

Grace Notes

One New Episcopal Church From Two Historic Parishes

Volume 5 Number 1

January 2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE! AND HAPPY EPIPHANY, TOO!

At the Epiphany, we celebrate many things. We celebrate, for instance, the arrival of wise men (and implied wise women), along with the whole entourage which made the whole trip possible and safe. They journeyed to pay generous homage to the newly-born Jewish wise man, Jesus of Nazareth, whom Christians will later honor as more than a wise man and indeed as the divine Son of God.



Epiphany, though, also celebrates what New Orleanians call “lagniappe”. (It’s pronounced “lawn-yap”). In his 1883 book, *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain wrote, “We picked up one excellent word, a word worth traveling to New Orleans to get; a nice limber, expressive, handy word – ‘lagniappe.’ It means ‘unexpected goodness or bonus’.” When you find a dollar on the street, that’s lagniappe. When you pull into a parking spot and there’s still 30 minutes on the meter for you to use, that’s lagniappe. When a stranger at the grocery store lets you cut ahead of them in the check-out line because the total of your shopping items is far less than theirs, that’s lagniappe. We Christians call it “little moments of grace” or “daily grace.” Whatever we call it, lagniappe is indeed a real thing.

At the Epiphany, Mary and Joseph experienced truly big lagniappe that they never saw coming: generous and valuable donations of gold, frankincense, and myrrh that helped the poor, working couple for whom there was no place at the inn and who were struggling to find their faithful way in the world. The Epiphany indeed celebrates many things, and one of them is lagniappe.

We at Grace Church just experienced some lagniappe related to the Loaves & Fish program we support at Trinity. Did you hear about it? Thanks to the clean-up some of our members (Linnet Baker, Jean Bonito, Tam Hernández, Nicola Kenny, Jo McGrath, Darryl Moy – and Fiona!) did to the Trinity kitchen in December, Fiona Matthew, the L&F program coordinator, a parishioner at All Saints’ Briarcliff, was able over the Christmas break to show contractors she trusts the renovation job that was needed, and here was the response from one of them, as Fiona shared in her email to some of us at Grace:



“Dear all, I have some amazing news re: our kitchen wall repair and repainting job. Double R, the contractor I asked for a quote, has offered to do the job at their cost. They will charge us only for the materials and their manpower. They tell me that all the partners of Double R agreed that this generous offer is something they want to do and are thankful to people like us who help others as well. Loaves & Fish can afford to pay for the job thanks to some generous donors. We will not need additional money from the Grace Church budget.”

That’s Grace Church, All Saints’, and Loaves and Fish receiving Big Lagniappe. God seeks to overwhelm us with big and small lagniappe all the time, especially when it comes to encouragement to follow God’s will. The problem, though, for most of us at least (count me in this boat!) is that we think and act like we need to do it mostly if not all ourselves, that God is too august and transcendent to get God’s hands dirty in the immanent, that we need to engineer everything according to human and Christian values and then implement our “faithful” plans for God all by our human selves alone. That’s not mature faithfulness. That’s, at best, shallow faithfulness that puts more emphasis on the human than the divine and, at worst, it’s the human ego disguised as divine will. In either case, it leaves God practically out of the picture and deprives God (and us!) of the joy of God’s recognized participation.

God is, after all, Love (1 John 4:7). What this newborn babe will reveal is that the divine nature is eternally loving, forgiving, creative, entrepreneurial, forward thinking, and empowering, just like we see Jesus acting in the Gospels over and over and over again, even to his enemies, even to the Cross. In fact, we might think of the Resurrection as the biggest lagniappe of all: eternal life to all, because He loves us that much and seeks to enjoy us forever! Now that’s truly Good News!

Christian discernment is the art of getting the balance right between the human and the divine, between human critical thinking and openness to lagniappe – the discovery of God acting in large and small ways in our midst. God has always given us lagniappe as manna in our lives (Exodus 16), not just to sustain us, but to point us in the direction of following God’s will.

This is all good news, especially for us at Grace Church. Why? Because in 2025 we are finally going to begin – slowly, consciously, intentionally, and faithfully – to discern and to discuss together the elephant in the room: the non-viability of Grace’s two campus situation.

Every time I bring up this issue with people, publicly and privately, I honestly cringe a bit inside because I know this is everyone's big anxiety. It makes me anxious, too, because so much is riding on it. And every time I bring it up with people, publicly and privately, people tell me something to the effect of: "We know this is the central issue, Hal; we know this is something we need to resolve. You aren't revealing a secret; you are helping us address the issue we have all known we eventually need to face."

Well, 2025 is the year we begin to face and discuss the non-viability of Grace's two campus situation, so that perhaps as early as 2026 we can begin making some hard, necessary, and faithful decisions together that embody where we believe God is calling us to go.

As you may recall, at the September 2024 fall half-year report to the parish, the parish gave the vestry some areas they wanted more information about: deferred maintenance at both campuses, rental updates, projected budget and endowment planning for the future, and more. The vestry has been diligently investigating that data and will share it at Grace's next annual meeting on February 9, 2025. That's when the non-viability issue will begin to take center stage consciously, deliberately, and faithfully.

In the meantime, let's celebrate Epiphany-tide – the season beginning with the coming of the Magi. Let's also celebrate lagniappe – that God is and has always been with Grace from the founding and long histories of both St. Paul's on-the-Hill and Trinity. God has and continues to act in our midst, in large and small ways, and that won't stop, especially when we intentionally seek to slow down and discern God's will for Grace now and for the future.

Let's close with a prayer for guidance from our *Book of Common Prayer* (page 100):

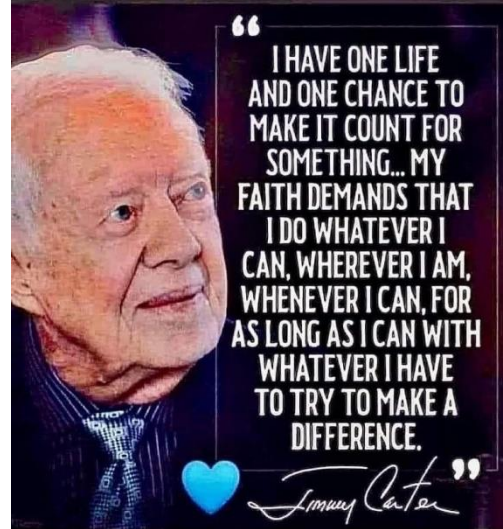
Heavenly Father,
in you we live and move and have our being:
We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by
your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our
life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are
ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

With love and prayers,

Fr. Hal+

DEACON'S MESSAGE

President Jimmy Carter died at age 100 on December 29, just a short week ago. I have been listening to and reading all the news coverage of his presidential term and his remarkable post-presidential years. I am pulled back in time to those years of the mid-to-late 1970s because Carter's run for a second term in 1980 was the first presidential election in which I was old enough to vote. It was Jimmy Carter (D) vs. Ronald Reagan (R) vs. Jon Anderson (a congressman who ran as an Independent). I was a student overseas in 1979-1980, and I had the great challenge of seeing America through the eyes of my fellow students, many of whom were Iranians living in Europe. Some were excited to see changes coming in



their homeland. Others warned about the ensuing chaos that would be ushered in by the Ayatollah Khomeini. (Women, especially, would be pushed back decades with repressive laws.) Many were cynical about America and our economic and military interests around the world.

We were in the middle of the hostage crisis, "stagflation," and an oil crisis. Whatever good Carter did with the Camp David Accords and urging us to face the coming energy crisis was never going to surmount these challenges. What I knew about Carter at that time, what overrode all other impressions, is that he was Christian, a devoted family man, and honest to a fault. I now see his life as a study in resilience and faith. In 1966, he lost his bid for the primary in the gubernatorial campaign in Georgia. He lost to a segregationist. It was a bitter blow. He learned from it. Then ran again and won in 1970.

He was a nobody from nowhere when he ran for president in 1976. He captured the zeitgeist of the post-Watergate era and won, only to lose the bid for reelection. Again, a bitter blow. In an interview he noted, years later, that he was disappointed in that he was a relatively young man and thought he had a lot of years of service he could do for our country.

So he recalibrated. He ended up doing those years of service. We might argue, he was more effective as a past president than he was as a president. A year after leaving office, he and his wife Roslyn founded The Carter Center. They traveled the world building houses for Habitat for Humanity. Carter was called upon to go on diplomatic missions. He wrote numerous books, gave many lectures, taught Sunday School, and won the Nobel Peace Prize. He remained steadfast in his faith all his life. (Annie, my spouse, especially delights in the fact that Jimmy Carter was a Sunday school teacher, from his teen years until just recently.) His quote above says it all...

Join us the day before Martin Luther King Day, Sunday, January 19, after service for our second discussion of *The Seven Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism: A Call to Action*, by Rev. Carter Hayward. I expect our discussion will have much insight on where we have been as a church and a nation, and where we can dream to go. Do not worry if you haven't read the book. Please come anyway. You may want to check out these links to several discussions and lectures online. (Thanks to Ann Visconti for finding these resources.)

A link to a good part of the audio book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgIkVL-okK4>
<https://youtu.be/K9RqKI5d8cM>
https://youtu.be/K9RqKI5d8cM?si=XoA3vTDs-f83P_lq
<https://youtu.be/EgIkVL-okK4?si=hU3fWZ93hHNwsix2>
<https://youtu.be/h91fW0Eixp0?si=iRpMwDBCNDkVZL7j>

In Peace,

Deacon Jean Marie



OUR UPCOMING SERVICES

January 5	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	The Epiphany
January 12	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (St. Paul's Campus)	First Sunday after the Epiphany
January 19	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	Second Sunday after the Epiphany
January 26	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (St. Paul's Campus)	Third Sunday after the Epiphany

All Sunday services are live streamed to our YouTube channel. And you can also find them there and on our Facebook page after the service is over. The links are:

YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP1qGAuJlIxWU8Z_ucCKEGA
Grace's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/graceossining/>

WARDEN'S REPORT



Christmas services, Lessons & Carols, holiday feasts & traditions are fun, but they all require a ton of work! We appreciate all of the behind-the-scenes folks, clergy, Christmas crew, Hospitality, Worship, Musical talent, Business staff, sextons, and our generous volunteers who all executed many multiple tasks at year-end so seamlessly and beautifully! Thanks again for all that you do to make it all happen at Grace Episcopal Church!

- We are very lucky to have the B&G team monitoring the many work projects which impact on property maintenance, repairs, and improvements. Darryl is tracking projects, timelines, costs, prospective work, and liability issues related to deferred maintenance. We will share the progress, the damage from the deferred maintenance and current status of both campuses during our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 9th immediately after the service.
- Fr. Hal was busy envisioning multiple ways to generate rental space revenue from our properties last year and he managed to finalize the terms of a lease agreement for the Lantern Shop space before year end!
- Beth, Kate, and Megan worked tirelessly making sure normal year end business was taken care of while a new payroll vendor/ system was being introduced by the Diocese of New York.
- Tina and Tam were keeping up with the multiple bulletins, notices, and year-end events to keep everyone on track!
- Jo, Beth, and Mel have been most generous with their time, energy, and talent in helping identify, execute, and complete whatever our scheduled Grace events or Election Day required!
- We are grateful to the livestreaming team who make remote worship/participation possible for our parish! Big thanks to Kate & Steve for keeping this rota schedule organized.
- Grace Church will be hosting overnight guests during the Emergency Shelter Program, from February 3 through February 16 and also for one week in March. Meals for the first week are scheduled to be provided by Holy Spirit Church. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Hudson Valley has tentatively volunteered to supply the meals for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of the second week and we are hoping our Grace family will be able to cover the remaining four days. More information will be sent when we get closer to the shelter's arrival.

- We have been very fortunate to have Darryl Moy serve as Warden and Sarah Davis, Maribeth Osgood, and Kellie Ishmael serve on the Vestry and support Fr. Hal during his transition to our Grace/Ossining community. (I am still processing functioning as Warden without my co-Warden Darryl. He will be sorely missed in 2025.) For those of you who have some free time to serve on Grace's Vestry please feel free to approach Fr. Hal or Darryl until our Nominating Committee is officially announced. Please step up as we have lots of courageous conversations, important decisions, and meaningful work to do this year and your input is sincerely needed!

WISHING YOU MANY BLESSINGS & SUCCESSES IN 2025!

Co-Wardens: Darryl Moy (2026) darryl.moy@gmail.com
Cecilia Quintero (2025) cquintero1506@gmail.com

Vestry Members: Sarah Davis (2025) songbird0606@outlook.com
Kellie Ishmael (2027) kellieishmael@gmail.com
Milton Kerr (2027) mkdj46@yahoo.com
Maribeth Osgood (2025) mosgood@optonline.net
Jo Ann McGrath (2026) mcgrathinator@gmail.com
Kate Pendzuk (2026) katependzuk@gmail.com

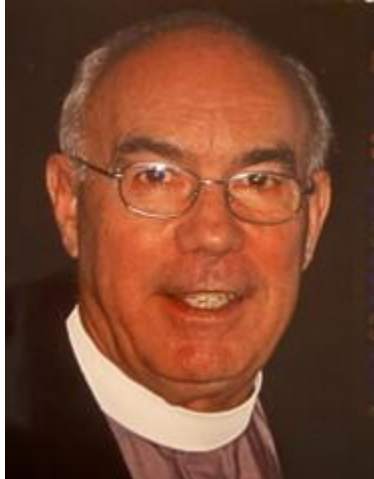
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2025 Annual Meeting Notice

The annual election of the wardens and vestry of this parish shall take place on Sunday, February 9, 2025, at 11:30 in the Parish Hall on our St. Paul's campus. (Lunch will be provided.)

Our current wardens are Darryl Moy and Cecilia Quintero. Vestry members are Sarah Davis, Kellie Ishmael, Milton Kerr, Jo Ann McGrath, Maribeth Osgood, and Kate Pendzuk. The terms of Darryl Moy (Warden), Kellie Ishmael (Vestry), Sarah Davis (Vestry), and Maribeth Osgood (Vestry) are expiring.

If you are interested in serving or know anyone who might be, please contact Fr. Hal or either of our wardens, Darryl and Cecilia. Nominees should be eighteen years or older and regularly attend worship, and regularly contribute to the support of Grace Church for at least twelve months prior to the election.

Nominations from the floor will also be permissible at the meeting. Again, please note, those eligible to vote must be eighteen years of age, baptized, and regularly attend and contribute to the support of our church for the past twelve months.



THE REVEREND CANON EDWARD NILS BLATZ

August 12, 1940 – December 8, 2024

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in a lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love.

~ Reinhold Niebuhr

Born on August 12, 1940, Nils grew up in Freeport, New York with a strong sense of community and service. A gifted athlete, he graduated from Bowdoin College in 1962, where he still holds the record for most assists (8) in a single varsity lacrosse game—a fact he eagerly shared with anyone he thought might appreciate it. Nils' spirited sense of humor and knack for mischief were evident even in his college days, where he left behind a legendary legacy of pranks in collaboration with (and sometimes at the expense of) his Chi Psi fraternity brothers.

After earning his Master of Divinity degree from General Theological Seminary in 1965, Nils was ordained to the priesthood in December 1965 by Bishop Jonathan Goodhue Sherman. His ministry, spanning several decades in the Diocese of Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Long Island, touched countless lives. At Saint David's in Wayne, Pennsylvania; Trinity Church in Roslyn, New York; Grace Church in Brooklyn Heights, New York; and as Vicar at Church of the Redeemer in Mattituck, New York, Nils was known for his welcoming compassionate leadership and his ability to create caring, communities where all were appreciated.

Nils' faith was rooted in both the Gospels and his enduring love for family. He and his beloved wife, Leslie Dickenson Blatz, married on August 25, 1962, and shared 62 years of marriage filled with mutual respect, deep affection, and a shared commitment to each other and their children. They deeply adored their grandchildren Christopher, Henry, Tilley, Audrey, and Payntar.



An avid swimmer and sailor, Nils could be found body-surfing waves at Jones Beach (Field 6 precisely) or gliding across the water on his Hobie Cat. These were his moments to indulge his free spirit and deep connection to nature. His colorful sail would often be seen on the waters of Lake George, Hempstead Harbor, and the Great South Bay. A lifelong reader, he found inspiration in the works of theologians, counting Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Schubert Ogden among his favorites. Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* was a work never far from his heart

and thoughts. His sermons, typically infused with insights from his readings, were thought-provoking and filled with wit and wisdom.

Nils approached life with a unique blend of grace and purpose. Through his inspiring sermons, kindness toward others, steadfast moral principles and his unwavering support of family and friends, Nils left an enduring impact on all who knew him. His legacy of love, service, and laughter will continue to inspire everyone he touched.

He is survived by his wife, Leslie; his children, Andrew, Amy (Doug Warden), Daniel (Jessica King); his cherished grandchildren; his sisters, Anne Holland and Liz Holland, and their families. He was predeceased by his parents, Irving Hanson Blatz and Elizabeth Holland Blatz, and his beloved daughter, Lisa Anne Blatz - his only equal in mischief and humor.

A memorial service will be held on January 11th at 11:00 AM at Grace's Saint Paul's Campus, 40 Ganung Drive, Ossining, New York. Friends, family, and the community are invited to celebrate Nils' life and the profound impact he had on all of us. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations honoring his lifelong dedication to service and compassion be made to:

Camp de Wolfe, 408 North Side Road, Wading River, NY 11792

<https://campdewolfe.campbraingiving.com/>

or

Community Mainstreaming Associates, 1025 Old Country Road, Suite 325, Westbury, NY 11590

<https://communitymainstreaming.networkforgood.com/projects/220809-general-donations>

Nils' legacy of joy, humility, and love will live on in our hearts forever. If you would like, you may send condolence cards to Leslie at:

1 Harbor Square
Apt. 633
Ossining, NY 10562

OUR 2024 HOLIDAY SEASON REMEMBRANCES

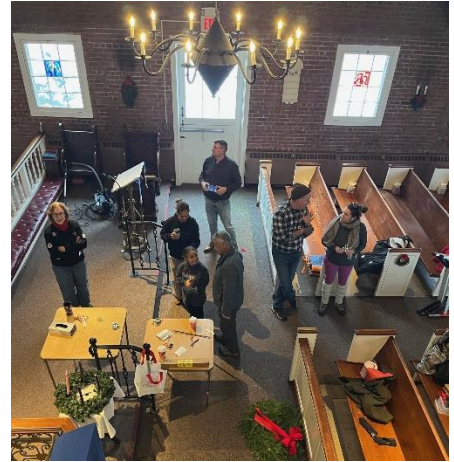
OPEN DOOR'S TOY DISTRIBUTION AT OUR TRINITY CAMPUS



OUR LESSONS AND CAROLS CHOIR



OUR FAMILY PREPARES



OUR CHRISTMAS ALTARS



WELCOME!



Briarcliff-Ossining Ministerial Association Presents

Dr Martin Luther King Jr

Annual Interfaith Celebration

Sunday Jan. 19 | 5:00 PM



Keynote Speaker: Reverend Dr. Willie Francois
Sr. Pastor, Fountain Baptist Church (Summit, NJ)
Assoc. Prof. of Theology at Union Theological Seminary



Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church | 304 Spring St. Ossining, NY 10562

HUDSON  CHORALE

Carols & Lullabies

Christmas in the Southwest

by Conrad Susa

Malhaar:

A Requiem for Water

by Reena Esmail

January 25 & 26

3 p.m.

The Chapel at
Maryknoll
55 Ryder Road
Ossining



TICKETS:



www.hudsonchorale/events.org

GRACE GRIEF GROUP

ANGELS ARE NEAR

By Donna Ashworth

When I go,
don't learn to live without me,
just learn to live with my love,
in a different way.

And if you need to see me,
close your eyes,
or look in your shadow,
when the sun shines,
I'm there.

Sit with me in the quiet and you will know,
that I did not leave.

There is no leaving when a soul is blended
with
another.

When I go,
don't learn to live without me,
just learn to look for me in the moments.
I will be there.

This beautiful print was made by
lucyclaireillustration ❤️❤️❤️

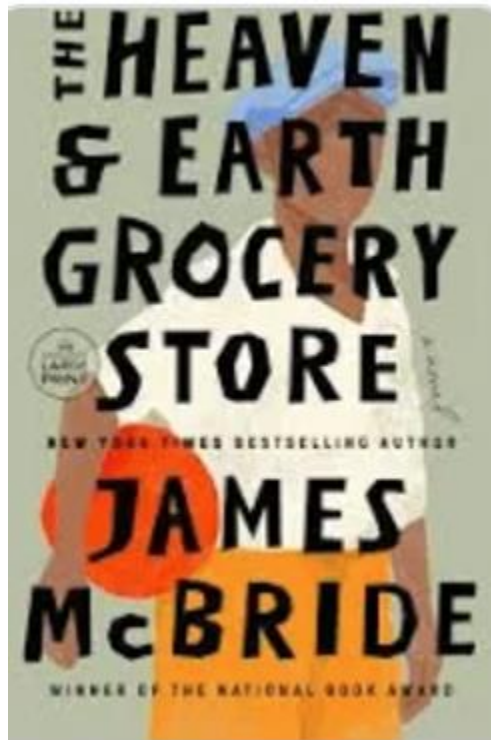
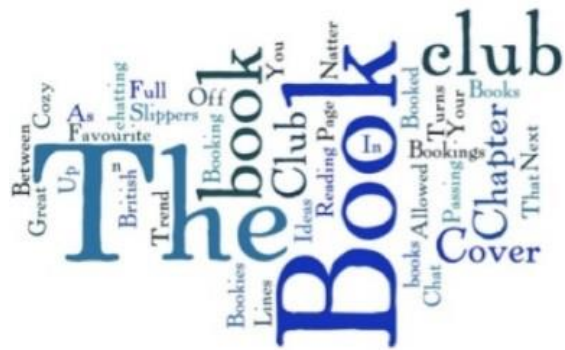


*look for me in the moments
I'm there*

Our regular meetings are scheduled on the 2ND AND 4TH Saturdays
(JANUARY 11th AND JANUARY 25th)

From 10:00 AM TO 11:30 AM In the Family Room, St. Paul's Campus of Grace Church
40 Ganung Drive, Ossining, NY 10562

For more information, call Grace Church at 914 941-6627.



TBC WILL DISCUSS THIS NY TIMES BESTSELLER AT OUR NEXT MEETING
FEBRUARY 23RD AFTER COFFEE HOUR

This popular novel has been on just about everyone's reading list, or recommended book list and it's time to add it to ours! It's a unique blend of literary fiction, historical fiction, and mystery. The tale weaves around a Jewish couple's struggle and the Black community which unites to help them. [Click here](#) to read the *Times* review. And [click here](#) for the PBS NewsHour video interview with James McBride (7 minutes).



JANUARY EVENTS

- 4 Hospitality Steering Committee
- 11 Grief Group at Grace
- 11 Nils Blatz's Memorial Service
- 22 Vestry Meeting
- 25 Grief Group at Grace



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Ryan Echevarria (Mahlau's grandson)	2	Katie Pauline	18
Jennifer Bomwell	4	Barbara Rose	18
Karley Ann Ryan	4	Samara Davis	20
Kate Pendzuk	6	Julie Davis	25
Marcus Roman	6	Elizabeth Bender	27
Margery Barnes	7	Ed Shultz	27
Kyle Muth	8	Katrinka Kip	28
Lorraine Baird	9	Tom Greene	31
Tyler Shaw	11	Chloe Nicole Wagner	31
Beverly Vaillancourt	17		

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Nunzio and Lori Liberti 7



CLERGY

The Rev. Hal Roark, Priest-in-Charge
The Rev. Jean Marie Angelo, Deacon

VESTRY

Darryl Moy, Warden Cecilia Quintero, Warden
Jo Ann McGrath, Clerk

Sarah Davis Maribeth Osgood
Kellie Ishmael Kate Pendzuk
Milton Kerr

STAFF

Beth Pollack, Treasurer
Tina Farrell and Tamsen Hernández, Parish Administrators
Suji Jung, Music Director
Katherine Pendzuk, Verger
Megan Whalen, Bookkeeper
Anthony Sena, Sexton, St. Paul's Campus
Pablo Montoya, Sexton, Trinity Campus

MISSION STATEMENT

To love God is a call to action. Strengthened by prayer, worship, and study,
Grace Church embraces and serves all people, the earth, and every living thing.