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**Grace Notes Ministry (Revitalization)**

Grace Notes is a growth initiative offered by the Anglican Diocese of the Great Lakes (ADGL) as an instrument in the revitalization of the Church. To date four churches in the Diocese have utilized Grace Notes as a part of their outreach ministry. Two of these Churches plan to utilize Grace Notes again as a part of their outreach ministry in the near future.

**What are Grace Notes?**

Grace Notes is a ministry which hopefully will help each of us see more clearly the opportunities God gives us to share unexpected grace with those He places in our lives. It is simple yet it can affect dramatically how we see those that God places in our life every day. Each person who volunteers to participate (Do not force this on parishioners) will receive 8 Hallmark Cards, 8 Envelopes and 8 Stamps along with a set of directions prepared specifically for your church (The Diocese will forward to the church everything except the stamps). One Church in our diocese had 68 people sign up and each opted to receive 20 cards over 10 weeks that reached potentially up to1,360 people over that time frame.

Each week those who volunteer to participate will personally write a note to at least one person that God has placed in their life that week. The note should be written to someone with whom they **do not** presently have a strong personal relationship.

Well, you may be thinking, who can I send a note too? After all these years most if not all my friends are Christians. And there is some truth to that thought. Yet I am sure many of you still go to the grocery store, doctor’s office, dentist office, hair salon, gas station, gym, or a restaurant. And most employees at these establishments will share their first name if you ask them or they have a name tag on the uniform.

Picture going to a to Giant Eagle, or any grocery store and the checkout clerk whose name is Mary is exceptionally kind or joyous. So, you write a short note thanking her and send it to Giant Eagle attention Mary. The grocery store receives the note and gives it to Mary. Sometime during the day, the store manager or Mary’s supervisor can’t help but ask what was in the note. It’s human nature! Mary is then able to share that it was a customer thanking her for her kindness. That would surely bring a smile to anyone’s face. Then, the next time you are at Giant Eagle, and you see Mary, you can introduce yourself and tell her that you had sent a note thanking her for her kindness and wondered if she received the note. If she did, it will open a conversation and a new or deeper relationship with Mary, if not you can mention to her what the note said and maybe send another note to the store. We are called as followers of the Christ to pour unexpected grace into the lives of others.

When at a restaurant the waiter or waitress normally introduces themselves or if not ask them their name. Share with them that before the meal you always have a short prayer and wondered if there was a blessing that they would like you to pray for. If they share it obviously pray for them but also send a note with the blessing to the restaurant to their attention. If their service was exceptionally good send a note to the restaurant to the attention of the waiter or waitress.

 If Someone shares with you that they or an acquaintance is sick, or has any other issue; of course, pray for them but also send a note with your prayer fully written out. Share a grace note with someone that had a joyous event – a birth of a child or a grandchild, birthday, engagement, an anniversary.

Another act of Grace that many have found very moving is to make a donation to the Church or some other organization in honor of someone and send a note to let them know how much they mean to you. These small actions will let people know you care and that you are thinking of them.

Most of the mail that we receive at our homes are bills, catalogues, or junk mail. How would you personally feel if you went to the mailbox and received a note of grace? Well others will probably feel that same type of reaction when receiving a kind note.

There is a sign-up sheet with name and email address (Template Available contact The Rev. Canon Jeff Smead jeffsmead@adgl.us) and each person will receive a reminder each week to send out a note. In addition, at least once during the 8 weeks they need to share one story by replying “All” to the reminder email. If a story is moving, ask them if they would share it during the service the following week during a time called “Portraits of Grace”.

Be aware around week 4 or 5 **you may hear a voice saying** I never should have signed up to do this ministry. That voice is **not** from God. And as followers of the Christ, we can have assurance that God’s Grace wins every time.

Two or three weeks after the completion of the 8-week Grace Note outreach the church must have a gathering for dinner at an offsite location that the whole parish can attend. Many Churches have made arrangements to take over all or a portion of a Pizza Place or have rented one of the metro park locations and had Pizza delivered. The only stipulation to attend is each person has to invite someone to come that does not regularly attend the Church. If the invitee you asked is unable to come, then you have done what was requested and should attend and spend time with those that were able to bring a guest(s). This is a time to make new relationships and/or to deepen others. Normally if a Pizza Place is utilized the Church pays for the Pizza and the people pay for their own drinks. If you rent a hall, you will probably need to bring drinks, and utensils. My first Church Plant in Ligonier Pennsylvania has utilized grace notes numerous times and they continue to have a Pizza night almost every month or the past 7 years and the congregation has continued to thrive and grow over the years.

In Christ

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