

Grace Notes

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.

Grace Notes is the monthly congregational newsletter for Grace Episcopal Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee. If you would like to contribute an article or comment, please contact James Dallas or Fr. Joe Davis.

Services & Continuing Events

Sun.	10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
	10:00 a.m.	Children's Church
	10:00 a.m.	Facebook Live Service
Wed.	Noon	Holy Eucharist
	11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Father Joe, Office
Tues.	4:00 p.m.	Inquirer's Class
Tues. & Fri.	7:00 p.m.	AA Meetings
Wed.	10:00 p.m.	Daughters of The King (monthly)
Thur.	9:00 p.m.	Crochet Club
Thur.	9:00 p.m.	Men's Breakfast, Grecian Restaurant

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Upcoming 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.

Jan. 24 – 25	Diocesan Convention, Church of the Good Shepherd (Brentwood)
Jan. 25	Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Jan. 26 10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
Feb. 2 10:00 a.m.	Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple Holy Eucharist
Feb. 9 10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
Feb. 16 10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
Feb. 19 6:00 p.m.	Mission Council Meeting
Feb. 23 10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
Feb. 24	St. Matthias The Apostle
Feb. 25	Anti-Racism Training, Diocesan House (Nashville)
March 2	Last Sunday after the Epiphany
March 4 6:00 p.m	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
March 5 Noon and 6:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday
March 9	Bishop's Annual Visit

Vicar's Annual Report

Our annual meeting was held after the Sunday morning service on Sunday, January 12, 2025.

As I reflect on the events of the past year, things that have happened in this congregation and in our community, our country, and the world, I give thanks that Grace Episcopal Church lives to worship and serve God and to be a fellowship that helps us find our spiritual home in a relationship in Christ and with

one another. I heard lately a reference to a verse from Ephesians that I wanted to bring before you today. I may have heard it in connection with President Jimmy Carter's funeral. It is Ephesians 4:31-32:

Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

We have come through a year of wars in the world and political conflict in our country. Yet every Sunday, we come together at Grace to proclaim and hear God's word and to receive the sacraments of Christ. Our hope is renewed and strengthened as we pray and sing together. Today we bring prayers and concern for the people of Los Angeles who have been suffering from tremendous loss of whole neighborhoods in a natural disaster of unprecedented destructiveness. And we also bring our own concerns in our own lives and our struggles in work and family. But every time we come together, we find hope renewed at the altar of Christ. Life is sometimes very hard, and sometimes full of joy; but it is always better shared with others in the body of Christ.

It has been a year of organization, rebuilding, and laying the groundwork for new leadership.

Last February 24, Canon Jody Howard came and led our mission council through a mutual ministry review. This day gave us a chance to consider where we have been and where we need to go as a church. We discussed goals for the future and laid down some priorities, which included strengthening our financial support for our church and developing ways of bringing more people into our church. As Carol will say in her report, we have invited several community groups to meet at Grace, giving people who don't go to church here a chance to consider coming back for a Sunday service. We completed an inquirers class last spring, and in June when the bishop came, we presented one person for confirmation from Grace and another who was a guest from St. Peter's, Columbia. In the fall, it became evident that we were going to need another inquirers class, so we started one up that will finish in February. The bishop will come this year on March 9 to confirm the 5 members of this class if they choose to be confirmed at this time. They have been extremely devoted to this class

and have taken part as committed members already in several ways.

Last year we had significant membership turnover. We had some losses for various reasons, and then all at once about thirteen people and one service dog started coming for the first time or came back after a time away. We have as many as 6 young children for Children's church, and we have had six people between 15 and 21 come several times, one of them being our new crucifer, Liam Henderson. Our average Sunday attendance is 29, which is lower than last year's 33. Opening up to the community may help us grow in membership, but the best way to grow as a church is for you to invite friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family members to come with you. Another way we grow is by keeping the special days of the church year, such as Ash Wednesday, Christmas, and Holy Week. These special days are some of the times when we offer people a chance to take part in a powerful tradition of worship that may not be for everyone, but those who are drawn to liturgical prayer and experience of this kind of worship care deeply about our common life at Grace. Try to invite people to come with you. Also, we have continued to offer a broadcast of our Sunday services through our Facebook group every Sunday and major feast, thanks to the videography of David Thomas. We have several online regular church attendees. This is one good result from the pandemic that we are so glad is in the rear-view mirror.

I mentioned that last year we did some organizational work. It is hard to mention organization without giving credit to our senior warden for the past two years, Carol Martinez. She has overseen the updating of all the job descriptions of people who serve in mission council offices and as liaisons to the different ministries and areas of church life. She also worked with me, Bill Rieger, and Canon Howard on updating the Letter of Agreement between the bishop, the Grace Church mission council, and me as your vicar. This Letter of Agreement was completed in March of last year. It is good to have this settled and my appointment to serve at Grace renewed as I am about to complete my eighth year as vicar at Grace on April 1 of this year.

Carol has also helped me with planning mission council meetings and with the pastoral responsibilities for this church. Others will speak of outreach ministry, but I want to say that some of our

members do a great deal of work behind the scenes that you will never know about for members of our church who have various needs. These people are doing the work of Christ among us, and we are all better for their presence and their labors for Christ and his people.

Carol has also led our stewardship for several years. We gave her a break this year by dividing up the jobs that need to be done to carry out a stewardship campaign and getting them done with a team of about 6 people. We still need a member to take on the task of running stewardship for the next couple of years. It is not a hard job, and I will make sure you get plenty of help. All we need is someone to help recruit speakers, organize mailings, and monitor the results with Brian Klammer, our treasurer, and Susan Browning, our financial administrator. We need someone to be in charge, or else the consequences could be harmful to the financial health of the church.

On the topic of stewardship, I want to say that those who are pledging this year are much appreciated. A very high percentage of our people pledge. But our financial needs are not decreasing. We had to take money from savings to break even last year, and we may have to do the same again this year. We don't have enough savings to do this much longer. If you are able to give more and have just been busy with other matters, please consider giving attention to this aspect of your spiritual life now. The theme of our campaign for this year was that when we give generously, our faith deepens, and we discover greater joy in our lives. Jesus tells us "Be not anxious." I try to do what he says. But it's easier when I am confident that our financial situation is stable and secure.

After three years (or is it more?) of faithful service, David Thomas is handing over the keys to the treasurer's position and will assist our new treasurer, Brian Klammer. Welcome, Brian, to this important way of serving at Grace.

One of our church traditions is the annual Lenten series, which we let go during the pandemic, but picked back up in 2023. Last year, we did a study of N. T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope*. This year we will have another Lenten series on Wednesday nights with Evening Prayer, dinner, and a study of some type. We are considering studying David Brooks's *How to Know a Person*. This whole book, though it is not

overtly Christian, is based on the fact that paying attention to another person is to love another in the spirit of Christ.

Some of you have remarked on the old red chasuble that made me look like I may have been one of the clergy from the earliest days of Grace Church in the 1870s. That old red chasuble has been retired with gratitude for its faithful service. Last fall, Linda Colmore and I ordered a new red chasuble. We had money in the memorial fund that was given by some of you and from others outside our church in memory of my father, who died on January 11, 2023. I was happy to bless this chasuble on the Sunday after All Saints' Day last November. I will wear it for the feasts of martyrs on Wednesday weekday services and for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Pentecost. For years, my father would ask me all about when services were held at Grace on Sunday, long after he could no longer drive; and I don't doubt that if he could have found his keys and gotten to his car, and the battery wasn't dead, he would have driven all the way to Grace Church to take part in our services. He can't be with us now, but that chasuble is a sign of his support for our life here in the body of Christ.

Last December, we had a service of Advent Lessons and Carols on the first Sunday of Advent, preceded by a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. We moved the Christmas Eve service to 5:00 p.m. on December 24, and our attendance was similar in number to what it had been before. We had a large group of visitors, and a good number of people from Grace attended this service. Thanks to Deanie for her help with all the music of the church, for special services and regular Sundays.

I want to thank you for your prayers and expressions of sympathy when my mother-in-law died on December 14, just a month ago, in Knoxville. I led the funeral the following Saturday, on the 21st, and then we had the Fourth Sunday in Advent at Grace the next day, and Christmas Eve that Tuesday. I really appreciate your cards and your Christmas gift to me and my family. Even when you had so much going on with the holiday, 29 of you signed or had a family member who signed the Christmas card Carol gave me Christmas Eve. If I just let myself think about it, your kindness goes far to heal the sadness that remains after Evelyn's death.

Behind the scenes every Sunday, there is a team that cooperates in a complicated system to make sure you get service bulletins and lessons and that the prayers of the people are as right as we can make them each week. Thanks to John Harvey, Karyl Brazier, and Deanie Moore for working with me to get ready every Sunday. Also, David Thomas, Charles Cochran, and John Harvey come early every Sunday to open up, prepare the church, start the coffee, and set up donuts for the coffee hour. You go a long way to provide the kind of hospitality that allows our relationships to grow with one another. Thanks also to Erin Harvey for all the help she gives every Sunday, especially the water you set out for me on that little table by my chair. Sometimes that drink of water is a real life-saver for me. The altar guild takes care of everything we need for our communion services on Sundays and Wednesdays. Thanks to Linda, Michele, and Teri for all you do. And thanks to Charles and his helpers for the good job they do as ushers to make sure people have a bulletin and can find a seat that is right for them. Thanks go to John Harvey and Susan Austin for serving on the finance committee the last few years. Thanks also to Chuck Warnick for his help with the church audits and to Carolyn for the leadership of the Daughters of the King and the note writing ministry she conducts. I greatly appreciate the loyal service of our lay Eucharistic ministers, Chuck Warnick and Jerry Schmelzer. It is a privilege to work with these helpers at the altar every Sunday.

Another behind the scenes job is the website management, which James Dallas does regularly. We depend on him for this good work, and it is an important part of the face we present to this area, for people may want to come to Grace because they see the pretty church when they drive by, but they will also look up our church online to read about who we say we are. James has also volunteered to help us with producing our monthly issues of *Grace Notes*. Thanks for this much appreciated assistance. And thanks to Carol for all the work she does to post news and events on our Facebook group page. This is another important part of how we present ourselves to the people of Spring Hill and beyond.

As you probably know, we don't have a paid church office administrator. Susan Austin has stepped in to help in the office as needed. Susan has greatly assisted me in doing paperwork and forms and

mailings that I am not so good at doing because they never seem very high up on the priority list. She helps us all by adding a level of order and organization that we really need. Joan Jackson has begun helping with mailings and other office work, too.

I need to mention our junior warden for the past two years. We owe much gratitude to Bill Rieger for serving in this capacity and leading the taking care of our church facilities, doing a lot of the work himself. And thanks to Lynn Rieger for her leadership with the children's church, as well as the way she has helped new leaders come in. Thanks to all who help with teaching our children, and the parents for bringing their little ones to Grace. Whether we are having children's church or not on a particular Sunday, we want your children at Grace whenever they can come.

Finally, remember, "*Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger...and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.*" It was by God's gift that we have come together to worship God and serve Christ in this place. He has given us so much, and forgiven so much; let us endeavor to spread his love and forgiveness in this world where people are hurting and need so much love and support.

Joseph N. Davis, Vicar

Senior Warden Report

This May, Grace will celebrate its 147th year as an Episcopal Church in Spring Hill. It's fascinating to think that people in the 1870s sat on the same pews we sit on and took communion at the altar.

One of our important goals is to find ways to keep Grace an active and vital part of the community and most important of all a place to worship God. Think of Grace 150 years from now. Or even 40 years. I think Ada Rose will be the Senior Warden sometime in the future.

When I first started attending Grace in 2013, first-time guests would often marvel that the church was open and held services. They thought it was just a historic building waiting to be turned into a fast-food outlet or a mattress store. (Fortunately, that can't happen because of its historic certification.) I don't

hear that much these days. Grace is once again becoming more active and known in Spring Hill.

Fr. Joe told you that our average Sunday attendance is 29. That means that in the past year people attended the Eucharist more than 1,500 times.

Each week about 125 people (and this is an estimate) enter the doors to go to AA meetings or attend crochet club.

This year Grace has hosted several meetings of the Spring Hill Historic Commission and meetings of the Friends of the Spring Hill Library. The attendance at those events was 50 plus at each meeting. And many community members visited us during the Spring Hill Christmas Parade. The number of people who come here is growing every year. This is thanks in large part to Alicia Fitts, Grace member and a member of the city's historic commission.

One of our challenges is to convert at least some of those visitors into Grace attendees. There is room in the pews, and we want to welcome new people to worship with us and become part of our church.

We all enjoy seeing people who worship with us in person but must remember those who worship with us electronically. Also, we have a growing number of people who are no longer able to come to church for a variety of reasons. We work to stay in touch and let them know that they are still part of our church family. We pray for Pat, Margaret, Jane, Steve, Mimi, Ken, Roberta, and others.

One of my favorite services in the year is Blessing of the Animals. This year 9 pets came to the event. My dog Bella has attended almost all the pet blessings at Grace since we moved here in 2013. Sometimes she was the only animal in attendance. She enjoys the company. My other dog – the chihuahua– does not. In 2025, in addition to Linus, Kate Klunk tells me there will be diversity at the service. Other animals will attend. She and Bob have many to select from.

During church services, we took time to honor and bless veterans, teachers, mothers, and fathers. This year we also focused on safety and security updating our security policies and our first aid kit.

In addition to serving as Senior Warden, my other church job was stewardship chairperson. In 2024 households pledged to Grace approximately

\$88,000. The amount received from pledgers when we closed the books was approximately \$77,000. We don't send a note to the credit reporting agency if you don't meet your pledge. We understand that people can't give for a variety of reasons. We greatly appreciate every dollar and yes, every coin that is given to Grace.

Pledges are the largest part of our budget. We also receive plate income (money from visitors and households who have not pledged), and small amounts from organizations who meet in our building.

Also, I want to mention that some of our bills aren't a part of the budget because many members of Grace pay for building repairs and maintenance, programs for children's church, communion wine, and a host of other things. John Harvey would be the "customer of the month" at Donut Palace if they had that award.

We know that we will be facing some financial challenges in the coming years. We will need a new roof. And our building always needs an update or repair. In 2025 we plan to put in place a capital campaign to raise money from our members and others for the refurbishment of our treasured organ.

I would like to thank everyone who served on the Mission Council in 2023 and 2024. I would like to thank those who have agreed to serve in 2025. It has been a pleasure to work with all of you and everyone at Grace who makes this church such a good place.

Since I will have more free time I have adopted a third dog. Danny, a 10-pound poodle is now part of my family. You will see him at the blessing of the animals. And you will see me at Grace worshipping and helping because I love Grace Church and my Grace church family.

May God Bless All of You, and thank you for all you do for Grace.

Carol Martinez,
Senior Warden

Junior Warden Report

I. Landscape Maintenance

Fall Leaf Removal: Every year, fall leaf removal is one of the most predictable tasks overseen by the Junior Warden, yet it is the most difficult to schedule. In 2024, most of the leaves were removed in two big last-minute pushes as we waited for breaks in the weather and for the leaves to drop.

Flower Gardens: For 2024 we did a great job preparing our flower gardens prior to the growing season. By the middle of summer weed growth became overwhelming, but we were able to bring the gardens back in shape prior to Cynthia Griffith's Memorial Service on August 1st.

Lawn: For 2024, lawn maintenance was limited to routine mowing.

Stone Wall: The stone wall was re-mortared. This was to address many parts of the wall that were deteriorating and beginning to crumble.

II. Sidewalk and Parking Lot

Sidewalk: The sidewalk was pressure washed for the second year in a row. We would like to continue pressure washing on an annual cycle. This is not just for cosmetic reasons, but also to keep the area outside of the Sacristy from becoming slick.

Parking Lot: Repair and restriping of the parking occurred in March. This would ideally be continued on a three- or four-year cycle.

III. Building/Other Infrastructure

Roof Condition: Through the process of seeking estimates to replace the roof, we were informed that we should have at least another three years of service life from our existing roof.

Gutter Cleaning: Gutters were cleaned this summer.

Safety: Our fire extinguishers were replaced this year. During a routine inspection it was determined that the extinguishers had exceeded their useful service life, so replacement was necessary.

IV. Other Ongoing and Pending Projects

Organ Repair: In 2024 we began to talk about a major overhaul of the organ. It has been about 20 years since any deep, non-routine maintenance has been performed. Thus far we have a couple of aging overhaul proposals and one newer proposal to

conduct some preliminary work that would dovetail into a more complete overhaul. This project needs to continue in 2025, but equally important is that we will most likely need to conduct a fundraising campaign. The overhaul price will far exceed the amount we currently have in our Organ Fund.

Other New Pending Projects: Repair of the Bell and woodwork repair to the south facade need to be addressed.

Existing Pending Projects: Projects that were not acted on in 2024 include replacing the exterior Sacristy threshold, addressing floor joists in the undercroft, and replacing the main aisle HVAC grate with a more resilient material.

V. HVAC Maintenance

Routine service of the HVAC system was completed. In September we experienced a clogged condensate line that resulted in water backing up and flowing into Faith Hall.

VI. Cleaning

The church employs a cleaning person who visits the church biweekly. Supplemental cleaning is done by members of the mission council. Cleaning the area behind the altar is done by the Altar Guild. For 2024 we also conducted a deep cleaning of the church a couple of times during the year, coinciding with Easter and Christmas.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and efforts to help with the upkeep of the church throughout the year. With our historic building, unexpected needs can arise, and it is wonderful to have support from within the congregation.

Bill Rieger,
Junior Warden

Music Report

Music continues to be an expression of the faith and joy of Grace Episcopal Church. Although we

have been unable to restart our choir post-COVID, the singing continues to be strong and enthusiastic.

Responses to the monthly newsletter articles have been interesting, and I'm thankful that they are being read. Several members have requested specific hymns for us to sing, and I fulfill those requests as soon as I'm able. We do coordinate hymn choices with the lessons for the day and the seasons of the church year.

We were thrilled to have our children sing at the Christmas Eve service. Our Children's Church leaders worked with the children for several Sundays, practicing "Away in a Manger." They also provided costumes for the children, and their singing at the close of our carols was just what we needed!

As we begin our new year, there is much to look forward to. We are still hopeful that our choir can restart and lead our worship with their hearts and voices.

Deanie Moore,
Music Director

Technology Report

Our website, graceepiscopalspringhill.org, continues to operate at an acceptable level. We have had about 99.9% uptime over the past six months. Our website software (WordPress) is up-to-date and is upgraded as needed.

All issues of *Grace Notes* and most of the weekly bulletins have been uploaded. The only bulletins that are missing from the website are the ones that were, for one reason or another, not e-mailed out. We also post updates about upcoming services and special events on our website. The Daily Office and Sunday lessons can be found on our website (this can be visited at <https://graceepiscopalspringhill.org/readings/>).

The statistics page reports 20,846 visitors and 97,619 page views over the past year, though I suspect most of that count is coming from "bots" (both good and bad).

In addition to our website, we have a public group on Facebook. It has 256 members. The

Facebook group has videos of most of our services, due to the diligent work of David Thomas. The Facebook group also has many timely updates on it, thanks to Carol Martinez.

We also use Realm (onrealm.org) for fundraising. We have a link to our Realm page for pledges and donations on our website.

James Dallas,
Web Administrator

Christian Education & Children's Ministries

The Children's Church program serves Grace Church by fostering an engaging environment, with age-appropriate lessons, for the children. We hope to encourage children to learn about the Christian faith and to remain involved in church as they grow older.

The number of children we serve varies from week to week (depending on which families attend services at Grace), but currently, three families (six children) regularly participate in our program. Children from a few other families visit with us occasionally.

On most Sundays, we follow lesson plans suggested in *Creative Ideas for Children's Worship*, a set of books written by teachers from the Anglican (Church of England) tradition. Most of our lessons are focused on the same Gospel lesson read in the regular ("adult") Sunday service. We use skits, games, and art projects to help reinforce the ideas in the lesson. We hope parents and their children will have conversations about the Gospel lessons.

During the summer, we had a special program called "Lava Lava Luau" that was based around 2 Timothy 1:7 ("For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.") This program was supported by a special collection taken up on May 19th, the day when we honor teachers and recent graduates. We thank the congregation for its support.

In the past, we have also had other special programs during summer "ordinary time" to teach our children about key figures and stories in the Old Testament. We usually will have a program only every other week during the summer to accommodate families taking vacation. Occasionally (on Easter, for

example) we will not have a Children's Church program so families can worship together.

We expect the children to be respectful of others and to treat the Children's Church room as a sacred space. Our room is set up to emulate the sanctuary, with an altar table, and we use seasonally appropriate altar cloths, candles, etc. to help educate the children about the liturgy. We also educate the children about important prayers such as The Lord's Prayer.

This year we have been encouraging children to be involved in other ways. For example, our children recently sang "Away in A Manger" during the Christmas Eve service. We also encourage children to participate in the regular "adult" Sunday service (as ushers, acolytes, etc.) on fifth Sundays. One of our students was recently a lector during our Advent Lessons and Carols service.

We currently have five volunteers: Susan Austin, Nicole Poirier, Will Pomeroy, Lynn Rieger, and me (James Dallas). Our policy is to have at least two adult volunteers always present, which means that each volunteer generally is called upon to serve about two or three times per month, though this varies considerably due to volunteer availability, health emergencies, and such. There have been cases where our volunteers have worked three weekends in a row; as such, we welcome the interest of any adults who would like to participate in our wonderful ministry.

Volunteers are required to complete the "Safeguarding God's People" training, as part of our commitment to preventing abuse. We also have (roughly) quarterly meetings where we coordinate volunteer schedules, discuss lesson plans, and assign responsibilities (for example, buying needed art supplies or props for skits).

This year we completed drafting a permission form so that we can better keep track of our parents and children and to keep them safe.

In addition to the Children's Ministry, Grace Church also has several educational opportunities for adults. We have an Inquirer's Class when we have a few person interested in being confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church, and this class may also serve as a refresher course for long-term church members. We also have a Lenten Series each year on the five Wednesdays after Ash Wednesday in Lent. Last year we studied N.T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope*. Generally, Fr. Joe is responsible for leading these, though there have been some opportunities for

the lay members to help out (for example, by helping to coordinate potluck dinners and a group buy of books).

James Dallas,
Mission Council Member

Congregational Life Report

One of the priorities of the congregational life ministry is to develop caring relationships among the congregation members and have fun doing it! Apparently, food is pretty important in accomplishing this task. Here are some of the 2024 highlights:

- The men took the leadership role during the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, while Liz Klammer provided the decorations.
- Hot Cross buns were served on March 29th following the *Good Friday* Service.
- Following the *Ascension of Our Lord into Heaven* service on May 9th, a potluck dinner was held at the home of Carol Martinez.
- Fifth Sunday brunches were held on June 30 and September 24.
- Greeting cards for member birthdays and anniversaries were sent out by volunteer Carolyn Warnick. I have been told that for some members, this is the only birthday card they receive. We all like to be remembered.

Thank you to all who help make Grace a warm and welcoming place to worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Austin, Mission Council Member

Community Outreach Report

In 2024 Grace Episcopal Church collected 919 pounds of food for The Well Outreach. Collection boxes for the items for The Well are in the church and

Faith Hall. Each month the items are blessed by Fr. Joe and taken to the food service charity.

In April, members of our congregation donated cake mixes, frosting, decorations, and other celebration supplies to The Well. The 30 pounds of supplies became a part of the charity's birthday program.

Fr. Joe, Charles Cochran, and Carol Martinez delivered the supplies and toured the food pantry. While there, they were told that Grace was one of the first churches in the area to donate supplies to The Well. Grace was known as "The Ramen Church" because they gave many packages of noodle soup to The Well. The collection still includes Ramen and other items like cereal, canned meat, and food and supplies for pets.

From January to March, Grace members collected bottle caps for a project to build benches out of recycled bottle caps for the city of Spring Hill.

Also, 2024 was a great year for community visits to Grace. The red doors were opened to welcome hundreds of residents of Spring Hill and surrounding areas for educational programs and community meetings.

It began in January when the Spring Hill Historic Commission featured Grace as part of the speaker series. Many people came to the event where Alicia Fitts, a Grace member whose family helped found the church, spoke.

Other programs at Grace included the Spring Hill Historic Commission program on westward expansion on June 26. And on Sept. 3 the Heritage Foundation of Williamson County conducted a town hall meeting at Grace on the preservation of local structures.

The program for the City of Spring Hill Founder's Day recommended that people attend a service at Grace. The Friends of the Spring Hill Library conducted their meeting at Grace. And in October Bishop John Bauerschmidt and the Bishop and Council committee met at Grace.

All visitors are offered a tour of the building and an opportunity to learn about our church and what a wonderful place it is to worship.

Every year Grace welcomes people who are attending the Spring Hill Christmas Parade. Members pass out hot chocolate along the parade route. Inside the church, there are cookies to decorate and arts and crafts projects for the children. This year there was an

outstanding turnout of young volunteers who passed out the drinks and welcomed everyone.

The year also included our program where we donated presents to families that wouldn't have Christmas gifts. The families provided a list of items they would like, and Grace members shopped for and wrapped the gifts. They were delivered a couple of days before Christmas.

This year concludes Charles Cochran's three-year term on the Mission Council as the member for community outreach. In addition to his work on the council, Charles serves as an Usher and helps with many other activities and projects at Grace. Thanks to Charles for his service.

Carol Martinez,
Senior Warden

Charles Cochran,
Mission Council Member

The Altar Guild: Linda Colmore

The Altar/Glower Guild is a small group of ladies who set up and clean the altar for the Eucharist (which occurs each Sunday and Wednesday) and at other times such as a funeral or wedding. This involves setting up the wine, water, wafers, and the chalice. Also, this service includes making sure there is some kind of greenery or an arrangement for the altar plant stands. If a member does not want to make an arrangement, we have some green plants we use instead. The usual rotation is about once a month.

We are glad to train anyone who has no experience. We are open to anyone who would like to join us including men. It is not exclusively a lady's service. Anyone interested can contact Linda Colmore. Please contact Linda at lcolmore@aol.com. We welcome anyone who would like to join us. Training is provided. Unfortunately, we lost one member of the Guild. Mimi Demoss has been with us for years but has had to leave the Guild due to illness.

As mentioned above we try to have flowers or greenery at the altar each Sunday. This is taken care of by our church members, but we would like to encourage anyone who is interested to contribute to this fund. We welcome any contribution. These gifts could be for memorials, weddings, birthdays,

anniversaries, or “just because.” It costs between \$75 and \$100 for two full arrangements for the altar. Inflation has affected the cost of flowers as well.

Thank you.
Linda Colmore

Mission Council Election Results

The following members were elected to the Mission Council at our Annual Meeting on January 12: Teri Mai, Nicole Poirier, and David Thomas. They will fill the seats of exiting members Susan Austin, Carol Martinez, Charles Cochran respectively. Teri was elected for a one-year term, and the others for three-year terms. One seat remains vacant. All elections were by acclamation.

After the Annual Meeting, the Mission Council elected Bill Rieger as the Senior Warden, and David Thomas as the Junior Warden. Brian Klammer will serve as Treasurer.

Chuck Warnick, Will Pomeroy, and Brian Klammer will serve as our Finance Committee.

At the Mission Council meeting on January 15, it was decided that James Dallas will move from the Children’s Church role to Communications. Nicole Poirier will now be responsible for overseeing Children’s Church and Christian Education. Teri Mai was picked to oversee Congregational Life.

Diocesan Anti-Racism Training Dates

As we are celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and about to enter Black History Month, it seems appropriate to note that the Diocese of Tennessee has scheduled several Ant-Racism Trainings for the coming weeks. This helps us to fulfill our Baptismal promises to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and to strive for justice and peace among all people.

A training will be held at the Diocesan House in Nashville on Tuesday, February 25. Another training is scheduled for April 26 at a location to be announced later.

If you are interested in attending such an event, please contact Sandra Beld at the Diocesan Office (sbeld@edtn.org).

Fr. Joe and other Grace members have attended previous Diocesan trainings and have spoken positively about their experiences.

December 2024 Treasurer’s Report

Grace’s revenues were only slightly short in November. With total revenues of \$8,916 and expenses of \$9,271, our balance shortfall was \$355. Although we’ve had several months with a negative balance this year, we are still in the black for the year with a positive balance of \$5,351.

The monthly report for the month is attached. Our financial position for the end of the month is as follows:

Pledged offerings:	\$4,728.00
Plate offerings:	\$3,864.00
Priest’s discretionary fund:	\$100.00
Memorial fund donations:	\$99.00
Facilities rental:	\$125.00
Total revenue:	\$8,916 .00
Total expenses:	\$9,271.00
Net total:	-\$355.00

Bank balances November 30th:

Checking account:	\$3,327.03
Savings account:	\$35,627.81

David Thomas, Treasurer

** Approved Mission Council minutes and presented Treasurer’s reports will be posted on the bulletin board in Faith Hall.*

Vicar's Vagaries

"A Song of The Stars"

*Here we are, stars in the sky,
at an unimaginable distance from you
on your little planet, Earth.*

*You see a multitude of tiny points of light,
but you have no idea what we are,
or how big we are and what color,
or how long we have been here,
but we have been shining light
down on your ancestors in your homeland
and across the great sea,
since they began to inhabit those lands;
and we will shine down on your descendants
long after your name is forgotten.*

*You call us the Pleiades and Orion and other names
that your seafarers and astrologists and scientists
have invented for us,
as if they had dominion
over the vast sky above them.*

*You look tonight, and you see us,
but you do not even know where we will be
tomorrow, as you on Earth move
through your daily rotations,
your mornings, and your evenings.*

*You think we will be here tomorrow,
yet we are always where we are,
and you are the one that is moving
through the numbered hours
of your days and nights.*

*But we, too, are moving, plummeting through space,
going out from the center where we came from
when we first began to be at the dawn of creation,
before there were days and nights,
months and years,
before time had come to be as you know it now.*

*From then until now and forever we sing the praises
of the one who set us on our course,
and we shine forth his glory for all who care to see.*

The Holy Eucharist will not be celebrated on February 5 or February 12, as Fr. Joe will be away those Wednesdays for clerical meetings (5th) and a clergy silent retreat (12th).

The regular Wednesday Noon Eucharist service will return on February 19.

"REMEMBER THE WELL!"

*Food donations for our neighbors are
always being collected in Faith Hall and are
periodically blessed and taken to The Well.*

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

Bill Rieger, Jr., Senior Warden
David Thomas, Junior Warden
Brian Klammer, Treasurer
Nicole Poirier, Christian Ed. & Children's Ministry
James Dallas, Communications
Teri Mai, Congregational Life
Eleanor Geary, Scribe

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

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

