

The Eighth Annual Meeting of
GRACE CHURCH
an Episcopal Community in the Southern Berkshires



January 26, 2020
Crissey Farm, 426 Stockbridge Road
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

GRACE CHURCH
an Episcopal Community in the Southern Berkshires
Eighth Annual Meeting - January 26, 2020

Step into Grace...

...where strangers become friends

We are an Open and Affirming church. Every one of every age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, or economic status is invited to join us as together we live out the Gospel message of love, forgiveness, service, and justice. No matter where you are in your spiritual journey—you are welcome here.



Call to order

Opening Prayer (all say)

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, as we begin our eighth year together as Grace Church, bear our prayers. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflections on conversations from the tables.

Old Business

Minutes of the 2019 Grace Church Annual Meeting (January 20, 2019).

New Business of Grace Church

Vestry and Convention Delegate Nominations and Elections
Presentation of the Ministry Budget of 2020

Remarks from the Rector

The Blessing

May God give you grace to never sell yourself short, grace to risk something big for something good, and grace to remember that the world is now too dangerous for anything but truth, and too small for anything but love. (William S. Coffin) And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen

The Dismissal

People's response "Thanks be to God."

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GRACE CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 27, 2019 GRACE CHURCH at CRISSEY FARM

Call to Order: Kathy Clausen, Senior Warden, opened the meeting with 30 parishioners in attendance. All were thanked for donating their time and efforts to Grace Church. No additions to the Agenda were requested.

Opening Prayer: The Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman led the group in opening prayer. People gathered at tables for lunch and conversation while videos were projected. One was of Gideon's Garden and the other was of the conversation among immigrants and the Wisdom Group made this past summer for the Diocesan Convention. More details about Gideon's Garden newly hired Agrarian Youth Mentor and Supervisor, Jen Bloesch, was shared with the group.

Reflections on conversations from the tables. Participants shared their reflections on table discussions.

Old Business:

Minutes of the 2018 Grace Church Annual Meeting (January 21, 2018), were unanimously passed.

New Business:

Vestry and Convention delegates names were presented after an explanation of duties and responsibilities. Additional nominees were requested from the floor. No additional names were presented. Sarah Sieber was thanked for her participation on the vestry. The balance of the slate was unanimously accepted:

OFFICERS (1 year)

Senior Warden	Kathy Clausen
Junior Warden	Rick Gore
Treasurer	Sue Gore
Clerk	Mary Anne Grammer
VESTRY – AT LARGE (3 year terms; with 2 consecutive terms possible)	
Class of 2020	John Cheek
	Dindy Anderson
Class of 2021	Anne Andrews
	Dutch Pinkston
Class of 2022	Cathy Haywood

DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

Vestry Delegate	Rick Gore
Lay Delegate	Lee Cheek
Vestry Alternate	John Cheek
Lay Alternate	Doreen Hutchinson

Presentation of the Ministry Budget of 2019. Sue presented the 2019 budget and answered questions. Sue explained that the Vestry approved to make available up to 10% of income from the funds invested with the Trustees for community grants such as the upcoming visit of Chris Herren, May 23, 2019, a community wide event.

Remarks from the Rector

Janet spoke on the missions of Grace Church: the Berkshire Immigrant Center, Gideon's Garden, the Lee Food Pantry, the People's Food Pantry, Multi Cultural Bridge and Construct and thanked the congregation for their support during a difficult personal year. Janet thanked Kathy for her leadership during her absence. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 P.M. after a blessing from Janet.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Grammer, Vestry Clerk

RECTOR'S REPORT

What an extraordinary year we have celebrated together at Grace Church. Thank you for all you give, for your prayers, your presence, and your willingness to risk in service to God in our world. I am grateful for your generous spirits, your active and engaging hearts, and your compassionate actions so that this loving community continues to thrive doing the good work that God has shown us.

This year has been about new beginnings. In January we offered a ministerial position to Jen Bloesch. After much prayer, much discernment, and much conversation, Jen accepted our offer to join us at Grace Church as our first Agrarian Youth Mentor and Supervisor. Jen joined us in March and soon after changed her title to Gideon's Garden Program Director. It has been a joy witnessing Jen's connection with the young people at Taft Farms and with our church. Her infectious enthusiasm for God, for God's creation, and for offering herself as a companion to others walking this journey of faith brings a wonderful energy to our work.

With Jen's ordination to the priesthood in May, she has led our Planting and Blessing of the Garden, planned and officiated at our Longest Night Service, and preached monthly in our worship services on Sundays. It has been a wonderful addition to our ministry to have the Rev. Jen Bloesch planning, responding, and initiating new ministries in the Berkshires. She is working with other organizations to connect young people over dinners this winter and preparing to offer a new internship program this summer in Gideon's Garden.

Grace Church continues to be blessed with healthy financial resources. Due to the generosity of our community and the prudent management of our budget, we are able to offer programs and services to the wider Berkshire community. In June, responding to the crisis of addiction in our communities, we planned and offered a program for young people and their families to hear from someone whose life was first devastated by drugs and then redeemed by hard work and love. Chris Herren, a star basketball player, spoke to a riveted crowd at Mount Everett Regional School and then later at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center. His message of hope and resolve touched the hearts and minds of many. Grace Church can be very proud that we were able to bring this program to our larger community.

Our work in the community continues to offer prayers and support for our immigrant neighbors. For another year, Grace Church continues to provide grant money to the Berkshire Immigrant Center so they can grow their counseling and legal services to those seeking safety and opportunity in our country. Members of our church were trained in accompaniment so they could go with our brothers and sisters to court dates and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) check ins. These acts of witness and solidarity extend the love of Christ into our world helping remind those most vulnerable that we care.

Our country and our world continues to be a hostile place for many. With continuing threats being waged against many people, Grace Church chose to make their welcome evident. In May, a group of church members came together to compose a statement of Welcome and Affirmation. This statement now appears on all our material and is emphasized in our new signage outside the church. We have also lent our prayers and our support for our Jewish brothers and sisters who have faced increasing hatred and violence. In May, I attended an *Evening of Unity Prayer, and Call to Action* sponsored by synagogues in Pittsfield. In June, I participated in *A Conversation for Faith Community Leaders: An Interfaith Day of Learning* led by the Diocese of Western Massachusetts held at Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, MA. And then in November, Grace Church members responded to a call to gather by the Berkshire Regional School District following a violent anti-semitic action at Monument Valley. As a result of these continued meetings, the Rev. Jen Bloesch and the Rev. Janet Zimmerman will be meeting with school leaders to plan events to bring young

people and our community together to face the hostility that exists in our community. A Day of Interfaith Worship and Service is planned for January with Hevreh, Grace Church, and Christ Trinity.

It has also been a year of good-byes. In April, we wished the Rev. Virginia Vogel-Polizzi farewell as she completed her time with us as an Assisting Priest. Virginia continues to serve God and God's people at Albany Medical Center as a Chaplain. We are grateful for her presence and her service. Without much attention, Doug and Sue Happ moved permanently to their newly completed home in North Carolina. Doug and Sue served Grace Church and before that St. James as Junior Warden, Altar Guild, Flower Ministry Coordinator, and hospitality extraordinaire. We wish them every happiness in this next part of their journey and hope they will visit when they are in the Berkshires.

Peter Feltman-Mahan brought his wonderful family to Grace Church and immediately became a vital part of our ministry. Peter entered the process for ordination to the priesthood by attending Yale Divinity School and faithfully offering his gifts to our church. In December, Peter was admitted by Bishop Doug Fisher to the postulancy. Postulancy is the first formal step toward ordination. While we rejoice with Peter and his family in their call to serve the church, it means he will be serving at Trinity Episcopal Church in Lenox for the next year. We wish him every blessing and give thanks that God has called such a family to serve the church.

In December, I too made an announcement that I had decided to retire from pastoral ministry. My last Sunday at Grace Church will be Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2020. I will have many opportunities to walk with you, pray with you, and give thanks for the many ways God continues to invite us to participate as witnesses to God's love. I look forward to sharing this journey with you and ask your prayers as together we listen faithfully for how God is speaking to us now and into our rich future. May the peace of Christ be always with you.

by the Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman, Rector

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Looking back over 2019, I see this astonishing group of people, many of whom have written reports for this Annual Report, doing the work God has given us to do. Janet's report describes this beautifully. Allow me to focus on the work of the vestry here.

Vestry service is holy and collaborative work

This phrase begins an article I read recently published by Donald Rominik on the *Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Practices* website. I was struck by it because I wondered if our members who haven't had the opportunity to serve on a vestry realized how profound the work is. Some of us have served for years, some are relatively new to the work and to our church, but all of us come together almost monthly to consider issues that impact our community. Our work shapes the future of Grace. It is a great responsibility and a great honor. We pray together and study together and make every effort to represent what we believe God is calling Grace to. But for us as individuals it is holy work. We are called to meet God in the challenges and concerns that come before us. We know God's voice is there when we discuss issues around the table. Each of us comes with life experiences, talents, and images of how we see God. Allowing the spirit to move among us allows us to know God better through our work. One member said that he saw us monitoring the "jigsaw puzzle that is Grace Church". Here, in the voices of two other members, are more impressions of this experience.

The Vestry is the heart of this church. I am moved by the collective wisdom in this body and grateful that it is

not up to me alone. Our situation allows us to concentrate on mission without the difficult task of keeping up an aging building. There is so much more than Sunday morning. There are always new possibilities and new pathways.

To me Vestry allows you to see more of what Grace Church is. You are able look at the church in a different way than just attending a service. Being able to hear concerns, comments and give your own view helps the church to grow. With the help of other groups such as the Wisdom Group, we hear of ideas that they have put together to help Grace Church grow and being on the Vestry you have an input with the outcome.

If this has piqued your interest, please join us for a Vestry meeting and consider if this is something you would like to experience. Thank you to our current Vestry: Rick Gore, Junior Warden, Sue Gore, Treasurer, Mary Ann Grammer, Clerk, Dindy Anderson, Anne Andrews, John Cheek, Cathy Haywood, and Dutch Pinkston.

by Kathy Clausen, Senior Warden

REPORT FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

This past year the building owner 67 State Road, where our office and chapel are located, replaced the roof. We still are getting stains on the ceiling tiles in Janet's office. We did notify the building owner about this, but I do not feel that this will get resolved any time soon so I have purchased a package of replacement tiles and I will replace as needed.

We have tried over the year to get our lease renewal signed for the office but have not received a signed copy from the building owner even though we have been asking for over six months. The main change we wanted was a clause that would allow us to give her six a month notice if we wanted to move somewhere else. She said she did not have a problem with that, but we have yet to get it even though we have contacted her many times.

With Jen Bloesch coming to us for Gideons Garden we renovated the storage room into an office for her. For 2020 we are planning on removing the remaining items still stored at Stevens & Finnerty.

by Rick Gore, Junior Warden

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild Teams of Sarah Sieber, Margaret Layton, Cathy Haywood, Lynn Walker, Meredith Haider, Monique Kirchoff, Viola Bagnaschi and Linda White continue to make sure the Altar is set up each Sunday. Setup is challenging at times but very rewarding.

Susan Happ has left for the Carolinas. She devoted many years to the Altar Guild and is very much missed. Holly Murray has taken over the duties of the flower list. We welcome her. New members are always needed and welcome. If anyone would like to just fill in as needed and not commit to one Sunday a month, that would be wonderful. I thank everyone for their commitment.

by Debbie Holmes

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Bible Study continues to be central to our formation as disciples of Jesus Christ. Every Tuesday evening from 7:00 to 8:30 PM we pray and study scripture together, closing with a service of Compline or Evening

Prayer. This year we studied the readings from the Revised Common Lectionary, the Gospel according to Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah. We have a committed and thoughtful group who bring good questions and their thoughts about how scripture guides their lives in the world. We are always ready and eager to welcome others who would like to add the study of scripture to their spiritual practices.

We also gather to read both fiction and non-fiction books in our Books and Bread Group that meets once a month in member's homes. This year we read and discussed books to help us walk our faith as we try to understand our complex, beautiful, and broken world. The conversation was always engaging and rooted in our faith. It is a wonderful opportunity to listen, learn, and share through great literature as we walk together on this journey.

In Lent, a study of *Making Sense of the Cross* was offered following worship on Sundays. There are many strong views about the nature, purpose, and effect of the cross on our faith. This study allowed the group to risk their views, concerns and wonderings about the cross. It was not intended to settle once and for all the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross, but rather to examine the many ways the cross has found meaning in our lives and how this act serves as a guide for our journey of faith. Each week we gathered around soup and bread.

In September, several women of Grace Church went on an overnight retreat at the Wisdom House in Litchfield Connecticut on September 13 and 14. The theme was *In the Shelter of Each Other*. Led by the Rev. Dr. Janet Whaley Zimmerman, it offered a time of restoration, reflection, and fellowship. The weather cooperated so we could walk the beautiful grounds and take in the labyrinth. This has become an annual retreat which nourishes the people who attend, including the leaders.

by the Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman, Rector

DIOCESAN CONVENTION

The Annual Convention of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts was held on November 9th at the Tower Square Hotel in Springfield. Attending from Grace were Janet Zimmerman, Lee Cheek, Rick Gore, delegates, John Cheek alternate and, Virginia Vogel-Polizzi.

The bishop's address opened the convention. He spoke about the message of Jesus as Revolution and of our numerous unconventional ministries in the diocese such as the Appalachian Trail Ministry in Sheffield, prison ministry, and Walking Together in Worcester. Following this, several videos of our missions were shown and the Lawrence House Interns were commissioned.

Worship entitled "Holy Earth, Holy People" included a liturgy for creation care accompanied by newly composed music from Geoffrey Hudson who conducted a chamber choir and orchestra. Four banners celebrating the beauty of nature were created by St. Andrew's Guild (Kathryn Aubry-McAvoy, Diane Kurkulonis, and Molly Scherm) of St. James and Andrew in Greenfield. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas presided.

After lunch, we heard short addresses from four speakers, Alex Chatfield, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts; Dr. M. Saleem Bajwa, Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts; Rabbi Mark D. Shapiro, Rabbi in Resident, Christ Church Cathedral; and The Rev. Laura E. Everett, Massachusetts Council of Churches.

Elections were held for diocesan offices including Deputies to General Convention 2021. John Cheek was elected as Lay Deputy and Janet Zimmerman was reelected to Diocesan Council. The 2020 Diocesan budget was presented by Treasurer Steve Abdow and adopted.

More videos were shown including “A Requiem for Gun Violence” and “St Mark’s Community Center”, and a report on the resolution Creation Care in Our Congregations was given by the Deputies to General Convention 2018. Convention adjourned after a short prayer.

by John Cheek

BOOKS & BREAD

The grid below captures all the important details for 2019. As shown, we met to discuss books on eight occasions with a meeting on January 9th at the Church office devoted to choosing the books and scheduling. Four of the meetings included dinner and started at 6:00 pm. The other four meetings started at 7:00 pm with appetizers and desserts (A&D). Whether the meeting was “long form”, beginning at 6:00 pm, or “short form”, beginning at 7:00 pm, was determined by the host. Book discussions at all meetings began at 7:45 pm which allowed enough time for social interaction before the start of the discussion. All meetings ended promptly at 9:00 pm. Attendance is estimated to have averaged in the 9-13 range for the eight meetings.

A planning session for 2019, led by Peter Kirchoff, was held on January 9, 2019.

Date	Book Title	Author	Pages	Host and/or Venue	Discussion Leader	Start Time	Food
February 13	<i>Everything Happens for a Reason; And Other Lies I've Loved</i>	Kate Bowler	137	Anderson	Janet Zimmerman	7:00 pm	A&D
March 20	<i>A Walk In the Woods</i>	Bill Bryson	274	Zimmerman	Monique Kirchoff	7:00 pm	A & D
April 10	<i>A Boy In Winter</i>	Rachel Seiffert	240	Katz	Martha Katz	6:00 pm	Dinner
May 8	<i>The Absolutely True Story of a Part Time Indian</i>	Sherman Alexie	230	Kirchoff	Peter Kirchoff	6:00 pm	Dinner
June 12	<i>The Far Away Brothers</i>	Lauren Markham	320	Garretson	Ted Cobden	6:00 pm	A&D
September 11	<i>Tattoos On the Heart; The Power of Boundless Compassion</i>	Gregory Boyle	240	Kirchoff	Dindy Anderson	6:00 pm	Dinner
October 9	<i>Snakebit</i>	Sey Zimmerman	150	Church Office	Ted Cobden	7:00 pm	A & D
November 13	<i>Washington Black</i>	Esi Edugyan	350	Raymond & Fletcher at Kimball Farms	Frank Garretson	6:00 pm	Dinner

CHURCH SCHOOL

Church school continues to be available most Sundays from September through June, with activities available at a table in the back of the church when more formal church school is not available. We continue to use a story-telling felt board curriculum called the Beulah Land Curriculum, which tells stories using felt figures, followed by wondering questions and an activity. In addition, we have toys for the youngest children. From 1 to 8 children have participated on a Sunday.

Thank you to Margaret Layton and Andrea White who are always willing to participate in church school when needed.

by Dindy Anderson

GIDEON'S GARDEN

With Kyle moving on from Gideon’s Garden towards his next steps in life, this year he passed the baton to Jen Bloesch, who filled the first time role as the Agrarian Youth Mentor and Supervisor, now titled Gideon’s Garden Program Director. Fisher Riiska filled Kyle’s shoes by becoming the new Youth Supervisor. Together, Jen and Fisher oversaw the garden from start to finish and enjoyed a fun and successful year overall.

Jen’s arrival this year has meant the expansion of Gideon’s Garden’s scope and goals. In addition to the continuation of deliveries, growing produce, offering youth a safe place to be, and welcoming visiting groups to the garden, through Jen’s efforts we also hope to increase the number of young people who come to the garden, to develop new community partnerships, and to increase Gideon’s Garden’s public presence in the community. This will be achieved in part by an internship program that is planned for 2020, in which a cohort of teens would come together once a week throughout the summer to learn and work together at the garden. Jen has focused this year on building relationships at the schools, with the pantries that receive our produce, and with the organizations that bring youth and adults to the garden.

This year it was our community partners that brought so much vibrancy to the garden. In June, the YES! Program from Monument Valley Middle School, led by Jake Pinkston, brought twelve engaged and energetic 7th and 8th graders for a three-day volunteer visit. We set an ambitious agenda, including making a raised table bed, crafting a native plant garden, building movable chickens pens, and getting the butterfly house ready for the season. The young people had a great time, and their efforts were invaluable in being ready for the beginning of growing season.

ExtraSpecial Teas also brought young adults with special needs multiple times to help out around the farm. The volunteers loved seeing the butterfly house and helping with harvesting. They even took on the laborious task of moving our compost pile! We are excited to continue with volunteer days with ExtraSpecial Teas next year. Similarly, Gould Farm sent a committed volunteer from their organization. Our volunteer, David, came weekly from July until the beginning of November, and he helped with the much needed projects of weeding, harvesting, and take down of the farm in the fall. We are very grateful for his work this season.

In August, we again partnered with Multicultural Bridge. On two consecutive Fridays, the 35 campers came to the farm to help and have fun. This year the children helped with transplanting zucchini, stuffing scarecrows, and harvesting. They also got to see the rescue animals and the Gideon’s Garden chickens. On their last day, they enjoyed an ice cream party in the garden and shared reflections from their two weeks at

camp. We look forward to working with Multicultural Bridge again next year!

Perhaps the most exciting addition to the Garden was the chickens. Jen incubated the eggs in her apartment, and once the chicks hatched, they were housed in the greenhouse at Taft Farms for all the youth to see and play with. Our regular youth volunteers loved helping raise the chicks. We hatched 38 chicks, but had to find a permanent home for the many roosters that hatched. Now, our flock is at 20, and they are laying many eggs each day. They have been a joy and delight for everyone who has worked at the garden, and they continue to be a feature for visitors to the garden.

The events that were held with the members of Grace Church were also a great success this year. Planting Day featured beautiful weather and an eager crowd. Jen led the blessing of the Garden alongside Fisher and our other youth volunteers—Cayenne Riiska, Harley Margraff, and Harrison Buck. The 35 or so volunteers headed straight to work, and the garden was planted in a startling 45 minutes! It was a beautiful day! Equally beautiful was the Celebration Sunday on September 22nd. Fisher and Jen shared reflections with the congregation, and Harley sold her own dried teas after service. It was a lively and celebratory occasion. Throughout the year, Jen was also able to regularly attend worship at Grace, preach, and share updates with the congregation about Gideon's Garden, bringing the congregation into closer connection with the Garden.

Overall, Gideon's Garden has a wonderfully bright year, which involved a lot of hard work, laughter, silliness, and connection with others. We are extraordinarily grateful to all the individuals who directly supported the garden—Pennie Curry, Janet Zimmerman, Kathy Clausen, and Dutch Pinkston. We are equally grateful for the support from the entire congregation, whose generosity has outpoured upon this hands-on ministry. We eagerly look forward to another year of caring for youth, tending the Earth, and feeding our beautiful community. Thanks for being on the journey with us.

by the Rev. Jen Bloesch



Blessing of the Garden



Y.E.S. Participants



Delivery at The Guthrie Center



The Bishop prays for Gideon Garden participants

GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIP

The Grants & Scholarship committee had no meetings this year. There were no requests nor disbursements.

by Doreen Hutchinson

HEALING MINISTRY

Each Sunday during the administration of Holy Communion an opportunity for healing prayer is offered at a station in back of the congregation. One may come for healing for oneself or for another. Prayer is offered in the assurance of Christ's ever-present care and power of newness of life. Members of the healing ministry are Pennie Curry, Kathy Clausen, Sue Gore, Peter Feltman-Mahan, Christy Yeo and Ted Cobden.

by the Rev. Ted Cobden

HOSPITALITY

We continue to be a friendly and welcoming congregation. Coffee hour is always a tasty event with many participating. Thanks to the willingness of many to be hosts, we always have wonderful food and conversation. Special events often occur including Grace's birthday on Epiphany, special luncheons, celebrating significant birthdays, and the Gideon's Garden celebration. Thank you to all contribute to this important part of Grace Church.

by Dindy Anderson

TUESDAY'S CHILD NEWSLETTER

Tuesday's Child includes basic information including worship time, ROTA, lectionary and food donation for the coming Sunday, upcoming events, weekly hymns, and other information, etc. Also included is a weekly depiction with art work of the coming Sunday's readings, and links to various church related web sites. Links are included with directions to specific event's locations or for more information on particular topics.

The intent of TC is to be a simple but interesting and attractive newsletter for Grace members and other interested people. 2019 was our sixth year of *Tuesday's Child*, having begun on January 22, 2013. Every week an email is sent to a mailing list of just under 100. 57% of the 95 people open our email and this is a very good percentage for not-for-profit and religious e-news letters.

Elizabeth Holland, *Tuesday's Child* originator, left for the warmer climes of Mexico little more than a year ago, leaving the newsletter without the gracious editor who has been sending out the first draft every Thursday, then making revisions, inserting articles, editing and proofreading before sending out the final copy on Tuesday for five years running. Those were big shoes to fill.

So why do I do it? For me *Tuesday's Child* is a way of highlighting local church and community events that are for the greater good. It is also a way of sharing music and readings pertinent to that season. I see it as a source of community building, and often inspiration. And I like to experiment with the pictures and colors.

I encourage you to send in pictures that are relevant: a picture really is worth a thousand words. Feel free also to call attention to whatever gatherings might be of interest to the members of Grace.

by Monique Kirchoff

MEN'S GROUP

The purpose of the Grace Church Men's Group is to provide fellowship and to enrich the faith of all who participate. Although we do not meet every month, when we do meet, it usually on a Wednesday evening. Generally speaking, we meet at a residence from 6-9 for supper and discussion focused on specific topics. All men of the parish and their guests are invited. There are no attendance requirements or attendance expectations. Now and then someone can come to a particular meeting that interests him or he can become a "regular" by attending most all the meetings. At the evening meetings we average about 10 although there are about 20 on our mailing list. We meet at 6:00 pm for soft drinks, wine and cheese followed by supper. Our discussion begins at about 7:45 pm and we adjourn promptly at 9:00 pm.

During 2019, we had six meetings:

Date	Presenter	Topic/Program	Venue
March 19	The Rev. Steve White, retired Episcopal priest and a parishioner of Grace Church	My time as a chaplain at Princeton	Kimball Farms
April 17	Karen Christensen, leader of The Train Campaign	Bringing Trains to the Berkshires	Cheek
June 19	Jane Ralph, Executive Director of Construct	An update on Construct	Kirchoff
August 28	No presenter	Annual BBQ	Doyle
October 16	Will Conklin	Who are the Greenagers and what do they do?	White
December 4	The Rev. Jen Bloesch	Her life story and an update on Gideon's Garden	Garretson

We feel God at work in our fellowship and care for one another. We are strengthened when we share our life stories and feel the support of the other men. This year we are once again thankful for the fellowship the Men's group provides.

If you would like to monitor the group's activities by being on the mailing list or would like to attend a particular evening meeting, please contact George Raymond (413-637-7224)

Committee: John Cheek, Ted Cobden, Peter Kirchoff, George Raymond

by George Raymond

THIRD SUNDAY SUPPERS

Each month, parishioners are invited to join together on a Sunday evening at a local restaurant for some fellowship and dining. We had 11 dinners in 2019, 3 of those were at new venues. Since inception in May 2013, we have had 77 suppers at 27 different venues.

What we did in 2019:

Date	Dining Venue	Cuisine	Location
January 20	Cancelled, snow	-	-
February 10	Koi	Chinese	Great Barrington
March 18	Chico's	Mexican	Great Barrington
April 14	Frankie's	Italian	Lenox
May 20	Aegean Breeze	Greek	Great Barrington
June 23	Fiddleheads	American	Great Barrington
July 21	Stockbridge Golf Club	American	Stockbridge
August 18	Cork N Hearth	American	Lee
September 15	Fiesta	Mexican	Great Barrington
October 20	Cork N Hearth	American	Lee
November 17	Aroma	Indian	Great Barrington
December 15	Koi	Chinese	Great Barrington

Although the suppers are always held on Sunday evenings, occasionally we have to hold them on a Sunday other than the third. Father's Day in June is a good example. We do not visit restaurants that refuse to give us separate checks.

The program has been successful and apparently well received. The current intention is to have a supper during each of the months of 2020. The first supper is scheduled to take place on Sunday, January 12 at Aegean Breeze.

by George Raymond

WELCOME TABLE

Two or three members of the committee come early each Sunday to set up the welcoming table at the door with bulletins, programs, publications and name tags. As attendees enter, they make themselves available to answer questions, help with coats, etc. Once the service is underway, they count how many are in attendance and take their seats with the rest of the congregation.

Loose plate collection is the next duty. The team then brings the filled plates up to the altar with a slip of paper bearing the number of attendees that morning. After the choir goes up for the Eucharist, the ushers let parishioners go up row by row and receive the Eucharist themselves after everyone else is done. After the service they pack up the contents of the welcoming table in the bin provided.

Serving on this committee is a wonderful way to meet and greet newcomers and old friends right at the start, to make sure everyone is supplied with programs and a name tag, and to get the service off to a warm and friendly start. Members of the team are: Debbie Holmes, Viola Bagnaschi, Sally Brooke, Anne Andrews, Sue and Rick Gore, Maureen Terry, Doreen Hutchinson, George Raymond, Sarah Sieber and Marcia Doelman.

by Sally Brooke

WISDOM GROUP

The committee met four times this year and members were involved with meeting to interview candidates for our Gideon's Garden Program Director (originally called Agrarian Youth Mentor and Supervisor) role.

Our goals for 2019 were as follows:

1. Help with hiring and onboarding of Gideon's Garden Program Director, the Rev. Jen Bloesch.
2. Support Chris Herren presentation on addiction for students during the day and parents and community members in the evening at the Mahaiwe. Grace partnered with Fairview Hospital for these events.
3. Create community grants program funded by using up to 10% of our investment earnings.

We hired Jen Bloesch as our Gideon's Garden Program Director. She has been working hard in the garden, the butterfly house and raising chickens. Jen has quickly become a role model for the young girls working in the garden and mentored the youth supervisors.

The Chris Herren program happened in May. The audience at Mt. Everett High School included 350 students (9 thru 12) and faculty. The evening program had 125 in attendance. The school counselors and Mahaiwe staff were very appreciative of the speaker and his openness. It opened up many conversations about addiction which was one of the goals.

We also developed a process for the community grant program. The committee listened to the parishioner from St. John in Williamstown to hear about their experience in funding such community initiatives. We did a survey of the congregation to elicit ideas and interest on initiatives congruent with Grace's mission.

Other needs met in the community:

- Back-to-School time gift cards (36) were distributed in Lee, Monument and Mount Everett High Schools to deserving teens identified by guidance counselors.
- Prior to Christmas gift cards were also given to students at the same schools. (44 were distributed)
- We supported the Multi-Cultural Bridge summer camp by contributing \$1,500. Thirty-five campers spend two days at Gideon's Garden.
- The Mampong Babies Home donations equaled \$1,073 over the last year.

The goal for 2020:

1. Continue working on distributing community grants with the Wisdom Committee being the decision group.
2. Support Jen to enact some of the ideas she would like as our Gideon's Garden Program Director.

by Doreen Hutchinson

WORSHIP

On Sundays at 10:00 am we gather at Crissey Farm for a service of Holy Eucharist Rite II with Healing to worship God and join together to recommit ourselves to service in God's name in the world. This is the principle activity of the followers of Christ as it is in this time that we find renewal for our life and our work. Through beautiful music, ancient prayers, reading and reflection on Holy Scripture, and gathering at the table of thanksgiving to receive the bread and the wine we are made new and prepared once again to participate in the coming of God's kingdom here on earth. An important part of our time together in worship is the opportunity to receive prayers for healing. A group of faithful ministers, led by the Rev. Ted Cobden, listen to the particular petitions and offer prayers to strengthen and encourage those in need. In 2019, the Healing Team consisted of Ted Cobden, Sue Gore, Pennie Curry, Kathy Clausen, Peter Feltman-Mahan, and Christy Yeo. People who receive healing prayers find peace in this sacred practice.

On Wednesdays at noon we offer a service of Holy Eucharist Rite I and Healing in our Grace Church Chapel. This is a less formal service where the homily includes a celebration of holy men and holy women who serve as examples of a life well lived in service to God. Their stories often speak to our own.

Centering Prayer is an ancient Christian practice that allows one to rest in the stillness and love of God. Every Thursday, we gather at 5:00 pm to pray, to reflect on our spiritual practice, and to share our challenges and joys in deepening our relationship with God. It is a time of beauty, silence, and openness. Those who join reflect that it supports their ability to see God everywhere.

Before worship can be offered, there is much planning that takes place to insure that music, liturgy, prayers, and setting support our desire to turn our hearts to God and to be sent back into the world refreshed and renewed. Thanks to the prayerful and creative work of the Worship Committee: Chris Clark, Lee Cheek, John Cheek, and Debbie Holmes, each liturgical season is planned to allow us to experience anew God's activity in our lives.

We are particularly blessed at Grace Church with an exceptional group of devoted and gifted musicians. Each week they come early to practice and prepare hymns, anthems, chanting, and bells that not only support us, but allow us to pray through our singing. Thanks especially to Chris Clark, who plans our music and prepares the choir for our worship together, and Sara Keene and Lee Cheek, who serve as our keyboardists. Week after week we are blessed to receive the great gifts of John Cheek, Mary Anne and John Grammer, Dutch Pinkston, Doone Marshall, and in the summer and fall, Nancy Fishell, Howard Seip, and Fred Hollman. This year, the churches of the Southern Berkshires joined together for Holy Week. Chris and our choir participated in leading music on Good Friday and at the Easter Vigil. Lee Cheek graciously offered her musical gifts on Ash Wednesday. We are blessed to have such fine music at Grace Church.



Our Altar Guild arrives early to create a beautiful and welcoming space to offer worship. No matter where we gather, their love is evident. This devoted group includes Debbie Holmes, Viola Bagnaschi, Sue Happ, Cathy Haywood, Margaret Layton, Sarah Sieber, Lynn Walker, and Linda White. We are very grateful for Pam Drumm who serves as Altar Guild for our Wednesday Eucharist. Monique Kirchoff has generously offered her great skills to prepare a beautiful altar hanging for the Chapel.

Acolytes are essential in leading our worship. They offer final preparations before worship begins, lead us in procession, and assist at the altar during the Holy Eucharist. We are very grateful for the services of our acolytes: Kathy Clausen, Cathy Haywood, Linda White, and Peter Kirchoff.

Chalice Bearers serve at the Altar and administer holy communion to our community. Thank you to Rick Gore, Dutch Pinkston, Lynn Walker, Viola Bagnaschi, and Kathy Clausen.

Lectors bring alive our readings from scripture every Sunday. Each week Dindy Anderson, Anne Andrews, Tom Doyle, Sue Gore, Meredith Haider, Pennie Curry, and Robert Forman faithfully prepare so we may enter fully into the sacred text. Intercessors pray on behalf of the people. Thank you to John Cheek, Kathy Clausen, Tom Doyle, and Doreen Hutchinson for preparing a space for us to offer our petitions and thanksgivings to God.

Those who serve at the Welcome Table, are the first to offer hospitality in our community. By their welcome, people who enter know that they are in a place where grace is possible. We are grateful for the service of Anne Andrews, Viola Bagnaschi, Sally Brooke, Marcia Doelman, Sue Gore, Rick Gore, Debbie Holmes, Doreen Hutchinson, Sarah Sieber, and Maureen Terry.

Holly Murray generously stepped in to organize our flower ministry. In November, she invited our community to offer flowers in honor or memory of a loved one. Sue Hayden of Taft Farms beautifully arranges flowers for our altar each Sunday. Thanks to the generosity of our members, the lives of those we love are remembered and our worship space is prepared with love to honor God.

Special worship services offered this year included two Ash Wednesdays services and a service for Good Friday Stations of the City where we offered public prayers for our community on the streets of Great Barrington, a Maundy Thursday Meal and Service with Christ Trinity in Sheffield, a Good Friday Service with St. Paul's Stockbridge, The Easter Vigil Service at Trinity in Lenox, the Blessing and Planting of Gideon's Garden, and a Blessing of the Animals. Each of these services invited the larger Berkshire community to participate. This year we will again offer opportunities for worship with our sister communities in Sheffield, Stockbridge, and Lenox.

Our Christmas Eve service at Taft Farms welcomed many to our service of simplicity and joy. This year, we welcomed 108 people to celebrate the birth and the promise of Jesus in songs, prayers, and gathering at the Eucharist. Many new people continue to join us at this service. We pray that their spiritual lives were enriched. Thank you to Christy, Elie, Nancy, and Charis Yeo for opening our service with the lighting of



candles, Magali Davila who read from the prophet Isaiah in Spanish, and Tom Doyle who led us in the Prayers of the People. Thank you to Rick and Sue Gore, and Maureen Terry who welcomed people to our service. Thank you to Kathy Clausen who served as acolyte and Viola Bagnaschi and Rick Gore who served as Chalice Bearers. The Rev. Jen Bloesch read the Gospel in Spanish and assisted at the table. The Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman celebrated and preached. Thank you to Chris Clark, Courtney English, Courtney Clark, John and Lee Cheek who led us in singing the glorious Christmas hymns. Thank you also to Maria Mayorga who provides priceless assistance in translating our worship bulletin for this service.

Preachers who offered their voices to our worship this year include: The Rev. Steve White; Lee Cheek, licensed lay preacher; The Rev. Jen Bloesch; The Rev. Virginia Vogel-Polizzi; The Rev. Dr. Jane Tillman; and the Rt. Rev. Douglas J. Fisher, Bishop of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts.

Every time we gather to worship, we are grateful for the bulletins that allow us to fully participate in the service. We are very grateful for those who proofread the text and music each week. I am particularly grateful for the meticulous work of Maria Mayorga who helps me create a document that adds to our worship. In the midst of the holiday season, Maria left to take a three month leave of absence. Into her work has stepped the gracious Gretchen Fairfield who has seemingly without a bobble, produced clear and impeccable bulletins for Sunday morning. I am so grateful for her kind spirit and commitment to supporting the ministry of Grace Church. Thank you also to Chris Clark who brings the bulletins to worship every Sunday.

by the Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman

YEAR ROUND STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship committee consisted of John Cheek, Tom Doyle, Dutch Pinkston, Sally Brooke, and Mimi Alford. We met on September 25 to plan our season which began on October 20 ended on Ingathering Sunday November 24. We chose six people to speak on topics ranging from "Why is giving better than receiving, Ministries that move you, How has your heart changed, and shining our light." The speakers were Howard Seip, Peter Feltman-Mahan, Meredith Haider, Dutch Pinkston, Holly Murray, and Sue Gore. The Stewardship letter was sent out to the congregation in mid-November.

by John Cheek

LEE FOOD PANTRY

MISSION STATEMENT: *To respond to human need by loving service*

1/1/2019 Beginning Balance	\$15,466.18
Income: 2019 Donations	\$21,598.99
Expenses: Food Purchase	\$21,167.29
12/31/19 Ending Balance	\$15,897.88

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS SERVED
2019 1,592

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS SERVED
2019 3,998

2020 will be our 29th year serving families and individuals to residents of Lee, Otis, Becket, Monterey, W. Stockbridge, Stockbridge, Tyringham and Lenox Dale. We continue to offer financial support to the Healthy Snack Program offered at Lee Elementary School for children unable to bring snacks. Weekend bags are also provided for students to bring home. The pantry also offers diapers through the Berkshire County Diaper Project and pet food through Irie's Pet Pantry.

Thank you to all at Grace Church and the people in our community who make this pantry a success.

by Susan Gore



Communion at Crissey Farm



Planning meeting for the YES! Program



Jen Bloesch's ordination and new stole "Garden to Table; Table to Soul"



Marking 400 years of slavery at the Ringing of the Bells, a joint event with other churches at St. Paul's, Stockbridge



Parishioners at Lights for Liberty, a Vigil to End Human Detention Camps, Great Barrington

LITURGICAL RITES CELEBRATED

Sunday/Saturday Night Holy Eucharist	51
Mid-Week Eucharist	37
Private Communion	18
Burial Service	1
Baptisms	0
Blessing of a Marriage	0
House Blessing	1
Garden Blessings	1
Animal Blessings	1

Those who have died this year:
Pat Edelstein 11/30/19

BALANCE SHEET				
		12/31/19	12/31/18	12/31/17
Assets				
Banking	\$	89,479	\$ 99,355	\$ 74,691
Prepaid Expense	\$	888		
Lee Food Pantry	\$	15,898		
Rector's Discretionary Account	\$	5,746		
Trustee Account (3rd qtr figures)	\$	2,312,645	\$ 2,366,510	\$ 2,337,020
Total Assets	\$	2,424,656	\$ 2,465,865	\$ 2,411,711
Liabilities				
AP/Vendors - Next Year Pledge	\$	1,000	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,200
Fund Balances				
Operational Funds	\$	828,231	\$ 817,511	\$ 771,093
Building Funds	\$	1,212,657	\$ 1,237,104	\$ 1,221,465
Mission Funds	\$	118,871	\$ 119,765	\$ 120,836
Memorial Funds	\$	230,929	\$ 279,593	\$ 287,013
Lee Food Pantry	\$	15,898		
Rector's Discretionary Account	\$	5,746		
Mahaiwe Cemetery	\$	1,003	\$ 974	\$ 641
Rector's Sabatical	\$	3,124	\$ 3,173	\$ 2,649
Gideon's Garden	\$	7,197	\$ 9,155	\$ 6,155
Gideon's Garden Vehicle Fund			\$ -	\$ -
Congregational Development	\$	-	\$ (2,760)	\$ (2,760)
People's Pantry			\$ -	\$ -
Lee Pantry	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 815
Teen Christmas	\$	-	\$ 100	\$ 100
Multicultural Bridge Pass Through	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 76
Annie Ryder			\$ -	\$ 20
Change the Babies Fund			\$ -	\$ 2,408
Total Funds	\$	2,423,656	\$ 2,464,615	\$ 2,410,511
Total Liabilities and Funds	\$	2,424,656	\$ 2,465,865	\$ 2,411,711

2020 Working Budget				
	2019 Budgeted	YTD Balance	2020 Budget	
Weekly Collection				
Pledge	\$ 154,800	\$ 206,441	\$ 160,521	
Loose Plate	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,571	\$ 1,500	
Tithely Fees Paid	\$ -	\$ 355	\$ - 0	
Special Offering	\$ 1,200	\$ 930	\$ 500	
Investment Income				
Trustees	\$ 96,678	\$ 40,290	\$ 109,865	
Crane Trust	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,432	\$ 3,800	
Nancy Cobden Memorial	\$ 56,500	\$ 52,000	\$ 58,970	
Other	\$ -	\$ (2,500)	\$ - 0	
Other Income				
Flowers	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,470	\$ 1,500	
Gifts in Memory		\$ 600		
Lent Suppper		\$ 338	\$ - 0	
Total Income	\$ 315,878	\$ 305,926	\$ 336,656	
Expenses				
Worship				
Flowers	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,556	\$ 2,000	
Liturgical Equipment	\$ 600	\$ 216	\$ 500	
Special Services Expense	\$ 2,500	\$ 719	\$ 2,500	
Music Supplies	\$ 200	\$ 100	\$ 200	
Guest Musicians	\$ 1,000	\$ 400	\$ 700	
Supply Clergy	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,150	\$ 2,000	
Benevolence - Mission - Outreach				
People's Pantry	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,200	
Lee Food Pantry	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	
Gideon's Garden	\$ 3,575	\$ 5,350	\$ 16,000	
Multicultural Bridge Initiative	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	
Berkshire Immigration Center	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
Berkshire Interfaith Organizing	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ - 0	
General Outreach	\$ -	\$ 696	\$ - 0	
Grace Community Grant	\$ -	\$ 9,000	\$ - 0	
Crane scholarships/grants	\$ 1,700	\$ - 0	\$ 1,700	
UTO out of Operations	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	
Assessment for Common Ministry	\$ 25,447	\$ 25,447	\$ 28,741	
Wisdom Group	\$ 1,000	\$ - 0	\$ 1,000	
Clergy's Discretionary Fund	\$ 800	\$ 64	\$ 800	
Christian Nurture				
Adult Education	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,245	\$ 500	
Church School	\$ 150	\$ 124	\$ 150	
Vestry Formation	\$ 350	\$ 386	\$ 350	
Coffee Hour	\$ 300	\$ 349	\$ 300	
Special Receptions	\$ 500	\$ 338	\$ 500	
Greeters Table	\$ 250	\$ - 0	\$ 250	

	2019 Budgeted	YTD Balance	2020 Budget	
Office and Administration				
General Supplies	\$ 1,400	\$ 2,293	\$ 1,400	
Postage and Box Rental	\$ 200	\$ 232	\$ 200	
Printing and Duplicating	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,797	\$ 3,500	
Advertising	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,186	\$ 1,000	
Web/Constant Contact Expenses	\$ 600	\$ 1,908	\$ 1,200	
Accounting Software	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,566	\$ 1,400	
Office Cleaning	\$ 910	\$ 770	\$ 910	
Rent, Utilities and Maintenance				
Office Rental	\$ 19,600	\$ 19,200	\$ 19,600	
Crissey Farm Rental & Set-up	\$ 20,000	\$ 19,360	\$ 20,000	
Storage Rental	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,275	\$ 2,100	
Electric	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,165	\$ 1,500	
Gas	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,850	\$ 1,800	
Phone	\$ 1,900	\$ 1,836	\$ 1,900	
Insurance	\$ 1,850	\$ 1,505	\$ 1,850	
Personnel Expenses				
Clergy, Secretary, Choir Director, and Gideons Garden Program Director Salary and Benefits	\$ 192,446	\$ 183,158	\$ 196,535	
Accountant Expense	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,654	\$ 5,450	
Keyboardist/Organist	\$ 5,400	\$ 5,630	\$ 5,920	
Clergy Sabbatical	\$ 500	\$ - 0	\$ 500	
Clergy Expense Reimbursement	\$ 1,000	\$ 140	\$ 500	
Sundries	\$ -	\$ 5,295	\$ - 0	
Total Expenses	\$ 315,878	\$ 315,160	\$ 336,656	
Net	\$ -	\$ (9,234)	\$ -	

SLATE OF OFFICERS, VESTRY MEMBERS, DIOCESAN DELEGATES

OFFICERS (1 year)

Senior Warden Kathy Clausen
Junior Warden Richard Gore, Jr.
Treasurer Sue Gore
Clerk Mary Anne Grammer

VESTRY - AT LARGE (3 year terms; with 2 consecutive terms possible)

Class of 2021 Anne Andrews, Dutch Pinkston
Class of 2022 John Cheek, Cathy Haywood
Class of 2023 Dindy Anderson, Holly Murray

DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

Vestry Delegate Richard Gore, Jr.
Lay Delegate Lee Cheek
Vestry Alternate John Cheek
Lay Alternate Doreen Hutchinson

GRACE CHURCH

an Episcopal Community in the Southern Berkshires



GRACE CHURCH STAFF

Bishop of Western Massachusetts: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Douglas Fisher

Rector: The Rev. Dr. Janet Zimmerman

Gideon's Garden Program Director: The Rev. Jen Bloesch

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