2022 Annual Report

159th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish

February 5, 2023

Grace Episcopal Church
Amherst, Massachusetts
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I. Order of Business

Celebration of the Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM in the Parish Hall and via livestream
Call to Order Ruthie Ireland, Clerk of the Vestry
Acceptance of Roll of Membership
Reception of Minutes of the 158th Annual Meeting, February 6, 2022
Recognition of Retiring Vestry Members Chris Freitag, Senior Warden
Report of Nominating Committee and the Election of New Vestry Members and Delegates to Convention
Report from the Stewardship Committee Bruce Stebbins, Chair
Reception of Reports from Officers and Commissions
Treasurer's Remarks Mark Leonas, Treasurer
Remarks of Wardens and Rector Chris Freitag, Senior Warden Tom Dougherty, 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 2022

Abdow, Erik  Atkinson, Wade  Benfer, Katherine
Abdow, Jessie  Ayers, Elihu  Berenson, Mary Kay
Abdow, Luke  Ayers, Emma  Bernal, Angelica M.
Abdow, Steve  Ayers, Jim  Blain, Beatrice
Abdow, Sue  Baird, Andrea  Blain, Rachel
Adler, Doug  Baird, Cameron  Blanchard, Kerry
Aldrich, Brenda  Baird, Ian  Blay, Jack
Aldrich, Rick  Baird, John  Botelho, Maria Jose
Allison, Barrett  Baird, Mackenzie  Boy, Sarah
Allison, Benjamin  Baker, Chris  Bracciotti, Paul
Allison, Caroline  Baker, Elizabeth  Brace, Dee
Allison, Donald  Baker, Joey  Breon, Emily
Allison, Edith  Baker, Kate  Breton, Amber
Allison, James  Baker, Nancy  Breton, Chris
Anderson, Gordon  Baker, Samantha  Breton, JaeLynn
Anderson, Gordon "Gordy"  Baker, Tom  Brooks, Cheryl
Anderson, Lydia  Balderston, Jacob  Brooks, Gregory
Andrews, Jess  Barnes, Toby  Brown, Beth
Appelbaum, Patricia  Barnes-Bernal, Bodhi  Brown, Beth
Arwade, Cyrus  Barnett, David  Brown, Catherine
Arwade, Sanjay  Barnett, Tamara  Brown, Elizabeth R.
Ash, Alison  Barrett, Ruth  Brown, Georgianna
Ash, Jonathan  Barrett, Steve  Brown, Gillian
Ash, Raiden  Bashour, Emelyn  Brown, Gregory
Ash, Sophie  Bashour, Gabrielle  Brown, Liam
Ash, Tori  Bausor, Randall  Brown, Malcolm "Max"
Atkinson, Chandler  Beall, Andy  Brown, Nate
Atkinson, Katherine "Kate"  Beall, Charles  Bryant, Karen
Atkinson, Lane  Beall, Eileen  Bull, Mary
Atkinson, Rollin  Bedet, Charlotte  Byler, Lynne
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<td>Hampson, Quinn</td>
<td>Hwang-Carlos, Camila</td>
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<td>Hampson, Tim</td>
<td>Ireland, Caleb</td>
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<td>Gaeke, June</td>
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<td>Gnatek, Andrew</td>
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<td>Herrington, Anne</td>
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<td>Goff, Abigail</td>
<td>Hertel, Marsha</td>
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<td>Goff, Yolanda</td>
<td>Ho, Jonathan</td>
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<td>Golden II, Norman</td>
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<td>Goodell, Jack</td>
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<td>Hoffmann, Anne</td>
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Van Cleef, Aidan
Van Cleef, Bryce
Van Dyke, Ann
Van Dyke, Elizabeth
Velazquez, Archie
Vigeland, Bonnie
Wald, James
Wald, Jane
Wald, Marianne
Walter, Micah
Wanninger, Natascha
Wanninger, Sebastian
Wanninger, Tatjana
Webster, Eve
Webster, The Rev. Raymond
Weeber, Charles
Weeber, Nancy Rose
Wells, Andrew
Wells, Nicholas
Wells, Sharon
Westhead, Charlotte
White, Ethel
Wilburn, Adam
Wilburn, Aidan
Wilburn, Emma
Wilburn, Jeanette
Wilkinson, Pam
Williams, Dani
Williams, David
Williams, Elia
Williams, Fox
Williams, Isabel
Williams, Kate
Williams, Keith
Williams, Kevin
Williams, Lee
Williams, Marion
Williams, Melinda
Williams, Sophie
Wilson, Sherry
Winslow, Reynolds
Wissemann, David
Wissemann, Kimberly
Wobst, Gregory
Wobst, H Martin
Wobst, Judith
Wobst, Natalia
Wood, Ann
Wood, John
Wood, Nancy
Wren Zide, Jana
Wright, Arline
Wright, Jonathan
Wright, Meg Kelsey
Zamora, Andrew
Zatyryka, Helen
Zhang, Enhua
Zobel, Chris
Zobel, Katie
Zobel, Noah
Zobel, Sydney
Zou, Lili
III. Minutes of the 158th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish, Amherst, Massachusetts convened on February 6, 2022

On February 6, 2022, Clerk Ruthie Ireland called the 158th Annual Meeting of Grace Church to order.

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

Role of Membership 2022

Ruthie Ireland asked for any additions or corrections to the Role of Membership 2022. A motion was made to accept the Role as printed, seconded, and the Role was accepted by unanimous vote.

Minutes of the 157th Annual Meeting

Minutes of the 157th Annual Meeting, held on February 7, 2021 were reviewed. There were no additions or corrections. A motion to accept the minutes of the 157th Annual Meeting was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote.

Retiring Vestry Members

Senior Warden, Chris Freitag, recognized the Vestry members who completed their terms: Alice Goodwin Brown, John Jenkins, Peter Sikowitz, and Emily Ireland. Peter and Emily are retiring, while Alice and John will continue for another term. Chris offered thanks to each member for their service on the Vestry. Gifts of flowers and books were presented to retiring members.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee are the retiring Vestry members, Senior Warden Chris Freitag, and the Rector, the Rev. Tom Synan. After discernment with interested parishioners, the committee presented a slate of candidates to the Vestry. Following approval by the Vestry, the slate of candidates was included in an email notification 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)
- Alice Goodwin Brown
- John Jenkins
- Suzannah Fabing

Vestry Youth (a term of one year)
- Amory Maxey
- Tyler Marino

Officers of the Vestry (each for a term of one year)
- Senior Warden – Chris Freitag
- Junior Warden – Tom Dougherty
Lay Delegates to Convention
Ericka Stewart
A Vestry member will be elected at a future date

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 positions by the Rev. Tom Synan.

Report of the Stewardship Committee

Bruce Stebbins presented the report of the Stewardship Committee. Prior to giving his report, Bruce shared that Jeannette Stebbins died one year ago yesterday. Bruce recognized Tom Dougherty and Charlie Tebbetts for their help in putting out the mailing, as well as Tom Synan’s sermon focused on the heart of pledging. Bruce also thanked Chris Freitag, Tom Dougherty, and Charlie Tebbetts for their stewardship testimonials. The 2022 Stewardship goal is $485,000. To date, $419,238 and 136 pledges have come in. Of the 136 pledges, 7 are new pledges.

Report of Planned Giving and the Saint Michael’s Fellowship

Doug Adler presented the report of Planned Giving and St. Michael’s Fellowship. He explained that this report recognizes those who put Grace in their will and living trusts. Three couples are recognized this year: the Rev. Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale, Jude and Martin Wobst, and Brenda and Rick Aldrich.

2020 Annual Report

A motion to accept the reports as printed in the 2021 Annual Report, 158th Annual Meeting of Grace Church Parish was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

Mark Leonas presented the Treasurer’s Report. 2021 was a surprisingly good year for Grace. 11th hour December donations helped meet the expectations of the ambitious budget. Grace finished the year with a small surplus of $268. Mark offered thanks to everyone for their generosity in pledging. Mark gave special thanks to members of the Finance Committee for their experience and wisdom: De Anne Riddle, Harry Chadwick, Bruce Stebbins, and Lynn Klock. Flowers were presented to DeAnne Riddle recognizing her 11 years of service to the Finance Committee. Mark offered thanks to the Plate Counting Committee members: Harry Chadwick, Steve McKelvey, Kitty Dougherty, Lynn Klock, Doug Adler, John Robinson, and Kathy Glime and also thanked Bruce Stebbins and Tom Dougherty for their work leading the Stewardship Committee. Mark is cautiously optimistic regarding the 2022 budget, asked for questions from parishioners, and encouraged everyone to continue to offer pledges. Mark ended his report by thanking the members of Grace for trusting him with the role of Treasurer.
Senior Warden’s Report

Chris Freitag delivered heartfelt thanks to the Rev. Tom Synan, the Rev. Megan McDermott, the Executive Committee, members of the Vestry, for their help through this challenging year. Chris highlighted the countless hours put in by Tom and Megan, and members of the Safety Protocol Committee to develop a Covid-19 safe plan for services at Grace. He also thanked members of the parish for sharing time and talents in countless ways. Chris thanked everyone for trusting him in role as Senior Warden. Chris highlighted the successful Saint Nicholas Bazaar, Christmas services, the wonderful work Megan is doing with youth in the church, and how great it was to have the Bishop present at the celebration of confirmands. Chris invited members to consider serving Grace with their time and talents.

Junior Warden’s Report

Tom Dougherty offered thanks to Jeff DeSantis, Terrie Korpita, Jaana Cutson, and Dave Ulen for their assistance and help maintaining Grace campus, and thanks to Mary Hocken and many others for their help maintaining Grace grounds and gardens.

The Rector’s Report

The Rev. Tom Synan referenced his sermon from today and recorded in the 2021 Annual Report recognizing thankfulness for Grace and all who are a part of this church. Tom highlighted today’s Gospel message from Luke - a story of “ordinary people rising up to answer God’s call” and God’s command, “do not be afraid!” Tom invited parishioners to be a part of healing and reconciliation in the world, and offered his thanks for everything parishioners do and have done for Grace.

Tom offered thanks to the Vestry, to music director and organist, Beth and Dick Damon, and to the choir. He offered thanks to the YouTube crew, Chris Freitag, Charlie Tebbetts, Kathy Glime, and Amory Maxey, for live-streaming the 10:30 AM services, and to those who connect with Grace in this way and join Zoom coffee hour. He thanked the Altar Guild and Flower Guild, acolytes, lectors, LEMS, and ushers, who all help with the liturgical life of this parish. He thanked Tom Dougherty, our Junior Warden, and all those who help maintain the upkeep and beauty of our church and grounds. Tom offered thanks for all those who help with ministries to Haiti, Ramallah, and the Circle of Care. He offered a big thank you to Rev. Megan McDermott for all her work as Director of Creative Formation. He thanked all parishioners for their generosity and stewardship this year.

Tom reminded us that wherever we are headed, it is not going back to 2019. The life of Grace Church is changing and it is a time of reorganizing, revival, and renewal. “Change can be scary, but it is also exciting. We are at a crossroads, and what lies ahead?” Tom referenced a passage from Isaiah in which God calls, “now you are going in a different direction.” Tom ended with a charge that we are being called into new territory, and we should “stay tuned; stay engaged, because the adventure of a lifetime is to be called by Christ.”

The meeting concluded with a hymn and prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Ruthie Ireland, Clerk
IV. Rector’s Sermon and Address, February 5, 2023

Many years ago, in the first year of my law career, I think I appeared once before Judge Judith Sheindlin, a/k/a Judge Judy. I think, I’m not certain, because this was years before she had a show and it was a brief encounter. If it wasn’t Judge Judy, it was someone just like her.

An attorney in the office was ill, so I was asked to stand-in at a hearing that did not concern our client. Someone simply needed to be there. It fell to me and all I had to do was acknowledge being present on behalf of the client. Nothing else. However, when I indicated being present, the judge, maybe Judge Judy – whoever she was, she looked at me and said, “Who are you?”

Who are you?

Given today’s Gospel and given the safety of being several decades removed from this judge, I wonder what she would have said, had I replied: “I’m the light of the world and the salt of the earth. And so are you, your honor, and everyone else here.”

Zip it. No more funny talk from you.

Of course, it can seem like a silly thing to say, but it is something Jesus says about us. Who are you? Have you ever said you’re the light of the world or the salt of the earth? Probably no, so why not? Do you ever think of yourself in these terms? Jesus does.

You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Jesus says this to everyone listening to the Sermon on the Mount. He doesn’t direct this to only a few, like the twelve apostles. He says it to everyone who’s there – folks who have come for healing or hoping for direction or purpose or meaning to their lives. Today Jesus speaks to us, and we’re here for many reasons, including healing, hope, direction, purpose or meaning for our lives. Jesus’ message is as relevant and meaningful today as it was back then. You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

But what does Jesus mean when he says this? Is he throwing out a compliment or is there more to what he’s saying?

Let’s start with salt. If you think about it, salt is an incredible mineral with many interesting properties. It gives flavor to food, making other things more tasty. It also acts as a preservative. And it helps us get through things like the winter, melting snow and ice on the roads, our sidewalks, our front porches, and our driveways. We’re better off thanks to salt.

In the same way, light is also amazing, particularly when it is illuminating something else. If you think about it, neither salt nor light exists for themselves. They only fulfill their purpose when used, when poured out. With both, their value comes in their application on other things – to change or transform other things, presumably for the better.

When Jesus tells the crowd they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, he’s not just throwing a compliment. He is defining discipleship, particularly discipleship as faith in action.
We are to flavor the world. As God’s agents, we are to season and transform life in such a way that God is better revealed and made manifest in this world. We are called to shine the light of hope where darkness prevails.

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

Faith alone is not sufficient, in the same way that salt and light on their own serve no true purpose. It is not enough to know or to think about or to love God. We are called to live our lives as salt and light – transformative agents that bring flavor, seasoning, zest, as well as light to where there is darkness.

So let me say it again: Who are you? You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. And for that, I say: God bless you, each and every one of you, for being the secret ingredient that makes this church so special. If ever there was community of faith of salty, zesty, flavorful, illuminating and enlightening Christians, it’s certainly here at Grace Church. Who is the salt of the earth and who is the light of the world? You are, and it’s evident in all that you do.

Let’s start with our worship which says so much about who we are and our relationship with God. What’s amazing about our services is that our liturgy truly is a work of the people as an act of love, love for God and love for one another. All of you play an integral role, seen and unseen, to make this happen: altar guild, acolytes, lectors, lay Eucharistic ministers, the choir, Beth and Dick – our music director and organist, ushers, visitors, counters, flower guild, coffee hour hospitality, and every single person in the pew. Your prayers matter. Your presence here matters. You matter. Thank God you’re here. It’s a beautiful thing when we unite ourselves with one another to acknowledge the holiness of God.

So let’s talk about being flavorful and zesty. Looking back over the year, I always have to start with Holy Week. You make that week holy, starting with the waving of palms and offering hosannas to the highest heaven on Palm Sunday, followed by the beauty of Tenebrae, the solemnity of Good Friday, the awesomeness of the Easter Vigil, and the glory of Easter morning. But I have to say, the most moving event for me that week is the footwashing Maundy Thursday evening. It moves like a well-choreographed dance: people sitting, others on their knees washing, acolytes replacing water bowls, altar guild monitoring towels and basins, tender words of thanks shared between the one who was washed and the one who washed. It’s an annual commemoration of Christ’s desire that we love one another as he loves us, and you do that so well.

This year Holy Week begins Sunday April 2nd. Join us for as much as you can, but please put in your calendar now Maundy Thursday, April 6th 7pm. In the words of the Patriarch Jacob: “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God.” (Genesis 28:17)

And then there was Pentecost Sunday, with the multitude of languages, and the global music. And once again, we shined in God’s glory as we celebrated the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, with the resumption of a parish picnic following; on All Saints Sunday we carried saints in our arms and in our hearts, and the next day we commemorated All Souls, poignantly remembering and naming so many we love and miss, and who we hope with God’s help one day we will be together with again. Advent was sublime, particularly Advent Lessons and Carols, and Christmas, as always, was beautiful, across all our services. It’s my humble opinion that no one tells the Christmas story better than children, unless it’s children and live animals. The goats are back! It’s a joy to watch the wonder on children’s faces as they place animal figurines in the crèche. Talk about bright lights of the world: such simple gestures convey so well the mystery of the incarnation which is good news for all people and all creation.
Among liturgical highlights in 2022, we incorporated *Enriching Our Worship* into our Sunday services, given that the Episcopal Church recently had elevated *Enriching* as being on par with the Book of Common Prayer. We reintroduced Holy Communion in both kinds: bread and wine, although intinction is still not permitted, and we resumed the use of the Communion rails. This year we blessed 12 icons, which I think may be a record. Iconography is such a sacred, holy, and mystical ministry. May we all be blessed through the work of our iconographers’ hands. And this summer, we started a modified form of Morning Prayer on Tuesday mornings, which meets in the Garth in the warm weather and in the chapel in the cold season. We are blessed with such a range of worship opportunities: Sunday morning services at 8:00 and 10:30, Liturgy in the Chapel once a month, Tuesday Morning Prayer, Wednesday midday Holy Communion and Healing Service, and Friday Evensong. In the words of an old spiritual: *There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place.*

Thank you to all who make the liturgical life of this parish the exceptional and transformative experience it truly is. You are the light of the world. You bring God’s light. Who else shines with the brightness? This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine! Yes, the light of Christ burns so brightly in our children and youth ministries. I’ve said it before and I will continue to say this over and over again and again and again that Grace Church, in the Town of Amherst, in the year of Our Lord 2023, has the nicest young people I have ever met in all my years of ordained ministry. Your presence and participation is such a witness and testimony to the faith. Never forget that this is your church as much as it is anybody else’s and don’t ever let anyone tell you otherwise. Many blessings to you; and praises to Megan McDermott, and to everyone who works with our young people, parents, grandparents, godparents, whomever, and to everyone who in whatever way helps ignite the light of Christ among our children and youth.

Grace Church is the salt of the earth as far as the Survival Center and a host of other agencies are concerned. In 2023, this parish surpassed our goal and provided 568 packages of bread stuffing for the Thanksgiving distribution, as well as over 1,300lbs of food for the Survival Center. We continue to partner with Books through Bars, a worthwhile prison ministry, and donated hundreds of books for people who are incarcerated. Grace’s Closet, thanks be to God, helped keep deserving folks warm and clothed in the winter. And we supplied Christmas gifts for 40 families, resulting in over 100 children waking up to a special and more happy Christmas morn.

We continue to uphold the light of education with our missions in Haiti and Ramallah. We started the year with the Annual Dine In, Help Haiti Out soup supper extravaganza. Presentations were made during the winter concerning other educational projects in Haiti. The new priest in charge, Père Walin Decamps visited us in May. It was a pleasure to meet him. May God bless him in his ministry. Once again we raised the needed funds for necessary school supplies and for every child to have a new school uniform. The school is expanding to include a seventh grade. What accomplishments! Can I get an Amen? May a generation of children be transformed through the power of education. And in Ramallah, we continue to support the education of Teya Awad at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center, through the monthly selling here of Palestinian olive oil.

Everything at Grace comes with a little salt and light. This year we wished Godspeed to the Berchmas family which relocated and is now settled in Avon, Indiana. God bless the Circle of Care and everyone who helped and supported this family. Your dedication, guidance, care, and love played an important role in their transformation and their ability to move on. May God be with them in their new life.

And when it comes to salt as currency, in a year of war in Europe, inflation, and so much uncertainty, this congregation – answered God’s call to love others – and gave away over $31,000 (that’s a lot of salt) to
deserving agencies near and far, such as the Center for New Americans, Not Bread Alone, Craig’s Doors, and Relief Funds for people in Ukraine. Thank you for being so generous and so caring for the welfare and well-being of others.

There is so much going on in the life and ministry of this parish. Thank you to all who participated in the discussion of Amy Jill Levine’s book *Witness at the Cross* and Rachel Held Evans’ book *Wholehearted Faith*. Thank you to the Pastoral Care commission for organizing vital presentations concerning topics, such as anxiety and depression, particularly in the context of COVID, which is still with us. Thank you to all who attended Megan’s Monday meditations, Movement and the Sacred, Kell Julliard’s mindfulness presentations, and various organ meditations. The Fanny von Arnstein Viennese Salon 1790, co-sponsored by Grace Church and the Jewish Community of Amherst. That was such a delightful afternoon. Thank you to Ken Samonds for his presentation about our stained-glass windows and for the publication of his book *A Slant of Light*. Thank you to all who share their thoughts and reflections on the Community Bulletin Board. Thank you to Climate Action @ Grace. Keep ringing the bell on the 11th day of each month, continue to raise awareness, and continue getting us into good trouble. Thank you to all who are re-envisioning the Parke House. Thank you Vestry and Executive Committee for your support and leadership. You mean the world to me. Thank you to those who hosted and those who attended the Advent Suppers. May there be more opportunities like that this coming year. And thank you to all who participated in the St. Nicholas Bazaar. Seeing all the people who come to the bazaar, reminds me every year that this is an important ministry for many in our area. It’s not just a fundraiser. To all who participate in the life of this parish, which you all do: thank you, thank you, thank you. You are the salt of the earth.

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. A church budget I believe, is a tangible and physical manifestation of a congregation’s faith, hope, and charity. God bless you for your generosity and your witness.

My friends, let’s be honest. Last year, 2022, was a very challenging year. There’s so much uncertainty about where things are going. COVID waxes and wanes but doesn’t go away. It will soon be the one year anniversary of Ukraine’s fight for its survival. Inflation has negatively impacted everyone’s finances everywhere – including the church. Hostility in our country shows no sign of abating. These are tough times but it’s also our time to shine the light of hope to a world that seems to be descending into darkness.

The life of a parish is first and foremost about its people – past, present, and yet to come. Faithful souls brought this church into being and it has been lovingly passed along from generation to generation by people who were the salt of the earth and the light of the world in their day. It’s now our turn to sustain it and strengthen this wonderful parish, so that we too can lovingly hand it on to those who will come after us.

Now in my tenth year at Grace Church, I remain so incredibly honored and humbled to be your rector. What makes Grace Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and in the People’s Republic of Amherst so special is you. You do some incredibly amazing things through amazing Grace, but even so we still have our work cut out for us.

My friends, *No arm so weak but may do service here.* Now is not the time for us to lose our flavor and zest or put our light under a bushel basket, and give up and do nothing.

Who are you?

_You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world._
May the Holy Spirit, who has begun a good work in you, continue to guide and strengthen you in the service of Christ and Christ’s kingdom.

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

Amen.

*The Rev. Tom Synan*

**V. Vestry Reports**

**Senior Warden:** I would like to begin my report by thanking the Parish for the privilege of allowing me to serve as your Senior Warden this past year. The Pandemic seems to be easing and we have learned to live with it, remain safe and have accomplished many things. I would like to thank Tom and Megan for their guidance and leadership, as well as the Executive Committee, Tom, Ruthie, and Mark for their individual work in keeping our Parish strong and vibrant during these difficult times.

We are worshiping again with mask optional, having communion with wine and meeting either on Zoom or sometimes finally in person. Our streaming of services continues, and we are looking at ways to make this easier and more consistent as we move forward. Thank you to Charlie Tebbetts and Kenneth Page who are helping with this ministry. Tom and Megan continue to provide wonderful, enriching adult education offerings. I thank the Parish for your support not only financially, but also more importantly with your time and talents because without your efforts over the past year we could not have continued to be such a vibrant community. The Bazaar was held, and we were able to serve lunch. We had a great turnout and fun was had by all. How wonderful it was to have our Christmas Services in full swing. The pageant was a great success as usual with some frisky animals. Thank you, Megan for your Poetry and Arts focused programs, and our youth and children continue to be blessed with your care and guidance. No one can say that Grace is not involved in our community as well as within the wider community. Our Haiti Ministry, through the generosity of our parish were able to provide uniforms to all students and funded many books for the library. We also published a book about the stained glass of Grace Church entitled A Slant of Light, researched and written by Ken Samonds our historian. This next year I will be asking the Vestry along with the Parish to form a committee to be involved with communication as well as fund raising. Our budget was a challenge this year. Not from the aspect of revenue to which I am very grateful, but our expenses, such as utilities and insurance increased and while we tried to be frugal in other areas, we need to find ways to make up for these increases that will continue to be with us in the future. The Communications Committee would work to enhance our web site and tell our and the wider community about all that we have to offer at Grace. We have seen some new faces, which is wonderful, but with all of the programs we have, we should be announcing these to those who may be seeking a spiritual home. The fundraising committee would work to suggest how we could further our mission of being connected as well as help to raise some additional funds to fill the gaps within the budget.

Having implemented our nominations process several years ago, we again used this process and had another successful time finding new leaders for Vestry and Diocesan Convention. The Nominations Committee consisted of Sarah Chadwick, Donna Devine, Kathy Glime, Tom Synan and me. Members of the Nominations Committee gave testimonials as to why they served on Vestry as well as the benefits of serving. Multiple bulletin inserts were used to request nominations and provide opportunities to meet with the committee and potential nominees. I am happy to say that again this process provided a good list of names and nominees were selected. Sarah and Donna have decided to run for a second term on the Vestry and I appreciate their staying on.
I want to thank Kathy for her service on Vestry and for her help on the nominations committee. I encourage everyone to think about how you can best serve Grace. We are always looking for people with special talents to share.

Chris Freitag, Senior Warden

Junior Warden:

Our long term 20 years sexton Dave Ulen retired at the beginning of 2023. In May of 2023 we hired Dave Goodhind a retired contractor to become our new sexton.

Dave Goodhind has done a great job of organizing supplies, making minor repairs around the campus and dealing with contractors. Some of his accomplishments are listed as follows;

- He replaced and painted the front step to the Rectory.
- Storm windows for inside the Rectory were made and installed from existing material!
- The communion area flooring in the Church was polished.
- Met with gutter contractors and finally had the gutter and downspouts in the back of the Church repaired satisfactorily (Mr. Gutter)
- Repaired some ceiling damage due to the broken gutters.
- We also removed the broken gutter on the Parish Hall kitchen entrance from Spring Street.
- We rehinged and planed the inside church doors so they close easier.
- Met with plumbing contractor (BPH Plumbing & Heating) to have the Parke House basement floor drain capped and to install a new high arc faucet in the Rectory sink.
- Dave installed cabinets in the downstairs sacristy and painted the floor.
- (Blanchard and Daley Electric – Bob Cote) installed a new heating unit in the elevator room and added illuminated switches by the Rectory mailboxes.
- Much of the interior stone walls where the caulking has been deteriorating have been sealed.

Along with setting up the Parish Hall for various functions including the Bazaar, our sexton is involved with the multiple inspections that we have throughout the year including; backflow prevention, fire safety, heating units, board of health and elevator.
My thanks to Dave Goodhind for his efforts to keep our church looking good. Terrie Korpita has been a big help this past year filling in details that we missed transitioning to a new sexton.

I look forward to continuing to keep the Grace Church campus/buildings in good repair with help from our sexton, the congregation and outside contractors when needed.

*Tom Dougherty, Junior Warden*

**VI. Commission Reports**

**LITURGICAL COMMISSION**

**Altar Guild:** Members of the Altar Guild worked hard to ensure that the Altar looked its best as we returned fully to our pre-Covid worship traditions. These individuals included Georgann Mirick who was responsible for setting the roster of duties as well as for keeping track and ordering Altar supplies; numerous volunteers who either set up and cleaned the Altar at all regular and special services or laundered Altar linens; and Lou Currin and her team who kept the Altar filled with gorgeous flowers. We thank all Altar Guild members for their commitment to this important ministry of making the Altar look beautiful.

Many volunteers are required to make Grace Church a special sacred space for all. We are very grateful to each and every volunteer who serves on the Altar Guild. Although we are a small group of volunteers, we are committed to making sure that our worship space remains special. We would like to invite any Grace Church members (men and women, singles and couples) who may be interested in joining this special ministry. Thank you!

*Sheila Mammen*

**Acolytes:** Acolytes (ages eight through high school) assist in all aspects of liturgical life at Grace Church; they are invited to join the ranks of Lay Eucharistic Ministers, lectors, and bell ringers for the consecration as they express interest in expanding their liturgical roles. In the past, those younger than eight have participated in workdays, assisted as crucifers to lead the food basket procession to the altar at the offertory, and served in the monthly liturgy in the chapel services. Acolytes traditionally work with the altar guild in many aspects of liturgical preparation such as assisting in preparing the sanctuary for Advent and Palm Sunday. Tom Synan and Megan McDermott support acolytes at the altar and meet with them when appropriate.

Graduations and the long-term effects of the COVID pandemic have depleted the roster of acolytes, and we are in a period of rebuilding. Currently acolytes serve with some regularity during the 10:30 am services. Megan hosted a training session in September and we are hopeful that a younger crop of acolytes will be active in the year to come.

*Trent Maxey*

**Music:** This year saw us beginning to recover from many of the restrictions which the COVID epidemic had necessitated. When we were only having online services, we had tried a “Virtual Choir” which was very time-consuming and required technical help from outside the church, so it was a relief and a great joy to be able to sing in church again.

We welcomed six new singers to the Choir this fall – bringing the total number of participants to 24. We are currently blessed with a “bounty of basses,” 6 or 7 in number, which is a most welcome circumstance.
A particular highlight of this year was our Advent Lessons and Carols, which is likely the most popular choir event we do annually. It was a great pleasure to be able to do it in person this year, and we were deeply gratified to see so many attendees in the congregation, especially since it was quite a cold afternoon/evening.

We were very pleased and gratified to be invited to give a concert at Trinity Episcopal Church in Ware, MA, which currently has our former interim priest, Randy Wilburn, as their leader. The concert was a benefit for the Haiti school we support in Bayonnais, and we raised approximately $500 for that ministry. Repertoire for the concert consisted of the anthems we had already sung at Grace during the fall, so it did not require a lot of extra rehearsal and was a lovely and worthy thing to do.

As restrictions due to COVID have lessened, it has been a joy for us to be able to once again incorporate a sung psalm and a Sequence hymn into our regular weekly services. We look forward to a time when we might again be able to include a Communion hymn in our regular line-up.

Because of having had to shut down our in-person worship almost completely, due to COVID, we have become even more appreciative of the rewards of being able to do what we do, which is to gather and offer our collective musical abilities in the hope of adding inspiration and beauty to our worship services.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Damon, Director of Music

CHRISTIAN FORMATION & EDUCATION - ADULT

As in 2021 adult education was greatly affected by the COVID pandemic. However, thanks to the energy and imagination of the clergy and others, many interesting programs did happen.

Several on-going programs have continued. Saturday Bible study has a devoted following thanks to Zoom. Tea and Titles likewise has carried on in different formats under the leadership of Jude Wobst. Raising the Questions has recently returned to in-person meetings.

For Lent the clergy led a four-part Wednesday night series: Language & Liturgy – Exploring Possibilities for Prayer. On the Sundays and Thursdays of Lent, the Rector Led a Lenten Book Series: Witness at the Cross – A Beginner’s Guide to Holy Friday. In the fall, the Rector led two discussions on Heroes of the Bible and Heroes of the Church. He also led a Book Group Discussion, both in-person and on-line, of Rachel Held Evans’ Wholehearted Faith. In Advent Tom gathered a group of parishioners on three occasions between the Sunday morning services to discuss the major figures of the season; John the Baptist, Mary and Joseph, and the Christ Child.

There were three forums in 2022. In April Sharon Seelig gave a presentation, The Postures of Prayer, about the poetry of George Herbert. In September Carolyn Colette gave a talk on Chaucer, Wycliffe, and the coming Reformation. In December Ken Samonds gave a presentation on our stain-glass windows based on his fascinating book, A Slant of Light.

Eve Webster
Raising the Questions
Raising the questions resumed regular in-person meetings in September; topics included meditation, walking as prayer, religion and politics, and politics and Christian identity. We will continue meeting monthly, the second Tuesday morning of the month at 10 am. Come raise some questions with us!

Nancy Lowry

Creative Formation

Since summer 2021, “creative formation” – opportunities to explore our faith through arts, literature, and creativity – has been a named area of my focus here at Grace. In 2022, we engaged this project of “creative formation” in a variety of ways.

In the season of Epiphany, Kell Julliard led a 4-week meditation series. As part of this series, I collaborated with Kell to end each session with a contemplative Compline experience. Compline began with a creative reading from literature that spoke to the night’s meditative focus. I also provided packets of poems and quotations pertaining to the night’s theme for people to take home for further independent reflection.

Over the Lenten season, I began a series of Zoom meditations on Mondays at 12:15 p.m., lasting about a half hour. This series was called “The Cross Through Artists’ Eyes.” Each week, we prayerfully explored artworks of the cross and crucifixion by different artists, including Georgia O’Keeffe, Odilon Redon, William H. Johnson, textile artists, and a number of living artists. These meditations included time for individual reflection as well as group discussion.

This time and format seemed to work well, so I decided to offer a similar meditation series throughout the summer. Meeting for 11 sessions, “Summer Poem & Prayer” featured a different poem weekly by a contemporary poet. I shared my thoughts on the spiritual questions and themes I found in the poem and then invited people into a time of prayer, reflection, and ultimately sharing.

In the fall, we offered another series, on both poetry and visual art, called “Holy Physicality,” centered around pieces that explored the relationship between the body and the sacred. This series included marble Jonah statues from the 3rd century and sculptures by contemporary artist by Debra Baxter, as well as poems by Natasha Tretheway, Missy-Marie Montgomery, Paul Jolly, and Romeo Oriogun.

For Advent, we had a 3-session series called “Finding Ourselves in the Stories of Advent: Poetry Meditations” that asked questions about how we relate to the narratives, themes, and characters of Advent, using poems by Enuma Okoro, Anya Krugovoy Silver, Luci Shaw, and Eugene Peterson.

All Zoom meditations were recorded and available for those who missed a session or couldn’t join us live. I am happy to share past recordings or lists of artwork or poetry to those who are interested. These meditations have continued into 2023, with a recent series of poems on “Fleeting Epiphanies.”

In summer 2022, a morning prayer service began on Tuesday mornings. This service now meets at Tuesdays on 8:30 a.m, in the Chapel and, when weather permits, in the Garth. This emerged from an interest in contemplative prayer opportunities among parishioners. Parishioners, along with myself, have rotated leadership of this service, which often features liturgy from the expansive language resource Daily Prayer for All Seasons, simple music, and movement meditation.
Parishioners Mary Hocken and Kell Julliard also hosted two workshops on movement and the sacred, one in 2022 and one in 2023.

Rev. Megan McDermott

CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMISSION -
CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children

In 2022, Grace Church continued to rebuild and recommit itself to vibrant, in-person children’s ministries.

The 2021-2022 school year was our first year welcoming children back to in-person Sunday School and Liturgy in the Chapel after a year of online ministry.

Given the realities of the pandemic, our Sunday School class for kindergarten through fifth graders met in the parish hall or outside in the Garth, when weather permitted. These spaces accommodated greater levels of social distancing.

We used the curriculum Sparkhouse Rotation, which encourages children to learn Bible stories through creative and fun activities, such as art, drama, and games. The same Bible story was typically featured for several weeks in a row, so students could immerse themselves more deeply in the biblical narrative. Drip paintings in the style of Jackson Pollack, obstacles course with hula hoops and parish hall furniture, and clay sculptures were all a part of our lessons, with tie-ins to the Bible stories. The most consistently meaningful part of class, however, was simply the reading of our children’s Bible out loud by one of the students and the conversations and questions that then emerged. Sunday School occurred between the two services – from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m.

Through the 2021-2022 program year, my weekly email to parents and guardians also provided regular “Faith at Home” resources (such as coloring pages, activity pages, prayers, etc.) for those families who may not have been able or comfortable with returning in-person.

As it does every year, Sunday School took a break over the summer. When Sunday School returned in Fall 2022, we moved back into an upstairs classroom of the Parke House. This is one of the spaces traditionally used for Sunday School. We also expanded the class to welcome K-6th graders to meet the needs and preferences of currently involved families. We continued utilizing the Sparkhouse Rotation curriculum, this year focusing on Old Testament stories. We’ve done digital photography, collaging, card games, poetry, and shadow plays while learning about God as Creator; God keeping unlikely promises to Abraham and Sarah; and the rescue of Moses from Pharoah.

If more families with children return, and more volunteers are recruited, we could potentially increase the number of Sunday School classes (classes used to be divided into smaller grade ranges, such as pre-school, K-2nd, and 3rd-5th), but for now, having one class with a broader age range best serves our needs in terms of the number of participating students and available leadership capacity. Sunday School participation has remained small in numbers, but lively in energy!

In the first half of 2022, Liturgy in the Chapel – our children’s Communion service – met from 9:45-10:15 a.m. on the third Sunday of each month, either in the Chapel or outside when possible. That program year, we did
not incorporate singing into our Communion services because of Covid-related concern, but instead used body movement prayers in their place.

In fall 2022, we realized a need for some reconfiguring of Liturgy in the Chapel. We began the program year hosting Liturgy in the Chapel as usual, but took a hiatus when there were some scheduling conflicts both among attending families and potential volunteers. Currently, we are soliciting feedback from families with children about what might be the best time/week to meet. In the gatherings we did have, singing was re-introduced.

Children at Grace were also involved in special ways seasonally throughout 2022. On Good Friday, children gathered for a Stations of the Cross service outside, on the church grounds and the Town Common, and on Easter, children participated in Easter egg hunts after both services. This upcoming Easter, we have plans for a Jr. Choir to perform at the 10:30 service, thanks to the volunteer leadership of Alice Goodwin-Brown. 2022 was our second year, since the pandemic, of having a successful, in-person Christmas pageant at our 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service, and we even had the return of live animals!

We have not resumed nursery care during the Sunday School hour and/or the 10:30 a.m. service. This used to be offered pre-pandemic and is a possibility to explore for the future based on interest and the return of families with young children to worship.

I am very thankful for those parishioners who have helped make these ministries possible in 2022. Many thanks to Janet Teng for her long-term ministry with Liturgy in the Chapel and for training new volunteers (the Marino family) in set-up and clean-up for the service; to Charlotte Casselton for help with Sunday School this past fall; and to Kate Atkinson, Katie Schendel, Sharon Marino, Tyler Marino, Libby Maxey, Gabriel Davila-Bustamante, Mary Hocken, Ancient Ponies Farm – and many, many others! – for their help with the pageant.

As we look to the future, an ongoing goal I have is to incorporate more, and new, parishioner volunteers into Sunday School and Liturgy in the Chapel. More broadly, though, it would be worthwhile to consider if there are new ways we are being called to minister to, and connect with, families with children besides our traditional programming. Many families find it difficult to fit in regular Sunday attendance in the midst of overwhelmed schedules, and many others may not see a need to be part of a worshipping community or faith tradition. Given these realities, what are creative ways we might love and serve our young neighbors in Amherst?

Youth

In the first half of 2022, we continued with our first program year back in-person after doing a year of online-only ministry.

For the 2021-2022 school year, we moved away from offering youth classes during the Sunday School Hour (9:15-10:15 a.m.) but instead focused our ministries with these age groups on youth group, which is open to grades 6-12. We strove to have gatherings that allowed for meaningful dialogue on life and faith and gatherings that helped us build our community through fun, local activities.

Our monthly youth group lunch discussions in 2021-22 explored the relationship between Christian faith and wellness, drawing on the resources of The Teen Compass Faith and Wellness Program from the organization Living Compass. Our community building activities included rock climbing together at Central Rock Gym in Hadley (joined by the youth of First Church Amherst!) and lunch, mini golf, and ice cream at McCray’s Farm

The Rev. Megan McDermott
in South Hadley. Typically, lunch discussions met immediately following the 10:30 service; times varied for local outings.

In Lent 2022, we also hosted a number of youth group prayer gatherings over Zoom on weeknights, responding to interest from some families in continued online programming.

Over the summer, youth group paused its regular meetings, except for a collaborative day trip in August, which included youth from our church, St. James and St. Andrew in Greenfield, and St. Michael’s-on-the-Heights in Worcester. Our youth from Amherst and Greenfield rode together to Worcester, where we did a morning of service at Marie’s Mission, a diaper distribution ministry hosted by St. Michael’s-on-the-Heights. We then prayed and reflected together at the church, went to the Worcester Latin American Festival for lunch, and ended with a visit to St. Joseph’s Abbey in Spencer, where we toured the monastery and learned about monastic life.

For the 2022-2023 program year, we started a Confirmation class for grades 8 and up. Confirmation classes happen every other school year, based on the bishop’s visitation schedule. I decided to have Confirmation with grade 8 to have a bigger cohort for the class. Currently, we have 5 youth preparing for Confirmation. The class meets every other Sunday after the 10:30 service for about an hour. We are working our way through the Baptismal Covenant as a means of exploring core aspects of our Christian faith and what they have to do with our lives.

Youth group for grades 6-12 has again focused on providing chances both for meaningful dialogue and fun, community building activities.

This school year, our monthly lunch discussions are centering around the book How Not to Be Afraid: Seven Ways to Live When Everything Seems Terrifying by Gareth Higgins. Using quotes from the book and the Bible as jumping off points, we explore topics related to faith and fear, especially what our Christian faith has to say to us in the midst of the scary things in our world and in our lives.

We’ve continued our fun, community building activities as well – like apple picking and exploring Art in the Orchard at Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton; enjoying Virtual Reality, bumper cars, and games at the new Fun Hub Action Park in Hampshire Mall; watching Hocus Pocus with First Church Amherst; and organizing and pricing toys together for the St. Nicholas Bazaar.

I am thankful to Kate Atkinson and Cara Crandall for supporting these youth group ministries as chaperones and mentors.

Some of our youth have also returned to roles as acolytes, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, or lectors in our services, particularly the 10:30 service. I am thankful to Trent Maxey who is currently serving as acolyte coordinator. Our middle and high-schoolers also played an essential part in this year’s Christmas pageant, which is elaborated on in our children’s formation report.

Looking ahead, I hope we will find more occasions to enhance the collaborations we’ve begun ecumenically in Amherst (namely with First Church) and other Episcopal churches across the diocese (such as with St. James and St. Andrew in Greenfield and St. Michael’s-on-the-Heights in Worcester). As we move into new stages of adapting to life with the Covid-19 virus, another hope might be increasing opportunities for service and travel.

The Rev. Megan McDermott
Campus and Young Adult Ministry

In 2022, we continued to rebuild our campus and young adult ministries after a challenging drop-off in young adult engagement and possibilities for outreach early in the pandemic.

While the first half of 2022 provided valuable chances to get to know students, this past Fall marked the restarting of a formal campus ministry. Parishioner Will Harron volunteered to help co-lead this ministry, which we’ve named GEMS: Grace Episcopal Ministry for Students. In the fall 2022 semester, GEMS met the first and third Thursday evenings of each month in the Connector, welcoming local students as well as other young adults connected to our parish. We provided dinner for each gathering from places like Bruno’s Pizza and Crazy Noodles and together studied the book of Ruth as well as talked more broadly about faith and Scripture.

I also continued to reach out individually to college students who attend worship, inviting them to coffee/tea and further one-on-one conversation; I have enjoyed getting to know several students over this past year on an individual basis.

In 2022, parishioner Micah Walter also began organizing monthly young adult brunches, where young adults (defined more broadly to include people in their 20s and 30s – not just college students) gather in the Connector after the 10:30 service and head out to brunch somewhere near the church.

I’ve also continued to co-lead Theology on Tap gatherings, sponsored by the United Christian Foundation (an ecumenical campus ministry serving UMass), that bring together people across a few different faith communities for conversation about life and faith over food and drinks. We alternate locations between different local bars and restaurants in both Amherst and Northampton and have also done some non-restaurant outings, like a picnic at Look Park and a bonfire at McCray’s Farm. These are not young adult only events, but have often been a place where young adults have found connection. These happen one Thursday evening a month.

Grace also participated in the Western Mass. Young Adult Ministry Network, led by Will Harron, which brings together Episcopalians ages 18-40 from across the diocese for growth in faith and friendship. In 2022, we came together in-person both for a day of serving Appalachian Trail hikers in Sheffield and for an in-person retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Camp in New Hampshire. The network also offers online community through its Discord server and virtual Bible studies.

Additionally, I’ve maintained connections with both Amherst College and Hampshire College’s spiritual life departments. At Hampshire College, another Christian advisor and I spent several weeks offering apple cider donuts from Atkins to students, as well as beginning-of-the-school-year-themed prayers. I’ve met multiple times with the college’s new spiritual life director, who has invited me to offer a talk in 2023, co-sponsored by the Centers for Feminism, on women’s spiritual leadership. At Amherst College, I helped facilitate a connection between the department and the organization Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom (SYRF), which will hopefully result in some interesting events and conversation around faith and reproductive rights in 2023. I also remain a board member of United Christian Foundation, an ecumenical mainline Protestant campus ministry that serves the UMass campus.

The Rev. Megan McDermott
PARISH LIFE COMMISSION

The mission of the Parish Life Commission is to spread the joy of Christian fellowship and hospitality throughout Grace Church and the larger community. Many committees and events strive to maintain a strong, social connection throughout our membership. In 2022 we were able to hold these events:

*Our Annual Meeting*
*The annual St. Michael’s Picnic*
*The annual Stewardship Feast of Grace*
*The café at the St. Nicholas Bazaar*

Our Parish Life committees serve our members in many important ways. The Hospitality Committee provides coffee hours after our services, schedules ushers, and welcomes newcomers. The Brother Lawrence Guild provides delicious cuisine at various gatherings. The Funeral Committee provides support in planning and executing funeral receptions. The St. 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 that they do. 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 2022.

**Saint Nicholas Bazaar:**

The St. Nicholas Bazaar was a great success, both for the fellowship shared and the money raised for the parish. Our net income was about $10,500, thanks to the contributions of time, talent and treasures from our generous congregation. This was truly a parish-wide event, with about 65 people (including some new to the bazaar!) helping before, during and after, not including those who donated and all who came to shop. Every individual’s contribution is greatly appreciated. Thank you to everyone involved - the bazaar couldn’t happen without so many doing so much.

Respectfully, Joan O’Brien

**Garden Ministry:**

The stalwarts of the Garden Ministry were aided by several newcomers this year as a few people retired.

Sarah Chadwick and Helen Drake took over the Columbarium garden from the Erards who had expanded and maintained it for a decade. Many thanks to Michael and Jeanette for such wonderful work over the years. And a thank you to Sarah and Helen who are carrying on the tradition.

Helen also helped immensely with the new planters in front of the Connector. Sherry Wilson and Tom Dougherty selected and installed them in the spring. Sherry and Helen took charge of the plantings.

Helen has also ably assisted Mary Hocken in the Goodwin Garden on Spring Street, which is our most public garden. As always it looked lovely despite the drought.
Tom also pruned the shrubs in front of the Parish offices to keep their exuberance under control and treated the brick patio weeds with vinegar.

Maria Dye and Paul Bracciotti planted and maintained the gardens under the Parish Hall windows and Paul took charge of the strip along the north side of our property abutting Town Hall.

Sandy Muspratt always turned up for work days. He specializes in dandelion control but pitches in wherever needed.

The Laylins are our other new workers who are learning about the gardens and Jeff DeSantis and Virginia Ramos have also helped on work days. Undoubtedly, I’ve neglected to acknowledge others who have helped for which I apologize.

We can always use new thumbs—green or otherwise.

For health reasons, Sherry Wilson is trying to step back even from organizing work days, so more volunteers are needed. Please donate your expertise or willingness to learn.

We would like to have a plant sale in the spring – but only if there are enough volunteers!!!

Thanks to all who have donated their gardening skills and/or enthusiasm. You are nearer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth!

Sherry Wilson, organizer

Iconography Workshop:

The icon workshop has blossomed to include s number of new members, and we are now meeting every Sunday afternoon, alternating between groups of beginning and more experienced iconographers. Several group icon blessings have been held to consecrate completed icons, and an icon of St. James was given to the Haiti Project's partner, St. James Episcopal Church in Indian Head, Maryland. The icon workshop welcomes visitors and new members.

Sandy Lillydahl

PASTORAL CARE COMMISSION

We continue to explore ways to support parishioners in times of need. Primarily, we have provided meals and cards in times of illness or bereavement. COVID restrictions have relaxed, but we are cognizant that this continues to be a very real concern and are always looking for ways to help the isolated members of our Grace family remain connected.

This past Christmas we created small gift boxes of cookies and candies for our homebound parishioners. Members of the parish delivered these the Sunday before Christmas and by all reports these were most welcome.
Many of our Grace family continue to attend services remotely. We continue to offer home delivery of consecrated host in order to allow these parishioners to more fully participate in communion. If you or someone you know is interested please contact Terrie Korpita in the parish office or Gail Gnatek.

Recognizing that care moves beyond the physical realm, we hosted two presentations dealing with the aftereffects of the pandemic as well as other stressors of our times. The first was September’s “The Psycho-Social Impacts of the Pandemic” by Dr. Saxon Elliott. In October we had “Moving Through Anxiety and Keeping Focus on What Matters” by Ross Goodwin-Brown. Both were well received and we plan to have more presentations in 2023.

Gail Gnatek, Chair

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMISSION

In 2012, our Fourth Sunday Outreach collections plus additional allocations from the Rector’s Discretionary Fund distributed just over $30,000 to worthy groups outside the church. Organizations that you supported included: Not Bread Alone Soup Kitchen, Amherst Survival Center, Craig’s Doors, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts as well as global and regional groups such as the Episcopal Vocational Training Center in Ramallah, the Episcopal Church in Navajoland, and several organizations providing support for those in and fleeing Ukraine.

As part of our mission “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” (Mission Statement: Outreach Ministries Commission), your Outreach Commission welcomes your ideas on new organizations to support, especially any organizations that parishioners are already involved with.

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

Chris Hoffmann, Chair

Adopt-A-Family for Christmas:

Once again Grace Church gave in abundance to struggling families. All 40 families (104 children) were adopted and $1,373 was sent to the Family Outreach of Amherst which does so much to support the most vulnerable families in our community. Your generosity continues to amaze. Thank you, thank you.

Mary Hocken

Haiti Ministry:

The problems in Haiti increased dramatically this past year as the nation descended almost into anarchy, especially in the large cities. Transportation became practically impossible, and most public services stopped operating. The opening of school was delayed several times. Throughout all this, however, St Matthew’s School in Bayonnais held on – more than held on, actually. Here is our annual report of what the Haiti Ministry has accomplished with the strong financial support of Grace Church members and the very dedicated staff and teachers in Bayonnais.
We began the year with our now annual soup supper in January, an event that was successful in raising $3,634 in support of St Matthew’s, and also in engaging many Grace Church members. Parishioners volunteered to bake cookies, and local restaurants joined with Haiti Committee chefs to prepare a bountiful variety of hearty soups. The Hungry Ghost bakery in Northampton again donated its wonderful bread. As in 2020, it was a “virtual” gathering. Orders were delivered to people’s homes, or they picked them up from the Parish Hall in the afternoon, and those who wished to do so broke bread together on Zoom that evening.

During February and March, we organized four Conversations About Haiti on Zoom, open to the congregation, in which we exchanged ideas and experiences with people from other organizations in this region that are involved with education in Haiti:
Doug Albertson from Opportunities for Communities in Amherst
Sheila Humphreys from HOST (Haitian Orphanage Sponsorship Trust) in Brattleboro VT
Rev. Rebecca Crosby from the Crosby Fund for Haitian Education in Old Lyme CT
Leslie Harrison from Be Like Brit in Worcester

Then, in early May the committee hosted Père Walin Decamps, the new priest in charge of St Matthew’s School, for a four-day visit to meet one another, for him to get to know the area of Amherst a bit so as to understand the environment in which we operate, and to share his and our goals and hopes for the school. We hosted small dinners and arranged visits to a local organic farm, the children’s section of the Jones library, and a self-sustaining ‘green’ building at Hampshire College. Père Decamps expressed his view that the school has so many needs and challenges that it would be difficult to prioritize them, but much of the discussion focused on the strong impetus for St. Matthew’s to offer grades 7 through 9. We, in turn, explained that we would need to find other partners to fund additional grades and asked about the possibility of students’ families contributing money or services to help with running the school. Other topics of discussion were the cooking facility, the functioning of the library, the possibility of adding solar power, expanding the school garden, and issues around transportation for the teachers. It was, we felt, a fruitful and candid exchange. Although Père Decamps had been at the school since August 2022, the situation there has made it impossible for any of us to travel to Haiti since his arrival. Having met him in person, we now feel a closer connection, something we have found over the years to be an important component of a successful working partnership. Père Decamps took back with him two suitcases stuffed with books for the library, Legos, puzzles, and dolls for the younger children, and school supplies. We are grateful for a grant from the Global Missions Committee of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts that covered the costs of his trip.

The Haiti Ministry is actively pursuing organizations that could join us in supporting the school, in particular Grade 7. We learned, to that end, that Saints James and Andrew in Greenfield has pledged $1500 as a Lenten offering in 2023. We hope for more news like this!

Over the summer, we focused on raising funds for school uniforms and school supplies, and once again the Grace Church community responded generously. We were able to raise $12,474, thus providing uniforms, books and supplies to over 250 children for 2022-23.

Other fundraising efforts included Honey for Haiti in August. Lisa and Tilman Lukas sold adorable honey ‘bears’ filled with honey from their own bees at Grace Church one Sunday and donated all the proceeds to St Matthew’s School. In mid-November, the Grace Church choir gave a concert at Trinity Church in Ware, where Randy Wilburn, former Interim rector at Grace, is now Bridge Pastor. Again, the proceeds were contributed to St Matthew’s School. It is clear that this Ministry has been embraced by the entire church community, with generosity and new ideas for raising funds!
Meanwhile, in Bayonnais a new 7th-grade classroom was being built. We sent $14,000 to underwrite the project. It was constructed on the upper level of an existing classroom building, which helped keep costs down. Haiti Committee members voted to send a lump sum of $30,000 to Père Decamps each year for the next three years to cover all operating costs, including those of seventh grade. We want our partners there to know that we fully support their efforts and trust them to make the best allocation of the funds as they see fit. We were able to use some accumulated reserves to make this promise. During those three years, we will concentrate on enlisting a new partner or partners who can undertake the ongoing funding of seventh grade.

In October, the committee welcomed three individuals from our partner in Indian Head, Maryland, St. James’ Church. They have been faithfully supporting the school alongside Grace Church since 2016. We also celebrated the success of the uniform campaign that weekend, with a well-attended ice-cream social after the 10:30 Sunday service called ‘Eat Dessert First,’ our way of thanking the Grace Church congregation. A joint meeting with our Maryland partners followed the party, at which we were joined by Maggie Sweeney of Saints James and Andrew in Greenfield. After their Lenten campaign in 2023, that church will decide whether to continue as a partner, and if so, at what level. Our fingers are crossed!

By late October the political, economic and social situation throughout Haiti had become deeply troubling, with gangs ruling the cities and controlling harbors, roads and airports and kidnappings keeping most residents indoors. There were riots brought on by drastic shortages of food and gasoline; hunger and an outbreak of cholera followed. It was not clear whether the banking system would function. Against this backdrop, we all wondered - and continue to wonder - how best to support the children in the school, their teachers and staff.

Amazingly, some of the village children have made it back to the classrooms, and some instruction is taking place. The 7th grade classroom is finished and hosting students. These are signs of hope.

We have been exploring with a new non-profit organization, Brighten Haiti, a project to install solar panels and a computer laboratory at the school, which would make it the first place in Bayonnais to have electricity. The Global Missions Committee of the Diocese awarded a grant of $5000 to cover Grace’s share of the cost. Work on this has been halted by the situation within the country, but we are optimistic that it will happen eventually.

We remain deeply committed to the school, its children, staff and teachers, and are praying daily for a peaceful and effective resolution of Haiti’s current problems. Whenever this happens, we know that the financial and social needs there will be greater than ever. The entire Haiti Ministry committee joins me in thanks to the Grace Church community for their generosity, their compassion and their faith in this work.

Submitted by Bonnie Vigeland, co-chair

Haiti Ministry committee members: Patty Appelbaum, Tom Baker, Sarah Chadwick, Mary Hocken, Meg Holladay, Brown Kennedy, Laura Klock, Sandy Muspratt co-chair, Suzannah Fabing Muspratt, Joan O’Brien, John Stifler, Tahina Vatel, Martin Wobst

Refugee Resettlement Project – Circle of Care – Final Report

Four years ago, in November of 2018, Grace Church stepped forward to form a Circle of Care for a family arriving from Rwanda. It has been an amazing journey for them and also for us! And in a surprising way, it is definitely an immigrant success. As of August, all twelve members of the Berchmas family have now relocated to Avon, Indiana! Many of them left with deep regret at having to begin again in a new place, but the cost of
housing in Amherst made the decision totally understandable. A single man from the same refugee camp in Rwanda was also under our wing; he has moved to Ohio.

So the work of our Circle of Care is basically complete. During 2023, there were a number of significant milestones – some accomplished with our help, some on their own: Amherst High School diplomas, drivers’ licenses, a successful move, new jobs, and for Berchmas, a trip back to Rwanda for the wedding in December of his oldest daughter (half sister to the ones we know).

Even now, the family continues to be profoundly grateful for the role Grace Church has played in their entry into American life. About 20 Grace Church volunteers have provided friendship, language tutoring, mentoring, and advice about American culture, expectations, and bureaucracies. The congregation’s financial contributions have helped them with a variety of expenses. Your prayers have helped sustain the family and also the Circle of Care. Thank you for your support!

While never attending Grace on a regular basis, as deeply God-centered people, they were delighted when infant Lincoln played the role of Jesus in the 2019 Christmas pageant, and it meant a lot to the family that we prayed for them weekly. They were especially touched by the July 3, 2022, liturgical Commissioning and Sending Out – a few weeks before they moved.

Again, thank you! Our own lives have been deepened by what we have learned through this experience of close partnership. We have been blessed by the family’s welcome of us into their lives. May the Holy Spirit continue to be present in their new life.

Thanks be to God!
Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale
Co-chairs of the Berchmas Family Circle of Care

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. Like Brother Lawrence, we try to 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 others to join us in this hospitable endeavor.

In 2022 BLG was able to serve a hamburger and hot dog lunch at the Feast of Saint Michael Picnic to approximately 75 parishioners.

At the Bazaar lunch café, BLG served up minestrone soup to 65 customers and sold 25 more containers of soup to go.

Tom Dougherty completed training for his Serv Safe and Choke Saver certifications.

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 very 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, Tom Dougherty for Members in service: Sarah Chadwick, Jeffrey DeSantis, Kitty Dougherty Tony Jewel, Mark Leonas, Steve McKelvey, Doug Moore, Diana Spurgin, Janet Teng and Virginia Ramos.

**ClimateAction@Grace**

Since reforming in mid-2021 and self-renaming to emphasize action and now freed from much of the restriction due to covid-19, our group, conscious that a small group must focus activity in order to be effective, concentrates on three arenas: the congregation and the church campus; our town and environs; our state and state legislation.

We toll the church’s bell for eleven minutes on the eleventh of each month to mark dire threat of climate change – the eleventh hour in which to act.

We have joined with Tom Dougherty, senior warden, in pursuing a new energy audit of the campus and the feasibility of heat pumps to reduce our consumption of fossil fuel. The report brings home that adjustment to climate change is necessarily costly and that with the prospect of some major structural investment any action were best incorporated therein.

In Amherst town we have supported Zero Waste Amherst, spoken before Town Council to prioritize climate change in Council’s directions to the Town Manager, and rejoice that we have a member in the Energy and Climate Action Committee.

At Springfield city hall we joined the rally to protest against the Eversource Longmeadow high pressure gas pipeline.

Taking a lead from Climate Action Now (Western Mass) we joined the lobbying campaign for house bill H.3292 featuring "carbon fee with rebate".

Sandy Muspratt

**Ramallah Ministry**

Grace Church continues to support a scholarship for a Palestinian student to attend the ETVTC (Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center) in Ramallah in the West Bank. The ETVTC is a program of the AFEDJ (American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem). Despite high levels of unemployment in the West Bank, the ETVTC manages to find jobs for most of its graduates.

Giovanni Anbar, the executive director of the ETVTC, is very supportive of his students, many of whom start with little confidence, but graduate with useable skills and clear goals. This is our twelfth academic year supporting a student. We sent Giovanni $500 for white boards and we sent Teya a Christmas card via e-mail. Giovanni is very appreciative of our support.
Teya Awad is our sixth student. She is now in her second and final year of the program. She is in the hospitality and culinary arts stream, where students learn to serve, cook, cater and manage a business. She is an artist as well as a cook in that her dishes are beautifully arranged.

Teya is our first student to communicate with us directly via e-mail. Her English is excellent. She plays basketball and likes gymnastics. We greatly appreciate her taking the time to tell us what she is doing and to share pictures of her scrumptious looking food with us. Her goal is to use her cooking skills to help her attend the police academy in Ramallah to catch cybercriminals.

John Lent, the former director of the AFEDJ, was replaced at the end of the year by Eileen Spencer. The AFEDJ visits its programs regularly. We look forward to having Eileen visit us to give us news of the ETVTC.

Chris Hoffmann

STEERWASHIP COMMISSION

Our 2023 Stewardship Campaign began in late October 2022 with members of the Stewardship Committee past and present (Tom Dougherty, Charlie Tebbetts and myself) sending out pledge information and pledge cards to our parishioners of record, followed by a sermon from The Reverend Tom Synan. That was followed by further information about pledging from the Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, Bruce Stebbins, and by testimonials at the following 8:00 and 10:30 AM the first two Sundays in November from Tom Dougherty, our Junior Warden, and from Chris Freitag, our Senior Warden, as well as Stewardship Committee member Charlie Tebbets.

Since the ingathering in November, we have received $447,434 in pledges for 2023 from 145 parishioners, including 3 new pledges, and are hoping to hear from another 59 households who have yet to pledge.

Our goal is to raise $480,000 for the 2023 budget.

Thankfully,

Bruce Stebbins, 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.

The St. Michael’s Fellowship membership currently includes Steven and Susan Abdow, Doug Adler, Brenda and Rick Aldrich, Patricia Andrews, Stephen and Jeanne Armstrong, Steve and Kate Atkinson, Lee Beaty *, Don and Jane Buckloh, Shirley Brodigan *, Heidi Frantz-Dale and Duane Dale, Tom and Kitty Dougherty, Suzannah Fabing, Kent and Scottie Faerber, Hertha Haensel *, Jonathan* and Sarah* Hanke, Charlotte Hathaway, Evan Fotos *, Bob Hawley, Mary McCarthy *, Mel Heath *, Royster and Kathryn Hedgepeth, Rob
VII. TREASURER’S REPORT

Each year at Grace presents different blessings, different challenges and different opportunities. 2022 was no exception. As pandemic fears eased slightly, we continued to experience the blessing of in person worship. You, the parish, continued to show your generosity and support for the church, by means of your pledges. Into the Fall, we had pledges of about $457,000. Then, as has happened in the past, we had an influx of pledge income in December that put us at $480,000 for the year, close to our goal of $485,000. Again blessings came our way! Thanks to all of you who helped us reach our goal for pledge income,. This generosity allows Grace to keep the staff and programs that enrich our lives.

As circumstances would have it, we faced challenges in controlling our expenses in 2022, exclusively due to the inflationary tendencies of our country’s economy. Costs for utilities and many other expense centers increased far beyond what we had projected. As costs of living increased for so many families, our expenses at Grace were no exception. Most of those expenses are fixed. In spite of careful management by staff and the Vestry, we ended the year with expenses of $656,589, and a deficit of a little more than $25,000. The Vestry, the Rector, and I had anticipated a deficit, only not quite that much. However, blessings again come our way! We were able to use a substantial surplus from a previous year to offset most of that deficit.

The circumstances of our finances in 2022 gave us pause and forced us to think creatively about how to balance the 2023 budget. We anticipate that costs will continue to be substantial this year. Fortunately, this year’s stewardship drive is off to a very good start. Even with anticipated increases in pledge income, however, it has become apparent to Vestry, staff, and the Finance Committee that additional sources of revenue will be necessary if we hope to balance the budget. With the input of those involved, we made some budget decisions that will require us to be more active than in past years. As you may be aware, a substantial source of income for Grace comes from investment income. We receive approximately $80,000 annually from our account with the Diocesan Fund. This coming year we will ask for another $20,000 from that account. Also, we will make plans to increase fund raising by an additional $10,000. In addition to the St Nicholas Bazaar, Vestry and other concerned parishioners will need to identify one or more new events to reach this goal. The Vestry welcomes any ideas any of you may have to help us reach this goal.

Another realization, as we plan for the future, is that we would do well to find ways to increase our membership at Grace Church. The Vestry has approved the formation of a Communications Committee, which will discuss what might be necessary to make this happen.

This year's budget is attached to this Annual Report. I encourage you to look it over. Let me know if you have any questions or suggestions. Harry Chadwick has done a superb job of calculating cost increases and entering

* deceased

Doug Adler, Chair
data into the spreadsheet he has created. Once finalized, we forwarded the spreadsheet to Rich Spurgin, who entered it into the format you see today. Rich also provides monthly financial reports for the Vestry, using the data he acquires from our bookkeeper, Jaana Cutson.

In these challenging times, we continue to be blessed by the hard work and dedication of parishioners like yourselves who generously contribute your time and financial support. Among so many others, we are blessed to have the continued input and recommendations of the Finance Committee, including Kitty Dougherty, John Robinson, DeAnne Riddle, Bruce Stebbins, Lynn Klock, Harry Chadwick, Rich Spurgin, and Mark Leonas. They have provided sound advice on a range of issues to aid the Clergy, myself and the Vestry in making financial decisions and recommending the Annual Budget.

I will also recognize our loyal group of collection counters. Counters include Bruce Stebbins, Sarah Boy, Kathy Glime, Doug Adler, Steve McKelvey, Lynn Klock, Kitty Dougherty, John Robinson, Harry Chadwick, and Mark Leonas.

In the midst of a busy and challenging year, we can be very thankful for the dedication and hard work of Bruce Stebbins and the Stewardship Committee. The response to the 2022 Stewardship Drive in the end proved to be better than expected. The Drive for 2023 has been remarkably good, thus far, although we still have a ways to go to meet our financial goals for this year.

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 make quarterly distributions, providing essential additions to our operating budget.

We continue to be in good standing with our diocesan auditor Steve Hasbrouck, whose 2022 audit confirmed that our financial records continue to be proper and accurate.

I have appreciated the opportunity to serve Grace Church as your Treasurer during the last four years. Bruce Stebbins will be our Treasurer in 2023. He is well qualified and will do a great job. I plan to remain on the Finance Committee and will look forward to supporting Bruce and the work of the Committee. 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**

Emily Rose Harris  
Alan Stewart Musgrave  
Winifred Hurley Sears

**Marriage**

Sarah A. Downing and Christopher A. Blond  
Melissa E. Freitag and Thomas C. Charest  
Kari-Elle Brown and Edward J. Kim  
Rebecca B. Freitag and Luke F. Miranda  
Pooja J. Naik and Owen C. Stebbins

**Confirmands**

None in 2022

**Received**

None in 2022

**Reaffirmed**

None in 2022

**Requiem**

Jeanne Balcom  
Eleanor Fraser  
John Morton Hyde II  
Joseph C. Jacobs III  
John H. Sutliff, Jr.  
Margaret Guilmette Turgeon  
Hazel Edna Williams

**Added - New members/Reactivated**

Lisa McDonald

**Transferred/Moved**

None in 2022