

Grace to You

January 2010
Volume 2010, Issue 1

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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. 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

From The Rector

Feeding America (Or at least our little corner of it!)

On Thursday, January 14 beginning at 4:30pm, Grace volunteers will set-up, neighbors will line up, a Feeding America truck loaded with 5000 lbs of food will pull up and Grace Church will step up into the new monthly ministry of food distribution.

The reality is that, in our country of plenty, over 40 million people (13.2 % of the population) live in poverty. The statistics are higher for households that live with “food insecurity”; almost 17.5 million households (15%) are unable to provide consistent, sufficient food for their families. And further research reveals the appalling truths that these hunger percentages are highest among the elderly and children and that in Ottawa County, Michigan we’re above average in *every* category.

And so it’s time for Grace to be grace in response, to do what we can to welcome and feed and know those who could easily remain numbers to us. We have learned that it takes a village to raise a child; it also takes a village to feed a village. This is a ministry that calls all of us into service: some who are willing to unload the truck and hand out food, others who will do registrations, some who will bake cookies, others who will serve cookies and hot chocolate, some who will talk and pray with those who come, and still more who will help people get food to their cars. We figure we will need 35-40 volunteers per month and hope that many Grace members begin to make the second Thursday of each month a monthly (family) practice. There is a place for everyone in this work, so sign up in the Commons and plan to show up as soon after 4:30 as possible.

There is plenty of food to go around. Be a part of the team and help us get that abundance into the hands of those who hunger.
See you on the 14th!

Peace,

Jen

Grace Episcopal Church
616) 396-7459 FAX (616) 396-7430
www.graceepiscopalholland.org
email: gechurch@sbcglobal.net

Election for Vestry Class of 2013 To Be Held at Annual Meeting January 17th

Nominations for the Vestry Class of 2012 closed on Sunday, December 27 and the election will be held during the Annual Meeting on January 17th. On Sunday, January 3, photographs and brief biographies of the candidates will appear as a bulletin insert. The same information will be available soon after on the Grace website.

Absentee ballots for the election may be requested beginning January 3. These will be granted to "communicants in good standing" for "good cause," i.e., illness, disability, or the need to be absent from the Annual Meeting for business or personal reasons. Absentee ballots may only be obtained from the Rector, and must be returned to the church office in a sealed envelope prior to January 18.

All parishioners who are unable to attend the Annual Meeting are urged to support their preferred candidates for the new Vestry by casting an absentee ballot.

Taking Stewardship of the Environment to Phase Two

by Bill Mendenhall

Three years ago my wife suggested that I stop "talking" about the things we need to do to help balance our environment and "do" something about it. She suggested I consider initiating an awareness and action program at Grace that would start changing what we do at Grace and also get the people at Grace to start thinking about how their own actions affect the world we live in. The idea was simple . . . get people thinking and talking about how they can live their lives for a greener world . . . and have the ideas spread to their family, friends, neighbors, the community, and beyond.

With help from Jen Adams and Barbara Griffin, Environmental Stewardship became part of the Stewardship Committee and its efforts. We gathered a group of Grace people that were representative of the profile of Grace and discussed ideas. We formed a final list of things to do, prioritized the ideas and started the plan. We called the effort "Taking Grace Green."

We began with a series of Forums over three Sundays showing the film "An Inconvenient Truth" and offering printed materials of articles about a wide variety of issues. We began publishing articles about environmental practices for everyday living, which included a wide range of topics, and scheduled presentations on subjects like making your own green cleaning products and green holiday baked goods and gifts.

In Year Two we continued the program with the church moving to recycling its office paper, an energy audit, changing light bulbs to more efficient products, replacing styrofoam cups with ceramic, and a new energy efficient furnace that would, with energy savings, pay for itself. We sold reusable shopping bags for use as a replacement to plastic. We brought in retired Hope College Professor, Dr. Eldon Greij who gave an excellent program on the tie between climate change and bird behavior and survival . . . and all life on the planet. And we continued our series of articles about environmental writers, environmental news, green living ideas, buying less and using less . . . even a green Christmas.

This year we continued our series of articles about how to live a greener lifestyle, becoming more environmentally aware and proactive, and places to go and see the joys of the earth we live on and the animal and plant life that surrounds us.

When we began our efforts we were ahead of the national discussion on the environment. Our concerns from three years have now become a regular part of the daily media discussion. Today there are a lot of action groups and there are a lot of new ideas on the internet, in books, and in the mainstream media.

Now it is time for us to turn the page and take our environmental stewardship to a new phase. We need the ideas and energy of some new people to move the program forward. So I am asking that all Grace people think about joining in, contributing ideas, considering taking a leadership role, and continuing the effort. This is important work. This isn't easy work because it has to continue for more than a few weeks, months, or years. But it must continue.

I plan on stepping back and letting others lead. I will help and continue to write, and be involved. But it is time for those who might have an interest and want to help, to keep driving this effort forward.

Please consider your level of involvement and let us know how you can help!

Bill Mendenhall mendasoc@iserv.net
Jen Adams rev.jenadams@yahoo.com
Guy Packard guy.packard@yahoo.com

Adult Forum January
Sundays from 9:15-10:15
In the Forum Room, Lower Level

January

3rd Epiphany Intergenerational

Follow the star down to the Forum Room as people of all ages celebrate the new season.

10th Feeding America (or our little corner of it)

On Thursday, January 14th, we begin our monthly ministry of distributing 5000lbs of food to those in need through the Feeding America program. Many Grace volunteers are lined up to welcome, register, serve coffee and cookies, and talk to folks who come to us for food. Come to this informational planning hour (whether you are signed up for January or plan to in the future) to hear what we need to hear and organize ourselves for this wonderful step we are taking at Grace.

17th Annual Report Overview

Take time prior to the Annual Meeting (which follows the second service this morning) to review the Annual Report which is a compilation of input from every Commission of the Church. Find a corner, grab a cup of coffee and read up on the happenings of Grace.

24th - 31st

Moving from Ethos to Ethics: Water and Energy in an Era of Climate Change , with guest Sara Ebenreck Leeland

Science, along with simple observation of processes like the melting of glaciers and the Arctic ice, tells us that climate change is already underway. Responding calls us to examine the values with which we respond to local and global impacts. Sara Leeland will outline what scientists are now saying about Great Lakes effects and then lead us in examining both our values and the options for local community action. Sara is a writer, philosophy professor and community activist focused on building community as we respond to the many local and global issues related to water and energy in an era of climate change. Her perspective is infused with appreciation for the worldwide leadership of women who join social justice to their environmental concerns. She earned her Ph.D. in Philosophy from Fordham University and taught in both the women's studies and environmental studies programs at St. Mary's College of Maryland. After moving back to the shores of Lake Michigan, in Holland, she has become an active leader in both these areas. She co-founded Lakeshore Women for Peace, is co-chair of WEST, the Holland-area renewable energy group, legislative board member of the Holland League of Women Voters and teaches at the Hope Academy for Senior Professionals. She has written numerous books and articles including *St. Leonard: A Maryland Tidewater Community*, a book that received the 2005 Educational Excellence Award from Maryland Historic Trust.

Did you know that Community Action House offers classes?

Financial Management Class: Do you struggle with money? Are you paying bills on time but want to save more? Gain the knowledge you need to get ahead financially. Topics include: Money Management, Borrowing Basics, Charge it Right, Savings, Check It Out, Consumer Protection, Investing, and Insurance. Class starting dates for 2010 are January 6, April 21, July 7 and September 29.

First-Time Homebuyers Class: Do you dream of home ownership? Gain the knowledge you need to get a good loan and a home you can afford. Topics include: Community Resources and Budgeting, Real Estate and Inspections, and Mortgages and Insurance. Class starting dates for 2010 are March 3, May 19, September 8, and December 1.

Home Maintenance Class: Is your home in need of repair? Come learn practical do-it-yourself skills that can save money. Topics include: Plumbing, Electrical and Furnace, Landscaping, Painting and Wall Repair. Class runs on Wednesday evenings March 24-April 14.

CAH classes are free of charge. Register by calling Mike Brown at (616) 738-1170

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 -- thirty-five to forty 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

Stewardship Update:

We need your pledge! While we have gratefully received 90% of our goal for pledging 2010, we need 100% of \$308,000 goal in order to avoid another round of budget cuts and to sustain the vital ministries that are Grace Church. Pledging for 2010 will allow for distribution of 5000 pounds of food per month, restoration of cost of living increases to our staff, continuation of renovation efforts and space needs evaluations, our living further into the vision and goals established in our recently completed Strategic Planning process and so many more of the ministries that are Grace Church. Pledge cards are available in the pews. Know that every pledge makes a difference!

Financial Stewardship Report - Total Gifts

November Budget	\$31,025.00	Year-To-Date Budget	\$298,825.00
November Received	\$29,356.36	Year-To-Date Received	\$301,707.13
November Surplus (Shortage)	(\$1,668.64)	Year-To-Date Surplus (Shortage)	\$2,882.13

Thank you!

An Invitation for St. Mary's

From Cherie DeCook

The St. Mary's Executive Committee would like to inform you all of the change in format for this year's Epiphany Party. We still want to join in the spirit of giving, and we still want to have a present to open, but we felt that two presents each year (nice as they are) was a bit much. SO- this year, after hors d'euovres and desserts (bring one or the other, please) we will have a gift exchange. We are hoping each party participant will bring a wrapped present containing something useful to either the animals at the Humane Society or to the women at the Center for Women in Transition.

There have been lots of suggestions for needed items, so contact a St. Mary's member for ideas. Remember that the dollar amount is not as important as the thoughtfulness involved that counts.

The Epiphany Party will be held at Geri Cawthra's home at 7 pm on Monday, January 11, 2010.

St. Martha's Guild Sets Winter Gathering for Jan. 26

from the Pastoral Care Commission

St. Martha's, the folks who call on "temporarily or regularly homebound" members of Grace church, plan to hold their annual winter get-together on Tuesday, Jan. 26. Peg Keegin will host the soup supper and short meeting at her home beginning at 6:30 pm.

If you are interested in making a monthly visit to a few of the homebound members of our church, please join St. Martha's at Peg's for more information as well as fellowship.

New callers (men AND women) are welcome and encouraged to join this growing ministry.

Call Peg Keegin or the church office if you have any questions.

January Evening Course To Focus on Discipleship

The evening course in January: **The Cost of Discipleship**, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Bonhoeffer is a 20th century German Theologian and anti-Nazi activist who was executed for his role in an assassination plot against Hitler. This book explores the level of sacrifice inherent in being a true disciple of Jesus. We will meet on Wednesdays beginning January 13th (will continue the 20th and 27th) 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

Soul: Be Prepared for the "Winter"

The first snow of the year arrived in northern Michigan last week, and it hasn't stopped since. The snow is beautiful, yet at the same time, we all know that everything is going to slow down for a while. It's the way of winter, and we're used to it here. We know how to prepare, but we still get the usual warnings and recommendations about what to carry in your car in case you get stuck somewhere and have to wait for help. The list is precise, and includes helpful items such as a flashlight, candle with an empty can, blanket, some food (chocolate is often recommended), communication device, and most of all, some good old common sense.

We know that high winds and falling snow can lower visibility and make travel difficult, especially at night. Under those circumstances, slipping and sliding into less than desirable situations is a real possibility.

This is so much like our lives! We know that we'll have days when our circumstances are less than desirable, and we wish we could be somewhere else. So how do we prepare for those days?

Here are some easy-to-remember practices that can help:

1. Become aware and cultivate your inner strength; develop it through practice, and draw on it constantly.
2. Don't allow yourself the luxury of self-pity. Understand that the things happening around, or sometimes even *to* you, are not always about you.
3. Recognize that most situations are temporary, and the discomfort you may be experiencing will pass.
4. Have a well-established relationship with your Higher Self/God/Source. This enables you to connect, even in very hard times, but it requires discipline and perseverance (practice) beforehand.
5. Always remember to carry a flashlight - whatever your "light" source is. Learn to be aware that it is always with you. Live in the light.
6. Carry "food" with you to feed your soul; this might mean always having good music or great reading material at hand, or learning a type of meditative, breathing, centering, or prayer practice that allows you brief respite even when you are engaged in daily activities.

We can prepare for the difficult or challenging moments in our lives and during the holidays most of us will face a few of them. Be prepared - it's a great idea.

From Spirituality and Health Magazine: www.spiritualityhealth.com

Bits & Pieces of Grace

By Debbie Coyle

As we are moving into a new year, there are lots of things for which we can be grateful. The holidays always remind us of the gifts of friends, relatives, and our community. Our Grace family continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Each Sunday is overflowing with excitement and energy.

Fran Greene's daughter, Maggie, who is a construction attorney, has passed the US Green Building Council exam for LEED Accredited Professionals. The US Green Building Council is the organization that certifies construction projects for meeting specified requirements for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). LEED projects focus on protection of the environment, energy conservation, water conservation, re-using and recycling buildings and materials, and creating a healthy interior environment for building occupants. By passing the exam, Maggie has demonstrated that she has a comprehensive understanding of LEED goals and engineering strategies and is qualified to manage the LEED certification process for a project.

Sadly, this month saw the passing of Alice Hertel, a beloved member of the Grace Family. Alice's art will be featured at the Holland Area Arts Council from June 11 through August 31, 2010.

Please continue to send us your "bits & pieces" to share with the Grace Community. Best wishes for a very happy New Year!

Announcements and Notices

Thank you to our wonderful coffee hour hosts for December!

Sandy, Dave & Alyssa Wright
Bruce & Cathy Fries
David & Ruth Hawley-Lowry

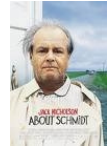


Also, thank you to the bakers and hosts for St. Andrews Sunday on November 29:
Peg Keegin, Lori Shier, Jill Mendenhall, Kim & John Shea, Katie Verspoor, Jim Thomas, Sharon Barlow, and Gerry Cawthra

- from Laurie VanArk, Coffee Hour Coordinator

Movie Night for January:

Our movie for Wednesday, January 6th, is "About Schmidt" starring Jack Nicholson. Warren Schmidt is about to experience a bittersweet slice of life. Newly retired, he and his wife Helen have big plans to see America--but an unexpected twist changes everything. Now Schmidt is determined to stop his daughter's wedding to an underachieving waterbed salesman. Within that framework of a plot, what the movie is really about is self-discovery, compassion, and love. It is a "road movie" which is both geographic and spiritual. Also, a great Satie soundtrack. Refreshments at 5:30, movie at 6, with pizza. Please bring a \$5 donation for the pizza.



SEE YOU THERE.

Attention anyone in Third-Grade or older:

How would you like to help with an important ministry at church? We are looking for people (young and old) that would be interested becoming an Acolyte. Time commitment is minimal (about once every six weeks). If you are interested please call the Guyers at 748-1079 or tguyer@charter.net.

A most sincere apology for our error:

In the December 2009 issue of Grace to You, it was announced that Dexter Leland had passed. Unfortunately, there was a misprint of his name. Our most sincere apologies go out to his family and to his friends in the Grace community for this error.

Attention Youth! Don't forget to RSVP to Debbie for the following activities.

January 9-10 Epiphany Retreat at Grace
4pm Sat. 1/09/10 - 11:30am Sun. 01/10/10.

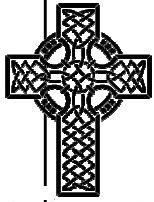
January 31 - Youth Groups Go Tubing at Pando
12pm - 4pm Sun. 1/31. Cost is \$20 per person. Please RSVP by Jan. 10th.

February 27-28 Ski Retreat to Crystal Mountain
8am Sat. 2/27 - 3 pm Sun. 2/28. Cost varies depending on equipment rental. Contact Debbie for more information and to RSVP by February 14.

March 18-21 Nightwatch in New York City
5pm Thurs 3/18-3pm Sun. 3/21. Travel to NYC to participate in Nightwatch at St. John the Divine. Cost is \$250 and includes all meals, accommodations, and activities. Trip includes service opportunity as well as spiritual retreat. RSVP by January 15th!

*Do not let cost keep you from participating in any of the Grace Youth activities. Contact Debbie for information on scholarships!

The deadline for submissions to the February 2010 issue of Grace to You is January 20, 2010.



Prayer List as of December 21, 2009

PRAYER REQUESTED FOR: Jon Fries, Des and Joy, the Schakel family, Florence Coyle (mother of Brian), Amy, Shirley, Dana Whitelaw, Rebecca Rannow, Wayne Fries, Diane, Janet Huyser, Bobbie Deitenbeck, Chris, Deborah Grieves, Judy Zylstra, Erin Walker, Katherine McNamar, Judy Ching, Andrew, Beth McFarland-Wilson, Tom Boyd, Nancy Lathem; 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, Matt Olney and loved ones of our parish family, Ralph, Sharon King, Karla Meeks, Aaron Schillaci, Mike, Brooks, Alex, Dolores & Earl, Yvonne Logan, Karen Trap, Tim and Jordyn and family, Bruce Browning (brother of Jean Adams), George Julius, Marian Schultz, Gilmore Lawrence, Dave Masselink, Barb & Gordon, Richard Bailey, Kellye Martin, Isaac Montgomery, Samuel Moody, Eric Heiberg, Susan & Tacho Sanchez family, Bradley Erickson, Aaron Miller, Betty Sova, Arty Ropa, Gloria Stegenga, Ann McKnight, 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 Mourrot, Ben Roper, Jim Roper.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Richard Swaney
Phillip Reinink | 12 David Wright
Joan Breitmeyer |
| 2 Vivian Kingsley
Jennifer Wolfe | 14 Liza Barry
Ron Brown
Phillip Kloske
Kathryn Swaney |
| 3 Kristie Phillips | 15 Tom Kelley |
| 4 Devin Shea
Lourdes Manderfield
Christoph Manderfield | 16 Mark Borgman |
| 5 Brian Coyle | 17 Roger De Cook
Mike Erickson |
| 6 Rob Sligh
Brian Essenburg | 18 David Raffenaud |
| 7 Krista Raffenaud
Stafford Keegin
Emily Wright
Holden Richardson | 21 Christopher Packard |
| 8 Elizabeth Phillips
Samantha Brown | 23 Heather Klamt
Clay Stauffer
Carla Vissers
Mary Cotta |
| 10 Gladys Woodward
Grafton Ervine
Simon Hodson | 24 Miranda Rinks |
| 11 John Barlow | 27 Anne Gamache
Dennis Joles
Ashlyn Jones |
| | 31 Sally Corneliussen |



Birthdays & Anniversaries in January

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