



Fall Newsletter - September 2026

GRACE UPON GRACE

To see Long Island awakened to the glory of Jesus Christ

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

For God's Glory, in God's Time

A church plant is born in Stony Brook

Ten years ago I began looking for a pastor to plant a church in the Stony Brook area of Long Island. Over the decade that followed I pursued more than sixty men. Most became long conversations, some stretching over months, with reference checks, interviews, and hard questions asked on both sides. About eight pastors made the trip out to see Stony Brook for themselves. They walked the area, met with us, prayed about it, and then told us no. One man said yes. Two weeks later he called to withdraw.

I did not always take that well. Ten years is a long time to keep asking, and the no's wore on me. More than once I handed the whole thing back to the Lord because I had nothing left to do with it.

But this church plant was never mine to manage. It is God's work, for His glory, on His timetable. What I experienced as ten years of frustration was, in His hands, ten years of preparing a man for this work.

That man is Reverend David Richter.

For more than a year, Reverend James Kessler, pastor of North Shore Community Church, and I walked with David and his wife, Kelly, as they prayed through moving their family to Long Island. They counted the cost honestly. Then they said yes, and they meant it.

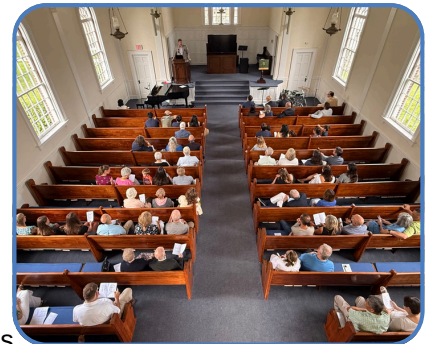
On Sunday, August 30, we installed David as pastor of the Stony Brook mission church. The service was held in the old chapel at The Stony Brook School, the Christian boarding school in the village. Billy Graham preached in that chapel in 1957, and I had the privilege of preaching there about five years ago. Sitting in that chapel and hearing a new pastor take his vows over a work ten years in the asking was one of the great joys of my ministry.

The installation is a beginning. David is now gathering a congregation from almost nothing in a community that needs Christ, and Grace Presbyterian Church intends to see this church prosper, not merely survive.

That work needs your help. Pray for the Richters as they settle in, and for the first families the Lord will bring to them. If you know people in the Stony Brook area, please pass them along to David. You can learn more at their website: www.thestonybrookproject.com.

Ten years of no. Then in His timing, God said yes.

Rev. Mark Middlekauff



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GRACEYOUTH @ A HOUSE ON BEEKMAN

By Lesley Middlekauff

In mid-July, our Sr. High youth embarked on a new endeavor: a week of service at A House on Beekman in the South Bronx. It was an incredible opportunity for our students to step outside their normal routines and into a week of learning, growing, and serving.

A House on Beekman is a ministry that empowers children and youth in the South Bronx to flourish, offering programs focused on academic, social, and emotional growth. Their vision is to equip young people in their community to live out their God-given potential — and their summer camp is a vital part of that mission.

Our group spent the week serving at their camp, taking on roles as math and reading teachers as well as camp counselors. Our students rose to the occasion and thrived in their responsibilities. The camp directors were so impressed with how quickly and genuinely our students engaged with the campers as beautiful relationships were formed. By week's end, we were worn out in all the best ways — and more than a little sad to say goodbye to our new friends.

Our time in New York City wasn't all work, though. Our evenings were fun as we enjoyed a delicious Korean BBQ dinner, a Broadway show, and plenty of laughter and games in the beautiful apartment we were graciously hosted in for the week.

This trip was a beautiful reminder of what happens when we say yes to a challenge and step outside our comfort zones. We're so grateful to A House on Beekman for welcoming us to serve at their camp, and we can't wait to see how God continues to use this partnership in the years ahead.



PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT!



by Adriana Pariz

For the past several years, Grace Church has hosted a cornhole tournament as a way to connect with our neighbors. Although it was a great success, we found that the majority of participants came from far away making it hard to reconnect after this brief encounter. This year, we decided to try something new: our first-ever Pickleball Tournament at SYS!

Why pickleball? Many people in our community who may not yet feel comfortable attending a Sunday service or Bible study are happy to join a tournament, class, or neighborhood gathering. Because pickleball has become so popular in our area, we saw a wonderful opportunity to meet our neighbors where they are. Our hope was to create an event that would bring many from our community where they could experience something of the love and character of Christ.

We are delighted to share that the tournament sold out! It was a wonderful day of competition, community, and generosity. Even more exciting, together we raised roughly \$5,300 for the Flying Point Foundation for Autism, supporting its important work with individuals and families in our community.

At Grace Church, we believe every person is created in the image of God and possesses inherent worth. Supporting Flying Point is one way we can help ensure that our neighbors are loved, valued, and supported.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who played, volunteered, invited friends, welcomed guests, and helped make the day possible. Thank you for rallying with us and making our first Pickleball Tournament such a joyful success!

MEET THE VOSTEENS



Chris and Rizza Vosteen started attending Grace Presbyterian Church in August of 2025. Rizza serves as a singer on the music team and attends GraceGroups. Chris also volunteers at Grace and will be joining GraceGroups as well.

Chris grew up in New Jersey. Rizza grew up in the Philippines. They met in Montauk in 2010, fell in love and got married in 2012.

Chris was raised Catholic and Rizza attended a Non-Denominational Church in her youth. While they had attended churches on the East End since they moved to the area, they both had a resurgence in their faith and began looking for a new church in which to grow. The search ended when they found Grace Presbyterian Church. They are grateful that the Lord brought them to a church that is a Bible-Centered Church with a community, family and love for Jesus Christ. They are hopeful that they will continue to grow in faith at Grace Church with everyone.