

2021 ANNUAL REPORT of GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

New Bedford, Massachusetts

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MISSION STATEMENT

As a Christian community, we seek to know, glorify, and serve God. We do this through:

WORSHIP

by using traditional and contemporary forms of liturgy with prayer and guidance;

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

by teaching the love of Jesus Christ through scripture, education, and daily life applications;

FELLOWSHIP

by nurturing and supporting each other; and

OUTREACH

by being Jesus' heart, voice, hands, and feet in our community and the world.

We invite you:
Whoever you are;
Wherever you are on your journey of faith;
Come to the table and receive the supper of the Lamb.

A PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

O God, our heavenly Father, graciously behold this congregation. Bind together its members with cords of friendliness and sympathy. Give us the vision of our common duty to Church and State and make us glad and strong in the doing of it. By all the memories of a great past, rouse us to hear the calls of the present. Grant wisdom, courage, and patience to our leaders, and fill us all with the spirit of loving service; that whatsoever we do in word or deed may be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, through whom we offer this our prayer.

Amen.

GRACE CHURCH GOALS

YOUTH MINISTRY - Re-envision Grace's program for the youth of the parish and the greater New Bedford community and develop an overarching framework for growth and maintenance of the program. This includes: 1) to hire and continuously fund the position of a full time Assistant Rector/Curate with oversight of the program; 2) identify appropriate structure for the program and provide appropriate resources to support it; 3) ensure an appropriate number of program mentors and succession planning for their replacement; and 4) support the growth of our youth outreach activities and involvement in the life of our parish.

INCORPORATION - Increase the involvement of all parishioners in Grace's programs by mentoring their interests and strengths. Continue to grow a new members program that welcomes all and provides avenues for their involvement in the richness of life of the parish community. Develop offerings representative of the diversity of the greater New Bedford community. Improve communication of the parish's organizational structure and needs in all areas including worship, formation, music and outreach, in order to support increased involvement by all.

OUTREACH/MISSION - Expand services and support for the local community and the world as a whole by nurturing the body, mind and soul. Open our hearts and minds to opportunities to continuously fulfill the needs of those who are vulnerable or on the fringes of our society and nurture programs of support. Support and grow, with our time, talents and treasures, existing programs that assist those in need.

FACILITIES - Continue to make capital improvements to provide a safe, secure and efficient environment within and outside of our church buildings for the use of the parish and the community at large. Make major repairs and raise funding for the projects' completion. Develop an ongoing maintenance plan for church facilities in order to conscientiously budget for work required over the coming years. Recognizing Grace's unique position in the community, ensure that our facilities are available, for generations to come, for worship, formation, outreach/mission programs, fellowship, and general use by the Greater New Bedford community.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY — Concentrate on bringing our operational expenses in line with our income without a disproportionate reliance on non-operational funds. Better educate ourselves on the church's budget and accounts in order to bring about an improved understanding of the financial resources required to support a congregation with a commitment to its worship and formation programs as well as the needs of those we serve in the community and beyond. Promote discussion of our Endowment and how it can be grown and used to support our ongoing needs.

PAROCHIAL STATISTICS

Baptized Members: **648**Confirmation/Reception: **0**Church School Enrollment: **23**Communicants: **486**Baptisms: **3**Youth Group: **14**

REGISTER OF CHURCH SERVICES

Holy Eucharist: Sundays: 54 in-person/50 virtual Weekdays: 3 in-person/2 virtual

Private: 5 in-person

Other Services: 1 in-person/8 virtual Marriages: 0 Burials: 20 in-person

Total Services: 83 in-person/60 virtual (total of 143)

Average Attendance: Saturday / Sunday Services: 75 Wednesday Morning Services: 0

THE VESTRY 2021

Senior Warden......Jean Pitcairn
Junior Warden......Charles Green
Treasurer.....Sharlene Begley
Assistant Treasurer.....Pam Mello
Clerk......Betsy Pye

Vestrypersons

Term expires 2022: Travis Bowie, Rob DaSilva, Maureen Decker Term expires 2023: Cheryl Gammel, James Doe, Beth Sharp-McKay, Lisa Thibeault Term expires 2024: Sean Corwin, David King, Eric Jaikes, Nadine Gomes

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Christopher R. Morck, Rector The Rev. Melissa Howell, Curate Brian Roderick, Director of Music Katie Brengle, Parish Administrator

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 25, 2021

Conducted via Zoom

Call to Order and Prayer

Recognizing the year of loss, The Rev. Chris Morck and The Rev. Melissa Howell opened the meeting with a reading of The Litany of Remembrance.

Refer to the Warrant

The warrant, which had been posted on the doors of the church and published in the e-news and on the website, was referred to but not read aloud. Chris asked Betsy Pye, Clerk, if there was a quorum; yes.

Approve the Minutes of the Previous Annual Meeting

Chris asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on February 9, 2020: Moved, Seconded, Approved (MSA)

Nominating Committee Report

Chris Morck announced the nominees for officer positions and vestry, referring meeting attendees to Page 7 of the Annual Report. Chris asked if there were any nominations from the floor; there being none, he asked for a motion to accept the nominations: **MSA**.

Recognition of Retiring Vestry and Officers

Chris Morck and Senior Warden Jean Pitcairn thanked the outgoing Vestry members, Roberta Igler, Kathy Ferreira, Judy Knox, and Dana Sargent, for their service to Grace.

Commissioning of the Vestry

The new and current Vestry members were commissioned by Rector Chris Morck.

Annual Report

Chris Morck referred all to the Annual Report, which had been sent out electronically, and asked for any additional reports.

Junior Warden Charlie Green offered some highlights of 2020, adding that, while Zoom is a blessing, and easier than using a microphone, he misses the food and fellowship of Annual Meetings.

In 2020 the bell structure was maintained, and a new computer system now controls the bells. The kitchen exhaust hood was improved, with the wood supports removed and replaced with stainless steel. The boiler has been maintained, for the first time since it was installed, and a large expansion tank replaced. Sprinkler system pipes that had rusted through are being replaced with galvanized pipes as needed.

Charlie thanked Len Boyce for being the "boots on the ground." Last March, before the shutdown, Grace Church hired a professional cleaning service and is in the process of hiring a Facilities Manager. In the meantime, Len stepped up. Thank you!

Stewardship Campaign chair Beth announced that, despite the pandemic, Grace is thriving. To date, the Stewardship Campaign has raised \$238,000 and that is a testament to the strength of our parish, its caring for one another and the community.

Treasurer Sharlene Begley reviewed the high points of the financial reports, noting that, as is to be expected, plate collections are down, but the pledges and unrestricted miscellaneous contributions are up. Sharlene pointed out that Grace received \$43,698 income from a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan; without it, Grace would have been \$36,000 in the hole.

On the expense side, there were savings due to the pandemic: with building and grounds use minimized, costs were down and education ministry expenses were minimal.

Sharlene is overwhelmed by the continued, generous support for the Community Breakfast, Martha's Pantry, and Laundry Love.

Sharlene invited questions: Asked if Grace would be applying for the second round of PPP funds, she replied no, Grace is not eligible. Asked if Grace would use employee tax credits, Sharlene replied that she was not sure, but would look into it. Sharlene assured all that the Annual Meeting is not the only opportunity to ask questions – she and Assistant Treasurer Pam Mello are available through email and telephone.

Sharlene asked for a motion to accept the Annual Report with Budget: MSA.

Feedback: Chris Morck mentioned that a few times, during pandemic Town Hall Zoom events, the gatherings had the nature of a conversation rather than that of an Annual Meeting. He invited attendees to share feedback.

Travis Bowie offered an update on Laundry Love: the committee has met twice and is working on a pilot program to distribute laundry cards to guests at Martha's Pantry. They will see how that works before expanding the trial.

Chris mentioned that the Vestry meets on Zoom every month, and, while there is no in-person worship yet, the ministries of Grace have kept going, adapting as needed to a pass-through window for Community Breakfast and Food Pantry distribution. While it was inactive, Laundry Love donated its supplies for Food Pantry guests.

Paula Cabral asked how to properly grieve for the parishioners we have lost this year; is there a

plan for when we get back together? Chris replied that there is no specific plan yet because there is no plan to re-open yet. As the pandemic winds down, and the weather improves, we may have a clearer sense of things. In the meantime, Chris can provide resources if that would be helpful. When we are able, services will be offered for Diana Ukleja and others.

Priscilla Guillemette asked if it was up to the Diocese to decide when we can get back together – some churches are already open for a minimal number of people. Chris replied that the Diocese strongly discourages opening. When Grace does get the green light, we will consider our strategy for re-opening. Grace has a 40-page re-gathering plan that has been approved by the Diocese; on paper, all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed. Chris added that the Governor's exemption for houses of worship was to avoid a legal issue, it had nothing to do with safety.

Jean Pitcairn added that it will not just be a case of vaccinated v. not vaccinated; she sees, in her work life, the public health responsibility of making these decisions. Even if we can gather, we must take care of each person. We have waited this long; a little more patience will go a long way.

Gerry Lopes suggested that monthly updates on re-gathering might be helpful; with summer coming, perhaps we could make plans for outdoor services?

Zelinda Douhan expressed deep gratitude for all who are carrying on through this difficult time.

Chris Morck reported that as many as 40 parishioners are without internet access and cannot join in virtual services. The Grace Cares effort is reaching out to those who want to keep in touch; please let us know if anyone needs a call. Sunday services will continue to be live streamed; the audio system has been rebuilt and is a great improvement.

Chris encouraged everyone to think about what we will be able to do as the weather warms; he is looking forward to resuming small groups. Please forward your specific feedback regarding groups and re-gathering to Jean Pitcairn. Chris thanked all who attended this virtual Annual Meeting and stated that it will be glorious to re-gather, so we can acknowledge our losses and celebrate our return.

Closing Prayer

Chris Morck offered a prayer of thanks.

Motion to Adjourn

Chris asked for a motion to adjourn at 12:48 PM. MSA

Respectfully submitted, Betsy Pye, Clerk

2022 NOMINATION SLATE

Officers

Senior Warden Jean Pitcairn
Junior Warden Charlie Green
Treasurer Sharlene Begley
Assistant Treasurer Karen Maciulewicz

Clerk Sean Corwin

3 Year Vestry Term, 2022-2025 (four)

- 1. Kathy Ferreira
- 2. Roberta Igler
- 3. Andy Sylvia
- 4. Andrea Medeiros

2 Year Vestry Term, present-2024 (one)

1. Pam McNamara

Convention Delegates (two)

- 1. Anne Gundersen
- 2. Allen Decker

Convention Alternates (two)

- 1. Beth Sharp McKay
- 2. Billy Boyce

Deanery Representatives (five)

- 1. Charlene Ryder
- 2. Mike Goulart
- 3. Ryan Shea
- 4. John Evans

5.

Episcopal City Mission Representatives (two)

- 1. Roberta Igler
- 2.

Inter-Church Council (one)

1. Eric Jaikes

Teller (one)

1. Maureen Decker

RECTOR 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-19, 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-19 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 +

CURATE 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

Please see Charlene Ryder's report on the parish's ministry with families of young children this year. We continue to reach out and stay connected to families in this challenging time. Charlene 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 †

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

In thinking about the past year as our Grace Community I am struck by opposing emotions and thoughts. We are experiencing significant social and emotional strains that all too often boarder on true trauma. And for many of us there has also been real trauma: illness, loss of loved ones that we cannot bear witness to, grief, loss of many things both physical and

emotional, loss of freedoms, and more. And we are all facing severe challenges, some of which we have been able to overcome or live with/through, and some of which we have not. We talk about resilience, strength-building, and courage, as they become cultivated because of pandemic burdens. All of this feels dark and hard because it is.

But there is also so much gratitude for the blessings of our lives. For so many of us, including me, our Grace Community is the anchor that helps bring life into focus and perspective. As we returned to in-person worship, it felt like small breaths of life were returning and reimagining how we could reconnect and be strong together again. For these glimmers of hope, there is much gratitude.

Yet here we are again in suspended virtual worship and community. This feels disappointing, while it remains the correct path at this time. It is a setback and leaves us once again less connected, waiting patiently for our time together to return.

The call from our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, to walk the way of love resonates even more in this time. The love that Bishop Curry speaks of is that love of God and Christ that unites us, makes us stronger, and provides a constant and unending spark of light in this darkness. Amanda Gorman, the Poet Laureate, and presenter at President Biden's Inauguration, wrote recently, "...Yet fear can be love trying its best in the dark." As we worry about all things in our lives - where we are going, what will it look like, how will church be now and, in the future, and how will we survive as a church - I believe that Bishop Curry's, Amanda Gorman's, and the Grace Community's view of love are all guiding forces in the dark.

I would be less than transparent if I said I do not worry about the way forward and worry for our community that feels disconnected. Just as much as I worry for our clergy, who continue to lead with great fortitude, despite the strain it continues to place on them. Yet, there is also a great deal of hope for the way forward because so many of us have stepped up to make virtual worship a reality, to welcome and incorporate and mentor a Curate, to help us celebrate Christmas together, to feed the community around us, to minister to each other as the opportunities arise. Again, referring to Amanda Gorman, "...Even as we've grieved, we've grown; even fatigued, we've found that this hill we climb is one we must mount together. We are battered but bolder, worn but wiser. I'm not telling you to *not* be tired or afraid. If anything, the very fact that we're weary means we are, by definition, changed; we are brave enough to listen to, and learn from, our fear. This time will be different because this time we'll be different. We already are."

As a final note, what I would like to ask of each one of us is to imagine how in the next year we can find our connections again. Please reach out to the Vestry and Senior Leadership with ideas on ways we can be together. We can help each other learn to navigate the world in front of us. We need each other and we need to know how we can be present for each other. It is uncharted waters, and yet we are so blessed to have our community at Grace. I am so blessed

to serve with the People of Grace. The light in our dark is the hope of being present together. We are blessed and grateful for our clergy, our community, our resources, and for a God that loves us and guides us with the strength of the Holy spirit.

Blessings and Gratitude as we go forward.

Jean Pitcairn, Senior Warden

HIGHLIGHTS OF VESTRY ACTIONS

In addition to approval of minutes of prior meetings, in 2021 the Vestry voted:

January 27, 2021

- to approve the 2021 Slate of Nominations, amended to fill vacancies
- to approve the date and time for the Annual Meeting for Sunday, February 28 at 11:30
- to accept the Safe Church policy for the Protection of Children and Youth
- to approve expenditure of limited amounts of ministry funds for the following:

Ministry Fund	Total Max Expenditure Amount for 2021	
Laundry Love	\$10,000.00	
Community Breakfast	\$ 6,000.00	
Martha's Pantry	\$13,000.00	
Organist Continuing Education	Up to the balance in the account	
Youth Program	Up to the balance in the account	
Outreach	\$ 800.00	
Outreach-New Initiatives	\$ 2,500.00	
Scholarships	Up to the balance in the account	
Library	Up to the balance in the account	
Altar Guild	\$ 1,000.00	

February 24, 2021

No other votes were taken.

March 24, 2021

- to agree to a 50/50 cost sharing of a \$16,000.00 payroll overpayment
- to authorize the Rector, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to set up a payment plan for repayment of the remaining \$8,000.00 of the overpayment

April 28, 2021

• accept the 2020 Parochial Report

May 26, 2021

No other votes were taken.

June 30, 2021

No other votes were taken.

August 25, 2021

• to approve budget overruns, as follows:

Category	Budget Amount	Overage Amount
Supply Clergy	\$600.00	\$1,200.00
Rectory Water	\$600.00	\$1,200.00

September 29, 2021

- to approve a **Motion of Gratitude** for Len Boyce: The vestry of Grace Episcopal Church, New Bedford, MA, expresses its deep gratitude for the ministry of Len Boyce as Interim Facilities Manager for the last year-and-a-half. Since March 2020, Len has worked tirelessly to keep Grace Church running smoothly in this newly crafted position while collaborating with our Junior Warden and Grace's staff and volunteers. He also has facilitated a seamless transition as he accompanies Grace's new Facilities Manager. We are profoundly grateful for Len's service to our community in this capacity and for his continued ministry within our parish in many other ways.
- to approve budget overrun, as follows:

Category	Budget Amount	Overage Amount
Rectory Electric	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.00

• to accept the \$5,000.00 grant by St. Aiden's Chapel and designate \$2,500.00 to Outreach Fund and \$2,500.00 to Pastoral Leadership fund

October 27, 2021

Meeting cancelled due to storm.

November 17, 2021

to approve budget overrun, as follows:

Category	Budget Amount	Overage Amount
Rector Pension	\$17,097.00	\$20,000.00
Supply Clergy	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,600.00

- to allocate \$62,904.26 income in excess of expenses as follows: \$15,000.00 to the Building Fund and \$47,904.26 to the Pastoral Leadership Fund.
- to approve Vestry Responses to the 2020 Audit Recommendations

- to approve the proposed 2022 Operating Budget, as amended
- to accept a gift in the amount of \$5,000.00 from the Karina Foundation, to be deposited in the Unrestricted Endowment Fund

December 15, 2021

No other votes were taken.

E-Votes in 2021:

On December 8, 2021 the Vestry voted electronically on the following three motions:

- to approve the 2022 Housing Allowance for Melissa Howell
- to set Sunday, February 13, 2022 as the date for the Annual Meeting
- to approve Terry Robinson as Grace Church auditor for 2022

ALTAR GUILD

The Mission of the Grace Church Altar Guild is:

To prepare for the worship in the Church as directed by the clergy; to provide for suitable furnishing and decoration of the Altar, and to take due and reverent care of its appointments, and to care for the font.

As a sacristan and member of the Altar Guild you will learn the names of the many vessels, paraments, and linens for use at all services. You will be trained to set-up all vessels and linens used during services.

Our current sacristans are Jean Brown, Jerré Croteau, Norma Dyer, Judy Knox, Gerry Lopes, Janet Miranda, and Charlene Ryder.

We welcome Blinn Dorsey as a sacristan on the Altar Guild.

If you are interested in this ministry, please contact Charlene Ryder or the Rector.

Respectfully submitted, Charlene Ryder, Sacristan

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

We began our 2021 church school year continuing to face the many challenges of the pandemic.

We continued to offer online church school classes through zoom. We shared stories, offered church school lessons, and played interactive games.

In September, the church school hosted an outside Sundae Sunday event for all. We made fairy houses and delivered them to our neighbors and friends in the neighborhood of Grace. The children made wooden creche sets. This was a wonderful experience. Andrea taught the children how to make origami crafts.

Our team of teachers includes Courtney Botelho, Jessica Cabral, Nadine Gomes, Andrea Medeiros, Erin Mingola, Claire Morck, Isabel Morck, Charlene Ryder, and Pamela Souza who are always available and ready to assist in any way with our Children's Ministry.

Respectively submitted, Charlene N. Ryder, Coordinator

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

The Community Breakfast Program provides a hot breakfast to the homeless and needy in the New Bedford community every Sunday morning. This breakfast is the only free community meal available on Sunday mornings and we typically serve 50 to 70 people each week in a "normal year".

COVID-19 HURDLES CONTINUED

We were fortunate to continue serving Community Breakfast despite state-wide shutdowns and COVID-19 restrictions, largely due to strict adherence to safety protocols and the creative construction of the "take-out" window in 2020. Throughout this unsettling time, our guests received a hot meal, dessert, snacks (i.e., granola bars, fruit cups, raisins, fresh fruit when available), yogurt, coffee, and a loaf of bread. During inclement weather, attendance was slightly lower since guests were required to eat outside or bring the meal to their cars or homes.

Safety Protocols

Community Breakfast volunteers wore masks and gloves, and we provided a mask to guests when possible. The glass pane at the takeout window was low enough to provide a barrier

between volunteers and guests but high enough to distribute the meals. At least one volunteer was positioned outside to help guests maintain social distancing and to provide an opportunity to chat with anyone seeking help. Five to seven volunteers worked inside on a typical Sunday while three to four volunteers prepped the food on Saturdays.

The Team A/Team B approach has been successful as a means of ensuring that if volunteers from one team were exposed to COVID-19, the other team could step in and provide Breakfast. Each team worked a three-week rotation, allowing for isolation time if one team was exposed. Fortunately, we did not require any full-team replacements in 2021.

In the fall, the Diocese issued a directive suggesting that only fully vaccinated volunteers work with the vulnerable populations we serve. Team A lost two team members and is actively recruiting for additional volunteers.

Cost Impact

The "take-out" format continues to be more costly than our communal indoor gatherings due to the increased use of disposable products such as meal containers, condiment packets, and Ziplock bags. Whenever possible, we have purchased cardboard take-away trays and tried to limit the use of disposables. We have also encountered shortages of certain items since supplies are limited and restaurants have been using more take-out items.

PROVIDING FELLOWSHIP FROM A DISTANCE

While many of us felt increased stress and isolation as COVID-19 stubbornly remained with us, our Breakfast guests continued to face challenges in finding employment, safe housing, adequate food, and social connection. Along with a meal, we strive to provide a friendly smile, a conversation (from a safe distance), and information on social services in the area. It is striking to see how a simple gesture such as offering a pair of gloves in the winter, an extra water bottle in the summer, or asking someone his/her name can transform an interaction. With God's grace, we endeavor to bring that light each Sunday as we serve a hot meal.

Winter Coat Giveaway – Boy Scouts

In November, Colby Blais and his Boy Scout troop set up a walk-through "shop" outside during the breakfast. The Scouts were prepared with masks, gloves and sanitizer and used metal rolling racks and tables, that could be wiped down after customers collected free coats, socks, hats, scarves, gloves, and other items.

Christmas Gift Bags – Youth Group

At Christmas time, the Community Breakfast volunteers handed out gift bags assembled by the Grace Youth Group. The gift bags contained toiletry kits, socks, hats, hand warmers, and a Dunkin Donuts gift card.

Miscellaneous

Throughout the year, Grace parishioners were generous in providing donations such as socks, new hats and gloves, outerwear, personal hygiene, and other items which the volunteers distributed on an as-needed basis.

FUND RECEIPTS

The Community Breakfast Fund received a total of **\$8,161.50** in receipts as of December 6, 2021. A more complete breakdown of grants and individual donations will follow; however, below are grant highlights:

- Case House grant of \$5,500: These funds were released by the Diocese in late December and are not included in the total above.
- Inter City Grant from City of New Bedford \$1,000
- Community Foundation Southcoast Emergency Response Fund \$3,000
- Grant from the Freemasons \$1,700

SUMMARY

The Community Breakfast Team is grateful for the support of the vestry, our parish, the greater community, and the individual contributions that so many have made to ensure we are able to keep serving on Sundays. Our doors may be temporarily closed but our hearts are open. And, it is our sincere hope, through God's blessings, that we will continue to do our Lord's work again in 2022, which is evident in the Gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 25:35 ESV

For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

With Sincere Gratitude, Community Breakfast Team

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Of Grace Episcopal Church, New Bedford

Grace Episcopal ECW members gather together at the James Arnold Mansion four times a year (March, May, October, and December) for a luncheon, business meeting, and speaker. All women are welcome to attend. We are a community of women who give, care, and share God's love through mission and ministry. We are part of the National ECW who are present throughout the country. Due to the Pandemic, we were only able to gather together for our December meeting during the 2021 year. This was approved by our Rector Christopher Morck. I am happy to report that we have gained four new members this year.

We are blessed to receive disbursements from restricted endowment funds for ECW to carry on our missions and ministries. This allows us to support our five fields of service.

Our 2021 distributions were as follows:

1. Parish

Community Breakfast Martha's Pantry Grace Church Restoration Rector's Discretionary Fund

2. Community

Neediest Families Fund Southcoast Breast Care Humane Society Interchurch Council

3. Diocese

Episcopal Diocese of Ma. Climate Fund

4. Nation

Rosebud Reservation National ECW

5. World

St. Margaret's of Haiti Episcopal Relief and Development (pair of goats and flock of chickens)

Currently, the following serve as officers:

President - Priscilla Guillemette
Vice President - open
Secretary - Janice Baker
Assistant Secretary - Louise Kelly
Treasurer - Judy Knox
Assistant Treasurer - Harriet Shaw
Sunshine - Jeanne Greenhalgh
Devotions - Gwen Skinner
Council of Women's Organizations - open

Respectfully submitted, Priscilla Guillemette, President

EUCHARISTIC VISITORS

Prior to the Pandemic, Chris, our Rector, and the congregation sent us forth on our Eucharistic visitations saying "I send you forth bearing these holy gifts; that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's Body and Blood. We who are many are one body because we all share one bread, one cup." This takes place at the altar prior to the post communion prayer as the Eucharistic Visitors are handed the Consecrated Elements by the Celebrant.

Our Eucharistic Visitors are licensed and trained by the Diocese of Massachusetts and take the Consecrated Elements following a Celebration of the Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present. Our licensed Eucharistic Visitors are Louise Kelly, Pauline Roderiques, Charlene Ryder, and Joan Swain. Blinn Dorsey and Memory Holloway will be joining our ministry once they are trained through the Diocese.

In 2021, with many restrictions and social distancing in place, we were able to take communion out to five parishioners who were dying or homebound.

Ministration at the Time of Death, Funeral Services, and Cemetery Committals were offered during 2021 for twenty members and friends of our parish family, including Claire Driesen, Durward Fowle, Helen Mimi Allen, Alfred Smialek, Linda Gaudet, Roger Silva, Dennis Beck II, Elizabeth Simpkin, Trefton Soucy Jr., Kenneth Howes, Peter Whelan, Steven Eaton, Barry Connelly, Katherine Darmofal, George Smith, Franklin Hobbs III, Diana Ukleja, Richard Cormier, Lois Ainsley, and James Lacerda. May the souls of God's faithful servants departed rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon them.

It is a joy for all of us to share the Eucharist with our shut-ins. If you know someone who could benefit from this ministry, please let us know so we can add them to our list by contacting Charlene or our Rector.

Respectfully submitted, Charlene N. Ryder, Coordinator

LAUNDRY LOVE

Laundry Love Community Outreach, which serves the low income and homeless in the New Bedford area, is now operating from Martha's Pantry at Grace Church.

When the pandemic put an end to holding Laundry Love at EZ Clean Laundromat, the volunteers were devastated. We didn't know how to respond to the need. As time went on and

Covid-19 continued to be a threat, we decided to re-envision Laundry Love in a safe location, using laundry cards. The new approach has been slow, but numbers of cards used is growing. The last Wednesday of the month, a LL volunteer offers laundry cards to guests who come for food. The cards are for use at the EZ Clean Laundry Center on the corner of Summer and Kempton St. (our former location). Guests are asked if they have washers or use a laundromat. If they use a laundromat, a \$20 laundry card is offered to them. Numbers of families asking for cards has fluctuated but 30 cards were asked for in December. Families are returning monthly for cards. They thank us, telling us how much they depend on the service.

The Laundry Love program receives no financial support from Grace Church, but we are grateful for the continued support of parishioners and others who donate. In 2021 donations were \$1,283.00.

Formerly, the money expended at the EZ Clean Laundromat averaged 52 guests a month, doing 96 loads of laundry at a cost of \$562 for the washes, with an estimate of \$52 for supplies, supported by 24 hours of volunteer effort.

Since our format has changed, we ended the year having spent \$4,400 on laundry cards. The missing component in our new location and format is the absence of social interaction with the guests and families we met. We grieve the loss and look forward to finding new ways to rekindle this missing link.

Thank you to the volunteers and parishioners who have offered help. They include Pat Fowle, Jim Parker, Pam McNamara, and Judy and Harold Isaksen.

Travis Bowie & Geraldine Perry-Lopes Co-Chairs

LAY LITURGICAL MINISTER & ACOLYTE, USHERS & GREETERS GUILDS

It has been a challenging year for our guild. The year started with only virtual worship with few Lay Ministers assigned to services because of the exigencies of the pandemic. As summer approached and it seemed that we might be able to reintroduce some form of in-person worship, we initially began with an outside service, weather permitting, in the lower parking lot below the Wingate Garden. Those Usher-Lectors who normally served at the Saturday 5pm service were reactivated to help with set up and seating for the outside service. In addition, virtual broadcast of Sunday morning services continued throughout the summer months (and

still continues to this day). Our Cantors doubled as Lectors and Subdeacons continued to be scheduled each Sunday.

With the advent of the new program year, it was decided to begin in-person services for Saturday and Sunday morning, with very strict guidelines implemented. At first Congregants were required to sign up ahead of time, if they wished to attend a service, and there was assigned seating. Masks were (and still are) mandatory, and six-foot spaces between pods was strictly enforced, as well as twenty-foot spaces between Cantors and other ministers. This was facilitated by using the Cary altar allowing spatial issues to be safe. Because of the reopening of the church for limited attendance, four Ushers and Greeters, two of whose guilds had been amalgamated into one, were scheduled each week in order to guide the parishioners into these new protocols and requirements.

In addition, Acolytes were canvassed to see if either they or their parents felt safe enough to allow them to serve. The majority were willing to return to duty, and so one Acolyte was assigned per week to be included in the sanctuary party. Lectors were also canvassed, and many agreed to be scheduled. They sat within their own pods during the service and come up to read.

Eucharistic Ministers were not reactivated, as Holy Communion was only allowed in one species, so that chalice bearers were not needed, and the Subdeacon could distribute communion on those occasions when there was only one clergy present. However, some Eucharistic Ministers are also Lectors so that they were still able to serve in that capacity.

There then was a movement to revive some of the additional pomp that usually accompanied the Christmas Eve services and the Festival of Lights. For these we returned to the High Altar and worked out safe seating for the additional ministers that were scheduled. Acolytes who were siblings or usually sat together in the same pods when attending service, were scheduled at the same time so that seating in pods in the sanctuary was possible. Also, the twenty-foot restriction between singers had been rescinded, and congregational singing (though masked) had been reinstituted.

At the same time Covid-19 cases began to resurge, and in January, we have temporarily discontinued in-person service. Scheduled Usher-Greeters have been temporarily excused from service, Lectors and Acolytes will still serve at the virtual services, with additional spatial-separation requirements.

The reactivated Lay Ministers include four Subdeacons, fifteen Lectors (some of whom are also Ushers, Acolytes, or Eucharistic Ministers), fifteen active Acolytes (out of 30), and twenty active Usher-Greeters. The current total of active Lay Ministers (some of whom are in multiple categories, but only counted as one) is 40.

The willingness of all our Lay Ministers to help the clergy and guide our Parish Family in their

worship in this time of crisis and pandemic is greatly appreciated by all.

Respectfully submitted: Jerré Croteau, Verger Director of Liturgical Ministries

AUDIO/VISUAL TECHNOLOGY GUILD

2021 was the second year of the audio-visual ministry of Grace Episcopal Church. We continue to believe this ministry is a hybrid of in-reach, outreach, and evangelism.

The ministry team has faithfully and diligently ensured live streams of all Sunday services were available both on YouTube and Facebook. In addition to regular worship services, special services and occasions were streamed this year including the Ordination of Rev. Melissa Howell, Bishop Gayle's remarks on the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, reading of the Holy Week Passion, Recounting of the Easter Morning Story, and much more. We also featured new drone footage of Grace Church in our Easter Sunday Festival Eucharist.

We sometimes risk sounding like the ramblings of St. Paul with phrases like, "We never cease to give thanks for you!" But alas, it is true! We cannot express our deepest thanks and the overwhelming gratitude of our parish for this ministry.

In responses to a parish-wide survey, anonymous praises for the live streaming team include the following:

- "I love the quality of the sound & visuals."
- "We think it's a great way to stay connected."
- "Online services have been great for when I cannot attend. I commend the videographer's expertise and dedication."
- "Personally, being able to participate in the live stream service really helped me get through the pandemic. I needed to feel some normalcy and being able to see the church and the clergy and to pray in Grace was a gift. It was comforting to see church members comments, to pray for birthdays, anniversaries, the sick, and those who died. On Christmas Eve, our family was quarantined and could not be together. So, we watched the service together in our separate homes. And yet we still could feel the Joy of Christmas as a family. I'm very happy that the live stream will continue because if I'm unable to physically be at church, I know I can still be part of Grace."

In a season of life that has created so much loneliness, Grace's A/V ministry has kept people connected, engaged, and full of hope! What a ministry! What a gift!

Some highlights of our online presence this year include the following:

- 3,642 views in 2021 on YouTube
- We had a number of views from Italy and Germany
- Our Facebook page reached 13,911 people in 2021
- Of our 530 followers of Facebook, 72.9% identified as female and 31.6% identified as over age 65

We are grateful to the guild of volunteers who have stepped up to help plan, execute, and operate our installed live stream system. Volunteers include the following:

Brendon Botelho Rev. Chris Morck
Courtney Botelho-Grime Rev. Melissa Howell

William Boyce Michelle Luth Seaver Boyce Beth Sharp Gerald Croteau Andy Sylvia

Patrick Grime Alex Howell

We extend deep gratitude to Mr. Gerald Croteau for his effortless assistance in preparing separate leaflets, designed for online publication; and to Rev. Melissa and Katie for their assistance in scheduling our live streams.

We also extend our greatest appreciation to the following individuals for their assistance in some of this year's special recordings/events:

Seth Baumgartner, William Boyce, Paula Cabral, Holly Cipriani, Jen Clarke, John Evans, Kathy Ferreira, Jean Pitcairn, Andrea Medeiros, Seaver Boyce, R.D. Singleton, Ronni Mak, Carissa Mak, Nadine Gomes, Gerry Lopes, Isabel Morck, Pam McNamara, Patricia Morck, Claire Morck, Louise Kelly, Cindy Shea, Allen Decker, Priscilla Guillemette, Chrissy Green, and Marilyn Saint-Aubin

MEMORIAL GIFTS FUND COMMITTEE

The Memorial Gifts Fund is a restricted fund consisting of donations given in memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving for a person or event and which have not been given for a specific project or ministry. The Committee receives requests for funds to be used for a specific purchase that would fall outside of budgeted expenditures. Committee members vote on a

request and then forward their recommendation to the Vestry. Our business is done by email and telephone.

We thank all those who have directed donations to the Memorial Gifts Fund in 2021. The pandemic has not slowed down the generosity of parishioners.

I thank all members of the Committee for their faithful stewardship and willingness to serve.

Respectfully submitted, Pauline Roderiques, Chair

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Grace Church is blessed to be in a unique position to offer scholarships to college students from the generous bequests of the Eccleston, Heptonstall, Holmes, Kenney, Menzer, Rapp, Robbins, Teves/Moreau, Tilton, Tripp and McKeachern families. These generous gifts and their prudent investments have enabled Grace Church to offer scholarships each year to assist our parishioners with their endeavors of higher education. The Grace Church Scholarship Committee is pleased to report that the following nine parishioners were awarded scholarships for the 2021-2022 school year:

Lindsey Bedard-Hofstra University
Alexia Blais-Johnson & 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

The Grace Church Scholarship Committee members: Colleen Cook, Rob DaSilva, Maureen Decker, Carole Johnson, Ann Kenney, and Kristen Morgan.

Respectfully submitted, Maureen V. Decker, Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP

Every Perfect Gift was this year's pledge campaign message. Although the campaign pledge giving was designated from September 25th through Sunday, October 24th we continued to receive pledges. Coronavirus continued to be part of our lives at Grace Church, but our dedication to our fellow parishioners and the ones we serve in the community is seen every day through our various ministries. We have asked God to give us strength and guide us to help one another through our perfect gifts knowing that He will provide for us if we trust and believe in Him.

Our ministries continued to serve those in need despite the Coronavirus keeping our doors closed for in-person services until July 4, 2021. Just like Martha's Pantry and Community Breakfast made modifications to their procedures to keep everyone safe in both 2020 and 2021, the pledge campaign needed to make changes to engage all the parishioners: those who attended in-person church services and those who continued online worshipping. We asked for everyone's participation in this year's campaign. We wanted the parishioners to reflect on the reasons for financially supporting Grace Church and the impact it has had on you and your family as well as on Grace's ministries. We received several responses and shared them with you in various ways (in the e-news via audio recording link, in Grace Notes, and in a reading during church services). The responses were very powerful and touching frequently echoing the true faith in giving financially to Grace Church and its ministries.

This year's extremely aggressive goal was to have 100% participation - in pledging (individuals, couples, or families who filled out a pledged card) for a total of \$250,000. As of January 23, 2022, we had received 122 pledges totaling \$228,991. On February 2, 2021, the number of pledging units was 137 for a total of \$235,558. Therefore, we received a smaller number of pledges and just over \$6500 less in total pledged compared to 2021 campaign. Currently, we have not met the goal of total amount pledged, but I have faith that the parishioners at Grace Church are devoted and dedicated to our ministries and will give generously and faithfully by offering *their perfect gifts*. Yes, we continue to be in a pandemic as well as economic hardships with inflation at its all-time high since the 1970s, but the people at Grace Church work side by side helping each other as well as helping others in the community through all challenging times.

The following chart represents the number of parishioners who increased their pledge, decreased their pledge, renewed their pledge or are new to pledging, and have not pledged:

2022 pledge campaign	Number of parishioners	Total amount of money
Increased their pledge	29	\$14,384
Decreased their pledge	8	\$2,570
New/Renewed pledge	13	\$17,530
No pledge in 2022, but	24	\$27,455
pledged in 2021		

To compare to 2021 pledge campaign, this year's campaign does have some positive outcomes. We had a similar amount of increase in parishioners' pledges, and the amount of decrease in pledges was reduced by \$3,000. However, the amount of money not pledged in 2022 but pledged in 2021 increased by \$6700. Finally, new parishioners and parishioners who renewed their pledge in 2022 was down by 9 people totaling \$12,000. Something to think about: if the 24 parishioners who pledged in 2021 but have not yet pledged for 2022 would make a pledge totaling \$27,455, then we would exceed our goal of \$250,000 by over \$6400. Overall, each of our parishioners' situations are different and may vary from year to year which leads to variances in our pledging habits. We are thankful to all of you for your continued commitment and the showing of support to one another.

Thank you to all who have pledged for 2022. For those who have not yet pledged, there is still time. Please prayerfully consider making your pledge today to support and expand the ministries here at Grace Church. Our 2022 goal is \$250,000 and with your consideration we could easily reach it.

Lastly, I would like to thank our rector, Rev. Chris Morck, our curate, Rev. Melissa Howell, and the committee members, Anne Gundersen, Ned Hines, Terri Nowell, and Robbie Watkins, for their dedication and conscientious work over the past year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Sharp-McKay Stewardship Commission Chairperson

TRUSTEES OF PARISH FUNDS

In 2021, the Trustees of Parish Funds met quarterly (via telephone conference call) to review quarterly performance reports, receive overall economy review information, market analysis and expectations (both domestic and international), consider investment recommendations from our portfolio investment advisors at US Trust (Bank of America), vote on specific buy/sell (rebalancing) recommendations and consider any other matters brought before us.

The timing of submitting this report was such that the year-end data for 2021 was not yet available from Bank of America/US Trust. We expect to receive the 2021 information at our first quarterly meeting of 2022 shortly before the Annual Meeting. As such, a report of the performance of the endowment accounts will be available for distribution and review in connection with the Annual Meeting and will be appended to this initial statement.

Our portfolio experienced its fourth year of investment in US Trust's socially responsible investing program (they call it Socially Innovative Investing (S2I), and it only invests in large capital domestic carbon-free companies).

While some 20% of the value of both the Unrestricted and Restricted accounts is specifically invested via S2I, approximately 20% of the remainder of both portfolios are invested in companies that would be considered ESG stocks (meaning Environmental, Social and Governance issues are factored into evaluating potential stocks in which to invest). The result is that approximately 40% of our total endowment is invested in socially responsible investments. Our involvement in the ESG analysis and the S2I program is principally thanks to consistent urging by the Rector and the Trustees' willingness to further diversify a portion of our holdings.

Our US Trust advisors have consistently commented that Grace Church was on the leading edge of their advisees "taking the leap" and that we have been reaping the benefits ever since. And they continue to be very positive about the S2I program. We are working towards practicing what we preach while remaining vigilant with our fiscal responsibility.

We continued to support the Finance Committee and the Vestry in their efforts to construct the Church budget by supplying comparisons of what the Unrestricted account's support to the operating budget would equal at annual rates ranging between 4% and 5% (with payments made monthly) both in gross amounts and net of bank fees. The rate currently continues at 5%.

As has been noted before, Grace Church is in an enviable position having an endowment of the size it does. We acknowledge the "push and pull" of our role and assure you that we take our responsibilities seriously, always with the best interests of the Church as a whole as our guide.

In regard to legacies, in December, a \$5,000 gift to the Unrestricted Account was gratefully received. Donations of legacies, particularly to the Unrestricted Account, are welcomed and can help ensure, along with prudent investing, the financial health of the parish.

Lastly, during the fourth quarter of 2021, the Trustees began the process of getting a fifth Trustee. This involved asking the Vestry to create an ad hoc committee to seek, review, and ultimately, recommend a candidate to the full Vestry for appointment to the Trustees. It is anticipated that the Vestry's appointment will occur in time for the Trustees' regular quarterly meeting in late April

Respectfully submitted this 18th day of January 2022.

TRUSTEES OF PARISH FUNDS

Allen D. Decker, Secretary Geraldine Perry-Lopes

William I. Reed Marcia Anselmo

YOUTH MINISTRY

Please see Curate Report.