

The Anchor

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A Prayer for the Parish

O God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship; narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, nor to straying feet, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power. God, make the doorway to this house the gateway to Thine eternal kingdom. *Amen.*

*- From ruined St. Stephen's Walbrook, London.
St. Stephen's Walbrook was destroyed in the London fire of 1666, rebuilt to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren, and reopened in 1679.*

Grace & Holy Trinity Church

an Episcopal parish on Monroe Park



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ghtc.org



The Rev. Paul Evans on Easter Sunday

Letter from the Associate Rector

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

I am very happy to be greeting you all with this first issue of the new monthly Anchor publication. This “micro-magazine” is intended to provide some reporting of the most recent Grace & Holy Trinity Church (GHTC) events, and to create space for some thoughtful reflection on the season.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the arrival of The Rev. Greg Bezilla, Priest Locum Tenens, who is here to help guide us as we move into this new season. Surely the Holy Spirit is at work in his farewell to his home state of New Jersey to come to Richmond with his wife Jacqueline Lapsley, the new President of Union Theological Seminary in Ginter Park, at exactly the moment of our need.

Greg has already shown that he is well suited to work in support of us all as we grow faithfully into healing. He has a deep ability to listen, and to find the pastoral dimension of those conversations. He believes firmly in leading neither from top-down authority or pushes from behind, but rather from standing side by side, facing forward together.

It is clear that this man has the heart of a priest, understanding that the mission belongs to Jesus in our hearts. He sees that his job is to empower all of us to live into it, and to do the work of reconciliation with ourselves, with each other, with the diocese, and with God.

We are deeply grateful for his partnership, and are looking forward joyfully to what we can learn together.

In Christ,

The Rev. Paul Evans,
Associate Rector for Communications & Formation ♥

Welcome to The Rev. Gregory Bezilla

Of all the changes that have been visited upon this parish in the last months, none has been greeted with more joy than the arrival of The Rev. Gregory Bezilla, who has come to serve as Priest Locum Tenens. It can't have been easy to leave a life of work and relationships centered in an entirely different place, but he put the sanctity of his marriage and his role of supporting spouse first when his wife Jacqueline Lapsley, a noted Old Testament scholar and a senior administrator and full professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, was tapped to head Union Presbyterian Seminary.

They moved to Richmond in July, the same month when GHTC's parish life was about to be turned upside down by the unexpected removal of the rector as the conclusion to a diocesan disciplinary process. In the summer Greg's greatest priority was to unpack boxes and organize belongings, care for the dog and the cats, and otherwise help make his wife's transition a success. "I realized that this might be a great adventure for us to have at this point in our life," he says, "and not just a career move. I'm following my wife, because this time, God called to us." So by the time we really needed him, he was already organized, available, and enthusiastic about stepping in to meet that need.

His initial impression of the church building was informed by its beauty, its historical presence, its long family connections, and its position right in the center of a large urban university. "In the Episcopal church I came from in New Jersey, it was very common for those who were active or in a leadership position in the church to have been a recent convert," he says. "There is a living heritage here that is a strength, particularly in this day and age, where people come and go. That is to be celebrated." He is also complimentary of GHTC's commitment to growing the Campus Ministry. "I was a chaplain at Rutgers in New Brunswick, New Jersey, so because of my own experience, part of me resonates with this location," he says, "and with the University as a place of the transformation of lives, not just of careers being made, but of vocations discovered and the mind's education built."

Greg's path to the Episcopal Church didn't begin until he was in graduate school after college. His parents, like most of their generation, did attend a neighborhood church, but they were not religious people, and upon reaching confirmation age, Greg said no, thanks. But when he was in his twenties, his father became seriously ill with lung cancer. Shaken

“

I see a church of leaders, and so my role is to support people, and help them to be effective in their ministries

”

by this trial, he began to search for a religious tradition he could relate to.

"I stumbled into an Episcopal parish church one weekday evening with a bunch of other graduate students, where offices of evening prayer were being led by the laity," he says. "One of us challenged the rest of us to meet every weekday to pray evening prayer ... [and] here was this prayer book, put right in my hands. The whole script was there ... I've heard Winton Marsalis and others say if you're going to play jazz, you better first learn Bach. In that prayer group I learned the classic language of the liturgy."

He and his wife met while she was a seminary student at Princeton Theological Seminary, and for some of their first dates she came with him to evening prayer. Then one Sunday morning in the Princeton University Chapel, the future Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles was preaching. "That day," he says, "a little light bulb went off, and I said this is all true, and it's worth giving my whole life to."

His path from seminary to GHTC included chaplaincy at a geriatric neuropsychiatric hospital, an inner city hospital in Trenton, and the parish in Rumson, a bedroom community for Wall Street, where he was when September 11th, 2001, happened. Five memorials from that dreadful day were conducted in his parish. So Greg is no stranger to the needs and processes of a parish suffering the effects of trauma, and understands how real that is.

After ten years at Rutgers came a nearby parish in an historic New Jersey community of multiple immigrations, most of them Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Islamic, or Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking storefront ministries. He was the only full-time Protestant minister, and he became an unofficial ecumenical officer for the town, getting people of different congregations together at the same table. “It’s true of human nature in general that we keep to our own until you give us a shared project,” he says. “That experience taught me to walk humbly, and tread lightly, and listen, and learn.”

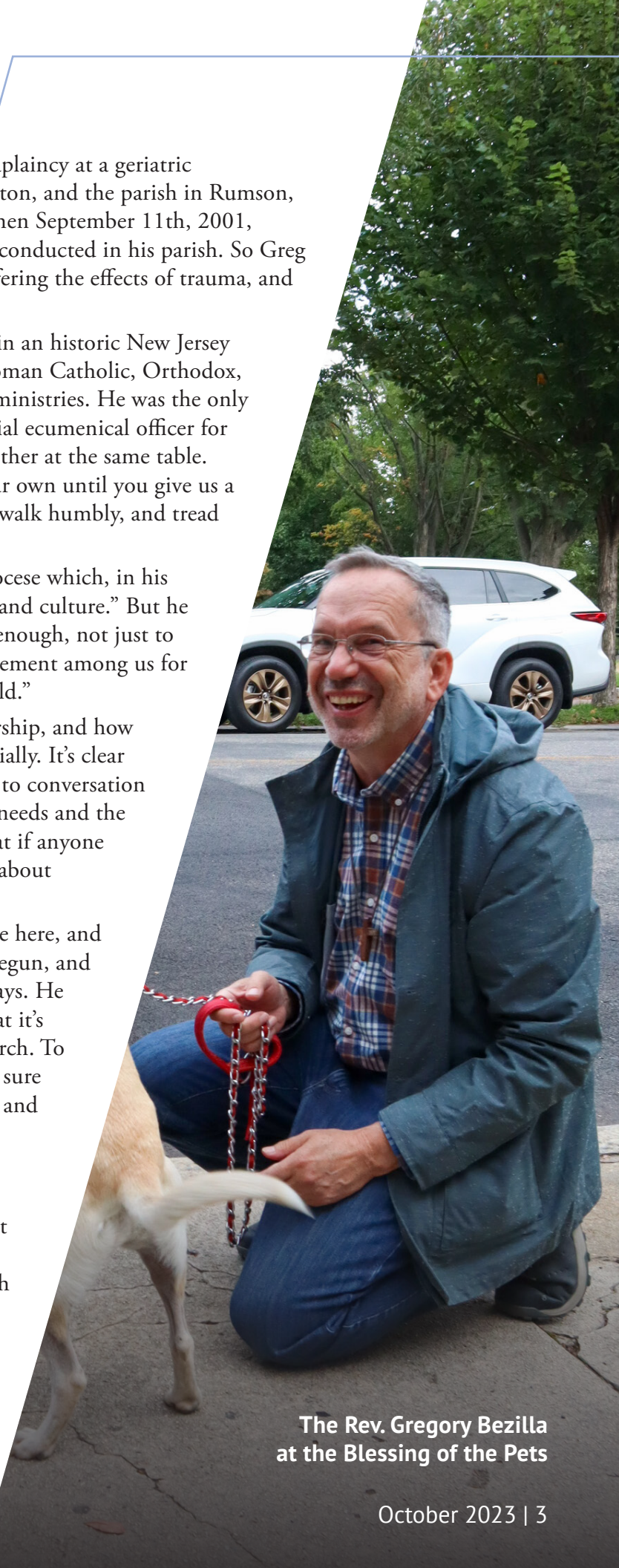
He is conscious that he is a newcomer into a diocese which, in his words, “has its own ethos which is rooted in its history and culture.” But he is also quick to see that the people here love the parish enough, not just to leave it as it is, but to be “open to the Holy Spirit’s movement among us for health and for healing and for the wholeness of the world.”

Greg compliments the vibrancy of the lay leadership, and how the vestry, the clergy, the staff, and the laity work collegially. It’s clear that he is friendly, accessible, a very good listener, open to conversation and questions, and ready to learn more about both the needs and the processes already in place. He wants people to know that if anyone wants time to talk with him, in the office or elsewhere, about anything at all, he welcomes that request.

“I’m going to try to keep the focus on the people here, and the good work they have done, that they have already begun, and to see how I can be of help in this season of need,” he says. He sees that the prayer book and the catechism teach us that it’s the people in the pews who are the ministers of the church. To support the realization of that vision, he wants to make sure that the parishioners and the staff have all the resources and the partnerships they need.

“I see a church of leaders, and so my role is to support people, and help them to be effective in their ministries,” he says. “What a privilege; what a blessing it is for me to be part of this transition season. If we just keep our center in Christ, we can stand in strength, with confidence and with joy, and with a generous and open attitude to ourselves in the world. I just can’t wait to see where this road takes us.”

—Ann Norvell Gray ♥



**The Rev. Gregory Bezilla
at the Blessing of the Pets**

Worship Services

Contact: The Rev. Greg Bezilla,
Priest Locum Tenens (Interim)

Phone: (804) 359-5628 x17

During the summer, the usual 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Sunday services continued to be held. The early service of Holy Communion with traditional language convened in the Chapel. The 10:30 a.m. service was held in the Nave, and its schedule began by alternating between Holy Communion, Rite II and traditional Morning Prayer, Rite I.

However, after the upheavals we all experienced this summer, it was decided that all the 10:30 a.m. services would offer Holy Communion as we move forward. The intention of this change is to bring us closer together in the foundational sense of our community, which is expressed in the eucharistic liturgy.

As is our custom, the 10:30 a.m. services are continuing to be livestreamed. By being a subscriber to the GHTC eNews, you can find the Sunday livestream link in the “Preparing for Worship” email sent to you all early each Sunday morning, or alternatively on the ghtc.org homepage.

In the first week of October, we began a regular Wednesday Morning Eucharist service at 8:00 a.m., followed by coffee in the Parish Hall. The Rev. Gregory Bezilla, the newly welcomed Priest Locum Tenens, will alternate with Associate Rector Paul Evans. Occasionally, a presiding clergy person known to the parish will supply this service. ♥

Music Ministry

So much glorious music has filled the church in the many worship services and concerts so far in 2023. We give thanks for the excellent GHTC Parish Choir, and for the Children’s Choir and its previous Director Sean McDonald and Assistant at the time, Abigail Stinnett. Sean also served as Beth’s Assistant Choirmaster & Organist, and founded and directed the new Youth Orchestra. Stanley M. Baker came

to fill the position when Sean moved on to focus on his teaching schedule. In addition, Abigail is now the Children’s Choir Director. We are humbled by the generosity, dedication, and joy of everyone who participates in this music ministry. ♥

“Hope for Ukraine” Concert

On Saturday, September 23rd, GHTC welcomed the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra & Chorus for the *Hope for Ukraine* concert as this year’s second Music for a Cause program. The pews were packed with members of this parish joined by a host of other people, some known to us and some new to this place. The music was glorious, and the fortunate audience was visibly moved, surely by the music, but undoubtedly by the courage of these women who have made this considerable effort in support of those they love back home in Ukraine. We are very happy to report that this concert has raised in excess of \$125,000, all of which will go directly to help alleviate the suffering of the people of Ukraine. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank all of you who contributed. May God go with them as they continue their concert tour, and deliver them safely home. ♥



**Kyiv Symphony & Orchestra
at the “Hope for Ukraine” Concert**

“100 Years of Song” Benefitting St. Andrew’s School

This year’s first Music for a Cause program was a great success. We raised a gratifying amount for St. Andrew’s School, the independent K-5 elementary school, four blocks from Grace & Holy Trinity in Richmond’s Oregon Hill. Special thanks go out to all of the musicians who participated, most especially to Caroline Whisnant, who planned and coordinated the program. ♥



“100 Years of Song” (Top), “Missa Brevis” (Bottom)

Mozart’s “Missa Brevis in G Major”

During the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, May 21st, the GHTC Parish Choir, supported by the organ and a chamber ensemble, presented Mozart’s glorious *Missa Brevis in G Major*. It was dedicated to the loving memory of Elizabeth Martin, who served so faithfully as our assistant organist for 43 years. If you missed the performance of this beautiful masterwork, or you just want to hear it again, a professional recording is available on SoundCloud here: soundcloud.com/ghtcparishchoir. ♥

Summer Sunday School

Sunday mornings are the backbone of our Children’s Ministry, and Grace & Holy Trinity offers several ways for children and families to participate in church. Over the summer months, we followed a child-led Sunday School curriculum, encouraging them to ask any questions they have about the faith. Children’s Choir and Children’s Breakfast were paused for the summer, and returned to the schedule on Sunday, September 10th, when Sunday School added Children’s Chapel again. Details follow below, under “Sunday School Programming: Sundays at 9:30 a.m. for All Ages.” ♥

Sunday School Programming: Sundays at 9:30 AM for All Ages

Contact: Lauren Frazier,
Executive Assistant to the Clergy
Phone: (804) 359-5628 x22

In August, the vestry voted to schedule Christian formation for all ages on Sunday mornings during the hour before the 10:30 a.m. service. The vestry supports wholeheartedly the belief expressed in the letter sent to the parish by Paul Evans, our Associate Rector for Formation & Communications. He and the vestry know how much we love these children, and the value of their presence to the strength of this parish. So they understand how important it is for us to worship together, and believe that our youngest members belong with us in the pews on Sunday mornings.

At the 9:30 a.m. hour, young children, from age 5 through fourth grade, are invited to the Godly Play classroom. Young people in the fifth through twelfth grade are invited to participate in the lectionary-based *Feasting on the Word* curriculum, led by clergy and staff together.

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Education *(continued)*

The same hour now offers two choices for adults, which in the Episcopal church includes anyone sixteen and older. Participants are now choosing between the lectionary group led by The Rev. Jack Sutor in the Library, and a new adult formation class, which is being led each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the First Floor Classroom by clergy, staff, and other appointed volunteers on a variety of topics. This new offering began on Sunday, September 10th, with the intriguing three-week series on reconciliation, which is a subject on which we are all grateful for guidance. ♥

Outreach

Parish Prayer List

Contact: Lauren Frazier,
Executive Assistant to the Clergy
Phone: (804) 359-5628 x22

Thanks to the ministry of The Rev. Stephen McGehee, a carefully chosen and regularly updated parish prayer list is now being printed in the Sunday morning worship bulletin. To keep this list current, and to support the intention and mindfulness with which we pray, we include names on the prayer list for three months or less. ♥

March 2023 Belize Trip

Contact: Mary Cay Kollmansperger
Email: marycay4@gmail.com

The goal of the mission trip to Belize was “to gather, train and support a team of volunteers, joined together in spiritual mission to serve the children of the Cayo District of Belize.” Their three projects were organized around the need for vision and dental health services, and one specific service project chosen for the trip.

The specific project for this trip involved making up for some deferred cleaning and maintenance needed by the preschool in Benque Viejo, Cayo, near the Ecuadorian border, which the GHTC volunteers helped to build on a previous mission trip.

A significant number of children have vision problems serious enough to affect their education, falling behind in ways that are difficult or impossible to make up for later on. During this trip, 846 children were screened, 214 of those were referred to the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired and examined, the 72 children who needed correction chose their frames, and the BCVI delivered their new glasses with the cost underwritten by GHTC.

Oral disease among children in rural areas is a chronic problem, and can lead to inadequate nutrition, developmental delays, and chronic pain. Early intervention is critical, but there are few resources near enough to help them. Following the Health Ministry of Belize’s intentions for better dental care, the GHTC clinic takes along four portable dental units owned by the church and two more from the Virginia Dental Association, and sets up at the Mopan Technical School in Benque Viejo. Of the 702 children screened, 247 were examined and 197 were treated at the clinic. ♥

Red Door Ministry’s Winter Gear Drive

Contact: Porsche Pierson
Phone: (904) 730-9302

The Red Door team has reopened the clothing closet to receive good, warm winter clothing, including coats, gloves, and scarves for Richmonders in need. Please drop off any new or clean gently used winter gear at the service ministry box between the elevator and the kitchen. The condition of the clothing we distribute says volumes about our respect for the people who most need our kindness and can share in our abundance. ♥

Parents' Night Out

The Parents' Night Out series continued in July. On those evenings, parents began by dropping their children at church. Then the clergy's assistant Lauren Frazier and Stan Baker, the Assistant Choirmaster & Organist, were the parents' hosts for drinks at Truckle Cheesemongers in the Museum District, which belongs to parishioner Maggie Bradshaw. Then the parents took off to enjoy a night out on their own.

While parents are out, the children and the parish staff and volunteers usually eat dinner, make crafts, worship, and sometimes wrap up the evening up with a movie. In July, Susan Hankins, who manages and leads the Holy Strollers ministry group, took the youngsters for a lovely walk to the Holly Street Playground. Keep an eye on the weekly news for additional dates. ♥

Parish Picnic

On August 27th Billy & Meredith McGuire once again opened their welcoming house and grounds in Goochland to all of us for the annual picnic. It was a blustery rainy day, but the clouds cleared enough for a pretty good crowd to appear. The evening began with a service of Evening Prayer, the bulk of which was wisely moved to their wide back porch. Bob Hetherington conducted the liturgy, Ann Gray read all the lessons, and we sang a familiar hymn without benefit of instruments. Then we dove into the hot dogs and barbecue, some very good side dishes, and a range of beverages. The spirit of fellowship was palpable, and a fine time was had by all. ♥

Parish Ministry Fair

The second annual Parish Ministry Fair was, by all accounts, a roaring success. Every table was prepped to a fare-thee-well by its leadership, with intriguing photographs or illustrations, samples of the work of its participants, and sign-up sheets prepared well in advance and distributed

by the energy generating Cathy Saunders. Every base was covered, including good food and drink, a raffle offering the many winners a choice of wildly differing treats and experiences donated by parishioners, and specially prepared passports promising sweets as incentives for the children to check in with what goes on. The variety of opportunities, both for service to the parish and the city, and for fellowship with people who share interests beyond the church walls, was a clear illustration of the vibrancy and value of our life together in this beloved place. ♥



Prayer Shawl & Needlers and Red Door Ministry at the 2023 Parish Ministry Fair (Above)

Sunday Breakfast Returns

At 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, October 1st, the Best Breakfast in Richmond returned, true to its mission of nourishing parishioners with an old-school, high-calorie meal of eggs, biscuits, bacon, sausage, apples, grits, and potatoes. Greg Bezilla dove right in, and raved about it in his announcements at 10:30 a.m. The goal of encouraging fellowship was clear to see, and those who rose from the tables were fully prepared for formation and worship - "fully" in every sense of the word. Going forward, a team of parish clergy and volunteers will address how we might best respond to our neighbors who come to the breakfast solely seeking the nourishment of a hot meal. ♥

Grace & Holy Trinity Church



Visit GHTC for worship, upcoming events, and more!

Sunday Worship

Holy Eucharist

8:00 AM (Spoken | Chapel)

Holy Eucharist*

10:30 AM (Choral | Church)

**Livestream Available*

Dinner Church*

5:30 PM

**Please use the N. Laurel Street entrances.*

Other Services

Wednesday Morning Eucharist

Wednesdays at 8:00 AM (Chapel)

Red Door Ministry Lunch

Fridays at 12:00 PM

Office Hours

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM | Monday - Friday

Clergy

The Rev. Gregory Bezilla, *Priest Locum Tenens (Interim)*

The Rev. Paul Evans, *Associate Rector for Formation & Communications*