

# Grace On The Mount Anglican Church Profile

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchMtWashington/>

Website: <http://www.graceonthemount.org/>

## **Our Vestry**

Sr. Warden: Shelley Davenport-Davis

Jr. Warden: Scott Baker

Treasurer: MJ Botula

Vestry members: Jim Vevers, Susan Delgado-Park

## Who We Are

*Tradition cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labor.*

—T.S. Eliot

Grace Church is an Anglo-Catholic teaching parish committed to expressing the gospel of Jesus Christ through the intentional and faithful expression of the classical patterns of liturgical formation and ministry recovered during the Oxford Movement. We believe that we have a unique charism and ministry to the community, the city, the region, and the nation. Our parish provides an oasis of deep sacramental life and transformational encounters with Jesus Christ, as we work to equip believers for lives of service. Though we have been, and still are, a small and fragile community, we believe that “God uses the weak to confound the mighty.” Situated like a lighthouse above a city of lost and searching people, we offer a beacon of hope—demonstrating a way of life through continuity with the historic Church. This promises to transform lives and, in turn, the world around us.

## Where We Are

Grace Church serves the Pittsburgh area. Once a depressed and dying Rust Belt town, Pittsburgh is now a dynamic and rapidly changing city. We have an explosive start-up community—including Uber’s autonomous vehicle research center—along with major corporate headquarters like PNC Bank, burgeoning academic centers such as the University of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Mellon, and also growing medical research centers like UPMC. Rated as a top food city, Pittsburgh attracts migrants from places like Brooklyn and Los Angeles, people drawn to the culture and affordable cost of living. We are still, however, surrounded by small, depressed communities, victims of the collapse of the former industrial economy. Pittsburgh is also home to racially segregated neighborhoods and poverty, and the opportunities for mercy ministries are ample.

For a glimpse into the transformation and reinvention of Pittsburgh, you may watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEw2Ky5XxDM>

## Worship

*You are here to kneel, where prayer has been valid.*—T.S. Eliot

In our worship we joyfully embrace the liturgy, which we see as an invaluable gift handed down from the saints who have come before us. We love the beauty of the liturgy, as it appeals to all five senses.

We seek to honor Christ through the sacraments, creeds, and rituals, which, together, teach us of the unfathomable beauty and truth in God's Creation. Our Sunday Eucharist is a sung, Rite I Mass with incense, celebrated by a celebrant, deacon, and a sub-deacon. For the past two years (except in the summer), an abbreviated Sung Matins has preceded the Eucharist. We use traditional idiom and chants, and our hymns and service music are principally drawn from the 1982 Hymnal. Our highly talented organist greatly enriches our worship with his playing.

We view the patterns of worship and devotional practices through the Church Year as key to the formation of the parish and a service to the larger community. The liturgical year includes the observation of Holy Days, Days of Special Devotion, and the Easter Vigil. We view the private devotional practices of the Book of Common Prayer as normative, but see ourselves as invited, though not required, to avail ourselves of the potent means of grace offered in the Prayer Book tradition. As the classic Anglican adage puts it, "All may, some should, none must."

## History and Core Values

Grace Church—initially formed in the mid-1800s—was a dying parish, until it was revitalized in the 1990s as a destination niche parish. It became one of the only churches in the Pittsburgh area for those seeking High Church Anglo-Catholic worship in traditional language. Currently, none of the parishioners live within walking distance, and only two families live within the Mt. Washington neighborhood. Some come from as far away as 60 miles. Though an eclectic group of people, we are united in our love of Anglo-Catholic liturgy. We count on our clergy to continue to teach and preach the Catholic faith. The vast majority of us are theologically orthodox and conservative, affirming a male-only priesthood (though we have had female deacons). We consider Marian doctrine to be *adiaphora*. Despite our general conservatism, we always welcome and extend hospitality to all who come.

As a destination parish, Grace Church works hard to equip parishioners to live out their faith and serve in the variety of day-to-day contexts in which God has placed them. Despite our destination parish status, we still strive to serve the local community as a part of the formation of parishioners and a part of our witness. For many years we have hosted a Blessing of the Animals for the community and a free Thanksgiving

dinner for the locals who wish to come. We also provide food and clothing to the needy in the neighborhood.

While we are not a community church or a program church, in past seasons, Grace has been home to a large variety of ministries. We have performed neighborhood processions on Corpus Christi and the public walking of the Stations of the Cross on the main thoroughfare overlooking the city. We have also carried out an active arts ministry with exhibits and coffee houses, provided ice cream socials and offered water to people on the Fourth of July, and have hosted an afterschool ministry for children.

Currently, we open our building to several groups who meet regularly, including the One Voice for Christ choir, which rehearses weekly in the hall from September to March and always gives a concert in the church during both Advent and Lent. The Pittsburgh Scottish Country Dance Society dances twice weekly in the fellowship hall, and a chapter of Narcotics Anonymous meets once weekly. The hall is also used as a polling station for elections.

In terms of potential ministries, as ambassadors of classical Christian practice we would like to begin sharing elements of our life resources on the Internet. Given the increase in immigration in the region we have considered the possibility of offering an ESL ministry. We have already planted one church, which is spreading its own wings, and have a retired priest and missionary within the congregation who could serve as the anchor of a potential future plant of a Spanish-language congregation. That said, our Bishop, Jim Hobby, has encouraged us to lean into the reality of serving as a destination parish which is an idea we look forward to exploring further.

We treasure Biblical preaching and teaching and place great emphasis on spiritual formation. Our Adult Christian Education takes place following coffee hour, and is attended by a large percentage of the regular attenders. It has covered topics ranging from the Oxford Movement, the *Divine Comedy*, Christian Perfection and Ascetical Theology, *The Screwtape Letters*, an overview of the Catholic Faith, and a series on the lives of the saints. These adult Christian education classes are mostly initiated and led by members of the laity.

It is important for a new rector to understand the depth of commitment to Biblical orthodoxy and the Catholic faith within the community of Grace Church. The congregation voted nearly unanimously against signing papers offered to us by the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, though we risked losing our building. In the event that we are asked to leave our property, we will do so rather than compromise our witness and mission in any way, financially, or otherwise.

## Our Community

Our congregation is small but unified by our commitment to traditional Anglican worship. Members come from throughout the Greater Pittsburgh area and beyond. We are an eclectic mix of blue- and white-collar professionals, military members, medical professionals, and an unusually high number of educators. A fair number of parishioners are retired, including two of the clergy, and we have former missionaries as well. Members come from a variety of church backgrounds: Presbyterian, Evangelical, Catholic, as well as cradle Episcopalians (One family has roots in our church that reach back to the 19th Century!). Many of the members have creative talents in music, writing, painting, and fine crafts.

Overall, the congregation is well-educated, intellectually curious, creative and actively participates in adult education. Almost all members contribute to church life in some capacity, including the male majority of the congregation. We are at a stage in our church growth where we would like to better utilize our gifts in ministry to the world.

## Our Future Rector

Grace Anglican is looking for a part-time rector who shares its love of the Anglo-Catholic liturgy and the cycles of Anglican life, and is enthusiastic about leading the church into a fuller understanding of our responsibility as stewards of the treasury passed down to us from the Apostles. We seek someone who takes seriously the spiritual life as exemplified in the principle *lex orandi lex credendi*.

Grace Anglican has a history of Bible-based, thoughtful, Anglo-Catholic teaching, and we are looking for a rector who embraces our Rite I-style Sunday morning liturgy, recognizing that right liturgy leads to right theology. We enthusiastically welcome a rector who understands our mission to thoughtfully teach and explain the rhythms of the liturgical calendar, cultivating a fuller appreciation of these traditions. Our worship is formational, shaping us into true followers of Christ. We see our future rector as one who will equip the saints with the teaching and habits that prepare us to go out into the world and fulfill the Great Commission.

While we at Grace are uncompromising in our worship and acceptance of traditional biblical teaching, we recognize the variegated backgrounds of our congregation. Our members have a wide range of political and philosophical views. When we walk through the doors Sunday morning, we lay aside our peculiarities and take up the disciplines and the common language of Mother Church. We gather around the altar together kneeling before our Present Lord who makes us one. We pray our new rector will be able to meet us where we are and lead us deeper into the “faith once delivered to the saints.” This will require the new rector getting to know us as individuals, which is very feasible in a parish of our size.

Although serving in a small parish does require the rector to be involved in most aspects of church life, he will find a congregation eager to share in the work of

maintaining church life in the various capacities of teaching adult education, maintaining the facilities, and serving in the Sunday morning worship. We look forward to welcoming a rector who will embrace us in our entirety—in our values, vision, and our desire for growth that will impact our congregation and our community. Though we are saddened to lose our current rector, who is retiring, we are thankful for the grace of God that daily sustains us. We wait expectantly to meet the pastor who will lead us into this new season of our life and worship.