

Grace Notes

February 2011

The monthly newsletter of Grace Reformed Episcopal Church, Scranton, PA. The Rev. Paul S. Howden, Rector; the Rt. Rev. David Hicks, Bishop Ordinary. See Gracerec.org for driving directions and other information.

Church Renovation.

Are you ready to get back into the sanctuary? Slowly but surely progress is being made. First, the vestry, then the congregation voted to approve the loan of \$255,000.00 from the Looney-Hoffman Trust. Both votes were unanimous. This loan will cover the renovations for the sanctuary and any other projects decided upon. The vestry met again Tuesday night Jan. 25, and awarded the church renovation contract to Scartelli Construction Services, Inc., a local business. The delay in starting was necessary for two reasons: first, the vestry needed to study exactly what renovations were needed. Secondly, they carefully evaluated which contractor to pick to do the work. This Tuesday or Wednesday (Feb 1 or 2) Scartelli Construction will begin removing the damaged ceiling, installing new drywall and the other projects for our sanctuary. The work should take about two months. Another company will replace the carpet.

Related to the renovations, the vestry created a “color committee” to choose the new colors for the sanctuary walls, carpet, and drapery. Beth Howden chairs the committee along with Suzanne Grote, Cheryl Smith, Bob and Sue Crane. They will present their choices to the congregation for feedback. The committee welcomes input and suggestions from all members of the parish.

Volunteers are needed to help move things out of the sanctuary for the constructors to begin. He would like to move baptismal font, coat hanger, paintings, etc. Let Ralph Bohn know if you can help.

Please persevere in your tithes and offerings. Keep in mind the biblical principles for your giving to the Lord:

- 1.) The giving of your tithes and offerings can be a means of grace that God uses to sanctify you. (Matthew 6:20).
- 2.) God’s ownership of everything means that when you give to the ministry of the local church you are simply giving back to God what already belongs to Him. (Psalm 24:1)
- 3.) Your tithe can be the means of souls getting to heaven. (Matthew 25:16).
- 4.) The Lord often blesses His people (physically, economically, and spiritually) when they trust Him with their tithes (Malachi 3:8-10).

Pastors and Their Wives Retreat.

Every year the diocese holds a January retreat in Lancaster for pastors and their wives. Thanks to a generous gift from the Kesters, and babysitting by the Burdicks, Beth and I were able to attend this year (Jan. 27-29). It was a great time of fellowship and learning as the speaker, Kevin Skogen unearthed the spiritual lessons of the Narnia books. Great stuff!

Super Bowl Party.

There will be a Super Bowl party at the rectory next Sunday. Come and enjoy the game. Go Packers!

30-year Award.

Jim Kester was honored by Tobyhanna for 30 years of excellent service and work. His boss is very grateful for his professionalism. Congratulations Jim!

Gideons International

Jan. 23, a representative, John Robinson, gave a presentation of the Bible-Distribution ministry of the Gideons. John is a humble and godly servant who spoke about this work worth supporting.

Christmas Specials.

We had a great Christmas this year. Twice the choir performed the Christmas Cantata entitled "Winter's Grace"; once at Grace Church and again at the Veterans' Administration building in downtown Scranton. It was a blessing to many and well received.

The annual Christmas dinner was one of the best ever. Sue Brodish was our guest speaker. The food was tasty, the atmosphere festive, the carols and special music a delight, and the gift exchange much fun.

The Christmas Eve "Lessons and Carols" service began at 4 PM, and it was an appropriate and moving way to celebrate this most special night. To conclude, candles were lit in the dark as we sang "Silent Night."

A New Year's eve party was held at the rectory. A good number of young people showed up for fellowship and feasting. We sang hymns and the pastor preached on "Redeeming the Time," for the New Year. Many played games and celebrated.

Web Site.

The parish web site, gracerec.org, has been updated with new sermons and many other nice features. Please take time to read Evan Hughes' article on worship, and the mission statement. The site is easy to navigate and has many good articles on a variety of subjects. Please visit!

Episcopal Visit.

Bishop David Hicks will make his next Episcopal visit on July 17th. God willing we will have the sanctuary completed by that time, and our bishop can dedicate it in a special way.

Banners.

Lacking banners for several important church festivals and events Women of the Church will begin creating some in January. If you are interested in designing banners to beautify our worship please see Ellen Williams.

Women of the Church.

The women of the Church will next meet in March. All ladies are welcome.

Sunday School Classes.

The high schoolers started their class with Evan Hughes. The Rev. Josh Grote is teaching the adult S.S. class. He has encouraged small group discussion towards growing the parish, building up one another, and using our gifts for Christ in His church. The other classes are learning valuable truths.

General Council.

The General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church comes this June 8-10, 2011 in Dallas, Texas.

Board of Foreign Missions.

With blessing of the vestry, and at the request of the Board of Foreign Missions Pastor Paul Howden has been named to lead the summer mission trip to Nigeria. It will take place July 19-Aug 2. Pray about participating in this project which will involve building a hospital ward near the city of Abu, in Southern Nigeria. This is in the Anglican diocese of Abu-Ngua North. The hospital wing will be named after the Reformed Episcopal Church. There will be computer work and other projects planned. Bishop Nathan Kanu is the Bishop and our contact for the trip. His is well-known by our bishops and to be trusted.

Timothy Howden, Charissa Howden and Kurt Schommer may participate.

Bill and Diane Jerdan head off for Southeast Asia in February. They will travel to Cambodia, Nepal, and other neighboring countries to strengthen contacts with Anglicans in Southeast Asia. Bill will inquire about the possibilities of adoption from the region.

Thursday Bible Study.

Sue Crane continues the Thursday evening Bible study with a group of dedicated ladies. They are covering a manual by J.I. Packer called, "Meeting God," and have three more sessions. All are invited every Thursday night at 7 PM.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study.

Jeane Mehne is leading the Wednesday morning Bible study, and the ladies are going through the book of Luke. Things get started at 9:45 A.M. with coffee and refreshments; the study itself runs from 10-11 AM.

Addiction Class.

Kathy Toothill leads the Monday evening addiction class that has an AA format. The mutual encouragement and prayers are helpful for those who struggle with substance abuse and alcoholism. Others assisting are Ron and Linda Burdick.

Pro-Life news.

Elaine Kester is the person promoting the ministry of Care Net to the various churches in the region. On Sun. Jan. 23, Pro-Life Sunday, she reminded us of the importance of this cause. The last Sunday in January we begin a baby bottle fund-raiser.

Each family will receive a bottle to fill up with coins. The money raised will go toward Care Net Scranton. The bottle will be collected March 6.

The Pro-Life breakfast was held on Sat. Jan. 29.

Please set aside Friday evening April 29. CareNet will hold their banquet that evening at St. Mary's Center.

Scott Kester is on the board, and they are working on getting 501 c (3) status for contributions. CareNet has a wish list: the Scranton office is looking for carpeting for the reception area, and more volunteers. If you can help, please see Elaine.

Choir and Wind Ensemble.

More members are needed in the choir and wind ensemble! Please consider joining. Beth Howden is the director of both. We resume rehearsals Tuesday Feb. 1. Baby sitting is usually available.

Men's Fellowship.

The men gather at the Man Cave for a great time of fellowship. God willing, the next meeting will be in Feb. 2.

Ladies' Discipleship group with Shower.

On Friday Jan. 21, the ladies had a nice group for the baby shower for Kcaarin Pineau and Patty Vietri. This discipleship gathers the last Friday of most months, and will meet again on Feb. 25, 2011 at the rectory. "Because He Loves Me" is the book in use.

Parenting Class.

The parenting class is going quite well. We meet the 2nd Friday of every month. The next meeting will be Feb. 11. Absorbing discussions ensued. Please join us at the rectory at 7 PM this Dec. 9. This class is open to one and all, whether you have children or not.

GRECO.

The GRECO outreach committee meets the first Saturday of every month at 9 AM. This Sat., Feb. 5, 9 AM is our next meeting. Please join GRECO and help out in evangelizing Northeast Penn.

Do you know where and how we can acquire real estate signs? These could be painted yellow, then written on with a black marker, "CHURCH →". The idea is to hammer these signs at key intersections around the church on Sunday mornings we could see walk-ons come through the doors of our parish.

Booklets and Pamphlets.

Evan Hughes has been putting out a selection of booklets on a variety of topics. Anybody can pick one up. These include practical and theological questions, evangelism and devotionals. It costs money to keep the materials replenished on the table. Please consider donating to this cause. A gift of \$50.00 can purchase many copies. Talk to Evan for more information.

Scranton Rescue Mission.

The next time for serving at the Scranton Rescue Mission will be Saturday evening on March 5th. Please see Bob Crane if you are willing to help out.

Uction.

James 5 exhorts those who are ill to go to the elders who will pray for them with the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. You have an opportunity to come forward and receive this the Sundays we observe Morning Prayer.

A.C.N.A.

The Reformed Episcopal Church is a confederate member of the Anglican Church of North America. Check out the web site: Anglicanchurch.net, and the document signed by our bishops: manhattandeclaration.org

A gathering of the Anglican Church of North America meets this Jan. 25-27, 2011 in Plano Texas. It is called "Summit 2011." Pastor Tim Keller will be the speaker.

Birthdays and Anniversaries for Feb.**Birthdays:**

Lucas Hughes Feb. 2
Samson McDonough Feb. 2
Kathy Toothill, Feb. 12
Valerie McDonough Feb. 15
David Whitley, Feb. 16
Phil Forgione, Feb. 19
Linda Burdick Feb. 21
Scott Kester Feb. 21

Anniversaries:***Prayer Needs.***

Pray for our parish as we commence renovating the sanctuary.

*Pray for the ministry of Grace R. E. C.: Growth in love, holiness, membership, mutuality, and giving; Pastor Howden and his family; for our evangelism, discipleship, outreach, website, worship, music ministries, Bible studies, Sunday School classes, preaching and teaching, fellowship, and finances.

*Those with special needs: Sarah Bohn needs our prayers for the soccer injury she suffered on her knee. There seems to be slow progress.

The Williams. Edie MacIntire. Stanley North.

Jim Pugliese has pneumonia. Sean Mullen, Doris Mullen's son, also has contracted pneumonia. They need our prayers.

The Statsmans. The Whitleys. Kathy Toothill. Malachi Howden in Okinawa with the Marine Corps, and Mark Howden currently in Twenty-Nine Palms. Jamie Barber. Val Pagliari, The Amicos. The Mendez family. The Burdicks. Roy Mehne. The Sheerins. Claire Kegel. Suzanne Grote. Bishop David Hicks and his family. The Pineau Family, especially Kcaarin's unborn baby. Jaime Mosher's pregnancy. Michele McCulligan gave birth to a girl Riley.

*For families and individuals who visit; that they would stay and join.

*Our shut-ins: Vince and Ruth Crane, and Marian Strauch.

*Please pray for missionaries, prisoners, U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, for the preservation of male/female marriage. The advancement of pro-life cause.

*Pray for revival in the U.S. and N. E. PA.

*The ministries of: Rock Mountain Bible Camp, the Scranton Rescue Mission, Care Net of Scranton, the Monday Night addiction group.

*Evan Hughes is making a transition from his present job into full-time art work.

*The Keislings travel to Florida. The Stefanskis just returned from Florida.

*Cheryl Smith traveled to Arizona for her brother's memorial service. Others traveling.