

Grace Notes

Volume II, Issue 3

September, 2019

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. 30	5th Sunday Brunch, 11:20 (Grace contact: Jessica Farmer)
Oct. 6	Blessing of the Animals, 1:00 p.m. (Grace contact: Father Joe)
Oct. 12	Spring Hill Art Walk, 12 noon to 4 p.m. (Grace contacts: Pat Mayo and Carol Martinez)
Nov. 3	All Saints' Sunday (Grace contact: Father Joe)

Services and Continuing events

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

Grace Church Financial Update, September 2019

Income and expenses were low in August:

Income - \$7,219.01 and Expenses - \$8,621.01

We remain in a solid cash position with \$3,027.47 in the checking account and \$87,900 in savings. We also have very good prospects for September. We will have extra expenses during the

month with some costs not recorded in August coming due. September should be a good month in terms of income with support for our past organ repair costs coming from a bequest held for us at the Diocese.

Our non-pledged income is about half of what was budgeted. For the year, we are at \$3,680 versus a budget expectation of \$7,200. The major difference is that we had a good number of people who moved from non-pledged to pledged in 2019 and backfilling those amounts has not materialized to the extent hoped for.

At the end of August, 23 of our 33 pledges were about the expected level for the year. Another 8 to 10 were close to the target, leaving only a few seriously behind. Most of those are behind for easily noted reasons. As we have said before, we have a generous congregation with a very good percentage who pledge. Still, we remain a small church in a fast-growing area.

The Mission Council is moving ahead with the recently highlighted survey of the congregation. As the last step before distributing it to the congregation at large, we asked the Council members to take it. We will ask our members to take the survey in early October.

The survey is truly anonymous: We cannot determine who completed it or not, but we will know the total we sent it to and the number who responded. We will be able to track an overall response rate and gauge our follow-up actions. We will keep the congregation informed of progress as we go through the process.

By Ed Strong, Treasurer

Wednesday Noon Healing Service

Grace Episcopal Church offers a healing service on Wednesday at noon of each week. The service provides the opportunity to:

- Learn about the Saints and how each of them reflected the light of Christ in the world;

- Take part in a mid-week Holy Communion service to strengthen us as we navigate through our week;
- Lift up in prayer friends and family members who need healing that only God can provide.

The service is for anyone who needs healing or intercessory prayer and can get away from work and other activities around lunchtime on Wednesdays.

By Richard Hawarah

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' exhibitions 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 Episcopalian to meet and greet our guests. Sign-up sheets will be on display in Faith Hall.

By Pat Mayo

Children's Church Update

Over the summer, children's church completed 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 prepared the lessons for the children of Grace Church.

For the rest of the school year, our lessons will be tied closely to the weekly scripture readings. We have resumed 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

Welcome Newcomers to Grace

At some point we were all newcomers at Grace Episcopal Church, and we all enjoyed it when we were greeted and made to feel welcome as we worshipped. Knowing how important it is to make visitors feel welcome, it is great to see that the congregation is very welcoming and spends time interacting with folks who are visiting Grace for the first or second time.

Although the Mission Council has formed a Newcomers Committee, in reality we are all on that committee as we:

1. Greet newcomers in church, especially during the Peace.
2. Encourage newcomers to sign the guest book or fill out a visitor card.
3. Invite visitors to join us after the service for coffee and donuts in Faith Hall.

The newcomers committee also:

1. Mails Grace Church welcome cards thanking visitors for worshipping with us and inviting them to return.
2. Provides the Vicar with telephone numbers so he can reach out to visitors.
3. Shares information about our historic church and activities within the congregation with visitors.
4. Mails invitations to visitors for our Fifth Sunday Potluck.

We will do our best to welcome visitors and newcomers as we share our dedication to Christ and serve him in our community.

Current newcomers committee members are: Shelia Flynn, Toni Strong, Marsha Hawarah, and Richard Hawarah. If you have ideas to share or would like to be more involved, please contact Richard or Marsha.

By Richard Hawarah

Blessing of the Animals

On Sunday, Oct. 6 at 1:00 p.m. the Blessing of the Animals will take place in the garden of Grace Episcopal Church. “All creatures are brothers and blessings under God,” said St. Francis of Assisi.

Oct. 4 is the feast day of St. Francis, who was canonized in 1228. He is appreciated for the way he delighted in all creation as a gift of God, the creator. Each year members of Grace, along with their furry and feathered friends, attend this special event.

By Carol Martinez

Bishop's Newsletter Available

Recently during the 10 a.m. service Father Joe mentioned the *Bishop's Blast*, a weekly email newsletter about what is happening in the Diocese of Tennessee. To subscribe, you can visit edtn.com and click on the **Sign Up Today!** button on the homepage.

Constitution Celebration

On Sept. 15 at 2 p.m., Constitution Week Bell Ringing took place at Grace Episcopal Church. More than 80 people attended the event that was sponsored by the Brigadier General Richard Winn Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Attendees gave thanks to God for the Constitution and offered prayers for our country.

The Vicar's Vagaries

[My online Merriam Webster’s Dictionary defines *vagary* as follows: “*an erratic, unpredictable, or extravagant manifestation, action, or notion.*” *Unpredictable* seems right for this month. I don’t suppose anyone thought I would write about pickles! JND+]

Last month, my older son Paschall told me that he and his girlfriend were making pickles. I saw the picture on Paschall’s Instagram account of several cucumbers in a jar with green juice in it. He said it would take at least ten days for the cucumbers to become pickles. I am very glad he is making pickles, because one can learn an important spiritual truth through the practice of making pickles: “If you want to be a pickle, you have to sit in the brine.”

I used to hear my parish priest say those words on occasion years ago. Though I have looked, I can’t find any evidence that this is a widely used expression. It is not in the Book of Proverbs or in the writings of the Old Testament prophets. I suspect it is a bit of almost-lost country wisdom from the Hill

Country around Austin, Texas, where I believe my priest grew up. He certainly never told me where he heard it. (Revealing his source would spoil the mystery.) Several of his mysterious old expressions are still lodged in my memory like peppers in a pickling jar. I suspect they are pickling my brain.

What does it mean to say, “If you want to be a pickle, you have to sit in the brine?” It means that if you want to become something you are not, you have to place yourself in a setting in which you are surrounded by what you want to become. Then you have to stay put and let the juices soak into you. You need to absorb a different flavor. I am reminded of the Benedictine vow of stability, the vow to remain where one is and not move from monastery to monastery unless directed to move by someone in authority. This nips in the bud a prospective monk’s temptation to search for the “perfect” monastery. Instead, a monk vows to stay in place until he discovers the ordinariness of the monastery. It is through the ordinariness of where one is that extraordinary appreciation of God’s gifts can be cultivated. This works for both male and female examples. It is part of marriage and family life. If you want to be a pickle, you have to sit in the brine. You can’t go leaping about in search of the perfect jar full of the perfect pickling juice.

God didn’t wait until he found the perfect person to lead the Jews out of Egypt. He called Moses to do it, and he made him the leader he became through grace. Moses complained a bit, but he did what God said; and the Exodus became a reality. God doesn’t call the equipped. He equips the called. God turns the called in to whatever kind of pickle he wants to make them.

Most of us did not start life holy. If we have grown any in holiness through the years, it is because God has been working on us, and we have not run away as much as we could have. The holiest people are the most surrendered to God’s work, like clay on the wheel of the master potter, or like cucumbers in a jar of pickling juice.

In our life as the Church, part of becoming holy is spending time in a holy environment. When we come into the church building, our minds may be on many subjects, but as we come in and see the flickering sanctuary candle above the ambry, we realize our Lord is present, and we make the appropriate reverence, which is either a genuflection (bending the right knee) or a bow before we enter our pew. This is our way of showing respect to our

Lord, as centuries ago people at court did to their king or queen. Through such acts, we are acknowledging with our body that the King is present. Our bodily action can help our minds become aware that we are in a place dedicated to God and his worship. We may have entered the church building with very worldly thoughts on our minds, but we are becoming attuned to the presence of the Holy Spirit. We are beginning to allow God's purposes for us to become the reason why we are there. We are beginning to sit in the brine.

Faithfully,
Father Joe

