

WARRANT

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Know all persons by these present
that the Annual Meeting of
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
NORWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS
will be held on
Sunday, January 28, 2024

The purpose of the meeting shall be to receive the Reports of the Officers and Organizations of the Parish; to elect Officers and Delegates for the terms specified for their offices as stated in the By-Laws of the Parish; and to conduct such other business as may lawfully come before this meeting. All baptized persons, sixteen (16) years of age or older, who acknowledge in writing the authority of the By-Laws of the Parish and who declares his or her intention to aid in maintaining public worship therein by regular attendance at such worship and who are contributors of record, are entitled to voice and vote.

Jon Grant
Senior Warden

David Button
Junior Warden

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Sunday, January 28, 2024

1. Opening Prayers
2. Welcome Words
3. Reading of the Warrant
4. Certification of a Quorum by Clerk of the Vestry
5. Review of Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting
6. Rector's Farewell Message
7. Senior Wardens' Report
8. Search Committee Report
9. Treasurer's Report for 2023
10. Presentation of Budget for 2024
11. Commissions and Organizations Reports
12. Questions from the parish
13. Thanks, Benediction and Adjournment

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MINUTES OF THE 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

Held on January 29, 2023

(Approval to be voted on at the Annual Meeting January 28, 2024)

Father John opened the meeting at 10:51 am with a Prayer.

Welcoming Words: Father John welcomed all in attendance. This year we are beyond what we were last year, having the meeting in the sanctuary without strict masking and distancing. It is good to be back together again.

Reading of the Warrant by Cathy Noble

Certification of a quorum by Cathy Noble with 33 in attendance well over the quorum of 18.

Review of the Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting: A motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Jon Grant, 2nd Karen Stanley. Unanimously Passed

Rector's Report: Father John read his report as the sermon at this morning's service.

Commissions and Organization Reports: A motion was made by Dorothy Sabourin, 2nd David Button that Senior and Junior Wardens reports be included with Commissions and Organization Reports and all accepted as a group. Unanimously Passed.

Treasurer's Report-Beth Gurney- We are financially doing ok at the end of 2022 considering we had to install a new boiler. We have been keeping expenses down. Our new secretary, Heather Belden has found ways to cut several costs. A motion was made by Carol Johnson, 2nd Eric Bedard. to accept the report as presented. Unanimously passed.

Budget 2023, Beth noted that some changes were made based on needs, also that pledges for 2023 are down. A motion was made by Jackie Bedard, 2nd Jon Grant to accept the 2023 budget as presented. Unanimously passed.

Nominating Committee Report: Katherine Wharton read the following candidates for vestry and related positions.

Assistant Treasurer: Leslie Grant, **Debbie Morton:** Outreach vestry member, **Open Vestry position:** Christina Meyers, **Senior Warden:** Jon Grant, **Investment Committee:** Eric Bedard to replace Jon Grant on the committee, **Deanery Delegate:** Sue Jarrell.

Election of Officers: A motion was made by John Stanley, 2nd Katherine Wharton to elect all persons as a slate. Unanimously Passed.

(Of note, at the next vestry meeting a motion will be made that Jon Grant as Senior Warden, cannot sign any checks that his wife Leslie Grant, assistant treasurer has also signed.)

Thank Yous: Thanks to the following people going out of their positions, Carolyn Escher, Assistant Treasurer, Sue Breen, Outreach vestry member, Katherine Wharton, Senior Warden, Debbie Terry, Archivist, and co-chair of Alter Guild. Congratulations to Roy McHoul our sexton for the past 22 years.

Adjournment: After a prayer from Father John, a motion was made by Jackie Bedard, 2nd Bob Parsons to adjourn the meeting at 11:19 am. The following coffee hour honored Roy's Retirement.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Noble
Vestry Clerk

SUMMARY OF 2023 VESTRY MEETING MINUTES

January

- Pledges for 2022 were greater than expected. We are in the black about \$5,000.
- Pledges for 2023 are down about \$8,000 from 2022
- Boy Scout Troop and Cub Scout Pack 49 will be meeting here. A motion was passed to approve Grace Episcopal church as a Charter for the Cub and BSA group.
- Annual meeting will honor Roy's retirement with an expanded coffee hour.

February

- Water seeping into Food Pantry area. Pioneer Basement has plugged suspected holes.
- Drop in Sunday School going well.
- Sue Cannon Scholarship Fund collected \$506.50. Winner of the 50-50 donated it to the fund. Souper Bowl of Caring for the Food Pantry collected \$354.61.
- Seder Dinner set for April 1 led by Rabbi Joiner.
- Seeking a sexton for Grace. A Norwood business ACC group will do a deep cleaning this month. Considering father daughter sextons, used by other churches with success.
Going forward Commission Reports will be combined and posted before the meeting to improve time spent on other projects. Updates as needed.

March

Easter Vigil will be at the Lutheran Church.

Official pledge total for 2023, 36 pledges and \$70,959.

- Discussion about Olivia Manson as Sexton, with her father, Scott available PRN. Reviewed how they both would be covered by our liability. Will clarify further with Olivia and Scott.
- Narthex area continues to be refreshed.
- Hopefully decreasing paper and printer use by using our prayer books instead of the entire service on the bulletin.

March 19, 2023 On line motion to move forward with the hire of Olivia and Scott Manson to be part time sexton(s) at Grace Church and incur additional costs for workers comp and liability. Olivia will be the primary sexton. Passed.

April

- Sunday School well attended during lent
- We need to vote on the Scholarship winner. Only one applicant.
- Father John and Jon following 91-page document on Father John's retirement and transition for the church. Jon following transition process and will meet with Cannon Rev. Kelly O'Connell next. Will also be looking into supply clergy.
- Olivia and Scott Manson have accepted our offer to be our Sexton(s), will start April 18.
- Olivia LeBlanc was awarded the Sue Cannon Scholarship. Vestry voted and passed to increase the scholarship to \$500.
- Discussed if we are ready to return to the altar for communion. Agreed to stay with our own cup and communion given at the bottom of the stairs for. Will revisit at some point.

- Discussed feedback on the new bulletin style. Concerned it is less welcoming. Cost savings not realized yet. New ribbons found to mark the prayer book pages. On expected large visitor days will print all prayers.
- Discussed moving Covenant Endowment to Capital Improvement account for annual funding. Motion passed to transfer \$928.51.

May

- Environmental Stewardship-plans to procure specific pollinator friendly plants for the food forest area of the property. Goal is to be an official Monarch waystation and serve as a model property for environmental awareness.
- Boy Scout Mark Nagram shared his Eagle Scout badge project.
- Vestry will meet with Rev, Cannon K. O'Connell May 22 via ZOOM to review options and choices we can make during the transition.
- Heather will be scheduling supply clergy. When no clergy is available Sunday Morning prayer will occur.
- Heather requests to work four hours a day Tuesday thru Thursday. She can accomplish more in 4hrs than working 3hrs four days a week. We agreed.
- After discussion a motion was made and passed to move \$15,000 of the undesignated funds in the present \$24,000 Book of Remembrance Fund to the general operating fund. Leaving \$9,000 in the Book of remembrance fund and helping our tight operating fund.

June

- First meeting after Father John's retirement.
- Our new boilers need servicing. Dave Button will make some contacts.
- One of our water heaters needs rewiring, electrician has been contacted.
- With the addition of a milkweed plant our garden qualifies us to be a Monarch Way Station.
- Making it smoother each Sunday with a different Eucharistic priest who don't know our church, a list of what to expect will be developed and sent to each before they come.
- Discussed interested and other possible members of the Search Committee. Tracey Johnson to be the vestry member of the committee.

On Line Voting, June 26, 2023 Motion was made and passed to continue with a single 9 AM service in the fall until a new rector is called to the parish.

July

- We will have a booth on Norwood Day, Sept 9th
- Five people, besides Tracey, have committed to being on the Search Committee seeking two people as alternates.
- Jon and Beth have met with the search business consultant to complete final report for the diocese.
- Mandatory inspection for the boilers was due. Dave got an estimate of \$4,000 for some necessary modifications. Original installer does not do maintenance. Will need written estimate.
- Several funds have been redirected to others where they can be better utilized. Will need monies set aside for the search committee costs, estimated around \$500 per year. Present sabbatical fund monies will be moved to Rector Search Fund.

August

- We now have 7 members of the Search committee. Will have them start meeting in the fall after summer vacations.
- Still searching for someone to do repairs and maintenance to boilers yearly. Need written quotes.
- Discussion about discontinuing paper cups/cruet to old method. Continued concerns about spreading germs. Will continue same for now.

September

- Search Committee-Eric Bedard and Tracey Johnson will be co-chairs. Vestry reviewed amended as needed and passed to send the charge to the committee.
- Boiler Modifications. Sinclair in Walpole can do yearly maintenance of our Royal McClain boilers. More information needed and other quotes to be explored.
- Beth and assistant treasurer team reviewed finances with the Diocesan financial person. We need to explore other fund-raising options.

October

- Search Committee- Steve Williams, from the Diocese, will be assisting the committee with the search process. Their process will be confidential after they receive the Charge from the Vestry.
- Motion passed to engage Sinclair for the annual maintenance as specified by Royal McClain, yearly cost \$588.
- Jon and Beth met with the Finance consultant from the diocese. Our finances are limited for choosing a new rector. Also found that the interest we have been getting from the Hastings Brown Fund is only if we have a full-time minister. Will consult with Rev. Canon Kelly to discuss options.

November 2, 2023-online meeting review related indications from Rev. Canon Kelly and financial recommendations. A motion was made, seconded and passed to vote for either collaboration with another church or search for our own as a 40% priest. Results, five members voted to search for our own priest, Two in favor of collaboration. Votes to search on our own for a 40% priest carried.

November

- Vestry met with Steve Williams, consultant and the Search Committee, to review the responsibilities for the Search Committee and for the Vestry. Jon Grant, Senior Warden gave “The Charge to the Search Committee to move forward to search for a new Minister for Grace Episcopal Church, this person will be a 40%-time priest”.
- All media sources have been notified of the tree sales starting this month. As well as Christmas Eve advertisement for Christmas Services
- In 2023 we had 36 pledges for a total of \$70,959. In 2024 we presently have 24 signed pledges for a total of \$74,220. There are 6 additional pledges not yet sent in, Estimated total \$81,970.
- A total of 2,350 *Bombas* socks have been delivered to several needy programs.
- Boiler expansion tank is leaking as noted by Sinclair, needs replacement to prevent flooding. Plus, some re-piping due to corrosion, and fittings on top of manifold. Motion passed to replace all that is needed for \$4,444.11.
- Christmas trees coming soon.
- There will be a 9 am prayer service on Sunday 12/24. Eucharist at 6 pm with music.

December

- Owner of Outrageous cookie company, has requested use of our kitchen. Several inspections have been done discovering problems mainly with the stove. Options were discussed to go ahead with repairs or replace the stove. Having a Commercial Kitchen Certification may give us more opportunities to rent it. Decided to have Familia Appliance Repair back to find possibility and cost of repair.
- Our new Regional Rev. Canon Greg Perez, in the place of Rev Canon Kelly, would like to visit and be the priest for a Sunday.
- A motion was made and passed to increase staff wages by 3% across the board in 2024. 2024 Budget reviewed and accepted.

RECTOR'S FAREWELL MESSAGE

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of our hearts, be right and acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock, and redeemer. Amen

Dear Grace Church Family Members,

I am writing to let you know that according to the Canons of the Episcopal Church, I must resign as rector at Grace Episcopal Church, Norwood when I reach the age of 72 on May 25th. Thus, my last day at Grace will be the Sunday after the Memorial Day weekend on Trinity Sunday, June 4, 2023, at a 10:30 Eucharist.

As I prepare to take leave of Grace, please know that I value the friendships and ministry, the joys and sorrows we have shared, and our growth in the love of Jesus. I must resign as Grace Church's rector, but I am not resigning my work as a priest, and I hope to continue, with God's grace, as an interim priest at parishes in the diocese going through transitions just as Grace is about to begin.

After leaving Grace Church on June 4, I want you to understand that I will no longer have a pastoral relationship with you. You will have a new pastor in your midst, and so it will no longer be my role to officiate at baptisms, weddings or funerals for members of Grace; that privilege will belong to the priest who comes after me. I will also take care not to talk about parish matters with you or parish leaders. After leaving, I will not post to Grace's social media sites.

In the coming weeks, we will have a chance to say goodbye to each other and to reflect on the ministry we have offered together in Christ's name in this place.

I know that you will offer the new priest your support, your encouragement, and your prayers as together you begin a new season of ministry. Please know of my prayers and gratitude for you and for the ministry we have shared.

Faithfully,
Fr. R. John Brockmann

SENIOR WARDEN'S MESSAGE

As we look forward to what 2024 holds in store for us, both personally and as a parish, it's also important to look back at 2023 to celebrate our successes and learn from the challenges. Grace Church had some of each last year, but I'm happy to say we made it through stronger than ever. None of them would have been possible without your support and participation, and for that I thank you.

There were many notable events throughout the course of the church year, both joyful and sorrowful, such as:

- We welcomed the Scouts to the church in February, after losing their home of many years at St. Catherines of Siena. The troops now have a home and bring energy and enthusiasm to the parish that is so very much appreciated.
- We said goodbye to our longtime sexton, Roy McHoul, who retired after many years of service, and welcomed our new sextons, Olivia and Scott Manson, in April. They stepped in and have done an incredible job of keeping the building clean, selflessly jumped in to assist the efforts of others without question and have shown their dedication in resolving several near catastrophes with skill and a smile.
- In April we participated in an educational and fun Seder Meal in conjunction with Rauch Israel. More than 30 gathered to enjoy traditional dishes, stories and smiles in Russell Hall.
- We held a successful Clean Up Day for the Church grounds just before Memorial Day, sprucing up the lawns, the food forest and the Memorial and Sunken Gardens. Thanks to all those parishioners who volunteered their time, including a notably energetic and tireless group of scouts who moved so many bags of leaves to the curb; it was a sight to behold.
- In June, we said goodbye to our beloved long-time rector, Father John Brockmann, with an appropriately festive and reflective party. We sent him off to retirement with some wonderful gifts and he didn't rest long. The next week he was off on a trip with his wife, enjoying his newfound freedom. He may be gone, but will not be forgotten.
- Our prized food forest produced such a bounty of apples of all different varieties that it inspired John and Karen Stanley to organize an 'Apple Bake Sale' in early fall. Parishioners and passers-by had the opportunity to purchase many wonderful apple treats and baked goods. It was so successful that we look forward to making it a tradition.
- Deb Morton, our Outreach Coordinator, continued the tradition started by Sue Breen of organizing the donation of 3000 pairs of *Bombas* socks and distributing them to several charitable organizations in our area. She did all this while recovering from foot surgery. Not even a walking boot and painkillers could keep her down!
- Our Search Committee has begun their important work to develop an understanding of what we as a parish are looking for in the next rector. They will be reaching out to all of us for our input; I'm curious and excited to learn from the process and support their efforts however possible.

- We had another very successful December tree sales season, thanks in very large part to the efforts of the Jordan family. We cannot thank them enough for all they do to make our largest annual fundraiser go so smoothly. Along with the Jordans were the volunteers who manned shifts in the corral, greeting our customers and making them feel welcome. Even with two Sunday washouts due to rain, we raised just over \$18,000.

I would be remiss if I did not wholeheartedly thank the members of the parish for their support as I've learned 'on the job' the many responsibilities of the Senior Warden. Not only was 2023 my first year as Warden, but it was also my first year on the vestry in any capacity. Talk about jumping in headfirst! I cannot tell you how much your support has meant to me; I pray I will be able to grow into the role in 2024 and live up to all the kindness and encouragement I have received.

While pondering what to write, I found a prayer that felt appropriate for our parish in 2024. I share it here so we can acknowledge the change our parish is going through and find some courage and peace for the days ahead.

Peace in Transition: God of comfort, in the midst of change, we seek your peace. Wrap your soothing embrace around us as we navigate this transition. Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change what we can, and the wisdom to discern the difference. Thank you for being our anchor in times of uncertainty. Amen.ⁱ

Here is to hope for the year ahead, and that we face it together.

Faithfully submitted,
Jonathon Grant, Senior Warden

ⁱ – From <https://strengthenprayer.com/prayers-for-accepting-change/>, #3

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

The Junior Warden would like to thank all the parishioners who stepped in on occasion to fix or adjust things in the church when the work description encompassed that of the Junior Warden who, for whatever reason, was not able to be present.

The Junior warden was mainly occupied with maintaining the new boilers. What this entails is finding an HVAC contractor who would perform the actual work and then shepherd the workmen inland out of the boiler room.

Additional tasks of the JW were handled by the Senior Warden as necessary such as installing the storm windows in the church.

The Book of Remembrance was sorely due for an update after several years of lying undisturbed in its home. The JW enlisted Andrew Jarrell (son of Richard and Susan), who diligently and beautifully added the names of those who passed to its pages. We thank him for his wonderful work.

Occasionally the JW had to remind users of the system alarm that when changing its state, namely Away to Off or Off to Away, select the new state first and then enter the PIN. The keypad should then display the desired state.

Before the Sunday service the JW moves the system's base station from the church to Heather's office so any sounds it emits won't disturb the worshippers.

Speaking (writing?) of which the JW attempts to be the first in the church to do various and sundry things like unlock doors, start the coffee maker, and check on the boilers. This is to observe the operation of the boilers is reasonable given the settings of the thermostats in the church. This is to fulfill a requirement of Weil McLain, the constructor of the boilers.

Submitted by,
David Button
Junior Warden

REPORT OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Rector Search Committee was formed in September 2023, following Father John Brockmann's retirement. The committee, based on Diocese/Vestry approval has begun the process of organizing information to be able to conduct the search process.

Members of the committee include:

Tracey Johnson - co-chair

Eric Bedard - co-chair

Peter Loescher

Laura Jordan

Gregory Cross

Heather Wiseheart

Sarah Malneritch

**Steve Williams - Diocese/Vestry approved Rector Search Consultant

A formal meeting schedule for 2024 is nearly complete, and work is underway. The committee will share regular updates with the parish throughout 2024.

Submitted by,
Eric Bedard & Tracey Johnson

Search Committee Prayer

The parish reads in unison at each Sunday Service

Almighty God, look graciously on the Grace Church Search Committee. Be with them and lead them in their efforts to find the next rector for our church. We ask your direction and guidance for those who shall choose our new spiritual leader, that our parish may receive an upright and faithful pastor who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries. Grant them perception, faithfulness, and joy so that your voice is heard in all their deliberations. Grant them also the desire and the ability to truly hear each other and those who have entrusted them with this process. Give them courage to respond and act as you lead them. Grant them the strength and endurance to persevere through the weeks and months ahead, no matter what may come.

We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2023

In June 2023, as the congregation said goodbye to Fr. John, the Treasury team embarked on a new journey with a Diocese appointed Business Consultant for our Transition Review. This consultant's appointment was to help us get our financial documentation in line with the Diocese' so we would have no issues when we were ready to begin our new Rector search.

This was a great learning opportunity for us. Our consultant poured through all our financials. The result was a few major changes and a few minor ones.

The largest change was to our Balance Sheet. Before this year, we utilized Insurance Value as the amount for our Fixed Assets. As the consultant explained, it was far better to use the town assessment. This change created a swing of nearly \$4.1M.

We also decided to implement the naming convention that the Diocese uses, so that we will be in line, not just for this Rector search, but any other request in the future. You will notice many lines zeroed out and a new line (containing an account number) in place.

Please see the attached "Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison" for a look at what the Balance Sheet looked like at the end of 2022 and the new format for the year ending 2023.

I am happy to sit with anyone who has questions regarding these changes, if you would like a better understanding. Please reach out to the office to schedule a time.

Submitted by,
Elizabeth Gurney

*See following files in Treasury Supplemental Insert:

(2023) Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
Standard Balance Sheet
Balance Sheet Previous Year Comparison
2024 Budget

ASSISTANT TREASURER REPORT

The assistant treasurer responsibilities were accomplished by the joint efforts of Leslie Grant, Carolyn Escher, and Karen Stanley. Grace Church is fortunate that Carolyn Escher continued to make sure our accounting is top notch, both on paper, and online through QuickBooks. Carolyn Escher and Karen Stanley jointly managed donations to the church, which are tracked with Faith Teams software. The treasury team which includes Beth Gurney (Treasurer) annually reviews the proposed budget and tracks all parish income and expenditures. Leslie Grant prepares checks for signature and ensures that financial questions are routed to the correct person on the financial team. We are thankful to our parish administrator, Heather Belden, for facilitating communication and ensuring we are able to address questions as they arise. Many thanks for everyone's hard work this year!

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Grant

HOSPITALITY/FELLOWSHIP REPORT

In the recent months, Coffee Hour has been available after the 9:00 AM service in the Fowler Room. Dave Button makes the most delicious coffee and it is available with a cup of juice if so desired and an array of treats. Coffee Hour is an opportunity to meet with friends to share the latest news! Our Supply Priests usually stay for Coffee Hour as well. We are looking forward to expanding Hospitality during the coming year to include more opportunities for fellowship. Stay tuned!

All will be well!

CAROL

aka Carol T. Johnson

HEALING MINISTRY REPORT

We continue to offer healing prayers one Sunday a month, typically the last Sunday of each month. We encourage all to come and pray with Cathy, Carol or myself. We are still using the prayer cord due to Covid concerns. We are hoping to pray with more of you this year.

In 2023, I created a Healing Ministry Reference Guide for Grace Church, which is held in the Church office for anyone to use. The guide outlines the process used at Grace Church, history of healing prayer, Bible passages, prayers, and references from other churches.

Respectfully submitted by,

Deb Morton

on behalf of the Healing Ministry Team

WORSHIP REPORT

This past year led to the retirement of Fr. John and the usage of supply priests from around the diocese. We are currently looking for a regular supply priest. Heather B, our Parish Admin, has keep the supply priests scheduled, so we have been blessed with a different perspective during the latter half of 2023. With the change in priests, we have been working to return to the consistent experience that was present before 2020- processing from the back of the church, the use of acolytes, etc. We have scaled back to one 9 AM service per Sunday, with morning prayer as a backup in case we have a supply scheduling concern. We had also condensed our Christmas programming to one Christmas Eve family service. As 2024 unfolds, the search committee will be working hard in our survey of the parish of the “new vision” for our next ideal rector.

Submitted by,
Tracey Johnson

SUNDAY SCHOOL REPORT

In June 2023 we completed the first year of Sunday School since Covid. We had 5 students who participated with us consistently, and a few more who joined us when they could.

The drop in aspect of the class seemed to work well for parents, so we decided to continue it into the next school year.

In September, we began the 2023-2024 school year.

Lessons are held every Sunday during the 9 service. We use the *Godly Play* program: *Godly Play* is a unique way to present Bible stories in a very simple, natural form with no bells or whistles that allows the child to find their own meaning.

We start our sessions reading a story from the Children's Bible that corresponds to the Gospel being heard by the adults. We then move onto our lesson. After, we work on a craft, or revisit the lesson or a previous lesson the children have heard. We rejoin the congregation before Eucharist.

Kids of any age are welcome to join us anytime. We'd love to have you!

Submitted by,
Elizabeth Gurney

SCOUT TROUP REPORT

BSA Scout Troop 49 and Cub Scout Pack 49

This year Grace became the Chartered Organization for both BSA Troop 49 and Cub Scout Pack 49, previously chartered at St. Catherine of Siena Parish.

The committees of both the Troop and Pack were notified in late December 2022 that their charters would not be resigned by the Catholic Church in Norwood, and we needed to find another organization to fill that role. All members of the committees began researching alternatives. Naturally, I thought of Grace. I began researching at a Diocese level and found the following statement from the *Church Relationships with the Boy Scouts of America**: “Our bishops continue to express support for the BSA as an organization and for our churches to be affiliated with or provide space to BSA troops.” After reading this I approached the Vestry to question if this relationship would be something they would be willing to explore. It was an overwhelming yes – see below the excerpt from the minutes of that meeting:

Vestry Meeting

Grace Episcopal Church

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Present: Father John Brockman, Katherine Wharton, Dave Button, Tracey Johnson

Carol Johnson, Elizabeth Gurney, Sue Breen, John Stanley, Cathy Noble

...VII. New Business

Boy Scout Troop and Cub Scout Pack 49, will be meeting here. Beth will be the representative from the church. A motion was made by Beth Gurney, 2nd Tracey Johnson to approve Grace Church as a Charter for the Cub and BSA group. Unanimously Passed.

Our official start date was February 8, 2023. February 8th is also, ironically, the day we celebrate the official Boy Scout of America Anniversary.

Shortly after this date, the scouts started meeting in Russell Hall for Den, Pack, Troop, and Committee meetings – giving life to this space most nights of the week. We also moved our storage items to Grace, in the room just across from the Sunday School Room.

The families, scouts and leaders of both groups were, and continue to be, thankful to Grace for keeping our groups going. The Troop just completed it's 76th year and the Pack it's 66th year.

The Troop was very happy to celebrate with the congregation at Coffee Hour on March 26th and assisted with the Spring clean-up; the Pack planted an Azalea to mark our first year at Grace. Families from both organizations assisted with tree unloading and sales this past holiday season. We are looking forward to more collaboration in the future.

Submitted by,
Elizabeth Gurney

*<https://www.diomass.org/sites/diomass/files/documents/Church%20Relationships%20with%20the%20Boy%20Scouts%20of%20America.pdf>

MUSIC AND CHOIR REPORT

In 2023, the music department of Grace church continued the various activities of the previous year. 2023 was the year of father John's retirement in June, and all year-round mainly Cathy and Michael served as cantors that led the congregation to sing.

A festival choir was recruited for Easter and Christmas. In particular, for the Easter Sunday service, various kinds of music and performers gathered and prepared the music. The Children's Choir was also recruited and they practiced two songs that were presented on Easter Sunday: "This is the Day" and "God So Loved the World." There were five children who participated: Logan, Lily, Efthalia, Ani, Giacobbe, and Kallista. The Festival choir consisted of Michael (Tenor), Brent, Dave (Bass), Cathy, Charlotte, Helen (Soprano), and Jamie (Alto, violin). On Palm Sunday, "Fanfare for Palm Sunday" was sung as the anthem. On Maundy Thursday, we sang two anthems "Remember Me" and "Now the Table is Set," along with the rest of the service music and hymns. On Good Friday, Brent and his daughter Charlotte beautifully sang "Pie Jesu" as a duet and the choir sang "Were you there" accompanied by Jamie's violin. On Easter Sunday, Trumpet player Ryan Stanbury was also invited to raise the Easter spirit.

After the Easter season, the choir was invited to sing for Iris Falcone's funeral on April 27. Iris was an active member of the choir, and the previous choir members were moved to sing at her service.

On June 4, for Fr John's Retirement Mass, we sang "And Wherever you go" with hymns chosen by Fr. John. During the summer season when the choir is off, Micahel led the singing of hymns as a cantor for most Sundays.

With the purpose of gathering people through music, I started Music Wednesday, where people have the opportunity to meet every first Wed of the month and share their favorite hymns to sing together. We met in October, November and December. Dave, Cathy, Sarah and Brent participated, and in December, I invited my husband Francis Jung-Gyu Kweon, who is a Voice teacher and the music director of St. Antoine Church in Auburndale, to teach how to breathe and vocalize your body as an instrument.

Our final big event of the year was of course the Christmas Eve service. The Festival choir was gathered and we had rehearsals before Christmas eve service. Jamie and Charlotte (Soprano), Maura and Johnny (Alto), Michael, Joshua (Tenor), Dave, Brent (Bass) made a beautiful ensemble despite our few rehearsals! Jamie played "O Come, o Come Emmanuel" on her violin as a prelude with piano and Brent's daughter Evelyn played flute for "All Bells in Paradise" while Charlotte sang "Silent Night" at the end of the service.

It was my second year at Grace church in 2023. After Fr John's retirement, I felt choir recruitment would be even harder as the congregation got smaller. With Michael's leaving, it is now a different challenge we need to face, but it is also my wish to keep up our activities as much as we did before. At Christmas eve service 2023, I felt a smile on my face when I listened to the congregation singing carols out loud led by our festival choir, making me set a goal for 2024 where the whole congregation sings like a choir. With God's Grace, who knows what is possible in the future?

Submitted by,
Joohwa Park, Music Directress

OUTREACH REPORT

Outreach Programs for 2023 are listed below.

February: Souper Bowl of Caring ran for the two Sundays before the Super Bowl. \$354.61 was raised and a check given to the Food Pantry.

Mothers Day: I reached out to the moms and women of our parish and they were presented with a small box of treats that Sunday.

Fathers Day: I reached out to the fathers and men of our parish with individual chocolate chip cookies at church that Sunday.

Norwood Day: Heather deserves kudos for all the help she gave to me setting up my first Norwood Day. We had a tent and a table and represented Grace Church with information about our church and bags with giveaways. Special thanks also to Sue, Rich and Doug Jarrell, Jon Grant, Dave Button, Cathy Noble and Christina Meyer for being at the table, setting up and cleaning up.

Bomba Socks: Thanks to the grant set up by Sue Breen, we received 3,000 socks this year. They were donated to:

St. Francis House

The MANNA program in the Episcopal Cathedral in Boston

The Women's Lunch Place

The Food Pantry

A group of refugees being supported by WMCA

A Ukrainian family supported by St Luke's Church, Scituate

All groups were very grateful to Grace Church for these donations.

Submitted by,

Deb Morton

Outreach Chair

PARISH GROUNDS UPDATE

Contemplative Food Forest

2023 brought renewed attention and an abundant crop to the Grace Church Contemplative Food Forest, envisioned, and realized by our newly retired rector, Fr. John Brockmann.

Parishioner John Stanley researched our apple varieties and printed signage to post at the base of each tree. The signage helpfully identifies key features, best usage, and harvest season for each tree.

In September, John and Karen Stanley, with the help of parish admin, Heather, organized an heirloom apple bake sale. Parishioners were invited to take apples from the orchard and bake apple recipes of their choosing. Following Sunday service on Oct. 1st, a bake sale table was set up outside on the front lawn and brought in \$350. Eight parish members and the parish administrator donated baked goods.

Connections were made in 2023 to begin collaboration with other Churches and organizations that might be interested in our apples. Epiphany Church, Walpole holds a pumpkin patch each October where they also have a tradition of selling caramel apples. Several of Grace Church parishioners volunteered time one weekend to help at Epiphany's sale and discuss the possibility of supplying apples in the future.

Union Congregational Church in East Walpole hosts an apple harvest fair every September. We reached out to them this year to express interest in providing apples for them in 2024.

We also reached out to local restaurants to see if they would be interested in purchasing our apples. Restaurants include The Farmer's Daughter in North Easton and Northern Spy in Canton. We will follow up with these locations again next season.

At the end of the season, Heather organized a clean-up day with her boys and a crew of local kids. Together the families picked up and bagged 14 leaf bags of downed apples and donated them to the Bean Family Farm in Westwood for pig feed.

Butterfly Garden

In 2023, John Stanley focused on the small garden outside the church side-door ramp. After nurturing this space and ensuring it hosts the correct assortment of milkweeds, nectar sources and shelter needed to sustain monarch butterflies, we were able to receive full certification as a monarch Waystation through the Monarch Watch program. More information on this is available through the office and with John and Karen Stanley.

Submitted by,
Heather Belden

OUTSIDE PROPERTY REPORT

Our Grace Church has resided on its current Chapel Street Property for over 60 years now. During this time, it has evolved to serve our changing parish population and the needs of the community. When Karen, Sarah and I first attended, almost 30 years ago, the feature event of the year was the Feast of Grace Family Fair, an event that focused on the youth and families of the parish. One could argue that it was the driving event of the year – something that both parishioners and the greater community looked forward to and attended.

As is the case with most churches, our demographic changed over time, as has our focus. We continue on with our time-honored traditions such as the 30 years or so of selling Christmas trees and hosting the Ecumenical Food Pantry, along with other events shared with Norwood organizations. Our property has always been with us – a blessing to all generations that have driven onto our circular driveway.

With this in mind, I would like to make a special call out to today's Grace church generations, young and old, with the ongoing development of the Food Forest and efforts to create a pollinator-welcome environment. I feel that this "gift" given to our community more than 40 years ago can "keep on giving" as it always has. The results of the attention paid to this can bring us together and make us stronger. Maybe most importantly, it can help us make sense and bring significance to an oftentimes confusing world.

In the weeks leading into the spring, I hope to update you with some of these continued efforts to uniquely position Grace Church as a property focused on environmental concerns of the day: A food forest whose abundant apple harvest this fall could lead to new connections and purpose. A pollinator friendly garden whose concept could be shared with other local churches are just some ideas.

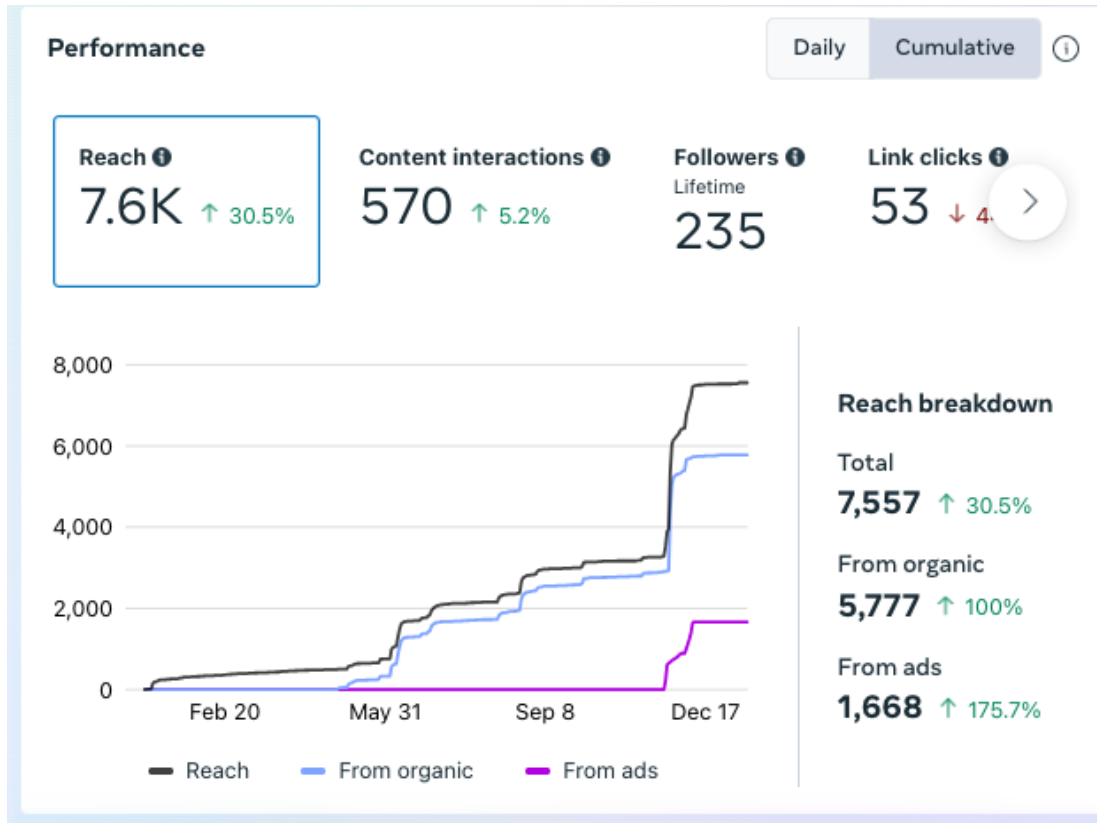
Stay tuned for this...I look forward to speaking to anyone with ideas or interest in this renewed focus on our property.

Submitted by,
John Stanley






PUBLICITY REPORT

This past year, the majority of the social media posts were transitioned over to Heather B, our Parish Admin. Over Easter and the Christmas season many Facebook and online ads were placed to provide more visibility to Christmas tree sales and Lent and Easter services. Many cross posts were placed on the Patch and Facebook Community pages (Norwood Now has a reach of 15K people, while other community pages have between 2-5K followers). These are the highlights from Facebook, with average “boosts” (paid to boost) around 3K views from the Norwood and Westwood area. Our best posts were around the Christmas tree sales, with above average interactions from the public with questions and comments.

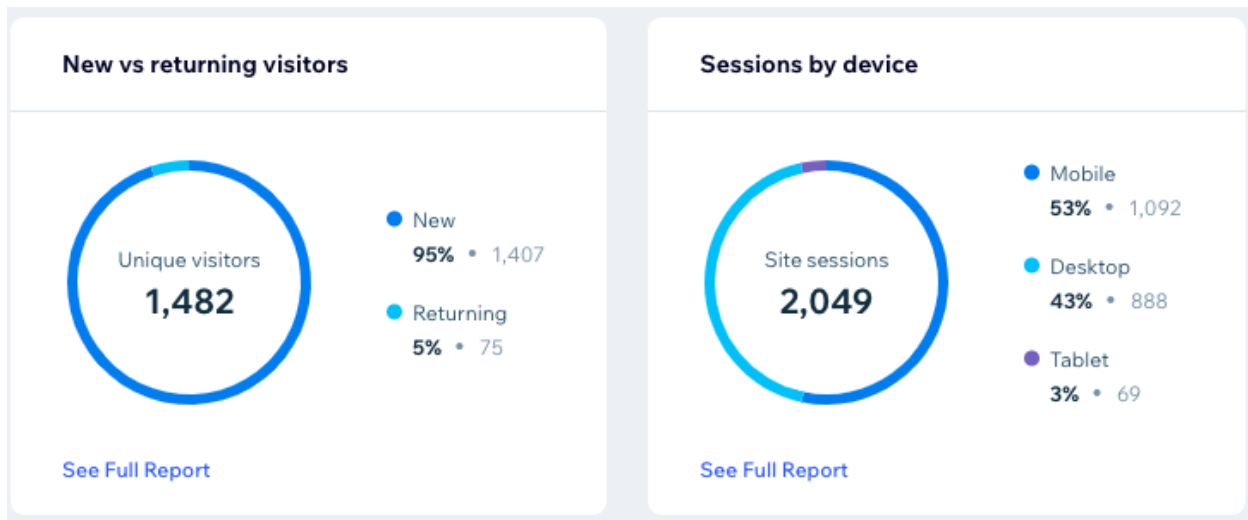
There was one paid newspaper ad for Christmas this year, to make sure we maintained visibility in the local community. Our Facebook page now has 235 followers and Instagram has 63 followers. Our reach to followers has increase by 30.5% with the majority of our views coming from paid ads during the Christmas tree season.



Our Top Five posts included three from our Tree sales, one from the “missing canopy” and one from the Heirloom Apple sales.

Title	Date published ↑↓	Reach ↓	Likes and reactions ↑↓	Comments ↑↓
 We are so excited- fresh trees and Christmas chee... Grace Episcopal Church	Nov 25, 2023	3K Reach	52 Reactions	2 Comments
 We have the most affordable Christmas trees in to... Grace Episcopal Church	Dec 5, 2023	2K Reach	92 Reactions	5 Comments
 Freshly cut this week from Nova Scotia- our trees ... Grace Episcopal Church	Nov 22, 2023	785 Reach	57 Reactions	3 Comments
 Did you or someone you know borrow our flower s... Grace Episcopal Church	Jun 8, 2023	667 Reach	1 Reactions	1 Comments
 Not to be missed Grace Episcopal Church	Oct 1, 2023	316 Reach	8 Reactions	0 Comments

The website continues to be updated several times a month with news and announcements that coincide with our midweek email. Our main traffic source continues to be Google with an increase of 3% in 2023. Our busiest day was 62 visitors on November 25. We had 1,482 total visitors, with 1,407 people who were first time visitors. Mobile users have now surpassed desktop users, at 53% of all sessions.



Submitted by,
Tracey Johnson

SAINT FAITH'S ALTAR GUILD

A Prayer for the Altar Guild

O Lord, be amongst us as we carry out the duties of our church's Altar Guild. Guide our minds to right intentions, our hands to devoted work, and our hearts to imitate your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For those who may be unfamiliar, the Episcopal Church gives a brief definition of what an Altar Guild does: "A volunteer group of the parish whose ministry is to care for the altar, vestments, vessels, and altar linens of the parish. Altar Guild members prepare the sanctuary for services and clean up afterwards. Altar Guild members frequently supervise the decoration of the sanctuary of the parish with flowers."

The members of St. Faith's Altar Guild, both past and present, have embraced this humble ministry as a way to honor God and be of service to Grace Church. For most of us, Altar Guild was our first ministry at Grace – a way to meaningfully contribute, but in a more "behind-the-scenes" way. Historically we have been blessed with dedicated members who fell in love with the ministry and served for many years. This year, we especially remember the half century-long service of our dear member Iris Falcone, who passed in 2023. Iris was devoted and passionate and used her beloved brand of humor and frankness to shape and guide clergy and members alike throughout her years of service. We fondly remember her today – she is greatly missed.

We also give immense thanks to our former director, Deb Terry. Deb continues her Altar Guild service in her home parish in Pennsylvania while continuing to generously provide guidance and instruction to Grace Church from afar! We are enormously grateful for Deb and all that she has done to organize and provide unfailing service these past 25 years.

In 2023, St. Faith's Altar Guild continued its faithful and devoted service preparing the altar for worship, and actively supporting special liturgies during Holy Week, Easter, and Christmas. With a decrease in our ranks, as well as an unforeseen member surgery, many have pitched in. When short-handed, Sarah Malneritch provided incredible service and handled all aspects of the ministry during the last part of the year. We are also grateful to vestry members and parishioners who stepped in to help – especially our Christmas crew – Sarah, Lillian Johnson, Leslie Grant and Cori Loescher. We also thank Helen Rintala who provided fresh, beautiful flowers and plants to adorn the altar throughout the year.

In 2024, we seek new members to join and experience the rewarding ministry of altar guild. All are welcome – but we especially invite any new members of Grace Church to consider participating. We gladly provide training and mentoring until you feel comfortable performing the duties on your own. We hope you will consider joining us!

St. Faith's looks forward to serving the parish and having the ability to adorn the altar each week and prepare for Holy Communion services in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Stanley (on behalf of Sarah Malneritch and Lillian Johnson)

STEWARDSHIP 2023

The 2024 Grace Church Stewardship campaign has concluded with a total of **28 pledging units and a dollar total of \$79,470**. Compared to 2023, this is a **decrease** of 7 pledgers and an increase of \$9,111.

The breakdown of the pledges are as follows:

- 4 pledges of \$5,000 and more
- 2 pledges of \$2,500 - \$4,999
- 6 pledges of \$2,000 - \$2,499
- 3 pledges of \$1,500 - \$1,999
- 10 pledges of \$1,000 - \$1,499
- 3 pledges of under \$1,000

The mean average dollar donation amount is \$2,838.21 a great increase of about \$738 per pledging unit. Nice!

We received 3 new pledging units this year and one returning pledge that chose not to donate the past couple years.

We miss the presence of one of our longest members and active givers, Fran Mannino.

Thanks, once again, to the ever- present guidance and help from Deb Morton and of her support over the many, many years on the committee. This year I'm especially grateful for the work of our office administrator Heather Belden. She's such a bundle of great ideas and positivity. Our church community is so lucky to have her. Given the size of our community, our financial commitment was fantastic.

God Bless All and Happy 2024!

Respectfully submitted,

John Stanley

BUILDING USE REPORT

The building is currently being used by the following groups on a regularly scheduled weekly basis:

Grace Episcopal Church

Sathya Sai Group

Sunnyside Up AA

Scouts of America

Norwood Ecumenical Community Food Pantry

The building periodically rents out spaces including Russell Hall and the Fowler Room for private events.

The Vestry is exploring the idea of renting out the Kitchen in the year ahead.

Submitted by,
Heather Belden

CHRISTMAS TREE SALES REPORT

On Sunday November 19th, we received our delivery of 500 Christmas trees and 138 wreaths from Nova Scotia. With the help of a group of parishioners and our local Boy Scouts, they were unloaded and arranged along the corral faster than ever. The official first day of sales began strong on November 24th (Black Friday), with the biggest day of sales being Saturday December 2nd. This year's sales lasted the typical span of 18/19 days as in previous years, though we may have sold out a day or two sooner had we not experienced two consecutive rainy Sundays. Revenue and profits were higher due to higher tree costs. In all, the church profited a total of \$18,224.50.

Thank you to the Bedard family, Grant family, Liz Pierce, Helen Rintala, Brian McTeague and Tim Verocchi, among others, for their numerous volunteer hours selling trees, as well as to Tracy Johnson for creating the Sign-Up genius which is a very useful way to reserve your spot. Looking ahead to next year, we will continue to encourage more parishioners to get involved so we don't need to rely on outside sources to fill every time slot.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris & Laura Jordan

PAROCHIAL STATISTICS 2023

20__		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23 ^{viii}
Average Sunday Attendance		63	57	56	57	50	48	45	NA	NA ⁱ	29	29
Easter Sunday Attendance		160	188	186	202	129	166	124	NA	75 ⁱⁱ	105	85
Number of Holy Eucharists	Sunday	93	90	86	92	91	90	89	22	47 ⁱⁱⁱ	82	70
	Weekday	14	14	14	8	6	9	8	1	0	3	3
Communions	Private	34	33	26	36	16	35	41	6	8	10	14
Daily Office	Sunday	8	5	2	7	4	6	4	46	17	1	0
	Weekday								34	5	0	0
Daily Devotion Using Non-digital Media	Sunday								37	15	0	0
Marriages		1	2	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	0
Burials		8	7	5	6	6	6	5	3	4	6	3
Baptisms		5	3	8	3	3	5	3	4	0	2	0
Confirmations & Reception		0	0	4	3	3	5	0	0	0	0	0
										iv		
Church School & Youth Group Enrollment ^v			19	23	25	25	14	12	12	12	6	6
Active Baptized Members as of 12/31 ^{vi}		239	239	245	248	248	210	215	215	215	180	180
Communicants in Good Standing ^{vii}		186	186	192	223	223	190	195	195	195	160	160
Communicants in Good Standing Under 16		27	22	26	25	25	25	25	24	24	24	24
Households as of 12/31		104	102	105	103	103	95	99	99	99	85	85

ⁱ From Sunday January 3rd until Sunday June 6th the parish operated (except in unusual circumstances noted next) with a 9 AM Zoomed Morning Prayer with sermon followed by a Free Conference Call Morning Devotion with Sermon at 11.

ⁱⁱ This was one of the first to be held outside in the parking lot to the sunny eastern side. This was followed by a Eucharist 5/9 on the front steps, and 5/23 in the Sunken Garden. Special services included 2/17th Ash Weds in-church noon service followed by two drive-through imposition of ashes. On 4/1 there was an in-church, live-streamed eucharist for Holy Thursday, and on 4/2 for Good Friday, there was a service in the driveway.

ⁱⁱⁱ From in-church return of services on June 6

^{iv} For the next five categories, the numbers have simply been replicated from last year since we have no basis for determining any changes since COVID has prevented in-person services from January until June.

^v Attendance includes Church School only, no active Youth Groups.

^{vi} An Active Baptized Member is, according to the canons of the National Church, a baptized person who has attended church at least once during the calendar year.

^{vii} A Communicant in Good standing is, according to the canons of the National Church, a baptized member who contributes financially, attends church three or more times per year, and volunteers for a ministry in the parish.

^{viii} In 2023, with the retirement of the rector, the parish conducted only one service from June through December, instead of the usual 2 services.

RECTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND REPORT

The Rector's Discretionary Fund is used to help the needy in our community and to help finance non-budgeted items that come along from time to time.

Individual donations are always welcome and are tax deductible.

Opening balance 1/1/2023	\$98.39
Contributions	500.00
Expenditures	-400.00
Closing Balance 12/31/2023	\$198.39

Submitted by,
Beth Gurney
Parish Treasurer

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER (2023)

Baptisms

None in 2023

Confirmations

None in 2023

Weddings

None in 2023

Funerals

Iris Mary Falcone

Shirley Ann Peterson

Frances L. Mannino

