

# ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2021

*REMINDER: We have regathered for in person worship each Sunday at 10 am, and no reservations are needed. For those not ready to return, the livestream continues on our YouTube Channel. On Sunday, May 2, Robin will be away, so there will be a service of Morning Prayer at 10 am.*

## MESSAGE FROM ROBIN+

Jesus said to his disciples, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.”  
John 15:1-2

Our Gospel reading for this coming Sunday is a familiar one, and so appropriate as we see new growth everywhere. The earth is bearing fruit, and the landscape is changing before our eyes. I write to you this week with news of a change at Christ and Grace. Our Assistant Organist and Choirmaster, Matthew Little, is leaving us to explore new opportunities.

While this is an exciting change for Matthew, many of us are feeling like a pruned vine at his departure. In the three years I’ve served at Christ and Grace I have watched Matthew hone his skills as an organist, wonderfully mentored by Bill Owen, while sharing his gifts of clarinet, bells, and voice. Most recently he was of great help in creating the worship videos used during the pandemic when we were unable to gather for worship and did not yet have our livestream camera. His technological skills were essential as he worked with choir members to add a music component to our worship videos.

Additionally, we will miss Matthew’s sense of humor and his readiness to help anyone with any need. He was the unofficial behind the scenes worker for so much of what happens liturgically, and always willing to tote and carry the heavy things for us. Many of us have literally watched him grow up here and he will always be attached to the vine of Christ and Grace.

Please read the letter from Matthew to the parish, also in this eNews, and we will hold him in our prayers as he sets forth on a new adventure with God. His last Sunday with us will be June 27th. We send him off with hearts filled with gratefulness and love, confident in God’s promise that when branches are pruned, there will be new fruit.

## Dear Congregation of Christ & Grace Episcopal Church,

As I write this letter, I took some time to reflect on my time at Christ & Grace and I wanted to share how I thought the church has influenced my development as a musician. The first of which is when I sang in the junior choir as a boy under the direction of Buddy Suerken. It was something that I enjoyed doing at the time, but it was never the focus of what I wanted to do. There is no doubt that this was a “seed” that was planted before I even started studying clarinet in school which began my growth as a church musician through exposure to Anglican music. After some time, I stopped doing it and joined the adult choir when Ryan Hebert was directing it. It was thanks to him that I started singing again and continued to sing during my studies at Longwood University. Once I graduated, I worked with Thom Guthrie who got me started with the basics of the organ and got me started on the journey of learning the instrument. After studying it for a year alongside my graduate clarinet studies, I returned and have since worked alongside Bill Owen. If you would have come to the church during the week, you would know that I spend a great deal of time every week practicing.

With all that being said, I have decided to move out of Virginia and will thus be resigning from my position of assistant organist. I still plan to be an organist and this is something that would not have been possible without your support during these transitional years of my musical life. I am thankful to have had all the opportunities to lead musical worship that I have and that you were all willing to join in singing when I was not playing exactly what was written in the hymnal. There is a power in congregation singing and I hope that every one of you continues to do so when the time is appropriate, no matter what you think of your skill level. I would also like to thank our wonderful choir for their hard work and patience as I honed my skills as a conductor. Thank you to both Robin Teasley for her help in making sure that I am playing at the right time during the service and to Jill Donnelly for making sure that I am on point in organizing my music for the service bulletin. Finally, I would like to thank Bill Owen for all of his help and advice to help guide me on the path that I am currently on.

The future is uncertain for all of us and I find that a quote from one of my favorite hymns resonates well in this situation: "Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain; God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain." (#677, *The Hymnal 1982*)

God's peace and best wishes to all of you,  
Matthew Little

### **A PANDEMIC WILL NOT STOP US – HELP US FEED THE HUNGRY**

Mark your calendars to help Christ and Grace feed the hungry. We will be providing 100 bagged lunches on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month.

You can help! Donate needed supplies, make a financial offering, or come help assemble lunches.

Dates: May 12, July 14, Sept 15, Nov 10

Place: Christ & Grace Kitchen

Time: 10:00 am

Menu for May 12: Ham & Cheese sandwich, chips, PB crackers or cheese crackers, cookies, fruit, bottled water

Donations Needed:

- 10 loaves of bread,
- 5 large containers of grapes or 10 bags of tangelos
- 100 packages of cookies, 2 per package
- 100 cheese & crackers packages
- 100 water bottles, 8-12 oz

Meat & cheese will be bought by Christ and Grace on the day of preparation of lunches.

Let us know how you want to help by contacting Elayne Pagano at [epagano@roadrunner.com](mailto:epagano@roadrunner.com) or 804-586-2951.

Please bring your food donations to the church kitchen 3-4 days prior to date needed. Monetary donations are greatly appreciated and may be mailed or dropped off in the church office.

### **PRAYER LIST**

We beg you to feed the hungry, protect the refugee, embrace the distressed, house the homeless, nurse the sick, and comfort the dying. Especially we pray for for Melissa Aigner, Mary Villeponteaux and Elaine Yeatts.