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## **Seasons of Grace**

One of the beautiful and profound experiences we have as a congregation is those phases that reveal to us how much we hold – in our hands, in our hearts, in our memories, in our hopes. As we prepare for the coming of Christ this Advent, we're in one of those phases and it feels something like holiness.

Over the course of the past nine weeks, Grace has experienced the deaths of several members and friends dear to us. Some of what we hold this season are our memories and the promise to lean together in to the mystery that is new life. Together, we have recognized and given thanks for the saints of Grace, from church treasurers, to painters, to prison ministers, to guild members as they join with “all the company of heaven” in eternal light and peace.

In mid-October, we launched our pledge drive for 2015 themed, “Grace on the Rise!” This is our second year of stretching forward into new programs, improved stewardship of our properties, and a staff configuration that better fits the needs of our changing and growing parish. We've committed to a time of intentional visioning and strategic planning forward. Some of what we hold this season are our needs, our goals and our challenges as we gather the resources and dreams God is giving us for the current and future ministries of Grace.

Finally, after several years of discernment, formation, education, and transitions, Jodi and Christian Baron will be ordained to the priesthood here at Grace on Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. Bishop Hougland, clergy from around the diocese, friends and family of the Barons, and members from St Andrew's parish in Grand Rapids will be here to celebrate with us as Jodi and Christian make their vows. Some of what we hold this season are the vocations of two wonderful people and the many ways in which God calls all of us to serve in the church and the world.

As God's people of Grace, Holland, we have been invited to hold these things and so much more - our monthly Feeding America offering, the Star Tree gifts, our Community Housing Partnership families, the prayers we pray for this world, the celebrations of the season . . . We hold so much in our hands, our hearts, our memories and our hopes and every now and then we sense the holiness that through grace is holding us.

Let us pray together, ‘Come Lord Jesus, come.’

Peace,  
*Jen*

# *The Christmas Season at Grace Episcopal Church*

December 21

*The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

8:15am Holy Eucharist

10:00am Holy Eucharist

with Lessons and Carols \*

11:30am Wrapping the Star Tree Gifts Intergenerational\*



December 24

*Christmas Eve*

5:30pm Music by Grace Children and Youth\*

6:00pm Holy Eucharist \*

This is a service especially geared to children. Filled with traditional Christmas carols, the liturgy will be spoken to ears of all ages.

10:00pm Choral Service of Christmas Carols

10:30pm Traditional Midnight Service of Holy Eucharist

December 28

*The First Sunday of Christmas\**

10:00am Holy Eucharist & Baptism

(NOTE: only one service this morning.)

January 4, 2015

*The Second Sunday of Christmas\**

8:15am Holy Eucharist

10:00am Holy Eucharist \*

\*Childcare provided at these services



## **Christmas Poinsettias and Altar Flowers**

Envelopes for Christmas Flower donations are in the pews. Please clearly fill out the information, and place in the collection plate or return it to the church office by December 16.

**Altar Flowers for 2015**—Sign-up sheet will be on a clipboard in the Commons. Multiple parties may sign up for each Sunday. Suggested donation is \$50-\$75 which can be submitted to the office. The altar vase liners will be taken to a florist weekly, and the flowers will be divided for delivery to home bound parishioners after the Sunday services.



By the Grace of God  
and with the Consent of the People of God

The Right Reverend Wayne M. Hougland, Jr.  
Bishop of Western Michigan

will ordain

Christian John Baron  
and  
Jodi Lynn Baron

to the Sacred Priesthood  
in  
Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

Saturday, the twentieth of December  
in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Fourteen  
at eleven o'clock in the morning

Grace Episcopal Church  
555 Michigan Avenue  
Holland, Michigan 49423  
(616) 396-7459

Your prayers and presence are requested.

Clergy: Choir Dress & Red Stoles

Reception to follow.



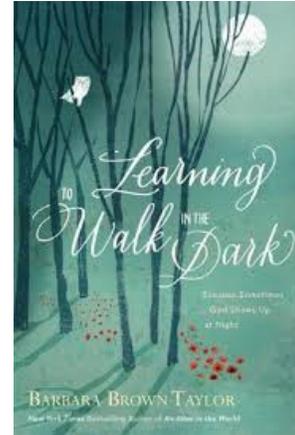
## Sunday Forums—11:30 Sundays in the Lower Level Forum Room

November 30-December 14

### Learning to Walk in the Dark

#### An Advent Read with the Rector

Rev. Jen will lead this discussion series on Barbara Brown Taylor's new book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. Brown Taylor is an Episcopal priest and Professor of World Religions at Piedmont College. About this book: "New York Times bestselling author Barbara Brown Taylor writes with wisdom, grace and beauty as she seeks to redeem what so many of us have learned to fear – the darkness. Entering into it to see whether what she has been taught about it is true, she discovers that there is light in the dark. Even when that light wanes or goes out altogether, there are treasures in the dark that we cannot always see by day. What we need is a spirituality that works in the night." Join us. Books will be available in the Commons or can be purchased on your own.



### Star Tree

Our Youth Groups are again coordinating the Star Tree effort (which helps provide Christmas gifts for our Community Housing Partnership families). The tree is in the Commons. Simply take a star, and bring back the **unwrapped gift with the star attached** by Education Hour on December 22. We will host an intergenerational wrapping extravaganza during Education Hour on December 21st at 11:30 and will deliver the gifts on Christmas Eve.

### Annual Meeting

Save the date for Sunday, January 25, 2015 for "The State of Grace", our Annual Parish Meeting. The meeting will take place at 5:00 pm with supper, business, and Celebration. Stay tuned for more information.

## COLLEGE STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

You are invited to share a common meal each Thursday evening beginning at 7:00 pm and then spend time praying (Taizé and compline). We meet weekly with Hope Church and share space. Every other week Grace hosts in the sanctuary. If you are interested, please contact Christian Baron (christianjohnbaron@gmail.com), or just show up—and bring a friend!

Dec. 4— at Grace

Dec. 11—at Hope Church

## MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH—IMPORTANT DATES:

Dec. 6- Diocesan Event in Kzoo. Service Project with other youth.

Dec. 7- Split groups- Advent 2 conversation- High School will walk to Simpatico

## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

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. B-Y-O-Both. Upcoming dates are **December 1st., 15th and 29th.**

## WEDNESDAY NOON BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Noon Bible Study meets in the Forum Room from 12:00 to 1:00. Discussion of the lectionary texts is led by Rev. Jen. Bring a lunch and join in whenever you can!

## ST. MARY'S GUILD

St. Mary's will meet on Monday, December 8 at 7:15 PM in the Forum Room. We will be making small gifts for the visitors of St. Martha's Guild to deliver to those who are often not able to make it to church during the holidays. This is always a fun evening!!! No creativity necessary (Gerry Cawthra and Nancy Hensley will take care of that part), just a desire to help and have a good time. Peggy Keegin is the hostess.

For current information, access the church  
calendar on our website:

[www.graceepiscopalholland.org](http://www.graceepiscopalholland.org)  
Click on “About us” and then “Calendar.”

- 2 Andrew Schafer  
Molly McVay-Walters
- 4 Sophia Steele  
Barb Vincensi
- 6 Danielle Biolette  
Lindsay Goodman  
Gloria Hignite
- 7 Cesar Edgell
- 8 Katie Gamby
- 9 Sandy Hansen  
Jesse Klug  
Pamela Landes  
Jorie Sligh  
Patricia Essenburg  
Libby Thomas
- 10 Chris St. John
- 11 Steve Shinabarger
- 12 Owen Foster  
Isabel Hodson
- 14 Jill Smalldon  
Karlyn March  
Andrew Macy

- 17 Grayson Visco
- 18 Alivia De Cook
- 19 Eleanor Nyhof
- 20 David Meier  
Andrew Scharlow
- 21 Signe Johnson
- 22 Derek Foster
- 23 Matthew Guyer  
Kim Ford
- 25 Carol Homan  
Kathryn Verspoor
- 26 David Hawley-Lowry  
Jersey Masselink
- 27 Donna Bogle  
Rob Linn  
Alice Gillam
- 28 Holly Nyland  
Brad Richmond
- 30 Pam Nienhuis  
Will Polik
- 31 Jennifer Balisi

## Birthdays & Anniversaries in December

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



### *Prayer List as of November 21, 2014*

†††††

**PRAYER REQUESTED FOR:** the Zylstra family, Cindy Brown, Sue Murray, John Parker & family, Gebre Bekele, Stephanie Ray, Nick, Andrew, David DeKraker, George Pierson & family, Bryce & Monny and family, Pablo Peschiera & family, Lori Smith, Fran Greene, the Sligh family, Kevin Norlander, Jerline Riley & family, John Badgerow, Gemmy & family, the Rocker family, Darin, Connie & Bill and family, Marion Edwards (sister of Ron Brown), Aaron Biolette, Mary Schimmel, Charlotte DeVries, the Cloutier family, Elaine, Kathy, Amanda, and for people in areas of war or unrest, for the unemployed or under-employed, for the women and men of the Armed Forces, especially Pierre Warner, Chuck, Warwick, Carrie, Sam, and other loved ones of our parish family; for all victims of disasters worldwide, natural and manmade; for those in our time who face persecution for their faith and for their persecutors. Linda Mourot, John Van Durren, Ann Mayers, Meghan Kelly & family, Karen Meeks, Erica & family, Vern, Catherine Page, Todd & Mary Lane, Emily & family, Shirley Swaney, Morley & Sally Byxbe, Kariann & Esperanza, Anne & family, the Butterfield family, Xenia & family, Kim & Nouri, Carol & Woody Merriman, Karin Sisson, Laura Ferster, Gladys, the Barkel family, Grace Herta, Judy, Dawn & family, Alex, Todd Billings & family, Peter Homan, Patricia Arnold, Devin, Robert McConkey, Gerald, Jim & Jane, Ralph Suchor, Steve, Jenny, Michael Borst, Jodi, Sandy, Donna, Amy, Diane, Adam, Shannon, Gail Davison, Stafford, Bruce Browning (brother of Jean Adams), Dave Masselink, Aaron Miller, Betty Sova, Gloria Stegenga, Betty & Jerry, John Keegin, Jackie Van Duren, Lisa Leland, Ben Roper, Jim Roper.

## FEEDING AMERICA

Over the past few months we've seen regular increases in the number of guests whom we serve. Thank you, Grace, for coming out in large numbers. We are now handing out over 7,500 pounds of food every month. Normally growth is a good thing at a church, in this case it only shows that more and more people are hungry due to job loss, underemployment, or recent cuts to government assistance.



I know that we are all busy and that our lives seem to be on the fast track, but, we need to always be aware that there are people who need our help. We need you to help us on the second Thursday of each month to distribute the food, chat with our guests, or help in the kitchen. Can you help us out? If you have any questions about this outreach, please contact Mick Schorle, Coordinator of our Feeding America ministry or Robbie Schorle at 269 543-4400. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Upcoming Dates: December 11th and January 8th

*Submitted by Robbie Schorle – Chairman of Outreach*

## 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.

**Volunteers** are needed at the to help serve and clean up from **11:15am to 1:30pm** every Monday through Friday. Grace Church is committed to providing **three or four helpers each Wednesday**. Join our “regulars” who help on Wednesdays. See the sign-up sheet in the Commons. For more information contact Jim at 566-6785.

## A TALE OF TWO CHRISTMAS GIFTS

1. It was the first year Jason picked out his own present for his mother. He knew exactly what he wanted to give her. Over time he saved up enough money and, with a sense of accomplishment, stretched his hands up to put it on the cashier's counter. While making the gift wrap paper using the watercolors his mom had given him for his birthday, he could already picture the expression she'd have on her face come Christmas morning. As he folded and tucked and taped, he was, in a real sense, wrapping himself into the gift.
2. Jackie ran late getting ready for the office Christmas party. Only that morning she'd remembered about the gift exchange. She'd asked her husband, who worked closer to downtown, to pick up something on his lunch break. "Just find something nice." He had the shop gift wrap it so as the party began Jackie hadn't actually even seen the gift yet.

In reality, we sometimes find the second type of gift inevitable. It is *not*, however, the type of gift we give to the church. If when you pick up this year's pledge card, it feels in any way like another bill, or membership "dues," then for heaven's sake, put it back down! It will do you no good.

Instead, wait for a time when you are reflecting on the colorful variety of ministries at Grace. Think of children learning "hands on" of rich traditions that have given meaning to Christian worship for centuries. Think of scriptures faithfully read in a way that helps make sense of today's newspaper. Think of strangers becoming friends across the table during the Feeding America meal. Think of the comfort and gratitude a family in the midst of grief feels knowing they will have a service that truly honors and respects the gift of their loved one as a unique child of God. Think of youth growing in relationship, learning together the joy and reward of service to others. Think of the privilege you have to invest yourself, to become part of all this and more through your giving.

*Then* you may go back to the pledge envelope and, like Jason, let your heart have its way.

-Phil Harrington

## EARLY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING THIS YEAR?

**Remember to use AmazonSmile online this holiday season and everyone gets a present!!** When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Grace Episcopal Church. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/38-1840930> and support us every time you shop.



# Taking Grace Green / Fellowship

## TAKING GRACE GREEN – CREATION CARE – ECO-THEOLOGY – ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE – EARTH CARE!



A few years ago there was a very active group in Grace Church that spent considerable amount of time and energy in 'Taking Grace Green' during the renovation of The Commons area, kitchen and the Undercroft! For their work, done well, we give a huge thank you! A thank you for the amount of time, energy and commitment in moving Grace Church toward

'greening' its buildings and properties! Since that time, however, there has been a lull in activity around environmental awareness and what might be loosely called 'Creation Care'. There is a group of folks who would like to get more active in this ministry and are meeting monthly in various homes for discussion, ideas, suggestions and resources, and at times, physical work around Creation Care. A couple of folk have gotten involved in The Micah Center, an organization in Grand Rapids, MI that "exists to educate people about the biblical call to do justice and how they can respond to that call in their local community." They have 'working groups' that include environmental advocacy both locally and statewide. All are welcome to meet with us – for food, discussion and an ongoing exploration of environmental and creation care topics! You can contact Mary Huisman at [huismanmr@aol.com](mailto:huismanmr@aol.com) for more information or David and Clara Brower at 616- 688- 7356.

## THANK YOU TO NOVEMBER COFFEE HOUR HOSTS!

Debbie & Brian Coyle  
Kim & John Shea  
Cathy DeVelder  
Peggy Keegin and "St. Andrew's Guild"



*From Laurie VanArk  
Coffee Hour Coordinator*

The sign-up sheet for Coffee Hour hosts is on the clipboard in the Commons. Please sign up if you can take a Sunday. Ask Laurie if you have any questions.



## **St. Nicholas Day Celebration Saturday, December 6**

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

247 Lovell St. \* Kalamazoo, MI 49007

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

What better way to celebrate the season of Advent then with your friends from the Diocese and Bishop Whyne playing the part of St. Nicholas?

**There is no fee to this**, but we must ask for registrations so we have enough food and supplies. Information can be found on the Diocesan website—[www.edwm.org](http://www.edwm.org).

Remember to bring friends, neighbors and family along. And please bring a new or gently used children's book for our Diocesan Reading Camps.

**A day for all ages** - there will be separate activities for children, youth and adults - so you'll be able to spend time with your peers along with time with others.

**Adults** - The Rev. Randall Warren will lead a program on Christmas Coping

**Youth** - An outreach project, making blankets and scarves for the community

**Children** - Celebrating Advent in your house

**Toddlers** - Who is St. Nicholas

**Come for all of the day or part of it.**

Lunch will be provided by the kind people of St. Luke's, Kalamazoo.

Begin with a welcome and learning about St. Nicholas

Breaking into age groups for a lesson and/or activity

Lunch

Play games & a visit from St. Nicholas

Celebrate a festive Eucharist with Bishop Whyne as preacher

*The deadline for submissions to the January 2015 issue of Grace to You is Dec. 18.*

*Please contact the church office at [gechurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gechurch@sbcglobal.net) for more details.*

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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.

