

The Anchor

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A Meditative Prayer

God be in my head,
and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be at my end,
and at my departing.

— Old Sarum Primer, 1558

Grace & Holy Trinity Church

an Episcopal parish on Monroe Park



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Letter from the Priest Associate for Pastoral Care

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

As we move through Lent, we first see clearly that we can't know where we're going in this life unless we understand where we are. This is as true for institutions such as Grace & Holy Trinity (GHTC) as it is for each of us individually. If we do the inner work of understanding and bolstering our faith, by placing God at the center of our lives, we are strengthened by a sense of joyful belonging to something much larger than anything we can imagine. And whatever transformation occurs in us individually as a result of this inner work also inures to the benefit of the community in which we reside.



Lent is made for the intentional, inner work of the soul. It begins with Ash Wednesday's reminder that we came "from dust ... and to dust we shall return," which confronts us with the fragility of our lives. But we are also made aware of our dependence on God in all that we are and all that we are becoming. So in this sense, Lent is a time to move intentionally from self-dependence to dependence on God, from spiritual individuality to community in Christ.

And Lent is also a time to move from darkness to light. Nowhere is this more evident than in The Great Vigil of Easter, to which this parish is returning as the beginning of Easter. In it, we hope to grasp the real point of our individual Lenten journeys: that in our own darkness there is a Great Light, which grows brighter as our dependence on God grows stronger. As the writer of 1 John declares, "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all."

Faithfully in Christ,

The Reverend Stephen Y. McGehee
Priest Associate for Pastoral Care

What is Lent?

Curtis Almquist is a Brother of The Society of St. John the Evangelist, a monastic community of the Episcopal Church. The GHTC website's page about Lent offers a quote from his daily meditation manual "Brother, Give us a Word," in which he writes, "For Jesus, the forty days in the wilderness were a time to re-align himself to why God had given him life: to claim the right purpose, power, and voice God had given him. For us, the focus of Lent can create space anew for the light, and life, and love of Jesus to teem in us and through us to our desperately broken world."

Although a nearly daily Lenten discipline has not been a widely valued practice among Episcopalians, the growing awareness among people of good will that the world around us is suffering, and we in it, has inspired a renewed interest in the value of such a practice.



From the pulpit on the first Sunday in Lent, Paul Evans said, "If we can dwell with Jesus in the desert during Lent, and come together as a parish searching for a priest, we will be more than just a flock looking for a shepherd. We can be strengthened as disciples looking for new direction. ... Good people of Grace & Holy Trinity, the darkness of the wilderness is just as much a gift to us as the Alleluias and light of Easter Morning. ... Let's not rush towards resurrection, but dwell patiently and prayerfully with Jesus in the desert of these forty days."

When asked about Lent and its meaning for this publication, Greg Bezilla wrote that many Episcopalians in his home state of New Jersey, converts from Roman Catholicism, routinely gave up things like chocolate or cigarettes. "I wondered," he says, "whether many had confused Lent with self-improvement ... those [admittedly good] benefits do not grow faith or strengthen Christian discipleship." He reminds us that *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) calls Lent "not an optional enrichment, but a season of repentance and renewal for the sake of a deeper faith and a stronger discipleship. ... In Lent we pause, sit quietly, reflect on our lives, give God our attention, and listen for Christ's call to us."

I asked a number of parishioners whether or not they had landed on a Lenten discipline. Some opted to give things up, some have added meaningful things instead of depriving themselves, and some have preferred to keep their decisions to themselves. Some, despite being known for their devotion and commitment, say they feel shamed by their lack of success at this. One or two said they prefer to simply rededicate themselves to the ethical requirements they hold themselves to every day.

Nancy Trego said, "I'm using Lent to put a moment of reflection and prayer back into first place in my morning rituals. I'm not giving up word games, but I'm doing *Forward Day by Day*, and writing a new version of an ongoing prayer list with my coffee as soon as I get up."

Mary Ann Blankenship has attached her daily devotions to a weekly emphasis using a resource from the Salt Project called *The Poetry of Lent: A Lenten Companion* to Mary Oliver's *Devotions*, which combine a scripture verse, one or two poems, and some journaling prompts.

One couple reported that "we decided to jump in and try something different for Lent this year by attending the Wednesday 8:30 a.m. service,

and the 9:00 a.m. Lenten Study discussion group reading *Meeting Jesus at the Table* by Campbell and Fohr ... an enlightening time of reading, discussion, reflection and prayer.”

Susan Hankins reports that she is saying goodbye to her beloved Whole Foods cookies, but also that she is following Phil Dawson’s recommended prayer routine, *Pray As You Go* (pray-as-you-go.org), an on-line daily devotional, created by the Jesuit order in the United Kingdom. “Look around,” she says. “Our world needs sustenance, guidance and Almighty Love.”

And Lisa Dawson says, “This year I have taken on a new effort. Instead of giving something up, I am reading from the less popular Epistles. I have read John’s, and am now on 1 Peter. Then I take about twenty minutes to meditate on the words and the meaning.”



In Lent we pause, sit quietly, reflect on our lives, give God our attention, and listen for Christ’s call to us.

The mystical Biblical number 40 usually symbolizes a period of testing, trial or probation. If the Israelites can live through 40 years in the desert, and God can wipe out the horribleness of everything and start over after 40 days and 40 nights of rain with only a boat, one family, and a lot of animals; and if Moses, Elijah, and most of all, Jesus, can be sanctified by 40 days wandering and starving in the wilderness, a little dedication to our own spiritual cleanliness and growth in these 40 days of Lent may not seem so daunting after all.

— Ann Norvell Gray



Worship

Reconciliation of a Penitent

The clergy are available to you individually for spiritual counseling, and also for the rite of Reconciliation. In the Episcopal tradition, Reconciliation of a Penitent (as defined on page 447 of the BCP) “is the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution.” It is often referred to as “private confession.” If you are interested in Reconciliation and want to ask, or if you just have questions, please feel free to call the church office and ask for one of the clergy, or visit our website at ghtc.org/contact to choose someone from the drop down menu.

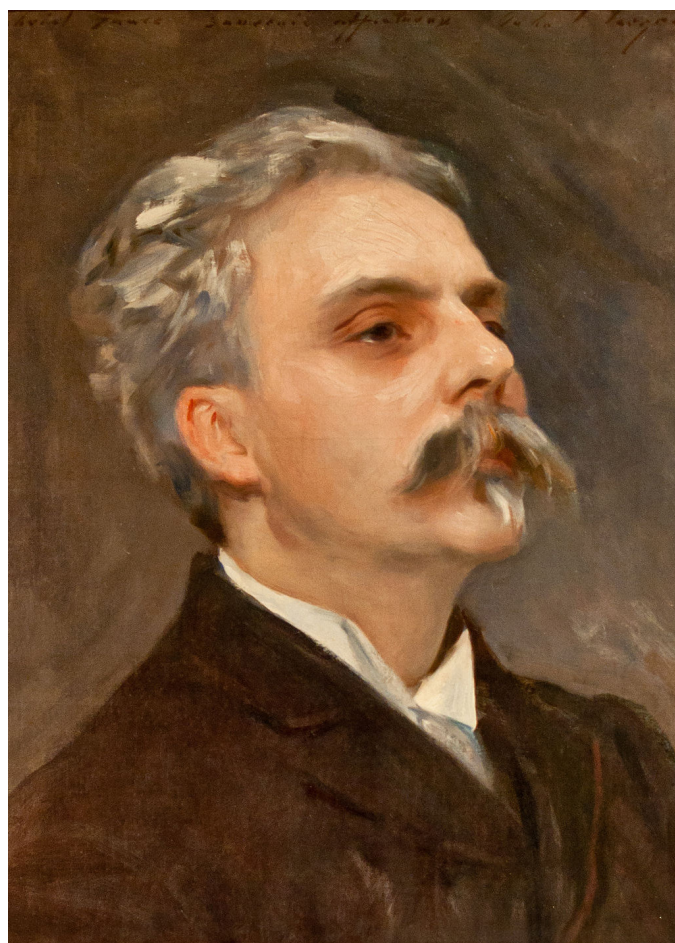
Daily Morning Prayer in Lent

Every weekday in Lent, the daily service of Morning Prayer with Holy Communion from the reserve sacrament happens at 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel. If you are not familiar with that form of communion, it provides for consecrated bread and wine to be set aside in advance and used in a very brief addition to the service. You can see that liturgy in the Prayer Book on page 396. Each service will be led by an officiant from the clergy or laity, and a lector and chalice-bearer from the laity. If you would like to serve as an officiant or a lector/chalice-bearer, please sign up using the sign up sheet located at the Connect Table. Training and support will be provided to all who sign up. If you have questions, get in touch with Greg Bezilla by phone or email. To assist in one of the services, sign up with Lauren Frazier in the Parish Office.

The Fauré *Requiem*

On March 3rd, the day that this issue is to appear, the GHTC choir is presenting the Gabriel Fauré *Requiem* as part of the 10:30 a.m. service. Baritone Chase Peak sings solos in “Offertory” and “Libera Me,” and soprano Keely Borland sings the exquisite “Pie Jesu.” The movements are presented within the liturgical context of the worship service. Accompanying this gorgeous music, there is a 14-piece chamber ensemble that adds strings, French horns, and a harp to the organ.

This Requiem is filled with beautiful lyrical melodies, and the music provides comfort and peace. If you missed that glorious setting of our worship, or if you just want to hear it all again, you will be able to listen to the recorded service on the GHTC website under “Worship.”

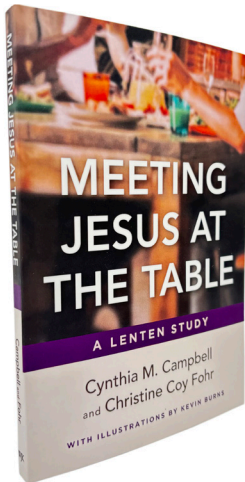


Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)
by John Singer Sargent

Education

Children Fasting from Art Supplies

In our children's Godly Play Sunday School classroom, the children are living into the Christian practice of sacrifice during Lent. Usually, the children sit in a circle to hear a Bible story. Then they have time to think, and then respond to the story in their own ways. They may retell the story, read a book, or make art. Art is always a favorite, but for this Lent they are fasting from all of the art supplies. This Lenten devotion is encouraging the children to better understand the books and stories we keep in our room. As the season progresses, art supplies will be slowly reintroduced, with encouragement to use the returned materials in thoughtful and creative ways.



Wednesday's Lenten Book Discussion After Morning Prayer

Throughout Lent, Greg Bezilla and Kate Given invite you to join them in reading *Meeting Jesus At The Table: A Lenten Study* by Cynthia M. Campbell and Christine Coy Fohr. The book looks at the meals Jesus shared with others in the Gospels, and gives us a chance to think about the

importance of hospitality and community around our own tables. You can get your own copy for \$5 at the church throughout Lent. We'll gather on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. after the Lenten Daily Morning Prayer to discuss the ideas presented in the book.

Mission

The Rev. Katie Gooch's February 25 Sermon

The Reverend Katie Gooch is an ordained Methodist minister, and serves as the Director of the Pace Center, which is a non-denominational campus ministry that serves the Virginia Commonwealth University population in numerous ways. At the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, February 25th, she talked to us about how the day's Gospel lesson from Mark 8:31-38 is often heard by those students. In that lesson, we heard the following:

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ... He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

"We connect with students who are from different faiths," she said. "We connect with folks that are just longing for connection and community with others ... and I have heard from students and from others that today's scripture passage can be turned into very harmful theology." The lesson of suffering for Jesus's sake, she tells us, is sometimes presented in ways that makes these impressionable young people feel unworthy of the love of God, either because they are human and



The Rev. Katie Gooch
Director of The Pace Center

fallible, or because they are just not suffering enough.

However, she says, “Jesus is not telling us to create sufferings for ourselves. Instead, Jesus is acknowledging today the deep brokenness and suffering that is going on in our lives and in our world. And he says that we are to not be ashamed of that suffering and not to be afraid of it, but instead to look it straight in the eye.”

She reminds us of how often we choose to react to the suffering we see around us by numbing ourselves. “We can do it through chemicals, through technology, through hiding away in communities that make us feel safe or by trying to borrow our sorrows away. It is because of today’s passage that the church is called to reject all of those temptations and to instead face the suffering of this world.”

The Pace Center gives these young people a place where they can make connections with people of good will, and learn to feel strong, even exhilarated, in service and in community. “Many of our students have been a part of churches where they have been told that because they’re a woman, or because of who they love, or because their

parents aren’t married, that they are less valued. So we celebrate the brave steps that they take to simply walk inside of Pace.”

Part of the Center’s encouragement to form those supportive relationships comes in the deeply traditional practice of sitting down to eat around the tables with other people who may be there for the same reasons. “We encourage them to take out their headphones and put down their cell phones,” she says, “and instead, to pick up a fork and eat a meal. And when they do that, they connect with the people that are eating across from them at the table around them.”

In this communal environment, strangers become bound in friendship and love, and can begin again. “Today’s passage,” she says, “instills in us that living a life that is numb to pain and filled with false luxuries of this world is not life at all.” She sees instead that “living a life that reflects Jesus’s life, that is not afraid to face pain and sorrow, a life that takes up a cross, is a life that practices resurrection. It leads to deeper relationships, to deeper connections. We grow as a people and we reflect God’s kingdom.”

Her message closes with this simple prayer – “Grant, O Lord, that we may have the courage to walk in the way of the cross and find it none other than the way of life and peace,” and the congregation joins her in a resounding “Amen.”

Contact The Pace Center

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The Pace Center is located across from Monroe Park, next door to Brandt and Rhoads Halls.

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Parish Life

Revitalizing Pastoral Care at GHTC

In Matthew 10:30-31, Jesus speaks to his disciples with these striking words: “But even the hairs on your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” Jesus wants to make sure that they get the message about God’s unbounded love for all his people – a love that translates outward into our pastoral care of others. God is so attentive to each of us that even the hairs on our head are numbered, and means us to pay it forward with careful attention to each other, in good times as well as in moments of personal challenge. This attentiveness is at the heart of a vibrant pastoral care ministry.

I came to GHTC in 2023 to build and manage a pastoral care system from the ground up. For the clergy to be attentive to the pastoral needs of the parish, we must have administrative systems supporting an effective and sustained response of clergy and laity to all pastoral matters. First, we restored a public prayer list, published every week in the Sunday bulletins, to be the “beating heart” of the parish. We also established a confidential prayer list for clergy’s eyes only, to ensure that every person is counted in our pastoral response. Routine clergy visitation schedules are now managed in a way that not only allows us to respond to emergency situations, but also to stay connected to those who cannot be with us in person. In this way, we count the hairs on every head.

More work remains to be done to round out these pastoral-care efforts. We hope to expand our pastoral reach by coordinating more participation by the laity in pastoral visits, delivery of communion and flowers to the homebound and those in need, and by expanding our prayer life through both established and new small groups.

All of us need the steadfast love of God in our lives. While our own families are a source of ongoing support and care, our parish family is also critical to our lives as Christians in community. Everyone at Grace & Holy Trinity is an instrument of God’s redeeming action in the world. And being loved in community is at the center of who we are meant to be as children of God. In community, we take careful care of the souls of everyone who walk through our doors.

– *The Rev. Stephen Y. McGehee*



2024 Annual Parish Meeting

If you were there, you already know that on the morning of Sunday, February 25th, the church was packed with people for the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting. We registered and collected our copies of the agenda and the Annual Report in the library, and assembled in the nave. Priest Locum Tenens Greg Bezilla called us to order from the lectern, and then proceeded to march us right through the agenda with both administrative skill and pastoral warmth. Meanwhile, for the first half-hour we marked our ballots to vote for five of the nine nominees to join the Vestry.

Last year's minutes were approved, and the reports from the Finance Committee and the Endowment Fund were delivered by Mike Joyce and Carl Blackwell respectively and respectfully. Senior Warden David Lewis was his usual thoughtful, articulate self when expressing his gratitude for the diligence and resilience of the whole church family during the difficult year past. He thanked everyone who has contributed leadership and support in so many ways, and expressed complete confidence in Meredith McGuire as she embarks on her term as Senior Warden. Meredith thanked him, and gave him a present from the Vestry.

The makeup and role of the Discernment Committee was described for us by Clay Hilbert, its chairman, who explained the choice to look for a Priest-in-Charge, and that they are hopeful that their decision will be fruitful by the end of March. Greg Bezilla talked a bit about how he has approached his role with us. Then after a few remarks from parishioners, David Lewis announced that the votes were in, and that Lisa Dawson, Marshall Morton, Brad Sauer, Nick Sollog, and Kathy Wommack would be joining the Vestry. We were adjourned at about 10:15 a.m., the service of Holy Eucharist followed, and then we headed for the gumbo, the King Cakes, a few beverages, and some excellent scene-setting jazz.





Counter-clockwise from top left: Youth Orchestra Violinist Mary Lecky, Children's Choir, and Youth burying the "Alleluia" at worship following the Annual Meeting

We Celebrate Mardi Gras a Few Days Early

On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, which coincided with the Annual Meeting, about 150 of the parishioners and friends of GHTC came out of the 10:30 a.m. service to find a terrific feast in a traditional New Orleans style celebration of "Fat Tuesday." The idea is to eat up all the fat in the house in preparation for the fasting season of Lent. Under the able leadership of Sandie Hale and Karin Walker, the Hospitality Committee knocked it out of the park with a divinely rich, savory gumbo swimming with little shrimps; ham and cheese rolls, and a table full of festive-looking king

cakes. Celebratory beverages representing what the beloved Polly Rice referred to as "the thirst after righteousness," were also in evidence.

In case you didn't already know, a king cake is a wreath-shaped cake similar to a babka, traditionally made of brioche, flavored with cinnamon, and covered with gold, green and purple sugars. Gold stands for power, green represents faith, and purple represents justice. In general, the cake symbolizes the unity of faiths. It is sometimes traditionally eaten at Epiphany, with the colors representing the three kings.

"Karin and I were joined in the church kitchen on Saturday afternoon by Liz Bisset, Neely Dykshorn, Jean Jumet, and Cathy Saunders,"



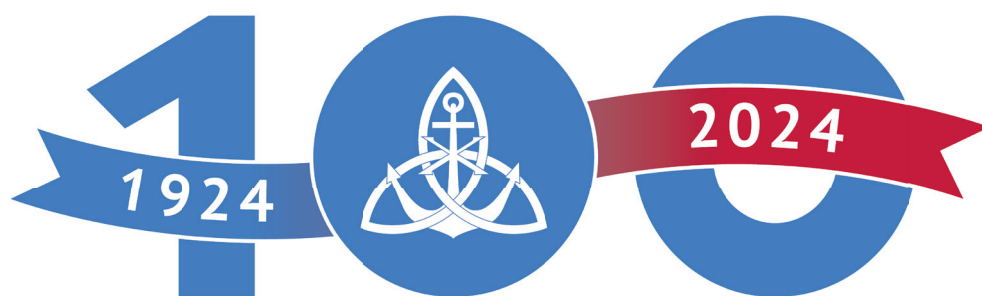
says Sandie. “The gumbo came from The Country Club of Virginia, and Carl Blackwell kindly took care of that for us. The King Cakes came from The Fresh Market, Karin and I bought the Bloody Mary and mimosa ingredients, and Mike Hale and Todd Dykshorn manned the beverage table.”

It was a wonderful party, and Sandie gave particular credit not only to the committee members and the breakfast crew, but also to Dougie Erikson for polishing the silver trays. Karin reminds us that they also did the flowers on Saturday, and a lot of prep work for everything to go smoothly on Sunday. Both of them expressed their gratitude for the many parishioners who pitched in.

Sandie reflected the joyfulness of that day, saying “I think the most satisfying thing about the Mardi Gras celebration is witnessing the joy of fellowship of our parishioners - seeing the smiles and hearing the laughter in the parish hall. Karin and I are grateful to be able to set the stage for such a happy and fun occasion!”



Brass Quintet at Mardi Gras Celebration



Joy Rings Out Over Richmond

Save the Date

Centennial Celebration

June 2, 2024

Worship begins at 10:30 AM*
(Choral | Church)

*One Service Only

Call for Photos

Please submit your ready-to-hang photos from weddings, baptisms, and confirmations in the Sanctuary, from Sunday, April 7th through Sunday, May 12th to display at our Centennial Celebration. During the weekdays, please drop off your photos at the Communications Office on the second floor of the Parish House. On Sundays, you may drop off your photos with a Centennial Committee Member collecting them in the Parish Hall. You may also submit digital photos of other ministry moments by sending them to communications@ghtc.org.



Grace & Holy Trinity Church

Church Staff

The Rev. Gregory Bezilla
Priest Locum Tenens (Interim)

The Rev. Paul Evans
Associate Rector

The Rev. Stephen Y. McGehee
Priest Associate for Pastoral Care

Stanley M. Baker
Assistant Choirmaster & Organist

Roland Boone
Sexton

Judy F. Bowman
Financial Secretary & Administrative Assistant

Tyler Brady
Communications Associate

Dr. Elizabeth Melcher Davis
Choirmaster & Organist

Lauren Frazier
Parish Administrator

Kate Given
Director of Formation

Barbara Hobson-Simpson
Receptionist

Kyle Reed
Communications Associate

Abigail Stinnett
Children's Choir Director

Vestry

Meredith McGuire, *Senior Warden*

Chuck Bleick, *Junior Warden*

Mike Joyce, *Treasurer*

Mary Ann Blankenship, *Register*

Jane Carlson, Judy Carlson, Maurice Cole,
Lisa Dawson, Dan McNamara,
Marshall Morton, Mason New, Nick Sollog,
Fielding Williams, & Kathy Wommack

Lay Ministry Leaders

Dan McNamara, *Acolytes*

Jean Jumet, *Altar Guild*

Meredith McGuire, *Caroling in Monroe Park*

Donna Campbell, *Chalice Bearers*

Nancy Smith, *Christmas Ministry*

Glenn Moore & Christy Ellis, *Circles RVA*

Catherine Perrin, *Flowers for the Church*

Maurice Cole & Deborah Cole, *Foyer Groups*

Lisa Dawson, *Greeters*

Susan Hankins, *Holy Strollers*

Sandie Hale & Karin Walker, *Hospitality Committee*

The Rev. Jack Sutor, *Lectionary Group*

Beth McClelland & Mary Ann Blankenship

Lectio Divina

Ann Norvell Gray, *Lectors*

Chuck Bleick, *Men's Group*

Mary Cay Kollmansperger, *Missionary Society*

Betsy Featherstone, *Prayer Shawls & Needlers*

Andrew Peacock, *Property Committee*

Mary Douglas Erikson, *Shining Examples*

Molly Howle & Porsche Pierson, *Red Door Ministry*

Shelley Thompson, *St. Andrew's School*

Judy Carlson & Mary Ann Blankenship

Spirited Readers Book Club

Cathy Saunders, *Spirited Sisters*

David Hetherington, *Sunday Breakfast*

Terry Hathaway, *Youth Formation*

Clay Hilbert, *Ushers*

Contact

To reach a member of staff, clergy, Vestry, or a Lay Ministry leader visit **ghtc.org/contact**. There, you may use the "Choose a recipient" drop-down menu to select the destination of your email.