Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on Grace Church, Sandusky, Ohio, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a Rector for this Parish, that we may receive a faithful Pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer
Grace Episcopal Church Sandusky Welcomes You!

FIND WHAT YOU’RE SEARCHING FOR ALONG OHIO’S NORTH COAST.

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Photos within provided by:
The City of Sandusky, Debbie Chase, Scott Fais, Firelands Health, Grace Church Archives, Mary Ellen Hart, Lake Erie Shores and Islands, Sandusky City Schools, Terrin Schnee, The Rev. Fr. Brian Wilbert, and others to the Glory of God.
You’ll find Grace Church Sandusky to be a warm and welcoming community situated midway between Cleveland and Toledo on Lake Erie. Our motto is “God Loves You. No Exceptions.” Some of us have been members of Grace for generations. Some were baptized at Grace, others were married here, and others have joined us throughout stages of their lives. Families continue to gather for worship at our location just blocks from Sandusky Bay year after year and return to our church for holiday services.

We have older children, young adults, professionals, stay-at-home parents, and retirees. In the summer months, guests visit Grace Church as part of their trip to the North Coast “Vacationland” area.
Finding Us

We bless babies, anniversaries, birthdays, and pets. We celebrate together at baptisms along the lake shore and during weddings in our church; we mourn loss together at funerals. What we all have in common is our commitment to our Church community, to worship, and contributing to the world beyond our Parish walls.

In early 2022, the Canonical requirements for membership in the Church stood at nearly 100 members, along with eight children. Meantime, more than 134 additional people are considered friends of Grace Church, who actively participate in worship and give freely of their time and treasure.

Join us as we continue our faith journey.

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
—Colossians 3:14
In autumn 2021, the Grace Church Search Committee canvased members and friends of Grace with a simple question: “What attributes do you seek from our next Rector?” Parishioners answered online, by mail, and in person during individual meetings with members of the Search Committee. The data identified the top 10 qualities desired in our new Rector.

### Finding Who We’re Seeking

**83%**
need a Rector who is caring, warm, friendly, humble, and a good listener

**75%**
want a Priest who is successful in helping to grow Parish membership

**72%**
value a Minister with a track record for fostering a strong youth program

**72%**
want a Spiritual Shepherd who is intellectually strong, a good writer and speaker, who delivers thoughtful and inspiring sermons

**67%**
need a Faith Leader who is energetic, optimistic, and enthusiastic

**67%**
want a Pastor who cares for parishioners outside the Church walls at home, during hospital visits, and when in crisis

**59%**
desire a Rector who connects the congregation to our community and supports Grace’s strong outreach programs

**58%**
value a Priest who recognizes and encourages the importance of music to reinforce scriptures and soothe the soul

**52%**
want a Minister who has a sense of humor (It’s okay to laugh!)

**48%**
desire a Clergyperson who will help build our Parish into a greater place that is welcoming, friendly, and loving

**ASK YOURSELF:**

“Is this me?”

---

**Finding Grace**
Finding the Path Ahead—Together

We look forward to welcoming an inspiring priest with a reputation for helping to increase membership and attendance at worship and parish programs, and who will help us rebuild our youth and adult formation at Grace Church.

Our red doors swing open each Sunday and Tuesday evening. We’re searching for a Rector whose uplifting sermons increase attendance and fill the pews. This person will exude inspiration that supports others in their spiritual growth, bringing them back to Church each Sunday. You’ll find a welcoming Vestry and Parish body who will support your vision and the systems you’ll create to drive growth. A Rector with strong family, peer, and community relationships—whose preaching serves as an attraction—is important to our Parish family.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. —Jeremiah 29:11
Rebuilding a strong youth program, one that would encourage participation in Church activities such as serving as an acolyte, is important to our Parish family. Past acolytes have built friendships, traveled together, and earned scholarships established by a current Church member. We hope the formation of a strong youth program—where children are involved in the fabric of Parish life during their formable years—will lead to the next generation of Grace Church members.

Grace Church is a congregation that has a history of inviting their Rector to participate in social and community gatherings. These include local service organization luncheons, BBQ’s in the backyard at a member’s home, toasting the Church with “Lemonade on the Lawn,” and boat rides on Sandusky Bay. We look forward with hope and prayer as we embark on the next chapter of our faith journey—together.
Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.
—Psalm 105:2
Finding Our Worship

You’ll discover parishioners value sermons that relate to their daily lives. Grace Episcopal Church uses the Rite II Liturgy at the 8:00 a.m. service and the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, and at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday. (In the past, this midweek service took place on Thursday evening). The 10:00 a.m. Sunday service serves as the main service for Grace Episcopal Church. Music is a vital part of our service.

We are interested in seeking fresh ways to make our service appeal to new and younger members, while balancing the needs of older members. Scripture, tradition, and reason can be incorporated in new and exciting ways to meet our changing world. New forms of worship have been tried at the Tuesday service, and occasionally at the 10:00 a.m. Sunday service. We look for ways to grow our Parish and make it relevant to our neighbors through uplifting preaching.
MUSIC IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY AT GRACE CHURCH.

Our next Rector will be asked to continue the long-standing tradition of using song to further enhance and match the lessons and gospels.

In our building, Grace Church is blessed with two fine pipe organs and a grand piano. The downstairs chapel has use of a portable keyboard. The choir library is home to a wonderful gathering of 2,000 pieces of choral music dating back 200 years. This collection is catalogued in spreadsheets and supplies our Faith Leaders with location, season, parts, and other documentation for easy selection.

My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast: I will sing and make music.

—Psalm 57:7
Our organist and choir master is Randall Ruthsatz. Randy graduated with a B.A. from Heidelberg College and majored in music and business. He is a member in the Association of Anglican Musicians, and is an affiliate of the Royal School of Church Music. Randy looks forward to working with our next Rector while continuing to inspire the best from his choir members.

The present choir at Grace Church is small and always on the lookout for new members. Choir members like to be challenged and are sincere in their obligation to perform all music to the Glory of God.
Finding Sanctuary

Step inside our building and you will find sanctuary, along with a sense of place. The worship structure is prominent, yet comfortable. The bold red carpet in the aisle conveys a sense of warmth and welcome to all who enter. The pews of different lengths harken back to an era when members bought their “family pew” based on the number of family members.

The stained glass windows date back to the mid-1800s. The Feast of the Epiphany window rests in the east transept; the Sermon on the Mount window stands above the altar; and the Ascension window in the west transept depict major events of Christ’s life on earth.

The Ascension window was created around 1895 by Lamb Studios of New York City. The stained-glass window bay is based on a famous painting by Doré. The window was given in memory of early parishioners Eleutherios and Martha Cooke, and William and Maria Townsend by their grandchildren. It’s a perfect example of how generations of families value our Church.

Finding Grace
Nestled to the right of the altar is the Church’s dynamic new organ. An investment made within the past decade, the new Buzard Opus 44 organ enriches service with traditional, and on occasion, contemporary music. This three manual and pedal organ features 47 independent speaking stops and 61 ranks of pipes. Building on tradition, the new organ incorporates several sets of pipes from the Grace Church’s former organ, a 19th Century Johnson which was heavily modified in the 1970’s.

The Grace Church of tomorrow will continue to embrace music. This favorite part of worship is a significant way the Parish connects with the Spirit through traditional hymns and new music.

Our facility has wonderful acoustics. Guest musicians are regularly invited and provide another dimension to our service. Music events sponsored by Grace Church and Sandusky Concert Association seek our Church home as a performance venue. The Sandusky Choral Society also calls Grace Church home each spring and Christmas season when conducting concerts.
Finding Our Technology

BOXCAST
Ready to go live? Grace Church is sharing God’s Word outside the conventional Church walls. When the global coronavirus pandemic prevented the Parish from gathering in person, the Vestry purchased a state-of-the-art camera system and video switcher allowing Grace Church to connect with companions along the way by streaming a professional presentation originating live from the Church.

As the first of its kind used in Ohio by an Episcopal Church, our Boxcast system streams services from the shores of Sandusky Bay to any computer or mobile device in the world. This worship service allows parishioners who are traveling, enjoying their seasonal residence, or receiving care at a medical facility to be connected. Sunday services are streamed live to our website and Facebook page, where they are archived, so they may be watched later. Come 10 a.m. on Sunday, “Live from Lake Erie, it’s Sunday morning!”

ZOOM ROOM
Just outside the Parish office sits the Grace Church “Zoom Room.” This dedicated space is equipped with technology that allows those meeting in person to connect with others via a video stream. Now, different groups at Grace can come together using laptops, tablets, or mobile devices.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. —Matthew 18:20
ALL ARE WELCOME AT OUR COMMUNITY TABLE
Grace Church serves a freshly made Community Meal on every third and fourth Saturday each month. These nourishing meals were first served to an average of 125 people in the Parish multipurpose room pre-COVID-19. In addition to meals, prayer and supportive conversation were provided to diners, along with books for children. Often, guests would provide musical entertainment. With the onset of COVID-19, the Parish did not stop serving, rather, transitioned the ministry to carry out meals that cater to an average of 80-100 people, along with offering cold weather items, like hats and gloves. Grace remains committed to providing healthy meals while sharing God’s love with our Sandusky community.

FARMING FOR GOOD
Every year during Lent, Grace Church collects donations for Heifer International. This organization works worldwide in 21 countries helping local farmers and business owners improve food security and nutrition in their communities. Our donations buy a variety of animals used for food and business development.
ALL ARE WELCOME

During summer’s annual Sandusky Pride Festival, Grace Church sponsors a booth where a variety of brochures, information, and refreshments are served. Members of the congregation volunteer to spread the message conveyed by the Church motto:

“God Loves You. No Exceptions.”

This all-inclusive festival celebrates acceptance and embraces individuality. Along with other community organizations, Grace Church works to further LGBTQ+ causes and understanding.
EMPOWERING YOUTH
Every December, the Erie County Juvenile Justice Center is the Church’s outreach recipient. Parishioners donate various items and gifts that youth and teachers can use in the facility. The donations are collected at the Church and delivered to the center along with generous gift cards to a local grocery store. These gift cards are used by teachers to buy classroom rewards and incentives for the juveniles.

BACK TO SCHOOL
In August, Grace Church supports the local “Stuff the Bus” Campaign. Parishioners buy new school supplies for local school children in need. The supplies are brought to the Church, and distributed to area Sandusky schools. These new supplies are collected at the beginning of each year to promote a positive, fresh start for community children.

COMMUNITY GRANTS
Grace Church generously supports a variety of community organizations through our Outreach Grants. Community Mentoring, Care and Share, Kinship, Meal on Wheels, and the Erie County Senior Center are some of the many organizations that are supported by Grace Church. Grocery gift cards are also distributed to families in need through the Church office.
Finding Outreach

YES! WE'RE OPEN

The Grace Episcopal Church Thrift Shop is a resale shop that accepts consignment or donated items that are sold at modest prices. Since 1947, the shop has served the needs of many different people in our community.

Complementary vouchers and school uniform vouchers provided by the Church are a lifeline for many families. The shop is managed and run by a group of Parish members who serve as dedicated volunteers.

The proceeds benefit numerous Erie County charities. But the good does not stop there. The Thrift Store and Church parishioners donated warm, winter items to the Native American Heritage Association in South Dakota. The small, non-profit organization serves residents living on Native American reservations in South Dakota.

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." —Acts 20:35
Grace Church is blessed to be sitting on a bedrock of strong financial stewardship. Through the time, talent, and treasure of its current members, and those who have gone before us, our Parish is in solid financial shape. Contributions and financial pledges from members, along with a sound investment strategy, allows our Church to focus on service and Spiritual growth.

This sound vision for generations will empower our new Rector to focus on growing attendance, serving the community, welcoming families, and building a youth program.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. —Matthew 6:21
The Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, which comprised the entire state, was organized between 1816 and 1817. Our history is deep, as our Diocese was the first established beyond the original 13 colonies. Our first Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Philander Chase, rode around Ohio on horseback with bushel baskets full of prayer books. When he came to a settled area, he would appoint a “Lay Reader” (usually a doctor or lawyer) to lead worship until such time as a priest could visit to celebrate the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

A lot has changed since the early 1800s. Today, Cleveland serves as the Bishop’s see. Trinity Commons, built in 2000, houses the administrative offices for both the Diocese and Cathedral. A nod to its early agricultural roots, in 2017, the Diocese dedicated Bellwether Farm, a camp, conference, and retreat center situated on an organic, regenerative farm in Wakeman Township, near the demographic center of the diocese.

Our eleventh Bishop, Mark Hollingsworth, Jr., has requested the election of a Bishop Coadjutor, someone who will serve as an assistant bishop alongside Bishop Hollingsworth, until his retirement. At that time, the Bishop Coadjutor will become the 12th Bishop of Ohio. Grace Church Sandusky is proud to have a member of the Vestry serving on the 12-person search committee for our next Bishop. It is an exciting time in our Diocesan history and at Grace Church in Sandusky.
The “Society of Grace Church” was founded in March 1835 by pioneer families who came to the new City of Sandusky (platted in 1818) for its great economic opportunities—best harbor on the south shore of Lake Erie, fertile farmland, and forest area. By comparison, it wouldn’t be until 1870 when a ferry boat began offering passenger service just blocks from the Church to the Lake Erie beach known as “Cedar Point.”

Grace Episcopal Church began as the only Episcopal Church in Ohio organized by lay members without the assistance of clergy. Sandusky Episcopalians began construction of our structure in 1835. The building was dedicated in 1843. The foundations of these structures are still incorporated in the present Church building.

Less than a generation later, in the mid-1800s, the building was enlarged with transepts and two towers. The Parish grew to include three missions, on the south, east, and west sides of the city.

Our original windows were clear. Now, stained-glass provides a myriad of colors on sunny days, and opportunities for memorials for those who assisted in establishing Grace Church, growing Sandusky, and developing Erie County in the early 1800s. In the early 2000s, each one of these stained glass windows were lovingly restored.

Sandusky has always been the “anchor” Parish between Cleveland and Toledo. When traveling by train was the way to get across our state, Bishop William Leonard would often stop in Sandusky on his way to or from Toledo to check in on Parishes along the lake shore.
DOWNTOWN SANDUSKY
Grace Church sits on a corner of Washington Park, a network of well-maintained sidewalks and impressive landscaping within downtown’s urban environment. If you’ve seen the “Back to the Future” films, then you’ll know Sandusky (yes, the county courthouse even has a clocktower, just like the movie). Our idyllic setting is just blocks away from the Sandusky Bay waterfront and an emerging “foodies scene” in Downtown Sandusky.

The renaissance of our downtown is underway, with Bowling Green State University opening a new downtown campus and the iconic State Theater undergoing a multi-year transformation following a tornado in the summer of 2020. New residential townhomes and condos highlight the rekindled allure of our small city. The Jackson Street Pier—formerly a parking lot—recently went through a metamorphosis, adding green space, an outdoor concert venue, a party pavilion, and swings providing views of Sandusky Bay and Cedar Point.  www.ci.sandusky.oh.us
Finding Sandusky

HEALTH AND MEDICAL
Firelands Regional Medical Center made the Newsweek’s “World’s Best Hospital List” in 2021. Firelands is among 22 Ohio hospitals—and one of three independent health systems in Ohio—to make the prestigious list that highlights hospitals across 25 countries. The 400+ bed not-for-profit medical center had humble beginnings, founded by a member of Grace Church, decades ago.

Today, Firelands cares for an average of 9,700 inpatients and 260,000 outpatients annually. As Sandusky’s largest year-round employer, Firelands emergency room and urgent care centers treat on average 62,000 people a year. In 2019, almost 800 babies were welcomed into the world at Firelands. firelands.com
The greater Sandusky area is blessed with several outstanding school districts. The districts offer a variety of academic and fine arts curricula with strong college preparatory classes. The Post Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) Program is also available in all districts. In conjunction with several local colleges such as Bowling Green State University-Firelands Campus, Lorain County Community College, and Terra State Community College, college credit is earned while attending high school. The new Sandusky Intermediate School is a brand-new structure housing grades 3-6. The fresh facility is a part of the community’s “Building Better Dreams Facilities Project.”

The athletic programs are competitive, successful, and strongly supported. The Sandusky City Schools’ Regional Center for Advanced Academic Studies is an elementary school that provides gifted students a research-based learning environment that nurtures them according to their academic needs. All districts have open enrollment. Many Grace Church parishioners and their families are local graduates and remain loyal to their schools. Local school districts include:

- Berlin-Milan School District
- Huron City Schools
- Margaretta Local School District
- Perkins Local School District
- Sandusky City Schools

scs-k12.net
You'll find life on Ohio's northern shore provides recreation and reflection along the water. As the winner of USA Today's "Best Coastal Small Town" (population of fewer than 25,000 people), Sandusky offers "uncrowded, unpretentious, and affordable seaside fun."

Sandusky sits on Sandusky Bay and serves as a gateway to Lake Erie, allowing for boating in the summer and ice fishing in the winter. Past Rectors of Grace Church have enjoyed sailing spring through fall.

The Cedar Point amusement park/resort is renowned worldwide for its collection of roller coasters, unique rides, a majestic 117-year-old beachfront hotel, and a freshwater bathing beach.
Finding Balance

The Sandusky Bay Pathway is an ever-expanding network of trails perfect for bicycling, jogging, and walking. Envisioned to span 12-miles from downtown Sandusky to Sheldon Marsh (a nature preserve) the end goal is to connect each Sandusky neighborhood with routes from residential areas to the waterfront.

The Cedar Point Sports Center is a regional destination for indoor sports competition that features 10 basketball and 20 volleyball courts, along with an elevated walking track—free for local residents.

shoresandislands.com

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.

—Psalm 23:2
Erie is Ohio’s Great Lake—and this community wouldn’t have it any other way. The lake provides a source of recreation, commerce, reflection, and peace.

The Lake Erie Islands form an international border with Canada and provide wonderful day trips and short escapes. Kelleys Island is big on acreage, and small on stress. A nature-lover’s paradise, visitors hike coastal trails, comb sandy beaches, kayak along rocky cliffs, and explore the world’s largest example of glacial scoring at Glacial Grooves State Memorial.

South Bass Island (also known as Put-in-Bay) is home to Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial, part of the National Park Service. The monument was established to honor those who fought in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. Today, the Doric column rising 352 feet over Lake Erie, celebrates long-lasting peace among Great Britain, Canada and the U.S. and is situated 5 miles from the longest undefended border in the world. South Bass Island is also home to two caves tunneling under Lake Erie … and a few popular wineries (perfect to visit on a breezy summer afternoon).

kelleysisland.com

putinbay.com
The Rector Search Committee at Grace Episcopal Church Sandusky is excited you’re interested in serving our Parish and making a home in our coastal community. The Spirit led you here, now let’s get connected.

Interested clergy should contact The Rev. Percy Grant, Canon for Ministry, with the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio. The Rev. Grant chairs responsibility for transitional ministry, vocational discernment with clergy, education, and clergy wellness.

You may also connect with the Grace Church Search Committee:

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https://gracesandusky.org/rector_search_committee
JOIN US
to turn Finding Grace into Amazing Grace.
Amazing Grace

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