

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, John Harvey, Ed Strong, and Peggy Roberts. *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 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.

- Jan. 20 Mission Council Meeting via Zoom  
Jan. 23 The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee  
Annual Convention.  
Diann Schneider and Michelle Pomeroy,  
delegates from Grace.  
Feb. 17 Ash Wednesday  
Feb. 21 First Sunday in Lent  
& Bishop's Visitation to Grace Church

### Services and Continuing Events

- Sun. at 10 a.m. To attend in-person, email  
Susan Austin, [sjanawicz@aol.com](mailto:sjanawicz@aol.com)  
to reserve physically distanced seating.  
Sun. at 10 a.m. Facebook Live Service Broadcast  
Sun. at 11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour via Zoom  
Tues. at 10 a.m. Bible Study via Zoom  
Tues. & Fri. at 7 p.m. AA Meeting

### **Vicar's Report January 10, 2021 The Rev. Joseph N. Davis**

In preparing this report, I went back over last year's vicar's report. I got the feeling I had stepped back into another dimension, or into a world of naïve innocence that has been forever altered. We never really know what is going to happen in the coming year, but we were thinking that with our church

survey information we were prepared to make some good changes that would help us grow. Our new website was just getting started, and *Grace Notes* had been reborn. The conclusion to my report makes a pretty good beginning for this one. I said, "Let us keep on doing the same old good things that have always sustained the life of the Church; and let us continue to be creative and strategic in the new things we decide to try for the sake of God's kingdom." Since March, we have lived through the most serious trial we have faced in our lifetime, and we have had a new experience of sustaining the life of the Church, as well as being sustained by the life of the Church, through the grace of God. We have had to be creative in ways we had never anticipated. I am not sure if we used any recognizable strategy, other than to do what we had to do to continue to worship God, preach the gospel, and make the sacraments available as we could, all the while taking every reasonable precaution to protect the life of our members.

In a year of many political rallies, protests, riots, motorcycle rider conventions, holiday gatherings, and other events that have spread the deadly coronavirus pandemic, we have been uniformly agreed here at Grace to follow strict safety protocols. We learned how to have mission council meetings on Zoom, a format I had not even heard of before March, to which I now have a yearly subscription. Because I love you and care for the lives of my flock, I changed from using every reason I could think of to persuade you to come to church every Sunday into a shepherd who advises many of his people to stay home and watch the service online.

All along, I have heard voices questioning if masks do any good or if the virus is really that serious; and every week, I see the faces and hear the stories of young and old people who died too soon because of COVID-19. Several of our own members have had it and appear to be fully recovered. The brother of Susan Browning, Richard Hardy, died of COVID-19 last summer in Alabama. And our beloved former long-term supply priest Father Peter Whalen died of COVID-19 on December 13 of last year.

Living with our country's confusion over how to respond to this pandemic and our failure to act to save lives has convinced me more than ever that, without love of one another and faith in God, we are likely to abuse our freedom in very destructive ways. The teachings of Christ provide the answers we need, now more than ever, for anyone who pays attention. If we know this, we share a responsibility to carry this truth to everyone we can reach with the gospel of Christ, and to do so with humility in a way that they may be likely to receive.

We did not exactly intend to become great evangelists this year. We tried to keep our heads above water and continue to have one church service a week. But because of our Facebook broadcasts, more people are "attending" our services, if you count watching at home, than used to attend in person when we had two services every Sunday. We have stopped singing, but Deanie and I still pick hymns for each service, and some people are singing them at home. When Deanie and her husband Tom were sick with the coronavirus just before Christmas, we missed her music terribly, so we appreciated it that much more when she returned; and she brought Tom with her for some soprano saxophone on Christmas Eve.

Not all of us are able to attend on Sunday morning, but this experience of absence has caused us to reconsider the deep meaning of communion with one another in Christ. We are not having the weekday noon Eucharist, but we are having a Bible study on Tuesday mornings on the lessons for the next Sunday. This study helps me get an idea of how the lessons strike a few of our members, and it helps me immensely as I prepare sermons. I continue to preach with just a few notes most of the time, and I am now quite at ease preaching in front of a telephone that could be carrying our service to people all over the world.

When Susan Browning retired from secretarial duties at the end of March, I figured we would hire someone else to take on her duties; but because of the coronavirus, we are not keeping the office open during the week, and I am doing the bulletin, the emails to the congregation, and the prayer list for the prayers of the people. John Harvey, Susan Austin, David Thomas, and Ed Strong are taking care of the mail while Susan Browning continues to work for us in the capacity of "financial administrator," and she

also manages our member database and helps us get our mailing labels, plus other things we ask her about from time to time.

We were not able to have in person coffee hour, so somewhere along the way somebody suggested we have a virtual coffee hour. Karyl Beal has hosted this for almost every Sunday, since April or so, and I have greatly enjoyed visiting with three or four people who watched the service at home and then joined her for a few minutes of catching up on Zoom.

I say we have three or four people for the coffee hour, and I know that does not sound like much; but think of how many small groups there are that meet regularly in connection with their life as part of the Grace Church family. There is the Sunday worship technical and liturgical team, members and officers of the mission council, the Bible study, the post-Sunday greeting under the maple tree with the vicar group, and even a Thursday morning men's breakfast group. I am sure there are others. Soon, creative Mondays may kick off in a new, online form so that our artists can get together and support one another in their exploration of their artistic gifts. Susan Austin has formed a group of "Merry Mulchers" to work on the grounds and gardens, and Laurie McNutt and Sheila Flynn have been part of this small group.

James Dallas has helped us with our website and with Facebook. We really appreciate his willingness to help on technical matters. David Thomas has accepted the treasurer's job, which he takes over beginning now as Ed Strong retires after serving in that capacity for three years. Ed has been about as much help as one person can be, and we thank him profoundly. I also thank Toni, who as president of the Daughters of the King has been my main contact when I have needed to ask for special prayers for our members and loved ones. I am so glad we have a vibrant chapter of the Daughters at Grace, and I look forward to your continuing growth and service in the future.

I am most grateful to Carol Martinez and Peggy Roberts for the work they do on *Grace Notes*. Carol is editor and organizer of our newsletter. She gets people to write articles on timely subjects and makes sure *Grace Notes* gets out and reaches our people. Peggy does the layout and some of the copy editing, which I also help with; and I send out the final

edition in an email. This has been a great project for us to work on to counter the isolating effects of the pandemic. We connect with one another through the ministry of the word, and anyone could potentially write an article for our newsletter, because we are all members of the body of Christ with our own experiences of God's grace and mystery in our day to day lives.

These past several months have been a time for many renovations to be completed in our church. Susan Austin, our junior warden, has overseen the installation of a new heating unit in the crypt below where we are meeting right now. She has had a new sign commissioned and installed, thanks to the gift of Ellen Booth in memory of her husband, Elwood Frederick Booth, Jr. ("Bud"), who loved the Episcopal Church dearly. She, John Harvey, and perhaps others I don't know about cleared out Faith Hall and did whatever was necessary so that a beautiful, sturdy new floor could be put in. And she is overseeing the replacement of our steeple cross, which was rotten. It's a good thing she discovered what shape the cross was in when she was helping to get the bell fixed, which she also took care of, because we wouldn't want to lose any members or guests because they had an old rugged cross fall on them when they came outside after a rousing church service. That cross seems small way up there on top of the roof, but you would learn just how heavy a cross can be if it fell on you. It will be replaced by an exact replica made of fine wood by a local craftsman, probably before Lent gets under way.

Richard Hawarah has been steadily enabling and supporting our outreach ministry. You will see from his report what a little enthusiasm and organization can do to unleash the generosity of people to help others in need. Jessica Farmer helped us organize and host a reception for the bishop at his visitation last year, and then we pretty much shut down all potlucks and parish gatherings, and her workload greatly increased as a nurse. We have kept her and all other health care providers in our weekly prayers by name.

Throughout the year, Carol Martinez has been keeping our eyes on stewardship matters, as she has done each of the past three years when she has chaired the stewardship committee. She has succeeded in reminding us of the importance of stewardship all year round instead of relegating the

deep theological matter of stewardship to a brief pledge drive every fall. As the stewardship campaign for 2021 ends, we have heard from almost all our members; but if you have not yet made a pledge, we would be happy to accept a pledge anytime. We know your circumstances may be uncertain, and we appreciate the level of involvement and giving that you feel good about committing to.

We have been figuring out what to do as we have been going along. I couldn't have done my part on Sundays if not for the altar guild and their continuing, steady service, though we never see each other anymore, for the time being. I realized that people who can't be here in person only get to see what we do in church, so I asked if we could have flowers for our services, even though they are shorter and simpler than normal Sunday services. Linda Colmore and the members of the altar guild have made sure we have had beautiful flowers and plants that are appropriate to the occasion every Sunday. John Harvey and Samantha Bennett, now Samantha McKnight, as she is newly married to Scott McKnight, have come to read the word of God just about every Sunday, freeing me up from worrying about whom would I get to be a reader next week. David Thomas has steadily done our broadcasting work and has become quite a skilled video producer. His can-do attitude about matters technical and over my head meant I didn't have to worry about so many things I don't know how to do. And James Dallas has helped both at church and from home on the internet by posting the bulletins with the Facebook broadcast every Sunday.

Lynn Rieger never forgets our children. Working with Diann Schneider, the mission council liaison for children's ministries and Christian education, Lynn has provided educational materials that have been a big hit with our younger members, whose lives have been disrupted every bit as much as ours have. We need to mention that we deeply miss our children, and we look forward to the time when we can all be back together again for services and events.

Early in the coronavirus crisis, Ken Scibetta and I were talking about how much we missed the regular connection with all the members of the church. We agreed that we are probably learning from this experience just how important we are to one another.

We were able to gather and support Alicia Fitts and her family when her father William died last winter and we had his funeral in early February; but as for John Aliano, whom I had come to regard as my Italian papa, when he died before Christmas, we have not been able to gather to celebrate his life or commend him to God in a worthy manner. We hope to be able to do that soon, but for now I ask your prayers for Marie Aliano, who is very ill and is in the hospital right now.

What can I say about the future? One thing for sure—this year will be very different from last year! When we do make it through the current challenges, I believe we will be ready for the new challenges we will face, and that we will continue in the ways that have sustained our life together to this day—depending on God’s help for all we do, serving the needs of our community, and continuing in the worship of God as the giver and savior of us all in Christ.

I believe we will go forward strengthened for the journey by our experience, for

*“those who go through the desolate valley  
will find it a place of springs, \*  
for the early rains have covered it with pools of  
water.*

*They will climb from height to height, \*  
and the God of gods will reveal himself in  
Zion....*

*No good thing will the Lord withhold \*  
from those who walk with integrity.*

*O Lord of hosts, \*  
happy are they who put their trust in you!  
(Psalm 84)*

### **Time for Well-Deserved Recognition**

When we turned the page on 2020, one of the year end events we faced was the expiration of the terms of two key members of the Mission Council, Jessica Farmer and Richard Hawarah. In addition, two of the non-voting members, Michele Gibson-O’Grady and Ed Strong, will be stepping down from their current positions. That leaves quite a bit of talent to replace. By the time you read this these vacancies should have been filled. Today I would like to take this time to recognize the departing members for their service.

First, I want to recognize and convey my admiration to two of this group for their selfless service outside their duties to the Mission Council. Michele Gibson-O’Grady, our Mission Council Clerk, and Jessica Farmer, Mission Council Member in charge of Mission Life, are both members of the healthcare profession. During this current pandemic they have served tirelessly to the benefit of their community and state. For that we owe them our gratitude. I am grateful for the time they were able to devote to the Mission Council, usually having to come straight from work to join us in progress. As we thank them for their service we should pray for their continued health and a reduction in their workload.

Our other elected Mission Council Member departing, Richard Hawarah, has been in charge Outreach. Richard has taken on any opportunity to extend our involvement in community outreach that has been presented. That has been especially important this past year. Many of our local charities have seen increased demand as the pandemic has affected more and more in the community. Richard (and our secret bonus, his sweet wife Marsha) has overseen our donations to The Well, totaling over 1,000#’s of food this past year, Adopt-a-Family at Christmas for The Center of Hope, our budding involvement with Meals on Wheels, and has helped congregants who needed transportation to church. If his successor is smart, priority #1 will be recruiting this wonderful couple to continue their involvement in these endeavors. We are truly blessed by their presence.

And finally, my friend and our Treasurer, Ed Strong, is stepping down. Ed has been a faithful steward of Grace’s finances and a valuable sounding board for any other matters he has allowed me to bounce off him. He has been mentoring our Assistant Treasurer, Dave Thomas, to move into the senior position. Ed will stay involved as the Assistant for backup but will get some well-earned time off.

Please join me in recognizing this group for their service with a big “Thank You”!

Christ’s Peace,  
John Harvey, Sr. Warden

## **COVID-19 VACCINATION**

We are happy to share with those waiting to receive the first of two COVID-19 vaccinations that my husband and I were contacted by email by the TN Department of Health late Monday afternoon to sign up for the Maury county waiting list for vaccination. We had previously searched everywhere online in Columbia and Nashville facilities and doctor's offices and were certainly puzzled over announcements about shipments of the vaccine; and then there the answer was right in front of us. Just two days later, Wednesday at 3:00 p.m., we drove to Columbia State Community College, passed through a tented area with four drive-up injection stations, were vaccinated inside our cars with Moderna, departed to a 15-minute waiting area, and finally arrived home. We now have an appointment in 28 days for our second injection at the same CSCC location.

Except for a little soreness in our arms, neither of us has experienced any side-effects. I would certainly reassure anyone who is thinking about taking the vaccine or "on-the-fence" to be sure you sign up online with the Nashville Department of Health, remain alert for the TDH email invitation, and proceed with your COVID-19 vaccines.

Peggy Roberts

### **Special Note of Thanks**

I want to thank the people of Grace Church for their Christmas gifts to me and Cindy this year, including packages left at the church for me and contributions made to the monetary gift that came with the beautiful, signed Christmas card on Christmas Eve (or soon after). I am grateful for the call to serve among you as vicar, and I enjoy working with you to advance the Kingdom of God in our community. Let us stride into 2021 unified by the hope that the Holy Spirit will guide us through the struggles that afflict us now and that the light of Christ will shine brightly forth from Grace Church in the New Year.

Faithfully,  
Father Joe

### **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  
Michele Gibson O'Grady, Clerk

To give to Grace Episcopal Church online:

<https://graceepiscopalspringhill.org/#giving>,

