

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

The Rev. Dr. Valerie Miller, Priest-in-Charge
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 - 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays at
9 am

Morning Prayer - 2nd & 4th Sundays at 9 am

Morning Prayer - Tuesday at 8:30 am

PACE OF GRACE



2021

Grace Episcopal Church
124 Maple Hill Avenue
Newington, CT 06111

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|--|----------|--------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 4th Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Holy Eucharist via Zoom | 8 | 9 6:00 pm Vestry by Zoom 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH | 10 2:00 pm Book Club Meeting via Zoom | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 5th Sunday after Epiphany 9:00 am Morning Prayer via Zoom  | 15  | 16 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH | 17 2:00-3:00 pm Drive Through Ashes  | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 1 st Sunday in Lent 9:00 am Holy Eucharist via Zoom | 22 | 23 7:00 pm Narc Anon - PH | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 2 nd Sunday in Lent 9:00 am Morning Prayer via Zoom | | | | | | |

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



Pace of Grace

February 2021

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

Dear Grace Church Community,

I am so happy as I sit at my rector's desk writing my first of many entries into our newsletter, Pace of Grace. It was the first time I served as our community's supply clergy that I felt at home. Many of you may remember when my parents and wife, Monica, visited one Sunday in 2019. When I speak about our Grace Community, my mother often says "I love that place!" I could not agree with her more.

January 1st of this year was my first official day as your rector. I prayerfully discerned, with the pandemic still at hand in our nation and state of Connecticut, for us to hold our services online. We have had a Eucharistic service and a Morning Prayer service held online. I also made this prayerful discussion with the diocese guidelines at hand. The services have come together with a few bumps and "trying on." I want to shine a light of thanksgiving on a few of our community members that have put their skillset in technology to work. These community members are our Treasurer Mark Shoemaker and Jonathan Buika. Mark and Jonathan have been handling all the various technological moving parts. I am thankful as well for our community who have been able to worship online with us for being at our services as we praise God in a new way. I am hoping for us to return to in person worship sometime in the near future. This will depend on the wisdom of our diocesan bishops and our medical health teams within Connecticut. We have returned to phase two, meaning our community is at high risk if we were to gather in person.

In the meantime, as your rector I attended my first vestry meeting a few weeks ago. I have been calling the homebound members of our community and those in medical care facilities. I also plan on reaching out to everyone on the parish contact list by way of a belated holiday card and a phone call over the next few weeks. My office hours are Monday and Thursday afternoons from 2-5 pm. Please know that as pastoral needs arise, you can reach me by leaving a message on the church phone. Debbie, our administrative assistant, and I can both retrieve those messages. My cell phone will be available for pastoral emergencies such as hospitalizations or a death of a loved one. Your loved one does not have to be a part of our community to contact me for emotional grief support. Family is so very important.

I look forward to the work of love and compassion that Jesus has waiting for all of us as a community of faith.

Peace & Joy,

Rev. Val



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

| | First reading | Psalm | Second Reading | Gospel |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| The Presentation February 2, 2021 | Malachi 3:1-4 | Psalm 84 | Hebrews 2:14-18 | Luke 2:22-40 |
| Fifth Sunday after The Epiphany February 7, 2021 | Isaiah 40:21-31 | Psalm 147:1-12, 21c | 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 | Mark 1:29-39 |
| Last Sunday after Epiphany February 14, 2021 | 2 Kings 2:1-12 | Psalm 50:1-6 | 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 | Mark 9:2-9 |
| Ash Wednesday February 17, 2021 | Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 | 103 or 103:8-14 Isaiah 58:1-12 | 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 | Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 |
| First Sunday in Lent February 21, 2021 | Genesis 9:8-17 | Psalm 25:1-9 | 1 Peter 3:18-22 | Mark 1:9-15 |
| St. Matthias February 25, 2021 | Acts 1:15-26 | Psalm 15 | Philippians 3:13b-21 | John 15:1,6-16 |
| 2 nd Sunday in Lent February 28, 2021 | Genesis 17:1-17, 15-16 | Psalm 22:22-30 | Romans 4:13-25 | Mark 8:31-38 |





How is 2021 going for you? It is still a lot of unknown for me. I am excited that there is a vaccine for Covid 19 being given. I pray that it is safe and effective for all who take it. However, this is not the immediate end of the coronavirus. We still have to practice safety rules. Masks on, wash hands, and stay 6 feet away from anyone not in your household until the virus is "contained." There are still food insecurities, job issues, and rents to be paid.

Hands up if you attended our first zoom service on 01/17/21. I think it went very well. Yes, I know I need a haircut/styling. It is hard to look good on some days when I don't even know what day it is. I am trying to be better about that situation. I hope that more of you try to zoom in with us on Sundays. We might even get a "coffee hour"/tea time" going after the service so that we can at least say "hi" to one another. We can share how we are managing during this part of our journeys.

Today is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. It was quite a year in 2020 in regards to racial injustice and white supremacy actions and concerns. Our ECCT is asking us to continue on with learning about racial reconciliation, anti-black bias, and white supremacy. This is not going away in 2021. We must continue to try to understand our history and change our ways. We have to admit that we (meaning all white society world-wide) are the problem with our attitudes and actions or lack of actions. We (living in the US) grew up in a society that talked about change but never did much about it. I never realized what the problem was in all aspects. We can no longer be silent. The deacon is supposed to be the bridge between the church and the world but also between the world and the church. Our world is in need of our prayers and willingness to try something different. A quote from the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.--"The time is always right to do what is right."

Mercy, Justice, and Equality for all no matter what color, gender or race. We know that the greatest commandment is to love God; love your neighbor as yourself is the second greatest. Jesus showed us that all people are our neighbors. The Beatles sang it in their song "All you need is love." Jackie DeShannon sang it in "What the world needs now is love sweet love." We celebrate Valentine's Day in February which is all about love (yes chocolates, flowers, jewelry, and dinners too!). We need to show and practice our love for God and all our neighbors.

How is your spiritual faith doing? Lent is starting February 7, 2021. I hope that we will all be inspired to find a way to get closer to God during this season. Some give up something and some take on something different. The importance of our actions is that we try to get closer to God by finding out more about what His will is as opposed to our will. I haven't decided yet what to do, but hopefully it will be an action that I can maintain even after Lent. I have had both success and failure in my endeavors. I would very much like to hear what others would like to "try on" during Lent. Of course, I won't be able to say one of my favorite words until Easter. Due to Covid 19 there will be no Shrove Tuesday celebration at church. We will have to make our own pancakes and sausage at home. Don't forget to put some kind of special topping on them...I like marshmallows and sprinkles on mine.

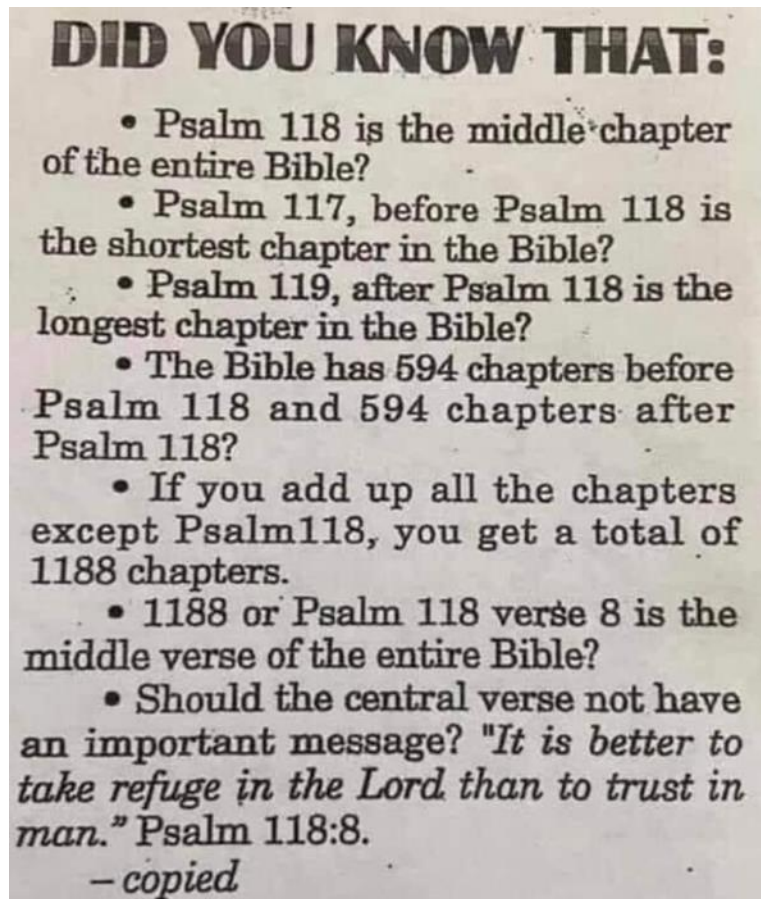
Anyone watching anything interesting on TV or whatever other device you might be using? I am still watching my panda boy grow. He is so cute! My cheetah cubs are getting very large. I have stayed away from Hallmark movies because I have discovered Netflix and Hulu. I can binge watch a show with the best of them. Does anyone have any suggestions for me or others? I also have discovered eBooks as my daughters gave me a kindle for Christmas. I can just email requests to my library to borrow a book to read. It is amazing what can be done with technology, This helps fill my days as much not as much watching for the deliveries from the Amazon person since the Christmas season is over.

I pray that everyone is staying warm this winter. I also hope warm weather comes early so that we can have the option of outdoor services. Time for me to go decide what TV series I want to watch next.

Stay safe-stay well-stay connected
cj

PS...useless and strange facts

Groundhogs have been used as informal weather predictors since 1887. Badgers were used in Europe first but none were found when they came to America so groundhogs were chosen instead. The Pennsylvania Dutch (and I thought we Episcopalians liked to party) used this day as an excuse to party hardy with friends and neighbors as February 2nd is about halfway to spring time,



DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- Psalm 118 is the middle chapter of the entire Bible?
- Psalm 117, before Psalm 118 is the shortest chapter in the Bible?
- Psalm 119, after Psalm 118 is the longest chapter in the Bible?
- The Bible has 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and 594 chapters after Psalm 118?
- If you add up all the chapters except Psalm 118, you get a total of 1188 chapters.
- 1188 or Psalm 118 verse 8 is the middle verse of the entire Bible?
- Should the central verse not have an important message? *"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."* Psalm 118:8.

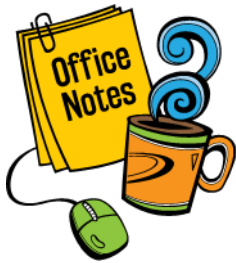
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February Birthdays

02/04 Jeanne Parker
02/13 Clare McCusker

February Anniversaries

02/08 Paul and Shirley Crosswaith



The deadline for the March issue is Tuesday, February 16. 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.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

February 7 Holy Eucharist
February 14 Morning Prayer led by CJ Puskarz
February 21 Holy Eucharist
February 28 Morning Prayer led by Karen Halpert



The Grace Church Book Club had its first Zoom gathering on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. There were a few glitches for people signing on but it turned to be a good beta test for our Zoom worship service the following Sunday! So all was not lost.

We finally were able to discuss *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate. The group enjoyed the book and the character development. It was an emotionally wrenching book inspired by a true story involving the Tennessee Children's Home Society scandal. They were responsible for the kidnapping and the selling of thousands of children in illegal adoptions. It is in the end a tale of love, loss and the bond of family and where we come from and belong.

There is a sequel to this book that we may read later this year. The sequel is *Before and After* by Judy Christie and Lisa Wingate.

Because we didn't have a December book club, the book we were to read for that is now our February book club read. Our February book club will be via Zoom again. The book we will be reading is *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith. The book club date is Wednesday, February 10 at 2 pm. Kathy Shoemaker will again send out the invitation with the link the day before.

Our book club is open to all. If you are interested in participating in our February discussion, please send an email to Debbie in the church office by February 1. Thanks and happy reading

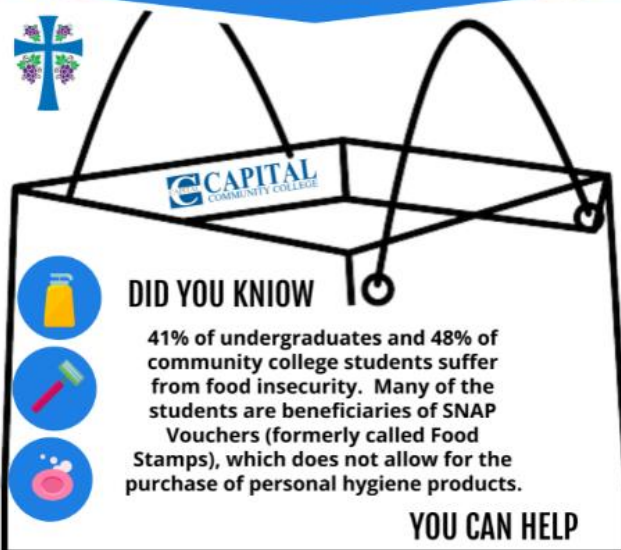
Melissa Haseley

2021 LENTEN OUTREACH PROJECT

We are going to participate in a project with our Cathedral and other parishes in the North Central Region. Did you realize that 48% of students from Community Colleges suffer food insecurities which include personal care and hygiene products? We are going to collect personal care and hygiene products. We will collect something different each of the weeks in Lent. Since we will not be gathering at church, you can leave them off at church in the Narthex when Debbie is working. I will leave bags for you to put things in them. If you don't feel safe coming to church, please call me at 860-833-0750 as I will be happy to come pick up the items at your house. You can leave them outside and I will get them. We are looking for full size products for all genders. The first week will be shampoo and conditioner. The second week will be razors, shaving cream, and deodorant. The third week lotions, body wash, toothpaste and toothbrushes. The fourth week feminine hygiene products, tampons, pads. The fifth week will be for large size Poise and Depends products. If you think of anything else, please feel free to include it. I will bring everything to the Cathedral right after Easter. The items are going to go to Capital Community College for their students and families of the students. There will be more information coming out later. I thank you in advance for any contributions that you can make. If you can't do shopping yourself, I will be happy to see that it gets done. I do pick-up at Stop and Shop as well as curbside pick-up at Target.

I will be hoping that starting Sunday February 21st thru Palm Sunday, March 28th, we will all try to donate items that will go to CCC in Hartford.

*Peace & Joy
Deacon CJ*



DID YOU KNOW

41% of undergraduates and 48% of community college students suffer from food insecurity. Many of the students are beneficiaries of SNAP Vouchers (formerly called Food Stamps), which does not allow for the purchase of personal hygiene products.

YOU CAN HELP

Christ Church Cathedral invites the Parishes in the North Central Region and it's members to collect weekly one personal care hygiene product for each week of Lent (February 17th to April 4th) to benefit Capital Community College (CCC) Food Pantry. Please share with your family, friends, and communities. The Director of the CCC Food Pantry has identified the most needed hygiene products:

- Soap
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Conditioner
- Men's and Women's Razors
- Feminine hygiene products
- Large size Poise and Depends products

Drop off for all collected items will be at our Cathedral from Wednesday, April 7th to Friday, April 9th, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Sunday April 11th 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more information contact Cathedral Deacon Bonnie Matthews at bmatthews228@comcast.net

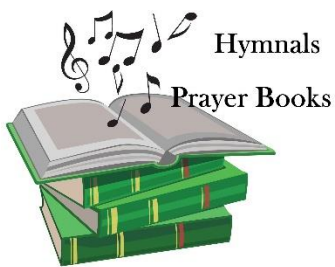
GRACE FUND



The "Grace Fund" is a collection started in 2014 as an in-house "outreach" program available to Parishioners with a temporary emergency need to help make ends meet. It was originally intended to be self-supporting by either special donations, or to perhaps be paid back when the emergency had passed.

Given the current unusual times of pandemic and unusual needs, the Grace Fund does have a limited balance that can be available. If anyone in the parish finds it impossible to pay an important bill, please contact either of your Wardens and perhaps Grace church can provide some limited assistance.

Sincerely, Mark Shoemaker, Treasurer



If you need a Prayer Book and/or Hymnal for home use, please contact the office. You can make arrangements to pick them up or arrangements can be made to deliver to your

home. There will also be a bin outside the church if you would like to stop by and pick them up outside of office hours.



Weather Closing

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



Creative Energy Team
February 2021

This is a little fun thing to do!

Quarantine Exercise: Can you find the names of sixteen (16) books of the Bible hidden in the paragraph below?

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a fluke). It kept people looking so hard for the facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the name of the books were not capitalized, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now.

There really are sixteen names of books hidden in this story!

As we start our new year of 2021 in uncertainty... We are beginning to plan our yearly tag sale. We will have two years' worth of items to sell this year. As of today we are tentatively planning for the end of April/beginning of May. This will all depend on where we are with the Coronavirus, vaccinations and, of course, the weather. We have been collecting items and still are collecting. This also includes clothing. Please place your boxed items or bagged clothing in the Nursery, Hallway upstairs or in the Room downstairs with all the boxes in it. Please be neat when placing items in any area. If you need help bringing any items to church please contact Lynn Page 860-667-1835 or Valerie Dumont 860-690-0727.

Stay safe and be well this month.

Please look up and like our Facebook page - Grace Episcopal Church-Newington



QUICK FINANCE UPDATE: DECEMBER 31, 2020

| | <u>DECEMBER OPERATIONS</u> | <u>Year to Date OPERATIONS</u> | <u>Year to Date BUDGET</u> | <u>TOTAL 2020 BUDGET</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pledge Income | \$ 5,999 | \$ 74,321 | \$ 79,304 | \$ 79,304 |
| <u>INCOME:</u> | \$ 8,618 | \$107,549 | \$ 118,534 | \$ 118,534 |
| <u>EXPENSES:</u> | (\$ 8,107) | (\$ 93,522) | (\$ 140,343) | (\$ 140,343) |
| <u>NET CHANGE:</u> | \$ 511 | \$ 14,027 | (\$ 21,809) | (\$ 21,809) |
| Checkbook Balance: | \$ 39,100 | | <i>End 2019 Checkbook:</i> \$ 22,206 | |

Lay Ministry Schedule
9:00 AM

| | February 7 | February 14 | February 21 | February 28 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | 3 rd Epiphany | Last Epiphany | 1 st Lent | 2 nd Lent |
| | Holy Eucharist | Morning Prayer | Holy Eucharist | Morning Prayer |
| Priest-in-Charge | Rev. Valerie Miller | | Rev. Valerie Miller | |
| | | | | |
| Deacon/LWL | Rev. CJ Puskarz | Rev. CJ Puskarz | Rev. CJ Puskarz | Rev. CJ Puskarz/ Karen Halpert |
| | | | | |
| LECTOR | Marie Ritchie | Karen Halpert | JoAnn Cromwell | Walt Parker |
| | | | | |
| PRAYERS | Karen Halpert | Marie Ritchie | Walt Parker | JoAnn Cromwell |
| | | | | |
| USHERS | Mark & Kathy Shoemaker | Nancy DiPrato Lorraine Belyea | Jane Stewart | Brandon & Kathy Johnson |
| | | | | |
| ALTAR GUILD | Kathy Shoemaker Elissa Schumann | Pat Rogorzenski Candy Casciano | Pat Rogorzenski Candy Casciano | Marie Ritchie Jane Stewart |
| | | | | |
| COUNTERS | | | | |
| | | | | |