



Grace Notes May 2022

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: Giving Thanks for Those Who Serve

Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart. Eleanor Roosevelt



In my Maundy Thursday sermon last week I spoke about how a former 10 year-old student rushed to the front of a line of people ready to wash my feet, politely begging if she could perform such a humbling task. I shared in my homily how incredibly powerful it was to have someone so eager to be of service. I will never forget how carefully Elena washed my feet, taking great time and tenderness to show her love. Additionally, exactly one week after I preached, Elena and her fiancé, Jake, and I met in a Zoom room to begin planning their wedding, which I will officiate this fall at my former cure in Washington, DC. Elena left a footprint in my heart, and I hope I do the same when I preside at her wedding.

I am grateful for the incredible sacrifice of time, talent, and treasure people in our parish regularly give to our church community and the greater city of Manchester. Without all of you, there would have been no Holy Week and Easter celebrations. We could not have done such a tremendous job without all of you, without your willingness to serve. Parish musicians, our choir, readers, parish administrator, assistant parish administrator, sexton, clergy-in-residence, Zoom tech deacons, wardens, Sunday school parents and teenagers (who made the first Easter Egg hunt in two years happen), Altar Guild members, readers, lay ministers, acolytes, counters, ushers, Coffee Hour hosts, and congregation made our first in-person Holy Week and Easter celebrations services in two years ones that individually and collectively filled and stilled our souls.

This edition of our parish newsletter will be the last one where Kersten Matera serves as our Newsletter Editor. Over the past four years Kersten has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to celebrate and publish news that is fit to print. She has raised the bar of our publication with beautiful artwork, pictures, and stellar editing. Kersten is holy, thoughtful, hard working, and wise. And because of those spiritual charisms she has made our parish better in her service as a lead communicator. Finally, Kersten has made me a better person by numerous e-mail conversations and the gift

of simply being in her presence. She models goodness, steadiness, and readiness. We are ever grateful for her holy offerings and numerous talents to our parish and the wider world.

We are looking for people to serve in helping our newsletter and website be streamlined and impactful. If you are willing to serve in either of these roles, please let me know.

Blessings and love,
Marjorie +

Three Earth Care Commission Events

On April 21st, three of us, members of the diocesan Earth Care Commission, served on a panel, sharing personal stories of our own spirituality in relation to God's gift to us of the earth. I was joined by The Rev Nathan Bourne, rector of St George's Church in Durham, and The Rev Carolyn Stevenson, rector of St David's Church in Salem.



On May 1st, all are invited to the Church of the Woods, 92 Foster Rd in Canterbury, at 2 PM for an in-person gathering, hosted by The Rev Steve Blackmer. The experience of being outdoors in the woods is quite different from being in a building confined by walls.

The third, and final, event in the series on May 24th at 7, will feature sustainability practices, with our own Dick Feren as one of the panelists.

The first and third events, on zoom, will be available on the diocesan website under "Online worship...". Scroll down to *Honoring Earth Series*.

I am writing this on Earth Day, an annual event celebrated since 1970. It is more important now than ever before, that we do what we can to ensure the viability of our island home for future generations. Everyone, from toddlers to nonagenarians, can re-use, re-cycle, and re-purpose. We can challenge corporate polluters. What are some of your ideas?

Jane W Van Zandt +

GEC Book Group Update

In April several members of our parish book group met to discuss the novel *The Only Woman In The Room* by Marie Benedict. Book group member Jill Porter recommended the book, a New York Times bestseller that delivers a compelling story about nine years of Hedy Lamarr's life. This story begins when Hedy Keisler is only 19 years old and an aspiring actress in Vienna being pursued by Fritz Mandl, the wealthiest man in Austria. Hedy is Jewish and her family, fearful of anti-semitism persecution, is encouraged to marry Fritz for her protection. Mandl becomes a more and more controlling husband over time and it becomes clear Hedy needs to escape from his powerful clutches. Hedy once said, "I knew very soon that I could never be an actress while I was his wife. He was the absolute monarch in his marriage. I was like a doll. I was like a thing, some object of art which had to be guarded and imprisoned, having no mind, no life of its own."

We were thrilled to welcome at this meeting parishioner Dick Feren as, "The Only Man In The Zoom Room," to talk about this novel. Everyone who read the book appreciated how well written it was. While not everything the writer asserted was completely historically accurate, Marie Benedict did a wonderful job of helping us as readers understand how bright Hedy was and how she was able to eavesdrop on her husband's conversations about the armaments and munitions he sold. Hedy managed to escape from Mandl's grasp in 1937 by fleeing to London, taking with her the knowledge gained from dinner-table, all male discussions over wartime weaponry.

Those of us who attended who were women spoke about what it was like to be, in the contexts of our careers, the only women in rooms full of men. Do we have to, as women, become more mannish? Do we believe in the basic stereotype that men work from their heads, while women use their hearts? Is it true men are mostly out for themselves, using their relationship to establish self-gains and self-promotion?

Several of us remember the marriage language of older prayer books in the Episcopal church that asked women to vow that they would, "love, honor, and obey." One woman who attended reminisced about how her mother stopped her own wedding rehearsal and said, "My daughter can say love, honor, and cherish. But never obey!"

Hedy Lamar was not only an actress, but an inventor who pioneered the technology that would one day form the basis for today's WiFi, GPS, and Bluetooth communication systems. As one book group member observed, "Without Hedy's fine mind, none of us would be in a Zoom room

right now!"

Our next book group gathering will take place on Tuesday, May 17th at 12 noon in our parish Zoom room. The book we will be reading is a well-known and beloved historical fiction novel published in 1932, *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck. All are welcome to join us!

Blessings,
Marjorie +

Co-operation vs Competition

Nancy-Ann and I have different hobbies and we like different books. We have played games where we compete, but we have the most fun when we are doing a game where we are both working together to get the best outcome. A good example of this would be Wordle, as well as its multi-word variations: Quordle and Octordle.

(Wordle has one word, Quordle has four words, and Octordle has eight words.) The goal of all of these is to figure out the hidden five-letter words.



We could play as a competition where we each try independently to see who could do the best, and then compare our results to see who “won” the most times. Or it could be a cooperation where we work together to see if we can get all the correct words. Considering the independent approach, if someone gets an answer but the other one doesn’t, there can be a sense of personal success, where someone feels that they were better or did better. This could include a case where both got the answer, but one took fewer steps or trials. I enjoy the game more when Nancy-Ann and I are both working towards a common goal. It is very satisfying when we succeed. We both feel good and look forward to our next attempt to solve the problems. It also gives us a sense of team spirit. One of us is not trying to out-do the other, but rather is trying to help the other. The same is true when we are planning and doing house repairs, renovations, clean-up, and trip planning. It makes us stronger, and increases the number and variety of things we can both feel good about doing.

It makes me wonder what might happen if countries all over the world played their “games” in the same way. Instead of one country trying to take over another, what if they tried to find ways to cooperate on goals that would benefit both? Could that make them both feel better about

what they are doing?

Dick Feren

Conversation Circles with Refugees

We began working with groups who were living at two local hotels. The plan was to lead discussions that would support the material being taught via more formal Zoom classes which the refugees were required to attend in the morning. At our first session we practiced basics such as “My name is ----. What is your name?” When we asked them to write their names on name tags we discovered that at least one Afghan man could not write his name. If they were literate in their own language (not all were) they had learned to write and to read using the Arabic or Cyrillic alphabets in which one reads from right to left.



We quickly learned that we needed to adapt our plans to meet the needs of each individual. We used calendars for recognizing and pronouncing numbers, for counting, and for attempting to teach the concepts of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We brought in money to practice recognizing coins, the value of each, and equivalencies such as four quarters equal one dollar. I worked with one man who insisted that each coin was one dollar. We brought in newspaper flyers to practice “shopping” and to count out the money needed for each purchase. The hope is that eventually we will take field trips to grocery stores and other places.

At the hotel where a friend and I were working, the Afghan men all moved into apartments so we have been working only with a Sudanese man and occasionally his wife. They are eager to learn and willingly try everything we suggest.

Chris Stevens was working at the other hotel. She commented that working with the women has been very rewarding. Some of them had never held a writing instrument (although you should see their amazing knife skills. The most skilled chef is no match for these women when it comes to dicing vegetables, etc. AND they chop without using a cutting board: vegetable in one hand--knife in the other.) She added that the Afghan women are very excited to have their daughters educated in a formal classroom.

Although many of us said we did not want to meet in refugees' apartments for various reasons--safety of the neighborhood, parking con-

cerns, and accessibility issues--Mary Atwell and I each went to separate apartments on April 21 and had very positive experiences. Mary and Nancy Frankel went to the home of an Afghan woman. Two children who were too young to go to school were there; two older children and her husband came in a bit later but this did not seem to be a problem. Mary and Nancy were immediately served an orange drink and her husband placed oranges and a knife on the table for them, despite the fact that they themselves were fasting for Ramadan. My friend Gayle and I went to the apartment where the Sudanese family had just moved. We too were offered drinks (tea, coffee, water) which we initially refused but it soon became clear that they wanted to offer hospitality and we both took water. The wife joined us, only once leaving to get their 2 month old baby who quickly went back to sleep in her arms. She is an eager learner and will not leave the apartment to meet somewhere else so we decided it was both safe and important to continue meeting there.

Thanks to the generosity of the Brookside Church Thrift Shop and all who have donated to their requests for various items, the apartments appear to be well furnished.

The hope now is to expand the conversation circles into some public places where more people who are living in apartments can join us. The challenge is not only finding a location for this but also a time since many of the men have started to work and many participants would have to meet their children coming home on school buses.

All of us who have been working with Conversation Circles have found the experience to be worthwhile. Even with our limited conversations (and the help of Google Translate) both we and the refugees have learned a lot about each other.

Nancy-Ann Feren

Laetare Sunday - March 27th

We are grateful to Gail Schuman for her donation of stunning Rose vestments gifted in memory of her husband, Robert Lee Schuman. These vestments were worn for the very first time at our parish on Sunday, March 27th, 2022. This particular Sunday was the Fourth Sunday of Lent, "Laetare" Sunday (Latin for "Rejoice"), the halfway point of Lent.



Lent 5 - April 3rd

Special thanks to all those who stayed after church on Lent 5 to prepare and polish our brass in preparation for Easter Sunday: Moe and Barnaby Thomas, Andrew Freshour, Marcus Forand, Michael Duffy, and our rector.



Palm Sunday

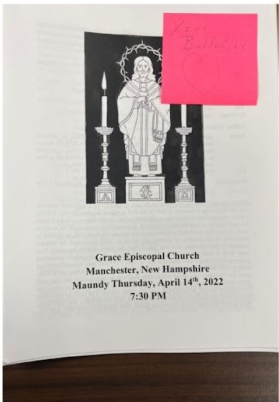


Tenebrae Service

Thank you to Lyn Marino, our Assistant Parish Administrator, who did a stellar job organizing readers and leaders to help begin Holy Week 2022 with a beautiful, somber Tenebrae service. Special thanks to Ken Grinnell for borrowing of a pair of cymbals from parishioner Ed Doyle (for the loud noise made at the service's end!) and to Tommy Suckley for serving as our acolyte for this service and all the Triduum services that followed as well.



Maundy Thursday



Stations of the Cross

Our parish courtyard hosted the starting point of an hour and a half long Stations of the Cross journey through Manchester that took place the afternoon of Good Friday.

Special thanks to Grace Church’s former parishioner and deacon, the Reverend Christopher Potter, for organizing this active worship experience and parishioners Hank Gagnon and the Reverend Allan Knight for attending.



Good Friday



Easter Vigil



Easter at Grace Church

Thank you to all those who made our first in-person/Zoom Easter worship celebration since the pandemic began so special. We had 135 people attend in person and 31 congregants on Zoom as well!!!

Thank you to all those who made our first parish Easter Egg hunt in quite a while (because of COVID we did not have one the past two

years) such a success.

Easter Eggs were stuffed in advance by Lauren Cline, Charity Frost, and the Reverend Marjorie Gerbracht. Eggs were hidden by Ernesto Burden, Kelley and Mannix Muir, Noah and Julie Turner, and Lauren Cline.





Thanks to Our Sexton

Blessings and thanks to our parish sexton, Emery Freethey, who daily continues to keep our outdoor courtyard, making sure our green space was clean and beautiful in time for Easter Day.



Thank You from Jill Porter

Thank You for your prayers, kindness and caring during my brother, Jim Fredholm's illness and after his death. Your prayers, kindness and caring strengthened me and I am forever grateful. Your cards of sympathy and email notes kept arriving and your outpouring of love has been a great comfort.

Jim was a committed individual to anything he became involved in. His passion was his love for music. He favored classical choral works and performed for over 80 years. He made lifelong friendships doing this and found it a source of great strength and inspiration during difficult times. He was in various church choirs over his lifetime and grew in faith in the Episcopal church during those early years of his life as a chorister.

Jim preplanned his funeral and service. He took the time to do this several years ago and took the burden off his family. Although there was much to take care of and arrange I saw how beneficial Jim's planning was for his son and step daughter. I saw the fruits of his labor in this action. I highly recommend this and must get back to the work I have done so far for Ken and for me.

Jill Porter

Manchester Choral Society's Spring Concert

The Manchester Choral Society will present their Spring Concert at Ste Marie Parish, 378 Notre Dame Ave, Manchester at 7 PM on Saturday May 21.

The program will include Lobgesang (Song of Praise) by Felix Mendelssohn with full orchestra, and Ruminations on poems by Rumi, by Jennifer Higdon.

Online tickets are available at the MCS website.

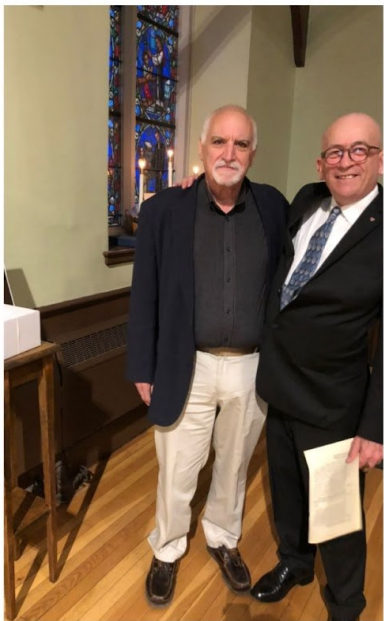
Jane W Van Zandt +

Burial Of Louis Thomas Hudon

Thank you to the 55 friends, family, and parishioners who attended the Easter Day burial of long time parishioner and Grace Church patriarch Louis Hudon in our parish's memorial garden.

Special thanks to Louis' stepson Dan Gingras for organizing this celebration and to the following Grace Church parishioners whose con-

tributions made this service special: Linda Heath, Hank Gagnon, Michelle Desjardins, Ken Grinnell, and Edward Doyle.



Congratulations Davan Muir

Congratulations to parishioner Davan Muir who performed in the musical *Descendants* at the Palace Theatre in Manchester on April 4th and 5th. We are looking forward to seeing Davan in more theater productions in the months to come!



Congratulations Zachary Stagnaro

Congratulations to Zachary Stagnaro who just performed the role of Lucas Beinke (Wednesday Addams' boyfriend) in the David Cawley Middle School production of *The Addams Family Musical*. Fiona Stagnaro and the rector attended the show to cheer Zach on.



Milestones

Happy Birthday to the following May birthdays celebrants!

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Eric Gagnon | 17 David Roy |
| 5 Linn Krikorian | 18 Edie Cummings |
| 6 Lyn Marino | 19 Dottie Koch |
| 7 Jude Lassonde | 23 Fiona Stagnaro |
| 9 Carter Beck | Michael Duffy |
| 10 Tim Lassonde | 24 Christopher Messier |
| 14 Dwight Simmons | 30 Robert Gameau |
| 15 Ruth Young | Quinn Turner |

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 - Hybrid

Our Vestry had our very first Hybrid meeting (a combination of Zoom and in person attendees) on Wednesday, April 20th. Special thanks to our warden Amy Brumfield for managing our Zoom room and warden Christopher Messier for his photographs of those who attended in person.



Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Present: Julie Alig Scala, Valerie Anderson, Amy Brumfield, Carol Cote, Hank Gagnon, Nancy Johnson, Ken Kjellander, Teddi McIntosh, Christopher Messier, Gail Schuman, the Reverend Dr. Marjorie Ann Gerbracht, Barnaby Thomas, Chris Turner, Meghann White

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 seconded by Teddi and was carried. The reports included are Vestry Meeting (Feb-2022), Rector's Report (Feb 2021/Mar-2022, Property Report (Mar-2022), Planning and Finance (Mar-2022), and Music Department Report (Feb 23,2022& Mar 9,2022).

Rev. Marjorie reported that Dick Feren would be the Pledge Clerk for the remainder of 2022.

Julie presented the February financials noting the following:

- Total income unfavorable \$7.8k to budget
- Pledge receipts unfavorable \$8.3k
- Expenses are favorable by \$16k (audit bill not charged yet)
- Pledges down \$25K YTD, Special Offerings down \$3.5k
- Total Expenses up \$4k

VOTE: A motion was made by Valerie, seconded by Carol to accept the February Financial Report. The motion carried.

The Vestry discussed the necessary bathroom plumbing repairs needed in Grace House.

VOTE: A motion to have repair of bathroom plumbing in Grace House done allowing up to \$5000 was made by Hank and seconded by Valerie which carried.

VOTE: A motion to have masks optional at in person worship was made by Hank and seconded by Christopher. The motion carried.

VOTE: Hank made a motion to have the above mandate effective for the entire campus starting March 17, 2022. The motion was seconded by Nancy and carried.

A discussion was held about the Bishop Rob's recommendations on alleviating further COVID19 restrictions was held. The Vestry adopted the following:

- Coffee hour will be allowed – starting only once a month. Volunteers to provide simple coffee hour are needed and those doing the coffee hour are responsible for clean up as well.
- Seating during worship will not be restricted; parishioners may choose how they wish to sit.
- Acolytes will have no COVID19 restrictions
- Passing of the peace will be simplified. Parishioners will remain in their pews.
- Passing of the plate will begin in the front of the church, parishioners will pass the plate to the back of the church.
- There will be 1 hybrid service through September. The service will begin at 9:30AM.
- Sunday School will begin again in the fall.

Rev. Marjorie stated that she would not be able to do the Easter Egg Hunt since she would be conducting the Louis Hudon celebration of life and if we wanted an Easter Egg Hunt to happen someone would have to volunteer to organize and run it. She reported that the homeless problem was severe, as many as 11 people have been staying overnight. The mailman has not been able to deliver the mail consistently. The Vestry recommended that a P.O. Box be procured. The problem of the homeless should be alleviated when the gates are installed in four to six weeks.

Easter flower donations last year were given to Champs. This year we will give our Easter flower donations to an appropriate Ukrainian relief organization.

The Holy Week schedule will be as follows:

- Wednesday – Tenebrae 7:30 PM (no hybrid option – in person only)
- Thursday – 7:30 PM (Hybrid)

- Friday – 3:00 PM Stations of the Cross in the city of Manchester
- Friday – 7:30 PM (Hybrid)
- Sat – 7:30 PM (Hybrid)
- Sunday – 9:20 AM Easter, Louis Hudon celebration of Life after in courtyard

The meeting was concluded at 8:30 PM

The next Vestry meeting is April 20, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Johnson, Clerk

Grace Episcopal Church

106 Lowell Street
Manchester, NH 03101
Tel (603) 622-9813
Fax (603) 669-6044

gracechurchmanchesternh@gmail.com
www.gracechurchmanchester.org

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 Freethey, Sexton
Susan Senneville, Nursery Care Giver
Ann Hewins, Grace House Manager

Newsletter

Eileen Suckley
gracechurchnewsletter@gmail.com

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Andrew Freshour

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