



THE MESSENGER

GRACE-ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Volume 56, No. 11

August 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Altar Flowers	6
Athletic News.....	4
Calendar	7
Cub Scout Sign-up Night.....	2
Fifth Sunday BLTs	3
First Friday Fellowship	3
Fitness Classes	2
Food Pantry Miracle	3
GSL School News.....	5
Heidi and Monica Update	3
Lay Schedule.....	6
Member News.....	6
Memorials and Honoraria	6
Men's DuBose Conference	2
Midtown Security Community	4
Musical Chair Sundays	2
Summer Speaker Series	3
Staff and Vestry	2, 5
Support Groups	2

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist, Homily
 8:45 AM Breakfast
 9:20 AM Classes (*August 2*)
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist, Homily
 5:30 PM Holy Eucharist, Homily
Nursery available for all services except the 5:30 PM service.

THE DAILY OFFICE

7 AM *Friday* Morning Prayer/Eucharist
 5:30 PM *Thursday* Evening Prayer
 5:50-6:30 PM *Thursday* Centering Prayer

OFFICE HOURS

8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday - Friday

Messenger Deadline/Online

The deadline for the September issue of *The Messenger* is 9 AM, August 15! Contact Lucy Owens at 272-7425 or lucy@gslparish.org with any questions. Thank you in advance for getting your articles in on time! Also, if you would like to go green and receive your copy of *The Messenger* online, contact Lucy.

Please join us Sunday, August 23, for the Episcopal Schools Sunday Service at 10:30 followed by a Dessert Reception in Trezevant Hall honoring the GSL School Teachers, Staff and Board Members

RECTOR SEARCH REPORT

In July, the Rector Search Committee completed the research phase of the search process with special – and very informative – Rector Search Roundtable sessions conducted with church youth and with the GSL School Board. The committee is now diving into the final preparations for opening the call to candidates, which includes the submission of our data profile to the national Clergy Deployment Office and the preparation of our comprehensive Parish Profile brochure for potential candidates. If all goes well, it will be ready by the end of August, at which time we will begin to solicit nominations and applications aggressively!

As an additional resource for candidates, the committee is also working on a parish history video that will accompany the profile. Dan Conaway – who has previously blessed our parish with the stained-glass window brochure, contributions to “The First Fifty Years” history book, and numerous community tour-guide services – has penned a script and has volunteered to help the committee get it produced. This will be a tremendous asset, and the committee extends its deep thanks to Dan.

Keep your eyes on this space and on the Rector Search bulletin board for more progress updates. And keep your ears open for exceptional candidates to add to the committee’s list when the call for nominations is announced in the next few weeks. And, as always, keep the Grace-St. Luke’s Rector Search Committee in your prayers, that the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts and guide our work.

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2009 VESTRY

Anne Ayres, Patrick Burnett, Karen Clark,
Thad Cockrill, Ann Dillard, Eric Epperson,
Gayle Evans, Lesley Hartney, Mike Jones,
Ruthie Lentz, Lucy McLemore, Hal Morse,
Andy Nix, Charles Pazar, Betty Peyton,
Barney Rolfes, Paula Sappington, Jim Taylor,
Jennie VanDeveer, Peggy Williamson, and
Tom Wyatt

**TO KNOW CHRIST AND
TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN**

We seek to serve God and our neighbor by welcoming into Grace-St. Luke's parish all people who seek to love God and participate in an open and supportive community based upon the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. Honoring the vows of our Baptismal Covenant, we respect the dignity of every human person by welcoming all regardless of physical appearance or ability, age, mental capacity, ethnic or religious background, sexual orientation, a sense of past or present personal sinfulness or financial circumstances. We seek to become more fully loving, and we welcome all who wish to join us in this journey.

**Musical Chair Sundays in August**

The GSL Choir plans to mix things up a bit for three Sundays in August at the 10:30 service. We'll have the ladies leading on 2 August, the men leading on 9 August, and for 16 August, the choir will be composed of anyone who would never be caught in a choir vestment. This non-chorister choir was inspired by Leslie Hartney and Anne Waring, who will be head divas that day. Anyone interested, just come to the chancel at 9:30 that morning. Any questions, please call Wesley at the church, 272-7425.



I'm Becca Howell, Cubmaster for Cub Scout Pack 34 at Grace-St. Luke's, and I would like to personally invite you to join our Pack and participate in a fun-filled year in Cub Scouting. I'm hosting our **Cub Scout Back-to-School Sign-up Night on Thursday, August 20, at 6:00 PM in Trezevant Hall**. Cub Scouting is a family program designed for boys in 1st-5th grades. Parents and leaders work together in a fun and age appropriate manner to help the boys achieve the 10 purposes of Cub Scouting: character development, spiritual growth, good citizenship, sportsmanship and fitness, family understanding, respectful relationships, personal achievement, friendly service, fun and adventure and preparation for Boy Scouts. We have a great group of boys (and Scout families) and always have a lot of fun!! If you are interested in being a den leader or helping out in any way, please let me know! Scouting is a lot of fun and very rewarding not only for the boys but adults as well. **If you cannot make the sign-up night but are interested in joining our Pack, just let me know. You can email me at howellbl@att.net.**

**Men's DuBose Conference**

Make plans now for the 63rd Annual Conference of the Episcopal Churchmen of Tennessee, August 14 - 16, at the DuBose Conference Center in Monteagle, TN. Don't miss this opportunity to attend the largest gathering of Episcopal men in the Anglican Communion! Come and bring a son, a friend, or a new GSL communicant! Applications available in the church office or go to www.episcopalchurchmen.net/ and register online! For more information contact Don McLemore, GSL keyman, at 272-3230 or d.mcl@comcast.net.

Support Groups at GSL

Weight Watchers: Trezevant Hall, Monday;
Weigh-in at noon; Meeting from 12:20-12:40.
AA meetings: Tuesdays, 6:30 PM, 8 PM, both in the Lounge.
Narcotics Anonymous: Saturdays, 10 AM, Sundays, 8 PM, Trezevant Hall.
Al Anon: Thursdays, 10:30 AM, Lounge.
Suicide Anonymous: Wednesdays, 7:30 PM (*begins August 12*)
Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous: Mondays & Thursdays, 8 PM,
Saturdays, 4 PM, and a Women's meeting on Thursdays at 6:45 PM, all in the Lounge.

Fitness Classes at GSL

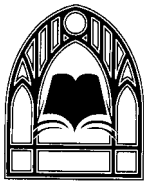
Pilates: Wednesdays at 12:05 (Scout Room), and
5:15 & 6:15 in the GSL Gym (childcare available @ 6:15)
Senior Fitness: Fridays at 9:30 AM in the choir room.



First Friday Fellowship

First Friday Fellowship is a place where newcomers and newly involved parishioners can connect for fun and fellowship. We plan to mix and mingle for lively conversation, libations, and heavy hors d'oeuvres. For those needing childcare, the church nursery will be available from 6 - 10 PM for infants to age 9 at the affordable price of \$15 total for one child, \$17 for two, or \$20 for three or more (per family).

The August FFF will be held on Friday, August 7, from 6-10pm at the home of Jon and Mary McCalla. An evite will be sent out as usual, however if you do not receive an evite and would like to be included, please email Kate Garretson Morse at kategarretson@yahoo.com to be added.



GRACE ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH SUMMER SPEAKER SERIES

The final session will take place in McClure Hall, starting at 9:20 and ending at 10:15.

Child care is available in the nursery for infants up to 3 years old. Alice Crow will be leading story-telling sessions for kids 4 through 10 in Room 212 (just across the hall from McClure). Kids 11 through 18 are cordially invited to join their parents/guardians and attend the series sessions.

Sunday, August 2

Gwen Harmon, The National Civil Rights Museum

Currently Director of Governmental and Community Affairs for the National Civil Rights Museum, Gwen Harmon has over 25 years of experience in communications and public relations. With a broadcasting anchor's experience and presence, she's worked in communications management with Federal Express, United Airlines, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the City of Memphis, the State of Mississippi, Tougaloo College, Jackson State University, from strategic and crisis communications planning to media training to spokesperson.

Heidi and Monica Update!

Go to <http://www.gslparish.org/heidiandmonica.htm>.
Also posted on Outreach Bulletin Board at church.

You're invited to the Marriage of Bacon, Lettuce & Tomato



Dearly Beloved, we will gather in Trezevant Hall once again for a Fifth Sunday lunch of BLT sandwiches. The big day is August 30th and we'll also be serving some special side dishes and a downright sinful dessert. No need to turn in a reservation, just follow the undeniably luring scent of crisp bacon immediately following the 10:30 AM service.



Food Pantry: a Miracle at Lemaster

From a small room lined with shelves and a refrigerator, Grace-St. Luke's Church, with a small army of volunteers, served 100 families in the month of June. It is amazing that this little corner of the world, open only two hours a week, managed to respond in this way to the dire needs faced by many in our community this summer.

Those hundred families were screened by MIFA and brought their vouchers to our doors for the lifeline they needed to provide food for 140 adults and 127 children. Before clients arrived on Monday or Tuesday, the GSL volunteers had been busy picking up food from The Food Bank and stocking the shelves along with purchases of other needed foods and with bread donated from Schnucks. According to specific guidelines, other volunteers had sacked foods and labeled the bag for 1 person or upward to 8 people. Another group of volunteers are there to greet our visitors warmly and fill the voucher order.

Volunteers hear stories too. Folks have lost their jobs and can't find work but are still looking; others have been sick and got behind with bills; some walk with their grocery sacks. The face of people in need is changing, and the numbers are growing. The June 2008 reports show that 50 families were served; the number doubled for June 2009.

How can you help? Contact Happy Jones at happyfred@comcast.net to work in the food pantry or Gayle Evans at gaylevans@bellsouth.net to get food from The Food Bank to the shelves; or put donated foods on the round table outside the Food Pantry. Thanks to GSL parishioners for your part in this miracle.

--- Ann Dillard



Athletic News

SOCCER ASSESSMENT DAYS for Soccer Participants Saturday, August 8, and Sunday, August 9. For details go to http://gslparish.org/sports/GSL_Soccer_Assessment1.pdf.

GSL SOCCER COACHES CLINIC

Saturday, August 1, 8 AM-12 noon
8 - 10 AM at the GSL field, 10 - noon at the church

**PLEASE LOOK AT OUR GSL ATHLETICS WEBSITE
FOR CURRENT INFORMATION!**

www.gslparish.org/sports.htm

If you have any **QUESTIONS** please contact Christi Authement at christi@gslparish.org, 825-7353 or 272-7425, ext. 22.

Midtown Security Community Meeting
Tuesday, August 25, 5:30 pm
1731 Union Ave.

Do you find yourself thinking about how to stay safe in Memphis? Do you wonder what security measures really make a difference? Come hear about a very innovative, new program initiated by nationally known criminologist, Dr. Richard Janikowski of the University of Memphis. It is called the Crime Prevention Extension Service, a curriculum of best evidence security practices for individuals and institutions that will be field-tested with neighborhood groups this fall. Dr. Janikowski has asked Midtown Security Community (www.midtownsecuritycommunity.org) to partner with him in this project. MSC meets on Tuesday, August 25, starting at 5:30 for refreshments at Schnucks Corporate Boardroom (1731 Union, first floor of The Belvedere Apts.). Business meeting is from 6:00-7:00 PM. "Be part of the solution. Help keep Memphis and Midtown a safe place to live and work." Contact: Peggy Williamson, MSC Chair, jfwn@bellsouth.net



GSL SOCCER WHAT TO EXPECT FROM SOCCER SEASON 2009 TOP 10 CHECK LIST



- 1) **TEAM ASSIGNMENTS** are made according to an individual's school grade and ability, with an effort to make the teams as even as possible.
- 2) By tradition, recreational league coaches are **VOLUNTEER PARENT COACHES**. We make every effort to equip coaches with knowledge and assistance in order to provide quality coaching.
- 3) **PRACTICES** could begin as early as Saturday, August 16, and are most often held at the GSL field. Your coach will contact you when he/she receives the team roster in mid-August. Coaches generally have one to two practices per week. Please contact Christi if you have not heard from your coach by this date.
- 4) The **SEASON BEGINS** on Saturday, September 12. All games will be on Saturday mornings and afternoons. The season will end the last week in October or 1st week in November.
- 5) **TEAM PICTURES** – TBA. Pictures will be distributed by the coaches at the end of the season.
- 6) **SOCCER UNIFORMS** are provided by GSL (jersey, shorts and socks). Note: Sometimes uniforms are not distributed until the week of the first game. This is for two reasons: 1) demand and time restrictions for city-wide uniform distributors and 2) late sign-ups. The uniforms will be distributed by the coaches.
- 7) **GSL RECYCLES UNIFORMS** each year to keep the replacement costs low. Please turn in your uniform to your coach at the end of the season!
- 8) **TROPHIES** will be provided by GSL. The coaches will distribute the trophies at the end of the season.
- 9) Many teams have an **END OF YEAR PARTY**, which is organized by the parents. This is a great opportunity for coaches to give out pictures, trophies and collect all uniforms!
- 10) **BASKETBALL REGISTRATION** begins on Thursday, September 17, and is due back by Friday, October 2nd. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis and does fill up quickly! Basketball Assessment Days- TBA

News From GSL School

by Tom Beazley



The summer is quickly flying by, and in a few short weeks we will be starting our 62nd school year. Amazing progress is being made every day on the corner of Peabody and Lemaster. The last of the concrete has been poured for the new Anchor Center and the steel girders are rising quickly. By the time you read this, the expansion of Miss Lee's should be nearly complete. In early June we officially opened a fourth section of our prekindergarten. Currently we have 520 enrolled students, which represents our highest enrollment in recent memory and includes our largest Middle School enrollment ever!

Considering the current economic environment, we feel truly blessed to be retaining and continuing to attract new families. We appreciate all the families who've chosen to invest in a private school education at GSL, and we are grateful to the parish of the church for being supportive partners and neighbors as we chart a course for the future. Thank you!

We are pleased to announce our final new teacher appointments for the upcoming year.

Natalie Gildea, who has been an assistant teacher in the SK program for the past two years, will become our lead teacher for the new prekindergarten section. Her assistant will be Meghan Money, who recently graduated from the University of Memphis with her bachelor's degree in education. Megan Ford will be the new PK assistant in Meg Comes' room; she is the parent of senior kindergartener Merrill and has her M.A.T. in early childhood education. Kate Gould, who recently completed her M.A.T. in early childhood education and did her student teaching with us last year in the Bucky Beaver room, will be the new PK assistant teacher in Jeremie Upshaw's room. Mary Scarborough, who recently completed her B.A. in elementary education at the University of Mississippi, will be the new SK assistant teacher, replacing Ms. Gildea in Amie Plumley's room.

School for grades SK-8 begins on Tuesday, August 18, with noon dismissal. This day serves as a visitation day for the Preschool. Preschool parents will receive an invitation to come to Miss Lee's at a specific time in the morning to visit the classroom and meet teachers. The first day of school for Preschool is Wednesday, August 19. We are very excited about the 2009-2010 school year at GSL, and there are lots of changes in store as we prepare to open our new building next spring. Thank you again for your patience as we all work around the construction!



Patrick Payne
Maintenance Supervisor

Hello, I am Patrick Payne, your new Maintenance Supervisor. I am elated to be a part of this wonderful staff. Although I'm new in this position, I feel like I've known this staff for years. Since 2004, I have been working at GSL part-time on a needs-only basis, so I arrive here already knowing much about the facility. I bring to you good maintenance knowledge and cost saving ideas. Having worked in the hospitality industry for over 25 years, I've been blessed with the knowledge of how to treat people, understand people, and to sympathize with people. These principles are also the foundation of our home life. We believe that what starts at home spreads abroad. My loving wife of 20 years, Kimberly, and I have three children. Our 20-year-old son, to whom I try to teach the basic fundamentals of life, is a student at Southwest Community College, majoring in Business Administration. He also plays a big portion of my decision making. Our 19-year-old University of Memphis nursing student daughter and our 14-year-old high school student daughter both try to make the decisions for me. Family plays a big portion of my life and that's very important to me. That's why it wasn't a difficult decision to come to GSL because I feel like I am part of one big happy family. Thanks for having me.



The enthusiastic girls in Brownie Troop 283 made a significant impact in their community this year. Accomplishments included creating 16 double-sided fleece blankets for the church's More than a Meal program; making sandwiches for St. Mary's Mission downtown; selling more than 700 boxes of cookies to be donated to troops overseas; and donating funds to the school's capital campaign and to the Regional Medical Center of Memphis. The girls are pictured with troop leaders Shelley Ryan, Lacy Apperson and Rachel Gray (back row).

*The Altar Gifts in August
are offered in loving memory of*

August 2 Maude Van Fossen, Thomas Van Fossen, Margaret Van Fossen, Edith Van Fossen

August 9 William K. Pearson

August 16 Marie Chism Pearson, Elizabeth Pearson Elsberry, Aylmarie Uhlhorn Govan, David Voss Johnson, Jr., Jim Williams, Earl Edward Paul

August 23 Grace Ford Waring, Roane Waring, Mollie Strange Ford, Harriet Ford Berry, Grace Waring Hughey, Mary Elizabeth Waring Stone, Elisabeth B. Fauntleroy, Lynn R. Strickland

August 30 Howard Emory Wilson, Nellie Pelter Wilson, Howard Emory Wilson, Jr., William Fitzhugh Murrah, Corinne Falls Murrah, Stewart Bethune Warren, John Fitzmaurice, John J. Wood, Linelle W. Wood, Mary Fitzmaurice, William Fitzhugh Murrah, Jr., Paul P. Wilson

Member News

Baptisms on June 28, 2009

Cassian Browning Gentry Branyan, son of Richard Branyan and Elizabeth McMullen

John Wilson Davis, son of Allen Wilson Davis and Mary Virginia Davis

Anne Reeves Doughty, daughter of Richard Andrew Doughty and Elizabeth Cordell Doughty

Carys Isabella Sears, daughter of David Raymond Sears and Page Moore McMullen

Joan Michaela Terhune, daughter of Bradley N. Terhune and Tracy L. Adkisson

Marriage

Courtney Beth McGinnis and Gaines Alley Conaway, July 18, 2009

Burials

Caroline Hope Turns died June 22; buried June 29, 2009, daughter of Pat and Marjanca Turns

David Voss Johnson, Jr. died July 12; buried July 15, 2009

Transfer In

Anna Catesby McGehee Yant from Trinity Episcopal Church, Natchez, Mississippi

Memorials and Honoraria

Gifts have been given to the glory of God and in loving honor of

Mallory Harper Morris and Marley Allison Morris for their Baptism from Carol Ann Mallory

The Rev. Drew Woodruff from Laura and Jason Key
Lilly Coggin from James and Kim Coggin

Gifts have been given to the glory of God and in loving memory of

Anne Plyler from Dr. and Mrs. Robert W. Ebbers
George Clarke, Sr. from Joan and Ernest G. Kelly, Jr.
John Moloney from Nancy and Emmel B. Golden,
Corinne Wilson

Rebecca Trimble from Jeannine Edwards, Corinne Wilson, Lucy Owens

August Lay Service Schedule

August 2

Altar Guild: M V Rogers, S Barnett, D Dale, L Trotter, C Wallace

Breakfast Cooks: J McCalla, L Allen, P Burnett, D Brown, A Nix, L Wardlaw, S Moore, J Hartney, C Lunsford

Lay Service Participants

8:00 Rolfes, Adams, Brewer, Hayes

10:30 *Acolytes:* H Morehead, B Landman, K Ayres; *Ushers:* TBA

August 9

Altar Guild: L Tual, C Jefcoat, L McLemore, L Niell, V Rowland

Breakfast Cooks: J Clay, A Nave, E Taylor, R Norcross, W Wimbish, K Self, R Clark

Lay Service Participants 8:00 McGehee, Adams, Whitlock
10:30 *Acolytes:* M Cline, K Rasberry, C Rasberry; *Ushers:* TBA

August 16

Altar Guild: L Tual, C Jefcoat, L McLemore, L Niell, V Rowland

Breakfast Cooks: D Conaway, P Taylor, G Conaway, S Liles, J Fields, M Rowland

Lay Service Participants 8:00 Edwards, Busby

10:30 *Acolytes:* H Morehead, C Rhea, C Sanders; *Ushers:* TBA

August 23

Altar Guild: A Crow, P Barnes, N Golden, N Golden, S Hickey, B Peyton, M Robinson, T Sheppard, E Smith

Breakfast Cooks: P Wilson, C Kerwin, J Moore, B Foster, L Strickland, C Pazar, S King

Lay Service Participants 8:00 Rolfes, Smith

10:30 *Acolytes:* M Hayes, D McClew, M Allen; *Ushers:* TBA

August 30

Altar Guild: A Crow, P Barnes, N Golden, N Golden, S Hickey, B Peyton, M Robinson, T Sheppard, E Smith

Breakfast Cooks: M Herr, C Mercer, M Crow, D McLemore, K Patton, B Williams

Lay Service Participants 8:00 McGehee, Whitlock

10:30 *Acolytes:* L Robbins, A Hartney, V Strother; *Ushers:* TBA

August 2009

For the most up-to-date calendar,
go to gslparish.org/calendar

September 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12 STEP MEETINGS Narcotics Anonymous: Sun 8pm, Sat 10am Al Anon: Thurs 10:30am Alcoholics Anonymous: Tues 6:30 & 8pm Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous: Mon & Thurs at 8pm, Sat 4pm, Women's meeting 7:15 Thurs Suicide Anonymous: Wed 7:30pm						
8:00am & 10:30am & 5:30 Eucharists 8:45am Breakfast 9:20am Speaker Series 10:30am Holy Baptism 12:00pm Coffee Hour 4:00pm MoreTAMeal	12:00pm Weight Watchers 1:00pm Food Pantry	9:00am Staff meeting 1:00pm Food Pantry	5:15pm & 6:15pm Pilates 5:30pm PC Team 4 6:30pm Fellowship (Peete)	5:30pm Evening Prayer 5:50pm Centering Prayer	7:00am Morning Prayer and Eucharist 9:30am Sr. Fitness	8:00am Soccer Assessment 5:45pm Rivendell Wedding 6:00pm Soccer Assessment
8:00am & 10:30am & 5:30 Eucharists 8:45am Breakfast 12:00pm Coffee Hour 4:00pm MoreTAMeal 5:00pm Soccer Assessment	12:00pm Weight Watchers 1:00pm Food Pantry	9:00am Staff meeting 1:00pm Food Pantry 5:30pm Finance 5:30pm Kroc Presentation (Trezevant) 6:00pm Soccer Coaches Mtg	12:00pm Executive Committee 5:15pm & 6:15pm Pilates	5:30pm PC Team 5 5:30pm Evening Prayer 5:50pm Centering Prayer	Sandlin-Maynard Rehearse 7:00am Morning Prayer and Eucharist 9:30am Sr. Fitness	5:45pm Rivendell 7:00pm Sandlin-Maynard Wedding
8:00am & 10:30am & 5:30 Eucharists 8:45am Breakfast 12:00pm Coffee Hour 4:00pm MoreTAMeal	12:00pm Weight Watchers 1:00pm Food Pantry	9:00am Staff meeting 1:00pm Food Pantry 6:00pm Vestry	5:15pm & 6:15pm Pilates 5:30pm PC Team 1	8:45am PDO Board Mtg 5:30pm Evening Prayer 5:50pm Centering Prayer 6:00pm Cub Scout Sign-up	7:00am Morning Prayer and Eucharist 9:30am Sr. Fitness	5:45pm Rivendell
Episcopal School Sun						
8:00am & 10:30am & 5:30 Eucharists 8:45am Breakfast 12:00pm Coffee Hour 4:00pm MoreTAMeal	12:00pm Weight Watchers 1:00pm Food Pantry	9:00am Staff meeting 1:00pm Food Pantry	PDO closed 5:15pm & 6:15pm Pilates 5:30pm PC Team 2	5:30pm Evening Prayer 5:50pm Centering Prayer 6:00pm Back to School Night	7:00am Morning Prayer and Eucharist 9:30am Sr. Fitness	Football Season Begins 5:45pm Rivendell
5th Sunday						
8:00am & 10:30am & 5:30 Eucharists 8:45am Breakfast 9:15am Psstl Care Trng 12:00pm Coffee Hour 4:00pm MoreTAMeal	12:00pm Weight Watchers 1:00pm Food Pantry					
Looking Ahead... Sept 1: PDO Fall Session begins Sept 4: First Friday Fellowship Sept 9: St. Cecilia, Canterbury and Adult Choirs begin Teen Group begins Sept 12: Soccer Season begins Sept 13: Sunday School, Youth Confirmation Classes and EYC Kick-off Sept 11: 39ers Recovery Repertoire Theater Sept 17: Third Thursday Sept 20: Diocesan Picnic @ St. Columba						



GRACE-ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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WOW!

I have a WOW! file. . .

This year I decided to make the entire season of Pentecost be a time of celebrating blessings, so each day I have been writing down a blessing that I experience. I had wondered how I could continue this focused sense of blessing in my life. Then I remembered my WOW! file.

Twenty-four years ago, I was sharing in a conference entitled *Being Spiritual in the Midst of Daily Life*. During one of the discussion times, someone asked the group, "What do you do to remind yourself of God's presence when everything seems to be going wrong?" Almost immediately the woman seated next to me responded. "I have a WOW! file."

She explained, "I'm an elementary school teacher and there are days when I wonder what I'm doing there, and I feel like running away in the middle of the afternoon. So I started a WOW! file. Every time something happens in class that is really exciting – like when a child *really gets it* – or when something is particularly insightful for me, I write it down on a 3x5 card and put it in a box on my desk. Whenever I get a thank-you or congratulatory note from a parent or from one of the students, I put it in my box. When those times of despair come upon me, I tell the kids to sit quietly for a moment and I pick a card or note from the front of my WOW! file, read it to myself, and

then put it in the back of the box. The WOW! always helps to bring me back to recognizing the balance of life and my ministry as a teacher."

The idea of a WOW! file caught my attention and that week I began a file. It has evolved over time from a 3x5 card box to a WOW! icon on my computer and a WOW! folder in my desk file drawer.

As a way of being more attentive to counting my blessings, I have decided to use my WOW! file more often. Instead of waiting until I am ready to run away for an afternoon to get away from it all, I will make a habit of going to the next WOW! entry on my computer or in my file drawer. I can also be more attentive to the daily happening, note, or insight that could become a new addition to the WOW!s of my life.

I invite you to consider a way to continue to be aware of God's presence in the midst of your daily life. Perhaps you'll read page five of this Messenger and celebrate the blessing of having Patrick Payne on our staff. You may choose to take time each day to write down a blessing you enjoy. There may be a service ministry or action that fits your schedule during the week or month. You may decide to take the Sunday bulletin home with you and read the Scripture during the week as you reflect on how God's Word is living and active in your life. Or. . . you may even decide to start a WOW! file.

Patrick Payne