

OTM Profile Information

Grace in the Desert Episcopal Church 20024 Spring Gate Lane Las Vegas, NV 89134
Rector | Receiving names until July 31, 2025 Contact: bishop@episcopalnevada.org
ASA: 151 # of Weekend Services: 3 # of Weekday Services: 2 # of Other Services: 3
Current Annual Compensation: \$80,000 Cash Stipend: \$80,000 Rectory & Utilities: \$0
SECA: 7.65% Compensation Avail.: \$80,000 Housing: N/A Pension: CPG compliant
Healthcare: Clergy+1 Dental: Yes Housing Equity: N/A Annual Equity: N/A
Vacation: One Month (incl. 5 weekends)
Continuing Ed: 2 weeks (incl. weekends) Continuing Ed. Budget: \$1,000
Spiritual Retreat: 1 week (incl. weekends) Retreat Budget: \$1,500
Sabbatical Provision: Yes Travel Reimbursement: Yes Cell Phone Reimbursement: Yes

Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

In December of 2023 a committee of four parishioners started a social gathering after our 4pm service on the first Saturday. We started with cheese, crackers, and wine. This ministry has grown to a full potluck, and we have attendees from Sunday services as well. We work as a team to coordinate themes for each month. We regularly have 40+ participants who are having fun getting know each other outside of worship. This is a successful ministry!

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

The Church of the future is being born in our midst through deepening our relationships with God, each other, and our surrounding community. Grace is uniquely situated in a thriving, multigenerational, wealthy suburb so we do not have the social deterioration that has led to the decline of church membership across the country. We are coming out of a turbulent transition renewed with passion, deepening our discipleship, and increasing our membership every month.

We know that Seekers attend church online an average of seven times before entering the grounds, so we have recently expanded our audio-visual system to improve the quality of our YouTube live stream of services. We completed a redesign of our website in early 2025, focused on people who are not already worshipping with us. We also have an active Facebook page with daily interactions.

We have created a Sacred Prayer Garden, modelled on the Garden of Gethsemane, which includes a Prayer Labyrinth and Meditation Garden. Our Garden is available to the public 24/7 and is well utilized by people in the neighborhood. We are developing a comprehensive Deferred Maintenance plan so that we can continue to be good stewards of the property and buildings God has entrusted to our care.

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

Leaders of our worshipping community need to have good communication skills and be proficient in using social media. They also need to have good interpersonal skills with the ability to build relationships, listen empathetically, provide pastoral care, and be sensitive to military families and inclusivity of ALL God's people. There is a strong need for skills and ability to motivate and inspire

others. Additionally, comprehensive conflict management and resolution, problem solving, and learning from failure are important gifts.

Above all they must possess a deep understanding of Episcopal faith and be able to communicate this through sermons, formation classes, and interpersonal relationships, while leading the congregation forward in our mission. Knowledge of Episcopal Church governance and experience in parish administration are necessary. They need to be able to delegate tasks and effectively manage resources.

We are looking for a Rector who is committed to engaging North Summerlin through community leadership. We are active in Nevadans for the Common Good, however, we recognize a need to grow as the church outside of Sunday morning. Several faith leaders are new in their position in the neighborhood, so there isn't a current cohort of ecumenical or interfaith leadership, however it is an important value.

We hope our Rector will have strong pastoral skills and a gift for connecting with parishioners. Grace has been through a tumultuous few years. We are a preserving people, yet we need a leader with a big heart who can love us where we're at while guiding us to where God is calling us. This is why we are hoping for a longer tenure Rector.

Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

At Grace in the Desert we worship God using various liturgical styles and practices that combine traditional and contemporary forms: the Saturday 4p service is more contemporary with our Bare Bones & Friends band, Sunday 8a service is a spoken contemplative service, while the Sunday 10a service is more traditional with organ and a small choir. In addition to weekend services, we have Morning Prayer on Tuesdays at 8:30a, a Healing Evening Prayer with Holy Communion service on Wednesdays at 6pm, and observe Major Feasts at 10a. Our midweek services are held in the Chapel.

We are a Broad Church theologically and our liturgies reflect that. Saturday Joy has a more evangelical tone and incorporates *Enriching Our Worship* resources. During Advent and Lent, our 8a services utilizes Rite I. Our 10:30a service is solidly Rite II, although we are beginning to incorporate music from other hymnals (instead of solely 1982).

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

In conjunction with our Stewardship campaign, we have an annual Ministry Fair in September where we invite congregants of all ages to share their "time and talent." Grace in the Desert has a full array of ministries that benefit both our parish and the community. The fair is centered around table-top displays in the Parish Hall where members representing each ministry explain and recruit more members. However, the principal and most effective practice of incorporating others in ministry is when we make the work of our ministries visible throughout the year and then engage others in a one-on-one conversation about the benefits and rewards of participating in that ministry, and share how they could become a part of it, too. Our "parish facing" ministries include the Lay Eucharistic ministers and readers, Altar Guild and Choir members and Musicians, AV techs, Ushers and Greeters, Sunday School teachers, and those who maintain our Labyrinth and grounds, and Vestry. Beyond our "church services," we use our spacious Hall for Tasty Hospitality after most services, "coffee" every Monday Morning, for both our Youth Group and High School students, who meet regularly there, and regular Foyer Group gatherings for our adult's fun and enrichment.

We also open the grounds of Grace to the community to celebrate events like “Trunk or Treat,” Shrove Tuesday’s pancake supper, our Easter Egg hunt, 4th of July Pancake Breakfast, and the Blessing of the Animals. Grace’s Prayer Shawl Ministry meets monthly to knit and crochet shawls and blankets for those in need of comfort, healing, and prayer. Our Parish Hall is also open to community groups, particularly those with a focus on children and youth development: art and drama classes for kids, Scout Pack and Troop meetings. And, for adults: GA and AA Recovery Programs; additionally, we participate in “Care Fair Meal Prep” and “Loaves and Fishes” to feed those without, and “Project 150” to provide school supplies, prom clothing, and coats to disadvantaged high school students. Our objective is to make our Outreach even more strategic and intentional, integrating it into a year-round Stewardship program.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?

When it comes to spiritual, emotional and physical well-being, we all need to take time away to reconnect. We need to set boundaries, so that we are able to navigate through the trials and tribulations of what is happening in our church life.

How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

One of the main ways we provide spiritual care outside of our worshipping community is through our Sacred Garden, which includes a full prayer labyrinth. Our grounds are accessible 24/7 for people to pray, meditate, contemplate, have lunch, or connect with God through walking. Another way we engage in pastoral care outside our community is through our Prayer Shawls ministry. We provide prayer shawls and blankets, as well as providing mittens and hats for Christmas at Sea.

Describe your worshipping community’s involvement in either the wider Church or geographic region.

Grace in the Desert is located in Summerlin which is a suburb of Las Vegas. The vibrant area, with gated communities, cultural events, shopping, blue ribbon schools, recreational areas, an upcoming movie studio - Sony and freeway access. As a community, we offer worship based on the needs of a “24 hour” city. Three services assist in supporting shift schedules, the Spoken, Contemporary and Choral Eucharist in addition to an expanding educational program for adults and youth. The greater community shares our space and we support several Ecumenical programs with Nevadans for the Common Good, Recovery Ministries, the BoyScouts, Youth sponsorship, Art Programming and so much more.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

Our Saturday Lectionary Studies is a dedicated class that focuses on insightful, highly informative studies of history and beyond. The class is led by Larry Casey.

What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Webster defines stewardship as “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.” The multi-generational congregants of Grace in the Desert are the current stewards of Grace in the Desert, our church home and the physical center of our religious lives. Therefore, it is only fitting that we support Grace and its religious leadership with our time, talent, and treasure. Our practice of Stewardship has centered around a strong and well-structured fall stewardship campaign that addresses more than just the financial aspect of stewardship. This annual campaign has focused on the spiritual aspects of stewardship (our relationship with God) as

opposed to being a fund-raising campaign (although in the last few years there has been a greater emphasis on raising “treasure,” as finances have been tight). As a result, parishioners have dug deeper into their pockets to support Grace more fully. We also have an annual Ministry Fair that draws attention to the various ways Grace parishioners apply their “time and talent” for the glory of God. Our worshipping community is shaped by our stewardship practices as they work to differentiate the values of a spiritual community based on the teachings and examples of Jesus and the values experienced in the secular world we live in every day. There is room for growth here by making “stewardship” a year-round activity.

What is your worshipping community’s experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

The pandemic was especially hard on the Grace congregation as we faced the retirement of our long-time rector immediately following the Covid lockdown period. Subsequent efforts to conduct a rector search were hampered by a variety of issues, including uncertainties concerning the search process, poor communications, dwindling interest in Vestry participation and the resignation of the Senior and Junior Wardens in July 2024.

As a result of the delays, the church has been served by no less than four priests and multiple temporary clergy in the last four years. At times, parishioners weren’t sure who would be preaching on any given Sunday. This caused considerable anxiety in the congregation and contributed to the formation of factions, which only increased dissension and conflict. Members wishing to avoid the controversy stopped coming or appeared only occasionally. Pledges dropped off.

Our current Priest in Charge has worked since June 2024 to focus the congregation’s attention on our true mission to restore all people to unity with God. Under her leadership, the Vestry has focused on its responsibility to be spiritual leaders, maintain active communications with parishioners and conduct the business of the church responsibly. Further, the number of parish events has been increased significantly and provides a variety of opportunities for fellowship; children and youth ministries have been reinvigorated; participation in community events has increased and Grace is learning and practicing the true meaning of discipleship. Judging from participation in the above initiatives and the results of the Congregational Assessment, Grace appears to be coming alive again as we re-learn the joy of recognizing and sharing God’s many gifts with each other and the community at large.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

We have recently experienced A LOT of change in the church, in the past four years we have had multiple Interim/Priests in Charge which causes a lot of uneasy change. Prior to almost a year ago it had gone poorly, decisions were made that did not help the church, and parishioners did not receive things well. We kept moving forward trying to make more positive changes. We made a change and received a Priest in Charge officially and although there were some major changes and adjustments the church has changed in the last 8 months for the good. The spirit of Grace is coming back again. We have learned through this process that if you embrace the change (with the best of your ability) it will emit to others to receive the change in the good. Don’t show your concerns on your face, listen to others and their concerns. Most of all is to be patient, kind and helpful to others so they can understand better.

Prior Incumbents:

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| • The Rev. Erica S. Rozolsky | Priest in Charge | June 9, 2024-Present |
| • The Rev. Rick O’Brien | Priest in Charge | August 21, 2023-June 9, 2024 |
| • The Rev. Gay Chaulker | Priest in Charge | September 2022-May 2023 |
| • The Rev. John Agbaje | Priest in Charge | September 2021-May 2022 |
| • The Rev. Shannon Leach | Rector | September 2013-May 2021 |

Church School - # of Children Teachers/Leaders: 8 # of Child Students: 15

of Adult Teachers/Leaders: 4 # of Adult Students: 14

Day School: N/A

Website: graceofsummerlin.org Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GraceintheDesertLV/>

YouTube: @graceinthedesertepiscopalc7644

Language: English

References

- Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Elizabeth Bonforte Gardner bishop@episcopalnevada.org
- Senior Warden: Denise Kubajak denise.kubajak@gmail.com
- Previous Senior Warden: Sue Pickel supick@cox.ent
- Search Chair: TBD
- Parish: Christ Church
- Local Community Leader: Anna Eng, Nevadans for the Common Good
anna.eng.iaf@gmail.com