

Grace Episcopal Church
124 Maple Hill Avenue
Newington, CT 06111
Phone: 860-666-3331

The Rev. CJ Puskarz, Deacon
Mei-Tsen Chen, Organist and Choir Director
Debbie Forrest, Office Manager
Web Site: www.gracechurchnew.org
Email: office@gracechurchnew.org

Holy Eucharist - Sunday at 9 am
Morning Prayer - Tuesday at 8:30 am

PACE OF GRACE



Grace Episcopal Church
124 Maple Hill Avenue
Newington, CT 06111



December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH	2	3	4	5
6 2 nd Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Holy Eucharist Angel Tree Gifts Returned	7	8 6:00 pm Vestry by Zoom 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH	9	10	11	12
13 3 rd Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Morning Prayer	14	15 2:00 pm Book Club Meeting 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH	16	17	18	19
20 4 th Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Holy Eucharist	21	22 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH	23	24 Eve of the Nativity 9:00 pm Holy Eucharist	25 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST 	26
27 1 st Sunday after Christmas 9:00 am Morning Prayer	28	29 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH	30	31		

Room Key: PH=Parish Hall; L=Library; MMR= Music Meeting Room; MR=Meeting Room; C=Chapel; K=Kitchen



Pace of Grace

December 2020

"The Pace of Grace" is a monthly publication of
Grace Episcopal Church, 124 Maple Hill Avenue, Newington, CT

Dear Parishioners of Grace Church,

As we look forward to Advent Season, we realize this year our celebration will be different than years past. On the first Sunday of Advent, November 29, a candle on the wreath on our altar was lit. Our traditional Christmas Eve service will be at 9:00. As always, carols will be a feature of the service. However, this year the congregation will hum along, with joy in their hearts and masks on their faces. If you are unable to attend Sunday and Christmas Eve services you will be there in our hearts.

If you feel the need for spiritual guidance, or just want to talk to someone during this time when many of us are shut away from family and friends, our visiting priest, The Reverend Dr. Valerie Miller, is available. She would very much like to talk and pray with any of you. You may arrange a telephone conversation with Valerie by calling the Church office. If no one is in the office when you call just leave a message. If you have an immediate need or question do not hesitate to call one of the Wardens, JoAnn Cromwell, Senior Warden or Walt Parker, Junior Warden. (phone numbers below).

For those of you attending services, we continue to make the Church safe. State of Connecticut capacity guidelines for Houses of Worship limit attendance to 25% of available seating. The seating capacity or our sanctuary is over 200 which limits attendance at services to 50. Since our average attendance has averaged about 25, Grace Church will not exceed State seating guidelines.

We wish you all the Blessings of Christmas.

Faithfully,

JoAnn Cromwell, Senior Warden Walt Parker, Junior Warden

Phone numbers:

Church office 860-666-3331

JoAnn Cromwell, Senior Warden--860-841-6296

Walt Parker, Junior Warden--860-666-6808



Here are the lectionary readings for each Sunday and Holy Day in December

	First reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
Second Sunday of Advent December 6, 2020	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
Third Sunday of Advent December 13, 2020	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Fourth Sunday of Advent December 20, 2020	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Canticle 3 or Canticle 15 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
St. Thomas December 21, 2020	Habakkuk 2:1-4	Psalm 126	Hebrews 10:35-11:1	John 20:24-29
Christmas Eve Nativity of the Lord December 24, 2020	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
Christmas Day Nativity of the Lord December 25, 2020	Isaiah 52:7-10	Psalm 98	Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)	John 1:1-14
St. Stephen December 26, 2020	Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15	Psalm 31	Acts 6:8-7:2a, 51c-60	Matthew 23:34-39
St. John December 27, 2020	Exodus 33:18-23	Psalm 92	1 John 1:1-9	John 21:19b-24
First Sunday after Christmas December 27, 2020	Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Psalm 147	Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7	John 1:1-18
The Holy Innocents December 28, 2020	Jeremiah 31:15-17	Psalm 124	Revelation 21:1-7	Matthew 2:13-18





I hope everyone had a safe and somewhat family oriented Thanksgiving. I am writing this before Thanksgiving as the article needed to get into the office early this month so I can't share how my Thanksgiving was. I do know that it will only be my daughters and granddaughter as we will not have the whole family gather. This probably means that I will be having leftovers because small turkeys are not easy to find. However, I am thankful that I have my immediate family to share dinner with on that day no matter what is being served.

ADVENT starts November 29. HAPPY CHURCH NEW YEAR!!!

It is time to reflect upon what we need to do to bring us closer to Christ for our celebration of His birth. As I reflect upon 2020, it seems more "penitential" than celebratory. I think back to last year at this time as I was getting ready for Advent I had no idea that I was going to need surgery for a broken ankle. I thought all would go on with no problems when "boom" I was laid up for 3 months. I did not get to church very often. However, I could still pray and read my prayer book and bible (and watch the Hallmark channel). I thought that once my ankle healed enough for me to drive that I would be out and about doing the usual stuff. Little did I know then that Covid 19 was starting to run rampant in the United States so that I was not going out and about as usual and still no church. It almost seems that 2020 has been one long Advent season. We have had lots of time to prepare for the coming of Christ as I have needed Him more than ever during this past year. This Advent I am not thinking of my expectations. I am leaving my heart, soul, and mind open to what Jesus might be asking of me. I pray for guidance in His ways, not mine. I hope a little more technology expertise might be coming my way, but again that is more me. Hopefully we all are finding a more spiritual sense as well as practical way of being closer to Christ this Advent. There is no new normal needed here.

Once we have worked on our closeness to Christ, we can focus on the joy of the Christmas season. MERRY CHRISTMAS! We can give thanks that Jesus came into this world to love us and save us. He gave us examples in the way of loving and helping all our neighbors. This is something we very much need to work on every day we continue on in this world. We can still have the beauty of Christmas if only in our decorations, pictures, nature and the love of family and friends as I have no idea how Covid 19 will be. I am reading that possible vaccines will be available in the not too distant future. We could still not be gathering with all family members this Christmas but that is ok as we must keep safe and well so that we can celebrate many other Christmases to come. We must do what is necessary now so that there will be time to continue to be together in the future. This could mean more shower singing or alone outdoors singing our favorite Christmas carols. What is your favorite Christmas song? It is hard for me to pick. I like O Holy Night, Angels We Have Heard on High, and Mary Did You Know as a start for me.

This is the time to count our blessings even if it doesn't take all our fingers and toes to do it. We too are in need of God's love and the support of each other. We can be angels to others or let others be angels to us. Please try to share the love of Christ in whatever way you can with family, friends and to all those you meet on your Christian journey. We can acknowledge the good that came from 2020.

Happy Advent.....Merry Christmas.....Peace on Earth...Mercy and Justice for All!

Stay safe- stay well-stay connected
cj

PS if you shop online do it now cause Santa might have a little trouble getting it all in his sleigh on a timely basis so we need to give his elves in the red, white and blue, or green and white or brown or blue smiley "sleighs" some extra time.



- 12/01 Kathy Johnson
- 12/12 Paul Bailey
- 12/12 Steven Tatsapaugh
- 12/14 Brandon Johnson
- 12/25 Jesus Christ



The next meeting of the Book Club will be on Tuesday, December 8. Since the November meeting was cancelled, we will discuss the November selection which was *When We Were Young* by Lisa Wingate.

Happy Reading,

Melissa Haseley



The deadline for the January issue is Tuesday, December 22. Please make every effort to meet this deadline to allow us to distribute the issue promptly. The earlier you submit, the easier it is to publish the issue.



Food Drive: Grace Church held another community food drive on November 7. Due to other food drives in the area, we didn't collect as much as we hoped, but it was still successful. Thank you to all who donated and gave their time to the drive.

Melissa Haseley

Food Drive Coordinator



- December 6 Holy Eucharist
- December 13 Morning Prayer
- December 20 Holy Eucharist
- December 24 Holy Eucharist 9 pm
- December 27 Morning Prayer



Weather Closing

Cancellation of services due to weather will be posted on NBC Connecticut (channel 30) and WFSB (channel 3) and on their websites



The Angel Tree was lit up on Sunday, November 22. Each angel tag has a message on the back, with the number of the household requesting a gift, the name and age of the requester, which should come back with the card. Everyone is asking for gift cards this year from various sources. The season is short this year so please return the card you selected by December 6th so they can all go to Human Services that week. If you can't get the card to church by Sunday, you can either mail a donation to the church (information below) or bring it to Human Services yourself.

Parishioners not attending services during the pandemic may also participate in the annual Angel Tree Giving. This year all tree gifts are gift cards. PLEASE, consider participating even if you are not attending services. To participate from home, mail a check to the Church noting it is for the Angel Tree. While the suggested donation is \$40, send more or less as you are able. Your contribution will be combined with others to purchase gift cards. The checks must be at the Church no later than Monday, December 7. Since the US Mail Service may not be as reliable as in the past, call the office and leave a message that 'The Check is in the mail'.

Make check out to Grace Church and mail to the church at: Grace Church 124 Maple Hill Ave. Newington 06111.

Call and leave a message that 'The Check is in the mail' 860-666-3331

After the Angel Tree tags are gone, we would like to fill the tree with scarves, hats, mittens and gloves for the people at the Friendship Center.

Thank you for your contributions.

Beverly Manning and JoAnn Cromwell



QUICK FINANCE UPDATE: OCTOBER 30, 2020

	<u>OCTOBER OPERATIONS</u>	<u>Year to Date OPERATIONS</u>	<u>Year to Date BUDGET</u>	<u>TOTAL 2020 BUDGET</u>
Pledge Income	\$ 5,792	\$ 62,275	\$ 62,650	\$ 79,304
<u>INCOME:</u>	\$ 7,558	\$ 86,631	\$ 94,224	\$ 118,534
<u>EXPENSES:</u>	(\$ 6,117)	(\$ 79,243)	(\$ 117,339)	(\$ 140,342)
<u>NET CHANGE:</u>	\$ 1,441	\$ 7,388	(\$ 23,115)	(\$ 21,808)
Checkbook Balance:	\$ 33,036		<i>End 2019 Checkbook:</i> \$ 22,206	





Creative Energy Team
December 2020

Hello from your Creative Energy Team,

We are finishing up the Clothing Drive which is our last fundraiser for this year. The Clothing Drive has been very successful this year. We believe it is because of several reasons but mainly due to the pandemic. One reason being everyone having time to clean out their closets. Then there was nowhere to bring that clothing because many donation centers have been shut down. Our team used free publicity in the Rare Reminder and on Facebook to have people come donate clothing in garbage bags at any time day or night. It was to be placed at our front entrance in our next to the large blue tub. This approach seemed to work for us. One of us would go every day to check and bring any clothing inside.

We spent time counting all the bags, bringing them to the Narthex the day before and then loading them onto a truck. The first load we brought to Savers in Newington on October 13, 2020. We brought in 188 bags which raised \$376.20. Our second load brought to Savers on November 24, 2020 was 3567 lbs. resulting in a payment of \$714.30. With both deliveries to Savers, our clothing drive raised \$1090.50!!!!

Thank you to all who helped in the various ways. Whether it was donating, bringing clothing inside, counting or lugging and tugging the bags of clothing. Some people came every time we asked, some helped one or two times while some helped just once. It all makes for a fundraiser that was successful. Besides our team which consists of Lynn Page, Jane Stewart, Lorraine Belyea and myself, we also had help from Mark Shoemaker, CJ Puskarz, JoAnn Cromwell, Walt Parker, Laura Lynch, Brandon Johnson, Mitch Page, Benjamin Page, Michelle Dumont, Drew Correa & Marty Dumont. Thank you also to anyone else that helped bring bags of clothing in. It is all appreciated.

Have a safe and blessed Christmas season. May you ring in the New Year healthy and safe!

Faithfully,
Valerie Dumont



If you wish to donate flowers for the Altar for Christmas in memory or honor of someone or in thanksgiving for blessings, please fill out the following form and mail it with your contribution, made out to Grace Church, to:

Grace Episcopal Church, 124 Maple Hill Avenue, Newington, CT 06111-2719

You may also drop off the form and your check at the office or place it in an offering plate on Sunday. Please return by December 20, 2020

Flower envelopes are also in the narthex at church and in pledge envelope boxes.

(Cut here)

CHRISTMAS FLOWER OFFERING

GIVEN IN MEMORY/HONOR OF OR THANKSGIVING FOR

NAME OF DONOR

ADDRESS OF DONOR

OFFERING ENVELOPE NUMBER: _____

AMOUNT: _____

Lay Ministry Schedule
9:00 AM

	December 6	December 13	December 20	December 24	December 27
	2 nd Advent Holy Eucharist	3 rd Advent Morning Prayer	4 th Advent Holy Eucharist	Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist	1 st Christmas Morning Prayer
Supply Clergy	Rev. Valerie Miller		Rev. Valerie Miller	Rev. Valerie Miller	
Deacon/LWL	CJ Puskarz	Rev. CJ Puskarz Richard Buika	CJ Puskarz	Rev. CJ Puskarz	CJ Puskarz
LECTOR	Karen Halpert	JoAnn Cromwell	Walt Parker	Karen Halpert	JoAnn Cromwell
PRAYERS	JoAnn Cromwell	Walt Parker	Karen Halpert	Beverley Manning	Walt Parker
USHERS	Jane Stewart	Brandon & Kathy	Mark & Kathy	Nancy DiPrato	Jane Stewart
		Johnson	Shoemaker	Lorraine Belyea	
ALTAR GUILD	Kathy Shoemaker	Kathy Shoemaker	Elissa Schumann	Elissa Schumann	Elissa Schumann
	Nancy DiPrato	Nancy DiPrato	Candy Casciano	Candy Casciano	Candy Casciano
COUNTERS	Melissa Haseley	Beverley Manning	Walt Parker		JoAnn Cromwell
	Nancy DiPrato	Nancy DiPrato	Lorraine Belyea		Melissa Haseley