

Grace Notes

October 2026

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Grace Episcopal Church
41 Bowman Street
Mansfield, Ohio 44903
www.gracemansfield.org

Our Mission:
“To Nurture our Members and Feed our Neighbors”

Along the Way . . .

Blessings

The autumn season has a way of inviting us to slow down and notice what is all around us. The leaves begin to change, the mornings grow cooler, and the familiar rhythms of October remind us that life is always moving through seasons of change. In the midst of busy schedules and daily responsibilities, October offers us an opportunity to pause and give thanks.

Years ago, television viewers were blessed with a recurring character on *Saturday Night Live* known as “The Church Lady,” played by Dana Carvey. Her character, Enid Strict, was smug, uptight, and often convinced that she was holier than everyone else. Her antics were exaggerated and silly, but that was part of the reason so many people enjoyed watching her.

Of course, “The Church Lady” had a trademark expression: “Isn’t that special?” She would say it with a creaky voice and a raised eyebrow, usually when she was passing judgment on someone else. Yet, despite the character’s humor and shortcomings, those words can remind us of an important truth: life really is special when we take the time to notice it.

The month of October is filled with reminders of God’s abundance. We see it in the beauty of creation, in the harvest, in the changing seasons, and in the people, God places along our way. We see it in the ministries of Grace Episcopal Church and Pantry, where food, kindness, welcome, and compassion are shared with our neighbors in Mansfield. We see it whenever someone offers a helping hand, listens to another person’s story, or makes room at the table.



“The Church Lady”

I am especially grateful for the blessings God has given me through this parish community. I give thanks for my family, both those who are close by and those who are far away. I give thanks for the privilege of ministry and for the opportunity to serve alongside each of you. I am grateful for the prayers, generosity, humor, patience, and faithfulness that make Grace a place of hope.

And yet, if I am honest, I do not always feel particularly blessed. There are days when the responsibilities of parish life, the needs of our neighbors, and the concerns of the wider world can feel overwhelming. Perhaps you know that feeling as well. Sometimes it is easier to focus on our worries than to recognize the gifts that are present in the middle of them.

When that happens, I encourage you to pause. Find a quiet moment and take a piece of paper—or simply offer a prayer—and name the people, experiences, and small gifts for which you are thankful. Think of a meal shared, a conversation that encouraged you, a familiar hymn, a child's laughter, a beautiful autumn afternoon, or a person who showed you unexpected kindness. You may be surprised by how many blessings you discover.

Gratitude does not pretend that life is easy or that suffering is absent. Rather, gratitude helps us recognize that God is present even in difficult seasons. It opens our eyes to the grace that surrounds us and reminds us that we do not walk alone.

So, with apologies to "The Church Lady," let us say it together: Isn't that special? Indeed, it is. Your life is special. This parish is special. Our neighbors are special. And every day, along the way, God is blessing us with more than we may first notice.

Blessed by you,

Fr. Christopher D. Hofer

September Vestry Notes

Grace Episcopal Church continues to move into the fall with gratitude, energy, and a strong sense of purpose. At the September 15 Vestry meeting, members celebrated the many ways our parish and pantry are serving the community while also preparing for important work ahead.

Pantry Ministry

The Pantry remains a vital ministry. Between August 15 and September 15, volunteers and staff served 1,601 households, including 1,171 children. This remarkable outreach is being strengthened through new partnerships and resources. The Greater Cleveland Food Bank has awarded the Pantry a \$10,000 food grant and

anticipates providing an additional \$38,000–\$50,000 grant toward the Undercroft renovation project. Seminary student Casey Sally will also contribute four hours each week to the Pantry for the next nine months.

With approximately \$10,000 in food scheduled for delivery by the end of September, Vestry approved the purchase of a 20-foot shipping container for storage. The container will meet an immediate need and provide valuable storage during future construction. The \$1,800 purchase will come from the renovation fund, while efforts continue to seek outside reimbursement.

The Pantry is also benefiting from Richland Public Health. Prenatal vitamins are now available for guests through a grant program, and another healthy-food initiative is expected to provide signage and other resources to encourage nutritious choices.

Stewardship

Stewardship of our buildings and finances remains a priority. August pledge and non-pledge offerings were stronger than expected, and Grace received a \$6,253 reimbursement from the Diocese following reconciliation of clergy expenses. Vestry is carefully reviewing several clergy-cost possibilities in preparation for the upcoming Mutual Ministry Review, including full-time, part-time, and supply clergy models. This review will include Grace, St. Matthew's, and shared-ministry leadership and will take place on October 17.

Improvements

Several building improvements are also moving forward. Vestry approved replacing the chapel carpet with a red, commercial-grade carpet that will improve both safety and appearance. Repairs are underway for a leaking sink, and moisture and mold discovered in a downstairs storage room will be addressed. Roof repairs above the altar are scheduled, followed by interior plaster repairs once the work is complete and the area has dried. The boiler passed inspection, and further evaluation will take place when it is turned on to help identify the cause of previously high water usage.

Looking ahead

Looking toward the holiday season, Jason Whitehead will research new, realistic greenery for the church windows and archway and coordinate Christmas decorating. Grace will also be represented at the Diocesan Convention in November by Carol Lovelace, Matt Moser Miller, and Jenny Blue.

Capital Campaign

Finally, Vestry approved the next phase of capital campaign marketing with Vinyl Marketing. These materials will help Grace communicate its vision, invite wider participation, and build support for the important work ahead.

As fall begins, Grace is grateful for faithful volunteers, generous partners, and the many people whose gifts make ministry possible. Together, we look forward to a season of service, renewal, and hope.



***From the baseboards of
Barnaby's home***

Golly, here we are already in **October!** And, as I promised, I have returned!

As usual, I'm going to start us off with a little question to get those minds thinking:

DO YOU KNOW...?

What is the purpose of the Creeds in the Episcopal Church, and how many Creeds are there?

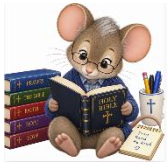
Answer: The 'Creeds' play a central role in our worship service. They summarize our foundational Christian beliefs in God and foster a sense of unity among us as congregants. They are recited during service, reinforcing our shared faith and guiding our spiritual practice.

Number of Creeds: There are three Creeds in the Church of England

- 1) The Apostles' Creed — The Apostles Creed is the ancient creed of Baptism. It is used in the Church's daily worship (e.g. Morning and Evening Prayers) and to recall our Baptismal Covenant. It is also used during the renewal of baptismal vows and confirmations. The Apostles' Creed can be found in the Book of Common Prayer, pages 53, 66, 96, and 120 within these different services
- 2) The Nicene Creed — The Nicene Creed was written in the year 325 by early bishops meeting in Nicaea (modern-day Turkey). Today, it is a creed of the universal Church which summarizes the Christian faith and is said in unison during services of the Holy Eucharist (the reenactment of the Lord's Supper). It can be found on pages 326 and 358 in the Book of Common Prayer.
- 3) The Athanasian Creed — The Athanasian Creed, (*Quicunque Vult*), is an ancient document proclaiming a statement of Christian faith within the Church of England. It articulates the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit emphasizing their co-equality and co-eternity (*known as the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation*). It is traditionally recited in liturgical settings (e.g. Trinity Sunday) and underscores the necessity of holding the Catholic Faith for salvation. The Creed of Saint Athanasius can be found in the Book of Common Prayer pages 864-865.

So, the next time you hear, "We believe..." don't just say the words on autopilot! Take a moment to think about what you are actually saying. You might be surprised at how much meaning is packed into those familiar sentences.

Who knew the Creed could be so interesting?



← My researcher –
“Ignatius”

P.S. Father Christopher, *in case you find your office a little untidy, please forgive us. We needed to access your wonderful library again to verify a few facts, but we left in a hurry to meet our media deadline.*



Midweek Mending

Our Healing Mass (Midweek Mending) is celebrated in the Chapel at 9:00 **a.m. each Wednesday**, concluding by 9:45 a.m. Please arrive a few minutes early if you can.

Each Wednesday we will gather for the prayers and lessons appointed for the day, hear a brief homily, and celebrate the Holy Eucharist. There will be an opportunity for the laying on of hands and anointing with holy oil for healing of mind, body, and spirit. Fr. Christopher, Priest in Charge, and Fr. Daniel, Priest Associate, will lead the service and offer pastoral prayer and care.

The service is timed to finish before Food Pantry setup but is open to everyone—parishioners, pantry volunteers and guests, neighbors, coworkers, those on the margins, the sick and suffering, people struggling with addiction, the lonely, and anyone who wishes to pray.



2nd Tuesday of the Month
noon

October

Buehler's Mill Restaurant
1083 Sugarbush,
Ashland, Ohio

RSVP by Oct. 11 by noon to 419-651-9789
and please include your name



4th Tuesday of the Month

4:30 p.m.

October

TBA

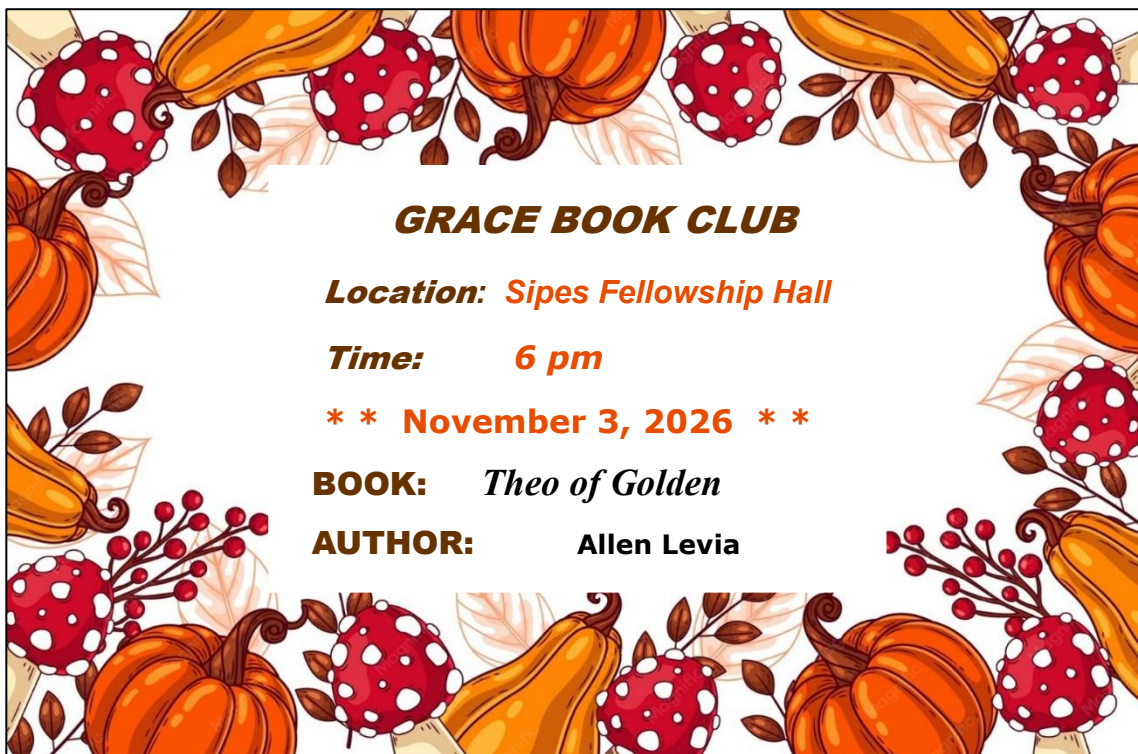


October Anniversaries

5 Richard and Salli Rohm
12 Nick and Tabitha Reed
17 Donald and Ann Stump

October Birthdays

1 Paige Saterfield
4 Joanne Mudra
7 Gregg Collins
14 Jason Whitehead
15 Gabriel Ray Prater
20 Bailey Dauterman
21 Benjamin Prater
22 Jack Bargahiser
26 John Winnick
28 Florentine Dearman





JOIN US FOR OUR FALL PARK CLEANUP

FALL PARK CLEANUP



Nature hikes
are available for
all abilities

WHEN: Saturday, October 3rd

TIME: 10:30am to 12:00pm

WHERE: John Todd Park

Bower Street,
Mansfield, Ohio 44902



Snacks are
welcome for
sharing

INCLEMENT WEATHER DATE: Saturday, October 10th

A community event by Grace Episcopal Church & Pantry
and Greater Mitchell Chapel AME Church

2nd Annual Oktoberfest

Saturday, October 3, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Fr. Christopher D. Hofer's Home

106 Samaritan Avenue

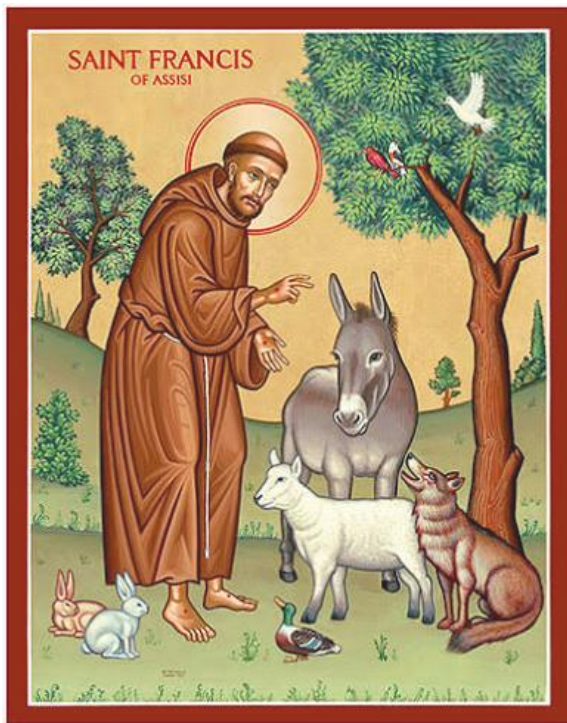
Ashland, Ohio

Please bring a dish to share



Celebrate Creation: Join Us for the Annual St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals

We invite you and your beloved animal companions to join us for our Annual St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals. This cherished tradition will take place on **Sunday, October 4, 2026, during both our 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. services.**



This is a wonderful opportunity to give thanks for the joy, companionship, and unconditional love our pets bring into our lives. Pets of all kinds—from dogs and cats to hamsters and birds—are warmly welcomed to attend. If your pet is shy, anxious in crowds, or perhaps not suited for a church setting, please feel free to bring a picture of your pet instead; we would be honored to include them in the blessing.

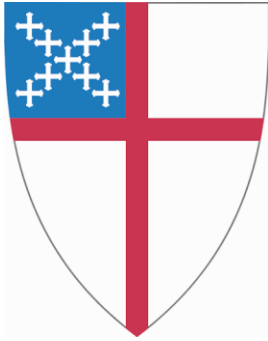
The Tradition of the Blessing

The practice of blessing animals is deeply rooted in the story of St. Francis of Assisi (1181–1226), a 13th-century friar who is remembered as the patron saint of animals and the environment. St. Francis famously

preached that all of creation is interconnected and that human beings have a responsibility to care for, respect, and protect all creatures.

Within the Episcopal Church, observing the Feast of St. Francis with a blessing of the animals has become a widespread and meaningful way to celebrate this legacy. These services serve as a reminder of our role as stewards of God's creation. By bringing our pets to be blessed, we acknowledge them not just as property, but as fellow creatures of God, and we commit ourselves anew to the kind, gentle, and responsible care of all living things.

We look forward to sharing this joyful, messy, and holy time with you and your animal friends.



Mutual Ministry Review

Saturday, October 17, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

A joint meeting between the Vestries of St. Matthew's
and Grace and the Shared Ministry Council



Grace Still Multiplies

So much Grace recently. Have you met our Seminarian? Casey Sallee. He is enrolled at Candler Seminary in Atlanta and taking classes remotely. He will work 4 hours a week with the Pantry. He also frequently worships Wed am with us at the Mid-Week Mending.

Furthermore, we had \$10,000 to spend on food at the food bank because of the generosity of the Cleveland Clinic. Given that we need the most food for Thanksgiving, and have the greatest challenge storing food for those days of distribution, we investigated warehouses or storage units. The Food Bank approved us for a unit on-site. Vestry approved the \$1,800 expense. So soon we will have 20' additional feet of water-tight storage next to our cardboard dumpster. Any ideas on painting it? "Grace

Still Multiplies"? "Grace to you, and peace"?
Just, "GRACE"?

Additionally, we received 7 boxes full of Grace. We have no idea who sent the boxes full of carts and bags and things to make life easier for us and our pantry guests!!!!!!
And more...

Thank you, Lord of abundance. Forgive our fearful worry, and lead us into your coming kingdom.
Amen



September	2026 (3 wks)	2025 (4 wks)	2024 (4 wks)
Households	1118	1479	1320
Kids	846	1201	860





Peace Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of
Thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow
love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, the truth;
Where there is doubt, the faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to
understand;
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are
pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life.



Celebrating Birthdays!

St. Matthew's Lunch Bunch celebrated Shirleen and David's birthdays at the September gathering. "Everyone had a blast" said a Lunch Bunch attendee. "It's probably a good thing they had us in the back room. We were very loud!"





*Shirleen enjoyed
her coffee martini*



*David's glo up for the
day, with his friend Deb*

**Grace Church Ministry/
Organizational Tree**

Vestry

Jenny Blue – Senior Warden
Deb Landin – Junior Warden
Joanne Mudra – Secretary
Larry Von Blon – Treasurer

Betty Diemer
Rita Glasser
Matt Moser Miller
Joanne Mudra
Stephen Myers
Anne Stump
Jason Whitehead

Staff

Pam Armstrong, Church Administrator, gracechurch41@yahoo.com
Lori Turner, Director of Music
Thomas Palmer, Organist
Michael Blue, Sexton
Tom Dornbusch, Social Media Coordinator

