

CROSSWAYS

"Making Christ Visible in His Community."

The Reverend Michael P. Flanagan, Rector of Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Simpsonville, SC 864-967-7470

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HOLY CROSS FAMILY,

Father Mike has lent me his space in this month's newsletter so that I might share with you an important message about our future. But first, I must ask you to go on a journey with me - back to an autumn that feels both like yesterday and forever ago.

The year is 2008. The global economy is on the brink of failure. The once-booming housing market has collapsed. The Great Recession is at our doorstep. The world is a gloomier place.

Yet, there is faith. At least in our little Holy Cross church community, where we embrace an ambition that had been held by church elders for two decades.

On September 24, 2008 - in the middle of a financial crisis that few could truly understand at the time - Holy Cross, with The Palmetto Bank as its lender, signed the closing papers on the loan to build our new sanctuary. The price: \$1.6 million, plus another \$303,000 to pay off the mortgage of the Holy Cross Academy building.

The decision had been made more than a year earlier, when our rector announced to the church in January 2007 that leadership had decided it was time to build a new place for our congregation to worship and commune and welcome others seeking spiritual nourishment.

Parishioners generously answered the call during the campaign to fund the building - \$1.1 million pledged, \$800,000 collected to date. By the time the financial world had begun to crumble before us, dirt was already moving on our corner of College Street. Economists might have seen the early signs of what was to come, but for the rest of the everyday people in this community trying to make the next right choice, with a heart for charity and not a mind for profit, it seemed as if the pieces fit.

The legacy of the Great Recession follows us today, just as we begin to reach a critical point in the short history of our sanctuary. Know this: No matter how we got here, by Easter we will run out of money in the building fund to pay the mortgage. In the coming months, the church will be asking again for money by means of a capital campaign. I've found in our church we don't tell others what God says you should do with your money. I offer the reality set before us and the history of how we got here.

In the simplest terms, we have a \$1.3 million dollar balance on our building loan. The monthly mortgage, after accounting for the \$4,000 in rent the academy pays to the church each month, is \$5,500. That's \$66,000 the church must come up with each year to pay the bank, with most of it going to pay the 4.5 percent interest it cost to buy the money. Only \$61,000 remains in the building fund. Some money comes in, but not nearly enough. From there forward, money will have to come from the fund we use to keep the lights on, pay our ministers and support our programs.

*This is the building
that houses the
people that make
the church.*

You could say we put our faith in God when we decided to grow from our little steakhouse-looking church into the sanctuary you worship in today. I would also say we put faith in ourselves. The church is its people, not a building. But the people must gather somewhere.

In 2005, the church made the decision to divide our 10:30 a.m. service into two – 9:30 and 11:15 a.m. The “8 o'clockers” would continue to do their 8 o'clock thing. The “11:15s” would boldly do their contemporary thing. The “9 o'clocks” would do ... something in between. Things moved quickly. The small sanctuary soon reached a point where a newcomer would enter an 11:15 service and see what appeared to be nowhere to sit. If you sit, stand or kneel in our space today, does it seem extravagant?

I remember the spring of 2009, when our sanctuary first opened, in the heart of the recession when my employer cut our pay and so many others lost their jobs. I remember listening to Father Mike tell us that he knew it was tough, but that even an effort like paying the electric bill for the month would make a difference. This place felt a bit foreign, but not too much to ask for a congregation whose mission goes beyond being a church with eyes cast inward.

This place has become all we thought it could be - even as the Episcopal Church has made tough, courageous decisions and new generations of parishioners are less inclined to attend church regularly. This is where we celebrate the promise of new lives through baptism. And where we celebrate the lives of our departed, remembering that this sanctuary is where they once would place a hand on our back during communion.

We try to remember to wear our nametags here. This is where we are reminded, each and every Sunday, what the Episcopal word for lobby is. This sanctuary is where the sound of the choir finds space to wander and echo. This is the building that houses the people that make the church.

No matter how we got here, this is where we are.

The time has come to decide how we move forward, in faith.

- Eric Connor, Holy Cross parishioner

REFLECTIONS ON FAITH AND LIFE

THE REVEREND LINDA GOSNELL,
ASSISTANT RECTOR FOR PASTORAL CARE

PRACTICING THE FAITH – GRIEF

This is not so much a newsletter article as it is an admission that I cannot write one this month. For a while now I've been functioning at far less than 100 percent. My mind wanders; I am forgetful; I have no mental energy for whatever task is at hand; I am short-tempered and impatient. I seriously just want to run away, and the week of vacation followed by a week of solitary retreat was wonderful at the time but offered no lasting relief. My spiritual director recently helped me name what is happening within me. It is grief – a fog of sadness, a river of sorrow that flows just beneath the surface of each day and every activity.

Grief is an interesting phenomenon. I've known a lot about it. I've read and discussed Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' 5 stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance) in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*. I know that they are more words to describe a continuum of experience that ebbs and flows and circles back around than a checklist of steps to get through. I've read and recommended other resources, as well: *Good Grief: A faith-based guide to understanding and healing* by Granger E. Westberg, *A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis, and the four-book series *Journeying through Grief* by Kenneth C. Haug that we send to members who have lost family members or close friends.

I am fully aware that grief is an individual thing - no two people experience grief in exactly the same way - and that any one person is likely to experience grief differently with various losses. I know that grief can sneak up on you and overwhelm at unexpected moments. I know one can be especially vulnerable as anniversary dates approach and that holidays are especially difficult. I know all this. I've accompanied many people through this journey of loss, and I've listened, cried, and prayed with them.

And so, one wonders, why didn't I recognize what was going on in my own heart and mind as my family and I approach the first anniversary of my sister's death? My only thought is that I have, as usual, been focused on the tasks at hand and I've simply overlooked the energy required to maintain my footing in this river of grief in which I wade.

What I've learned is a new need to accept the limitations grief is placing on my productivity; to be honest when people ask how I am; to cry if I need to; and to quit when I can no longer focus and go for a walk, or sit and stare, or go do something totally different, like take a few pictures.

If you, too, are grieving any loss, be gentle with yourself. Name what you are dealing with. Talk about it with someone who empathizes. You may also find support by attending our All Souls' Taize service on November 5, the Adult Forum at 10:15 a.m. on December 14 on mental health and the holidays, and our Blue Christmas service at 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 21.

May you be enfolded in the love of Christ and find comfort there.

Linda+



Comfort those in any
trouble with the comfort
we ourselves have
received from God.

2 Corinthians 1:4



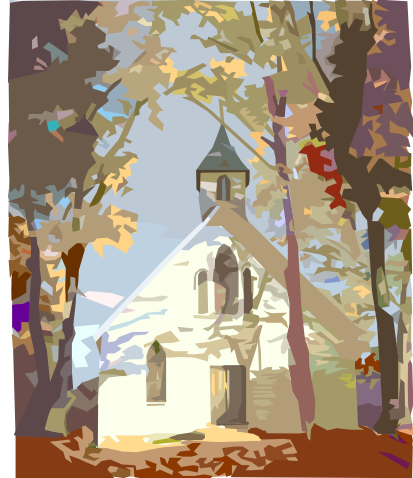
CHRISTIAN FORMATION

CHRISTIAN FORMATION, ADULT, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH CHRISTIAN FORMATION – SUSAN LOUITT HARDAWAY
YOUTH@HOLYCROSSEP.ORG

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES – SHELLEY ALLEN
ACADEMYDIRECTOR@HOLYCROSSEP.ORG

COORDINATOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES – LESLIE DONAHUE
CHILDREN@HOLYCROSSEP.ORG

PROGRAM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE
ADULT – DRAYTON GAILLARD WHDGAILLARD@CHARTER.NET



NOVEMBER YOUTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH

Youth in grades 6-12 are invited to attend youth group each Wednesday night from 6-8 p.m. in the Parish Hall. For more information, contact Mother Susan by email susanhardaway@gmail.com or text [864 483-2250](tel:8644832250).

- Nov. 5: Youth will attend All Soul's Evensong together. Dinner will still be served.
- Nov. 12 and 19: regular youth group in Parish Hall
- Nov. 26: NO youth group held on this night (Thanksgiving break)

SUNDAY YOUTH FORMATION

Youth in grades 6-12 are invited to participate in Bible lessons/discussions during Youth Sunday School on Sunday mornings from 10:15-11 a.m. in the Meeting Hall. For more information, contact Bonnie Schmidt at 270-0341 or bonnie1870@gmail.com.

- November meetings are Nov. 2, 9, 16, and 23.
- NO Sunday Youth Formation on Nov. 30!

PROJECT HOST SOUP KITCHEN

Youth and parents are invited to help prepare and serve lunch at the soup kitchen in Greenville. Email Lizzie Berry Clark at lizziebphat@live.com with questions.



LORD'S RESOURCES

ADMINISTRATION, STEWARDSHIP, BUILDING & GROUNDS

SENIOR WARDEN – GREG FARLEY

SRWARDEN@HOLYCROSSEP.ORG

JUNIOR WARDEN – JUDY WORTKOETTER

JRWARDEN@HOLYCROSSEP.ORG

STEWARDSHIP – DAVE GEISLER

STEWARDSHIP@HOLYCROSSEP.ORG

BUILDING AND GROUNDS – TOM JONES

JONE63194@GMAIL.COM



FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

Good Grief

by Granger E. Westberg

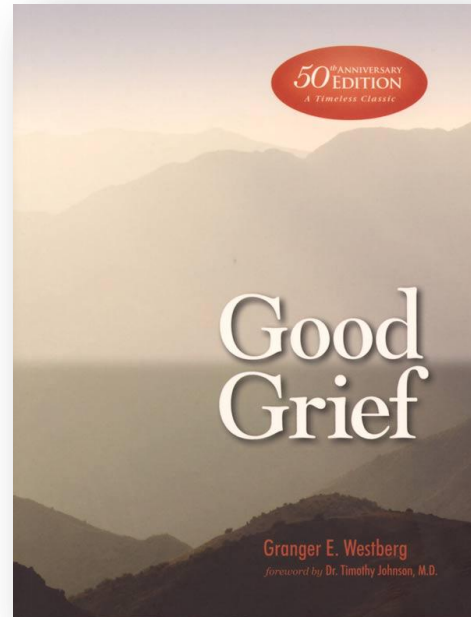
For 50 years *Good Grief*, has helped millions of readers, including NFL players and a former first lady, find comfort and rediscover hope after loss.

Good Grief identifies ten stages of grief - shock, emotion, depression, physical distress, panic, guilt, anger, resistance, hope, and acceptance - but recognizes that grief is complex and deeply personal and defines no "right" way to grieve. *Good Grief* offers valuable insights on the emotional and physical responses one may experience during the natural process of grieving.

Whether mourning the death of a loved one, the end of a marriage, the loss of a job, or other difficult life changes, *Good Grief* is a proven steady companion in times of loss.

www.amazon.com

Send an email to kclconnor@gmail.com if you have a book, music, or movie that has been a special part of your spiritual journey.



HOLY CROSS CONTACT INFORMATION

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|-------------------------|--|
| Items for newsletter: | newsletter@holycrossep.org |
| Bulletin announcements: | secretary@holycrossep.org |
| Parish office | (864) 967-7470 |
| Fax | (864) 967-0393 |
| Mailing address | PO Box 187, Simpsonville, 29681 |
| Holy Cross Academy | (864) 963-5986 |
| Pastoral counseling | (888) 293-7585 |
| Church website | www.holycrossep.org |
| Diocesan website | www.edusc.org |
| Office | secretary@holycrossep.org |
| Rector | rector@holycrossep.org |
| Assistant rector | assistantrector@holycrossep.org |
| Youth ministry | youth@holycrossep.org |
| Children's ministry | children@holycrossep.org |
| Senior warden | swarden@holycrossep.org |

