

Grace Notes

Grace United Methodist Church

5407 North Charles Street., Baltimore, Maryland 21210 • 410-433-6650



www.GraceUnitedMethodist.org

--To Act so that God's Love is Felt by All--

Volume 27, No. 6

June 2019

June worship and preaching

JUNE 2 - End of the Church School Year Celebration - Rev. Amy McCullough preaching

JUNE 9 - Pentecost Sunday - Pastor Dane Wood preaching

JUNE 16 - Father's Day - Rev. Amy McCullough preaching

JUNE 23 - Pastor Dane Wood preaching

JUNE 30 - Rev. Amy McCullough preaching



Summer Meal Ministry resumes this summer

Our Mission-Outreach Team announces the return of our summer meal ministry! As in years past, we will be offering a simple summer supper in the Wilson Park North neighborhood as a ministry of presence in a nearby community. These meals provide nourishment to children and youth who may become food insecure during the summer months. This summer we will be partnering with Wilson Park Christian Community Church, located on York Road near Cold Spring Lane. It has graciously offered to be the site for the summer meals.

Meal service will begin the week of June 17 and will run through August 31. Look for the volunteer sign-up sheet in early June so that you can participate in sharing a meal with our neighbors.

We are also hiring a summer meal coordinator to assist with this meal ministry. This is a very part-time summer job. To receive more information about the position, please contact the church office.

Youth Mission Trip June 16-21 - Harrisburg, PA



Through an organization called Youth Works, our team from Grace will be working with development organizations as they seek to break the cycle of generational poverty. They may be serving in projects such as a local children's program, a community garden, helping with small home repair or in a senior care facility. Please pray for these youth and their chaperones and look forward to learning more upon their return.

AUCTION AND GALA!!

Thanks to everyone to participated in any way with this year's Auction and Gala. Not all figures are yet in, but it appears that this fundraising project's totals exceeded \$10,000 goal.

If you gave of your time and energy in planning and executing, donated an auction item, or were a successful bidder, we are grateful.

Our backpack ministry is the beneficiary of your generosity!

Grace's Way Forward

by Marie A. Yeh, Chair of the Church Council

Having shared these statements at church services on Sunday, May 5th, I also wanted to update those who could not make services with recent activities of the Church Council. Previously in *Grace Notes*, I wrote about the Council's retreat activity where we engaged in a powerful process of sharing our personal stories about times Grace has deeply affected and inspired us which developed a guiding statement for us. At our latest meeting on April 30th, the Council voted to accept the work we did as our new mission statement. Grace's new mission statement is:

To Act so that God's Love is Felt by All. We will achieve this:

- By welcoming all who seek to feel closer to God,*
- By serving others and doing God's work,*
- By creating a sense of belonging and family for one another,*
- By caring for each other daily but especially in our times of greatest need,*
- By bearing witness to the suffering in the world and taking action to fight injustice,*
- By helping each other grow personally, spiritually and in community with one another*
- By becoming more whole in our efforts towards perfecting our love for God and walking in the ways of Jesus*

I wanted to share our new mission statement, because I want to be clear that the Council created and adopted this new mission statement prior to our in-depth discussion and decisions we made regarding the outcomes of the United Methodist's Church's General Conference in February of this year. As many of you are familiar, the General Conference is the legislative body for all matters affecting the United Methodist Church. The February Conference was specifically convened to work toward resolving conflicts around the inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the life of the church. There they passed, by narrow margins, laws to continue the exclusion of LGBTQ persons from the rites of ordination and marriage and upheld the current, hurtful language that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching." Not only did they uphold these decisions, they also now expressly prohibit pastors from performing same-sex weddings or conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions which include severe penalties for violating these laws. For the first offense, a clergy member who performs a same sex wedding would be penalized with a year's suspension without pay with a second offense resulting in termination of their ordination.

We as a Council waited to make decisions regarding this matter until the Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church met to see what aspects of the conference's decision were upheld by the Judicial Council. While changes were made, the above key components were upheld.

When we met on Tuesday, April 30th, we as a group engaged in an in-depth discussion on the General Conference rulings and came to the unanimous decision to emphatically REJECT the positions upheld and passed by the general conference which segregate and separate people who are LGBTQ from the grace of God and the Love of Jesus Christ. We as United Methodists are called to "Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God." With this calling, we affirm that the exclusion of any person in Christ's Body is harmful not only to those affected but to all aspiring to follow the example of Jesus. Every person is created in the image of God and God's grace is for everyone. As such, we speak out in opposition to the position passed by the General Conference. We believe that all persons, regardless of their sexuality, can be faithful Christians and should be included in the life of the United Methodist Church in all its aspects.

Many in the United Methodist Church agree with us in finding the General Conference's position to be inconsistent with our understanding of God's love, grace, and mercy. We take hope that many within our denomination are also speaking out. While additional actions will be considered, the Church Council will be making a public statement by publishing an advertisement in the Baltimore Sun proclaiming our dissent to the General Conference's decision using many of the words I share with you in this article. We will also be lodging a formal letter of protest to the Baltimore Washington Conference and the General Conference. We stand with other LGBTQ affirming congregations in taking action to resist and overturn the decisions of our governing body. This issue is far from resolved.

For those of our members who are LGBTQ, as a Church, we see your suffering, we value you, we love you, we support and stand with you, and we will fight this injustice for you. Grace United Methodist Church of Baltimore is the product of merging four churches across three different branches of Methodism. We would not be who we are today without celebrating the wide and varied cultures of our community and of our members. We welcome ALL who desire to feel closer to God. We serve others by following Christ's example. We strive for perfection in Christ's love as a family of God. We will fight this and other injustices that we see. We will work for change. Grace Church remains a welcoming, reconciling congregation.

Grace welcomes Dr. Arthur Sutherland as Theologian-in-Residence, 2019-2020



Grace is excited to welcome Dr. Arthur M. Sutherland to our congregation as he serves as a Theologian-in-Residence during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Dr. Sutherland is an Associate Professor of Theology at Loyola University Maryland and Class Dean of the Class of 2020. He has advanced degrees from Yale University Divinity School and Princeton Theological Seminary. He did research in Germany and Switzerland for his doctoral dissertation on the early sermons of Karl Barth. He has received fellowships from the Fund for Theological Education, the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, the Christian Scholars Fund, and the Wabash Center for the Teaching of Theology and Religion. He serves on the board of the Lilly Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities. Before moving to Baltimore, he was

a minister for a small church in Windsor, CT.

He has made presentations to churches and academic organizations across the United States and has been featured in *USA Today* and other publications. His book, *I Was Stranger: A Theology of Christian Hospitality* which addresses topics like immigration, exile and violence, was nominated to receive the Grawemeyer Award for Religion.

His wife, Mary, shares his interests in community activism, homeschooling and good food from scratch. His son Ethan is eight; his daughter Gabrielle is eleven.

The task of the theologian-in-residence is to be of use to the local congregation in its witness to Jesus as it bridges its witness to the life of the world. The theologian-in-residence does this by keeping before the congregation three questions:

Who are we, really?

Where are we, really?

What do we want, really?

While he is with us, Dr. Sutherland will be writing a commentary on Ezekiel for Westminster/John Knox Press and editing a volume of essays on Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail." He will be sharing with us his progress on these projects by asking for feedback, and also facilitating a series of Saturday morning workshops. His first workshop will be in September on the topic of Christian hospitality. He will preach in October, and then again in the winter/spring of 2020.

Dr. Sutherland will be introduced to the congregation in worship at both services on Sunday, June 16, and then officially begin his time with us in September. Welcome to Grace, Dr. Sutherland!

Received by email

Your Rainbow flags

My husband and I attend Osher Life Long Learning classes at your church, and although I am Jewish, have always been interested in seeing how an "establishment," main-line Protestant church such as yours continues to survive in this difficult time for many churches and synagogues. Having been a former member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, I have been aware of the Methodist Church's internal struggle regarding reproductive justice and marriage equality issues. That is why I have always admired your AIDS ministry and your sign in the side entrance that Grace Church is a "welcoming" church. When I pulled into the church's parking lot last week and noticed the rainbow flags billowing proudly from the majestic columns, a big smile appeared on my face! Unlike the Omaha confirmation class that is waiting to hear its congregation's response to the recent ruling from your national meeting before becoming Methodists, the youngsters in your congregation need not wait for an answer. I wish you continued success in spreading the Good News to the Baltimore community. Hate definitely will not find a home at Grace United Methodist Church.

Roni Berkowitz



Happy Birthday

to those of our church family celebrating in June:

- 1 Karen White
- 2 Ed Caster, Erica Underland
- 3 Duncan Barnes, Holland Barnes, Bob Gayler, James Thorne, Angie Wasylak
- 5 Tom Gordon, Laura Headley
- 6 Piper A'Hern, Jackson Davis, Drew Landgren
- 7 Anna Mae Frederick, Lani Sinfield
- 8 Annette Beachler, Christen Bradley
- 9 Lynne A'Hern
- 10 John Thorne
- 12 Genevieve Schuh
- 13 Jeanne Achuff, Grace Hayes, James Topper
- 14 Lorraine K. Foley, David Haile, Richard Hall, Thomas Lynn
- 15 Kitty Allen
- 16 Allison Trumpler
- 17 Hailey Benson-Williams
- 18 Casey Humbyrd
- 19 Susan Hennighausen, James Pflaum, Chelsea White
- 21 MaAn Barcelo, Joyce McKissick, Kwesi Turkson, Carl Weber
- 22 Susan Schumacher
- 23 Chelsea Doak
- 24 Emma Draper
- 26 Diane Chambers, Maggie McGrath, Lois Wellener, Marie Yeh
- 27 Corey Schmidt
- 28 Sharon King, David Klindienst
- 29 Judson Arnold, Sarah Guth
- 30 Rob Murray



Grace Preschool students in their May 3 "Pedal for Pediatrics" fundraiser to benefit the J. H. Kimmel Cancer Center Pediatric Oncology Center. More than \$8,000 was raised!

Trisha says "Thank you!"

Dear Grace Family-

As a new chapter begins, one has to close. I would like to start by saying thank you to each and every one of you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of a wonderful community for almost four years. When I started at Grace United Methodist Church in 2015 you opened your arms to me and made me feel welcomed right from the beginning. There were people that helped me move all of my "pink stuff" into a room that I made into my space and then took me out to dinner, and others that came into my office just to say hello and eat my candy! I will never forget the kind generosity that was shared.

Thank you to the extraordinary Grace Staff for all of your support through the years and the amazing luncheon and beautiful flowers. It was a wonderful way to end my last days in the office having time to relax and chat with all of you.

Fast forward to today. All I can say is "Wow!" Thank you so much for the amazing send off to the next step in my career. The celebration of my ministry, Children, Youth, and Family on Sunday April 7th was very special and heart-warming from the children singing to Rev. Amy's children's moment to Linda English's amazing words! The kind comments before and after the service from members of the congregation and let me not forget the perfect pink fellowship time!! Over the past years, I was so blessed to work with an awesome Children's Ministry Team (Linda English, Jody Wiseman, Wayne Schmidt, Abbi Bayne, Biz Shaner, and Michelle Riddle) and Youth Ministry Team (Doug Schmidt, Jim Grandsire, Wayne Schmidt, Mark Ottinger). Thank you! The children, youth, and their families will forever have a very special space in my heart and I will miss you all!

As I enter this new calling in my life, I know that God will be with me guiding me each day just as I know that He will bring to Grace the next person to continue growing the children and youth programs that have been such a special part of my life through these past years!

Thank you for being a part of a wonderful chapter in my life! Blessings to All,

Trisha (Dr. Trisha Wetzelberger)

Within the Family at Grace

DEATH

Lura Ellen Warren
April 27, 2019

BAPTISM

Caroline Grace Thomas (born February 2, 2019)
daughter of Kacey and Philip Thomas
May 12, 2019

FROM THE MINISTER OF MUSIC...



Our **PENTECOST CELEBRATION** on Sunday, June 9th will feature some special handbell and choral music presented by the Sonlight Youth Choir on tour from First Baptist Church in Gainesville, GA. These youth ensembles are under the direction of Mark Green and Steve Coldiron. This visiting Youth Choir will team up with Grace's Youth Choir to provide a festive and lively celebration for our Pentecost worship! Make plans now to attend worship that day to hear these talented youth choristers!

JOIN THE SUMMER CHOIR

Beginning June 16 and continuing through the month of July, the Chancel Choir will continue to sing in worship. The choir will not rehearse on Thursday evenings during the summer months but will rehearse prior to worship at 9:15 a.m. in the choir room. If you are interested in singing with the choir (without having to commit to a Thursday night rehearsal!), please plan to join us for this short-term commitment. All are welcome! Questions can be directed to Chris Schroeder at chris@graceunitedmethodist.org.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, YOUTH, HANDBELL AND CHANCEL CHOIRS

and congratulations to all the singers and players for their participation in choir throughout this past year! Their countless hours of preparation and rehearsals are truly appreciated by all who hear them! A heartfelt and sincere thank you also to Miss Mairin Srygley, director of the Sunday School Choir, to Mr. Robert Cantrell, director of the Youth Choir, and to Jane Benson, who has been leading the Handbell Choir. You are gems to us all!

MUSIC AT GRACE CONCERT SERIES

Join us for the Fifth Annual PATRIOTIC CONCERT

SUNDAY, JUNE 30th at 3:00 p.m.

with the Chancel Choir leading the congregational singing accompanied by brass, timpani and organ.

Wear your red, white and blue and celebrate America's birthday with us! ICE CREAM SOCIAL to follow!



PIPE ORGAN PROJECT

As announced in the January *Grace Notes*, Grace's pipe organ is undergoing some much needed work that includes cleaning, repairing and revoicing of the pipes. That work began right after Easter when workers from Angerstein Organ Works came to

Grace to remove several ranks of pipes, which were taken back to the organ shop in Hendersonville, NC to begin the work. This project will continue through the summer months, and the new, improved organ with a whole new tonal sound will be fully operational by November. We are grateful to the Trustees of Grace Church for financially supporting this project!



CONGRATULATIONS ROBERT!

WHAT A JOY AND PRIVILEGE to see and hear our own Robert Cantrell starring as Porgy in the Baltimore Symphony performances of "Porgy & Bess" at the Meyerhoff. He stole the show!! We are so proud of you! You got plenty a somethin' wonderful!

Report from the Trustees

Grace Facilities study

Early this year it was announced to the congregation that the Grace United Methodist Church Board of Trustees had initiated a study to determine what the church's goals should be for any changes to the church building to meet the current and future needs of the entire congregation and others who use the facilities. Waldon Studio Architects was introduced to the congregation at a Sunday service as the firm selected to guide Grace through this process.

The first phase of this study process has been completed. Short-term and long-term goals have been identified, submitted to and approved by the Trustees and endorsed by the Church Council. The goals attempt to address areas where the most benefit can be provided to the congregation in its usage of the Church space. The priority of the study committee was to allow the congregation to come together more in our space, allow us to increase our engagement and mission outreach involvement and make sure our facility has the tools to allow us to engage and grow. A summary of the short term and long term goals in priority order appears below:

Short term goals

1. Improved signage
2. Technology upgrades: sanctuary lighting / sound / video, wi-fi
3. Hallway / room brightening / lighting improvements
4. Short term hospitality / entrance greeting options
5. Improved welcoming entrance / access security

Long term goals

1. Improved gathering space / entry-narthex access / circulation / accessible restrooms
2. Improved entryway / hospitality / office space
3. Courtyard usage / access: possible use as chapel
4. Relocated chapel

Short term goals focus on allowing people to quickly and easily find their way around the Church and improving the aesthetics and functionality of key existing spaces in the Church. Long term goals focus on improving the circulation, gathering and office spaces in the core of the building where there is maximum usage and traffic flow.

+ + +

Since this report was presented to and affirmed by the Church Council, but after press time, the proposal was discussed at a meeting with the congregation held after worship on Sunday, May 19th. If there were any changes or suggestions made at that meeting, look for updated information as to progress and plans for funding. The article above was submitted by Scott Stevens of the committee.



Grace Church is proud of those graduating this spring. Our heartiest congratulations and best wishes! If there are others we should celebrate, please send their names and information to kitty.allen@verizon.net

HIGH SCHOOL

ABIGAIL BENFER, daughter of Eric and Robin Benfer and granddaughter of Carolyn Benfer, will graduate from Glenelg High School in Howard County on May 30. Abby is planning to continue her education at Howard County Community College. She is an artist and her goal is to major in Visual Arts and Graphic Arts for a Bachelor of Arts degree.

GRACE HAYES graduates from Bryn Mawr on June 11 and will attend the University of Colorado at Boulder in the fall.

COLLEGE

BECKY (REBECCA J.) BLACKSTONE graduated summa cum laude from NYU with a degree in Film and Television. She is remaining in New York City to work in the film industry.

BECKY SHANER graduated from West Chester University, summa cum laude, with a double degree in Psychology and Social Work. She was in the honor society for both degrees: Phi Alpha and Psi Chi. She will be returning home to work and consider pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work. She would like to work in a nursing home facility or organization that serves senior/older adults.

Grace Book Club

The June 13th meeting of the Book Club will feature a discussion of *Educated* by Tara Westover. Those interested are invited to the Church Parlor at 7:00 p.m.

Future books to be read include:

July 8th - *The Dry* by Jane Harper

August 12th - *Code Girls* by Liza Mundy





BALTIMORE PRIDE WEEKEND

June 15-16

On Saturday, June 15, members of the seven Baltimore Reconciling Congregations will once again march as a group with the Faith Communities of Baltimore delegation. Come be a part of some 300 church members representing over 30 faith communities. For us as United Methodists, we need to make a visible witness that there are United Methodist Churches that support the LGBTQ

community, no matter what they may have heard.

The parade will start at 1:00 p.m. at 33rd and Charles Streets and continue south on Charles to 23rd Street. Those participating in the parade are asked to be in place by 12:30 p.m. However, if past years are a guide, you can join our group at 1:00 p.m. or even while we are parading down Charles Street. We will have rainbow flags and beads to pass out to those watching the parade.

On Sunday, June 16, the Pride Festival moves to Druid Hill Park from noon to 6 p.m. The Baltimore Reconciling Congregations will have table space for handing out our congregations' information within the Faith Community of Baltimore tents. Come on out for a few hours in the park. There will be many displays, crafts, food and entertainment for the entire family. If you can volunteer for an hour or so at our display table, that would be helpful.

You are encouraged to participate in the activities of Pride Weekend and show your support for the LGBTQ community. If you have any questions contact George Kahl at the church office 410-433-6650. George is the contact person between Grace and the Faith Communities of Baltimore. We look forward to seeing you at Baltimore Pride.

Flowers for Fathers

Remember your Dad, Grandpa, Brother, Uncle and special friends

I/We wish to purchase _____ flower(s) (\$2.00 each) to be placed in the Chancel for Father's Day, June 16, 2019.

Proceeds will benefit our Vacation Bible School.

All orders must be placed by Sunday, June 9



IN HONOR OF

IN MEMORY OF

PURCHASED BY

ENVELOPE NO: _____ TOTAL: _____



Still time to sign up for Vacation Bible School

June 24-28

9:00 to noon

Children ages 3 and up

Children will go "To Mars and Beyond" to explore where God's power can take us. Out of this world fun, learning and timeless Bible stories. Wildlife Adventures will be a part of the VBS program with a different one of God's creatures there each day.

An extended day option is available upon request.

Registration can be made using a form available in the church office or simply by calling the office at 410-433-6650

We are also in need of a few additional volunteers - please contact Rev. Amy McCullough - amy@graceunitedmethodist.org



AIDS Benefit Variety Show

On Service Sunday, several of the acts from the weathered-out original show performed in Fellowship Hall. Thanks to the Hucklebells, David Haile, Jane Benson, John Gryzbowski, Henry Perry, Kevin Shaner, Luke McCullough, Mike McGuire, Kristin Turner, and of course, Chris Schroeder who organized it all as well as performing at the piano. Sorry the whole show could not be rescheduled, but this much was FUN! (The lighting was not great for photos...)



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VACATION



Theatre School

Vacation Theatre School returns for another summer week of fun for children ages 5 and older August 19-23 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Throughout the week, we will prepare to put on a play for Friday night, working on learning lines, painting and setting the stage, practicing with microphones and all the stuff that goes on behind the stage. There will be a potluck dinner Friday for the families before the 6:30 p.m. curtain time.

Contact Samantha Southern with any questions samantha.southern@gmail.com

STAFF CLEANING

It is so easy to accumulate stuff and the busy nooks and crannies around the church are evidence of that!

During the week of June 10, members of the staff will undertake a needed cleaning of our building. If you are a ministry leader or committee chair with material stored in closets or rooms, please take stock of your things, marking what is still needed and what

can and should be tossed. There will be a dumpster onsite and major efforts made to clean up, clean out and reorganize. Thank you!



TRUSTEE WORK DAY

Members of the congregation are invited to join the Trustees on **Saturday, June 22 from 9 to noon** to help us "Spruce up for Spring"!

We'll be mostly working outside to clean up the grounds and parking lot, window wells, etc. Lend a willing hand; trash bags and refreshments will be provided!