

# Grace Presbyterian Church

"To see Long Island awakened to the glory of Jesus Christ."

## Update from Pastor Mark Middlekauff

Recently I had a number of people tell me that Christmas season began months ago in the Philippines, so I did a little research, and it is true: people in the Philippines begin celebrating Christmas on September 1st and continue into mid-January! Part of me is thankful that Christmas celebrations do not begin that early in the States. I tend to equate long Christmas season with a commercialization of our Lord's birth. And yet, part of me resonates with a long Advent season as our souls would benefit from a prolonged meditation on the birth of the Son of God. Earlier this week (early November) I was reading through Isaiah and I found myself in chapter 9 and that classic Advent passage was before me:

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his  
shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
(Isaiah 9:6)

This beloved promise from God to send the Messiah as a child that was born and as a son that was given, is not just for the few weeks leading up to Christmas, but for all the days of the year.

So maybe we have something to learn from our Filipino brothers and sisters: savoring the birth of our Savior should fill more of our days.



*Ladies' Night Bike Ride*



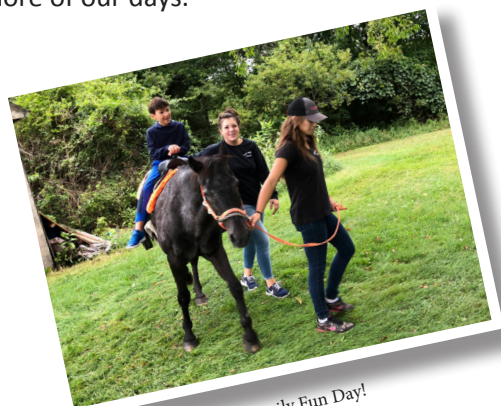
*Fall Family Fun Day!*



*Silly faces at Second Saturdays Out!*



*Ladies at lunch on the Women's Retreat!*



*Fall Family Fun Day!*



*Youth Group at Six Flags*



*Guys' Day Out- Skeet Shooting*

Aimee Astarita

## Meet the Astarita's

We were married in 2005 at Dune Church by a dear family friend and pastor on the East End, Joe Kelley. At that time we were attending Community Bible Church. We were deeply connected and loved worshiping there. In the year after our wedding we built our current home on Great Hill Road and continued attending Community Bible as our family grew to include our first baby. We now have four children: Madeleine, Evangeleine, Genevieve, and Finn.

We met Mark and Lesley shortly after they moved here. Mark and Colin had so much in common! Time and again Mark and Lesley reached out to us with meals, gifts, and help as our family increased and we moved into a new home. After all, Lesley only had THREE little girls at the time, and had just moved to the area!

As time went on we began to feel more and more at home with Grace Church. It was such a perfect fit for our girls, and Colin especially enjoyed being there. The men's Bible study (at the time held in Colin's law office) was an amazing lift to Colin's faith and something he looked forward to every week. Before we knew it, Grace was our home.

Last year, Madeleine was baptized in Little Peconic Bay by Pastor Mark, a landmark moment in her life. We have seen her grow in the Lord so much since that time.

Grace Church reaches so many people in different stages of faith. It has grounded us and given us a strong foundation as we continue to make our home in the Hamptons. It is also a place we are proud to bring friends and family. We know that they will hear the word of God and His great love for us, and at the same time meet people they can identify with. We really can't say enough about how much we love and appreciate this church. We feel 1000% more confident raising our children to know and trust the Lord with Mark and Lesley's leadership and example. We are so grateful to have a Christian community that is thriving and growing and there for us.

We thank God all the time for bringing Mark and Lesley here with a heart for reaching the Hamptons with God's message of salvation.



Adriana Pariz

## Womens' Retreat

Grace Presbyterian Church held our third annual Women's Retreat at Camp Quinipet at the end of October. Twenty women gathered in a cabin over the weekend to learn about "Union with Christ." Talented



ladies transformed the cabin into a cozy and warm space. Between morning devotions, testimonies, and seminars we shared home-cooked meals, faced a crazy storm, and laughed really hard. Over the last three years, we have found that something special happens at these retreats. There is something to be said about setting aside a weekend to enjoy God and other women: it works!

This year's theme of "Union with Christ" showed us how, through the finished work of the cross, God gives us a new identity as his adopted children. Our identity as Christians is no longer dictated by how the world views us, or even by how we view ourselves, but rather by our being children of the living God. As the weekend came to an end, we all wished it could have been a couple of days longer. Needless to say, it was a delight!

Mark Middlekauff

## Budget Update

### General Fund

The General Fund supplies all of Grace Church's ministries. Our 2018 budget for the General Fund is a little under \$550,000, which includes \$30,000 to set aside for our church plant, new RUF college ministry, and future counseling center. At the end of October, we had a year to date shortfall of \$52,000.

A shortfall is typical as we approach the end of the year. Usually, 30% of our annual giving happens during November and December. With a strong finish to the year we can make up the shortfall and end with a solid foundation for 2019, so please make a year-end gift to support all the ministries of Grace Presbyterian Church.

### Building Fund

We are getting close to paying off the short-term loan for our building and property. If you would like to contribute to our building fund, please mark your year-end gift with the words "Building Fund".

If you are looking to make a big impact for Christ and his kingdom through financial means, then please consider giving to Grace Presbyterian Church. We will steward your gifts well as we seek to honor God in all we do. Thank you.

### To give...

- by check please mail your check to Grace Presbyterian Church, 1225 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY 11976. Make sure it is postmarked by Dec. 31st.
- online visit our giving page: <http://gracehamptons.org/giving>
- by text just text the dollar amount (e.g. "100") to 631-405-4483.
- stocks or other assets please e-mail or call the office for details.

Grace Presbyterian Church  
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