

Grace Notes
October
2022

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





Rector's Reflection: Giving Thanks

"Don't let the sun go down without saying thank you to someone, and without admitting to yourself that absolutely no one gets this far alone." Stephen King

When I was a child, soon after I received a gift, my mother would seat me at our kitchen table and hand me an envelope, paper and a pen. Then she would encourage me in the composition of a thank you note. It was a practice my mother taught again and again, until the writing of thank you notes became an automatic response.

Soon after arriving home from travel this summer, I received three, "snail mail" cards from various parishioners. One parishioner praised me for a sermon he found especially enlightening. Another wrote to observe how wonderful it was that we broke bread together over lunch. A third card welcomed me back after being away for a few weeks. These cards now hang on a large metal circle in my dining room. Each brings great joy when I look at them and read the words within.

The pandemic has impacted faith communities tremendously over the past two years. Lower numbers of people are attending worship. Parish endowment investments (like ours!) are down. Fewer donations are sent in or placed in our Sunday morning offering plates. Yet every day I begin by praying the exact same words: "Thank you God for my many blessings, but especially, for the many people at Grace who keep helping get things done that need to get done!" I give thanks for our core staff, Marlene and Emery, who continue to staff our parish office and care for our building. I give thanks for our Grace Church music team (Carter, Ken, Mark, and Lyn Marino) who since the pandemic began have been meeting on Zoom nearly every week to plan meaningful hymns and anthems that lift up our souls. I give thanks for our choir, who began rehearsing again (after a summer break!) to prepare for Sundays. I give thanks for our wardens and Vestry, who help steward financial resources and reflect on a range of topics, from COVID protocols to the decision to return to two services. I give thanks for the many committees and small groups (Property, Stewardship, Outreach, Altar Guild, Wednesday morning Bible Study, to name a few) who serve as catalysts to encourage beauty, generosity, service, and faith for our parish family. I give thanks for countless volunteers who use their skills to produce a parish newsletter, schedule worship leaders, maintain our grounds, love others through action.

We will soon move towards holidays centered on giving thanks (Halloween: thank you for candy; Thanksgiving: thank you for food and family; Christmas: thank you for the gift of God come to earth as an innocent child). I hope we can remember, on ordinary days, to give thanks, through smiles, words, donations to worthy causes and charities, and the gift of self, in the image of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Much love, Marjorie+



Thank you to the Reverend Nancy Strong for serving as our supply clergy for four Sundays across this summer so our rector could have vacation. Printed copies of the sermons Reverend Strong preached are available on a table in the back of our sanctuary.



WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY: **The Dead Sea Scrolls**

Beginning on Wednesday, October 5, the Adult Ed Bible Class will revisit a study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a spellbinding story of the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th century.

In the 75 years since their dramatic discovery, excavation, reassembly, and translation, the Dead Sea Scrolls have supplied us with countless fascinating insights. They provide an unprecedented window into two great monotheistic traditions in the pivotal years before and after the time of Jesus, broadening our understanding of both Jewish history, culture, and religion and the growth of early Christianity out of Judaism. These 24 lectures, presented in video format by Gary A. Rendsburg, Professor of Jewish History at Rutgers University, will tell you what the scrolls are, what they contain, and how the insights they offered into religious and ancient history came into focus.

The class meets from 11:00 am to 12:15 pm in the Grace Church library. Each participant will receive a study guide and workbook. For more information or to enroll, contact Lyn Marino. (603) 801-3565 or ciaomarinno2@gmail.com.

A Blessing of the Animals



On October 16th at 11:30 AM, the Reverend Jane W. Van Zandt will offer a blessing for our animal companions as well as prayers for those who have died and crossed over the Rainbow Bridge. Folks will have time to go home and bring their animals to the church. They must all be caged, crated, leashed, or bowled. Once, we were joined by fish. On another occasion, 22 chickens came for a blessing amid an avalanche of feathers. (If you're thinking of the latter, please bring just one to represent the others.) Should your pet(s) would prefer to stay home, simply bring a photograph. Pictures of your deceased pets are welcome, as well. We often have stuffed animals in attendance. Please plan to join us, rain or shine.



*Lord, Bless this creature who loves me
beyond measure: never leaving my
side, watching while I sleep,
comforting me when I am sad,
rejoicing when I am happy.
How like you, Lord.
How exactly like You.*



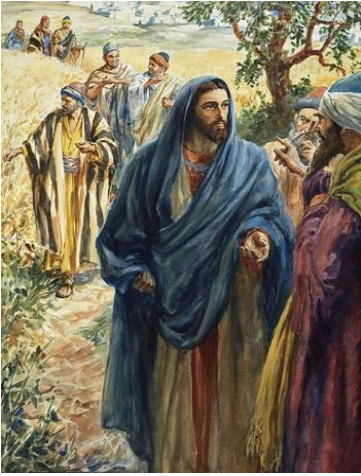
Two Important Anniversaries



Michelle and Roger
Bleau recently
celebrated 52 years of
marriage.

Moe and Barnaby
Thomas celebrated
their first anniversary.





From the site “Dancing Faith”
Reverend Steven Klierer

It is early fall, late September.
I should have Advent on my mind,
but instead, I find myself thinking about
resurrection.

What does it mean to be raised to new life?
That is the question that lingers as we move
from the vibrant energy of summer into fall
and creep our way toward the cold death of
winter.

I would like to think it means we emerge from the tombs of our own making
without spot or wrinkle, whiter than snow. New. Fresh.
But I suspect that when we are born from above,
we emerge from the tomb like Lazarus, slightly wrinkled
with our resurrected selves in rough shape.

Jesus was raised with his scars
and the dirt of the garden (or tomb) under his fingernails.
We are raised to newness
but the old clings to the fabric of our beings.

This does not mean that we are not new.
It does not mean Love has not claimed us and transformed it.

It means that God does not remove us from our messy lives
but joins us in those lives and loves us through them,
even as we stumble forward
carrying, sometimes, ugly pasts, carrying our wounds.

Even as we put one foot in front of another, awkwardly,
still making mistakes, sometimes tripping, sometimes falling flat on our faces,
sometimes doubting, sometimes wondering,
sometimes being stunned into silence by the wonder of it all.



Notes from Outreach: The Giving Tree

Grace Church parishioners have been extremely generous for many years in helping to buy and wrap Christmas gifts for children at some of our inner city schools. Because of the pandemic, in 2020 and 2021 we distributed gift cards and asked the parents to do the shopping. After discussing this with the school counselors, we have decided to continue to give \$75 Target gift cards for 50 children each at McDonough and Wilson Schools. The counselors felt that the parents liked knowing what was being bought and being able to have equitable gifts for multiple children in the same family.

Please help us by contributing any amount that you wish no later than Sunday, November 6. Put your donation in an envelope marked "For Giving Tree".

We will continue to have a Mitten Tree set up in the back of the church for your donations of warm hats, scarves, and mittens. **It will be available from November 13 until December 11.** Thanks for your continued support of our Outreach efforts.



Ataxia Fundraiser 2022 Update by Jill Porter

Our Ataxia fundraising page is still open at this time. As of mid September we have raised close to \$1500.00 with pledges made still to come. Thanks to each of you who made this possible. International Ataxia Awareness Day was celebrated on September 25th, as it is every year. It is a coordinated effort from individuals and Ataxia organizations to help shed light on Ataxia.

On Wednesday, September 21st, over 80 Ataxia advocates met with their Congressional Members to raise awareness about Ataxia, research funding needed, and ways to expedite treatments. Ken and I continue to support the efforts of the National Ataxia Foundation whose mission is: "To support the fight to improve the lives of people affected by Ataxia and their families. If you are able to support our efforts by making a donation of any amount please go to our page:

<https://igfn.us/vf/NAFLIVE/JillPorter>

If you prefer to make a donation by check, please make your check payable to: National Ataxia Foundation or NAF and give it to me in church, mail it to me or place it in the offering plate in an envelope marked: Ataxia. Thank you for taking a moment to check out our page and for your caring concerns for us during this past year.



Connecting with Nature: A reflection from Dick Feren

As I write this, I recall two quotes: The first is from George Washington Carver and says “One must know plants, birds, insects, animals; in fact, the more one knows about the things God has created, the better he can talk to Him.” The second quote is from Nancy Newhall (naturalist and photographer) and reminds me of how much we still don’t know: “The wilderness holds answers to questions man has not yet learned how to ask.”

Nancy-Ann and I like to spend time outside when we can. Our yard and gardens are not precisely organized, and, as a result, our plants actually have some say in the overall appearance. For the most part, our plants tend to take care of themselves, and we tend to let them do so. This can actually produce problems and prizes. Among the problems is that the plants often go places we would rather they not be, or don’t want to grow where we put them. It’s a bit like the behavior of children when you’re trying to raise a family. On the other side, they sometimes surprise us and appear in a great location that we had not considered previously. It’s like when one of your children surprises you with a present that you never expected, or they finished all their tasks on time. One great present we got was a flowering quince that was probably gifted to us by a bird.

House plants are less random and spontaneous than outdoor plants, but they can still be fun. For years, I had the pleasure of watching our house plants grow and fill several windows. It added an outdoor dimension to the indoors. At one point a few years ago, some of our house plants had grown so much that I needed to cut them back. I put the cuttings into jars and let them develop roots. I then potted many of the rooted cuttings and left them out by the street. They were all picked up quickly. One was taken by a woman who walks frequently by our house. A couple days later, she stopped to say how much she enjoyed having the new plant.

Giving the plants a large say in how the yard looks can produce both problems and surprises. If we maintained tight control, it could have a precise look and any unwanted variations would be instantly removed. Being open gave us a quince. I find that observing nature helps me better connect with it.





Grace Church Book Group

The Grace Church Book Group continues to meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 12 PM. This month a small group of us met on Zoom as many of our members who attend were traveling or had previous plans. We read, then discussed at our September gathering the remarkable book The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah.

Kristin Hannah is known as a best selling author for many other remarkable and well read books, including Firefly Lane and her 2015 novel The Nightingale, which was voted a best book of the year by The Wall Street Journal, Library Journal, and Buzzfeed. The Four Winds is a stunning, historical novel about the Dust Bowl and subsequent westward migration by drought-stricken farmers. While everyone who read it was impressed with the author's skills in character development and wordsmithing skills, some members found the book extremely depressing and way too long. The book spawned an interesting discussion about migrant workers, fair wages, and the experience of refugees in our country today.

Our next meeting will be our first hybrid meeting and will take place on Tuesday, October 18th at 12 noon. The book we will be discussing is A Good Apology: Four Steps to Make Things Right by Molly Howes. Members of our book group can either attend via Zoom and the link that will be sent out a few days before our meeting, or can come in person and gather (bring a bagged lunch) in our Parish Library.

If you wish to get a start on other future books, here are our upcoming picks and dates. All meetings take place at 12 noon.

Fall 2022 – Spring 2023 Schedule

Tuesday, November 15th – The Light in Hidden Places by Sharon Cameron

DECEMBER – NO MEETING

Tuesday, January 17th, 2023 – All the Lonely People by Mike Gayle

Tuesday, February 21st – The Henna Artist by Aika Joshi

Tuesday, March 21st – The Splendid and the Vile by Erik Lawson

Tuesday, April 18th – Antartica: An Intimate Portrait of a Mysterious Continent by Gabrielle Walker

Tuesday, May 18th – American Dirt by Jeanine Cummings

Tuesday, June 20th – Mirror Made of Rain by Naheed Phiroze Patel

Being a part of our book group gives us a chance to connect and reflect with other bibliophiles in our parish community. Additionally, our group challenges us to read books outside the genres and authors many of us normally would not gravitate toward on our own.

VESTRY MEETING
Wednesday, August 24, 2022

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

Rev. Marjorie opened the hybrid meeting at 7:06 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 Hank seconded by Gail and was carried. The reports included are Vestry Meeting (July-2022), Planning and Finance Report (Aug-2022), Property Report (Aug, 2022), Stewardship Committee (July-2022), and Music and Worship Committee (Aug 4, 2022).

Rev. Marjorie informed the vestry that Julie had resigned as treasurer. The Vestry went into Executive Session to discuss the position of treasurer.

The Vestry reviewed the July financial report. Two corrections in the Financial Comments page were noted (\$4836k should be \$483.6K and \$452 should be \$452k).

VOTE: A motion was made by Gail, seconded by Carol to accept the July Financial Reports with the corrections. The motion carried.

Rev. Marjorie reported that the Grant checks have been sent and the audit payment will be addressed this week.

The Vestry reviewed the proposed 12"x12" sign that will be mounted to the right of the front door of Grace House which will display the name of the building (Grace House), the year built, and the year acquired. The fire alarm system is too sensitive to allow incense usage. After a discussion regarding Sunday School, it was determined that currently there were only about 7 children that would be in the age group of Sunday School students. It was decided that a once-a-month activity/special event would be offered; this could be increased in frequency if more families with Sunday School aged children were attending church.

Rev. Marjorie and Amy reported that the endowment committee has decided to continue keeping the endowment portfolio with socially responsible commodities.

A small printer in the office needs to be replaced.

A discussion about the need to have two computers purchased for Zooming from the church was had. The computers would be kept in the church and only used for Zoom and church needs.

VOTE: A motion to purchase two computers (up to \$1000 per computer) was made by Valerie and seconded by Chris. The motion carried.

The Vestry again went into Executive Session to discuss Shelley’s current journey into priesthood.

Rev. Marjorie reported that the NH clergy had had a meeting with the bishop concerning the Free State/Libertarian movement website that published a directory of Christianity in NH listing WOKE churches.

The Vestry discussed how and when we might go back to using the common cup.

The meeting concluded at 8:43PM

The next Vestry meeting September 21, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Johnson, Clerk



Chamber Music Concert

The Spotlight Room at the Palace Theater will be the site of an engaging recital on October 8th at 7:00 pm and again on October 9th at 1:00 pm celebrating American and Cuban American music. Entitled **Journey to Freedom**, the chamber concert will take you on a musical sojourn from the mountains and lakes of North America to the Caribbean Sea of Cuba. Music will include piano, vocal, and classical guitar repertoire written by American composers such as Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and William Grant as well as Cuban American composers such as Ernesto Lecuona, and Jose Lezcano. Each selection reflects the poignant human experiences of Cuban American immigrants and will set the stage for the premiere of a new work, a composition by Dr. Jose Lezcano with poetry written by Cuban Americans and Cuban dissidents. Music and poetry will reflect on the subject of what it means to be free through a musical perspective.



A reflection from Jim Lee

*“For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled
and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”*

Luke 14:11

When my parents visited New York for the first time many years ago, at the top of their agenda was to attend the Sunday morning Eucharist at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. Not wanting to be late, we set off in good time to park the car and get a good seat. For my father, who was quite hard of hearing, this meant an aisle seat, from where he had a clear view and the sound waves could arrive unobstructed.

We found seats about two thirds of the way down the nave. We settled in, my father on the aisle, adjusting his hearing aid and waiting for the action. A very kindly usher, dressed in his Sunday robes, approached us, welcomed us and asked if it was our first time visiting the Cathedral. My father said yes, indeed, he was visiting from England and it was his first time at the Cathedral. The usher said that he couldn't help noticing that that my father had a hearing aid. "Wouldn't you like to move a little closer to the front?" he asked. "That's very kind of you," my father replied, "but we wouldn't want to cause any trouble. Really, we'll be fine here and I can see everything." "Please, I insist," said the usher, "please come with me and I'll find you somewhere nearer."

Who could resist such an offer? We followed the usher to the very front of the nave, when he took a sharp left and motioned us to sit in the middle of the front row of the south transept. We thanked him profusely albeit feeling more than a little embarrassed to be in such a position. We felt much better when the service started and we had a wonderful view of the whole Cathedral and enjoyed the singing at such close quarters. I was very happy that my parents were enjoying the service and knew that they would have lots to tell their friends back at Saint Mary the Virgin in their village.

The Dean took up position to deliver his sermon, which was on Luke 14, in particular that part dealing with how people choose their places at table during banquets and wedding feasts. Looking down from the pulpit, he talked about how rich, important people go to The Hamptons and expect to be seated in the best seats in expensive restaurants. Looking down directly at us, he continued, "If those same people ever set foot in a church, they would expect to be seated in the front row to indicate their importance. Well, that's not how it works, as Saint Luke's Gospel teaches us in these words of Jesus."

The rest of his sermon was a haze for us. We felt mortified and wanted to creep back to our original seats. Still, we decided to go the coffee hour and perhaps we would meet the kindly usher and other members of the parish. There, standing at the door as we moved to the coffee hour was the Dean. My parents begged me not to say anything, but I simply had to tell him how very unwelcome he had made us feel with his withering looks. He took it quite in stride, saying that he had not recognized us and while he understood how we might feel, such was not his intention. We parted amicably, but that incident has remained with me for the rest of my life. My father was right – sit near the back and stay there!

Happy Birthday to the following October birthday celebrants!

5	Evelyn Harding	14	Barbara Maloney
6	Eileen Suckley	18	Marco Protano
	Lincoln Lassonde	21	Sam Anderson
9	Suzan Padmore	22	Rodney Padmore
10	Jim Thomas		Danielle Blevens
11	Toby Fox	23	Linda Lassonde
	Davan Muir	24	Ken Grinnell
13	Ronald Paquin	29	Warren Koch

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.

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

Property Committee Projects



Grace House, the yellow house that sits next to our parish campus and houses City Year interns, just got a new paint job and a new roof! Special thanks to Gary York, who managed both of these projects. Thank you also to sexton Emery Freethey and parishioner/manager of Grace House, Ann Hewins for helping with oversight of these projects. Finally, thanks to Bruce Thomas, who is in the process of procuring an exterior sign proclaiming:

Grace House

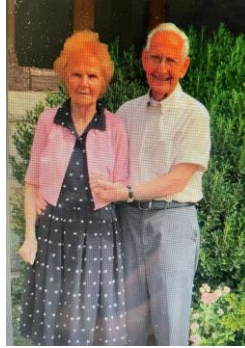
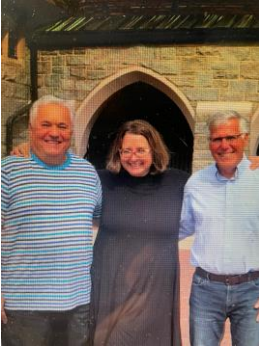
Parish Life



Congratulations to Davan Muir for her premiere performance in a professional production of *The Little Mermaid* at the Palace.



Meeting with several members of the John Yen family as they plan memorial observances for their beloved mother, Rebecca.



Let me keep company always with those who say "Look!" and laugh in astonishment and bow their heads. M. Oliver

Parish Picnic – August 28th

Many thanks to Tom and Christine Stevens for once again hosting this delightful summer gathering.



“A good friend knows the song in your heart....and sings it back to you when you’ve forgotten the words....”



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

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
Jim Higgins, Treasurer
Tom Stevens, Assistant Treasurer

Newsletter

Eileen Suckley
Eralphs@Comcast.net

Cover Illustration

Andrew Freshour

Next Newsletter Deadline

October 22, 2022