

The Gracevine

December 2019/January 2020

 **GRACE**
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & SCHOOL

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



So many colors, so much light!
WORSHIP WITH US AT CHRISTMAS

THE LONGEST NIGHT

When Christmas Comes in our Darkest Times

12/21 7:00 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE

A Multicultural Mass with Candlelight

12/24 5:00 PM - PRELUDE
5:30 PM - MASS

CHRISTMAS DAY - LABYRINTH

A Casual & Contemplative Midday Eucharist

12/25 @ 11:30 AM

DECEMBER & JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

12/26 Yvonne Carter-Johnson
1/3 CL Johnson
1/5 Mario Ruiz
1/6 Rowan Painter
1/8 Bob Duran
1/12 Morty Johnson
1/19 Christopher Coates
1/27 Michael Farquhar
1/31 Cecelia Johnson

Please tell us if we forgot yours!

DEC & JAN ANNIVERSARIES

12/28 Charlie and Tammy Spruell
1/5 Dorothy Hickman-Joseph

ALTAR FLOWERS

12/1 Daniel & Mitzi Coleman
45th Anniversary
12/8 Taylor
12/15
12/22 The Hannans for Thomas
Hannan's Birthday
12/24 Christmas Poinsettias
12/29 Christmas Poinsettias
1/5 Christmas Poinsettias
1/12
1/19
26th

See Coffee Hosts on page 8

DECEMBER 1
DURING SUNDAY SCHOOL & COFFEE HOUR

ADVENT WREATH-MAKING

ALL CRAFT SUPPLIES PROVIDED
\$10 DONATION SUGGESTED

*Come with your family or friends to
make your own home Advent wreath to
help mark the days til Christmas.*



DAUGHTERS OF THE KING
AND FRIENDS
Invite You To a

Chrismon Decorating Service



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DECEMBER 14, 2018
10:00 AM

A Chrismon tree is an evergreen tree often found in the chancel or nave of a church during Advent and Christmas. The Chrismons are Christmas decorations with Christian symbols on them. They help Christians to remember that Christmas is the celebration of Jesus's birthday. They are often used on Christmas Trees in Churches and Christians homes.

Frances Kipps Spencer at the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia, USA first made them. She also thought of the word, Chrismon, which is a combination of Christ and monogram (meaning symbol). The idea quickly spread to other churches. It is traditional that Christian groups can make their own Chrismons with their favorite symbols.

As with the Christmas tree, the evergreen tree itself, for Christians, "symbolizes the eternal life Jesus Christ provides." However, the Chrismon tree differs from the traditional Christmas tree in that it "is decorated only with clear lights and Chrismons made from white and gold material," the latter two being the liturgical colors of the Christmas season. The Chrismon tree is adorned with Chrismons, "ancient symbols for Christ or some part of Christ's ministry: the crow, descending down, fish, Celtic cross, Jerusalem cross, shepherd's crook, chalice, shell, and others." gical (or Church) color for Christmas and symbolizes that Jesus was pure and perfect. Gold symbolizes His Majesty and Glory.

"Chrismons are traditionally colored white and gold. White is the liturgical (or Church) color for Christmas and symbolizes that Jesus was pure and perfect. Gold symbolizes His majesty and glory."



2020: Celebrating Ten Years of Grace

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

With this special two-month edition of *The Gracevine*, prayers for blessing in a new year work for both December—when Advent begins a new liturgical year for the church—and January, when pretty much the entire world marks the calendar’s turn to a new year. *And a new decade!*

This new year also marks a special milestone in the life of our growing congregation. All throughout 2020, we will celebrate the ten-year anniversary of GRACE. It was in 2010, during the tenure of The Rev. Carol Blaine, that this congregation known at the time as St. George and St. Patrick Episcopal Church took the bold step of claiming a new name to carry us into renewal and a sustainable future here in Southwest Houston – Grace Episcopal Church.

Personally, I can say that since long before I came to serve this community, the knowledge and experience of God’s grace has been a focus of much reflection and meditation in my own devotional life. I have been and continue to be moved by the unconditional, limitless, nurturing and nourishing work of God in our lives – without any prerequisite or precondition placed on us for receiving it. GRACE might be the most God-like thing of all about GOD.

It is a beautiful thing for us to be able to worship, serve, fellowship and grow under the banner of Grace.

I am reminded of these words of St. Paul to the Colossians, as he was writing from a personal experience of vulnerability and inade-

quacy in his ministry: “[God] said to me, ‘My grace is enough for you, because power is made perfect in weakness.’ So I’ll gladly spend my time bragging about my weaknesses so that Christ’s power can rest on me.”

As we begin to reflect over these past ten years as Grace, we’ll be mindful that our



community has known more than its share of low points—times when our size and lack of resources and organizational challenges seemed to indicate there was no way forward. (We’ll be sure to make time and space for the kind of storytelling to remind ourselves of the highs and the lows!) I pray with St. Paul we’ll also testify that through it all God’s grace has been enough, and that God’s power has been shown in our weakest moments.

Stay tuned for more information about how we will be celebrating, all year long, Ten Years of Grace.

With you on the journey,

BRINGING CHRISTMAS BIM FUND DRIVE



Bringing Christmas! ~ BIM Fund Drive by Mitzi Coleman

Help bring Christmas to families who are in need with a gift to this year's fund drive for Braes Interfaith Ministries (BIM), and honor a loved one with your gift. During the month of December, please consider making a special financial contribution to BIM to support its food pantry program that serves families in need in our area. Look for forms in the Sunday bulletin, narthex, or church office to dedicate your gift in thanksgiving for a special loved one in your life. If you write a check, please make it payable to Grace and write "BIM" on the memo line to designate your gift.

As a member congregation of BIM, Grace is committed to supporting BIM's vital work. In its 35th year of service to our community, BIM provides food, clothing, and utility assistance to as many as 19,000 individuals each year. This work is made possible primarily through the financial support of its member congregations.

Let's bring some Christmas love and real help to our neighbors, as we give thanks for our abundant blessings and prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus this Advent season.

DECEMBER
2019

FUNDS TO SUPPORT BRAES INTERFAITH MINISTRIES

Pick up a form to donate
"in honor" or "in memory"
of a loved one.

Annual Meeting

Celebrating Ten Years of Grace and
Prayerfully Planning for the Future

JANUARY 19, 2019
11:30 AM IN PARISH HALL
LUNCH PROVIDED



Grace Christmas Tea
 Saturday, December 7
 at 3:00 PM

Elegant Dining! Teatime Specialties!

Pamper yourself, or give a special Christmas gift to that hard-to-buy-for friend.

SOLD OUT

Volunteers Needed!
 Call Charmian Kendrick at
 (713) 393-7381 for questions.

GRACE2GO NEWS

Dear friends,

This fall, we received a \$1500 grant from Daughters of the King to continue our ministry. That should provide for our needs up until May, 2020. In August, the Pershing Middle School bus stop was moved away from our church campus. This significantly decreased our average numbers from our usual 60 guests each day. We now serve an average of 25 people each Tuesday from 6:30am to 8:00am. For most of our six-and-a-half year ministry, we have served Tuesdays and Thursdays, but due to my need to leave early for class, and our smaller number of volunteers, we are now serving only one day each week. Grace2Go began in April of 2013. We have now served well over 30,000 people (most of whom are repeat guests). And we have prayed with and for all those who have asked—and for some who haven't. We thank all those who have contributed and volunteered. If you would like to share in this ministry, please contact Daniel Coleman at dcoleman@lonestar.edu or 713-302-0362.



SERVING AND LOVING
 OUR NEIGHBORS ON
 TUESDAY AND THURSDAY
 MORNINGS.

Contact
Office@graceinhouston.org
 to learn more and volunteer.



Daniel

Elexio Community
by Colin Dunham, Junior Warden



If you are anything like me, you may find that you misplace your copy of the directory. Or worse, I'll find an old copy that doesn't include a lot of the new folks that have joined our community recently. You may know that we have church management software at Grace Episcopal Church that enables us to use modern technology to access our directory! If you don't, the name of the online church management system is Elexio Community, and this will allow you to view a current directory from either your computer using a web browser or your smartphone using a free app!

If you would like to download the app, go to your app store and download the Elexio Community app. Likewise, to view the directory on your computer, just open your web browser and go to www.graceinhouston.elexiochms.com. If you have never logged in the Elexio system before, email me (juniorwarden@graceinhouston.org), and I will be happy to provide you with your username and password!

Another great feature of Elexio is that by early 2020, we will be able to initiate online giving via this system (replacing Paypal)! Using your computer or your smart phone, you'll be able to set up recurring or one-time payments to Grace. No need to write any more checks or try remember if you've paid your pledge this month, as you can monitor progress easily from your profile. We hope that these technological improvements will help you as you are in community with us here at Grace!

SECOND SATURDAY

MEN'S BREAKFAST

December 14 @ 8:00 am

Tamales Don Pepe
3816 Link Valley



All men are welcome to gather with us for breakfast and mutual encouragement.

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 AM in the Flex Room. We would love to have you!



Reading with Grace Book Group

Thursday
January 16
2 pm
Flex Room

Our selection for January is
"The First Mrs. Rothschild" by
Sara Aharoni.

There will be no meeting in
December.



MUSIC NOTES



On Sunday, December 15, at 5:30 PM, the music team at Grace will lead a service of Advent Lessons and Carols. We will have familiar and newer music from many different cultures, just as we have at every service here. As I have been preparing the music and readings, I have been learning about and reflecting upon the tradition of Lessons and Carols from historical and cultural perspectives.

The Festival of Lessons and Carols is a tradition that began in 1880 in Britain as a way to bring more people to church through the means of song. Bishop Edward White Benson of Truro Cathedral came up with the idea to encourage people to participate in the singing of carols in order to learn and reflect on the promise of the Messiah. Although there are a few long-standing, traditional sets of readings (lessons) and music (carols) that are sung year by year, that is by no means the only way the festival has been celebrated. We do not have to look any further than Grace Episcopal Church for a different take on the tradition.

In 2016, Diane Andrew, Gary Davis, and Rev. Gena Davis led the community of Grace in the celebration of the Festival of Lessons and Carols with a set of readings that emphasized the promise of the Messiah and with music that reflected the community. In addition to the anticipated organ and choir, there were guitars, drums, mandolin, and violin, with music from as early as the 16th century through 2016. There were many people who contributed to put this service together, and it truly was a product of the community at Grace.

Also, while reflecting on what this festival is, I cannot stop myself from thinking about the traditions of having Christmas pageants, concerts with Handel's Messiah, or even the celebration of Las Posadas (the Hispanic series of reflection and celebration of the Holy Family finding a place to stay during the birth of Jesus). Each one of these is about remembering the story of Jesus, the Word incarnate, the light of Wisdom coming into this world, and how we each have heard the promise of salvation. We can reflect in the cold, marble nave with the sound of an organ; we can reflect in the comfort of our own home with the smells of turkey and tamales wafting between candles on an Advent wreath; and, we can reflect in our wooden pews surrounded by the people we worship with every week.

I hope that you will come and celebrate the miracle and promise of Advent with us through song, prayer, and reflection.

Thank you,

Ellis Montes, Music Director

Christmas Reception at Bob & Benn's House

(12006 Braewick Drive, Houston)

December 22, 7-9:00 PM

Join us in our home for refreshments and friendship.

Hot Cider, Hot chocolate, Gingerbread Cookies, Sugar-free Sugar Cookies and Sugar-free Cocoa.

Stewardship Campaign Update



From His fullness we have all received,
Grace upon Grace.
John 1:16

Dear Friends,

First and foremost, thank you, thank you and *thank you again* to all who have pledged to support our Grace Church with your time, talent, and finances. Your pledged financial support is immensely crucial in the preparation of the church budget for next year. A balanced budget will allow us to continue to support and grow our ministries, keep the lights on, and maintain our campus infrastructure.

Our 2020 Stewardship campaign "Grace upon Grace" officially ended on Sunday November 17th. A brief recap of the results of our campaign efforts compared to last year's campaign are as follows:

To Date 11-25-19	2020	2019
# of Pledges Received	44	49
Campaign Goal	\$175K	145K
Pledge Commitments (\$)	169,930	162,368.00
New Pledges	12	?
Increased Pledges	17	?

As you can see, we are short of our 2020 goal by just a little over \$5,000.00. That said, there is still time and I know we can reach our goal if others continue to send in pledge cards before December 31st!

Please help me deliver the good news at our annual meeting in January that once again, God has moved all of us that call Grace our church home, to support his work in Southwest Houston.

In Christ,

Bob Duran
Stewardship Chairman, 2020 Campaign

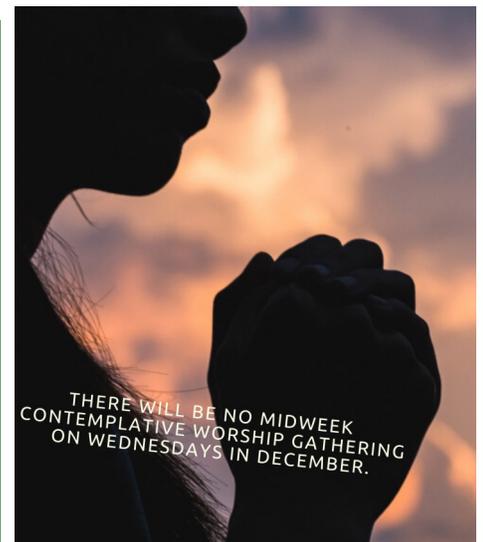
DECEMBER & JANUARY COFFEE HOSTS

December

1st DOK
8th
15th The Kimbroughs
22nd
24th
29th Bob and Benn

January

5th DOK
12th The Kimbroughs
19th ANNUAL MEETING
26th





TIBERIAS
DEAD SEA
JERUSALEM
NAZARETH
BETHLEHEM
SEA OF GALILEE
2020

Save the Dates: November 5-18, 2020
Contact Rev. Scott Painter (vicar@graceinhouston.org) for details

GraceLine Holy Currencies by Deacon Dawn Shepler

“Praise God from who all blessings flow”

Hi friends!

I'm really excited about all that I'm learning as we journey together here at Grace. God is doing amazing things with and through us. Part of my experience is getting to know the concept of Holy Currencies, something many of you are familiar with, and others are just hearing about. The idea comes from Eric Law, an Episcopal priest and founder of the Kaleidoscope Institute. In his model there are six currencies: Gracious Leadership, Relationship, Truth, Wellness, Money, and Time & Place. You'll be hearing more about each of these and how we can live more fully into our Christian identity as we implement and move through these currencies.



Most of us think of currency as money, but that is only one type of currency. If we think of all the blessings that flow from God and through us, there is so much more for us to share, so many more ways for us to grow in community. I am enchanted by the idea of flow as a way of health. Flowing like streams of water, moving gracefully and carrying all of us in the current of life. Blessings flow because they move in and through our lives, like in the Tale of Two Seas.

The Sea of Galilee is alive and full of fish and marine life. The Dead Sea is so named because it holds no life. The difference is that the Sea of Galilee has water flowing in and flowing out again, while the Dead Sea has no such movement. When blessings only flow one way, stagnation occurs. But when we allow the Spirit to move with us and open our lives to the Current, then we can really see our ministry come alive. When Gracious Leadership leads to Relationship, which shows us Truth which then allows us to understand our Wellness so that we can best utilize our Money and Time and Place, we are living out viable, sustainable ministries that are alive and flowing. We'll talk more about these Holy Currencies and how we can learn, grow, and flow through them in the coming months. If you want to read *Holy Currencies*, ask Scott or me and we'll help get you a copy.

I pray you have a blessed Holy Season of Advent and stay in the flow!

Deacon Dawn

DISCOVER YOU

*A retreat to listen to our lives, according to the ancient **Enneagram**.*

January 18, 2020
9 AM - 3 PM
Parish Hall

Lunch Provided
\$20 Donation Suggested

GRACEINHOUSTON.ORG



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Instagram
@grace_in_houston





A WONDERFUL AUTUMN OF WORSHIP,
FELLOWSHIP, and OUTREACH!



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

AlejandroSixtoMontes@gmail.com

Deacon: The Reverend Dawn Shepler

Deacon@graceinhouston.org

Music Director: Ellis Montes

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Children's Minister: Fabian Berrios

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Childcare: Bertha Spadone, OPEN POSITION

Bishop's Committee

Philip Montgomery, Bishop's Warden

BishopsWarden@graceinhouston.org

Colin Dunham, Junior Warden

JuniorWarden@graceinhouston.org

Lisa Bullock

Vyonne Carter-Johnson

Norma Burlingame

Melissa Duran

Robert Burlingame, Clerk

Jim Pauloski, Treasurer

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