

# The Epistle *E-news*

## GRACE CHURCH

### in New York City



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**Exploring T.S. Eliot (and the walk to Emmaus?) with Nicholas Birns!**



Joseph von Führich 1837

## April 19, 2015

The Third Sunday of Easter



Dear Friends,

Behold: A parable about prayer.

Last week we began Youth Confirmation classes in preparation for the Bishop's visit to Grace Church on May 31. The syllabus of the first class included a prayer exercise designed to give the students a framework for structuring their own private time of trying to commune with God. After all, what is the use of being confirmed if you don't pray - if you don't communicate with God? I think we'd all like to be in better touch with God, but the fact is we don't know how. Even the disciples of Jesus had to pull him aside at one point and say, "Lord, teach us to pray."

To illustrate the difficulties but also the rewards of prayer, I gathered the dozen 7-8<sup>th</sup> graders in my office. Front and center in the room was an old-fashioned, rotary dial, desktop telephone: the type that I used every day while growing up in the 1970s. The challenge for the students was simply this: could they make my modern cell phone ring using the rotary dial phone? One-by-one the volunteers stepped forward, and while I was expecting that the old phone would give them a momentary pause, I was not prepared for what transpired. 1. They did not know that the phone needed to be plugged in, even though I left the wire clearly in view. 2. They did not know that they needed to pick up the receiver and wait for a dial tone. 3. Most of all, they had no idea what to do with the dial itself. The concept of putting one's finger in the hole above the number you want, and then "dialing" clockwise until it stopped was as foreign to them as sending Morse code messages through a telegraph machine would be to me.

**The Sunday Forum**  
@10 a.m.

**TICKETS STILL  
AVAILABLE!**



**NEXT WEEK! On  
Wednesday, April  
22nd, attend the GO  
Project's annual  
benefit and auction  
and join 500 of their  
closest supporters in  
shaping the futures of  
New York City's public  
school children. For  
more info and  
[TICKETS, CLICK HERE!](#)**

**APR 30 – Grace  
Newcomers!**

Come for  
fellowship, fun and  
to grow your Grace  
Church network!

*Details below!*

Finally, after I plugged the phone in, one student figured it out, and the smart phone in my hand lit up and rang.

What lessons did I hope the students would take from the lesson? First, I am old. Let's just get that out of the way right now. Rotary phones have been gone for a long time, so if you remember using them, join the club. Second, communication is possible. Private prayer should resemble of telephone conversation that includes both listening and speaking. If an antiquated phone can light up the high-tech device in your pocket, then simple beings like ourselves can commune with the Mind who is the maker of the stars and sea. Third, prayer takes practice and even some know-how. But with discipline and persistence it can become second nature.

Some say the church, and all of our ways of communicating with God are like an antiquated phone. Fair enough. But it works. The time to figure out how to use it is now, rather than in a crisis. Lord, teach us to pray, indeed.

See you in church.

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

**This Sunday**

**9 a.m. Holy Eucharist**

Sermon: The Rev. Stephen C. Holton

Music: The Parish Choir

**11 a.m. Morning Prayer**

Sermon: The Rev. Stephen C. Holton

Music: The Choir of Men and Boys

**6 p.m. Holy Eucharist, in the Chantry**

Sermon: The Rev. Stephen C. Holton

Music: Hymns with Instrumentalists

**THE SUNDAY FORUM @10 AM.** Join Nicholas Birns in exploring the connections between "What the Thunder Said," in T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" and the story of the walk to Emmaus in the Gospel of Luke--

connections that potentially guide us through Easter to Pentecost. *Come to the Sunday Forum each week at 10 am in the Reception Room for coffee, lively discussion and spiritual enrichment!*

Next week come and hear HOW A FRIENDSHIP CHANGED THE WORLD with the author of the recently published *Barnabas vs. Paul: To Encourage or Confront?*

**NEWCOMERS' CLASSES** – Members of the clergy speak, and answer questions, about Christianity, the Episcopal Church, and what it's like to be a member of Grace Church. A light lunch will be served. Sundays, Apr 19, 26 & May 3, from 12:45 – 1:45 pm in the Reception Room. *Newcomer classes are held about 3 times per year.*

***Coming Soon***



**APR 24 – THE ANNUAL SPRING CONCERT OF THE CHOIRS OF GRACE CHURCH** 7 p.m. on Friday, April 24. The Choirs will join forces to offer some of our favorite anthems. Organ scholar, George Fergus will tickle the keys and pedals with an amazing display at the Bicentennial Organ and a merry noise will be enjoyed by all. The music offered is a sampler of the program the choirs will offer this summer as they tour France. *Get your tickets to the special benefit reception and help the Choirs raise funds for their summer concert tour to France. Simply click [HERE](#).*

**APR 26 – BARNABAS AND PAUL: HOW A FRIENDSHIP CHANGED THE WORLD –THE SUNDAY FORUM @10 AM.** The Rev. C.K. Robertson, Ph.D., Canon to the Presiding Bishop, and author of the book *Barnabas vs. Paul: To Encourage or Confront?* Barnabas and Paul were close friends and colleagues until conflict tore

them apart. Barnabas is barely remembered while Paul became, apart from Jesus himself, the most influential figure in the history of Christianity. Why did the Church canonize one man and push the other into relative obscurity? The Rev. C.K. Robertson will be here to give us a fresh portrait of both men and of a partnership that, quite literally, changed the world. *Signed copies of the book will be available to purchase for \$15.*

**APR 30 – GRACE NEWCOMER NETWORKING**

**RECEPTION.** Join us for the Spring Newcomers Reception, Thursday, April 30th 6:30–9 pm in the Reception Room. Meet Clergy, Staff and Parishioners who represent a diverse range of professional and Grace affiliations. Not sure if you are still a newcomer and want to get to know the Grace community better, please [contact Singleton Cox HERE](#) for more information. Come Grow your Grace Network!

**MAY 8, 9 – THE CHORAL SOCIETY AND ORCHESTRA**

**SPRING CONCERTS** at Grace Church: Friday, May 8 at 8 pm and Saturday, May 9 at 3 pm. REQUIEM with works by Britten, Howells and Vaughan Williams. The 70 minute program features some of the most heartfelt and elegaic choral music ever written. Tickets on sale at [www.thechoralsociety.org](http://www.thechoralsociety.org) (click CONCERTS).

**MAY 10 – EPISCOPAL CHARITIES SUNDAY** – This

Mother's Day, celebrate Episcopal Charities Sunday, and help reduce the impact of hunger on your neighbors in the Episcopal Diocese of New York. Hundreds of thousands of people will directly benefit, many of them children and the elderly. On Sunday, May 10, you'll find an envelope inside your service bulletin, which we hope you will consider using to make a donation to this worthy cause.

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