

# Grace to You

December 2009  
Volume 2009, Issue 11

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*\*Pull out calendar, birthdays, anniversaries, and prayer requests in center\**

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## GRACE CHURCH VESTRY & OFFICERS

**Carol Rickey**, Senior Warden—  
396-3734 – Church Family, Outreach  
**Cal Boer**, Junior Warden—399-2725—  
Buildings and Grounds, Evangelism  
& Communication  
**John Shea**—Treasurer—399-2123  
**Kristie Phillips**, Clerk—494-9511—  
Church Family

**Chris Broersma**—399-5701—Pastoral  
Care  
**Clara Brower**—688-7356— Outreach  
**Jay Bylsma**—399-5721—Stewardship  
**Suzanne Cloutier** - 396-3034,  
Fellowship  
**David Hawley-Lowry**—616-915-  
6188, Buildings & Grounds  
**Carrie Hodson**—396-7744—Worship  
**David Meier**— 335-5184 Christian  
Education & Formation  
**Chuck Murray** - 335-3690 GCCC  
**Jerry Roper**, Treasurer Emeritus

## STAFF

Robert R. Geper., 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

## From The Rector

*You must be men and women of ceaseless hope, because only tomorrow can today's human and Christian promise be realized; and every tomorrow will have its own tomorrow, world without end. Every human act, every Christian act, is an act of hope. But that means you must be men and women of the present, you must live this moment – really live it, not just endure it – because this very moment, for all its imperfection and frustration, because of its imperfection and frustration, is pregnant with all sorts of possibilities, is pregnant with the future, is pregnant with love, is pregnant with Christ. – Walter J. Burghardt*

In the midst of a season that leans towards watching and waiting for what is yet to come, Walter Burghardt calls us to a holy sort of presence now. More than simply a “counting down” to Christmas, Advent is a time of attentiveness, an opportunity to notice that our lives and our world have been infused with holy sorts of possibilities and grace. It is only when we are open to those gifts of present *and* future, Burghardt claims that our hearts can truly be “pregnant with Christ.”

Here at Grace Strategic Planning is complete (presentations to happen on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>), we are working on completing our pledge goals (thank you for pledges submitted and keep 'm coming!), and many eyes are focused on Christmas and the coming of 2010 (my holiday lists are long, how about yours?) And we wouldn't be responsible stewards and family members without this kind of looking ahead, this kind of goal setting and preparation. But our preparations and our plannings are not just about making for our Tomorrows, they are also about our noticing our Today, being present today, loving and serving today. To be pregnant with Christ means not only getting ready for the future birth. It also means tending to the life that is already inside of us, needing tenderness and care now.

Landing in this place of holy presence is hard, but maybe that's why we need it so much. It shouldn't seem so far from our everyday experience, and that's part of the point of this season. God is always close, always coming to us, coming through us, living in us. God is in the everyday of Advent. God is in the everyday of everyday.

This Advent I wish you a holy sort of presence in the midst of all that the season brings.

Peace,

*Jen*

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## A Calendar of Worship For The Seasons

### December 20 **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 children's homily, 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 27 **First Sunday after Christmas**

**One service of Holy Eucharist at 10:30 am\***

(NOTE: one service only)

### January 3, 2010 **Second Sunday after Christmas**

Holy Eucharist at 8:15 and 10:30 am\*

Intergenerational Education Hour at 9:15 am\*

January 17 \*\*\* Please also note: **Our Annual Meeting** with brunch will follow the 10:30 service \*

\* *child care provided at these services*

### **Nominations are open for the Vestry Class of 2013**

The Vestry Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations for Vestry leadership, and everyone is encouraged to consider who might be called to serve the parish as a lay leader in this important capacity. Vestry needs a wide variety of members, with different experiences, from all areas of the parish. Nomination is for a three-year term that will begin following the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 17, 2010.

If you want to nominate a fellow parishioner, please take the following steps: 1. Give the nomination prayerful consideration. Ask yourself if you feel this person would be a valuable asset to our Vestry; 2. Talk with the person you wish to nominate. Obtain permission to submit his or her name to the Nominating Committee; and 3. 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 for a face-to-face meeting to learn about current Vestry focus areas, become aware of the time commitment, and ask any questions. From this meeting, and any subsequent discussions that may be requested, the nominee must discern if now is the time to accept nomination. If the decision is to move forward, her or his name will be placed in nomination during the January 17, 2010, Annual Meeting at which four new Vestry members will be elected.

Nominations open on Sunday, November 22, and close on Sunday, December 27, 2009, 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:

Cal Boer 399-2725 boerkaren@hotmail.com

Carrie Hodson 396-7744 hodsonc@hope.edu

Chris Broersma 399-5701 cbroester@gmail.com

## *A Grace Filled Advent*

*This is an invitation to take some time during The Season of Advent to reflect, pray, ponder, wait, wonder and to hope.*

*To help facilitate this for members and friends of Grace Episcopal Church, as a community we are scheduling fewer meetings during the Advent Season to give you time for reflection, prayer, being quiet, and spending time with family and friends!*

*To help you in this Advent Season a variety of resources will be available to you and space will be set aside in The Chapel, the Sanctuary and in the Adult Formation room for prayer, quiet reading, listening to music or space to 'just be'.*

*Or, if you prefer the space of your home, take the time to create an Advent Altar, a space where you can light a candle, put on some music and read a good book and reflect on the meaning of the Season!*

**Life Is an Advent Season . . . . . CONNECTIONS, 11-28-93**

"Life is a constant Advent season: we are continually waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfill. Hope, struggle, fear, expectation and fulfillment are all part of our Advent experience.

"The world is not as just, not as loving, not as whole as we know it can and should be. But the coming of Christ and his presence among us—as one of us—give us reason to live in hope: that light will shatter the darkness, that we can be liberated from our fears and prejudices, that we are never alone or abandoned.

"May this Advent season be a time for bringing hope, transformation and fulfillment into the Ad-

## Vestry Notes November 16, 2009

Submitted by Carol Rickey, Senior Warden

Present:: Jen Adams, Jim Barry, Jay Bylsma, Chris Broersma, Clara Brower, Sue Cloutier, David Hawley-Lowry, Carrie Hodson, David Meier, Chuck Murray, Kristie Phillips, and Carol Rickey. John Shea, Treasurer.

October Financial Reports: Revenues continue to exceed expenses but only slightly: revenues at 103 % of budget and expenses at 101%. .

The G4C financial books were closed in October with a year to date shortage of \$10, 456 which we remember accounts for scholarships for children who otherwise could not have participated. Consequently the Church and G4C show a year to date shortage of 10,353.

Good news continues in the rental house balance which is now at \$10,456 which is due to the regular rental income through the Community Partnership and the Michigan program. We are continuing to make regular payments to reduce the Grace line of credit., in October a payment of \$2,500 reduced the balance to \$22,000. (interest rate of 4.24%)

The Moor Fund and the Endowment Fund balances show respective current market values of \$256,892 and 188,938. Vestry authorized the annual 4.5% distribution from the Endowment to the Church operating account in the amount of \$8,502. It should be noted that this distribution has often been required in the summer but due to regular parishioner contributions it was not required this year.

Strategic Planning report: , **The parish is invited to review the plan at either of two sessions, Wednesday evening, December 2 at 6:00 p.m. following a soup supper or Sunday, December 6 following the 10:30 service.** Chuck Murray has agreed to coordi-

nate the implementation of the Plan and to encourage strategies for meeting our goals.

### Actions from Commission recommendations:

**Building and Grounds** – approval of installation of six programmable thermostats at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

**Outreach** - approval of expenditure up to \$1,000 to purchase eight 8ft. plastic tables to be used for distribution of food through the Feeding America program.

**Nominations for Vestry:** Nominations for new members for Vestry are being sought and will be presented for election at the Annual Meeting, January 17, 2010. Parishioners interested in more information about serving on Vestry or being nominated are encouraged to contact one of the retiring Vestry members: Carrie Hodson, Kristie Phillips, Cal Boer and Christie Broersma.

**Confirmation of members by the Bishop:** Jen Adams reported a clarification in the new process of Diocesan confirmation that will now include three alternative dates and places. The places will be in Grand Rapids, and one location each in the northern and southern parts of the diocese. [In the past, confirmations were held in each of the five deaneries]

Next meetings of **Vestry** are: Mondays, December 21 at 6:30 and January 11 at 7:00 p.m.

**Parish meetings** to review the Strategic plan are Wednesday, December 2, 6:00 beginning with a soup supper and Sunday, December 6, following the 10:30 worship.

**Annual Meeting** – Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup> with a light lunch following 10:30 worship.

\*Childcare will be available for this meeting

### **Strategic Plan Report To Be Presented**

Come hear the Vestry presentation of the final version of the plan that will guide us through the next five years. Over 80 people from Grace contributed to this vision. Come and hear where we are headed!

**Wednesday, December 2nd at 6 pm**

**(supper provided)**

**Sunday, December 6th at noon.**

*\*Childcare is provided for both presentations.*



## YOUTH CHOIR NOTES



You might not see it yet, but exciting things are happening behind the scenes with the Youth Choir! Thanks to the Dekker Memorial Fund, we are now the proud owners of a collection of performance-quality percussion instruments (finger cymbals, tambourine, hand drum, triangle and claves), and are waiting impatiently for a three-octave set of tone chimes.

Tone chimes are a more affordable and less delicate alternative to handbells. We bought a set at a church I worked at in Ontario, and enjoyed them immensely, both in a handbell choir and in our service music. Though the youth will work with them first, there is every possibility of starting an adult handbell choir if there's enough interest. Let me know!

Not only that, but a dedicated and determined team of women has been working hard on new Youth Choir service apparel, to replace our aging and small-size-only burgundy robes. The official name for the new garment is a "scapular" -- essentially a long rectangle with a head hole, wrapped with a rope belt. Look for them to make their debut during the Christmas season. **MANY MANY THANKS** to the sewing team: Loralee Murray, Ashley Hopkins, Carol Rickey, Robbie Schorle, and Gerry Cawthra, under the talented leadership of Valerie Methric.

**JOIN US!** If your child has been thinking about joining choir, and your family will be in town on Christmas Eve, this is the perfect time to give it a try. Lovely music, new choir robes, percussion instruments, and lots of performance opportunities. It's natural for small ones to be nervous about choir at first (and parents are welcome to sit in for a few weeks), but before you know it they will be right in the swing of things. (Tell them about the stickers and candies ...)

### YOUTH CHOIR SCHEDULE THROUGH CHRISTMAS:

*Regular rehearsals after church until 12:30 every Sunday unless otherwise announced.*

Dec. 13: 10:00 rehearsal, sing in the 10:30 service ("Prepare the Way of the Lord")

Dec. 20: **ADDED DATE!** 10:00 rehearsal, sing in the 10:30 service ("One Small Child")

Dec. 20: 3:00 PM concert at Warm Friend, followed by hot chocolate

Dec. 24: **FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**, 5:00 call, 6:00 service

*\* Youth are invited to bring an instrument and play a Christmas carol before the service (5:40).*

Jennifer Wolfe



## The Gift of Wild Things and Wild Places

*by Bill Mendenhall - for Taking Grace Green*

In August Jill and I traveled to Montana to fly fish several classic trout rivers in the Gallatin National Forest. On our trip we saw Brown Pelicans, Hawks, Bald Eagles, Sandhill Cranes, Snowy Egrets, Coots, Blue Heron, Kingfishers, Ravens, Wild Horses in North Dakota, Mule Deer, Pronghorn Antelope and Bison (in Yellowstone National Park), Rainbow, Brown, and Cutthroat Trout, and Whitefish in the Yellowstone, and Stillwater Rivers and Armstrong Spring Creek, and an abundance of other wonderful wild creatures across seven states. We also saw four National Parks / Monuments, including Yellowstone, the Badlands in North and South Dakota, and Mount Rushmore.

This past summer we spent countless weekends in Northern Michigan and saw Eagles, Swans, Hawks, Ducks, Geese, Owls, Kingfishers, Cormorants, Sea Gulls, Heron, Woodpeckers, Humming Birds, Blue Jays, Song Birds, Turtles, Whitetail Deer, Fox, Raccoon, Chipmunks, Squirrels, Frogs, countless species of fish in our lake, Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout and Salmon in streams, and other wild things. And we visited the Sleeping Bear Dunes National shoreline for some special hiking and great open scenery.

In late June I went fly fishing on the Pierre Marquette River in the Manistee National Forest for two days and saw very large Brown Trout, enormous Mayflies (*Hexagenia limbata*) and Green Drakes, thousands of fireflies that lit up the night, hundreds of bullfrogs that sounded like an orchestra over miles of water.

Earlier this year, in March, we traveled to Colorado to ski and fly fish. On our trip we saw Hawks, Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, Canada Geese, Ravens, Scrub Jays, Dippers, Whitetail Deer, Mule Deer, Big Horn Sheep, Brook, Brown, Cutthroat, and Rainbow Trout in the Frying Pan River, and other wonderful wild things across six states. We drove through the Arapahoe National Forest, and fished in the beautiful mountain canyons and skied on the slopes in the White River National Forest in the Rocky Mountains.

If you take the time to look and listen, you can realize the extended life around you. We live in an amazing country with amazing wild things and wild places. They are a gift for us to behold. They are something we should take the time to see and hear. And they are something we should be thankful for in this season and throughout the year.

## Announcements and Notices

### **Thank you to our wonderful coffee hour hosts for November!**

Duanne & Dave Masselink  
Cathy Develder & Katie Verspoor  
Joanne Stewart & Will Polik  
Peg Keegin and the St. Andrew's  
Group



- from Laurie VanArk , Coffe Hour Coordinator

### **A Change in Bible Study Schedule**

On Wednesday December 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> there will be no Bible study. We will be meeting on December 30 and January 6, which is also movie night.

### **BLUE Holiday Service Offered at First Reformed Church**

Are you feeling BLUE in the midst of the constant refrain “Merry Christmas”? There will be a Blue Christmas Service on Sunday, December 6th at 6:00 pm at First Reformed Church of Holland. Death, unemployment, poor health, isolation, or broken relationships contribute to the feeling of being alone and BLUE. At such times as these we need to make space to acknowledge our sadness, to remember what we have lost, and to know that we are not alone. For these reasons, First Reformed Church is hosting a Blue Christmas Service. There will be prayers, scripture, music, and a time to acknowledge your loss and remember loved ones. We hope the service will bring comfort to those who mourn, peace to those who struggle, and be a reminder that God’s gift, the light of the world, shines in the darkness. NO need to RSVP, no need to dress up, no need to put on a cheerful face. First Reformed Church is located at 630 State Street in Holland, on the corner of State and 26th.

*The deadline for submissions to the January 2010 issue of Grace to You is December 16, 2009.*

*Please contact the church office or Debbie Coyle at [debcoble@gmail.com](mailto:debcoble@gmail.com) for more details.*

### **MOVIE NIGHT**

On Wednesday, December 2nd, we will be showing the recent movie LAST CHANCE HARVEY, with Dustin Hoffman, among others. I saw this film while flying back from Rome in October, and I thought it was an instant classic. It is a story about divorce and how that affects all concerned, but even more it is a film about reconciliation and the hope that it is never too late to find love. 5:30 refreshments, movie at 6 with pizza. Please bring \$5 if you are eating.



As an “FYI” the movie night for January 2010 is set for January 6th. We will be viewing “About Schmit starring Jack Nicholson.

Henry

## A Special Day for Stephen Ministry at Grace!



Front: Sharon Barlow, Anne Packard, Rev. Jen Adams  
2nd Row: Lora Lee Murray, Molly Coyle, Judy Lynn, Carol Homan, Katie Verspoor.  
Back: Cal Boer, Gerry Cawthra, Tom Kelly, Mary Benedict, and Diane Glupker

The 10:30 am service on Sunday, November 8, 2009 was special for the Stephen Ministry program as the Rite for Commissioning was held. This always takes place at the culmination of training of new ministers. Three things occurred this day:

- Anne Packard (17 years) was presented to the parish having completed 6 months of training to be a “Teen Steve” (the Youth branch of this ministry). Anne received her certificate and is ready to provide Christian lay-caregiving to youth who are facing life challenges.
- Mary Benedict and Tom Kelly were received into the Grace team having been previously trained in other congregations.
- All Stephen Ministers were re-Commissioned.

This day was special to Stephen Ministers for many reasons:

- We feel blessed to be able to use our gifts of caregiving in this way.
- It is a stewardship issue for us, something we do with joy (but usually behind the scenes)
- We are grateful to those who permit us to offer them care in time of their need.
- We are grateful to all parishioners – it is your generosity that funds our training materials and leadership training.

Most important to the team is that, having completed training of another class, it was an opportunity to come before the parish and receive its blessing.

Thank you Grace Church parishioners,

The Stephen Ministry Team

## **Bits & Pieces of Grace**

*By Debbie Coyle*

Congratulations go out the Grace family as the Foster (Alex and Derek) family welcomes Markko and the Bullinger family (Susie and Eddie) welcomes Tommy. Both families are doing well. We're very excited to welcome these babies to Grace.

Congratulations also go out to MacKenzie Coyle who recently was inducted into the Hamilton High School Honor's Society. Great job.

Sadly, Grace said “good-bye” recently to Brad and Carrie Hirdes who served as High School Leaders for two years including the pilgrimage to Canterbury. While we will miss them very much, they are moving on toward great opportunities for both Brad and Carrie! Best wishes to them.

Grace also saw the passing of Kenny Scholten and Dexter Leland during the month of November. Please keep their families in your prayers as you move through the coming weeks.

Please keep all these members of the Grace family in your thoughts and prayers as you move through this Advent and Christmas Season. Also, be sure to send us your “Bits & Pieces” to share with your friends and families of Grace.

## ***From Stewardship Commission...***

When I think of Stewardship certain words come to mind: gratitude, commitment, loyalty, generosity, and giving. Stewardship is more than a question of money; it is a **Question and Answer** of our commitment to ministries we share at Grace.

As a parish, it seems that we have never had more confidence and clarity about our commitment to being part of the Body of Christ in the world. This clarity is reflected in the thriving ministries that abound at Grace, and the implementation of our Strategic Plan developed over the past few months. I ask that you join us in sustaining and growing our ministries in the year ahead.

If you have not made your annual pledge yet, I ask you that you carefully consider making a financial pledge by discussing it, praying about it, and then *acting* on it.

While this article is about making a financial pledge, it is truly an invitation to join your community in dreaming the dreams that our faith calls us to realize at Grace. It is your invitation to share the gifts you have been given to serve God's work in this extraordinary place.

We have every confidence that a strong, vital, and well-led Grace Parish will move into 2010 without a pause in the energy, good will and faithfulness of our members. We are blessed with a dedicated Vestry, a talented and much-admired clergy and staff, a solid financial position, and most importantly, a clear sense of a common God-ward direction. We are pulled forward and drawn together by our fine worship, dynamic and diverse outreach ministries, and gracious hospitality.

I am reminded of an Ancient British epitaph:

*What wee spent we had;  
What wee kept we lost;  
What wee gave we have.*

When our Lord said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," he was telling us a precious secret. What we do with our substance leads our hearts toward God—or away. This is what the ancient couple whose epitaph is quoted above had learned in their journey. Only what we have given away can we keep in eternity. I think that Archbishop Rowan Williams states it the best when heard this last summer, "What is given to us is given to be given in return."

May all of our stewardship be about gratitude.

Guy Packard, Stewardship Commission Chairman

Thank you to everyone who has submitted pledge cards. Cards continue to arrive and, after in-gathering Sunday (November 22nd), our pledge total is **\$192,822**.

***Help us reach our pledge goal of \$308,000! \*contact Grace church if you did not receive a pledge card.***

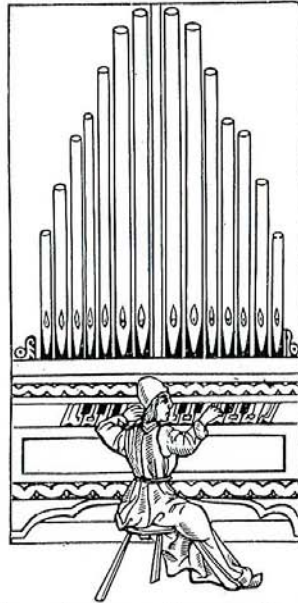
### **Financial Stewardship Report - Total Gifts**

October Budget	\$ 27,400	Year-to-Date Budget	\$ 267,800
October Received	\$ 23,297	Year-to-Date Received	\$ 272,351
Oct Surplus (Shortage)	\$ (4,103)	Year-to-Date Surplus (Shortage)	\$ 4,551

***Thank you!***

Grace Episcopal Church presents

# Steve Jenkins



performing an Organ Recital  
of works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Pärt, Bolcom & Messiaen

Sunday, December 6, 2009 4 PM

Free admission,  
donations accepted

555 Michigan Avenue, Holland MI

*This recital is respectfully dedicated to local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. All proceeds go to the local chapter of Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).*

## **January Evening Course To Focus on Discipleship**

The evening course in January: *The Cost of Discipleship*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer, is 20<sup>th</sup> century German Theologian and anti-Nazi activist who was executed for his role in an assassination plot to execute Hitler. This book explores the level of sacrifice inherent in being a true disciple of Jesus. We will meet on Wednesdays beginning January 13<sup>th</sup> (will continue the 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>) from 5:30 – 7:30 pm in the Adult Formation Room in the lower level. Each class begins with a segment of a biographical video of Bonhoeffer's life. Books are available in the Commons for \$10, or are available online at Amazon.com. The movie for February is entitled "Amen" and will be an illustration of the themes for this course. Please sign up in the Commons or contact the church office if you are planning to attend.

I will look forward to seeing you there.  
Henry



## Fellowship Commission

*Sue Cloutier, Fellowship Commission*

As Advent begins, Fellowship Commission has a variety of opportunities for you to enjoy the fellowship of Grace. We begin the season with the **Holiday Cookie Exchange and Bake Sale**. Last year's cookie exchange was a huge success, and we are excited to host the cookie exchange on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> after the 2<sup>nd</sup> service. An exchange is where you bring in the number of cookies that you want to trade for, i.e. bring 1 dozen and choose 1 dozen to take home, bring 2 dozen and take 2 dozen. This year we are asking those who bake to also donate an extra ½ to 1 dozen cookies to the bake sale side. There are members who don't bake or have time and have expressed a desire to buy cookies last year.

In addition to cookies, we have organized an evening of fun, fellowship, and food at the **Christmas Madrigal Dinner**. Enjoy some holiday music and fun at the Hope College Madrigal Dinner, on Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 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.



Finally, we are in the process of planning a **New Year's Eve get together** - Fellowship is trying to determine how many people would be interested in attending a New Year's Eve get together here at church in the undercroft, probably a potluck and leftover Christmas goodies, with movies and games for the children and cards games for the adults with an approximate starting time of 5:30 - 6 pm until 10 pm. An **"Interest Only"** signup sheet is posted in the Commons **until Sunday, December 13th**; at which time we will make a final decision based on how many people are interested in this event.



Our next meeting is Monday December 7th, 7:00 pm in the Commons.

Join us for any or all of these fellowship activities!

## Grace Begins a New Year with a New Food Ministry (Begins January 14, 2010)



In cooperation with the Feeding America organization (formerly Second Harvest Gleaners), Grace Church will begin providing food once a month to one hundred or more families. We join several other local churches that also provide food through this program and there is still unmet need.

Grace will purchase 5,000 pounds of food at a cost of \$450 and the Feeding America truck will arrive every second Thursday of the month at about 5:30 p.m. People from the community will be registering and waiting in the undercroft for their turn to receive the food. Grace volunteers will provide hospitality, coffee and cocoa, cookies, and conversation with our guests. While the hospitality and waiting occurs, volunteers will be unloading the foods, and re-packaging them in family size amounts. The families will pick up the foods and when all have been served, if there is food left, the families may go through the line again until all has been distributed.

Grace volunteers -- twenty five to thirty individuals of every age and talent will be needed each month to serve our community guests. Jen Adams described the work in this way, "We'll need lifters and sorters and talkers and prayers and grocery carriers and registrars and those who simply are willing to "be with," There is a ministry in this project for everyone."

Things we can do now:

Sign up in the Commons to be a volunteer.

Block the second Thursday of every month from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. for every one in the family.

Start saving plastic grocery bags (because hundreds will be needed every month)

Let us know if you speak Spanish or know someone who does and would be able to help.

Plan to donate each month, either a four pack of toilet tissue or jug of laundry detergent (Grace's special contribution to each family and not available from the truck).

Pray for this new ministry and for those who will be served.

Carol Rickey, for Outreach Commission

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change  
The courage to change the things I can  
And the wisdom to know the difference*

By Reinhold Niebuhr

We've been praying the serenity prayer more than usual these days. Just when we think the worst is over, we learn that the economy may get worse before it gets better. And with no clear solutions and no clear way out, it is easy to fall into despair.

It's impossible to be immune from the fear that is ever present, but it is possible to seek out God's invitation and discern a faithful response in the firm knowledge that God's steadfast love, God's faithfulness in and through Christ can be trusted.

God is in the midst of this crisis and calling us to more deeply integrate our spiritual lives with our financial lives. During this time of great uncertainty, we remain certain that we are called and led by the Holy Spirit to be stewards of God's gifts and God's grace to one another. We pray that the Holy Spirit leads us to change the things we can.

The following is the sixth of seven articles from the National Church: "Finding Hope in Hard Times, Seven Spiritual Practices: A Faithful Steward's Guide" which offers practical steps and prayerful reflections in how we can individually and as a faith community adapt to the troubling reality of our fragile and weakened economy. Ideal for personal contemplation, small group studies, or even adult forum classes, the seven practices offer a way to ground us in the deepest reality of God's abundant grace—despite trying times.

### ***Step Seven A Financial Downturn Can Be A Spiritual Upturn***

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (*Colossians 2:6-7*)

What does it mean to be rooted in Christ? Imagine a house plant with each leaf and flower receiving the nourishment it needs through the root system, up the stalk, and out to the very tips of the plant. So, too, every part of our lives can be nourished by Christ; bringing peace and calm in the midst of anxiety, wisdom to handle financial and other pressures, and comfort in times of burden, grief, and sorrow.

And then, with an almost throw-away line, Paul adds that we are to be "abounding in thanksgiving." We return to where we started these reflections – combating a culture that does not encourage thankfulness, indeed, which spends billions of dollars every year to encourage discontentment. Recessions are difficult times, and there is pain and hardship for many, but we can have nourishment and contentment by trusting God's faithfulness.

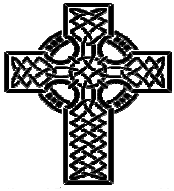
With God's leading, we can come out stronger, as individuals and as a society.

**Pause for Reflection:** How might tough times bring you closer to God? Spend some time in prayer, turning your thoughts to God. In what areas of your life do you need God's nourishment?

**Final Action:** Look back over these seven practices. Make a note of what you have decided to do differently. Set aside time each day in prayer to be led to wise choices and right actions.

This is the final article in this series. You can also see this series in full on our website at [www.graceepiscopalholland.org/stewardship](http://www.graceepiscopalholland.org/stewardship) as well as find printed copies in the Church Commons.

*From Guy Packard, Stewardship Commission*



## *Prayer List as of November 23, 2009*

**PRAYER REQUESTED FOR:** Dana Whitelaw, Sharon King, Karla Meeks, Rebecca Rannow, Diane, Janet Huyser, Bobbie Deitenbeck, Chris, Deborah Grieves, Ralph, Judy Zylstra, Erin Walker, Katherine McNamar, Judy Ching, Andrew, Beth McFarland-Wilson, Tom Boyd, Aaron Schillaci, Ethel, Gordon Gladden, Nancy Lathem, Mike, Brooks, Alex; for the unemployed or under-employed, for the people of the Middle East and other areas of war and unrest, for the women and men of the Armed Forces, especially David and loved ones of our parish family, Dolores & Earl, Yvonne Logan, Karen Trap, Tim and Jordyn and family, Bruce Browning (brother of Jean Adams), George Julius, the Mourot family, Marian Schultz, Bob Borgman, Gilmore Lawrence, Charlie March, Alice Hertel, Harriett Edwards (mother of Stephanie), Dave Masselink, Barb & Gordon, Richard Bailey, Kellye Martin, Carl & Karen Holkeboer, Isaac Montgomery, Samuel Moody, Eric Heiberg, Sue Bentley, Susan & Tacho Sanchez family, Loretta Fisher (mother of John Kustron), Anna DeKraker, Bradley Erickson, Aaron Miller, Betty Sova, Arty Ropa, Gloria Stegenga, Ann McKnight, Max Kurowski, Jerry Mount, Ruth Hill, Betty & Jerry, Bob & Donna, Marge Homan (mother of Carol Homan), Mary Rieckmann, Curt Keegin, Vivian Kingsley, John Keegin, Jackie Van Duren, Lisa Leland, Patrice Mourot, Ben Roper, Jim Roper.

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Charlie Broersma   | Chris Van Tongeren |
| 2 Andrew Schafer     | 22 Jack Wilson     |
| Molly McVay-Walters  | 23 Sara Swaney     |
| 4 Sophia Steele      | Matthew Guyer      |
| Barb Vincensi        | 25 Carol Homan     |
| 5 Gerard Cook        | Kathryn Verspoor   |
| Alex Parrish         | 26 Lindsay Clark   |
| 6 Danielle Biolette  | Jersey Masselink   |
| Lindsay Goodman      | 27 Rob Linn        |
| Gloria Hignite       | 28 Enrique Garcia  |
| Jeremy Stauffer      | Holly Nyland       |
| 8 Katie Gamby        | Brad Richmond      |
| Katherine Light      | 29 Karen Wilson    |
| 9 Sandy Hansen       | 31 Dan Paterson    |
| Jorie Sligh          |                    |
| Patricia Essenburg   |                    |
| Libby Thomas         |                    |
| 10 Chris St. John    |                    |
| Bruce Witteveen      |                    |
| 11 Steve Shinabarger |                    |
| Ethan Vissers        |                    |
| 12 Isabel Hodson     |                    |
| 13 Earl Barkel       |                    |
| 14 Jill Smalldon     |                    |
| Karlyn March         |                    |
| Andrew Macy          |                    |
| 19 Eleanor Nyhof     |                    |
| Tommy Miller         |                    |
| 20 David Meier       |                    |
| Evan Reimer          |                    |
| Andrew Scharlow      |                    |



## **Birthdays & Anniversaries in December**

- |                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| 9 Dianne & Curtis Glupker       |
| 18 Lynne & Bob Frey             |
| 19 Monny & Bryce Cobb           |
| Sharon & John Barlow            |
| 21 Chris & Rick Van Tongeren    |
| Karen & Wiley Wilson            |
| 27 Mary Mims &                  |
| Brent VanderBie                 |
| 28 Jane & Dennis Joles          |
| 29 Donna & John Molendyk        |
| 30 Mary & Kevin Matrosic        |
| 31 Ruth Fischer & Bill Paterson |