

GRACE NOTES

Worship God | Learn from Christ | Love One Another

Three Kings / Tres Reyes Sunday, Jan. 6

Grace Church will host a visit from the famous traveling Magi on Epiphany **Sunday, Jan. 6 at the 10am service**. *Los Tres Reyes*, as they are called in the Spanish-speaking church tradition, offered gifts to the Christ child long ago—and still to this day distribute gifts for small children. This will happen after the service in the Parish Hall, where children will also have a chance to take a swing at a piñata.

Chat with Matt

Drop-in hours to speak with Father Matt about anything in your mind or heart are Wed. 1-3pm & Thurs. 9am-12pm, or by appointment.



Bazaar & Baking Bring Success!

St. Nicholas Bazaar and Holiday Cookie Sale

Thank you all so much for giving your time and talent to make our final fundraiser for the year a tremendous success! We exceeded our goal this year and netted \$3100 through your generosity.

We sold a least 80 pounds of cookies, which many of you lovingly baked & decorated, and fine artisans filled the first and second floors of our Parish Hall with hand-crafted gifts and edible treats.

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Hello from Grace Fellows



Candlemas/Candelaria: Candle Blessing Feb. 3

In the tradition of the ancient Anglican church, we will bless candles and distribute them to all who come to the 8 and 10am services on Feb. 3. In some places this is also a service in which seeds for the coming year may be brought and blessed. We will thus distribute some blessed bean seeds (you can tell us later if they were also magic).

Hello, Grace Church, and Happy 2019!

We hope that everyone had a lovely holiday season, reuniting with friends, family and God. If you are wondering what we've been up to - below is a quick update!

Earlier in December, the Grace Year Fellows were so thrilled to attend St. Nicholas Party at the rectory of St. Thomas Church, NYC (yes, that beautiful one on the 5th Ave). We enjoyed chatting with Bishop Shin and mingling to the

rhythms of live music with other young adults in the Episcopal Diocese of New York. However, nothing would surpass the most wonderful St. Nicholas Bazaar and the majestic cookie sale organized by our own church. We would like to extend special gratitude to many Women of Grace who made this heart-and-belly-warming experience possible.

Besides, the fellows also hosted a mini-party at their house (the vicarage) for the newcomers and young families of the parish soon before we headed out for the winter break. Final kudos go out to "Millbrook at Home" first Friday lunch gathering where all four of us were invited to speak and share our stories. As Mary Lou - who so graciously shared the rectory space with us - would say, "It was fabulous!". We thank Rev. Matt and Rev. Albert Ogle, as well as Linda and Bill Hogan for this opportunity.

Here's to more beautiful memories, sincere connections, unrestrained dreams and fearless decision-making that awaits us in 2019!

With Peace,
Nastia, Maihan, Jorge and Marcella

P.S. If you would like to connect, feel free to email: fellowship@graceyear.org (or our individual accounts). And visit us at the house! We love guests!

CONNECT Youth!

On Dec. 9th, CONNECT met at the vicarage for our fourth meeting. We fit comfortably in the sunroom for meditation and a few laughs. Downstairs we completed Personal Intakes, reflecting upon our interests, goals and challenges. After apples & Nutella, Madison presented on the issues surrounding human trafficking, which prompted discussion of how we may shed light on the dark realities many feel they face alone. The lovely Christmas Concert across the street served as our closing ceremony. Dec. 21 we enjoyed a fun sleepover together! We continue to deepen self- and social-awareness as we commune. Our next meeting will be Jan. 13 at 3pm.

Sunday School News & Notes

"Children are not the church's future, they are its present."

– Father Matt

A very successful Christmas Pageant was held on Sunday, Dec. 23 at the 10am service. The children were spectacular. The tech crew was right there when needed. Many thanks to Dawn Galente, John & Lisa Lacey, Jonathan Shanks and Isabelle Dichiara...and to all the other parents for their support and help. Special thanks also to the Kasin family for the wonderful coffee hour!

Father Matt has given us a draft outline for the upcoming Sunday School Schedule for Epiphany. It is full of fun and meaningful ideas for the children.

And as always, Lunch Box continues; volunteers are always needed and appreciated!

Parade of Lights

A great big "Thank you!" to Ron and Katherine Mustello for helping us with the Parade of Lights! We could not have done it without you, your truck and the glorious float. Thank you also to the parents who helped supervise the children and to everyone who brought candy and glow sticks. Between the glow sticks and the beautifully decorated float it was like we were following the star to Bethlehem! Thank you to the EPIC kids and most especially our Sunday School kids and their friends. The float has never been so full. Again, many thanks to everyone!



Epiphany Study Opportunity: *The Way of Love*

Thursdays 7-8:30pm at the Rectory and Wednesdays 11am-12pm in the Choir Room

During Epiphany (the first week of Jan. through the first week of March), join Fr. Matt and the Grace Year Fellows on Thursday evenings for an Epiphany study series on the *Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life*. Each Thursday, a different fellow will facilitate the session. We will host a daytime course during our regular Bible Study time on Wednesday mornings at 11am. This is a program that our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has encouraged us to adopt. We had a short course in Advent with our Bible Study group. It provided a well-designed curriculum and offered a set of powerful tools for personal spiritual transformation.



Image courtesy of ClipArt.

The Adoration of the Magi, Edward Burne-Jones. Image sourced from: wikimedia.

Epiphany House Blessings



Part of the rich heritage of the Catholic, orthodox and Anglican branches of the Jesus movement is to offer house blessings during the season of Epiphany. The local priest (Fr. Matt in our case!) is invited to visit one's home to lead a "Blessing of a Home" service. This involves a bit of wandering through rooms, offering prayers and readings from *The Book of Occasional Services*, concluding with a cup of good cheer. A spiritual house-cleaning and good occasion for inviting friends to share the blessing of your home! Call the office to make an appointment.

Stewardship at Grace Church

We had excellent participation during our Consecration Sunday service this past week and the Celebration Luncheon that followed. We hope all of you enjoyed our Stewardship activities during and leading up to this very busy day.

As part of the Stewardship process, several of our parishioners shared their experiences regarding how Grace Church impacts their lives, how they feel about participating in church life and why they support the church with a monetary pledge. We know many of you have similar thoughts and feelings.

We also know that parishioners support Grace Church in many different ways, but your pledge helps the Finance Committee and Vestry make sound budgetary decisions when developing the annual budget and throughout the year. We can't thank you enough for making a pledge for 2019. And, if you haven't had the opportunity to do so yet, please feel free to contact the office for a pledge form. Or, you can find one at the back of the church on Sunday.

Thank you for understanding the importance of providing a strong financial foundation for the many spiritual activities and programs of Grace Church.

Sincerely,
The Stewardship Committee

The Hope Farm Baptismal Front

Fr. Matthew Calkins

When I visit folks at the Fountains, a retirement and assisted living community outside of Millbrook, I sometimes stop by the old Chapel of the Good Shepherd, a rugged stone church by the gates of the property. It was built in 1904 as the chapel for Hope Farm School for children from disadvantaged children in New York City an Episcopal school and working farm. The school was later named Greer School after its founder Bishop Greer, and was active until the end of the 1970s. After it closed it was converted into a retirement community. It is currently owned and operated by the Watermark Corporation.

Even when the school became a retirement community, the Chapel remained an active Episcopal church, as retired Bishop Wetmore was then a resident. But over the years the use of the chapel for services has diminished. For some years, Grace Church and Fountains resident Ann Westney arranged for its use on Christmas Eve. But, as Deb Sloacum the current Executive Director said, as the population has aged it has become more difficult to transport folks to the service—and to maintain the building. So now it sits empty, plaster flaking from the walls, and its church furnishings in peril.

In order to reclaim for the church some of the furnishings, which included a beautiful small baptismal font, given as a gift to the Chapel of the Good Shepherd “by the children of Hope Farm,” I asked and received permission to move the font to Grace Church. We are also sending a team to inspect and if possible preserve and reuse some of the beautiful old vestments and altar hangings found in the sacristy, some of which were done by members of the famed Needlework Guild of Millbrook.

Accordingly, David Swift and I moved the font and I built a small movable base for its use at the front of Grace Church. Of course we have a perfectly good font already located in the Rose Window niche at the back of the

church. But baptisms there are unable to be seen by most parishioners, and any friends or family members watching online. Now we have the ability to perform a baptism in front of the altar, which we tried for the first time on December 16 at the baptism of Dalton Schultzel (pictured).



Thus something old and something new are drawn the treasure house of the church for the welcoming of new members of this part of the body of Christ.

EPIC

EPIC finished the year with a bang! Our dynamic winter party was an opportunity for members to express teamwork through set-up, cooking, shopping and food preparation. We enjoyed the MCs Adriana and Joana introduce the speakers who shared their experiences as long-term or new members of EPIC. Thank you all who came out! We look forward to 2019.

A Hello from Millbrook Community Preschool!



Father Matt joined the children and teachers at MCP the Wednesday before break. He shared the story of baby Jesus. The young ones were eager to then sing songs and perform a Frozen dance they learned from their movement teacher Heather for the parents.



Reflections from the Rector

January 2019

Epiphany: an appearance (*phanos*) from above (*epi*). Which is not exactly or in all cases the same as an appearance of God, what's known in the trade as a *theophany*. But it does suggest an angelic messenger, or light shining from heaven, or the voice of God somehow heard in human understanding (while others may hear only thunder). Thus the stories we read in the season of Epiphany include the baptism of Jesus, a voice from heaven calling him beloved, a descending dove; the visit of the magi, guided by a singular star; and the concluding story, the Transfiguration of our Lord on the holy mountain, witnessed by three disciples.

Peter, Andrew and John couldn't make sense of what they saw at the time. We struggle still to understand the teaching of Jesus on what it means to be blessed even in our brokenness, how we are called to forgiveness and reconciliation, how we are beloved of God. Now we see Jesus through the mirror of ordinary consciousness, dimly, but come the Day, Paul tells us, we will see him face to face (1 Corinthians 13). We will know as we are known.

It takes time and study, prayer and action to dress our epiphanies in sensible shoes. Perhaps it may be easier if we learn to dance with them. To hold revealed truth firmly, yet lightly. Christian faith is comfortable with paradox after all: God and human in one Person, three Persons in one God. Faith as koans understood, finally (never?), in a flash of enlightenment.

So let's say you hear the Word of God in a clap of thunder one summer day, or see God's hand reaching down through rays of light in the clouds. Something is whispering to you, you feel, some sense of something more. There is more to this world than light and sound, matter and energy. There is a voice calling your name.

And there is a person whose face you imagine even now, whose eyes are looking at you with love, whose lips speak mercy, whose hands wield justice, whose vestments shine like the sun.

This is the Christ, the image of the invisible God. Whose face is yours to picture in any shade or shape or expression (the Bible is silent on this point). And perhaps it is also the face of a beloved friend or family member, or even the face of a stranger. Perhaps this morning you had an epiphany when you looked at yourself in the mirror. Yes, you said to yourself, I am a beloved child of God. Yes, you are, said the whispering Spirit.

See you on Sunday, Matthew+

Epiphany House Blessings image from page 6: <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/d7/39/64/d73964488965f654462eeadac728cbb8.jpg>

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