

# The Epistle *E-news*

## GRACE CHURCH

### in New York City



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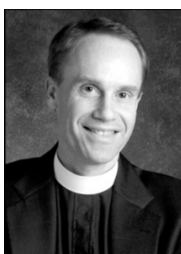
**Grace Church  
Pageant makes  
the Dec 25th  
issue of the New  
York Times!**



See it online  
[here.](#)

## January 5, 2014

The Second Sunday after Christmas



Dear Friends,

This coming Sunday is the 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas, so it's appropriate to take a last, grateful look back on Christmas 2013 before moving full steam ahead into 2014.

On Christmas Eve at Grace Church, we tell the story of Jesus' birth in three distinct and beautiful ways. At 4:00 pm we present a magnificent pageant that sometimes includes a cast of over 100 costumed angels, shepherds, wise men, friendly beasts, and villagers, all in addition to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, of course. Then by 8:00 pm the choir stalls are back in place in the chancel for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, a service in which we "read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God, from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this holy Child." Finally at 11:00 pm we celebrate the midnight Eucharist, by which we remember and make present God's giving of Jesus, and in receiving him in bread and wine, the Word becomes flesh in us. If three services in one evening isn't enough, we have one more: the Christmas Day 11 am Eucharist, a special service of its own that draws upwards of 300 more worshippers.

Each one of the services seem replete with moments when the veil between heaven and earth is parted, and we mortals are given the grace to glimpse eternity. But every year the angels seem to descend most noticeably on a moment of their own choosing at one of the four services. It is a different moment every year and, of course, it's always in the eye and ear of the beholder. To

**HAVEN'T  
PLEGGED YET  
FOR 2014? PLEASE  
TAKE A MINUTE TO  
DO SO NOW! Click  
[HERE](#).**

It's fast and easy!

Remember, you can  
take all of 2014 to  
fulfill your pledge, so  
*make your pledge  
now!*

## Outreach Opportunity...

**FEB 8 - "DON'T WALK  
BY" HOMELESS  
OUTREACH** Volunteers  
for this annual  
outreach and rescue  
mission seek to offer  
every street person  
food, warm clothing,  
blankets and the  
opportunity to get off  
the streets. If you are  
interested in joining a  
group from Grace  
Church on Saturday,  
Feb 8, [contact Team  
Leader Mike Watson](#).  
For details and a  
video click [HERE](#).

be sure, human planning and talent play a part, but the moment can't be scripted. Someone goes into the zone and it just happens. I remember one time it was simply the way the choristers sang the carols and anthems at the 8 pm service. Another year it was at the Communion rail during the 11 pm service, while the choir sang "O Holy Night." One time it was the year we moved the Christmas Day service from 10 am to the much more humane and reasonable 11 am hour. People kept coming and coming during the opening hymn until the congregation was four times the size it was the year before.

Where did it happen this year? Two places that I noticed, and again, others might identify completely different moments. First, the flower guild, headed by Ellen McElduff, outdid themselves in the way they decorated the church with poinsettias and greens. The altar itself appears as if it is being held in the palms of two hands. What is more, the placement of red poinsettias suggest these are the wounded hands of Jesus. You can't plan these things; they just happen.

Secondly, the pageant. The highlight of the pageant every year is when the friendly beasts crowd around Mary as she sings a beautiful lullaby to the infant Jesus. Yes, it's a real baby up there, and no one ever knows how the little Lord Jesus will respond. This year, Mary was portrayed by Catherine Cheung, and it was the task of 4-month old Burke Boger to interpret the role of the Infant King. Catherine and Burke went into the zone! Catherine did a beautiful job singing the song, but the most striking thing to me was that she sang the lullaby not for the benefit of the 900 people in the congregation, but solely and purely to the baby Jesus. Meanwhile, Burke was completely focused on Catherine, staring directly in her eyes for the duration of the song, and holding one of her fingers in his little hand. It was an extraordinarily beautiful moment of what worship is supposed to be: being held in the gaze of Jesus. It is an image I will carry with me into 2014 - a year that I hope will be, for you and me, a closer walk with Jesus.

See you in church.

[The Reverend J. Donald Waring](#)  
Rector

**This Sunday, January 5th**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sermon: The Rev. Canon Dr. Titus Presler  
Music: The Parish Choir

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
Sermon: The Rev. Canon Dr. Titus Presler  
Music: The Adult Choir

4 p.m. Choral Evensong  
Amahl and the Night Visitors  
Music: The Adult Choir

6 p.m. Holy Eucharist, in the Chantry  
Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring  
Music: Hymns with instrumentalists

(Service times are updated  
weekly on the [website](#).)

GUEST PREACHER – Today we welcome the Rev. Canon Dr. Titus Presler as our guest preacher at the 9 and 11 am services. Canon Presler, who will also lead the Sunday Forum at 10 am, is the Principal of Edwardes College, in Peshawar, Pakistan, and will speak about his ministry there.

10 AM – THE SUNDAY FORUM RETURNS –The Rev. Canon Dr. Titus Presler will speak on the opportunities and challenges of his work as Principal of Edwardes College in Peshawar, Pakistan as part of our *Belief in the 21st Century series*. This season, the Sunday Forums will continue to explore themes established during the fall: Compassion in Action and Belief in the 21st Century. *The Rev. Canon Dr. Titus Presler is Principal of Edwardes College, an undergraduate and graduate church institution in Peshawar, Pakistan. A scholar of Christian mission, he has been President of the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Academic Dean at General Seminary in New York, Rector of St. Peter's in Cambridge, Mass., and pastor in several other parish ministries. He and his wife Jane were Episcopal missionaries in Zimbabwe, and Titus grew up in India in a mission family.*

4 PM – AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS, the beautiful seasonal opera by *Menotti* will be offered by the Adult Choir as part of Choral Evensong on Sunday, Jan 5 at 4 pm in the Church. Menotti originally wrote this work as a Television piece and after 50 years it has become a loved part of the Season. Please join us for this special offering.

2014 OFFERING ENVELOPES are now available in

Tuttle Hall on Sundays and in the Reception Room during the week. If you have not yet made a request for envelopes, please contact [Brian Hagan](mailto:bhagan@gracechurchnyc.org), Director of Development at 212-254-2000, ext. 119 or email [bhagan@gracechurchnyc.org](mailto:bhagan@gracechurchnyc.org).

## AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS

by GIAN CARLO MENOTTI

SUNDAY 5 JANUARY  
AT 4:00 P.M.

THE ADULT CHOIR

Featuring

TAMI PETTY, ALVIN CRAWFORD,  
JOSHUA PARRILLO AND  
ARAM TCHOBANIAN

GRACE CHURCH  
IN NEW YORK  
EPISCOPAL

FREE ADMISSION

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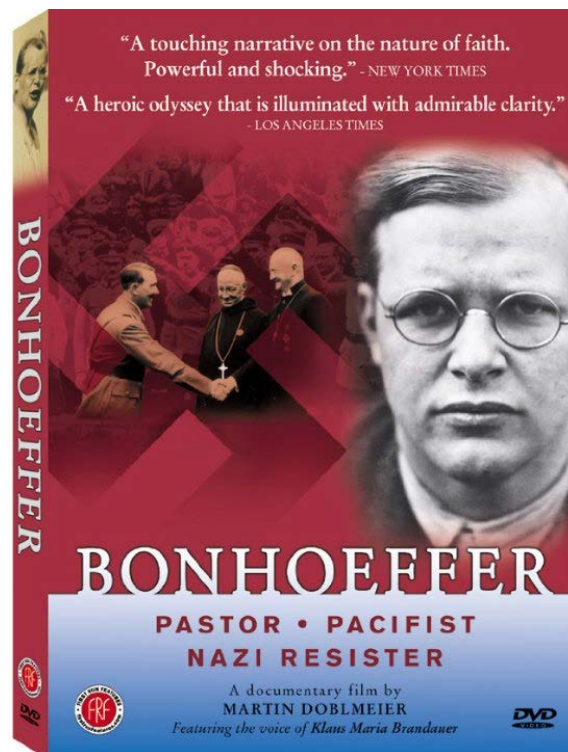
The Reverend J. Donald Waring, Rector  
Patrick Allen, Organist and Master of Choristers



**COMING SOON**

JAN 8, 15, 22 –DIETRICH BONHOEFFER: FILM AND CONVERSATION with the Rev. Sarah Wood. (Wednesdays, Jan 8, 15, 22 in the Music Room directly after the 6 pm Eucharist.) Join the group as we view the documentary *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Pacifist, Nazi Resister* and some pieces from his letters and papers from prison, and reflect theologically upon these together. In a highly conflicted time during WWII,

Bonhoeffer studied in New York City, returned to Germany to shepherd a seminary, and, ultimately, strove ardently against Hitler's power. Bonhoeffer's faith led him to some inspiring and also challenging ends. Join us for some reflection on this beloved and undaunted human life.



JAN 18 – WOMEN'S QUIET DAY with the Rev. Sarah Wood. Saturday, Jan 18, 10am–3pm. Meet in the Reception Room. Please bring a sandwich. Beverages provided. Sponsored by Sarah Wood, and the ECW of Grace Church. ALL WOMEN OF GRACE CHURCH ARE WELCOME!

NEXT WEEK'S EPISTLE will include descriptions of the upcoming season of Sunday Forums!

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[www.gracechurchnyc.org](http://www.gracechurchnyc.org)

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