

2024 Annual Report

161st Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish



February 2, 2025

Grace Episcopal Church
Amherst, Massachusetts

**2024 Annual Report
Grace Church Parish**

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161st Annual Meeting of Grace Episcopal Church
Amherst, Massachusetts
2 February 2025

I. Order of Business

Celebration of the Holy Eucharist	9:30 AM in the Parish Hall and via livestream
Call to Order	Alice Goodwin-Brown, Clerk of the Vestry
Acceptance of Roll of Membership	
Reception of Minutes of the 160th Annual Meeting, February 4, 2024	
Recognition of Retiring Vestry Members	Kathy Glime, Senior Warden
Report of Nominating Committee and the Election of New Vestry Members and Delegates to Convention	
Report from the Stewardship Committee	Bruce Stebbins, Chair
Reception of Reports from Officers and Commissions	
Treasurer's Remarks	Tim Hampson, Treasurer
Remarks of Wardens and Rector	Kathy Glime, Senior Warden Tom Dougherty, Junior Warden The Rev. Thomas Synan, Rector
Other Business	
Closing Hymn and Prayer	

O God our Creator, make the door of our parish church wide enough to receive all who need human love, fellowship, and care, and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and rancor. Here may the tempted find succor, and the sorrowing receive comfort; here may the careless be awakened to repentance, and the penitent be assured of thy mercy; and here may all thy children renew their strength in thee and go on their way rejoicing; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

II. Membership 2024

Abbott, Hannah	Ayres, Elihu	Bedet, Charlotte
Abdiken, Zhamilya	Ayres, Emma	Beebe, Jane
Ackerman, Inge	Ayres, Jim	Benfer, Katherine
Adler, Doug	Baird, Andrea	Berenson, Mary Kay
Aldrich, Brenda	Baird, Cameron	Bergin, Lucy
Aldrich, Rick	Baird, Ian	Bernal, Angelica M.
Allbritton, Bill	Baird, John	Blain, Beatrice
Allison, Barrett	Baird, Mackenzie	Blain, Rachel
Allison, Benjamin	Baker, Chris	Blanchard, Kerry
Allison, Caroline	Baker, Elizabeth	Blay, Jack
Allison, Donald	Baker, Joey	Bogal-Allbritton, Elizabeth
Allison, Edith	Baker, Kate	Bogal-Allbritton, Rose
Allison, James	Baker, Nancy	Botelho, Maria Jose
Anderson, Gordon	Baker, Samantha	Boy, Sarah
Anderson, Gordon "Gordy"	Baker, Tom	Bracciotti, Paul
Anderson, Lydia	Balderston, Jacob	Brace, Dee
Andrews, Jess	Bancroft, Frances	Breon, Emily
Appelbaum, Patricia	Barnes, Toby	Breton, Amber
Arwade, Cyrus	Barnes-Bernal, Bodhi	Breton, Chris
Arwade, Sanjay	Barnett, David	Breton, JaeLynn
Ash, Alison	Barnett, Tamara	Brooks, Cheryl
Ash, Jonathan	Barrett, Ruth	Brooks, Gregory
Ash, Raiden	Barrett, Steve	Brown, Beth
Ash, Sophie	Barry, Monica	Brown, Beth
Ash, Tori	Barry, William	Brown, Catherine
Atkinson, Chandler	Bashour, Emelyn	Brown, Elizabeth R.
Atkinson, Katherine "Kate"	Bashour, Gabrielle	Brown, Georgianna
Atkinson, Lane	Bausor, Randall	Brown, Gillian
Atkinson, Rollin	Beall, Andy	Brown, Gregory
Atkinson, Stephen	Beall, Charles	Brown, Liam
Atkinson, Wade	Beall, Eileen	Brown, Malcolm "Max"

Brown, Nate	Costa, Dennis	Dineen, Daniel
Bryant, Karen	Coughlin, Brendan	Dineen, Denise
Buckloh, Don	Coughlin, Kevin	Dineen, John
Buckloh, Jane	Coughlin, Lauren	Dineen, Matthew
Bull, Mary	Coughlin, Marie	Dineen, Patrick
Byler, Lynne	Coy, Sheila	Ditzler, Anne
Callard, Patricia	Cram, Al	Dolbeau, Clothilde
Callard, Tim	Cram, Diane	Dole, Nancy
Carlson, Melvin	Crandall, Cara	Dougherty, Jackie
Case, Wendryn	Creaser, Patricia	Dougherty, Kellen
Casey, Kathleen	Currin, Cecil	Dougherty, Kitty
Cataldi, Marlaina	Currin, Lou	Dougherty, Stewart
Chadwick, Harry	Dale, Duane	Dougherty, Tom
Chadwick, Sarah	Damon, Beth	Drake, Helen
Chapman, Veronica	Damon, Dick	Duda, Elizabeth
Chase, Andrew	Dann, Cecily	Duda, Gillian
Chase, Calla	Dann, Chelsea	Duda, Jessica
Chase, Lucy	Dann, Jennifer	Duda, Jim
Chase, Samuel	Dann, O'Keefe	Durfee, Janet
Christakos, Deborah	Davila, Jaime	Dye, Maria
Clark, Casey	Davila-Bustamante, Gabriel	Easton, Lee
Cleary, Daniel	Davis, Brenda	Emerson, Sarah
Coleman, Emily	Davis, Elizabeth	Enhstrom, Christophe
Coleman, Jack	Denit, Lucas	Erard, Jeanette
Coleman, Jeremy	Denit, Lyle	Erard, Michael
Coleman, Juliet	DeSantis, Jeffrey	Erickson, Heidi
Collette, Carolyn	DeSantis, Karen	Etinde, Alpha
Collier, John	Devine, Donna	Etinde, Annie Lokangu
Collins, Sue Ann	Dick, Carol	Etinde, Floribert
Comeau, Lindsay	Dickinson, Anne	Eve, David
Connerton, Winifred	Dickinson, Charlie	Eve, Kira
Connerton-Ryan, Maizie	Dickinson, Emma	Eve, Max
Constantine, Maria	Dickinson, Will	Eve, Tomi

Eziri, Emeka M.	Goodwin, Mary	Ho, Linda
Eziri, Kelechi	Goodwin-Brown, Alice	Ho, Marissa
Fabing, Suzannah	Goodwin-Brown, Ross	Hocken, Mary
Faerber, Kent	Gosling, Oscar	Hoffmann, Anne
Federa, Danielle	Gralenski, Linda	Hoffmann, Chris
Fiddian-Green, Prunella	Gralenski, Michael	Hoffmann, Sarah
Finkel, Hattie	Gregory, Matthew	Hoffmann, Willy
Fowler, MJ	Haff, Susan	Holladay, Margaret (Meg)
Frantz-Dale, Heidi	Haight, Andrew	Holland, Ann
Freitag, Christopher	Haight, Charles	Homme, Anne
Freitag, Melanie	Haight, Susan	Honig, Adam
Freitag, Melissa	Hamel, Marc	Honig, Charlotte
Freitag, Rebecca	Hampson, Amy	Honig, James
French Finn, Elizabeth	Hampson, Carter	Horn, John
Fukushima, Barb	Hampson, Liza	Horn, Raisin
Gaeke, June	Hampson, Quinn	Howe, Edy
Garrett, Greyson	Hampson, Tim	Howe, Ralph
Gergely, Sophia	Harris, Colleen	Hunter, Jefferson
Gerzina, Gretchen	Harris, Loy	Hunter, Pamela
Gilsdorf, Anna	Harron III, William	Huston, Walter
Gilsdorf, Benjamin	Hartblay, Amber	Hwang-Carlos, Camila
Gilsdorf, Sean	Hartblay, Cassandra	Ireland, Caleb
Glace, Andrew	Hartblay, Marian	Ireland, Emily
Glace, Mya	Hathaway, Charlotte	Ireland, Michael
Glime, Kathy	Hazlip, Bennett	Ireland, Ruthie
Gnatek, Andrew	Hazlip, Ilona	Jacobson, Adam
Gnatek, Dan	Hazlip, Joseph	Jacobson, Adrienne
Gnatek, Gail	Healy, Lorie	Jacque, Deborah
Goff, Abigail	Herrington, Anne	Jacque, Ronald
Goff, David	Hertel, Marsha	Jenkins, John
Goff, Yolanda	Hix, Camille	Jenkins, Miriam
Golden II, Norman	Ho, Carlton	Jewell, Tony
Goodell, Jack	Ho, Jonathan	Jones, Kimberly

Judge, Sharon	Konieczny, Maria	Lillydahl-Schroeder, Elija
Judge, Steve	Konieczny, William	Lillydahl-Schroeder, Hosanna
Julliard, Kell	Labor, Jasper	Linberg, Catherine
Keedy, Jeffrey	LaMotte, Erik	Lloyd, Julia
Keedy, Maddox	LaMotte, Kirsten	Lowance, Susan
Keedy, Mia	Lane, Cameron	Lowell, Ann S.
Keefe, Nancy	Lange, Betty	Lowry, Bridget
Kellogg, Charlotte	Lapis, Jennifer	Lowry, Fiona
Kelly Jr., Robert	LaPointe, Jennifer	Lowry, Janet
Kelly, Charlotte	LaPointe, Michael	Lowry, Nancy
Kelly, Janine	LaPointe, Nancy	Lowry, Sam
Kelly, Patrick	Lattanzi, Robert	Lowry, Susannah
Keneally, L. Finley	Lattanzi, Susan	Lukas, Lisa
Kennedy Costa, Gabriel	Lavine, Isaac	Lukas, Tilman
Kennedy Costa, Michael	Lavine, Louise	Luschen, Kristen
Kennedy, Brown	Lavine, Michael	Lynn, Liberty
Kiefer, Marvin	Lavine, Noah	Lynn, Violet
Kinney, Murph	Lawson, Merrick	Malsch, Sally
Kirk, Gavin	Laylin, Peter	Malzone, Sarah
Klock, Benjamin	Laylin, Peter	Malzone, Wesley
Klock, Laura	Leavitt, Joan	Mammen, Sheila
Klock, Lynn	Leonard, Bill	Mangaliso, Bande
Klock, Suzanne	Leonard, Deborah	Mangaliso, Mzamo
Klug, Elizabeth	Leonard, Katherine	Mangaliso, Nomazengie
Klug, Stephanie	Leonard, Margaret	Mangaliso, Unati
Knapton, Harrison	Leonard, Samuel	Manning, Arlene
Knight, Caseem	Leonas, Andrew	Marino, Kevin
Knight, Kelley	Leonas, Mark	Marino, Nathan
Kohler, Walter	LeSage, Edward	Marino, Sharon
Kohler, Wendy	Leung, Helen	Marino, Tyler
Konieczny, Alan	Lewin, Ann	Markovits, Elizabeth
Konieczny, Jo-Ann	Liberty-Laylin, Sara	Marshall, Mark
Konieczny, Joseph	Lillydahl, Sandra	Martineau, Erin

Martini, Mary	Moner, Emily Anne	Olson, Erika
Masinter, Ania	Moner, Meriel	Ortega-Bustamante, Isolda
Masinter, Samuel	Moore, Douglas	Owaki, Alesha
Mathews, Betsy	Moore, Janet	Packard, Wendell
Mathews, Cindy	Moore, Lisa	Page, Kenneth
Mathews, James	Moore, Robert	Palaia, Amy
Mathews, Philip	Moran, Charlene	Peavey, Douglas
Mattrey, Gianna	Moran, Frank	Peltier, Heidi
Mattrey, Jack	Morse, Dorothy	Pemberton, Jane
Mattrey, Jada	Moss, Castor	Perry, Alex
Mattrey, Ruby	Moss, Eliot	Perry, Evan
Mattrey, Stephanie	Moss, Natalie	Perry, Fred
Maxey, Amory	Musgrave, Alan	Perry, Thomas
Maxey, Henry	Musgrave, Elizabeth	Peterman, Janice
Maxey, Libby	Muspratt, Sandy	Peterman, Mark
Maxey, Trent	Muszynski, Anthony	Pickron, Carlton
McDermott, Megan	Muszynski, Jozef	Pickron, Lisa
McDonald, James	Muszynski, Samuel	Plette, Christine
McDonald, Lisa	Nagasaki, Kanae	Polino, Antonio
McKelvey, Bridget	Nasman, Corey	Polino, Francesca
McKelvey, Diane	Neill, Elizabeth	Polino, Gemma
McKelvey, Kira	Nelson, Julie	Polino, Joseph
McKelvey, Stephen	Nelson, Rosario	Polino, Maria
Mead, Amelia	Niswonger, Dee Dee	Quinlan, Catherine
Mead, Jim	Norris, Harold	Quinlan, Victoria
Mead, Kimberly	Obbard, Catherine	Rachootin, Hannah
Miller, Audrey	O'Brien, Jeffrey	Ramos-Velazquez, Virginia
Miller, John	O'Brien, Joan	Rankin, Jean
Mincheff, Cristine	Olakanpo, Annabel	Rankin, Larry
Mirick, Georgann	Olakanpo, Bethany	Read, Matthew
Mishkin, Peter	Olakanpo, Florence	Read, Rick
Miskovsky, Glenn	Olakanpo, Olusoji	Redfern, Garrett
Mix Barrington, Jessica	Olakanpo, Sally	Reed-McNally, Karla

Reed-McNally, Linus	Seelig, Sharon	Spence, Jack
Reed-McNally, Rudy	Sessions, Phebe	Spence, Rob
Reid, Melinda	Seterdahl, Anna	Spurgin, Caroline
Ricard, Andre	Seterdahl, Elsa	Spurgin, Kate
Ricard, Laura	Seterdahl, Peter	Spurgin, Richard
Rice, Robert	Seterdahl, Trudie May	Spurgin, Richard
Riddington, Dahlia	Shaffer, Sally	Spurgin, Sarah Grace
Riddington, Forset	Shaughan, Mary Ellen	Stair, Adrian
Riddington, Leif	Sheehan, Marcia	Starkweather, Emily
Riddington, Sara	Sikowitz, Peter	Stebbins, Bruce
Riddle, Chris	Silvia, Angela	Stebbins, Owen
Riddle, DeAnne	Silvia, Bjorn	Stelzner, Sara
Riddle, Emily	Silvia, Teghan	Sternau, Barbara
Robinson, John	Siudzinski, Bryn Margaret	Stewart, Doug
Robinson, Lucy	Siudzinski, Madeline	Stewart, Ericka
Rogalski, Stephen	Siudzinski, Meghan	Stifler, John
Rogers, Diana	Siudzinski, Robert	Stimler, Piper
Rosazza, Jacob	Smith, Anna	Stoneham, Joel
Rosenau, Marion	Smith, Betsy Cannon	Stoneham, Luke
Rosengarten, Mindy	Smith, Donovan N.	Stoneham, Pete
Rosengarten, Peter	Smith, Ellie C.	Stoner, Sarah
Ryan, Jennifer	Smith, Kevyn	Stromgren, Elise
Samonds, Ken	Smith, Lucy A.	Sullivan, Brendan
Saulsberry, Gaylord	Smith, Randall P.	Sullivan, Brooke
Saulsberry, Janet Elias	Smith, Randall P., Jr.	Sullivan, Cornelia
Scarff, Anne	Snedecor, Peter	Sullivan, Kyle
Schaeffer, The Rev. Susan	Soper, James	Sweeney, Thomas
Schendel, Katie	Soper, Jennifer	Synan, Thomas
Schreiber, Stephen	Soper, Joshua	Szumowski, Pat
Scott, James	Soper, Katherine	Taghon, Meredith
Scott, Nina	Spell, Cynthia	Talan, Catherine
Seaman, Amanda	Spence, Catherine	Talan, Kenneth
Seelig, Harry	Spence, George	Tebbetts, Charles

Tebbetts, Walter	Webster, Eve	Wobst, Judith
Teng, Janet	Webster, The Rev. Raymond	Wobst, Natalia
Thompson, Colin	Weeber, Charles	Wood, Ann
Thompson, Zachary	Weeber, Nancy Rose	Wood, John
Thornton, Benjamin	Wells, Andrew	Wright, Arline
Thornton, Dean	Wells, Nicholas	Wright, Jonathan
Thornton, Shannon	Wells, Sharon	Wright, Meg Kelsey
Thurber, Jane	Westhead, Charlotte	Zamora, Andrew
Thurber, Kate	White, Ethel	Zhang, Enhua
Tillona, Patricia	Wilburn, Adam	Zobel, Chris
Todd, David	Wilburn, Aidan	Zobel, Katie
Treyz, Eric	Wilburn, Emma	Zobel, Noah
Treyz, Frederick	Wilburn, Jeanette	Zobel, Sydney
Treyz, Justin	Wilkinson, Pam	Zou, Lili
Treyz, Mary Sidney	Williams, Dani	
Treyz, Peter	Williams, David	
Tupper, Laurie	Williams, Elia	
Turgeon, Sarah	Williams, Fox	
Tyng, C W	Williams, Isabel	
Van Cleef, Aidan	Williams, Kate	
Van Cleef, Bryce	Williams, Keith	
Van Dyke, Ann	Williams, Kevin	
Vaughan, Mary Elizabeth	Williams, Lee	
Velazquez, Archie	Williams, Marion	
Vigeland, Bonnie	Williams, Melinda	
Wald, James	Williams, Sophie	
Wald, Jane	Wilson, Sherry	
Wald, Marianne	Winslow, Reynolds	
Walter, Micah	Wissemann, David	
Wanninger, Natascha	Wissemann, Kimberly	
Wanninger, Sebastian	Wobst, Gregory	
Wanninger, Tatjana	Wobst, H Martin	

III. Minutes of the 160th Meeting of Grace church Parish, Amherst, Massachusetts convened on February 4, 2024

On February 4, 2024, Clerk Ruthie Ireland called the 160th Annual Meeting of Grace Church to order.

The Rev. Tom Synan opened the meeting with a prayer.

Role of the Membership 2024

Ruthie Ireland asked for any additions or corrections to the Role of Membership 2024. The name of one new member, Oscar Gosling, was added to the role. The amended Role was accepted by unanimous vote.

Minutes of the 159th Annual Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Meeting, held on February 5, 2023 were reviewed. There were no additions or corrections. A motion was made to accept the minutes of the 159th Annual Meeting. It was seconded and approved by unanimous vote.

Retiring Vestry Members

Senior Warden, Chris Freitag, recognized Vestry members who had completed their terms: Sara Chadwick, Donna Devine, and Kathy Glime.

Sarah and Donna are returning to the Vestry and Kathy will be serving as Senior Warden.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee are the retiring members of the Vestry, Senior Warden Chris Freitag, and the Rector, the Rev. Tom Synan. After discernment with interested parishioners, the committee presented a slate of candidates to the Vestry. Following approval by the Vestry, the slate was included in an email notification for review by parishioners.

The candidate for the Vestry, Officers of the Vestry, and Delegates to Diocesan Convention are:

Vestry (each for a term of three years)

Rachel Blain
Patrick Kelly
Peter Sikowitz

Vestry (for a term of one year)

Carolyn Collette

Vestry Youth (a term of one year)

Joe Hazlip
Nate Marino

Officers of the Vestry (each for a term of one year)

Senior Warden – Kathy Glime
Junior Warden – Tom Dougherty
Treasurer – Tim Hanson
Clerk – Alice Goodwin-Brown

Lay Delegates to Convention

Sheila Coy

A Vestry member will be elected at a future date.

The Rev. Tom Synan asked for nominations from the floor. No nominations were offered.

Patricia Tillona made a motion to close the nominations and to direct the Clerk to cast one vote for the slate of candidates as presented. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously. The candidates as presented in the slate were welcomed to their positions by the Rev. Tom Synan.

Report of the Stewardship Committee

Bruce Stebbins presented the report of the stewardship committee. He recognized the work of Charlie Tebbetts and Tom Dougherty for their help with the campaign and thanked those who had made stewardship testimonials to the congregation. Bruce reported that the post-pandemic increase in attendance had continued and that this year we had had an increase of pledges. At the time of the annual meeting we were very near to making our \$500,000 goal for 2024. He reported that there had been a total of \$462,784 pledged by 152 contributors. In addition, 5 new pledges had come in that had not yet been added to the total.

Bruce made note of the fact that, as a parish, we are continuing to anticipate future costs and have been exploring additional sources of revenue beyond the annual St. Nicholas Bazaar. He announced the formation of a committee for planned giving under the leadership of Doug Adler and Tom Baker. In addition, the Vestry has been developing sub-committees that will focus on fundraising and outreach to newcomers, among other things.

Senior Warden's Report

Chris Freitag began his report by thanking Rev. Tom and Rev. Megan, the Executive Committee of the Vestry, and the members of the Vestry itself for the work that they had done to support Grace Church as a strong community with a dependable financial foundation. He spoke of three committees that had been brought together in the past year: Communication, Fundraising, and Newcomers. Chris praised the work that had been accomplished and stated that a good beginning had been made in keeping Grace Church a thriving parish.

Junior Warden's Report

Tom Dougherty spoke about recent upkeep of the church campus, starting with thanking Dave Goodhind for the excellent work he does as sexton, and Terrie Korpita for all of the work that she does in the office scheduling various annual inspections around the campus. He mentioned *some* of the many projects he and Dave had going including:

- Reseating the pavers in the Columbarium
- Changing ceiling lights in the Parish Hall and the Connector
- Covering all thermostats and locking them
- Power washing moldy sidewalks
- Meeting with the Amherst Tree Warden to discuss removal of invasive Norway maples on the north edge of the property
- On-going water mitigation in the basement

The Rector's Report

The Rev. Tom Synan spoke in his sermon about the message for the day which was that God is paying attention to human kind. He spoke of some of the ways in which members of Grace Church respond to God's loving kindness towards us:

- Taking active roles in the worship service, such as planning, Altar Guild, ushering, offering music, and acolytes...
- Studying together in on-going small groups and helping in the education and support of the children and young people of Grace Church
- Offering financial support to neighbors near and far, including the Survival Center, Books Through Bars, Craig's Doors, and students in Haiti and Ramallah
- Supporting the life of the parish by participating in the many committees that are active here. In addition, he mentioned the three new committees, Fundraising, Communications, and Newcomers that are being developed by the Vestry for further support of our growing parish

Rev. Tom thanked Rev. Megan for all of the gifts that she brings to the parish from preaching to Christian education to her poetry. He spoke with humility and gratitude for his eleven years at Grace Church saying, "You do so many incredibly amazing things through Grace, but even so we have our work cut out for us."

The meeting concluded with a hymn and a prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Alice Goodwin-Brown, Clerk

IV. Rector's Sermon and Address, February 2, 2025

Today we are 40 days out from Christmas, which means (no judgment) but if you still have your Christmas decorations out, now may be a good time to put them away. The holiday season is now officially closed. Our celebration today is one that is out of the ordinary, because today we observe an ancient feast of the Church which I think of as the Feast of Many Names. In addition to being the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, today is also known by some as: Candlemas, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, and the Meeting of the Lord, and a few others, which I will not get into.

This feast of various names is so significant, though, that when it falls on a Sunday, we suspend the regular calendar and give it precedence. This year there is no Fourth Sunday of Epiphany. We don't hear the second half of the story of Jesus returning to his hometown Nazareth. Folks seemingly filled with rage, perhaps driven to the edge by Christ, who mysteriously departs passing through them. His work complete there, he moves on to other towns to proclaim his message of Good News, which he was meant to do. We don't hear that, instead we're back in the nativity, with Jesus still an infant.

At this midpoint of winter, when shadows begin to recede and daylight is noticeably longer, Mary and Joseph literally bear in their arms the light of the world – the light that is meant to shine in the darkness, the light that is meant to guide people who have walked in darkness. They come to the temple, bringing the infant Jesus.

Why is that? Why are they doing this?

A presentation takes place. On the surface the holy couple has brought their child to present him to the Divine, to his heritage, to his future, and even to his destiny. But is that what's really going on? Luke says nothing about a liturgical event. Instead we have an elderly man and woman, who have nothing to do with any such rite or ceremony, surprisingly put in the center of the action.

Ancient Simeon presumably shocks Mary and Joseph when he takes their son suddenly into his arms and praises God saying, “*Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation.*” What’s so special about Simeon that he’s promised that before he dies, he’ll see the Christ – the Messiah? If this story only concerns him, then nice for Simeon, but what about the rest of us? If this story is unique to an elderly couple who lived two thousand years ago, then why in the world should we give this story such deference that it takes precedence when it falls on a Sunday. I’d rather hear about Jesus stirring things up in his hometown.

This story isn’t relevant only for an elderly man and woman 2000 years ago. I think this story is a lot more than that. While the liturgical mini-drama is supposed to be whatever it is Mary and Joseph came to do, the real drama is this encounter with Christ.

Why so old? Why are these people elderly? The implication is that they’ve been waiting a long time. They were promised they would encounter Christ. How long ago was that promised made? We don’t know, but based on that promise, they went to the temple in anticipation every day. Was it days? Months? Years? Did they wake up every day with a positive attitude that today might be the day? And if they did, did they ever go home disappointed because day after day, it wasn’t that day?

Think about it. We all know what it’s like to wait. It’s not the easiest thing to do. It’s not easy waiting for life to change, waiting for despair to go away, for depression to lift, waiting for prayers to be answered, waiting for a little joy, waiting to heal and feel better, waiting for a sign that life is good, waiting for an acknowledgement from wherever that we are loved and valued.

Waiting can be trying, especially when we’re hoping and waiting for a miracle. What is the miracle in this story? There’s at least one in there. I don’t think the miracle is with Mary and Joseph. I don’t the miracle has to do with Christ and the mystery of the incarnation. I think the miracle of this story is that these two elderly people showed up on a continual daily basis. The miracle is that they never gave up on the promise they were made. For years they showed up. They may well have had bad days. Who knows? But they kept showing up – never letting despair or disappointment get the better of them.

How did they do that? What allowed them or helped them to show up and not throw in the towel? Faith? Hope? Trust? Some combination of all of the above? And who’s doing the presenting and who’s being presented? Again on the surface, it can look like Simeon’s presenting Jesus as he praises the Almighty for keeping their word. I think the true presentation may be the inverse. Christ is the one presenting Simeon as an example of a true believer, a follower, a child of God.

I think this story is a metaphor about life and living life as true believers. It’s about discipleship. We are to live like Simeon and Anna, showing up and remaining faithful, not knowing what the future holds or how trying times may be. We show up honestly believing that somehow somewhere in the mix of it all, we’ll encounter Christ who will gladly present us to the Almighty as faithful people, faithful to the promises of the Almighty.

The whole story is a metaphor. Like Mary and Joseph, the Church is called to dedicate itself to carry the Light of Christ for the benefit of a world engulfed in shadows and darkness. And we are called to show up and do our part, living lives of faith, hope, and love – ever trusting the promises of God. I cannot thank you enough for your dedication and faithfulness to the Gospel, to the ministry of Jesus Christ, to Grace Church. The many ways you show up through your prayers and through your many ministries means so much.

I am so blessed to be your Rector here at this incredible parish of Grace Church – to bear witness to the many ways and to the many things you do out of dedication and commitment to God. Let's start with our prayer life – the spectrum of our services – Sunday mornings, Wednesday afternoons, Friday evenings – Baptisms, Holy Communion, Confirmations and Receptions, Weddings, and Requiems – this is a House of Prayer.

The beauty of our services is that our liturgy truly is a work of the people – people who are dedicated to God and dedicated to this community of faith. Christmas once again was awesome and beautiful. Across our four services, we had well over 600 people attending, and each service unique and special in its own way. Everything was done so well. Flower arrangements, our sacred vessels and everything we use in the services meticulously prepared and made ready by our Altar Guild, acolytes pitching in, lectors, LEMs, our talented and gifted choir, Noah and Dick – our music director and organist, our ushers welcoming all who came through the doors, counters and hospitality.

The pageant always unfolds as God intends it to be. Don't bother trying to micromanage or control children and live animals as they tell the story of Christmas. Like Simeon and Anna, just show up and let it wash over you. We also have the finest crèche filled by children with all of God's creatures. Where else do dinosaurs and sea monsters join in the adoration at the manger? You want to know the true meaning of Christmas, all you have to do is watch the faces of the children (and there were a lot of them this year) as they put the animal figurines in the crèche. And that all comes about – thanks to you and your faithful dedication.

Holy Week and Easter is another key moment in the life of Grace. The richness and the beauty of those holy mysteries is made possible thanks to you. Pentecost Sunday with our annual picnic is not to be missed, and Advent Lessons and Carols is so sublime. It truly captures the spirit of the season. And this year we had a solemn evensong in September for the Feast of the Holy Cross. It also commemorated St. Francis of Assisi on the 800th anniversary of his receiving the stigmata, connecting those wounds to the wounded-ness of our planet. Our world suffers and it suffers at our hands. Through Scripture, music and singing, the proclamation of the Gospel, and presentations afterwards, it was a day of enlightenment, awareness, and spiritual hope. Bless you!

Bishop Doug was with us twice last year. He joined us for Maundy Thursday, which is an ongoing tradition, and then he came back in October to confirm and receive 4 members, dedicating their lives to God. And this year we will host Bishop Doug in December in thanksgiving for his inspirational leadership and guidance, and for all that he's done and continues to do for our Diocese as he prepares to retire. Stay tuned for more on that later this year. We are keeping the Holy Spirit busy here at Grace Church.

And speaking of the work of the spirit, I want to give a shout out to the children and youth of this parish. Last year a new curriculum called *Growing in God's Love* was introduced for Sunday school. In Lent, music and art were the focus and new Stations of the Cross were created for the Good Friday Way of the Cross service. Well done! And of course, I have to thank everyone who participated in the creation of my Christmas card. Many hands, some of them very small, brought that card to fruition. Once again it was a stunner and a keeper. Thank you for the many ways you inspire me.

I have said it before and I will say it again, that Grace Church, in the Town of Amherst, in the year of our Lord 2025, has the most wonderful young people I have ever met in my years of ordained ministry. God bless you for being who you are and for being part of this parish. Always remember: in this place, you matter to God and to the rest of us, and this is your church.

Many thanks and many blessings to Megan McDermott and to our dedicated Sunday School teachers, parents, grandparents, godparents, and to all who give of themselves for our children and youth ministries.

I also want to acknowledge the growing number of college and university students, who like Simeon and Anna in the Temple, have and continue to show up regularly and faithfully, not only for worship services but also across the various ministries of this parish. In my estimation and in God's eyes: You are counter-cultural and Avant Garde, getting up early on Sunday morning at this stage of your life to worship the Almighty and connect with the Divine. We are delighted you are here and we are extremely blessed through you, so thank you.

In terms of outreach and mission, the generosity of this parish is humbling. In 2024, we donated somewhere in the ballpark of 1800 pounds of food to the Amherst Survival Center, and once again we provided over 500 packages of bread stuffing for the food pantry at Thanksgiving. We also partnered with Ascentria Refugee Services, providing winter clothes for people who are new to our area and our country.

And please remember what the Lord has to say about that:

The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. (Lev. 19:33)

Thank you for taking God's word to heart and putting it into action.

Last year over a hundred children had a better Christmas thanks to you and your generosity. We adopted 40 families at Christmas and provided assistance to the Family Outreach of Amherst, which does so much wonderful work helping struggling families in the area. Our missions in Haiti and Ramallah remain vibrant and exciting, despite the crises and challenges around them. The number of students at St. Mathieu exceeds 200. They've started a 9th grade class, and thank God they've remained open. Remember when they were in the goat shed? Not anymore. Every student at St. Mathieu went to school in a new uniform thanks to the dedication of Grace Church, and many of us enjoyed, thanks to the annual Dine in Help out Extravaganza, delicious soup, whose most important ingredients are faith, hope, and love. In the Middle East, we continue to sponsor the education of a deserving student at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center, through the monthly sales of Palestinian olive oil at coffee hour. Joyce Harish is our current student and we wish her success in her computer and IT studies.

Monetarily, this congregation once again, showed up faithfully to help other near and far, generously giving away over \$30,000 to deserving agencies – from Craig's Doors and the Episcopal Relief and Development Hurricane Fund to Doctors without Borders and the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church. I can't express enough what an important and significant milestone that is. Doing the math, I realized I was in seminary at the time of the 25th anniversary, and back then there was no recognition or celebration, which was unfortunate. Today our society seems to be modeling itself on the Taliban, just without the beards. The rights of women and their equality are under attack. In our country, more parts of Christianity than we may realize or comprehend promote the importance of patriarchy, the denial of the God given gifts and talents of women, particularly regarding leadership roles in the Church and elsewhere, and an increasing misogynistic discourse that's alarming, and in plain English – sinful.

Now more than ever, the Episcopal Church needs to shout from the rooftops what we believe and what we bear witness to: that in Christ there really is no male or female, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not gender exclusive in any way, shape, or form. That the One we worship, the One we show up for, and the One whose promises we faithfully trust has brought us to where we are today, directing us to a more equal and just world, and there's no going back.

Our service in July that was concelebrated by the Rev. Megan McDermott, the Rev. Heidi Frantz-Dale, the Rev. Raisin Horn, the Rev. Susan Schaeffer, and the Rev. Adrian Stair (present in spirit) was a glorious event for us, and a great day for the greater Church. Later in the fall, we showed the Philadelphia Eleven documentary, which was followed by a book group discussion of the same, and we blessed a beautiful banner designed and created by members of this parish, commemorating those first ordinations. Thank you for not letting the 50th anniversary go unnoticed.

There is so much that goes on here – thanks to your dedication and commitment. God bless our Mutual Care team, Sunday morning hospitality, Archives, the Over 60's Gathering, the Funeral Reception committee, the Brother Lawrence Guild, Iconography, the Men's Group, the Garden committee, Planned Giving, Raising the Questions, the Saturday morning Bible study, our Adult Christian Education programs and presentations, and Tea and Titles.

Many blessings and a special shout out to Climate Action at Grace for raising awareness and bearing a prophetic witness. Thank for enlightening presentations and for ringing the bell at the 11th hour on the 11th day of each month. Keep up the good work. We can never become complacent in our world and think our work is done here. In the days, weeks, and years ahead, our witness and our help may be needed more than ever and in ways we never imagined.

Many thanks also to the Stewardship Committee and to each and every one of you for your generous outpouring of financial support for Grace Church. The church budget is not just numbers or dollars and cents. It's a tangible and physical manifestation of a congregation's faith, hope, and love. God bless you for your love of God and your love for this church. The love, the spirit, the dedication that permeates, surrounds, and sustains this House of Prayer is a beautiful thing.

And thank you to all who participated and helped make the Service Auction and the St. Nicholas Bazaar the successes they were. These are not only fundraisers, they're fun-raisers, friend-makers, and community builders that help build up and strengthen the Body of Christ.

My friends, who knows what the future holds and what will be coming our way? Today some people are relying on a groundhog to provide guidance and direction. My faith and hope rests on God and you. As our Prayer Book so eloquently says, *Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.* Whatever the future holds, let's go boldly into 2025 together and like Simeon faithfully show up and see what God has in store for us in the Almighty's magnificent plan of salvation.

I am incredibly honored and humbled to be your rector. Thank you for letting me be here among you. God bless you all, and God bless Grace Church.

Amen.

The Rev. Tom Synan

V. Vestry Reports

Senior Warden:

Grace Church Amherst thrives, serving both our local community and extending our reach internationally. It's truly inspiring to witness the dedication and hard work of so many individuals who contribute to our parish's success.

Under the exceptional leadership of The Rev. Tom Synan and The Rev. Megan McDermott, along with the tireless efforts of our Executive Committee and Vestry, we've continued to nurture vital ministries impacting countless lives. The generous financial contributions of our members are instrumental in enabling this outreach, both within our church and beyond its walls. We are deeply grateful for your support.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated team ensures the smooth functioning of our church. Terrie Korpita in the front office, Jaana Cutson as our bookkeeper, and David Goodhind as our Sexton consistently go above and beyond, providing invaluable support often unseen. Let's make a conscious effort to express our sincere appreciation to them for their tireless work.

Our vibrant music program, under the direction of Dr. Noah Horn, continues to enrich our worship experiences and attract new members. The captivating musical events have become a highlight of our calendar, fostering a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

The Altar Guild, led by Sheila Mammen and her dedicated team, meticulously prepares for every service. Their dedication to the beautiful presentation of our sanctuary, ensuring the flowers, linens, and candles are always perfectly arranged, is truly commendable, as is the work of our acolytes. While our number of acolytes may have fluctuated, the consistent commitment of our current members is deeply appreciated.

Our Christian formation and educational programs have expanded to serve a broad range of ages, from young children to college-aged adults – some of whom have become valuable additions to our congregation. The garden ministry and iconography workshops continue to flourish. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Joan O'Brien for her years of leadership in organizing our highly successful St. Nicholas Bazaar – a year-round undertaking resulting in a significant fundraising event much anticipated by our community.

Our Pastoral Care Commission, through the compassionate efforts of our volunteers, provides essential support to those in need, offering assistance through cards, visits, transportation, and thoughtful gift boxes. Our Haiti ministry continues its vital support of Saint Matthieu in Bayonnais, Haiti, recently sponsoring their successful soup fundraiser. Furthermore, our Outreach Ministry dedicates the fourth Sunday of each month's plate offerings to various non-profit organizations, both locally and internationally.

This overview, though ambitious, may inadvertently overlook some of the numerous acts of kindness and service within our parish. I sincerely apologize for any such omissions. The sheer volume of good work undertaken here is truly remarkable. Our community consistently seeks innovative ways to touch the lives of both those we know and those we don't yet know.

This year has welcomed many new faces to our congregation. While I've had the pleasure of meeting some, I haven't had the opportunity to meet everyone. I encourage you all to extend a warm welcome to newcomers. Have you noticed any new faces recently? If so, please introduce yourself and make them feel part of our Grace

Church family.

Are you considering becoming more involved in one of our ministries? All of our programs would greatly benefit from additional hands to share the workload. Don't hesitate to offer your time and talents. Let's work together to support our ministries both within these walls and in our broader community and world.

Thank you for being a vital part of Grace Church Amherst. We are truly blessed to have you here.

Katherine Glime, Senior Warden

Junior Warden:

As the junior warden I was involved with many undertakings around the Grace Church campus in 2024. Some of those undertakings are highlighted as; Removable of the invasive trees alongside the Garth and Amherst town parking lot. I had some help with this project from Mike Gralenski, Charlie Tebbetts and Paul Bracciotti, Paul made arrangements to have the stumps ground down by Northeast Tree Care, while Wagner Wood removed the trees. Working with Chris Freitag, Patrick Kelly, Kenneth Page and Charlie Tebbetts we were finally able to get the live streaming going in the Church through Sonix Pro. We also worked to have a signed maintenance agreement with Western Mass Heating and Cooling to keep our gas heating systems working smoothly in the Church and Connector.

Through all the inspections and meetings with vendors I have to continue to praise our Sexton Dave Goodhind for his energy and ability to make repairs, Also Terrie Korpita in the office for her help with scheduling the various yearly inspections.

In 2025 we are looking forward to adding another bank of niches in our Columbarium and consolidating our fire safety, inspections and controls systems through one vendor. We have also initiated energy initiatives with Artis Energy and Advanced Green Insulation that will add insulation to the rectory roof and basement to make for a more comfortable working space while using less energy.

We continue to work hard to keep this large beautiful campus clean, less energy dependent and safe for our staff, parishioners and community.

Tom Dougherty, Junior Warden

The Parke House Revisioning Committee

Before the Parke House can be replaced the Undercroft under the church has to be readied to handle Sunday School classes and other needs. Plans for the undercroft and what they might entail will be forth coming in 2025.

Tom Dougherty, Junior Warden

VI. Commission Reports

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Altar Guild:

The main responsibility of the Altar Guild is to prepare the sanctuary for worship and to take care of all the items used in our worship. There are many individuals who help to do this. They include Georgann Mirick who sets the roster of duties and keeps track of and orders Altar supplies. There are Altar Guild members who set up and clean up the Altar at all regular services (8am and 10:30am Sunday services) as well as at special services and seasons (baptisms, funerals, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter). Lou Currin and her team are responsible for creating beauty in the sanctuary with flowers throughout the year. Finally, we have volunteers who launder the Altar linens on a weekly basis. We are grateful to all members of the Altar Guild.

I would also like to acknowledge Rev. Megan McDermott who has taken responsibility for setting up and cleaning at the monthly Liturgy in the Chapel service. This was done patiently for many years by Janet Teng.

It is a small group of volunteers who make sure that Grace Church remains a special sacred space. Each member of the Altar Guild plays an extremely important role in this effort. We thank them for their dedication to this important ministry. We are always looking for new members and would, therefore, like to invite any Grace Church members (men and women, singles and couples) who may be interested in joining the Altar Guild. Thank you!

Sheila Mammen

Music:

The music program continued to thrive in the year 2024 at Grace Episcopal Church, Amherst, Massachusetts. This marked my first full year of music ministry at Grace, after inheriting a wonderful program from previous music director Beth Hart Damon.

The choir performs each Sunday during the program (academic) year at the 10:30 a.m. service; a list of anthems is given below. Additional weekly music includes several hymns, a sung psalm, and Proper offerings such as the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Fraction Anthem. Organist Dick Damon plays excellently and fluently, and handles keyboard duties for both the 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning services. He performed over a hundred solo keyboard works this year, also listed below.

Special choral services throughout the year included Ash Wednesday, Holy Week (Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil), the wedding of Ania Wieckowski and Sam Masinter, an Evensong for the Feast of the Holy Cross, Advent Lessons and Carols, and Christmas Eve. The second annual Messiah sing-along was another highlight and filled the church again. The church continues to be a popular venue to rent for choral concerts, hosting local groups such as Arcadia Players, and also Nightingale Vocal Ensemble from Boston.

We had several parishioners perform as instrumentalists throughout the year. These include (in score order): Kell Julliard, flute; Lisa McDonald, bassoon; Noah Horn, trumpet; Alice Goodwin-Brown, trombone and djembe; Micah Walter, violin; Caleb Ireland, violin; Sam Lowry, violin; and Mary Hocken, cello. Guest musicians throughout the year included Agnes Coakley Cox, soprano; Nathaniel Cox, theorbo; Christopher Prestia, tenor and composer; Jeff Holmes, trumpet; Bryan Erickson, trombone; Luca Kevorkian, violin; Colin Britt, conductor; and Gregory Brown, conductor.

With thanks to all for contributing to our lovely music program, respectfully submitted,

Dr. Noah Horn
Director of Music, Grace Church

Choir Roster

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Alice Goodwin-Brown	Rev. Adrienne Stair	Caleb Ireland	Dick Damon
Anna Smith	Ania Masinter	Dennis Costa	Duane Dale
Breyanne Cassimore	Elizabeth Damon	Hanif Lawrence	Harold Norris
Helen Drake	Rev. Heidi Frantz-Dale	Henry Maxey	Rev. James McDonald
Libby Maxey	Joan O'Brien	Jim Mead	Kell Julliard
Lorie Healy	June Gaeke	John Stifler	Mark Marshall
Marsha Hertel	Lisa McDonald	Ross Goodwin-Brown	Peter Mishkin
Mary Hocken	Marianne Connor		Randall Bausor
Natalie Moss	Susan Altabet		
Sarah Boy	Rev. Susan Schaeffer		
	Zhamilya Abdiken		

Choral Repertoire (2024)

January 7	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina	Sicut cervus
January 14	Maurice Duruflé	Ubi caritas
January 21	William L. Dawson	Ain'-a That Good News!
January 28	Morten Lauridsen	O nata lux
February 4	Leonard Bernstein	Psalms 131 & 133, from Chichester Psalms
February 11	Noah Horn	Arise, shine
February 14	Richard Farrant	Call to remembrance, O Lord
February 14	Richard Farrant	Hide not thou thy face from us, O Lord
February 18	Richard Farrant	Lord, for Thy tender mercy's sake
February 25	William Byrd	Ave verum corpus
March 3	John Stainer	God so loved the world
March 10	Joseph Haydn	The heavens are telling the glory of God
March 17	César Franck	Panis angelicus
March 24	Johann Sebastian Bach	Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen Gebeine
March 27	Johann Kuhnau	Tristis est anima mea
March 27	Marco Antonio	Ingegneri Tenebrae factae sunt
March 27	Jacob Handl	Ecce quomodo moritur
March 27	Giovanni Croce	Velum templi
March 27	Felice Anerio	Christus factus est
March 28	Maurice Duruflé	Ubi caritas
March 28	Richard Damon	Lord, for ever at Thy side
March 29	Claudio Monteverdi	Adoramus te, Christe
March 30	Serge Rachmaninoff	Bogoroditse Devo

March 31	Edward C. Bairstow	Sing ye to the Lord
April 14	J.S. Bach	Dona nobis pacem
April 21	J.S. Bach	Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt
April 21	Geoffrey Hudson	Holy earth, ancient home
April 28	Elizabeth Hart Damon	Ego sum vitis vera
May 5	Ralph Vaughan	Williams O clap your hands
May 12	Joseph Haydn	Stimmt an die Saiten
May 19	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina	Dum complerentur
May 26	Alice Parker	Trinitarian Blessings
June 1	Charles Wood	O Thou the central orb
September 8	Johannes Brahms	How lovely is Thy dwelling-place
September 14	Orlando Gibbons	Preces
September 14	Felice Anerio	Christus factus est
September 15	Christopher Prestia	Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
September 22	Undine Smith Moore	We Shall Walk through the Valley
September 29	Richard Damon	And war broke out in heaven
October 6	Charles Villiers Stanford	Beati quorum via
October 13	Alice Parker	Come Sunday
October 20	Herbert Howells	Behold, O God our defender
October 27	Joseph Haydn	The heavens are telling the glory of God
November 3	Alice Parker	Hark, I hear the harps eternal
November 10	Kell Julliard	St. Francis Prayer
November 17	Kell Julliard	O Flame of God
November 24	George Frideric Handel	Lift up your heads, O ye gates
December 1	Paul Halley	Jesu, the very thought of thee
December 8	André J. Thomas	Keep your lamps
December 15	Anonymous (16th century)	Rejoice in the Lord alway
December 15	Elizabeth Poston	Jesus Christ the Apple Tree
December 15	Felix Mendelssohn	Behold a star from Jacob shining
December 15	Judith Weir	Drop down, ye heavens, from above
December 15	Richard Horn	A shoot shall come forth
December 15	Serge Rachmaninoff	Bogoroditse Devo
December 15	Charles Wood	O Thou the central orb
December 22	Serge Rachmaninoff	Bogoroditse Devo
December 24	Richard Damon	Love came down at Christmas
December 24	Harold Darke	In the bleak midwinter
December 24	George Frideric Handel	Glory to God
December 24	David Willcocks	See amid the winter's snow
December 24	Richard Damon	Holy Savior, yet so tiny

Organ Repertoire (2024)

January 7	J.S. Bach	Chorale Preludes
January 7	J.S. Bach	Prelude in E-flat major (St. Anne)
January 14	Theodore Dubois	Prelude
January 14	Leon Boellmann	Menuet Gothique
January 21	J.S. Bach	Sinfonia in G major
January 21	G.F. Handel	Presto in G major

January 28	Cesar Franck	Fantasie in C major
January 28	Dietrich Buxtehude	Prelude & Fugue in F# minor
February 4	Aaron Copland	Appalachian Spring and Fanfare for the Common Man
February 4	Johann Sebastian Bach	Organ Concerto #1, Mvmt. 1
February 11	J.S. Bach	Largo from the Second Trio Sonata
February 11	Alexandre Guilmant	Chorale and Fugue from the 5th Organ Sonata
February 18	J.S. Bach	Fugue in d minor
February 25	Paul Hindemith	Movements 2 & 3 from Organ Sonata #2
February 25	Gabriel Pierné	Prelude in G minor
March 3	Johannes Brahms	Chorale Preludes
March 3	J.S. Bach	Fantasie in C minor
March 10	Ernest Chausson	Le Vepres des Vierges
March 10	Paul Hindemith	Sonata # 2, Movement #1
March 17	J.S. Bach	Largo from Concerto in D minor for 2 violins
March 17	J.S. Bach	Largo from Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005
March 17	Paul Hindemith	Vivace from Concerto in D minor for 2 violins
March 30	John Stanley	Trumpet Voluntary
March 31	J.S. Bach	Sheep may safely graze
March 31	J.S. Bach	Prelude in G
March 31	G.F. Händel	Arrival of the Queen of Sheba
April 7	J.S. Bach	Organ Trio Sonata #2, Movements 2 and 3
April 7	J.S. Bach	Sinfonia in D major
April 14	Dietrich Buxtehude	Chorale Preludes
April 14	Dietrich Buxtehude	Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne in C major
April 21	Flor Peeters	Chorale Preludes
April 21	Flor Peeters	Chorale Preludes on Now thank we all our God
April 28	Johann Pachelbel	Toccat and Pastorale
April 28	William Boyce	Allegro in F major
May 5	Cesar Franck	Fantasie in A
May 5	G. F. Handel	Allegro in G minor from Organ Concerto #3
May 12	Johann Pachelbel	Fantasia and Fugue in D minor
May 12	Robert Schumann	Fugue on BACH
May 19	J.S. Bach	An Wasserflüssen Babylon
May 19	Henry Purcell	Voluntary in C
May 19	Henry Purcell	Introduction & Trumpet Tune
May 26	Georg Böhm	Allein Gott in der Höh
May 26	J.S. Bach	St. Anne's Fugue
June 1	Ralph Vaughan Williams	Rhosymedre
June 1	J. S. Bach	Prelude and Fugue in D major
June 2	J.S. Bach	Chorale Preludes
June 2	Dietrich Buxtehude	Prelude & Fugue in F major
June 9	César Franck	Prelude, Fugue and Variation
June 9	Felix Mendelssohn	Allegro maestoso from Sonata #4
June 16	J.S. Bach	Fugue in B minor (on a theme by Corelli)
June 16	Vivaldi/J.S. Bach	Organ Concerto #2
June 23	Claude Debussy	Passepied

June 23	Louis Vierne	Final from Organ Symphony #3
June 30	G.F. Händel	The Harmonious Blacksmith
June 30	W.A. Mozart	Allegro in F major
July 7	Gabriel	Fauré Pavane
July 7	Jean Langlais	Acclamations
July 14	Alexandre Guilmant	Pastorale
July 14	Alexandre Guilmant	Allegro from Sonata #2
July 21	J. S. Bach	Chorale Preludes
July 21	J. S. Bach	Fugue in C Minor
July 28	G.F. Handel	Andante in B-flat
July 28	Healey Willan	Chorale Prelude on Deo Gracias
August 4	Theodore Dubois	Prelude
August 4	Dietrich Buxtehude	Fugue in C major (the Gigue Fugue)
August 11	J.S. Bach	Adagio in A minor
August 11	J.S. Bach	Prelude in E-flat major
August 18	J.S. Bach	Fugue in E-flat major, BWV 552
August 18	Louis Vierne	Final from Symphony no. 1
August 25	Sergei Rachmaninoff	Vocalise
August 25	Dietrich Buxtehude	Prelude and Fugue in F major
September 1	J.S. Bach	Komm, Heiliger Geist
September 1	Georg Böhm	Prelude & Fugue in C major
September 8	Georg Böhm	Herr wie du willst
September 8	Georg Frideric	Händel Allegro from Organ Concerto #4
September 14	Jean Titelouze	Ave Maris Stella
September 14	Giovanni Gabrieli	Canzona
September 15	Johann Sebastian Bach	Tocatta in D minor ("Dorian"), BWV 538
September 22	C.P.E. Bach	Adagio in E-flat major
September 22	C.P.E. Bach	Allegro in G minor
September 29	Johann Kellner	Was Gott tut das ist wohlgetan
September 29	Nigel Ogden	Penguins' Playtime
October 6	Marcel Dupré	Chorale Preludes
October 6	Henry Purcell	Rondeau
October 13	Johann Kerll	Canzona
October 13	William Walond	Introduction and Tocatta
October 20	Cesar Franck	Fantasia in C major
October 20	Cesar Franck	Pièce Héroïque
October 27	J.S. Bach	Pastorale
October 27	J. S. Bach	Tocatta and Fugue in D minor
November 3	Felix Mendelssohn	Prelude in G major
November 3	Cesar Franck	Pièce Héroïque
November 10	Samuel Barber	Adagio
November 10	Alexandre Guilmant	Chorale and Fugue in C major
November 17	J.S. Bach	Canzona in d minor
November 17	J.S. Bach	Fugue in d minor
November 24	Andrew Carter	Aria
November 24	Andrew Carter	Finale
December 1	J. S. Bach	Prelude in C major
December 8	Johannes Brahms	Chorale Preludes

December 8	Dietrich Buxtehude	Prelude and Fugue in A minor
December 15	Michel-Richard Delalande	Prelude, Musette and Passacaille
December 15	J.S. Bach	Organ Concerto #1
December 15	Louis Claude Daquin	Noël
December 15	G.F. Handel	Movement #4 from Organ Concerto #5
December 22	Johann Walther	Chorale Preludes
December 22	G.F. Handel	Allegro from Organ Concerto #6
December 24	Johann Pachelbel	Chorale Prelude on "Vom Himmel hoch"
December 24	Gordon Young	Toccata in C major
December 29	Claude Daquin	Noëls
December 29	C.S Lang	Trumpet Tune in D major

CHRISTIAN FORMATION & EDUCATION - ADULT

In 2024, Grace Church offered programs engaging and exploring our Christian faith from a variety of angles. On an ongoing basis, parishioners can participate in:

- *Saturday morning Bible study with the Rector, which meets on Zoom
- *Tea and Titles, group coordinated by Jude Wobst that meets every third week to drink tea and discuss adventures in reading
- *Raising the Questions, group coordinated by Nancy Lowry that meets monthly for reading and discussion, focusing on theology and liturgy
- *Monday lunchtime art and poetry meditations with Megan on Zoom (*see "Creative Formation" announcement for a more detailed report*)
- *Joy of Living, group coordinated by Kell Julliard that combines meditation, practices integrated in the flow of life, and discussion, for people of all faith backgrounds.

Newcomers are always welcome to any of these groups! Additionally, Grace offered a variety of programs by season. Last year's seasonal offerings included:

Epiphany

John Horn led Botany for Gardeners and Cooks.

Lent

John Horn led Covenant and the Promises of God: A Lenten Reflection between Sunday services.

On Zoom, several churches from our clericus (Episcopal churches in Franklin and Hampshire counties) came together for "Now What? Incorporating the Gospel We Heard Into Our Lenten Journey," a series meeting Sundays at 4:00 p.m.

Ordinary Time/Fall

Nancy Rose offered Life Story Writing.

Tom and Megan led an adult Confirmation class that met several weeks over Zoom.

Tom led a book series between services on James K.A. Smith's *How to Inhabit Time*.

On November 3rd, we hosted a screening of the documentary *The Philadelphia Eleven*. Megan, Mary El Vaughan, and Cara Crandall also organized a three-week book group over Zoom on *The Story of the Philadelphia Eleven* by Darlene O'Dell. These events were in recognition of the 50th anniversary of women's ordination to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church.

Advent

Tom led Advent: Prepare, Hope, and Action between Sunday services.

Rev. Megan McDermott

Raising the Questions

Raising the Questions has continued to meet monthly during 2024. We bring our liturgical and theological questions and have a great time discussing them. We talk about books we have been reading and pass around articles, prayers, and bulletins from other churches we have visited. We laugh a lot. The meetings are always open, so join us if you are curious. We meet the second Tuesday at 9:30 am, in the Connector.

Nancy Lowry

Creative Formation

Since summer 2021, "creative formation" – opportunities to explore faith through arts, literature, and creativity – has been one of my focuses at Grace. In 2024, my primary way of engaging this project of "creative formation" was hosting a Monday Zoom meditation series. Meeting at 12:15 p.m., I guide a group through pieces of visual art or poetry, often offering a reflection to jump-start people's thinking, questions for individual meditation, and time for group discussion. Themes shifted according to liturgical season.

Zoom series for 2024 included:

***Epiphany Meditations: Poems of, or About, or Evoking, or Complicating Encounter with God** – Using the poetry of Samantha DeFlicht, Matthew E. Henry, Mark Jarman, and K.T. Landon, we explored spatial metaphors for God's presence; the decision to notice "small sanctities;" the role of time and perspective in recognizing encounters with God; and the quest to find joy in the present moment.

***Take Up Your Cross: A Visual Lenten Meditation** – Throughout Lent, we looked at visual art that might help us consider the biblical instruction, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). We explored "Mystery of the Cross" icons that depict Jesus surrounded by crosses; a statue of a man balancing a cross in his hand found in a Belgium cathedral; and contemporary artist Tyler Ballon's 2020 painting of a boy holding a cross.

***Summer Poetry and Prayer** – Each week, we read a different poem by a contemporary poet. Poets included Linda Pastan, Bryana Joy, Amy Bornman, Aviya Kushner, Kiki Petrosino, and Elizabeth Harlan-Ferlo. Poems and their accompanying reflections explored topics like the importance of contributing to the world in small ways; the secrets we keep; Mary's thoughts about the wise men's visit; the Hebrew word for spirit (or wind) in Genesis; the physical, sensory experience of a worship setting; and the messages we have been told about what's proper or presentable at church. The summer series this year was shortened because of my sabbatical.

***Seeking Self and Spirit Through Self-Portraits** – This art meditation series met for 9 Mondays throughout the season of Ordinary Time. We explored what artists' self-portraits might suggest about what they consider central aspects of their own identities. We then used these self-portraits as inspiration for musing on our own self-image.

Artworks included: 16th and 18th century women artists depicting themselves in the act of painting; self-portrait photographs of Francesca Woodman in the 1970s and 80s; recent paintings by Rebecca Ness and Chloe Wise; Artemesia Gentileschi's 17th century depictions of saints and biblical figures in (potentially) her own image; 20th century surrealist self-portraits from Leonara Carrington, Claude Cahun, and Leonor Fini; sculptures by Camille Claudel from around the turn of the 20th century; three self-portraits painted over the lifetime of 20th century artist Samuel Joseph Brown, Jr.; and self-portraits across the lifetime of Audrey Flack, from 1956 through 2022.

Topics for reflection included the relationship between the self and vocation; self and hiddenness; self and the mess/clutter of everyday life; self and saints/biblical figure; self and dreams/symbols/imagination; self and struggle/monstrosity; self and commercialism/brands; self and mirrors/reflection; and self and realism.

***Prophetic Prophets Preparing the Way: An Advent Meditation Series** – In our Advent liturgy and lectionary, we recognize the role prophets played in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. Through this 3-week series, we looked at poems that might be considered prophetic – helping prepare the way for us to act differently in the world or giving us valuable warnings. A poem by Joshua Bennett dismantled the justifications people make for police brutality against young Black men, while Marge Piercy encouraged women to find their voices and Margaret Atwood urged us to “sing on” even when our words feel “too late to be of help.”

All Zoom meditations were recorded and available for those who missed sessions or couldn't join us live. I am happy to share past recordings or links to my slides or reflections with those who are interested. Meditations will continue into 2025.

Rev. Megan McDermott

CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMISSION - CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children

In 2024, Grace Church continued its commitment to engaging in meaningful and sustainable children's ministry in a variety of ways.

During the 2023-2024 school year, our K-5th grade Sunday School class used a curriculum called Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible Curriculum. In Lent, we paused this curriculum to focus on music and art – pairing together a Jr. Choir experience (coordinated by parishioner Lucy Bergin) preparing children and youth for an Easter performance with the creation of new Stations of the Cross art (coordinated by parishioner Nancy Lowry) for our Good Friday Way of the Cross Service. This seasonal program offered children different ways to be creative as we learned more about Lent and Easter.

My three-month sabbatical (which clergy are encouraged to take every five years) began on April 8th. We made several shifts to accommodate my absence, for instance, pausing weekly Sunday School. Some activities for children and youth still did continue with volunteer support, such as Liturgy in the Chapel.

Liturgy in the Chapel is our regular worship service centered on the needs of children and their families. Starting this past fall, we shifted our Liturgy in the Chapel schedule to gathering once every other month. On select Sundays, the chapel service meets from 9:35-10:15 a.m., using a Eucharistic prayer I adapted from the

Book of Common Prayer that helps to explain different elements of the service and doesn't assume liturgical familiarity. Liturgy in the Chapel focuses on one Scripture reading, and it includes an interactive sermon.

After our usual summer break, we began the 2024-25 school year with a shift in Sunday School programming. We focused on offering a Jr. Choir experience as a means of learning faith and building community through music. This was intentionally multi-age, with pre-schoolers up through high-schoolers participating. Rehearsals sometimes ended with a mini-Bible lesson. Many thanks to Lucy Bergin and Mary El Vaughan for their musical leadership this fall!

Shifts in volunteer capacity meant we were not able to do a November Jr. Choir performance as planned. We were able, though, to pivot our energies towards our annual Christmas pageant with the musical help of Maki Matsui. Rehearsals occurred during the Sunday School hour, 9:15-10:15 a.m., throughout December. A wide age range of children participated, taking on roles acting, singing, narrating, and acolyting. A big thank you to all our participating children and youth; the parents/guardians/grandparents who supported their participation; and to Maki Matsui, Sharon Marino, Tyler Marino, Katie Schendel, Sean & Ben Gilsdorf, Zoe of Ancient Ponies Farm, and so many others for their pageant help! Children at Grace also contributed artwork to Grace Church's annual Christmas card, coordinated again by Nancy Lowry.

Going into 2025, we plan on incorporating music regularly into Sunday School, but as an element of our programming rather than the primary focus. We will continue using a curriculum from Illustrated Ministry called Mini-Revolutions that is adaptable to different ages and lengths of class time. Mini-Revolutions focuses on one of that Sunday's Scriptures. Each week will use coloring and creativity to engage with a Bible story, as well as fun activities and reflective questions.

We held one acolyte training in the fall (with Henry M. assisting in demonstrating different roles of the acolyte). This year, I will poll families again to see if we have any other newly interested children/youth who might want to be introduced to this ministry.

In 2024, we regularly offered staffed childcare in Grace's nursery, located in the Parker Room in the parish office. Our nursery had been on hiatus for several years starting with the pandemic closure of in-person worship. There are some challenges staying staffed over college breaks, since many of our nursery workers are local college students. In 2025, we will work on offering nursery care as consistently as possible.

In last year's annual report, one of the things I noted was the need for "ongoing brainstorming about how music and theatre, particularly on a seasonal/special event basis, might be a good entryway for many families into the life of the church." This is still a piece of ongoing discernment for our children's programming. This fall, we leaned into musical offerings. This is a compelling draw for families, but we are still figuring out how to best coordinate this with volunteers and how to balance this with other ways of doing formation. I am thankful for the flexibility and grace of families journeying with us to discover what it means to do ministry for the church of today!

Please be in touch with me, Megan, with any questions about children's ministry options here at Grace!

The Rev. Megan McDermott

Youth

In 2024, our youth group for grades 6-12 met regularly for opportunities to connect Christian faith with the issues of their lives, have fun, and build supportive relationships with others at church, both with peers and adult mentors.

Youth group activities included: lunch discussions on the theme “Living Your Best Life? Finding Meaning + Joy in Middle and High School;” multiple gatherings to play board games; an Escape Room experience at the Hampshire Mall; mini golf at Western Mass. Family Golf Center; and an evening volunteering for St. Nicholas Bazaar preparations. Even during my sabbatical, youth group activities continued on a reduced schedule. Many thanks are owed to all the volunteers who helped with youth group in 2024 – Lucy Bergin, Mary El Vaughan, Oscar Gosling, and Wendell Packard!

For the rest of the 2024-2025 school year, we plan to continue meeting about twice a month, on Sundays after the 10:30 a.m. service, both for fun activities and continued discussions of this year’s topic, “Living Your Best Life? Finding Meaning + Joy in Middle and High School.”

In recent years, I have coordinated summer service opportunities with the Episcopal Church of Sts. James and Andrew in Greenfield. This was not able to happen in 2024, but I am looking forward to coordinating together again in 2025. So far, we are hoping to schedule two joint service opportunities this spring for our youth groups, one project in Greenfield and one in Amherst.

There was not a youth Confirmation class scheduled for 2024. Typically, we hold a youth Confirmation class on an every-other-year basis, tied into the bishop’s visitation schedule. Scheduling our next Confirmation class may be impacted by the bishop transition process.

Our Grace youth have been involved in a variety of aspects of parish life outside of youth group, including serving as: acolytes; Lay Eucharistic Ministers; youth vestry representatives; and leaders and volunteers in ministries with younger children, such as the pageant, Jr. Choir rehearsals, and Liturgy in the Chapel.

I am regularly impressed by the kindness, thoughtfulness, and helpfulness of our youth at Grace Church! Though we may have a small group, our size allows for a depth of conversation about things that matter, which I hope contributes to foundations of faith that can be relied upon for years to come.

The Rev. Megan McDermott

Campus and Young Adult Ministry

In 2024, Grace Church regularly gathered college students through monthly meetings of GEMS: Grace Episcopal Ministry for Students. Typically, we met on Saturdays during the school year, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m., at Coronation Café for free-flowing conversation on life, faith, and the Episcopal Church, according to participants’ interests. Grace covers the cost of beverages and treats for students at these outings. GEMS went on a brief hiatus towards the end of the spring semester because of my three-month sabbatical and also takes breaks for the summer and in between summers.

Though we do have a dedicated program for the students, the heart of Grace’s campus ministry is students’ participation in our worship life on Sunday mornings and the relationships that they build intergenerationally

throughout our church. This past year has seen a notable uptick of participation from college students. Notably, we have had students from all three schools, UMass, Amherst, and Hampshire, involved at Grace in 2024, which does not happen every year. Students take part in a variety of aspects of parish, including serving as lectors, bell ringers, and children's and youth ministry volunteer; attending events like our Advent suppers; or helping out at the St. Nicholas Bazaar.

I make it a priority to invite newly attending college students to coffee or tea to get to know them better and answer any questions they might have about Grace. I also regularly catch up with our participating college students on a one-on-one basis. These personal relationships are one of my favorite parts of serving in a college town and are also essential because students' limited free time sometimes make group activities difficult to schedule or attend.

Over the years, I have also experimented with many ways of offering ministry on our local campuses for students who may never come through the doors of Grace Church. Early in 2024, I held a Bible study on-campus at UMass with Leah Gregg as an offering of United Christian Foundation, an ecumenical ministry serving UMass. In the past, I have collaborated with chaplains and spiritual life staff at Amherst College and Hampshire College to offer programming or supporting existing Christian programs. There has been some turnover in staffing in those offices, so those collaborations, unfortunately, were not a significant aspect of this ministry in 2024. Hopefully, there will be opportunities to reconnect with those offices in the year ahead.

As part of its ministry to a wider age range of young adults, Grace participates in the Western Mass. Young Adult Ministry Network (YAMN), a diocesan group that brings together people from across various parishes, ages 18-40. I offer carpooling to as many of YAMN's events as possible to make them more accessible for young adults. YAMN came together throughout the year for board game meet-ups at Tree House Brewing in South Deerfield. The ministry has provided (sometimes through support of Grace Church) pizza for young adults and a place to grow in friendship through games and conversation. During Lent, YAMN held a half-day retreat at St. John's Athol that included communal prayer, time for individual reflection and creativity, a shared meal, and a visit to St. John's thrift store.

In November, YAMN held its annual weekend-length retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Camp in New Hampshire. This was the first year undergraduates attended. Grace Church sponsored the participation of an Amherst College student and a UMass student. The retreat included a spontaneous hymn sing; time for individual reading, art making, and nature exploring; the celebration of Communion; games; and a workshop on liturgical time. This was a vibrant event bringing together young adults from several parishes across the diocese.

Last year, I reported about the grant funding we received from the Community Foundation of Western Mass. for the project "Fostering Imaginative Spirituality in Students and Young Adults." Remaining funds from this grant were put towards supporting YAMN's retreat this year; this is a meaningful offering Grace Church was able to make towards the health of the wider church. Earlier in the year, this grant also funded a collaborative *Visio Divina* event with St. John's Northampton that took place at the Smith College Museum of Art, with conversation and snacks following at St. John's.

If you are a college student or young adult interested in connecting with GEMS: Grace Episcopal Ministry for Students or YAMN (Young Adult Ministry Network) or helping to organize/host an event for other students or young adults, please be in touch! I'd love to hear your ideas.

The Rev. Megan McDermott

PARISH LIFE COMMISSION

The mission of the Parish Life Commission is to spread the joy of Christian fellowship and hospitality throughout Grace Church and the larger community. Many committees and events strive to maintain a strong, social connection throughout our membership. In 2024 we were able to hold these events:

Our Annual Meeting

Shrove Sunday Pancake Coffee Hour

The annual Pentecost Picnic

The annual St. Michael's Picnic

The annual Stewardship Feast of Grace

Our Third Annual Advent Suppers

The café at the St. Nicholas Bazaar

Our Parish Life committees serve our members in many important ways. The Hospitality Committee provides coffee hours after our services, schedules ushers, and welcomes newcomers. The Brother Lawrence Guild provides delicious cuisine at various gatherings. The St. Nicholas Bazaar Committee not only provides a community event but also raises money that is crucial for our budget. The Garden Ministry continues to maintain our gardens and to address areas of need.

The Parish Life Commission would like to thank all these committees for all that they do. Your dedication and support of Grace's programs and projects is most sincerely appreciated. Great may your reward be in heaven.

Funeral Reception Committee:

The Funeral Reception Committee is an important ministry of Grace Church. We strive to offer a calm, welcoming presence to the friends, family and loved ones of those celebrating and honoring the departed.

MEMBERS:

Kitty Dougherty (chair)

Tom Dougherty

Hannah Abbott

Mary Hocken

Laura Klock

Lucy Robinson

Alison Ash

Mike Gralenski

Karen Desantis

Kathy Glime

Many thanks to Sheila Mammen, Lou Currin and Janel Tang, who work so tirelessly on the liturgical components and the flowers for the services.

The receptions held this year were in celebration of:

Carolyn Samonds April 5, 2024

Tony Morse April 6, 2024

Jennifer Read May 14, 2024

Jana and Michael Zike May 16, 2024

David H. and Thomas E. Soper May 24, 2024
Martha Mitchell June, 8, 2024
Valerie Ivy June 29, 2024

Kitty Dougherty

Saint Nicholas Bazaar:

We outdid ourselves this year! We had a combination of good weather, good advertising, large crowds, willing buyers, and of course, excellent volunteers. Again this year we had a number of first-time helpers, which is a plus.

All in all, it was a joyful and very successful event, thanks to everyone who participated before, during, and after the bazaar. Thank you all!

Respectfully, Joan O'Brien

Garden Ministry:

The Garden Ministry was once again very active this year. We increased our membership and had other volunteers for all of our projects. Following is the highlights of our year:

*We had a very successful garden sale on May 11th. Several local merchants gave us donations to add to our collected items from church members. We all worked very hard prior to the sale to price the items. We netted \$950.00

* We had 7 diseased trees removed from the Garth area; the trees were hanging over the parking lot for Town Hall.

* We had a soil analysis done for the area where the trees were removed to help us determine what shrubs would thrive in this area.

* During the summer months, we dug holes for Arbor Vitae trees to be put in the ground in the fall. This involved very determined effort due to the multitude of roots left from the tree removal.

* We set up Tax Exemption status with several local nurseries.

* Prior to the fall planting, we had the remaining stumps ground down and ended up using the sawdust for mulch. We then planted the 3 Arbor Vitae trees.

* A donor came forward to fund replanting the small garden next to the connector with pollinator plants. After several meetings it was decided that the garden would be planted in the fall—which took place in early October.

* Also in October, the Garth clean-up and planting work party took place. We had 14 volunteers and planted 7 shrubs and hundreds of daffodils. We readied the southeast corner for planting this spring.

I encourage everyone that is interested in upgrading and maintaining the Grace Gardens to come to our meetings. They are kept short but we do have fun.

*Sara Liberty Laylin
Grace Garden Ministry Chair*

Iconography Workshop:

Saint Luke's icon workshop met on Sunday afternoons regularly through the year with several 3 day intensive workshops. About 15 iconographers are gaining in skill and increasingly beautiful icons are being completed and blessed. At the annual services auction the icon workshop offered to create an icon of the angel of the bidders' choice, and after some deliberation, an icon of the Archangel Raphael is nearing completion for the winners.

Sandy Lillydahl

Archives Committee:

Many years have passed since a group of parishioners began work on organizing the Grace Church archival materials. The project continues to need fine tuning and maintenance of yearly materials. We meet periodically to complete this work. Our thanks to Terri Korpita for assisting us in this effort. If anyone has any materials that should be stored at Grace, please leave them with Terri. We always welcome help with this project.

Anne Homme and Janine Kelly

PASTORAL CARE COMMISSION

This year we were delighted to welcome new members and new interest in our mission.

Educational Series

Seeking to move beyond the traditional role of support through meals and rides, we developed an ongoing series of presentations on such subjects as memory loss, relationships, caregiving, and death/dying. This series continued into this year.

Christmas Gifts

We prepared small gift boxes of cookies and candies which were then delivered to parishioners unable to freely leave their homes as well as those with recent losses. Often the visits were as welcome as the treats. Much thanks to volunteer bakers and those who made deliveries. This was a fun way to let others know they are not forgotten and that we miss them.

Seeking Support

If you or a family member are finding yourself in a situation of need, where food or transportation to doctor's appointments or church are difficult or you are going through more than you can handle on your own, please reach out. We will do our best to support you.

Offering Support

If you feel called to be part of this mission, we welcome you. There are many ways to offer help: cooking, baking, delivering meals, writing cards, checking in over the phone, visiting, or giving someone a ride.

Gail Gnatek, Chairperson

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMISSION

In 2024, our Fourth Sunday Outreach collections plus additional allocations from the Rector's Discretionary Fund distributed just under \$25,000 to worthy groups outside the church. Organizations that you supported included: Amherst Survival Center, Craig's Doors, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and Amherst's A Better Chance as well as global and regional groups such as the Episcopal Vocational Training Center in Ramallah, the Episcopal Church in Navajoland, and several organizations providing support for refugees in the Middle East and elsewhere.

As part of our mission "to sustain outreach ministers through offerings of prayer, practical support, and opportunities to share the joys and challenges of their work as God's hands in the world" (Mission Statement: Outreach Ministries Commission), your Outreach Commission welcomes your ideas on new organizations to support, especially any organizations that parishioners are already involved with.

We thank you once again for your donations of time, talent, and treasure to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ outside the walls of Grace Church.

Chris Hoffmann, Chair

Adopt-A-Family for Christmas:

Amazing and oh so generous were once again so many of Grace Church members who adopted 40 families, 101 children. Every year I have considerable doubts that all 40 families will be adopted but one should never doubt this extraordinary community of Grace. So many thanks to each one who adopted a family, contributed money or shopped. These families struggle to make a life for themselves and their children so your gifts make their holiday much brighter. Thank you, thank you!

Mary Hocken

Haiti Ministry:

It has been, once again, an extraordinarily difficult year for the nation and people of Haiti. Yet somehow, almost miraculously, the elementary school in rural Bayonnais--St Matthew's School, which Grace Church has been supporting since 2008--is doing well, continuing to educate more than 200 children. The school has been expanding and has initiated progressive pedagogical methods in its teaching. Because of the generosity of Grace Church and our partners in Indian Head, MD, and Greenfield, MA, the teachers are paid regularly, the students are supplied with uniforms, books and school supplies, transportation for the staff is covered, and improvements have been made to the campus. In short, it has been another successful year for the Haiti Ministry.

In January we began organizing our annual soup supper, which took place on February 10. While the event raises money for St Matthew's School, it also brings together the church community in a warm, friendly and delicious way! Many of the soups and all of the breads and cookies are prepared and donated by Grace Church members, and almost all of the people who enjoy eating them also come from Grace. We raised about \$4000 and had a great time doing so!

Also in January, we learned that St. Matthew's School was one of 15 Haiti schools chosen to participate in a pilot project developed by Digital Promise, a nonprofit which focuses on incorporating online technology into pedagogy in developing countries. The project sends coaches to work with local teachers on formulating ways

to incorporate the resources of the digital world in their classrooms. The pilot will last three years, 2025 being the last. At St Matthew's, 2nd graders have been using a new 'blended' science curriculum. The pilot also has brought the school internet access via Starlink satellite.

The steering committee had hoped to bring Pere Decamps, the priest in charge of the school, and Clibert Massillon, the principal, to Amherst in the spring, using a grant we received from the Global Missions committee of the Diocese, but the dangerous situation in Haiti meant that was not possible. We continue to communicate via email and WhatsApp, but that is not as effective as speaking face to face, and we will keep trying. In the meantime, Haiti's banking system has become unstable, and we have had to find work-arounds to get money for salaries, transportation and supplies safely to the principal.

SS. James and Andrew in Greenfield, MA, for the second year undertook a Lenten campaign for the Haiti Ministry. Several members of the steering committee went to meet with church members, answer questions, show videos of the school and express our gratitude for their joining us in this ministry. Our other very important partner is St James' Episcopal Church in Indian Head, MD; members there have been providing steady monthly support since 2016.

In the fall, St. Matthew's enrolled a 9th grade class for the first time, bringing the school into full compliance with the 'Fundamental Education' mandated by the Haitian Ministry of Education. Education in Haiti begins at preschool, followed by 9 years of "Fondamentale"(first, second and third cycles). St Matthew's is now providing a complete elementary education, from preschool through 9th grade, an ambitious undertaking! We received a grant from the Miles of Pennies program of the Church Periodical Club to buy 12 sets of new textbooks for the ninth-graders in time for the start of the school year.

The steering committee spent some time this year discussing ways to increase the awareness of the work of this ministry to the rest of Grace Church. Many felt that people did not know that the school was doing so well in spite of the dreadful political and security situation in Haiti. We decided to hold an informal event in September to share all the good news that was coming from St Matthew's. The event was also intended as a thank you to the church community for their generous support of the summer uniform and school supply campaign which brought in about \$20,000. We hosted a program of short talks, videos and good food after the Sunday service on September 8th .

In closing, this has been a busy and productive year for the Haiti Ministry, and it is, as always, a joy and a privilege to do this work. We are always happy to have new people join the steering committee to share this challenging but important endeavor, but we want to express our gratitude to the entire Grace community for their continuing support.

Submitted by Bonnie Vigeland for the Haiti Ministry steering committee:

Submitted by Bonnie Vigeland for the Haiti Ministry

Haiti Ministry committee members: Alison Ash, Sarah Chadwick, Hattie Finkel, Brown Kennedy, Laura Klock, Mary Hocken, Sandy Muspratt, Suzannah Fabing Muspratt, Joan O'Brien, Diana Rogers, John Stifler, Martin Wobst

Brother Lawrence Guild:

2024 was another eventful year for the BLG as we happily prepared food for the St Nicholas Bazaar, St Michael's and Pentecost Picnics, Shrove Tuesday/Sunday pancakes, assisted with set-up and clean-up at the Feast of Grace also known as "The In Gathering" and also Margaret Bullitt-Jonas's retirement party. This past year we added two highchairs and booster seats to our equipment along with a Bissell Steam shot handheld cleaner. In addition, we were finally able to get the dishwasher up to full operating capacity. Two new regulators were installed on the outdoor grille.

Serving as a member of the BLG is a great way to get involved at Grace Church. All are welcome to join us. We are very relaxed and light hearted as we prepare and serve meals to the Parish. We recognize God's presence among us in serving food and promoting fellowship in the congregation. When we at Grace Church, meet, greet, and eat with each other, God is with us, and those times are joyful occurrences! If you would like to be a part of the BLG but fear you cannot make or help at all the functions, not to worry, help when you can.

Brother Lawrence was a seventeenth-century Carmelite monk who experienced the presence of God while cleaning pots in the scullery of his monastery. Accepting what he'd been given to do, Brother Lawrence spent his life attempting to live in God's presence. Like Brother Lawrence, we try to practice the presence of God in the act of preparing meals for our fellow parishioners – and newcomers – at Grace Church. We are grateful for this opportunity and welcome others to join us in this hospitable endeavor.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Dougherty for Members in service: Sarah Chadwick, Jeffrey DeSantis, Kitty Dougherty Tony Jewel, Mark Leonas, Doug Moore, Katie Schendel, Diana Spurgin, Janet Teng and Virginia Ramos

ClimateAction@Grace

Climate Action at Grace (caag) meets the second Sunday of the month after the second service, at 12:15. Somewhat counterintuitively, this gathering together can be joyful. We begin and end with prayer and/or song. We have no budget.

Our hopes for 2025 include increasing our sense of a reciprocal connection with the natural world and how it supports us, and how we can support it.

List of our efforts in 2024:

1. We took stock of efforts that parishioners are already doing on their own on behalf of Creation. There were over 75 efforts of all different kinds, from avoiding paper towel use to solar panels.
2. We hosted Mireille Benjani to educate us about how the electrical grid is run in our Commonwealth and how we can support efforts for it be more eco-friendly and also affordable to lower-income communities.
3. During Creation Season we hosted two well-attended presentations. Corinna Moebius grew up in Amherst and at Grace and talked about the powerful connection to place and spirituality that can inform and inspire our efforts. She is a local and national leader in this work. Marianne Connor led us in "where does our joy meet the world's need?" She is working to develop a bioregional network to coordinate the many various efforts in our Valley working for the natural world. We look forward to future workshops she and others will be leading.

4. We provided the Vestry, through Tom Dougherty, with an option from MassSave to assess our insulation needs and apply for no-cost insulation. He is waiting to hear their recommendations. The costs are paid through Eversource fees.
5. We are developing a presence on the web. We intend for this to help us discern, choose, track, and commit to our efforts.
6. We continue our monthly bell-ringing on the 11th of the month at 11 am for eleven minutes. This has been several years running. This year we coordinated through the church office how to respectfully support the Veterans' ceremony on the Town Common. After a period of silence at the end of their gathering we tolled (single rings) our bell eleven times.
7. We are looking into how to reduce waste at coffee hour.
8. We have assigned ourselves groups to research that are active on behalf of Creation Care and then decide where to become more engaged
9. Sandy Muspratt is leading us in following legislature in the Commonwealth. The session began in January 2025. He will alert interested people as to how to advocate for our environment: when, to whom, how, and which bills and their content.
10. We acknowledge and appreciate several other groups and ministries:
 - Garden Ministry, who planned and planted a pollinator garden by the front door to the Connector
 - Music ministry, who included an anthem for Earth Day ("Holy Earth, Our Ancient Home" by local composer Geoff Hudson), among other creation selections throughout the year
 - group who brought us teachings of St. Francis
 - sermons that have mentioned and honored our magnificent natural world
11. We are nurturing informal connections with other parishes and churches in our area in anticipation of coordinated efforts in the future, including Sts. James and Andrews (Greenfield), All Saints' (Hadley), and St. John's (Northampton).

Description of our mission

Members of Climate Action at Grace seek to inspire, educate, and encourage each other and our congregation, as well as our local, state, national legislatures to move toward environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.

We recognize that difficult and widespread changes in personal and social practices are necessary to meet the challenge of climate change. We seek to join our voices with others, of faith and secular, for mutual support and to amplify the call for these changes.

As Christians and humans we are charged by God to be good stewards of the Earth. We have an exciting time joining together in this quest to discover new ways to keep the world a healthy and glorious place to live for generations of people and all creatures to come. We invite others to join us in this sacred and imperative calling.

Edith Allison

Ramallah Ministry

Our Ramallah Ministry continues to survive despite the unrest and violence in the Middle East. We continue to support a scholarship for a Palestinian student in the last two years of high school, providing vocational training in either culinary arts/hospitality or in IT/computer programming, installation and repair, two areas where it is still possible to find work. The AFEDJ (American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem), located in

Connecticut, provides the over-sight, and the ETVTC (Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center) trains and finds jobs for the students.

Giovanni Anbar, founder and general director of the ETVTC, is in regular contact with us. He is very supportive of his students, many of whom start with little confidence, but graduate with useful skills and clear goals.

This is our 14th year supporting a student, which Giovanni says is longer than any other donor. He says they would normally have a year-end celebration but are skipping it for the second year in a row, because of the “daily attacks” from Israeli settlers in settlements on hills surrounding Ramallah and because of the deprivation caused by the blockade of the West Bank.

Our current student is Joyce Harish, our first female student in the IT stream. Giovanni says, “Joyce is doing soooo good and is one of the best students of the year.” She enjoys swimming, dancing and computer games. She would like to catch cyber criminals.

For years we have purchased Palestinian olive oil from Equal Exchange, which prides itself on purchasing products from the farmers who grow the trees, harvest the olives and produce the oil. We sell the oil on the first Sunday of each month to fund the scholarship for our ETVTC student. For years this oil has come from the West Bank, but this fall that changed. Israel has made it next to impossible for West Bank farmers to export their products. The borders are sealed. Therefore, Equal Exchange has had to find a different source. They now purchase the oil from a women’s cooperative in Galilee. The women in the cooperative are Israeli and Palestinian women working together, supportive of each other.

We thank God for the loyal support of the Grace congregation and appreciate this Episcopalian outreach of generosity and respect for all God’s children.

DeAnne Riddle

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Our 2025 Stewardship Campaign began in late October when members of the Stewardship Committee and The Reverend Tom Synan sent out pledge information and pledge cards to our parishioners of record, followed by an announcement from Tom Synan at both services on January 12th.

Since the ingathering, we have received \$504,090 in pledges for 2025 from 138 parishioners, and we are hoping to hear from any other households who have yet to pledge.

Our goal was to raise \$500,000 for the 2025 budget. Thanks so much for your continuing generosity and help in exceeding our goal!

Thankfully,

Bruce Stebbins, Stewardship Chair

Planned Giving:

The Planned Giving Committee, comprised of Doug Adler and Kent Faerber, provides information to parishioners on ways to include Grace Church in their estate plans in conjunction with advice from their legal counsel. Doug and Kent can discuss options to support the long-term needs of Grace through a will or living trust, a designation in an insurance policy or retirement plan, or a life income gift, such as a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust. The St. Michael's Fellowship, established in 2004, recognizes those who

have included Grace in their estate plans and parishioners are encouraged to alert the Rector or one of the committee members of such plans.

Kell Julliard and Harold Norris are new members of the Fellowship this year and they join Steven and Susan Abdow, Doug Adler, Brenda and Rick Aldrich, Patricia Andrews, Stephen and Jeanne Armstrong, Steve and Kate Atkinson, Tom Baker and Mary Hocken, David and Jessica Mix Barrington, Lee Beaty *, Shirley Brodigan *, Don and Jane Buckloh, Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale, Tom and Kitty Dougherty, Suzannah Fabing, Kent and Scottie Faerber, Evan Fotos *, Eleanor Fraser *, Hertha Haensel *, Jonathan* and Sarah* Hanke, Charlotte Hathaway, Bob Hawley*, Mary McCarthy *, Mel Heath *, Royster and Kathryn Hedgepeth, Rob Hirschfeld and Polly Ingraham, Ann Holland, Anne Homme, Dorothy Ives *, John Lemly and Catherine Melhorn, Mark Leonas, Karen Lowe, Sheila Mammen, Mark Marshall and Helen Leung, Margo McMahon *, Roberta Morel *, Eliot Moss and Hannah Abbott, Marilyn Munn *, Priscilla Parke *, Larry and Jean Rankin, Jim and Nina Scott, Phebe Sessions, Eugene and Marcia Sheehan, Bruce and Jeannette* Stebbins, Mary Steigner *, Mary Steinway *, Sara Stelzner, Bernice Taylor *, Janet Teng, Patricia Tillona, Zina Tillona *, Charlotte Turgeon*, Paul Vasconcellos*, Nancy Rose-Weeber and Charles Weeber, Reynolds Winslow, Jude and Martin Wobst, and Jeffrey Wood *.

* deceased

Doug Adler, Chair

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT

Special thank you to Rich Spurgin who provides monthly financial reports to the finance committee and the Vestry.

Thank you to the finance committee, Mark Leonas, Kitty Dougherty, John Robinson, Lynn Klock and Sarah Boy for their wisdom and experience regarding all things financial at Grace Church.

Lastly, thank you to the counters who each week help count and organize the offering. Much appreciated.

We do not take for granted how fortunate we are at Grace Church. There are many churches that are not as vibrant nor as fortunate to have a congregation who pledge more than \$500,000. Thank you to all of you for your generosity. Your pledges support all the programs we enjoy as well as the amazing staff that we have here at Grace Church. We finished 2024 with pledges totaling \$533,000 and did not need to rely on supplemental income from our investments.

Starting in Q1, our operating revenue exceeded our budgeted expenses. That continued consistently throughout the year and we were delighted to see a surplus of revenue at the end of 2024. Each month I presented our financial status to the Vestry and the remarks were consistent each month that we were ahead of budget. This continued through the summer and into the fall. At the end of the year, we finished with revenue ahead of budget, expenses below budget and we were able to fund all programs without needing to access any reserves or investments. Please review the attached financials and let me know if you have any questions.

Tim Hampson

VIII. MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Baptisms

Oliver Abela Horn
Brenden David Monahan

Confirmands

Jeanette Margaret Mary Erard
Michael Charles Erard
Terry Masterson
Wendell Packard

Received

None in 2024

Reaffirmed

None in 2024

Marriage

Loyda Martinez and Kevin McKeown
Anna Gabriela Wieckowski and Samuel Anthony Masinter
Sara Blue Brainard and Christopher Wesley Byler

Requiem

Elizabeth Ann Congdon
Gigi Green
Valerie A. Ivy
Martha Chase Mitchell
Stearns Anthony "Tony" Morse
Gary L. Niswonger
Jane Price
Jennifer M. Read
Carolyn Samonds

David H. Soper
Thomas E. Soper
Howard Reid Ward
Peter A. Ward
Virginia C. Ward
David W. Wills
Walter Winternitz
Jana Winthers Zide
Michael Roi Zide

Added - New members/Reactivated

Bill & Monica Barry
Don & Jane Buckloh
Harriet (Hattie) Finkel

Transferred/Moved

None in 2024

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