

# Reflections of Grace

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2018



## Rector's Reflections

A while back I was at Haywood Pathways dropping off some leftover food from one of our fellowship events. I encountered a woman I'd never met who shared that she was filled up with God's love. It was overflowing within her! So, she came to Pathways to prepare meals for hungry neighbors to channel that overflowing love toward those in need of being filled up too, but on a literal level.

In reflecting on this encounter, I realized this woman's testimony embodied an insight from William Temple, a bishop in the Church of England who led the Church near the end of World War II: "The church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members." Of course, this doesn't mean we don't care for one another as members; rather, it inspires our care of each other SO THAT we can go out beyond our walls, the beauty of our nave, the familiarity of our friendships in order to "be love" in the world. There are several words that capture what I mean by "being love in the world." One of those words is **mission**, which means being sent out. Another might be **stewardship**, using the resources we've been entrusted to honor the image of God in every human being and God's providence within all creation. Another word is **service**. And another word, the one we frequently use at Grace, is **outreach**.



In this edition of "Reflections of Grace," we've chosen to explore what outreach means to us, how we've been faithful to God's call in the past and present, and how God might be nudging us to go deeper, love more fully, give of our time, talent and treasure with even greater generosity. It seems that the Spirit is stirring among us to revisit some critical questions about what our community's unmet or under-resourced needs are and to which of those needs we might be called and equipped to respond. What would it mean for us to go deeper with our existing feeding ministries through our onsite Food Pantry and the Grace Giving Garden? Would we spend a year studying scripture with an eye toward God's abundant provision and our all-too-human lens of scarcity? Would we come to appreciate the wisdom of God in something

as complex and mundane as soil to become better stewards of it? Would we partner with other like-minded folk in a thorough needs-assessment of food insecurity issues in our region? Would we gather the prayers of our Food Pantry visitors and offer them in our Sunday liturgy? Might we foster space for a wide-range of parishioners to cultivate friendships with Grace Giving Garden guests as we cultivate vegetables? Already I see the Marthas' ministry of knitting hats, shawls and scarves expanding to teach knitting and to form friendships with some of our younger members...planting figurative seeds of service that will bear fruit throughout their lives.

Our faith teaches us that there are three reliable places to encounter Jesus: scripture, where we learn what it means to be created in God's image; sacraments, where we practice receiving God's grace so that we can take it out into the world; and service, where we see Jesus' face in the face of the poor. Hearing and studying scripture, receiving and administering the sacraments are things we often do within the church walls. But service, or outreach, always draws us beyond ourselves, beyond our walls to meet Jesus in surprising places and people. May we, the blessed people of Grace, grow in our openness to encountering Christ both within and without.

**Joslyn+**

## Our Missional Priorities at Grace Church

- To grow in mutual love for one another specifically by improving our ability to communicate across difference.
- To develop a vibrant ministry to children, youth and young adults.
- To cultivate a culture of "welcoming" that engages each person's spiritual gifts.

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# How Grace's Outreach Ministry is Evolving

## A Progress Report from the Outreach Committee



The Outreach Committee meetings at Grace Church in the Mountains have included some lively discussions in recent months. On January 16, representatives of the committee shared some thoughts with the vestry. The presentation encompassed three areas:

1. Operational questions -- What has the Outreach Committee been responsible for? What does the vestry want the Outreach Committee to deal with going forward?
2. Big-picture questions -- What guides our decisions about how we allocate our time and efforts? What questions should we be asking of ourselves and our faith community?
3. The outreach tradition at Grace Church and its impact on the community over the years.

The following information is a digest of the internal discussions of the committee and the sharing session with the vestry at its first meeting of 2018.

**1. What is outreach at Grace?** During our 2016 discernment process as we planned for calling a new rector, outreach rose to the top of parishioners' concerns and dreams. According to the Grace Church in the Mountains 2017 Annual Report, outreach activities include the following:

- Dispersal of funds
- Item collections and drives
- Parish Fair
- Food Insecurity Ministries
  - Hot Lunches for the Alternative School
  - Meals at Haywood Pathways
  - Grace Church Food Pantry
  - Saturday Produce Market, replaced by the MANNA produce pod
  - Grace Giving Garden
- Dependency Groups (as defined in Grace's Facility Usage Policy)
  - Alcoholics Anonymous
  - Al-Anon
  - Food Addicts

**How does our outreach align with our missional priorities?** Our Missional Priorities (below) should be the driving force in all we do at Grace:

*- To grow in mutual love for one another, specifically by improving our ability to communicate across difference.*

- To develop a vibrant ministry to children, youth and young adults.
- To cultivate a culture of “welcoming” that engages each person’s spiritual gifts.

The Diocese’s *Information, Guidelines, Policies* document states, in the Justice and Outreach section, “Every Episcopal Church should serve those outside its walls.”

If we link our missional priorities with the diocese’s guidance and our committee’s working guidance, perhaps the following statement summarizes our mission: *We serve those outside our walls by engaging each of our parishioners’ spiritual gifts to help people in need and to improve the lives of people and services in our community through our food insecurity ministry, children’s need ministry, and human needs ministry.*

## 2. What are some guidelines for whom and what the church should support?

The criteria listed in the diocese’s 2017 Justice and Outreach Grant Application and modified below, might serve as our guidelines. Worthwhile outreach ministries should do the following:

- Engages** people in ministry that is focused on social justice and outreach issues
- **Builds** capacity in the local community to improve the quality of life for the poor, lonely, and/or disenfranchised through **collaboration**
- Has an end result that **transforms** the community and/or the parish

Outreach was an important topic in several adult forums during 2017. During Lent we were fortunate to have Josephine Hicks, a former board member of Episcopal Relief and Development reflect on that organization’s work in Ghana and how its asset-based approach to development could be useful even in our local context. Later in the spring, Joslyn and Rev. Jonathan Myers engaged in dialogue how to attract younger adults to mainline denominations. Rev. Myers made the point that people of his generation want to do more than write a check; they want to engage in outreach activities that foster productive relationships. Finally, during a summer deck forum, Joslyn and our intern Jen Kirby shared the following Continuum of Social Justice:

1	2	3	4
<b>Charity</b>	--	--	<b>Social Justice</b>
Solely help a small group of people with dire needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary</li> <li>• Doesn’t address causes</li> <li>• Dependency remains</li> <li>• A Privilege</li> </ul>	Help this group but also explore connecting to new structures to address the causes of their problems	Emphasis is on developing new structures that address causes and help more with people with particular dire needs	Create or renew structures that address causes and help all people with particular dire needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent solution</li> <li>• Address all causes</li> <li>• Self-sufficiency</li> <li>• A Right</li> </ul>

Applications of the continuum might include the following:

1. Charity – helping a homeless family meet its immediate needs for food and shelter.
2. Enrolling the family in Mountain Project's "Circles of Hope," which provides low-income individuals with the tools, skills, and connections to advocate for themselves.
3. Grace Church in the Mountains providing leadership in convening an interdenominational study group to address problems of food insecurity in Haywood County.
4. Grace Church in the Mountains advocating specific policies to address food insecurity with local and state decision-makers.

**How should our outreach evolve?** Some of the big, ongoing questions raised during Outreach Committee discussions include the following:

- How do we discern best practices in ministry outside the church?
- How do we educate and energize our parish community to promote ministry outside the walls?
- How do we promote higher levels of activity on the Continuum of Social Justice (from Charity towards Social Justice)? Note: it's important that we sustain charitable outreach; there are people with immediate needs all around us; however, we can work on multiple levels, i.e., addressing needs and exploring and advocating for solutions.
- Who is our neighbor? How do we build relationships with those we serve? The implication here is how do we balance our responsibility to those in our immediate community with the diocesan injunction to "Walk in the Way, Widen the Walls, Wake up the World"?

We hope to engage our congregation in consideration of all these questions as our work continues.

### **3. Finally, Outreach Committee member Vicky Gribble shared her reflections on outreach at Grace Church.**

Our parish is "small but mighty." Our parish fair is very well known throughout Haywood County as giving back all we take in at the fair. People know and trust that the money from their purchases helps others! Many people attend because they want to support this type of giving. We have provided the seed money for many projects in Haywood County to get started and to make it through lean times. Often our support increases awareness and helps struggling programs take off.

We need to recognize where our church is located and who our neighbors are. Think about the people who pass by this church every day. We are within walking distance to the Pigeon Center, Waynesville Housing Authority, downtown, Waynesville Library, Hazelwood, Frog Level, the Open Door, Triangle Club, Pathways, the train tracks, the Richland Creek corridor, and Russ Avenue. Many of the neediest people in Haywood County are at our doorstep every day.

Our group serving dinner at Pathways met M, a lady struggling after divorce to get back on her feet. Many of us included M in our daily prayers. Over three months we watched with pride as M got a job, saved up her money, and moved out to an apartment of her own. We were soon caught up in the 2016 Parish Fair. As part of the fair grants, we gave money to the Unmet Needs Fund at Mountain Projects. This fund was meant to help people with small grants in times of crisis. That fall, one of our members ran into M. She was doing well, except that her truck wouldn't pass inspection because the tires were so bald. We approached the unmet needs fund, and for less than \$100 M was back on the road. A local tire shop owner was so moved when approached to purchase her tire, he donated two more and got her inspected for free. It may not seem like much, but by keeping her on the road to work we kept her earning money and paying her rent. We prevented a re-occurrence of homelessness! M was so grateful and inspired by our church volunteers who took the time to listen to her story and offer a helping hand that she now

volunteers at another local agency that works to help those in need! We don't always know the full impact of even the small actions that we take individually and collectively.

All in all, it is an exciting time to be working on "ministry outside the walls" of Grace Church in the Mountains. We welcome everyone to get involved and to come to Outreach Committee meetings, which normally take place the fourth Tuesday of every month.

**For more information, contact Outreach Vestry Liaison, Linda Sexton - [lindasextonvestry@gmail.com](mailto:lindasextonvestry@gmail.com)**

## Outreach Ministry: Grace Food Pantry



Grace Food Pantry began as a vision of one person, Dorian Moorhead, a parishioner who saw the need to help people living in neighborhoods near Grace Church, some in desperate poverty. This was in the mid-1980's, and Manna Food Bank had just opened in Asheville and was operating out of a basement at the Eliada Children's Home. The pantry began in a supply closet in the parish hall, before the building was remodeled during the late 90's. Dorian and her helpers ordered food from Manna, stocked the closet shelves and established pantry hours to distribute bags of food. Families could come to the pantry two days a week to receive food. I remember hearing a story about someone who called the church office and asked, "Is this the church that helps people?" As people in the community learned that, yes, Grace Church is a church that helps people, the need grew. Our pantry grew as well to meet the need, and now we are open five days a week. We operate the pantry in a specially designed area of the remodeled parish hall ground floor, an area that was further improved in 2011 with fresh paint, modern cooling units, a computerized data and bar code card system to provide monthly reports to Manna, and two beautiful hand-painted welcome signs. In 2017, we supplied over 55,000 pounds of food to neighboring families. Our families receive fresh produce, eggs, meat, bread, cereal, and a variety of pantry items such as soup, peanut butter, pastas, as available from Manna, which is a regional agency linked to Feeding America, a national non-profit group of over 200 food banks.

But more than the physical structure and space that is Grace Food Pantry, the real heart and soul of the pantry is the devoted group of volunteer parishioners who are the body of the pantry. We have a faithful group of regulars who commit to a weekly shift, as well as a vital group of pantry substitutes who ensure that the pantry remains open when our regulars must miss a shift, and last, but never least--our pantry drivers who deliver the food we order from Manna to the pantry. Without these drivers, we could not function. We also provide pet food once a month to pantry families. All those involved with the pantry share a ministry of grace and plenty, in which the providers are truly the receivers. Paula Welling, a Monday volunteer, said, "I feel like I'm getting so much more from the people who come to the pantry than what I give them." Wednesday volunteer Lisa Hardeman said, "I work in the pantry because my heart loves it. Talking to our visitors and learning about them gives you a whole new aspect on life. I think

we [pantry volunteers] all feel the same way.” Many pantry visitors have expressed heartfelt gratitude to pantry volunteers in a variety of ways. One beloved pantry visitor made a quilt to donate to the parish fair as a way to raise money for the pantry; this was a way she could give back, she told us. Recently, a young woman brought baby supplies to donate, as her toddler had outgrown them, and several pantry visitors share books or articles of clothing for the pantry’s use. One of our long-time pantry clients faithfully assists with the weekly deliveries by helping unload our drivers’ vehicles and helping to put away the Manna order. This gentleman considers working in the pantry to be his weekly job, and he is a huge help to the volunteers and never misses his self-chosen shift. Before Christmas, an elderly pantry visitor brought in a thank you card with this poetic message:

*The world needs more people as thoughtful as you, for joy is a part of each nice thing you do.*

*The kindness you share brightens so many days; thank you for all of your wonderful ways.*

Joy is in fact, a predominant feeling inside the pantry, along with kindness and bright smiles, as volunteers greet familiar faces each week or enroll new families in the pantry. We chat with them about their families, hearing good news and bad, their stories about finding work or losing jobs, going back to school, caring for sick relatives, having family members move in, with several generations all sharing one roof, one table. Our pantry visitors seek assistance with food for many reasons: some are elderly; some are disabled; others have struggled with substance addictions; or they work multiple jobs and make just enough money to keep from getting food assistance; some have not completed enough education to find good jobs; some take in needy relatives and can’t afford enough food for all of them; and there are many other circumstances that put people in the position of seeking help. “Is this the church that helps people?” Yes, it is.

Would you like to join us? The pantry is in need right now of additional substitutes and drivers, and we would love to add your name to our list of volunteers. It is a small gift of your time, but the grace-filled space of your heart will be large.

**Contact Susan Williams, Grace Food Pantry Coordinator at 828.627.2226 or [swilliams330@bellsouth.net](mailto:swilliams330@bellsouth.net) if you would like to participate.**

## Outreach Ministry: Pathways



Since late 2014, Haywood Pathways Center has provided emergency and short-term shelter to those in need from Haywood County. These programs have helped men and women break the cycles of homelessness with dignity and respect, and many have returned to the community as productive citizens once again. Grace Church is part of a coalition of churches that cooks, serves and dines together with the homeless and hungry members of Haywood County. Grace Church takes responsibility for cooking, serving, and sharing meals every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday and 5<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month, when applicable. Natalie Bayless, one of Grace’s frequent volunteers, said “Sharing a meal reminds everyone that we are all in community with one another. That is



easy to forget when you are homeless and hungry." On average, 50 – 60 people share a meal together at Pathways every night.



Last October, the Grace Episcopal Church Women (ECW) unanimously voted to donate \$10,000 to Haywood Pathways Center. The ECW dedicated its donation to naming the trauma-informed playroom "Godly Play" that will be housed in the soon-to-be constructed Moms and Kids dorm on the Pathways campus. The Pathways Center project for Homeless Moms and Kids was officially chosen as the major mission for ECW.

Former senior warden and ECW president, Mary Lou Daily said, "With the Lodge (motel) no longer providing housing, it has become increasingly difficult to find temporary housing for the ever-increasing number of homeless women and children in Haywood County. Edwina Costly came to me with her long-time dream of a homeless shelter for women and children, hoping that ECW could help establish a shelter. We investigated the possibilities and found it an overwhelming challenge. Then upon becoming a board member at Pathways, I became familiar with the Pathways homeless project. Prayers are being answered; ECW found a mission, Edwina is realizing a dream, and the homeless women and children in Haywood County will soon have a safe place to transition from homelessness. I believe God goes before us and shows us the path we are to take."

The ECW will be hosting fundraising efforts throughout the year on behalf of the new Homeless Moms and Kids dorm. There is a lot of excitement about the renewed interest in ECW activities. The next meeting of the ECW will be held in March to organize committees for the Annual Tablesapes Luncheon (September 2018) and to discuss plans for several new projects including a Christmas Cookie Walk (December 2018). All women of Grace are automatically members in the Episcopal Church Women group and are encouraged to attend meetings and join in very meaningful mission work.

Contact Natalie Bayless at [nbayless1@gmail.com](mailto:nbayless1@gmail.com) to participate in serving meals at Pathways or Mary Lou Daily at [mldaily7@gmail.com](mailto:mldaily7@gmail.com) for more information on ECW efforts.

## Outreach Ministry: The Grace Giving Garden

*"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul."* John Muir



Many in our parish may not have reason to go behind the church very often, but the changes made may be surprising. How exactly did this rapid evolution occur? The short explanation is that God placed a hand on our goals. This evolution can be described but only in retrospect. Here's the story.

The Grace Giving Garden (GGG) lives behind the church below the Memorial Garden. Born as the Wee Weeders in 2008-9 to teach young children about gardening, it expanded over several years into a four-

bed produce garden that supplemented the Grace Church Food Pantry. For several years, the garden served financially strapped and food-insecure families with children, older adults, and people with challenges and disabilities. Children and volunteers from the Grace congregation grew the produce. This is still a primary purpose for the garden.



However, two years ago, three people joined energies to shape the newly named Grace Giving Garden, each with a unique vision for our garden. Mary Alice Lodico, our garden founder, has a strong background, interest and remarkable skill in gardening, and in teaching children to garden. Jim Geenen has a lifetime of expertise and experience working in global communities with the food insecure and people in need—and is a guiding light in connecting groups of people for the common good. Emily Chatfield-Lusto has a boatload of words, images, and ideas as well as a burning urge to build bridges between people of all flavors by working mindfully in

gardens. All three are Master Gardeners and all three agree with the philosophy expressed by The Lord's Acre community garden: *"There are many types of hunger. Everyone is hungry for something. Everyone has something to give."* Spiritually, all three draw close to God in nature and as they garden.



Since early spring 2016 when the three joined together to lead, the garden has dramatically increased in size, tools, and sophistication. Emily said, "It felt as if a whirlwind picked us up and moved us forward." They now garden seven large raised beds, two 25- by 30-foot field beds, blueberry bushes, fruit trees, and a dedicated herb garden. They constructed four compost and leaf bins and built a three-foot high raised bed to accommodate people with mobility issues. To facilitate small group teaching and resting, they set in benches, added a picnic table, and constructed a teaching-worship amphitheater. They now



have a 1000-gallon rainwater collection and drip irrigation system and a tool shed.

"We didn't accomplish all this with our superhero abilities, but with the kindness, planning, labor, time, busy hands and full hearts of volunteers from all over our community and our church," said Emily. "Learning about our vision, the Master Gardeners Volunteer Association, the Southwestern North Carolina Resource Conservation and Development Association and other donors graciously funded our projects. The vestry and our liaisons had to learn to do the fast cha-cha to keep up with us, and if you want the pure

inside scoop, we had to learn a few new dance steps ourselves to understand the business of the church and how to work more efficiently and gracefully (NPI) with process. As I write this in January 2018, one entire side of the rear landscape of Grace Church sits in winter expectation and we await the joy of teaching people of all ages how to be good stewards of the earth—and to have fun doing it."

Less obvious than the physical landscape changes but a much deeper layer of growth in the Grace Giving Garden is evident in how the vision has become more closely aligned with the missional priorities of Grace Church and the outreach vision. This is partially the result of the "If you build it, they will come" syndrome. "It's partially the result of our paying attention to Bishop Curry's call to become Crazy Christians," said Emily. "Mainly, I suspect, it is a case of opening ourselves to becoming Love in the world."



So what's next? This year the goals include aligning the teaching curriculum in the GGG with the summer programs being offered in the various community centers and youth groups that will be gardening with us. These will include the Pigeon Multicultural Community Center, the Meridian Health Center, BBBS (Big Brother Big Sister), the Learning Center, Lifespan clients, children and adults from Grace and, hopefully, children and adults from other downtown Waynesville churches. GGG hopes to engage more closely with Food Pantry staff and clients for good times sharing and harvesting. The group plans to offer a few entertaining outdoor craft projects for young people and one volunteer has begun designing those offerings already.

#### **An Invitation to Join!**

A primary goal this year is to expand the core facilitator group from three to six and to involve more people from the church in all levels of volunteering—from one-time to occasional to regularly planting and tending to buddying with community groups who garden individual beds and so on. All help is welcome, no involvement is too small or too casual and the rewards for all will fill your hearts. “We will be watering, tending, standing around and laughing,” said Emily. “We will be enjoying those “aha moments” on the faces of children when they visualize pizza and see all its components growing before their eyes. There will be watermelon. There will be harvest feasts and stories to share. There will be juicy, ripe tomatoes. There will be Love. Well. That’s what we have in mind for this growing season. We’ll keep you posted how God works his purpose out. Or come stand with us and find out for yourself.”

**If you would like to participate, contact Emily Chatfield-Lusto, Co-Facilitator, Grace Giving Garden at [echatfieldlusto@gmail.com](mailto:echatfieldlusto@gmail.com).**

**Many thanks to Michael Lodico, Les Taylor, Vicki Gribble, Susan Williams, Natalie Bayless, Mary Lou Daily, Emily Chatfield-Lusto as well as many others for their contributions in producing these articles on our outreach ministries.**

## Wardens’ Reflections

Here we are in 2018 and Grace Church has new wardens and vestry. To help the new vestry get to know each other and reflect on how we will work together for the benefit of all Grace members, we attended a Lake Logan retreat with Joslyn+ on January 12 and 13.

In reflection on accomplishments and goals from this past year, we renewed our commitment to our missional priorities:

- To grow in mutual love for one another specifically by improving our ability to communicate across difference.
- To develop a vibrant ministry to children, youth and young adults.
- To cultivate a culture of “welcoming” that engages each person’s spiritual gifts.

Looking at our 2017 SMART goals: here is how we fared:

- *To hold quarterly vestry-led Adult Forums.* This started with our annual meeting December 3, 2017 and we led another on January 21, 2018.

- *To identify a baseline of the number of children participating in each class.* Rite 13 averaged 3 and Godly Play had 2.5. Catechesis is expected to grow as our youngest children age into this program.
- *To personally contact each member regarding their Time & Talent selections.* Vestry members worked to make their calls throughout January 2018.

We set new 2018 SMART goals to help us measure our success towards achieving our priorities.

- By March disseminate the communication guidelines adopted by the vestry last year to all our committees and request that they review them at their next meeting.
- Between now and when school starts again in the fall, have three intentionally intergenerational events outside the education hour that involve skill sharing between adults and children.
- Two adult forums. One by Pentecost on a skills/gifts inventory (different from committee/ministry structure). One on educating ourselves on how to be welcoming.

Another renewed commitment for 2018 included a revised Grace organizational chart (Org Chart) and vestry members' liaison assignments. You can find a copy of the Org Chart on our Thatcher Hall bulletin board and on our new website. As a reminder, here is your new vestry and their assignments:

- Bill Collins - Senior Warden – 2016 vestry class
- Paula Welling - Junior Warden –2017 vestry class
- 2016 Vestry Class:
  - Louisa Lunt – Building & Grounds Liaison
  - Linda Sexton – Outreach Liaison
- 2017 Vestry Class
  - Linda Deeb – Hospitality/Fellowship Liaison
  - Rob Viau – Education/Formation Liaison
- 2018 Vestry Class
  - Crystal Clary – Administration & Treasury Liaison
  - Mary Hartman – Congregational Care Liaison
  - Kenneth Ratcliffe – Worship/Liturgy Liaison

Here are a few other highlights for the last quarter of 2017:

- Completed another successful stewardship education campaign
- Established our 2018 Grace Church budget.
- Along with Joslyn+, Bill Collins and Paula Welling attended the WNC Diocesan Convention.

**Bill Collins, Senior Warden**  
**Paula Welling, Junior Warden**

## Reports from Vestry Liaisons

### Buildings & Grounds

Liaison, Louisa Lunt - [louisa7349@aol.com](mailto:louisa7349@aol.com)

**Lay Weeders of the Greater Grace Grounds:** Led by Mary Alice Lodico, the group is excited that thirty-four persons signed up to help with occasional grounds work on the stewardship cards. When the weather warms up, look for the spring all parish work day to spruce up the grounds. Otherwise, the group and the grounds are resting for the winter. Mary Alice will be contacting newcomers to orient them to lay weeding.

#### Amphitheater Construction:



Led by Mary Alice Lodico, the amphitheater will be complete when Joe's Welding installs a custom-made safety railing and hand rails for the step down to the stage area and along the brick walk from the memorial garden to the Grace Giving Garden. Although it is not quite finished, it has been used twice, for very differing functions. First, on a chilly December 21, Joslyn led the first Liturgy of the Longest Day around the fire pit in a moving scripture about the power of light and dark.

Second, Jim Geenen, Emily Chatfield-Lusto and Mary Alice Lodico treated fifteen Tuscola masonry students and their instructor, Eric Sollie, to a weenie roast with chips, fruit, salad and s'mores. This was in thanks for their excellent work on the amphitheater. The boys did a fine job of the fire pit; it

draws beautifully. A spring project will be to landscape the area around the amphitheater.



Many thanks to Lynn Sprague of Southwestern NC Resource Conservation & Development Council for a \$2,000 grant to help with the cistern, amphitheater and related gardening projects. He immediately saw the value in involving the community in our garden and feeding the food insecure and has sent several people to witness the efforts taking place.

## Congregational Care

Liaison, Mary Hartman - mneedhamhartman@gmail.com



The Congregational Care Committee had a busy season. Pam Davis, chair, reported that the committee delivered advent wreaths to our homebound. Many meals have been prepared and delivered, cards have been sent, and prayers have been offered up. Betsy Stecher, president of the Daughters of the King, reported that the Daughters have a monthly prayer list and have prayed for parishioners and loved ones.

## Administration and Treasury

Liaison, Crystal Clary - ctclary@charter.net

The church website has undergone a transformation thanks to the efforts of Mary Lou Daily. It was unveiled at an Adult Forum and it contains new features. The website address continues to be <https://www.gracewaynesville.com>. The quarterly newsletter has been renamed "Reflections of Grace," and will be a look back to what's been accomplished in the previous three months. The Endowment Committee will soon post a short video on the website to explain the endowment process for this long term giving opportunity. Bob Vogt is building a Church Windows template to enable us to add photos and other data to our directory.

The Finance Committee completed the 2018 budget, with vestry approval. The new treasurer for 2018 is Fred Deeb. Thank you, Fred, for taking on this important role for Grace Church. Fred shared the budget during an Adult Forum.

# Hospitality/Fellowship

Liaison, Linda Deeb – l.deeb@charter.net



The Fellowship Committee's major December event was the church pot luck dinner Christmas party on December 17. Our center piece decorations, made by Louisa Lunt and her team, were table prizes and were appreciated by all the attendees. "A good time was had by all," said Linda Deeb

**The Men of Grace**, led by K. G. Watson, continues to meet on the first Saturday of each month at 9:00 a.m. to enjoy a full breakfast and lively conversation. All male members of the church can attend; no reservations are required.



**Sew Graceful**, meets on Saturday mornings in the Marthas' room across from the library and is open to all who want to learn how to quilt. If you are already a quilter, there many projects to share quilted gifts with others. In December, the group had a "Jacket Work Day." Currently the group is working on a "love gift" quilt for a church member. This very industrious group also makes soft "prayer squares" that Rev. Joslyn provides to our ill and hospitalized parishioners. This group will be planning and working towards raffle items for the 2018 Grace Parish

Fair. Come join this group of happy quilters.

**The Welcoming Committee**, led by Paula Welling, had a very busy fourth quarter 2017. In November, the committee had the last of three casual off-site newcomer meet-ups for the year – this one at Bocelli's, which proved to have the needed quiet atmosphere for conversation. Meet-ups have been well attended and will continue in 2018.

Also, in November, the committee officially welcomed 25 new members to Grace Church in the Mountains. For a church of our size, this is phenomenal growth!

The Time and Talent cards from our Stewardship campaign and personal conversations in December yielded nine people who indicated interest in helping welcome and incorporate newcomers here at Grace Church.

## Newcomer's Corner

### John & Donna Culp



John's family is from this area, and he and Donna built a vacation home/family gathering space back in the 1990's in Jonathan Creek that they would visit over the years. The Culp's officially retired in December of 2016 and moved here in April from northern Virginia. Donna said, "We are Episcopalians, and Grace was the church we started with (in our search) and it is the church we ended with, due to its openness and welcoming spirit." John added, "We asked these questions about Grace when we met with Joslyn: Is this a church that is truly looking forward,

and is this a church that welcomes diversity? We were looking to join a church that gave us an opportunity to help make these things possible."

Donna is passionate about doing creative projects, and she is interested in animal rescue and in learning about dog therapy. She and John love their dog, Chelsea, whom they adopted from Sarge's. Donna said, "We're a blended family with four grown children, who live in all different places, and a total of seven grandchildren." John's passion is for learning new things and new experiences, and he added, "I've been told I have a knack for teaching." The Culp's like to attend the 10:30 service on Sundays.

### Michael & Valerie Gracie



Michael and Valerie were raised as Roman Catholics, but they had not been attending church in Asheville when they discovered Calvary Episcopal Church in Fletcher. "It is a beautiful church, and we were captivated by the church service and the priest who was there. I had no clue how close the Episcopal Church service was to the Catholic mass," said Michael. He and Valerie later moved to Pawley's Island, South Carolina, and transferred their membership to Holy Cross, another Episcopal church. Last March, the Gracies moved to Waynesville and found their way to Grace Church. "We met Joslyn, and felt a connection with her, so we began coming to church here,"

Michael said.

The Gracies both stated that they are passionate about their family. Michael has five children and one grandson, Kristian, who is five years old. Kristian and his father live with the Gracies currently, and Kristian spends every other week with them, attending Sunday School at Grace when he can. The family

has two dogs, Bella and Jake, and the Gracies both enjoy taking care of and watching birds. "I'm a nature guy," Michael said, "and I'm fascinated by birds. I keep the binoculars handy. We keep bird feeders, and we've been brushing and saving the dogs' fur for birds to nest with in the spring. Especially the hummingbirds like that." In addition to enjoying family activities, Valerie said, "I like to volunteer in the community, garden, and I enjoy reading." Before Valerie began her new job, she volunteered during the summer at the parish fair and in the Grace Giving Garden.

### **Sue Shirley**



Sue grew up in the Episcopal church and was baptized and confirmed in New York. She married Mike, a Methodist minister, and after their retirement to Maggie Valley, Sue found her way to Grace Church. When asked how she chose Grace, specifically, Sue said, "That's easy---Joslyn, Joslyn!" She added, "Grace is an open community, with open-minded people. And of course, I love the liturgy." Sue loves to read, and she likes "anything artsy." She takes watercolor classes and enjoys doing yoga and fitness activities which "keep my old body in shape," Sue explained. She and Mike volunteer with Meals on Wheels, and they have been delivering meals for the last year. "This has been a real eye-opener," Sue said, as they have visited people and places in Haywood County they otherwise would never have seen. "Hunger

is something that really concerns me," Sue said, and she is a new Grace Food Pantry volunteer, willing to fill in whenever she can, and eventually to take a regular pantry day, if needed.

Important people and creatures in Sue's life are her husband Mike, and their two little Shih Tzu dogs, "who are like our children now," Sue said. The Shirleys have two grown daughters with families of their own, and a total of six grandchildren. One daughter's family used to live in California but have moved to Atlanta, and Sue said that it is so wonderful now to see them at least once a month. Their other daughter and her family are currently missionaries living in Haiti with their three children. "We are so proud of them," Sue said, "as they are very committed to their mission." Sue added her sister to her circle of loved ones important in her daily life. She said, "I also have a sister in Asheville, and we're both learning to play the mountain dulcimer. It's wonderful!"

### **Lauri SoJourney Family & Travis Zack**



Lauri, who is the new Executive Director of Lake Logan, explained how she and her family found their way to Grace Church. "Because of my job, I reached out to Joslyn and I found her to be so genuine and down to earth. Travis really liked her sermons, and we both loved the fact that the church had a goal to increase youth presence and to welcome youth." Lauri added, "We appreciated that

the church invested in preparing the classrooms ahead of time.” The family moved on June 1 to Lake Logan from Aiken, South Carolina, and the children began school in August. Gracie is in the tenth grade at Pisgah High; Daniel entered seventh grade but was promoted to eighth grade at Bethel Middle; and Jack is in the fifth grade at Bethel Elementary. The family lives on the property at Lake Logan, and Lauri said, “We pinch ourselves daily that we live in this beautiful place.” Lauri said she has always been committed to diversity and inclusion, “and I have become more passionate about this. I really do believe the Episcopal Church welcomes all.” Lauri’s oldest daughter, Sarah, is a freshman at Kenyon College, and she is also passionate about social justice and is a writer. “Gracie is an artist who loves to draw and paint, and Daniel is so intelligent and is also concerned about social justice. Jack likes to do his own thing, and he doesn’t worry about what people think. He has a great sense of humor—very dry.” Travis has two daughters who live in Minnesota. Older daughter Arbie and her husband live near Minneapolis, which is where 15-year-old Anna lives with her mother. Travis’s response about what he is passionate about is, “On any given day, it might be something different. But in general, I am passionate about learning and experiencing new things. Also, being gentle to people and to animals. I feel very strongly that it’s important for us to treat animals well.”

The family members all love animals, and they have two dogs, a cat, a parakeet, and raise chickens for the eggs. They also serve as a foster family for Sarge’s. As Travis said, “We love critters.” Lauri’s mother recently passed away, seven weeks ago, and Lauri said, “I was surprised when people at Grace reached out to me and knew about my loss. We are so new here; it meant a lot to me that people have this awareness and caring.”

## Outreach

Liaison, Linda Sexton - lindasextonvestry@gmail.com

Outreach is a new area of focus for me. This area of mission is large at Grace. We are called to walk in the way, widen the walls, and wake up the world. The annual report outlines five key areas that outreach has centered on in past years: dispersal of funds, item collections/drives, parish fair, food insecurities ministries, and dependency groups.

Going forward, we will be working on a purpose statement which encompasses Grace’s missional priorities embracing the Outreach Committee’s purpose statement to come up with concrete direction. The goal is to *engage people, collaborate with others, and transform our community and /or parish.*

I look forward to working with all the people involved in outreach with an eye toward moving from charity to social justice with our time and talent. Who is our neighbor? How do we proceed to promote ministry beyond our walls? I am excited to be a part of Outreach!

## Education/Formation

Liaison, Rob Viau - robert.viau@gcsu.edu

The Christian Education/Formation core leadership team, presenters, and teachers at Grace have been very busy indeed since November, providing opportunities for our parish to learn and share across our missional priorities! Whether holding focused discussions on some of our differences, working with our children and youth to learn “Christian basics,” or helping to provide a welcoming atmosphere for our own church members or visitors, many talented and passionate church members have helped Grace grow into our mission and reach out to the community at large. The following areas fall under the embrace of Christian Education/Formation (see the organizational chart):



**Adult Forum.** Under the leadership of Pamela Nolte-Viau, the Adult Formation Committee meets once a month to develop programs for the Adult Forum Hour. The past few months have provided a variety of programs that had addressed several of our missional priorities with topics such as the Grace Giving Garden, Godly Play, seeking a peaceful heart during Advent, sharing faith, and the spirituality of dreams.

**Bible Book Study.** In the past three months Rev. Joslyn has enriched the spiritual and intellectual life of our parish with a series of discussions on the bible, Isaiah.

**Children/Youth.** Mary Hartman has just recently become both a new vestry member and the chair of the Youth/Children's Education Committee. On January 21, Mary held a meeting with the vestry liaison Rob Viau and most of the teachers to work on coordinating the programs, overcome challenges, and prepare for an open house on a Saturday in February. The numbers of children and youth who attend are, in general, on the rise, and we hope to do everything in our power to continue that trend. We are truly blessed with dedicated and passionate teachers at all levels who are eager for new students.

The subcommittee under Mary Hartman's leadership discussed planning several intergenerational programs outside of the Adult Forum hour, probably on Saturdays, and will continue to brainstorm on ways to connect a wide range of parish members in programs involving our youth.

Richard and Carol Ploch are the proud grandparents of 13-year-old twins who have experienced the Children/Youth Education Programs at Grace over a period of several years. Richard writes:

Our twin grandsons, Armand and Christian, began coming with us to Grace Church and Sunday School four years ago. For the first two years, they had wonderful teachers available to them each Sunday thanks to Lorelei and Dale Yerse, Teresa Heinz, and Heather Cyre. The boys were growing in their understanding of the Christian faith and enjoyed being with the teachers. They want to be in Sunday School.

Sadly, two years ago, in spite of sincere efforts by members of the vestry, especially Donna Buckner, no Grace members stepped forward to continue classes for children during our 9:15 Christian education hour.

Since the arrival of Rev. Joslyn Schaefer a year ago, however, the children's program has reawakened in a delightful way. Two downstairs classrooms as well as the Marthas' room across from the church library are alive each Sunday morning. Once a month, the teachers have also sponsored exciting events at additional times.



Louisa Lunt and Paula Eachus teach the Catechist class for children 3 to 6 years old.

Godly Play, the class for children 7 through 10, is led by Bill Collins, Karen Morris, Donna Buckner, Linda Deeb, and Vicky Gribble.



And the middle school and high school young people are blessed by the faithful guidance of Annelle Woggon, Teresa Heinz, and Mary Hartman. This class is called Rite 13. Christian education is foundational to a child's understanding of the faith. The whole church is blessed by all our fine leaders.

Richard and Carol, we are blessed to have your expert leadership and guidance to help us on our path!

**Contemplative.** Under the truly inspired leadership of Susan Williams, the Thomas Group meets twice a month for 1 ½ hours. The group meditates and reflects on the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas in the peaceful setting of the Grace Church sanctuary, with candle light and spiritual music.

**EfM.** The EfM (Education for Ministry) classes, mentored by Jim Lynn, continue with five students in their third year of a four-year study, one student in the second year, and two students in their first year.

Students are NOT required to complete the course in four consecutive years.

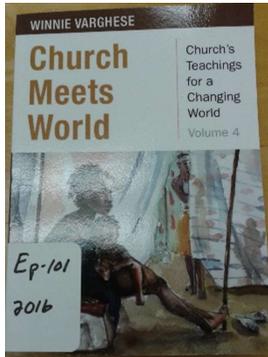
EfM recognizes the fact that lay persons face the difficult and often subtle task of interpreting the richness of the church's faith in a complex and confusing world. They need a theological education which supports their faith and teaches them to express that faith in day-to-day events. As the emphasis on lay ministry has grown, EfM has come to play an important role by providing a program that develops an informed and knowledgeable laity.

The EfM program is preparation for the ministry to which we all are called. It is that vocation for which we pray: "And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord."

The group meets weekly for nine months and will be open for new students in the fall. The cost is \$375 per year and scholarships may be available.

**Library.** Paula Welling has continued to build our church library into an extremely useful resource for our parish. Before Paula, the library was mainly a meeting room. Not so anymore. Here are some book reviews that Paula has provided:

### ***Church Meets World: Church's Teachings for a Changing World: Volume 4***



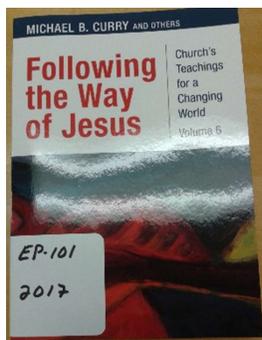
By Winnie Varghese, published 2016.

Winnie Varghese serves as Priest and Director of Community Outreach at historic Trinity Episcopal Church Wall Street in New York. She is a popular blogger on Huffington Post and gained respect for her work as rector of St. Mark's in the Bowery, a diverse, progressive church in New York. She is the chair of the board of The Episcopal Service Corps and leads social action efforts at the national and local levels.

In Church Meets World, Varghese explores the "what," "how," and "why" of Episcopal engagement with the most urgent contemporary social issues: racial justice, gender and sexuality, economic disparity, war, and much more, inviting us to live as if God's kingdom is here among us already.

Look for this book in our library's "Episcopal 101" section, to your left as you enter the library.

### ***Following the Way of Jesus: Volume 6***



By Michael Curry. Published in 2017.

Michael B. Curry, Bishop of North Carolina from 2000 to 2015, was elected the 27th Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church by the 78th General Convention in July 2015. He has had a national preaching and teaching ministry and has received honorary degrees from Sewanee and Yale.

Michael Curry leads off this volume with a clarion call for Episcopalians to join the Jesus Movement. A team of the church's brightest stars follow up with reflections on the practice of ministry in light of the movement: Rob Wright on adaptive leadership, Broderick Greer on racial justice, Anthony Guillen on multicultural ministries, Megan Castellan on evangelism, Nora Gallagher on loving the earth, and Kellan Day on ministry with young people. Michael Curry closes with a word on making the world whole. Christians have been following Jesus together for some 2000 years - these leaders help to illuminate how we follow him in our time.

Look for this book in our library's "Episcopal 101" section, on your left as you enter the library.



**Small Groups, Deck Discussions, Graceful Conversations, Pub Theology.** Thanks to Rev. Orion Davis, Wednesday nights have become special occasions, once a month, for worship, discussion, and community building that occasionally reaches outside the “campus” of Grace Church. The last few months have seen “Conversations” across difference on topics related to the creation stories told in Genesis 1 & 2. Orion has a strong and reliable core of thoughtful followers! A new program, Pub Theology (PT), which meets outside Grace Church, has provided additional opportunities for church members to take on somewhat more controversial topics such as biblical authority, life after death, etc. Pub Theology is beginning to attract some notice in the

wider community, and one of the hope is that PT will in effect become a kind of social/educational outreach branch of Grace.

For those who have not yet heard of Pub Theology, here is a description:

Pub Theology is a group of spiritual and intellectual seekers—searchers. In the relaxed, comfortable setting of a pub (or café, or living room), we discuss God, the church, the history and politics of religion, and all that falls within the embrace of the quest for truth. Our goal is non-judgmental inquiry; safe, fair, and open discussion of ideas that have puzzled and tested humans from the beginning of civilization. Pub Theology is a “great ideas” group that welcomes people of all faiths, or none.

Grace in the Mountains is truly blessed to have a rector, vestry, committee chairs, and teachers dedicated to bringing us closer as a faith community and reaching outside our campus to the community at large.

## Worship/Liturgy

Liaison, Kenneth Ratcliffe - [kratcliffe@lakejunaluska.com](mailto:kratcliffe@lakejunaluska.com)



We had many wonderful and inspiring worship services over the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons culminating in several services on Christmas Eve. We had 203 folks total for Christmas Eve, over forty more compared with 2016. The 4:00 p.m. service, in which the children proclaimed the Good News, had just under 50 in attendance and about 18 children and youth. Thanks so much to the Altar Guild and others for lovingly decorating our sanctuary with many beautiful poinsettias, berries, and greenery for the season.



On January 28, Bishop Jose' McLoughlin visited Grace Church celebrating Eucharist at both services and confirmed two, reaffirmed one, and received five into the body of Christ. A joyous reception followed.

We want to especially thank Kathy Geyer McNeil for her years of dedicated service to our music ministry as Director of Music. She has recently accepted a position with First United Methodist Church in Waynesville. Thank you, Kathy for your time, talent, and ministry! A search committee is in place to discern who our new Director of Music will be.



## All Saints Day & Harvest Festival



# Dedication of Memorial Garden Plaque

