

September 15, 2008

Dear friends,

It's About Time

Where does the time go? It seems like only yesterday that it was June and we were leaving on Sabbath Leave. Now here we are back again and setting plans in motion for another exciting season of events at Grace. It also seems a mere moment in time since my June 2007 letter in which we celebrated the Amazing growth at Grace Church, with our Sunday attendance more than doubling over the previous three years. Your cooperation and support has been fantastic in inviting people to Grace!

In that letter we introduced plans for a “**pilot project**” which would provide a third worship opportunity, as a result of the preferences you conveyed in a then, recent survey. This project took shape as the 9:30AM Informal Worship in the Upper Parish Hall. This service generally ran about 45 minutes and introduced a more contemporary style of music and liturgy. The project began Sunday, November 4, 2007 and continued until Sunday March 9, 2008, the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

You may also recall in that letter the purpose of using a pilot project was explained, which indicated that the Leadership Team at Grace Church was initiating a trial program involving three worship services, which, after necessary adjustments, would become an established feature of the Sunday worship at Grace.

“If I Could Save Time in a Bottle”

Business friends tell me the most important factor for success is “timing”, whether getting in or out of a market, be it stocks, real estate or looking for a job. It would be great if we could put an hour here, a half hour there in a bottle and shake out ten or 15 minutes whenever we needed them. As this is not possible, the best we can do is manage our time wisely and this fall the management of 15 minutes at Grace will be very important to our Sunday worship together.

It seems ironic that during my Sabbath Leave I have been doing research extending over 15 centuries to return to manage 15 minutes of time. Now, after considerable, careful planning the Leadership Team has decided that beginning Sunday October 26, 2008, the following times will apply for the three worship services:

Early Service, will start at **8:15AM**, in the church for about 35 minutes;
Eucharist in the Round, will start at **9:15AM**, in the upper hall for about 45 minutes;
Parish Eucharist, will start at **10:15 AM**, in the church for 75 minutes

For the parish to thrive 9:15 is essential. And it's about all of us at Grace making changes so all parishioners will get the most possible out of all of our worship opportunities. This gives a clear choice of time for people to start and finish worship, while creating an opportunity for varying and distinct worship programs. The three liturgies will allow for growth in worship within our existing space.

Enthusiasm has been exceptional for the 9:15 format and style. The Upper Hall has been repainted and freshened for the resumption of the 9:15 liturgy. As well, there has been major support for the addition of a **worship band**. Do you play an instrument and want to join in? **Dorothy McKelvey** is creating a new banner to extend the atmosphere for worship in the 9:15 worship area – it will be revealed in October. As was the case in 2008 the “middle” service will run until Easter 2009.

Going forward there is a new feeling of excitement about worship with interchangeable opportunities to celebrate God's love and presence in our lives. A sense that Grace is a special place to be as we grow and respond to the ever changing context of Markham – not every parish is so fortunate to have so much happening! Yes these are changing times and everyone has had to adapt, but nothing is carved in stone. You all are contributing to the success at Grace; Sharing the change! Revitalizing worship!

If you have any thoughts to share or need further insight please talk to me or the Churchwardens we all look forward to such a conversation.

Together we are Living Grace Fully!

In Christ,