

Grace Notes

One New Episcopal Church From Two Historic Parishes

Volume 6 Number 1

January 2026

Happy New Year, Beloved of God and Grace,

As I sit to write this message during the first week of January, there are many thoughts that come to mind that deserve our attention. I am not, however, going to comment on most of them here or at this time. We have plenty of time in 2026 to process our parish life, local life, and national life together, through the teachings and values of Jesus and our Episcopal/Anglican tradition.



I do, though, want to reiterate my Christmas Eve sermon message because, to be frank, we all saw this coming, right? We aren't naive people; we are experienced, mature adults, and we all knew the disruptions of 2025 would continue into 2026, tragically. And they have. And it is rational to believe that they will continue for some time to come, sadly.

So: what are we to do about it?

Weekly at worship, we affirm our commitment to Jesus and the values and reign of God he promotes. If I had to summarize in one continuous paragraph what the contemporary Episcopal Church and The Episcopal Diocese of New York believe is a core summary of Jesus' teachings, it would be this paragraph from the First Letter of John, Chapter 4, verses 7-13:

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.

We know personally as individual Christians that discerning God's invisible Spirit in our personal lives isn't easy or quick. It takes time, discernment, critical thinking, prayer, a willingness to interrogate our lives by the values of Jesus, experimentation, and more. The same is required for group or parish discernment, and we are learning that together through our Grace New Futures Discernment program.

One change we are making to our program is a desire for us to share what our faith means to us personally. What do we all think “church is about?” As we all know from our experiences in The Episcopal Church, there is no one right answer to that question. It is important for us to clarify our understandings and expectations, though, because this will inform our collective sense of Grace's mission going forward.

Therefore, we have amended our Grace New Futures schedule a bit. On January 18th, we will have a conversation in Potter Hall after worship at Trinity to begin these discussions. Acknowledging that this can be an awkward conversation for Episcopalians, Rev. Claire will guide us in a fun series of questions with “faith question playing cards” that are meant to help us articulate our sensibilities. I will do the same on January 25th in the Parish Hall at St. Paul’s after worship. Please plan to come to both, or at least one.

At this point in our Grace New Futures Program, we have begun to look at our Grace history and taken photos of places that have a lot of life and action in Ossining. We have also interviewed strangers in Ossining about what they like about Ossining, dislike about it, and where they find spiritual nourishment. Most respondents have named places like “nature,” “the river,” and other places not aligned with a formal spiritual community. We also looked in depth at Ossining data from a national data source that provided dozens of current statistics on indicators like race, class, education level, family formation, income levels, education levels, and more. This helped us have a more current understanding of Ossining and, in some cases, challenged our own Ossining lives and living routines.

The program will move to interviewing local leaders to learn what issues they are addressing, what challenges they are facing, what successes they are experiencing, and to seek their perspective about how—if they were in our shoes—they would use our campuses to address the challenges they face. The purpose in these conversations is not to attract new tenants. The purpose is to learn directly from other local organizations what challenges they see (that we may be unaware of or insufficiently aware of) and how they would use our space to address those problems (in ways we may never think of). This will take place over two community panels to come in the coming months. They are called the Community Panel and the Discovery Café. (You can learn more about them in your Grace New Futures Congregation Handbook, pages 21-24. [Click here](#) if you need to download a copy.) Ultimately, we are seeking to answer the question: What does God want Grace to do and be at this time? Once we clarify this mission issue, then we will explore what tools we need to develop and fulfill that faithfully, and a campus is a tool.

We will send you an updated schedule of all of Grace’s New Futures Discernment activities once we finalize it. In the meantime, reflect on that passage from 1 John. Does it speak to you? Do you agree with John? How do you live those values and

beliefs concretely in your life? How do you see Grace living them concretely in its life? How else could and should Grace be living those beliefs and values in these trying times? Where does the darkness present us with opportunities to live and bring the Light? Also, what are the initial whispers you are discerning about where God may want Grace to go?

Finally, take a look at the whole fourth chapter of John's first letter. It has more interesting things to say, especially about love, fear, and the Antichrist. And, just in case we missed the core of what John said, he repeats it in the last verse of that chapter: "And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister."

Isn't it a blessing to be a part of a faith community that believes that theology, lives that theology, and seeks God's Spirit to discern how we can live it even more faithfully in these disturbing times?

For me, the answer is a resounding Yes! I know that's true for you, too.

Thanks be to God!

Faithfully and committedly, with love and prayers,

Fr. Hal+



OUR UPCOMING SERVICES

January 4	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	The Epiphany
January 11	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (St. Paul's Campus)	The Baptism of Our Lord
January 18	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	Second Sunday after the Epiphany
January 25	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (St. Paul's Campus)	Third Sunday after the Epiphany

All Sunday services are live streamed to our YouTube channel. You can find our recorded services there, and on our Facebook page after the service is over. The links are:

YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP1qGAuJlIxWU8Z_ucCKEGA

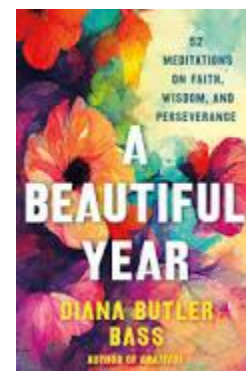
Grace's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/graceossining/>

DEACON'S MESSAGE

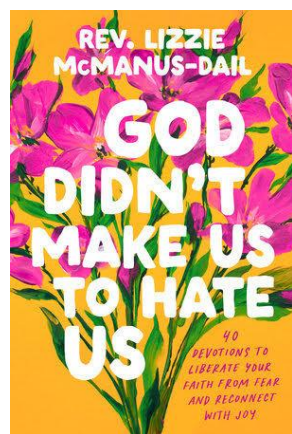
MEDITATIONS AND INSPIRATION FOR THE JOURNEY

I begin each new year selecting the daily reader and devotional readers that I will use as I move through the church year. I have lined up a few for this year that I want to share with you.

Diana Butler Bass, one of my favorite religion and theological writers, has just released *A Beautiful Year*. This is an exquisitely written series of 52 meditations on faith. Diana weaves passages of scripture with her knowledge of church history and theology. As she says, "Other than its major holidays, many people are not familiar with the rhythms of the church year, an ancient spiritual cycle of time." She aims to change that with this very accessible, thoughtful, and beautifully illustrated book.



Today she is an Episcopalian, but she was raised in a more evangelical setting and eventually became an historian and an academic. All of these aspects combine to make her a very interesting author and observer of faith and formation. *The Cottage* is Diana's newsletter, published on the Substack platform. All subscribers receive two posts each week, one on a matter of topical interest and another, Sunday Musings, usually focused on that week's lectionary text. Paid subscribers receive additional posts, participate in monthly Zoom conversations and interviews with leading thinkers, and occasional special series. I often use this for sermon or reflection preparation, and I know that I am not alone. *The Cottage* was launched during the pandemic when Diana could not travel or lecture or be a guest preacher. It has become so successful that it is now a faith community of its own.



Early last year Reverend Lizzie McManus-Dail, an Episcopal priest, released *God Didn't Make Us to Hate Us*, which is a series of 40 devotional entries that she says are intended to "liberate your faith from fear and reconnect with joy." A life of faith can be particularly hard for those who have been on the margins of society. Those scripture passages that are trotted out to put women, LGBTQ people, and people of color in their place are called the "clobber passages," and Rev. Lizzie aims to move us to a more loving experience of scripture.

Promotional materials for this book state, "Countless Christians are deconstructing the fear-based faith they were handed, but many don't want to give up on God—they want to love and be loved by Jesus without hateful or abusive theology. If you're one of these believers, this feminist, anti-racist, LGBTQ-affirming devotional will take you on a journey of spiritual re-enchantment."

Rev. Lizzie was ordained during the pandemic and coped with church shut downs and home quarantine by creating Instagram and TikTok accounts that addressed questions about faith. Her following grew and drew comments and questions from many who were hungry for some

type of spiritual understanding. She met another Episcopal priest online who was doing the same. They decided to team up and create the podcast, “And Also With You.” This has become another must-listen for me. Together they cover interpretations of scripture, how to teach children about Jesus, prayer, forgiveness, discernment, and everything in between.

Rev. Lizzie was so successful at building community that she was asked to plant an Episcopal church in a small town in Texas. Her Jubilee Church started in an abandoned retail space in a strip mall. Today she has a stable congregation that is growing.

I hope reading and reflecting brings all of us to even deeper experiences of faith.

— Deacon Jean Marie



LIKE US, FRIEND US, FOLLOW US!

Please find us on Facebook as [graceossining](#). Every week our service link is posted from our YouTube channel. Key promotions for our special events are also part of our “story.” In early January, a long-defunct Instagram account was reactivated. Thank you, Tam Hernández, for not giving up on this. This is good news for Grace because Instagram is key for sharing photos and videos and spreading our good news. If you are on one or both social media platforms, please connect with us.



WARDEN'S REPORT

"EACH STEP IS A WHISPER OF FAITH—EVEN WHEN [WE] CANNOT SEE WHERE IT LEADS."

Your faith, trust, talents, and mindfulness, during the beginning of our discernment process last year was a very encouraging start to the work which lies before Grace Church this year. Currently, we are awaiting the findings of the review of our two campus properties which were visited by the Parish Property Management team. Meanwhile, our To-Do list keeps growing, which results in our Buildings & Grounds Committee always making triage decisions on which issue is now most urgent, our Treasurer and Vestry consider which items we can afford to approve and fix, and then we hope and pray that we will have more time and money available until the next emergency or repair is needed. We have been truly blessed that Kate, Darryl, Beth, and others have been on deck for these challenges over the years and we now need to Stop, Reflect, and Consider a more sustainable model for the future. And so we are all now called to discern, imagine and design a more effective path forward for Grace Church along the many liminal places and spaces our work, worship and mission take us during the year. If you feel a personal calling to help during this time please consider formally joining us on our Vestry during our upcoming Annual Meeting next month.

Wardens:	Graham Gulian (2026) ggulian@gmail.com Cecilia Quintero (2027) cquintero1506@gmail.com
Vestry Members:	Ann Barringer Spaeth (2027) abspaeth55@gmail.com Alison Ford (2028) alisonford@msn.com Milton Kerr (2027) mkdj46@yahoo.com Jo Ann McGrath (2026) mcgrathinator@gmail.com Maribeth Osgood (2028) mbosgood@outlook.com Kate Pendzuk (2026) katependzuk@gmail.com

FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRACE'S ANNUAL MEETING

The 2026 annual election of the Wardens and Vestry of this Parish shall take place on Sunday, February 8, 2026 at 11:30 AM in the Parish Hall on our St. Paul's campus.

Our current wardens are Graham Gulian and Cecilia Quintero. Vestry members are Ann Barringer-Spaeth, Alison Ford, Milton Kerr, JoAnn McGrath, Maribeth Osgood, Kate Pendzuk. The terms of Graham Gulian (warden), JoAnn McGrath (vestry), Maribeth Osgood (vestry), and Kate Pendzuk (vestry) are expiring.

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

Nominations from the floor are also permissible at the meeting. Those who are eligible to vote must be eighteen years of age, baptized, and regular in attendance and in their support of Grace over the past twelve months.



WREATHS!

We hope everyone had a very Merry and Green Christmas.

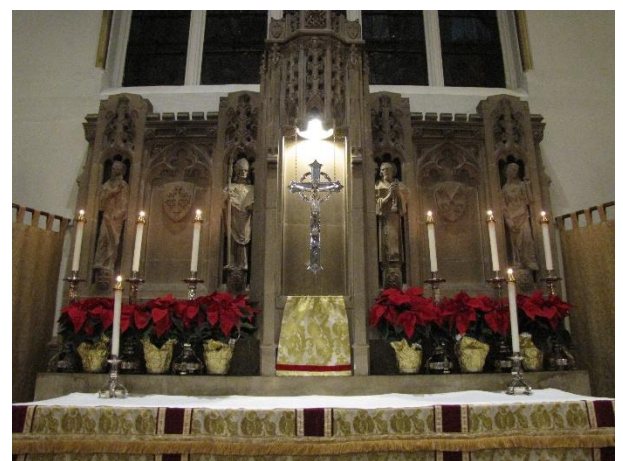
Thank you to everyone who bought and sold wreaths. 105 wreaths were ordered and delivered, which is 40 less than 2023, our high.

Your support netted \$1330.35.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

The Elves!

SOME MEMORIES OF DECEMBER





GRACE GRIEF GROUP

Grief Group will be meeting on Saturday, January 10th and January 24th in the Family Room at the St. Paul's Campus of Grace Church – 40 Ganung Drive, Ossining, NY.




JoAnn shared this moving and beautiful "Love Letter from the Afterlife" for us to read at our next meeting. Please read it whenever you have a moment.

<https://andreagibson.substack.com/p/love-letter-from-the-afterlife>



STEPHEN KING

The Life of Chuck

A photograph of Stephen King walking on a reflective surface, possibly water or a wet floor, against a bright blue sky with a sunburst effect. He is wearing a dark jacket over a light blue shirt and dark pants. His reflection is visible on the surface below him.

<https://lithub.com/the-ultimate-best-books-of-2025-list/>

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LOAVES & FISH

On Saturday evening, January 17th, Grace will serve dinner to about 40-60 guests. The Loaves and Fishes teams are ten groups of people who work to provide meals for our neighbors. Grace Loaves and Fishes prepares a Saturday night meal about every ten weeks. On Grace's Saturday, we prep from 4:00-5:00 PM, serve meals from 5:00-6:00, and clean up from 6:00-7:00. We welcome volunteers to shop, cook, serve, and clean up. Help your neighbors, have some fun, and lower your blood pressure! Contact alisonford@msn.com for more information.

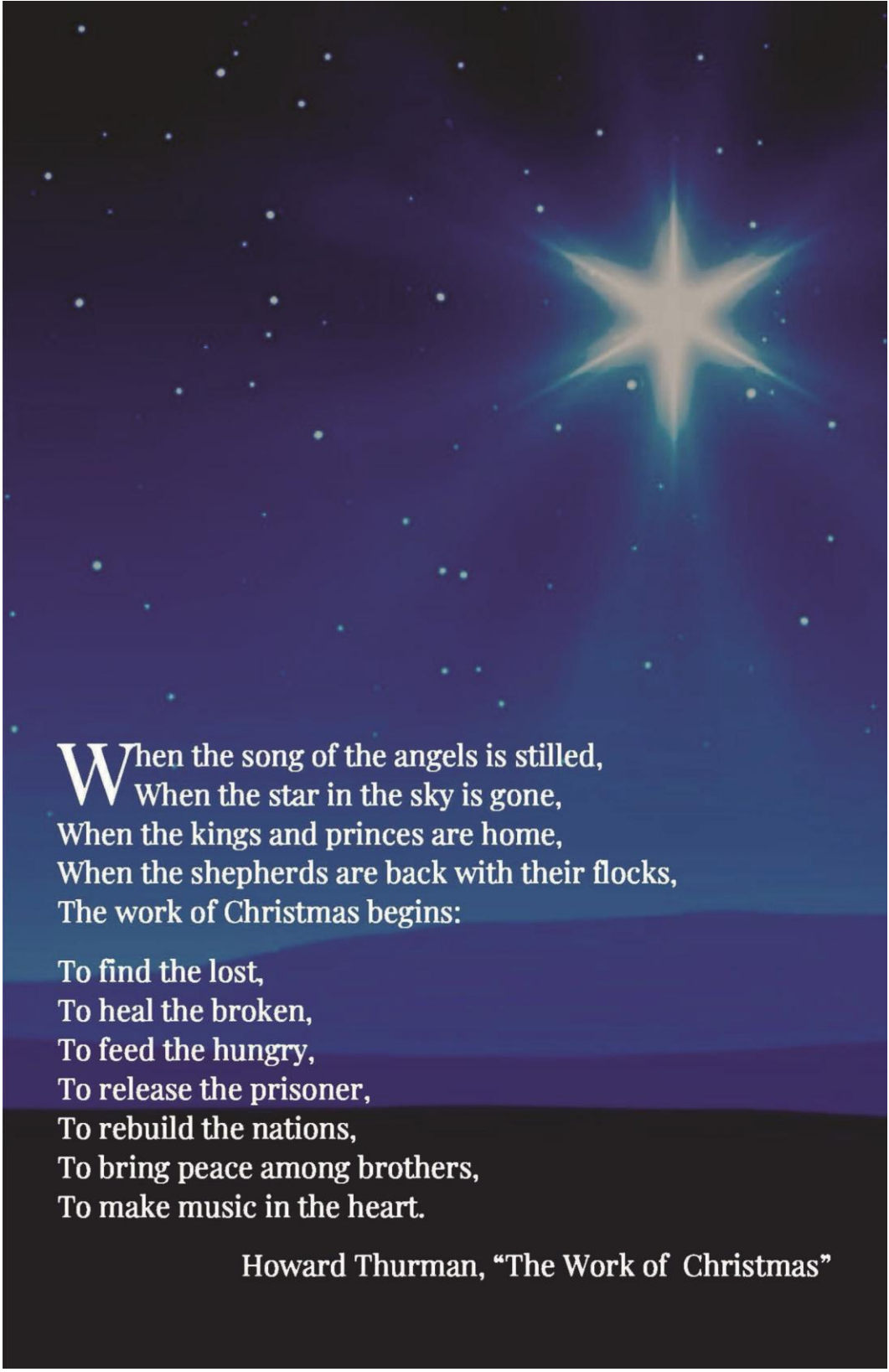


W.A. Mozart **REQUIEM** / Christopher Tin **THE LOST BIRDS**
 January 24 & 25, 3 pm Maryknoll Chapel, 55 Ryder Rd, Ossining

Tickets: <https://events.humanitix.com/Mozart-and-tin>



www.hudsonchorale.org



When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman, "The Work of Christmas"

REPAIR

Rivertowns Episcopal Parishes Action on Inclusion and Race

DOING THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS IN 2026

In an increasingly diverse America, race continues to divide us because of unconscious bias, ingrained systems of oppression, and the burdens of history. Founded in 2015, REPAIR is a community of Westchester citizens determined to play our part in bringing healing and justice to our society starting with the local Episcopal churches in which many of us worship.

Upcoming Programs From Rivertowns Episcopal Parishes Action on Inclusion and Race (REPAIR)

- "Reclaiming Christianity": Episcopal clergy and lay people discuss how our faith calls us to respond in a world torn by racial division, political polarization, and economic inequality.
- "Welcoming the Stranger": Leaders of community organizations dedicated to serving immigrants and refugees describe the challenges they face in 2026 and explain what we can do to help.
- "How We Learn to Be Brave": A program inspired by the writings and public witness of Mariann Edgar Budde, Episcopal Bishop of Washington, D.C., addressing the practical challenges of standing up for Christian values in times of strife.
- "Jesus and the Disinherited": How theologian Howard Thurman modeled love and reconciliation for the age of Jim Crow—and what his example can teach us today.

PROGRAMS LIVE AND INTERACTIVE • ONLINE VIA ZOOM

DATES AND TIMES TO BE ANNOUNCED

LEARN MORE AND SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTER:

WWW.REPAIRRIVERTOWNS.ORG

REPAIR

Rivertowns Episcopal Parishes Action on Inclusion and Race

A CHRISTMAS COMMITMENT

In this season of Christmas, we renew our commitment to honor the God-given dignity of every human being. We remember that the Holy Family knew the fear and uncertainty of forced flight, and that Jesus came into the world as a vulnerable child—born far from home, driven into exile, and welcomed only by those who had room in their hearts.

To this day, in the Christ Child, God continues to reveal to us the ones who we are called to defend. In response, we stand with all who now are dispossessed, rejected, or pushed to the margins. We acknowledge our complicity in sinful systems that perpetuate oppression, we embrace the need for change, and we commit to the hard work of repair—acknowledging past failures, changing destructive habits, and choosing a better future.

We reject any use of faith or public policy to exclude or disenfranchise any person, since all are made in the image of God. And because our faith calls us to walk humbly with God and one another, we strive to remember that the Gospel message must be embodied in lives informed by love rather than imposed in the name of ideological or cultural conformity.

We invite all people of goodwill to join us in this shared commitment and in the hope that guides it.

DRAFTED BY THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF REPAIR AND ENDORSED BY THE RECTORS OF OUR
SPONSORING PARISHES:

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BRIARCLIFF MANOR; CHRIST CHURCH/SAN MARCOS MISSION, TARRYTOWN;
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, OSSINING;
AND ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, IRVINGTON

BRIARCLIFF OSSINING MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

DR. MARTIN L. KING JR. INTERFAITH SERVICE

JANUARY 18, 2026 @ 5PM

GUEST SPEAKER:
REV. STEPHAN MARSHALL,
SR. ADVISOR NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK



304 SPRING ST. OSSINING, NY 10562 | WWW.STARBETHBC.ORG
WATCH LIVE ON   @STARBETHBC | PASTOR SHAUN E. JONES



JANUARY EVENTS

- 3 Hospitality Steering Committee (11:00 AM, Trinity Campus)
- 10 De-greening of Trinity Campus sanctuary (noon; tentative)
- 10 Grief Group meets (10:00 AM, St. Paul's Campus Family Room)
- 11 De-greening of St. Paul's Campus sanctuary after the service
- 17 Grace serves at Loaves and Fish (4:00 PM, Trinity Campus)
- 18 Preparation for Traveling Shelter (Trinity Campus after the service)
- 24 Grief Group meets (10:00 AM, St. Paul's Campus Family Room)
- 28 Vestry Meeting (7:00 PM, St. Paul's Campus)

1/26--2/15 Homeless Shelter (Trinity Campus)

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Ryan Echevarria		Katie Pauline	18
(Barbara Mahlau's grandson)	2	Barbara Rose	18
Karley Ann Ryan	4	Samara Davis	20
Kate Pendzuk	6	Julie DiLoreto	25
Marcus Roman	6	Ed Shultz	27
Margery Barnes	7	Katrinka Kip	28
Kyle Muth	8	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

Janine Thwaite, Deacon Postulant

VESTRY

Graham Gulian, Warden

Cecilia Quintero, Warden

Jo Ann McGrath, Clerk

Ann Barringer Spaeth

Maribeth Osgood

Alison Ford

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.