

Grace Notes

Volume I, Number I, December 2017

Grace Episcopal Church Spring Hill, Tennessee

Grace Notes is the new monthly newsletter for Grace Episcopal Church in Spring Hill. The newsletter will be mailed monthly to members of the church and posted on the Grace Website, grace4sh.org. Also, it will be given to visitors and interested individuals. If you would like to contribute to Grace Notes or have comments, please reach out to a member of the Grace Notes committee: Ken Scibetta, Ed Strong or Carol Martinez.

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

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| Dec. 2 | 3 pm | Decorating the Church |
| Dec. 2 | 4 pm | Open House, Spring Hill Christmas Parade |
| Dec. 3 | 8 am | Holy Eucharist, I Advent |
| Dec. 3 | 10 am | Lessons and Carols w. the Holy Eucharist |
| Dec. 3 | 11:30 am | Stewardship Brunch |
| Dec. 10 | | II Advent |
| Dec. 17 | | III Advent |
| Dec. 24 | | IV Advent |
| | 8:00 am | No Service |
| | 10:00 am | Holy Eucharist |
| Dec. 24 | 4:30 pm | Christmas Carols |
| Dec. 24 | 5 pm | Family Christmas Eve Service |
| Dec. 24 | 10:30 pm | Christmas Carols |
| Dec. 24 | 11:00 pm | Midnight Mass |

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| Dec. 31 | First Sunday After Christmas Blessing of the Clocks, Calendars and more |
| Jan. 6 | Epiphany |
| Jan. 7 | First Sunday after Epiphany |
| Jan. 14 | Annual visit by Bishop Bauerschmidt |
| Jan. 19-20 | Diocesan Convention, St. Paul's, Murfreesboro |
| Jan. 21 | Annual Meeting |

Weekly Services

Sundays at 8 and 10 am
 Childrens' Church at 10 am
 Wednesdays at Noon, Holy Eucharist with Healing, Rite II

Weekly Activities

Mondays OA at 7 pm
 Tuesdays and Fridays AA at 7 pm

We welcome our **new members**! They are: Lawrence and Lynn Ballantine, Ronnie and Karyl Beal, Allen Carper, Charles Cochran, Judith Ann Gillon, Patricia Henessy, Justin and Kylie McGhee. (Several others will be listed as their transfers are received.)

About Our Historical Building: Grace Episcopal Church was built in 1877 in the Carpenter Gothic Style of architecture that was very popular immediately following the Civil War and consecrated on May 16, 1878 by the Rt. Rev. Charles Quintard, Bishop of the Diocese of Tennessee. This May we will celebrate Grace Church's 140 years of continuous service as a house of Worship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Things We Don't Talk About on Sunday (The Vicar's Vagaries)

Why a Newsletter Now?

The Grace Church Newsletter Task Force, made up of Ken Scibetta, Carol Martinez, Ed Strong, and me, was formed a few months ago to explore the issue of whether or not Grace needs some kind of regular, written means of communication for our church. *Grace Notes* is the result of our combined analysis and inspiration. Our expectations are:

1. ***Grace Notes* will reach everyone in our congregation.** The internet and Sunday announcements are great means of reaching people, but there are many who do not use the internet and who are not able to attend the Sunday Eucharist every week. Phone calls, emails, Facebook, the website, and word of mouth are not enough. An old-fashioned newsletter could be mailed to every household within our membership. Sometimes, there's no substitute for hard copy and snail mail. This is one of those times.
2. ***Grace Notes* will build unity among us.** We will learn in these pages about each other, about major events in our church, and about issues that concern us all.
3. I will write **articles about the seasons of the Church Year, matters of church practice, passages from Scripture, and excerpts from sermons** that I want to share with everyone in the church.
4. ***Grace Notes* will give us all focus and help us organize** the ongoing life of the church. It is so easy to take things as they come without a thought for the future; but *Grace Notes* will help us all make out our calendars more thoughtfully.
5. ***Grace Notes* will inform newcomers and visitors about our church** and will help them overcome the initial

awkwardness of beginning to attend a new church.

6. ***Grace Notes* will contain occasional reflections** from me or others in the church on current local, national, and international events.

Please give *Grace Notes* a thorough going over. Let me or any member of the Task Force know what you think, and pass on your ideas for how this newsletter can best serve Christ and our members.

Advent and Christmas

The season of Advent is a time to attend to Christ in his coming to us. Isaiah points to the return of God's people from exile to their homeland. John the Baptist points to the coming of the Messiah. Luke gives us the story of the Annunciation of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, which calls her to be the mother of our Lord and shows all Christians how to receive the calling of God by saying "Let it be to me according to your word."

Advent is a time for preparation, not for the premature celebration of the Feast of the Nativity. We will use the penitential acclamation at the beginning of the Sunday service ("Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins," followed by "His mercy endures forever."). Instead of the "Gloria," we will sing the "Kyrie Eleison." Many of the hymns will be in a minor key. The "Agnus Dei" (Lamb of God) replaces the "Pascha Nostrum" (Christ our Passover) after the consecration. Every Sunday's lessons emphasize a different aspect of preparing for the coming of our Lord. Regular attendance is especially rewarding at this time.

Faithfully,
Father Joe

Grace Notes

Volume 1, Number 2, January 2018

Grace Episcopal Church

Spring Hill, Tennessee

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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

- Jan. 19-20 Diocesan Convention, St. Paul's, Murfreesboro
- Jan 28 Annual Meeting (after 10:00 am service)
- Feb. 11 Teacher Recognition Day
- Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 18 Bishop Bauerschmidt's Annual Visitation

Weekly Services

Sundays at 8 and 10 am
Childrens' Church at 10 am
Wednesdays at Noon, Holy Eucharist with Healing, Rite II

Weekly Activities

Mondays OA at 7 pm
Tuesdays and Fridays AA at 7 pm

2018 Stewardship Update

In our stewardship campaign for 2018, we received \$89,635 in pledges versus \$73,100 last year. We had a total of 40 pledges versus 34 last year. That is a tremendous response, greatly aided by new people coming to Grace and pledging right away, as well as continuing pledges from those who have been around for years.

As we need to support our vicar for the entire year in 2018, our budget needs for this year are quite a bit higher than they were in 2017. We anticipate 2018 expenses to be \$108,065. This represents a flat line budget with no increases other than adjustments for actual expenses such as heating and electricity. Our total anticipated revenue is \$108,725. These encouraging preliminary figures are subject to Mission Council review of 2017 end of year accounting and any adjustments needed for 2018.

The Mission Council will be taking up the budget at its meeting on January 14 and will come to the Annual Meeting January 28, 2018 with a final budget.

We are truly blessed with a generous and caring congregation.

Please join us in celebrating the joy we all receive from our affiliation with Grace Church and the much more important joy we received from worshipping the Lord together.

Your Stewardship Committee,
Marty Cline, John Harvey, and Ed Strong

Things We Don't Talk About on Sunday (The Vicar's Vagaries)

From Christmas to Epiphany

January 6 is the Feast of the Epiphany, otherwise known as "The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." after which we celebrate the First Sunday after Epiphany, which is always the Baptism of Christ. The Christmas season flows into Epiphany as seamlessly as the Magi approach the manger in a Christmas pageant.

It was not enough for Christ to be born. He had to be made known to the people beyond his family. Real people of flesh and blood had to "behold the glory of the Lord," so he could "enlighten our hearts with the knowledge of his glory" (paraphrased from Ephesians and the proper preface for Epiphany).

During Epiphany, we celebrate the ways God incarnate has been revealed to us, as well as how he has made himself known in us and among us. The three main events regarded as epiphanies by the Church through the ages have been (1) the coming of the Wise Men to worship Christ at Bethlehem, (2) Christ's baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, and (3) Christ's first miracle, when he changed the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee.

As we enter more fully into the experience of Epiphany in prayer, worship, and daily life, we ourselves are transformed into a kind of epiphany, a manifestation of Christ in the world. As St. Paul has written, "And we all..., beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another." (II Cor. 3:18)

So why is Epiphany so important? The proper preface for the season gives the answer. *"Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord."*

On Receiving Communion

It is the policy of the Episcopal Church that all baptized Christians are welcome to receive communion in our church. Those not receiving communion may come to the altar rail and receive a blessing. Please cross your arms in front of you to indicate that you would like to receive a blessing rather than communion. Anyone who is not baptized is invited to speak to the vicar about being baptized and becoming part of the Church.

I also want to say a word about the practice of intinction, which is receiving from the chalice by dipping the host into the chalice and then consuming the host. I encourage you to receive the consecrated wine by taking a sip from the chalice itself. It is highly unlikely that anyone will get a communicable disease from the chalice. But if you do prefer to receive by intinction, please allow the priest to put the host on your palm, hold your palm up so the chalice bearer can pick up the host and dip it into the chalice, and then open your mouth and allow the chalice bearer to place the host onto your tongue. I ask that you let the chalice bearer dip the host for you instead of doing it yourself. To receive the host from the chalice bearer, who has intincted it for you, is to emphasize the fact that we receive communion as a gift rather than taking it for ourselves.

You may have noticed that when I celebrate, I receive communion before giving it to anyone else. Why? Because I need to receive Christ so I can give him to others. I cannot give away what I have not yet received. I am humbled by this realization at every celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Faithfully,
Father Joe

Grace Notes

Volume I, Number 3, February 2018

Grace Episcopal Church Spring Hill, Tennessee

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Events and Dates of Note

- Feb. 11 Teacher Recognition Day
- Feb. 13 Shrove Tues. Pancake Supper
- Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday
Services at 12:00 noon
and at 6:00 p.m.
- Feb. 18 Bishop Bauerschmidt's Annual Visitation
- Feb. 21 First Wednesday Night Lenten Program at 6 p.m.
- Feb. 23 Lenten Quiet Day at the
Diocesan House, 9:30 a.m. to
1 p.m.

Sundays at 8 and 10 am, Holy Eucharist
Childrens' Church at 10 am
Mondays OA at 7 pm
Tuesdays and Fridays AA at 7 pm
Wednesdays at Noon, Holy Eucharist with
Healing, Rite II

The Vicar's Vagaries

Wednesday Night Lenten Program

On the five Wednesdays in Lent, we will be offering an evening Lenten Program based on *St. Benedict's Toolbox*, a book by Jane Tomaine. In this class, we will explore the riches offered us today by the centuries old Rule of St Benedict. The author will help us take tools we can use from the Rule so we can live a more purposeful, holier, and more balanced life.

We will gather for the service of Evening Prayer at 6:00 p.m. in the church, after which we will have a light supper. Our class session will begin after dinner and last till 7:45 or 8:00 p.m. These gatherings will be in the parish hall on February 21 and 28 and March 14, 21, and 28. You may purchase the book on your own, or let us know and we can order one for you. See Fr. Joe for more information.

During Lent, we will continue to have our Wednesday noon Eucharists, but we will not have lunch.

From the Annual Meeting

The Grace Church Annual Meeting took place on Sunday, Jan. 28 after the 10 a.m. service. Father Joe opened the meeting with a prayer.

The first order of business was the nominating committee report and the election of new Mission Council Members. Richard Hawarah, Jessica Farmer, and John Harvey were nominated and elected by acclamation. They will join returning members of the Mission Council Bill Rieger, Ken Scibetta and Kala Fawbush.

The council also includes Susan Austin, secretary, and Ed Strong, treasurer.

Mission Council members presented reports on Outreach, Parish Life, Christian Education and Communication ministries. Bill Rieger presented the Junior and Senior Warden reports. Ed Strong gave an overview of the Church's successful Stewardship campaign. Nancy Newton, outgoing treasurer, and Ed Strong presented the 2018 budget. Minutes of the meeting were taken by Susan Austin and copies are available upon request. After the Vicar's Report, Fr. Joe closed the meeting with a blessing.

An edited copy of the vicar's report follows.

Vicar's Report for 2017 (Slightly abridged)

AS I BEGIN my vicar's report, I want to recognize outgoing mission council member Cheryl Cline, who has done such a splendid job on leading us through church social events as parish life liaison that she made it look easy. I want to express gratitude to Cheryl Kline, outgoing senior warden, who led this community through the search for a new vicar. She accepted the mantle of leadership when no one else was in a good position to do so. She told me everything she could to make my way easier the first months I was here. We wish her all blessings in her new life in Arizona. Thanks also to Nancy Newton, who completes her final year of a three year term as treasurer. She now is retiring as Ed Strong becomes our new treasurer, but she has promised to help us in any way she can when we need her. I must thank Bryan Young, our verger, for his help with liturgies, with the recruiting and training of liturgical ministers, and with scheduling. I want to thank Linda Colmore for leading our altar guild with diligence, tact, and reverence.

I am most grateful to Susan Browning, our office manager, who does much of the

organizational and financial work you don't want your vicar to have to think about. And thank you, Deanie, for your good humor, and your corny jokes, and your devoted work so we always have good music and the choir is prepared and supported as they lead our singing. And thank you to all the acolytes, altar guild members, Daughters of the King, leaders of children's church, especially Lynn Rieger and Julie Whittier, scripture readers, and Eucharistic ministers. I especially need to thank Bill Rieger, our junior warden who makes sure we have heat no matter what and can be depended on to make surprisingly dramatic announcements in church when we least expect it, and to Lynn, who served in the office during the six weeks when Susan was getting a new knee. I want to recognize Dianne Schneider, who was elected president of the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Tennessee. Finally, thanks to Ed Strong for pulling together a first rate stewardship committee and running an amazingly successful stewardship program.

A year ago, Grace Church was between vicars, and I was between churches. Father Peter Whalen was filling in after Father Doc Martin's retirement, and I had finished my time at Redeemer, Shelbyville. In February, I was excited finally to get a call from Canon Snare and learn that I would be a candidate to become the next vicar of Grace Church. When she asked me to update my Ministry Portfolio and send it in, I resisted the urge to tell her I would rather eat a box of dry oatmeal and did as I was asked. It wasn't long before I was talking to Cheryl Kline and we were scheduling an interview in March. Imagine my surprise and delight when I arrived and found that everyone present was cheerful and well-prepared. They had read my answers to those thorny questions on my ministry portfolio, and yet they still wanted to get to know me. Not only were the lasagna and salad great, but I learned an

important lesson: Grace Church likes to eat.

I CAN'T REMEMBER a less stressful interview. After a few days, Cheryl called me back in the name of the mission council to ask me to be the next vicar of Grace Church. I happily accepted, and I have had no regrets. My first Sunday was April 2, the last Sunday of Lent. We made it through Holy Week and Easter, largely because Bryan Young, Deanie Moore, Susan Browning, and Linda Colmore know what they are doing and after 31 years in the ministry, nothing really surprises me anymore. As long as the people are faithful and trying to do their part, I am satisfied. I have found that at Grace, many people step up to do their part and more. If your car battery has died, or if you need to go to a doctor's appointment, or you need a ride to church, someone will help you out.

Before I had time to look around, it was the weekend of the Divine Swine. Now the name of that event did give me pause, for it reminded me of one of my friend Stuart Smith's favorite expressions for something not very nice. If he wanted to say that a particular congregation had modest expectations of their clergy, he would say, "As long as the priest didn't sacrifice a pig on the altar, the congregation would be happy." The name "Divine Swine" made me a little nervous, but soon I learned that no one was going to ask me to sacrifice a pig on the altar. However, I was asked to stand for a picture with a man-sized traffic-directing pig named Craig. All I had to do was come on a Saturday, greet our members and guests, and eat some really good barbeque. I also ordered a whole pork butt, and we ate it all without any difficulty over the summer. Large thanks go to Bryan Young, Jerry Schmelzer, Cheryl Kline, and all the volunteers who prepared, ran, and cleaned up after this event.

Next, I went to California for my son's graduation from college, which I could have

designated as continuing education because I heard speeches from Deepak Chopra, Cheech Marin of Cheech and Chong fame, and Will Farrell (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfjGmBVAL-o>). Soon after my return, the parish hall and church were transformed completely into a Maker Fun Factory Vacation Bible School for celebrating God the creator and the creative nature of every child of God. Craig and Danette Olsen, Lynn Rieger, Julie Whittier and more other people than I know performed the inside duty, while Richard Hawarah and Ken Scibetta took the children outside to wear them out whenever they got the chance. Several of our older children played an indispensable part in guiding the younger children and helping with crowd control.

Sometime in the early summer we cleaned up the font and set it up in the center of the aisle in the back of the church to remind us of how we come into the body of Christ through the sacrament of baptism. Soon, we baptized Allen Lee Carper, newborn son of Dustin Carper and his wife Jessica. On All Saints' Sunday in November, we baptized Kylie and Justin McGhee, Emily's little brother and sister, children of Melissa and David McGhee, and grandchildren of Susan Austin. We began to notice that there were more and more children gathering around the rope after the 10:00 service to ring the bell. For the last two Sundays, there have almost been too many for everyone to get a hand on the rope. As attendance has gone up to almost 60 each Sunday, the main age group responsible for this increase has been children 3-11. Their presence bodes well for the church in the coming years, but it also changes the responsibility of our church today. Caring for these children and their families, seeing to their education and formation as Christians, and helping them discern their gifts and the ways they are called to serve God are tasks central to our mission as disciples of Christ, who said, "Let the children come to me."