

# Grace Notes

April 2026

## Those Mighty Acts

While Lent is quickly coming to an end, Holy Week begins with a prayer:

*Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

“The contemplation of those mighty acts” is a phrase worth contemplation. The stories we hear this week are very familiar for many of us, starting with Palm Sunday. A donkey untied and borrowed. Cloaks placed on the donkey and spread on the road. Branches cut from trees and spread on the road. A crowd ahead and behind shouting: “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

Later in the service, we hear Matthew’s version of our Lord’s passion and death. He tells of the plot to betray Jesus; the Passover meal shared with the twelve; the announcement during the meal that one of them will betray him. We all know the story that unfolds this week – the events that are to come and how Jesus will be crucified, buried, and raised from the dead.

I’ve known this story for as long as I can remember, and it’s that familiarity that makes me question how well I actually “contemplate those mighty acts.” Too much familiarity can result in glossing over the acts of this week, failing to consider (or contemplate) how exactly these acts are mighty.

Perhaps one keeps a safe distance from the story, because otherwise the reality of what took place is overwhelming. Jesus is fully incarnate, meaning fully Divine and fully Human. Everything is meaningless if it’s Jesus’ divinity that got him through Holy Week, and it’s absurd if everything rests solely on his humanity. God and creation together experience the events of this week, and that is mighty.

Jesus was a real, flesh-and-blood human being who lived and died and walked the earth. Throughout Lent, we heard stories in which his incarnation showed through. He takes on the devil in the wilderness, and he’s also hungry. At a well in Samaria he commissions a Samaritan woman to be an evangelist, and he’s thirsty. He heals a man born blind, placing clay made with his saliva on the man’s eyes. He brought his dear friend Lazarus back to life, and he cried real tears on his behalf.

And come Maundy Thursday, he will institute the great sacrament of Holy Communion, and drop to his knees twice: first to wash his disciples feet and then later in a moment of despair in the garden of Gethsemane. On Good Friday, he will proclaim “it is finished,” and his mother will cradle his dead body just like she did at his birth.

This Holy Week let us truly contemplate those acts that are mighty, because they are profoundly human experiences – bodily and real. A

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meal is eaten; disciples fall asleep; an ear is cut off; Peter warms himself by the fire; Simon bears the weight of the cross; Mary Magdalene and the women see it all, watching from a distance.

As both Human and Divine, Jesus took on flesh in all its fullness and fragility, even to the point of death.

And that is the mighty act we ought to contemplate.

May we have a blessed Holy Week and a joyous Easter.

The Rev. Tom Synan+

## 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.

## 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](mailto:slillydahl@library.umass.edu) for additional information.

## A Week at Grace

<b>Sunday</b>	
<b>8:00 am</b>	<b>Holy Eucharist</b>
9:00 am	Coffee Hour
9:15 am	Sunday School
<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Holy Eucharist</b>
11:30 am	Coffee Hour
7:30 pm	AA
<b>Monday</b>	
10:00 am	Staff Meeting
7:00 pm	AA
<b>Tuesday</b>	
8:30 am	Prayer Group
5:15 pm	AA
7:00 pm	Al-Anon
<b>Wednesday</b>	
<b>12:10 pm</b>	<b>Rite I Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayer</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	
7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal
<b>Friday</b>	
7:00 am	Men's Group
<b>5:30 pm</b>	<b>Evensong</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	
10:00 am	Bible Study
5:00 pm	AA
8:00 pm	AA

# Grace Notes "Notes"

## 2026 Holy Week

### **March 29--Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday**

8:00 am Holy Eucharist  
10:30 am Holy Eucharist (begin at the Parish Hall and process to the Church)

**March 30--Monday** 7:00 pm Holy Eucharist

**March 31--Tuesday** 7:00 pm Holy Eucharist

### **April 1--Wednesday**

12:10 pm Holy Eucharist (Rite I) with Healing;  
7:00 pm Tenebrae

### *The Paschal Triduum (the Sacred Three Days)*

#### **April 2--Maundy Thursday**

7:00 pm Foot Washing, Holy Eucharist of the Last Supper; Stripping of the Altar.  
All-night vigil before the Blessed Sacrament (Chapel)

#### **April 3--Good Friday**

4:00 pm Children's Stations of the Cross (Church and Town Common)  
7:00 pm Liturgy of the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ

#### **April 4--Holy Saturday/The Great Vigil of Easter**

9:00 am Liturgy of Holy Saturday  
8:00 pm The Great Vigil of Easter, Renewal of Baptismal Vows, and  
The Feast of the Resurrection (begins outside, in the Columbarium. All are welcome to bring  
bells to ring at the Gloria)

#### **April 5--Easter Sunday**

8:00 am & 10:30 am The Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
Easter egg hunt for children following both services

# Grace Notes "Notes"

## Raising the Questions

Raising the Questions is a Grace Church reading and discussion group that focusses on theology and liturgy. We meet monthly in the Connector on the third Tuesday at 9:30 am. Got questions? Come join us.

## 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](mailto:judith.wobst@gmail.com)

Our April 2026 meetings will be on April 2nd and 23rd 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](mailto:lcd@polysci.umass.edu)

## Grace Church Facebook Page

Be sure to like us at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071025877972> and check back frequently for updates, events, and announcements. There are so many wonderful things happening at Grace - please help spread the word and share our Facebook postings with friends.

## 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](mailto:ggnatek@gmail.com).

## 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](mailto:mjfowler3@comcast.net)).



# Grace Notes "Notes"

## Senior Warden Report for April 2026

Steve Wilco, Canon to the Ordinary, addressed the Vestry on Tuesday March 17th to inform us on what we might expect when The Reverend Tom Synan retires. He thought the process could take anywhere between 18-24 months and would include the following;

- a) A discernment period (a prayerful time for the congregation to heal, reflect on our identity and prepare for new leadership)
- b) Steve Wilco will line up help, to get us through the summer months.
- c) Profile for an interim, then getting an interim to get us into and through the fall months/holidays.
- d) While an interim is in place, we at Grace Church will be working on a profile for our new priest.
- e) Assemble a search committee seeking guidance from the new Bishop-elect Miguelina and again with Steve's help with posting our need on the various Episcopal websites.

We will be planning celebrations for Tom's journey from Grace Church. Saturday May 16th from 4-6:00 PM in the Parish Hall and again during the Pentecost Picnic on Sunday May 24th. We are hoping parishioners can make one or both celebrations to wish Tom Synan well. After Pentecost, you may see Tom Synan in and around town, but not on the Grace Church campus.

Regarding updates on the air conditioning feasibility study from Salas O'Brien.

The study listed four options:

1. Adding AC to our existing four burner heating unit using the same duct work that is currently in place.
2. Replacing our current heating unit with a new air-handling unit using mini splits for the connector and undercroft.
3. Replacing our current heating unit with a new air-handling unit to serve the church, and undercroft, mini splits for the connector.
4. Replacing the current heating unit with a new air-handling unit and also adding a mechanical air replacing unit.

John Robinson, Chris Freitag and myself met with Jeff Cichonski from Salas O'Brien to discuss the four different options and their respective pros and cons. Option 1 does not address the fact that the current heating unit is 20 years old and on the back end of the heating unit's useable life. In addition, all four existing burners have had some major work done on them.

Option 4 requires mechanical air replacement which we know is very costly and will be unsightly. Currently we have ample make up air that would fit and work with options # 2&3.

We have asked Salas and O'Brien to come up with CRA Condensate Risk Assessment also known as a Hygrothermal Analysis and a scope of work for option #2 and option #3. The scope of work will allow us to bid out either option so we can see what the costs will be for installation.

Tom Dougherty, Senior Warden

# 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.

### *Climate Change Prayer*

Holy God,  
earth and air and water are your creation,  
and every living thing belongs to you:  
have mercy on us  
as climate change confronts us.

Give us the will and the courage  
to simplify the way we live,  
to reduce the energy we use,  
to share the resources you provide,  
and to bear the cost of change.

Forgive our past mistakes  
and send us your Spirit,  
with wisdom in present controversies  
and vision for the future to which you call us  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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of Australia*

### **Singing Creation, Speaking Truth: Women's Voices, Earth's Gospel**

Join us at 4 pm on Saturday, May 9, 2026, for "Singing Creation, Speaking Truth: Women's Voices, Earth's Gospel," a contemplative and inspiring gathering that weaves together sacred readings, reflection, and song. Drawing on the wisdom of voices such as Hildegard of Bingen, Rachel Carson, Teresa of Ávila, Dorothy Day, and others, this event invites us to rediscover the holy presence of God in creation, to listen honestly to the earth's cries, and to renew our courage and hope. Through moments of wonder, lament, prayer, and blessing, we will explore how attention, compassion, and faithful action can become our shared response to God's greening power at work in the world. Come be nourished, challenged, and encouraged as we reflect on what it means to love God by loving the earth entrusted to our care.

# Grace Notes "Notes"



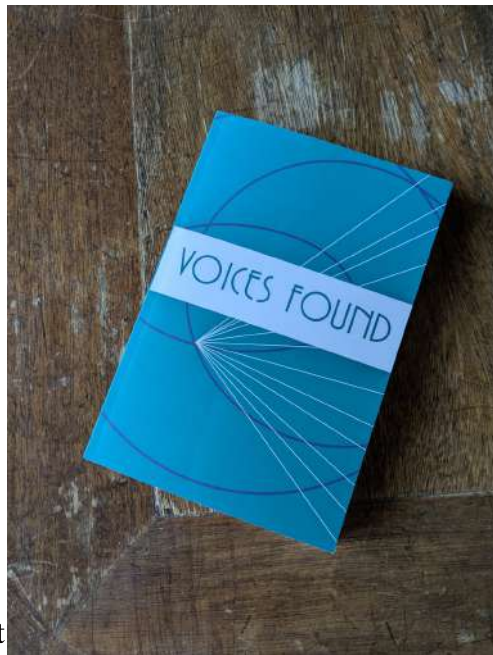
## Celebrating Bishop Fisher

Join us as we give thanks for Bishop Fisher's 13+ years as our chief pastor and spiritual leader. There are three opportunities ahead to gather, pray and share refreshment with the Bishop and his wife, the Rev. Betsy Fisher.

**Sunday, April 12 – St. Matthew's, Worcester, 3:00 pm,** hosted by the parishes of the Worcester County Corridor.

Individuals are invited to make financial gifts in thanksgiving for Bishop Fisher's service to **Building Bridges Veterans Initiative**.

The Transition Committee for the Election of the Tenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts.



## Voices Found: A New Hymnal for Grace Church

We're delighted to welcome a new hymnal at Grace Church starting on Palm Sunday, entitled Voices Found. From the preface: "Voices Found: Women in the Church's Song is a rich collection of hymns and spiritual songs by, for, and about women." This hymnal was inspired by the 20th anniversary of the Philadelphia Eleven, and published in 2004. After our own celebration of the 50th anniversary of those Eleven, a small group from Grace gathered together to find ways to include more music by women in our worship. Voices Found was identified as a top priority, as it is a beautiful collection of music that we can all sing together, and indeed some "VF" hymns have been included in worship over the past few years. The church was eventually able to secure

funding to purchase these hymnals, thanks in part to some generous donations from our parishioners. This will be an important part of our honoring the artistic work of women moving forward. We'll debut the hymnal with one hymn at the 8:00 a.m. service, and two hymns at the 10:30 a.m. service. Logistically speaking, the hymnal fits perfectly with Lift Every Voice and Sing II in the pew racks, essentially requiring no additional space in the sanctuary. Please take a moment to read through the preface and peruse the hymnal when you have a chance, and we hope you enjoy Voices Found!

—Noah Horn, on behalf of the committee: Ania Wieckowski Masinter, Rev. Heidi Frantz-Dale, Rev. Susan Schaeffer, and Rev. Megan McDermott (in absentia).

# Grace Notes "Notes"

## 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](mailto:chris.hoffmann@umass.edu)) for more information.

## 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.

## 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 unending 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

# Grace Notes "Notes"

## Rural Hours

new music for tenor and string quartet

*Rural Hours* features texts by Susan Fenimore Cooper, whose amazing and under-appreciated nature diary gives a delightful first-hand account of living in rural New York in the mid-19th century. Join us for the premiere of this multi-movement work by composer Gregory Brown, performed by the award-winning Apple Hill String Quartet and internationally renowned tenor James Reese.

8pm Friday April 17

Grace Episcopal Church  
14 Boltwood Ave  
Amherst MA

Amherst  
tickets by donation  
of the door

7pm Saturday April 18

3S Artspace  
319 Vaughan St  
Portsmouth NH

3S Artspace  
tickets and  
information



Apple Hill String Quartet



composer Greg Brown



tenor  
James Reese

# Haiti Ministry

## Bits of news from the Haiti Ministry

We just about have the final total for our February soup extravaganza, having sold about 300 quarts of soup with cookies and bread, and raising almost \$6,000 for St Matthew's School in Bayonnais. Again, a round of thanks goes out to everyone who joined in this terrific effort!!

On February 20th, on a snowy evening, we were invited to the UMass Haitian American Student Association PEACH Pageant where we gave a short presentation about our work in Haiti and the students modeled glamorous outfits. It was good to make a strong connection with these local students over Haiti and its needs. (photos below)



At the school in Bayonnais, a copier/printer/scanner was delivered to the library along with a toner cartridge and 5,000 sheets of printer paper.

The Haiti Ministry was awarded a grant for more solar panels to provide power to another building at the school and we await estimates on installing the panels, batteries and wiring. More on this in the next GraceNotes.

And once again, the Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew in Greenfield has committed to a Lenten pledge in support of St. Matthew's School. We met with a group from the church on March 1st, presented an update and noted their serious interest in this ministry, a blessing all around.

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## April 2026 Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
Sunday, March 29	8:00 AM and 10:30 PM	Palm Sunday - Holy Eucharists	Church
Monday, March 30	7:00 PM	Monday of Holy Week - Holy Eucharist	Church
Tuesday, March 31	7:00 PM	Tuesday of Holy Week - Holy Eucharist	Church
Wednesday, April 1	7:00 PM	Tenebrae	Church
Thursday, April 2	2:30 PM	Tea & Titles	Connector
Thursday, April 2	7:00 PM	Maundy Thursday	Church
Thursday, April 2		All Night Vigil	Chapel
Friday, April 3	4:00 PM	Stations of the Cross	Church and Common
Friday, April 3	7:00 PM	Good Friday	Church
Saturday, April 4	9:00 AM	Liturgy of Holy Saturday	Church
Saturday, April 4	8:00 PM	The Great Vigil	Church
Sunday, April 5	8:00 AM and 10:30 AM	Easter Sunday - Holy Eucharists	Church
Tuesday, April 7	7:30 PM	Concert to benefit Amherst ABC	Church
Wednesday, April 8	6:30 PM	Confirmation Class	Zoom
Thursday, April 9	10:00 AM	Life Story Writing	Connector
Friday, April 10	9:00 AM	Garden Ministry sorting session	Undercroft
Saturday, April 11	11:00 AM	Memorial Service - Patricia Andrews	Church
Sunday, April 12	11:30 AM	Confirmation Class	
Sunday, April 12	12:15 PM	Climate Action@Grace	Fireplace Room
Friday, April 17	8:00 PM	Apple Hill String Quartet Concert	Church
Saturday, April 18	9:00 AM	Garden Ministry sorting session	Undercroft
Sunday, April 19	9:30 AM	Holy Eucharist with Confirmation	Church
Tuesday, April 21	9:30 AM	Raising the Questions	Connector
Thursday, April 23	2:30 PM	Tea & Titles	Connector
Friday, April 24	9:00 AM	Garden Ministry sorting session	Undercroft
Thursday, April 30	10:00 AM	Life Story Writing	Fireplace Room
Thursday, April 30	11:00 AM	Memorial Service - Frank Robert "Bob" Moran	Church

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

# Grace Notes

April 2026

## Return Service Requested

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

Grace Episcopal Church • On the Common • 14 Boltwood Avenue, Amherst, MA 01002-2301  
Phone: (413) 256-6754 • Fax: (413) 256-3518 • [grace@gracechurchamherst.org](mailto:grace@gracechurchamherst.org) • [www.gracechurchamherst.org](http://www.gracechurchamherst.org)

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](http://www.gracechurchamherst.org) for updates