

# Amazing Grace



The Newsletter of Grace Episcopal Church, Liberty, Missouri  
520 S. 291 Highway, Liberty, Missouri 64068 816-781-6262  
Website: [www.graceepiscopalliberty.com](http://www.graceepiscopalliberty.com)

Spring 2008

*Alleluia! The Lord is Risen! The Lord is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!*



Grace Church celebrated the high feast of Easter Day on Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, with great joy. Starting with Palm Sunday, Holy Week took us through the joys and sorrows of our Jesus' triumphal ride into Jerusalem, our Lord's grief in the garden, Passion on the cross, and the glorious Resurrection of our Savior. A special part of our Easter Day festival was the service of our acolytes. This year marked the first Easter that Lauren Birkeness, Erin Burroughs, Mattie Davis, Keegan and Logan Sharp, Erin Umland, and Jenna Whitehead served at the altar.

The many beautiful lilies and the special music provided by our musicians enhanced our worship. We were blessed by the special talents of a brass quartet on Palm Sunday and two string players on Easter Day. The choir sang "Praise to the Lord" by Mark Hayes during the Offertory and "At the Lamb's High Feast" by Jakob Hintze at Communion. Music Director, Brett Terry, played "Prelude and Fugue in C" by Johann Sebastian Bach for the opening Voluntary and concluded our worship with Charles-Marie Widor's "Toccata from Fifth Symphony" as the postlude.

## From our Rector:

Blessings and greetings to all as we prepare for the end of another school year and the delights of Summer. Below is the summer schedule for Sunday mornings.

Summer at Grace 2008 will feature:

...An exciting Bible Reading Program for **ALL** Ages beginning on June 1

...A four week Sunday Morning Film Series for **ALL** ages

...Vacation Bible School

...A six week Greening Grace program for **ALL** ages

...Summer in the City, a Mission Program for youth entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade - 12<sup>th</sup>

...A two week program, "Are You Smarter than the Rector?" for **ALL** ages.

During July and August we will all worship together at 9:00 am. And every Sunday we'll have an intergenerational educational program for **ALL** ages at 10:00.

I hope that when you are in town you'll make Sunday worship and education at church an important part of your week.

Blessings to all in the Name of Christ,  
Mother Susan McCann+

Sunday, June 1

8:00 & 10:15 am	Holy Eucharist
9:00 am	Last day of Sonshine Academy
9:00 am	Last day of Adult Forum - Poverty: An Issue of Ethics and Justice

**The Summer Bible reading program begins today for adults and children**

Sunday, June 8

8:00 & 10:15 am	Holy Eucharist
9:00 am	4 Week Film Series begins for adults and children

Sunday, June 15

8:00 & 10:15 am	Holy Eucharist
9:00 am	Film Series

June 16 - 20 Monday through Friday

Wizard of Oz Vacation Bible School from 5:30-8:00 pm

Sunday, June 22

8:00 & 10:15 am	Holy Eucharist
9:00 am	Film Series
11:30 am	Summer Celebration BBQ following the 10:15 service

Sunday, June 29

8:00 & 10:15 am Holy Eucharist  
9:00 am Film Series

Sunday, July 6 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Greening Grace

A program for all ages which continues through August 10<sup>th</sup>

July 7 - 11 Summer in the City Monday through Friday 9:00 - 3:00

A Mission program for youth entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Sunday, July 13 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Greening Grace

Sunday, July 20 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Greening Grace

Sunday, July 27 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Greening Grace

Sunday, August 3 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Greening Grace

Sunday, August 10 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Last Sunday for Greening Grace

Sunday, August 17 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Are You Smarter Than the Rector?  
A two week program for all ages.

Sunday, August 24 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:00 am Are You Smarter Than the Rector?

Sunday, August 31 In July and August we will have one Sunday morning service.

9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
No Education Hour this morning.

Sunday, September 7 Fall Kick-Off

8:00 am Holy Eucharist  
9:00 am Sonshine Academy Fall Kick-Off  
9:00 am Adult Forum Fall Kick-Off  
10:15 am Holy Eucharist

## **We Learn: Education for all**

### **Adult Forum: A Smaller Carbon Footprint and Spiritual Disciplines**

As part of our on-going effort to be better stewards of the earth, Linda Hezel led us in a discussion of steps we can take as individuals, families, and a faith community to reduce our carbon output and thus do our part to slow global warming. We used exercises and topics suggested by *Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds* by David Gershorn. Copies of the book are available at By the Book on the square in Liberty if you would like to join the effort.

The Rev. Robin Sandbothe led us in series of discussions titled "Practicing Our Faith," which she describes as "those shared activities that address fundamental human needs and that, woven together, form a way of life." We explored keeping the Sabbath, hospitality, and shaping communities. In addition to learning how Christians have historically understood these aspects of our spiritual journey, Robin challenged us to consider what we do and how intentional we are about such activities as a part of our walk with God.

### **"Beyond the Yellow Brick Road:" A Vacation Bible School Adventure!!**

The Wizard of Oz will provide the theme for this year's Vacation Bible School, planned for **June 16-20**, from 5-8:30 p.m. Dinner will be served each evening. The learning objective is to define and nurture the spiritual self through the characters and story of the Wizard of Oz. If you are interested in helping with VBS, or if you have a child interested in attending, see Rev. Trish, or email her at: [grace4revtrish@hotmail.com](mailto:grace4revtrish@hotmail.com). Children through 5<sup>th</sup> grade are welcome as participants. Older youth will serve as helpers.

### **Editor's History Corner**

Because church and state were supposedly one in the Church of England, the parish vestry was the local government as well as the local church leadership committee. This meant that until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, parish vestries were responsible for things such as garbage collection, street paving, policing, caring for the poor, and making sure the church building was in good repair. In some places, anyone who paid the local taxes was considered to be on the vestry. In some London parishes, this meant the vestry might have thousands of people eligible to join. This could be a little TOO exciting at times. In 1823, for example, in the East End parish of St. Matthew, Bethnal Green, when a motion was made to name a particular person chair of the vestry, a riot broke out and the police had to be called to restore order.

## **We SERVE: Doing for others**

### **Serving on the Altar: The Acolytes Reflect on Easter**

Here are some thoughts from some of the acolytes who assist Mother Susan during services on what it meant for them to serve on Easter Sunday for the first time (in alphabetical order):

**Lauren B.** To be an acolyte is a very big responsibility but it's a worth-while thing. I think having an opportunity to help the church and to be even closer to the church makes me feel a whole lot closer to Jesus. Every time we meet on Saturday [to practice] we all get to do a different job.

**Logan S.** I was really excited when Mother Susan asked me to be an acolyte on Easter Sunday. My job was to carry the plates to Mother Susan. I can't wait to finish second grade so I can start being an acolyte.

**Keegan S.** It meant a lot to help serve on Easter. I was (assigned) the Easter Cross. My jobs were to carry the cross at the beginning, end, and at the Gospel procession. My other job was to help close the gates. I like to help serve the church and will continue to do that.

**Erin U.** At Easter Sunday, I loved the flowers. All of the people were nice as always. I like celebrating how God (Jesus) came to life again! I love how on the altar everything was stone then everything turned to gold. The colors on Mother Susan's vestments brought the altar to life.

### **Feeding Ministries**

- Nourishing Neighbors feeds 11 adults 55 meals per week (or 220 per month).
- Franklin Friends feeds 32 children 192 meals per week (or 768 per month).

Sarah Cool, chair of Franklin Friends, shared that when she recently gave a pack back filled with food to a child receiving a backpack for the first time, the young girl told her: "It's going to be a great week end!"

In keeping with Grace's food ministries, the Garden Committee encourages all those with home gardens to plant an extra row of vegetables for Harvester's "Plant a Row for the Hungry" project. Look for more information and barrels for reception of produce at participating garden stores in mid-May.

Kim Sharp, chair of Grace's Grocery, is exploring ways that we can continue to provide food for children in need who attend Franklin Elementary this summer. We will continue to provide food for our elderly Nourishing Neighbors friends and will be adding a hot entrée which will be cooked each week in Grace's kitchen. If you or your ministry group or your family would like to cook an entrée please sign up on the bulletin board outside the kitchen.

### **AIDS Walk 2008**

Grace's Integrity Chapter participated in the Kansas City AIDS Walk this year. The AIDS Walk raises money to help provide shelter, medical care, and emergency assistance for persons affected by HIV and AIDS in our community. The walk was Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. Led by Gretchen Renfro, the Grace team included twenty-two adults and children from Grace. The KC Walk raised a record amount, over \$500,000.

### **SUMMER IN THE CITY**

All youth entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall and Older: Join Mother Susan and Reverend Trish for a week of fun and mission here in the KC and Liberty area. Mark your calendars for July 7-11, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00p.m. We'll meet at the church, then travel together to serve God's people and creatures! Mission sites may include the Kansas City Community Kitchen, St. Luke's Hospital, Liberty Animal Shelter, Bridging the Gap, or the Zoo! Don't miss out! See Rev. Trish or Mother Susan for more information.

## **CELEBRATE: Fun and Fellowship**

### **The Joy of Easter: Slightly messy, a bit chilly and lots of fun**

In addition to the joyous and solemn services of the week, we also colored eggs, made bread, hunted for eggs, and ate yummy treats at the annual Egg Cetera. Below on the left, a few intrepid souls learned the fine art of egg-blowing.



The competitors in the egg and spoon race, in the photo on the right, are under starter's orders!



On Easter Day, the children of Grace braved the elements to find 600 eggs filled with goodies. The wind was a bit fierce. Colin (blue shirt) felt the chill. We can only hope that Ascension and Pentecost will be warmer in temperature and will match the joy of Easter Day!

### **Long-time members: Dick and Ginny Hoffman**

**Raymond Lincoln "Dick" Hoffman and Virginia "Ginny" Hoffman** were charter members of Grace Episcopal Church, one of ten couples in the 1960s who reformed Episcopal congregation in Liberty. Ginny and Dick have been faithful members ever since. "We believe in it," says Dick. Ginny adds, "It's our church home." They liked Mother Susan from the beginning and feel their initial faith in her has been well proven. "She's been very good for the church," said Dick.

The Hoffmans have been good for Grace as well. Ginny has served for forty years on the Altar Guild, sewn rag dolls, and helped with countless church bazaars. Dick has been on the Vestry many times and served as Senior Warden. He sang in the choir until just a few months ago and now assists Ginny on the Altar Guild. "Quitting choir was the hardest thing to do," Dick commented sadly. He had been singing in church choirs since he was sixteen years old.



Although Ginny claims she doesn't sing, she and Dick have been making music together for 61 years. Their first dance was on a blind date. They have danced and cruised all over the world. Dick has also enjoyed woodworking, while Ginny has always loved crafts. They even worked together on some projects, but Dick talked in glowing terms of his wife's artistic talent. Of their lives together, Dick said, "We've been blessed." They still live in the same house in Liberty where they raised their three children. They now have five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

When asked "what one last thing do you want the Grace community to know about you?" they replied:

Ginny: *We've always tried to be good examples for others.*

Dick: *We've had a blessed life. It's been fun.*

### **The Gift of Music**

Grace's Music Director, **Brett Terry**, invites parishioners to his **Junior Organ Recital**. We all know that Brett is not a junior musician, but he is in his junior year at the Conservatory. The performance is **Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>** at 3 p.m., at St. Paul's Church, 40<sup>th</sup> and Main, Kansas City.

### **Game Night**

On Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, the Fellowship Committee sponsored a Family Game Night. Twister, Pictionary, and Triominos attracted an enthusiastic crowd. Or was it the delicious food!



**We WELCOME: Practicing Radical Welcome**

**Newcomers.**

The spotlight this month is on **Dennis and Gerry Cray** who moved to Liberty from New Jersey two years ago. Dennis is an installer for Norson Inc., and Gerry is a chemical technician at Caravan Ingredients. One thing they like about the Midwest is that traffic is much lighter here than in New Jersey!



Married for 25 years, they have 5 grown children and 8 grandchildren. They are owned by a Pembroke Welsh corgi named Foxy who likes to stay in the car during services. They both feel very much at home at Grace, and enjoy many of the church's social activities. Dennis and Gerry are very active in the Franklin Friends and Nourishing Neighbors programs, helping to pack and deliver on Sundays.

### New Members

Since January, we have welcomed the following new members. Future editions of *Amazing Grace* will introduce them in greater depth but be sure to say welcome when you meet them:

Jerry and Susan Jacobs by Letter of Transfer  
Bryan Michael Wilper through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism  
Paul and Kate Van Gorden by Recording their Baptism  
and  
Ellie and Jack Van Gorden through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism

**The Newly Baptized** On Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Grace welcomed **Aaron Kirby** into God's household through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. The youngest child of Thom and Susan Kirby, Aaron is 8 years old. Welcome Aaron to the Body of Christ!



### Claiming the Blessing

Grace Church recently hosted one of five regional "Claiming the Blessing" workshops. Similar meetings occurred in Newark, Atlanta, California, and Michigan. Claiming the Blessing (CTB) is an intentional collaborative ministry of Episcopal justice organizations (including Integrity, Oasis, Beyond Inclusion, and the Episcopal Women's Caucus). In partnership with Witness magazine and leaders in the Episcopal Church, CTB works to promote wholeness in human relationships, abolish prejudice and oppression, and heal the rift between sexuality and spirituality in the Church.

Delegates from Grace included Carla Umland, Gretchen Renfro, Kim Sharp, Sharon Grimes, Father John McCann and Mother Susan McCann. Assisting with the event were Sarah Cool, Sylvia Nadler, and Brad Chance. Participants were from Missouri, Kansas, Texas, Minnesota, Michigan, and California.

The meeting provided an overview of authority and decision making in the Episcopal Church, strategies for advancing equality in the church, developing and communicating messages, and strategies for promoting change via submitting convention resolutions.

The goal of this effort is: **Full inclusion of all the baptized in all sacraments.**



Kim Sharp and Gretchen Renfro listen carefully to The Reverend Cynthia Black of Kalamazoo, Michigan, one of the CTB workshop presenters.

## **We Care: For God, the earth, our neighbors, and ourselves**

### **Our Health**

The newly-formed Parish Wellness Committee sponsored its first event on Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. Dr. John Burroughs and Nurse Practitioner Gretchen Renfro checked blood pressures and blood sugars. It is important for everyone to be checked periodically. If either number is out of the range of normal, it can be a sign of serious health problems, including heart and artery disease in the case of blood pressure and diabetes for blood sugar. Some of us did wait until after the 10:15 service, as our blood pressures got a good work out in the gardens (see below).

Be on the look out for a new program: "Graceful Losers" The Wellness Committee will organize activities and support members who are trying to shed extra pounds with activities, information, and Internet links to helpful websites on nutrition and exercise. Let's see how much we can lose!

### For the Earth

All hands were not on deck but in the garden on Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, when the congregation turned out to celebrate Earth Day. We cleared away winter debris, weeded out new spring growth, and generally cleaned up the grounds. Many hands made light work and dirty shoes!

Stocking feet were seen in the 10:15 service in large numbers.



Check out the Grace Church web site for an explanation of our landscape at [graceepiscopalliberty.com/environment.html](http://graceepiscopalliberty.com/environment.html). Rose Verbena (*Glandularia canadensis*) is in bloom.

### For the Work of God in the Church

From the Treasurer as reported to the Vestry:

#### April 2008:

Income: \$11, 953.72  
Expenses: 22,201.72  
Deficit: (10, 248.00)

#### Year to Date (actual):

Income: \$83, 955.23  
Expenses: 85, 751.94  
Deficit: (1,796.71)

#### YTD (Budgeted):

Income: \$86, 433.52  
Expenses: 90,169.16  
Deficit: (3,735.64)

### **The Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church**

The Very Rev. Susan McCann, Rector  
Richard Moore, Senior Warden

Susan Anderson, Adult Ed   Lori Birkeness, Fellowship and Hospitality  
Henry Bramman, Junior Warden   John Burroughs, Parish Wellness  
Brad Chance, Evangelism   Sharon Grimes, Communications  
Jim Hill, Stewardship   Terry Hayter, Outreach  
Gretchen Renfro, Parish Wellness   Jerry Venters, Finance Chair

### **Clergy**

The Rev. Trish Winters, Clergy Associate for Children and Youth  
The Rev. Barbara Beam, Priest Associate

### **Amazing Grace Staff**

Editor: Elaine Reynolds

Staff Writers: Jody May, Lolly Ockerstrom, Robin Sandbothe  
Photos: Bonnie Strider, Sharon Grimes, Thom Kirby  
Consultants: Diane Pike, Sharon Grimes, Mother Susan McCann

Please send comments to the Editor at [reynoldsea@att.net](mailto:reynoldsea@att.net)