

AUTUMN 2021

HEAVEN IN ORDINARY

St. George's Anglican Church

What is Grace?

BY REV MADDIE

Followers of Jesus have been trying to define grace since Jesus began gathering people around him. There have been many beautiful, deeply satisfying articulations of grace in poetry and music that get close to a definition, but fall short of capturing grace in its full essence. Grace is hard to define because when it is conceptualized, it loses some of its power -- and that power is exactly what draws us to God and to a life of faith. Grace is far more a lived experience and a personal interaction with the Spirit of God in relationship than it is an idea or a concept. We may not always be able to put words to an experience of grace, but we know it intimately when we experience it: it comes in a moment of being forgiven when we've messed up; a moment of deep peace when life feels chaotic and uncertain, and a sense of reassurance that God is with us no matter what.

Grace comes in a variety of ways! I arrived at the church one morning to see leaves from the maple trees in the backyard twirl through the air, golden yellow and orange against a piercingly blue prairie sky. I stopped to take the picture featured above. That small moment of beauty, and of witnessing creation once again prepare to welcome a time of rest was a grace to witness, and a moment of reverence. I was reminded that God has designed creation to have times for rest and letting go, and times for flourishing, and that one can't be had without the other.

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The poet Mary Oliver captures these moments of realizing we're experiencing something grace-filled, well: "Sometimes I only need to stand where I am to know that I am blessed".

I invite you to consider where you are at this moment of life in the fourth wave. How is it that you are experiencing grace in this time? What are things in your life that you are particularly grateful for? How do you think that God might be drawing your attention to ways in which God longs to reveal God's love and presence to you? This fall edition of Heaven in Ordinary features the soft quiet images of prairie beauty characteristic of the stunning work of Bill Shores. It also contains poetry by Kathy Sperling, updates of things that are happening at St. George's, and some information on our current stewardship campaign. Personal interviews will once again be featured in our Advent issue. I hope that the words and images in this issue provide a way for you to reflect on grace and how it is real in your life. May you always know that you are a grace-bearer to those around you.

"Sometimes I
only need to
stand where I
am to know
that I am
blessed."

MARY OLIVER



Bring your Own Breakfast

Living the Questions Bible and Faith Study

Bring Your Own Breakfast will resume on October 13th at 8.30 for 7 consecutive Wednesdays. These meetings will continue to be 90 minutes in length and will be held via Zoom. Join us whether you have studied the first 2 sections or not – all are welcome! Please indicate your interest by contacting Sheila at the number below.

You can order the book "Living the Questions" from Amazon, Indigo, or any other bookstore.

It costs about 20.00\$ Cdn. You will need a computer or phone with a wifi connection to participate. If you are not available during the day but would like to follow this study please let Sheila know.

Haganblo@gmail.com
780-719-8753



Giving in Grace

St. George's is a parish that goes about the work of grace in a humble and beautiful way. We are presently undertaking a stewardship campaign so that we may continue more specific works of grace in meaningful and ways with the hospitals close by. Your gift and pledge helps us to maintain current operating costs and to continue to dream and implement ways in which to express God's love in the world. Emily Herd and James Fidler have both expressed what giving means to them below. Please read and consider why it is that you give, and how you can support the ministry of St. George's in 2022.



"My reason for giving is very practical and logical, although ultimately tied to my faith and how I value our community. We value St. George's and the community it provides (a community all the more important with our extended families across the country from us). I give to help ensure the church can function because I can, because I have the financial means to do so, so this community that I value can continue to exist and grow."

— Emily Herd

Reverend Maddie recently reached out to me via email, in these hopefully waning days of covid, and she asked me if I would consider joining a stewardship committee. My first thought was – Oh Lord- I should have attended more church services on Zoom! My second thought was that I should accept, as this would be a good way to support our church community. Reverend Maddie then asked me and my fellow committee members, on a Zoom call, two further questions – What does belonging to a faith community mean to me and why do I give to the church. Having agreed to send Reverend Maddie a reply, I sat down a few nights ago to think about my “Homework” and suddenly realized that these were not easy questions to answer! After some thought however, I believe that belonging to a faith community provides me with the opportunity to feel reverence, connect with people who are like minded, and to help others in our wider community. Believing that this was a reasonable answer to question one, I then turned to question two – why do I give to the church? This was a, somewhat, easier question to answer after spending time thinking about this first question. I give to the church so that there is a place where I can feel reverence, connect with people, and have a space where we can make meals or collect and package everyday items, for example, for those people who are less fortunate than ourselves. I hope that you feel the same way.

-James Fidler

tee hee! And my response to anyone who might feel weird about tying attendance to belonging: church attendance doesn't determine how beautifully you belong to a community. There are multiple points of entry to a community-centered upon experiencing God's grace.

- Maddie

Speaking of reverence, this image of a small flame flickering in the dark inspires reverence in me.

Photo courtesy of Bill Shores.

MUSIC, FAITH, AND ETHNICITY IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Led by Dr. Carl Urion

“Gospel music developed outside the church over three centuries within and between communities whose overarching relationship was race-based violence--slavery, war, dispossession, genocide, physical segregation, economic exploitation, social denigration, and denial of civic or political rights or personhood. In that bloody context, gospel music developed in and amongst those communities in shared spaces of song, dance, prayer, and invocation of power. It’s the main musical precursor of blues, jazz, and country. It’s been around in Western Canada since the 1840s. I’ll play some examples from loosely overlapping White, Black, and Indigenous gospel music communities here. Each of the communities has made the music their own at that same time as they still share roots, canon, and contemporary practice”.

Thursday, October 21st at 7pm via Zoom

For more information please email Rev
Maddie at: revmaddie@gmail.com

What's Happening

This past fall, we bid goodbye to Nola Shantz, and welcomed Shawn Grenke as one half of our music ministry along with our beloved Aaron Parker. Shawn Grenke is Director of Music at Eglinton St. George's United Church in Toronto, past Associate Conductor and Accompanist for the Amadeus Choir of Toronto, Accompanist to the Elmer Iseler Singers of Toronto, and Artistic Director of the 80-voice Achill Choral Society in Orangeville, Ontario. Shawn began his musical training as a chorister and pianist with the Hastings County Board of Education Concert Choir under the Direction of Rudolf Heijdens in his hometown of Belleville. He has a Bachelor of Music degree (2000) from Mount Allison University (New Brunswick), and a Master of Music degree (2002) from the University of Toronto. Shawn has made international appearances in concerts in Poland, at the 'Let the Future Sing' Choral Festival in Sweden, the 'Le Mondial Choral Loto-Québec World Choral Competition' in Laval, Québec, Xinghai Choral Competition' in China, Seoul, Roy Thomson Hall, CBC Radio, and other various festivals, concert series, and recitals throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. This fall Shawn began a Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree (in choral conducting) at the University of Alberta. Shawn is pleased to be one of the 'Artists in Residence' at St. George's Anglican Church. Welcome Shawn! We're so glad to have you with us.

**"But now bring
me a musician."
And when the
musician played,
the hand of the
Lord came upon
him.**

2 KINGS 3:15





COMMUNITY CARE

Our parish ID process is transitioning to a time of intentional visioning around aligning our gifts, skills, and assets with the needs of the community around us.

You are invited to attend a conversation about visioning for community care on November 6th at 10 am via Zoom! Participation in the Parish ID process is not a requirement for joining this conversation. More information will be available on our parish website in the coming days.

IT CAN BE SIMPLE

It can be simple this life, it can.
It can be as easy as one breath at a time
One step at a time walking in one direction
But accepting that perhaps the
Navigation coordinates will change.
Why worry about it ahead of time?
Why waste one moment of this precious life
On that which may not happen,
A storm that may not even arrive?
Better to look around, take in the scenery
Watch for the many small graces
That cross our paths all the time
When we are paying attention
The sun comes up every day
But I don't always notice it
What a pity!
The people who cross our paths
All a miracle, alive, wondrous mysterious
The events that arrive
All part of a confluence of forces so
Beyond our control or awareness
Why even try figure it all out?
Truly, I will try my best to live
Like a child, be in the moment
Cry when I am sad, laugh when I am happy
Dance when I want to, rest when I need to
Pray at all times, trust as much as I possibly can
And dream of possibilities I had long
Forgotten or given up.
It can be that simple –
It just isn't always easy to do!

Kathy Sperling