



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELCOMES YOU



ST GEORGE, UTAH

GRACE NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2026

Dear Grace Parish Family,

One day years ago I was on my way in a limousine provided by The Egan Ryan Funeral Home in Columbus, Ohio to the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows in St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery to perform the Funeral Rites including Holy Mass for Ms. Fern Poussin. I remember the day distinctly. It was one of the hottest days in the recorded history of the city of Columbus. It was right around 105 degrees. Very hot but not surpassing a 1934 record of 113 degrees. I was accompanied by two of my very best altar servers from St. Agatha Church, Mr. Andy Diblasi and his younger brother Mr. Nick Diblasi. In addition to the semi-formal attire required in my program (dress shirt, dress pants and dress shoes) they had with them their black cassocks and white surplice. I had all of my priestly vestments with me as well.

The Sorrowful Mother Chapel in the cemetery was built of red brick and..... un air conditioned. It was safe to presume whatever the temperature outside in summer inside was +20 degrees warmer.

The older Diblasi, Andy said "Father, are we really going to be able to do this?"

I responded: "Sure, let's try it to honor Ms. Poisson and her wishes to have her funeral mass here". I said: "Look at it this way...if you live your life right, today may be the hottest day of your entire existence"

Laughter. We got through it fine. Fortunately while no air conditioning, electricity had been discovered by this point in history and there were fans. How can I help but reflect on that with the smile on my face as we go through these hot summer days in St. George? I actually moved here for this and the glorious sunshine we enjoy almost the entire year. I seem to thrive on it. I do pray for those suffering because of the heat of summer or the cold temperatures of winter.

It does seem to be very interesting and concerning the extreme variances of climate happening around the world. I am always grateful to God for my blessings and send prayers to heaven and my financial help to places around the world suffering so terribly from all sorts, climate, war, natural disasters and other sorrows. I invite all of us when at church and at home to be mindful of the suffering of others. Prayers help. Action helps.

In regards to our parish: matters are to my knowledge going so well for us. Our parish continues to increase in holy members. Good people are joining those already in long service to Grace to strengthen our mission. Grace continues to grow in every positive way.

There are some new devotional pieces in church that are important to know.

1- Giant Jesus. This 80" tall icon is a copy of the very famous original of "Christos Pantocrator" in Greek meaning "Christ Ruler Of All". The original is in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. Jesus is depicted holding the Book of The Gospels in his left arm. His right arm and hand are raised in blessing. His right hand is composed according to the rubric of blessing.

What is the rubric of blessing? First a rubric is typically a liturgical directive guiding the priest in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in pretty much every manner. While everything in the Rites of our church have meaning, often the meaning is lost because people have never been given the knowledge of the sometimes almost 2,000 years of tradition behind these things. Without over complicating this article pretty much every gesture and movement I make in celebrating the Holy Eucharist is rubrical and rooted in great and ancient traditions of the church.

The rubric of blessing refers to the manner that this image of Christ configures his right hand and also the way the Alter Christus (the priest) configures their hand when giving blessings most especially the final blessing in the Eucharist. It is not accidental but a deliberate configuring of the right hand. The index finger with the middle finger held tightly together with both pointed straight upward to heaven. This is to symbolize the two natures of Jesus Christ: Human and Divine. The remaining three fingers are also joined together with the thumb pressing the remaining two fingers. Three joined together symbolizing The Holy Trinity. From this deliberate rubrical configuration the priest blesses with the words "May Almighty God Bless You: Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

Hmm. How old are some of the rubrics guiding the priest in celebrating the Holy Eucharist? This image dates to the sixth century, circa 550 AD. Or 1,450 - 1,500 years ago.

2- Next, The Rublev Holy Trinity in front of our Altar. This was one of three images gifted to Grace, St. Jude Thaddeus Parish, Cedar City and Spirit of the desert Parish, Ivins by me on the occasion of my installation as Pastor of all three parishes. With the return of most of the members of Spirit of the desert parish to Grace, I thought it would be appropriate to use their icon with us. I have since learned that having their icon with us has been a most incredible consolation to them in their sorrow of having to close their beloved parish. Since this sacred image depicts the Holy Trinity its placement central and with The Altar is most appropriate.

This image was painted by Andrei Rublev perhaps the most famous iconographer in the Middle Ages (1400-1500). It is considered the most famous Russian Icon. It depicts the three Angels who visited Abraham and Sarah at their home at The Oak Of Mamre (Genesis 18: 1-8). At the time Rublev lived, the Holy Trinity was the embodiment of spiritual unity, peace, harmony, mutual love and humility. Notice the central angel's hand...the rubric of blessing again depicted in sacred art.

3- Then next, The Theotokos of Vladimir. Theotokos is the title given to Mary the mother of Jesus at The Council Of Ephesus in 431 AD. It is the Greek word meaning "God Bearer". This icon has yet to arrive and will likely be placed where the large Grace, Rublev Holy Trinity now reposes. The artist who painted this image is unknown at present time. It is a 12th century Byzantine Icon. It is highly appropriate that an image of his Mother is present in the House Of Her Son (aka...The Church).

Is it not the case that our homes enjoy remembrances and pictures of our parents and families? So to the Holy Church offers to the faithful images of the Family Of God as well as Biblically revealed images of Jesus and other great holy people often known as the Saints. It joins with an orchestra of all things holy to raise our minds and hearts to God.

Why icons here?

The Episcopal Church is well known as "The Middle Way". Middle Way between what? The Middle Way between The Roman Catholic Church and The Orthodox Church. The Middle Way between Protestant Churches and The Roman Catholic Church. The great Pontifex of The Reformation. Pontifex means "The Bridge" .

Icons are as fitting as statues. But in particular they highlight a unique relationship between us and the Orthodox Church in this Country.

You may know or not know, often when a new Orthodox Church was being planned in a community they would seek their first home in an Episcopal Church. Not a Roman Catholic Church. Several reasons for that but perhaps most poignantly both could relate to at some point be it 1054 or the 1500's being shown the door by the Mother Church. A very long story but in short, many in Christianity find the consolation of a Church that is absolutely connected to The Mother Church but also possessing a certain independence that allows for an image unique to Anglicanism.

The Three Legged Stool. The Church is certainly founded in Holy Scripture by Christ, also possessing the connection to the early Church through Tradition (remember the rubric of blessing I mentioned) and then also the third leg of the stool. Reason. While some have understood and esteemed the Episcopal Church as Protestant certain important events somewhat recent led to a complete reconsideration and redirection of that notion.

Most notable would be Our Church's influence on the Second Vatican Council in her efforts to reform the Sacred Liturgy. Some may have heard of what's called The Old Latin Mass or The Tridentine Mass. Thanks to our help in various consultations which also included The Lutherans, The Roman Catholic Eucharist is now almost identical to ours. Comically they dropped kneeling for Holy Communion whereas that was something we kept. Now there is movement in the RC church to return to kneeling. Good.

They too influenced us. Two things in major:

At The 1979 General Convention the Episcopal Church directed The Holy Eucharist is to be the principle Sunday Celebration. Not Morning Prayer.

Then the decision to make another big change. Reckoning the Catholicity of The Episcopal Church and its greater proximity instead of distance the decision was to "drop" the word "Protestant" from the church's title.

So is there any difference left?

Hmm... according to our new parishioner's from our beloved neighbor St. George Catholic Church, yes.

They can finally hear the priest, it's easier to find parking and it's less crowded.

We need to seriously work on the less crowded. We can handle a little more crowded.

That's what the faithful people in the pew understand and experience. Yea, scholars are still aware of some other issues.

So I hope this is helpful on some wonderful things.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Rob+

More news from The Rector:

I want to share with you all that Mary Lloyd Barth has prayerfully made the decision to pass on her duties as Junior Warden to Mr. Mike Labrecque.

First, I would like to thank Mary Lloyd profoundly for her years in service to Grace Parish in this important role. Mary Lloyd has worked tirelessly in this capacity seeing many great things achieved here. The list is endless. What can one say in the face of such greatness? Thank you seems hardly to suffice. But in fact it is our gratitude that shows forth even in some small way that this person is deeply appreciated and beloved.

Mary Lloyd, please accept the most heartfelt gratitude for your long and dedicated service here.

I would like to dedicate a special Coffee Hour to celebrate Mary Lloyd's service to us. I will leave that to The Parish Committee to arrange. In the meantime, we now have the joy of welcoming Mike to this new role. To note the responsibilities of this role are being adjusted with some being moved to the Parish Administrator. Mike will be introduced to you soon as many of you may not know or recognize him.

Our role to assist Mike is to be the eagle eye on matters pertaining to our parish building and ground. Should you see something broken or out of sorts share that with:

1-Mike

2-Larry

3- Me.

That should lead us to a happy future in maintaining this most beautiful House Of God.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Willmann+
Rector

Dear Friends,

Also of note especially to our Saturday 4pm Eucharist: Our organist Troy is taking a new position at another church. Troy has been a very generous and kind addition to our Grace Family. He and his wife Cindy will be missed. I wish to thank Troy and Cindy for their kindness to us.

My plan as of now is to leave the Saturday 4pm Eucharist as a quiet "said" Eucharist. I was paying Troy out of my own funds since he arrived. I want us to continue to right size our budget in conformity with our expenses. Hopefully it will be delightful to have music again at this Eucharist when the parish can pay for this.

As we look to the Fall Stewardship Program and the 2027 budget it is important to examine carefully what our hopes are for the near future. To grow we need important things a parish of our hopes provides.

For instance: A continued vibrant and beautiful music program at the 10am Eucharist. Very important is the Pastoral Leadership you have been accustomed. I have been directed to cut my presence at a Sunday Eucharist and replace it with a Lay led Morning Prayer. After consulting with other parish leaders we agree that would be damaging to the parish and impair our growth efforts. My presence has a 100% impact. Far better for me to cut back my office presence. My being physically present in the office has about 0 impact on our parish. True, people want to drop by and see the Rector. Let's for now leave that dream to the presence of a full time Rector.

For now I want right sizing my time with you that abides the very constraining letter of agreement of 2023 that has me here only two Sunday's per month plus Wednesday with some office hours to be moderately abided in ways my presence is actually maximized.

Main Point: I need to be full time by the end of 2028 and that will take increased generosity and parish growth.

God Bless You All!

Fr. Rob+

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SENIOR WARDEN

Katy Peterson

Mark and I have been spending the summer traveling throughout the Pacific Northwest and into the Northwest. We even were able to meet up with Berry and Deb Ormsbee at their beautiful home in Sand Point ID. Observing the beautiful land of our nation and experiencing Mother Earth at its most sacred, makes me even more committed to the call of God to protect and care for what has been given so generously to each one of us. St Francis of Assisi along with many saints before and after him teaches us the concept that nature is Gods first bible, teaching us that all God has created is good. St Therese de Lisieux or more commonly known as St Therese of the Little Flower, viewed nature as a living “book” through which God reveals the mystery of souls, equality, and Devine love.

This September, I will be attending the Province VIII Creation Care Network Conference 2026 in Salt Lake City. My prayer is that a few others in our parish might be interested in attending and returning to Grace to help start a Creation Care Ministry. I plan to drive and can fit three more in my car, so transportation will not be a problem. Scholarships are also available for anyone who needs one. LET'S DO THIS!!! If you have questions, you can contact me at katypeterson3@gmail.com

Province VIII Creation Care Network Conference 2026

Join us as we gather to renew, repair, and restore our relationship to God's creation.

September 25–27, 2026

Episcopal Retreat & Conference Center

75 S 200 E, Salt Lake City, Utah

<https://www.provinceviii.org/creationcare/creation-care-network-conference>

Why Attend?

This is not just a conference. It is a call to meaningful, grounded action.

You will leave equipped to:

- Take practical climate action in your congregation.
- Lead ministries rooted in creation care and spiritual formation
- Contribute to The Episcopal Church's goal of carbon neutrality by 2030
- Build relationships with others doing this work across the church.

Registration

Includes Meals

September 25–27: **Cost** \$250

Saturday, September 26 only: **Cost** \$200

Scholarship requests: email province8ccn@gmail.com with the subject "SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION"

COMMON CENTS

Pete Hogan

As I write this article, we are past the halfway point for the year. At this point in the year, we show positive cash flow of \$9,882, which is good, because we will need to hopefully finish out the year on a positive note. As of June, we have received 39% of money pledged, which is a little less than I was hoping for as of this date. But my cup is always half full. If you think you will have trouble making your pledge amount, please let my office know so I can adjust my cash flow projection for the **remainder** of the year. As far as our expenses are concerned, we had budget \$92,690 for expenses through June 30; actual expenses were \$92,506 so we are under the estimate by \$184 or 2 tenth of 1%.

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Parish Committee Report

Jean Goode

The Parish Committee is announcing a potluck dinner on August 30 after the worship service. Sign up sheets are on the bulletin board. Please list your name and what you will bring to the potluck. We are hoping to have as many people a possible to join us for dinner.

We have reserved the fifth Sunday for potluck dinners when they appear on the calendar. The next one will be November 29. These dinners provide an opportunity to socialize with members of the

congregation and get to met new people.

While signing up for the potluck, please consider signing up for a Sunday to bring refreshments for

coffee hour. This has become a popular gathering after Sunday worship. If we share the provision of refreshments it eases the responsibility of a few people by sharing it with many.

Jean Goode

Book Club

Our book club will be meeting again on October 14, at 10:30 am at the church.. We will be discussing “Theo of Golden” by Allen Levi. Please consider reading the book and join us for the discussion. We will also be taking recommendations for other books you think would have general appeal to others in the book club.

To sign up for book club please contact Jean Goode or Katy Petersen.

Music Program

There is interest in forming a Church Choir to sing at the Eucharist on Sundays. As the church grows this is an objective of Father Rob and Dr. Paul Wiems. Look for recruitment of members in the future, and see Dr. Wiens if you might be interested. There are also 3 openings in the Bell Choir at present, please talk with Dr. Wiens if interested in joining a fun and satisfying group.

God's Good Earth

Deb Ormsbee

Last month I shared thoughts about light and being grateful for the longer days of sunlight during the summer season. This month I've especially noticed birds and feel grateful for hearing and seeing their beautiful songs and colors. In talking with others, it seems that hearing and seeing birds helps our hearts feel lighter and our days brighter. With those thoughts, I share this image of a plaque that was on my childhood family kitchen wall that now hangs on my kitchen wall. I feel it continues to speak well of sunlight and birds brightening our days – “The Kiss of the Sun for Pardon, The Song of the Birds for Mirth”



We all seem to enjoy watching the various hummingbirds fly and dive so fast and then hover for food at the flowers or the feeder. We also enjoy listening to the birds' calls and songs and notice how interesting and different. One morning they had a varied and full-on chorus going. Another morning, they were very quiet. I wondered why some times they seem quieter than others and learned that in summer, birds may shift from the louder, open displays of spring to more discreet behaviors with seasonal changes in their behavior and environment such as molting and trees fully leafing out.

As we continue to notice and learn about gifts from nature, we are thankful indeed for the birds of God's Good Earth. It's difficult to think of living in a world that doesn't have the sights and sounds of birds. I'm reminded of a prayer we said as children: "Thank you for the World so sweet. Thank you for the Food we eat. Thank you for the Birds that Sing. Thank you, God, for Everything."



During a video presentation we watched recently with Diana Butler Bass about Grace, Gratitude and Gifts, it ended showing this image with scripture from 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. It felt so fitting that birds were in this image, reminding us to give thanks for all the gifts of God's Good Earth.

Parish Administrator's Notes

Larry Hansen

Greetings to all at Grace Parish. ☺

I am very much enjoying being your Parish Administrator. ☺

As we go forward in our faith at Grace, If I can be of **Help, Service or Direction**. Please feel free to E-mail me at office@gracestgeorge.org or call me **(435)-628-1181** and leave a message if I'm not available.

Below are a couple of announcements:

As a Parish Administrator I will be taking on all administrative tasks of a Sexton/JW, as well as any building administration as is part of the job being a Parish Administrator (not an executive assistant).

I also will be donating my time as a ¼ time Maintenance Sexton now and for the coming months to collect info and give the vestry and congregation an idea of what even just a ¼ maintenance sexton could provide. As we go forward, If there are any repairs or items that need attention, please let me or our Junior Warden, Mike Labrecque know, so we can see that it is attended to. Also, any announcements for the weekly program need to be in by Wednesday evening. Call, leave a message, or send and email to the office, Thankyou ☺

Readings Ahead

For those of you who wish to read the Lessons ahead of time there is a really easy website called:
<https://www.lectionarypage.net> . Click on the date you wish to use, then choose the readings under **Track 2.**
Voila, the Proper for the day.
