



Grace Notes

March/April 2021

From the Rector

By Rev. Chris Morck

From the Annual 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 The pandemic landscape changed by the day, if not by the moment, and so sometimes what I would write seemed to be outdated as soon as I sent it.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 on-line, 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 Sundae Sunday (or is it Sunday Sundae?), 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 Pitcain 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 our 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 the Grace Annual Report to get a brief and better sense of the enormity of the work involved in this new ministry this past year.

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 to allow for more participation and to give 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's Report: Annual Meeting

By Rev. Melissa Howell

From the Annual 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
Louise Kelly
Kristi Botelho
Jackie L'Heureux
Ann Dailey
Jean Pitcairn
Blinn Dorsey
Jesse Roderiques
Roxanne Garcia

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 †

Liturgy & Liturgical Ministry

By Jerré Croteau, Verger

Lent-Holy Week-Easter

As I write this, we have already entered the season of **Lent** which began on **Ash Wednesday**, this year February 17th. The actual date when the liturgical season of Lent begins is dependent on the date of Easter itself, Lent begins, counting backwards, the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter. There are five Sundays in Lent, then Palm Sunday and Holy Week, culminating in Easter. The color of **Lent** is **purple**, though other colors have been used in some places historically. During Lent there is a custom, not followed by all churches, though our National Cathedral does so, of veiling the crosses and images for the duration of the season.

The practice of veiling images during Lent dates from the tenth century. In addition to making obvious the solemnity of the season, it is a sign of penitence, introspection and mourning during a time when we are called upon to examine ourselves spiritually and to reflect on Jesus' suffering and death. We, at the same time, have faith and hope in our ultimate redemption through Christ's

death and resurrection, the Glory of which we can only perceive dimly as *through a veil* as we reflect during Lent, to be manifest in the joy of Easter when the veil falls from our eyes. Historically the colors of the veils have varied in various centuries and various countries, but in most modern practice, the veils match the seasonal color of the hangings traditionally used by the individual church.

We are still in the throes of the pandemic, necessitating a continuation of virtual participation in the liturgy. The Sunday Eucharists will continue to be broadcast on Facebook and YouTube. Throughout Lent there are some changes in the order of service. We begin with the Penitential Order, in which the Confession comes at the beginning of the liturgy, the Gloria is not said or sung, but instead we hear the ancient Greek hymn the “**Kýrie**” (“Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.”) Another change is that the word “Alleluia” is not expressed in any of its usual places in the liturgy.

The **First Sunday in Lent**, we began with the **Great Litany** and to mark the commencement of the season we used Rite I for the liturgy (to be consistent with the language of the litany itself). For the **Second, Third, and Fourth Sundays in Lent** we will be using the Penitential Order Rite II Eucharistic Prayer A. The **Fourth Sunday in Lent** has a special designation, it is called “**Lætare Sunday**.” The word “lætare” is a Latin verb meaning “to be happy.” We are happy because our time of waiting for our salvation is nearly over. It is one of two Sundays in the year that **rose** vestments and hangings may be used. In French it is called **Micarême**, meaning Mid-Lent. If you count Holy Week, it is the

middle Sunday of the season and we are halfway in our journey. On this Sunday, the Eucharist will be in honor of **Bishop Barbara C. Harris**, whose first anniversary of her death is March 13th, and which is now dedicated to her. Also, Holy Communion will be distributed at the Wamsutta Club Parking Lot after the service. The **Fifth Sunday in Lent**, here at Grace, we will again begin the service with the **Great Litany**.

Next we come upon **Palm Sunday**, March 28th. The color of the veils and hangings changes to **red**, signifying Jesus’ Passion. The Liturgy begins on a joyous note, representing Jesus’ triumphant reception into Jerusalem, the palms reminiscent of the branches being waved and placed marking his path into the city. This year Palm Crosses will have been distributed or mailed to our Parish Family. After the triumphant beginning, the Gospel tells us the story of the betrayal, persecution, and execution of Jesus. This year’s Passion Gospel is according to St. Mark. It is normally read in parts here at Grace, with different Lectors taking on the roles of the various people mentioned in the scripture passage. This will be prerecorded and included in the service.

Then begins Holy Week. What will happen on **Maundy Thursday**, this year April 1st, is yet to be determined. Last year we joined a virtual service put on by the diocese, rather than having our own live service. This may be the case again this year, depending on what the diocese has to offer. The three last days of Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are called the **Triduum**. Though at Grace we have always celebrated the liturgies associated with these three days, in recent years

live attendance at them has been sparse.

On **Good Friday**, April 2nd, the church and altar will have been stripped bare and black mourning veils cover the main crosses. We will have one virtual service at noon which will be available to watch the rest of the day online. There will also be a live projection of the Cross we venerate on Good Friday in the afternoon. This crucifix, most people know, is a relic of the **Great Fire** of 1987, whose charred broken corpus is a powerful reminder of the death from which our Church was resurrected.

In addition to what has been listed above, during this season there will be zoom times for prayers which you will be hearing about from our Curate.

Since the time of Scott Helferty, we have celebrated to **Great Vigil of Easter** on the eve of the Feast of the Resurrection. Rather than the full service, sometime between 6PM and 7PM, the Holy Fire will be lit in the back of the church, as it is every year, and from it the Paschal Candle will be lit, and the **Light of Christ** will be proclaimed and the ancient hymn the **Exsultet** will be sung. The gloomy veils will have disappeared.

Then comes the glorious **Feast of the Resurrection, Easter Day**, the church resplendent for the celebration of our Salvation, as we broadcast the **Festival Eucharist**, after which Communion will be distributed in the Wamsutta Club parking lot. This begins the seven-week Season of Easter, which brings us through April and into May.

May you all have a contemplative and peaceful season of Lent and a joyful Easter.

Children's Ministry

By Charlene Ryder

We continue to offer our Children's 'Storytime' via zoom on Sunday mornings at 11:15AM. We have played Bingo, read stories, and participated in church school lessons. The teachers and children had a wonderful time learning the zoom whiteboard. We tried our skills with word games and drawings. We have many great artists and word game solvers in our church school!

We will be working on fun projects for the Easter and Pentecost seasons.

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

Thank you... To Our Retiring Vestry Members

As we welcome new members to our vestry, on behalf of the whole parish I want to especially thank our outgoing members. This year's outgoing vestry members – Roberta Iglar, Kathy Ferreira, Judy Knox, and Dana Sargent - will be greatly missed.

Although they are stepping away from the vestry, each one will continue to serve God and God's people in many other ways. I am truly grateful for the leadership they have demonstrated and their thoughtfulness, their heart, and their generosity of spirit which have enriched our vestry in so many different ways.

Gratefully, Chris +

Food & Faith

By Trish Morck

As I write this we, as a community, a nation, and a world, have entered a

second year of confronting a global pandemic, of reckoning with our past, and of coming to terms with how fragile our democracy and its systems really are. However, it is also a time of hope mixed with realism, and optimism mixed with wisdom, as we continue to tread lightly to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors. It is a strange thing when loving your neighbor means keeping your distance. But I look forward to the time when we can fellowship together once again and even share a good meal or two!

Since it is winter I find myself pulling out the slow cooker once a week or so, cooking up different vegetarian dishes thanks to two vegetarian slow cooker cookbooks I purchased last year. I have had the most success with soups so far. Soups are perfect for the winter, full of vitamins and minerals and a warmth that fills you when it's cold outside. One that I really enjoyed in the slow cooker is Caribbean-Style Black Bean soup. It has unique spices, black beans which are full of antioxidants and fiber, and vitamin C – great support for our immune systems!

Caribbean-Style Black Bean Soup

2 garlic cloves, chopped
 1 T. olive oil
 2 c. cooked black beans
 1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes
 1 red bell pepper, diced
 1 t. ground cinnamon
 1 t. ground allspice
 2 t. ground cumin
 1 t. chipotle chili powder or adobo sauce (from canned chipotle peppers)
 Juice of 1 orange
 Juice of 1 lime
 4 c. vegetable broth
 salt

1. Sauté garlic in olive oil until fragrant. Add to crock pot.

2. Stir together the rest of the ingredients in the crock pot.
3. Cook on low for 8 hours.
4. If you want a smoother soup, puree it with an immersion blender or a regular blender. Taste for salt before serving.

Lent: A Season for Reflection, Confession, and Absolution

In our tradition, we usually pray together the General Confession of Sin; but there is a place as well for individual confession, and the Book of Common Prayer has two brief services of reconciliation, found on pages 447 and 449, which can be shared with a lay person or a priest.

On occasion, when struggling with a heavy burden, a sense of harm that we feel we have caused, or a way in which we feel that we have seriously strayed from God's good purposes for us, we also may feel the profound need to share this confidentially with someone who can listen and more directly reflect or embody the truth of God's mercy and lovingkindness.

Lent is a season where we focus on offering up those things to God which must be transformed, so that God's love would take deeper root in our lives and we would be able to experience God's healing and restoration to wholeness.

During this season, if you desire the sacrament of reconciliation, please email Chris, revchrismorck@gracechurchnb.org, or Melissa, revmelissahowell@gracechurchnb.org, to set up a time for this.

Gifts January-February 2021

Community Breakfast

Gifts of Episcopal Church Women, Benjamin & Deborah Baker, James Bisagni, Edith Lauderdale

Laundry Love

Gift of Edith Lauderdale

Martha's Pantry at Grace

Gifts of Noreen Santos, Thomas & Susan Knight, Andrew & Susan Chlebus, Patricia & Gerald Bedard, Susan & Richard Poyant, John Buck, Lisa Carrier-Titti & Nicole Carrier-Titti, Episcopal Church Women, Benjamin & Deborah Baker, John Buck, Edith Lauderdale, Cindy

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

Gift of Christopher, Paige, Silas, Jasper, and Tetta Reed **in memory of Martha Reed**

Gift of Shirley & Dennis Beck II **in memory of Nancy Pye**

Gifts of Priscilla Guillemette, Deborah Clark **in memory of Claire Driesen**

Gift of Pamela & George McNamara **in memory of Marian Treger, Rita Creagh and Kendrick Snyder**

Gift of Greater New Bedford Adult Day Health **in memory of Nancy Pye**

Flower Fund

Gift of Harold & Judy Isaksen **in honor of loved ones who always have a place in our hearts**

Gift of Heidi, David, & Janice Baker **in memory of Ruth & Lloyd Baker, Grace & Edward McConvill, Joan Ann Niles, Edward Wooler McConvill**

Gift of Roberta & Robert Ladetto **in memory of Alden Taylor**

Gift of Peter Smialek **in memory of Adele Smialek**

Gifts of Rillis & Robbie Watkins, Maureen & Allen Decker, Joan Swain, Carlos DaCunha, Tena Cotey, Michael & Wendy Rego, Roger & Ermelinda Silva

Rector's Discretionary Fund

Gifts of Chuck Cotter & Marilyn Saint-Aubin, Tena Cotey, Thomas & Susan Knight, Episcopal Church Women, Roberta Iglar, Blair Perry & Sandra Brodowski, Amy & Jeff Semanscin, Susan Lee, John Duarte & Margaret Boyce, Kimberly Green, Marcia Anselmo, Harold & Judy Isaksen, Shirley & Dennis Beck II, John & Patricia Oliver, Ann & Doug Dailey, Lisa Thibeault & Martha Silveira, Ruth & Gerald Bowden, Michael & Cynthia Shea, Patricia Oliver & James Murray, Blinn Dorsey, William Reed, Pauline Roderiques, Donald Driesen, Nancy & David Faria, Tom & Paula Cabral, Artie Hodge & Lavard Blanche **in honor of the Rev. Melissa Howell's Ordination**

Memorial Fund

Gift of Lucy Gundersen **in memory of Hilmar (Gundy) Gundersen and Erica Anne Gundersen**

Gift of the Episcopal Church Women **in memory of Norma Bossé and Claire Driesen**

Gifts of Norma Dyer, Alfred Smialek, Nancy & David Faria, Cynthia & John Delano **in memory of Claire Driesen**

Gift of Theresa Nowell **in memory of James Sylvia**

In Honor of the Epiphany and Christmas

Gifts of John & Patricia Oliver, Donald Driesen

Theological Education

Gift of Nancy & David Faria

Stewardship

Gift of Theresa Nowell

Audiovisual Equipment

Gift of Michael & Caroline Blais

General Fund

Gift of Kathleen Thompson, Enable Hope Foundation

Envelopes

Gift of Kingsley & Janet Doe, Tom & Paula Cabral, W. Gardner Chase, Michael Medeiros

Miscellaneous

Gift of Thomas & Susan Knight

Restoration

Gift of Episcopal Church Women

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Curate	Rev. Melissa Howell
Director of Music	Brian Roderick
Parish Administrator	Katie Brengle
Verger	Gérald Croteau

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Junior Warden	Charles Green
Treasurer	Sharlene Begley
Assistant Treasurer	Pamela Mello
Clerk	Betsy Pye

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