

Grace Episcopal Church

Lexington, North Carolina

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 1, 2023

The Holy Eucharist: Rite II - 10:30 a.m.

The Reverend Canon Earnest Graham

Celebrant

The Reverend Edward Kelaher

Rector

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

PROCESSIONAL HYMN #690 (In the Blue Hymnal)

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah

1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun-tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but thou art might - y;
 stream doth flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar
 fears sub - side; death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion,

hold me with thy power - ful hand; bread of hea - ven,
 lead me all my jour - ney through; strong de - liv - erer,
 land me safe on Ca - naan's side; songs of prais - es,

bread of hea - ven, feed me now and ev - er -
 strong de - liv - erer, be thou still my strength and
 songs of prais - es, I will ev - er give to

more, shield, feed me now and ev - er - more.
 thee, be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee.

355 OPENING ACCLAMATION AND COLLECT FOR PURITY

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS (*Hymnal S280, front section of hymnal, sung by all*)

*Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world;*

*have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father;
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Lector A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel.

The word of the LORD came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

- The Word of the Lord **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 25:1-8 (*Responsively, by whole verse*)

¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul;
my God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be humiliated,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

² **Let none who look to you be put to shame;
let the treacherous be disappointed in their
schemes.**

³ Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.

⁴ **Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.**

⁵ Remember, O LORD, your compassion and
love, for they are from everlasting.

⁶ **Remember not the sins of my youth and
my transgressions;
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.**

⁷ Gracious and upright is the LORD;
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

⁸ **He guides the humble in doing right
and teaches his way to the lowly.**

THE EPISTLE

Philippians 2:1-13

Lector A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- The Word of the Lord **Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand)



1 Be - fore thy throne, O God, we kneel: give us a con - science
 2 Search out our hearts and make us true; help us to give to
 4 Let the fierce fires which burn and try, our in - most spi - rits

quick to feel, a rea - dy mind to un - der - stand the
 all their due. From love of plea - sure, lust of gold, from
 pu - ri - fy: con - sume the ill; purge out the shame; O

mean - ing of thy chas - tening hand; what - e'er the pain and
 sins which make the heart grow cold, wean us and train us
 God, be with us in the flame; a new - born peo - ple

shame may be, bring us, O Fa - ther, near - er thee.
 with thy rod; teach us to know our faults, O God.
 may we rise, more pure, more true, more no - bly wise.

THE GOSPEL*Matthew 21:23-32*

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

-- The Gospel of the Lord *People:* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

SEQUENCE HYMN #574 (v. 3)

Before thy throne, O God

(Please be seated)

THE HOMILY

The Reverend Edward Kelaher

358 THE NICENE CREED *(All Standing)*

We believe in one God, the Father, the
Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven and is
seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the
living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the
giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is
worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and
apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

388 PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE FORM IV AND CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us pray for the Church and for the world. Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Silence Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Silence Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Silence Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Silence Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Silence Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Silence Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

We pray for all who are traveling, especially **Cameron** Klass, **Julia** Klass, and **Josey** Parker and those with special needs:

Lou Adkins, **Mark** Adkins, **Amanda** Amon, **Ella** Asebes, **David** Bankston, **Rhonda** Bralkowski, **Alice** Brandon & family, **Gayle** Burke, **Art** Burkhardt, **Emily** Duquette Byers, **Lynne** Cleckley, **John** Clippard, **Joan** Clodfelter, **Linda** Clodfelter, **Morgan** Curia, **Kat** Danze, **Tracy** Davis, **Susan** Dixon, **Renee** Ewbank, **Cathy** Farley, **Jenny** Gallen, **Shana** Garland, **Frances** Garner, **Jane** Grimes, **George** Hanna, **Rob** Hare, **Kristen** Harris, **Nancy** Hinkle, **Chris** Hodges, **Jon** Huff, **Jahiya** Huntley, **Greg** Hutchins, **Tanya** Johnson, **Lindsay** Layfield, **Cara** Lee, **Beattie** Logan, **Warren** MacKinstry, **Debbie** Mason, **Kate** McKenzie, **Nicholas** Melomo, **Roan** Mitchell, **Dan & Fran** Moore, **Ronnie** Moretz, **O'Lema** Morgan, **Chocolate** Myers, **Howard** Palmer, **Jerry** Peace, **Fred** Pfohl, **Gabby** Plott, **Pat** Plummer, **Libby** Robert, **Gail** Rogers, **Jacklyn** Rojas, **Lucas** Sanabria, **Suzy** Sheets, **Patty** Short, **Talmadge** Silversides, **Annabell** Smith, **Dan** Griff Smith, **Martha Ellen** Smith, **Jackie** Touchton, **Brenda** Tyndall, **Perry** Grimes Van Dyke, **Kathy** Watson, **Flynn** Williams, **Mary & Jay** Williams, **Vickie** Wolfe, and **Charlotte** Young.

“Are there others?”

Hear us, Lord; *For your mercy is great.*

Celebrant

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Please stand if you are able

360 THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

THE DEDICATION AND NAMING OF A CHURCH ORGAN

The people remain seated. The Minister of Music and the Wardens join the Clergy at the Organ.

The Celebrant

O God, you are the source of all goodness and beauty, the creative power coursing through all humanity, bringing forth for your glory so many gifted and skilled musicians, composers, lyricists, conductors, and technicians. Receive, we pray, our heartfelt expressions of gratitude for your gift of music to the church and to the world. Most specially today, celebrating the 60th Anniversary of her ministry in this parish church, we give thanks for the gift and devotion of Joan Lamar Kearns Clodfelter, our Minister of Music.

Celebrant Our help is in the Name of the Lord;
People **The maker of heaven and earth.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Everliving Father, watchful and caring, our source and our end: All that we are and all that we have is yours. We pray that you will accept the dedication of this Organ, its new Console, and its refurbishments, for your glory and to praise your holy Name. We ask that you will always be present by your Holy Spirit to sanctify, inspire, guide, illumine, and bless your people as they worship by the music of this beautiful instrument. **Amen.**

Celebrant Father, your people worship you with many voices and sounds, in times of joy and sorrow. Move us to express the wonder, the power, and the glory of your creation in the music we make and in the songs we sing.

People **Praise the Lord with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with strings and pipe.**

Celebrant We dedicate this Organ, Console, and refurbishments, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

People **Amen.**

Celebrant By your blessing and inspiration, Lord God, we come before you to name this Organ and Console in honor of your faithful, devoted, long-serving, and loving servant, Joan, that it shall henceforth be known as:

THE JOAN LAMAR KEARNS CLODFELTER ORGAN

People **Amen.**

*The Wardens unveil the commemorating plaque,
which is here read aloud to the Congregation by the Rector.*

The Minister of Music is acknowledged by all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

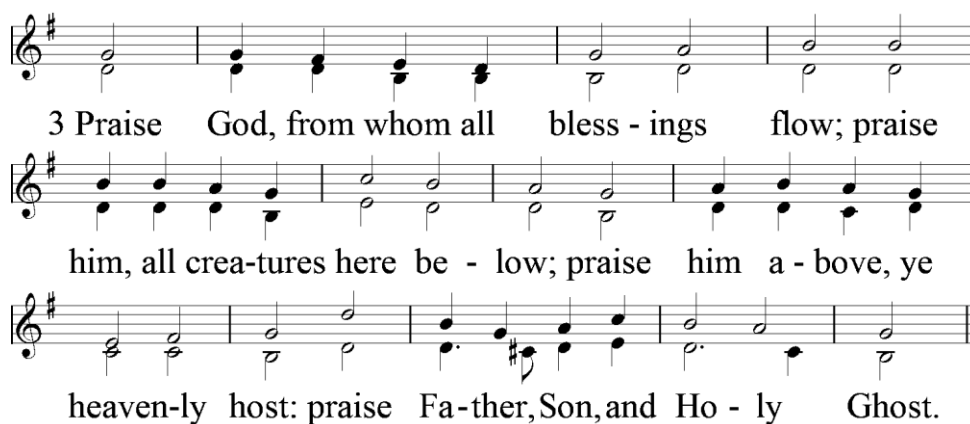
THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

With a Voice of Singing – Martin Shaw

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS #380 (v. 3) *(The offering is brought forth while the hymn is being sung)*



3 Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise
him, all crea-tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heaven-ly host: praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

361 THE GREAT THANKSGIVING *(Eucharistic Prayer A)*

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

For by water and the Holy Spirit you have made us a new people in Jesus Christ our Lord, to show forth your glory in the world.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS #S129
(sung by all)

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

The people may stand or kneel

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

364	<p>Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those</p>	<p>who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.</p>
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364 THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
People Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

Facing the people, the Celebrant may say the following Invitation

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All baptized Christians of any denomination are invited to come forward for Holy Communion at the Lord's Table.

You may receive both the bread and wine, or only the bread or only the wine.

Receiving Communion in one or both forms is sufficient sacramentally.

If you prefer neither bread nor wine, you also are invited to come forward and to simply cross your arms over your chest as a sign for the minister to provide you with a holy blessing of the Lord.

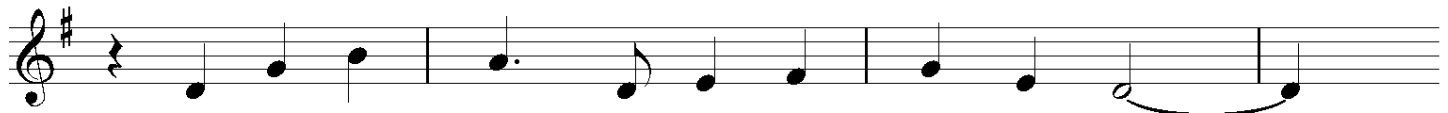
366 POST-COMMUNION PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Celebrant and People

**Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory,
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace, this day and forever.
Amen.



1 When in our mu - sic God is glo - ri - fied, _____
 2 How of - ten, mak - ing mu - sic, we have found _____
 3 So has the Church, in lit - ur - gy and song, _____
 5 Let ev - ery in - stru - ment be tuned for praise! _____



1 and a - dor - a - tion leaves no room for pride, _____
 2 a new di - men - sion in the world of sound, _____
 3 in faith and love, through cen - tu - ries of wrong, _____
 5 Let all re - joice who have a voice to raise! _____



1 it is as though the whole cre - a - tion cried _____
 2 as wor - ship moved us to a more pro - found _____
 3 borne wit - ness to the truth in ev - ery tongue, _____
 5 And may God give us faith to sing al - ways _____



— Al - le - lu - ia! — Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

THE DISMISSAL

The Celebrant dismisses the people

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

People Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

POSTLUDE

Allegro Maestoso e Vivace (from Sonata II) – Felix Mendelssohn

*The flowers on the altar today are given to the glory of God
 by the Grace Church Choir
 in love and honor of Joan Clodfelter.*

WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY

Lector: Mary Bolstad
Intercessor: Kristi Allred
Lay Eucharistic Minister: Mary Matthews, Karl Bolstad
Ushers: Doug Hartzog, Joe Wallace
Greeter: Sandra Husted
Acolytes: Hadley, Lyndon, and Jack Briggs

WELCOME GUESTS AND NEWCOMERS!

We are delighted to have you worship with us today, and we would welcome the opportunity to get acquainted. Please sign the Guest Book in the narthex and join us immediately following the service in Undercroft for refreshments and conversation. **Today our hosts are members of the Grace Church Choir.**

Infants and young children are always welcome to worship with their families in the sanctuary. However, we also offer a nursery in our Undercroft downstairs (basement of the church). Children may remain there the entire service or will be walked up to the sanctuary during The Peace (please let the nursery attendant know your preference).

The restrooms are located in the rear hallway, and diaper-changing stations are provided in both rooms.

During Holy Communion, if you are unable to receive communion at the altar rail, please notify an usher so that communion can be brought to you.



*Long life is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.*

Proverbs 3:16

TWO HANDS, ONE HEART, A KEYBOARD, AND A LIFETIME OF MUSIC FOR GOD

By Ed Kelaher

In 1951 Joan Lamar Kearns was a freshman at the Women's College of the University of North Carolina, now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She would soon marry a Navy sailor named Bob and become Joan Lamar Kearns Clodfelter. Also that year she would climb onto the organ bench at Grace Episcopal Church in Lexington, North Carolina, and, hold onto your hat . . . *she is still there!*

Seventy two years later, she indeed is still there. And her tenure marches on.

From 1951 to 1963 Joan served as a substitute and special services organist for Grace, playing for wedding and funeral services as well as some Sundays.

In 1963, Joan became the permanent Organist and Choir Director at Grace Episcopal Church.

Yet, not to break the heart of her loyalist Lutheran mother, she continued her local Lutheran Church membership for decades to come. She later became a member of our Episcopal parish in the 1980s, safely after her dear mother's passing to the nearer presence of our Lord. To hear Joan's take on it all, her Episcopal transfer likely triggered her mother to cause a great disturbance among the "cloud of witnesses" and the "communion of saints"! (See, *inter alia*, Hebrews 11-12 and the Apostles Creed. See also, Alec Guinness as Obi-Wan Kenobi: "I felt a great disturbance in the Force, as if millions of voices suddenly cried out in terror and were suddenly silenced. I fear something terrible has happened." *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*, 1977)

It's not just the 72 years. It's the godly light Joan casts upon those who know her. An inspiring wife, mother, grandmother, friend, and mentor to many, she has endured all the trials and tribulations life brings without diminishment of her ministry.

Small in stature, yet giant in impact, Joan is a force to be reckoned. She doesn't merely preside over a choir rehearsal, she holds court! At rehearsals, her opening "stand up" routine is the stuff of late night talk shows filled with quips, self-deprecating humor, biblical and cultural comical references, and anecdotes of every flavor. Her wit is exceedingly brilliant, her mind is electrically fast, her energy is dynamic, her inspiration is contagious, her influence on the lives of others is permanent, and her uninhibited, plainspoken, and ready witness to Jesus is inspiring. The brilliance of her musicianship and her zeal for perfection remain undiminished decades later. All of this comes from someone old enough to have served for 72 years since college. How old is Joan? Ageless. Timeless.

Reigning above all her attributes and virtues is Joan's faith. She loves our Lord deeply and openly. She is the living embodiment of Bach's "*Soli Deo Gloria*" – to God alone be the Glory – shying away from all spotlights, accolades, tributes, applause, or flattery.

Such humility surely made it tricky to plan Grace Church's October 1, 2023 grand celebration of her 60th year of permanent ministry, 72 years counting her previous part-time service. The festivities include the naming of the parish's newly renovated organ in her honor, a concert by a celebrated organist, vocal and instrumental performances by parishioners, the homecoming of several choir alumni, a grand reception, special gifts, and much more. Even all that falls short of the unspeakable gratitude and admiration of the hearts of the parish.

Joan Clodfelter is anointed and ordained to use her spiritual gifts to lead God's people to deepened faith and service. So much so, that I once exclaimed to a group knowing her well that I have never seen the likes of her before. The quick and almost reflexive reply in unison was, "And you never will again." Amen!

As her Rector, I recently confessed to Joan how I would be so very sad if she were to retire, especially if it were sudden. Drawing from her bottomless faith and pastoral tenderness, her response was a gift from Genesis 28:15, "I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

It is certain that there is robust approval of Joan's devotion among the communion of saints and the great cloud of witnesses, including most especially her dear Mom. Even more certain is that God is whispering in love to Joan, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

North Carolina Episcopal church to honor organist for 60 years of service

BY MELODIE WOERMAN

Posted 23 hours ago



Joan Clodfelter, who for 60 years has been the full-time organist for Grace Church in Lexington, North Carolina, will have the organ named for her during a celebration on Oct. 1. Photo: Ellie McKinney

[Episcopal News Service] On Oct. 1, Grace Episcopal Church, Lexington, North Carolina, will honor Joan Clodfelter, its minister of music, for 60 years of full-time service to the church by, among other things, naming the organ in her honor.

Of those years, she told Episcopal News Service, “It’s been quite wonderful, all 60 of them.”

Clodfelter, 89, has spent nearly a lifetime playing music. She started taking piano lessons when she was 8 years old, and at 14 she was asked to play the organ for the Lutheran church she and her family attended. She played there throughout high school and while she attended the Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In 1951, when she was a college freshman, she began playing at Grace Church for some weddings and funerals, plus a few Sundays – an arrangement that lasted for 12 years.

In 1963, when the church needed a full-time organist and choir director, Clodfelter was hired, and she has stayed ever since.

Things were a little different in those early days, she told ENS. Worship was in a small brick building that later became the chapel after the current church was built in 1985. Choir rehearsals were in the nearby rectory, where the priest and his family lived. But the biggest changes, she said, came with the adoption of a new Book of Common Prayer in 1979 and Hymnal in 1982.

According to a statement about Clodfelter from the church's rector, the Rev. Ed Kelaher, she remained a Lutheran when she took the job at Grace until after her mother died so as not to break "her Lutheran loyalist heart." It was an easy change, Clodfelter said, because after so many services at Grace, "I felt so Episcopalian."

Since then, she said, "Being associated with The Episcopal Church and providing music has been the crowning glory of my life."

One of the best parts of her work, Clodfelter said, is leading the choir. But, Kelaher said, "She doesn't merely preside over a choir rehearsal, she holds court." He said that during rehearsals, "her opening 'stand up' routine is the stuff of late-night talk shows filled with quips, self-deprecating humor, biblical and cultural comical references, and anecdotes of every flavor."

Clodfelter said the associations she has made with so many choir members have been deeply important. "The choir has become my family over the years," she said. "I have played for choir members' weddings, the baptism of their children, weddings of children and grandchildren, and their funerals."

A lifelong resident of Lexington, she also has had a full life outside of music at the church. She and her husband Bob, who died in 2005, had four children and, eventually, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, and she still sees them all regularly. She also spent 25 years teaching first- and second-grade students, which she had to give up when she was diagnosed with cancer and needed to minimize exposure to viruses and germs while undergoing treatment. But during that time, she never missed a Sunday at the organ, she said, and she recovered and remains cancer-free.

She and Bob also loved to travel, visiting 48 states, missing only Alaska and Hawaii. One of her joys was spotting an Episcopal church as they drove through a town and then stopping in to see it. "I have been in lots of Episcopal churches," she said, "including the little church in Independence, Missouri, where Margaret Truman was married. I even played a few hymns on their organ while visiting." They had stopped at Trinity Church, which also hosted the wedding of Margaret Truman's parents, Harry and Bess Truman, in 1919, 26 years before he became the 33rd president of the United States.

Clodfelter said she truly has enjoyed providing music for Grace Church, where she serves "a wonderful parish full of loving, committed people" and called Kelaher "a wonderful priest for us, very pastoral."

In summing up her years of service she said, "I love to play the organ and the opportunity to be involved in music. I've stayed because of my love for the Book of Common Prayer."

Kelaher said Clodfelter's humility made planning a 60th-anniversary celebration tricky, but the parish managed to pull it together. In addition to naming the organ in her honor during the 10:30 a.m. service, there will be an afternoon organ concert, as well as vocal and instrumental performances by parishioners, the homecoming of several choir alumni, a reception and the presentation of special gifts.

But, he said, regarding how parishioners see Clodfelter, "all that falls short of the unspeakable gratitude and admiration of the hearts of the parish."

—Melodie Woerman is a freelance writer and former director of communications for the Diocese of Kansas.

LEXINGTON'S GRACE EPISCOPAL WILL CELEBRATE ORGANIST'S 60 YEARS ON THE BENCH

By Jill Doss-Raines The Dispatch Sep 28, 2023



Grace Episcopal Church in Lexington will celebrate its organist's 60 years of dedication to the music ministry on Oct. 1 with an organ concert reception to follow in the Parish Hall.

Jill Doss-Raines/The Dispatch

At the tender age of 10, Joan Kearns Clodfelter first felt lust.

But don't start the paperwork to excommunicate this faithful Lutheran and eventually Episcopalian servant.

Her desire was not fueled by fresh, strong drink or some other sin warned about in the Good Book. She fell under the spell of the organ. Yes, the musical instrument that she has dutifully played since she was 13, which is another amazing story we'll get to eventually, called to her like the sirens to sailors from the first time she heard one played.

"When I was in the fifth grade, my teacher asked my mother if she could take me to First UCC (United Church of Christ) to see what an organ looked like," she said, noting she had been taking piano lessons since she was 8 and playing piano at school for plays and performances for her class. "The organist at the church showed me the organ and the sounds it could make. I tell people I did not fall in love with the organ that day, I fell in lust. I just loved the idea of playing an instrument that could make such different sounds."

Clodfelter is being honored Oct. 1 at Grace Episcopal Church in Lexington, where she has been the organist for the past 60 years, with an organ concert by Davidson County native Michael Surratt at 4 p.m. A reception will follow the concert in the Parish Hall. Both are open to the public. The church is 419 S. Main St.

When she was 13, Clodfelter's big debut on the organ came about under odd circumstances at First Lutheran Church in Lexington, where she attended with her family and became a member. She and her mother were attending a wedding when an usher came up and said: "The organist has left. I wonder if Joan could play some songs on the organ for the wedding."

"My mother said, 'Surely she will,'" Clodfelter recalled. "I was stunned. You have to understand that back then, children did not tell their parents no. I just went up there and played what I knew."

From then on, Clodfelter played the organ at her Lutheran church for weddings, funerals, church services and any other time she was asked. Word about the talented teen spread across the city and county. She was asked to play at other churches, as well, through her time in high school.

After graduating from Lexington Senior High, Clodfelter headed off to Woman's College, now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, to earn her primary education degree, and she took organ classes as an elective.

At the time, the person who was the full-time organist at Grace Episcopal enjoyed taking vacations, especially around holidays, to visit her family up North, so the church began calling on Clodfelter to fill in when she came home to Lexington from college for the same holidays. So although Clodfelter has been the full-time, employed organist at Grace Episcopal for 60 years, she has been playing there, including her time as a fill-in, for more than 70 years.

She became the full-time organist at Grace in 1963. In the early years, she would perform her duties at Grace and then walk over to First Lutheran to sit with her mother for the rest of the Lutheran service. When she married, her husband, Bob Clodfelter, joined the Lutheran Church and took their four children to First Lutheran while she played at Grace Episcopal each Sunday.

"I came here because I loved to play the organ. This church has always had a beautiful organ," she said, sweeping her hands through the air to point out the shiny, silver pipes that tower over the sanctuary. "I stayed because I love the (Episcopal) Book of Common Prayer and the wonderful people that have been in this congregation over the years."

She did not move her membership to Grace Episcopal until after her mother's death. She said she just didn't want to risk any disappointment her mother may have had in her leaving the family church.

But Grace Episcopal had long been her church family. She eventually took on the duties of choir director, also.

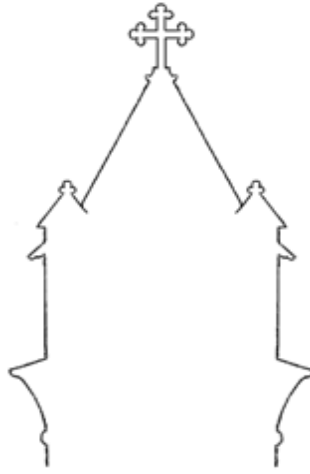
"I realized, I had been Episcopalian for a long time, but I did not want to change my membership until she died," Clodfelter said.

Clodfelter also taught in Lexington City elementary schools for 25 years, and after retirement she went back to be a part-time reading tutor for 17 years.

Clodfelter usually stays where she is, doing things she loves for a long time. But at 89, she said, retirement from playing the organ at Grace is imminent.

"I don't want to become a cartoon organist," she said. "I have seen some of those, and it's not pretty. I think it is time for new blood. It's just time. ... I'm not sure how I will feel with someone else playing the organ. I will just have to figure that out."

Jill Doss-Raines is The Dispatch trending topics and personality profiles senior reporter and is always looking for tips about businesses and entertainment events, secret and new menu items and interesting people in Davidson County. Contact me at jill.doss-raines@the-dispatch.com.



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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The Most Reverend Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop
The Right Reverend Samuel Rodman, Diocesan Bishop
The Right Reverend Jennifer Brooke-Davidson, Assistant Bishop
The Reverend Edward T. Kelaher, Rector
Joan Clodfelter, Minister of Music
Kathy Johnson, Christian Education Director
Maureen Tincher, Parish Administrator
John Taylor, Facilities Manager

THE VESTRY

2024

Lynn Meeks Treasurer
Sandy Reynolds Asst. Clerk
Logan Sheets
Susan Terrell

2025

Wes Allred Sr. Warden
Thompson Miller Asst. Treasurer
Marjorie Parker Jr. Warden
Marilyn Taylor

2026

Karl Bolstad
Bright Carter
Sally Dodd Clerk
Henry Duquette Asst. Jr. Warden

Vestry Person of the Month for October is Henry Duquette.