

Grace to You

October 2009
Volume 2009, Issue 9

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From The Rector

Glimpses of Grace

It was a beautifully sunny Sunday afternoon when four-year old Ben Bier came up to the plate. He was acting as if he had waited for this moment his whole life and, for all we know, maybe he had been. The intergenerational crowd seemed to understand the weight of the moment and so went quiet with anticipation as Ben carefully took a few steps back and took one of the biggest breaths he had ever taken in his life. And then Ben turned it on! He ran up to kick the gently rolled pitch with everything he had in 'm. And (as if in slow motion) contact was made, the ball bumped forward off his shin, rolled about three feet, and landed between home plate and the pitcher's mound where it came to a complete stop.

But Ben had big things in mind. He had a vision. He had a dream. And he had the support of an entire community behind him. So, after standing and watching for a moment or two, Ben began to run. He cleanly rounded first and then (in a surprising and slightly unconventional move) headed directly over pitcher's mound toward third base, skipping second all together. And upon reaching third, Ben jumped up and down on third base with his arms in the air as if he had finally arrived!

And it all could have ended there. But, sensing the possibilities and breathing in the excitement, Ben dug even deeper and remembered his dream. He turned toward home and absolutely-without-a-doubt-believing-that-nothing-could-stop-him, Ben ran and ran and then he slid, like no one has ever slid before, right on top of home plate. It was his first time up ever and IT WAS A HOME RUN!!! The crowds went wild! And Ben was high fived and hugged and cheered for what seemed like hours. And even the other team smiled big smiles at the event that was Kick-Off Kick-Ball '09.

And this is Grace. All of these things are Grace. Grace is room for Ben to dream and kick in faith. Grace is all of those gentle pitches that first-timers can handle. Grace is a seasoned and forgiving infield that allows for the unconventional approach to a game that's older than us all. Grace is celebration and a community of support. Grace is the ability to see possibility when the ball isn't moving at all. You could say that Grace is even, in many ways, coming home to embraces and cheers and high fives. And isn't that the dream, the vision that we all share?

Thanks, Ben and everyone for a wonderful kick off to what promises to be another grace-filled year. Thanks for the reminder of who Grace at our best can be.

Peace,
Jen

Sunday Forum Fall Offerings
9:15am Sundays in The Formation Room, Lower Level

The Stimulus Society: How are we being changed?

October 4

What have been the consequences for the Holland community?

Presenter: Al McGeehan, Mayor of Holland

October 11

How have the poorest among us fared?

Presenters: Mark Tucker, Community Action House,
and Judy Van Dyke, Good Samaritan Ministries

Autism: Living with Awareness and Hope

October 18 -25

Autism is one of a group of serious developmental problems called autism spectrum disorders (ASD) that appear in early childhood — usually before age 3. It's estimated that three to six out of every 1,000 children in the United States have autism — and the number of diagnosed cases is rising. What is clear is that though there is no cure for autism, intensive, early treatment can make an enormous difference in the lives of many children with the disorder. **Benjamin's House** is a place where people with autism are fully supported so that they might reach their greatest potential, enjoy a meaningful and rich life, and realize a future of hope. **Krista Mason** will be here to educate us regarding autism, tell us about her work with Benjamin's house, and lead a discussion about our own experiences and faithful responses to spectrum disorders.

Nov 1st All Saints Sunday

Join us for an informal Bible study and fellowship time with coffee and bagels. A Newcomer Welcome brunch follows the 10:30 service.

Prophetic Themes in Popular Music

Nov 8th & 15th

Henry Idema will lead a critical evaluation of pop music. Mark your calendar now and look for more details in the November issue of Grace To You.

**All Saints' Day Provides a time of Welcome To Our Community with Baptisms,
Eucharist and Newcomer Welcome
Sunday, November 1st**

It has become the tradition here at Grace to welcome those who have begun worshiping with us over the last year (or two!) at a luncheon following the 10:30 service on All Saints' Sunday. We have many newcomers in our system already, but we don't want to miss anyone! SO if you are new to Grace or know of someone who is new to Grace, please contact the office and make sure we've included all. We encourage newcomers and old timers and everyone in-between to join us for our All Saints' Day Service of Holy Baptism and Eucharist at 10:30am and Newcomer Welcome with brunch in the Undercroft following the service.

What about H1N1 and Communion?

Rev. Jen Adams

Over the past couple of weeks people have been asking about the risks of contracting H1N1 through communion, primarily the common chalice. So, here's some information to help you decide how to receive the sacrament.

First, the alcohol content in the wine, along with proper purificator use (the white cloth used by the chalice bearer,) greatly reduces the chances of spreading germs through drinking from the common cup. According to medical experts, the odds of transmittal of disease through the common cup are very, very slight.

Second, many believe that dipping their own hosts in the chalice reduces exposure to infection. Medical authorities and the CDC strongly question that assumption. In truth, they suggest, the more hands dipping into the chalice, the greater the possibility of infection as the hands are among the greatest carriers of "germs." So, the fewer who "dip" the better and since the cleanliness of hands is a major concern, prior to communion (after the passing of the peace) those who distribute the bread and wafers wash their hands with alcohol based hand sanitizer. We'll also be making hand sanitizer available throughout the parish to help reduce the odds of spreading this flu by hand.

Finally, we believe that receiving the bread and/or wine is full communion. In other words, bread without wine is considered full communion and vice versa so if you are uncomfortable receiving the wine simply cross your hands over your chest when the chalice comes and the chalice bearer will move on to the next person.

If more information becomes available or we feel a need to change our practice we'll communicate that to the parish.

Blessing of the Animals on October 4th

Join us for this St. Francis Day tradition in the side yard of the Church on Sunday, October 4th at 5:00 pm. All animals are welcome regardless of denomination. Water will be provided out of common bowls for all who thirst.

Wednesday Evening Programs focuses on : *The Role of Mass Media in Our Culture* October 7th—November 4th

- Henry Idema

As we move into fall, the Wednesday evening course will continue to focus on the role of the mass media in our culture. There will be a variety of movies, discussions, and reading opportunities to help us explore this timely topic. Movies for this series include:

October 7: CITIZEN KANE: Many movie critics consider this the best movie ever made. The film will be hosted by Dr. Dede Johnston, professor of communications at Hope College. This is Orson Welles is at his best!

October 14: ELMER GANTRY: For this film be sure to read the chapter in *AMUSING OURSELVES TO DEATH* about religion and the mass media. Burt Lancaster plays the lead.

October 21: A FACE IN THE CROWD: Andy Griffith made his stunning movie debut as Lonesome, a big ol' teddy bear whose meteoric rise to TV fame is paralleled by his plunge into booze, sex and political corruption.

October 28: GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK: It is 1953, and the piece of talking furniture called TV is still a novelty in America's living rooms. On it, Senator Joe McCarthy uses fear, falsehoods and belligerence to become arguably the most powerful man in the land. On it, newsman Edward R. Murrow, who has had his fill of the senator's tactics, fights back. Stars George Clooney, Robert Downey Jr., and Frank Langella.

All classes begin at 5:30 with refreshments (bring a snack or beverage to pass). Movie will begin at 6:00 with pizza served (please bring \$5 to help cover cost of pizza). Reminder: We are now meeting in the new Adult Formation room in the Lower Level!

Please sign up on the bulletin board in the Commons if you plan on attending, even if only for two or three

Tune Your Senses to Discover an Outdoor Wildlife Adventure Right in Your Own Yard

by Bill Mendenhall

Last year I began keeping notes on the different wildlife species that visited our yard. Within a short time I began to realize that the list was growing into something larger than I expected.

Soon I put the list into a file on my laptop computer by the back windows in our sun room.

The list continued to grow and, as the seasons changed, it became even more interesting. I recorded the large variety of birds. Then I noted the Coopers Hawks and Barred Owls as they visited to see if they could get a meal.

Throughout the seasons White Tail Deer came to the woods behind our back fence for a meal of greens, shade from the heat of summer, protection in the fall and food in the winter. We saw Kit Fox, Wild Turkeys . . . and Mallard Ducks come to the feeders in the Spring. And it continues.

It is a real treat to watch and, in time, your awareness increases. And you notice new things.

This has turned into an ongoing adventure for me. It has become content for Christmas card letters and some eye opening conversations with friends.. It is fun . . . and right there in the yard.

Here is my list after a year:

The Yard: Chipmunks, Red Squirrels, Brown Squirrels, Grey Squirrels, Black Squirrels, Rabbits, Possum, Mice, Goldfinches, Cardinals, House Finches, Hummingbirds, Doves, Robins, Sparrows, Creepers, Nut Hatches, Crows, Blue Jays, Baltimore Orioles, Tufted Titmice, Juncos, Downy Woodpeckers, Red Shafted Flickers, Green Herons, Grosbeaks, Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, Mallard Ducks, Coopers Hawks, Barred Owls, Gnats, Bees, Wasps, Hornets, Butterflies, Moths, Dragon Flies, Damsel Flies, Fireflies, Lady Bugs, Spiders, and Ants

Outside the Fence : Deer, Wild Turkeys, Kit Fox, Skunk

and Overhead: Ducks, Canada Geese, Snow Geese, Swans, Great Blue Heron, Sandhill Cranes, Gulls, Hawks, Eagles, and Turkey Vultures.

Try it yourself. See how it goes. It will grab your interest and make you more aware of your own world.

Liberals Have Proof Texts Too?: An In Home Discussion Group hosted by Jay and Karen Bylsma

For a time after I left my evangelical Protestant tradition, I was reluctant to engage my Bible toting friends who professed concern about my eternal destination. But after 30 years of intensive studying some of the best modern day theologians (like Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, Hans Kung, Hendrikus Berko, Karen Armstrong, Douglas John Hall, Huston Smith, etc), I was pleased and comforted to discover that liberals have proof texts, too. And some of them are truly convincing.

So if your background is similar to mine, and your transition, like mine, was less than comfortable, I welcome you to our living room on Sunday evenings from 7:30 pm. to about 9:00 beginning October 4th for some great discussion and some scrumptious desserts.

The discussion will follow an unpublished novel about a young man who is forced to come to terms with his long held religious constructions about the inspiration of the scriptures, the inerrancy of the Bible, and the virgin birth, (to name a few of the less controversial topics). The discussion may leave your theological concerns lighter but the desserts could weigh more heavily. There is a sign-up sheet in the Commons. I'll get directions and materials to those who are interested. -- Jay

Thank you to our wonderful Coffee Hour Hosts for September!



From Laurie Van Ark, Coffee Hour Coordinator

Ed Hansen
Prescott Slee & the Kick-Off Sunday Crew
Sue Cloutier & Fellowship Commission
Cherie & Roger DeCook

Announcements and Notices

Families gather for some “outside church” Time Together.

For many years now, families at Grace have participated in a program called “Holy Chow!”. While the Grace Church Family “Circles of Grace” was created as a way to network families living in similar geographic areas, Holy Chow was created as a way to bring people together for dinner and get-to-know-you conversation, out side of Grace. Several times each year, parishioners are asked to sign up to participate in Holy Chow, then divided into groups of 8-10, who take turns hosting the group for an evening. Many long-standing friendship were begun over dinner and a beverage. Don’t miss out on this great chance to spend a little more time learning about the people of Grace. Sign up in the church commons or contact the church office for more information.

Why Bad Things Happen to Good People

Heny Idema will once again be leading a weekly Bible study on Wednesdays, beginning October 14 at noon. The group will be studying the Book of Job, which struggles with the age old issue of why bad things happen to good people. It is also a window into Israel’s past, and the issues the book raises are relevant to our present dilemmas. This group meets every Wednesday unless otherwise posted.

In preparation for the first meeting, participants are asked to read the first four chapters. We will be going through the text line by line, meditating on the poetry, and examining the theology. You do not have to be at each class, but please make a commitment to come as often as you can.

First Monday Arts Event

A new series on *Creativity, Spirituality* and the *Arts* will continue this fall. Our regular monthly meetings will begin at 7:00 pm on October 5, and will continue November 2 and December 7 to end the 2009 calendar year. All are invited if your interests are in the area of creativity, spirituality and the arts. We will continue to explore the depth and breadth of artistic and creative mediums to see where and how these phenomena exhibit themselves in our lives. Our schedule is currently looking like this: (always allowing for changes!)

October 5, Exploring the Medium of Polymer (Sculpy) Clay with Robbie Schorle
November 2, Creating Luminaries for an Advent Labyrinth Walk with Mary Huisman
December 7, Pausing on the Road to Bethlehem, Advent Labyrinth Walk with Mary Huisman
January, 2010 – No Meeting and we will resume meeting on February 1, 2010 .

Healing Shawl Ministry

- from Brenda Millett

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? Prayer shawls provide a way to reach out to parishioners as well as our community at large who may be experiencing illness, grief or other difficult circumstances. Yarn is available. You can use your own pattern or choose the one provided in the brochure on the bulletin board in The Commons. For more information and any questions, please call Brenda Millett, 738-0890.

Financial Stewardship Report - Total Gifts

August Budget	\$ 27,075	Year-To-Date Budget	\$213,475
August Received	\$ 25,914	Year-To-Date Received	\$224,577
Aug. Surplus (Shortage)	\$ (1,161)	Year-To-Date Surplus (Shortage)	\$ 11,102

Thank you!

The deadline for submissions to the November 2009 issue of Grace to You is October 14, 2009.

Fellowship Commission Continues Chili Cook Off

Sue Cloutier, Fellowship Commission

It was wonderful to see about 100 of you enjoying the Kick-Off Sunday Picnic at Moran Park. What a great start for the new program year. Thank you to Prescott Slee for coordinating the meal.

Now that our program year is in full swing, remember to join your Grace family for wonderful fellowship opportunities. This year, we will again be hosting the **Teusink's Hayride & Chili Cook-Off**. This has become our annual jaunt to Teusink's Pony Farm on West 32nd Street in Holland. This year's gathering will be on Friday, October 2, beginning at 6 pm until 9 pm. We will hold a "Chili Cook-Off" and will have pumpkin painting, a hayride, and activities for the kids. And you will want to stick around for the bonfire, as we will have s'mores for dessert! So if you would like to bring chili or a salad for supper, or supplement the s'mores with a dessert, please indicate that when you sign up. There will be hot dogs available for those who prefer. Suggested donation is \$5/person or \$15/family. The signup sheet is posted in the Commons.

We are also pulling together details for a variety of other activities. Be sure to check your newsletter or the website for more details of upcoming events. Our next meeting is Tuesday, October 6, at 6 pm in the Commons please join us!

A Morning of Retreat Set For Those Facing Unemployment

Are you someone who is unemployed or underemployed? Know that you are not alone! Several Grace parishioners came together in September and plan to continue gathering on the THIRD Thursday of each month from 9:00—10:00 for bagels, coffee, networking, and ideas sharing. Jen will meet with the group in the new Adult Formation space across from the offices on the lower level. Join us October 15th, November 19th, and December 17th and please spread the word to anyone you know who might benefit from being a part of this group.

Young Singers Tune Up For An Active Fall!

From Jennifer Wolfe, Youth Choir Director

The Grace Youth Choir has an active program year planned, and we would love for **ALL YOUTH** to be part of it! Whether or not you've sung before, whether you're 5 or 15, we have a spot for you!

Singers are welcome to join us when they can read words a little bit and sit at the back with the choir through the service—generally around age 5 or 6. I do expect timely and regular attendance.

The choir will rehearse on Sundays after church. Grab a snack, visit with your friends for a few minutes, and then join us up in the choir room until 12:30. Parents, you can enjoy coffee hour a little extra long, or we can arrange car-pooling to get your kids home.

Below is the fall service schedule. If you have any questions, just call me at 395-8387 or e-mail wolfe@hope.edu. I strive to make choir a fun, educational and spiritual experience, and I would love to welcome your child to our group.

Sunday, October 4: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service

ALSO 4:45 rehearsal, 5 PM Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 18: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service

Sunday, November 1: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service (with adult choir)

Sunday, November 22: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service (with adult choir)

Sunday, December 13: 10 AM rehearsal, 10:30 service

Sunday, December 20: 3 PM concert at Warm Friend Seniors' Residence

... likely one or two special Christmas choir rehearsals TBA this week ...

Thursday, December 24: 5:15 PM rehearsal, 6 PM Christmas Eve service

*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 fifth 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 Five: Keep on Giving

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

It's vital that we continue to give during an economic downturn, and not only because our faith communities and charities depend on our giving. We give because we need to give. The Holy Spirit is continually at work shaping and growing our hearts, leading us to reflect the generosity of God's nature, as well as the depths of God's self-giving nature made known in Jesus. As we give, we experience the deeper joy of growing into the full stature of Christ.

One advantage of thinking about our giving in terms of giving away a percentage of our income is that it helps us adjust our giving as our income goes up or down. When we have less money coming in, we can give less, but do so knowing that our relative generosity is unchanged.

Action: Review your giving, setting it in the context of your income. Do you know what percentage of your income you give back?

Pause for Reflection: The passage above challenges us to give cheerfully. One way of increasing the joy found from giving is to become deeply aware of how your purpose is aligned with God's purpose of *shalom*, which is the Biblical understanding of peace that comes from living in right relationship with each other and all of creation. Understanding your purpose leads to joyful giving.

Watch the upcoming issues of Grace to You for subsequent articles: "Rebuild Generous Communities", "A Financial Downturn Can Be A Spiritual Upturn". You can also see this in full on our website at www.graceepiscopalholland.org/stewardship as well as find printed copies in the Church Commons.

From Guy Packard, Stewardship Commission

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Please help us go GREEN! Contact us at gechurch@sbcglobal.net if you are able to view the newsletter online at www.graceepiscopalholland.org/newsletter.

Come and See.....

What's happening at Grace

Important Dates:

- October 2 - Grace Night at Teusink's Pony Farm
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- October 4 - Blessing of the Animals
5:00 pm
- October 25 - Stephen Minister Commissioning
10:30 Service
- November 1 - Newcomer Welcome Sunday
Immediately following 10:30 service

****full calendar of events and list of birthdays and anniversaries in center...***

