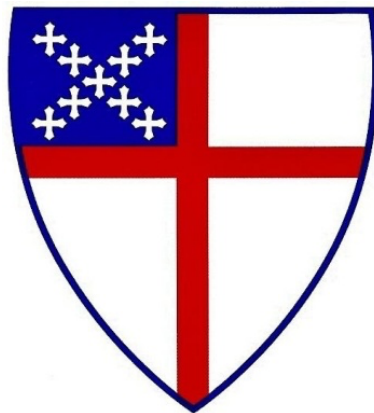


GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

55 New Park Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106



Annual Meeting
January 26, 2025



Annual Report for 2024

CANONICAL VOTING LIST

(Adopted by the Grace Episcopal Church Vestry)

This list may be amended at the Annual Meeting in January 2025

Auciello, Daniel	Gwardyak, Claudia Bell	Phillips, Thomas
Bouchard, Antoinette	Gwardyak, Walter	Rifkin, Sheryl
Bowman, Douglas	Hamilton, Cornelia	Rivera Monclova,
Brown, Adrienne	Holmes, Claudette	The Rev. Marta
Brown, Kenneth	Holmes, Kraig	Rosa, Linda
Burgos, Maria	Holmes, Nadia	Rovetti, Katharine
Burns, Victoria	Kemp, The Rev. Rowena J.	Ruta, Sally
Burr, Barbara	Kendzior, Daniel	Scales, The Rev. Dcn. Joy
Carroon, The Rev. Cn. Robert	Lacedonia, Marijane	Simmons, Sr. Gregory
Dominguez, Josephine	Lacedonia, Mark	Snow, Leonor
Evanko, Thomas	Leach, Ratana	Swann, Kyle
Fisher, Nigel	Leach, Steven	Traficanti, Karen
Floyd, Mary	Morgan, Sandra	Vela Cruz, Luz & Amarildo
Galbreath, Dr. Barbara	Moriarty, Rosa	Wachtelhausen, Richard
Glasner, Pamela	Morse, Ellen	Warren, The Rev. Annika
Glenn, Sean	Pace, The Rev. Joseph	
Gould, Douglas	Phillips, Elaine	

This is the Canonical List of Voting Members of Grace Episcopal Church as a result of the review and revision by the Vestry of the same at a legal meeting held on January 22, 2025, and subsequent authorized revisions. Upon the adoption at the Annual Parish Meeting, this list becomes the roll of that meeting and all other Parish meetings held in 2025, absent further revision by the Vestry.

From Constitution and Canons of Diocese of Connecticut:

Canon I, Section 4: . . . Any adult member of the Church, registered as such in any Parish, who has attained the age of sixteen years, shall become a member of such Parish, provided that no person may be a member of more than one Parish or Mission Station in the Diocese at any time.

Canon I, Section 6: Of the members of the Parish only those shall be entitled to vote at any Parish meeting who for at least six months prior to that meeting shall have been faithful attendants at the services of the Church in the Parish, and faithful contributors to its support.

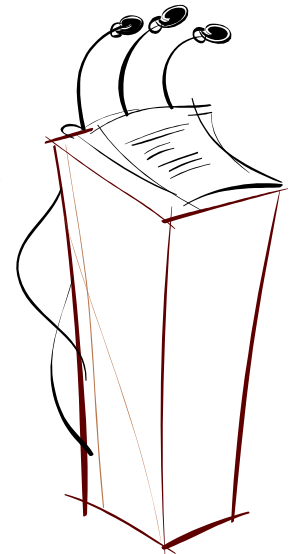
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

AGENDA

January 26, 2025

The Rev. Rowena J. Kemp, *Rector*, presiding

- I. Opening Prayer
- II. Call to Order ~ Rev. Rowena
- III. Opening Remarks: welcome; moment of silence ~ Rev. Rowena
- IV. Presentation and adoption of roll or Canonical Voting Members Inside Front Cover
- V. **Adoption and acceptance of the last Parish Meeting minutes** p. 2-3
- VI. **Report of the Rector** p. 4
- VII. **Report of the Curate** Assistant Rector p. 5-6
- VIII. Report of the Senior Warden p. 7
- IX. **Report of the Junior Warden** p. 8
- X. **Report of the Treasurer** p. 9-11
- XI. Adoption of Committee reports
 - Altar Guild** p. 12
 - Flower Guild** p. 12
 - Pastoral Care** p. 12
 - Christian Education** p. 13
 - Music** p. 14
 - Musical Friends** p. 14
 - A Place of Grace Food Pantry** p. 15-16
 - Christmas Giving to Parkville Families** p. 16
- XII. Election of Wardens, Vestry, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer; Delegate and Alternate for Diocesan Convention and to the Region Inside Back Cover
- XIII. New Business: Change in Bylaws
- XIV. Appreciations and Regrets
- XV. Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting: Sunday, January 25, 2026
- XVI. Adjournment and Closing Prayer



ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2024

Nason Hall

I. Quorum: There is a quorum.

II. Opening Prayer: The Rev. Rowena Kemp: The meeting opened at 12:30 P.M. We observed a moment of silence for Jim Shafer and Richard Burt, two parish members who recently passed away.

III. Presentation of this meeting's Agenda:

Motion: To accept the Agenda. It was moved, seconded and adopted.

IV. Presentation and adoption of roll or Canonical Voting Members:

Motion: To accept the Canonical Voting List: The motion was seconded and adopted.

V. Presentation and Acceptance of the Minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting:

Motion: To accept the Minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting: The motion was seconded and accepted.

VI. Rector's Report ~ The Rev. Rowena Kemp:

A. Gratitude: Rev. Rowena was grateful for two new acolytes. She expressed appreciation to Doug Bowman and Aldon Hynes for training them.

B. Last Wishes: Rev. Rowena would like the last wishes from everyone in the parish. There will be forms available starting next week.

C. Bequests: Grace Church received two bequests this past year.

D. Sabbatical: Since Rev. Rowena is approaching her 8th year at Grace, she plans to take a sabbatical from June through August this coming year. The Rev. Linda Spires will handle the Pastoral Care. The Rev. Joe Pace will cover the services in July and The Rev. Marcus Halley will cover the ones in August.

VII. Senior Warden's Report ~ Doug Bowman:

A. David Rivera: Doug was happy to report that David, a former parishioner, is doing well at his first job.

B. COVID: We did well, as a parish, staying together during and after the pandemic.

C. Altar Training: We are training two children right now and hope for more to join.

VIII. Junior Warden's Report ~ Tom Phillips:

A. Broke and Fixed: When things were broken, we fixed them.

B. Two New Computers: Tom bought two new computers for the food pantry, and we have two people who can run them. Each "guest" has a card with a barcode. The pantry is much more efficient now, as we can check people in more quickly by scanning the barcodes.

IX. Treasurer's Report ~ Mark Lacedonia:

A. Donations: They exceeded the pledges this year.

B. Stock Market: Our investments have performed well.

C. Weather: Since we had less snow this past year, we were able to save money on snow removal.

D. Jim Shafer's Estate: We received \$168K from his bequest.

E. New Account: We now have \$400K in the new Grace Investment Fund.

F. Energy Costs: They have gone up due to inflation

X. Committee Reports:

A. A Place of Grace Food Pantry - Kathie Rovetti: We are serving more families now, over 250 most weeks.

B. Christmas Gifts to our Neighbors: We served 250 families.

Motion: To adopt the Committee Reports: The motion was seconded and adopted.

XI. Election of Officers, Vestry Members and Delegates to the Convention:

A. Tribute to Tom Phillips: Tom will be leaving the Vestry, having served for many years as Senior and Junior Warden. Rev. Rowena expressed appreciation for all he has done for the church.

Motion: That the parish clerk cast one ballot for the proposed slate of Vestry members and Convention Delegates standing for election. The motion was seconded and passed.

XII. Old Business:

A. Grace Forward: We hope to start a Bible School this summer. Sandra Morgan proposed a one-week session.

XIII. New Business:

A. The Haven Religious Community will be starting monthly Evensongs. Members include Marta Rivera Monclova, Gregory Simmons and Sean Glenn. They also hope to celebrate Tenebrae during Holy Week.

XIV. Appreciations and Regrets: These were shared.

XV. Next Annual Meeting: January 26, 2025; The bylaws will be revised during that meeting.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed. The meeting adjourned at 1:20 P.M.

Closing Prayer: The Rev. Rowena Kemp; all then sang the Doxology.

Respectfully Submitted,
Katharine Rovetti, *Parish Clerk*

RECTOR'S REPORT

It has been challenging trying to recall last year's ministry; not because there isn't anything to recall, or that there weren't many joys and successes for us as a worshipping community and followers of Jesus Christ. There have been many joys and many successes! The challenge is my exhaustion. The years of burning the candle at both ends whether personally or professionally have finally caught up with me! I now enter a season of slowing down not because I need to do so, but rather because I must do so! My body, my mind, and my spirit demand it! I can't truly love and care for you when I am so drained.

So first, I would like to say thank you to our vestry who have supported and challenged me as we tried to lean more fully into the ministry God is calling us into at this time and in our Parkville community. In the next year, we hope to more intentionally engage in ministry that will be inclusive of youth and the elderly. My pastoral experience in the past year has confirmed these needs. Stay tuned for more details.

I offer special thanks to the outgoing members of our vestry, Douglas Bowman, and Thomas Phillips, Senior and Junior Warden, respectively and Nadia Holmes and Sandra Morgan, members at large. We could not have made it through the challenging years of the pandemic without your prayers, leadership, and ingenuity. Thank you for your service to our community and a special thank you to the vestry for your sustained commitment!

Second, thank you to our various liturgically related leaders like the members of the altar guild, flower guild, the acolytes and servers, the lectors, our amazing choir and choirmaster, Kyle Swann. You continue to provide familiarity and stability in the tried and true that make us true Anglo-Catholics while at the same time offering new and exciting ways for us to experience God through our worship! I am grateful for your care for our liturgy!

Third, our most impressive outreach programs continue to blossom as we find ways to reach more families in the community. Our pantry, our Christmas giving, our Musical Friends concert, our Three Kings celebration, and our partnership with the Haven Religious Community and St. James's West Hartford continue to tell the stories of the small but mighty community we are! Thank you to Kathie Rovetti, Claudia Gwardyak, Leo Snow, Marta Rivera, Gregory Simmons, Sean Glen, Frs. Bob Hooper & Joe Rose, and Ruth Mitman.

Fourth, my gratitude to the members of our congregation who in life and in death continue to remind us of the importance of our ministry to each other and in Parkville. Special thanks to Adrienne Brown, who has enlivened our Hospitality ministry, Mark & Jane Lacedonia who keep our card ministry and bulletin boards current, and to Pamela Glasner, Aldon Hynes and Doug Bowman who have tirelessly served alongside me at our altar! I am grateful for each of you!

Fifth, I offer my gratitude to Seraph Root and James Shafer who through their generous gifts to our community will ensure that we can sustain the ministry that they held dear! I invite each of you to consider providing a legacy gift to Grace in your Last Will & Testament! Also, please remember to file your last wishes with us!



Curate's Report

JULY ~ With great joy and deep gratitude, I began my role as Curate at Grace in July, supported by the generosity of a two-year fellowship through Trinity Wall Street. This opportunity, which extends through June 2026, has been a dream come true. From the moment I first encountered the Grace congregation, I felt drawn to this vibrant community, and I am profoundly thankful to Trinity for adapting their program to make this possible.

Starting during Rev. Rowena's sabbatical provided a unique opportunity to immerse myself in the life of Grace. I devoted myself to learning the Deacon's role in our liturgy and noticed that our liturgical documentation needed some refreshing.

One of the highlights of this time was the collaborative effort to reorganize and revitalize the Sacristy. Together, we transformed it into a more welcoming and functional space — a testament to the spirit of care and teamwork at Grace.

Senior Warden Claudia Gwardyak was an invaluable partner during this transition. Our regular meetings provided guidance and insight, helping me feel truly at home in this wonderful community.

AUGUST ~ In August, I turned my attention to our website and the customary. While technical challenges abounded — reflecting years of deferred maintenance — the work marked the beginning of important updates. There's still much to do, but it's exciting to see progress take shape!

I also had the pleasure of working closely with Tori to better understand bulletin creation and the day-to-day rhythms of Grace. Her patience and expertise have been an incredible gift as I've continued learning the "ways of Grace. August also saw a brief pause in Haven's monthly Evensongs, a reminder of the ebb and flow that keeps our community refreshed and renewed.

SEPTEMBER ~ Rev. Rowena's return from sabbatical in September marked a new chapter in my journey at Grace. Our regular meetings have been a source of wisdom, encouragement, mentorship, and inspiration.

I joined the preaching rota in September, delivering my first sermons at Grace, (second if you count the Haven clothing ceremony last May, but my first as Curate!) and participated in Haven's Evensong commemorating Lancelot Andrewes. A weeklong trip to New York City to meet with other Trinity Fellows offered fresh ideas and deepened my sense of purpose.

OCTOBER ~ October's Evensong, the first Evensong of All Saints was Haven's first "First Evensong," and it's Halloween date meant that candy supplemented our soup and bread fellowship that follows every evensong.

I also took my first week of vacation, which offered time for rest and reflection, preparing me for the winter ahead.

NOVEMBER ~ Our efforts to update the website and customary, and to keep the Sacristy a clean, useful, and well-organized continued in November, ensuring that the work we've started will have a lasting effect.

A special highlight was our first acolyte training in some time, thanks to the generous support of Sean Glenn and Steve Leach and with special thanks to Doug Bowman coming back for it. Our two current acolytes, Joseph and Soraya, showed great enthusiasm and brought along their friends, Yamil and Mateo. Valerie, a past acolyte, has also expressed interest in returning. Watching this growing group develop their skills is inspiring, and I'm excited for the role they'll play in Grace's future.

Rev. Rowena and I also began planning a safe and educational weekday space for our youth, which will be a testament to Grace's renewed commitment to nurturing our young people.

Our November Evensong was particularly meaningful as we celebrated St. Martin of Tours, Grace's patron, instead of holding it on Thanksgiving Day. It was a poignant reminder of Grace's rich history and traditions.

DECEMBER ~ My first Advent at Grace was a season of discovery and joy. From learning new Grace traditions to preaching on Christmas Eve, it was a privilege to experience the beauty and depth of this holy season with all of you.

Christmas preparations brought the community together in a remarkable way. Church Cleanup Day was a standout, with so many hands scrubbing, polishing, and shining every corner. I personally polished every inch of the altar and tabernacle — a labor of love that mirrored the collective care of everyone who participated.

We also tried something new: a combined Evensong/Watchnight service. The event was a resounding success, drawing attendees from St. Martin's, St. Stephen's, St. Monica's, and Bishop Laura herself. It was a beautiful evening of shared worship and connection.

JANUARY ~ January began with the joyful celebration of the Three Kings and flowed seamlessly into the excitement of my ordination and first Masses at Grace.

Words cannot fully capture my gratitude for the love and support I have received from this congregation during my transitional diaconate and as I step into my role as priest. Your encouragement has been a source of strength and inspiration, and I am honored to serve this incredible community.

The Rev. Marta S. Rivera Monclova, n/OCC, PhD



SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

We should be proud at Grace Hartford. We have a small, but mighty, community and, thanks to our leadership and membership, both clergy and lay people, we are living out our mission at the corner of Grace Street and New Park Avenue, a mission that includes the Diocesan theme of "Joining Jesus" inside and outside the walls of the church.

As Senior Warden for the past year, I have had two different jobs: one, "evangelical authority" during the Rector's three-month sabbatical (June, July and August 2024) and two, a less defined role in participating in what is going on, notably the monthly Vestry meetings.

During the Rector's sabbatical, as Senior Warden, I kept an eye on what was going on in every corner of Grace, whether with neighborhood people, pantry goings on, or Sunday morning activities. For many Sundays I helped to welcome "supply" clergy. Others were the visiting clergy's key contacts; mine was more of a social role. I learned to come in early and stay through until I locked up around 1 P.M. I was always grateful for Maria Burgos' role in hospitably greeting everyone, providing coffee for all, and staying until the last person left.

The Senior Warden is one of two wardens – Senior and Junior. The role of the Junior Warden is well defined as he/she oversees all building matters. The role of the Senior Warden is not defined in detail other than to take up lay duties of the Rector's if she is absent. Perhaps the best job description is readiness to step into situations that require leadership.

During 2024, the Vestry, a talented and dedicated group of individuals, went above and beyond their own job descriptions, working hard to maintain, sustain and improve things at Grace. Financial management and building maintenance, as well as the weekly food pantry, were capably handled by Treasurer, Mark Lacedonia, Junior Warden, Dr. Barb Galbreath, and *A Place of Grace* Food Pantry Director, Kathie Rovetti. Kathie is also the Parish Clerk. In addition, as of last summer, Marta .S. Rivera Monclova joined us as Deacon and (now as of this writing) Curate. Marta's salary is supported by a two-year grant from Trinity Wall Street, New York City. In addition to Marta, Tori Burns, the Church's Office Manager, and Kyle Swann, Grace's Organist and Choir Director, were sources of comforting stability during the Rector's sabbatical. Speaking of the Rector, one of my favorite moments of 2024 was the New Year's Eve service and supper organized by the Rector and Haven Religious held jointly with friends from St. Stephen's (Bloomfield), St. Martin's, followed by a Watch service held at St. Monica's.

Early in the year, I conducted a survey of the parish to see what ideas we have to support and increase membership at Grace. While several good ideas were offered, we have seen an increase in activities and attendance due to some new faces, some new kids and families and particularly some new energy and direction provided by *Haven Religious*.

Respectfully submitted, Claudia Gwardyak



JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

The porch was rebuilt and painted after receiving the BHN (*Basic Human Needs*) grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Also, the fence / railing was replaced with a black metal one and new tables were purchased for the Food Pantry.

A new roof was placed on the Church and Parish Hall after filing an insurance claim. The cost to the church was \$4000 which covered the deductible.

The trees and brush were removed from the back of the Church, allowing more light to come thru the stained glass windows behind the Altar and clearing the entire area so lingering around the church will be discouraged.

Mulch was applied to the garden beds at the Church and the Rectory, and gutters cleaned at the rectory. Electrical improvements and repairs were made at the Rectory.

The leaking faucet in the handicap bathroom was replaced, thanks to Adrienne Brown and her handyman.

A second option is ongoing regarding the air conditioning and electrical repairs will be completed in the near future for the Church and Rectory.

The stained ceiling tile in the kitchen is scheduled to be replaced.



Dr. Barbara Galbreath, *Junior Warden*

The logo for the Treasurer's Report is set against a blue grid background. The words "TREASURER'S" and "REPORT" are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. A red diagonal line crosses the text from the bottom-left to the top-right.

2024 was an eventful year at Grace Episcopal Church! Here are some of the financial highlights:

Certainly, one of the biggest developments was our new part-time curate, Marta S. Rivera Monclova. She joined in July and will be with us until June 2026. Her compensation is covered entirely through a contract we have with Trinity Wall Street. Welcome Marta!

Despite declining membership (due in part to the passing of several parishioners over the past few years), pledged income received in 2024 was up as compared to both the budget and the prior year. While this is certainly good news, the favorable variance came primarily from several very large and generous donations.

We are also very fortunate to possess a multi-million-dollar investment portfolio comprised of Donations and Bequests (D&B), the Wellman Trust, the Klemonski Fund and the new Grace Investment Fund. The Grace Investment Fund was established in 2023 from monies received from the Seraph Root Estate and additional funds were deposited into the account from the Estate of Jim Shafer in 2024. This new fund now has a market value of \$368,888.47 at year-end 2024.

We use the substantial investment income generated by these portfolios to meet our bi-weekly payroll. This leaves pledges, donations, and grants to fund all of our other needs such as day-to-day operating expenses, the food pantry, music, etc.

From a financial perspective, we were able to complete a lot of deferred maintenance this past year (Thanks, Barb!) with minimal impact on our bottom-line. This was accomplished through the judicious use of grants and insurance.

Please note that all of our payroll-related filings and tax returns like W-2s and 1099s were completed on a timely basis with the help of our vendor (Paychex).

We also filed our Audit with the ECCT on a timely basis again in 2024. And more importantly, we received yet another "clean opinion".

And lastly, my big concern for the 2025 Operating Budget continues to be INFLATION, as rising costs for seemingly everything continues to put a lot of pressure on our finances!!!

Please note that this report should be read in conjunction with the 2024 Financial Statements (Balance Sheet and Income Statement) and the 2025 Operating Budget.

Thanks,
Mark Lacedonia, *Treasurer*

2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Balance Sheet (As of 12/31/24):

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	
KeyBank Checking	\$ 42,252.07	Accounts Payable	\$ 464.00
KeyBank Savings	70.02	Annuity (HEA)	18,556.94
Fidelity	684.40	Rector's Leave	16,189.18
Total Cash	\$ 43,006.49	Total Liabilities	\$ 35,210.12
Receivables	\$0.00		
D&B	\$ 450,138.09		
Wellman Trust	1,047,826.43	Fund Balances	\$ 2,322,149.09
Klemonski Fund	447,499.73		
Grace Investment Fund	368,888.47		
Total Investments	\$ 2,314,352.72		
TOTAL	\$ 2,357,359.21	TOTAL	\$ 2,357,359.21

Consolidated Cash Basis* Income Statement (For Year Ended 12/31/24):

*Excluding the Unrealized Gain or Loss on our Investment Portfolios of \$63,315.70

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Pledges	\$ 106,441.76	Rector	\$ 115,888.23
Contributions/Grants	72,828.94	Curate	30,066.86
Cash From Investments	197,435.71	Organist	32,257.54
Other Income	51.72	Secretary	18,181.66
Trinity Wall Street Fellowship	29,374.52	Supply Priests / Rector's Leave	6,087.74
Total Income	\$ 406,132.65	Total Compensation	\$ 202,482.03
		Office	\$ 8,963.09
		Parish Administration	9,889.10
		Worship & Music	6,545.10
		Diocesan Assessment	26,022.60
		Total Administrative Expenses	\$ 51,419.89
		Church Utilities	\$ 12,878.63
		Church Cleaning & Maintenance	25,994.68
		Rectory Utilities	4,770.97
		Rectory Repairs & Maintenance	10,179.40
		Property Insurance	11,271.00
		Total Buildings and Grounds	\$ 65,094.68
		TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 318,996.60
		Pantry Expenses	\$ 53,474.68
		Choral Singers	\$ 4,650.00
		Major Repairs	\$ 3,780.40
		Musical Friends	\$ 2,900.00
		Other Restricted Funds	\$ 7,143.12
CASH BASIS NET INCOME	\$ 15,187.85	TOTAL CASH EXPENSES	\$ 390,944.80

2025 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

CASH INCOME

Pledges	\$ 65,265 ~ Based on Pledge Cards (25)
All Other	40,000 ~ Based on recent Experience
Total Contributions	\$ 105,265
Reimbursement from TWS	\$ 58,749 ~ Per Contract with Trinity Wall Street
D&B	\$ 18,137 ~ Per ECCT
Wellman Trust	35,715 ~ Per Bank of America
Klemonski Fund	80,000 ~ Same as Last Year (SALY)
Grace Investment Fund	60,000 ~ SALY
Total Cash from Investments	\$ 193,852
TOTAL CASH INCOME	\$ 357,866

CASH EXPENSES

Rector's Compensation	\$ 120,750 ~ 4.1% Increase (per ECCT)
Curate's Compensation	58,749 ~ Per Contract with Trinity Wall Street
All Other Employees	52,500 ~ 4.1% Increase (per ECCT)
Supply Priests	3,500 ~ 5 Weeks / Rector's Leave Accrual
Total Compensation	\$ 235,499
Office	\$9,000 ~ SALY
Parish Administration	10,000 ~ Based on Recent Experience
Worship & Music	7,000 ~ Based on Recent Experience
Diocesan Assessment	25,127 ~ Per ECCT
Total Administrative Expenses	\$ 51,127
Church Utilities	\$ 14,000 ~ SALY
Church Cleaning Service	13,090 ~ Per New Vendor Contract
Church Maintenance	20,000 ~ Increased Based on Recent Experience
Rectory Utilities	6,000 ~ Based on Recent Experience
Rectory Maintenance	12,000 ~ Increased Based on Recent Experience
Property Insurance	12,710 ~ Per ECCT
Total Buildings and Grounds	\$ 77,800
Total Cash Expenses	\$ 364,426
NET LOSS (CASH BASIS)	\$ (6,560)



ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild had a very busy 2024, and much was accomplished. The Rev. Marta Rivera Monclova held a cleaning of the sacristy event this summer, and a cleaning of the Church and polishing of the brass event was held on December 7th, 2024, led by Jane Lacendonia. The altar linens are now being laundered by the *Haven Religious Community*. The Chalice was repaired and polished as the stem had broken.

Numerous people have helped with these tasks and special thanks also needs to be extended to the Choir and Acolytes.

If you are interested in joining the team, please reach out to Rev Rowena or Barb Galbreath.
Barbara Galbreath

FLOWER GUILD

During 2024, the church and parish hall were decorated with fresh flowers. Also festive decorations from Richard Bragg were used in the Parish Hall.

The Flower Guild is thankful and appreciative of the support of the congregation for their help in 2024. This is especially noted for the decorating of the Church for Easter and Christmas.

Please feel free to use the Flower Memorial Sheet that is posted in the parish hall for weekly Flower Memorials.
Barbara Galbreath



PASTORAL CARE

We are still unorganized as a pastoral care team since the death of our coordinator, Kathy Jaeger several years ago though we have managed to provide care, support, and assistance to our hospitalized, sick, homebound, institutionalized and grieving despite the inconsistent visits and calls. We thank Barb Galbreath, Claudia & Walter Gwardyak, Jane & Mark Lacedonia (especially for their card ministry), Tom Phillips, Kathie Rovetti, and Kyle Swann for assisting the rector this past year.

In the past year we lost beloved member Monica Grange, and it was a privilege to support her family in their bereavement and to invite former rector, Rev. Chris Rose to be with us for the funeral mass. Additionally, our First Saturday of the Month service at the Parkville Care center continues to grow and expand. Not only is Communion provided but also Holy Water and cookies for the residents.

We invite anyone who may feel called to serve or lead our team to be in contact with Rev. Rowena.
Prayerfully submitted by Rowena Kemp

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We continue to offer formation programs to encourage a deeper relationship with God and a better understanding of what it means to be a Christian in community and the world. This past year, our attention continued to center on adult formation, but with an increase in the attendance of children at church, we have begun more nuanced formation with our acolytes. We are grateful to our Assistant Rector, Rev. Marta for facilitating one-on-one Christian Education with acolytes as they learn their roles and responsibilities around the altar.

Adult formation this past year included a Lenten formation series entitled, *Bearing Witness* where we learned about the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem's ministry and work throughout Gaza and the Holy Land. This was followed by Stations of the Cross & Benediction. In Advent, we hosted a series facilitated by Sr. Gregory Simmons of *Haven Religious* entitled, *Women Mystics*, where we learned about early church and modern-day women whose faith and relationship with God are models for our own Christian lives. For both series, we were joined by our friends from St. Martin's, Hartford. Additionally, Sr. Gregory offered a contemplative space for a time of prayer as we adored the Blessed Sacrament in Advent.

Last year we began to more intentionally incorporate the children present in our lives at Grace. Engagement opportunities came at our Three Kings Celebration after the Epiphany Solemn Mass, The Easter Egg Hunt following the Solemn Mass on Easter Sunday, helping to decorate the Creche at Christmas and a shared Columbian tradition of praying the Novena de Aguinaldos on the ninth day followed by a meal. Thank you to the Vela Cruz family, especially Luz Vela Cruz for ensuring the children got to church.



This coming year we hope to expand our programming not only for children and youth but also for all in our community. Thanks to Claudia & Walter Gwardyak, Jane & Mark Lacedonia, and members of *Haven Religious* for their assistance with Christian Formation. We are looking forward to the exciting opportunities that lay ahead as we prepare a children and youth room in the undercroft!

Finally, we also give thanks to our lay preachers, Doug Bowman, Sean Glenn, Aldon Hynes, and Sr. Gregory Simmons who open the Scriptures for us in new, fresh and provocative ways.

We invite you to join our team and help spread the Good News in English and Spanish!

Prayerfully submitted by Rowena Kemp

MUSIC

The Choir has offered music, hymns, chanted Propers, anthems, motets, psalms, etc. at the 10:30 Sung Mass on Sundays throughout the year. Additionally, music was provided for Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, the Triduum, Ascension, and Assumption. Due to lack of clergy availability, there was no Mass celebrated on Feast of the Annunciation. For Easter Day, one of Mozart's *Missa brevis* settings was accompanied by a professional string trio.

A number of pieces from the Renaissance through the 21st Century have been added to the repertory. They are carefully chosen because they can be sung by relatively small forces, as well as appropriateness to the style and liturgical character.

A generous gift was made to the Russell Fund. That enables the Parish to continue, for the near term, the supplementation of our fine volunteer singers with additional voices (and, for Easter, instruments). This, with the support of our Vestry, is a testament to the importance of high-caliber music at Grace.

Membership in the Choir has remained relatively steady. Obviously, we were impacted by Betsy Rose's departure in the Fall of 2024. Christmas Eve welcomed the additional voices of Douglas Gould and Sean Glenn, as well as the inimitable Marc Rovetti on violin.

The Schoenstein organ sits with the Choir as a focal point of the musical output. It has been low maintenance—just the expected and necessary tuning twice a year. The firm of Foley Baker, from Tolland, Conn., continues to curate the organ.

Kyle Swann, *Choirmaster and Organist*

MUSICAL FRIENDS

Musical Friends held its first concert at Grace in 1994. Every year since then *Musical Friends* has performed for growing and enthusiastic audiences.

In 2024, there were many more in person attendees – probably our largest audience ever. There were 95 attendees making the concert appear to be “sold out”. In addition, there were over 50 views on Facebook.

A couple of comments from attendees at the 2024 Concert:

“What a wonderful concert! It was such a joy!” – Judy W.

“I watched your performance last night through Facebook live. Excellent!”- Nat K.

Musical Friends thanks all the volunteers who make these concerts possible. Their tasks include grant proposal assistance, paying the musicians, creating and disseminating publicity and planning. Special thanks is due to the Rev. Rowena Kemp who has been a devoted supporter of our concerts and for allowing Grace Episcopal Church to act as our fiscal sponsor. Although she was on sabbatical during the concert, Claudia Gwardyak graciously stepped in to welcome the audience to Grace Episcopal Church and the concert.

If funded, Grace Episcopal Church will host *Musical Friends* in a concert in August 2025. Watch for announcements about the concert and plan to attend and invite friends.

Respectfully, Leo Snow, Director, *Musical Friends*



A Place of Grace FOOD PANTRY



A Place of Grace, the food pantry located at Grace Episcopal Church, continues to serve the Parkville Community and beyond. We are a partner agency of Connecticut Foodshare and Midwest Food Bank of New England. Since COVID began in 2020, the only Foodshare requirement for eligibility is that one must be a Connecticut resident, although most of our “guests” live nearby.

The pantry was started in the mid-nineties by The Rev. Christopher Rose and Carol Hilton. At first, they gave out day-old bread. As the pantry grew over the next few years, a new wing was added onto the church for the storage of many other food items. Today the pantry continues to grow. Before the pandemic we would serve an average of 140 families each week. We now serve over 250 and even 300 families per week.

Unlike many other pantries, we remained open during the COVID pandemic. Connecticut Foodshare was very grateful for this. We did need to modify our operation, however, pre-packing bags and distributing them outside. Thanks to an improved COVID situation and an air scrubber purchased through a Hartford Foundation grant, we were able to move back inside in August 2021. This enabled the guests to select their own food, a system that they much preferred.

Every Wednesday, volunteers and community workers set up Nason Hall like a small grocery store. The guests come on Thursday mornings from 9:15-11:30 to do their “shopping”. They line up on the sidewalk on Grace Street and enter Nason Hall through the porch door, where they register and sign in. We are grateful to Tom Phillips who computerized our database. Each guest now has a card with a barcode which is scanned for a quick check in. The guests then go around the room to select their groceries from various stations. Volunteers stand behind the tables to greet the guests, to oversee the selection process, restock the food items and break down the cardboard boxes for recycling.

This year we continue to work with Trinity College as well. Several student volunteers help us distribute food on Thursdays. They are most helpful, both helping with our newly implemented computer system, with supervising the distribution of food and breaking down boxes. We are also grateful to Trinity students who also volunteered to help clean the church on their “Do-it-Day” back in September.

We are pleased to continue our partnership with Trinity College. Several students come help us distribute food and work the computers on Thursday mornings. They have also organized a couple of community service days, helping us clean the pantry areas as well as other areas of the church. We are also grateful to St. James’s Episcopal Church in West Hartford for sending us volunteers and donations of food and supplies. We are also grateful for donations from Our Lady of Fatima Church in

Hartford, St. John's Episcopal Church in West Hartford, Simsbury United Methodist Church, the Farmington Valley Muslim Center, and St. James Episcopal Church in Glastonbury for their numerous donations. We were deeply moved by the student council at the Parkville School for running a food drive and donating a huge amount of food for Thanksgiving. We are also grateful to Dr. Don Salzberg who provides us twice weekly with bagels from Brugger's Bagels in Avon. We are also grateful for various monetary donations from church members and from people from outside the church. It is wonderful to have churches, schools and businesses in the area work together, helping to support our community. If you would like to donate, please make your check out to Grace Episcopal Church with a memo to *A Place of Grace*.

We are grateful for our community workers who provide strong backs for the heavy lifting that is necessary for our operation. We do need more volunteers, however, especially on Wednesday mornings to help set up. Wednesday volunteers need to be able to do heavy lifting. Thursday volunteers have an easier job, serving as greeters and overseers. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Kathie Rovetti at krovetti@gmail.com. It is a very gratifying endeavor.

Kathie Rovetti, *Director*



CHRISTMAS GIVING TO PARKVILLE FAMILIES

Christmas Giving to Parkville children continued this year with the assistance of friends, family, Grace's congregation and with a wonderful partnership with St. James's, West Hartford. Ruth Mitman at St. James's gathered volunteers to shop for children individually, according to the specific wish lists that we gave them. Thank you once again, Ruth Mitman! Together, we gave boxes of gifts, both clothes and toys, to 214 children and teens in 59 Hartford families in Hartford.

Maria Burgos, Linda Galarza and Josie Dominguez, as well as Kathie Rovetti, Will, Francesca and Rev. Rowena, signed up families in October. Maria, Linda and Josie called everyone the day before to remind them of the pickup date and helped to run the distribution on December 14th. Other volunteers helped by going up and downstairs to get boxes of gifts. Rev. Rowena provided pizza and prayers for all.

In addition to St. James's, there were many individual donors, including several members of Grace's choir, Vestry and clergy, family members and friends of theirs, and individuals.

Claudia Gwardyak, *Chair*

ELECTION INFORMATION

2025 Nominees

Below are the names of those who have been nominated and agreed to stand for election

Positions to be filled for 2025

Officers (one-year term)

Senior Warden	Claudia Gwardyak
Junior Warden	Dr. Barbara Galbreath
Parish Clerk	Katharine Rovetti
Treasurer	Mark Lacedonia
Assistant Treasurer	Dr. Barbara Galbreath
Delegates to Convention & Region	Claudia Gwardyak
	Dr. Barbara Galbreath
Alternate Delegate to Convention & Region	Douglas Bowman

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#### Members of the Vestry

##### Vestry Members at Large:

|                                                       |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Electing Replacement Class of 2026<br>(one-year term) | Adrienne Brown |
| Electing Class of 2028 (three-year term)              | Douglas Gould  |
|                                                       | Sheryl Rifkin  |

##### Continuing to serve

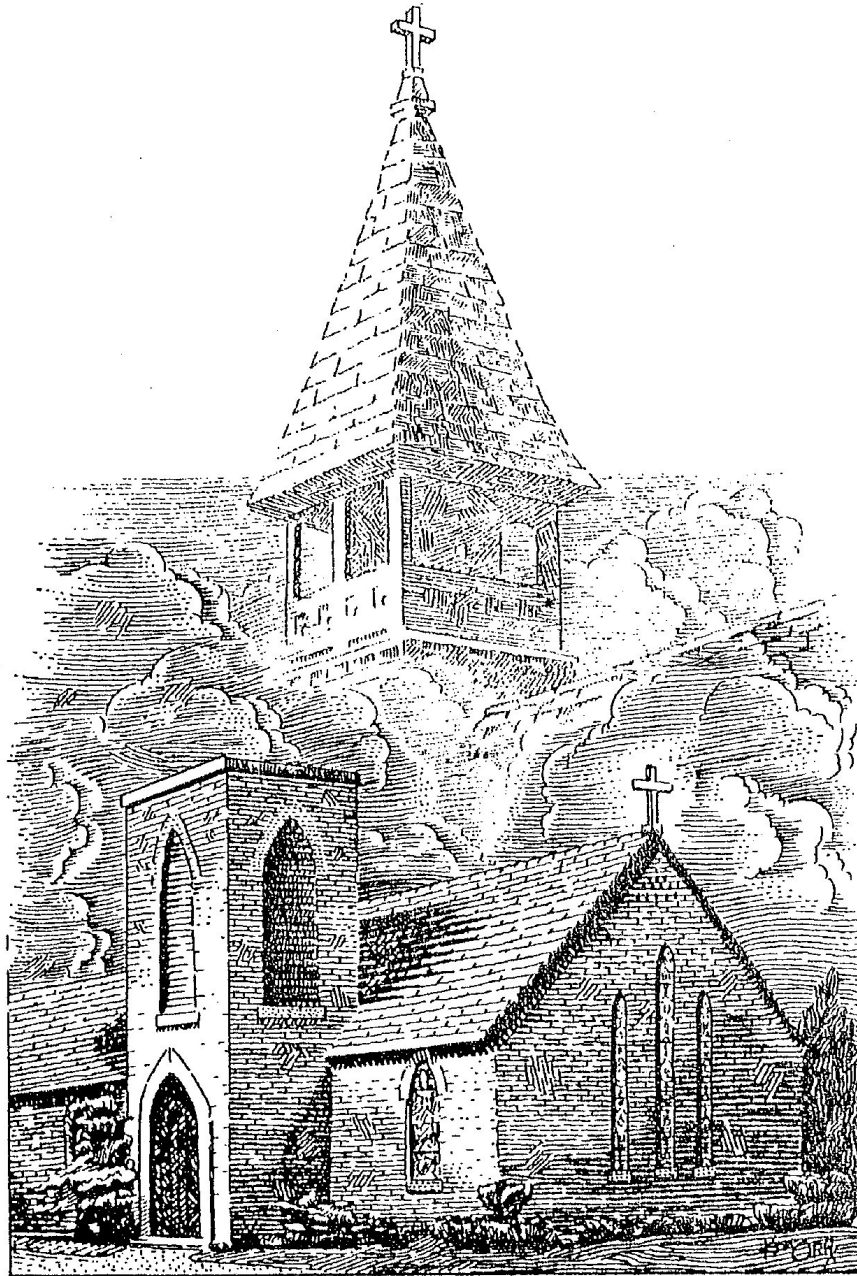
|               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Class of 2026 | Josie Dominguez    |
| Class of 2027 | Linda Galarza-Rosa |
|               | Gregory Simmons    |

**Retiring Vestry Members:** Douglas Bowman and Pamela Glasner

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Vestry Member Emeritus: Thomas Phillips





Grace Episcopal Church

55 New Park Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

The Rev. Rowena J. Kemp, *Rector*

Parish telephone: 860-233-0825

Parish website: www.gracehartford.org

Parish fax: 860-233-5082

Parish email: church@gracehartford.org

Rector's cell: 203-209-4178

Rector's email: RevRowena@gracehartford.org