

Grace Notes

October 2025

To: All the Faithful
From: The Standing Committee
Re: Slate and Petition Process
Date: September 29, 2025

An Update of the Bishop Search: Announcement of Slate and Petition Process

The Feast of St. Michael and All Angels

Dear people of Western Massachusetts,

It gives us much joy as the Standing Committee of this Diocese to announce a slate of three candidates to serve as our 10th Bishop Diocesan. As we give thanks to God for the faithful ministry of Bishop Fisher, we also give thanks for the faithful and gifted clerics who have put themselves forward in this process of discernment.

We also give our heartfelt thanks to The Rev. Heather Blais and the incredible work of the entire Search Committee. This dedicated team of clergy and laypeople have thoroughly reviewed a large number of applications, engaged in interviews and gathered with finalists for a Spirit-led and intensive discernment retreat weekend. All this hard work and holy listening has yielded an impressive slate of faithful, talented clerics who have discerned a call to Episcopal ministry as our next Bishop.

The candidates are:

The Rev. Susan B. Fortunato
*Rector, Christ Episcopal Church,
Poughkeepsie, New York*

The Very Rev. Dr. Marcus George Halley
*Chaplain to the College and Dean of
Spiritual and Religious Life at Trinity
College, Hartford, Connecticut*

The Very Rev. Miguelina Howell
*Dean of Christ Church Cathedral,
Hartford, Connecticut*

Meet the Candidate

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The people of our diocese will have the opportunity to meet and hear from the candidates at events throughout the Diocese **November 4-6**. More information on these “Meet-and-Greet” gatherings will be found on the [Diocesan website](#). Clergy and lay delegates will then vote to elect our next Bishop at our [Annual Diocesan Convention](#) - **November 14-15** at the UMASS Campus Center in Amherst.

Concurrent with this announcement we are opening [a petition process](#) whereby additional candidates may be added to the slate. The petition process runs from today, **September 29, until 11:59pm on October 6**. The requirements to be petitioned onto the final slate are:

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* Signatures of four clergy and eight lay communicants in good standing of this Diocese who represent at least three different parishes of this Diocese.

* Submission of all application materials required of the earlier search process.

* No cleric will be considered who participated in the process conducted by the Search Committee and who was not selected for the final slate of nominees approved by the Standing Committee.

Throughout this process the Standing Committee has had every confidence in the work of the Search Committee. We feel confident that each of these candidates would make an outstanding Bishop in Christ's Church. We ask that you continue to join us in prayer as we discern together who God is calling to lead us and to serve among us at this time and in this place.

The Rev. Nathaniel Anderson, President
St. John's - Williamstown

Mr. Richard Gore,
Grace - Great Barrington

Ms. Carole Ibsen
All Saints' - South Hadley

Ms. Phyllis Larson, Secretary
Christ Church Cathedral - Springfield

The Rev. Patrick Perkins
St. Francis' - Holden

The Rev. Ann Scannell
Good Shepherd - Clinton, and Trinity - Shrewsbury

The Rev. Meredyth Ward
All Saints' - Worcester

Ms. Wende Wheeler
St. Andrew's - Longmeadow

A Week at Grace

Sunday

8:00 am

Holy Eucharist

9:00 am

Coffee Hour

9:15 am

Youth Choir Rehearsal

10:30 am

Holy Eucharist

11:30 am

Coffee Hour

7:30 pm

AA

Monday

10:00 am

Staff Meeting

7:00 pm

AA

Tuesday

5:15 pm

AA

7:00 pm

Al-Anon

Wednesday

12:10 pm

**Rite I Holy Eucharist
and Healing Prayer**

Thursday

7:30 pm

Choir Rehearsal

Friday

7:00 am

Men's Group (alternate weeks)

5:30 pm

Evensong

Saturday

10:00 am

Bible Study

5:00 pm

AA

8:00 pm

AA



Grace Notes "Notes"

Palestinian Oil



Palestinian olive oil will be available for sale by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship in the Connector on the first Sunday of each month. It is first cold press organic and fair trade olive oil. The proceeds from the sale enable Grace to provide a scholarship for a student at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center in Ramallah.

Raising the Questions

Raising the Questions meets monthly on the second Tuesday at 9:30, in the Connector. We discuss liturgy and theology, faith and spirituality. We talk about books we have been reading and pass around articles, prayers, and bulletins from other churches we have visited. The meetings are always open, so come join us!

Life Story Writing

For those of us in the autumn years of life interested in reviewing life so far. We'll excavate long forgotten memories, explore life choices, and reacquaint ourselves with our own stories: highlights, influential events, roads taken and not taken. Multiple handouts; no previous writing experience required. Five Thursday morning sessions (9:30-11:30) beginning Oct 2, 16, 30, Nov 6, 20. Interested? Contact Nancy to save a seat (limited): nancyroseweeber@gmail.com.

Bible Study

Join the Rector and others to study, and react to, the Gospel and Old Testament lesson for the following Sunday. We meet via Zoom Saturday mornings at 10am. Email Tom at tsynan@gracechurchamherst.org to receive the connection.



Iconography Workshop

An ongoing iconography workshop meets every Sunday afternoon, from noon to four in the Parish Hall. Previous artistic experience is not necessary, since icon writing is as much a contemplative process of an inner spiritual journey as it is an artistic discipline. Please contact Sandy Lillydahl at slillydahl@library.umass.edu for additional information.

Tea and Titles

Tea & Titles meets once or twice a month at 2:30 pm in the Connector to share and discuss books recently read. For more information, please contact Jude Wobst at judith.wobst@gmail.com

Our next meeting is October 16, 2025 at 2:30pm. All are welcome!



Men's Group

The Men's Group is always looking for new members for general discussions and personal exchange. We meet on Friday mornings 7-8:30. We meet in person every other Friday of each month. (On the other Fridays we will be zooming to accommodate members who live away or are unable to attend for other reasons.) For further information contact Charlie Dickinson: lcd@polysci.umass.edu

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Click [here](#) to read the minutes of the most recent Vestry meeting. If you wish to see past meeting minutes, please go to our website at <https://www.gracechurchamherst.org/our-church/parish-staff/>

Grace Notes "Notes"



Sunday, October 5 at 4:00pm on the Common directly across from the Church.

Outreach!

Our September Outreach Offering brought in \$917.00 which has been sent to Save the Children.

Generosity changes everything, starting with us.

Thank you for your generosity!

Garden Ministry

The fall garden clean up will be Saturday, October 4th from 9am to 11am

Please bring your own garden gloves

All are welcome. We will meet at the red door on Spring Street.

Questions? Contact Sara Liberty-Laylin at : p.laylin@comcast.net

Pastoral Call for Volunteers

Do you like to cook or drive? Would you like to help fellow parishioners? Pastoral Care is looking to develop a list of volunteers to be contacted as needed. Most likely a request for food or a ride would occur every other month or so. And being on the volunteer list does not obligate your assistance every time a request is made. If you are interested in this ministry, please see the sign up sheets at coffee hour, or email Gail Gnatek at ggnatek@gmail.com.



St. Michael's Picnic

September 28, 2025



Grace Notes "Notes"



Grace Notes "Notes"



Planned Giving – Your Will, Trust and Other Options for Beneficiary Designations

There are many ways through your estate plans to provide future support for your loved ones and for organizations important to you, such as Grace Church. A periodic review is wise to take into consideration changing circumstances. Updating designations in your will or trust are common and warrant review with your lawyer, but minor updates for individual or institutional beneficiaries may also be achieved through:

1. a simple codicil to your will (with modest legal fees)
2. designating portions of a life insurance policy
3. designating portions of a retirement plan (most 401(k), 403(b), and IRAs) keeping in mind the designations already made in your will or trust

You are welcome to contact Planned Giving Committee members Doug Adler and Kent Faerber.

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The St. Nicholas Bazaar is Dec. 6, and the time is NOW for donations!

Donations are needed for all areas of the bazaar, the *sooner the better*, especially antiques and fine jewelry. Please remember that items should be in **good working condition and clean**. We accept many kinds of items, but please NO textbooks, binders, classical records, clothing (scarves are ok), or mildewed items. We already have a large number of puzzles, so if possible hold those for next year. Donations may be dropped off in the undercroft after the Sunday service, or during office hours (M-F, 9:30-4). Please put them on the table inside the door from the walkway.



The bazaar is fast approaching - this is a good time to think about **how you can contribute** to its success during set-up, the day of the bazaar, and/or clean up. Volunteer sign-ups will appear in early to mid-November.

Any questions, contact Joan (jobrien82@gmail.com). Thank you!

Request publicity for your event!

To make Grace Church events as successful as possible, the Communications Committee developed an online form to request event publicity. The form, which includes instructions for completing and submitting the request, is found on the Grace website under the Outreach Commission or <https://www.gracechurchamherst.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Request-for-Event-Publicity-Form-2023.pdf>. The Communications Committee asks forms be submitted six to eight weeks prior to an event to ensure adequate time for publicity.

Prayer Circle is still here!

We are ready to pray for the needs of those in crisis who want a degree of anonymity. Names will be held in confidence by members of the Circle and will not be published outside Circle members. Names will remain on the list for a month, unless otherwise requested. If you would like to be prayed for in this way, or would like to make a request for a loved one, please contact MJ Fowler (mjfowler3@comcast.net).



Outreach Commission

Every fourth Sunday, Grace Church members' offerings are donated to worthy organizations. Ever wonder how those recipients are chosen? Have other recipients you'd like to recommend?



Then why not consider joining the Outreach Commission! We meet once a month via Zoom to discuss Grace's various missions, decide on the fourth Sunday recipient, and otherwise further Grace's outreach to the world. It's a fun, easy, and educational way of serving your church. Please contact Chris Hoffmann (chris.hoffmann@umass.edu) for more information.

Grace Notes "Notes"

Grace Church Harvest Concert

**Saturday, November 8, 2025
4:00 pm**

Performers include:

Mark Fraser, cello

Dick Damon, organ

Estela Olevsky, piano

Hanif Lawrence, tenor soloist

Silverwood Quartet

Cantabile Vocal Ensemble

Grace Church Choir

Hanif Lawrence, choir director

Suggested donation: \$25 at the door

Proceeds benefit the Grace Church Organ Fund

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Marianne Connor led a discussion about regenerative approaches to aging on Sept 7. As part of a co-parish effort for Creation Care, some parishioners from Sts. James and Andrew, Greenfield, attended. The day before, some members from Grace participated in Sts. James and Andrew's day-long retreat led by Rev. Jimmy Pickett.

11th Hour Bell Ringing for Climate Change

Saturday, October 11th

On Saturday, October 11, at 11 a.m. we will toll the bell at Grace Church for 11 minutes to express our alarm at the climate emergency that we face, and to convey this concern to all within the sound of the bell. All are welcome to join. We encourage you to come and to bring your own bells or other noise-making devices to make the message as lively and inclusive as possible.



Climate Action@Grace

Thank you one and all who took the time to attend our three events so far in Creation Season! Rev. Jimmy Pickett led us in a day-long retreat at Sts James and Andrew, Greenfield, helping us with sustainable spiritual practices. Marianne Connor led a discussion about the pressing financial and psychological issues of later life stages when we may need community and support. There was interest expressed in following up on this topic (contact Marianne.connor7@gmail.com). On a separate Sunday, Marianne presented new approaches to the daunting topic of helping the planet: she described how to shift from "do less bad" and even from "do good," to regenerative systems' thinking that draws on our creativity and that inspires us, working together. Building new understandings, together, is proving to be a vital step in honoring Creation. Please watch for books and suggestions to borrow and read as we delve more deeply in this direction. There may be another retreat day to explore and pursue this further, possibly with another parish for greater impact and ease of planning. Stay tuned.

Climate Action at Grace appreciates multiple ways many people have shown their care for creation this month, including children's education class's significant art project, specially chosen liturgy and Prayers of the People, music selections, and Evensong's powerful prayers and readings. CAAG updated the Vestry at their September meeting and looks forward to more efforts together. Blessings of the Garth and Gardens and Blessings of the Animals are the closing events of Creation Season.

Interested in lighter footprint and ease in holiday shopping and preparation? Carol Dick and friends will lead a discussion Sunday, November 18, 12:15 after coffee hour, in the Parish Hall. Pooling ideas for "lighter" ways to celebrate the holidays.

Next CAAG meetings will be Sunday, October 12 (daylight savings ending) and Sunday, November 9. Both are second Sundays of the month, 12:20 after coffee hour, in the Parker Room. Come for the camaraderie! Bring your lunch!

Grace Notes "Notes"

On Creation and Refuge

It's 9 PM, and I'm lying on the daybed on the screened porch here at the farm. It's too cold for just a tee-shirt and jeans so I'm covered with a blanket crocheted fifty years ago. This might be the perfect combination of elements: cold air on my face, warm under the blanket.

From the yard I hear crickets and tree frogs, and in the distance, cars passing on Route 9. There's a slight smell of skunk. I can hear the dog breathing from her chair by the screens. She knows she can't go out and chase the skunk, but she's on high alert.

I'm practicing "sound meditation," as taught by a friend from church, Kell Julliard. It helps me relax. In days of rising temperatures and sea levels, political turmoil, and our own private pressures, pretty much everyone I know is dealing with some kind of anxiety. How do we find comfort when the truths of the present are brutal? How do we break the spell of worry? I'm needing to practice "self-soothing."

I first heard the term self-soothing in the 90s from a meditation teacher. He said, not with a little understatement, "Some of us didn't learn the art of self-soothing." He had served in Viet Nam. It was from him I learned what "sappers" were. God knows, he had plenty of reason to still be anxious by the time we met. But now it's 2025, and I need an immersion in this thing I never really learned. I'm exploring the art of soothing however I can.

One day last winter, I was playing an imagination game with a friend. (She was eight at the time.) We were choosing who we would pretend to be for the game that day. Other times she's chosen to be a dragon, an apothecary, a bird, but that day she opted to be a fairy, as she most often does. I came up with "soothsayer," prompting her to ask, "What's a soothsayer?" I confessed I wasn't totally sure, but guessed it was someone who could heal by seeing the future and telling the truth, that "sooth" was an old-fashioned word for truth. In her way she said, "That makes sense, because the truth is soothing."

So tonight on this cold porch I'm calling on inner resources and refuge. I can take refuge in the the sound of crickets and tree frogs, the feel of a blanket on a cool night, Friday Evensong, the play of imagination, the faces I see at church. I can create inner and outer refuge, places of safety and love.

--Anna Smith

Note: If you're interested in learning "sound meditation" and more, the "Joy of Living" group meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7 PM in the Grace Church connector.



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Great news from "the Berchmas Family"

From late 2018 until mid 2022, Grace Church helped welcome a refugee family from Rwanda to Amherst. Some of us at Grace were volunteers, many contributed financially, and many of you met them at church on several occasions.

They moved to suburban Indianapolis in summer 2022, mostly because of high housing costs here. Last week, Heidi received a video call from Umulisa with fantastic news: Her husband, whom she married before leaving Rwanda, had finally been approved for immigration and was sitting beside her in Indiana! It was a day we thought might never come because she had submitted the paperwork for it in January 2020 and it got stuck in the process. But once she became a citizen, she reapplied and it worked. This is such a wonderful story of patience and persistence!

But there's more:

All the adults have become U.S. citizens! Berchmas, now retired, spends a lot of his time in Africa, visiting old friends. Tuyi's partner (and father of Garnet), who became a refugee in France, is now in the U.S.; they were married in late September. Muka, Claude, and Gentile are also married and each has a child.

Berchmas's youngest four are pursuing their education: Mutoni has just been accepted into nursing school. Chance and Jeanine are in college programs. Sandrine is in high school, and the two children born here are in kindergarten.

This is all good news, indeed. Give thanks! Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale, Co-chairs of the Circle of Care

A Litany for the Restoration of Peace in The Holy Land

God of peace, we pray for the people of Palestine and Israel in these perilous and dangerous times.

For all who are fearful for the safety of their loved ones and themselves, we pray that the assurance of unfailing love, even in the midst of danger, settles upon them. Shelter them from despair and protect them from harm.

For all who are wounded, we pray they find healing.

For all who have died, we pray they find rest.

For all who grieve, we pray they find comfort.

For leaders on all sides, we pray for a renewed will to lay down arms, for the strength to put the grievances and wrongs suffered by their people to rest, and for the conviction to embrace a path of reconciliation and peace that preserves the rights and dignity of all of your children.

God of mercy, help us to remember there is no border that can separate us from your great love and protection, no stone that can sound the well of your deep mercy.

God of justice, we pray with hopeful hearts that your beloved children of the Holy Land will be spared a future of sustained violence and unrest and that a recognition of the humanity of all people will prevail.

We ask all this in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

- American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Haiti Ministry

Feeding Hungry Children at St. Matthieu

“Some of the children are fainting in class, because of hunger,” read the urgent email from St. Matthieu’s School principal Clibert Massillon last April. Food shortages have become acute in Haiti because gangs now block the major roads and intercept shipments, demand payment, or, in extreme cases, kidnap truck drivers and hold them for ransom. Farmers are afraid of being attacked while tilling their fields, so less food is being produced. Many people are subsisting on one meal a day, and children are often sent to school without breakfast.

Until the 2024-25 school year, St. Matthieu had been serving a daily hot lunch. The charity Food for the Poor provided the main ingredients--rice and beans--and Grace Church paid for spices, cooking oil, charcoal, and the salary of local cooks. But Food for the Poor was forced to suspend deliveries last year--even though it had food on hand--because road travel had become too dangerous for its drivers. For most of last year St. Matthieu had no school lunch.

When we learned how dire the situation had become, the Haiti Committee took immediate action. We asked our partners what foods they could buy in the local market, and they provided an itemized menu and budget. We advanced a modest sum from our emergency reserve—enough for a simple lunch four days a week in May and June. Meanwhile, knowing that the Grace congregation, generous though it has been, could not take on the full cost of a thousand meals a week on an ongoing basis, we started looking for other solutions.

Meds and Food for Kids (MFK) came to the rescue. This Haitian NGO, started by a pediatrician in 2003, produces three kinds of ready-to-eat peanut butter food—formulated for malnourished infants, pregnant and nursing mothers, and grade-school children. They train and support small-plot Haitian farmers who cultivate the peanuts, and their all-Haitian team operates a solar-powered factory in the north of Haiti to manufacture the therapeutic products. MFK has awarded St. Matthieu 40 boxes of peanut bars, weighing a combined 1230 pounds (more than half a ton!). A daily vitamin-enriched 40-gram bar apiece will quell those hunger pangs in October and November, enabling the children to concentrate on their studies.

Haitian and Haitian-American students at the Five Colleges took up a collection in the spring to add to the school’s food budget and sent a check to St. Matthieu in May. Grace’s Haiti Committee, buoyed by your generous response to various fundraising efforts, will send another stopgap donation in October, to make possible some school lunches until Christmas vacation. We continue to seek other sources of support for this purpose and would be grateful for suggestions from parishioners. And we ask you to join us in praying that some improvement in Haiti’s security situation will, before too long, enable charities like Food for the Poor to resume delivering rice and beans again.



Grace Notes "Notes"

September 2025 Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
Thursday, Oct. 2	9:30 AM	Life Story Writing	Connector
Saturday, Oct. 4	9:00 AM	Garden Clean Up	Garth plus
Sunday, Oct. 5	12:15 PM	Blessing of the Garth	Garth
Sunday, Oct. 5	4:00 PM	Blessing of Animals	Town Common
Saturday, Oct. 11	11:00 AM	Bell Ringing for Climate Action	Front Lawn
Sunday, October 12	12:15 PM	Climate Action@Grace Meeting	Parker Room
Monday, Oct. 13		Office Closed - Indigenous Peoples' Day	
Tuesday, Oct. 14	9:00 AM	Raising the Questions	Connector
Thursday, Oct. 16	9:30 AM	Life Story Writing	Connector
Thursday, Oct. 16	2:30 PM	Tea & Titles	Connector
Thursday, Oct. 16	5:00 PM	Executive Committee Meeting	Zoom
Tuesday, Oct. 21	4:00 PM	Haiti Ministry Meeting	Connector
Tuesday, Oct. 21	7:00 PM	Vestry Meeting	Zoom
Sunday, Oct. 26	9:00 AM	Youth Choir Open House	Parish Hall
Thursday, Oct. 30	9:30 AM	Life Story Writing	Connector

See the weekly schedule of services and standard events on page 2.

Would you harbor me?



Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri* (selections); Shaw, *To the Hands*; works by Dunphy, Guillaume & more
Followed by a reception featuring photos of works by artist Harriet Diamond (www.sculpturestories.org)

Sun., October 5, 2025, 2:30pm Grace Episcopal Church, 14 Boltwood Ave, Amherst



Grace Notes

October 2025

Return Service Requested

*"Grace is nothing else
but a certain
Beginning of
glory in us."
--Thomas Aquinas*

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Grace Episcopal Church, located on the Town Common of Amherst, is a community of prayer and action. If you want to connect with God or if you are seeking a deeper knowledge of God, and you would like to do this with a community that cares for you and honors you, then Grace Church is the place for you. Our doors are open to one and all, regardless of where you are in your spiritual journey.

We love because God first loved us. 1 John 4:19

Discover true life and true love at Grace Church.

Service Schedule

Sunday 8:00 am and 10:30 am Holy Eucharist
Wednesday 12:10 pm Rite I Holy Eucharist
and Healing Prayer
Friday 5:30 pm Evensong



See our website, www.gracechurchamherst.org for updates