



Grace Notes November 2022

Our Mission Statement:

To know Christ & make Christ known

Grace Episcopal Church

106 Lowell St.
Manchester, NH





Rector's Reflection: Keep the Flame Burning

When I served in Washington DC as a day school chaplain, annually I would arrange an all day tour of various sacred spaces. In the course of a single school day a busload of Grade 6 students would visit a Hindu temple, a Buddhist temple, and a Jewish temple. The goal: to observe similarities and differences across various faiths regarding religious practices.

One year, after arriving at Washington Hebrew Congregation (the largest Reformed Jewish temple in the United States) one of my students became fascinated with a large, elaborate lamp suspended from the ceiling, holding a candle, hung in front of the Torah ark. My rabbi friend explained it was *Ner Tamid*, which means "eternal flame" or "eternal light." A sanctuary lamp meant to represent the menorah of the Temple in Jerusalem, the continuous burning fire on the altar of burnt offerings in the temple, and finally God's eternal presence. The student who was fascinated by the lamp asked, "What happens when the candle burns out? Do you get in trouble with God?" Smiling back, my friend explained the candle lasts one week, and that various temple volunteers make sure to replace old candles with new ones so the flame is always burning. The rabbi also explained even if the candle did burn out, Yahweh would still be present. No matter what.

In our own parish, in Saint Michael's Chapel, close to the aumbry (which holds consecrated bread and wine) a sanctuary lamp, suspended over the altar, burns 24/7. Our Altar Guild keeps track of the candle inside, making sure it is changed regularly. Our parish's "eternal flame" symbolizes the light of Christ. That God is always with us. Sometimes people also give a donation towards a church to pay for the cost of the sanctuary lamp candle to remember a loved one who has died yet still burns bright in one's heart. (I will be doing this for the month of November to honor my maternal grandmother, who died the day before Thanksgiving, and remains a personal, vivid example of lived faith and love.)

The start of November we celebrate All Saints' Day. A day when we, as Episcopalians, remember not just famous saints, but saints who have loved, treasured, and mentored all of us. Faithful people who have kept the flame of faith burning in their hearts. Holy people who have inspired us to love better, do better, image our faith into the world.

As we move towards months with more evenings of deeper darkness and less light, I challenge all of us to be mindful of keeping the flame of faith in our hearts burning bright. May we do good things for ourselves - worship, rest, prayer, silent meditation, reading, exercise, hobbies that fill and still you - that tend and tinder our soul's fire. May we do good things for others through loving-kindness, the sharing of self, generous acts, thoughtful gestures and words.

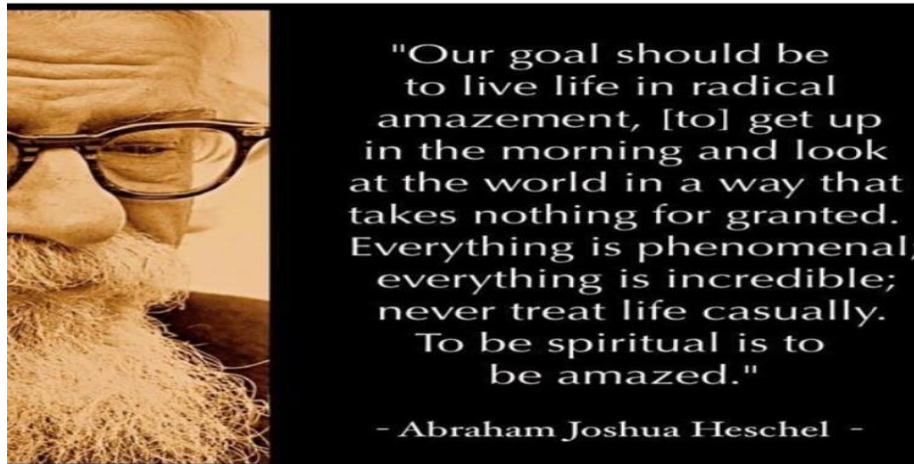
I continue to be grateful and thankful for the resilience and devotion of all of you who choose, every day, to shine bright in your parenting, professions, relationships, family life, and faith.

Blessings and love,

Marjorie +

All Saints' Day Memorials

On November 6 we will celebrate the Feast of All Saints. During our intercessory prayer time we will continue the tradition of remembering the names of faithful loved ones who have died. We invite you to remember all those you know who have inspired you to be a child of God. This includes both family and friends as well as important people (particularly those who have died this past year) who have taught you how to love well and embrace lives of faith and service. Please e-mail our parish office with a list of first and last name(s) [do not use Mr. and Mrs.] NO LATER than Tuesday, November 1. If possible, please make a financial contribution in memory of those you list. We ask people to do their best to contribute no more than 10 names.



Blessing of the animals – Reverend Jane Van Zandt



Evensong
November 27th at 5:00 pm
Christ Church, Andover, MA
33 Central Street



On the first Sunday of Advent, the choir at Christ Church in Andover MA will offer the beautiful service of Evensong featuring Bach's Cantata #140 with orchestra. Our own Music Director, Mark Cleveland, and his daughter Elizabeth will be joining the choir for this service.

Memorial for Rebecca Beek

On Saturday, October 8th our parish hosted a memorial service for Rebecca Ding Chuei Beek, former Grace Church parishioner and wife of the Reverend John Yen. Following are two eloquent testimonials to this remarkable woman.

Rebecca was a wife, a daughter, mother, sister, auntie, friend, co-worker, a woman of faith, a Dinka, a woman of Bor, a woman of South Sudan, a citizen of the United States . . . and, with the respect that you of Sudan bestow on the revered and honored - she was "MAMA". You, of Grace Church, who welcome the stranger and help the less fortunate, express God's imperative and unconditional inclusive love. You welcomed Rebecca and Father John and their family to Grace Church and helped them in adjusting to a new life in America. You, my Sudanese Brothers and Sisters, a resilient community of faith and love, continue to care for one another here in America and for your friends and families who remain in So. Sudan. YOU ALL choose to live God's imperative as communities of faith and as reflected in Jesus' life and works. The Gospel from Matthew reminded me of Rebecca and her journey and struggles from war in Sudan, living in Egypt, to finally reaching America, learning to speak and write in English, learning a new culture, living with a chronic illness, working to help support her family here and in Sudan, working to become a United States Citizen, AND it reminded me of how YOU were there for HER. **Linda Garrish Smith**

Elizabeth II wasn't the only Queen that the world lost this year! Most of the people in this congregation today are still feeling the effects of the British Empire in Sudan, and will continue to all their lives, as Rebecca did. Her life, from the chaos in her hometown, through civil war, to exile in Egypt, to refugee camps and finally to resettlement in the U.S., where, as you know better than I, there is also a troubled history of colonization, segregation, and inequality, has been overshadowed by the turmoil in her homeland. Perhaps, like the other Queen, Rebecca has spent her entire life trying to un-do its legacy and to recover from its effects. She faced all of it with an incredible amount of bravery, and lived her life, even as a refugee, with grace and majesty. I was told that my talk was to be entitled "Words of Encouragement". I'm not so sure how much encouragement I have to share except to say this: I want to see all of you beautiful princes and princesses grow into the adults that your mother knew you could be, and to live lives that are worthy of her sacrifices and her pride. **Michael J. Duffy II**





An Ethical Dilemma posed by Jane Van Zandt



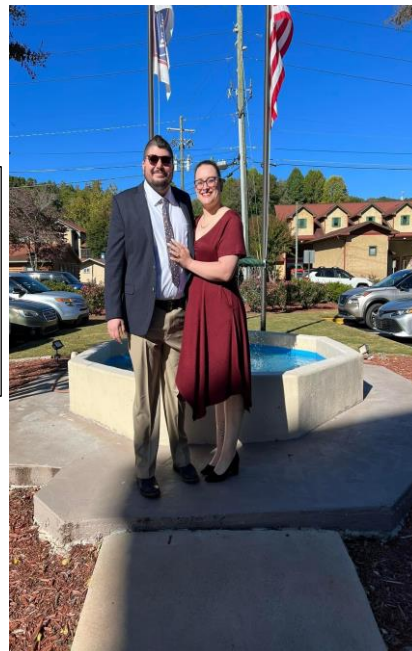
Allan's 86 year old sister had had a significant decline in health over the last few months. Full of energy all her life, she was now unable to do any of the things she had enjoyed: cooking, singing, walking with friends. After much thought, she decided that her quality of life was such that she no longer wished to live. She died at 9:15 Vancouver BC time on October 20, with the help of MAiD – Medical Assistance in Dying. Though we were sad, Allan and I supported her decision 100%, as did her two children. We had a chance to tell her we loved her, as we said goodbye on a zoom call her son set up. However, their younger sister and her husband were not at all supportive. They tried to talk her out of it from a moral standpoint, "It's in the Bible". It's wrong; only God should decide when you die. Her brother-in-law, a retired M.D, told her that she should just keep taking her meds (which were not working). Her cardiac problems included congestive heart failure; the last trip to the E.D. was because her lungs had filled with fluid. Again. And she also had to be cardioverted twice recently. Allan and his sisters were brought up in the Baptist tradition. His older sister had become an Anglican, and had been quite active in the Cathedral in Vancouver. Allan, as most readers know, shares his sister's Christian affiliation as an Episcopalian. Their Ontario sibling and her husband are conservative Baptists. So, my question to you is: **what would you have done?**

Sing to the Lord a new song

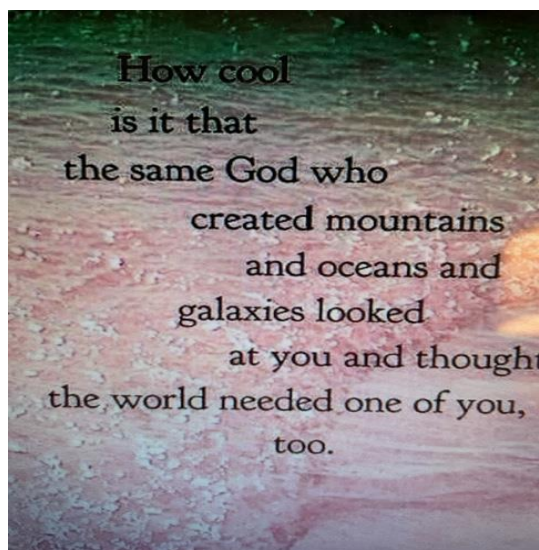




Congratulations to
Teddi and Rich
McIntosh,
whose son, William,
just became engaged to
Scarlett Jacquot.



Milestones



Happy Birthday to the following November birthday celebrants!

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Mark Critz | 14 Amy Brumfield |
| 3 Gail Schuman | 15 Allan Knight |
| 4 Ken Rhodes | 21 Shirley Magnuson |
| 7 Matthew Serge | 25 Colinette Campbell |
| 10 Brian White | 28 Rick Krikorian |
| 30 Darby Thomas | |

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

Ataxia Fundraiser 2022 Update by Jill Porter

The National Ataxia Foundation is a leading non Profit organization established to help persons with ataxia and their families. NAF **applauds NFL and the NFLPA decision to add "ataxia" to their concussion protocol.** Ataxia describes an impairment of coordinated movement resulting from brain or nerve dysfunction. Many symptoms of ataxia mimic the physical effects of excessive drinking, such as slurred speech, imbalance, stumbling, and difficulty with fine motor skills. The Foundation's vision of a world without Ataxia will be accomplished through its primary programs of funding Ataxia research, providing vital programs and services for Ataxia families, and partnering with pharmaceutical companies in the search for treatments and a cure..

Our Ataxia fundraising page is still open at this time. As of mid October we have raised close to \$2500.00 with pledges made still to come. 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.



Outreach: Giving Tree Reminder

Again this year the Outreach Committee will purchase Target gift cards of \$75 each to be given to the parents of 100 children at McDonough and Wilson Schools to help them make Christmas a happy time for their children. The parents will then purchase gifts for the children. Since we would like to distribute the cards before Thanksgiving, we need your help by Sunday, November 6. Any amount which you can contribute will be appreciated.

Please place your donation in an envelope marked "For the Giving Tree".

A Mitten Tree will be 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. Thank you for your continued support of our Outreach efforts.

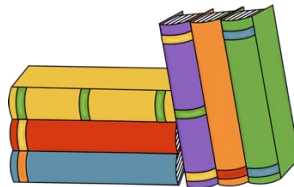
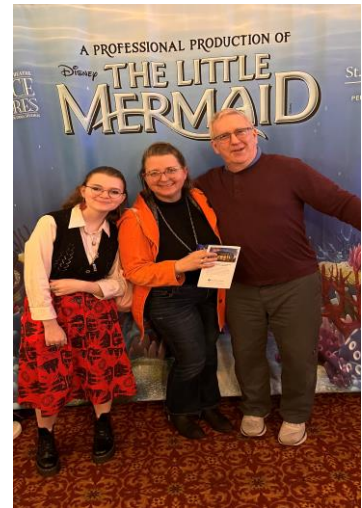
Outreach Committee



Palace Theater



Congratulations
 to Zachary Stagnaro for
 performing the role of Flounder
 in the Palace Theater's recent
 professional performance of
The Little Mermaid.



Grace Church Book Group Update

This past month our parish book group met in Hybrid form for the very first time. Four members attended in person in our parish library, while three others joined via Zoom. We had a lively discussion of the book A Good Apology: Four Steps to Make Things Right by Molly Howes. This was a book that all New Hampshire Episcopal clergy were asked to read about a year into the pandemic.

We all agreed this text was extremely repetitive. Throughout the book the author would refer to a forgiveness story in one chapter, then wait to bring up the same story again two chapters later, making it hard to remember various details. The book is very much in the category of "self-help," and thus most of us found the work pedantic and as one member put it "skimmable". Still, although most of us did not enjoy reading the book, the text birthed a rich discussion about our own personal experiences of good and bad apology moments in our lives and who we wish we could give an apology to or receive an apology from in our own lives.

The Reverend Jane Van Zandt observed towards the end of our meeting that our parish book group began meeting in September of 2012. So our parish book group just celebrated its TEN year anniversary! Special thanks to those who have been a part of the group for the past decade, as well as newer members who have brought new energy and insight to our gathering by joining.

All meetings take place at 12 noon and for the foreseeable future will meet in a hybrid model. You can join us in person on the third Tuesday of nearly every month in person (in the parish library - bring a bagged lunch) or online via Zoom.

Here is a list of our upcoming books and meeting times:

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 – Antarctica: 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



Stewardship



The following passages are excerpts from the reflections of two thoughtful and faithful parishioners.

"Stewardship" is a word with many meanings ranging from the spiritual to the mundane. My talk will tend toward the mundane this morning. That means dollars. When considering giving, whether it is our time, talent, or treasure, we first ask whether the institution is worthy of our patronage. As we are all here today, presumably we believe it is. What attracted me to this church and has kept me here for twenty-four years, even as my wife decided that organized religion was not for her? In addition to the people, first is the place: the ambiance, the effect the physical structure has on me. The shapes, colors, hues, the general feel of the interior of this church calm and center me in a way that was very helpful to me while I was still trying cases, a pursuit filled with antagonism and high emotion. I loved the trial, but the respite here in church was definitely needed. Then there was the music. I love the standard hymns and those set to Irish and southern folk music and the anthems from long ago. I cannot sing (which is not to say I don't enjoy trying!), but some Sundays the music transports you to another realm. And when Ken and Carter do their organ/piano thing, the result is wonderful. There can be many things that bind us to this church. These are the ones which captured me and continue to bring me back. For me, certainly, the Church is worthy of support, whether in terms of time, talent, and treasure. I tend to think of the treasure part now as I am a member of the Endowment Committee and more recently, your Treasurer.

The next question to be answered is whether the Church needs our support. Of course, we intuitively know that a charitable, non-profit like Grace must need its members' support to survive and flourish. However a special circumstance arises at Grace Church resulting from the generosity of a former parishioner, Sally Addison, who bequeathed to this Church a sum slightly in excess of four million dollars, income from that sum to be paid regularly to the Church. That translates to 4% of the principal, annually paid quarterly, to be used for our charitable purposes. In 2022 that translated into \$50,000 a quarter, designated into halves by the Vestry: 50% for operations, 50% for worthy causes in the community.

Some might think that their pledge was not needed or should be reduced because of Mrs. Addison's generosity. Pledge income is down substantially. The endowment has lost more than 20% of its value in the stock market downturn, much like our retirement plans. Post COVID, there are fewer people in the pews, even considering our Zoom attendees, and the choir has been cut in half. We must not let our Church fall into the trap a lot of other churches have who were "fortunate" enough to have a generous donor and withdrew member support only to see the institution wither. We need to maintain "skin in the game," as they say. We live in one of the two least religious states in the Union. Supposedly mainline,

Protestant churches are in decline. Clearly COVID had an impact on us. We see it in the empty pews and the choir at half strength. Times are getting tough and will likely get tougher still. We probably could keep the lights on with the endowment money, but we would end up with a church with no members and that is not a church. **Jim Higgins**

There are so many examples I can think of in my own family of giving time and talent. Every parish we belonged to growing up my father would sing in the choir, sharing his gift of singing that God had bestowed upon him. It also brings to mind my grandmother. She was a wonderful musician and played both the piano and the organ. God gave her those talents, and she felt compelled to give those talents to her church, where she played the organ for more than 70 years.

After Brian and I married I became part of the Episcopal church, in which Brian had grown up. When we moved to New Hampshire and joined Grace Church it felt like we had found a home. As we started to build our home, and expand our family, we started to consider what we could offer as members of Grace. It has not always been easy. I'm embarrassed to admit that sometimes it felt like a burden, which then ended up in a viscous cycle of guilt for not being more and doing more. But life and faith are a journey, and fortunately for us, any time is a good time to come to know Jesus better.

I remember sitting here, listening to another parishioner share her stewardship journey and it was a turning point for me. So many things in life are about perspective, and for me I was seeing stewardship through different eyes. It's not something we should do out of obligation. It's something that we are called to do as part of our being disciples of Jesus. Today I give as much of my time, and talent, and treasure as I can. I do this by participating as a member of vestry, as part of the fundraising and grant committees, as an assistant Sunday school teacher when I'm needed, and by committing to an annual pledge. It feels good, and it also makes me feel closer to God. And I'm happy to say my family is also involved in this journey.

For me, the essence of stewardship is giving. God has given me many gifts, and it brings me joy to be able to share them with Grace Church. In preparing for this, I looked to the Bible to find some inspiring words that spoke to me. The passage in Luke 12:34 did just that: For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. I ask you today, to join me. To consider what you may offer to Grace church in terms of your time, talent and treasure. It is very personal. Your journey will not be the same as mine. However, I know that giving what you can will bring you closer to God and to this parish in turn. **Meghann White**



Some thoughts about the teenage brain

By Dick Feren

About a year or two ago, during a fairly short time span (a few weeks) I read some things that all happened to be related to each other. One was an article titled "The Amazing Teen Brain" in Scientific American, June 2015; another was an article titled "Beautiful Teenage Brains" in National Geographic, October 2011; and the third was a small book titled "A Boy Called Slow" by Joseph Bruchac about a famous Native American more commonly known as Sitting Bull.

The Scientific American article started with the following quote: “A mismatch in the maturation of brain networks leaves adolescents open to risky behavior but also allows for leaps in cognition and adaptability.” The part of a person’s brain that controls impulses does not mature until they are in their 20’s. The National Geographic article started with the following quote: “Moody. Impulsive. Maddening. Why do teenagers act the way they do? Viewed through the eyes of evolution, their most exasperating traits may be the key to success as adults.”

In the book “A Boy Called Slow”, the story of Sitting Bull’s childhood and teen years was described. While very young, he was slow at doing anything, so he was given the childhood name “Slow,” which he did not like. As a Lakota child grew and matured, it was customary for the child to be given a new name after having done some brave or special deed. At one point during his teen years, he went with others of his Lakota tribe to defend against an attack from the Crow tribe. They could see the Crow approaching. Slow got on his horse and charged off towards the attackers. As he charged towards the Crow, he hit an enemy warrior and prevented him from firing an arrow. The other Lakota also charged in, and the Crow fled. Slow was then given the name of Sitting Bull, implying strength and wisdom.

Reading this story about Slow also reminded me of the story of David and Goliath, at which time David was probably also a teenager. David’s response to Goliath might have been impulsive and risky, but David was quick and he knew his own strengths. I could picture David as a teenager growing in strength, knowledge, and wisdom, all of which were important and valuable during his reign as king. After reading and thinking about these articles and stories, I have a more informed perspective of the importance and value of a child’s teen years.

Parish Life





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

Newsletter

Eileen Suckley
Eralphs@Comcast.net

Cover Illustration

Andrew Freshour

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