



# GRACE

*Episcopal Church*

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May 8, 2015

Dear friends in Christ,

The excitement is building at Grace! Architects, contractors, and sub-contractors are putting finishing touches on plans. We are beginning to meet and make decisions about paint colors and other decorating details. We are even beginning to talk about what our worship might be like when we have to meet in the Guild Hall while work is being done in the Nave. While there continue to be a great many uncertainties about its overall scope and many details of the project, we expect to begin construction this summer.

With all of this on the horizon, it's appropriate for us to be thinking about what's next in the life, mission, and ministry of Grace Episcopal Church. Of course, we've been thinking and talking about these matters throughout the master planning process. We have been driven by the desire to make our facilities more accessible and welcoming and also by the desire to be able to use our spaces to connect better with our community and neighbors.

For over 175 years, Grace has been a center of ministry on Capitol Square and throughout Madison. Our food pantry, founded in 1979, helps to feed thousands of families each year. With volunteers from Grace and the community, Food Pantry Coordinator Lorraine Brathwaite provides healthy and nutritious food and essential toiletries. Porchlight's Mens' Shelter, housed at Grace since 1984 provides overnight shelter and meals for men and helps to connect them with social services and job opportunities. Created thanks to the vision of Grace members and clergy as well as community activists, both ministries have become central to our identity and central to our mission in our community. They will remain at the heart of who we are. We are committed to working with Porchlight and the wider community to provide emergency shelter and resources for homeless people and with the wider community to engage in conversations to seek solutions to homelessness and poverty and to continue to address the immediate needs of the most vulnerable members of our community.

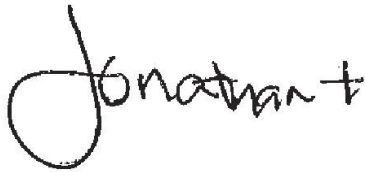
At the same time, our building project and changes in downtown Madison create new opportunities for ministry and mission. In recent years, downtown Madison has undergone a transformation with new development bringing new residents, new businesses, and new entertainment venues like the Overture Center and the Children's Museum. Even more development is under discussion with the Judge Doyle Square project, the potential move of Madison College, and emerging proposals for our own block. All of this will have a significant impact on Grace Church. While the precise shape and effects of future development remain uncertain, we can expect that our immediate neighborhood will continue to be a vibrant community, attractive to residents, workers, and tourists alike.

This presents us with amazing opportunity. As we renovate our facilities and begin to experience our new spaces, we can creatively imagine how our spaces and our congregation can be enhanced assets to our community and neighborhood. What new ministries and initiatives might we use to engage our community? How can we build on and expand existing ministries and congregational strengths to attract new members? How can our sacred space be a place where residents and visitors to downtown Madison can encounter God and deepen their spiritual lives?

Over the course of the next months, we will discuss these and other questions as we seek to create a vision for Grace's future role in our neighborhood. As a starting point, on May 17, at 11:30 AM in the Library, Jonathan will be leading an initial conversation. All who are interested in helping to shape this vision are invited to join. Bring your questions and your ideas.

Together, let us discern where the Holy Spirit is directing us.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J" and a small cross at the end of the word.

Jonathan

