



Grace Notes

Nov/Dec 2020

November

By Rev. Chris Morck

This time of the year is very significant in the history of Grace Episcopal Church. Many of Grace's major events happened in November, in fact.

We were founded as the first Episcopal mission in Greater New Bedford, with our first church service held in November of 1833. Grace's first church building was actually on Union Street and the construction began in November of 1834.

Then, in November of 1881, the church opened on our current site here on County Street, on land donated by Samuel Rodman – a Quaker!

Over 100 years later, this same church building was consumed by a fire on the 29th of November, the first Sunday of Advent in 1987. Through that tragedy, the community was brought together. Miracles of restoration and renewal

happened as we relied on God's grace shown through each other and the generosity and openness of the wider community of which we are a part.

The fire is also the reason that we have this beautifully restored church, rededicated in the fall of 1992. Our nave is twenty-eight years old and yet architecturally looks much the same as it did in 1881.

Every year, on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, we celebrate Harvest Sunday, a day particular to Grace which dates back at the very least to the 1880s.

We might say that this is our parish's feast day. A church founded after a saint often marks that saint's day as their feast day. So, a church named after St. Andrew would hold November 30th in particularly high regard. For St. Martin's, it would be November 11th. The Feast Day for Trinity Church would be the moveable feast of Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after Pentecost. *(continued p.3)*

Exploring the Holiness of Darkness this Advent

By Rev. Melissa Howell

"The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."
—Exodus 13:21-22

These verses from Exodus remind us that God is present in both darkness and light, symbolized here by a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. As we enter the season of Advent, which also corresponds here in the northern hemisphere with some of the shortest days and longest nights of the year, this Exodus passage helps us to remember God's steadfast presence with us, guiding us night and day, and helps us to name both darkness and light as holy.

How we talk about darkness and light in our culture and in our church matters. It matters for our own emotional and spiritual well-being, because to affirm that darkness is holy and that God is present in it with us can be an extraordinary comfort, through dark nights, and through dark seasons of the calendar and of our lives. Affirming the goodness and holiness of darkness also matters for our society and culture, particularly in our frameworks for racial justice work. Proclaiming darkness as holy breaks down stereotypes of light as good and dark as bad, and disrupting these false stereotypes and associations is important work whether we are talking about God, religious symbolism, or the color of our neighbors' skin. To say "Darkness is holy" in our church that sees light as the prevailing symbol for God is akin to saying "Black lives matter" in our society that sees white lives as the privileged norm.

Much has been written in our Christian tradition about the holiness of darkness. While it is not possible to honor it all in the space of a newsletter, we can name a few potential starting points. If you are looking for a spiritual reading companion to begin to explore this topic, I highly recommend Barbara Brown Taylor's wonderful book *Learning to Walk in the Dark* (HarperOne, 2014). If you are seeking a prophetic call to social justice that includes a powerful critique of the church's liturgical and symbolic uses of darkness and light, I am currently reading and being challenged by Lenny Duncan's *Dear Church: A Letter From A Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.* (Fortress Press, 2019). Finally, Christian mystics and poets have much to say on the subject of darkness as a holy and spiritually

fertile place. We might look to the work of 17th century Spanish mystics John of the Cross and Teresa of Ávila, or to the writings of 20th century Black American theologians and poets Howard Thurman and Pauli Murray for insights here.

Mysterious, miraculous, transformative things happen in the holy dark. In *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, Barbara Brown Taylor reminds us that Mary gave birth to Jesus in the sacred darkness of a manger, and that Jesus's resurrection happened in the sacred darkness of a tomb. Taylor begins her first chapter with this verse, Isaiah 45:3: "I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name." This Advent and Christmas, may we know and share the treasure of God's love, calling us by name, wrapping around us like a warm blanket in the blessed darkness of the manger, and guiding us forward in our journey, like the sparkling light of the stars.

With peace,
Melissa †

Liturgy & Liturgical Ministry

By Jerré Croteau, Verger

November-December

During November we will be finishing the season of Pentecost and entering the season of Advent. As I write this, I feel as if I should put all verbs in the subjunctive mode as things change as the progress of Covid-19 marches on, influencing decisions being made about our liturgical life. For the foreseeable future we will continue to worship together virtually at the 10AM Eucharist on Sundays, and in

some of the zoom and virtual prayer groups and gatherings already scheduled.

Sunday November 1st, this year, is actually on **All Saints' Day**. Breaking with the perpetual green of "ordinary time" the liturgical color is white. As has been the tradition at Grace, we will be using Eucharistic Prayer D, a translation of one of the most ancient Eucharistic Prayers. The service also includes the Baptismal Covenant and some of the portions of the mass will be sung by cantors, *eg*: The Gloria and Sanctus. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the names of all those associated with our parish who have died in the last year will be remembered.

The following Sunday, November 8th, will be the **Twenty-third after Pentecost** with the usual virtual Eucharist using Eucharistic Prayer A, as will the following Sunday, November 15th. The use of the Children's Liturgy which is normally used on the third Sunday of the month has been suspended for the time being.

November 22nd will feature our own ancient custom of **Harvest Sunday**, which has become our parochial feast day. The concept of Grace represents God's abundance and forgiveness freely given and also expresses our thanksgiving for all we have received. The word "grace" itself in Romance languages expresses these ideas, *eg*: Spanish: gracias, French: grâce, Italian: grazie, etc., all express gratefulness. Even the idea of "freely given" is expressed by this root: the word "gratis" means "freely given" in many of the Romance languages. So on this Sunday we celebrate the concept of Grace after which our parish is named. The retable of the altar is

traditionally festooned with the fruits of the harvest.

On November 29th, we begin the new liturgical year with the **First Sunday of Advent**. The Eucharistic Prayer changes to B and the color to blue. There are four Sundays in Advent, this year the other three occurring on December 6th, 13th, and 20th. The Third Sunday of Advent is called **Gaudete Sunday** and the color is rose. "Gaudete!" means "Rejoice!" as the wait for the birth of the Messiah is almost over. **Christmas Eve** this year is on the Thursday following the Fourth of Advent, beginning the twelve-day season of Christmas, and **Christmas** itself is on a Friday. December ends with the First Sunday of Christmas, December 27th.

I wish I could give you the usual details about the services and calendar of events for the **Christmas Season**, but as of this writing we are still working out the details of how we will approach this important liturgical event. One thing we do know, we will need volunteers sometime before the Fourth Sunday of Advent (December 20th) to bring up all the Christmas trimmings and crèche components to decorate the church. The Hanging of the Greens would normally occur this year on that Sunday before Christmas. You will receive more information as decisions are made in the e-news or by other means.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting

February 28th

Children's Ministry Program

By Charlene Ryder, Children's Ministry Program Coordinator

As we approach the months of November and December, we continue to have our Storytime and Church School lesson on Sunday mornings at 11:15AM via Zoom. The Zoom link is sent out weekly. If you have not received the Zoom link in email, please contact me and I will forward you the information to join our Storytime.

We have some amazing storytellers!!! Jerré Croteau did an awesome reading of the book *Baby Wren and the Great Gift*. He is also a talented actor for our church school lessons! We have had lessons on *Moses Gets Water from a Rock* and *The Wedding Banquet* with Show & Tell follow-ups. We have many great rock painting artists!

Mimi Monteiro read the book *Three Bears in a Boat*. Thank you, Mimi! Andrea Medeiros told the story of *The Night I Followed the Dog*. I believe we heard many different voices for the characters in that book.

We look forward to our future readers: Jaliyah Mingola, Davy Mingola, Erin Mingola, Pamela Souza, Claire Morck, Courtney Grime, Ali and Georgia Roderiques, and Charlene Ryder.

Our 'Back to School Blessings' and 'The Blessing of the Animals' events were joyful and fun times seeing all the children, youth, and animals.

I will continue to keep you updated as we journey through the stages of

reopening our church and our upcoming church school events.

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

November

By Rev. Chris Morck

(... continued from front page)

We are not named after a saint or an important day in the life of the church but rather we are named after a theological concept, and maybe a somewhat elusive one at that – Grace; the gratuitous overflowing generosity of God's love calling us, in ways large and small, to share in God's life.

Named as we are after this essential attribute or quality of God, it does seem that Harvest Sunday, tied as it is to the Sunday before Thanksgiving, would be a most appropriate date for our Feast Day.

Now, I do not know if our name and the date of Harvest Sunday was a coincidence, but it makes quite a lot of sense, this idea of Thanksgiving and Harvest being connected to Grace. Even the words Grace and Thanksgiving themselves are related.

In several of the Romance languages, the word *thanks*, to express gratitude, is intimately connected to the word *grace*. In Spanish, for example, grace is *gracia*, thanks is *gracias*, and the Day of Thanksgiving is *Día de Acción de Gracias* – the day for the act of giving thanks.

This can be seen in Greek as well in a very interesting way for us Episcopalians. The Greek word for grace is *charis*, and the word for

gratitude or the giving of thanks is built on this word: *eucharistia*, the word from which Eucharist comes. Eucharist is a prayer of thanksgiving, a response to God's grace.

For thanksgiving is the proper response to grace. And there is a certain grace even in the feeling of true gratitude; not an automatic 'thank you' but rather a deep feeling of delight and joy flowing from one's heart in the recognition and reception of grace, of God's generous gifts.

Thanksgiving and grace are intimately connected. Gratitude is the sign that we have truly accepted God's grace, the beauty and love of God around us, working in us and through us, ever present.

The theologian Karl Barth makes the connection like this, writing, "Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes gratitude like the voice an echo. **Gratitude follows grace as thunder follows lightning.**"

Now, reading this reminds me that, sometimes, grace may seem like lightning in a storm that we cannot quite see through. Grace does not always come in ways that we would expect or even ways we would initially want. There are experiences which do not seem like gifts. Like that Fire in 1987. And yet the grace of God bears goodness through them.

In the many and varied ways that it comes, God's grace gives fullness of life to God's people and to the whole of God's creation. And it is in thanksgiving that grace finds its fullest expression.

God's grace is all around us, in those times when we feel it, see it, know it;

and in those times when we do not. Let us, together, seek to more fully allow God's grace to awaken us and animate our lives; that it would continue to renew us, to transform our relationships, and that gratitude for this grace would guide us, guide our hearts and minds, our words and actions.

Gratefully,
Chris +



Food & Faith

By Trish Morck

Now a solid seven months into a global pandemic, with warmer months behind us and colder months ahead, it can be quite easy to slip into feelings of despair, of hopelessness, of the sense that there is no end to what we are experiencing. I do have hope, though, that better times are ahead of us, that in some ways the new "normal" may be better in some ways than what we are leaving behind, and that we can use these difficult, unprecedented times to make positive changes in our lives. To paraphrase an article I just read about the ways stress can have negative impacts on our health, there are also many positive things we can be doing to impact and improve our health as well. Like take walks... go to the ocean... work in our yards and gardens... exercise... read... and, yes, cook!

I have for a while been contemplating cooking as a subversive, political act, even an act

of resistance. Every time we say "no" to processed, prepackaged, fast food, and to the companies who market such products, we are saying "yes" to better nutrition, better health, and connection with the earth from which our food comes. As Norman Wirzba writes in *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*, "...cooking is one of the fundamental activities that situate and define people as human beings. Through cooking people learn to understand their relation to the material world... Through cooking, and in a manner much like gardening, we move deeply and knowledgeably into the world." He goes on to say that through cooking we can "experience food as a precious gift and as God's delight." [*Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*; by Norman Wirzba; Cambridge University Press, 2011; pages 190-191]

As more cooking has been happening at home in recent months, I find myself returning to cookbooks and recipe boxes I have inherited in the past several years. I share my late grandmother's passion for cooking and baking, and one recipe I return to again and again that she clipped, probably from the Indianapolis Star newspaper decades ago, is for Cuban Black Beans. It is simple, delicious, and healthy.

Cuban Black Beans

1 c. dried black beans
1 tsp. salt
4 garlic cloves
2 Tbsp. olive oil
¼ tsp. powdered or dried sage
1 each: bay leaf, crumbled; green pepper, chopped; lg. onion, finely chopped
1 Tbsp. cider vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

Soak beans overnight in water to cover. Drain; pour into 2-quart kettle.

Add water to depth of 2 inches above beans. Add salt and one garlic clove, cut in half. Cover kettle and simmer 1 ½ to 2 hours, until beans are tender. Meanwhile, heat oil in saucepan; add remaining garlic cloves, minced. Add sage, bay leaf, green pepper, and onion. Simmer slowly and stir frequently until everything is almost mushy. Stir in vinegar, simmer 2 minutes; stir into beans. Mix well, heat through, season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve hot with hunks of French or Italian bread. It's even better the second day!

SUBSCRIBE TO THE E-NEWS

If you don't receive it already, you can subscribe to Grace Church's weekly e-news by going to www.gracechurchnb.org and clicking the "Subscribe" button at the top of the homepage.

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<http://www.diomass.org/subscribe>



Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. – 1 PETER 4:10

FAITH-FILLED GENEROSITY

As you know, our yearly Pledge Campaign ran five weeks this year ending on October 25th. We did not have an actual “ingathering” of pledges since the church services are being livestreamed through various methods e.g. Facebook and YouTube. However, that “formal” ingathering did not matter to the parishioners of Grace Church. Our building may be “closed” but our church is open and lively! We have various ages of people at Grace who consistently volunteer their time, talent, and give generously to God’s work. We at Grace are frequently showing God’s love and generosity to our own community through our various ministries such as Grace Cares, children and youth ministries and our Community Breakfast and Martha’s Pantry. We hope you enjoyed listening to the video clips from our parishioners describing their reasons for giving of their time to serve others in need and the impact on the people whom they help and the satisfaction they themselves receive for doing it.

Despite being in a pandemic, parishioners at Grace Church have stepped up again to make a written commitment to pledge support to our ministries. Several have chosen during these difficult times to increase their pledge. The pledge that you have decided to give is your own generosity back to God based on YOUR faith. Pledges received to date have shown both an increase in total dollars pledged and the number of pledges made. This is very gratifying and helps not only to sustain our ministries but also allows us to plan financially for the future.

Thank you to those who have given. To those who have not, there is still time to consider making your commitment by submitting your pledge card through Grace Church either through the mail or online at

<https://gracechurchnb.org/give/#pledge>.

Beth Sharp McKay,
Chairperson of the Stewardship Committee

September-October Gifts

Community Breakfast

Gifts of Norma Bossé, James Bisagni
 Gift of Ken & Mary Lou Garrett **in thanksgiving for God's many blessings**
 Gift of Jerré Croteau **in memory of Norma Bossé**

Pastoral Leadership

Gift of Jean Brown **in thanksgiving**

Laundry Love

Gift of Edith Lauderdale

Martha's Pantry at Grace

Gifts of James Bobrick, Artie Hodge, Charlene Nelson, Susan Merrow-Kehoe & William Kehoe, Bonnie Silverstein, Linda Austin, Edith Lauderdale, Donald Driesen
 Gift of Roland & Harriet Shaw **in memory of Martha Reed**
 Gift of Norma Dyer **in memory of Louise Dalzell**
 Gift of Ken & Mary Lou Garrett **in thanksgiving for God's many blessings**

Rector's Discretionary Fund

Gifts of Alfred Smialek, Nancy & David Faria, Donald Driesen, Artie Hodge & Lavard Blanche, James Ring, Charles Cotter & Marilyn Saint-Aubin, Norma Bossé, Deborah & Robert Huckabee, Travis Bowie, Larry Correia
 Gift of Ken & Mary Lou Garrett **in thanksgiving for God's many blessings**

Memorial Fund

Gift of Mary & Peter Mackie **in memory of Harland Knox and in honor of Judy Knox**
 Gifts of Sally Bullard, and Martha Marie & Norman Fuller **in memory of Walter Pratt**
 Gift of Kathleen Mayo **in memory of Joan Ann Niles**
 Gifts of Robert & Judith Gregory, Kingsley & Janet Doe, Priscilla Guillemette, Andrew & Sally Frazee, Joan Swain, John Howcroft, Theresa Nowell, Gerry Lopes, Marjorie & Bob Joseph, Diane Lopes & Family, John F. Whiteside, Alfred Smialek, Norma Dyer, Shirley & Dennis Beck, Joe & Mary Ellen Howarth, Barbara Santos, Zelinda Douhan, Louise Kelly, Pauline Roderiques, Dave & Barb Mitchell, Gilbert Mello **in memory of Norma Bossé**
 Gift of Lucy Gundersen **in memory of Norma Bossé, Muriel Pehrson & Diana Ukleja**

Audiovisual Equipment

Gift of Michael & Caroline Blais, James Bisagni & Memory Holloway, Gerald & Ruth Bowden, Nancy Krueger, James McKay & Beth Sharp

Outreach

Gift of Beverly Sutton

General Fund

Gift of Kate Kimball

Operating Expenses

Gift of Ken & Mary Lou Garrett **in thanksgiving for God's many blessings**

Miscellaneous

Gift of Andrew & Sally Frazee, Eric Braitmayer & the Karina Foundation, Juliette Berthiaume

🌀 ADVENT & CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS 🌀

CRÈCHE

Virgin Mary & St. Joseph, original Christ Child 1963
 Christ Child, 1977
 Original Shepherd and Donkey, 1977;
Gift of Lulmira Handy in memory of Jacob Handy
 Subsequent Christ Children
 1999 *Gift of the Rev. Sarah K. Hague*
 2008 *Gift of Jerré Croteau*
 Original Magi, 1979
Grace Memorial Gifts Fund
 New Statues for the Handy Memorial Crèche, 2014
Gift of Jerré Croteau, Travis Bowie, Priscilla Guillemette, Geraldine Lopes,
Alfred Smialek, Nina Catelli Vincent, Michel Jodoin & John Masson
in memory of Robert O. Boardman, Richard Bowie, Ronald Guillemette,
Norman Lopes, Adele Smialek, Una Vincent and Dorothy & Penry Warr

ADVENT WREATH & CANDLESTAND, 1994

Gift of Mr & Mrs. Alfred Smialek, Peter & David Smialek
In Thanksgiving

Arrangement of Greens, 1998

Gift of Scott Simpkin

BLUE ADVENT BURSE, VEIL & HANGINGS, 2000

Handwoven Gift of Patricia Nieman

ANGEL/CHRISTMAS TREE

CHURCH WREATHS, GREENS & TRIMMINGS, 2000

Gift of Jerré Croteau & Robert Boardman in memory of
Kennedy Shaw, Richard Hagan & the Rev. Clifford Kolb

PEW CANDELABRA, 1947

In Thanksgiving and Memory of

William Gordon, Rehnberg Wingate & his son, Catherine Beattie, David T. Wilbur, James J. Miller, Departed members of the Evening Auxiliary, Margaret A. Tupper, Walter G. Thompson, William Orr, Irene Barrett, Kenneth R. Smith, John E. Wood, John A. MacLeod, Alice Blacklidge, Robert Hazeltine, Jr., James L. Lemos; Edward and Henrietta Charles, Beatrice, Harry & William Bly; Frank & Elizabeth Congdon, Delphine E. Sturtevant, William H. Broadbent, Dorothy M. Upton, Kate A. Arden, Julia Lattimer, Lucy J. Stowell, Florence P. Eldridge, Henry D. Cornell, William H. Brown, Alice W. Goodwin, Alfred S. Dunham, Michael Bendikson, Marion Wordell, William & Hannah Huston, Departed Grace Church Mothers, Sheldon Gardner, Robert C. Kirby, Alfred Bradley; Louis, Lillian & Anthony Sears; Winona & Frank Hanna, John Chartier, David Kinghorn, Lydia Whitehead, Departed members of the Woman's Guild, Mildred Sturtevant, Frank & Laura Moody, Philip & John Threshie, John Harwood, Sanford Read, Daniel Smith, Joseph & Mary Ellen Marsh, Elizabeth Nelson, Emma Harwood, Henry Dixon, Harriet Gunning, Richmond Wood, Ralph Bardsley, Minnie Abrams, Irving Cartwright, John G. Kennedy, Grace & Henry Wood, Departed members of the Woman's Auxiliary, Manuel & Lucy Avelar, Charles Goulding, Martha Rowand, Harry Allen, Julia A. Rodman, Edith Morgan Wright, Ruth Ellen Jennings and by many people in thanksgiving.
Metal for Candelabra donated by the Klarén Family

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Director of Music	Brian Roderick
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Grace Episcopal Church
133 School Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

508.993.0547
office@gracechurchnb.org
www.gracechurchnb.org