

PAST PARISH EVENTS

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

Pat Werk



Pictured from L-R: Matthew Pollock, Hudson, Caldwell, Ezra, Aries, Wolfgang Werk, Lousie, Harry, and Luca



On December 3, Grace Episcopal Church embraced the spirit of St. Nicholas Day with a delightful twist that transported us back in time. This year, the celebration's highlight was the extraordinary effort put forth by Matthew Pollock, a lover of creating historical costumes, at the Bristol Renaissance Faire in Kenosha, WI. Matthew had a mission: to craft a new set of vestments befitting the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, brewers, pawnbrokers, unmarried people, students, and children, but Matt wanted it to be more historically accurate.



St. Nicholas, also known as Nicholas of Bari, lived a remarkable life from March 15, 270 AD, to December 6, 343 AD, during the heyday of the Roman Empire. Hailing from the maritime city of Myra in Asia Minor, which we now know as modern-day Demre, Turkey, he was an early Christian bishop of Greek heritage. His life was extraordinary, earning him the endearing title of Nicholas the Wonderworker.

But what truly sets St. Nicholas apart in the annals of history is his legendary generosity and secret gift-giving. This practice would later become the inspiration for our beloved Santa Claus. Among his numerous benevolent acts, the most famous is the tale of his rescue of three destitute girls. He discreetly tossed a sack of gold through their window for three consecutive nights, providing their father with the funds he needed for their dowries.



On our special St. Nicholas Day celebration at Grace, Wolfgang Werk, portraying the benevolent St. Nicholas, allowed the children to participate in the reenactment of his famous act of generosity. They eagerly tossed their own three bags of gold through a window. As a token of their participation, each child received a replica of a silver coin reminiscent of those used during St. Nicholas's time. The ultimate victor of this heartwarming game, Ezra, was awarded a replica gold coin.

But the fun didn't stop there. The children were also treated to hearing the book "St. Nicholas and the Nine Gold Coins," and they crafted their own bishop's miters, adding a personal touch to their connection with the famous bishop.



After church, St. Nicholas made a special appearance during coffee hour, distributing candy canes and chocolate gold coins. The joy and excitement were palpable, creating fun memories for all who attended.

If this glimpse into the world of St. Nicholas has left you intrigued and wanting to delve deeper into his remarkable story, we invite you to explore additional resources at the [St. Nicholas Center](#) and [Wikipedia](#). The legacy of St. Nicholas, with his heartwarming acts of kindness, continues to inspire and enchant people of all ages.



A special thanks to Pat Werk, Wolfgang Werk, and Matthew Pollock for their hard work making St. Nicholas Day magical for the whole parish.

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ST. LUCIA AND HER SAFFRON BUNS

On December 10th we commemorated St. Lucia at coffee hour. Lucia Day - also called Saint Lucy's day - can be traced back to the 4th century. A Christian feast day, it commemorates the martyr Lucia of Syracuse, who, as legend has it, brought food to Christians hiding in Roman catacombs, lighting her way with a candlelit wreath on her head.

Traditionally Lucia Day begins with a procession of young women in white robes with a red sash. The procession is led by "St. Lucia" who is typically an older girl wearing a crown with lit candles (now people tend to use battery powered ones).

This year our St. Lucia's were Louise Curry and Evie Robb who brought us the warmth of light through beautiful saffron buns made by Wolfgang Werk. These buns are a sweet yeasted bun with generous amounts of saffron to give them their golden color and topped with dried fruit.



Fun fact about St. Lucia - part of the legend goes that she was tortured because of her refusal to marry a pagan and had her eyes removed. Thus in most icons of her, her eyes are shown on a plate. She is the patron saint of sight, virgins, and the city of Syracuse, Sicily.

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HOLIDAY COOKIE DECORATING CONTEST

The Second Annual Cookie Decorating event was held after the 10:00 service on December 10th, with a new twist this year. By popular suggestion from participants last year, a cookie judging contest was held. Shelley Hansen-Blake served as judge, based on her extensive experience as a lover of Christmas cookies! Six prizes were awarded, along with a grand prize for the adults. The winning entries included the Family prize awarded to the Waldos, the Brothers prize going to Harry & Luca Schuurmans, and the Adult Crown awarded to Gabriela Brown. Adult runner up, James Waldo was bequeathed the crown, so it can be proudly worn by multiple family members. Several other prizes were awarded; including, most googly eyes, use of most decorations, working cooperatively, and creative adaption from original shape. It appears a good time was had by young and young at heart. There are already plans in the works to make next year even better!

-Shelley Hansen-Blake





CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



***CHRIST IS BORN!
GLORIFY HIM!***



A big thanks to our very talented Altar Guild and acolytes for decorating the nave and setting up the creche. Their hard work helped to elevated our worship.

MOSES GALA: TRANSFORMATION CELEBRATION

GEORGEANNE CUSIC



An enthusiastic group attended the Moses Gala Event on Dec 9, 2023.

The program showcased 3 people who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system. They have taken advantage of the programs developed to give them a second chance at life. Their stories were powerful and emphasized the impact that effective mentors and solid pathways could have in traversing the obstacles the honorees faced as they aimed for a new life. We were humbled and inspired!

Grace had the biggest group attending from a faith community, and people noticed! It was stimulating to meet others who shared an interest in the fine work MOSES does.

For our members who had not attended a MOSES event before, eyes were opened to the state of Wisconsin's prison system and antiquated structures, both buildings and legal policies.

Grace Church should feel proud of our participation and support for MOSES. As the Bible reminds us, "the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few." We can always use more workers to tell others of the work that MOSES does, learn more about its inspiring leaders, and consider how you might contribute to their work by sharing skills that are needed or offering time to pray or to contact legislators about issues of concern.

The menu was prepared by Goodworks Community Catering and served by students in the TeenWorks program, who are being trained in Culinary Arts at the Goodman Center where the event was held. Everything was delicious, plentiful, and attractively presented.

Be watching for the 2024 Gala. We'd love to have you join us!

~ Georgeanne Cusic

MOSES GALA: TRANSFORMATION CELEBRATION

GEORGEANNE CUSIC



A SAD FAREWELL



On November 11th Grace Episcopal lost a beloved friend and long time parishioner, Gwen JeSchonek.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Gwendolyn Adele Ray JeSchonek is now celebrating with her father, John Kirk Ray, in heaven, having left this world for the next adventure on Saturday, November 11th, 2023 in Madison, Wisconsin.

Finding beauty in art, music, design, quilting, organization, and her surroundings was integral to her being, so she has probably already requested piano and cello lessons, a part in the heavenly choir, her very own quilt show, permission to organize something, and a large plot in heaven to finally create her long-desired Japanese garden!

Gwen's mission statement was "To create, promote, and inspire places of peace, beauty, and respect within the walls of home and family life." She was very cognizant of using her spiritual gifts: leadership in tandem with administration, and knowledge in tandem with teaching. She was such a planner and caregiver to her family that years ago she wrote the draft for this obituary and placed it in her "Heaven file". She found joy creating beauty and order out of chaos. She greeted most people with a greeting or a smile, whether she knew them personally or not.

Gwen was born March 22, 1949, in Phoenixville, PA, and grew up in Graterford, PA the oldest of five children: Jacquelyn Marie Longacre, Kenneth Edward Ray, Elizabeth Joan Tickle, Patricia Jane Nicholas. She was one of 80 in the graduating class of Schwenksville High School in 1967. She received a BS in Library Science from Millersville State College in 1971 and an Associate's Degree in Interior Design from Madison Area Technical College in 1982.

Gwen was project-oriented, so she had multiple career changes and talked about them as her "previous lives." She enjoyed every one of them: elementary school librarian in Lebanon City School District; multi-media specialist and booking agent for Twentyonehundred Productions in Pasadena and Madison; assistant to Student Training in Missions director of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship; interior designer through her own firm Panache and then Sergenian's Floor Coverings; independent beauty consultant with Mary Kay Cosmetics; and 23 years at American Girl (Mattel) as an order processor, customer service specialist, doll doctor, correspondent, and ultimately, department assistant for Corporate Product Integrity. In retirement, she poured her artistic and creative talents into quilting and was a member of many groups in the local quilting community. Gwen also functioned as a volunteer in multiple capacities at Grace Episcopal Church, and as a volunteer and staunch supporter for many of her daughter's (Stephanie Beth JeSchonek) activities. According to her daughter's friends, she gave the best themed birthday parties ever!

In addition to Stephanie, her handsome husband Kenn (Kenneth Wayne JeSchonek, Sr.) gave her two amazing stepchildren, Kenneth Wayne JeSchonek Jr (Melchora) of Las Vegas and The Philippines, and Kimberly Paige JeSchonek Bautz of Madison/Deerfield, and two granddaughters, Rachel and Sarah. She is also survived by her mother, Adele Margaret Jewitt Ray and "grandpupper" Korbel.

She was widely loved and will be deeply missed.

Alleluia! He is risen...and so is she!

