

Fall 2020



The ANGELUS

News of the Life of GRACE CHURCH

Over 150 Years in the Heart of White Plains



Grace Episcopal Church/La Gracia Is Open For Gathered Worship!

I repeat, be strong and brave! Do not be afraid and do not panic, for I, the LORD your God, am with you in all you do. Joshua 1.9

Resilience

John Lewis, the amazing Civil Rights Activist declared, *“If you’re not hopeful and optimistic, then you just give up. You have to take the long hard look and just believe that if you’re consistent, you will succeed.”* Therefore, I suggest that we become consistent and resilient in our faith of Jesus Christ.



John Lewis, Civil Rights Leader

We do not often discuss this aspect of resilience, but it is a prerequisite to our survival as parents, teachers, leaders, anyone and everywhere. Never in my lifetime have I been called to this notion so often and so powerfully. This notion of resilience invites

me as a priest, a spouse, a father, a friend to move beyond the daily pandemic tabulation of infection and death. We must be survivors. We must be resilient.

When I think of resilience, I think of John Lewis, the Congressman and Civil Rights Leader who recently passed from pancreatic cancer. Lewis was a survivor. Lewis never gave up despite insurmountable odds – economics, racism, beatings, too many to name. Early in his life, police beat him severely on the head, causing life-long challenges, but he never complained nor gave up. He would never succumb. This type of resilience is now being called for to strengthen our soul. Resilience is deeply tied to our faith. A deep faith allows for a strong resilience. I realized this firsthand as a young man competing in boxing and martial arts. I was not the best athlete, nor did I have the greatest skill. However, I had a tremendous inner faith, an unusual resilience. I never lost. As crazy as it sounds, you could say I was the Rocky Balboa of rural Missouri with little talent and awkward movement, but I got the job down and I was the only one still standing. The underlying message is not about boxing, but resilience.

Daily life presents challenges, regardless of world events. However, this pandemic has challenged us beyond normal obstacles. Days seem longer. Lives lost. Anxiety has increased. The world of 5 months ago is no longer here...

However, there is always hope. With a resilient faith, we will never give up. The pandemic did not stop our church, quite the opposite. We are resilient. We are busier and more active than ever. We worship multiple times each week. Our leaders are reaching out to the White Plains community. We are supporting hundreds of families each week with food. We are connecting each week with our members. We have multiple online educational events. Simply put, our church is alive. Grace Episcopal Church is alive and well. We are resilient and we are here for you. If you need a listening ear, please let us know.

God Bless,
Fr. Chip+

Walter Simon – Thank You

At the end of this year, Walter Simon will step down from chairing the Building and Grounds committee. He has maintained this position for many, many years and we cannot thank him enough for all that he has done for Grace Church.

Walter Simon is a tall man. He towers above most men and in more than one way. Yes, Walter towers over others, not because of his height, but because of his giving. Walter gives much and in many ways. He does so by utilizing his gifts. As a Christian, I believe we are called to respond to God's invitation to best utilize our God given talents. Walter Simon has many talents; however, there is one that has greatly benefitted Grace la Grace Church over so many decades. Walter loves Building and Grounds. He loves to tinker and strategize how to fix things, maintain things, repair things; and he is exceptionally good at it.

Walter will shrug it off when you compliment him because he does not want the attention, indicating that it is his committee or the sexton who should be commended. That may be true in part, but I have come to realize that people do not shine unless they are led; and Walter is a great leader.

Walter, as a former chemist and business executive, knows how to manage the details, multitask, and get things done. Whether it is pursuing a \$200,000 city grant for Lifting UP Westchester, or helping our sexton repair a boiler, Walter is on top of it and gets the job done. We will never know how much Grace Church has received from Walter Simon, but we value him tremendously. God Bless you, Walter.

Thank you for all you have done.

Fr. Chip +





NEW BEGINNINGS

In September, 2019 we opened our new church year with “New Beginnings” as our stewardship theme. We chose this theme as it was a new (first) year for Father Chip at Grace Church. There were other firsts in 2019. We are continuing in 2020 with the same theme because of all of our firsts in this time of Covid-19.

Many of our parishioners lost their means of employment because of layoffs due to the Corona virus. Unfortunately others lost their lives. Many people are in need of food and other assistance. This has given our parish and community members the opportunity to be good stewards in a new way. The Vestry and stewardship committee have been calling every member of Grace to check on their welfare. Also, the members (under the leadership of Father Chip, Father Adolfo and Michael, our warden) responded to the needs of others through our food alliance weekly distributions.

The Church was closed for services for several months but reopened on Sunday, August 2nd. During this period the stewardship committee continued to meet via zoom, another first. We asked our parishioners (who are able to), to continue giving their pledge. Some parishioners stepped up and even increased their pledge and or gave their pledge in advance. Grace Church was able to pay its expenses with this pledge money, help from the Dioceses and loans. Another first was the installation of a slot in the door by our Sexton Taurino. Parishioners now have three options to give their pledge: (1) mailing a check; (2) putting an envelope through the slot in the door; and (3) giving electronically.


We are prayerfully optimistic about our future. We hope to begin our church school year in September and our stewardship campaign for 2021 in October. Please start thinking about the ways in which you can contribute to our church’s stewardship campaign, growth and prosperity.

Charlotte Roberson
Stewardship Chairperson

NUEVOS COMIENZOS

En septiembre de 2019 abrimos nuestro nuevo año eclesiástico con "Nuevos comienzos" como nuestro tema de mayordomía. Elegimos este tema porque era un nuevo (primer) año para el Padre Chip en Grace Church. Hubo otras primicias en 2019. Continuamos en 2020 con el mismo tema debido a todas nuestras primicias en esta época de Covid-19.

Muchos de nuestros feligreses perdieron sus medios de empleo debido a los despidos por el Coronavirus . Desafortunadamente, otros perdieron la vida. Muchas personas necesitan alimentos y otro tipo de asistencia. Esto le ha dado a nuestra parroquia y a los miembros de la comunidad la oportunidad de ser buenos administradores de una nueva manera. El comité de mayordomía y la junta han estado llamando a todos los miembros de Grace para ver como están. Además, los miembros (bajo el liderazgo del Padre Chip, el Padre Adolfo y Michael, nuestro



director) respondieron a las necesidades de otros a través de las distribuciones semanales de nuestra alianza de alimentos.

La Iglesia estuvo cerrada durante varios meses, pero volvió a abrir el domingo 2 de agosto. Durante este período, el comité de mayordomía continuó reuniéndose a través de zoom, otra novedad. Les pedimos a nuestros feligreses (que pueden hacerlo) que continúen dando su promesa. Algunos feligreses dieron un paso al frente e incluso aumentaron su promesa o dieron su promesa por adelantado. Grace Church pudo pagar sus gastos con este dinero de las promesas, ayuda de la Diócesis y préstamos. Otra novedad fue la instalación del buzón en la puerta por nuestro Sexton Taurino. Los feligreses ahora tienen tres opciones para realizar sus promesas: (1) enviar un cheque por correo; (2) echar un sobre en el buzón instalado sobre la puerta que da para Main st; y (3) donaciones electrónicas.

Estamos optimistas y estamos orando por nuestro futuro. Esperamos comenzar nuestro año escolar de la iglesia en septiembre y nuestra campaña de mayordomía para 2021 en octubre. Empiece a pensar en las formas en que puede contribuir a la campaña de mayordomía, el crecimiento y la prosperidad de nuestra iglesia.

Charlotte Roberson

Encargada de Mayordomía

Reopening for Worship at Grace la Gracia Episcopal Church

Grace Family,

We are **reopening worship** in our building as of August 1st. I know there are many questions and therefore hope to answer many of them with the Q and A section below.

Q: What are the main changes in worship?

- must register with ushers before you enter due to Contact Tracing; if someone would later test positive, we could notify those in attendance
- must enter wearing a mask
- sit in front seats marked and separated (we will exit by pews)
- enter and exit with 6 feet distancing
- no singing because it promotes infection spread
- no Communion yet
- 75 attendance maximum per service
- no choir; but yes, to organ and soloist
- please do not attend if you have a medical condition or if you have a 104.1 degree or higher temperature
- our pew cushions and books will be removed; please do not bring your own

Q: May I use the bathroom?

- Yes, during the service, not afterward.



Q: Has the church space been sanitized?

- Yes, before and after each service.

Q: Do members have to preregister for a seat?

- No, currently the English services are using an app to check people in. All member names are downloaded in this app. When someone enters, their name is checked. If someone outside this list wants to worship, that is fine, we will add their name.

Q: Can I take my mask off in worship?

- No, for your safety and others, we ask you to not remove your mask.

Q: Can I sit next to my family or someone living with me?

- Yes.

Q: Can I sit next to a friend or someone not living with me?

- No, not currently.

Q: When I enter the church, I see all these ropes or tape. What are they for?

- We have blocked areas where members are not allowed based on safe distancing. You will see alternating pew entrances blocked. You will see some pews partially blocked off.

Q: If I have had flu-like symptoms and/or 100.4 degrees or higher temperature, should I stay home?

- Yes.

Q: Will the online worship services continue?

- Yes, just as they have been.

Q: When are the Sunday worship services?

- The normal times at 8:00am English, 10:00am English and 12:30pm Spanish

Q: If I have a question during worship, what do I do?

- Please raise your hand, an usher will help you.

Q: If I have more questions now, where can I get answers?

- Please contact me, Fr. Chip

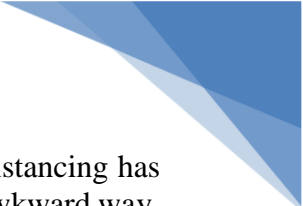
God Bless,

Chip+

Where is God in the Present Pandemic?

By. Rev. Adolfo Moronta

Today, we are fighting different fronts - the pandemic which has challenged all of us, an economic crisis, and social injustices. All these matters have been waking us up in different ways especially to appreciate more the walk of faith.



All over the world there is pain, chaos, disease, disorientation and turmoil. Social distancing has become the new norm, no hugs, no hand shaking, and greeting each other in a very awkward way, with our elbows. On top of it all basic activities such as going to school, graduations, birthday parties, meetings, funerals, and Eucharistic services are now mostly done virtually.

Some people are questioning whether God sent the virus as a punishment and if not then where was God? The answer is that God didn't send the virus; illness, viruses and trouble have always been around.

You see, viruses are constantly changing, making it possible on very rare occasions to change in such a way that they can infect people easily and spread efficiently from person to person.


For example the 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919. It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States.

I don't believe the corona virus is God's plan. God is not causing a pandemic that kills some, makes many miserable, and has widespread adverse effects on society. God did not cause this evil! I think God loves everyone and everything. The God I am describing is not watching from a distance, eating popcorn. Instead, God actively fights against evil. But God needs cooperation from creatures and creation for love to win. In this time of struggle, God needs the best of medicine, the best from social leaders, and the best from each of us.

As a priest, I've heard and seen in people a variety of feelings in the past months: panic, fear, anger, sadness, confusion and despair. More and more it feels like we are in a horror movie. And even the most religious people ask me: Why is this happening? And: Where is God in all of this?

- ❖ God is in the doctors, nurses and healthcare workers caring for those suffering.
- ❖ In the first responders who risk everything to help others.
- ❖ In the scientists and researchers working tirelessly to find treatments and a vaccine.
- ❖ In the essential workers who keep things running.
- ❖ In the people who donate their antibodies to help treat the sickest.
- ❖ In every neighbor, friend or stranger who helps feed, who shops, or who just provides comfort to those who are suffering.
- ❖ That's where God is in this pandemic, God is the same and He is with us.

The recent coronavirus has not taken God by surprise. He is at work through this pandemic to revive and restore His people. His power and glory will shake the world and take us to a true great awakening. His plan for this world is still to draw the hearts of all people to Him. Let's not allow this time to be a time of decrease, let's allow it to be a time of increase. God is with us, He didn't bring us this far to leave us, He - God - is doing more than hurting with us—He is redeeming this



tragedy in very amazing ways. We are going to have to trust in God to take us through these difficult circumstances, and to bring us out safely.

In all circumstances, God is not only our refuge where we flee for protection and healing, but he is also our fortress, our defensive structure that allows us to withstand the attacks of enemies.

In John 16:33 Jesus reminds us: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Thoughts from the Senior Warden

The Discernment Committee (chaired by George O'Hanlon – with strong guidance from Father Chip Graves - which includes: The Rev. Marsha Bacon Glover, Mary Baker, Bill Biles, Sam Brown and Walter Simon) met for the 4th time last Wednesday. This special group of Grace Episcopal Church/La Gracia representatives is helping me through a critical stage of preparation in my ordination process. Our conversations have been uplifting and revealing. It is a complete departure from what I had expected, as the members of the committee are sharing as much about their own experiences as they go through the process of discerning about my worthiness as a candidate. At last week's session, much time was spent on my frenetic pace of activity (in life) and the need for me to try to find time to "empty my cup" so that I have the opportunity to reflect - and receive. A good friend sends me daily meditations from Dutch theologian Henri Nouwen, which I have come to look forward to. Curiously, this one below just hit my inbox. I firmly believe that in life (and especially in this process) there are no coincidences. Please consider and try to apply this approach to your own circumstance. I'm already making the commitment.

Being is More Important than Doing

I suspect that we too often have lost contact with the source of our own existence and have become strangers in our own house. We tend to run around trying to solve the problems of our world while anxiously avoiding confrontation with that reality wherein our problems find their deepest roots: our own selves. In many ways we are like the busy executive who walks up to a precious flower and says: "What for God's sake are you doing here? Can't you get busy somehow?" and then finds the flower's response incomprehensible: "I am sorry, but I am just here to be beautiful."

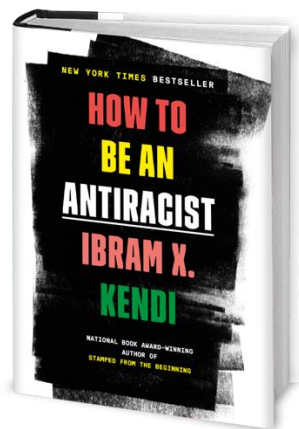
*How can we also come to this wisdom of the flower that being is more important than doing?
How can we come to a creative contact with the grounding of our own life?*

I do want to mention that I'll be having a total knee replacement on the 25th of August. I don't imagine that I'll be mobile for a few weeks. I feel that the Grace Church/La Gracia "ship" is moving steadily in the right direction. Please do what you can – through your prayers and actions – to help keep us on course.

Blessings

Michael Heffner
Grace Episcopal Church/La Gracia
Senior Warden

Join the Book Club in a Special Diocese-Wide Reading




Social justice. Systemic racism. Religious bigotry. Fierce hatred. These are just some of the issues that have become even more urgent, intensely rising right along with the pandemic. Where do we go from here? Ibram X. Kendi, author, historian, scholar, and director of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University, has some specific ideas on how we as individuals can move from awareness to action that he shares in his highly acclaimed *New York Times* bestseller *How to be an Antiracist*. Considering Kendi's book an essential read, Bishop Andrew ML Dietsche is passionately inviting all 200 parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of New York to digest, discuss, and commit to the messages Kendi proposes as the cure to racism of every kind.

The Book Club will launch its 21st year with this pivotal and engaging book selection and follow the Diocese's timeline shown below.

The book is available through many sources, including the Westchester Library System, Amazon, and Audible, among others.

TIMELINE



July 2020: Launch of Episcopal NY Reads 1 Book 2020. All 200 parishes in the Diocese of New York are invited to form reading groups to read and discuss Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist*. Parishes begin promoting the program, recruiting participants, and purchasing books.

August 2020: Parish reading groups sign up to participate in the book reading program, including taking part in online book chats with people from other parishes. Parishes select dates for three live book discussions during the month of September and enter these on their calendars.

September 2020: Three live book discussions are held in parishes around the Diocese, including a number that feature inter-parish dialog and sharing. Many parishes find that Kendi's book and the conversations it generates are stimulating ideas about how their congregations can commit to turning their churches into antiracist institutions.

October 22, 2020: Parish members from across the Diocese participate in a live online event with author Ibram X. Kendi (sign-up details to come).

As Bishop Dietsche says, “Reading this book convicted me, but made me grateful and hopeful. In moving past the binary simplicity of racism or nonracism to the broader, deeper and transformative possibilities of antiracism, he (Kendi) calls America to a new way of being. Everyone—white, black, and all people of color—will find their assumptions challenged in this book, but I promise: challenged in ways which signal the possibility of human and godly liberation.”

The Book Club is looking forward to this meaningful exploration of a way forward in our current environment. We hope you will join the conversation! Keep an eye out for more details to come. (Interested in the Book Club? Contact Karen Odom at karenodom@yahoo.com)


Submitted by Karen Odom

STRESS

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked: “How heavy is this glass of water?” Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g.

The lecturer replied, “The absolute weight doesn’t matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that’s not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I’ll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you’ll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it’s the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”

He continued, “And that’s the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won’t be able to carry on. As



with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden."

Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can. Put down anything that may be a burden to you right now and don't pick it up again until after you've rested a while.

Mary Baker

LAYING DOWN YOUR BURDENS

Here are some ways of dealing with the burdens of life:

Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.

Always keep your words soft and sweet. Just in case you have to eat them.

Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.

If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.

If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.

More in the next issue.....

Mary Baker

This document was submitted to the Grace Episcopal Church Discernment Committee and is the second of a three-part series which I'd like to share with the congregation. Michael

Personal History

My father was pre-med at William and Mary when he enlisted in the Navy to help in the war effort in 1941 (he was 18). He was sent to the Pacific and was a lieutenant j.g. on the LST's (tank landing ship) that brought tanks, vehicles, cargo to the beaches of Okinawa in 1945. The devastation that he witnessed became the source of his spiritual conversion. With the ending of the war, my father completed his undergraduate work and then attended Virginia Theological Seminary seeking ordination to the priesthood. During his time at VTS, my father saw a posting for an assignment in Japan to build missions for the Episcopal Church on leper colonies (on an

island off of Okinawa). He was drawn to the potential to create healing in a time of great despair and felt that the “untouchables” at this colony would have the greatest spiritual need.

My mother is Japanese and lived through the devastation of the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 (losing her father, brother and all that belonged to her family). She was 10 years old and had to survive in the mountains in fear of the allied forces and the raiding Japanese troops. At one point, her family was convinced that death was the preferred alternative and were given a grenade to collectively bring an end to the suffering. By some miracle, the detonation mechanism failed. Shortly after, American soldiers were able to convince my grandmother that there were alternatives. This event stayed with my mother as she learned about Christianity as a student and began her conversion. She attended college in Kyoto and returned to Okinawa to become a teacher and eventually the principal of a faith-based school that my father helped to build. They were married in 1960.

Both of my parents continue to be the largest spiritual influences in my life. Their stories inspire me. Their works amaze me. My calling is a natural extension of where I came from. That there is a genetic component to my call is not an exaggeration.

My wife Hyun and I have been married for almost 30 years. She knows my story better than anyone. She is convinced that seeking ordination to the priesthood is the best step for our entire family. I would add that my sons are supportive (and a bit mystified) at this decision – “aren’t you a little old to be in school?” And so it goes...



I would suggest that the Grace Church experience, in its totality, has been hugely impactful in bringing me to this period of discernment. The children I have taught, the people who I have fed, the funerals that I have attended, the baptisms that I have photographed, the members who I have embraced, the priests who I have come to know and love – all have brought me to this place. I am blessed.



RALLY HONORING BLACK LIVES LOST

Friday July 10, 2020 6pm
Westchester County Courthouse
110 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
White Plains

**Please wear a mask and adhere to social distancing guidelines.*

Stand with families impacted
by police violence.

"We came because we could not stand silently by our
brother's blood, we came because we know that second
only to silence, the greatest danger to man is loss of faith
in man's capacity to act."

— Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz



Urban League of
Westchester County, Inc.



MLK Institute
Westchester Martin Luther King Jr. Institute for Nonviolence



VOCAL
NEW YORK

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FOUNDATION

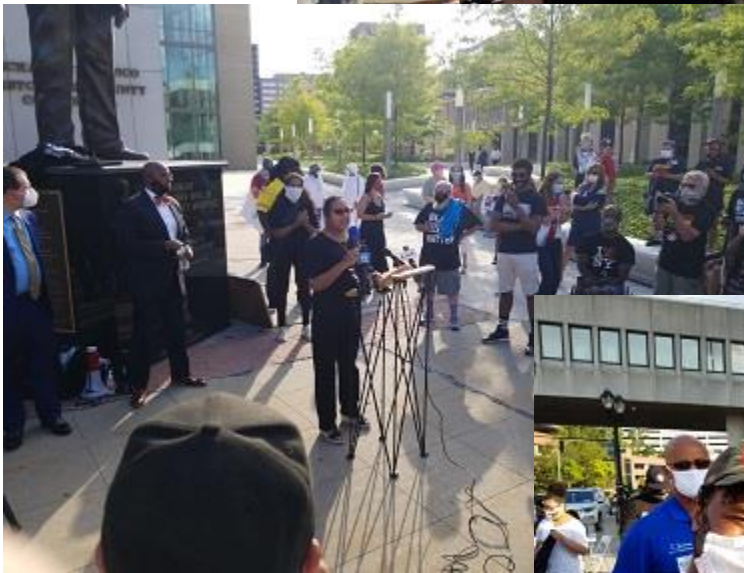


The B.L.M.P.
The Black Lives Matter
Project

BLACK
BV
WESTCHESTER

Advocacy at Grace Episcopal Church

Grace Church was well represented at the July Rally Honoring Black Lives Lost – with attendance by many members and speeches from our own Sorraya Sampson and Nathaniel Graves.





Sanitizing the Church

Covid-19 has ravaged our country, our institutions, and our daily lives, forcing us to explore new ways of reconnecting with our traditions. Who would have thought we would be mandated a six-foot distance or that face masks would become a necessary fashion trend?

The pandemic has also forced us to change our ways and means of doing church, including safety guidelines that seemingly change by the week. That said, you can know that Grace Church is in good hands and is doing everything by the book.

Over the past months, the Building and Grounds Committee, headed by Walter Simon, has ensured our building space to be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected according to CDC and diocesan guidelines. Taurino, our sexton, has been a remarkably busy man, applying the new safety guidelines in his daily routine. Below is a list of the many procedures taken.

- We have fogged the parish hall and kitchen (heavier traffic areas).
- We have constantly and consistently swept, washed, wiped down all hard surfaces throughout the many rooms and offices in our building.
- We have removed all books and cushions from the church.
- We have marked all pews in the church (safe distancing).
- We disinfect and sanitize the church, parish hall, and sacristy before and after each worship service.
- We have placed new signs at all entrances sharing new safety guidelines.
- Taurino works closely with Samaritan House and Grace's Kitchen to ensure they are utilizing the CDC safety standards as well.

I pray that our covid-19 pandemic dissipates so that we can return to some sense of normal; however, until then, know that our number one priority is your safety.

God Bless,
Chip +

A NEW SEASON, A NEW NAME!

YOUTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

It's been a very long time since "Sunday School" paused because of Covid-19. We were getting ready to celebrate the Journey to Womanhood and Manhood for our Rite-13 students. It will happen, but not until we are all safe enough to physically come together to congratulate and celebrate this milestone in the lives of our young people.

The bad news was that Covid-19 also truncated religious instruction for all our young people. We've all been adrift in this extraordinary time. We didn't have the opportunity to celebrate Easter, Pentecost, and the end of the school year. The good news is that the teaching staff, along with Fr. Chip, are planning for the academic year to come.

As many of you know, prior to the church closing, there had been parental meetings to find out what they would like to know and envision for their children. As a result, the teaching staff and Fr. Chip met to discuss what the future of religious education would look like once we resume. On behalf of Grace Church's teaching staff (along with Fr. Chip) we are sharing with you that our new name is **Youth Christian Education**. It is more reflective of our mission and goal to provide religious education to our young people. Yes, we meet on Sunday, as a rule, but our collective desire is to share the Good Word with them in a more modern presentation. The teaching staff will be using a curriculum which will reflect the Lectionary being shared during the service so that instruction melds with what is happening at the Mass. We will also be sharing take home materials with parents as a way to include them in the education of their children. We are the proverbial village in forming our young people as Christians. This ministry will resume in some manner this autumn. Once plans are concrete, Fr. Chip will announce this ministry's plans: albeit remote, in-person, or a blend.

On an additional note, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Donna Louis for her extraordinary leadership in the many years she has led this part of our church life. We could not have come this far without her graciousness, leadership and talent.

As the new Youth Christian Education leader, I welcome your input, thoughts (and prayers, too!) as I embark on ensuring that our very important young people continue to be a part of our spiritual lives.

Linda Gallo



***The Deadline For The Winter Angelus
Is November 15th. As Always, Thank You For
Your Contributions!***

The Angelus
Quarterly Newsletter
of Grace Church/La Gracia
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www.gracewhiteplains.org

Rector: The Rev. Dr. Chip Graves

Editors: Mary Baker and Michael Heffner

Contributors: Karen Odom, Mary Baker, Linda Gallo, Michael Heffner, The Rev. Dr. Chip Graves, Charlotte Roberson, The Rev. Adolfo Moronta, The O'Hanlon Family, The Youth of Grace Church (Views from the Pews), Sylvia Simon

Distributor: Suzan Ortega-Collado

Views from the Pews


This month our parishioners shared their views about dealing without in-person worship services.

THE O'HANLON FAMILY:

For the O'Hanlon family, the interlude since mid-March has been a time of mixed emotions. We are most grateful for the heroic efforts Father Chip, Michael Heffner and the vestry have undertaken to make remote church possible. And we are delighted that the Church has taken on the social justice issue as it has.



That said, we of course miss the close connections with our fellow parishioners which is possible only through our in person services and activities. For Nikolas, Anna and Vika, the time has meant an end to the



fellowship which arises from serving as acolytes, choir members, lay readers and ushers. Anna and Vika have also missed the revamped J2A format, which Lauren Reid had cleverly established as a once monthly gathering late on a Sunday afternoon, so as to avoid the schedule conflicts which had arisen with holding J2A weekly during the Church service. For George, it has entailed an early end of the year for the Rite 13 class he teaches with Donna Louis, and unfortunately missing out on the Celebrity Celebration we hold in mid-March, to honor our new Rite 13 Celebrities. The good news is that we do look forward to that celebration in the near future. Karen and Anna were able to serve as lay readers at a remote service in July, and report it was wonderful to be in the sanctuary and be a part of the service there.

But for all we miss, the one overriding conclusion we draw is that our Church is far stronger than the pandemic. In modified form, the Church service goes on. The work of the vestry goes on. The work of the discernment committee goes on. Through its food distribution activities, the Church demonstrates its leadership in helping to address a core problem made worse by the pandemic. Social justice remains at the fore of our thinking and efforts. We connect with each other through zoom and other means. We all know that it is just a matter of time before we are all together again in a more normal setting. And we also know that our Church and congregation will be stronger for this experience

Sunday School Students:

Maya Daughtry

Something I love about Grace is a loving and safe community. Grace church to me is the family that will always love you and be there to support you. I also like being an acolyte and volunteering to feed the homeless on holidays. Everyone works together and we serve them with dignity.

Shane Daughtry

What I like about Grace Church is the community of people and how close they are.

Eric Woodberry

It has been very strange not going to church on Sundays. I miss being an acolyte, which makes me feel like an important part of the service and church. I also miss Sunday School, meeting as a group and completing assignments.


Aaron Woodberry

One of the main things I miss about not having church is Sunday School. I miss meeting with my peers and learning about God.

Emmi Woodberry

Sunday School, and I miss my teachers and learning about the Bible. I also miss doing the crafts.

Anna Kristina O'Hanlon



The things I miss most about Grace Church are the J2A meetings, acolyting and seeing the other members of the congregation.

Nikolas O'Hanlon

There are many aspects of Grace Church that I miss in this time of turmoil, uncertainty and chaos. Some of these aspects include the extremely kind and accepting Grace Church community, the jovial and uplifting aura that I would feel as soon as I set foot in the building, and all the events and outings that would progressively bring the Grace Church community closer to one another. The kind and accepting Grace Church community has helped me throughout my time with this community.

Vika O'Hanlon

The thing I miss most about Grace Church is the people.

Priya Kumar

I miss Sunday School and coffee hour.

Rohan Kumar

I miss Sunday School, the 3rd Sunday (Family Sunday Service) and coffee hour.

Aadi Kumar

I miss Sunday School, coffee hour and serving as an acolyte.

Sebastian Lopes

I miss the lessons learned during Sunday school, the people of Grace Church, the coffee hour, and feeding the homeless.

SYLVIA SIMON:

My mom used to say that ‘No one misses the water till the well runs dry’

This is so true. When church had to be closed for weekly services and related activities, many of us discussed the fact that it created an emptiness which we all acutely felt. Yet, as we began to reach out to each other, we discovered that God enabled us to find other ways to connect.

Weekly Services

At first, most of us felt it wasn't the same as in-person services. However, thanks to Fr. Chip, Michael Heffner and Peter Roberts it became better and better each week. The addition of weekly lectors from the congregation and a choir member to sing hymns were excellent enhancements. I remember feeling so filled with emotion as Abigail sang “We are Climbing Jacob’s Ladder.” Kudos to all who worked so hard to perfect the virtual services. Ironically, many older parishioners and/or those with underlying conditions, continued to attend virtual services even after modified in-person services resumed

Person to Person Connection

How we miss our ability to connect to fellow parishioners for both sad and happy events. We were saddened by the passing of longtime friends like Cecil Henry, and Harvey Chambers. We

were unable to gather together to formally send them off to the Lord. Charles Wiggins had a more formal send-off. Yet, the service had been impacted by the pandemic's constraints. We had to celebrate our graduates virtually as well. Lauren Reid did a wonderful job of coordinating a celebration of all graduates by designing a banner displayed in front of the church. She also gave a wonderful description of each graduate during a virtual service, and she personally delivered gifts from the vestry and ECW to each graduate. Thank you, Lauren, for all you do for our young people.

ZOOM Connection

Zoom meetings and discussions have also provided a venue for connection. Fr Chip and Mo Lisa led several discussions on Race Spirituality, after viewing a reflection by Bishop Curry. This allowed parishioners of Grace and St. John's Episcopal in Tuckahoe to have discussions on race and spirituality. In addition, Michael Heffner coordinated several discussions on Social Justice. We heard from experts in the area of Social Justice Initiatives led by Sorroya Elliott. Many of Grace's organizations have had zoom meetings, including the vestry.

Outreach Connection

Fr Adolfo, Michael Heffner and the La Gracia parishioners have spearheaded a wonderful weekly food distribution initiative for our neighbors who need food during the pandemic. Each week they distribute bags of food to sustain the recipients during the week. Besides assisting with the food bank, Linda Gallo coordinates a shopping service for parishioners who need it.

Phone Connection

The good old-fashioned phone call means so much to those who can't go out. We all have managed to remain connected through weekly calls to each other. My grandmother always told me when I became frustrated or distressed "The Lord will help you find a way." Indeed, this is more than true at Grace.

Compiled by Mary Baker



There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus.
-Galatians 3.28

Do All People Deserve Respect and Equal Treatment?

Amid the protesting of racism and the aftermath of the horrific George Floyd incident, we face the aspect of Social Justice, front and center. As I look to the Bible for reference and guide, I find

hundreds of scriptural verses claiming justice and equality, not for one group, but for all. Grace Church has a long history of support for Social Justice. We have and continue to develop programs, discussions, various venues in support of those facing injustice. Furthermore, there seems to be not one but many groups that have faced injustice.

I am a visual person and therefore resonate with the Social Justice image to the left. This multi-color image envelops so many who have faced injustice. It begins with Black Lives Matter. It continues with women's rights, human rights, and that love and kindness are our greatest tools. All are enveloped in this multicolor image, resonating with all people of all colors and those in the LGBTQ community.

I ask that we pray for those facing injustice, that they should have a seat at God's table.

Furthermore, I pray that we as Christians remain true to our Baptismal Covenant stating that we will strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.

Amen!

Grace Church – Rectory Renovation

Fr. Chip is extremely grateful that Grace Church provides a wonderful place for his family to live. We refer to it as the rectory. In the past year, Grace Church has been updating the church-owned rectory, initially with new windows, exterior painting and more. However, thanks to former senior warden (Joe Gallo) and current chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee (Walter Simon), Grace Church received a substantial grant from an Episcopal charity, the Bedell Foundation for much needed improvements.



Therefore, over the past 6 months, under the direction of Nate Hogan, the rectory has received additional renovations to include 3 new bathrooms, a new driveway, lawn management, a new kitchen and more. Please look at the photos displaying some of the wonderful changes. Fr. Chip and Rev. Lisa are hoping that Grace la Gracia members will come see the rectory and join them for a social gathering once it becomes safer to congregate.





Rise In Glory

Sarah Addo-Yobo



Charles Wiggins