



Grace Notes April 2021

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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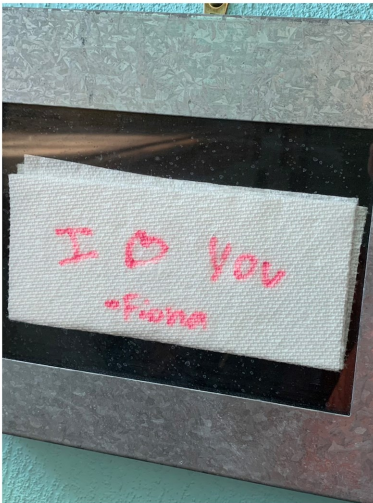
Rector's Reflection

If you ever venture into my parish office, you might notice something unusual on the wall. It is a framed, paper towel. On it is a note my daughter Fiona (who was 8 at the time) left for me on the kitchen counter one day before leaving for school. It was a total surprise to see her love in print and all ablaze thanks to a hot pink highlighter. Obviously I was so touched by the note, I framed it for all to see.



We all know the power of words. Words can challenge, teach, uplift, comfort, and inspire. They can also divide, wound, and hurt others. Truly what we speak and write matters. At my last job, a mentor once counseled, “Marjorie, never type and then send anything in an e-mail you wouldn’t want published on the front page of *The Washington Post*.”

Hopefully, we treasure the written word even more so since the pandemic began. Lo these many months my soul has been uplifted by good books, poetry, books of prayers, the Bible, handwritten notes that arrive unexpected by post, and most recently, a flurry of birthday wishes through cards, e-mails, texts, and Facebook posts – many from all of you. I am ever grateful for all the ways you preach to me and to our world through kind, compassionate, holy words.



As we prepare to celebrate Holy Week and worship in a virtual way, consider joining us to hear holy voices and faith family on screen as we pray and say God's written word and sacred prayers into being. On Palm Sunday (March 28th) and Easter Sunday (April 4th) we will gather (beginning at 9:20 AM for Prelude Music) in our Grace Church Zoom Room for worship. After both of these high Holy Days, Drive-by Eucharist will be offered from 12 to 12:45 PM. We will also offer worship on screen from Wednesday, March 31st to Saturday, April 3rd at 7:30 every night.

Sylvia Plath wrote, "Let me live, love, and say it well in good sentences." Though we all want this pandemic to end, let us give thanks for the power of three:

- That over the past year we have heard sacred, written words come to life through hymns, prayers, and scripture in our Zoom room.
- Let us be glad that we continue to reach out to one another by text, e-mails, and notes.
- Finally, kudos and blessings to the many writers who contribute to this publication and to our newsletter editor, Kersten Matera. You are the ones who faithfully keep our community together through the written word.

Blessings on all of you,
Marjorie xo+

Holy Week 2021

Please consider joining us on Zoom for a wealth of preachers, prayers, and sacred time this coming week to celebrate our Savior's path towards crucifixion, burial, and resurrection:

Palm Sunday – Sunday, March 28th

Zoom Worship @ 9:30 AM Preacher – The Reverend Allan Knight

Drive-By Palms/Eucharist from 12 to 12:45 PM

Please join with us as we celebrate the many "Ps" of Palm Sunday: Palms, Pomp, Parade, Procession, Pageantry, and Passion. We will share the Rite II Eucharistic service in our Zoom-room, sing our favorite Palm Sunday hymn, join in the pageantry virtually, and distribute palm fronds with drive-by Eucharist following the service.

Compline - Tuesday, March 30th

Facebook Live @ 7:30 PM Led by The Reverend Michael Andres

Please join our deacon to pray the final church service/office of the day in the Christian tradition of canonical hours, prayers spoken at fixed hours of the day. This service lasts less than fifteen minutes and is a calming, gentle way to end your day.

Tenebrae – Wednesday, March 31st

Zoom Worship @ 7:30 PM

The name “Tenebrae” is the Latin word for “darkness” or “shadows.” The most conspicuous visual feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles and lighting in the church until only a single candle, imaging of the light of Christ, remains.

This year we will be using Tenebrae liturgy developed by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Many voices will pray us through the various “shadow moments” of Christ’s walk towards crucifixion. Please join us to remember that in the all dark moments of our lives, Christ is with us.

Maundy Thursday – Thursday, April 1st

Zoom Worship @ 7:30 PM Preacher - The Reverend Michael Andres

Maundy Thursday, comes from the Latin maundatum, to command. This service traditionally remembers the Last Supper and Christ washing the feet of his disciples. This year we will use the Agape liturgy our New Hampshire diocese developed, inviting all of us to pray, bless, and feast on bread and drink while in both our parish Zoom-room and our homes.

Good Friday – Friday, April 2nd

Zoom Worship @ 7:30 PM The Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross lead us to a contemplation of the suffering and sacrifice of the prophesized Servant of the Old Testament and the Savior revealed in the New Testament. This Good Friday, our devotion of the Stations of the Cross will be led by members of the Choir who will direct our meditation of the stations along this path while viewing the beautiful “stations” which are arranged on the walls of the sanctuary of Grace Church.

Holy Saturday – Saturday, April 3rd

Zoom Worship @ 7:30 PM Preacher - The Reverend Jane Van Zandt

A Vigil, at its essence, is a service of watchful waiting. This year we are constrained to consider a different vigil, a vigil over the Internet, a vigil from our homes. This year you are invited to join with us in this observance of the “essentials” of the Vigil service as we worship and wait in “wonder, love and praise” because of our Risen Savior!

Easter Day – Sunday, April 4th

Zoom Worship @ 9:30 AM Preacher - The Reverend Dr. Marjorie Ann Gerbracht-Stagnaro

Drive-By Eucharist from 12 to 12:45 PM

Please join us in our parish Zoom room for extra special music offerings and joyful prayer, then for Drive-By Eucharist so our parish can continue to proclaim: Christ is alive. Let hope spring eternal in us.

Best Friends

By definition, it appears that a person can have only one best friend. I’m not so sure about that. It is a superlative. *Best friend*. I get that. But, as we go through life, people change. Circumstances change.

Kim, a Baltimore County police Colonel, was dear to me from the moment we met in early 1992, until she died last August. We texted, emailed, facetedimed, or telephoned, pretty much every day during her last year of life. Sick as she was, she always wanted to know what was going on in my life. I was there for her, too - in person - until COVID prevented visits. We shared her journey toward death, openly and honestly. We were best friends.



Jim, is a dear friend, with whom I am in contact on a regular basis. We’ve been friends for 45 years. We have vacationed together; attended opera, theatre, and movies; and shared many dinners in Boston and Cambridge and beyond. We had planned to live together, until his job took him to San Francisco. He is my “forever friend”. Another best friend.

My former choir director, Don, and I shared 47 years together. We consoled each other when mutual friends died of AIDS. We had long talks about anything, and everything. We shared intimate conversations about faith, love, and relationships. My best friend.

Christa is a classmate from Boston University School of Nursing. We've been friends for over 60 years. I've watched her four children grow up. We've spent time together at Dana Farber in Boston, each time a mutual classmate underwent chemo. She arranged a dinner party for another classmate, who was having surgery the next day. Several of us from B.U. School of Nursing have gone camping together in VT, all orchestrated by Christa. She is there for me, as I am for her. Another best friend.

There are many who feel that their spouse, or sibling, or parent is their best friend. If you think beyond that, though, who is next in your heart? COVID has made it difficult to be with friends. Meeting new people on Zoom is awkward. The internet has helped us keep in touch with folks, to some extent. And, there is light at the end of the COVID tunnel! Are you familiar with this round? I learned it at Girl Scout camp:

*Make new friends, but keep the old;
One is silver, and the other's gold.*

Think about those people you've known throughout your life – the ones who have been extra special. If it's possible, perhaps you might take the time to tell them that. May we thank God for the gift of friends!

Rev Jane W Van Zandt

GEC Book Group Update

The American aphorist Mason Cooley once explained, "Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are."

Our parish book group continues to go places, despite the fact many of us continue to shelter in place. This month we welcomed for the first time to our Zoom room long time book group member Joan Ryan's friend Lisa, who joined us all the way from the southern part of Virginia. It is remarkable how 10 women all gathered in one virtual space while one woman was in another state hundreds of miles away, another was sitting in her car, and the remainder of us were in our home or office spaces. What a tremendous blessing!!

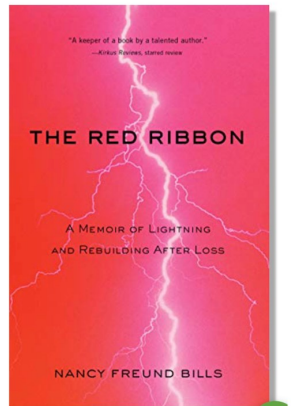
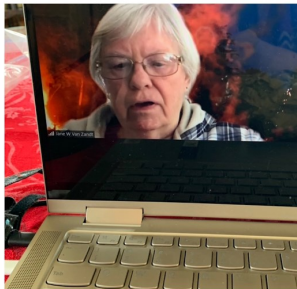
The book we discussed this month, *Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing As We Age*, was written by Mary Pipher,

a long time therapist and author of the extremely well-known book *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. Jane Van Zandt continues to provide excellent questions and statements for us to contemplate. Several wonderful points Jane summarized for our group from this text are:

- None of us can stop time, but we have the potential to will ourselves into a good, new place.
- Ageism is a prejudice against one’s own future self.
- We may have no choice about what happens to us, but we can control how we deal with it.
- True grief never goes away. We learn to live with it. Grief is a reflection of our ability to love.
- “It’s not time to worry yet.” Good advice? Does worrying change anything?
- Gratitude is a life skill that can be improved with practice. Do you agree?



The Red Ribbon: A Memoir of Lightning and Rebuilding After Loss



All of us who attended the group discussion this month agreed this text is more of a self-help book. Many of us didn’t find the book that entrancing (or as my tween daughter would put it “Meh!”) as we collectively prefer reading stories that enable us to “go someplace” rather

than be taught how to behave. Still, the book created a wonderful context for discussing heartaches, loneliness versus solitude, and the importance of reflecting regularly upon our lives. Our newest book group member Lisa, who lives alone, observed, “It is so wonderful to hear intelligent women conversing and talking respectfully among one another!”

Special thanks to Nancy-Ann Feren, who over the past few weeks curated a list of 27 titles from our GEC book group members, as well as recommended reads from parishioners who don’t attend our gatherings yet had great suggestions. This list was then sent out to the members of our book group and all were able to vote on their top choices.

Special thanks to Renee Van Leuvan, who then took the winning books and compiled them into a future reading schedule, not just for 2021, but also for 2022 as well. The group agreed if collectively we decide to skip a meeting, we will just move the entire schedule forward one month.

For those of you who would like to get ahead on reading, here is the list!

For 2021

June - *I Will Always Write Back* by Martin Ganda and Caitlin Alifrenka

July - *Beartown* by Fredrick Backman

August - *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly

September - *The Book of Lost Friends* by Lisa Wingate

October - *Apeirogon* by Colum McCann

November - *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig

December - *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand

For 2022

January - *The Gown* by Jennifer Robson

February - *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson

March - *The Only Woman in the Room* by Marie Benedict

April - *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck

May - *The Kitchen Front* by Jennifer Ryan

June - *CASTE: The Origins of Our Discontent* by Isabel Wilkerson

July - *The Four Winds* by Kristen Hannah

August - *A Good Apology: Four Steps to Make Things Right* by Molly Howes, Ph. D.

All are welcome to join us for our next GEC Zoom book group gathering, which will take place on Tuesday, April 20th at 12 noon. On that day we will discuss the text *The Red Ribbon: A Memoir Of Lightning and Rebuilding After Loss* by Nancy Freund Bills. The back of the book explains:

In the summer of 1994, a freak thunderstorm explodes on the southern coast of Maine, killing Nancy Bills's husband and critically injuring her younger son. Bill's memoir – insightful, moving, and full of intelligence and humanity – is a story of surviving the many and often devastating lightning strikes of life, and a gift of compassion and wisdom for readers who are struggling with their own losses.

Also, mark your calendars as on Tuesday, May 18th at 12 noon we will be discussing the well-beloved novel *Anne of Green Gables*, written by Lucy Maud Montgomery and published in 1908. For people who enjoy listening to books, the actress Rachel McAdams (known for her work in films like *The Notebook*, *Spotlight*, and *Midnight In Paris*) narrates the Audible version. One reviewer observed, “McAdams’ voice is imbued with the spark that has made Anne a much-loved symbol of individualism and cheer for over a century. In this story of “kindred spirits”, McAdams’ touching and heartfelt narration proves she is just that – bonded on a deep level to this shimmering classic.

Grateful to all who continue to travel to places through their love of reading and collectively join their hearts and intellects (for now) in our parish Zoom room.

Much love,
Marjorie xo+

Getting to Know You - Brian Guimond

Brian, I know that April 2021 is a special month for you in regards to Grace Church. Why is that?

April 1st will mark my 20th year at Grace Church in Manchester. The previous winter my niece asked me to be Godfather of her yet to be born son. I had just turned forty. I was reaching out in new ways and

felt that it was time to reexamine my faith. I am a cradle Episcopalian. I had stepped away from church when I was a teenager. I did a quick search (anyone remember Mapquest?). Grace was the closest church to me.

What do you do for a living? How did you get into your particular vocation?

After college I discovered that a desk job was not for me. I have always travelled, meeting people, and enjoy the freedom of the open road. My main work supports the movie theatre industry. I make sure when you go to a movie that it works. I work behind the scenes in the booth maintaining the various pieces of equipment, projectors, audio processors, closed captioning, lights, etc. to provide you with a great movie experience. I have worked for the same company since 1988. I have been purchased by five different companies. I started out servicing a program called Channel One. It was a twelve-minute news show that was seen in middle and high schools across the country in 12,000 schools.

How has your job changed since the pandemic began?

Since movie theaters have been effectively shut down, I have not worked on a regular basis in over a year. Since they are technically open, I am not part of any stimulus plan or eligible for unemployment. It has been challenging. My job requires me to travel. I cannot work or use my skill set working from home.

You are the founder and main fosterer of Grace Episcopal Church's Laundry Love Program. Tell us how you learned about that program and what you love most about it.

Like most things today I was made aware of Laundry Love on Facebook. For some reason it showed up on my feed page. I did some research, worked a day in Milford, MA at a Laundry Love site (it was the closest site then), and saw the potential impact we as a church could have in our community. The plain truth is that Laundry Love humbles me. I see people who use Laundry Love as a way to ease their burden. I see my church use its time and talent reaching out and extending God's love. It has brought me closer to fellow parishioners. It helps me to center myself to be thankful for all of God's gifts he has bestowed on me.

You have a special tradition at Grace Church regarding gifting people one specific, holy present over and over again. Can you share with us what gift you give regularly and why?



At Easter 2003 two of my best friends, Stephen and Michael, presented me with a Prayer book/Hymnal. I have used it ever since that Easter. (It is starting to get quite worn.). Ever since then I have given a Prayer book/Hymnal to someone at Grace Church each season of Lent to pass on the tradition. As always, the return of gratitude, love and affection from my gift far outweighs my intention. It has brought me closer to my fellow parishioners.

You are a long-time member of our parish choir. What do you love about being part of such a

special group that offers prayer through song?

To be an Episcopalian is to sing. Singing God’s praises is what I miss. The feeling I get when the congregation is really into the hymn, the choir is at the back of the nave with feet firmly planted, all singing the final verse, (# 57 – Lo! He come, with clouds descending for example), our voices reaching beyond our walls proclaiming the glory that is and declaring our faith to all the world. That inspires me and reaffirms my love of Christ. It sends me out into the world with a reborn sense of purpose. That is what I love the most about the choir. Without people like Dave Kjellander to make me a better singer, or Mark Cleveland making us perform at the level we need, the music would not be as rewarding to me.

What is your favorite place to eat in Manchester? Why?

I dislike cooking. I am a logic and science guy. I need exact measure-

ments to make me happy. Cooking has too many variables for me. My lifestyle has always been on the go. I choose to eat out for breakfast on the go. I enjoy the Red Arrow. I am not out to eat but to eat breakfast. Simple meals are the Red Arrow's specialty.

Where did you grow up? Can you share a memory about church that you have that happened when you were a child?

My family dates back to Sudbury, MA 1634. I grew up in East Boston back when the English were the new immigrants. I attended the church my grandparents were married in, and where I was baptized. A happy memory was playing a Wise Man in the church Christmas Pageant. My last memory was my brother's funeral. When I was fourteen my older brother died in a car accident. His funeral was held at the church. Due to shifting demographics the new immigrants were Catholic. Sadly my church closed.

You are truly a lover of people and enjoy being with others. Do you have a teacher or mentor from your life who helped you become that way?

Since the time I was little I have always been an outgoing inquisitive person. The only way to understand someone is to talk and interact with them. That gives you the ability to meet new people. My siblings are the same way. I guess my parents led the way. They were always doing their own version of outreach with new people. The pandemic has really made me struggle to stay connected. I am not big with online meetings. I need to be with people.

How have you stayed close to God during the passage of pandemic time?

I tried using the various online sessions without success. Again, I am a direct contact person. I struggled with my faith for a time. I have subscribed to Forward Movement Publications and get the Daily Reading for years. They also feature a Podcast of Morning and Evening prayers. That has allowed me to reinvigorate my faith. It sustains me. It has given me a wider appreciation of the Book of Common Prayer.

What do you love most about Grace Church?

Simple. The people are what I love the most about Grace Church. I am blessed to know them and take comfort in the love and affection I get back.

Making Creativity a Daily Discipline

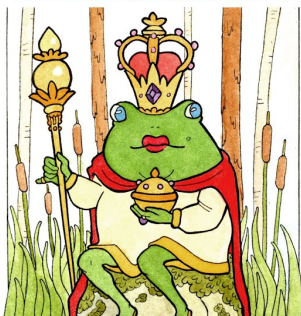
It's been a crazy year with covid, hasn't it? Like many of you it caught me off guard. One moment I was going into work, and then the next I was home for months with plenteous free time and solitude.

With those strange circumstances in mind I had an idea. Not wanting to go completely crazy being trapped indoors, I needed a project.



For years I wanted to get back into painting with watercolors, but for whatever reason there was an invisible barrier that held me back. I certainly was comfortable painting my work digitally, but I think I leaned too heavily on Photoshop like a crutch. Luckily, right before everything began to shut down in March of 2020, I bought some new watercolor paints. I worried after I bought them they'd soon be a well-meaning forgotten venture.

Thankfully that wasn't the case. With months of free time ahead of me, I challenged myself to paint one piece a day. I honored that challenge, and managed to paint roughly eighty pieces before I broke my streak. It was



difficult certainly, but it gave me purpose. Everyday I'd wake up and get back into drawing, inking, and painting. It delighted me too just reacquainting myself with the watercolors themselves.

Those months of constant producing thankfully yielded some good fruit. I caught the eye of the Framers Market here in Manchester, where I currently have work on display as well as for sale. Towards the end of this month at the To Share Brewery, I'll be putting some prints on display too. So, little by little, I'm getting out of my cozy little shell to put myself out there.

As of this writing I'm about to bring some of my pieces to be juried at the New Hampshire Art Association. If they like what they see, I could become a member there. Maybe that will open up some doors too. It really is a dream of mine to live off my art someday, so who knows?

If you would like to see some additional works I made during covid, please pay my website a visit: www.andrewfreshour.com

Andrew Freshour

February News from Southern Convocation

The Southern Convocation re-convened on February 23 via Zoom following its annual winter hiatus. The first order of business was to elect The Rev. Greg Baker of Church of the Good Shepherd (Nashua) as our new clergy co-convener, and to thank outgoing co-convener Colin Chapman for his years of faithful and competent leadership. Grace's own Shelley Kesselman made her debut as lay co-convener, and our parish was also represented by Ed Doyle, Matt Richards, Catie Bailey, Julie Alig Scala, as well as Rector Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro. It was a joyful evening, as we welcomed newly elected parish representatives from around the convocation.



Our program centered on the work that Chris Potter is doing with Granite State Organizing Project. GSOP is the largest grassroots community organizing group in New Hampshire, and is an affiliate of

the national umbrella organization Faith in Action. It was founded in 2002 by a coalition of religious organizations, labor unions, and community leaders to promote social and economic justice. The organization seeks to strengthen community members' voices and power in decisions that affect them at the state and local level, thereby promoting justice and a stronger sense of community. GSOP believes that forging relationships is at the heart of its work and focuses heavily on relationship building as it hosts conversations that make a difference in civic life. As an interfaith, non-partisan organization, it rallies around specific issues rather than specific parties or religious doctrine, but recognizes that faith informs our engagement with the world, and understands social justice work to be holy work. Chris is living out his diaconal call in the context of this faith based community organizing, and is building a clergy coalition in the context of GSOP.

If you are interested in hearing more about what Granite State Organizing Project is doing, GSOP members Shelley Kesselman or Chris Potter will be happy to talk with you.

Shelley Kesselman

Thoughts and Reflections **Some Things Are Universal**

Several years ago, there was a NOVA show called "What is Music?" One of the things that stood out for me was that any particular style of music produces the same kind of reaction from people all over the world. People in New York City had the same reaction to a given piece of music as did native aborigines in the Australian outback. Over time, I have thought about things that people have done that have produced very strong effects, and how universal these can be.



In a Reflection I wrote for April 2018 (Give More and Get More), I told a story about a man who had a good business and made a lot of money. His house was a mansion and he had many millions of dollars, but despite all that, he was not happy. He finally decided that what he had was excessive, and that he was going to get rid of the excess. He sold his mansion, bought a small house, and gave enor-

mous amounts of money to charities. He was much happier after this. Giving to others is a powerful factor for happiness. As I thought about this, I recall the story about the woman that Jesus said had given all she had. (Mark 12: 41-44) Is it possible that she got a strong satisfaction from giving that?

Recently, I read a piece about the effects of extreme self-centeredness. It commented specifically about men who were sexual predators. The report indicated that men who were focused on attacking and taking advantage of women had a significantly higher risk of developing seriously negative physical conditions. The strongest example I can think of for this was a picture of Harvey Weinstein who couldn't move without a walker.

I regularly read Forward Movement's quarterly publication "Day By Day". One inspiring series I remember was done by a man who had been convicted and served time for murder. The following is quoted from the Forward Movement website:

"Perhaps few of God's sheep have been as lost as Bo Cox. In his early twenties, addicted to drugs and alcohol, he killed a man, was convicted of murder, and sent to prison. About ten years into his prison sentence, Cox sent a donation and writing samples to Forward Movement. The then-editor took a chance and asked Bo to write meditations for Forward Day by Day. The response was overwhelming A model of humility and reconciliation, he connected with readers in a powerful way, and his deep and abiding gratitude to a God who forgives and loves was transformative. now released from prison, he works at a state-run psychiatric hospital, helping other lost sheep."

Based on the above examples, it seems that God's grace is universally available to any who are willing to try for it.

Dick Feren

Property Committee Still Hard At Work

Although our parish campus is currently closed to outside visitors, our Property Team, led by dedicated parishioner *Mark Anderson*, continues to do a tremendous amount of onsite work during pandemic time.

Grace House, the yellow house that sits next to our parish office, provides affordable housing to six City Year interns who teach and mentor students at various inner city Manchester grade schools. Special thanks to Grace House's manager *Ann Hewins* and Property Chair *Mark Anderson* who are in constant contact with our tenants so various upgrades and repairs can be completed.

Securitas, a Manchester based security company, continues to be contracted by our leadership to walk our parish campus a few times each night to make sure that our campus stays clean and safe. Weekly reports from Securitas are reviewed by *Mark Anderson*, *Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro*, and our wardens *Amy Brumfield* and *Christopher Messier*. Special thanks to *Emery Freethey*, who during the day continues to pick up trash, beer cans, and sadly, abandoned needles on our property (though there are less of these since hiring Securitas).

Our **Steeple Project** continues to be managed by *Ken Rhodes*. In early March our contracted steeple jack performed an on-site inspection. After examining the inside of our steeple, the steeple jack reported that the 6 main structural support timbers are in great shape. Outside louvers will need to be replaced. The good news is, the examination showed we are on target for the estimated cost of necessary repairs. Special thanks to *Ken Grinnell*, who continues to work with Andover Organ, who will do what is necessary to cover and protect our organ innerworkings and pipes after Easter.

Our **Kitchen Renovation** will soon begin thanks to the power of three: *Nancy Johnson*, *Valerie Anderson*, and *Gail Schuman*. These involved and able leaders will work to secure three bids from local contractors so the work can begin. Special thanks to *Ken Rhodes* and *Gary York* who will consult about necessary kitchen equipment, city health requirements, and mechanical needs.

Lexan Window Covers (a higher end form of plexiglass that does not become discolored over time) was installed by Granite State Glass on 18 of our campus' windows both to protect the glass and for safety purposes.

A massive **Wi-Fi extension** on our parish campus was installed thanks to a HOPE (**H**elp for **O**nline **P**romotion of **E**vangelism) grant of \$3,000 gifted to our parish from our diocese. *Marjorie Gerbracht-*

Stagnaro wrote up the grant proposal, assisted by our parish administrator *Marlene Thompson* and our parish treasurer *Gail Austin*. An anonymous donor provided an additional \$500 donation and *Gary York* arranged for talented electricians, supervised by him, to upgrade wiring and install additional outlets. Gary spent countless hours on site managing this project and we are beyond grateful.

We now have an upgraded modem, extenders throughout our parish campus, and a brand-new Xfinity cable box in our Sunday School classroom. Wi-Fi access is now available in our financial office, Sunday School classroom, and our Choir rehearsal room. Now our leadership will work to learn more about Hybrid Church practices to figure out how we can stream worship from our nave. (Note: the Wi-Fi extender providing internet in our nave is located at the feet of Jesus, just below one of our stained-glass windows!)

Our parish's **Visual Insurance File** (photos of everything inside our parish campus for insurance purposes) is being upgraded thanks to the hard work of *Bruce Thomas*. If you think of an item purchased over the past decade for our parish that needs to be included in this file, please contact our parish office.

Thanks and praise to all our active Property Committee members: *Mark Anderson, Ann Hewins, Emery Freethey, Ken Rhodes, Gary York, Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Allan Knight, Linda Heath, Amy Brumfield, Christopher Messier, Bruce Thomas, Michael Duffy, and Christopher Turner*. Special kudos to *Christopher Turner* who takes spectacular minutes of our meeting each month on Zoom. Without him this update would not have been possible!

Blessings and Love,
Marjorie +

New CDC Guidelines on Gatherings After Vaccination

New Guidelines were released on March 8, 2021 as people are becoming fully vaccinated. Rest assured, these guidelines will be updated as the percentage of people being vaccinated increases. No matter what, we all need to continue to wear masks and stay physically distanced in

public or when interacting with people who are unvaccinated and at increased risk of severe illness from COVID (for example, those over 65 years old, those with underlying medical conditions). The vaccine does not prevent you from getting or spreading COVID, it only protects you from getting severe disease.

Those who are fully vaccinated can:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without masks or being physically distant
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID disease indoors without masks or physically distancing

Fully vaccinated people should still:

- Wear masks and practice physical distancing when in public
- Wear masks, physical distance and follow other local public health guidelines when visiting with unvaccinated people who are at risk for severe COVID disease **OR** who live with someone who is unvaccinated and at increased risk
- Wear masks, physically distance and gather outdoors or in well-ventilated space and adhere to other public health measures when visiting unvaccinated people from multiple households (such as Church).
- Avoid large- and medium-sized in-person gatherings

Fully vaccinated people visiting with unvaccinated people from a single household where members are at risk for severe COVID disease should:

- Visit while all are wearing masks, physically distancing by at least 6 feet, visiting outdoors or in well-ventilated spaces

Fully vaccinated people visiting with unvaccinated people from multiple households should:

- Visit while everyone involved is taking precautions as above (masks, distancing, outdoors or in a well-ventilated area)

Note that the bishop will have final say on our reopening as we contin-

ue to monitor trends (which are creeping back up slightly). The Grace Episcopal Church building is not a well-ventilated space so we will have to take that into consideration as we continue to move forward. Please be safe out there.

Dr. Gail Schuman

Volunteer Opportunity

The Centro Latino de Hospitalidad is a collaboration between the Granite State Organizing Project and St. Anne-St. Agustin Parish. We opened the center because we noticed issues in the Hispanic community and the need for assistance. Since the pandemic started, the need for food assistance in the community has increased. In April 2020, we began a food distribution drive that runs every Thursday, where we serve the community with boxes of food. At this moment, we need some assistance; we need people who can volunteer at the center on Thursday so we can continue our great work to serve the community. We are looking for assistance at different times:

- The first time slot is from 10:30 am-11:30 am: this is to unload boxes from the truck, heavy lifting required.
- The second time slot is from 12:30 pm-1:30 pm: this is to unload and sort out food in individual boxes.
- The third time slot is from 2 pm-3:45 pm: this is to help Iliana serve the boxes; some heavy lifting is required.

Everyone will be wearing masks and gloves. A COVID-19 screen questionnaire and temperature are taken upon arrival.

Can you help? Please call or text Iliana Barreto at 603-858-7452 right away if you can help! Centro Latino Location: 189 Spruce Street Manchester 30103 (the back door of St. Anne-St. Augustin).

Learning About Our Church's Backyard Neighbor IINE Webinar on Tuesday, March 30th

Right behind our parish campus, in the large brick building that used to be a local Catholic school, is housed the organization IINE. Parishioner Tara Chynoweth serves on their board and a past parish grant of \$10,000 was given to this hardworking, other-centered organization.

The IINE website explains: "Our Manchester office provides vital support and assistance to our city's refugee and immigrant communities. Manchester has welcomed refugees in partnership with IINE since 1994. Today, IINE Manchester resettles refugees from all over the world. Upon arrival in New Hampshire, refugees are welcomed with a basic home and are guided by IINE through the beginning phases of the integration process. Support services are focused on helping refugees and immigrants successfully transition into their new lives in the United States."

All are welcome to learn more about the work of the International Institute of New England (IINE) through an online webinar titled "Refugee Resettlement: The Road Ahead in New England." This webinar will take place on Tuesday March 30th at 12 noon. You can register for this webinar using the following link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Z7Tk6tOYQEuvmdz8OgXM5g

IINE's Chief Institutional Advancement Officer Alexandra Weber will discuss the history of refugee resettlement in New England, changes to the refugee resettlement program under the Biden Administration, and new ways to engage supporters and promote community involvement in resettlement.

All are welcome to participate in this webinar which is aimed at delving deeper into the value of the U.S. humanitarian resettlement program, how it restores dignity to individuals while it transforms communities, and what it will take to realize the refugee resettlement program's full potential after years of divestment.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to the following April birthdays celebrants!

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|----|----------------|
| 1 | Ian Matera | 16 | Samuel Thomas |
| 3 | Jok Leek | 17 | Jane Van Zandt |
| 4 | Bob Bell | | Anay Leek |
| | Edward High | 18 | Tom Suckley |
| 12 | Mark Thomas | 30 | Meghann White |
| 13 | Yan Leek | | |
| | Linda Garrish | | |
| | Thomas | | |
| | Greg Gagnon | | |

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness 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.

Grace Church - Vestry Minutes

February 24, 2021

Present: Valerie Anderson, Gail Austin, Amy Brumfield, Carol Cote, Hank Gagnon, Reverend Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Teddi McIntosh, Christopher Messier, Gail Schuman, Eileen Suckley, Barnaby Thomas, Chris Turner, Meghann White

Excused Absence: Nancy Johnson, David Roy

Reverend Marjorie opened with prayer

Reading of the Norms with special guest: Micah Brumfield

Approval of Eileen Suckley acting as Assistant Clerk:

Motion by Christopher Messier, seconded by Carol Cote

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Motion by Hank Gagnon, seconded by Teddi McIntosh

Approval of January Financial Reports:

Motion by Hank Gagnon, seconded by Meghann White

Treasurer's Report

- Budget vs. Actuals in Operating Budget are \$7.9K favorable
- Special Offerings: \$1.0K Richmond memorial, \$1.5K grant from Schwab Charitable foundation, \$1.2K Christmas offering
- \$3.0K NH Charitable Foundation, unbudgeted donation received.
- Operating Fund balance is a very healthy \$107.2K

- Endowment Fund Bank Accounts cash balance of \$158.4K (\$100K from Addison Fund for Capital Campaign matching. \$58.4K Emergency Cash Fund established by vestry vote.

Cash Management Proposal

Our high cash balances can be managed more effectively. Gail Austin and David Roy have been researching terms for money market accounts and CDs at all local banks (inasmuch as no short term vehicle for cash management is currently available from ECF). By splitting the money between three financial institutions, we stay below the FDIC insured ceiling and retain access to funds with the lowest penalties for early withdrawal. In addition, the enhanced interest levels will actually yield a higher return than we are currently obtaining.

Vestry authorizes Treasurer Gail Austin to purchase two CDs at Primary Bank and to open an additional Bank Account with Triangle Credit Union. The signers on both accounts will be:

Gail Austin, Treasurer, David Roy, Assistant Treasurer, Amy Brumfield, Warden, Christopher Messier, Warden. Our account at Eastern Bank will be closed and funds will be transferred from Citizens Bank and Schwab Cash. Gail will require two declarations indicating that the Vestry has approved these measures and listing the signers. Eileen Suckley will coordinate with Marlene Thompson.

Motion by Valerie Anderson, seconded by Meghann White

The Endowment Committee has discussed, voted and moved the investments to ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) investments which are fossil fuel reserve free and socially screened. As such, these new investments align more fully with our beliefs. (Note: the ESG investments performed better than original)

Our Easter observances typically include donations for flowers (in memoriam and/or in thanksgiving) and donations to the brass ensemble. Inasmuch as we plan to be online for Easter worship, the Vestry recommends that we suggest an alternative; donations to an Outreach designated fund. Lyn Marino has agreed to contact previous donors and Reverend Marjorie will compose an Easter letter apprising the parish of this opportunity. All donations will be funneled to the same designated fund.

Motion by Carol Cote, seconded by Teddi McIntosh.

The annual Parochial Report is nearly done with the exception of Safe Church.

Chris needs background checks to finish that section and will send an updated audit to vestry when complete.

Motion to submit Parochial Report by Christopher Messier, seconded by Chris Turner

Official Vote for appointment of David Roy, Assistant Treasurer and Eileen Suckley, Assistant Clerk.

Motion by Gail Schuman, seconded by Valerie Anderson

With regard to Kitchen renovation, the Vestry recommends to Property that we hire an outside contractor to oversee this project and that, insofar as possible, the work be completed while the church is closed.

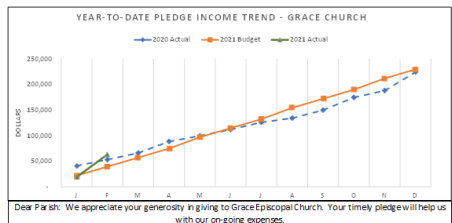
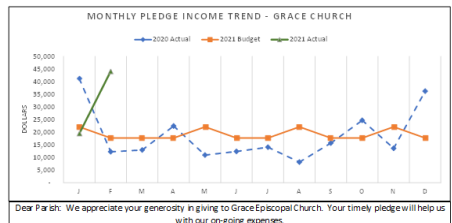
Motion by Gail Schuman, seconded by Valerie Anderson

Work on WIFI in the sanctuary is nearly complete and will result in an additional thirty dollars monthly to expand Broadband. Gary York indicates that the total cost will be \$3.9K. Reverend Marjorie has secured \$3K from a diocesan grant and \$.5K from a private donor. Gail Austin cites the need for all invoices to be paid from the parish and submitted after the fact to the diocese for reimbursement.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:20 pm

Next Meeting: March 17, 2021 at 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Eileen Suckley



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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, Gail Schuman, Barnaby Thomas
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
Emery Freethey, Sexton
Susan Senneville, Nursery Care Giver
Ann Hewins, Grace House Manager

Newsletter

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Next Newsletter Deadline

April 22, 2021