

Grace Notes

Volume II, Issue 2

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Grace Episcopal Church

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, 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.

Sept. 15	Class for children ages 9 to 12 Sundays at 9:30 a.m. resumes. (Grace contacts: Lynn Rieger or Jana Balke)
Sept. 15	Constitution Week Celebration (Grace contact: John Harvey)
Sept. 30	Fifth Sunday Brunch (Grace contact: Jessica Farmer)
Oct. 6	Blessing of the Animals (Grace contact: Father Joe)
Oct. 12	Spring Hill Art Walk (Grace contacts: Pat Mayo and Carol Martinez)

Services and Continuing events

Sundays	at 8 and 10 am, Holy Eucharist (Childrens' Church at 10 am)
2 nd and 4 th Monday	Creative Monday 1 to 3 pm
Mondays	OA at 7 pm
Tuesdays & Fridays	AA at 7 pm
Wednesdays at Noon	Holy Eucharist with Healing, Rite II

Update from the Mission Council

I give thanks daily that I am blessed to be a part of the wonderful, caring, and giving group that makes

up our Grace Church family. It is amazing how much we accomplish through the efforts of a small congregation who give so willingly of their finances, time, and talents. I've always believed it is that personal connection and investment that is so attractive about small church life. At the same time, small churches like Grace have their own sets of inherent problems, not the least of which is maintaining a stable base of members.

Last year your treasurer, Ed Strong, and I were discussing the upcoming budget for 2019. Recognizing as a given that numbers in congregations will always fluctuate, we agreed that in any church there is a level of attendance needed to be able to carry out the church's mission and meet the needs of the congregation. We are fortunate to live in a growing community (if you overlook the minor inconveniences like increased traffic and construction). The logical next question is how to tap into that growth to attract and retain members whose needs we can fulfill.

Early in the year, I suggested forming an ad hoc "Budget/Growth" working group to explore these issues outside of regularly scheduled Mission Council business. Fr. Joe was supportive of the idea, and our first meeting was scheduled for January 25. The initial invited participants were the Mission Council, Treasurer Ed Strong, Secretary Susan Austin, and the Stewardship Committee chairman Carol Martinez. It was recommended the Mission Council adopt a budget for the first 6 months of the year at the 2018 level with a reduction in the diocesan contribution, to be reviewed in June. This was subsequently approved by the Mission Council. In addition, it was agreed that we have a follow-up session focusing on growth initiatives.

The working group met again on June 5. After reviewing an update from our treasurer, it was recommended the Mission Council adopt a budget for the July-December period at the 2018 level, and restore our diocesan commitment to the 2018 level. The bulk of the meeting was spent in a facilitated session led by Ed Strong, focusing on ideas and

observations that would impact Grace's prospects for growth. This was an opportunity to collect entirely unfiltered comments, desires, and observations that resulted in the formation of the following five "bucket lists", with leaders for the organization of each.

Worship & Related Items: John Harvey

Visitor Greeting & Follow-up: Richard Hawarah
Presence in the Community (Multi-media & Other Means): Carol Martinez, Kala Fawbush-Brown, David Thomas

Focus on Youth-Related Activities: Mark Henderson

Infrastructure Issues: Bill Rieger

If you have not been contacted by these group leaders, and feel called to participate, please reach out to the respective group leader- volunteers are always welcome!

You will soon be asked to participate directly in this process. One thing that has become abundantly clear to me is that everyone has an opinion about almost every aspect of our Grace Church life, and they are not necessarily the same. Ed and I have discussed the benefits of gathering information on these topics by surveying the congregation for some time, and this working group's discussions have reinforced that belief. We briefed Fr. Joe on our proposal and had a very productive meeting with him in the afternoon on July 24, before he joined us for our working group meeting that evening. I would like to thank him for his support and input as the survey takes shape. Ed has spent a great deal of time compiling and organizing the questions, and David Thomas has been handling the formatting for the online version. Thanks to all who have participated in these sessions, and especially to Susan Austin, who records all our actions and keeps us organized.

It is our intention that every member of our Grace family have the opportunity to participate in this survey. There will be an online version available, as well as hard copies for those who would rather fill it out manually. You should see more on the timing soon. Stay tuned!

Christ's Peace,
John Harvey, Sr. Warden

Grace Church Financial Update, August 2019

Our books are closed for July. The following is a summary of where we stand at the end of that month.

We spent \$9,267 for July against income of \$7,881. We remain in a solid financial position with \$4,420 in our checking account and \$89,800 in our savings. The high savings rate is largely due to the very generous bequest we received from the estate of Margaret Thompson, a friend of Grace for many years. We have had to transfer \$7,000 from savings to checking to cover our overall monthly shortfalls.

As you can see from the simple view of income versus expenses, we do not take in enough money to meet our needs on a monthly basis. While this fluctuates month to month, this pattern is quite consistent. We have a generous congregation, a high rate of pledging, but a relatively low number of active members who make up our financial base.

Your Mission Council is actively looking at things to do to increase our active membership. As noted in the Senior Warden's letter, a big step in that process is doing a survey of the congregation to assess how well the church is meeting our collective needs. This is an additional urge to complete the survey when you receive it and be part of examining our commitments and expectations for Grace, church home we all cherish so much.

By Ed Strong, Treasurer

2019 Spring Hill Art Walk to Come to Grace

The Spring Hill Art Walk, scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 12 from 12 noon to 4 p.m., will include Grace Episcopal Church as one of the exhibit locations. Our venue will feature the works of some of the church's artists, children's art and returning artist, Bob Jones, with his new intricate drawings and paintings.

We will again offer visitors the opportunity to see the interiors of our lovely building and listen to organ music performed by Deanie Moore, director of music. Each year during this event, hundreds of people are welcomed to Grace and are introduced to our church family.

The Art Walk will begin at Old High School near the Spring Hill Arts Center and wind along Main Street with some 30 artists exhibition at local businesses and churches. Spring Hill Pickin' in the Park will present a concert at Ferguson Hall on the lawn of the Tennessee Children's Home.

If you would like to exhibit your art during the event, please reach out to Pay Mayo or Carol Martinez. Also, we need volunteers to help make the event successful. Volunteers will hang the artwork in Faith Hall on Friday, Oct. 11 at 10 a.m. and we will

need some volunteers to help us prepare for Saturday. On the day of the event, we will need delicious snacks and goodies from the cooks in our congregation, or some nice purchased items along with drinks and hospitable Episcopalians to meet and greet our guests. Sign-up sheets will be on display in Faith Hall.

By Pat Mayo

Children's Church Update

As we enter the month of September children's church will complete their series of lessons on the Old Testament genealogy of Jesus. This series has been very enlightening and fun for the kids as well as the grown-ups who prepare the weekly lessons the children of Grace Church.

Beginning Sept. 15 our lessons will once again be tied closely to the weekly scripture readings with the help of some materials taken for the Episcopal Digital Network. Also, beginning Sept. 15, we will resume our twice-monthly classes for our 9 to 12-year olds at 9:30 a.m. followed by the 10 a.m. class for younger children. We look forward to a great 2019-2020 school year and invite all children to join us for the fun and learning. Adults who are interested in getting involved in children's church should reach out to Lynn Rieger or Jana Balke.

By Richard Hawarah

The Vicar's Vagaries

Something happened during the 10 am Sunday service a few weeks ago that I want to tell you about. After I sang the "Proper Preface," the short part the celebrant sings before the consecration, we began the "Sanctus," in which we all sing together "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might..." In this chanted prayer, we praise God by "joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven." It should always sound pretty good, with all those angels and archangels. But what does that mean in a small congregation of about 30 people in which the best singers are amateurs?

Certainly, God is pleased when we all join in and do the best we can, no matter how small our numbers, and no matter if some of us are little sharp or flat. He loves to hear us sing his praises the way parents love to hear their children sing in a musical program at school, and we don't have to be any better than those children to bring a smile to his face.

However, this time, I liked it so much that I was tempted to behave like Peter at the

Transfiguration and do something silly. I had to put myself back on track and let my pleasure in the music go. I told myself, "Just move through it to what we are singing about; remember, this is for God's praise, not so we can feel good about how well we are singing!"

I have a theory about why the "Sanctus" was better than usual that Sunday. Deanie, the choir, and I had worked together on the "Sanctus" for a few months before the 10 am service begins. We worked on singing at full volume at the loud parts and more softly at the quiet parts and on phrasing and tempo. Best of all, we practiced singing together and listening to what we sounded like. The goal was to sing the "Sanctus" about the same way we would say the words, with the same tempo and emphasis on words and syllables. That's the way chant is supposed to work.

It worked well because the whole church sang together. Deanie's accompaniment, my voice, and the choir's voices anchored the singing of the whole congregation, but everyone sang, "and it was very good!" We mustn't worship the liturgy, and I don't want you or me to feel as though our best efforts are not good enough if things don't sound pleasing to the ear every time; but our worship should be the best that we have to offer, for through our worship, we offer God "ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice" to him (Eucharistic Prayer, Rite I, BCP p. 336).

Whenever we offer to serve God in his Church, and we pay attention to our task, and give it our best, we help manifestation the glory of God on earth. This goes for lay readers, Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, choir members, organist, newsletter editors, mission council members, children's church teachers, ushers, altar guild, flower guild, children, and people in the pews who take seriously their call to attend regularly and participate in our weekly worship of God on Sunday.

I thank God for the privilege of praising him at the altar with you every week, and I appreciate what you are doing to put your heart into what we do together in our time together on Sundays. It is a great joy to be part of a church that enjoys worshipping God every Sunday. This gift is something worth appreciating, cultivating, giving thanks for, and giving away to others.

Faithfully,
Father Joe

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