

The Epistle *E-news*

GRACE CHURCH

in New York City



In This Issue

[Flowers and Greens](#)

[Join Us in Making a Pledge!](#)

[Final Sunday Forum!](#)

[A Taste of Grace](#)

[This Sunday](#)

[Coming Soon](#)

Quick Links

[GIVE to Grace](#)

[Visit our Website](#)

[More About Us](#)

[Did You Miss a Sermon?](#)

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A Call for Christmas Flowers & Greens!



December 7, 2014

The Second Sunday of Advent



Dear Friends,

An often-told story describes an old man walking along a beach on which thousands of starfish have washed ashore. With the tide going out and the hot sun coming up, all of the starfish will surely dry up and die on the sand. So what the old man does as he traverses the beach is frequently bend down, pick up a starfish, and throw it back into the water. At some point he encounters a younger man who comments to the old man that he is wasting his time. "Let nature take her course. There are tens of thousands of starfish on the sand. You can't possibly make a difference." Silently, the old man picks up another starfish and throws it into the sea. "I just made a difference to that one," he said, continuing on his way.

It would be an understatement to say that we are living in interesting times. We can look at our society and world and easily feel overwhelmed. It is like the beach full of starfish. How can anyone possibly make a difference? Here is where the old story can guide us. I'm not suggesting its message is the only answer to the many troubles besetting our nation, but pressing on with the little things sure beats inertia and cynicism.

Every year at Christmas time it is the generous donations from our parishioners that enhance the beauty of Grace Church.

You may donate online [here](#) or you may use a Christmas flower envelope (found in the Parish House hallway) to offer your cash or check.

We recommend donation amounts beginning at \$50, but are grateful for any amount. Thank you! *For your donation "in honor of" or "in memory of" to be listed in the Christmas bulletin, it must be received by Tuesday, Dec 16th.*

2015 Annual Campaign!

Every Advent we have the opportunity to make a difference by contributing to the special collections for various charitable organizations. Last week the goal was hats, scarves, and gloves. This week we are asking that you gather up any new, unused, travel-sized toiletries (shampoo, soap, shower caps, etc.) and place them in the baskets near the church door as you arrive. If you don't have any such items in your bathroom cupboard, how about going out and buying some to share. What difference will it make? It will make all the difference in the world to the one person who able to be clean for the first time in weeks. And who knows what difference that person will make with the new start you've helped to provide. The little things matter. Keep doing them.

See you in church.

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

This Sunday, December 7th

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring
Music: The Parish Choir

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

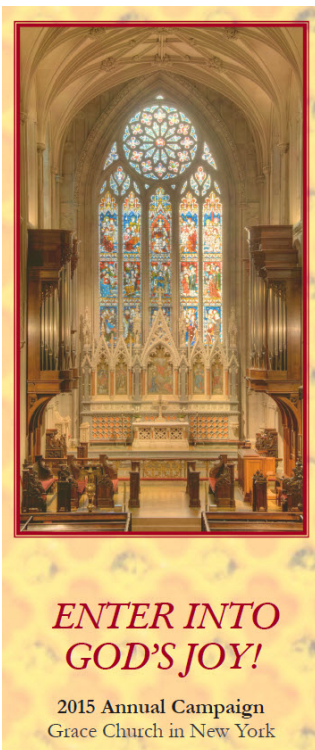
Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring
Music: The Combined Junior Choristers
with Adults

6 p.m. Holy Eucharist, in the Chantry

Sermon: The Rev. Mark Hummell
Music: Hymns with Instrumentalists

THE SUNDAY FORUM is on recess, and resumes for a final session on Dec 14 (see description below).

DEC 7, 14 – THE ANNUAL ADVENT COLLECTIONS for local charities continue today with a collection of



Don't Miss the Final Sunday Forum of the Season!



Popular Forum speaker and Grace Parishioner **Nicholas Birns**, on John MILTON'S NATIVITY ODE. Sunday, Dec 14th.

FROM NOW UNTIL CHRISTMAS,

travel-sized toiletries for the *women's shelter at New York City Rescue Mission*. (Please bring *travel-sized* shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, powder, shower caps, lotion, soaps, and/or washcloths). On Sunday Dec 14th we'll collect new men's boxers, t-shirts, and tube socks (larger sized) for the *men's shelter at NYC Rescue Mission*. Donations will be collected in the baskets at the back of the church. Please give generously this Advent!

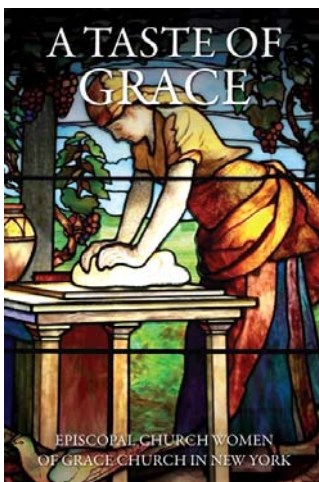
ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS Readings of scripture foretelling the coming of Christ are interspersed with beautiful music of the season. Sung by The Adult Choir at 4 pm in the Church.

NOV 30, DEC 7, 14, 21 – ADVENT BOOK DISCUSSION: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO *BE* A CHRISTIAN—and why does Christian community matter? Join us after the Sunday 6 pm service to discuss what it means to be a Christian (as opposed to think about, know about, or even talk about Christianity) using Rowan Williams' new book, *Being Christian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014). Formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, Williams (now Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge) offers a four-part meditation on Christian discipleship, focused on Baptism, Eucharist, Scripture, and Prayer. *Held in the Honor Room, directly after the 6 pm service. This four-part class is ideal for people new to the Christian faith or long-time Christians who are curious about why Christian practice and community matter. Copies of the book are available from Fr. Stephen Holton or for order online. [E-mail Fr. Stephen Holton](#) for more information, to sign up, or to reserve a copy. Please read Chapter 1, Baptism, for our first discussion Nov 30.*

COMING SOON

DEC 10 – THE COMMUNITY CAROL SING All are welcome to come and sing with The Combined Boys'

**pick up your
copies at coffee
hour after the
9 and 11 am
services!**



This fabulous book of over 330 recipes from the people of Grace Church, compiled, edited and designed by the ECW is already a hit! A unique and special gift for everyone on your Christmas list! \$30 each. Purchase yours at coffee hour (9 & 11 am), every Sunday until Christmas, or by contacting [Elana Foundos](#).

and Girls' Choirs in this festive annual event! 12:15 – 12:45 pm in the Church.

DEC 13, JAN 10, FEB 14 – HELP REBUILD STATEN ISLAND More than two years after Hurricane Sandy, thousands of homes remain in some form of distress. Join teams from Grace Church for three parish work days, Saturdays Dec 13, Jan 10, and Feb 14. Many jobs for multiple skill levels are available—including insulation installation, sheet rocking, painting, and cleanup. We'll schedule a celebration dinner and party after our work days, so sign up now by contacting Fr. [Stephen Holton](#). TO SEE HOW YOUR WORK ON STATEN ISLAND IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE click [here](#).

DEC 14 – GINGERBREAD HOUSE DECORATING – Families are invited to come decorate a gingerbread house after the 9am and 11am services. Houses will be pre-assembled and read for you to help your little ones decorate. RSVP is required by Wednesday, Dec. 10th to make sure we have enough supplies. \$15 minimum suggested donation per house.

DEC 14 – CEREMONY OF CAROLS BY BENJAMIN BRITTEN will be offered by The Girls' Choir with Alumni of the Choir and members of The Adult and Parish Choirs at 4 pm in the Church.

DEC 14 –THE SUNDAY FORUM @10 AM – MILTON'S NATIVITY ODE: IN SEARCH OF THE SACRED with **Nicholas Birns**, PhD, Associate Professor of Literary Studies, The New School – John Milton wrote "On The Morning of Christ's Nativity" when he was 21, as a Cambridge undergraduate, It is one of the great poems of the Advent season, lauding the birth of Christ and its promise of salvation. The poem is movingly communicates core Christian doctrine, yet, in its daring, brio, and occasional downright weirdness, inimitably Miltonic. Here we see a great poet testing his fledgling talents while coming to grips with how the birth of Jesus truly changed the world. *This concludes*

our fall series. Please watch for announcements of our next series which begins in January 2015.

DEC 22 – GREENING OF THE CHURCH – A few good souls are needed to help dress the church on Monday, Dec 22, for the joyous celebration of Christmas. If you would like to sign up, you must [contact Ellen McElduff](#).

DEC 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE
4 PM CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
Featuring 89 talented beasts, shepherds, and villagers.
Doors open at 3:30 pm.

7:30 PM FESTIVAL MUSIC FOR THE ORGAN
Patrick Allen, *organ*.

8 PM FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS
The Choir of Men and Boys with the Girls' Choir. Sermon by the Rector.

10:30 PM FESTIVAL MUSIC FOR ORGAN,
BAROQUE TRUMPET & VIOLIN -
John Thiessen, *baroque trumpet*, Cynthia Roberts,
baroque violin & Patrick Allen, *organ*.

11 PM CANDLELIGHT CHORAL EUCHARIST
The Adult Choir. Sermon by the Rector.

DEC 25 - CHRISTMAS DAY
11 AM HOLY EUCHARIST WITH CAROLS
The Adult Choir. Sermon by the Rector.

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