



# Grace Notes

Brief notes for the members, families and friends of Grace Episcopal Church



## Men's Group Annual Pig Roast

My first overnight pig roast vigil was well underway and the doubts had started to creep in. The tail lights of the early evening crew, headed home to sleep in their beds, faded from the church parking lot around 11 pm and I thought: "I'm going to 'sleep' in a tent tonight, 20 yards from Georgia Avenue, with a 250 pound pig lying between two chain-link gates, suspended over a charcoal fire, right outside my tent?"



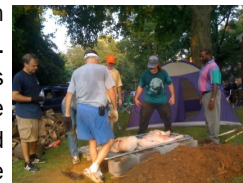
And we've got to flip the pig and baste it with a mop every half hour, all through the night?" And, later: "Is that Virgil or Peter Curtin who's snoring somewhere out there in the darkness? Whose idea was this, anyway?" But the next afternoon, standing contentedly – if not a bit woozy from lack of sleep – amid a crowd of smiling neighbors and friends enjoying some delicious barbecue, the doubts had long since faded away.

Faith, to me, means overcoming doubt by believing in something greater, trusting in the Christian values and community found in a place like Grace Church. The pig roast was John Mahler's idea a couple of years ago, and what a great idea it has turned out to be. **Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>**, is the third annual Grace Church Pig Roast and Community Day. All are invited, all are welcome to participate, and all are encouraged to spread the word in the near-by community. For, without a doubt, this has become one of those wonderful Grace fellowship and outreach opportunities that we want everyone to share.

Here's the story behind the pig roast, and a little window into what goes on behind the scenes. Before coming to Grace, John spent a number of years

at a church in Georgia whose men's group did an annual pig roast. Two years ago, he suggested that Grace's newly-formed Men's Group might want to give it a try. Barbecued pig is a bit more common in the South than it is here in the northern suburbs of the Capitol of the Union. But we do live below the Mason-Dixon Line. And Grace is on Georgia Avenue, after all, down which the Confederate Army marched, southward, 148 years ago on their way to attack Washington. Most of all, we had an eager group of men looking to give something back to the community, and to have some fun in the process. So in August 2010, the first annual Grace Church Pig Roast and Community Day was launched.

John not only provided the vision, he provided the know-how and the do-how that first year. And ever since. Along with his son, Jonathon, who was home for a stint before joining the Marines, John ordered the pig and the supplies, gently supervised all the work, and stayed up all night monitoring it and doing the work when others had nodded off. Then, the next day, he was there to help set up the tables, bring the baked beans, the watermelon, the cole slaw, the lemonade, everything, out from the undercroft. In short, there is a lot of preparation involved in a pig roast, and John has been there for it all.



Other than ordering and procuring the supplies, the preparation begins Friday evening when a rec

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August 2012

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### Special points of interest:

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- Stewardship and Hoodoos

## Save the Date - Sunday, September 9 - Ministry Celebration Sunday



We will be kicking off our new program year on September 9 with our annual **Ministry Celebration Sunday**. This is great day to connect with old friends, meet new ones, and learn about everything happening here at Grace. After both services, our various ministries will have tables with information available. Stop by each table to learn what our ministries do and ways in which you can participate. We want everybody involved! Lunch will be available after the 10:30 service (**please bring a salad or side dish**) and there will be activities for children, including the ever-popular moon bounce.

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**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH****Grace Notes**

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**The New Face of Sunday School**

As most of you know, Grace Episcopal Day School recently consolidated the lower grades and upper grades into one location at the Kensington campus. This is a fantastic step for GEDS in streamlining operations, simplifying the lives of families, and creating a cohesive student body. It also creates a new opportunity for our Sunday School program. As a result of the move, our parish now has more access to the Parish Hall. With that access also comes full responsibility for furnishing, decorating and maintaining our Sunday School rooms. In the past we have enjoyed the wonderful class room furnishings and experiences created by our day school teachers. It's now up to us!

The Vestry has allocated funds for new furniture like desks and chairs, but we need your help as well to prepare for the Sunday School year. The following are ways you can participate:

- ◆ Donate your time to help organize and decorate the classrooms. We will host several "Get Organized" days in August and September.
- ◆ We are also in need of some outdoorsy types who would like to help us weed and tidy the playground. If you have a bit of time, we will arrange for access.
- ◆ Donate gently used teaching toys such as sets of wooden blocks, puzzles, animal figurines, and other toys that can be used for teaching and for play. Books are also excellent materials. Other options include Legos or sturdy play furniture such as kitchens or cradles.
- ◆ Children's pillows, bean bags or cushions for sitting (sit-upons) are needed. Large, clean rugs are also needed.
- ◆ Decoration materials that could be used to create bulletin boards or classroom decorations are an area of great need. Several ideas include kites or banners that could be suspended from the ceilings. We would love to have your ideas as well.
- ◆ Also, as you shop for school supplies, please consider purchasing an extra set of glue sticks, safety scissors, markers, Crayons and other supplies to furnish our children.



In addition to these facility preparations, we, as always, need teachers, greeters and helpers for our upcoming year.

Last but not least, we need your prayers as we prepare our new-found space and as we welcome our children back for the year.



I will be sending a Sign-Up Genius for these Get Organized days next week as well as for the volunteer opportunities listed above. You can reach me by email at [bbreeden@graceepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:bbreeden@graceepiscopalchurch.org) or by phone at (703)973-9443 to volunteer or donate.

*Becky Breedon*

## Men's Group Annual Pig Roast

tangular fire pit, about six feet by three feet, two feet deep, is dug in the lawn outside Grace House. A safe distance from Grace House, because the Fire Department keeps an eye on these things, as we learned last year when they came by in the night and almost shut us down. The first year, an eager group began digging on the other side of the driveway on the north side of Grace House. Turns out the property line is a little ill-defined and we were digging on the property of our near-neighbor behind the hedges. Oops. Not a great way to begin reaching out to the community. But we learned and moved on.



You also need a separate area to build a wood fire, which must constantly be re-supplied, and from which you shovel the coals to place under the pig. You don't want direct flame, but a constant supply of hot charcoal heat. Shoveling charcoal on a hot

August night makes you appreciate what anyone who stoked the fires of a steam engine must have gone through. All night, the fire must be fed and charcoals moved. And every half hour you need two strong people to grab either end of the gates and flip the pig so it doesn't get over done on one side. Every time you flip, you generously baste the pig with a North Carolina-style vinegar-based mixture, slopping it on with a fresh mop bought clean for the occasion.

A lot of hard work, but also a lot of fun. Men of all ages and types, sitting around a fire. Swapping stories about where they grew up. What their kids are doing. A lot of jokes. Some music. A few cold beers. And as the night goes on and the traffic quiets, a real sense that we're in this together, and this is something special. Something Graceful. And last year, thankfully, all that testosterone sloshing around was diluted by the Curtin girls who pitched

a tent with their Dad and helped keep vigil through the long night.

The night of interrupted sleep, fire stoking, and pig flipping and basting, is rewarded in the wee hours when the various cuts of meat start to split and the wonderful aroma of wood-smoked barbecue wafts through the campsite. After the sun rises, tents are struck, tables are set up, and side dishes hauled out to the parking lot;



some go home to catch up on a little sleep before the mid-day dining starts. Then folks start trickling in and the campsite becomes a community picnic area. The Pennyworth Shop sets up some racks outside. The first year we had a shredding truck set up so people could recycle old papers lying around their house. Little kids are running around and neighbors talking, some of whom we've just met.



Then we give thanks. For the animal, like the lamb and oxen of all those Old Testament stories, sacrificed for human nourishment and fellowship. For the many hands that helped prepare the feast. For the community that we share, which has

joined us to help us celebrate. And for the God whose presence is in all of this. Fellowship and outreach. A casual, laid-back way to celebrate the end of the summer and look forward to the church year ahead of us. Grace at its best. Come join us August 18<sup>th</sup>, or the night before.

*Paul Brown*

### Pennyworth gives Thanks and Helps Teens with Service Hours and Experience in Job Market

Pennyworth held their annual luncheon on Monday June 11th in the undercroft. The main purpose of the luncheon is to thank our workers. About 50 of our wonderful workers were able to attend the event. We really appreciate all who helped this year especially since we had such a huge job of rehabbing our new space. Many people from Grace Church and the Silver Spring community came to our rescue by painting, laying carpeting and moving lots of merchandise.

Stop by the new shop at **949 Bonifant** just south of Wayne Ave and just off Georgia Ave. We are open 10 to 4PM Tues through Saturday. There are lots of games and toys for bored children. Great prices on clothes for everyone.



If your teenager 16 or older needs service hours and or wants great retail experience, email or call shop manager, Marilyn Seitz. If your teen is under 16 then we would appreciate if you could work with them.

mmseitz1@gmail.com -- 301-661-8028

## Stewardship and Hoodoos

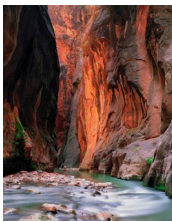
For the past several years, Stewardship at Grace Church has included a focus on environmental stewardship. The basic theology of which is the necessity of remembering that every element of creation is a gift from God as well as a revelation of God. Part of being a good steward is understanding that how we relate to the world also reflects on our relationship with God. As we increase our understanding, it will transform our awareness of the responsibility to act in ways that protect, heal, and honor the integrity of God's creation. My personal understanding of the sanctity of the world entrusted to us by God was greatly enhanced this summer during a vacation to the southwestern part of the United States.



Angel's Landing,  
Zion National Park

During a wonderful trip to Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, I became acutely aware of what Celtic spirituality refers to as "thin places." According to Celtic Christianity, a thin place is any place where the wall between this material world and the realm of the divine becomes so thin that we can experience a glimpse or taste of the glory, majesty, and love of God. Thin places may also be experiences, or music, or writings, or silence, or people. A thin place is a place where connection to that world seems effortless, and ephemeral signs of its existence are almost palpable.

As we hiked, explored, and simply relaxed in each of these marvelous places, I became more attuned to the "thinness" of each place. It was impossible to not sense an "other worldliness" when in these places of extreme beauty and majesty. Just the sheer quietness and solitude of each place was awe inspiring. Absent the noise and lights and yes, television, it was possible to alter one's focus and simply take in the grandeur of one's surroundings and to sense that there was much less of a boundary between the physical and the spiritual in such places. It felt thin, as if the connection to the "other side" was effortless. It was as if the manifestation of God's presence was everywhere.



The Narrows  
Zion National Park

It is literally impossible to fully describe the visual impact of seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. When President Theodore Roosevelt visited the site, he said, "*The Grand Canyon fills me with awe. It is beyond comparison—beyond description; absolutely unparalleled throughout the wide world... Let this great wonder of nature remain as it now is. Do nothing to mar its grandeur, sublimity and loveliness. You cannot improve on it. But what you can do is to keep it for your children, your children's children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see.*" Thanks to early environmental stewards like Roosevelt, we can still visit places like the Grand Canyon today.



North Rim, Grand Canyon

Definitely a thin place.

The immenseness alone of the Grand Canyon easily can make one think about the vastness of God's creation and our small place within it. With ever changing colors, shadows, and landscapes, it feels as if one could simply reach out and touch God.

Thin places are also believed to be marked by human spirits that have gone before, felt the thinness and been changed by it. Thin places not only transcend the senses, but transcend the boundaries of time and space. While you're there, time seems to stand still, and there is a communion with the human spirits that have walked there before and are yet to walk. Thin places are all about connection - with God, and with all who have lived, are living and will live in generations to come.

During a raft trip through the Glen Canyon, our group had the chance to hike a bit from the riverbank to place of ancient petroglyphs; images etched into the surrounding rock. Thought to be thousands of years old, the petroglyphs are symbols that help to tell a story and often depict migrations of ancestors and thoughts of the artist among many mysteries. Standing there, in the intense sunlight and heat of the canyon, it was impossible to not be moved as I pondered the symbols left by others, thousands of years ago, in this sacred and thin place.



Petroglyphs, Glen Canyon



Bryce Canyon Amphitheater

Another example of thin places marked heavily with the sense of those who have gone before us was found in Bryce Canyon National Park. Bryce is known for its unique geology and consists of a series of horseshoe-shaped amphitheaters. The erosional force of frost-wedging and the dissolving power of rainwater have shaped the colorful limestone rock into bizarre shapes, including slot canyons, windows, fins, and spires called "hoodoos". Hoodoos are tall skinny spires of rock that protrude from the bottom of arid basins and "broken" lands. According to the legends of the ancient Paiute Indian dwellers, hoodoos are "the animal legend people who lived in Bryce Canyon long ago, and severely displeased the coyote. Angered, he turned all the people to rock."



Hoodoos, Bryce Canyon

Our trip was an incredible opportunity to experience and touch some very beautiful thin places; places where the presence of the holy and divine could be experienced through the beauty of nature and God's creation.

Linda Caleb

# Grace Youth Travels

Five upper school members of the Grace Youth Group and their chaperones just returned from a week at Passport Mission Camp in Danville, VA. There, we joined another 240 youth in an ecumenical week (July 16-21) of daily bible study, community work, worship and fun.





## Fiscal Officer Report

From a financial perspective, July had a lot of activity, as expected, in addition to one surprise.

- First, there were five (5) Sundays during July. Pledge income through the first seven (7) months of 2012 totaled \$284,035.14, including a total of \$35,142.84 received during July. Pledge income for the first seven (7) months of 2012 exceeded the comparable total for the first seven (7) months of 2011 by \$34,743.32 (14%) and fell only 1% below the budget estimate for the seven-month period, \$286,595.00, which is based on the pledge total for 2012. We continue to appreciate everyone's efforts to keep their pledge payments current during the summer.
- During July, we incur three (3) costs which are not typically incurred on a monthly basis – we incur a quarterly pension fund assessment; we incur a semi-annual 'third pay date'; and we incur our annual insurance premium costs. Our annual bi-weekly payroll cost is roughly \$9,000.00; our quarterly pension fund assessment is roughly \$10,000.00; and our annual insurance premium costs total approximately \$24,000.00. Our expenses for the month of July totaled \$98,210.36, including the special costs above in the combined total of \$44,363.80.
- The surprise during July involved the costs involved in cleaning up the impact of the storm which hit our area at the end of June. Costs for tree removal services and clean-up totaled \$6,500.00. While we got a break in costs generally incurred for snow-removal costs because of the mild winter, the combination of these tree removal services and the snow removal costs that we did incur exceeded our normal snow removal costs on an annual basis.

In summary, total income for the first seven (7) months of 2012 equaled \$389,951.28, including a total of \$41,608.22 in income received during July and a total of \$17,200.00 transferred from the church endowment funds dedicated for the annual contribution to the operating budget (generally made during July in conjunction with the insurance premium payment and the impact of the quarterly pension fund contribution).

Expenses during the first seven (7) months of 2012 totaled \$414,093.10, including a total of \$98,210.36 in expenses incurred during July. Reflecting the impact of the unusual expenses identified above, a deficit of <\$24,141.82> was seen in operating budget at the end of July. While this deficit was higher than the deficit of <\$18,856.36> seen in the operating budget at the end of July 2011, it was \$6,258.18 better than the deficit of <\$30,400.00> which had been projected to be seen in the operating budget at the end of July 2012 based on the balanced budget approved by the Vestry for this year.

This positive difference again continues to reflect the trends that have been seen consistently in Grace – the church is dependent upon pledge income and, if pledge income targets are met, the church can end the calendar year with a balanced budget. Despite the impact of the one-time tree-removal costs following the recent storm, expenditures during the first seven (7) months of 2012 fell slightly below the budget estimate of \$415,525.00.

In summary, we find ourselves at the end of July where Grace generally finds itself at the end of July – coming out of the summer (where pledge income payments take a small drop) with a deficit that will require the remaining five (5) months of the year to overcome. Eliminating this deficit requires a combination of the following – bringing pledge payments back into balance with pledges made, with the receipts from the Holiday Fair (is it too early to start thinking about the end of the year!) and with the Christmas offering (coming already!).

I hope that everyone is enjoying their summer and getting ready for an exciting upcoming program year.

Gib Baily  
Church Fiscal Officer

### FOOD COUPONS FOR SALE BY THE OUTREACH MINISTRY

Our Homeless Ministry is financially supported in large part by proceeds from sales of grocery store certificates (Sniders, Giant, Shoppers Food Warehouse). How does it work? Grace Church purchases food certificates from the three local grocery stores. Parishioners buy the food certificates and use them just like cash at the local stores for grocery shopping. For every \$1500.00 sold by the Outreach Commission, our Homeless Ministry nets \$75.00. The Homeless Ministry operates on roughly \$300.00 per month. Can you help? Certificates can be purchased (check or cash) every Sunday following the 10:30 service, or you can call Gib Baily in the church office on Mondays or Tuesdays and purchase them directly from him. For more information, contact John Mahler, 240-505-9610 or mahlerjo@gmail.com.

