

Back to Basics

"The higher your structure is to be, the deeper must be its foundation."

– St. Augustine



It is human nature to aspire to greatness, and for those of us who follow Jesus, it is natural for us to strive to be good, faithful servants of our God. We seek to glorify God through our worship, our prayers, and our service to others, our generosity and in striving to lead lives worthy of our calling as disciples. Sometimes we can get so caught up in the holy busyness of the Christian life that we lose sight of the reason we do these things; we can become disconnected from the well of grace that nourishes us, and strengthens us for the journey.

When this happens we can often get disenchanted with our faith, we can become tired to the point of exhaustion, and sometimes we can even burnout. Like the man in Jesus' parable (Matthew 7:24–27) who built his house on the sand, when we lose touch with our foundation in the faith, everything it seems can fall apart around us.

I find that when I am the most agitated or frustrated or overwhelmed is when I have allowed the cares of the world, the busyness of parish life, to get in the way of "being with God" in prayer, in study, at the Eucharist. Everything becomes more manageable when I remember that Jesus carries the heaviest burdens in our life of faith, and merely invites us on the journey with him to share his yoke.

Just like in our physical homes, we have to spend time making sure our faith foundation is strong, and from time to time we have to undertake work to solidify that foundation so

that no challenge or calamity will dismantle our faith.

To that end I encourage each of you to find ways to get back to the basics, to re-learn or perhaps learn for the first time Christian practices and disciplines that shore up the foundations of our faith. At Grace, we want to offer you many opportunities to ensure a solid foundation for your life of faith. Beginning this week Rev. Steve will be leading a 3-week session on Prayer on Sundays at 12:30 p.m. In the new year Jonelle will be offering a week-night course exploring Christian Foundations. On Wednesday mornings at 11:00 a.m. we have our weekly Bible Study. In the new year I will be inviting members of the parish to join me in a book study by reading Rowan William's book, Being Christian – an examination of the practices of 4 basic cornerstones of the Christian life: baptism, the Bible, the Eucharist, and prayer.

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No one can force you to participate, but also no one can do the work of strengthening your foundation for you. It is my hope and prayer that each member of the parish, no matter how young or old, will find some way to engage with the basics of their faith and I pray that this Advent you might take time to prepare for the celebration Christmas by immersing yourself in prayer, reading God's word, and in acts of kindness and charity for others.

May God bless you and may you be fruitful in your endeavours,

Rev. Graham

A Hymn for Advent

"Come, O Lord, and Set Us Free"

Hymn #113 Common Praise
Text by Tim Schoenbachler



Come, O Lord, and set us free. Marantha.

Desert and dry land will grow green in praise;
clay will rejoice with full bloom:
showers of flowers given birth in dead earth;
in colours they echo Love's song.

Come, O Lord, and set us free. Marantha.

Strengthen the hearts of the fearful and weak;

be strong; fear not, God is near,
coming in power and loosing our bonds,
setting the captives free.

Come, O Lord, and set us free. Marantha.

We have been waiting and longing for light,
watching for signs of the Lord.

"Promised of ages," "Messiah to come,"
hear us, we beg you: "Come, save!"

Come, O Lord, and set us free. Marantha.

Give us a star in the sky day and night,
sign of your promise to save.

Over the mountains we follow its light,
hoping for sign of your life.

Come, O Lord, and set us free. Marantha.

Weekly Services

Sunday	8:45 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
	10:30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
Wednesday	10:15 a.m.	Said Eucharist

Upcoming Events

"The Good Life" Study Series: Our final session of the year will be Tuesday, December 12 at 7:30 p.m. The Goods will experiment with **getting up with sun and going to bed with the sun**, and **celebrate Christmas on no budget**. Please plan to come early for the "Prayer and Praise" service at 7:00 p.m.

If there is interest, we can continue the series into the New Year. ***Please let Craig Gustafson know if you are interested.***

Carol Singing, Christmas in Popular Song, & English Tea:

Again this year, in preparation for the Christmas season, we will gather to sing carols and listen to some popular songs and reflect upon the meaning they have for us. This year we will focus on the **activities of Christmas**. We will gather following the Community Lunch on Saturday, December 9 at 2:30 p.m. We will end with fellowship over an English tea. Please plan to join us!

Guest Preacher: In the new year, we will welcome the Rev. Chris Harper, the Indigenous Native Priest of the Diocese of Toronto. Please watch the bulletin for more details.

Daylight Saving Time Begins Sunday, March 11, 2018.

Please remember to set your clocks **AHEAD** one hour before you go to bed on Saturday.

One of Our Saints: Nicholas (December 6)

From For All the Saints: Prayers and Readings for Saints' Days compiled by Stephen Reynolds. General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, 2007.



Nicholas was a fourth-century bishop of Myra, a town in what is now southwestern Turkey, and we remember him because of the stories which have given him "a perpetual name for deeds of kindness on land and sea."

Nothing certain is known about his life, but the people of the Church held him in high honour from a very early date and many stories came to be told about him. The most famous of these legends tells of his merciful generosity. Once there were three sisters whose parents were so poor that they thought of selling them. Bishop Nicholas heard of the sisters' plight and tossed three bags of gold onto their doorstep — thus providing them with dowries for marriage and saving them from a life of prostitution. That is why he is considered the special protector of children. In memory of his deed of mercy to the three sisters, the Dutch developed the custom of giving gifts to children on his feast-day. They brought this custom to America, where it became associated with Christmas rather than the feast of Nicholas — and where "Sant Nikolaas" was changed into "Santa Claus."

Another story tells how a company of seafarers were caught in a storm off the coast of Asia Minor. The waves were swamping their ship, and the mariners were nearly at their wits' end when they remembered what they had heard about the bishop of Myra. Though he was still alive, the sailors cried out his name and implored his help. The legend says that Nicholas himself suddenly appeared in the rigging of their ship and calmed the storm, so that the ship and all who were in it came safely to port.

Nicholas is considered the patron saint of many other groups besides children and sailors. The common thread in all these claims on his heavenly protection is his legendary kindness to those in need — and

his special care of those who follow his storied example by aiding the desperate, the needy, and the sick.

Special Worship Services

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24

9:30 a.m. Advent 4

4:00 p.m. Children's and Family Christmas Service

7:00 p.m. Carols and Communion

10:30 p.m. Carol Sing

11:00 p.m. Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

Monday, December 25

9:30 a.m. Carols and Communion



Lent

Shrove Tuesday

February 13

Pancake and Samosa Supper

Ash Wednesday

February 14

10:15 a.m. Imposition of Ashes and Communion

7:00 p.m. Imposition of Ashes and Communion



A Little Biblical Humour

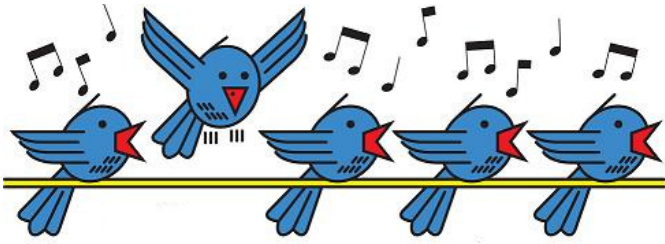
Q. What kind of motor vehicles are in the Bible?

A. Jehovah drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden in a *Fury*. David's *Triumph* was heard throughout the land. Also, probably a *Honda*, because the apostles were all in one *Accord*.

Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A. Samson. He brought the house down.

Introducing Our New Choir Director



Rachel Colman was born and raised in southern Manitoba, an area rich in musical heritage. Her love for music was noticeable at an early age, and her enjoyment in sharing her gift through performance began with local festivals and school music programmes. A winner at the Manitoba Provincial Festival in 2001 in the Junior/Intermediate Mozart category and performer in the Provincial National class in 2007, Rachel has continually sought to play with excellence.

Rachel graduated from Brandon University in May 2008 with her Bachelor of Music, Honours, in piano with a minor in voice. She received the silver medal for academic excellence as well as various scholarships during her studies. She then toured with Masaki's Rising Stars, giving concerts and master-classes in rural Manitoba. She has since studied Collaborative Piano with Laura Loewen and Judy Kehler-Siebert at the University of Manitoba and graduated with a Post-Baccalaureate in 2012, where her studies focused on the skills needed to collaborate with other musicians, playing orchestral and operatic music, and language studies for vocal music. It has challenged her to explore the limitless possibilities of the piano as it interacts with the sounds of other instruments and as she encounters the personalities and styles of her collaborating musicians. Rachel seeks to bring from the piano a whole orchestra of colourful sound and support for those with whom she collaborates.

Rachel had the great opportunity, in March 2012, to tour with Charmaine Bacon, flutist, through the Home Routes Classical series in rural Manitoba and Saskatchewan, bringing Classical music into communities which do not often have the opportunity to hear it,

and interacting with audiences in ways that Classical music does not usually allow.

Rachel began her private teaching studio in Winnipeg in 2009. She is flexible with teaching methods, and strives to be aware of the strengths and shortcomings of different methods so as to give the student a well-rounded education, especially through the inclusion of ear training and the understanding of harmony.

Since moving to Toronto in September 2014, Rachel took on the position of Director of Music at the Anglican Church of the Epiphany and St. Mark in Parkdale, where her versatility as a musician was refreshing. She prepared music for services in a variety of styles on organ and piano, often collaborating with guest musicians, as well as arranging pieces to suit the abilities of the choir. She is involved in a song arrangement project through St. Benedict's Table in Winnipeg, and has begun composing music for use in the church liturgy.

Rachel and her husband, Andrew, share a cosy place in Trinity-Bellwoods, where they keep friends well-fed, brew beer, make wine, and dance Argentinian Tango every so often.

Our Leadership

Incumbent

The Rev. Graham McCaffrey

Honorary Assistants

The Rev. Julie Golding-Page

The Rev. Steve Page

Secretary

Doreen Brown

Choir Director

Rachel Colman

Children & Youth

Jonelle Douglas

Churchwardens

Nadia Murray

Ryan Ramsden

Deputy Churchwardens

Margaret Crossman

Jonelle Douglas

Quilting/Knitting Group

The Quilting/Knitting Group has increased in numbers. When we first started in 2015 we had 14 members. Now in November we have 22 members. In September we started an Anniversary Quilt for Canada's 150th, and a Log Cabin Wall Hanging. At the bazaar held on November 4, the quilt was won by Esme Walkes and the wall hanging by Alice Wagner. At the bazaar we also sold many knitted items and made a profit of \$924. From the profit we gave the Church \$500 and we purchased a new quilting frame (badly needed) at a cost of approximately \$220.



On Saturday, November 25 we had a table at Birkdale Community Centre, 1299 Ellesmere Road to sell, hopefully, the rest of our items. From this sale we hope to give the church another donation.

We meet every Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (bring your own lunch – tea is provided). If you enjoy sewing or

knitting **and lots of laughs** you are welcome to join us.

Our last day for 2017 will be on December 13, and we will be starting again on January 10, 2018, which will be a potluck luncheon, and we will be planning what we are going to do for the year.

Yvonne Erwin-Knox



This is Your Newsletter

We hope you will contribute to the articles. If you have attended a conference or an event either inside or outside the parish, tell us about it. Tell us in what activities your group is engaged. Send us information about upcoming events. Feel free to send photographs or clipart, and we will try to include them. Submissions can be sent to communications@gracechurchscarborough.com (be sure to have "Newsletter" in the subject line).

The deadline for the next newsletter will be March 4.

Mercy and Grace . . . Different Sides of the Same Coin??

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 KJV

What are Mercy and Grace? Are they the same? Are they different?

Mercy is commonly defined as forbearance or kindness. Mercy is one of God's traits that he shows towards us. Moses said to the children of Israel, *"For the LORD thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them"* (Deuteronomy 4:31 KJV).

Mercy is often tied to the concept of forgiveness. For instance, if you forgive someone who has wronged or hurt you, that would be an act of mercy.

While the Bible often talks about mercy in reference to sins and transgressions, that is not always the case; we can have mercy in situations of trial as shown in Proverbs 14:21; *"he that despiseth his neighbour sinneth, but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he."*

Notice these words from Christ, given in the Sermon on the Mount: *"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain Mercy"* (Matthew 5:7 KJV). How much mercy are we showing to others?

All the previous passages refer to Mercy; How does Grace fit into this picture; is it the same as Mercy?

Hands up all those who know these words: *"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me"* (John Newton). What is grace?

Grace comes from the Greek word *"charis,"* which has multiple meanings including gift, favour, and kindness. It refers to the unearned favour of God that is extended to us to pardon our sins upon repentance and



to enable us to have a healthy, happy relationship with God.

Grace = unconditional love. Grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve. God sent his son to die for us while we were still sinners. WOW! I don't know about you, but to me that is unconditional love! That is Grace!

Grace and Mercy are glorious gifts from God that should bring us to our knees in worship and adoration. We can bring ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to God except a humble and thankful heart. Titus said, *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy, he saves us"* (Titus 3:5 KJV).

Grace is something we all need, but we cannot earn it or give it to others. It comes only through the sacrifice of Christ. Mercy though is something we need at various points in our lives and is something we are expected to show toward others.

There is a difference between Grace and Mercy. Mercy is the decision of God not to punish, us but Grace is the decision of God to save and bless us.

God's Grace and Mercy can be viewed as two sides of the same coin; Grace on one side gives us what we do not deserve, and Mercy on the other side not giving us what we do deserve.

Dr. David Jeremiah expresses it as the following: *"Mercy withholds from us that we deserve. Grace gives us what we do not deserve."*

J. Gresham Machen, American Presbyterian Theologian, declared, *"The very center and core of the Bible is the doctrine of the Grace of God."*

Grace involves the unmerited pardon of our sins. Grace is a gift from God and is available to ALL mankind. At this time of Advent let us remember God's Grace and show Mercy towards others.

Nadia Murray