

Parish Profile Components

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Grace Church Today

Grace Episcopal Church has been a congregation in Christ's name since the 1840's. Today, Grace comprises two locations: the Parish Hall, at the intersection of Montgomery and Landing Roads, and the historic stone church on Elkridge Heights Avenue, originally serving Elkridge Landing, a seaport linking the Patapsco River with the Chesapeake Bay.

A vibrant community, Grace Episcopal Church is many things to many people, all united in Christian fellowship. Grace Church conducts worship in both a traditional style, with choir, at the historic stone church, and in a contemporary, family-friendly setting at the Parish Hall. Grace Church supports or charters groups that serve the community and it is through these groups most people come to know Grace Church. Most prominently Grace Church supports the Grace Child Care Center, providing a nurturing and loving environment to 150 children.

Currently Grace is a parish in transition in a number of dimensions and will rely upon its people to steer a prudent course, strengthening the parish over the coming years. Despite budget deficits, a small exodus of parishioners, and the departure of a long tenured Rector, a "can do" attitude defines the parish, combined with intellectual and spiritual bounty. The Grace community has been generous with its time, talents, and resources.

Grace Episcopal Church History

Founded early in the 18th century, Elkridge is located at the crossroads of three counties: Howard, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore. Its location on the Patapsco River was a key factor in its growth. The settlement existed even before the Maryland General Assembly elected a law in 1733 to erect a 30-acre, forty-lot town at Elkridge Landing. Initially, the settlement provided a place where planters, who each had a wharf along the river, could bring their tobacco crop to be loaded on English trading ships. Later, Elkridge Landing was built as the

seaport dock for the community.

The congregation had its beginning in 1841, when the Rev. Robert Piggot began preaching to small groups on Sunday afternoons in various local homes. The Convention of the Diocese of Maryland, meeting on May 29, 1845, admitted Grace Church of Elkridge Landing to full status as a parish. The first vestry was elected in 1845. The Rt. Rev. William Rollinson Whitingham, Bishop of Maryland, consecrated the church on June 15, 1848. Incorporated as Grace Episcopal Church of the Elkridge Landing, we are the third oldest Episcopal congregation in Howard County.

Between 1855 and 1909, Grace Church had three fires which destroyed the church buildings, located near the railroad tracks where sparks from passing locomotives ignited the construction frame buildings. After the third fire, the vestry acquired additional land and rebuilt the new church of stone with a slate roof, up the hill a safe distance from the railroad. George Worthington, a Baltimore architect who was a vestryman and son of the first registrar of the first vestry, designed the building. Nestled into a hillside adjacent to Elkridge Heights Avenue, this beautiful stone building remains the home where the Grace Episcopal community has worshiped for generations.

The Rev. Charles C. Durkee, our first long-term Rector, came to Grace Church in 1928 and served for over 26 years. During that time he served as Dean of the Convocation of Annapolis and later as its secretary. His minutes became well known for their humor and thoroughness. Early in his ministry, the rood screen was installed in the church as a memorial to Mr. Richard Norris who had served as treasurer, vestryman, and head of the Sunday School for twenty-five years. Entirely the product of parish talent, the rood screen was designed by George Worthington, who had designed the church, and built by Robert Coates, a skilled artist at wood working, and his son, Louis Coates. Mr. Louis Coates later served as Senior Warden in the 1960's. Grace Church began its sponsorship of Cub Pack 432, Boy Scouts of America, in 1949. The pack is one of the oldest in the Baltimore Area Council.

When Fr. Durkee retired in 1954, he was named Rector Emeritus, a position he held until his death in 1967. His grandsons gave the parish the extensive collection of books belonging to the Durkees and their daughter, Ada Durkee Wyatt. These formed the basis for the Durkee-Wyatt library, which was housed in the Guild Room at the old parish house and open to the public. The library was closed in 1986 when Elkridge received a branch of the county public library.

During the Rev. Charles Hein's five years at Grace Church (1954-1959), the parish constructed a new rectory on Lawyers Hill Road near Montgomery Road on land given by Mrs. Howard Bruce. Shortly after the construction of the new rectory, the Maryland Department of Transportation announced plans for Interstate Route 95, which condemned a large portion of the rectory property but not the rectory itself.

In 1954 a team of researchers from the National Church advised the parish to expand its facilities to anticipate future growth. Accordingly, the congregation purchased land at Montgomery and Landing Roads for a new, larger parish house.

The Rev. Robert Gourlay arrived in 1960. In his first year, he asked for permission to have a crèche in the church. The vestry granted permission and began offering a Christmas Eve crèche service, which has continued through the years. During Fr. Gourlay's rectorate, the

new parish house was built and opened for use in September 1966. Fifteen years later the mortgage for that building was paid in full. New music and “Folk Masses” sung to guitar accompaniment were also introduced during Fr. Gourlay’s rectorate.

Fr. Gourlay left in December 1972, and the Rev. Richard Murdock was called in May 1973. At the urging of some of the congregation, he began a short worship service before Sunday School classes. In the Reverend Gulick’s subsequent administration in 1976, this service was enlarged to a full but informal Eucharist, which became the weekly family service.

During Fr. Murdock’s tenure, the old parish house on Main Street was used as a thrift shop called The Penny Pincher. It began operation in September 1975 and continued in operation until the parish’s fourth fire damaged the building beyond repair in the summer of 1977. The congregation made the agonizing decision to not rebuild the thrift shop in December of that year.

In February 1976, Fr. Murdock answered a call to a parish in West Virginia, and in June of that same year, the parish called the Reverend Edwin F. “Ted” Gulick Jr., who was serving at the time as the Assistant Rector of Trinity Church, Towson. During Fr. Ted’s ministry, the 1979 *Prayer Book* began to be used by all congregations. In addition we had a number of seminarians who received part of their training with us. Among them were Tom Haifley, Taylor Moore, Skip Adams, Rebecca Dinan and Jesse Parker. They have all gone on to be priests, and we feel privileged to have had a part in their spiritual and professional development. Two were ordained at Grace Church – the Rev. Taylor Moore (who was also married at Grace Church) and the Rev. Rebecca Dinan.

Four other parishioners have also been ordained. Thomas Donaldson, a descendant of one of the founding families was ordained a priest. Berkley Ford, who was raised in the Elkridge community, became an Episcopalian and attended Sewanee with assistance from our parish and was subsequently ordained a priest. The late Rev. Mary Pat Ashby attended Virginia Theological Seminary with assistance from the parish, and Mr. Dennis Hewitt was ordained to the Perpetual Diaconate. Two parishioners have entered convents: Hannah Smith entered All Saints Convent, Catonsville in 1957, and Miss Phyllis Crothers entered the Community of the Transfiguration in 1982. In October 1982, Fr. Gulick accepted a call to St. Stephens Church, Newport News, Virginia, from which he was elected Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of Kentucky in 1994.

In September 1983, the Rev. William W. Rich began his ministry at Grace Church. During his pastorate, we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the present church building and the 140th anniversary of the founding of the congregation. At that time we undertook the “Partners in Grace Campaign” to finance needed repairs at the church and at the parish house. The new hymnal was incorporated into our worship. Our deacon, Dennis Hewitt, was transferred, and William Jefferson, fondly known as Father Bill, became our deacon. He continued to serve Grace Church until his death in 1998. Fr. Rich resigned in 1987 to become a chaplain at St. Mary’s College.

In 1989, the Rev. Michael B. Russell answered the call of Grace Church to become its rector. During his rectorate, Fr. Mike involved the parish in many community-oriented activities. Largely as a result of his leadership, the first only subsidized senior housing in Elkridge was constructed by a partnership of which Grace Church was a member. Fr. Mike was also the catalyst for the sponsorship by Grace Church of regular teen dances, which attracted young

people from a wide area. In 1995 the parish celebrated its 150th anniversary with a catered dinner and the gathering and displaying of many historical documents and pictures.

As a result of the growth of the Sunday School, the family services, and the need in the community for more daycare services and youth programs, a building campaign called "Amazing Grace" was launched during Fr. Russell's ministry. The monies raised would not only support the renovation of the existing parish hall but would also help to build a new, expanded daycare center. Fr. Russell resigned in October of 1999.

In 2001, The Rev. Taylor M Smith was called to lead Grace Church into the new millennium. Under Fr. Taylor's leadership, plans to build a new, expanded day care center were fulfilled, and soon thereafter a dedication ceremony was held. Sunday School classrooms and office space were refurbished, and space was repurposed to house The Mustard Seed, a thrift and gift shop and one of Grace's outreach ministries. During Fr. Taylor's rectorate, we had a number of deacon interns and seminarians who received part of their training with us, and we feel privileged to have had a part in their spiritual and professional development.

In the fall of 2010, a meditation garden and gazebo were built at the parish hall in honor of the memory of Mrs. Bessie Weatherholt, a long-time member of Grace Church. Members of her family spearheaded the effort, and many parishioners generously donated funds for memorial bricks in honor of their own relatives and friends. An Eagle Scout candidate of Boy Scout Troop 432 completed the work.

On October 9, 2011, Grace Church celebrated the 100th anniversary of the consecration of the stone church building located at the intersection of Main and Brumbaugh in Elkridge.

In August, 2012 Fr. Taylor Smith was called to a parish in western Howard County, and Rev. Dr. John Price became Grace's Interim Rector.

For a more complete account of Grace's history, read the *150th Anniversary of Grace Church History*, compiled by Mrs. Shirlene Martha (Hastings) Bauman, a life-long member of Grace Church, and Ms. Terry R. Damon. These pages contain a praiseworthy effort to provide interesting and factual information from parish sources.

Sources

100th Anniversary of Grace Church, booklet

150th Anniversary of Grace Church History, Mrs. Shirlene Martha (Hastings) Bauman, a life-long member of Grace Church, and Ms. Terry R. Damon

Various documents and photos Charlotte Aldridge loaned by Mrs. Judy (Harman) Peddicord, a life-long member of Grace Church

Wikipedia

The Parish Profile, 1999, Ms. Cathy Hudson, Chair of the Search Committee

Rectors, Past to Present

Rev. W.G. Jackson, 1854-1876
Rev. Phillip Nelson Mead, 1877-1882
Rev. Dudley Powers, 1882-1885
Rev. Rich and the Rev. Frank Gibson, 1886-1893
Venerable J. Clay Morgan, 1893-1896
Rev. John C. Clay, 1896-1901
Rev. Benjamin Lovett, 1901-1903
Rev. C. Mosley Murray, 1903-1906
Rev. R.A. Castleman, 1906-1917
Rev. Edwin S. Hinks, 1918-1927
Rev. Charles C. Durkee, 1928-1954
Rev. Charles Hein, 1954-1959
Rev. Robert Gourlay, 1960-1972
Rev. Richard Murdock, 1973-1976
Rev. Edwin F. Gulick, Jr. 1976-1982
Rev. Roy Coffin, Jr. (Interim Rector), 1982-1983
Rev. William W. Rich, 1983-1987
Rev. Michael B. Russell, 1989-1999
Rev. Robert W. Carlson (Interim Rector), 1999-2001
Rev. Taylor M. Smith, 2001-2012
Rev. Dr. John Price (Interim Rector) 2012-present

Welcome to Grace

We hope you come to know our story; more importantly we hope that you find friendship, worship, and a sense of a Christian community in the people of Grace Church. We are a suburban church in search of a rector who can build upon our strengths, help the parish grow, and add vibrancy and depth to our Christian community.

Our new rector will find people coming together in faith and engaged in the work of the parish and the Church. Our new rector will find dedicated, caring parishioners understanding they are in a period of transition, with some trepidation regarding the future. As part of a strategic planning effort, we completed a recent parish survey. That work identified strengths and weaknesses in our parish, and the Vestry is now considering plans based on that work. The Vestry's efforts identify these areas:

1. Growing the parish but maintaining the relationships and richness of a pastoral-sized parish.
2. Encourage parishioners to continue and increase engagement in hands-on ministries, whether supported directly by the Grace Church or not.
3. Strengthen our Christian education and spiritual development efforts, particularly for the children of the parish and those we hope will be coming in the next few years.
4. Build a stronger administrative structure promoting better communication and providing more effective stewardship for the resources entrusted to Grace's care.

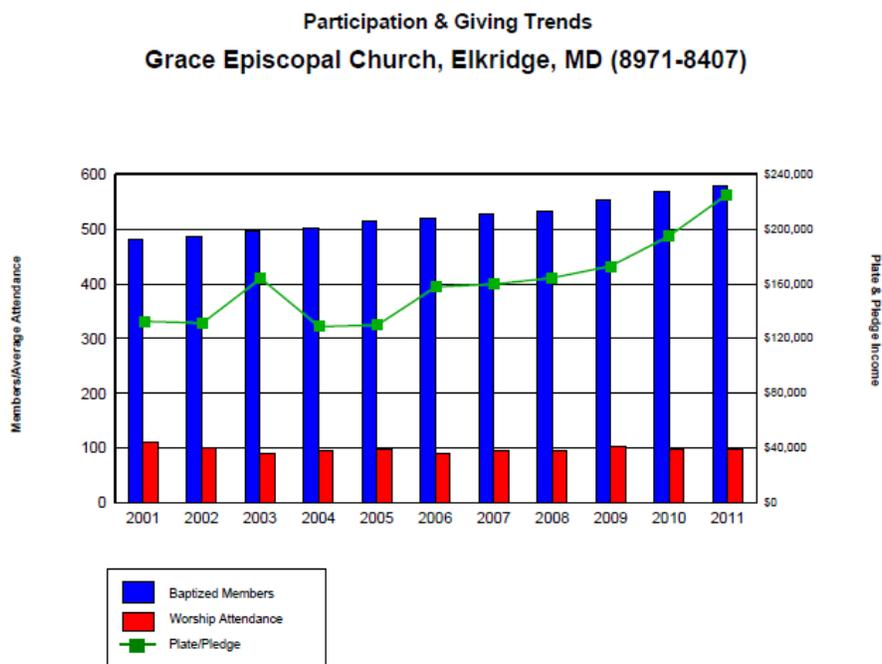
Parish & Planning

A lot has been happening at Grace, and consideration of those happenings must be in the context of who Grace Church is now and who it wants to be in the future.

In this segment of the Grace story we first consider who we are. In describing ourselves we rely on a recent parish survey done as part of our strategic planning. We then turn our attention to the major tenets of the strategic planning and describe actions and implementations being considered by the Grace Vestry towards those ends. Lastly, we report on the work of the Rector Search Committee, which incorporates all of the above information to the best of its abilities.

The People of Grace Buck Some Common Trends (in a good way)

There is good news to share, as provided by the Diocese about Grace Church and its membership.

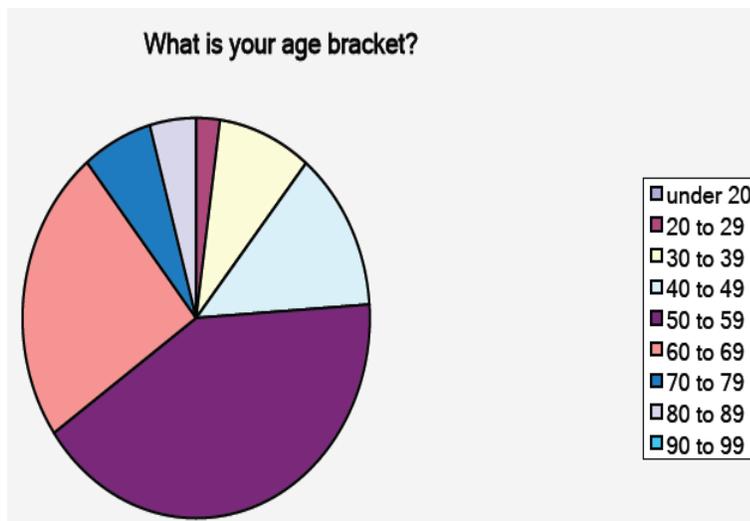


The data show participation and giving trends over an 11 year period. The ratio of average worship attendance to baptized members appears low, given evidence from other parishes; Grace has followed a very lenient and liberal method for keeping members “on the books,” so to speak. More importantly, the numbers show a fairly constant average attendance over the time frame and an increasing financial contribution from parishioners. Both of these trends are counter to broader experience in Episcopal and other mainline parishes over the past decade. While hard data are always useful, we respectfully point out that this hard data does

not reflect the dedication and countless hours given by Grace parishioners, nor does it account for the great sense of fellowship that permeates our Christian community.

Parish Survey, Part I of the Strategic Planning Effort

During January 2013 the Vestry of Grace Church received a report from the Parish's Strategic Planning Team.¹ The report provided not only a snapshot of the parish but also insights into the desires, satisfaction, and hopes and dreams for the future of Grace. There were 44 surveys completed and returned to the Strategic Planning Team, six group based meaning statement exercises, and four cottage meetings held in the homes of parishioners to provide input into the planning process. Before considering the results of the Strategic Planning Team Report and the Vestry actions based on that report, we will describe ourselves using some common measures.



The largest share of the 44 survey respondents attend the 9:00 service (27), about 25% of respondents attend the 11:15 service (11), and the smallest share (6) regularly attend the 7:45 service.

The survey revealed the distribution of ages of survey respondents represents a significant share of parishioners over 50 years old.

Interestingly enough, a prior "Parish Profile" was compiled a little over 10 years ago and the largest age

cohort then was 40 to 49.

The survey also revealed an unequal stratification of age groups across regularly attended services.

The growth in regular attendance at Grace has been highest at the 9:00 a.m. service. The survey revealed that the 9:00 a.m. service is the main choice of younger parishioners. Unfortunately the survey did not provide a means to determine the tenure of parishioners at Grace by service attended, but it is generally acknowledged that the newer members who are young are more likely to attend the 9:00 a.m. service. During the end of 2012 and beginning of 2013, the Interim Rector noted that more newcomers to Grace came to the 11:15 service than any other; discussions among parishioners hypothesized that younger people may prefer a later Sunday service, providing room for extra sleep or recreation activities prior to church.

¹ Much of the material in this section is drawn from the "Strategic Planning Team, Final Report" 1/6/2013. A version is available [by this link](#), or at <http://home.ubalt.edu/ntsbgel/Strategic%20Planning%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Parish Survey, Part II Actions Based on Strategic Plan Effort

While the Vestry is in the interpretation stage of the strategic planning study and has moved to an affirmation of goals and implementable strategies supporting those goals, the findings and recommendations of the study are of considerable import to the parish. These goals are summarized as

1. A continuation and further projection of Grace's ability to
 - a. Increase the utility of Grace Church in the community in a variety of ways
 - b. Continue to build membership in the church, particularly emphasizing the 9 a.m. family service with song and rebuilding youth participation in this service, including co-scheduled youth programming.
2. A focus on areas where the Christian community of Grace Church could be better served, particularly with respect to
 - a. Consistent programs supporting Christian formation within the congregation
 - b. Strengthening administrative aspects of church-related operations including communication and record-keeping on activities.
3. A forwarding-looking paradigm involving two explicit aspirational goals of
 - a. Growing membership but maintaining a pastoral-sized parish (150 regular attendees on an average Sunday)
 - b. Developing of a robust multi-generational program to support Christian formation.

The initial Vestry discussion of the report led to a short term statement of four goals:

- A. Build membership but remain a pastoral-sized parish.
- B. Increase Christian education programs.
- C. Continue to support outreach efforts.
- D. Strengthen our administrative and communicative processes.

The Vestry will implement a response to these four goals. The Senior Warden, working with the Interim Rector, will focus on goal D. Cross-functional teams will address the remaining goals, enhancing Grace's ability to maximize the efforts of its Vestry while identifying the interconnectedness of the broadly stated goals. Those four cross-functional implementation teams are: Christian Education, Facilities, Fellowship, and Welcoming.

Finding a New Rector

A Rector Search Committee was formed in the fall of 2012. As of March 2013, the Rector Search Committee has outlined its intentions at the Annual Parish Meeting (January 2013), developed this Parish Profile, determined a list of characteristics and attributes for a Rector; the committee will soon forward our portfolio information to the diocese.

The Rector of Grace Church will have:

1. The interest and some demonstrated experience in helping Grace grow membership to a larger size but to remain a pastoral sized congregation.
2. Good administrative, managerial, and communicative skills, capable of effectively leading parishioners to better manage ourselves and the resources entrusted to Grace Church.
3. An interest in interacting with and strengthening a sense of Christian community in parishioners of all ages. This would include building stronger Christian education programs.
4. The interest in and some successful experience in encouraging us to maintain and improve our outreach efforts.
5. The ability to resolve conflicts and build consensus in the parish in a healthy, caring way without alienating individuals or groups, but also continuing to bring change where needed.
6. The ability to continue and enhance the successful stewardship efforts found in the Grace community.

The Rector of Grace Church will aid, galvanize, and lead the congregation by:

1. Providing good pastoral care
2. Giving sermons that are relevant to our daily lives.
3. Helping Grace Church further develop the welcoming nature of the family service.
4. Developing relationships with the parish that create an environment of open communication and trust.
5. Marshalling the vast pool of human resources in the Grace community by building a sense of shared vision and goals that promote the well-being of Grace Church and strengthen its abilities in delivering God's Word.
6. Exhibiting a good sense of humor and Christian fellowship even under adversity.
7. Understanding the flexibility needed in relating to a mixed group of parishioners.
8. Performing miracles with limited funds.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

A volunteer coordinator of the Sunday School directs the Christian Education Program. Christian education begins with the 9:00 a.m. child-friendly family Eucharist, which includes a special children's sermon and continues with intergenerational classes for preschool children through adults.

At various times during the year, the Sunday School classes in conjunction with worship services present special programs. Some of these presentations have occurred during particular holiday seasons such as Thanksgiving or Christmas.

The Adult Education program is lay led. We are currently using the Nooma video series by Rob Bell as a launch for discussion. There is a women's discernment group that meets weekly

and a Bible study group that meets on weekday mornings after the weekday Eucharist and breakfast.

Each year we have a Lenten program that meets weekly on Tuesdays. The program follows a simple supper of bread and soup. Themes have varied, focusing on Christian responsibility in the social, environmental, and fiscal living of our faith.

OUTREACH

Our church is a seven-day-a-week-congregation, providing support for all ministries in times of joy and crisis. The vestry oversees all expenditures associated with outreach activities including funds collected by the Mustard Seed Thrift Shop.

Grace Church touches the lives of many residents in Elkridge who are not directly associated with the parish. Toddlers through elders receive services in different forms. The Grace Church Child Care Center was founded in 1972. In 2002, we built a new facility to meet the expanding need for services. Today we provide care and education for 150 children, age six weeks through five years, in full-day daycare and half-day preschool. Many “generations” of families have been through Grace Church Child Care Center, first the parents and then the children; there is no better testimony to consistency than that.

Our mission projects include parishioner support of Paul’s Place, the Route 1 Day Shelter, Elkridge Love Mission, Nickels for Nurses (Haiti), and annual support of those families in the public school system in need of school supplies.

The parish sponsors several groups through the Boys Scouts of America: Cub Pack 432 (among the oldest in Howard County), Boy Scout Troop 432, and coed Venture crew.

We have hosted a Monday night Alcoholics Anonymous program for over thirty years. In 2012 we began to host a second meeting on Tuesday nights. It is a large and active chapter.

We also host karate classes for children and adults and drama classes for youth.

The Mustard Seed Thrift Shop recycles household goods and clothing, providing low-cost goods to the community, and it provides resources to multiple other community agencies. Among the groups it supports are the Elkridge Love Mission food pantry, clothing and resources for Paul’s Place (a resource for the homeless in Baltimore City), the Route 1 Day Shelter for homeless persons in Howard County, and the House of Ruth Domestic Violence Center.

In addition to the Mustard Seed donations, the parish also supports the Route 1 Day Center through donations of time, toiletries, food, and clothing.

Our bereavement program provides meals and support to those who have lost loved ones. Pastoral care, meals, and assistance are provided to those who are sick. Laying-on of hands and prayer ministries support those in need.

Each year at Christmas the parish adopts several families identified as in need of assistance and provides clothing and toys as needed. We provide Thanksgiving dinner for those who would be alone or in need.

Grace Church helped build affordable elder housing, Colonial Landing Apartments, for Elkridge and continues to assist in its sponsorship. The three story building is located adjacent to the Senior Center on Route 1 and is currently undergoing renovations.

The parish has an active recycling program and is working to reduce our waste and our carbon footprint.

Parish Statistics

Grace Church regularly reports to the Diocese. The table below presents a snapshot of some key statistics used as metrics by the parish.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 (Projected)
Number Signed Pledge Cards	57	58	52	42	37
Revenue - All Sources					
Amount Pledged	\$158,000	\$171,591	\$166,260	\$153,104	\$130,946
Plate, Pledge, and Regular Support	\$172,330	\$194,266	\$224,788	\$202,353	\$125,100
Investment Inc. Used for Operations	\$246	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,000
Other Operating Income	\$39,871	\$22,177	\$29,036	\$40,250	\$39,600
Total Operating Income	\$212,447	\$216,443	\$253,824	\$242,603	\$224,700
Capital Funds Contributions	\$4,036	\$7,666	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Non-Operating Income	\$1,243	\$0	\$2,069	\$9,816	\$14,000
Total Non-Operating Income	\$5,279	\$7,666	\$2,069	\$9,816	\$14,000
Total Revenues	\$217,726	\$224,109	\$255,893	\$252,419	\$238,700
Expenses - All Sources					
Diocesan Assessment	\$16,819	\$20,648	\$22,582	\$23,376	\$28,373
All Other Operating Expenses	\$206,281	\$239,017	\$220,652	\$225,965	\$202,067
Total Operating Expenses	\$223,100	\$259,665	\$243,234	\$249,341	\$230,440
Capital Expenditures	\$858	\$608	\$9,000	\$10,832	\$20,000
All Other Non-Operating Exp.	\$258	\$1,281	\$304	\$0	\$0
Total Non-Operating Exp.	\$1,116	\$1,889	\$9,304	\$10,832	\$20,000
Total Expenditures	\$224,474	\$262,835	\$252,842	\$260,173	\$250,440

Worship

Worship is a high priority to the parishioners of Grace Church, incorporating the Eucharist, preaching, and Christian education. Styles of worship are varied and designed to meet the needs of most of the parishioners. The plan for a typical Sunday at Grace follows.

- 7:30 a.m. Contemplative - "A Quiet Time of Renewal, Refuge, & Preparation for Life in a Hurried World"
- 9:00 a.m. Contemporary - "Making a Joyful Noise to the Lord. Welcoming families"
- 11:15 a.m. Traditional - "Comfort and Strength in Customary Ritual"

In keeping with the tradition of the Episcopal Church, special services highlight significant events during the year: Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, the Annual meeting, and important national holidays. These services help to give parishioners an important fellowship and worship experience.

Lay leaders and chalcists participate in all regular weekly and special services. Acolytes serve at the 9:00 a.m. service. Grace has also re-invigorated its Altar Guild.

Each Thursday there is a Eucharist service followed by the best breakfast in Howard County.