



# Grace to You

Grace Episcopal Church  
The Very Rev. H. Scott Kirby,  
Priest-in-Charge  
January, 2018

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715-434-1040 **Church Circuit Number**

*Our vision: "Come to know and live with God at our table."  
The mission of Grace Church is to have a church committed to God and our neighbors, sustained by individuals dedicated to providing spiritual opportunities to enhance the feelings of family and community*

2017



*Thank you, Heidi Olson,  
for many of these photos.*

**Presiding Bishop Michael Curry  
Christmas Message 2017**

In 2 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul says,

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new is come.

At a point in that passage, St. Paul says, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself,” and he also says at another point in the same passage, “and we have been given the ministry of reconciliation.”

Have you ever gone to the movies or read a story or a novel, and the novel starts with the end, so you know where the story ends, but then the rest of the story or the novel is actually the story behind the story. We know about Christmas. We know about Mary. We know about Joseph. We know about the angels singing Gloria in excelsis deo. We know from our childhood the animals in the stable. We know of the magi who come from afar, arriving around Epiphany, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. We know of the angels singing in the heavens, and the star that shown above them. Therein is the story.

But the story behind the story is what St. Paul was talking about. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and Jesus has now given us that same ministry of reconciliation. God was reconciling the world to himself by becoming one of us. The divine became human. God entered history. Eternity became part of time. God was reconciling the world to himself by actually living it himself. In Jesus, God came among us to show us the way, to be reconciled with the God who has created us all and everything that is. And God has likewise come in the person of Jesus, to show us how to be reconciled with each other, as children of the one God who is the Creator of us all. That’s the story behind Christmas.

God is showing us the Way to become God’s children, and as God’s children, brothers and sisters of each other. God is showing us in Jesus how to become God’s family and how to change, and build, and make a world where everybody is a part of that family. Where children don’t go to bed hungry. Where no one has to be lonely. Where justice is real for all and where love is the ultimate law.

Know there is a story behind the story, and it’s a story worth singing about, and giving thanks for, and then living.

One of my favorite writers, the late Howard Thurman, composed a poem many years ago about Christmas, and he says it probably better than I:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and the princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
Then the work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace to others,  
And alas, to make music in the heart.*



The story behind the story is that God so loved the world, and so loves you, and so loves me.

Have a blessed Christmas, a wonderful New Year, and go out and make music in the heart of the world.

**The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
The Episcopal Church**



December 20, 2017

Dear Family and Friends of the Diocese of Eau Claire,

In January of 1990 I visited the Holy Land. I was there about ten days on a crash course of familiarization sponsored by St. George's College in Jerusalem. One morning late in the trip our group visited Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock. Both are on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Al-Aqsa had been the Cathedral for the Crusader Kingdom. Dome of the Rock is the third most holy site of Islam and contains Mt. Moriah where Abraham planned to sacrifice Isaac. It is the site of Herod's Temple, and its foundation at a lower level is the location of the Wailing Wall that is so sacred to Jews.

Upon entering both Al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock I was struck by the beautiful and intricate colors and designs. Dome of the Rock in particular is filled with mosaic combinations of squares, circles, diamonds, and other shapes. My impression was that the persons who designed Dome of the Rock were either scientists or mathematicians. In both places, as prescribed by Islamic law, was the absence of any human or other living images.

As I left these two Mosques, I found myself walking into the Old City of Jerusalem away from my group and moving at an increasingly faster pace. My being there left me with an unexplainable void. I didn't understand myself, but I ached for something in Christianity. I desperately needed to find a Church. Finally I came by chance to St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church also known to me as the Memorial Chapel of Saints Joachim and Anne, parents of the Virgin Mary. Inside that Church were exquisite wood and stone carvings of Mary, Jesus, and Mary's parents. Immediately the anxiety within me dissipated, and I felt an incredible sense of peace and joy. Spiritually I was connected with people—holy people!

Of the three major western religions, Christianity embraces most fully the incarnation. As expressed in Christian painting and statuary, we see and experience God in the flesh. When we look at our own bodies we understand that we are made in God's image. When we imagine Jesus teaching we see him as God himself. Jesus' death on the Cross is bloody, sweaty, and dirty. We understand this as a sad dimension of our own human experience. When we see Jesus as Risen Lord in Easter season, we believe this is what we will be like when we too are raised from the dead and commence a new life with God in heaven.

As we take delight in celebrating the birth of a child in our own families, at Christmas the birth of Jesus brings forth the powerful and joyful message of Emmanuel—God is with us! God is incarnate, "enfleshed," in the person on Jesus. His teachings, life, death, and resurrection are destined to change how we see God, the world, each other, and especially ourselves. It may seem strange to say it, but Christmas is about understanding what it means to be human. God has given us a roadmap on who he wants each of us to be. We are then challenged to take this ideal and live out in our flesh the reality that we can love God and love others by first learning to love ourselves. To paraphrase from Genesis 1: God made us and determined that what he accomplished is exceedingly good! With my love and best wishes in this Christmas Season, I am,

Your brother in Christ,  
W. Jay Lambert  
Bishop of Eau Claire

## January Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 5 Wayne & Jeanne North
- 7 Mary Thompson
- 9 Peter Olson
- 9 Nathan Hodgson
- 11 Eileen Yeakley
- 15 Paula (Heidi Olson's mother)
- 18 Holly Pimentel
- 18 Suzanne Funck
- 22 LaVonne Thompson
- 28 Rick Pimentel

### *Your Vestry*

Paul Chase, Sr. Warden  
 Marv Thompson, Jr. Warden  
 LaVonne Thompson, Clerk  
 Tom Yeakley, Treasurer  
 Janelle Gruetzmacher (2018)  
 Suzanne Funck (2018)  
 Ann Roeder (2019)  
 Eileen Yeakley (2019)  
 Lynn Fowler (2020)  
 Steve Harback (2020)

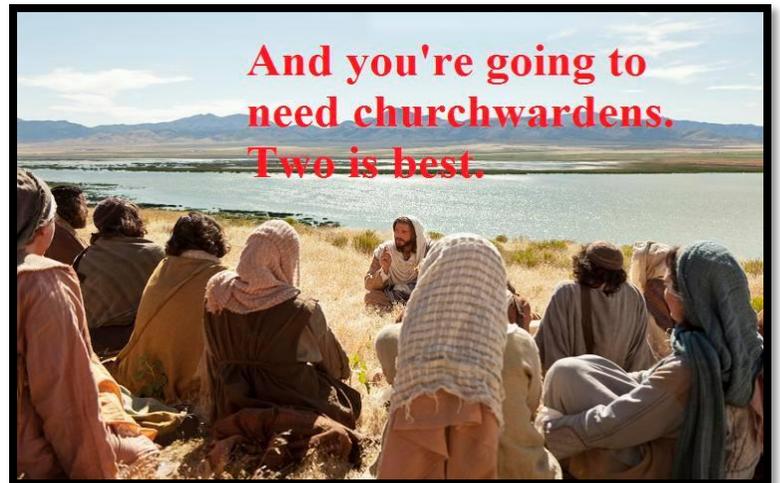
January 17-20 Father Kirby on vacation  
January 21 Vestry meeting  
January 28 Annual meeting  
 Sign up for the pot luck lunch



There was excellent response to the call for supplies for Benjamin's House Shelter, The Family House Shelter, and the R.L.H.S. Caring Closet. We will be distributing these donated items in the new year. Thank you for caring about the needs in our community!

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The General Theological Seminary thanks us for our gift of \$650.00 that was received on December 18, 2017. The letter goes on to say, "Your continued faith and support is a blessing to our community-Thank you."



### **DO ALL YOU CAN**

John Wesley  
 Do all the good you can,  
 By all the means you can,  
 In all the ways you can,  
 In all the places you can,  
 At all the times you can,  
 To all the people you can,  
 As long as ever you can.



## 2018 Ministry Schedule

The Service	January 7 1 Epiphany The Baptism of Our Lord Holy Eucharist	January 14 2 Epiphany Morning Prayer	January 21 3 Epiphany Holy Eucharist	January 28 4 Epiphany Holy Eucharist
Celebrant	The Very Rev. H. Scott Kirby	Mary Marsh, Worship leader	The Very Rev. H. Scott Kirby	The Very Rev. H. Scott Kirby
Organist	Heidi Olson	Heidi Olson	Dorothy Lewis	Heidi Olson
Crucifer	Joe Burnap	X	Jon Olson	Paul Chase
Eucharistic Ministers	Bev Burnap Mary Marsh	X	Marv & Mary Thompson	Tom & Eileen Yeakley
Lector	Paul Chase	Eileen Yeakley	Stacey Tubbs	Jane Bender
Ushers	Tom & Eileen Yeakley	Marv & Mary Thompson	Ty & Janelle Gruetzmacher	Craig & Lynn Fowler
Counters	Marv Thompson Lynn Fowler	Joe Burnap Craig Fowler	Mary Ellen Filkins Nancy Bender	Tyler Gruetzmacher Nancy Bender
Coffee Hour Hosts	Mary Marsh	Gruetzmachers Burnaps	Yeakleys LaVonne Thompson	Pot Luck before the Annual Meeting See the sign-up sheet