



# GRACE NOTES

*The Newsletter of Grace Church, Amherst*

*December 2007*

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This is an abbreviated Advent issue of Grace Notes. We are thankful to Jane Andresen who ably, graciously and generously filled in for us while we were undergoing a search for a new Parish Administrator. Thank you, Jane!

*Ring the bells that still can ring.  
Forget your perfect offering.  
There's a crack, a crack in everything.  
That's how the light gets in.  
That's how the light gets in.*

This stanza from the artist and mystic Leonard Cohen was a running theme of a painting workshop I attended this past summer in New Mexico during my sabbatical. It seems to be appearing in various places in my recent experience as well. At a conference for clergy in mid-career, in a sermon from a bishop about a leak in his cathedral's roof, on the radio driving through the rain a week or so ago. Strange for a song written in 70's.

Cracks and light. I wonder if this "Anthem" could just as well be a kind of Advent anthem for us at Grace Church. In both medieval woodcuts and in folk mystery plays about the Nativity, there is *always* a crack or a hole in the roof of the stable where Christ was born. The most solemn and poignant part of our Eucharistic prayer is called the Fraction, when the bread is broken or torn apart so that we who are many can be made one in Christ. One of our youngsters, on the way between the Church and the Parish Hall the other day saw shapes in the notorious cracks in the sidewalk on Spring Street. "Look here," he said to me. "There's Vermont and New Hampshire with the river right between them!" There are openings aplenty in our physical plant these days—the builders are beginning to close up the framing of our new connecting space; there are new cracks in the plaster of the ceiling and wall in the upstairs bathroom in the Old Rectory. Old friends depart out of this life, tearing our hearts. Words spoken carelessly in gossip or spite cruelly rend trust that we thought we could rely on as rock solid. The war in Iraq tears our society and families apart in incalculable ways.

Into all the cracks, fissures, and fractures, we pray that God's light, the Word made flesh, will show up. That Word is not a sealant or a filler, but Christ stays with us as Emmanuel, God with us, in the cracks of our humanity, to offer us hope, healing, life itself. As Christians, we know that the joy of this season is never a completely smooth or clean joy. Our joy comes to us when we seek and find God in those places that are incomplete or broken—in places of pain, depredation, fear, and loneliness. That's why we're arranging for our youth to play their musical instruments at a local nursing home on the Sunday before Christmas. There we find much that brings us to the steamy feed-trough where our God comes to us as one who needs to be loved by us. Let's be honest about this—we visit places of loneliness not so much to bring the joy of Christmas to those in need, but because we want to go to the manger ourselves to see the child Jesus among us.

I hope that as we all gather around the Altar this Advent and Christmas, we may more fully know the God who comes to us as light, pouring through the cracks in our selves, our society, our humanity.

With my prayers for a blessed Advent and a Happy Christmas,

Rob+

Grace Notes publishes news and information about upcoming events, teaching from clergy, and messages from elected and appointed parish leaders. Parish events include those sponsored by groups Grace Church supports by giving them funds or space in our church buildings (as opposed to those who rent our Parish Hall, for instance). If you are unsure whether or not your material is appropriate for Grace Notes, please feel free to consult with any member of the Communications Committee.

The Committee is eager to get your comments on the parish's three main methods of communication: the Sunday Bulletin, Grace Notes, and our Web site. How are these publications useful to you? What improvements could be made? If you have an idea or suggestion, please send them to any one (or all) of us. We would be happy to hear from you!

Janet Lowry, chair: ballymena ## comcast.net 665-2189

David Heyes: davidheyes ## charter.net 323-0739

Ann Kearns: aekearns ## verizon.net  
549-8773

Dave Williams: d.williams ## twgroup.net  
256-1234

Melinda Williams: melindaw ## external.umass.edu  
259-0090

The Parish Administrator receives the articles, handles production, and consults with the editorial board.

## Pastoral Care Commission

Kathy Shaw, Chair & The Rev'd Ann Wood, Deacon

### PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Wednesdays, 11am-1pm... Lunch provided.

Knitters, crocheters, and others who can create shawls or lap shawls are needed! New folks always welcome! We have added **Prayer Beads** to the Prayer Shawls. David Heyes is making Prayer Beads which will have directions and suggestions for prayers.

If you know someone who is going through a difficult time and would benefit from a shawl, lap shawl, or prayer beads, please let Ann Wood or Melinda Williams know.

([ann@gracechurchamherst.org](mailto:ann@gracechurchamherst.org); [melindaw@external.umass.edu](mailto:melindaw@external.umass.edu))

Contact Melinda Williams for more information. Also you can check out the national website [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com).

### Aelred Group Resumes

The Grace Church Aelred Fellowship is a men's spiritual friendship group that meets Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 8:45. The goal of the fellowship is to help men connect and share with each other along their spiritual paths. Our confidential meetings consist of a reading, discussion, and a few minutes of meditation and prayer. Contact Steve Abdow (256-4885, [steveabdow@yahoo.com](mailto:steveabdow@yahoo.com)) or Steve Atkinson (335-6168, [steve.atkinson@kaman.com](mailto:steve.atkinson@kaman.com)) for more info.

### Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), are a summons to the world from the UN to help defeat deep world poverty and its effects. The eight goals are as follows:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability, and
- Create a global partnership for development with a focus on debt, aid, and trade

How are you going to help? Are you ready to make your 0.7% pledge to an organization working to meet these goals?

Take a look at the Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation website [www.e4gr.org](http://www.e4gr.org) to see what other dioceses and churches are doing to eradicate extreme poverty and to embrace God's mission of global reconciliation. In addition to giving money to organizations that serve the poorest developing nations, one church in Maryland has been studying the MDGs through the lens of one country—Namibia—where they already support an orphanage. The website also mentions an online collection of short independent films on MDG-related topics that others can use as resource.

## Outreach Ministries

Patrick Kelly & Chris Hoffman, *Co-Chairs*

### The Cot Shelter:

Grace Church cooks and serves dinner at the Northampton Cot Shelter on the second Thursday of the month from November through April. Call Mary McCarthy or Bob Hawley(253-3582) if you wish to cook all or part of a meal for 20 hungry guests on any of those Thursday evenings. Also please help fill the boxes in the Library and the Parish Hall with toiletries and men's white socks. Toothbrushes, disposal razors, shaving cream and sample size deodorants and other travel size items are appreciated.

## Youth Group Activities in December

### Info Session for Service Trip in April

Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> from 4 - 6 p.m. in the Parish Hall  
Come learn more about Mission on the Bay and Camp Coast Care in Bay St Louis, Mississippi. Volunteers have been working and staying there ever since Hurricane Katrina hit in August 2005. We will travel to Mississippi to serve at Mission on the Bay over the April break. Come eat pizza and learn more about how you can participate in this project.

### Holiday Concert

Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2:30 p.m.

The Geckos will provide a holiday concert at the Center for Extended Care of Amherst on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please plan on playing or singing any piece(s) of your choice. This is an informal performance for the residents of CECA. Friends and family members are welcome to perform with you. E-mail Catherine McGraw if you plan to participate at [cbmcgraw@comcast.net](mailto:cbmcgraw@comcast.net).

## Christian Formation & Education

### Kenosis: That's the real meaning of Christmas, Charlie Brown.

Come join a meditative series of reflections on the traditional Christmas texts read through the lens of the ancient hymn quoted by Paul in Philippians 2. Led by the Rev. Rob Hirschfeld, Rector, on the Wednesdays of Advent, December 5, 12, and 19 from 6:30-7:45pm in the Parish Hall. A simple pot-luck meal will be offered beginning at 6pm.

## Advent Quiet Day

Grace Church, Amherst  
Saturday, December 8, 2007  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

### *Space for Jesus: An Advent Quiet Day*

Led by The Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas

In the hectic rush of the season, what better way to welcome Jesus than to set aside a quiet morning to make room for Him in our hearts and minds?

Please join us for a morning of silence and singing, conversation and reflection, as together we create a space for Jesus to be born again in our lives.

### Eco-Tip December 2007

#### Keep Christmas Simple



A simpler Christmas builds relationships – within ourselves, with others, with the Earth, and with God. It promotes justice, too. Using only our fair share of Earth's resources leaves some for others around the globe and for future generations.

When planning your Christmas giving, try giving a gift of time or help. Create something handmade – cookies or a poem. Instead of using glossy wrapping paper (which can't be recycled), wrap gifts in old maps, newspaper "funnies," saved packing paper, or a reusable gift bag whose travels you can track just for fun (<http://wrapsacks.com>). Or make a financial gift in someone's honor to an organization that promotes the Millennium Development Goals, such as Episcopal Relief and Development (<http://www.er-d.org>).

--Greening Grace

### Amherst Center for Christian Studies

The ACCS is working to reach out to an ecumenical community of Christians who are interested in the intersection of faith and culture. Our goal is to encourage each other to think clearly and faithfully about what it means to follow Christ. ACCS is offering four primary activities this year: Distinguished Lecture Series, Movie Discussion Group, Andreas Forum, and Book Discussion Group (starting in Spring). Everyone is welcome. ACCS is located at 691 South East Street, Amherst, MA 413-230-3287, [amherst.christian.studies@gmail.com](mailto:amherst.christian.studies@gmail.com)

More events and info found on

[www.amherstcenterforchristianstudies.blogspot.com](http://www.amherstcenterforchristianstudies.blogspot.com)

Melinda Williams

## December Birthdays

- 1 Jennifer Soper, Virginia Johnson
- 2 Adam Wilburn
- 4 Rachel Blain
- 5 Royster Hedgepeth, Wendryn Case, Caroline Spurgin
- 6 Sam Jonas
- 7 Danielle Gaspar, Maria Polino, Patrick Dineen
- 8 Rose Gibson, Matthew Read
- 9 Samuel Orvis
- 10 Jane Buckloh, Maria Botelho, Charlotte Kelly
- 11 James Dachos
- 12 Charlie Dickinson, Martin Wobst, Matthew Buckley
- 13 David Shaw
- 14 Elihu Ayres, Christopher Franklin
- 15 Kay Moran
- 16 James Ayres
- 17 Susan Taylor
- 18 Richard Riewaldt, Marie Coughlin, Debby Coulter
- 19 Jean Roetter, Kai Raper, Max Eve, John Musante
- 20 Kathleen Lichtenstein, Calla Chase, Alex Lichtenstein
- 21 Chris Zobel, Lucy Chase
- 22 Merle Ryan
- 23 Kathleen Casey
- 24 Nancy Parr
- 27 Nancy Roskill, Cecelia Buckley, Max Brown, Liam Brown
- 28 Peter Ward, Marianne Wald
- 29 Joan Gibson, Carol Kelly, Judith Wobst, Matt Lichtenstein
- 30 Andrew Chase, Catherine Bickford, Robin Riewaldt, Diana Spurgin
- 31 James Mead, Deborah Katzman

## Clergy

The Rev'd A. Robert Hirschfeld, Rector  
The Reverend Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Priest Associate  
mbj ## gracechurchamherst.org  
The Rev'd H. Burton Whiteside, Priest Associate  
Hbw ## gracechurchamherst.org  
The Rev'd Ann Wood, Deacon  
Ann ## gracechurchamherst.org

## Vestry

Chris Freitag, Senior Warden cfreitag ##wnec.edu,  
Jennifer Soper jkjsoper ## yahoo.com  
Bruce Stebbins, Treasurer bsteb51 ## aol.com,  
Jane Beebe, Clerk jabeebe ## amherst.edu  
Steve Abdow SteveAbdow ##yahoo.com (10)  
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Don Buckloh buckloh ##noho.com (10)  
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Elizabeth Duda, youth member  
lizduda##comcast.net

## Staff

Elizabeth Hart, Director of Music & Sr. Choir  
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Parish Administrator  
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Steve Hasbrouck, Assistant Treasurer  
Smh ##gracechurchamherst.org  
David Ulen, Sexton

## Ministries

Mary Hocken, Angel Choir Director  
Mhocken ## verizon.net  
Nancy Lowry, Director of Acolytes  
nancylowry## earthlink.net  
Janet Moore, Director of LEMs & Lectors  
Lemlec ## gracechurchamherst.org  
Janet Teng, Director of Altar Guild  
jteng01002 ## yahoo.com

# Advent Lessons and Carols



Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>  
4 PM

# December 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
HE = Holy Eucharist PBS = Prayerful Bible Study PH = Parish Hall, RO = Rector's Office PR = Parker Room , CL = Choir Loft L = Library, FR = Fireplace Room CCC = Christ Church Cathedral Springfield 1st Ch = First Congregational Church on Main Street UU –Unitarian Universalist						<b>1</b> 9 am Collectibles Roadshow (PH) 9 Property Co. (PR) 4 Hampshire YPC (Church) 6 Hampshire YPC Concert
<b>2</b> 1 Advent 8 am & 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am PBS (RO) 9:15 Stewardship (PR) 10:30 Liturgy in the Round (PH) 12pm - 4 pm Advent Party (PH) 12pm -1pm LEV meeting (PR) 3-5 Full Contact Singers (CL)	<b>3</b> 7 pm AA (PH)	<b>4</b> 4:30pm -Silent Prayer (AA) – (PH) 5:15 AA (PH) 7 pm - Vestry	<b>5</b> 11-1 Shawl Ministry (PR) 12:10 HE & Healing 4 pm Centering Prayer (PR) 6 pm Potluck Supper (PH) 6:30 Adult Ed-The Christ of Christmas (PH)	<b>6</b> 7:30 pm Choir (CL) 7:30 pm Aelred Fellowship (PR)	<b>7</b> 7 am Men's Group (PR)	<b>8</b> Quiet Day 9 am – 12 pm 10:30 Not Bread Alone (1 <sup>st</sup> Ch) 4 pm-6pm GECKOS (PH) 6:30-9:30pm Amherst Fair Trade Partnership (PH)
<b>9</b> 2 Advent 8 am & 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am PBS (RO) 10:30 am Liturgy in the Round (PH) 12 pm Rector's Forum: Wedding Fast (PH) 12 pm – EPF (FR) 3 pm – Full contact Singers (CL) 4 pm Confirmation class (PH)	<b>10</b> 7 pm AA (PH)	<b>11</b> 4:30pm -Silent Prayer-AA (PH) 5:15 AA (PH) 6 pm Liturgical Comm. (PR)	<b>12</b> 11-1 Shawl Ministry (PR) 12:10 HE & Healing 4 pm Centering Prayer (PR) 6 pm Potluck Supper (PH) 6:30 Adult Ed-The Christ of Christmas (PH)	<b>13</b> 5:30 pm Interfaith Cot Shelter (Noho) 7:30 pm Aelred Fellowship (PR) 7:30 pm Choir (CL)	<b>14</b> 7 am Men's Group (PR)	<b>15</b> 11 Choir Practice (Church)
<b>16</b> 3 Advent 8 am & 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am PBS (RO) 3 pm – Full Contact Singers (CL) 4 pm – 6pm Lessons & Carols	<b>17</b> 7 pm AA (PH)	<b>18</b> 4:30pm -Silent Prayer - AA (PH) 5:15 AA (PH)	<b>19</b> 12:10 HE & Healing 4 pm Centering Prayer (PR) 6 pm Potluck Supper (PH) 6:30 Adult Ed-The Christ of Christmas (PH)	<b>20</b> 7:30 Choir Practice (CL) 7:30 Aelred Fellowship (PR)	<b>21</b> 7 am Men's Group (PR)	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 4 Advent 8 am & 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 9:15 PBS (RO) 3 pm Full Contact Singers (CL)	<b>24</b> 4pm – 5 pm Pageant & HE 7 pm AA (PH) 8pm Feast of the Nativity 11 pm Feast of the Nativity	<b>25</b> Christmas Day 10am Holy Eucharist 4:30pm -Silent Prayer-AA (PH) 5:15 AA (PH)	<b>26</b> 12:10 HE & Healing 4 pm Centering Prayer (PR)	<b>27</b> 7:30 pm Choir Practice (CL) 7:30 pm Aelred Fellowship (PR)	<b>28</b> 7 am Men's Group (PR)	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 8 am & 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 10:30 am Liturgy in the Round (PH) 9:15 am PBS (RO) 3 pm – Full contact Singers (CL)	<b>31</b> 7 pm AA (PH)					



Grace Episcopal Church  
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Amherst, MA 01002-2301

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Return Service Requested

**Saturday, December 8, 2007: Advent Quiet Day**

9:00 AM -12:00 noon, Parish Hall .

"Space for jesus "

led by the Rev'd Margaret Bul litt-Jonas

**Sunday, December 16: third Advent**

4:00PM Service of Lessons & Carol s, Church

**Monday, December 24: Eve of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ**

4:00 PM Christmas Pageant and Hol y Eucharist

7:30 PM Music Prel ude

8:00 PM Christmas eve feast of the nativity

10:30 PM Music Prel ude

11:00 PM Christmas Eve feast of the nativity

**tuesday, December 25: The Nativity of our Lord**

10:00 am feast of the nativity

