



# Grace Notes

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



## The Grace Homeless Ministry – Join Us!

*Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me (Matthew 25:40)*



If you've been in the undercroft the first Saturday of the month, you may have enjoyed the special aroma of a huge pot of homemade vegetable soup, and noticed

a group of parishioners making long rows of sandwiches. Grace Church has a long-standing tradition of preparing a wholesome lunch, then loading the van with food and clothing to make the rounds to serve our brothers and sisters on the streets. For many of us, this is the most important role Grace can play in our community – serving those in need who are all around us, every day. The sustenance and clothing are much appreciated, but mostly, our friends who live on the street appreciate someone who will look at them in the eye, speak with them, making a human connection. Also, being a member of the Homeless Ministry team is a wonderful way to bond with all kinds of folks in the Grace family – while you enjoy sampling the delicious soup and sandwiches (all volunteers get to eat!).

The Grace Homeless Ministry can be supported in many ways and by parishioners of all ages ;

- ♦ The “donuts for socks” program allows children to contribute to the ultimate comfort for a homeless person – a soft, clean pair of socks for their weary feet.
- ♦ We invite the Grace youth to make a commitment to serve as a group on one of the three teams and join us once every three months – it's not only fun, but you also can receive those Student Service Learning (SSL) hours you need for graduation!
- ♦ Younger parishioners (and their parents) coming to Saturday music lessons can help make sandwiches, sort clothing, and other tasks.
- ♦ The Grace van makes one stop in Silver at Shepherd's Table, less than a mile from Grace Church. Some parishioners may wish to join the

group for just that one stop, to serve our neighbors. After that stop, the van heads downtown, hopefully with about six volunteers to serve and to interact with our friends on the street in Washington, D.C.

By joining one of our **teams (Red, Blue, Green)** you can commit to joining us four times a year, on a fixed date.

♦ You may want to be a shopper with one of the teams, which gives you the flexibility so shop at a time that is convenient with you (Thursday evening through Saturday morning).

♦ Alternatively, you may wish to spend an hour making soup or sandwiches, or be part of the team that heads downtown.



In the coming weeks, a few of us from the Grace Homeless Ministry will be in the undercroft after church to address any questions you may have such that you and your family can

consider how you might contribute to this rewarding outreach activity.

Every member of Grace Church likely has a different reason why they are engaged in our Church family – worship, Sunday School or Youth Group, music, fellowship, and much more. For some of us, Grace has a key role to play in outreach to our broader community. The Grace Church Outreach Community recently held a retreat to review our programs and develop our vision for activities over the next few years, particularly in light of the evolving demographics of our growing congregation. We are eager to share with you some of our ideas for taking our outreach work to its next phase.

For further information, please see us in the undercroft on **Sunday July 8<sup>th</sup>**, or kindly contact **Erik Olson** (erikdavidolson@gmail.com), **John Mahler** (mahlerjo@gmail.com) or **Rebecca Lent** (Rebecca.Lent@gmail.com).

July 2012

### Inside this issue:

Save the Date Bishop Mariann's Blog	2
Remembering 25 Years in Choir	3
Sunday School Thank You	4
Working with the Youth Group	5
GEDS News Bible Study	6
Fiscal Report	7
One More Note - from the Rector	8

### Special points of interest:

- Remembering 25 Years in Choir
- Working with the Youth Group
- One More Note from Rev. Andrew Walter

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**Grace Notes**

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**Save the Date!**

Be sure to mark your calendar for the two upcoming events at Grace Church.



**Saturday, August 18 - Third Annual Pig Roast**



**Sunday, September 9 - Ministry Celebration Sunday &  
 Start of New Program Year**

**Bishop Mariann's Blog**

Have you had a chance to follow Bishop Mariann's blog? Our new Bishop is described as "A passionate believer in the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church, . . . committed to the revitalization and growth of congregations and core ministries of the diocese, building their capacity to serve Christ's reconciling mission in the world. Her priority is to develop and strengthen collaborative models of ministry that can meet the needs of a changing world with flexibility, endurance, and grounded faith."



To learn more about Bishop Mariann and her vision for our diocese, go to:

[http://www.edow.org/bishops\\_blog/](http://www.edow.org/bishops_blog/)

**Summer Garden**

During the summer months, children are invited to gather in the Undercroft during the 10:30 a.m. service for Summer Garden: a relaxed time together of song, brief Scripture lesson, games, crafts and small snack during the first half of the service. Children will rejoin their families at the exchange of the Peace. Two adult volunteers, often assisted by youth helpers, will be on hand to oversee and coordinate activities for children. The Grace Crib Nursery will continue to provide childcare for infants through 3-year-olds.

Adults and youth interested in volunteering for Summer Garden are encouraged to contact Rev. Lael ([lsorensen@graceepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:lsorensen@graceepiscopalchurch.org) or 301-585-3515).



*Cont. from page 3*

text memorable, set it in verse; to make the verse unforgettable, set it to music. Some anthems will run through our heads for years. Or a piece pulled out of the library will look unfamiliar but is somehow easy to sing, and we suddenly remember learning it from two choirmasters back. Music is one of the surest ways of perpetuating the words of a faith tradition.

The choir experience at Grace was what drew me into the congregation more fully after attending services only casually for several years. What I've heard from, and seen in, our brothers and sisters in the church has advanced my understanding of faith in action, and moved me along my spiritual journey.

I'm grateful for the guidance from all of our ministers of music, and for the support of our congregation. My wife, Joyce, who has served as an organist, handbell player, and chorister at several churches, has always been encouraging. The choristers of Grace all hope and believe that our music is pleasing to the Lord, and a means of sharing the Holy Spirit.

## An Appreciation of 25 Years of Grace's Music Programs

On Sunday, June 10, David Kitzmiller was recognized for 25 years of service in the Adult Choir. David kindly shares the following about his experiences during that time.



Music has had great influence on my life. My parents have always been classical music enthusiasts, and some of my earliest memories are of listening to the program themes broadcast on FM stations from Baltimore, when Baltimore had three classical stations. Within my experience as a musician, I think there were two crucial moments. The first came on

the morning during the summer after third grade when a half-size cello was placed in my hands. The other was another summer morning, sometime in August 1987, when I approached Mr. David Wilson and asked if somebody like me, with much instrumental experience but no vocal background, might fit into the choir at Grace.

I did find a place rather quickly, whether by grand plan, or by being badly needed even as a novice - for most of that first year, I was one of only two tenors in the ensemble. It took me some years to develop a feel for where my own notes were, and how to get a musical effect beyond hitting the right pitches at the right time. But I learned much from our choirmasters, and I absorbed a great deal by simply by being with the other singers. Since before I arrived, we've been fortunate to have some strong, experienced singers in each section of the choir, who can lead effectively and teach by example.

Performances outside of regular church services expanded the range of works we learned, from concert settings of masses to musical theater. Through the Music at Grace program, we came into contact with other singers, instrumentalists, and conductors from outside the parish. From theatrical productions, I got an appreciation of the difficulties of stagecraft, even if I've never had to master it myself. The most memorable productions were performances of the John Rutter *Requiem* mass, and productions of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Britten's *Noyes Fludde*, with their large choruses and marvelously poetic lyrics.

There was the challenge of preparing for weekly performance through ten months of the year. This was a contrast to my experience as a high school and college orchestra musician, which involved maybe five carefully rehearsed concerts each season. The result for the choir was almost always a good outcome, though sometimes chance or oversights in rehearsals led to near disaster. Once or twice, I found myself facing the congregation and not knowing just where in the score we were to start. On a memorable Palm Sunday, due to some miscommunication, the adult and youth choirs began singing two different anthems simultaneously. There were sometimes mishaps with large musical instruments, like the time a stack of drumsticks fell onto the top of a kettle-

drum at what was supposed to be a quiet moment in the service.

But through most of these nervous situations, our choirs have risen to major challenges and difficult music with considerable grace, and can perform on Sunday morning just as well as the choirmaster assures us we can, even when it seemed impossible at 9:35 the previous Thursday evening.

That touching faith and optimism are essential for a choirmaster. During my time in the choir, the church rectors and search committees have chosen a series of music ministers each of whom was an astute clinician and excellent keyboardist. Mr. Wilson, Neil Weston, Richard Thibadeaux, Paul Dewhurst, and Danny Cattalanotto, are all highly skilled musicians who know how to advance singers who are willing to learn.

And since the 1980's our church has had a wonderful source for congregational singing. The *Hymnal 1982*, and later the hymnal *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, were compiled by musicians with considerable vision. They had an appreciation of all the good music from the last 800 years, and of all the moving texts since the first centuries of the church.

I found that choir practice serves as Bible study and a church history course. While I knew something about most of the composers we performed, I knew little about the sources of the texts we sang, which appear as cryptic phrases like *Missa Orbis Factor* at the bottom of the hymnal entries. Many are from the Bible itself, others from historic prayers dating to the first millennium, while others are poetry set down at any time between 1500 years ago and the last decade. They included William Billings, a tanner in colonial Boston; John of Damascus, at one time a civil servant to the Muslim administration of medieval Syria; and Michael Praetorius, who edited a famous collection of dance music along with his vast output of works for the Lutheran Church in renaissance Germany. I believe that keeping in mind the authors of the music and text is important in performing a choral work; we're giving those artists a voice in another place or time.

Those of us who started performing music as children and carry on into adulthood understand the pull of the experience. One has a need to hear and feel harmony from within the group creating it; it's a physical sensation that goes beyond the audible part. It's an almost overwhelming sensation in the massed choral groups I've been privileged to join at the National Cathedral and the annual convention of the Church of the Brethren, but just as fulfilling in the smallest group of four voices.

One develops a full appreciation for the adage that "singing is like praying twice," as understood by people of all religions for thousands of years. It might be stated as an axiom: To make a

Cont. on page 2



## Sunday School Thank You



On behalf of the children and parents of Grace, I want to extend thanks to all of the beloved teachers and volunteers who made Sunday School an exciting and friendly learning environment for the youngest members of our faith community. Without

the gifts of your time and talents, we would miss the amazing opportunity to unlock the hearts and vivid imaginations of our future. You inspired their minds and tended their hearts with creativity and compassion. Each Sunday you arrived with a smile and willing hands. We learned from you and with you. There was not a Sunday this year that we did not see God's handiwork in our midst as you all shared your passion for your faith with our children.

There are not enough column inches in Grace Notes to list all of those who stepped up week after week even when not slated for duties. You came out of the woodwork as needs arose and stayed until the job was done. Thank you.

To all of those considering Sunday School volunteerism, I personally want you to know that I received much more than I could ever give from this year of service. The gift of watching children blossom and seeing our community rise up in support is invaluable.

First, I must thank **Laura Collard** who was my partner in coordinating. Thank you for your steadiness and leadership, and also for your elbow grease. You were quick to recognize areas of need and step into the gap. Thank you.

Thanks also to **Lael** for offering unparalleled support and placing such importance on this ministry. Even through personally difficult times, you made sure we were supported.



**Karen**, thank you for bringing your smile, your light and your talent to our music.

Thanks you our teachers:

**PreK\_** - Stacy, Martha, Caroline and Samantha, these smallest of our souls need a little extra love and support. Thank you for giving this unselfishly.



**Kindergarten** - Beth, Lisa, Susan, thank you for your amazing creativity. Ms. Beth, you are unrivaled in great ideas. Thank you all for your patience and energy.

**First Grade** - Leslie, Kecia, and Aimee you have such a special and diverse group. They are coming into their own and your patience and consistency made this year successful.

**Second Grade** - Victoria, Greg, Brett, you all built such a fantastic class as we split out second grade during the year. Each Sunday you brought structure to your lessons while offering these kids a way to stretch their wings.



**Third/Fourth Grades** - Jayne, Rebecca, Carrie and Brendan, thank you for all of your preparation and creativity. You tapped the sensitivities, the energy and creativity of this class.

**Fifth/Sixth Grades** - Tony and Cafiner, thank you for inspiring these pre-teens to learn their faith and ask the critical questions for their next phase of development.

**Super Greeters** - Laura, Marnie, Aileen, Susan, Pete, Rachel, Matt, and everyone else, thank you for your warm smiles, your hard work in getting set up and your willingness to stick around and help us transition.



**Choir Herder** - John, thank you for thinking to do this and for making your way over to us each Sunday. This was such an important role.

**Goldfish Dippers** - Lola, Carol, Rosanna, Wynette, and all of you other Goldfish dippers, our children have come to rely on this snack to get them through the rest of their morning. Thank you for being flexible and quick with the cups.

**Transition Team** - Lynn, Mike, Chris, Matt, Kaia, Jenand all of the parents more than willing to help, thank you for learning the mystery of the tables and for helping us move to our next stage of the morning.

**Youth Volunteers** - Imani, Eva, Bronwyn, Ogden, VJ, Nick, Marie, and Katherine, thank you for reaching out to the children who aspire toward the gifts they see in each of you. Your presence is a balm and inspiration.

Becky Breedon



## Reflections on Working with Grace Youth

Ever wonder what it's like to slay a frightening giant? The youth here at Grace do. I know. I've seen it first-hand.

Over the course of the past two years I have had the privilege of working with the Grace Church Youth Group as one of the regular adult mentors. I call it a privilege because it is rare thing to be able to view young people, still in the midst of finding their individual life's path, through a lens in which one can hear their thoughts and witness their discovery of the routes on which they'll continue their journeys of self-discovery. Most of us simply just don't take the time. But, speaking from experience, it is time well worth making.



When we make the time to pay attention to our youth we can reflect on the fact that the even the youngest member of our parish has a role to play and brings with him or her individual gifts. These gifts only increase in number and become more apparent as the child grows. Among the middle- and high-school youth here at Grace, these gifts are enormous. They are not "just kids," but rather play an integral role in the life of our community. Key to their roles is their abiding faith in themselves and their abilities. This is a faith that flows from their faith in God, even if it is not verbalized as such. I do not believe these things are mutually exclusive. Setting aside self-doubt and finding inner confidence are key to our youth's ability to strive and to succeed. And these are the giants that teenagers must slay daily.

The Old Testament lesson on a recent Sunday, I believe, is a poignant reminder of what our young people can do and do every time they cast aside their doubts and insecurities. The young David, looked upon as "just a kid," someone unworthy to go up against the Philistine extreme fighter, smack down champion Goliath, steps up to the task when no one else will. Though others express their doubts about his ability to take this guy out – not much being at stake, just the very existence of Israel – David verbalizes his confidence. He does so in front of Goliath, expressing his fervent belief that God has instilled in him the ability to succeed.



He is not ashamed to acknowledge his fear and his initial reluctance to save from the jaws of wild vicious beasts lost lambs from the flocks over which he watched. But he stepped up and did so, as no one else was there to do it. Armed with

and protected by not much more than this confidence – just a sling-shot – David took aim and strategically flung a high-velocity projectile in the form of a rock squarely into the forehead of the bemused giant, striking him down. The fears of Israel, as well as the doubts of its people, are put to rest, and David, of course, goes on to become a highly successful poet and

songwriter, as well as a leader of a great nation.

So, whether it involves their serving as acolytes, volunteering with the various ministries by lending a hand when needed or simply being supportive of one another, the young people of Grace serve to inspire not unlike the young David. They are without doubt a gift to us. With the increasing number of youth in our parish, it would help them immeasurably if we were to acknowledge these efforts much more than we currently do. While those of us working in children's ministries certainly could tell you where we could use the help, your direct and increased involvement in ministries of this parish will assist efforts in supporting the children's programs.

At the conclusion of summer and as the new program year begins, you will have an opportunity, on Ministry Sunday, to select where you want to help. In October, upon the launch of the Stewardship drive, you will have yet another opportunity to step up by pledging or increasing your current pledge. I would encourage all of us to spend a part of this summer discerning what gifts and resources each of us possess that we can tap to be part of this effort to assist with the growing number of children and meeting their needs.



Let us move forward together in helping our youth vanquish the giants that would hold them back, so that they can go on to be, well, successful poets, songwriters – and leaders of a great nation.

*Charles Bogino*



## Greetings from the Day School



Greetings from the Day School! I am excited to write as the new Head of School at Grace. The school was led wonderfully in the last year by Acting Head of School **Donna Harshman**, who fortunately will remain at Grace as a division director. Thank you, Donna, for your energy, expertise, and commitment to the school. In addition, I want to thank Board Chair **Judy Whalley** for her leadership during the 2011-2012 year. She will continue in her role as Board Chair, and the Grace community will be served well by Judy and her stewardship of the school.

As many of you know, the big news at the Day School was the relocation of the Silver Spring campus to the Kensington campus at the end of June, which placed the entire school at Kensington. Facilities manager **Leonard Lee** coordinated the move—no easy task!—and the Silver Spring teachers worked diligently to pack their classrooms up right after the school year ended. A luncheon was held at the Silver Spring campus on June 15 to celebrate and commemorate Grace's 52

years at Silver Spring, from its founding in 1960 by Jane Wood and the Women of Grace Church to the end of this past school year. At the luncheon, which was attended by faculty and board members, longtime faculty and staff such as **Betty House, Cathy Moore, and Nina Muys** shared warm and amusing recollections of life at the Silver Spring campus.

While certainly there are *many* things the school community will miss about Silver Spring, including, of course, the physical connection to the Church, the teachers and students are looking forward to all being together under one roof. The previous motto of "One School, Two Campuses" will have to be replaced! No official motto for 2012-2013 has been chosen, but "Coming Together" is certainly a theme, as being in one place promises to make life easier for students, faculty, and parents alike. Meanwhile, we look forward to continuing our connection with Silver Spring through the numerous joint church and school events in the year ahead.

At Kensington, Grace's summer camp is in full swing, led by **Jason Dejavitlert**, the

director of Summer Programs. Campers are attending a variety of offerings, including music, Chinese, art, soccer, basketball, lacrosse, robotics, drama, Lego's, and other camp selections. My own children are looking forward to attending camp at Grace later this month!

In the year ahead, I look forward to working closely with Rector **Andrew Walter** and Assistant Rector and Day School Chaplain **Lael Sorenson**, as well as getting to know many of you. I am grateful for the warm welcome that has been extended to me and my family. Thank you to all who have made us feel so much at home.

Have a terrific summer and I look forward to seeing everyone in the fall, if not during the summer months!

Warmly,

Head of School

## Wednesday Bible Study



The Wednesday Bible study has wrapped up another fantastic year! We began with Marcus Borg's study called *Embracing an Adult Faith*. This study pushed us to be clear about what we mean when we talk about God; why Jesus matters; salvation as transformation and what part community prays in our lives as Christians.

After those five weeks we began a study of the Old Testament working our way through 2 Kings before we broke for Lent to study the book Bishop Budde asked parishes to use. We found McLaren's study, *Finding our Way Again*, to be significantly different from what we had been

used to. It suggested we participate in the traditional spiritual exercises of the church. Although it was difficult at first, in the end we did find it useful.

After Easter we went back to the Bible beginning a study of the prophets with 1, 2, and 3 Isaiah. This was so rich it took us to the end of our year in mid-June. Much of Isaiah is familiar to us because of its use in the New Testament and our hearing the word "Comfort, comfort my people" to begin Advent and the "Servant Songs" used to help us understand Jesus last week, our Holy Week readings.

At our end of the year luncheon we decided it was a very good year and decided to begin next September with a Keryg-

ma course called *Listening to Scripture: Strategies for Interpreting the Bible*. This six-week study will cover such things as the historical setting, the literary context and original audience, identifying oral and literary forms, and other ways to be sure we are being faithful to what the writers of our scripture meant.

If you're free on Wednesday mornings, we would love to have you join us! We do some serious study, but we have a lot of fun!

The Rev. Nancy Noall

## Fiscal Officer Report

As I write this message, I hope that everyone is surviving the recent storm. We have much to be thankful for.

In my financial message last month, I looked 'backwards' a bit to indicate the distribution of costs in the annual operating budget. As we approach July and the "dog days" of August, I thought that it might be helpful to look ahead a bit. Actually, July is one of the busiest and most financially 'stressful' months of the year for Grace because;

- ◆ we generally see a slight drop in pledge income as people enjoy their summer vacations
- ◆ we have to pay our quarterly pension assessment contributions for our clergy and lay staff; we have to make our annual property and liability insurance payments
- ◆ we generally incur a third pay date for our staff (most months only have two pay dates, but January and July generally have three)
- ◆ and we send out our quarterly giving statements through the end of the second quarter of the year.

We generally end July with a relatively significant deficit in our operating budget, and spend the remaining five months of each calendar year climbing our way back to a balanced budget (culminating in December when the combination of our Christmas offering, the Holiday Fair, and our end-of-year pledge payment 'surge' combine to allow to achieve a balanced budget or come really close).

This year, thanks to the efforts of so many parishioners to keep their pledges current to this point in the year, we are well positioned financially as we move into July to accommodate the one-time and quarterly charges which occur this month.

Looking ahead, steps are being taken to hire a **part-time assistant organist/choirmaster** beginning in September, four (4) months earlier than the filling of this position had been anticipated – the expenses and hours for this position are being covered by the anticipated four-month delay in the hiring of a part-time Sunday School Coordinator, so that the total expenses for calendar year 2012 will remain within the allowance for expenses included in the balanced budget approved by the Vestry for the year.

Because of the strong level of giving by so many of our parishioners during the first six (6) months of the year, **we continue to believe that the church will end 2012 with a balanced budget.** A surplus of \$15,301.61 was seen in the operating budget at the end of June. If we realize a balanced budget in 2012, our operating budget will have been balanced for the second consecutive year, an achievement not realized in Grace Church in more than a decade.

So, while we will come out of July with a deficit in our operating budget, it will not be as large as had been anticipated when the balanced budget was passed for 2012.

Through the end of June, we received a total of \$331,133.50, including a total of \$39,211.52 received in June. Of the total of \$39,211.52 received in June;

- ◆ we received a total of \$31,325.02 in pledge income, comparable to the pledge income total received during June 2011.
- ◆ we also received a total of \$3,740.50 in space use contributions from the Grace Episcopal Day School, a total of \$2,052.00 in "no pledge giving" and a total of \$1,409.00 in "plate offerings".

A total of \$41,201.87 in expenses were incurred during July, including;

- ◆ a total of \$29,080.96 in costs for salaries and benefits for church staff
- ◆ a contribution of \$4,000.00 as a part of our annual pledge to the Diocese
- ◆ a total of \$1,926.70 for repairs and maintenance costs, and a total of \$1,302.35 for costs of electricity.
- ◆ A small deficit of <\$1,990.35> was seen during June.

In one other note, through the end of June, a total of **\$695,000.00 was transferred from the Geyger estate to Grace Episcopal Church.** All of these funds have been transferred to the church's endowment funds for a variety of purposes designated by the Vestry.

As always, if anyone has any questions, please let me know. We hope that everyone has a good summer, and we appreciate everyone's efforts to keep their pledge payments current to the church.

Gib Baily  
Church Fiscal Officer



## One More Note . . . from the Rev. Andrew W. Walter

On Saturday, June 9, the Vestry held a Strategic Planning Retreat at the Library on the Kensington Campus of our Grace Episcopal Day School. Joey Rick, Canon for Congregational Vitality at the Diocese of Washington, served as facilitator, and it was a wonderful day of worship, camaraderie and strategic thinking about the future of our beloved church.

As a framework for our conversation, we reflected on the "Envisioned Future" for the parish adopted by the Vestry in 2010:

*We believe that we, Grace Church, are called to be that "city on a hill" where people of all races and cultures come to build their relationships with God and others. We imagine that in 10-20 years Grace will be known to be:*

*\* a bustling community*

*\*with a wide range of vibrant worship opportunities and*

*\*with solid program offerings especially focused on Christian formation*

*\* that actively embraces the voices of all children*

*\* whose outreach is centered on social justice and*

*\* in which it's okay to say, "I don't know."*

It was clear, from the beginning of our discussion, that we all agreed Grace Church is in a very, very good place right now: we have successfully transitioned to a new Rector; our worship and music continue to be spiritually uplifting and of high quality; attendance and participation are growing; our Christian formation programs are expanding; and, many dedicated individuals are working to revitalize our Outreach ministries which reach out to serve the wider community. So, many of the things the Vestry envisioned two years ago are already coming to fruition. Plus, all this is happening with fiscal responsibility – our budgets are balanced as we strive to be good stewards of the financial resources given to us.

At the same time, we are facing some challenges, mostly stemming from our growth and activity. As our facilitator reminded us, we have challenges, but unlike so many other churches, they are good challenges.

With so many visitors and new members, one of the challenges is how we can best welcome and incorporate people deeper into the life of our community. It is not only about welcoming newcomers when they attend worship on Sunday but also relates to helping new members meet new friends and find ministries in which to participate as well as nurturing and developing future leaders of the parish. While we did not come up with any answers at the retreat, the Vestry is committed to making this a priority.

Another challenge related to our growth is the size of our music program. If you were in church on Choir Recognition Sunday, you saw what we are facing – almost 90 children involved in music plus another 20 members in our Adult Choir. It is an incredible blessing to have such a successful music program, but it is too large a program for our Minister of Music, Danny Catalanotto, to lead all by himself. So, the Vestry unanimously supported the hiring of an Assistant Minister of Music to help Danny and our Music program. We have already begun forming a Search Committee and hope to have an Assistant on staff by September.

The Vestry also discussed the popularity of our 10:30 a.m. service. It is quite common for us now to have 270 people in church at 10:30. Our pews are crowded and our parking lot is full. To put this in perspective, a few years ago, our average attendance at both services combined was less than 200. In keeping with our vision to offer a wide range of worship opportunities, it seems to be the right time to consider – merely consider – adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> worship service on Sunday. Therefore, this fall, a committee will be formed to look into the many issues related to adding a worship service, including what time this service might take place and what the service would be like liturgically. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please let me know.

Finally, with increased activity and participation, our church building is getting more use, straining its current infrastructure and systems: our heating and air conditioning units are not properly functioning; the downstairs bathrooms are in poor condition; the electrical system in the Undercroft is outdated; and, the organ console needs work. These are just a few of the areas in the church which need immediate attention. So, the time has come for us to take preliminary steps towards a fundraising campaign which enable us to address some of these issues. We anticipate beginning these preliminary steps over the summer and having more information for you this fall.

Hopefully, you gather what a busy retreat it was for the Vestry. There was a lot to discuss. Increased activity and growth are wonderful and exciting, but they also bring challenges and change, neither of which are easy. Whatever challenges and change lie ahead, though, we will face them together, trusting the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us along the way.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, I would love to hear from you. Please stop me after church on Sundays, call me on the phone, send me an email or drop by the church office. My door is always open to you. Likewise, I know members of the Vestry are always ready to talk about any issues you might want to discuss.