**Beginning & Returning**

Greetings, Grace Church! The month of September means we are both returning to familiar rhythms (two services on Sunday morning, the wonderful music of our choir, and the resumption of many programs) while also stepping into a sense of newness. Though this year may follow patterns of years past, it is also its own precious and unique time! Even me, Megan, writing this article is an example of a new thing, since I am covering Tom’s usual contribution while he is away on sabbatical.

This fall, we will be living into beginning and returning even more than usual, since we are in a time of transition—welcoming new Music Director Noah Horn for his first Sunday September 17th and honoring Beth Hart Damon’s 23 years of moving musical leadership with a celebration on Sunday November 5th. You can look further into Grace Notes for more info on both welcoming Noah and celebrating Beth!

For me personally, it has been surreal think that this is my sixth year of Sunday School and youth group gatherings to plan! There’s a sense of return—return to time with our great children and youth of Grace Church, return to running between service and Sunday School and back again, and return to my commitments to make spaces for children and youth that allow both for fun and exploration of the deeper questions and lessons of faith. At the same time, every year also brings something new! New teachers or volunteers, new ideas, new service opportunities or trips, a classroom arranged in a new way, perhaps even new participants!

This is how returning and beginning are showing up for me in church life at the moment. How are returning and beginning showing up in your life? Does your fall include any new beginnings or the return of certain rhythms? Are there things that you hope to begin anew, or hope to make space to return to? Are there new steps to try out in the midst of dancing to familiar rhythms?

Sometimes understanding the rhythms of our lives can be complicated, and we might feel more like we’re in the midst of a jumble than anything else! At times I’ve wished aspects of life were more linear and easy-to-chart. It would especially be helpful if the spiritual life felt like a consistent and obvious upward trajectory towards wholeness and holiness. But very rarely is that how life feels. We may find our pace changing, our progress receding, ourselves circling the same things again and again—the same wounds, the same questions, the same laments, the same dreams.

A favorite theologian of mine, Evelyn Underhill, describes something similar: “*Some people may seem to us to go to God by a moving staircase...Some appear to be whisked past us in a lift; whilst we find ourselves on a steep flight of stairs with a bend at the top, so that we cannot see how much farther we have to go. But none of this really matters; what matters is the conviction that all are moving towards God, and, in that journey, accompanied, supported, checked and fed by God.*”

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No matter if you are in a season of familiarity, newness, or both; no matter whether you’re hoping for new beginnings or longing for the return of something familiar; no matter whether you feel like you’re on a spiritual climb or descent, or caught going around in circles – may you find grounding in those words from Evelyn Underhill: “All are moving towards God....accompanied, supported, checked and fed by God.”

Or as the Psalms put it, “Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast” (Psalm 139:6-10 NRSV).

May God’s hand lead you in every beginning, every return, and even all those times where you aren’t quite sure where you stand! And may God’s hand lead us as a community that is immersed in new beginnings; beloved, familiar rhythms; and all the complexities in-between. Amen.

-Rev. Megan

**Sunday, September 10th**

8 am and 10:30 am services resume

Sunday September 3rd is the final 9:30 service for the summer season. Our regular schedule of 8 and 10:30 services resumes on September 10th.

**Sunday School begins on September 10th and will meet from 9:15 to 10:15.**

**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.

**Tuesday Morning Prayer**

Our Tuesday morning Prayer Group hosts 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.

**Saint Michael’s Picnic**

**One Sunday Service Sept. 24**

On Sunday September 24th there will be one service at 9:30 am followed by the Saint Michael’s Picnic. The picnic is open to all parishioners, newcomers, and friends.

Please join us!
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.

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 September 14, 2023 at 2:30 pm. All are welcome!

Men's Group

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

A Week at Grace

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10:30 a.m. Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour is a wonderful weekly tradition where parishioners catch up with one another, share news, and in general have a wonderful time. Volunteers are needed to host coffee hour for the 10:30 service. Treats are donated by parishioners. Folks sign up for odd or even month Sundays throughout the year. You may sign up alone or work with a partner for even more fun. For more information contact Sarah Chadwick at snchadwick@verizon.net.

THE Weekly Event to Host and to Be Seen!

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.

Request publicity for your event!

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

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Celebrate Beth Hart Damon

Beth Hart Damon has blessed our church with the most beautiful music for twenty-three years as Music Director. Her skill and devotion to her craft have made our worship services special, brought joy to each and every holiday, and uplifted us in so many ways. Beth’s gift and dedication to Grace Church will be celebrated on Sunday, November 5 at a very special and single 9:30 a.m. service with a reception to follow. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. To help with the celebration, please be in touch with Kitty Dougherty (kitty@kdougherty.net) or Harold Norris (hnorris2@gmail.com).
Welcome Our New Music Director

Grace Church has hired Noah Horn to be the new Music Director. Noah most recently served as Music Director at St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church in New Haven, CT, and his first Sunday at Grace will be September 17.

The decision to hire Noah was the result of a six-week effort that began with establishing desired attributes in a conductor, gathering input from parishioners and choir members, creating a job description, posting, reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, and auditioning finalist candidates with the choir. The search committee met with the choir, staff and clergy, and after reviewing choir feedback forms and auditions, recommended that Tom and the Vestry hire Noah from the pool of three highly qualified candidates.

Noah Horn has lived in western Massachusetts since 2018, when his spouse Arianne Abela started her tenure as choral director at Amherst College. This will be his twentieth year as a church choir director, almost entirely in the Episcopal Church. He is concluding a term as music director at St. Thomas’s Episcopal Church, New Haven, Connecticut. Also, a collegiate educator with a doctoral degree from Yale University, he has taught locally at Amherst, Hampshire, and Williams Colleges, as well as Yale, Oberlin, Wesleyan, University of Michigan, Wayne State, and Western Michigan. In the spring of 2024, he will conduct the primary mixed choir at Harvard University, the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum.

His parents, the Reverends John and Raisin Horn, recently began attending Grace Church after moving to the area this summer, so he has been hearing all kinds of wonderful things about the church. Noah greatly looks forward to getting to know everyone, and making beautiful music with the congregation and choir. He has three kids: 6-year-old Hazel, 3-year-old Tala, and 4-month-old Oliver. They all plan on attending church regularly!

Thank you to everyone who shared thoughts and ideas for the search for our new Music Director. We hope that you will join us in welcoming Noah and his family to Grace Church, and ushering in the next era of sacred music making at Grace.

Join the Grace Church Choir!

We are always happy to welcome new singers to our group... no audition is necessary. The only requirements are that you can match pitch, love to sing, and are available for Sunday services (we rehearse at 9:15 to sing for the 10:30 service) and Thursday evening rehearsals (7:30 pm in the Sanctuary - we begin at 7:00 when we're preparing for Advent/Christmas and Lent/Holy Week).

Please email our Music Director, Noah Horn, at nhorn@gracechurchamherst.org if you are interested in joining us. Our first rehearsal will be on Thursday, September 7th (at 7:30 pm), and our first Sunday in church will be on September 17th (at 9:15). It would be good to know in advance that you plan to come. We'd be delighted to have you join us!

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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
A Series on Death and Dying – Fall, Winter, Spring 2023-2024

Starting in September, the Pastoral Care Committee will host a series of talks, workshops, and discussions on the topics of death and dying as considered through a variety of lenses: spiritual and theological; artistic and literary; medical, scientific, and legal; as well as perspectives from non-Christian cultures and religions. It is our hope that by exploring death and dying as part of our spiritual path, we can become more at peace with death—our own and that of others—and also live more fully to the end.

Wednesday Sept. 13th, 6 p.m., The Connector
Entering the Topics of Death, Dying, and Grief Through Literature and Art
Introducing our theme, Megan will share work of visual artists and poets that can help give us a creative entryway into contemplating and talking about these often difficult topics.

Sunday October 29th, after church in the Parish Hall
Tom and Megan will continue the series with a talk and discussion of death and dying within the framework of theology, the church, and the Bible.

Sunday November 12th, after church in the Parish Hall
Photographer and retired physician Larry Rankin will give a talk on the MOLST (Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment), Living Will, and Health Care Power of Attorney.

More programs for winter and spring of 2024:
1. a talk and discussion related to scientific research into dying, consciousness, and spirituality, led by Kell Julliard,
2. a discussion of issues related to wills and estate planning,
3. a program on hospice care and caregiving.

Suggested reading:
Listed below are a few books for people interested in delving into these topics further. We’ll schedule a book discussion some time during Lent (with a special event for Hamlet, led by Brown Kennedy,). Feel free to reach out at coffee hour if you want to chat about books!

1.  *Being Mortal: Illness, Medicine, and What Matters in the End* – Atul Gawande, surgeon, writer, and professor
3.  *How We Live is How We Die* – Pema Chödrön, Buddhist teacher
4.  *Hamlet* – William Shakespeare (The 1996 Kenneth Branagh film is a worthy adaptation.)

The Pastoral Care Committee –
Rev. Tom Synan, Rev. Megan McDermott, Gail Gnatek, Maria Dye, Ruthie Ireland, Anna Smith

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Love wild mushrooms but don’t know which ones to pick?

Join parishioner and expert Michael Gralenski for a mushroom foraging walk in Leverett!

Learn where to look and what to pick, and enjoy a dish prepared with the mushrooms after the walk!

Saturday, September 23, 10 - 11:30 am
Cost: $35
(“Mind the Gap” - Proceeds benefit Grace Church!)

Registration: https://tinyurl.com/mushroom-event
(Registration Deadline: September 15)

Questions? Contact Suzannah Muspratt
suzannahfabing@gmail.com
ClimateAction@Grace

Climate Change Prayer

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

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

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

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11th Hour Bell Ringing for Climate Change

Monday, September 11th at 10:45

On Monday, September 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.

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Creation Season

Many parishes in the Episcopal Church, including Grace, will join in this month for an ecumenical observance of the Season of Creation, which runs from Sept. 1st, a Day of Prayer for Creation, to October 4th, the feast day for Francis of Assisi. The Season of Creation prioritizes a renewed relationship to our Creator God and to all of God’s beloved creation.

As part of our recognition of Creation Season, on the four Sunday mornings of September you may notice two creation-themed prayers: a concluding prayer to the Prayers of the People and a blessing at the end of the service. Our community conversation board will continue to highlight a theme related to creation, Following God in Challenging Climates. We hope this month will inspire your prayer and reflection, as well as actions rooted in love for creation, like checking out and supporting the work of our parish group Climate Action @ Grace.

Garden Ministry

The Garden Ministry of Grace Church continues to need help in maintaining the gardens and grounds of the church. Sherry Wilson has chaired the group for several years but is stepping down on September 1st. She is grateful for all the wonderful help parishioners have provided with weeding, deadheading, mulching, planting and holding plant sales. And she is very grateful that Sara Liberty-Laylin has agreed to become chair. Please support her efforts and those of the Garden Ministry: Sherry Wilson, outgoing chair

Sara has written: "Sara Liberty-Laylin is delighted to be named the new chair of the Garden Ministry. Sara has gardened in the northwest, the southwest and now here in New England. She has been the past chair of a HOA landscape committee and is currently serving her new HOA as a landscape committee member. Sara would like to know if there are new parishioners interested in joining the committee. She will be setting up the first meeting soon. Her email is: p_laylin@comcast.net.
Peace and plants to all. Sara."

Mind the Gap Fundraising Update

The Fundraising and Communications committees have been hard at work planning and promoting events for the Mind the Gap campaign, where all proceeds go to reducing the church’s budget gap. So far, a garden tour with progressive lunch, auction of a donated week in a house on Cape Cod, and an auction of paintings by parishioner Peter Mishkin have brought parishioners together in both fun and supportive ways.

We have raised $6,600 toward an overall fundraising goal of $21,000, which includes proceeds of the St. Nicholas Bazaar. Upcoming events include a mushroom foraging walk in September and a three-day Harvest Festival in late October. Please plan to take part as these are announced, and sign up to help out if you can. You may also donate by check, payable to “Grace Church,” with “Mind the Gap” on the memo line. Alternatively, pay by credit card by clicking the “Give” box on the homepage at www.gracechurchamherst.org and then selecting any “Mind the Gap” activity in the drop-down menu. Thank you!

http://www.gracechurchamherst.org
Children’s & Youth Ministry
Join us for Sunday School & youth group!

We’re excited to begin Sunday School and youth group again this month. Throughout the next several weeks, there will be registration forms for both at the back of church. You can also email me at mmcedermott@gracechurcharlherst.org to receive an online form. If you aren’t already receiving my weekly emails to parents and guardians about children and youth events, please email me also.

Growing in God’s Love: K-5th Grade Sunday School, 9:15-10:15 a.m., begins Sept. 10th
One class for Kindergarten – 5th graders will meet from 9:15-10:15 a.m. on Sundays starting Sept. 10th in the upstairs of the Parke House. We will also sometimes be using outdoor space in the Garth.

This year’s curriculum is based on a story bible called Growing in God’s Love that focuses on telling the story of “the mystery of God who is healer, spirit, shepherd, friend, mother, caregiver, peacemaker, father—all of these things and much more” in a way that “invites children to engage…with their own imaginations.”

Our first unit will be exploring the question “Who is Jesus?”, looking at Jesus as the good shepherd, the true vine, the light of the world, and the bread of life. The “Who is Jesus?” series will meet for 4 Sundays – Sept. 10th, Sept. 17th, October 1st, and October 8th. You’re welcome to plan your involvement as a family by series that interest you or to join us all year-round!

Lucy Bergin will be teaching with me this year. She brings over a decade of working with children of all ages and in particular 3-15 in group classes on music, theater and theology. She has been worshipping at Grace since December 2022 and is thrilled to support children's formation in the Pioneer Valley!

There will be no Sunday School on September 24th, when we’ll be sharing in one service at 9:30 a.m. for the feast of Michael and All Angels.

Liturgy in the Chapel Resumes October 15th
Last year, Liturgy in the Chapel went on hiatus, but we are excited to bring back the opportunity this year for monthly Communion services centered around children and their families! Stay tuned for more information, and mark your calendars for October 15th.

Youth Group (Grades 6-12) Welcome Back Event on Sept. 10th, after 10:30 service, in Garth
Weather permitting, youth group will gather outside in the church courtyard for a Welcome Back celebration on Sept. 10th, which will include food, fun, and brainstorming for the year ahead. In the case of inclement weather, we will still meet but move inside to the Fireplace Room of the Parke House.

We already have lots of great ideas for what this year together could look like, but gladly seek the input of our youth participants!

So far, multiple service opportunities alongside the youth group of Sts. James and Andrew in Greenfield are in

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the planning stages. We also look forward to more opportunities to get to know each other through local fun and to connect with our spirits and with God through the discussion of relevant spiritual topics. In previous years, we’ve gone mini golfing, bowling, apple picking, indoor rock climbing, and more, and discussed the connections between faith, wellness, and self-care as well as how faith sustains us in the midst of bad or frightening news.

Lucy Bergin and Kate Atkinson will serve as youth group volunteers, assisting in planning and chaperoning a variety of events.

Please reach out to me at mmcdermott@gracechurchamherst.org for more information.

**Campus and Young Adult Ministries**

We are excited to welcome new students to Grace and to Amherst!

Once a month, GEMS: Grace Episcopal Ministry for Students will provide a casual opportunity for students to get together with me, Megan, for beverages and treats at a local café, as well as discussion about faith, theology, and life. We will meet the third Saturday of every month at 11 a.m.

Our first meeting will be on Saturday Sept. 16th, between 11 and 12:30 p.m., at Coronation Café. Please share with any students you know with whom this might be a good fit!

Grace also hopes to host other young adult events throughout the year! Thanks so much to all of you who attended young adult brunches over the past program year. We are hoping to return to young adult brunches later this year and potentially other 20s/30s gatherings. Stay tuned for more information, and let me know if there's an event you'd like to do together as Grace Church young adults!
The Young Adult Ministry Network (YAMN) continues to bring together young adults ages 18-40 from across the diocese.

On Saturday Sept. 9th, we’ll meet from 2-6 p.m. at Tree House Brewing in South Deerfield for board games and pizza. This is a regular outing that we’d love to have you join!

On Saturday Sept. 16th, we’ll do apple picking at 2:30 p.m. at an orchard to be announced soon.

If you need a ride for either event or more information, please check in with me at mmcdermott@gracechurchamherst.org.

Lastly, we hope you’ll join in on the free YAMN annual retreat in New Hampshire from Oct. 13th-15th! Please see the flyer for details. Carpooling is available.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Young Adult Ministry Network

Fall Retreat

OCTOBER 13-15

Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center, Greenfield NH

For young adults 18-40.
No cost to attend (including food and lodging), travel assistance available.

Email Will at william.harron@gmail.com with any questions.

Register at tinyurl.com/yamn-retreat by September 4

A Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts

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Think Fall now! The fundraising and communications committees are delighted to announce the return of the much-loved Harvest Festival on Friday, October 20 through Sunday, October 22. Be sure to save this weekend for it will be full of events not to be missed which include the following:

**Friday, October 20:**
- 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Decorating the Church

**Saturday, October 21:**
- 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Harvest Mini Bazaar
- 10:00 a.m. Gospel Sing
- 4:00 p.m. Jazz Concert
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner and Dancing (Reserve your space early. Sign-up sheets are in the Connector.)

**Sunday, October 22**
- 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Come worship with us in a celebratory, harvest-themed setting!
- 4:00 p.m. Classical Music Concert

This will be one of our biggest fundraising and fun-making events of the year! Be sure to get involved. Sign-up sheets for all events are in the Connector. Contribute your skills and enjoy the fun. For more information, contact Mary Hocken at melizhocken@gmail.com.
Planned Giving – Your Will, Trust and Other Options for Beneficiary Designations

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

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

You are welcome to contact Planned Giving Committee members Doug Adler, Kent Faerber or Jean Rankin with questions.

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).

Grace Church Facebook Page

The Communications Committee, with the help of Terrie Korpita, our Parish Administrator, have done some fine tuning and updating of the Grace Facebook page. Be sure to like us at https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071025877972 and check back frequently for updates, events, and announcements. There are so many wonderful things happening at Grace - please help spread the word and share our Facebook postings with friends.

Outreach!

Our July Outreach Offering brought in $1152.00, for the Center for New Americans.
Our August Outreach Offering brought in $615.00 for Hospice of the Fisher Home.

Generosity changes everything, starting with us.

Thank you for your generosity!

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.
Community Conversation Board

Our current Community Conversation board, about “Following God in Challenging Climates,” will stay up through the month of September in honor of our observance of Creation Season. If you haven’t already stopped by the board, which can be found in the Connector, please do so and share your thoughts or read the contributions of others!

A Circle of Care Update

The Grace Church Circle of Care came together in the fall of 2018 to support a large family of Congolese refugees as they entered life in this country. Our intense involvement gradually (and appropriately) diminished, as they became increasingly self-reliant. The family was profoundly appreciative of our support and friendship but found the cost of housing in Amherst untenable. So, in summer of 2022 they relocated to suburban Indianapolis, where they were able to purchase their own home and to join a sizable community of other Kinyarwanda speakers.

This July Duane and I were invited to join them for the traditional wedding ceremony of Muka, the eldest of the eight sisters. It was a wonderful visit. We’re pleased to report that all are doing well. Berchmas (the father) has retired. The other adults all have steady work. The three who graduated from Amherst High School in June of ’22 are employed and have also applied to Community College to continue their education. Jeannine and Sandrine are doing well in school, though they miss Amherst life. The two little ones are now in pre-school and HeadStart and speak to each other in English more often than in Kinyarwanda! Claude has become a long-distance truckdriver, and in January, married his sweetheart from their camp in Rwanda. They now have a son. Unfortunately, they, like Umulisa’s husband, are all still in Kigali awaiting US Immigration Services to allow them to come to this country to join their spouses. Muka and her husband, Mugiraneza, live near Louisville, Kentucky.

Duane and I (along with Circle of Care member Rebecca Klause and her daughter) were honored to be included in the wedding. We hope these few pictures provide a flavor!

— Heidi Frantz-Dale

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Joy of Living Group

Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm, 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month (first meeting Sept. 11, 2023)
Location: Connector, Grace Church
Cost: free

The Joy of Living is a program for training the mind and opening the heart that can be followed by anyone, regardless of religious or cultural orientation. This training enables us to discover a lasting contentment that is not subject to the fluctuating conditions of the external world, and to nurture the wisdom and compassion that naturally manifest from awareness itself.

The awareness, loving kindness/compassion, and wisdom practices and perspectives taught in the Joy of Living are not religious in nature and yet can profoundly support our journeys as disciples of Christ. They deal with basic functions of the heart and mind, such as mindful awareness and the movement toward happiness and away from suffering. In working with these qualities, we gradually transform our relationship to present-moment experience, learning to approach every thought, feeling, and sensory experience with unconditional warmth and acceptance.

The Joy of Living group at Grace Church is open to everyone, whatever their philosophical or spiritual perspective. It combines meditation, practices that can be integrated into the flow of life, and discussion of key points so that participants can gain maximum benefit in their lives.

The group will be led by Kell Julliard and Claudia Citkovitz. Kell is a mindfulness instructor certified by the International Mindfulness Teachers Association. He teaches for Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare as well as the Tergar Meditation Community and has published four peer-reviewed medical research articles on mindfulness meditation. Claudia Citkovitz is a licensed acupuncturist and a practice leader for the Tergar Meditation Community.

St. Nicholas Bazaar

Do you have an interest in antiques and/or collectibles? We need your help with sorting and pricing bazaar donations. Join us - it's fun and a great way to help Grace Church! Some knowledge of antiques and collectibles is helpful, but not required. Contact Joan (jobrien82@gmail.com) with any questions or to volunteer.

Donations are needed for all areas of the bazaar, especially antiques and fine jewelry. Please remember that items should be in good working condition and clean. We accept many kinds of items, but please NO textbooks, binders, 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!

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**Haiti Ministry**

The 2023 "Outfit a Haitian Child for School" Uniform campaign is wrapping up.

**Good news from Haiti – You’ve read and heard all the bad news. Now the good:**

**L’Ecole St. Matthieu is thriving.** Despite food and fuel shortages, danger and disorder, dedicated teachers and leaders show up every day. So do children who are eager to learn. Amid such hardship, they completed a full school year and are ready to begin again. **Please support them.**

The growth and development of St. Matthieu is a continuing blessing, for which we are all thankful. Folks from Grace who first went to Bayonnais in the early 2000s remember the small clusters of children valiantly struggling to learn on bare benches in the dimly lit church sanctuary and a former goat shed! **This fall the school expects about 237 students in pre-kindergarten through the new Seventh grade!!** These students will find ready for them: caring and increasingly well-trained teachers; a lovely, bright classroom building with spaces for each grade; a dual use library/refectory with locally crafted book cabinets, the start of a collection of books and a librarian/reading specialist (very rare in Haiti even in the best of times); and not the least, the school now also has new sanitary facilities and a safe supply of fresh water.

www.gracechurchamherst.org
Further good news: Construction of an additional classroom-sized space, planned for a future 8th grade, is underway.

All this growth and progress stems from the hard work of the local school and church leadership and the now fifteen-year formal partnership of Grace Church with St. Matthieu, together with the devoted assistance of St. James, Indian Head, MD. Your gifts of money and time have borne fruit. Now we need to stay faithful. We cannot help our partners in Bayonnais with all the grave risks they face nor guarantee their future. **We can support the courage and work of these teachers and children by providing the things they need for this fall:**

--- **Required school uniforms.** St. Matthieu receives no government support, but it conforms to mandated curriculum and standards, including those for uniforms. At the same time, uniforms are a source of great pride for the students and a practical necessity for the very poor families that comprise this community. Materials are sourced locally and uniforms made by local seamstresses/tailors, a contribution to the local economy.

--- **Supplies.** All the normal back-to-school things: paper, pencils, crayons, along with teacher supplies like chalk.

--- **Books.** Textbooks, too, are the responsibility of students.

Grace's annual campaign to "OUTFIT A HAITIAN CHILD FOR SCHOOL" wraps up the second week in September. With 148 "outfits" complete, we have 89 children still to provide for!!!

**If you have contributed, THANK YOU!** If you haven't yet, please consider whether you can do so now.
The cost of a uniform is about $50 US; supplies and books for a child for a year are estimated at $25 for a total of $75. But all gifts help! Make your check to Grace Church and write "Haiti Uniforms" on the "for" line.

As a thank you to everyone who contributed generously to the St Matthieu School uniform campaign this year, the Haiti Ministry will be showing the film, MADAN SARA, a documentary about the market women in Port-au-Prince, in the Parish Hall at noon on **September 10th**, after the 10:30 service. The film tells the story of the madan saras’ tireless work, day in and day out, as they ensure that food in Haiti makes its way to market. Despite facing intense hardship and social stigma, madan saras manage to put their children through school, provide housing for their families, and ensure a better life for generations to come. Please join us on Sept 10th! We’ll have popcorn and raisinets for you, too!

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www.gracechurchamherst.org
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<th>Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Office CLOSED for Labor Day</td>
<td>8:00 am Staff Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am: Morning Prayer, 11:00 am: Holy Eucharist, 5:15 pm: AA, 7:00 pm: Alaxon</td>
<td>12:00 pm: Holy Eucharist, Rite I with Healing Prayer</td>
<td>5:00 pm: Outreach Commission, 7:30 pm: Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 am: Men's Group, 5:30 pm: Evensong, 8:00 pm: AA</td>
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<td>7:00 pm: AA</td>
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<td>11:00 am: Bell Ringing for Climate Change, 5:00 pm: Haiti Ministry, 7:00 pm: Joy of Living, 7:30 pm: AA</td>
<td>12:00 pm: Meal Ministry, 5:15 pm: AA, 7:00 pm: Alaxon</td>
<td>2:00 pm: Tea &amp; Tidings, 5:30 pm: Exec. Commm., 7:30 pm: Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>5:30 pm: Evensong</td>
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<td>8:30 am: Morning Prayer, 10:00 am: Raising the Questions</td>
<td>11:00 am: Holy Eucharist, Rite I with Healing Prayer, 5:15 pm: AA, 7:00 pm: Alaxon</td>
<td>2:00 pm: Death &amp; Dying - Art &amp; Poetry</td>
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Coffee hour: follow Sunday morning services and provide an opportunity for parish fellowship and for welcoming and becoming acquainted with newcomers.
Grace Notes
September 2023

Return Service Requested

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

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

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

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

Discover true life and true love at Grace Church.

Service Schedule

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

See our website, www.gracechurchamherst.org for updates