



the Grace TEAM

to each a ministry

December 2022

Grace Episcopal Church

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www.graceavl.com &

www.facebook.com/graceasheville

or www.facebook.com/grace.church.718689/

The Grace TEAM
is published quarterly.

Sunday Worship

10:30 a.m. - Rite II

In-person and

virtual on YouTube at <http://tinyurl.com/graceUTvideos>

Gospel Bible Study

Mondays, 10:30 a.m., Zoom

Centering Prayer

Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m., Zoom

Spiritual Direction Sessions

Wednesdays, 1-3:00 p.m.

Appointment required

On-Line Access. Go to

www.graceavl.com and look for links near the top of the page to most of our online services and bulletins and access to parish-wide Zoom meetings. For some Zoom meetings, reference the email invitation you may have received from the meeting Host.

A Message from Rev. Milly

Happy New Year, Good People of Grace!

As we end this liturgical year and enter into the season of Advent, I am curious what this new year holds for us at Grace Episcopal Church.

Curious; eager to learn or know something.

The season of Advent is all about anticipation. We as Christians anticipate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and we anticipate what his birth will mean for our living. Being curious is a symptom of anticipation.

Stop for one moment, take a deep breath and recall the last time you felt deeply curious about something.

How did it feel to be curious? Was it a welcomed feeling, or did your curiosity show up more like fear or dread or judgement or gossip? Being open to simple curiosity can be difficult. And so sometimes, when we anticipate something and start to become curious, some part of us immediately turns that simple and potentially joyful childlike feeling of curiosity into dread or fear.

Continued on page 3

Reflections from Fr. Mike

Dear Friends in Christ,

I pray that this Advent season is bringing you peace and introspection. It is a time of great anticipation in our inward lives and our broader church community. Many of our most cherished memories and traditions at church happen during this Advent season. We will gather together to make Advent wreaths, sing and light Advent candles each week during church, put up a Christmas tree and collect gifts for our annual Angel Tree effort, and green the church in anticipation of our festive Christmas services. Anyone who has propped a ladder against our sanctuary's wooden beams and bravely endured the long journey to the church's rafters to hoist a wreath above their head and hang it is acutely aware that this is a season where our focus is firmly fixed on the second coming of Christ. In my first year at Grace, I was initiated to this tradition and can assure you that with each step you pray harder for the second coming to arrive before you finish your ascent.

More seriously, this is a time where a lot is going on in our lives—it's a busy time of year. And yet, in the midst of that, we are told to be still and to wait. We are told to wait for the approaching birth of Jesus of Nazareth and to wait faithfully for the return of Christ's reign, but we are not called to learn to wait for those things only. In this season, we learn how to be still in the midst of bustle. This doesn't mean erasing our schedules of life's everyday tasks, but rather offers us a new way to be in the midst of everyday life. Advent teaches us that we can be still in the midst of all of those things—we don't need to wait for the imagined moment where all of our life's obligations pause and we can be at peace. Advent reorients us to find peace at the very apex of activity. In the bustle, may we find stillness; in urgency, may we learn to wait. In this season, may we come to see life anew and may God's wisdom ever unfold before us.

In peace,
Fr. Mike

4

Be Born in Us Today

December 4, 11, and 18, the Rev. Guy Sayles will facilitate our listening to and learning from Mary about what the birth of Jesus can mean to us.



5

Our Christmas Stories

So many vignettes—hanging of the greens, Angel Tree, Paper Bag Pageant. What are your Christmas stories?



Cover Page Messages from Rev. Milly and Fr. Mike

3 From Our Sr. Warden

A message from our outgoing Senior Warden. Looking back, looking forward.

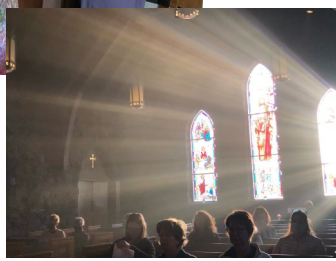
6 Grace Dates

Advent and Christmas are busy seasons at Grace! We hope you will take note of events and activities this month. See where you fit in!

From the TEAM Editor

SNAPSHOTS OF GRACE 2022. This was the year when we all came back home again—to worship in person, to break bread together, to once more work together side-by-side building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. For too long, our Grace Family was pixels on a computer screen, but now, look at us! We're 3-dimensional again! And doesn't that feel good?

So, take a moment to think back—to workdays and potlucks, the ECW Rummage Sale, weekly Taizé services, a new playground, Holy Week and Easter morning, a Pig Pickin', Women Walking the Way, Bible studies and adult forums, PubSings, backpacks, pumpkins, new ministries. It's been quite a year. A year that, in the wake of what felt like a paralyzing and never-ending pandemic, has us all beginning to feel a little more normal again. I'm just so thankful.



A Message from Rev. Milly

(continued from cover)

We anticipate the worst-case scenario, rather than lean into the deep eagerness to learn. Curiosity can feel very vulnerable because to be curious we must first accept that we do not know. To be eager to learn we must admit that we do not know. And then to be deeply curious we must find wonder, awe and, yes, joyful anticipation within our not-yet-knowing. That can feel hard in a world where we have a lot of information coming at us. We actually KNOW very little. That can be hard, too, because it can make us feel out of control, powerless and vulnerable.

So, what is it that allows us to lean into simple, joyful anticipation, accepting that we don't yet know and being open to the experience of being curious?

Imagine the last time you felt truly curious. Perhaps curious about an upcoming trip, or a date, or an evening with good friends, or a gift, or a party, wedding or celebration. Curious to know what it would be like, but without fear or prejudices or dread....just open and curious. How did that feel? What allowed you to lean into that experience?

For me, it is faith and trust that allow me to be fully open to being curious. Faith and trust that something much bigger than knowledge is at work in the world, trust that the Holy Spirit is present in all things and that God, goodness and love, always wins. Always. That faith allows me to anticipate the future with awe and curiosity. Because I know that God's got this. I trust I have all I need to meet the next moment with courage, and I have faith in the Holy Spirit's guidance of my life and the life of people I love. I just know it. I feel it in my heart and deep in my bones.

It is with that trust and faith that I lean into this new liturgical year with you the good people of Grace Church. I am curious. What does 2023 hold for us? What will the Spirit lead us to do, what will we choose to become, how will we show up for God's people?

I am curious. Where will Jesus Christ be born for us in this new year at Grace? Where will Jesus be born for us?

I am curious, and, oh, so eager to learn.

Peace and love,

Rev. Milly

From Our Senior Warden

PARTING REMARKS. When Milly originally asked if I would be Senior Warden, I just laughed, because in no way did I feel qualified. But, after praying about it and contemplating it, I STILL didn't feel qualified. I *did*, however, feel like it would be a great growth experience for me. And, if I sucked at it, well, it was only a year (or shorter if she decided to go in a different direction). So I said yes, and lo and behold, we all survived me for the year. So, YAY!

When I started, I equated us with being on a ship together, setting sail for new adventures. That was because, when Milly first started with us, we were completely shut down due to Covid, and it felt like we were basically just doing whatever was needed to stay afloat. But now that we are back up and running, it finally feels like we are figuring out what direction we want to go in and what we need to do to get there. And that feels good.

During my tenure we slowly came out of Covid restrictions and were able to fully open back up on Easter Sunday. Of course, I really had nothing to do with that. We also had a very successful Solar Panel campaign—which I really didn't have anything to do with either. But, we *will* be installing a new playground (which I kind of have something to do with, but the new Senior Warden will be able to take credit for it since it won't be fully installed until next year). One thing I DID do was lead us through lots of repairs and upgrades to the church—okay, that wasn't me, either. That was Scott.

So, looking back on the year, I'm not really sure WHAT the heck I did. But whatever it was, I actually had a lot of fun doing it, and that wasn't expected. I was personally able to grow a lot this year (you've seen it - I've gained at least 10lbs). And I am grateful for every bit of it—for God and for all of you, who were right there with me. I am excited about all of the new growth we continue to experience and am very much looking forward to all that is to come. So thank you.



Elaine Potter

Elaine, you've done a wonderful job as our Senior Warden. We did indeed all grow together, but it was you who provided the leadership (and wonderful humor) we needed. Thank you from all of us at Grace for being at the helm for this exciting 2022 voyage.

Be Born in Us Today: Preparing for New Life

On December 4, 11, and 18, during Adult Formation at 9:00 a.m., the Rev. Guy Sayles will facilitate our listening to and learning from Mary about what the birth of Jesus can mean to us.

All are welcome to gather in the parish hall and explore, with Mary as our primary guide, how to make room in our lives—as individuals and as a community—for new life with Jesus, a life characterized by joy, love and hope and committed to justice, mercy and peace.



Advent is about waiting, anticipating, and preparing. In this season of the Christian year, we find ourselves joining with Israel in yearning for the Messiah to come set God's people free from every kind of bondage and with the church in the longing for Jesus Christ to come finally and more fully to make all things and everyone whole. By honoring and leaning in to these yearnings and longings, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Mary is the quintessential and essential guide to that kind of preparation. Her yearnings and longings for the Messiah became the actual pains of labor by which she gave birth to Jesus.

She, more than any other historical figure, can show us how to make room for the birth and rebirth of faith, hope, joy, and love—for the birth and rebirth of Jesus.

She can teach us what she learned as she encountered unsettling and wondrous mystery, consented to generative grace, sang of justice, pondered what she saw and heard, and nurtured God-made-flesh as she held, nursed, comforted, and taught her son. And, she became his disciple, the model disciple.

Our Christmas Stories

Hanging of the Greens. There are those who climb the ladder and those who manage from the safety of solid ground. No job is too big or too small when we gather at Grace for the hanging of the greens, but it definitely takes a special person to climb that ladder.

For decades, on a Sunday afternoon just before Christmas, the Grace Church sanctuary is transformed. God bless the brave souls who climb up into our rafters and hang fragrant garlands and wreaths. Guided by our Flower Guild, the entire sanctuary is decorated with the greenery and flowers made possible by memorial gifts you so generously give.

The effect is stunning!

This year, the Hanging of the Greens will be Sunday afternoon, December 18, following our annual meeting. All are welcome!



Paper Bag Pageant. Young adults with a history at Grace Church come home to oversee flocks of little sheep, shining stars and shepherds. In the parish hall, costumes are pulled from paper bags. Last minute adjustments are made to robes and veils. The young narrator clears her throat, steps up into the pulpit—and the pageant begins!

With a role for every child, the Christmas Eve Paper Bag Pageant at Grace has been a tradition for years. Those helpful young adults were once sheep and shepherds gathered around the manger, themselves. Parents who brought their little ones to participate now bring their grandchildren.

This year, you, too, are invited to join the celebration on Christmas Eve at 4 p.m. Bring little ones to the parish hall at 3:15 to participate. Simple costumes are in paper bags, and parishioners help the children with selections and getting dressed. Children sit with their family during the service and go to the back of the church when instructed.

At the end of the service, the costumes are returned to their bags in the parish hall. No rehearsal necessary.



Caring for Others. “Advent in a Bag” is Back! It was a new idea last year, brought to us by Pat and Nancy Walters. With the creativity of James Cannon, who designed the Advent Calendar, parishioners were guided each day of Advent to add a non-perishable food item to their bag. The filled bags were then returned to the church and delivered to the ABCCM pantry.

This year, the tradition continues, and you can pick up your “Advent in a Bag” kit in the foyer. Each day during Advent, read the appointed scripture for the day, put the requested food item in the bag and let the kids (or grownups) use the colored pencils to color that day’s bag decoration on the tree. By the end of the Advent season, you’ll have an Advent calendar “work of art” and a bag full of much needed food items that can be brought to the church on or before Christmas Eve or on Sunday, December 25, to be delivered to ABCCM.

Last year sixty bags went to ABCCM, filled with over three quarters of a ton of much-needed food for the winter ahead. Let’s do it again!



An Angel Needs You! This year’s Grace Angel Tree is up and decorated with gift wishes from area foster children. For many years now, our Angel Tree project has supported children and families through the Buncombe County Foster Care Association. The “Angels” on our tree in the foyer represent the children and their personal lists, both wishes and needs. Here are a few tips:

- ◆ Look carefully at the tags. Let your heart guide you in your choice of a child or children.
- ◆ In the same way that parents don’t always buy everything their children wish for, you are not obligated to buy everything on the list. Again, listen to your heart.
- ◆ For a challenging list, collaborate with a friend.
- ◆ Be sure to attach your Angel Tree tag to the gifts and include a list of items purchased.
- ◆ Call Cheryl Deyton with questions: 828-337-9065.



Return gifts to the church by December 11!

Grace Dates

Here's a look at some of the events and activities happening during this busy season. For details, be sure to check "This Week at Grace," your weekly Friday email, and the announcements in your Sunday bulletin.

Don't forget our Advent Adult Forum, "Be Born in Us Today: Preparing for New Life,"
9:00 a.m. in the parish hall, December 4, 11 and 18 (see p. 4 for details).

Sunday, December 18, is a Crazy, Exciting Day at Grace!

ANNUAL MEETING. Our Annual Meeting is Sunday, December 18, following worship. Rotating off our vestry this year: Scott McKenzie, Jim Compton, Joe Aull and Ron Sims. Additionally, there is one vacant seat to fill. Your prayerful consideration about those who will best serve our church in these roles and your presence to vote are important. The meeting agenda will also include reports from our ministries and a review of activities in 2022.



CHILI COOK-OFF. No one should meet on an empty stomach, so this year, the first ever **Grace Chili Cook-Off** will be on the annual meeting agenda! Contestants will bring their best chili recipes to share as we review the year and look forward to 2023. Fixin's provided.

If you plan to contribute a pot of chili, contact Jill, office@graceavl.com, and let her know as soon as possible.



AND...HANGING OF THE GREENS. Come help the Flower Guild on December 18, after the meeting. Bring your gardening gloves and pruners.



Our Christmas Worship Schedule

December 24, 4:00 p.m. , Christmas Eve Paper Bag Pageant & Family Service
December 24, 8:00 p.m., Christmas Eve Eucharist
December 25, 10:00 a.m., Christmas Eucharist
January 1, 10:30 a.m., Lessons and Carols

GRACE MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

ADULT FORMATION:

The Rev. Milly Morrow, milly@graceavl.com

ALTAR GUILD:

Shannon Townsend, gstownsend@att.net

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:

Scott McKenzie, JuniorWarden@graceavl.com

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP: Patrick Mahon,
404-375-4737

CHILD FORMATION:

CHOIR:

Rusty McCredie, rebscape@att.net

ENDOWMENT:

Steve Birkhofer, sbirkhof@unca.edu

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN (ECW):

Cheryl Aull, ckaull@charter.net

FELLOWSHIP:

FINANCE: Tara Lonneman,

Tara265@gmail.com

FLOWER GUILD:

Pat Davis, dpatdavis@aol.com

GARDEN GUILD:

Kathleen Griffin, (828-337-8241),

Jackie Schauer, (828-337-9441)

GRACE GREETERS:

Diane Wilkey, thewilkeys@gmail.com

HEALING MINISTRY:

Interim: Karen Compton,

comptons0292@gmail.com

MEDICAL ADVOCACY MINISTRY:

Jeff Russell, jeffkr46@gmail.com

MEN OF THE CHURCH:

Jim Compton, j.t.compton@gmail.com

NEWCOMERS:

The Rev. Milly Morrow, milly@graceavl.com

OFFICE MINISTRY: Jill Stevenson,

office@graceavl.com

OUTREACH:

Fr. Mike Reardon, mike@graceavl.com

PASTORAL CARE:

Cliff Albertson, clifford.albertson@verizon.net

or pastoralcare@graceavl.com

PUBSING:

Monty Wooten, montywooten@bellsouth.net

SHEPHERDS' MINISTRY:

Lorie Tola, lorie.tola@gmail.com

STEWARDSHIP:

Louise Wernicke, lcwernicke@aol.com

TAIZÉ:

James Cannon, imjcannon@charter.net

WEDDING MINISTRY:

Katherine Johnson, Weddings@graceavl.com

WORSHIP:

The Rev. Milly Morrow, milly@graceavl.com

Grace in Action

Welcome to Grace Episcopal



*We're so glad you're
here.*

GRACE GREETERS! Grace is bringing back an active greeters ministry to welcome parishioners old and new on Sunday mornings! If you enjoy people, have been a greeter at Grace or another parish in the past, have always wanted to be a greeter, or just want to learn more about the ministry, contact Diane Wilkey, thewilkeys@gmail.com.

First impressions *do* count. Regular worshippers and visitors alike who are greeted with a smile, an introduction and the offer of assistance when they come through our doors appreciate and remember the warmth and kindness of that welcome. We hope you'll consider this fun and important ministry.



GRACE CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP.

Rosalyn Carter reminds us that caregiving provides both challenges and opportunities. Participating in a caregiver support group will help you turn challenges into blessings. It will also help you avoid burnout, lessen stress and be uplifted by compassionate hearts in a confidential setting. The group meets at 10:30 a.m. the first and third Thursdays of each month. Patrick Mahon, a caregiver for five years, facilitates and can be reached at 404-375-4737, or chat with him in the coffee area after Sunday worship.

GRACE MEDICAL ADVOCACY MINISTRY. Navigating the healthcare system can be a nightmare. But you don't have to journey through all the medical-speak by yourself! A team of experienced, committed Grace parishioners (Jeff Russell, Dodie King, Ginny Moser and Jennifer Witt) can help you find the resources and advice you need to make informed health care decisions for a loved one, a friend or yourself.

What are your needs? Could you or a loved one benefit from information about:

- ♦ Aging in place (how to make a home safe for living in later years)?
- ♦ End-of-life issues (death and dying, palliative and hospice care, advanced directives, a healthcare power of attorney)?
- ♦ Senior support (home healthcare, caregiver resources including care for the caregiver)?
- ♦ Healthcare provider and facility navigation guidance (locating a physician, questions to ask your physician and other providers, insurance questions, tips on using online resources)?

What skills could you bring to this ministry? Are you a medical professional, a social worker, an insurance professional?

If you need assistance or would like to learn more about this ministry, please contact Jeff Russell at jeffkr46@gmail.com.

