



Grace Notes March 2020

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 Reflection

A week ago one super intelligent parishioner approached me privately and asked, *"Marjorie, could you explain to me what was going on at the 8 o'clock service when the Bishop came? I saw +Rob laying hands on two of our regular parishioners and saying some prayers. But I had no idea why he was doing it."*

His question was music to my ears. For as a priest of nearly 25 years (and teaching at an Episcopal Day school for half of that time) I love it when I get a question I can actually answer well. I explained how the two parishioners the bishop laid hands on were originally Roman Catholics who officially had decided to become members of the Episcopal Church. Thus, these two faithful people chose to make a public affirmation of their faith. And so Bishop +Rob laid hands upon them (as did many others who attended that service) and proclaimed, *"We recognize you as a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, and we receive you into the fellowship of this Communion."*

A different wise parishioner stepped into our parish office mid-week and announced, *"I think I need to learn more about my faith. I am joining the Wednesday morning study group."* He followed his public proclamation with action, joining our new Great Courses study of the Dead Sea Scrolls this week with twelve other, wise parishioners.

Not everyone is able, because of work or family obligations, to come to our Wednesday morning study program. So for the season of Lent, for five Sundays in a row (every Sunday in March) I will host between services (beginning at 9 AM) a discussion group about the Episcopal Church. The class will be centered around the book *Walk In Love: Episcopal Belief and Practices* written by Scott Gunn and Melody Wilson Shobe. Anyone interested in attending is welcome to attend. Just be forewarned that those who read the book will enjoy the experience on a deeper level.

Please contact our parish office and let us know, ASAP, if (1) your need us to order you a copy of the book (the book is avail-

able on Amazon for \$17) and (2) if you will be joining me and others to learn more about our Episcopal identity.

Much love,
Marjorie +

St. Patrick' Day Corned Beef Supper

Saturday, March 14th @6:00

Tickets are now available and seating is limited!!



Tickets are \$8.00 per person in advance (with a max of \$24 per family with school-age children. Tickets – if available – are \$10.00 per person the door (with a max of \$30 per family).

Please see Nancy Johnson for tickets; Teddi McIntosh or Nancy-Ann Feren (at 8:00 service).

Resolutions 2020

Last year, on Ash Wednesday, I asked a number of people if they were giving up something for Lent. Not much response. So, I took a different tack: perhaps they planned to take something on – volunteering somewhere, or helping a neighbor. No. They were willing to look at the possibilities, but they couldn't make a commitment without giving it some thought. A great deal of thought, apparently.

We spent New Year's Eve with friends. After dinner, someone asked if anyone was planning to make a New Year's resolution. Interestingly, the four women did; the four men were silent. I decided that I would be more kind and patient, especially with my husband. January 2nd almost proved to be my downfall. This thing was going to be harder than I thought. I am not a patient person.

Since then, one of the women sent me a button that says, "Make America kind again". I have pledged to wear it every day, hoping that it will be a constant reminder. I think of a song with another pledge, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me...".

The black pick-up truck with the big confederate flag in the back,

the graffiti, and other signs that hate is right here, where we live – all make me more determined, not just to be kind and patient, but welcoming to the stranger as well. In *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce, Harold speaks of the “addicts, drunks, and dropouts” he met: “No one is so frightening, once you stop and listen”. Putting a human face on that which we fear.

So, encourage me in my struggle, and join me if you can. As we pray in our baptismal service, “I will, with God’s help”.

Jane W Van Zandt

Thoughts on Lent

When I was growing up, an all too common late winter question was “What are you giving up for Lent?” The idea was to create a Lenten discipline; some activity of denial, restraint or additional diligence that would constitute an extended act of devotion and be pleasing to God. The unspoken inference (or so it appeared to me) was that by so doing, one could join an elite group of the spiritually grounded upon whom God would look with special favor.

Time and experience have a way of exposing personal folly and it quickly became apparent to me that hubris was the quickest and most direct route to disaster. We are all called upon to work unceasingly in an effort to become the best possible versions of ourselves. But for all the strengths and skills I could muster and display, there was (there is) always a discomfiting undercurrent belying the surface image. For within me resides a voice, partly mischievous imp, sometimes nasty demon, which must be continually challenged and quelled. The voice is seductive, often couching judgments, petty barbs and critiques into clever and amusing quips. But what price this amusement? Like most sins, the wreckage extends in both directions: hurt to others and atrophy to the soul of the arrogant source.

Is it destructive if one only “thinks” nastiness but never speaks or acts upon it?? Absolutely. Toxins, in my view, either spread or lurk. They are rarely, if ever, safely contained.

I began to look for an alternative. What could I do? What Lenten discipline could I offer that would be genuinely helpful and truly selfless?

The more I looked and listened, the more opportunities I saw. We live in the midst of unparalleled brokenness. From the elderly neighbor struggling to deal with snow and ice, to the surly but isolated adolescent, to the person on the street corner or in the pew right next to us – to some degree, everybody hurts. Everybody suffers. I think recognizing that pain is the first step in becoming fully human. It is not an easy course and requires some care. There have been times when my clumsy efforts have not been welcomed or helpful. In some instances, gestures of kindness have been met with suspicion and hostility. It has also become clear to me that help ought to be anonymous or at least fairly private. But most importantly, I realized that this had to extend beyond a Lenten discipline. This had to become a lifestyle choice. I needed to be able to function in this mode or regress. Going backward had become unthinkable.

Make no mistake, it will be eons before I embody this responsiveness practice with anything even remotely akin to the one Christ modeled for us. Spiritual process and progress are never linear and I misstep with discouraging frequency. But I am continually gratified and humbled by the glimpses afforded to me of courage, loyalty and selfless devotion - often hidden just below the surface in the people I encounter. If my efforts are awkward and clumsy, at least they are becoming as honest and real as I know how to make them. I take some comfort from the words of the poet, Leonard Cohen:

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.*

Eileen Suckley

Grace Book Group

Grace Book Group welcomes all readers to bring your lunch and join the book discussion, share experiences, observations and opinions on a wide variety of books. The group meets once a month, noon in the Parish Library. This Spring the following books will be the topics of discussion:

- March 17 - The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
- April 21 - Becoming by Michelle Obama
- May 20 - Not Your Average Traveler, 40 Years of Adventure in All the U.S. National Parks by Nancy-Ann Feren *** Please note: The group will meet at The Bookery, 844 Elm Street at noon. The Cafe will be opened.

We hope you will join this fun, relaxing gathering.

February Ushers' Meeting

Special thanks to all those who attended our Ushers' Meeting on Sunday, February 9th led by parishioner Darlene Raboin:



Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Linda Heath, Ken Rhodes, Ann Hewins, Roger Bleau, Christopher Messier, Ernie and Lyn Marino, Jim Higgins, Chris Turner, Ruth Young, Bruce Thomas, Bill Bochinski, Hank Gagnon, and Valerie Anderson.

Thank You Note to Grace Church

The Outreach Committee received the following note from Hallsville School:

Dear Members of the Grace Episcopal Church,

Hallsville School would like to let you know how thankful we are for your amazing Christmas gifts for some of our students. The families were greatly appreciative for the help to be able to provide presents for their children during this holiday season we wanted to let you know that each year when the gifts are delivered, we are always met with heartfelt grati-

tude. It is with the help from community members like you that keeps the spirit of giving alive. So on behalf of Hallsville School, we say thank you!

Danielle Saitz.

Guidance Counselor

Stacey Evans

Social Worker

Forrest Ransdell

Principal

Anchored in Hope

Hello Grace Church. I would like to introduce you to Anchored in Hope. This group was formed to extend a helping hand to those in the Manchester area that are homeless, living in shelters/camps/on the streets, and struggling with substance use or mental health issues. We are a small group of volunteers that hand out items of need to those

on the streets of the city, and host a table the first Sunday of the month at New Horizons when amazing Grace Church parishioners volunteer to serve the evening meal from 4-5:30. We are always looking for volunteers on to help serve dinner, as well as set up and man the Anchored in Hope table.



Picnic in the Park was a long time ministry at Grace Church, serving a homemade meal and giving out articles of clothing and toiletries. Since this program has ended, many individuals have expressed the dire need for these essentials, particularly items of clothing and cold weather essentials such as gloves, hats, and blankets. Anchored in Hope is currently filling some of that need, but we could use your help! Donations of coats, hand warmers, hats, gloves, and blankets would be greatly appreciated. I can arrange pick up at the church. We also have an Amazon Wish list: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/6MAGTJQXE1K9?ref_=wl_share

Anchored in hope puts items directly into the hands of those who need them most. The anchor symbol is dear to my heart, and one I share with my daughter Sara, signifying strength. We believe everyone deserves Hope, Compassion, and Kindness, and our care packages and donated items are distributed with a smile, hand shake, and often a hug.

Thank you for your support, and hope to see you at New Horizons on Manchester Street on the first Sunday of an upcoming month.

Terry Everett

(Please contact the church office for contact information.)

Presidential Candidate Worshipped with Us



Presidential candidate Tom Steyer worshipped with us on Sunday, February 9th at our 8 AM service.

Holy Week and Easter at Grace Church

Sunday April 5	Palm/Passion Sunday 8 am - Holy Eucharist with hymns 10:30 am - Choral Eucharist (incense)
Tuesday April 7	8 am - Morning Prayer , Chapel
Wednesday April 8	8 am - Morning Prayer , Chapel 7:30 pm - Service of Tenebrae , Chapel
Thursday April 9	Maundy Thursday 8 am - Morning Prayer , Chapel 7:30 pm - Liturgy of the Day: Holy Eucharist with Foot Washing and Stripping of the Altar 9 pm - Watch before the Altar of Repose (continues through Friday morning)
Friday April 10	Good Friday 8 am - Morning Prayer , Chapel 12 pm - Stations of the Cross 1 pm - Stations of the Cross in the neighborhood 7:30 pm - Liturgy of the Day (Communion from Reserved Sacrament)
Saturday April 11	Holy Saturday 7:30 pm - Great Vigil & First Eucharist of Easter
Sunday April 12	Easter Day 8 am - Festival Eucharist with hymns and brass 10:30 am - Festival Eucharist with choir, hymns and brass <i>Child care provided/no Church School</i> <i>Easter Egg Hunt following 10:30 service only</i>

Cough Drops in the Sacraisty

Don't forget that cough drops are now available and located in our parish sacristy if you have need of one!



Dr. Seuss Breakfast

Saturday March 7, 9-11 AM

It's not too late to sign up to help with the Dr. Seuss Breakfast or to get tickets to attend. The Outreach Committee hopes to see you there.

Parish Photos

Bishop Rob's visit in which Julie and Chris M were being received into the Episcopal Church.



Laundry Love

Grace Episcopal Church Family and Friends,

Our Laundry Love volunteers are totally outstanding, incredible servers who are all about getting it done. Our latest time for ministry on Tuesday, February 4th proved just that. We celebrated our four year anniversary of doing God's work by showing unconditional love, great conversations, hugs, and respect. Brian Guimond, our rector Marjorie, and I are so blessed beyond words.

These photographs capture God's work in motion! Be proud and feel great for our volunteers and parish. Through your support we are walking the walk and doing God's work. We continue to give thanks for the staff at Granite State Laundromat and their amazing support. This month we especially give thanks for the following parishioners who served others: Brian Guimond, Hank Gagnon, Mary Atwell, Bill Bochinski, Tom Stevens, Shelley Kesselman, Christine Anderson, Linda Heath, Tommy Suckley, Dwight Simmons, Lorraine Louie, Lisa and Amber Matheson.



Thank you all so much especially our financial supporters. You allow us to continue doing Laundry Love work which makes a big difference. The photographs speak for themselves. Happy Fourth Year to all!

Peace,
Hank Gagnon

Reflections and Thoughts

Hong Kong Reflection

Last month Dick wrote about the benefits of offering kindness to others and from appreciating kindness done for us. If you are thankful for help you receive and are optimistic, your health improves.

As many of you know, our younger son, David, and his family have been living in Hong Kong for the last two years. David and Kristen work at Hong Kong Academy. While they were on vacation in the Philippines in early February, they got word that all schools in Hong Kong, as well as in mainland China, would be closed for the next week because of the coronavirus.

On their first Monday back in Hong Kong, the staff who had been able to return met to re-imagine their school and work out the logistics of teaching on-line. On the following day, on-line school began. Since that time, the length of time for schools to be closed has been increased twice. The teachers who have been able to return to Hong Kong and have home child care for their children go into school. They get their temperature taken and use hand sanitizer to reduce the risk of spreading infection.

We have tried to keep our friends informed of our family's status but my college roommate went one step further and contacted David herself. She sent us David's reply last night. We were struck by his optimistic outlook and comments on "silver linings".

Here are some of David's comments:

"We are still in Hong Kong and still teaching classes, although schools are officially closed. We use Google Classroom to share materials and Google Meet as the meeting place for our 'classroom'. We record the necessary portions of lessons so students who have chosen to leave Hong Kong temporarily can still access the learning. About 75-80% of students are still here in Hong Kong, but that might change now that the Bureau of Ed (EDB) has chosen to keep schools closed until March 16. We need to re-imagine what class looks like, so we are all learning way more about online collaborative tools than

*we otherwise might have. It has been a steep learning curve but has opened the door to innovation. **Silver linings.** :)*

*It is challenging for our kids to be cooped up all day, but their time spent reading, drawing, making crafts and playing music has increased. **Silver linings.***

*Our school kitchen staff is reduced, but they are bored with no students around, so we have been getting amazing lunches! Again, **silver linings.***

So we are adapting and surviving and hoping that this latest extension of school closures is the last."

Our 14 year old granddaughter Hannah has sent me several emails which show a teenager's perspective and seem to reflect her parents' positive attitude. She wrote:

"I have been very busy with school. Somehow online school is just as tiring as regular school. It is going pretty smoothly so far. I attend my classes at their regular times via Google Meet which allows the teacher to teach the class live, and the students to chime in with any questions or comments either using their microphone or using the chat. There have been a few funny things that have happened, where the teacher forgot to turn his microphone off.

It's cold here too! I've been doing online school in cozies wrapped in a blanket most of the time as we have no heating in our house. I have been calling my friends often during the day to stay in touch during this strange month. We did a sleepover last weekend, and are planning on doing another one, two weekends from now for my friend Minnie's birthday. However, it's just been me and two other girls for these sleepovers as our other friends are either out of the country or their parents have put them on lockdown. One friend is not allowed to leave her house.

I have piano today, and it's Wednesday so I have a different schedule. Wednesday online learning is collaborative, and you can do it all in the time they give you quite easily so I am going to be able to get lunch in

town before my piano lesson. I am excited as I haven't had lunch in town for a while and I am missing my favorite Mediterranean restaurant."

I think optimism and looking for positive things in difficult situations improves one's ability to deal with life.

Nancy-Ann Feren

Stewardship

In my February Reflection, I noted that there are health benefits from giving, from being thankful for what we receive, and from being optimistic about the future. Here is a chance for you to do something that could have a positive effect on yourself, as well as on our community, and maybe the rest of the world. Specifically, it involves pledging and giving to support Grace Church and our community.

Related to this is the concept of the tithe. Some people find it very disconcerting that they should be expected to give 10% of their income to church or charity. Actually, as explained by former rector Rev. George Werner, a tithe is not a requirement, but a goal. If you treat it as a goal, you can work towards it. Every time you meet a goal or advance closer to a goal, you feel better. That's a good thing.

If you are not sure whether you can increase your giving, that's understandable. However, you might have faith and try it anyway. More than once, we have been unsure about increasing our giving, but did so despite our uncertainty, and almost immediately after making the decision, received an unexpected bit of money that almost exactly paid for the increase. Ever since then, faith has been part of our giving. It was very uplifting to get closer to the goal of a tithe.

If money is a problem, then consider time and talent. There are many people who give their time and expertise to maintain and care for Grace Church, and help with various community activities, all of which can make you feel good, and build a positive outlook.

Dick Feren - On behalf of the Stewardship Committee

Milestones

Happy Birthday to the following March birthday celebrants!

2 Chloe Dufresne	14 Stephanie Blevens
Julie Alig Scala	Tracy Gillick
3 Pat Andres	17 Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro
5 Max Anderson	19 Ed Zimmerman
7 Ann Hewins	Daniel Blevens
8 Andrew Freshour	21 Pam Gallagher
9 David Kjellander	24 Ayuen Leek
Chris Turner	27 Debbie Hendry
Amber Mathison	Noah Turner
10 John Day	Megan Mathison
Tory Serge	30 Ellen Zimmerman
12 James Wyatt	31 Pubali Chakravoty-Campbell
13 Ashley Rousseau	

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.

Other Milestones: On Sunday, February 2nd, 2020 at our 8 AM service both Christopher Messier and Julie Alig Scala were received by Bishop +Robert Hirschfeld into the Episcopal Church.

VESTRY MEETING

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

Present: Valerie Anderson, Gail Austin, Amy Brumfield, Carol Cote, Hank Gagnon, Linda Heath, Nancy Johnson, Ken Kjellander, Christopher Messier, David Roy, Matthew Serge, the Reverend Dr. Marjorie Ann Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Chris Turner, Meghann White

Excused Absence: Eileen Suckley

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Rev. Marjorie at 7:00 PM. We continued with the reading of the Norms.

In reviewing the reports it was noted that the Property Report did not provide enough information for the Vestry to understand the projects that were addressed and the costs involved.

VOTE: A motion to accept the reports with a consent agenda vote was made by Hank, seconded by Chris, and was carried. The reports included are Clerk's, Rector's, Planning & Finance, Hospitality, Property, Grant, and Publicity.

David reported that the Capital Campaign pledges were now just over \$100,000 and that \$66,000 has been already contributed. It was noted that this is a two year process and that neither the steeple project nor the kitchen renovation would be started until all the money had been acquired.

He also reported that for 2020 we currently have 62 pledge units promising \$163,000. In 2019 we had \$199,000 pledged by 68 pledge units.

The Vestry reviewed the December Financial Report. Gail pointed out that we had finished the year favorably primarily due to a \$4,000 pledge prepayment and an unexpected \$20,000 donation. She reported that because the office had been closed the week after Christmas, mail had not been received so that the revenue checks had not

been counted in the December financials. The amounts of the checks written and sent in December however can still be included as 2019 contributions for tax purposes. The Endowment Fund value reflects the market value as of September 2019 and will be undated for the December 2019 values when the information is given by ECF. She will transfer \$29,000 to the Eastern Bank Money Market account so that it can accumulate some interest until it is need for the Alarm System.

VOTE: A motion was made by Valerie, seconded by Meghann to approve the December Financial Report contingent on the update needed upon receiving the ECF's final payment. The motion carried.

The Vestry reviewed the budget for 2020.

VOTE: A motion to approve the budget for 2020 was made by Christopher, seconded by Matt and was carried.

VOTE: A motion was made to take 5% of the General Fund/ Carpenter Fund and 4% of the Addison Fund for 2020 and to also approve a 1% COLA raise affective on February 1st was made by Carol, seconded by Ken and was carried.

Rev. Marjorie, the Wardens, and Marlene had met and put together the agenda for the annual meeting which she presented for the Vestry's approval.

1. Opening Prayer - Hymn 433 – We gather together
2. Call to Order/Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes - **Amy Brumfield**
3. Endowment Grant Recipients
 - 1269
 - Music
 - IINE
 - Laundry Love
4. Presentation of Slate of Candidates - **Amy**
Accounting of Quorum/Absentee Ballots
Vote – Slate of Vestry and Diocesan Representatives
Thank You to Outgoing Leaders - Marjorie

5. 2019 Budget Recap and Review of 2019 Budget - **Gail Austin, David Roy**
6. Panic Buttons
7. Giving Thanks (to the various committees and groups)
8. Closing Prayer – Hymn 655 – All my hope on God is founded

Gail reported that Rick Maloney would not be available to attend the meeting but would be sending a statement. She presented “Operating P&L Budget 2020 & Actual 2019” which she has for the annual meeting.

Meghann reported that the information for grant application has been posted on the website.

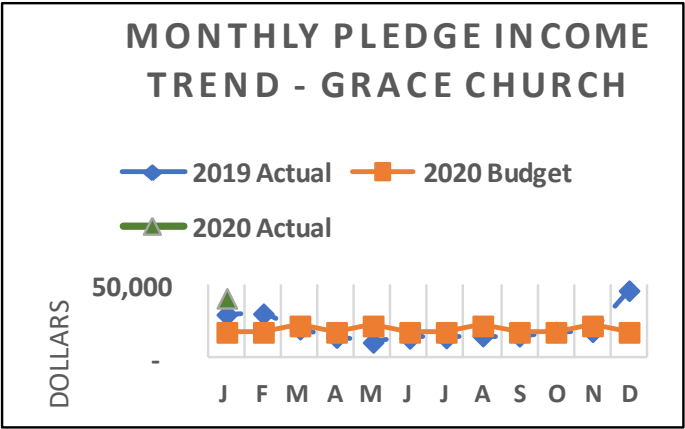
Rev. Marjorie reported that Bishop Rob would be with us on February 2nd. She will suggest to him that he meet with the Vestry at 9:00 (between services). The Hospitality Committee will host the coffee hours but requested that the Vestry contribute and help with the coffee hours on that day as well.

Hank noted that on February 4th Laundry Love will celebrate its fourth year. There will be cake – he suggested that all that can come by on that evening to celebrate as well.

The next Vestry meeting will be February 19th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Johnson, Clerk



Dear Parish: We appreciate your generosity in giving to Grace Episcopal Church. Your timely pledge will help us with our on-going expenses.



Photo credit: Christopher Messier

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Clergy

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

Vestry

Amy Brumfield, Warden
Christopher Messier, Warden
Nancy Johnson, Clerk
Gail Austin, Treasurer
David Roy, Assistant Treasurer

Valerie Anderson, Carol Cote, Hank Gagnon, Ken Kjellander,
Teddi McIntosh, Matthew Serge, Gail Schuman,
Chris Turner, Meghann White

Staff

Mark Cleveland, Director of Music
Ken Grinnell, Organist
Carter Beck, Organist
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

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