

GRACE HAPPENS HERE IN SHARING GOD'S ABUNDANCE- WEEK 3



FROM THE RECTOR - A PRAYER FOR THE KEEP



Three years ago our Vestry faced a decision. We had several people with the gifts and experiences to fill the normal positions on the Vestry, and quite well. But we also had this situation that had arisen a few times over the years that I wanted to address through them.

That situation was a “miss”. They would happen when a problem, decision, or opportunity would come up, and we would realize after we resolved it that we had not gone to prayer together, or that we had kept in mind a lot of things but not some essential thing that was close to our purpose.

These “misses” were not threatening, just disappointing. They never endangered the church, but they frustrated the leadership. They were subtle but important, so I proposed a new position on the Vestry: the Keep.

In medieval castles, the center structure, often the original tower or hold of the castle was called the “keep”. It was the safest place in the castle behind several layers of security, and it was often deep and central to the identity of the castle. The Tower of London could be called the keep of its structure, the oldest, central structure of the main castle of London.

The keeper of the keep, sometimes called the keeper of the keys in literature, was often a trusted counselor of the king or regent of the castle. I thought immediately of these couple of people serving on the Vestry as keepers of the keep, so we called this new position the Keep. Our first Keep on the Vestry was Greg Hagan, and currently Mary Merrill is our Keep with Eddie Grim as Assisting Keep.

I have been thinking of Grace this month as an elaborate castle of the Lord. Like a castle, the reach of its influence goes far outside the walls, but the inward workings are complex, multi-layered, and frankly busy. Like those medieval castles, Grace plays a role in the larger community and involves whole markets and residences. Every member of these elaborate communities and organs is vital. From the guards to the maids, horsemen to regents, every person makes this place what it is.

Unlike those castle of lore, our community is made a family in Christ. Our keep is not some older, experienced warrior or sheriff, but rather the Holy Spirit, and this is the time to go deep into the center of who we are and to listen to what the Spirit has to say. The keep of the vestry kept us to our true identity, so that we did not miss our true calling and values and opportunities as we did the work of being community together.

Don't miss this time to pray, to go down into the depth of this community, to God yourself to listen to the Holy Spirit's call to steward this important landmark on the spiritual landscape, our home, Grace. Don't let this opportunity to be Grace pass you by. The Keep is waiting with wisdom, insight, and experience for you.

WHO SAID.....?

Draw a line from the name to their quotation about giving.

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Anne Frank | A | For it is in the giving that we receive. |
| 2. St. Paul | B | No person was ever honored for what he received. He was honored for what he gave. |
| 3. Calvin Coolidge | C | The Spirit reveals that we belong not to a world of success, fame, or power, but to God. |
| 4. Jesus | D | No one has ever become poor by giving. |
| 5. St. Francis | E | No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. |
| 6. Winston Churchill | F | Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. |
| 7. Henri Nouwen | G | We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give. |

Answers are on pages 2

MORNING PRAYER

Morning Prayer – 24th Sunday after Pentecost – Proper 27
O Lord our God, you have given us all things so that we might delight in light and serve you in all creation. As we think and pray about ourselves, our time, and our possessions; equip us to give outlandishly these things to further our faith, build your Kingdom and bring others to relationship with you, Creator, Redeemer, and the one who makes us Holy. Amen.

Psalm 93

Read from the Bible or the Daily Office Lectionary, page 992, BCP		
Sunday	Ezra 10:1-17	Luke 14:12-24
Monday	Nehemiah 9:1-25	Matthew 15:1-20
Tuesday	Nehemiah 9:26-38	Matthew 15:21-28
Wednesday	Nehemiah 7:73b-8:3,5-18	Matthew 15:29-39
Thursday	1 Maccabees 1:1-28	Matthew 16:1-12
Friday	1 Macc. 1:41-63	Matthew 16:13-20
Saturday	1 Macc. 2:1-28	Matthew 16:21-28

Reflections: Silent and Written Prayers

The Church in our neighborhood and around the World
For those persecuted today for the sake of the Gospel
For our Nation and Leaders
The work we share in our Parish, area, and world
For our new Rector and Priest
Thanksgiving, praise, and concerns

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Collect

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God!

EVENING PRAYER

Evening Prayer – 24th Sunday after Pentecost – Proper 27
Lord, You are in the midst of us and we are called by your Name: Do not forsake us, O Lord our God.
Jeremiah 14:9, 22

Psalm 34

Read from the Bible or the Daily Office Lectionary, page 992, BCP		
Sunday	Acts 24:10-21	Luke 14:12-24
Monday	Revelation 18:1-8	Matthew 15:1-20
Tuesday	Revelation 18:9-20	Matthew 15:21-28
Wednesday	Revelation 18:21-24	Matthew 15:29-39
Thursday	Revelation 19:1-10	Matthew 16:1-12
Friday	Revelation 19:11-36	Matthew 16:13-20
Saturday	Revelation 20:1-6	Matthew 16:21-28

Reflections: Silent and Written Prayers

Pray for your calling, your giving, and work as a disciple of Christ.
The Lord's Prayer
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Collect

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

The Antiphon

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God!

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen.

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STEWARDSHIP IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY

Never pledged before?

A suggestion for beginning the journey

- Calculate your annual household income
- Write down your current annual pledge to the church
- Calculate the percent of income you are currently giving to the church.
- Consider what gift (or percent of your income) would bring you joy.

More food for thought

- On an annual basis, how much does your household spend on _____?
 (Insert something you consider to be a discretionary expense such as eating out, hobbies, entertainment, vacations, etc.)
- What percent of your income do you spend on this item annually:
- Compare this number with the percent given to the church



For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21

DISCOVERING THE JOY OF GIVING

Becoming a faithful steward of God's abundant blessings enables us to experience the joy of giving. Some have humorously suggested that we should "give until it hurts," while the discipline of stewardship suggests that we "give until it feels good."

Discovering God's will for our lives and resources is an opportunity for spiritual growth and a deepening of our relationship with God.

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WHAT PORTION SHALL I GIVE?

By considering a gift to Grace Church as a proportion of income, we establish priorities that reflect our relationship with God. Determining our giving to God through the church requires prayer and faith. Biblical tradition suggests the practice of giving away 10 percent (a tithe) of our income. For some, it is helpful to calculate the current percent of income given to Grace Church and to grow one or two percent a year until the tithe is reached. As a guide for your stewardship journey, we offer this proportional giving chart.

Proportional Giving Chart

Annual Income	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	12%	15%
\$30,000	\$600	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$2,400	\$3,000	\$3,600	\$4,500
\$40,000	\$800	\$1,600	\$2,400	\$3,200	\$4,000	\$4,800	\$6,000
\$50,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,500
\$75,000	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$9,000	\$11,250
\$100,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$15,000
\$125,000	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$15,000	\$18,750
\$150,000	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$15,000	\$18,180	\$22,500
\$175,000	\$3,500	\$7,000	\$10,500	\$14,000	\$17,500	\$21,000	\$26,250

You want me to do what?

For some, giving back 10 percent (or more) of their annual household income is a daunting challenge. This is why stewardship is about growth. It encourages us to assess where we are in returning a substantial proportion of our blessings back to God out of gratitude for everything we have been given. It is about finding the level of giving that brings us joy.

What are your giving habits? Won't you grow in giving this year?

Zero	Token	Flat Amount	Proportional	Tither
Can include one-third of attenders. They contribute nothing to the life of the congregation. Contribute either time or talent in lieu of treasure. May be long-term church-goers, but they are young in the faith and in giving.	New to faith or new to our church and have little experience of charitable giving. Contribute via the offering plate but do not pledge. Unaware of church ministries. They are obstacles when enlisted in leadership because of inexperience in church and giving.	Determined giving based on flat amount and divide by 12 months or 52 weeks. Settle on an amount and do not waiver from year to year. Attitude of giving is similar to paying dues or taxes.	Have decided to make giving based on income with a personal goal of reaching 10 percent giving. They give first from their income rather than leftovers. Discovered joy of giving but are not yet tithers.	Have discovered the joy of generosity by giving away 10 percent or more. They have a sense of gratitude, awe for God's blessings, a spirit of generosity, and a desire to give away more.