

2020 Annual Report

157th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish



February 7, 2021

Grace Episcopal Church
Amherst, Massachusetts

**2020 Annual Report
Grace Church Parish**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----|
| I. | Order of Business | 3 |
| II. | Membership | 4 |
| III. | Minutes from the 156th Annual Meeting | 11 |
| IV. | Rector's Sermon | 13 |
| V. | Vestry and Committee Reports | 17 |
| | Senior Warden | 17 |
| | Junior Warden | 19 |
| VI. | Commission Reports | 19 |
| | Liturgical Commission | 19 |
| | Christian Formation and Education | 21 |
| | Parish Life Commission | 26 |
| | Pastoral Care Commission | 27 |
| | Outreach Commission | 28 |
| | Stewardship Commission | 33 |
| VII. | Treasurer's Report | 33 |
| VIII. | Membership Information | 35 |

157th Annual Meeting of Grace Episcopal Church
Amherst, Massachusetts
7 February 2021

I. Order of Business

| | |
|--|---|
| Morning Prayer | 9:30 AM via Zoom |
| Call to Order | Gail Gnatek, Clerk of the Vestry |
| Acceptance of Roll of Membership | |
| Reception of Minutes of the 156th Annual Meeting, February 2, 2020 | |
| 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 |
| Reception of Reports from Officers and Commissions | |
| Treasurer's Remarks | Mark Leonas, Treasurer |
| Remarks of Wardens and Rector | Marion Rosenau, Senior Warden Jeffrey DeSantis, 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 2020

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Hannah Abbott | Wade Atkinson | The Rev. Jane Beebe |
| Erik Abdow | Emma Ayers | Katherine Benfer |
| Jessie Abdow | Elihu Ayers | Mary Kay Berenson |
| Luke Abdow | Jim Ayers | Angelica M. Bernal |
| Steve Abdow | Andrea Baird | Rachel Blain |
| Sue Abdow | Cameron Baird | Beatrice Blain |
| Doug Adler | Ian Baird | Kerry Blanchard |
| Brenda Aldrich | Mackenzie Baird | Jack Blay |
| Rick Aldrich | John Baird | Maria Jose Botelho |
| Barrett Allison | Tom Baker | Sarah Boy |
| Benjamin Allison | Elizabeth Baker | Paul Bracciotti |
| Caroline Allison | Chris Baker | Dee Brace |
| James Allison | Samantha Baker | Emily Breon |
| Donald Allison | Nancy Baker | Chris Breton |
| Edith Allison | Joey Baker | Amber Breton |
| Gordon Anderson | Kate Baker | JaeLynn Breton |
| Lydia Anderson | Jeanne Balcom | Nate Brown |
| Gordon "Gordy" Anderson | Jacob Balderston | Beth Brown |
| Jess Andrews | Toby Barnes | Liam Brown |
| Patricia Appelbaum | Bodhi Barnes-Bernal | Beth Brown |
| Sanjay Arwade | David Barnett | Gregory Brown |
| Cyrus Arwade | Sharon Barnett | Georgianna Brown |
| Jonathan Ash | Tamara Barnett | Gillian Brown |
| Raiden Ash | Ruth Barrett | Catherine Brown |
| Sophie Ash | Steve Barrett | Malcolm "Max" Brown |
| Tori Ash | Emelyn Bashour | Karen Bryant |
| Stephen Atkinson | Gabrielle Bashour | Don Buckloh |
| Chandler Atkinson | Randall Bausor | Jane Buckloh |
| Rollin Atkinson | Charles Beall | Mary Bull |
| Katherine "Kate" Atkinson | Andy Beall | Lynne Byler |
| Lane Atkinson | Eileen Beall | Tim Callard |

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Patricia Callard | Duane Dale | Helen Drake |
| Melvin Carlson | Dick Damon | Jessica Duda |
| Wendryn Case | Beth Damon | Jim Duda |
| Kathleen Casey | Chelsea Dann | Gillian Duda |
| Marlaina Cataldi | Jennifer Dann | Elizabeth Duda |
| Sebrina Cataldi | Cecily Dann | Maria Dye |
| Sarah Chadwick | O'Keefe Dann | Lee Easton |
| Harry Chadwick | Jaime Davila | Christophe Enhstrom |
| Veronica Chapman | Gabriel Davila-Bustamante | Jeanette Erard |
| Matthew Charity | Brenda Davis | Michael Erard |
| Andrew Chase | Elizabeth Davis | Annie Lokangu Etinde |
| Calla Chase | Fletcher Davis | Floribert Etinde |
| Lucy Chase | Lyle Denit | Alpha Etinde |
| Samuel Chase | Lucas Denit | David Eve |
| Deborah Christakos | Jeffrey DeSantis | Tomi Eve |
| Casey Clark | Karen DeSantis | Max Eve |
| Daniel Cleary | Donna Devine | Kira Eve |
| Jeremy Coleman | Carol Dick | Suzannah Fabing |
| Emily Coleman | Charlie Dickinson | Kent Faerber |
| Jack Coleman | Will Dickinson | Martha Favre |
| Juliet Coleman | Emma Dickinson | Danielle Federa |
| Carolyn Collette | John Dineen | Prunella Fiddian-Green |
| Sue Ann Collins | Denise Dineen | MJ Fowler |
| Maria Constantine | Patrick Dineen | The Rev. Heidi Frantz-Dale |
| Dennis Costa | Daniel Dineen | Ellie Fraser |
| Brendan Coughlin | Matthew Dineen | Melanie Freitag |
| Kevin Coughlin | Anne Ditzler | Melissa Freitag |
| Lauren Coughlin | Nancy Dole | Rebecca Freitag |
| Marie Coughlin | Tom Dougherty | Christopher Freitag |
| Cara Crandall | Kitty Dougherty | Elizabeth French Finn |
| Patricia Creaser | Kellen Dougherty | Barb Fukushima |
| Cecil Currin | Jackie Dougherty | June Gaeke |
| Lou Currin | Stewart Dougherty | Greyson Garrett |

Sophia Gergely
Gretchen Gerzina
Benjamin Gilsdorf
Anna Gilsdorf
Sean Gilsdorf
Andrew Glace
Mya Glace
Kathy Glime
Gail Gnatek
Andrew Gnatek
Dan Gnatek
David Goff
Yolanda Goff
Abigail Goff
Jack Goodell
Mary Goodwin
Alice Goodwin-Brown
Matthew Gregory
Susan Haff
Andrew Haight
Charles Haight
Susan Haight
Tim Hampson
Amy Hampson
Carter Hampson
Quinn Hampson
Liza Hampson
Loy Harris
Colleen Harris
Marian Hartblay
Amber Hartblay
Cassandra Hartblay
Charlotte Hathaway

Bob Hawley
Bennett Hazlip
Joseph Hazlip
Ilona Hazlip
Lorie Healy
Anne Herrington
Marsha Hertel
Linda Ho
Jonathan Ho
Carlton Ho
Marissa Ho
Mary Hocken
Anne Hoffmann
Sarah Hoffmann
Willy Hoffmann
Chris Hoffmann
Margaret (Meg) Holladay
Ann Holland
Anne Homme
Adam Honig
James Honig
Charlotte Honig
Jefferson Hunter
Pamela Hunter
Caleb Ireland
Emily Ireland
Ruthie Ireland
Michael Ireland
Valerie Ivy
Adrienne Jacobson
Adam Jacobson
Deborah Jacque
Ronald Jacque

Miriam Jenkins
John Jenkins
Tony Jewell
Cheryl Johnston
Kimberly Jones
Steve Judge
Sharon Judge
Maddox Keedy
Mia Keedy
Jeffrey Keedy
Nancy Keefe
Janine Kelly
Charlotte Kelly
Robert Kelly Jr.
Patrick Kelly
L. Finley Keneally
Brown Kennedy
Gabriel Kennedy Costa
Michael Kennedy Costa
Margaret King
Laura Klock
Suzanne Klock
Lynn Klock
Benjamin Klock
Stephanie Klug
Elizabeth Klug
Kelley Knight
Caseem Knight
Wendy Kohler
Walter Kohler
Alan Konieczny
Jo-Ann Konieczny
Maria Konieczny

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Joseph Konieczny | Fiona Lowry | Jada Mattrey |
| William Konieczny | Susannah Lowry | Stephanie Mattrey |
| Jasper Labor | Bridget Lowry | Gianna Mattrey |
| Erik LaMotte | Janet Lowry | Trent Maxey |
| Kirsten LaMotte | Samuel Lowry | Libby Maxey |
| Betty Lange | Lisa Lukas | Amory Maxey |
| Jennifer Lapis | Tilman Lukas | Henry Maxey |
| Robert Lattanzi | Kristen Luschen | Megan McDermott |
| Susan Lattanzi | Violet Lynn | Lisa McDonald |
| Michael Lavine | Liberty Lynn | James McDonald |
| Noah Lavine | Sara Malsch | Catherine McGraw |
| Isaac Lavine | Sheila Mammen | Diane McKelvey |
| Louise Lavine | Bande Mangaliso | Kira McKelvey |
| Peter Laylin | Mzamo Mangaliso | Bridget McKelvey |
| Peter Laylin | Unati Mangaliso | Stephen McKelvey |
| Joan Leavitt | Nomazengie Mangaliso | Amelia Mead |
| Samuel Leonard | Fiona Mangan | Jim Mead |
| Bill Leonard | Bill Manning | Katherine Messina |
| Deborah Leonard | Arlene Manning | Audrey Miller |
| Katherine Leonard | Sharon Marino | Georgann Mirick |
| Margaret Leonard | Nathan Marino | Peter Mishkin |
| Andrew Leonas | Kevin Marino | Glenn Miskovsky |
| Mark Leonas | Tyler Marino | Martha Mitchell |
| Helen Leung | Elizabeth Markovits | Jessica Mix Barrington |
| Ann Lewin | Mark Marshall | Meriel Moner |
| Sara Liberty-Laylin | Erin Martineau | Emily Anne Moner |
| Sandra Lillydahl | Mary Martini | Douglas Moore |
| Elija Lillydahl-Schroeder | Cindy Mathews | Janet Moore |
| Hosanna Lillydahl-Schroeder | James Mathews | David Moriarty |
| Catherine Linberg | Betsy Mathews | Dorothy Morse |
| Susan Lowance | Philip Mathews | Tony Morse |
| Ann S. Lowell | Jack Mattrey | Eliot Moss |
| Nancy Lowry | Ruby Mattrey | Castor Moss |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Natalie Moss | Janice Peterman | Lucy Robinson |
| Elizabeth Musgrave | Carlton Pickron | John Robinson |
| Alan Musgrave | Christine Plette | Patricia Rogalski |
| Sandy Muspratt | Gemma Polino | Stephen Rogalski |
| Hannah Muszynski | Maria Polino | Marion Rosenau |
| Anthony Muszynski | Antonio Polino | Peter Rosengarten |
| Jozef Muszynski | Francesca Polino | Mindy Rosengarten |
| Samuel Muszynski | Joseph Polino | Ken Samonds |
| Elizabeth Neill | Jane Price | Gaylord Saulsberry |
| Julie Nelson | Catherine Quinlan | Janet Elias Saulsberry |
| Dee Dee Niswonger | Victoria Quinlan | Anne Scarff |
| Gary Niswonger | Virginia Ramos-Velazquez | The Rev. Susan Schaeffer |
| Catherine Obbard | Jean Rankin | Katie Schendel |
| Joan O'Brien | Larry Rankin | Stephen Schreiber |
| Jeffrey O'Brien | Rick Read | Nina Scott |
| Annabel Olankapo | Jennifer Read | James Scott |
| Sally Olankapo | Matthew Read | Amanda Seaman |
| Bethany Olankapo | Linus Reed-McNally | Harry Seelig |
| Florence Olankapo | Maureen Reed-McNally | Sharon Seelig |
| Olusoji Olankapo | Rudy Reed-McNally | Phebe Sessions |
| Erika Olson | Karla Reed-McNally | Trudie May Seterdahl |
| Isolda Ortega-Bustamante | Melinda Reid | Peter Seterdahl |
| Edward Owaki | Laura Ricard | Elsa Seterdahl |
| Kenneth Page | Andre Ricard | Anna Seterdahl |
| Amy Palaia | Robert Rice | Sudha Setty |
| Douglas Peavey | Sara Riddington | Mira Setty-Charity |
| Heidi Peltier | Dahlia Riddington | Mohan Setty-Charity |
| Lucien Perrault | Forset Riddington | Mary Ellen Shaughan |
| Fred Perry | Leif Riddington | Marcia Sheehan |
| Thomas Perry | DeAnne Riddle | Eugene Sheehan |
| Evan Perry | Chris Riddle | Peter Sikowitz |
| Alex Perry | Emily Riddle | Bjorn Silvia |
| Mark Peterman | Matthew Riddle | Teghan Silvia |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Angela Silvia | Jeannette Stebbins | Eric Treyz |
| Bryn Margaret Siudzinski | Matthew Stebbins | Peter Treyz |
| Meghan Siudzinski | Sara Stelzner | Mary Sidney Treyz |
| Robert Siudzinski | Barbara Sternau | Laurie Tupper |
| Madeline Siudzinski | Doug Stewart | Sarah Turgeon |
| Kevyn Smith | Ericka Stewart | Margaret Turgeon |
| Lucy A. Smith | John Stifler | Aidan Van Cleef |
| Betsy Cannon Smith | Pete Stoneham | Bryce Van Cleef |
| Ellie C. Smith | Luke Stoneham | Ann Van Dyke |
| Randall P., Jr. Smith | Joel Stoneham | Elizabeth Van Dyke |
| Donovan N. Smith | Elise Stromgren | Archie Velazquez |
| Randall P. Smith | Brendan Sullivan | Bonnie Vigeland |
| Anna Smith | Brooke Sullivan | Jane Wald |
| Peter Snedecor | Kyle Sullivan | Marianne Wald |
| Jennifer Soper | Cornelia Sullivan | James Wald |
| James Soper | Thomas Sweeney | Micah Walter |
| Joshua Soper | Paul Swem | Natascha Wanninger |
| Katherine Soper | The Rev. Thomas Synan | Tatjana Wanninger |
| Cynthia Spell | Pat Szumowski | Sebastian Wanninger |
| Catherine Spence | Kenneth Talan | Eve Webster |
| George Spence | Catherine Talan | The Rev. Raymond Webster |
| Jack Spence | Warren Taylor | Charles Weeber |
| Rob Spence | Walter Tebbetts | Nancy Rose Weeber |
| Richard Spurgin | Charles Tebbetts | Sharon Wells |
| Caroline Spurgin | Janet Teng | Nicholas Wells |
| Sarah Grace Spurgin | Zachary Thompson | Andrew Wells |
| Diana Spurgin | Colin Thompson | Charlotte Westhead |
| Kate Spurgin | Jane Thurber | Ethel White |
| Richard Spurgin | Kate Thurber | Adam Wilburn |
| Adrian Stair | Patricia Tillona | Jeanette Wilburn |
| Emily Starkweather | David Todd | Emma Wilburn |
| Bruce Stebbins | Justin Treyz | Aidan Wilburn |
| Owen Stebbins | Frederick Treyz | Pam Wilkinson |

Marion Williams
Kate Williams
Keith Williams
Elia Williams
Dani Williams
Kevin Williams
Sophie Williams
Isabel Williams
Lee Williams
David Williams
Fox Williams

Melinda Williams
Cheryl Wilson
Reynolds Winslow
Kimberly Wissemann
David Wissemann
Judith Wobst
Gregory Wobst
Natalia Wobst
H Martin Wobst
Ann Wood
John Wood

Nancy Wood
Jana Wren Zide
Jonathan Wright
Meg Kelsey Wright
Arline Wright
Andrew Zamora
Helen Zatycka
Enhua Zhang
Sydney Zobel
Noah Zobel

III. Minutes of the 156th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish, Amherst, Massachusetts convened on February 2, 2020

On February 2, 2020, following a brunch provided by the Brother Lawrence Guild, the 156th Annual Meeting of Grace Church was called to order by the Senior Warden, Marion Rosenau, I in place of Gail Gnatek, Clerk of the Vestry.

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

Role of the Membership 2020

Marion Rosenau asked for any additions or correction to the Role of Membership, 2020. Ross Goodwin Prom was added. A motion to accept the Role as amended was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of the 155th Annual Meeting

Minutes of the 155th Annual Meeting, held February 3, 2019, were reviewed. A correction to the Treasurer's Report (a comma replaced a period) was moved and accepted. A motion to accept the minutes as amended was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote.

Retiring Vestry Members

Senior Warden, Marian Rosenau, recognized the Vestry members who have completed their terms: Kathy Glime, Laura Klock, Trent Maxey, and Walter Tebbetts. Junior Warden Mark Peterman will be retiring and Kathy Glime will continue on to another term. Marion 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 Marion Rosenau, 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 the Vestry, Officers of the Vestry, and Delegates to Diocesan Convention are:

Vestry (each for a term of three years)

Sarah Chadwick
Donna Devine
Kathy Glime

Officers of the Vestry (each for a term of one year)

Senior Warden Marion Rosenau
Junior Warden Jeffery DeSantis
Treasurer Mark Leonas
Clerk Gail Gnatek

Lay Delegates to Convention
Jeannette Stebbins
Ericka Stewart

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

Patricia Tillona 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 position by the Rev. Tom Synan.

Report of the Stewardship Committee

Tom Dougherty presented the report of the Stewardship Committee. In 2019 the Stewardship campaign received pledges of \$455,000 at the time of the meeting, for a goal of \$500,000. Pledges are expected to continue to come in.

Planned Giving and St. Michaels Fellowship Report

Doug Adler spoke for the Planned Giving Committee. The committee provides parishioners in their estate planning. A memorial plaque that recognizes those who have included Grace Church in their estate planning in the past 25 years was announced. He encouraged membership to consider making a gift to benefit the next generations of Grace Parishioners.

Janet Teng and Patricia Tillona were recognized for their long service to the committee.

Circle of Care

The Rev. Heidi Frantz-Dale spoke on behalf of the Circle of Care and invited membership to help with supporting refugee families. A transportation coordinator, a pool of volunteer drivers, and leads for employment were asked for.

A motion for the reception of all reports included in the annual report was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mark Leonas presented the Treasurer's Report. This past year was the 11th year in a row in which Grace has ended in a positive budget balance. Thanks to a \$50,000 bequest, Grace Church is currently debt-free, and additional bequests are going to the Diocesan investment fund. Tom Dougherty and the Finance Committee were recognized and thanked for their service. The committee is considering making online payments of pledges possible.

Senior Warden's Report

Marion Rosenau thanked the Rev. Tom Synan, the Rev. Megan McDermott, and the Executive Committee for their help through the year. She also thanked Dick Damon for facilitating the removal and repair of the church organ motor. Marion reported on the town of Amherst's plans for changes to the western end of the town

common. As currently stated, these plans would greatly impact Grace Church, especially the parking in front of the church. The Vestry will be closely watching this planning process.

Junior Warden's Report

Mark Peterman thanked the Rev. Tom Synan and Marion Rosenau for supporting his work as Junior Warden. He thanked those who served on the reconstituted Property Committee. He thanked fellow parishioners for their kind support.

The Rector's Report

The Rev. Tom Synan referenced his sermon from today and recorded in the 2019 Annual Report recognizing the many ways we bring light into this world. He offered thanks to the Altar Guild, the lectors, acolytes, LEMS, ushers, counters, coffee hour and other hospitality volunteers, the wonderful choir, Beth and Dick Damon, our music director and organize. He also thanked Bishop Doug Fisher.

Questions were taken from the floor, the first concerning the state of the Parke House. The inefficiency of the old windows and waste of heat was noted. Tom replied that it is a recognized need. The Junior Warden, Jeff DeSantis explained that when replacing the windows in the Parke House and Old Rectory were explored in the past, the Historical Society asked that wooden window frames be used. These would have to be custom-made and would be very expensive (approximately \$1,000 per unit). The costs may look different now if we use standard-sized wooden windows. A suggestion to interior storm windows are sometimes installed to good effect in historical buildings was made from the floor.

John Robinson rose to explain the presence of excavators on church property. The town of Amherst is removing above-ground utility lines.

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

The meeting concluded with a hymn and prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Trent Maxey (outgoing Vestry member)

IV. Rector's Sermon and Address, February 7, 2021

The season of Epiphany, a season of increasing light, is a season of revelation, a time of discovery, particularly discovering the reality of Jesus, who Jesus is, whose entrance into this world was shown by the light of a single star. Today's Scriptures are particularly on point as texts of revelation. The message of Isaiah to a people suffering, depressed, anxious, homesick, and wishing for things to go back to normal because they're in exile in Babylon is an encouraging proclamation of hope that the reality of God is that God is with us always, perhaps especially in times of crisis.

Jesus is at the start of his ministry – Day 1. He was baptized and tempted in the wilderness. He's returned to the area and has gathered his first disciples and on this first day he taught in the synagogue, where he healed a man who called out and challenged Jesus' authority.

Today is a continuation of that first day of ministry. Jesus now leaves the synagogue and goes to Simon's house for dinner. While there Jesus learns that Simon's mother-in-law is not well and he, almost as an aside, heals her. Word of course quickly spreads that there's a healer at Simon's house and soon enough Jesus spends the Sabbath afternoon running a triage center, taking care of everyone who needs some help.

Evening came and morning followed, day two begins with Jesus perhaps processing the reality of his ministry and how taxing it will be and so he goes off to be by himself. Simon and the others panic when they think Jesus has left them and so they go and literally hunt him. They want him to come back to house and stay there. They do not want to let him go. But instead he tells them, "let's move on to other towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And they left and moved on.

What is the message that Jesus came out to proclaim?

His message is both a promise and an invitation: a promise that God is with us and an invitation to participate in God's work in the world. Mark's Gospel succinctly lays out who Jesus is, who God is, and who we are and who we are called to be. Jesus is a healer and reconciler; the Messiah showing us the way to God and the nearness of God. And God, as proclaimed by Jesus and Isaiah, is very present and very real, full of love and compassion for all of God's creation. And we are people invited by God to be part of the divine mission and ministry of healing and reconciliation in a broken world.

For 2000 years that is what the Church has been called to do – help heal and repair the world and be agents and models of reconciliation. Historically the Church has been at its best whenever it rises to the occasion of serving the common good through acts of charity and self-sacrifice. Simple acts of kindness – providing shelter or food and water or basic healthcare – have been the way the Church has made God and Christ manifest. In the end, perhaps we all will be judged primarily by how well we conduct ourselves especially in times of challenge and crisis.

In this time of COVID, the Church's collective witness in our country is ambiguous at best, if not lacking. Lots of arguments raised, starting almost day one, about the infringement of liberty, First Amendment violations, and the Church seemingly wanting to put itself first. Decades from now, when the final analysis of our time will be written, I'm not sure how well the Church collective will be viewed. How far has the Church come up short and lacking? That I can't answer, but one thing I am certain of and which I want to emphasize today is how blessed, honorable, and terrific this congregation has been in this most unusual time of COVID.

Plain and simple, you have sustained the mission and ministry that God and Christ call us to, and have risen to the challenges brought to us by the pandemic. It has not been easy and God's work is never easy, so my message today for our Annual Meeting is: THANK YOU. Thank you for everything you have done in the name of and for Grace Church.

The year 2020, began with such great promise, starting with its name: 20-20, a year of perfect vision. We got off to a good start. We made it to the beginning of Lent, when everything changed – March 13th to be exact – the day the Bishop advised us of a two week suspension, not a closing. Grace Church never closed. Throughout the year we have done what we are called to do, doing what we can do, given the circumstances we're in.

Thinking this was a short suspension to help "flatten the curve", we discontinued all in-person gatherings, including worship. We sent everyone to the National Cathedral. In the first few weeks it was fun to see parishioners names go by in the chat box on the side, but eventually I closed that window, because that's one

chatty pew. Almost eleven months later I still attend the National Cathedral and over time I feel it has become my liturgical telenovela. Each Sunday when I click the link I wonder who's on this week and anxiously await to see what Imani's latest fashion statement will be. She is star quality.

Weeks went by and there was no flattening of any curve, and so we adapted, offering sermons on YouTube. We commemorated Holy Week and Easter through videos and messages meant to convey the essence of what we normally do in-person. God bless Beth and Dick Damon, our Music Director and Organist, and our choir who have valiantly provided hymns, music, and anthems through a variety of on-line presentations, including a wonderful service of Advent Lessons and Carols. Music is central to our spirituality. Your ministry is vitally important. Thank you for all that you are doing and please keep up the good work.

In March we also started the Daily Prayer – a message that should be landing in your email every day at 5:45am. The intent of this daily message was to keep us connected in what was thought to be for a few weeks. The Daily Prayer, which consists of a prayer for the day, portions of our Prayers of the People, and a poem or meditation is now approaching its first anniversary. Many thanks to all of you who read the Daily Prayer, share your thoughts and comments with us and share it with others, and thank you also to those who share with us prayers and poems to that are special to you. My hope is that this has been and can be a daily discipline to feed one's soul in the strange time we are in.

We also opened the church for private prayer and devotion. Throughout we have had a steady stream of folks coming through the door. Many of you as well as others who needed a place to pray or maybe take a little time out from the world. Thank you to the altar guild and the flower guild who have maintained the beauty of the interior of the church so that it reflects the days and seasons of the Church year. And thank you to all gardeners, planters, and others who likewise have maintained the upkeep of our church, making it such a beautiful and inviting house of prayer.

As a people faith, because of the pandemic we offer a menu of opportunities for prayer: daily prayer via email, private prayer and devotion at the church, an online prayer group Thursday evenings, Friday night Evensong which is also online, our Sunday morning service that's pre-recorded so you can watch it that morning before the 10:15 Coffee Hour or throughout the week, and services from the National Cathedral.

By April, our missions, ministries, and meetings did not go into tongues, but rather we added a new word to our vocabulary: ZOOM. From Vestry to Outreach to the Men's Group to Over 60s to Bible study to Coffee Hour, most of our programs moved online and we learned to adapt to the clunkiness of this new technology, but while always sustaining our desire to honor God and serve the common good. God bless our ministries to Haiti and Ramallah, as well as the Circle of Care for never giving up these important ministries we do for others. The students at St. Mathieu once again started the academic year with new school uniforms. We also just had a fun night of a 1000 soups, which were delicious and for a great cause. Bisan, the student we sponsor at Episcopal Technical & Vocational Training Center, thankfully is doing well in school and receiving good grades in the first semester, while managing the struggle of trying to learn during a pandemic. And here at home, the Berchmas family applied for and received their Green Cards, and several members of the family have learned to drive. Thanks be to God! And thank you to everyone who sustains these worthwhile and important ministries. And if that was not enough, this parish rose to the occasion and started a NEW ministry: Grace's Closet, which collects and distributes warm clothes for people in need in our community. A special shout out and thank you to Kevyn Smith for recognizing a potential crisis developing in our local community as winter was quickly approaching that we could help alleviate.

The generosity of this parish every year is humbling, but this year you outdid yourselves. Despite no in-person gatherings, food donations to the Amherst Survival Center suffered no decline. Once again we donated almost 1500 pounds of food, and provided 400+ packages of bread stuffing at Thanksgiving. Local school children received backpacks and school supplies, and 40 families (95 children) had a brighter Christmas thanks to the generosity of you. In April the Outreach Commission asked the parish to raise \$10,000 as an Easter Offering for the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts COVID-19 Fund, which you gladly did and surpassed, raising \$18,000. Fourth Sunday of the month collections became monthly opportunities to give, and give you did. In a year of tremendous uncertainty and growing needs, this congregation gave away approximately \$50,000 to deserving agencies near and far, such as the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, the Episcopal Church in Navajoland, and the Archbishop's Beirut Emergency Fund. On top of that the Vestry also declined the generous offer from the Diocese to provide approximately \$65,000 of funding from the Payroll Protection Plan, determining that we would rather that money go to others who need it more than we do. Thank you for being so generous and so caring for the welfare and well-being of others. You are my heroes.

And speaking of heroes, let me give a giant shout out to the children and youth of this parish. God bless you as you let God into your life during these difficult times. Sunday School, albeit modified because of the current conditions, continues to meet regularly online and a Confirmation class is in formation right now getting ready for Bishop Doug's next visit. And let's hear it for the Christmas pageant, which came with a plethora of narrators and award winning performers. Thank you, thank you, thank you for making my Christmas! It was fantastic.

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. God bless you for being who you are and for being part of this parish. Always remember: this is your church as much as it is anybody else's and don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise. A big thank you, Megan McDermott for all the great work you are doing this year, and to everyone who upholds and supports the young people of this parish.

The mission and ministry of the Church manifests in so many ways. Thank you to everyone who stood in silence when we rang and tolled the bell in memory of George Floyd. That was a powerful afternoon. Thank you for sponsoring a Saint Michael and All Angels feast for the Survival Center in lieu of our annual September picnic. Just because we can't gather in-person shouldn't mean there can't be a celebration. Thank you to those who participated in the Sojourner Truth Walking Tour and the Wednesday night program "Let's Talk about Race". It is important for us to be allies and agents of change. Thank you to everyone who participated in the mini-Bazaar, which was so well received by the greater community. Wherever two or three are gathered, Christ is there. Thank you to everyone who shared their palm display at Palm Sunday, who remembered their deceased loved ones on All Souls Day, or who spoke of what they are thankful for at Thanksgiving. It is important to mark, remember, and commemorate the days of feast and fast of the Church year. And thank you to all who have striven with God and with humanity and with Zoom, and have prevailed. Great is your reward in heaven, if I have a say.

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 charity. God bless you for your faith in God and your faith in God's Church – a wonderful and sacred mystery.

My friends, this has been a year, a year unlike any other: the recent confusion of the vaccination rollout, the frustration of trying to earn a living or get an education, the politicization of attending church, and the tragedy of over 400,000 dead in our country because of this virus. In the midst of all that, I remind myself how I need to

count my blessings, because I am incredibly blessed, blessed especially by you. Thank you for your ceaseless commitment and dedication to the mission and ministry to which God is calling us. We will continue to persevere and make our way through this pandemic, we have made it this far, and with God's help we will come out the other side – hopefully sooner than later.

Oh what joy there will be when we can gather together in-person again. There is no other place I would want to be right now than right here with you at this amazing Grace Church. I am incredibly honored to be your Rector. Thank you for being you and thank you for being here.

God bless Grace Church and God bless each and every one of you!

Please stay safe and sat healthy!

Amen

The Rev. Tom Synan

V. Vestry Reports

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

The year 2020 at Grace began as have many years before. The Vestry met in February, about two weeks after Annual Meeting, welcomed new members and began a discussion of plans for the year ahead. Ideas were exchanged about inviting representatives of various ministries to attend a Vestry meeting in order to educate Vestry members about the work of the ministry and to provide the ministry leaders an opportunity to communicate any needs or concerns to the Vestry. Participation in Diocesan Leadership Day scheduled in mid-March was discussed.

Then Covid-19 appeared and soon became a pandemic. The governor declared a state of emergency and our world changed. Schools, shops, restaurants and churches were ordered to close, and residents were told to stay in their homes. At Grace the March Vestry meeting was cancelled, all in person services ceased, and meetings of parish groups were cancelled. Our hopes that the situation might be of short duration were soon dashed and it became apparent that we were likely to be living in this new world for an indefinite period of time.

This new world presented an overwhelming challenge to our clergy, Tom and Megan, as well as to our employees. We are truly blessed that all of them quickly faced the challenge with great determination. Tom and Megan were forced to develop technical skills which they never imagined they would need as an integral part of parish ministry. Terrie and Jaana cheerfully approached extra tasks and David has done an extraordinary job keeping the campus clean and safe. Beth and Dick have helped us hear the music in new ways.

Supporting and communicating with parish members while unable to hold religious services, or in fact to greet or meet in person, may have seemed like an insurmountable task, But Tom and Megan worked quickly on solutions. Daily prayers, with readings and poems, were sent by email to all parishioners able to receive them. This has continued every day for what is now almost a year. Vestry members made phone calls to check on other parishioners. Before long abbreviated Sunday services were made available each Sunday on youtube.

Now, choir members, masked and socially distanced, are participating in the youtube services thanks to Beth and Dick. Coffee hour and meetings are now taking place on Zoom, a platform many of us had never heard of prior to the pandemic. Even Christmas services (including the pageant) were presented in new and ingenious ways.

The Bishop started a series of monthly Zoom meetings with the wardens from all the parishes in the Diocese in order to communicate important information as well as to allow communication between parishes concerning successes and problems parishes are facing during this time.

On behalf of all the parishes in the Diocese applied, and was approved to receive, funds from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program which was designed to assist employers in maintaining the jobs of their employees. Because Grace Church is fortunate to be financially solid, the Vestry, at Tom's suggestion, unanimously voted to turn down the funds in hopes that the funds might go to parishes with greater needs. Grace has been able to continue to pay all employees at their normal rate.

Guidance and regulations concerning behavior during the pandemic comes from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. Our Diocese paired with the Diocese of Massachusetts to issue "A Journey By Stages" the guiding principal of the considerations for the reopening process for churches was identified as "love thy neighbor". When the Governor lifted the ban on holding religious services, the advice from the Diocese remained to proceed with caution. "A Journey by Stages" includes check lists of factors which must be met before reopening. Each Deanery has formed a committee to review and give advice on each plan to reopen submitted by parishes.

The Commonwealth places additional requirements on employers regarding their responsibility to the employees. For this reason, a committee composed of Katie Schendel, Chris Freitag, Mark Leonas, Tom and myself worked over the summer to develop a plan to reopen the Old Rectory for only the employees, which would satisfy the Commonwealth, the Diocese, and importantly our employees. The Vestry and the Diocese approved the plan and it is on file should the Commonwealth ever have the need to investigate.

In October, as it became apparent that it would still be months before services would return to "normal", a committee of Maria Dye, Steve McKelvey, Peter Sikowitz, Jeff DeSantis and John Jenkins was formed to think about how worship will happen during the next year. At about this same time the Diocese announced that a parish could be reimbursed, up to \$2,000, for expenses incurred for technical improvements required by the pandemic. Grace will look into what devices or education might be of assistance and reimbursable for us.

In November Grace responded to a suggestion from parishioner Kevyn Smith, based on needs in the community she was aware of. The Survival Center has closed their free store to focus on food distribution, Craig's Doors has moved to a new location with reduced storage, and Not Bread Alone was facing requests for warm clothing which they were unable to satisfy. A plan was developed, approved, and put in place for the use of the Parish Hall to store and organize warm clothing to distribute to the partner agencies at their request. A wonderful new ministry at Grace and an opportunity to partner with local agencies serving those in need.

The Nominating Committee, composed of outgoing Vestry members Maria Dye, Susan Ab dow and Steve McKelvey, with Marion Rosenau and Tom were able to assemble a slate of Officers, Vestry members and a Convention delegate for approval at Annual Meeting. Many thanks to Sue and Maria for their service and to Steve who has agreed to serve another term.

This barely scratches the surface of the many who contributed to keep us together during this most difficult year. We are truly a blessed community.

Marion Rosenau, Senior Warden

Junior Warden: 2020 presented the usual jobs of getting the furnaces cleaned and tuned up for the Winter season. As well we had the fixing of roof water leaks, hence, plastering and painting the affected area in the building.

The big projects for the year were replacing the carpeting in the Church, because it was pulling apart as well as being thread bare, making it hard to keep clean. The upgrade was a new flooring in the Old Rectory kitchen area. At the same time the floors in both of the bathrooms of the Old Rectory were replaced with same flooring as the kitchen.

The work of a Junior Warden cannot be done alone, so I would like to give a shout out the following. First to Dick Damon usually our organist but for two days a co-epoxy applier to the front doors of the Church. To continue on the mighty weed whacker yielding of Tom Dougherty to remove the weeds and vines that were over the roof of the kitchen. The trim masters of our planting around the church Paul Bracciotti and Karen DeSantis; and Mary Hocken for her beautiful up keep of the flower garden at the corner of Spring Street and Boltwood. The Garden Committee cannot be forgotten for the great effort of picking up the compost and spreading it around all the planted areas. The last shout out goes to Michael Erard for all the planting and up keep in the Columbarium.

Lastly this is just an informational note of the annual inspection costs that Grace Church has to go through every year from the State and the Town of Amherst it comes to \$7,000.

Jeffrey DeSantis, Junior Warden

VI. Commission Reports

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Altar Guild: This has been a year unlike any other because Covid-19 prevented us from holding regular worship services after the first Sunday in March. In a normal year many Altar Guild members work hard to ensure that the altar looks its best during our services including Georgann Mirick who is in charge of setup and cleanup schedules for services and orders supplies, Veronica Chapman who launders albs for Acolytes and LEMs, Lou Currin who heads up the Flower Guild, members who launder altar linens, members who clean up and set up for regular services and, finally, members who take on responsibilities for special services such as the monthly Liturgy in the Chapel, Advent, Lent, and Holy Week.

Although we were closed for services, Flower Guild members ensured that the altar was never without fresh flowers or potted plants. We thank them for this.

It takes many hands to make Grace Church, our sacred space, a special place. We are so grateful to have wonderful volunteers. We look forward to seeing you all when we are able to worship together once again. 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.

This year, the year of the COVID-19 shutdowns, was clearly a different year for acolytes. They were only able to vest up and serve at the altar for January and February, missing all the major church festivals. Yikes!

Under normal circumstances, acolytes work with the altar guild in many aspects of liturgical preparation such as assisting in preparing the sanctuary for Advent and Palm Sunday, although clearly these events did not happen this year!

Tom Synan and Megan McDermott support acolytes 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 has ensured that we start each week with a rack of vestments washed, pressed, and carefully arranged by size.

This year, Walter Tebbetts graduated from high school and the regular acolyte rota after over ten years as a stellar member of the crew.

I have told Tom and Megan that when services start up again in the church in later 2021, acolytes start up again with new leadership. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to work with this wonderful group of young people over many years. Working with young people as they found their places at the altar has been a true blessing in my life.

Acolytes by grade (Current): 12: Evan Perry; 11: Liam Brown, Max Brown, Emily Ireland, Katie Leonard****, Francesca Polino*#; 10: Amber Breton, Anna Gilsdorf#, Abigail Goff, Lucy Smith; 9: Amory Maxey#, Tyler Marino; 7: Gemma Polino; 7: Joe Hazlip, Maggie Leonard, Nathan Marino; 6: Jada Mattrey, Henry Maxey, Madeline Siudzinski; 5: Jaelyn Breton; 4/3/2: Isabel Ehnstrom, Gianna Mattrey, Bryn Margaret Siudzinski.

* Lay Eucharistic Minister # Lector ** Bell ringer

Nancy Lowry

Music: We started 2020 normally – not knowing that, by Holy Week, we would be compelled to endure a long and challenging time for all. I had been in the process of putting singers together for our wonderful Tenebrae service, when we learned that Grace would need to close down due to the pandemic. It has been a challenging, sometimes dispiriting time, but we have continued to make music in some new ways. I am so very eager for the time when we can “be church” as we have been in the past, but I realize that we don’t know when that can happen. In the meantime, we do our best to keep music alive at Grace!

Since our main activity is to provide choir anthems and organ music for weekly Sunday services, we have had to create new ways of making music. Fortunately, Dick has been able to do recordings of hymns and some organ music to include with weekly online services. But, since choral singing is one of the more dangerous activities which can be done during a pandemic (due to the usual closeness of singers to one another and the fact that singing produces droplets which can spread germs), we have had to try to find creative ways to continue making music for Grace’s online services.

The Choir has, essentially, been on hiatus since the pandemic began. We did try doing some “Virtual Choir” anthems – each one required singers to submit a recording of themselves singing, listening with headphones to a “guide track” which Dick recorded on the organ, to stay together. Then each singer would send in a recording of him/herself singing his/her part, and all of those had to be combined into a video which showed everyone’s faces, along with hearing the combined sound of the many voices. We had wonderful feedback from parishioners about these recordings, but they proved to be terrifically complicated to make, and prohibitively expensive to produce, so we needed to find other solutions to making music happen.

At this point, we have moved forward with offering mostly organ music, and occasional videos of singers making music in the Sanctuary. There have been soloists, and, for special occasions such as Advent Lessons & Carols and Christmas Eve, we managed a small choir, wearing “singers’ masks” (which make everyone look like some sort of mutant pelicans!). Since we are limited to only 10 people in the Sanctuary at a time (with singers 10 feet apart), two of those 10 being Dick and myself, we have had to make music with small groups, two on each of four voice parts, and with sufficient social distancing. We received many notes of gratitude from parishioners for these recordings, and I hope that we might be able to do more of this as we move forward, but that has yet to be discussed and decided.

We will get through this, I trust, and be able to “do church normally” at some point in, God willing, the not-too-distant future. Dick and I so miss seeing all of you in the pews, and look hugely forward to greeting you at coffee hours yet to come.

Beth Damon, Director of Music

Young People’s Choir:

Due to the pandemic, there were no opportunities in 2020 for a Young People’s Choir.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION & EDUCATION - ADULT

Wednesday Night Forums:

Before the pandemic shut-down we were fortunate to have several Wednesday night programs in the Connector. To celebrate Epiphany there were two presentations by Grace Church members. On January 22 Brown Kennedy led a discussion of Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night focusing on a host of inversions of class and gender roles.

Twelfth Night cake was served. On January 29, Sandy

Lillydahl presented “Something so Transporting Bright”, a visual exploration of the mystical theology of light in Christian art.

In February, The Reverend Susan Schaeffer gave two presentations entitled “From Sources to Scripture”. We looked at how Biblical writings are rooted in the histories of Israel and early Christianity and what they mean to us today.

In March, we began our Lenten series. Before Covid-19 forced us to close our doors, we gathered to participate in a program created by the Society of St. John the Evangelist. The series explored signs and symbols at the heart of Christian worship: light, water, food, shelter, community.

In November, we met again on two Wednesday nights, this time by Zoom. Inspired by national events and propelled by interest in the parish, we contracted with the Sojourner Truth School in Northampton to present a program called “Let’s Talk about Race”. These programs, on November 11 and 18, were lively and well-attended. The goal was to “confront and acknowledge racist attitudes without guilt.”

Bible Study:

Until mid-March, Bible study, led by the Rector, took place in the Parish Hall between the 8 and 10:30 services. Now it meets via Zoom at 10 on Saturday morning. An interesting trade-off is that people who were unable to attend the original format can now participate. It is at the same time structured and freeform.

We follow the same format every week: Collect, Gospel, OT reading, but share our thoughts and impressions, whatever strikes us and gets us thinking.

Raising the Questions:

The group met three times before Grace Church closed in March; we look forward to meeting again once the coronavirus has been vanquished!

Tea and Titles:

The group started the year in its traditional format in the Connector with members reporting on the books they’ve read, accompanied by tea and an assortment of delicious baked goods. Since the lockdown, thanks to Jude Wobst’s perseverance and editorial skills, participants are able to share their reading via email. Readers send in their comments and she organizes them into a report. We have light reading (“twinkies” or “crumpets”) and more serious volumes. Classics, such as Jane Austen are popular, as well as history, nature, and lots of detective fiction.

Eve Webster

CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMISSION - CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children: Our approach to children’s ministry had to significantly change this March, when all in-person services were suspended due to the ongoing pandemic.

Through most of the Spring, I focused on continuing to send out my weekly emails to parents, but with more resources on how to do faith formation at home, providing links to coloring pages, devotionals for children, prayer websites, etc.

I also created three “Reflection & Prayer for Children” videos based on symbolism in art found at the church.

We also incorporated the participation of children into some of our earliest online worship videos – such as using children’s art & narration for our video offering for Holy Saturday and featuring photos of families’ Easter festivities in an Easter musical meditation.

Another early offering was a pen pal program, matching up children and youth who signed up to older members of the parish for an exchange of letters, postcards, etc., in order to facilitate intergenerational connection during this time apart.

Our offerings shifted again for the current program year (2020-2021), since I was able to plan with the possibility in mind that we might be gathering virtually for a substantial amount of time.

After consulting with parents, we landed on a schedule, for younger children, of offering Zoom gatherings twice a month.

Since September, we have held a monthly children's worship service, inspired by our usual Liturgy in the Chapel gatherings, typically on the first Sunday of the month at 9:15 a.m. This is open to all ages, but designed with children in fifth grade and younger in mind. Each service consists of two short songs, one Scripture reading, an interactive children's sermon, and prayers.

We have also been holding a monthly K-5th grade Sunday School class, the last Sunday of the month at 9:15 a.m. Instead of using our usual Sunday School curriculum, Weaving God's Promises, we have been using a curriculum that was designed with virtual Sunday School in mind. This is called "The Beatitudes: An Illustrated Curriculum." We look at one beatitude per session. With each session, I send out a coloring page ahead of time that parents can print at home; some of the class time is spent coloring together.

Early on in the pandemic, I sent personalized letters to all children and youth of the parish with small goodies (Bendable Bible figures for younger children, small notebooks with a Bible verse for older children). At the beginning of the school year, children and youth received a back-to-school prayer from Grace along with a "You are Loved" Jesus sticker from the company that makes our Sunday School curriculum – Illustrated Ministry. As of writing this report, I am working on a mailing to go out in January with a letter from myself, a New Year prayer and reflection activity, and another small goodie – a "Jesus keeps me warm" small stuffed penguin for younger children and a "Peace" button for older children.

Lastly, we were still able to have a Christmas pageant this year, albeit virtually! Pre-schoolers up through high school students participated in filming scenes for our Christmas pageant over Zoom. Other middle and high schoolers sent in clips of themselves narrating the Christmas story, which were used for the pageant as well. The completed pageant is still available on our YouTube channel. Families also submitted photos of children and youth with Christmas decorations or crèche that were used as a slideshow to "The First Nowell," which was included in our playlist of Christmas musical offerings.

Although this certainly has not been the year that we planned, I've been grateful to still spend meaningful time with the children of this parish. I'm also grateful for the flexibility and graciousness of all the parents of Grace, who I know have so much on their plates, particularly right now! For as long as this time of gathering virtually continues, we will strive to keep offering opportunities for children to be nourished by their faith, as well as ways to be incorporated into the church's broader worship life.

The Rev. Megan McDermott

Youth

At the time of our last annual report, I shared that I was meeting with parents and youth in hopes of redesigning our youth program to better fit Grace's current needs. In 2020, we ended up, of course, having to redesign on the fly to meet the needs of the moment!

Our last in-person youth group event in February 2020 was a gathering to take photographs for a project called

“Lent Through the Lens,” a series where photos inspired by Bible verses were shared for each day of Lent. These were posted to the Instagram “graceyouthcreate.” Thankfully, that project was perfect for the circumstances we were in and was able to continue all the way through Easter.

During the Spring, I began offering youth group over Zoom every other week for students in grades 6-12. Typically, youth group takes a break for the Summer, but given the stress and isolation brought about by the pandemic, it felt important to continue offering that space. Going into this Fall, we simply kept up the same schedule as Spring and Summer – gathering every other Thursday at 4 p.m.

We haven’t been using a set curriculum for youth group but instead have been embracing flexibility and variety, talking about a number of timely topics such as the place of lament in Christian life, what it means to have hope during a pandemic, and the relationship between faith and science; having a movie discussion about the film *Just Mercy*; and sometimes just gathering for prayer and games, such as online Pictionary. For every gathering, I try to make space for everyone to check in and share both the good and challenging things of their lives.

Prior to the pandemic, one goal that had been articulated in my meetings with parents was a desire to provide more opportunities for service. Figuring out ways to more actively serve others, from home if necessary, remains a goal for the rest of this year.

In the Fall, we added to our schedule a Confirmation class for high schoolers, which happens every other year. This class typically is held on Sunday mornings alongside our other Sunday school offerings, but after talking with parents, I decided to use Thursdays at 4 p.m., alternating with the weeks we have youth group. Our small class (currently 3 high schoolers) has been discussing questions in the Baptismal Covenant and the basics of Christian faith. Our thoughtful conversation is often the highlight of my week.

One element of our Confirmation program that is currently up-in-the-air is our Confirmation class pilgrimage. Typically, the Confirmation class goes on a pilgrimage the summer following Confirmation. With so much still unknown, we have not begun planning travel for this class, but Grace is committed to making sure this group gets this formative opportunity – even if it means traveling a different summer and/or eventual travel plans being closer to home.

Last summer, I was also supposed to lead the diocesan group going to the Episcopal Youth Event in Maryland, which was cancelled. We look forward to offering that opportunity to gather with Episcopal youth across the country whenever it is safely rescheduled.

In addition to youth-specific programming, we’ve had at least one youth lector for our YouTube worship services, a youth reader for our Advent Lessons & Carols service, and a youth reader for our live Christmas Eve 4 p.m. Zoom service. As mentioned in my “Children” report, we also had middle and high schoolers participate in our pageant and “First Nowell” videos. We hope that our youth members will feel encouraged to keep participating in this way! If anyone would like to be added to our list of lectors or would like to offer something musically for worship, they or a parent can reach out to myself, Tom, or Terrie.

As with our children’s ministries, Grace will continue to offer supportive space for youth to gather virtually for as long as we are not meeting in-person.

Lastly, over the Spring and Summer, Ben Ashby volunteered to help with our youth programming over Zoom, and for the new program year, Emma Wilburn has volunteered with both youth group and Confirmation class. I am grateful to them both for the help!

Campus Ministry: Like most of our ministries, Grace's approach to campus ministry and young adult ministry shifted last March when confronted with the realities of the pandemic. Prior to Covid, we'd been establishing a rhythm for the 2019-2020 program year of monthly gatherings for our 20s and 30s group and biweekly gatherings for local college students. In addition to these Grace-specific offerings, I had also been assisting in leading a monthly Theology on Tap gathering through United Christian Foundation, an ecumenical ministry serving the University of Massachusetts, and gatherings of Hampshire Christian Students. At Amherst College, I have formed a supportive connection with Protestant Chaplain Rev. Anna Woofenden and been involved in ministries she's organized there!

When our ministries shifted to gathering online, the Theology on Tap group I'd been helping with moved to gathering online every other week, Thursdays at 7 p.m. This has been a consistent offering throughout the pandemic, including over the summer. While we can't get together over drinks and appetizers, we strive to still create a welcoming atmosphere to talk about life and faith. We've talked about a wide variety of topics since the shift to gathering online - including Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail, our understanding of saints, and the role of artistic depictions of Jesus in our religious understanding. Though formed by a group serving the University of Massachusetts, its scope has always been wider than just those students and has been a primary way I've kept connected with young adults.

At Hampshire, I've continued to assist in leading regular offerings for Christian students over Zoom. For Advent, I created a reflection packet with poetry, art, and Scripture for each week of Advent that was distributed by Hampshire's Office of Spiritual Life, along with Advent calendars. We were thrilled that over 20 students signed up - a much larger number than students our group had been serving! We hope to connect with those students more in the semester to come.

At Amherst College, I have sporadically attended the virtual dinner church organized by Rev. Anna Woofenden - and guest preached! - and I look forward to more opportunities to connect with students in that context.

The prayer group that I lead weekly, on Wednesdays at 7 p.m., is open to all ages, but has also ended up being a great space for young adults to connect.

College students and young adults have also participated in various ways in our broader community's online worship life - serving as lectors, filming themselves as narrators for the Christmas pageant, and contributing to special videos like our Baptismal Covenant shared in multiple voices.

One exciting development on a diocesan level is the recent formation of the Young Adult Ministry Network, spearheaded by one of our parishioners Will Harron. The Young Adult Ministry Network has gathered those who are passionate about young adult ministry in our diocese together to support one another and to come together in collaboration and is pursuing grants to fund having a staff person dedicated to these ministries. I have been grateful to attend this group and contribute to discussions and dreaming about what we might do together! Over Advent, the network held its first event - an Advent Vespers service for young adults. I believe the young adults in our community will really benefit from the connections a network like this can foster.

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. Prior to COVID-19 we participated in the parish annual events up through the Shrove Sunday Pancake Coffee Hour. The remainder were not held this year, but we look forward to when we can have these events again at church:

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 normally serve our members in many important ways. When we are able to meet in-person, 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. Nicholas 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 all they have done and will do again hopefully sooner than later. Your dedication and support of Grace's programs and projects is most sincerely appreciated. Great may your reward be in heaven.

Funeral Reception Committee:

There were no funeral receptions held in 2020.

Saint Nicholas Bazaar: Even though the regular bazaar was cancelled this year, there was a Mini-Bazaar, thanks to Betsy Mathews. She came up with the idea and organized it to take place the last two Saturdays of the outdoor Amherst Farmers Market, November 14 and 21.

It was a great success, both for the opportunity to see some Gracies in person (properly distanced!), but also to show the face of Grace Church to the public in this time of separation. And we made about \$800, too! Thanks to all who participated in any way, and thanks to all who usually work on the bazaar. We'll be back next year!

Joan O'Brien

Garden Ministry: When the pandemic closed Grace Church and its grounds in the spring, the Garden Ministry canceled plans for a plant sale, spending money on new plants for the gardens and mulching most of the area.

However, our members continued to weed the existing plantings and maintain flowers in the containers outside the Connector. Maria Dye also planted annuals in the Parish Window Garden and Mary Hocken and others added some annuals and tulips in the Goodwin Garden on Spring Street.

The Erards maintained the Columbarium garden.

Due to Covid-19 we will once again forgo having a plant sale in 2021 but will continue to maintain the existing gardens.

Many thanks to all who helped weed and mulch and plant this year, always wearing masks and social distancing. Our workers included the Erards, Mary Hocken, Meghan Siudzinski, Maria Dye, Paul Bracciotti, Tom Baker, Helen Drake, Martha Favre, Miriam Jenkins and Sandy Muspratt. A special thanks to Helen Drake who did most of the watering of the Goodwin Garden over the summer.

Sherry Wilson, chairperson, Garden Ministry

Iconography Workshop: The iconography workshop has begun meeting again with zoom, sharing progress on our icons by holding them up to the camera, asking questions, talking about icons and their symbolism, and enjoying each other's company again. We look forward to being able to work together again.

Sandy Lillydahl

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 was coordinated by Jeannette Stebbins. Requests for assistance may be made 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 out 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 offers 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.

Offers of help in Mutual Care would be greatly appreciated!

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMISSION

Despite the lack of in person worship services due to the pandemic during most of 2020, the generosity of Grace Church parishioners continued unabated. The 4th Sunday Outreach Offerings were changed to offerings collected throughout each month, and an amazing total of almost \$38,000 was distributed to charitable organizations outside of Grace Church. This is in spite of the fact that there was no Outreach Offering in March as the pandemic emergency began. At Easter, the Rector promised a donation of \$5,000 from The Rector's Discretionary Fund if the parish would donate a matching amount. The parish responded, going far beyond the Rector's challenge, with fantastic gifts totaling \$13,760. The Community Foundation Fund for Covid-19 received \$18,760 from Grace Church at Easter. Organizations supported by the Outreach Offerings include both local and global groups. This year the local groups were The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Interfaith Cot Shelter, Circle of Care, The Community Foundation Covid-19 Fund, Amherst Survival Center, Amherst A Better Chance, and Craig's Doors. The global organizations included American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem for the Beirut Emergency Fund, Area Mission of Navajoland, and our scholarship program in Ramallah.

In addition to the money collected as Outreach Offerings, parishioners have always contributed time and treasures to those in need. The pandemic limited those opportunities this year, but soup was still collected for "Souper Sunday", on the days when the church was open for prayer donations continued to come in. Stuffing was collected at Thanksgiving for the Survival Center, food for the Survival Center was regularly left at the back of the church, backpacks for the schools were collected, and "Adopt a Family" still happened at Christmas if in a different form. The Circle of Care continued to provide support for the Berchmas family, support made challenging due to Covid requirements. Perhaps most notable, a new outreach ministry, "Grace's Closet", came into being to fill a void left when the Survival Center closed the Community Store to focus on food distribution, Craig's Doors lost storage space when it moved to the new location at the Unitarian Society, and Not Bread Alone reported requests for winter clothing which it was unable to fulfill. The Vestry approved the use of the Parish Hall to store and sort winter clothing for distribution to the agencies as request come in. A plan was developed and submitted to the Diocese to assure all Covid safety measures would be followed. It is a gift to be able to do our part to coordinate with partners serving those in critical need during the winter months.

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". This year the challenges have been many, and we urge parishioners who are involved in charitable work, locally or globally, to contact the Outreach Commission to see if support is needed. We thank all of you for your generous donations of time, talent and treasure to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ outside the walls of Grace Church.

Marion Rosenau, Chair

Adopt-A-Family for Christmas:

Once again Grace Church gave in abundance to struggling families. All 40 families (95 children) were adopted and there was extra money to contribute to Family Outreach of Amherst which does so much to support to the most vulnerable families in our community. Special thanks to the young folk who shopped at the last minute. Your generosity continues to amaze. Thank you, thank you.

Mary Hocken

Haiti Ministry:

The Haiti Ministry has had a busy, productive year in spite of many very serious challenges both here and in Haiti.

In what seems like a different world, we began 2020 with a festive Games Night gathering in the Parish Hall in early February. Sarah Chadwick organized the event wonderfully with help from Kitty Dougherty, Gillian Duda and Lisa Lukas, whose clever decorations carried out the theme. Members of the Haiti Committee prepared delicious soups and desserts, and the Hungry Ghost Bakery donated its excellent bread. People of all ages played board games, cards, and raucous rounds of bingo well into the evening. The event was a success, both socially (we had fun!) and financially (we raised \$1200). We send a big thank you to everyone who participated.

Also in early February, with the political situation in Haiti becoming a bit calmer, John Stifler was able to travel there, meet with Père Diegue and visit the school in Bayonnais, bringing back a very positive report on the school, the teachers and the students. He also delivered a large package of art work from the students at the Amherst Montessori School, which they created for the students at L'Ecole St Matthieu. And he brought back photographs of artwork that the St Matthieu students had created in response. We are hoping that this student-to-student exchange will continue when schools here and there are back on a normal schedule and travel is possible again.

L'Ecole St Matthieu has been gaining a very good reputation, and enrollment has been growing steadily each year. In the fall of 2019, there were 177 pupils at the school, and we began to make plans for a final building which would comprise a refectory, a kitchen and a library, to complete the campus. Planning was accelerated when we learned that Père Diegue was considering retirement in the near future. He has been an extraordinary asset to this Haiti Ministry, a visionary leader who has carefully shepherded the previous three buildings to successful completion on time and within budget. We wanted to have this building project completed while he was still the priest-in-charge at St Matthieu, so we allocated funds to begin construction. Also, with almost all the school's teachers commuting to Bayonnais, there was need for another motorbike to get them back and forth; we allocated funds for this as well.

And then the pandemic arrived. The school was ordered closed, and we needed quickly to send funds for a new hand washing station equipped with running water, soap, and bleach disinfectant. St James, our partner parish in Indian Head, Maryland, was able to continue to provide its critical monthly financial support, even in the face of diminishing resources, so we were able to continue to pay the teachers' salaries while school was suspended.

St James is a vital part of this ministry, and it has been hard this year not to be able to meet in person with them in the spring and the fall as has been our custom. Laura Klock has graciously taken on the role of liaison between St James and Grace following Mark Peterman's move to Maine in the summer. We look forward to resuming our fall and spring get-togethers as soon as possible, but it has been an unexpected benefit of our own shift to meeting via Zoom during the pandemic that one or more members of the St. James committee has often been able to join in. Our communication has actually improved as a result.

Most schools in Haiti were closed for many months in the winter and spring because of civil unrest, followed by the pandemic. Our school, remarkably, only closed for a few weeks in the spring, and classes for grades 4 to 6 resumed in August to finish the 2019-2020 academic year.

By August, the hand washing station was finished, the new building construction underway, and the students in 4th, 5th and 6th grades were back in class, with uniforms, matching masks, textbooks and school supplies, all made possible by the great generosity of Grace Church members.

During the summer, Sandy Muspratt worked on improving the Grace in Haiti website (www.graceinhaiti.org). We are regularly posting news of the Haiti Ministry not only on the website but also on Grace Notes, which is being disseminated electronically. And with the vestry approving the adoption of tithly.com, we now have an option for online giving as well. We are very grateful for all these accommodations to the limitations imposed by Covid-19 restrictions. We have been able to share news, raise money for the school, and sustain a sense of community, purpose and connection. We are also deeply grateful for a \$4000 grant from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts to help cover costs for the new building.

In October the 2020-2021 school year began for all classes at St Matthieu. Enrollment this year tops 200 children. Kesnel Decius, an excellent and beloved teacher, left to pursue further education, but to replace him the school hired Hans Walter Gabriel-. Like Kesnel, he was trained by Anseye pou Ayiti (Teach for Haiti), a Haitian organization dedicated to preparing native Haitian teachers to serve in rural schools. He is the fifth teacher from Anseye to come to St. Matthieu, contributing to the school's growing reputation in the area. This year the principal, Clibert Massillon, was chosen for APA's brand-new program for School Leaders. He remains a strong, energetic and extremely positive presence at the school. We are enormously grateful for the entire staff at St Matthieu!

The end of 2020 found us busy with planning our next event, a winter soup supper. Entitled "Dine IN, Help OUT Haiti, it is being organized once more by Sarah Chadwick, who earns our thanks again and again. Rising to the challenge of Covid, we are planning to deliver orders to individuals' homes and to offer a blessing and breaking of the bread on Zoom for those who wish to "dine IN" together.

In the coming year, we hope to establish a small library at the school: raising money for shelving and books, finding sources of kreyol books for children, and figuring out just how to make this happen from afar. The library, a rarity in elementary schools in Haiti, will honor Père Diegue, who delayed his departure by a year but will now retire in summer 2021. We also want to focus on our 'scholarship' program, wherein the principal chooses three promising students from the graduating 6th grade each year to be supported through 9th grade (the end of elementary-level education in Haiti) at nearby private schools. This year, for the first time, two of the scholarship students finished ninth grade, hence "aging out" of the program as it stands. The desire to continue supporting deserving students as they get older may conflict with the equal desire to support as many students as possible through grade 9, and we want to explore these issues more closely.

To close, the Haiti Ministry is blessed with members who are dedicated and imaginative, hard-working and generous with their time and talents. We welcome new members. Please contact anyone listed below if you have questions. We have accomplished much this year, and our hope is to continue to do so. But it is the members of Grace Church who have made all this possible. Our deepest thanks to you all!

2020 Committee members: Patty Appelbaum, Tom Baker, Trish Callard, Suzannah Fabing, Meg Holladay, Mary Hocken, Brown Kennedy, Laura Klock, Sandy Muspratt, Joan O'Brien, John Stifler, Tahina Vatel, Bonnie Vigeland, Martin Wobst.

Submitted by Bonnie Vigeland, co-chair

Refugee Resettlement Project

Grace Church's volunteer "Circle of Care" continues to support the Berchmas family, who arrived in Amherst from Rwanda in November 2018. They've stayed healthy and are doing well. And they're increasingly comfortable and competent speaking English, which has helped the connections with them to deepen. The five public school students have continued at the Amherst Public Schools – mostly remotely – with tutoring from Circle of Care members. Of the four who had been working full-time at the start of 2020, two lost their jobs in March, but within a couple months all four were at full employment in more stable situations.

A highlight of the year was that the ten family members who had come from Rwanda applied for and received their Green Cards, signifying permanent resident status. Also, two of the adult sisters have been getting driving lessons; one passed her road test, the other will take hers soon. Volunteers were involved in coaching them, and volunteers were also involved in helping to arrange doctor and dentist appointments and seeing that family members got to those appointments.

Even with the constraints of the pandemic, there have been times of celebration – especially the first birthday of the two babies, in August 2020 at the Mill River Park – planned by the family, with some help from our volunteers.

Special thanks are due to Laura Klock, Sue Abdow, Ray and Eve Webster, Elise Stromgren, Kate Atkinson, Lucy Robinson, and Karen Romanowski, who've been especially active in 2020, and to the Parish and to members who've contributed financially. The family continues to be grateful for our prayers and support.

Although the family is increasingly capable of navigating American life, there are still opportunities for new volunteers to get acquainted with them and provide support and friendship – and driving lessons for others of the sisters, if anyone is so inclined!

Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale, Circle of Care coordinators

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. Our work includes the planning, shopping, setting up and cleaning up. We believe that many hands make light work and the "work" can actually be fun!

Ordinarily, BLG serves meals at the following events: Annual Meeting, the Pentecost and St. Michael's picnics, the Stewardship In-Gathering Potluck, the St. Nicholas Bazaar Cafe, and other assorted receptions. Most of these usually happy events were unfortunately curtailed in 2020, owing to the pandemic. We are very hopeful that we'll be able in the not too distant future to resume our ministry and the many enjoyable times when we can be together and share meals.

Serving as a member of the BLG is a great way to get involved at Grace Church. All are welcome to join us. We are pretty relaxed and light hearted as we prepare and serve meals to the Parish. 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

This was a quiet year for Greening Grace and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. In March, a week before the pandemic closed everything down, John Lent, Executive Director of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ), gave a talk and slide show about their work in the Middle East. Through them Grace Church sponsors a student at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center (ETVTC) in Ramallah in the West Bank. Our current student, Bisan Freij, is in the hospitality stream learning to cook and serve in restaurants and hotels. When COVID19 caused the ETVTC school and kitchen to shut down, she continued improving her cooking skills at home and stayed connected to the school through online learning. Giovanni Anbar, director of the ETVTC, reports that she is a hard-working, dedicated student. Usually Grace Church funds Bisan's scholarship through the sale of Palestinian olive oil, but with the cancellation of in-person coffee hour at Grace this income source is no longer available. Thankfully the Outreach Commission decided to dedicate one of the fourth Sunday offerings to help fund her scholarship. This raised a little more than was needed to fund her fall tuition. Thank you to all who helped!

Greening Grace had hoped to build on its very successful lecture-discussion sessions of October 2019, but the pandemic made in-person meetings impossible. In lieu of offering our own program, we recommended to the congregation an important and relevant lecture series at UMass, "Planet on A Precipice: Histories and Futures of the Environmental Emergency," which featured presentations by Bill McKibben, Robin Wall Kimmerer, and others, and workshops open to people on-line. A number of the Grace Church community participated and found these helpful. We also continued meeting on-line and working with Margaret Bullitt-Jonas. Unfortunately plans to visit Episcopal parishes across Western Massachusetts to introduce "Sustain Our Island Home" (SoIH) had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. SoIH helps individuals examine their own carbon footprint and figure out how to reduce it. Sandy Muspratt has developed a data-base of parishes with contact information and an indication of whether we've made a presentation to them.

We discussed how we, as people of faith, might have the greatest impact on energy use, stewardship of the planet, and environmental awareness. We decided we could contribute most by supporting and spreading information about groups like the non-partisan Environmental Voter Project, to increase the likelihood that citizens concerned about climate change would have information about which candidates share those concerns. Edie Allison organized Greening Grace to send postcards to eligible voters in the south with instructions on how to vote by mail as part of the non-partisan Reclaim Our Vote movement.

We supported encouraging our Massachusetts legislators to vote for carbon fee and rebate legislation that would reduce air pollution and health related problems, while helping economically disadvantaged citizens manage the higher energy costs through rebates.

We hope to be meeting again in person and become active again in 2021.

DeAnne Riddle

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Our Stewardship Campaign for 2020 raised \$487,292 towards our goal of \$500,000 from 179 pledges, four pledges being new. The amount pledged was most encouraging considering the pandemic.

For 2021 with continued challenges the Stewardship goal has been lowered just a hair to \$487,500. To date for 2021 we have received 135 pledges totaling \$384,322. We have yet to hear from 44 parishioners/families who have pledged in the past, we are hoping and praying they will be able to contribute to our goal.

During these challenging times it is extremely important that we support Grace Church, the church staff and our local and global ministries.

If you need a pledge card please contact Tom Dougherty at Thomasdougherty56@gmail.com Cell Phone # (413) 563-7321

Or contact Terrie Korpita at the Grace Church Office (413) 256-6754.

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.

Jude and Martin Wobst, and Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale are new members of the St. Michael's Fellowship this year and they join Steven and Susan Abdow, Doug Adler, Patricia Andrews, Stephen and Jeanne Armstrong, Steve and Kate Atkinson, Lee Beaty *, Don and Jane Buckloh, Tom and Kitty Dougherty, Suzannah Fabing, Kent and Scottie Faerber, Hertha Haensel *, Charlotte Hathaway, Bob Hawley, Mary McCarthy *, Mel Heath *, Royster and Kathryn Hedgepeth, Rob Hirschfeld and Polly Ingraham, Mary Hocken, Ann Holland, Anne Homme, Dorothy Ives *, John Lemly and Catherine Melhorn, Mark Leonas, Karen Lowe, Sheila Mammen, Mark Marshall and Helen Leung, Margo McMahon *, Roberta Morel *, Eliot Moss and Hannah Abbott, Marilyn Munn *, Priscilla Parke *, Larry and Jean Rankin, Nancy Rose-Weeber, Jim and Nina Scott, Phebe Sessions, Eugene and Marcia Sheehan, Bruce and Jeannette Stebbins, Mary Steigner *, Mary Steinway *, Sara Stelzner, Janet Teng, Patricia Tillona, Zina Tillona *, Charlotte Turgeon *, Paul Vasconcellos *, Reynolds Winslow and Jeffrey Wood *.

* deceased

Doug Adler, Chair

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT

In 2020 God's grace blessed Grace Church in many ways: our financial status was one of them. In spite of a year like no other, with a pandemic raging and an inability to have Sunday services, we were able to meet expenses and finish the year with a small financial surplus. Your generous pledges and faithful fulfillment of

them, along with the thoughtful monitoring of expenses by staff and committee chairs, helped us maintain financial health, as we prepare for what may be another challenging year, but one with hope for improving circumstances in our communities and the world.

In these challenging times, we continue to be blessed by the hard work and dedication of parishioners like yourselves who find creative ways to serve the parish. Among others, we are blessed to have the continued expertise of Rich Spurgin, who prepares informative, helpful monthly financial reports, and DeAnne Riddle, who prepares our annual budgets, including the budget for 2021.

The Finance Committee includes Rich Spurgin, Kitty Dougherty, John Robinson, DeAnne Riddle, Bruce Stebbins, Lynn Klock, and Mark Leonas. Like many church committees, Finance now uses zoom and other means to review ongoing financial matters and plan for the future. They have provided sound advice on a range of issues to aid the Clergy, myself and the Vestry in making financial decisions. Recently they reviewed and recommended a break even budget for 2021. A copy of that budget is included in the Annual Report.

This past year presented a different situation for collection of pledges and other donations. Without Sunday services, Grace Church relied on the thoughtfulness of parishioners who kept up by mailing pledges and other contributions to the Office. In addition, the Church began to offer online giving options, including the [tithe.ly](https://tithely.com) program, which is now available on our web site.

In the midst of all this change, we are very thankful for the dedication and hard work of Jaana Cutson, our Parish Bookkeeper. She keeps our complex financial system running smoothly. Also, thanks go to Tom Dougherty and the Stewardship Committee, who work hard to help us achieve the financial goals that will insure our ability to have talented staff and meaningful programs in 2021, on a well maintained church campus. While initial response to the Stewardship drive was remarkably good, we still have a ways to go to meet our financial goals for 2021.

2020 marked a year when we were thankfully able to retain and support our talented staff. We didn't expect a financial surplus but were fortunate to achieve one, which will be held until we determine our financial status for this new year. Stewardship will continue to work toward helping us achieve our pledging goals for 2021.

Once again this year a number of beloved parishioners left bequests in their wills which will be invested with the Diocesan fund and hopefully generate income to help our operating budget. The Trustees of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts continue to manage our endowment funds well and to make quarterly distributions, providing essential additions to our operating budget.

We continue to be in good standing with our diocesan auditor Bruce Rockwell, whose 2020 audit confirmed that our financial records are proper and accurate. Bruce recently retired from his auditor position and will be replaced by Steve Hasbrouck, in time for the 2021 audit in March. You may remember Steve, who was formerly our assistant treasurer at Grace Church.

I have appreciated the opportunity to serve Grace Church as your Treasurer during the past year. We continue to hold our own during these challenging times and hope for improvement in the year to come. Your support has been invaluable and is very much appreciated.

Mark Leonas, Treasurer

VIII. MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Baptisms

Marriage

Elizabeth Brannan-Williams & Hugh Ward
Juliet Heeg & Dale Ponikvar
Sarah Schmidt & James Sears

Confirmands

Requiem

William Berenson
Shirley Brodigan
David Brown
Mareile Fenner
Anne Holahan
Richard Lovelace
Margo McMahon
Bette Moriarty
Carolyn Samonds
Bernice Taylor
Guiqin Yu

Added - New members/Reactivated

James & Lisa McDonald
Kenneth & Catherine Talan

Transferred/Moved

Obadiah & Joan Gibson