



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

175 MATTHEWSON STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903 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 and to downtown Providence.

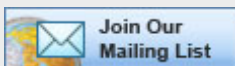
Grace Episcopal Church E-News

Grace Abounds

December, 2014

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Deadline: December E-News

Please [forward](#) any content for January's e-news by Friday, December 19th.

Grace Church Calendar

Rector's Letter



Friends,

Is Thanksgiving the John the Baptist

of holidays? Is it a sign to us that an even bigger holiday, Christmas, is just around the corner, just as John says of Jesus, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me."? (Mark 1:7) A local public radio pundit recently suggested that, despite claims that there is a secular "war on Christmas", in reality, the war is on Thanksgiving, with stores beginning their Christmas sales on the morning of Thanksgiving Day itself. And many of us have noticed how stores have begun swapping out the Halloween decorations on November 1st for Christmas ones, with Thanksgiving getting lost in the shuffle. In the third chapter of the Gospel of John, verse 30, John the Baptist says of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Thanksgiving seems to similarly deferring to Christmas.

In these opening days of Advent, which begins on Sunday, let's focus in this time of anticipation on what it means to be in hopeful expectation. Let's try to imagine how it was for John the Baptist, waiting and preparing for the coming

Sundays in December
8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Eucharist

First Three Wednesdays in
December
12:00 p.m. Noonday Eucharist
12:20 p.m. Intercessory Prayer

Saturdays,
December 13th & 27th
9:30 a.m. Women's Prayer and
Bible Study: Chafee Room

Christmas Eve, December 24
5:00 pm & 10:00 pm

Christmas Day, December 25
10:00 pm

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of the promised messiah. Of course, as Christmas draws nearer, we will see it approaching. It won't come upon us as a thief in the night. Greens will start to appear in our church as December begins, and by the third Sunday of Advent, we'll be in full anticipation mode, with the annual Christmas pageant in church and the traditional Lessons & Carols service that evening. After all, even John saw Jesus coming and said, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

Advent is a time when we remember the hopeful expectation of Christ's arrival on this earth 2,000 years ago, and we look towards his return in the un-named future. In this season, let's focus on all those who have pointed the way toward God over the centuries, including John the Baptist, about whom Jesus said, "Among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist." (Matthew 11:11)

So let's enjoy this great national holiday of Thanksgiving that unites all Americans and then begin our journey to Bethlehem in the coming weeks.

Happy Thanksgiving...and Advent!

Jonathan

Grace Church Silent Auction, December 6, 5 - 7 pm



Please join us at our Annual Celebration and Open House for Wine, Hors D'oeuvres, Music, Holiday Warmth; and a chance to bid on a wonderful selection of gifts and treasured of all kinds. All proceeds to benefit Children's Friend & the Providence Intown Churches Association.

Last bid at 7 pm.

Free Parking in the Grace Church Parking Lot.

25th Annual Service of Lessons and Carols, December 14 at 5 pm

A traditional service of nine lessons and carols, readings, in the tradition of King's College, Cambridge.

All are welcome to attend this elegant and illuminating holiday offering.



Advent Giving Tree



You can put a smile on the face of a vulnerable child this Christmas! Please help Grace Church support the mission of Children's Friend to improve the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's most vulnerable young children by purchasing a Christmas gift(s) for a child/children in need. Choose one or more ornaments and purchase the requested gift(s) on the attached tag. All UNWRAPPED gifts must be returned to the church with the tag (which includes the child's name and

family number) securely attached to it no later than Sunday, December 14th. Children's Friend has also requested donations of wrapping supplies (wrapping paper, scotch tape, gift tags, ribbon, etc.) so that parents/caregivers may participate in the joy of preparing the gifts for their children. Most of these children would not receive ANY gifts at Christmas this year were it not for the generosity of someone like YOU! Stop by The Advent Giving Tree at the back of the church today! For questions or more information please see/contact Elaine Gabellieri at jefffoster1@cox.net.

Sunday Forums in Advent

Advent Book Group We'll be discussing the novel, Mr. Ives' Christmas by Oscar Hijuelos at the 9 am. Sunday forum on December 7th & 14th. Please buy a copy or check one out of the library and join us. You can read the New York Times review of the book at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/30/us/through-a-novel-a-window-to-an-authors-beliefs.html>.

Taming the Anxiety of Advent In a two-part forum on the first and last Sundays of Advent, Priest Associate Jennifer West explores Advent's invitation to prepare for Christ's coming by weaving Advent themes from respected theologians Richard Rohr and Evelyn Underhill. The forum on November 30th explores the theme of Advent and possible obstacles to growing in Christ. The forum on December 21st focuses on Christ's consolation.

The final forum of 2014 will be December 21st, and it will re-commence on January 11th.

Organist Search Process

The rector has convened group of parishioners who have agreed to serve as the Search Committee for a new Organist & Choir Director for Grace Church: Melody Ennis (Chair), Valoree Schrank, Ed Putnam, Michael Earnheart, Joan Martin, Elfreda Thorpe and Ben Willis met to begin the process which we hope will result in the rector calling our next organist in the Spring of 2015. The committee will draft a ministry description and candidate profile and then begin to respond to applicants for the position. There will be opportunities for people from the congregation to share their ideas for the music ministry with the committee, but even now, parishioners should feel free to talk with the rector or any of the committee members about their hopes and dreams for music at Grace. Ultimately, the goal is to call someone who will continue the extraordinary musical tradition of this parish and lead us in new and creative ways to expand our music program in order to deepen our experience of God's presence in this community of Christian faith. Please hold this Search Committee in your prayers as we work hard to accomplish the tasks before us...just as we are praying for you and the parish to grow through this process. The Committee will keep the parish updated on our progress in the coming months, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Order Your Poinsettias!



Adorn our beautiful Grace Church at Christmas!!!

In memory of, in honor of, in Thanksgiving for ...and bring joy to our homebound parishioners, and friends! Please pick up a form and return envelope during services this month. If you have questions please email Christine Pulciani, Grace Church Flower Guild, pulciani@aol.com.

Grace Church e-letter Administrators
Grace Episcopal Church