

The Epistle *E-news*

GRACE CHURCH

in New York City



In This Issue

[Closing the Gap](#)

[A Cross-shaped Life](#)

[This Sunday](#)

[Coming Soon](#)

Quick Links


[GIVE to Grace](#)

[Visit our Website](#)

[More About Us](#)

[Did You Miss a Sermon?](#)

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CLOSING THE GAP...



March 9, 2014

The First Sunday in Lent



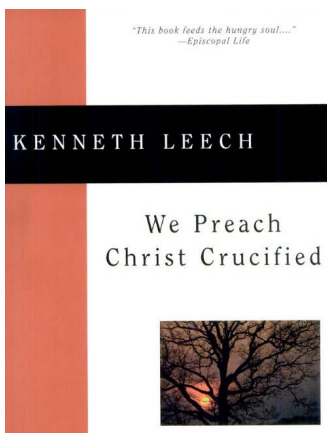
Dear Friends,

Today is Friday, March 7th, and as I write this the bells in the Grace Church tower have just chimed 11: 00 am. It was precisely at this moment 168 years ago that the current Grace Church here at 10th and Broadway was opened to the public for the first time, and consecrated to the service of God. Our parish history book (which itself is now 90-years old) contains descriptions of the impressive service derived from newspaper accounts. One thing about it that stood out at the time, and stands out still, is the consecration sermon, preached by Thomas House Taylor, who was the Rector of Grace Church from 1834-1867.

Rather than dwelling solely on the beauty of the structure, or the accomplishment of the members in building it, Taylor challenged the pew holders with another summit to climb. He asked for the means to build a Grace Chapel, "where the sittings shall always be free." You see, in those days churches funded their ministries through a system of pew rentals. To be a member of a church you had to rent a pew, and only pew holders could sit in their pews. But what of those who could not afford to rent a pew? This was the group whom Taylor challenged the pew holders to serve. Imagine: the people in the pews on March 7, 1846 had risked everything to build a new edifice and move two miles uptown, and they barely made it through the opening hymn in the new church before hearing the call

The Sunday
Forum @10 am.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN...



to live a cross-
shaped life?
Sunday @7pm.

**HAVEN'T
PLEGGED YET
FOR 2014?
It's fast and
easy!**

Just click [HERE](#).

*...and remember,
you can take all of
2014 to fulfill your
pledge.*

to keep on climbing. So over the next 100 years Grace Church would build and operate four Grace Chapels, where the sittings were always free for thousands upon thousands of the city's poor and newly arrived immigrants to America.

In addition to the Grace Chapels, Grace Church would launch numerous pioneering urban ministries, such as the Day Nursery, which was a forerunner to what we know today as day care. Over the years would also give birth to Grace Church School, the GO Project, and the Grace Church Choral Society. We operated a rooming house for young people, and a shelter for the homeless. The question is, what's next? What's the next summit that God will be calling us to climb?

At a recent Saturday workshop the Vestry of Grace Church was grappling with that very question under the stern gaze of Thomas House Taylor, whose portrait hung above us. "What's next?" should always be a question we are asking, but not one we are lunging too quickly and too hastily to answer. Sadly, I've known churches that have tried to climb too high, too fast, and have lost everything because of it. In the near future we must finish the job of interior restoration, and pay the endowment back what we borrowed from ourselves. But let's keep dreaming about the next major ministry initiatives to which God will be calling us. We don't need the answer tomorrow. The truth is, the new organ was a twenty-year journey from start to finish. To mix in another metaphor: this is a marathon, not a sprint.

See you in church - where the sittings these days are always free.

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

This Sunday, March 9, 2014

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring
Music: The Parish Choir

11 a.m. Morning Prayer
Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring
Music: The Choir of Men and Boys

6 p.m. Holy Eucharist, in the Chantry
Sermon: The Rev. Stephen Holton
Music: Hymns with instrumentalists

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

CLOSING THE GAP: A PERSONAL SOJOURN – THE SUNDAY FORUM AT 10AM. The Rev. Paul Raushenbush, Senior Religion Editor, Huffington Post will start the first of our five Lenten series classes with an account of his own personal journey from an interfaith upbringing to pursuing ordained ministry in the American Baptist Church to his current role as Senior Religion Editor at The Huffington Post. For many years he was the Associate Dean of Religious Life and the Chapel at Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. Previously, he served at Seattle First Baptist Church, as well as in the Presbyterian Chaplaincy at Columbia University.

The Sunday Forum Lenten series on MAR 9, 16, 23, 30, APR 6 "CLOSING THE GAP: Testimonials of Transformation" will focus on testimonies from Grace Parishioners and others who have undertaken journeys of rigorous self-examination. Five presenters will focus on how such self-imposed reflection has resulted in personal transformations for themselves as Christians, as they faithfully answer God's call to cleave ever nearer to the divine. Held in the Reception Room; pick up some refreshment at coffee hour and join the discussion.

ACOLYTES – All Acolytes are encouraged to attend a training session today following the 11 am service. Help yourself to a snack at coffee hour, or a bite to eat with the Boys Choir in the Music Room, then meet at the altar (approximately 12:45 pm) for a twenty-minute review of our responsibilities. If you are a young person in the 4th grade or older and are interested in joining the acolytes, you are welcome to come listen in.

WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED – SUNDAY EVENINGS AT 7PM. What does it mean to live a cross-shaped life? How does Christ's passion inform our daily lives, our sense of mission, and our service to God and others? Walk the way of the cross this Lent with a series of brief readings, reflection, and discussion centered on Kenneth Leech's masterful devotional book, *We Preach Christ Crucified*. Leech, an Anglican priest, served for decades in urban parishes in London, focusing on young adult ministry and outreach to homeless and addicted populations. Sundays in Lent following the 6 o'clock service in the Chantry. Light refreshment served. March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13. Books are \$12; order online or [email now to Fr Stephen](#) Holton to reserve a copy.

COMING SOON

MAR 11 – ECW FUNDRAISER COOKBOOK – MEETING. Anyone from the parish is welcome to join the committee for this project. The first meeting will be Tuesday, Mar 11 at 6pm in the Reception Room. We will discuss the format, the collecting of parishioners' favorite recipes and any other suggestions or ideas. The book will be completed in time for sale at the 2014 Grace and the Arts at Christmas Fair!

MAR 14 – 20s30s LENTEN SUSHI FRIDAYS – Enjoy a meal, prayer and fellowship with others in their 20s and 30s at 6:30 pm on alternate Fridays during Lent (Mar 14, Mar 28, April 11). Come to one or to all three! \$10 per person for dinner and BYOB. Held in the Reception Room. *RSVP by 5 pm each THURSDAY prior, to [Melissa Spindler](#).*

MAR 16 – MEETING OF THE ALTAR GUILD – for all who serve the ministry of the altar, we will meet to plan for services in Lent and Easter. We'll plan, collaborate and answer all of your questions! Grab some coffee in Tuttle Hall and come to the Reception Room at 12:30 pm.

MAR 27 – DOCUMENTARY FILM *MISS REPRESENTATION* will be screened on Thursday, Mar 27 at 6:15 pm in Tuttle Hall, along with discussion time and a "No pressure" finger food pot luck (bring food or bev to share – no pressure!). The evening is hosted by the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) of Grace Church and the discussion moderated by Melissa Spindler. All parishioners and friends are welcome. \$5 suggested donation. *Premiering at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, Miss Representation is written and directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom and exposes how mainstream media contribute to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America. The film challenges the media's limited and often disparaging portrayals of women and girls, which make it difficult for women to achieve leadership positions and for the average woman to feel powerful herself. View the trailer [HERE](#). Check out the website [HERE](#).*

APR 13 – EXCERPTS FROM HANDEL'S MESSIAH PART

II. On Palm Sunday at 4 pm in the Church, the Adult Choir will offer Choral Evensong featuring excerpts from the Easter Portion of Handel's MESSIAH.

APR 29 – GO PROJECT/ANNUAL SPRING BENEFIT. 46 years ago, members of Grace Church and parents of Grace Church School created the GO Project as an educational outreach program for underperforming public school children. This year's event will feature cocktails, tasting tables and both silent and live auctions. Your participation will help GO continue to provide academic and social service supports to 550 students and families. Tuesday, April 29 at the Bowery Hotel. For more information and tickets visit: <http://www.goprojectnyc.org>.

MAY 9, 10 – THE CHORAL SOCIETY & ORCHESTRA SPRING CONCERT Deeply felt works for unaccompanied choir, choir with organ, and choir with orchestra and soloists, including the magnificent Mozart Requiem. Randall Thompson: The Last Invocation, Arvo Pärt: The Beatitudes, Charles Ives: Psalm 90, W. A. Mozart: Requiem (KV 626). Under the musical direction of John Maclay. Friday, May 9 at 8 pm and Saturday, May 10 at 3 pm. Tickets are on sale now: www.thechoralsociety.org click "concerts."

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