



Dear Friend,

Last December, the idea in my head was that 2021 could be the best year ever. I remember moving through January with hopes of vaccines and normalcy just to slowly wake up to the realization that the pandemic was not done. The approaching Easter season was meant to be a great renewal, both in our lives and in the church, but we spent most of those early months in a continued hibernation. A slow COVID recovery, the search for vaccines, freezing temperatures, and power outages during February's freeze made for a strange Lenten season.

For the first time I have a sense of the first Easter when the Apostles rolled away the stone and found an empty tomb. There was uncertainty; there was the unknown; and, though I do not believe those Apostles lacked for faith, they, like me, likely felt fear. The Easter season found me uncertain and searching. It still wears on me, but over these difficult two years, the People of Grace have been a true comfort. I am so grateful to share communion with all of you, even if we do so in so many diverse ways, in the church, over live streaming, outside in the parking lot, or gathering at the labyrinth.

The People of Grace, for me, have always been the secret power of our Church. Seeing the People of Grace, even if I can't shake your hands during the Peace or see your smiles hidden behind a mask, brings me joy. Come Pentecost and an explosion of red banners and balloons, I was caught up in the excitement and felt the strength of our community! As Grace prepares to become a Parish again, I think of how we grew during this pandemic. Much as those apostles faced the uncertainty of that first Easter only to become moved by the Holy Spirit during the first Pentecost, Grace met a pandemic that halted many traditional efforts, and we doubled down on new opportunities like BIM food collections, blood drives, vaccine clinics, and other acts of faith in the community. Since that day in May, I've felt that we've burned with the power of Pentecost. (If not red, at least perhaps we burn orange like Mario's car!)

I'm so proud that we, as the People of Grace, looking to become the Parish of Grace once again, are in a position to work with God to leave this pandemic a stronger community. The "People of Grace, Parish of Grace" is something I'm proud to support. The world needs more communities full of the Holy Spirit and driving to spread the goodness of God in the world.

As my family makes our pledge commitment to Grace for next year, I invite you to join us in supporting this great Parish. Godly actions may be fueled by the Holy Spirit, but they are made graceful through plentiful resources and great commitment! We give to Grace to support church operations, to ensure our community has a place to come together with God, and to fund the good things that we do.

"Gracious and generous God, Creator and Giver of all that is good, we thank you for our many blessings. You are with us always. In each dark hour, you are here. In each bright hour, you are here. Blessed by your grace, may we show gratitude by sharing what we have been given. By serving our brothers and sisters, we serve you." We are the People of Grace, we are the Parish of Grace.

Please consider joining me by supporting Grace Episcopal Church and School in 2022. Whatever you are able to commit for Grace's future, your pledge will be an important part of God's plan.

In Christ,

Doward Hudlow
Stewardship Chair

