

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.

Grace Notes is the monthly newsletter for Grace Episcopal Church in Spring Hill. If you would like to contribute an article or comment, please reach out to a member of the Grace Notes committee: Peggy Roberts, Carol Martinez, and LaRue Schmelzer.

Services & Continuing Events

Sun.	10 AM	Holy Eucharist
	10 AM	Children’s Church
Sun.	10 AM	Facebook Live Service
Tues.	3 PM	Inquirer’s Class
Tues. & Fri.	7 PM	AA Meeting
Wed.	10 AM	Daughters of The King (2 nd & 4 th Wed.)
	Noon	Holy Eucharist
	11:30 – 3 PM	Father Joe, Office
Thur.	9 AM	Crochet Club
Thur.	9 AM	Men’s Breakfast, Grecian Restaurant

<u>Newsletter Articles</u>	
Vicar’s Vagaries	Pg. 1- 4
Sr. Warden Report	Pg. 4-5
Jr. Warden Report	Pg. 5-6
Stewardship Report	Pg. 6
Director of Music	Pg. 6
New Members Ministry	Pg. 6-7
Communications Report	Pg. 7
Website Report	Pg. 7
Christian Ed. & Children’s Ministry	Pg. 7-8
Community Outreach Report	Pg. 8-9
Congregational Life	Pg. 9
Altar Guild	Pg. 9-10
Daughters of the King	Pg. 10
Nov. MC Minutes	Pg. 10-11

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.

Jan. 18		Confession of St. Peter the Apostle
Jan. 20		The Diocesan Convention
Jan. 21	10 AM	Holy Eucharist
	10 AM	Children's Church
Jan. 25		Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Jan. 28	10 AM	Holy Eucharist
	10 AM	Children's Church
Feb. 2		Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple
Feb. 2	Noon	Ladies Potluck Lunch Faith Hall
Feb. 13	6 PM	Pancake Supper at Grace
Feb. 14		Ash Wednesday
Feb. 19		First Sunday in Lent
Feb. 24		St. Matthias The Apostle



Vicar’s Report
January 14, 2024
The Rev. Joseph N. Davis

I realize I have mentioned in several sermons that Jesus came to make us part of God’s family, and that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can call God our Father, or even address him as “Abba,” which means “Daddy.” It may be that I have stressed this important truth of the gospel more this year than I usually do because this year I have experienced more powerfully than usual what a gift it is to be part of God’s family here at Grace Episcopal Church. If you have been here for at least a few months, you know that this year has been a very challenging one for me. In rapid succession, my father died in January; I preached at his funeral in February; I officiated at the wedding of a cousin in Colorado in July; my brother died at the end of August; his funeral was in September; and my

wife and I attended the wedding of our older son and his fiancée on December 9 in New York City.

I want you to know how deeply I appreciate all that you have done throughout the past year to support me and my family as we have been going through this roller coaster of sad and happy events. I have not been alone in my grief or my joy. You have been willing to share both, and I greatly appreciate your prayers, your cards, your spoken words, the memorials you gave in memory of my loved ones, and your attendance at the funerals of my father and my brother. And I am extremely grateful to Fr. Sandy Herrmann, who substituted for me on the Sundays when I was away.

We also went through the seasons of the year together, including Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, and Christmas, and we had 11 mission council meetings, the baptism of Mani Baskar on the Sunday after All Saints' Day, and an Advent Service of Lessons and Carols. We had a Lenten series about prayer based on a section of the book *The Little Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

My immediate family has gone through a lot in the past year, but so has our church family. It was good to see John Colmore in church on Christmas Eve as he works on recovering from the stroke he had last summer. Linda has worked on the altar guild with Michele Gibson-O'Grady, Mimi Demoss, and new member Teri Mai to make sure our services are properly set up and taken down without a hitch. They also take care of preparing the beautiful flowers that adorn our sanctuary during our eucharistic celebrations.

While we don't have a formal choir right now with regular practices, Deanie works with a few loyal singers who sit up front together and lead our singing, especially on hymns sung during communion. Thanks to Les Bennett, Diann Schneider, Stana Chapman, Sheila Flynn, Pat Mayo, and others who sometimes join them. Deanie also picks hymns weekly that suit the season and our congregation, and Karyl Beal puts these hymns into the bulletin draft and sends that on to me so I can check it and make any last-minute adjustments that are needed. Then I give the final copy to John Harvey, who makes copies and inserts the lesson sheets every week. Most things that happen at Grace Church, such as *Grace Notes* and keeping up with newcomers, are also team efforts. Because of the tireless work of Peggy Roberts

and Carol Martinez, our newsletter comes out monthly, and it usually has interesting articles written by various members of the congregation, partly because it is so hard to tell Peggy or Carol "No" when they ask for something.

We owe our thanks to the steady help of our ushers, Charles Cochran and Robert Chapman, who help people get their bulletins and take up the offering every Sunday. I don't think any of us realized how important their work was until we didn't take up an offering for a year and a half during our Covid days. As soon as we turned Charles loose to pass the plate again, giving went up sharply and has become much more regular.

Though the Covid pandemic no longer affects us as it did in recent years, we still have some regular viewers every Sunday on Facebook, so we continue to stream our Sunday services every week, thanks to the regular work of David Thomas, who has also served as our treasurer for the last three years. Now we have an assistant to help him with those treasurer duties. He is Brian Klammer, whom we welcome with his wife Liz to their first annual meeting this year.

Others who help with our services are the lay Eucharistic ministers, Jerry Schmelzer and Chuck Warnick. I hope there will be two more as soon as certain requirements are completed so they can begin serving. I also want to thank Bryson Farmer, our acolyte, for his service twice a month and on special occasions.

Our faithful lay readers do a great job every Sunday proclaiming God's word with reverence and understanding. Thanks to Sheila Flynn and James Dallas for their help in organizing and scheduling these readers. I know Sheila also makes more schedules than I even know about and sends them out faithfully. James helps us with technical matters, such as updating our website and other things people ask him to help with.

If you got a birthday or anniversary card in the past year, it is probably because Carolyn Warnick wrote you one in the name of this church. I have heard from several people how much these cards have meant to some of our members, and I know how much those cards and others from the people of Grace have meant to me. One sits on my desk right now as I prepare this report. And Carolyn's husband Chuck kept the

mission council minutes in order as our clerk for the last two years, for which we owe him our thanks.

Lynn Reiger leads the way for our Children's church, but she couldn't do it without assistance and support from Susan Austin, Nicole Poirier, James Dallas, and sometimes others who help on occasion; and of course, we are grateful for the parents who bring their children. Whether we have a children's church program for their children or not, we all want children to come to church. And I want to commend the children of our church for being so attentive and reverent. Please tell our children who are not here today, "God knows you are there, and he is glad to see you in our pews."

Bill Rieger has been a faithful and dependable junior warden this past year. He has a wonderful way of inviting others to help with church clean-up days, and he does a lot of the work of caring for our church himself. It was great to have his help on Christmas Eve when we needed someone to announce the carols which would be sung before the Eucharist, and he stepped right in when needed, so that everything went smoothly.

Carol Martinez has served in a double capacity this past year as both senior warden and stewardship chairperson. I can't imagine a more dedicated and attentive person in both these vital positions. I can always count on her to tell me what she thinks, and I am grateful for the many things she thinks of that would not occur to me.

Carol will probably be our senior warden again next year, but we owe it to her and to this church to find a stewardship chairperson to take her place. Contrary to popular belief, this is one of the best jobs in the church. The stewardship chairperson helps others express their gratitude to God. One never really has to ask others for money. We just need to tell people the truth, bear witness to the gospel of Christ, and organize the tasks that are involved in facilitating the congregation's generosity. Stuffing envelopes and putting stamps and address labels on them is a lot of the job, and it doesn't take a great diplomat or a motivational speaker to do that kind of work. Make no mistake about it: when people are grateful to God, they give generously, as I have seen over and over again. The reverse is also true. When they give generously, they become more grateful people, and with gratitude, joy increases.

The outreach ministry led by Charles Cochran and the work of the congregational life team led by Robert Chapman will be covered by other reports. But I want to say something about all the people I have not mentioned. Every single member of Grace gives to God and to the whole church every time he or she comes to a service, or participates online. Isn't it wonderful to know that we can enrich one another just by coming together to worship God and hear his word proclaimed?

I have probably mentioned too many people by name today, but I have also probably left off some people who particularly need to be mentioned, and I am sorry if you are one of them.

Although we may never be free of Covid, at least in the past year we were able to have a regular schedule of services and events that was not interrupted by a pandemic. Our average Sunday attendance for last year was 33, though it seemed higher. Our total membership is stable at around 88. We had 15 new people join Grace, which is a higher number of new people than we have had in any of the years I remember since I came here in April of 2017. (Six new people came in previous year, and four came in the year before that. If the trend continues, we may have over twenty new members join us in 2024.) I believe this large number is partly due to the tireless work of Peggy Roberts and the newcomer's ministry team, which consists of anyone who helps her keep up with new people and information about them.

It may be that we will see more new people in the coming year. I know for sure that in a few years, those of us who are here will have new friends that we could never imagine having just because we have been members of this church and have allowed the Holy Spirit to work us into the fabric of being and into the woodwork and the floorboards of Grace Church.

New Section not delivered on Sunday, January 14:

I want to say a few words about what we may look forward to in the coming months. We will continue with our inquirers' class, which includes Steven Wallace and Mani Baskar, two new members who want to be confirmed when the bishop visits this summer. The bishop's visit will be especially festive due to these confirmations. Beginning with the first regular Wednesday in Lent, February 21, we will begin a new Lenten series, with Evening Prayer,

simple meal, and a study of a book I just recently read by N. T. Wright called *Surprised by Hope*. This is a great book about the resurrection, the fulfillment of God's kingdom, what heaven really is, and what happens to people after death. Wright's skillful use of biblical theology backs up every claim he makes. Wright shows how the Bible teaches that what we do in this life is very important; that we are already part of the resurrection life; that we don't have a physical life on earth so we can die and have our spirits go to heaven for a disembodied life in eternity. You may never listen to a funeral sermon the same way again after you attend this class, and that could be a very good thing. If you are like me, reading this book will lead to your being "surprised by hope."

After an early Easter on March 31, followed by Ascension Day on April 25, we could resume our Diving Swine Barbeque event. If we do, the time to start planning is next month. This is a whole-church event that needs a great deal of preparation and involvement. We don't have to have one; but if we do, someone needs to take charge and start getting ready. We have a prospective leader or two; but we need someone to start mobilizing volunteers if we want to have a barbeque.

What else do we have in our future? The mission council has a mutual ministry review planned with Canon Jody Howard on February 24. This is a time for reflection on our purpose, what we have accomplished, and how we can do better in the future. This year, there will be events in the world around us that could put a strain on us, such as the presidential election. If the past is any indication of what we will be this year, our church will be a haven from the anxiety around us but also a source of strength to face the challenges that affect us in this fallen world.

More could be said, but there will be other times to build on what I have reported at this time. Thank you for attending and for serving the mission of Christ in this place. It is a joy to be with you through these times, and I look forward to what lies in the good future that God has prepared for us at Grace Church.

Senior Warden 2023: Carol Martinez

This is my second time serving as Senior Warden at Grace and both times have been interesting, rewarding, and sometimes challenging. I do enjoy a challenge most days.

2023 provided many Grace Episcopal Church highlights for me:

Watching Mani Baskar get baptized and serving as one of his God parents along with Dick and Peggy Roberts has been a wonderful experience. God did a wonderful thing when he sent Mani to our door.

This past year I attended Fr. Joe's Episcopal 101 class along with Mani, Steve, Peggy, and Dick. The last time I attended a class like this was about 55 years ago. The class has strengthened my faith and deepened my knowledge of the Bible. And I am happy that Dick Roberts is also a student. He can answer many of Fr. Joe's questions. I recommend this class to all. It takes place on Tuesdays at 3 pm.

I enjoy coming to the Wednesday 12 noon services where I get to learn about saints and experience worship during a quiet time and receive both the sacrament of healing and communion.

I am thankful that I am able to drive and provide transportation to church, church events, and other places for some of our members who no longer drive. It gave me the opportunity to get to better know some members of our congregation. I am also delighted that my passengers seem not to care that I get lost. Just ask Peg Agrimonti. One day I will need a ride, but please do not ask me for directions. I am just one of many people who offer transportation.

Another project that I enjoy is working on church service enhancements. I did not clear that phrase with our leader. What I mean is I like to plan special moments during the services to honor or feature members of our congregation. On Veterans Day we recognized the 11 Veterans who currently attend Grace.

When we honored the four people who worked with our children during children's church, we also recognized the members of our parish who worked as teachers. At graduation time, we honored members who graduated.

And then there is Blessing of the Animals, a favorite of me and my 2 pets. It has been a regular event for the 10 years I have been at Grace. In 2023 we saw many new humans come to Grace. Our event for pets hit a new attendance high: 10 dogs, 1 cat and for the first time ever a bird. Also, we prayed for some of the many dog rescues that are in our area. The pets do not walk through the red door. Their service takes place outside.

I pray that God continues to send more people through the red door to worship with us. I also hope that more members will find it in their heart to step up and lead or be active in our programs.

On a more serious subject, security is an important issue for me, and during 2023 Dick Roberts and Bill Rieger added peep holes to the door in Faith Hall. The holes comply with regulations established by the Americans for Disabilities Act. Also, I visited groups who use Grace facilities and discussed security issues.

Future plans call for working with the Spring Hill Fire Department to offer a CPR class for members. Also, local law enforcement has offered to provide a safety training course like what is offered at local schools and businesses. A written plan is in progress.

Grace is a wonderful place to worship and establish a closer relationship with God. It is also a good place to learn about the importance of the Oxford comma. I love my church family and look forward to spending many more years at Grace. This church has been part of our community for 145 years sharing our Grace and gratitude to God. Let us all pray for many more years of worship and that in 145 years someone will look at this issue of Grace Notes and read about what happened. Hopefully, they will know how to speed read because this is an exceedingly long issue.

Jr. Warden Report: Bill Reiger

I. Landscape Maintenance:

- *Fall Pruning:* A heavy pruning of crepe myrtles and other trees and shrubs was conducted in late fall.
- *Flower Gardens:* The maintenance of our flower gardens is an ongoing challenge, and additional assistance from volunteers is needed to address this considerable task.
- *Lawn:* For 2023, lawn maintenance was limited to routine mowing and leaf removal. For 2024, soil amendments and overseeding will be necessary to increase the health of the lawn, especially on the shaded south side of the building.

II. Sidewalk and Parking Lot:

- *Sidewalk:* The sidewalk has been pressure washed for both cosmetic improvement and to address safety concerns related to slick areas during wet conditions.

- *Parking Lot:* Repair and restriping of the parking lot will commence soon.

III. Building/Other Infrastructure:

Sacristy Door Repair: The sacristy door, which exhibited significant rot, has been successfully repaired. However, attention is still needed to replace the door threshold.

Roof Replacement: The roof, last replaced in 2005, is approaching the end of its useful life. Consideration of a replacement within the next 1-5 years is recommended.

Chair Maintenance: The ongoing project to install felt pads on the chairs in Faith Hall is now complete. Felt pads have been installed on 100 percent of chairs to prevent floor scratches. Periodic replacement of worn-out pads is anticipated, and an annual inspection cycle is recommended.

Dishwasher Upgrade: The dishwasher has been replaced with a new model, enhancing kitchen functionality.

Peep Holes: Peepholes were added to the Faith Hall exterior door as recommended by the Mission Council's safety review.

Gutter Cleaning: Gutters were successfully cleaned this fall.

IV. Other Ongoing and Pending Projects:

- *Basement Support:* A pending project involves adding support for diminished capacity floor joists.
- *Sanctuary HVAC Grate:* While a repair has been implemented, a more permanent solution remains under consideration.
- *Metal Shed:* Yes, we have a shed located outside the sacristy. The shed needs repair or replacement.

V. HVAC Maintenance:

Routine service of the HVAC system has been completed to ensure peak operation and to protect the equipment's value.

VI. Cleaning

The church employs a cleaning person who visits the church biweekly. Members of the mission council do supplemental cleaning. Cleaning the area behind the altar rail is done by the Altar Guild.

I would like to conclude with a message of thanks to all who contributed to the effort to maintain our facility. Whether with physical work, or financial

support, or with words of encouragement and advice, your support matters and is appreciated.

Stewardship 2023: Carol Martinez

In 2023, 31 households were pledging members of Grace Episcopal Church. This is an increase. In 2022 28 households were pledging members of Grace Episcopal Church. In 2023 the total amount pledged was \$82,368, to date we have exceeded that amount by \$1270. This is due in part to some generous households who exceeded their pledge.

To date 30 households have pledged for 2024. Traditionally, Grace receives pledges until Spring, so we expect that number to grow. If you have not had the opportunity to pledge, please reach out to Carol Martinez or David Thomas. One of us will give you a pledge card, or you may go to the Grace website and make a pledge electronically. A comprehensive report of the 2023 budget will be presented after the February Mission Council Meeting. Susan Browning, the financial administrator for Grace, is preparing the final 2023 budget that will be reviewed by the treasurer and the mission council prior to presentation.

Stewardship is more than just money. People at Grace and their family and friends give of their time and talents. If I listed everything that everyone did, this report would expand to 20 or more pages. Thanks to everyone for all they do for Grace.

I would like to close with something I borrowed from another Episcopal Church: As Episcopalians, we are followers of Jesus Christ, and both our worship and our mission are in Christ's name. In Jesus, we find that the nature of God is love, and through baptism, we share in his victory over sin and death.

If you are interested in finding out ways that your talents can be used to help Grace Church, please reach out to a member of the 2024 mission council or Father Joe.

Director of Music Report: Deanie Moore

This has been an interesting 2023 as far as music goes at Grace Episcopal Church. We were hoping to have the choir up and running again, and we did for 5 or 6 Sundays. We will work on it again in the coming 2024.

We had a service of scripture readings and carols on the Second Sunday in Advent and were thankful to be able to get back to this meaningful part of the season.

I have authored an article for Grace Notes each month, and I am so pleased with the comments I am getting back. Thank you all for reading my pieces, and I am looking forward to responding to each of you.

New Members Ministry: Peggy Roberts

For a period of about two years now, I have collaborated with other members and Father Joe to identify and welcome new people and new families that come to Grace Episcopal every Sunday. These people come to experience the Episcopal service, meet our leader and Vicar Fr. Joseph Davis, explore church beliefs, and visit our artful, humble, splendid old church. Most visitors report they visited our church after just driving by.

The year 2023 brought an increasing number of fresh faces, and Grace is excited and thankful for prayers that were generously answered. We have welcomed more than 52 visitors during the year and are even more grateful to now have an additional 16 members. The Christmas Eve service was attended by 78 people and Grace church was very full and festive.

Meeting people and welcoming them to Grace includes extending a gift of the church mug, inviting them to coffee after the service, introducing them to members, and sending them a thank you card and invitations for return visits. Phone calls are made to extend information concerning the ladies' monthly luncheons, men's weekly breakfasts, Fifth Sunday Brunches, and even perhaps an inquirer's bible study class. Grace Episcopal is blessed with many genuinely kind and sincerely caring people who are an even greater benefit than being able to worship in our invaluable 1878 church.

Additional help with this growing ministry would be a great support. Please text or email: Peggy Roberts, 931.625.6069, proberts000@charter.net, Carol Martinez, 213.434.5710, carolcm443@gmail.com. or Fr. Joe.

Communications:

Carol Martinez, Fr. Joe & Peggy Roberts

Grace Notes has again achieved the goals of following Grace happenings, informing members of Church activities, and it is an especially important record of church happenings over the past year. We have successfully produced our little paper for the past 12 months!

The team who were involved in the creation, editing, and publishing of *Grace Notes* for 2023 were Father Joe, Peggy Roberts, and Carol Martinez. Each issue began with Fr. Joe's column Vicar's Vagaries on page 1 along with Services and Continuing Events and Events & Dates of Note compiled by Peggy Roberts.

We are grateful to the many members of the church who contributed to the publication. Deannie Moore wrote a monthly column on music; Karyl Chastain Beal worked with members on profiles so the congregation could get to know members; Treasurer Dave Thomas did the financial report; and Chuck Warnick, as the Mission Council Scribe, provided the meeting minutes. Each article goes through an editing process where the editorial team (Fr. Joe, Peggy, and Carol) checks the article for accuracy and makes sure it conforms to the publication style guide and editorial mission.

After the editorial work is done, Peggy Roberts turns the written word into something visually pleasing and adds drawings and photos to the layout. And finally, Fr. Joe writes an introduction to the email and then hits the send button.

LaRue Schmelzer helps with the distribution. The majority of people receive the publication via email, but LaRue made certain that it is distributed via the U.S. mail to people who do not have access to a computer. Two of those who received the publication via snail mail—Mamma Flo Kline and Margaret Lee—always commented about Grace Notes. James Dallas puts the publication on the Grace website, and guests can find a paper copy in the Narthex or Faith Hall. And then the process begins again.

If you are feeling the need to be a part of this vital activity, please reach out to Peggy Roberts, 931.625.6069, proberts000@charter.net or Carol

Martinez, 213.434.5710, carolcm443gmail.com. or Fr. Joe. If any of you, not named, know you have meaningful content to share, please call us.

Faces of Grace Directory 2023-24 – One of the most needed sources of information I looked for as a visitor and new member was how to identify Grace members, who all knew my name immediately. Fr. Joe was very encouraging and helpful with a directory “on the down low” when I approached him. Parishioners were asked to supply us with their no-cost selfies, and a church directory that everyone could use was compiled economically with members' contact information. All households received one copy and it became a very appreciated connection between all the members and staff.

Faces second edition is about a year old now, and to keep the Directory current, updates to phone number, addresses, and email addresses appear monthly in Grace Notes as needed. Updating the Directory is also inexpensive. The third edition will be released sometime in 2024.

Website Report 2023: James Dallas

More than 7 changes were made to the Grace website this year:

- The “Ministries” section was added to spotlight the different ministries, based on videos recorded during the Ministry Fair last spring.
- A page <https://graceepiscopalspringhill.org/readings> was added that displays the readings assigned for each Sunday.
- More photographs were added on the front page.
- The front page was restructured so that news items can be displayed more effectively.
- Links were updated to point to the new 2024 stewardship format.
- Plugins were updated.
- “Site up/down” monitors have been created so we can track uptime better.

Website Statistics (from January 1 through December 11, 2023)

Visits: 52,042

Visitors: 16,572 unique visitors (quite sure that a vast number of these are not real people, some may be malicious, and some may be people looking for another site and coming to us by mistake). Average visitors per day: 48 (344 days). About 10 of these are hacking attempts.

Visitors came from 93 different countries. About half (8,929 visitors) are coming from the United States. Only about 5% of our website traffic is coming from Middle Tennessee (though a significant amount of USA traffic cannot be geolocated, so it may be higher).

Platform: 57% Windows, 18% OS X, 18% Linux (including Ubuntu and Fedora), 4% iOS (iPhone/iPad), 3% Android, <1% ChromeOS
Browsers: 59% Chrome, 12% Firefox, 7% Safari, 4% Edge, 3% Opera, 15% Other.

Among "local" users iOS and Chrome OS are more common.

We currently have 368 media items (PDFs and images mostly), 41 posts, and 7 pages.

93 media items were uploaded, and 26 posts have been created since January 1.

Facebook 2023: Carol Martinez

As of December 2023, the Grace Facebook group had 214 members and 143 visitors. The Facebook group ended 2022 with 182 members.

As of Jan. 8, there were 40 Facebook posts in the past 30 days on the Grace Facebook group.

The top posts are always the weekly services that are recorded by David Thomas.

Other Top Posts for 2023:

74 views of Momma Flo watching the Grace service on a computer. 71 views of Tammy Bolen performing at the BrightStone Christmas Concert; and 50 views of the Christmas Eve night service.

Carol Martinez oversees the Facebook activity at Grace and makes the majority of posts and determines if people who ask to join as members are appropriate. Facebook administrators in addition to Carol are David Thomas, James Dallas, and Fr. Joe Davis.

Fr. Joe often posts information about services and provides reading suggestions that supplement his sermons. Frequent Facebook commenters on posts in the Grace group are Karyl Chastain Beal, Gerald Schmelzer, Kelly Carpenter Jenkins, and Penny Watson.

This year information on Grace services, events, and activities was posted on select group pages and public pages. The I Heart Spring Hill page featured Grace's outreach to people attending the Spring Hill Christmas Parade and reached more than 135 people.

Future plans call for growing Grace's social media platform to include Instagram and adding a Facebook page in addition to the group. Additionally, we want to identify additional people to record the services. If you would like to be involved in Grace's social media outreach, please reach out to Carol Martinez.

Christian Ed. & Children's Ministries:

Will Pomeroy

New children have joined Children's Church at Grace. 8 yr. old Ellie Bradberry her brother, 4 yr. old Christian Bradberry, have come to Grace as 2 yr. old Braxton Pomeroy has joined his big brother, Barrett, attending Children's Church. I am glad to report that in 2023, three new children started coming to Children's Church: Siblings Ellie and Christian Bradberry and Braxton Pomeroy, who has joined his brother Barrett. The liturgy-based curriculum is mostly geared to school-age kids, so we are implementing new ways to reach the younger group that has become a part of Children's Church.

The Children's Church room is a sacred space that includes its own altar and cross. Before the children come into the room, we ask them to enter respectfully, much as they would do during the church service. The children come into the room following one child carrying the cross. We begin by bowing to the altar, sitting down, and saying our prayers. Members of the congregation can look at the curriculum book to get an idea of what we are doing in Grace Children's Church.

We have four very dedicated leaders: Susan Austin, James Dallas, Nicole Poirier, and Lynn Rieger. We need more adults to volunteer to serve, whether it be to fill in when we have a shortage or join us a little more often. It is an extremely rewarding way to serve,

and it allows you not only to instruct the kids about Jesus and God's love for us, but also to have your own faith grow from being with these amazing kids!

On the 5 Sunday of the month, we plan to have the children serve in church during the service as ushers and greeters and carrying the offering plate. When they reach the right age, they can train to become acolytes. Serving the church in many ways helps all of God's children, of any age, realize how important we are to him and how we can be of service as members of Christ's body, the Church.

Community Outreach Report: Charles Cochran

During the year of 2023, the members of Grace Episcopal Church donated 1,491.5 lbs. of food, personal items, and supplies to The Well Outreach along with \$300 cash.

When the Well Outreach called for egg carriers, Grace members responded with many cartoons, and soon, we had to say, "Stop, no more cartons are needed." Every month Charles loads up his truck and takes food to The Well, where he receives a warm welcome.

Members of Grace Episcopal Church hosted community people attending the Spring Hill Christmas parade on Sat., Dec. 23. Lynn Rieger was the head elf and planned the entire event complete with food, hot chocolate, and children's activities. Lynn and church members were fully prepared a week earlier on Sat., Dec. 16 when a severe weather forecast canceled the parade for public safety, and they all regrouped for one week later.

All work began at 3:30 PM with Diann Schneider, Stana Chapman, and Carol Martinez preparing hot chocolate and hot apple cider. Susan Austin prepared cookies, frosting, and decorations. Charles Cochran, James Dallas, Susan Austin, and John Harvey distributed drinks to parade goers along the route. Many Spring Hill people expressed thanks to Grace for the snacks, activities for children, and restrooms open to the public. While all this was going, others decorated our new Christmas tree. Thanks to Peggy and Dick Roberts and Mani Baskar for putting up the church street signs on the original day of the parade. Members of the congregation donated all food, drinks, and materials necessary for anyone who ventured in to get warm, chat a while, entertain their

children, or find out more about Grace Episcopal church.

This Christmas season, The Well asked Grace to adopt four families with 14 children. Church members selected adults and children with their personal Christmas lists. Susan Austin came to the church early on the day of the deliveries and coordinated the gifts for all the Christmas families. Thank you, John Harvey, Carol Martinez, David Thomas, Lynn and Bill Rieger, Charles Cochran, and Jackson Gray for taking care of the deliveries. Thank you to everyone from Grace who donated items for these families.

Grace received a Christmas card from The Well stating "We are so grateful for your support of the Well Outreach. Your generosity has helped give food and hope to many families in our community."

The Pancake Supper will take place on Feb. 13 at 6:30 PM. Organized by Community Outreach, everyone happily enjoys pancakes, sausage, milk, and coffee the evening before Ash Wednesday. Last year's supper happened after COVID isolation, and everyone enjoyed being together and meeting extended families and friends.

Grace hosts a Knitting and Crochet group on Thursday mornings. A large bag of a variety of yarns was donated to the group and shared at Grace. Some of the yarn went to the Crochet Club at Summit High School and was used by the students to make blankets for those in need.

It has been my honor to represent Grace in our Community Outreach program.

Congregational Life: Robert Chapman

It has been a pleasure to work with the mission council this short time. The events I helped with as liaison for congregational life are as follows.

Coffee Hour after Church

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

4 Fifth Sunday Brunches

I also helped us generate ideas for more fun things to do with our fellow church members. I hope some of these ideas, such as a chili cook-off or a ramen noodle cook-off, will be planned in the days ahead.

The Altar Guild: Linda Colmore

The Altar/Glower Guild is a small group of ladies who set up and clean the altar for the Eucharist which occurs each Sunday and Wednesday and other times such as a funeral or wedding. This is setting up the wine, water, wafers, and the chalice. Also, this service includes making sure there is some kind of greenery or an arrangement for the altar plant stands. If a member does not want to arrange, we have some green plants we use instead. The usual rotation is about once a month.

We are glad to train anyone who has no experience. We are open to anyone who would like to join us including men. It is not exclusively a lady's service. Anyone interested can contact Linda Colmore. The church can provide the contact information. We welcome anyone who would like to join us. Training is provided. This past year we welcomed Teri Mai who has been so wonderful and faithful to our Guild.

As mentioned above we try and have flowers or greenery at the altar each Sunday. This is taken care of by our church members, but we would like to encourage anyone who would be interested to contribute to this fund. We welcome any contribution. These gifts could be for memorials, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries or just because. Just for information purposes it costs between \$75 and \$100 for two full arrangements for the altar. Inflation has affected the cost of flowers as well. Thank you.

Daughters of the King **Report: Shiela Flynn**

In keeping our DOK vows, we conduct our commitment to Prayer-Service-Evangelism by following our individual Rule of Life, Rule of Prayer, Rule of Service, and Reaching out to Serve (Evangelism) which we developed during our discernment process before we took our vows. We show our love for our God by sharing our time, treasure, and talent with Grace Episcopal Church and our community at large in the following ways:

- Prayer requests (100+) are received and disseminated to our Daughters for our active prayers.
- Pray for our Church membership and prayer requests as they are made known to us.
- Meet with Fr. Joe for spiritual direction.

- Contact our DOK Province IV, TN, President as liaison or for spiritual direction.
- Officers participate in DOK Board meetings in Nashville.
- Support DOK funds with a "thank offering" to the Order's funds (The Master's Fund, Self-Denial Fund, the Endowment Fund, and the Alpha Fund).
- Manages Grace's participation in the General Federation Women's Club of Spring Station community service project to help the environment, and the caps will be used to make benches for local parks.
- Author articles for *Grace Notes* as requested.
- Visit people in assisted living, hospitals, or at home.
- Prepare meals for the ill.

DOK members also participate in a book study, as scripture readers, in training to become a Lay Eucharistic Minister, sending out Prayer Grams and birthday greetings,

Grace members who belong to DOK are Carolyn Warnick, Lynn Rieger, Teri Mai, and our sister Susannah Weber who participates in our chapter.

**Financials for 2023 will be available
February 2024.**

November Mission Council Minutes

Fr. Joe recognized a quorum was present and gave an opening prayer at 6:00 PM.

Scribe's Report –The minutes for the October 2023 meeting of the Mission Council were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report:

David sent the October financial reports to the mission council members. As of the year ending October 31, 2023, our approved budget was expected to be a shortfall of -\$5,510.10. The telephone system and related expenses will be reviewed.

Vicar's Report: Fr. Joe shared the following items. Inquirer's Class continues. Mani Baskar was baptized. Diocesan Fair Share: After discussion, Charles Cochran moved Grace will send a check for \$1,000 for 2023 and the same for 2024. Seconded by

Will Pomeroy. The motion was approved. Delegates for the Diocesan Annual Convention must be selected. Peggy Roberts will serve as a delegate. Lessons and Carols is scheduled for December 10, with Fr. Sandy Herrmann serving while Fr. Joe attends the wedding of his older son in New York City. It is time to appoint the Mission Council Nominating Committee and the Stewardship Committee. Please give Fr. Joe your thoughts on filling these important positions. Grace's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 14, 2024. The Bishop will visit in June 2024.

Senior Warden's Report: Carol Martinez. Discussion was held on the Budget and Organ Maintenance Bills Status Report. Carol asked for help in writing thank-you notes for those who pledge in the coming campaign. Carol outlined the Stewardship Campaign schedule, including those who will give their thoughts as parishioners. Security Issues: Peep holes have been installed in the outer door of Faith Hall. An officer of the Maury County Sheriff's Office will come in early 2024 to present a program on safety and security. It is time for all Ministry Liaison Reports to be completed and submitted to Carol. These will be shared with the congregation at the Annual Meeting in January.

Jr. Warden's Report: Bill Rieger. Fall Cleanup is scheduled for November 18, both inside the church and the outside grounds. The custodian asked to have someone on call when she comes every other week. A contractor will clean the gutters. A parishioner has volunteered to pay the cost of this service.

Liaison Reports:

Communications – Peggy Roberts. John Sage from The Well would like to have a tour of Grace's facilities. It was suggested that Bill Rieger conduct the tour, based on his knowledge of the history and other information. *Grace Notes* will be published in early December.

Children's Ministry – Carol Martinez for Will Pomeroy. No Children's Church the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Will is working on a new permission form.

Outreach – Charles Cochran. Grace Church members have donated 1,268 pounds of food as of the end of October 2023. The Well has not yet been called for

assistance with Christmas gifts for needy families. Charles will let folks know when they do.

Congregational Life – Robert Chapman. No Fifth Sunday Brunch in December. Robert shared ideas for consideration.

Fr. Joe closed the meeting with a blessing at 7:40 PM. Respectfully submitted, Chuck Warnick, Scribe

Clergy and Staff

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

The Mission Council

Carol Martinez, Sr. Warden
Bill Rieger, Jr. Warden
David Thomas, Treas.
Christian Ed. & Children's Ministry
Charles Cochran, Community Outreach
Peggy Roberts, Communications
Eleanor Geary, Scribe
Jessica Farmer
James Dallas

You may contribute to Grace Church at this link or by using the QR code below.

<https://graceepiscopalspringhill.org/#giving>.

