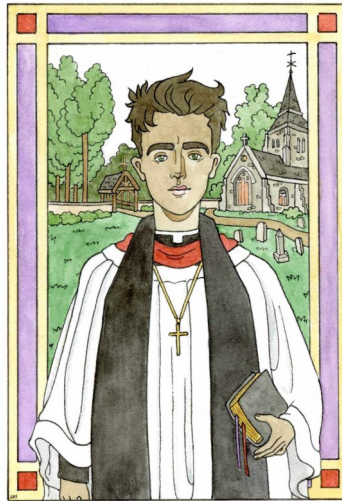




# Grace Notes March 2022

***Our Mission Statement:***  
***To know Christ & make Christ known***  
**Grace Episcopal Church**  
106 Lowell St.  
Manchester, NH





*Illustration by Andrew Freshour*

## Table of Contents

Rector's Reflection .....	3
Rector's Reflection - Pandemic Creativity.....	3
Gone, But Not Forgotten? .....	4
Pandemic Creativity .....	5-9
- Andrew Freshour.....	5
- Barnaby Thomas.....	5
- Allan Knight.....	6
- Linn Krikorian .....	7
- Eileen Suckley.....	7
- The Stagnaro Family Artists .....	8
- Linda Chamberlain .....	8
- Gail Austin.....	9
- Robert Fox .....	9
February GEC Book Group Update .....	10
Perspective .....	11
Afghan Update .....	12
Refugee Update .....	13
Sunday, February 13th 2022 .....	14
Sunday Worship/Drive By Eucharist - February 6th, 2022 .....	15
Sunday Worship - February 20th, 2022 .....	15
Congratulations Kate Porter .....	16
New Grandbaby .....	16
Milestones .....	16
Vestry Meeting .....	17
Monthly Pledge Income Trend Graphs .....	20

# Rector's Reflection - Pandemic Creativity



A few weeks after the COVID era began I sat in a Zoom room with over a hundred Episcopal clergy, both active and retired, who live, move, and have their being in the state of New Hampshire. One of my younger colleagues wondered aloud: "What new and wonderful things will God create out of the pandemic?" I remember at the time being deeply offended by the question. Inwardly I thought, "Seriously, R? Do you actually have the audacity to say good things will come from COVID?"

We will soon celebrate (is *celebrate* the right word?) the two year anniversary of the start of the pandemic on March 11th, 2022. I am angry, frustrated, and tired by the fact the pandemic has lasted as long as it has. And I despise how COVID has caused us as humans to connect in the flesh less. We have missed out, these past two years, on parish pancake and corned beef suppers, coffee hours, Easter Egg hunts, and a host of other "we love hanging together" social events.

Still, we are sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, created by God to be creative, hopeful, thoughtful people. I continue to be impressed with how we all continue to innovate and create new ways to spiritually "fill our buckets." How all of us have adapted our lives and patterns not just to tolerate the pandemic, but also to find and foster joy.

The actress Liv Tyler once observed: "There is no definition of beauty, but when you can see someone's spirit coming through, something unexplainable, that's beautiful to me."

A month ago I reached out to several parishioners I knew were creative, crafty people. This newsletter honors them and how they have evoked "pandemic creativity." You will see the beauty of their souls come through with the art and imagery they have birthed over the course of the COVID era.

A favorite collect of mine says this: "O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be ever present with your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of

your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (*The Book Of Common Prayer*, page 819)

For all the ways we bring beauty to the earth -- quilting, knitting, painting, drawing, baking, stitching, conversing, caring, loving, volunteering, serving, worshipping, praying -- I give thanks.

Blessings and love,  
Marjorie xo+

## Gone, But Not Forgotten?

I'm sure I've told you the sad story of the demise of my schools. They are gone, all of them. Agassiz Elementary was torn down to make way for condos; Girls' Latin School in Boston changed its name to Boston Latin Academy and became co-ed; Boston University School of Nursing's closing was announced at our 25th reunion; and the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge moved to NYC, and is part of Union Theological Seminary. Son Jordan's question was, "Do you think it could be you?". It does give one pause.



My point in bringing this up is that several months ago GLS alumnae were asked where we wanted our donations to go: a separate GLS fund, the existing GLS/BLA fund, or both. Overwhelmingly, we voted on the first. Why is that a potential problem? Because at some point, all GLS alumnae will have died; we will no longer exist, at least physically. Then, to whom should the money go? Why would we even want to keep alive a school which doesn't exist, and whose graduates will also eventually no longer exist? Our youngest graduates are about 64 years old, so it won't be long before we are all just words on a page, pictures in a yearbook of students no one remembers.

GLS was founded in 1878 to give a "classical education and college preparatory training" to girls. Then in 1972, boys were admitted to GLS. That was the beginning of the end. The school's name was changed to Boston Latin Academy in 1975. Those boys signaled the end of an era, yet we remain fiercely loyal to what was.

I have a GLS sweatshirt, a pendant, my class ring, and a silk scarf – all with our mascot, the Jabberwock, on them. I can still remember



our school song. I am a proud GLS alumna; no one can ever take that away from me. What are your thoughts?

Jane W Van Zandt +

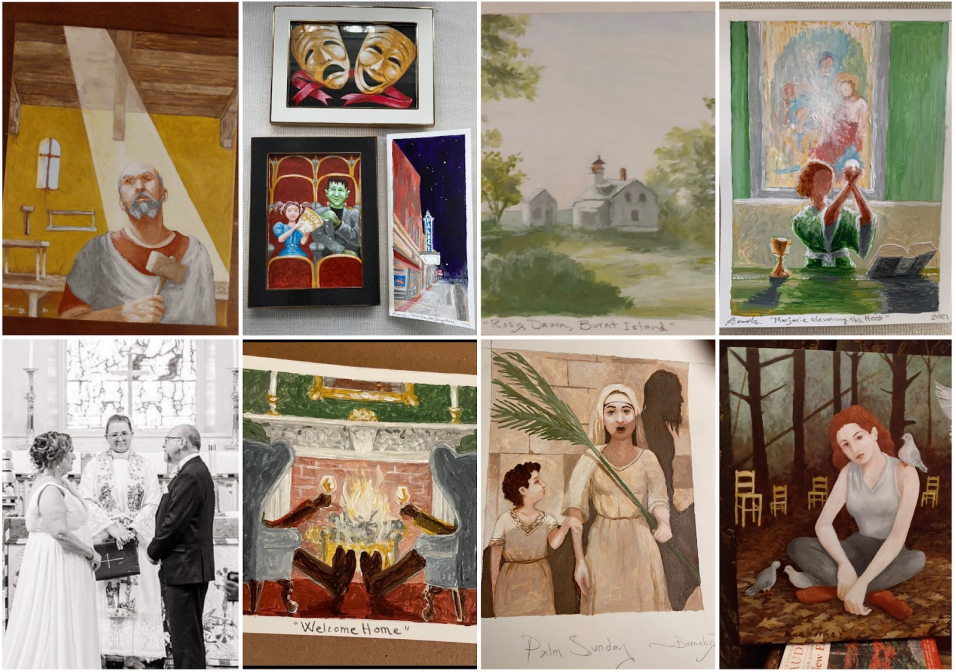
## Andrew Freshour

Andrew Freshour is a graduate of the New Hampshire Institute of Art. His renderings are creative, colorful, inspiring, and unique. Andrew generously shares his God-given gifts and clear passion for art with our parish, both for our monthly newsletter and numerous bulletin covers.



## Barnaby Thomas

Parishioner Barnaby Thomas shares his incredible artistic skills in thoughtful, stunning paintings and hand made cards he gifts to family, friends, and fellow Grace Church parishioners. Barnaby images holy people, places, and moments, making those of us who receive the works of his hands feel incredibly blessed.



# Allan Knight

Allan Knight is not only a gifted and remarkable priest, but also a member of the League of New Hampshire craftsmen. He has a passion and a talent for taking a simple piece of wood and turning it into beautiful, functional containers and wooden objects.







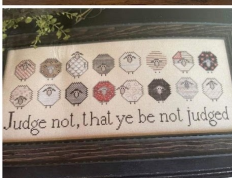
## Linn Krikorian

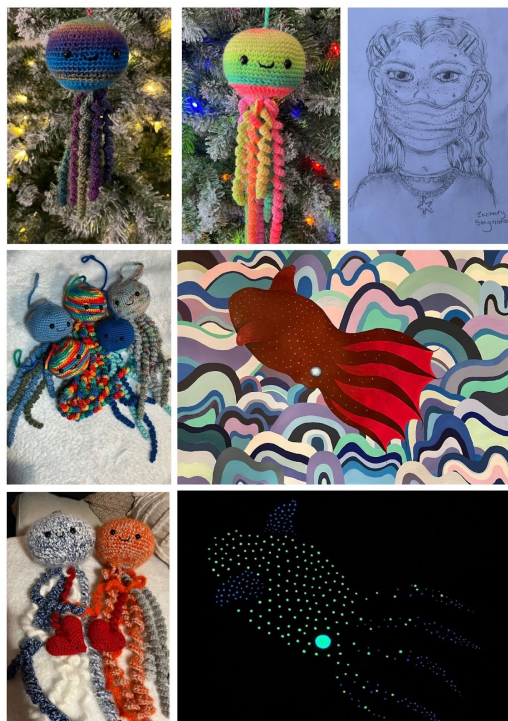
Linn Krikorian is not only a remarkable soprano in our parish choir and a stellar Altar Guild leader, but also a talented teacher, mentor, and creator of art. Pictured here are two of her paintings and one charcoal drawing - all created during the pandemic.



## Eileen Suckley

Eileen Suckley leans on the wisdom of parishioner Linn Krikorian, a fellow artist, when it comes to deciding how to mat and frame the cross stitched artistry she creates. Eileen is master gift giver who uses her talented, holy hands to sew amazingly detailed images of love for her family, friends, and members of Grace Church.





## The Stagnaro Family Artists

Our rector enjoys making pottery, cross stitching, English paper piecing quilting, jewelry making, knitting, and crocheting. Lately she has become obsessed with the practice of creating Amigurumi, a Japanese word that means “crocheted or knitted stuffed toy. Marjorie’s children are both talented artists. Zach enjoys sketching and Fiona creates earrings out of miniature toys and figures. Fiona’s glow in the dark painting of a vampire squid was just featured in a Pinkerton Academy art gallery showing.

## Linda Chamberlain

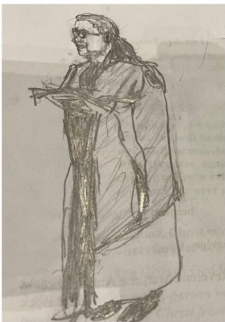
Linda Chamberlain is an accomplished, high level knitter who is fearless when it comes to attempting new patterns. Some of her stunning pandemic projects include: intarsia ornaments for Christmas gifts, a sweater she made for herself (and remade – an exact copy -for her sister-in-law!), a breathtakingly detailed shawl for her niece Rachel who is getting married in July, and a hat for our rector. We are grateful for all the ways Linda prays with her hands.





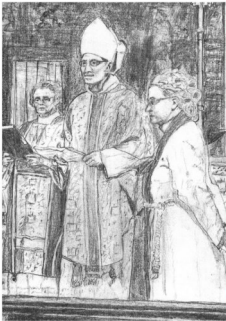
# Gail Austin

Gail Austin is a talented knitter, a remarkable quilter, and makes the world a better place through her stunning, handmade gifts. Thanks be to God for her generosity and creativity.



# Robert Fox

Robert Fox enjoys drawing people and holy moments he sees at our parish. He is especially gifted at taking photos and re-imagining them as sketches he then gifts to those he has drawn.



## February GEC Book Group Update

On Tuesday, February 22nd ten members of our parish (including one new parishioner!) gathered on Zoom to discuss the wonderful historical fiction novel *The Gown*. Parishioner Jill Porter recommended we read this book, having found it as a recommendation from her Kindle after reading another novel. Though a few of us thought the book was a bit too long (400 pages in length), all of us enjoyed the novel, which detailed the story behind the creation of Queen Elizabeth's wedding gown. Told in the voice of three women - Ann Hughes, Miriam Dassin (a real life embroiderer and artist), and Heather Mackensie the plot moves back and forth between London, 1947 and Toronto, Canada, 2016. The author spent over two years painstakingly researching the true history of the real life seamstresses and embroiderers who crafted Queen Elizabeth's wedding gown. (No surprise at the remarkable historical details and touches within the text as the writer, Jennifer Robson, holds a doctorate in British history from the University of Oxford.) While some of us preferred the story thread of the past (1947) and others preferred the more recent storyline of 2016, we agreed that we all learned a lot about the experiences of people in London and the impact of rationing after the war ended, as well as the value and skills of women who had joined the workforce at this time.

All are welcome to join us for our next Zoom gathering, which will take place on Tuesday, March 15th at 12 noon. At that time we will be discussing *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. This book was a winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction and was authored by the Pulitzer Prize winning author Isabel Wilkerson, also the author of *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, which was an Oprah's Book Club pick. A warning: *The Warmth of Other Suns* is 640 pages long, so give yourself enough breath, space and time to read it over the next month!

Future reads to look forward to are:

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.

Blessings and happy reading!  
Marjorie +

## Perspective

I started writing this while watching snow falling that was predicted to be fluffy and about 10 - 12 in deep. We actually accumulated about 6-8 inches. About a month earlier, there was a lot of wet snow and sleet that turned into a coating of ice about 2-3 in thick. Snow can accumulate in a variety of ways, and there can be a variety of reactions to snow, and a variety of uses for snow.



When we get a lot of snow, it means a lot of work clearing it off drive-ways, streets, sidewalks, and parking lots. There are different ways of clearing the snow, including plow, snowblower, and shoveling by hand. Over the years, I have done all three, but shoveling snow is my favorite form of exercise. It involves full body motion, uses multiple groups of muscles, provides a positive reaction because it accomplishes something, and I can go faster or slower depending on how much effort I want to exert.

Another way I view snow removal is as a form of giving. Clearing snow on a city sidewalk in front of our house is a way of giving to others. A number of people have commented that it is nice to have the sidewalk clean so they can walk on it rather than in the street.

There are other positives that can vary depending on the amount and texture of the snow. If there is a little, and it is soft and it piles up gently on branches, it can produce beautiful scenery. If it is heavy and sticky, it can be used to make a snow man and bring our inner child out from hibernation. You can also enjoy using skis, sleds, and snow-shoes. We have skied to church a few times.

Also, snow that is light has other uses. One is for sugar-on-snow. We collect the snow when the right type falls in the winter, store it in the freezer, and then bring it back out after maple-sugaring. We boil the syrup, and when it gets thick enough, dribble it onto the snow. When cooled, the syrup forms a chewy candy which is very special to us. Another use for light-textured snow is for making ice cream. It should probably be called "ice"-cream because the snow is actually made of ice crystals. The basic ingredients are milk, sugar, vanilla, and snow, but chocolate chips and other candy bits can also be added if desired. Fluffy snow can also be used as a leavening agent to make what we call snow cake.



For one last thought, thick light snow on your roof can serve as a form of insulation. So, the next time a snow fall is predicted, think of all the good things it might bring.

Dick Feren

## Afghan Update

Several Grace Church parishioners have begun working with Afghan evacuees in various capacities. We will highlight their stories in the next few issues of *Grace Notes*. This month we begin with Christine Stevens' experiences as she described below.

We have had the opportunity to meet and assist some of the Afghan refugees recently placed in Manchester. Our new Afghan neighbors arrived in the U.S. following a traumatic, hasty departure from their lives in their home country. The common thread each of them shares is that at least one member of their family worked for the United States government in some capacity – including pilots, interpreters, police force members, clerical staff and gardener. They helped keep our American soldiers safe while in Afghanistan. The Afghan refugees have been vetted by the U.S. government, spent time in a relocation center (many in Texas living in tents) and then placed in cities around the country. Many individuals had no cultural or language exposure prior to their escape from Afghanistan. Most of them left their homes with little more than the clothes they were wearing. Manchester has been selected as a host city for some Afghan individuals and their families.

The number of refugees arriving in the U.S. at one time was unusual compared to previous groups from other countries. The large number combined with the lack of affordable housing and COVID restrictions has led to most individuals and families being placed in area hotels. If you think hotel living sounds easy and a bit carefree let us paint you a picture. Families with 4-6 children have been living in hotels for a few months. There are no areas for the young children to play except in the hotel room and doing such daily chores as laundry is a challenge. Cooking is prohibited in the hotel rooms. Most of the school age children were not enrolled in school until mid-January. While the stress on everyone is evident – they consider themselves fortunate to be living here at this time – away from the terrors in Afghanistan.

We began assisting with meal delivery in early December. Because there is no cooking or refrigeration in the hotel rooms, each meal must come from outside the hotel. The area restaurants which provide the meals are paid an amount that covers the cost of the meals. Personally,

we would consider the meals an occasional treat (fried chicken, pizza, kebabs). The meals are good but most times not what we consider well balanced or what we would want for a steady diet. We pick up the meals and deliver them to each hotel room. This has given us an opportunity to meet and interact with most of the people. The children have become our friends. They have amazed us on how fast they are learning to speak English. They are eager to assist us with our deliveries and to talk with us to improve their English-speaking skills. Most of the women are timid but do offer greetings and a shy smile. The men greet us with a smile and often a few words of welcome. Many of the 'single' men struggle with the constant worry for their family members left behind in Afghanistan. Their hope is that their loved ones are safer with them out of the country – away from the Taliban's grasp. Many of the men have communicated to us multiple times their extreme desire to find a job, to become employed as soon as possible. The International Institute of New England (IINE) is the support organization that assists with finding housing, assisting with medical care and facilitating job applications.

We have also been involved by providing transportation to doctor's appointments and working with Brookside Church to allow the families who are living in apartments to shop at no cost for clothing and other necessities at their thrift store. A brief glimpse as to how the Afghan refugees and others enter the U.S. and the initial support offered to these folks, please visit the following website.

<https://manchesterinklink.com/how-refugees-and-afghan-evacuees-get-to-new-hampshire/>

Christine Stevens

## Refugee Update

Good morning Grace Church!

I wanted to give you a quick update. At last, we had an apartment setup yesterday for a refugee family! We now have space again at Brookside and are ready to replenish for our next refugee apartment setup. Please spread the word.

We can accept gently used furniture items. Smaller pieces are easiest to move into third floor building locations, which is often the situation. Pictures are helpful in advance. We can take donations at the Brookside Church's hallway where the handicap ramp enters off the

parking lot.

We are looking for the following items:

Dining table and chairs

Small End Tables

Coffee Table

Small Couch

Living Room Chair

Dressers

Night stands

On the housewares stock we are short on:

Twin Size Sheets

Twin Comforters

Tea pots

Basic Pressure Cooker

Electric Tea Kettle

Kind Regards

Calley Milne

Brookside Church Outreach Coordinator

## Sunday Worship February 13th 2022

We were grateful to host as our guest preacher on February 13th the Reverend Nancy Strong, whose daughter Katharine Strong was a Grace Church parishioner and Vestry member several years ago before relocating to Vermont.

Special thanks to parishioner Kate Marconillier for recruiting both her mother and grandmother to knit numerous warm hats to be delivered with underwear purchased for our 1269 Cafe "Drop Your Drawers" campaign.





Sunday Worship/Drive By Eucharist  
February 6th, 2022



Sunday Worship  
Feb. 20th, 2022



## Congratulations Kate Porter

Congratulations to granddaughter, Kate Porter, who took 1st place in 3 heat events at the 2022 Bowling Green Swim Club Regional Championships, Seekonk, MA held Feb. 12th and 13th. Her strength in the 100 Individual Medley, the 200 Freestyle and the 100 Breaststroke show her commitment to her swimming and training. No doubt her coach, our son, Jim Porter, plays a big role in her training. We were quite pleased to be able to watch these events live via a YouTube broadcast.

Jill Porter

## New Grandbaby

Congratulations to proud grandparents David and Jane Charlesworth, who recently made a sacred journey to visit their newest grandbaby in Milford, Connecticut right after the most recent New Hampshire snow storm.

Jane and David's son, Benjamin Charlesworth, and his wife, Jackie Teixeira, welcomed into our world Cecelia Charlotte Charlesworth, born 2/22/22 and weighing in at 7 pounds and 22 inches long. CeCe, her parents, and Cece's big brother Jacob (age 12, Grade 7) are all doing well.



## Milestones

Happy Birthday to the following March birthday celebrants!

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 Julie Alig Scala   | 18 Marjorie Gerbracht |
| 5 Max Anderson       | 19 Ed Zimmerman       |
| 7 Ann Hewins         | Daniel Blevens        |
| 8 Andrew Freshour    | 21 Pam Gallagher      |
| 9 David Kjellander   | 27 Debbie Hendry      |
| Chris Turner         | Noah Turner           |
| Amber Mathison       | Megan Mathison        |
| 10 John Day          | 30 Ellen Zimmerman    |
| 14 Stephanie Blevens |                       |
| Tracy Gillick        |                       |

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.

## Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Present: Valerie Anderson, Gail Austin, Amy Brumfield, Hank Gagnon, Nancy Johnson, Ken Kjellander, Teddi McIntosh, Christopher Messier, David Roy, Gail Schuman, the Reverend Dr. Marjorie Ann Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Barnaby Thomas, Chris Turner, Meghann White

Excused Absences: Carol Cote

This meeting was conducted via Zoom. Rev. Marjorie opened the meeting at 7:02 PM with a prayer. We continued with the reading of the Norms.

**VOTE:** A motion to accept the reports with a consent agenda vote was made by Gail S, seconded by Valerie, and was carried. The reports included are Vestry Meeting (Dec-2021), Rector's Report (Dec-2021/Jan 2021), Property Report (Jan-2022), Planning and Finance (Jan-2022), and Music Department Report (Dec 15,2021/Jan 5&12,2022).

Gail A. presented the December financials highlighting that the pledge receipts are \$13.5K favorable to budget with \$9.0K as a pledge prepayment; YTD pledge receipts down \$18.4K from budget and \$13.1K from prior year; suggested to add audit bill into budget for next year as a loss of \$15K; \$3.050K in gift cards delivered to IINE; Endowment Fund account balance is comprised of \$58.4K emergency cash fund and \$51.0K unallocated.

**VOTE:** A motion was made by Hank, seconded by Gail S to accept the December Financial Report. The motion carried.



The Vestry reviewed the proposed budget for 2022. Gail A recommended fundraising to offset the \$14K deficit.

**VOTE:** A motion to accept the budget for 2022 as presented was made by Valerie and seconded by Teddi which carried.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 30, 2022, as part of the Zoom Sunday Service. The quorum needs to be 38 parishioners (25% of our flock). The agenda for the meeting was determined. The following slate of officers will be presented for election at the meeting: Vestry (3-year term): Carol Cote, Teddi McIntosh, and Meghann White; Delegates to Southern Convocation/Diocesan Convention (2-year term): Roger Bleau and Ed Doyle; and Alternates to Southern Convocation/Diocesan Convention (2-year term): Maureen Thomas and Barnaby Thomas.

Rev. Marjorie reported that she was discussing with Bishop Rob the possibility of his teaching confirmation classes (6 sessions) this year.

**VOTE:** A motion to accept a memorial donation of a full set of vestments was made by Meghann. and seconded by Valerie which carried.

**VOTE:** Valerie made a motion to have the 4% COLA increases for salaried employees and contractors take effect on Feb 1. It was seconded by Hank and the motion carried.

The Vestry discussed the need to have a designated computer available in the Nave to be used only for Zoom services. A computer and microphone will be needed for this purpose. Rev. Marjorie stated that she may have some donations for that purpose available. Gail A recommended that donations be made to the Music Fund and the money from that fund be used for the purchase of the computer and microphone.

**VOTE:** Amy moved to purchase a computer and microphone with the funds from the Music Fund for a cost not to exceed \$2000. Gail S seconded the motion which carried.

**VOTE:** A motion was made by Teddi, seconded by Ken to continue to have City Year tenants in Grace House for 2022-2023. The motion carried.

Gail A reported that 2 Cd's are going to mature on March 1 and recommended that the new treasurer set up a money market account until research is done to determine where to deposit the funds longer term.

Staffing of the financial office – Larry Farrell has been interviewed and has been recommended to be hired as our Financial Consultant beginning February 1<sup>st</sup>. He will be responsible for keeping the Quicken books, paying bills, creating schedules, sending out 1099's, and reporting to the Treasurer. Barnaby recused himself from voting since Larry is a friend.

**VOTE:** A motion to hire Larry Farrell as Financial Contractor was made by Christopher, seconded by Valerie, and carried.

Gail A will close the books for January with Larry and shadow him as well.

Julie will be our Treasurer who will perform the executive functions such as doing banking and reporting to the Vestry. Kersten is considering doing the ACS (Church accounting – pledge and donations).

David reported that we have 59 donors with \$160K in pledges; last year at this time we had 61 donors with 176K pledges

Gary is continuing to work on getting approval for the gates.

Meghann and Rev. Marjorie met to discuss ideas for Fund-Raising. They need more volunteers for the committee. Valerie and Rev. Marjorie had previously volunteered to be part of the committee; Ken, Christopher and Barnaby volunteered to join the committee. They will pursue NH Gives for the first half of the year and then hope to have one large fund-raising event that can bring in the community.

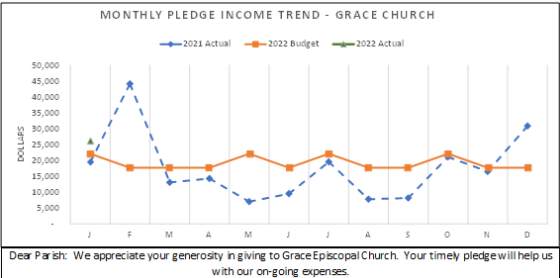
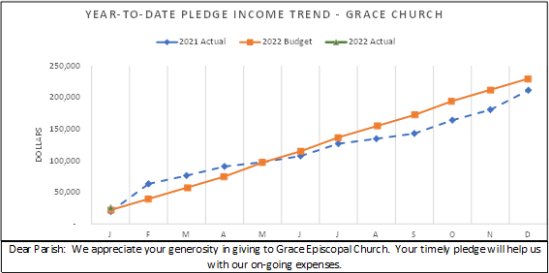
Rev. Marjorie reported that we could have had an exposure to Covid on Sunday. A notice will be sent to parishioners and posted on the door to notify people of the possible exposure.

The Vestry decided that until Covid numbers decline, when there is more than one person in any part of the church, masks must be worn.

The meeting was concluded at 9:10 PM

The next Vestry meeting February 16, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Johnson, Clerk



# **Grace Episcopal Church**

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## Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht, Rector

## Vestry

Amy Brumfield, Warden

Christopher Messier, Warden

Nancy Johnson, Clerk

Julie Alig Scala, 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 Freethy, Sexton

Susan Senneville, Nursery Care Giver

Ann Hewins, Grace House Manager

## Newsletter

Kersten Matera

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## Cover Illustration

Andrew Freshour

## Next Newsletter Deadline

March 22, 2022