



Grace Episcopal Church

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

10:30 A.M. HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: *Creator of the Stars of Night*

Michael McCabe

As the bells ring, the congregation is asked to stand.

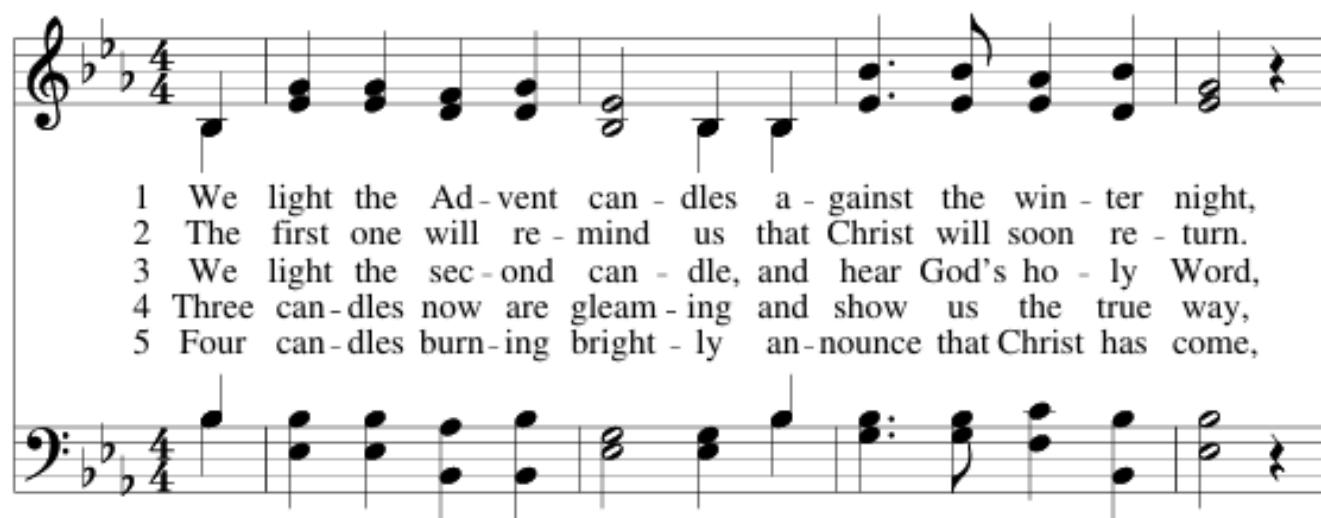
Opening Hymn: *Rejoice! rejoice, believers*

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The Acclamation

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**



1 We light the Ad-vent can - dles a - gainst the win - ter night,
 2 The first one will re - mind us that Christ will soon re - turn.
 3 We light the sec - ond can - dle, and hear God's ho - ly Word,
 4 Three can - dles now are gleam - ing and show us the true way,
 5 Four can - dles burn - ing bright - ly an - nounce that Christ has come,



6 to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,
 7 We light it in the dark - ness and watch it gleam and burn,
 8 it tells us, cling to Je - sus, pre - pare to meet your Lord,
 9 re - joice, the Bap - tist cries out, your Lord has come to - day,
 10 pre - pare, my heart, be - lieve it, and give the Christ child room,



11 to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.
 12 We light it in the dark - ness and watch it gleam and burn.
 13 it tells us, cling to Je - sus, pre - pare to meet your Lord!
 14 re - joice, the Bap - tist cries out, your Lord has come to - day!
 15 pre - pare, my heart, be - lieve it, and give the Christ child room.

The Collect for Purity

Trisagion

Archangelsky

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and Might - y,

Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

The Collect of the Day

BCP 212

THE WORD OF GOD

The First Lesson: Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go
astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 146:4-9

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob / **for their help!**
whose hope is in the / **Lord their God;**
Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that / **is in them;**
who keeps his pro-mise **for ever.**

Who gives justice to those who / **are oppressed,**
and food to / **those who hunger.**
The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes / **of the blind;**
the Lord lifts up those who / **are bowed down.**

The Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares / **for the stranger;**
he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way / **of the wicked.**
The Lord shall / **reign forever,**
your God, O Zion, throughout all / **generations.**

The Second Lesson: James 5:7-10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Hymn: *Creator of the stars of night*

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Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

The Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Reader The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Homily

The Reverend Timothy McRee

The Nicene Creed *(standing)*

BCP 358

The Prayers of the People: Form V

In the course of the silence after each bidding, the People offer their own prayers.

Leader In peace, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy."

Leader For the holy Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the day of your coming, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For Sean, our Presiding Bishop, for José, our own Bishop, for all bishops and other ministers, and for all the holy people of God; and in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, for Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil; and in the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, St. Thomas, Burnsville, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For all who fear God and believe in you, Lord Christ, that our divisions may cease, and that all may be one as you and the Father are one, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For those in positions of public trust, that they may serve justice, and promote the dignity and freedom of every person, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For this congregation, that we may be delivered from hardness of heart, and show forth your glory in all that we do, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader For all who have commended themselves to our prayers; for our families, friends, and neighbors; that being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health, we pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. We pray especially for Linda & David Adams, Joan & Allyn Aldrich, David Gentry, Anne Jarema, Todd Kaderabek, Nancy Lewis, The Reverend Timothy McRee, Wayne & Laura Parton, Elaine Potter, Debra Rice, Ann Robinson, Jeff Russell, Becky & Bill Smith, Laura, Tsz-yan (G-Yen) and Roger Snyder, Shannon Townsend, and Ed & Marla Woeckener...Are there others? We pray to you, O Lord.

People *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us. Let us give thanksgiving for those celebrating birthdays, especially Emily Oxford, Stearns Oxford, Jenny Thomas, Kate Young, and Steve Birkhofer, and for those celebrating anniversaries, especially Lynda & Rusty McCredie, and Sally & David Withers.

Leader We commend to your mercy all who have recently died, especially Bob Ray, Peggy MacDonald Hobson, Don Hawkins, and Charles Weaver; and on the anniversary of their deaths we pray for Cal Frue, Mel Luedtke, Landon Roberts, Abbiejean Lynn, Ann Hayer DeHart, Gladys Sandberg, Bob Williams, Elizabeth Hall, Doris Kelly, and for those who still grieve them...Are there others? For all who have died in the communion of your Church, and those whose faith is known to you alone, that, with all the saints, they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray to you, O Lord.

People Lord, have mercy.

Leader Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.

People To you, O Lord our God.

Silence

The celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

The Confession of Sin

BCP 360

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Anthem: *Lift Up Your Voice and Sing*

G.F. Handel

Doxology

Dix

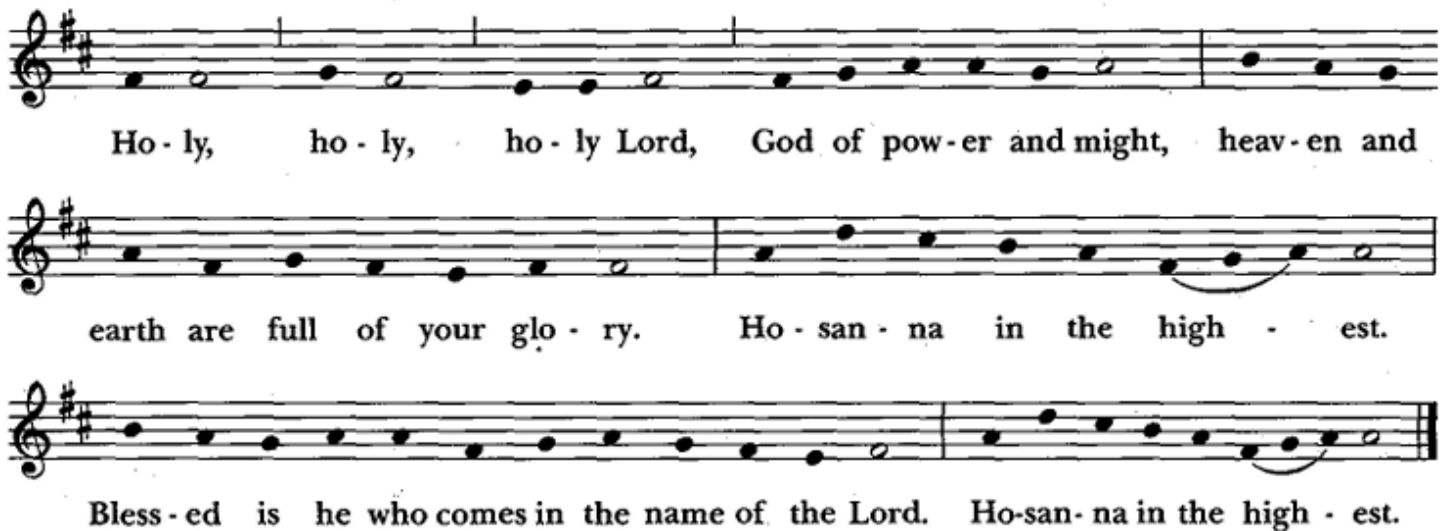
Praise to God, immortal praise,
For the love that crowns our days;
Bounteous Source of every joy,
Let Thy praise our tongues employ,
All to Thee, our God, we owe,
Source whence all our blessings flow.

The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer B

BCP 367

Sanctus

Hurd



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, heav - en and
earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The Lord's Prayer (*Traditional*)

BCP 364

The Breaking of the Bread

Fraction Anthem

Hurd

(Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.)

Christ our Pass - o - ver is sac - ri - ficed for us;

there - fore let us keep the feast.

(Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.)

Invitation to Communion

(gluten free wafers available upon request)

Communion Hymn: *Come with us, O blessed Jesus*

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Post Communion Prayer

BCP 365

Sending Forth of the Lay Eucharistic Visitors

When a Eucharistic Minister is to be sent forth, the following is said

Celebrant In the name of God and this congregation, we send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us in the Communion of Christ's body and blood.

People **We who are many are one body because we all share one bread and one cup.**

The Blessing

Dismissal

Postlude: *Advent Proclamation*

Phil Lehenbauer



The Aumbry Candle is given to the Glory of God by Nora & Steve Jones in celebration of the birthday of their grandson, Walker Webb.

The Altar greenery is given to the glory of God by Jennifer Witt in memory of her parents, Louise & Levi Matthews.



LAY MINISTERS

Crucifer: Jack Frue Torches: Sally Withers, Steve Birkhofer
Chalicer: James Cannon Lectors: Louise Wernicke, Elise Cassarino
Intercessor: Nancy Lewis Presenters: Beth & John Woodson
Ushers: Ron & Jeanne Sims
Greeters: Diane Wilkey, Melanie Druckenmiller
Coffee Hour: Carole Lenz, Jennifer Witt
Vestry Member of the Day: Kim Hayes

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Schedule of Christmas Services

4:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve with the Paper Bag Pageant
8:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Choral Festival & Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. – Christmas Day Holy Eucharist
10:30 a.m. – Christmas Lessons & Carols – December 28

PubSing, Christmas Edition

This month's PubSing! Happens today at the Cork & Keg in Downtown Asheville. Singing will start around 3:00 p.m. and go until 5:00. Feel free to bring an instrument or your voice and join in. At this session we will add some Christmas carols to our typical mix of Gospel, Inspirational and Americana music. For more information: montywooten@bellsouth.net.

Last Week! Get Your Fresh Green Christmas Trees and Wreaths at Grace Every Friday, Saturday (8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. both days) and Sunday (12:00 noon - 8:00 p.m.) - until December 21, we are hosting a Christmas tree sale on the front lawn of Grace Church to benefit Consider Haiti.



Christmas Altar Flower Donations

The Flower Guild will be decorating the altar and chancel areas, as well as the two front doors this year. Therefore, donations will be welcomed to cover the costs for this special display. The memorials and thanksgivings will be published in the newsletter after Christmas. Use one of the Christmas Offering envelopes located in the pew. If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Witt at jmwitt5384@gmail.com.

Pastoral Care Requests

The Pastoral Care Team is asking that your prayer requests now be submitted to the team by using the Prayer Request Form, which can be found on our Website – Graceavl.com – or in the Growing in Grace Newsletter. This will ensure the accuracy of our master prayer list which is used to produce the bulletin, Prayers of the People and the GIG newsletter. Your Pastoral Care Team appreciates your support.

Advocacy and Action

If you're interested in meeting with a group of like-minded Grace members and friends to discuss how we might help bring justice in a more effective and joyful way, together rather than alone, please send an email or text to Tahani Sticpewich (tahaniweb@gmail.com; 828-301-0550). All are welcome.

Let's Keep those Food Donations Coming in for ABCCM

Do you know we have “food deserts” in Asheville and 349 total food deserts in North Carolina? Food deserts are areas where there are a large number of low-income residents living in both urban and rural areas. Poverty is usually high and transportation can be limited. Also, food deserts are where many individuals choose to get their meals from convenience stores and mini-markets. And it's where many low-income residents who live far from large grocery stores can get the food to sustain themselves. Crackers, chips and candy bars are prevalent because they're cheap, easy to buy, and usually quicker to satisfy hunger than wholesome food and meals, including fresh fruits and vegetables.

Thankfully, Buncombe County has ABCCM's Crisis Ministry to help those in need. In 2024 alone, ABCCM Crisis Ministry provided assistance to 13,755 households. Food-wise, 31,680 hot meals (120+/day) were served. Also, 124,944 food bags were distributed, and 1,922 individuals and families received emergency assistance.

Now it's our turn to provide the support ABCCM's Crisis Ministry needs. ABCCM really needs your food donations! You can bring them to the lobby at Grace in your Advent Bag, grocery sacks, or other containers.

WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: *On hiatus through the end of the year*

Monday Morning Bible Study: *Mondays at 10:30 a.m.*

We study the scriptures for the upcoming Sunday service. Please join us virtually by clicking on the button at graceavl.com.

Taizé: *Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.*

Weekly Taizé services are held in the sanctuary. Healing prayer is offered throughout the service for oneself or on behalf of someone else. For more information on Taizé at Grace, visit: graceavl.com/taize-grace.

Women Walking the Way: *Thursdays at 8:20 a.m.*

Meet in the Bird Sanctuary parking lot by Beaver Lake for a walk around the lake and some spiritual reflection with like-minded women. For more information, contact Ann Lewis at annaflewis7@gmail.com or call her at 815-441-2282.

Soaking Prayer: *Wednesdays at 12:00 noon*

Meets in the Sanctuary. This 45 minute service uniquely blends Holy Silence with Holy Spirit. The silence allows the Spirit to move deeper into the needs and life struggles that we face week-to-week.

GRACE'S PRAYER LIST

For Parishioners: **Linda & David Adams, Joan & Allyn Aldrich, David Gentry, Debbie Howard, Anne Jarema, Todd Kaderabek, Nancy Lewis, Fr. Timothy McRee, Wayne & Laura Parton, Elaine Potter, Debra Rice, Ann Robinson, Jeff Russell, Becky & Bill Smith, Laura, Tsz-yan (G-Yen) and Roger Snyder, Shannon Townsend, Mary Ann & Bill Warren, Ed & Marla Woeckener.**

For Homebound Parishioners and Those in Healthcare Facilities: **Martha Boyette, Ed Denison, Walt & Joyce Noble, Nancy Sink, Rita Spragg.**

For Others: (Names will remain on the list for six weeks unless we hear otherwise). **Geraldine Allen** (aunt of Carole McClellan); **Allen** (brother of Cheryl Aull); **Aubrey** (friend of Joe & Cheryl Aull); **Bridget Black** (cousin of Lorie Tola); **the Brongel family** (daughter and family of Jackie Schauer); **Donna Boone** (mother of Hannah Buckner's daughter-in-law); **Bob Brennan** (relative of Anne Jarema); **Molly Breslin** (friend of Gary Coffey); **Mary Daniels Chapman** and **Tim Chapman** (friends of Nancy Porter); **Marcie Coleman** (friend of Lynda McCredie); **Peter Fitzpatrick** (friend of Eleanor Jameson); **Jill Franklin** (friend of Rusty Herman); **Alex Freeman** (son-in-law of Rusty Herman); **Debbie Howard**, (mother of Sara Howard); **Tom Hunnicutt** (friend of Rusty Herman); **Jim Kaderabek**, (father of Todd Kaderabek); **Sue Larsen** (sister of Kristen Dusenbery); **Judy Wells Meehan** (friend of Rusty Herman); **Bunky Manship** (friend

of Rusty Herman); **Daniel McRee** (son of Fr. Timothy McRee) and **David** (husband of Daniel McRee); **Megan** (friend of George & Pat Davis); **Diana Noble** (daughter of Walt & Joyce Nobel); **Meredith Peppers** (cousin of Carole McClellan); **Kip & Val Pritchard** (friends of Cliff); **Valerie** (daughter of Sharon & Jim Rains); **Kevin Randall** (friend of Ron & Jeanne Sims); **Sarah Ray** (cousin of Doug McClellan); **Peter John Rouse, Sr.** (grandfather of Mike Vines); **Wiley Thornton** (cousin of Carol McClellan); **Stephanie Tugurian** (daughter of Ron & Jeanne Sims).

For the recently deceased: **Bob Ray, Peggy MacDonald Hobson, Don Hawkins, Charles Weaver.**

For those celebrating birthdays: **Emily Oxford, Stearns Oxford, Jenny Thomas, Kate Young, Steve Birkhofer.**

For those celebrating anniversaries: **Lynda & Rusty McCredie, Sally & David Withers.**

For Those in Service to Our Country: **Tommy Brown** (grandson of Ed & Marla Woeckener); **Matt & Martha Cardenas** (daughter & son-in-law of Hannah Buckner); **John Davids** (nephew of Elaine Potter); **Matthew George** (son of Zoe Davis); **Jason Marino** (son of Lynda McCredie); **Brady Paschall** (granddaughter of Gael Paschall); **Sarah Jane Wilkey** (daughter of Diane & Tony Wilkey).

For Those in the Episcopal Church: **Sean**, our presiding Bishop; **José**, our Bishop; **the clergy, vestry, staff, ministries, and people of this parish;** in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for **Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil;** and in the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, **St. Thomas, Burnsville.**

For our Nation and the Wider World: For the President and his Cabinet; for Congress; and for our country; for victims of violence around the world; for local agencies and those who work for relief of the poor; for stewardship of the environment; for resolution of crises throughout our world.



Grace's Mission Statement

Grace Church exists as a diverse community of the Body of Christ, to serve Jesus Christ our Lord. Our mission is to nurture and develop each individual to reach out and share God's love.



Grace Episcopal Church

871 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville, NC 28804

828-254-1086

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

office@graceavl.com

The Right Reverend José McLoughlin, *Bishop*

The Reverend Timothy McRee, The Reverend John Rice, *Clergy*

James Cassarino, *Director of Music*

Cathy Adkins, *Organist*

Anne Spruance, *Office Administrator*

Katie Douglas, *Finance Manager*

Angel Stoudt, *Sexton*