

Grace Notes

September 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 . . .

Miss Dott

I've never felt cursed in life. Although I come from a family that never had much money, we never went without. We didn't have an Atari, an outdoor pool, the newest *Star Wars* action figures, or fancy vacations. Yet in our simple living—and perhaps a little added debt from my parents—my sister, brother, and I managed to find joy in the simplest of ways.

Of course, being the son of a Lutheran minister came with its own set of curses. If I got in trouble, friends would say, "I'll tell your father!" Everyone knows pastors' kids are supposed to be either really bad or really good (if memory serves, I mostly fell into the "good" category—but you'd have to ask my parents to confirm). The hardest part, though, was being at church every single Sunday and never missing Sunday School.

Truth be told, Sunday School wasn't so bad. Some days it was genuinely fun—singing favorites like *Jesus Loves Me* and *How Did Moses Cross the Red Sea*, enjoying treats, and playing games. Other days felt more like a chore. But for two blissful years, Sunday School exceeded every expectation I had, and I learned lessons of faith that have stayed with me ever since—all thanks to Miss Dott.

Miss Dott was in her early to mid-twenties and had never taught before. Her father owned one of the two grocery stores in the small town of Rio, Wisconsin, and her mother worked as a substitute teacher. What Miss Dott lacked in experience; she made up for in passion—a genuine love for children and for learning. Because of that passion,



Miss Dott and a Student

she was asked to teach a Sunday School class, and my fourth-grade class became her very first.

We weren't the easiest bunch of students—all boys, each with our own personality. There was Brian, who was developmentally delayed; Steven, who believed he deserved special treatment; Todd, who didn't want to be there at all; and me, "the P.K." Yet from our very first class, when Miss Dott told us how special we were, to our very last, she brought the Bible, its stories, and our love of Christ to life. She taught me that Christian formation is an ongoing journey—and that it can, and should, be fun.

In the years that followed, Miss Dott went on to open a preschool. I have no doubt she's still instilling hope for a better tomorrow in those young children, just as she once did in me. Perhaps if we all follow her example—staying open to learning and growing in faith—we too will find that hope along the way.

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Christopher Hofer

Save the Dates

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.

St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 4, 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

Bring your furry friends and be blessed.

The English Mystics: Contemplation, Prayer, and Love

Wednesdays in October 2026, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Sponsored by Grace Episcopal Church and Pantry
and The Inclusive Catholic Church

Instructors: Archbishop Joseph Richards and Fr. Christopher D. Hofer

Mutual Ministry Review

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

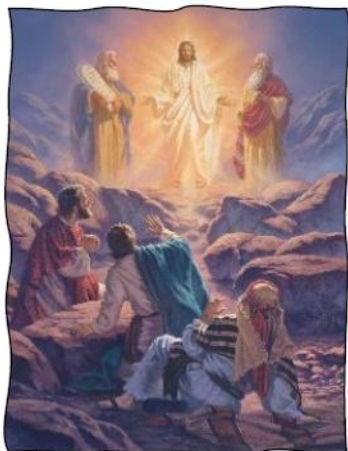
A joint meeting between the Vestries of St. Matthew's
and Grace and the Shared Ministry Council

*"Just A Tidbit" from the
friendly church mouse*



Hello everyone

Last month on August 6, the Episcopal Church celebrated "The Transfiguration of our Lord". Father Christopher read the account of The Transfiguration of Our Lord from the Gospel (Luke 9:28-36). *If you recall, the Transfiguration was when Jesus revealed His divine glory to Peter, James, and John by changing His appearance. Moses and Elijah appeared alongside Him and spoke about His coming death and resurrection, showing the continuity of God's plan. The disciples were terrified, but Jesus comforted them and told them not to be afraid. After the vision ended, Jesus instructed them to keep the event secret until after His Resurrection.*



For many years, whenever I heard the reading of the Gospel on the Transfiguration of Our Lord, I found myself wondering: **WHY did Moses and Elijah specifically appear with Jesus, rather than others such as Abraham, David, or even especially, John the Baptist?**

Reflecting on Fr. Christopher's remarkable insight and his gift for making connections among the Scriptures helped to bring this question into clearer focus for me. However, what ultimately put my curiosity to rest was my rather covert decision to use the underground passageway to gain access to Fr. Christopher's library. In the midst of his seminary books, I discovered something most unexpected—a "scroll" an answer to my **"WHY"**! (See next page).

(Cont'd).....TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

Why Did Moses and Elijah Appear with Jesus?

Moses and Elijah represent two key eras in the history of Israel where God wanted to make himself known in a special way through miracles and revelations.

Moses symbolizes the Law, as he was the one through whom God gave the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Mosaic Law to Israel. His time was marked by significant miracles, such as the parting of the Red Sea and the provision of manna in the desert, which demonstrated God's authority and presence among His people.

Elijah represents the Prophets, being one of the most prominent prophets who called Israel back to the worship of the one true God (most notably from worship of Baal). His ministry was also characterized by significant miracles, including calling down fire from heaven and the raising of the dead, which showed God's power and authority working through him.

Their appearance with Jesus at the Transfiguration highlights the continuity of God's miraculous work and authority from the Old Testament through to the New Testament in Jesus.

It underscores Jesus as the fulfillment of both the Law and the Prophets, affirming that his life and ministry are the culmination of God's plan as revealed through the Scriptures..

Their presence affirms Jesus' divine authority, as he stands in direct succession and fulfillment of these key figures through whom God's authority was previously manifested.

Lastly, the Transfiguration provides a foretaste of the glory of Jesus' resurrection and the future glory of the Kingdom of God, linking Jesus' mission directly to the foundational aspects of Israel's faith history and God's miraculous interventions during the times of Moses and Elijah.

Your church mouse,
"Barnaby"



See you in October.



Beloved Community

In God's house there is always room for more: more ideas, more people, more ways to share, more stories to tell. And in the world that God created, there is more needed: more love, more connection, more peace, more creativity. *Plenty Good Room* reminds us that there is always room in God's house; we just need to make ourselves at home and invite others to join us. The ways we steward our relationships, resources, and responses to grow ministry and serve our neighbors are the ways we connect our gratitude to our generosity. There's Plenty Good Room in God's House. Everyone belongs in this Beloved Community.

TENS Reflection

Selection by the Shared Ministry Stewardship Team of
St. Matthew's Ashland and Grace Mansfield



Our Friday noon Bible study is on vacation but working on something new for Fall. Watch for the new schedule of discussions. Each session blends Scripture, discussion, and gentle reflection every Friday at **12:00 p.m. in the Sipes Fellowship Hall, or you can join us via Zoom.** Questions? Contact **Jenny Blue at 419-612-6813.**

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
September

Pump and Grind
586 Park Ave. E. (aka OH 430)
Mansfield, Ohio

RSVP by Sept. 6 by noon to 419-651-9789
and please include your name



4th Tuesday of the Month
4:30 p.m.
September

Applebee's
145 Stander Ave., Ontario
(NOT off Possum Run)



September Birthdays

2 Caroline Thompson
 9 David Dauterman, Jr
 17 Stephanie Herz
 Betty Guenther
 18 Pamela Henney
 19 Gwendolyn Harmon
 26 Margaret Ransom
 Samuel Taylor
 29 Theresa Bender Roberts
 30 Bill Reed

September Anniversaries

9 David & Virginia Harmon
 Dennis and Margaret Ransom
 20 Ronald & Charla Clinage

NEW SEASON 2026-2027



BOOK: Damon Copperhead
AUTHOR: Barbara Kingsolver

GRACE EPISCOPAL BOOK CLUB

You're invited.

Please Come join us .

*Whether you have read our
 selected book or not, we will
 welcome you to our humorous
 group. Our Grace Book Club is
 open to men and women*

TIME: 6:00 PM - Tuesday

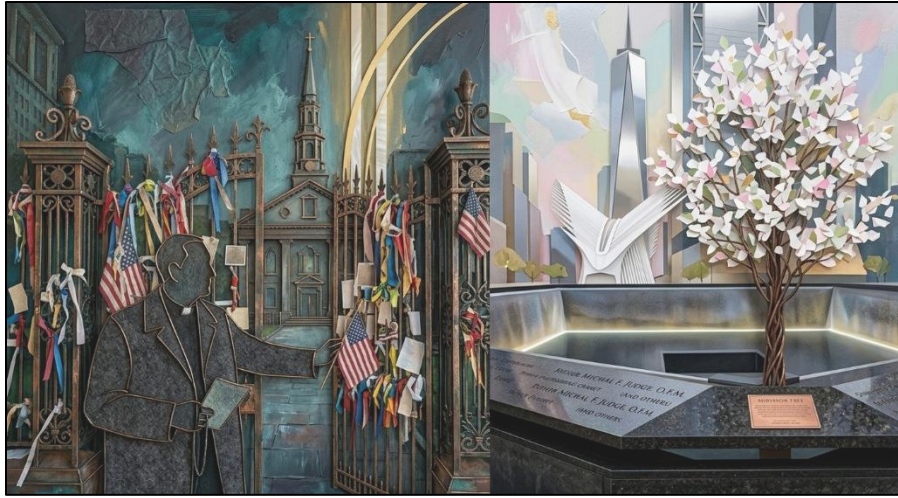
DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

WHERE: Sipes Fellowship Hall
 Grace Episcopal Church

From the Churchyard Gate

St. Paul's Chapel — September 11, 2001–2026

Written by Fr. Christopher D. Hofer



I stood where Washington once knelt to pray,
beside the iron fence, the ancient stones,
when morning tore itself apart that day
and thunder fell in glass and steel and bones.

I saw the sky turn paper, ash, and dust,
saw strangers running, saw the towers bleed;
I watched the world I thought that I could trust
collapse into a cloud no eye could read.

The sycamore spread wide her weathered arms
and caught the wreckage meant for chapel walls —
one broken tree absorbing all the harm,
so old Saint Paul's stood firm while giants fall.

I could not speak. I could not look away.
The dust of thousands settled on my sleeve.

I carried them — I carry them today —
the ones who had no morning left to grieve.

But in the weeks that followed, through those doors,
came firemen to sleep in wooden pews,
came hands with soup and blankets, cots on floors,
came love that asked no name and kept no dues.

Now twenty-five Septembers have gone past.
The pit became a pool of falling water;
the names carved deep in bronze were built to last,
each one somebody's son, somebody's daughter.

And where the sycamore gave up her life,
a young tree rises, green against the gray —
a pear tree pulled half-dead from out that strife,
Survivor named, still blossoming today.

I am old now. My eyes have seen the worst
that hatred, fire, and falling steel can do.
But I have also seen what rises first
from ashes: it is us. The brave. The true.

So when they ask me what that morning meant,
I point to towers of light that pierce the dark,
to strangers' kindness, mercy heaven-sent,
to one small tree still blooming in the park.

The dead are not forgotten — they are seeds.
From ruin, roots. From mourning, morning grows.
I stood at St. Paul's gate. I saw. I bleed.
And still — and still — I've watched the hope that rose.

Greater Grace

Putting our Faith in Action in A New Way

Did you know that the Kitchen and Bath Pantry located at First Christian Church is the only kitchen and bath pantry in the city of Mansfield? Together we are meeting a great need! Thanks to all who have donated to make it happen!



We have been open almost four months now, open on the first and third Thursdays from 9-11am. In that time, we have served over 400 shoppers, averaging 50 persons each time we are open. That's a lot of stuff getting into the hands of people in need! And they tell us how much they appreciate it!

For some, their coffee maker just broke or they didn't have a can opener to open the cans from the Grace Food Pantry, or they didn't have any forks to go with their spoons etc. etc. Little acts of kindness can make a big difference! Through this ministry we are able to serve both the housed and the unhoused!

Our two biggest donors so far have been the Furniture Bank in Mansfield, and Linden Ave Presbyterian Church, along with many individual donors, totaling over 13 car loads in all. On the Thursdays, when we aren't open, we are busy sorting and preparing items for the next day we are open. We are grateful to Sandy and others from First Christian church as well as volunteers from three other churches who make it all happen!

Our biggest needs are bath towels, small appliances, pots and pans and silverware. And a shelving unit or two. Please spread the word about this exciting new ministry!

Please bring donations with you to church on Sunday, and leave them in the office, or bring them to the Kitchen and Bath Pantry at First Christian Church on Thursdays.

Deacon Beth Weisbrod



*"Hunger isn't only a physical ache. It's an ache to be seen,
welcomed, and told, 'There's more than enough.'"*

from our "Foundational Alignment" Vinyl

Volunteer Appreciation - Sunday Nov 1, 5 pm.

If you are a volunteer, come be celebrated.

If you are not currently a pantry volunteer, come help us celebrate.

Thanksgiving Distribution will be Monday and Tuesday Nov 23, 24.

Pray for a Double Match Date with Meijer Simply Give, [possibly Dec 12.]

We do not have assurance yet, and this program supplies almost all of our holiday meat.

Pray that Grace Pantry is again selected to receive donations in 2026.

News Bullets

- 2025 Jan 1 - Aug 18 = 10,374 households, 28,762 people, 7,007 children*
- 2026 Jan 1 - Aug 18 = 11,005 households, 30,908 people, 8,112 children*

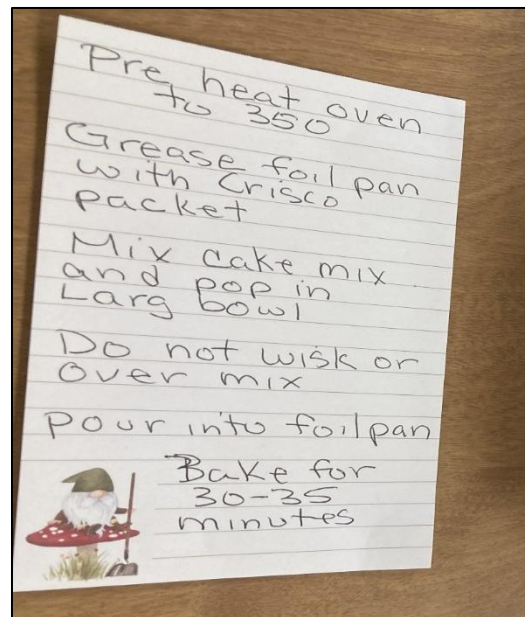
Donate an Emergency Birthday cake

Important to Note

Last year we had almost a 25% increase! Right now, we are on track for a 5/6% increase. Thank You, Lord.

Still, this is like we served an extra month spread out over the last 8 months. And this is on top of 2025 when we effectively added 3 months of households served.

There are dog years, cat years, and now pantry years! We'll live 16 months this year at the pantry in terms of 2024 numbers! Notice that, very sadly, children account for a lot of the increase.



Include the recipe in the foil box with ingredients



Some Grace Pantry 'sisters'



Bridget and her homemade tote and cart.

Equipping Our Community: School Supply Drive Underway

As the summer season winds down and a new academic year begins, Grace Episcopal Church and Pantry is launching our annual School Supply Drive to support local students, our food pantry guests, and neighborhood families. Ensuring children start the school year with the tools they need to succeed is a vital way we put our faith into action.

Living into our mission—to *nurture our members and feed our neighbors*—this annual effort helps ease the financial strain on local families while empowering students to walk into their classrooms prepared and confident.

Items Most Needed

We are currently collecting new, unused school supplies. If you are shopping for your own family or picking up extra items while out, please consider adding these high-priority items to your cart:

- **Backpacks:** New backpacks for all age groups (elementary through high school)
- **Writing Supplies:** #2 pencils, pens, erasers, and washable markers
- **Paper Goods:** Spiral notebooks (wide and college-ruled), pocket folders, and loose-leaf paper
- **Craft & Classroom Basics:** Glue sticks, crayons, rulers, and scissors

Drop-Off Information and Schedule

Donations can be dropped off directly at Grace Episcopal Church and Pantry, located at **41 Bowman Street, Mansfield, OH 44903**. To accommodate various schedules, donations are accepted at the following times:

- **Sunday Mornings:** 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays:** 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- **Pantry Hours:** 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month (4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) and Thursday mornings

The final deadline to drop off all donated supplies is **Sunday, September 13**.

How Else You Can Help

Beyond donating supplies, you can support this effort by spreading the word to friends, neighbors, and local businesses, or by volunteering to help sort and organize items before distribution.

Every notebook, pencil, and backpack donated makes a tangible difference in a child's education and reassures our neighbors that they are supported by a caring community. Remember: *God loves you. No exceptions.*

For questions, to volunteer, or for more details about our food pantry and community programs, please call the church office at **419.524.2661** or visit **gracemansfield.org**.



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH & PANTRY: SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

 **DEADLINE: SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 13**





MOST NEEDED SUPPLIES



- NEW BACKPACKS (all sizes)
- #2 PENCILS & PENS
- POCKET FOLDERS
- SPIRAL NOTEBOOKS (wide & college)
- LOOSE LEAF PAPER
- GLUE STICKS & CRAYONS
- WASHABLE MARKERS
- RULERS & SCISSORS
- ERASERS



DROP-OFF INFORMATION & HOURS

41 BOWMAN ST, MANSFIELD, OH 44903

SUNDAYS
(8 a.m. - Noon)

TUES, WED, THURS
(9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

AND ANYTIME THE PANTRY
IS OPEN, INCLUDING:
2ND & 4TH WEDSDAYS
(4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
& **THURSDAY MORNINGS.**





OUR MISSION:

To nurture our members
and feed our neighbors.
God loves you. No exceptions.™

CONTACT US:

419.524.2661
gracemansfield.org

Around the Diocese



September 9

Join the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio at **Seneca Pride in Tiffin** as we celebrate Pride and share God's inclusive love. We're grateful to stand alongside LGBTQ+ people, families, friends, and allies, and to celebrate the joy, dignity, and belovedness of every person.

September 20

Grace Church, Sandusky invites you to an afternoon of music at 4 p.m. with **organist Dan Boyle**. The program will feature works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Hollins, Sousa, Fletcher, and Fey, including The Stars and Stripes Forever and Festival Toccata. Come experience the beauty and power of the organ in Grace's newly renovated worship space. All are welcome to attend.

September 23-26

The **Episcopal Creation Care Gathering** is an annual church-wide event focused on the work of Christian ministry, mission, and living on earth. These gatherings create space for conversation, learning, and practice as we explore the deep relationships that bind together spirituality, justice, ecology, discipleship, and evangelism. Visit the diocesan website to learn more and register. Event is at the Procter Center.

**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

