“Love God, Do Good, Grow in Grace”

Thanks to your faithfulness and generosity, Grace United Methodist Church witnessed to God’s love in many ways during the past year. Our stewardship campaign for the upcoming year is based on 1 John 3:18 which reads “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth.” Knowing the call to us to spread God’s love through our living, Grace will continue to grow our ministries within the congregation, into the community, and throughout the world in the year ahead.

A stewardship packet is mailed to each Grace household in late October, and we ask that you prayerfully read through the materials and complete a pledge card of your 2020 financial commitment. Congregational giving represents 60% of the annual Operating Budget. Your pledge is vital to the ministries of God through Grace, and every pledge is received with gratitude. We ask for pledges to be submitted by Sunday, November 10, and hope you will join us that day for a morning of celebration.

PRE-ADVENT WORKSHOP

Advent is a season of holy expectation in which we are invited to get in touch with our longings for home, love, peace, joy and God. Spanning the four weeks prior to Christmas, Advent invites us to prepare our hearts for Christ’s birth, just as we are preparing our homes for Christmas. This year Grace will offer a pre-Advent workshop on Sunday, November 24. Beginning at 11:15 a.m., the congregation will have an opportunity to make an Advent wreath or create an Advent table decoration. Lunch will be served, for a nominal fee. This is a wonderful way to prepare for the Advent season with your church family. Advent begins December 1.
A recap of the Church Council meeting

The Church Council’s meeting on Wednesday, October 2, was a lively one with several items on the agenda for discussion. We began by receiving the proposed 2020 Operating Budget, which will be finalized following the fall stewardship campaign.

Next, the Council received a report from Pastor Dane Wood and Doug Schmidt about the recent United Methodist Leadership Institute they attended in Kansas City. That report is included in this issue of Grace Notes.

Flowing from the report, Pastor Dane presented a proposal to alter the Sunday morning schedule to create a “Sunday School hour” between the early and later worship services, through slight shifts in our worship times. While reviewing several possible options, the Council affirmed the goal of creating more space on Sunday mornings for children and adults to be engaged in faith formation through study, and moving as a congregation to a practice of a “2-hour” Sunday morning. In the coming weeks, the proposal will be taken to the Children’s Ministry team and the Worship Committee for further discussion with reports brought back to the Church Council.

Lastly, Rev. McCullough presented a plan to study Grace’s committee structure during 2020. Grace’s committees have been structured in a two-fold pattern of roughly four administrative committees, several programmatic or ministry-related committees, a few ad-hoc or special committees, and an overarching Church Council. Several different models exist which are known as a Simplified Board or a Unified Board. A sub-committee is being formed to explore such models and present a recommendation to the Council during the upcoming year. Church Council members are serving on the sub-committee, which also has space for other interested participants. If you are interested in joining the study, speak directly with Rev. McCullough.

The Council concluded with a time of sharing ministry reports and a final prayer. The next Church Council meeting will be on Wednesday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Summer facility activity at Grace

Although many members of the Grace Church congregation look to the summer months as a time of rest and recuperation from hectic times of work and school activities, the Grace pastors, staff and some committees were extremely busy coordinating and implementing various maintenance and other facility-related projects to prepare for the coming church season. Extensive work was completed during the summer months which included:

- completion of exterior painting of the church and education building
- repainting of railings
- stripping and refinishing of floors in the main building
- reconditioning of the sanctuary organ which is still underway. Ranks of pipes have been removed, reconditioned and reinstalled. Most of the congregation is probably unaware that the organ has not been at full strength since early spring, for which we can count our blessings for the expertise of Chris and David in providing the music for our ears and minds. Yet to come is completion of the work on the digital portion of this wonderful instrument.
- the kitchen was painted and cleaned
- the Courtyard was power washed
- window wells have been cleaned and repainted, and the drains cleaned out
- storage spaces were opened and sorted. Two dumpster loads of items were removed and usable goods donated to Goodwill and the Salvation Army
- soundproofing of offices on the lower level was completed
- a new financial system was selected and will be implemented after the year-end reports are complete
- planning for renovation of the Parsonage kitchen and dining area was completed and construction began the last week of September
- the Facilities Study Committee concluded its work with Waldon Studios in identifying and recommending to the Trustees a list of short-term actions and long-term goals to determine how Grace’s building can best support the existing ministries, congregation and visitors. The Trustees have acted upon the recommendations and the vision for Grace’s current and future physical facility was presented to the congregation at a meeting following worship on October 6.

The Trustees wish to express deep appreciation to the pastors, church staff and committee members for all of their hard work in accomplishing these activities.

– Dick Frank, Trustee chair
HALLOWEEN PARTY

Be wacky and kooky, 'cause this celebration is not-so-spooky!

Join us for a fun Halloween party! Come see all the costumes, share treats, fun games and entertainment. It’ll be quite a sight when we celebrate at our party on Saturday, November 2 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. We are asking for donations of sweet treats. There will be an admission fee for all children, which is to bring a friend. Please see Carolyn Young, Director of Children’s Ministry, for more details. Carolyn@graceunitedmethodist.org.

BREAKFAST
Sunday, November 3rd
(Don’t forget to turn your clocks back one hour)
9:00-9:30 a.m. - Breakfast pancakes, bacon, eggs, other breakfast items
9:30-9:50 - Witness about our saints

Our Youth will be hosting and serving breakfast for all the church’s saints. That means EVERYONE! Bring some pictures or heirlooms to share, and we’d love to hear stories about the influential saints in your life. Donations accepted to support Youth activities.

A Youth Lock-in will be held on Friday night, November 1 starting at 7:00 p.m. All students 6th to 12th grade are welcome. Wear a costume and stay up all night. We’ll eat, party, watch movies and play games. Bring a friend or 3! Please contact Pastor Dane to let him know you are coming!

BSO Concert to recognize hospice/palliative care patients, volunteers

November is National Hospice/Palliative Care and Caregiver’s Month. On Saturday, November 16 at 2:00 p.m. Hospice Volunteer Coordinators from Professional Healthcare Resources will recognize hospice patients, caregivers and volunteers here at Grace UM Church. A mini concert will be given by a select small group of musicians from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Light refreshments will be served following the concert. All are welcome. Please see Carolyn Young, Director of Children’s Ministry for details. Carolyn@graceunitedmethodist.org.

ADULT CLASS
Sundays @ 11:00 AM

Beginning this fall, we will be exploring the New Testament from the Gospel of Matthew to the Book of Revelation.

As our core material we will be using course material written and prepared by Dr. Bart D. Ehrman, Professor of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina. Each session will consist of a half-hour lecture presented via audio-visual format (DVD) followed by a half-hour discussion by the class.

Our study will start with an orientation in the world of Greco-Roman pagan cults and the setting of early Judaism - examining the beliefs, sacred spaces, liturgical practices and distinguishing features of the relations surrounding the beginnings of Christianity.

We will be studying each of the Gospels in the light of historical evidence. Then we will examine the importance and context of Paul’s ministry and finish with an exploration of the Book of Revelation.

We meet one-half hour following the close of the 10 AM worship service. You are welcome to join us then in the Heritage Room, #116.
Birthday Greetings

Heartiest congratulations to those of our Grace family celebrating birthdays in November.

1  Ed Frederick, Heather Sharpe
2  Jonathan Howe, Dr. W. Richard Shindle, Joanne Weber
3  Suzanna McCullough, Priscilla Newton
4  Jim Fitzgerald
5  Alice Mack
6  Amanda Friedel, Sam Harris
10 Dr. Susan T. Strahan, Arthur Thompson
11 Jason Bradley, Maureen Danz
12 Carl Armstrong, William White, David Wingate
13 C. William Clark
14 Holly Troyer
15 Douglas A’Hern, Sara Mullan
16 Kayley Harris, Lois Klein, Carole McCrory
17 Brady Bayne, Jacob Bissett, Linda English
19 Matthew Green, Helen Mosher
20 Cecelia Adams
22 Francette Boling, M. Lee Starkey
23 Marcos Calderon, Scott Hudson, Downing Kay, Amy Coates Madsen
24 Diane Lesman
25 Elizabeth Adolph, Linda Benson, Barbara Simmons
27 Marina Chobanov, Sheri Gimigliano
29 Betsy Scott

SPECIAL GIFTS

We acknowledge with gratitude the following special gifts to MUSIC in memory of Dr. Richard Hall by Kitty Allen and Pat Volker

OCTOBER AT GRACE

by Susan Baukhages

October at Grace is on the face of all who enter her doors, and partake of a warmth at the hearth of acceptance, and then leave to lead, steeped in renewal, which is, of course, at the core of God’s grace.

Music at Grace

Concert Series

On Sunday, November 10 at 3:00 p.m., students from the Baltimore School for the Arts will once again present OPERA SCENES, directed by our Bass soloist, Robert Cantrell. Come hear these talented students perform favorite scenes from famous operas. This event has no admission fee but a free will offering will be available. A reception will follow in the Parlor.

* * *

Make plans to hear the New Wave Singers of Baltimore, a community of gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and straight people, as they present a Christmas Concert on Saturday, December 7th at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary at Grace Church. Tickets are available at the door or by visiting their website: www.newwavesingers.org.

16th Annual Holiday Brass Concert

Tuesday, December 3rd at 7:30 p.m.
Cathedral of Mary Our Queen
5200 N. Charles Street

Our own Kathie Metz and Chris Schroeder will be participating in this popular event, along with Jim Wharton and the Catonsville High Steel Drum band and the Concert Chorale from St. Paul’s School for Boys. Discounted tickets of $22 are available through Kitty Allen. She can be reached at 410-494-8589 or kitty.allen@verizon.net or in church on Sundays.

Music for Worship:

a weekly epistle on the music presented in worship

In each week’s E-notes and on Grace’s website, you can read a weekly commentary written by our Minister of Music, Chris Schroeder, regarding the music presented in worship on Sunday. Chris speaks about how the music that will be sung and played corresponds to the scripture readings of the day. Also included in the weekly commentary are recordings of Chris’s practice of the various pieces, giving you a preview of what you will hear. Chris’s hope is that these notes will enhance the worship experience of each member of the congregation, allowing an opportunity for a deeper spiritual connection to God during worship.
Grace welcomes new members

On Sunday, October 6, seven new members and a family of returning members were welcomed into the congregation at Grace. Please extend a warm welcome when you see them at church!

Patsy Andrews

Valerie Pasquale

Al and Vicki Saxon

Sheldon Gruber-Lebowitz

(Left) Bo, Becky and David Farace

No photo available for Bonnie Tarbert, Mark Gruber (spouse of Sheldon), and Campbell and Wyatt Farace, the other sons of Becky and Dave.
David Shank update
On September 12, 2019, David Shank was received as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. He had previously been a provisional elder in the United Methodist Church, and many will remember him as our associate pastor here at Grace. Dave is now the associate pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Fulton, MD where his wife Carolyn is lead pastor. He is under the care of the Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA candidacy committee. Dave and Carolyn are the parents of 3-year old Gabriel David Shank.

Altar Flowers
DECEMBER ALTAR FLOWERS
1st Sunday  Mary White and Beth Ander
2nd Sunday  Getchel* and Beachler* families
3rd Sunday and Christmas Eve
Altar Flowers Danz.* (1) and __________
Urns Rinker * and __________
4th Sunday  Bruce Rice (1) and __________

Looking ahead, there is an opening for Easter flowers and for a new Paschal candle.
Please contact Claire Greenhouse at 410-337-7407 or aschoolrn@verizon.net for any changes or special requests. (*=standing order)

Again for this Thanksgiving season, Grace has committed to providing several baskets of food for families in need as identified by Roland Park Elementary School. Watch for notices in early November for when the baskets and lists of food items to provide a Thanksgiving meal will be available. Baskets will be due back to Grace by Sunday, November 24 for delivery on Monday, November 25.

ONE VIEWPOINT
The Music for Gathering, listed in the service bulletin each Sunday, is an integral and valued part of worship at Grace, inviting congregants to leave the pressures and worries of daily life outside, to calm the body and spirit in readiness to participate in a time of prayer and praise to God. It introduces them to a meditative atmosphere allowing for the centering of minds and hearts, to rejoice, to praise, to listen, to learn, to be inspired, uplifted and fed, prepared to embark on another week.

The planning of a service of worship by the staff involves the integration of scripture, sermon and prayers with complimentary hymns, anthems, solos, preludes, postludes, each ingredient intentionally chosen to meet our spiritual needs. Do you notice the theme each week? This inspirational whole begins with the first notes of the Music for Gathering and hopefully extends well beyond the last notes of the Music for Parting, as, fulfilled, you reenter the work-a-day world.

As a courtesy to those around you who come early to listen and prepare, a kindly suggestion to please refrain from casual conversation with your neighbor. The noise of talking is a distraction not only to those in the pews wanting to listen, but also to the musicians needing to focus as they create this meditative mood.
REPORT TO GRACE’S CHURCH COUNCIL ON

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2019

September 25-27, 2019

Pastor Dane Wood, Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Missions
Doug Schmidt, Lay Delegate to Annual Conference

Context
At the request of our Lead Pastor, Rev. Amy McCullough, we represented Grace Church at the Leadership Institute 2019 held at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas on September 25-27, 2019. This is an annual gathering of over 2,000 sponsored by the Church of the Resurrection. That church is led by the Rev. Adam Hamilton, one of our denomination’s most recognized pastors and known as a gifted orator, organizer, evangelist, and writer. The Church of the Resurrection is the largest church in The United Methodist constellation with 22 thousand members, half a dozen locations, and a massive church campus capable of hosting such a conference.

In recent years, Rev. Hamilton has come to represent the “centrist” portion of The United Methodist Church. This Leadership Institute 2019 was billed as more than the usual conference but as a gathering to address the future of The United Methodist Church “regarding human sexuality, with the aim of committing to full inclusion for all.” Hence, our desire for Grace to be present and represented. The conference consisted mostly of centrist and progressive churches and very few participants representing the ‘traditional’ position, but it did have present a dozen bishops, including the current President of the Council of Bishops, Bishop Ken Carter of Florida and the incoming President, Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey of Louisiana. In essence, the conference was not an isolated “preaching to the choir” conference but a major effort to mobilize the Centrists and Progressives in light of events described below.

Background
The United Methodist Church has been struggling since 1972 with the issue of human sexuality and full inclusion in the life of the church – ever since the infamous phrase “homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching” was voted into our Book of Discipline, the official doctrine of The United Methodist Church. Subsequent additions created even more strictures and prohibitions against LGBTQ pastors, contributions, ordinations, and more. One of the highlights of this Leadership Conference that we attended was to describe that this struggle over human sexuality within our church has a larger context, representing age-old disagreements such as women’s ordination, racial equality and logistical issues such as how to run the church, who should be included, how the Bible should be interpreted, and more.

The United Methodist Church, like many Protestant churches, has a checkered history of action and inaction concerning treatment of indigenous peoples, slavery, women in ministry/leadership and now human sexuality. We were impressed with one speaker who said that ‘resolving our issues in The United Methodist Church should not be done on the backs of the LGBTQ community.’ In other words, our LGBTQ brothers and sisters have suffered greatly, and we in The United Methodist Church should pray for forgiveness for any and all offenses – but we should likewise stop making the LGBTQ community pay the price for our inability to create a church that is inclusive and welcoming for all Christians.

General Conference is held every four years and is the only gathering of Methodists that can determine church doctrine and law, through voting. Our Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference votes on and sends General Conference Delegates, based on our percentage of members in the total global church. There was tremendous hope for the General Conference 2016 in Portland, Oregon. But the issue of human sexuality was too overwhelming for the Conference to deal with in one sitting. Eventually, the church punted to a future, special General Conference 2019 where the issue would be the only topic.

This special General Conference 2019 (with the same attendees as in 2016) was held in February this year in St. Louis to move the church beyond the issue of human sexuality. Multiple plans were put forward to change the structure of The United Methodist Church and eliminate the divisive doctrinal language. One plan known as “The Traditional Plan” was put forward to keep the exclusive language and installed harsher restrictions and punishments for violations. Most U.S. delegates were in favor of more moderate or progressive plans while a ‘traditional’ minority combined with a vast
majority of international delegates were in favor of the Traditional Plan. The Traditional Plan passed with a 3% majority. Finally, a petition set guidelines to allow individual churches to leave The United Methodist Church. However, this was ruled unconstitutional and the “graceful exit” guidelines no longer apply. (Many traditionalists came to the special General Conference 2019 prepared to lose, so they wanted a simple and non-costly method for their churches to leave. But they did not lose. So, somewhat paradoxically, there was a reasonable mechanism for any church to leave, whether traditional, centrist or progressive, but our judicial system struck that down.)

As you will remember, we at Grace Church and the Church Council reacted decisively to these events above. We discussed their ramifications, voted to reject at our church level the pronouncements of special General Conference 2019, and then published a letter in the Baltimore Sun proclaiming our belief in the sanctity and dignity of all humans and their full inclusion in our church with its open doors.

What Next?
To say that the United Methodist Church is in a state of flux would be a gross understatement. This uncertainty matters to all of us but no more so than to our LGBTQ friends and family who continue to be stigmatized, made second class members of the church, and now put into a worse position with new restrictions to be added on January 2020.

A full and normally scheduled (every four years) General Conference 2020 for the worldwide church will be held again in early May in Minneapolis. This precedes our scheduled Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference in late May, so as of this time, there is no possibility for our Annual Conference to gather and act ahead of the General Conference 2020. (The Bishop could call for one, but that is unlikely.)

Meanwhile, as you can imagine, there has been significant organizing and activity by all elements of The United Methodist Church. Here is what we learned that may eventually lead to change or results:

- New proposals for General Conference 2020. At least two new proposals are being put forward to change the structure of The United Methodist Church with the hope of ending the rifts.

- One proposal is the “Indianapolis Plan” which creates a “Methodist Convention” in which the UMC is split into 3-4 denominations which remain loosely connected under one tent.

- Another proposal is the Next Generation UMC Proposal, which was openly supported by the organizers of the Leadership Conference that we attended. This proposal is also complicated, and on the surface, seems like a rehashing of a losing proposal in 2019 and therefore a non-starter. It calls for the U.S. United Methodist Church to become its own ‘regional’ (central) conference, similar to how international conferences have their own central conference designations which allow them to edit and adapt portions of the Book of Discipline for their own contextual needs. This will allow the U.S. to adapt to its needs without forcing changes worldwide, and it would remove international delegates from votes and issues that are U.S. only.

- The Next Generation UMC proposal calls for a moratorium on church trials and accusations that have begun and will likely accelerate after January 1 (installment date of the Traditional Plan). You should know that pastors continue to be tormented by accusations and trials. These charges are very real and harmful and will only worsen beginning in 2020. Grace’s efforts to resist will become important.

- The Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA), the leader of the conservative groups (which include Good News and Confessing Movement among others) has already begun to remove themselves and has started writing their own constitution to create a new denomination. This is new information in all of these debates. Rev. Hamilton estimates that this group might represent 10-20% of U.S. churches. But, this would effectively change the balance of voting power at any General Conference and allow the remaining 28,000 or so churches to remove offensive language and laws from the UMC faith.

- Why would the WCA leave? Didn’t they win at General Conference 2019, over and over again with many votes taken? Yes, and no. We must understand that we are not all the same or in the same place. If you are in the WCA, it is not just the human sexuality issue. There are many other issues upon which you believe The United Methodist Church is moving in the wrong direction. In a very understandable manner, you can imagine that it is not their desire to rule with international churches over a large, fractious body of churches with such a variety of views on doctrine. From the point of view of the WCA, it is better to preside over only the churches that you know support your principles.
And what of the international UMC churches, including the African church which is the fastest growing in the UMC? What you may not know is that these churches, particularly the African church, are financially dependent upon U.S. churches for contributions that make each district and conference solvent. That would include Africa University and other institutions. The Next Generation UMC proposal looks into the future and tries to appease these international churches and keep them in the worldwide UMC by giving them more equity in votes and resources.

What Will Happen Next?
No one knows. The permutations are endless. If the ultra-traditionalist WCA moves first, then there is a mechanism in place for churches to choose and exit the UMC and a new UMC starts to take shape. Maybe the WCA will have its own proposal to put forward at the General Conference 2020. If nothing happens between now and the May General Conference 2020, we speculate that there will be much thunder and lightning at General Conference 2020 but none of the new plans will command a majority – not if the traditionalist-international coalition stays in place (which is not a certainty).

Nevertheless, despite the chaos and the incomplete picture, we do believe, after learning what we could from the Leadership Conference, that change will happen and that there is a good probability that a new UMC will emerge that will be free of the current discriminating words and doctrine that are a part of the current UMC. **We do not believe at this time that Grace and our conference will need to take the drastic step of disaffiliating from the UMC in order to accomplish the goal of full inclusion.** That could change, and we must remain vocal and steadfast in proclaiming our position and willingness to disaffiliate, so that we and others are heard throughout the UMC. But there are other pathways forward that will preserve the UMC and allow us to change, and we pray for such a resolution.

Final Observations and Recommended Actions:
- **Complexity.** Many times at this Leadership Conference, we were reminded of the financial and logistical complexity of dissolving the church or leaving the church. Although we have less sympathy for debates over assets and bureaucracies, we recognize and are moved by concern for support for the good works of United Methodist relief and education ministries. Likewise, the support for international conferences is important, as is all missionary work.
- **“Go With Blessings.”** We were impressed with Rev. Hamilton’s continuous admonitions to be good Christians and remove any enmity in our hearts in working with those with whom we disagree. Any future dividing of the UMC should be accomplished by an attitude that those who leave “go with blessings.”
- **Repeat our Stand and Write to our Conference.** One action which we discussed at the Leadership Conference is for individual churches and conferences to continue to try to educate themselves. There may come a time in the next year or so when churches and conferences will have to vote and choose a direction. To that end, we would recommend that Grace Church consider restating its position on church doctrine and the future of the UMC and made that widely known.
- **Be Knowledgeable about How to Disaffiliate.** Disaffiliation remains a pressure point. There is more than one scenario where disaffiliation may become an important option. Grace Church needs to be knowledgeable and properly aligned to use such an option, if it were to become necessary.
- **Removing offensive church doctrine is only the beginning.** In a humorous moment at the Leadership Conference, Rev. Hamilton said, “The hard work is only beginning. If we remove the offensive language from the Book of Discipline, do you think people are going to suddenly say, ‘Hey, they changed their Book of Discipline. Let’s start attending our local United Methodist Church.’? It will certainly lift a cloud over us, and we pray for that day to come soon. But if the life of an individual and a congregation is one of striving toward perfection, we will have even more work to do once we have cleaned up our own house.”

**BUILDING A BELOVED COMMUNITY: NEXT GATHERING IS NOVEMBER 13, 2019 at 7:30 PM**
The Building a Beloved Community small group continues in November by reading together *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates* by Wes Moore. Books are available for borrowing in the church office. All are welcome to read along.
Lunch and Listen: Conversations about Grace

Tuesday, October 8 was a time for food, prayer and fellowship when 27 of us met with Rev. Amy and Pastor Dane in the parlor to talk about what was on our minds. The announcement had read: “Do you have thoughts about Grace’s ministries? Questions about the ongoing conversations in the United Methodist Church? Do you have a story about how God has touched your life or why Grace is important that you’d like to share?” We then were invited to “speak in love” of signs of God at work.

How have you felt God recently?
In death, illness, widowhood, recent relocations were among the emotional responses.

For what are you grateful?
Stellar medical terms, families, when we experience God through one another.

What part of worship do you look forward to?
Music, fellowship, prayer, sermon, spiritual and bodily food, passing the peace, caring for each other.

Is there a segment of worship that you wish were different?
The manifold responses were varied!
Removing (or roping off) the last four pews so worshipers would have to sit closer together, further front
More Bible stories in sermons that relate to life today.
Nothing political or one-sided
Variety in services, e.g. Gospel service
Inclusion of a creed in worship on occasion
Why now sitting for the postlude; it is a time for parting and greeting each other
Have a study series with meal at times other than Sunday mornings
Small groups - a good way to deepen relationships
Acknowledgment of Veteran’s Day, Memorial Day with flags in the Chancel, appropriate prayers and hymns.

Recognition of the Holocaust and other historic events. This is especially important when children are in church for otherwise they may never learn about the sacrifices of military service, world history, the bases of faith for many of an aging generation. This is a generational concern. Our children have not lived through the horrors of war but need to know so that they will understand the human costs that earned them freedoms, the right to vote, etc. It is not just an entitlement.

Make our American, Christian, Maryland, Baltimore flags more visible. We are ALL Americans and ALL Christians.

We are already a Reconciling church so why is there a need to continue to mention the GLBTQ monthly lunch in every bulletin, keep the flag on the portico? [The bulletin is a resource for those visiting Grace for the first time to tell who we are, that we are a church home welcoming everyone.]

We should continue to have special Sunday services dedicated to Reconciling and Social Justice, but should also recognize Veteran’s Day, Flag Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Independence Day, Memorial Day as occasions we can all celebrate together.

Concern was expressed for waning attendance, numbers of giving units and pledged amounts. Is there any effort being made to contact members noticed as missing for a number of weeks, any outreach to those listed in the directory who have stopped attending? Current clergy contacts by phone and note could be followed up by laity contact; the responses/reasons given may differ and be helpful.

We need more transparency about our finances, and if outside groups meeting here contribute in exchange for space dedicated to their use.

The projects undertaken by the Trustees should be shared with the congregation; it is our money funding them.

Next steps?
Perhaps offer classes about national holidays or issues of God vs. State
Have more opportunities to dialog - luncheon or dinner gatherings which would accommodate schedules for those who no longer drive or who are currently working.

Soon it was 1:30 and time to conclude, even though ideas were still flowing!

Communication is a good thing. It is good to know that some were listening and listened to. We care about our church, our church family, each other. Perhaps some of the seeds planted will grow into something beautiful since they were spoken in love.

Grace Book Club

The selection to be read for the November 11 gathering is The Women’s Hour by Elaine Weiss. Ms. Weiss will be speaking two days earlier, November 9, at the Church of the Redeemer, 6703 N. Charles St. at 7 p.m. Next year will be the 100th anniversary of women getting the right to vote.

Get the book, read and join the group in the parlor for a sharing of thoughts.
To allow for multiple opportunities for promotion of Holiday services and activities, the schedule for December issues is adjusted. Should you have information to share with the congregation, please have your articles/photos in by the following deadlines:

**November 10** for the December issue of Grace Notes which is mailed to members on November 29.

**November 25** for the December/January issue of Grace Notes which is mailed to members on December 16.

**January 10** for the February issue of Grace Notes which will be mailed January 27.

A reminder to those wishing to be Patrons for our Concert Series to send in your donation and email information to have your name included in the first concert program on November 10. With your email, concert reminders can be sent for each event so you won’t miss out!

**Count your blessings this Thanksgiving!**

**Time for an Attitude of Gratitude!**