



WINTER 2021



The ANGELUS

News of the Life of GRACE CHURCH

Over 150 Years in the Heart of White Plains

Advent Comes to Grace Church

Advent is coming! The weather is cool. The leaves are gone. The fireplace warms. And Advent is upon us, beginning November 28th, the First Sunday in Advent, initiated with a green wreath and new weekly purple/pink and eventually a white center candle enveloping our Anglican tradition forward. Advent is what we do. Advent prepares us for the coming of Jesus Christ, Christmas morn. Advent forces us to this notion of liminality, slowing time and allowing us to contemplate where we have been, where we are going – life, family, church, and the world. Advent's primal focus is expectation – the already, not-quite-yet process necessary before the virgin birth underneath the stars of wise men. Advent allows us to ponder, prepare, rejoice, and more deeply contemplate our Lord and Savior, ever guiding us in those things we do and speak.

Father Chip

Father in Heaven, I pray earnestly for your continued protection and watching over our beloved Grace/la Gracia Episcopal Church, now approaching two hundred years of amazing ministry – worshipping, pastoring, advocating, outreaching, and educating. We respond to your grace through your gifts bestowed through your son, to whom we pray, commune, respond and love. Be with us God in this time of expectation of your glory, incarnate. Continue to guide us, lead us and be with us as we venture toward you, in ways

known and unknown; in ways understood and misunderstood; and in ways we see and in ways we are blind.

Amen.

La Gracia Annual Retreat
By Father Moronta



On September 24, 25 & 26 La Gracia held its annual retreat called Transforming Lives. The retreat aimed to renew in our parishioners a deep personal commitment to Jesus Christ in openness to the Holy Spirit and His gifts. It serves as an introduction to a life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

During the three days participants were part of a spiritual process of seven teaching sessions, each one building upon the previous one. The retreat included speakers from both New York and Florida and was accompanied by joyful and spiritual music, prayer times and small group meetings where the participants shared their point of views, asked questions and formed a small community. Almost 100 participated in this annual retreat which has an objective to: 1) Begin, renew or deepen a relationship with Jesus, 2) Motivate parishioners to a fuller participation in Parish Life, 3) Developed greater appreciation of Eucharist, 4) Deepen prayer life and 5) Increase study of Scripture.

Many who attended the retreat experienced God and the Holy Spirit in a way they had never done before. Many received the **Gifts of the Holy Spirit** just as the Apostles did in the upper room on Pentecost; gifts which are given to improve our lives and the lives of our families, the church and our community. This is the third time La Gracia has had this type of retreat. The first one was almost five years ago and we are looking forward for many more to come.





YOUTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Grace Church's Youth Education Program has been "full speed ahead" since early September, with an active slate of activities and programs.

We kicked off our Youth Education program just after Labor Day with our traditional blessing of the book bags. Here we are all reminded of the importance of both Christian education and the education provided by our schools, in the lives of our youth.

The Grace Youth Education program proceeds at several levels. We offer: pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes; elementary school programs; a middle school class; and a class for our high schoolers. The objective is to bring peers together and afford not just Christian learning, but lasting friendships as well. We see these objectives at work not only among our present students, but our alumni/alumnae who we see regularly in Grace Church.

Our primary (elementary) students have been focused on learning about the Gospels, in which they have observed how Jesus taught through parables, personal example and wisdom. These students have also been talking about how they, as Christians, can find favor with God by fulfilling Christian values of humility, integrity and service to others.

Our Rite 13 (Middle School) students have just completed a 5-week study on prayer. Our class discussions focused on what prayer means to us and how we pray, and involved a detailed study of the Lord's Prayer. Our goal through these discussions is to make prayer a truly fulfilling experience, and a springboard for personal and spiritual growth. Rite 13 has also been studying how the Bible fits together as New and Old Testament, and the role of the Gospels.

Our J2A class has continued its practice of meeting on Sunday afternoons a few times a month, to avoid conflict with the Church service and to enhance camaraderie among the class. Some meetings have taken place at various locations around Westchester, and sometimes the class meets at the Church. Discussion points focus on connecting Christian teaching with the daily lives of our high schoolers. A highlight for this year's J2A and Rite 13 classes was our pumpkin carving event, which took place in mid-October at the Church. Our craftspeople were able to fashion 10 attractive pumpkins to festoon their homes in an afternoon of fellowship and fun.

A core element of our Christian education is service. For this reason, we continue to be proud that starting with our older primary level students, essentially all of the Youth Education students serve as some combination of lay readers, acolytes and ushers at our Church services. You have doubtless seen them in action!

We have already started planning our Grace Church Youth Education Christmas Pageant. Come see our annual re-enactment of the Christmas story on Christmas Eve in Grace Church!

By George O'Hanlon



Stewardship 2021-22

Each year we select a theme for our Stewardship season. In light of the many challenges we have faced in 2020 and 2021 we decided to choose the theme “Celebrate Life” with the corresponding verse “This is The Day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (John 5:24).

Planning for our next Stewardship campaign began in September, 2021. Then in October we asked for volunteers to give a short talk on stewardship. The first talk was given on October 31st. Other talks were given in November. A Pledge letter and form were mailed to each parishioner. If you have not received one, please speak to Cynthia S. Brown, Charlotte Roberson or Daisy Calderon or an usher during the 10am or 12:30pm service. Pledge forms can also be obtained by: clicking on the link in the Sunday bulletin, visiting the Grace/ La Gracia website or calling the church during office hours and leaving a message with Suzan Ortega, secretary.

We realize that many of you are still paying your 2021 pledge. We do appreciate the effort that you are making to fulfill your commitment. How did you determine how much to pledge for 2022? Did you simply pledge the same amount as in the previous year? Or did you find that you were able to give a little extra in thanksgiving for all of the blessings that you have received? Just living through the drama and trauma of 2020-1 is a cause for celebration.

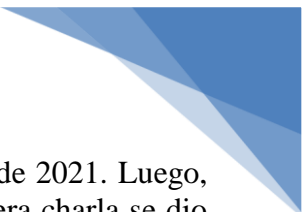
The budget for 2022 is based upon the total pledge that you make. We want to continue our Christian education, music, S.A.G.E and other programs at the same level as in previous years. We also want to plan for new programs (evening jazz etc.). Of course, we have to pay for salaries, utilities and building maintenance.

As you read this article in the Winter Angelus please ask yourself if you have pledged the amount that represents/reflects your ability and desire to Celebrate Life. If you would like to give an additional amount you can make a separate pledge to a specific program that you wish to support. Please remember to select one or more of the volunteer opportunities at the church. The Vestry and Stewardship committee thank you for your pledge and additional contributions.

Charlotte Roberson, Stewardship Chairperson

Mayordomía 2021-22

Cada año seleccionamos un tema para nuestra campana de Mayordomía. A la luz de los muchos desafíos que hemos enfrentado en 2020 y 2021, decidimos elegir el tema “Celebra la vida” con el verso correspondiente “Este es el día que hizo el Señor; regocijémonos y alegrémonos en el ”(Juan 5:24).



La planificación de nuestra próxima campaña de mayordomía comenzó en septiembre de 2021. Luego, en octubre, pedimos voluntarios para dar una breve charla sobre mayordomía. La primera charla se dio el 31 de octubre. En noviembre se dieron otras charlas. Se envió una carta de promesa y un formulario a cada feligrés. Si no ha recibido uno, hable con Cynthia S. Brown, Charlotte Roberson o Daisy Calderón o un acomodador durante el servicio de las 10 a. M. O de las 12:30 p. M. Los formularios de promesa también se pueden obtener haciendo clic en el enlace del boletín dominical, visitando el sitio web de Grace / La Gracia o llamando a la iglesia durante el horario de oficina y dejando un mensaje con Suzan Ortega, secretaria.

Sabemos que muchos de ustedes todavía están pagando su promesa de 2021. Apreciamos el esfuerzo que está haciendo para cumplir con su promesa. ¿Cómo determino cuánto prometer para 2022? ¿Simplemente prometió la misma cantidad que el año anterior? ¿O descubrió que pudo dar un poco más en acción de gracias por todas las bendiciones que ha recibido? Vivir el drama y el trauma de 2020-1 es motivo de celebración.

El presupuesto para 2022 se basa en la promesa total que hace. Queremos continuar nuestra educación cristiana, música, S.A.G.E y otros programas al mismo nivel que en años anteriores. También queremos planificar nuevos programas (jazz nocturno, etc.). Por supuesto, tenemos que pagar los salarios, los servicios públicos y el mantenimiento del edificio.

Al leer este artículo en el Ángelus de invierno, pregúntese si ha prometido la cantidad que representa / refleja su capacidad y deseo de celebrar la vida. Si desea donar una cantidad adicional, puede hacer una contribución por separado a un programa específico que desee apoyar. Recuerde seleccionar una o más de las oportunidades de voluntariado en la iglesia. El comité de Vestry and Stewardship le agradece su compromiso y contribuciones adicionales.

Charlotte Roberson, Stewardship Chairperson

OLD TESTAMENT BLOOPERS FROM CHILDREN

Adam & Eve were created from an apple tree.

Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.

Noah built the ark and the animals came on in pears.

Lots's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.

Sampson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a jezebel like Delilah.

Sampson slated the Philistines with the axe of apostles.

Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients.

Joy of The Season
December 12th
5:00 PM—NO Charge at
Grace Church

Trans Jazz

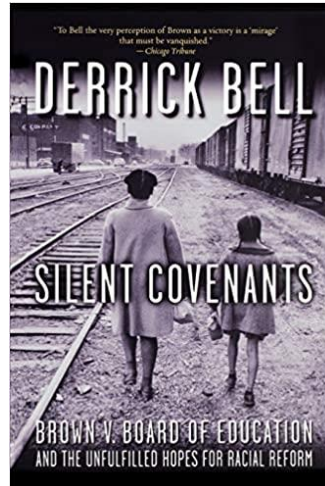


Trans Jazz
Contemporary Jazz-Gospel Music

Featuring the Singing of Vanessa Daley-Johnson and Franceska Marie, with Dinah Vero on Piano



www.youtube.com/transjazzvideo



Critical Race Theory: 101
An Invitation to Join the Book Club in an Essential Discussion
Karen Odom

Critical race theory. Recently, we have been hearing frequent references to the term “critical race theory.”


- What does the term mean?
- Why is it important to understand?
- How and why was the term adopted?
- What is the connection between critical race theory and other terms such as anti-racism?

The Book Club will explore these and many other pressing questions when they, along with interested members of the congregation, meet in February to discuss our selection in honor of Black History Month, **Silent Covenants: Brown V. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform** by law professor, scholar and author Derrick Bell.

In its review of **Silent Covenants**, *the Boston Globe* observed: “In his most creative chapter, Bell imagines an alternative Brown decision that would have upheld segregation but insisted on the equalization of resources between blacks and whites. Had that road been followed, he suggests, black children might have gotten the education they needed and deserved.”

For many, the term critical race theory may seem to be new, but this academic concept has been around since the 1970s. Just as there many questions about critical race theory, there are just as many misconceptions.

According to Amazon’s summary of the book, “When the landmark Supreme Court case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* was handed down in 1954, many civil rights advocates believed that the decision



finding public school segregation unconstitutional could become the Holy Grail of racial justice. Fifty years later, despite its legal irrelevance and the racially separate and educationally ineffective state of public schooling for most black children, *Brown* is still viewed by many as the perfect precedent. Derrick Bell here shatters this shining image of one of the Court's most celebrated rulings.”

The Book Club also has the good fortune and extraordinary opportunity to have our discussion led by an expert on the subject, Dr. Jamel Donnor, a professor who teaches the concept at the College of William and Mary in Virginia and who also happens to be the son-in-law of Grace Church parishioner Dr. John Mitchell.

Until then, feel free to join us in reading any of the books we have scheduled for the rest of the season:

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro (Dec 14)

While Justice Sleeps: A Novel by Stacey Abrams (Jan 11)

Silent Covenant: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform by Derrick Bell (Feb 8)

Falling: A Novel by T.J. Newman (Mar 8)

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson (Apr 12)

The President's Daughter: A Thriller by James Patterson and Bill Clinton (May 10)

Billy Lynn's Long Half-Time Walk by Ben Fountain (June 14)

State of Terror: A Novel by Hillary Clinton and Louise Penny (SUMMER READ)

Join us by Zoom on Tuesday February 8 at 7 pm. More details to come!

HARLEM

By Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore –
and then run –

Does it stink like rotten meat?
or crust and sugar over –
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load
Or does it explode?

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Rev. Adolfo Moronta



Our Blessed Mother 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, 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 conquerors 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 devotions 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 is set to take place on December 11 at 8:00 PM. It is La Gracia’s largest religious gathering and the preparations for this major event have already begun. Because of the current COVID season we only expect to have between 100-150 people present. The festivity will have three major moments: a) the procession outside the church which is done together with a Mariachi Band b) the Eucharist and c) the Mañanitas which will be done this year right after the service. We invite all parishioners to come and be part of this religious and cultural celebration.



Lifting Up Westchester

2022 Student Essay Contest

**What Role Does
Housing Play in
Influencing Our Future?**

5th Annual Student Essay Contest

Lifting Up Westchester, a nonprofit agency committed to helping individuals experiencing homelessness and hunger achieve self-sufficiency, announces their 5th Annual Student Essay Contest. All 7th to 12th graders who attend school in Westchester are invited to reflect on the role housing plays in influencing our collective future.

This year's essay invites students to think about the role housing plays not only in our individual futures, but the future of our community. Did you know that there are tens of thousands of Westchester residents living in homes where their tenancy is unstable? Did you know that there are 1,800 individuals living in shelters every night in Westchester County? Did you know that even more individuals and families have to "couch surf" or live within overcrowded quarters to have a roof over their head? Did you know there are negative physical and mental health as well as educational consequences to experiencing inadequate housing and all forms of homelessness?

Students are asked to consider how the Pandemic has exacerbated this problem for a much broader socio-economic group who have lost jobs or had salaries reduced at the same time rents and mortgages have risen faster than income and earnings. Stable, adequate housing is a critical foundation on which all other individual and family success can be built. This year we are asking students, how can we help ensure adequate housing for all of our neighbors? Students can enter the contest here (<http://s.alchemer.com/s3/2022-LUW-Essay-Contest>) through a dedicated portal (<http://s.alchemer.com/s3/2022-LUW-Essay-Contest>).

Twelve Prizes will be awarded in total including first, second and third prizes in each of the four categories:

7th & 8th, 9th & 10th, 11th & 12th and ESL students

- 1st prize - \$500
- 2nd prize - \$250
- 3rd prize - \$100

STUDENTS CAN ENTER BEGINNING OCTOBER 14TH THROUGH THIS DEDICATED PORTAL

ESSAYS ARE DUE JANUARY 17, 2022, BY 5:00 PM

For Full Contest Details Visit [Lifting Up Westchester](#)

*This contest has been funded in loving memory of Beth Massey Rubens,
A lifelong teacher, tutor, and mentor with a particular love for language arts.*



IS IT FEBRUARY ALREADY?

The month of February is Black History Month, which is enthusiastically celebrated at Grace Church. Although right now February might seem somewhat distant in the future, the Winter issue of the Angelus actually is meant to cover that month. Therefore, in this Angelus you will find a number of contributions to our appreciation of Black History Month.

I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings

By Maya Angelou

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky. But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing. The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the caged bird
sings of freedom. The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

ABSALOM JONES, FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN EPISCOPAL PRIEST

By Mary Baker



The Reverend Absalom Jones is a revered figure in our American Episcopal history. He is listed in the Calendar of Saints in our Book of Common Prayer and is remembered liturgically on the day of his death, February 13, 1818.

Absalom Jones was born into slavery on November 7, 1746, in Sussex County, Delaware. At 16 his owner sold his mother and all her children to a neighboring farmer, Mr. Wynkop, who then moved to Philadelphia and became a merchant. Mr. Wynkop kept Absalom, but the others were sold. Mr. Wynkop was a Vestryman of Christ Church in Philadelphia.

Absalom was allowed to go to school and to marry Mary King. She was also a slave who was owned by a neighbor. Absalom purchased his wife's freedom, asking for aid from donations and loans. Eventually Mr. Wynkop gave Absalom his freedom in 1784, and he took the name Jones.

At that time Methodism was sweeping Philadelphia and the country. Jones and a friend, Richard Allen, were licensed to be lay ministers of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, an interracial congregation. But even in that church, there was much discrimination and segregation and the blacks were asked to sit in the balcony. The blacks walked out!

Absalom Jones and Richard Allen founded the African Church of Philadelphia on July 25, 1791, and they began holding religious services there. However, Jones longed for a black congregation free of white control but still a part of the Episcopal Church. He established the African Church of St. Thomas and it opened its doors on July 17, 1794. He was ordained a deacon in 1795 and the first black Episcopal priest in 1802. He was known as a great orator and gave fiery anti-slavery sermons.

Absalom Jones and Richard Allen were life-long friends, but Allen chose to remain under the Methodist umbrella while Jones came under the Episcopal umbrella. In 1816 the fully independent African Methodist Episcopal Church was established and Richard Allen became its first bishop.

Absalom Jones died on February 13, 1818, at the age of 71, in Philadelphia. St. Thomas Church there has a chapel and rectory named in his honor. His cremated remains are in a reliquary in that church's Absalom Jones altar.

The Amazing Story of “Amazing Grace”

By Mary Baker

For the last 350 years, Amazing Grace has been one of our most cherished hymns. How it came to be written is an “amazing” story of its own.

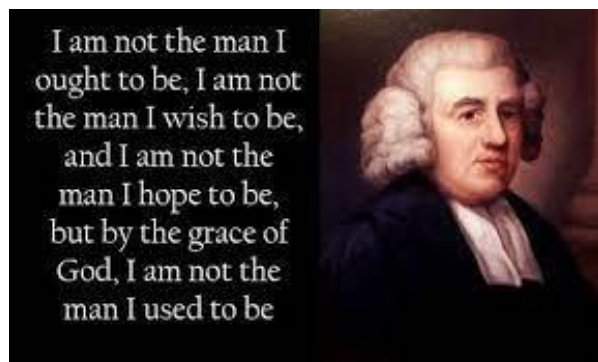
The author of the poem/words is John Newton, who was born in 1725. His mother was a Puritan. She died just before John turned seven years old. His father, Steven, was a sea captain who took John to sea when he was eleven so that he could follow in his footsteps. This life at sea led to his searching the African coast in order to capture and then sell slaves for profit. As a sea-going man, John led a very violent life. Eventually, on one of his trips, there was a huge storm, more horrible than he had ever encountered. As he was lashed to the wheel in order to keep himself from being blown overboard, he lost all hope of survival. In desperation he cried out “Lord, have mercy on us.” The storm calmed down and he was saved. The date was March 10, 1748, and he always afterwards credited this as the exact date of his own great conversion.

He went home to England in order to begin his “new life.” He began to learn Hebrew and Greek and eventually was ordained in the Church of England. He was known as a very unusual clergyman in his day because his sermons were very personal about his own conversion experiences. In December, 1772, at the age of 47, in Olney, England, he began to write the words for Amazing Grace to illustrate his message for the coming New Year’s sermon in 1773. The words are a description of his conversion experience at sea all those years before. It is interesting to note that these words are referenced in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” In addition to Amazing Grace, he wrote other poems such as “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken.”

At that time, the words of Amazing Grace were sung to various tunes. The one we know and love is a melody called “New Britain,” composed by the American William Walker in 1847.

John Newton also began to actively work towards abolishing the slave trade that he came to abhor. He said: “It will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me, that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders.” His witness was a great influence on William Wilberforce, whose life mission in the British Parliament was to fight against slavery in England.

John Newton died in 1807 at the age of 82.



Prominent Black Musicians in the Episcopal Church

By Peter Roberts

Music Notes spotlights one of the most celebrated musicians in the Episcopal Church, the African American organist, choral conductor and composer David Hurd.



David Hurd (born 1950) is a composer, concert organist, choral director and educator. Dr. Hurd was professor of Sacred Music and Chapel music at the General Theological Seminary, Chelsea, New York City for 39 years. He was also the Music Director at the Church of the Holy Apostles until May 2021 and is presently the Director of Music at the Church of St. Mary The Virgin (Manhattan, New York City).

Hurd attended the high school of Music and Art, the Julliard School, and Oberlin College. He has honorary degrees from Berkeley Divinity School, Seabury- Western Theological Seminary, and Church Divinity School of the Pacific. These degrees were given in recognition for his contributions to sacred music. In 1977 he received first prizes in organ performance and in organ improvisation from the international Congress of Organists the only person to win both prizes in the same year.

As a composer, Hurd has written several works and is regularly sought by congregations and organizations that commission new anthems and organ works.

Hurd's mass entitled New Plainsong, found in the 1982 Hymnal, is performed regularly at Grace Church, White Plains, as is his setting of the hymns "Let us break bread together on our knees" and O sacred head sore wounded."

DREAMS

By Langston Hughes

Hold fast to Dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

BENJAMIN BANNEKER – EARLY AMERICAN SCIENTIST

By Mary Baker

One of the earliest compromise decisions that enabled the organization of our new country after the Revolutionary War from 13 colonies into one unified nation was that the capitol of the new country would be more southerly. A 3-acre site on the banks of the Potomac River was selected. It would not be a part of any state. Our President was George Washington and his Secretary of State was Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson chose Major Andrew Ellicott to survey and draw up plans for the new capital and its most important buildings, the Capitol and the White House.

Andrew Ellicott had a free African American assistant named Benjamin Banneker. Although largely self-taught, this man had amazing mathematical, astronomical, and mechanical abilities. According to legend, it was Benjamin who fixed the first boundary stone by lying on the ground at night and plotting the movement of the stars.

Although there are some discrepancies about Benjamin Banneker's parentage, it is generally assumed that he was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 9, 1731, to a free African American woman and a former African slave. About the age of 21, he borrowed a pocket watch and used it as a model to carve pieces to scale out of wood to create a wooden clock that struck the hour.

About this time, a family of Quakers, the Ellicotts, bought a farm nearby and constructed grist mills. This family had Quaker views on racial equality. Benjamin got to know the family and from them he borrowed books and equipment to study astrology. Andrew Ellicott chose the talented Benjamin to assist him.



About this time the Georgetown Weekly Ledger wrote about “an Ethiopian whose abilities, as a surveyor and an astronomer, clearly prove that Mr. Jefferson’s concluding that race of men were void of mental endowments was without foundation.” After reading that, Benjamin returned home and wrote to Thomas Jefferson himself. He praised Jefferson for the “true and invaluable doctrine” he set forth in the Declaration of Independence: “that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Then he went on: “But, Sir, how pitiable is it to reflect that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of those rights and privileges which he had conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren under groaning captivity and cruel oppression.”

Benjamin Banneker went on to continue making astronomical calculations and predicting eclipses and other astronomical facts, which were successfully commercially published in several almanacs.

Benjamin Banneker died on October 19, 1806.

AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTISTS IN OUR MIDST

By Mary Baker

An excellent way for children to be introduced to Benjamin Banneker is through a book, “Dear Benjamin Banneker,” written by Andrea Davis Pinkney and illustrated by her husband, Brian Pinkney. This book tells the story of Benjamin Banneker and his famous clock. It tells about his science, politics, and morals, as well as how he famously called Thomas Jefferson a hypocrite.

Andrea Davis Pinkney has written numerous books for children and young adults about African American culture. She has also written a book “Seven Candles for Kwanzaa.” Many of her books have received well-earned honors.

She often collaborates with her husband, Brian Pinkney as the illustrator. Brian is a Caldicott Honor artist. Between them they have published over 70 children’s books.

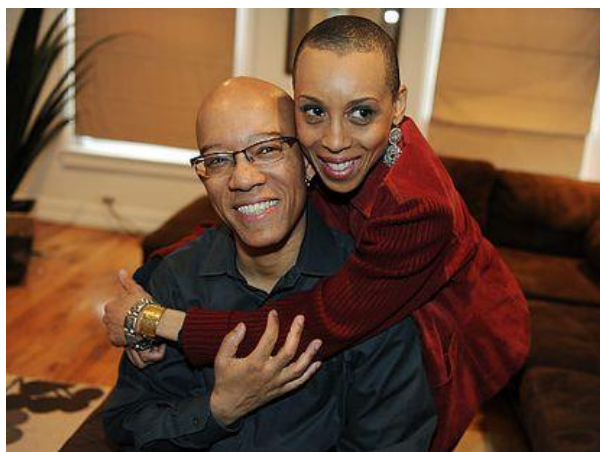
They live in New York City, but the Pinkney family is a local legend. Brian grew up in Croton, where his very famous father and mother live and work.

Father Jerry Pinkney and Mother Gloria Jean’s studio is in their Croton home. They encouraged their children to use the materials in that studio. Jerry was a famous illustrator and Gloria Jean is an author, milliner, and silversmith. It is a great loss to the world when Jerry Pinkney suddenly died just recently on September 14th.

Jerry Pinkney has illustrated over 100 books since 1964 and has multiple awards for his artistic contributions to children’s literature. He started his passion as a child using pencils, but now usually works in vibrant watercolors. He has even created Black Heritage postage stamps.

In his own words – “I am a storyteller at heart. There is something special about knowing that your stories can alter the way people see the world, and their place in it.”

You can go to your library and have access to all the books by these renowned local artists.



CELEBRATION OF KWANZAA

By Mary Baker



When I was teaching first grade, my social studies curriculum in December centered around holidays celebrated around the world. I would put a big world map on my bulletin board and big markers on the relevant places as we celebrated various holidays. Now first graders, as a rule, don't know much about "maps" and "the world," but they certainly know how to celebrate. And celebrate we did! St. Nicholas from Holland visited us on December 6th and filled our wooden shoes with candy. St. Lucia of Sweden with her (cardboard) crown of candles joined us with a tray of breakfast buns on December 14th. We had a special Mexican posada party to recount the nine days leading up to Christmas and the trip of Mary and Joseph on their donkey to Bethlehem. Everyone in the corridor outside our room knew by the wonderful aroma when we were making Hannukah latkes for our dreidel party.

But of all the "goodies" we enjoyed, none was better received than all the fruit brought in by the children when we celebrated Kwanzaa, which we placed on our woven mats as we lit the seven candles. It seemed to me that they seemed to love all the fruit much more than all the candy and cupcakes at our other parties!

So what is Kwanzaa? Our party had to be held on the last day of school before the holiday vacation, although Kwanzaa actually begins on December 26th and lasts seven days until January 1st. A large feast, called Karamu, is usually held on the 6th day.

Kwanzaa was created by an American named Maulana Karenga in 1966 in response to the Watts riots in California. He believed it was important to "give blacks an alternative to the existing practice of the dominant society" and it should give "identity, purpose and direction."

The word Kwanzaa derives from a Swahili phrase "first fruits" and is based on the African harvest festival tradition. It is celebrated in December, which is actually the time of the southern solstice. There is a Cwanza River in Angola.

He has said “Kwanzaa was not created to give people an alternative to their own religion or religious holiday.” Therefore, it is celebrated in addition to observing Christmas. Decorations are from the colors of Kwanzaa, which are black, red, and green. It might include depictions of colorful African art and cloth, African drumming, and harvest food of corn and fresh fruit. Seven candles are lit in a candleabra called a Kenara.



The candles represent seven principals of African heritage and each principle is highlighted on each of the seven days:

1. Umoja (Unity): To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
2. Kujichagulia (Self Determination): To define and name ourselves, as well as to create and speak for ourselves.
3. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.
4. Ujamaa (Cooperative economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.
5. Nia (Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
6. Kuumba (Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
7. Imani (Faith): To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

You might like to pursue this topic by reading Andrea Davis Pinkney's book “Seven Candles for Kwanzaa.”

VIEWS FROM THE PEWS

Gone to Glory, Still in Our Hearts

Fond memories of long-time church members who passed away in 2021

Memories of Dorothy Lynch - By Sylvia Simon



Ask anyone who has been a member of Grace Church for long about Dorothy Lynch and a smile immediately comes to their lips. Most will describe her as positive and loving. She never seemed to be in a bad mood. She seemed to care about everyone she met. She would ask you about your family. She remembered important things about the people she met and she never left you without saying I love you or blowing you a kiss. She was a member of SAGE and faithfully attended weekly Bible Study. She was always impeccably dressed. Dorothy's positive upbeat presence will be missed.

Memories of Clyde Hicks – By Barbara Biles



Clyde was born in Virginia and graduated from Virginia Tech University. He worked for many years as an Engineer. He worked for many years in a variety of assignments and location for General Foods /Kraft General Foods Corporation. He eventually retired from their Research Center in Tarrytown.

Throughout his adult life, he was an active member and ardent supporter of Grace Church and its mission. He was a very active member of its choir and music programs. he spent many hours organizing parish Clyde was born in Virginia and graduated from Virginia Tech University as an industrial records and documents for archival purposes.

Clyde loved the Arts and was an active member of several Music Societies and Cultural Organizations in the Metropolitan area.

Most of all, Clyde was a very caring and generous person who contributed time and resources to many individuals and causes. Whenever he saw a need, he was willing to help.
The Grace Church Community and World has lost a GREAT FRIEND.

Memories of Judith Hutton - By Carole Lashley



Church is a place for spiritual nourishment, healing and connecting with God. Giving back to others is a part of our teaching, which Judy exemplified. She gave of her time to help others. She had a beautiful smile. She was also very engaging and welcoming to everyone. Judy practiced these teachings through Eucharistic visiting by serving communion and connecting with people that were homebound, in nursing homes, and hospitals. She prayed with the sick, and shared the message from the sermons. She brought brightness to their faces. She would bring up the elements when asked, or on occasion help with organizing the programs for nightly concerts. She always made sure to make a contribution for Lifting Up Westchester's day camp, and made sure the children of La Gracia had toys for Christmas. Sometimes she would even read the lessons. Judy had a creative side as well. She loved baking her special pound cakes for the Welcome Committee functions. In addition, she was great at designing baskets for ECW raffles in support of Samaritan House, and decorating the tables for Mother's Day. It was not unusual to see her multitask, participating in two or three functions almost simultaneously like setting up for coffee hour, decorating the table for an ECW raffle, and preparing to sell flowers for the choir. No job was too big. We worked closely on many of these functions. Judy helped in so many ways. Very seldom did she say no if asked to assist. She loved Grace Church and she wanted to see it shine. She will be sorely missed for all her contributions and the person that she was. "Rest in peace my Dear Friend"

Memories of Maria Louisa Lewis – By Sandy Gadsden McAllister



Maria, a long time Grace Church parishioner transitioned to her heavenly home on October 19, 2021. While Maria was with us for what seemed like a brief time, her contributions to Grace Church and the White Plains Community was plentiful. Maria was grounded in who she was as a person, her ethnicity, and her spirituality. Any interaction with her would cause one to stop and think about what she said or the action she took.

As a faithful parishioner, she helped with coffee hour, donated time, and food for our holiday barbecue and ensured that there were healthy items on the menu. Celebrating Black History Month was important to her; she took an active role participating in the planning of activities for the month. Her spiritual life was important to her, and she actively worked encouraging others to join her on a spiritual journey. She actively participated in an International Bible Study Group, went on retreats and was instrumental in donating a portable labyrinth to Grace Church that has been used by parishioners particularly during the Lenten season.

Maria was interested in the Arts and faithfully attended Downtown Music's Wednesday concerts. She was an avid tennis player and worked with Lifting Up Westchester to bring a tennis clinic to their summer program. She wanted underserved children to learn how to play tennis. Maria was a generous giver financially, with her time, and talents. She was always willing to offer a helping hand, counsel, and encouragement. Maria will be sorely missed.

MY PEOPLE

By Langston Hughes

The night is beautiful.
So the faces of my people
The stars are beautiful.
So the eyes of my people.
Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

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.

MARIA LEWIS



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