

# The Gracevine

April, 2020

 **GRACE**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & SCHOOL

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

## THE VICAR'S NOTES

THE REVEREND SCOTT PAINTER



"When can I see you again?"

Dear Friends,

This is a letter from my heart. I'm not trying to be fancy, clever, or theologically sophisticated today (all of which I rarely accomplish, even on a best day). I just want you to know that you are loved and that, with God's help, we will get through the uncertainty, fear, and loneliness of this coronavirus pandemic *together*. During this season, we are not without purpose, mission, or hope.

Our faith tradition rests on the stories of so many people who lived – and often even came to thrive – through uncertain, scary, and lonely times. The constant theme throughout all these encounters is that God is always with us, albeit in different ways at different times. In some stories, God is present as a strength and a comfort, assuring us that we will get through difficulty with God's help. In other stories, God is present in a hugely profound but perhaps a less comforting way—more to challenge people through the difficulty. On these occasions, God calls us to be and act differently: to come through the trial and be transformed for greater trust in God and faithfulness to God's ways.

*(continued, p. 2)*

### APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4th Jim Pauloski  
19th Keira Driscoll

### APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

2nd Robert & Diane Andrew  
3rd C.L. & Vyonne Johnson

Please tell us if we forgot your birthday or anniversary!

## WORSHIP WITH US

ONLINE

At

[YouTube.com/graceinhouston](https://www.youtube.com/graceinhouston)

Or

On Zoom (links sent out via email and Facebook)

Holy Week Worship Schedule

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*The Gracevine*



# THE VICAR'S NOTES

THE REVEREND SCOTT PAINTER



(continued from p. 1)

Through it all, I cling to some essential beliefs. And, I hope you will to.

1. I believe that God is always *with us*, will never abandon us, and remains faithful to us. As the church we are called to be with one another, even in a time like this when we can't be physically present in the same place together. The Holy Spirit can inspire us with creativity, and can energize us when we are nearly worn out, to be persistent in finding new ways to support one another.
2. I believe that God is always *for us* -- working to bring about goodness, wholeness, and flourishing in us and in the whole world. God is not trying to bring an end to us or to the world God created good and that God loves so much. Holy Week is a time when this truth is made evident. God, who became human to be among us at Christmas, is now walking with us through the depth of human brokenness and suffering of Good Friday, and ultimately to the greatest sign of hope we could imagine: triumph over death in the resurrection at Easter.
3. Finally (for today), I believe that the church's *purpose* in this world is more evident and more urgent right now than perhaps we have felt it in a long time. In this time of "social distancing," when the most loving thing we can do is to keep physical distance from one another and to shelter at home as much as possible, we are learning what it means to have a community

founded on the unconditional and unlimited love of God, where there is always a place for everybody, and where we are surrounded by siblings in Christ who are praying for us, checking in on us, and encouraging us when we most need it. (And, I can't wait for the day when we are able to once again come together!)

During this time, I hope you will keep reaching out to one another. And, please know that I am here for you. If you are discouraged or sick or otherwise in need of prayer or conversation, please reach out to me and set up a time when we can talk by phone (if you don't like technology or don't like to be on video) or by Zoom (if you'd prefer for us to look at one another while we talk and listen). Call me at 832.274.4450 or email at [Vicar@graceinhouston.org](mailto:Vicar@graceinhouston.org) to set this up.

I look forward to worshipping with you through Holy Week and on into Easter. We will have more information coming soon about our plans for the month of May.

Your brother in Christ,

Scott+



# BE the Worshiping Church in **HOLY WEEK & EASTER**

As we approach Holy Week and Easter amidst the global coronavirus pandemic, our community will come together online for appointed liturgies, times of worship and prayer, and gatherings for connection and encouragement..

## *Palm Sunday*

April 5 on YouTube Live

10:00 AM - Liturgies of Palms and Word

5:30 PM - Night of Worship & Compline

## *Maundy Thursday*

April 9 on YouTube Live

6:00 PM - Liturgy  
with the Stripping of the Altar

## *Good Friday*

April 10 on YouTube Live

12:00 PM - Stations of the Cross  
6:00 PM - Liturgy of Good Friday

## *Holy Saturday*

April 11 on YouTube Live

With Chrysostom Homily

12:00 PM - Liturgy

## *Easter Sunday*

April 12 on YouTube Live

10:00 AM - Easter Worship

All services can be accessed on Grace's YouTube Channel:  
[YouTube.com/graceinhouston](https://www.youtube.com/graceinhouston)

 **GRACE**

[GRACEINHOUSTON.ORG](https://www.graceinhouston.org)

# MY ILLNESS

BY HELEN ROSE EBAUGH

As many of you know, this winter I was confined to my home with a recurrent urinary infection that was resistant to antibiotics. This condition led to bladder spasms that were very painful. So, for six weeks, I was homebound. Challenging as this was, in retrospect it was a precious gift. I learned many things about myself and had time to reflect and turn inward. I want to share some of my awakenings in the hope that it might encourage others to thrive during these days of self-quarantine rather than to go through these days as utter pain and suffering.

The time of quiet gave me a chance to review the priorities in my life. I have a tendency to get overcommitted and too busy, even though it is all by choice. As my brother always reminds me, there is only one person responsible for this when one is retired. It brought up clearly what my priorities are and what criteria should guide my commitments.

Very importantly, it taught me that I am really not indispensable. Besides being a "2" on the Enneagram (a caretaker), all my life I have been in circumstances where people have depended on me. Being the oldest of six siblings on a farm in West Texas, I had a lot of responsibility for younger siblings. After I joined the convent, I was in the cohort that came of age during the Second Vatican Council in the Catholic church, a time of questioning old structures and institutions and creating change both in the church and in religious orders. Along with others in my cohort, and always a leader, we started many new customs and ways of living. Then after I left the order and became a professor at the University of Houston, I was put in charge of our undergraduate program and finally chair of the department. At the same time, I became president of several of our international professional organizations.

I married a doctor who was very busy in his practice and, after we had children, I was the primary caretaker. Because of health care issues, his parents also lived with us for awhile. Gradually, my husband developed frontal temporal dementia and ALS (Lou Gerhig's disease) which affects both muscle strength and organizational abilities in the brain. So again, I was challenged to keep the family organized and functioning. I share all of this to say that a major lesson I learned during my confinement was that I really am not indispensable. Out of commission for six weeks, everything continued very smoothly. Being retired and having grown children, I could relax and let others carry on. It was a very freeing experience for me which carried forth once I was well again.

During this time, I also grew closer to God and developed a renewed relationship with the sacred. I remember one day, in particular, when I said to God that I was too sick to pray. I heard very clearly the message, "Don't worry! Words are not necessary. I have you covered in my love." After this, I felt a special wordless connection to the sacred and an ongoing sense of God's presence in my life.

After I was feeling better, I was able to read again and devoured some of the books on my side table. I sat outside in my lovely patio with the birds, squirrels, flowers, sky and sunshine and felt a part of God's wonderful world.

I have determined that I am going to try to thrive during this time of self-quarantine rather than just suffer through it. I have a list of things I want to accomplish:

- Clean out my file cabinet leaving only up to date files
- Update my black book in which I have organized all my business affairs so that the kids one day won't have to struggle with my affairs
- Photograph some of my inherited antiques with descriptions of their history
- Organize my photos and discard many of them
- Get in touch with some of my old friends whom I have abandoned in recent years
- Do a lot of walking outdoors, with family and friends, keeping 6 feet apart
- Read and watch more Netflix and Amazon Prime movies

Hopefully, by the time I accomplish all this we will be back together at Grace to celebrate and enjoy our lives together.

Lovingly, Helen Rose Ebaugh

# PRESIDING BISHOP MICHAEL CURRY'S WORD TO THE CHURCH: ON OUR THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP



Across The Episcopal Church the current Pandemic has given rise to many questions about challenges to our liturgical life. Bishops are being asked, “May we do this or that? Will you permit this or that way of celebrating the Eucharist or delivering Holy Communion to the members of our congregations?” Some years ago in an essay titled “Is There a Christian Sexual Ethic?” Rowan Williams observed that in the then current debates about marriage rites for same sex couples, this “permissible/not permissible” way of conducting the conversation was a dead end. The real (and much more productive) question for a sacramental people, he said, was not simply whether a given practice was “right or wrong,” but rather “How much are we prepared for this or that liturgical action to *mean*?” How much are we prepared for it to signify? Sacraments effect by signifying.

Sacraments are actions that give new meaning to things. The current questions about the way we worship in a time of radical physical distancing invites the question of what we are prepared for a given sacramental encounter to mean. Sacraments are communal actions that depend on “stuff”: bread and wine, water and oil. They depend on gathering and giving thanks, on proclaiming and receiving the stories of salvation, on bathing in water, on eating and drinking together. These are physical and social realities that are not duplicatable in the virtual world. Gazing at a celebration of the Eucharist is one thing; participating in a physical gathering and sharing the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist is another. And, God, of course, can be present in both experiences.

And that is surely the most important thing to remember. From the time of Thomas Cranmer, mainstream Anglicanism has insisted that the Holy Eucharist is to be celebrated in community, with no fewer than two people. In contrast to

some medieval practices, the Prayer Book tradition was deeply concerned with reestablishing the essential connection between the celebration of the Eucharist and the reception of Holy Communion. Over time, of course, many factors contributed to a general decline in the celebration of the Eucharist well into the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and Morning Prayer became the common service of worship on the Lord’s Day. And while it is good and right that the situation has changed dramatically, that the Holy Eucharist has again become the principal act of worship on Sunday across our church, few would suggest that the experience of Morning Prayer somehow limited God’s presence and love to generations of Anglican Christians. There are members of our church today who do not enjoy a regular sustained celebration of the Eucharist for a variety of reasons other than this Pandemic — they are no less members of Christ’s Body because of it.

Practices such as “drive by communion” present public health concerns and further distort the essential link between a communal celebration and the culmination of that celebration in the reception of the Eucharistic Bread and Wine. This is not to say that the presence of the Dying and Rising Christ cannot be received by any of these means. It is to say that from a human perspective, the full meaning of the Eucharist is not obviously signified by them. Our theology is generous in its assurance of Christ’s presence in all our times of need. In a rubric in the service for Ministration to the Sick (p. 457), The Book of Common Prayer clearly expresses the conviction that even if a person is prevented from physically receiving the Sacrament for reasons of extreme illness or disability, the desire for Christ’s presence alone is enough for all the benefits of the Sacrament to be received.

Richard Hooker described the corporate prayer of Christians as having a spiritual significance far greater than the sum of the individual prayers of the individual members of the body. Through corporate prayer, he said, Christians participate in communion with Christ himself, “joined ... to that visible, mystical body which is his Church.” Hooker did not have in mind just the Eucharist, which might have taken place only quarterly or, at best, monthly in his day. He had very much in mind the assembly of faithful Christians gathered for the Daily Office.

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While not exclusively the case, online worship may be better suited to ways of praying represented by the forms of the Daily Office than by the physical and material dimensions required by the Eucharist. And under our present circumstances, in making greater use of the Office there may be an opportunity to recover aspects of our tradition that point to the sacramentality of the scriptures, the efficacy of prayer itself, the holiness of the household as the “domestic church,” and the reassurance that the baptized are already and forever marked as Christ’s own. We are living limbs and members of the Body of Christ, wherever and however we gather. The questions being posed to Bishops around these matters are invitations to a deeper engagement with what we mean by the word “sacrament” and how much we are prepared for the Church itself — with or without our accustomed celebrations of the Eucharist — to signify about the presence of God with us.



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 community.

This month we'll meet April 4 online with Zoom

We would love to have you!

## LOST AND FOUND

JOHN K. GRAHAM, MD, DMIN

Department stores have a “lost and found” department. If we lose an item, we go there to find and identify it as our own. On occasion, the lost item was your three-year-old child and you had to show proof of ownership there, as well. Usually a heartfelt hug and tears is proof enough.

With Coronavirus in the air and on every desk and table, we find ourselves locked at home, soon discovering we have lost more than our freedom. We have lost family and friends, co-workers, and our favorite restaurants, gym, and theatre. Even the doors of our place of worship are closed. We have lost so much that we had taken for granted.

But, what have we found? In the midst of loss, we are invited to explore the “lost and found” department of life. Surprisingly, in our quiet space we may become aware and know this can be the time to recover what was lost long before the virus struck.

The list is long. Things and people. Simple things, really. A game of Chess or Monopoly, putting a puzzle together, looking at albums of photographs from our childhood and school days, our church, synagogue or temple. Flowers in our back yard. A bird feeder, empty. The bike hanging on the garage wall, unused. Members of our family that we hardly know. Our spouse and children.

Most of all, we lost ourselves. Our true Self. Who we truly are. In the haste of living, making money, and climbing the ladder at work, we left behind and lost many of the things that can give us true joy and pleasure.

Thankfully, lost things and lost people can be found. Alone, in our shuttered home, what we have lost can be recovered one by one. We must first identify and claim the lost items. We must tell the clerk that resides in our heart, “Help me recover what I have lost.”

Our first task is recognizing what is lost and then acting to restore it. This may mean going to the closet to bring out the game of Scrabble or putting a puzzle together with our son or daughter. It may mean looking through an album of pictures together with our spouse, or reading a book we read long ago that had a story that brought forth life and joy and tears when we were much younger -- and still alive, still seeking, still believing.

In the lost and found department of life, all this and more is found. Brought back by the memory of a time when simple things were the most important in life. They are recovered in a song, in a dance, or in a glance at the one you love. Yes, even a glance and smile can restore love that was lost and now is found. The lost and found department is not far away. It is found in your soul, where true meaning and joy are always found.

John K. Graham, MD, DMin

# How to Use ONLINE GIVING

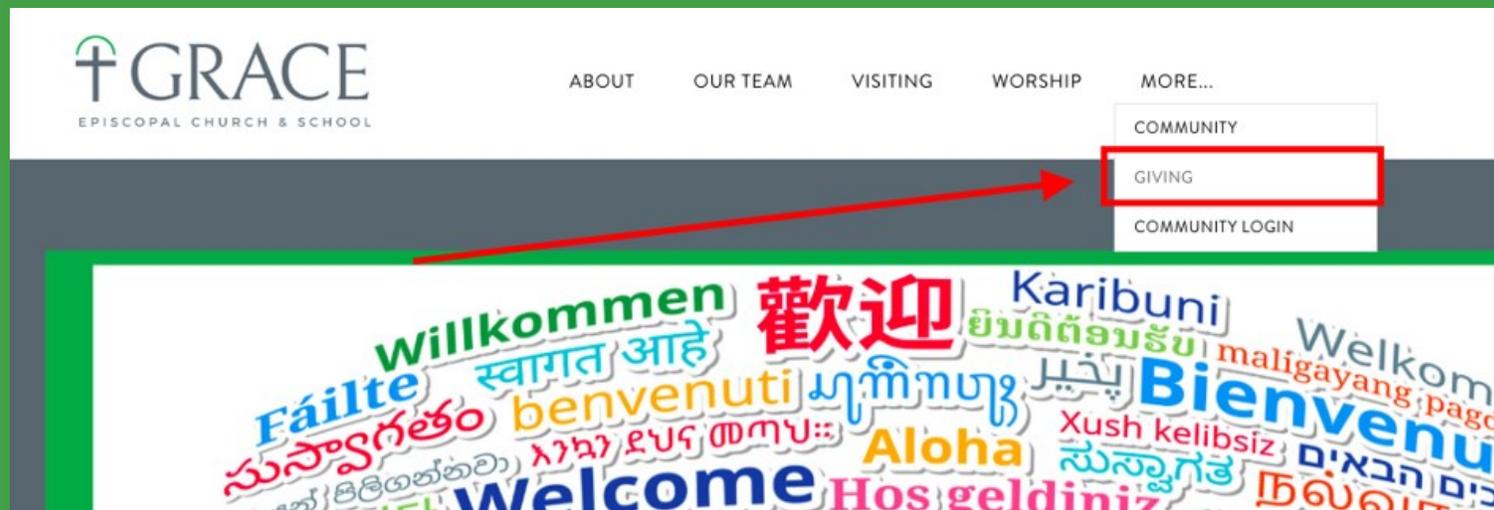
BY COLIN DUNHAM

As your Junior Warden, I can say I love our community and the facilities we have available to us at Grace Episcopal Church. I can also tell you as Junior Warden that Grace relies financially on each of you to maintain our facilities and provide a place of welcome to all who visit or call Grace home. To that end, we now have a way for you to give more efficiently.

If you're anything like me, you may find it easy to forget to bring your pledge or offering with you to church. Or, perhaps you don't carry cash/checkbook, so you can't make your donation for the altar flowers. Whatever the obstacle to your financial giving, we now have a new tool to facilitate ease in giving: Elexio Giving. As you may remember, Elexio Community is the name of our church data management software. An add-on we recently established is Elexio Giving, which allows our community members to give online donations in a secure, easy-to-use way. I recently set-up my online giving to reoccur weekly, saving me the hassle of writing a check every week. Additionally, I know that my pledge will be paid to Grace Episcopal Church in line with the commitment I made during our stewardship campaign. I invite you to join me in growing a culture of generosity which will allow us all to set priorities in line with what we value most.

Whether you want to set up reoccurring payments or would just prefer to pay online every now and then, this efficient system allows you the flexibility to pay anywhere, anytime.

In order to set up your Elexio Giving profile, you will need to go to our website: [graceinhouston.org](http://graceinhouston.org). Once there, click on the "Giving" tab. (You may have to click on the "more" button, first.)



From there you'll be taken to our giving page on our website. You'll see from here that you have a "Give Now" or "Sign In" option. To set up a profile, click on the "Sign In" tab and scroll down to click on the "register for an account" option at the bottom.

## Online Giving

GIVE NOW

[SIGN IN](#)

EMAIL ADDRESS

PASSWORD

[Forgot Password?](#)

SIGN IN

New?

[REGISTER FOR AN ACCOUNT >](#)

NOTE: It is very important when you are registering for your Elexio Giving account, that you use the same email we have on file for you at the church. That way, any donations you make will automatically be updated in your statement you receive. If you are not sure what email we have on file for you, please contact Elizabeth Martin, ([office@graceinhouston.org](mailto:office@graceinhouston.org) or (832) 667-8601) at the church to verify.

After filling out your name, address, email address, and a password, you will click the

**Register for an account**

If this is your first time giving online, provide the information below to create your Elexio Giving account.

FIRST NAME  LAST NAME

ADDRESS

CITY  STATE  ZIP CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Email address used for sign in and receiving confirmation emails

PASSWORD  CONFIRM PASSWORD

“Register” button.

When giving, you have the option from the dropdown box to give to several different funds: pledge, offering, altar flowers, vicar's discretionary fund, community partner fund, and other. You simply select which fund you want to contribute to, the amount, and possibly any notes. You can also give to multiple funds in one session.

### My Donation required

FUND

AMOUNT

FUND

NOTE optional

AMOUNT



FUND

DESIGNATION optional

AMOUNT



+ ADD DONATION

Please select a fund from the drop down menu and enter an amount.

After selecting the funds and amounts, you'll be asked if you want to make the gift recurring. If so, check that box.

You'll need to input the method of payment: either using your credit card number or the account and routing number of your bank account. While either works, using your bank account as a method of payment is far cheaper for Grace than the credit card option.

Finally, you'll be asked if you want to pay a small convenience fee to help cover the cost of the transaction. While Elexio Giving allows Grace to collect money much more efficiently, it is not a free tool. When you pay the convenience fee, you help further ministry opportunities at Grace by keeping us from paying additional fees. After making all your selections, click "Submit!"

At the end of the form is a check box for a Convenience Fee. The Convenience Fee is COMPLETELY OPTIONAL, but checking this box will help defray our cost for processing this transaction by adding it to your donation.

Additionally, to make a recurring donation, please sign in or create an account.

MAKE THIS GIFT RECURRING

**I'd Like To Give By**

Default (Account x: ▾

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ADD 2.5% TO HELP COVER COSTS OF PROCESSING.

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2.5% CONVENIENCE FEE:	\$5.13
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<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$210.13</b>
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**SUBMIT!**

Hopefully, this brief overview of Elexio Giving shows you how easy it is to give to Grace Episcopal Church. If you have any questions or would like to be assisted in setting up your Elexio Giving account, I would be happy to sit with you and assist in the process. Feel free to email me at [juniorwarden@graceinhouston.org](mailto:juniorwarden@graceinhouston.org).

OUR

# CORE VALUES

We share Core Values that inform our priorities for ministry programming, time allotment, and financial investment.

## COMMUNION Common Prayer, Common Life

At the heart of our identity as Episcopalians is the celebration of Holy Communion. It reminds us that we come together not based on intellectual uniformity or shared interests, but, first and foremost, because of the radical hospitality of Christ who calls us to gather around a common table. We share in communion, no matter how we may be different or disagree with one another.

## All are Loved, Accepted, Cared For **COMPASSION**

We desire to be authentic people, not putting on airs or pretense to cover up the truth of who we are. In striving to become a safe environment for all people, we value compassion. We want to welcome everyone – those who are celebrating and full of gladness, and those who are hurting and given to despair. We also desire to care for all in our community, especially those who are aging, infirm, marginalized or oppressed. To be compassionate means that we uphold our baptismal vows to respect the dignity of every human being and to seek and serve Christ in one another.

## COLLABORATION A Place for Everyone

We are going together in community and not going alone. We value the kind of interactions that encourage the best in one another. We want to call out that goodness for the sake of our life together. Collaboration means that we each bring all that we are and know and have, and we offer it for the good of one another. We value the kind of leadership that holds space for all voices to be heard and helps all to contribute their gifts for the blessing and benefit of community and neighbors.

## Beyond Bounds **CREATIVITY**

God is creative, and we are made in God's image as creative beings. As a vital church we are constantly growing, changing, and adapting. We do not want to be stuck in old or established ways of being, knowing, or doing that keep us from moving forward together into God's future. We value creativity, and we desire to be a group of people who embrace imagination, vision, and risk-taking.

## COMMISSION Going Outside, Going Together

God sends us out as ambassadors of Grace into the world. We are not blessed only for ourselves, but that others may be blessed through us. God commissions us from this community to seek out others in relationship. The word commission indicates that we are not sent out alone. We do the work together, in partnership with God and each other.

Grace Episcopal Church is a Christ-centered community of people from diverse walks of life, cultures, languages, religious backgrounds, identities, and faith experiences. Our life together is grounded in the tradition of The Episcopal Church. We say we are "Christ-centered," because at the heart of our life together is our desire to follow the person, example and teachings of Jesus Christ.

## Church Staff

Vicar: The Reverend Scott Painter  
Vicar@graceinhouston.org

Assisting Priest: The Rev. John Graham, MD, DMin  
John.K.Graham@gmail.com

Assisting Priest: The Rev. Alejandro Montes, DMin  
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Sexton: Mario Ruiz  
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Head of School: Edolia James  
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Childcare: Bertha Spadone, OPEN POSITION

### Join us on Social Media:

Facebook /GraceinHouston

Twitter @GEpiscopal

Instagram @grace\_in\_houston

And on the Web at

[graceinhouston.org](http://graceinhouston.org)



## Grace Episcopal Church & School

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