

Grace Episcopal Church
124 Maple Hill Avenue
Newington, CT 06111
Phone: 860-666-3331;
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The Rev. David C. Parachini, Interim Rector
The Rev. CJ Puskarz, Deacon
Martha Brundage, Organist and Choir Director
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Father David: eakp@aol.com

Holy Eucharist - Sunday at 9am

PAGE OF GRACE



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Room Key: PH=Parish Hall; L=Library; S=Sanctuary; PO=Pastor's Office; C=Chapel; MR=Meeting Room; K=Kitchen

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---|--|--|--|--------|--|
| 30 1 Advent 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM HE with Music - S 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal | 1 Hi-Noon Group 12n PH 6:30 PM Boy Scouts - PH | 2 8:30 AM Morning Prayer - C 7:00 PM Narc Anon - PH, MR | 3 4:00 PM Drop the Rock - L | 4 9:30 AM Tai Chi PH 7:00 PM AI Anon PH L & MR | 5 | 6 Roast Beef Dinner 5- 7 PM PH |
| 7 2 Advent 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM HE with Music - S 9:00 AM Church School 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal | 8 6:30 PM Boy Scouts - PH | 9 8:30 AM Morning Prayer - C 7:00 PM Vestry - Library 7:00 PM Narc Anon - PH, MR | 10 8:30 AM Chili Prep K 4:00 PM Drop the Rock - L | 11 8:30 AM Chili Prep K 9:30 AM Tai Chi PH 7:00 PM AI Anon PH L & MR | 12 | 13 |
| 14 3 Advent 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM HE with Music - S 9:00 AM Church School 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal | 15 6:30 PM Boy Scouts - PH | 16 8:30 AM Morning Prayer - C 7:00 PM Narc Anon - PH, MR | 17 4:00 PM Drop the Rock - L | 18 9:30 AM Tai Chi PH 7:00 PM AI Anon PH L & MR | 19 | 20 8:00 AM Welcome Table Breakfast |
| 21 4 Advent 8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM HE with Music - S 9:00 AM Church School 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal | 22 6:30 PM Boy Scouts - PH | 23 8:30 AM Morning Prayer - C | 24 Christmas Eve 5:00 PM HE S 10:00 PM HE S | 25 Christmas Day 9:00 AM HE S | 26 | 27 |
| 28 1 Christmas 9:00 AM HE with Music - S | 29 1:30 PM Blood Drive PH 6:30 PM Boy Scouts - PH | 30 8:30 AM Morning Prayer - C :00 PM Narc Anon - PH, MR | 31 New Year's Eve 4:00 PM Drop the Rock - L | 1 New Year's Day 7:00 PM AI Anon PH L & MR | 2 | 3 |



Grace Episcopal Church Newington,
a Spirit-filled community,
joyfully welcomes all to gather
and worship in God's grace to
experience and share God's
transforming love.

Pace of Grace

December, 2014

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

Light

Dear Grace Church Family,

As we come to the beginning of a new month we come also to the beginning of a new church year as we enter the season of Advent. The theme of Advent is renewal and preparation for the return of God's light, our Savior Jesus Christ. With all of the secular hype and materialism which has been building to a frenzy as the preparations for Christmas continue unabated it is easy to lose sight of the gentle light which surrounds us at this special season. If we don't slow down to experience the wonder of Advent, how can we truly celebrate the joy of Christmas? Advent and Christmas are all about the gift of light. We are reminded of this as we watch the growing lights on the Advent wreath and as we celebrate the festal lights of Christmas. It is far too easy for the harsh light of the secular observance of the Incarnation to overpower God's gentle light in our lives. A light that we are called to share not just with a few and not just on one day or even a short season of twelve days but throughout the coming year and with all whose lives touch ours.

The gift of light for me is deeply rooted in my childhood. When I was growing up in Pennsylvania, we lived in a part of that state where there were many Moravian congregations. Advent and Christmas were always special times in Bucks County among the Moravian community as indeed they are intended to be in all Christian communities. Light, God's light, is a focus of the Moravian observance of these days of preparation and celebration of Incarnation. It is a time filled with the hope of the season as symbolized by light and in the promise of faith. Each year on Christmas Eve, the Moravian congregation in Lititz gathers to celebrate The Christmas Eve Vigils, a service filled with joy, light and the wonder of God's love for humankind. Shining over the congregation and seeming to grow more brilliant with each scripture reading and ever more glorious music is the brilliant Moravian Star which hangs suspended in the Nave. The Moravians are wonderful singers and the church is filled with the joyous harmonies of familial hymns and anthems music brought with their forebears when they fled their homeland to escape religious persecution. One of the pieces that is always a part of the Vigils is a beautiful and haunting piece, "Mache Dich Auf Werde Licht" by the noted Moravian composer Karl Gottlieb Reissiger. Part of that text is my prayer for all of us during these holy days of Advent and into the joyous twelve days of Christmas:

"Throw open your heart, your soul, your mind'
free them of all those thoughts and desires which limit God's presence in your life;
let them be bathed in the cleansing light of love, kindness and understanding.

Then your light will shine among people;
You will be as a light in darkness, and the Glory of God
Will be over and around you. AMEN"

With best wishes for a blessed Advent, a joyous Christmas and a New Year filled with the hope and promise of God's continuing presence in your lives as together we work to reveal God's love and to further that part of God's mission that has been entrusted to us.

Faithfully,

David+



Christmas Eve: In the evening we will have our Christmas Eve services at 5 PM and 10 PM.

Christmas Day: Holy Eucharist will be celebrated on Christmas Day at 9:00 AM.



- 12/01 Kathy Johnson
- 12/05 Rosario Savastra
- 12/08 Deborah Winslow
- 12/09 Robert Stewart
- 12/12 Paul Bailey
- 12/12 Steven Tatsapaugh
- 12/14 Brandon Johnson
- 12/15 Ashley Lockery
- 12/17 Ruth Bachman
- 12/28 Ruth Sperre



- 12/27 Donald and Charlotte Buckingham



Thank you for making a contribution to the Food Bank as part of our food in-gathering. Please continue to support the Food Bank throughout December. Many of the kinds of foods you brought for Thanksgiving are perfect for the December Holidays.

Shirley Adams, Outreach Chair



Weather Closing

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



At the start of our Grace, Gratitude and Generosity stewardship campaign earlier this year I was bound and determined to put my attitude of gratitude into a 12 month perspective by being more intentional in acknowledging the blessings and bounty of my life and the people in it, both personally and professionally. My hope was to say thank you often, not only in person but also through phone calls, emails and handwritten notes. My thought too was to do little write-ups for the Pace of Grace for all that gets done to keep our church home running smoothly. And I was off to such a good start with my Gratitude Journal, making almost daily entries for several weeks. Well, you know what they say about good intentions!

What I didn't want to do is exactly what I am doing: waiting until this more traditional time of year to slow down for a moment and take stock, and really remind myself again, of what's really important in my life. Many people believe this is the perfect time of the year to do it and that's fine but blessings and bounty, great and small come every day; for me just waking up every morning to welcome a new day is a blessing ; I acknowledge it by saying "Thank you, Lord" before doing anything else. Some things do become a habit if you do them often enough!

Another way I am going to try to capture a year around perspective of gratitude and thanks and to keep the good thoughts flowing through the year is to resurrect my gratitude journal. By the way, how's yours going for you? And I'm going to try to jot something down regularly. The one thing I do know is that my entries give me a lot of comfort when I'm feeling a little down and offer an immediate spirit booster. It really

doesn't take a lot of time to write down everything you're thankful for – a warm day, your family and friends, your animal companions, a good outcome on a medical test, a beautiful sunset, whatever it is be thankful and write it down.

One of the best ways to be grateful for all that God has given you is to give back or to pay it forward. It is better to give than receive – the reward is an uplifting feeling and doing something for the greater good. And this time of the year is chock full of ways to give back. If you aren't ready for any a long term volunteer commitment, get your feet wet incrementally by buying a toy to stuff a cruiser, take a request off the angel tree and fulfill it, adopt a family for the season through Newington Social Services, buy some food for the food bank, then look for opportunities throughout the year: volunteer at an animal shelter, deliver meals for Meals on Wheels, volunteer at a community clean-up day.

Often it is easy to lose perspective on exactly what we do have and take for granted every day. An attitude of gratitude helps us stop taking our life for granted and can inspire us to think of other people and to "Love your neighbor as yourself". Be warmed by the goodness around you this holiday season and give thanks to all that you have and for all the blessings and richness of life every day of the year.

*Peace and Blessings,
Melissa Haseley, Senior Warden*



Save the Dates: Here are some important "Save the Date" events for the next few months:

- † December 6, 2014 5-7 pm: Roast Beef Dinner
- † December 20, 2014: Welcome Table Breakfast
- † January 17, 2015: Welcome Table Breakfast
- † January 25, 2015: Annual Meeting
- † February 17, 2015, 5-7 pm: Pancake Supper
- † February 18, 2015: Ash Wednesday
- † February 21, 2015: Welcome Table Breakfast
- † March 1, 2015 5-7 pm: Stewardship Kick-off Dinner. Bishop Ahrens will be speaking.



Thanks So Much!

- ☺ to those who helped with watering the plants over the summer to keep our grounds looking good.
- ☺ to Mark Shoemaker and Jane Stewart for their faithful service to the business and treasure side of managing our financial affairs.
- ☺ To all who contributed to our Thanksgiving Food In-gathering.



Angel Tree

If you haven't taken a "Christmas bulb" listing a gift to be purchased, please do so. Be sure to bring the gift in no later than December 7. Place the gift under the tree. Do not wrap the gift. If you have bought a gift card, please put it in an envelope. The amount of the gift card should be written on the gift card. Be sure to put the three digit number that is on the "Christmas bulb" on the gift or on the envelope or attach the "Christmas bulb". Putting the number on the gift is the only way we can make sure the gift goes to the correct person. If all of the "Christmas bulbs" have been taken and you want to help out, please buy a number of small gift cards to grocery stores, Target, Citgo, etc. and place under the tree in an envelope. We will add them to other gifts or give them to Social Services to give out as needed.

Thank you for carrying about your Newington brothers and sisters.

If you have any questions, please ask.
Shirley Adams



Our community Welcome Table Breakfasts continue. The dates for the next few months are December 20, January 17 and February 21. To make it easy to remember, the dates are always the *third*

Saturday of the month. The time is from 8 am to 10 am.

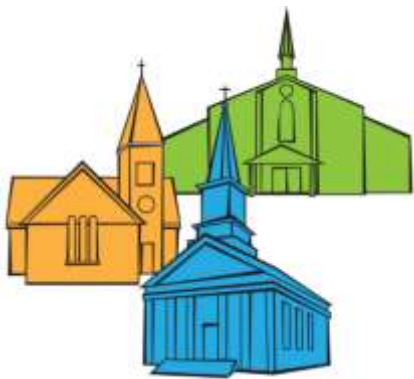
The breakfasts have turned into a nice fellowship event for the church so if you haven't joined us please do. Our primary focus of course, is to provide a hot meal to those who need one. And we've had a nice mix of community folks joining us. Every month we've had between one and four new people, and we also have a handful of "regulars" who depend on us each month. It is because of these regulars, we will continue the community breakfasts.



At our Altar Guild meeting in September, it was decided not to clean and decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve as we have in the past. This year we will meet at 10 am on Saturday, December 20 to clean instead. We will be able to do some decorating that day, as well. The threesome assigned for the

Christmas weeks will set up for the Christmas Eve service after Sunday, December 21 (the last Sunday in Advent). Thanks

Barbara Block



Diocesan CONVENTION

*Convention News for the Episcopal Church in
Connecticut.*

As some of you may already know, the most recent Convention took place on Friday (10/24) and Saturday (10/25) in Waterbury, CT. Approximately 566 people were scheduled to attend the two day event. Friday evening, there was a special reception and dinner in Bishop Curry's honor to celebrate his retirement from the diocese of Connecticut. It was reported to be a lovely affair.

It's always such a special and uplifting time

together, as we share in the Eucharist, in the prayers and in the joyful noise. You can't deny that God is present and the Spirit is at work amongst us.

The budget was presented and passed; as a matter of fact, Bishop Douglas has not taken an increase in salary. I would like to share a couple of Resolutions: Resolution #8 called for the General Convention to adopt the "Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Community", and requests that all parishes, dioceses and institutions of the Episcopal church implement the charter. Due to the importance of this resolution, it is most important that we all keep our Safe church certificates up to date. If anyone is interested in signing up for the first time or for renewal, please contact Father David or Melissa Haseley.

Resolution #9 refers to a new task force, "TREC-CT" and charges them to develop recommended revisions to the organization and structure of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. We broke off into groups by these categories – Catalyst. Connector (connecting with our community more broadly), Capability Builder (where do we need to grow) and Convener. There were many common threads and themes needed to re-imagine the Episcopal Church, such as communication, flexibility, listening, passion, etc. This resolution will help to further God's mission more effectively as we live together as the Body of Christ.

There were a total of 13 Resolutions presented at Convention. If you have any questions or would like more information, please see Bev Manning or me.

We have all been charged and challenged to share our gifts and talents. I believe the following bible verse sums it up nicely – 1Peter 4:10 – "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

Beverley Manning and I would like to thank you for choosing us as Grace's delegates to Convention, and for giving us the opportunity to have Grace's voice heard.

*Faithfully,
Karen Halpert*



Because of Christmas, the deadline for January *Pace of Grace* is **Tuesday, December 16th**. 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.

The office will be closed during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. The office will be open again on Tuesday, January 6th.

The **Annual Meeting of the Parish** will be on Sunday, January 25th. Please send all annual reports to the office as soon as possible and no later than Tuesday, January 13th to assure that they will be included in the meeting booklet.

Art Riihimaki

Christmas traditions around the globe

Although Americans celebrate the holiday with candlelight services, piles of gifts, large feasts, lights and trees, people in other countries mark Jesus' birth in many interesting ways:

- Nine days before Christmas in Mexico, Las Posadas processions reenact Joseph and Mary's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem.
- Instead of decorating trees, Italians place fruit on small wooden pyramids.
- On Christmas Eve, the streets of Caracas, Venezuela, are blocked off so people can roller-skate to church.
- Ukrainian Christmas trees often feature an artificial spider and web. According to a folk tale, a poor woman who couldn't afford decorations awoke one Christmas morning to find that spiders had "trimmed" her children's trees with delicate webs.
- In Brazil, the gift-bringer is known as Papai Noel (Father Noel), who lives in Greenland, according to legend. When he arrives in Brazil, he wears silk clothing because of the summer heat.
- It's considered bad etiquette to send red Christmas cards in Japan because funeral notices are customarily printed in red.



Please mark your new 2015 calendars – Our Stewardship Campaign kick-off dinner will be taking place on Sunday, March 1, 2015, from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Bishop Laura will be our guest speaker. More information to come!



Hi-noon Group

HI NOON, Annual Christmas Party - Monday, December 1.

Lunch provided at our annual holiday event. You may bring some holiday goodies to share, but most important bring yourself and hopefully a friend.



Blood DRIVE

10TH ANNUAL RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

This is our 10th Blood Drive even though we missed a couple of years. It will be held in the Parish Hall on Monday, December 29, 2014, from 1:30 PM until 6:30 PM.

It is our privilege to offer our Parish Hall for this Blood Drive and work closely with the local Red Cross.

This is a simple way to serve our local community and allow us to be involved.

Volunteers are needed for the registration and refreshment tables. Let me know if you can help out any time between 1 PM and 6:30 PM, in 3 hour shifts.

If you are a current blood donor, the Red Cross will contact you to set an appointment. To become a new donor, contact JoAnn Cromwell (860-667-0030) to reserve a time.

To donate baked goods for our blood drive refreshment table, please mark them and leave in the kitchen or on The Narthex shelf.

Thank you for your continued support!

*JoAnn Cromwell
Blood Drive Coordinator*



FINANCE REPORT

As I write this, November is not yet over. The figures below represent income for only the first four weeks, and don't yet include Thanksgiving or the fifth November Sunday of 11/30. However, all the November bills have been paid, and an estimated figure for month end payroll is indicated. Therefore, the end November receipts will only add to the bottom line, and the month should definitely be a positive one. Of special note is that almost all of the Fall Fair receipts and expenses are shown below and show a net profit for everyone's hard work of almost \$1,100. Thanks especially to the Fund Raising Committee.

The Finances for the first four weeks of November (including month end payroll):

| INCOME | November | Y.T.D. | EXPENSES | November | Y.T.D. |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Beginning Checkbook: | \$ 4,021 | \$ 3,898 | Salaries & Benefits: | (\$ 5,519) | (\$ 57,451) |
| Pledge Receipts: | \$ 7,180 | \$ 91,403 | General Expenses: | (\$ 1,784) | (\$ 25,410) |
| General Receipts: | \$ 280 | \$ 4,569 | General Utilities: | (\$ 1,140) | (\$ 15,349) |
| Use of Church Building: | \$ 1,030 | \$ 11,262 | Fund Raiser Expenses: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 239) |
| Fund Raisers, General: | \$ 15 | \$ 1,070 | Fair Expenses: | (\$ 184) | (\$ 1,482) |
| Church Fair: | \$ 275 | \$ 2,577 | Special Event Expense: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 989) |
| Special Events: | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | Grounds (Snow/Lawn): | (\$ 490) | (\$ 10,978) |
| Cap. Camp from M.Mkt: | \$ 375 | \$ 575 | Capital Camp to M.Mkt: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 0) |
| Capital Campaign: | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | Capital Campaign Exp: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 200) |
| "B-to-B" & Special: | \$ 44 | \$ 1,026 | Memorials to M.Mkt: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 0) |
| Memorial Donations: | \$ 10 | \$ 265 | Mem. Garden Exp: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 640) |
| Memorial Garden: | \$ 7 | \$ 400 | Diocese Pledge: | (\$ 1,302) | (\$ 14,322) |
| Seasonal Offerings: | \$ 112 | \$ 1,448 | Outreach: | (\$ 105) | (\$ 2,965) |
| Outreach: | \$ 0 | \$ 567 | The Grace Fund | (\$ 0) | (\$ 910) |
| The Grace Fund | \$ 1,075 | \$ 1,075 | Miscellaneous Forward: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 160) |
| Miscellaneous: | \$ 0 | \$ 160 | Rectory Rent to M.Mkt: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 1,000) |
| Rectory Rent: | \$ 1,500 | \$ 18,300 | Audit Fee: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 1,100) |
| Special Donation: | \$ 0 | \$ 7,500 | Reserves to M.Mkt: | (\$ 0) | (\$ 7,500) |
| Reserves from M.Mkt: | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------|------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| Total Received: | \$11,903 | \$ 142,197 | Total Paid Out: | (\$10,524) | (\$140,695) |
| | | | Ending Checkbook: | \$ 5,400 | \$ 5,400 |

Please notice that our November receipts include a generous donation toward rebuilding our new "Grace Fund". We hope to keep rebuilding this fund to be available as a temporary source of help for anyone in our Parish family with a specific financial crisis. Note also that although our Lawn Care expenses should be about over for the year, our winter snow removal expenses seem to be already beginning. Hopefully our Thanksgiving snow storm doesn't amount to much, and isn't an indication for more to come. In closing, please make sure to include our Roast Beef Dinner in your early December plans.

Faithfully Yours, Mark Shoemaker – Treasurer

Capital Campaign and General Money Market Update: At the end of November, the overall Money Market account balance should be \$57,858. Of this amount, the major elements are: \$23,244 as the posted Capital Campaign balance, and \$15,142 as the posted net Rectory balance (\$1,500 Security Deposit + \$13,642 Rectory Reserves). In addition, a special donation of \$7,500 is being temporarily held.

Faithfully Yours, Mark Shoemaker – Treasurer



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 ticket 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.

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: _____