



Grace Notes

Sept/Oct 2021

From the Rector

By Rev. Chris Morck

Recently, I was reminded of a conversation that I had at the Community Breakfast. This was some time ago, before the pandemic.

“Mary” and I were talking about how she used to have a job and a home. She had been able to count on regular meals, a roof over her head, being able to provide for herself – fundamentals which I often take for granted and to which I believe every one of us should have access.

Then she said something which I have pondered again and again, “You know, Jesus was homeless. Jesus was poor. He said himself that he didn’t have anywhere to lay his head. He went around from place to place. He was just like we are. And even his followers. You know, his disciples were fisherman, just like so many of us here in New Bedford.”

(cont. page 2)

Falling and Rising

By Rev. Melissa Howell

“A young monk once went to see his superior: ‘Father,’ he said, ‘I must leave the monastery because I clearly do not have a vocation to be a monk.’ When the older monk asked why, the younger monk replied: ‘In spite of daily resolutions to be good-tempered, chaste, and sober, I keep on sinning. So, I feel I am not suited to the monastic life.’ The older monk looked at him with love and said: ‘Brother, the monastic life is this: I rise up and I fall down, I rise up and I fall down, I rise up and I fall down.’ The young monk stayed and persevered.” ~ Christopher Jamison OSB, as quoted in the book *The Monastic Way: A Journey Through the Year*, by Hannah Ward and Jennifer Wild, Canterbury Press, 2013.

This is an old story that has been told by many people in different ways, and I love it because it is not only a description of the monastic life, but more broadly of the rising and falling

of the Christian life. I am writing this mid-August, at the beginning of yet another surge in COVID cases, and at times the news and science change so rapidly that it can feel exhausting and disheartening, very much like falling down. Wildfires and heat waves from climate change are increasing. And against this difficult wider-world backdrop, there are the difficulties of our own personal lives—illnesses, complicated relationships, grief and loss, failure, the ways we hurt one another. All of these can feel like falling down.

While we are down, when we find ourselves on the floor, whether through our own behavior or through what the world has handed to us, we require rest and a certain gentleness for ourselves to be able to rise up again. Sometimes when we fall we need a kind word of encouragement, another to sit on the floor with us, the community of our loved ones and the Church to rise together with us and go on. We might need a nap. Prayer can be useful for rising—the Lord’s Prayer,

the 23rd Psalm or other favorite passage, or a simple “God help me,” or “Lord, have mercy.”

When we feel, like the monk in our story, that we are not suited to the Christian life, when everything feels too hard, when we would rather remain on the floor, we can look to Jesus, who invites us into the rhythm of a life of falling and rising, falling and rising, falling and rising. Jesus gives us rest when we are weary and have fallen, and when we rise he promises that his yoke is easy and his burden light (Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus, through his life, through the Cross and Resurrection, shows us what it is to fall down, to pray for God’s help, and to rise.

With peace,
Melissa †

From the Rector, continued...

(cont. from page 1)

It’s no secret that Christianity can emphasize Jesus’ divinity in such a way that we view him far removed from his humanity. We confess that Jesus was fully human, and yet so many times we think of him as very different than ourselves, someone who walked apart from our own concerns and our common humanity.

Yet Scripture speaks to us in much the same way as Mary. “You know, Jesus... was just like we are.”

Scripture tells us that Jesus knows us because he was human, because he lived as we do. He was human in every way that we are. His needs were our needs, as was his joy and deep sadness, his faith, and his fear.

This is a very different kind of savior, isn’t it? He does not pull us up from

someplace on high or swoop down from somewhere to rescue us. No, he is no superhero, and we should not be looking for one, either.

And Jesus tells us, and the lives of the disciples show us, that we are not called to be superheroes either.

The disciples were just as we are. And they followed Jesus as we do, with both trust and doubt, joyfulness and sorrow, moments of self-giving and moments of self-interest.

Our salvation – our healing, our restoration, our wholeness – comes not from someone who is so far above us, but one who is our friend, our companion, our sibling. One who accepts us as we are, who calls us to be our best selves, and who walks with us on the path of this becoming.

Jesus called the disciples, and calls us, to live more deeply within our common humanity and strive to build very human relationships of solidarity, self-giving, collaboration, equality. It is through these relationships that God is shown forth, felt, and seen.

Jesus’ glory, Jesus’ beauty, is not that he was free of his humanity, but that he lived it out in all of its fragility and abundance, pointing us to the fullness of God, and inviting us to live God’s holiness in our own lives, just as they are.

Peace,
Chris +

Grace Regathering Update: August 19, 2021

Dear Grace Church,

I commend to you the latest diocesan update, [found here](#), which arrived earlier this week. Please do

take time to read and reflect on the message from Bishop Gayle Harris and its implications for our individual decisions and actions and our life together.

A word about where we are now

The good news - and there is good news - is that most practices carried out at Grace Church will not change. We are already implementing most of what is specified by our current diocesan guidance.

So, we will continue to have both in-person and virtual worship services, open to all. We will continue to maintain physical distancing between households/pods and stay masked. We will continue to be vigilant and make decisions guided by attention to the needs of the most vulnerable and respect for the most cautious. We will continue to have available face-to-face pastoral care, even though in-person visits will need to be brief.

(We continue to ask that, if you feel sick or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you do not come to church and advise you to self-isolate until you can obtain a COVID test. If you test positive, develop symptoms, or find out that you have had a known COVID exposure after being at church, please contact your clergy so that we can perform contact tracing.)

This new diocesan update, combined with the advice of our Grace Regathering Ministry Team and the current reality of the Delta variant in our area, does mean that we will not be re-opening further as we had anticipated. Things that we thought might be in the near-term future, like larger memorial services, regathering events and picnics,

congregational singing - to name just a few - will continue to be on hold.

This diocesan update does require one notable change here at Grace. You will note the third requirement from the diocese: "COVID vaccination of all persons, clergy or lay, who are engaged in ministry with the most vulnerable..."

This means that, by August 25th, all staff and volunteers at Grace Church will need to be vaccinated in order to continue to serve in an *in-person, physically present* capacity. This includes several but by no means all of the components of ministry of Martha's Pantry, Community Breakfast, worship, children, and youth. This potentially affects 'hands on' volunteers for those ministries but does not affect in any way attendance at worship services.

All are welcome to attend in-person worship services at Grace Church, regardless of vaccination status.

Because this vaccine mandate, limited to specific responsibilities and roles, could be misunderstood or mischaracterized, I want to be clear. The intention of this decision by the diocese is **not** to exclude, marginalize, stigmatize, or pressure those who cannot or refuse to vaccinate.

Rather, it is founded on current scientific consensus around the Delta variant combined with care for those who are not vaccinated and protection of the most vulnerable. In essence, then, this decision is founded on Christian compassion and mutual care, and the lived-out desire for the well-being of us all in the midst of a difficult and precarious reality.

Please know that I am available and willing to talk with those who are concerned about this limited vaccine mandate, the potential implications of this change, or any other questions or concerns you may have.

A word about vaccinations and Delta

Melissa and I recommend this article in the New Bedford Light about the current spread of the Delta variant in our area: [COVID-19 cases doubling in New Bedford - The New Bedford Light](#)

We also emphasize the guidance of [the Episcopal Church](#) and of the vast majority of medical professionals and scientists: that the best protection against serious illness, hospitalization, and death from the coronavirus and its Delta variant is vaccination.

Although it is possible for vaccinated people to become infected, the vaccines are doing much to prevent hospitalization and death. Vaccines help slow the spread of the virus and protect those among us who cannot yet be vaccinated, like young children, as well as those who, because of age or illness, are unable to build a strong immune response after vaccination. Vaccination helps lower the chance that more dangerous variants of the virus will develop and spread.

Vaccination helps slow the virus's spread so that our health care system and its workers, who have been through so much already, do not become overwhelmed even further. In that it helps prevent hospitalization, being vaccinated is an ethical, religious, and honorable obligation as it keeps hospital beds and equipment available for others who need them.

In closing, for now

This may be a time of anger, disappointment, exhaustion, and sorrow for many of us who thought that the end of the pandemic was near. We might also be feeling fear – fear of more unknowns, fear of the virus, perhaps fear of vaccination. Please know that Melissa and I are here as a resource to speak and pray with you about any of these emotions that you might be feeling.

It is also a good time to reach out to one another, to check in with loved ones and friends and fellow parishioners who might be feeling sorrow or confusion. Together, we live and rest in Christian hope, and in the power of God's perfect love to cast out fear (1 John 4:18). Amen!

With gratitude for this community, for the ministry we carry forward together, and for the faith that is within us,
Peace,
Chris +

Links:

<https://www.diomass.org/news/diocesan-news/aug-16-pastoral-message-covid-19-requirements-recommendations>
<https://newbedfordlight.org/covid-19-cases-doubling-in-new-bedford/>
<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/covid-vaccine-toolkit/>

Liturgy & Liturgical Ministry

By Jerré Croteau, Verger

September-October 2021

Summer is almost over, and we cast our minds forward to the new program year at Grace. Covid is very

much still with us and imposing precautions and limitations as to what we can and cannot do liturgically. Many things we might have been able to do over the summer have had to be modified in view of the new variants of the pandemic. But we at Grace will carry on as best we can to continue to worship God. Three new members of our Worship leadership will return with the new schedule, an Acolyte, a Lector, and another Usher. We had hoped for more Lay Ministers to be able to return but the new guidelines make it impossible at this time. Though the books have been returned to the pews, they will not be needed for worship as we will continue the practice of printing the leaflets which will contain all the prayers, words to hymns, the Eucharistic Prayer, and all other components of the service. Congregational singing is still not possible. The 10AM service will continue to be in person and livestreamed.

We begin the new rota on September 12 when the Sunday Eucharist returns to **10AM**. The Saturday service at 5PM will continue as before. For the moment the 8AM Sunday service and the Wednesday service are still discontinued. We are still in the seemingly endless **Season of Pentecost**. The color remains **green** and the Prayers of the People and Eucharistic Prayer vary during the Autumn portion of this season. September 11-12 is the **Sixteenth after Pentecost**. Ordinarily this Sunday would be called Homecoming, but the usual extra components of celebration that this Sunday entails are cancelled for this year. The following weekend, September 18-19, **Seventeenth after Pentecost, Children's Liturgy** will be used at the 10AM service, which will include the Blessing of the Backpacks

and honoring of our Church School and Youth Group teams.

September 25-26 will be **Pledge Sunday** beginning the annual Pledge Campaign. October 2-3, **Nineteenth after Pentecost**, we continue the tradition of honoring **St. Francis of Assisi**. All our furry and feathered companions are invited to the service. The **Blessing of the Animals** will occur at 11AM after the Eucharist.

October 9-10, **Twentieth after Pentecost**, regular services will take place. October 16-17, **Twenty-first after Pentecost**, the 10AM service will feature **Children's Liturgy**. **Pledge Ingathering** will occur on the **Twenty-second after Pentecost**, October 23-24. The last weekend in October, 30-31, is the **Twenty-third after Pentecost** (also called here at Grace **Acolyte Sunday**), the Sunday we honor all members of our **Lay Liturgical Ministry**.

As you can see, the Fall season at Grace is a busy time. And all are invited to participate in both our in person and virtual services.

LITURGICAL MINISTRY

Over the past week I have contacted or have attempted to contact all Lay Ministers, Acolytes, Acolyte Parents, Lectors, and Usher-Greeters. I have heard from almost all of you and we now have more than enough volunteers to cover the few extra ministers that we are now allowed to return to service. I thank you all for your responses and for the willingness to serve again at the altar. When I began this I wasn't sure how many people Covid restrictions would allow us to return to duty. For now, the Worship Team for the 10AM service, in addition to the clergy, organist, and Audiovisual

Team, will consist of a Subdeacon, a Cantor (sometimes Lector), a Lector, a Crucifer, and four Usher-Greeters. (The Ushers and Greeters have been merged into one guild.) For Lectors and Acolytes this means a very limited number of services for which they may be scheduled. We will still be at the Cary Altar so that returning Acolytes and Lectors will have to be reoriented to their duties and placement before their first scheduled service. This would entail asking you to come in a little earlier your first time on duty.

In addition, the new protocols mandate that all **volunteers, in contact with the congregation or outside seekers of our help, must be masked and vaccinated**. (This vaccination mandate only applies to volunteers but **does not apply** to the congregation attending services.)

Again, thank you all for agreeing to return to duty, even on this limited basis.

Children's Ministry Program

By Charlene Ryder, Children's Ministry Program Coordinator

As I write this newsletter article, we are still unsure of the direction for our church school in September 2021.

Two possibilities are to hold our zoom "Children's Storytime" and church school lessons or outside "Storytime & Chapel" lessons weather permitting. I will forward updates to families as we learn more in the coming months.

If you have any questions, please contact me at any time by phone, text, or email at 508-728-4374 or cryder@umassd.edu

Every Perfect Gift



Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above...

James 1:17 NRSV

This year's theme for our Pledge Campaign is "**Every Perfect Gift.**" The campaign will begin on Sunday, September 26th, and end on the weekend of October 23rd and 24th with the ingathering. The symbolic meaning of making a commitment to God's ministries at Grace Church remains the same no matter which method of giving you prefer i.e., in person or electronically.

On or about September 26th, you will receive a letter from Rev. Chris with a pledge card, and new this year a special request for your participation. This year, we are asking you and your family to tell us why you contribute to Grace's ministries: How do you feel your financial contribution has impacted Grace and the lives of others? Finally, we are asking parishioners to share their experiences and feelings with the congregation. Your responses either anonymously or with your permission will be published throughout our campaign. All instructions regarding your submission will be included with Rev. Chris' letter and on Grace's website <https://gracechurchnb.org/> under *Give* tab, then *Pledge Campaign*. This addition to our campaign is so others can see the impact their pledge can make to improve the lives of others.

We all have special gifts given to us from God. How are you going to use those gifts to help others? What are your special gifts? By pledging you are sharing one of those gifts. Your financial gift in 2022 will continue to help support our ministries in Greater New Bedford.

Lastly, we realize all sorts of issues can and will impact your giving decision; however, please find comfort in knowing you may change your pledge commitment any time by contacting Rev. Chris, Katie, or myself.

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above. Amen....

Stewardship Committee: Beth Sharp McKay, Chairperson, Rev. Chris Morck; Rev. Melissa Howell, Anne Gundersen, Ned Hines, Terri Nowell, and Robbie Watkins.

Martha's Pantry at Grace

By Travis Bowie

Grace is feeding a lot of people!

We need more volunteers to help with this outreach. You can be a church member or a member of the community who sees the need and offers to help. Masks are worn by all volunteers.

The public comes to a window to give name and size of household. They do not enter the building. Volunteers then bring food to the window and it is passed to the individual. Due to Covid there is no physical contact with clients.

Some info on how the food pantry works and what the volunteers do:

The food pantry is open Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:30-10:30AM. Volunteers arrive by 9AM. Two sets of volunteers are at work. Five or six volunteers work at greeting people,

packing up produce, and passing out food (fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, frozen meats, canned goods, bread, butter, eggs, and paper goods). For households with children, packets of powdered milk, yogurt, cheese, and peanut butter are prepared to be given out. Two or three volunteers work in the downstairs food storage area assembling packets of non-perishable foods. Some of these are prepared ahead of time, others are made up on Wed and Fri mornings by the volunteers.

Where does the food come from?

On the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, a group of volunteers help to receive food from the Greater Boston Food Bank. We usually receive 6,000 to 7,000 lbs. of food on those

deliveries but occasionally receive more. Food comes from Boston by truck to a loading dock in the north end of New Bedford where Grace volunteers load it for us. Grace rents a vehicle to bring the large amounts of food to the church. Volunteers unpack and bring food into the church.

We greatly need additional help with this work.

Additional food is received from Friends Academy, individual donations, and food drives done on our behalf by other groups.

Come and join us! Contact Sharlene Begley, begleysktj@comcast.net, pantry coordinator, and offer your time. You help feed others and at the same time you are fed spiritually by your presence.



July-August 2021 Gifts

Community Breakfast

Gift of James Bisagni

Martha's Pantry at Grace

Gifts of John Buck, Ann Langlois, Charlene Nelson

Gift of Pam & George McNamara **in memory of Harry G. Foden**

Gift of Terry Nowell **in memory of Elizabeth A. Montigny**

Gifts of William Reed and Priscilla Guillemette **in memory of Shirley Alves**

Gift of Christopher Reed **in memory of Martha Reed**

Children & Youth Ministries

Gift of Larry Correia; Peter, Susan, Kia, Jack & Kaitlyn Whelan

Gift of Terry Nowell **in memory of Elizabeth A. Montigny**

Rector's Discretionary Fund

Gifts of Nancy & David Faria, Jean Brown, Michael Medeiros, Blinn & Lisette Dorsey, W. Gardner Chase

Flower Fund

Gift of Priscilla Guillemette **in honor of the Tenth Anniversary of the Death of Ronald Guillemette and the Twentieth Anniversary of the death of Stasia Green**

Miscellaneous

Gifts of Juliette Berthiaume, Mr. & Mrs. J. Andrew Frazee, G. Kenneth & Mary Lou Garrett

Gift of Meredith Persson **in honor of Fred & Marcia Anselmo's Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary**

Sunday, August 1, 2021, was Scholarship Sunday. Grace Church is blessed to be in a unique position to offer scholarships to college students from the generous bequests from the following: the Eccleston, Heptonstall, Holmes, Menzer, Rapp, Robbins, Teves/Moreau, Kenney, Tilton, Tripp and McKeachern families. These generous gifts and their prudent investment have enabled Grace Church to offer scholarships each year to assist our parishioners with their endeavors of higher education. The following are the recipients and where they are attending college:

Lindsey Bedard (Hofstra University Graduate School)

Alexia Blais (Johnson and Wales University)

Katherine Frazee (Stonehill College)

Abbey Luth (Nazareth College)

Autumn Luth (University of Vermont)

Claire Morck (Bridgewater State University)

Mia Morgan (Maine College of Art)

Christopher Ng (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)

Kaitlyn Ng (Merrimack College)

Congratulations to each of them! We are very proud of these members of our church and are honored to help them fulfill their dreams and ambitions by furthering their education.

I would also like to recognize the members of the Scholarship Committee and thank them for their time and service: Colleen Cook; Rob DaSilva; Carole Johnson; Ann Kenney and Kristen Morgan.

Maureen V. Decker, Grace Church Scholarship Committee Chairperson

Nominations are open

Nominations are open for the 2022 slate of vestry members and delegates of Grace Church. Possible positions for this year are 3 Year Vestry Terms, 2022-2025 (four), Convention Delegates (two), Convention Alternates (two), Deanery Representatives (five), Episcopal City Mission Representatives (two), the Inter-Church Council (one), and Teller (one). If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for any of these positions, please contact Chris Morck, revchrismorck@gracechurchnb.org, by Sunday, October 31st.

Vestry positions:

Vestry members represent the congregation as a part of the governing body of the parish. They regularly attend Grace, support the ongoing work of the church, and are engaged in Grace's ministries. The work of the vestry continues throughout the year and meetings are monthly.

Yearly positions:

Convention Delegates/Alternates (2 each)

Each year the Diocese of Massachusetts holds a convention to carry forth the work of its 185 churches and vote on a budget and any such business as presented in the agenda. Conventions are held early in November. If a delegate(s) is unable to attend, one or both alternates will serve in that capacity as needed.

Deanery Representatives (five)

The congregations in our diocese are grouped into 12 deaneries whose boundaries are drawn according to natural watersheds, reminding us of our connections with God's creation and symbolic of the waters of Baptism. This gives churches an opportunity to meet collaboratively and locally to discuss issues that are both local and diocesan related. Grace is part of the Mount Hope/Buzzard's Bay Deanery. Evening meetings are quarterly and rotate among the member churches. For more information go to: www.diomass.org/about-us/deaneries-and-regions

Episcopal City Mission Representatives (two)

Episcopal City Mission (ECM) promotes social and economic justice, with particular emphasis on the urban poor. Each year, they provide funding:

- To parishes to enhance their role in their communities
- To grassroots organizations to advocate and bring about social change in low-income communities, and
- To Diocesan programs and initiatives to support the urban poor.

Meetings and the annual fundraising dinner information can be found at www.episcopalcitymission.org

Inter-Church Council (one)

The ICC has united area churches and the greater Faith Community in service to the surrounding area. With 47 member congregations from Westport to Wareham and a volunteer force of 150 leaders, the Council is a strong faith collaborative committed to social, economic, and racial justice and spiritual renewal within a framework of ecumenical cooperation.

Meetings and events can be found at www.iccgnb.org

Teller (one)

The teller is present in the event that additional ballots need to be cast and tallied during the Annual Meeting.

Church Staff

Rector	Rev. Christopher Morck
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	Pamela Mello
Clerk	Betsy Pye

Vestry Members 2021

Travis Bowie
 Sean Corwin
 Rob DaSilva
 Maureen Decker
 Jim Doe
 Cheryl Gammell
 Nadine Gomes
 Eric Jaikes
 David King
 Beth Sharp
 Lisa Thibeault

All Saints' Day Remembrance

Name(s) of deceased to be remembered and placed upon
 the altar on Saturday, November 6th
 and Sunday, November 7th

*Completed forms may be mailed to the office or placed in
 the baskets provided in the back of the church and chapel
 or sent via email to verger@gracechurchnb.org*

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