count – not only because we aren't guaranteed the next one – but also because this is exactly how our Savior spent His time here.....How then do we walk...determined to experience abundant life and fulfilling the plans God has for us?....The answers are found in following the footsteps on the One who lived fully, because He was determined that we might do the same."

Each chapter of the book is based on verses in the Gospel of Luke as follows:

The Son: Determined to Choose Life (Luke 2-4)

The Teacher: Determined to Demonstrate a New Way (Luke 4-6)

The Rescuer: Determined to Save Humankind (Luke 7-9)

The Healer: Determined to Love the World (Luke 9-10)

The Friend: Determined to Persevere (Luke 12; 13; 15; 18)

The Victor: Determined to Live with Courage (Luke 19; 20; 22-24)

At the completion of the Study, comments from our Daughters shared that they felt it was very inspiring; it is a blueprint/layout of what we need to do to live like Jesus and how to do it! We agree with the author as she states that it is her hope that "... you (we) have intimately connected with a Savior who remains laser-focused in His mission to love you (us) and the world around you (us). He is the true prize to living with determination...God is scanning the globe for determined disciples of Jesus. Let's be ready to answer the call!"

As Sisters in the Order of the Daughters of the King®, we pray our Motto every day: "*FOR HIS SAKE...I am but one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do. What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do. Lord, what will you have me do?*" We continue our daily prayers for Father Joe and all of our members of Grace Episcopal Church. Please let us know if you would like us to pray for your special intention or in thanksgiving to Our Blessed Lord for hearing and answering your prayer.

In the near future, we will hold a short informational meeting. We invite the women of our

parish to learn more about what it means to become a member in the Order of the Daughters of the King®. We encourage you to attend or Zoom with us. We will keep you posted but in the meantime, please feel free to contact me with your questions. May God bless you and keep you all in His Peace.

Toni Strong

President, Daughters of Grace

### **"Hail Thee, Festival Day"!**

Text: Venantius Honorius Fortunatus

Music: SALVE FESTA DIES by

Ralph Vaughan Williams

In deciding what to write about this month, the only topic possible is Pentecost. Coming from a non-liturgical tradition, Pentecost was the topic of sermons, but was not celebrated as a season. I have loved learning about it, and especially learning the Pentecost text of "Hail Thee, Festival Day!"

The text was written by Venantius Honorius Fortunatus, who was also the author of the Easter hymn, "Welcome, Happy Morning." This text was first published in a collection of Fortunatus' poetry in 576. The poem inspired many imitations and adaptations over the centuries. It was translated and published in The English Hymnal in 1906.

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, God commanded the Israelites through Moses to observe certain annual feasts. With the death and resurrection of Jesus that cycle of feasts became obsolete. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was the perfect and final Passover sacrifice. Though God did not decree a new religious calendar, the church throughout the ages has established a calendar of holy days to celebrate and remember the events in Jesus' life, including Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. This hymn recognizes the importance of such celebrations with the opening line, "Hail thee, festival day! blest day that art hallowed forever."

Deanie Moore

### **What is the United Thank Offering?**

The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of The Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. Through UTO, individuals are invited to embrace and deepen a personal daily spiritual discipline of gratitude. UTO encourages people to

notice the good things that happen each day, give thanks to God for those blessings.

UTO is entrusted to receive the offerings and to distribute the 100% of what is collected to support the mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church.

We give thanks for the “little things”, like a parking spot on a busy day or sunshine for the church picnic, or for big things like recovery from a serious illness, or a new job. You are never too young or old to count your blessings and share your thankful spirit with others and with God.

It’s easy – notice the good things that happen each day. Make an offering for each blessing. Every penny, nickel, dime, and quarter offered in thanks through the UTO is given to God’s mission in the world. Transforms lives in the United States. Your blessings become blessings for others. Through daily prayer and tangible offerings, lives are changed in very real ways. You are never too young or old to start a daily spiritual practice.

**United Thank Offering Prayer:** Gracious God, source of all creation, all love, all true joy: accept, **I pray**, these outward signs of my profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life. Keep me ever **thankful** for all the blessings of joy and the challenges that come my way. **Amen.**

Diann Schneider, Diocesan UTO Chairman

**Treasurer’s Report**

April was a good month for Grace with a positive balance. Attendance is up and it made a difference!

During the first four months of 2021, revenues fell short of expenses in January and March, but were positive for February and April. This is largely due to receiving some large pledges - those paid annually - so we cannot continue to expect those to reoccur. With more people returning to services, it’s likely revenues will pick up from plate income.

In summary, Grace church’s balance is positive and appears to be trending upward in 2021. Finances for April are as follows:

Total April revenues:	\$17,499.00
Total April expenses:	\$8,503.58
First Horizon checking balance	\$8,413.46
First Horizon savings balance:	\$71,599.36

Savings breakdown:	
Organ fund:	\$23,500.00
Building fund:	\$26,540.00
Undesignated:	\$17,556.59
Large pledge escrow:	\$ 4,000.00
Interest earned:	\$2.77
 Total assets:	 \$80,012.82

Dave Thomas, Treasurer

**Mission Council**

Grace Mission Council held their monthly meeting via Zoom May 19, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. Father Joe mentioned that Bishop Bauerschmidt had sent an email to the diocesan clergy and senior wardens in which he modified the recommended Covid 19 protocols. For fully vaccinated people, distancing and masking are no longer recommended for indoor worship services. Those not yet fully vaccinated or who are especially vulnerable are recommended to wear masks and maintain a physical distance from others. Fr. Joe and the council discussed what the new protocols should be for Grace, and when they should be implemented. (If you did not receive this email or a printed version of it in the mail, please contact Fr. Joe by phone or at [jonormand@aol.com](mailto:jonormand@aol.com), and he will send you another copy.) Communion in both kinds (chalice and host) is to be offered at the altar rail. Those who would like to be brought the host in their pew may remain in place, and he will come to them. This new policy was implemented on May 23, Pentecost Sunday.

Les Bennett was nominated and elected to fill a vacancy on the Mission Council.

A special meeting of the membership on May 23 after the service was announced again. The bylaws amendments mentioned last month and on the following Sundays were adopted unanimously at this meeting.

Peggy Roberts, Clerk of Mission Council and Fr. Joe

**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  
Will Pomeroy, Communications  
Diann Schneider, Christian Education

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