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**Stories that Must Be Told**

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# The Story that Must be Told

We live our lives as story. God has made us this way; the facts and data that are the building blocks of life are cemented together and shape us as we tell the story of our lives: “I had bought a chuck roast earlier this week since I knew the weather would be bad; I put it in the Dutch oven with potatoes and carrots and braised it all day since we were all at home. It was a great meal for a snowy night.” In this quick story is economics, weather forecasting, a recipe and history—yet all these are held together by the question “what happened next?”

You may not have considered it, but God also lives as story. We might want to say The Story, but God lives as story. The Bible begins with one of the best ways to get a story launched: “in the beginning...,” and from there we are told the story of God—God creating, God calling, God providing, God seeking, God suffering, God redeeming, God triumphing. Of course, God’s story involves those whom he created, whom he called, for whom he provided, whom he sought, for whom he suffered, whom he redeemed, for whom his triumph is given. We have been caught up in the story of God that is still unfolding.

This last point is very important: we tend to treat the story of God—and the story of Jesus that is a part of it—as something past, as something “back there.” However, the story of our Lord’s life, death and resurrection is also ahead of us, for as we move toward the ending of our story there is the firm, wonderful promise that our Lord will waiting there, already ahead of us, ready to welcome us. Our lives are not as Shakespeare famously declared in *Macbeth* “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing;” rather, our lives—and the stories we tell—are full of meaning and possibility because God has taken hold of us.

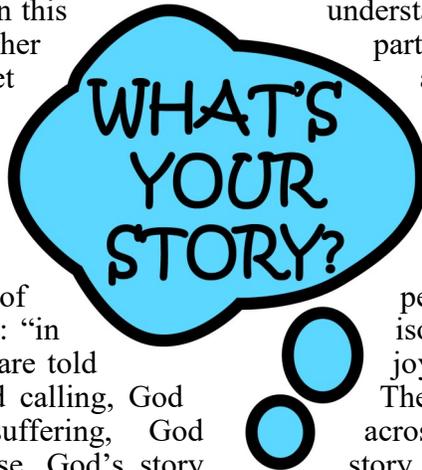
There are two repercussions to the fact that we are

creatures of story. The first is important for us as Christians. While we might want to focus on the story of Jesus, we need to know the whole story of God at work. Whenever Jesus refers to “the Scriptures,” he is referring to the books of Moses, the Psalms, the writings of the prophets. The portion of the story we call the Old Testament is also our story, and to understand Jesus rightly—and to understand our part in the story of God—we need to pay attention to the story the Old Testament tells.

The second repercussion is that your family, friends, and neighbors are also creatures of story. The stories that are being told out in the world are making people angry, paranoid, anxious and isolated. It is hard to find stories of hope or joy, stories that show why life has meaning. There are far too many *Macbeths* striding across life’s stage in today’s world! Your story of how God has claimed you, saved you and made you a part of his family is desperately needed by others, and one of the best things you can do is think about how God has been and is a part of your life and be able to tell that story. But it’s not just people out in the world who need to hear how God has come to you! Your brothers and sisters also need your stories of how God has answered your prayer, come to you in a time of need, or made blessing possible. Both those out in the world and those within the Church need good news!

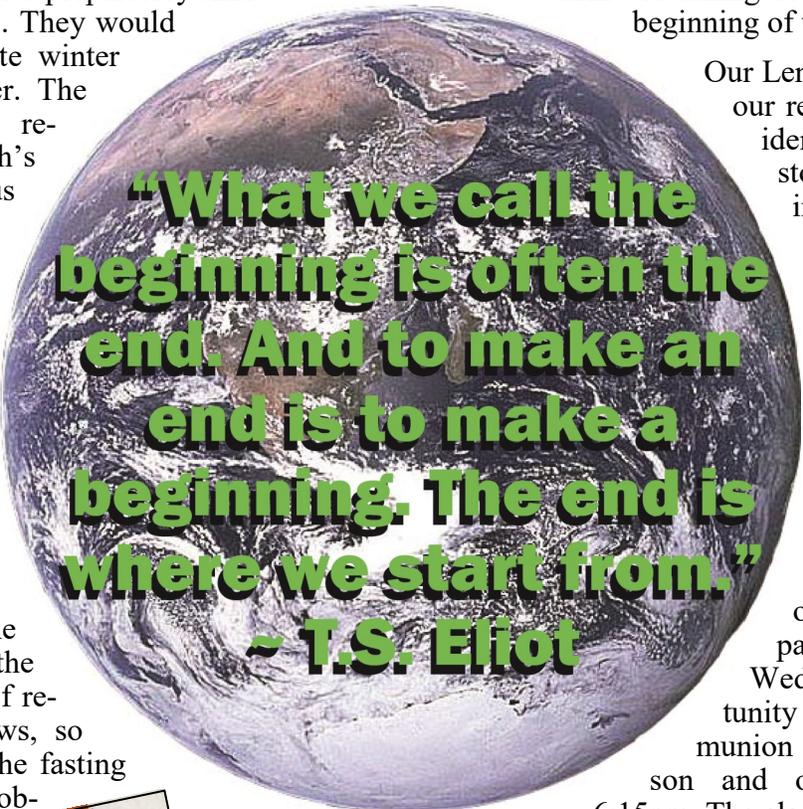
This issue of **GPS** is given over to telling some stories of our parish. Within these pages you’ll learn more about our staff, discover how God is at work in our parish, learn how to tell your story and be prepared for Lent and Easter. We hope you enjoy this latest issue of **GPS** as you ask the question “and what happened next?”

~Pr. Dave Brooks



## LENT BEGINS MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>!

Lent as a season began as a preparatory time for baptismal candidates. They would be “enrolled” in the late winter forty days before Easter. The forty-day interval—a reminder both of Noah’s time in the ark and Jesus in the wilderness—was a period of self-examination and instruction in the path of Christianity. As Easter arrived, the candidates would be baptized, rising from the water to be celebrated by their new community with song and praise. As the centuries went by, the Church began to use the time of Lent as a time of renewal of baptismal vows, so all the people took up the fasting that the candidates observed. While



**“What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.”**  
~ T.S. Eliot

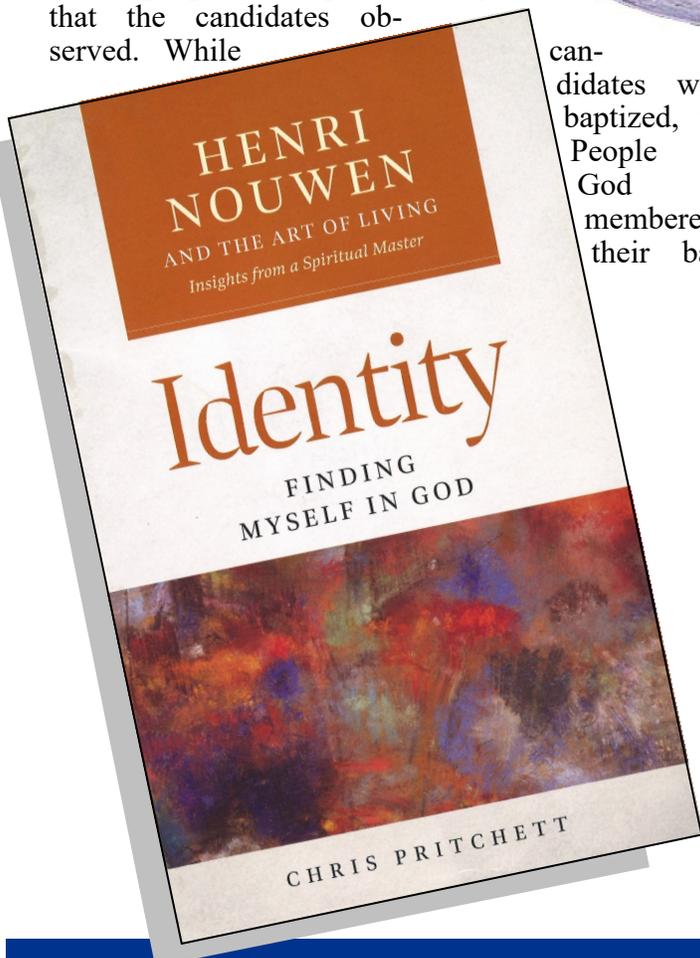
tism—returning at the end of Lent to the beginning of their life with Jesus.

Our Lenten focus this year is on our return to baptism and the identity in Christ that it bestows. We will be guided in our Lenten journey by a small book based on the writings of Henri Nouwen: *Identity: Finding Myself in God*. The five chapters of this small book invite us to remember that who we are begins in the One to whom we belong. There will be two group opportunities to participate in this study: a Wednesday lunch opportunity after our Noon Communion service, and both in person and online Wednesdays at 6:15pm. The class begins March 9<sup>th</sup>.

While candidates were baptized, the People of God remembered their bap-

Make plans to join your brothers and sisters in our Lenten observances this year and discover again how your life is held in the greater life of God.

~Pr. Dave Brooks



### Shrove Tuesday, Mar. 1

Join us as we celebrate Shrove Tuesday with your Grace family and friends for a special time of fellowship before Lent begins. Menu includes pancakes, sausage, fruit and orange juice. 



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## Lenten Study & Worship Opportunities

### Ash Wednesday Wednesday, March 2

Join us for one of two Ash Wednesday services:

**12:00 Noon:** Mid-day service, In-Person

**7:00 PM:** Evening service, In-Person or watch Livestream

The imposition of ashes is available for those attending in person at both services.

### Wednesdays in Lent Dates: March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6

Weekly Wednesday Schedule through Lent:

**12:00 Noon** – Worship, In-Person

**12:30 PM** – Lunch & Lenten Book Study, Bring Your Own Lunch, In-Person

**6:15 PM** – Supper & Lenten Book Study, Supper provided, In-Person and via Zoom

**7:00 PM** – Worship, In-Person and Livestream

**Book Study Topic:** Identity, *Finding Myself in God*, Chris Pritchett; Henri Nouwen and the Art of Living Insights from a Spiritual Master - Sign up on the  website.

## HOLY WEEK

## Holy Week Worship Opportunities

### Palm Sunday Sunday, April 10

Join us for Worship at **8:30 AM** and **11:00 AM**

### Maundy Thursday Thursday, April 14

**7:00 PM** – Worship, In-Person and Livestream

### Good Friday Friday, April 15

**12:00 PM** – Stations of the Cross Service

**7:00 PM** - Tenebrae Worship Service

### Easter Vigil Saturday, April 16

**6:45 PM** - Easter Vigil Service

### Easter Sunday Sunday, April 17

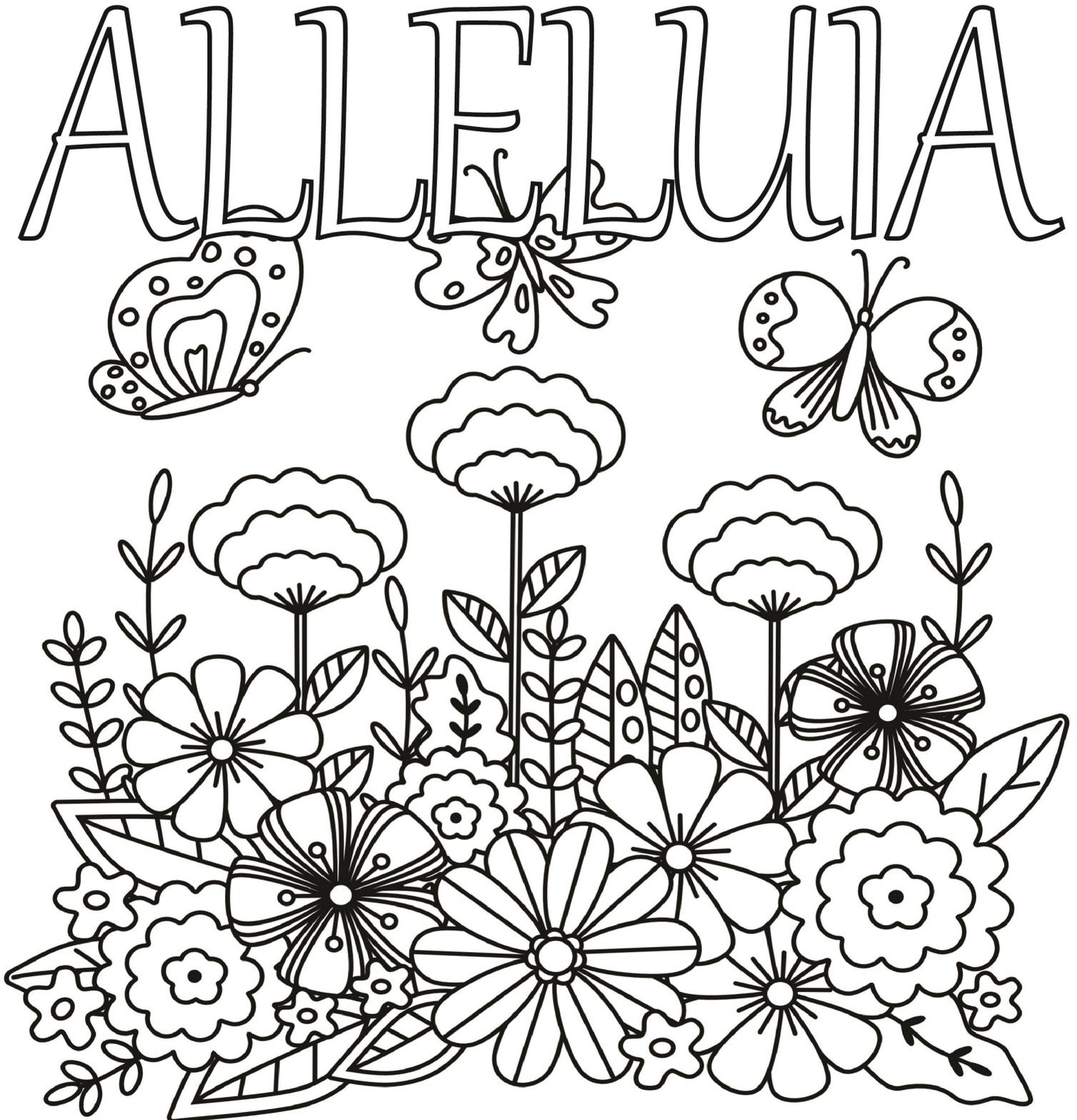
Join us for Worship at **8:30 AM** and **11:00 AM**

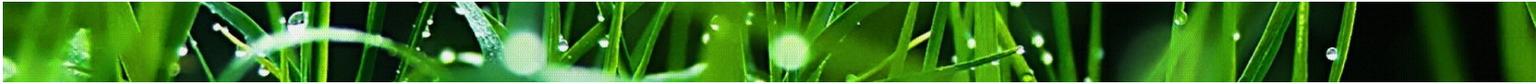
### Easter Brunch 9:45 AM - Between Services



## PUTTING AWAY ALLELUIA FOR LENT

The Church has the custom of not speaking or singing the word “Alleluia” during Lent. Alleluias are joyful proclamations, which we put away during the more contemplative season of Lent. Putting it away for Lent is like putting away a favorite toy for a while – to appreciate it better later. A symbolic ritual to help children move into this season is to “say goodbye” to the Alleluia. Have your children color and decorate this page, and then put it in a dark corner or closet until Easter when you pull it out again!





# WHY TELLING OUR STORIES MATTERS

By Chris Wethman

*“Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation.” - Joel 1:3*

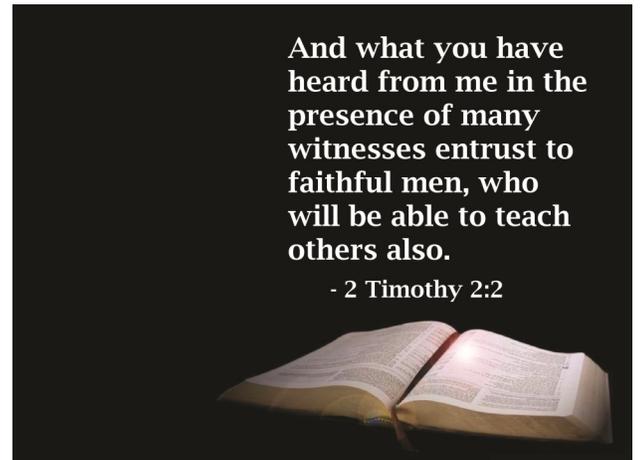
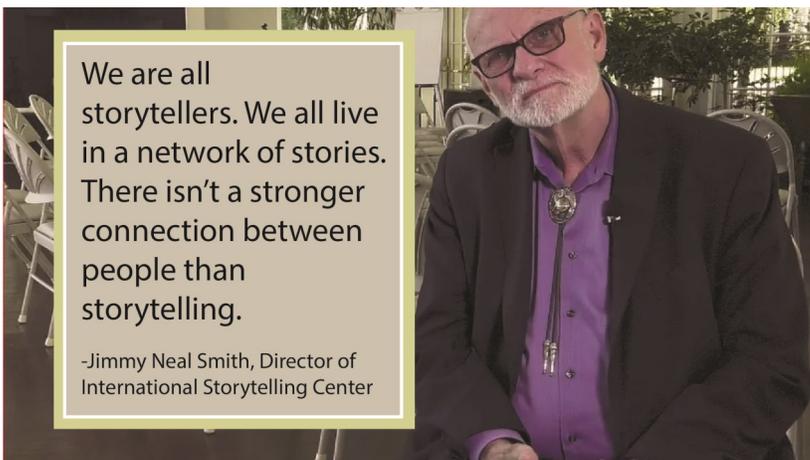
The Joel passage is a continuation of Deuteronomy 11:19: *“You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”* In both passages we are tasked with passing what God has done for us, His Word and teachings, on throughout our generations. If we tell our stories for those that follow, it will create a ripple effect that spans limitless generations.

Briefly, here are 7 reasons by telling our stories matters:



In addition, telling stories become a deep, rich, natural pathway to growing together in Christ. Sharing stories change the way we are as a community together. All of us who gather for worship – from young to old – realize in a deeper way that we are all redeemed sinners, loved by Jesus, shaped by grace each struggling in a different way. We all stand together at the cross with open hands.

For more information about congregational storytelling, visit: [crcna.org/Faith Formation](http://crcna.org/Faith Formation) or read *“Why Telling Our Stories Matters”* by Chuck DeGroat.





## INTERVIEW WITH ORGANIST AND CHOIR DIRECTOR

### CHASE BENEFIEL *By Marie Hammond*

“Sing to the center of the cross,” is a phrase the choir has heard repeatedly over the last several weeks. With these words, our director Chase Benefiel reminds singers to project with resonant voices that fill the sanctuary from the gallery to the large cross on the opposite wall. His advice yields obvious acoustical benefits, and may well contain some religious symbolism as well. Another piece of good counsel from our director advises choir members that when we sing we are praying with and for the congregation. Our prayers are, of course, directed to God, hence it is quite appropriate to sing to the center of the cross.

Chase assumed the position of Director of Music at Grace in October of 2020. For almost a year he played the organ at services but was prevented by Covid restrictions from convening the choir. Only in the last few months has the group resumed rehearsing on Wednesday evenings and singing together at worship services. New choir member Marie Hammond sat down with Chase over lunch at a local restaurant to conduct the following interview.

**MH:** At what age did you begin taking music lessons?

**CB:** I was eight years old when I started piano lessons, and during freshman year of high school I started organ lessons.

**MH:** What is your background in choral singing?

**CB:** Growing up in Nashville [TN], I was in children’s choirs at church and at an arts academy. Then I sang in school choirs in middle school (honors choir) and high school (all-state chorus).

**MH:** How did you become interested in church music?

**CB:** When I was twelve I began playing piano regularly for church services, and starting at age fourteen I played organ in church. My family moved to Loyall, Kentucky, while I was in high school, and at sixteen, I became choir director and organist at First Baptist Church in Loyall.

**MH:** In what church did you grow up?

**CB:** My father is a Baptist pastor so I grew up in the

Baptist Church. From the age of seventeen, I started playing organ for an Episcopal Church and continued doing that through college, which helped with finances during my college years.

**MH:** Are there particular composers or styles of music that especially appeal to you?

**CB:** Works by 19th and early 20th century British composers (Parry, Stanford, Ireland). And Bach, of course, as any organist will say. I love all baroque music – Handel is one of my favorites

**MH:** How well does the style of worship at Grace match with your musical and liturgical background and inclination?

**CB:** When I came to Grace they [the worship leaders] said, “You are free to be as experimental as you wish.” I am pretty conservative but I do appreciate spirituals and modern hymns. And it seems that when I play arrangements of spirituals and modern music, people give me the most compliments. So far, I have not found anything I’ve done yet to be out of bounds at Grace.

**MH:** Describe your educational experiences from childhood through college.

**CB:** Growing up I went to public school in Tennessee for elementary, middle school, and the first two years of high school. My last two years were spent at a Christian school, where I was able to take music lessons (piano and voice) as part of the curriculum. At the same time I took organ lessons at UT, Knoxville, which was quite a commute. At Carson-Newman [a Baptist college in Jefferson City, TN], I majored in organ performance and church music. During sophomore year I took Greek and really loved it, so my advisor suggested I add a Biblical languages major. Then I started taking Hebrew and was extremely busy.

**MH:** How is Duke Divinity School shaping your religious and artistic life?

**CB:** Duke Divinity School is one of the few (maybe the only) divinity school to have a tight relationship with the arts [officially recognized in the Duke Initiative in Theology and the Arts, directed by Prof.



Jeremy Begbie]. A lot of theology schools focus on questioning each passage of Scripture to see if it's true, but at Duke we read the Bible for what it is, what it says, and what it means. Sometimes this results in our finding an artistic way to read Scripture, for example reading the Psalms as poetry and hymns.

**MH:** Are there classes that have been particularly inspirational? teachers?

**CB:** Ellen Davis, of course. She is supervising my directed study on the Psalms, using a narrative, poetic approach. I was surprised at how influential and informative I found the first year church history course [taught by Warren Smith]. I especially remember from that course reading and learning about Athanasius' *On the Incarnation*. Also very enriching has been praying the Office [Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer] every day.

**MH:** What are your career goals? What would be your ideal position?

**CB:** I would like to get a Ph.D. in Old Testament. Also I am in discernment for ordination to the clergy. My ideal job would be one-half time teaching and one-half time serving as a clergyman, where a big part of my focus would be on the liturgical life of the church. Of course, church music is part of the practice of liturgy.

**MH:** Can one have a dual career in ministry and church music?

**CB:** Music will always be part of my life, though I'm not sure how it will manifest itself. I have never been in a situation where music was not a major part of my life. Music and theology are both very important to me, and now I have the combination of working at Grace while attending divinity school.

**MH:** What was it like starting out at Grace during the pandemic?

**CB:** I started in October 2020 when live church services were already in progress, but there were lots of protocols. The church was closed except on Sunday mornings, and only one person was permitted to sing hymns from the gallery, standing at the other end from the organ. After vaccinations became available, hymn singing by the congregation was allowed in the nave. This year has been so different. Then I knew only the staff and a few others I met through Zoom.

**MH:** Have you been able since then to get acquainted with members of the congregation?

**CB:** This year it's been a real blessing to meet people in the choir, some on the worship committee and Parish Ministry Council, and at a vaccination clinic and church cleanup day.

**MH:** What do you like best about working at Grace? Anything you'd want to change?

**CB:** I really love more and more working with the choir and am having a great time with that. In a broader sense, the people at Grace really care about the liturgical life of the church and realize it's not a show for them to watch. People are deeply involved in what goes on, on Sundays and during the week. Congregational energy is high. Grace is not anywhere near being a dead church. The only thing I can think of to change would be for the congregation to sing louder on hymns.

**MH:** Is there a chance you'll stay in Durham after you finish divinity school?

**CB:** There is definitely a chance. I have really come to love Durham, but I also love Nashville too. I would not be sad at all to stay here. It depends on what comes up after divinity school.

**MH:** Anything else you'd like to add?

**CB:** I have really enjoyed being at Grace. Last year was a rough year, doing all my classes on Zoom. Being at Grace and having it open offered just enough interaction with people to keep me sane. I will always be grateful.



## PASTOR BROOKS' PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

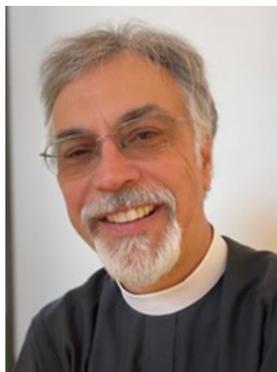
When I think of my life, I am struck first by the wonderful relationships that God has provided me through the Church. Every chapter of my life is really a story about how God provides what we really need—including the right people at the right time!

I have mentioned frequently that my family was one of the early “pebbles” that signaled the later avalanche of the Nones, that growing group of Americans that have no religious faith commitment or experience. Both of my parents grew up in strict Baptist families but left their childhood religious life behind when they graduated from high school. My own faith experience was scattered and unfocused—while my parents didn’t prevent me from going to church with friends, being a part of a congregation was not a priority for them.

That changed when we met new neighbors who were faithful Lutherans. They invited us to come with them whenever they went to worship or for weekday events. Gradually, my family was drawn into the parish’s life and through the parish into life with God, and I was baptized at age 12.

From that moment, my life has revolved around how God is at work in the world. I came to Duke in the late 1980s and found a great mentor in the faith in Pastor Hugh Beck (who some of you remember!). He encouraged me to consider a call to ordained ministry, which I eventually did. My entry into seminary in the 1990s was a struggle between what the world offered and what God was planning, but the Lord again provided: I had a chance to go to Los Angeles for my vicarage year and learn how to be a pastor under the watchful eye of Pastor Raymond LeBlanc and the members of First Lutheran Church, Carson. Pastor LeBlanc and the members of First taught me to always begin at the feet of Jesus; that God’s mission for His people is key; and we have brothers and sisters in the Lord everywhere.

As first I, and then my wife and I, and then my wife, daughter and I have moved through life following Jesus as best we can wherever He might lead, I am grateful that my Lord has brought me full circle to the community where my sense of call was first kindled. I look forward to what God is doing with us and for us in many years ahead!



## WHO AM I?

Who Am I?

Who am I? They often tell me,  
I come out of my cell

Calmly, cheerfully, resolutely,  
Like a lord from his palace.

Who am I? They often tell me,  
I used to speak to my wardens

Freely and friendly and clearly,  
As though it were mine to command.

Who am I? They also tell me,  
I carried the days of misfortune  
Equably, smilingly, proudly,  
like one who is used to winning.

Am I really then what others say of me?

Or am I only what I know of myself?

Restless, melancholic, and ill, like a caged bird,  
Struggling for breath, as if hands clasped my  
throat,

Hungry for colors, for flowers, for the songs of  
birds,

Thirsty for friendly words and human kindness,  
Shaking with anger at fate and at the smallest  
sickness,

Trembling for friends at an infinite distance,  
Tired and empty at praying, at thinking, at  
doing,

Drained and ready to say goodbye to it all.

Who am I? This or the other?

Am I one person today and another tomorrow?

Am I both at once? In front of others, a  
hypocrite,

And to myself a contemptible, fretting  
weakling?

Or is something still in me like a battered army,  
running in disorder from a victory already  
achieved?

Who am I? These lonely questions mock me.  
Whoever I am, You know me, I am yours, O  
God.

~Dietrich Bonhoeffer



## TELL US YOUR STORY...JEAN POCHERT

*Interviewed by Scott Gesell*

Jean Pochert has been a member at Grace since 1972. She has been a mainstay for the Altar Guild for many years and willingly is a reliable resource for all who have followed her in serving her Lord and those who need to be served.

Jean was born and grew up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan which by Jean's own words, "Was literally one and a half blocks from the Detroit city limit on the south shore of Lake St. Claire." Her father was a carpenter and her family roots are from German/Prussian origin. She grew up in an LCMS family and was baptized in 1936. She recalls that at that time the kids went to, not just Sunday School, but also a confirmation course held after Saturday School in the afternoon.

After high school Jean completed her RN in nursing with a BS in Nursing and worked in a rehabilitation facility in Detroit. In learning about Duke offering the only geriatric program in the country, she applied was accepted in the program and finished with a Masters in Geriatric Nursing. She worked in a nursing home in Chapel Hill until her retirement.

Jean served many years on the Altar Guild here and also as a grounds caretaker member as she calls it on an "unofficial committee" with several other members over the years keeping the parking lot and church

campus free of debris. She recalls her "desert experiences." While pulling weeds in the parking lot, people would frequently come to them needing help. They willingly helped these people with what they could provide be it a few cents, a band aid, an aspirin for a headache, etc. She recalls the enjoyment she received in giving so little and receiving so much gratification in return.

One of Jean's most memorable events at Grace was when the new Sanctuary was opened and dedicated. She remembers the wonderful emotions that were experienced by everyone with moving from old to new. It was a time of renewal as a congregation and blessing of hope for our community as a whole.

She also recollects when LWML became dormant for several years and how Pastor Knuth gathered the 2 or 3 people interested in revitalizing it and helped get it started by encouraging an active quilting group women which became the nucleus for LWML missions. Grace quilting and LWML remains as we know it today as a very active and productive group of ladies. This year they sent 45 beautiful quilts to other parts of the world.

Jean's motto to all is, "That by the Grace of God go I in His service, for we are blessed to be in His Care".



## TELL US YOUR STORY...RUBIE HECHT

*Interviewed by Scott Gesell*

Ruby Hecht and her late husband have been members of Grace since 1956. She and Herman have contributed much to the growth and success of Grace over the last 66 years. Ruby is the mother of 3 children Ray, Debbie and David who were brought up at Grace and live on or share the farm property which I refer to as "Hechtderosa" in Hillsborough, N.C. The cross which stands in the front of our sanctuary was designed, honed and placed in the sanctuary by Herman and Ray.

Ruby was born in Hamlet N.C. and very shortly after

her birth her mother died and her aunt who lived close by made sure she was baptized in the Presbyterian church and cared for her for 6 months before bringing her to Warren County northeast of Durham where her Grandmother raised her until she was 12.

Ruby remembers the days of "hand me down" clothes from cousins and relatives. She recounts that she wore mostly boy's clothes and she only had one dress and it was worn only for church and special occasions. She recalls that whenever her grandmother told her to put on her dress it was for something really special, which

*Rubie Hecht continued next page*



# Katherine Hankey and Frances J. Crosby: What's Their Story?

By: Chris Wethman

Between 1866 and 1880, two beloved hymns were written by Katherine Hankey and Frances Crosby. For over 150 years, their hymns have been part of countless worship services, Sunday School classes, summer sessions of Vacation Bible School and so many other settings it would be impossible to count.

Tell Me the Story of Jesus was published in 1880 by Frances J. Crosby. Believe it or not, she wrote more than 8,000 hymns and gospel songs. Known as the “Queen of Gospel Song Writers” her songs were frequently considered revival music. She was committed to Christian rescue missions and known for her public speaking.

Frances used over 200 different pseudonyms during her career. Some of her best-known songs include, “Blessed Assurance”, “To God Be the Glory”, and “Praise Him, Praise Him”. She penned at least five cantatas on biblical and patriotic themes, including “The Flower Queen” the first secular cantata by an American composer. A member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Frances Jane van Alstyne was born in Brewster, NY and died at the age of 94 in Bridgeport, CT.

### Refrain:

*Tell me the story of Jesus, Write on my heart every word;*

*Tell me the story most precious, Sweetest that ever was heard.*

I Love to Tell the Story was written by Katherine (Kate) Hankey. Although this is now a well-known hymn, it was originally written as a poem about the life of Jesus. “The Story Wanted” was the poem’s first part and consisted of 50 stanzas. The second part is titled, “The Story Told.” Certain verses were selected from each part to make the hymn, “I Love to Tell the Story”.

Born in London into a home of a wealthy English banker, she not only wrote hymns but also published Gospel tracts to hand out in the Bible classes she taught. Katherine spent many years in Africa on mission trips. During one of those trips, she experienced a long illness and wrote Parts I and II. Katherine and her father belonged to an influential group called “Clapham Sect.” Most members of this group were prominent and wealthy Anglicans. Kate Hankey died in 1911 in London, England.

### Refrain:

*I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,*

*To tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.*



### Rubie Hecht continued

Ruby very much looked forward to attending.

Ruby met Herman her “husband-to-be” when she was 12 years old at a wedding of her cousin. They weren't allowed to date until Ruby was 15. They were married in 1952.

Herman and Ruby joined Grace in 1956. She remembers Pastor Reinbolt, Grace’s third pastor since its inception. She recalls the close friendship that was developed during the one year the Reinbolts were at Grace. They also well remember our fourth pastor at Grace, the Reverend Ernest Schoenborn. He was a man of tall stature and had a voice to go with it. The Hechts remained friends for many years after the Schoenborns left for his military chaplaincy.

The special times Ruby remembers are: Sunday School Picnics at the Hecht farm and CERF (Christian Education Recreation and Fellowship) on Wednesday nights at church.

**Her thoughts for the future:  
Keep communication with each other, especially us older folks –  
It means so much to you and us!!**



# THE STORY OF GRACE'S CHRISTMAS CACTUS

*Submitted by Judy Barnes*



Did you ever wonder about the Christmas cactus in the front of the sanctuary at Grace? How did it get there? Seems like it's been there forever?

Here's some history behind that Christmas cactus. Originally, this plant belonged to Lloyd Redick's mother. They lived on a farm in Ohio. Lloyd remembers it being kept in the "sewing" room (mid 1940' s) and bloomed faithfully every Christmas. His parents took it with them when they moved to a new home in town. After Lloyd's father died and his mother moved into a nursing home for health reasons, the cactus was passed on to Lloyd and Anne (1987). When Anne and Lloyd moved to the Forest at Duke in 2007, they gave it to Grace. From that time on, Grace has cared for it, and it has continued to bloom every

Christmas.

Well this summer it seemed like it wasn't looking so good, a little more wilted, not as many blooms, etc. I asked Lloyd if he would mind it was looked at by a professional. He didn't think it was looking so healthy either, so with his permission we got it to a greenhouse professional. Tom McGill was helpful in getting it there.

We got some excellent advice and instructions on what was the matter and steps in correcting the problem. After much prayer and what I call crucifying the plant, we repotted it with new soil, into a new pot, and kept it in the kitchen so that it could be watered frequently for about 3 weeks. Again, with Tom's help, it was then moved back upstairs.

I doubted that it would bloom this year because of the trauma it had sustained but I thankfully was wrong. I'm happy to say that it not only has put out new shoots but did bloom for Christmas and was quite lovely.

I'd like to thank Lloyd on behalf of all the members that had a chance to get some cuttings from his cactus. We now have Christmas cactus of our own. All from his parents' cactus.

Just an example of we humans doing the work of planting and God giving the growth.

## TELL US YOUR STORY...BARBARA STILES

- Q. Where were you born?** San Juan Puerto Rico
- Q. Where do you work?** I work at Grace Lutheran Church in the office as the Parish Administrator.
- Q. Where have you lived?** Being raised in a Military family, we moved a lot. One year I attended three different elementary schools. When I started high school, my family moved to Egypt and lived there for 2½ years in a little village outside Cairo called Madi.
- Q. Tell more about life in Cairo.** We often took trips into Cairo where we sometimes climbed the pyramids, which you can no longer do. We visited some of the passages and rooms inside the pyramids. One of the passages was found while we were living there. It was interesting to see and even scary to go through. We rode camels and horseback riding in the dessert and around the pyramids. Every Saturday,

school kids went to an outdoor venue where they showed movies. Most families stationed there belonged to a club with an outdoor pool, garden and eatery. It only rained twice while we lived there.

One school day, there was a bombing about a half mile from our school. It was a big deal and scary. Everyone was caught off guard and most of us kids were running around outside frightened to death wondering where to go or what to do, before the administration told us to get to our outdoor lunch area and get under the tables. We huddled there for some time. The press came and they interviewed some of us as the story unfolded. This is something that is etched in my mind forever.



*Barbara Stiles continued next page*

*Barbara Stiles continued*

Praise the Lord for keeping us all safe.

**Q. Do you have children?** I have one daughter, Kristin, and three grandchildren, Emma, Alec (Alison) and Evan. I enjoy watching them grow and come into their own. All three are very different and unique in their own way.

**Q. What is an interesting fact about you?** I wear a very small petite ring on my right hand. It was given to me one summer in Egypt from a classmate while we were horseback riding in the desert. He told me to put it on and never take it off. That way we would be friends forever and whenever I looked at the ring, I would remember our fun times we had together. He and his family were moving away, and we were saddened about losing our friendship. To this day, I have never taken it off! It is a little beat up and not as round as it once was! But I cherish the ring and keep the memories close to my heart.

**Q. What is a valuable lesson you learned in your career?** No matter where I worked, a valuable lesson I learned was to never jump to conclusions or assume you know what a person needs. It is important to hear people out; sometimes people just need you to listen and not fix anything. Sometimes people get angry and direct their anger towards you. When someone is angry, it is not necessarily directed at you, just needing to vent. I enjoy hearing people and working together with a goal of finding a solution that may work for all. I found many times in the end, they appreciated you just listening.

## “WATCHING MY STORIES”

*Submitted by Chris Wethman*

My grandmother used to talk about watching “my stories” on television. What she was really referring to were those daytime dramas commonly known as soap operas. (The name came from the soap manufacturer that sponsored them, Procter & Gamble.) Her favorite? Days of our Lives. My mom had her own favorite, “All My Children.” I confess to being fond of “General Hospital” at one point in my life. Remember seeing the “Soap Opera Digest” in the rack at the supermarket checkout counter? The notoriety of soap stars skyrocketed.

Soap operas have become a dying breed. But I still remember the times three generations of women came together to and eagerly shared the latest twist and turn of the plots. We listened intently, eager to get to the cliff hanger ending, and by the end of the conversation, we had created “our story” knit together by daytime drama.

If we are to be knit together there are stories that MUST be told. I discovered such a story one day while poking around in the Archives Room. It’s a tale about the meal that unites us – Holy Communion. It’s a story too rich in history to be buried in the archives.

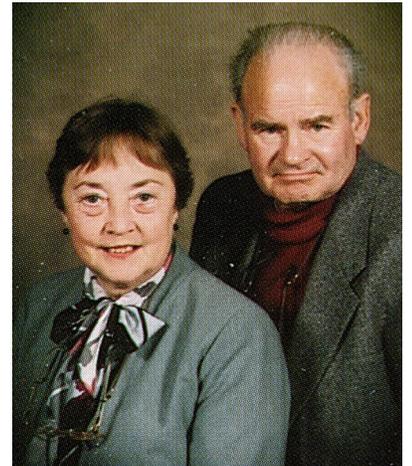
Once upon a time, the communion wine served at Grace came from a little bit of California wine country in Orange County. The vineyard was owned by Grace members Drs. Earl and Marlys Mitchell.

Earl and Marlys arrived at Grace from Grand Forks, ND in 1962 – 60 years ago this year. Earl earned his PhD in Physics and accepted a position at UNC until his retirement in mid-1991. Marlys pursued her doctorate at UNC in Special Education and ultimately became a professor in the UNC School of Medicine.

For more than two decades, the Mitchell’s experimented in growing grapes for wine and grape juice. Considering himself more of a researcher, Earl learned which grapes are adaptable to the warm, humid Southern climates. These included the muscadine grape. In a newsletter article Earl said it bothers him when people call them scuppernongs because those grapes belong to a separate variety.

Earl tended to the grapes more than Marlys. She kept the garden growing with tomatoes, okra, eggplant, and peppers. Flower beds bloomed with Zinnias, marigolds, and Jerusalem artichoke flowers – said to resemble Shasta daisies. Marlys wasn’t totally removed from the vineyard, she designed the wine label using her husband’s initials.

The Mitchell’s story is quite remarkable. The archives contain much, much more than time and space allows. Serving areas for Earl and Marlys include: Church council member, Stephen Minister, Building Committee,

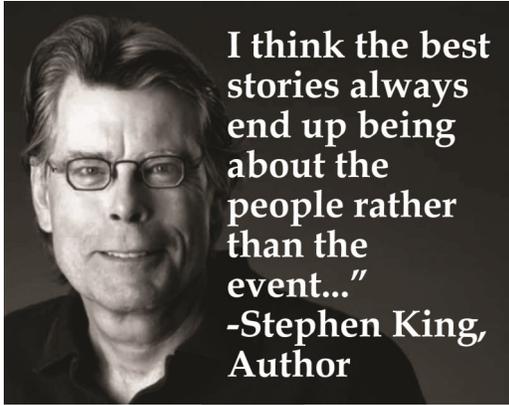


*“Watching My Stories” continued next page*



## “WATCHING MY STORIES”

Continued from page 13



I think the best stories always end up being about the people rather than the event...”  
-Stephen King, Author



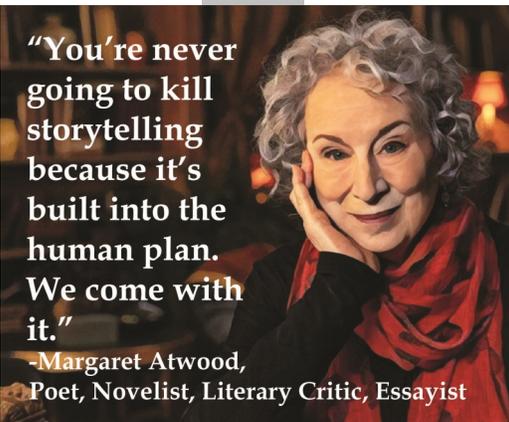
Stories are memory aids, instruction manuals, and moral compasses.

-Aleks Krotoski, Author



We tell ourselves stories to live.

-Joan Didion, Author and Journalist



“You’re never going to kill storytelling because it’s built into the human plan. We come with it.”

-Margaret Atwood, Poet, Novelist, Literary Critic, Essayist

CERF (Christian Education, Religion and Fellowship program), Greeters, Elder, Director of Adult Education Programs, Congregation President and so on...

The untold story about the communion wine? Because he was not a bonded commercial vintner, Earl (aka Mitch) could not sell his wine and was limited to producing 200 gallons a season. He used the fruit of his vine to make communion wine.

Earl was a member of the N.C. Grape Council and the American Society for Enology and Viticulture. He also conducted wine making classes. At one point, he and Marlys invited people to see their vineyard and taste their wine as one of the short courses offered through Duke University’s Continuing Education Program.

Herman’s newsletter article goes on to say that Mitch and Marlys, “... have been members through good and bad times because of a sense of commitment to God, the people and the church. In return, both Mitch and Marlys feel that the basic message received from the church has been to remind them of their sinful state and the blessed grace offered them by Christ through His vicarious atonement.” A story about Grace because of God’s grace.

The newsletter article in the membership folder of Marlys telling their story is titled, “Grape Growers Will Share Fruit of Their Labors.” It is not dated. Susan Kaufman is listed as the Staff Writer. The end of her story in print?

“And he [Mitch] and Marlys drink his wine every night for dinner. ‘I have to get rid of it somehow,’ he said.”

Along with countless others who have worshiped and served here, if it’s a story about Grace its part of my story, your story, and our story.

*When interviewing Earl and Marlys in 1991, Herman Hecht wrote, “Both Mitch and Marlys would like to see continued growth at Grace and a deeper commitment to outreach in the community; perhaps an adult day care center or a ministry to street people.”*

Without storytelling

Storytelling





## TELL US YOUR STORY... DORIS SCHOMBERG

*Interviewed by Mary Ferrell*

**Q. Tell me about your family background. Where did your family come from?**

My family came from Cambridge, England and then from a farm in Wisconsin.

**Q. What are your first memories of church life?**

I remember going to a small church in the country. I was baptized as an infant in 1939.

**Q. What were some memorable events at Grace in the years you have been here?**

I came to Grace in 1968. Some of my fond memories of life here were the Bible Studies in our homes which included several mothers with small babies. Also special was the start-up of CERF and the fun time on January 6th, Epiphany, when we went to the Redick home for our Christmas tree burning and cider afterwards. I remember that we were in the small sanctuary at that time. Thinking about the early Families in Grace groups also brings positive memories.

**Q. What positions have you held in the church?**

I have served in many capacities at Grace: Sunday School teacher and Hospitality Chairperson. Being Hospitality Chairperson included cooking Easter breakfasts and blowing several fuses trying to use electric fry pans to cook bacon and sausage.

**Q. What are some memorable characteristics of the pastors who have served here in the past?**

Pastors Neebe and Nelson were excellent teachers. I remember Pastor Knuth for his to-the-point messages. Pastor Chestnutt was very loving...always giving hugs.



## TELL US YOUR STORY... SCOTT GESELL

*Interviewed by Mary Ferrell*

**Q. Tell me about your family background. Where did your family come from?**

I was born at Watts Hospital in 1946 and baptized the same year at Grace which met in a laundromat back then.

**Q. What are your first memories of church life?**

I recall Sunday School classes being held in the basement and the classrooms were divided only by curtains. Teachers were Mrs. Roll, Mrs. Davis and Mr. Hecht.

**Q. What were some memorable events in the life of the church in your early years here?**

We had movies on the lawn (complete with popcorn). The Davis girls used to tell ghost stories. In recent years, I have enjoyed the Families in Grace gatherings.

**Q. Where were you baptized?**

I was baptized at Grace Lutheran Church in 1946.

**Q. What positions have you held in the church?**

President, Secretary, Trustee, Elder, Mutual Care and Evangelism Committees, and longtime Chairman of Properties and Facilities Committee. I now serve as an Usher, Communion Assistant, and Deacon. Along with Joe Wethman, I handle benevolence requests that come into the church.

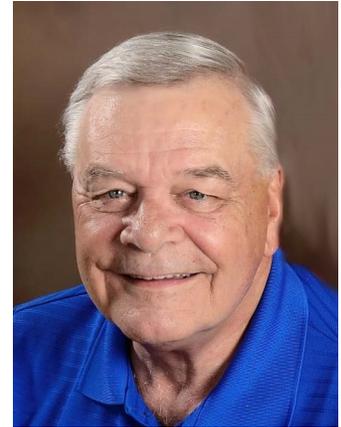
**Q. Why are you LCMS Lutheran?**

Born and bred LCMS.

**Q. What have been the significant events in the life and history of the church?**

My confirmation here and when worship began in the new sanctuary.

*“God has blessed me. The good times here outweigh the bad. Sharing faith is so important and that happiness revolves around God’s grace.”*



# Quotes Tell A Story...

Taken from GRACE newsletters of the past.



2022

*"We invite you to share your story with us and your brothers and sisters. Tell us about that moment God encountered you. Tell us about the blessing you experienced. Tell us about how God made something possible that could not be. We will gather our stories, ponder what they mean, and share them as widely as possible. If you'd like to be a regular contributor/writer, please let us know!"*

2012

*"In our technological age, with all the new ways to communicate, clear communication has become even more difficult."*

2002

*"Your participation is vital in helping focus Grace's mission direction and prioritize areas of ministry to be developed and strengthened. Where do you think the Lord is leading us as a congregation?"*

1992

*"The Voters meeting for the People of Grace is set for Thursday, this week at 7 PM, May 14. I sure hope you have a good reason if you cannot attend. The direction of mission and ministry is always at the heart of voters meetings; at least it should be."*

1982

*"Lead Us Not Into Temptation," we pray, because no one wants to face the rigors of temptation and testing...We all know that a good healthy struggle with temptation, in which we've been able to withstand, makes us stronger, more vibrant people. But the risks of defeat are so great that no one gladly or willingly seeks temptation. It is always comforting to know that "God will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." But it is hard to remember God's faithfulness, when your own faithlessness is rife. And it is hard to see the way of escape when you're trying to close your eyes to the temptation."*

1972

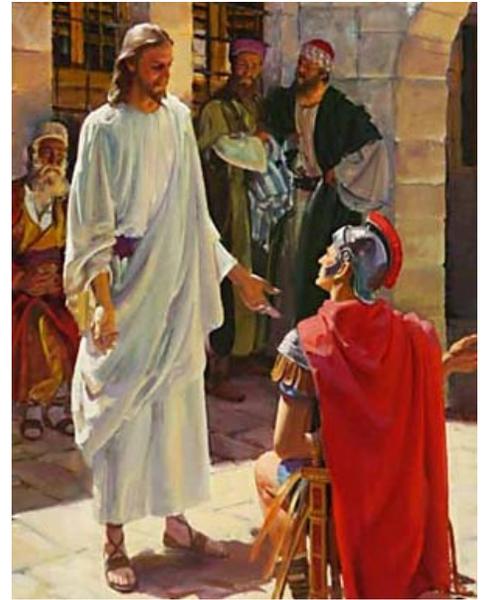
*"30 years old we are...since the Mission Board answered the request of Mr. J.J. Appel to send a preacher. Grace has come a long way."*



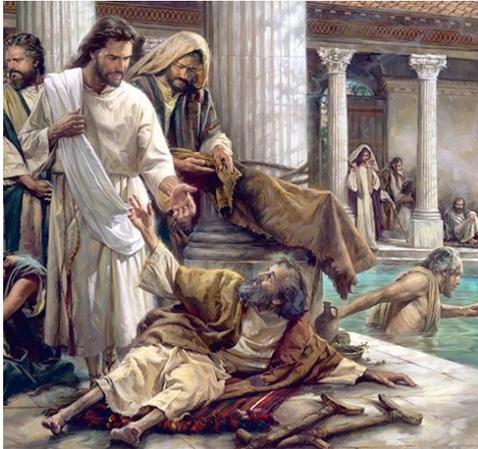
# WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MIRACLE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN?



**Miracle 1 - John 2:1-11**  
Jesus Turns Water Into Wine



**Miracle 2 - John 4:34-64**  
Healing of the Official's Son



**Miracle 3- John 5:1-9**  
Healing at the Pool of Bethesda



**Miracle 4- John 6:1-5**  
Feeding of the 5000



**Miracle 5- John 6:16-25**  
Jesus Walks on Water



**Miracle 7- John 11:1-44**  
Raising Lazarus from the Dead



**Miracle 6- John 9:1-41**  
Healing of the Man Born Blind

**Members were asked to  
vote online for their  
favorite miracle in the  
Gospel of John.**

**And the  
Winner is...**

**Miracle #6  
Healing of  
The Man  
Born Blind**

## THE ROMERO PRAYER

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

*This prayer was composed by the late Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden in November 1979 for a celebration of departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included in a reflection book a passage titled "The mystery of the Romero Prayer." The mystery is that the words of the prayer are commonly attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him. Pope Francis used the "magnificent" prayer in December 2015 in his Christmas address to the Roman Curia.*

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

-1 Corinthians 3:7

# YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN

By Sharon Brooks

I grew up in Asheville, NC, so I share a hometown with one of America's most well-known 20th century authors: Thomas Wolfe. Wolfe made famous a short phrase you've probably used many times: *you can't go home again*. Wolfe explored the tension we all feel whenever we think of the place we call "home" in a novel which used this phrase as its title. Whenever you go "back home," whether for the holidays year by year or for the first time in several years you might have asked yourself the question, "Can I come back home, again? Will things look the same? Will people be the same? Do I even want them to be the same?"

I visited my home church for Christmas Eve this past December. As I pulled into the parking lot of that little church, my past memories and experiences flooded my mind. The building looked the same, but not really. The people walking to the door looked the same, but not really. At that moment Wolfe's famous phrase popped into my mind. I sat for a moment and realized that this quote conveys our fear of change. Our desire to protect and preserve our past often means sabotaging our future. What Wolfe tried to convey is we can't go back to the way things were, to some time in the past when everything was perfect. There was no such time. Wolfe is observing that time moves us forward whether we like it or not, so it does

no good to wish for something that we cannot retrieve.

As I sat in the pew at Francis Asbury United Methodist church I saw so much had changed. I marveled at all that was new in this church—the church of my family, the church that nurtured me and told me the story of Jesus. In the 1800's my family donated the land that this church sits on. My Great-Grandfather Holcombe would wake early every Sunday morning, walk

across the fields and build a fire to prepare for worship. Four generations of Holcombes are buried in the cemetery and I was the first baby baptized in what is still called the "new church building."

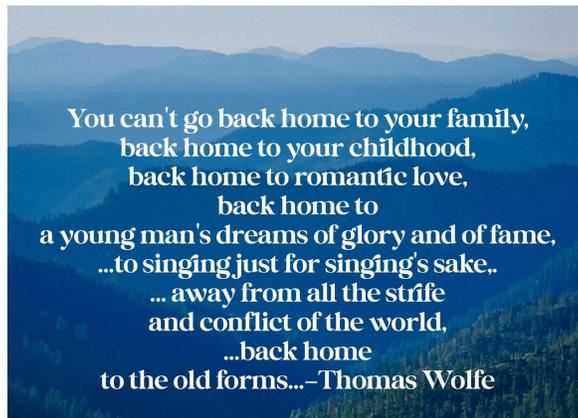
I also remember sitting through long council meetings as others discussed all the reasons why a new idea wouldn't work, then ask why our youth group had only 3 kids, or why our pews were growing more empty. One of the biggest arguments that I remember was whether the choir should turn the pews in the choir loft in a different direction so their voices would project better. The Building Committee finally rejected the idea because it didn't honor how the

church was designed. I joined my elders in worrying over dropping attendance, but I remember the Sunday when my indignation overflowed at seeing a stranger sitting in my family's pew.

Over the years I have followed the church through its newsletters, visits for homecoming and news from friends still there. There is excitement, energy and joy whenever I hear about my

family church. What has changed? Francis Asbury made the decision to move forward to the future by concentrating on the world outside—everyone who had no church to miss them Sunday by Sunday. The focus moved away from "who was in" and moved to "who's out there?." My home church is now a home for the community to come hear the story of Jesus. The result has been growth. I saw so many strangers smiling and welcoming me—the stranger!

The building did not look exactly the same. The people were not the same. The service was not the same. Yet that Christmas Eve I gave thanks to God. I gave thanks because I felt God's presence. All my good memories were still there. I remembered playing Mary in the Christmas play, I remembered my Dad and I sitting together as Mom sang in the choir. As we lifted up our voices in praise that the Lord had come, I felt the presence of all the Saints who went before me, because Jesus holds us all together—with him, we are Home, no matter what change may come.



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The Rev. Dr. David H. Brooks

Assistant to the Pastor:  
Rev. Richard Kuehn



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Grace  
Lutheran  
Church



## Grace Lutheran Church

Our new logo tells a story. It reflects our purpose and our goal: we are walking the way of **GRACE** that we might share God's blessing in our **HOMES**, our **NEIGHBORHOODS**, our **CITY**, and our **WORLD**.

The four points of the cross remind us of the first four parts of **GRACE**:

We **GROW** with Jesus  
We **REJOICE** in God  
We **ANSWER** with hope  
We **CARE** for our neighbors

Each of these points moves us to the circle where we **EMBRACE** community. When Jesus calls us to life with him, it is not alone or solitary, but rather a life with and among others.

Our paths may be varied, winding, wandering and twisting, but as we walk the excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31) we find Jesus who is the heart of life. The circle and the heart work together to mark out the four areas where we practice the way and find the Lord: in our homes, among our neighbors, around the city, and out in the world.

The cross in Duke blue and the heart in Carolina blue reminds us of our commitment to be God's People in the Durham/Chapel Hill area, "between the Blues."

*<sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the higher gifts.  
And I will show you a still more excellent way.  
~ 1 Corinthians 12:31 ESV*

**Mission Statement:** We are called to *Welcome Everyone to Walk the Way of **GRACE***, and walk in that way in our individual lives, in our shared life in our various communities, in our common life with our neighbors, and even to the world at large as God sends us. The *Way of Grace* is to: **GROW** with Jesus, **REJOICE** in God, **ANSWER** with hope, **CARE** for the neighbor, and **EMBRACE** community.

**Vision Statement:** God has a plan **FOR OUR LIVES**, and so we teach how to walk in the path of Jesus Christ; **FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**, and so we work to build healthy and strong communities; **FOR OUR CITY**, and so we share life with our neighbors in Walltown, Trinity Park, Duke, and the Triangle; and **FOR OUR WORLD**, and so we go with Good News.

**Core Values:** Because God loves us first, we value worship rooted in Scripture and Sacrament, service to all people, and being a welcoming community that loves and forgives one another.