



# GRACE NOTES MARCH 2019

*Our Mission Statement:*

*To know Christ & make Christ known*

**Grace Episcopal Church**

106 Lowell St.  
Manchester, NH





*Illustration by Andrew Freshour*

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## Rector's Message

*We ask for long life, but 'tis deep life, or grand moments, that signify.*

*Let the measure of time be spiritual, not mechanical."*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson, Society and Solitude*

One of the things that Jesus managed extremely well was the concept of life balance, as Ralph Waldo Emerson called it, his interaction between "society and solitude." We know by reading all four gospels that Jesus spent a lot of time socializing with others. That Christ worked hard to lean into others, hear their troubles, and be a compassionate, attentive presence to those in need. But Jesus also spent an equal amount of time, if not more time, alone, in prayer, so that he had enough strength and energy to care for others.

My first boss in ministry often would say to me, "Marjorie, you are not the Savior!" Isn't that the truth! Yet all too often all of us get savior complexes. As Christians, family members, responsible individuals we want to be of great use, and often the result is we over-function. We give of ourselves to extremes. We text, talk, socialize too much. We work too hard. Do too much. Help to exhaustion. And then is the when we develop "compassion fatigue." There is even a compassion fatigue awareness website you can peruse (<http://www.compassionfatigue.org/>) that talks about how we all tend to stretch ourselves too thin.

The call of the season of Lent (which we will soon begin!) is to embrace, as Emerson suggests, a better balance between society and solitude. To remember more regularly we are not just human doings, but spiritual beings called to both do our best for God and find time for rest and time to simply pray and be with our Creator.

Looking back at our time together at our Annual Meeting it was remarkable to see all the ideas people had within our parish of how we could balance helping others both within and outside the walls of our church campus. You responded beautifully to the question as to how we could invest some of our endowment revenue to image Christ within the city of Manchester. Here are a few of your ideas:

Internal parish outreach ideas:

1. Help finance the cost of **Laundry Love** programming;
2. Lower income parishioners regularly call our parish office asking

for **rides to and from church**. Could we allot a certain amount of funds to be set aside so that these parishioners could call a local taxi service and be brought to church. *(Note: securing other parishioners with cars to drive lower income parishioners has not, for the most part, been successful.);*

3. Add a **staff person at Grace Church** (Part Time?) to focus on youth, children, community needs;
4. Set up a program to **provide free bikes, helmets, and locks to area youth**;
5. Start a monthly, free **Senior Lunch** on site at our church.

External outreach ideas within our city and state: (in no particular order and not the full list!)

1. Support **1269** which provides a food pantry, lunch, social and financial support to the homeless of Manchester;
2. Support **IINE** (International Institute of New England), an organization which helps refugees and immigrants succeed through resettlement, education, career advancement and pathways to citizenship;
3. Finance **scholarships to Christian Summer camp programs**;
4. Support **Families In Transition**;
5. Continue to support **Sally Zyla Addison's passion for the arts and children** within the Manchester community.

This Lent I pray our parish will continue to look towards valuable ways to worship God and en flesh Christ both through prayer and study at church and love and concern within the wider world.

Move love,  
Marjorie +

## **St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef Supper**

Saturday, March 16, 2019 at 6:00 PM

Please join us for a traditional Irish boiled dinner (prepared by professional chefs) complete with live entertainment and raffle. Impresario Ernie Marino promises this to be a 5-star-plus event – you won't want to miss it!



Wear green and bring your lucky charms!

Tickets are \$8.00 per person in advance (with a max of \$24 per family with school-age children) and \$10.00 per person at the door (with a max of \$30 per family). Seating is limited (fire codes are strict!) so get your tickets early!

Tickets will be available in the Great Hall after each service.

If you can help with set-up, clean-up, or serving, please sign up on the kiosk.

## **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Seuss Breakfast**

March 16, 2019

9:00 am to 11:00 am

It's not too late to make plans to attend or help with the Dr. Seuss Breakfast on Saturday, March 16 from 9 to 11:00 AM. Activities are aimed for kindergarten to 3rd grade students but younger children are welcome to attend. We'd like to have lots of Grace Church families joining those who have been invited from The Way Home, Bakersville, Hallsville, McDonough, and Wilson Schools, and the Manchester Developmental Preschool. Free tickets are available in the church office or from any member of the Outreach Committee.

The Cat in the Hat will be there to read stories and join in the activities. Corky the Clown will perform a magic show. Bring your children, your grandchildren, your friends. Listen to stories, make some crafts, and enjoy a delicious breakfast.

We also need help in a variety of forms. You can sign up on the kiosk to bring food, set up, cook, serve, clean up, or direct children to activities. Monetary donations are also appreciated.

Contact Nancy-Ann Feren, 627-2503, if you have questions.

## Market Basket Gift Card Donation Thanks

The Grace Church Outreach Committee donated \$1000 in Market Basket gift cards along with some books for beginning readers to the International Institute of New England. We received the following note:

*Thank you so much for your tremendous contribution to the International Institute's gift card drive. The impactful gift you made has ensured that our newest refugee families have the resources to buy food and necessities. Your support is so appreciated, especially during a time of uncertainty for our families. Thank you for being a champion for refugees and immigrants!*

Sincerely,  
Shannon St. Pierre  
PS We love the books too!"

## Grace Book Group

What is your preference – hard copy books, eBooks, audiobooks? Whatever method or device you prefer – the books that have been selected to read and discuss this year for the Grace Book Group are interesting, sometimes humorous and always provide great topics for discussion. Please join your fellow parishioners and friends for monthly discussion – and delicious pot luck luncheon. The group meets the third Tuesday of each month at noon in the parish library. Everyone is welcome whether you have read the book or not. Your life experience is a valued and welcomed part of the discussion.

Books that participants will be reading and discussing are:

**March:** ‘One Thousand White Women’ by Jim Fergus. According to Good Reads this is story of May Dodd and a colorful assembly of pioneer women who, under the auspices of the U.S. government, travel to the western prairies in 1875 to intermarry among the Cheyenne Indians. The covert and controversial "Brides for Indians" program, launched by the admin-

istration of Ulysses S. Grant, is intended to help assimilate the Indians into the white man's world. Toward that end May and her friends embark upon the adventure of their lifetime. Jim Fergus has so vividly depicted the American West that it is as if these diaries are a capsule in time.

**April:** ‘The Rainbow Comes and Goes’ by Anderson Cooper & Gloria Vanderbilt. Good Read’s review states that this is a touching and intimate correspondence between Anderson Cooper and his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt, offering timeless wisdom and a revealing glimpse into their lives. An appealing memoir with inspirational advice, *The Rainbow Comes and Goes* is a beautiful and affectionate celebration of the universal bond between a parent and a child, and a thoughtful reflection on life, reminding us of the precious insight that remains to be shared, no matter our age.

## Reflections

### Forgiveness and Confession

Over the years, I have seen articles and comments about forgiveness and confession. I have pondered them a lot, and I think I have a better understanding of both of them now. I would like to pass along some of my thoughts.

A few years ago, there was an article in the Christian Science Monitor about a man who forgave another for killing his father. Several years before that, there were articles in many publications about the Amish who forgave a man (Charles C. Roberts) who had killed several of their children at a school in Lancaster, PA. In both cases, there was a sense that forgiveness was the right thing to do. The point is often made that if you focus on non-forgiveness and wanting revenge, the grudge will destroy you both mentally and physically. Forgiveness removes the grudge and frees you.

While looking back at information about the Amish school shooting, I had another realization. It seems that the Amish realized that the shooter was a person, and his family was also suf-

fering. The following comment was made:

“Amish community members visited and comforted Roberts' widow, parents, and parents-in-law. One Amish man held Roberts' sobbing father in his arms, reportedly for as long as an hour, to comfort him. The Amish have also set up a charitable fund for the family of the shooter.”

This combination of thoughts has given me a broader perspective.

So, how does confession tie in with this? I was recently reading a Skeptic article in Scientific American from 2007. The author was Michael Shermer, and the title of the article was *Bush's mistake and Kennedy's error*. In the article, Shermer states that people make errors, and often prefer to find a way to justify their error as valid rather than admit it was an error. He used the US involvement with the war in Iraq as an example. The Congress at that time, and the then-President George W. Bush, both decided that despite significant losses of lives and money, the US should “stay the course” and not pull out before victory. Part of the logic was assuming that admitting an error would make them look bad. This error became a mistake.

In contrast to this reasoning is President John Kennedy taking responsibility for the botched Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba. The following is from the statement he made:

This administration intends to be candid about its errors. For as a wise man once said, “*An error does not become a mistake until you refuse to correct it.*” We intend to accept full responsibility for our errors.....We're not going to have any search for scapegoats....the final responsibilities of any failure are mine and mine alone.

As a result, Kennedy's popularity shot up, along with respect for his ability as a thoughtful leader willing to change his mind.

This is a good example of how confession can lead to for-



giveness. It is also worth remembering that forgiveness can come from oneself as well as from others. Maybe that is the whole point of why churches encourage confession.

Dick Feren

## **Congratulations Laundry Love! – Three years!**

On Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> our parish entered its third year of Laundry Love. We continue to reach out into the community to bring God's love to all. As of the time of the Annual Meeting, our parish has helped over 2,000 people. We have washed almost 11,000 loads of laundry. We have washed over 113 pounds of laundry. We have had over 300 volunteers since we started, averaging nine per session. We wish to thank this congregation for all their support. We feel that we are making a difference in people's lives as we go forth with this calling.

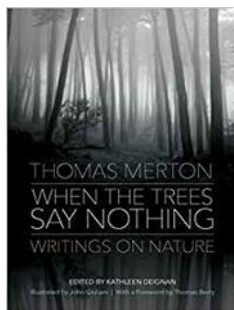
Brian Guimond



## Book Review

“When the Trees Say Nothing” by Thomas Merton.

Foreword by Father Thomas Berry



Perhaps the greatest spiritual challenge we face as a species is healing our relationship with our home, Earth. Thomas Merton continues the tradition of 12<sup>th</sup> century spiritual masters Hildegard von Bingen and Bernard of Clairveaux in “when the trees say nothing,” an intimate collection of daily observations written as a young Trappist monk in Kentucky.

As Father Berry observes, Merton’s gift is to sense the sacred throughout the entire range of the natural world. Merton faced the challenge of doing so in the belligerent, industrial and technological western world of 1941. That it is even more difficult to do so today may contribute to the daily unease many feel, unease which an hour or two of spiritual contemplation on the weekend can barely assuage.

Merton writes as if “Dominus Est (The Lord is Here) in these brief, luminous reflections. An example is his lovely sentence, “There I sat in silence and loved the wind in the forest and listened for a good while to God.” For Merton, “Illusion is nevertheless shadow of reality and reality is the grace that under lays these lights, these colors and this silence.” If one has eyes to see and ears to hear, as Merton does, reality is spiritual.

For any who seek a way to see the sacred everywhere in everything, “when the trees say nothing” by Thomas Merton is a fine place to begin or to continue the journey.

David Ross

## Milestones

Happy Birthday to the following March birthdays celebrants!

1	Gwen Gioseffi	19	Ed Zimmerman
2	Chloe Dufresne		Daniel Blevens
5	Max Anderson	21	Pam Gallagher
7	Ann Hewins	24	Ayuen Leek
8	Andrew Freshour	25	Miles Hoisington
9	David Kjellander	27	Debbie Hendry
	Chris Turner		Noah Turner
10	John Day	30	Ellen Zimmerman
	Tory Serge	31	Pubali Chakravoty-
12	James Wyatt		Campbell
13	Ashley Rousseau		
14	Stephanie Blevens		
	Tracy Gillick		
17	Marjorie Gerbracht-		
	Stagnaro		

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*

If you don't see your birthday listed that means that we do not have it. Please call the office so that your special day can be acknowledged – or if we have it wrong, please let us know that also.



February 20, 2019

Grace Episcopal Church  
106 Lowell Street  
Manchester, NH 03101

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your donation of **\$800.00**, in support of the individuals and families in our program. Our mission is to provide hunger relief, emergency shelter, safe affordable housing, and supportive services to individuals and families who are homeless or in need, enabling them to gain self-sufficiency and respect. **In 2018, we were able to provide shelter to 1,328 individuals, of whom 143 were children.** Successes like these are thanks to our supporters like you.

Warm regards,

Maureen Beauregard, President

This is the amount of money we raised and donated on Souper Bowl Sunday!

## **VESTRY MEETING**

**Wednesday, January 16, 2019**

Present: Valerie Anderson, Gail Austin, Steven Botana-Gumbs, Amy Brumfield, Richard Feren, Hank Gagnon, the Reverend Dr. Marjorie Ann Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Edward High, Nancy Johnson, Linda Lassonde, Eileen Suckley  
Excused Absence: Linda Heath, Ken Kjellander, David Roy, Matthew Serge

The meeting was opened by Rev. Marjorie at 7:05 PM with a special prayer for the Vestry

members who were completing their terms. We continued with the reading of the Norms. Leslie Pendleton of the ECF joined us to have us define our five core values. She had reviewed all the data and had determined what we considered to be most important to us and thus decided on what our core values were. We had long and interesting discussions on each of the core values. With Leslie's guidance we fleshed out concrete definitions for our core values.

The five core values for Grace Episcopal Church are as follows:

**WELCOMING** – We intentionally greet everyone who comes through our doors and strive to make a meaningful connection.

**FELLOWSHIP** – We value relationships with one another and embrace the opportunities to deepen personal connections. Being involved and invited to participate in our parish life brings us joy.

**WORSHIP** – We are committed to the beautiful spiritual Episcopal liturgy each week and the extraordinary High Holy Day celebrations. Within this traditional worship we make it known that all are welcome at God's table.

**MUSIC** – Musical offerings from children, quality organ music, a well led choir, and singing from the congregation enhance our worship and spiritual experience.

**OUTREACH (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)** – our mission "to know Christ and to make Christ known" is lived out connecting with our local community currently including activities such as Laundry Love, serving at New Horizons, Mitten Tree, Chips, and Dr. Seuss Breakfast.

These core values will be used in determining our goals and benchmarks in how to communicate with the parishioners, new

comers and the community. The Vestry will have an ECF guided retreat with Melissa Rau on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup> about our goals and benchmarks.

**VOTE:** A motion to accept the reports with a consent agenda vote was made by Hank, seconded by Valerie, and was carried.

Dick presented the proposed Operating Budget for 2019 and the December 2018 Financial Reports.

**VOTE:** A motion was made by Ed, seconded by Eileen and approved by the Vestry to approve the proposed Operating Budget for 2019 as presented.

**VOTE:** A motion was made by Steve, seconded by Linda L. and approved by the Vestry to approve the December financial reports.

Rev. Marjorie reported that a letter of agreement had been drawn for Ann Hewins to be the Property Manager for Grace House. Her salary is \$20/hour when she is needed (with a max of \$5000 for the year). She will submit a monthly bill.

**VOTE:** A motion to have Ann Hewins added to the Grace Church staff was made by Hank, seconded by Eileen and approved by the Vestry.

The Sharps Policy was reviewed by the Vestry.

**VOTE:** A motion to accept the Sharps Policy was made by Ei-

leen, seconded by Valerie and approved by the Vestry. Amy reported that CEEP (The Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes) is an organization which provides information and guidance for parishes that have endowments. They have a large meeting each year; this year the meeting will be in Boston (Feb. 20-23). Amy plans to attend the meetings and Rev. Marjorie will attend two of the days as well. The rate to join the organization for our size endowment is \$1500 per year (they will charge \$750) for the first year. The charge to attend the entire meeting is \$700. There was discussion as to whether we would like to join the organization – it was felt that it might be feasible for one year but the Vestry would make a decision only after Rev. Marjorie and Amy had attended the meetings to determine if they seemed worthwhile. Rev. Marjorie reported that we are very short of counters. The job generally takes about 2

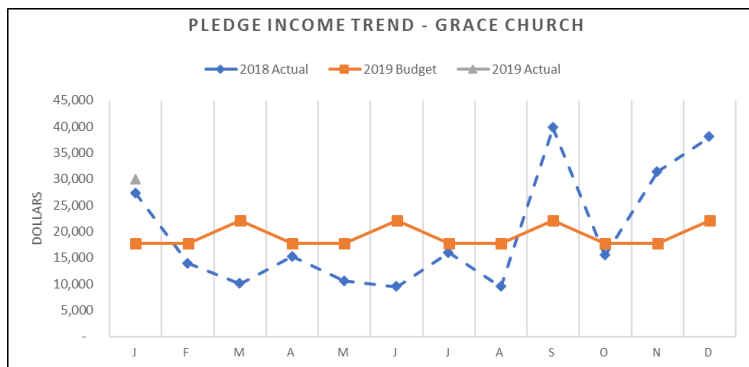
hours. Both Gail and David (who were counters) will be treasurer and assistant treasurer and therefore cannot be counters any longer. The counters work in pairs. Linda L. and Hank volunteered. We were asked to “look around” and see if there were parishioners who were willing to do this job.

The ceiling tiles in the Great Hall are falling off the ceiling. The estimate to have the repair done by Miville is \$1808 (includes scaffolding and caulking). Mark looked into the cost and new tiles would be \$100 each if these are not taken care of and subsequently need replacement.

**VOTE:** A motion to approve the repair of the ceiling tiles was made by Hank, seconded by Ed and approved by the Vestry.

The meeting was adjourned 9:15PM. The next meeting of the Vestry will be on February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Johnson, Clerk



## **Grace Episcopal Church**

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### Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Rector  
The Reverend Mike Andres, Deacon

### Vestry

Linda Heath, Warden  
Amy Brumfeld, Warden  
Nancy Johnson, Clerk  
Gail Austin, Treasurer  
David Roy, Assistant Treasurer

Valerie Anderson, Carol Cote, Hank Gagnon, Ken Kjellander,  
Christopher Messier, Matthew Serge, Eileen Suckley,  
Chris Turner, Meghann White

### Staff

Mark Cleveland, Director of Music  
Ken Grinnell, Organist  
Carter Beck, Organist  
Justin & Nicole Otto, Church School Coordinators  
Marlene Thompson, Parish Administrator  
Lyn Marino, Assistant Parish Administrator  
Jill Porter, Bookkeeper  
Emery Freethey, Sexton  
Susan Senneville, Nursery Care Giver  
Ann Hewins, Grace House Manager

### Newsletter

Kersten Matera & David Ross  
[gracechurchnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:gracechurchnewsletter@gmail.com)

### Cover Illustration

Andrew Freshour

### Next Newsletter Deadline

March 15, 2019