

Weekly E-News from Grace Episcopal Church

August 19, 2016

Spotlight on Grace: Why the Lectern is an Eagle



Standing boldly with wings agape in a warm glow of reflected light, the exquisite eagle lectern here at Grace Church commands the gaze of all who enter here.

To understand why eagle lecterns have remained commonplace features in Anglican churches since the medieval era, we look solely to the relevant Christian symbolism. Given the eagle's symbolic stature as national emblem of the United States, however, we may need to consciously table those more familiar associations momentarily in order to explore the ancient Christian context.

We're all familiar with the idiom whereby those with keen eyesight or perception are said to have eagle eyes, but the religious symbolism also incorporates a belief that the eagle could stare straight into the sun. Thus, the eagle came to symbolize the ability of Christians to countenance the word of God without turning away.

Another aspect of the sacred symbolism relates to the eagle's lofty flight. Likely no creature known to the early Christians would have flown higher, and therefore closer to heaven. Accordingly, to the eagle was ascribed a symbolic power to carry forth and spread the word of God.

References to the eagle within the Old Testament allude to these and other qualities. Within the Song of Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy, we see the eagle cast as loving guide and protector: *As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions, the Lord alone guided him; no foreign god was with him* (Deuteronomy 32:11-12). Meanwhile, in the book



of Isaiah, we find the eagle associated with strength and resilience: *But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint* (Isaiah 40:31).

Interestingly, the eagle is also a symbol of the St. John the Evangelist. To each of the four evangelists is ascribed a symbol corresponding to the four living creatures described in Ezekial's vision of the heavenly chariot (see Book of Ezekial, Chapter 1). St. Matthew is



represented by a winged man, St. Mark by the winged lion (hence the iconic winged lion next to Piazza San Marco in Venice), St. Luke by the winged ox, and St. John by the eagle. "The eagle was allotted to St. John because, as the eagle soars towards heaven, he soared in spirit upwards to the heaven of heavens to bring back to earth revelation of sublime and awful mysteries" John Vinycomb, (1909), *Fictitious and Symbolic Creatures in Art*, retrieved from sacred-texts.com.

Of the four evangelists, John is most closely associated with the Word, owing in no small measure to the opening passage of his gospel: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1:1). It is entirely fitting, then, that in our worship we read the Word of God from a lectern bearing the symbol of John the Evangelist.

During your next visit to Grace Church for worship, as you listen to your lectors reading the Word of God, I hope you'll envision the words being 'born aloft' on the eagle's wings, carried lovingly to the hearts and minds of all in our congregation, and similarly throughout the world. And if this brief exploration of the Christian symbolism of the eagle that's associated with the prevalence of eagle lecterns within Anglican churches has caused you to see our lectern at Grace in a new or different light, please know that [we always enjoy your feedback](#).

[Chris Barker](#)

Parish Administrator

This Week at Grace

Worship Services:

Sunday 8:00am Holy Eucharist

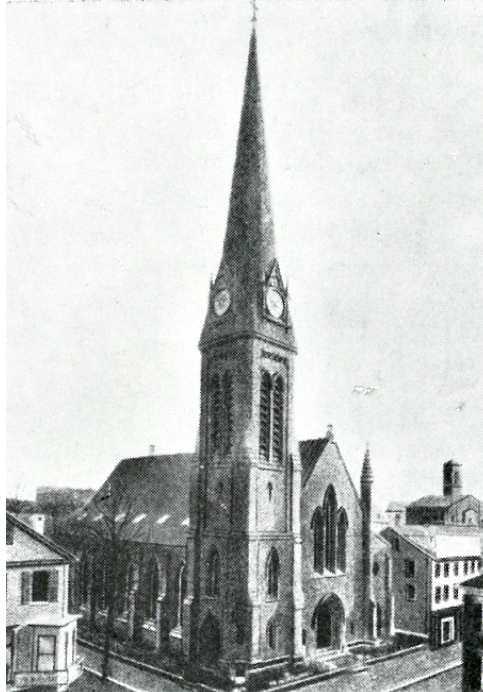
Sunday 10:00am Holy Eucharist with Music

Wednesday Noon Holy Eucharist

Nursery: Please note that the nursery will not be available this Sunday, August 21, nor the following Sunday, August 28. The nursery will return September 4.

Parking for Worship: Parking for Sunday worship is provided in the lot diagonally across Westminster Street, on the NW corner of Westminster and Snow. A small number of spaces are available on the portion of the Grace Church lot facing Snow Street, along an inset section of the construction fence.

Wheelchair Access and Accessible Parking:
Please find wheelchair access from the sidewalk on Westminster Street into the church. Handicapped parking spaces have been posted for Sundays on Mathewson Street near Westminster.



Outreach Ministry - Back to School Supply Drive

YOU can help send a vulnerable child to school ready to learn!

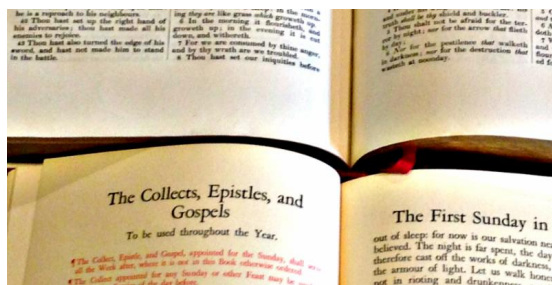
Please Support the Grace Church Outreach Ministry's Back to School Supply Drive for [Children's Friend](#).

The following items are needed:
construction paper, children's books (ages 3-5), writing paper, glue sticks/craft glue, crayons, popsicle sticks, pencils, small backpacks, washable markers, glitter, tempera paints, watercolor paint sets, paint brushes, preschool size scissors, etc.

Donations will be collected each Sunday through September 11th, and can be left in the collection box at the back of the church. Thank you for supporting this important ministry!



August 21, 2016 - Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost



Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

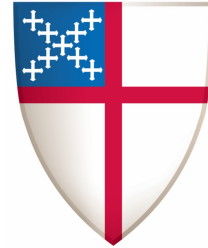
For the text of this Sunday's readings, [please click here](#):

Would you like to add someone to the prayer list? [Please click here](#) to submit a name, or call the church office at (401) 331-3225. Names are kept on the list for a month, and can be renewed at any time. Those received by Wednesday will appear in the same week's bulletin.

From The Episcopal Church

Highlights for August 21, 2016 from the Episcopal Digital Network:

Leaving for college, work, or post-high school opportunities can be an adventure, leaving behind family, friends, and established routines for new experiences. For many young people, it also means leaving behind important spiritual support networks.



The Episcopal Church offers young adult and campus ministries on nearly 200 college campuses across the United States. You can find a map and listing of Episcopal campus ministries here: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/campus-young-adult-ministries>.

To read the full Sunday Bulletin insert, [please click here](#).

[Click here](#) for the latest churchwide and worldwide news from the [Episcopal News Service](#).

Music at Grace



Nine new members of the Grace Church Choristers attended a 4-day choir camp in Ivoryton, CT this week. We sang, learned, played, and sang some more!

All are excited to sing with the Grace Church Choir on Sunday, September 11, when our Fall music program begins.

For a description of the Chorister program here at Grace, and for information about joining the group,

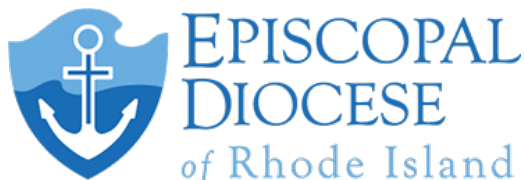
[please find our brochure here](#).

Thank You for Coffee Hour Fare

Ever wonder where that delicious food at coffee hour comes from? From you! Parishioners are welcome and encouraged to bring food to share at coffee hour. Homemade or store-bought, fresh fruit or baked goods - whatever you are moved to share! Simply place items on the coffee hour table at the back of the church before worship. Your fellow parishioners thank you!



YES! A Workshop Series by the Episcopal Diocese of RI



The Commission on Ministry will again offer the Yes! curriculum beginning on September 21 through November 9, 2016. The 7 session course will be facilitated by our Archdeacon, The Venerable Janice Grinnell, and will be held at St. Columba's Chapel in Middletown, RI. This

program is in direct response to lay people who are seeking ways to discern and understand their God given purpose. Cost for the entire series is \$100. [Please click here](#) for a listing of all 7 session times.

[Please click here to Register Online](#)

For more information, contact Canon Betsy Fornal, 401-274-4500, ext. 225, [or by e-mail](#).

Your Priest-in-Charge: The Reverend Lavonne Seifert

During the period of Jonathan's sabbatical, through the end of August, please direct all pastoral questions, inquiries, and/or conversations to Mother Lavonne Seifert.

Lavonne will serve as Priest-in-Charge of Grace Church, and is already well known to this congregation as both a longtime parishioner and as our current Associate Rector. To speak with Lavonne, or to make an appointment to visit with her, you may reach her by telephone at 401-331-3225 (ext. 6), or via email: lseifert@gracepvd.org.

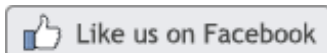


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[This Sunday's Readings](#)

[Listen to Recent Sermons](#)





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amazon smile

Sincerely,



Your Grace Church Clergy & Staff
401-331-3225

The Mission of Grace Church is to build, by the grace of God, a loving and joyful community which lives the gospel through worship, proclamation and service to each other, to downtown Providence, and beyond.