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As Resurrection Unfolds

An Easter Day Sermon

Of the four variations on the story of the resurrection it's this one from the gospel of John that's my favorite. There is something very real about the way it all played out in this story, as "real" as resurrection can sound anyway. In the other gospels there's an earthquake or sparkling angels or something hugely dramatic that shines a phenomenal spotlight on this moment. But in John it's a little more gentle and I like that that.

At first, there's just Mary and she had gone to the grave to grieve. And while it was extremely sad, I imagine that the morning was also peaceful – we all know how important those alone moment of tending to our own grief can be. But when she got there the stone had been rolled away and the body was gone. She went and got Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved and both of them ran to the tomb to see if what Mary was saying was true. Both disciples eventually entered the tomb, saw the linen wrappings that had covered Jesus body lying on the ground and the cloth that had been over his head was wrapped up in a place by itself. And so having seen the empty tomb for themselves the Peter and the other disciple believed what Mary had told them – notice they did not yet believe that Jesus had been raised "for as yet they did not understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead," John says. All they believed at this point was that Jesus body was gone. Resurrection had not yet occurred to them. And so they left the garden. The gospel says that they actually returned to their homes! Hear that the first experience of resurrection was to miss that it had actually happened at all.

And so again it was just Mary at the grave. She was weeping – grieving the loss of her friend – and now confused about the body being taken. She looked in the tomb again and this time there were two angels sitting there where Jesus' body had been, one at his head and the other at his feet. And they asked this beautiful question, "Woman why are you weeping?" And she told them the story.

But before they could get into it any further, Mary turned around – turned away from the tomb - and there was Jesus, but she didn't know yet that it was him. Again, recognition of resurrection takes time. Jesus appeared to be the gardener, the caretaker of the grounds. And he asked her the same question that the angels did, "Woman why are you weeping?" and added "Whom are you looking for?" and after she responded Jesus said her name, "Mary." And at that moment, at the calling of her name, she knew that the gardener was the Christ.

I like this version of the story because in some ways it allows resurrection to

be both absolutely miraculous and also intimate, almost tender and a surprise that takes some time to understand. And that's more like how it tends to play out in our own lives. When we think of resurrection we tend to think in terms of earthquakes or mountain tops or flashy angels. But often resurrection comes gently, slowly. Rather than an instantaneous 'Alleluia,' resurrection unfolds over the course of a whole scene, like it did in today's gospel. Sometimes faithful disciples can even miss that it's happened at all.

So what we need to watch for in our lives, even expect in our lives is this: Easter often begins not with bells or joyful shouts – often Easter begins in an emptiness and even in a place of tears – because those are the places to which God comes. And then resurrection begins to unfold. In the midst of that emptiness there is an unexpected and new presence that wasn't there before – there are angels who meet us – angels who acknowledge our grief, let us tell our stories and who very simply receive us in the place that had been tomb. Then there's a grace of some kind, a grace that turns us away from the tomb and invites us to look out into the world and live again! Often it's the voice of Christ spoken through a friend or a co-worker, or a fellow church go-er, or a parent or child, or a neighbor, or even a stranger – that voice who asks us about our tears, calls us by name and listens us into the possibility of new life. And then resurrection is fulfilled in one or ones who are “gardener” for us. I love that Jesus chose “gardener”; He came to Mary as one whose job was to nurture, care for and grow living things.

Now I don't want to lessen the drama of this day. This first Easter morning was the moment on which everything turned forever. Death was conquered. Endings became beginnings. Heaven was cracked open and humanity was invited into eternity. Don't lose that! But know too that for the people involved in that very moment, Easter didn't just happen; it unfolded over time and in our day to day lives Easter is likely to happen just like that. It's more likely to play out intimately, tenderly and over the course of a scene or two.

And so while we rest in the magnificent eternal promise, we live because angels meet us, voices turn us, gardeners tend to us and resurrection unfolds for us.

And so I wish you these kinds of resurrection experiences. I pray that angels appear in whatever tomb it is that has your attention; let them hear your story and accept your tears. I challenge you too to listen for your name as the Christ calls you away from the tomb and out into the world, receiving you and all that you bring. And I invite you and all of us to notice the gardeners in this world, to together be the gardeners in this world – tending to one another and the new life, the resurrection that is always coming to be.

— *by The Rev. Jen Adams*

Sunday Forums

9:15-10:15am—Lower Level Forum Room

April 7 No Forum Just Coffee , Donuts and Conversation!

April 14 The Bishop’s Search Process

How does this work, exactly? What is a ‘Walk About,’ anyway? Is there smoke? Everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask about the process of electing a bishop in the Episcopal Church. Bring your questions, your thoughts and listen with Rev. Jen to the discernment involved in choosing the next bishop of our diocese.

April 21 Feeding America

Our monthly food distribution of 5000lbs of food represents the most attended program of Grace Church. We host as many as 160 families each month who receive hospitality, resource information, food, toilet paper, and detergent from Grace Church. Nancy Ullrey, Regional Manager from Feeding America and the Grace leadership team will lead us in an overview of this national program and the specific local needs we have in maintaining this vital ministry.

April 28 Grace Endowment Funds Explained

Over the last two years the Grace Endowment Committee and Vestry have structured the funds of Grace, established policies for their use, and begun to communicate giving opportunities. Come hear about all of this as we take steps toward being good stewards of all that we have been given and all that we have to share.

Believing, Belonging, Becoming

Our Christian practice this month is “Telling Our Stories.” We’ll share supper, pray together and explore our spiritual journeys in varieties of ways. There is something for all ages! Join us.

Wednesdays

5:45 Supper in the Undercroft

6:30 Evening Prayers

6:45 Practice Stations

6:45 Kids Choir in the Choir Room or Sanctuary

7:45 Chamber Choir in the Choir Room or Sanctuary

Grace



News from Children and Youth

Spring is loaded with formation, fellowship, and service opportunities for children and youth at Grace. As we begin the month, the youth are asking the congregation to support our youth mission, pilgrimage, and other youth activities by volunteering to work at the Dutch Food Court of Tulip Time Marketplaats. We are again working in cooperation with the First United Methodist Women and the Seven Christians Club of Douglas to prepare and serve traditional Dutch food. Please consider your calendar and sign up to help us with our ONE MAJOR fundraiser to benefit the youth mission, pilgrimage and other events. Sign up in the Commons or contact Debbie at the church office. Tulip time is only 1 month away – please sign up soon!

Also, know that we are planning for summer! As you begin looking at your travel plans, mark your calendar for these great opportunities:

Vacation Bible School - June 23 – 27 6:00 – 8:00pm

All Grace children ages 3 to current 5th graders are invited to join the children of Peace Lutheran and First Presbyterian for a week-long VBS focused on living faithfully, and serving our neighbors to help fight hunger and poverty. There is no cost for the week, but registration is required. Look for sign up sheets in the Commons coming in May, but save the dates!

EDWM Episcopal Youth Camp:

Senior Camp (campers entering 9th – 12th grades) June 16 -22

Middle Camp (campers entering 6th – 8th grades) August 4 – 10

CIT – Counselors in Training

Junior Camp (campers entering 3rd to 5th grades) August 11 – 17

Offered by the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan, this week-long experience provides the children and youth of EDWM the opportunity to experience faith formation and fellowship in new ways and meet other young people from around the diocese. Cost is \$385. Some scholarship funds are available. Please contact Debbie for more information. Registration is due by June 7th for Senior Camp and July 26 for CIT, Middle, and Junior Camps.

As we begin planning for the coming program year, please consider your level of participation in the CYM programming at Grace. It is not too late to join the team! Look for volunteer opportunities on the sign up table in the Commons, or contact Debbie at the church office for more information.

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

ST. MARY'S GUILD

The April meeting of St. Mary's will be held at Jonkers Garden at 7:15 PM on **Monday, April 8**. We will hear a presentation on container gardening. Those who would like to carpool from church will gather in the church parking lot about 6:50 PM. More details to follow!!

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES AT A NEW TIME:

Alternate Mondays, 4:00 to 5:15 pm (a men's discussion group) — The men's study group "Beer and Bibles" meets every other Monday, for conversation, reflection, and fellowship. We are currently reading through the book of Hebrews. B-Y-O-Both. Upcoming dates are **April 8th and April 22nd**.

MARKETPLAATS

No car wash, no cookie sales, no pizza sales... because you volunteer at Marketplaats!!!

The Dutch Marketplaats food court at the Civic Center during Tulip Time is our ONE major fundraiser for special youth events such as pilgrimage, mission trips, and ski retreat. Please help us prepare for this event by attending one (or more) of the following workshops at First United Methodist Church where we will prepare our major food items for the Marketplaats. The dates are:

- Saturday, April 6 - Windmill Cookies
- Saturday, April 13 - Brownies & Buttercake
- Wednesday, April 17 - Pigs in a Blanket



All workshops will begin at 9:00 am and continue till complete. We welcome ALL help...for a short time or the duration!

Can't attend the workshops and still want to help? We have multiple opportunities for you to help us during Tulip Time to serve this amazing food. There are a variety of ways to help. See the sign up table for more information.

Sign up on the sign up table in the Commons.

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

Pastoral Care / Outreach

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP AT GRACE:

If you are living with Parkinson's disease (or know someone who is) consider the Grace Parkinson's Support Group as a place to find companionship, encouragement and support on the journey. The group meets on the *third Thursday of the month*. Next meeting is **April 18**, beginning at 7pm in the Forum Room.

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

STEPHEN MINISTRY



Grace Church Stephen Ministers are pleased to invite you to join us on Monday evening, April 22, at 7:00 pm as we welcome our own Karen Bylsma, LMSW, who will speak on Parenting and Grand-parenting. This portion of our Monday night gathering is open to the parish. Refreshments will follow.

HEALING SHAWL MINISTRY IS EXPANDING!!

Knitted or crocheted shawls have provided a way to reach out to parishioners as well as those in our community who may be experiencing illness, grief or other difficult circumstances. We've also recently added fleece fringed lap robes to our inventory! Just as yarn is available for the knitted and crocheted shawls, fleece is available for the lap robes, along with directions. For those who would like to contribute to this ministry but don't knit or crochet, the fleece lap robes are a great alternative as no sewing is required. For more information, please call Brenda Millett, 738-0890.

COMMUNITY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP (CHP)

Two of our Grace houses are members in the CHP program through which previously homeless families are given a new beginning. We have just had one family move on (having secured their next step) and so we will be welcoming a new family in mid-April. They will likely need a few household starter items. As soon as we know who the family is, we can begin to identify specific needs and will make those known. Keep your eyes posted and get ready to help a new family settle in among us!

FEEDING AMERICA

In just over 3 years Grace Church has served over 2,774 families with our Feeding America Outreach initiative. Once a month, Grace distributes 5,000 pounds of food together with toilet paper and laundry soap. This totals 140,000 pounds of food to date and approximately 2,600 bottles of soap and 11,096 rolls of toilet paper!



Please mark your calendars for our upcoming Feeding America dates: **April 11th, May 9th and June 13th**. We need folks to help with set-up and to welcome our guests.

If you are working in the kitchen, come at 3:30.

If you are working registration, come at 4:00.

If you are working food distribution, come at 5:00.

Also, remember the ongoing need for *laundry detergent (see special request below) and toilet paper!* You can bring these items at any time and deposit them in the labeled drawers in the Commons. The cost for food is covered through our Outreach budget. However, we are dependent on our member's in kind contributions of soap and toilet paper. Because the number of families served has risen significantly, we also encourage financial contributions to help us meet the need. These may be made by check to Grace Church noting in the memo section "FA soap & paper."

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

The families we serve through Feeding America are very appreciative as Grace continues to serve our community in remarkable ways.

Submitted by Sue Cloutier

COMMUNITY KITCHEN

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".

DIOCESAN MISSIONS: TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

HOME OF THE CRIMSON TIDE

NEEDS YOUR HELP

A mile wide tornado with winds of up to 190 mph devastated major areas of Tuscaloosa on April 27, 2011. This tornado started near Tuscaloosa and covered 300 miles eventually dissipating near Birmingham, Ala. Entire neighborhoods were destroyed. Apartments, shopping centers, restaurants, hospitals, and schools were affected. Forty-three people were killed and over 1000 injured with 7000 homes destroyed. This was the worst tornado in recorded history. Recovery will take years

Considering missions for 2013, the Diocesan Mission Board chose Tuscaloosa as its first mission project for this year. The dates of the mission are **May 3 to May 12**. We will car pool to the mission. The diocese will cover our costs for fuel and motels. We will be staying at a Y.M.C.A. camp near Tuscaloosa. All camp fees, accommodations, and meals are also covered by our diocese. There are no registration fees.

Habitat for Humanity is operating the recovery camp. We are now Habitat's partner on this rebuild project. To view their internet site contact habitat@tuscaloosa.org. Other Habitat partners include Nick Sabin's 14/14 Foundation. The Diocese is looking for approximately 20 volunteers. We will have experienced diocesan mission leaders and crew leaders to work with Habitat on the rebuild project.

Volunteers with experience in construction, such as dry wall, framing windows, doors, and cabinets, or flooring are needed. Less experience volunteers for painting, insulation, skill labor assistants, and transportation are also valued.

To volunteer or for more information contact **Terry Dorcy at tjdorcy@aol.com** or call **Terry at 269-349-3625**.

Other options in 2013:

Kentucky Reading Camp, June 15 through June 22

Pine Ridge, SD, June 21 through June 29

Minot, ND, July 19 through July 28

Kentucky Rebuild, September 21 through September 28

New Orleans, November 15 through November 24

There is a job for everyone, even if you have no special skills!! The experience is very worthwhile. You give, but you also gain!!

THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF

IS TO LOSE YOURSELF IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

DIOCESE MISSION MANAGERS NEEDED

The Diocese is seeking experienced volunteers to manage the following missions in 2013:

- Tuscaloosa Alabama, May 3 through May 12, an area devastated by tornadoes in 2011
- Minot, North Dakota, July 19 through 28, destroyed by a flood in 2011
- Lexington, Kentucky, September 21 through 28, home remodeling and repair in Appalachia
- New Orleans, Louisiana, November 15 through 24, home reconstruction and landscaping in the aftermath of hurricanes

The Diocese is also seeking volunteers for two reading camps this summer:

- Lexington, Kentucky, June 15 through 22, teachers, aides, and camp counselors are need to work with second, third, and fourth graders
- Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 22 through 26, a joint effort between St. Andrew's Episcopal and Grand Rapids Public Schools to improve reading skills for elementary children

Each of the disaster relief missions will need two Mission Leaders. Experience in previous Diocesan missions and general knowledge of home repair is a plus. Leadership skills working with people in a group setting is essential.

To learn more about or to volunteer as a Mission Leader, contact Terry Dorcy, tjdorcy@aol.com, or call 269-349-3625.

To learn more about or volunteer for one or both of the Diocesan reading camps, contact Rev. Cindy Nawrocki at rocki@att.net.

CROP Walk 2013



Join with friends from Grace and the larger community to raise funds to help end hunger.

Two walks are held: Saturday, April 27, with registration beginning at 8:00 am at Holland Christian High School, and Sunday, April 28, with registration beginning at 1:30 pm at Beechwood Reformed Church.

Find more information and pick up a donation envelopes in the Commons.

FROM THE DIOCESE:

BISHOP SEARCH TEAM SLATE ANNOUNCEMENT:

Following a ten month process of discernment, the Diocesan Search Team has nominated three priests to stand for election as the 9th Bishop of Western Michigan. The nominees for bishop are:

- The Rev. Jennifer Adams, Rector, Grace Episcopal Church, Holland, Michigan (Diocese of Western Michigan)
- The Rev. Wayne Hougland, Jr., Rector, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Salisbury, North Carolina (Diocese of North Carolina)
- The Rev. Canon Angela Shepherd, Canon for Mission, Diocese of Maryland



A letter from each nominee, as well as a summary of education and experience, is included in the slate announcement booklet. This booklet and more search process detail, including timeline, next steps and petition process guidelines can be found at edwmsearch.org. More information from each candidate will be posted in late April. Please keep this process, the candidates, and our diocese in your prayers as we begin to move toward the May election.

THANK YOU TO APRIL COFFEE HOUR HOSTS!

Laurie Van Ark & Dawn Van Ark
Tom and Tammy Kelly
Barb Vincensi
Nancy Chamness & Laurie Van Ark
With setup help from Sam Zylstra & Dawn Van Ark

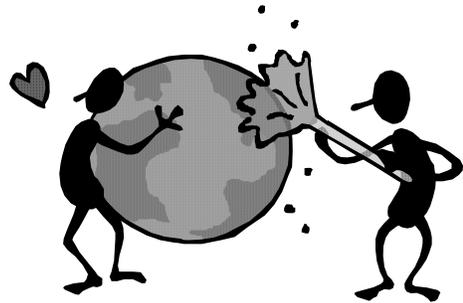


*From Laurie VanArk
Coffee Hour Coordinator*

Creation Care / In the Community

Earth Day 2013

April 22 is Earth Day! What will you do to celebrate our Earth? This Earth Day, make a pledge to change at least one way you live *all year*. Pledge to grow a portion of your food, to buy local when possible, or to start recycling beyond what you already do. Look for all of the Earth Day community activities — recycling events are hosted by many local businesses and community groups. Every little bit helps!



Want to do more with caring for the Earth at Grace? Join the Creation Care group. The next meeting will be held at the church on **Monday, April 15 at 4:30pm**. Contact DuAnne Masselink or Rev. Jen Adams for more details or to get involved (even if you cannot make the meeting).

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION OR FOSTER CARE

Are you interested in international adoption or foster care? Do you take an interest in international affairs? Would you like to make a direct impact in the life of a young person who has been forced to flee his or her country because of political oppression, or violence? Become a Refugee Foster Parent with Bethany Christian Services! Call 224-7540 for more information!

MAY NEWLETTER DEADLINE: Wednesday, April 24, 2013
Times New Roman, 12pt requested. Send to gechurch@sbcglobal.net

Have something to share? Want to write something about a recent or upcoming Grace event? Don't be shy, send it in! We love articles that share any aspect of Grace life.

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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.

