

Grace Notes is the monthly newsletter for Grace Episcopal Church in Spring Hill. If you would like to contribute an article or comment, please reach out to a member of the Grace Notes committee: Carol Martinez 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.*

Services and Continuing Events

Sun.	10 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
Sun.	10 a.m.	Facebook Live Service
Tues. & Fri.	7 p.m.	AA Meeting
Wed.	11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.	Father Joe, <i>Office Hours</i>
Wed.	12:00 Noon	Holy Eucharist

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Events and Dates of Notes

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

Feb. 24	St. Matthias the Apostle
Feb. 27	The Last Sunday after Epiphany Blessing of food donations to The Well
Mar. 2	Ash Wednesday, service at noon

Mar. 6

First Sunday in Lent

Vicar's Vagaries

How Services Change During Lent

Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday**, which is on **March 2** this year. We will have a service with music at noon. At this service, we will have the litany of penitence and the imposition of ashes, as well as the Holy Eucharist. It is always a deeply moving experience to place the ashes on the heads of church members and say, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." I am sure it is a profound experience to receive those ashes and hear those words said to you and to those you love who are beside you. As of now, I am not planning to have a service in the evening.

Lent is a season of penitence and preparation for Easter. The color is purple. We put away the "Gloria" and the Alleluias and the "Pascha Nostrum" (Christ our Passover), and say the "Lord, Have Mercy" and the "Agnus Dei." We fast during Lent, doing without something we will miss, such as desserts or large meals, and we take on some kind of spiritual discipline or work of mercy.

I wonder if you would like some suggestions of ways you might enrich your season of Lent and prepare well for Easter. Here are just a few suggestions. You could pick one or two, if you wanted, but please don't take on much more than you did last year. It is better to set a small rule you can follow than set yourself an ambitious rule you won't follow. I would be happy to discuss your Lenten rule with you if you like.

1. Take up praying for someone you don't normally pray for—possibly someone at Grace Church, someone in your family, or even someone you don't like.

2. Pray for God's mercy and aid for one world need.
3. Write a journal. You might even write your prayers down as if they were letters to God. No one has to see your private journal.
4. Bring an item of food for The Well each Sunday in Lent.
5. Attend church every Sunday in Lent.
6. If feasible, attend church on Wednesdays at noon and pray for the healing of someone who needs your prayers.
7. Check up on a friend or relative who might appreciate a call. Even if you don't go anywhere, you can brighten the lives of others by calling them.
8. Read a book of the Bible slowly and meditate on what strikes you in your reading. Or you could read one of the lessons in the Daily Office Lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer each day. (See odd pages 951-957, BCP, for these readings.)
9. Make a list of things you are thankful for each week. Go over the list Sunday at church before we celebrate the Eucharist (the Great Thanksgiving).
10. Take advantage of the opportunity to use the Sacrament of Penance (confession). You may ask me for help if you need help with your self-examination and confession.
11. Either begin or recommit yourself to keeping a daily time to be quiet and in prayer. Even ten minutes would make a huge difference in your day.
12. Do without something you often buy yourself, and give away the money as alms for the poor.

These are just some ideas that might help you come up with a Lenten rule this year. Whatever you do, don't beat yourself up if you slip and don't go by your rule perfectly. Instead of feeling guilty, give thanks that you know how weak your resolution is, get back on your spiritual feet, and keep going with your rule, even if you find it annoying.

I do hope you have a good Lent. Your celebration of Easter will be more joyful if you work at your Lenten rule for five weeks. With blessings and prayers for a holy Lent,
Father Joe

The information on our website about Covid protocols at Grace has been updated as follows.

To: Grace Episcopal Church

From: The Rev. Joseph N. Davis, Vicar

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Over the past 2 years, Covid 19 has changed, and so have we. The recent spike seems to be declining now, but there are still many cases in our state and in the United States. Being vaccinated is still the best defense against becoming sick or being hospitalized with Covid 19.

At Grace Church, we request that you wear a mask, preferably an N95, when inside the building for the church service. We are singing with our masks on. Please maintain a safe distance from people who are not part of your family or group of friends that you came to church with. We are offering communion in both kinds—the consecrated bread and wine—but we are not intincting for now. If you choose not to receive the chalice, please cross your arms at the rail or return to your pew after receiving the host. We are passing the plate at the offertory, but you may give before or after the service by putting your contribution in the plate, and you may give online through the link at our website or by using the code printed on your service bulletin. Readers may remove their masks while reading.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we were recommending people to stay home and watch online. Now we are asking people who are not having Covid symptoms and have not recently been exposed to a person with Covid 19 to attend in person and continue safe practices such as the ones mentioned above. We are continuing to broadcast the service online by Facebook Live and afterwards on YouTube. If we have a sustained downward trend in numbers of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, perhaps we will no longer ask people to

wear masks if they prefer not to. That time could come this spring, but we will have to wait and see.

We have been patient a long time, and caring for our own safety and one another's has brought good results for our congregation. We continue to wait, watch, and pray for deliverance from this trial. May God bless and keep you all. I hope to see you under the maple tree.

Faithfully,
Father Joe

2022 Calendars Available

Paper copies of the Episcopal Church Year Guide calendar are available in Faith Hall. There are also some copies in the narthex for people to take on their way home from church. A photograph of the stained glass "The Last Supper" is printed on the calendar along with the name and address of Grace Church.

The calendar includes Principal Feasts, Holy Days, Days of Special Devotion, and Days of Optional Observance. Usage for each entry in the calendar is guided by The Book of Common Prayer. The calendar is edited and compiled by The Rt. Rev. Barry E. Yingling.

If you do not have access to Faith Hall and would like to have a copy of the calendar, please reach out to Carol Martinez, carolcm443@gmail.com or 213-434-5710.

Practicing Gratitude

I am authoring this article not as your Junior Warden, but as a member of Grace Church and our wonderful church family. Not long ago I was driving down a back road in Williamson County when I passed a small church with a sign on its front lawn. The sign simply read "Practice Gratitude." That message really struck home with me. I would like to think that this was something I did naturally, but I had to ask myself if I really did. It's not difficult to remember to say thank you after someone has done something for you. But what about giving back and showing gratefulness for the many blessings that I have been shown? I appreciate the kind act of someone who calls just to see if I'm doing well or the beauty of a sunset at the end of a

long day. So, I am striving to practice gratitude on a regular basis, sometimes by paying it forward.

A few years ago, I found one way to pay it forward for the many blessings I received from the support of our close Grace Church family. I was reviewing my financial plans, including my life insurance policies (something we should all do regularly or after a life event change). Having worked for a life insurance company for more than 40 years, I had purchased several policies to help take care of my family after I was gone. I found one policy that I had been paying the premium for but had forgotten that I owned. I also realized that there was a family member that I had forgotten about and that was my Grace Church family. The policy is not a huge one, worth about five times my annual pledge. But no doubt it will help keep Grace Church doing its mission of spreading the Word of God in our community. I remain the owner and payor for the policy but changed the beneficiary to Grace Church. In most cases to change the beneficiary, you will need the church's tax identification number, which Susan Browning can provide to you.

I am sharing this idea as some of you may want to consider leaving a legacy and show your appreciation for all that Grace Church has done for you and your family. I am also buying another policy, naming Grace Church as the beneficiary. Since I am no longer insurable, I am buying one of the so-called "final expense" policies. They are very affordable, and your health condition is not a factor for acceptance. You can also set up the policy with Grace Church being the owner as well as the beneficiary and you would be the payor. If the church is the policy owner and beneficiary, the premium you pay would be tax deductible in most cases (please consult your tax advisor concerning your specific tax status).

I remain forever grateful for my Grace Church family.

Christ's Peace,
Susan Austin, Jr. Warden

2021 Was a Good Year for Stewardship at Grace

In the year 2021 Grace Episcopal Church Stewardship Drive contributed a total of \$78,184.77 to the church. Pledges came from 32 households.

The contributions from everyone are greatly appreciated and are an important part of the church.

Thanks so much to all the members of the stewardship committee: John Harvey, Dave Thomas and Father Joe. Also, thanks to the many members of the church who have helped us with this outreach especially Diann Schneider, Susan Austin, and Cheryl Cline. Special thanks to Susan Browning, Grace's finance person who is an important part of this process.

I now invite you to say with me the prayer below.

Blessing of 2021 Pledges

Most Loving God, we place upon the altar of love these pledges of our very lives. These pledges represent many things, our time, our gratefulness for this place called Grace Episcopal Church.

They represent our dreams, our hopes, our vision of the future, our life together as a people committed to following you and sharing you with others. May our lives lived outside the walls of our church reflect that vision. May our gifts, these and others, not be viewed as leverage with you, but rather as gifts of thankfulness for all that we have been given.

We pray for the continuing mission of Grace, that it will continue to be a place where all are welcome no matter who they are or where they are on their journey of faith. And now we ask your blessings on these pledges and the pledge that we have made to you through them and with our lives.

Amen

This prayer is an edited version of a prayer by The Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel, Diocese of Olympia and printed in the United Thank Offering Book of Prayers (2021-2024)

Carol Martinez, Stewardship Chairman

Grace Helps The Well Feed the Community

The Well is a food pantry that serves the less fortunate in our community. They furnish food to families and individuals in need. Grace Episcopal Church is a supporter of The Well and we gather food at the church and deliver it to The Well where it is distributed to households.

Here are some facts that I found on the local impact made possible in 2021 from The Well website. It costs \$30.92 to provide groceries for a family. In 2021 the number of families fed through

The Well Food Pantry was 4,736. The total number of families served through mobile food giveaways and the pantry was 8,512. Meals provided to at-risk students through the weekend JetPack Program was 130,000 and the number of meals provided through the mobile food pantry was 300,000. As you can see, this is a huge task.

Here is a list of the top food items that they currently need: *syrup, condiments, tuna, canned chicken, pasta, beef stew, chili, soups, jelly peanut butter, flavor rice extenders, and spaghetti sauce.* The Well has several big fundraisers throughout the year.

Boxes to donate food to The Well are located in Grace Church Faith Hall. The offerings are blessed on the last Sunday of each month. *The Well, 5306 Main St., Spring Hill, TN, phone 615-302-9355.*

Charles Cochran, Community Outreach

Cleaning the Church

If you heard our Treasurer's report at the Annual Meeting last month or read it in *Grace Notes*, you know that our church is having money problems. Our expenses have exceeded our income for several months.

The Mission Council is considering ways to cut back our expenses. One of these is to discontinue our cleaning service with the hope that our members will step up and volunteer to help keep our building clean.

The Senior Warden, Junior Warden & I are suggesting this plan/schedule to help this work. We've divided the building into 5 areas:

1. Faith Hall
2. Kitchen
3. Bathrooms
4. Sacristy, Chancel & Sanctuary
5. Nave & Narthex

A monthly volunteer sheet will be on the bulletin board and you can sign up for an area to keep clean for the month. Rather than scheduling work days, each volunteer will be provided a key to the church so you can clean your area at your own convenience. I'm told that many members already have keys, but if you need a key, please let me know. There is some concern about the security system, so we will need to hold a training session on how to enter & exit the building without setting

off the system. Perhaps, before volunteering, you may want to know what tasks are suggested for each area:

Faith Hall:

Dust windowsills, mantle, bookshelves, tables. vacuum/mop floor, if needed.

Kitchen:

Put any dirty dishes in dishwasher, wipe down countertops, fridge, stove, sink, vacuum/mop floor, if needed.

Bathroom:

Clean toilet bowl, tank, top, seat, and base. Clean lavatory and mirror, sweep/mop floor, if needed.

Sacristy, Sanctuary, Chancel:

**Altar Guild will do this.* Dust counter tops, windowsills, altar, rail, lectern, credence tables, and vacuum/sweep floor & rugs.

Nave & Narthex:

Dust pews, windowsills. vacuum/sweep/mop floors.

Laurie McNutt

Treasury Report for December 2021

December was another poor month for Grace's finances, with expenses exceeding revenues by \$3,275.14. Although the balance was up and down the first half of the year, we still had a positive overall balance through June. From July through September, we supplemented through transfers from savings. The total of transfers supporting our operating budget for the year was \$14,500.

This year looks more promising as many have increased their annual pledge amount. As of January 19th, pledged income for 2022 is \$70,504. Other pledges are anticipated. In both our Easter and Christmas offerings, the donations were each over \$1,000. We cut the \$4,000 in plate income back to \$2,000, as only about \$1,500 was collected in 2021. This would bring our total anticipated income in 2022 to \$74,554.

The Finance committee met (in mid-January) to find areas in the budget in which we might cut down expenses. Susan Austin kept wonderful records and pointed out that over the past few years, our annual bank service charges increased from \$105.10 in 2019 to \$500 in 2020, and then to nearly

\$900 in 2021. I contacted First Horizon, and it was explained to me that those increases were the result of mergers and other changes, and that we can probably change our account to one with less charges. Additionally, they said some of those charges might be returned to us.

As to the fund designated for building maintenance, we have lowered that amount from \$3,000 to \$1,000, as we have spent less than the latter amount each year.

We recommend eliminating the cleaning service, as we feel members will take care of this. This will free up another \$3,090 from the budget.

We have an organ fund in savings, and also a fund at the Diocese. We feel the \$1,200 budgeted for organ maintenance is unnecessary.

We have also discussed waiving the \$4,000 budgeted to give to the Diocese. With the shortfall of revenues vs. expenses the past two years, we really cannot afford it.

With these changes, we can predict the total expenses to come to \$97,832 so we would experience a net loss of \$23,278, compared to revenues. Our only course of action is to pull more from savings, in the absence of further increases in pledged or plate income.

Finances for December are as follows:

Pledged gifts:	\$ 4,240.00
Plate gifts:	\$226.00
Total Gifts:	\$4,466.00
Christmas offering:	\$950.00
Flowers:	\$125.00
Facilities rental gift:	\$100.00
Other special offering:	\$480.00
Total Revenue:	\$5,541.00
Total Expenses:	-\$9,396.14
Net Total:	<u>-\$3,275.14</u>

Banking Balances:

Checking balance:	\$1,517.72
Savings balance:	\$49,265.60

Breakdown of Savings:

Organ fund:	\$23,500.00
Building fund:	\$20,650.00

Undesignated fund:	\$5,115.17
Interest earned:	\$0.43
Total Savings	\$49,265.60
Total Assets:	\$50,783.32

David Thomas, Treasurer

Mission Council Meeting of January 19, 2022

The Grace Mission Council met on January 19, 2022. Fr. Joe welcomed the new Mission Council members, Carol Martinez and Charles Cochran, and the new scribe, Chuck Warnick. David Thomas, Treasurer, reviewed the December 2021 financials. The Mission Council reviewed potential expense reductions for the coming year, including the elimination of the cleaning service contract, which the Mission Council approved. Members of the congregation will be offered the opportunity to volunteer to assume cleaning duties. Laurie McNutt will chair this new committee.

The 2022 Annual Budget for Grace was reviewed and discussed. The new budget includes reduced expectations for plate offering and Christmas and Easter special offerings, based on actual giving for the last two years. Several other expense reduction ideas were discussed and will be researched. As these are implemented, the Mission Council will share them with the congregation.

Susan Austin was approved to serve as Jr. Warden for the coming year. Action on the filling of the Senior Warden office was tabled until the February 2022 meeting. David Thomas was affirmed as Treasurer as he begins his second year of service.

The following Liaison Chairs were appointed for the coming year:

- Children’s Ministry & Christian Education – Will Pomeroy
- Outreach – Charles Cochran
- Communication – Carol Martinez
- Congregational Life – Laurie McNutt

Carol Martinez will continue to serve as 2022 Stewardship Chairman until this work is completed.

Two baptisms are expected in the coming weeks. Mark your calendars for the following dates:

- April 17, 2022 – Leon Mott
- May 1, 2022 – Braxton Pomeroy

The following items were reported by the Liaison Chairs:

- Outreach – The Christmas outreach project felt more personal this year than in previous years. Our members themselves delivered food to needy families in a project organized by The Well.
- Communications – Carol invited Mission Council Members to write more articles for Grace Notes.
- Congregational Life – The Mission Council congratulated Fr. Joe on the 35th anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. The Daughters of the King held a Zoom meeting in January and a Christmas luncheon in December. The Altar Guild has several members out and really needs help.

If you have questions about the Mission Council meeting, speak to Fr. Joe or any member of the Council.

Chuck Warnick, Scribe

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

Diann Schneider, Senior Warden
 Susan Austin, Junior Warden
 David Thomas, Treasurer
 Laurie McNutt, Congregation Life
 Charles Cochran, Community Outreach
 Carol Martinez, Communications
 Will Pomeroy, Christian Education

You may contribute to Grace Church at this link or by using the code below.

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

