

Winter 2021



The ANGELUS

News of the Life of GRACE CHURCH

Over 150 Years in the Heart of White Plains



Father Adolfo, Father Chip and Bishop Allen Shin admiring our beautiful new sign.



The Queen's Gambit

My favorite recent pastime has been watching the number one Netflix miniseries entitled, The Queens Gambit. The limited series takes place in the 1960's with a lead character (Beth Harmon), an orphaned chess prodigy, who is struggling with addiction and eventually becomes the world's greatest player. If the period cinematography does not draw you in, the character will. If the character's overcoming great obstacles to become the world champion does not draw you in, the chess playing may. This miniseries is named after a keen chess strategy, the Queen's Gambit.

One does not need insider chess knowledge nor a title of Grand Master to understand this ploy. Simply put, a player sacrifices a weak piece (pawn) to gain a desired field advantage on the chess board. The key word here is sacrifice. Does this word 'sacrifice' ring a bell? Have we not sacrificed enough in 2020 with racism, burning buildings, riots, protesting, horrific politics, pandemic depression, challenging economy, and loss of jobs...? Need I say more? I think we have sacrificed enough in 2020 and I am truly looking forward to 2021. But what is to come?

The Queen's Gambit is a strategy of sacrifice for the greater good, a victory in the game of chess. This deeply connects to our Christianity, based on the sacrifice of God's Son in Christ, martyred on the cross 2,000 years ago – sacrifice leading to victory; sacrifice leading to a greater good; sacrifice leading to grace for you and me and a billion followers around the globe. I am now rethinking the title of this piece to become Christ's Gambit or perhaps the Jesus Gambit..... Each and every turn of this calendar year has been a struggle for all reasons aforementioned, but I do believe I see some light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

The Pandemic will wane – vaccine, hospitalization, time, other. I am unsure of the exact recipe, but I do believe we will see the other side and return to a new normal. That said, I do believe we will survive and now is the time to celebrate. Now is the time to celebrate the birth of our Christ. The birth of our Savior. The birth of our King in Jesus Christ. Perhaps our gatherings are subdued, smaller, more safely intelligent than years past, but we must celebrate.


Know that you are loved and beyond your ability to fully comprehend, for now and evermore.

Amen.

Fr. Chip+

The Queen's Gambit

Mi reciente pasatiempo favorito ha sido ver la miniserie número uno de Netflix titulada The Queens Gambit. La serie toma lugar en la década de 1960 con un personaje principal (Beth Harmon), un prodigio del ajedrez huérfano, que está luchando contra la adicción y finalmente se convierte en el mejor jugador del mundo. Si la cinematografía de esa época no le atrae, el personaje lo hará. Si la superación de grandes obstáculos por parte del personaje para convertirse en campeón del mundo no te atrae, el



ajedrez sí puede hacerlo. Esta miniserie lleva el nombre de una aguda estrategia de ajedrez, The Queen's Gambit .

No se necesitan conocimientos de ajedrez internos ni un título de Gran Maestro para comprender estatactica. En pocas palabras, un jugador sacrifica una pieza débil (peón) para obtener una ventaja de campo deseada en el tablero de ajedrez. La palabra clave aquí es sacrificio. ¿Te suena esta palabra "sacrificio"? ¿No nos hemos sacrificado lo suficiente en 2020 con todo lo que hemos vivido: racismo, edificios incendiados, disturbios, protestas, políticas horribles, depresión pandémica, economía desafiante y pérdida de empleos...? ¿Necesito decir más? Creo que nos hemos sacrificado lo suficiente en 2020 y realmente espero con ansias el 2021. ¿Pero qué está por venir?

The Queen's Gambit es una estrategia de sacrificio por el bien mayor, una victoria en el juego de ajedrez. Esto se conecta profundamente con nuestro cristianismo, basado en el sacrificio del Hijo de Dios en Cristo, martirizado en la cruz hace 2.000 años: sacrificio que conduce a la victoria; sacrificio que conduce a un bien mayor; sacrificio que conduce a la gracia para ti y para mí y para mil millones de seguidores en todo el mundo. Ahora estoy reconsiderando el título de esta pieza para que se convierta en el Gambito de Cristo o quizás el Gambito de Jesús... Todos y cada uno de los giros de este año han sido una lucha por todas las razones antes mencionadas, pero creo que veo algo de luz al final del túnel.

La pandemia disminuirá: vacuna, hospitalización, tiempo, otros. No estoy seguro de la receta exacta, pero creo que veremos el otro lado y volveremos a una nueva normalidad. Dicho esto, creo que sobreviviremos y ahora es el momento de celebrar. Ahora es el momento de celebrar el nacimiento de nuestro Cristo. El nacimiento de nuestro Salvador. El nacimiento de nuestro Rey en Jesucristo. Quizás nuestras reuniones sean moderadas, más pequeñas, más seguras que en años anteriores, pero debemos celebrar.

Sepa que es amado y más allá de su capacidad de plenamente comprender, por ahora y para siempre.

Amén.

P. Chip +

Our Lady of Guadalupe

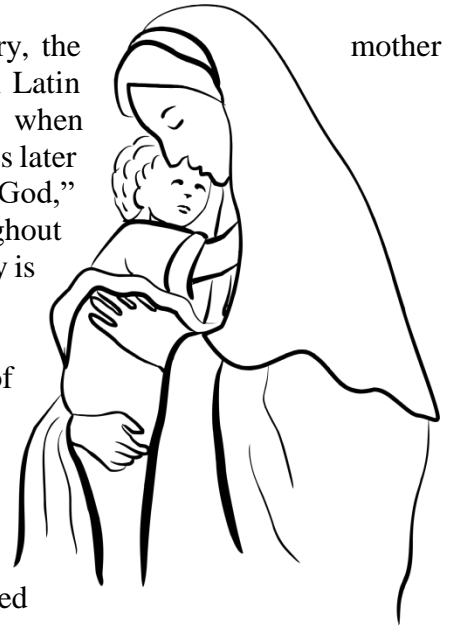
Rev. Adolfo Moronta

Mary's life and role in the history of salvation is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, while the events of her life are recorded in the New Testament. Traditionally, she was declared the daughter of Sts. Joachim and Anne. Born in Jerusalem, Mary was presented in the Temple and took a vow of virginity. According to the Gospel of Luke 1:26-38, living in Nazareth, Mary was visited by the archangel Gabriel, who announced to her that she would become the Mother of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit.

[Mary](#) is known by many different titles (Blessed Mother, Madonna, Our Lady), [epithets](#) ([Star of the Sea](#), [Queen of Heaven](#), Cause of Our Joy), and other names [Our Lady of Loreto](#), [Our Lady of Guadalupe](#), Catalina, Copacabana, ... In our Book of Common Prayer (p.864) she is mentioned as “Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer (Theotokos).”

All of the titles Mary bears refer to the same individual named Mary, the mother of Jesus and are used variably by all who have a devotion to her. In Latin America the figure of Mary arrived with the Spanish conquest, when indigenous peoples were evangelized and converted. Conquered peoples later embraced her not as a Patron of their conquests but as the “mother of God,” who stands with those suffering oppression and discrimination. Throughout Latin America and in the faith of Spanish-speaking Episcopalians Mary is widely recognized and is an important part of the faith.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is the most familiar and common devotion of Mary in Latin America. This representation comes from an appearance of Mary to an indigenous farmer in the 16th Century in Mexico. He found this image miraculously imprinted on his peasant garment, and it is still on display in a church in Tepeyac, Mexico. The rays in the background symbolize an Aztec deity which is being eclipsed by Mary. She is wearing a black cincture which, at the time, symbolized pregnancy.



The Blessed Mother of Guadalupe holds a special place in the religious life of [Mexico](#) from where 80% of the parishioners of La Gracia come from. Her image has played an important role in Mexican history but is not limited to religious matters; she has also played an important function in Mexican [nationalism](#) and identity.

The celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be December 11 at 8:00 PM. This is La Gracia's largest religious celebration and the preparations for this event have already begun. This year we are following all safety protocols. Everyone is required to wear a mask, for those who would like to attend a sign-up sheet has already been created, and the food that will be served after the Eucharist will be grab & go. The celebration will have three major moments: a) the procession inside the church b) the Eucharist and c) the Mañanitas which are the celebrations that will be done after the service together with the Mariachi band.



STRESS

In our fall issue, we highlighted the toll that stress takes on our bodies and emotions when we hang on to it longer and longer. The longer we hold onto our stress, the more hurtful it becomes. This year has been the epitome of a stress-filled year! Here are a few more stress-busters!

LAYING DOWN YOUR BURDENS

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

It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to be kind to others.

Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time because then you won't have a leg to stand on.

Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance!

Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.

Mary Baker

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Instructed Eucharist

A few months ago, I shared a survey with our membership, inviting them to give feedback on possible sermon topics. One of the preferred options included an Instructed Eucharist where I, as the preacher, would teach on the various sections within our liturgy. After my sermon, several members asked me to follow up with an article, reclaiming many details from the instruction. My sharing that follows is a response to that request.

I began the sermon by defining ‘liturgy’ and ‘Eucharist’, essential terminology used to describe our worship. Liturgy refers to the work of the people and Eucharist refers to giving thanks. Therefore, when we worship, our work is to give thanks to God. Every tiny piece of our worship connects us to this notion of thanking God. As we look back on our 2,000 years of Christian worship and giving thanks to God, we recognize that during the first several hundred years of worship we spoke in Greek, and then later in Latin.

It was not until 1548 when we held our first English Mass and in 1549 developed the first Book of Common Prayer written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. The first American Book of Common Prayer was developed in 1789. Today’s Book of Common Prayer was drafted in 1979, placing Baptism and the Eucharist in primary position. As we review our worship, we must recall that it stems from our Judeo-Christian roots dating back thousands of years, well before the Common Era.

Our worship service has two primary parts. The first half of the service ending with the offertory is called the Word of God. The second half is referred to as Communion. The Word of God portion includes glorification, prayers, scripture, confession, absolution, reconciliation and receiving God’s peace. As we review all components of the service, it is important to remember that it is done with both an

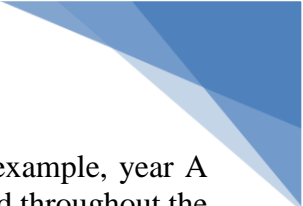
individualistic and corporate understanding.



We begin the service affirming our relationship with God through the acclamation. This is followed by the Collect for Purity found in the 14th century spiritual classic, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the Highest) follows. However, during the Lenten Season and penitential services, we focus on sins and

repenting, and therefore use the Greek version, Kyrie Eleison (Lord Have Mercy) and also the Trisagion from the Eastern tradition (Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One). The Gloria, Kyrie, and Trisagion remind us that life with God begins with praise and mercy. The Collect or Prayer of the Day follows, emphasizing a theme echoed throughout the scriptural readings. The Collect and readings are called Propers of the Day that can be found in the lectionary and assigned for that day.

As we move forward in our worship sequence, we share 4 lessons from Scripture, including the Old Testament lesson (Hebrew scripture), the Psalm, the New Testament Epistle (letter), and the Gospel lesson (4 accounts of Jesus). Our lectionary readings come in a three-year rotation (years A, B, C) and



begin with the 1st Sunday in Advent. Each year emphasizes a particular Gospel. For example, year A emphasizes Matthew. Year B is Mark. Year C is Luke. The Gospel of John is interspersed throughout the three-year cycle. The 1979 Book of Common Prayer was revised to envelop 3 scriptural lessons because in the Middle Ages, only the Epistle and Gospel were used.

The Old Testament prepares the congregation for Jesus. The Psalm, known as the Gradual in the 4th century, means elevated step, eventually leading to Communion; and in medieval times, was sung by a cantor. In ancient times, the sequence or Prose was a festival music piece preparing us for the Gospel. The Gospeller (only a Deacon or Priest) then presents the Gospel passage (presence of Christ). The final part of the 1st half (Word of God) is the sermon presenting the ancient scripture and how it relates to our world today.


After the sermon, in unison, we speak the Nicene Creed, one of two creeds of faith, along with the Apostles Creed. The Nicene Creed was formed out of the Council of Nicaea in 325 and was not included in the Eucharist until 589 in Spain. In 1014, Pope Benedict viii ordered the Nicene Creed to be placed after the Gospel. Remarkably, for the past 1700 years we have declared our statement of faith through the Nicene Creed. Next, we profess the Prayers of the People (intercessions) which have followed the scriptures and sermon since the 2nd century. The Prayers are the community's response to the Word of God. In essence, the Prayers allow us to ask for help.

We continue with the Confession, looking within our hearts, naming, and confessing our sins to renew our lives. Absolution comes next with our request for forgiveness and redemption. The final aspect to this first phase of worship culminates with the Exchange of Peace, a sign of mutual love for the church community and a reconciliation with God before we offer our gifts to God. The Exchange of Peace is a ritualistic cleansing before we participate in Communion.

After the Offertory Sentence, we begin our Holy Communion, the 2nd half of the worship service. There are 4 parts to the Holy Communion. First, the Offertory - it is an offering of our gifts of bread and wine. Second is the Great Thanksgiving, that gives thanks and consecrates the elements. Third is Breaking the Bread. And finally, there is Communion, the distribution of the bread and wine (body and blood of Jesus Christ). What an amazing transformation of our gifts (bread and wine) into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

There are many important definitions surrounding the Eucharist Service. The Corporal is the square shaped white linen with embroidered cross that lies below the paten (plate) and chalice (cup). The Host is the large wafer broken at the fraction. The Purificator is the smaller white linen folded in a long rectangular fashion and used to wipe the chalice. The Cruet is the glass vase used to carry the water or wine. The lavabo is the small silver bowl that carries water to wash the priest's hands.

The Credence table holds all elements before being placed on the altar. The Tabernacle is the golden box located in the wall at the high altar and used to safeguard the pre-consecrated bread and wine. The Chasuble is the colored cape that the celebrating priest wears during worship and changes color in accordance with the season or the service. The Alb is the white garment under the priest's Chasuble that signifies the memory of Christ as a shepherd with a flock. The Stole is the matching colored scarf hung around the neck of the celebrating priest. There are many more definitions, but this will get us started.



The Great Thanksgiving introduces the Eucharistic Prayer. There are 4 forms of Eucharistic prayer. Each has its own particular focus. We then continue with the Sursum Corda (We lift up your hearts) which is derived from an ancient Jewish prayer representing families celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. The Preface includes the proper preface, a call to joyous song with angels and archangels. We continue with the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy Lord) which was developed from Jewish synagogue liturgy and based on prophet Isaiah's celestial visions. Within the Sanctus is the Benedictus qui venit or blessed is He who comes in the name of the lord from Psalm 118.26, indicating Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

We now consecrate the elements. There are four parts. First, Jesus took Bread. Second, He gave Thanks. Third, He Broke the Bread. Fourth, He Gave it to the disciples. These are the words of Institution and followed by our statement of faith - Christ Died, Christ Resurrected, and He will Come Again. This is the sum of our story. It is not about punishment but the resurrection and healing through Jesus Christ. In the blessing and sanctification, the bread and wine change; and so, do we. In sum, Communion gives each of us a piece of Christ. The Fraction, the Breaking of the Bread is symbolic of Christ on the Cross. The Fraction, "Alleluia Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us", is followed by a fraction anthem, "therefore let us keep the feast". Therefore, we are praising God for giving up his son. The final part of the Eucharist is the receiving of the gifts (the gift of God for the People of God).

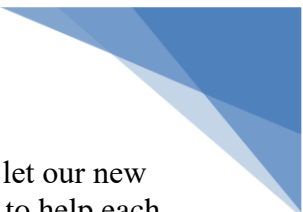
The Post Communion Prayer is said in unison to thank God for the gift of Christ and our new lives in him. The Post Communion Prayer has been in use since the 4th century. We conclude with a final blessing and dismissing to Rejoice in the Power of the Spirit, Thanks Be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! The Dismissal reminds us that our Eucharist Service should not stop there, but continue out into the world, well beyond our wonderful, historical, red doors. God Bless.

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

Stewardship

Winter 2020

This is a rare stewardship season. We are dealing with a pandemic. Everywhere we go, we are reminded that we must wear a mask. People who used to be friendly may just raise their eyes in recognition and keep walking. In addition to people not recognizing us with our masks, we don't see our beloved Grace Church Family each Sunday during service and afterwards during coffee hour. How do we solve this problem? Simple, and yet, not so simple. We keep talking as if we are going back to 'normal' times and routines. Well, it's time for all of us to wake up to the fact that we can't go back to the past. We are



living and will continue to live through this new ‘normal’ for years to come. We want to let our new ‘normal’ begin by “catching the spirit.” We must commit our lives to doing what we can to help each other on a daily basis.

There have been many examples of “catching the spirit” since covid-19 began. It starts with our family making a decision to get up early each Sunday and joining Grace/LaGracia services at 8, 10 or 12:30, either in person or on line. Next, filling out the appropriate pledge envelope and mailing it. (Don’t forget the stamp.) If you are able to come to the church, you can drop it any day through the slot in the front door. You can also give electronically thru pay pal and other apps.

So where is the problem? To most of us, we now have to make a true decision. How much can I afford to give to Grace Church this year and next year? Recently, you should have received your third quarter statements letting you know how much you have given for 2020 and how much remains on your pledge. Each week, (Covid-19 or no Covid-19) we must budget money for food, rent, utilities, the children and our Church. Giving to the church should not be an afterthought. God wants us to return to him what is his. That means planning to give and give graciously back to God.

Sunday November 1st was pledge Sunday. You received the stewardship letter with the bulletin. Please read it, fill it out the form based on your present circumstances, and return it by email to Cynthia S. Brown at Cyndysbrown@gmail.com or by mailing it to Grace Church at 33 Church Street, White Plains, NY 10601. You also should have received information about Grace’s financial circumstances. Please read it. Father Chip has sent many email blasts about our bare bones budget and running at a deficit. We cannot continue to spend more money than we receive.

At the beginning and end of every letter in which we ask for your money, we need to let you know that we are cognizant that people live in very different circumstances. If you have more, please give more than your pledge. We appreciate whatever you give. If you are in need of food or other assistance, please contact Father Adolfo or Father Chip and they will inform you of the steps you need to take to get help. The Food Alliance distributes food from Grace/LaGracia Church every Thursday or Friday.

Please “catch the spirit” and give to our food drives, LUW, Downtown music, Christmas drives, etc. In addition to giving of your money we ask that you give of your time and talent. Those young people who have turned 18 years old can also give of their time by voting and encouraging others to vote. Please also offer your prayers for Father Chip, Father Adolfo, the Vestry, our staff, our parish and community as we progress through the “new normal”.

Charlotte Roberson, Stewardship Chairperson



IN THE NEWS

When the devastating events of the past summer led to massive protests all over the country under the banner “Black Lives Matter,” Grace parishioners responded by participating in several diocesan and parish on-line seminars on this subject. A number of us also read the book “How to Be An Antiracist” by Ibram X. Kendi and joined a virtual discussion with its author. In addition, it is rewarding to know that one of our Grace Church “family” is making a difference in the corporate world.

The Angelus is proud to publish the following article, which first appeared in Forbes Magazine. Paget Alves (son of Irene Alves) co-authored this article about his firm’s important response to the issue of systemic racism. It is comforting for us to see that there are those we know who are making a difference in real ways in the business world.

Thank you to Paget for sharing his article with us.


3 ways to make sure corporate diversity and inclusion efforts have a lasting impact

BY MARGARET KEANE AND PAGET ALVES

August 31, 2020

“The fierce urgency of now.”

Martin Luther King Jr.’s words, spoken during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, are, sadly, still as relevant today as they were almost 60 years ago. The devastating killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, among too many others, have stirred a national crisis of conscience as to the work still to be done for justice and equality for all. And the passing of civil rights icon John Lewis, a man who risked his life as he marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, reminds us all of the need to ensure our nation lives up to these very ideals. In the past, corporate America has often let moments of change pass by. As a CEO and a board member of one of the nation’s leading financial services firms, we pledge this time will be different. We believe that in order to make real change, business leaders in our country should deploy our collective resources to help benefit society. While progress doesn’t happen overnight, we will begin now. Corporate America’s response should go beyond platitudes and simply checking boxes on diversity initiatives. Diversity, inclusion, and equality are moral and business imperatives—companies can and should do better. This moment calls for business leaders to ask ourselves soul-searching questions as to how to tackle the root cause of structural racism within our own spheres of influence; while doing so, we also have to face some uncomfortable truths about how we operate today. At Synchrony, diversity and inclusion have always been core to our corporate culture. If they hadn’t, we wouldn’t be in the position we are in today: Our eight diversity networks, employee groups open to all, help drive change from the ground up, with more than 10,000 employees (60% of our workforce), either joining groups with which they identify, or becoming partners and sponsors to better support their peers. Yet the current movement from within, driven by candid dialogues with our Black colleagues as well as those from outside our company, has caused us to look even more deeply at our own corporate



practices. We have a responsibility to drive systemic change to further integrate diversity and inclusion into our long-term business strategy. Here are some of our key learnings to date:

Create an ethos of an inclusive culture

Removing unconscious bias starts with an ethos to build an inclusive culture; one that promotes candor and openness. We must do more than conduct diversity training. Corporate leaders have to build bridges through honest conversations with people whom they know and with whom they work. Only through authentic, continuous interactions at every level can the business community come to grips with unconscious biases and begin to eliminate them.

Through our recent listening and engagement efforts, our minority employees have shared that they feel pressure to fit into the majority culture. One Black colleague revealed the hours of preparation it took to style her natural hair in an effort to conform. We have heard from others who feel they have to not appear “angry” or “aggressive” in order to move up the corporate ladder.

These experiences are part of what is a common occurrence for many Black Americans. Fostering an environment of candor and trust allows minority professionals to speak out about their life experiences outside the workplace. Being mistaken for the parking valet no matter how well one is dressed, or being wantonly stopped by the police are all too regular events for many. Hearing these stories from colleagues gives our employees a unique understanding of the challenges and needs of our diverse workforce and the customers we serve.


One way we can reject this oppressive mindset is by raising it with our peers. Being authentic cements stronger relationships and higher engagement, which are critical to opening up opportunities for all. By infusing an attitude of inclusion, where everyone feels accepted for who they are, businesses will be able to attract the best talent and realize exceptional performance over time.

Diversify your board

We believe companies will perform better if they capitalize on diverse talent, starting at the top and infused at all levels of the business. To guide companies into the future, we believe it’s critical to assemble an independent board of directors that possesses diverse backgrounds and skill sets that align with strategic business needs. This means pushing search firms to increase diverse representation, looking beyond traditional criteria, and setting clear goals on how future board seats will be filled. Synchrony’s board of directors is among the most diverse in the financial services industry, with four women and four members with racially diverse backgrounds (out of 12 members overall). The board is an active one; its members engage with employees, attending company events and forums; their presence shows employees that inclusiveness stretches across the company at all levels.

Integrate D&I into long-term business strategy

To succeed at driving progress over the long term, we should treat diversity and inclusion no differently than we would an important business challenge, with new board-approved governance rules, imperatives, and accountability mechanisms that allow us to measure results and course correct as necessary.



Synchrony recently created a senior-level committee led by our president, chief diversity officer, and others. The committee is charged with developing an enterprise-wide strategy, setting measurable goals, and providing progress reports to our board and employees across all areas of the business.

Changing the face of leaders is key to driving innovation, becoming tomorrow's employer of choice for future generations. This requires a data-driven approach, measuring gaps as well as progress while still employing the human touch overall.

Earlier this year, through our Advancing Diverse Talent program, we used data analytics to identify gaps in our hiring and promotion process. As a result, we put more focus on hiring, developing, and progressing talented underrepresented minorities, understanding that we needed to move the needle faster for Black or Hispanic employees to rise to senior leadership positions.

Consequently, we tied leaders' performance metrics to diversity improvements, mandated diverse candidate slates for senior roles, and launched a new leadership program designed to advance diverse employees.

Our work as corporate custodians should extend beyond our companies as well. We have committed to creating new products and policies that could positively impact Black Americans and other minority communities. We are examining ways to deepen our diverse supply chains and investments in women- and minority-owned small businesses; we have committed \$15 million in philanthropic grants to help nonprofits advance social justice initiatives, providing emergency relief to small businesses and assisting communities hit hard by the pandemic; and we are mobilizing resources to ensure employees can exercise their right to vote in elections.

During a crisis, it's easy to feel energized, driven by a sense of purpose and motivation. It's harder to maintain that work when crisis fatigue sets in, when the world moves on to the next major news event or catastrophe. We should not lose the momentum. We should push to ensure diversity and inclusion stay ingrained in our workplaces and in our lives.

What gives us hope is the next generation of leaders who are demanding justice and equal rights in our society and within our companies. That fact, along with a cultural mindset shift built on open, honest relationships, new faces among corporate leaders, and diversity as critical to long-term business strategy, is what we believe will, this time, truly move toward a world of equal opportunity for all.

Margaret Keane is the CEO of Synchrony. Paget Alves is a member of the board of directors of Synchrony and previously served as the chief sales officer of Sprint Corporation.

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR THE SAKE OF CONSCIENCE

O God our Father, whose Son forgave his enemies while he was suffering shame and death: Strengthen those who suffer for the sake of conscience; when they are accused, save them from speaking in hate; when they are rejected, save them from bitterness; when they are imprisoned, save them from despair; and to us your servants, give grace to respect their witness and to discern the truth, that our society may be cleansed and strengthened. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, our merciful and righteous Judge. Amen.

From the Book of Common Prayer



ADD DECEMBER 10TH TO YOUR CALENDAR

December 10th is an important date that should be on everyone's calendar, but it isn't! December 10th is designated as Human Rights Day. On that date in 1948, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of Human Rights that enumerates such rights for all human beings as the right to life, liberty, security, and equality before the law, as well as freedom of movement, religion, and expression.

These are freedoms which are denied in many places on earth and may even be taken for granted and denied in our own country. They are freedoms for which many have died in the past and are still willing to die for today.

As we Christians observe our world, it is easy to see that our need for God's grace is more obvious than ever. We are being called to pray for our world. We are called to pray and ask God to show us how each of us can act on behalf of human rights. And we should pray for those who are serving God in this world on behalf of human dignity and human rights.

Mary Baker

Making Music Memorable

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced a change in the way we worship at Grace Church, Music Director Peter Roberts immediately found a way to keep the church's music meaningful for the congregation. Without fail, every week, Peter has remained committed to sharing the meaning behind the music with a video in which he discusses more details about the music featured during that week's service. In the Q&A below, Peter shares his thoughts about his commitment and the process.

Q. What led you to record the backstory to a featured piece of music?


At the onset of the pandemic, Fr. Chip asked if I would consider expanding the music program to include an online music ministry with video commentary. This request was made to fill the void caused by to the cancellation of live church services.

Q. How has the pandemic influenced your choice of music for the services?

I try to choose music that corresponds with the liturgical calendar, is familiar to the congregation, and above all, is uplifting. I begin by considering music that moves me personally, hoping that the selections would also inspire others. However, I am always open to listening to and exploring new music.

Q. Do you have a favorite piece of music that you have featured so far?

I have enjoyed researching the background stories of hymns, psalms, anthems, cantatas, oratorios and instrumental works. I am always in awe of the great masters and am inspired when seeing and hearing exceptional conductors interpret great works of art. While I don't have a single favorite work, I receive



the most positive feedback from the congregation when pieces such as Bach's *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* and the *Pachelbel Canon* are featured.

Q. What do you hope the congregation will get from your music commentaries?

I hope that the congregation will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the music. I also hope that listening to these selections may inspire others to further explore choral and instrumental works.

Q. What do you miss most about our altered services?

The Internet affords the ability to reach people who may not be able to attend Sunday services. Missing from the virtual service is the human interaction, connection and communion with people. That communion is what I miss most.

Q. Any more music plans on the horizon?

I am looking ahead to 2021 in hopes that we will be able to return (safely) to a traditional live service with choirs. I pray that what we are presently experiencing will bring us closer together as a congregation, as a nation and as world citizens. May this experience give us even greater resolve to spread the Gospel's message of love, hope, and deliverance. May the music of the old masters, as well as compositions by contemporary artists, continue to be our inspiration at this moment in time and beyond.

Submitted by Karen Odom

Grace Church Youth Christian Education Report

The Grace Church Youth Christian Education program has been anything but dormant during the pandemic, as we have enthusiastically started the new school year. We thank Linda Gallo for serving as our Youth Ministry Director and teacher of our K-3 grade students, along with our teachers – Michael Heffner for our Intermediate Students (grade 4-6); George O'Hanlon for Rite 13 (7-8 grade) and Lauren Reid for Journey to Adulthood (J2A high school students).

Headlining the activities was the Rite 13 Celebration which took place in the Church on October 25. This was a particularly special event because we were able to celebrate God's blessed gift of adulthood for 5 celebrities: Sebastian Maldonado; Cameron Owens; Gabrielle Parkinson, Harrison Richards and Eric Woodberry. We had planned to celebrate this event this past March, but unfortunately the covid pandemic had other ideas. But the delay was just that – a delay. And it was extra special to bring these 5 Celebrities back one more time as members of Rite 13, to properly celebrate this important event in their lives and in the life of the Church. The parents of each of these 5 Celebrities likewise joined the ceremony and it was truly a joyous event. We wish these five Celebrities well as they now embark on their Journey to Adulthood Class with Lauren Reid.



Meanwhile, we are pleased that the regular Rite 13 class has begun for our current 7th and 8th graders. We are 4 students strong and are currently doing a module on Faith – what is faith and why is it important to us as Christians? What do we do when we have doubts about faith? How does faith influence our behavior?

We will look forward to another Celebration for the current 8th grade members of the class in the Spring. Currently our meetings are held remotely via a google connection remote learning program, but we hope it will not be too long before we can again meet in person.

J2A is likewise off to a quick start. Lauren Reid has welcomed the five Rite 13 Celebrities into the J2A Fellowship, along with several returning members of the class. J2A has likewise held its initial meeting of the year via Zoom and the group will meet in this fashion regularly until we are able to restart in person meetings.

Michael Heffner's intermediates (4th-6th Grade) are already fully engaged with their learning. Michael's curriculum is unique in that it couples Christian education with introducing the students to other aspects of the Church, such as serving as lay readers during the Church service. The intermediates are also meeting remotely during the pandemic, with the hope of returning to regular in-person worship soon.

(Wanted to include this with George's piece – From November 3. Michael)

Last week was the second session of Sunday school with the intermediate age students (grades 4 -6). We decided from the start that classes would be virtual (Cynthia Sangurima Brown and I are using the parish hall as our classroom). As All Saints' Day fell perfectly on Sunday the 1st of November, that seemed like the best topic to focus on for Sunday's lesson. We talked about how All Saints' Day was one of the seven principal feasts of the church (and the history of "All Hallow's Eve") and how Saints often served as examples for people in how they should live their lives. The lesson – which is always interactive – morphed into a discussion of whether or not the students had a person that they particularly admired. I can't tell you how pleased I was that each of the 3 students in attendance was ready with a person and a reason ("John Lewis – for his work in the Civil Rights Movement and his

leadership in Congress”. “Albert Einstein – for never giving up, even when he had to deal with so much failure.” “Martin Luther King – for the inspiration that he gave through his speeches, and for giving up his life for what he believed in”. I suggested Jesus. You could see their nods – “Ah, that’s right. He was almost greater than a Saint.” That will be the topic for our next lesson...



Last but certainly not least, Linda Gallo is teaching our Lambs (kindergarten) and Elementary (1-3 grade) students. These meetings are also via remote learning, with Linda creatively engaging these students through the new curriculum she has introduced.

The Youth Christian Education is an important element of Grace Church and we thank the congregation for its ongoing support of our programs.

George O’Hanlon

SMOKE SIGNALS

By Mary Baker

I love perfume! When my family asks for my gift preferences, perfume is at the top of my list. Proverbs 27:9 says “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart.” I agree whole-heartedly!

Perfume is not a gift that just sits on a shelf and gathers dust. You have to use perfume and when you do, it surrounds you wherever you go. Perfume distinguishes you from everyone else and demonstrates your individuality. Others notice when you go by and may smile as you pass. Others often comment on it and ask “what are you wearing?” Perfume reminds me of my own individual uniqueness. I can choose each day how I am feeling and how to present myself to the world by which of my perfumes I choose to wear. Do I feel flowery? Or lemony? Or spicy?



Our church has also chosen to use a perfume. We call it incense. It also brings joy to our hearts.

The first perfumes were burned, not worn. In fact, the word for perfume comes from “par fumen” or “through smoke.” Church perfume (incense) comes from the Latin “incenderi” – “to burn.” This practice probably began in ancient Egypt and circulated around the world in all cultures, including native Americans. Incense is made from aromatic plant resin material that releases fragrant smoke when combined with oils and burned. Frankincense and myrrh (gifts given by the Magi to the baby Jesus) are precious tree resins.

In church the incense is contained in a container which is called a thurible, which is carried by a server who is called the thurifer. The thurible (censer) has a liner. The top of the thurible is lifted to insert aluminum foil in the liner and then two round pieces of charcoal. The charcoal is lit. The incense mixture is taken from the incense holder (the boat) and put into the thurible. Then the incense-infused smoke will rise up and out of the thurible as the incense is burned.

At Grace, the Altar Guild, under the direction of Brinda Bradley, makes sure our supply of incense is purchased from our supplier. A mixture is selected which is a mild blend and hypo-allergenic, as you can see from the package.


The Jews used the smoke from burning incense as a visible sign of prayers uplifted to God. David’s Psalm 141:1-2 says:

“Oh Lord, I call to you; come quickly to me.
Hear my voice when I call to you.
May my prayer be set before you like incense;
May the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.”

The Jews also used incense when sacrifices were being made. In our Christian worship, we acknowledge Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice. His sacrifice of himself on the cross has redeemed us from our sinful nature and allows us to live in the expectation of meeting our ultimate Judge (God) as totally blameless. The use of burning incense smoke during the Eucharist reminds us of this sacrifice and how each of us has been raised up as incense smoke with Christ by the waters of Holy Baptism. As Scripture tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:15-16: “For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved” and we are “the fragrance of life.” Ephesians 5:1-2 tells us: “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

We also use incense in worship to demonstrate honor and blessing. The priest swings the thurible to cense the altar and the Gospel. Then he gives it to the thurifer who swings the thurible filled with the incense toward what or who is being honored – the bread and wine, the crucifix, the clergy, the congregation, the acolytes, the body of the deceased in a funeral. Then the thurifer swings the thurible back and forth during the remainder of the service.

The smoke of burning incense is used as a symbol of the rising prayers of the people to God. In Revelations 5:8 it pictures that the “four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb (Jesus). Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”



Our worship services are designed to use all our senses. Everything around us interacts with our physical bodies to remind us that God is in our midst even though we cannot see him. No wonder I love perfume. When I wear it, I am reminded that I am a child of God, redeemed by his holy sacrifice. It reminds me that I am “the aroma of Christ.” It reminds me that my aroma is symbolic of my prayers to God in that holy bowl before the Lamb. It reminds me that I am honoring who He is and what He did for me.

It is no wonder that perfume is always at the top of my gift list!

Use of Incense During the Service

Here is some additional information about the use of incense during service:

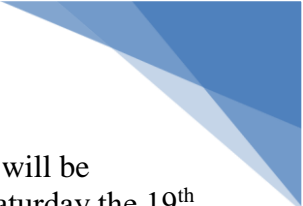
The incense is purchased by our supplier. We try to select a a blend that is mild and hypo-allergenic, as you will see from the package. The thurible or censer has a liner which holds the charcoal. The top of the thurible is lifted to insert aluminum foil in the liner and then the coal. The charcoal is in a circular shape which fits in the liner. The charcoal is lit and burns until the incense is taken from the boat (the holder of the incense) which creates the smoke which the Priest uses to cense the

Altar then he gives the thurible to the Thurifer who censes the Priest and Altar Ministers. Then the Thurifer turns to the congregation and censes them, and lastly, censes the alcoytes. The Thurifer swings the thurible back and forth during the remainder of the service.

Brinda Bradley



Please Give a Thought to Those Less Fortunate



The God in Action – Food Alliance (Grace Episcopal Church/La Gracia – White Plains) will be collecting toys from now until the 16th of December. We'll be distributing the toys on Saturday the 19th of December at 10:00am. Please keep the gift price to \$20.00 or less. Gift cards are especially welcome for the older children (Amazon gift cards are the easiest). Any checks should be made out to Grace Church – Food Alliance Toy Drive. Drop-offs are between 3:00 and 6:00pm on Wednesday's at Grace Episcopal Church – 33 Church Street in White Plains. We'd prefer that the toys come unwrapped. Ages: Infant to 14 years old. Please contact: Father Adolfo Moronta (adolfomoronta27@hotmail.com) or Michael Heffner (michaelheffner08@gmail.com) for larger drop-offs or special situations.

Trying to bring happiness to our children during this very challenging time. Blessings

(Originally submitted as a “Thoughts from the Senior Warden” piece in October)

As I sit down to write this, I'm struggling to comprehend how we've managed to sustain a program for six months that was a really just a church's response to an emergency condition in our community brought about by COVID-19. The God in Action – Food Alliance didn't exist before March of this year. How could we know that the situation for those facing food and financial insecurity would last into the Fall. Wasn't the coronavirus supposed to die in hotter temperatures? The reality is far different than anything we could have imagined. And yet we carry on. Shockingly, we've gone from a complete start-up to the distribution source that the City of White Plains has come to rely on (they consolidated their four distributions into ours back in July). As this has happened, we have quadrupled the amount of food that we're giving out to the 200-300 families who stand in line to receive the supplies each Friday – and have supplied these families with food to sustain them for 4 to 5 days. The best part of what we're providing is that there is a solid balance of protein, produce, dairy and shelf-stable items. Private donors have stepped up from the start to supplement with things like eggs, bread, cooked chickens, toilet paper

and school supplies. A true sign that a higher presence is working in our midst is that for the 23 weeks of distributions only one was affected by rain (last week) – and that was only for the set-up hours. I hear Father Adolfo asking for an “Amen!”...



Having shared all of this; it's now time for us to prepare for the colder months ahead. Arrangements have already been made to tighten up the logistics for delivering the supplies from the food bank to the church. We're setting up space to store the frozen items and hope to streamline the distribution process so that the recipients won't have to spend hours in line waiting (currently, people are starting to line up from 8:30am for a noon

distribution). We've sourced tents and heaters and are making plans to continue without interruption through the coldest winter months. I have no sense as to when things will get back to normal. I am certain that the demand for what this ministry provides will be with us for longer than any could have predicted. Please pray for us.

The obvious question from anyone watching the development of this new ministry is “how can you possibly sustain the energy to keep going?” The volunteers, Father Adolfo and I sprinted to get this program started in the late winter and we’ve been sustaining a similar pace throughout. Making things better each week has been our directive (more food, more balance, clothing, kitchen items, school supplies, getting volunteers to deliver to the shut-ins, and on). Curiously, fatigue has never been an issue. I can only speak for



myself, but I’m absolutely feeding off the energy and enthusiasm of the special group of people who have dedicated themselves to the simple mission of “taking care of their neighbors”. Father Adolfo has publicly stated that this mission work is what feeds his soul. People have shared with me that the energy that I convey when I’m talking about this ministry is contagious. I can’t tell you how pleased I am that Bishop Allen Shin (of the Episcopal Diocese of

New York) was so moved by a conversation that Father Chip and I had with him last week that he committed (on the spot) to join us this Friday to volunteer. Knowing that the Bishop will be joining us, I asked Chairman of the Westchester County Legislature Ben Boykin and White Plains Mayor Tom Roach to join us. Both enthusiastically agreed. We’ve engaged the services of a videographer and plan to make a professionally edited promotional video to spread the word about this ministry and help with fund raising. I’m in the process of applying for the “Basic Human Needs” Grant from the Episcopal



Charities and have made a petition to a large donor (through the City of White Plains) for 10 large storage containers. I just got off the phone with a contact about making arrangements to have free flu shots provided for families who are waiting in line to receive their food.

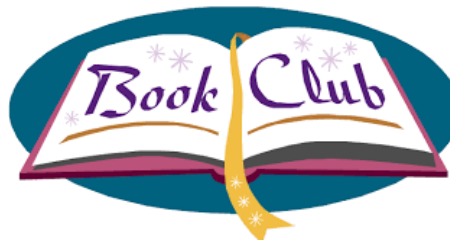
The Holy Spirit is in our midst. Our “energy supply”, as far as I can see, is boundless.

In Peace and Gratitude

Michael Heffner

Grace Church Book Club Update

Join us the first Tuesday of Every Month




Even during a pandemic, the Grace Church Book Club is still going strong! Join the Book Club on our journey through exciting book adventures this season (our 21st!). Until further notice, we will meet virtually through Zoom.

Dec 8, *Leave the World Behind* by Rumaan Alam: in this suspenseful novel, we’ll explore how times of crisis can reshape our closest bonds and forge new ones in the most unexpected ways.

Jan 12, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris: as hard as it is to imagine, we’ll learn how the power of the human spirit to love and bloom can prevail and triumph over evil and the deepest despair.

Mar 9, *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson: we’ll follow Isabel Wilkerson as she documents the evidence of a powerful caste system firmly in place in the U.S., and links the pernicious caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany.

Apr 13, *When No One is Watching* by Alyssa Cole: we’ll take a journey through the gentrification of a Brooklyn neighborhood that takes on a sinister form described as “*Rear Window* meets *Get Out*.”



May 11, *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles: we'll time travel back to 1922 when a Count, sentenced by a Bolshevik tribunal to house arrest in the attic of a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin, discovers what it means to be a man of purpose during a tumultuous time in Russian history.

Jun 8, *Hieroglyphics* by Jill McCorkle: we'll examine the impact of carrying secrets across generations through the experience of a married couple who initially bonded over their common loss of a parent early in life that later leads to unearthing memories, both pleasant and painfully complex.

Summer 2021, *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow: we'll delve deep into the book about the trajectory of Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's turbulent life, from his beginnings as an orphan in the Caribbean to his famous death in a duel with Aaron Burr, that inspired Lin-Manuel Miranda to create the spectacular Broadway hit musical, *Hamilton*.

Submitted by Karen Odom Interested in the Book Club? Contact Karen Odom (karenodom@yahoo.com).

VIEWS FROM THE PEWS

This holiday season will be like no other we have ever experienced. We are in the midst of the "second wave." There is a strict limitation on our interactions if we hope to be safe from this deadly virus. Being able to chat with our friends at Sunday morning coffee hour is no longer possible and so we feel very isolated from all in-person conversations.

A few parish friends have let us know how they plan to cope with this holiday isolation.

Cynthia Sangurima-Brown:

I'm grateful that we have the option of connecting via the web, but I'm "zoomed" out. I try to make it to church every other Sunday because I miss everyone. Even though we're all socially distant, in-person church is WAY better than online services. Besides working remotely and (trying) to stay healthy, books have always been a source of joy. However, I'm watching a lot more movies now. May you all find activities that inspire you and find ways to digitally engage with friends!

Karen Odom:

I still have no idea what form my holidays will take, whether in-person (intimate and socially distanced) or zooming with family in Chicago, Connecticut, Texas, Virginia and California. I know it will be wonderful, uplifting, and filled with gratitude.

Mary Baker:

I knew this was going to be a totally strange holiday when we recently discussed our scaled-down Thanksgiving holiday dinner menu. Rather than a festive dinner with extended family and friends, the

table will only be set for five of us. Since none of us is crazy about pumpkin pie, which is normally a holiday “given,” we decided to eliminate that entirely and instead serve our all-time favorite – a chocolate cream pie covered in whipped cream. I knew right then that all normality was out the window!

Another clue is that I am doing all my Christmas gift buying on-line, which is totally new for me.

I am trying to stay positive (although not totally succeeding) about the cancellation of my San Diego son and his wife’s annual holiday visit. This was always a yearly highlight for me. And our table will be missing my granddaughter from Pittsburgh. Of course, we will be “zooming” these holidays, but “zooming” is not “hugging.”

A favorite holiday movie is the “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.” This year I feel like the Grinch has turned into Covid!

Marva Williams:

Almost all my relatives live in San Francisco, California, so the holidays will not be spent with them as usual. Rather than spending the Thanksgiving holiday alone here in White Plains, I opted to give myself a treat and take a “staycation” at a hotel in New York City for five days. Although the holiday meal with probably be a room service delivery in my room, the rest of the time I will enjoy visiting my beloved museums.

Linda Heusser:



In past years, my small family (my daughter and her husband and three teenage girls, and Ben, and my son Ho and his wife from Oregon) have celebrated Thanksgiving together. I have always used a tablecloth and 12 napkins that my grandmother embroidered in France over 100 years ago. My grandmother was sent from Meissen, Germany, to France to “finishing school” to learn lady-like things like embroidery. I never knew her because the World War intervened and she died. I was supposed to go there to be baptized in her Lutheran church. The 12 napkins include one for each month (see pictures) and I tried to give each person the month in which they were born.

We always give thanks for the past year. One year one of the girls gave thanks for her boyfriend! It is a custom that evokes mixed emotions! We give thanks for being present with family, but we miss those not present because they have died. Although I know that Ben is with God, I still miss him, as does everyone else at the table.

This Covid Thanksgiving we are down to five. One granddaughter has married and is in California so there will be just me and my daughter, her husband, and two girls. I read about planning a small Thanksgiving dinner for 5. I bought a small turkey and thought about making a small amount of everything else—1 cheese, 1 vegetable, and 1 something or other for a starter. When I told my daughter that plan, she said, “Oh, no!” She is planning to bring a few cheeses, another vegetable, and a pre-dinner feast!

But all our plans may change. A steam pipe burst in my building and it will not be fixed before the holiday. It may be a very chilly Thanksgiving. I do have a fireplace and a space heater, but we may all be in for a “moveable feast” to another, warmer location.

This is just one more crazy thing to add to the year of Covid 2020!



PEACE ON EARTH

A Collect for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your spirit, that all people may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever. AMEN.

He will be called
Immanuel

God With Us

Holy
One

Mighty
God

Christ

Lamb
of
God

Savior

Ancient of Days

Unspeakable Gift

Prince of Peace

Everlasting
Father

King

Alpha and Omega

First Born of All Creation

Immortal
One

Everlasting
God

Light of the World

The
Word

Jesus

Good
Shepherd



Rest in Peace

**Barbara
Wiggins**

