Grace Church, Georgetown

Report to the Annual Meeting 2026

November 8, 2026

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Agenda

1. Declare the Meeting Open
2. Approve the minutes from the 2025 Annual Meeting
3. Vestry Election
    a. Introduce the candidates for:
        i. Senior Warden
        ii. 2 Vestry Members (3 year terms)
    b. Entertain motions for election by acclamation
    c. If no motion for acclamation is made or passed:
        i. Distribute ballots
        ii. Balloting to be closed after 15 minutes
        iii. Tally tabulation
        iv. Election results announced
4. The Presentation of Reports
    a. Financial Report
    b. Junior Warden's Report
    c. Senior Warden's Report
    d. Rector's Report
5. Motion to close the meeting

Minutes from the 2025 Annual Meeting

November 30th, 2025

1. The meeting was declared open at 11:47am by the rector, the Rev. David Wacaster.

2. The minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting were approved by voice vote on a motion by Patricia Sherman seconded by Catherine Aselford.

3. The candidates for Junior Warden and vestry were introduced:

    a. Junior Warden – Billy Carter

    b. 3-year vestry terms:

        i. David Bujard

        ii. Gillian Morton

        iii. Dani del Rosal

    c. 2-year vestry term – Douglas Neumann

4. The rector asked for nominations from the floor and was reminded by Lee Tyner that there is no provision in our by-laws for nominations from the floor. The rector requested a motion to elect the slate of nominees by acclamation. Sally Stanfield moved to elect the nominees by acclamation. Terry Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5. The treasurer Braden Murphy gave his report. The written report is in the Report to the Annual Meeting. There is money in the bank and we have healthy reserves, but the 2025 budget was a deficit budget. Expenses go up and pledges have not. Grace needs to grow. At this point in the meeting our accountant Catherine Payling arrived, and the financial team of Treasurer Braden Murphy, accountant Catherine Payling, and Financial Secretary Daniel Capizzi was recognized. The treasurer said that he may need to ask the congregation for more contributions after the 2026 budget is adopted. He also suggested putting Grace in your estate plan.

    Braden Murphy noted that he has now served two two-years terms as treasurer and is not willing to serve another full term. When the vestry elects the treasurer at the January meeting, he is willing to be elected, but to serve only one year. The search for a new treasurer needs to start now to allow for an orderly transition.

6. Junior Warden Helen Buhr is ending two terms as Junior Warden but will become chair of a new buildings and grounds committee. Her report is in the Report to the Annual Meeting. Braden Murphy thanked Helen Buhr for all she has done as Junior Warden and all she is willing to do for the life of Grace Church.

7. There was general discussion of the state of our church with some "doom and gloom" comments. The rector noted that the parish is vibrant and the sky is not falling. The Tending Our Soil report that was not included in the Report to the Annual Meeting will be emailed to all. His sermon was on hope, and that was not the tone of the comments at the meeting. Defining success solely in terms of numbers can lead to despair, not hope.

8. The rector thanked the congregation for giving Jennifer McKenzie a good experience when she was our supply priest during his sabbatical. She will facilitate the vestry retreat in February.

9. The rector closed the meeting at 1:25pm.

Minutes provided by: Lee Tyner, Vestry Member

The Reports

The Rector's Report:

Activities and Achievements

I returned from sabbatical during the final week of November last year. At the time, I concluded my Annual Report by saying, "I am deeply grateful for the sabbatical time I had this fall, thank you. I remain so glad to be here at Grace, and I look forward to seeing what the Holy Spirit has in store for us moving forward." This remains true – both my gratitude for the sabbatical time and my delight and appreciation for the Grace Church and Georgetown communities. There have been so many instances during this past year where the presence of the Holy Spirit has been palpable here at Grace!

On my second day back, I had a conversation with Nancy Miyahira, Director of Arts and Culture at Georgetown Heritage. Georgetown Heritage is a non-profit affiliated with the Georgetown BID (Business Improvement District). Nancy wanted to discuss the possibility of collaborating with Grace Church to provide space for a mural proposed by the Government of Spain in honor of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of The United States. These conversations continued over the course of the year and culminated with the mural now on the retaining wall which faces Wisconsin Avenue.

I began December by having lunch with my colleague Rachel Cornwell, the Pastor at Dumbarton United Methodist. One of the greatest things about being in Georgetown is the collegial relationships I have through the Georgetown Ministerial Association (GMA). Later in the month, I celebrated the Eucharist with the Collington Community and met with my Colleague Group. This group is facilitated by a Family Systems therapist and is part of my professional support system. We prayed, read, sang Lessons and Carols on the 3rd Sunday of Advent, and observed Christmas with a Festal Eucharist on Christmas Eve and a more contemplative Eucharist on Christmas Day.

The GMA gathered the first full week of January. Beth Lee and I met with Anne Tomkinson, the coach assigned to us through the Tending Our Soil program that week as well. On Saturday of that week, I attended diocesan ordinations at All Souls' Parish, and the Tending Our Soil team met after church on the 11th . I had lunch with Pastor Brett Wilson from Georgetown Lutheran Church and attended a farewell Happy Hour for The Reverend Emily Labrecque, who was ending her ministry at Church House and moving on to become the Senior Minister at Westmoreland United Church of Christ on Westmoreland Circle. At the 10:30 service on January 25th, I baptized Simon Petros Alemayhu, and we celebrated with Simon and his family at coffee hour. January ended with the Diocesan Convention on the 31st, where Alecia Torres Valdez, Mystelle Ruble, and I represented our parish.

February began with a rescheduled Open Mic Poetry Night on the 2nd. The Reverend Jennifer McKenzie led our Vestry Retreat on Saturday, February 7th. During the retreat, Jennifer facilitated a conversation about vestry culture and practice. This conversation led to a restructuring of vestry

meetings and a new agenda format for our meetings. We also assigned vestry members areas of responsibility with regard to parish life and came up with a list of norms. Since then, vestry meetings have become more collaborative, space has been created during meetings for all members to have input, and conversations about strategy have been added to the routine discussions of administrative items. While this work is ongoing, I believe vestry meetings have become more effective since we made these changes.

Ash Wednesday was February 18th, and I once again offered Ashes to Go at the intersection of Wisconsin and M Streets, along with The Reverend Sarah Duggin from St. John's. I also observed Ash Wednesday with liturgies at 12:15pm and 7:00pm in the sanctuary. On February 19th, I had the honor of officiating a wedding. One of the greatest honors and joys of being a priest is walking alongside parishioners during major life events. February concluded with Open Mic Poetry Night and a week of meetings with parishioners and colleagues.

I began March by traveling to Charlotte, NC for the Episcopal Parish Network (EPN) meeting. During the week, I attended workshops, networked, and learned from colleagues. I returned from NC on Friday and immediately went to a Tending Our Soil Learning Lab at All Soul's DC the next day. The following week I had a meeting with a group from the Thai Embassy to discuss being part of the embassy's participation in the annual Passport DC event, and Francine and I met to plan music for Eastertide. That month I also had meetings with someone I met at EPN from the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF), The Corporation Board of Directors, parishioners, the Tending Our Soil team, my colleague group, and the head of the Georgetown Montessori School.

Holy Week started on Palm Sunday, which was March 29th. We had Open Mic Poetry Night that Monday, and I attended the annual Renewal of Ordination Vows at the National Cathedral on Tuesday. We collaborated with Christ Church, Georgetown for the Maundy Thursday liturgy and foot washing. On Good Friday, the GMA held an ecumenical Seven Last Words service at Epiphany Roman Catholic Church on Dumbarton Street, and we observed the Proper Liturgy for Good Friday here at Grace that evening. The Great Vigil of Easter was held at St. John's, Georgetown on Holy Saturday, and clergy from Grace, St. John's and St. Patrick's led the service. Finally, we celebrated Easter with Festal Eucharists at 8:30 and 10:30 on April 5th.

I got away to Bethany Beach for most of Easter Week and returned for a meeting of the Claggett Center Board at the end of that week. The Tending Our Soil Committee met after church on the 12th, and on Tuesday, the 14th, I flew to Jacksonville, FL to attend a CREDO conference sponsored by the Church Pension Fund. CREDO is a weeklong clergy wellness initiative which encourages clergy to consciously consider and evaluate their Physical, Financial, Psychological, Vocational, and Spiritual health. I returned from CREDO having learned a lot, and I also made some new friends. At the end of April, there was a diocesan Vestry Learning Day at Trinity, Upper Marlboro, which I attended along with several members of our Vestry. Then, on the last Sunday of April, we hosted a training on how to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and had one installed downstairs across from the lift entrance.

May kicked off with a busy Saturday at Grace. Grace's Table hosted its weekly hot lunch, and the Tending Our Soil (TOS) committee hosted committees from All Souls' and Christ Church, Chaptico for the final Learning Lab of the TOS program. The Tending Our Soil team and I found it very interesting to view our parish and its various ministries through the eyes of the other members of our TOS cohort. After the Learning Lab and Grace's Table concluded, Grace welcomed the Thai Embassy, as our grounds served as a satellite site for their participation in Passport DC. The rest of May was taken up with meetings with colleagues and parishioners, Province III Synod, a TOS team meeting, and a music planning session with Francine. May ended with a Tending Our Soil graduation gathering held at St. Alban's Parish and De-escalation Training here at Grace.

I took vacation during the first two weeks of June, and went on a road trip. I drove to visit family in East Tennessee, my father in Huntsville, AL, and a seminary classmate in Pensacola, FL. My trip concluded with a stop in Roanoke, VA for the consecration of Karin McPhail as the Seventh Bishop of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Karin is a friend and seminary classmate, and roughly 20 members of my class were in attendance. Karin is the 6th member of the VTS Class of 2004 to be elected bishop.

There were several big events in June. Our annual Saving Grace Gala took place at Pinstripes on June 14th. Stacy Carter and others did an amazing job as usual, and it was a truly fun evening and an effective fund raiser for the Saving Grace Fund. Grace was one of several sites in Georgetown for the 3rd Annual World Music Day on June 20th, which was organized by Georgetown Heritage. We had musicians from Malaysia, India, and the DMV perform in our churchyard, and we welcomed over 100 people into our church building over the course of the day. Thursday, June 25th was the Grand Opening for the mural project I mentioned at the beginning of my report. I welcomed Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, and Ángeles Moreno Bau, the Spanish Ambassador to The United States, to Grace, and there was a reception in the churchyard after the unveiling. I am very proud of this collaboration between the Spanish Government, the D.C. Government, Georgetown Heritage, and Grace Church.

July saw the arrival of our annual Bach Festival. Francine organized four concerts this year, and they were all excellent! I particularly enjoyed Charlie Powers' cello concert and David Bond's organ concert, which not only featured Grace's organ but also the harpsichord we received from Will Ollison's estate. The music of Grace is a wonderful gift! Also in July, I attended a priestly ordination at St. Paul's, K Street, and there was a special vestry workday. I celebrated Eucharist with the Collington community and attended a retreat for the members of the Board of Directors for The Corporation.

At the very beginning of August, I went to see Weird Al Yankovic at Merriweather Post Pavilion, which was a lot of fun. Vestry did not meet during August, but the Executive Committee did. I took another road-trip during August and visited Richmond, South Carolina, Huntsville, and East Tennessee. At the very end of August, I attended a meeting of the Central DC region's clergy, and Mary Ann Ruehling and I represented Grace at VTS' Contextual Ministry Fair. The very last Sunday of August was August 30th, and we celebrated and gave thanks for the presence and ministry of Catherine Payling among us as we said goodbye before her move back to the UK.

September found Abby Merk joining us as a seminarian. Abby is a Senior at VTS and canonically resident in the Diocese of New Jersey. The mentoring and supervision of seminarians is a ministry I relish, and it has been my pleasure to welcome Abby to Grace. She is the third seminarian I have supervised at Grace so far. I attended diocesan ordinations at the Cathedral as well as a gathering of Corporation beneficiaries. September also saw the need to make several pastoral visits and take communion to parishioners.

Abby preached her first sermon at Grace on the first Sunday in October, which was also the day we observed The Blessing of the Animals. Several of our neighbors, both human and canine, joined us that day. I returned to Collington to celebrate the Eucharist, and I also accompanied Wally Valdez to a Poetry Event in Adams Morgan. During October, I continued to make several pastoral visits and joined routine meetings as well.

Hopes and concerns for the future:

I am looking forward to continuing to work on our Vestry culture. My goal is to help Vestry members feel more connected to their various areas of ministry and to continue imagining and strategizing what comes next for our parish community. A question I keep returning to is: How do we honor our past while looking toward the future? I envision Grace continuing to live into our vision and mission of being a place where all sorts and conditions of people come together to be in relationship with each other and with God.

On a concrete and practical note, during the coming year, I would like to evaluate our parish by-laws and see if updates are needed with any proposed changes being presented at next year's Annual Meeting. I also want to continue the good work accomplished this year by Catherine Payling and Braden Murphy in evaluating our parish financial practices, including conversations about the long-term financial health of Grace.

Finally, I would like to explore opportunities for community building. Where are the places parishioners can connect with each other? Where are the places our parish can connect with the neighborhood? Where are the places this is already happening and how do we highlight and honor and expand those happenings? I invite your questions, wonderings, and imaginings as we continue to tend the part of God's Kingdom entrusted to our care here in Georgetown.

Faithfully,

David+

Report provided by: The Reverend David C. Wacaster

The Deacon's Report:

Activities and Achievements:

Continuing Education and Diocesan Ministry

- Completed the continuing education course "Cultivate, Theologize, Organize! Community Organizing Fundamentals for the Church" and began developing a working ministry plan.
- Continued serving with the Diocesan Reparation Committee as the group maps the needs of identified congregations.
- Completed the identification of active Black churches within the Diocese.
- Helped advance the first reparation payment, which was approved and submitted to the diocesan treasurer for disbursement.
- Participated in efforts to identify a program focused on the recruitment and retention of Black clergy.

Parish and Community Ministry

- Established a hygiene bag ministry in collaboration with David Bujard and with assistance from Jared Belfeld.
- Participated in the Georgetown Village Fair open house.

Hopes and concerns for the future:

Looking toward the future, I hope the diaconate will continue to strengthen the connection between the church and the wider community, helping congregations recognize and respond faithfully to the needs of those who are vulnerable, overlooked, or underserved. I hope to deepen partnerships, encourage broader participation in ministries of mercy and justice, and nurture a culture in which compassionate service is understood as central to Christian discipleship.

At the same time, I am concerned about the growing complexity of community needs, limited resources, and the risk of fatigue among those committed to serving others. I am also mindful that division, indifference, and fear can weaken the church's public witness. These concerns call for prayerful discernment, sustainable practices, honest collaboration, and continued formation so that ministry remains grounded in the Gospel and responsive to the world.

Despite these challenges, I remain hopeful. I trust that God will continue to equip the church with the courage, wisdom, and compassion needed to serve faithfully and to embody mercy, justice, reconciliation, and hope.

Members/Participants:

The Reverend Diana Edwards & David Bujard

Report provided by: The Reverend Diana Edwards, Deacon

The Senior Warden's Report:

Activities and Achievements:

During October and most of November 2025, our Rector, the Rev. David Wacaster, was on sabbatical. During that time, I worked to ensure that the canonical (non-liturgical) functions of the church, to include regular meetings of the Vestry, were carried out without interruption. I assisted the Sabbatical Supply Clergy, the Rev. Jennifer McKenzie, as needed.

One significant accomplishment of the past year was Grace Church's role in community engagement. Details of these events are addressed elsewhere in this report. Highlights of community engagement included the Armistice Day/Veterans Day service in the churchyard at the Memorial Cross, the cultural fair of the Royal Thai Embassy as part of the May "Passport DC" celebration, and World Music Day in June with three concerts on the Grace Church lawn.

Hopes and concerns for the future:

Financial: The Rector and Vestry, with much good work from those involved in the financial management of the church, have taken action to increase the financial stability of the church. These actions include placing funds in interest-bearing accounts where possible, and placing the church's bills and other financial obligations on auto-pay to the extent possible. Initial steps have been taken to explore the creation of a "Legacy Fund" or similar that would allow those who wish to do so to make a gift to Grace Church that would grow and offer long-term financial benefits to ensure a secure future for the church. We hope this fund will be established in the near future.

Spiritual: Regular worship services are central to the life of the church. Grace Church plans to continue to welcome all who seek a place to worship.

Community: Grace Church has an exceptionally talented and hardworking group of parishioners who sustain a number of ministries. It is our hope that these activities, ranging from the weekly feeding ministry of Grace's Table to the annual Bach Festival, to the monthly Poetry Open Mic Night, and others, will continue to flourish within the parish and the neighborhood. It has been a privilege to serve as Senior Warden of Grace Church.

As I finish the last year of my term, I owe thanks to the Rector, the Rev. David Wacaster, the Vestry, and all the people of Grace Church for their patience and collaborative approach to serving God within and without the parish.

Report provided by: Mary Ann Ruehling, Senior Warden

The Junior Warden's Report:

Activities and Achievements:

- Appointed as Junior Warden.
- Attended Vestry meetings and retreats.
- Assisted in gathering auction items for Grace's Gala.
- Partnered with Mary Daly to initiate outreach to church members with lapsed attendance to encourage future participation.

Hopes and concerns for the future:

In this time of uncertainty and fear of the future for our families, our church, our government, and our way of life, my hope is to help sustain and grow Grace Church to be a safe haven for those who seek shelter from the coming storm.

Members/Participants:

Billy Carter and Mary Daly

Report provided by: Billy Carter, Junior Warden

The Treasurer's Report:

Activities and Achievements:

For many years, Grace's financial stability has been dependent on the generosity of longtime parishioners. We saw a decline in membership during and after the pandemic, but are beginning to see new members. We still need Grace to explore avenues of growth in the future, both in membership and income stream.

When the Vestry met in January to consider the 2026 Budget, we had secured pledges totaling $306,000 for pledge year 2026. We continue to be thankful for the generosity of everyone in the Grace Community. As for cashflow, by the end of 2025, we had received over $77,000 in pre-paid pledges for 2026, and January 2026 saw several large pledges that were paid in bulk. We also have had significant funds in reserve in our interest-bearing Wells Fargo account. This means we had good cashflow as we began 2026. Our Restricted Funds (Scott Fund, Outreach Fund, and the Rector's Housing/ Sabbatical Fund) were all well stocked.

However, Grace's Financial Team (myself and our longtime accountant, Catherine Payling) recommended a 2026 budget with a significant shortfall and a gap we hoped to close. Our recommendation allowed for a small Cost of Living Adjustment Increase for the Rector and Staff, as recommended by the Diocese. The Vestry passed the budget as recommended in the January 2026

meeting. **In future years, however, we must find ways to achieve financial stability that are less dependent on the generosity of longtime parishioners.**

Generally, as of September 30, 2026, operating expenses have been on or below budget this year across the board, though monthly expenses often fluctuate. Utilities are often high, but we are rectifying this going forward with an increased contribution from GMC that accounts for their greater consumption of power, gas, and water resources. Office expenses are down, largely due to hiring a parish administrator for only 25 hours a week. However, healthcare expenses are significantly increased, since, per Diocesan policy, Grace now pays a significant portion of the health care for David's husband now that he has retired. Overall, largely due to lower expenses and the estate funds, we are running something of a surplus for the year so far. We are fortunate to have funds in reserve as we look to improve financial stability in the future.

I have included the Balance Sheet for Grace's accounts as of September 30, 2026. I am always available to answer questions about specific financial issues. All funds of the church are held in some form of interest-bearing account. The General Fund, Saving Grace, Outreach, Scott, and Rector's Housing Fund cash balances are all held at United Bank.

Operating Account at United Bank: General Fund, Saving Grace, and Other funds

The Operating Account at United Bank consists primarily of: 1) the General Fund, used for budgeted expenses; 2) the Saving Grace Fund, for capital expenses; and 3) a variety of small other funds for specific purposes.

The General Fund receives pledge payments and other gifts from Parishioners and other donors, as well as Use of Space receipts. The General Fund pays the routine operating expenses of the church, as laid out in our annual budget. These expenses include the salary, pension, and healthcare expenses for Grace's Clergy and Staff, as well as expenses for Maintenance, Utilities, Office expenses, Music, Worship and Education, and Grace's support to the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

As of September 30, 2026, the Operating Account at United Bank had a balance of $95,625. (Last year at this time the bank balance was almost $220,000, but earlier this year we moved $100,000 over to Wells Fargo so it could earn more interest.) In addition, Grace manages a PayPal account through which several parishioners and others made contributions. On a regular basis, the account balance is transferred into the General Fund. As of September 30, 2026, the PayPal account held $6,010. We also have a Certificate of Deposit at United Bank valued at $15,585.

Saving Grace Fund

The Saving Grace Fund, also part of the Operating Account at United Bank, is used primarily to pay for capital improvements and major repairs of our buildings and grounds. Traditionally, funding for the Saving Grace Fund is largely provided through Grace's annual Saving Grace Gala. This spring, we held our third Saving Grace Gala since the pandemic. As of September 30, 2026, the Saving Grace Fund held $36,519 (up from $32,921 last year).

Wells Fargo Securities

The church maintains a brokerage account at Wells Fargo for the purpose of liquidating marketable securities donated to the church by parishioners. Accordingly, funds are held until they are needed for Operating expenditures. They are then transferred into the Operating Account at United Bank. In 2024, we moved this money to an interest-bearing account at Wells Fargo. As of September 30, 2025 (last year) the account held about $200,000, up from $192,000 the year before. As noted above, earlier this year, we moved an additional $100,000 from United Bank so it made more interest.

In addition, since David had his sabbatical last year, we moved about $80,000 (the bulk of the Rector's Housing Fund (see below)) over to Wells Fargo so it could also earn more interest.

As of September 30, 2026, the Wells Fargo account held a combined $388,164. This money can be transferred back to United Bank at any time.

Other Restricted Funds (all held at United Bank)

Other Restricted Funds represent a myriad of gifts for special designated purposes. Some of them are forwarded on by Grace Church as "pass through" funds for intended recipient organizations, such as Episcopal Relief and Development, or individuals, such as a Seminarian. These restricted funds, which are generally quite limited, are also kept in the Operating Account at United Bank.

Rector's Housing /Sabbatical Fund

The bank account known as the "Rector's Housing Fund" (RHF) has two purposes: 1) Rector's housing (as the name implies) and 2) to pay for a Sabbatical Priest. As of September 30, 2025, the Rector's Housing Fund contained a combined total of $81,804. Of that, $80,000 was moved over into the Wells Fargo account so it could earn more interest. (See above) The RHF fund at United Bank remains open, with placeholder funds of about $2,346.

About 1/3 of the RHF bank account is used to set aside funds to pay the Sabbatical Priest (or, last year, the "Supply Priest") while David was on sabbatical last fall. The remaining portion (2/3) of the RHF is for an incoming rector in the event he or she wishes to use the funds for a down payment on a house. Since David Wacaster was hired from within the Washington Diocese, and since he is already a homeowner, there was no need for that expenditure. With David's Sabbatical now concluded, the Vestry will look at reinvesting the RHF funds so they provide some interest income, probably through a Money Market Fund.

Scott (Music) Fund

The Scott Fund funds and sponsors the annual Bach Festival each summer and other music events. As of September 30, 2026, the Scott Fund had a balance of $12,359.

Outreach Fund

The Outreach Fund was established for the purpose of supporting existing Grace Ministries, such as Grace's Table, Music on the Lawn, and other functions conducted by the Outreach Committee. As of

September 30, 2025, the Outreach fund had a balance of $26,230, up from $23,368 a year ago. (The fund had $17,782 two years ago, so this fund is growing and healthy). We receive regular donations to this fund from St. John's Lafayette Square.

Sabbatical and Mitchell Funds -- Managed by the Diocese

The Sabbatical and Mitchell Funds are mutual funds administered by the Diocese. They fluctuate with the market. The Sabbatical Fund is designed to pay for substitute clergy and other expenses during periods when the Rector may be on Sabbatical, though Grace has its own fund for this as noted above. The Mitchell Fund can be used for emergencies. Neither fund has been drawn on in recent years, since the sabbatical priests have been funded "in-house" through the RHF as discussed above. As of September 30, 2026, the Mitchell Fund was valued at $106,379, up significantly (it was $69,893 three years ago). The Diocesan "Sabbatical Fund" is currently valued at $39,090 (up from $25,650 three years ago.

Grace is generally required to compile and submit its financial records for an annual audit, for submission to the Diocese of Washington. Historically, Grace has used an outside auditor. For a variety of reasons, Grace had not done an audit for several years. During 2024, with the invaluable assistance of longtime Grace parishioner Reg Burner, our Treasurer Emeritus and professional accountant by training, and our accountant Catherine Payling, we prepared a summary audit covering 2016-2023. We are grateful to Reg as he is preparing the audit for 2024 and 2025. The audits are now prepared "in house" in accordance with Diocesan guidelines, which saves Grace a significant amount of time, energy, and money.

I will soon complete my fifth year as Treasurer (since January 2022). We have several experienced hands managing Grace's finances. Catherine Payling has been Grace's accountant for over 12 years. She writes the checks, logs the deposits, balances the books, and provides excellent professional financial oversight on all budgetary and tax-related matters, which has been particularly helpful to the Treasurer, a lawyer by training and profession. This fall, she relocated to England, but we are grateful that she continues in her role virtually from there.

Daniel Capizzi has been the Financial Secretary for several years. He prepares the quarterly and year-end pledge and donation reports. We are very fortunate that Daniel will succeed me as Treasurer in January. I expect to work with him closely in that role going forward.

The financial team performs profoundly important work for Grace, keeping it going as a solvent institution. I also want to thank all the members of Grace Church and its community who contribute so generously to support the church in all its important ministries.

Braden Murphy

Treasurer

Grace Episcopal Church

Balance Sheet

As of September 30, 2026

	TOTAL		
	AS OF SEP 30, 2026	AS OF SEP 30, 2025 (PY)	% CHANGE
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Bank Accounts			
1000 Cash	0.00	0.00	
1001 Bank of GT Oper	95,625.15	219,216.75	-56.38 %
1021 Wells Fargo Brokerage	388,154.45	200,471.32	93.62 %
1031 Paypal	6,010.25	8,873.39	-32.27 %
Total 1000 Cash	**489,789.85**	**428,561.46**	**14.29 %**
1100 Cash Restricted			
1101 Bank of GT Scott Fund	12,359.58	10,195.53	21.23 %
1102 Rector's Housing Fund	2,346.28	81,804.25	-97.13 %
1103 Bank of GT Outreach	26,230.76	23,368.74	12.25 %
Total 1100 Cash Restricted	**40,936.62**	**115,368.52**	**-64.52 %**
1105 Vanguard	0.00	0.00	
Total Bank Accounts	**$530,726.47**	**$543,929.98**	**-2.43 %**
Accounts Receivable			
1106 Accounts Receivable	0.00	0.00	
Total Accounts Receivable	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**0.00%**
Other Current Assets			
1400 Prepaid Expenses	0.00	0.00	
1410 Accrued Income	-50.00	-50.00	0.00 %
1460 Undeposited Funds	0.00	0.00	
Total Other Current Assets	**$ -50.00**	**$ -50.00**	**0.00 %**
Total Current Assets	**$530,676.47**	**$543,879.98**	**-2.43 %**
Fixed Assets			
1500 Church and All Contents	3,026,000.00	3,026,000.00	0.00 %
1510 Land	6,608,800.00	6,608,800.00	0.00 %
Total Fixed Assets	**$9,634,800.00**	**$9,634,800.00**	**0.00 %**
Other Assets			
1700 Securities and Investments			
1710 Mitchell Fund	106,379.13	95,987.08	10.83 %
1720 Sabbatical	39,090.36	35,271.67	10.83 %
Total 1700 Securities and Investments	**145,469.49**	**131,258.75**	**10.83 %**
1725 Certificate of Deposit	15,584.96	15,000.00	3.90 %
1800 Note Receivable	0.00	0.00	
Total Other Assets	**$161,054.45**	**$146,258.75**	**10.12 %**
TOTAL ASSETS	**$10,326,530.92**	**$10,324,938.73**	**0.02 %**

Grace Episcopal Church

Balance Sheet

As of September 30, 2026

	TOTAL		
	AS OF SEP 30, 2026	AS OF SEP 30, 2025 (PY)	% CHANGE
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Other Current Liabilities			
2100 Fund Transfers	0.00	-3,000.00	100.00 %
2200 Deposits	0.00	0.00	
2400 Prepaid Pledges	0.00	0.00	
2450 Other Deferred Income	0.00	0.00	
2500 Accrued expenses	0.00	0.00	
2600 Payroll Protection Loan	0.00	0.00	
Total Other Current Liabilities	**$0.00**	**$ -3,000.00**	**100.00 %**
Total Current Liabilities	**$0.00**	**$ -3,000.00**	**100.00 %**
Total Liabilities	**$0.00**	**$ -3,000.00**	**100.00 %**
Equity			
3000 RE Fund Balance Operating	290,719.20	243,569.91	19.36 %
3010 Fund Balance Saving Grace	36,519.46	32,921.49	10.93 %
3015 Fund Balance Outreach	23,379.67	23,368.74	0.05 %
3020 Fund Balance Scott Fund	9,532.49	10,195.53	-6.50 %
3025 Fund Balance Rector's Housing Fund	82,346.28	91,282.06	-9.79 %
3035 Fund Balance Sabbatical	39,090.36	35,271.67	10.83 %
3040 Fund Balance Mitchell Fund	106,379.13	95,987.08	10.83 %
3045 Mate Memorial Fund	3,082.00	3,082.00	0.00 %
3046 Other Restricted Funds	70,335.28	70,335.28	0.00 %
3050 Fund Balance Facility	9,634,800.00	9,634,800.00	0.00 %
3090 Rector's Discretionary Fund	0.00	0.00	
Net Income	30,347.05	87,124.97	-65.17 %
Total Equity	**$10,326,530.92**	**$10,327,938.73**	**-0.01 %**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	**$10,326,530.92**	**$10,324,938.73**	**0.02 %**

Report provided by: Braden Murphy, Treasurer

The Altar Guild Report:

Activities and Achievements

The Altar Guild serves as communion ministers, keeps the linens clean, bakes the communion bread, and adds oil to the altar candles between services. The annual schedule for the Altar Guild follows the church calendar beginning with Advent. A copy of the schedule is kept in the Sacristy.

Hopes and concerns for the future

I would gladly share the Altar Guild with new members.

Members/Participants

Helen Buhr, David Wigglesworth, and I are members and take turns as communion ministers.

Report provided by: Sally Stanfield

The Centering Prayer Report:

Activities and Achievements

Centering Prayer meets Tuesday at 12:15 on Zoom and sometimes in the church. It is a form of Christian meditation in which one works to clear your mind of all the thoughts which come naturally by listening to our breathing or repeating a word or phrase. We read the Psalm and the Gospel for the coming Sunday, go into the quiet for 20 minutes, say the Lord's Prayer, and then go on about our day. This becomes a very fulfilling practice– each one of these thoughts being brushed away is a chance to open your mind to God.

Hopes and Concerns for the Future

To continue to offer this opportunity for peace and invite all who are willing to try it.

Members/Participants

The group ranges from 2 to 8 people who have found us in many different ways– -about half of whom are Grace Church members. Others found us through the Constant Contact Tuesday Centering Prayer message, the Bach Festival, or Open Mic Night.

Report provided by: Helen Buhr

The Community Events Report:

Activities and Achievements

Over the past year, Grace Church has been involved in a number of activities in the community. Some of these are recurring events, such as the annual Bach Festival and the monthly Poetry Open Mic Night. These are addressed in detail elsewhere in this report.

During the past year, a number of other activities involving the community took place at Grace Church. These included the Blessing of the Animals on St. Francis Sunday in October, when parishioners and neighbors were invited to bring their pets to church to receive a blessing. On November 11, Grace Church held an Armistice Day/Veterans Day service at the Memorial Cross in the churchyard. This service represented the revival of a tradition of the early days of Grace Church. Photos of these early services can be seen on the walls inside the church.

Springtime saw outdoor events at Grace Church. In May, as part of the Passport DC Festival, our neighbors at the Royal Thai Embassy held a Thai Cultural Festival on the lawn, featuring music, crafts, and demonstrations of Thai boxing. In June, three international concerts were held on the lawn in observance of World Music Day. Also in June, the Rector and the Parish Administrator represented Grace Church at the "Georgetown: Get Involved!" event, which was held on a very wet Sunday afternoon at Waterfront Park.

Hopes and Concerns for the Future

Events throughout the year continue to strengthen ties between Grace Church and our community. The Georgetown Ministerial Association, of which the Rector is a member, along with the Georgetown Business Improvement District, Georgetown Heritage, and Georgetown University, all provide connections between our church and our neighborhood. We hope to nurture these connections as they strengthen and grow.

Members/Participants

The Rev. David Wacaster, Jared Belfield, Helen Buhr, Francine Máté, Braden Murphy, Mary Ann Ruehling, Walker Valdez, Veronica Watson-Freeman, and many other members and friends of Grace Church.

Report provided by: Mary Ann Ruehling, Senior Warden

The Counters Report:

Activities and Achievements:

As the name suggests, Counters are traditionally tasked with managing the collection plate on Sundays and during other church services, both during the service, and afterwards. Counting duties include diligently accounting for the checks and cash offered at the Sunday services (and others that have come in during the week), calculating the deposits, and preparing the bank deposit slip to ensure that the contributions are properly logged and deposited. This is an important, yet often unseen, function in keeping Grace's financial house in order. Under ordinary circumstances, the Counters perform their important service every Sunday and during occasional holiday services. Counters are also traditionally tasked with counting the number of attendees at church services on Sundays.

While donor checks sent to Grace in the mail are processed regularly, parishioners are strongly encouraged to make their pledge payments automatically, through PayPal.

Members/Participants

I have been the Head Counter at Grace for about 17 years. It would be great if someone else took over these duties. Anyone interested in being a counter should contact me at bradenmurphydc@yahoo.com.

Report provided by: Braden Murphy, Treasurer

The Diocesan Convention Report:

131st Annual Convention of the Diocese of Washington, D.C.

The Episcopal Diocese of Washington (EDOW) held its 131st Annual Convention of the Diocese on January 31, 2026, at the National Cathedral. Grace Church was represented by Rev. David Wacaster, Deacon Diana Edwards, lay delegate Alecia Torres Valdez, and lay alternate delegate Mystelle Ruble.

The morning began at 9AM with a worship service led by the diocesan clergy in English, Spanish, and French. During the convention and over the course of several ballots, attendees nominated and elected a slate of clerical and lay delegates and alternate clerical and lay delegates to the national convention, including Rev. David as a clerical delegate.

Bishop Mariann then addressed the convention with an update on the recent work and achievements of the diocese. The treasurer provided a detailed overview of the 2025 financial report, and then the 2026 budget was presented and adopted.

Additional reports were made to the attendees by the Committees on Congregational Stewardship & Diocesan Support, Constitutions and Canons, and Reparations. The convention adopted a new set of

minimum standards for churches in the diocese to contribute with due allowance for financial circumstances and retaining the tithe as a goal.

In the morning, a late resolution was submitted and accepted for consideration: Dignity, Not Hate, Not Mass Deportation, Not Silence. It addressed the current mass deportation campaign and calls for the treatment of migrants with respect and human dignity. Multiple individuals spoke in favor of the resolution as it was considered, and no one spoke against it before it was adopted.

The 132nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington will be held Saturday, January 30th, 2027, at the Washington National Cathedral.

Members/Participants:

The Reverend David C. Wacaster, Deacon Diana Edwards, Alecia Torres Valdez (Lay Delegate), and Mystelle Ruble (Alternate Lay Delegate)

Report provided by: Alecia Torres Valdez, Lay Delegate

The Flowers for the Church Report:

Activities and Achievements:

Flowers for the church are requested by identifying a date for a specific Sunday on which you wish to remember a person or an event by donating flowers to be placed in front of the altar and contacting Helen Buhr at helen.j.buhr@gmail.com.

The flowers can be purchased and brought to the church the day before, or by Helen ordering and picking up the arrangement for you. The fee for the flowers is $150 at this time. An announcement about who or what is being celebrated or remembered can be placed in the Sunday bulletin.

For Christmas and Easter we hope to have flowers at the altar and poinsettias or potted spring flowers in the windows. Donations for these special days are gratefully accepted and will be noted in the service bulletins.

Report provided by: Helen Buhr

The Friends of Grace Gala Report:

Activities and Achievements:

The Annual Saving Grace Gala was held at Pinstipes in Georgetown on June 14th from 5-8pm. This year's theme was a Retro Game Night. Find information below:

Annual Saving Grace Gala GAME NIGHT!

Number of Attendees: 40

Ticket Sales: $5000

Auction Receipts: $6070

Auction receipts after the event "Son of Silent Auction": $1255

Donations: $2375

Other gifts: $200

Total: $14,900

Expenses

Pinstripes: $5213

Receipts: $253

Gala Net to the Saving Grace Fund: $9434

Hopes and concerns for the future:

The Gala theme seemed to be popular with those who attended. We will likely repeat this theme for 2027. We are in desperate need of volunteers, particularly with the silent auction. Please see one of the members ASAP if you are interested, we will be planning for 2027 soon.

Members/Participants:

Stacy Carter, Helen Buhr, and Braden Murphy

Report provided by: Stacy Carter

The GMC Report

Activities and Achievements

Grace Church is a founding congregation of Georgetown Ministry Center, which is based out of a drop-in center located in the basement of Grace's Rectory. Founded in 1987, GMC is a non-profit membership organization founded to address the incipient problem of homelessness in Georgetown. GMC includes a drop-in center, street outreach, and a secondary (formerly pop-up) location at Georgetown Lutheran Church that offers a safe haven from the streets to our most withdrawn and vulnerable unhoused neighbors. GMC offers showers, laundry service, mail delivery, referral services, coffee and some meals at the drop-in center and at Georgetown Lutheran.

GMC has a special vocation to "abide" with its members, and to build trust and community among unhoused neighbors and with the larger community. Its work witnesses to a shared conviction that unhoused persons are our neighbors here in Georgetown– they count as full members of the larger community. Other agencies specialize in guiding clients through the "pipeline to housing" and into permanent supportive housing. From its place within the spectrum of homeless services, GMC seeks to refer those ready to enter the pipeline to one of these other agencies and to actively advocate on their behalf.

GMC's daily activities are managed by a small, highly dedicated staff who are supported through the help of volunteers. GMC is governed by a volunteer board of directors nominated by the Members. Board Members are elected by the Member organizations at GMC's annual meeting in January of each year. The Rector of Grace Church also serves as a Director.

GMC's drop-in center is located at Grace pursuant to a use of space agreement under which GMC pays Grace a monthly fee for the space. The improvements located in the center were built out at GMC's expense. GMC shares some utilities with Grace Church. GMC operates a second center at Georgetown Lutheran Church (GLC) on Wisconsin Avenue in order to provide more services than can be accommodated at Grace. Until recently, GLC had a long-term tenant for the basement portion of its facilities. That tenant has now vacated, and GLC has offered the space for rent to GMC as a larger, consolidated base of operations. The GMC Board of Directors are engaged in conversation with GLC about this proposal.

GMC provides invaluable resources to our unhoused brothers and sisters in greater Georgetown, particularly in the current political environment.

GMC's 2025-2026 Impact Report reflects the following services provided, a dramatic increase from 2024-25:

- 1,200+ unique total guests served
- 20,700 Drop-In Center visits
- 3,700 computer sessions
- 4,900 showers
- 3,900 laundry loads

- 175 mail pickups
- 3,650 outreach interactions
- 700 unique outreach guests
- 190 medical consultations
- 600 psychiatric consultations
- 19,060 Meals Served

Hopes and concerns for the future

Volunteers and donations are always needed and welcome to keep this extraordinary ministry alive. Also, if anyone is interested in serving on the GMC Board, please speak to me or our Rector, David Wacaster.

Members/Participants

- Christ Church, Georgetown
- Dumbarton United Methodist Church
- Epiphany Roman Catholic Church
- First Baptist Church, Georgetown
- Georgetown Lutheran Church
- Georgetown Presbyterian Church
- Grace Episcopal Church
- Holy Trinity Catholic Church
- Kesher Israel Congregation
- Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
- St. John's Episcopal Church
- St. Paul's K Street
- St. Stephen the Martyr
- Georgetown Clergy Association
- Georgetown University
- The Georgetown Business Improvement District
- Georgetown Business Association
- Citizens Association of Georgetown

Report provided by: Beth Lee

The Grace's Table Report

Activities and Achievements

Grace's Table is a Saturday morning feeding ministry for the unhoused and those living on the margins. We provide a hot meal (entrée, salad, bread, and dessert) and a sense of community, warmth and safety for our Saturday congregation. We are one of the few programs providing meals on weekends, and the need continues to grow as we serve upwards of 80 guests per week. We have a large group of regulars eager to engage in conversation with each other and with us. About a quarter of our guests stay to participate in a voluntary ecumenical Bible study organized by David Bujard, which they eagerly anticipate and greatly miss when we don't have someone available to lead it.

Grace's Table is supported by a small but stalwart group of volunteers from Grace Church, backed up during the academic year by student volunteers from the APO fraternity at Georgetown University. St.

John's Lafayette Square provides the meal and a group of volunteers on the third Saturday of each month. Georgetown Lutheran provides the meal and a group of volunteers on the first Saturday of every other month. We are actively working to expand this type of partnership with other organizations. This year we have added Nest4Us as a partner, as well as a growing group of volunteers from St. Monica and St. James Episcopal Church. Periodically we are joined by other volunteer groups from around the District of Columbia, and we have a growing group of individuals from the larger community who volunteer as they are able.

Hopes and concerns for the future

Our growing Grace's Table ministry is one of the central ways Grace Church serves the larger community of which it is part, providing nourishment and community as well as volunteer opportunities. None of this is possible without the support of 6 -10+ volunteers each Saturday, and we are relying on the same small group of core volunteers most weeks. We are actively working to expand our partnerships, but to make this ministry sustainable, especially over the long term, we need a larger pool of volunteers to cook, serve and assist with set up and clean up. The larger the pool, the more widely we can distribute opportunities both to contribute food and to serve. We also need to expand the leadership team to share responsibilities more broadly. Come join us!

Members/Participants

- Beth Lee
- David Bujard and Family
- James Hamilton
- Dani del Rosal
- Darcy Bacon
- Sarah Haft
- Margaret Lenzner
- Mary Redding
- Lisa Rosen and Scott Rosen
- Esben Lunde Larsen
- Parker Marshall
- Rachel Miller-Selzer
- Nia Harris
- Reese Oaks
- Victoria and Davie Bruno
- Jessica, Clint, and Josey Sánchez
- Charles Gnaedinger
- St. John's Lafayette Square
- Georgetown Lutheran
- Georgetown APO
- Rotaract Club of Georgetown
- Nest4Us
- Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Georgetown
- DC Episcopal Fellowship

Report provided by: Beth Lee

The Koinonia Report:

Activities and Achievements

In 2026, the Koinonia Dinner Groups formed a new group in June. There are currently three groups running – two with six participants and one group with seven participants.

Hopes and concerns for the future

Koinonia is important to the Grace community as a way to meet and socialize outside our gates and grow deeper roots as a community. We welcome new participants. You can directly email koinonia@gracedc.org with any questions or to be directly added to the member list.

Members/Participants

1. Helen Buhr
2. Doreen and Reg Burner
3. Vicki Carlson
4. Stacy & Billy Carter
5. Mary Daly
6. Debra and Michael Decker
7. Beth Lee
8. Braden Murphy and Lucy Alexander
9. Terry and Patricia Murphy
10. Janet and Jim Sale
11. Sally Stanfield
12. Lee and Fred Tyner

Report provided by: Alecia Torres de Valdez

The Memorial Committee Report:

Activities and Achievements

No new activity to report at this time.

Hopes and concerns for the future

We hope to be responsive to the congregation on issues concerning our memorial garden and the garden in general as needed. If anyone is interested in joining the committee, contact Janet Sale at jjsale60@gmail.com or David Wacaster at david.wacaster@gracedc.org.

Members/Participants

Jim Sale, Janet Sale, Sally Stanfield

Report provided by: Janet Sale

The Music, Choir, & the Bach Festival Report:

Activities and Achievements

It is an honor for me to be able to once again write about our Grace Choir. Our Choir sang Choral Anthems for our 10:30 am Sunday services from September, 2025, through September, 2026, except for a summer break.

Special Choral music during this period included a beautiful service of Lessons and Carols in December, 2025, and a festive musical service on Easter Sunday, 2026. At the conclusion of the Easter Sunday 2026 service, our Choir once again led the entire congregation in the singing of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. I thank our Choir for their consistent beautiful singing, and continuing dedication to our group. And, thank you, Grace Members, for your support of our Choir.

We were fortunate to be able to continue our "live" Bach Festival concerts in 2026 with our 31st Bach Festival! We presented 4 Concerts between July 5, 2026 and July 17, 2026. The last time we had more than 3 Bach Festival Concerts was in 2019! The flyer (next page) lists all the performers and information on our 31st Bach Festival at Grace Episcopal Church. It is such a joy and honor for me to be the Director of this marvelous Festival.

Once again with the assistance of Mary Ann Ruehling, our Bach Festival information continues to be on Facebook.

Many, many thanks to Jared Belfield, Veronica Freeman, Donald Freeman, Mary Ann Ruehling, Helen Buhr, and Mary Daly for all their work and support at our Bach concerts this year!

As always, I am deeply grateful for Larry Molinaro's vision over 30 years ago when he founded the Grace Church Bach Festival.

And thank you to all who support our Grace Church Bach Festival!

Please note that our 2021 Virtual Bach Festival, the 27th Bach Festival at Grace, remains on our Grace website for your continued viewing and enjoyment!

2026 Flyer for the 31st Bach Festival:

31st Bach Festival



Grace Episcopal Church,
Georgetown
Washington, DC

1041 Wisconsin Ave NW
www.gracedc.org
(202) 333-7100

Sunday, July 5th, 2026, at 1:30 PM

Regino Madrid, Violin
Emily Grace Konkle, Violin
Derek Smith, Viola
Charlie Powers, Cello
Trevor Mowry, Oboe and Oboe d'amore
Soo Young Chrisfield, Soprano
Shouvik Mondle, Baritone
& **Francine Máté**, Harpsichord, and Director of the Bach Festival

Works include *Cantata No. 82*, a soprano solo from *Cantana No. 49*, and *Cello Suite BWV 1009*.

Friday, July 10th, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Charlie Powers, Cello

The Program will be *Johann Sebastian Bach's Cello Suites BWV 1007, BWV 1008,* and *BWV 1009*.

Sunday, July 12th, 2026, at 1:30 PM

Piotr Pakhomkin, Guitar

Works include the *Chaconne from the d minor Partitia, BWV 1004*, and the *Vivaldi D Major Concerto RV 230 arranged for the organ by JS Bach.*

Friday, July 17th, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Dr. David Bond, Organ

Works include music by *JS Bach* contemporaries *Frescobaldi, Buxtehude, Clermabault, Scarlatti,* and music by *JS Bach.*

For more information scan the QR code or contact **Francine Máté**, Director of the Bach Festival, at **bach@gracedc.org**

Admission: $35
Student: $15

Purchase tickets here

Hopes and concerns for the future

It would be wonderful to have even more singers in our Adult Choir. As you are reading this report, if you have ever considered joining our Adult Choir, please talk to me about joining. Even though we sing every Sunday, no one is expected to be there every Sunday. Everyone has family and work obligations that keep them from singing every Sunday.

Our Choir is not just about music making. Our Adult Choir is a very collegial and fun group as well!

In past Grace Annual Reports I stated that it is truly amazing that as high profile as our Bach Festival is both locally and internationally, we continue to operate on almost a skeleton budget. Generous donations by Grace Parishioners in the summers of 2024, 2025, and 2026 allowed us to be able to produce our 31st Bach Festival in June/July 2026.

Preparation for our 32nd Bach Festival has begun, and at the present time I am pleased to announce that Cellist Charlie Powers and his Trio will be performing The Bach Goldberg Variations on Friday, July 9, 2027, at 7 pm, for the 3rd time!! Mr. Powers, a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, has been performing in our Bach Festival for many years, and it will be a joy to have Mr. Powers and his Trio for our 32nd Festival.

To stay within the budget that we now have, we will still continue to pay our performing musicians only honorariums. Publicity and other needs to produce the festival are very expensive. This past summer, as in many of our past festivals, our revenue from ticket sales at the door to our concerts did not cover all expenses. Many thanks to the generous donations from a Grace Parishioner in 2024, 2025, and 2026.

Our Grace Church Bach Festival is the only Bach Festival in the entire Washington DC Metropolitan area. On Bach's birthday in 2023, March 21, 2023, Austrian born Organist Michael Koenig performed our first Bach Birthday celebration Recital. Mr. Koenig performed his magnificent program pro bono for us in order to promote the resuming of our live Grace Church Bach Festival Concerts in the summer of 2023. I was the Director of our Bach Festival every summer from 2000-2019. Because of the Pandemic and other related issues, except for our Virtual Bach Festival in 2021, we were not able to resume our live Bach Festival Concerts until the summer of 2023.

We were honored this year to be added to the International List of Bach Festivals worldwide by the German Musician, Dr. Joerg Hansen. Our 2026 Bach Festival Flyer is in their Collection of Bach Festivals in 2026. Please see the flyer (next page). In this document, Dr. Hansen requests all information of Bach Festival Directors worldwide to submit information for their Collection of Bach Festivals in 2026. Our 31st Bach Festival flyer is included in their list in Germany.

If you would like to contribute to our Bach Festival, you may do so on our Grace website www.gracedc.org. Go to the portion at the bottom of the Home Page "Give to Grace." The drop-down menu has a link to "Bach Festival" for donations to our Bach Festival.

BACHHAUS EISENACH

Bachhaus Eisenach gGmbH | Frauenplan 21 | D-99817 Eisenach

To organizers of Bach festivals
(international version)

Bachhaus Eisenach gGmbH
Frauenplan 21
D-99817 Eisenach

Telefon +49(0)3691 7934-0
Telefax +49(0)3691 7934-24

info@bachhaus.de
www.bachhaus.de

Geschäftsführer: Dr. Jörg Hansen
Aufsichtsratsvorsitzender:
KMD Roderich Kreile, Dresden

Bankverbindung:
Wartburg-Sparkasse
BLZ 840 550 50
Konto-Nr. 170 160
IBAN: DE97 8405 5050 0000 1701 60
BIC: HELADEF1WAK

Registergericht:
AG Jena HRB 405352
USt-IdNr. DE216466260

Special Exhibit „125 Years of Bach Festivals – 100 Bach Festivals" (from 4 June 2026)
Request for the contribution of items

10.02.2026

Dear Sir or Madam,
dear friends and colleagues in the service of Bach,

125 years ago, the idea of regular Bach festivals was first put into practice. In 1901 the New Bach Society (Neue Bachgesellschaft), founded in 1900 to organize such festivals regularly and thus make „propaganda for Bach", celebrated its first such festival from 21-23 March in Berlin. The idea was a great success. Already in 1907 and 1908 there were independent Bach festivals held in Essen and Leipzig. Today, many places have their own regular Bach festivals. The New Bach Society, incidentally, celebrates its own 100th Bach festival this year in Leipzig.

To commemorate this jubilee, the Bach House is planning a special exhibition from 4 June to 1 November 2026. We are the museum of the New Bach Society, founded in 1907, and have around 42.000 visitors per year, many of them international. In our planned exhibition we want to include as many as possible of the current regular Bach festivals throughout the world.

As you are an organizer of regular Bach festivals, we would be very happy to obtain from you

- **festival posters, from your latest event or historical**
- **program brochures, leaflets, souvenirs or other three dimensional objects,**
- **photos of highlights from the history of your festivals.**

It may be most convenient to send a digital PDF or high resolution jpg file which we will reproduce for our exhibition. We also accept printed materials or anything that you might want to send us to highlight your festival. If objects are to be returned we are happy to enter a loan agreement. Otherwise they become part of our collection. If you want to tell us more about your festivals and their genesis not readily available from public sources, or have special literary suggestions, this would be very welcome to produce correct exhibition texts.

We would be very happy if you could send us your material until **31 March 2026**. In case of questions please do not hesitate to contact me at hansen@bachhaus.de .

With many thanks and best wishes,

Dr. Jörg Hansen, director

Gesellschafter des
Bachhauses Eisenach ist die
Neue Bachgesellschaft e.V.
Internationale Vereinigung
Sitz Leipzig | Gegründet 1900

Members/Participants

1. Sopranos
    a. Darcy Bacon
    b. Sarah Haft
    c. Beth Lee
    d. Marian Wentworth
2. Altos
    a. Lucy Alexander
    b. Diana Martin
    c. Mary Ann Ruehling
3. Baritones
    a. Frank Burgess
    b. Jim Cobey

Report provided by: Francine Máté, M.M., D.M.A., Organist, Choirmaster, & Director of the Grace Episcopal Church Bach Festival

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The New Members Ministry & Greeters Report:

Activities and Achievements

The New Member Ministry / Greeters welcome everyone to Grace at the 10:30 service and follow up with first time visitors if they want to know more about the church or its programs. In the past year, 8 people have returned or become regular attenders.

Hopes and concerns for the future

Our main goal is to welcome everyone who comes to Grace and to help people become a part of the church.

Members/Participants

Thank you to Lucy Alexander, and ex official member David Bujard, for their work greeting everyone and getting to know our guests.

If you would like to help in welcoming people to Grace, please contact Helen Buhr at helen.j.buhr@gmail.com. It would be a plus to have four or five more people ready to help greet our guests on Sunday morning.

And thank you to everyone for extending a warm welcome to all our guests.

Report provided by: Helen Buhr

The Online Ministries Report: Constant Contact

Activities and Achievements

Jared Belfield, our Parish Administrator, regularly uses the Constant Contact mass email software to inform parishioners of current and upcoming events. Constant Contact remains a primary means of disseminating information, such as the Weekly Updates and the Sunday bulletin, to parishioners. It is also an important tool of the Visitors' and Hospitality Ministry, as visitors who are interested in activities of the parish are invited to leave an email address to be added to the Constant Contact database. In addition to Jared, one parishioner assists in sending out information by Constant Contact as needed.

In April of this year, Jared was able to reduce our Constant Contact subscription fee by over 50%. With the help of other parish administrators in the EDOW, Jared realized that the previous subscription that we had been paying for could have been downgraded for a less costly subscription that has the same features. By him reaching out to the Constant Contact help desk, the team at Constant Contact also pointed out that we had been sending emails to dead addresses, resulting in those emails bouncing back to the website. They removed around 40 dead email addresses, which put our subscriber number under 500– resulting in us being placed in a lower priced tier based on how many email addresses we reach out to. Constant Contact also gave us the option to reduce our bill by 30% more via prepaying our subscription fees annually rather than monthly. This option was gratefully accepted.

Hopes and concerns for the future

Grace Church plans to continue its use of Constant Contact to connect and build the community by sharing information of interest.

Members/Participants

Jared Belfield and Mary Ann Ruehling

Report provided by: Jared Belfield, Parish Administrator, and Mary Ann Ruehling, Senior Warden

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The Online Ministries Report: Social Media

Activities and Achievements

During the past year, Grace Church continued to work to increase its presence on social media. The Grace Church Facebook page currently has 485 followers. The largest concentration of followers is in the Arlington, VA area. Approximately 80% of the Facebook followers are over the age of 45. For this reason, Grace Church recently added accounts on Instagram and TikTok to cover social media used by multiple age groups. The addition of the Instagram account was a goal from the previous year.

In late July, our Parish Administrator, Jared Belfield, created accounts for Grace Church on both Instagram and TikTok. Our username on both platforms is @gracechurch_dc . Since then, our Instagram account has grown to 122 followers, and our TikTok account has grown to 1 new follower. Content about our Open Mic Nights and Sunday Services have been posted, and as more events take place, such as Advent, Christmas, and the Bach Festival, more posts are to come.

Hopes and concerns for the future

Hopes include increasing engagement, with a goal of at least two relevant Facebook posts per week. The Instagram and TikTok accounts were established recently. The hope for the Instagram and TikTok sites is to post relevant content and reach a wider audience with news of Grace Church activities.

Members/Participants

Jared Belfield and Mary Ann Ruehling

Report provided by: Jared Belfield, Parish Administrator, and Mary Ann Ruehling, Senior Warden

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The Open Mic Night Report

Activities and Achievements

The Coffeehouse Poetry Open Mic started in November 2024. It meets in the church sanctuary on the last Monday of every month at 7 PM and typically goes up to 8:30 PM with time to socialize afterwards. Light refreshments are provided such as coffee and cookies. The Open Mic is free-of-charge with a $5.00 suggested donation.

Readers typically recite a poem, a cover poem, or perform their music or a cover of a song. Since January, I also bring feature artists, and they get 20 to 25 minutes of performance time. We have had participants as young as 17 and as old as 80. We now have regular attendees who do not normally attend church service. This year, our open mic attendance has ranged from 15 people up to 56 people. We have increased our numbers from last year and our open mic is starting to become much more known among the performance artists in the area. Additionally our Coffeehouse poetry Instagram page currently has 679 followers.

We met once a month on the last Monday of every month for the past year. Instead of the January date, we met on the first Monday of February because we canceled the original date due to snow. I have most enjoyed the patrons and performers of our open mics, and many of them have told me that they feel very welcome and enjoy our Open Mic more than other ones in the area. At this point we have regulars from the church who are typically present as well as rotating regulars that consists of poets featured at our Open Mic that try to come back every couple of months or so.

As of a few months ago, we purchased a microphone and portable sound system from Amazon. I purchased and donated a mic stand to the open mic. Since, having that equipment, the audio from video recordings that I make and place on the Coffeehouse Poetry instagram page is much clearer.

Hopes and concerns for the future

In 2027, my hope is that we are able to bring back some more of our feature artists who performed for free before and allow them to get the $120.00 honorarium that we now offer feature artists. With that, I have been able to hire more established artists, and I feel that it shows feature artists that we value their time and talent.

Members/Participants

Rev. David Wacaster, Rector

Walker Valdez, Open Mic Host, Organizer, Promoter on social media

Mary Ann Ruehling and Helen Buhr, Refreshments

Veronica Freeman, Church Maintenance

Jared Belfield, Marketing, Promoter on social media

Approximate estimate of attendants each month:

10/2025- Approx 17 guests, Approx $54.00 in donations

11/2025- Approx 19 guests, Approx $45.00 in donations

12/2025- Approx 29 guests, Approx $55.00 in donations

Rescheduled January that was cancelled due to snow- 2/2026- Approx 56 guests, Approx 94.00 in donations

2/2026- Approx 15 guests, Approx $54.00 in donations

3/2026- Approx 29 guests, Approx $70.00 in donations

4/2026- Approx 15 guests, Approx $85.00 in donations

5/2026- Approx 25 guests, Approx $82.00 in donations

6/2026- Approx 21 guests, Approx. $80.00 in donations

7/2026- Approx 25 guests, Approx $60.00 in donations

8/2026- Approx 17 guests, Approx. $65.00 in donations

9/2026- Approx 24 guests, Approx 77.00 in donations

Report provided by: Walker Valdez, Vestry Member

The Parish Administrator's Report:

Activities and Achievements

In November of last year, I assisted with the collaboration with the DC Tweed Ride in which we hosted the finish line for their fashionable bike ride. It was a sight to see so many people dressed in their best sartorial clothing and pompous accessories all while on bicycles! That same month, I helped facilitate the memorial service of Anne Satterthwaite, a pioneer in the development of what we know today as the Georgetown Waterfront Park. That same month, I was introduced to leaders of the Papermill Home Owners Association, of whom hosted their annual meeting in our Sanctuary towards the end of the month.

In January I witnessed my first ever sight of snow (and inclement weather days off) at Grace Church! The crisp snow and ice was a beautiful sight to see, and I wish I captured more pictures of it.

As the weather warmed up, the painting began for the Mural that lies on our street level wall on Wisconsin Avenue. I helped coordinate with the Georgetown Heritage, the Spanish Embassy, the DC Mayors office, and MuralsDC on ensuring that this eye catching work, celebrating 250 years of independence and freedom, was provided with all resources needed for completion.

In April, I was able to use the advice of other parish administrators in the EDOW to reach out to our subscription based service providers to see if we qualify for any discounts or tier changes. Through that, I was able to significantly reduce our subscription fee on Constant Contact. That same month, I also helped facilitate the installation of and training for our AED, at no cost, which is located across from the lift entrance on the lower level of the Church. This machine can not only impact and save the lives of parishioners here at Grace but also the entire Georgetown community at large. The free installation of the AED also included CPR training for those in attendance.

In May, I was able to assist with the Royal Thai Embassy as they hosted their passport event on our lawn. That same month, the mural along Wisconsin Ave had completed. In June, for its grand revealing and ribbon cutting ceremony, we hosted DC Mayor Murial Bowser, members of the Spanish Embassy, ambassador Ángeles Moreno Bau, the Georgetown Heritage, and members of the Georgetown community.

Later that same month, I worked with Stacy Carter, Braden Murphy, and Rev. David Wacaster in creating all of the promotional materials for the Saving Grace Gala. This was my first time assisting with the Gala, and it was a lot of fun designing the flyers and graphics that were set to reflect the

aesthetics of the 70s. Although I was not born then, everyone was very pleased in the outcome of the materials (super huge thanks to Rev. David and Veronica for their input).

In June, I reached my one year anniversary of working at Grace Church. The year was phenomenal, and I am excited and honored to still be here today. Simultaneously, I assisted Francine with creating and sending out all of the promotional materials for the 31st Bach Festival. This went into July as well, as I assisted with the box office for each concert. The music was absolutely divine, and the musicians were phenomenal.

In late July, I created the Instagram and TikTok pages for Grace Church! This has been a goal of Rev. David's for some time, and I am glad that it is finally actualized. Through these platforms, we now have a larger of opportunity to draw in more guests to our services and events.

In September, I was able to meet (again) DC Mayor Murial Bowser, as well as Ward 2 Councilmember Brooke Pinto, at the Georgetown BID annual meeting. It is always fun to attend events like this, Georgetown Mainstreet's Coffee & Community events, the Georgetown BID safety meetings, Georgetown Get Involved!, and our Community Purchasing Alliance annual meetings, as a representative of Grace Church. Our attendance helps reinform the business representatives in the area that we are active in the community and have operations and events that extend far beyond Sunday services. Events as such also are great for community building, as I now have a much greater understanding of how other businesses in the area can assist Grace Church in our operations and vice versa.

In October, I was able to coordinate my first wedding here at Grace Church, with the gracious and knowledgeable assistance of Helen Buhr. Assisting the wedding party and their planner with their dream goals was extremely fun and fulfilling. It is also lovely to see the church filled with so many motifs of love and collaboration.

All throughout this time, I continued to manage and maintain our business affairs and responsibilities, I increased our community presence through the creation of our new social media pages, and I continued to oversee the maintenance of the Grace Church building, lawn, and property. I learned far more about Grace's history and mission, assisted with everything promotional, and continued to work towards the enhancement of our Sunday bulletins and email communications.

The office presently maintains a 5-day week, with the office being open Monday - Friday from 10 AM - 3 PM.

Hopes and concerns for the future

In the future, I hope that we have establish specific daily time periods or better advertised time periods upon request for the Sanctuary to be open to those who would like to stop by. Many people have either called or physically visited asking to enter the Sanctuary for prayer and/ or observing our architecture. I was able to accommodate all requests, as individuals usually stayed for no longer than ten minutes. Everyone who stopped by also asked for our information and expressed an interest in returning. Some people even left money as a token of thanks.

Report provided by: Jared Belfield, Parish Administrator

The Property, Buildings, and Grounds Committee Report:

Activities and Achievements

The Property/Buildings & Grounds Committee was established this year to allow the Junior Warden to focus as the People's Warden rather than spending most all his/her time on the buildings and grounds. After many years as the Office Manager and four years as the Junior Warden, this was an easy move for me. The committee is responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and grounds, working with the Sexton and the Parish Administrator who schedules things which need to be done on a calendar basis.

The spring season was uneventful except for the painting of a mural on our Wisconsin Ave wall as a gift from Spain to the USA to celebrate our 250 years of independence. We cleaned up the sidewalk area and laid gravel under the mural. The Mayor of DC and the Ambassador from Spain were at Grace in June for the mural's dedication.

We did have one repair of the roof in the area between the church and the parish hall and a subsequent closet cleanup in the lower level of the church.

During the summer the focus is on the Montessori school area to be ready for the DC inspection in the fall. We must be sure all chipped or peeling paint is sanded and repainted so there is no way children can be exposed to paint chips of old lead paint.

In September we had water in the GMC office area under the office/Rectory during a heavy rainstorm. We had the plumber look for leaking pipes and the HVAC people checking all their lines before the roofer found the problem which lied in the joint of the gutters and the fascia which ran down to GMC. The roofers fixed the problems quickly. We are now getting estimates on repairs to the GMC office.

This month we have been pleased to receive a new 12 foot tall northern red Oak sapling which is planted near the Rectory and the parish hall entrance. It is the gift of Gillian and Jake Morton, who also transported it to Grace and planted it. We can't thank them enough!

Hopes and concerns for the future

There are things we should be doing but can not afford at this time. The most important ones are:

1. The peak of the roof of the church needs to be examined and at the least repainted. If you stand on the other side of South St. and look up at the peak of the roof, it is clearly visible. We do not have a bid on the cost of this yet.
2. The windows of the church on the inside need to be carefully cleaned and repainted, preserving the original wood and glass. In 2018 the cost of this was $18,000.

Thank you for reading this all the way through. Please contact me with your questions and concerns at helen.j.buhr@gmail.com

Members/Participants

Other members of the Committee include Gillan Morton and Doug Neumann, who are Vestry members, and Tracey Johnstone, who consults on the gardens and lawn. Thank you to them for all their work.

Report provided by: Helen Buhr

The Stewardship Report:

Activities and Achievements

A letter announcing our kickoff campaign was sent electronically to the family and friends of Grace Church on September 17, 2026. In this letter it was stated that our goal for 2027 was $310,000. We are attempting to gather most, if not all, pledges by November 8 when we have our Annual Meeting. An ingathering of pledges placed at the altar will occur on November 1, All Saints' Day.

An electronically generated link to the pledge form was included in this letter. This has proven to be a successful way to receive pledges. For those who find it inconvenient, paper pledge cards have been available in the back of the sanctuary each Sunday.

On October 18, Rick Elgendy delivered a sermon on deepening our commitment to understanding God and how that can help us to deepen our commitment to Stewardship. Announcements and encouragements have been spoken during the services. The Weekly News report and the Sunday bulletin published weekly updates on the progress of the campaign, complete with a list of names of those who had pledged. As of this writing, October 23, we have reached 40% of this year's goal.

Hopes and concerns for the future

Our concerns for the future mission of Grace Church have very much to do with the financial support of our sacred space here in Georgetown. Not only do our pledges cover the salaries of our clerical and office staff, but also the physical essentials, such as the electricity, the gas and the water bills. All of this and more, allow us to continue many of the services provided to our parish family and community. The presence of this space where worship, prayer, and connection with others is essential.

Members/Participants

Sarah Haft, Stewardship Chairperson; Jared Belfield, Parish Administrator; and Helen Buhr

Report provided by: Sarah Haft, current Chairperson of Stewardship Committee

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The Sunday Service Volunteers Report:

Activities and Achievements

The 10:30 Service comes together each week with the support of volunteers who are willing to take on one of its many roles. We are grateful to each of them for their willingness to support the church in these many ways.

If you would like to take on a role please contact Helen Buhr at helen.j.buhr@gmail.com. I'll send you an email at the start of each month asking if you can volunteer for the Sunday that works best for you. If you can help on Sunday please contact me – we are happy to show you what needs to be done.

Members/Participants

Here are the many roles that make the service and hospitality complete and the people we need to thank for doing them:

1. Broadcast Technicians
    a. This is the newest and one of the most important roles for each Sunday service. There are about 20 views each week – many not at 10:30 on Sunday – one of the gifts of Livestream- people can worship when they are able. We are fortunate to have 6 volunteers but could certainly use more. Please consider being trained to perform this important role.
    b. Current volunteers: Lucy Alexander, David Bujard, Billy Carter, Mystelle Ruble, Dani Del Rosal, and Elena Valdez Torres. These are the people who make the Livestream of the 10:30 service possible.
2. Communion Ministers
    a. Communion Ministers before pandemic changes participated in the consecration and administration of the wine at communion and the setup and takedown of the altar afterward. At the moment Communion Ministers set up the elements for the communion on the side table and assist the Priest in the preparation of the altar. They also clear the altar at the end of the service.
    b. Current volunteers: Helen Buhr, Sally Stanfield, and Dave Wigglesworth. We could use your help here. These people prepare the altar for Communion for the 10:30 service, offer the wine at Communion and take down the silver and supplies after the service.
3. Coffee Hour Hosts
    a. As in many churches Coffee Hour is an extension of worship, deepening the ties between members and offering an opportunity for welcoming newcomers. An individual or a family brings finger food for about 20 people and helps to serve it at Coffee Hour The Sexton will set up the table and make the coffee, while hosts set out and clean up the food offerings.
    b. Current volunteers: Lucy Alexander & Braden Murphy; Helen Buhr; Reg & Doreen Burner; Stacy & Billy Carter; Mary Ann Ruehling; Sally Stanfield; Alecia, Elena &

Wally Valdez; Dave Wigglesworth & Gulmira Shakiralieva. These people are to be thanked for bringing snacks for a chance to gather after the 10:30 service.

4. Greeters
    a. Greeting everyone who comes to the 10:30 service and welcoming visitors and inviting them to Coffee Hour are the most visible tasks. Contacting visitors who leave phone numbers or email addresses is the next important step but harder as people are reluctant to leave contact information.
    b. Current Volunteers: Lucy Alexander, Helen Buhr, and David Bujard.
5. Readers
    a. These ministers read assigned Bible passages other than the Gospel (most Sundays) and lead the Prayers of the People. This role I have learned is reserved for lay people by the customs of the church. Being a Reader requires no special training, but the primary goal is to read the text without emphasis – let the text speak for itself. Your help if you are interested would be welcomed.
    b. Current volunteers: Lucy Alexander, Catherine & Terence Aselford, Darcy Bacon, Helen Buhr, Joana Bujard, Frank Burgess & Diana Martin, Reg Burner, Stacy & Billy Carter, Daniel Capizzi, Mary Daly, Rick Elgendy, Sarah Haft, James Hamilton, Beth Lee, Margaret Lenzner, Gillian & Jake Morton, Doug Neumann, Whitney Redding, Dani del Rosal, Scott Shaughnessy, Sally Stanfield, Lee Tyner, Alecia & Wally Valdez, and Marian Wentworth.
6. Server/Acolyte
    a. Servers lead the processions which begin and end the 10:30 Sunday service, and aid in the preparation of the altar for Holy Communion. Servers are adults or young people 12 or older. Becoming a Server requires a brief but important training session.
    b. Current volunteers: Helen Buhr, Henry Carter, Elena Valdez Torres, and Dave Wigglesworth. We have not done this in the past year as there is often conflict with Broadcast Technician. New applicants are most welcome.

Report provided by: Helen Buhr

The Tending Our Soil Report:

Activities and Achievements

The Tending Our Soil team was convened in June of 2023. The specific objectives of the TOS program are: to revitalize congregations to grow the Jesus Movement of "people who center their lives on Jesus and follow him into loving, liberating, and life- giving relationship with God, each other, and creation"; to cultivate a culture of adaptive leadership and learning among congregations so that congregations will remain vital bearers of God's love in the communities; and to build processes and resources to continue to adapt to changing contexts.

We were a diverse lot – some long-time Grace members, some newcomers (including Reverend David W. himself), all involved in several different aspects of church life, all committed Christians although from different denominational and life experiences, and all with different points of view, different strengths, and different growth areas. As with any newly formed team, we had our periods of forming, storming, norming, and performing figuring out how we could each best contribute our unique gifts and support each other to make a flourishing whole. Over the three years we've done that, although not without periods of frustration and adjustment along the way. The key was always listening with an intent to understand, making sure we were pulling in each person's perspective and truly "weaving" them together.

Finding: The best ideas and solutions come from a group of committed individuals with a shared purpose who spend regular time in community together.

Our first task was understanding who we are as a church, a congregation, and a parish. If you were to ask each member of our congregation and our community, you would likely get slightly differing answers – which we did. A very important piece of our church identity – particularly for Grace, but we learned too for all our cohort churches – is our founding and history. It's certainly colorful and dramatic! Another is the values and priorities that we hold today as evidenced by our major focus areas: mission through Grace's Table; welcoming, low-church worship; shared music via the organ and Bach Festival; strong partnership with the Montessori school and our neighbor organizations; and providing a space and home to our local community. There is a very strong vein from our founding to Grace Church today of making space for people from all walks of life tapping into their distinct gifts, reflecting the diverse and evolving neighborhood around Grace. This led to the creation of our mission statement– perhaps a first for Grace Church – that centers us on the distinct role we want to play in God's world:

Grace Church manifests God's love by offering a sacred space in Georgetown
where diverse communities weave together their gifts and blessings.
We welcome each person as a beloved neighbor.

Finding: The mission statement is vastly important for all of us in capturing and sharing with others the unique value that Grace Church seeks to bring in the Kingdom of God. It's our yardstick and litmus test for everything we say and do – are we being true to our mission?

Now that we knew who we were, who we wanted to be, and how we wanted to show up, our next task was to understand the neighborhood we find ourselves in. Vastly different from the world of dock-workers, servants, and laborers whom Grace was first founded to serve, today we are surrounded by single professionals, empty nesters, expensive hotels, and college students sharing the neighborhood with our significant population of the unhoused. Vastly different too from the more family-oriented streets of upper Georgetown (think apartments and condos vs. large row houses), already served by several well-established Episcopal churches that were founded specifically for those families, distinct from our own.

Episcopal Church research shows that most church participants attend a church within a 10-minute drive or 20-minute walk from their home. This was a surprise to us, and we discussed it at length as a team. While Grace currently has a large number of "commuters", the most likely audience for us is the professionals, empty-nesters, students and unhoused who live nearby. This also speaks to a geographic challenge we have, located in a relatively inaccessible part of Washington, constraining how and when our diminishing group of core attendees and volunteers can be physically present at the church.

We discussed how we can best minister to this group around us, particularly the epidemic of loneliness that infects younger generations brought up on electronic devices and scarred by COVID lockdowns, and the increasing aging population, who frequently struggle to adjust to retired life without natural means of interacting with others. Particularly in Washington, these are often transplants, far from family, familiar surroundings, and their natural social networks.

Finding: Our strongest opportunity for ministry and to re-vitalize the church is outreach to the young professionals, empty-nesters, and students in Georgetown east of 24th Street NW, north to M Street, south to Rosslyn, and west to Foxhall Rd.

So now we have the lens through which to evaluate where we spend our time, precious resources, energy and attention as a church. Are we fulfilling our mission, our unique reason to exist as a church? Do the ministries we provide serve those most likely to engage with Grace and seek the social nurture and spiritual sustenance we offer? Are there "seeds" that we should explore further, to plant experimentally and see how they grow? Some examples:

- Grace's Table continues to increase those around us whom it feeds physically–now regularly 70+ on any Saturday. An increasing number attend Bible study on Saturday and worship services on Sunday.
- Grace's Table has also become a pillar of our outreach to and engagement with others organizations around us, offering all of us a meaningful way to serve our fellow travelers in our shared life journey in Washington, DC.
    - Georgetown Ministry Center
    - St. John's, Lafayette Square
    - St. Monica & St. James', Capitol Hill
    - Georgetown Lutheran
    - Holy Trinity, Georgetown
    - Georgetown University
- We continue to be a magnet for the local community through music, particularly the Bach Festival and community-wide events we host like World Music Day. We are now also listed in a city-wide database of music event venues.
- Open Mic Night – the brainchild of a vestry member – brings more people from all walks of life to be in community through shared love of poetry, music, and literature. There are usually 10 to 20 people in attendance although there have been evenings with more, including one memorable evening with 75 people present.

- Through the initiation of flyer distribution around the local neighborhood particularly around Advent and Easter, we learned that Grace is known, recognized and much valued by our neighbors especially for our Grace's Table ministry.
- This is further evidenced by the Spanish Embassy's invitation to paint a mural in commemoration of the US's 250th anniversary on our retaining wall.
- As part of Tending Our Soil, we implemented name tags at coffee hour so we can recognize and engage with guests by name, and vice versa.
- We now print our mission statement in the Sunday bulletin and on signage, so everyone knows who Grace Church aspires to be.
- Vestry has begun to focus on more structured church leadership.

Finding: We have a very vibrant church doing many of the "right" things to fulfill our mission and minister to those to whom we can bring the most social and spiritual comfort. We need to continue to nurture these efforts, grow them, and create more like them (see the list of ideas).

So how do we connect those we aim to serve with the abundance Grace has to offer? As we all know, the world has shifted to more electronic communications. The flyer distribution has been effective in making sure Grace is visible in the community and inviting people in, but it's highly inefficient.

Finding: We need a greater and more intentional online presence and outreach, eg, a focused outreach plan with leadership and engagement, a continually updated Grace website, increased focus and support for the livestream every Sunday, Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor.

Conclusion

Those are the highlights and learnings from three years of research, study, information-gathering, asking and listening, benchmarking, learning, coaching, reflection, discussion, some arguing, experimentation and assessment. As you know, in addition to planting a few seeds along the way as part of our learning journey, we've also identified many more seeds we believe would flourish in the rich soil of and around Grace Church, in pursuit of our mission. So, having added our chapter to the long and expansive story of Grace Church, we now turn the pen over to you, the Vestry, to craft the next chapter. There is vastly more we can share about our experiences, learnings and insights, and we welcome the opportunity to do that with you. But at its heart, it is for you as the leaders of Grace Church -- what do you think is the right direction for Grace Church to help us fulfill our mission and make our most valuable contributions to the spiritual and physical world around us? What is the chapter of the Grace story you will leave behind?

Members/Participants

Lucy Alexander, David Bujard, Beth Lee, Sally Stanfield, Rev. David Wacaster

Report provided by: Lucy Alexander