

The Gracevine

May, 2020

 **GRACE**
EPISCOPAL CHURCH & SCHOOL

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

**WEAR RED
& JOIN US
ONLINE
FOR
THE FEAST OF
PENTECOST**

With a Reading in Many Languages
& Guest Preacher,
The Very Rev. Dr. Cynthia Kittredge,
Dean & President of
The Seminary of the Southwest, Austin

**Sunday, May 31, 2020
10:00 AM**

[YOUTUBE.COM/GRACEINHOUSTON](https://www.youtube.com/graceinhouston)

CALLING ALL SPEAKERS OF ALL THE LANGUAGES!

This year, we will perform our Annual Reading of the Pentecost Story in the Book of Acts by **RECORDING** and **COMPILING** all the languages!

Contact Elizabeth Martin (Office@graceinhouston.org) to sign up and ask for the reading in your language. We will share directions for recording your language and uploading your recording by **MAY 23**. Join in the fun!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

2nd Norma Burlingame
9th Patricia Powell
11th Mary Lou Del Homme
Dorothy Hickman-Joseph
Marcia Sadberry
13th Scott Painter
15th Tammy Wu
21st Nigel Minion
25th Celina Carter

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

28TH Bob & Melissa Duran

Please tell us if we forgot your birthday or anniversary!

WORSHIP WITH US ONLINE

on



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

Sunday at 10:00 AM

DON'T FORGET TO



TO OUR CHANNEL



“Quarantine”



I was recently reminded by a clergy colleague about the origins of the word *quarantine*. Literally meaning, “the span of forty days,” the word was used in the Middle Ages to

describe a 40-day period of keeping ships from port, as a precaution to prevent latent cases of plague coming on shore.

Of course, the number “40” is familiar to readers of the Bible, too. It is always used to describe a time of exile, wandering, loneliness, and testing. We recall the story of Noah, when the rain falls for forty days and nights, forcing Noah and his family to be at sea until the storms calm and new life begins to spring forth; and, the story of the Israelite sojourn in the wilderness for forty years, between escape from Egyptian captivity and entrance into the Promised Land; and, of course, the forty days and nights after his baptism that Jesus stays alone in the wilderness, tempted and tested, before the start of his public ministry.

In these biblical stories of quarantine, time is spent apart: a time of consecrating self and community to God and God’s purposes in the world.

As we’ve said since first beginning to stay apart as church, amidst the initial rise of the coronavirus pandemic, we are doing *quarantine* out of *love* and not out of fear. Have we been afraid? Of course! It’s a scary thing. But as a Christian community, our commitment to the way of love, embodied in Jesus, is at the heart of who we are and what we do. We made an early decision to stay apart—not for a literal 40 days, but for a quarantine—with the guidance of our Bishop. We did this for love of neigh-

bor, staying at home to limit the spread of a deadly virus to others.

Near the conclusion of the biblical narratives of “40 days,” God’s people always experience some new blessing or sense of God’s presence with them—a rainbow, the report of spies about milk and honey, the appearance of angels to attend to Jesus. But the line isn’t always clear to mark the edge of the desert and the entrance to rest. There is often ambiguity that requires a new level of discernment, collaboration, and faith.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will recognize the landscape becoming more ambiguous around us, between official orders of government to stay at home, and increasing societal movement back toward work and activity in public spaces. This will be frightening to some of us, especially those who are of vulnerable age or physical health. And, it will be a relief to others, especially those who have suffered in their mental health from the extreme isolation and loneliness during these highly anxious times.

Bishop Doyle has asked the leaders of each congregation to begin making a plan unique to the specific context of the local community. He has advised that in our decision-making, relative to the coronavirus pandemic, we will be moving away from fixed universal timelines and toward a phased approach. For now, we remain in “Phase 1,” focused on mitigating viral spread in the local community, and will remain here for at least the month of May. This means that throughout this month, we know that we will continue to worship and connect virtually and make service opportunities available on a very limited basis, only in responses to specific needs in the community. During May, members of our Bishop’s Committee, School Board, and other

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(Quarantine, from p. 2)

congregational leaders will work together to create a plan for moving into "Phase 2." (Phase 2 will involve some gatherings and public worship, limited in size and space; incorporating new distancing and sanitizing procedures, maintaining stay-at-home for vulnerable people groups, continuing online connection and worship opportunities, and approval of our plan by Bishop Monterroso.)

A brief summary of the Bishop's "Phased Plan" in 4 phases is illustrated in the graphic to the right.

In all of this, we will move forward in ways that are inspired by and consistent with our core values of **Communion, Compassion, Collaboration, Creativity, and Commission**. We will stay committed to breaking down walls of division, and making a space in our community for anyone and everyone who desires to be a part. We will not move forward in ways that leave some behind.

Love – not Fear – will be our rule and our way on this journey into the glorious future God has for us.

With you on the way,

Scott+
The Rev. Scott Painter
Vicar

Grace Episcopal Church

Phases & Re-Gathering Milestones

Phase 1: Grace Online

Stay at home & work safe!
Worship, Compline, DOK, Men's Group, etc. are all online.
We are assisting our community through food drives, prayer, and other appropriate, socially distant methods.



Phase 2: Grace Online & Small Gatherings

Milestone: reduction in cases for at least 14 days, hospitals safely treating all patients without crisis standards, widespread testing all symptomatic persons, then we can have a conversation with the bishop about having small gatherings in person.

Phase 3: Grace Online & In Person

We will continue to offer streaming options online for our community members who cannot worship in person with us.

Milestone: negative community spread, mass vaccination, mass therapeutic availability, mass testing, lifting social distancing requirements.



Phase 4: Codify our Learnings

Continue to learn and document our processes as we prepare for the future. Remain flexible and open to ministry opportunities that are new to us.

Grace Episcopal Church's Bishop's Committee is currently reviewing a more thorough and specific plan so that we are well prepared for all the phases.



GIVE BLOOD.ORG

Grace Episcopal Church

**Friday,
May 15**
10:00 am - 2:30 pm
In The Parish Hall

To Register:
Click the link on the Grace website
graceinhouston.org

Or E-mail Scott or Elizabeth
Vicar@graceinhouston.org
Office@graceinhouston.org



Artemio, blood recipient



EAT. DRINK. BRING I.D.

Share your
donation story



@commitforlife | #commitforlife

THE VIEW FROM HERE

”

*Thoughts, Reflections, and
Wisdom from Philip Montgomery,
Bishop's Warden*



I want to take some time to talk about our Vicar Scott Painter and recognize the excellent work he is doing during this pandemic, and to talk about what he needs and how we can help him. However, I also need to acknowledge how radically our church life has changed since the enforcement of isolation and how that affects our priest.

In this difficult time of pandemic and uncertainty, I want to acknowledge that our priests, deacon, and lay leaders are doing a great job of keeping Grace Church functioning.

Every morning I commute to work from my bedroom to my dining room table with a stop in the kitchen to make coffee. This is my new normal. The days run together since I rarely leave my home. Monday through Friday, I make the bedroom to home-office commute and back again. Going to church on Sunday morning is just a laptop away via YouTube. On the surface everything seems to be simpler.

The hustle and bustle of Houston has

slowed down. Days seem to run together despite working from home. Like my dog, I get excited when neighbors pass by the house. However, this simplicity is an illusion when it comes to the operation of our digital world that allows all of us to connect with our work, our loved ones isolated in distant places, and our fellow parishioners at Grace.

The experts in digital media have their share of problems. COVID-19 is responsible for wreaking havoc with the work force of some companies or causing such an increase in internet traffic that established systems broke down. Amazon cannot fill orders in their usual timely manner. Small companies like the bike manufacturer Sixthreezero cannot keep up with emails that jumped from 200 a month to 800 per month causing them to stop accepting orders. Grocery stores have had to implement new online procedures to handle the overwhelming demand for curbside service. In all this digital chaos, our priest manages to bring the message of Christ into our homes, and that is not easy.

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Our vicar is not a geek who prefers isolation and the blue light of computer screens to people. Sure, he knows his way around some sophisticated apps and used technology before the pandemic struck, but he is an extrovert. He loves to meet people, read faces in real time, sing and play music to an audience that nods, claps and does call and response. He loves the one-on-one with his parishioners. Interacting with his church family in close physical proximity feeds his soul. Being a virtual priest, so to speak, is tough for him.

He is working hard to bring Jesus to all of us in our isolation. He conducts services on Sunday and interacts with various groups via Zoom, a touchy form of social interaction at best. With the help of Colin Dunham, our Junior Warden, who is also a blessing to this congregation, Scott is learning a new way of being a priest in this era of social isolation. Frankly, he did not sign up to be a virtual priest.

So, here is my point. Keep in mind that Grace has no full-time digital or media infrastructure. Scott is pretty much it, and it is not easy for him. Colin, who is still working full time, helps when he can, and his help is critical. There are others helping, and bless them all. But these helpers are not enough. When you offer Scott helpful hints about how to improve the service, remember that everything done at Grace is essentially falling on the shoulders of one man. A torrent of "hints" about how to improve things can turn into a pile of straw criticisms, one of which may break the camel's back as the old saying goes. If you can, offer to help. If you cannot help, offer prayers. Be compassionate. We are living Isaiah 43:18-19. "Don't remember the prior things; don't ponder ancient history. Look! I am doing a new thing."

Peace and serenity,

Philip Lee Montgomery—Bishop's Warden



Join Us on Zoom

DOK

Daughters of the King

Saturday, May 2

10:00 am

zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

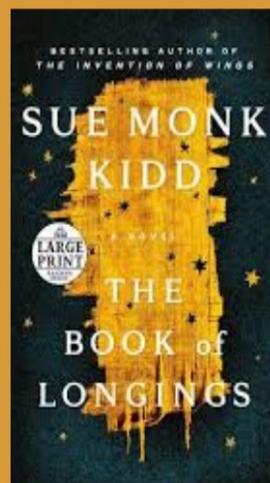
www.zoom.com

Meeting ID: 936 831 6751

Password: Grace

OR Call in

+1 346 248 7799



Tuesday

May 21

2 pm

via Zoom

Zoom.com

Meeting ID 936-831-6751

Password: Grace

Reading with
**Grace Book
Group**

Men of Grace Breakfast

Sat. May 9th @ 10am



zoom

Grab your coffee and breakfast
and join us at 10am on Zoom

www.zoom.com

Meeting ID: 936 831 6751

Password: Grace

OR Call in +1 346 248 7799

Special Note: A Change in Leadership

Dear Grace Community,

We want to share with you that Jim Pauloski has resigned as Treasurer. We thank Jim for the countless ways in which he has helped us improve our reporting and accountability systems in the finances at Grace. Please make a point to share with Jim your thanks and appreciation for all he has done to serve our congregation.

Gratefully, we can also share that Nigel Minion has agreed to step in as Treasurer for the time being. Nigel served for many years as Treasurer for this congregation, and he has continued to serve on the Finance Committee.

These are trying times for our world, city, and local congregation. We give thanks that God continues to inspire leaders to step forward in service to the life, worship and witness of Grace Episcopal Church to meet new challenges.

Philip Montgomery, Bishop's Warden
The Rev. Scott Painter, Vicar



THE FACE OF CHANGE

by Cheryl Kimbrough

The nursery rhyme line “March winds and April showers bring May flowers” comes to mind, when I think of May. We need some blossoms about now. 2020 is turning out to be a momentous start for a new decade: We expected the census and the presidential election, but not the COVID 19 virus.

Change is always a given, but this will be a change like none in recent times. There have been wars, international catastrophes, plagues, natural

disasters. The list goes on. This even eclipses 9/11 in how it effects life as we know it. Social distancing, shelter-in-place and self-quarantine are the new buzz words.

Isolation really brings out desperation. The few times I've ventured out, Houston looks like a ghost town. There are so few cars on the road, it seems like the “Twilight Zone.” The only places with some facsimile in appearance are parking lots outside grocery stores and pharmacies. The emergence of rationing with added security guards and the lines of masked and gloved patrons surrounding stores have me returning home with thoughts of finding a way to have whatever I need delivered. There is discussion on lifting some of the bans now in place. I trust we will choose safety over expediency.

I've discovered my biggest loss is the absence of physical community. I knew Grace was special and this catastrophe shows me how much Grace satisfies my need for physical interaction. We are blessed to have technically savvy leadership to provide digital worship. Our ability to reach out through live streaming gives a whole new meaning to community. Take time to engage with us this month.

Our Gospel readings for May warm the soul. Savor the concluding verses.

John 10:1-10 (4th Sunday in Easter: Jesus the Good Shepherd)

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

John 14:1-14 (5th Sunday in Easter: Jesus the Way to the Father)

¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

John 14:15-21 (6th Sunday in Easter: The Promise of the Holy Spirit)

²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

John 17:1-11 (7th Sunday in Easter: Jesus Prays for His Disciples)

¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

John 20:19-23 (Pentecost or Whitsunday: Jesus Appears to the Disciples)

²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

I look forward to hearing our sermons, homilies and reflections during these last weeks of Easter and Pentecost Sunday. I am proud to be a part of the two little churches that joined together to become a community named Grace. We moved from a feeling of lack to a spirit of abundance. We continue to move our prayer beads from being worry beads to beads of gratitude. Give thanks for the blessings God sends every day. Plan to wear RED the last Sunday in May. Clouds are lifting and flowers are in bloom. We are in community in whatever way, God has us celebrate.

For His Sake,
Cheryl Ladner Kimbrough

AN UPDATE FROM OUR FORMER INTERN



Hello, Grace Community!

It's nuts to think that we are nearing one year since I first stepped onto Grace's campus. Boy, has it been a great and hectic year!

For an update on my life, after leaving Grace I went back to Davidson College to begin my senior year. The Fall was busy between spending time with friends, being in organizational leadership positions, and writing a thesis. Before this past semester was interrupted, I spent time hanging out with friends, playing video games, and enjoying having less schoolwork. Currently, I am home in South Carolina with my mother, girlfriend, and pets, and am finishing up classes. On May 17th I will graduate; never did I think I would be part of my school's first virtual graduation, but unusual times call for unusual measures!

Recently, I have been thinking about my time with Grace as, I am thrilled to share, I have decided to officially begin the Discernment Process! This means over the past several months, I have been having conversations related to my personal sense of "calling." And naturally, a fair amount of these discussions has been spent recounting my wonderful experiences with you all last summer.

What keeps coming to the surface when I talk about Grace is the sense of joyful community and care for one another. I recently picked up a book that describes the triune God as the original, perfect community. Part of our charge as Christians made in the image of this communal God is to value inclusivity, uplift our uniqueness, and discover commonality. And I feel like Grace is one example of earthly community seeking to resemble such beauty.

Last summer, I witnessed you all, again and again, show up for one another in daily lives, support each other in times of struggle, and celebrate one another in moments of achievement. Better yet, you all always look for opportunities to invite others in and love them where they are. When seeing these fruits of the Grace community, I feel as though I see a God of Love who is ever with us, ever affirming us, and ever sustaining us in the journey to build God's Kingdom.

Over these past few weeks of quarantine and COVID-19, I have been so glad to reconnect with many of you through Compline, Holy Week services, and Sunday mornings. Every time I see your faces on the screen, I recall such great memories and miss you all a bit more. Know that you all are always in my prayers, and I look forward to the post-corona world where I can travel to Houston and see all your faces in person.

With Love,

Liam Barr (libarr@ davidson.edu)



BIM CANNED FOOD DRIVE-IN WAS A SUCCESS! THANK YOU, GRACE!



Braes Interfaith Ministries would like to thank all of our supporting congregations for a very successful Virtual Food Drive. The amount of food that has come in is incredible!

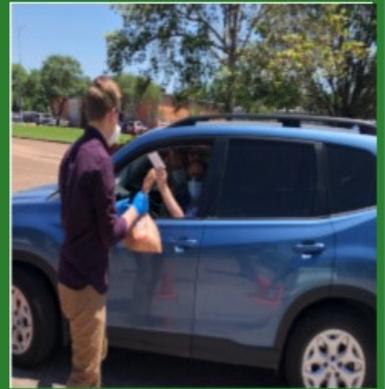
Soups! Black and Pinto Beans! and, Oh, My Goodness...peanut butter and jelly!

And it continues to arrive which is a great thing!

Ordering online has provided a successful avenue to securing and increasing our food inventory. You are keeping us busy, which is what we wanted. The delivery guys are also kept busy and they appreciate the job at this time. So, the Virtual Food Drive has provided many opportunities for many people.

What a blessing!

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!



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
Music@graceinhouston.org

Children's Minister: Liz Luna
GraceChildren@graceinhouston.org

Office Assistant: Elizabeth Martin
Office@graceinhouston.org

Accounting: Robin Talamini
Accounting@graceinhouston.org

Sexton: Mario Ruiz
Sexton@graceinhouston.org

Head of School: Edolia James
Edolia@graceinhouston.org

Childcare: Bertha Spadone, OPEN POSITION

Join us on Social Media:

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And on the Web at
graceinhouston.org



Grace Episcopal Church & School

4040 W. Bellfort
Houston, Texas 77025
832.667.8601 office
281.840.2069 cell
Office@graceinhouston.org