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Grace Episcopal Church  
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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 Notes

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

April 28	Bible Study via Zoom, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.
May 16	Grace Episcopal Church consecrated 1878
May 21	Ascension Day
May 31	The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday
June 1	The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin

## Services and Continuing Events

Sun. at 10 a.m., Online Eucharist Via Facebook Live  
Virtual Coffee Hour follows Via Zoom at 11:00 a.m.

**The following services and events will resume after the statewide quarantine ends:**

Sundays at 8 and 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist  
(Children's Church at 10 a.m.)

(Class for children age 9 and above, Third Sunday of each month, 9:30 to 10 a.m.)

Wed. Noon Holy Eucharist & Healing, Rite II  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mon. Creative Monday, 1 to 3 p.m.

## Vicar's Vagaries

April 26, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The scriptures and the events of the last two months have presented me with new challenges in my preaching. It seemed unusual to begin an Easter sermon with Abram, but that's what I felt inspired to do. Why? Because both the call of Abram and Mary Magdalene's Easter encounter with the risen Jesus mean that God has a much greater future in store for us than we could ever imagine.

We were told by some that Easter would be America's Good Friday moment in the struggle against the coronavirus. So on Easter, my message was that in the resurrection of Christ, God gives those who love him a future after Good Friday. For some reason, that message needed to start with the moment when God called Abram to leave the land of his home and go wherever God sends him. Why? Because, however impossible it might seem, God gave Abram a future. Not many 75 year old men expect to have a new life, much less a new son, in the near future. But Abram believed God, and he went. At 99, God renewed the promise to Abram. God gave Abram a new name, Abraham, but still no son. In about a year, Isaac was born. So God did what he said. It only took him 25 years...to get started. But in his time, according to his ways, he gave Abraham a future, a new life beginning with his son. Now Abraham's family is the biggest family in the world. All the faithful children of God are Abraham's offspring. Whenever we trust God to give us what he has promised and follow where he

leads, we are being true to our calling as children of Abraham and Sarah.

Not even the death of Jesus on the cross could eliminate Abraham's family. To the contrary, the cross was the instrument by which God defeated Abraham's family's greatest enemies, sin and death. On the cross, Jesus proved that God does not separate himself from mankind and rest in serene contemplation of his infinite perfection up in heaven while we human beings live out our lives of suffering and woe. Jesus has compassion on us; which literally means that he suffers with us. Where is God in this pandemic? He is with us. Our Lord takes our suffering to himself. When we suffer, he suffers with us. That is how much he loves us. He comes to us wherever we are. When we suffer with those who are suffering, we are being like Christ, for that is what he does.

He also leads us into the place where he is. "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also." (John 12:26) When I hear doctors and nurses from the hotspots of COVID 19 talking about what it is like caring for the sick and dying, I can't keep thoughts about what I have learned from our Lenten study invading my mind and shaping what I am seeing and feeling. We learned in St. Benedict's Toolbox that we are to look for Christ in every stranger who comes our way. As we welcome the stranger, we are welcoming Christ himself. As the EMTs, fire fighters, police officers, nurses, and doctors care for the sick, they are caring for Christ. And Christ is present in those who care for the sick. He is also in those who make the hospital work, those who keep our food supply going, and those who bring us the mail. Every person is worthy of love. Every caregiver is present to give the love that Christ has for us all. I see Christ serving in the hospitals, and I see Christ lying there on a ventilator. And Christ alone can give us the healing we need, whether in this life or the life to come.

I saw a film clip about Dr. Prakash Gatta in Washington State who contracted the coronavirus, recovered, and returned to seeing patients again in the hospital. He gave the most encouraging talk I have heard during the whole coverage of the pandemic. He spoke with the confidence of a man who had faced death and survived as he wheeled a patient down the hospital hall. He said that the

people he was working with have more courage than anyone he has ever known. He compared working now every day in the hospital to going into battle, as he and his colleagues fight an unseen and deadly foe that could take their lives. Still, he said that he is privileged to be serving alongside such brave people and doing what he is doing. He assured all who were listening, "We've got this."

I know that if I were being treated in the hospital, if I were sick and feared that I would never again catch a good breath of air, I would want someone like him with me. If my family could not be there with me, I would be glad for the help of a doctor or nurse who would hold a cell phone so I could hear my family's voices or see their faces. I would know Christ was with me. I might still be afraid, but I would not be alone.

Let us learn the lessons this crisis is teaching us all. Let us all help each other not be alone. Jesus said, "By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, that you love one another." (John 13: 35) Let us show the world as we never have before to whom we belong when this trial is over.

God has promised us a future, and he has given it to us in the resurrection of his Son Jesus. We even have a future after COVID-19. To us, it seems like a long time coming. Abraham waited 25 years for God to get started. I hope for us the wait will not be that long. The life we have in Christ is glorious now, and it will be glorious. Of that we are assured. Do not lose heart.

Faithfully,

Father Joe

### **Father Joe's Three-Year Grace Anniversary**

I'm certain as Fr. Joe approached the third anniversary of his arrival at Grace, he had absolutely no idea what lay in store. I imagine he was trying to concentrate on finishing our Lenten study series while anticipating his normally busy Holy Week. None of us suspected a terrible virus would reach from the other side of the globe to turn our world upside down. In no time, we found ourselves learning new terms like "social distancing" and "safe at home." We transitioned to Mission Council meetings via the "Zoom" app. Upon consultation

with the Diocese, church services as we knew them were suspended. Suddenly, we were faced with the huge question of how to keep our Grace family connected to the church, as well as each other.

Fr. Joe has stepped up and worked tirelessly to help address these issues. The Diocese granted permission for the churches to explore broadcasting services with a limited production crew. With the faithful help of our technical group, David Thomas and James Dallas, we are now live-streaming the services through our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchSH>. Deanie and Tom Moore have provided wonderful musical accompaniment for those of us who “need a bucket to carry a tune”. We have been blessed to have Samantha Bennett and James Dallas step in to help with the readings. In fact, the entire crew has been pressed into service for the readings of the Passion. Fr. Joe has delivered some of his best sermons during this trying time. I’m not sure how these services come across to our congregation in video format, but I am solidly certain of two things. First, there is an almost surreal but spiritually powerful feeling being there as a small scattered group representing all of you. And second, I cannot wait for this to be over so we can all physically gather in worship together.

One other initiative we have started recently is calling to check on our Grace family members. At Fr. Joe’s suggestion, the Mission Council has divided our member list and begun calling each one to see how they are doing. This is a wonderful way to stay connected while we can’t gather in groups. It’s especially good to check on those who live alone or might need help with something. In fact, this does not need to be limited to the Mission Council. I would encourage everyone to join in. I suspect the caller will find they benefit as much as the member they call.

Please remember in prayer all those who have been affected by this pandemic in many different ways. And as always, if you have any questions or needs, reach out to your Mission Council or Fr. Joe.

Christ’s Peace,

John Harvey  
Sr. Warden

## **Financial Update for End of March 2020**

March was a fairly typical month for 2020. Expenses were down somewhat due to fewer activities at the church. Income ran about where it has in the previous months this year. We did use Building Fund resources to pay for a much-needed new HVAC system for Faith Hall in early April. While that expenditure will show up in our April report, it is important to note here since it impacts our current cash position. We do remain in good shape from a cash standpoint, as noted below

Bank Balances as of 4/8/20

Checking	\$5589
Savings	\$81,438
March	\$7975
March Expenses	\$9050

As everyone is experiencing in one way or another, April will be a tough month for Grace from a financial standpoint. Fortunately for the technology that we have available we can be together virtually and still worship together, even if it is a more than from a safe distance.

We also have available the technology for on-line giving. If you are able, using that method of giving is quite safe and would be greatly appreciated. We know that, for many, these are very uncertain and hard times and our prayers and hearts are with each and every one of you

Ed Strong  
Treasurer

## **Prayers for Health Care Workers**

During this challenging time, prayers have become an even more important part of our daily ritual. Please consider including a special mention of our members and friends who work in the health care field. These professionals are on the front lines of caring for those who have the Covid19 virus and other health issues, both physical and mental. This group includes Jessica Farmer, Michele Gibson-O’Grady, Wanda Harvey, Steven Ray Mead, Melissa McGhee, and Nicole Poirier. Also, we offer prayers and gratitude to those many people who are involved in making sure that essential services are available including, but not limited to, police, firemen and all first responders; those who work to

provide the many services that are key to daily life groceries, mail and trash pick-up. If you know of anyone else who should be on this list, please reach out to Carol Martinez at Carolcm443@gmail.com or 213-434-5710.

Carol Martinez

### **A Message from the Daughters of Grace**

The Daughters of Grace are quietly busy at prayer every day. We pray for each other, our loved ones and friends, our congregation, the church and clergy, our community, our country, our world, and members of our Order of the Daughters of the King. We welcome your prayer requests for a need or in thanksgiving for blessings and we will join with you in your prayers. As intercessors, we lift our hearts and voices to Our Risen Lord and King EVERY DAY. This is WHO WE ARE and what we do through God's Grace. If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, please contact Toni Strong either by email at [tonistrong2319@yahoo.com](mailto:tonistrong2319@yahoo.com) or by phone at 717-372-8619. All requests are treated as confidential. Thank you and God bless you all!

For His Sake,

Daughters of Grace  
Toni Strong

### **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  
Jessica Farmer, Congregation Life  
Mark Henderson, Communications  
Richard Hawarah, Community Outreach  
Diann Schneider, Christian Education  
Ed Strong, Treasurer  
David Thomas, Assistant Treasurer  
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