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GRACE CHURCH VESTRY

Jim Barry– 283-3026
Suzanne Cloutier– 396-3034
Bruce Fries– 393-0153
David Hawley-Lowry– 616-915-6188
Dave Masselink– 546-2662
David Meier– 335-5184
Chuck Murray– 335-3690
Mary Remenschneider– 283-7725
Robbie Schorle– 269-543-4400
David Stubbs– 546-8845
Diane Wiersma– 403-0051
Doug Zylstra– 773-551-8166
Jay Bylsma– 399-5721
Jerry Roper, Treasurer Emeritus

STAFF

Robert R. Gepert, Bishop
Jennifer Adams, Rector
Henry Idema, Pastoral Support
Steve Jenkins, Director of Music
Jennifer Wolfe, Children's Choir
Director
Debbie Coyle, Director of Children's
& Youth Ministries, Communications
Secretary
Thom Samuelson, Sexton
Gail Westerhof, Secretary
Mary Battaglia, Financial Secretary

“Stir up thy power O Lord, and with great might come among us.”

from the Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent

As we enter the season of Advent, this is our prayer and it's an exceptionally brave one to allow to flow from our hearts, let alone to speak aloud. In its words we are reminded of the vulnerability and resultant, fear and trembling that come with what we pray for as an Advent people. As Church, we are preparing for God to come among us. We remember God's coming in Christ, but also look forward to and pray for the second coming, and our prayer asks that God come among us with “great might.” And so, as I work my way through my many lists of the season, I'm also wondering if I'm really prepared for that piece of this season at all.

Maybe if God were to come with “great food,” or “great gifts” or “great peaceful resolution to all the conflicts of the world” I could honestly be totally on board already, but “great might” sounds a little open-ended, perhaps even risky. Are we really ready to pray that kind of prayer? Holy, divine, incarnate, resurrected, almighty, abundant, merciful, loving, powerful, mysterious, (you add the adjectives). . . great might? Really? Remember that we were already given the baby in the manger; so odds are good that this time around could be radically different. Are we sure we want to pray this prayer?

I think that's the first important question of the season. Before the preparation and the celebration there is the questioning of ourselves in a very deep place. How do we pray this prayer with honesty, genuine openness, and hope? How do we allow room for the great and mighty needs of this world, the ones that the Almighty Great God might just be coming to be among?

Stir up thy power, O Lord, and hang on to your hats, O People of God, Advent is here.

Peace,

Jen

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Grace



**Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany Bring Activities
for Children of ALL AGES!**

Children's and Youth ministries is planning a fun filled and eventful Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. There will be a variety of fun activities, meaningful lessons, and even some time for fellowship.

We kick off the Advent season with our Advent Intergenerational lesson. As has become the tradition at Grace, we will gather all children (ages 3-103) in the Undercroft to hear the story of Advent, to create a model of Bethlehem that we will use throughout Advent, Christmas and into Epiphany season. After we build our working model, we will then work on making an "Advent Map" that will help you move through advent at home.

This Christmas, the youth will be helping Outreach Commission once again with the Star Tree (which helps provide for our Community Housing Partnership families). Look for the tree, take a star, and bring back the unwrapped gift with the star attached to the church. On Sunday, December 18th, we will once again gather the many generations of Grace to wrap the gifts for our Star Tree families.

On Christmas Eve at the 6:00 pm early service all Children and Youth will be invited to participate in a "spontaneous Christmas pageant". Any children or youth who are at Grace for this service will have an opportunity to participate in this pageant to be led by the Youth Choir. There will be extra costumes and song sheets available at the door!

For Epiphany, the youth groups will spend Saturday evening, January 7, in Fellowship and formation during the 3rd Annual Epiphany Youth Retreat at Grace. The evening's festivities will be focused on themes of Epiphany, will involve some sledding and dinner, and will culminate in a "U-2charist" to be organized by the youth. Festivities begin at 4pm for the youth, and the service will be in the Grace Sanctuary at 9pm if you would like to join us!

It has been a great year so far, and Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany look like they will follow suit. Don't miss these great opportunities to join in with Grace CYM. It is never too late! Come and see.....

Submitted by Debbie Coyle, Director of Children's and Youth Ministry

GRACE YOUTH CHOIR

The Youth Choir will continue the regular program year with weekly Sunday rehearsals after church. Take time to grab a snack and visit with friends, then join us (sometimes upstairs, sometimes in the sanctuary) for a rehearsal until 12:30. Singers from second grade through early high school are encouraged to participate, with no prior experience needed.

The Youth Choir will sing in church on December 11. We'll also sing for the Christmas Eve children's service at 6PM (choir rehearsal time 5PM).

Please call or write with any questions: Jen Wolfe, wolfe@hope.edu, 395-8387. Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!

WEDNESDAY MOVIE SERIES

For December and January we are showing two movies that speak to the moral issues of our day:

Wednesday, December 7: Frank Capra's MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON, starring James Stewart and Jean Arthur. This film will offer us the opportunity to examine our political system. We will see depicted the type of politician we all want but rarely get, and the politician we never want but often get.

Wednesday, January 4: THE COMPANY MEN, starring Ben Affleck, Chris Cooper, Kevin Costner, Maria Bello, and Tommy Lee Jones. This film will provide opportunity to discuss our economy, corporate buyouts, the loss of our manufacturing base, and the role of money in our lives.

We gather for refreshments at 5:30, followed by the movie and pizza at 6. Discussion following. Please bring a \$5 donation if you are dining with us, and something to share at our fellowship time. See you then!

Men's Bible Study continues:

- Alternate Mondays, 5:30 to 6:45 pm (a men's discussion group) — The men's study group "Beer and Bibles" is looking at the book of Mark. The group meets every other Monday, 5:30 to 6:45, for conversation, reflection, and fellowship. If you have been considering looking in on this event, now might be a good time to start. B-Y-O-Both. Upcoming dates are December 5 & 19 and January 2, 16 and 30.

WEDNESDAY "SACK LUNCH" BIBLE STUDY

We are studying the book of Amos who was the first prophet to leave writings witnessing a passion for social justice. We will be going through the book verse by verse, applying the text to the moral issues of our own day.

Feel free to bring a lunch. We meet from 12:00 to 1:00 every Wednesday unless notified in the bulletin or newsletter. We meet in the Forum room across from the parish offices. Come and join us.

Henry Idema



Christmas Poinsettias and Altar Flowers

Envelopes for Christmas Flower donations are in the pews. Please clearly fill out the information, and place in the collection plate or return it to the church office by December 19.

Altar Flowers for 2011—Sign-up sheet is on a clipboard in the Commons. Multiple parties may sign up for each Sunday. Suggested donation is \$50-\$75 which can be submitted to the office. The altar vase liners will be taken to a florist weekly, and the flowers will be divided for delivery to home bound parishioners after the Sunday services.



Grace Episcopal Church November 2011 Strategic Plan Update

Vision Point #3

Establish Dynamic Christian Formation in the Episcopal Tradition

Christian Education and Formation Commission

The Christian Education and Formation Commission continued efforts to work on the goals for years 2 through 4.

Successes for Years 1 and 2:

Pre-5th Grade Education Involvement is around 45% of youth in the age range where we sought to involve about 30%, so ahead of our goals for the age group by about 15% for Year 2.

For the 6th Grade and higher we are seeing participation for Middle School involvement around 65%, High School is about 30%, and the Youth Group about 45% of participants for the age ranges, placing us about on track of 50% for Year 2 of the Plan.

Significant work to share events within the Diocese of Western Michigan as well as other local churches in Holland as well as a theme-based program that is in alignment with the “Mini-University” goal where both internal and external speakers lead session.

Trained a number of volunteers for various efforts.

Continuing Challenges we need to resolve to attain other goals:

The commission faces a continuing struggle to gather enough volunteers to help us attain these goals.

The Campus Ministry goals will require additional focus and efforts and the commission is continuing to look into this goal.

The Family Track Program will be a focus of the future.

Submitted by Chuck Murray

Sunday Forum 9:15am in the Forum Room



Nov 27th , Dec 11th , Jan 8th

A Thrill of Hope: The Christmas Story in Word and Art

Through the beauty and power of art and sacred text we will explore the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany stories, 'A *Thrill of Hope*'. Each week we will explore one of John August Swanson's Advent and Christmas paintings and look at texts from Matthew and Luke to see how those words are brought to life through art. Swanson's art tells Biblical stories in finely detailed, brilliantly colored paintings and original prints, many of which you will find on the walls of Grace. Six of his paintings constitute a series known as "The Birth Narrative" and are featured on a DVD that we will use for this series. Advent I, November 27th, we'll focus on 'A Visit' and 'The Nativity'. Advent III, December 11th, we'll continue with 'The Shepherds' and 'Epiphany'. January 8th we will conclude the series with an exploration of 'The Presentation in the Temple' and the 'The Flight into Egypt'.

Dec 4th Sacred Time and the Search for Meaning

Gary Eberle, MA, professor of English at Aquinas College author of a book with title of this Forum, will be our speaker. Gary will bring to us a variety of ways as to how humans' view of time has evolved throughout history, how we came to measure time, and why we feel especially starved for it now. He formulates an insightful analysis of our culture's obsession with speed and efficiency, and offers guidance for slowing down to savor life outside of schedules and routines, showing the way toward finding fulfillment in this increasingly accelerated world. Eberle seeks to rediscover a renewed sense of meaning in life through looking for ways to enter the realm of sacred time or "sabbath time"—where we can reconnect with the slower, deeper rhythms of life that have traditionally been experienced through worship, prayer, and the observance of holy days.

Dec 18th Intergenerational Christmas Wrap

This Sunday we'll gather in the Forum Room to wrap presents for our Community Housing Partnership Families. Look for the Star Tree in the Commons during Advent. Each star will have a gift listed that is a "wish" of one of our CHP family members. We ask for gifts to be returned by this Sunday so that we can wrap them up for deliver on the 24th!



Pastoral Care / Outreach

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP AT GRACE:

If you are living with Parkinson's disease (or know someone who is) consider the newly founded Grace Parkinson's Support Group as a place to find companionship, encouragement and support on the journey. The group will meet next on Wednesday, December 21 at 7pm in the Commons.

Contact the Church Office, Rev. Jen Adams or Tom or Tammy Kelly if you are interested in joining.

ST. MARY'S GUILD

St. Mary's Guild will meet on Dec 12 at 7:15pm in the Forum Room to make gifts for members of our church family who cannot always be present at our services. These gifts are delivered by visitors from St. Martha's Guild.

Hostesses for the evening will be Fran Greene and Cherie De Cook, and Nancy Hensley and Gerry Cawthra will be our "craft directors". No previous experience required! Please join us.

From Outreach:

During the Spring of this year, Grace Episcopal Church was selected by Meijer Stores to partner in their "Simply Give" Food Pantry Program. For eight weeks shoppers at both the West Shore Mall and the 16th Street Meijer locations were given the opportunity to purchase a "Simply Give" \$10 donation card which was credited to Grace Church. At the conclusion of the program, Meijer Stores matched the totals. The results amounted to \$3,320. In addition, Grace also received \$650 in gift cards bringing the entire total to \$3,970 to support Feeding America! We are using these funds to purchase toilet paper and laundry detergent to supplement the items we collect as a parish to distribute during our monthly Feeding America events. We were able to keep up with items needed when our guest families numbered in the fifties but we are consistently seeing over 110 families per month for Feeding America. So, we encourage all members of Grace Church to continue ongoing donations of these items (small size detergents, please) AND WE THANK EVERYONE who participated in the Meijer program and ALL who contribute to this worthy community Outreach!

Feeding America

Mark your calendars for our upcoming Feeding America dates: December 8th and January 12th. We need folks to arrive between 4:30 and 5:00 to help with set-up and to welcome our guests. Also, remember the ongoing need for *laundry detergent (see special request) and toilet paper!* You can bring these items at any time and deposit them in the labeled drawers in the Commons. With a little corporate help we have managed to regularly distribute these items to each family. Good job Grace!



Special request: We appreciate the many laundry detergent donations we receive, but if possible, please keep the bottles under 70oz. for ease in distribution.

Community Action House Drivers/Helpers Needed

Community Action House is in need of volunteer van/truck drivers and riders during the holiday months (November and December). Volunteers would drive/ride around to local schools, churches and businesses picking up donations of food and clothing. There is some lifting of 30-40 pound boxes of food involved, so a strong back helps. Interested people would volunteer for one day per week anytime between the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm. Contact Sue Cloutier or Community Action House for more information.

Submitted by Sue Cloutier

Community Kitchen Helpers Needed:

Every weekday and on Sundays too, the Community Kitchen serves lunch to about 200 hungry people out of the commons area at Western Seminary.

Grace Church is committed to providing **three or four helpers each Wednesday**. Volunteers are needed to help serve and clean up from **11:15am to 1:30pm** every Wednesday. Please sign up in the Commons and let us know if you are available to be "on-call".

Thank You to November Coffee Hour Hosts!

Duanne and Dave Masselink
Beth Trembley and Jen Adams
Brian and Debbie Coyle, Mac, Molly & Momoka

*from Laurie VanArk
Coffee Hour Coordinator*



Fellowship / Vestry

Upcoming Fellowship Events:

Christmas Madrigal Dinner - Enjoy some holiday music and fun at the Hope College Madrigal Dinner, on Friday, December 9th at 7 pm. The signup sheet is posted in the Commons. Tickets are \$25 each. We currently have 16 tickets, if there is greater demand we will try to get more.

Knitting Club and/ or class - Fellowship is trying to determine how many people are interested in participating in a knitting club and/or a knitting class. We will be posting an "Interest Only" sign-up sheet at this time. If you are interested in either one, please mark your preferences on the sign-up sheet.

Our next meeting is Monday, December 5th, at 7 pm. Please join us!

From Sue Cloutier, Fellowship Commission

Nominations are open for the Vestry Class of 2014

The Vestry Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations for Vestry membership (three year term to begin following the Annual Meeting on January 22nd.) You are encouraged to consider who might be called to serve the parish as a lay leader in this capacity. To nominate a fellow parishioner, please take the following steps: Talk with the person you wish to nominate. Obtain permission to submit his or her name to the Nominating Committee; and give a member of the Nominating Committee or the Rector the individual's name.

Each nominee then will be contacted personally by a member of the Nominating Committee, offering the nominee an opportunity to learn about current Vestry focus areas, become aware of the time commitment, and ask any questions. If the Nominee's decision is to move forward, his or her name will be placed in nomination during the Annual Meeting at which four new Vestry members will be elected.

Nominations close on Sunday, January 1, 2012, three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting as required by our by-laws. You are urged to submit your nominations as soon as possible so that we may have sufficient time to meet with each nominee.

The following parishioners make up the Nominating Committee:

Jim Barry	283-3026	jbarry_174@msn.com
David Hawley-Lowry	915-6188	hawley-lowry@juno.com
Suzanne Cloutier	396-3034	suzannemcloutier@hotmail.com
David Meier	335-5184	david.meier@gmail.com

- 1 Charlie Broersma
- 2 Andrew Schafer
Molly McVay-Walters
- 4 Sophia Steele
Barb Vincensi
- 5 Gerard Cook
- 6 Danielle Biolette
Lindsay Goodman
Gloria Hignite
Jeremy Stauffer
- 8 Katie Gamby
- 9 Sandy Hansen
Jesse Klug
Jorie Sligh
Patricia Essenburg
Libby Thomas
- 10 Chris St. John
- 11 Steve Shinabarger
- 12 Owen Foster
Isabel Hodson
- 13 Earl Barkel
- 14 Jill Smalldon
Karlyn March
Andrew Macy

- 18 Alivia De Cook
- 19 Eleanor Nyhof
- 20 David Meier
Andrew Scharlow
Chris Van Tongeren
- 22 Derek Foster
- 23 Matthew Guyer
- 25 Carol Homan
Kathryn Verspoor
- 26 David Hawley-Lowry
Jersey Masselink
- 27 Rob Linn
Alice Gillam
- 28 Holly Nyland
Brad Richmond
- 30 Pam Nienhuis
- 31 Jennifer Balisi

- 1 Debbie & Mihai Craioveanu
- 9 Dianne & Curtis Glupker
- 18 Lynne & Bob Frey
- 19 Monny & Bryce Cobb
Sharon & John Barlow
- 20 Pat & Warren Parker
- 21 Chris & Rick Van Tongeren
- 27 Mary Mims & Brent VanderBie
- 28 Jane & Dennis Joles
- 29 Donna & John Molendyk
- 30 Mary & Kevin Matrosic
- 31 Ruth Fischer & Bill Paterson

December Birthdays & Anniversaries



- 1 Richard Swaney
Phillip Reinink
- 2 Jennifer Wolfe
- 3 Kristie Phillips
- 4 Devin Shea
Lourdes Manderfield
Christoph Manderfield
Sam Klug
- 5 Brian Coyle
- 6 Rob Sligh
Brian Essenburg
- 7 Krista Raffenaud
Stafford Keegin
Emily Wright
- 8 Elizabeth Phillips Otten
Samantha Brown
- 10 Gladys Woodward
Grafton Ervine
Simon Hodson
- 11 John Barlow
- 12 David Wright
Joan Breitmeyer
- 14 Liza Barry
Ron Brown

- 15 Tom Kelley
- 17 Roger De Cook
Mike Erickson
- 18 David Raffenaud
- 21 Christopher Packard
- 22 Sydne Klinge
- 23 Heather Klamt
Clay Stauffer
- 25 Ronan Kelley
- 27 Anne Gamache
Dennis Joles
- 31 Sally Corneliussen

- 4 Lynn & Blane Kamp
- 7 Debbie & Brian Coyle
- 16 Betty & Gerald Sova
- 17 Cherie & Roger De Cook
- 19 Pam & Ron Brown
Karen & Jay Bylsma

Birthdays & Anniversaries in January



Stewardship - Taking Grace Green

From Taking Grace Green

Deer on the Ridge . . . Watching Us

When Maggie, my first Golden Retriever, was young we went hiking in the Saugatuck Dunes State Park almost every day that we were in Holland. We hiked in the early morning when the trails were empty, and we hiked through the seasons year round.

In the fall and winter we would often catch sight of the deer in the park. We knew where the game trails were in different places in the woods and running parallel to the beaches back in the trees.

Early on, I taught Maggie that it was really more fun to sit down and watch the deer than chase them when she saw them. She grew to like watching them cross a trail, ghost through the trees, or play on the beach along the water's edge.

As the seasons changed we saw their coats change, from lighter summer brown, which matched Maggie's carmel coat, to a darker brown which blended into the leafless trees and brown beach grass in fall and winter . . . then back again in spring and summer.

We saw the deer on the south trails, on the Livingston Trail, on the two track trail in the woods, and near the beach, in the valley between the ridges on the beach trails, and in the grass and trees on the north trails. They were always a wonderful sight to see, and both of us took joy in their presence.

Quite often we would see the deer on the north trail and the meadow trail leading to the beach west of the north trails. One fall we were coming back from a loop hike on the north trail and as we began walking up a long slope we heard several snorts and the stomping of a hoof. We looked up and there was a big buck on the ridge above us. It was the mating season and he was upset that we were in his territory. As we watched him he bounded away into the trees.

Several years later, in the fall, we had another surprising experience. Maggie and I were walking on the Beach Trail toward Lake Michigan. We went down into the valley below a tree covered ridge and I had a feeling that we were being watched. I stopped and looked up and saw several deer above us on the ridge. They were watching us. As we moved forward they moved with us.

When we stopped they stopped. After this happened several times I realized they were watching Maggie. It must have been her size and the color of her coat. From above she may have looked like a deer and they were watching her. We continued and finally reached the approach to the beach and they broke off. We remembered that encounter for many years afterward. And we always looked up to that ridge when we hiked through the valley on that trail.

The wonder of the natural world is always close by. If we open up our senses we can experience some amazing things. Things that remind us that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves, and of the wonderful gifts we have been given.

Submitted by Bill Mendenhall, Taking Grace Green

A Calendar of Worship for the Seasons

December 18 *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

Holy Eucharist at 8:15 am

Intergenerational Education Hour at 9:15 am

Holy Eucharist with Lessons and Carols at 10:30 am

December 24 *Christmas Eve*

Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist at 6:00 pm This is a service especially geared to children. The liturgy will be a participatory pageant, children's choir, special prayers, and celebration of the Eucharist. (The nursery space will be open and available for parents' use.)

Choral Service of Christmas Carols at 10:00 pm*

Traditional Midnight Service of Holy Eucharist at 10:30 pm*

(Childcare will be provided in the nursery. You may want to bring your child's night time toy and/or blanket and pillow.)

December 25 *Christmas Day, Sunday*

One service of Holy Eucharist at 10:00 am*

(NOTE: one service only)

January 1, 2012 *First Sunday after Christmas*

Holy Eucharist at 10:00 am*

(NOTE: one service only)

Please also note

January 22

Holy Eucharist at 8:15 and 10:30 am

Our Annual Meeting with brunch will follow the 10:30 service *

* child care provided at these services

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Our Mission Statement:

Grace is a dynamic community of faith grounded in Episcopal tradition, welcoming all, and serving Christ through worship, spiritual growth, and compassionate care for one another, the community and God's world.

