



GRACE HAPPENINGS / THIS WEEK AT GRACE

FEBRUARY 2, 2020

PARISH INTERCESSIONS

We pray for: Africa, Al, Albert, Angie, Betty, Bill, Brenda, Carla, Carlos, Catherine, Chip, Damany, David, Desmond, Dorothy, Eduardo, Elaine, Emma, Eugene, Francis, George, Hilario, Holly, Ingrid, Jadvyga, Jahovah, James, Jane, Jennifer, Jose, Keith, Ken, Kettly, Kyra, LaWanda, Lisa & Family, Madelyn, Marc, Marjorie, Maureen, Michael, Mildred, Nadia, Oliver, Paola, Peter, Renata, Ronald, Rudy, Russell, Sam, Serena, Sheila, Ted, Veronica, Vincent, Wilfred (Call or email the Parish Office (908-756-1520; office@graceplainfield.org) to add or remove names on the prayer list.)

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Pray for the Anglican Church of Burundi – The Most Rev. Martin Blaise Nyaboho – Archbishop of Burundi & Bishop of Makamba. **In the Diocese of New Jersey Cycle of Prayer:** St. Simeon-by-the-Sea Church in North Wildwood, Rev. Theodore L. Anderson, Jr., Rev. W. Joseph Leigh


If you have a pastoral need, please call Deacon Ted Moore at 973-214-0055; or our supply priest, Rev. Alson Percival, at 908-821-8705. Deacon Ted and Father Percival bring communion to Grace members who are sick or shut-in on the second Friday of each month between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Contact either of them to schedule a time for yourself or to give them the name of someone else who may want a visitation. For issues related to Grace Church, please contact Karen Moore (908-884-9023) or Jason Algeo (732) 841-8839).

Happy Birthday prayers and best wishes to those who celebrate birthdays in February: LaChanda (2/4), Ted (2/5), Nii (2/6), Cheryl (2/10), Rudy (2/12), Lawrence (2/15), Amanda (2/18), Leila (2/19)

Discussion of Prostate Health. Dr. Srinivas Channapragada will be a guest speaker on **Sunday, February 9**, immediately following the 9:30 service to talk to us about best practices to improve prostate health. Dr. Channapragada recently led a discussion with us about general health issues in the black community.


Pre-Convention Hearings. The annual diocesan convention is March 7. Because it's just a one-day affair, it's important for delegates to be prepared. Come out to a pre-convention hearing to learn about the proposed budget, new fair-share giving requirements for congregations, and resolutions to be considered. The hearings are open to anyone, but delegates and alternates are especially encouraged to attend. Upcoming dates are: February 4 at 7 p.m. Holy Spirit, Lebanon; February 6 at 1:30 p.m., St. Luke's Metuchen; and February 6 at 7 p.m. St. Peter's Spotswood.

Grace Church Annual Meeting. At last week's Annual Meeting, Karen Oliver Moore was elected to a two-year term as Warden; Ivor Blair and Trevor Forbes were elected to three-year Vestry terms; Gloria King, Trevor King and Winsley Rudder were elected delegates to the 2020 Convention and to all 2020 Convocation meetings; and Jason Algeo and Karen Oliver Moore were elected alternate delegates. Thank you to all Grace Church members who attended the meeting.



Celebrating Absalom Jones. A celebration of the life and ministry of Rev. Absalom Jones, the first African American ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church, will be held on Sunday, **February 16 at 2:30 p.m.** at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton, 808 West State Street. Born into slavery, Rev. Jones founded the first African American Episcopal congregation – the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia. He is listed on the Episcopal calendar of saints and is remembered liturgically on the date of his death, February 13, in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. The program begins at 2:30, celebrant will be Rev. Andy Moore, preacher will be Rev. Anne-Marie Jeffrey. Reception follows in Synod Hall. If you would like a ride to Trenton to attend the service, please let Rev. Ted Moore know.

Anti-Racism Workshops on February 21, 22, and 29. The Diocesan Anti-Racism Commission will hold a two-and-a-half-day workshop this month at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 2998 Bay Avenue, Ocean City, NJ. A \$50 registration fee covers meals and hotel accommodations. (Scholarships are available.) The workshop begins on Friday evening, February 21 at 5:30 pm followed by a whole day on Saturday February 22 and ending on the Saturday one week later. For more information, contact Rev. Ted Moore at 973-214-0055 or tmoores12@comcast.net.



Black History Month Evensong and Dinner Celebration. Please mark your calendar for an Evensong Celebration of Black History on **Sunday, February 23 at 5 p.m.** followed by a dinner immediately afterwards in the parish hall. The Evensong will feature music of traditional spirituals to present day gospel performed by the Parish Choir of Grace and the Plainfield Community Outreach Youth Choir. The dinner in Knickle Hall is free and will include mouth-watering meals from the African diaspora.

PCO Bottle Cap Collection. The students in the Plainfield Community Outreach afterschool program are collecting plastic bottle caps of all kinds between now and June to be recycled for a good cause. When 400 pounds of the plastic tops are collected, they'll be recycled into a plastic Buddy Bench that will be donated and installed in a local park. So please help by bringing all your plastic caps from beverages, detergents, any other product (please rinse them first) to the church. A collection bin is located near the table outside Knickle Hall. Or you can bring them to the PCO offices downstairs between 10 am. and 3 p.m. Monday - Thursday. For more information, contact Tonju Hunt at 908 756-7897 ext. 15 or tonju@pconj.org. PCO is Grace Church's 501(C)3 organization.



Diocesan Women's Lenten Retreat. This year's Lenten Women's Retreat will be held on **Saturday, March 28 from 10 am – 3 pm at Church of the Good Shepherd in Pitman.** Lunch will be provided, There is a \$10 suggested donation, which will be accepted at the door. **Register online at <https://tinyurl.com/womensretreat03282020>** or by calling Mary Anne Clisham at Diocesan House at 609.394.5281 ext. 10. The presenter is Rev. Sr. Margaret Kentigern, a professed member of the Anamchara Fellowship. She is a retired priest, last serving as Rector of St. John's in Chews Landing, NJ. The focus of the program will be on the Triduum. What is it? Why is it important? How can we best experience it? In addition to having a conversation about the importance of the Triduum, there will also be times of silence for your own personal reflection. Feel free to bring any sort of hand work, coloring implements and paper, rosaries, or whatever you find to enhance your times of stillness. Email Allie Graham with any questions, allie.graham@gmail.com.



Sophisticated and Suave Fashion Show. Plans are underway for the 2020 Sophisticated and Suave Fashion Show fundraiser at Grace. It will be held in Knickle Hall on Saturday, June 6 at 4 p.m. More details will be available in the coming weeks.

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed. Please see Brenda Loncke to schedule a time to host Coffee Hour. Treats can be homemade or store bought. Coffee and tea will be provided. Other soft beverages are welcome.

The Parish Choir needs additional members. Music Director Andrew Kilkenny is looking for additional choir members. You don't need prior experience and you don't need to know how to read music to join the choir. Rehearsal is in the Choir Room on Monday evenings at 7:30 – 8:15 p.m. See Andrew for more information.

Grace's Kitchen. The next service dates for Grace's Kitchen soup kitchen are February 25 through February 29. Volunteers from Grace will serve on **Thursday, February 27.** Please join us to help make our guests feel welcome. For more information, please contact Karen Moore at karen@graceplainfield.org; or Chef Marvin Daniels at 908-400-7727. Thanks and gratitude to Grace members Lynnette Taitt and Ivor Blair, who volunteered for Grace's Kitchen on Thursday, January 30.



Star-Fish Food Pantry Collection. Contributions of non-perishable food items are collected on the first Sunday of every month. You can bring in your contributions that morning and put them in the basket at the back of the church, or you can drop them off at the parish office any weekday during the month. Next collection is **Sunday, March 1.**

2020 PLEDGERS

The Wardens and Vestry express thanks and gratitude for the people who have made financial pledges to support Grace in 2020. If you have not yet made a 2020 pledge and wish to do so, please contact [Noel Taitt](#), assistant treasurer, or [John Taitt](#), treasurer. Our 2020 pledgers are:

Cheryl Adams-Welshman, Angie Adusei, Jason Algeo, Marjorie Bailey, Renate Baumgaertner, Ivor Blair, Sam Bogdan, Selma Cato, Susette Ceres, Dan Damon, Trevor Forbes, Bernadette Harris, Carrie Hayes, Gina Intsiful, Josephine Intsiful. Cheryl & Lawrence Ishmael, Maureen Johnson, Gloria & Trevor King, Brenda Loncke, Karen & Ted Moore, Barbara Nichols, Al Pittis, Winsley Rudder, Carol & John Taitt, Elaine & Ted Taitt, Lynnette & Noel Taitt.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY: *The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany*

First Lesson: Isaiah 58:1-9a, [9b-12] Psalm: 112:1-9

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20

THIS WEEK AT GRACE: February 2 – 9, 2020

Please also check the website, display tables, and bulletin boards for more information.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2: THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

8:45 am – 9:20 am	Choir rehearsal, Church
9:00 am – 9:20 am	Bible Study, Lounge
9:30 am - 11:00 am	Choral Eucharist, Church
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Sunday School, Upper Level Classrooms
10:00 am – 10:15 am	Chorister Rehearsal, Music Director's Office
10:00 am – 11:30 am	Lighthouse International, All Saints' Chapel
11:00 am – 11:45 am	Worship Commission, Rector's Office
4:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Friendship World Outreach Church, All Saints' Chapel

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3

9:30 am – 12:00 pm	ESL Classes, Lower Level Classrooms
10:00 am – 1:00 pm	cents Clothing Thrift Shop, Gymnasium
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm	ESL Classes, Lower Level Classrooms
7:30 pm – 8:15 pm	Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room
7:30 pm – 8:30 pm	AA, Knickle Hall

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

9:30 am – 12:00 pm	ESL Classes, Lower Level Classrooms
10:00 am – 1:00 pm	cents Clothing Thrift Shop, Gymnasium
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm	ESL Classes, Lower Level Classrooms

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

7:30 pm – 8:15 pm	Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room
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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

8:00 am – 9:15 am	Lift Inspection, Parish Office
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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9: THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

8:45 am – 9:20 am	Choir rehearsal, Church
9:00 am – 9:20 am	Bible Study, Lounge
9:30 am - 11:00 am	Choral Eucharist, Church
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Sunday School, Upper Level Classrooms
10:00 am – 10:15 am	Chorister Rehearsal, Music Director's Office
10:00 am – 11:30 am	Lighthouse International, All Saints' Chapel
11:00 am – 12:00 pm:	Coffee Hour, Meeting Room
4:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Friendship World Outreach Church, All Saints' Chapel

The Bishop's Corner



The Diocese
of New Jersey



Dear People of the Diocese of New Jersey,

For Christmas, Susan gave me a 50th Anniversary edition of the book [To Kill a Mockingbird](#) as well as tickets to the Aaron Sorkin stage adaptation of the novel now playing on Broadway. From the moment I had heard about the play, I wanted to see it. Like many, I had read and treasured the book when I was in middle school; somewhere in 1968 or 1969. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy had both been assassinated. Cities across the country were on fire. My mother had married my stepfather, a black West Indian and my brother had been born. I was attending St. Thomas Choir School.

In the midst of this, I read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Harper Lee portrayed an egregious act of racial injustice and the failure of the American justice system through the eyes of a child narrator – Scout. She also contrasted a noble protagonist in the person of Atticus Finch, an old-school lawyer who loved the law and believed in a fair system of justice. As I am the offspring of generations of lawyers who loved and believed in the highest ideals of the law and the court system, it is perhaps easy to understand why Atticus Finch became one of my literary heroes. In fact, during the walkabouts held in New Jersey in advance of the election of the 12th Bishop of New Jersey, one of the “ice-breaker” questions asked the nominees was who their favorite literary hero was. I answered Atticus Finch.

By that time and even with that answer, however, I had come to recognize that the idealized portrayal of Atticus Finch in that 1960 novel was flawed; that *To Kill a Mockingbird* was very much a “period” piece. Even with its central plot of the gross injustice in the trial and false conviction by a biased jury of Tom Robinson for rape, even with the principled behavior of Atticus Finch, the novel did not, and does not,

adequately communicate the brutal racism of our nation, most particularly its criminal justice system as it was then or as it is today.

In his treatment of the story for stage, Aaron Sorkin attempts to remedy some of this in two ways: First, he addresses the idealized portrayal of Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's novel. In an article he wrote describing the challenges of adapting the book, Sorkin wrote:

But how do you give Atticus Finch a flaw? Does he go from a bad guy to a good guy? A bad lawyer to a good lawyer? An abusive father to a loving one? A racist man to one who believes in equality and justice? No, no, definitely not, and no. I tried all the doors and they were locked, until I found one that swung open with the lightest touch. I didn't have to give Atticus a flaw because, to my mind, he already had one; it's just that we'd always considered it a virtue. Atticus believes that you can't really know someone unless you "climb into someone's skin and walk around in it." He believes that Bob Ewell should be understood as a man who lost his job. He believes Mrs. Dubose should be understood as a woman who recently stopped taking her medication and lives in physical pain. He believes in the fundamental goodness in everyone, even homicidal white supremacists. He believes . . . that there are fine people on both sides?

("You're Licked Before You Begin, But You Begin Anyway." – Atticus Finch - Bringing To Kill a Mockingbird to Broadway was nearly impossible. <https://www.vulture.com/2018/11/aaron-sorkin-to-kill-a-mockingbird.html>

Sorkin also modified Harper Lee's work by giving more texture, depth, and voice to the two black characters in the book: Tom Robinson, the victim of the false allegation of rape, and Calpurnia, the Finches' maid. Calpurnia, especially, serves as a foil to any pristine portrayal of Atticus. Sorkin observes, "*To Kill a Mockingbird* is about the nature of decency. What it means to be a person. In the novel, Atticus has the answers. In the play, he would struggle with the questions."

At the end of the play, I found myself in tears, not because the play was so fine or powerful, though in many ways it was. I was in tears because the play brought into sharp relief the sad truth that racism continues to mar our lives, our souls, our relationships, our systems, our justice and our nation. Most of you, I am confident, recognize this.

For those who don't recognize this, I urge you to go see the movie [Just Mercy](#), which is a screen adaptation of Bryan Stevenson's book of the same title. *New York Times* reviewer A.O. Scott described [Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption](#) the book, as: "a painful, beautiful, revelatory book, the kind of reading experience that can permanently alter your understanding of the world. Partly a memoir of Stevenson's career as an activist and a lawyer specializing in death-penalty appeals, it is also a meditation on history and political morality, a clear-sighted and compassionate reckoning with racism, poverty and their effects on the American criminal justice system."

I can't recommend the book highly enough. The movie captures much of the spirit and story of the book, although the movie does, in some ways, "whitewash" the depth of the on-going challenges of mass-incarceration and systemically racist patterns of the criminal justice system.

Most compelling about *Just Mercy* – both the book and the movie – is that they are based on true events and actual persons. As someone wryly observed on *Twitter*, "Bryan Stevenson is no Atticus Finch: He's not a fictional character." Bryan Stevenson is the founder of [The Equal Justice Initiative](#), which continues to carry out his important work.

Both Aaron Sorkin's adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* encourage us to reframe our understanding of race, racism, and justice in the United States. They urge to see things differently and in so doing to act for positive change.

February is Black History Month. The theme adopted by [The Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#) in 2020 is African Americans and the Vote. 2020 marks the 150th commemoration of the adoption of the 15th Amendment (1870) which gave black men the right to vote after the Civil War. It is also the centennial of the passing of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution which gave all women the right to vote. In our era, when voting rights for blacks and other persons of color are under clear assault, Black History Month invites all of us to grapple with our tragic history. It also demands that many of us reframe our basis of knowledge and act more intentionally for justice.

On a more fun note, as part of the celebration of Black History Month, I hope everyone will consider joining me at St. Mary's, Haddon Heights on February 9 at 4:00 PM for a concert by the renowned St. Thomas African-Episcopal Church was founded by Absalom Jones, the first Black Priest of The Episcopal Church.

I also invite everyone to join us at Trinity Cathedral on February 16 for our Absalom Jones Service of Witness to Black Ministry. That service will begin at 2:30 PM.

These activities are not just for the members of our black churches and communities; they are intended as opportunities for all of us to celebrate Black History because, in truth, Black History is a part of all our histories.

May God bless you and keep you.

The Right Reverend William H. Stokes, D.D.
12th Bishop of New Jersey