

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Parish Meeting

7 January 2023



Grace Memorial Episcopal Church

Ancient prayers. Joyful worship.

Agenda

Prayer & Welcome

Recognitions

Previous Year Parochial Report

By-Law Update (pg. 8)

Election of Vestry (pg. 10)

Reports & Discussion

Rector's Comments

Closing Prayer

Thank you, Current Vestry!

Lessy Nixon (Senior Warden)

Sharon Davis (Junior Warden)

Gloria Cardwell

Linda Carroll

Marsha Cooper

Ronda Spinner

From the Senior Warden:

New Year Greetings and Blessing to you All!

As I reflect back on the past year, you might be surprised to know that my most significant memory of 2023 at Grace Memorial is what I privately refer to as “The Flood.” In July, the surrounding Lynchburg area was inundated with rain over a period of several days. Our faithful leader, Alan, was on a well deserved vacation. When I was notified about the water, which was standing, in the old parish hall, the call came from Vestry members who had discovered it. By the time I arrived on the scene, they had swung into action. There were perhaps a half dozen folks there working with wet vacs, emptying out old Sunday school rooms and utilizing dehumidifiers to remove moisture from the air.

The next day was a Sunday. We held services that day to the sound of wet vacs downstairs as we worshipped. We came dressed to work and asked those attending to come back and join us for an afternoon of continued clean-up. Many hands and hearts continued to be available throughout the next week as we dried, sorted, and threw away (a LOT was thrown away!) I was so grateful for those who stayed and contributed much of their Sunday afternoon to make sure the space was as clean as we could make it.

This was a moment in our Life together as a community that speaks volumes about our commitment to Grace Memorial. We respond. We work hard. We care about each other and this place. We don't turn our backs on something that has symbolized the Love that our Lord has drawn us each to. This was missional work, in every sense of the word.

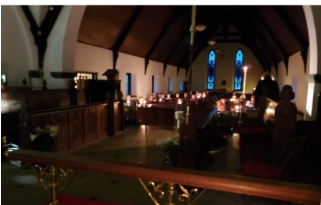
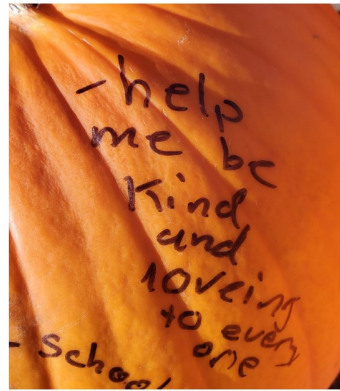
If I were to ask you all what your significant memory of Grace Memorial of 2023 is, you would each have a different story to tell. I would love to hear them. If you are so inclined, send me an email anytime and let me know what it is.

There will continue to be greater challenges than even water in our common Life together in the future. I believe that our response will be just as fulfilling. We will work hard. We will show up. And we will love with all of our Hearts those both inside and outside of this place, as we have been called to do.

In His Peace,
Lessy Nixon

Out-going Vestry Members

Lessy Nixon
Gloria Cardwell
Marsha Cooper



Notes from the Junior Warden

As the chairperson of the Building and Grounds Committee, I would like to thank the congregation, and the committee for their support in 2023.

It is the Buildings and Grounds Committee's responsibility to maintain any/all repairs of the buildings and grounds. This could mean a person in the parish taking on a "fix-it" task, or calling a repair person for more complicated work. We have been so fortunate to have committee members that can do most tasks. By having committee members and other able parishioners completing the tasks, it saves money for our Church.

We would also like to thank the people who have continued to give to Grace Memorial Church. Without you we would not be able to have repairs done. Maintaining our beautiful facilities is a priority for the Vestry and this committee.

Having and maintaining this beautiful Church is so important for some of the following reasons:

1. A beautiful and functional place to gather is an important part of our worship
2. Anyone who visits can also enjoy the beauty of our Church and the glory of our services.
3. Our facilities are not just for "us," but a place for others to hold meetings and possibly come to visit during a service.
4. Even the outside lawns and plants are kept as appealing as possible, to entice others to come inside.

These are just a few of the reasons that we maintain the buildings and grounds. If you would like to be a member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, please contact one of committee members.

Faithfully,
Sharon Davis

Building and Grounds Committee:

Sharon Davis
George Klacynski
Fred Fralick
Dan Warden
Linda Carroll
Ronda Spinner
Martin Tolhoek
John Guenther

Items completed by Buildings and Grounds in 2023

1. Parish Hall floor was repaired, stripped, cleaned, and waxed.
2. Old, unfunctional pianos in Parish Hall and Undercroft were removed.
3. Lighting was added to the East parking lot (along the planting beds near the atrium entrance) for more security and safety at night.
4. Window leaking from the Cloister windows was repaired.
5. First aid kits were added to kitchen and replaced under the automatic defibrillator.
6. Drainage runoff outside Parish Hall entrance was addressed. Gravel was laid to address splashing and erosion.
7. Hole in concrete sidewalk in front of rear narthex was filled.
8. Iron railings and handrails around courtyard window well and Education Wing entrance stripped, prepped, and repainted.
9. Old electrical/GFI receptacle was replaced in kitchen.
10. Upstairs classroom was repainted and new furniture installed.
11. Fire Alarm system died and was replaced. A new system panel and batteries were installed.
12. Several Fire Exit signs and emergency lights were experiencing electrical issues and were repaired.
13. Parlor Renovation was begun (note: this project was coordinated by the committee, but funds were available from the dedicated Memorials Fund, per the Vestry's approval.
14. Parlor Ceiling was replaced with new lighting and wiring
15. Parlor walls and trim have been prepped and painted
16. Parlor received new carpeting.
17. New furniture was added to the Parlor
18. Flooding in Undercroft: After initial clean up, floors were cleaned and dehumidifiers were placed to draw water and moisture from the hall. The source of the flooding was investigated. Several potential sources have been identified and estimates for possible preventative work have been received and are being considered. To date, no other water has been seen in the affected areas
19. A new HVAC maintenance contract with Donald Inge was recommended and approved by the Vestry.

BY-LAW UPDATE

Background

As our parish and global Christian communities have changed, we have felt that impact here at Grace Memorial. Not only is the core of our community smaller, but the groups and committees which support that work do not reflect the reality imagined for them even a few years ago and often struggle to fill the expected complement of participants. While we have introduced a great deal of flexibility into serving on the Vestry, we operate with many “vacant” positions.

In addition to discussions about who might be willing, able, or well-chosen to serve on Vestry, the Vestry had been discussing for some time the need to reduce the number of Vestry members required by our most recent by-laws. The number had been 9, but there was discussion whether a “right size” of 6 or 7 Vestry members would better reflect the current makeup our community. Other parishes and dioceses have also been looking at this issue; language was seen in another parish by-law update to allow for flexible numbers (“no less than 6 and no more than 9”). The Vestry liked this idea and suggested the change. The diocese suggested even more flexibility was being investigated locally in other parishes and Grace Memorial’s Vestry is now suggesting a change to allow for a composition of “no more than 9” members. This prevents us from always looking for a “right size” which may or may not be achieved in any given year, but focusing on only seeking the thoughtful, prayerful leaders that Grace seems to continue producing.

According to our by-laws, any changes therein must be approved by the congregation at a Parish Meeting. The Vestry has approved the by-law change below to be presented to the parish for discussion and is recommending its approval. Two other factual/typographical errors are corrected in another section of the by-laws and are also presented for approval at the Annual Parish Meeting. Below you will see a “red-line” version with both original and amended language, as well as an amended version with only the updated language.

ARTICLE III — OFFICIALS AND DELEGATES

VESTRY:

The Vestry shall consist of no more than nine (9) persons. Members of the Vestry are to be elected for up to a three-year term. Having served a ~~three-year term~~ three (3) consecutive years, no member is eligible for re-election until the expiration of one (1) year. The Vestry may elect to override this requirement for a member for one additional three-year term before the member is ineligible for re-election for one (1) year.

WARDENS AND OTHER OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION:

1. Senior Warden and Junior Warden from the membership of the Vestry. Duties of the Wardens are set forth in Canon 12, Section 8. In addition to the duties as outlined in Canon 12, it is hereby, specifically provided that it shall be the duty of the Junior Warden to supervise and/or provide for ordinary care and maintenance to the church property for all repairs or maintenance with an expenditure of ~~\$800~~ \$1,000 or less per event, without resort to permission from the Vestry, as if the Vestry had specifically given its permission and provided for such.
2. Recorder of the Vestry. The duties of the Recorder are as listed in Canon 12, Section ~~40~~ 9. It is hereby, specifically provided that the Secretary of the Vestry need not be specifically elected from the Vestry membership.

*Election of
New Vestry Members*



*Judy Gibson
Martin Tolhoek*

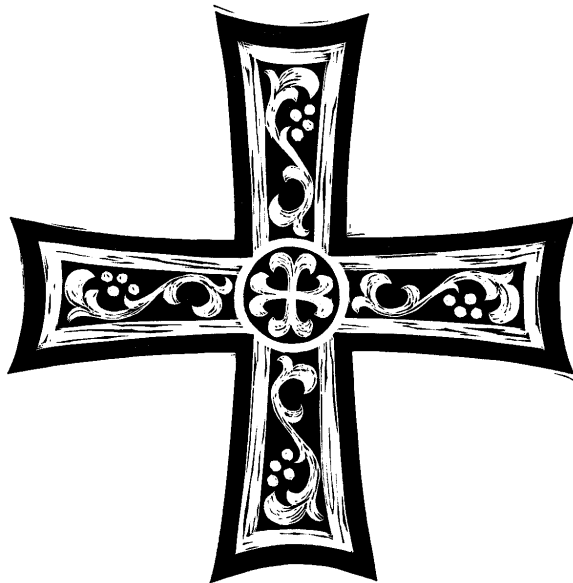
Fellowship

As my term on vestry comes to an end this year, I want to thank everyone for any help and support you have given in relation to fellowship activities. I have served mainly in this role with fellowship activities in regards to Cuppa Grace. The fellowship committee has been able to provide this fellowship with the help of a small group of parishioners, currently we have had six or seven individuals/families who are regularly participating, after the 10AM service. We have a regular schedule for those individuals and families who are willing to participate as hosts.

This past year, we have been able to start back with several church lunches. It has been great to begin reconnecting with others as well as welcoming newcomers.

Stocking the kitchen with necessary items and arranging the schedule for Cuppa Grace are a few of the activities I have helped coordinate. I have also helped with special event receptions here at church such as dinners, baptisms, and funerals. I have also been available to help with last minute jobs such as moving furniture or helping to clean up from flooding.

-Marsha Cooper



Outreach Report

December 2022 -December 2023

The Covid-19 pandemic still remained a part of our everyday lives as we prepared for the Christmas season and the New Year. Although many of us put aside the masks, others were still cautious about mingling with others outside of their families. However, the hybrid version of worshipping together and helping others still remains an integral part of our church family's way of sharing God's love with the community and beyond. Our determination to love God and our neighbor is the "tie that binds us to the fellowship of Christian minds."

FORT HILL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Over ten years ago, we committed to a partnership with Fort Hill Community School. Because of this commitment, we received a plaque from the Lynchburg City School System which thanked us for our continuing partnership. For Christmas 2022, we provided Christmas stockings with candy and a game for 25 students instead of having an Angel Tree. The Principal, Mrs. Viar, requested the use of our kitchen to have a cooking class for a select group of boys with two of the school's coaches. The class would provide hands on learning of basic cooking skills as well as the opportunity for the boys to develop a positive male role model relationship. In May, during Teacher Appreciation Week, we provided an ice cream bar for the faculty and staff "Sundae Fun Day" on Wednesday, May 10th. We were going to assist them with the end of the year cookout, but due to the school year ending unexpectedly ahead of time, the cookout was cancelled. In recognition of Mrs. Viar's leadership at FHCS, the Outreach Committee is asking the church members to join us in giving her a retirement gift in appreciation for our partnership in serving the students and their families over the past ten years.

BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK

The church family continues to faithfully support the Lynchburg Regional Food Bank. Our committee selects the items from the Food Bank's list, and the church donates them generously. We also continue to send cards of support and blessing to our Prayer Cycle organizations. The cards also include a small monetary donation to assist them in the work that they do for others. Special donations were sent to Grace House, Interfaith Outreach, and Madison House of the Arts because of special contributions given to the church for outreach donations.

FUNDRAISING DINNER

The big project for this spring was sponsoring a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser for Grace House on the Mountain. This was a whole church project, and participation was fantas-

tic. The Men's Group provided the food and cooked a delicious meal. The Outreach Committee brought the idea to the church and organized the event. Fr. Alan made the flyers with help from his office assistant and set up ticket sales on Tithely, and an announcement was also put on nextdoor.com and in our newsletter. Members of the church donated raffle and door prizes, sold tickets, helped to set up, served the guests, and helped to clean up afterwards. Two quilts from the Queen Bees quilting group were provided for the raffle, also. The hard work paid off, and a check for \$1990.00 was delivered to Grace House by three of our church members who went to Grace House on a mission trip.

SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW

In July, the Outreach Committee invited a speaker from the Society of St. Andrew to come to our meeting to tell about their program, and how we might be able to help. The Society has many different projects. It not only includes the potato project which it started with two student pastors, but it includes working with food banks, Harvest of Hope Mission Camp, Seed program, working with cities to identify fruit trees on public land, and other programs.

FHCS—NEW DIRECTIONS

In August we met with Dr. Chris Glover, the new principal at FHCS, to discuss his vision of our partnership for this year. The meeting was a luncheon with Dr. Glover and the school faculty. Dr. Glover requested that we do the Thanksgiving dinner for the students and their families similar to what we did before the pandemic. As before, we would provide the turkeys, gravy, stuffing, and cranberry sauce, and the FHCS staff would provide the sides and dessert. Thank you to all who cooked turkeys, made the stuffing and gravy, and or provided the cranberry sauce. We even had a vegetarian side dish provided. A Christmas activity was not requested this year.

The former principal of FHCS retired at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. She began this partnership with us over ten years ago when she called our church to ask if we could be the evacuation site for the students in case of an emergency. Thanks to some donations from the congregation and this committee we purchased a gift certificate from the Acorn Hill Spa and presented it to her at lunch with her recently. She was pleased and thanked us for the gift and the prayers we said weekly for her late son when he was sick.

LYNCHBURG DAILY BREAD

In October, the committee had a peanut butter and jelly sandwich-making activity for Lynchburg Daily Bread in the parish hall after service. Many members of the congregation joined us in making the sandwiches which were delivered to LDB immediately after we finished. We have scheduled another PB & J day in January, 2024.

(continued on next page)

BOYS HOME OF VIRGINIA

The December 2023 outreach committee's "Boots and Batteries" collection for the Boys Home has gone well. We have purchased the number of pairs of boots the Boys Home requested and have collected a good number of packs of batteries for them. We also had enough money left over to purchase toiletries for them as well.

FREE LIBRARY

And last, but not least, GMEC's Kids' Free Library has been completed and is now standing on our front lawn loaded with books. After two postponements this month, the library will be dedicated on Christmas Eve after the 10 am service. Thank you to Fred Fralick who built it, Ronda Spinner who painted it, and the Buildings and Grounds members who installed it!

In the last year, Grace Memorial was privileged to provide direct support to the following organizations

- Madison House of the Arts
- Blue Ridge Area Food Bank
- Parkview Community Mission
- Jubilee Development Center
- Lynchburg Daily Bread
- Miriam's House
- Free Clinic of Central VA
- Boys Home
- Johnson Medical Center
- Meals on Wheels
- Interfaith Outreach Association

The Outreach Committee welcomes any suggestions from the congregation for activities to serve our community. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry.

Gloria Cardwell, Chairperson
Outreach Committee

End of Year Financial Reports

Please see the attached report for the discussion.



SPAGHETTI DINNER
Benefit For: **GRACE HOUSE ON THE MOUNTAIN**
Supporting people in Appalachia for 100 years

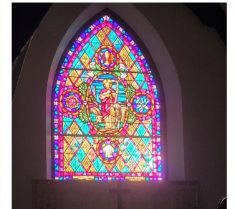


SATURDAY, MAY 6
DINE-IN OR TAKE-AWAY
SERVING 4PM-7PM
\$10 (KIDS UNDER TEN, \$5)



Buy tickets here!

1021 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE



“At-Large” Vestry Member

The Williamson-Rosser Chapter of The Daughters of the King meets monthly to encourage and strengthen one another in our vows to pray and to serve. We maintain a prayer list in addition to the parish prayer list which we review regularly and update as needed. We make each other aware of service needs in our parish. We share parish, diocesan, province, and national programs that might enhance our faith life. We take turns offering a brief program at our meetings which lately has been using a book on short stories about the women in the bible and what we can learn from them. Several of us joined other Daughters in our diocese for spring and fall assemblies in Roanoke. In March, we held our meeting at Westminster-Canterbury and had Daughters from other chapters who are residents of W-C join us. In April, several of us attended a talk by Bobbi Bowman on her family history which inspired the name of our chapter. The DOK is always looking for new members who would like to discern if they have a calling to be a Daughter. For me, being a Daughter has caused me to focus on the things I should have been doing all along in my faith life—praying, reading scripture and serving others regularly.

When I was in elementary school, only boys could become acolytes. Even as my daughters joined the acolyte corps years ago at Grace Memorial, I never imagined that I would do the same. Now that I have served in several services as an acolyte, I would recommend it. It gives one a different perspective on worship. Fr. Alan is a gentle teacher and very forgiving of mistakes.

We have several home bound members who need visiting. I prefer to have a reason to visit so becoming a Lay Eucharistic Minister was a good fit for me. Again, Fr. Alan is a gentle teacher, and he will not send you out alone if you are not ready. You will not be alone, of course, as you will absolutely feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and you share the Eucharistic meal with Grace Memorial friends.

Twice this year, Fr. Alan gave me the great privilege of leading worship in his absence. Leading worship is another time that I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. It's not that I don't make mistakes, but it is the love that I feel from above and from you all that makes leading worship a meaningful experience. Please prayerfully consider if this roll is for you.

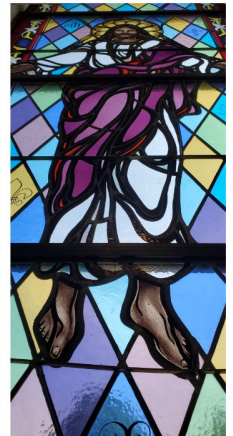
-Linda Carroll



Music & Choir

We are fortunate to be surrounded by beautiful music, instruments, and voices! We have a small but robust (some say scrappy!) choir who supports the whole parish throughout the year. Thanks to all who serve in this way! Thank you to the many instrumentalist who have accompanied worship on piano, saxophone, and cello. The choir is always looking for willing voices!

Thank you to the congregation for singing your hearts out in worship with songs old and new, with hymnals and bulletins, with chanted Psalms and familiar hymns!



Ways to Serve

Thank you to everyone who currently serves in one of the many ways to support each other and the ongoing efforts of this parish. If you would like to participate in one of the following ways or in perhaps a way that is needed but not yet named, please see Alan or a member of the Vestry. The list below is just a start!

- Altar Guild
- Lay Readers
- Outreach Committee
- Buildings & Grounds
- Pastoral Care
- Ushers
- Choir
- Cuppa Grace hosts
- Vestry
- Finance Committee
- Acolytes
- Lay Eucharistic Visitor
- Office Volunteers
- Livestream Support
- Teachers
- Small Group leaders
- Men's Group
- Daughters of the King

Do you like to . . . ?

- Organize
- Work with historical documents
- Help others
- Design webpages
- Take pictures
- Garden
- Do office work
- Teach things
- Plan parties
- Advocate for others
- Fix things
- Learn about liturgy
- Cook for a crowd
- Clean
- Sit with someone in crisis
- Set up & take down
- Work with community organizations

. . . There is probably a way to participate just for you!

Officers & Staff

Rector: The Rev. Alan B. Cowart

Organist/Choir Director: Elizabeth Wilkinson

Cleaner: Robin Woolfolk

Parish Administrator: Vacant

Senior Warden: Lessy Nixon

Junior Warden: Sharon Davis

Treasurer: Joe Carroll

Assistant Treasurer: Betsy Hovda

Bookkeeper: Claudia Chagnon

Vestry Recorder: Vacant

Trustees:

Pat Clough

George Klacynski

Gary Smith (court filing in process)

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church

Ancient prayers. Joyful worship.

1021 New Hampshire Ave., Lynchburg, VA 24502
gracelyncburg.org

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Organist & Choir Director: Elizabeth Wilkinson