



Grace Notes

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



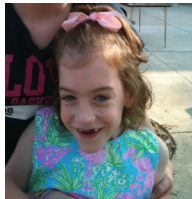
The Blessings of a Diverse Community - Part II

The February issue of Grace Notes included the first of a series of articles about some very special members of our parish family. This month, we continue that series, by providing an opportunity to meet Hannah Albus and Kara "Nicci" Jones. We are also including the first three articles in this series, in case you didn't get a chance to meet David Mahler, Chloe Miller, and Max Olthoff.

Grace Episcopal Church is a diverse and welcoming community in many ways. Many of our parishioners have physical or developmental disabilities, and you may have noticed them on Sunday mornings or at other church events. Several parishioners who have children with special needs have offered to share information about them and would be happy to talk with you more about their children, because with knowledge comes understanding and acceptance.

Meet Hannah Albus by Mark and Sarah Albus

Our daughter Hannah is one of the happiest girls we know - quite amazing given the struggles she has faced and continues to face on a daily basis.



Hannah and her twin sister Libby were born on February 2, 2004 after only 25 weeks gestation, nearly 4 months early. Hannah's amniotic sac had become infected, putting her in significant distress, and an emergency C-section was performed. Hannah was quickly whisked away to the NICU and placed on a ventilator. She weighed 790 grams (1 lb 12 oz.) and was 12 inches long. Libby was born 2 minutes after Hannah, she also had a weak respiratory effort and was intubated by 3 minutes of life. She weighed 860 grams (1 lb 14 oz.) and was 13 inches long.

We honestly were in a state of shock...already parents to 2 little girls at home and to have the twins born 15 weeks early, struggling to survive even in a high level NICU was beyond overwhelming to us. Nothing in your personal or professional life can prepare you for the powerless feeling you have when you see your children on life support in the intensive

care unit of a hospital.

With the exception of a few early respiratory problems, and a "simple" heart surgery to close the ductus arteriosus, Libby had a typical stay in the NICU and miraculously experienced very few serious complications during her 3 month stay. She came home to us when she was 12 weeks old, weighing 4lbs.

Hannah's 6 month stay in the NICU was a much different story. While she experienced similar medical issues to Libby - the same heart surgery, gastrointestinal reflux disease, chronic lung disease, a number of blood transfusions and infections - the big issue was the intraventricular brain hemorrhage that occurred on day 3 of life; causing a grade 3 bleed on the left side of her brain and a grade 4 on the right (4 is the highest and worst level). Hannah's neurologic road was a rough one - Five brain surgeries in her first 4 months to tackle hydrocephalus and seizures that developed from the brain hemorrhage. This bleed and the complications that arose from it led to Hannah's diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy at 18 months of age.

Cerebral Palsy is defined as a disorder of movement, muscle tone or posture that is caused by injury or abnormal development in the immature brain, most often before birth.

In general, CP causes impaired movement associated with exaggerated reflexes or rigidity of the limbs and trunk, abnormal posture, involuntary movements, unsteadiness of walking, or some combination of these. People with Cerebral Palsy often have other conditions related to developmental brain abnormalities, such as intellectual disabilities, vision and hearing problems, speech issues or seizures.

Now, eight years later, Hannah is an infectious, vivacious, magnetic little girl. Time and time again she has proven those wrong that examine her medical chart or look at her brain scan and proclaim she won't be able to do something. We were told by a number of doctors that she would never walk and by the time she was 3 1/2 years old she

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Special points of interest:

- Blessings of a Diverse Community
- Honoring Ethel Lockett
- Handyman Ministry
- One More Note from Rev. Andrew Walter

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GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**Grace Notes**

**Grace Episcopal Church
1607 Grace Church Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910**

**Telephone: 301-585-3515
Fax: 301-585-4309**

**Website:
www.graceepiscopalchurch.org**

**The Rev. Andrew Walter
Rector**

**The Rev. Lael Sorensen
Assistant Rector & Chaplain,
Grace Episcopal Day School**

**The Rev. Michele Hagans
Priest Associate**

**Danny Catalanotto
Minister of Music**

**Beth Boyd
Parish Administrator**

**Marnie Brown
Communications Coordinator**

**Gib Baily
Fiscal Officer**

**Wardens and Vestry
Peter Curtin, Senior Warden
Aileen Moodie, Junior Warden**

**Kathryn Allen, Paul Brown,
Theresa Cameron, James Doyle,
Matt Hardwick, John Mahler,
Amy Miller, Virgil Whitehurst,
Raquel Wilson**

Grace Notes

Linda Caleb

Dining With Grace at the Movies Friday, May 4



In early celebration of Mother's Day, come join us for our last movie, "The Incredibles", on Friday, May 4th. *This animated film is about a family of humans gifted with superpowers that must be kept secret. A threatening situation develops that will cause the family to band together, reveal and use their superpowers.* Families and friends of all ages are welcome. The movie will be shown at approximately 7:15 p.m. and a brief discussion will follow.

Our potluck dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Undercroft. Drinks will be provided. Please bring the particular food item associated with the **first letter** of your **last name**:

Please join us in the

A - H	Dessert/Fruit
I - Q	Main Course/Casserole
R - Z	Salad/Vegetable

For further information contact:

Lola Crawford - (301) 571-2321

Maria Jenkins - (301) 897-9662

Diocesan Mission Trip to Honduras



The **Honduras Committee** of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington (EDOW) is planning a 12 day mission trip to Honduras during the first weeks of **January 2013**. This trip is open to adults or children traveling with responsible adults. One week will be spent in Copan studying Spanish, visiting the Mayan Ruins of Copan, a World Heritage Site, and local church communities. Lodging will be with Honduran families. Then we will spend 4-5 days in rural communities where EDOW parishes already have established relationships with Episcopal church communities. Lodging will be in parish halls, health clinics, or private homes. The cost will be about \$1000, including airfare, Spanish language instructions, food, lodging, ground transportation and some funds for adding to capital of micro enterprises in rural communities.

Membership is limited to 10 travelers and two leaders. Contact Tom Cooke at thomasmcooke@hotmail.com 202 669 0022 or Richard Marks at richard-pmarks@aol.com or 301 256 7355 for questions and more information.

The Blessings of a Diverse Community, *cont.*

was walking unassisted. Some doctors and therapists warned us that she may never speak and we often have to laugh because now we can't get her to stop talking. All of these milestones Hannah achieved through her own perseverance combined with care and therapy provided by individuals who never said never, when it came to Hannah.

Hannah brings joy to everyone who knows her. She is constantly smiling, laughing, playing games and socializing. Hannah is in the first grade and although she has trouble communicating it, she is quite smart and funny. If you can get past Hannah's abnormal gait, her coordination issues, and her speech troubles, you will come to know that she is one of the sweetest, most loving children you will ever meet. She has a fantastic relationship with her sisters (Katherine, Grace, and Libby), who do an incredible job of helping her navigate the world and we like to think we are all better people because of Hannah. She and so many others like her are willing to fight to be here – fight to walk – fight to talk; they do the hard work, we just need to work to understand their differences and support them in their efforts.

Meet Nicci (Kara Nicole Jones)

by Joan Christopher

Who is Nicci? Kara Nicole Jones (Nicci) and her twin brother Erik were born on October 8, 1982. Some days Nicci prefers to be called Kara. Nicci and Erik were born ten weeks prematurely, and as a result, both have cerebral palsy (CP), although Erik's is much less severe than Nicci's. Nicci also has a stepfather, Steve, an older brother Chris, a sister-in-law Allisen and a two-year old nephew, Logan, as well as many other relatives and friends. All of Nicci's immediate family members are mentioned here, because they are very, very important in her life. Most Friday evenings and Sundays after church are spent with Logan and his parents. Nicci loves being called "Aunt Nicci" (even though Logan usually pays little attention to Nicci's attempt to influence or correct his behavior.)



When Nicci and Erik were being born, I remember praying to God to just let them live and promising that I would joyfully accept whatever happened. And I have. Nicci is a delight, and although she can be challenging once in a while, makes my life and the lives of those around her very rich.

Nicci has had several surgeries to release leg muscles to help her walk. But, about fifteen years ago after one of her surgeries to reshape her left hip, she was left with a shorter left leg that is unstable and floppy. Thus, she cannot bear weight on that leg nor walk. In addition, some people with CP suffer from pain as they age, due to contractures and an inability to move and exer-

cise, and Nicci is no exception. So for the last five years, 1 to 2 times a year, she receives numerous Botox injections to relax many of her muscles throughout her body. Indeed, Nicci needs so many injections that she receives anesthesia as a surgical patient at Children's hospital, and is a minor celebrity in the Physical Medicine Department. After a Botox treatment, Nicci has to have intensive physical and occupational therapy for 2 to 3 months, 2-4 times a week. By the time she finishes a treatment series, she and I are both exhausted and just want to watch TV and eat chocolate. But it helps her feel less pain.

How does Nicci communicate? Although Nicci does not read very well, nor is she able to write, due to poor fine motor coordination, Nicci communicates very effectively through speaking and hearing, although her speech can be hard to understand sometimes. She is very much an auditory learner, and when she takes classes at Montgomery College, keeps up with her assignments by having them read to her. She understands all of what she hears (or asks questions if she doesn't) and she hears everything. She has a Dynavox, which is an augmentative communication device. The Dynavox connects to her wheelchair, allows her (or me) to program words and phrases and then artificially "speaks" them when she presses a key or a series of keys. However, she long ago decided not to use the Dynavox because it was awkward and made her uncomfortable. Nicci usually answers our telephone when she's sitting at the kitchen table. I call her our family "secretary" and our secret weapon against telemarketers. Nicci became a "latch key kid" at age 19 while still attending Albert Einstein High School. She would use her remote control key to open our door, which has an automatic door opener. She would then call me at work, using our preprogrammed phone, to let me know that she was safely in the house. (Her bus attendant would walk her to the door to make sure things looked ok.)

What does Nicci like? Nicci likes to shop, hang out with friends, volunteer, go to church and make money – not necessarily in that order. For instance, she has a best friend who recently won the title of "Miss Wheelchair, DC." Nicci has convened a small group to help her friend raise funds for this pageant. (I can't believe I agreed to this!) Nicci also has a dear friend, Mrs. Neely with whom she speaks almost every day, sometimes for hours at a time.

Nicci is on several volunteer committees, including: the Stewardship Committee of Grace, the Patient-Family Advisory Council of Children's Hospital, the Consumer Advisory Council of the Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, People on the Go of Maryland (a self-advocacy group), Project Action! (another self-advocacy group), the Transportation Advocacy Group of Independence Now, and the sponsorship committee of the Gandhi Brigade Youth Media Festival.

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The Blessings of a Diverse Community, *cont.*

She is also a member of Phabulous Photographers (a group sponsored by Potomac Community Resources) and attends the Women's Group meetings of Independence Now. And, she loves presenting at classes, workshops and conferences, as well, especially if she receives a stipend. Whew!

What is happening to her today? After several years of frustration from not finding employment, Nicci was accepted into New Directions, a self-determination Medicaid waiver program for persons with disabilities in Maryland. With her modest allotment, Nicci hires assistants to help with her home-based businesses. Nicci first started an eBay business, "Uncle Charles Closet," where she sells clothing, DVDs, books and other items that she obtains (free of charge) from friends and family. She has branched into selling on Amazon, as well. Then, two years ago, Nicci decided to make a business out of one of her hobbies, paper shredding. She has developed a somewhat steady stream of customers and works very hard at finishing her jobs, and although she probably will never get wealthy from this, it's fulfilling and important to her.

What is Grace like for Nicci? I've told this story many times to many people about the sense of relief and belonging that Nicci and I felt when we first visited Grace and Reverend Janice brought communion to Nicci as an accommodation because the altar was not accessible. I later told Janice that we had never attended a service where communion was actually brought to Nicci, and Janice couldn't believe it. But it's true. Of course, this happened several years ago, before the renovations to the church were completed. Back then, during communion, Nicci used to move her chair into the aisle to line up behind one of the radiators, so that people would have more space get by her. Sometimes it would be tight, but never, ever was there a cross word or stern look from anyone. Compare this to the rest of world where too often Nicci is cut off, ignored, devalued, bumped into or scowled at for taking too long to get through a door. Nicci and I appreciate the respect and support shown to her by everyone at Grace Church - from greeting and speaking to her directly, inviting her to join the Stewardship Committee, and continually supporting her paper shredding business. Grace Church not only offers peace, friendship and support, but also nurtures our spirituality and reminds us that world can be all right.

Meet David Mahler

by Elizabeth and John Mahler

Who is David? Born December 2, 1995, in New York City, David surprised his parents shortly after birth by spending almost two weeks in the hospital in intensive care. There he was diagnosed with Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome ("RTS"), a rare genetic disease that involves broad thumbs and toes, short stat-



ure, distinctive facial features, and varying degrees of intellectual disability. Most people who have RTS have a defect in a gene usually found in chromosome 16. People with RTS are slow to develop motor skills and have very low muscle tone. David was very lucky to get diagnosed so early in life. Starting as a baby, he was able to get intensive therapies to help him learn to suck from a bottle, and to help him maximize his fine and gross motor skill development. David was not quite three years old when he learned to walk! David also had a number of surgeries during the first three years of his life when the Mahlers lived in New York City. David's parents are John Mahler and Elizabeth Campbell-Mahler. He has 3 siblings: Daniel (who you see in church all the time), and an older brother and sister who sometimes visit (Lyz and Jon).

How does David communicate? David has a severe cognitive disability (the term "mental retardation" is not widely used anymore) and he doesn't talk. Although he is 16 years old and his brain is still developing, he will probably attain no more mental age than that of a 4 year old. David cannot produce speech although he has a collection of approximate sounds to some of his favorite words: "uke" for Duke, the family dog; "ing" for pudding, one of his favorite foods; "ik, for milk; "Op" for Pop (his grandfather). David can sign many more words/phrases. He knows probably 40 different signs. At school, he uses something called an "augmentative communication device" to help him communicate with his teacher and others in the classroom. He pushes different buttons with symbols on them and the machine produces a voice sound. David also loves to use the iPad.

What does David like? David is very friendly, loves to interact with people and repetition is guaranteed! He hardly ever does anything only once. David will sign to you whatever he remembers recently seeing or doing. If he saw his grandfather in the morning he will sign "grandfather" all day long! If he knows that he is going to go swimming he will sign it to every single person all day long until he goes swimming and then for days afterward. He loves tricycles and bicycles and anything that rolls. He loves trains, too.

David remembers faces and if he can get you to look at him, he will shake your hand. If you smile or act like you might hug him, he will hug you. He doesn't dwell on anything for more than a second. While he is shaking your hand, he may be looking to the next person already. One of his favorite hand-shaking things is to grab your hand and have you shake the next person's hand he sees. David wants everyone to be friendly with each other and to love each other!

David loves babies more than anything else. He wants to kiss them on the cheek. We want to be very sensitive to everyone's personal space - and we try to stop David from getting too close. If you don't mind David kissing your child, please let us know so we can let him instead of pulling him away.

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What is happening to him today? David recently had an operation on both of his knees. Two clamps were placed on his growth plates, just above his knees, to help guide the growth of the bones. The plan/hope is that his bones will continue to grow in the right direction so that his legs straighten out. David is in a special education program at Einstein High School. He is learning skills to be able to work in a supervised job setting. His current job site is at Wheaton Plaza where he hands out flyers to the public. He will be in High School until he is 21.

What is Grace Church like for David? David loves to be in church and we have found Grace Church to be a welcoming place for David and our family. When you don't see David at church on Sunday, it is usually because he is "helping" his grandmother lead a worship service at one of the area nursing homes. The seniors love it when David visits them! You've probably noticed that David has a favorite pew at Grace Church. He loves to sit up front where he can get a good view of the clergy and the choirs. If you look closely, you will see that David really is following the worship service! Sometimes he makes the same hand movements that the clergy are making during communion and the blessing. He knows the liturgy and sometimes you can hear him utter sounds that mimic what the congregation is saying. He has learned how to take communion all by himself. David loves music and at the end of the service, David likes to listen to Mr. C. play the postlude on the organ. He moves to sit in the choir chancel with his mother for the postlude because the sound is pretty amazing up there!

Meet Chloe Miller

by Amy and Mark Miller

Who is Chloe? Chloe was born on Valentine's Day in 2004. She was evaluated at a very young age for speech and cognitive delays, and at age 2 she was diagnosed with autism. About a year later, she began having seizures. (An estimated 25 to 40 percent of people with autism also have seizures.) Chloe takes medications to control her seizures, but she still has about 10 to 15 on a typical month. At her worst, she used to have 100 or more in a month. Even though she does not have many seizures now, they can occur at any time with no warning, and that's why she often wears a cloth helmet to protect her head in case of a fall.



Autism is actually called "autism spectrum disorder," because there is a wide range of symptoms. Some people with autism talk a lot but are awkward socially. Others are extremely isolated, anti-social, and resistant to being touched in any way. Chloe does not fit into any typical category. She does not talk, but is more affectionate than many other people with autism. Chloe has severe cognitive delays, which has been exacerbated by her seizures. She still needs a lot of assistance with dressing, feed-

ing, and other self-help skills. It takes a lot of repetition for her to learn things.

How does Chloe communicate? You may think that because Chloe does not talk, she does not communicate. But she connects with people in many ways. If you get down to her eye level and hold your hand in front of her, she will lift her hand and give you a soft "high-five." If you sit in front of her at church, you may feel her reach out and touch your hair or collar – she is very tactile and sometimes seems to be showing affection by gently touching people's faces, hair, or clothes. (If a child is confused or afraid about this, we usually explain that it means Chloe likes them and is saying hello.) She doesn't often make eye contact or play with other children, but she enjoys being around children and adults. When she is happy, she smiles a lot and may make humming, sing-song noises. When she is tired, bored, or agitated, she often expresses herself with loud noises. She knows just a little sign language, but her use of it is inconsistent.

What does Chloe like? Chloe likes music, soft textures, warm baths, swings, and all types of food. Her favorite book for many years has been "Brown Bear, Brown Bear." She loves her fuzzy pink pillow, and she enjoys musical, light-up toys, especially her talking frog named Tad. She enjoys swimming in warm water (with water wings), and she likes to be pulled around the neighborhood on her adaptive bicycle.

What's Chloe up to these days? Chloe is in the second grade – in the School Community Based (SCB) program at Arcola Elementary School. One thing she likes about school is that they take field trips every Friday! She is in a small class and gets one-on-one attention all day long. She is adjusting well to being a big sister and especially enjoys patting Morgan's head and touching her hair.

What Grace means to us: When you have a child with special needs, it can be easy to avoid settings where your child will not be welcomed or understood. Grace provides a welcoming community where Chloe is accepted for who she is. Over the years, she will attend different schools and participate in different programs, but the people at Grace are like extended family members who are a constant and important part of her life.

Meet Max Olthoff

by Leah Royce and Glen Olthoff

One of the most joyful days for our family with Max at church was the celebration of his 18th birthday. Max loves birthdays, the singing, the candles with lights dimmed, the cake and on that Sunday after the 10:30 service in November 2010, many people from the congregation shared our joy, and it was a great way for the children in the church to see Max's birthday celebrated in the same way that their own birthdays have been celebrated – the singing, the candles, the cake. On Max's 19th birthday, we

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repeated the event after the 10:30 service on the exact day of his birthday, November 20th, but this time, he seemed to be embarrassed and stayed close to Glen. I laughed because even though Max showed that he was uncomfortable, we were still celebrating and part of the celebration that day was that Max had changed. Wouldn't most teenagers be embarrassed about their parents joyfully and publicly acknowledging their birthday? Max had matured a little and when Max's awareness and behavior is more mature and developmental appropriate, that is absolutely a time to celebrate.

I share this because Max's birthday used to be a depressing day for our family. While for other children, birthdays signal growth and movement forward, Max's birthdays were a reminder to us that Max was not changing or worse, was stagnant. And stagnant for Max included the fact that he suffers delays in development as a result of a brain injury that occurred before his birth. The brain injury resulted in a severe mood disorder, mental retardation, autism which for Max includes a severe language and social/emotional impairment, and mild gross motor issues and moderate fine motor issues. His mood disorder, language and social/emotional issues have served as the most challenging aspects of his multiple disabilities. They impact his emotional availability, social skills development, and make for a very frustrated guy at times. His mood disorder fluctuates in that he experiences irritability, sleep difficulty, food selectivity, aggression and self abusive behaviors in a cyclic pattern and the "down time" comes on often unpredictably and can last around a week or two. When he was young, babyhood until around 10 years, the "down time" could last up to three weeks, followed by a "up time" for about a week or two if he was lucky. These days, the intensity of the "down time" is less as well as the length of time any given day in the "down time". The "up times" have sometimes included new skill obtainment even in a very slight way, but still very noticeable and valued by his family and others caring for him.

When Max was 4, he was institutionalized for about 2 ½ years – neither his family, caregivers, or the school he was placed in in Montgomery County could manage his extreme and escalating behaviors. He lived in South Jersey at a residential school for about 2 of those years, and we visited him and brought him home more than any other resident at that school. And that was in great part because regardless of the difficulties and chaos of caring for Max, the bottom line was that we loved him. Loving him and bringing him back home was our goal from the time he was court ordered to residential care. In August 2000, we did just that – convinced the school system and harnessed the resources through a special program managed through the Maryland Governor's office, to bring him home. He was the only child ever to leave the Bancroft School at the request of a family – the president of Bancroft came to meet me (Leah) on one of my visits there to see Max (weekly), just to tell me that fact.

How did we come to Grace? I (Leah) was confirmed as an eighth grader at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, and the spring of 2001 after months of struggling to meet all of Max's needs now

that he was back home as well as absorb the recent death of a brother, I (Leah) came to Grace church with our son Alex (then 11) and daughter Aislinn (then 4). We didn't bring Max because we came to the 10:30 service every week to get a break from Max in a peaceful place for a couple of hours. Glen stayed home with Max.

How did Max come to Grace? It finally dawned on me that Max should be included in coming to church with us. Alex Geyger kept first Alex, then Aislinn busy up in the "loft" recording the service, while Max and I and eventually Glen, sat in the pews.

Over the years, Max adapted to this new "activity". These days, Max chooses to come to church – not every Sunday, but most. He's become quieter over the years, and developed the stamina to stay for the whole service. He used to come for the donuts (he'd point to the picture of donut in his picture communication book all during the service), but now he comes we believe, because he likes being part of the community. We feel that Max feels very welcome to be there. Sometimes I'll see him sitting on the stage, with children playing and socializing around him, and it's clear that he's made the choice to be there sitting on the stage nearby the action. Sometimes he gets a donut, sometimes other snacks, many Sundays he just wants to get out of there. But in general, he chooses to be a part of the routine of the service each Sunday, and he confirms that when he approaches the altar to receive communion. I used to wonder what motivated him to take communion, this kid who is often socially withdrawn and picky about what he eats and drinks. It's clear though that he is there for the same reason the rest of us go to the altar – to be in community to receive communion. It's one of the highlights of my week to kneel next to Max. Sometimes he lingers a little, taking in the scene at the altar and that's inspiring too. Now we find ourselves admiring Max and his commitment to being included much more than the feeling that we are overwhelmed by taking care of him.

We know that when people say hello to Max, and when some of the children at church have made simple gestures of getting Max a refill on his drink or a cookie or getting him the extra napkin he needs, all of this means a lot to Max. Max wouldn't be who he is today without love. Being loved has allowed Max to grow and become the person he is and we are grateful that he has been able to be a part of the community at Grace Church and that he has learned more about being loved from the Grace Church community. Sometimes he can be funny in how he chooses to experience the service by turning around to look at the people behind him while everyone stands to sing or pray, or when he laughs or makes some vocalizations during the service. At times, he'll reach out to join in accepting someone's hand during the peace, but he'll also accept people reaching out to him and wishing him peace by patting his shoulder. While Max may not initiate much socially, and sometimes he may be agitated or irritable or impatient, those around him can be confident that he is very aware of the community of Grace church and that that community is full of others who chose to show up, be together and include him.

Ethel Luckett, Outstanding Senior Volunteer

The Grace Church Silver Spring Parish family is happy to recognize **Ethel Holter Luckett** as the Outstanding Senior volunteer for 2012.

Ethel Holter Luckett was born at Sibley Hospital, Washington, D.C. in 1934 to Henry and Dorothy Holter. The only child in a very special family, both of her parents were hearing impaired, Ethel was raised in the Episcopal Church.

One of her earliest memories was, as child, attending St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., where Father Otto Berg held services for hearing families in the Sunday mornings and hearing impaired families Sunday after-

noons. Ethel observed her parents give back to the church community. Ethel father often served as a LEM during the services for the hearing impaired at St. Mark's. The Holter family also attended St. Barnabas in D.C. where Ethel watched as her mother served as the administrator for the Women's group within the parish. When Ethel was a teen her family had moved to Silver Spring, Maryland and in 1952, Ethel graduated from Blair High School. After graduation she went on to attend Montgomery Community College. A year later Ethel decided to get



married. She became the mother of four sons and later she worked in the private sector as a bookkeeper and accountant.

In 1972 Ethel's life took another major turn, she became a divorcee and she decided that she wanted to become more aligned with her faith. She looked around the area and found Grace Episcopal Church, Silver Spring Parish. Ethel fell in love with the

people that she met there including some wonderful ladies who worked with the parish thrift shop ministry, Betty Lou Day and Dale Caracci. Dale has a very effervescent personality, and she makes friends easily. Betty

Lou and Dale were quick to welcome the newcomer into volunteer ministry for the parish thrift shop, Pennyworth. Ethel, Betty Lou and Dale became fast friends, but more importantly, Ethel became a dedicated member of the Pennyworth team and partnered with Dale in handling the sorting of items that are donated to the store. Once she stepped into the ministry, it became her ministry niche.

Today, Ethel serves as the President for the business built up by her sons and is the proud grandmother of nine grandchildren and nine great grandchildren, but one of

her greatest loves comes from her ministry to Grace Church through the Pennyworth thrift shop. Ethel is committed to supporting the Pennyworth ministry of Grace church and is very proud of the value that the ministry has share both within the parish and within the Silver Spring community. She serves on the governing Board of the Pennyworth Shop and is responsible for the major behind-the-scenes 'sorting and pricing' activity, which is an important part of the Pennyworth thrift shop ministry. Working along with a wonderful group of volunteers, you will find Ethel spending several days each week getting items prepared sale in the thrift shop.

May is Older Americans Month and the Diocese of Washington and Seabury Resources for Aging will host it's annual service honoring the contributions of older adults to the parish, the Diocese and community. This year Mrs. Ethel Luckett, a member of the Grace Church Silver Spring Parish for over 25 years and a volunteer and board member of the Pennyworth Thrift Store, will be honored during the celebration. The Senior Celebration will be held on May 15, 2012, at noon at the Washington Cathedral.

Donations Needed - Can You Help?

Pennyworth Planning for Prom Season



Donate your gently used formal wear to Pennyworth as prom season approaches. Fancy dresses and gowns, men's formal wear, shoes, sandals and accessories (jewelry, evening bags and purses) are especially welcome.

Food Pantry



Remember to drop off donations to the Silver Spring Food Pantry in the narthex. An usher can direct you to the baskets. Especially needed are: baby food, peanut butter, canned tuna, canned fruits and vegetables.

Transitions

Baptized:

Saturday, April 7
Alexandra Grace Franzel
Morgan Elizabeth Miller

Transferred In:

Susan Maxon Aldridge
from St. Mark's, Capitol Hill

Transferred Out:

Berit Lakey
to St. Stephen and the
Incarnation, Washington, DC

Thanks to Our Acolytes



As we approach the end of the school year, we look forward to expressing our appreciation to the younger members in our parish who have served faithfully as acolytes during the past year. The parish has been blessed by the faithful service of 33 acolytes this past year and by seven (7) college students who served at special services when they were home for the holidays. As a

congregation, we are blessed by the presence of a wonderful group of young people, and it has been a privilege to work with our acolytes this past year.

Our acolytes were divided into four teams, each headed by a senior acolyte. The four senior acolytes, who served as crucifers during the services this past year, were *Jamie Allen, Charles Cato, Jack Dahill and Nicholas Ryder*. Also serving as crucifers on a routine basis this past year were *Ben Allen, Kris Amundson, Nicola Ekuban and Kirby Porter*. The following young members of our parish also served faithfully as acolytes this past year: *Tayo Adelanwa, Grace Albus, Katherine Albus, Anna Bedal, Eva Bogino, Ogden Brown, Virginia Brown, Alexander Brown-Collie, Kayla Brown-Collie, Kai Fukuda, Ellie Henley, Sophie Holt, Nick Kurtz, Caitlin Jacobs, Imani Long, Jenna Ocheltree, Justin Ocheltree, Aislinn Olthoff, Ian Parks, Haley Porter, Tyreik Rogers, Alex Seeman, Gabby Whitehurst, V. J. Whitehurst and Ruby Wilson*. The seven (7) college students serving as acolytes when they are able, most often at festival and other special services, were *Paul Cato, Jack Dahill, Shannon Harmon, William Moodie, Alex Olthoff, Eric Ruggieri and Ben Yezer*. In addition to serving each Sunday, acolytes were scheduled at all special services of the year, including all of the services during Holy Week, at Easter, at Thanksgiving and at Christmas.

Jamie Allen and **Charles Cato** will graduate from high school this year and hopefully will join with the college students above serving as acolytes when they are home from school next year. We

are extremely grateful for their leadership as acolytes over the past few years and grateful for their faithful service and contributions to the Acolytes Guild. We wish them well as they graduate from high school and begin their college careers. **In addition to honoring Jamie and Charles, this year we are honoring Ben Yezer for completing ten years of faithful service as an acolyte.** Ben has made many special contributions to our worship services over the past years, and we are proud to be able to honor his service.

We are grateful to all of our acolytes for their faithful service at God's altar during the past year. In the coming year, Ben Allen will succeed his sister as the senior crucifer on the "first Sunday" team and Kris Amundson will succeed Charles as the senior crucifer on the "second Sunday" team. We appreciate in advance the service of all of our acolytes in the coming year.

We are also grateful to the adults who served as acolyte advisors this year – *Paul Brown, Steve Dean, Jennifer Porter and Gib Bailly*. They gave faithfully of their time this year to train the acolytes and to assist them in preparing for our worship services.

As an acolyte of Grace, I've learned a lot about what it means to be a leader, and I like teaching the younger acolytes to work as a group in order to assist the rector during the service. I was especially proud to serve with Bishop Chane when he visited Grace, and I know it means a lot to the parishioners of Grace to have a good acolyte team that behaves well serving on Sundays. Working as an acolyte can be difficult, but it's been a great leadership experience, and I'm going to miss the people of Grace. I have to thank Gib, Steve, and Paul for being such awesome acolyte supervisors- we couldn't have done it without all of your help!

Jamie Allen

Thank You Jack!

Jack Dahill, one of our high school youth, made a special presentation to the parish on Earth Day. Through Jack's efforts in the recycling of electronics, he raised enough money to purchase a grille for the church! This grille is a great gift and will be used frequently for various events. Jack has been diligently collecting unwanted cell phones, inkjets, toner cartridges and digital cameras via recycle bins in the Undercroft and in Grace House. Not only has Jack helped with an important environmental problem, but he has also generously donated the proceeds from this project to purchase a gift for the entire parish.



Mother's Day Ideas from The Pennyworth Shop

According to several histories of Mother's Day, Anna Jarvis, who worked to have Mother's Day officially recognized in the US, was annoyed with the high level of commercialization that came to be associated with the day. Would you like to honor your mother, or help your kids honor their mother, without a trip to the mall? Would you like to find special gift, without spending a lot of money? Would you like your kids to be able to purchase something really special that fits their budget? What about that person who has been like a mother to you? Here are some ideas from The Pennyworth Shop.

- ◆ A framed photo: A mother can never have too many photos of her child or children! The Pennyworth Shop always has a few interesting frames on hand. Pop in a recent photo of mom and her child/children.
- ◆ A vase of flowers or a potted plant: Skip expensive floral arrangements. Instead, stop by Pennyworth to pick up one of our vases or pots. Pick some flowers from the garden or a plant from the garden shop and pot it for Mom.

- ◆ A hand-painted vase: pick up a simple glass vase and paint it with glass paint, available at any craft store. There are even markers designed to "paint" glass that are very easy to use and don't involve any mess.
- ◆ Jewelry: the jewelry case at The Pennyworth Shop always contains a selection of one-of-a-kind jewelry at all sorts of prices. Whether she ears clip earrings, favors brooches, or enjoys bangle bracelets, you'll find something she'll enjoy.
- ◆ Books: is Mother a reader? You'll find everything from best-sellers to classics at amazing prices: 50 cents for paperbacks; \$1 for hardbacks.

Of course you can find scarves, purses, and all sorts of clothing as well. Stop by before May 13th, or any-time you need a special gift.

The Pennyworth Shop is located at 949 Bonifant Street in downtown Silver Spring, and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 4p.



Grace Handyman Ministry



The Men's Group of Grace Church is excited to announce the newly formed **Grace Handyman Ministry**, which will serve as a pastoral care ministry of the Men's Group.

The Grace Handyman Ministry is a pastoral care ministry, providing simple handyman assistance to persons referred by the pastoral care team. The goals of the ministry are:

- to provide Christian service to people who need handyman,
- to engage in fellowship between the Men's Group and others touched by Grace Episcopal, and
- to offer fellowship and ministry opportunities to involvement of men who are associated with Grace Episcopal but who are not attracted to the "usual" ministries.

Who Are We?

- Ministry providers - men of Grace Episcopal who volunteer
- Foremen - men who lead individual projects (as scheduled)
- Survey assistant - assists the project foreman with the initial visit and supplies
- Workers - everyone who helps on the project
- Ministry representative - **John Mahler**, chair of the Men's Group Ministry scheduler - **John D. Wilson**
- Ministry foreman - **Dan Amundson**

- Pastoral care liaison - **Rev. Michele Hagans**

What Do We Do?

The Grace Handyman Ministry provides home repair projects, typically one-time maintenance and household safety to persons identified by the Pastoral Care team. Typically the recipients of assistance will be members of Grace Episcopal Church including people who are:

- In need of geriatric or medical support;
- Single parents; or
- In need of special assistance with technology-related items (installing home electronics, etc.).

In addition to the referral, the recipients of assistance must be either the homeowner and occupant or a renter; at rental properties, any installations or other assistance that goes beyond normal maintenance requires written authorization from the owner/agent. The ministry will not do projects that require licenses or permits, roofing jobs, pest removal, or major mechanical replacements (e.g., hot water heaters). Ongoing maintenance is not offered (e.g., lawn care).

What Are the Costs?

Labor for all ministry services provided will be free of charge.

(cont. page 10)

Fiscal Officer Report

This report is being written about a week before the end of April, so our financial situation might be even slightly more rosy by the end of the month than the comments below would indicate because there are five (5) Sundays in April in addition to the additional contributions received in our Easter offering. **The trends seen during April continued to reflect the trends seen during the first quarter of the year, and so I begin by continuing to thank everyone for keeping your pledge payments current and for your generous response to the Easter appeal.** Your support has enabled our operating budget essentially to remain in balance through the first four (4) months of the calendar year (we had projected that a small deficit of approximately \$3,600.00 would be seen in the operating budget at the end of April based on the balanced budget approved by the Vestry for 2012).

As of today (4/24/2012), a total of \$232,654.78 in income was received during the first four (4) months of the year, including:

- a total of \$57,967.91 in income received during April including a total of \$40,251.09 in pledge income received and
- \$10,326.50 received in the Easter offering.

A total of \$230,071.17 was disbursed during the first four (4) months of this year, including a total of \$58,191.57 disbursed during April. Essentially, the operating budget is in balance during April, and we see a small surplus of \$2,583.61 in the operating budget through the first four (4) months of the year.

While there are many factors which contribute to this positive situation, a portion of this surplus reflects the delay in the hiring of a Sunday School director – initially, this position had been projected to be filled at the beginning of April. It now appears that it may take another month to fill this position, and so the savings in this area contributes to the surplus being seen in the operating budget at this time. This savings offsets slightly higher costs projected to be seen in the area of clergy compensation, so it appears that expenses in 2012 could fall as much as \$4,000.00 below the estimate for disbursements included in the balanced budget approved by the Vestry for 2012.

Contributions in the combined total of **\$10,751.50** were received for the Easter offering this year, slightly higher than our budget estimate of \$10,600.00 and slightly higher than the total of \$10,604.00 received for the Easter offering in 2011. Many thanks to all who gave so generously this year.

This pattern of faithful stewardship has been seen in pledge payments as well – a total of \$167,192.68 was received in pledge offerings through the first four (4) months of this year, slightly higher than the budget estimate of \$166,410.00 projected to be received in pledge offerings during the this four-month period. **We continue to appreciate everyone's efforts to keep their pledge payments current.** Reflecting the continuing influx of newcomers in our parish, plate income during the first four (4) months of 2012 totaled \$4,699.30, which is \$699.30 (17.5%) higher than the budget estimate of \$4,000.00 for this four-month period – this experience indicates that plate offer-

ings could exceed budget estimates by nearly \$3,000.00 this year.

As indicated above, expenses continue to be held within projected limits. The relatively mild winter resulted in lower-than-projected costs for snow removal services, and the volunteer maintenance effort led by **Steve Dean, Leonard Lee and Aileen Moodie** have kept maintenance-related expenses in line with budget allowances (*the first time in many, many years when we have been in this situation*). Thanks to the leadership of **Linda Caleb** and to all who have supported our hospitality events through the donation of food and labor (both set-up and clean-up), costs for hospitality-related events are within budget allowances and are roughly \$1,800.00 below the comparable costs for the first four (4) months of 2011.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Finance Committee for all of their hard work in recent months – **Amy Miller, Chair; Andrew Walter +, Rector; Paul Brown; Linda Caleb; Peter Curtin; Kent Kester; Aileen Moodie; and Tony Yezer, Treasurer.**

Gib Bailly
Fiscal Officer

Grace Handyman Ministry, cont.

In general, the cost of supplies will be the responsibility of the person receiving assistance. However, the ministry will maintain a small fund for purchase of commonly used supplies (i.e., bulk items). At its discretion, this fund may also be used for purchase of safety-related items that the ministry may recommend beyond the services requested.

Any donations to Grace Handyman Ministry, in excess of the material cost, will be gratefully accepted.

Greetings from the Day School - Essential Life Skills



For the last several weeks in the School's *Backpack Bulletin* I have been sharing with the School families the seven essential life skills every child needs.

- Focus and self-control
- Perspective taking
- Communicating
- Making connections
- Critical thinking
- Taking on challenges
- Self-directed, engaged learning

These skills were in a book written by Ellen Galinsky, titled *Mind in the Making*. Ellen Galinsky wrote a chapter on each "life skill." Her introduction begins with an exercise: What is life like today? Think about some words that describe what life is like today. What words come to mind?

I wonder if my words would be the same as your words. I imagine many of us would think about things that have to do with time--not enough of it, it goes too quickly, so much to do in so little time. Others may think about uncertainties- the economy, relationships or health. Some may think about things that bring pleasure and fill us with joy.

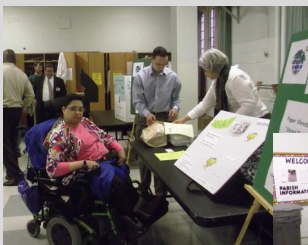
Ellen Galinsky's research shows that to manage what life brings us we need competency with the seven essential life skills. She believes that the skills are equally important for adults. In fact, adults need to practice them to promote them in our children.

Now that the end of the school year is near I am hoping that our families will be able to spend more time with their children and practice these life skills together. If you would like to see my articles about these seven life skills, they are in the issues of the *Backpack Bulletin* from March 15th through May 3rd.

In the last few weeks of school we will have our awards assembly, with the presentation of the **Daniel Benner Award** to the student who exemplifies scholarship, leadership and sportsmanship; the **Theolyn Wilson Music Award** to the student who has excelled in a solo musical performance and is a role model for other students; and the **Drew Nealley "Walkers" Award** for the student who has walked the most miles throughout the school year. A reunion for the Class of 2006, their families and teachers, track and field day in Kensington, games day in Silver Spring, closing chapel and graduation at the church followed by a picnic at Kensington will round out the year.

Donna Harshman
Acting Head of School

Earth Day Celebration - Sunday, April 22



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

Recently, I read an article in the New York Times by Sherry Turkle, a psychologist and professor at MIT. Turkle has written a new book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, which looks at the effect technology is having on the way we live our lives. Many people have been studying this issue, of course, and a lot has been written on the subject, but I was struck by what Turkle had to say. She points out that we live in a technological world in which we are always communicating, and yet, we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection. "At home, families sit together, texting and reading email. At work, executives text during board meetings. We text (and shop and go on Facebook) during classes and when we are on dates."

Those illustrations really hit home for me. When my wife and I take our boys out for dinner, we end up sitting around the table with one of them texting, one playing a video game on his cell, and the third one checking his Facebook page via his iPhone. We can barely get their attention! And, how many of us have been in a meeting while others around the table are constantly glancing down, looking at their phone which they hold in their lap just below the level of the table, trying to be discreet and not seen as being rude? We all have.

Turkle describes our condition as being "alone together." Our technology enables us to be with one another, and also elsewhere, connected to whomever we want, wherever they are. So, we can be at a table with family, or in a meeting with colleagues, and yet still be isolated, cut off from those in our presence.

The day after I read Turkle's article, I had to go into downtown Washington for a meeting. One of my favorite things about living in a metropolitan area is taking public transportation so I walked from our apartment building to the nearby Metro. As I

took my seat on the train, I noticed many, many people sitting in their seats, wearing their headphones, obviously listening to their favorite music. It is a common scene these days – one I have seen before – but until I read Turkle's article, I never noticed how prevalent it was. Suddenly, I realized just how many people on that train were engrossed in their music, and I understood that we were all "alone together."

Please do not get me wrong – this is not a piece bashing technology. I love my cellphone and my iPod. I like that I can send and receive emails and text messages. I like having my favorite songs at the tip of my fingers. But, you know what else I like? People. I like being around people! One of my favorite aspects of our life at Grace Church is our great social and fellowship events. In my year as Rector, I have been struck by how much fun we all seem to have in the Undercroft. Just recently we had an amazing Easter Brunch and a great celebration of Earth Day. There is nothing like spending time with people you love.

So, I am going to keep my cellphone and iPod, but I am also going to keep attending all of our special events. That way, we can be together together.



Earth Day Celebration



Have thoughts, comments or questions about Andrew's articles (or even his sermons)? He would love to hear from you.

Please email him at awalter@graceepiscopalchurch.org