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Grace Notes

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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, Pat Mayo, Peggy Roberts, or Ed Strong.

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 Note

Here are just some of the events scheduled at Grace. Please mark the following dates on your calendar. More information to come in the bulletin and the newsletter. **All events are subject to change.*

- Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25 & April 1
6:00 p.m. Lenten Series, Wednesdays.
- April 5
Sunday of Passion, Palm Sunday.
- Apr. 6
Chrism Mass & Clergy Vow Renewal
- Apr. 9
Maundy Thursday, 6:30 pm.
- Apr. 10
Good Friday, 3:00 pm.
- Apr. 12
Easter Sunday, 8:00 & 10:00 pm.
- Apr. 15
Walk in Love, Prayer Vigil at St. Anselm.
- Apr. 19
Walk in Love, Pilgrimage.
- Apr. 25
Daughters of King Spring Assembly.

Services and Continuing events

- Sun. 8 & 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist
(Children's Church at 10 a.m.)
- Wed. Noon Holy Eucharist & Healing, Rite II
- 2nd & 4th Mon. Creative Monday, 1 to 3 p.m.
- Tues. & Fri. AA at 7 p.m.

BREAKING NEWS, Monday, March 16:

*In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Wednesday noon service is cancelled, and the Wednesday evening Lenten series will not be held at the church. I am trying to see if we can offer a service of Evening Prayer and discussion of our book by **some online means**. This would be held at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday evening (EP), followed by a discussion of St. Benedict's Toolbox, the chapter on "Having a Benedictine Lent."*

Bishop's Pastoral Letter

March 13, 2020

Dear Clergy and Parishioners of the Diocese of Tennessee,

Less than two weeks have passed since the destructive tornadoes that affected so many parts of Middle Tennessee. Now we are faced with new challenges in our communities through the coronavirus (COVID-19). I share with you again the words from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, which apply equally well to this situation. "Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers... Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." (Romans 12:11-13,15). These words of encouragement inspire us through the Holy Spirit as we do the work Jesus has called us to. On February 28, the three Bishops in the State of Tennessee shared with our three dioceses some guidelines for best practices considering the virus. We have continued to consult with each other and to support each other in prayer. I continue to commend this statement to you. We have also determined, this week, that our differing contexts require maximum flexibility in addressing

this complex crisis. This same principle of flexibility applies within our own diocese. We are a single community of faith that gathers in different communities within Middle Tennessee. We differ not only in geography, but in congregational size and in the average age of our parishioners. Our circumstances are different. In responding to the different contexts and circumstances in which we minister, my intention at this time is to give you the maximum flexibility in responding to the needs of your situation. Clergy conducting worship, in consultation with vestry and mission council leadership, are free to make determinations about public worship and the “Due Celebration of Sundays” (Canon II.1). I ask the clergy to communicate with me and Canon Howard about these developments. This is a rapidly evolving situation. We are aware that in some parts of our country, churches have been asked to suspend public worship by the civil authorities or have themselves determined to suspend it. We are closely monitoring communications from State and local authorities, as well as trusted information from the health care community. I anticipate that you will hear further from me early next week as we chart a course through this season of our life together. We are now challenged to do ministry in new and creative ways as this situation evolves. Live streaming liturgies and preaching; continuing our ministries to the homebound, the sick, those who may be quarantined; discovering new ways to engage the Holy Scriptures and each other in light of this challenge. We are still called to mission and ministry. We are still called to be a community. [There was an internet link to a document about best practices during the coronavirus epidemic.] You are in my prayers as you continue to engage in the work of the Church.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore” (2 Cor. 13:14).

The Rt Rev'd John Bauerschmidt, Bishop of Tennessee

Vicar's Vagaries: A Year for Trying New Things

Vicar's Report

Saturday, March 14

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This month I am delighted to announce that Peggy Roberts has volunteered to help us with the layout for *Grace Notes*. Her help could not have come at a better time. Your vicar has been in charge of layout, and the only thing good I will say about that is that Peggy is bound to look good after you have gotten used to my work. Thank you, Peggy, and we look forward to ways you will keep the good news flowing at Grace Church.

I am sorry to announce that Susan Browning will be departing as our office administrator at the end of March. She has served us faithfully for about ten years, through thick and thin times, and she has dealt with the interesting and varied ways of Fr. Doc Martin, Fr. Peter Whalen, and yours truly with practically unruffled equanimity. She may help us out in some areas of church administrative life as we have need, but she needs to devote more time to caring for herself and her family.

The tornadoes of March 3 and the spread of the coronavirus in our world and in Middle Tennessee have shown us how little control we actually have and how fragile our world is. We depend on the grace of God, and he will not abandon us. At this time, we are continuing to meet for Sunday services, but at-risk people are advised to stay at home, and anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms should stay home and protect himself or herself and spare everyone else the risk of infection. As our bishop has said, this is a transitional Sunday, and our situation and our response may be different next week. Remember, last Wednesday afternoon (March 11, 4:40 p.m.) we thought there would be basketball galore for the rest of the month, and that Harvard students could finish out the semester on campus. But March Madness has taken a different turn this year. We are told to practice “social distancing” to “flatten the curve,” or slow the rate of increase of infection, so that our health care facilities will not be overwhelmed. Though many cases of the coronavirus will probably be mild, many people could be infected. The disease is much more serious for people with compromised immunities, other health conditions, and people over sixty years old.

The mortality rate for people over eighty is about 14%.

Thanks to Lynn Rieger and a team of volunteer cleaners, the church is being disinfected today. We will have the 8:00 and 10:00 services tomorrow, March 15, but all at-risk people are encouraged to stay home. If we can broadcast or record the 10:00 service, we will, and we will post instructions on Facebook and announce in an email how to watch and listen. I will try to set up a schedule for taking communion to those at home, though I don't believe I can reach everyone every week. We will try to maximize other ways of remaining connected other than meeting in person at the church. Our bishop has told us to be creative in facing this crisis, and any reduction in number of public services will be strictly temporary and for the purpose of slowing the rate of infection.

Our mission council will meet Thursday night, though we are considering a format for meeting online. At this point, Wednesday noon services will continue, and we will continue to pray for the healing of all. Stay tuned for news on the Lenten Series. The Thursday morning Spring Hill Historic Society's speaker series is postponed. We hope to schedule this event for another time. Alcoholics Anonymous can decide what they will do about their meetings. This meeting is a lifeline for those who attend, and we will be in touch with their leaders about good health practices and the use of disinfectants.

While most of us have lived through many challenging times, such as 9/11/01, Hurricane Katrina and other storms, and the flood of May 2010, not to mention the Cold War and Vietnam, we have not faced a pandemic like this. But I find the words of scripture become ever more vivid in such crises, and praising God brings life and hope for those who grow weary. He lifts us up on eagles' wings! So, no matter what happens, go to God's word for strength and solace. Use your Book of Common Prayer for a great variety of prayers that apply to our circumstances. Continue to reach out to one another in love and compassion, whether on the phone, in social media, or in person. And pray for those who are facing this situation on the front lines in the hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices, in public

places that remain open, and all first responders. Stay in touch!

Faithfully,
Father Joe

New Mission Council Members 2020
New Look of Leadership

In case you haven't noticed, there are some new faces in leadership positions at Grace this year. Each year we have two members of the Mission Council whose terms expire. Unless they were elected to fulfill an unexpired term (in which case they are eligible for re-election to a full term), they will rotate off and be replaced by a newly elected member. This year we thank our retiring members, Kala Fawbush and Bill Rieger, for their service. We have two able replacements in Diann Schneider and Susan Austin. Both bring valuable experience and sound judgment to our group, and perhaps more importantly, willing and positive attitudes.

In addition, Michele Gibson-O'Grady has graciously volunteered to join us as our new Mission Council Clerk. She will be relied upon to generate correspondence and materials for the Mission Council, as well as memorialize all our actions.

Although he has been serving some time, I want to recognize our Assistant Treasurer, David Thomas. Since our Treasurer, Ed Strong, and his wonderful wife, Toni, have reached that point they are able to enjoy some time traveling, David's able assistance has allowed us to continue our normal business with minimal disruption.

For your convenience, the members and officers of the Mission Council are listed below, along with their individual areas of focus. Feel to address them for any questions or suggestions you may have for them.

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|-------------------------|---------------------|
| John Harvey | Sr. Warden |
| Susan Austin | Jr. Warden |
| Jessica Farmer | Congregational Life |
| Richard Hawarah | Community Outreach |
| Mark Henderson | Communications |
| Diann Schneider | Christian Education |
| Ed Strong | Treasurer |
| David Thomas | Asst. Treasurer |
| Michele Gibson- O'Grady | Clerk |

Please join me in welcoming our new members and officers.

Christ's Peace,
John Harvey

Correction:

The story in the February edition of Grace Notes entitled "La tour du jar din par l'enfant" was written by Bill Rieger. The editorial board apologizes for the omission.

Clergy and Staff

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

The Mission Council

John Harvey, Senior Warden
Susan Austin, Junior Warden
Jessica Farmer, Congregation Life
Mark Henderson, Communications
Richard Hawarah, Community Outreach
Diann Schneider, Christian Education
Ed Strong, Treasurer
David Thomas, Assistant Treasurer
Michele Gibson O'Grady, Clerk