

GRACE NOTES

Worship God | Learn from Christ | Love One Another

Little Artists of Millbrook Community Preschool



Alison, a new student who recently joined us at MCP, paints a tree on our inviting Community Playthings easel.

Pancake Dinner on Shrove Tuesday, March 5th at 6pm

The Men of Grace, along with help from the youth of Grace, will host the Annual Grace Church Pancake Dinner on Tuesday, March 5 at 6pm in the Parish Hall. All are welcome. Dinner will be served at 6pm. Please bring a friend, and come hungry!

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday will be observed on March 6th. Services will be held at 12pm and 7pm.

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.

Under the direction of our creative Deborah Coconis, the little artists of MCP have created individual works of paper planets orbiting in a ring against colorful backgrounds of outer space. These will be showcased in the ArtBlast! student exhibit at the library. Please join us for the opening reception Friday, March 1st from 5-7pm!

The preschoolers will continue exploring creative expression this month through animation and live action video with a teaching artist from the Art Effect, who will guide them through a workshop and put together a digital video to share with our families and community.

Earlier this month, parenting and education expert Joanna Faber, facilitated a workshop with the teaching staff at MCP, along with the director and a staff member from MCEC's Toddler Program. We looked at examples and tools from her book, *How to Talk so Little Kids will Listen*, a communication guide for those who live and work with small children.

Application forms for MCP are now available online! Check out our new website at: www.mcpatgrace.org and please feel free to share with families with small children who may be ready for preschool.

With songs and smiles,

The staff at MCP,

Kay, Deborah, Carolyn, Ruth, Barbara, Marcella & Maureen

Lenten Reflections

If you would like to write a reflection on a piece of scripture for a day in Lent, please see Father Matt. These reflections will be emailed to the parish on a daily basis.

Grace Fellows Reach Their Semi-Anniversary



A visit from Bishop Shin: photo included with the article on Grace Fellows in the Dutchess News.

February has been a very busy month for the Grace Fellows. They have savored the spotlight afforded to them by two local papers, the North Dutchess News and the Millerton News, which eagerly sought to interview them for pieces which are sure to catapult them and their wonderful program to greater superstardom. The Fellows also joined several Vestry members and the EPIC students on an insightful and rejuvenating weekend at the Trinity Retreat Center in West Cornwall, Connecticut. With the Grace Year program a little over halfway through, the Fellows used their time at Trinity to reflect on the personal and professional advancements they have made and envision further avenues for growth. Working alongside the Fellows at TRC, EPIC students plunged headfirst into their ongoing memoir writing project.

In terms of Praxis Positions, each Fellow has a slew of developments to report. Nastia has been designing a weekly newsletter for St. Peter's Lithgow, providing support for Millbrook at Home, and preparing to lead the St. Peter's Women's Retreat scheduled for March 8th. Marcella has been further

developing the preschool website, teaching children reading and writing, and planning for CONNECT's mission trip in July. Finally, Jorge has been leading the Dover ESL classes on his own, assisting a large group of Central American asylum seekers with legal concerns, and supporting the EPIC students' memoir writing.

The Fellows look forward to their upcoming silent retreat at the Won Dharma Retreat Center in Claverack, NY March 15-17 as they wrap up their leadership module and transition into their final module on social justice.

Please continue to check in with us and share questions/stories via e-mail at: fellowship@graceyear.org (or our individual accounts). And always feel welcome to pop in for a visit at the vicarage!

In peace,
Jorge, Marcella, Nastia & Maihan

CONNECT Youth!



Pictured above: CONNECT Youth at our February meeting. We took a walk along Canoe Hill Road, then ate pizza, had a discussion about our ideas on God and religion, and began planning for our mission trip.

We are now preparing for our mission trip to Maine in July! Next month, we will begin fundraising for our trip. This will include a Fundraising Performance in the Parish Hall, a children's Game Night (Parents' Night Out), and possibly candle-making! Stay tuned to hear how you can help support our group as we prepare to serve and foster fellowship within another community.

CHANGE OF LOCATION: Our next meeting will be held at **St. Paul's, Poughkeepsie**, on March 10 at 1:30pm.

Sunday School News & Notes

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

– Father Matt

Grace children methodically placed blessed candles along the altar for families to retrieve and take home to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus at Candlemas/Candelaria on February 3. In Sunday school, we talked about love, faith and hope. We crafted "Love Holders," cardboard tubes adorned with paper hearts, which the children then filled with their own written messages of something or someone they love.

The children have also explored the Beatitudes. They thought about what it means to have faith regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in—that God is always with us in good times and bad. Marcella did a craft on a Celtic Prayer about the Tree of Life with the children. The Golden Rule and Joseph and his coat of many colors was another topic we learned about. We talked about what to do if someone was mean to you or if you were hit by someone. These children were already well aware of what they should and should not do! Marcella worked with the children discussing various readings of the day in the new program which she leads in the choir room during church service, returning for the Peace and Holy Communion. We then go

down to the Parish Hall for our Sunday School lessons and crafts. We are looking forward to March and we will not mind if it comes in like a lion as long as it goes out like a lamb!

A Note to Our Sunday Schoolers: Children ages 6 through 15 are invited to engage in age-appropriate discussion readings from the day with Grace Fellow Marcella after opening hymn at the 10am service on Sundays in the choir room. Children re-enter the church for the Peace and Communion.

Reflections from EPIC Writing Retreat at TRC

EPIC members spent three days with facilitators and visiting mentors at the Trinity Retreat Center in Connecticut to focus on writing pieces for their memoir book. This book will showcase members' stories of love, friendship, and challenge from their perspectives as young people growing up in rural New York. Many will share from especially unique experiences as immigrants or individuals from recent migrant backgrounds.

Here is a quote from Alison, an interfaith minister, educator and writer who joined us to guide EPIC members through the writing process: "I was invited to be a facilitator at EPIC's Writing Retreat for Youth at the Trinity Retreat Center in Cornwall after briefly meeting Abby volunteering in Tijauna at the border. Throughout the retreat, I was so impressed by [the youth's] trust in an outside facilitator, [their] deep connection and care for each other and the larger vision of EPIC. I feel incredibly honored to have played a role in such an important project that creates space for youth to share their personal memoir experiences on immigration. Having worked deeply with a few students in the retreat, I will never forget what Sophie shared after an active listening activity: 'sometimes you don't need help, you just need someone to listen to you...Sharing helps with perspective.' Or what Jay asked in our writing session: 'How do you write your feelings when you don't want to be reminded of them?' Wow. Incredible real and vulnerable insight from our youth. Thank you EPIC for the opportunity to be part of something so meaningful and necessary."

And: **victory!** EPIC received funding from NYS OCFS to support our mission!

Episcopal Beliefs & Practices

SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

- The Bible, church tradition, and human reason provide compelling truth about God and creation.
- The Baptismal Covenant and Holy Eucharist serve as the cornerstones of our beliefs and worship.
- The Book of Common Prayer provides comprehensive resources for an individual, family and community life of prayer, in the context of the liturgical year.

BELIEFS

- God: We, and all creation are the continuing work of a loving God. Commit to examine and deepen your relationship with God.
- Jesus: Jesus is the supreme disclosure of the heart of God. Jesus' total trust and obedience to God reveals the unconditional trustworthiness of God, who raised Jesus from the dead. Embrace Jesus and his teachings and practices as the supreme example of whole and authentic life. His radical trust in God and freedom to re- imagine the traditions of his people call us to follow in his way of trust and freedom.
- Holy Spirit: We experience the power of the Holy Spirit working in us as we place our trust in Jesus' promises and follow in his ways in the Church and in company with the followers of Jesus through the centuries. Passionately express your life by responding to the Holy Spirit.
- The Bible contains all things necessary for salvation. It is the story of God's creation and God's people and provides a key for understanding the presence and purposes of God in the midst of nature, history and our personal journeys. Jesus is the lived Word of God.
- Every person has freedom and responsibility to discern the truth of God for his or her life through engaging the Bible, in conversation with the historic teachings and liturgy of the church, and human reason. We cherish diverse expressions of belief and practice as people grow into abundant and authentic lives in their time and place.

PRACTICES

- We participate regularly in the Holy Eucharist, bringing the substance of our lives and the fruits of our labors, offering them to God, and having them incorporated into the Risen Body of Christ.
- We seek to name and renounce all forces in and around us that corrupt God's purposes of love and unity among all people and with creation.
- We put our whole trust in Jesus' disclosure of the unconditional love and faithfulness of God.
- We turn to Jesus as the supreme source of understanding and power for living our lives fully and authentically.
- We promise to persevere, and to repent and return when we fall away from God.
- We promise by word and example to proclaim our trust in God's reconciling love.
- We promise to strive for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every human being.
- We seek to bring values rooted in faith in God to our participation in public life.
- We promise to seek and serve Christ in every person and to love our neighbors as our selves.
- We express our gratitude and trust in God through tithing and supporting works of justice and compassion.
- We offer regular morning and evening prayers.
- We offer prayers of intercession for all who suffer from violence, illness, grief or abandonment and for all whose lives are closely linked with ours.
- We offer prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of life and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God.
- We read and meditate on the Bible regularly
- We prepare and participate in the Prayer Book rites for baptism, marriage, confession of sins, and burial of the dead.
- We observe the prayers and disciplines provided for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost.

- We participate regularly in the offerings of our congregation for Christian formation for children and adults.
- We seek spiritual friendship and accountability through individual and group reflection on our spiritual journeys.
- We believe that God is present and active in the whole of creation and that we are called to participate with God through appreciation and care for creation, through the arts, through our daily work, through our relationships with other people and in our own inner lives.

What's Up at the Lunch Box?

Grace Church's ministry at The Lunch Box has been going strong for decades. Have you served yet? Here are some facts:

-The Lunch Box is the Dutchess Outreach community meal program, located at the Family Partnership Center, 29 N. Hamilton St. in Poughkeepsie.

-In the past year, over 83,000 meals were served!

-On the last Sunday of each month, the Grace Church team greets our neighbors and shares gratitude for God's abundance by serving a warm, nutritious meal to nearly 200 people of all ages!

-We help The Lunch Box staff set up, then serve the meal, cafeteria style, and lastly, wipe down the tables and fold up chairs. A few of us also run a commercial dishwasher similar to ours in the parish house. (We do stand up!)

-Our efficient team usually numbers 5-6 parishioners (friends are welcome!). We arrive at 11:15am and leave by 1:15pm. Time well spent!

COME AND SEE what's happening at The Lunch Box. Sign-up sheets through June are on the bulletin board in the church narthex, so you can plan ahead! QUESTIONS? Ask Kathryn Calame at 8am or John Lacey at 10am on Sunday!

Submitted by Nanci Kryzak

Join Us for Our Last Session! Epiphany Season's *Way of Love*

Thursday, March 7th, 6:30-9pm at the Parish Hall

Our Epiphany study series *The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life* will conclude with a potluck meal and group-facilitated discussion to integrate all we have learned and prepare for what our individual and collective journeys hold for us as we move forward.

Come join for one last session with the group, which has really created a sacred space together over these past two months, and complete your spiritual tool-kit so you can feel fully ready to continue diving deep into your lives and relationships with others!

Sunday Morning Forum

"We believe" - But do I? Join in an ongoing discussion of faith and practice using the Nicene and Apostles Creeds during Sunday Morning Forum between services in the Parish Hall.

Reflections from the Rector

March 2019

To live is true wisdom

Get ready. Ash Wednesday is March 6. Clear out the fat and butter from the larder (what's that? where you keep the lard!). Traditionally Lent is a season of fasting—and so Shrove Tuesday is also known as Fat Tuesday—Mardi Gras. We observe the two days in traditional ways: pancake supper on Tuesday night, imposition of ashes on Wednesday (10 am or 7 pm).

But Lent is not a one or two day experience. It extends through forty days (echoing Jesus temptations in the desert)—not including Sundays. (Sundays remain feast days.) And insofar as Lent is about the examination of conscience, it is the symbol of a lifelong challenge to balance the dictates of self, society, nature and God. Call this challenge the formation of a good conscience.

Consider this passage from Thomas Merton's book, *No Man Is An Island* (1955). (As you can tell by the title, taken from a famous meditation by John Donne (1572-1631), this is English from an earlier age, when "man" and male pronouns were used as human universals; but you will note the point is to balance universal and particular.)

Everything that God wills in my life is directed to this double end: my perfection as part of a universal whole, and my perfection in myself as an individual person, made in God's image and likeness. The most important part of a man's education is the formation of a conscience that is capable of seeing God's will in this correct light, and guiding the response of his own will in strong, prudent and loving decisions. So to live is true wisdom.

To live is true wisdom. But true wisdom—and "the life that is truly life" (1 Tim 6:19)—is not just given. Our lives are formed within the web of human and natural relationships, yet each person is a singular individual with a unique perspective in all of space and time. Each of us is but one among many billions to be sure, but nevertheless each human soul is required to think and act and justify one's actions as a responsible individual; each soul will be judged before the throne of God by the deeds, not words, that were done in this life.

In “Self-Reliance” Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of the challenge—he called it the challenge of genius—to trust in the self against all daunting forces of social conformity. He very much included traditional church teaching in the list of such forces. Judgment and fears of damnation have been used to coerce moral (and immoral) conformity. Those who have done and do so still will be judged by the measure of their mercy, so Jesus teaches. Judge not, lest ye be judged. But I take the American prophet of the sovereign self as teaching a good and salutary lesson. Trust in your own conscience, your deepest self, stand firm in your convictions and never doubt your worth in the eyes of God.

But still I want to raise up Merton and all those who note our interdependence, our social formation, and, especially, our duty before God to take good care to form our conscience so that we may hear the truth, and so do the good, and so heal the world, and so deserve blessed rest and eternal life.

Spend some time this Lent checking your conscience (part of this nowadays is called “checking your privilege”). I will put some materials in the back of the church to use. Here’s the Donne passage put into verse.

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

Who could you become
with the *gift* of a year?

Grace Year

a yearlong **fellowship** program for young adults
to **live** in intentional community in rural New York,
to **serve** in praxis positions with local organizations,
and to **study spirituality, leadership, and justice.**



- Grace Year is a **fully-funded** fellowship. All fellowship expenses are covered, including: housing, food, health insurance, transportation, weekly educational trainings, retreats, one-to-one spiritual direction, and a monthly cash stipend.
- Our 2019 cohort arrives on **August 21, 2019** and will live, serve, and study in Millbrook, NY for one year.
- This is a selective opportunity for passionate and courageous college graduates **ages 21-28** who are ready for **experiential learning, professional development, and spiritual discernment.**
- We are an **interfaith** community and a ministry of Grace Episcopal Church in Millbrook.

Apply by March 1

Currently seeking fellows for ecological research, (dis)ability services, immigration, eldercare, youth ministry, and more.

graceyear.org

845.420.4280 | hello@ganceyear.org

MILLBROOK AT HOME PRESENTS

A MATTER OF BALANCE

DUTCHESS COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE AGING
•
MILLBROOK AT HOME
•
GRACE EPISCOPAL
CHURCH



Weekly on
Mondays, 1-3 p.m.
starting **March 18**

Grace Church Parish Hall
3328 Franklin Ave
Millbrook, NY 12545

*A donation of \$10 is suggested
but not mandatory.*

Do you have concerns about falling?
Have you fallen in the past? Would you like to learn how to
improve your flexibility, balance and strength?

If you are 60 years old or older, apply for our 8-week program. All applications must be filed through the Dutchess County Office for the Aging. For more information or to apply, contact **845 – 486 – 2555**. Ask for application for “A Matter of Balance”. Space is limited! First come, first serve.

Millbrook at Home seeks to create and deepen connections among those who remain in their homes as they advance in age. Our network will help senior citizens maintain vibrant, engaged and socially active lives. connect@millbrookathome.org

Making Connections | Having Conversations | Being a Community

Directory

GRACE CHURCH

Franklin Ave,
PO Box 366 Millbrook, NY
12545

Phone 845-677-3064 Fax
845-677-3134 Office

Hours: M-F 9a-2p

www.gracemillbrook.org

office@gracemillbrook.org

Grace Notes Articles

office@gracemillbrook.org

VESTRY

Wardens:

Kathryn Calame

Barbara Rudy

Treasurer:

Cathy Shanks

Members:

Lynda Boissey

Evelyn Garzetta

Linda Hogan

Nanci Kryzak

John Lacey

Ron Mustello

Kyle Van De Water

Beth Willis

CLERGY & STAFF

Rev. Dr. Matthew Calkins,

Rector

calkins@gracemillbrook.org

Cindy Schmoke, *Secretary*

John Lacey, Jonathan

Shanks & Betty Rae

Nittiskie, *Sunday School*

Coordinators

David Swift, *Facilities*

Manager

Deborah Coconis,

Preschool Director

Evelyn Garzetta, *Director*

of Grace Immigrant

Outreach (GIO)

Abby Nathanson, *Director*

of Engaging People in

Change (EPIC)

ALTAR GUILD

Jean Hayes, *Director*

Susan Quigley, *Flower*

Chairperson

Nanci Kryzak

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Latino Outreach:

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Kathryn Calame, Walter

Cadette

Fundraising:

Pamela Freeman, Evelyn

Garzetta, Betty Rae

Nittiskie, Janelle Styles

Lay Server Schedulers:

Joan McGilvray, Evelyn

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Jean Hayes, Katherine

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