

# The Epistle *E-news*

## GRACE CHURCH

### in New York City



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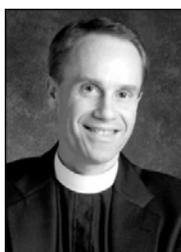
## PARISH LIFE



**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PASTORAL RESIDENT, HERSHEY MALLETTE!** Hershey is this year's recipient of the Bishop of Newark Preaching Prize, awarded

## May 17, 2015

The Sunday after Ascension Day



Dear Friends,

I wish I had a dollar for every time this week someone asked me if I'd seen the recent article about the decline of Christianity in America. Yes, I've seen it. A new survey by the Pew Research Center reveals that only 71% of

Americans self identify as Christians. That's a drop of eight percentage points in the past seven years. At the same time, the fastest growing segment of the religious landscape is the percentage of people who claim "nothing in particular" as their affiliation. If you have the time to read the full article, [click here](#). It is long and exhaustive, and at the end of it you may be inclined to ask what accounts for the numbers of people leaving or never affiliating with the church.

One answer might be the unattractive face that religion presents to the world. The other day I was walking through Union Square. On my left was a group of Hare Krishna devotees, chanting, jingling their bells, and passing out literature. On my right was a small group of people who apparently set themselves up in opposition to the Hare Krishnas. They held up a banner that read SALVATION IS ONLY IN JESUS, and they too were trying to hand out literature. As I passed through the singing and shouting match, I thought to myself that not on my worst day would I give the slightest notion to affiliating with either one of these two groups. It's no wonder why religion is on the decline.

to the graduating M.Div. Senior at General Theological Seminary, whose sermon is judged best on the basis of content, delivery, theological consistency and biblical integrity. The recipient of this award will be the preacher at the Commencement Day Holy Eucharist on Wed, May 20. Hershey thanks Fr. Waring and Fr. Holton for graciously providing opportunities for her to learn and develop as a preacher while in residence at Grace Church. Hershey believes the loving constructive feedback, and constant encouragement from the members of Grace Church has contributed to her growth as a preacher, and to her success in the competition.

**MARY KEANE MEMORIAL SERVICE** – A memorial service for Mary Keane, a lifelong parishioner of Grace Church who died in March, will be held here on Saturday, June 13, at 11 am.

**EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY (EfM)** A fun, complete, college-level

What can be done? It is up to you and me to present a compelling, attractive case for Christianity. Some time ago I was riding in a subway car when a young street preacher came aboard. As the train began moving he asked for our attention, and in short order had consigned to the flames of hell everyone who did not subscribe to the pinched and narrow version of God and Jesus he had just laid out in a few breathtaking sentences. It was quite the elevator speech! Another passenger calmly challenged him: "So what you're saying is that God is going to burn me in hell for all eternity?" The preacher cherry-picked Scripture verses that he recited to the man. Back and forth it went. Finally, an older woman inserted herself, saying to the passenger, and here I will paraphrase, "Excuse me for interrupting, but please don't believe that all Christians are like this preacher. I'm a Christian too. I believe that God is love, and that God loves you."

I don't recall exactly how the conversation ended, but the woman's gracious words and demeanor effectively silenced the preacher, who scurried off at the next stop. As the train started rolling again I thanked the woman for her courageous, gentle witness, and I thought that in the future, under similar circumstances, I too may need to snap out of my subway silence and make a case for Jesus that is compelling and reasonable. You, my friends, may need to do the same.

See you in church.

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

## This Sunday

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE CHOIRS' ANNUAL JUNE RAFFLE** to benefit the Choir Special Projects Fund! You can purchase a raffle ticket today at coffee hour after the 11 am service, or from any choir family or chorister. The raffle includes many amazing items such as fine wines, iPads and also child friendly items. This fund supports activities and opportunities for the choirs that are not covered by the annual budget including such projects as the upcoming tour this summer to France. Tickets are \$5 and \$10. Winners will be

Bible study/seminar for laypersons developed by an Episcopal Seminary 38 years ago. Year 1 of this 4-year program will meet September – May 2015 at the Church of St. Luke in the Fields on Hudson Street. \$350/yr includes text books and trained mentor. Contact Richard Limato [HERE](#) or 917-915-7531 for information or to sign up for a sample class. You'll be joining 7,000+ students and 1,300+ mentors in nearly 900 groups in the USA alone who are seeking to grasp the fullness of the Good News. For more info visit <http://efm.sewanee.edu/>.

### **THE GO PROJECT SUMMER INTERNSHIPS**

**Attention 9th–12th graders!** Help Shape Academic Futures! Become a GO Getters Intern! Are you passionate about educational equity? Are you committed to having in depth, change-making conversations with your peers? Do you want to spend a summer giving back to your community? If you replied yes, apply NOW for the GO Getters Summer Internship at

selected on June 7<sup>th</sup> at the parish picnic. Thank you for all your prayers and support.

**NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY SACRED SITE OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND** – Grace Church in New York will be participating in the New York Landmarks Conservancy Sacred Site Open House Weekend, "Celebrating New York's Diverse Houses of Worship". This year marks the 50th anniversary of New York City's Landmarks Law and we are thrilled to take part in this notable event. On Sunday, May 17th, guided tours of Grace Church will be conducted from 1–3:30 pm. For more information on the Sacred Sites Open House Weekend, please visit: [www.nylandmarks.org](http://www.nylandmarks.org).

### *Coming Soon*

**JUNE 2 – OPEN DOOR MINISTRY: SEEKING VOLUNTEERS!** Like spending time in the beautiful Grace Church sanctuary? Open to helping us to provide basic information and a welcome to over 14,000 weekend visitors yearly? Open Door is seeking volunteers just like you to round out our team. Come sit with an Open Door volunteer during their 2-hour shift on a weekend in April or May and give volunteering a try. Please contact Singleton Cox [HERE](#) for more info and to try Open Door. *And save the date for the next Open Door Celebration and Reception: June 2, at 7 pm in the Reception Room.*

**JUNE 7 – THE ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC AND CHOIR RECOGNITION SUNDAY** – All Grace Church parishioners and friends are welcome and encouraged to come to Huntington Close following the 11am service! Join us in celebration of the choir ministries of Grace Church and to help bring our program year to a joyous and festive close. Suggested donation at the door is \$10 per person. There are many ways to support this event so

[goprojectnyc.org!](http://goprojectnyc.org)

*Deadline May 18.*

*Questions? Contact Olivia*

*Nunez [HERE](#).*

please contact [Melissa](#) to find out how you can help.

**JUNE 29–JULY 1 – VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL:  
JOSEPH'S DREAMS & MULTICOLORED COAT!**

–Through three days of Bible stories, games, lots of music and awesome activities the children will learn to turn to God as they join Jacob's sons through sibling rivalry, dream–interpretation, and surviving a famine by sticking together! All children aged 4–12 are welcome. Class will meet from 9:30 am–1:30 pm. Suggested donation of \$30/child for all three days. *Please contact [Miss Melissa](#) by Sunday, June 14 to sign up.*

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

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