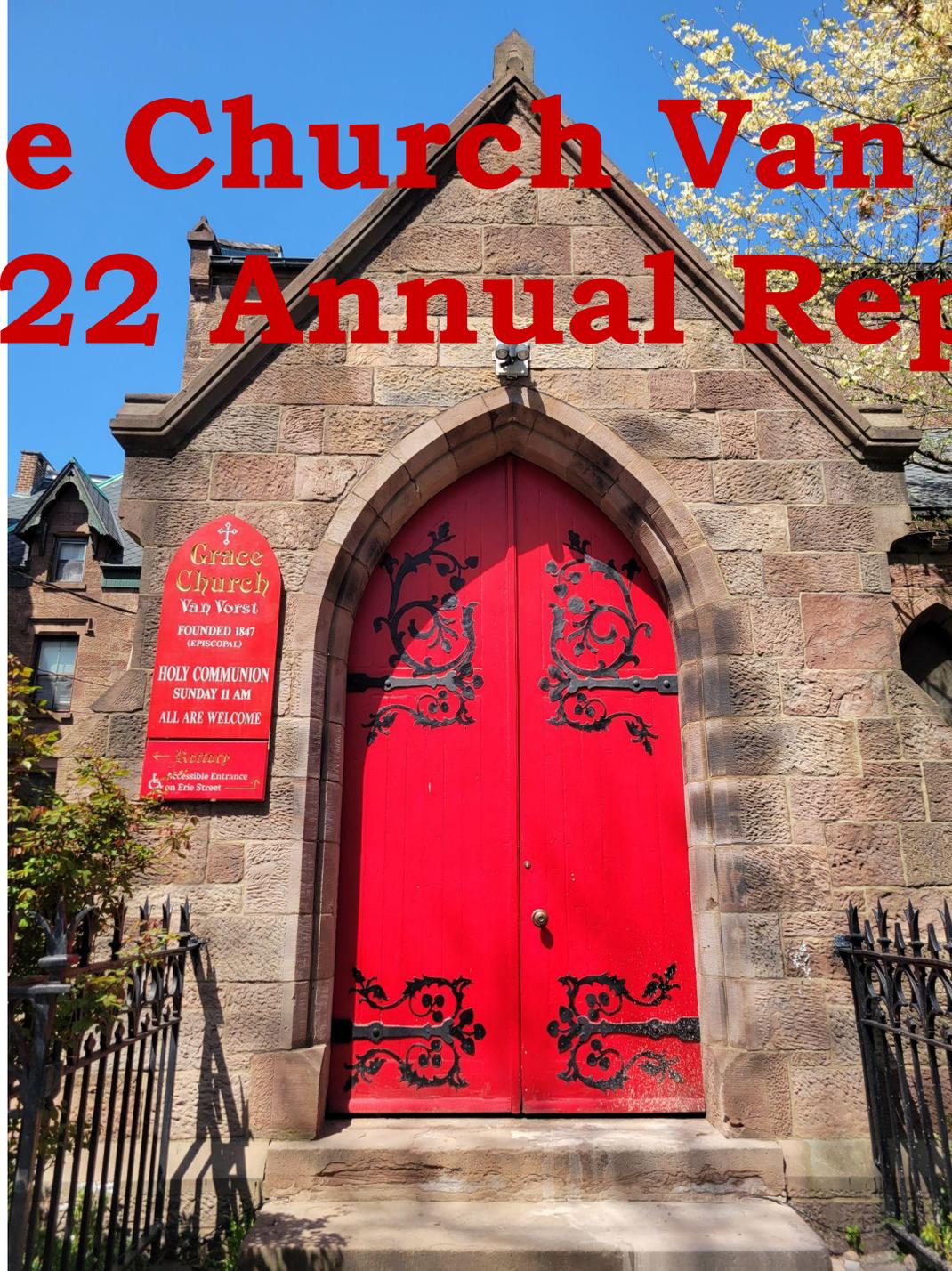


Grace Church Van Vorst 2022 Annual Report



Grace Church Van Vorst

Our mission is to introduce people to Jesus, to help people to know Jesus in new and exciting ways, and to give everyone an opportunity to experience God's love whether they are members of the congregation or not.



To Live Into This Mission, Grace....

- Strives to engage members, visitors, and friends in beautiful, community - building, thought-provoking worship
- Provides ongoing opportunities for spiritual formation through Bible study, meditation, and adult forums
- Hosts events throughout the year for fun, to bring people closer to one another and to God
- Creates opportunities to love God by loving our neighbors



Worship

On Sunday mornings, Grace connects loving God with seeking God in all people. Some of the ways we did this in 2022 include:

- Inviting Ahmed Shedeed, President of the Islamic Center of Jersey City to worship with us on Epiphany
- Hosting our annual, guest preacher series during Black History month with preachers from a variety of Christian traditions
- Inviting Monica Shaw, Director of the Triangle Park Community Center to join us during worship and speak about the work being done in the Ferris-Triangle Park neighborhood



Music Ministry

- The Grace Church Music ministry continues to be an active, engaged, and dedicated presence in weekly services and church life.
- We currently have a group of 8-12 singers and instrumentalists.
- As a small group ministry, choir builds in time to be with each other by having “Happy Hour” for a half hour before rehearsals.
- Music ministry provides worship music from a wide variety of genres including: world music, traditional hymns, Gospel and contemporary Christian. Because members of Grace come from a wide array of traditions, our music does too!





Youth Ministry Welcoming Jazamine Davis!!!!

- The William E. Simon Foundation awarded Grace Church Van Vorst a three year grant to hire a Youth and Family Minister.
- Jazamine joined Grace staff in January. She's rebuilding ministries that stopped during the pandemic including: Friday Game Nights, Youth Group gatherings, and families with young children get together.
- Jazamine is also creating plans to expand Grace's current youth ministries including coordinating regional Episcopal Church Youth gatherings.

Grace Church Wardens



Kim Holl, 2nd term, class of '24



Lucia Zhanje, 1st term, class of '23

Grace Church Vestry



Patrick Hambrect
2nd term, class of '23



Shanita Rapatalo
1st term, class of '23



Jenn Roach
1st term, class of '25



Brandyn Heppard
1st term, class of '25



Meredith Gnerre
1st term, class of '25

Rev. Laurie's Sabbatical

Rome, Israel, a camel...



Rev. Laurie's Sabbatical - when the cat's away ...



- Bro. John-Henry and Fr. Geoff Curtiss
- Lay preachers rock
- Two awesome adult forums

Worshiping in the World and Serving as Worship

- Every Summer GCVV gathers for worship with our sister church, The Church of St. Paul and Incarnation. This was our second summer of worshiping at our shared storefront ministry in Greenville: The Triangle Park Community Center
- For the first time since the pandemic Grace was able to open its doors to serve Christmas Dinner to anyone who was hungry for food and/or friendship after Christmas Day services. What better way to celebrate the Incarnation?!



Spiritual Formation

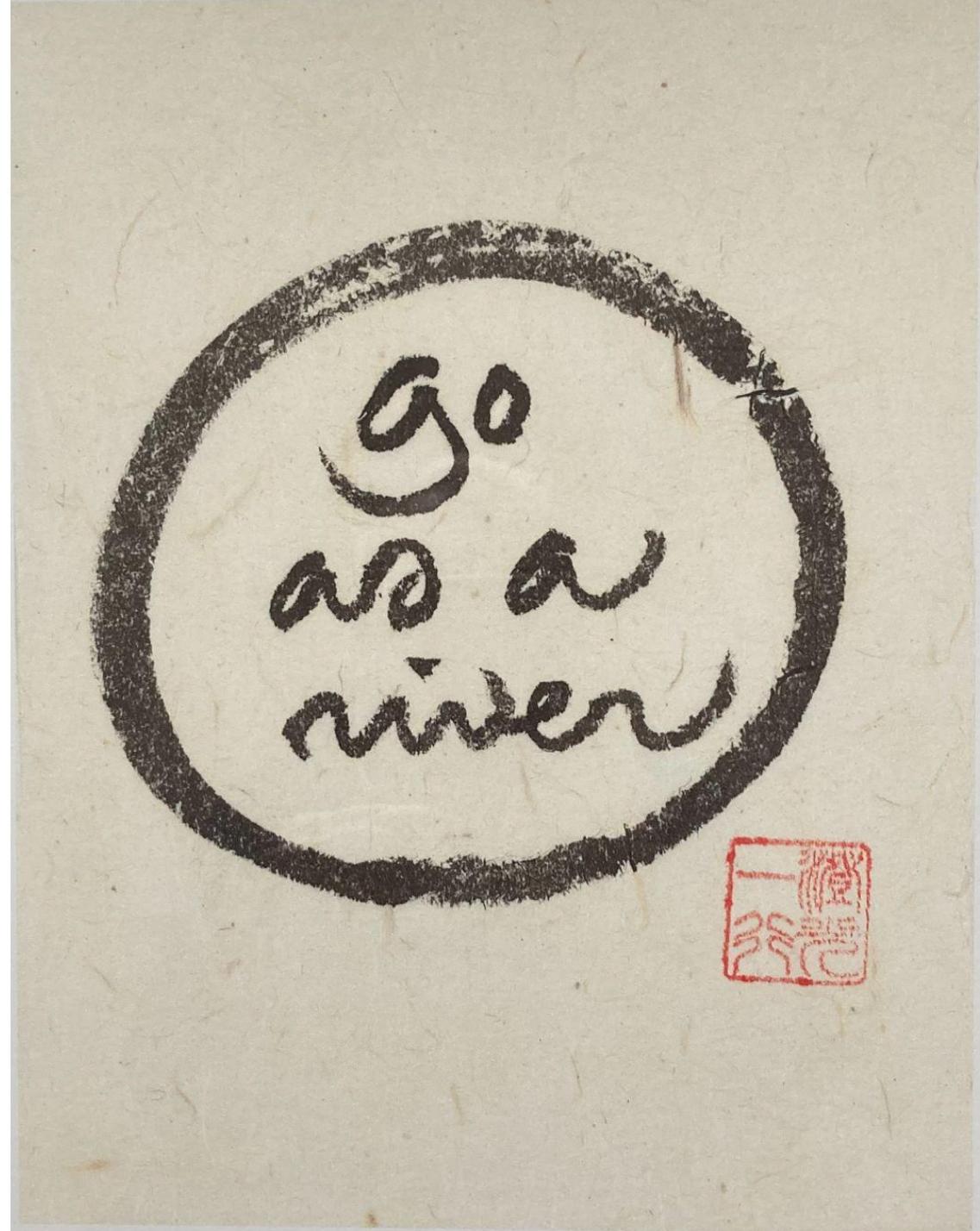
Through Sunday worship, daily meditation, and weekly Bible study, Grace offers opportunities for spiritual growth seven days a week. But that's not all! Over the last year Grace also offered these opportunities for spiritual formation:

- Noon Prayer During Lent
- Over half a dozen book groups
- “Wade in the Water: Spirituals and Coded Language Workshop”
- Vacation Bible School for Adults and Children



Meditation Group

- Saturday morning meditation group has been meeting since Feb 2020
- Early morning meditation group has been meeting seven days a week since October 2020
- Typically about 12 people meet on Saturdays and about 6 on weekdays
- Anyone, regardless of experience in meditation, is welcome in either group, meeting on Zoom



Religious Formation

- For the first time since the pandemic, last spring we were able to resume our “Living Grace” workshop which, over the course of two Saturdays, offers an overview of the Episcopal Church in general and Grace Church Van Vorst’s history and ministries in particular
- We currently have eight people in our four-week long Inquirer’s Class preparing for confirmation and two adults preparing for baptism



Identifying Systemic Racism in the World, Church, and Ourselves

How has Grace Van Vorst benefited from systemic racism? How can we identify how white supremacist ideologies have shaped our understanding of the world and unlearn them?

In 2022 the Walking Together Group offered multiple venues to explore these issues including:



- Documentary “Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America”
- Stations of the Cross following Jesus through the violence of white supremacy
- Creating a church history timeline tracing church and diocese failures and progress in confronting its colonialist history
- Many book groups on understanding privilege

Small Group Ministry

Small Group ministries are a vital way for members of the church to maintain strong relationships with each other and for newcomers to become integrated in the the Grace community.

In 2022 Grace began to rebuild its in-person small, group ministries which were suspended because of the pandemic.

Many thanks to Ricky Rojas and Charlie Metzger for rebooting Young Adult Happy Hour and to Lynn Schundler for getting Breaking Bread groups organized and meeting again.

Our Youth and Family Minister Jazamine Davis is working on creating a new, small group ministry for families with children.



Events.... aka Parties!!!!

Nothing says “Grace Church Van Vorst” like a great, big party. Deprived of those for two years, Grace has been making up for lost time.

Here are some of the parties we’ve had since the end of quarantine:

- Cathedral Arts Live concert with Mary Aiken and friends
- Christmas party and carol sing-a-long after our children’s Christmas Pageant
- Christmas Day Dinner in the gym
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
- Celebrated Rev. Laurie’s 10th year anniversary at Grace



Bringing Good News to Our Neighbors

Triangle Park Community Center in Greenville

- In collaboration with The Church of St Paul's and Incarnation
- Food and baby supply pantries
- Friends of Ferris Triangle Park
- Wide array of community events
- Outreach program to young people who are victims and perpetrators of violence in the Ferris Triangle Park neighborhood.

New Jersey Together

- Active member in this coalition of over 35 faith communities
- Work together on local and statewide justice issues
- Prison reform, creating more affordable housing, investing in Jersey City's public schools.

Grace Community Services

- Senior Center for Healthy Living
- Grace Breakfast Program
- Inspire: mentoring and tutoring students who experience significant hurdles to having lives of their choosing as adults



Getting Back to as Normal as Grace Gets

The impact of the hit we and everyone on the planet took from the pandemic is no longer a mystery. We see it in our pews, our finances, and in our leadership.

In-person attendance is about 60% of what it was at the beginning of 2020. Many who have been members of Grace for decades and many who headed ministries have moved far away, are attending Sunday worship less, or not at all.

Our online participation in worship has declined significantly over the last year too, even after accounting for people coming to in-person worship.

That said, new people who are excited about Grace have joined, are building relationships with each other and the larger church. Grace is nurturing a new generation of church leaders. Thanks be to God!



What's Next?

Here is a snapshot of what's coming next at Grace:

- Re-building a rotation of Sunday worship leaders, Stewardship, Liturgy and Property Committees.
- Taking care of our church family by collecting emergency contacts, offering assistance with the creation of Powers of Attorney and Living Wills.
- Creating a more thorough database of member information and making it easier to communicate with the church.
- Creating a stewardship form that will enable you to make a pledge with a few clicks on your phone. Yay!



What's Next?

- Equipping current and future ministry leaders with facilitation tools that help:
 - 1) insure all participants are heard and
 - 2) acknowledge and participate in dismantling sexism, racism, homophobia, classism and all the “isms” that devalue people when they show up in conversation.
- Building a Youth and Family program that Grace can use as an evangelism tool for reaching the many families with kids in Jersey City.



AMAZING Financial News!

Grace began 2022 with a projected deficit and ended with a surplus because.... of the tremendous generosity of faithful pledgers and unexpected donations from loyal friends.

In thanksgiving for the many gifts God has given us, we made a total of \$10,000 in donations to...

Grace Community Services

Family Promise of Hudson County

The SCORES Reentry Program

The Triangle Park Community Center

The Diocese of Newark's Alleluia Fund

Catholic Charities for Refugee Services

The Waterfront Project

Haven Adolescent Community Respite Center





Grace Church invites you
to stick around
for the rest of 2023.

God's going to do
incredible things!