



Grace Notes

Mar/April 2022

From the Rector

By Rev. Chris Morck

From the Annual Report...

*My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it
will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am
following your will
does not mean that I am actually
doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please
you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all
that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything
apart from that desire.
And I know that, if I do this, you will
lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore I will trust you always
though
I may seem to be lost and in the
shadow of death.*

*I will not fear, for you are ever with
me,
and you will never leave me to face
my perils alone.*

— Thomas Merton, from
Thoughts in Solitude, page 79

You may be familiar with this prayer by the Trappist monk Thomas Merton. Though I have read it before and thought it meaningful, I just came across it again recently and, in the “shadow” and “perils” of the last year, I found it to be particularly reassuring. This has been a blessed reminder that God indeed will lead us by “the right road” and walks with us on that way.

In many ways, the past year has been such a difficult time. There has been the continuing pandemics of covid, of racial injustice and heightened white violence, of extreme disinformation and deception – about everything from voting and elections to vaccines and viruses, and of that human virus of greed which threatens and mars us and the rest of God’s creation.

We have witnessed - and experienced - covid surges, insurrection, further dissolution of our civic life, widespread political lies, alongside our own personal losses and upheavals and all of those “changes and chances of this life” (in the language of our Book of Common Prayer).

This is all true, and yet this is not the whole story, not in our world or our wider community or here at Grace.

This past year at Grace, I have seen so many ways in which we have allowed God to “lead (us) by the right road.”

I think of the joy of returning to celebrate our services together, in-person, first outside in our lower parking lot to resume our regular Saturday service and then inside a month later for Sunday morning.

Even before we could re-gather in-person, we began the year with Melissa’s joy-filled Epiphany ordination to the priesthood and her

first celebration of Holy Eucharist. Ran Chase preached, and we broke our long eucharistic fast through the distribution of communion at the James Arnold Mansion parking lot.

We celebrated again with the new opportunity of the Stations of the Nativity, first in January and then again this December, as we came together to spend time in prayer in our church while reflecting on the stories of Jesus's birth.

When we could not come together inside our building, we found creative ways to distribute palm crosses and ashes and communion and offering envelopes and a new parish directory.

We met together in many small groups throughout the past year, as Melissa writes about in her report, to continue to form and strengthen relationships, nourish community, and transform our faith.

As you can read about further in this Annual Report, our children and youth found inspired ways to join together for outings and projects.

Once again this year, due to the imagination, compassion, and dedication of our volunteers, Martha's Pantry, the Community Breakfast, and Laundry Love continued helping those who need it most, while Grace Cares extended fellowship and shared information with the considerable number of us who do not have internet.

In a number of ways, Grace parishioners committed to or continued to engage with the work and journey of anti-racism. We sought to continue the open-hearted listening required to explore the systemic racism at the roots of the violence and divisions in our country.

We joined with Our Lady of Assumption to line County Street for a Memorial Luminary Walk to silently remember our loved ones who have died.

The Grace Re-gathering Ministry continued to meet to talk through the many various aspects that are part of Grace's continued re-gathering process.

As Thomas Merton wrote, we rightly may feel that we "have no idea where (we) are going" nor "know for certain where it will end". That is a very real part of our story.

An equally true part is that we do have "the desire to please" our just and compassionate God and we are being led, I believe, "by the right road."

Through it all, we have continued to "be the church". Grace has continued life-giving ministry through our virtual and then in-person liturgies, our youth group and church school, our small groups and pastoral care, our feeding ministries and Grace Cares, your continued financial support, and more.

Through the pandemics and other challenges of 2021, you, as Grace Church, have ministered and been ministered to in such grace-filled ways, continuing to extend yourselves to each other and to the wider community with compassion, generosity, and creativity. Thank you. There is much for which to be grateful!

With thanksgiving,
Chris +

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Thank you...

To Our Retiring Vestry Members
As we welcome new members to our vestry, on behalf of the whole parish I want to especially thank our outgoing members. This year's outgoing vestry members – Travis Bowie, Rob DaSilva, Maureen Decker, Pam Mello, and Betsy Pye - will be greatly missed.

Although they are stepping away from the vestry, each one will continue to serve God and God's people in many other ways. I am truly grateful for the leadership they have demonstrated and their thoughtfulness, their heart, and their generosity of spirit which have enriched our vestry in so many different ways.

Gratefully,
Chris +

From the Curate

By Rev. Melissa Howell

From the Annual Report...

It was a blessing to continue to serve with Chris and the community at Grace as curate in 2021. This year my ministry centered on our youth and families, adult formation, and collaborating on ways to regather and continue to gather and connect with one another and our neighbors safely and meaningfully during the ongoing pandemic.

Youth ministry and providing opportunities for our youth to be together, to support one another, and to know that they are loved by God and by their church community are of high importance during the pandemic, as the effects of isolation are particularly challenging for young people and their mental and

emotional health. Youth group met in-person and mostly outdoors (for pandemic safety) during 2021, exploring different parks and beaches in our region, with a focus on themes of wilderness, creation care, and seeking and finding. Highlights included a series of scavenger hunts, kayaking and paddle boarding, and team-building games. In Easter season the youth group held our first ever neighborhood prayer walk, walking and praying for the people and institutions who are our parish's neighbors in downtown New Bedford. In Advent our youth again collaborated with Community Breakfast to assemble and distribute Christmas gift backpacks of socks, toiletries, and gift cards for our breakfast guests. Many of our youth are also involved in service and worship ministries at Grace and were able to continue or return to those ministries this year, through Community Breakfast, summer volunteering with Martha's Pantry, and once again serving as acolytes in Sunday worship. We are grateful for all those who served as youth mentors in 2021 and give special thanks for their leadership and dedication in continuing to be present with our youth in the fall while I was recovering from surgery:

Kristi Botelho	Blinn Dorsey
Maggie Boyce	Louise Kelly
Paula Cabral	Jackie L'Heureux
Ann Dailey	Jesse Roderiques

We continue to reach out to families with young children in this challenging time. Charlene Ryder and our church school teachers have provided wonderful virtual and in-person offerings for children and families who are able to participate.

Adult formation offerings this year continued to be focused on small

groups that could gather meaningfully and safely either virtually or in-person. Chris, Jean Pitcairn, and I initiated and led several small groups throughout the year. I led a virtual *lectio divina* and Compline small group that met weekly during Lent. Our vestry retreat focused on small groups and the fellowship, connection, spiritual support, and hospitality that they can provide. Jean and I organized and led a facilitator training in September for others in the parish interested in leading small groups. We continue to focus on and invite our parish community into small groups of varying themes.

As we move into the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic and adjust to an ever-changing new normal of living with the coronavirus, I am grateful for the flexibility, creativity, and dedication of Grace Church as we continue to care for one another and for our neighbors. Throughout this extraordinary year, our parish sought to listen to God and to one another and worked to be Jesus's hands and feet in the world through serving, praying, learning, grieving, worshiping, and celebrating together—online, outdoors, and indoors. As we continue to come together in the ways we can, may we keep turning to orient ourselves to Jesus and to heed his tireless call to care for the most vulnerable and to bear good news of resurrection hope.

With gratitude,
Melissa †

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Liturgy & Liturgical Ministry

By Jerré Croteau, Verger

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter

The season of **Lent** begins with **Ash Wednesday** on March 2 this year. The service with the **Imposition of Ashes** and Holy Eucharist will take place in person at 6pm and will also be broadcast. The color of this season is **purple** and at Grace all images in the church are veiled. Both the color and the veiling are a sign of penitence and mourning during a season when we are called upon to examine ourselves spiritually and to reflect on Jesus' suffering and death. We, at the same time, have faith and hope in our ultimate redemption through Christ's death and resurrection, the Glory of which we can only perceive dimly as through a veil as we reflect during Lent, to be manifest in the joy of Easter when the veil falls from our eyes.

The weekend of March 5-6 is the **First in Lent**. The service will begin with the **Great Litany**, and we will be using Rite I Eucharistic Prayer 2. The thought is that this emphasizes the solemnity of the season. During the season of Lent the Gloria is replaced by the **Kyrie**. The words traditionally sung in Greek, though some use the English translation. In it we plead for mercy: **Kýrie eléison. Chríste eléison. Kýrie eléison. (Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.)**

The following two weekends, March 12-13 and 19-20 are the **Second** and **Third in Lent**. Another difference in Lent is that the **Penitential Order** is used, wherein the confession begins the service rather than being at its usual place after the prayers. For these services we will be using

Prayers of the People form V and Rite II Eucharistic Prayer A.

Next comes the **Fourth in Lent**, March 26-27, which is also called **Lætare Sunday**. The Latin verb *lætare* means “to be happy.” We are happy because our waiting for the glory of Easter is almost over. Though the Saturday service will still be Prayer V and Eucharistic Prayer A, this Sunday during Lent will feature the Penitential version of the Children’s Liturgy. The color for this Sunday is **rose**, one of only two days a year that this color is used, the other being the Third Sunday in Advent, or Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. Again, it represents that the wait is almost over.

The **Fifth in Lent**, April 2-3, once again we will begin with the Great Litany, and to match the language Rite I Eucharistic Prayer 2.

The following weekend, April 9-10 is **Palm or Passion Sunday**. This begins **Holy Week**. The color changes to **red** representing Jesus’ Passion. The Palm Sunday service begins with the **Liturgy of the Palms**, telling the story of Jesus’ triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. Palms are blessed and distributed. At the Gospel the service takes on a somber note as the Passion of Christ, this year St. Luke’s version, is read in parts, Lectors taking on the roles of the various people mentioned in the passage from Luke’s Gospel. The service which began in triumph, ends in sadness.

The last three days of that week are called the Triduum. The Triduum begins at dusk on **Maundy Thursday**, April 14 and ends with Easter Day. The service on Maundy Thursday takes place at 6pm. This service incorporates the **Washing of the Feet**, the anniversary of the first

Eucharist at the Last Supper, and the **Stripping of the Altar** in preparation for the solemnity of Good Friday. Eucharistic Prayer D, which is a translation of a very ancient form of the prayer, and on this day the last of the Reserved Sacrament is consumed.

Then **Good Friday** when we contemplate Christ’s suffering and death in expiation of our sins. The images are veiled in black, and all decoration and liturgical trappings have disappeared. The **Liturgy** will take place at noon, and the church will be open after for most of the remaining day for private prayer and devotion. The service includes the reading of the **Passion** according to St. John and incorporates the **Veneration of the Cross**. The cross we venerate is a relic of the Great Fire of 1987. It is a charred crucifix, the corpus damaged and incomplete, which once hung here in All Saints’ Chapel. It is laid in state in the crossing.

Then **Holy Saturday** and the **Eve of Easter**. The usual service takes place in the early evening. This service is called the **Great Vigil**. It begins in darkness with the lighting of the Paschal fire, from which the Paschal candle is lit followed by the singing of an ancient anthem called the **Exsultet**. This officially inaugurates the **Season of Easter**. It incorporates several Old Testament readings alternating with collects, canticles, or hymns, as well as either a baptism or the Baptismal Covenant. Then a joyful Eucharist begins with blazing light and the revelation of the church gloriously adorned.

The next morning, **Easter Day, the Feast of the Resurrection** takes place at 10am with a Festival Eucharist.

During the seven weeks of the **Easter Season** the color will be **white** symbolizing joy. For the rest of April, the Sundays of Easter will follow each other.

Lay Ministry Subdeacons, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Acolytes, Usher-Greeters

The new schedule covering March 2-June 12 was recently published. One change you may notice is that beginning with the Easter Season through Trinity Sunday the number of Acolytes at the 10am Sunday service has been increased to three, a Crucifer and two Torchbearers. Also on many Sundays, Lay Ministers who are capable of more than one position may be assigned both. For example: an Usher or Acolyte who is also a Lector may do both at the same service.

Please try to be there for your report time, as many in the congregation arrive earlier than the start-time of the service, and it is difficult not to have ushers in place before the congregants arrive and to give instructions to others when they arrive late.

Re: Changes, Trades, and Substitutions: the Verger makes every effort to honor all requests and limitations you may have before publishing the schedule and to distribute Sundays among you in a fair and equitable manner. But we realize that circumstances may arise once the schedule has been published which may necessitate your absence on a particular Sunday. If you know ahead of these changes, whether or not you have found someone with whom to trade or to substitute for you, **please inform the Verger no later than the Tuesday before the Sunday in question**, so that reminders and readings get to

the right person, and the leaflet is accurate. If an emergency or unforeseen circumstance comes up after Tuesday, call the Verger as soon as possible and he will provide a substitute. Again, thank you all for your loyal service to your Parish Family.

If anyone is interested in joining one of the Lay Minister Guilds, please contact the Verger, Jerré Croteau. We are in need of lectors, ushers, and Acolytes.

Stewardship Committee

By Beth Sharp-McKay, Chairperson

As of January 10, Grace Church temporarily suspended in-person services and went to live streaming services due to spike in coronavirus

cases in New Bedford and surrounding area.

Members of the parish stepped up again to help one another. I want to thank the following three people: Lisa Thibeault and Cheryl Gammell of the Vestry, and Robbie Watkins of the Stewardship Committee, for taking time out of their days to hand out offering envelopes on Saturday 1/22 and Sunday 1/23 at Grace as well as home delivering the remaining 60-70 sets of offering envelopes. Without their assistance, many parishioners would not have received their envelopes in January.

We are so blessed to have parishioners assist each other by giving of their time and talent! Thank you to Cheryl, Lisa, and Robbie!

Children's Ministry

By Charlene Ryder, Coordinator

As we look forward to regathering our children's ministry, we have some thoughts and ideas that will be put in place depending on Covid numbers.

We will begin our weekly children's time in the back of the church. We will offer a variety of church school lessons and craft projects. We plan on holding our Ash Wednesday Children's Chapel at 6pm on March 2. On Good Friday, April 15, at 12pm, we will hold our children's stations of the cross in the chapel.

I will be in touch with updates as we move closer to these dates.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time by phone call, text, or email at 508-728-4374 cryder@umassd.edu



Gifts January-February 2022

Community Breakfast

Gift of Episcopal Church Women, James Bisagni

Martha's Pantry at Grace

Gifts of Episcopal Church Women, Sandra & Peter Medeiros, Margot Schmid, Thomas & Susan Knight, Artie & Lavard Blanche, John Buck

Gift of Catherine Johnson **in honor of Tom & Susan Knight and the Rev. Philip & Marie Douglas**

Gift of Kate Haggerty **in honor of Marcia Becker**

Gift of Anonymous **in honor of the Pitcairn-Boyce Family**

Gift of Janet Allain **in memory of Lois Ainsley**

Laundry Love

First Citizens Charitable Foundation

Rector's Discretionary Fund

Gifts of Episcopal Church Women, Thomas & Susan Knight, Jean Brown, Nancy & David Faria

Gifts of Kenneth & Laura Ainsley, Kyle & Mary Ainsley, and William Reed & Family **in memory of Lois M. Ainsley**

Flowers & Flower Fund

Gift of Pamela & Robert Mirick

Gift of Carl J. Cruz **in memory of Dorothy B. Cruz**

Gift of Theresa Nowell **in memory of Muriel R. Foster**

Theological Education

Gift of Nancy & David Faria

Christmas

Gifts of Marjorie Ursini, Jim McKay & Beth Sharp-McKay

Color Printing

Gift of Jerré Croteau **in memory of Nathan R. King**

Envelopes

Gift of Larry Correia, W. Gardner Chace, Nancy & David Faria, Lisa Thibeault & Martha Silveira

Memorial Fund

Gift of Lucy Gundersen **in memory of Hilmar (Gundy) Gundersen & Erica A Gundersen**

Restoration

Gift of Episcopal Church Women

Miscellaneous

Gift of Thomas & Susan Knight

You Can Sponsor Easter Flowers

If you would like to sponsor flowers for the altar at Easter, in memory or in gratitude for a loved one, please fill out the form available in the back of the Church, place in the envelope provided with your contribution and place it in the offering box or give it to Charlene Ryder: cryder22@comcast.net or 508-728-4374.

Note there are no flowers during Lent.

Two Poems for Lent

Here are two poems to accompany us as we enter the season of Lent.

The blessing from Jan Richardson honestly and bravely names and speaks into the grief and loss that so many are carrying. Whether we are grieving in our personal lives or grieving about our country or the world, Richardson reminds us that we are never alone in that grief.

The poem from Mary Oliver speaks of the wonder and renewal and abundant grace available to us—in Lent and always. This is Jesus, Logos, the Word of Love poured out for us and for all.

With peace and blessings for a holy Lent,
Melissa †

Blessing When the World Is Ending **By Jan Richardson**

Look, the world
is always ending
somewhere.

Somewhere
the sun has come
crashing down.

Somewhere
it has gone
completely dark.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the gun,
the knife,
the fist.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the slammed door,
the shattered hope.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the utter quiet
that follows the news
from the phone,
the television,
the hospital room.

Somewhere
it has ended
with a tenderness
that will break
your heart.

But, listen,
this blessing means
to be anything
but morose.
It has not come
to cause despair.

It is simply here
because there is nothing
a blessing
is better suited for
than an ending,
nothing that cries out more
for a blessing
than when a world
is falling apart.

This blessing
will not fix you,
will not mend you,
will not give you
false comfort;
it will not talk to you
about one door opening
when another one closes.

It will simply
sit itself beside you
among the shards
and gently turn your face
toward the direction
from which the light
will come,
gathering itself
about you
as the world begins
again.

Source: *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons* (Wanton Gospeller Press, 2015).

Logos **By Mary Oliver**

Why worry about the loaves and
fishes?
If you say the right words, the wine
expands.
If you say them with love
and the felt ferocity of that love
and the felt necessity of that love,
the fish explode into many.
Imagine him, speaking,
and don't worry about what is reality,
or what is plain, or what is mysterious.
If you were there, it was all those
things.
If you can imagine it, it is all those
things.
Eat, drink, be happy.
Accept the miracle.
Accept, too, each spoken word
spoken with love.

Source: *Devotions* (Penguin Press, 2017).

Church Staff

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Curate	Rev. Melissa Howell
Director of Music	Brian Roderick
Parish Administrator	Katie Brengle
Verger	Gérald Croteau

Wardens & Officers

Senior Warden	Jean Pitcairn
Junior Warden	Charles Green
Treasurer	Sharlene Begley
Assistant Treasurer	Karen Maciulewicz
Clerk	Sean Corwin

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