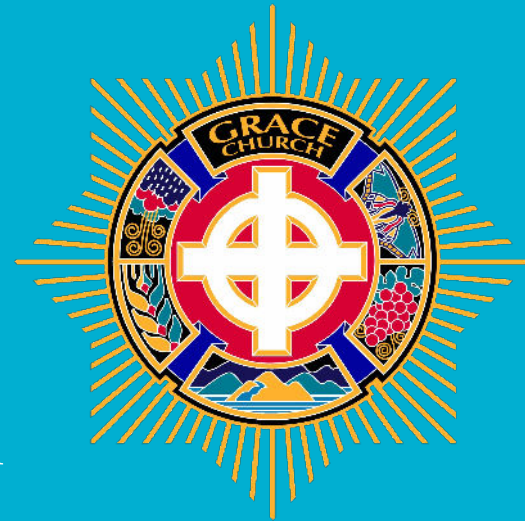


Town Hall-Parish Meeting

Pentecost: June 8, 2025

Preparing to Celebrate our Bicentennial



Looking at all the aspects of the parish's life

As we begin the planning stage of our Bicentennial Celebration, it helps to have a status update for all aspects of the parish's life.

Grace Episcopal Church is a congregation in communion with all that is in God, seen and unseen. We are led by the example of Jesus Christ and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to support each other through prayer, formation, worship, and service.

We will welcome all with kindness, acceptance, and love, with God's help. We are Grace, grounded in faith and relentless in compassion.

Our Current Context

Bicentennial

Begin our formal planning for the Bicentennial Celebration.

Reflect on how we have grown while being nimble and listening to the Spirit's Presence.

Worship & Prayer

The Eucharist as the heart of our identity: Communion. Baptism and living a sacramental life:

“Outward the visible sign of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure assurance of that grace.”

Discernment is a key practice.

Formation/ Christian Identity

What does it mean to “be Episcopal” at this time? In this community?

What are the core ‘markers’ of our identity?

How have things changed over the past two decades?

Parish Demographics

2024 stats:

\$1.3mil budget

Avg. weekly

312

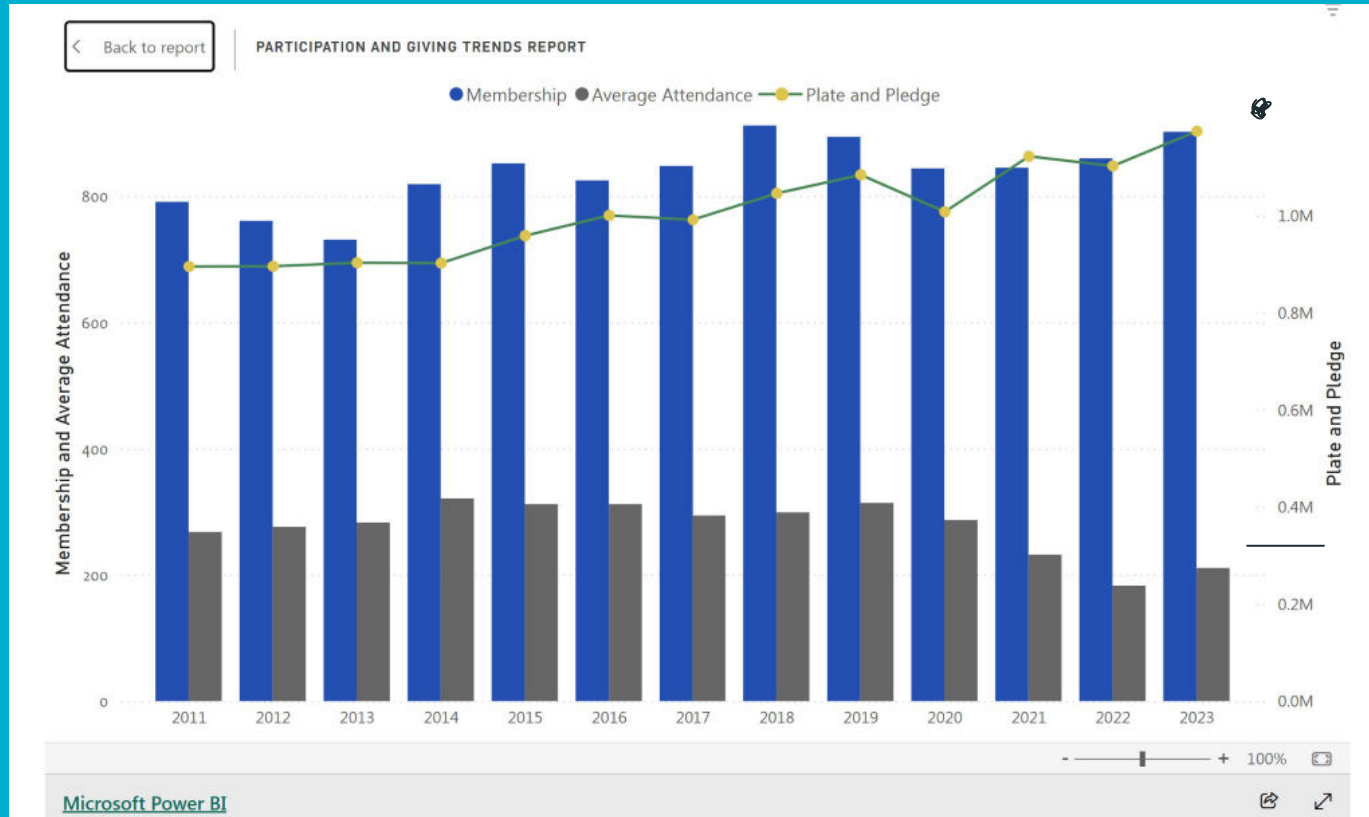
Avg. Sun in
person

224

Avg. Sun
hybrid

293

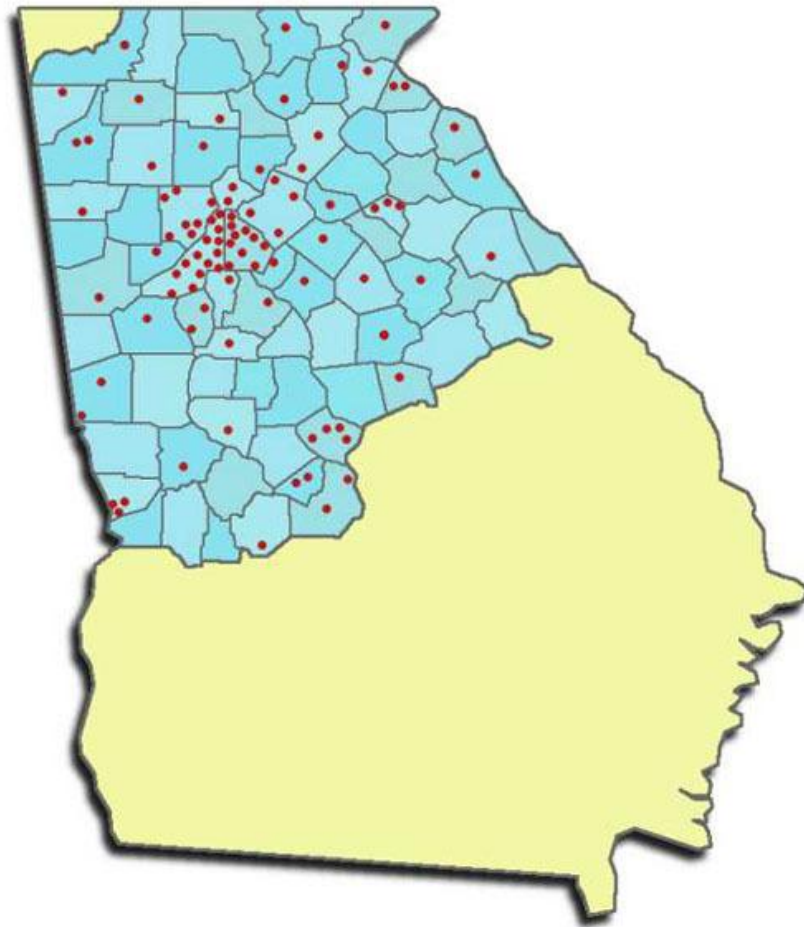
*Shift from
ASA to weekly



The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

As of 2024, Grace was the 6th largest parish (budget) out of some 96 parishes and 120 worshipping communities (chaplaincies, schools, ministries, etc.)

52% of parishes now can only afford one part-time priest (which may be a retired priest very limited in their availability)



Community Demographics

It is important to look at broader trends in the community.

To the question: Who are we? Who is our neighbor? What needs do we see?

How is the Spirit calling us to embody compassion and peace?

Gainesville/Hall County Demographics

<https://generalconvention.org/explore-your-neighborhood/>

Worship & Prayer

Eucharistic Life

Our Sunday services, along with the Wednesday chapel service and the 2 x monthly Eucharist at Lanier Village.

The grounding of our life is our Eucharistic identity—the mutual indwelling and Communion with the Spirit.

Music

A hallmark of Episcopal identity is an aesthetic sense of life—a connection with our hearts. **Friends of Music.**

Music and the arts, poetry, how beauty connects us with God.

How we can share our gifts?

Spiritual Imagination

What conversation can we have that recognizes how we live in a both/and time in regards to traditional worship as well as the need to explore imaginative spaces of prayer that connects with our lives today?

Worship & Prayer

Flower Guild and Delivery Group

Two teams of people who focus on beauty with our Sunday worship, as well as deliveries to those who are ill or unable to come to the services.

Altar Guild and Brass

Preparation of all the services, with the details needed to coordinate with clergy and vergers.

Home Communion

A team of people who coordinate with the pastoral life of the parish, taking Communion to those who are unable to attend the services.

Worship & Prayer–Sunday participation

Vergers

The vergers are the “emcees” of the services, making sure that all the details are in place for our liturgies.

Readers, Intercessors, Ushers, Chalice

These souls add their voices and their presence in readings, offering the Prayers of the People, and welcoming everyone who comes to the service.

Choir and special musicians

We are very fortunate to have such an outstanding choir, with Lynn Swanson. As well, we are grateful for the special music offerings that help support our common prayer.

Online Platform & Development

Online worship participation

Average for Sunday 10:45 service (as of now) is 81.

Two choices for online participation: Facebook and streamed to the website under the Grace@Home tab.

Glimpses of Grace Podcast

Our podcast has the Sunday sermons as well as reflections by Brandon, Meg, and Stuart.

Total engagement: approx. 900

Substack and other reflections

Stuart's poetry and reflections (cross-linked with the podcast and sites) averages 1,200 per month.

Communication & Online Platform

We have worked hard to develop a user-friendly online platform that includes website, podcast, social media, emails, newsletters, and other offerings to support the parish's practice of prayer.

- Subscribe to the emails!

www.gracechurchgainesville.org/subscribe

- Church Life Directory App! Sign up to have access to contact information to engage pastorally in the life of the community!

Communication & Online Platform

A central “hub” for parishioners is the **Member Resources** page.

www.gracechurchgainesville.org/connect/member-resources/

Under “Connect” at the bottom, you’ll see “Member Resources”

- Contact information
- Key forms and policies
- Worship information

Christian Education & Spiritual Formation

Children & Youth

- Godly Play
- Episcopal Youth
- Retreats/Camp Mikell
- Parish events
- Performing Arts Camp!
- Family Clusters/Groups
- COG chapel
- Children's chapel

Adult Formation

- Sunday forum spaces
- Retreats and events
- Book Groups
- Special speakers
- The School for Prayer and Spiritual Practice

Discipleship Mentor Ministry

We are launching a Discipleship Mentor Ministry at Grace to focus on younger and newer parishioners whose gifts can be nurtured by those who have supported ministries for years.

How can we nurture our spiritual gifts?

Monastic Spirituality

Building on the work of the Centering Prayer group, the DOK and the COHI groups, we are now focusing more intently on the richness of monastic spirituality at Grace.

- Benedictine spirituality
- Franciscan spirituality
- Rule of Life groups

The School for Prayer & Spiritual Practice



We created an online “hub” for in-depth conversations, recognizing that we need to focus more intently on what it means to practice our faith today.

Under the “Learn” tab of the website.

www.gracechurchgainesville.org/spiritualpractice/

We are moving well beyond a typical Sunday School framework, and we need to invest in an online and in-person framework for spiritual growth and Christian education that can nurture a transformation of the heart.

Buildings & Grounds

Maintenance and Repair

Our ongoing campus repair and maintenance requires constant attention.

For calendar year 2025, the B&G Committee, Finance, and Vestry approved approx. \$200,000 in repairs and upgrades.

Upgrades and Repairs

- Interior carpet
- COG flooring
- Server upgrade
- Exterior painting and staining
- Interior painting
- Exterior lighting
- 2026 target for HVAC upgrades, tech upgrades

Bicentennial Phase 1 completion

- Signage redesign
- Grace Center
- Choir suite refurbishment
- Accessibility at entrances

The 1828 Society: Planned Giving at Grace

We recognize the need to focus on planned giving as a means to foster a sustainable future, as we are aware of the challenges of congregational ministry today. How can Grace leverage its financial strengths to facilitate a deepening of our ministry and spiritual lives?

Under the “Give” tab on the main website:

www.gracechurchgainesville.org/1828society

Many thanks to Bob Pennington, Hank Goble, and Clark Jones.

Staff, Leadership, Admin Details

Formation and Participation focus

A heightened focus on participation and formation in these years, with Sister Genevieve Lynn as Pastoral Assistant and Meg McPeck as Assistant for Formation and Community Life.

Evaluation of lay staff compensation with a working group.

Treasurer

We give thanks for Amy Munn and her deep care as Treasurer these past few years, and we welcome Rachel Pearson as she transitions into this role.

Children of Grace Preschool

Denise Wilkins as new director.

Koleigh Turner as new assistant director.

Continued excellence for our parochial school, babies through pre-K.

Staff Updates

The Rev. Dr. Brandon Nonnemaker:
Associate Rector for Family Ministries and Discipleship

Sr. Genevieve Lynn:
Pastoral Assistant

Meg McPeck:
Assistant for Formation and Community Life

Jessica Voyles:
Assistant for Finance and Operations

Participation & Community Life

Pals ministry

Newcomer focus, working with “prospects” and fostering community.

Supporting their gifts and strengths as they listen for the Spirit’s voice.

Participation Committee

A focused team of people who support parish-wide engagement and events.

Fellowship focus, and also looking at parishioner support, etc.

Bicentennial Celebration Committee

» will transition to being the Bicentennial Celebration Committee to support and develop a spectrum of events and celebrations, etc. for the formal bicentennial period.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Contacts

We estimate we have 30 to 40 pastoral contacts every day, from phone calls to visits to text engagements.

A very intense part of our parish's life.

Sacramental Life

Home Eucharistic Visits are key, and this ministry continues to grow within our community.

Coordinate both in homes as well as in assisted livings and intentional communities.

Intentional Groups/Ministries

Community of Hope, Intl is key in this regard, with their focus both within the parish as well as in the wider community.

Daughters of the King and their continued prayerful presence is essential.

Outreach & Community Ministries

Outreach Committee restructuring

Some 35 people working (currently) on four teams identifying core needs in the community: Education, Health, Poverty/Housing, and the Hispanic Community.

Many thanks to Darlene and David Hauserman

Upcoming Grace Days of Service!

Plans are developing for an even more intentional engagement of the wider parish in the community.

Subcommittees are formed within the Outreach Team, focusing on awareness and coordination.

Homelessness task force

Ongoing conversations with city and local officials and non-profits to identify ways we can work toward eliminating/reducing homelessness—supporting the unhoused population of our community.

Bicentennial Planning & Celebration

Proposed Timeline

2026–begin with several opportunities, concerts, other spaces

September 12, 2027: formal launch of the Bicentennial, to run through May 2028 (post-Easter).

Potential/proposed Phase 2

Participation/ Bicentennial Celebration

Need a focused group of people to help coordinate the full spectrum of the events and opportunities.

More details coming, but we will work toward a clear plan of communication»

Communication

» a special catalogue will be created to map out the entire time frame.

It will be ESSENTIAL to sign up for communication and actively engage during this period of time.

Organizational Structure

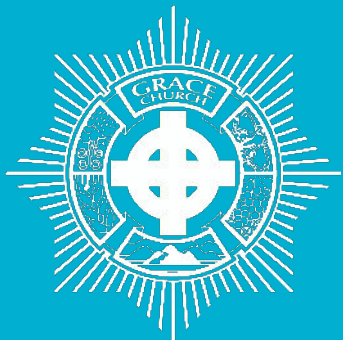
The Vestry works in conjunction with the staff, of course, and existing committees and working groups to support and nurture the full life of the parish.

- Finance Committee
- Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Interior Design Committee
- Outreach/Community Ministries recommendations
- Endowment Committee
- Bicentennial work
 - Bicentennial Celebration
 - Bicentennial Projects (planning construction, etc.)
 - Bicentennial Giving (coordinating the pledging, etc. for the proposed Phase 2)

Q & A

Given this information, what is a particular website or online resource that you feel needs to be profiled more or featured on the website?

Paper on the table to write a question with your name on it. We will get in touch with you.



Grace Episcopal Church

Established 1828

