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Lent Begins February 17

We will have two identical services on Ash Wednesday, February 17: one at 11 a.m. and one at 7 p.m. Both will include the imposition of ashes and litany of penitence, as well as a celebration of Holy Communion ✕

Lenten House Eucharists

As the season of Lent begins, the Church of the Annunciation once again gears up for house eucharists. A tradition begun only last year, these are small gatherings in which we break bread, and share the cup as well as a meal in the homes of parishioners.

There will generally be one house eucharist hosted each week throughout Lent, and the gatherings are fairly small, ranging from five to ten guests, depending on the space available in the homes. The tradition of house eucharists stems from the early days of the Christian church, when it was illegal to gather and worship in public. To avoid persecution, Christians would secretly meet in houses to celebrate the eucharist.



One of last year's participants explains, "Participating in a house eucharist is a wonderful way to bring spiritual focus to the Lenten season and at the same time offer an opportunity to meet your fellow parishioners in a more personal setting."

The meals are potluck, and participants are asked to bring a simple main dish, vegetable, salad, dessert, or wine. Sign-up sheets will be available in the Parish Hall. For anyone new to Annunciation or new to this event, consider signing up early, as spaces tend to go quickly. One of the reasons for its popularity is the particular intimacy and warmth afforded by meeting in someone's home.

This year, the structure will be that of an ancient symposium, which was doubtless Jesus' model for the shape of the eucharistic meal. Instead of a homily, we will have a general discussion over dinner, which will be set in the context of the eucharist. Being in a small group in an informal environment allows for a relaxed exchange of reflections and thoughts, and it's a great way to get to know your fellow parishioners. ✕



Annual Meeting of the Parish
Sunday, 7 February 2009
Following the 10 a.m. service

For the purpose of electing Wardens, Vestry Members, Delegates to District 9 and Diocesan Convention, and for the oral reports of the Wardens and Rector

A Name to Remember

Who are Grace and David Oliff? *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* says, "Grace, the quality or state of being considerate or thoughtful." In Greek mythology, "one of three sister goddesses who were the givers of charm and beauty." And David is the taciturn, strong individual who speaks little but is at all times available to volunteer and be helpful in many areas and numerous ways.

Grace Benson Oliff is "born to Annunciation," that is, baptized, confirmed, married, vestry, warden, Lay Eucharistic Minister. She uses her abundant skills and talents in running a long list of activities, including Breakfast at Annunciation, a variety of food fundraisers (spaghetti dinner, pancake supper, etc.) and monitoring the Lay Eucharistic Minister's schedule. This is accomplished in her quiet methodical way with strong assistance from David.

While Grace is New Jersey born, David is an import from the Bronx. David's family moved to Teaneck, where both of them grew up. The attended and graduated from Teaneck High School, but were just casual friends among a fairly large group of acquaintances. It was only while Grace was attending Douglas College and David was at Monmouth that they got to know each other. As fate would have it, David was visiting a friend and started to talk to Grace. They realized that they had much in common and a lot to talk about.

Completing their undergraduate work, getting married at Annunciation in 1977, the Rev. Jamie Callaway officiating, they planned to continue education. Grace completed her Master of Library Science at Columbia University and then enrolled in a doctoral program at Rutgers. David, meanwhile, graduated with a degree in political science, and enrolled in a master's program at Seton Hall. An almost tragic episode sidetracked their plans. In 1979, David was seriously injured in an automobile accident that left him in a coma for a month. It was followed by a two-year recuperative period. Although their educational plans were interrupted, this experience shaped their marriage in a most positive way; they learned that they could weather just about anything thrown their way—together.

Grace is a school librarian for the Hillsdale School District, a part-time lecturer at the Rutgers School of

Communication and Information and at William Paterson University. She is the "story teller in residence" for Elizabeth Mottow School in Englewood. She writes book reviews and articles related to her field. In 1998, Grace received the prestigious Governor Teaching Recognition Award for her work.



Davis is employed in a very exacting and technical occupation as watch maker for Seiko Corporation.

Education ranks high with all the Oliff family: Emily graduated from Monmouth University, and now works at a public-relations firm in New York; Alison graduated from Northeastern University, and works as a rehabilitation specialist for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Daniel graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and now free lances as a graphic artist. Grace and David have every right to be pleased and proud of their three offspring.

The Oliffs are committed, hardworking, and loyal members of our church community. For even after moving to Woodcliff Lake in 1981, they still make the long commute to come to Oradell. ✕

Special Thanks to...

Webb MacKenzie (Jamie's dad), for fashioning a new way of putting together our outside crèche (*without* using screws!).

Marie Mitchell, for inaugurating a system for mailing newsletters and bulletins to our homebound parishioners.

Jamie MacKenzie and *Barrie Bates*, for a second coat of paint in the new parish office.

The Rectory's secret guardian, who brings in the trash cans and newspapers when the residents go away and forget. (Let us know who you are to collect your reward!)

Elizabeth Craig, *Barbara Maggio*, and *Marie Mitchell*, who served as this year's Nominating Committee for parish leadership offices.

Clare Simpson, for donating a lovely wall clock for the new office.

Sara Sarnicki and *Brianna Cottone*, for baking muffins for our coffee hour on January 17. ✕

Your Pledge for 2010

If you are among those who made a special gift to close the budget gap in 2009, thank you! We finished the year with over \$15,000 in deficit-reduction donations. If you remember the original challenge, you may recall that it asked you to raise your pledge—something we imagined would continue into 2010—and not simply make a one-time special gift. Please prayerfully consider whether you can continue this enhanced level of support. Your parish church sure needs it!



If you have not yet made a pledge, please consider doing so. The Vestry relies on your commitment in making plans for the year—and it is good for your soul! ✠

B&G Plans

Last year was a busy one for our buildings and grounds. We aerated the lawns, installed a skylight, replaced the flat roofs, installed new downspouts, sealed the old coal chute, repointed the Rectory's foundation, built two closets and renovated a third, brought the electrical service in the Rectory up to code, installed a new HVAC system in the Parish Hall, received the gift from the Borough or Oradell (a handicapped curb cut outside the Center Street entrance), made permanent handicapped-accessible places among our pews, reconfigured other pews to accommodate the bell ringers and a children's space, converted to 100% recycled paper products, had the kitchen and two pantries painted by volunteers, and sealed leaks in the Parish Hall masonry. All of this was done with zero impact on the budget.

In addition, we began the lengthy process of converting the old "courtyard room" into the parish offices. This work will soon be brought to its completion, and we hope to formally dedicate the new office space this month. Attention turns to



three project areas, which will be undertaken as funding allows.

First, the basement windows. These are leaky single-pane windows, and the plan is to replace them with

glass block. Each window will have a vent that will let air in but keep rain out—so we can leave them open all summer. This should help with that musky smell!

Second, the entrances, particularly the Center Street doors. These will be replaced by commercial-grade doors with glass panels—much like the original (you can see the architect's rendering in the robing area). If funds allow, we will also replace the kitchen door with one that properly opens out (and has an opening window in it), as well as the exit doors at the basement level.



Third, the parish hall. We have the funds on hand to replace the flooring with wood laminate. We also have a pledge to donate materials to renovate the walls, as well as materials and labor to replace the ceiling. The hope is to build a partition separating where the chairs and tables are stored from the old lounge on the north end. This will reclaim that space as a conference or meeting room that can be closed off from the main space. We hope to keep the stage as a seating area, but this will require building a ramp. We also hope to install a permanent coffee station on the east wall, once the redundant radiators are removed. This



project is still in the incubation phase—but the plan is to replace the ceiling, repair the walls, renovate the lounge and storage area, repair the stairs, build the ramp, fashion the coffee area, coat rack, and trash and recycling bins, and paint the walls—and only *then* replace the floor. We have a long way to go!

As with each capital project we have undertaken in recent years, we will proceed only when (and if) funding permits. These projects will have no impact on the operating budget of the parish. Unlike the heat or the roof, there is no diocesan fund to assist us, sadly. The ongoing upgrade of our buildings and grounds is but one way we are striving to be good stewards of all God has entrusted to our care, so that generations yet to come can continue to worship the beauty of holiness in this sacred space. ✠

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Everyone's help is needed! We have a number of simple volunteer tasks that need doing at the church. Many of these are things that could easily accompany you to church on Sundays. Won't you please help?

Weekly Mailings—(Marie Mitchell) send the Sunday bulletin and monthly e-News to parishioners unable to attend church or receive e-mail.

Check the Oil (Jim Gwynne)—each week during the heating season, check the level on the oil tank.

Recycling (Jim Gwynne)—once a week, organize and set out for pick-up.

Laundry—each week you are here, take rags and kitchen towels home to wash, then bring them back a subsequent week.

Dishwasher—on Mondays, empty the dishwasher of Sunday's dishes.

Seasonal Changes—re-set clocks, timers for heat and outdoor lights, smoke-detector batteries, and such things when the time changes each fall and spring.

Lavatory Check—each week (preferably *before* Sunday), check the lavatory for paper and supplies and refill.

Calendar—maintain our online calendar, adding events and activities to it, and printing out an updated copy weekly for the bulletin board.

Hazardous Waste—collect batteries, spent fluorescent lights, used paint, and other hazardous waste and take them to the Bergen County Utilities Authority or similar group (along with your own household hazardous waste, of course!).

Acolyte Master—help acolytes vest and prepare for worship, train and recruit children periodically.

Light Bulbs—spend a few hours with a friend changing light bulbs. This would need to be done quarterly, more or less, with particular attention before Christmas and Holy Week.

Offering Envelopes—once a month, or so, replenish the supply of offering envelopes and pencils in the pew racks. (We will no longer be using individually numbered envelopes, so this is especially important.)

If you able to help, please speak with Barrie. Everyone who is a committed and active member of this congregation could take on just one such task. That way, no one will be overburdened but the work that needs to be done will get accomplished. ✕

Summary Budget

The Vestry has authorized the parish budget for 2010. The complete details are included in the printed annual report of the parish, which will be distributed at the annual meeting on February 7. Here are the highlights:

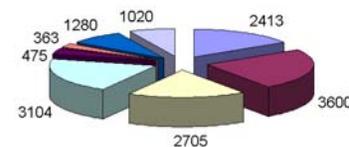
Income	2009	2010
Pledge and Plate	85,400	84,000
Use of Facilities	26,490	43,360
Other	7,100	11,000
Expense		
Personnel	78,057	82,382
Office	5,566	8,205
Buildings & Grounds	10,800	19,000
Insurance	10,976	11,200
Utilities	21,622	19,950
Programs	2,570	3,870

Increases in Office and B&G expenses reflect last year's experience, not actual enhancements. For several years, we have kept the budget flat in these areas, but costs have continued to climb nonetheless. For 2010, our budget better reflects this reality. Under Programs, we have added a regular nursery caregiver. Otherwise, we have pretty much "held the line" with regard to expenses.

This budget anticipates a deficit of nearly \$25,000. In 2009, we originally planned for a deficit of \$17,953, but finished the year with a

surplus of \$14,208—a difference of more than \$32,000! We can do this again, with the help of every member of this community, the imaginative problem-solving of our leadership team, and the grace of God.

Unlike the federal government, we cannot simply print more money or borrow large sums from foreign countries, and we really should be building up our cash savings, not depleting them. Although we do have the cash on hand for the worst-case scenario of a deficit, we all need to come together and help this parish grow. Every new member brings energy and vitality to our community, and as each becomes committed, they contribute financially, as well. As your Rector, it is my hope that by next year we will be talking about enhancing our music program, hiring a handyman (a.k.a. Sexton), and increasing the effort of our Administrator. Please help by praying, giving, and working for the continuing growth of this parish. ✕



Parish Statistics

In 2009, we posted a net gain of eight members (increase of 15 new members, against a decrease of 7). Our average Sunday attendance increased by ten to 66. This is a gain of nearly 18 per cent—so we are clearly doing something right!

We laid two of our faithful to rest—Willabelle Edson and Lorraine Cristi—and conducted a total of four

funerals, one wedding, and three baptisms. We celebrated the Holy Eucharist a total of 103 times, and conducted an additional eleven worship services,

*Daniels in the forehead burial from Easter 1761 to Easter 1762.
John son of Robert & Bridget Machin Apr. 8, 1761.
George & Henry sons of Henry & Susan Payne Apr. 8, 1761.
John Darcy May 17, 1761.
Susanna wife of John Jones June 9, 1761.
Ester wife of John Wilson July 9, 1761.
Henry Walden son of Newark upon Trent Sept. 15, 1761.
Evanical son of Stephen & Sarah Spencer Nov. 3, 1761.
William son of Francis & Elizabeth Parke Nov. 4, 1761.
Rose Anna daughter of John & Susan Jones Jan. 3, 1762.
Barbara wife of Daniel & Mary Logg Feb. 21, 1762.
Jane Tuby widow from Northch. Mar. 3, 1762.*

William Green, Decker.

which include both Lessons & Carols and Morning Prayer services.

Also, for the first time in many years, our parish register is coming into order, and we can now accurately claim 134 baptized members, of whom 90 are communicants in good standing (those who have received Holy Communion at least three times during the year, are faithful in corporate worship—unless for good cause prevented—and are working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God. —*As defined by the national canons of the Episcopal Church*).

The trend for some years in our parish has been decline or, at best, stagnation. This now appears to be changing, thanks be to God. ✕

Q. What is the duty of all Christians?

A. The duty of all Christians it to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

—From the Catechism in the Prayer Book, p.856

Thank You, Elizabeth!

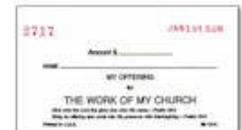
After numerous years of continuous service in parish leadership, our Elizabeth Craig is taking a break. She is leaving parish leadership to attend to her new business and family matters, and thus setting a good example for all of us. We are able to minister only from our abundance, so when our personal life leaves no surplus energy, it is time to pull back. Thank you, Elizabeth, for your fine work as Vestry member, chair of the search committee, and Warden. We look forward to welcoming you back into the ranks of our formal leadership when your circumstances again permit this. ✕



Envelopes?

Back when the federal income tax was instituted, Woodrow Wilson was president of these United States. At that time, most people were paid in cash, they paid their bills in cash, and they made donations to the church in cash. Those little envelopes we became so accustomed to were instituted to help track the cash, so that proper credit could be given for tax purposes.

Nowadays, nearly everyone writes a check (and some even donate online with a credit card!). There is no need for special envelopes, as you can easily be identified by your name printed on your check. Thus, we are experimenting with doing away with those little envelopes.



In the past each of us received a box containing nearly 60 envelopes—but few people used more than about half, and many used only a small proportion. This was wasteful and expensive—and this is why we made the decision to abandon those printed envelopes.

If you are giving actual dollar bills, please use one of the little envelopes found in the pew, and be sure to write your name on the envelope. If you are putting a check in the plate, please do so without any envelope, thus saving our financial stewards the job of opening it, our cleaner the job of collecting it, and our volunteer the job of putting it out for the recycling. ✕

The Church of the Annunciation

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A Seven-Week Advent?

“Advent” comes from the Latin *adventus* and is the translation of the Greek word *parousia*, commonly used in reference to Christ’s pledge to return (the “Second Coming”). Christians believe that the season of Advent serves a reminder both of the original waiting that was done by the Hebrews for the birth of their Messiah as well as the waiting of Christians for the second coming of Christ.



This season is not always four full weeks, however. In the Eastern church, a pre-Christmas period of fasting begins on September 1. And for

us in the west, the season has always included four Sundays, but can be anywhere from 22 to 34 days in length. (You may remember years in which the last Sunday of Advent was also Christmas Eve—yikes!) This is so complicated that the typical children’s Advent calendar simply starts on December 1.

Recent developments in the theology and practice of Advent has led to a proposal to expand our observance of Advent from four to seven Sundays. The response within the church to the obscene consumerism of the time leading up to Christmas Day supports this change, and will help pull the focus away from shopping days and back onto the hope of our salvation.

You may remember talk of the Advent Conspiracy last year. What was once a time to celebrate the birth of a savior has somehow turned into a season of stress, traffic jams, and shopping list. The Advent Conspiracy envisions Christmas becoming a world-changing event again. It encourages us to worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all. (See adventconspiracy.org for more information.) One aspect of worshipping more fully will be to observe this expanded seven-week Advent this year.

We will continue to use purple as our liturgical color for this longer season. Purple is the color of royalty, and it symbolizes our welcome of Christ the King. If we can, we will also keep a pink candle for *Gaudete* Sunday (which will now be the *sixth* Sunday of Advent.)

Advent is far more than marking a 2,000-year-old event in history. It is celebrating a truth about God. This is the moment when the World became flesh, a revelation whereby all creation is reconciled to God. It is also a time when we reflect on the promised second Advent, including themes of accountability for faithfulness, judgment for sin, and hope of eternal life.

In this double focus on past and future, Advent also highlights our spiritual journeys—as individuals and together as a community. These journeys affirm that Christ has come, that he is present in the world today, and that he will come again in great power.

Acknowledging this provides a basis for “Kingdom ethics,” which calls us to holy living in this “between time.” As Christians, we are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God’s people—not the people who spend \$450 billion on Christmas each year (as we Americans do!).

We live in a world which is enamored by super size, super stars, and high definition. But as the prophet Zechariah reminds us, we should not “despise small things,” because God does some of the best work with small beginnings and impossible situations. Our small change to a seven-week Advent will help us wait in expectant hope for such signs of hope. ✕

Parishioners’ Milestones

Birthdays: Barbara Maggio 2nd, Sue Hoag 10th, Christine Dziemian 12th, Grace Oliff 25th

Baptisms: Emily Oliff 19th, Barbara Maggio 28th

Confirmations: Kathiann Krott 10th, Alison Oliff, Daniel Oliff, and Clare Simpson 22nd, Anthony Palladino 23rd, Barrie Bates 29th

Weddings: Pieter & Elfrieda Fontein 8th

Flower-memorial donations were received in January in loving memory of: Ken Baird, Alan Glen Munson, George Papp, and Bill King. ✕



The Episcopal
Diocese of
Newark



Equipping congregations...
Empowering people...
Engaging the world...
...with the hope and justice of Jesus.

