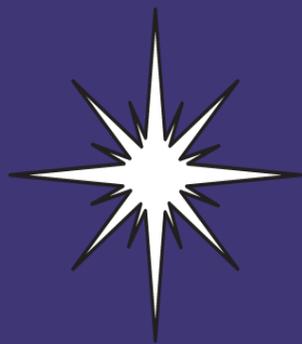


# The Gracevine

December 2018

 **GRACE**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & SCHOOL

4040 W. Bellfort  
Houston, TX 77025  
832-667-8601  
graceinhouston.org



## WORSHIP WITH US IN ADVENT & AT CHRISTMAS

**SUNDAYS IN ADVENT - DECEMBER 2, 9, 16, & 23**

10:00 AM EUCHARIST WITH CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

**CONTEMPLATIVE EUCHARIST - DECEMBER 5 & 19**

11:30 AM | IN CHURCH, ENTER FROM WOODWIND PARKING

**LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE AT ST. STEPHEN'S - DECEMBER 21**

7:00 PM | 1805 W. ALABAMA, HOUSTON

**CHRISTMAS EVE - DECEMBER 24**

5:30 PM PRELUDE CONCERT | 6:00 PM FESTIVE EUCHARIST

**CHRISTMAS DAY - DECEMBER 25**

11:30 AM HOLY COMMUNION ON THE LABYRINTH

### BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

12/19 Kaitlyn Baker

12/26 Yvonne Carter-Johnson

12/29 Lewis Sterling

*Please tell us if we forgot yours!*

### ANNIVERSARIES

12/28 Charlie Spruell & Tammy Wu

### COFFEE HOUR

12/2 Daughters of the King

12/9 Phillip & Cheryl Kimbrough

12/16 Astride and Eddie Nnadi

12/23

12/30 Stephanie Miller

### ALTAR FLOWERS

12/2 Burlingames—grandson  
Dylan

12/9

12/16 Eddie and Astride Nnadi  
anniversary

12/23 Lisa Bullock-anniversary

12/24 Poinsettias-

12/30 Glen and Antoinette Gibson  
- anniversary



**THE VICAR'S NOTES**  
THE REVEREND SCOTT PAINTER



"A Season of Holy Waiting"

Happy New Year!

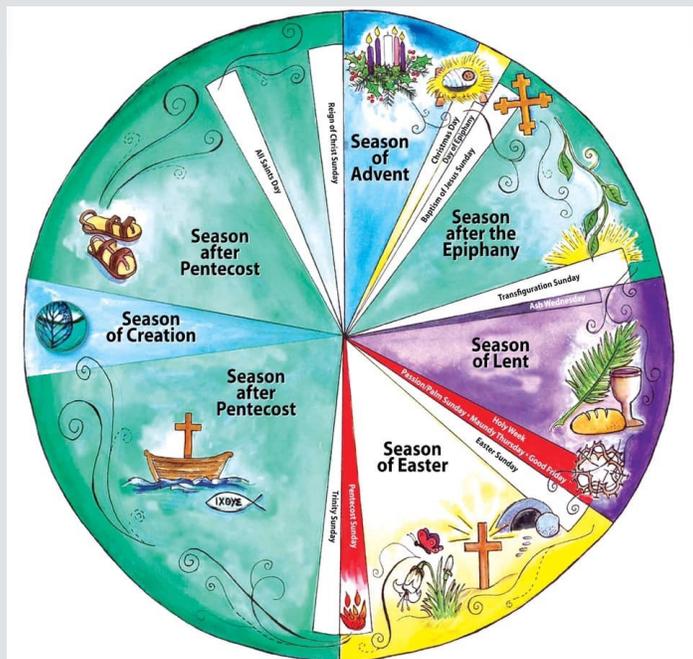
For Episcopalians and Christians of many other traditions all over the world, time moves to a different rhythm from the established days, weeks, months and years set on the calendar that governs modern society.

The Church's year ebbs and flows with the energy of the cosmos. Our Liturgical Calendar (which guides annual patterns of worship and activities) is set each year

*(Continued on page 2)*

("Vicar's Notes," continued from page 1)

according to the solar and lunar calendars. Some Festivals, like Christmas on December 25, are fixed in place according to the sun.



Others, Easter most of all, arrive at slightly different points each year, according to the moon.

### How can we prepare in Advent?

(You may be interested to know that Easter's moveable date is a result of a conscious decision that is about 1700 years old. The Council of Nicaea in 325AD set Easter to come each year on the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after the Spring Equinox. This is why Easter may arrive much earlier or much later from year to year.)

It is actually Easter's movement around on the calendar, in relation to the fixed point of Christmas on December 25, that determines how each liturgical year- will correspond to the January-December calendar.

The church begins each new year with the season that is a most counter-cultural and counter-intuitive wonder. We do not begin each new church year with a big bang, nor a party, nor a pinnacle Feast. Instead, we start anew with deferred gratification -- in the season of Advent.

The word Advent comes from Latin, meaning "coming." The season of Advent is a time of waiting for what comes next. But it certainly isn't a time for passivity or rest. NO! Advent is a time for anticipation and hope, preparation and prayer.

My favorite Advent passage from Scripture is in the Gospel of Luke (3:4-5). The writer is telling about John the Baptist, who is proclaiming that a Savior is on the way. His words ring in my heart throughout the season of Advent: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

There is a holiness to the waiting of Advent – it is rooted in the promise that God has not left this world to its own devices and has not left humans to fend for ourselves. The promise inspires us to hope; it rouses us to prepare the way for God's salvation to enter into every place of despair that the world knows.

How can we prepare in Advent?

As a community in worship, we prepare by telling the stories of promise, praying our hope, and singing our longings for God's salvation. In relationship with others, we prepare by making straight paths for God's goodness into the world: by loving and serving!

Let me encourage us to join in the work of Grace2Go, serving our neighbors on



(Continued on page 3)

("Vicar's Notes," continued from page 2)

Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 7-8:00 AM in the W. Belfort parking lot. Just show up once, find a way to help out, and meet some of our neighbors.

We can also get a name from Mitzi Coleman off of the Angel Tree. The name belongs to a child who may experience scarcity and lack amplified during the holidays. You can purchase a toy for that child, according to their list, and bring it as an offering of love to be shared.

We also continue to collect donations for Braes Interfaith Ministries throughout December. BIM experiences great demand on their resources during holidays, and this is a long-time ministry of Grace. (FYI, BIM is always welcoming new volunteers, if you are inclined to put feet to your preparations!)

As individuals, we can take time to voice our concerns and longings in our prayers. And we can be intentional in our kindness to others, in our generosity to those in need, in our service to doing good in the world. We can speak out for those who need an ally or advocate.

Advent is the perfect way to begin our new year together in faith - with a season of holy waiting. I look forward to walking with you, anticipating and preparing for the gift of Jesus.

The Rev. Scott Painter,  
Vicar of Grace



## Reading With Grace Book Group



The Reading With Grace Book Group is taking a short break and will meet next time on January 17th at 2 p.m. in the Flex room. We will be discussing the book *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-time*, by Mark Haddon. All are welcome to join us.

## PRAYER & POTLUCK



Prayer and Potluck November Meeting

We will not meet in December. All are invited to explore our Gospel reading for December on your own for personal enrichment. We will resume January 12, 2019.

The December 13, 2018 Gospel Reading:  
Luke 3:1-6

As you go about your faith walk in the coming weeks consider contemplation: Stop, close your eyes; Still the mind if only for five minutes, then open your eyes and your heart and consider what needs to be done.



The Rev Dr John Graham proclaims the Gospel in Sunday Worship.

February 10, 2019

# THE BISHOP IS COMING!



The Rt. Rev. Jeff W. Fisher, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Texas, will be with us to Baptize, Confirm, and Receive new members into The Episcopal Church. Bishop Jeff will also Preach and Celebrate!

Please contact The Rev. Scott Painter (Vicar@graceinhouston.org) to learn more. Prep classes for Confirmation and Reception will be coming in January. Those who have come from another Episcopal Church may inquire about transferring their membership letter to Grace.

## Growing in Grace STEWARDSHIP 2019

### Stewardship Campaign Update, by Bob Duran, Chair

We have officially concluded the most successful Stewardship Campaign in recent years: at least 12 first-time financial pledges to Grace, many increased pledges, and several returning pledges. Many have also indicated their willingness to serve in this community. For all this, we are extremely grateful.

While the campaign required an official time frame, we will not have the official results until early next year, allowing those pledge commitments that are still outstanding to be shared.

We will share the final numbers from our "Growing in Grace" campaign in January.

### WORDS FROM YOUR WARDEN



I am paraphrasing a message recently heard from a young man, Patdro Harris, the Resident Director and Choreographer at the Ensemble Theatre, "The definition of Peace is the willingness to be inconvenienced; likewise, if you are fortunate enough to have abundance build a larger table not a taller wall." We at Grace have such a table and try very hard to bring down walls. We are blessed to be part of a greater community that does not see outreach as an inconvenience.

November saw Grace spin cartwheels, reaching out to our community at large. Our Shepherd Rev. Scott oversaw an outstanding month of Praise and Worship. Ellis Montes and the music team provided ambiance for our celebrations. Fabian Berrios guided our children in Christian Education. Our Bishop's Committee and School Board were in lock-step with the Vicar, promoting our desire to serve God as envoys for Peace.

PLEASE JOIN THE PAINTERS FOR  
*Hors-d'oeuvres, Desserts, and Drinks*

## A CHRISTMAS RECEPTION IN THE VICAR'S HOME

1207A Missouri Street | Houston, Texas  
December 16, 2018 | 3-5:00 PM

*Come and go as you please.*



*(Words from the Warden, continued from p. 4)*

Special thanks to Bob Duran and Stewardship Team for explaining who we are and why this ministry is essential for present, new and future members. Thanks also to Sara Bushell and the Circle of Care team, Daniel Coleman and the Grace to Go teams, Cecelia Johnson and the DOK, C. L. Johnson and The Men of Grace in spearheading our outreach initiatives. We could not keep the lights on and the doors open without our Sexton, Mario Ruiz and the Office Staff, Robin Campbell and Elizabeth Martin. A gem in our crown is the impact Edolia James and the Grace School team bring to the table. None of this would be possible without every member of Grace. Thank you being a part of Grace.

As we enter the season of Advent continue our good works, "Be watchful, Be alert," remember how much God loves us: He sent us a savior, His son, in midst of the world's turmoil, centuries ago. Unfortunately we still don't seem to hear His message. We continue to sin, that is, miss the mark. We are not to listening to His Good News of Great Joy. This season is a perpetual reminder of what we were given. Join me as I stop and listen as God speaks, and with God's Will, I will hear His call to serve Him in whatever way He wants. May You do this also?

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl Ladner Kimbrough



## Welcome our New Office Assistant, Elizabeth Martin!

Welcome, Elizabeth Martin! Elizabeth joins us this week as our new office assistant. She is an experienced administrative assistant who has worked in social services with special needs adults. She has worked in several different environments building efficient work systems and streamlining communications. Elizabeth, her partner, Bill, and their children attend Christ Church Cathedral in downtown Houston. She is excited to join the team at Grace as we grow and serve the community. Elizabeth will be in the office Monday-Friday, 7 AM-12 PM (our new office hours!).

The St. Clare Chapter of the Daughters of the King presents



# THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WINTER PRAYER RETREAT AND EUCHARIST

DECEMBER 15, 2018

8:30 AM - 1:00 PM

In the Book of Isaiah 11:2-3, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are described. In the passage the gifts are considered ones that the Messiah would have possessed.

The seven gifts are wisdom, understanding, counsel, might (fortitude), knowledge, delight in the fear of the LORD (piety), and fear of the LORD (hope)

### ARE THE GIFTS LIVING IN YOU?

In the Book of Galatians 5:22-25, by contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

**Yvonne Carter-Johnson, Retreat Leader**



**GRACE**  
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4040 West Bellfort Ave  
Houston, Texas 70025  
graceinhouston.org



Light Breakfast & Lunch Served | Donations Accepted

*1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 11:30 AM*

## CONTEMPLATIVE EUCHARIST

JOIN US IN THE CHURCH SANCTUARY FOR QUIET IN COMMUNITY,  
AROUND THE SACRED MEAL OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Enter through office entrance at 9939 Woodwind Drive |  
Ring bell for access





## “An Advent for the Church”

*By Ellis Montes, Music Director*

A few weeks ago, I was at my first meeting with the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, which is one of the interim bodies (groups meeting in between General Conventions) for the Episcopal Church. As I was preparing for this meeting, I was a bit nervous because of some of the commentary I had received from around the Church, particularly in a piece of correspondence from a “concerned layperson” about the revision of the Book of Common Prayer and an open letter issued by the bishop of the Diocese of Albany. Both of these pieces of writing featured some very harsh language (to put it lightly), and I was not sure I was ready to don my polemicist garb for this meeting.

When I walked into the introduction for all the interim bodies, I felt relieved. There in the front, giving an impassioned invitation, was Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. In the front rows were people whom I had met during this past year, people in charge of different offices and committees at the national level. Canon Stephanie Spellers gave me a warm welcome as she was sitting in the back rows in the auditorium. I also knew that one of my family members, Luz Montes, a seminarian at the Seminary of the Southwest, was there. This was the first glimmer of hope for me during the following three days of non-stop scheduled meetings.

During my meetings, I learned that the future of the Episcopal Church is bright. We are moving forward in our embracing of the Gospel of Love that we have learned through Jesus Christ. We are moving in the direction of inclusion, of reconciliation, of listening, of learning. And, this hope is exactly what I like to see during my contemplations during Advent.

Our message we learn in church is that Advent is about the hope for a brighter future.

As a commission, we were tasked with looking at revisions for the Book of Common Prayer. Now, while not everybody is in agreement as to how that will look or how it will manifest itself, everybody was on board with more expansive and inclusive language. We are looking to respect our church members with our prayers, especially when looking at gender and privilege in the BCP. On a broader scale, we are looking at how we will pay attention to the saints who have lived before us and have brought us closer to God. In fact, we are looking at more than just a European narrative. Our church calendar is looking more colorful. Also, we are looking at how we will lift up every voice in our congregations, especially when it comes to celebrating traditions and customs of different communities. We are reaching out and engaging people from the different cultures in our Church so we can see how to represent them.

I do not know how everything will resolve just yet, but I see there is a great future for our Church, and I hope that as we move forward in expectation, we can receive the same good news that came during the first Advent: Jesus is coming to bring us all together into a world without pain or suffering.



# Holy Baptism (photos by Charlie Spruell)



# Invitation to Serve in Leadership

Nominations for Elected and Appointed Positions

The Bishop's Committee has appointed a Nominations Committee (Cheryl Kimbrough, Bob Andrew, and The Rev. Scott Painter) to engage the work of recruiting nominees for elected and appointed leadership to the Bishop's Committee for terms beginning in 2019. There are two 3-year elected positions and one 2-year elected position open, as well as officer positions and an alternate delegate to Diocesan Council in February. Please see a member of the Nominations Committee for requirements and more information about serving in these areas.

Elections will take place at the Annual Meeting on January 27, from 11:30-1:00 PM. Terms begin the second Monday in February, and meetings take place on the second Monday of each month, from 6-8:00 PM.



God is Love

**Sunday Morning Bible Study  
Continues: 1, 2, & 3 John.  
With Daniel Coleman**

Dear friends, Since we're not quite through with our study of *The First Epistle of John*, we plan to continue until we are finished: that should be either December 2 or 9. Immediately after that, we will take at least one Sunday each for 2 John and 3 John—the letters to “the elect lady and her children” and “to the beloved Gaius.” Join us in the Parish Hall, Sundays at 9:00am throughout Advent. Please remember to bring your Bible.



SAVE THE DATE!

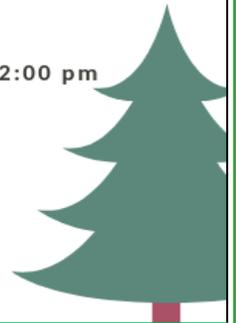


SAVE THE DATE  
FOR OUR FIRST ANNUAL

## Grace Christmas Tea

A fundraiser to support the ministries of  
Grace Episcopal Church  
\$20 per person

December 8 | Saturday | 2:00 pm  
Parish Hall



### *First Annual Christmas Tea*

Start the Christmas season with something new! A relaxing afternoon in the Grace Tea Room! This is a fundraiser to support the growing ministry of Grace Church. The tea is from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Seating begins at 2:45 p.m. The cost is \$20.00 per person. Limited Seating - Reservations Only. Reservations with accompanying payment must be received at Grace Church no later than December 2. Registration forms are available in this morning's bulletin, in the church foyer. Checks should be made payable to: Grace Episcopal Church. Give a special gift to that hard-to-buy-for individual!



## ADULT FORMATION & CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sundays @ 9:00 AM

"1st, 2nd, 3rd John" Bible Study through Advent, led by Daniel Coleman

Sundays @ 9:00 am

Contemplative Prayer with Gospel Reading Lectio Divina (Library)

## CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

Sundays @ 10 am

Children's Chapel is available each Sunday. The children exit the church following the cross before the first Lesson and return at the Peace.



***Be an Angel this Christmas!***

***Gifts for Kids in Our Community***

Grace Episcopal Church and School is partnering with the Weekly Family YMCA to sponsor an Angel Tree to brighten the holidays for children in need in our neighborhood.

Please consider helping a child by selecting an ornament from Grace's special Angel Tree. Each ornament represents a child who is in need.

When you select an ornament from the tree, you will receive instructions and information about a specific child, so that you may purchase gifts for that child.

It's easy to participate! Now through Sunday, December 9, stop by the Angel Tree in the Parish Hall during Coffee Hour and we'll be happy to assist you.

Then, purchase and deliver your unwrapped Angel Tree gifts to Grace by Thursday, December 13.

If you would like more information, please contact Mitzi Coleman by phone at 713.302.0382 or email at [mitzicoleman@prodigy.net](mailto:mitzicoleman@prodigy.net).

Let's join in giving the gift of love, hope, and joy to our neighbors in need this Christmas!



## GRACE GOES TO LUNCH

DECEMBER 11, 12:30 PM | SIGN UP IN PARISH HALL

I H O P - LOOP 610 @ BEECHNUT AVE



## Daughters of the King?

The Saint Clare Chapter of the Daughters of the King invites all women of Grace to join us on our spiritual journey.

As Daughters, we are charged with daily prayer, service, evangelism and the strengthening of the spiritual life of the parish. We meet the first Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Flex Room. We would love to have you!



**GRACE**  
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and Instagram @grace\_in\_houston