



**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**of**  
**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**New Bedford, Massachusetts**



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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

As a Christian community, we seek to know, glorify, and serve God.  
We do this through:

### **WORSHIP**

by using traditional and contemporary forms of liturgy with prayer and guidance;

### **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

by teaching the love of Jesus Christ through scripture, education,  
and daily life applications;

### **FELLOWSHIP**

by nurturing and supporting each other; and

### **OUTREACH**

by being Jesus' heart, voice, hands, and feet in our community and the world.

We invite you:  
Whoever you are;  
Wherever you are on your journey of faith;  
Come to the table and receive the supper of the Lamb.

## **A PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH**

*O God, our heavenly Father, graciously behold this congregation. Bind together its members with cords of friendliness and sympathy. Give us the vision of our common duty to Church and State and make us glad and strong in the doing of it. By all the memories of a great past, rouse us to hear the calls of the present. Grant wisdom, courage, and patience to our leaders, and fill us all with the spirit of loving service; that whatsoever we do in word or deed may be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, through whom we offer this our prayer.*

***Amen.***

## GRACE CHURCH GOALS

**YOUTH MINISTRY** - Re-envision Grace's program for the youth of the parish and the greater New Bedford community and develop an overarching framework for growth and maintenance of the program. This includes: 1) to hire and continuously fund the position of a full time Assistant Rector/Curate with oversight of the program; 2) identify appropriate structure for the program and provide appropriate resources to support it; 3) ensure an appropriate number of program mentors and succession planning for their replacement; and 4) support the growth of our youth outreach activities and involvement in the life of our parish.

**INCORPORATION** - Increase the involvement of all parishioners in Grace's programs by mentoring their interests and strengths. Continue to grow a new members program that welcomes all and provides avenues for their involvement in the richness of life of the parish community. Develop offerings representative of the diversity of the greater New Bedford community. Improve communication of the parish's organizational structure and needs in all areas including worship, formation, music, and outreach, in order to support increased involvement by all.

**OUTREACH/MISSION** - Expand services and support for the local community and the world as a whole by nurturing the body, mind, and soul. Open our hearts and minds to opportunities to continuously fulfill the needs of those who are vulnerable or on the fringes of our society and nurture programs of support. Support and grow, with our time, talents and treasures, existing programs that assist those in need.

**FACILITIES** - Continue to make capital improvements to provide a safe, secure and efficient environment within and outside of our church buildings for the use of the parish and the community at large. Make major repairs and raise funding for the projects' completion. Develop an ongoing maintenance plan for church facilities in order to conscientiously budget for work required over the coming years. Recognizing Grace's unique position in the community, ensure that our facilities are available, for generations to come, for worship, formation, outreach/mission programs, fellowship, and general use by the Greater New Bedford community.

**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY** – Concentrate on bringing our operational expenses in line with our income without a disproportionate reliance on non-operational funds. Better educate ourselves on the church's budget and accounts in order to bring about an improved understanding of the financial resources required to support a congregation with a commitment to its worship and formation programs as well as the needs of those we serve in the community and beyond. Promote discussion of our Endowment and how it can be grown and used to support our ongoing needs.

## PAROCHIAL STATISTICS

Baptized Members: **643**                      Communicants: **482**  
Confirmation/Reception: **0**                      Baptisms: **0**  
Church School Enrollment: **23**                      Youth Group: **14**

## REGISTER OF CHURCH SERVICES

Holy Eucharist: Sundays: **33 in-person/43 virtual** Weekdays: **11 in-person/2 virtual** Private: **25 in-person**  
Other Services: **12 in-person/18 virtual** Marriages: **1 in-person** Burials: **9 in-person/1 virtual**  
Total Services: **91 in-person/64 virtual (total of 155)**  
Average Attendance: Saturday / Sunday Services: **169** Wednesday Morning Services: **23**

## THE VESTRY 2020

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

### Vestrypersons

Term expires 2021: Kathleen Ferreira, Judy Knox, Dana Sargent  
Term expires 2022: Travis Bowie, Rob DaSilva, Maureen Decker, Sean Corwin  
Term expires 2023: Cheryl Gammel, James Doe, Beth Sharp-McKay, Lisa Thibeault

## CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Christopher R. Morck, Rector - The Rev. Melissa Howell, Curate  
Brian Roderick, Director of Music - Katie Brengle, Parish Administrator

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 9, 2020

### **Call to Order and Prayer**

The Rev Chris Morck opened the meeting with prayer.

### **Refer to the Warrant**

The warrant, which has been posted on the doors of the church and published online in the E-news and the website, was referred to but not read aloud.

Chris asked Diana Ukleja, Clerk, if there was a quorum; yes.

### **Approve the Minutes of the Previous Annual Meeting and Special Meeting**

Chris asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on February 10, 2019, and the Minutes of the Special Parish Meeting held on March 31, 2019. Moved, Seconded, Approved (**MSA**)

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Jean thanked the Nominating Committee, made up of outgoing Vestry, Wardens and Rector, for their work and announced the nominees for officer positions and vestry, asking each to stand. She asked for nominations from floor; Bill Boyce has agreed to serve as an alternate delegate to convention.

Volunteers were invited to fill the open positions.

Jean asked for a motion to approve the slate of nominees, representatives and delegates; **MSA**

### **Recognition of Retiring Vestry and Officers**

Chris asked all current Vestry members and officers as well as the newly elected to come to the front. He thanked the outgoing Vestry members, John Evans, Nadine Gomes, Mike Goulart and Ryan Shea, for their service to Grace.

### **Commissioning of the Vestry**

The new and current Vestry members were commissioned. A copy of the commission document can be found on the website, under Events / 2020 Annual Meeting.

### **Sermon**

Quoting from this morning's Gospel (Matthew 5:13-20) on how Jesus says his followers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, Rev. Chris noted that in Biblical times ... and still today, in many parts of the world, salt is a rarity to be prized, and light after sundown is in very short supply. He asked the congregation how they see Grace as serving as light and salt today. We were not short of responses! Some emphasized our service to one another, as with the Christ in the Kitchen ministry, while others spoke to our many outreach services to the community. Our position in the community was underlined by our hosting of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus and the visit from the Presiding Bishop last year, and our hosting of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance this year. Chris concluded with a quote from this morning's reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 58:1 – 12):

if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

### **Lunch with Discussion**

During lunch, the Wardens made brief presentations, and the congregation was invited to review the Annual Report. Several additions to the annual report were made, including the report of the Trustees of Parish Funds, an update on the Stewardship Campaign, and an update of the planned disbursement of funds from the 40<sup>th</sup> and Final (and very successful) Bittersweet Bazaar.

## Senior Warden

Jean Pitcairn reflected on her experience as part of the team which attended the Rooted in Jesus Conference in Atlanta as well as her experience with our youth. She wonders if we really know what we as a parish need from one another, and how we can better connect to one another and to share our stories with one another. Bill Boyce then spoke of his experience working with the Presiding Bishop's staff on Evangelism this year. He had us repeat together:

We are the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement and we are called to seek, to name, and to celebrate Jesus' loving presence in the stories of all people—and then invite everyone to more. (This is the Episcopal Church definition of Evangelism.)

Kathy Ferreira spoke to her new understanding of the term evangelism, more about sharing our stories with one another, rather than the image of going door to door or Bible thumping. Beth Sharp spoke of her decision to attend the conference after she heard Bill speak on evangelism at a vestry meeting she attended to provide an update on stewardship and found that it was really calling to her and some issues she had been experiencing.

## Junior Warden

Charlie Green shared a salt story: this winter has been easy but there has been some late freezing. Salt is kept by the doors – if you see a need, please apply it! He appealed for any with special talents related to the upkeep of the building to volunteer their help. He also asked that we all try to leave things in good condition. Do let him know if you see maintenance issues.

The parking issue was addressed: the spaces next to the Rodman House and in the lower lot are not available to Grace Church during the week. On Sunday, three Rodman spaces are marked with cones as clients are expected to visit at that time.

## Treasurers

Sharlene invited questions. It was asked what the vestry planned to replace the income stream represented by the Bazaar. In 2019, \$500 was passed to the operating budget, and the vestry has never planned on receiving income from the bazaar.

## Bittersweet Bazaar

Betsy Pye reported that the Bazaar committee voted to disburse \$18,000 (slightly more than was raised) as follows:

Children's Ministries	\$1000
Youth Ministries	1000
Community Breakfast	500
Martha's Pantry at Grace	1500
Laundry Love	500
Restoration / Building Fund – School area	3000
Replacement chairs	500
Pastoral leadership	10,000

Betsy noted that fund raising efforts will continue, but the volunteers needed to support the bazaar are no

longer to be found.

A question was asked about renting out available space; Chris said we are actively pursuing opportunities and invited suggestions.

### **Stewardship Campaign**

Beth Sharp reported with pleasure that this is the first year we have met our pledge goals by the end of the year.

### **Trustees of Parish Funds**

Copies of the report of the Trustees of Parish Funds were available and have been posted on the website under Events / 2020 Annual Report.

Allen Decker was asked to explain the term “legacies”. Gifts made by known or anonymous donors are referred to the vestry. If a gift is specified for a purpose, it is placed in the restricted endowment for that purpose. Gifts not so specified are generally referred to the unrestricted endowment, from which a regular draw, currently at a rate of 5%, supports the operating budget. At present, this represents 37% of the operating budget.

A motion was made to accept the annual report, and the 2020 budget included therein, and to place them on file. **MSA**

### **Final Thoughts**

Sharlene appealed for help on Tuesday at 10:45 to assist with a large delivery of boxes from Shaw’s for Martha’s Pantry at Grace.

Chris thanked all who assisted at the setup for the meeting, and those who brought food. He asked for all who can to stay and help with cleanup.

### **Closing Prayer**

Jean Pitcairn closed the meeting with prayer.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

Chris asked for a motion to adjourn. **MSA**

Respectfully submitted,  
Diana Ukleja, Clerk

# 2021 NOMINATION SLATE

## Officers

Senior Warden	Jean Pitcairn
Junior Warden	Charlie Green
Treasurer	Sharlene Begley
Assistant Treasurer	Pam Mello
Clerk	Betsy Pye

## Three-Year Vestry Term, 2021-2024 (four)

1. Sean Corwin
2. David King
3. Eric Jaikes
4. Nadine Gomes

## Convention Delegates (two)

1. Anne Gundersen
2. Allen Decker

## Convention Alternates (two)

1. Elizabeth Sharp
2. William Boyce

## Deanery Representatives (five)

1. Charlene Ryder
2. Mike Goulart
3. Ryan Shea
4. John Evans
- 5.

## Episcopal City Mission Representatives (two)

1. Roberta Iglar
- 2.

## Inter-Church Council (one)

1. Eric Jaikes

## Teller (one)

1. Maureen Decker

## RECTOR REPORT

What a year to be the Church and to be part of Grace Church!

So much of what we thought the year might hold changed drastically. There were plenty of surprises along the way, and though there were those we would not have wished for, not all of them were unwelcome. Each week seemed to gift us opportunities alongside challenges. Through it all, our call to 'be' the Church, Jesus' body in this world, never changed.

### **The new pandemic**

March 11th was the first time that COVID-19 began to change the way that we 'do' church, as we began to postpone some of our meetings (temporarily, we thought). Things rapidly progressed. March 12th, given further direction from our Diocese, we suspended Coffee Hour, Church School, and Youth Group "through the month of March" and canceled the Sunday Book Study. The church office closed the next week, on March 19th.

Sunday afternoon, March 15th, after what proved to be our last in-person weekend services for the rest of the calendar year, I wrote my first of almost monthly and way-too-long updates to the parish. The pandemic landscape changed by the day, if not by the moment, and so sometimes what I would write seemed to be outdated as soon as I sent it.

The City of New Bedford canceled all public meetings and took other measures as part of a comprehensive State of Emergency. Schools suspended classes.

As I wrote then, "In view of the well-being of us all, in seeking the common good, in solidarity with the City, in consultation with Grace leadership, and following guidance from our own Bishops and our Presiding Bishop, I have decided to suspend all in-person worship services for the next three weeks."

Of course, we all know that the timeline we set, and re-set, and set again, changed as time moved on.

At the same time, we began, from that last March 15th 10am service, to offer our services online, first through Facebook and then additionally through YouTube.

### **Feeding the hungry**

Solely due to the creativity, compassion, and dedication of our volunteers, both Martha's Pantry and the Community Breakfast continued helping those who need it most, with required modifications for the health and safety of all. Much thought and energy went into looking at how to keep both ministries functioning well. More supplies were purchased, a take-out window was built, and we hardly missed a beat. Some volunteers stepped back, as they needed to do. While new volunteers joined us, as altered work and school schedules freed up their availability.

### **Nourishing each other**

We soon began compiling a list of people to give and receive phone check-ins. Grace Cares developed a phone bank, keeping a constantly updated list of callers and callees in order to check in and also hear of any needs that arise, such as food needs, grocery delivery, and pharmacy pick-up. This was also a primary way that fellowship was extended, and information was shared with those who do not have internet.

People began to spread the word about our virtual services and by the end of March we witnessed people coming together virtually who had never been in our physical building or who would not have been able to. We had friends who had moved away and reconnected. Participants came from Washington over to Maine down to Florida up to Canada and over to the UK.

We were invited to set aside noon together every day to pray for and think about each other, though we were apart, while adding some other opportunities for connection in our common life. Through the vision, time, and energy of some of our members, creative services and opportunities for prayer and connection were offered.

There was “Pop In Prayer” – brief moments of prayer on Wednesdays that changed time every week to accommodate people’s schedules, and “Grace Connections” on Sunday nights. We held several parish “town halls” throughout the past year to stay connected and informed.

### **Holy Week and Easter**

Although unthinkable at the beginning of the pandemic, we came together in an unprecedented way for Holy Week and Easter, through virtual Compline on Wednesday in Holy Week, a prayer service via Zoom on Maundy Thursday, a virtual veneration of the cross on Good Friday, the lighting of the Paschal Candle and singing of the Exsultet on Holy Saturday, and then the livestreamed Easter Sunday in the chapel (due to the better sound quality of the recording -- we were still using a smart phone at the time!).

### **Grace’s new curate**

It was right around that time that we also received some really good news for Grace. We hired Melissa Howell as our curate, just as she was finishing her last year of studies at Sewanee Episcopal Seminary in Tennessee.

Melissa officially began her ministry with us on Sunday, June 7th, Grace’s Sundaes Sunday (or is it Sunday Sundaes?), though she had already started her ministry at Grace virtually as she re-started Youth Group through Zoom with our youth and mentors in the spring even while finishing her studies.

### **Youth and Children**

This also began a transition from volunteer coordination of the Youth Group. I have been so deeply grateful for the many ways that Jean Pitcairn has coordinated the Youth Group these

last several years. Since I arrived, every year Jean stepped up to the plate as we searched for the stable, caring, and organized leader and coordinator that a Youth Group of Grace's size and activity needed. Now, with Melissa at the helm and our excellent youth mentors, Jean has been able to transition to other Grace ministries.

Our Children's Ministry also resumed through Zoom. Our coordinator and Church School teachers invested much time and effort as they sought to keep us together during this time. Creativity, hard work, and fun abounded in virtual Church School and story times, and in events like the summer's Children's Ministry Scavenger Hunt.

### **Our four-hundred-year-old pandemic**

At the end of May, in the midst of one new pandemic, we saw more visibly undeniable outbreaks of the pandemic which has neither been eradicated nor ever been rightly or fully reckoned with – the violence of racism and white privilege in our country.

This pandemic affects and infects us all, though the symptoms vary greatly depending on the color of our skin. Especially for those among us who are white, the constant prayer is that this moment continues to push us to be on the path of anti-racism and to be part of the struggle for the lasting change that this nation so desperately needs even as it resists.

Some of the ways that Grace parishioners committed to or continued to engage with the work and journey of anti-racism this past year were through honest conversations and listening, education through book and dialogue groups and the 21-day Equity Challenge, joining the protests in our area, and commitment to working on changing public policy and legislation that will address systemic issues.

### **The A/V Club**

Through the summer we began the process of contracting a professional company to install video equipment on a permanent basis, enabling us to livestream our worship even when we are re-gathered. The fruit of that work was first seen by the public on September 27th, with high-quality audio-visual worship thanks to the extraordinary work of our newly formed Audio/Visual Technology Guild. Please see their report (included in this Annual Report) to get a brief and better sense of the enormity of the work involved in this new ministry.

### **Re-gathering**

In the beginning of the summer, we formed a Grace Re-gathering Advisory Council, mid-summer we developed a parish COVID-19 policy, and right after the end of the summer we had a diocesan-approved plan to begin to re-gather. Though at no point since the pandemic began did it seem wise, safe, or even feasible for Grace Church to begin re-opening our doors to in-person weekend worship, we did begin to re-gather in other ways.

This fall, as virtual worship continued, we started three different small groups, offered both in-person and virtually. Each group had a different emphasis – sharing stories of life and faith, further exploring prayer, reading a book on forgiveness and grace amidst difficulty and grief -

while all of them sought to build connections and strengthen our relationship with God and one another.

The Youth Group began hikes and outdoor activities and we had an outdoor, in-person Back-to-School Blessing and Blessing of the Animals (both with thanks to the James Arnold Mansion!).

### **Christmas**

We closed out an astonishingly unusual year in a fittingly unordinary way, as the A/V Guild spent countless hours pre-recording segments and preparing for hybrid livestreamed Christmas services. Many 'attended' the virtual release of our incredibly holy and entertaining Christmas Pageant, our livestreamed Christmas Eve service (with many pre-recorded pieces, allowed more participation and gave the service the closest-felt sense that we could get for that holy evening), a "Silent Night Moment" at midnight, and Christmas prayer the next morning through Zoom.

### **Looking back, looking ahead**

As we ended 2020, we also looked forward to some early January blessings at Grace, with the new opportunity of the Stations of the Nativity, Melissa's Epiphany ordination, and her first celebration of Holy Eucharist and the breaking of our eucharistic fast through the distribution of communion at the James Arnold Mansion parking lot.

Though through much of this year we have been unable to gather in our church building, we have continued to "be the church". Grace has continued life-giving ministry through the above, through virtual liturgies, youth and church school activities, and book studies, continuing to offer pastoral care, our undaunted feeding ministries and Grace Cares, the maintaining of our building, your continued financial support, and much more.

We have been and will continue to be in this together. As we look back at the past year, let us continue to look for the ways that we can care for and support each other and our wider community. As challenging as 2020 had been, over and over again I have been filled with gratitude for this community that is Grace Church and the many ways that we have reached out and stepped up.

God bless us, God keep us, God guide our steps. Amidst so much which has changed, we continue to be held unflinchingly, fully, unconditionally in God's arms of abiding and eternal lovingkindness, a love embracing each one of us and all that God has made.

Faithfully, and with thanksgiving,  
Chris +

## CURATE REPORT

It was a joy to join Grace in June 2020 as curate after my ordination to the transitional diaconate, and it was a blessing to be ordained priest here in January 2021. During these months of many pandemic-related challenges, serving with and getting to know the beloved community at Grace has been a gift.

In addition to the curate's role of mentee and learner about all aspects of parish ministry, my primary responsibilities at Grace have included ministry with our youth and chaplain to our church school and families. As chaplain to the church school, I have met and consulted regularly with Charlene Ryder to support her in her ministry as the coordinator of our church school and teachers. You can read about Charlene's and the teachers' creative ministries with our children this year in her report.

In my role as youth minister, Jean Pitcairn and I began Grace's first ever Zoom youth group in April 2020. Jean, the mentors, and I met with our youth over Zoom from April through the summer—summer youth group was also a first, as the kids really wanted to continue to meet rather than take their usual summer break. We got to know one another through check-ins and show and tell, played games like Zoom Bible Pictionary, sang campfire songs, and had a summer film festival night. In the fall, we received permission from our diocese to begin meeting in-person. Four new youth mentors joined our team, and we switched to a hybrid model of alternating every other week between Zoom and in-person outdoor meetings. With a theme of seeking and finding play, resilience, and the deep rest Jesus offers to us in Matthew 11:28-30, we engaged in practices of noticing, seeking, and finding wonder and rest in God's creation while enjoying fellowship with one another. We hiked, beachcombed, and had a park scavenger hunt, and we sought and found Jesus in one another through regular check-ins, prayer, and games of connection. In December, to respond to youth and adult Zoom fatigue, we switched to meeting outdoors in-person every other week, discussing the Advent theme of waiting, and assembling gift bags of personal care supplies and warm clothing items for the guests of Grace's Sunday morning community breakfast. Looking forward to 2021, we will start the year by continuing to meet outdoors with our youth. In the fall of 2020, Jean Pitcairn and I completed training to lead and facilitate a youth curriculum on dismantling racism from the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing, and we plan to offer this to our youth (and potentially to other youth in our diocese and community) at some point in the coming year, when we are able to gather for longer periods of in-person interactive and educational time, either outdoors or indoors. We are grateful for the ministry of the youth mentors who served during 2020:

Heather Bernardo  
Kristi Botelho  
Ann Dailey

Louise Kelly  
Jackie L'Heureux  
Jean Pitcairn

Blinn Dorsey  
Roxanne Garcia

Jesse Roderiques

As curate I've also shared in adult education and spiritual formation, in collaboration with Chris and our worship and spiritual formation teams. In fall of 2020, as part of several small groups offered at Grace, I planned and facilitated a group called the Resource of Prayer, a six week exploration of prayer and prayer practices, including praying with Holy Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer, art, music, nature, and movement. I also worked with our worship team to plan and implement Stations of the Nativity, a new offering at Grace this year during the 2020-21 Christmas and Epiphany seasons. The stations are a self-guided and interactive walking prayer meditation that invite parishioners and community members into the stories of Jesus's birth through Holy Scripture, art, and the sacred space of Grace's chapel and sanctuary. Offering times for individuals and households to pray the stations was a way for Grace parishioners to safely be and pray in our church space after not being able to do so since the pandemic caused our in-person worship to pause in March 2020. We are especially grateful for the ministry of Jerré Croteau and Charlene Ryder in planning and implementation of Stations of the Nativity.

In a year filled with significant challenges and graces, it was a blessing to begin ordained life ministering with the community here at Grace in 2020, as together we bravely and creatively sought and served Christ in one another and in our neighbors.

With gratitude,  
Melissa †

## SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

*Gracious and loving God, I ask you to strengthen my mind, body, and spirit today. When I'm weary, may I be refreshed. When I'm worn, may I be renewed. When I'm broken, may I be restored. When I'm fearful, may I become faithful. I pray that I walk in complete confidence today knowing that the Lord Almighty is with me. Amen. —Belief.net*

It seems unfathomable that a year has passed, and we are still in the throes of such amazing challenges and difficulties—the health pandemic caused by COVID-19, division of minds, and isolation from our faith communities. At our last Annual Meeting, we made plans for our way forward as our Grace Community. Weeks later, all that we knew was turned upside down and inside out. Our isolation from each other and from our worship space has been destabilizing for all of us—it feels like we are in the wilderness.

But we also see, in our reflection of this last year, the incredible resiliency of our community. Through all the unprecedented challenges we have faced, the deep faith of our Grace family sustains us—Manna in the wilderness. Together, we have accomplished so much including virtual church, Zoom coffee hours, vestry by Zoom, socially distanced small groups, Children's

Christmas Pageant, continued help for our Food Pantry recipients and our brothers and sisters at Community Breakfast. It is amazing to see all the ways we have re-imagined our service to each other and our community, still serving God's people through the commitment and faithfulness of our Grace Family. Thank you all for inspiring and supporting and caring for our Grace Family and our neighbors in these challenging times.

This fall, it was a gift to see the many ways Grace Church stepped up to support (from afar) Chris and the Morck family, through unforeseen health needs. Once again, I am encouraged by all the ways we have stepped up to support Chris and Melissa (and Ran) and kept our Grace Family strong.

Perhaps one of the biggest blessings of this year was the arrival of Rev. Melissa Howell—an inspiring priest and mentor. Her devotion to youth even before she was officially at Grace, her gifts of prayer and creating safe worship space, and her devotion to relational ministry has supported and grown our community even in the pandemic. The vision and ongoing support of Melissa's position have kept us connected and grounded in this wilderness.

We are living through 4 pandemics: the pandemic of COVID-19, the pandemic of isolation, the pandemic of ecological devastation, and the pandemic of racism. Addressing the latter, Rev. Melissa and I are working through new anti-racism and racial reconciliation training through the Absalom Jones Center in Atlanta, Georgia (a ministry of The Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta). We hope to share what we have learned in the coming months.

To the pandemic of isolation, I have personally received the gift and mutual blessing of our wonderful small group experiences in Gathered in Grace that meet weekly, socially distanced, to spend time in prayer, worship, and fellowship. Hopefully, we can increase our small group ministries as the weather warms.

As followers of Jesus' way of Love, we continue to be blessed by each other, as our Grace family continues to pray, volunteer, and support each other. Indeed, we are Blessed to be a Blessing! As we continue in this wilderness time, we know there are joys and challenges ahead. Through all that lies ahead, I want to invite you to more...More relational ministry to know each other and connect more deeply...More involvement in small groups so we can deepen our faith and support each other more deeply...More conversation on how to address our many social challenges especially the sin of systemic racism...More understanding of the needs of our Grace Family and our surrounding community and how we can meet them...More prayer that God may dwell deeper in us, and us in our resurrecting God.

I continue to pray for the health and wellbeing of all of us as we move forward in 2021 and look forward to being together in any way that is safe and healthy. I do not know what will challenge us next, but I am grateful for all of the ways in which Grace keeps us grounded and balanced.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF VESTRY ACTIONS

In addition to approval of minutes of prior meetings, in 2020 the Vestry voted:

**At its meeting on January 29, 2020:**

- to accept a gift of \$20,000.00, in memory of Dr. Victor and Barbara Kiarsis from their children, to be utilized for the new computer system for the bells. Any balance of funds will be placed in the Building Fund to cover other ongoing property needs.
- to accept a gift of \$19,450.00 from Jerré Croteau, in memory of Robert Boardman, to be applied to the Pastoral Leadership Fund
- to approve expenditures from the following ministry funds to the stated limits:

<b>Ministry Fund</b>	<b>Total Max Expenditure Amount for 2020</b>
Laundry Love	\$ 8,500.00
Community Breakfast	\$ 8,000.00
Martha's Pantry	\$ 13,000.00
Organist/Continuing Education	Up to the balance in the account
Youth Program	Up to the balance in the account
Pilgrimage	Up to the balance in the account
Outreach	\$ 800.00
Outreach-New Initiatives	\$ 2,500.00
Scholarships	Up to the balance in the account

- to apply 2019 Operating Budget excess income over expenses to the Pastoral Leadership Fund
- to appoint Terry Robinson as our auditor.
- to transfer \$17,000 in the 2019 Operating Budget, identified by the expense line Capital Expenditures to the Building Fund for future repairs for the Chapel roof.

**At its meeting on February 19, 2020:**

- to accept the allocation of funds raised by the Bittersweet Bazaar:

Children's Ministries	\$ 1,000.00
Youth Ministries	1,000.00
Community Breakfast	500.00
Martha's Pantry at Grace	1,500.00
Laundry Love	500.00
Building Fund – for school area	3,000.00
Replacement chairs	500.00
Pastoral Leadership	<u>10,000.00</u>

TOTAL \$18,000.00

- to approve the expenditure of approximately \$900.00 for new main altar fair linen from Altar Guild

**At its meeting on April 29, 2020:**

- to approve Betsy Pye as Clerk
- to approve the Parochial Report, as amended
- to revise the 2020 Operating Budget, shifting funds from Layworker Wages and Benefits to Cleaning Services
- to approve the Grace Church application for a loan under the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)

**At its meeting on May 27, 2020:**

- to approve the 2020 Housing Allowance for Melissa Howell

**At its meeting on June 24, 2020**

- to approve a request for a Diocesan micro-grant in the amount of \$2,000.00, and a COVID Recovery grant in the amount of \$5,000.00, pending communication with Diocesan contact that Grace is not taking funds from congregations with greater need

**At its meeting on August 26, 2020:**

- to authorize budget overruns, as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Budget Amount</b>	<b>Overage Amount</b>
Assistant Rector Compensation	\$35,677.00	\$41,620.00
Assistant Rector Pension	\$ 6,421.98	\$ 7,492.00
Adult Education	\$ 300.00	\$ 750.00
Security/Fire Alarm	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 5,000.00

**At its meeting on September 30, 2020:**

- to accept the gift of St Aiden’s Chapel in the amount of \$5,000.00; \$2,500.00 to be directed to Outreach, \$2,500.00 to Pastoral Leadership
- to endorse Melissa Howell for ordination to the priesthood

**At its meeting on October 28, 2020:**

- to accept the gift of \$10,000.00 from the Karina Foundation for deposit into that legacy in the Unrestricted Endowment
- to accepts gifts totaling \$13,350.00 from multiple donors to be used toward purchase of Audio Visual system to support live streaming church services
- to authorize budget overruns, as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Budget for 2020</b>	<b>New Estimate</b>
Web Site	\$650.00	\$800.00

**At its meeting on November 18, 2020:**

- to approve the proposed 2021 Operating Budget

**In 2020, the Vestry approved the following E-Votes:**

1/8/2020      Slate of nominations for 2020 Annual Meeting  
8/4/2020      Contract for Live-Streaming services  
9/9/2020      Regathering Checklist  
12/17/2020    2021 Housing Allowance for Melissa Howell

## **ALTAR GUILD**

The Mission of the Grace Church Altar Guild is:

To prepare for the worship of the Church as directed by the clergy; to provide for suitable furnishing and decoration of the Altar, and to take due and reverent care of its appointments, and to care for the font.

Three of our altar guild members died in 2020: Norma Bossé, Muriel Pehrson, and Diana Ukleja. They were all dedicated sacristans with knowledge of the many vessels, paraments, and linens for use at all services. We will miss their expertise in so many areas of this ministry.

Our current sacristans are: Jean Brown, Jerré Croteau, Norma Dyer, Judy Knox, Gerry Lopes, Janet Miranda, and Charlene Ryder.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene Ryder, Sacristan

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

The year 2020 left us all with many challenges in ministries.

A total of 23 students were enrolled this year in Church School. Our dedicated teachers taught during the months of January, February, and early March. Our team of teachers included: Mark Bernardo, Courtney Botelho, Jessica Cabral, Nadine Gomes, Andrea Medeiros, Erin Mingola, Claire Morck, Charlene Ryder, and Pamela Souza.

We used the Spark Classroom Curriculum in all classes. This curriculum explores stories from Genesis to Paul's letters in a two-year cycle. Children's Chapel during the 10:00am service used Godly Play teaching modules, and we continued to add new Godly Play lessons to our inventory

this year. We have two new Godly Play lessons one about Bishop Barbara Harris and the other about Martin Luther King, Jr.

During the pandemic, we had a Church School teachers' parade in June with our Rector and Curate joining in the fun! We delivered the end of the year gifts to many of our church school children.

In September, we offered blessings of the backpacks in the James Arnold Mansion parking lot. Our Blessing of the Animals in October was also held at the James Arnold Mansion parking lot. We were visited by 'The Cat in the Hat' and many other animals.

We offered a Children's 'Storytime' over Zoom with many of our teachers and children reading storybooks followed by a church school lesson.

Our teachers and children pre-recorded the 'Christmas Pageant' this year with only one family unit in church at a time. We have many talented children in our parish (and teachers too!). It was awesome seeing how the final pageant came together.

This year, we welcomed Claire Morck to our Children's Ministry as a church school teacher. Claire participated in the pageant and read during our 'Storytime'.

If you are interested in learning more about the Children's Programs or registering your child(ren) for church school, please let me know.

Respectively submitted,  
Charlene N. Ryder, Coordinator

## **COMMUNITY BREAKFAST**

The Community Breakfast Program provides a hot breakfast to the homeless and needy in the New Bedford community every Sunday morning. This breakfast is the only free community meal available on Sunday mornings and we typically serve 50-70 people each week in a "normal year."

### **2020 AND COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS**

The Community Breakfast was open for breakfast (dine-in) in January, February, and the beginning of March 2020 and then, COVID-19 Coronavirus hit the USA. After shutting down the breakfast at Grace Episcopal Church for a week, to assess the situation, the community breakfast reopened, even though the church building itself remained closed to the public.

### **Safety Protocols**

To protect our volunteers and our customers, the community breakfast crew wore masks and

gloves, and door handles at entrance and exit locations were continually wiped down with a sanitizing spray. The bathrooms were closed to the public, due to comprehensive deep cleaning standards that would have to be implemented each time restrooms were used (e.g., sanitization of all surfaces, including door handles and sink faucets).

### **Initial Approach**

We used an initial “walkthrough” approach and allowed up to three customers in the building at a time. The customers would enter and be escorted over to a set of tables to collect a shopping bag containing a hot meal and dessert, in disposable takeout containers, as well as other items, like fruit, condiments, napkins and utensils. After collecting their meal bag, they would be escorted over to an exit door, where we had a coffee urn and carafes set up. We would ask them if they wanted coffee or tea and then hand them a cup with lid. The customers (i.e., group of three) then exited the building. At this point, we re-opened the entrance door and repeated the process for the next set group (set of three) customers.

### **Result**

This was a controlled gauntlet style approach that worked initially, but we had to modify that approach, as we learned more about the COVID-19 Coronavirus. In addition, a city ordinance was now in place to limit the number of people in a building (at one time) to under ten or less. Finally, there was some friction with controlling the number of people allowed in the building at one time. A few of our customers grew impatient waiting their turn and some of them became insistent on using our bathrooms, which were now closed to the public.

### **Current Approach**

After a meeting with our rector, Reverend Chris Morck, our crew went through a brainstorm process and came up with the idea of a takeout only window. And so, a window at the top of our handicap ramp (adjacent to our door) was designated and a wooden shelf was constructed and mounted to that window. This new approach allowed us to keep the number of people in the building (community breakfast volunteers only) to around five to seven people. And our customers could safely receive a breakfast to go, in a tray that we could sanitize and slide out a partially open window. With this approach (mask and gloves on) we could safely provide a hot meal, dessert, other goodies (i.e., fruit, fruit cups, granola bars and raisins and loaves of bread), and beverage to our customers.

### **Result**

The “take-out” window approach has worked extremely well from early April 2020 through the end of the year.

### **Cost Impact**

The changeover from a “dine-in” breakfast to a “takeout only” breakfast, meant an increase in the number of disposable products, such as: meal take-away trays, dessert take-away trays, creamer packets, ketchup packets, maple syrup packets, plastic shopping bags and Ziplock bags.

### **Two Team Approach**

With COVID-19 Coronavirus numbers high in the community, it was decided that we would break up our community breakfast crew into two teams. Team A would be on for three Sundays and then Team B would take over for the next three Sundays. This approach was put in place, to keep the breakfast open, in case one or more of our volunteers at the breakfast came down with the virus. With a two-team approach, we could isolate an infected team and then the backup team could take over, thereby allowing us to keep our breakfast open to the community.

### **A TIME TO LISTEN AND A TIME TO HELP**

In 2020, it was especially important to listen to the homeless and needy, as COVID-19 forced the closure of many small businesses and retail establishments, which of course had a huge impact on the Southcoast community here in Massachusetts - with an increase in unemployment, eviction concerns, and a worry about how individuals were going to feed themselves (food security) and their families.

For our part, through prayer and God's grace, we were able to transform the community breakfast in such a way that we could continue to serve the weekly needs of the community, amidst a lockdown.

### **Winter Coat Giveaway (Boy Scouts)**

In November 2020, a member of our church, who is active in the Boy Scouts, set up a walk-through coat area outside during the takeout breakfast. The Scouts were prepared with masks, gloves and sanitizer and used metal rolling racks and tables, that could be wiped down after customers collected free coats, socks, hats, scarves, gloves, and other items and departed.

### **Christmas Gift Bags**

At Christmas time this year, the community breakfast volunteers handed out gift bags that the youth group at Grace had put together. These bags contained toiletry kits, socks, hats, and a Dunkin Donuts gift card.

### **COSTS**

The Community Breakfast program was supported this year by the following sources:

- Case House grant of \$5500
- Inter City Grant from City of New Bedford - \$1000
- Individual donations (11/7/2020) - \$1464
- Community Foundation - Southcoast Emergency Response Fund - \$3000
- Grant from the Freemasons - \$1700

### **SUMMARY**

What started out as a normal grant year in 2020, quickly changed in March. But by April, we

had evolved with the changes and found an efficient, albeit more costly way to keep our community breakfast going. And, it is our sincere hope, through God's blessings, that we will continue to do our Lord's work again in 2021, which is evident in the Gospel of Matthew:

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**Matthew 25:35 ESV**

*For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,*

---

With Sincere Gratitude,  
Community Breakfast Team

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN**  
**Of Grace Episcopal Church, New Bedford**

Grace Church ECW members gather at the James Arnold Mansion four times a year (in March, May, October, and December) for a luncheon, business meeting, and speaker. We are a community of women who give, care, and share God's love through mission and ministry. We are part of the National Episcopal Church Women, who throughout the country support mission and ministry.

Due to the Pandemic this year we were unable to meet, however we did stay in touch by telephone, mail, and email, as well as our weekly Sunday services on Facebook.

We are blessed to receive disbursements from restricted (designated) endowment funds for ECW to carry on our missions and ministries. This allows us to donate to our five fields of service.

1 Parish

- Community Breakfast
- Martha's Pantry
- Grace Church Restoration
- Rector's Discretionary Fund

2 Community

- Neediest Families Fund
- Southcoast Breast Care
- Humane Society
- Interchurch Council
- Washburn Street Fire Victims % Interchurch Council

3 Diocese

Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts Pandemic Fund - COVID

4 Nation

Rosebud Reservation

National ECW

5 World

St. Margaret's of Haiti

Episcopal Relief and Development (pair of goats and flock of chickens)

The Grace Church Memorial Fund received donations in memory of our deceased members Claire Driesen, Priscilla Taylor, Muriel Pehrson, and Norma Bossé.

Our meetings offer socialization, education, and participation in service projects and are open to guests as well as members.

Currently the following individuals serve as officers of ECW

President - Priscilla Guillemette

Vice President- open

Secretary- open

Assistant Secretary- Janice Baker

Treasurer- Judy Knox

Assistant Treasurer- Harriet Shaw

Respectfully Submitted,

Priscilla Guillemette

President

## **EUCCHARISTIC VISITORS**

Prior to the Pandemic, Chris, our Rector, and the congregation sent us forth on our Eucharistic visitations saying "I send you forth bearing these holy gifts; that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's Body and Blood. We who are many are one body because we all share one bread, one cup." This takes place at the altar prior to the post communion prayer as the Eucharistic Visitors are handed the Consecrated Elements by the Celebrant.

Our Eucharistic Visitors are licensed and trained by the Diocese of Massachusetts and take the Consecrated Elements following a Celebration of the Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present. Our licensed Eucharistic Visitors are Louise Kelly, Pauline Roderiques, Charlene Ryder, and Joan Swain.

In 2020, during the months of January, February, and early March, we were able to take communion out to the homebound. We made 25 private Eucharist visits.

Ministration at the Time of Death, Funeral Services, and Cemetery Committals were offered during 2020 for twelve members and friends of our parish family, including Priscilla Taylor, Mildred Logan, Harland Knox, Jr., Walter Platt, Jr., Gladys Almeida, Norma Bossé, Kathleen Towers, Richard Warburton, Dennis Beck, Alden Taylor, Muriel Pehrson, and Diana Ukleja. May the souls of God's faithful servants departed rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon them.

It is a joy for all of us to share the Eucharist with our shut-ins. If you know someone who could benefit from this ministry, please let us know so we can add them to our list by contacting Charlene or our Rector.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene N. Ryder, Coordinator

## **FOOD AND FAITH**

The Food and Faith Group at Grace Church explores our faith and how it relates to our daily bread – where we get it, how we prepare and consume it, and why it matters. Like all things during 2020, any hopes of gathering and sharing in person were upended, and the principal activity of the group were regular submissions to Grace Notes.

Diana Ukleja, who with Trish Morck maintained the group and its focus, stepped back in the winter due to health reasons, and she then passed away in March. Her thoughtfulness, contributions, and support are sorely missed, and we are grateful for her and all she did for the group.

Articles were submitted to Grace Notes throughout the year. Note was made in January of the resolutions passed during Diocesan Convention in November 2019 to “change our habits and choices in order to live more simply, humbly, and gently on Earth.” Throughout the rest of the year further reflections were molded and shaped around the ever-changing, pandemic-affected world in which we found ourselves – how to shop safely and thoughtfully; how we cope through these difficult times related to food; what we do now that some of us have more time on our hands; and remembering and recovering that which has been handed down to us as a source of comfort.

As we move forward in hope towards regathering and sharing in-person time together, look for an opportunity to gather in some form and have guided conversations surrounding simple living and our daily bread, most likely during Eastertide.

Respectfully submitted,  
Trish Morck

## **LAY LITURGICAL MINISTER & ACOLYTE GUILD USHERS' & GREETERS' GUILDS**

At the beginning of 2020, the Lay Liturgical Minister and Acolyte Guilds were composed of 35 acolytes, as well as an additional 6 who served on a limited basis; 24 Eucharistic Ministers, and 4 subdeacons; four of the above are Licensed Worship Leaders. There were also 29 Lectors, most of whom are also either Acolytes or Eucharistic Ministers. The grand total of Lay Ministers in all categories is 68. (There are many ministers who appear in more than one category total; these are only counted once in the grand total.) Those Lay Minister licenses that were due for renewal in December were renewed with the diocese. In addition, within the allied guilds, there are currently 16 Ushers and 26 Greeters. During the year one Subdeacon-Worship Leader, Diana Ukleja, died and is deeply mourned.

Because of the extraordinary effect of the Pandemic, the great majority of ministers within these guilds have not been able to serve. A new guild has formed, the Audio-Visual Team, which has ten members who virtually broadcast the 10AM Eucharist every Sunday since Pandemic restrictions have been imposed. Three Subdeacons, three cantor-lectors, and two videographers alternate Sundays to serve at and broadcast these Eucharists and other liturgical events.

Assistant Verger Charlene Ryder and Verger's Assistants Michael Doe, William Boyce, Seaver Boyce, and Kimberly Doe ably continued in their roles. The Verger has been greatly aided by their organizational skills and devotion to duty.

Acolytes who consistently have shown leadership ability, participated in training, and helped

the younger acolytes, have mastered the more difficult functions and have good attendance records, are designated *Lead Acolytes*; There are currently 20 Lead Acolytes. The Acolyte Guild continued to enjoy the cooperation and support of the Director of Music, the Children and Youth Ministries, and Acolyte parents.

An article has been submitted and published in *Grace Notes* outlining and describing details of the liturgy for the next two months as well as explaining liturgical traditions and/or innovations here at Grace and within the Church in general.

We are proud of all our Lay Ministers and commend them for their loyalty, reliability, and sense of responsibility. Over the years, attendance and morale have remained steady and our ministers and acolytes have responded professionally to changes in some liturgical events. If regular services can be reinstated in the future, we will continue in our commitment to make every lay liturgical minister's experience at the altar safe, comfortable, and rewarding, and to instill in them the importance of their ministry in leading their Parish Family in the worship of God and serving the clergy and other ministers at the altar, both through their practical functions and ceremonial duties.

Respectfully submitted:  
Jerré Croteau, Verger  
Director of Liturgical Ministries

## **AUDIO/VISUAL TECHNOLOGY GUILD**

This was the inaugural year for the Audio/Visual Technology Guild. We are grateful for all those who have made this new ministry possible. This ministry is a hybrid of inreach, outreach, and evangelism.

On March 15, 2020, the last Sunday with a fully in-person congregation, we started streaming our 10am worship services with an iPhone and stand made for a vehicle. Quickly, we added an external microphone stand to improve audio quality. Our services continued to be live streamed by phone and a music stand through the Spring and Summer.

Starting in late May, we explored multiple long-term, permanent technology solutions. Exploring multiple vendors, consulting with the Presiding Bishop's technology team, and much research led us to contracting with Audire Design, Inc. to install a permanent live-streaming system. Audire is the same company that updated our sound system in 2015.

In looking at the needs of the parish, especially the significant number of camera views needed throughout the liturgical year, the system installed included the following elements:

- 2 PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) cameras with numerous pre-set views for the sanctuary
- 1 fixed camera for our chapel for future installation
- A Mac computer to operate the cameras, condense the video, and stream the feed
- A server to host and stream the live stream
- A dedicated back-up device to archive services
- Direct connection to our audio system so that all audio input comes directly from the microphones to the live stream

We have successfully live streamed Sunday services weekly. We have also been able to use the system to stream and pre-record, including for our Children’s Christmas Pageant.

Funding for the system came from the following:

- Generous Donations from the Grace Church Family
- Grants from the Diocese of Massachusetts
- Grace Church “New Ministry” Fund

Finally, we are grateful to the guild of volunteers who have stepped up to help plan, execute, and operate our newly installed live-stream system. Volunteers include the following:

Brendon Botelho	Rev. Melissa Howell	Courtney Botelho-Grime
Alex Howell	Billy Boyce	Michelle Luth
Seaver Boyce	Rev. Chris Morck	Gérald Croteau
Charlene Ryder	Patrick Grime	Beth Sharp
Andy Sylvia		

## **MEMORIAL GIFTS FUND COMMITTEE**

The Memorial Gifts Fund is a restricted fund consisting of donations given in memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving for a person or event and which have not been given for a specific project. The Committee receives requests for funds to be used for a specific purchase that would fall outside of budgeted expenditures. The seven committee members vote on the request and then forward the recommendation to the Vestry for approval. Our committee business is done by email and telephone.

There has been a temporary moratorium on spending further money from the Fund as we try to build up the balance. We thank all those that directed donations to the Memorial Gifts Fund in 2020 and we look forward to once again taking requests for projects and ministries within Grace.

I thank all past and present members of the Committee for their faithful stewardship of this important Fund.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pauline Roderiques, Chair

Michael Shea

Joan Swain

Carole J. Johnson

Lisa Thibeault

Pamela McNamara

John Amaral

## **PLANNED GIVING**

Through estate planning, you can leave a legacy of blessing and a better future for Grace Church. Your planned gift will ensure that Grace Church will be able to continue our commitments to the community.

By including Grace in your will or trust, you will be joining other friends of the church in the promotion of God's ministries. Support makes a difference, and it allows us to preserve shared values and support the welfare of the church and its mission.

We can help you fashion a gift to meet your personal interests and ensure the legacy you envision is a reality. To learn more, please contact the church office.

## **SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

Grace Church is blessed to be in a unique position to offer scholarships to college students from the generous bequests of the Eccleston, Heptonstall, Holmes, Menzer, Rapp, Robbins, Teves/Moreau, Tilton, Tripp and McKeachern families. These generous gifts and their prudent investments have enabled Grace Church to offer scholarships each year to assist our parishioners with their endeavors of higher education. The Grace Church Scholarship Committee is pleased to report that the following 14 parishioners were awarded scholarships for the 2020-2021 school year:

Lindsey Bedard-Hofstra University

Margaret (Maggie) Boyce-Boston University (Graduate School)

Seaver Boyce-Bridgewater State University (Graduate School)

Kimberly Doe-Johnson and Wales University

Katherine Frazee-Stonehill College

Jared Gammell-Worcester State University

Abbey Luth-Nazareth College

Autumn Luth-University of Vermont

Erin Mingola-Bridgewater State University

Claire Morck-Bridgewater State University  
Mia Morgan-Maine College of Art  
Christopher Ng-Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Kaitlyn Ng-Merrimack College  
Elizabeth Sylvia-University of Tampa

The Grace Church Scholarship Committee members: Colleen Cook, Rob DaSilva, Maureen Decker, Carole Johnson, Ann Kenney, and Kristen Morgan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maureen V. Decker, Chairperson

## **STEWARDSHIP**

### **Faith-Filled Generosity**

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. - 1 PETER 4:10 (NIV)*

**Faith-Filled Generosity** was this year's Stewardship Message. Although the pledge campaign was designated from September 27th through Sunday, October 25th, we continued to receive pledges to this day. The Coronavirus took center stage in all of our lives this year, but the parishioners of Grace even during these hard times showed their true faith and dedication -- we asked God to direct us and watch over us as we struggled with this unforeseen happening which affected all of us in some way or another. During this time, we asked God to guide and give us strength in knowing He will provide for our needs if we just trust Him.

The Coronavirus closed our church building to the public, but Grace's ministries continue to thrive. Just like Martha's Pantry and the Community Breakfast had to modify their procedure to keep everyone safe, the pledge campaign needed to make changes on how to communicate and engage people on the excitement of giving generously to God's work. Our mission to help maintain and grow our ministries continued. During this time, as we are livestreaming our services, we listened to three volunteers - Diana Bullard, Blinn Dorsey, and Jesse Roderiques - through videotaping their stories on why they volunteer their time to help others through the Community Breakfast, Martha's Pantry, and the Youth Ministry. Diana, Blinn, and Jesse felt there was a positive impact on those they helped. They stressed the benefits they received outweighed the time spent out of their day. Their testimonies were also available on Grace's website.

This year's extremely aggressive goal was to have 100% participation - in pledging (individuals,

couples, or families who filled out a pledged card) for a total of \$240,000. As of February 2, 2021, we have received 137 pledges totaling \$235,558. On December 31, 2019 (2020 Pledge Campaign), the number of pledging units was 152 for a total of \$232,618. Therefore, we have received about \$3,000 more but with fewer people pledging. Currently, we may have not met the goal of total amount pledged, but I have faith that the parishioners at Grace Church are devoted and dedicated to our ministries and will be guided by God to give generously and faithfully. Yes, we are in a pandemic and the year continues to have uncertainty, but we at Grace Church work together side by side to help others in need – the ones within our walls and outside our walls.

Now, when you compare the final total of pledging units for 2020, which was 152 pledges for a total of \$232,618, to the current 2021 numbers, which is 137 pledges for a total of \$235,558, we have an increase in number of households pledging by 36 and the total amount of money pledged increased by \$13,900. This is great news! I continue to witness daily how the people of Grace Church work together for the greater good. In addition, the number of new pledges and/or renewing their pledge are slightly less than last year, but these numbers for 2021 are still higher than in the year of 2019.

Finally, the pandemic did have its casualties one of which is reflected in the number of parishioners who had to decrease their pledge (13 households); this created a \$4,000 deficit compared to the previous year.

As the number of pledging units is less but the total amount pledged is more than last year's figures, I still wanted to provide the specifics in the number of increases, decreases, new pledges, and pledges not received for 2021 Pledge Campaign. We are blessed to have 20 new/re-new households pledging compared to 23 new/re-new pledging units from last year; 36 households increased their pledge compared to 40 households from last year. Thirteen households decreased their pledge compared to 8 households from last year. Finally, 31 households have not pledged for 2021 who had pledged in 2020. **If those 31 people would commit to God's ministries, we would have approximately \$22,800 more to add to our ministries and outreach and surpass our goal of \$240,000 by approximately \$18,000.** Overall, each of our parishioners' situations are different and may vary from year to year which leads to variances in our pledging habits. We are thankful to all of you for your continued commitment and the showing of support to one another.

Thank you to all who have pledged for 2021. For those who have not yet pledged, there is still time. Please prayerfully consider making your pledge today to support and expand the ministries here at Grace Church. Our 2021 goal is \$240,000 and with your consideration we could easily reach it.

Lastly, I would like to thank our rector, Rev. Chris Morck, and the committee members - Anne Gundersen, Ned Hines, Terri Nowell, and Robbie Watkins - for their dedication and

conscientious work over the past year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Sharp-McKay  
Stewardship Commission Chairperson

## TRUSTEES OF PARISH FUNDS

During 2020, the Trustees of Parish Funds held regular meetings to review quarterly performance reports, receive overall economy review information and market analysis and expectations (both domestic and international), consider investment recommendations from our portfolio investment advisors at US Trust (Bank of America), vote on specific buy/sell (rebalancing) recommendations and consider any other matters brought before us.

2020 was certainly a year the likes of which very few of us had ever experienced. That said, in terms of being invested in the market, 2020 was a very positive year and our portfolio rode the crest of the wave. As shown later in this annual report, the market performed quite well, and our portfolio actually did even better and outperformed the applicable benchmarks. Our portfolio experienced its third year of investment in US Trust's socially responsible investing program (they call it Socially Innovative Investing (S2I) and it only invests in large capital domestic carbon-free companies).

While some 20% of the value of both the Unrestricted and Restricted accounts is specifically invested via S2I, approximately 20% of the remainder of both portfolios are invested in companies that would be considered ESG stocks (meaning Environmental, Social, and Governance issues are factored into evaluating potential stocks in which to invest). The result is that approximately 40% of our total endowment is invested in socially responsible investments. Our involvement in the ESG analysis and the S2I program is principally thanks to consistent urging by the Rector and the Trustees' willingness to further diversify a portion of our holdings.

Our US Trust advisors have consistently commented that Grace Church was on the leading edge of their advisees "taking the leap" and that we have been reaping the benefits ever since. And they continue to be very positive about the S2I program. We are working towards practicing what we preach while remaining vigilant with our fiscal responsibility.

We continued to support the Finance Committee and the Vestry in their efforts to construct the Church budget by supplying comparisons of what the Unrestricted account's support to the operating budget would equal at annual rates ranging between 4% and 5% (with payments made monthly) both in gross amounts and net of bank fees. The rate currently continues at 5%.

The stock market's performance in 2020 was very positive. While it was not quite what 2019's

performance was, the 2020 double-digit positive returns have made for a nice two year run of numbers in the black. Periodic (i.e. quarterly) rebalancing throughout the portfolio enabled us to capture the strengths of the market and avoid the less-strong sectors. Because we, and our US Trust advisors, know the important role that the endowment plays in supporting the Church’s operating budget, we are prudently aggressive in the Unrestricted portion of the endowment and more conservative with the Restricted portion. We continue to recognize the congregation’s interest in maintaining the Church’s varied outreach ministries and their vital importance in, and to, the greater New Bedford community and we balance that against the foresight of our forebearers to establish and maintain the endowment. Grace Church is in an enviable position having an endowment of the size it does and, while it assists with capital projects and on-going operations, at the same time, we acknowledge the “push and pull” of our role and assure you that we take our responsibilities seriously, always with the best interests of the Church as a whole as our guide. On to the numbers...

	<u>Unrestricted Account</u>		<u>Restricted Account</u>	
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Beginning Value (1/1)	\$3,335,652	\$3,197,543	\$4,211,250	\$3,380,574
Ending Value (12/31)	\$3,687,217	\$3,335,652	\$4,773,751	\$4,211,250
Change in Value	\$351,565	\$138,109	\$562,501	\$830,676
Disbursement (Regular)	\$169,203*	\$174,363	\$49,906***	\$80,131
Disbursement (Special)**	\$NA	\$NA	\$NA	\$NA
Bank Fees	\$17,275	\$17,210	\$22,399	\$21,108
Current Yield	1.55%	2.16%	1.66%	2.34%
Total Return (Net of Fees)	16.06%	20.24%	14.64%	17.49%
Benchmark	13.31%	20.38%	11.85%	17.35%

\* This figure is the amount transferred to the Church’s Operating Account. It comes from being 5% of the Unrestricted Account’s average balance over the prior 12 calendar quarters. It is then divided by 12 and 1/12th is transferred monthly.

\*\* This line represents additional approved disbursements such as the \$600,000 disbursed in 2016 in support of the Grace in Community campaign. As reflected by the NA, there were no such special disbursements from the Unrestricted Account in 2019 or 2020.

\*\*\* This figure represents funds generated by “income only” legacy gifts that are used to support the Church’s Operating Account. Transfers occur on a quarterly basis. Approximately 50% of the legacies in the Restricted Account are of this “income only” type, the remainder specifically direct their income to support the Church in other ways (for example: outreach,

flower fund, scholarships, ECW, church school, music program, Martha’s Pantry, Community Breakfast etc.).

<b>Portfolio Allocation</b>	<b>Unrestricted Account</b>		<b>Restricted Account</b>	
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Equities	73.0%	65.3%	61.7%	53.1%
Fixed Income	24.8%	31.3%	35.0%	42.4%
Real Estate	0%	0%	0%	0%
Tangible Assets	0.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.6%
Cash	1.4%	1.8%	1.9%	2.9%

In regard to legacies, in October, the Karina Foundation made a \$10,000 gift and directed that it be placed in the Unrestricted Account. Donations of legacies, particularly to the Unrestricted Account, are welcomed and can help ensure, along with prudent investing, the financial health of the parish.

As part of the permanent record, attached to this annual report is the 2020 Investment Portfolio Review (containing YTD figures) and account statements.

Respectfully submitted this 4th day of February 2021.

**TRUSTEES OF PARISH FUNDS**

Allen D. Decker, Secretary  
 Geraldine Perry-Lopes  
 Alfred J. Smialek

William I. Reed  
 Marcia Anselmo

**WORSHIP COMMISSION AND WORSHIP TEAM**

The Worship Commission met once during the year 2020, before the Pandemic made meetings of the full commission impossible.

There was a review of the Christmas through Epiphany worship services for the seasons which had just finished, and it was decided to continue with all three Christmas Eve services this year, and that the Festival of Lights would now permanently be incorporated into the 10AM Eucharist the Sunday nearest the Epiphany. (Neither of these decisions could be implemented in 2020 because of the Pandemic.)

It was proposed that a single comprehensive leaflet would be published which would include all the services in Holy Week. This was decided by consensus. Other decisions were made regarding the Altar Guild, Lenten Offerings, a Bishop’s Visitation, and periodic Saturday Taizé-

Eucharists, none of which could be implemented because of the Pandemic.

In lieu of the full Commission, a Worship Team was formed consisting of the Rector, the Director of Music, the Curate, the Chief Videographer, the Verger and Subdeacons, to ensure the continuance of worship within the rigid restrictions imposed by the Pandemic.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerré Croteau, Verger, Secretary to the Worship Commission

## **MARTHA'S PANTRY AT GRACE**

As January 2020 arrived, Martha's Pantry continued to serve those in need in the Greater New Bedford area. We were open two days a week, Wednesday and Friday, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. We were able to provide fresh produce and dairy items, non-perishables, and frozen meats. We served 214 households which included 723 individuals. In late January, Shaw's Markets delivered approximately 8000 lbs of food donated to us via their holiday fund raiser at the State Rd, Dartmouth store. At the time, the Asst Rector's office was empty and it became the overflow storage area for the pantry, filled with peanut butter, soups, spaghetti sauce, powdered milk, pasta, oatmeal, and a number of other items.

February arrived and we continued our work, serving 190 households and 588 individuals. A dedicated group of volunteers, many of whom had been doing this work for years, worked Wednesdays and Fridays, opening the church Library to provide food to our guests. They also worked on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays picking up food delivered to a central New Bedford location by the Greater Boston Food Bank and bringing it to the church, unloading it and stocking the shelves. This work continued into March with the following volunteers:

Mary Sweet	Jack Whiteside	Chrissy Green
Gerry Lopes	Judy Yard	Larry Correia
Bill Reed	Pauline Roderiques	Colleen Roy
Norma Dyer	Steve Barkhuff	Barbara Bell
Norma Bossé	Fred Smialek	Connie Sweeney
Bobbie Ketchel	Travis Bowie	Janice Gomes
Shirley Beck	Barbara Trecker	Peter Medeiros
Angie Mello	Roland & Harriet Shaw	Barbara Pearl
Judy Knox	Nancy Krueger	Charlene Nelson
Kingsley Doe	Sue St. Gelais	
Len Boyce	Pat & David Fowle	

But March brought change as we had to quickly adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of our volunteers were seniors who could no longer work at the pantry due to the health risk. Additionally, we knew we could no longer operate in the same manner, inviting folks into the library. We quickly pivoted to a set-up of serving clients from a library window and

prepackaging orders so that guests could move along quickly and maintain social distances. Gratefully, a number of individuals, parishioners and others, stepped up to fill the shoes of our prior volunteers. We never missed a day of the pantry during this time thanks to those new volunteers. We served lower numbers of people during March and April as it wasn't widely known that the pantry was open. But as word spread and the economic impact of the pandemic caused rising levels of food insecurity in the Greater New Bedford area, the numbers served grew. From May thru December of 2020 we averaged 298 households per month representing 1146 individuals each month.

Our new volunteers abided by all precautions, wearing masks at all times, using gloves as needed, and maintaining social distances. Some volunteered for several weeks or months, some are still volunteering. Some of our prior volunteers returned as we all learned more about the risks of the pandemic. We are grateful for all our new partners in this ministry:

Blinn Dorsey	Jim Parker	Louis Silverstein
Trish Morck	Katherine Parker	Alex Howell
Claire Morck	Rob DaSilva	Janice Gomes
Isabel Morck	Alex DaSilva	Pam Souza
Betsy Pye	Erin DaSilva	Martin Lipman
Maureen Decker	Lauren DaSilva	William Bullard
Mirna Decker	Allison DaSilva	Sean Corwin
Seth Baumgartner	Megan DaSilva	Sam Green
Sarah Barkhuff	Colleen Cook	Lauren Green
Steve Lamade	Tucker Cook	Sue Abdow
Ann Dailey	Tyler Cook	Mary Ellen Nochimow
Doug Dailey	Bonnie Silverstein	Robbie Watkins

As with any list of volunteers, my apologies if you were not listed, know that your work has been appreciated.

We no longer were able to rely on food donations left in the church during weekend services and could not accept other donations for an extended period of time due to food safety rules. We also lost some other resources due to food shortages early in the pandemic. The Greater Boston Food Bank became our main resource and they worked hard to help us meet the increased demand. Eventually, we have been able to accept outside food donations and in May we were able to start taking in fresh produce from our longtime partner, Friends Academy in Dartmouth. Throughout the year, they delivered fresh produce from their gardens on a weekly basis.

As the holidays approached, we knew our usual Thanksgiving Dinner offering could not be the same. We are thankful for the continuing support from Shaw's in helping us provide holiday dinners for over 250 families. Shaw's alone provided 200 turkey dinners with the "fixins." That was supplemented by turkeys and chickens from the Greater Boston Food Bank and gift cards from Stop and Shop and Shaw's gift cards donated by Chase Farm Veterinary Hospital.

We have been extremely blessed this year with the gift of time from our volunteers as well as financial support. In particular, beside those gifts already noted, we are grateful to the Community Foundation, the Masons, and the Greater Boston Food Bank for their financial support. And many individuals in the community, both parishioners and others, have been generous in providing financial support for this ongoing ministry. This year you have helped us provide almost 82,500 meals to those in need, thank you to all of you!!!

As always, we are grateful for the assistance provided by the Grace staff, Rev. Chris Morck, Rev. Melissa Howell, and Katie Brengle. Each provides invaluable assistance throughout the year.

I would be remiss if I didn't offer a special thanks to Larry Correia who has worked hard to keep the pantry operating. Larry is there every Wednesday and Friday to help with set up and clean up as well as helping during the pantry's open hours. He also is there for every Tuesday delivery, helping to load our truck at the loading dock and then returning to the church to unload and stock shelves. Thank you, Larry.

Finally, I can't end this report without a very special thank you to Len Boyce. Len has overseen the on-site running of the pantry during this time. Len is there every Wednesday and Friday ensuring that everything is set up, cleaned up and running smoothly. He drives our truck for every delivery and oversees the loading and unloading process. He keeps an eye on inventory and ensures I have all the paperwork I need to submit reports and order the food we need. And he coordinated all the deliveries and holiday meals from Shaw's. He has given much to the pantry during this time. Thank you, Len!

We welcome your continuing support via donations of food, time, and funds.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharlene Begley, Coordinator