

St. John's Grace
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

An all-inclusive faith community.



April 28, 2024
Fifth Sunday of Easter
8:30 A.M. Morning Prayer

Welcome to St. John's-Grace!

We are a community who gathers in faith to walk together into the mystery and experience of love, grace, hope, and healing.

Our Mission is to go into the community and partner with our neighbors, to work for justice for all. Everyone is welcome at Jesus' table.

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, and whether you are joining in the nave or via the livestream, you are welcome here!

Established in the early 1800's, St. John's and Grace Church (est. 1825) united in 1971 as St. John's-Grace Episcopal Church. We are an affirming and inclusive Christian community. Our members and leaders welcome all people just as God created them. We do this through love, worship, fellowship, and service.

St. John's-Grace acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Buffalo, the Seneca People, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of all indigenous Iroquoian-speaking people of the Seneca Nation

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Easter The feast of Christ's resurrection. According to Bede, the word derives from the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess Eostre. Christians in England applied the word to the principal festival of the church year, both day and season. 1) Easter Day is the annual feast of the resurrection, the pascha or Christian Passover, and the eighth day of cosmic creation. Faith in Jesus' resurrection on the Sunday or third day following his crucifixion is at the heart of Christian belief.

Easter sets the experience of springtime next to the ancient stories of deliverance and the proclamation of the risen Christ. In the west, Easter occurs on the first Sunday after the full moon on or after the vernal equinox.

Easter always falls between Mar. 22 and Apr. 25 inclusive. Following Jewish custom, the feast begins at sunset on Easter Eve with the Great Vigil of Easter. The Eastern Orthodox Church celebrates Easter on the first Sunday after the Jewish pesach or Passover (which follows the spring full moon). Although the two dates sometimes coincide, the eastern date is often one or more weeks later. 2) Easter Season.

Eastertide Another term for Easter season, the Great Fifty Days. As used in English-speaking churches, “tide” is an old word meaning a festival and its season.

The Great Fifty Days The feast of Easter is a season of fifty days, from Easter Eve through the Day of Pentecost. From early times the Greek word pentecost (fiftieth day) was used also for the whole Paschal season. During this season there is no fasting. The Council of Nicaea (325) directed that Christians are to pray standing. The word “alleluia” (praise the Lord) is said or sung repeatedly, which contrasts sharply with the season of Lent when the alleluia is omitted. The color of liturgical vestments and hangings is white or gold. The BCP notes that it is customary for the Paschal candle to burn at all services of the Easter season. The “Alleluia, alleluia” may be added to the dismissals and their responses during the Great Fifty Days. The traditional Christian Easter greeting (see Lk 24:34) serves as the opening acclamation at the eucharist during the Easter season.

from The Glossary of Terms, An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church
<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/>

The Sounding of the Church Bells

*The people's responses are in **bold**.*

All stand

The Opening Sentence

BCP, p. 75

Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into a heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf -*Heb. 9:24*

Confession of Sin

BCP, p. 79

Officiant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Please kneel as you are able.

The Officiant and people say together:

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Officiant: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Invitatory

BCP, p. 80

All stand, as you are able.

Officiant: O Lord, open our lips.

People: **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Alleluia!**

**Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was
in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Christ Our Passover (*Pascha nostrum*)

BCP, p. 82

The Officiant: Alleluia. Christ the Lord has ascended into heaven: Come let us adore him. Alleluia.

The Officiant and people say together:

Alleluia.

**Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us;
 therefore let us keep the feast,
Not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil,
 but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

Alleluia.

**Christ being raised from the dead will never die again;
 death no longer has dominion over him.
The death that he died, he died to sin, once for all;
 but the life he lives, he lives to God.
So also consider yourselves dead to sin,
 and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Alleluia.**

**Christ has been raised from the dead,
 the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
For since by a man came death,
 by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die,
 so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Alleluia.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

The Psalter

The Psalms should be said responsively by half-verse.

Psalm 22:24-30

Deus, Deus meus

- 24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; *
**I will perform my vows in the presence of those
who worship him.**
- 25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and those who seek the LORD shall praise him: *
"May your heart live for ever!"
- 26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to
the LORD, *
**and all the families of the nations shall bow before
him.**
- 27 For kingship belongs to the LORD; *
he rules over the nations.
- 28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in
worship; *
all who go down to the dust fall before him.
- 29 My soul shall live for him;
my descendants shall serve him; *
they shall be known as the LORD's for ever.
- 30 They shall come and make known to a people yet
unborn *
the saving deeds that he has done.

After the Psalter reading is said:

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

The First Lesson

Reader: A Lesson from the book of Acts.

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. *Acts 8:26-40*

The Word of the Lord;
Thanks Be to God,

A Song of Creation (*Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*)
BCP, p. 88-90

The Officiant and people say together, by alternating verse:

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, you angels and all powers of the Lord,
O heavens and all the waters above the heavens.

Sun and moon and stars of the sky, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, every shower of rain and fall of dew,
all winds and fire and heat.

Winter and summer, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O chill and cold,
drops of dew and flakes of snow.

Frost and cold, ice and sleet, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O nights and days,
O shining light and enfolding dark.

Storm clouds and thunderbolts, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Let the earth glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills,
and all that grows upon the earth,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams
O whales and all that move in the waters.

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,
and all you flocks and herds.

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Let the people of God glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O priests and servants of the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O spirits and souls of the righteous,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

You that are holy and humble of heart, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Let us glorify the Lord: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

The Second Lesson

Reader: A Lesson from the first Letter of John

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. *1 John 4:7-21*

The Word of the Lord;
Thanks Be to God,

You Are God (*Te Deum Laudamus*)

BCP, p. 95

The Officiant and people say together:

You are God: we praise you;

You are the Lord; we acclaim you;

You are the eternal Father: All creation worships you.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven, Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

The glorious company of apostles praise you.

The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.

The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you;

**Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.**

You, Christ, are the king of glory, the eternal Son of the Father.

**When you became man to set us free you did not shun the
Virgin's womb.**

**You overcame the sting of death and opened the kingdom of
heaven to all believers. You are seated at God's right hand in
glory.**

We believe that you will come and be our judge.

**Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

The Third Lesson

The People should remain seated during the lesson.

Reader: A Lesson from the Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples." *John 15:1-8*

The Word of the Lord;
Thanks Be to God,

Comment on the Lessons

By the Officiant.

The Apostle's Creed

BCP, p. 96

The Officiant and People together, all standing:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and was born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer and Suffrages

BCP, p. 97

The people stand or kneel.

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

Officiant and people together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Suffrages A

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

R. **And grant us your salvation.**

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. **Let your people sing with joy.**

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. **For only in you can we live in safety.**

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. **And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**

V. Let your way be known upon earth;
R. **Your saving health among all nations.**
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
R. **Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. **And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

The Collects

BCP, p. 98

The Officiant prays the following collects:

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life:
Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be
the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly
follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through
Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with
you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and
ever. **Amen.**

The Collect For The Season of Easter

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus
Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting
life:

Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Collect for Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom; Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies, that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Grace

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety into this new day; Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer for Mission

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Prayers for Intercession

A period of silent prayer will follow. You may offer prayers or thanksgiving, quietly or aloud, for yourself or others. A list of various prayers and thanksgivings for different occasions is available in the BCP at p. 810.

The General Thanksgiving

BCP, p. 101

The Officiant and people say together:

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

The Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

BCP, p. 102

The Officiant prays:

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

The Closing

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

People: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

Please stay seated for brief announcements.

Everyone is invited to gather for fellowship and refreshments following the service, in the Walter Lord room.

Welcome

We're Glad You're Here!

We gather each week to worship, grow, and serve in the love of Jesus Christ. Coffee, refreshments, and fellowship following the liturgy. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25

Assisting with Ministries

	Officiant	Jesse Pyle
	Usher	John Moffitt
	Host	Nick Green
	Lectors/Readers	Peggy Moffitt, John Moffitt
Announcements		John Moffitt, Jesse Pyle, Wardens or Rob Petersen, Treasurer
	Altar Guild	Donna Doyle

The Bible texts of the Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, c. 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, used by permission.

Those We Hold in Prayer

John Schimminger & Stefana Paskoff; David Mathewson; Deborah Deacon; Neal Hodgson and the Dolce family; Mary Joy & Bill Murphy and family; Ann & Andy Graham, Bonnie and family; Whitey, Kathy Stelter & Martha Robinson

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to

**God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 4:6-7

*Please let the office know if you wish to be listed in our weekly bulletin
prayer list.*

**“To pray... to listen to the voice of the One who calls us the “beloved”
is to learn that that voice excludes no one.”**

The Rev. Henri Nouwen (1932-1996)
Dutch priest, professor, writer, and theologian

A Prayer for Peace and Forgiveness *Contemporary Way of the Cross, p. 49*

Loving God of all the earth, we pray for those who perpetuate injustices in the Holy Land, regard-less of their motives; we pray that you will change their hearts and fill them with the spirit of mercy. Teach us all the pathways of peace and forgiveness. Spirit of comfort, whose glory covers the face of our earth, comfort the oppressed, give shelter to those who have lost their homes, and let your peace dwell in every heart.

With thankful hearts we pray in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

+ + + Announcements + + +

St. John's-Grace is looking for those who might be interested in leading morning or evening prayer services. This would be an occasional commitment of once a month or as needed for special occasions. No prior training or expertise is needed, and there is no expectation of preaching or singing.

Prayer is the lifeblood of the church. Leading others in prayer can be a rich and rewarding spiritual practice. It is also a good way to deepen bonds with your friends and neighbors in the parish. The Book of Common Prayer was designed to make daily offices accessible and easy to follow for all, even those with little or no background in leading worship.

Those interested should please contact Jesse Pyle (jcpyle1066@gmail.com or 740-707-3659). Mother Claudia and/or Jesse will provide training and guidance to all who wish to pursue this ministry.

SJG Fish Fry Dinner Gathering On Friday, May 10 at 6:15 P.M. our church family will gather for dinner, fellowship, and FUN at the Polish Falcon Society of Depew, 445 Columbia Ave. Depew. Everyone is invited to attend. After dinner, we will gather for Ice Cream in memory of Charlie, our beloved Father Deacon, who served our church for many years. A menu of all the food the Polish Falcon Club offers can be found at [Menu ~ Polish Falcon Club](#). Email or text Kathy Stelter by Wednesday, May 8 so that she can make reservations for our group. [kstelter58@gmail.com](mailto:kstelster58@gmail.com)

SJG at Porchfest 2024 ~ Saturday, May 18, 2024
Mark your calendar!

Buffalo Porchfest, a highly anticipated community event, has been a staple since its inception in 2013 and has garnered a significant following. Our team at the Elmwood Village

Association has been diligently working to accommodate all requests from hosts and bands, ensuring a seamless experience for all participants. Please note that the schedule is subject to change without notice, as is customary with live events. We look forward to welcoming everyone back this year and delivering an exceptional event.

Celebrating Birthdays and Anniversaries

Anniversary blessings to **Tim & Wendy Reidy**, who celebrate their Anniversary on Wednesday, April 24. Happy Birthday to **Magdi Ortiz** who will celebrate a birthday on Friday, April 26. Also, Anniversary blessings to **Jim & Barbara Caozzo**, who celebrate their Anniversary on Friday, April 26. Happy Birthday and many blessings to **Mikey Styn** who will celebrate his birthday on Sunday, April 28.

St. John's-Grace Bible Study Group

Bible Study is held on Mondays from 2 to 3 P.M. in the Walter Lord room on the lower level of the Parish Hall. We read the text and comment on it as we go along. The study group is currently reading from the Apocryphal texts. Please, consider joining with us in this exploratory study.

Evening Prayer at SJG

Please join us for evening prayer every Thursday evening at 6:30 P.M. in the side chapel at St. Johns-Grace. This is a quiet, contemplative service drawn from the ancient words of the Book of Common Prayer. It is led by one of our wardens, Jesse

Pyle. This service is perfect for those who may be unable to regularly attend Sunday morning services but still wish to engage in prayer with the community. The service uses only the Book of Common Prayer; there is no Zoom, no bulletins, and no microphone. Please come as you are able, to this warm, intimate service.

Online Healing Prayer

This online healing prayer group is led by Mother Meredith and is held every Monday afternoon from 12-1:00 P.M., at the SJ-G Zoom link found on our website.

Yoga Belle

Yoga Belle is once again meeting on Thursday mornings at 10:00 A.M. in the Parish Hall.

St. John's-Grace Choir

Our SJG Choir welcomes you to join us as we prepare music each week for our worship services. Choir practice is held on Sunday mornings at 9:45 A.M. prior to the 11:00 A.M. service.

Contemplative Prayer

Contemplative Prayer gathers on Thursday mornings, 9-10 A.M., each week in the Sanctuary.

Monthly First Saturday morning prayer retreats are also in the works. Watch the announcements for details.

The Bible & More

Monday evenings, 7:15 P.M. at Westminster

A new class lead by the Rev. Dr. Skip Ferguson. Together we'll grow in faith, spirit, and discipleship as we learn from the Bible, and from various faith traditions and practices. All are welcome!

Volunteers Needed

Additional Hospitality-Reception Hosts, Lay Communion Ministers, Altar Guild, Acolytes, Lectors/Readers, Greeters, Ushers, Choir members, Landscaping Gardeners, and more are being sought. Reach out to the church office if you would like to help.

Buildings and Grounds

Our Vestry has formed a building and grounds committee to guide the church in the preservation of our facilities and adapting them to future needs. We are seeking motivated members to join us. If interested, please contact Bill Murphy, 716-310-0576, wfmurphy@gmail.com or John Moffitt 716-867-2236, nymoff@gmail.com

ADHD Support of Erie-Niagara

Support group meeting the second Tuesday of each month at St. John's-Grace from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Free to attend, light refreshments served, adults 18+. Send questions to erieniagaraadhd@gmail.com

VOICE's mission is to faithfully bring forth racial justice and equity in our region through organized, collective action. VOICE boldly imagines a society of diverse communities that are empowered, informed, active, and connected to one another, where all people have access to the resources they need to thrive and a voice in the decisions that affect them.

Online Gifts and Pledges to St. John's-Grace

The Diocesan Bishop's office continues to maintain an online giving platform that accepts gifts and pledge payments for any congregation. The partnership dioceses will absorb payment processing fees so contributions will go entirely to local mission and the church of your choice. Use the drop-down Fund menu to select Buffalo, St. John's Grace at this link:

<https://onrealm.org/EpiscopalDioces/-/form/give/wynwpa>

Elmwood Village Association

Our Mission:

The Elmwood Village Association is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in our community. We strive to preserve and promote the unique character of Elmwood Village, while fostering a sense of belonging and pride among residents and visitors alike.

With YOUR generous support and our various initiatives, events, and partnerships, we aim to create a vibrant and sustainable neighborhood that celebrates the arts, supports local businesses, and provides a better future for Elmwood and its residents.

Our Vision: The Elmwood Village Association is a hub that facilitates community members coming together to have an impact. We have active member participation, transparent procedures, fiscal

stability, and a culture of engagement, positivity, and relationship-building. We build a neighborhood by engaging residents, merchants, and visitors to improve the quality of life for all. We keep the community informed and invest in beautification projects contributing to a distinct sense of place. We take pride in Elmwood Village's unique urban character and support our community's many features that make this one of Buffalo's best districts for living, shopping, and visiting.

What is the Elmwood Village Association? The Elmwood Village Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit community development organization serving the Elmwood Village in Buffalo, NY. The organization was incorporated formally, as Forever Elmwood Corporation, in November of 1994. The Elmwood Village Association is built by the collective efforts of Elmwood Avenue small business owners, property owners, and neighborhood residents to improve the quality of life and support the Elmwood Avenue business district. With roots extending back into the 1980s, the organization has become the primary vehicle for community engagement shaping the future of this Buffalo neighborhood. Since its inception, the organization has housed active, community-led committees focusing on economic revitalization, housing code enforcement, urban design, zoning regulations, community events, neighborhood safety, small business marketing, and more. The organization follows the National Main Street Center's Main Street Four-Point Approach with transformation strategies focused on: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization.

A Prayer for Ukraine

The Most Reverend and Right Honorable Justin Portal Welby

105th Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Reverend and Right Honorable Stephen Geoffrey Cottrell

Archbishop of York and Primate of England

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today. We pray for peace and laying down of weapons. We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them. We pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment, and compassion to guide their decisions. Above all, we pray for all your precious children at risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

A Litany for the Restoration of Peace in the Holy Land

God of peace, we pray for the people of Palestine and Israel in these perilous and dangerous times.

For all who are fearful for the safety of their loved ones and themselves, we pray that the assurance of unfailing love, even in the midst of danger, settles upon them. Shelter them from despair and protect them from harm.

For all who are wounded, we pray they find healing.

For all who have died, we pray they find rest.

For all who grieve, we pray they find comfort.

For leaders on all sides, we pray for a renewed will to lay down arms, for the strength to put the grievances and wrongs suffered by their people to rest, and for the conviction to embrace a path of reconciliation and peace that preserves the rights and dignity of all of your children.

God of mercy, help us to remember there is no border that can separate us from your great love and protection, no stone that can sound the well of your deep mercy.

God of justice, we pray with hopeful hearts that your beloved children of the Holy Land will be spared a future of sustained violence and unrest and that a recognition of the humanity of all people will prevail.

We ask all this in the name of your Son, Jesus. *Amen.*

*– American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem,
<https://afedj.org/resources/worship-and-prayer-resources/>*

A Prayer for the Palestinian People

In the name of Elohim, the most merciful. May the Palestinian people receive the healing powers of our prayers. May they be granted safety, success, love, security, and hope. May they enjoy the fruits of freedom and equality that they – and all human beings – deserve.

As Jews, we pray for their well-being. We remember that the Holy Land is a shared space and pray to see the day when Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, and all religions will live there together in peace. We hope for the day when Palestinian refugees may return. We pray that together with their Jewish neighbors they can rehabilitate their history and rebuild what could be the best place on Earth. A place of many cultures and true equality.

We pray that Palestinians will be able to live lives free from violence and oppression. And we ask God to help us build bridges of peace with them.

May we be the light that brings peace and hope to our Palestinian friends and to all the world.

Amen.

by Matt (Matah) Adler מטע 7לדא <https://ritualwell.org/ritual/prayer-palestinian-people/>

April 28, 2024 – Easter 5 (B)

General Convention Young Adult Festival

Registration is open online for The Episcopal Church Young Adult Festival, scheduled to run during six days of the 81st General Convention this summer in Louisville, Kentucky. The deadline for participants needing housing is **May 6**; commuter registration deadline is **May 31**. Apply here: iam.ec/yaf2024.

The Young Adult Festival is designed for those ages 18-30 to meet peers from across the globe, pray and learn together, engage in the church’s legislative process, and help discern God’s call for The Episcopal Church.

“This is a wonderful way for young adults to get to know more about General Convention, to understand more how our church creates priorities and budgets, to meet other young adults, to learn more about ministries across the church, to meet the presiding bishop and the president of the House of Deputies, to worship together, and to explore together,” said the Rev. Shannon Kelly, staff officer for Young Adult and Campus Ministries. “We look forward to welcoming everyone to Louisville.”

General Convention will be held June 23-28 at the Kentucky International Convention Center. The Young Adult Festival will run from June 21-26, with programming events at the Galt House Hotel.

The cost for the event ranges between \$135 and \$595, depending on housing choices. Registration for those traveling to Louisville includes five nights of housing at the Galt House Hotel, dinner on June 22, General Convention registration, and all Young Adult Festival programming and activities. Space is limited for housing. Registration for commuters includes dinner, convention registration, and all festival programming and activities. For more information, contact the Rev. Shannon Kelly: skelly@episcopalchurch.org.

Commemorations CHRISTINA ROSSETTI POET, 1894

Christina Georgina Rossetti (5 December 1830 – 29 December 1894) was an English poet who wrote a variety of romantic, devotional, and children's poems. She is best known for her long poem *Goblin Market*, her love poem "Remember", and for the words of what became the popular Christmas carol "In the Bleak Midwinter". Rossetti was born in London and educated at home by her mother. Her father, Gabriele Rossetti, was an Italian poet and a political asylum seeker from Naples; their mother, Frances Polidori, was the sister of Lord Byron's friend and physician, John William Polidori, author of *The Vampyre*.

When she was 14, Rossetti suffered a nervous breakdown, which was followed by bouts of depression and related illness. During this period she, her mother, and her sister became seriously interested in the Anglo-Catholic movement of the Church of England. This religious devotion played a major role in Rossetti's personal life. She was a volunteer worker from 1859 to 1870 at the St. Mary Magdalene "house of charity" in Highgate, a refuge for former prostitutes. Rossetti began writing at age 7, but she was 18 when her first published poem appeared in

the *Athenaeum* magazine. However her most famous collection, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, appeared in 1862, when she was 31.

The collection garnered much critical praise and, according to Jan Marsh, "Elizabeth Barrett Browning's death" (in 1861) "led to Rossetti being hailed as her natural successor as 'female laureate'."

Her Christmas poem "In the Bleak Midwinter" (Hymnal 1982 #112) became widely known after her death when set as a Christmas carol first by Gustav Holst, and then by Harold Darke: in this setting it was judged in 1998 the best carol in a poll of some of the world's leading choirmasters and choral experts. Her poem "Love Came Down at Christmas" (1885; Hymnal 1982 #84) has also been widely arranged as a carol. Rossetti continued to write and publish for the rest of her life although she focused primarily on devotional writing and children's poetry. In the later decades of her life, she suffered from Graves Disease. In 1893 she developed cancer, and died the following year 29 December 1894.

CATHERINE OF SIENA REFORMER AND SPIRITUAL TEACHER (29 APR 1380)

Catherine Benincasa, born in 1347, was the youngest (one of my sources says the 23rd) of twenty-five children of a wealthy dyer of Sienna (or Siena). At the age of six, she had a vision of Christ in glory, surrounded by His saints. From that time on, she spent most of her time in prayer and meditation, over the opposition of her parents, who wanted her to be more like the average girl of her social class. Eventually they gave in, and at the age of sixteen she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic (First Order = friars, Second Order = nuns, Third Order = laypersons),

where she became a nurse, caring for patients with leprosy and advanced cancer whom other nurses disliked to treat.

She began to acquire a reputation as a person of insight and sound judgement, and many persons from all walks of life sought her spiritual advice, both in person and by letter. (We have a book containing about four hundred letters from her to bishops, kings, scholars, merchants, and obscure peasants.) She persuaded many priests who were living in luxury to give away their goods and to live simply.

In her day, the popes, officially Bishops of Rome, had been living for about seventy years, not at Rome but at Avignon in France, where they were under the political control of the King of France (the Avignon Papacy, sometimes called the Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy, began when Philip the Fair, King of France, captured Rome and the Pope in 1303). Catherine visited Avignon in 1376 and told Pope Gregory XI that he had no business to live away from Rome. He heeded her advice, and moved to Rome. She then acted as his ambassador to Florence, and was able to reconcile a quarrel between the Pope and the leaders of that city. She then retired to Siena, where she wrote a book called the *Dialog*, an account of her visions and other spiritual experiences, with advice on cultivating a life of prayer.

After Gregory's death in 1378, the Cardinals, mostly French, elected an Italian Pope, Urban VI, who on attaining office turned out to be arrogant and abrasive and tyrannical, and perhaps to have other faults as well. The Cardinals met again elsewhere, declared that the first election had been under duress from the Roman mob and therefore invalid, and elected a new Pope, Clement VII, who established his residence at Avignon.

Catherine worked tirelessly, both to persuade Urban to mend his ways (her letters to him are respectful but severe and uncompromising -- as one historian has said, she perfected the art of kissing the Pope's feet while simultaneously twisting his arm), and to persuade others that the peace and unity of the Church required the recognition of Urban as lawful Pope. Despite her efforts, the Papal Schism continued until 1417. It greatly weakened the prestige of the Bishops of Rome, and thus helped to pave the way for the Protestant Reformation a century later.

Catherine is known (1) as a mystic, a contemplative who devoted herself to prayer, (2) as a humanitarian, a nurse who undertook to alleviate the suffering of the poor and the sick; (3) as an activist, a renewer of Church and society, who took a strong stand on the issues affecting society in her day, and who never hesitated (in the old Quaker phrase) "to speak truth to power"; (4) as an adviser and counselor, with a wide range of interests, who always made time for troubled and uncertain persons who told her their problems -- large and trivial, religious and secular.

by James Kiefer



ST. JOHN'S - GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

51 Colonial Circle, Buffalo, NY 14222 (716) 885-1112

www.stjohnsgrace.org

The Episcopal Church welcomes all who worship Jesus Christ, in 111 dioceses and regional areas in 17 nations. The Episcopal Church is a member province of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The mission of the church, as stated in the Book of Common Prayer's catechism (p. 855), is "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ." As part of that mission, we're following Jesus into loving, liberating, and life-giving relationship with God, with each other and with the earth as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. We seek every day to love God with our whole heart, mind, and soul, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. *Matthew 22:36-40*

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Brian L. Hilton, (716) 435-9771 brian14209@aol.com

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