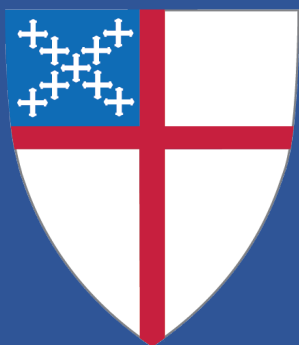


*“A Gateway Parish -
Dressed for Action”*



Grace Episcopal Church Parish Profile

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Mission Statement



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***We, the family of
Grace Episcopal Church,
Whitestone,
are a caring community
of faith, celebrating our
diversity and unity.
Our mission is to continue
to nurture spiritual
growth in ourselves, to
lead by example, to
inspire and attract new
members from the
community and be an
integral part of the
Diocese of Long Island***

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Welcome to Grace Church

Who We Are

We are a dynamic community of parishioners represented by all age groups. We come from various social and economic walks of life, but share one desire, that is our search for a deeper relationship with God. Many of us did not start life as Episcopalians but we have found profound comfort in the Episcopal Church and with each other, while on our own spiritual journey and exploration. If asked to define ourselves with one word, that word would be Family.

Our congregation is comprised of those who are single, married, divorced and widowed. We are predominately middle and working-class people. We pride ourselves on what Grace Church represents to our community. With over 20 houses of worship in the surrounding area, Grace Church represents the Episcopal Church's branch of the Jesus movement!

Grace Church excels in community outreach by serving hundreds of people each week through our charitable and educational activities and other social service programs. If you ask any one of the hundreds of people who use our facility each week if Grace Church has made a difference in their life, their answer would be a resounding YES!



Where We Live

Grace Church is in Whitestone, New York. We are a small community just off the Whitestone Bridge, which is one of the many bridges that connect Long Island to the Bronx and beyond. Grace Church is an important place and congregation in the Diocesan plan to serve the nearly



seven million people that live between the Brooklyn Bridge and Montauk Point. We are a “gateway parish”, as the first community of the Diocese once people come over the bridge from the Bronx.

Whitestone has an estimated population of 40,000 people. Most of the residents are high school educated or higher. Most are married with a median household income of \$77,000 and the median home value is \$690,000.

Although our Church is in Whitestone, our members also live in other surrounding towns. We are less than 10 miles from Midtown Manhattan. We are a 10-minute drive from La Guardia Airport and a 30-minute drive from John F. Kennedy Airport.

About Our Diocese

The Diocese of Long Island is located on the most populous and largest island in the United States. It is comprised of 132 churches all of which reside in one of four counties; Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk. The population of the Diocese is among the most ethnically diverse in the United States. It is comprised of urban, suburban, and rural areas. The mission of the Diocese is to serve the people of God in its midst.



Worship and Fellowship at Grace Church

Worship at Grace Church consists of two Sunday Masses at 8:00am and 10:00am. Both Masses use the Rite II Liturgy and the 10:00am Mass also has musical accompaniment with traditional

hymns. There are no regular scheduled weekday masses or services at the present time. A new monthly Saturday Evening service has been added with contemporary music followed by a potluck dinner and fellowship.

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild of Grace Church has several members who care for the altar and who prepare the church for our services. Altar Guild work happens behind the scenes, quietly and effectively. Altar Guild members are responsible for the care and appearance of all church furnishings. For example, glass, silver, brass, linen, silk, candles, wood, hangings, etc. The Guild orders and arranges the flowers and also orders the supplies.



Acolytes, Thurifers, Lectors and Ushers

There are no formal meetings. A member of the parish coordinates the schedule for the acolytes, thurifers, lectors, and ushers. The coordinator schedules duties on a two-month basis. Those who participate in the Masses on Sunday are very dedicated and quite willing to fulfill their assignments. They are an integral and important part of both of our Sunday services at Grace Church.



How We Serve Our Parish Community

We are a tight knit community of individuals and families who pray and worship together on Sundays at 8am and 10am. We come together after our 10 o'clock service for a Coffee Hour which helps us connect socially and it also deepens our fellowship.

Once a month, we hold a special Children's service. This affords the Sunday School the opportunity to take over various positions within the Liturgy. We often organize community events within the parish and these are opened to the broader community. Some of these events have include the following: Paint Nights, Breakfast with Santa, Game Nights, Movie Nights and our Annual Music Festival. To further the development of our children's' spiritual education we have organized trips to various



Manhattan museums as well as nature hikes to Bear Mountain and a weekend Retreat at Camp DeWolfe.

We serve the community through our Thrift Shop, our growing Food Pantry, our monthly Community Meal, and our Annual Thanksgiving Meal, which is open to everyone. Our Sunday School also takes up a special collection every Sunday to support an Orphanage in Honduras, and also to support Camp DeWolfe.

Annually, our parish adopts a family at Christmas and that family is provided with a happy holiday

experience as well as with many needed essentials. During Lent, we partner with the other parishes in our deanery to pray together in a weekly Bible study. When a parish member is in need of assistance, there is help to be found at Grace Church. That help can come through prayer, a Eucharistic visit, a meal, fellowship, or financial assistance.



Over the past several years, we have been making an effort to have community members who may not attend our church for worship to get involved in outreach activities at our facility. Community members come as individuals or as parts of a group (e.g. Masons, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts) to volunteer at the food pantry, assist with thrift shop operations and assist with other initiatives.



What We Offer

- Open hearts, open minds, open doors
- A warm, welcoming atmosphere with many different ministries serving our community
- An opportunity to serve in Queens County, New York City, the most ethnically diverse urban area in the world
- All the culture and entertainment that New York City has to offer
- A committed Sunday School team
- A spacious five-bedroom Rectory with a big, beautiful back yard on church grounds
- An efficiently run, debt free church
- Public schools ranked among the top schools in the city
- A committed Vestry



Sunday School Program

There are currently 17 students and 4 teachers in the Sunday School program. They are:

- Early Elementary (pre-k-grade 3)
- Late Elementary (grades 4-5)
- Middle School/Youth Group (grades 6 & up)

Our Sunday School initiatives include:

- monthly Family Liturgy
- ongoing support to El Hogar in Honduras
- support of Camp DeWolfe located in Wading River, Long Island
- an annual weekend retreat to Camp DeWolfe
- volunteering at Ronald McDonald House
- the back to school supply drive
- Thanksgiving food drive
- Breakfast with Santa to support the Diocesan Toy Drive
- Caroling to the homes of our homebound parishioners



Food Pantry

The Food Pantry is open twice weekly, during which time we provide 35-40 households with needed food items.

Additionally, on the second Saturday of each month we host a free Community Meal, where all are welcomed to a hot, nourishing meal and good fellowship.

Our annual Thanksgiving luncheon, started in 2012, has grown significantly each year—this past November, we served over 95 people.

The Food Pantry has been completely self-sufficient – in other words, it has relied solely on food and monetary donations from parishioners and numerous community organizations to provide the services we offer. In addition, we recently were awarded a \$10,000 grant from the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, which we hope to use to further expand our services.



Thrift Shop

Our thrift shop is the oldest outreach ministry in our church. For over 70 years it has existed in various forms. At the present time it is open two Wednesdays and one Saturday a month from

September to June. It is also open four Saturdays during July and August. It is located in two rooms on the lower level of the church.



Our loyal and enthusiastic staff is comprised mainly of our parishioners. The donations we receive of clothing and household items comes primarily from the community. The

money the thrift shop generates goes into the general fund of the church and goes towards the operating expenses of the church. The Thrift Shop raised nearly \$14,000 in 2018.

Our outreach to the community also includes regular donations made to such organizations as NYCares Annual Coat Drive, Vietnam Veterans of America, Bridge to Life, Whitestone Animal Hospital, Diocesan Jail to Life Ministry, and St. Mary's Church in Brooklyn. Our thrift shop obviously plays a vital role in the lives of both our church and our community at large.



Coffee Hour

The Coffee Hour at Grace Church is a tradition. There is Coffee Hour every Sunday following the 10 o'clock Mass, with the exception of Easter Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Coffee Hour is a vital part of the life of our parish family at Grace Church. It is a rich and lively time when we come together as a parish family. It is a time when we take a break from the hectic pace of our lives to be with each other. We take the time to care for each other, to share information and to talk, laugh and celebrate life together.

Most of those who attend the 10 o'clock Mass remain for coffee hour. All are welcome. There is always a lot of high energy at the Coffee Hour. It gives the people a chance to welcome guests and new people, and to recognize special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. People also take the opportunity to plan activities and collect money for special events.

Refreshments are simple. There are teams who coordinate coffee hour every five or six weeks depending on the number of teams



Brief Description of Grace Church

Church Building

An open worship space with a freestanding altar in the sanctuary. A large wooden reredos under a stained-glass window depicting Jesus with outstretched arms dominates the East End of the sanctuary. The wood beamed ceiling is typical of late Nineteenth Century Cottage Gothic. There is a roomy narthex at the front of the church. Seating capacity of the church is approximately 250. Major renovations were done in the 1950's, replacing the floor and installing new pews.



There is a small chapel located off of the church proper. The Lady Chapel, the Chapel of our Lady of Grace, has a reredos with a painting of Mary with the child Jesus at play with John.



There is a pipe organ located near the choir pews. There are many lovely stained-glass windows located throughout the church. There is a corbel type bell tower with a single bell above the narthex.





Parish House

The parish house is connected to the church building housing the Sacristy, church offices, sexton closet, library, classrooms, gymnasium with stage, and prop room. There is a small attic above the prop room. There is a large storage attic that is atop of the church offices and classrooms.

The lower level of the Parish House consists of a full kitchen with ample storage for the Food Pantry. The thrift shop operates out of two rooms on the lower level. There is also a large meeting room where most church social events, including coffee hour, are held. Seating capacity is about 150.

Church Grounds

We own a small ranch house and rectory. There is a parking lot capable of accommodating approximately 15 cars. There is also a two-car garage in the parking lot.

Rectory

The rectory was built in 1957 with approximately 2,500 square feet of living space. It is a two-story brick ranch type building. On the upper floor are three bedrooms and full bath. On the

lower floor are two bedrooms, two full bathrooms, an office and a large L shaped living and dining room with a working fireplace. There is a full sized eat-in kitchen, a full unfinished basement and a large storage room. A louvered porch off the living room opens onto a paved patio and built-in brick barbeque in the backyard. The large back yard is enclosed by a white picket fence. There is a two-car attached garage.



History of Grace Church

In September 1858, the Parish of Grace Church, Whitestone, was incorporated. The Church itself was built in 1862. Throughout the last 150 years, additional buildings were added, such as the parish offices, classrooms, gym and Rectory. A comprehensive history of our Parish can be found on our website at www.gracechurchwhitesone.org/history.



Results of the Parish Profile Workshop

What is The Mission of this Parish?

- Bring families together
- Bring more youth to Grace Church and expand Youth Ministry
- Lead by example and inspire the community
- Reach out to all parishioners and understand their specific needs
- Keep parish family together and foster extended family
- Maintain the beauty of Episcopal ritual
- Follow Christ according to Scripture
- More youth involvement in church and community
- Follow-up on baptized children and their families

Our Five-year Goals

- Increase membership
- Attract younger families
- Increase the choir
- Youth choir
- Increased stewardship pledges
- Maintain balanced budget and Diocesan pledge
- More volunteers

Our Ten-Year Goals

- Grow so that we can have more services



- Revamp parish website (completed)
- Develop Food Pantry to serve beyond Whitestone Community
- Repaint ceiling in Church
- Refinish Narthex
- Air conditioning in the Church, gym, and Lower Parish Hall



Our Strengths

- Sense of community amongst our members
- Beautiful church and grounds
- Community outreach programs
- Balanced budget
- Strong Vestry self-management
- Building use donations from a variety of community groups
- Major structural repairs have been completed
- Large Rectory with beautiful back yard for priest and family
- High performance public schools
- Near institutes of higher learning
- Good family values
- Open minds/open hearts
- Easy access to Manhattan, shopping and airports

Areas of Opportunity

- Small parish, less than 50 families
- Increase choir size
- Increase membership
- Better advertising to the Whitestone Community.

Mutual Expectations

Our Expectations of a New Rector

- Compassionate
- Good Shepherd
- Great interaction with children
- Great interaction with seniors
- Able to relate to all age groups
- Sense of humor
- Healthy self-image
- Good organizer
- Outgoing
- Sensitive
- Open-minded
- Willingness to be involved in parish and community life
- Family participates in church activities
- Family oriented



- Familiar and comfortable with technology
- Works well with the Vestry
- Participates with the deanery and Diocese
- Episcopalian and supportive of Episcopal traditions



What a New Rector Can Expect from Us

- Collegial Vestry
- Dedicated committee chairs
- Parishioners who step in and step up
- Open to new ideas on how to address our areas of opportunity
- Clean well-maintained Church, buildings, and grounds
- Good stewards of the Rectory
- Positive thinkers and problem solvers
- Enthusiasm
- Warm and welcoming
- Working on increasing pledge participation
- Committed to working towards tithing

The Shepherd We Are Seeking

Preacher – Interprets message in creative ways- Able to effectively communicate the Word of God

Teacher – Helps facilitate learning of the readings

Visitor – Conscious of sick parishioners, visits those in need

Pastor – Gifts of guidance. Demonstrates love and concern

Counselor – Listener, confidante, advisor

Leader – Pacesetter, establishes projects and goals

Liturgist – Mindful of conduct of services



An Overview of Our Financial Health

We presently have funds of \$372,629 to support our operational needs. We have 38 pledging families pledging \$59,810.

Several years ago, we sold one of our buildings. We currently have \$259,796.79 invested in the Diocese Fund. This money is restricted for capital improvements only.

