

Grace Notes

One New Episcopal Church From Two Historic Parishes

Volume 6 Number 3

March 2026

Happy March, everyone.

The weather has affected the schedule of many of our Grace New Future Discernment activities, initially planned for January and February, so I want to use my time in these opening remarks to keep us on track.

We have important discernment work to do, y'all! We are now moving into a new phase of the New Futures Discernment process. Previously, we looked at statistics for many local things – housing, education levels, income levels, cultural backgrounds, religious affiliation – and much more. We interviewed people, took photos, had discussions. Now we shift to inviting community groups to our campuses to ask them specific discernment questions that will help us discern God's call in our midst.



You ready? Set? Let's go!

First, retrieve and open your New Futures Congregation Handbook to pages 13 and 14 for information on the Community Panel. If you need to download another free copy, [click here](#).

Second, plan to attend our upcoming Community Panel at our St. Paul's campus Parish Hall on Wednesday, March 18th, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. A lovely dinner will be provided for all attendees. Come! Attend!

There are four questions we will ask each panelist:

What is your name, your organization, and who is your constituency?

What are your challenges?

Where do you see life and what are you building on?

What might be a special request of our parish that you and/or your constituents have that would help you better serve the members of the community?

The Community Panel involves interaction with the larger Ossining non-profits. Members of the Ossining Public School system, the Ossining Public library, the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce, the town and village building departments, and Neighbors Link will be present. We will be asking the same four questions of all groups for approximately 10 minutes per group. We are listening for Signs of the Holy Spirit. (Reread page 2 of the Congregation Handbook on the "Signs of the Holy Spirit" to refresh yourself on what this means.) Also, in my article *How to Discern the Holy Spirit in Your Life Too!* (on page 9 of this newsletter), I go into detail about how the Spirit manifests in our lives, what our Book of Common Prayer and parts of the New Testament have to say about this, and more.

As we attend the panels, let's listen, deeply. You'll note on page 13 and 14 of the Congregation Handbook that there are places to take notes as we listen to community leaders. Listen! Take notes. What are you/we hearing from the panelists? Where is there convergence? What messages persistently keep coming through? What's disorienting? Why? What had we expected? What are we finding? Where do we sense energy together to make a difference for a particular group in need in Ossining? Where is clarity -- slowly!-- emerging? Where is peace and even joy eventually unfolding? Where are we experiencing fruitfulness -- i.e. hard decisions and tasks now moving more easily with confidence?

While you are at it, add the April Community Panel for smaller non-profits to your calendar now, too: Tuesday, April 28th from 5:00 to 7:00 PM in Potter Hall on our Trinity campus. Dinner will be provided there as well. We will share more about that after this month's Community Panel.

Refresh yourself and get ready for these community panels. This is going to be fun. And engaging! Attend! No pressure, but the thriving presence of The Episcopal Church in Ossining for decades to come literally depends on our discernment success. May we not fail!

I close with a story and encouragement from Jesus. When the disciples began to realize the huge amount of work they faced ahead, after Pentecost, and how hard it was going to be spreading the Good News and creating from scratch the New Testament, the Church, and more -- talk about discernment pressure! -- Jesus said to them, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

And so, eventually, did the first disciples. And so too will we, together, following the call and lead of the Holy Spirit in our midst. Hold fast to the truth in Paul's letter to the Ephesians (3:20-21): "Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine! Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever! Amen!"

In the meantime, let's continue to pray for one another, our country, the world, and Grace. Let's continue in our Lenten practices for a holy and impactful Lent and note our Holy Week activities in this newsletter. Compassionate people of faith are needed now more than ever.

Don't hesitate to reach out to me if I can support you in any way (hal@graceossining.org)

With love and prayers,

Fr. Hal+



OUR UPCOMING SERVICES

March 1	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	Second Sunday in Lent
March 8	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (St. Paul's Campus)	Third Sunday in Lent
March 15	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 22	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (St. Paul's Campus)	Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 29	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	Palm Sunday

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/>

THE MAKING OF THE ASHES



DEACON'S MESSAGE



THE SEASON OF LENT IS A SEASON OF HOPE

We pray the Suffrages when we say Morning Prayer. My favorite verse and response is:

Verse Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

Response Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Hope is precious, I know. In the strange times we live in, I think we need to add to our Lenten practices our observations of what gives us hope. By hope, I am not speaking about some false cheerfulness, I am talking about that spirit — that voice — that inspires us despite struggles and heartbreak.

I read a lot these days about activists and brave people who spoke truth or did brave deeds. I also follow current events and try to focus on stories of those among us speaking truth and doing brave deeds.

The Flight Portfolio is an historical novel that tells the true story of Varian Fry, a young American sent to Marseilles, France, to try to help artists, authors, intellectuals, and many others escape Nazi persecution. In the end, he saved 2,000 people by drawing up false passports, stowing them away on ships, or even sending them in hiking parties over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain. Later in life he moved to Redding, Connecticut, and became a high school teacher. He so regretted he did not save more people. His story may have been forgotten altogether, but it caught the imagination of author Julie Orringer and we are better for it. He was an ordinary man who did extraordinary things.

It gives me hope when I see our diocese responding with vigils, actions, and worship services that raise awareness and lift our hopes. Whether we celebrate Blessed Absolom Jones at the Cathedral or rally against ICE and for justice at Federal Plaza ([click here](#) for the video), I feel just a little more courageous and more inspired when I see those around me stepping forward in hope.

So now I turn to you. What gives you hope? Is it seeing just a little more snow melt? Is it knowing spring is coming? Is it the promise of Easter?

Please reflect on it. And please share with me.

Deacon Jean Marie

WARDEN'S REPORT

Reflection on Grace's Blessings and 🙏 Prayers for Spiritual Fortitude on the Road Ahead 🙏

I am very grateful that proceedings at our 2026 Annual Meeting went well in the Parish Hall at Ganung Drive and via Zoom. Having that platform available during threatening inclement weather helped us vote on the ballot of new and returning vestry members. We updated our by-laws so we could officially invite new members from Ossining to join our Vestry and to allow Richard Shaw to serve as Warden.

I am ever thankful for the vestry's service and commitment. Thanks to Jo Ann and Graham for remaining on our board. I cannot imagine a better Warden than Richard Shaw at this time in Grace's history. And Kate's faithful service on vestry over the years is truly an impressive legacy!

Mardi Gras dinner was just what we needed to brighten the foggy, cold, snowy winter weather. The menu was robust, delicious, and brought a smile to all our faces. Thanks to the Hospitality team, Beth's inspired NOLA decor and Darryl, Dennis, Cha, and Francesca who made sure everyone had a warm tasty meal to feast on! And everyone who cooked and brought their dishes, sides, and desserts. Lori not only prepared a tasty gumbo... she brought us the traditional king cake! Anyone remember who found the baby?

Graham's beautiful Spiritual biography during a recent Morning Prayer service held over Zoom has led to an invitation to all of us to join him in sharing our own spiritual journey and formation. Upcoming meetings after coffee hour will be announced. Keep up-to-date on our Sunday bulletins and email blasts for upcoming Grace scheduled events!

As we look forward to making progress on our journey, Grace needs to be open, honest, direct, and focused in our work together to meet the challenges which lie ahead. And we need everyone to continue to be engaged and active participants in this great and dynamic experiment of our merged church.

Thank you for your trust, faith, and support in our work together in discerning our vision for Grace's future!

Wardens: Cecilia Quintero (2027) cquintero1506@gmail.com
Richard Shaw (2028) rsshaw@gmail.com

Vestry Members: Ann Barringer Spaeth (2027) abspaeth55@gmail.com
Alison Ford (2028) alisonford@msn.com
Graham Gulian (2029) ggulian@gmail.com
Milton Kerr (2027) mkdj46@yahoo.com
Jo Ann McGrath (2029) mcgrathinator@gmail.com
Maribeth Osgood (2028) mbosgood@outlook.com



GRACE MAKES THE GOOD TIMES ROLL...*LAISSEZ LES BON ROULER!*

35 Angels and Revelers enjoyed a feast of gumbo, jambalaya, pancakes, sausages, and more! This is one of Grace's most fun food events on the calendar.

Fr. Hal summed it up beautifully, "*It was great. Sacramental, I'd argue. In these terribly stressful times being together in human community feeds the soul and warms the heart, reminding us we aren't crazy and aren't alone. Thanks be to God!*"

On behalf of the Kitchen Angels, thank you...Charlie

THE STORM OF THE YEAR???



SOUPER SUPPER 2026

On Saturday, February 22, the Ossining Arts Council held its Souper Supper 2026 at our St. Paul's Campus. Friends Committee had a wonderful Soup and Bowl Event. Art and I decided from the description online that it looked like fun.

The parking lot was filling up when we arrived. Upon arrival we were greeted warmly by a gentleman who said he had organized the Event and we could each choose a bowl. It was hard to choose, as there were so many beautiful ones - each different from the other. I chose a pink one, and Art chose a blue one. Then we had to choose a soup or chili that we wanted to eat from our bowl. Everything was delicious. I put cabbage soup, split pea soup, bean soup, and regular chili (no beans) into my bowl. Wow! That was soooo good! Beatrice DiMartino was the only person we had met before but then we met new folks at our table...so interesting! They also had a raffle of two paintings, and one special bowl made by the gentleman running the show. As soon as I said "I never win anything," my name was called and I won the special bowl.



Most of the people at the event found it online and thought it would be a great way to spend a Saturday night. We all agreed that we had had a great time.

This is to thank Fr. Hal for recommending our campus for events of this type. I hope we have many more.

Carolyn Black Hightower



My Prize!





HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

March 29	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (Trinity Campus)	Palm Sunday
April 2	Noon	Maundy Thursday (St. Paul's Campus)	Maundy Thursday
	9:00 PM	Overnight Vigil (Trinity Campus)	
April 3	Noon	Stations of the Cross and Good Friday Liturgy (Trinity Campus)	Good Friday
April 4	7:00 PM	Great Vigil of Easter (All Saints' Briarcliff)	Holy Saturday
April 5	10:30 AM	Holy Eucharist (St. Paul's Campus)	Easter Day

NOTE: Kate Pendzuk will have a sign-up sheet for the Maundy Thursday overnight vigil at our Trinity Campus. Please see her to schedule your watch.

Prayer for Lent

Loving God,

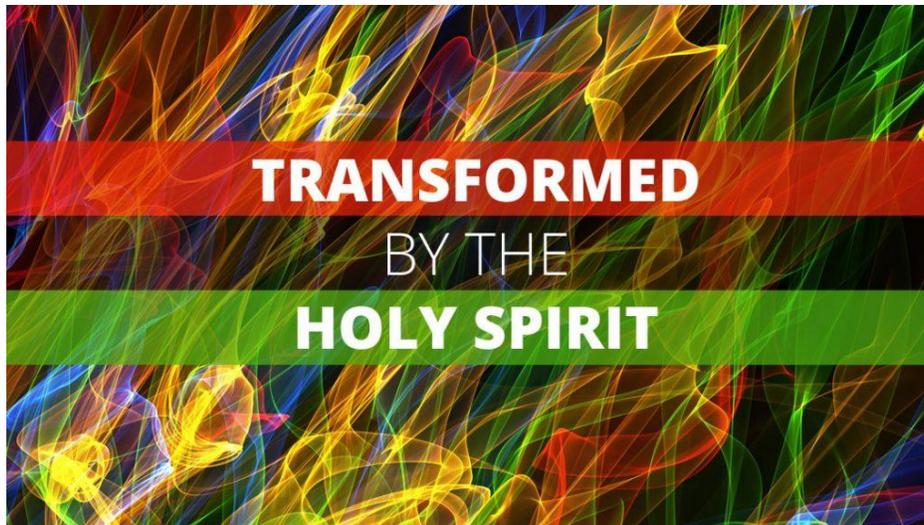
As the season of Lent unfolds, you call us to return again and again.

As you invite us to reflect on your love made visible in the person of Jesus, align our lives more closely with you through prayer, fasting and generous giving.

Bless our desire to accompany Jesus' suffering here and now in the crucified people of our world.

With your grace, may we live Lent fully and move with transformed hearts into the abundant life of Easter morning.


Amen.



HOW TO DISCERN THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE, TOO!

You may remember me saying last fall when we started our New Futures Discernment program that one of the side benefits of our activity – in addition to discerning collectively our sense of call as a parish -- would be that each of us would get better at applying discernment principles in our own individual lives too. In other words, discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit at work in Grace will also help us get better skilled at discerning the Holy Spirit in our individual spiritual lives as well if we so desire. I want to talk now about personal discernment in more detail. This article may be a little long, but it's worth reading. This is theology personally and spiritually applied to one's personal life as done in seminaries, in monasteries, with spiritual directors, etc. The goal is to help you practically deepen your daily relationship with God through the Holy Spirit, if you so desire.

Let's begin.

As Jesus taught in John's gospel, and as we read in last Sunday's worship, the Holy Spirit is like the wind (John 3:1-21). The Holy Spirit, in other words, is real but invisible, and the Spirit is around a lot more than we may realize. How do we know when the Holy Spirit is present, or not? Answer: by its effect on us.

Jesus taught that, just as we sense the invisible presence of the wind by its rattling of leaves in a tree, so we sense the presence of the Holy Spirit by its rattling in our individual and collective minds and hearts. And so we ask: what does it look and feel like when the Holy Spirit is rattling our minds and hearts and thus is present in our lives? That's a great and important question! The answer is: it depends on how we respond to the Holy Spirit and the rattling.

Remember the first things we learned in the Grace New Futures Congregation Handbook called “Signs of the Holy Spirit” on page 2. (A link to download a copy is in my message on page 1.) It’s important for your personal discernment and for the next phase of our group discernment work as well. For greater clarification, I will summarize page 2 in what follows, with supplemental references to both our Book of Common Prayer (<https://www.bcponline.org/>) as well as the New Testament.

As our Book of Common Prayer teaches on page 852 in the Catechism on the topic of The Holy Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit that “enables us to grow in the likeness of Christ”. What does it mean “to grow in the likeness of Christ”? John the Evangelist says it this way in his first letter from the New Testament:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, 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 perfected in us. (1 John 4:7-12).

In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit enabling us to grow into the likeness of Christ is about enabling us to be ever more loving and “other-centered” just as Jesus is. As our catechism teaches in the same section, “We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.” This is also known as the process of sanctification -- the process of being made holy -- the journey from our natural narcissism to becoming a person of Love/God, just like Jesus our brother and savior is Love/God.

Surprisingly, the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives can be disorienting, especially at first. Why is it disorienting? Why isn’t the presence of the Holy Spirit non-stop joy in our lives? Because the journey from focusing on self to truly loving others is a long, slow, and hard one, requiring much self-renunciation and humility. Also, the more we resist the inner prompts of the Spirit to grow, the more we suffer. God loves us too much, though, to let us stagnate. In fact, one of the other signs of the Holy Spirit is persistence: the same message keeps coming through unrelated channels and in different ways to us, despite our active avoidance. The Holy Spirit never gives up on us!

To say it differently, the Holy Spirit is often prodding us to realize our need for growth, our need to let go of our attachments and idols (especially our favorite idols, ourselves and our preferences!) and when we resist, we suffer. As religious psychologists teach, sometimes our anxiety, depression, fear, etc. are the result of resistance to the Holy Spirit within us. And sometimes it’s not. That’s discernment!

Discernment is deciding when something may be of God and when it is not. Discernment is always done in group conversation with others who can help us “get out of our stinkin’ thinkin’,” (as the 12 step programs like to say) and to look at the situation from a broader viewpoint than ourselves alone, in conversation with others and scripture.

When we are feeling disoriented, are we meant to feel disoriented forever?

Heavens no! When we attain that new stage of growth and development the Spirit is leading us into, the disorientation turns into clarity, another sign of the Holy Spirit. Also, by working with instead of against the Holy Spirit and our deeper spiritual nature, we eventually experience peace: a sense of confidence and trust at a deep personal and collective level that God holds us, loves us, and is guiding us. The growth we initially resisted is, in fact, paradoxically part of the tangible proof of God’s love for us!

We also see convergences: we begin to perceive what we previously thought was happenstance as profoundly spiritually interrelated. While we may have felt blocked and fragmented before, fruitfulness now becomes possible -- unanticipated endeavors produce remarkable results when we work with versus against the Spirit and our deep nature. Joy is also a classic byproduct of the clarity and the presence of the Holy Spirit, as is increased energy to fulfill our mission statement: “to serve all people, the earth, and every living thing,” just as Jesus did.

Discernment isn’t math – where 2+2 always equals 4. Discernment is an attitude of faithfulness and a skill in a relationship with an invisible, sovereign, creative God for whom 2+2 sometimes equals 4 and sometimes, from God’s perspective, it equals 22. Discernment entails understanding the meaning of the 22 and not the expected 4. Discernment uses Jesus and scripture as its guide because Jesus is the supreme human and teacher, one with God, and because scripture contains wisdom and experience from the ancient Church that believers for over 2000 years have found relevant to their daily, practical life of faith.

I encourage you to develop your discernment skills in your personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. It’s exciting! It’s an adventure. Contact me if you want to talk about this privately and confidentially (hal@graceossining.org). I’d love to help you hone your spiritual discernment skills and experience. I’m happy to share more of my journey, too.

Right now, the key discernment question for us individually and collectively is: Are we listening? Are we open to sensing the Spirit and truly following God’s lead? Is our prayerfulness really “thy will be done”? Or is it secretly: “my will be done!”? Joy comes from following the Spirit together, living into fruitfulness for ourselves and those in need in Ossining.

Faithfully,

Fr. Hal+

GRACE GRIEF GROUP

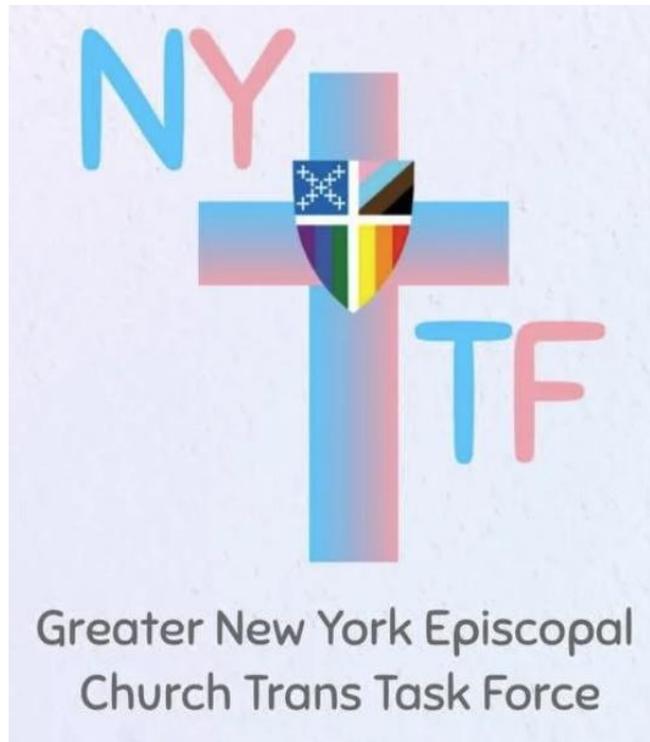
We meet on the second (March 14) and fourth (March 28) Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM in the Family Room at 40 Ganung Drive. Anyone who may be experiencing a loss, seeking a safe space to listen, learn and feel supported is invited to our gatherings. People of all faiths, the agnostic, and unchurched are welcome.

From the Washington Post:



The wind phone Colin Campbell and Gail Lerner set up in Joshua Tree, California, in honor of their children, Ruby and Hart, who were killed in a car crash in 2019. (Colin Campbell)

"On June 12, the six-year anniversary of the crash, Campbell and Lerner installed a disconnected rotary phone as a wind phone, where mourners can make one-way calls to people they have lost. They placed it in Joshua Tree — one of Ruby and Hart's favorite places."



A CELEBRATION OF TRANS JOY AND RESILIENCE

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine

Saturday, March 21st

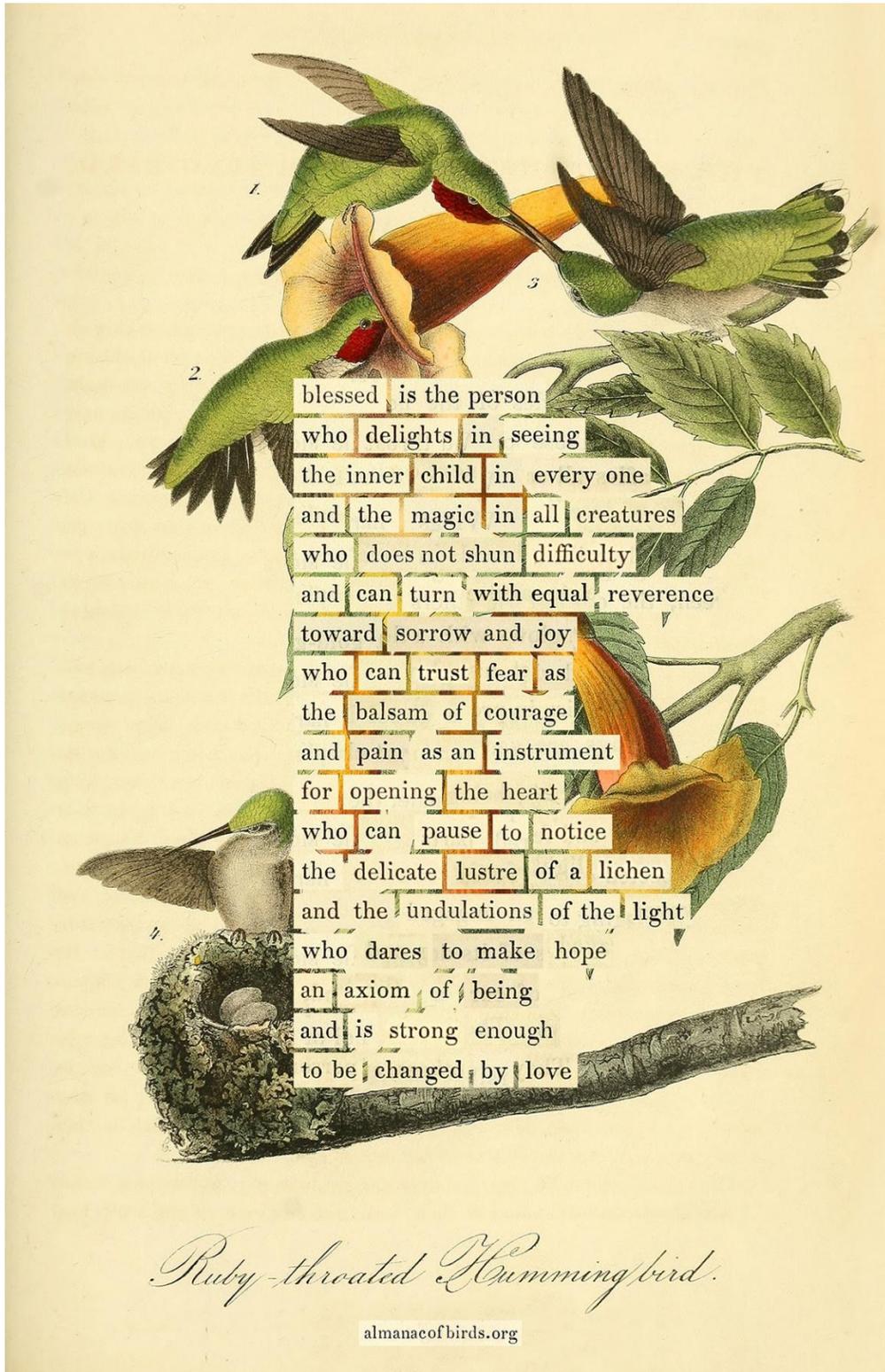
Noon to 2:00 PM

This is the third year for this event and the growing diocesan committees for transgender support and for LGBTQ concerns want to reinforce an important message:

“The Episcopal Church welcomes you.”

Deacon Jean Marie

From Carolyn Black:



blessed is the person
who delights in seeing
the inner child in every one
and the magic in all creatures
who does not shun difficulty
and can turn with equal reverence
toward sorrow and joy
who can trust fear as
the balsam of courage
and pain as an instrument
for opening the heart
who can pause to notice
the delicate lustre of a lichen
and the undulations of the light
who dares to make hope
an axiom of being
and is strong enough
to be changed by love

Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

almanacofbirds.org

GREATER OSSINING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PRESENTS

O.N.E.

OSSINING NONPROFIT EXPO

MARCH 29, 2026

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE 3-5PM

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 40 GANUNG DR.

VOLUNTEER

CONNECT

LEARN

GIVE



EVENT SPONSORED BY:

WITH ADDITIONAL
SUPPORT FROM:



Office of Assemblymember
Dana Levenberg



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**OSSINING CHILDREN'S
CENTER**

SAVE THE DATE

*Spring
Gala*

26 April | 5 p.m.

**Abigail Kirsch at Tappan Hill
Tarrytown, NY**



MARCH EVENTS

- 7 Hospitality Steering Committee (11:00 AM, Trinity Campus)
- 14 Grief Group meets (10:00 AM, St. Paul's Campus Family Room)
- 15 The Book Club (Champagne Toast) (Noon, Trinity Campus)
- 18 New Futures Community Panel and Dinner (6:00 PM, St. Paul's Campus)
- 25 Vestry Meeting (7:00 PM, St. Paul's Campus)
- 28 Grief Group meets (10:00 AM, St. Paul's Campus Family Room)
- 29 Ossining Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit Expo (3:00 PM, St. Paul's Campus)

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Alexander Pollack	1	Steven Pendzuk	25
Sarah Brewster	4	Maxwell Ishmael	26
Helen Ishmael	5	Max Gulian	30
Liliana Rose DeOliveira-Scappaticci	10	David Kamp	30
Lily Roark	16	Christopher Boswell, Sr.	31
Terri Roman	19		
Fr. Hal Roark	24		



CLERGY

The Rev. Hal Roark, Priest-in-Charge

The Rev. Jean Marie Angelo, Deacon

Janine Thwaite, Deacon Postulant

VESTRY

Cecilia Quintero, Warden

Richard Shaw, Warden

Jo Ann McGrath, Clerk

Ann Barringer Spaeth

Milton Kerr

Alison Ford

Maribeth Osgood

Graham Gulian

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.