



Grace Notes

Sept/Oct 2020

From the Rector

By Rev. Chris Morck

In a sermon this summer, I quoted a phrase that I had heard or read somewhere, though I still cannot place it. It is to the effect of, "God shouts when we do not heed God's whisper."

I wouldn't say that God does it often. Most often we hear God's whispers or conversation using our 'inside voices,' but sometimes God does have to shout.

We might hear God shouting now through the Earth and her climate, like in June during the first 100-degree day ever recorded within the Arctic Circle, because certain groups on this planet have not listened to God's whispers.

Sometimes when God shouts, it is through us. I believe that I've been hearing God shouting loud and clear for weeks this past summer on the

corner of Union and County Streets, just a couple of blocks away, and across the nation, in protest of the still unreckoned white sin of structural racism.

Sometimes Jesus must overturn a table or two. I wonder if we have been seeing this as well, as statues honoring oppression are literally being toppled throughout our country.

You might recoil at the suggestion, yet there *is* a history behind these monuments, quite different than the white-washed one attempting to tell us that they are in homage to something else.

As I explained in the sermon, most of these statues were placed decades after the Civil War, peaking in the very early 1900s as the North allowed reconstruction of the South to fail, and the Jim Crow era began, with a series of laws designed to segregate, disenfranchise, and subjugate black people. These

monuments were an extension of that movement.

Not coincidentally, the erection of the statues peaked as both lynchings and the KKK grew. They were put up in order to reassert control over former slaves and their descendants. They were placed specifically as public memorials to unrepentant white supremacy, the institution of slavery, and a romanticized and sanitized version of the Confederacy.

And they went up with little to no public process, some even using public funds by private groups, so the very process marginalized black people in these communities while colonizing public space.

The construction of monuments peaked again - again not coincidentally - during the Civil Rights movement, as physical symbols of anti-blackness and terror, and it was again accompanied by massive white violence against black people and anyone who would stand with them in solidarity.

Yes, I do believe that God is shouting in this moment. I believe that it is God, through the hands and righteous anger of people in the streets, who topples these idols to injustice. And we can and should be open to God shouting through us.

Of course, this isn't the whole picture. God also whispers and carries on normal conversation through us as well. This is still true.

Maybe we are not shouting or toppling, but instead, for example, we are supporting the protesters or educating ourselves, having tough conversations or donating to causes for racial justice. Maybe we are reaching out through acts of compassion, generosity, empathy, lovingkindness.

God uses it all. But let us remember that this is the time for it. This is the time.

Faithfully,
Chris +

Grace Church Regathering News

Although understandably it might not seem like much has changed at Grace as far as re-gathering, I just want to write you all a note to let you know that there is much going on behind the scenes.

In May, following diocesan guidelines, we formed the Grace Re-gathering Advisory Group, made of Grace parishioners, to help guide us through the process. We also readied the church for eventual re-gathering, removing our books, cushions, and such, and even envisioning the way that pews could be filled (with people).

In July, we solicited a diocesan Re-gathering Shepherd.

In August, as I write this to you now, we are drafting an extensive and highly detailed re-gathering plan which will be reviewed by the Advisory Group and the Shepherd, and then will need approval by our vestry and bishop. We hope to have this in place by early September, so that we can begin re-gathering as soon as it seems safe to do so.

We also drafted a Grace Policy in case there is potential exposure of staff, volunteers, parishioners, or visitors who have been physically present at Grace.

In addition to all of this, the summer has been filled with ample conversation around the how, when, and what of re-opening our doors.

Of course, the timeline will be dependent on the trajectory of the virus. (I admit to being very conservative as we move toward this, believing that health and safety take precedence.)

Also, re-gathering will happen for different facets of our common life at different times. Very soon, we hope to be able to gather again in, say, small groups or at a park or through 'parking lot' or 'driveway' visits. Maybe a group of us could take a hike together!

All the while, we continue to evaluate how soon we feel that it is safe to worship together again, in person. That will be so sweet!

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with your questions or feedback.

Gratefully,
Chris +

Grace Youth Group: New Ways to Gather

Spending time with our youth group has been a huge blessing of beginning ministry with you all at Grace. Back in April, after several weeks of not being able to meet in-person because of the coronavirus shutdown, our youth group met for the first time over Zoom. I was still in Sewanee, TN at the time, finishing up the seminary semester online, and technology made it possible for me to join our team of youth mentors and young people as we stepped together into a new way of accompanying one another through Zoom. How fitting that this happened during the season of Easter, a season of resurrection, of new life and new possibilities!

That first youth group Zoom meeting was awkward, for sure. But as we kept showing up, Sunday after Sunday, as we checked in with one another and prayed with one another, the awkward Zoom space became our space—a space to be ourselves, to share the hard things and good things, and a space to be reminded of God's love for us and our love for one another. This happened so quickly over Zoom, I think, because this was the kind of space youth group already was long before I arrived, and before the coronavirus changed our way of meeting—our youth and mentors at Grace, with the leadership and guidance of Chris and Jean and many other ministry leaders through the years, have cultivated and tended something that is a precious rarity for young people: a space to be themselves and know that they are beloved of God, a space for us to accompany one another on our journeys of life and faith, as we seek to know and serve Christ together.

Youth group normally pauses for the summer, but this year the youth wanted to continue to meet, and so we have been Zooming together every Sunday after church. We have played games (Bible story Pictionary on the Zoom whiteboard was a favorite), sung campfire songs, made origami cranes as signs of hope and healing, and shared experiences of our time in nature. Through it all, we check in and pray for and with one another. Our Zoom space has come to feel, to quote some of our youth during a recent check-in, “real and true.” The Holy Spirit moves through all spaces, even virtual ones.

As we enter a new fall season, our youth group is growing, and we look forward to welcoming our new members. We also have a need to grow our team of youth mentors, which is exciting! We are happy to welcome new mentors into our ministry at any time of year. If you are interested in learning more about youth group and/or serving as a youth mentor, please do reach out to me at revmelissahowell@gracechurchnb.org. I look forward to continuing to listen together, with God and our young people, for new and changing possibilities for youth ministry at Grace this year and beyond.

With peace and blessing,
Melissa †

Liturgy & Liturgical Ministry

By Jerré Croteau, Verger

September-October 2020

I just returned from a three-week vacation in Provincetown, though still there were vacationers, much quieter than usual, which suited the older and wiser Jerré. Masks were

mandatory, everywhere you went, big signs on Commercial Street warning not to proceed without a mask. The restaurants have been extremely creative about making outside seating on their postage-stamp-sized lots; the tiny boutiques limiting the number of patrons. The beautiful, little Episcopal church, St. Mary of the Harbor, shuttered and only doing the same as we, virtual services. It is indeed a different world.

Here at Grace we are still in phase one, phase two still uncertain as to timing. There is so much work to be done in order to implement the safe re-establishment of in-person services. Thus, there is not much I can say about the upcoming months, except that the liturgical year will continue on its course. Once we are able to reopen our doors to a limited number of our beloved Parish Family, we will still continue to broadcast some services for those who are still unable to join us. For this purpose, like many of our sister churches of all denominations, we are investing in a more sophisticated video system; we are currently streaming live by the use of a telephone, not a very reliable way of doing things.

September 6th is still within the “summer” mode. The program year usually starts with the first Sunday after Labor Day, this year it will be September 13th, which is normally “Homecoming Sunday.” During the months ending Summer and bringing us to Autumn, we have, for the past few years, used a combination of Eucharistic Prayer C and Enriching Our Worship Prayer 3, depending on the Sunday. Children’s Liturgy will continue to be offered at the principal service on the third Sunday of the month.

The Blessing of the Animals is still planned to occur on October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, but where, when, and how are still being worked out. There are many other traditional liturgical events that occur during these busy first two months of the “Program Year,” alternative celebrations for all of which are being planned with consideration for the health and wellbeing of our Parish Family. Our Rector will be updating you when plans are firmer. Many people are working very hard to decide what to do and creatively implement worship in this new world in which we are forced to live during this period of pandemic and political chaos.

LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

Not knowing when we will return to in-person Liturgy and being totally uncertain as to how many ministers will be needed for the services in Autumn, your Verger is unable to create a viable schedule for Clergy and Lay Ministers at this time. When decisions are made and provisions made for how many Ministers will be allowed to serve safely, then I may embark on creating a tentative schedule. In the meantime, I have lost track of those Acolytes, Acolyte Lectors, and Acolyte Eucharistic Ministers and Verger’s Assistant are still in the area to serve. Also, there are some Adult servers, who may not feel comfortable serving under present conditions. I will be reaching out to all those Acolytes and Lay Ministers that are currently on my lists, to ascertain their ability and willingness to serve during the current year, once members of those vulnerable age groups can be allowed to serve in future phases.



*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another
with whatever gift each of you has received.*

1 Peter 4:10

This year's theme for our Pledge Campaign is **Faith-Filled Generosity**. The campaign will begin on Sunday, September 27th, and end on the weekend of October 24th and 25th with the ingathering of the pledges. The method of receiving pledges will likely look different this year, but the symbolic meaning of making a commitment to God's ministries at Grace Church does not change. Parishioners will receive a letter from Rev. Chris and a pledge card in the mail during the week of September 22nd. As we continue to find new ways to strengthen our relationship and help others in our community, please reflect on how God has provided for you even during this time of uncertainty. When we give in faith, we are showing love and generosity for our community and our neighbors. Prayerfully consider making and/or increasing your monetary commitment by turning in your pledge card. Your 2021 commitment will fund our ministries that support the greater New Bedford area. We realize that this pandemic may have impacted some of you financially, please know that your written commitment is changeable at any time by contacting Rev. Chris, Katie, Administrative Assistant, or myself....Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Amen

Stewardship Committee: Beth Sharp McKay, Chairperson, Rev. Chris Morck; Anne Gundersen, Ned Hines, Terri Nowell, and Robbie Watkins.

Children's Ministry Program

By Charlene Ryder, Children's Ministry Program Coordinator

As I write this email article for September & October, I reflect on what information do I have to share about this ministry. As we are uncertain about when we will be able to re-open in-person church school to children, I have some offerings via ZOOM and our Facebook Live Sunday morning service I will share.

The church school teachers and the verger have offered to read storybooks. This will be via ZOOM and more information will be forthcoming shortly.

During our Facebook Live Sunday 10AM Eucharist Services, we will be offering the Children's Liturgy and a children's sermon on the third Sundays of the month.

When we open for in-person church school classes we have an AWESOME team of teachers ready to begin:

Mimi Monteiro, Pam Souza and Andrea Medeiros – grades Pre/K – K

Courtney Botelho, Mark Bernardo and Nadine Gomes – grades 1 & 2

Charlene Ryder, Jessica Cabral and Erin Mingola – grades 3, 4 & 5

If you have any questions, please contact me at any time by phone, text or email at: 508-728-4374 or cryder@umassd.edu

July-August 2020 Gifts

Community Breakfast

Gift of James Bisagni, Norma Bossé
Gift of Bill Reed **in memory of Martha Shaw Reed**

Pastoral Leadership

Gift of Pauline Roderiques

Laundry Love

Gift of Edith Lauderdale

Martha's Pantry at Grace

Gifts of James & Carol Dildine, Pauline Roderiques, Lavard Blanche & Artie Hodge, Edith Lauderdale, James Bobrick, St. Gabriel's Church

Gift of Roland & Harriet Shaw, Priscilla Guillemette **in memory of Harland Knox**

Gift of Pearl Corbett **in memory of Robert A. Corbett**

Gift of Bill Reed **in memory of Martha Shaw Reed**

Rector's Discretionary Fund

Gifts of W. Gardner Chase, Donald Driesen, Norma Bossé, Michael & Cynthia Shea, Travis Bowie, Richard Fabio, Nancy & David Faria, Tim & Holly Cipriani, Larry Correia, Barbara Santos

Memorial Fund

Gift of Sally Bullard **in memory of Walter Platt**

Audiovisual Equipment

Gifts of Michael & Caroline Blais, James Bisagni & Memory Holloway, The Protestant Episcopal Diocese of MA

Interchurch Council

Gifts of Richard Fabio, Roger & Ermelinda Silva, Richard Anderson

General Fund

Gifts of Thomas G. Davis, Diane B. Gallant, Gerry Lopes

Gift of Maureen & Ray Armstrong, Thomas & Susan Knight **in memory of Walter Platt**

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Church Staff

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Rector               | Rev. Christopher Morck |
| Curate               | Rev. Melissa Howell    |
| Director of Music    | Brian Roderick         |
| Parish Administrator | Katie Brengle          |
| Verger               | Gérald Croteau         |

Wardens & Officers

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Senior Warden       | Jean Pitcairn   |
| Junior Warden       | Charles Green   |
| Treasurer           | Sharlene Begley |
| Assistant Treasurer | Roberta Iglar   |
| Clerk               | Betsy Pye       |

Vestry Members 2020

Kathleen Ferreira  
Judy Knox  
Dana Sargent  
Maureen Decker  
Travis Bowie  
Rob DaSilva  
Sean Corwin  
James Doe  
Cheryl Gammell  
Beth Sharp  
Lisa Thibeault

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