2019 Annual Report

156th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish

February 2, 2020

Grace Episcopal Church
Amherst, Massachusetts
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I. Order of Business

Celebration of the Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM in the Church
Brunch prepared by the Brother Lawrence Guild 11:00 AM in the Parish Hall
Call to Order Gail Gnatek, Clerk of the Vestry
Acceptance of Roll of Membership
Reception of Minutes of the 155th Annual Meeting, February 3, 2019
Recognition of Retiring Vestry Members Marion Rosenau, Senior Warden
Report of Nominating Committee and the Election of New Vestry Members and Delegates to Convention
Report from the Stewardship Committee Tom Dougherty, Chair
Planned Giving Kent Faerber, Chair
Reception of Reports from Officers and Commissions
Treasurer’s Remarks Mark Leonas, Treasurer
Remarks of Wardens and Rector Marion Rosenau, Senior Warden
Mark Peterman, Junior Warden
The Rev. Thomas Synan, Rector
Other Business

Closing Hymn and Prayer

_O God our Creator, make the door of our parish church wide enough to receive all who need human love, fellowship, and care, and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and rancor. Here may the tempted find succor, and the sorrowing receive comfort; here may the careless be awakened to repentance, and the penitent be assured of thy mercy; and here may all thy children renew their strength in thee and go on their way rejoicing; through Jesus Christ our Lord._
II. Membership 2018

Hannah Abbott
Erik Abdow
Jessie Abdow
Luke Abdow
Steve Abdow
Sue Abdow
Doug Adler
Brenda Aldrich
Rick Aldrich
Barrett Allison
Benjamin Allison
Caroline Allison
Donald Allison
Edith Allison
James Allison
Gordon Anderson
Gordon "Gordy" Anderson
Lydia Anderson
Jess Andrews
Patricia Appelbaum
Cyrus Arwade
Sanjay Arwade
Jonathan Ash
Raiden Ash
Sophie Ash
Tori Ash
Chandler Atkinson
Lane Atkinson
Katherine "Kate" Atkinson
Wade Atkinson
Rollin Atkinson
Stephen Atkinson
Elihu Ayers
Emma Ayers
Jim Ayers
Andrea Baird
Cameron Baird
Ian Baird
John Baird
Mackenzie Baird
Chris Baker
Elizabeth Baker
Joey Baker
Kate Baker
Nancy Baker
Samantha Baker
Tom Baker
Jeanne Balcom
Jacob Balderston
Toby Barnes
Bodhi Barnes-Bernal
David Barnett
Sharon Barnett
Tamara Barnett
Ruth Barrett
Steve Barrett
Emelyn Bashour
Gabrielle Bashour
Randall Bausor
Andy Beall
Charles Beall
Eileen Beall
The Rev. Jane Beebe
Katherine Benfer
Bill Berenson
Mary Kay Berenson
Angelica M. Bernal
Beatrice Blain
Rachel Blain
Kerry Blanchard
Jack Blay
Maria Jose Botelho
Sarah Boy
Paul Bracciotti
Dee Brace
Emily Breon
Amber Breton
Chris Breton
JaeLynn Breton
Shirley Brodigan
Beth Brown
Beth Brown
Catherine Brown
David Brown
Georgianna Brown
Gillian Brown
Gregory Brown
Liam Brown
Malcolm "Max" Brown
Nate Brown
Karen Bryant
Jane Buckloh
Don Buckloh
Mary Bull
Lynne Byler
Patricia Callard
Tim Callard
Melvin Carlson
Wendryn Case
Kathleen Casey
Marlaine Cataldi
Sebrina Cataldi
Harry Chadwick
Sarah Chadwick
Veronica Chapman
Matthew Charity
Andrew Chase
Calla Chase
Lucy Chase
Samuel Chase
Deborah Christakos
Casey Clark
Daniel Cleary
Emily Coleman
Jack Coleman
Jeremy Coleman
Juliet Coleman
Carolyn Collette
Sue Ann Collins
Maria Constantine
Dennis Costa
Brendan Coughlin
Kevin Coughlin
Lauren Coughlin
Marie Coughlin
Cara Crandall
Patricia Creaser
Cecil Currin
Lou Currin
Duane Dale
Beth Damon
Dick Damon
Cecily Dann
Chelsea Dann
Jennifer Dann
O'Keefe Dann
Jaime Davila
Gabriel Davila-Bustamante
Brenda Davis
Elizabeth Davis
The Rev. Fletcher Davis
Lucas Denit
Lyle Denit
Jeffrey DeSantis
Karen DeSantis
Donna Devine
Carol Dick
Charlie Dickinson
Emma Dickinson
Will Dickinson
Daniel Dineen
Denise Dineen
John Dineen
Matthew Dineen
Patrick Dineen
Anne Ditzler
Nancy Dole
Jackie Dougherty
Kellen Dougherty
Kitty Dougherty
Stewart Dougherty
Tom Dougherty
Helen Drake
Elizabeth Duda
Gillian Duda
Jessica Duda
Jim Duda
Maria Dye
Lee Easton
Christophe Ennhstrom
Jeanette Erard
Michael Erard
Alpha Etinde
Annie Lokangu Etinde
Floribert Etinde
David Eve
Kira Eve
Max Eve
Tomi Eve
Suzannah Fabing
Kent Faerber
Martha Favre
Danielle Federa
Prunella Fiddian-Green
MJ Fowler
The Rev. Heidi Frantz-Dale
Ellie Fraser
Christopher Freitag
Melanie Freitag
Melissa Freitag
Rebecca Freitag
Elizabeth French Finn
Barb Fukushima
June Gaeke
Greyson Garrett
Sophia Gergely
Gretchen Gergely
Anna Gilsdorf
Benjamin Gilsdorf
Sean Gilsdorf
Andrew Glace
Mya Glace
Kathy Glime
Andrew Gnatek
Dan Gnatek
Gail Gnatek
David Goff
Yolanda Goff
Jack Goodell
Mary Goodwin
Alice Goodwin-Brown
Matthew Gregory
Susan Haff
Andrew Haight
Charles Haight
Susan Haight
Amy Hampson
Carter Hampson
Liza Hampson
Quinn Hampson
Tim Hampson
Colleen Harris
Loy Harris
Marian Hartblay
Charlotte Hathaway
Bob Hawley
Bennett Hazlip
Ilona Hazlip
Joseph Hazlip
Lorie Healy
Marsha Hertel
Carlton Ho
Jonathan Ho
Linda Ho
Marissa Ho
Mary Hocken
Anne Hoffmann
Chris Hoffmann
Sarah Hoffmann
Willy Hoffmann
Margaret (Meg) Holladay
Ann Holland
Anne Homme
Adam Honig
Charlotte Honig
James Honig
Jefferson Hunter
Pamela Hunter
Caleb Ireland
Emily Ireland
Michael Ireland
Ruthie Ireland
Valerie Ivy
Adam Jacobson
Adrienne Jacobson
Deborah Jacque
Ronald Jacque
John Jenkins
Miriam Jenkins
Tony Jewell
Cheryl Johnston
Kimberly Jones
Sharon Judge
Steve Judge
Jeffrey Keedy
Maddox Keedy
Nancy Keedy
Charlotte Kelly
Janine Kelly
Patrick Kelly
Robert Kelly
L. Finley Keneally
Brown Kennedy
Gabriel Kennedy Costa
Michael Kennedy Costa
Margaret King
Benjamin Klock
Laura Klock
Lynn Klock
Suzanne Klock
Elizabeth Klug
Stephanie Klug
Caseem Knight
Kelley Knight
Alan Konieczny
Jo-Ann Konieczny
Joseph Konieczny
Maria Konieczny
William Konieczny
Jasper Labor
Erik LaMotte
Kirsten LaMotte
Betty Lange
Jennifer Lapis
Robert Lattanzi
Susan Lattanzi
Isaac Lavine
Louise Lavine
Michael Lavine
Noah Lavine
Peter Laylin
Joan Leavitt
Bill Leonard
Deborah Leonard
Katherine Leonard
Margaret Leonard
Samuel Leonard
Andrew Leonas
Mark Leonas
Helen Leung
Ann Lewin
Sara Liberty-Laylin
Sandra Lillydahl
Elija Lillydahl-Schroeder
Hosanna Lillydahl-Schroeder
Catherine Linberg
Richard Lovelace
Susan Lowance
Ann S. Lowell
Bridget Lowry
Fiona Lowry
Janet Lowry
Nancy Lowry
Samuel Lowry
Susannah Lowry
Lisa Lukas
Tillman Lukas
Kristen Luschen
Liberty Lynn
Violet Lynn
Sara Malsch
Sheila Mammens
Fiona Mangan
Arlene Manning
Bill Manning
Kevin Marino
Nathan Marino
Sharon Marino
Tyler Marino
Elizabeth Markovits
Mark Marshall
Erin Martineau
Mary Martini
Betsy Mathews
Cindy Mathews
James Mathews
Philip Mathews
Gianna Mattrey
Jack Mattrey
Jada Mattrey
Ruby Mattrey
Stephanie Mattrey
Amory Maxey
Henry Maxey
Libby Maxey
Trent Maxey
Megan McDermott
Catherine McGraw
Bridget McKelvey
Diane McKelvey
Kira McKelvey
Stephen McKelvey
Margo McMahon
Amelia Mead
Jim Mead
Katherine Messina
Audrey Miller
Georgann Mirick
Peter Mishkin
Glenn Miskovsky
Martha Mitchell
Jessica Mix Barrington
Emily Anne Moner
Meriel Moner
Douglas Moore
Janet Moore
Bette Moriarty
David Moriarty
Dorothy Morse
Tony Morse
Castor Moss
The Rev. Eliot Moss
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<td>Heidi Peltier</td>
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<td>Mindy Rosengarten</td>
<td>Kevyn Smith</td>
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<td>Lucy A. Smith</td>
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<td>Evan Perry</td>
<td>Carolyn Samonds</td>
<td>Randall P. Smith</td>
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<td>Ken Samonds</td>
<td>Randall P. Jr. Smith</td>
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<td>Gaylord Saulsberry</td>
<td>Peter Snedecor</td>
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<td>The Rev. Susan Schaeffer</td>
<td>Joshua Soper</td>
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<td>Katie Schendel</td>
<td>Katherine Soper</td>
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<td>Stephen Schreiber</td>
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III. Minutes of the 155th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish, Amherst, Massachusetts convened on February 3, 2019

On February 3, 2019, following a brunch provided by Brother Lawrence Guild, the 155th Annual Meeting of Grace Church was called to order by the Clerk, Marion Rosenau.

The Rev. Tom Synan, Rector, opened the meeting with a prayer.

The Role of Membership 2019

Marion Rosenau asked for any additions or corrections to the Role of Membership 2019. There were no additions or corrections. A motion to accept the Role as printed was made, seconded and approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of the 154th Annual Meeting

Minutes of the 154th Annual Meeting, held on February 4, 2018 were reviewed. There were no additions or corrections. A motion to accept the minutes of the 154th Annual Meeting was made, seconded, and approved.

Retiring Vestry Members

Senior Warden, Chris Freitag, recognized the Vestry members who have completed their terms: Diana Spurgin, DeeDee Niswonger, Maria Polino, Katie Brown, and Emma Wilburn. Senior Warden Chris Freitag will be retiring and Clerk Marion Rosenau will be stepping down as Clerk in order to serve as Senior Warden. Chris expressed thanks and presented gifts to each of the retiring members and officers.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee are the retiring Vestry members, Senior Warden Chris Freitag, and the Rector, the Rev. Tom Synan. After discernment with interested parishioners, the committee presented a slate of candidates to the Vestry. Following approval by the Vestry, the slate of candidates was included in the Sunday bulletins for review by parishioners.

The candidates for Vestry, Officers of the Vestry, and Delegates to Diocesan Convention are:

Vestry (each for a term of three years)
- Peter Sikowitz
- John Jenkins
- Alice Goodwin-Brown

Vestry (a term of one year)
- Kathy Glime

Vestry Youth (a term of one year)
- Walter Tebbetts

Officers of the Vestry (each for a term of one year)
- Senior Warden-Marion Rosenau
- Junior Warden-Mark Peterman
- Treasurer- Mark Leonas
- Clerk- Gail Gnatek

Lay Delegates to Convention
- Maria Botelho, Sarah Chadwick, Emily Ireland (youth)
Gail Gnatek will be moving from Vestry member to Clerk leaving a one year vacancy on Vestry. Kathy Glime has agreed to be a candidate for that one year term.

The Rev. Tom Synan asked for nominations from the floor. No nominations were offered.

Patricia Tilona made a motion to close the nominations and to direct the Clerk to cast one vote for the slate of candidates as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The candidates, as presented in the slate, were welcomed to their new positions by the Rev. Tom Synan.

The Rev. Tom Synan expressed his thanks to retiring Senior Warden, Chris Freitag for his years of service to the parish.

Report of the Stewardship Committee

Tom Dougherty presented the report of the Stewardship Committee. In 2018 the Stewardship campaign received 185 pledges (7 new) for a total of $490,000. The 2019 Stewardship goal is $490,000. To date 166 pledges have been received totaling $462,539.

Planned Giving and St. Michael’s Fellowship Report

Kent Faerber spoke for the Planned Giving Committee, which consists of Doug Adler, Jean Rankin, and Kent Faerber. The committee provides parishioners with information on ways to include Grace Church in their estate planning. He explained the St. Michael’s Fellowship recognizes those who have included Grace in their estate plans. The Planned Giving Committee has been working with Steve McKelvey to develop a broader awareness plan. He asked the Annual Meeting attendees to pause and give thanks for those who in the past have benefitted Grace Church by their gifts, funds, and activities. And he encouraged the membership to consider making a gift to benefit the next generations of Grace Parishioners. The handout Leaving A Legacy was distributed, which outlines various ways to achieve this. He reminded us that one needn’t be wealthy or elderly to leave a legacy.

2018 Annual Report

A motion to accept the reports as printed in the 2018 Annual Report, 155th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish was made, seconded, and passed.

Treasurer’s Report

Mark Leonas presented the Treasurer’s Report. This past year was the 10th year in a row in which Grace has ended with a positive balance in our operating budget. Grace Church was able to retire the Restoration Project Loan, in the amount of $287,000. This was accomplished by applying previous surpluses and accumulated growth in our investment funds, to make most of the final payment. Additionally, an interest free “loan” to ourselves was made. This will be repaid in 2-3 years.

This year’s budget is a “break even” budget, as we are now fully staffed.

Mark expressed thanks to the Finance Committee: Kitty Dougherty, John Robinson, DeAnne Riddle, Rich Spurgin, and Bruce Stebbins. He also thanked our parish bookkeeper Jaana Cutson, Tom Dougherty and the Finance Committee, and the collection counters.

Bruce Rockwell performed the diocesan annual audit and reported that our financial records are accurate. At his suggestion an inventory of our physical plant has begun.
Senior Warden’s Report

Chris Freitag, who is leaving after 4 years of service, thanked the parish for putting their trust in him. He thanked the Vestry, Executive Committee, and the Parish for their support, time, and talents.

Chris referenced his report in the 2018 Annual Report.

The past year saw us saying goodbye to our Deacon, the Rev. Vicki Ix and our interim priest associate, the Rev. Jane Beebe. We welcomed our new curate, the Rev. Megan McDermott. Chris and the Rev. Tom Synan travelled to Pennsylvania for Megan’s ordination as a Deacon.

Many members of our parish participated in the Revival in our Diocese by travelling by bus to hear the Presiding Bishop speak at an event in the Berkshires. Some parishioners also travelled to hear him at the event in Worcester.

Chris also took this occasion to celebrate the five year anniversary of the installation of the Rev. Tom Synan as the Rector of Grace Church.

He closed by encouraging members of this parish to consider how they might use their time and talents to serve the Parish.

Junior Warden’s Report

Mark Peterman thanked prior Junior Warden, Jeff DeSantis, for his help in making the transition to new Junior Warden. This past year saw the replacement of the hot water heater located in the basement of the Old Rectory and the patching of a large leak in the roof above the Nursery. Several electrical outlets were installed in the Old Rectory kitchen.

A Property Committee was formed in order to better serve the maintenance of our campus. The members are: Jeffrey DeSantis, Tom Dougherty, Michael Erard, Sandy Muspratt, Doug Adler, Paul Bracciotti, Tony Jewell, John Robinson, and Mark Peterman.

The kitchen passed inspection by the Amherst Board of Health. This required the additional certification of an individual in the treatment of choking by attending a Choking Awareness Course offered by the American Heart Association.

The Rector’s Report

The Rev. Tom Synan referenced his sermon from today and recorded in the 2018 Annual Report recognizing the many ways we show and things we do out of love. He noted our love is shown by the beauty of our services.

He offered thanks to the Altar Guild, the lectors, acolytes, LEMs, ushers, counters, coffee hour and other hospitality volunteers, the wonderful choir, and Beth and Dick Damon, our music director and organist. He also thanked Bishop Doug Fisher, noting that ministry is a team effort.

Tom expressed gratitude for the wonderful youth of our church, and thanked Megan McDermott for accepting the call to Grace Church. He also offered thanks in anticipation of her impending ordination to the priesthood the following week.

Outreach and mission were also cited as evidence of the love present at Grace Church. This year 1500 pounds of food were donated to the Amherst Survival Center. 500 boxes of stuffing were donated to the Survival Center for Thanksgiving. We continued to donate books to Books Through Bars, a program for the incarcerated, and backpacks with school supplies for children going back to school. 40 families were adopted at Christmas for Family Outreach of Amherst. We continued to support our missions in Haiti, donating uniforms for all of the students at St. Mathieu and sponsoring the education of a student at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational
Training Center in Ramallah. This year the congregation donated over $30,000 to various agencies such as Craig’s Doors shelter and the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund among others.

Circle of Care helped the Berchmas family, a family of 10, resettle in Amherst after spending years in a refugee camp in Rwanda. Tom noted the outpouring of love evidenced in the steady stream of donation of goods and time in helping this family.

Tom expressed gratitude to all the committees and groups that show their love by their offering of talents and time.

The meeting concluded with a hymn and a prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Gail Gnatek, Clerk

IV. Rector’s Sermon and Address, February 2, 2020

Today is the 40th day after Christmas. Time sure flies. And our celebration today is one that is out of the ordinary. Today we observe an ancient feast of the Church which just might have the most number of names attached to it. In addition to being the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, today is also called by some: Candlemas, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, and the Meeting of the Lord. There are even a few others, but I’d rather not get into those.

This feast of many names is so significant that when it falls on a Sunday, it takes us off the regular calendar. There is no Fourth Sunday of Epiphany. Instead we are, for the moment or for the day or maybe longer, back in the nativity, with Jesus once again an infant.

But more so, my guess is that this feast of many names is lost on most people who instead associate February 2nd with Groundhog Day, wondering whether Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow and when can we expect the onset of spring. According to folk tradition, if it is cloudy, then spring will come early; but if it is sunny, the groundhog supposedly sees his shadow, retreats back into his burrow, and we will all have six more weeks of winter.

Please know it is no coincidence that these two observances fall on the same day – one an ancient religious holy day, the other a secular Pennsylvanian tradition that began in the 19th century.

Think about it.

Shadow and light are the realities of life and our world. They are the means by which we measure time and through time – give meaning to life. And life comes with uncertainty. We don’t know what the future holds. Not everything works out as planned.

We all can have stories about what it is like to live in shadowy places, brought about perhaps by unexpected, uninvited, or undesired circumstances of life. The shadowy fear of not knowing what will come next or how we will handle it. That is the way of the world and that is our world today. Whether it is the melting of the polar ice caps and the rising of the seas and the dramatic change in climate, or the events in our nation’s capital and around the world, or the increase in hate and violence, or the spread of sickness, illness, and disease, people, as was mentioned at the recent Bending Toward Justice conference, are feeling stuck, feeling like life is spinning
out of control. Shadowy places can be rather uncomfortable, so metaphorically seeing especially one’s own shadow could make the best of us want to run back inside and hide.

But then there’s the Gospel.

Enter Mary and Joseph, literally carrying in their arms the light of the world – the light that is meant to shine in the darkness, the light that is meant to guide people who have walked in darkness. They come to the temple, bearing the infant Jesus.

Why is that? Why are they doing this?

This event is based upon an amalgam of bits from the Torah. Leviticus makes reference to rituals required of women as they reenter society after having given and survived childbirth. Hence the offering of turtledoves or pigeons. Exodus provides instruction about every first-born male, whether human or animal belonging to the Lord. Animals that are classified as clean are sacrificed, humans however are redeemed.

You can start to see how this day has so many different names. But that said, I want to be completely clear that there is nothing in the Scriptures that says one must bring their newborn child to the Temple, forty days after the birth. It’s not in there. What there is is a major gloss done by the Church, in total disregard to the Judeo cultural practices of the time. Throughout Christendom, we perpetuate a misunderstanding that Mary and Joseph are doing a function required of them according to the Law, which is incorrect.

There is nothing in the Scriptures requiring parents to travel miles on dangerous roads with their newborn infants in order to bring them to the Temple. And not to make this too complicated, but the Scriptures provide additional directions on some of these issues. Numbers indicates that some of these requirements could be done with the priest in your local neighborhood. First century Jewish Christians would not have understood this story as Mary and Joseph simply doing something that all families did.

So what then is going on?

Luke gets inspiration for his nativity stories from the life of the prophet Samuel. Samuel’s birth comes about through God’s help, and his mother Hannah prays in thanksgiving. Her prayer is the basis of Mary’s prayer centuries later – The Magnificat – “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. When Hannah prayed to God for a son, she vowed that, if she had a son, she would give him to God for all his days. And guess what she did. After Samuel’s birth, Hannah brings him to the Temple, where she lends him or dedicates him to the Lord for life.

This is what is happening in our Gospel today – a little reenactment. Mary takes the role of Hannah and brings to completion what was asked of her – ten months earlier. She gave birth and now she, with Joseph, like Hannah centuries before, goes to the Temple and lends or dedicates her son to the Lord for life. This is an extraordinary event, demanded not by God, but done voluntarily by Mary and Joseph.

They bring the Light of the world, but first a shadow passes; a shadow foretelling the suffering that will precede the victory of that Light over darkness. Before they leave the Temple, there is a second Annunciation or the conclusion of the first, through Simeon and Anna – who perhaps are meant to be shades of Samuel and his mother Hannah.
The announcement confirms Mary’s faith in the accomplishment of the divine promises of salvation, but there is a proviso: Before there will be joy, there will sorrow, struggle, and challenge; so much, it will pierce her heart and shake her to the core.

Does this news frighten Mary? Does she and Joseph leave the Temple screaming? Do they run and hide? No, they go home and nurture and sustain the Light of Life, so that, like Samuel, he grows and becomes strong, filled with wisdom and the favor of God is upon him.

Like Mary, the Church is called to carry the Light of Christ. I cannot thank you enough for your dedication and faithfulness to the Gospel, to ministry of Jesus Christ, to Grace Church. Your work and your prayers mean so much.

I am so blessed to be your Rector here at this wonderful parish of Grace Church – to bear witness to the many ways and to the many things you do out of dedication and commitment to God. Let’s start with our worship. The beauty of our services is that our liturgy truly is a work of the people – people who are dedicated to God and dedicated to one another.

Christmas once again was spectacular. We had it all: on a day when we have so many guests and visitors, everything was done so well. Flower arrangements, our sacred vessels and everything we use in the services meticulously prepared and made ready by our Altar Guild, acolytes ready to help, lectors, LEMs, our talented and gifted choirs, Beth and Dick – our music director and organist, our ushers welcoming all who came through the doors, counters and hospitality. Don’t let me start on the pageant, which just gets better and more expansive every year. In addition to Mary and Joseph, the baby Jesus, angels, shepherds, monarchs, goats and donkey, this year we welcomed a seven foot puppet camel. I can only imagine what might join us this year, after all we have the finest crèche filled by children with all of God’s creatures. Who else has dinosaurs and sea monsters at the manger, joining in the adoration? You want to know the true meaning of Christmas, all you have to do is watch the faces of the children as they put an animal figurine in the crèche. And that all comes about – thanks to you and your dedication.

Holy Week and Easter is another key moment in the life of Grace. The richness and the beauty of those holy mysteries is made possible thanks to you. Pentecost Sunday with our tradition of world music is not be missed, and Advent Lessons and Carols captures so well the spirit of the season. Bless you!

Did you know that Bishop Doug made four visits last year? He was here in February for Megan’s ordination to the priesthood – thank God! He joined us for Maundy Thursday, which is an ongoing tradition, and then he came back twice – during Easter and All Saints Sunday – to confirm and receive 12 members. That’s terrific. The Holy Spirit is working overtime here.

And speaking of the work of the spirit, let’s hear it for the children and youth of this parish. Once again a group of our young people made a pilgrimage – this time to Nashville, in July, God bless you – where you did the work of God as a sign of your commitment to Jesus Christ, and you did us proud! Your dedication gift to the parish is greatly appreciated, and certainly eye-catching, clever, and a conversation starter, hanging in the Connector in our newly designated children and youth corner. My Christmas card, designed by many hands, some of them very small, once again was a stunner. Thank you for inspiring me.

I have said it before and I will say it again, that Grace Church, in the Town of Amherst, in the year of our Lord 2020, has the most wonderful young people I have ever met in my years of ordained ministry. Ever! God bless
you for being who you are and for being part of this parish. Always remember: in this place, you matter and this is your church.

Many thanks and many blessings to Megan McDermott and to our dedicated Sunday School teachers, to parents, grandparents, godparents, and to all who give of themselves for our children and youth ministries.

In terms of outreach and mission, the generosity of this parish is unbelievable. In 2019, we donated almost 1600 pounds of food to the Amherst Survival Center, and once again we provided over 500 packages of bread stuffing for the food pantry at Thanksgiving. And we continued our ministry of providing school supplies and backpacks for children going back to school.

Last year 99 children had a better Christmas thanks to you and your generosity. We adopted 40 families at Christmas and provided assistance to the Family Outreach of Amherst, which does so much wonderful work helping struggling families in the area. Our missions in Haiti and Ramallah remain vibrant and exciting. Last summer we sent missioners to work with the summer arts camp, and at the start of the school year, every student at St. Mathieu went to school year in a new uniform thanks to Grace Church. In the Middle East, we continue to sponsor the education of a deserving student at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center, through the monthly sales of Palestinian olive oil at coffee hour. And monetarily, this congregation once again generously gave away almost $30,000 to deserving agencies near and far – from Craig’s Doors and the Catholic Charities for the Refugee Resettlement Project to Doctors without Borders to the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

In terms of hospitality, we continue to support the Berchmas family which was blessed with the birth of children, as the family continues to settle into life in Amherst. In other community developments, we continue to participate in the town’s annual Lumenaria as a warming station while also providing the joyful sound of our choir. And in terms of benefits for others, once again we hosted a night of Gospel Choir for the benefit of ABC House, and in October we showed our dedication to our neighbors, hosting a giant feast for the benefit of Goodwin Memorial AME Zion Church.

There is so much that goes on here – thanks to your dedication and commitment. God bless our Mutual Care team, Sunday morning hospitality, the St. Nicholas Bazaar, Archives, the Over 60’s Gathering, the Funeral Reception committee, the Brother Lawrence Guild, Iconography, the Men’s Group, the Garden committee, Planned Giving, Raising the Questions, the Sunday morning Bible study, our Adult Christian Education programs and presentations, and Tea and Titles.

Many blessings and a special shout out to Greening Grace and our Peace Fellowship for raising awareness and bearing a prophetic witness. Keep up the good work. Let’s not forget Lucio Perez who is in his third year of living in sanctuary next door. Let’s not forget he is there and why he is there. We can never become complacent in our world and think our work is done here. The world needs our witness and our help, now more than ever.

Many thanks also to the Stewardship Committee and to each and every one of you for your generous outpouring of financial support for Grace Church. The church budget is not just numbers. It is a tangible and physical manifestation of a congregation’s faith, hope, and love. God bless you for your love of God and your love for this church.
Last year, for me, there were many Grace filled moments and times of challenge. Times of light and shadow, life and death, and through it all it was you who inspired and sustained me. I’m serious. The love, the spirit, the dedication that permeates, surrounds, and sustains this holy place is a beautiful thing.

My friends, who know what the future holds and what will be coming our way. Today people are hoping to get answers from a groundhog. My faith is in God and in you. As our Prayer Book so eloquently says, Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Let’s go boldly into 2020 together and see what God has in store for us.

I am incredibly honored and humbled to be your rector. Thank you for letting me be among you. God bless you all, and God bless Grace Church.

Amen

The Rev. Tom Synan

V. Vestry Reports

Senior Warden: I want to thank the parish for the honor of serving as Sr. Warden this past year. Also thanks to Tom for his support and the Executive Committee Mark Leonas, Mark Peterman, and Gail Gnatek for the important work they do.

The year began with deep sorrow at the death of Tom's partner, Tim. His death was followed in the same week with the joyous occasion of Megan's Ordination to the Priesthood. A beautiful memorial service for Tim was held in Holyoke with numerous friends and family remembering the person he was and the many good works attributable to him. Megan's Ordination was full of music and joy. The music brought to Grace by members of her home parish was particularly memorable. We are truly blessed to have Megan with us.

As Tom took several weeks of bereavement leave, Megan, with the assistance of the staff, parishioners, the Rev. Ray Webster, and other retired clergy at Grace, did a wonderful job of ensuring that both business and worship continued uninterrupted. Megan proved once again what a blessing she is, and how Grace Church is truly blessed by the support of clergy, staff and parishioners.

The Vestry continued the process of inviting representatives of Committees and Commissions to attend a Vestry meeting, both to educate Vestry members regarding the mission and goals of the group, and to give the representative an opportunity to communicate any needs or concerns to Vestry. This year, the Vestry met with the Stewardship Commission, Altar Guild, Christian Formation and Education Commission i.e. Children, Youth and Campus Ministries, Mutual Care, the Circle of Care supporting the refugee family of Berchmas and his children, and the Haiti Ministry. The Vestry resolved that the Haiti Ministry, although originated as a project of the National Church's Millennium Goals as a time- limited project with required renewals, presently “this ministry, like all ministries of the parish does not need nor require further renewals for its existence.” This resolution was offered in appreciation for and in thanksgiving for the hard work, dedication and commitment of the Haiti Ministry.

A highlight in the financial life of Grace came with the repayment in full of all loans related to the Restoration Project. In 2018, with the advice and assistance of the Finance Committee, the loan to United Bank was retired and an internal loan to ourselves was approved. This year, due in part to the generous bequest of a parishioner, that internal loan was repaid in full. Many thanks to the Finance Committee and to Rich Spurgin in particular.
who generously gave of his time and expertise to explain the process to the Vestry. What a great feeling to have this difficult chapter, in the financial life of Grace, finally closed!

Following several meetings with the Planned Giving Committee, which recommended the purchase of a plaque to memorialize those who have left a bequest to support Grace Church parish, Vestry approved the purchase of a plaque, contingent on locating funding outside of the operating budget. The Shepard Little Fund was created with the proceeds of the sale of the Shepard portraits and is restricted to projects of historical significance to Grace. The purpose of the plaque, to inform parishioners of the gracious gifts to Grace of those who have gone before, was deemed to meet the restriction and the payment was approved. A small committee was established to recommend appropriate placement of the plaque, the plaque was installed in the Connector in time to be dedicated and blessed by the Bishop, appropriately at All Saints. The committee also recommended a place in the Connector for display of gifts which the youth have brought from their pilgrimage trips, as well as a place for those gifts which may be presented in the future. The youth corner was dedicated and blessed by the Bishop at the same visit.

The Interfaith Opportunity Network, of which Grace is a member, organized an event to benefit and recognize the Goodwin Memorial AME Church in Amherst. Grace participated by hosting a well-attended dinner in the Parish Hall which preceded a concert at First Church. Many thanks to those who helped manage the dinner.

The Grace Executive Committee met several times with the developers of the mixed-use building now under construction on Spring Street in order to be informed regarding the progress of the construction. Completion of the building is expected to be September 2020. One benefit to Grace will be the underground placement of the utility lines along Spring Street. Grace had hoped to be able to put the lines underground as part of the last restoration project but it was deemed too expensive. The developers of the Spring Street building have included the underground placement of utility lines as part of their building costs.

The Nominating Committee, Trent Maxey, Laura Klock, Tom Synan and Marion Rosenau, followed the process established several years ago to put together a slate of candidates for Vestry, Officers, and Convention delegates. Outgoing Vestry members, Trent and Laura, gave testimonials as to their experience and the value of serving on Vestry, notices and opportunity for parishioners to suggest names of potential candidates were provided, and several potential candidates attended a tea designed to provide information. Committee members contacted potential candidates to discuss the possibility of service on Vestry. We are pleased to be able to present a slate of Officers and Vestry candidates for approval at Annual Meeting. Many thanks to Trent and Laura for their service and to Kathy Glime who was serving a one year term and has agreed to be a candidate for a three year term.

Music at Grace continues to be exceptional. A first in 2019 was participation in the Amherst Winter Festival. The church was open during the evening hours of the festival and choir members offered songs, drawing a steady stream of listeners including many who were not Grace members. A beautiful way to celebrate our location on the Common.

Very special thanks are due to Dick Damon who seamlessly moved from organ to piano when the organ broke down between the 8:00 and 10:30 services on the Sunday of Lessons and Carols. A very special talent! Dick’s musical skills are heard and appreciated throughout the year, but his engineering abilities had been hidden. Dick designed an apparatus to facilitate the movement of the huge blower motor which was the cause of the organ malfunction. With the assistance of Mark Peterman and Jeff DeSantis the machine saved Grace a considerable cost in time and money in the repair of the organ. Thank you Dick!

This report barely scratches the surface of the many contributions of time and talent contributed to Grace by clergy, staff and parishioners. We are truly a blessed community.

Marion Rosenau, Senior Warden
**Junior Warden:** I want to thank all of you for the privilege of serving the congregation as Junior Warden over the last 2 years. I also want to thank many of you who have shown me partnership and guidance in helping with various projects around our campus. Herein are some of the projects we faced over the past year:

The Property Committee was reformed, comprised of 8 members and myself. We first met in February 2019, and shared ideas regarding how we could jointly serve the congregation and its beloved campus.

A thorough deep cleaning of the kitchen and pantry was undertaken, including cleaning the pilots of the gas stove. A new sink sprayer head was installed, and the dishwasher was professionally serviced.

The spring cleanup was successful, with 10 volunteers, spreading 6 yards of mulch over the various gardens in the garth and around the church. A fall cleanup involved predominantly leaf management with 8 volunteers.

The sound system in the church proper was evaluated, and resulted in both partial and a more complete renovation quotes. A second vendor evaluation is still pending.

The main front door of the church became loose on its hinges, due to wear of the screw holes in the frame beyond what could be repaired. It was determined that the frame had to be rebuilt, and this was accomplished with a professional contractor. Secure attachment of the new frame to the stone behind was successful, and the doors then rehung. The walls of the vestibule behind these doors were then regrouted and painted.

The sink in the lower sacristy off the chapel became clogged, and was successfully repaired.

The trees in the yards on the Spring Street side of the church were professionally pruned through the help of Michael Erard.

The flat roof over the Parish Hall and kitchen were inspected, cleaned of debris, and found to be secure.

The organ in the church became incapacitated in December, due to a problem with the blower motor. Under the oversight and direction of Dick Damon, the blower motor was extracted successfully from its place in a small closet, requiring the construction of a trolley track to allow a hydraulic jack (which suspended this very heavy motor) to be able to be rolled out of the closet. After the repair of the motor (coordinated by Dick), the motor was successfully re-installed in its place. As of Sunday, January 12, the organ was again playing its significant role in the ministry of music at Grace! We are certainly blessed with this wonderful instrument, and with Dick’s skills (in so many ways). Many thanks to Jeff DeSantis who helped Dick and me in this repair process!

Respectfully submitted,

*J. Mark Peterman, Jr. Warden*

**VI. Commission Reports**

**LITURGICAL COMMISSION**

**Altar Guild:** The many individuals, serving on the Altar Guild, work hard to ensure that the altar always looks its best during our worship services. We are indebted to all of them. Among others, they include Georgann Mirick who does the setup and cleanup schedules for every service and orders all the supplies, Veronica
Chapman who makes sure Acolytes and LEMs have clean albs at every service, and Lou Currin who heads up the Flower Guild.

We are also fortunate to have dedicated individuals who clean up and set up for the regular 8am and 10:30am services and launder altar linens. These individuals take on additional cleaning and other responsibilities for special services including the monthly Liturgy in the Chapel, Advent, Lent, and Holy Week. We appreciate the beauty at the altar created by the members of the Flower Guild on Sundays and at other special services.

Finally, we would like to thank Janet Teng who continues to provide us with valuable advice and who has never failed to step in whenever we need assistance.

It takes many hands to make Grace Church, our sacred space, a special place. When we were recruiting for launderers last year, we were blessed with five new volunteers. We are now seeking individuals to help us with the setup and cleanup of the altar especially for the 10:30am Sunday service. We would like to invite all Grace Church members (men and women, singles and couples) to join this special ministry. Thank you!

Sheila Mammen

Acolytes: Acolytes (ages eight through high school) assist in all aspects of liturgical life at Grace Church; they are invited to join the ranks of Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, and bell ringers for the consecration as they express interest in expanding their liturgical roles. Youngsters younger than eight participate in workdays, assist as crucifers to lead the food basket procession to the altar at the offertory, serve in the monthly liturgy in the chapel services, and begin a limited number of regular assignments.

Acolytes work with Sheila Mammen, Janet Teng, Veronica Chapman, Lou Currin, and others of the altar guild in many aspects of liturgical preparation such as assisting in preparing the sanctuary for Advent and Palm Sunday. Tom Synan and Megan McDermott take an interest in the acolytes, support them at the altar, and meet with them when appropriate.

Chris Freitag, Kent Faerber, Trent Maxey, Sharon Marino, and assorted senior servers and their families have helped shepherd acolytes on Sunday mornings. Veronica Chapman ensures that we start each week with a rack of vestments washed, pressed, and carefully arranged by size.

Isabel Ehnstrom and Gianna Mattrey are our newest acolytes, and Bryn Margaret Siudzinski is waiting in the wings!

Acolytes learn quickly and take their liturgical jobs seriously. They are wonderful about helping each other out, and I am thankful to have the opportunity to work with this wonderful group of young people.


Visiting acolytes: Mollie Jenkins (Minnesota), Rose Warner (Eastern Massachusetts). Hadley Goar (Arizona), Jake Goar (Arizona)

* Lay Eucharistic Minister # Lector ** Bell ringer

Nancy Lowry

Music: The music program continued its many activities over the past year, providing choir anthems for our weekly 10:30 services, plus holidays and special events. As always, my great thanks go to Dick Damon for his brilliant organ-playing and also the many new anthems, hymn arrangements and psalm tunes he composes for us here. I’m especially grateful for his work in helping to get the organ motor repaired – we lost it the day of
our beloved Advent Lessons & Carols service, in early December, and it was out of commission until January 8th of 2020. It was a good lesson in not taking wonderful things for granted, for I think we all missed the organ very much indeed!

We continued our regular work of offering music for weekly Sunday services, and special occasions such as Holy Week, Easter, Advent Lessons & Carols (which was again gratifyingly well-attended this year) and Christmas Eve. The choir is one of the most dedicated volunteer constituencies at Grace, giving 4-5 hours per week (plus travel time to and from church) of their time and love of singing for rehearsals and services. They give many more hours in advance of Christmas and Easter. I remain constantly grateful for the gift of their time towards our work together, and am always amazed by the talent, work and good will which they faithfully contribute each week to our worship at Grace. And, as always, I’m also hugely grateful for Tom’s guidance and support – he is wonderful to work with.

It is such a privilege and joy to do this work in such a loving and liturgically vibrant community – I am, I believe, hugely blessed to serve Grace’s music ministry.

Beth Damon, Director of Music

Young People’s Choir: A choir of young people sang at special times during the year at Easter, Pentecost and Christmas Eve when they sang a new piece by Dick Damon and a lovely German carol about a nightingale. There were some 15 - 20 or so young people singing in the group each time they sang.

As always Dick Damon so willingly and sensitively accompanied the young people. Thank you Dick!

Mary Hocken

CHRISTIAN FORMATION & EDUCATION - ADULT

Thanks to suggestions from many parishioners, the Adult Education Commission cast its net wide in 2019. We were rewarded with offerings that included church history, literature, liturgy, and current global concerns. The following programs were offered on Wednesday evenings.

In February, Carolyn Colette told us about the spiritual and mystical side of the British suffragette movement. Later that month, Micah Walter gave a presentation on the rich tradition of Anglican service music. During Lent, in preparation for the Bishop’s visit for Confirmation, the Rector offered an Inquirers’ Class, open to all: “What does it mean to be an Episcopalian in the 21st century?” Attendees were told that there were no questions that could not be asked.

After Easter, Dennis Costa generously gave three presentations on Dante’s Divine Comedy: the Inferno in May, Purgatorio in June, and Paradiso in September. Handouts of specific cantos were provided and discussion encouraged.

October was dedicated to the climate series organized by DeAnne Riddle and Sharon Seelig. Speakers included: Julie Brigham-Grette, Professor of Geosciences, UMass; Raymond Bradley, Distinguished Professor Department of Geosciences and Director Climate System Research Center, UMass; Jonathan Wright, Founder of Wright Builders, Brin Lickel, Professor of Social Psychology and Director Psychology of Peace and Violence Program, UMass. The last session was devoted to a panel discussion, “What Can We Do?”.
We had two presentations in November. Susan and Brayton Shanley from the Agape Community, a sustainable community in Hardwick, spoke about the history and present activities of their group. Copies of their new book, Loving Life on the Margins, were available for purchase. Later that month, Ken Samonds, our parish historian, gave a well-researched talk asking the question “Did Grace Church fulfill its destiny as envisaged by its founders?”.

In December, Margaret Bullitt-Jonas continued the focus on climate with a talk about actions and opportunities in that domaine. Copies of her book, Rooted and Rising, were available for purchase.

Two other programs are offered besides the Wednesday evening forums: Bible study and “Raising the Questions”. Sunday morning Bible study has continued through the seasons. We meet with the Rector between services during most of the year and after the 9:30 service in the summer. We look at the Gospel and Old Testament readings for the following Sunday, and always begin by praying the collect. Discussions are open-ended and free.

Raising the Questions has met monthly to discuss questions of faith, theology, and liturgy. We started the year with a pot luck supper, preceded by Night Prayer from The Zealand Prayer Book and ending with Compline from The Book of Common Prayer. Other meetings included readings and discussions on evil, what it means to call ourselves Christian, liturgy, Holy Week, Easter/resurrection, confession, absolution. Discussions of images of God and liturgical language always seem to make their way into our discussions. We share prayers, writings, and commentary that are meaningful to us. RtQ meets at 9:30 on the second Thursday of the month in the Connector. All interested people are invited.

_Eve Webster, Nancy Lowry_

**CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMISSION - CHILDREN & YOUTH**

**Children:** This school year (2019-20), Grace has been offering Sunday School classes for K-2nd grades and 3rd-5th grades, as well as a combined middle and high school Bible study. All of these classes meet between our two services, from 9:15-10:15 a.m., in the Parke House. Initially, we had both a middle school class and a separate high school Bible study, but we decided to combine these into one class based on attendance numbers.

The elementary school classes continue to use an Episcopal curriculum called “Weaving God’s Promises,” which operates on a three-year cycle. This year, the classes are exploring lessons centered on the theme “Weaving Our Faith.” The first semester primarily covered Old Testament lessons, while this semester is primarily New Testament material. Classes feature a mix of telling stories from Scripture, engaging in arts and crafts related to the biblical stories, and singing together.

We hope to offer a preschool class again in the future, also using this curriculum.

The middle/high school Bible study, which I lead with a rotation of volunteers, does not use a set curriculum. Instead, it explores that particular Sunday’s Bible texts and the way they relate to life today.

Beginning this semester, we will also have a children’s choir meeting regularly for grades 3 and up, which will be led by Alice Goodwin-Brown. The choir will rehearse in the final fifteen minutes of Sunday School in the 3rd-5th grade classroom.
On holiday weekends, we’ve come together for combined Sunday School classes in the parish hall. This year, combined classes have often centered on artistic projects – including helping design a banner for the church, creating art for Grace’s Christmas card, and doing an Advent craft along with learning about the season.

Liturgy in the Chapel remains a vibrant monthly gathering on the third Sunday of each month from 9:45-10:15 a.m., where young families are able to participate in a Eucharist that is specifically designed with children in mind.

In December, some Sunday School time was dedicated to putting on another awesome Christmas pageant. The leadership of Kate Atkinson, Mary Hocken, and Katie Schendel was key to the pageant’s success – as was the willingness of our children and families to put forward their time, effort, and singing/acting skills! We enjoyed having live animals, as per tradition – this year, two goats inside and a donkey outside. We also enjoyed the new addition of a very convincing camel puppet!

Looking ahead to fall 2020, our Sunday morning offerings will change to include a confirmation class for high schoolers. We hold confirmation classes on an every-other-year basis in conjunction with the Bishop’s visitation schedule.

*The Rev. Megan McDermott*

**Youth:** This past July, three of our newly-confirmed high school students traveled to Nashville for a week of service through Lutheran non-profit Serve Boldly, chaperoned by Andrew Zamora and me. The parish greatly supported this trip by participating in fundraisers, such as our spaghetti dinner/Bible trivia night, and making donations outside those events. We served at a food pantry, a community garden, a shelter for homeless women and their children, and a Lutheran camp. The students gave a presentation on their trip on a Sunday this October. Their gift to the congregation is hanging alongside gifts from past confirmation class pilgrimages in the youth corner of The Connector, which was blessed by Bishop Fisher during an afternoon celebration of All Saints’.

This school year, our youth group has made efforts to connect more with other local churches. In the fall, we had two combined youth group sessions with South Church here in Amherst; we’ve also met with them once in 2020. It’s been a pleasure to co-lead with South Church’s Minister of Faith Formation Skyler Keiter! Our sessions have centered on exploring the Psalms and how they relate to students’ lives; they also include enjoying games and pizza together.

As the year goes on, we’ll continue to look for ways to connect with South Church and other local churches to enhance the youth group experience for all of us. I’ve been in conversation with leadership both at St. John’s, Northampton and St. John’s, Williamstown about opportunities to bring our groups together.

On a larger scale, youth at Grace have an opportunity to connect with Episcopalians across the country at this summer’s Episcopal Youth Event in College Park, Maryland, from July 7th-11th. I was asked by the diocese to be involved in leading the delegation from Western Mass. We are hoping to have youth attend from Grace, as well as many other parishes across the region! This is only open to current high schoolers.

A notable change that has happened in the past year with youth group activities is that we generally have middle and high schoolers meet together. In the past, they were meeting separately, but overlapping for dinner. This decision was based on practical concerns about numbers.

Besides combined sessions with South Church, other events this school year have included mini-golfing in Hadley and seeing the movie *Harriet* about Harriet Tubman. We’ve also been having times to get together over bubble tea at LimeRed, which I started offering last Lent. Those times have been a great opportunity for casual conversation.
This January, I began reaching out to parents to put together small focus group conversations on crafting a vision for the future of our youth and children’s programming. Through the rest of this school year, I am hoping to get feedback from families and youth that might help us redesign our youth programming to better fit the needs and schedules of our families and that works well for the number of youth we have actively involved. I also attended the “Rooted in Jesus” conference in Atlanta from Jan. 22nd-24th, which had workshops on a wide range of topics including children and youth faith formation. I hope to bring insights from that conference to bear in the process of exploring new possibilities for youth ministry at Grace.

The Rev. Megan McDermott

Campus Ministry: Throughout most of the fall semester, Grace offered get-togethers for students every other Monday at 6 p.m. We met at a number of downtown establishments, like Amherst Coffee, Bart’s, and Share, for beverages/food and conversation. These get-togethers will continue this semester, at a day and time to be decided in conjunction with students’ schedules. In addition, I had a number of interesting one-on-one conversations with students who are visiting or attending Grace.

Ministry also continues at the various campuses! At Hampshire, I officiated at two Communion services on-campus – one outdoors this Fall, and one for the season of Advent. In the coming semester, I plan to continue connecting with Hampshire’s Christian ministries. Two Hampshire students I’ve connected with through my work on campus are currently volunteering with our youth group.

At UMass, I’ve gotten further connected with the United Christian Fellowship, an officially-recognized mainline Protestant ecumenical chaplaincy. The United Christian Fellowship has begun organizing monthly “Theology on Tap” nights to talk about God and faith in informal settings. While it’s a ministry of UCF, it is open to all area young adults – not just UMass students. I also had a wonderful time being a guest speaker at the UMass Philosophy Club during the fall semester, where I gave a talk on vocation, calling, and purpose, and enjoyed dinner with students afterwards.

At Amherst College, I assisted at a service that was part of the Hermenia T. Gardner Bi-Semester Christian Worship Series and served as a reader at one of their annual Christmas Vespers services. We also had Amherst College students worship with us as a part of a class called Religion, Democracy, and American Culture. Additionally, Amherst College hired a new Protestant advisor this year, Rev. Anna Woofenden, who served as a guest speaker at one of our campus ministry gatherings. I am looking forward to collaborating more with Anna this year as she helps establish a progressive, mainline Protestant presence at the college! Grace was also fortunate to have an Amherst college student, Lucien, assist in teaching the 3rd-5th grade Sunday School class last semester.

Beyond ministry specifically for students, our offerings for young adults in general have also expanded in the past year. Early in 2019, I began holding sporadic gatherings for people in their 20s and 30s. That 20s and 30s group is now meeting once a month. Some fun activities we did in the fall included apple picking, ginger bread house decorating, and a game night. This year, we hope to have more activities that allow for deeper spiritual conversation to emerge!

The Rev. Megan McDermott

PARISH LIFE COMMISSION

The mission of the Parish Life Commission is to spread the joy of Christian fellowship and hospitality throughout Grace Church and the larger community. Many committees and events strive to maintain a strong, social connection throughout our membership. We participated in these events of fellowship:
Our Annual Meeting, preceded by the BLG Brunch
Newcomers Brunch with the Rector
Shrove Sunday Pancake Coffee Hour
The annual Pentecost Picnic
The annual St. Michael’s Picnic
The annual Stewardship Feast of Grace
The annual St. Nicholas Bazaar

Our Parish Life committees continue to serve our members in many important ways. The Hospitality Committee provides coffee hours after our services, schedules ushers, and welcomes newcomers. The Brother Lawrence Guild provides delicious cuisine at various gatherings. The Funeral Committee provides support in planning and executing funeral receptions. The St. Nicolas Bazaar Committee not only provides a community event but also raises money that is crucial for our budget. The Garden Ministry continues to maintain our gardens and to address areas of need.

The Parish Life Commission would like to thank all these committees for their continuing donation of their time and talents. Your dedication and support of Grace’s programs and projects is most sincerely appreciated. Great may your reward be in heaven.

Archives Commission: The Archives Commission continues to work on the organization of our historical materials. Final sorts are underway and draft inventories have begun. The formation of a finder’s guide will complete the project. We still need assistance in formulating such a guide. We would appreciate any help from individuals with this expertise.

We would like to thank Terrie Korpita for her help in collecting yearly materials. This is an ongoing task in order to keep the archives up to date.

It has been a rewarding experience to work on this project. Sifting through our history has been enlightening and at times very entertaining. The work of many people from the past has made Grace Church what it is today.

Anne Homme and Janine Kelly

Funeral Reception Committee:

The mission of Grace Church’s Funeral Reception Committee (FRC) is to provide hospitality as desired to those in our church community who are bereaved. We work in coordination with the Rector, Parish Administrator and any local caterers, florists, funeral directors, etc., with whom the bereaved family has made arrangements.

The FRC always needs new volunteers. The FRC usually (but not always) operates on short notice, and if your schedule allows you any flexibility to be available for a few hours for even just one or two receptions per year, PLEASE consider joining our committee. It is a great group of people to work with, and a very important part of the ministrations of our church.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Spurgin, chair, for FRC members: Alison Ash, Kay Berenson, Sarah Chadwick, Karen DeSantis, Carol Dick, Sophie Gergely, Mary Hocken, Sheila Mammen, Virginia Ramos, Lucy Robinson, Jeannette Stebbins, Sara Stelzner, Pam Wilkinson, and Reynolds Winslow.
Saint Nicholas Bazaar:  Thanks to everyone who participated (including several newcomers!), the bazaar raised about $9,000. This event continues to bring together a large number of parishioners for work, fellowship and fun, in addition to raising needed funds for the church. Everyone who participated in any way contributes to, and shares in, the bazaar’s success.

Joan O’Brien

Garden Ministry:  The Garden Ministers had a busy but quiet year tending the gardens of Grace Church. We held a plant sale in May that raised nearly $1,000. In the fall, David Williams contributed house plants he had propagated for a special sale that raised $150. We are financially in very good shape.

The drip irrigation system on the Garth embankment installed last year had a few glitches this summer that have been resolved. Many thanks to Mary Hocken for discerning a problem and John Jenkins for resolving it.

Passersby continue to praise the Goodwin Garden on Spring Street, which is largely maintained by Mary Hocken. Maria Dye designed, planted and maintained the annuals in front of the Parish Hall windows. Paul Bracciotti pruned the shrubs in front of the parish offices and Michael Erard arranged for professional pruning of the ‘Princeton’ elm and the crabapples.

We had another Rogation Sunday event led by the Rev. Tom Synan, blessing all our gardens for 2019.

Jane Pemberton, stalwart Garden Minister whose special contribution was the Connector planters, moved to the Boston area this fall. She will be sorely missed.

Martha Favre and Meghan Siudzinski continued to help in the gardens as did Miriam Jenkins and Sandy Muspratt.  Cheryl Johnston helped price plants for the May sale and the Erards provided the tent. This year we were joined by Steve Atkinson, Tom Baker and Helen Drake. More workers would be welcome.

Please contact Sherry Wilson, chairperson, with any questions.

Sherry Wilson, chairperson, Garden Ministry

PASTORAL CARE COMMISSION

The Pastoral Care Commission at Grace Church is a group of ministries offering support and assistance to parishioners and their families who need some extra help during a crisis, illness, loss or other circumstance. The Pastoral Care Commission is coordinated by Jeannette Stebbins. Requests for assistance may be made directly to Jeannette or through the clergy or main office.

Jane Buckloh coordinates the Card Writing Ministry. Jane shares this role with 2 or more other parishioners who send notes celebrating a special family event, or those suffering pain, loss or difficulty in their lives. In the past year this ministry sent our 50 or more notes. Jane is in touch with the Parish Administrator and clergy to receive updates on parishioners who would appreciate a note of support or celebration.

As always, donations of cards to support this ministry are always appreciated and can be left with Terry in the Parish office.

The Prayer Circle is coordinated by MJ Fowler. MJ receives requests for intercessory prayer on behalf of oneself, family and friends. Requests for prayers from the Prayer Circle are held in confidence and not shared outside the Circle. If you have permission from the person for whom you are requesting prayers, you may call
or write to MJ and she will let the Prayer Circle know. Feel free to contact MJ if you feel called to join the Prayer Circle.

The Mutual Care Commission is guided by Jeannette Stebbins. Mutual Care members offer services to parishioners including meals, visits, phone visits, and rides to appointments and also to church. With the exception of rides, these services are to provide a short term solution or break to individuals or families in need. This is an active ministry with many contacts with parishioners to offer support and to check in with offers of meals, rides or other short term assistance. Requests for assistance will often come from the clergy, but Jeannette is happy to hear from anyone with a neighborly pastoral concern about a parishioner.

Offers of help in Mutual Care would be greatly appreciated!

Lay Eucharist Visitors, (LEV’s), take Communion and visit parishioners who are unable to worship in Grace Church due to illness or other concerns. LEV’s visit parishioners who are homebound, hospitalized or nursing or rehabilitation facilities. If you or someone you know would welcome a LEV visit or visit from the clergy, please let the clergy or Jeannette Stebbins know.

Christmas and Easter Visits

Our holiday visits to Grace Church members who are homebound or suffered a loss in the previous year continues with plants and “goody bags”. This “ministry” is very well appreciated by recipients and deliverers at the same time! It is a great way for our community to bring a bit of cheer for those who aren’t able to come to Grace and for those who need the gift of care and compassion during the holidays.

Requests for any services provided by Mutual Care or Pastoral Care can be directed to Jeannette Stebbins. Her phone and email are published weekly in the Church Bulletin.

The tremendous support from all parishioners in serving their Grace Church family is truly remarkable! We serve to further the healing ministry of Jesus Christ through this ministry, and I am so grateful to all who have shared their gifts to serve those in need.

Jeannette Stebbins, Chair

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMISSION

In 2019, our Outreach Offerings distributed a wonderful total of over $27,900 to groups outside of Grace Church. We are all grateful for the continuing generosity of the congregation. Our Easter Offering was $7048, Christmas was $8201, and the 4th Sunday Offerings totaled $12,040. Organizations supported by the Outreach Offerings include both local and global groups. The local groups include: Not Bread Alone, Center for New Americans, Amherst Survival Center, Family Outreach of Amherst, Amherst Committee for A Better Chance, Interfaith Cot Shelter, Welcoming Refugees Resettlement Program of Catholic Charities, and Craig's Doors. Global groups include Syrian American Medical Society Foundation, American Friends of the Diocese of Jerusalem, Episcopal Relief and Development Hurricane Relief Fund, St. Matthieu School in Haiti, International Rescue Committee for the Southern Border, and Doctors Without Borders. The collection jar for the “Change the Babies” project collected spare change to help support children living at the Mampong Babies Home in Kumasi, Ghana.
In addition to money collected as Outreach Offerings, parishioners contributed time and treasures to those in need in countless ways. Just a few of the many: Volunteers for “Adopt-a-Family” bought and wrapped gifts for 99 children from 40 families at Christmas; Grace parishioners continue to assist with food and presence as First Congregational Church provides sanctuary to Lucio Perez; Grace agreed to be a partner with Sojourner Truth School for Social Justice by making available the syllabus of the free classes at the Truth School; Backpacks were collected for students in the Amherst public schools; Welcome Back Packs were collected and filled with toiletries and other useful items to give to women as they are released from the correction center in Chicopee; A Circle of Care continued to welcome and support a family of ten (now a family of twelve with the birth of two babies) who came to Amherst from a refugee camp in Rwanda. The children at the 10:30 service carried the food basket each Sunday which totaled hundreds of pounds of food donated to Amherst Survival Center. In addition, cans of soup were donated on “Souper Sunday” and 500+ packages of stuffing were delivered to the Survival Center at Thanksgiving; Many parishioners donated volunteer hours at shelters and meal programs.

Part of the Mission Statement of the Outreach Ministries Commission says the mission is “to sustain outreach ministers through offerings of prayer, practical support, and opportunities to share the joys and challenges of their work as God's hands in the world”. We urge parishioners who are involved in charitable work, locally or globally, to contact us to see if we can provide support in any way.

We thank all of you for your donations of time, talent, and treasure to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ outside the walls of Grace Church.

Chris Hoffmann, Marion Rosenau, Co-chairs

Adopt-A-Family for Christmas:
Once again Grace Church gave in abundance to struggling families. All 40 families (90 children) were adopted and there was extra money to contribute to Family Outreach of Amherst which does so much to support the most vulnerable families in our community. Your generosity continues to amaze. Thank you, thank you.

Mary Hocken

Haiti Ministry:
While practically all of Haiti has been in a state of turmoil, public protest and general instability for the past several months, l’Ecole St. Matthieu opened on schedule last September and, except for a few days in mid-autumn, has remained open. Pere Diegue and principal Clibert Massillon report that the school has been operating normally, even given the challenge of transporting the teachers to the village of Bayonnais from the city of Gonaives at a time of fuel shortages and black-market price-gouging, as well as a no-business-as-usual atmosphere throughout the country. The school was closed for a few days in the fall, but it reopened in October. We understand that very few schools were open in Haiti during the fall or are open now. While we are deeply concerned about the welfare of Haiti’s people in this crisis, we feel very good about what Grace Church and its partners in this project are accomplishing.

In October of 2014, the Grace Church Vestry unanimously renewed its approval of Grace Church’s continued partnership with l’Ecole St. Matthieu through the year 2020. In the fall of 2019, recognizing the ongoing commitment of Grace Church to this partnership, and also recognizing the addition of St. James Episcopal Church in Indian Head, Maryland, as a valued partner in this ministry, the vestry made this further resolution:

RESOLVED: That this ministry, like all ministries of the parish, does not need or require further renewals for its existence. This decision is made in appreciation for and in thanksgiving of the hard work, commitment, and
determination of the Haiti Committee at Grace Church and their partners at St. Matthieu in Bayonnais, Haiti, and St. James, Indian Head, Maryland. The mission and goals of this ministry remain the same as specified in the Resolution found in the October 2014 Vestry minutes.

L’Ecole St. Matthieu is not merely open; it is thriving. With Grace Church’s support, the school enrolls more children and employs more teachers than in any previous year. In a country where a large portion of the population is officially illiterate, more children in Bayonnais are learning to read. Two teachers have come to St. Matthieu through the exceptionally strong Anse Ayiti (“Teach for Haiti”) program, and other teachers participate in two-week summer teacher-training workshops. In an effort to ensure that our strongest students can continue their education beyond sixth grade (i.e., after they graduate from St. Matthieu), several members of the congregation are providing individual scholarships this year for seven students who have been able to continue their education at the next level. Bonnie Vigeland has taken on this program, ensuring that on a regular basis donors can receive news and photos of the child they are sponsoring.

Since 2015, our collective efforts have been even more productive, thanks to the leadership and oversight of the priest-in-charge, Père Diegue, a strong, experienced administrator of the school, which is just one of his many responsibilities. Thanks to his experience and insights, also to his background in construction, teachers and pupils are enjoying the use of two new classrooms, constructed in 2019 for Kindergarten and Pre-K classes, so that the whole school is now housed on the same side of the road. Classes no longer have to meet in the church sanctuary, and the school’s youngest children do not have to cross the road to get to the rest of the campus. We have also helped to build a covered walkway and a storeroom for food and musical instruments, and, beneath the classrooms, we have installed a 2300-gallon fresh water tank.

With input from Père Diegue, Clibert and the Bayonnais school community, we continue to improve all aspects of the school. In addition to building projects and faculty support, money from our budget pays for school supplies, enables the school to hire a music teacher, and covers the cost of propane for cooking the daily school lunch, without the traditional and environmentally unsuitable use of charcoal or firewood. (The international organization Food For the Poor, led in Haiti by our friend Bishop Ogé Beauvoir, provides the food itself.) In the near future, we’ll also pay for much-needed storage cabinets, and we are creating a real school library. Much of the planning for this library has been led by Bonnie Vigeland, drawing on her own experience in library work and on research she pursued on her Bayonnais visit last July.

Throughout all this work, we continue to improve our system of accountability of funds, attendance, test results and so on – all elements of bookkeeping and measurement that have historically been more familiar in Massachusetts than in Haiti. In these areas, new tablets and other modern electronic devices for St. Matthieu’s staff have been helpful. Beyond our budget for current expenses and our fundraising for specific projects, we keep $10,000 as a stabilization fund.

Financially we continue to be healthy thanks to the amazing generosity of you, the members of Grace Church, as well as to the members of our partner church, St James, and to members of the larger community. We augment your contributions with grants from the diocese, thanks especially to Suzannah Fabing, who writes numerous grant proposals to Global Missions, a diocesan source. During the next months, working with Père Diegue and our diocese, we will be putting together a United Thank Offering grant proposal, which should help build the next stage of the school.

Other support comes from the many fundraisers we organize. Last February, our fundraiser was another fun “Stone Soup” dinner in the Parish Hall, for which many thanks go to coordinators Meghan Siudzinski (2018/19) and Sarah Chadwick (2019). Besides such one-time events, our most successful fundraiser was a steady campaign over the past summer that raised donations to buy new school uniforms for the 167 children at St.
Matthieu. With characteristic generosity, the congregation raised $9,000. Kitty Dougherty designed a big poster on which we could track progress toward that goal week-by-week. In June, Kitty and Tom Dougherty also sponsored a kick-off Pig Roast.

Twice in 2019, members of Grace Church’s Haiti mission met with members of St James’ Church. In May, Mark Peterman, Sandy Muspratt and John Stifler visited them in Indian Head, Maryland, and in October seven members of St James visited Grace Church and Amherst. A truly remarkable partnership to be sure.

Several members of Grace Church have made visits to the school. Last summer, Sandy Muspratt and Bonnie Vigeland visited Bayonnais along with the two students who helped run the school’s summer camp, Veronica (Nica) Israel and Mohan Setty-Charity. John Stifler had hoped to visit in October, but given the widespread blockading of highways, which meant that getting around the country would be difficult or impossible, he postponed his trip. With recent indications that travel is again fairly reliable, he plans to go to Bayonnais in January or February. All these visits are important, since our physical presence amplifies the message that we really care about the teacher and children at St. Matthieu, and being there in person means we can observe details of how the school is functioning.

Immense thanks go to this wonderful congregation that continues to support our partner school and to the extraordinary Haiti Ministry committee. Each person is so committed and is always willing to step forward to do whatever is needed, whether it is to help with a reception, write notes of thanks to donors, give parties, share ideas and carry them out, correspond with the team in Haiti, and of course give generously of money and time and on and on. Special thanks go to Sandy Muspratt, who keeps the books and is the main liaison with the priest and teachers at the school, and to Suzannah Fabing, who is the chief minute-taker, grant writer and inspirational source of ideas that keep all of us on our toes. The Committee also is extremely grateful for all of the work of our co-chair, Mary Hocken, who makes sure that we are on track and moving forward.

This ministry is profoundly exciting. We have heard repeatedly that our partner school, l’Ecole St. Matthieu, is considered one of the best in its area. For this success, great thanks are due to all the support from church and community members here as well as the teachers and families of St Matthieu. We are truly making a difference in the lives of these children.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with Grace Church’s Haiti Mission, please contact Sandy Muspratt or Mary Hocken (co-chairs), at musprats@gmail.com or melizhocken@gmail.com to find out how you can help. We need short-term project-based assistance as well as longer-term commitments. We can match your availability! And we are eager to recruit younger members of the congregation.

Committee members: Patty Appelbaum (part of the year), Tom Baker, Trish Callard, Gillian Duda (note writer), Suzannah Fabing, Mary Hocken (co-chair), Brown Kennedy, Laura Klock, Sandy Muspratt (co-chair and treasurer), Joan O’Brien, Mark Peterman, John Stifler, Bonnie Vigeland, Martin Wobst.

Submitted by Mary Hocken (edited by John Stifler)

Refugee Resettlement Project

The Grace Church Circle of Care was formed in October 2018 to provide support and friendship to a refugee family from the Democratic Republic of Congo who arrived in November 2018. Now, 14 months later, five are in their second year in the Amherst schools, four adults are in the local workforce, and one has a driver’s license and a car. All have made strides in learning English and becoming involved in Amherst life.
The Circle of Care is a group of volunteers from Grace Church and beyond, in collaboration with the Catholic Charities Agency of Springfield. The Circle’s core mission is to assist the family toward independence, so the volunteer work is always shifting as new skills are acquired and new challenges arise. It is exciting and rewarding work and we would welcome new members. We have been actively involved in helping the family negotiate the complexities of life in the U.S. by providing English language tutoring, school support, homework coaching, transportation, driver training, scheduling and getting to medical and dental appointments, help in navigating medical situations and bureaucratic paperwork, relocating from one rental to another, general problem-solving, companionship and friendship.

The family has grown from ten to twelve with the births of two delightful babies in August. (Grace hosted a wonderful baby shower in July.) Other special moments: swimming lessons, summer afternoons at Puffer’s Pond; several summer day-camp sessions, acro-dance class for the ten-year-old, and some Zumba classes for older sisters; a wonderful party at Grace celebrating the anniversary of their arrival. And one of the babies played the role of baby Jesus in Grace’s Christmas pageant. Circle members hosted numerous fun local ventures – introducing them to the Tri-county Fair, apple-picking, hikes, sledding parties, community theater production, and special meals.

The family continues to be grateful for the weekly prayers of Grace Church and the generosity of all who have contributed to the refugee resettlement fund that has helped us to address particular needs.

Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale

Brother Lawrence Guild: Brother Lawrence was a seventeenth-century Carmelite monk who experienced the presence of God while cleaning pots in the scullery of his monastery. Accepting what he’d been given to do, Brother Lawrence spent his life attempting to live in God’s presence. We hope that we, like Brother Lawrence, may practice the presence of God in the act of preparing meals for our fellow parishioners – and newcomers – at Grace Church. We are grateful for this opportunity and welcome those who would like to join us in this hospitable endeavor!

Our merry band of men, women and the occasional teen helpers serve the parish by preparing and serving food for most church events, including the planning, shopping, setting up and cleaning up. Our mantra is "Many hands make light work!" (And "have fun!")

In 2019, the BLG served at the following events: Annual Meeting, the Reception following Megan McDermott’s ordination to the Priesthood, the Pentecost and St. Michael's picnics, the Stewardship In-Gathering Potluck, and the St. Nicholas Bazaar Cafe.

Serving as a member of the BLG is a great way to get involved at Grace Church – we are pretty relaxed, frequently zany and always in good taste! We recognize God’s presence among us in serving food and promoting fellowship in the congregation. When we at Grace Church meet, greet, and eat with each other, God is with us … and those times are joyful occurrences!

Respectfully submitted, Mark Leonas, for Members in Service: Sarah Chadwick, Jeffrey DeSantis, Tom Dougherty, Martha Favre, Tony Jewell, Steve McKelvey, Doug Moore, Sandy Muspratt, Diana Spurgin, Jeannette Stebbins, Janet Teng, Virginia Ramos, and Reynolds Winslow
**Greening Grace/Peace Fellowship**

The Greening Grace/Episcopal Peace Fellowship had an active year.

The Sustain Earth Our Island Home initiative galvanized a number of members, including DeAnne Riddle, Sandy Muspratt, Edith Allison, and Lucy Robinson, to take active roles in presenting the Sustain Earth Our Island Home (SoIH) initiative, both at Grace and a number of other churches in the diocese. The website gives a large number of situations in one’s home where actions, from the easy to the more involved, can cumulatively produce very significant decreases in the amount of energy used by our households. At the website, adding each household’s savings to that of the whole congregation indicates a really impressive energy decrease by Grace Church. Grace is now Sustain’s top energy saving church outside of California, which created the website several years ago! Anyone may sign in online at sustainislandhome.org and join our effort. It’s really exciting to see the small changes that can create fine energy savings. Ask any Greening member if you’d like to learn more about it.

We looked into having solar panels on our church property, but there’s little room and the steep slate roof makes it almost impossible. Instead we signed up for solar energy produced offsite.

Sandy Muspratt, DeAnne Riddle, Miriam and John Jenkins, and Lucy Robinson worked at bringing information to many parishes on the very important carbon pricing bill being argued at the Statehouse just as this report goes to press. After these presentations, a goodly number of parishioners at the various parishes signed petitions supporting the bill.

On April 4 Greening Grace joined South Church in Amherst in sponsoring a Greening Investing Breakfast. Members of both congregations heard from Green Century Equity, Vanguard Social Index and Calvert Green Bond about responsible investing.

A number of Greening and Grace Church members were involved in supporting and singing in a thrilling presentation of a new choral composition by Geoffrey Hudson, Passion for the Planet. This is an hour-long oratorio on the subject of climate change. Using scientific prose, poetry, and sacred texts from many faiths, the libretto traces an arc from beauty and gratitude into darkness and out again into hope. The performance was given in June at Smith College to a packed house and a standing ovation at the end. Several members of the congregation were in the chorus. The hope is to use this beautiful piece of music as a call to action for many more people to get involved in combating climate change at home, in the state and in the nation.

On behalf of Greening, Lucy Robinson joined the Faith Science Alliance for Climate Leadership in Boston and will keep Greening up to date on coming actions and presentations.

Sharon Seelig, Sandy Muspratt, and DeAnne Riddle became joint chairs of EPF/Greening Grace in September. We had a table at the Ministry Fair in September and at the Saint Nicholas Bazaar in December, where we shared the tables with the Haiti ministry. We gave away free copies of Mary Matthews’ children’s book, Magid Fasts for Ramadan.

We organized a 5-part Wednesday night adult education series on the crisis of climate change for October. We put posters up at other houses of worship and had good attendance both from our congregation and others in the Valley. Professors Julie Brigham-Grette and Raymond Bradley from the Geosciences Department at UMass spoke about the scientific evidence of climate change and where we are headed unless we drastically change course now, before it’s too late, but they emphasized that there are solutions. Jonathan Wright, builder and author, spoke on sustainability and spirituality, and how doing what is right for our planet has the spiritual benefit of calmness. Brian Lickel, professor of Social Psychology at UMass, who among other things studies responses to environmental threats, finds we tend to ignore what we don’t want to deal with until it’s bearing down on us. We finished the series with short presentations from people with solutions for combating climate change: Karen Ribeiro from PV-Squared on installing photovoltaics; Adele Franks from Climate Action Now.
on community choice aggregation: cities and towns working together to buy green power; Tony Rogers on carbon fee and dividend; Chris Riddle on strengthening Massachusetts' energy efficiency requirements for buildings; and DeAnne Riddle on Sustaining Earth, Our Island Home.

We staffed a table at the Diocesan Convention in November, offering Margaret Bullitt-Jonas’ new book, Rooted and Rising, for sale. We called our Massachusetts representatives to ask them to support a bill banning pesticides and herbicides that are killing bees and other pollinators.

Our Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) is primarily involved in our Ramallah project, in which we support a scholarship for a Palestinian high school student to attend the ETVTC (Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center) in Ramallah in the West Bank through the sale of Palestinian olive oil. The oil is sold on the first Sunday of the month after both the 8 and 10:30 am services. All of the proceeds go to support the scholarship. We are in contact with Giovanni Anbar, the director of the program. The funds are sent through the AFEDJ (the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem), which has a four star (the highest possible) Charity Navigator rating for finances, accountability and transparency.

Our scholarship student, Amir Wahhab, who was studying computer installation, programming and repair, one of the few professions currently in demand in the West Bank, graduated in June. He is continuing his studies in IT at a community college run by UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. We sent him a congratulatory card upon his graduation. As of September, we have a new student, a young Christian in the 11th grade, Bisan Freij, who loves to cook. She is in the ETVTC Hotel/Hospitality and Culinary Arts Stream. We sent her a Christmas card signed by many in our congregation.

DeAnne Riddle

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

To “Kick-Off” our 2019 Stewardship Campaign in early-November 2018 the Reverend Tom Synan tailored his sermon extolling the virtues of pledging, this was followed by testimonials from; Chris Freitag and Mark Peterman. An “In Gathering” was blessed on Sunday November 24, 2018 that was preceded and celebrated with a potluck luncheon after the 10:30 PM service.

Our Stewardship campaign for 2019 raised $490,284., from 185 pledges (12 new pledges). Our goal was to raise $495,000 to meet our 2019 budget.

The 2020 Stewardship campaign is off to good start with 159 pledges totaling $447,952 toward our goal of $500,000.

Tom Dougherty, Stewardship Chair

Planned Giving: The Planned Giving Committee, comprised of Doug Adler, Kent Faerber and Jean Rankin, provides information to parishioners on ways to include Grace Church in their estate plans in conjunction with advice from their legal counsel. Doug, Kent, and Jean can discuss options to support the long-term needs of Grace through a will or living trust, a designation in an insurance policy or retirement plan, or a life income gift, such as a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust. The St. Michael's Fellowship, established in 2004, recognizes those who have included Grace in their estate plans and parishioners are encouraged to alert the Rector or one of the committee members of such plans.

In late 2018, the committee began to develop a broader awareness plan with assistance from Vestry member Steve McKelvey. We concentrated our efforts in 2019 on designing a plaque to recognize those from whom
Grace Church received a bequest in the last 25 years. We met with a focus group and then with the Vestry to seek feedback on our initial ideas.

We contacted Partners In Recognition (PIR) in Ohio, based on three local references and PIR’s experience in designing and constructing memorial plaques. We developed plaque wording with our Rector, reviewed several drafts of the layout and colors and made presentations to the Vestry. Funding for the plaque (plaque cost, shipping to Grace and engraving of nameplates was $4,302) came from the Shepard Fund. The Rector formed a committee to recommend the placement of the plaque and gifts from our Youth Groups. Our Junior Warden hung the plaque and gifts in the Connector, which were blessed by Bishop Fisher at the end of a 4:00 service on November 3rd.


* deceased

Doug Adler, Chair

VII. TREASURER’S REPORT

2019 is the eleventh year in a row in which we ended with a positive balance in our operating budget. Your generous pledges and faithful fulfillment of them, along with the thoughtful monitoring of expenses by many staff and committee chairs, have contributed to these results.

A great strength at Grace Church is the time and talent that is freely given by members of our parish. We are blessed to have the continued services of Rich Spurgin, who prepares informative, helpful monthly financial reports, and of DeAnne Riddle, who prepares our annual budgets, including the budget for 2020.

The Finance Committee includes Rich Spurgin, Kitty Dougherty, John Robinson, DeAnne Riddle, Bruce Stebbins and Lynn Klock. They have provided sound advice on a range of issues to aid the Clergy, myself and the Vestry in making financial decisions. Our faithful collection counters have scrupulously accounted for all the cash and checks donated each Sunday. We are also very thankful for Jaana Cutson, our dedicated Parish Bookkeeper, who has done a wonderful job of keeping our complex financial system running smoothly. I also want to recognize Tom Dougherty and the Stewardship Committee, who continue to work hard to help us achieve the financial goals that will insure our ability to have talented staff and meaningful programs in 2020, on a well-maintained church campus.

2019 marks a year when we were thankfully fully-staffed, a blessing given the many important ministries here. We didn’t expect a financial surplus but were fortunate to achieve one, in the amount of $6,204. The Finance Committee recommended and the Vestry approved allocating this year’s surplus toward the building maintenance reserve fund.
Looking back on last year’s financial achievement to retire the Restoration Project Loan, we were able this year to pay off our internal loan to ourselves, well ahead of the three year plan. We were able to accomplish this feat owing to a generous bequest. Again, many thanks to Rich Spurgin and the Finance Committee, who continue to help us keep on top of church finances.

This year a number of beloved parishioners left bequests in their wills which will be invested with the Diocesan fund.

The Trustees of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts continue to manage our endowment funds well and to make 5% distributions, providing essential additions to our operating budget.

This year’s budget is once again a “break even” budget. Pledges continue to arrive as we approach our stewardship goal for 2020. We are grateful for all of the generosity of Parish members and will carefully monitor the use of our financial resources in 2020.

We continue to be in good standing with our diocesan auditor Bruce Rockwell, whose 2019 audit confirms that our financial records are accurate. We will have completed our parish financial handbook and inventories in time for this year’s audit in March.

I have appreciated the opportunity to serve Grace Church as your Treasurer during the past year. We continue to make good progress and hope for the same in the year to come. Thank you for all your support!

Mark Leonas, Treasurer
## VIII. MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

### Baptisms

- Conor Patrick Bailey
- Sydney Marie Currie
- Grace Alexandra Currie
- Abigail Florence Goff
- Yolanda Goff
- Maddox Michael Keedy
- Grayson Michael Peterman

### Confirmation/Received

- Gabriel Davila Bustamante
- Anna Gilsdorf
- Emily Liesbeth Ireland
- Katherine Lee Leonard
- Francesca Capri Polino
- Aidan Randall Wilburn
- Carolyn Harding Hall
- Micah John Walter
- Helen Elizabeth Drake
- Jean Stewart Vigeland
- Randall Sydney Bausor
- Stephanie Kay Mattrey

### Marriages

- Shannon Murphy & Benjamin Thornton
- Lili Zou & Richard Spurgin
- Cara Crandall & Léo Héroux

### Requiem

- William R. Barnett
- Myrtle Regina Blanchard
- Robert Blanchard
- Leslie Huntington Brown
- James Quincy Denton
- Elizabeth Wells French
- Sarah Hanke
- Dorothy Jones Wiesner Hertzfeld
- David Mack Goode Huntington
- Dr. James Q. Knight
- Marilyn J. Munn
- Andrew Rising Musgrave
- Mary A. Steigner
- Zina Tillona
- Barbara Louis Worthley

### Added - New members/Reactivated

- Helen Drake & Randall Bausor
- Lee Easton
- Robert & Susan Lattanzi
- Peter Laylin & Sara Liberty-Laylin
- Sara Malsch
- Leif & Sara RiddINGTON
- Dahlia Riddington
- Forset Riddington

### Transferred/Moved

- Annie Cheatham
- Barbara Wogrin