

Grace Notes
Grace Episcopal Church
106 Lowell Street
Manchester, NH 03101-1625
www.gracechurchmanchester.org
July/August, 2014

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July/August 2014

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106 Lowell St.
Manchester, NH

From the Rector

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro

Thank God for the Trees. Teaching What We're Meant to Be.

Thomas Merton writes: *A tree gives glory to God by being a tree. For in being what God means it to be it is obeying God. It "consents," so to speak, to God's creative love. It is expressing an idea which is in God and which is not distinct from the essence of God, and therefore a tree imitates God by being a tree.*

This past Sunday we had a special, first time visitor. We have a lot of visitors walk through our doors. People searching for a spiritual home, a place to find God, find friends, find a place to celebrate and worship. But this particular visitor was different. Just under a foot in height, very hairy, and impossible to nail down for coffee hour conversation. It was a squirrel.

Chris Potter, sitting at a table in the Great Hall shortly before our 8 AM service ended, was the first to see the squirrel. The visitor stared up at Chris, sized Christ up, and assessed just what to do next. Chris hadn't yet heard the sermon for the day celebrating Trinity Sunday and the theme for the day ("the power of three"). Still instinctively he knew he couldn't catch the squirrel alone. So he went for help; found wise and capable aid in the form of parishioners Ken Rhodes and Kurt Wickes. The power of three men then debated, not how to keep this new visitor and get him to fill out a pew card, but how to get the visitor out the door. But first they needed to figure out where visitor had gone. To fill a cup of coffee? Grab a snack? Not at all. The men found the visitor at the one welcoming spot for a squirrel in our church. The squirrel went to a place of happiness, a place where he felt safe – to the tiny potted tree in the Great Hall.

Chris, Ken, and Kurt were able to shoo the squirrel out of the Great Hall, down the stairs, and out the door. Hooray for the power of three – for Chris, Ken and Kurt – for their compassion, for getting the squirrel where he needed to go – out the door and to a sanctuary more of his liking – to an outside, not inside, tree of choice.

At this month's property meeting our gathering had a lively discussion about the importance of trees on the Grace Church grounds.

Grace Episcopal Church

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Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Rector
The Rev. Joan Barr Smith, Deacon

Vestry

Ellen Zimmerman, Warden
Michelle Shuman, Clerk
Richard Feren, Assistant Treasurer
Linda Heath, Warden
Ed High, Treasurer

2012-2015 Mary Carol Collings, Barbara Hermann, Kevin von Braun
2013-2016 William Bochinski, Jill Porter, Mary Sargent
2014-2017 James Higgins, Mark Bartram, Ann Hewins

Staff

Mark Cleveland, Director of Music
Carter Beck, Organist
Justin & Nicole Otto, Church School Coordinators
Marlene Thompson, Parish Administrator
Jill Porter, Bookkeeper
Emery Freethey, Sexton
Susan Senneville, Nursery Care Giver

Newsletter

Lauren Cline
Lauren6997@yahoo.com

Next Newsletter Deadline

August 15, 2014

On July 29th, we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of women's ordination to priesthood. Sandi Albom and I will be in Philadelphia for the celebratory Eucharist at the Church of the Advocate, where the ordination took place. I recommend three books: *The Story of the Philadelphia Eleven* by Darlene Odell, *Looking Forward, Looking Backward* - Fredrica Harris Thompsett, editor, and *The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me (The Writings of Suzanne Hiatt)* - Carter Heyward and Janine Lehané, editors. Most folks are not aware of the pain and struggle these eleven women suffered. Jane W Van Zandt+

Many of you have supported Macy's annual "Shop for a Cause" event by purchasing your one day discount cards through the National Ataxia Foundation supporting research for a cure for ataxia. Ataxia affects an estimated \$150,000 individuals. Ken Porter's ataxia is from an inherited gene, that affects his balance and his speech. If you love to shop and love a discount this event is definitely for you!

Macy's "Shop for a Cause"
\$5.00

www.ataxia.org/macyscard

Macy's Card orders must be received by August 15th, 2014.

Your special Macy's "Shop for a Cause" discount card gives you access to a special one-day-only sales event at Macy's stores nationwide on Saturday, August 23rd. Card holders receive a 25% discount on regular, sale, and clearance items, including home-even save on most brands usually excluded! Card holders will also save 10% on electronics, watches, furniture, and rugs. Exclusions Apply. Card holders are also eligible to register to win a \$500 Macy's gift card. To order by mail send a check made payable to the National Ataxia Foundation to 2600 Fernbrook Lane, Suite 119 Minneapolis, MN 55447. Write "Macy's Card" in the memo line. Or, even easier, go through the NAF website listed above.

Grace Church Book Group

The book group will continue during June and July. Questions? Contact the hostess.

July 15, 2014 [Orphan Train](#) by Christina Baker Kline
 Hostess: Jane van Zandt



We discussed how many of us didn't know when and why trees were planted on our property. Were specific trees planted in honor of a marriage? What trees serve as memorials for those who have died? What trees were planted to mark an important event? We'd like to learn from you, if you know one or more of these answers, the spiritual significance of the trees on our property. Do you know how a tree came to be? Why a specific tree was planted? If you do, please let us know as we're trying to make sure, as we do future landscaping, we don't cut down a tree sacred to you and to our parish history.

Certainly this recent encounter with a squirrel reminded me of the importance of trees. And of the wisdom found in Thomas Merton's words: *A tree gives glory to God by being a tree. For in being what God means it to be it is obeying God.*

This summer, as you look around God's creation, thank God for trees! For their strength and shade, and for reminding us sometimes just standing still, being there for someone, is more than enough.

Blessings,
 Marjorie +

THE BIBLE CHALLENGE **Ernie Marino**

Every Wednesday morning for an hour, a group of truth seekers meet in the Grace Church library for lively and, often, introspective discussions. The class, known as The Bible Challenge, is ably led by facilitator Sue Gordon and mentored by Marjorie. We are assigned weekly readings from the Old Testament, the Psalms, and the New Testament. Our discussions begin with reviewing the readings, but sometimes they evolve into broader commentary about current events and biblical points of interest.

Personally, I was at first intimidated by the thought of reading the Bible from cover to cover. Now I find the reading and subsequent discussion to be stimulating, thought-provoking, and uplifting. The members of our group have differing opinions, but there is a palpable camaraderie among us. Everyone listens; no one judges. People come back week after week, and all contribute insights from personal experience and prayerful consideration. The Bible Challenge class proves that a heterogeneous group can, indeed, come together for a homogeneous purpose, not the least of which is to know Christ and to make Christ known.

MILESTONES

Happy Birthday to the following July & August birthday celebrants!

July

3 Cyndi Wasdyke
 Anne Harvey
 4 Olivia Alvarez
 5 Dr. Stewart Richmond
 6 Meaghan Chandonnet
 7 Kenneth Fox
 Herb Perez-Ramos
 8 Frank Manley
 Susan Tonnar
 11 Blake Leister
 12 Bud Marvin
 Stanley Paras
 Benjamin Thomas
 13 Ethan Cline
 17 Wes Wasdyke
 Lyndsay Stenbeck
 Sam Leek
 Brian Guimond
 18 Betsy Staulcup
 20 Liam Neville
 22 Kurt Wicks
 25 Linda Chamberlain
 26 Connor Ricker
 28 Zachary Stagnaro
 Miranda Cole

29 Clare White
 30 Andrew Cote
 31 Rick Maloney

August

3 Tom Suckley III
 5 Taylor Harvey
 Susan King
 7 Ken Wyatt
 9 Richard Jefferson
 10 Mary Baron
 12 Lauren Cline
 13 Linda Heath
 Dan Ferry
 14 Barbie Fox
 15 Jay Douglas
 19 Mary Beth Neville
 Ernie Marino
 22 Stephen Cornish
 25 Sebastian Cline
 29 Micah Brumfield
 Dick Feren
 Nancy Johnson
 30 Jane Charlesworth

Watch over thy children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may thy peace which passeth understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer, page 830

Baptisms: June 8, 2013 6 Brennan David Gregoire

Births: Leighton Elizabeth Ricker
 Born May 29th, 2014
 6 lbs 10 oz, 21 inches
 Daughter of Rachel and Dan Pictured with proud big brother Connor



Acolyte Gathering and Training Planned

ac-o-lyte (pronounced 'akə,lit) noun: acolyte; plural noun: acolytes

Definition: a person assisting the celebrant in a religious service or procession. Synonyms: an assistant, follower, helper, aide, minion, underling, lackey, henchman; follower, disciple, supporter, votary, sidekick, groupie, hanger-on

Who knew that a Google search could reveal so many hats, roles, synonyms, for the word “acolyte”? While the word “minion” might make us think of short, yellow creatures from Despicable Me and words like “underling” and “lackey” diminish the worth and work of the role, acolytes are an important part of the liturgy and tradition of the Episcopal Church. They are not just liturgical sidekicks or religious groupies, but people who enjoy serving God on the altar, who help making prayer and worship happen.

We will be having two acolyte gatherings in the next few months, one in July to educate, set standards, gather questions, and distribute information. Another in September to help those who acolyte become more comfortable in the role. If you have a strong desire to serve and worship God on the altar as an acolyte, please join us on the following dates:

July 20th – Following our 9 AM service we invite all those who are already acolytes at our 8 and 10:30 AM services to join us to review the roles and responsibilities of acolytes. We also ask that all those who are interested in becoming acolytes join us as well. We invite all children of God, ages **7 and above** (younger children accompanied by a parent) to join us for this event. Note: beginning in September children ages 7 to 12 are especially invited to serve as acolytes on the third Sunday of each month.

September 14 – Following our FINAL 9 AM service of 2014 we will gather in the sanctuary to train new acolytes and review roles with those who are already acolytes.

Please contact the parish office to let us know you will be attending these training and discussions.

Janet Mills, Acolyte Coordinator and Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Rector

Property Committee Request: when hosting an event, please be mindful to take with you all unused items, including food, drinks, paper goods and decorations. In past clean-ups, we have found many outdated food and drink items in kitchen as well as storage closet. **THANK YOU!**

Reflections AND THOUGHTS

Before you go

Growth Part II

One of the things mentioned in the first part of this series was the trash (both garbage and recycling) left out for weekly pick-up. The amount of trash has been increasing over the past year or so, which is interpreted by many as an indicator that the economy is recovering because it means more things are being sold; more people are making more money; companies are doing better; stocks are going up so retirement accounts are better funded; etc.

All of those ideas seem reasonable, but for just a minute, let's look at what is in the pile of trash. If you walk around on trash day, there are indeed some very large collections of boxes, packing, etc. Cities usually provide specific containers for both garbage and recycling, but approx. 80% of the total is usually set out to go to the land-fill, and approx. 20% is set aside as recycling. A lot of towns and a lot of people (me included) would like to see the ratios reversed. In other words, I would like to see a growth in the percentage of recycling. Looking at the piles of debris, it is clear that a lot of what is being treated as garbage could be recycled. Most people just don't want to take the time to sort it.

Most houses seem to have an average of three barrels set out each week: two for garbage and one for recycling, plus other materials being treated as garbage that don't fit into those containers. My recycling barrel gets full slowly and goes out about once a month. I don't have a garbage barrel, so my weekly garbage goes out in a bag the size of a potato chip bag (I hand-compact it). I also have a weekly compost deposit roughly equal to the amount of garbage. My ratios are approx. 20% garbage, 20% compost, and 60% recycling (80% if you consider compost as a form of recycling).

Now I have another thought. What if people didn't buy so much, but rather put their extra money into growth of savings and investments? Would that be hurting the economy, or would it be helping the economy? I'm sure that people have different opinions, so I'll look at that next time.

Dick Feren



Sunny Skies in Lancaster

Monday June 16, 2014: Good morning! I am writing to you from the St. Paul's Rectory located just behind St. Paul's Episcopal Church here in Lancaster. I arrived yesterday for 9:00 AM Eucharist to meet a very full congregation. The three acolytes were somewhere between the ages of 7 and 12 and quite lively. The Rev. Janet Lombardo is the interim priest here. Janet and I met over ten years ago and have not seen

each other in quite some time. We are happy to be reunited and look forward to a pleasant and joy-filled experience serving together in this welcoming and faith-filled community. Janet holds an informal Bible study during coffee hour.

Sophie (my yellow tabby cat) is not pleased with our transition and has been scurrying around the rectory from room to room since we arrived. Yes, all night too! Now she has found a fit place to nap in a lovely chair in the main living room. She thinks this is just fine for a classy cat.



I on the other hand have a full and exciting day ahead. The St. Mark's Summer Enrichment Program in Groveton begins next week and there is still some final work to be done on the weekend backpack food program which will begin on Friday of that week. In the afternoon I will be traveling to St. Barnabus Church in Berlin to get acquainted with the surrounding city and meet with the missionary to the North Country the Rev. Richard Davenport who will serve as my primary mentor for the summer internship. Tomorrow will be my first vestry meeting.

I am looking forward to participating in the Lancaster Street Fair in July as well as sharing in all the vital ministries God is calling the wonderful little parishes of this convocation to being to life.

Yours in Christ, Maryan Davis (postulant to the diaconate)

Not “Goodbye,” but “Godspeed”

We give thanks for the presence of Christ found in the Shuman Family as we say "Godspeed" to Michelle, Jeffrey, Gabby, and Madison. Jeff was offered, quite suddenly, a wonderful new job in El Paso, Texas. In his new vocation Jeff will be managing three manufacturing buildings and a distribution center. He will also be helping manage the construction of three new factories. Thanks to Jeff, those fruit gummies kids love in all shapes (Disney Princesses, Cars, Despicable Me minions) will continue to be available! The Shuman family moved from Chester, New Hampshire at the end of June to a beautiful new home in the heart of Texas. The last thing they did in New Hampshire before beginning their five day drive was attend church!

Michelle has served as clerk of our Vestry for the past five months and done thankless jobs, including the cleaning out and restocking of "church boxes" for our youngest parishioners and stuffing over 700 eggs for this year's Easter Egg hunt. Both Jeff and Michelle have been assistant teachers in our Sunday School program this year as well where there children have been regular, engaged students. We are thankful for the stewardship and love they have gifted our church.



Michelle, Madison and Gabby Schuman

Please consider sending a card of congratulations and joy to the Shuman Family at their new address: 6258 Franklin Moor Drive El Paso, Texas 79912

GOOD NEWS

Grace House will soon be buzzing with new activity. Some updating will be going on to make way for volunteers of City Year. “City Year is an education-focused nonprofit organization that works to help keep students in school and on track to graduate by uniting teams of diverse, young AmeriCorps members for a year of full time service in schools.” According to City Year leaders, Grace House would be an ideal setting for these volunteers to rent. During July, please check your email for details on how you can help to make ready for City Year volunteers and welcome our new neighbors when they arrive in August.

**Grace Church Renovation Team
Rev. Mathews, Linda Heath, Ed High, Ellen Zimmerman**

Christopher Potter, who moved away from Manchester in mid-June and is teaching tennis this summer, sends the following from Boston:

To my dear friends at Grace Church,

I had the opportunity to lead church school the week before I moved. I wanted to teach the kids about community service, how Jesus instructed us to serve each other with humility and compassion. We read together the stories of the Good Samaritan who helps a man in need, how Jesus washed his disciples' feet, and how the widow gave all she had to the Temple. I had the children act out charitable deeds like giving a coat to somebody cold or helping others clean up. I hope the kids learn the value of such actions and make them habitual.

That lesson encapsulated my mission for my entire term at Grace. I created opportunities for us to serve together because I believe that when people serve others, they uplift the person they help and themselves.

Jane Van Zandt once told me as we volunteered at New Horizons, "scoop the food onto the tray neatly, because it shows you care." We have the chance to show people we care every day. The more intentionally and enthusiastically we do it, the more comfort and joy we bring into the world. It also makes the people around us more likely to do good deeds. That way, we change our society at the same time we help a single person.

Please, if you are willing to do something to remember me, find a time to serve others. Even better, bring a friend, too; encourage someone else. I pray from the bottom of my heart that Grace Church will grow a culture of community service. Grace Church can be a shining beacon of compassion and charity. I believe Christ directed us--as a community and personally--to create a society of love. The opportunity knocks on our door every day--open it! Better yet, go forth to share our abundance with a smile!

Know that I am happy and healthy in Boston and will come visit you this summer. I'll be blogging on Thursdays and hope you'll read and comment. I send my love and gratitude for a fantastic two years. I miss you already.

May the Spirit be with you. Christopher Potter