

# GRACE NOTES

VOL. 30 No. 8

AUGUST 2021



## AUGUST WORSHIP AND PREACHING

8:15 a.m. in the sanctuary - in person

10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary - in person and online - website and YouTube

August 1 - Rev. Amy McCullough

August 8 - Rev. Amy McCullough

August 15 - Pastor Levon Sutton

August 22 - Tracy Radosevic, Biblical Storyteller

August 29 - Pastor Levon Sutton

Congregational Singing (with masks) is back! Singing in worship, especially for us Methodists, is such an important part of our worship experience and we have greatly missed it. But this summer Grace has reintroduced singing in our in-person services. Come back to worship, to sing, to hear God's message in scripture and word, and to be in community with one another.

## Proposed Facility Renovation Plan - Opportunities for Discussion

Last month's Grace Notes announced a series of discussions about the Trustees' continued discernment about undertaking the administrative phase of the master facility plan. You are invited to come learn more about these plans. Several of the dates for discussion have been changed. The new dates are:

- ★ Friday, July 23 at 10:00 a.m. at Grace
- ★ Sunday, July 25 at 11:15 a.m. at Grace
- ★ Tuesday, August 3 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
- ★ Sunday September 12 at 11:15 a.m. at Grace

You may sign up using the online sign up found in E-Notes or by calling the church office. We do ask that you register to attend a meeting as we aim to keep groups small enough to facilitate discussion. Additional meeting times will be scheduled if needed.



SUNDAY, AUGUST 29

11:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

What better way to conclude the summer than with an outdoor water party! Children are invited to this year's Summer Splash, complete with water slides and fun water games on the Grace front lawn. Lunch will be available for purchase with a food truck onsite.

This event is co-sponsored by the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen.

# Welcome to Alex Carney

## Communications and AV Specialist

The Grace Church community extends a warm welcome to the newest member of our staff, Alex Carney. Alex is joining Grace as the Communications and AV Specialist, which is a part-time position entailing responsibility for the church's electronic communications and worship production and streaming ministries, as well as providing oversight for the coordination of all of Grace's communication streams.



Alex originally comes from Dillwyn, VA. She has a passion for social media marketing and communications that she has pursued through work with churches and nonprofits. She earned a degree in religion and gender studies from Shenandoah University and then received her Masters of Divinity degree from Drew Theological School in 2020. Her hobbies include knitting, makeup and watching horror movies. She also loves spending time with her partner Case, as well as their two cats and four sugar gliders.

Alex's first official day at Grace was July 8. She will be present on Sunday mornings, although most often at the AV Booth in the balcony as well as in the church office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Welcome, Alex!

## Farewell and Thank You to Diane Lesman

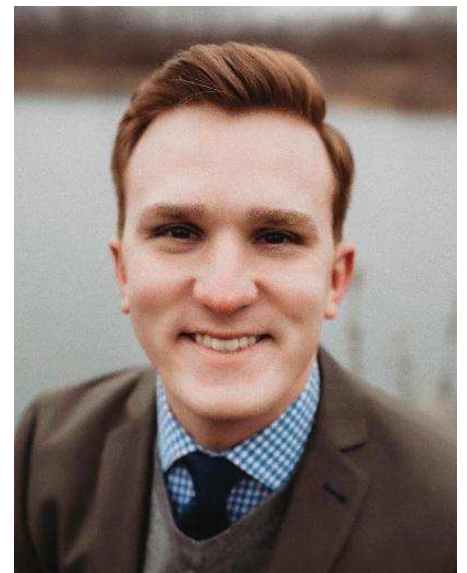
Diane Lesman has served as Grace's Communications Coordinator for nearly two years. During this time, she provided invaluable help through the expansion of E-Notes, our electronic newsletter, during the pandemic. Diane also worked behind the scenes in creating online sign-ups, managing our website, and providing the slides for online worship. She also sang for several years in the Chancel Choir.

Earlier in the year, Diane relocated from the Baltimore area but continued to work remotely while the communications position was redesigned. As we welcome Alex to the staff, we extend our gratitude to Diane for her ministry among us. Thank you, Diane. May God continue to bless you as you begin a new chapter in your life.

## Saying Goodbye to our Tenor Soloist, Timothy McGowan

During the pandemic this past year, Tim McGowan moved to Champaign, IL so that his partner, Nick Pothier, could pursue his doctoral degree in piano accompanying. Since Grace was online for most of the year, Tim was able to continue his work remotely, recording his selections in Illinois for online services. With Grace returning to in-person worship, it is sadly time to say goodbye to Tim. He has been a wonderful addition to our professional soloists team and has blessed us with his beautiful voice and wonderful presentation. Tim will be missed greatly by the congregation and by members of the Chancel Choir! We wish Tim and Nick all the very best.

Tim sends this message to all: "Timothy continues to pursue singing professionally while working fulltime. Gabe, their retriever, enjoys living in Illinois and Nick continues his doctoral studies at the University of Illinois with straight A's. The two of them have started an opera company called *Opera on the Rocks* and they will premiere Mozart's *Don Giovanni* virtually in late July. Timothy has enjoyed singing for Grace Church and has been grateful for the opportunity to continue his work for the music ministry team throughout the pandemic."





## Altar Flowers

# ALTAR FLOWERS FOR AUGUST

Please contact Claire Greenhouse with any changes to flower orders  
410-337-7407

The flowers on the altar are given to the Glory of God and . . .

**August 1** - in honor of their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by Anna Mae and Edward Frederick; and in memory of Edith Gordon by her husband Tom and her sons and their families;

The flowers on the side tables are in honor of the marriage of Kelly Marie Gordon and Jason Irwin by her grandparents Tom and Edie (Jackie) Gordon.

**August 8** - in memory of Patrick M. Cosgrove by his sister Kathy Cosgrove; and

Florence Elizabeth Losey by her grandchildren

**August 15** - .....

**August 22** - in memory of Ruth Streeks on her birthday by her son Gilbert and daughter Nancy Grasmick; and Helen F. Stokes on the anniversary of her birth by her friend Vickie Leshinski

**August 29** - in memory of Joseph E. Spann by his daughter Jeanette Cosper

## LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER

**September 4** - Pat Volker, Christine P. von Klencke

**September 11** - Lynn Beachler, Tish Swam

**September 18** - Kitty Allen and Barbara Bond

**September 25** - Glenn Simmons, Francette Boling



## Time to collect School Supplies

Again this year we will be collecting school supplies for students in need in designated schools in Baltimore City. Sales are already on! You may bring your donations to the narthex on Sunday mornings or leave them in the marked box in the glass entryway during the week. On Sunday, August 22, we hope to have a kit-collating gathering so the supplies will be delivered well in advance for the start of the school year. - Diane Topper

Folders  
Notebooks  
pencils  
highlighters  
pencil pouches  
rulers  
1" binders  
wide-rule lined paper

erasable pens (blue or black)  
protractors  
compass  
flash drives  
markers  
colored pencils  
pencil sharpeners

scissors  
crayons  
glue sticks  
*optional*  
mini stapler  
3-hole punch  
index cards



Hearty congratulations to those of our Grace family celebrating birthdays in August:

- 1 James Thorne, Madeline Wasylak
- 3 Amaya Greenberg, Timothy McGowan
- 4 Courtney English-Doud
- 5 Erin Cheek, John Edgar Locke
- 6 Peggy McCabe
- 9 David Farace, Connor Franklin, Pam Tyler
- 10 Bonnie Graziosi, Betty Nottrodt, Abbott Ottinger, Laura Ottinger
- 11 Lauren Friedel
- 12 Stephen Gilbert, Michael O'Dwyer
- 14 Jamieson Allen
- 15 Todd English
- 16 Beth Mentusky, Emily Rombach, Andrew Trofatter
- 18 Lisa Sharpe
- 19 Sarah Camp-Mugford, Whitney Ann Scheiner, Patrick Shaner, Sadie Yanega
- 20 James Doub
- 21 Barbara Bond, Allie Holle, Steve Painter
- 22 Harrison Gilbert, Amy McCullough, Chris Schroeder
- 23 Carlie Plitt, Vicki Saxon
- 24 Dianne Van Sciver
- 25 Spencer DeMetrick, Burt English, Weston Vargas
- 28 Christina Becker-Birck
- 29 Don Greenman
- 30 Mary Aikins-Afful, Molly Cornbrooks, Judy Gillan, Evan Kick, Lynne Sharpe
- 31 Doris Franklin, Robby Harris



## Live concerts are returning

We are excited that the Music at Grace Concert Series will begin offering in-person live performances for the 2021-2022 concert series beginning with the much anticipated **Two Piano/Four Hand Piano Concert** presented by artists Kathryn Locke and Chris Schroeder on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. The program will feature Edvard Grieg's *Romanze* and Johannes Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*.

Be watching for a mailed concert series brochure in early September as well as additional information in Grace Notes and E-Notes with more details regarding upcoming concerts. We look forward to welcoming you back to Grace Church for live music!

## Additional Renters at Grace

In addition to the choral ensemble *Encore Creativity for Older Adults* beginning its weekly rehearsals at Grace Church this fall, *The New Wave Singers of Baltimore* will also be calling Grace Church its home for weekly rehearsals beginning in September. We are delighted that this LGBTQ+ ensemble is calling Grace Church its home. Welcome, New Wave Singers!

## EICHER PRIZE AWARDED

The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University has announced the awardees of the Bruce R. Eicher Prize in Organ. This prize was established with contributions given in Bruce's honor on the occasions of his 50 years as Organist and Director of Music at Grace Church and enhanced by further gifts upon his retirement.

The Assistant Director of Donor Relations writes "Thank you for making a difference in the lives of Peabody students." The Peabody faculty nominated Paul Byssainthe and Andrew Johnson, both graduate students currently studying with Dr. Daniel Aune.

"Thank you for your continued dedication to Peabody and to talented artists like Paul and Andrew. We are excited to welcome students on campus this Fall and look forward to inviting you to join us for live performances soon."

Sara Torgerson  
Assistant Director of Donor Relations  
and Special Events

## BOOK CLUB

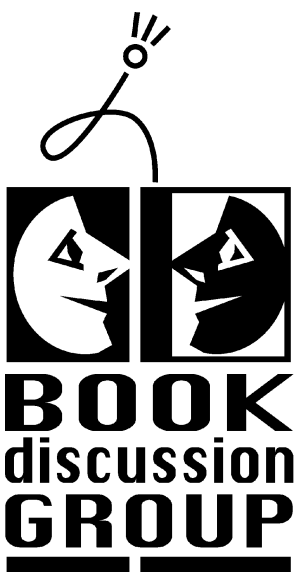
The book selection for the August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting is *The Disappearing Act* by Catherine Steadman.

Then on September 13<sup>th</sup> the group will have read and will discuss

*The Last Flight: A Novel* by Julie Clark.

So nice to be able to meet face to face in the parlor!

If you have questions, or want more information, please contact Maureen Danz, at [maur.danz@verizon.net](mailto:maur.danz@verizon.net).



# *Calm in the Storm*

Pentecost IV

2 Corinthians 6:1-10 and Mark 4:35-41

June 20, 2021

Rev. Amy P. McCullough, PhD

On the morning of December 26, 2004, Sonali Deraniyagala was vacationing with her family at a beach resort on the south-eastern coast of Sri Lanka.<sup>1</sup> They were packing up to leave when the enormous waves of the tsunami made their way up the shoreline, hurling over the sandy beach toward the glass doors of their hotel room. At first, she recounts, it looked simply like the ocean had moved a little closer than normal, offering a zoomed-in look of a wave with its big, white curl. Then came the frightening realization: the waves are not receding. They are coming closer, furious and menacing in their swirling. Deraniyagala and her family were swept into the tsunami's waters. She survived. Her parents, husband and children did not. The days, months, and years after their deaths contained the same crushing panic of that December morning, an overwhelming disorientation caused by having precious pieces of one's life washed away. How does one live when the swirling waters strip away the anchors of one's being?

I start today's sermon about Jesus's calming of a storm with this tsunami scene because I believe the rising waves, the utter panic, and the sense of the imminent destruction move us closer to the experience of the disciples in the boat than imagining a slightly choppy trip across the Inner Harbor. We are perishing, the disciples cry. Their terror is both immediate and metaphoric, touching the chaos contained in an unruly sea and the vulnerability of being human, exposed to nature's raw power and life's inexplicable twists. Jesus rouses from his sleep to answer their cry, but his power to calm the winds frightens them even more. Here is a perplexing story with an inconclusive ending. What does faith look like across the waters? How might we turn anew to the Lord who speaks to wind and waves?

Jesus's early ministry is centered around the Sea of Galilee. It is here, when walking along the shore, that Jesus called his first four disciples. James, John, Peter and Andrew are fishermen, intimately familiar with the sea. Jesus preaches in the towns that dot the coastline. He travels from one town to another healing those in need. Sometimes, when the crowd swells too large, or gets so eager that it presses too close, Jesus gets in a boat and goes out into the water, to teach from there. Throughout the gospel Jesus and his disciples make numerous trips across the sea.

The Sea of Galilee is formed by waters flowing from the Jordan River. Shaped like a kidney bean, it is situated in a valley with the Galilean hillside rising up around it. Winds can get trapped by the hills. Temperatures vary between the higher, cooler air of the hills and the moist, warm air by the waters. The sea is also, relatively speaking, a shallow one. Taken together, the factors make the sea susceptible to sudden, intense storms. The distance across the Sea of Galilee from east to west is 8 miles. Although the time to travel across by boat would vary due to the strength and direction of the wind, it certainly would be hours. A boat caught in the middle of the sea – with one shore out of sight behind them and the other not yet appearing – could be in danger if a storm descends. This certainly was the situation of the disciples, carrying with Jesus along with them. The waves beat at the boat, scripture says. The boat already is being swamped. Water is pouring in.

Exhausted when he climbed aboard, Jesus sleeps through the storm. His calmness contrasts the disciples' terror. I imagine they did not wait long before waking him, asking "Can't you sense the danger? Are you to be of no help? We need another set of hands to help bail out the water, steady the sail." Jesus performs neither of these emergency measures. He commands the sea to calm. He orders the wind to cease.

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<sup>1</sup> Deraniyagala, Sonali, *Wave* (New York: Vintage, 2013).

The first clue we are given that this is more than a story about a storm comes with Jesus's rebuke of the wind. He orders it to tame using the same language used to cast out demons. He speaks to the chaotic forces that destroy life and reminds them of his power over the sea, wind, and waves. The second clue comes with the disciples' reaction. The water is now calm. The air is still. The storm has passed. But the disciples are not relieved. They are more frightened. "They were afraid with great fear." They have glimpsed his power, which is stronger than the storm. They have seen his identity, which means they are in a boat with the Son of God.

"The sea, the storm, and the fragile craft that carry our Lord and the followers across the Sea of Galilee offer evocative, metaphorical images of our life of faith," writes Michael Lindvall.<sup>2</sup> Here we see the perils of some passages. Some parts of our journey are dangerous. Here we face the profound vulnerability of the vessel that bears us on our way. Whether "vessel" represents our bodies, our livelihoods, or our relationships, there is profound risk and breakable moments along the way. And here we admit our longing for "the One who calms both us and the storm."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus's act to still the sea storm is a story about a discipleship, which means it has clues for us about our faithful journeys across the sea. What lessons of faith might we take from this miracle?

First, faithful discipleship involves a commitment to growth, a willingness to move and be moved. The story begins with Jesus telling the disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." The other side of the sea is a foreign territory, a place somewhat strange to his followers, and full of opportunities for spreading God's grace. The faithful disciple is always on the lookout for ways to move, opportunities to venture into strange lands, to extend love to new places, and to discover new depths of relationship between God and self. God will continually surprise us, showing up in those unexpected new spaces and asking us to deepen our learning.

Second, in the midst of life's storms, our best option is to cling to Jesus's calm. None of us will escape a stormy sea. Some storms are predictable, visible from the horizon. Others are sudden, coming out of nowhere. The worst ones conjure up comparisons to primordial chaos, the wild destruction wrought by things beyond our control. The temptation is to cry like the disciples, "Don't you care?" or "God, why are you ignoring my plight?" Resist that corrosive doubt. Refuse to view the storm's presence as evidence of God's indifference. Instead, cling to God's care. Ask Jesus to give you a space to rest within his peace. Remember that Jesus never leaves the boat.

Lastly, the Christian disciple practices faith over fear. Faith over fear. Jesus's followers make a habit of choosing faith when fear threatens to overtake. Science will tell you there is real danger in stormy seas. Being faithful does not mean pretending that fear isn't ever warranted. Instead the follower of Jesus faces one's fear, while remembering Jesus's posture when his own life turned deadly. "Into your hands, God, I commend my life," he prayed. Earlier, he said, "I am the truth, and the truth sets you free." By continually asking Jesus for access to his stillness or a window into his command of creation, you will find your faith growing greater than your fear.

St. Augustine once wrote about Christ being asleep inside each of person. His image was meant to convey how easily human beings can forget Christ's presence. Centuries later, another Christian writer, Frederick Buechner, took Augustine's image of Christ sleeping within us and suggested what we needed to do was awaken Christ, shaking him awake in our own need, just as the disciples did on the perilous boat. "Come Jesus," he says, "come awake within us and give us courage, give us hope, show us our way, especially when the winds go mad and the waves runs wild."<sup>4</sup> May Christ, who is peace, strength, hope, order, and love, be found awake beside you, to guide your way. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> Lindvall, Michael L. "Pastoral Perspective on Mark 4:35-41" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary Year B Vol 3* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 168.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Buechner, Frederick, "A 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Prayer" in *Secrets in the Dark: A Life in Sermons* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 297.

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PLEASE RUSH

## A glass of water and the pastor

A lady went to her pastor and said, "Pastor, I won't be going to your church anymore."

The pastor responded, "Why?"

The lady said, "Ah! I saw a woman gossiping about another member; a man who is a hypocrite; the worship team living wrong; people looking at their phone during service; among so many other things wrong in your church."

The pastor replied, "OK, but before you go, do yourself a favor. Take a full glass of water and walk around the church three times without spilling a drop on the ground. Afterwards, leave the church if you desire."

The lady thought: too easy! She walked three times around the church as the pastor had asked. When she finished, she told the pastor she was ready to leave.

The pastor said, "Before you leave, I want to ask you one more question. When you were walking around the church, did you see anyone gossiping?"

The lady replied "No."

"Did you see any hypocrites?"

The lady said "no."

"Anyone looking at their phone?"

"No."

"You know why?"

"No."

"You were focused on the glass to make sure you didn't stumble and spill any water. It's the same with our life. When we keep our eyes on God, we don't have time to see the mistakes of others. We will reach out a helping hand to them and concentrate on our own walk with God."

*At any church, there are going to be things to complain about. A church is filled with people, and people aren't perfect. Only Jesus can set the perfect example, so let's keep the focus on Him! – Confucius*

(Submitted by Jack Danz, CLM)