



The ANGELUS

News of the Life of GRACE CHURCH

Over 150 Years in the Heart of White Plains

Dear Grace Church Family,

I continue to feel incredibly blessed and honored to be your Priest in Charge as God leads us into a new season of life and ministry together. As a parish together we have weathered storms, but we have also been blessed, and we are moving forward together into the next chapter of our church family's history.

We have just said goodbye to summer and hello to fall on September 22. Spiritually speaking, fall represents the harvest time of year, a time to acknowledge growth and expansion as a natural evolution of our organic being. Our lives go through cycles of growth, harvest, death, and rebirth just as we see in nature.

The fall season is also a great in-between-time, helping you make the transition from the heightened activity of summer to the deep quiet of winter. Fall serves to remind us that it is time to slow down from the intensity of summer. All in nature is winding down and preparing for the quiet, resting time that will come in the winter.

What a wonderful time of year this is. We just had our well attended Homecoming Barbecue where we all had the opportunity to catch up with one another, see parishioners that we had not seen in a long time, and share the wonderful happenings in our lives over the summer months. After the hot summer months, we now come back to church on a more routine basis as we settle into our church/school calendar year. We are also getting ready to have the Installation/ Commissioning of the Priest in Charge which will take place on October 29 at 3:00 PM.

Welcome Back Grace Church!

I look forward to seeing you in church.

God Bless, Adolfo+



Grace Church Retreat Life in the Spirit Seminar November 19 & 20

By Rev. Adolfo Moronta

What is a Spiritual retreat? A Spiritual retreat is time set apart to be in quiet, rest, and solitude with God. For generations, people have gone on spiritual retreats to encounter God and experience spiritual renewal. Retreats remove us from noise and distraction, into a place of spiritual refreshing and renewing.

When Jesus was on earth, he promised that he would send the Holy Spirit upon his followers. And he promised them that the Holy Spirit would do things among them that they could experience. He told them that they would be clothed with power from on high, that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes and that they will be witnesses... to the ends of the earth.

Life in the Spirit Seminar is a means to a better life through Christ. Through this retreat you will be guided to take the necessary steps which will allow Jesus to establish or restore or deepen a relationship with you.

Life in the Spirit Seminar Goals

1. To help participants in the Seminar to establish, re-establish or deepen an individual relationship with God through Jesus, the Christ.
2. To help participants yield to the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. God is active in the lives of believers.
3. As believers we are called to membership in a faith community, and to a life of service using the gifts, fruits and charisms offered through the Holy Spirit.
4. New Life means a life of discipleship and growth into Christ Jesus. As Christians we need effective means of growth, such as small faith-sharing groups, prayer, study, sacraments, and the reading of Scripture.

The retreat will help people deepen their faith in the Lord and grow in relationship with him, and it will include speakers, scripture, music, prayer and small groups.

Thursday Noon Services

During 2022 Grace/LaGracia has been working hard to reinvigorate the church, bringing people back to in-person services, rebuilding energy, and reinstating long-time traditions.

For many years noontime services were held every Tuesday and Thursday in the side chapel at the church. The weekday schedule was reduced to only a Thursday service in 2019 and completely eliminated with the Covid lockdown in March 2020.

But on Thursday August 25 our weekday Noontime service was resumed. The response was inspiring with 16 attendees that first Thursday. We met on the lawn in front of the church, with a brief service that included readings, sermon, singing and Eucharist. Subsequent services have also been very well attended. Participation has been joyous and enthusiastic- enough so that our singing has brought people passing by to stop and observe.

For years weekday noontime services provided a respite from the routine of daily life for parishioners as well as some people who worked in the area and they offered an opportunity to participate in a service and receive communion for those who could not attend a Sunday service.

The response to the first few weeks of our Thursday services is an indication that this is the right time to revive this tradition.

The Thursday Noontime Eucharist will be held outside on the front lawn as long as weather permits. When the weather is not conducive to an outdoor service we will meet inside near the entrance at the rear of the church near the doors.

Thursday at noon is a great time to take a break in your day for some fellowship, prayer and even some singing! Join us if you can, all are welcome and we would love to see you!





GRACE/LA GRACIA CHURCH CALENDAR

Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church

OCTOBER

- **October 2** **Baptism (During La Gracia Service)**
Sunday 12:30pm
- **October 6** **Noon Day Eucharist**
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **October 8** **Quinceañera Special Service (La Gracia)**
Saturday 11:00am
- **October 13** **Flu Shots Event by Lifting Up Westchester**
Thursday 9:30am – 12:30pm in Library and parking lot
- **October 13** **Noon Day Eucharist**
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **October 16** **ECW Meeting Hosted by Melanie Jackson**
Sunday 11:45am – 1:00pm / Library Booked
- **October 20** **Noon Day Eucharist**
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **October 23** **Priest in charge Stewardship Letter goes out to congregation**
Via Constant Contacts
- **October 27** **Noon Day Eucharist**
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **October 29** **Installation of Priest in Charge**
Saturday 3:00pm
- **October 30** **Stewardship Chair Letter gets sent out to congregation**
Via Constant Contacts

NOVEMBER

- **November 3** **Noon Day Eucharist**
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- November 5** **Quinceañera Special Service (La Gracia)** Saturday 3:00pm
- **November 6** **Pledge Sunday**
- November 10** **Noon Day Eucharist**
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church

- **November 11&12** Diocesan Convention
Friday & Saturday
- **November 13** Saint Catalina Eucharist (During La Gracia Service)
Sunday 12:30pm
- **November 13** ECW Meeting Hosted by Melanie Jackson
Sunday 11:45am – 1:00pm / Library Booked
- **November 17** Noon Day Eucharist
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **November 20 – 25** Vacation of Priest In Charge
Sunday – Friday Rev. Adolfo Moronta
- **November 24** Noon Day Eucharist
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **November 27** Advent Begins

DECEMBER

- **December 1** Noon Day Eucharist
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **December 8** Noon Day Eucharist
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- December 11** Virgen de Guadalupe La Gracia Event
Sunday 8:00pm
- **December 15** Noon Day Eucharist
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church
- **December 17** Christmas Party Ada Raiford Group
Saturday 12:00-3:00pm / Parish Hall Booked
- **December 18** Lessons and Carols
Sunday
- **December 18** ECW Meeting Hosted by Melanie Jackson
Sunday 11:45am – 1:00pm / Library Booked
- **December 22** Noon Day Eucharist
- **December 24** Christmas Pageant Hosted by George O'Hanlon
Saturday 4:00pm
- **December 29** Noon Day Eucharist
Thursday 12:00pm– 12:30pm / Outdoor in front of the church



STEWARDSHIP IN THE SUMMER 2022

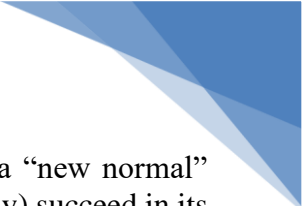
The Stewardship Committee hopes that you enjoyed the summer of 2022. The economy seems to be improving and the pandemic was not stressed as much. In fact, the politicians and advertisers on television encouraged New Yorkers to come out and enjoy all that NY has to offer. Of course, even though we have had both vaccinations and we are double boosted, we still have to be careful. New strains of the virus continue to affect children and adults.

There is always a great deal of activity at Grace La Gracia Church. Father Adolfo, our Priest in Charge, and our vestry have been working together to encourage all parishioners to be good stewards. We ask each parishioner to give as much financially as possible. But we also encourage the giving of time and talent to our church and to others less fortunate than we are. For example, Grace needed some repair/replacement work done on the front red door of the church. A group of men from LaGracia volunteered and started the necessary work in July. They continued their work over the next few Saturdays. Without this stewardship, we would have had to hire a contractor to do the work. So their stewardship decreased our overall expenses. Another example of good stewardship has taken the form of our youth group manning and restocking The Caring Cupboard. Families in need of food are able to enter the church through the Main Street entrance and pick up food, no questions asked. A third way to be a good steward is to come out to our recently restored Thursday Noon Day Services. Father Adolfo has asked for 5 or more parishioners to attend the outdoor (weather permitting) Noon day service. We are trying to spread the good news about Grace LaGracia to the White Plains community and its visitors. And one final example of being a good steward: did you attend, participate in and/or donate food to and/or prepare food for our welcome back Barbeque held on September 18th. It was enjoyed by many parishioners from Grace and LaGracia. It gave us a chance to mingle with and get to know each other.

Summer is now officially over. Please go back over the pledge that you made last November. Three quarters of the year is finished. Have you paid three quarters of your pledge? So for example: Let's say you pledged \$800.00. $\frac{1}{4}$ of \$800 is \$200. So as of the end of September we hope that you have paid \$600 to our church with the intention of paying the last \$200 before December 31st. If you missed a few Sundays and paid less than \$600, now is the time to try to catch up. Money paid after 12/31/22 is credited to 2023 by the IRS.

Grace LaGracia Church needs your financial support. Please know that your stewardship helps us to continue many programs and activities: Music (soloists and organist), Sunday School, the Sunday bulletin, the Forward Day booklet and other written materials, the Caring Cupboard, staff salaries, heat and air condition etc. There are many ways to give to our church:

- Put cash or check in an envelope during church service (envelopes available in the back of the church).
- Write a check and mail it or put it through the slot in the red door of Grace Church
- Arrange for your bank to send a check weekly/monthly to Grace Church
- Use Paypal, Zelle or other electronic service to give to Grace Church



The parishioners of Grace Church have always been a family. We are experiencing a “new normal” together. We are looking forward, not backwards. We can help Grace Church (our family) succeed in its mission by contributing time, talent, and the money that we pledged. Your good stewardship along with God’s love and guidance will help us enjoy a better tomorrow.

Charlotte Roberson, Stewardship Chairperson

THE GRACE CHURCH CHOIR

We are thrilled to have the Grace Church Choir return for the 2022-23 season, in which it plans to be “better than ever” with new beginnings, more voices, and more music. Most importantly, to keep the church’s traditions with expanded outcomes! Our first rehearsal of the season was a huge success. We had 6 people join us which was a pretty good start, but we are hoping for a lot more people as this year will mark a “full return of the choir since the pandemic.” Some of our repertoire that the choir is working on will include “Missa Brevis in F” by Hayden, arrangements by Mayo such as Cante Domino, Gloria Patre, Kyrie Elison, Ubi Caritas, and many other classical works that will suit liturgies appropriately and sweet sounding. Hayden’s Missa Brevis was one in particular that he admired for ‘the melody and a certain youthful fire.’ To present all this requires lots of technique, which is something that is incorporated during choir rehearsals (vowels, breathing, posture, and sight reading). We do this by simply incorporating some useful exercises into our repertoire such as *singing this line on the vowel ah, and paying attention to our rib cages as we breathe*. A lot is in store for the Grace Church Choir and we can’t wait to share it all every Sunday morning. New members are always welcome, no experience needed. Anyone interested please speak to Michael DiLeo, or simply join us for rehearsals on Sundays at 12pm.

“Singing isn’t just a good feeling to our soul, but it rings the bells to call the Lord upon us into our parish community” - A quote by Michael DiLeo

Grace Church Book Club Update

Celebrating 23 years!



The Book Club has been going strong for more than 20 years! It's now time to launch our 23rd season when we meet at 7 pm by Zoom on Tuesday, October 11, and discuss our summer read **Billy Lynn's Long Half-Time Walk** by Ben Fountain.

We look forward to another exciting season of adventures. Whether we're exploring stories based on fact and real-life narratives or stories born of the imagination of talented fiction writers, we can always count on an interesting and meaningful discussion when we meet.

Last season, our book journey included a fascinating look at the concept of love through the friendship of a teenager and her android friend (**Klara and the Sun** by Kazuo Ishiguro) and examining and admiring the personal account of an author's enlightening excursion through and appreciation of the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail (**A Walk in the Woods** by Bill Bryson).

We interspersed our line-up with more than one thriller—we traveled with the main characters through the twists and turns when neighbors began to unexpectedly disappear during the gentrification of Brooklyn (**When No One is Watching** by Alyssa Cole); we felt the fear as a pilot's family was kidnapped and their desperate measures to survive (**Falling: A Novel** by T.J. Newman); we navigated the chess-like moves through a legal thriller set in the halls of the U.S. Supreme Court (**While Justice Sleeps** by political leader Stacey Abrams); and we followed the abduction of a former Navy SEAL and a past-president's daughter and the special ops response that ensues (**The President's Daughter: A Thriller** by best-selling mystery author James Patterson and former President Bill Clinton).

Never a group to shy away from politics, we examined the controversial concept of critical race theory (**Silent Covenants** by law professor and legal scholar Derek Bell); we also satisfied our curiosity by learning more about Alexander Hamilton—from his troubled childhood in the Caribbean to becoming a founding father of the United States—through the very same biography that inspired Lin-Manuel Miranda to create the groundbreaking and immensely popular Broadway musical, *Hamilton* (**Alexander Hamilton** by Ron Chernow);

At our October 11 meeting, we will also begin scheduling our book selections for the season. Who knows where this season's book journey will take us! We do know that one of our season selections will be **State of Terror: A Novel** by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and award-winning mystery novelist Louise Penny. If you're interested in traveling with us, contact Karen Odom (karenodom@yahoo.com) or feel free to join in a meeting any time. You're always welcome whether it's for a single meeting or indefinitely. Submitted by Karen Odom



YOUTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Grace Church Youth Education Program is off to a fast start. Our classes represent 4 age groups. Our youngest class, which we refer to as the “Little Lambs,” is taught by Erica Santos. These students are aged kindergarten through third grade. Our primary class students attend grades fourth through sixth and are taught by Ingrid Richards and Tiffany Woodberry. Our Rite 13 students attend grades 7-8 and their teacher is George O’Hanlon. Finally, Lauren Reid teaches our high school students (J2A). Our first through sixth grade classes meet each Sunday upstairs from the sanctuary at the same time as the 10am service. Rite 13 meets at 10am in the parish Library. Our high school students meet 15 minutes after the end of the 10am service in the parish Parlors.

Our education program is tailored to the age group of the students, with our primary objectives to provide age-appropriate education on the principles and events which constitute the core of our Christian philosophy. We are inclusive by design and we go out of our way to try and have all students feel welcome. Parents are welcome to attend classes with the children, and to speak with their teachers.

We started the year with our annual “Blessing of the Book Bags” on September 11th, in which our students bring their school backpack to the 10am service, for a blessing from Father Adolfo. This event is popular both with our students and the broader congregation, and is a great way to start off the school year. In late October we will host our second annual pumpkin carving event for our Rite 13 and High School students. This activity is popular with our students young and old. After a successful initial event last year, we brought it back for this year. Each child picks out his/her favorite pumpkin from a local pumpkin store, and then we return to Grace Church for the carving. The event is well supervised and has resulted in many artistic pumpkins for the Grace Church families.

An important element of our program is having our students serve for the 10am service. We are proud that our students serve as ushers, acolytes and lay readers during the service as well as contributors to our Grace Kitchen events. Our philosophy is that performing service is a great supplement to our Youth Education teaching. And you will see many of our members serving alongside during the service and during our service projects.

We would love to expand the youth participation in our Grace Church Youth Education program. If you know anyone who might be interested, please contact one of our teachers referenced above, or our Youth Education director George O’Hanlon. George can be reached at 914 525 4381.

Homecoming Barbecue

By Rev. Adolfo Moronta



September 18 was a special Sunday at Grace/La Gracia. This was our Homecoming Sunday. Homecoming is a time to come together after time spent away. Homecoming is a celebration of old relationships, new relationships and a reminder of our identity as a church.

Planning for Homecoming began several months ago in June of 2022. Quickly a committee was formed, headed by Eileen McClean. A number of people volunteered their time and talent to work out the details of the day, but in addition to the individuals who volunteered, there were many parishioners who donated money and goods to support the efforts of the planning committee. Lifting Up Westchester assisted with the use of tables and chairs and White Plains High School graciously allowed us to use their parking lot for the barbecue.

The day started with a special bilingual service at 11 am with 110 congregants in attendance. Following the service we moved to the Rectory for the highlight of the day, our Homecoming Barbecue!

Over 150 members from Grace/La Gracia attended the barbecue. The barbecue was set up on the patio of the Rectory and a sense of celebration was in the air.

Our menu was a blend of the traditional barbecue fare along with many Caribbean specialties. Special thanks must go to Taurino for the incredible fruit table. The beauty of that colorful, delicious table perfectly captured the flavor of the day. The festive feeling was enhanced by the music of the Mariachi Band.

People of all ages were enjoying the food, the music, and most of all, the fellowship. It was beautiful to see all the smiling, happy faces on this very special day.

Organizing an event like the Homecoming Barbecue takes many hands to be successful. That certainly was true for our wonderful celebration this year. We are thankful to everyone who contributed in any way to the success of this day. This was a true Homecoming - celebrating old relationships, new relationships and a reminder of our identity as a church.



Finally, I want to also thank everyone who attended the barbecue and added to the fellowship and joy of this festive day. What a great day, a celebration we need to reinstate and establish as a tradition.! Let's start thinking now about what we can do to make it even better. So - on to next year - even bigger and better!





Our new Organist and Music Director

Michael A. DiLeo Jr. began here at Grace Church on May 1, 2022, and has lots of ministry and committee goals as we have warmly welcomed him at Grace Church. Michael is a fine church organist, a Classical Musician, Improvisor, and Baritone. He has been studying music for over a decade and has an extensive repertoire of classical performances throughout voice, piano, and organ and has been honored with several awards and scholarships. His big fascination as a kid was hearing the organ played and watching other organists, and wishing that could be him someday. During his years in high school, Michael was not only able to just accompany a choir, but also able to lead it periodically. In addition, he has also played for several fundraiser shows as well as a variety of both formal/informal recitals. In his years of studying organ, he has performed at several different churches throughout Westchester County, most recently, a Halloween Concert and Arts Afternoon Concert at West Center Congregational Church in Bronxville, as well as the AGO Members Recital at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Mount Kisco. He will play another Halloween Concert at West Center Church in Bronxville on October 30th.

Mr. DiLeo is currently an undergraduate B.A Music Education student at Manhattanville College with a concentration in piano and organ, and will continue his M.A. Organ Scholar studies after receiving his Music Education Degree in 2024. In addition to being at Grace Church, Mr. DiLeo is also organist at the O'Byrne Chapel, located at Manhattanville College and teaches piano at Songcatchers Inc. in New Rochelle, NY. He began studying piano at 8 years old and on into high school, and then at 19, began his organ and vocal studies. We are very grateful to have Michael with us here at Grace Church as he is eager to present himself musically and worthily in his years to come!

“Grace Church has become my home and spiritual family with such welcoming people! I am really looking forward to not just being a part of this church, but of course getting to know everyone, expand upon the music ministry and, of course, to allot a variety of historical and traditional music for many years to come”

“Ever Since my childhood years, I have always wanted to be able to play the organ just like other organists, and then in high school I became interested in choral conducting and found it to be fun. My career then became official and most importantly, I have found my place!”

“Music is Life Itself” – Armstrong

Hon. Delores Scott Brathwaite

Honored by Pace Law School



On April 14, 2022, the Elizabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University held its *Annual Gavel Gala Dinner Awards* event in celebration of the *Pace Law School Advocacy Program*.

Among the distinguished honorees was the **Hon. Delores Scott Brathwaite**, recipient of Pace Law School's "*Unsung Hero*" Award for her many years of participation, dedication and commitment to the Law School's Judicial Advocacy Program and for her Mentorship of law students.

She is a 1984 graduate of Pace Law School and in 2009 was honored by Pace Law School with their *Distinguished Leadership Award*.

Judge Brathwaite has been the recipient of numerous social justice awards, honors and proclamations from State, County and local organizations for her outstanding contributions to law, human rights, civil rights and mentorship of young women in high school, college and law school. She said that while she "cherishes every award she has received, but to be honored and recognized by your law school (*twice*) is the *crème de la crème*!"

Judge Brathwaite is the Senior Judge of the Greenburgh Town Court, is an Acting City Court Judge and also serves as an Accessible Magistrate handling *Raise the Age* cases involving Adolescent and Juvenile Offenders.



General Convention 2022

By Lauren Reid

This past July, the National Church held its 80th General Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. Convention should have taken place in 2021, but was postponed because of Covid. We were fortunate that it was possible to hold Convention this year, though Covid-19 continued to play a role in shaping the look of the event. I learned a great deal about the ins and outs of Convention, but I think the most important thing that I learned is that there is no way I could possibly take all there is to know about Convention and successfully convey it in this article. I will do my best to share a basic framework of what I've learned. Because of the reconfiguration of Convention, I had the opportunity to attend the Persons of Color Pre-Convention Meeting in person in Baltimore in May, but was only able to view Convention online in July.

General Convention is an event that typically takes place every three years, and usually lasts officially for 9 days, though most voting members are in attendance anywhere from 10-14 days. This year's convention was originally shortened to 8 days in total, then shortened even more when several pre-convention workshops resulted in Covid outbreaks. The Convention planners worked tirelessly to pivot in an effort to keep everyone safe. In the end, General Convention met in person July 8th – 11th, and in-person attendance was largely limited to voting deputies, Executive committee members, and some essential staff. The amount of work completed by those in attendance in the amount of time allocated was nothing short of monumental.

This was to have been my first opportunity to attend General Convention, as I was elected as an Alternate Deputy to Convention representing the Diocese of New York. I learned that each Diocese sends a *deputation*, not a *delegation*. Delegates are required to vote according to the wishes of the body they are representing. Deputies prayerfully vote their conscience based on the information they have gathered over the numerous pre-Convention caucuses that address the issues and dozens of proposed resolutions that effect the life of the Church not only in the U.S., but Haiti, the Virgin Islands, and Western Europe. It is honestly no exaggeration to say there may be hundreds. I didn't count. Luckily, I didn't have to, because each deputation works together to gather and share information, and the work goes on from morning until night. I was told by the deputies in attendance that they were up at 6:30 and worked until 9 or 10pm each night. This is not a vacation!

Deputies are assigned to Legislative Committees and focus on the resolutions assigned to their committees. Alternate Deputies, like me, choose a Legislative Committee to follow, gathering information about their discussions and actions regarding the resolutions. Our Diocesan deputation tried to spread all deputies and alternates across 24 Legislative Committees (some of which were even broken into additional committees) so that we had ears and eyes on the resolutions that were of greatest importance to us. As Co-Chair of the Diocesan Anti Racism Committee, I followed Committee 9 – Racial Justice and Reconciliation, but there were so many other committees I had so much interest in as well, including World Mission, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation, & Safeguarding, Prayer Book, Liturgy & Music, and Christian Formation & Discipleship. I'm pleased to say that many of the resolutions I followed on Committee 9 were addressed and accepted by the Convention.



Sunday, December 10th, is designated on calendars throughout the world as Human Rights Day. This day is celebrated every year on this date ever since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed at the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

The theme this year is how rights are the beginning of peace within society and a way to create a fairer society for future generations. This theme was taken from Article 1 of the Declaration, which states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Here is a quote from ***Eleanor Roosevelt***, who was prominently important in the development and passage of this Declaration in 1945:

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

As a baptized Christian, each of us has an important stake in this declaration of human rights. The Baptismal Covenant requires each of us to answer the following questions:

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

And you have answered: **I WILL, WITH GOD’S HELP!**



WOMEN'S OPEN CLOSET

Women Helping Women – Town of Greenburgh

By Delores Brathwaite

One of the things that emerged from the Covid 19 pandemic was that many people began to “purge” or clean out their closets. Many women were finding that they had clothes that were new (with the tags still on them) or “gently used” that they would not be wearing again for whatever reason. The problem was – they did not know where they could take them to ensure they would be given to women in need. Most of the well-known places that accept clothing donations had closed due to the pandemic. And still, many women who had experienced loss due to fire, finances or other misfortune were in need of clothes.

On Saturday, May 14, 2022, under the leadership of Hon. Delores Scott Brathwaite, Greenburgh Town Justice and in collaboration and coordination with Judith Beville, Greenburgh Town Clerk and Tina Phoenix Harper, Recreation Leader at the Department of Community Resources at the Theodore D. Young Community Center, women of the Town of Greenburgh were invited to donate new and gently used items of clothing, shoes, handbags, and accessories to the new –

GREENBURGH “WOMEN’S BOUTIQUE and OPEN CLOSET”

Donors were given the option to donate their items or set up their own boutique.

The event, held in the Cafeteria of Town Hall, garnered hundreds of items ranging from casual wear, business attire to formal wear. Many of the items donated were high end designer clothes, shoes and handbags.

From 12:30 pm to 5:30 pm on the day of the event, many women came to “shop” at the Open Closet and avail themselves of the myriad of items. All items were “free” – giving this event a two-fold impact: It (1) allowed women to purge their closets of gently used or never used items and (2) allowed women who needed or were unable to afford items the opportunity to enjoy beautiful clothes, shoes and other accessories.

Although the event and the items were “free” – some of the “shoppers” voluntarily made small monetary “thank you” donations. Any and all donations were given to the Theodore Young Community Center for the benefit of their youth Summer Camp.

Given the success of this program, the intent is to repeat the Open Closet project in the Fall and to have other individuals and organizations join in the project.

Thank you also to Fran Shorts (AWAH), Connie Fowler (NCNW), George Malone and Lloyd Clunie, Jr. for assisting with the set-up and organization

In Memoriam



Queen Elizabeth II

On Thursday, September 8, 2022 we were all shocked to hear of the Death of Queen Elizabeth II. She had been Queen since February 6, 1952, making her the longest-reigning British monarch in history.

Born in 1926, Elizabeth was the daughter of King George V's second son, and had little expectation of succeeding to the throne until her uncle, King Edward VIII, abdicated in 1936 to marry the divorced American socialite Wallis Simpson. After the death of her father, King George VI, 25-year-old Elizabeth was called upon to assume the throne, beginning a momentous reign.

Elizabeth's coronation ceremony was the first to be broadcast live on television. Some 27 million people in the United Kingdom (out of a total population of 36 million) watched the ceremony, and 11 million more listened on the radio. Afterward, some 3 million people lined the route as the queen and her entourage made their slow procession back to Buckingham Palace.

Queen Elizabeth was also the supreme governor/Head of the Church of England, a position which is vested in the British monarch. Although the monarch's authority over the Church of England is largely ceremonial and is mostly observed in a symbolic capacity, the position is still very relevant to the church. It is good to point out that the Church of England is the mother church of the Episcopal Church and both are part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

As the supreme governor, the monarch formally appoints high-ranking members of the church on the advice of the prime minister of the United Kingdom, who is in turn advised by church leaders, such as the Lords Spiritual.

In February 2022, the United Kingdom staged a series of celebrations for the queen's Platinum Jubilee—marking 70 years of her service to the British Commonwealth.

She installed her 15th Prime Minister Liz Truss, just two days before her death, and peacefully died at age 96.

We do not choose the life into which we are born and seldom do we shape the events that define our times. We could only hope to move through life with humility and close regards for those around us. To conduct

ourselves in the time we are given with compassion, with kindness and with grace. Rest in peace and rise in glory, Queen Elizabeth II!

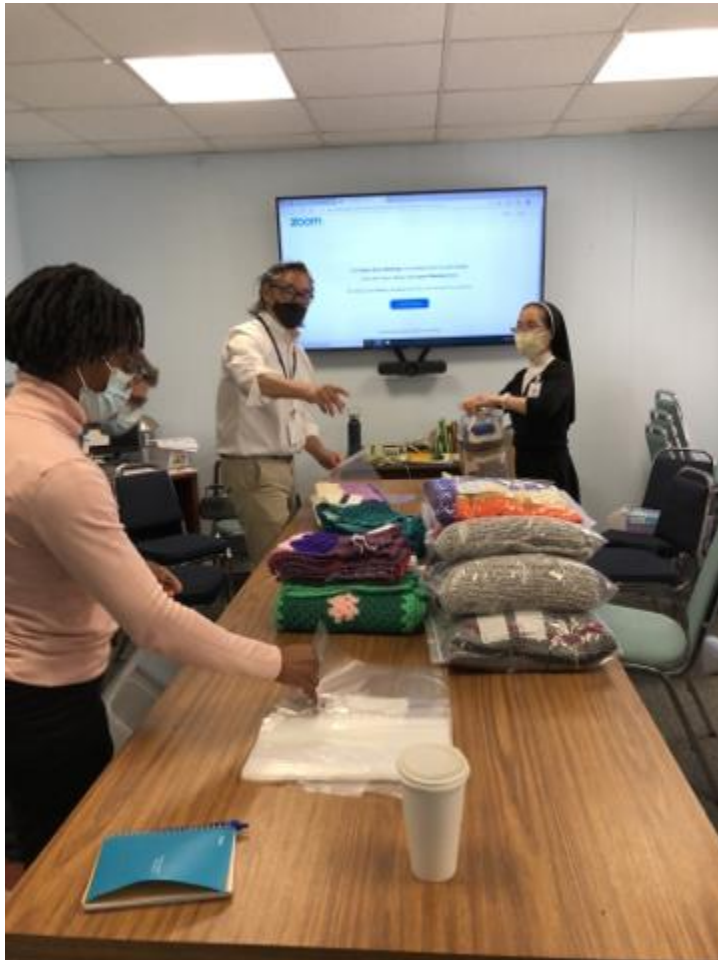


George Washington's Prayer of Thanksgiving and Praise

Most gracious Lord God, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift, I offer to Thy Divine Majesty my unfeigned praise and thanksgiving, for all Thy mercies toward me. Thou made me at first and hast ever since sustained the work of Thine own hand. Thou gave Thy Son to die for me, and hast given me assurance of salvation upon my repentance and sincerely endeavoring to conform my life to His holy precepts and example. Thou art pleased to lengthen out to me the time of repentance and to move me to it by Thy Spirit and by Thy Word, and by Thy mercies and by Thy judgments. Amen.

Prayer for Thanksgiving Day from the Book of Common Prayer

Almighty and gracious Father, we give thee thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we beseech thee, faithful stewards of thy great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen



Thoughts from the Seminarian

Michael Heffner - Yale Divinity School

Master of Divinity Candidate – 2024

(I tapped into this reflection paper for my sermon from August 7. I was grateful that my mother got to see the video, before she passed away on August 15th. This piece is dedicated to her memory. May light perpetual shine upon Naeko Yoshihira Heffner).

I spoke by phone (with my sister's assistance) with my mother the other day and tried to explain what I was doing as a hospital chaplain. The call was to wish my mother a happy wedding anniversary (the 26th of July would have been my parents' 62nd anniversary). It quickly pivoted to something more as my mother asked how my summer was going. I spent some time explaining the CPE program – and shared that it was a combination of education (teaching us how) and the pastoral application of what we learn in a hospital setting. I told her that it was a full-time job, Monday to Friday – 8:00 to 4:30 – and that we were expected to be there without fail. I added that we were on a 24-hr call (picture – packing prayer blankets for the patients)

at the hospital every other weekend. She was surprised to hear about the amount of writing involved, the process work that was being done

with the team members and the educators, and the general intensity of the experience. I explained that this was all part of my formation. I then decided that the best way to describe the applied portion of the program was to recount a day (a rough version of a verbatim) at the hospital.

The day starts before 6:00 am (I am generally up well before the alarm goes off), checking the weather, scanning the headlines, and making some coffee. The following 30 minutes is about physical therapy and stretching – the necessary therapy from 2 major surgeries and decades of martial arts training. I'm dressed and out the door by 7:30. The scooter (and I did spend time sharing about the joys of commuting by electric scooter) ride generally takes less than 15 minutes – so I'm at the "office" well before 8:00. I go immediately to the computer and check out the internal system and print out the information for "pre-ops" (those patients who will be operated on shortly), "consults" (requests for spiritual care visits), and the units that I cover (the intensive care units). I'll spend the next 30 minutes putting together a plan (they call it "triage") for whom to visit over the balance of my day. Each day, there's a group meeting where the administrators and chaplains gather to review the previous day, share joys/concerns, present meditations, and plan for the coming day. Then we get to work.



A Day at St. Raphael's Campus (Yale New Haven Hospital)

I decided that the best way for my mother to understand what I was doing was to give specific illustrations. I shared with her that I'll routinely attend discharge meetings with the nursing staff to gain insights into patient conditions, but that isn't always enough preparation for entering the room and first engaging the patient. Not every patient is receptive to a visit. Not every engagement is deeply spiritual. Sometimes it's just about companionship – and a willingness, if necessary, to advocate. Bringing “authentic presence” to every engagement is imperative.

The Patient grieving the anniversary of her son's passing

I entered the room; the woman was sitting in bed watching television. I introduced myself as the chaplain. She turned off the tv and welcomed the visit. She seemed lonely, and getting things started wasn't a challenge. She shared immediately that that day was the first anniversary of her son's passing (I gathered from the conversation that it was a suicide). She talked a lot about faith and hope – but the visit was colored by the presence of the emotion of the patient missing her son.

The “St. Francis” Patient

I walked into the room, and the patient was on the phone and quickly hung up. I'm unsure if she thought I was part of the medical team. I introduced myself, and the patient soon engaged. We spoke about her reason for being in the hospital – and then she shifted the conversation to religion. An extended part of her sharing was about how important the church was to her (she was a eucharistic minister in the Catholic church). It then shifted to her disappointment with her home church having to close and her priest being moved. The highlight of the visit was her sharing about being introduced to the Franciscans. We spoke at length about St. Francis (his work with the poor, his recognition of the needs of the lepers, and his love for animals). We connected and drilled down. I arranged for the hospital priest (Roman Catholic) to give her Communion.

The Patient who wants to go back to the Tae Kwon Do dojo

I met this patient in the early stages of this program. The nurses gave me suggestions that it might be a challenge connecting. I was getting a “flat” vibe when I first went in, but we bonded over the movie he was watching, “The Karate Kid,” and the martial arts. My encouragement to return to his school and get his black belt (he is very close) was a spark that (the nurses told me) helped bring him to a better place. The nurses encouraged me to visit this patient as he prepared for his surgery. The most recent visit was “a job well done” visit as the procedure was a success. The patient kept pointing to God and saying he was watching over him. We continued to talk about getting back to the dojo—a feel-good visit.

The Firemen

The nurse strongly suggested that I visit this patient. He was in a condition where comfort measures only (CMO) was being provided. His son was with him. I entered the room and immediately determined that much of the conversation would be through the son. I explained who I was and that I was there to provide any necessary assistance. I connected with the son to the point where he began sharing his family's story. That allowed me to keep the visit going. As it turns out, the patient was having a tough time, and the son was anticipating the inevitable. He spoke about his mother passing in February and his sister passing two years ago. I acknowledged the sadness in the room. I did discover that both the father and the son were former career firemen. This connection to my personal experience (my son is considering the same career path) was the common basis for the three of us to have an excellent visit.

The Roman Catholic Patient who just wanted a prayer

This patient knew immediately what she wanted when I introduced myself as the chaplain. She engaged in small talk about her medical condition. She talked about what a great job the medical team had done. She spoke about her relationship with God and the church and asked for prayer. She thanked me – addressing me as Father – and sent me on my way. I played my part. She played her part. Sometimes that's how it goes.

The Year of the Ox Patient

Late afternoon visit. The patient was watching tv and peered at me over her glasses. She was convinced by her facial expression that my presence was unnecessary. I'm still unsure what gave me the traction to stay in the room (was it my pitch on the benefits of spiritual care, was it my willingness to listen to her, was it that I had a familiar face?). A direction shift highlighted the visit to something I'm very familiar with – the Chinese zodiac (the 12 animals assigned to birth years). We determined that she was born in the year of the Ox – and spent much of our time discussing the characteristics of people born in that year. An interruption by the medical team didn't stop the flow of the conversation. The visit ended only because the meds started to kick in, and she couldn't keep her eyes open.

These were five of the eight patients whom I visited that day. My mother patiently listened through each of these episodes. Her only response to me when I was done was,

"You're doing God's work, Michael."

ALL SAINTS DAY – NOVEMBER 1

The string of church holidays – All Hallows Eve (known culturally as Halloween), All Saints Day, followed by All Souls Day – was created by the church back in the 7th century. They are based on the conviction that there is a spiritual connection between Heaven and on Earth.



Thank you, God, for the tremendous sacrifices made by those who have gone before us. Bless the memories of your saints. May we learn how to walk wisely from their examples of faith, dedication, worship, and love.



HOME SWEET HOME

Lifting up Westchester Essay Contest

In the Summer Angelus, the Lifting Up Westchester Student Essay Contest winners for the 7th and 8th grade were published. Included was the winning essay written by our own Kendal Mangum. The 2022 contest asked the young people to reflect and write on the role housing plays in influencing our collective future.

In this issue, we are presenting the winner in the 9th-10th grade category and the winner in the 11th-12th grade category. In the next Angelus we will print the winning essay in the English as a Second Language category.

The contest is held annually and winners receive cash prizes. It is always awesome for us to read what our teenagers are thinking and feeling. It gives us great hope that our world will include such future leaders.

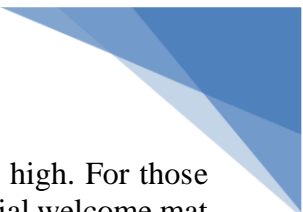
Each year a new contest with a new area of concern is announced in the middle of October on the Lifting Up Westchester web site for essays that are due by the middle of January. Here at Grace/LaGracia we have very talented youth and we would always hope that some of them might be inspired to enter the contest for 2023.

Fishing Poles

By Natasha Pereira, 10th grade

Give a man a fish, he can eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he can eat for a lifetime. But, he still needs a fishing pole. This saying reflects the problem of housing in the United States. Property prices, inconsistent employment, government subsidies, the pandemic, and poor urban planning are the primary causes of Westchester County's housing crisis. Unstable housing is often defined by tenants' difficulties paying rent, frequent moving, couch-surfing, and disproportionate income spent on rent. With unstable homes come unstable families – it's a suppressive cycle. People cannot flourish without knowing if there is a roof overhead. In 2020, roughly 85,000 Westchester residents were in poverty and therefore living (or barely surviving) in unstable homes. It's not a government dole that's needed, it's the pole.

Westchester County is seen as a wealthy community. However, the median income masks the thousands of homeless individuals. This is only increasing as NYC has been sending homeless families to Westchester. Furthermore, in the past two years, housing prices have increased 50% or more in some places. Rents have seen record heights of 150% climbs. Thus, those who are living in rentals are having an even harder time making their rents. Those families receiving aid at the start of the pandemic will suffer when these relief programs expire. Many of them already have. Westchester also has the highest property




tax rate per the 2019 data report by ATTOM, making the costs of owning a home very high. For those already struggling, the recent housing environment of Westchester has pulled the proverbial welcome mat out from underfoot.

Our housing problem is further exacerbated by gentrification. Due to gentrification, low-income individuals are forced to move out of communities with shifting landscapes – no different from Williamsburg, Brooklyn in the early 2000s, and Harlem when President Clinton moved his offices there in 2001. Moving further away from popular communities prevents people from working in locations with generally higher wages. Gentrification also impedes the ability of businesses to hire workers, negatively impacting Westchester's local economies. It seems like common sense for all communities to reign in gentrification by having affordable housing. It further benefits local and state economies because when families can afford to buy homes, they pay property taxes. And if they have a home they can afford, then they have more money to spend in restaurants and shops. Moreover, affordable housing located near public transit can help low-income residents save money, access better jobs, and reach critical services.

America, especially Westchester, has the money to solve the home affordability crisis. It seems that funds have been diverted to "aftercare" - NOT preventative measures. Government handouts/subsidies, rental assistance, and homeless shelters don't help long term. Preventative measures make sense financially. In 2018, Boston Medical Center found that nationwide, \$111 billion in health care and educational costs could be avoided if all families with children simply lived in a stable home. These costs include increased hospitalizations, ambulatory visits, dental procedures, mental health services, and educational or daycare provisions.

"Lifting up Westchester " offers both a life jacket and a fishing pole. Each year, LUW changes the lives of thousands of locals by securing stable housing, food, and healthcare. LUW operates 250 supportive housing units county-wide. Individuals living with mental illness, substance abuse, or homelessness have gained an ally. This foundation is the platform upon which individual and family success can be - and will be - built. LUW creates opportunities for a largely ignored group to thrive. It provides educational services via their Housing Retention Specialists to shelter clients, teach them good tenancy, and work with individuals who need longer-term financial support. Thousands can focus on building (or rebuilding) their lives and working towards personal goals - like time with family, career advancement, and self-care.

Another long-term solution that could help Westchester is an increased focus on zoning and urban planning. Certain communities would benefit from rezoning for multi-family housing. White Plains is currently undergoing a complex gentrification process. The developers should be given an incentive or tax break to use portions of their projects for affordable housing. Also, local and state governments can buy single-family homes and convert them into sustainable multi-family homes. They can provide loans for low-income residents. But such housing must be integrated into the community, not sectioned off, deterring crime, and increasing curb appeal. The county government can use a portion of real-estate taxes to pay for this endeavor. These solutions will prevent gentrification from being a fait accompli...we know how that story goes: rents and property tax rise, locals become marginalized, storefronts empty, and quickly an entire demographic disappears. Westchester neighborhoods need to reframe the very notion of gentrification. We can be at the forefront of preventing zip codes from determining success in life.



This problem isn't too complicated to solve, but perhaps too delicate for some residents to meaningfully engage with. Some communities in Westchester feel that they don't want "those kinds of homes." They invoke the saying: "Not in MY backyard!" But these residents may be convinced when they see the diversity, both culturally and economically, that comes with fairer housing practices. Communities become richer and more interesting. They become better places to live, to eat, to work...and to raise open-minded children.

I've never asked anyone to catch my fish, just show me how. Take me down to the pier - in Yonkers, or Hastings, or any river town in this remarkable county, and I'll bring poles. I'll also lend you my spare if you don't have your own. And if you happen to fall in, I'll consider it as my personal responsibility to save you. It's what we do in this country; or should.

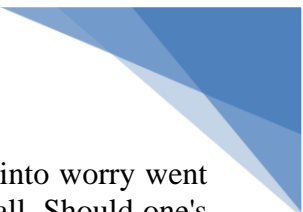
PHANTOM WALLS

By Kylie Staebler, 11th Grade

A bedroom. A kitchen. A bathroom. Maybe a garage. Is that what a house is? Or is it something else entirely? A house is more than four walls and a roof. It is a sanctuary: a place of safety and solace for its inhabitants where they can come home after a long day of work or school or struggles and shed life's burdens in the comfort of familiar surroundings. Yet not everyone is fortunate enough to share in such luxury. Even among the most affluent of towns, struggling families find themselves reduced to nomadic lives hopping between shelters and friends' couches without a residence of their own.

Such is the case here in Westchester County, NY. While mansions and horse farms span across its towns, in 2019, Westchester was home to a reported 1,812 homeless people according to statistics from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). And this number only included individuals who made their way to shelters for consecutive nights. The estimated total number of homeless people in Westchester County – “encompassing those who take emergency residence in a friend's house, their cars, etc.” – is likely substantially higher. There are many different levels of homelessness. Some experience what's known as transitional homelessness, often occurring during catastrophic events like flood damage or major life changes like losing one's job. Others suffer from episodic homelessness, in which they experience 3 unique periods of homelessness within the same year. The most ill-fated of souls fall into the category of chronic homelessness: being homeless for longer than an entire year, often due to limitations like mental illness or physical disabilities which prevent them from fighting their way out of such desperate situations.

Finding housing in a "normal" year is already enough of a struggle. Now think about the additional challenges that have plagued the past decade: the rise in the cost of living has vastly outpaced the rise in annual salaries, natural disasters have destroyed cities, and the ultimate grand finale: the world was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic and irreversible damage ensued. Family after family fell victim to financial crises, with more than a reported 31.3 Americans finding themselves unable to work between 2019 and 2021 due to pandemic-related business closures and cutbacks (US Bureau of Labor Statistics). As panic electrified the globe, prices of virtually all products skyrocketed: an 8oz bottle of hand sanitizer could sell



for upwards of \$15, not to even mention what rent rates sailed up to. Out of wage and into worry went many individuals during this time and housing became one of the greatest questions of all. Should one's government-issued stimulus check be used to help cover rent, or was it more important to put food on the table than to keep the electricity running that month? That's a decision that no one should ever have to make. Yet it's the reality of our world.

It's the reality of our Westchester community behind its exterior of country club golf courses and million-dollar homes. Even in beautiful Westchester County, COVID-19 created a minefield that rendered many without income and reliable housing. All levels of homelessness represent a failure as a society to ensure that people have access to a fundamental necessity of life: shelter. Fortunately, there are continuous efforts to help right this wrong. In Westchester County, organizations like Lifting Up Westchester (LUW) devote themselves to combatting the ever-increasing homelessness rates by helping individuals transition back into independent living that is safe, stable, and affordable. LUW operates various programs, including managing over 250 supportive housing units where individuals struggling with mental illness, substance abuse, or chronic homelessness can retain stable housing from year to year. This is the beauty of LUW: its unique creation of programs that make a difference long-term. On top of providing nights of emergency shelter (making a tremendous difference by providing over 20,000 of such nights to people experiencing homelessness), LUW provides resources such as a Housing Retention Specialist who helps struggling individuals navigate the uncertain realm of affordable housing. LUW has been able to return hundreds of formerly homeless individuals back to independent living.

What many don't acknowledge is that homelessness doesn't just impact where a person sleeps each night. It impacts a person's entire future. Children who grow up homeless or with some degree of unstable housing are identified by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) as more likely to drop out of high school, suffer from mental health issues, and have higher rates of substance abuse than their peers. For elementary-aged children, being homeless can even lead to social disconnect and isolation from classmates. All who experience any form of homelessness are also more likely to receive inadequate healthcare and leave maladies untreated. Ultimately, unstable housing isn't just something that a person can compartmentalize and live unaffected by. It leaves a mark on an individual, one that sticks with them like a phantom they can't get rid of. It is for this reason that support from community members is so imperative. Ranging from vocational training and employment guidance to academic enrichment for children in homeless families, to even college prep programs for such individuals, there are various ways to get involved in programs such as the aforementioned ones provided by LUW. All are a collective effort to ensure that anyone who finds themselves homeless at some point in time, can live a successful future.

Until you've experienced firsthand what it means to not know where you're sleeping that night, or how stressful the daily debate of "should I bring my toothbrush to school with me this morning?" is, or until you know how it feels to not be able to invite friends over because you don't have anywhere to invite them to, you can't fully understand. The best you can do is try to help. More than half a million Americans experience homelessness on any given night. Imagine if something you did could change the life of even one of those people.



In Thanksgiving for the Life of Naeko Yoshihira Heffner

November 15, 1934 – August 15, 2022

Memorial Service

Saturday, October 8, 2022

1:00 pm (Reception to follow immediately after the service)

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Mount Kisco, New York

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Downtown Music at Grace (Downtown Music is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization). DTM has made a substantial investment in the cultural life of the Westchester County community and has over 34 years created something truly unique and successful. Naeko enjoyed attending concerts and supporting the artists over the decades that she lived in this area. Her connection to Executive Director Tim Lewis goes back to the 1970s.

Downtown Music 33 Church Street, White Plains, NY
10601 www.dtmusic.org (914) 949-0384

REST IN PEACE

Almighty God, Father of mercies and giver of comfort: Deal graciously, we pray, with all who mourn; that, casting all their care on you, they may know the consolation of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



Gladstone Reid



NaeKo Yoshihira Heffner with her son Michael



Pat Hosten

Wyman Roberson

Marjorie Fletcher

The Angelus

Quarterly Newslette

(914) 949-2874

www.gracewhiteplains.org

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