



# The ANGELUS

News of the Life of GRACE CHURCH

## RECTOR'S LETTER Holy Days and Holidays

**AS I WRITE THIS**, we are well into the holiday season. I saw my first Christmas decorations on sale in September, but the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas always seems to be the peak. Families are making their plans, bargains are being snapped up, decorations are being put up, parties are taking place, and emotions are already running high. I personally enjoy most of the trappings of Christmas, but suspect that in many cases the real point is being lost.

Theologically, of course, the point is to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and that is what we do expressly in our worship at Christmas. But the emotional investment we put into this season points to something personal that also tends to get lost. The birth of Jesus is called the Incarnation, in which God comes among us as a fellow human being. The Incarnation sanctifies human life, showing that it is capable of being a vehicle for the holy.

I think it is that underlying holiness of human life that shines through this season. Beneath all the activity and hype, frantic at times, is a perception of life as precious and significant and worthy of celebration. We take the mundane things of life and ornament them in all sorts of ways, to show how precious they are. We decorate our houses and yards and our church. We not only give one another gifts, but wrap them in colorful paper. Our meals turn into feasts. We gather as family and friends, not just to organize daily life, but to celebrate the significance of our lives together. Perhaps these are all ways to

recognize the holiness, mystery, and beauty of our lives.

If that is the case, I think it gives us some direction for our own celebrations. I think the real longing we all feel is to be able to touch something significant and holy. Things like gifts, meals, music, and gatherings are simply the means, and not the end. It is possible to have a perfectly decorated house, with Handel playing in the background, appropriate gifts festively wrapped, the turkey a scrumptious brown, and all the participants feeling exhausted, stressed, uncomfortable and even grumpy.

Sometimes we all end up driven by what are really the trappings, and we mistake them for the point. The real point is that God is with us and within us, and we are blessed. That can be expressed in many ways.

The way we celebrate holidays is bound to change. People move away, children grow up and have their own families, loved and treasured people who were central to our gatherings die, new friends and people come into our lives, and we find that different things move us.

The constant we have through all that change is that Christ continues to be with us. It is his light shining on our everyday lives that makes them luminous and gives us reason to rejoice. However you celebrate Christmas this year, may you be able to touch, if only for a moment, something holy and precious and beautiful. — **Fr. Richard A. Kunz**

## Vestry Nominating Committee Report

The hard-working Vestry of Grace Church meets with the Rector monthly to tackle all the business of this busy and vibrant ministry. It maintains oversight of the many programs going on in the church, sees to it that our beautiful physical plant is maintained properly, and has the fiduciary responsibility to handle our monetary assets faithfully.

The members of the Vestry are elected by the congregation at the annual meeting. To prepare for this election, a Nominating Committee has been formed, consisting of Chairperson Ella Fitzgerald, along with Irene Alves, Bill Biles, and Amy Auld-Owens.

In order to bring ourselves up-to-date according to the ByLaws, we are filling four positions which will be for three years each. Three of these four

positions are currently held by people who may be re-elected for another three-year term, since the by-laws allow Vestry members to serve two consecutive three-year terms. In addition, two people will be elected to two-year terms. If you are interested in serving on the Vestry or would like to nominate someone to serve, please contact any member of the committee.

The Nominating Committee plans to interview all candidates in advance of the election, asking them, among other things, about their vision for Grace Church and what they feel they might be able to contribute. We will also host a forum (date to be determined) during coffee hour so that the congregation may ask questions of the candidates.—

**Members of the Nominating Committee**

## THE PRAYER BOOKS AND HYMNALS REPLACEMENT PROJECT

On Nov 27, 2011, the first Sunday of Advent, Father Kunz asked each attendee at the 8:00 a.m., and 10:00 a.m., services to find a new Prayer Book or Hymnal in their respective pews and to raise it high as he proceeded with a blessing of these new arrivals at Grace Church.


Thanks to the generosity of this congregation, a gift of over 170 new Prayer Books and Hymnals now reside in the pews of Grace Church.

Each given by you “In Memory Of” or “In Thanksgiving For” 1) PERSON(S) YOU HOLD DEAR, 2) GRACE CHURCH’S MISSION, or 3) LIFE’S BLESSINGS.

Your enthusiasm and overwhelming support for this project is truly “The Gift that Lifted the Spirit and Rocked the Soul”.

P.S. There are 10 books remaining for those that signed up and haven’t completed the process or those who would like to do so.

— **Oscar Bunche**



GRACE CHURCH  
of the Episcopal Diocese of New York

The

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**The Angelus**  
Quarterly Newsletter  
of Grace Church  
(914) 949-2874  
[www.gracewhiteplains.org](http://www.gracewhiteplains.org)

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## BEING ON THE VESTRY

If what you love about Grace Church is the weekly message, consider how much more you would enjoy it if you had the opportunity to witness, first hand, God's grace in choosing the messenger; if it's the music that fills you with the spirit, consider how much more you would appreciate it if you understood the sacrifices the musicians and the Church as a whole had to make in order to deliver it; or if what moves you to attend is the beautiful body of parishioners, consider how your adoration for them would grow with the knowledge of the love they put into each aspect of the service from that very first welcome to the beauty of the altar. I have found that being on the Vestry changes the way I experience Grace Church.

Ingrid and I started attending Sunday morning services at Grace more than ten years ago. Of course we thoroughly enjoyed it, in fact we loved it. We loved the weekly message, we loved the music and we loved the diversity of the people (the incense was a bit much but we learned to live with it).

However, the last five years were much different than the first in that over the course of the last five years I have served on the Finance and Search Committees, and the Vestry. Through these experiences I learned that Grace Church was on the brink of disaster. Revenues and expenses were severely out of line and the finance committee initially was handcuffed by the very appropriate view that we had to wait until a Rector was appointed to move forward with significant changes. Although nothing about my experience at the 10 a.m., service had changed, knowing that we and the community as a whole might be in jeopardy of losing this important icon in downtown White Plains history and culture was troubling. That said, understanding more about the needs of the church changed my experience dramatically. No longer was it just a beautiful

building that we spent an hour or two in a week listening to music and greeting random acquaintances. It became a second home for which I, along with many others, were directly responsible. The parishioners became more like family relatives or partners. So when I was given the opportunity to have significant input into the future of this wonderful institution through the process of calling a rector, I grabbed it. What an experience! Could there be anything that would make you feel better about the direction your church is heading than knowing, first hand, where your leader wants to take it.?

Being on the Vestry, serving on these committees, does come with its challenges as we try to balance competing priorities in life. When you invest your time, talents and resources into the church an emotional investment naturally comes with it. It is this intangible that creates an experience that brings you closer to the church in ways you could never have imagined. — **Kevin Richards**

### Key Dates for ADVENT and CHRISTMAS

Sunday Dec. 18 4:00 P.M.  
A Service of Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 4:00 P.M.  
Eucharist with Pageant

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 7:00 P.M.  
La Gracia Misa

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 10:00 P.M.  
Concert & Sung Mass

Christmas Day, Dec. 25 9:00 A.M.  
Eucharist

## A Blessed Gift to Grace: The Family Service

**WHEN WE WERE BLESSED** to have God send us Fr. Rich and Dr. Barbra, I knew that they were the right messengers coming at the right time to the right place. How and why was this known? God is *always* in charge, and that Truth, joined with our Faith, equals a positive.

One recent affirmation of this belief is inclusion of the Family Service as a part of our Sunday schedule. The pre-Thanksgiving service illustrated the forthrightness of children as they spontaneously responded to Fr. Rich's questions about the meaning of giving thanks.

Nothing exceeds children's sincerity and honesty; they recognize deceit, selfishness, and negativity very quickly.

This was evident during the dramatization when the children openly and clearly expressed themselves. I rejoiced, because children rarely have an opportunity to speak out and be active participants during the service. This was a rare and wonderful occasion.

As a retired teacher who still delights in seeing children grow intellectually as well as physically and emotionally, that interchange confirmed my conviction that children need a variety of opportunities to learn how to express their ideas. Parents, as the first teachers, provide the foundation.

The church builds on this and schools continue the process.

The onslaught of technology encroaches on personal interaction and "face to face" dialogue. I fully respect and value technology and recognize it as a permanent fixture in our daily lives. It has evolved as a significant reality for current and future generations. However, there should be a way for the two worlds to coexist. We must find the balance.

Parents, we may be able to do this by planning for a time each day for the technology devices (cellphones, video games, etc...), to be turned off and replaced with thought-challenging discussions and face-to-face acknowledgment of each others' existence. Perhaps family meals could be a time where conversations take place and ideas are exchanged and enjoyed.

Family conversations might lead to improved communication and enhanced interpersonal skills. When family members have an opportunity to unplug their gadgets and spend some relaxed time with each other, there is nothing to lose and much to gain. Please consider giving this a try.

Thank you, Fr. Rich, for resuming the Family Service, which helps us continue communicating with our children. It is our responsibility to keep moving in this positive direction. — **Elsie Adams**

## PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

Each week our church bulletin includes a section inviting us to pray for those dear to us who serve in the armed forces. Certainly God already knows these people and has them in his total care already, but the Bible repeatedly tells us that it is important to communicate with our Holy Father and bring our concerns to him in prayer.

He wants to know what's on our hearts and minds. So prayer is for our own benefit for the purpose of deepening our relationship with God. And I am also sure that those serving in the armed forces appreciate knowing that they are upheld in prayer by those at home.

As we pray for these individuals, it might be good if we know who they are and how they came to be on the list of our church bulletin. Here are a few particulars:

Christopher Vigliotti is Martha-Jane Dunphy's nephew, her sister's son.

These are related to Cecilia Peagler:

Mark Culbert is her nephew

Sgt. Picasso Mieken is her nephew

Ruis Rogelio Parker is her brother

Denny J. Edmondson is Mae Edmondson's grandson

Others on the list are Rick Erickson, Melissa Lawrence, and David Moran.

Perhaps in later issues of the Angelus, we can find out more about these last three, and perhaps even more up-to-date news of all of them. In the meantime, remember to continue upholding all our service men and women in prayer, including those close to our very own hearts.

## Thanksgiving at Grace



This Thanksgiving, the Grace Church Parish Hall welcomed over 150 people for the annual Thanksgiving Dinner run by Grace Church Community Center. The meal was a great success and everyone who participated was moved by the generosity and dedication of the donors and volunteers. Fr. Kunz blessed the meal and several Grace Church parishioners donated their time or provided donations. More than 50 volunteers were on hand to serve up about 300 meals to guests. Another 270 meals were packaged and distributed the homebound; GCCC also provided 150 full turkey dinners with all the fixings to clients throughout Westchester.

The Thanksgiving dinner kicks off the holiday season, meals will also be served on Christmas and New Year's Days. Over the course of the holidays, GCCC anticipates that over 2,000 meals will be provided. This year, the demand for holiday help has increased as more and more families are impacted by the country's economic challenges. GCCC is accepting donations of food, gift cards and other items, for more information, please contact Emily Gallagher at 914-949-3098 x130. Volunteers are also needed for the meal on New Year's Day. Please contact Ken or Allene Berman for more information at 914-937-2130. — **Emily Gallagher**



### Grace Church Book Club: New Season, New Adventures

From one page turner to the next, the book club keeps going strong! This season (our 12<sup>th</sup>) is no exception. Members agree that a major joy of the book club is exploring fascinating books and authors—each one a unique adventure—that we may never have explored individually. These are the selections and meeting dates for the remainder of the season:

**The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration** by Isabel Wilkerson, January 10, 2012.

**Little Bee** by Chris Cleave, February 14, 2012.

**Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock** by David Margolick, March 13, 2012.

**The Paris Wife: A Novel** by Paula McLain, April 10, 2012

**The Search for God at Harvard** by Ari Goldman, May 8, 2012

**Called out of Darkness: A Spiritual Confession** by Anne Rice, June TBD (luncheon)

#### *Summer Selections*

**Loving Frank** by Nancy Horan, Fall 2012

**Steve Jobs** by Walter Isaacson, Fall 2012

Whether or not you've read the book, our meetings are always open. And, don't forget our book club library. Borrowing is easy and convenient—simply sign out and return your selection to the top left bookshelf in the church library. Best of all, the book isn't due back until you're finished. — **Karen Odom**

## Rincón Latino

Con el comienzo del nuevo año litúrgico B el pasado 27 de Noviembre, los cristianos hemos embarcado una vez más en la jornada espiritual del ciclo de Navidad, que forman las tres estaciones de Adviento, Navidad y Epifanía. Durante esta bendita temporada fijamos nuestra atención a través de cada estación en aspectos fundamentales del quehacer cristiano que forman y renuevan nuestro discipulado como ciudadanos del reino de Dios en la tierra. El reino que esperamos “venga a nosotros” y que ya comenzó con la llegada de Jesús; el Mesías nacido de una virgen pobre en un humilde pesebre.

Durante la estación de Adviento que significa “llegada” somos exhortados, iluminados por las sagradas escrituras y guiados por el Espíritu Santo a apartar de nuestra rutina de vida un tiempo sagrado para dedicarlo a profundizar en la oración, la reexaminación de nuestras almas, la confesión, la meditación, reflexión y la contemplación. Estas son las herramientas principales del cuidado de nuestro discipulado que nos capacitan en el trabajo del reino. Esta preparación interior se externaliza no solo en las actividades y servicios de la iglesia sino también en la preparación de nuestros hogares, las reuniones familiares y servicios hogareños tales como las posadas que anticipan la gran fiesta de la Navidad.

Este espíritu de vigilia y preparación nos sirve de preámbulo para celebrar la recepción en nuestras vidas del príncipe de la paz, el hijo de Dios humanizado en el niño Jesús; mientras continuamos la vigilia diaria en la esperanza ardiente del regreso triunfal de Jesucristo nuestro Redentor al final de los tiempos.

El resultado del trabajo de esta espera es el gozo inigualable que experimentamos en la Navidad. La gracia incomparable, el calor y la ternura sin igual y la exquisita humildad que sentimos son los frutos de agradecimiento por el abrazo amoroso de Dios. La Navidad es la celebración de acción de gracias por el regalo más grande que Dios Padre nos ha concedido en el misterio de la encarnación de Emmanuel que significa “Dios con nosotros”. Sabiéndonos y deleitándonos en la certeza que siempre estamos en la compañía de Dios en nuestro caminar, nos disponemos a re-dedicar nuestras vidas, nuestros dones, nuestro tiempo y nuestras fuerzas a la proclamación del reino que se avecina pero que ya se dio en la Epifanía, que quiere decir la manifestación de Dios al mundo. Este bendito ciclo que nos ofrenda nuestra iglesia nos induce a abrir nuestras mentes y nuestros corazones para convertir nuestras almas y nuestras vidas en posadas de la Luz resucitada y resucitadora de Cristo.

Jesús nos invita por medio de esta maravillosa temporada a navegar hacia el fondo de nuestros corazones, a sumergirnos en su sagrada palabra y al compás de la oración y la vigilia, acampar en los desiertos de nuestras almas y en el sagrado silencio interior encontrarnos con el cordero de Dios que nos limpia de nuestros pecados, nos sana, nos redime y nos devuelve fortalecidos a la vida resucitada de Cristo. Saciados de su amor y misericordia manifestemos las buenas nuevas del amor de Dios y anticipemos la venida de su reino en gloria.

Que la Paz de Cristo los acompañe,

Madre Gladys+

# STEWARDSHIP REPORT

The Stewardship Committee, chaired by Charlotte Robertson, has been hard at work putting together its annual stewardship appeal. We have been well taught over the years by our faithful rectors that Christian stewardship is an ongoing response of gratitude to our loving God for His bounty that has blessed our lives.

We show our formal gratitude at this time of year by taking stock of our time, talents, and finances and making a pledge to Grace Church.

Stewardship is a year-round activity, but in order to do the work of the church in a financially responsible way, at this time of year Grace Church must make and follow a yearly budget, looking forward to the new year of 2012. Our vision for this church is large and grand, and is only limited by the pledges our members make and fulfill.

Here are a few comments from church members about their views on Christian stewardship:

## *What Pledging Means to Me*

In pledging, I agree that I am one of the custodians of our church, Grace Episcopal Church. I assume responsibility for its upkeep and affirm that Grace Church is my spiritual home. Whether your rent, pay a mortgage, or maintenance fees, one of these are required for the upkeep of any home. A spiritual home requires the same. Pledgers accept that it is our honor to care for Grace Church and welcome those who come home regularly, while we also prepare a place for those who will come to know Grace Church as home, many of whom we may never meet. In this economy, as a pledger, I feel truly humbled that my church can provide living spaces for so many, meals, spiritual guidance, and that I chose be part of that blessing. — **Natalie Davy**

When I was asked to write a few words about what pledging means to me, I thought deeply about what pledging means to me and why I pledge. God gives freely to us. He is not selfish. I see evidence of His love and blessings all around me, especially at Grace Church.

Grace Church has many wonderful programs that benefit the Grace Church family and the community.

None of these programs can run on their own. They all need support, so I feel a responsibility and duty to give back, in service as well as financial support, so Grace Church can continue to do all the wonderful things that benefit so many.

I feel blessed to be a part of a church as loving and as giving as Grace Church.—**Laura Auld**

**Help Grace Episcopal Church take the “next steps” for 2012. Be sure to pledge!**

# INCREASING SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! There are decorations on houses, music on the radio, advertisements encouraging us to buy, buy, buy! There are cards to send, parties to give or to attend, lists to make, trees to decorate! Do, do, do – until we get so tired that we lose the meaning of what the Christmas season should be all about. Children cannot help but pick up these frenzied “vibes.” It's difficult to step back and try a better way.

For those of us trying to live Christian lives, it is especially important for us to keep in the forefront of our activities the true meaning of Christmas. It's really all about the Christ baby – God's fulfillment of His promise to send a redeemer into the world. The Christmas season has marvelous opportunities for Christian parents to emphasize this true meaning of the holiday. Here are a few ideas:

- Tell the Christmas story over and over. Children love “repeats.”
- You probably have a beautiful crèche somewhere in a prominent spot. Make it a

family event when you set it up. Tell the story as each figure is placed in its spot.

- Also, try to get a child-friendly crèche for your children to play with and act out the Christmas story.
- An Advent wreath in the home can be a special way to mark the Sundays of Advent as the candles are lit and prayers are said.
- Pick a favorite Christmas carol each week and sing it often.
- Remind your children that gift-giving is in honor of God's gift to us. Help them pick out, or make, gifts to give to others.
- Make a point of including your children in plans to give to others in need – a gift card for a child through the Grace Church Community Center, or a donation to a worthy charity.
- When Christmas finally arrives, of course, you will want to attend church on Christmas Eve. Perhaps you will also make a birthday cake or cupcakes for Jesus' birthday. — **Mary Baker**



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