

## FROM YOUR RECTOR

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:3-6)*

My Beloved Grace Church Family,

You truly are a remarkably gifted, gracious and loving community of the faithful at Grace Episcopal Church. 2023 marked an “almost return to normalcy” after the ravages of the worst parts of Covid-19. I say “almost return to normalcy,” because an event the scope of the pandemic forever changes life, not all of which is bad. Your resilience and perseverance in proclaiming the Gospel in Word and deed no matter the circumstances made way for a congregation steeped in love, grace, and hope. Or as St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, *we boast in our suffering or difficulties because difficulties produce endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.* (Romans 5:3-5)

In a full recovery of the ability to gather together, every Sunday (all 53 of them) and all feast and fast day worship services were offered in person. The same was true of meetings, Bible Study, youth, children’s ministries, outreach programs, and music rehearsals. But our stream team/video ministry, so crucial to our community during lock-downs, has become a vital outreach, offering a livestream video for those unable to attend worship. And for all of us who grew so tired of zoom, how easily and gratefully we now embrace it for meetings and Bible Study. Our outreach has gone far beyond the boundaries of our church buildings and the city of Glendora and state of California.

The same spirit of endurance that enabled our worship services under any and all circumstances was evident in our pursuit of an outstanding organist. Through ups and downs, disappointments and false starts, we persevered with piano for worship until God led us to the supremely talented organist, Thomas Mellan. Our Rosales Op. 3 organ roared back to life and goodness in worship on November 12, 2023.

Persevering in grace, our outreach ministries continued to make a difference. Food outreach thrived, whether through our Adopt-A-Lunch program or our various food drives that benefited local food bank, Shepherd’s Pantry. Our Hillside’s Toy Drive, Blood drives, Back to School Backpack blessings, the Blessing of the Animals, Valentine’s Day and Christmas Baskets for those who are alone, and outreach to the victims of the fires in Maui were highlights of the year.

My thanks to our Vestry for providing vision and leadership, and for their love and service of our church. And I thank all of you for the privilege as serving as your Rector. I am grateful for you, the blessed people of Grace Episcopal Church.

In Christ’s love,  
Rev. Susan



## SENIOR WARDEN

We had another great year at Grace Church. We've come out of the worst of the Covid pandemic, and although we're still facing many challenges and have a smaller regular congregation, we're still healthy and continuing to rebound.

Some of the highlights of our year:

In January we held our annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Red Cross blood drive; a great success thanks to Catie Anders' leadership.

In February, the youth took their annual trip to Mammoth for skiing, snowshoeing and fellowship, shepherded by our rector, Susan Scranton, and youth group leader Jade Petteruto. Our resident Boy Scout Troop 486 sponsored a Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and got a huge turnout of over 300 people.

Our annual Palm Saturday work party in April spruced things up nicely around the church property.

In May, the youth held a Mother's Day brunch (featuring "Mom-mosas") to honor the women of the congregation.

Susan unfortunately came down with Covid in June and we had to cancel a Sunday Eucharist at the last moment. I led Morning Prayer (assisted by Janet Kawamoto), which was kindly received by the congregation, which throughout the Covid pandemic has been so flexible and understanding. June also saw our annual "Donuts with Dad" Father's Day celebration.

July was Vacation Bible School month, led by Heather Moore and the Sunday School team. We had to resort again to Morning Prayer one Sunday when Susan was on vacation and our assisting priest, Jim Seipel, was ill.

After the relative calm of summer, things got busy again starting in August with our annual Blessing of the Backpacks and Welcome Back BBQ as the school year began.

November was a big month this year as we held our Stewardship Ingathering and welcomed our new organist, Thomas Mellon, about whom I have much more to say in the music director's report. Suffice it to say that he's a warm and wonderful presence in our midst as well as a fine musician, and we're very grateful he found his way to Grace Church.

As we came closer to the year's end, we noticed that things were looking a little scruffy on the campus, so we held a successful Advent work party that got things nicely cleaned up. Our well-attended Christmas services were full of music and joy.

All of this came amid the usual weekly worship, carried out by so many talented and dedicated people; monthly meeting of the vestry, who work hard to address your needs and concerns and keep Grace Church on a firm financial footing; and all the other activities of an active and devoted congregation.

In Christ's service,  
David Aldrete  
Senior Warden



## JUNIOR WARDEN

When I joined the Episcopal Church, I heard the following statement of unconditional welcome:

**Whoever you are, wherever you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome here.**

I absolutely believe this is a foundational and unifying belief here at Grace Church. I see this in action each time we share the sign of peace during service. Before joining Grace, I had never before seen people leaving the pews and passing the peace throughout the entire church. No one is left out; everyone is included and everyone is welcomed. This generous and inclusive nature is not just expressed/ demonstrated during worship. On my first day, self-proclaimed unofficial greeter, Margo made her way to me after service and invited/brought me (wouldn't take no for an answer) to hospitality. She linked arms with me and off we went to Baxter Hall. I knew in my heart that from that first sign of peace and my first time at hospitality that I was home.

I hope each member of our church feels welcomed, loved and celebrated for their diversity. This is truly the foundation of Grace Episcopal Church and is the bedrock upon which is rooted our deep belief that we are the church that love built. It is in this sacred space that we share with each other our time, our treasures and talents.

It is an honor to serve as your Junior Warden alongside our Senior Warden David Aldrete and the other vestry members. This opportunity has allowed me to give back in a big way to GEC from which I have gotten so much. The Junior Warden, also known as the peoples' warden, is charged with hearing from all voices of Grace Church and bringing them before the vestry at our monthly vestry meetings. In addition to other items, your vestry worked together to approve the installation of two new HVAC units for the church and hire a new cleaning service. Please know Vestry is always working hard to prayerfully address the various congregational and campus needs in fiscally responsible ways and in order of necessity. I'd like to thank Todd Rice for handling all the Building and Grounds needs.

Through conversations with many of you, I learned one main thing: we all love being a part of the Grace Church Family. Truly, each and everyone one of us brings unique gifts and experiences to our life together and strengthens us.

This year, we worshipped together, we served together, we celebrated and mourned together, and we supported each other as we walked in love as Christ loved us. We experienced life to the fullest together.

This year, besides our weekly services and Bible study we had fantastic events here at Grace. Some of these included: the Blessing of Backpacks, the Blessing of Animals, Vacation Bible school, Youth Sunday, the youth trip to Mammoth, Senior Sunday, advent wreath making, our Ingathering celebration, parish work parties, receptions hosted by hospitality and outreach to both Shepherd's Pantry and Hillsides. We are a busy and vibrant community.

Perhaps one of the biggest celebrations was that, after three years of searching and prayer, we welcomed Thomas Mellan as our new organist. When the organ's first note filled the church, the fantastic melodies added to our worship experience as we all made a joyful noise together. A genuine sense of awe and wonder filled the sanctuary as the organ music poured over us and the choir lead us in song. It is truly a gift to have Thomas share his musical talents with us.

I'd like to thank Rev. Susan for faithfully and beautifully playing the piano in each and every worship service while we searched for Thomas over the years. Your musical talents lift our hearts and spirits. Thank you again.



Also, I'd like to thank each and every ministry for their contribution to our life together. There are too many to list but know that each of you and all the ministries at Grace are valued and appreciated more than you know

Thank you so much for allowing me to serve you.

With love and gratitude,  
Lucie Pelleriti  
Jr. Warden

## **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

As we accelerate right through January with eyes wide open and into the optimistic possibilities of 2024, business as usual is how I would describe the ongoing stewardship of our church facilities. There is always plenty to do and fortunately, we are blessed with so many passionate talented members who roll up their sleeves and gracefully share their personal expertise. Everything we do requires time, talent and money. We're exceptionally rich in talent, time and money is always the challenge, but together as a team we've stayed on top of regular maintenance and quickly respond to immediate needs.

Sharing our facilities required a higher level of cleaning service, so we contracted with the professional team at Higgins Carpet Care. Wendy and Jeff Higgins are wonderful to work with and the team that comes in during the week is doing an exceptional job. (Nancy Approves!) We are fortunate to have them and I hope you have noticed the difference.

This year we need to paint and address termite damage where needed. Arrangements for termite inspection will be handled through the front office in collaboration with Pete Tuzzolino our painting contractor.

Then there are the two big projects we need to start factoring into our future plans. We have a parking lot that is severely aggregated and a traditional slurry is not going to fix it. It's not an immediate need, but will become a bigger issue in the future. The same with our beautiful south facing stained glass windows. They show signs of fatigue, leak, and are desperately in need of care and maintenance. We have talked about both of these and I am just pointing it out again, so we start planning sooner than later.

While enjoying our beautiful facility, please keep your eyes open to things that just don't look right and bring it to my attention. The sooner the better when it comes to maintenance issues.

My best - Todd



## HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

It is my belief that hospitality is about loving others through Christ and making people feel special! That is what hospitality is all about at Grace Episcopal Church in Glendora!

Every Sunday, we have coffee, tea and a special treat for our “Baxter Buddies” who meet together in Baxter Hall to celebrate after the worship service, sharing their weekly activities and sharing their lives with their friends at Grace Episcopal Church. Many of our members have been friends for decades and enjoy talking, socializing and sometimes even discussing and debating with their very dear friends. I love watching our “Baxter Buddies” enjoying their time fellowship time together. It makes my heart happy.

I have a phenomenal committee of volunteers, who work effortlessly to serve the church in any way they possible can, making treats, working in the kitchen, washing dishes, etc. I want to thank Donna McAlmond, Pat McAlmond, Linda Rice, Susan Sherman, Lucie Pelleriti and Susie Seielstad. I also have another back up team that is always ready to help when we need more manpower. Thank you Nancy Rice, Janese Grady, Liz Sandona and Lynn Colley. I am truly blessed to have a wonderful support team sharing their hospitality and talents with the members of Grace Episcopal Church Hospitality Ministry.

My hospitality team enjoys spending time working together, laughing, making memories, and enjoying each other’s company. I could not ask for a better group to be a part of at Grace Episcopal Church.

My team hosted hospitality 11 times this past year, we helped 3 times with Vestry functions, (Annual Meeting, Church Picnic, and Welcome Back Barbecue), and hosted 5 Memorial services this year. We have been very busy and blessed to be able to serve our church.

Respectfully submitted by  
Debbi England, Hospitality Chair

## OUTREACH MINISTRY

Grace church has a thriving Outreach Ministry. In January 2023, we did our annual Red Cross blood drive. During this drive, 20 donors registered and 21 units were collected. It was so successful that the Red Cross asked us to host another drive in July because the blood supply is very low. For this drive, 13 donors were scheduled and 17 units collected. Both of these were successful and the Red Cross thanks us. The church collects food weekly for Shepherds Pantry. Additionally, we had a special Reverse Advent food drive, aimed at maximizing our food collection while enjoying the fun of an Advent Calendar. As we continually collect food for the needy, please remember that anyone can contribute non-perishable food or hygiene items and many do.

In August, our congregation stepped up and spontaneously made a sizable donation to Episcopal Relief and Development to help those who lost so much in the fires in Maui.

We also ensured that the children and young adults at Hillsides in Pasadena had a Merry Christmas. Over \$1,600 was collected and gift cards were bought through our scrip program. Toys were also given.



Once a month, Grace Church makes 50 sack lunches for the homeless at Pasadena Union Station. Everyone is welcome to sign up to bring items for the lunches or just show up to put everything in the bags.

For a small congregation we do a lot. There are so many people in this congregation who contribute and help, that everyone is a member of this ministry whether you know it or not. Thank you to everyone.

I would like to try something new this year.

Respectfully submitted by  
Debbie Pullen

## **HILLSIDES in Pasadena**

We had our first gift drive since COVID came on the scene and what a wonderful response we had. This year we decided to go with gift cards, making it not only easier for our parishioners and Hillsides being able to purchase exactly a child's wishes, but it also benefited Grace Episcopal Church by the majority of cards being bought through script. A win-win!

The total amount raised was \$1,730. In addition to this, we had some gifts in my box, as well as a wonderful assortment of yarn, generously donated by Karen Huss. I could not believe the boxes of yarn, which the girls at Hillsides will certainly enjoy.

Thank you all so very much for opening up your hearts and being so generous. Hillsides was absolutely delighted when I took out gifts to them.

Patricia Coppack

## **LITURGICAL MINISTRIES**

### **PARISH CHOIR**

*Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises.*

Psalm 47:6

This year has been another blessed year for all of us in the Parish Choir. Those of you who hear the music on Sunday may not realize that the Choir members devote each Thursday night and several other additional rehearsals to our music ministry. Without this effort, our music program would not be what it is today, and I thank each and every member of the choir for this extraordinary effort.

We started our year off with Reverend Susan as our accompanist, playing for our Thursday rehearsals and the Sunday services. We are grateful that she was able to step in and share her talent with us. I know she enjoyed getting back to her musical roots. I want to thank her for her devotion and her hard work for the last year and her support of the music program in general.

In November, we were blessed to find and hire Thomas Mellan as our organist. Thomas comes to us with many accolades. He is a very talented organist and musician and fits right in with our crazy fun bunch of characters! We are so pleased to have him with us.



We brought the year to a close with the glorious music of our Savior's birth, celebrating with our Christmas Eve service at 5pm.

I want to thank Marilyn and the bell quartet for their devotion and the diversity they bring to the music program here at Grace.

We look forward to glorious music and fellowship in the upcoming year.

In Christ's service,  
David Aldrete  
Choirmaster

## **USHERS MINISTRY**

Being an usher at Grace Episcopal Church is not only rewarding, but it is an enjoyable service that allows us to give back to our members. This is a special calling that allows you to support the Church membership in a very positive way, ensuring the safety and comfort to all who attend Grace, and lastly assist members who need a lending hand or support during the service. The last few years have been challenging with Covid and the declining support network, but we will continue to be on the front line to keep everyone safe and compliant. As always, we try to bring a smile to everyone's face by wearing Hawaiian shirts and dress to the nines for more formal services.

We extend our most sincere thanks to all members of the ministry including Carl Colley, Rick Sandona, Alex McKenzie, Todd Rice, Micah Palpant, and Rob Van Derbur. A very special thanks to our Junior Usher Evie Palpant and others who pull double duty as choir members, sound engineers, and acolytes. It's been a tough few years and we can use your help to support Grace's services – No experience necessary.

If you are interested in becoming one that can give back to our Church and parishioners, please let us know. All are very welcome in becoming an Usher.

With great thanks for those called Grace Ushers,  
Alex McKenzie



## ACOLYTE MINISTRY

One of the first things that I told the Acolytes and I try to remind them is “this is your ministry”, and they continue to take that to heart. They are the ones that make this Ministry successful; my role is just to provide them the tools and guidance that they need to accomplish it. 2023 saw the creation and introduction of a new tool: the Grace Episcopal Church Acolyte Manual. There was a lot of thought and love poured into this new Manual and I hope they find it useful and helpful. The manual has been made available to them with their own hard copies, as well as a virtual copy posed on the Acolyte Page of the Church Website for all to see.

Each one of the Acolytes has stepped up to serve and do their part to ensure successful worship services every week. They continue to learn and adapt as I keep throwing more responsibilities their way, learning new roles, and adjusting as things change on a regular basis.

This is a great group to work with and there is no way that I can do justice in this report for their hard work and dealing with new and unexpected situations on a regular basis. As well as stepping up to help each other out and make sure that everything is covered when there are schedule conflicts and unforeseen situations. The more experienced members have done a wonderful job mentoring the younger members as they begin to learn new responsibilities even while adjusting to greater responsibilities themselves.

I would like to offer a thanks to each one of our Acolytes who serve week after week: April Moore, McKenna Parra, Karen Williamson, Mitchell Patterson, Morgan Patterson, Claire Wainwright, Oliver Wainwright, Elizabeth Anders, Amelie Palpant, and Ethan Seielstad. It is my hope that in 2024 we can convince some of our other bright young Parishioners to join this Ministry.

2023 also saw the retirement of one of our Outstanding Acolytes who have moved on to the next phase of his life: Garrett Patterson. Thank you for your service in this ministry over the years. We are forever grateful and look forward to seeing what the future has in store for you!

I would also like to Thank Rev. Susan; while the Acolytes’ role is to support her during the service, she has also been a support through constant changes to make sure that they have everything needed to be successful. I would also like to thank the other ministries that work together to make each and every service successful and special: The Lay Eucharistic Ministers, the Altar Guild, the Ushers and the Parish Choir. Each of these other ministries has played a role working with the Acolytes, and it is a joy to have all the ministries working together so smoothly and successfully. Finally, I would like to thank all the parents for all their support in communicating and making sure the Acolytes arrive on time.

Thank you to all our Acolytes. I look forward to the exciting and dynamic year that 2024 promises to be, and to continue working together in this successful ministry

In Christ’s Love,  
Jared Anders  
Acolyte Master



## ALTAR GUILD

2023 saw us back in the church for our worship services. It was nice to know, however, that our Covid-19 worship experiences which saw us take the altar on the road, enabled us to expertly offer the planned outdoor service of the Blessing of the Animals in Baxter Hall due to weather. The truth is that Altar Guild responsibilities remain the same regardless of where worship takes place: to prepare the altar for worship and care for the sacred vessels and vestments. Like our ancestors in the faith, going all the way back to the Old Testament, our many vessels and vestments required care. Silver and brass items were regularly cleaned and polished, linens were laundered and chalices and candles cleaned, inspected, and made ready for the next service.

We have moved most of the regular care and set-up for services to Sundays, with altar guild members setting up the already prepared trays on Sunday mornings before services, and then cleaning up and setting up for the next weeks' services after the 10:00 AM service. Of course there were mid-week jaunts to the French Hand laundry and brass cleaning sessions when necessary. My thanks to Altar Guild members Debbie Pullen, Janese Grady, Patricia Meyer, Dawn Mellon, Cathy St. Onge, Cassy Shields, and Jon Sharp. Additional thanks go to Alex McKenzie, Frank Boyd, Todd Rice, Stephen Rice, and Jared Anders for helping with the heavy lifting, putting up of the wall hangings, and the scariest of all – veiling the large and high Jesus.

It is incredibly rewarding to stand at our Lord's altar and lovingly care for it. I invite others who would enjoy this ministry to join the Altar Guild team. Please see me if you are interested.

Respectfully submitted by  
Patricia Meyer  
Altar Guild Directress

## HANDBELL CHOIR

The members of the Sounds of Grace Handbell Quartet are talented, dedicated ringers and are always ready for a new challenge. They played for many church services during 2023 and for the Glendora Mayor's Prayer Breakfast. This coming April, they have been invited back to once again play for the breakfast, and all of you are invited to come enjoy the breakfast, gather in prayer as a community, and hear the music. Shortly before Christmas, the quartet enjoyed spending time at Serento Casa, a Senior Living facility, while sharing a Christmas program with the residents. As per usual, when we go on the road, it means toting tables, pads, music, and multiple cases of bells and chimes: all in the life of a handbell musician and we love it.

My thanks to Jared Anders, Crystal Hoffman, Jade Petteruto, and Susan Scranton for their time, talent, and dedication to keep the bells ringing. I look forward to more happy ringing.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn Scranton  
Handbell Director



## LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS AND LECTORS

Our LEMs continue to adapt as circumstances change in response to the waxing and waning of the Covid virus. We're mostly back at the altar rail and most of us have ceased to use masks, though gloves and hand sanitizer are still part of our regular routine.

Our current LEMs are: David Aldrete, Jared Anders, Frank Boyd, Miles Bresee, Pam Bryant, Janet Kawamoto, Pat Meyer, Bobbi Patterson, Debbie Pullen, Todd Rice.

Our readers (lectors) do a great job of delivering Old Testament and New Testament lessons and leading the Prayers of the People. With the late-2023 advent of our new organist, we shifted back to chanting the Psalm, making the first reader's assignment a little shorter.

Our current readers are: David Aldrete, Stacey Aldrete, Jared Anders, Frank Boyd, Miles Bresee, Lynn Colley, Janet Kawamoto, Laurel McKenzie, Bobbi Patterson, Lucie Pelleriti, Jade Petteruto, and Jon Sharp.

We could use some new LEMs and lectors, if anyone feels called to join this ministry. If you're interested, please see me or the rector to learn about requirements and responsibilities. I especially invite young people to step up as lectors – many of you do a great job on youth Sundays and in special presentations, so if you're comfortable reading in church and would be interested in doing so on a regular basis, please let me know, either at church or by email at [jskawamoto@gmail.com](mailto:jskawamoto@gmail.com) or phone at 213.220.5566.

On behalf of Grace Church, I thank our LEMs and lectors for their faithful service.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Kawamoto  
LEM/Lector coordinator

## **THE MEGABYTE MINISTRY ~ IT, WEBPAGE AND FACEBOOK** **[www.GraceGlendora.org](http://www.GraceGlendora.org)**

We have found that a positive presence on social media and a strong webpage helps our church grow. It is interesting to talk with our newest members who clearly check our online presence before stepping into the Church.

Our Web Page is an ongoing effort of the entire GEC staff. We keep the calendars up to date with current events, photographs fresh and timely, and we try to poke all the other ministries of GEC to keep their page fresh and timely. It is a big effort to keep the system up and going, but it does have a silent payoff of attracting new membership to the Church.

I extend a special thanks to Bobbi Patterson for her input on Facebook and Instagram. These are the two most dynamic social media tools we use. Often posting occurs during actual services as events are occurring. In fact, our highest "hit" of the year was the posting of the arrival of Thomas Mellan, our new organist in November on the day of his arrival.

So, like our live stream, this is the 21st Century for GEC and the way we effectively reach into our community to get known and become inviting. Thank you for all your support.

Rick Sandona  
Webmaster  
Gigabyte Ministry



## FLOWER GUILD

Thank you to our 2023 Flower Guild: Denise Barcelo, Rosann Kindt, Amelie Palpant, Hannah Palpant, Liz Sandona, Marilyn Scranton, Susie Seielstad, Nancy Rice, Todd Rice and Peggy Wallace. Denise Barcelo joined the guild this year and she is a pleasure to work with! It is wonderful having her join our group! We have said good-bye to Peggy Wallace from her weekly scheduled hours but she enjoys coming back to help for large celebrations and feast days. We have also said good-bye to Tricia Coppack this year, a past director and longtime member of our guild.

The Flower Guild worked to make Memorial Services beautiful with flowers and memorial photos. (These additional services are separate to our regular Sunday services.) We had memorial services for Doug Rice (January), Paul Meinholz (March), Candace Goble from Transfiguration (July), Gene Haynes (September), and Donna Petrokowitz (October) this year. We take pride in helping to make these services beautiful; meeting with the families, purchasing the flowers adding personal touches, and coordinating flowers and displays for the receptions in Baxter Hall. We also display other flowers that are delivered by friends and loved ones.

The Flower Guild has adopted an outreach to deliver flowers or candy on Valentine's Day to our parishioners that no longer have a living spouse. It brings me great joy to create and deliver something on a day that may be silently dreaded and to bring a smile to their faces. Thank you to Janese Grady and Penny Wallace who helped me deliver 16 flower arrangements in 2023. I appreciate your help so much!

This past December we expanded our outreach to bring a special basket to those who are alone at Christmas. Thank you to Denise Barcelo, Debbi England, Donna McAlmond, Laurel McKenzie, Susan Scranton for the homemade baked goods and Liz Sandona for chocolates for the baskets. We made, assembled and delivered 23 baskets!! It was a lovely sentiment to show our love for those that may be missing loved ones they have lost at Christmastime. A labor of love.

I would like to thank Rev. Susan for her support and help to juggle my budget when the guild has new ideas. Thank you to Todd Rice for his vision using succulents, rocks, and adding driftwood to our season of Lent. I would also like to thank Jared Anders for helping with the palms on Palm Sunday as he adds the palms to the center aisle. Thank you to Rosann Kindt and Bobbi Patterson for planting and maintaining the gardens in front of the church. Rosann also weeds and fertilizes whenever needed and lends her hand to keep the planters beautiful.

I enjoy working with this amazing group when we come together to create and show our love in our creations. We spend time purchasing the flowers, preparing our containers and creating our arrangements to add beauty for our church services and other festivities. We have so much fun working together and I am truly blessed by their love and commitment to this ministry. If anyone would like to join our ministry, please talk with one of our Flower Guild members. There is no experience necessary!

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Rice  
Flower Guild Director



## GEC LIVE STREAM TEAM MINISTRY

We are the little engine that never gives up. Starting in the midst of Covid-19 on March 15, 2019 your stream team have been there weekly for all of you to maintain that connection to our Church. Learning sometimes as we go, we have kept the camera rolling to do our best to capture the very heart of every service.

This year we said some heartfelt goodbyes as Nathaniel Olmos and Nolan Frymer as they graduated from High School and both went on to college. We are proud to say that Nathaniel not only found a new Church near his college in Tennessee, but he has brought with him his streaming knowledge to share and support their weekly effort of streaming their services. Leaving some large shoes to fill, Mizuki Williamson has stepped up to be the Streaming Producer and has trained Ethan Seielstad to be our #1 cameraman. Both are doing an excellent job at the system to produce our weekly productions. Our thanks to these two for stepping up to the challenge of learning something new and different.

The Stream Team is open to all members of GEC. We provide all the training and technical know-how. We are open to new ideas and challenges and we encourage you, if you have the slightest interest, to join us back in the video booth on any Sunday. Thank you for your support and interest.

With colored wires, camera and action,

Rick Sandona

GEC Stream Team

## EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

### BIBLE STUDY

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

(John 1:1)

I can think of nothing more rewarding than studying the “word” of the Word. The Wednesday morning Bible Study is a long-running study that has continued for more than 30 years, transcending both members and the rectors of Grace Episcopal Church. The shape and direction of the Bible Study has seen different foci, but its purpose of understanding God’s Word has never changed.

2023 saw us firmly in hybrid mode. Actually an unlikely gift of the Covid years, our hybrid in-person/zoom study has allowed for greater participation while eliminating the problems of transportation and distance, even as far away as Texas.

During the year, we enjoyed studying Ezra/Nehemiah, Jonah, and Philippians from cover to cover. Taking a slightly different approach, we used Adam Hamilton’s book and video series, John: The Gospel of Light and Life, to read through the entire book of John during the 40 days of Lent. We took an in-depth look at John’s prologue from whence comes the famous lines, *in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. Additionally, we took a thematic look at Jesus’ seven signs, his “I am” sayings, and the extended scenes Maundy Thursday through Jesus’ resurrection. We challenged the congregation to join us in reading through John’s Gospel during Lent. Away from the direct study of a single book, we enjoyed Hamilton’s book/video entitled Why: Making Sense of God’s Will, and during Advent we engaged the Christmas story and all that led up to it through a book entitled An Unlikely Advent: Extraordinary People of the Christmas Story by Rachel Billups.



We learned much, enjoyed sharing our experiences with one another, and hopefully gained a deeper understanding of the Bible and our faith. Please feel free to join us on Wednesday mornings either in person or on zoom.

In Christ's love,  
Rev. Susan +

## YOUTH GROUP 2023

In 2023, our youth group at Grace saw many new opportunities to grow closer together as both believers and friends, and solidify the special bonds of friendship that only sharing faith can bring. We have lifted each other up, supported each other, and celebrated each other through another year of new experiences and memories.

In the past year, our youth came together for some wonderful events and experiences, including the 30-Hour Famine sleepover, Rubel Castle tour, Easter cleaning prep & candy egg filling, participating in Mother's Day and Father's Day services, our annual summer beach trip, a successful bake sale fundraiser, a memorable ski trip to Mammoth, a church camping trip and countless games and outdoor activities during our onsite meetings.

We saw two of our longtime and beloved youth group members, Nathaniel Olmos and Garrett Patterson, graduate in May of last year and move on to college. We also welcomed one new sixth grader to the group, Ethan Seielstad. Ethan has made an awesome addition to our rowdy bunch. I've been blessed to watch these young people strengthen their bonds with one another, their community, and their faith as we've been able to spend more time together now that the pandemic is fully in the rear-view mirror.

Looking ahead in 2024, I am excited to continue our activities and do more to impact our surrounding community. Although I am sad that we will be saying goodbye to another senior this year, Mizuki Williamson, I know our group will continue to grow in Christ's love and cherish these opportunities for fellowship for the rest of their lives.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jade Petteruto  
Youth Director



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

2023 saw great learning and fellowship in Sunday School. We started with the story of Moses and the exodus, took a deep dive into the story of King David during our VBS program, and ended the year with the story of Jesus' birth. In June we graduated two students, Jayden and Ethan, as they moved up to middle school and youth group. With about ten students, our Sunday School is small but vibrant. We start each Sunday with prayer and song, followed by our story and a craft. We enjoyed making shofars to bring down the walls of Jericho, Jonah's big fish surrounding the classroom door, and (my favorite) Samson grass heads. A big thank you to Micah Palpant for sharing the teaching duties, assisting with the Advent Pageant, and helping construct the big fish.

With the congregation's support we have wanted for nothing, and we are especially grateful to the parish for their donation of materials for a very successful VBS program. Fourteen campers joined us for the four evening program. A big thank you goes out to all who helped with decorations, dinners, and running the various learning stations. The water bounce house made a very welcome return this year and has become an exciting tradition for our kiddos.

In 2024, we look to continue learning about our faith and what God wants us to do in our lives with a focus on Jesus' life and work. We will keep sharing what we have learned in church and participating in service. If you know of any families looking for a warm, supportive space to raise their children in their Christian faith, please consider sharing all about our little Sunday school program with them. We welcome any and all new friends!

Submitted in faith and hope,  
Heather Moore



# TREASURER'S REPORT

Grace Family,

This is my first Treasurer's Report for 2023 as Treasurer for Grace Episcopal Church.

May I say at the outset, 'What a year!!!' In March, our Vestry approved a deficit budget. Perhaps not unusual for some organizations, but as one whose career as financial manager and investment advisor...runs against everything I have held dear...fiscal responsibility. However, it was the expected reality of where we were earlier last year. We lost several longtime members of our Church due to death, relocation, some not returning due to COVID, inheritances by heirs with no ties to Grace, etc. On the expense side, a couple of major line items were the search for a permanent organist, and mandatory contribution to our Diocesan Mission Share Fund.

Fast forward to the end of the year... Pledges and unexpected donations, and less than budgeted expenses. While an organist was budgeted, our search did not settle on one until we found Thomas Mellan. His salary did not 'hit' our expenses until mid-November; so that budget line items went without cost for almost 11 ½ months... a boon to our bottom line. During and at the end of the year, we received some unexpected large donations, which on the income side... positively boosted our financial position.

During the course of putting together the 2023 budget, Vestry thoughtfully and prayerfully considered several major factors. Rev. Susan, the Parish Administrator, and the Choirmaster had not had a raise in almost 5 years. There is a tremendous amount of work Susan, the Parish Administrator, and the Choirmaster do... which is not a 'Monday thru Friday 9-5' job. Vestry felt they needed to be compensated and in as prudent a manner as possible, brought up to date with competitive compensation. Another, as previously mentioned, was establishing a salary to recruit an organist.

Grace is fortunate to be in much better fiscal shape than some of the other churches in the Diocese. We are subject to many of the economic challenges as are individuals. It is with the current economic environment we will have another deficit budget; although not on the same order as last year. We will use a portion of the generous donations to minimize our shortfall... allowing for the remainder to be kept in reserve for the future, if necessary.

In conclusion, please see the following documents that make up the rest of the Treasurer's Report:

1. Income Statement ending 12/31/2023
2. Balance Sheet ending 12/31/2023
3. Fund Accounts ending 12/31/2023
4. Scrip Income Report ending 12/31/2023
5. 2024 Budget

Faithfully Submitted,

Miles Bresee  
Treasurer