A Time for Sabbatical

As I have recently shared with our community in worship, I’ve decided, after prayerful consideration and meaningful discussion with the Wardens and Vestry, to take a two month sabbatical beginning August 1st. I am incredibly grateful to be able to have this opportunity, and appreciate the love and support from so many in having made this decision.

The concept of sabbatical is rooted in the biblical belief of “Sabbath” which God models in Genesis (And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and rested on the seventh day.) and which God commands in Exodus (Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. The seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work). In Leviticus 25:1-7, the Lord says that after the sixth year the people are not supposed to sow the fields or harvest a crop. The land was allowed to rest, and therefore, so were the people.

Sabbaticals have often been used in church and academia to provide rest, recovery, renewal and re-education for the individual. It is my intent to use this time to rest, renew, and recalibrate. I have been the Rector at Grace Church for ten wonderful years, and I’m incredibly blessed being here. It is my hope to do a little traveling in August, while in September, I will be the Priest-in-Residence at the House of the Redeemer – a retreat center in Manhattan. Throughout my time away, a primary objective is to spend quality time with my family and friends.

In my absence, the care of this amazing parish will be in the very capable hands of the Rev. Megan McDermott and the Wardens – Chris Freitag and Tom Dougherty.

Dear friends, God is good. God has blessed me with an incredible cloud of witnesses here at Grace Church, for which I am most grateful. And our God is also a God who loves to refresh, restore, and make things new. As Jesus said, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.

The Rev. Tom Synan

www.gracechurchamherst.org
Summer Poetry and Prayer Series

Last summer, Megan led a Zoom meditation series on poetry that occurred throughout the summer at 12:15 p.m. on Mondays. This series is returning this summer, starting on Monday June 5th, will all new poems.

Each session introduces one poem, typically by a contemporary or living writer, and some of the spiritual questions the poem opens up for each of us. There is time built in for individual meditation or prayer inspired by the poem. Each session then ends with time for optional sharing about our reactions to, and connections with, the poem. Returnees and newcomers welcome!

It will meet every Monday throughout June, July, and August, except times Megan is away or the office is closed for a Monday holiday, and usually will be a less than 30 minute gathering. Be on the look out for an email soon with the Zoom link.

Raising the Questions

Raising the Questions is a Grace Church reading and discussion group that started in the fall of 2017, continued sporadically on Zoom during COVID, and is once again meeting in person. The group formed because of questions we were asking ourselves and of others; we discuss a variety of topics that center on theology, images of God, liturgical language, and alternative forms of worship. We compiled the booklet of alternative prayers that was available in the back of the church during Lent (2022), and was the source for the discussion group on language and liturgy that same Lent. We welcome everyone and the questions and ideas they bring.

We meet monthly in the Connector on the second Tuesday at 10:00 am.
Tuesday Morning Prayer

Our Tuesday morning prayer offering is returning for prayer outside, in the Garth, on Tuesday mornings at 8:30 a.m. You can enter through the Connector door or the Spring Street door. In case of inclement weather, we will gather in the Chapel.

Prayer sessions will use morning prayer liturgies from sources like Daily Prayer for All Seasons, an Episcopal resource emphasizing inclusive and expansive language, and will sometimes incorporate simple movement meditation and music. Additionally, it is a chance to connect personally with a small group.

All are welcome! If you’d like more information, please email Megan at mmcdermott@gracechurchamherst.org.

Men’s Group

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

Bible Study

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

Iconography Workshop

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

Tea and Titles

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

Our next meeting is July 27, 2023 at 2:30pm. All are welcome!

Garden Ministry Volunteers

The Garden Ministry maintains the gardens around Grace Church including the Goodwin Garden on Spring Street, the Parish Hall Walkway garden, the Columbarium and the Garth plantings. We need volunteers for the summer. This involves weeding, deadheading, pruning and generally keeping the plants healthy. We hold workdays but individuals are also welcome to come on their own to work in specific areas. Novices are welcome as well as experienced gardeners. According to some people, "You are closer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth.” Please contact Sherry Wilson to volunteer. (sherrywilson135@comcast.net or 413-256-6955).

www.gracechurchamherst.org
For Ukraine

A Prayer for Peace in Our Time

O God, author and giver of peace,
in whose image and likeness each of us has been created
with a human dignity worthy of respect on earth
and destined for eternal glory,
Listen to the cry that rises from every corner of this fragile earth,
from our human family torn by violent conflict:

Give peace in our time, O good and gracious God,
that peace which, as your Son Jesus Christ told us
and as we have experienced in these days,
is a peace which the world cannot give.

To world leaders grant the wisdom
to see beyond the boundaries of race, religion, and nation
to that common humanity that makes us all your children
and brothers and sisters to one another.

To those who have taken up arms in anger or revenge
or even in the cause of justice,
grant the grace of conversion to the path of peaceful dialogue
and constructive collaboration.

To the innocent who live in the shadow of war and terror,
especially the frightened children,
be a shelter and strength, their haven and hope.

And to those who have already lost their lives
as victims of human cruelty and warfare,
open wide your arms and enfold them all
in the embrace of your compassion, healing, and everlasting life.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

- Peter J. Scagnelli
ANGELS ON THE CLOTHESLINE: A MEMOIR
By Ani Tuzman

In these days of increasing anti-Semitism, racial and religious hatred, it is important to be reminded of the depths of cruelty to which those feelings can lead. In her vivid and beautiful memoir, Ani Tuzman, a local author, reveals to us the intergenerational and lingering effects of such animosity, with the retelling through the wide eyes of her child-self of the repercussions of being the daughter of Holocaust survivors. Her Father, a strong and practical chicken-farmer by day, screams and weeps throughout his nights, rising to hide his red eyes behind thick spectacles. Her Mother bursts into sudden inexplicable rages against her daughter, inexplicable, that is, before PTSD was recognized.

Yet this book is not a gloomy book, but a picture of irrepressible resilience which Ani paints for us, not through adult memories, but through the real eyes of her childhood. The strands of the past, which her parents reveal to the child, believing that only through this knowledge will their children become strong enough to face any new Hitler, are interwoven with many other reverberations -- her seeing beyond the ordinary surface of things, of knowing in unfathomable ways the presence of GOD, her passion for becoming a writer, and the unpardonably cruel words and torments of her schoolmates and even of some of her teachers.

A most important theme is her passion for reading, and thence to writing. Her first vignette, “Marks,” begins with her longing to read her Father’s Yiddish newspaper which he has left open on the dining room table she is just tall enough to reach.

“All those marks crowded together. Tall ones and skinny. Some with hats. Boots. Tails. Big-bellied ones.”

The child knows that these signs give access to ideas -- ideas which occasionally can make her Mother laugh, though more often they cause her to scream, and her Father to pound his fist on the table. The longing to read and write occurs at intervals throughout the book. The Alphabet opens “secret boxes”, the idea that through writing one could change the outcome of a story. So writing becomes what she wants to do forever. In a later episode, her parents’ American friend, Jack, tells the little girl, “Don’t get your hopes up. People who are not native English speakers don’t ever become fine writers in that language.” Had he never heard of Joseph Conrad? The proof against Jack is our constant delight at Ani’s felicitous phrasings, such as “the unspeakable consolation of lilacs.”

There are also constant reminders of the hate: teasings, physical attacks and the accusations of “stinkiness.” Torments not only from her schoolmates, but from some teachers. Her third-grade teacher, Mrs Cadave (echoes of Cadaver?), forces her to chew and swallow a piece of American leavened bread during Passover, though knowing it is forbidden for Jews. Ani’s terror is that her “sin” will cause her family to die!

At the other extreme are Ani’s sudden revelations of love. She recognizes that Terry, her chief tormentor, has a “light inside her, tiny, like the flame of a Hanukah candle.” Other themes of light and love recur throughout the book: the reflections of light on the clothesline, those angels which sparkle and dance after Ani has hung up the heavy sheets, the revelation of GOD in her dog’s eyes, and her delight in spinning like a whirling dervish, which leads to an ecstasy of knowing “that you will always be able to find your way home.”

Dancing Letters Press

www.gracechurchamherst.org
Grace Church Garden Tour for the Mind the Gap Campaign

Saturday, June 10 dawned with excitement and the promise of good food, flowers, and fun. It was the day of the Grace Church Garden Tour. Forty garden and food enthusiasts traveled to three lovely gardens and enjoyed a progressive lunch, where a luncheon course was served in each garden.

Many thanks to the garden hosts, the luncheon cooks, participants, and all who helped out in any way to make this a wonderful and successful event. Although, the final number is not in yet, this event made over $3,000 for the Mind the Gap campaign where all proceeds go to reducing the current budget gap.

Photos by: Sarah Chadwick, Nancy Lowry, Rev. Megan McDermott, Doug Moore, and Natalie Moss

www.gracechurchamherst.org
Art and Cape Cod House Auctions for Mind the Gap

A wonderful Art Auction for the Mind the Gap campaign is currently under way in the Parish Hall. All the art was generously donated by Peter Mishkin. Peter is a talented visual artist who produced a fabulous body of work at the Anchor House of Artists. Parishioners and others are able to bid on 30 paintings at a silent auction. The event started off with an informative lecture by Kell Julliard and Michael Tillyer, from the Anchor House, who presented “Anchor House and the Art of Peter Mishkin” on July 16. Although the auction is silent, the buzz was loud and complimentary during the opening weekend as folks viewed each work. The auction will continue on July 22 and 23. Don’t miss your chance to bid on a truly stunning piece of original art!
Additionally, thanks to a very generous parishioner, an auction for a week’s stay at a wonderful Cape Cod home was also held in July, with proceeds also going to the Mind the Gap campaign. The lucky high bidder will be enjoying a serene week in September in a cozy house that is close to the ocean and that overlooks Jemima Pond in Eastham. Thanks to all who participated in the bidding!

Although, as of this “Grace Notes” issue, the final numbers are still being tallied, these events were both successful. Many grateful thanks to all who participated and who are helping Grace Church to Mind the Gap.
ClimateChange Prayer

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

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

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

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11th Hour Bell Ringing for Climate Change

Friday, August 11th at 10:45

On Friday, August 11, at 11 a.m. we will toll the bell at Grace Church for
11 minutes to express our alarm at the climate emergency that we face, and
to convey this concern to all within the sound of the bell. All are welcome
to join; our group regularly includes members of other faith communities in
Amherst; others across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are taking
part in their own locales. We encourage you to come and to bring your
own bells or other noise-making devices to make the message as lively and
inclusive as possible.
Climate Action @Grace

On Sunday, June 11, Climate Action@Grace sponsored an open meeting with State Representative Mindy Domb. Called to be stewards of the earth, and concerned that measures that we have supported have not always succeeded, we asked how we could communicate more effectively with our legislators: Rep. Domb gave us a very useful outline on how bills are proposed, presented, and modified, as they make their way through the legislature. She urged us to let our representatives know, by phone, letter, and email, what our priorities are, and to present oral or written testimony before the joint committees that consider such proposed legislation.

In particular, Rep. Domb pointed to several bills that she and other local legislators (Representatives Natalie Blais, Lindsay Sabadosa, and State Senator Joanne Comerford) are sponsoring. Among these: one to encourage solar arrays on top of large parking lots, buildings, or disturbed areas; another to restrict the availability of single-use plastics. We have written the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy, urging action on these and other bills. And we are currently advocating for several others now in committee, all designed to limit our emissions of greenhouse gases and meet the state’s ambitious carbon goals: one to encourage clean heat in the Commonwealth (S 2105); one to take account of (and limit) the amount of carbon expended in construction and during the life of buildings; one to expand carbon pricing for commercial properties and transportation, and to reimburse those affected by such increases; and one to improve outdoor lighting, conserve energy, and preserve dark skies.

Please join us in these efforts: come to our regular meetings on the second Sunday of each month, after worship (11 am. in the summer). And on the 11th day of every month, at the 11th hour, to toll the bell at Grace Church to express our alarm at the climate emergency that we face.

Pastoral Call for Volunteers

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

Prayer Circle is still here!

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

Music at Grace

In case there is a favorite hymn or two of yours that might not have been used in a service recently, please feel free to email Dick Damon (ddamon@gracechurchamherst.org) or write it down and put it in his mailbox (staff mailboxes are across from the kitchen) and he’ll try to see that it gets into the rotation.

www.gracechurchamherst.org
Episcopal Youth Event 2023

From July 4th-July 8th, Megan and Joel Martinez, priest at St. Paul’s Holyoke, chaperoned a group of 5 high schoolers from across the Diocese of Western Massachusetts at the Episcopal Youth Event, a gathering that brings together youth from across the church (including international dioceses like Taiwan, Honduras, and the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe) every three years.

Episcopal Youth Event had not been held since 2017, however, due to the pandemic, so it was especially joyous to be able to come together after not being able to do so in 2020!

This year, Episcopal Youth Event – known commonly as EYE! – met at the University of Maryland and explored the theme Regreso a Casa (Returning Home): A New Age of Faith. Particularly, EYE drew inspiration from the book of Esther and the idea that, like Esther, the youth of the church are called by God to be change-makers “for such a time as this.”

The event featured notable speakers, such as Presiding Bishop Curry and President of the House of Deputies Julie Ayala Harris; energetic worship; workshops on a variety of topics such as vocational discernment, suicide prevention, and how to represent your faith on social media; and plenty of fun, including a Family Feud-style competition between delegations, “speed friending” ice breakers, and a Neon Dance Party.

Amory attended from Grace Church and has this to share about his EYE experience: "Attending the Episcopal Youth Event, and being able to engage with other youth from our diocese, the entire United States, and the wider world, was an immensely rich and rewarding experience. I am incredibly grateful that I was able to participate in this experience, and want to thank Megan for chaperoning and organizing the participation of our diocese, as well as everyone in the Grace Church community for your support. Thank you all."

Megan loved the reminders of what a wonderful wider church we are a part of and the good news we have to share for young people about God's love for exactly who they are. She also enjoyed getting to dance so much in worship and spending so much time with the awesome youth of Western Mass!

If you, your child, or someone you know will be ages 15 to 19 in summer 2026, and in grades 9-12 for the 25-26 school year, keep your ears open for info in the years to come about Episcopal Youth Event 2026!
Children’s & Youth Ministry

For the most part, our children’s and youth ministries have paused for the summer in recognition of the packed schedules, often including travel, that many families have at this time of year. This summer, however, we’ve had a few wonderful exceptions! Elsewhere in Grace Notes, you can see a report on Episcopal Youth Event, which I attended along with 4 youth from across our diocese. However, we also offered a great youth experience the weekend before EYE.

On July 1st, 2 youth from Grace Church, 2 youth from Sts. James and Andrew Episcopal Church in Greenfield, and 3 adult chaperones packed into a rental van and headed to Sheffield, Massachusetts, where we provided hospitality to hikers from roughly 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This yearly ministry, organized by a UCC and Episcopal church in Sheffield, provides “Trail Magic,” kindness that hikers might find at various points along the Appalachian Trail. The Sheffield churches have an impressive set-up of a large tent, a grill, tables, and chairs, which allows volunteer groups like ours to easily step into the work of grilling food for hikers (burgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers) and welcoming them into a place where they can rest, charge up their phones, fill up water bottles, and, if desired, engage in friendly conversation.

Along with volunteering, our churches collectively donated a $100 Big Y gift card, which went towards buying food for the next day of hikers.

Here are some of our photos from our experience in getting to tangibly share God’s love with others through hospitality:

I’m looking forward to more ways we might collaborate with the Episcopal church in Greenfield and other local churches in the school year ahead!

Stay tuned for more information about regular youth group and Sunday School programming for the 23-24 school year! If you are not already on my email list for parents/guardians, please email me at mmcdermott@gracechurchamherst.org to be sure you’re receiving information as soon as it’s ready. If you are a parent/guardian or youth who has some thoughts to share on hopes for the year ahead, please also be in touch so we can set up a time to meet, perhaps over iced coffee/tea!
Grace Notes "Notes"

Young Adult and Campus Ministries

Throughout the summer, there’s a number of events happening through the Young Adult Ministry Network (YAMN), which brings together young adults ages 18-40 throughout the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, as well as ongoing Theology on Tap gatherings. Would love to see you at any or all of these events!

Appalachian Trail Hospitality Day – Saturday July 29th

The Young Adult Ministry Network is gathering a group to go provide kindness and hospitality (in the form of burgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, snacks, and a place to sit in the shade, rest, refill water bottles, and charge up electronics!) to Appalachian Trail hikers passing through Sheffield, Massachusetts! We will be volunteering at an annual ministry organized each summer by the Episcopal and UCC churches in Sheffield from roughly 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please email me (mmdermott@gracechurchamherst.org) or Will Harron (william.harron@gmail.com) if you’d like to attend. Carpooling can be arranged.

Board games at Tree House brewery & hike/lunch meet-up – dates coming soon

Members of the Young Adult Ministry Network are also planning to organize a meetup soon at Tree House Brewery in South Deerfield for pizza, board games, and drinks (non-alcoholic beverages available) and a local hike. Dates & details on those events are not yet decided! Please email me at mmdermott@gracechurchamherst.org if you are interested so I can be sure you get the info as soon as we have it.

Theology on Tap – July 27th

There’s a Theology on Tap gathering tentatively scheduled for July 27th. Open to all ages, Theology on Tap hopes to be a particularly welcoming environment for young adults to have supportive and informal conversation on life and faith. We typically meet at a Northampton or Amherst bar/restaurant, providing free appetizers. More details to come soon on location + topic for this month! Please email me to make sure you’re on the list for info: mmdermott@gracechurchamherst.org

www.gracechurchamherst.org
July 2023 Junior Warden Report for Grace Notes

With such a beautiful and large church campus there is always something for the Junior Warden and Sexton to do. Cleaning, repair work for interior or exterior projects and seeking quotes from contractors.

When I transitioned into the Junior Warden role at Grace Church, Jeffrey DeSantis, the outgoing Junior Warden and I reviewed a host of items, one of those items was the huge trees at the top of the Garth on church property that line the town hall parking lot. This past Spring a pileated wood pecker made such a mess of one of the trees that the pile of wood chips at the base of the tree made me take a closer look as I thought someone had used a chainsaw on the property. Looking at all the trees that line the town hall parking lot, I could see that each tree had many branches that appeared to be dead.

I asked Alan Snow, the Amherst Tree Warden, to take a look with me and give me his opinion. Alan said that of the eight trees, 6 are Norway maples and that they are an invasive tree. One is an ash tree and another an elm tree. All are in “rough” shape with many dead branches, one tree closest to the rectory has even been cabled in the past with two cables visible, one cable now attached to a dead branch. The Grace Church Garden Committee was made aware of the trees’ conditions and advised seeking quotes for removal before any of the trees or dead branches become a liability. I am in the process of seeking quotes. As many of you may or may not know tree work/removal is very expensive. As the quotes come in, I will run them by the Executive Committee and Vestry, to see what we are able to do.

Tom Dougherty, Junior Warden
Check the Connector for a new community conversation board topic!

Since May, we’ve had a community conversation board exploring the concept of a “New Step of Faith,” in honor of Pentecost and the Confirmation service held that month. Thank you to all who contributed their thoughts!

People shared their responses to a variety of questions and prompts. When asked about milestones in a spiritual journey, one person shared “Trinity Sunday, 2013” as a particularly notable day. In response to steps of faith still ahead, one person shared the step of volunteering in a soup kitchen or cot ministry, and another wrote “Just say yes!”

Writing about what support they needed to take a new step of faith, one person said “hearing success stories in sharing God’s grace” while another thanked church friends for their support and encouragement. One person described taking a step of their faith as “life-changing,” while another identified the time where they took a new step in faith with “helping families less fortunate.”

When asked how they consider new experiences or insights of faith in relationship to experiences of the past, one person highlighted the framework of “growth and maturation,” while another used the language of “a paradigm shift – growing tension or dissonance followed by a decisive change.” One person shared that they had “just took one” (a step of faith), and another encouraged us with the words, “Life is sweet!”

We hope this community conversation board inspired you to be thinking both about the past steps of faith you’ve made and steps of faith you have ahead.

Starting on Sunday July 16th, there is a new community conversation board topic: Following God in Challenging Climates. Various Scriptures speak to the idea that the earth’s environment sometimes poses a challenge to its people – whether that’s the curse of working the land described in Genesis, a dramatic storm like that faced by Noah, or various instances of famine. In the midst of summer heat and the ongoing challenges of climate change, we ask ourselves how we, too, might follow God when our environment presents challenges to ourselves or others.
A Message from the Pastoral Care Commission

Traditionally the Pastoral Care Committee has been a way for people in the church to support parishioners who are going through a hard time. For many years, Jeannette Stebbins chaired this committee that provided meals, rides to appointments, and cards for parishioners in need of condolence or connection. In recent weeks, Tom and Megan asked several of us to get together on Zoom to think about pastoral care going forward, particularly in response to the challenges of the pandemic: increased isolation, illness or the life-complicating threat of illness, and so many difficult transitions and losses.

Holy Communion Distribution
Given the evolving needs of this time, an idea came up to provide a way for people who currently aren’t able or comfortable coming to church to receive communion. If you would like to have the host delivered to your home so you can participate more fully in communion, please get in touch with Terrie Korpita in the parish office and/or Gail Gnatek, and we will arrange for this to happen.

Seeking Support
If you or a family member are finding yourself in a situation of need, where basics of food or transportation to doctors' appointments are difficult or you’re going through more than you can handle on your own, please reach out. We will do our best to support you.

Offering Support
If you feel called to help with pastoral care, we welcome you. Please get in touch with Gail Gnatek about opportunities to participate. There are many ways to offer help: cooking, baking, delivering food, writing cards, checking in over the phone, or giving someone a ride. There are many ways to express compassion.

Gail Gnatek, Karen DeSantis, Maria Dye, Ruthie Ireland, Anna Smith

Contact information:
ggnatek@gmail.com or
tkorpita@gracechurchamherst.org
(413) 256-6754

St. Nicholas Bazaar

Are you interested in antiques and/or collectibles? We need your help with sorting and pricing bazaar donations. Join us - we never know what we'll find! Some knowledge of antiques and collectibles is helpful. Contact Joan (jobrien82@gmail.com) with any questions or to volunteer.

Donations are being accepted for the bazaar. Please remember that items should be in good condition and clean. We accept many kinds of items, but please no textbooks, binders, VCR tapes, cassettes, clothing, or mildewed items. Donations may be dropped off in the undercroft after the Sunday service, or during office hours (M-F, 9-4). Any questions, contact Joan (jobrien82@gmail.com). Thank you!

www.gracechurchamherst.org
Did you know that one third of Haitian youth are unable to read and that for peasant families, school expenses amount to 40% of the family income?

This is why the Haiti Ministry at Grace fully supports the St. Matthew’s School in Bayonnais, Haiti. Our goal is to bring hope to the children of St. Matthew’s by equipping them with the elementary education that will enable them to live fulfilling and productive lives.

Since 2008 when the Haiti Ministry was first established, we have helped approximately 1,500 students receive an education. With the generous support of Grace parishioners, we originally established the school for grades 1 – 6. With your continued support we have built a library, filled the library shelves, added a pre-school and most recently, added a 7th grade. We have also financed a computer lab.

This is a huge accomplishment in a country that faces dire challenges and where education is at a premium.

We recently launched the 2023 campaign to once again provide school uniforms and school supplies to the children of St. Matthew’s. This year we will be supporting 237 students and our goal is $17,775 by Monday, September 10 when the students are back in school.

Won’t you please help? A donation of $75 will cover the cost of one child’s uniform, textbooks, and other basic supplies. But a donation in any amount matters and is deeply appreciated.

To donate, please make checks payable to “Grace Church” and write “Haiti School Uniforms” on the memo line. You may also give via the church website by clicking the “Give” button and then selecting “Haiti Ministry” in the “To” drop down box.

www.gracechurchamherst.org
Solar Power Comes to St. Matthew's School

With any luck, when students return to St. Matthew’s School in Bayonnais, Haiti, this fall, the lights will be on! “What?” you say, “I thought there was no electricity in Bayonnais…” More than a year ago, the Haiti Committee asked a new NGO, Brighten Haiti, to bring solar power to the school. And at last, after a year of frustration during which gangs took over the port in Port-au-Prince, the project is finally moving forward.

Brighten Haiti, which was started by a veteran solar operator, takes donations of functioning and intact solar panels that the US finds redundant, and that would otherwise be headed to landfills. They plan to send these panels to Haiti and install them on schools—particularly those in poor rural communities—that are currently without electricity. Brighten Haiti has established an apprenticeship program to train Haitians for well-paying careers installing solar systems. As part of their training, the apprentices will install the schools’ solar systems, under the tutelage of a Haitian with a decade of experience in the field.

Fed up with the ongoing turmoil in Port-au-Prince that has essentially closed that port, in the spring Brighten Haiti moved its operations to Cap-Haitien, in northern Haiti, where the gangs are not as active. They decided to begin installing systems on the closest schools, in relatively quiet rural areas. So now, it appears, St. Matthieu is at the head of the queue and will be the proving ground for Brighten Haiti’s plan to eventually outfit 300 Haitian schools!

The system will deliver 2 kW of electricity, enough to power a ceiling fan with built-in LED light for each classroom. In the three buildings constructed since 2016, which the priest in charge at the time, Père Diegue, had the foresight to equip with electric wiring. In addition, it will power a computer lab. Fifteen Dell laptops are on the way to Haiti, along with a server nicknamed “Internet in a box.” It’s stuffed with 2300 books in Haitian Kreyol, French, English and Spanish, as well as Wikipedia and educational programs from Kolibri and the Khan Academy. The computers are the gift of another NGO, Bethel UMC Computers in Education, based at a large Methodist church in Warrenton, VA.

For now, the computers will be housed in the school library, and classes in computer skills will meet in the adjacent lunchroom/multi-purpose room. Plans are afoot to construct a dedicated room for a computer lab on the second floor of the 2016 classroom building, adjacent to the seventh-grade classroom. We’re also sending a digital projector and portable screen in the container with the solar panels. Images from the server can be

Waiting to be palletized for shipment to Haiti are items associated with the installation of solar electricity at St. Matthew’s School.

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projected onto the screen, enabling many students to take part simultaneously in, for example, foreign language lessons. Training the teachers to use the computers and server will be the first order of business. Fortunately, the school’s sister K-12 school in the city of Gonaives, La Redemption, has long had a computer lab, so we can draw on their expertise.

Also in the shipment to Haiti are a rice cooker and a rice warmer. These electric appliances draw too much current to be operated while classes are in session with lights, fans, computers and projector in use. Our notion, however, is that the cooks can experiment with the devices after school ends for the day, to see whether this method of cooking lunch is a viable option. Up until now, they’ve been cooking outdoors over charcoal in an open pot set on three stones on the ground. An indoor kitchen has been framed in, with the idea of switching to propane, but it has yet to be finished. Solar electricity would be much greener and cheaper than either charcoal or propane, if it can do the job. We would need to buy a second solar installation just for cooking—an expensive investment, but better for the environment and the cooks’ backs, and it would reduce the annual fuel cost to zero. The question is moot at present because Food for the Poor has been unable to supply rice and beans since its warehouses were sacked last winter, so lunch is not being served. It’s a good time to experiment.

As far as we know (having not been able to visit Bayonnais in person since 2019), this solar installation will make St Matthieu the first and only electrified building in the village. It has the potential to transform the teaching and learning environment for our students. We are full of excitement, as are our partners in Haiti. The fans, lights, cooking appliances, projector and screen were purchased with a grant from the Global Missions fund of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. We are grateful to them, to Brighten Haiti, and to Bethel UMC Computers in Education for making available the components of this complex package.

As icing on the cake, we’ve just learned that Brighten Haiti will give “solar kits” to a few of the school’s best teachers who don’t have electricity at home. The kits, for their personal use, include a solar panel, battery, radio, rice cooker, lights, and a cell phone. The intent is to bring home to these teachers the usefulness of electricity in daily life. St. Matthieu will be a beta test site for this new program, toward which Brighten Haiti intends to seek contributions from solar installers and their customers.

**Palestinian Oil**

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

**Outreach!**

Our June Outreach Offering brought in $1313.00, which will go to Sudanese Refugee Relief.

Generosity changes everything, starting with us.

Thank you for your generosity!

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<td>2:30 pm Tea &amp; Titles</td>
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Coffee hour fellow Sunday morning services and provide an opportunity for pills, fellowship and for welcoming and becoming acquainted with newcomers.
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<td>6:00 am Zoom Bible Study 11:00 am Memorial Service – Eucharist Prayers 5:15 pm AA 7:30 pm AA</td>
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Coffee hour follows Sunday morning services and provides an opportunity for pastoral fellowship and for welcoming and becoming acquainted with newcomers.
“Grace is nothing else but a certain Beginning of glory in us.”
--Thomas Aquinas